AMERICAN SILK MANUFACTURE.

Processes and Products Cost of Labor-Pre-sent State of the Trade-The Employes-Pro-tection and Importations.

A political economist, recently writing on the subject of American manufactures, said that the United States can produce all the nsually imported fabrics, except silk. Yet the comparatively infant State of California has unfurled over a public building an American flag of which every particle and process were the products of home manufacture. The flag which waved over the old Crystal Palace was woven in colors by Major Ryle, of Paterson, N. J. Thomas N. Dole of the same city has, within a month, received from a party of French and Swiss immigrants, who are founding a manufacturing and agricultural colony in Central Kansas, orders for thrown trams and organzines with which they purpose to make velvets for the Chicago market.

Early American Silk Manufactures. As early as 1747 Governor Low, of Cincinnati, were a coat made of silk which was raised and manufactured in his own State. In 1770, the English Queen was proud to wear, as a present from the colonies, an Americanmade gown; and Charles II, in 1660, wore a coronation robe of American silk. The production of raw silk in America was at first discouraged by company mismanagement, then by the speedy profitableness of tobacco, afterwards by the Revolution, and the easy production of cotton, and finally by the famous "silk mania," which began in 1825. Windham county, Connecticut, had produced so great quantities of raw silk that the attention of the whole country was excited, and Congress, that year, appointed a committee to investigate the subject of silk raising, with a view to legislative protection. The committee reported, in 1826, that the culture of the mulberry and the worm was advisable for agricultural as well as economical reasons. Richard Rush's official pamphlet on the subject was spread broadcast. The people, during the next few years, speculated largely in the morus multicaulus, a species of mulberry, native of the Philippine Islands, and cultivated in France. Farmers in all the States planted a great number of mulberry trees. Even Maine offered premiums for raw silk. In 1830 a bill was introduced in Congress for appropriating \$40,000 to the establishment at Philadelphia of a "filature" in which young men and women might be taught. under the direction of M. Duponceau, the processes of raising and preparing raw silk, they to be teachers of others. It was expected that great quantities of raw silk could be exported. But it was during the Nullification times, and the bill was lost. Notwithstanding the want of encouragement, States bounties for raising the mulberry trees. Between 1828 and 1833, twelve mills were erected in the United States for the manufacture of imported silk, until the home product should be sufficient. Large plantations of trees were made; mills started the Eastern and Middle the young trees sold at the nurseries at high prices. A large class of the silk enthusiasts limited themselves to theories and pamphlets; yet at Troy, Concord, Hartford, Philadelphia, and other places, large sums were employed as capital for practical operations in the business. The Rhode Island Silk Company, at Providence, used a capital of \$100,000, and established a large cocoonery. Industrial Fairs were filled with prize specimens of silk weaving, in gimps, "sewings," and broad fabrics. Yet, in 1836, in the height of the excitement, we imported over \$22,000,-000 worth of silks. The excitement increased during '37 and '38. The morus multicaulus tree assumed a value in the market scarcely costly experience and good luck. During this time importations did not cease, and no protection was provided, except on sewing-silk, which immediately, in consequence, became a desideratum. And the fact that American manufacturers to-day have the experience and facility to make as good sewing-silk as could be imported, and so greatly to rely upon that branch of manufacture, is due to its other logical fact, that a protective duty of 28 per cent, was imposed on sewing-silks. In 1842 a duty was imposed on all silks, but it was too late; the morus multicaulus failed; a violent reaction ensued; the shipwreck was complete. But many lessons were learned. Manufacturers began to use imported silk for want of home-cultivated, and the trade assumed its

