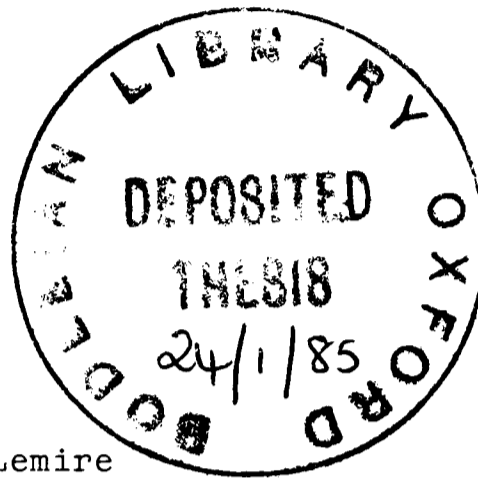


The British Cotton Industry and Domestic Market:  
Trade and Fashion in an Early Industrial Society, 1750-1800

by

Beverly Lemire



Submitted in fulfillment of requirements

for the degree of D.Phil.

Faculty of Modern History

Balliol College

Trinity Term

1984

ABSTRACT

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The British market has until now received little of the credit due it as the chief support of the cotton industry during the final fifty years of the eighteenth century. The manner in which this support was extended involved a restructuring of the economy, as illustrated by a qualitative change in the consumer habits of the population; the advent of a mass consumer society. The demand for cotton textiles was a distillation of many amorphous desires and aspirations that flourished in eighteenth century Britain. This was not a frivolous whim on the part of a small host of women, but a powerful economic force which might be tapped through the female section of the society, but which involved the entire society on a fundamental level. When the fashionable urge was translated into a demand for inexpensive, attractive cottons the industry was tied to one of the most potent commercial forces of that period.

As a result of recent research, historians are coming to recognize a feature of economic development in the last half of the eighteenth century never before sufficiently acknowledged. This quality in the economic life of the nation set it off from all previous eras. During that time an economy developed and prospered that was geared to the profits of popular fashions, produced cheaply and in quantity for the mass market. Never before had a trade developed so quickly, exclusively on popular demand for mass-produced fashionable textiles. The provision of news on current fashions throughout the nation sparked generalized interest in British manufacturers among the middle and working classes. These classes were the basis of the market on which the cotton industry depended for its vitality; it was among these sections of society that the creations of the cotton industry found the great new markets of the eighteenth century. Institutionalized dissemination of fashion information in print; a homogeneity of demand throughout the nation and the ranks of the nation; and the diversification and development of cotton products in response to this demand were the principal characteristics of this economic and social phenomenon.

LONG ABSTRACT

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The eighteenth century British cotton industry attracted the interest of a multitude of modern historians by virtue of its unique development in the latter half of the century. The improvements in the capacity to produce cotton textiles and in the product itself fascinated early historians, as too did the distinctive history of these goods in British trade throughout the world. However the home market remained the pre-eminent one for the cotton industry until shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, after which the enormous sales in North, Central, and South America dwarfed the established British market. Perhaps it was the awe-inspiring foreign sales in the nineteenth century that led later researchers to dwell almost exclusively on this aspect of the trade. Whatever the reason for this imbalance it still remains. The intent of this thesis is to redress the imbalance and examine various aspects of the trade and consumption of Lancashire goods in later eighteenth century Britain. The focus of investigation of the cotton industry has concentrated in the main on the technological and industrial developments, business histories, and the markets abroad for the cotton products.<sup>1</sup> More recently S.D. Chapman

- 
1. This is a partial bibliography representative of the major studies of the eighteenth century cotton industry in Britain.  
George M. Daniels, The Early English Cotton Industry. (1920).  
George Unwin, Samuel Oldknow and the Arkwrights. (1924).  
A.P. Wadsworth & Julia de Lacy Mann, The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780. (1931).  
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S.D. Chapman, The Early Factory Masters. (1967).  
"The Transition to the Factory System in the Midlands Cotton-Spinning Industry" Economic History Review, 2nd series, vol. xviii, 1965.  
M.M. Edwards, The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815. (1967).  
S.D. Chapman & S. Chassagne, European Textile Printers in the Eighteenth Century. (1981).

examined the affiliated printing trade that prospered in conjunction with the cotton industry and a portion of this work dealt with the home market for printed textiles. However there remain many crucial features of the cotton industry and its domestic market yet to be examined.

The cotton industry grew up in conjunction with very novel economic and social conditions in Britain. The home market provided a rich and sheltered environment in which to grow and it is the interrelationship of the two elements, the affluent, changing British society and one of the newest additions to British industry, that forms the basis of this study.

The demands and requirements of the indigenous population shaped the rate and specific areas of growth in the cotton industry. The industry, in turn, through the development and proliferation of its products, irrevocably altered the dress and habits of consumption of much of the population. The purpose of this work is to provide a clearer and more comprehensive appreciation of the major areas of change and development in the cotton industry in response to the economic pressures of the home market. At the same time there must be a complementary analysis of the factors within Britain that accelerated the trading vigour of the first mechanized industry.

Achievement of these goals depended on the discovery and correlation of a variety of late eighteenth century records indicative of industrial, retail and consumer practices. According to popular dogma these sources were, at best, scarce and at worst nonexistent. However in this case popular wisdom was wrong, though not to the degree that made the puzzling out of this topic very easy. It must be acknowledged at the outset that there were not boundless caches of surviving records pertaining to this topic. Some might even query whether the available documentation was sufficiently representative. Certainly there was not a generous supply of documentation; some years were sparsely represented while other periods were blessed with an embarrassment of documentation. However within

the collected core of source material can be observed threads linking producer to wholesaler, and consumer to retailer, resulting ultimately in a closely interwoven collection of records, with the documentation of one frequently overlapping that of another. A cohesive representation of the industry, the marketing, and the consumers finally emerged.

One of the largest and most versatile collections of records were found in the published Beekman Mercantile Papers:<sup>1</sup> illustrative of the trading and commercial life of a New York family from the mid-eighteenth century into the nineteenth century. Supplemented by unpublished invoices from the Beekman collection in New York, these were invaluable records of trends in the British textile trade. Beekman's British suppliers, in turn, appeared in two other major documentary sources, the company records of J. & N. Philips and the day book of sales of an unknown Manchester firm. The latter source covered a crucial period of the cotton industry during the 1770's. The pages of the day book were rich in information on producers, wholesalers, and ordinary consumers. New products appeared in these pages as too did recognizable trends in distribution and consumption. In conjunction, the Dent shopkeeping records, the Thomas invoices, and the Morgan draper's ledger revealed important features of the retailing of cottons, of the activities of the wholesalers and manufacturers, and the requirements of consumers. A surprising number of small document collections from that period supplemented the larger groups mentioned above. The surviving records from Joseph Harper, of Hinckley, is one example. A memo book from the 1750's and a ledger from nearly twenty years earlier are all that remains of this tradesman's business. Despite the fact that the earlier records pre-date the major boundaries of this study, the relevant information contained therein justified their inclusion. Occasionally borders must be extended both to utilize pertinent material and to clarify factors influential to the topic at hand.

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1. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vols. 1-3, ed. Philip L. White, (1956).

In addition to the major documentary sources there was an abundance of related contemporary records that added detail to the economic phenomenon of the new consumerism and the cotton industry. The profusion of subsidiary documentation can hardly be wondered at for the advent of fashions for the mass market pre-occupied the nation, giving modern historians the benefit of the writings of either critics or champions of the new forms of consumerism. Among the millions of active consumers of the period some necessarily left records of their activities that have survived to this day, either in official papers such as those of the Old Bailey, or in personal notes like those of Barbara Johnson. The sum of these individual records is a vivid chronicle of social and economic innovation that inaugurated a new consumer society and stimulated a new industrial age.

It was vital to this study to trace the development of consumer demand for cotton textiles. But the nature of the documentation required an oblique line of attack. No neat figures illustrating changing national or regional levels of consumption could be brought forward. The topic, nevertheless, received thorough treatment, though few aspects could be measured with precision. However specific trends were both discovered and defined, resulting in a clearer understanding of the rate of demand over this period.

The succeeding section deals with the competition for dominance in the home market among the woollens, linen, East Indian, and cotton textiles. The competitive activities of the wool industry takes place over the length of the century as the industrial capacity of the cotton industry alters. The fact that some features of this topic have been touched upon ought not to preclude a comprehensive assessment of the topic. The competition of the three textiles with the cotton industry ranges over varying periods of time. The wool trade felt the instant pressures of foreign cottons early in the century, and the antagonism felt towards the cotton industry persisted to the end; the period of competition between linens and cottons

occurred with brief, but devastating effect between 1760 and 1790; while the East Indian cottons remained a constant source both of inspiration and irritation to the British cotton manufacturers up to the close of the century. All three of these studies enrich the appreciation of the commercial intricacies of the home market during the growth of the cotton industry. But in particular, the relevance of conducting this enquiry is borne out in a unique discovery, the turning point in the competition between linen and cotton, which also became the point of ascendancy of the cotton industry.

The distribution of British cottons involved the re-ordering of traditional textile customs and practices. New modes were established, altered and improved over the term of this study and a previously dark area of inland trade illuminated. The importance of road transportation in this inland trade was identified; so too was the homogeneity of distribution over the whole of the British market. The proliferation of middlemen both in London and Manchester attests to the volume of trade involved. Included in this work were examinations and assessments of the range, rate and efficacy of the domestic cotton trade, as well as an examination of Manchester's role, challenging London as the distributive hub of the cotton industry.

The final chapter traced the growing public pre-occupation with fashion. This ripple grew into a major economic current that reshaped the direction of Britain's consumer industries, one of which was cotton. As the demand for novel, stylish and easily replaceable cotton textiles grew there were further innovations - the most notable being the development of a ready-made clothing industry affiliated with the cotton industry. For the first time manufacturers could tap the popular urge to present a fashionable appearance. The qualities of the cotton textiles produced were geared for a mass market. The manufacturers aspired to emulate the whirlwind success of Indian calicos and chintz a century earlier and in this they

succeeded beyond even their expectations. For in the interim the most crucial affiliate of popular fashions had developed, that is the dissemination of news and information about fashions through printed media. So generally pervasive were these newspapers, journals, and magazines that few would have escaped their influence. The cotton industry thrived in the provision of inexpensive textiles that could be replaced yearly with little or no financial inconvenience as the exigencies of popular fashion demanded.

The relationship between the cotton industry and the home market that developed in the last half of the eighteenth century grew out of the preceived needs of the population for new sorts of fabrics not available through established sources of supply. The economic imperatives produced by this demand helped shape a new British society in an industrial age and as such is deserving of the attention awarded here. The individual sources seemingly lent themselves only to a micro-economic study of the topic, but the interlinking parts of the industrial, commercial and consumer life of eighteenth century Britain yielded a portrait of major national trends in the production, demand and sale of British-made cottons in the nascent industrial society.

### Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to the Association of Commonwealth Universities for their generous financial support over the past three years. Many mundane financial concerns were eliminated as a result of the funds forthcoming from this body. Balliol College also receives my thanks for timely incidental sums allotted me during my time in Oxford.

My academic debts are many. I am very grateful to my supervisor Dr. Stanley Chapman for his instructive supervision over the last year of work on the production of this thesis. Both his suggestions and his criticisms were immeasurably constructive. I also thank Prof. Peter Mathias for his supervision of the initial processes of my research. Balliol College provided not only financial help but personal support and encouragement: my particular thanks to Mr. John Prest, of Balliol College for his assistance.

The research for this thesis involved travel and investigation in many centres round the country and I thank the staff in the libraries and record offices for their efficient assistance but in particular the Bodleian Library. I am also especially grateful to Mrs. Madeleine Ginsburg, of the Textile Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, for the time and assistance so generously given. As well to Dr. Margaret Spufford, Newnham College, Cambridge, my thanks for the lengthy response to questions posed.

Research work of this duration invariably places demands on all members of a family, without whose whole hearted support progress would necessarily be curtailed. My deepest personal thanks go to my husband Morris and daughter Shannon.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Introduction</u>	1 - 5
 <u>Chapter I</u>	
The British Market for Cotton Textiles and Clothing: A Study of Domestic Demand and Consumption of British- made Cottons, 1750-1800	6 - 69
 <u>Chapter II</u>	
The Struggle for Pre-eminance in the Eighteenth Century British Textile Market	70 - 151
 <u>Chapter III</u>	
The Transformation and Distribution of British Cottons Throughout the Home Market, 1750-1800	152 - 207
 <u>Chapter IV</u>	
Developing Consumerism and the Cotton Industry: The Popularization of Fashion and the Growth of A Ready-made Clothes Trade in Britain, 1750-1800	208 - 254
 <u>Conclusion</u>	 255 - 261
 <u>Appendices</u>	
I        Varieties and Prices of Linen and Cotton Yard Wide 1753-64	262
II        Organization of Textiles by Price 1775-85	263 - 265
III       Comparison of Prices of Cotton and Linen 1753-84	266
IV        Imports of Flax and Yarn	267
V        Account of Seizures of East India Textiles	268
VI        Imports of East India Textiles	269
VII       Barbara Johnson Clothing	270
VIII      Catalogue of Joseph Harper's Journeys	271 - 272
IX        Elizabeth Atkinson's Purchases	273
X        Destinations and Customers of Manchester Firm	274 - 276
XI        Orders of Kettle and Mandeville	277 - 282
XII       Orders Sent by Coach	283 - 285
XIII      James Gee's Orders	286
Tradecards 1 - 6	287 - 292
Illustrations 1 - 3	293 - 295
Bibliography	296 - 302

## INTRODUCTION

The eighteenth century British cotton industry attracted the interest of a multitude of modern historians by virtue of its unique development in the latter half of the century. The improvements in the capacity to produce cotton textiles and in the product itself fascinated early historians, as too did the distinctive history of these goods in British trade throughout the world. However the home market remained the pre-eminent one for the cotton industry until shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, after which the enormous sales in North, Central, and South America dwarfed the established British market. The focus of investigation of the cotton industry has concentrated in the main on the technological and industrial developments, business histories, and the markets abroad for the cotton products.<sup>1</sup> More recently S.D. Chapman examined the affiliated printing trade that prospered in conjunction with the cotton industry and a portion of this work dealt with the home market for printed textiles. However there remain many crucial features of the cotton industry and its domestic market, and the interrelationship of the two yet to be examined.

The cotton industry grew up in conjunction with very novel economic and social conditions in Britain. The home market provided a rich and

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 R.S. Fittion & A.P. Wadsworth, The Strutts and the Arkwrights, (1958).  
 C. Aspin & S.D. Chapman, James Hargreaves and the Spinning-Jenny, (1964).  
 S.D. Chapman, The Early Factory Masters, (1967).  
 M.M. Edwards, The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815, (1967).  
 the latter deals with some aspects of the home market, though most of his attention to market remains with foreign trade.  
 S.P. Chapman & S. Chassagne, European Textile Printers in the Eighteenth Century, (1981). This is but a partial bibliography representative of the major studies of the eighteenth century cotton industries.

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The demands and requirements of the indigenous population shaped the rate and specific areas of growth in the cotton industry. The industry in turn, through the development and proliferation of its products, irrevocably altered the dress and habits of consumption of much of the population. The purpose of this work is to provide a clearer and more comprehensive appreciation of the major areas of change and development in the cotton industry in response to the economic pressures of the home market. At the same time there must be a complementary analysis of the factors within Britain that accelerated the trading vigour of the first mechanized industry

Achievement of these goals depended on the discovery and correlation of a variety of late eighteenth century records indicative of industrial, retail and consumer practices. According to academic orthodoxy these sources were, at best, scarce and at worst highly dispersed. However in this case the received wisdom was wrong, though not to the degree that made the puzzling out of this topic very easy. It must be acknowledged at the outset that there were no boundless caches of surviving records pertaining to this topic. Some might even query whether the available documentation was sufficiently representative. Certainly there was not a generous supply of documentation; some years were sparsely represented while other periods were blessed with an embarrassment of documentation. However within the collected core of source material can be observed threads linking producer to wholesaler, consumer to retailer, resulting ultimately in a closely interwoven collection of records, with the documentation of one frequently overlapping that of another. A cohesive representation of the industry, the marketing and the consumers finally emerged.

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In addition to the major documentary sources there was an abundance of related contemporary records that added detail to the economic phenomenon of the new consumerism and the cotton industry. The profusion of subsidiary documentation can hardly be wondered at for the advent of fashions for the mass market pre-occupied the nation giving modern historians the benefit of the writings of either critics or champions of the new forms of consumerism. Among the millions of active consumers of the period some necessarily left records of their activities that have survived to this day, either in official papers such as those of the Old Bailey, or in personal notes like those of Barbara Johnson. The sum of these individual records is a vivid chronicle of social and economic innovations that inaugurated a new consumer society and stimulated a new industrial age.

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It was vital to this study to trace the development of consumer demand for cotton textiles. But the nature of the documentation required an oblique line of attack. No neat figures illustrating changing national or regional levels of consumption could be brought forward. The topic, nevertheless, received thorough treatment, though few aspects could be measured with precision. However specific trends were both discovered and defined, resulting in a clearer understanding of the rate of change of demand over this period.

The succeeding section deals with the competition for dominance in the home market among the woollen, linen and cotton textiles. Some well known areas of cotton history are reviewed, but within the context of a theme that until now had never received the study deserved by this important topic. The relevance of conducting this enquiry is borne out in a unique discovery, the turning point in the competition between linen and cotton, which also became the point of ascendancy of the cotton industry.

The distribution of British cottons involved the re-ordering of traditional textile customs and practices. New modes were established, altered and improved over the term of this study and a previously dark area of inland trade illuminated. Included in this work are examinations and assessments of the range, rate and efficacy of the domestic cotton trade, as well as an examination of Manchester's role, challenging London as the distributive hub of the cotton industry.

The final chapter traces the growing public pre-occupation with fashion. This ripple grew into a major economic current that reshaped the direction of Britain's consumer industries, one of which was cotton. As the demand for novel, stylish and easily replaceable cotton textiles grew there were further innovations - the most notable being the development of a ready-made clothing industry affiliated with the cotton industry. The cotton industry thrived in the provision of inexpensive textiles that could be replaced yearly with little or no financial inconvenience as the exigencies

of popular fashion demanded.

The relationship between the cotton industry and the home market that developed in the last half of the eighteenth century was critical to the history of both. The cotton industry grew out of the perceived needs of the population for new sorts of fabrics not available through established sources of supply. The economic imperatives produced by this demand helped shape a new British society in an industrial age and as such is deserving of the attention awarded here. The individual sources seemingly lent themselves only to a micro-economic study of the topic, but the interlinking parts of the industrial, commercial and consumer life of eighteenth century Britain yielded a portrait of major national trends in the production, demand and sale of British-made cottons in the nascent industrial society.

The home market for cotton textiles in the second half of the eighteenth century has long been accorded the importance due it without, in fact, great attention being spent on its study. Throughout the eighteenth century the British home market provided an environment which both protected and succoured the nascent cotton industry. The importance of the home market in the development of this trade has been acknowledged by most historians. M.M. Edwards granted that the "stable base" rendered a service to the trade as it remained "less volatile, subject to fewer crises, and was considerably easier to serve" than was the export market.<sup>1</sup> The domestic market remains to be studied in detail; both the demand for cotton goods and fabrics, the range of goods produced for the home market, and the specific markets served by the progressively expanding industry.

#### i The Character of the British Home Market

Any discussion of the domestic demand and consumption of cottons in Britain during the early years of the industrial revolution necessitates a broad assessment of the chief economic characteristics of the society during this period. In undertaking such a task, reliance must be placed on the historians who, over the past fifty years, have endeavoured to identify and explain the governing economic and social features within Britain which propelled that nation from agricultural dependency to industrial pre-eminence. Historical fashions as with those in every other area of endeavour have favoured one then another school of analysis, pitting humanist against empiricist, optimist against pessimist. However if academic contention has fostered greater intensity of study it can only have profited the history of the British industrial revolution overall. The principal purpose of this chapter is to determine the importance of home demand for the cotton industry, to examine in detail the response of the industry to the demand, concluding with an appraisal of the individual and group

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1. M.M. Edwards, The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815, (Manchester University Press, 1967), p.27.

components of the market with an analysis of the manner in which the fabrics were used and worn, providing, with specific exemplification, all the elements of the national demand for cottons.

The discussion of domestic demand begins with an appraisal of eighteenth century British society as best it can be defined from a distance of two centuries. The eighteenth century British economy has come under close, intensive scrutiny over the past several years. Fundamental factors such as population structure, aggregate real wages, and domestic demand and consumption have received painstaking measurement and revision. The several re-appraisals of the basic components of the eighteenth century, poised at the juncture between pre-industrial and industrial eras, provide this segment with a large part of the theoretical bulwarks for the study of demand and consumption of British-made cottons. This period of history has tantalized and confounded many historians. Less than ten generations have passed since the first trades were industrialized, linking this era to modern times through a strong thread of common experience. But the absence of abundant, comprehensive records compels historians of that period to acknowledge the ever-present limitations in all quantitative economic analysis. In spite of these exigencies, or perhaps because of the difficulties, enormous efforts have been made to discern the structures of that society.

The population of England, upon which the cotton industry depended so heavily for the consumption of its textiles, has received extensive re-examination. The earlier estimates of Gregory King and the nineteenth century director of the British census, John Rickman, as well as later historians have had their projections of population size and demographic activity subjected to minute examination and re-evaluation with the aid of quantitative analysis and the computer counting of a multitude of baptisms and burials listed in over four hundred parish registers. The enormous task undertaken by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure ultimately provided all historians of the eighteenth century with much more

accurate and representative estimates of population size, structure and rate of growth than has hitherto been available. The Population History of England by E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield reveals both the size and principal demographic characteristics of this body. According to the calculations of this team the last half of the eighteenth century witnessed a slow but steady rise in the nation's population, beginning about the 1730's. The expanding birth rate reshaped the structure of society, leading to the highest proportion of young dependents to adults yet seen. The following table summarizes the movement of population size in England over the century using the data obtained from Wrigley and Schofield's estimates distilled from the parish registers across England.

Table 1:1

Estimates of Population for England, 1701-1801  
(in millions)

1701 ..... 5.058	1761 ..... 6.147
1711 ..... 5.230	1771 ..... 6.448
1721 ..... 5.350	1781 ..... 7.042
1731 ..... 5.263	1791 ..... 7.740
1741 ..... 5.576	1801 ..... 8.664
1751 ..... 5.772	

1

The continuous, sustained rise in population was unprecedented. Moreover the increase depended on the steady acceleration of the birth rate for its impetus, rather than a drastic decline in the death rate. Thus this demographic anomaly reshaped the features of the English nation, with each new generation continuing in the early child-bearing practices of their parents, adding larger contingents of babies, children and adolescents to the society with each decade.

One of the most crucial of the repercussions felt as a result of the increase was pressure on the level of real wages. Up until the 1750's the rate of real wages had risen steadily as a by-product of expanding agriculture and vigorous commerce in conjunction with a low birth rate. Within

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1. E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, The Population History of England, 1591-1871, (Cambridge University Press, 1981), Appendix 5, p.577.

the first fifty years of the eighteenth century standards of living had improved generally and with this expectations were established that carried through into the second half of the century where substantially new conditions prevailed. However only in hind sight can the gradual alterations in the shape of society be so specifically perceived. For both parents and children, starting new families and raising children between 1750 and 1800, their past experience was of more and more varieties of affordable consumer goods and a greater prosperity than had been enjoyed within living memory. The atmosphere was one of vitality and hope for continued plenty. No figures better reflect this national conviction than the age of first marriages, as determined by Wrigley and Schofield. Eighteenth century marriages were life contracts, and as such concerned both sets of parents as well as the man and woman directly involved. Marriage could be entered into only when the couple between them had sufficient resources to support a household independent of the parents. Times of hardship, of famine or unemployment always witnessed a corresponding falling off of marriages; while in times of abundance marriages occurred more frequently and at an earlier age.<sup>1</sup> This social contract, common throughout the breadth of England and in all classes, provides a barometer of national expectations. Wrigley and Schofield have aptly observed that "Precisely because marriages last for a long time it is not simply short-term prospects that affect marriage decisions but an appreciation of the probable course of events over half

#### ERRATUM

-bottom page 9/top page 10 should read:

...as long as the population increase did not exceed 0.5 per cent annually. Once that rate of increase was exceeded a corresponding drop in real-wages ensued. ...

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It is indisputable that in the face of the growth in population pressure on real wages was intensified. There had always existed a delicate balance, typical of an agrarian society, that allowed the level of real wages to remain stable or even rise slightly, as long as the population increase did not

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1. Wrigley and Schofield, p. 421.

2. Ibid, p. 421.

a corresponding drop in real-wages ensued.<sup>1</sup> However, though this cycle of action and reaction came into play shortly into the second half of the century the trend to earlier marriages persisted. Table 2:2 below charts the progressive drop in the age of first marriage.

Table 2:2

Age of First Marriage through the Eighteenth Century

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	
1700-24	27.3	25.8	
1725-49	26.9	25.6	
1750-74	26.2	24.7	
1775-99	25.9	24.1	2

The continuing decline in the age of first marriage, from 1750 to 1800 of one year for men and nearly one and a half years for women argues strongly that expectations remained high among much of the populace. This common judgement on the anticipated prospects to be found within the society must be considered when assessing that economy. Whatever the apparent decline in economic conditions, the reality encouraged contemporary men and women to marry younger with each succeeding generation and to have more children. W.A. Cole speculated that "rising expectations may have been engendered by the increasing real wages of the first few decades of the century."<sup>3</sup> The progressive drop in the age of marriage suggests that expectations were indeed high, higher in fact than many pessimistic historians would deem wise. However the broadest popular expectations as reflected in the rising birth rate were fulfilled. For if, as T.S. Ashton asserted, "the central problem of the age was how to feed and clothe and employ generations of children out numbering by far those of any earlier time",<sup>4</sup> then Britain was ultimately successful. Moreover the cotton industry played a significant

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1. Wrigley and Schofield, p. 421.

2. Ibid, p. 424.

3. W.A. Cole, "Factors in demand, 1700-80" The Economic History of Britain Since 1700, eds. Roderick Floud & Donald McCloskey, vol. I, (Cambridge University Press, 1981, p.58).

4. T.S. Ashton, The Industrial Revolution, 1760-1830, (Oxford University Press, 1948, reprinted 1975), p.161.

part in justifying the high hopes of the population. Any examination or interpretation of the economy must note in the equation the incalculable influence that the hoped for continued prosperity exerted on the subsequent workings of the economy and the people who laboured within it.

According to all calculations the pressures of population halted the rise in real wages early in the last half of the century. Shortly thereafter, contend Wrigley and Schofield, there was a decline in real wages. However these researchers then perceived a unique economic feature that emerged from their study. In spite of the demands placed upon the level of real wages by a growing population and an expanding labour supply, around the last decade of the century the typical response of an agrarian society was no longer mirrored in the levels of real wages. Wrigley and Schofield summed up this unique departure in the functioning of the economy.

Until the radical change at the end of the eighteenth century rapid population growth, at a rate of 0.5 per cent per annum or more, entailed falling real wages, whereas period of slight population growth or population decline were associated with rising real wages. Towards the end of the eighteenth, however, although population was growing at more than 1 per cent per annum, and significantly faster than at any earlier period, real wages, which had been falling sharply, recovered and began to rise also, reaching a rate of growth higher than any previously experienced in spite of the rapidity of population growth. For the first time since land was fully settled swiftly rising numbers proved consonant with rising wages. The meaning of the industrial revolution is visible in the figure.

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The evidence on the declining age of first marriage provided impressive though dumb testimony to the vigour of the British economy as perceived by the men and women of the period. The Wrigley and Schofield-led team discerned a major social phenomenon reflective of the general economic status of the nation. This consensus offered some contradiction to a pessimistic hypothesis on the movement of real wages throughout this period. The two

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1. Wrigley & Schofield, p. 409. (my emphasis)

inconsistent findings confronted each other within the same volume, the one a product of recent revisions of the demographic history of England and the other based on the existing tables of wage rates which were then correlated to the new findings on population. Only with the subsequent publication of new research on the levels of real wages could the two apparently contradictory assessments be reconciled, as shall be shown. First, though, it must be averred that a blanket assertion of declining real wages discounts many additional influences on the earning capacity of the nation's families. One can only conjecture as to all the possible local influences individual trades would have exerted. Indeed average national indicators hide the highs and lows of regional economies. It is essential to recognize that when speculating on the movement and effect of the level of real wages "it is ultimately impossible to accommodate the complexity of historical experience within the straight jacket of any single economic model."<sup>1</sup> Thus an appraisal must recognize the other influences that affected family income and the state of the home market.

Significantly the most recent examination of wage rates and cost of living fluctuations discounts the formerly strongly held pessimistic assertions about the lot of the common working man in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Peter Lindert and Jeffrey Williamson have substantially revised the wage scale developed by Phelps Brown and Hopkins, which Wrigley and Schofield had used in their recent volume, though with some reservations.<sup>2</sup> Lindert and Williamson's paper "mines an expanded data base and emerges with a far clearer picture of worker's fortunes from 1750."<sup>3</sup> As such their

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1. Cole, p. 63.

2. Wrigley & Schofield commented, p. 407, The Population History of England with reference to the Phelps, Brown & Hopkins tables of wage data that their reservations arose because of the narrow range of trades used as a data base and the problems that resulted when these figures were extrapolated with the existing cost of living statistics.

3. Peter, H. Lindert & Jeffrey G. Williamson, "English Worker's Living Standards during the Industrial Revolution: A New Look", Economic History Review, 2nd series, vol. XXXVI, no. 1, 1983, p.1.

work is of great importance to this study, providing more comprehensive tabulations of wages based on a broad spectrum of trades more nearly representative of eighteenth century employment. In fact this investigation provides intelligible economic rationales for the unprecedented social movement within the population towards early marriage. Trends in real earnings among adult males were found to have suffered post-1750 from the effects of population increase. However it is possible, for the first time, to observe a differentiated influence between five representative working groups. The middle group of earners, along with the white collar workers suffered comparatively little from declining real wages, while artisans experienced the biggest drop. All of the five groups, farm labourers, middle group, artisans, blue collar, and white collar workers, experienced the effects of declining real wages at that time. Farm and non-farm labourers among these groups gained ground against the other sectors before 1800.<sup>1</sup> But these assessments mean little without an appreciation of the broad levels of earnings of these sectors of workers, for a comparable percentage drop in real wages would have more stringent effects on the unskilled labourer earning twenty pounds per year than a city clerk earning sixty-three pounds annually.

Along with the more accurate assessments of real wage movement, Lindert and Williamson have also computed the most detailed chart to date of estimated earnings for a total of eighteen sectors of employed adult males. The wage rates have been augmented with representation from many other areas than the Phelps Brown & Hopkins building trades, including the estimated annual earnings of those employed in service industries, a vital, expanding sector in the eighteenth century hitherto unrepresented in any wage scale. Beginning in 1755 three estimates of wages for the eighteen occupational

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1. Lindert & Williamson, pp. 7, 13.

groups were provided. These yield the widest range of estimated wage rates for the period and from these can be deduced the most likely social levels for expanding consumption. It has been suggested that the impetus for consumer demand arose from the households around the country who enjoyed an income of £50 per annum; from these households, it was conjectured, came the steady expenditures that fueled domestic consumption.<sup>1</sup> This "middle class of consumer" were critical "in the emergence, and maintenance of a large domestic market for mass-produced consumer goods".<sup>2</sup> Other historians contend that the likely income groups able to participate in expanded consumption were lower than the £50 guideline suggested by Eversley.<sup>3</sup> Lindert and Williamson have provided a framework from which can be determined the areas of male adult employment likely to have been able to sustain increased levels of consumption throughout this period. In 1755 six areas of employment had estimated earnings of £50 or over and six areas of work with over £30 income. In 1781 eight groups earned over £50 and six over £30; 1797 saw ten areas of employment earning over £50 with several earning substantially over, and seven with estimated earnings of over £30.<sup>4</sup> By 1797 only one group failed to reach the £30 mark.<sup>4</sup>

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1. D.E.C. Eversley, "The home Market and Economic Growth in England, 1750-80" Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution, eds. E.L. Jones and G.E. Mingay, (London, Edward Arnold, 1967) pp. 206-259.
  2. Eversley, pp. 210-11.
  3. Neil McKendrick, "Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution" Historical Perspectives, ed. Neil McKendrick (London, Europe Publication, 1974), pp. 172-3.
  4. Lindert & Williamson, p.4.

Historians of England's industrial revolution have had to grapple with the question of how the burgeoning industries affected the lives of those labouring in mills and factories, for better or worse. This is a crucial question in the study of the home market for British-made cottons, for a general immiseration of those employed by the new industries, as well as others working in the newly industrialized society, would have eliminated from the roll of consumers those supported by the mechanized industries in the position to acquire some of the fruits of these trades. In fact the neighbourhood which boasted the presence of a mill also boasted some of the highest real wages rates.<sup>1</sup> Moreover as the attraction of high wages drew local labour in from agriculture to factory, local landowners and other employers were eventually obliged to offer sufficient financial inducement to retain their workers. In so doing they helped create a high wage enclave throughout the industrial region.

Britain was a patchwork of varying wage rates. Within any one region the range of work available and the remuneration provided produced ascending scales of earnings. London wages, for example, were one third above those in next-door Kent, while in both regions craftsmen earned almost fifty per cent more than labourers. The north and midlands offered higher wages than southern Britain. Understandably internal migration favoured the northern and midland areas where new skills could command comparatively substantial rewards.<sup>2</sup> The absence of any migration away from the developing industrial centres suggests that those who laboured in mills and workrooms and potteries found

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1. Wrigley & Schofield, p. 451.

