

THE JOURNAL
OF THE
Board of Arts and Manufactures
FOR UPPER CANADA.

SEPTEMBER, 1864.

WOOL AND WOOLLEN MANUFACTURES.

Of all the warm blooded animals, man alone is unprotected against the vicissitudes and rigours of climate by a natural covering; all the others, wanting the intellectual faculties necessary to provide raiment for themselves, possess the advantage of a wise, bountiful, and most admirable provision of nature, whereby they are clothed by the functions of their organization—the skin being the soil as it were out of which hair, feathers, and wool grow, receiving their nutriment from organs appropriate to its secretion.

Man, most keenly sensitive to atmospheric influences, is left to clothe himself. It would be a pleasing and perhaps not unprofitable occupation to trace him step by step in his progress to the present results. Deep research in this direction, however, is incompatible with the limits of this article, and we must be content with a very brief skeleton outline. It is quite possible that man's first covering consisted of leaves, and afterwards vegetable fibre, plaited or interwoven by hand, in the rudest and most imperfect manner. No doubt, however, he soon availed himself of the skins of animals slaughtered for this special purpose or for his food.

How many ages passed in the infancy of the race before he learned to spin and weave the wool of the sheep we have no means of knowing, nor have we any positive knowledge even as to whether he found the sheep such as we have been taught to regard that animal, namely, as the wool producing companion of man around the seats of ancient and modern civilization, or whether these external qualities by which we distinguish the sheep from the goat grazing on the rich alluvial soil of Egypt and in the green pastures of Judea, were the result of man's fostering care.

If we had seen the sheep neglected by the migratory tribes who, to pursue less peaceful courses, left him to his *own ways*—to "*go astray*," herding with, and putting on the habits and appearance of the native *Argali* on the high table lands of Asia, we might ask the question, do animals thus readily leave their *natural state* and pass into some other, or is the sheep merely relapsing into *his natural state*, from whence he was originally taken?

The first generation of man, as history makes us acquainted with him, cultivated the sheep. Among the patriarchal tribes their herds were their chief care and most fruitful source of wealth. So early as the days when Jacob served Laban for his wives, we find in the story of the peeled rods allusion to the great impressibility of the sheep in breeding, which impressibility has rendered him so available for the service of man, and had, perhaps, long before Jacob's time.

The great care and kind attention paid to the sheep from the earliest ages down to the Christian era are shown by the comparisons, similes and parables, &c., in the Scriptures—"The Good Shepherd." How beautiful the expression, how *pastoral*—"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters." There is no doubt that at a period long anterior to historical record, there were, as there are now, numerous flocks feeding on the mountains near the valley of Cashmere, constituting the chief wealth of their owners, and giving employment to the dwellers in the valley. As early as the time of Moses, the Egyptians were great sheep breeders, and so well have they succeeded that they have shorn their sheep twice a year. Weaving, and consequently spinning, was practised by the Egyptians from time immemorial. Representations of looms have been found by Sir J. G. Wilkinson amongst the ancient monuments of the Egyptians, and they were celebrated for their textile manufactures of fine linen and other cloths, which were exported to and eagerly purchased by foreign nations. Their fine linen and embroidered work, the yarn and woollen stuffs of the upper and lower country, were frequently mentioned and highly esteemed; woollen work of an ornamental character bearing the evidence of a high antiquity, has recently been found at Thebes.

That the woollen manufacture formed a considerable part of the industry of Babylonia and Phoenicia cannot be doubted, but it appears they were unable to raise the finer sorts of wool, or, at least, in sufficient quantities for the requirements of their trade, for Heeren in his learned researches concerning Eastern nations, says: "The finest descriptions of wool manufactured in Babylonia and the Phœnician states are the productions of many parts of Asia."

We have a description of the Arabian sheep by Herodotus, distinguishing the two sorts to which it owed its origin, as the long and the broad tail.

Passing on westward through the pastoral regions of Asia Minor, we come to Miletus, renowned throughout the world for her wools and woollen