natural, normal condition. More Recent Operations. Since 1840 we have been learning to manufacture. It has been proved, however, that Americans can raise as good raw silk as other countries. The cocooneries of California are only experimenting, but they promise sure success. Mr. Cowdin reports that some of the finest cocoons at the Paris Exposition were from the Santa Clara Valley. The rains which, in Europe, during the feeding season, destroy the worms, do not occur in California at that time. The worm is hatched about the middle of May, reaches maturity about the first of July, and before the first of August has formed its cocoon ready for market or reel. From the first of May till the first of October, in California, the sky is clear, the air dry, the temperature equable. A Chinaman recently, in reply to the question what he thought of California as a silk-growing State, said he believed it to be the best in the world, because the blunderers at the cocooneries had not been able to kill half the worms. As a question of labor, California, with her thousands of Chinamen, can compete with the world. She has recently exported from the Santa Barbara colony 100 pounds of eggs, valued at \$10,000 in gold. The raw silk which we import (free of duty) comes from China and Japan, though it first goes to England, whence we purchase it at prices fixed by the market there, after the best has been chosen. The Pacific Railway will remedy that. It costs from \$7:50 to \$11.50 per pound. Some of the Japanese silk is cleaner and finer than the Chinese. Cevennes silk is dearer than either, and is used in weaving "silk-mixed" cassimeres, Considerable quantities of partly-manufactured silk are received by the importers through the Custom House under the guise of raw silk, and so free of duty, the officers ignoring or conniving at the fraud. The raw silk, purchased by the pound, comes baled in skeins of a yellowish-white color, and each thread is composed of from four to twelve threads of eocoon silk. A thread will sustain the same weight as a thread of iron the same size. The raw silk contains from twenty to twenty-five per cent. of gum from the worm. It also readily absorbs moisture to the amount of ten and even fifteen per cent. All French silks are "conditioned" at the Government Assay Office. Eleven per cent. is decided as the amount of natural increase by moisture; the silk is thoroughly dried by steam, weighed, and the eleven per cent. added, the aggregate weight being that at which it must be sold, whatever the weight it may accumulate afterward. An official tabular statement accompanies each package.

Manufacturing Processes. The first process at the American manufac-

care being required in every stage that the threads be equal in size, as inequality would produce a manufactured thread of uneven and unmanageable twist. It is then soaked in soapy water to dissolve the gum and render the thread pliable and elastic. The skeins are slipped upon octagonal wicker "swift" reels, a dozen or more of which revolve on an axis fastened in the legs of each table. A thread from each reel-skein passes upward over a smooth metal or glass rod, fixed on the lateral edge of the table, to its revolving bobbin, upon which it is wound. After this process the thread is guided between the con-tiguous edges of two sharp steel resembling seissors, it of gummy lumps and clinging waste, to another bobbin. This process occasions considerable waste. The finer and more regular threads are now taken for making organzines, which are the warps of woven goods. Coarser threads are taken for trams or woofs. The most inferior are used for the manufacture of sewing silks. Loose and broken ends are corded like cotton and spun into floss for embroidery. The twisting or "throwing" process is done by passing the thread of raw silk from an upright bottom through the eye of a craned wire flyer, which rapidly spins with the top of the bobbin to receiving bobbins revolving above. This thread is called a "single," and for organzines receives from 12 to 19 twists to the inch, Organzines or trams are made by twisting together two of these twisted threads, in an opposite direction to the former single twist, at the rate of from ten to seventeen turns to the inch; the two threads having previously been wound parallel upon one bobbin. Organzines receive tight twisting to induce strength and elasticity. A swing of two twists to the inch sometimes saves five cents to the pound in the cost of labor, but may occasion greater loss in weaving. Two or three threads of a raw silk twisted loosely two to four times to the inch is tram, shute, or woof. In weaving, the woof has little or no strain upon it, and it fills up the warp better by being soft and loose. The twist in silk threads is set by dampening and drying. Skein sewing silk is made of three to ten threads twisted together, and two of these latter doubled. Sewing machine silk is trebly Button-hole twist is Twists with a tighter twist. threads of sewing silks are ten to fifteen to the inch; and the doubled, eight to twelve. The organzines are reeled into skeins of one or two thousand yards each, care being taken to make them of the exact length, as that compared with their weight determines the quality of the goods to be woven. The American sewing silk machine is a great improvement over the old-fashioned machine. By the aid of a few girls, the former at once doubles and twists the silk, and reels it into skeins of equal length; and it turns out 125 pounds a week. The cost of throwing raw silk into organzines is \$1 to \$5 per pound, a great proportion of that going to labor. Trams cost less, After weighing, the threads go to the dyer, who is charged with the weight; also with the number of skeins. As the manufacturer knows how much of each color should be returned, little fraud or error can happen. Up to the time the silk goes to the dyer there is a loss of three to nine per cent, from cleaning, breaking, etc. It loses from eighteen to twenty-five per cent. of weight in dyeing by the boiling off of the worm gum, which is made up greatly by surcharging with sugar or dye. In the dye-house the silk skeins are tied to prevent tangling, and boiled for four or five hours in coarse linen bags, by which the hempy colors attain a lustre. Yellowish colors inferior to that of gold in '63. Those who are "counteracted" to a pure white by the use achieved anything in manufacture did it by of a little blue dye. This white dyeing costs 60 cents a pound—less than any other color. Of white colors the manufacturer receives back from the dyer 12 ounces for every pound. The aniline or bright colors cost \$1.50 to \$3.50 a pound to dye. The light greens are the most expensive. They also return 12 ounces to the pound. High colors are cheapened in the weight by the addition of three ounces of sugar to 12 of silk. Drabs and slates are dyed with sumae, at a cost of a dollar a pound, and return 14 ounces. Blacks are dved with nitrate of iron and cutch, and also logwood, a bluish shade, especially for velvets, being desirable. Blue-blacks return 14 ounces; plain blacks the full complement. losses being compensated by surcharging, Surcharging can be carried to the extent of trebling the weight of the silk. After dyeing, the skeins are dried on bars in a close steamed room, and then lustred by passing over hot cylinders. Sewing-silk is softened by wring-