2. Gilboy, quoted in P.K. O'Brien & S.L. Engerman, "Changes in income and distribution" The Economic History of Britain since 1700, vol.I, eds., R. Floud & D. McCloskey, (Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 167-8.

compensation in the wages paid them sufficient to endure the often deplorable conditions.

The quality of life of the labouring classes during the early years of the industrial revolution has pre-occupied many generations of historians. Some have been convinced of the wholesale devastation of the working classes inherent in the early years of industrialized production, a deteriorating life style common throughout the labouring masses. The decline in real wages might at first glance seem to bear out this interpretation. However with the research of Lindert and Williamson this hypothesis has been refuted. The common labourer achieved wage gains raising his standard of earnings against those of skilled workers. Moreover in any discussion of incomes it must be noted that cash payments commonly comprised only a portion of the payment for work undertaken. Traditional perquisites accompanied most occupations throughout this period. The domestic servant received used clothing from master or mistress while those employed in the kitchen would have had food stuffs to supplement their incomes. Payments in kind, whether clothing, food or the use of a piece of land constituted an unrecorded source of income over and above cash received. Moreover these additions would have mitigated, to some extent, rising prices or declining real wages. The gardens cultivated around cottages, for instance, raised many farm labourers' families from the subsistence level, whereby vegetables, corn or livestock produced on the adjacent land could be used by the family or sold for profit.<sup>1</sup>

Another simple strategy to compensate for the drop in real wages was to work for longer hours in preference to greater leisure and diminished income. The newly mechanized trades, by their very nature,

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1. Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850, (London, 1930, reprinted Virago Press, 1981), pp. 21-1.

involved longer regularized hours of work of from twelve to sixteen hours for six days a week with no optional Saint Monday holiday. It has been accepted that greater effort and longer hours were features of much of the employment of this period. O'Brien and Engerman described this as "an increased labour output in the market sector" equating the increase in hours worked with a correspondingly greater demand for goods in the home market. They have further related that the

debates on the standard of living and on the causes of the industrial revolution have been intertwined. A pessimistic position on the former, since it presumes inadequate domestic demand, is consistent with an emphasis placed upon the role of foreign markets in generating growth. Recent work on foreign trade patterns and upon the sources of demand, demonstrates, however, that the home market was a major factor in the demand for increased production, and that the home market must have accounted for much of the increase in output demand in this period. 1

While the reshaping of work patterns during the industrial revolution contributed substantially to the maintenance of incomes and so to the demand for consumer goods, there were additional fundamental alterations in the structure and composition of wage-labour during this period. The salaried employment of women and children was an important feature of the time. Neither of these groups had existed in idleness prior to this. However their work and any payments attached were either very small or dependent upon the policy or whim of the fathers, husbands or landowners upon whom they depended, and for whom they laboured. Children had always had to make some contribution to family income. Those apprenticed as farm servants worked side by side with women servants, driving cattle to the field, shovelling dung, digging potatoes or even ploughing the fields. Children were deemed able to tackle these jobs at the age of ten.<sup>2</sup> Children of

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1. O'Brien & Engerman, p. 178.

2. Pinchbeck, p. 17.

cottagers might in addition be employed weeding, scaring birds, minding younger children or berry picking along the hedgerows, while in every case wives worked all hours necessary to feed and clothe the family. The common element of most of these sorts of work was the lack of cash payments, without which this enormous section of the population would be forever outside the mainstream of consumers. This dependent economic position barred them from any positive contribution to demand for consumer goods aside from the basic necessities of life. While this situation persisted the home market was substantially diminished.

Women and children began participating in the wage economy in earnest with the proliferation of the domestic putting-out system of textile production. Even in the decades of mid-century, prior to the technological innovation in the cotton trade the domestic system enabled women and children to contribute cash earnings to the family income. Early in the eighteenth century Defoe drew a vivid contrast between the lot of the agricultural labourer's family, dependent on one weekly income of twelve shillings and the family dwelling in a textile manufacturing district. Here the father's income was matched by that of the family. The wife would spin as too would the older daughters, while the smaller children worked for the weaver winding weft and performing other tasks for a small sum. The benefits of this system of work, as Defoe described it, were that "they all feed better, are cloth'd warmer, and do not so easily fall into Misery and Distress". Defoe emphasized the particular affect that the salaried working women had on the consumption of goods, stating that whereas "the Father gets the Food,...the Mother gets them Clothes".<sup>1</sup>

By 1750 the expansion of the cotton industry led to a larger

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1. Daniel Defoe, A Plan of the English Commerce, (1728, reprinted Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1927), p.69.

recruitment of women for spinning, as well as auxilliary occupations. The recorded imports of raw cotton provide an indication of the growing numbers of women now working to produce the yarn, as well as the increasing numbers now more able to participate as consumers in the home market. (See Table 1:4, p.44). The volume of cotton imported may appear insubstantial in comparison to the imports of the later machine spinning era. However when viewed as a reflection of manual spinning hours the contribution of women to this trade becomes apparent as does the projected earnings of these spinners. Imports of raw cotton were calculated at 2,325,000 pounds in 1746 and reached 6,687,000 pounds in 1766.<sup>1</sup> Along with the advance in cotton imports was a parallel move in the ability of these families to participate in the developing consumer society.

Children were put to useful work at a very early age under the domestic system of production. One of the earliest recollections of Samuel Crompton was being stood up in a washing tub of soapy water with layers of cotton battens under his feet, which he was to wash as he trod on them.<sup>2</sup> William Radcliffe wrote that his mother "taught me to earn my bread by carding and spinning cotton, winding linen or cotton weft for my father and elder brothers at the loom, until I became of sufficient age and strength for my father to put me into a loom."<sup>3</sup> Thus even prior to the advent of spinning mills the steady development of the cotton trade helped support the large new generations of children. Conversely older trades, such as button-making were by 1761 dominated almost entirely by women and children. In Dorset over four thousand women and children worked making many sorts of shirt buttons. The

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1. Elizabeth Schumpeter, English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697-1808, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 62.

2. Pinchbeck, p. 113.

3. William Radcliffe, A History of Power Loom Weaving, p. 9-10, quoted in Pinchbeck, p.113.

best workers received ten to twelve shillings while an average worker earned from six to seven shillings.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of the expansion of consumer industries, both new and old, lay in the additional and independent sums paid women and children. This point has been dealt with in detail by Neil McKendrick in his essay "Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution".<sup>2</sup> The prosperity of the cotton industry and of the many other trades which began to flourish in the latter half of the century, depended on the health of consumer demand for mass-produced fashionable items. Demand for these goods in turn, enabled a new segment of society to find paid employment and participate themselves as buyers in the market place.

The opening of spinning mills, the expansion of the potteries and the proliferation of workrooms devoted to the production of ornamental smallwares presented the opportunity for employment of a profoundly new type. First, though the hours were long the salaries obtained were far in excess of the two and a half shillings which was the average earned by a cottage spinster. Secondly, as Neil McKendrick notes, "Long hours of work for women were not new, but the machinery to make these hours of work as productive as the work of men was new".<sup>3</sup> The scale of this employment was unparalleled. Moreover the rapid development of these industries occurred at a time when continuing declines in real wages since the 1750's would have been pinching family

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1. Pinchbeck, pp. 230-1. The wage rates quoted were for 1812; an approximate level could be expected for the late eighteenth century.
  2. Included in Historical Perspectives, ed. Neil McKendrick, (London, Europa Publications, 1974).
  3. McKendrick, p. 164

budgets. Therefore the addition of these earnings to those of the husband would have made a considerable difference to the levels of surplus income in the family. McKendrick presented the hypothesis that if wage rates for men, women and children were 3 to 2 to 1, or even 4 to 2 to 1, the total weekly income of a working family would at worst almost double that of the husband alone and at best equal over twice his weekly salary.<sup>1</sup> The thousands of families that moved into the industrial regions of Britain attest to the attractions of these developing industries and new modes of employment.

Heretofore women and children had figured hardly at all in the calculation of consumer demand in the national market. Their contribution to demand would have been marginal without an independent income to affect purchase. But during the last fifty years of the eighteenth century the market demands of this diverse group would figure significantly in the national consensus. For the first time thousands of women and children, lucratively employed in industry, controlled regular cash incomes, while in the associated trades working women also achieved a small prosperity. Records of women carriers, shopkeepers, warehouse operators and a variety of other retail occupations were to be found in this period, many of whom appeared to be enjoying a prosperity founded on the expansion of the cotton industry.<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1750 the series of good harvests and expanding agricultural production had doubtless fed consumer demand through the advance in men's wages.

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1. McKendrick, p. 184.

2. Several women carriers were noted in the Universal British Directory 1793, vol. III, p. 668, operating short hauls on the Manchester, Warrington, Ormskirk routes. Women shopkeepers appeared regularly in the Day Book of Sales of the Unknown Manchester Firm, 1773-79, MC MS: ff 657, D43, Manchester Public Library. Women warehouse "men" appeared in H. Lowndes, A London Directory, 1776, p. 98; and in Popes Bath Chronicle, Sept. 1766.

but the entrepreneurial success stories of the late eighteenth century demanded more dramatic increases than these, and before the appearance of large-scale exports, the increased family unit earnings, swollen by the wages of wives and children, played a major part in providing...[the surplus to spend].

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A large family was no longer necessarily a burden, or the recipe for hunger and want. Now these children could be profitably employed and, with their mothers, add substantially to the welfare of their family.

Here again the intangible expectations of the population come into play. Daniel Defoe had written earlier in the eighteenth century of the tendency to "over high living" which had taken hold of the middling classes in British society. This Defoe attributed to "the increase of the gaiety and profuse humour, which I call the luxury of the times."<sup>2</sup> Modern historians can recognize from this description the presence of a greater degree of consumer demand for the niceties of life that became apparent among the middle classes earlier in the century. As the decades passed what had first been considered a luxury gradually became perceived as a necessity. Moreover the urge to acquire more material amenities spread down through the ranks of British society. Defoe later commented on the superior standard of living enjoyed by the working people of Britain, as compared to their European counterparts. "Even those we call poor People, Journeymen, working and Pains-taking People do thus; they lye warm, live in Plenty, work hard and know no Want."<sup>3</sup> While Defoe might have overstated the case the fundamentals of his assertions were supported by the multitude of contemporary chroniclers,

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1. McKendrick, pp. 195-6.

2. Daniel Defoe, The Complete Tradesman, 1727, reprinted in The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel Defoe, (London, 1841), vol. 18, p.239

3. Defoe, A plan of the English Commerce, p. 76.

as well as by recent analysis of the economic characteristics of the time. Henry Fielding's mid-century "Inquiry into the Increase of Robbers" held that the improvements in the general living standards and so in the expectations of the lower orders had contributed directly to the rise in crime and to the deterioration of the moral tone of the nation. Whether an improvement in living standards can be held to have a deleterious effect on the moral tone of the nation is a matter for conjecture. However Defoe was convinced of the benefits that accrued to Britain's commercial health through "the Home Consumption of our own Produce" and particularly in extensive consumption by the "poor People and "Journeymen". "These are the People" wrote Defoe, "that carry off the Gross of your Consumption".<sup>1</sup>

The eighteenth century was characterized by a constant, growing pre-occupation with material ameliorations to the existing style of living. J.H. Plumb has catalogued and chronicled the national spirit of curiosity and acquisitiveness common throughout the span of Georgian England.<sup>2</sup> This spirit reflected itself, in part, in the desire for more of the new consumer goods - pottery for the imbibing of tea and to replace pewter or wooden utensils; textiles to furnish the cottage or lodgings and stylish clothing to beautify the female form. All of these wants were devoid of any element of necessity. Yet the power of these desires among the population became an engine of economic expansion during the century. Fashions, fads and the search for novelty had always been an element of western society. But in past centuries these transitory wants had been selectively assuaged by master craftsmen and artisans whose products had been available only to an elite. The very nature of those products, individually crafted, of great beauty

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1. Defoe, A Plan of the English Commerce, p.77.

2. J.H. Plumb, Georgian Delights, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980).

and equivalent cost, restricted their consumption to the upper reaches of society. The phenomenon of popular fashions, fashions for the common people, was accelerated at the end of the seventeenth century with the appearance of cheap, colourful Indian cottons. The enormous success of these fabrics laid the basis for the British trade to India and enriched generations of East India traders. When an equivalent fashion for British-made products developed later in the eighteenth century the benefits were passed on to the whole society.

The power of popularized fashions for clothing, china, or domestic accessories cannot be overestimated. Moreover eighteenth century entrepreneurs were quick to appreciate the commercial potential inherent in the national fashions. These men strived not only to produce the merchandise but also to feed the desire for these goods through the provision of information and dissemination of fashions in print. (See Chapter 4 for more detailed appraisal of fashions and the cotton industry). Newspapers flourished, journals, periodicals and magazines sprang up to supply the town, the region or even the nation with the latest news and, equally important, displayed advertisements for the newest modes and products. Shopkeepers described their merchandise in glowing terms, announcing their stock of fabrics to be "sold as cheap as in London" or "of the widest assortment outside London". Custom was solicited and new items always announced, as, for example, the availability of new copper plate printed cottons.<sup>1</sup> Advertising, whether by hand bill, trade card or newspaper, brought the large and growing range of merchandise to the attention of the public in a manner that was unprecedented. Previously customers in the vicinity of a stall or shop-front might be enticed to enter and examine the stock through

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1. Pope's Bath Chronicle, 7 March 1765.

the shouts, cries or solicitous appeals of the tradesman or his wife. But such tradesmen were restricted to passers-by or neighbouring inhabitants for their solicitations to have any affect. Word of mouth might attract customers, but essentially the tradesmen's markets were restricted to the immediate locale. Moreover the method of soliciting custom was haphazard at best. Nor could much information be included in the shout or call. Printed advertisements brought to the attention of the reader all the essential facts about any number of trades: goods could be listed with prices and new stock announced, making this information available systematically to thousands of potential customers.

The efficacy of this sort of advertising can be gauged from local and national papers. In a local paper such as Jackson's Oxford Journal advertisements were placed regularly by the principal drapers, mercers and hosiers of the towns, while periodic notices were put in by tradesmen from the surrounding counties of Buckinghamshire, Worcestershire, and Berkshire, as well as from Oxfordshire itself.<sup>1</sup> Clearly the forum offered by this publication enabled tradesmen to reach more potential customers and increased the rate and extent of their trade. London tradesmen were equally assiduous in their attention to advertising, with the intent of making their names and businesses known to all the readers of the newspapers whether in London or the provinces. Certainly nowhere near all of London's multitude of drapers, mercers or warehousemen advertised in newspapers, but a perusal of contemporary papers shows that many of the largest retailers advertised their merchandise regularly and apparently to great benefit. Thus Mr. Taylor of London owned two warehouses selling quilted petticoats, when in January 1779 he announced the opening of a third. Large shirt and linen warehouses

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1. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 2 June 1770; 20 Jan. 1770; 15 April 1780; 16 June 1781; 23 June 1781; 18 April 1767; 2 May 1767.

were also advertised regularly, as were several tailors establishments, milliners, mantua-makers and purveyors of cloaks and great coats.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the success of this new venture in marketing that more newspapers sprang up in the metropolis bearing the word "advertiser" in their title. The General Advertiser operated in mid-century, and it, as well as the later Public Advertiser and Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, clearly intended to attract readers with the promise of plentiful and accurate advertisements. In 1760 Londoners had morning and evening newspapers to choose from, as well as several weekly publications. Not all the provincial centres possessed a local paper at the start of this period. But by 1780 few regions were without a daily or weekly paper, the latter being available at a cost of two pence per week.<sup>2</sup> This sweeping change whereby there was a general availability of printed papers, with all their retail and commercial information, took place within the period of this study. Moreover by the end of the eighteenth century the simple advertisement had been joined by more sophisticated appeals to consumers. In the autumn of 1782 one large London clothing emporium commenced its advertisements with the eye catching slogan "Wonder of Wonders! and the Greatest of all Wonders",<sup>3</sup> a marked departure from the stark listings of textile stock only a few decades earlier.

From one end of the country to the other newspapers and journals advised their readers on the cotton textiles available; the prices, the varieties and new innovations to stocks. Information was a prod

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1. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 14 Jan. 1779; 27 Oct. 1778; 25 Feb. 1777; 2 Jan 1779; 27 May 1777; 22 Aug. 1777.

2. Plumb, p. 13.

3. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 4 November 1782.

to fancy: fashion and fancy stimulated demand. As printed advertisements became habitual components of newspapers, as new merchandise was bruited in London and the provinces within weeks of its appearance, the process of demand was accelerated at the same time as the national market was unified. Advertising linked the amorphous desire for fashionability with the products of the new consumer industries. Josiah Tucker wrote in his 1750 Essay on Trade that "All Commerce is founded upon Wants, natural or artificial, real or imaginary".<sup>1</sup> Throughout the century articles were written and sermons preached about the deplorable tendency towards excessive materialism witnessed in all classes of society.<sup>2</sup> Yet the expectation of an improving material existence persisted and remained an ever present, though unmeasurable, cornerstone of economic life. A moralist wrote in The Lady's Magazine that he was "amazed to see that young people spend so much of their precious time, in decking these poor frail bodies, which...will last but a short season and then must be prey for worms and moulder into dust...."<sup>3</sup> But far from decreasing, the public fascination with fashions persisted and the movement of news through the press expanded as specialized publications such as the Magazine a la Mode were inaugurated,<sup>4</sup> while in the mainstream newspapers more and more notices were to be found describing the latest fashions and the newest modes.

Defoe and McKendrick both pointed out how demand was increased and the market for clothing expanded with the addition of tens of thousands of women to the wage roles. Women's function within a household

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1. Josiah Tucker, An Essay on Trade, 1750, p. i.
  2. A comprehensive study of the literary evidence of growing domestic demand and the responses to this phenomenon appears in an unpublished M. Litt. thesis by Richard Kent, Home Demand as a factor in Eighteenth Century Growth: the Literary Evidence, (Cambridge, 1969).
  3. The Lady's Magazine, vol. 5 January 1774, p. 14.
  4. The Magazine a la Mode was begun in 1777 and was followed in 1794 by Rudolf Ackermann's The Gallery of Fashion.

predisposed them to be consumers of clothing and furnishing textiles. Once they were in the position of wage earners their role as consumers would have expanded. Women would have made decisions within the family about the replacement of old, worn or outmoded clothing, the addition of soft furnishings and the provision of household linens. Records from the Greg mill at Styal show how quick the female operatives were to take advantage of improved economic conditions and how rapidly a rise in income was translated into a rise in demand for various textiles and other items. Fashionable clothing was the first purchase in times of plenty, and along with hats and calicos various practical garments and household linens were bought.<sup>1</sup> Thus women took a leading role in the purchase of fashionable goods. Moreover the dictates of fashion worked to stimulate demand from town to city, from the country manor to the crowded city court.

It has long been accepted that the purchases of the expanding middle classes contributed substantially to the progress of the industrial trades during the eighteenth century. However in this instance, it is the ranks of improving working classes as well as the middle classes, that are of specific interest. For it was these hundreds of thousands of families that provided the largest market for British cottons. Periodic fluctuations in the economy and sporadic depressions in trade occurred intermittently throughout the fifty years. However the most constant factor was the continuing positive expectations of the economy evinced by the population as a whole and reflected in the declining age of first marriage and continuing rise in the birth rate. The implicit faith in the economy was confirmed in new and expanding areas of high paid employment that involved not only the traditional

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1. The Quarry Bank Papers, Styal Mill Shop Accounts, quoted in Francis Collier, The Family Economy of the Working Class, (Manchester University Press, 1964), pp. 40-1.

male portion of the work force, but the hitherto under-paid women and children. Salaried domestic employment had enabled women and children to add to the family budget an equivalent amount to that of the father's earnings. The advent of factory employment, of paid positions in mills and potteries, advanced the economic position of women even further, according them an importance as personal consumers of inexpensive fashionable fabrics and other items at an unparalleled level.

There is no doubt that hardship and distress were experienced by some parts of society, as indeed they are in any period, and some of this suffering has received extensive attention. But while focusing on the instances of scarcity or difficulty it must not be assumed that this was the general or continuous experience of the whole of society. Britain was undergoing a radical economic re-ordering. During this period an industry of modest dimensions had, within fifty years, reached an unprecedented size with the aid of mechanized production. The cotton industry depended heavily on the home market to absorb the bulk of its products in the decades prior to 1800. The examination of the state of the domestic market confirms the capacity and the interest in the consumer goods produced by the cotton industry. Over the fifty years under study the demand for cottons accelerated and the market expanded as a greater assortment of cottons, was introduced. This diversification of production by the cotton industry testifies to the high levels of demand generated within Britain.

#### ii. The Products of the British Cotton Industry

After having considered the general characteristics of the British market in the last half of the eighteenth century, the economic influences on levels of demand and the potential capacity to consume cottons, what is next required is an examination of the cotton industry itself. This process seeks to trace the growing range of products available

for the British market. The qualities of the cotton fabrics manufactured around 1750 were those of popular textiles. The goods were in the main sturdy, hard-wearing and all the cotton fabrics were easily washable, qualities to recommend them to the British consumers. The imports of cotton textiles into Britain were initially almost entirely of the fine, high quality Indian muslins and these would have been purchased by the wealthier members of society. The price of the Indian muslins would have been too high and the fabric unsuitable for most practical uses. For generally comparable textiles the less affluent British consumers looked to the printed linens and British-made cotton/linen chintz. These goods were not of the quality of their Indian counter-parts, either in substance or in the printed or painted designs. But as the home market was essentially circumscribed by a barrier of legislative prohibitions directed against imported Indian chintzes and calicos, the principal competitor was barred from British markets, so the local consumers made do with the improving British products.

The British manufacturers had been making chintzes since the beginning of the eighteenth century in imitation of the Indian goods. The erection of protective legal bars after 1721 provided the impetus for the development of a range of textiles comprised in some part of cotton yarn. Fustians, fabrics of mixed cotton and linen composition, had been known and manufactured for centuries, as had fabrics of wool and cotton, and silk and cotton. The popularity of these multi-fibre materials had spread across Europe, beginning in the fourteenth century. It is impossible to determine all the varieties of these fustians produced by individual weavers over the centuries, but what was of importance in the cotton industry around 1750 was not only that an increasing variety of cotton-based fabrics were being produced, but also that these were being made systematically to a set standard. Over the

fifty years the scale of production grew enormously, as did the varieties of cotton textiles. The process of growth in demand and a reciprocal acceleration of production can be followed through the documentation of merchants and manufacturers in the cotton trade.

John Holker's report on the Lancashire textile industry in 1750 provides a unique sampling of the varieties of textiles then produced. A comprehensive price analysis cannot be determined from this report, but the samples, supplemented by the brief descriptions of the swatches, give a clear indication of the products made by the English cotton industry. In all the report announced a listing of 115 individual types of cloth. However of this total four were linen goods made in London, four sorts of silk came from Spittlefields, six silk and wool, and all wool materials were the product of Norwich manufacturers, and two light-weight wools came from Yorkshire. Thus of the total, only ninety-nine of the fabrics included in the report originated in Lancashire and less than eighty could be described as cotton.

Table 1:3

Lancashire Cotton Textiles in Holker's Report, c. 1750  
67 Sorts of Cotton/Linen Textiles

Check	- 17	Jean	- 4
Chintz	- 13	Striped Dimity	- 3
Fustian	- 11	Handkerchief	- 1
Cotton Stripe	- 10	Grandunelle	- 1
Cotton Diaper	- 6	Herringbone	- 1

9 Sorts of Cotton Textiles

Velvet	- 7	Nankin	- 1
Check	- 1		

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Checks comprised the largest single group of fabrics: Holker included seventeen assorted samples of checked cloth.<sup>1</sup> Of these not

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1. G.G.2 Livre Eschantillons..., Nos. 1-17, Musee Centrale des Arts Decoratifs, Paris.

all were examples of cotton or even cotton/linen fabrics. In fact only one of the check samples shown could be purchased in an all cotton variety. Two of the other materials of red and navy blue checks were made of linen and wool. Both the one all cotton and the linen/wool sort of checks reflect the technological deficiencies that hampered production at this time. Without a means of producing cheap and abundant stocks of strong cotton warp, manufacturers were obliged to use linen, while deficiencies in standard techniques of dyeing cotton a colour-fast red made wool yarn preferable in patterns where red predominated.

The diversity of this collection of checks lay in part in the many colours used, including navy blue, light blue, red, white, yellow, and light and dark green. Of the seventeen, nine were intended for clothing and eight for furnishings with the cost running from 12 to 17d per yard. As each of the check fabrics listed was accompanied by a sample of cloth other differentiating features could be discerned. The basic variations of the cloth lay in the three qualities of fabric, offering slightly finer and more densely woven cloths for the added pence per yard, while the furniture checks were heavier than those for clothing. The final variations in the checks were based on the assorted size of the checks and fine lines that comprised the patterns. The clothing checks tended to be small or medium-sized and the furnitures were very large and brightly patterned. The possible combinations and permutations of colour, check and line seem endless; however, it appears that production was roughly restricted to the assortment included in the 1750 report.

The Bristol merchants Peach and Pierce told one customer of the difficulty in obtaining checks outside the limited numbers produced. In the spring of 1753 Peach wrote: "I have been as exact to patterns

as the times will allow [.] Our Manufacturers are under no Command and 'tis impossible to get them to make all small and dark Patterns without extra-ordinary price but for the future I will preserve those patterns by me on purpose...for they are saleable only with You."<sup>1</sup>

In this case customer insistence on a dark blue, small-checked cloth added substantially to the cost of the fabric, and Peach and Pierce appeared reluctant to stock these more costly goods. Two years later the question of the checks arose again and the merchants wrote that, "I am sorry my Checks have proved too large in Pattern". However the merchants justified forwarding the goods they had, stating that, "the high price both of Indigo and Cotton have made it impossible to get a large Quantity of all dark Pattern."<sup>2</sup> The productive capacity of the cotton industry was not as yet so widely established as to be able to respond to a demand for non-standard textiles. Apparently any diversion in ordering from the accustomed stocks meant delays and added expense.

Printed chintzes made up the next largest sort of fabric, thirteen chintzes were listed by Holker.<sup>3</sup> These were the most expensive clothing fabrics costing approximately 3/6d and 4/ per yard. The mixed cotton/linen fabrics were of a uniform length and width and here too the variation in the textile depended on the patterns printed on the cloth or on the special finish later applied. In common with checks, there was no evidence of wide varieties in the quality of the woven cloth: the cloth appeared to conform to a single standard. Consumers had to seek variety in the printed cloth or in a special finish. A satin-like finish worked on a printed chintz, for example, raised it about

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1. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. II, ed. Philip L. White, (New York, New York Historical Society, 1956), p. 536.

2. Ibid, p. 539.

3. G.G.2 Livre, Nos. 88-100.

fifteen percent in price above the other chintzes, which were approximately four times the cost of the checked material. But though the extra cost of a satin finish made this fabric dearer than the regular chintz, the customer was provided with an even greater verisimilitude between the British-made cotton chintzes and the brocades and printed silks upon which it was designed and which it sought to emulate. Godfrey Smith explained in his 1756 book the origins of the botanic prints which had such wide appeal.

With respect to the drawing of the patterns for the calico-printers, they are, for the generality, in imitation of the flowered silk-manufactory, with such variations as may best answer the nature of the different sorts of works, of which there is a great variety. The principal are the whole chintzes, in which they imitate the richest silk brocades, with a great variety of beautiful colours.... The fashion, as with the brocaded silks, has run upon natural flowers, stalks and leaves...or in sprigs and branches carelessly flung, in a natural and agreeable manner.

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The Manchester and Blackburn manufacturers depended heavily on the expertise of the London printers for novelty in the finished product, the fabric being an acceptable medium for the printers' art. English printers had become expert in the execution of tasteful and pleasing prints for the mass market. Having worked for generations on East India cottons for the export trade, the textile printers applied themselves to the British manufacturers and assisted considerably in establishing the popularity of these fabrics.<sup>2</sup>

In the same general category of light clothing textiles were the cotton hollands, and cherydery. The first was made of cotton weft and linen warp and usually decorated with stripes, both thin and broad, in colours similar to those of the checks. The cotton hollands were

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1. Godfrey Smith quoted in Florence M. Montgomery, Printed Textiles, (New York, Viking Press, 1970), p. 24.
  2. S.D. Chapman & S. Chassagne, European Textile Printers in the Eighteenth Century, (London, Heinmann, 1981) presents a detailed study of contemporary developments in textile printing.

woven in two widths and in several qualities, thus adding to the numbers of this textile available to the public. These ten varieties of cloth formed a middle quality of goods between the inexpensive checks and the more costly chintzes.<sup>1</sup> The eight sorts of cherydery included in Holker's report were of silk and cotton in composition and were very attractive light fabrics based on an Indian precursor.<sup>2</sup> The cheryderies, as well as the hollands were used in women's clothing with the price of the silk and cotton fabrics beginning at a third more in price than the striped hollands. The most expensive cherydery cost the same as did the printed chintz. Thus, with the cost of the cherydery ranging from two to three shillings per yard the price of fabric for a gown could cost as much as fifteen shillings.

Along with the many examples of dress goods were samples of the handkerchiefs produced in Lancashire. The principal emphasis appears to have been, at that time, on the production of linen handkerchiefs in patterns of blue, red and white checks. One of these handkerchiefs cost approximately ten and a half pence and this product was reported to have a very wide popularity in England.<sup>3</sup> The only example of a cotton/linen handkerchief was made in Manchester and for the manufacture of red, white and blue checks the producers were dependent on colour-fast red yarn from India. The last of the Lancashire handkerchiefs was a facsimile of an East Indian style of handkerchief. The remainder of these goods listed were produced in London and its environs. Clearly at this time the cotton trade, as such, produced little in the way of handkerchiefs. Those that were manufactured faced stiff competition from the London-based silk and linen industries.

Manchester's renowned all-cotton velvets represented the largest

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1. G.G. 2, Nos. 21-30.

2. Ibid, Nos. 33-40.

4. Ibid, Nos. 77-79, 84.

specie of goods produced from purely cotton yarn. While these fabrics found a wide market in Britain and abroad,<sup>1</sup> there were in fact only seven sorts of velvet presented in the sample book, plus one example of a silk and cotton velvet. This modest group of fabrics represented a significant break-through and application of new technology to the manufacture of all-cotton cloth. Production techniques of the plain and flowered velvets were jealously guarded and Holker only succeeded in obtaining his samples at great risk. These were the most costly fabrics in the collection, running from about eight shillings per yard to over twelve shillings. The silk and cotton velvets were a quarter again as much.<sup>2</sup>

Fustians were another of the largest mixed groups of textiles to originate from Lancashire. Samples of these fabrics were scattered throughout the report, and can be divided into several groups. The first was comprised of the heavy, unnapped cloths such as jean, nankin, ticking, hooping, granunelle and herringbone. The ticking, hooping, and two sorts of jeans were, at this time, made entirely of linen; the nankin was an all cotton cloth; while four sorts of jeans, one of grandunelle, and herringbone were cotton/linen mixtures. These fabrics formed a component of the dress of the ordinary man or woman in the making of footwear, stays, hoops, jerkins and breeches. The second sort of fustians were those with raised woven patterns like the three kinds of self-corded striped dimity and the six varieties of diaper decorated with small, medium, and large raised floral patterns. All of these were made of cotton weft and linen warp. Finally the reported included samples of napped and corded cloths, like pillow,

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1. A.P. Wadsworth & Julia de Lacy Mann, The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, (Manchester University Press, 1931), pp. 174-5.

2. G.G.2, Nos. 54-60, 72.

barragon, and thickset, of which there were three, two, and two respectively. Only the barragon was also available in an all cotton sort. These fabrics covered a range of prices from the very cheapest hooping at twelve and a half pence to the higher priced diapers, jeans and thicksets, which could cost from eighteen pence per yard to four shillings per yard or more. In all, this diverse assortment made up the largest part of the sample book, with a total of twenty-five fustians represented. Holker commented that these products accounted for perhaps the largest part of the trade in cotton textiles within Britain, and accounted for the largest part of the manufacturing capacity of Lancashire.<sup>1</sup>

One of the inferences that can be drawn from this very diverse collection of textiles was the essentially limited production of that period. Although ninety-nine of the one hundred and fifteen textiles originated in Lancashire, when this total is sub-divided into the various categories, such as checks, fustians, chintzes, velvets and handkerchiefs, the dimensions of the cotton industry, and the level of product diversification are more realistically presented. Certainly the level of production at this period was not wholly contemptible, even when compared to that of the later decades. Holker's comments on the extent of the manufacture of chintz, for example, are well known, wherein he writes that "scarcely a week goes by without a thousand rolls being sold and sent to London unbleached." Holker also averred that though the export market received much of this output, the domestic market too was "very extensive".<sup>2</sup> His assertion on the popularity of Manchester handkerchiefs and fustians has already been noted above, while cotton velvets were termed by another contemporary as "one of

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1. G.G.2, Nos. 18-20, 31-31, 42-52, 61-71.

2. Ibid, No. 88.

the most celebrated manufactures of the place".<sup>1</sup> The popularity of these textiles has been confirmed.

