greatest clothier in England. He was the owner of one hundred looms, and is said to have equipped as many men- at-arms for the Scotish wars at his own cost.

York, at this time the next city to London in population and wealth, had long been deemed the great seat of the woollen trade in the northern counties. This branch of manufacture had established itself there in the reign of Ed­ward III., and it seems steadily to have increased from that period. The trade also spread into other parts of the county, and we find many evidences that Halifax had grown into importance. The trade indeed prevailed in Halifax as early as 1414, but it does not appear to have increased until after the year 1443, when the advance was steady until 1540, during which period the number of houses is stated by Wright, in his History of Halifax, to have increased from thirteen to 520. They had even in­fluence enough to procure acts of parliament in their favour, couched in the narrow spirit of the legislation of that day.

Acts of parliament for the regulation of the woollen trade now began to multiply, which, if they prove nothing else, prove the importance which the staple trade had at this time assumed. In the reign of Edward VI. Coventry and Manchester are named as the seats of manufacture ; and in that of Philip and Mary a long act was passed regu­lating the making of woollen cloths, and confining the same to market-towns. Ten or eleven counties, besides North and South Wales, were excepted in the act ; but it was deemed so oppressive that it was amended in the first year of the next reign.

At this time it should be observed, that the freedom of trade and industry was wholly unknown. Guilds or cor­porate bodies monopolized every trade or calling ; and even the whole export trade of England was in the hands of three companies, the merchants of the staple, the merchant adventurers, and the merchants of the steelyard, the latter of whom were foreigners. In 1551 the merchants of the steelyard exported 44,000 cloths; and shortly afterwards the merchant adventurers, into whose hands this branch of trade fell, exported 100,000 cloths. The exportation of wool had been for some time diminishing, and we were rapidly becoming a manufacturing nation. Acts indicative of the ignorance which prevailed continued to be passed; but although the state sought to regulate every thing, our manufactures and trade grew in spite of vicious legislation. Some counties and towns, however, were relieved from the oppressive acts of former reigns, and a considerable number of foreign artisans settled in England ; but generally the character of legislation was bad, and was indeed only toler­able because that of other countries was either equally bad or worse. The exportation of sheep was prohibited “ for divers good causes and considerations and in the follow­ing reign the export of “ white cloths” was prohibited, in order to give a boon to our dyers ; but other countries adopted the same narrow policy, and by prohibiting the importation of British dyed cloths, defeated the intended monopoly. The woollen manufacture now declined apace, and the persecutions and civil disorder during the contest with the Stewarts, that is, from 1620 to 1688, almost annihi­lated the trade. The exportation of wool was alternately prohibited and permitted, according to the notions of the government. The great prosperity of the woollen trade in Elizabeth’s reign had been coincident with free trade ; but as ignorance prevailed throughout all classes, vain at­tempts to secure monopolies found favour with the public, notwithstanding repeated failures. Oppressions drove the manufacturers out of the kingdom ; and it is said that **two** thousand left the country at one time under Thomas Telham of Warwick, and shortly after more joined them. This was in the year 1665, when the white clothing trade **had** fallen off from 100,000 cloths to 11,000, without any increase in the exportation of dyed cloths.

The legislation of the commonwealth was just as unwise as that of the Stewarts. The exportation of wool, fullers’ earth, and all the materials of manufacture, was prevented, and it seems never to have entered the minds of the pro­moters and framers of these laws that other nations could produce these articles ; nor was it until about the year 1660 that the superiority of Spanish clothing wool was ad­mitted, when our manufacturers began to mix it with Eng­lish wool, to the great improvement of the cloth.

To enumerate the various schemes to remedy the de­pressed state of the woollen manufacture about this period, would occupy more space than we can afford. They will however be found in Smith’s Memoirs of Wool, a work to which we are much indebted. Suffice it to say, that bad legislation continued its work until it had paralyzed thc trade.

In the mean time the w∞llen manufacture found its way into Ireland. Some English clothiers had settled at Dub­lin, Cork, and Kinsale, and *a more* considerable establish­ment was formed at Clonmel. Some Frenchmen also set up a manufacture of druggets at Waterford, and the success of these excited the jealousy of the English clothiers, who as­cribed the depression of the trade to Irish competition. The farmer also attributed part of his distress to the im­portation of Irish wools ; and, with singular inconsistency, the clandestine export of both English and Irish wools was deemed the cause of the increase of foreign manufactures. These erroneous notions produced another crop of bad le­gislation, and the result was, that the very evils complained of were actually produced. Nearly all the tracts on trade published at that time, and nearly all of which are briefly noticed in Smith’s Memoirs of Wool, will be found harping on the declining state of trade, and recommending measures calculated to produce the worst of evils. The great complaint was “ the running of wool and although the consump­tion of Spanish wool was annually increasing, because its merits were becoming known, manufacturers, traders, le­gislators, all seemed to act under an impression that no wool in the world equalled that of Great Britain.

As the consumption of Spanish wool increased, English cloth improved ; and, immediately before the Revolution, our manufacturers opposed with some success the rivalry of the French, which had become extremely injurious to Bri­tish manufactures.

The tranquillity produced by the establishment of the princess Mary and the prince of Orange on the throne was extremely favourable to the woollen manufacturers, more especially as many of them were Protestant dissen­ters, who had not enjoyed under the domination of the Stewarts that degree of religious liberty which they craved. Towards the end of the century, it was calculated that the total woollens manufactured in this country amounted to L.8,000,600, of which about L.2,000,000 were exported. From 1718 to 1722 it averaged L.3,000,000. For the ten years ending with 1748 the number was L.3,300,000; and for the following five years L.4,200,000, from which time the advance has been progressive down to the present time.

The principal seats of the woollen manufacture are the western counties and the west riding of Yorkshire. From the year 1726 until the year 1821 accounts were kept of the quantity of cloth manufactured in the west riding of York­shire, as exhibited by the returns from the several fulling mills made at the Easter quarter-sessions held at Pontefract. The table for every year of the period will be found in Marshall’s Statistical Tables ; but for the purpose of bring­ing the progressive increase of the manufacture before the eye of the reader, apart from all occasional and tempo­rary fluctuations, we have arranged the last fifty years of the table in five periods, giving the total and averages for each period.