

The use of the very finest muslins is restricted to members of a royal house. In a country which contains two prominent classes—princes and peasants—the former will naturally prevail, and we find throughout India that there has been a demand for the choicest and most beautiful specimens of manufacturing art, for the gratification of the powerful and the rich. The chief thought of the dependent has been to produce the most luxurious and most exquisite fabric for the prince and his favourites. The intelligence and dexterity of the spinner and weaver are taxed to the utmost strength to supply their wishes or anticipate their wants, and the reward is frequently as lavish as it is generous; and in proof of the estimation in which the art of weaving is held, Mr. Redgrave states that the Hindoo weaver ranks above all other mechanics, and next below the scribe. The delicacy and fineness of the Dacca muslins are not easy to describe. In the imaginative language of the East, they have been called “webs of woven wind;” and it has been stated that when laid upon the grass to be bleached, and the dew is upon it, it cannot be discerned. That this latter description is not overdrawn, we may gather from a circumstance which is related to have taken place at the court of Arungzebe. He is said to have chidden his daughter for appearing before him too thinly clad, when she replied to him that she was clothed in nine folds of raiment. She might have added that her garment contained a filament of cotton which, if produced, would measure upwards of forty miles. And a Persian ambassador, upon returning from India to his own country, is said to have presented his Sovereign with a cocoa-nut containing a piece of India muslin for a turban 30 yards in length, which when expanded in the air could hardly be felt.

“Reckoning the dress of the daughter of Arungzebe as containing 20 square yards, and that four miles of yarn could be spun by an expert spinner in India from 180 grains of cotton, her dress would weigh about four ounces, and contain forty miles of yarn; and then, calculating according to the English method of determining the fineness, or, as it is technically called, the counts, or numbers, of yarn, by reckoning so many hanks or skeins, of 840 yards each skein, to a lb weight, it would appear that her dress was made of about 320’s, *i. e.*, 320 hanks of cotton yarn, each measuring 840 yards=160 miles of yarn, which would weigh 1 lb. But to spin 300’s is no marvel in Britain; 700’s are constantly spun for the manufacture of lace, *i. e.*, a pound of yarn of that degree of fineness will measure upwards of 334 miles in length. The Messrs. Thos. Houldsworth & Co., of Manchester, who probably, spin the finest yarn in England, spun for the Great Exhibition of 1851 specimens in short lengths of 2,150’s=1,026 miles to the pound weight, and the estimate is that the fibre of the raw cotton from which this yarn was spun would average 8,000’s *i. e.*, it would require 8,000 hanks of a single fibre of the raw cotton, each

hank measuring 850 yards, to weigh one pound. It may be true that the delicate fingers and sensitive organism of the Hindoo girl may enable her to manipulate the fibre of the cotton in spinning, with a certain degree of elasticity of which the spinning machine is incapable, but in the one quality of degree of fineness, we compete successfully with the Hindoo.”

“It has been well said by Lord Palmerston, that dirt is only to be condemned when it is in the wrong place. Now, a factory is certainly not the place for the accumulation of dirt, nor is the stream which flows in its vicinity the proper place for its reception. All offensive and dirty matters used to be freely discharged into the nearest stream, but now the dirty and greasy washings of factories, and herein I allude chiefly to woollen and worsted factories, are conducted to a tank, and by a very simple process the watery particles are discharged, and the residuum is reconverted into a fatty substance, largely used for candles and the manufacture of soap. In one establishment alone I am assured that a profit of £800 a year, after paying a rent of £200 to some neighbouring factories for their refuse, is made by this conversion to useful purposes of the dirt which formerly polluted the stream and neighbourhood.”

It has been found that old materials form very good substitutes for new. The bits of raw cotton which do not pass through the machines, the ends of rovings and yarn, the flaws, which are broken off, are all carefully preserved, and undergo several modes of preparation by which they become serviceable for various purposes. It is the same with wool, with flax, and with silk—but the chief utilisation of old materials is the manufacture of new coats-out of old. A Polish Jew, or Italian beggar, is generally considered one of the dirtiest objects with which we can come in contact, yet it is not impossible that some of us may, at this moment, happily unconscious of our fate, be wearing some portion of the cast-off habiliments of a Polish Jew. Coats, trowsers, &c., after having been well worn in England, are shipped off for the German ports, and after having been distributed where most in request, and thoroughly used up as garments, they return to us as woollen rags. They are sorted into qualities, and they then go through a machine called a devil, which tears up the bits of cloth and delivers them out as wool, which undergoes again the various processes of carding, spinning, &c., and being mixed with new wool, again becomes cloth.

It is calculated that at least 45,000,000 lbs. of woollen rags are annually consumed, which is about one-fifth of the whole of the material, new or old, now used in the manufacture of woollen cloth. Twenty-five years ago the price of the woollen rags averaged about £4 4s. per ton, but the present demand for them has raised that price to £44 per ton. When these rags were first introduced, and for some years afterwards, they were only of use if they contained nothing but wool originally. But the demand became so pressing, that the rags of fabrics made of