By far the soundest argument for established consumer demand at this period was the mixed qualities of the textiles produced. The cotton industry did not direct its products at a single consumer group, neither did it restrict them to a single area of use. Textiles for labourers' garments, popular furnishings, women's underwear and gowns, aprons, kerchiefs and head gear were all manufactured in Lancashire, as were fabrics for men's clothing, for pockets, linings, and for use in foot wear. Moreover included in this modest, though diverse collection of fabrics were several qualities in the most sought-after goods. In the manufactured textiles of this period was laid the foundations for a trade in consumer textiles covering the whole gamut of domestic uses. In the following decades one can trace the manner in which the expansion of this trade progressed in tandem with demand from the British public.

The collection of letters and invoices published in The Beekman Mercantile Papers, as well as additional invoices from the central holdings of the Beekman papers, provide a clear record of both the developing production of textiles and the associated diversity of accessories. These records illustrate the acceleration and further diversification within the cotton industry even before machine spinning assisted the take off of the trade. From these documents can be discerned the spiralling sequence whereby the advent of new products sparked greater demand, which in turn prompted increased production. One of the earliest new products which acquired unexpected success in Holker's period were the furniture checks. Shortly after their introduction

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1. Zinzendorf, quoted in Wadsworth & Mann, p. 175.

they had achieved a wide popularity as bright, washable furniture coverings, wall hangings, curtains and draperies. Samuel Touchet testified before a committee of the House of Commons in 1751 that "the Manchester Trade has continued to increase still within these Two or Three Years". Moreover this increase was attributed to greater consumption by the British public "of a particular Fashion in Furniture."<sup>1</sup> Another witness concurred that during the past few years cotton goods had been purchased in larger quantities in Britain than ever before and this too he attributed to the "many new Articles having been introduced into our Manufactures".<sup>2</sup> Chronic, intermittent disruptions in the export markets made the potential apparent in the home market all the more attractive to the cotton manufacturers. Demand remained high as witnessed in the new textiles or other clothing items which found eager acceptance in the British market. The largest and most prosperous free market area in Europe awaited exploitation by the entrepreneurs in the cotton industry.

In 1753 the invoices of orders sent by Peach and Pierce to James Beekman list thirteen assorted qualities of linen check, of four main widths. In the same year only two sorts of cotton checks were shipped, and these were provided in two widths only. (See Appendix I) Within the next ten years more and more cotton checks were added to the merchandise stocked. By 1770 the number of qualities and widths of cotton checks equalled that of the linen checks, namely thirteen. This pattern of development was common among many of the ranges of textiles. Not only did the practical use of cotton yarns in the production of textiles grow, but also the total number of textiles gradually

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1. Reports relating to chequered and striped Linens, 1751, Reports from Committees of the House of Commons, vol. II, 1737-1765, p.293.
  2. Ibid, p. 295.

increased in all varieties of goods. In 1767, for example, the invoices reveal five sorts of pillow, an increase of two over the three sorts listed in 1750, while in 1771 seven sorts of pillow were available.<sup>1</sup> These developments presaged the enormous growth in production that was to occur later during the 1770's and 80's.

Throughout the 1750's and 1760's production in the cotton trade was directed towards a diversification and specialization, creating greater choice for the consumer. Just as cotton textiles appeared in greater numbers so too did the many assorted accessories, important components of dress. The range of buttons, buckles, caps, handkerchiefs, hose, and mittens were added to throughout this period. This innovation in the numbers of accessories, as much as that in the cotton industry, reflected a strong and persistent consumer demand. Moreover this was a popular demand generated by the many levels of the middle class. All of the items fell within a broad price spectrum from the most inexpensive, costing several pence, to the higher quality, mass-produced articles. One invoice from the 1750's for instance, reveals eight type of shirt buttons and fourteen sorts of gilt, plated, tin and horn buttons made for various parts of the clothing. The 1758 invoice also included ten kinds of garters, "check", "spotted", "white Lettered", and scarlet, to name a few; four qualities of women's mitts; two colours of muffatees; thirty-two sorts of hose; seven types of buckles; and six sorts of two seam caps.<sup>2</sup> In fact the bulk of the consignment consisted of practical but stylish additions to a wardrobe, reflecting the care and attention given by the consumer to the choice of accessory.

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1. Invoices, Robert & Nathan Hyde, 17 March 1767; 20 March 1771, Beekman Papers, New York Historical Society, New York.

2. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. III, pp. 1404-9.

The popularization of cotton stockings was another of the successful innovations of the period. This sort of hose gained customer allegiance among a wide spectrum of British society, as cotton stockings were both inexpensive and attractive. The middle and upper ranks could buy cotton hose as an alternative to the more costly silk variety, while for the working classes cotton stockings conferred an apparent fashionability, much to the disgust of one contemporary commentator.<sup>1</sup> The development and diversification of this trade centred on the Nottingham and Derbyshire regions and has been extensively documented as the principal product of the midlands cotton industry. Much of the industrial and commercial prosperity of those areas could be attributed to the national demand for the varieties of cotton stockings manufactured in those regions.<sup>2</sup>

New articles appeared at regular intervals throughout the second half of the eighteenth century as contemporary events and fashions contributed to the novelty of items such as buttons and handkerchiefs. "Death head" buttons in four different colours were introduced in the 1760's. At the same time campaign buttons of various sized and colours appear in the invoices.<sup>3</sup> Handkerchiefs were an essential part of the female dress during the whole of this period and their low cost encouraged the production of an enormously varied range of these goods. In addition to new sorts of handkerchiefs being made as new fabrics were introduced, handkerchiefs were also printed to depict topics of current political or military concern, while others were stamped with designs such as a blue or red "Map of England" or with a pattern called

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1. The London Magazine, vol. LII, 1783, p.128.

2. S.D. Chapman, "Enterprise and Innovation in the British Hosiery Industry" Textile History, vol. 5, 1974,  
The Early Factory Masters, (1967), pp. 17-27, 145-6.

3. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. II, p. 837.

"London Cryes".<sup>1</sup> Linen check handkerchiefs had been the staple wear of working women throughout the mid-century. But as the cotton industry expanded, the linen checks were joined by cotton varieties as well as an impressive array of other cotton handkerchiefs. By 1776 at least ten sorts of cotton check handkerchiefs were being manufactured in Lancashire, as well as twenty-seven other kinds of handkerchiefs - such as printed cotton, black cotton, silk and muslin, muslin, malabar, malabar blue, malabar check, barcellona, cotton and silk, romall, and silk and linen handkerchiefs.

The extensions to wearing apparel were not limited to the simple handkerchief. Manchester manufacturers began to supply ready-made clothing from the locally produced cotton textiles. The first order for cotton gowns from Manchester was found in a 1768 invoice: "Dark Cotton Gowns" priced nine shillings each.<sup>2</sup> The cost of making a gown was about five shillings, so in fact this sort of commodity represented a saving for the customer should she wish to avoid buying five yards of cloth and having it made up. The proliferation of ready-made gowns suggests that many were eager to relinquish the drudgery of home dress-making, as well as the cost of professional services. By 1779 the cost of a ready-made cotton gown had dropped down to between seven shilling and sixpence, and eight shillings, depending on the colour of the gown. Moreover by that time many more varieties of ready-made gowns had been produced to meet demand from a wide section of the population. Three price ranges of ready-made gowns could now be purchased. As well as the inexpensive cotton gowns there were also moree gowns and silk and cotton gowns; the former in twenty-two known colours and patterns and the latter in four varieties.

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1. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. III, p. 946.

2. Invoices, Robert & Nathan Hyde, 10 Jan. 1786, Beekman Papers.

The moree gown cost on the average twenty-two shillings in 1775, though by 1779 the price was beginning to fall, and these gowns could be had for as little as seventeen shillings. Silk and cotton gowns followed the same price pattern, selling for sixteen shillings in the early 1770's and falling in price to from eleven shillings sixpence to fifteen shillings sixpence by 1778. When compared to the fifteen shillings cost for five yards of cherydery earlier in the century the advantage to the consumer is plain.

Demand was not restricted to ready-made clothing for women only. Manufacturers also sold several sorts of ready-made men's clothing. Waistcoat shapes appeared in more and more sorts of fabric through the last decades of the century. Breeches and shirts, made from the fabrics of the cotton industry, were also commonly for sale in the last quarter of the century. The large volume production of ready-made clothes marked a departure from all previous manufacturing endeavours. The cutting and sewing of these garments was centralized in conjunction with the manufacture of the textiles.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary consumer habits were undergoing qualitative changes as the British market was offered increased choice both in fabrics and clothing.

The 1774 level of imported raw cotton marks a watershed in the requirements of the industry. From that point to the end of the century the cotton manufacturers required supplies of the raw material in greater and greater quantities. Table 1:4 illustrates the progressive rise in cotton imports over this period.

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1. Chapter 4 provides a more detailed study of the influence of fashion on the production of fabrics and in the ready-made clothes trade.

Table 1:4

<u>Retained Imports of Raw Cotton</u>					
(ooo pounds)					
1750-4	...	14,739	1775-9	...	29,380
1755-9	...	12,786	1780-4	...	43,143
1760-4	...	12,807	1785-9	...	104,225
1765-9	...	22,008	1790-4	...	126,908
1770-4	...	18,392	1795-9	...	152,244

New measurements of the rates of growth of British industry can provide an even clearer indication of the progress of the cotton industry in this period. N.F.R. Crafts has estimated that while from 1700-1760 the growth rate of real output rose **by** only 1.37 per cent, between the years 1760 and 1770 this rate had more than tripled to 4.49 per cent. In the next decade the increase in industrial productivity was not quite so spectacular, but even so reached 6.20 per cent; while during the ten following years, from 1780 to 1790 the rate doubled again to 12.76 per cent. In those last ten years were laid the industrial foundations of production. If the growth rates of real output were not sustained at that level, as indeed they were not, dropping down to 6.73 per cent, they still reflected an enormous continuing expansion of production and concomitant strength of demand for the products of the industry.<sup>2</sup>

It might well be asked why, with the cotton industry operating at such a rate of production, the domestic market was of such importance. Cotton manufacturers had in the past expended great efforts in cultivating export markets for their cotton manufacturers. However in West Africa, the Caribbean and the American colonies they were confronted with competitive East Indian textiles and in a number of instances

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1. Figures based on the findings of Elizabeth Schumpeter, English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697-1808, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1960), Table XVIII, pp. 62.
  2. N.F.R. Crafts, "British Economic Growth, 1700-1831: A Review of the Evidence", Economic History Review, 2nd series, vol. XXVI, no. 2, 1983, p. 181.

had to yield the market to the superior oriental cottons.<sup>1</sup> The American market had absorbed successively larger amounts of goods over the years. However since 1776 this market was temporarily lost to the British manufacturers for a period of nearly eight years during the revolutionary war. The legislative protection afforded British producers and the elasticity of demand characteristic of the domestic market convinced many of the advantages attendant with a concentration on the home market. One merchant wrote in 1776 that in his opinion, "It will take a considerable time before the cotton manufacturers will fully supply the demands of the home trade."<sup>2</sup> It is significant that the years beginning the largest imports of raw cotton were also those when the industry relied most heavily on the expanding sales within the domestic market.

In an effort to expand their portion of the home market, production of cotton textiles was redoubled in the last quarter of the century. Twenty-five sorts of cotton checks were being produced regularly between 1775 and 1785, along with fourteen linen checks. Only two of the cotton/linen checks that twenty years before had been the staple of the industry were now manufactured. Pure cotton fabrics now predominated. The price of the cotton checks fluctuated throughout this period: starting from 13½ pence per yard for yard wide checks in the 1750's, up to 14½ pence in 1764 and up and down in the 1770's. By the next decade the price of cotton checks had dropped down and stabilized, holding around 12 pence per yard for the rest of the period. Moreover as more entrepreneurs began to operate spinning mills the price of all cotton goods continued to fall throughout the remaining years of the century.

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1. Wadsworth & Mann, p. 159.

2. B.M., Liverpool MSS., vol. CLIII, 38, 342, quoted in Edwards, p. 27.

Year by year new cottons were brought out on the market. All manner of corduroys, Brunswick, Queen, Prince of Wales, and Genoa, corded Tabby, Wild Boar Tabby, corded thickset, as well as ribdeleur, ribdurant, everlasting, and Royal Ribb, issued from the manufactories of Manchester and vicinity between 1775 and 1785. Along with the abundant stocks of new fustians came an equal assortment of plain-surfaced textiles. In addition to the very successful checks, plaid cottons enjoyed a huge popularity and were offered in many designs and colours. At least twenty-two different widths, qualities and patterns were made at this time. Cotton sheeting was also being produced for the first time, along with cotton towelling, the former available in sixteen varieties and the latter in only one. In addition to the standardized products, the industry was also able to offer specialized production to its customers, such as the moree fabrics, "flowered in the loom".<sup>1</sup> (For a list of textiles introduced by 1785 see Appendix II) The cotton industry gained expertise both in the cultivation of mass markets and in fulfilling demands of more specialized sectors of the trade.

The two hundred and fifty three cotton fabrics listed in Appendix II are illustrative of the productive capacity of the industry. They are by no means the sum total of production of this industry. Recently a sample book of cotton textiles from the Manchester merchants John & Benjamin Bower came to light. The samples of fabrics included in this volume represented the stock available in the mid 1770's from the British cotton industry. One hundred and twenty-one sorts of cotton, cotton/linen and linen checks appeared in this folio; checks

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1 Eng. MSS 1192, John Rylands Library, Manchester.  
The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 2 August 1777.  
The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. III, pp. 1115-7.

both for clothing and furnishings. Along with the checks were seventy-eight sorts of holland stripes, eighty-four of cherydery and one hundred and ninety-two kinds of fustian. The total number of textiles listed was four hundred and seventy-six,<sup>1</sup> a truly impressive indication of the acceleration of production within the industry over the previous quarter century.

From the outset the products of the cotton industry were developed and directed towards a broad market within Britain, but one which reflected certain common characteristics. This market was composed of the working and middle ranks of society as identified earlier. These segments were not affluent yet but were able to afford some of the amenities the society produced and they desired to appear both well dressed and perhaps to be slightly more prosperous than they were. The cotton industry was looked to for the means to fulfill these aspirations. The highest ranks of society, with some exceptions, routinely purchased the most costly silks, satins, brocades, wool worsteds and muslins. The British "ten thousand" could not hold out the commercial appeal of the millions ranking in society between lord and pauper. It was to these millions that the bulk of the cotton textiles were directed. In turn the demand generated by these classes fostered an even greater boost in the numbers and range of cottons produced. The lists of textiles manufactured in the last decades of the century confirm the focus of the industry's emphasis.

Table 1:5

Price Division of Cotton Textiles, 1775-85

<u>Under 12½d</u>	<u>13d - 2/</u>	<u>2/ - 11/6d</u>
71	136	46

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1. Mary Elizabeth Burbidge, "The Bower Textile Sample Book", Textile History, vol. 14, no. 2, 1983, pp. 213-5.

The two hundred and fifty-three cotton textiles culled from several sources were divided into three price groups; those under 12½ pence per yard; those from 13 pence to two shillings; and finally those cottons costing from two shillings to the top priced fabric of eleven shillings and six pence per yard. The assortment of cotton textiles is in itself an impressive commentary on the developing productivity. When viewed with reference to the three categories the area of market concentration becomes even more apparent. Of the two hundred and fifty-three sorts of cottons, one hundred and thirty-six fall within the medium price range of fabrics, while the lower price range contains seventy-one sorts of cottons. In the collection of high priced goods are listed forty-six and these are made-up in the main of hard-wearing fustians, corduroys, velverets and the like. The vast majority of the cottons manufactured fall within a common category of affordable merchandise with the essential qualities of low cost, attractiveness and washability paramount. Even when the technological progress enabled the manufacture of fine muslins and calicos these were produced in a variety of qualities both medium and fine. And as has been stated the price of all cottons fell during the 1780's and after. It was to the broad middle group of consumers the textiles were directed and correspondingly the low and middle price range of fabrics enjoyed the biggest success and largest consumption.

S.D. Chapman's assessment of the consumption of printed cottons found the same pattern of production and consumption. Nearly fifty per cent of printed cottons consumed in 1797 sold for between 12½ and 18 pence per yard. This amounted to 12.6 million yards of printed cloth. The printed fabrics in the second most popular range fell between 18½ pence and two shillings six pence and of these 5.4 million yards were sold, 21 per cent of the total. The cheapest printed goods,

under 12 pence per yard, sold 2.8 million yards and accounted for 11 per cent of British consumption. In all, nearly sixty per cent of printed textiles consumed in the home market cost less than 18 pence per yard to purchase.<sup>1</sup>

Over the third quarter of the eighteenth century the most fundamental revisions in the components of dress and of household decor took place. These changes were preceded by a gradual, progressive increase in consumption of British-made cottons leading to wholesale innovations in dress and furnishings. Not all of the increased consumption came about as the result of substitutions for the other traditional fibres, wool, silk and linen, though there is no doubt that all of these manufactures suffered to some degree from the unprecedented advances of the cotton trade.<sup>1</sup> In addition to substitutions, there were innovations in dress which accounted for a portion of the demand. The cotton industry encouraged various of these, such as the use of underclothes and night clothes among the general populace instead of wearing a shift or shirt day and night. When the habits of the nobility in the wearing of night rails, for example, were successfully transplanted among the lower orders, that addendum to the common dress would in itself have generated the consumption of thousands of yards of cotton annually. Cotton textiles of all weights, qualities and varieties appeared in growing numbers from 1760 to 1800. What is now required is an assessment of the standards of dress of the various ranks of people in an effort to see how the components of dress and the standard of clothing changed over the period. As well, an effort will be made to show how the different levels of consumption varied within the great middle rank of people, between skilled labourer and thriving bourgeois.

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1. Chapman & Chasagne, p.90.

2. See Chapter 2 for a closer and more detailed study of the competition among these textiles for pre-eminence in the British market.

iii. Changing Standards of Dress and Furnishings among the Population, Expanding Consumption of Cotton Textiles, 1750-1800.

There was no precedent for the extensive use of cotton fabrics either in clothing or furnishings. Even in the days before the prohibition of Indian cottons, when each year millions of yards of cottons were brought into Britain, chintzes and calicos had formed only a very small portion of the clothing of the population and even that was confined to the most commercially accessible parts of the country. The cotton industry developed on the back of the linen industry. Initially several of the cottons of popular general wear were modelled on their linen precursors. Checks were the first such example. As more sorts of cotton checks were created, consumer choice would likely turn to the novel species of fabric.

An excellent example of typical working dress of women of small means appears in the Proceedings on the Kings Commission of the Peace, held at the Old Bailey. These records admit the reader into the lives of an enormously varied cross-section of society - all those who were victims of crime in London, in its environs and the county of Middlesex. In an astonishing number of instances burglaries were committed to steal any textiles or clothing stored on the premises. These goods were perhaps the most easily disposed of either privately or in the pawn shops scattered across the city. Indeed personal covetousness often seems to have motivated the thief. The records of contemporary prosecutions frequently contain enough information on the victims and the items stolen to enable a correlation to be formed between the rank or occupation of the victims and the clothing and textiles which they owned. The Old Bailey records, supplemented by similar newspaper accounts, provide extensive and continuous documentation of the changing

components of dress among the population as the cotton industry developed. Furthermore the records also suggest a measure of the personal possessions owned by the various individuals from many social and economic stations. Over sixty cases have been selected, illustrative of the changing use of cottons in everyday costume and the rising general levels of consumption of British cotton fabrics in the household. The bulk of the examples fall within the last quarter of the century, however sufficient early examples remain to provide a contrast to the later sartorial transformations of the populace.

One of the best examples of the common working woman's dress appears in a 1758 case and confirms the composite picture suggested by costume historians of that period. One outdoor servant possessed a linen gown, a linen handkerchief, a shift, a check apron and a silk hat.<sup>1</sup> A more detailed description of the same period provides further illustration of the garb of a working woman. This woman was described as wearing an "old patched twill petticoat, calico red and white bedgown, old red, short cloak, white holland gown rough dyed, black velvet hood, black silk bonnet."<sup>2</sup> The second individual though of apparently limited means, still owned several attractive articles of clothing.

The importance of the British cotton industry was that it provided new, inexpensive fabrics and hosiery that enabled even those of low income either to add to their existing wardrobe cheap accessories like aprons or handkerchiefs, or to change their apparel completely, selling the old clothes to a clothes broker and using the proceeds to buy a new gown. There are no household accounts from the lower classes, detailing expenditures on clothing. Thus one must depend on the second

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1. Proceedings on the King's Commission of the Peace...for the City of London; and also...for the County of Middlesex; Held At ... the Old Bailey...May, 1758, p. 201.

2. Ipswich Journal, 17 March 1759, quoted in Anne Buck, "Variations in English Women's Dress in the Eighteenth Century" Folk Life, vol. 9, 1971, p. 18.

hand descriptions of dress to give an indication of the clothing commonly worn, and through those trace expanding consumption of cottons.

The itemized attire of a young woman employed as a servant provides one indication of the use of cottons by the 1770's. The girl, Mary Wilds, lived in Holborn and her mother worked as a char. Mary wore in her everyday attire a pair of stays, a linen shift, two petticoats of unspecified fabric, a stuff gown, a checked apron, a pair of leather shoes with iron buckles and a silk handkerchief. The total value of her costume was assessed at eight shillings and eight pence, including the check apron which was priced at one shilling.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the somewhat meagre sound of this attire there are touches that suggest an attention to fashion in the shoe buckles, the cheap silk handkerchief and the check apron. The apron was the only portion of her clothing made of cotton and, along with handkerchiefs and cotton stockings, check aprons were the earliest and most common articles made of cotton to be found among the poorest citizens.

Check aprons had been accepted dress for working women for decades by 1770. Even in the 1750's a commentator writing a table of appropriate dress for the inmates of a workhouse had listed check handkerchiefs as necessary items of clothing for women.<sup>2</sup> Check probably provided one of the few touches of colour in the attire of the labouring poor as well as being a hard wearing fabric. In later life Samuel Bamford painted a word picture of his mother, stereotypical in costume of working women of her class during the decades before 1780:

Tall, upright, active, and cleanly to an excess: her cheeks were fair and ruddy as apples; her dark hair was combed over a

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1. Proceedings...Old Bailey, Dec. 1772, p. 20.

2. William Bailey, A treatise on the Better Employment and More Comfortable support of the Poor in Workhouses, 1758, p. 41.

roll before and behind, and confined by a mobcap as white as bleached linen could be made; her neck was covered by a handkerchief, over which she wore a bedgown; and a clean checked apron, with black hose and shoes completed her daily attire.

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Up to this point most of the instances relating the dress of working women have suggested rather spartan attire, of little variety. This was far from the case. The desire for fashionable clothing coursed through all levels of British society. Contemporary comments, contents of invoices and further itemized accounts of clothing present a far from austere portrait of the modes of working people. Domestic servants probably presented the most fashionable appearance. As wage earners in closest proximity to the wealthier middle and upper classes the example of the latest fashions were always before them, and even by mid-century attractive, inexpensive checks and printed linens were available in abundant supplies. By the last quarter of the century the choice in cheap, colourful cottons had multiplied four fold. Francis Place's young wife had worked at this time as a servant for a tradesman and Place himself commented on her proclivity for pretty clothes. Since her earnings were not great all her wages went on "a good stock of clothes".<sup>2</sup> More than one writer agreed with the denunciation printed in the London Magazine, condemning the "luxury of dress of our female servants and the daughters of farmers and many others in inferior stations who think that a well chosen cotton gown shall entitle them to the appellation of young ladies".<sup>3</sup> In line with this comment was the portion of a wardrobe of a female servant described as containing "one pink and black Manchester gown, lined with green stuff; one garnett stuff gown; one striped and flowered

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1. The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford, vol. I (1848, reprinted Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 5

2. The Autobiography of Francis Place, ed. Mary Thale (C.U.P., 1972), p. 100.

3. The London Magazine, vol. LII, 1783, pp. 129.

cotton gon [sic]; one light coloured quilted stuff coat".<sup>1</sup> Cotton fabrics did not comprise the total complement of her clothing. But three out of four gowns originated with the cotton industry. The six or seven shillings for cotton cloth for a gown or the eight shillings for a ready-made gown was low enough to create a greater potential consumption among the many ranks of working women for whom those prices meant only one week's work. The fact that a servant was able to afford four gowns is a significant commentary on the success of the marketing practices of the cotton industry.

It was the ordinary, everyday people of Britain who dressed themselves in British cottons. The wife of lighterman Joseph Barber, of Christ Church, Surrey, who owned two cotton gowns, "one a hop pattern, the other purple and white"; the thief described as wearing "a yellow spotted waistcoat of silk and cotton"; the woman in "a yellow striped Cotton Gown"; the missing young woman from the country dressed in "a cotton gown, with a purple ground, red and white spots"; and the "two notorious shoplifters" who escaped from Newgate dressed variously in black and white striped silk and cotton gown and a dark cotton gown with sprigs.<sup>2</sup>

Among the working men of Britain fustians and light cottons were to figure more and more frequently in descriptions of their clothing. The aforementioned lighterman still had buckskin breeches for himself and his sons, as did Thomas Partridge, a wheeler's apprentice about the same time.<sup>3</sup> But within a space of five years, velverets, corduroys, thicksets and velvet became the most frequently seen fabrics in men's

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1. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 8 Nov. 1777.

2. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 16 Jan. 1778; 8 Dec. 1777; 11 Dec. 1777; 23 Mar. 1779.  
The Public Advertiser, 19 Aug. 1784.

3. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 16 Jan. 1777.  
Proceedings...Old Bailey, March, 1774, pp. 20-1.

outer garments. In 1784 the stableman's breeches were made from corduroy. Carpenter, John Parker, used a thickset coat. While three watermen when attired other than in their trade costume wore a range of heavy cottons: Manchester waistcoat, brown, velveret or black Manchester breeches.<sup>1</sup> A bachelor, most probably employed as a skilled labourer, reflected in the contents of his wardrobe the growing preponderance of cotton textiles in the daily garb of working men. Joseph Coleman possessed in total:

four cloth coats, value 20s.  
 one velvet waistcoat, value 3s.  
 one nankeen waistcoat, value 3s.  
 one linen waistcoat, value 2s.  
 one pair of leather breeches, value 5s.  
 two pair of fustian breeches, value 5s.  
 one pair of nankeen breeches, value 3s.  
 one linen neck handkerchief, value 1s.                    2

While leather breeches continued to be used, they lost ground with each year to the growing volume of washable and hardwearing cotton textiles that annually assumed a greater portion of the market. Lyon Phillips, describing his employment as that of housekeeper, lost from his house in the Little Minories, a whole collection of men's and women's cotton clothing of both light and heavy weight.<sup>3</sup>

Cotton fabrics for working women's clothing were usually confined to the lighter sort of chintz, check or printed cotton, those for men among the same classes were at first only found among the fustians, and other heavy goods. However in the last two decades innovations in labouring men's dress continued. The first indication was the record of a Liverpool sailor's dress in 1784. At that time the man's

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1. Proceedings...Old Bailey, July 1784, p. 1114; Sept. 1785, p. 1201. The Public Advertiser, 25 Oct. 1784.

2. Proceedings...Old Bailey, Sept. 1784, p. 1131.

3. Ibid, Sept. 1784, p. 1192.

clothing consisted of "one woolen jacket...one man's hat...one cotton handkerchief...one striped cotton shirt...one pair of silver buttons...one pair of cotton stockings...one pair of silver buckles...one pair of leather shoes."<sup>1</sup> Since the sailor managed to hold on to his trousers even while in a drunken stupor these were not included in the itemization of his clothing. The significance of this inventory lies in the use of cotton for shirting. This was an important departure in the history of working costume. Hitherto only those en route to the Caribbean or to India had equipped themselves with cotton shirts. Although these shirts were available made to order or ready-made from several London warehouses, cotton shirts had not been generally accepted wear in England. However with the advent of the mid-1780's the use of light cottons in men's clothing became more wide spread. Thomas Reed, a hairdresser, for example, numbered sixteen calico shirts among his possessions in 1784,<sup>2</sup> for by this time London shops commonly carried this kind of cotton goods.<sup>3</sup>

The existing documentation, scattered though it may be, clearly indicates that by the last decade of the eighteenth century the dress of working men and women had altered substantially, both in its composition and in the average size of the wardrobe. Cotton textiles became a staple commodity in the clothing of labouring men and women by the close of the century. The account books of several of the retail shops run by the spinning mills reveal the routine purchase of inexpensive calicos and other cottons by their female operatives. Moreover the charge of four shillings and six pence for a bedgown seems below the customary charge for clothing of this type. Indeed in the table of

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1. Proceeding...Old Bailey, Sept. 1784, p. 1185.

2. Proceedings...Old Bailey, Dec. 1784, pp. 28-9.

3. See Tradecards 2-6 Appendix for further examples of cotton clothing sold by London tradesmen.

wages at the Bury mill for six random selected families for the year 1801 all earned over £1 per week for five people.<sup>1</sup> In years of good trade that would amount to well over £50 per year, sufficient to contribute to demand for the cottons of their manufacture. But if there is no doubt that the highest paid members of the working classes contributed to the national demand for cotton textiles, did the poorest sections of the working classes add to the national demand? In fact even among the poorest classes, the working poor and paupers, certain items made from cotton textiles were thought essential. An anonymous lady of the period published a lengthy plan of her own devising designed to provide the working poor with the essentials of dress at the lowest cost possible. Parents, two children and a baby were included in this exercise whereby clothes would be made up by the Sunday school to be sold to the poor of the parish at cost. As the fabrics would be bought wholesale this was thought to give a considerable saving.<sup>2</sup>

For women and girls it was determined that cotton checks only would suffice in the making of their aprons. Two yards were required for the largest girl's apron and double that for the largest women's. Boys were equipped with sturdy white napped jackets, as well as "red napped waistcoats". Boys' shirts could be made from either cotton or linen. It is probable that these garments were constructed from fustians or other similar cotton cloths. The father's costume was made without any cotton, although tapes and pocket materials would probably have been used in the making. However the family member that involved the greatest consumption of cottons was the baby. Included in the list of items thought essential were two sheets of Lancashire cloth for the wife's child-bed; two baby skirts made of figured diaper

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1. Collier, pp. 30, 33.

2. Instructions for Cutting out Apparel for the Poor..., (1789), pp. iii-iv.

and two baby frocks made of printed cotton. The latter item was proposed to be made from printed cotton costing two shillings per yard, the sheeting to cost fourteen pence per yard and the figured diaper seven and half pence per yard.<sup>1</sup>

The proposal detailed by the charitable Hertingfordbury lady was intended to represent the most fundamental level of consumption of textiles deemed acceptable. Seen as the minimum standard of acceptable dress, the plan reflects changing levels of expectation, both the expectations of the individuals and those of society about the level at which it allows its dependents to live. The worthy poor were never provided with more than the minimum acceptable amount of clothing, so as not to encourage sloth among local labourers. However the minimum varied as the prosperity of the society increased. Concepts of the basics in clothing, as represented in the published plan, appear to have undergone modifications with rising standards of consumption among the whole society. It can then be inferred that those not receiving charitable assistance owned much more in the way of clothing and household linens, for it was not seen as extravagant to clothe the baby of those receiving charity in printed cotton costing two shillings the yard. That assumption on the part of the author of the plan is a pertinent commentary on the levels of societal expectation and rising rates of consumption through all ranks of society.

The account of wearing apparel received and distributed by the constable in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire from 1782 to 1786 provides additional indications of the basic standards of clothing for which the local authorities were willing to pay. Pieces of cotton check and dozens of check handkerchiefs were bought or donated to the parish authorities,

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1. Instructions, pp. 40, 45, 56, 68, 72, 79-85.

along with "Yorkshire plain", linsey-woolsey, dowlass, flannel and hessen. These goods, in addition to knitting yarn, shoes and stockings were doled out to the local labouring poor. The supervisors of the poor relief do not seem to have been over generous, but the necessities were more than provided as is plain from the special deliveries of, for example, a coverlet to an inmate of the workhouse and cloth to make a bolster for another parishioner<sup>1</sup>. Check handkerchiefs and check cotton for aprons was distributed in abundance. It appears to have been the one colourful element in an otherwise drab dress of the poor. When one considers the over one hundred sorts of checks manufactured for clothing listed in the Power sample book the popularity of this inexpensive fabric cannot be wondered at, nor can one dispute the vast market for these goods throughout the working classes of Britain.

