

encouraging the manufacturing of linen, by fixing penalties on all flax or linen exported."

Fynes Moryson, Secretary of Lord Mountjoy, the Lord Deputy of Ireland under Queen Elizabeth, in his History of Ireland, states, "Ireland yields much flax, which the inhabitants work into yarn, and export the same in great quantities; and of old they had such plenty of linen cloth as the natives used to wear 30 or 40 ells in a shirt, all gathered and wrinkled and washed in saffron, because they never put them off until worn out."

Sir Thomas Wentworth, afterwards created Earl of Strafford, was Lord Deputy of Ireland from 1633 until 1639, under Charles I. He may be said to have been the first to establish the growth of flax extensively in Ireland. In 1640, articles of impeachment were preferred against him, in which it was charged "That flax, being one of the principal and native commodities of Ireland, the said Earl having got great quantities thereof into his hands, and growing on his own lands, did issue out several proclamations prescribing and enjoining the working of flax into yarn and thread, and the ordering of the same in such ways wherein the natives of that kingdom were impracticed and unskillful; and the flax wrought or ordered in other manner than as said proclamation prescribed was seized or employed to the use of him and his agents, and thereby the said Earl did gain in effect the sole sale of that native commodity." To this the Earl replied "that he imported flax seed from the Low Countries, and sold it at first cost to such as desired it, that the linens were not made above a foot broad and the linen yarn wound from many bottoms together; that the flax of the kingdom was not above a foot long, whereas the flax produced from his seed became a yard in length, on the soil fit to bear it; and the people loved such easy works, he set up many looms, made much cloth, and sold it to the loss of some thousands of pounds; but when the state saw the natives would not change their old customs for new and better, the Proclamation was declined; what he did was for the public good, &c." After an investigation, a bill of attainder was passed against the Earl, and he was executed in 1641. Be his crime what it may, there is no doubt but it is to him that Ireland is indebted for introducing the cultivation of flax into that country upon a proper system. The civil wars which soon after broke out checked its progress, however, for a time.

An act was passed in the year 1661, in the reign of Charles II, for granting a subsidy of tonnage upon merchandise imported and exported into or out of Ireland; and by the book of rates settled for payment of the duties, in the same year, linen

yarn was valued at £20 the pack of 400, at six score to the 100, or 10d. per lb.

In 1662, an act was passed "for encouraging Protestant strangers to inhabit and plant in Ireland for the improvement of manufacture." Flax and linen yarn were now considered amongst the materials and principal commodities of the Kingdom.

In 1667, James Butler, Duke of Ormond, obtained from Charles the Second, a prohibition of the importation of linen, &c., from Scotland, and successfully executed his plans of national improvement; and by constant attention, the weight of his own influence, and princely munificence bestowed in aid of the linen manufacture of Ireland, he revived it; he induced people from the Low Countries—France and the Netherlands—who understood the cultivation and manufacture of flax, to come over to Ireland in 1668, and from that time great encouragement was given to manufacture; and such an interest was taken in the matter, that in 1681, spinning linen yarn was fashionable amongst the high classes of farmers in Ireland.

Great numbers of Protestant refugees left France in 1685; some of them went to England and many to Ireland, bringing with them a knowledge of manufacture. In 1696, hemp, flax, linen, thread, and yarn, from Ireland, were admitted duty free into England, and this infused life and spirit into the trade of Ireland, which was found to be of such advantage to the country, that by an order of the Irish House of Commons, in 1697, (in the reign of King William III.) steps were taken to form a society of persons qualified to superintend the linen manufacture and flax business; and they finding the necessity for further information and instruction, "induced other French Protestants to settle in Ireland, to instruct the inhabitants in the manufacture of hemp and linen." The King granted to one of those Colonies of French Protestants, who came to Ireland with Cromelin, in 1700, a patent in which, amongst other regulations, it was directed that £380 should be paid yearly as salaries to several of the Colonists, and £800 as bounty money for linen to be made by them, making a total of £1180 yearly. They improved and encouraged the linen trade of Ireland; they had manufactures and machinery for damasks and figured goods, and many persons were employed by them; by their improvements the Irish soon came to compete with the French and Flemish manufacturers.

To the trustees of the Irish Linen Board, which had been formed under an order of the Irish House of Commons, large sums of money were