> and again rewound to give a proper tension to the thread before weaving. Present Condition and Prospects. Such is the extent to which the American trade has usually been carried, though pongees and foulards were woven in Connecticut, and ribbons in Baltimore, twenty years ago. During the last ten years the manufacture of ribbons has increased rapidly. The Cheney Brothers of Harrford are making great quantities of parasol coverings; the Dola Company at Paterson are making tailors' trimmings scarfs, and braids; Dexter, Lambert & Co., of the same city, make this season 3000 yards of knotted fringes, and 2500 yards of bullion fringes per day, driving the foreign goods out of the market. The processes of trimmingmanufacture are too intricate and tedious for popular description. An examination of the goods will show a delicately-knotted thread, or a base of cotton wound with silk. Broad silks are woven upon the plain loom, and figured ones upon the Jacquard. The operations are delicate and costly. To get the proper length of warp for a piece, and at the same time to lay a sufficient number of the warp threads together, amounting sometimes to 5000 or 6000, the threads from a great number of bobbins, rolling in a frame like the old school counting frame, are reeled backward and forward together on a large reel. These again are rewound upon a large drum to give than tension and lay them the right distance apart, the operation being afterward completed by passing each thread by hand between the teeth of a large brass comb, and while they are stretched cleaning than by hand with small scissors. Narrow gools are woven upon a small adaptation of the plain or the Jacquard looms, a dozen or more of which are operated upon the same table, Watered goods me made by laying a piece of woven plain goods upon another, and passing them behind iron cylinders, one heated, the tension and abrasion of the surfaces producing the watered effect. In chine gools, the figure is painted upon the close warp, and woven in by the woof, "Shot" goods are woven with the warp of one color, and the woof of another. For the best ribbons Italian warps are used. Bandannas and other loose goods are made of waste and cocoon covers, scutched, chopped, and spun, like cotton. This "spun" is also used by some American manufacturers for the woofs of broad goods. The Murray Mill at Paterson was about to be used in this trade before it was recently

> burned. Inferior silks are produced altogether

ing, and tied into skeins for sale. Trams and

organzines are then rewound upon bobbins,

tory is to sort the raw silk into sizes, great | from "spun." But the latter, being loose in care being required in every stage that the | texture, is best if used as a woof, with web or pure silk warp, when it makes a good article.