The Morgan Drapers Ledger provides a running total of expenditures for the whole range of customers throughout the villages and valleys of south Wales in the last decade of the century. The customers identified by trade or occupation show an identical manner of consumption to their counterparts in the southeast of England. As well as buying printed calico and love ribbons, the ~~maltster~~ David Hopkins, for example, also bought himself a scarlet swansdown shape and a length of wild boar tammy. Servants were purchased ready-made cotton gowns by their employers. Mr. Rees Howell, the tanner, bought muslin and a quilted petticoat for his wife.<sup>2</sup> Other skilled craftsmen like Evan Evans the cordwainer and William Story the joiner spent between ten and twenty pounds annually on textiles and textile goods from Morgan. A substantial portion of these expenditures was on various sorts of cottons

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1. D/P29 9/1, Account of Wearing Apparel received and distributed - Chestnut constable accounts, 1782-86, Hertfordshire Record Office.
  2. D/D ma 139, Morgan Draper's Ledger, pp. 100, 101, 110, Glamorgan Record Office.

and not the cheapest sorts either. Both bought several different kinds, muslins, printed calico, furniture checks and waistcoat shapes. The smith followed an identical mode of consumption. Over several years John Powell, the smith, bought regular supplies of corduroy, as well as printed calico, plain cotton and, in 1801, the new "Nelsons Corduroy". The baker, the millwright, tanner Phillip Buttrel and the currier Mrs. Morgan purchased the same sorts of goods, although the many varieties of cottons allowed individual tastes free range within the price catagories.<sup>1</sup> These regular purchases bear out the contention that the working classes, both skilled and unskilled, were steadily accumulating and replacing clothing and household furnishings at an unprecedented rate and that cotton textiles made this possible. Moreover, as the cotton industry developed and the price of cottons decreased more articles made from the fibre were included in clothing consignments to the armed forces. Part of the enthusiasm for cottons was due to the decline in price, but an equal measure can be attributed to the intrinsic characteristics of the cotton textiles. The naval physician Thomas Trotter represented the new ideas on health and hygiene for working men when he denounced the practising of issuing flannel clothing to be worn next to the skin. Trotter declared that it turned men into "walking stinkpots". He insisted that "If British seamen are to wear flannel next the skin, they...must soon lose the hardiness of constitution that fits them for duty. Clothe them as warm as you please but in the name of cleanliness give them linen or cotton next the skin".<sup>2</sup> Doctors such as William Buchanan promulgated ideas of domestic hygiene as bulwarks against disease. These concepts were

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1. Morgan Draper's Ledger, pp. 187, 248, 165, 334, 29, 26, 1, 117.
  2. T. Trotter, Medicina Nautica, III (1801), pp. 93-4, quoted in Peter Mathias, "The armed forces, medicine and public health" The Transformation of England (London, Methuen, 1979), p.278.

given greater credence during the last half of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> It does not seem coincidental that large orders for cotton shirts were placed by the navy in 1793.<sup>2</sup> Comparable acceleration in demand among the civilian population probably owed something to these new ideas as well.

The vast, diverse contingent of the middle classes had, by their definition more to spend on material comforts. Not surprisingly the consumption of British cottons by these orders varied from that of the labouring classes. A greater range of social activities necessitated a greater number of costumes and thus more clothing. The women in this group were not restricted to checks for their daily attire, but had within their grasp a selection of garments of many sorts of cottons, such as the "white fustian Riding-habit turned up with blue and laced with silver, a Petticoat of the same, and a waistcoat trimmed also with silver."<sup>3</sup> Thus these classes had an interest in the more costly cotton textiles, and especially those with some element of originality in their make-up. While working in London in 1758, Benjamin Franklin sent goods of this sort to his wife. Included in the package was a note describing the contents "56 Yards of Cotton, printed curiously from Copper Plates, a new Invention, to make Bed & Window Curtains...Also 7 yards of printed Cotton, blue Ground, to make you a Gown".<sup>4</sup> Thus while this group of consumers did not bedeck themselves with cottons everyday the many and varied cotton textiles devised over this period were to be invaluable additions both in the wardrobe and in furnishing the house.

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1. Mathias op. cit. p. 276.

2. Adm. 49/35, Admiralty Records.

3. James Peller Malcolm, Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London during the Eighteenth Century, vol. II, (London, 1810), p. 336.

4. Letter of Benjamin Franklin, quoted in Printed Textiles, p. 29.

It is among references to genteel households and those in trade that indications abound of the generalized use of printed cottons as household furnishings. Out of a house in New Street, Hanover Square, for example, were stolen in 1778 "three blue striped window curtains; two figured cotton ditto of chintz pattern; two white counterpane; six elbow chair-cases of blue striped Manchester, and a sofa case of the same."<sup>1</sup> A silversmith lost from his house an elaborately printed four-poster bed furnishings of Manchester cottons,<sup>2</sup> while most advertisements in the period, announcing auctions of house contents, included references to items such as "window curtains of chintz, cotton and Manchester" or chintz and check bed furniture.<sup>2</sup> Some modest households might boast only a cotton counterpane or chintz curtains. However the fabric blowing in most windows and covering many beds were the chintzes and checks emanating from north west England.

An inventory of the contents of a thriving Hertfordshire inn presents another venue where cotton furniture textiles found a healthy market. Traffic on British roads increased almost yearly during the last half of the eighteenth century and with it grew the numbers of inns scattered along the highways ministering to travellers. The Black Bull at Broxbourne was one of the prosperous hostelries dotted about the countryside. The contents of this inn reflect the national pre-occupation with the material amelioration of life. The rooms were filled with the latest accoutrements for the elegant domestic surroundings; mahogany goods, table clocks, "India japaned dressing Boxes", "a pier glass in japaned framy", and "Russia leather chairs" were some of the items listed. British-made cottons comprised the majority of soft furnishings through-

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1. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 11 April 1778.

2. Ibid, 12 Nov. 1778.

3. Ibid, 22 April 1783 General Advertiser, 14 June 1751.

out the inn, and these would have been selected as the finishing touch for fashionable interior fittings. Almost every room was decorated with examples of cotton furnishings, like, for example, "blue & white printed cotton furniture made to draw up drapery fringed" or the "2 blue & white festoon Cotton window curtains".<sup>1</sup> This sort of record, though an individual instance of the use of cotton textiles, when set within a period of continuous references in advertisements, commercial inventories and private records, confirms the status of these textiles as the most popular and commonly used furnishings. Such records mirror the most widely prevalent consumer practices, in both public and private settings.

The clothing of the middle classes was often an advertisement and assertion of their status as much as a practical reflection of personal income. Society set certain standards of dress to which the aspirants of gentility had to adhere. These standards of dress sparked a greater consumption of the higher priced cottons than necessity demanded, for the cottons could be used as substitutes for the most costly textiles while still preserving a fashionable appearance. Growing numbers aspired to the standards of gentility, and in this pursuit appearance was paramount. That being the case continuing expanding expenditures were generated by the wide range of middle classes, subscribing to the philosophy that,

on our dress depends the general estimation of the world, as persons are every way looked upon according to their cloathes, and their merit valued by the judgement of their taylor or their mantua-maker, dress is a thing which deserves our serious consideration....

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1. BroxburneD/1, An inventory of the Household Goods & Chatels of Mrs. Ruth Francis at her House the sign of the Black Bull at Broxhurn... 1786, Hertford Record Office.
  2. The Lady's Magazine, vol. 5, 1774, p. 538.

Documentation from around 1775 shows a persistent use of cottons in the costume of the middle and upper classes. However these groups were not obliged to restrict themselves exclusively to cotton fabrics. Thus in a collection of four or five gowns two or perhaps three would be made of cotton and the rest of fine linens, silks or wools.<sup>1</sup> Moreover of the cotton fabrics used in clothing a portion of those were made of Indian muslins, as the British producers did not yet manufacture a cloth of comparable quality. The composition of men's attire in the middle orders did not alter as dramatically as did that of the women. Cottons were incorporated in waistcoats and heavy breeches, stocks were routinely made from muslin, but there again the greater consumption of fine British cottons awaited innovations in the cotton industry itself. An unusual discovery of cotton trousers was made among the clothing of a ship's captain. But in this case they were most probably a special order for a hotter climate.<sup>2</sup>

By the 1780's the dress of women in the middling ranks of British society, from the wife of a prosperous shopkeeper to the family of a wealthy merchant or professional, had experienced a dramatic change; a change equally as marked as that felt by their poorer sisters. The lists of stolen clothing from two daughters and one female servant of a brandy merchant living in Westminster illustrates how closely the wardrobes of the two classes of women resembled each other.

	<u>Daughters</u>	<u>Servant</u>
	<u>Margy Read</u>	<u>Mary Dentry</u>
	<u>Mary Read</u>	
1 check apron-6d	1 silk petticoat-1s.	1 silk cloak-6d
1½yds. cotton-2s.	1 cotton gown-7s.	1 cotton gown-7s.
1 satin petticoat-1s.	1 pr. woman's stays-4s.	
1 muslin cap-1s.	1 calico apron-6d.	
	1 linen petticoat-6d.	

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1. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 3 Nov. 1777; 6 Jan. 1778; 31 Oct. 1778.  
Proceedings...Old Bailey, Dec., 1775, p.34.
  2. Ibid, Sept., 1776 p. 351; Oct. 1784, pp. 1281-2, 1334-5
  3. Proceedings...Old Bailey, July, 1784, p. 900.

The number of items owned stands as the only demonstrable difference between the wardrobes of these women from two different stations in life. Two other lists of goods taken from middling households in the mid 1780's contain very similar sorts of clothing and accessories, though one came from the home of a publican at Shoreditch and the other from a house on White Cross Street. The manufacture of fine muslins and calicos in Britain facilitated an even more elegant dress among the middle classes in obedience to the latest fashions. Late eighteenth century inventories reveal increasing quantities of muslins in the households of the middle classes. Moreover the household accounts of one Lancashire middle class family exemplifies how families of this type became more and more pre-occupied with the movements of fashion and the presentation of a modish appearance. The rising fortunes of this family were immediately translated into increased consumer spending.

The household accounts do not divulge the source of the family's rising prosperity. But in common with thousands of such families the late eighteenth century brought greater affluence whether generated by trade, commerce or industry. The family's aspirations to gentility are unmistakable in the expenditures for dancing lessons, the conversation club and the purchase of books such as the Dictionary of Trade and the History of England.<sup>1</sup> The years covered by the account book are providential. Running from 1770 to 1782 they include the time of the greatest expansion to date in the cotton industry and coinciding with this family's growing wealth were greater sums spent on fashionable cottons. The first year records one purchase of cotton goods - ten shillings and six pence for fustian. None were noted in 1771 or 1772,

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1. Eng. MS. 989 R9 1695, Hibbert-Ware Papers, John Rylands Library, Manchester.

while in the next year over three pounds was spent on large quantities of furniture check. The pattern of comparatively restrained but continuous spending on household improvements continued until the next decade at which time there begins a flurry of shopping for stylish clothing, most of which involved buying varieties of cottons.

Throughout the three years in the 1780's the entries reflect a complete pre-occupation with fashions and stylish clothing for the whole family, but especially for the daughter, Hannah. And as the new and larger generations of children grew up in Britian, this would have been a common scenario throughout middle class Britain. Several pounds worth of muslin were purchased in 1781, in addition to other fashionable items purchased. In subsequent years as much as five pounds were spent each year to augment the daughter's wardrobe, concentrating first on muslins for accessories and then on printed cottons for gowns.<sup>1</sup> The pattern of expenditure encapsulated in a single family account book mirrors a level of demand pervasive throughout the expanding middle classes.

Demand for a wide variety of cotton fabrics was just as common among the middle classes in south Wales. Over a period of one year the local surgeon bought Wigan stripe cotton, muslin, furniture check, "Genoa Velvet" and holland. Mr. Elias Jenkins, Esq., of Neath, matched these diverse expenditures on cottons with orders of fustians, muslin, jean, cotton lining, muslin handkerchiefs, checks and a cotton gown within the first eight months of 1791. Nearly three pounds was spent on cottons in that year, and over three pounds in the first six months of the next. An average of from three to five pounds appears to have been the normal rate of expenditure for the middle class customers

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1. Eng. MS. 989 R9 1695, Hibbert-Ware Papers.

of Morgan the draper.<sup>1</sup> This rate of purchasing cottons appears to have been the norm for that period and their social class. Compare those purchases with the more than fifty pounds per year spent on apparel in 1786 by a scion of a baronet.<sup>2</sup> Or the impressive collection of clothing of another member of the higher classes of society. The late Mr. Richard Tristram had accumulated by 1785 the following in the way of clothing: 37 shirts; 44 neckcloths, 22 silk handkerchiefs, 2 lawn handkerchiefs, 37 caps, 8 spatterdashes, 22 pairs of socks, 13 waistcoats, 7 pairs of breeches, 7 pairs of flannel gloves, 3 pairs of flannel sleeves, and 1 morning gown, to list but a portion of his attire.<sup>3</sup> However magnificent the costume of the gentry and nobility, the collective demand of the labouring and middle classes provided the greatest measure of impetus for the cotton industry in the last half of the eighteenth century. Hundreds of thousands of five, ten and twenty shilling purchases over a year generated greater economic demand than would the exclusive patronage of the well-born. The cotton industry prospered feeding the legitimate needs and extraneous conceits of the whole nation. Demand was fostered not only for necessities but for an unceasing stream of inexpensive novelties in dress. For millions their aim in clothing had gone beyond being clean and warmly dressed, they now aspired to be in style both in their dress and their furnishings. The cotton manufacturers would certainly have concurred with the following sentiments.

Blessed be thou, O Vice! says Trade to the new  
 Modes of Dressing! How do I thrive by the Affil-  
 iance! But for thee, my City of London would fall  
 of it self....But for thee, all our Shopkeepers must  
 turn Bankrupts, our Apprentices turn Beggars, and  
 our sober virtuous Milliner Ladies turn Whores.  
 Without thee, O Glorious Vanity! ...the Manufac-  
 turers would mutiny, our Weavers rebel . . .

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1. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 243, 140, 166, 186, 66-7, 263.
  2. D/E Bd F7, Hertford Record Office.
  3. 60567, Hertford Record Office.

Hail, Virtuous Pride! Regular Vanity and  
Necessary Luxury! How are we obliged to  
your Excellence for our Commerce, for  
Improvement of Arts, for the Encouragement  
of Industry....

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iv. Conclusion

There has been no attempt made to calculate the net consumption of cotton textiles per person as the industry developed. The sources do not lend themselves to this type of analysis. But the abundant interrelated documentation does portray a convincing verification of the rising levels of consumption of cotton textiles among the labouring and middle classes of society in Britain. The initial segment established the economic characteristics of the nation. Within the kingdom the burgeoning engine of industrial growth succeeded in mitigating traditional economic restraints in a society which was undergoing unparalleled growth in population. The positive popular assessment of the economy persisted throughout the period, and in spite of the pressures on the economy at the close of the century, expectations were in the main fulfilled for labourers and middle class. In the last decades of the century the people of Britain were able to dress better than ever before, to lie between clean, easily washed sheets, and to add inexpensive fabric amenities to their household furnishings. These improvements must be included in any calculations of the standard of living of the populace; they represent a substantial material improvement, and demand among consumers was bound to continue.

New ideas and aspirations percolated through British society; thoughts on anticipated material improvements to living standards and ideas on ways of tapping demand for new products and marketing them to the growing population. Individual manufacturers in the cotton industry awoke to the profits to be made in supplying the home market

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1. The Weekly Journal or Saturday Post, 7 February 1719.

with the whole range of fabrics which such a varied market required. The importance of the British market has never been disputed. The detailed examination of the diversification of British cottons stands as testimony to the breadth of demand incorporated within a single market. The degree to which the cotton industry succeeded in developing fabrics to meet the sectoral demands of the population can be judged by the degree to which cotton textiles dominated the dress and furnishings of British people and their homes. The final section of this chapter confirms that market demands were being met. The independent but interconnected documentation of the period traced an industrial revolution in dress and furnishings. This unparalleled social and economic phenomenon was precipitated by the dual forces of demand and production centred around the eighteenth century cotton industry.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE FOR PRE-EMINENCE IN THE 18TH CENTURY

BRITISH TEXTILE MARKET

i Competition between the Wool Trade and Cottons in the British Market

The market for textiles in the late eighteenth century was a vigorous, expanding forum in which invention and innovation played equal parts in the creation of stocks of goods. Competition abounded within this market. It flourished among the growing number of manufacturers, and between the British producers of the new cottons and those engaged in the manufacture and sale of more traditional materials. The composite of competitive forces shifted and changed over the latter half of the eighteenth century and with it the status of the cotton industry; beginning as an off-shoot of the linen trade and ending as one of the chief components of industrial Britain. An accurate assessment of the struggle for pre-eminence in the domestic market requires a longer view than that offered within the formal boundaries of this study. Legislative parameters and legal restrictions which shaped the cotton industry were established early in the century. Therefore one must look to the beginning of the century for an understanding of the competitive forces at play among the textile trades in Britain. A portion of this chapter will be a composite, drawing together disparate sources and previously unconnected research to provide an overall picture of the moving and changing face of competition among the various textiles. After that will follow the appraisal of the strategies of market dominance as they continued throughout the century.

The first concerted campaign to restrict the sale and use of cotton textiles commenced in the decades prior to 1700. The vociferous and sometimes violent opposition to the sale of cottons in Britain was led by the wool merchants, traders, and their allies. The strenuous objection to these novel materials advanced by the wool traders and manufacturers was due to the rapid rise in popularity of the light, painted, and printed fabrics, at a time of changing demand and shifting markets for the wool trade. Wool manufacturing had undergone considerable innovation over

the past century, responding to public demand for lighter fabrics with the introduction of New Draperies. The composition of Britain's wool trade was transformed by mid-seventeenth century and by 1700 the New Draperies made up sixty per cent of wool fabrics exported. For all this successful innovation, British merchants were still losing old customers as manufacturers in France and Spain began making wool fabrics, and although new markets were opening in southern Europe the British wool industry continued on the defensive against the new commercial forces.<sup>1</sup> The result of the shifts in production and re-arranging of markets was an increased anxiety over markets, an anxiety that intensified as, for the first time, the British market was introduced to a great array of unusual coloured textiles, made in an unfamiliar fibre - the cottons of the East Indies.

An atmosphere of compulsory product modification continued in the wool trade, as well as requisite redevelopment of markets; not surprisingly the wool industry felt particularly sensitive to what they saw as an invasion of their home market by competitive foreign goods such as had never before been seen in Europe. Indeed the East India Company first introduced Indian cottons more as curiosities than as legitimate trade goods.<sup>2</sup> However the examples of the Indian craft displayed in London generated a very positive response. By 1641 the Company was acknowledging the serendipitous success of these fabrics, writing to their agents in India that:

The Quilts of chints being novelities produced from £5.5s.0d to £6 the pair, a further supply therefore desired, and both as regards those and the Chints more should be made on the white grounds, and the branches and flowere to be in collors, and not to be (as these last sent) all in general of deep red ground and other sadded collors.

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1. Charles Wilson, "Cloth Production and International Competition in the Seventeenth Century" Economic History Review, 2nd series, vol. xiii, no.2, 1960, provides a more detailed examination of this phenomenon.
  2. P.J. Thomas, Mercantilism and East Indian Trade, (London, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1926 repr. 1963), pp. 25-6.
  3. Letter Books, 1641, quoted by C.P. Baker, Calico Printing and Painting in the East Indies in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries, (London, Edward Arnold, 1921), p.30.

Greater and greater emphasis was placed on the Indian-made cottons as a trade item by the English East India Company, with each success for these items in the home market. Fashion both in household furnishings and clothing favoured the oriental fabrics. In 1682 the Directors ordered that bed covers, curtains, and hangings be prepared for the British market "ready made of Serveral Sorts and Prices, Strong but none to dear nor over-mean". The rationale for this order was explained "you know our poorest people in England lye without any Curtains or Vallances and our richest in Damask...Possibly some of these things may gain that repute here as may give us cause of greater enlargement in them hereafter".<sup>1</sup> The East India Company constantly developed new products in their efforts to extend the sales in the British market, to the discomfiture of their competitors. The wide variety of Indian textiles shipped to England possessed the lightness and rich colours reminiscent of silks and brocades at a fraction of the cost. In addition the cottons were washable and colourfast. Chintzes and callicos succeeded over traditional fabrics where beauty and low cost were preferred over durability. By the 1680's Indian cottons arrived at English ports in amounts that were without precedent. In 1664 the Company had imported over one quarter of a million pieces of calico, muslin, chintz and the like, equalling 73% of the Company's trade. Twenty years later more than one million pieces of cotton cloth arrived at the Company's English warehouses, totalling 83% of their East India trade. The profits of this trade were high. The sale of the 1681 shipments of textiles from Bombay, Madras, and Bengal, for example, brought £519,851 to the Company coffers.<sup>2</sup>

Not satisfied with extending the market for Indian goods among the

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1. Letter Book, 1682, quoted by John Irwin, "Indian Textiles in the Seventeenth Century" Studies in Indo-European Textile History, (Calico Museum of Textile, Ahmedabad, 1966), pp. 36-7.

2. K.N. Chaudhuri, The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, (Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 282, 540, 542, 544.

lower and middle classes alone, the Company's head, Sir Josiah Child, set out to woo the upper classes - gentry, nobility, and even royalty - to expand the patronage of East India wares. Connections with the City and the Court were exploited; favours granted and services rendered; all with the aim of ingratiating the Company and its goods with the fashionable and the powerful. The judicious distribution of samples of Indian goods among the great and near great, financial contributions to the monarchs such as Charles II, and astute appointments to Company positions soon gave the East India Company and its oriental products an unassailable satchel.<sup>1</sup> By 1687 the Directors could report to their servants in India that calicos, chintzes and muslins were the "Ware of Ladyes of the greatest quality, which they wear on the outside of Gowns and Mantuoës and which they line with velvet and Cloth of Gold."<sup>2</sup> Others less sanguine when recounting the commercial coup of the East India Company concurred with Defoe that, "everything that used to be made of wool or silk, relating either to the dress of the women or the furniture of our houses, was supplied by the Indian trade."<sup>3</sup> A conspicuous success of this sort did not go unopposed.

During the last twenty years of the seventeenth century a complex series of events culminated in the first legislation prohibiting the use or sale of certain Indian-made textiles in Britain. The passage of this Bill through Parliament was preceded by several crucial shifts in the political power wielded by the East India Company, plus the simultaneous development of a cohesive opposition to the eastern trade, formed by the wool trade and the landed gentry.

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1. Audrey W. Douglas, "Cotton Textiles in England: The East India Company's Attempt to Exploit Developments in Fashion, 1660-1721" Journal of British Studies, vol. VIII, no. 2, 1969, pp. 28-32.
  2. Despatch Book, 23 March 1687, vol. 91, p. 275. India Record Office.
  3. Daniel Defoe, Weekly Review, 31 Jan. 1708.

The East India Company ensured its security in trade through a close alliance with the Stuart kings. The Glorious Revolution marked the start of rather more difficult relations. William was under none of the monetary obligations that had aligned his predecessors with the interests of the Company. Moreover he felt inclined to listen to the complaints concerning the exclusivity of the eastern trade voiced by those men who had helped him to the English throne. From 1689 to 1695 the East India Company was under attack in the Commons from a variety of sources; disgruntled Levantine traders, ambitious independent traders, and investors, frustrated at restraints on their proposed investment in the oriental trade. Just as Child began to placate his principal critics on the composition of the East India Company there was a storm of criticism raised against the trade in Indian textiles itself.<sup>1</sup>

Other more perspicacious commentators insisted that competition with cheaper foreign goods would ultimately be a benefit to British industry.

It is very true, that the English Manufacture cannot be sold so dear, or rather the East Indian Trade, will put an End to many of our English Manufacturers... [But] the East India Trade, by putting Persons upon Invention, may be the Cause of doing Things with less Labour; and then, tho' Wages should not, the Price of Manufactures might be abated. ...The East India Trade procures Things with less, and cheaper Labour, than would be necessary to make the like in England; it is therefore very likely to be the Cause of Invention of Arts and Engines, to save the Labour of Hands in other Manufactures; these are the Effects of Necessity....

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However, pragmatic assessments such as these did not convince the wool traders to call off their campaign.

The battle for access to the British market was not fought solely to determine which textiles would best serve the national market. On

1. Henry Horwitz, "The East India Trade, The Politicians, and the Constitution: 1689-1702" Journal of British Studies, vol. xvii, no.2, 1978, pp. 1-9; Derek Jarret, Britain 1689-1815, (London, Longman, 1965), p. 101.
2. The Advantages of the East India Trade to England, considered...., 1697-8.

the contrary, the most vehement opposition to the East India trade emanated from a section of society who bitterly resented all of the flourishing commercial activity which characterized the age, and attacked the East India Company in particular because of its commercial and political pre-eminence. Many English landowners equated England's mercantile ascendancy with their own gradual slide from the prosperity and political power enjoyed by their fathers and grandfathers. The country Tories saw themselves as the natural leaders of English society and politics. In their estimation the Restoration guaranteed them this station and the advent of merchants and financiers into positions of prominence in the Court, the House, and the City, explained, in their opinion, the subsequent loss of the political place and fortune they were used to expect. In actual fact, from the time of the Restoration the conditions that had made the gentry so prosperous on the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries began to change. An economic recession ate away at agricultural profits and lowered the profits for the affiliate of the English landowners, the wool industry.<sup>1</sup> That the declining prices for agricultural products benefitted large commercial endeavours, selling cheaply to a mass market, seemed additionally galling to the struggling agriculturalist; however, such was the case.<sup>2</sup> The unsuccessful crusade which the wool trade had been engaged in for nearly forty years received a crucial impetus when the English landowners joined the ranks of the opponents of East India-made fabrics, with the hopes of bringing down the huge trading enterprise.

The gentry feared for the state of the national economy; they feared a further decline in their fortunes. The crisis in the wool industry cemented the alliance of wool merchants and gentry against the commercial

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1. Jarret, p. 43.

2. Charles Wilson, England's Apprenticeship, (London, Longman, 1965), pp. 185, 216-7.

leviathan, the East India Company. The gentry threw all their considerable influence behind the movement to prohibit Indian manufactured textiles from England. A foreboding contemporary prophesy of what England might become should the Indian imports go unchecked haunted both gentry and freeholder, "in the end it must produce...empty houses, empty purses, empty towns, a small poor, weak and slender people, and what can we imagine the value of our land?"<sup>1</sup> At this time the political voice of the country party was powerful: the electorate in the countryside was tired of excesses of the London clique in government and they supported the representatives of the country interests.<sup>2</sup> Once it was decided what action to take, the movement against eastern imports swelled to impressive proportions with the wool merchants and landowners leading the way.

In January of 1700 the House of Commons ordered that a Bill be prepared for "the more effectual employment of the poor and encouraging the Manufactures of England".<sup>3</sup> The first Act for the prohibition of Indian manufacturers stated that as of the 29th day of September, 1701 "all wrought silks, bengalls, and stuffs mixed with silk or herba, of the manufacture of Persia, China or East Indies and all calicoes painted, dyed, printed or stained there which are or shall be imported into this kingdom, shall not be worn or otherwise used within this kingdom of England, dominion of Wales, or town of Berwick upon Tweed."<sup>4</sup>

All Indian textiles were not banned from England as a result of this first Act. Plain, unfinished cottons and all white cotton materials could enter the country unchecked. The legislation had been enacted in the hopes that the new patterns of consumption could be reversed;

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1. Scott, Joint Stock Companies, N.D. P. 309, quoted in Thomas, p. 56-7.
  2. Jarret , pp. 110-1.
  3. Journals of the House of Commons , vol. 13, 1700, p. 174.  
(Hereafter rferred to as J.H.C.)
  4. II Will.III, c. 70.

that cottons could be eliminated from the market place; that clothing, furnishings, and taste in fashions could return once again to those in the days before the influx of cottons into Britain; that wool would dominate the British market once more without fear of foreign competition. These hopes were in vain. The economic forces at work in Britain could not be channelled into a mould of the Parliament's making. A number of British entrepreneurs attempted to reproduce the colours and prints characteristic of Indian printing, while others tried to immitate the cloth itself.

The campaign against the sale and use of cottons in England rose and fell with the health of the wool trade; each fluctuation in sales brought renewed calls for the elimination of Indian cottons, and indeed all light printed cotton blends, from the British market. Petitions arrived at Westminster with greater frequency from 1710 onwards from wool manufacturing centres such as Norwich, demanding government action against printed cottons and other light fabrics.

The spread of the many sorts of cotton or cotton blend textiles throughout the nation thoroughly antagonized the representatives of the wool and silk industries in Britain. A report on the state of these trades presented to the Commissioners of Trade and Plantation concluded that "it is a matter of greatest importance to this kingdom to support the woollen and silk manufactures and as at least two thirds of the woollen and almost all of the silk manufactures are consumed at home it is reasonable and necessary that the expense of foreign manufactures should be prevented as much as possible."<sup>1</sup> Indeed there had been a generalized substitution of Indian cottons and new British-made goods for various wool, silk, and wool/silk blends, a process begun in the late seventeenth

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1. Calendar of Treasury Papers, (1714-19), 12 Dec 1719, p. 486.

century which continued in the eighteenth century as British manufacturers and textile printers worked in greater numbers to produce a multitude of light-weight, attractive fabrics for the home market.<sup>1</sup> These new sorts of fabrics had diverse uses and could be adapted to suit the needs of a modiste or an upholsterer as easily as they could meet the requirements of an elegant lady or a tradesman's daughter. The manufacturers of wools and silks felt threatened. But the threat they sensed came from the commodity itself, whether imported or manufactured in England. Whatever the basis of their resentment the wool interests were not prepared to let the huge lower and middle class market escape them.

In 1721 Parliament prohibited all cotton textiles from the nation.

The Act stipulated that "any stuff made of cotton or mixed therewith shall be printed or painted with any colour or colours, or any calico chequered or striped, or any calico stitched or flowered in foreign parts" were to be banned.<sup>2</sup> Not only was it illegal to sell cotton material in England, but it was also against the law to wear or use cotton textiles of any description. Parliament had taken the most stringent measures at its disposal to prop up the wool trade and prevent a possibly dangerous state of unrest in the country. In so doing they had implicitly asserted that the legislation of their devising would have the ultimate authority in the shaping of the economy. However, resolving the conflict among textile producers competing for access to the British market was ultimately outside their control. The demands of the market place could not be restricted by legislation; goods no longer available from one source would be sought from alternate sources of supply.

Throughout Britain various communities of weavers and entrepreneurs

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1. The author of The Merchant's Warehouse laid open: Or, The Plain Dealing Linen-Draper, 1695, described in some detail the numerous Indian and English linen and cotton/linen fabrics sold in Britain around the turn of the century.

2. 7 Geo. I, c. 7.

persisted in developing the skills required to produce the light printed fabrics so greatly prized by British consumers. Their success can be judged by the persistent complaints of the wool industry who continued to demand the eradication of competition in the home market with the elimination of all the new printed fabrics. A report of this continuing campaign against British-made light textiles appears in The Country Journal in the summer of 1728.

A petition was lately presented to the Worshipful Company of Weavers, sign'd by above a thousand of their Journeymen, complaining of the great Miseries and Hardships which they undergo, occasioned by the Want of Trade, which they attribute to the wear of printed Linnens, as was formerly their Case when Callicoes were worn.

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Dissatisfaction persisted among those employed in the wool trade as printed linens and cotton/linens became regular components of British dress, as well as household furnishings. Efforts on the part of the wool industry to reverse this consumer trend led them to begin an advertising campaign directed against these British-made fabrics. The advertisers maintained that all those using or wearing the fustians (cotton/linen fabrics) were liable to prosecution under the Act of 1721. Such advertisements were "industriously handed about, in order to deter People from wearing or using the same".<sup>2</sup> The advertisements produced in Norwich papers proved to have a very detrimental effect on the sale of fustians. Not satisfied with advertisements alone the Norwich wool merchants began enclosing printed notices in all their orders. These warned retail and wholesale tradesmen of the possible dangers of dealing in goods which they described as prohibited. Customers of the fustian manufacturers were very successfully intimidated. The fustian merchants from Lancashire, Derbyshire, Cheshire and Nottinghamshire brought their objections to these tactics before Parlia-

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1. The Country Journal, or the Craftsman, 3 August 1728.

2. J.H.C., vol. XXII, 1735, p. 551,

ment. They insisted that as the fabrics they made were composed of linen and cotton, a product of the colonies, they had a perfect right to manufacture and sell fabrics demanded by British consumers. Witnesses attested to the decline in the sale of foreign linens since the growth of the British fustian industry; other witnesses described the great numbers involved in the trade; while the final reports to the Commons confirmed the damage that had been done to the trade by the campaign of intimidation launched by representatives of the wool interest.<sup>1</sup> The advocates for the nascent British cotton industry convinced the Commons of the justice of their case. In 1736 an Act was passed which sanctioned the manufacture of "Goods made of Linen Yarn and Cotton Wool manufactured in Great Britain".<sup>2</sup> This was a signal victory for the representatives of the cotton industry, proof of their increased economic and political strength, a portent to the traditional textile manufacturers of the potential strength of the new competitors.

The wool industry was defeated in its efforts to secure a virtual monopoly for its products in Britain. The ban on foreign cottons remained, but with the Act of 1736 British manufacturers were now free to develop their facilities for the production of cotton/linen fabrics. Legal security was thus assured for those keen to invest their money and skills in the growing industry. The legislation also assured the British manufactures of access to the largest and richest free-market area in Europe, unhampered by competition from a far-superior foreign product, and protected from the hostility of the wool trade. Undoubtedly the actual and potential profits of the trade in fustians generated support from Parliament in 1736 where earlier petitioning for protection fifteen years earlier had not moved them.

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1. J.H.C., VOL. XXII, 1735, pp. 551, 565-7.

2. J.H.C., vol. XXII, 1735, p. 567.

Nor was Parliament disposed to act against the legalized fustian industry several years later when there was renewed petitioning against this industry. A petition from the "several Masters, Workmen, and other Persons, concerned in the Woollen Manufacture, within the Borough of Warick<sup>(sic)</sup>" was presented to Parliament in March 1737 and their case elaborated to the members of the House. The petitioners maintained that:

the Worsted-weaving Trade of this Borough has for many years past, been carried on...and that, of late Years this Advantageous Manufacture has been gradually decreasing, by the prevailing Use and Wear of printed, painted, stained, and dyed, Linens and Cottons.... 1

The wool trade representatives proposed that foreign products be subject to higher duties. However there can be little doubt that some of their spleen was directed against the recently legitimized fustians. Many more petitions decrying the decline of the wool trade were received by Parliament from Somerset and Wiltshire, Cornwall and Cirencester, "Newberk<sup>(sic)</sup>" and Kidderminster, to name but a few of the petitioning regions.<sup>2</sup> But such was the prosperity of the new textile trades that suggestions that the new linen and cotton enterprises should be curtailed to bolster the wool trade were no longer entertained.

