

Ayres. Some of these were known as Cheviots, tweeds, Scotch fancy suitings, Scotch fingering yarns, etc. In the olden time the finest wool to be obtained in our own country was the English Southdown, excepting, of course, the very fine Saxony wool, which was largely imported into Bradford in the early part of this century. Both English Southdown and Saxony wool had now been supplanted for dress purposes by the enormous imports of colonial and Buenos Ayres wools. There remained, however, one market for Southdown which it was not likely to lose, viz., hosiery, for it possessed an elasticity and a springiness which were not to be found in any other wool. It was principally grown in Sussex, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Shropshire, and Dorset, but the Southdown blood was to be found, in various proportions of admixture, in almost every county in the United Kingdom. There was no doubt that, during the life of the present generation, merino wool had held the most prominent position. It gained largely in popularity at the time when the public was becoming tired of lustrous and hard-haired fabrics, and for twenty-five years it had had the chief command of the market. It was soft to the touch, would take the most solid and the most delicate colors, and was available for the heaviest woollen cloths, the lightest of ladies' dress goods, and the smoothest of linings. By admixture with the well understood Leicester breed it had produced a vast variety of crossbred colonial wool, which was the principal factor in the wool market to-day. With the exception of the pure lustre wool, almost any wool of European growth could be matched from the supplies of colonial crossbreds.

#### THE MANUFACTURE OF SAKAI CARPETS.

The carpet-making industry of Japan is of comparatively recent growth, and the chief seat of the industry at the present day is Sakai, a town about eight miles south of Osaka, and a few are made at the neighboring village of Surmyoshi. Mr. Playfair, First Assistant at H.M. Consulate at Hiogo, in a report to the Foreign Office, states that originally two kinds of carpets were made in Sakai, one the ordinary hand woven, and the other on which designs were afterwards dyed. In the former kind the system employed was practically that now in vogue, while in the second kind a double thread was used in the warp, and it would appear that designs were dyed on the carpet after it had been woven, by some sort of stencilling process. As the colors did not thoroughly penetrate the material, these carpets were apt to quickly fade.

The method of weaving is somewhat similar to that for making velvet, the threads on being tied are cut off, and a "nap" left. Skill in cutting the threads off evenly and rapidly is one of the tests of an efficient worker. The inventor of hand-woven carpets in Japan was Fujimoto Shozayemon, a thread merchant of Sakai. In 1831 he began to make an article known as Hizen mabeshima carpets—also called Sagara—and carpets copied from those made in China. He employed a skilled weaver named Idzumi Rihei, and gave to his goods the name of Sakai dantzu, and sold them in a small shop of his own. Before the opening of the country to foreign trade the business

was a small one, and the quality of the goods very poor. Accordingly the grandson of the original inventor, who is at present one of the leading merchants of Sakai, turned his attention to improving the quality of his wares and seeking a market for them. He did not meet with much success until the Emperor of Japan went to visit the Unebi Mausoleum in February, 1877, on which occasion Fujimoto presented his Imperial Majesty with some of his manufactures. At the first Tokio Exhibition Sakai rugs were shown, they quickly took the public fancy, and since that date have continued to grow in popular estimation. In 1878 Fujimoto exported a few carpets to America and France through foreign merchants. Since then he has been a successful exhibitor at numerous exhibitions at home and abroad. The progress of the trade is shown in the following table:—

Year.	Carpets Exported.	Value (Yen)
1880.....	1,595	2,043
1890.....	27,593	51,048
1891.....	60,811	94,731
1892.....	112,279	177,446
1893.....	203,050	391,989
1894.....	546,091	1,134,073
1895.....	685,536	1,635,902
1896.....	661,732	1,152,177
1897.....	555,878	973,871

The weaving is done in houses all over the town of Sakai and its suburbs, the houses containing from two to four looms worked by three or four children, the superintendent being usually a girl of 17 to 18. The workrooms are frequently rather dark, and in winter very cold. One large packing and sorting warehouse was light and airy, and was fitted with electric light for use after dusk, but no means of heating were employed. In this warehouse there is a press for packing bales. It is worked by hand by means of long levers, but it is hoped that ere long hydraulic pressure may be substituted. The presses used by merchants for packing bales are worked by screws, not levers. The reason why no large factories exist is that, as education is compulsory in Japan, it is difficult to get together a large number of children of school-going age in any one place. Weavers, therefore, set up houses in a district where poor children are numerous, and thus get labor in abundance at their very doors. Parents are allowed to plead poverty as an excuse for not sending their children to school, and freely avail themselves of the privilege, although probably the truth is that when the carpet business is flourishing, and children can earn fair wages, it is found to be more profitable to send them to work than to school. As a natural consequence children in Sakai are numerous but ignorant. To remedy this evil night schools are being established by private enterprise to educate the little workers after their hours of labor are over. The materials employed in carpet making are cotton, wool, silk, and yamamai or wild silkworms' thread, waste silk and jute. The cotton used is chiefly obtained from Osaka. The woollen yarn is chiefly made in Tokio from raw wool imported from Australia, mixed with a certain proportion of wool imported from China, which is much cheaper. Yarn imported from England has also