Who Are in the Business. At the present time American silk fabrics are competing favorably with European goods. In braids and trimmings we have driven foreigners out of the market, and our ribbons are purchased as freely as theirs. But it is with broad silks that the manufacturer will experiment, and produce, and succeed, during the next ten years. P. G. Givenand, of West Hoboken, and John N. Sterns, of First avenue, New York, now turn out respectively several thousand yards of gros grain silks per week, which no man in the trade can tell from the best imported articles, and which retail on Broadway for \$5 per yard. With the present tariff of 60 per cent., American manufacturers can throw and weave silk goods at a profit of 15 per cent. There are now in Philadelphia 30 trimming factories, those of Graham, Horstmann (carriage and military trimmings), and Hensell and Cornet being the largest. At Hartford and South Manchester the Cheney Brothers, who have been engaged in the business thirty years, employ 1000 hands, and have the following capacity per annum:— 60,000 pounds of thrown silks, 60,000 pound of "patent spun," 100,000 pieces of belt rib bons, and 600,000 yards of wide goods. com prising dress silks, gros grains, poplins, fou-lards, and pongees. The Dole Manufacturing Company, which, in 1865, built at Paterson, N. J., a mill probably as large as any in Enrope, having a mean length of 375 feet and a height of four stories, turn out 3000 pounds of manufactured threads per month, 1000 gross of silk braids, 600 gross of hat bands, and 3500 yards of serge, performing within the mill every operation necessary to produce the goods from the raw thread, and employing 300 hands, mostly children of Paterson ma-chinists. John N. Sterns of New York is making 400 yards of woven goods per day, and M. Givenaud over 300. Dexter, Lambert & Co., at Paterson, make 60,000 to 75,000 yards of dress trimmings per month, and during the past spring season manufactured 12,000 dozen yards of bullion trimmings. Hamill & Booth's Passaic Mill, beside making trams and organzines, is employed in the manufacture of dress goods. Nearly all the Paterson mills are engaging in this specialty, the Dole Company having introduced a large number of improved American looms; and the Murray Mill, which was burned in May, but will be immediately rebuilt, will be employed in weaving broad goods of net warps and "spun" fillings. American dyers are succeeding in producing as fine shades of color as the French. Claude Greppo, at Paterson, with 35 dyers, some of them from France, is daily turning out 350 pounds of dyed silk, the colors of which are equal to any produced at Lyons or St. Etienne. The American Velvet mill started at Paterson a few years ago failed. New York city contains probably 50 estab lishments for various grades of the manufacture; many of them are small. At Schenec tady, Troy, and Yonkers are also several mills. Paterson is the headquarters of the trade, and contains 15 factories. The operatives are mostly children of mechanics, the majority of them girls, who earn from \$4 to \$7 a week. In the trimming and weaving mills skilled operatives, brought from Lyons, receive as much as \$35 a week for piece work during the spring season, and girls trained to the labor earn \$9 and \$10 a

Protection Needed. The enthusiasm with which manufacturers are entering into broad-weaving, which is just now springing up with promise, presages the future course of the trade. They say, "Give us protection, and we are safe." However fish they may be the wish, the results to labor remain unaltered. Reduce them to free-trade, and three millions of silk capital in Paterson alone will be annihilated. Beside this, more than three thousand silk operatives in that city will be reduced to beggary. Three hundred of these, by the demoralization of idleness, will seek lives of prostitution in New York. Two hundred more, from the desperation of idleness, will follow in their footsteps. The farmer's lands and crops will consequently decrease in value. Thirty thousand people, in that single city, who de-pend, however unconsciously, upon these operatives, will sell no goods to them when they are scattered, and will have no money with which to purchase French silks. We have advanced to that success under moderate protection, whence we cannot, must not recede. Even with the protection we have, the navy of Britain and the army of Napoleon are less formidable to our national life than the organization of weavers at Leeds and Lyons and St. Etienne. Not long ago it was discovered-not by the customs officers, but by watchful manufacturers-that foreign importers were sending to their agents here hollow blocks of ribbons, with a piece outside which paid duty, and a piece inside which paid none. Even now they fight us with loss to themselves. After selling to the European market, French manufacturers send the surplus to America, and sell it for less than it cost, rather than lose it altogether. The American importers of foreign goods are in league with the foreign manufacturers. They do not propose, in fair play, to give us "the choice of two markets: they bring patience and money and chicanery to break down our mills, and reduce us to the necessity of buying in Europe. The practical logic of free trade is, one market, and that market Europe. A few years ago American importers tried the plan of assuming to share with manufacturers in the production of American goods. Of course the style of goods was made as they ordered it. They ordered it of inferior quality, labelled it ostentatiously "American silk," put in their warehouses beside foreign goods, and rained their dupes. From acts such as these, and, confessedly, from the indiscretion of some of our own manufacturers, a stigma attends American silks. A manufacturer recently made a lot of ribbons, and purchased a right to use an importer's label; he labelled half the lot as of a foreign make, and the other half as of American. In the auction room the goods under foreign labels brought over seventeen per cent, more than their other half! The only defensive weapon of the American manufacturer, under protection, is good silks. Do not make them heavy, with inferior "spun" fillings. Use a good quality of woof and warp, and make them thinner, if need be. The tariff prints its protection to silk as at sixty per cent., but, with the average of deductions, it does not amount to fifty. If, however, a strict specific duty of sixty per cent. can be collected, we can in less than ten years drive the last threads of foreign goods to the historical societies, as relics of our weakness and unwisdom.

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