By 1751 the British government were in fact taking steps to protect the manufacture of checked and striped linens and cotton/linens. The House as a whole was resolved that the "Support and Encouragement of the British Manufactures of striped and chequered Linen, and Linen mixed with Cotton, is of great importance to the Trade and Navigation of this Kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

The qualities of many wool fabrics were no longer those in demand by consumers. Printed wool hangings once graced the walls, beds, and

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1. J.H.C., vol. XXIII, 1737, p. 61.

2. J.H.C., vol. XXIII, 1737, pp. 233, 237, 240, 241, 244, 264, 266, 268.

3. J.H.C., vol. XXVI, 1751, p. 218.

windows of the wealthy and middle classes. Cheap flannels and serges clothed the labouring people. But by the last quarter of the eighteenth century these woollens had been superseded. Consumer requirements for both clothing and furnishing textiles had changed. British consumers became more sophisticated, extending their demands to encompass a broader range of goods, expecting to be able to change their clothes to suit the fashions. Moreover greater emphasis was now being placed on keeping clothing and furnishings clean. Wool textiles were at a categorical disadvantage to cottons when it came to washing. Wool fibres mat with the least degree of friction in washing and are also sensitive to changes in temperatures of washing water. These textiles were not the ideal substances to scrub and scour, as would have been the common washing techniques at that time. Therefore as cleanliness came to assume greater importance to the population wool fabrics were placed at a greater disadvantage.

The Old Bailey records provide probably the only documentation of British dirty laundry for that period - stolen dirty laundry or recently laundered clothes appear to have been a common inconvenience of the age. In only two cases of the more than ten discovered were there records of wool textiles, both instances the items noted were the soon-to-be-denounced flannel waistcoats which were stolen from wash houses.<sup>1</sup> All other documentation of the contents of wash houses or clothes lines lists items such as those taken from a dirty linen bag in a house in Catherine-wheel Alley, Whitechapel: 6 check aprons, 1 plain cotton apron, 3 linen shirts, 4 linen shifts, 3 linen aprons, 2 cotton handkerchiefs, 3 linen handkerchiefs, 3 linen table cloths, 1 cotton waistcoat, 2 napkins, 1 frock, 2 cotton petticoats, 1 linen bed gown, 1 pair of cotton stockings, and 1 linen laundry bag.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Proceedings...Old Bailey, October 1784, p. 1281; December, 1784, pp. 125-6.

2. Ibid, October, 1784, pp. 1244-5.

References to washer women and households with specific areas devoted to clothes washing appear frequently in records from the late eighteenth century. Accounts from households records show a regular allocation of funds for washing.<sup>1</sup> The more the public wanted clean, easily maintained and inexpensive clothes the greater the disadvantage of the purveyors of wool textiles. Thomas Trotter publically disputed the use of flannel as underclothing and his criticism cannot have been the first. The readers of The Lady's Magazine were, on occasion, reminded of the desirability of cleanliness in a fashionable ensemble. In 1785, John Byng regretfully admitted that the days of his youth were long gone when a bucolic tenant "wore the same coloured coarse cloth all the year round".<sup>2</sup> As fewer and fewer working or middle class families wanted to be known as "walking stinkpots", as were the flannel-habited British sailors, the practice of wearing wool next to the skin declined and that of using cotton underclothing was gradually adopted.

Just as cotton textiles were adapted to new uses in clothing so new varieties of cotton textiles usurped the position of woollens in furnishings over the eighteenth century. Cotton furniture textiles were some of the earliest successful substitutions of cottons for wool textiles. (See Chapter 1, Section 2) This marked an unforeseen commercial coup. But the profitable sale of checked and striped cottons in the home market in response to this "particular Fashion in Furniture"<sup>3</sup> sparked further concentration of production in that field, until cottons completely dominated most low and medium cost textile furnishings. The occasional commentator might deplore the relegation of "honest grograms, tamines, linsey-woolsey and other wool [to] lie mildewed in our mercers' shops".<sup>4</sup> But

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1. Bou ASR 143, Northampton R.O.; Hand Morgan 24/3, Wm. Salte Library, Stafford.

2. The Torrington Diaries, Vol. I, ed. C.B. Andrews (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1934), p. 217.

3. Report relating to Chequered and Striped Linens, 1751, Reports from Committees of the House of Commons, vol. II, 1737-1765, p. 293.

4. The London Magazine, Vol. LII, 1783, pp. 128-9.

the massive public demand for cottons continued unchecked.

An article in Rees' Cyclop<sup>a</sup>edia acknowledged that from "the year 1775, the introduction of Arkwright's inventions for spinning, carding etc. into the cotton trade, produced a great change in the article of female dress in England, stuffs and tammies being supplanted by cotton goods, which were become very cheap."<sup>1</sup> The move away from wool goods persisted in spite of the substantial drop in the price of wool occasioned by upsets in export markets due to the American Revolutionary War. Rees described the price of wool in the last years of the war as being "lower than it had been in any period of our history".<sup>2</sup> However no corresponding up<sup>o</sup>surge in demand followed the temporary drop in wool prices. Table 2:1 illustrates the above-mentioned drop in price of a blue wool cloth supplied to the Greenwich Hospital over the 1770's. Known as "Wilts Blue Cloth" supplies of from three to ten thousand yards were purchased yearly to be made-up into uniforms for hospital staff.<sup>3</sup> However institutions such as this could not compensate through their purchases for a general decline in market demand for these wool goods.

The incorporation of improved spinning machinery into the cotton industry during the last twenty-five years of the century hit hard at several of the wool manufacturing regions over that period. The serge producing areas of Devon, for example, felt the competition keenly since the products they offered to consumers were ones for which cotton manufacturers provided alternatives. The serges produced in Devon were inexpensive fabrics designed to be a low cost clothing material. However it is possible that over the last forty years of the eighteenth century

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1. Abraham Rees, The Cyclop<sup>a</sup>edia ; or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Science and Literature, (London, Longman et al, 1819) vol. XXXVIII.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Beveridge Papers - Price History Archives, I22, London School of Economics.

Table 2:1Cost of "Wiltshire Blue Cloth"

(s. per yard)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>
1750	6.69	1776	6.00
1751	6.75	1777	6.00
1752	6.83	1778	6.00
1753	-	1779	6.00
1754	6.67		
1755	6.67	1780	6.00
1756	6.67	1781	6.19
1757	6.67	1782	6.25
1758	6.67	1783	6.31
1759	6.67	1784	6.33
		1785	6.45
1760	6.67	1786	6.50
1761	6.67	1787	6.50
1762	6.67	1788	6.50
1763	6.85	1789	6.50
1764	6.97		
1765	7.00	1790	6.67
1766	-	1791	5.95
1767	6.50	1792	5.92
1768	6.50	1793	6.25
1769	6.25	1794	-
		1795	6.33
1770	6.25	1796	6.33
1771	6.50	1797	6.33
1772	6.25	1798	6.33
1773	6.25	1799	6.33
1774	6.25		
1775	6.00	1800	6.33
		1801	6.33
		1802	6.33
		1803	6.33
		1804	6.79
		1805	6.92

Source: Beveridge Papers - Price History Archive, I22, London School of Economics.

serge products underwent a price increase thus undermining their market position even further. (See Table 2:2)

Table 2:2

Price of Serge Gown and Coat, 1750-1800

(shillings per pair)

<u>1750-1</u>	<u>1752-7</u>	<u>1758-9</u>	<u>1760-91</u>	<u>1792</u>	<u>1793-1800</u>
30.00	28.50	29.50	30.50	31.50	32.50

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The accounts of the Greenwich Hospital reveal a rise of two and a half shillings the pair for the serge gown and coat supplied the nurses in the hospital from 1760 to 1800,<sup>1</sup> though established dress standards ensured that institutions would continue to purchase the wool goods there was no such guarantee in the open market. However by the last quarter of the century Lancashire and the other cotton manufacturing districts offered many alternative fabrics that met standards of fashion and the new emphasis on cleanliness much better than the serges. Devon serge makers could muster few reserves in the face of the commercial challenge posed by the advancing industrial capacity of Lancashire. They suffered continuing reverses through consumer substitution of serges with velverets, velveteens, corduroys, thicksets, and the increasing inventory of cotton goods. Over the first half of the century the West Country and East Anglia had both offered persistent resistance to the sale of cottons in Britain. By the last quarter of the century it was very apparent that their fears had in fact been justified; both regions were adversely affected by the upsurge of a domestic rival. Yorkshire wool merchants and manufacturers too suffered from the competitive edge of the cotton industry. However the callimancoes and worsted stuffs they manufactured were soon made with

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1. Beveridge Papers - Price History Archives, I22.

the same technological innovations that had boosted the cotton industry to such prominence.<sup>1</sup> Moreover as the wools did not compete for the same place in the consumers' wardrobes as that occupied by cotton textiles Yorkshire goods continued in their deserved popularity.

Periodically patrons of the stuff manufacturers would be called upon to generate enthusiasm for the wool textiles. It was certainly in the interests of the landowners to try to do so as any drop in the wool clip would diminish their personal prosperity. Stuff Balls were held for a number of years during the last decades in the century in many east midlands counties, where all those attending were obliged to gown themselves in wool.<sup>2</sup> The verdict on these events was mixed. Lady Banks wrote in 1791 that, "I can't say much for the Manufacture, but it was certainly a charming good Meeting."<sup>3</sup> Hardly the response hoped for by the organizers, but entirely in concert with the prevailing modes of the time.

Consumers in Britain concurred with Lady Banks's assessment of the wool fabrics, at least as far as their suitability as very fashionable materials. Witness to the preference for the new cottons as opposed to the traditional wool, or wool/silk fabrics is found in the Barbara Johnson Sample Book. (See Section 4, p.146, also) From 1746 to the nineteenth century Barbara Johnson recorded all new additions of apparel. From 1752-6 four wool garments were made for Miss Johnson, but even in those early years before 1770 printed cotton or cotton/linen goods made up a part of her purchases. As well such items as an all cotton fustian riding dress were made in 1757. But throughout this period cottons comprised a small portion of her purchases, much less in evidence than the wools, silks and linens. The "Pompadour Broadcloth riding dress", "grey

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1. S.D. Chapman, "The Devon Cloth Industry in the Eighteenth Century" Devon & Cornwall Record Society, vol. 23, 1978, p. xix.
  2. Dear Miss Heber, ed. F. Bamford, (London, Constable & Co. Ltd., 1936), p.111-112, 159, 28.
  3. Ibid, p. 112.

Stuff negligee", and "black stuff short sack" were by far the more common purchases. From 1770 to 1800 no further expenditures on wool clothing were to be found. A gift of fourteen yards of "Irish stuff" was given her in 1792, but this item stands out as the sole example of wool clothing for that thirty years. It is not improbable that outer wear was made from wool fabric and not recorded in the book. But clearly Barbara Johnson, like Lady Banks, could not "say much" about the wools when compared to the extremely fashionable cotton textiles.<sup>1</sup>

For centuries Britain's eastern counties and the West Country had been at the heart of the British wool industry; now they were becoming peripheral both geographically and commercially to the innovative textile counties. Entrepreneurs attempted to apply Lancashire technology in these increasingly peripheral locations, however as S.D. Chapman describes, the results were not as had been hoped. "Unhappily for Devon, expertise was not easily transferred from north to south, and in the difficult trading conditions of the French Wars large and small firms alike capitulated to the competition of Lancashire and Yorkshire."<sup>2</sup> In fact it could truthfully be stated that the Norfolk and West Country wool manufacturers suffered both from the competition with cottons and the more efficiently produced Yorkshire wool fabrics. The Yorkshire textile producers also successfully introduced cotton mills in that region, while in Norfolk an American traveller recorded the less prosperous scene at the end of the century.

The present manufacture of Norwich is camblets and stuffs of the like kind chiefly for the Russian, Italian and Assyrian trade; some of these have greatly declined and the manufacture of cotton goods similar to Manchester has been since decreed; they are not however made so cheap....

3

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1. T. 219-1973, Barbara Johnson Sample Book, Textile Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, pp. 1-47.
  2. Chapman, p. xix.
  3. Journals of Joshua Gilpin, quoted in Chapman, p. xx.

The wool manufacturing communities of the south and east failed in their challenge to the Lancashire industrial hinterland. Rees records that,

many branches of the woollen and worsted trade have been gradually retiring from the south of England, and concentrating in the West Riding of Yorkshire and in Lancashire. These districts were the first to introduce mechanical improvements into wool manufacture, and thus gained a decided advantage over the more ancient of the woollen trade.

1

The commercial climate became more exacting and trading conditions less hospitable in the years of war with France; in this environment the inefficient and the improvident as well as those producers whose economies of scale simply could not match those developing in the north fell by the way. Table 2:1 shows the rise in price of "Wilts Blue Cloth" at the end of the century. The shift in industrial initiative from the wool to the cotton industry is reflected in the growth rates of real output. The latest figures available to compare the two industries in the eighteenth century show the growth rate of real output for cotton at 12.76 per cent per annum between 1780 and 1790. The wool trade achieved 0.54 per cent for the same period, a vivid indication of changing comparative vigour between the two industries.<sup>2</sup>

By the early nineteenth century the cotton industry had achieved the final advantage over the woollen products of the southwest in the reversal of the comparative prices of the two sorts of commodities. The trend of declining prices for cotton textiles culminated early in the nineteenth century with the price of cotton undercutting that of wool.<sup>3</sup> The cost of wool had risen sharply due to wartime shortages and disruptions in supplies. British consumers turned more and more to the abundant,

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1. Rees, vol. XXXVIII.

2. Crafts, p. 181.

3. Chapman, p. xxxii.

low-priced cotton textiles in preference to woollen goods. The British cotton industry suffered only moderate inconvenience, which in no way affected the growing diversity of their product or its low price.

The final phase of the competition between cotton and wool in the eighteenth century saw the cotton textiles emerge from the position of an adjunct to the linen trade to become the most prevalent new fabric in the industrial age. A letter from Robert Davison to Lord Carrington in 1802 decried the commercial inversion of the two industries, which in spite of his personal predisposition to the wool industry, he could not dispute.

the high price of wool has produced a very great and alarming rivalry in cotton fabrics ...the substitution of the latter for the former is immense, ...large mills and factories originally destined to the working of woollens have been compelled to devote their works to cotton. ...such substitutions must increase every day....

1

Commercial exigencies, changing consumer tastes, and industrial innovation coalesced to create an unprecedented substitution of textiles, reversing the tradition of centuries in favour of the products of the new industrial colossus. Custom and tradition perpetuated continuing institutional consumption of certain wool textiles. But where free choice operated, where consumers had direct market access, there was a perceptible switch to alternate cotton textiles.

#### ii Competition between Cotton and Linen in the Lancashire Industry

In the history of the cotton industry it is usually assumed that there was little or no competition between cottons and linens for ascendancy in the British market. The two sorts of fabrics are seen as complementary. However on several occasions linens too have been in competi-

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1. R. Davison to Lord Carrington, 28 August 1802 (Smith MSS., N.P.L.), quoted in Stanley D. Chapman, The Early Factory Masters, (Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1967), p. 215.

tion with cottons; first for a place in the market dominated by Indian cottons and later the two fibres competed for pride of place in the developing Lancashire textile industry.

In the late seventeenth century one of the chorus of opponents of the East India cottons were the manufacturers of linen textiles. The tremendous popularity of Indian cottons had to a large degree usurped the market traditionally filled by European and British linens. The British linen dealers feared a permanent loss of their home market. At the time of the first campaign against the importation of oriental cotton materials the voices of linen producers were heard along with those of the wool and silk manufacturers.

The campaigners added linens to the list of articles which were,

Goods of our own Make,...for the Supply of our Necessities, and hitherto have been thought very advantageous, as saving Expence in foreign Goods of this sort. If we should reject our own, and prefer the Consumption of those from India, we may reasonably expect, the other Nations should, by our own Example, do the same; and so by our own Endeavours, we should destroy what we ought to be industrious to preserve.

1

The complaints of the linen manufacturers did not last as long as did those of manufacturers of other British textiles for the linen cloths could be dyed and printed in close approximation of calicos. Members of the linen industry realized that should they adapt their textiles to the style of the Indian imports then they would enjoy a success comparable to that of their former rivals. The first Act of 1701, banning printed Indian cottons stimulated domestic printing of textiles. This in turn benefitted the trade in printed linens as well as in British-printed Indian cottons. At this point printed cottons and linens complemented each other, with linens in general being cheaper and directed towards the lower

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1. England and East India, inconsistent in their Manufactures, 1697.

end of the market and calicos to the middle and upper consumer groups. By the advent of the second campaign against East India imports, printed linens were associated in the minds of the wool interests with the cotton textiles so greatly despised. An editorial in The Weekly Journal wrote caustically of the "Callicoes and printed Linnen" which "sucks out the wealth of the Nation, and serves to enrich Foreigners".<sup>1</sup> The author of this passage conveniently ignored the industry which produced abundant supplies of printed linen in Britain; 2,841,000 yards of printed fabrics were produced in England and Wales in 1719, nearly half this amount was made up of printed linens and stuffs.<sup>2</sup> Defoe repined when writing about the contemporary fashion for printed linens rather than wool stuffs, writing in 1729 that,

A manufacture of painted linen, which, touching the particular pride and gay humour of the ordinary sort of people intercepts the woollen manufacture which they would otherwise be cloathed with...the poorer sort of people, the servants and the labouring poor who wear this new fangle are a vast multitude.

3

At this point in time linens were not competing with British cottons for ascendancy in the domestic market, for that specie of goods did not as yet exist. For more than fifty years of the eighteenth century what is generally described as the British cotton industry was in fact dominated by the manufacture of linen and linen-based textiles. Tape manufacturers such as J. and N. Philips were one of the first recorded of the new Lancashire companies. Their products were made wholly of linen.<sup>4</sup> The dependence of the early products on linen was documented by A.P. Wadsworth and Julia de Lacy Mann, who stated that two of the three sorts of textiles produced at this time were based all or in part on the use of linen yarns.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The Weekly Journal, 22 August 1719.

2. Schumpeter, p. 184; Wadsworth & Mann p. 138.

3. Daniel Defoe, The Humble Proposal to the People of England, 1729, p.50.

4. J & N. Philips Co., Eng. MS -M 97/3, Manchester Public Reference Library.

5. Wadsworth & Mann, pp. 173-5.

British spinners could not as yet produce sufficient quantities of cotton yarn strong enough to be suitable as warp for all their fabrics. The experience and expertise gradually accumulating in the handling and production of cotton was readily available and of a higher general standard among the producers of linen goods. Furthermore there were large supplies of inexpensive flax and linen yarn from Europe and the British Isles. Thus the manufacturers in the early "Cotton" industry depended on the abundant stocks of linen yarns for production of checks, tapes and many other goods. In fact as the Report for the House of Commons on Chequered and Striped Linens shows, some of the Manchester manufacturers did not consider the production of mixed linen/cotton fabrics as part of their main stream Lancashire textile industry at all. Mr. Samuel Touchet commented that "the Species made up of Cotton and Yarn [linen] are not reconed Part of the Linen Trade."<sup>1</sup>

This was the basis of competition between linen and cotton in the burgeoning British textile industry in the middle of the eighteenth century. It was an objective competition unlike that between wool and Indian cotton interests, based on the established use of a traditional commodity in the manufacture of checks and fustians, as opposed to a total dependence on the much newer cotton fibres for manufactures. The demand for light printed materials led to an increase in the consumption of different sorts of linens, in novel patterns. Cotton yarns were incorporated to create a greater similarity to the banned Indian cloths and with continuing use of the raw cotton technical skill grew among the British craftsmen. However up until the second half of the eighteenth century the low cost and ready availability of linen yarn guaranteed that a greater number

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1. Report relating to Chequered and Striped Linens, 1751, Reports from Committees of the House of Commons, vol. II, 1737-1765, p. 293.

of linen-based fabrics were made than cotton. But in spite of the general predominance of linens, the manufacture of cotton cloths was growing in the Manchester trade. Mr. John Craven testified before the above mentioned Committee, stating that in his opinion "The Manufactures in Manchester depend on Linen, as well as Cotton", but "Linen has decreased the Cotton increased; but...the Cotton is only a temporary Thing".<sup>1</sup> Few of the witnesses brought before the Committee seemed blessed with clairvoyance. They evinced only passing interest in the newer goods for home consumption, suggesting that their success was transitory and was "attributed to a particular Fashion in Furniture."<sup>2</sup> The principal pre-occupation of the attending manufacturers appeared to be the continuing steady sales of their linen textiles, as opposed to the innovation of new cotton goods. But with or without government attention a new range of textiles was being created.

Experience accumulated in all facets of the production of cotton textiles in the decades prior to 1750. By that time approximately one hundred different sorts of fabric were manufactured in the county of Lancashire, usually in mixtures of the four basic fibres; cotton, linen, silk and a few in wool mixtures.<sup>3</sup> Of that collection of Lancashire textiles ten were made entirely of linen and sixty-seven of mixed linen/cotton composition. The popular handkerchiefs, jean, and hooping cloths were pure linen goods and the thirteen sorts of chintzes and the seventeen sorts of checks owed half their contents to linen. For nearly three-quarters of the eighteenth century linen featured as one of the most versatile components of contemporary textile manufacture. Holker's list also included linen and wool fabrics; silk and linen were equally as common. Linen

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1. Report relating to Chequered and Striped Linens, 1751, Reports from Committees of the House of Commons, vol. II, 1737-1765, p. 293.

2. Ibid, p. 293.

3. G.G.2.

yarn was a staple of a textile trade with only four main fibres available. Great efforts were made by British manufacturers to devise textiles that equalled in quality the imported goods. Checked linen was one of the earliest successes and since the end of the seventeenth century had been described as "a thing of great use in our Nation...sold for...12d. per yard."<sup>1</sup> It is very unlikely that the use of cotton yarn in the production of checks was intended to launch a separate competitive industry. Rather the incorporation of cotton yarns would have helped make the fabrics lighter, in line with consumer demand for light-weight fabrics. But growing familiarity and improved techniques in cotton manufacture allied with demand for cotton textiles inevitably resulted in the development of a specialized segment within the linen industry.

Kay's flying shuttle had gradually improved the capacity of British weavers over the past several decades, but with an attending further dichotomy between the levels of production of weavers and those of cotton spinners. One weaver then required the combined output of five or six spinners for the production of cotton weft, thus there was a built-in break on the volume of cottons that could as yet be produced. There was little incentive to switch from linen warp to the inferior tensile strength of cotton yarn, particularly when there was so great a difficulty obtaining sufficient supplies of cotton weft. Thus there had been only limited attempts at the production of purely cotton cloths. Inferior technology in cotton spinning and the great reservoirs of flax and linen yarn forestalled any such large scale commercial endeavours.

The invoices of Peach & Pierce, a Bristol merchant house supplying Lancashire textiles, illustrates the predominance of linen goods at that period. Between the years 1753 and 1757 there were listed sixteen sorts

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1. The Merchant's Warehouse laid Open; or The plain Dealing Linen-Draper,  
p.6.

of linen checks, for example, compared to only eight sorts of cotton checks. (See Appendix I) Of the linen checks there were six qualities of yard wide checked cloth, five qualities of  $7/8$  wide checks, two of  $\frac{3}{4}$  wide, and one of yard and  $3/8$  wide linen checks.<sup>1</sup> This variety of linen was typical of the output of the Lancashire manufacturers. The inventory of a Northampton draper a decade earlier includes over thirty types of linens, excluding those imported into Britain.<sup>2</sup> The selection of linens enumerated in the inventories and invoices of the day would not be noteworthy had there not been a discernible shift from a majority of linens to an overwhelming preponderance of cotton goods within little over a decade.

A survey of any number of invoices, inventories and shop records in the late 1760's and 1770's reveals a large and growing stock of cotton textiles available for consumers. Clearly within approximately fifteen years a change had taken place; an advantage had materialized important enough to impell a shift from a linen-based manufacture in the Lancashire region, to a cotton centred industry. Merchants and craftsmen, experienced in the production of linens and linen/cottons, identified an advantage in the restructuring of their production. This advantage was sufficiently momentous to warrant the expense and inconvenience of a change in the substance of their production.

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1. Invoices, March, 1753 to August 1757. Beekman Papers, New York Historical Society, New York  
Several qualifying factors with regard to the analysis of the contents of the invoices must be noted. First, the price information is sporadic, in that it varies with the orders sent by customers. However it does represent the regular consignments from one supplier of Lancashire and Irish textiles. Second, it is impossible to obtain an exact determination of the quality of the fabrics in relation to price. However there is an accompanying letter book with the invoices which records complaints when any deterioration in quality occurs. Therefore there would seem to have been reasonable standards of consistency. The invoice prices, combined with the accompanying letters provide insights both in the movement of prices, comparison prices between linen and cotton, and the contemporary assessments of the reasons behind price rises and other changes.
  2. YZ 8366, Northampton Record Office.

The current explanation for the acceleration of production of cotton textiles holds that the first innovations made by Hargreaves and Arkwright boosted production in response to growing demand. Certainly the spinning jenny, the water frame and then the mule materially transformed the productive capacity of British cotton spinners. However there are elements of the transition from linen to cotton that are not wholly explained by the improved technology in spinning. Linen yarns were in abundant supply in the 1770's and 1780's at the same time that the manufacture of cottons was rapidly expanding, yet there was no return to the predominant position of linens among the Lancashire manufacturers. A demonstrable upswing took place in the cotton industry during the 1760's . As yet, no explanation as to the reason for the timing of this industrial rise has been offered.

Technological improvements from 1764 onwards allowed the production of cotton yarn to multiply. However another factor came into play as well, urging manufacturers to switch from linen to cotton yarn before improved spinning equipment provided the concrete rationale for such a change.

As has been stated British manufacturers received a substantial volume of European flax and linen yarn. (See Appendix IV) Lancashire producers J.&N. Philips liked especially the Hamburg yarn which they commissioned their agent to purchase from Manchester warehousemen.<sup>1</sup> These supplies were intrinsic to the manufacture of the tapes in which they specialized. In the table of prices garnered from the Beekman invoices the years 1753-55 show prices of linen checks to have been in general lower than those of comparable cotton goods. This was a major drawing point in the popularity of these fabrics. However with the start of the Seven Year's

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1. Letter, 10 August 1757, J. & N. Philips Co.

War in 1756, stocks of cheap European linen products were in jeopardy. Wars had in the past hampered deliveries of supplies of yarn necessary for Lancashire's industry.<sup>1</sup> The recurrence of this threat to Lancashire's yarn supplies was particularly inopportune at a period of rising production.

The London merchant house of Pomeroy & Streatfield made the first mention of a scarcity of linens in the winter of the new year 1757.

A severe cold spell locked vessels in Bremen and Hamburg harbours. The problems caused by the hard winter were exacerbated by "the troubles in the country where our saxon linnens are made" presaging a time in the near future when those linens would be "very scarce" in Britain.<sup>2</sup>

The disruption of the production and trade in German linens began in the first instance with the expectation of war. Pomeroy & Streatfield wrote in the spring of 1757 that Silesian linens "are charg'd 3d per piece higher. We assure You they cost us above 6d more." Moreover no immediate prospect of a fall in price was seen, "as that unhappy country is likely to be the seat of war"<sup>3</sup> Tradesmen expected that war would lead to a rise in the price of flax and linen goods and their expectations were confirmed by the autumn of 1757. At that time the London merchants wrote that their stocks of cambricks were "detained in Holland for want of convoy"<sup>4</sup> By December 1759, they reported that "Our Sletia [sic] linens of all kinds are very dear and scarce, and a great probability of a larger advance next spring, most of the manufacurers being gone for Soldiers."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Witness testimony before the Committee of the House of Commons investigating the state of the chequered and striped Linen Trade, in 1751, heard how earlier wars in the eighteenth century disrupted yarn shipments from the continent and led to higher prices. These disruptions were acknowledged to have a detrimental effect on the Lancashire industry.
  2. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. II, ed. Philip L. White, (New York, New York Historical Society, 1956), p. 631.
  3. Ibid, p. 632.
  4. Ibid, p. 640.
  5. Ibid, p. 645.

The pressure on linen prices affected all stocks whether from Europe or not. Imports of Irish linens met identical market conditions as John Peach regretfully informed his customers.

You may be assured the Linens ordered shall be rendered on the Lowest Terms in my Power...but when the Market price for Irish Goods rises, which has of late been the Case with regard to the Coarser sorts the Disappointment is greater to me than to you. In the Last parcell Sent you, several Articles were charged only at prime cost, on Account of the Advance.

1

Hopes for a return to lower, more stable prices two years later were dashed for one customer when Pomeroy & Hodgkins explained that they were "sorry to inform You, that You were misinformed about the fall of linnens, many of which are dearer, ...The war lately declared against Spain will also affect our insurance."<sup>2</sup> By 1761 John Peach reported to his client with even greater pessimism the continuing high prices of even the common linens, which made up such a large portion of his trade.

Inclosed Bill of Loading of a Chest of Irish Linens and some printed Handkerchiefs pursuant to your Order. I hope they will meet with your Approbation, especially when the Advance on all Sorts of Low Linens is considered; Sheeting in particular have been remarkably dear and are like to advance still higher, nor is there any reason to expect a Fall on any kinds of Low Goods till the Conclusion of a Peace of which at present there seems but little likelihood.

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The London merchants Pomeroy & Hodgkins sent letters in a similar vein to their clients, complaining of the "extravegent price" on many linen textiles, which by this time had reached "full twenty per cent" above pre-war prices.<sup>4</sup>

The Beveridge Price Archive reveals corroborative evidence of the

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1. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, p. 625.

2. Ibid, p. 652.

3. Ibid, p. 627.

4. Ibid, p. 644.

rise in linen prices about this time. The Lord Steward's Accounts for the Royal Household, included in this collection, record many long runs of linen purchases. However, as was the case with most institutional purchasing, the bulk of the linens was acquired under long-term contracts. When these contracts were in force market fluctuations remained hidden and price rises awaited the advent of another contract. In some cases yearly contracts do disclose indications of market pressures on linen prices and such was the case with a certain type of linen diaper bought for tablewear. Table 2:3 traces the definite upward price swing beginning in 1763, after what were probably great efforts to keep the price of these goods at earlier levels. Table 2:4 provides another price series of Table 2:3

Price Movement of Contracted Linen  $\frac{10}{4}$  Diaper

(s. per yard)

<u>Year</u>	<u>s. per yard</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>s. per yard</u>
1727	7.50	1788-91	8.00
1760	8.50	1792	8.33
1761	8.50	1793	8.33
1762	8.50	1794-97	8.00
1763-87	8.67	1798	8.75
		1799	9.00

Source: Beveridge Papers - Price History Archive, N4, London School of Economics.

a lower quality yard wide Russian linen, bought without contract. As this series begins in 1760 there are no positive indications of the pre-war cost of these linens. However the upward swing for 1760, 61 and 62 suggests that linens were probably priced about 0.50 shillings per yard, the level the goods dropped to in 1763. Despite the limitations of these series they confirm the general price increase during that period, an increase in the cost of linen that was to be crucial in the subsequent development of both the linen and cotton industries.

Table 2:4

Prices Russian Linen Sold in Britain, 1760-1800

<u>Year</u>	<u>s. per yard</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>s. per yard</u>
1760	0.73	1780	1.19
1761	0.75	1781	1.29
1762	0.80	1782	1.29
1763	0.50	1783	1.19
1764	0.61	1784	1.28
1765	0.61	1785	1.30
1766	0.58	1786	1.19
1767	0.58	1787	1.29
1768	0.33	1788	1.38
1769	0.54	1789	0.83
1770	0.67	1790	0.83
1771	1.25	1791	1.44
1772	0.79	1792	-
1773	0.79	1793	1.33
1774	1.08	1794	1.33
1775	0.79	1795	1.00
1776	1.11	1796	1.17
1777	1.02	1797	-
1778	1.08	1798	-
1779	1.22	1799	1.33
		1800	1.70

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Source: Beveridge Papers - Price History Archive, N4, London School of Economics.

By the closing years of the war the shortage of yarn for Lancashire manufacturers led to an increase in the cost of producing all Lancashire textiles which were in some part made of linen. Peach & Pierce described the difficulties experienced by all in the trade as a result of the obstruction of consignments of linen yarn.

You will be Surprised at the advance on Checks but the prodigious deerness and Scarcity of Linen yarns will Account for it. We should not have sent you any but the allmost certainty there is of their being still higher. Our manufacturers have turned off many of their Weavers so that they are now so Scarce that it will be Impossible to Supply one half of Our Orders. This will we hope Justifye us in sending them although greatly above your Price.

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Deficiencies in the stock of linen yarns presented serious difficulties, for most cottons and fustians, as well as checks, contained some linen yarn. Therefore the cost of many textiles was adversely affected. Significantly, in 1756, at the beginning of the conflict, the traditional price relationship between linen and cotton appears to have been reversed. In that year the unprecedented occurred when the price of cotton checks fell below that of linen checks. The very large quantities of yard wide cotton checks represented in the invoices shows a selling price of 12d. per yard while yard wide linen checks cost from 13½ to 13½d. per yard. In addition the invoices indicate a rise of from 12d. to 14½d. per yard for yard wide cotton checks between the years 1757 and 1763; while yard wide linen checks rose relatively more steeply from 10½d. in 1757 to 13½d in 1763.<sup>2</sup> (See Appendix I and III) Invoices from shipments of Irish yard wide linen confirm the price movement for this period.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. II, p. 620.
  2. Invoices, March 1757 - June, 1763. Beekman Papers.
  3. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. III, p. 1410.; Invoices, John Peach, 1756.

The protracted impediments to the linen trade did not vanish with the end of the hostilities on the continent. There many farmers, spinners and manufacturers involved in the linen trade would have had a lengthy process of reconstruction before supplies could resume in normal volumes. But the misfortunes of the linen trade did not end there. Even before European shipments revived, supplies of linen goods from Ireland were cut, placing further strain on manufacturers dependent on linen yarns and at the same time widening the vacuum left in the domestic market for textiles comparable to the scarce linens. In 1763 John Peach was obliged to write in explanation of the continuing high costs of his linens yet again. He stated that,

I have never known this kind of Goods so scarce and dear as they are now, occasioned by the Loss of last Year's Crop of Flax; and I should have deferred Sending the Linen, had there been any probability of their Declining, which cannot be for a Considerable time.

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Even by 1764 Peach & Pierce had no good news to report. They wrote once again to their customer that, "it was with Difficulty that we kept Chks [checks] down even to the Price now charged so that we are very Clear the next you order will be a ½ and 1d p. ell higher as Lin[en] Yarn is on the Advance"<sup>2</sup>

In fact it was a year and a half later, in the spring of 1765, that notices appeared indicating the substantial decline in linen prices. An advertisement in a Bath newspaper printed in large type the news from a local draper proclaiming that "IRISH LINENS having had a Fall will be sold much cheaper than usual"<sup>3</sup> The lower prices also referred to Russian and some German linens too. As this advertisement was carried through

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1. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, p. 628.

2. Invoice, 13 March 1764, Peach & Pierce, Beekman Papers.

3. Pope's Bath Chronicle, 7 March 1765.

most of the rest of the year it can be inferred that the good news was relatively recent and so of particular interest to consumers. A proponent of the British linen industry had urged local manufacturers to use the disruptions in German manufacturing to their advantage, and expand production.<sup>1</sup> However it was not linen but cotton, the minor adjunct to the linen trade, that thrived most in the market conditions.

Throughout the Seven Year's War impediments to the steady provision of linen yarn generated significant pressures within the Lancashire textile industry. Appendix IV illustrates the effect of the war on the importation of linen yarn and flax. The war years fall within the four years prior to 1760 and the three immediately following. Even with this awkward spread, masking some of the repercussions, the resultant influence of the war on imports can still be observed. Prior to 1760 the influence of the first years of war on imports of yarn and flax appears in the total which did not increase over that of the previous years. Rather the figure shows a slight decline from the total of imports for the year 1755. The 1765 total takes in the last three of war as well as two years of the recovery period. Even with the several years of peaceful trade included in the 1765 figures, the imports are only slightly above the level for 1745, illustrating convincingly the substantial drop in imports that were the legacy of that period of turmoil.

The inherent advantages to a manufacturer in a shift from linen-based textiles to cotton became more compelling as the disruption in linen supplies continued throughout the seven years. The accelerated demand for cotton textiles by the beginning of the 1760's, at the time of accumulated disruptions to the linen trade, was recounted by Samuel Crompton:

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1. William Bailey, A Treatise on the Better Employment and More Comfortable Support of the Poor in Workhouses, 1758, p. 47.

For the six years previous to that date [1769] there had been a greatly increased demand for all kinds of cotton goods and in particular for imitations of the fine and thin muslins imported from India, which had become very fashionable for ladies' wear.

1

Pressures to find a solution to the technological bottleneck in spinning grew as profits fell and production faltered with continuing shortfalls in stock of cheap flax and yarn. The development of the spinning jenny around 1764 appears in significant juxtaposition to the preceding years plagued by a paucity of suitable yarn. The comparatively high cost and sporadic shortages of linen supplies undoubtedly encouraged manufacturers to substitute cotton yarns in their stead wherever possible. Hargreaves spinning jenny provided the means by which a change in the composition of British textiles became possible. N.B. Harte writes that though "The linen industry mothered the early growth of the cotton industry...finally the linen industry in its eighteenth century form was destroyed by cotton."<sup>2</sup> Exigencies of profitable production demanded that Lancashire manufacturers find a replacement for linens by the closing years of the Seven Year's War. Growing demand dictated that production increase. Linen lost place as the industry's chief fibre when escalating costs and discontinuous shipments began to characterize the trade. When countered with the introduction of successful technology for an alternative fibre the status of linen in the Lancashire trade was unalterably changed. The long-established linens were ousted from their position of supremacy in Britain's burgeoning textile industry.

By 1774 representatives of the linen industry had to acknowledge the very different status of the linen production for the home market as compared to their rival cotton industry. In testimony before Parliament

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1. Gilbert F. French, The Life of Samuel Crompton, (Manchester, 1859), p.19.
  2. N.B. Harte, "The rise of Protection and the linen trade, 1690-1790" Textile History and Economic History, eds. K.G. Ponting & N.B. Harte, (Manchester Univ. Press, 1973) p. 110.

Mr. Dempster **stated** that there was a

very different state of the present laws relative to linen and cotton printed cloth manufactured at home. As the law now stands, no printed cotton, other than the manufacture of Britain, can be worn in this kingdom. The wear of all others is forebidden by positive statute. The cotton therefore...enjoys a monopoly over the whole island; the law admits no rival to it.... 1

Any suggestion made that the linen industry should retain a legislative advantage over the cotton industry, whether in the home or export market, was refuted by the powerful proponents of the new industry.<sup>2</sup> Cotton not only displaced linen in the Lancashire manufacturing region but generated a new and large following among the legislators in Westminster, who were predisposed to uphold the hegemony of Britain's cotton trade. The linen industry had enjoyed what N.B. Harte describes as a "flowering" between 1740 and 1790.<sup>3</sup> But with each succeeding innovation applied to the production of cottons the linen industry lost more and more ground. In 1786 one of London's most perspicacious drapers described the recent changes in the composition of the Lancashire industry. "The linen manufacture in Lancashire hath declined within these few years from the great increase of the cotton manufacture in that country", he reported.<sup>4</sup> Thus in spite of the initial advantages, the disruptions of yarn supplies, allied with the application of new technologies to the production of cotton won this fibre the premier place in Lancashire's mills and in national consumption.

The cotton industry displayed an industrial and commercial initiative absent in the linen industry. Nowhere was this more evident than in the proliferation of cotton textiles over the last forty years of the 1700's. (See Chapter 1, section 2) Fabric traditionally composed of linen began appearing in cotton facsimiles. The challenge to

1. Proceedings in the Commons on the State of the Linen Trade, 10 March 1774, The Parliamentary History of England, vol. XVII, 1813, p. 1155.

2. Ibid, pp. 1146-9.

3. Harte, p. 108.

4. B.M., Add. Mss. 38, 389, f.223v, evidence of Samuel Salte to the Board of Trade, April, 1786.

linen sales was launched not only against clothing materials, but also against household goods. Cotton hollands for the making of shirts was generally available in the 1770's and in several qualities from course to fine, so too were sheets, counterpanes and also bed quilts. A 1712 inventory of household linens illustrates the previous monopoly on household textile goods enjoyed by the manufacturers of linens. Included in this collection were over nine dozen napkins, sheets and tablecloths, inherited from a relative who had been a linen weaver. These goods were stored away. But the commonly used household linens included nineteen pairs of linen sheets, two dozen huckabuck and five flaxen napkins, eight huckabuck table cloths and eight flaxen pillow cases. Every item was made of one sort of linen or another.<sup>1</sup>

Linens continued to be used widely, especially among the lower classes of consumers. However when alternative cotton products began to be available in the 1770's inroads were made in what had been the almost exclusive sector of the linen trade. From that period onward there are records of greater numbers of cotton bed linens; for example the wife of one of the prosecutors at the Old Bailey had a cotton counterpane stolen from her house, as too did another man of similar social standing, along with twelve bed curtains.<sup>2</sup> When cottons such as these became accepted among the middle classes only time and price stood between their penetration into the broader national market. Linen sheets continued in common use through much of the population to the end of the century, but most linen articles of dress were replaced with equivalent cotton fabrics. The example of Barbara Johnson is a case in point. During the 1750's and 60's she chose printed linens for her new gowns. But during the next thirty years she invariably picked a cotton material for her new clothing.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hand Morgan 26/1, Stafford County Record Office.

2. Proceedings...Old Bailey, December, 1775, p. 34; February, 1777, p.120.

3. Barbara Johnson Sample Book, pp. 2-21.

The progressive emphasis on cleanliness during the later eighteenth century has been mentioned with regard to the consumption of wool fabrics during that period. But this pre-occupation would have affected linens as well. Up until the 1760's linens of every description held pre-eminence over much of the market for light textiles. Part of their success could be attributed to the ease with which they could be washed. Betsy Sheridan wrote of her Irish lawn gown that, "It has been washed three times and appears now if anything better than new..."<sup>1</sup> Domestic account books for the 1750's and 1760's included regular sums for washing, some paid specifically for "Washing my Linnen Gowns", the purchase of which were also noted in the books.<sup>2</sup> However this advantage was shared in common with cotton textiles. In the inventories of laundry included in the Old Bailey records more and more cotton goods appeared in the last decades of the century along side the expected linen articles.<sup>3</sup>

Cotton ultimately became the choice of consumers from all but the poorest classes, and only among the paupers and labouring poor were linens still consumed in anything like the volume that had been common through the whole society earlier in the century.<sup>4</sup>

Table 2:3 and 2:4 reveal an upward price rise at the end of the century that must have contributed to the worsening situation for the linen trade. Below is another brief price series for Irish dowlas, a commonly used linen, bought in this case for the royal household. From 1763 to 1793 the price held steady as contracted at 1.37 shillings per yard. Between 1794 and 1800, however, a marked increase took place.

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1. Betsy Sheridan, Journal, ed. W. Le Fanu, (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1960), p. 59.
  2. Bou ASR 143, Ladies Account Book, Northampton Record Office. Hand Morgan 24/3, Domestic Accounts of Mrs. Anne Sneyd, William Salte Library, Stafford.
  3. Proceedings...Old Bailey, February 1770, p. 141; July 1784, p. 931; October, 1784, pp. 1244-5; January, 1785, pp. 36-7.
  4. Account of Weaving Apparel Received and Distributed - Chestnut Constables 1782-6, Hertford Record Office. Instructions for Cutting out Apparel, pp. 40, 72, 68, 84-5.

Table 2:5

<u>Price of Irish Dowlas</u>						
(s. per yard)						
<u>1794</u>	<u>1795</u>	<u>1796</u>	<u>1797</u>	<u>1798</u>	<u>1799</u>	<u>1800</u>
1.44	1.44	1.50	1.50	1.58	1.58	1.67

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Such increases in price were extremely inauspicious, coming as they did with the linen industry under attack in all the traditional markets from the new cotton textiles. Certainly cotton textiles experienced fluctuations in price too. (See Appendix III) However the expansion in the production of yarn enabled certain cotton goods to be produced at parity with linen by the 1780's. The 7/8th yard wide cottons for example were as low in price as linens of the same width. Over the years the price advantage enjoyed by the linen trade melted away until only a light advantage remained near the end of the century.

Deficiencies in contemporary documentation do not permit a year by year comparison of the price activity of comparable cotton and linen commodities. But what can be incontrovertibly asserted is that cotton products were declining in price in the last decades of the century. An examination of the export price of cotton stockings from 1772 to 1800 bears out this trend. (Table 2:6).

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1. Beveridge Papers, Price History Archive, N.4.

Table 2:6

Price of Cotton Stockings, 1772-1800

(£ per doz. pair)

<u>Year</u>	<u>£ per doz.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>£ per doz.</u>
1772	2.247	1787	1.995
1773	2.247	1788	2.013
1774	-	1789	1.939
1775	-	1790	2.058
1776	-	1791	1.960
1777	1.924	1792	2.046
1778	1.835	1793	1.918
1779	1.883	1794	1.726
1780	1.878	1795	1.898
1781	1,815	1796	1.819
1782	2.005	1797	1.786
1783	2.008	1798	1.818
1784 <sup>1</sup>	-	1799	1.754
1785	-	1800	1.869
1786	1.828		

1

A shorter run of British-made muslins also shows a drop in price of from £.147 per yard in 1794 to £.120 in 1800.<sup>2</sup> This price pattern enabled cotton products to retain a decided market advantage over all other competitive goods.

The most extensive listing of prices of British linens presents a picture of relatively unchanging prices, with any movement tending to be up rather than down. Table 2:7 illustrates the price per piece of plain British linens. When compared to the price per piece of plain British-made calico at £1.40 per piece in 1795 and £1.399 in 1800 the price advantage of the cotton textile stands as a convincing explanation of the growing pre-eminence of cottons. The brief price series available for cotton yarns from 1794 into the nineteenth century confirms the declining cost of cottons. Improved production techniques and resultant lower prices won greater numbers to the ranks of consumers of these new textiles with each succeeding decade.

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1. Davis Collection, Box 4, Export prices, University College, London.

2. Ibid.

Table 2:7

<u>Price of Plain or White British Linen</u>			
<u>(£ per piece)</u>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>£ per ps.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>£ per ps.</u>
1772	1.734	1786	1.750
1773	1.756	1787	1.760
1774	1.750	1788	1.764
1775	1.380	1789	1.772
1776	1.382	1790	1.776
1777	1.750	1791	1.739
1778	1.703	1792	1.758
1779	1.800	1793	1.744
1780	1.760	1794	1.750
1781	1.714	1795	1.749
1782	1.714	1796	1.752
1783	2.103	1797	1.725
1784	1.749	1798	1.755
1785	2.387	1799	1.743
		1800	1.914

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Table 2:8

<u>Price of Exported Cotton Yarn</u>						
<u>(£ per lb)</u>						
<u>1794</u>	<u>1795</u>	<u>1796</u>	<u>1797</u>	<u>1798</u>	<u>1799</u>	<u>1800</u>
.109	.111	.119	.113	.100	.087	.087
<u>1801</u>	<u>1802</u>	<u>1803</u>	<u>1804</u>	<u>1805</u>	<u>1806</u>	<u>1807</u>
.087	.097	.092	.089	.089	.089	.089

2

The brief "flowering" is marked in the growth rates of real output of the linen industry. But the true significance of these rates emerges when compared to those of the cotton industry. Between 1700 and 1760 the percentage per annum rates of real output of linen at 1.25 and cotton

1. Davis Collection, Box 4, Export Prices.

2. Ibid.

at 1.37 showed a paralld development in production of textiles. But by 1760 the paths of the two trades diverged. At a critical period of rising consumer demand and market interest in light fabrics the linen industry was plagued with shortages and high prices. Between 1760 and 1770, while the cotton industry recorded a growth rate of real output of 4.59 per cent per annum, that of linen reached slightly above half that figure, 2.68 per cent. Certainly the linen industry experienced growth, but from 1760 to 1780 it was always at nearly half the rate of the rival light textile trade. From 1770 to 1780 the rates registered were 6.20 per cent per annum for cotton and 3.42 for linen. In the decade after 1780 the linen industry lost all momentum in industrial production, shrinking back to a negative rate of growth at -0.34 per cent in the face of staggering advances by the cotton industry of 12.76 per cent growth rate of real output. In the concluding ten years of the century the linen trade was marked with a zero growth rate of real output.<sup>1</sup> The broad statistical representations mirror the trend in manufacturers' sales books, shop invoices, personal and household inventories of textiles. Technological advances and the untimely disruption of the linen trade gave an advantage to the cotton industry that could not be recovered.

### iii Competition between East Indian and British cottons

The 1721 legislative prohibition of Indian cottons was an officious attempt at dictating public tastes. The chances of success of this sort of law were limited by the number of officials allotted to enforce its enactments. London shops would certainly have been subject to strict scrutiny, but probably more by the hostile London weavers than by government officers. However even with the many prying eyes around the metropolis, shopkeepers and tradesmen would have attempted to supply goods that were in demand. As long as Indian cottons continued to be superior to domestic cottons

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1. Crafts, p.181.

then they were surreptitiously supplied to the British market. The reason for their continued illegal importation would cease to exist as soon as British textiles matched the Indian cottons in quality and price. A study of the competition between East India cotton and British cotton textiles presents some severe difficulties, for the illegality of the former product makes it as difficult to discover and quantify as a willow~~w~~-the-wisp. Most East India fabrics were banned, therefore the sale and use of these materials were necessarily undertaken surreptitiously, particularly in the large cities. Throughout the rest of the country the mechanisms for the sale of illegal merchandise were well-established. East India cottons simply joined the lists of goods landed on beaches and on river banks all round England's coastline. Thus an appraisal of the competitive relationship between Indian cottons and British goods must, in large measure, be inferred from the small, sporadic assortment of evidence that remains of the illegal trade in calicos.

The first line of defence against the illicit cargoes of East India goods was His Majesty's Customs Officers. However once the stocks had been landed and disbursed to hawkers, pedlars and shopkeepers, the only other means of detecting the goods was through informers. The informer related to the local Justice of the Peace the name of the person seen to be wearing or using calicos; within six days of the information being laid the miscreant was to appear before the J.P. and at that time a fine of £5 was imposed. This fine reverted to the informer as payment for services rendered. The goods were subsequently auctioned and the revenues delivered to the government. Mercers or drapers discovered selling calicos were fined £20, as too would be any customer caught purchasing new Indian materials. Clearly the heaviest penalty fell on those selling Indian cottons, while lighter punishments were allotted persons continuing to use

or in possession of East Indian textiles.<sup>1</sup> The inequities of this system of enforcement are quite apparent. Prosecution depended on the testimony of an informant who in most cases would be inspired by greed or spite. There was no uniform method of enforcing the ban, thus neither the country nor the city could be policed thoroughly enough to eradicate the general use of Indian calicos.

Prosecutions continued following the imposition of the final prohibition. In 1727 The Country Journal reported the seizure of several sorts of prohibited silks and cottons from citizens around the capital. Under the heading "London" the following selection of items were listed:

The Officers of the Customs have seized lately at...Kings-street; a Suit of sprig'd Gamware, Lime-house; a Suit of yellow India Sattin, a Suit of India Burdet, and a Piece of Strip'd Sattin, at Bow; a Suit of strip'd Persian, Bell-yard; a yellow Damask Gown, Dowgate-Hill; a Suit of white Damask, Love-lane; a Suit of black Padesuoy, Old Bailey; a Suit of strip'd black and white Damask, Farthing-field; a Suit of Cherriderry and nine Handkerchiefs...etc.

2

Evidently the climate of opposition to the Indian fabrics was sufficiently obdurate even six years after the Act to ensure that this group of offenders be penalized. As a representative sample of prosecutions the report indicates persistence in attempting to eliminate Indian textiles from Britain; but among the total population of Londoners who might have been wearing and using Indian goods this group surely represents only a fraction.

An extensive and thriving black market operated in Britain throughout the whole of the eighteenth century. In 1745 the House of Commons heard of the vast quantities of tea - approximately three million pounds a year<sup>3</sup> - that were routinely landed, housed and distributed to retailers in a manner

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1. Malachi Postlethwayt, The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, "Callicoes". vol. I, 4th ed. 1774.
  2. The Country Journal, 12 August, 1727.
  3. J.H.C., vol. XXV, 1745, p. 104.

that with the exception of its legality matched the business practices of ordinary tradesmen. The smuggled goods were landed illegally to avoid duty or evade other restrictions on their sale. These operations involved a substantial percentage of the population. In coastal towns or inland ports most of the inhabitants figured in some part of the smuggling trade. One witness asserted, "That there is not One Person in Ten in the Country, but would give them [smugglers] Assistance, and do lend the Smugglers their Horses and Teams to convey their Goods...And he believed, that upon the whole, the Smugglers do not lose by Seizure above One Pound of Tea in 20 or 30."<sup>1</sup> Warehouse exchange marts operated whereby customers supplied either illicit wool for trade or money could purchase all manner of contraband goods stocked in these centres.

The emphasis on tea in the discussion of smuggled East India textiles arises because tea was the bulk commodity on which most illegal shipments were based. The former smuggler Samuel Wilson maintained, "That Tea is by far the most considerable Commodity that is run; and Running most of the other Species of Goods depends upon, and are encouraged to be run merely from the Opportunity of running them with tea...."<sup>2</sup> Therefore assessing the levels of smuggled tea in Britain carries with it the implicit acceptance that East India textiles formed a smaller part of the cargo. Along with the suggested currency of prohibited East India goods arising from estimates of smuggling are other pieces of evidence pointing to their persistence in the market place. The wool traders petitioning Parliament in 1737 with complaints of declining trade, listed as the culprits "the prevailing Use and Wear of printed, painted, and stained, and dyed, Linens and Cottons, of foreign Manufacture".<sup>3</sup> It is probable that British-made linens and

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1. J.H.C., vol. XXV, 1745, p. 105.

2. J.H.C., vol. XXV, 1745, p.108.

3. J.H.C., vol. XXIII, p. 61.

cotton/linens as well as European linen imports figured in the general description of goods. However as Indian muslins and blue dyed calicos were permitted in Britain and quantities of illegal East India cottons were brought yearly into the country, these goods must certainly have figured prominently in the category of goods blamed by the wool trade for their poor trade.

Confirmation of the general sale of prohibited oriental fabrics can be found in the collection of bills of sale and invoices of articles supplied the Countess of Exeter in the middle decades of the century. In 1748 and 1749 Lady Exeter purchased eighteen pieces of Super Indian Cotton. In 1749 she bought two India Handkerchiefs at 28/ each, plus two pieces of yard wide "Double Thread Callico" at 6/6 per yard and two other sorts of India Handkerchiefs which cost a total of £2.6 for the two. All of these materials were bought from the Derby draper John Bingham. Four years later Lady Exeter procured three more pieces of "Best India Handkerchief" for 36/6d. the piece from John Bingham. Several pieces of "Persian" silk were bought from a London draper, specializing in silks.<sup>1</sup> No impediment sufficiently stringent existed to inhibit the sale of Indian fabrics in Britain. So long as the demand for cottons of these sorts continued, the fabrics were supplied by eager entrepreneurs, without respect to the laws.<sup>2</sup>

Despite her position as a vicar's daughter Barbara Johnson also indulged in prohibited East India items. In 1764 she entered in her book the purchase of sufficient "India Dimity" at 4/4 a yard to make a gown. Five years later Miss Johnson legitimately spent 10/- per yard on a coarsely embroidered muslin for another gown.<sup>3</sup> She does not appear to have suffered either

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1. Household Invoices and Accounts for the Countess of Exeter, Northampton Record Office.
  2. The Citizen, 28 April 1757, reports the sale of stock-in-trade of a milliner which includes "India DIMITIES".
  3. Barbara Johnson Sample Book, pp. 10, 13.

compunction or contrition over her purchase of prohibited goods. Barabara Johnson was of much humbler station than the Countess of Exeter. Moreover her contact with metropolitan centres was limited at this time in her life; she lived with her parents in a small Northamptonshire village, perhaps fifteen miles from the county seat. These instances confirm the hypothesis that textiles of this sort were both available and commonly purchased throughout Britain. Two other domestic accounts also contain evidence of prohibited East India textiles. One lady's account book contained a reference to the three pounds and three shillings spent on purchasing Indian dimity in 1750, and in the domestic accounts of Mrs. Anne Sneyd nine shillings were recorded as having been spent on "Indian Cotton" in 1769.<sup>1</sup>

Initially British products offered little competition to the East India fabrics. The craftsmen persevered, though, and by 1750 the cotton/linen calicos which they produced became very popular in the home market. Holker commented specially on the British chintzes which were bought in large quantities in France "which are sold as Indian chintzes because of the special finish they are given".<sup>2</sup> Holker described the thousand rolls of fabrics that were sold each week from Blackburn and brought to London for bleaching and printing. In addition there were the cotton/silk cheryderys which provided the British consumer with an excellent facsimile of East India goods.<sup>3</sup> A 1731 entry in a household ledger represents one of the many such purchases of cherydery for a lady's gown.<sup>4</sup> Clearly improvements had been made in several sorts of goods to challenge the medium-priced Indian goods no longer sold legally in Britain. The Gentleman's Magazine recorded an occasion when <sup>the</sup> British cotton industry made a frontal

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1. Bou.ASR 143, Ladies Account Book, Northampton Record Office.

2. G.G.2, Nos. 89-100.

3. Ibid, nos. 33-44.

4. Hand Morgan 24/2, William Salt Library, Stafford.

attack on the supposed superiority of the Indian materials as compared to their own products. The March, 1754 report described how,

Mr. Sedgwick, a very considerable wholesale trader in printed goods, had the honour to present her royal highness the princess of Wales with a piece of English chints of excellent workmanship printed on a British cotton, which being of our own manufacture, her royal highness was pleased to say she was very glad we had arrived at so great a perfection in the art of printing, and that in her opinion it was preferable to any Indian chints whatsoever, and would give orders to have it made up into a garment for her highness' own wear...as an encouragement to the labour and ingenuity of this country.

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From the presence of these fabrics in shop inventories and wardrobes around the country it can reasonably be inferred that cotton/linen chintz were held in high regard throughout the nation. It seems doubtful that those buying for the upper end of the market would have preferred the British goods for all their vaunted superiority of printed design, for the cloth on which the patterns were printed could not match the standard of cotton cloth made in India. However should supplies of Indian cottons be disrupted then the British manufacturers made great efforts to expand production and capture and retain portions of the market.

Such was the case in the 1750's. In India the Moghul empire was torn by internal unrest, disrupting the orderly production and collection of textiles for the East India Company. The auctions, usually held quarterly, were postponed and regular customers could not be supplied. The suspension of the East India dominance of the market was seized upon by British producers. The opportunity presented itself to attempt to meet the demand for calico, chintzes and other cottons with British-made substitutes. The best documented of these efforts to usurp the East India markets occurred in the export trade to West Africa. During the years of interrupted production in India

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1. The Gentleman's Magazine, vol. XXIV, 1754, p. 140.

manufacturers in London and Lancashire too made every effort to diversify and improve their products in imitation of the Indian wares. The English had only limited success in the export trade to Africa. With the return to a stable political climate in India and regular cargoes to London, export customers once again turned to their suppliers of cheap oriental cottons.<sup>1</sup> However throughout this period it could reasonably be inferred that illegal consignments of cottons did not reach Britain in such large volumes as usual. A similar disruption of supplies of East India smuggled goods would surely have led to higher levels of home demand for Manchester chintzes. The industry as a whole would have received a boost from the temporary absence of stocks of superior eastern textiles from the marketplace.

The Indian craftsmen were as yet unsurpassed by manufacturers in Britain. Consequently it is common to find frequent references to purchases of muslins in domestic accounts of the middle and upper classes. One anonymous lady, an acquaintance of Lady Holland, spent over seven pounds on muslin purchases in 1757; as well as a whole piece of muslin she also bought several yards of spotted muslin.<sup>2</sup> However the business of producing textiles for markets thousands of miles away occasioned many chronic organizational difficulties. The chief of these handicaps was the distance itself: the months of travel between the managing directorate in London and those interpreting their production requirements in Bengal, Bombay or Madras; the oceans that separated the stocks of fabrics from markets in which they would be sold and the impediments that could arise between production site and markets. Inevitable in this commercial arrangement were delays, inefficiencies, and insufficient control both over the company's servants and the goods being produced.

Vast distances from the close, critical scrutiny of the London

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1. Wadsworth & Mann, pp. 163-4, 159.

2. Bou ASR 143, Northampton Record Office.

directorate enabled lapses to go unchecked for some time. In the 1750's the London authorities found ample grounds for complaint in the textiles shipped to Britain. Quality was not rigorously enforced and inferior bales of cloth were let into the home-bound consignments, only to be discovered months later by irate buyers. The slackness tolerated at Fort St. George meant that years **passed** without any improvement in the quality of certain fabrics. The price of the sallampores and long cloths fell at the auctions and Company profits on the goods were further reduced when pieces were found to be riddled with holes on the inside bolt of cloth. In 1755, two years after the first criticism of the sallampores were made, cargoes containing pieces of inferior cloth still arrived at warehouses in London. Customers had become so weary of these goods that they insisted on opening and unrolling each bolt to check for holes before a purchase would be considered.<sup>1</sup> The irate Company director wrote to Fort St. George that this process "besides the prejudice of greatly retarding the delivery of the Goods is attended with a great additional Expence of Labour and very considerable loss to the Company by the large sum allowed the Buyer for Damage found in Bales."<sup>2</sup> Exhortations and supplications produced few permanent results. Improvements were slow in coming and disadvantages of having senior management half a world away from the production site were only too apparent.

Along with difficulties in enforcing stringent standards of quality control, the time involved in communicating with the production centres and having these instructions relayed to the craftsmen put them at a disadvantage to textile manufacturers at closer proximity to the British market. New fashions took longer to reach India and even more time to be incorporated

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1. Records of Fort St. George, Public Despatches from England, 1753-4, vol. 57, p. 86, India Record Office.

2. Ibid, vol. 58, p. 37.

into designs. However notwithstanding the handicap distance imposed, the quality of cotton textiles made in India still had no equal among British-made fabrics; nor could the British equal the low cost of Indian goods. Indian cottons continued to be preferred, dominating the top market for cottons with muslins and made continuous inroads into the middle and lower range with smuggled chintzes and calicos. Records of possessions from the middle and upper classes almost invariably contain some article of muslin. The prosecutor's wife, for example, with the "white muslin night-gown", the merchant Soloman Fell's twenty-four muslin stocks, the painter's daughter's hand embroidered muslin shawl and nine muslin handkerchiefs, all reflected the varying levels of affluence of these consumers.<sup>1</sup> Manchester muslins were a part of the advertised stock-in-trade of a London tradesmen in 1779.<sup>2</sup> However the greatest expansion in the manufacture of British muslins did not take place until the 1780's and even then they did not find immediate acceptance among the highest levels of society.

The cachet that accompanied the use or wear of Indian textiles can be discerned from the comments of the much-quoted Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys. In her journal she commented on the elegance of various households and their occupants. In 1771 she wrote of "Lady Blount's dressing-room you may imagine elegant; fine India paper on pea-green...The chambers all good, spacious, and well-furnished. I think Lady Blount has more chintz counter panes than in one house I ever saw; not one bed without very fine ones. ...everything very clever, and a thousand nick-nacks from abroad as one generally sees in these Catholic families." Mrs. Powys next commented on the dress of the children of the household remarking that "the youngest in fine sprigg'd muslin...the eldest in a vest and tunic of tambour (Lady

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1. Proceedings...Old Bailey, December, 1775, p. 34; September, 1776, p.351, July, 1784, p. 949.

2. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 29 July 1779.

Blount's own work), large sprigs of gold on thin muslin lin'd with pink."<sup>1</sup> Mrs Freeman's Indian furnishings also occasioned comment on Mrs. Powys's visit. After describing in some detail the India paper "prettier than 'tis possible to imagine", she then categorized the furnishings in the next bed-chamber as being composed of "one of the finest red-ground chintz I ever saw".<sup>2</sup> Some tempted fate when they placed fashion before the dictates of the law, for informers still earned £5 when breaches of the law were reported, and there were always those willing to implicate others for personal gain. The Gentleman's Magazine reported a case in 1768 of two ladies brought before the Lord Mayor of London and fined £5 for wearing the banned Indian chintz gowns.<sup>3</sup>

The confiscation of one chintz-draped bed in 1775 generated a rather unique set of records for the bed was owned by England's most popular contemporary actor, David Garrick. The chintz had been given him as a gift and his wife had made the bed up in the current fashion. Nothing untoward occurred until the Garricks moved house at which time the chintz drapery was spotted and steps taken to seize the bed. Carrick's wife was inconsolable. In an effort to obtain the return of the offending chintz Garrick wrote to a friend in government who advised him to appeal to Mr. E. Stanley, an official of the relevant government department. Garrick's plea was presented in verse form and in it he appealed for mercy as much for his own sake as his wife's. However as the British manufacturers and their allied printing industries improved their capacity to produce higher quality products the home market was guarded with ever more jealousy. Legal

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1. E.J. Climenson, ed., Passages from the Diaries of Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys, 1756-1808, (London, Longman & Co., 1899), pp. 139-140.
  2. Diaries...Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys, pp. 147-8.
  3. There were frequent comments in the 18th century on those who bought prohibited goods simply for the aura of fashionable, daring. Colley Cibber wrote the line for one of his characters, "No I don't care for it; now it is not prohibited." - The Double Gallant, Act 3, sc. 1, 1708.

The Gentleman's Magazine, vo. xxviii, 1768, p. 395.

cotton imports were increasingly resented. Thus there was even less possibility that illegal cottons would be tolerated, especially now that the British cotton industry had been granted the virtual monopoly of the production and sale of cotton textiles.<sup>1</sup> David Garrick's friend promised "to use his best offices to prevail with the Harpies to come into a reasonable composition for the restitution of the chintz, and yet the Linnen Drapers and Cotton Printers and all the cursed Bourgeoisie I fear will be as powerful as they are merciless."<sup>2</sup> Garrick was singularly more fortunate than he deserved to be by rights of law. The chintz was returned to his wife.<sup>3</sup>

In the year 1774 it became legal to wear or use cotton chintz, calico, velvets, or checks, as long as the textiles were of British manufacture.<sup>4</sup> The revision of the 1721 ban on nearly all cottons in Britain came about in response to a technological breakthrough in spinning which made possible the profitable commercial production of an all cotton cloth. The potential profit, apparent to the legislators, persuaded them to rescind the ban. The propetic advice of the pamphleteer sixty years before to construct "Engines, to save the Labour of Hands" had at last been successfully implemented. The productive potential encapsulated in the new mechanical spinning contrivances placed the cotton industry in direct competition with all other comparable commodities. The most apparent of these rivals was the East India producers of cotton textiles. Indian calicos and chintz had sparked off the first British-made facsimilies nearly a century ago and over the years the ever-present examples of Indian textiles provided a standard of excellence, a goal at which to aim. The attainment of a comparable quality and capacity in the production of yarn, through mechanical

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1. J.H.C., Vol. XXXIV, 1774, p. 736.

2. Garrick quoted McIver Percival, in Chintz Book, (London, Wm. Heinemann Ltd., 1923), pp. 54-5.

3. Garrick's bed is now safely housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

4. J.H.C., vol, XXXIV, p. 736.

means, gave British manufacturers the advantage over the Indian producers for the first time. The potential now existed for the production of British textiles of a quality equal to the finest threads in Indian muslin, and at a lower cost.

However in the mid-1770's British producers had not yet fulfilled that potential. Indian muslins remained the premier cotton textiles. These fabrics were sold throughout Britain to the middle and upper classes, but occasionally these goods were available at prices low enough to interest even more humble consumers, thus putting muslins in direct competition with lower priced Manchester ware, to the detriment of the latter. Smugglers traditionally sold their merchandise below the regular retail prices (See Appendix V for the record of East India textiles seized about this time) However there was an additional source of cheap muslins that depended on smuggled cargoes only indirectly. Cargoes seized by Customs men were impounded and later auctioned. Tradesmen later resold these items at prices substantially lower than market prices. Mr. Stridwick advertised an eight day sale of Indian goods in Jackson's Oxford Journal, announcing that "he is just arrived from Portsmouth with all sorts of INDIA MUSLINS". These were promised to be "Cheaper by 20 per Cent...and many Articles 50 per Cent". Some of the merchandise included:

200 yards of superfine India Dimity for Gentleman's Waistcoats, as low as 3s. per Waistcoat...50 Pieces of India Muslins, small sprigs, at only 2s. a Yard; 20 Pieces of five-quarter wide stripe Muslins, 3s.6d. a Yard...and checked Muslins of all Breadths, which shall be sold considerably under the usual Price; 50 Pieces of striped sprigged Gingham at 11.5 the Gown Piece, worth 11.11s.6d....26 Pieces of Gingham Waistcoats, at 8s. a Piece...50 Pieces of spotted and plain Silk Handkerchiefs, at 3s.6d. each; an inferior Sort, as 2s.8d.

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The silk handkerchiefs were certainly prohibited goods as were the dimity

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1. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 26 May 1781.

and gingham. But Mr. Stridwick sold those and many more sorts of textiles banned by the 1721 Act without apparent fear of prosecution, or surely he would not have advertised in a provincial newspaper. Some of the other contraband goods were "200 Pieces of Chintz for Ladies Gowns" and "300 Yards of Yard and Half-wide Callico Muslin for Ladies Morning Aprons".<sup>1</sup> Prosecutions had been initiated against shopkeepers who were discovered to be selling East India prohibited goods by an organization of craftsmen who made silk handkerchiefs.<sup>2</sup> But these endeavours seem to have been rather fruitless efforts at stemming a tide of illicit merchandise.

Reports of thefts of clothing and furnishings supply further information on the prevalence of Indian manufactures in Britain. The reports in question are random in that the thefts were random and the goods stolen listed in newspapers as a measure taken by Bow Street in an effort to curtail the resale of the stolen goods. Among the many sorts of British-made cotton and silk clothing stolen were examples illustrative of the prohibited East India textiles that occurred in British society. In December, 1777, for example, a box stolen out of a wagon contained a number of sorts of East India goods: "four waistcoats, India striped or spotted silk", "twelve white dimity and India waistcoats", "fourteen pairs of white breeches, India dimity or gingham" and "one Pemona green India silk bed curtain".<sup>3</sup> In another list of stolen goods taken from the back of a chaise were "four gowns,...one gold chintz saque and petticoat,...a silver muslin Polonaise and petticoat...a India taffeta night gown, small green leaves, edged with gold...."<sup>4</sup> The draper John Morgan periodically offered his customers in South Wales illicit Indian textiles. The sale of "Bengali" cottons

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1. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 26 May 1781.
  2. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 15 October 1779.
  3. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 6 December 1777.
  4. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 31 October 1778.

were noted in the ledger for two customers in 1795, while a Soosee patch was sold another local in the same period.<sup>1</sup> The availability of these Indian textiles in this region cannot be wondered at as smuggling abounded along all the coastlines. In the absence of representative figures on the levels of illegal Indian imports these examples suggest the sorts and varieties of articles available throughout Britain.

In the spring of 1782 the British manufacturers launched their first legal assault on the East India Company. The complainants were the "Importers of Cotton, and Printers of Callicoes, Cottons, Muslins, and Linens, of the City of London and Parts adjacent". They described the cotton printing trades as one of the most valuable branches of this trade in Britain, having been much improved through the invention of metal plate printing in 1754. The petitioners went on to relate how shortly after the technical improvements were adopted the East India Company arranged to ship to India all the machines and utensils necessary to begin an identical printing industry in their India factories. In addition they employed English artisans to teach the new techniques to Indian printers. The current type of printed Indian fabric was not, they maintained, "on any Account to be Considered as within the Meaning of the Act of Parliament of the Eleventh and Twelfth of William the Third,...for at the time of passing that Act, the Species of Goods which hath lately been imported...was not known in the East Indies...."<sup>2</sup> A complementary petition from Lancashire printers concurred with the principal points raised by the London group. They concluded that, "the Similitude in the Patterns printed in India and Great Britain will be a great Inducement to the Practice of smuggling into this Country the Callicoes printed in India, to the great Injury of...the Manufacture and Printing of Cottons

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1. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 243, 255, 263.

2. J.H.C. VOL. XXXVIII, 1782, p. 912.

and Linens in Great Britain, for Home Consumption."<sup>1</sup> British manufacturers were entering an era when the advantages of production rested at last with them. The Lancashire manufacturers were manifestly unwilling to relinquish even a fraction of that advantage to those with whom they had been in competition for so long.

The following year, 1783, despatches sent out to India reflected the concern of the East India Company at the commercial challenge to their hegemony in the cotton trade.

The great degree of perfection to this manufacture is already arrived at though at present only in its infancy; the prices which are 20% under our own, are circumstances which cannot but justly alarm us for so important a branch of our commerce.

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Cumulative improvements in the techniques of spinning cotton brought British yarns to a previously unobtainable high quality. The Peel spinning mill at Radcliffe Bridge produced a yarn described by Holker in 1783 as "very strong, more clean and less fluffy than that from any spinning mill that I have seen". He felt that the British had made a significant breakthrough, writing in his report that, "I consider this cotton mill as uniquely suitable for making the handkerchiefs and other fabrics of the type that come from India and that we have not been able to copy exactly until now...."<sup>3</sup>

In 1783 the Commons once again turned their attention to the problem of smuggling which had increased sharply and was alleged to be carried on "in every accessible Part of the Coast of this Kingdom".<sup>4</sup> The Commons was informed that "the Cargoes consist chiefly of Spirits, Tea, Tobacco Stalks, Snuff, East India Goods, Wine Drugs, Cambricks, Laces, and Silks." (The figures for the East India textiles seized since 1770 can be seen

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1. J.H.C., vol. XXXVIII, 1782, p. 912.

2. Records of Fort St. George, Despatches from England, vol. 1783.

3. S.D. Chapman & S. Chassagne, European Textile Printers in the Eighteenth Century, (London, Heinemann, 1981), p.38.

4. First Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into Illicit Practices used to Defraud the Revenue, 1783, House of Commons Sessional Papers of the eighteenth century, ed. S. Lambert, 1978 vol. 38, p. 218.

in Appendix V) The sum of the goods captured can in no way be seen as a measure of the volume of prohibited Indian fabrics brought into Britain. A second report singled out hawkers and pedlars as some of the chief culprits in the organized retail sale of the smuggled stock.<sup>1</sup> This allegation was not without foundation. The Rev. James Woodforde noted in his diary the purchase of "an East India Silk Handkerchief for self" while his niece bought some chintz which may or may not have been Indian in origin.<sup>2</sup> These items were bought from Mr. Alldridge, a pedlar who dealt in all sorts of textile and mercery goods, legal and illegal. Woodforde also wrote of his purchases from "Richard Andrews a Smuggler for a Pound of 9/0 Tea, and 3...India Handkerchiefs at 5/6."<sup>3</sup>

The government responded to the illicit trade in East India textiles with new restrictions on the ships docking in the Thames. New measures required East Indiamen to report their arrival within twenty-four hours of reaching their anchorage; moreover they could not anchor at Deptford or Blackwall, but had to remain in Long Reach. These ships could not move to a closer anchorage until "they have delivered into the hoys to be sent for that purpose, every article of private trade that may be on board."<sup>4</sup> In this way government hoped to curtail the small shipments of illegal East India goods from being sold in Britain. But the ultimate solution to the problem of the competitive East India cottons rested with the improvement of the British product to the level where it became superior to the former types of textiles.

In 1784 the Prime Minister, Mr. Pitt had introduced a body of taxation

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1. Second Report..., 1783, H. of C. Sessional Papers...., vol. 38, p. 291.
  2. Rev. James Woodforde, The Diary of a Country Parson, vol. I, ed. John Beresford, (Oxford University Press, 1924, repr. 1968), p. 332.
  3. Ibid, p. 197.
  4. The London Evening-Post, 7-9 June 1787.

which by its very nature led to an increase in smuggling. Taxes were raised on a host of commodities among which was tea. The East India Company representatives estimated the 7½ million pounds of tea were being landed illegally in Britain, and had been from 1772-82. They now feared an even bigger volume of smuggled tea would be sold in Britain.<sup>1</sup> Along with the tea would have come fabrics from the East.

The London papers reported battles between the Revenue ships and the smugglers. In October, 1784 a correspondent wrote that "from Cork, ...the Dispatch cutter has taken within two leagues of that port a French smuggling vessel, deeply laden with brandy, tea, coffee, and some India piece goods, ...her cargo was valued at 12,000l." Another report prematurely congratulated "the King's cutters". These crewmen were described as being "so judiciously stationed, and so vigilant that nothing can escape, the Neptune sent in this day a cutter of 300 tons burthen, laden with tobacco, tea, ankers of spirits, and India goods."<sup>2</sup> The authors of these articles were unrealistically optimistic as later in the month this same paper was moved to castigate the "smuggling shopkeepers of London", further suggesting that it might be "very useful to prosecute a few conspicuous receivers of smuggled goods".<sup>3</sup>

At the same time that legal and illegal muslins and calicos were being sold throughout Britain the British cotton industry had been hit with a new series of excise duties on "Cotton Stuffs, bleached or dyed, and on licenses for bleaching or dyeing the same."<sup>4</sup> British manufacturers raged against the intended tax of their products and prophesied the ruin of the trade should the measures be enforced. Both Houses of Parliament were

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1. W.A. Cole, "Trends in eighteenth century Smuggling" Economic History Review, 2nd series, vol. X, no. 3, 1958, p. 396.
  2. The Public Advertiser, 7 October 1784.
  3. Ibid, 26 October 1784.
  4. J.H.C., vol. XC, 1785, p. 642.

petitioned by the Manchester manufacturers for an end to the iniquitous excise duties.<sup>1</sup> British cotton producers found the very different treatment meted out to their East India competitors especially galling. A Glasgow representative of the cotton industry summed up the position of its membership with the following statement issued in September, 1784 following a summer of vigorous protest.

The manufacturers of cottons and muslins in this city and neighbourhood have come to resolutions to join the manufacturers of Manchester in applying to Parliament, early next Session, for the repeal of the taxes which, by an ill-advised system of taxation have been laid upon the infant manufacturers of this country, and which were obstinately persisted in by Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding the repeated representations against them. What aggravates the matter is, that the manufacturers muslins consider themselves as a body of individuals, at least equally intitled to the favour and protection of government, as any public society who import a similar article from a foreign country; yet they have the extreme mortification to see their manufacture discriminated as an object of taxation, while the East-India Company...are supported at the public expence, with little short of one million, free of interest, which would nearly equal the whole product of the tax on cottons.

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The correspondent strongly denounced taxes designed to serve "the East India Company, and to foster the production of foreign countries, by depressing the manufacurers at home".<sup>3</sup> Sustained opposition compelled the government to reconsider the tax on British cotton textiles especially when petitioners pointed out the advantages to be obtained by moving their businesses to Ireland where no such tax existed to threaten them, but rather textile producers enjoyed "the most liberal Encouragement for promoting similar Manufacture".<sup>4</sup> Within a year representatives of the cotton industry

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1. The Public Advertiser, 24 August 1784.
  2. The Public Advertiser, 7 September 1784.
  3. The Public Advertiser, 7 September 1784.
  4. J.H.C., vol. XC, p. 760, 1785.

were complaining of declining trade caused by the extra duties and prophesied hardship and distress in the industry should amends not be made. Producers who paid the tax could not pass along the extra cost to consumers without imperilling their markets; those who sought to evade the tax in order to save their markets risked prosecution.<sup>1</sup> Lancashire's cotton and calico manufacturers and printers maintained that "owing to the great Importation of East India Callicoes, and the reduced prices at which they are sold, the Petitioners are not only deprived of their Foreign Trade, but also of a Part of the Consumption of this Kingdom."<sup>2</sup> Manufacturers and dyers of velvets, velverets, fustians and other goods of that sort concurred with the other petitioners from the cotton industry. They state that "in case the said Tax is continued, the Petitioners are in great Danger of being inevitably ruined".<sup>3</sup> In May, 1785 the government, convinced of the justice of the complaints, passed an amending Act removing the excise duties on cotton, cotton/linens and linens and the licenses for bleaching and dyeing those goods. The cotton trade had positive confirmation of its power and importance in the economy of the country with the rapid amendment of the offending legislation.

The victory won in 1785 spurred on the industry to continue attacks on East India imports. By the mid-1780's British-made muslins had broken the monopoly of fine cottons formerly held by the East India Company. Manufacturers such as Samuel Oldknow gave particular care to the development of this portion of their trade. Oldknow's agent in London, Samuel Salte, wrote him in June 1786, with advice on the printing of his muslins. Salte concluded that, "we do not despair of great attainment in this branch of

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1. J.H.C., vol. XC, p. 760.

2. J.H.C., vol. XC, 1785, p. 760.

3. J.H.C., vol. XC, 1785, p. 780.

Trade: ingenuity & Patience & perseverance will yet work miracles, or something like them."<sup>1</sup> In the following spring Salte sent a short congratulatory note to Oldknow, writing: "The Ianndiennies, the Ianndiennies, the Ianndiennies - well made [...] you must not Send a pc [piece] to any other house - as fast as possible Pray invent some New Pat<sup>rns</sup>."<sup>2</sup> Crompton's mule enabled the British to spin fine yarn essential for the manufacture of muslins; once this machine was successfully modified, yarns for muslins were spun in increasingly larger quantities. In 1788 approximately one million pieces of calico and half a million pieces of muslin were manufactured from the yarn produced by this device.<sup>3</sup>

But prior to 1788 British manufacturers and wholesalers were far from sanguine about the flood of East India and British muslins and calicos on the market. George Unwin's collection of letters between Samuel Salte and Samuel Oldknow encapsulates the concerns felt at the time in the face of what was seen as excessively large imports of Indian textiles. Samuel Oldknow's letter to his brother Thomas on 18 October 1787 reflected this anxiety.

I got here this morning and have been with Mr. Salte at the India house - the private Trade Sales comes on to morrow and the Company has declared for a very large Sale the 25th of next Month - no less than Six Ships Cargo - and another private Trade Sale will be in Feby next so that there are more India Goods coming into the Market than has been known of these many Years....

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The following day Oldknow's foreboding had magnified. "There is no Trade", he wrote his brother, "Nobody will buy till the India Sale is over...it is almost incredible the quantity that will come into the Market of India

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1. Letter, London, 13 June, 1786, Oldknow Papers, Eng. MS-751. John Rylands Library, Manchester.
  2. Letter, London, 26 April, 1787, Oldknow Papers.
  3. Melville MSS. 1064, fol. 60; M.M. Edwards, The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815, (Manchester University Press, 1967) p. 40.
  4. The Oldknow Papers, quoted in George Unwin, Samuel Oldknow and the Arkwrights, (Manchester University Press, 1924), reprint 1968, pp. 96-7.

Muslins the next 4 Months".<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously the East India Company evinced apprehension over the growing volume of British cottons. Sharp instructions travelled out to the factories in India charging servants to be vigilant about quality and ensure regular deliveries.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile British cotton manufacturers launched a concerted offensive against Indian imports. A short fluctuation in the cotton trade stimulated the first round of opposition to the presence of foreign cottons in Britain. Resentment boiled over, founded on the long-held rivalry with a competitor tolerated and protected by government. Throughout 1788 petitions abounded condemning the alien manufacturers. Patrick Colquhoun, as a spokesman for the British cotton industry, insisted that, "it is plain to demonstrate, that in the common articles of apparel there is no room in the British market both for the home manufactures, and for the same species of goods imported from India." Having laid down his ultimatum rather in the style of the gunmen of the American west, Colquhoun continued with the crux of his argument. "It comes therefore to be a question of state policy, to whom the preference should be given."<sup>3</sup> There was no doubt in the minds of the British manufacturers to whom the advantage was due.

Salte and Oldknow were both extremely concerned about the volume of fine Indian cottons coming on the market at the same time as the output of British producers was reaching unprecedented heights. Prices had declined in consequence, by Colquhoun's estimation to 50-60 per cent of those five years ago. The precipitous drop in price was catastrophic and the advantages in trade all went to those with sufficient capital

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1. The Oldknow Papers, quoted in George Unwin, p. 97.

2. Madras Despatches, E/4/873., pp. 1195, 1207. India Record Office.

3. An Important Crisis, in the Callico and Muslin Manufactory in Great Britain, Explained, 1788, p.14.

to weather the storm, most of all the East India Company. Patrich Colquhoun wrote from Glasgow in 1788 that "Our Manufacturers in Lancashire & here by the aid of Machinery, Skill & industry had really reduced the Muslins & Callicoes below the prices of the Company at one period". However the current surplus of muslins would, he feared, inevitably result in the ruin of "the smaller mfrers ...& the large ones will with draw from the Trade".<sup>1</sup> This gloomy conjecture was not far wrong as many in the trade faced bankruptcy in such poor trading conditions. M.M. Edwards has examined the collision between the two cotton industries, both vying for the British market, and in his estimation the fears of the British manufacturers were warranted, as the East India Company presented "a constant challenge to their infant muslin trade in its struggle to supply fine cloths to the upper classes."<sup>2</sup> Colquhoun continued to campaign against the East India imports insisting that the reward for the "progressive and astonishing improvement" in the national cotton industry ought rightly to be pre-eminence in the home market.

East India Company directors were increasingly concerned about the inroads made into their markets in Britain, as this letter sent to Madras in 1790 reflects.

We last Year observed to you, the very material interference of the British Manufactures with those [muslins] we receive from Ainee & the Muslawar Country. We repeat that in all Muslins it is much more essential that we should be supplied with the most superior Qualities, & that a fair Advance of Price should be allowed, than that for the sake of a small Saving in the Purchase, we should be prevented from offering to Sale the best procurable Fabricks.

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The Company complained continually of the chronic ineptitude and

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1. Melville MSS. 1064, fol. 20. Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.
  2. Edwards, P. 42.
  3. Madras Despatches, E/4/876, 1790, p. 855, I.R.O.

sloth among some of their representatives in India which adversely affected trade. Meanwhile the Company was forced on the defensive by the attacks on their prerogative to import and sell their cottons in Britain. They felt compelled to produce a justification of this trade - itself an admission of their beleaguered position. The defence appeared as a Report of a Select Committee and was presented to Parliament in 1793 in an effort to placate the adherent of the British cotton industry who remained opposed to the eastern trade. The report concluded that the clamour raised against the Indian cottons in 1788 was occasioned "not by any unusual Exertions on the Part of the Company,...nor by any Disposition of the Part of the Public to prefer Indian to British Goods". The cause of the temporary distress in the British cotton industry was assigned to the circumstance of "their having pushed their Enterprizes beyond all Bounds".<sup>1</sup> In fact the table of import of Indian cotton pieces plus imports of raw cotton provides clear evidence of the health of the domestic cotton industry. (See Appendix VI ) There was no sharp rise in the numbers of pieces of cloth imported, while the weight of raw cotton rose from 2,677,042 lb. in 1771 to 31,447,605 in 1790.<sup>2</sup> One could justifiably conclude that the swelling chorus of complaint against the East Indian imports developed precisely because the cotton industry was now in a position to threaten the commercial enterprise of the foreign supplier. The Lancashire producers had carved out a monopoly market in Britain for cotton checks, velvets, velverets, corduroys, and other fustians. It was consistent that the commercial assault on the Indian muslin's supremacy should have been twinned with a political offensive on the right of the East India Company to continue their trade in these fabrics.

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1. Report ...upon the subject of the Cotton Manufacture of the Country, House of Commons Sessional Papers of the Eighteenth Century, vol. 91, p. 91.

2. Ibid, p. 92.

The ultimate solution to the problem of competitive Indian cottons lay in the application of improved technology in the production of textiles. The success of British manufacturers by the end of the century can be judged by the experience of the established Cheapside drapery firm of Thomas Brown. In his 1792 report to Sir Francis Baring he described the changes in the composition of his merchandise.

my assortment of India goods is great, never less than £20,000 at times four times that sum, [but] I am now frequently unable to sell any to many who are my customers for other articles & who used to lay out with me many hundreds annually.... 1

The competitive pressures of British-made quality muslins reshaped the inventories of British retailers. Some doubted whether British consumers would ever completely forego their oriental textiles, legally or illegally.<sup>2</sup> And the occasional inclusion of illicit textiles in the Morgan drapers ledger bears this out. However the bulk of British consumers were satisfied to buy British muslins that matched those from India in quality and were sold at low cost. The higher labour costs of British workers compared with their Indian counterparts were discounted when the productive capacity of that worker was multiplied many times over that of their rivals. The goods produced could then be sold at a lower rate than could the Indian items; which then had to absorb the added costs of shipment by sea. Lower costs plus higher quality inexorably won the market advantage for the British producer. Some East India Company officials made efforts to reform the organization of the cotton trade in India, without success. Strenuous attempts were made to encourage more sophisticated and productive wage labour in the Indian textile trade, but these efforts ran counter to the main thrust of Company policy as it was then being devised. Land-

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1. Melville MSS 1064, fol. 60.

2. Ibid.

H.R.C. Wright, East Indian Economic Problems of the Age of Cornwallis and Raffles, (London, Luzac & Co., 1961) p. 196.

based revenues now figured as the chief organizational tenet in the quest for profits in India. Therefore a majority of the Company directors opposed any alteration of the existing system of land usage, which a movement of craftsmen to factory centres would have entailed.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Indian productive techniques continued in established patterns, inflicting irreparable damage on the trade as a whole through inertia at a critical period of competition with Manchester.

The British consumers were presented with a panoply of fabrics in every imaginable colour, print, and weave; embroidered, plain or patterned for home furnishing, working costume, everyday wear or festive clothing. By the early 1790's India's monopoly production of muslin for the British market had also been wrested from them by the aggressive British manufacturers. In 1792 Francis Baring, Chairman of the East India Company, concluded that there was "a very trifling quantity of India goods at present worn in Great Britain." Moreover he did not expect even this small section of the market to remain theirs. It would, he felt, "very speedily be reduced to nothing in consequence of the low price and great perfection which British muslins and calicoes have attained."<sup>2</sup> Any lingering preference for Indian goods among the upper classes was soon overcome when war with France disrupted further regular deliveries from the Indies. The exigencies of war completed a process of progressive substitution of a variety of British European, and East Indian fabrics with the many sorts of British cottons. By the close of the century the British market was securely in the hands of the Lancashire manufacturers.

Wool textiles lost place in the home market through a fundamental alteration in the tastes of the population. The struggle against the

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1. George Unwin, "Indian Factories in the Eighteenth Century" Studies in Economic History, ed. R.H. Tawney, (London, Royal Economic Society, 1927), pp. 366-7, 373.

2. Edwards, p. 45.

established interests of the wool trade took place in the first decades of the century where the supposed victory of the wool industry in fact laid the conditions for the development of indigenous cotton manufacture over the next thirty years within the linen trade. The production of British linens succoured the cotton trade for succeeding decades. However between 1755 and 1765, at the point of expanding consumer demand the momentum of the linen industry faltered under the nearly ten years of disruptions to supplies of raw and worked linens. From this time the impetus of cotton production exceeded that of linen. The position of seemingly unassailable superiority passed to the cotton industry in the last twenty years of the eighteenth century. During the same twenty years the wool industry was under comparable stress as cottons of many sorts became the staple of the British population, in preference to wool or worsted stuffs. The wool industry remaining by 1800 was one honed in a demandingly competitive domestic market; only those sections of the wool trade able to compete with the productive techniques of the cotton trade proceeded into the nineteenth century.

Throughout the century the British cotton industry had been faced with the continuing presence of the superior East Indian cottons. The same era of dynamic industrial expansion certainly forced the common range of illegal calicos to an even more marginal position in the British market. Furthermore the aggressive expansion of muslin production in Britain made the practical elimination of Indian cottons from the home market only a matter of time. By the 1790's the importance of the East India Company as purveyor of competitive textiles in the home market was more apparent than real. The directors of that Company acknowledged themselves that the last remnant of their enormous trade in cotton textiles with England was at an end. All but a tiny portion of the demand for cottons was being met by British manufacturers well before 1800. Surreptitious

cargoes of printed calicoes would continue to be landed while fashion favoured these goods. However neither these goods nor the shrinking volumes of muslins imported could be said to pose any threat to the almost absolute hegemony over the domestic market attained by the cotton industry. Indian chintz was the spur to innovation, the ideal inspiring imitations which ultimately surpassed the progenitor in cost, quality and proximity to the market.

#### iv The Advent of New Cottons in the Home Market

While the previous sections have dealt in broad terms with the many political and economic machinations encountered by the proponents of the cotton industry in the course of developing that trade, the individual progress of the many sorts of cotton goods has yet to be examined. Chapter 1 contains a detailed enumeration of the textile products developed during this period. However those lists and the reactions of competitors do not in themselves encapsulate all that is significant in this phenomenon. Thousands of artisans and craftsmen collectively produced a growing array of cotton goods all of which were directed to markets already supplied by goods of comparable characteristics. The overall victory of cotton goods in the domestic market has been well documented, but what of the components of this economic coup? The individual documentation of the mass of weavers and manufacturers is not available; other means must be found to examine the specific progress of the range of cotton merchandise produced in competition with existing materials.

Throughout this period new sorts of woven and knitted cottons were added to the various categories used for clothing. A struggle then ensued within the various species of textile wares as to what would now constitute standard dress as the diversification and production of cottons continued in tandem. Naturally income set the limits for affordable clothing items of both new and traditional composition. However such was the breadth

of production in the cotton industry that virtually all areas of sales of wool, linen and silk were challenged.

Startling alterations in standard modes of dress occurred during this fifty years. A portrait of the average man in mid-century compared to another in 1800 would reveal many alterations in the substance of dress, where cottons usurped the place of many long established textiles. The early success of the cotton velvets, velverets and velveteens began the process. These cottons laid the ground-work for the progressive substitution of heavy, densely woven, napped cottons for both wool and leather clothing. Wool worsted, stuffs, serges and broadcloths had long been used in the making of warm outer garments for a whole spectrum of British consumers. However by 1770's significant incursions had been made upon the everyday wool clothes that had been so prominent a feature of the British costume. This is borne out in the report of three wanted men from that period, only one of which was described as wearing the products of the British wool industry, a cloth coat and waistcoat, and worsted stockings. The other two sported fustian or thickset frocks and waistcoats.<sup>1</sup> At this juncture most working men continued to wear leather breeches. However the many sorts of napped, ribbed and plain fustians had invaded much of the market for men's waistcoats, coats and frocks by the 1770's, even among the more affluent male consumers.<sup>2</sup>

Breeches made from the assorted cotton fabrics now available ultimately intruded upon the established market for leather and buckskin. In 1774 leather breeches were still commonly worn by many working men such as the lighterman Joseph Berry, who had a pair of new buckskins stolen from

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1. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 24 March 1770; 31 March 1770; Proceedings Old Bailey, February, 1770, pp. 138-40.

2. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 5 December 1771.

his house. The above mentioned fugitives also wore on their nether regions articles described variously as "greasy Leather Breeches" and "Buckskin Breeches".<sup>1</sup> However the accelerating productive capacity of the cotton industry allowed retailers to offer many varieties of cotton breeches. This was an innovation in the history of men's clothing. There would have certainly been resistance to the appearance of these competitive products from the established breeches makers, both those concentrated in London and their brethren in most towns and villages throughout Britain.<sup>2</sup> The leather breech trade was an ancient trade. Undoubtedly the practitioners of this trade opposed the novel cotton breeches as vigorously as had the wool manufacturers, and with as little success. The declining trade of one such leather breeches maker was chronicled by his apprentice Francis Place. During the term of his apprenticeship in the late 1780's Place witnessed the triumph of the new fabrics over the traditional sorts of leather apparel. By the beginning of the last decade of the century Place wrote despairingly that, "the Leather Breech trade had declined considerably and there was not nearly enough employment for the journeymen." The dislocation of employment reflected the profound alterations in the composition of men's clothing, for as Place concluded "leather was no longer commonly worn by any class of persons."<sup>3</sup>

By the beginning of the last quarter of the century the productive upsurge of the cotton industry filled shops throughout Britain with alternatives to buckskin and leather. The London tradesman Brown, a tailor and habit maker, advised customers that "any sort of cotton riding breeches" could be had for 17s. 7d.<sup>4</sup> While the London owner of the "Great Coat

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1. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 24 March 1770; 31 March 1770; The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 16 January 1778.

2. The Universal British Directory, vols. I-V, lists breeches makers in all major centres and most towns.

3. Place, p. 110.

4. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 27 May 1777.

and Ladies Mecklenburgh Cloak Warehouse" promised in 1777,

Breeches of various kinds, of the Manchester manufactory, such as ribdeleur, ribdurant, barragon, sattinet, everlasting, corderoy, jennet, stockinnet, etc. etc. all of the best kinds, at 16s. per pair....

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The proliferation of cottons for heavy outer wear encouraged the switch to cotton breeches. However leather articles did not disappear all at once, but rather, as Place recorded, in a slow attrition of the trade.

Leather breeches appeared only sporadically in the last decades of the century, while each new year witnessed the arrival of additional varieties of corderoys, thicksets, and other fustians. Genoa corded velveret and Prince of Wales corderoy were some of the sturdy cotton fabrics introduced in the late eighteenth century. While by the turn of the century Admiral Lord Nelson had had his name attached to the new Nelson corderoy, as a symbol of the strength and durability of the textile. The inventory of goods sold the smith John Powell typified the practical alterations in the clothing of British working men. From 1791 to 1801 the records list an abundance of corderoy, including the new Nelson cord, clearly indicating the preference for hard-wearing cotton fabrics. Even the local tanner in a Welsh village evidently preferred corderoy and velveteen for his clothing to the old fashion leathers.<sup>2</sup>

Over the last fifty years of the eighteenth century there was a progressive process of successful competition between the developing varieties of cotton goods and established textile commodities that had hitherto dominated men's clothing. The fustian and velvets produced so plentifully in the early years of the British cotton industry were readily incorporated

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1. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 2 August 1777.
  2. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 165, 334, 26.

into waistcoats, coats and frocks resulting in a noticeable alteration in the dress of British men. British-made cotton hose was also introduced in mid-century. Examples of invoices of orders for hose in the 1750's contain predominantly worsted or plain cotton hose. Few varieties of cotton hose were listed then.<sup>1</sup> However, as with the textiles, the assortments of cotton hose increased in quality and quantity as the craftsmen made great efforts to cultivate the home market. By the 1770's over fifteen sorts of cotton hose were included in orders where twenty years before there had been only a few. A decade further on cotton ribbed hose extended the varieties readily available.<sup>2</sup> The success of yet another segment of the cotton industry came about through the wide spread popularity of cotton hose among much of the population. The Welsh draper John Morgan of Neath sold cotton hose to customers in as diverse circumstances as the captain and currier, surgeon and ironmonger, tailor and tanner. The varieties he sold ranged in price from 17d. to 5/ per pair for plain cotton hose, though the draper also stocked grey cotton hose and ribbed cotton hose.<sup>3</sup> Even in the remote Welsh valleys cotton hose had become one of the basic ingredients of everyday dress.

There seemed to be no limit to the range and variety of goods that could be manufactured from cotton yarn. Goods were made providing consumers with a host of contradictory features from the same basic material. Cottons were made that were warm or cool, heavy or light, hard-wearing or ephemeral, smooth or napped. Manufacturers created one product after another, as fast as technical problems could be overcome, all in imitation of existing merchandise but with the added feature of easy care characteristic of cotton.

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1. Invoice, Peach & Pierce, 10 September 1770.
  2. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. III, pp. 1116, 1171.
  3. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 66, 144, 117, 92, 162, 134, 163, 245, 255, 263.

By the 1780's obvious revisions in the composition of men's clothing appeared throughout much of British society. A sailor dressed for his shore leave in fustian breeches, velveret waistcoat and cotton hose in 1784; while a coach-maker owned similar clothing in his marseilles waistcoat and cotton stockings. Gentlemen owned even greater stocks of cotton clothing, as their whole supply of clothing would have been much larger than that of working men. One captain of a merchant ship had eighteen pairs of cotton stockings and cotton trousers, while the second mate of another ship owned ten pairs of cotton hose and three cotton waistcoats.<sup>1</sup> The cotton industry challenged almost every other area of textile manufacture, specialists in the production of materials for men's coats, waistcoats, breeches stockings and frocks. Moreover the newly developing trade penetrated each market to which they directed their attention and over the last twenty years of the eighteenth century came to dominate many areas of consumer sales.

One of the last markets to hold out against the products of the cotton industry was that in men's shirting. The linen trade had for centuries provided the fabrics to make shirts across the whole social gamut from pauper to prince. At the lowest end of the market there was indeed the greatest resistance to the new sorts of cottons. Paupers and inmates of work houses continued to be supplied with the cheapest linens.<sup>2</sup> A coarse dowlas cost only about 8d. per yard and there was as yet no cotton cheap enough to match that price. But the mass of middling consumers required a less coarse variety of shirting and here the cotton industry was able to challenge yet again another of the traditional bastions of linen pre-eminence. In 1776 the difference in cost between cotton holland

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1. Proceedings...Old Bailey, October, 1784, pp. 1281-2, 1334-5; December, 1784, p. 165; September, 1785, p. 1007.

2. D/P 29 9/1.

and linen holland was 1½d., the former being 12½d. and the latter 11d.<sup>1</sup> However the industrial impetus favoured the production of cotton fabrics over linens. More and more varieties of plain cottons appeared in the last thirty years of the century threatening the long-held domination of linens in this field. High quality bleached cotton sold for from 16½d. to 15½d. per yard by 1777, the same approximate price as Irish linens of that quality.<sup>2</sup> Yearly, plain cotton textiles were manufactured in a greater number of widths providing unparalleled consumer choice and greater ease in the cutting and making of garments. Bit by bit portions of clothing that had once been made from linen were being made from cotton. Cotton linings, for example, were commonly ordered by the last decade of the century.<sup>3</sup> This sort of fabric was an unremarkable part of the clothing, but accounted for several yards of cloth for each suit of clothing. An alternative cotton lining cut into yet another area of linen sales.

Cotton shirts became readily available in the 1780's, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter. In this instance there was no precipitate rush for the new sort of shirt material. However one can assume that there was probably a slow, gradual shift to first try the cottons used to make shirts. One of the most conservative British institutions that consumed massive quantities of textiles was the Royal Navy. The Navy was not adventurous in its purchases. Yet even this slow-moving monolith eventually ordered considerable supplies of cotton shirts by the close of the century.<sup>4</sup> As representative of the most conservative elements of the British market, this order marks the final breach of the market held so long by the linen trade, a victory for the cotton industry

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1. Day Book, p. 285, 386.

2. Day Book, pp. 386, 471.

3. Morgan Drapers Ledger, p. 29.

4. ADM., 49/35, 1793.

in altering the fundamental composition of men's attire within a period of less than fifty years. Wool fabrics, linens and leather goods were constrained to retreat from their former prominence in the British market. A contemporary comment on the fate of woollen textiles in the home market could just as easily be applied to the three categories of goods by the end of the century; the comment being that they were "seldom enquired for but by paupers and parish officers."<sup>1</sup> Thus where free market choice determined the materials bought and the clothing worn, an array of cottons, woven and knitted, fulfilled an unprecedented proportion of the demand for men's clothing.

Barbara Johnson kept what is probably the most comprehensive personal record of clothing purchases over the last half of the eighteenth century. While the changes in the composition of women's clothing was strongly influenced by contemporary fashions, (See Chapter 4) there are still other features related to the competition among fabrics used for women's dress that remain to be discussed. The Barbara Johnson Sample Book warrants close attention first because of the pertinent decades covered by this volume and second because of the representative nature of both Miss Johnson and the clothing which she purchased.<sup>2</sup> Barbara Johnson was part of the aspiring middle ranks of British society. One can reasonably conjecture that both her interests and her patterns of consumption reflected common thought and practice among that wide-ranging social gradation. An examination of these records reveal specifics of a fierce and lengthy commercial contest among the various fabrics used in women's costumes. This contest illuminates the process whereby British cottons achieved pre-eminence in the market for women's clothing.

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1. The London Magazine, vol. LII, 1783, p. 128.

2. Barbara Johnson Sample Book.

Just as with the dress of British men, that of British women also underwent a startling transformation in composition between 1750 and 1800. It was content rather than form which altered the most dramatically over the second half of the century. The Johnson sample book mirrored the shift in the constituents of dress away from silk, wool and linen towards cotton materials. Appendix VII illustrates the progressive alterations in the fabrics bought from 1746 to 1800. The majority of the clothing added to her wardrobe during this period was made of silk, thirty-seven pieces of silk dress material in total. But of this total thirty-one of the lengths of silk fabrics were bought before 1779. Only six costumes were made of silk in the last twenty years of the century. Wool clothing was similarly concentrated in the earlier part of the volume. Nine garments were made from wool textiles before 1763 and only one in the years running up to the nineteenth century, and that was a gift to Miss Johnson. The clergyman's daughter bought fewer lengths of linen for clothing than any of the other fabrics. There were several sorts of printed linen bought in the early 1750's, one of which was described by the writer as being printed cotton. A small flurry of purchases of printed linens followed just prior to 1780, after which there were no further additions of linens to her collection of clothing.<sup>1</sup> The individual consumer like Barbara Johnson reflected national consumer trends. The consumption of linens dropped dramatically during the last quarter of the century as has been shown in the previous chapter. Individual consumers readjusted their established buying patterns, favouring alternate textiles, the products of the cotton industry.

Significantly one of the earliest listed purchases of a British cotton by Barbara Johnson was for a fustian riding dress; this was bought in

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1. Barbara Johnson Sample Book, pp. 2-21.

1757. The choice of a cotton fustian for this garment illustrates the initial penetration of the domestic market for both men's and women's clothes by heavy weight cotton textiles. Such fabrics were offered as less costly alternatives to comparable wool materials: the difference in price was substantial. Barbara Johnson paid 5/6 per yard for the cotton twill cloth for her riding dress, while a wool broadcloth riding dress was nearly four times as dear, costing 20/ per yard.<sup>1</sup> Understandably women required less sturdy clothing materials for their daily costumes than did men, for the warmth in women's dress came from the many layers which were worn. However some garments required a warm heavy fabric and when a cheaper, practical alternative found favour in men's clothing women were not long in adopting these novel textiles as well.

The major portion of the yard goods recorded in this volume were bought to be made into lighter gowns. Silks were in the majority, clearly Johnson's favourite of the fabrics available in the third quarter of the century. The prices of these silk textiles ran from 12/ per yard to 4/ per yard, though the bulk of her purchases of silk lutestrings, tobines and taffetas cost between four and seven shillings. Cotton dress fabrics were first purchased in the late 1740's and again in 1760, the latter cottons costing 2/6 per yard. Cotton dress fabric comprised a small but constant part of Barbara Johnson's wardrobe throughout the third quarter of the century. Printed linens served the same function as did the cottons and for a while, before 1780, she appeared to favour the two sorts of textiles equally. Four lengths of printed linen were bought early in the 1750's for about 2/4 per yard. The next piece of linen noted in 1764 cost 3/ per yard and the three remaining sorts bought by 1779 continued

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1. Barbara Johnson Sample Book, pp. 4,8.

to show a higher price than the printed linens of mid-century. The last linens bought sold for from 3/ to 3/2.<sup>1</sup>

There was an obvious correlation between the production and improvement of light cotton dress materials and the disappearance of many comparable linen, silk and mixed linen/wool and silk/wool fabrics from the pages of the sample book. The first records of printed cottons in the volume were followed later in the 1760's by another sturdy cotton twill textile and a printed glazed cotton; over the next decade an embroidered Indian cotton and a purple and white printed cotton were added to her complement of clothing. The versatility of the cotton fabrics and the availability of a variety of multi-purpose textiles was undoubtedly a factor in the success of these cottons. Linen clothing textiles enjoyed an advantage only as long as it took to develop cottons of the same type or, indeed, cottons that offered added features such as the glazed cottons. The more costly cotton fabrics like the glazed cotton had particular qualities justifying the higher price, these goods being cheaper and imitations of expensive silk fabrics.<sup>2</sup> The Indian muslin and fine glazed cotton chintz were the dearest of the cottons Barbara Johnson bought, being 10/ and 10/6 respectively.<sup>3</sup> However these prices were exceptional. The British-made cottons which Barbara Johnson bought with greater and greater frequency between 1780 and 1800 cost as little as 20d. per yard, though the average was from three to five shillings per yard. This average cost was noticeably lower than that of the silk fabrics. This price differential would certainly have contributed to the substitution of silk textiles with the "blue muslin", gingham, cotton tabby, calico and chintz fabrics that appeared so consistently in the later pages of the sample book.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Barbara Johnson Sample Book, pp. 1-46.

2. Ibid, p. 10.

3. Ibid, pp. 10, 13.

4. Ibid, pp. 37-52.

The cotton industry waged a broad battle for a foothold in the home market. Ultimate pre-eminence was achieved through the many individual skirmishes between specific species of cotton manufactures and the established commodities, most of which had been fixtures in the domestic market for decades, even centuries. One by one traditional commodities were knocked back from their established position in the British market. Fustians, corderoys, velveteens and the like challenged many wools - tammys, serges, worsteds and stuffs. Specialization in the cotton industry added new contenders to the fray with each year, specific textiles and knitted goods being directed at specific markets. Thus it was mainly the heavier cottons that first broke into the market for men's clothing and within a short time similar women's garments also came to be made of cotton tabbies, twill, velvets, and velveteens. Both sexes adopted the use of cotton stockings, to the detriment of the manufacturers of linen, silk and worsted yarns. While lighter cotton dress fabrics cut deeply into established demand for silk, linens, wool stuffs and mixtures.

The result of the vigorous competition in the many market area was a comprehensive alternation in the composition of British clothing, the substitution of cotton for many other fibres. The magnitude of this change was without precedent. Centuries of established production and consumption of unvarying combinations of wool, linen, leather and silk were upset in less than half a century. The many examples of the progressive changes in men's dress and the peerless record of Barbara Johnson's wardrobe during the crucial fifty years mirror one of the most dramatic instances of commercial competition of that era. Moreover in considering the enormous economic impact of these changes one must not lose sight of the fact that these were not the result of an economic coup by an industrial leviathan, but rather reflected the ingenuity, enterprise and endeavour of thousands of artisans and craftsmen who saw the opportunity to contribute

new products to the growing inventory of cotton goods and hoped to profit from their industry. Names like Crompton, Arkwright, Oldknow, and Strutt are well known. However in their ranks were small farmers, tradesmen, artisans, and chapmen, all of whom hoped to prosper producing novel and practical cotton goods for the home market. The success of their various ventures is witnessed in the predominance of cotton products in many areas of drapery and haberdasher, and in the clothing of British men and women at the close of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER III

The Transportation and Distribution of British Cotton  
Textiles Throughout the Home Market, 1750-1800

Many aspects of the eighteenth century British market for cottons remain as yet uninvestigated or only partially explored after half a century of study on the cotton trade. The wholesale and retail distribution of cottons is one of the areas deserving closer and more detailed examination. Selected elements of the domestic sale of cottons were expounded upon by Wadsworth and Mann in their description of the early Lancashire firms like the J. & N. Philips Company. However in dealing with distribution and markets their interest centred on the export trade in cottons rather than the home market. R.B. Westerfield's turn of the century volume Middlemen in English Business dealt in some detail with the activities of the chapmen and other travellers selling textiles, in addition to the many other middlemen who received Westerfield's attention. However in this study as well the focus was not fixed on the distributive network and the function of the wholesale and retail centres in eighteenth century Britain. M.M. Edwards has presented the most comprehensive examination to date on the home trade in cottons, in The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815. In this work the development of textile enterprises, like that of Samuel Oldknow, and the distribution and sale of his materials through the London middlemen contributed to Edward's study of the home market. Edwards also examined the relationship between the manufacturer and the major London distributor such as Samuel Salte.<sup>1</sup> Making particular use of the Irving Manuscripts, illustrative of the life and business of Samuel Crompton, Edwards was able to elucidate the diversification among the various middlemen in the cotton trade, like the commission agents and warehousemen, in the distributive chain running from manufacturer to retailer.<sup>2</sup> In most of these instances the records used as the basis of Edward's study emphasized London as "the crucial focal point in the distribution of cottons" during the period 1780 to 1815.<sup>3</sup>

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1. M.M. Edwards, The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815 , (M.U.P., 1967), pp. 160-1.

2. Ibid, pp. 151-160.

3. Ibid, p. 163.

Edwards acknowledged the role of provincial centres. However this portion of his study lacked the depth of example that characterized the extensive segment dealing with the London distributive market.

The following chapter will reveal additional features of the national picture, providing a more diverse and detailed examination of the commercial distribution of cottons in Britain throughout much of the eighteenth century. This segment will begin with a look at the sources of supply for a mid-eighteenth century mercer and shopkeeper. Next comes an assessment of the roles of London and Manchester as centres of distribution, utilizing the records of several later eighteenth century provincial shopkeepers as well as documentation on the individual cities. In addition there will be an examination of the transportation used to move these goods across country, an important consideration in any history of Britain's inland trade and one which is only now receiving attention after a long series of general revisions on the transportation and inland trade of eighteenth century Britain.<sup>1</sup>

#### i Transportation in the Domestic Cotton Trade

The marketing of textiles had never been a static trade and this continued to be the case for tradesmen in the first half of the eighteenth century. Regardless of the hazards and inconveniences of travel in contemporary Britain, merchants and tradesmen covered miles of roads, collecting the requisite supplies of fabrics and bringing bales of cloth to markets and fairs for sale. Most were probably inured or at least resigned to the travel demanded by their occupation and lacking the hindsight of later historians, did not realize that conditions were so poor that travel should have been impossible or very restricted. Rather, the detours and delays

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1. M.J. Freeman has produced two short studies on various aspects of transportation and the trade in British textiles around 1800. "Transporting methods in the British cotton industry during the Industrial revolution" The Journal of Transport History, 3rd series, vol. 1, no.1, 1980, and A Perspective on the Geography of English Internal Trade During the Industrial Revolution, 1982. The latter studied the distribution of Yorkshire woollen and worsted fabrics.

were accepted and the middlemen in the textile trade proceeded<sup>e</sup> deliberately with their affairs. The pace would have been almost leisurely, not by choice but by necessity, for the collection, distribution and sale of textiles depended on the weather, the state of the roads, the waterways and the coastal seas. As Defoe so aptly phrased it, "there are multitudes of people employ'd, cattle maintain'd, with waggons and carts for the service on shore, barges and boats for carriage in the rivers, and ships and banks for carrying by sea, and all for the circulating these manufactures...for the consumption of them among the people."<sup>1</sup> Joseph Harper worked in the mercery trade in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, operating a shop in Hinckley, Leicestershire. Harper travelled extensively, for his prosperity depended on a regular supply of modish materials at reasonable prices and the trade and sale of fabrics outside his shop as well. A memo book for the year 1753 indicated that fabrics purchased were both practical and fashionable, with textiles and haberdashery as well as grocery items, books and stationery comprising part of his stock. Among the items noted under "Drapery" were printed linens, dark ground chintz, and light blue chintz; while under mercery, black velvets, and "Strip Cotton" were listed.<sup>2</sup> All of these types of materials were then being manufactured in Lancashire and vicinity.<sup>3</sup> Thus there can be no doubt that Harper was being supplied with an assortment of British-made cottons and cotton-linens.

Earlier records of Harper's endeavours for the years 1733-37 provide insight into the almost continuous round of journeys which appear to have been essential. Harper travelled for two reasons, either to sell his merchandise or to purchase stock. The degree to which he travelled suggests that it was a prerequisite at that time for a healthy level of profits. The regular sequence of journeys to Rugby and Atherstone, for example,

1. Daniel Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman, (Dublin, 1721)p. 255.
2. Harper (Burton-Latimer) 6/87, Northampton Record Office
3. G.G.2

indicate that Harper attended nearly all of the local markets and fairs, where he could have exercised both parts of his trade. The seasonal fairs appear to have been a great impetus for Harper's journeys, especially in the early few years when he attended most fairs in the vicinity of Hinckley. Although Wadsworth and Mann concluded that these seasonal events declined in importance as the century progressed,<sup>1</sup> clearly the Coventry Fair, as well as several others, retained sufficient importance to attract Harper year after year.<sup>2</sup> (See Appendix VIII for catalogue of journeys).

The other reason for Harper's journeys was to select and order stocks of fabrics and other goods, and to this end he made regular journeys to London. Contemporaries and later historians concur on London's unique status as an entrepot and distributive centre of unrivalled proportions, offering every sort of product and mercantile service.<sup>3</sup> The London market often employed the artisans and craftsmen of the countryside, sometimes at great distances, to produce stocks of cheap goods. Dorothy George discussed the provision of cheap ready-made shoes by shoemakers in Northampton and elsewhere in the country for merchants in the capital.<sup>4</sup> The practical distributive mechanism that enabled merchants to organize production and collect supplies, would have worked equally well for the re-sale and re-distribution of merchandise of all sorts. The volume and variety of merchandise stored in London drew provincial tradesmen to make selections for their own needs.

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1. A.P. Wadsworth & Julia de Lacy Mann, The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1931, pp. 238-9.
  2. H(B-L) 81.
  3. Daniel Defoe, A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain, vol. I, (London Everyman edition, 1966), pp. 314-376.  
E.A. Wrigley, "A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society" Past & Present, no. 37, July, 1967.
  4. Dorothy George, London Life in the Eighteenth Century, (London, 1925, reprinted Harmondsworth Mddx, 1965), pp. 198-9.

The first two years of the ledger tells of Harper's yearly spring journey to London, where he would have made his selection from the abundant supplies. However, during the last two years the number of trips to London rose from one to three in 1736, plus another London trip in the winter of 1737 when the records end. At the same time Harper cut down on the secondary jaunts to smaller markets and fairs.<sup>1</sup> Harper's ledger reflects the trend developing throughout the whole trade whereby the sources of supply and the retail outlets were becoming increasingly fixed. Retailers more and more looked to a central outlet for their merchandise. Significantly it was at this same point that Harper made his first trip to Manchester. Harper went right to the source of the "Stript Cotten" and other cotton textiles noted in the later memo book and on this first trip he remained four days. This entry reflects the persistence of Manchester's manufacturers and tradesmen to persevere in their capacity as distributors for the cotton trade, in spite of London's overall pre-eminence.

Joseph Harper's catalogue of travels crystallized a conflict that persisted up until the close of the eighteenth century between the two distributive centres for the cotton trade, the one in London and the other in Manchester. By mid-century, long before the mania for turnpikes had infected the nation, London stood at the hub of a comprehensive transportation network. Eleven per cent of the population lived in the capital while at least one in six of the nation's adult population visited London at least once.<sup>2</sup> Publishers began producing directories and guides to the metropolis in increasing numbers from 1740 in an effort to cater to the needs of visitors. These volumes enable tradesmen such as Harper to find the desired linen drapers, haberdashers and warehousemen, all of whom were listed in the directories. The title of R. Baldwin's 1753

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1. H(B-L) 81.

2. Wrigley, pp. 45-50.

reference book indicates the audience to which this volume was directed - A Complete Guide to All Persons who have any Trade or Concern with the City of London. Included was a detailed listing of the inns from which carriers and coaches set off and the times and days of services. London maintained close and reasonably regular ties extending out to all points of the kingdom. In 1753, coaches travelled to York seven times weekly in summer and six in winter; Bath boasted eight weekly services in summer and six in winter; while even ports such as Newcastle-on-Tyne, which one might expect to be served exclusively by coaster, had a twice-weekly service from London.<sup>1</sup> The proliferation of various almanacks and guides provided the country tradesman with all the relevant information to assist him in a commercial expedition to London and back home again.

The system of roads which connected the cities, villages and hamlets of eighteenth century Britain have been considered by some historians more of an obstacle to commercial intercourse within Britain than a contribution to the internal economy and interregional trade. In fact until a few years ago the whole topic of internal trade in eighteenth century Britain is notable for the paucity of literature. One of the explanations for the very long absence of interest, only recently revived, in the internal trade of eighteenth century Britain may lie in the assumptions held until recently about the state of land-based transportation during that era. Literary records abound with complaints about winter quagmires and narrow, broken road surfaces that confounded attempts at rapid travel. Individual comments by contemporaries like Defoe over the years attained the status of dogma, leading many to suppose that the physical limitations of eighteenth century roads inhibited all but the most intrepid.

Over the last ten years there has been a major re-evaluation of the role of road transportation. E. Pawson, W. Albert, M.J. Freeman, and

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1. R. Baldwin, A Complete Guide to All Persons..., 1753, pp. 99, 114, 123.

G.L. Turnbull have presented substantial evidence confirming the part played by land-based transportation in this era.<sup>1</sup> Studies of the maps of turnpiked roads confirm that improvements began when and as the traffic generated by the economic life of the region required, or when the increase in long distance haulage placed excessive strain on local resources. The 1734 petitioners from "the Town of Manchester, and the several Townships of Newton, Failsworth, and Oldham" clearly reflected the regional requirement for passable roads. Textile manufacturing in Lancashire and vicinity and the commercial ties established with other markets were jeopardized by the hazardous routes. The concern exhibited in the petition was in proportion to the risks to the economic life of the area that an impediment to easy land travel represented.<sup>2</sup> One of the most significant points to emerge from the revisionary work on transport history is that poor roads notwithstanding, road carriage was frequently the preferred choice among merchants. Mud, precipitous hills, narrow tracks and deeply rutted roads tried the endurance of driver and vehicle, but

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1. Eric Pawson, Transport and Economy, (1977).  
 W. Albert, The Turnpike Road System in England, 1665-1840, (1972).  
 G.L. Turnbull, Traffic and Transport, (1979).  
 G.L. Turnbull, "Provincial Road Carrying in England in the eighteenth century" Journal of Transport History, new ser. 4 (1977), pp. 17-39.  
 M.J. Freeman, "Transporting methods in the British Cotton Industry during the Industrial Revolution" The Journal of Transport History, 3 vol. 2, no. 1, Sept. 1980; "Road Transportation in the English Industrial revolution: an interim assessment" J of Historical Geography, 6 (1980), pp. 17-28.  
 M.J. Freeman, Op. Cit.  
 - also pending, a new volume on transportation and internal trade on 18th Century Britain, by Manchester University Press. Other work on this topic includes:  
 W.T. Jackson, The Development of Transportation in Modern England, 2nd ed., 1962.  
 T.C. Barker & C.T. Savage, An Economic History of Transport in Britain, 3rd ed. (1974).  
 T.S. Willan, The Inland Trade, (1976).  
 E.A. Pratt, A History of Inland Transport and Communication, (1912).  
 J.A. Chartres, Internal Trade in England, 1500-1700, (1977) (excellent bibliography).
  2. J.H.C., vol. 22, 1734, p.372.

travel by road was still faster and more reliable than either coastal or river vessel. Water borne shipments suffered substantially more from the vagaries of weather than did wagon or coach. William Stout reported ships immobilized by ice and destroyed in harbour and on the seas during severe winter weather, while river traffic experienced delays and obstructions as well. Stout also complained of the damage inflicted on board ship by rats, endemic to all water-going craft.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in times of war enemy vessels off-shore made all coastal shipping problematic.

By 1750 thirteen arterial routes, branching out from London had been improved by turnpike trusts. These highways stretched to all corners of the kingdom and joined up with the principal thoroughfares linking provincial capitals and market regions. Thus as the mid-century London directories indicated, the network of roads and carrier services plying the length of those routes provided a London-centred transportation system of sufficient complexity and flexibility to serve most parts of the nation. Harper noted in his ledger that "Goods Came from London", only several days after his own return from the capital.<sup>2</sup> At that time the consignment from London would have travelled most of the way along the improved turnpike surfaces. Thus the improvements in the nation's highways contributed to London's continuing dominance as the national distributive centre in almost all commodities, including British-made cottons.

G.L. Turnbull has made an intensive study of Pickford's, probably the oldest recorded continuing carrier company. Pickford's grew out of the demand for carriers to move the Lancashire cottons from Manchester to London. First mention of the firm appeared in a 1756 edition of the Manchester Mercury and by that time James Pickford ran a well-established

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1. The Autobiography of William Stout, ed. J.D. Marshall, (Manchester University Press, 1967), pp. 227, 228, 108.

2. H(B-L) 81.

undertaking.<sup>1</sup> As well as Pickford several other carrier firms operated on the Manchester-London route, funnelling the Lancashire manufacturers to the nation's largest market and redistributive centre. The Jacobite John Holker, when spying for France, reported that each week approximately one thousand bolts of chintz were sold by Blackburn manufacturers to London merchants for dyeing.<sup>2</sup> This figure provides an approximation of the volume of textiles moving from Manchester to London each week.

As the numbers of journeys increased along with the volume of textiles transported the basis of a distributive infra-structure was formed. The practical requirements of this level of road shipment demanded temporary storage space at the terminus of these trips. Inn keepers fulfilled many of the secondary administrative functions throughout the whole length of the carrier routes, selling tickets, arranging transfers of packages and providing temporary warehouse space. It was this last activity that developed into part of the national distributive network. Various inns specialized in coach and carrier services to different parts of the country and it was around the terminal inns in London where the carriers from the north-west ended their journey that a warehousing system developed specializing in Manchester wares. Initially the bales of cloth were probably housed temporarily in the outbuildings of the inns such as the Axe on Aldermanbury, the Bell Inn on Wood Street, Blossom's Inn on Lawrence Lane, The Castle and Falcon on Aldersgate or the Swan with Two Necks on Lad Lane.<sup>3</sup> Inevitably the potential profits to be made from selling these goods to wholesalers would have encouraged development of a **separate** warehouse business. Earlier in the century similar businesses in the sale of textiles ready-made gowns, or banjan, operated from inns and coffee

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1. G.L. Turnbull, Traffic and Transport, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1979), p.6.
  2. G.G.2, Nos. 88-100.
  3. The Universal British Directory, vol. I, pp. 475-90.

houses in London. Harrison's warehouse, for example, was situated "Against the King on Horseback, Charing Cross".<sup>1</sup> Established warehousemen or newcomers to the trade naturally settled close to the area at which the carriers arrived as a purely practical consideration. This was a common phenomenon. S.D. Chapman described an identical process among the wholesalers of cotton stockings.<sup>2</sup> Thus as the shipments of cotton textiles increased an area specializing in wholesale distribution developed within London in the area of Lad Lane, Wood Street, Lawrence Lane and Aldermanbury running off the established textile merchandizing area of Cheapside. Some warehousemen used the warehousing built along the lanes and courtyards that wound around that area of the city. But others remained either in inn buildings or the courtyards of these establishments. Manchester warehousemen Kearsley & Chesnie were listed in a 1776 directory at "2 Blossom's Inn Gateway, Lawrence Lane", while warehouseman Bloss Branwhite conducted his business from the Spread Eagle Inn, Gracechurch.<sup>3</sup> The economic organization which developed with the increase in inland trade in cotton textiles was a closely knit, interdependent group of tradesmen that served whole areas of England and developed in conjunction with the carrier services.

#### ii Middlemen in the Cotton Trade

In London the sale of Manchester wares was undertaken by tradesmen according to several arrangements. M.M. Edwards has described the various specialities of these middlemen. The commission agent for example, sold the British-made cottons on commission, and for their mutual benefit kept the Lancashire manufacturer informed on all shifts in fashion.<sup>4</sup> Warehouse-

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1. The Country Journal, 3 August 1728.
  2. S.D. Chapman, "Enterprise and Innovation in the British Hosiery Industry" Textile History, vol. 5, 1974.
  3. H. Lowndes, A London Directory..., London, 1776, pp. 21, 95.
  4. Edwards, pp. 151-7.

men comprised another category of tradesmen who engaged in the purchase and resale of cotton textiles, and of this group certainly Samuel Salte is the most well known of those operating in the late eighteenth century. George Unwin has defined the responsibilities of the warehousemen, their main business being:

to buy from country manufacturers and from importers to sell to retailers. They had to keep in constant and sensitive touch with the fluctuating demand of fashionable consumers on the one hand and with the technical resources and business capacity of an everchanging body of manufacturers on the other. They had to be prepared to offer credit both to manufacturers and retailers....The great, "Linen Houses", to which class Saltes' probably belonged, are said to have needed a capital of £30,000 to £50,000 for their establishment.

1

Thomas Mortimer's Universal Director for 1763 contains listings of all the major tradesmen and warehousemen resident in London. Included in this directory were eighty wholesale linen drapers and warehousemen, six of whom traded exclusively in Manchester wares.<sup>2</sup> The London Directory for 1776 contained one hundred and thirty warehousemen, of which twenty-four traded in Manchester goods; there were in addition fifteen wholesale linen drapers and eight wholesale mercers, making a total of one hundred and fifty three designated wholesale dealers in textiles.<sup>3</sup> However even this extensive collection of wholesale dealers did not constitute the entire assemblage. The title ascribed to a tradesman did not always indicate all of his functions. S. & W. Salte, for instance, were listed as linen drapers. However although they ran a retail outlet, the greater part of Saltes' business consisted of supplying other retailers with textiles. In fact a multiplicity of function was common among tradesmen

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1. George Unwin, Samuel Oldknow and the Arkwrights, (Manchester University Press, 1924, reprinted 1968) pp. 56-7.
  2. Thomas Mortimer, The Universal Director..., London, 1763, pp. 107-165.
  3. Lowndes, pp. 4-194.

in the period. Advertisements regularly appeared in newspapers placed there by mercers, drapers, and the like, soliciting custom from country tradesmen.<sup>1</sup> Thus an appraisal of the numbers of London's retail textile tradesmen is also of interest since these firms were, in many instances, active in the business of wholesale distribution of textiles. In 1763 Mortimer tallied forty-six mercers and one hundred and fifty-five linen drapers of sufficient stature to warrant an entry in his directory. Twenty years later London boasted over one hundred of the former tradesmen and nearly two hundred and eighty of the latter, a peerless collection, the largest distributive entity in the British textile trade.<sup>2</sup>

Table 3:1

London Tradesmen Operating as Wholesale Distributors

<u>Year</u>	<u>Warehousemen*</u>	<u>Manchester ditto</u>	<u>Total</u>
1763	74	6	80
1776	129	24	153
1790	160	41	201

\* all wholesale linen drapers and mercers included.

3

The function of the warehousemen and linen drapers was essentially that of a middleman. In order to facilitate the movement of information and stock between one firm and another, the London tradesmen in cottons, linens and the like congregated together. Cheapside/the Poultry was the backbone of the textile trading area. The streets, lanes, courts and alleys that ran off that main thorough-fare, north and south, contained the bulk of the traders in British-made cottons. Milk Street, Lawrence Lane, King Street, Ironmonger Lane, Aldermanbury, Bucklersbury, and Princes Street near the Mansion House, contained the majority of the warehouses

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1. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 29 July 1779; 25 August 1779; The Bristol Gazetteer, 9 March 1797.
  2. Mortimer, Director, pp. 107-165; R. Baldwin, The Complete New Guide..., London, 1783, pp. 190-323.
  3. Mortimer, Director, pp. 107-165; Lowndes, Directory, pp. 4-194; The Universal British Directory, vol. I, 1790, pp. 49-345.

for both regular warehousemen dealing in mixed textiles and the Manchester warehouses, specializing in cottons exclusively. In and around the same area gathered the linen drapers, wholesale linen drapers, and a range of subsidiary and affiliated trades.<sup>1</sup> By the last decade in the eighteenth century the number of warehousemen specializing in cotton textiles had risen to forty-one, an increase of thirty-five since the first listing of that trade in 1763.<sup>2</sup> (See Table 3:1) The London middlemen encapsulated a tremendous capacity for trade, in volumes that can only be speculated upon as year by year the production of the cotton industry increased and the trade of the London middlemen grew in turn with the sale of these goods. Certainly London styles set national fashions and the common drawing card for all eighteenth century provincial tradesmen was the announcement that stock had recently arrived from London. This boast can be found in advertisements printed in newspapers around the nation, and in itself hints at the vast stocks of goods moving out from the metropolis.<sup>3</sup> However at this juncture it must be ascertained whether the London colossus of trade did indeed dominate the entire distribution of British-made cottons in the domestic market to the exclusion of all others.

London had been described as an engine of economic growth during the preceding centuries. The concentration of wealth and the sheer size of the market generated a unique demand during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> However by the second half of the eighteenth century prosperity also accrued to the capital's middlemen in supplying the demand for goods emanating from the rest of Britain. In many cases London dominated distribution. This has been the case since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe described London's

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1. London Directory, 1776, pp. 4-185.

2. Universal British Directory, vol. I, pp. 49-345.

3. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 2 June 1770; 14 February 1767; The Bath Journal, 24 September 1753.

4. F.J. Fisher, "London as an 'Engine of Economic Growth'" in E. Carus-Wilson ed., Essays in Economic History, vol. 2, (London, Edward Arnold, 1962), pp. 3-16.

unique importance as the chief distributor of merchandise in England, making it the central trading place of the nation.

[As London] is the centre of trade, so all the manufactures are brought hither, and from hence circulated again to all the country...Country shopkeepers do not go or send to all the several counties where those goods are made - that is to say, to this part for the Cloth, or that for the Lining, to another for Buttons, and to another for the Thread; but they again correspond with the wholesale-dealers in London, where there are particular shops or warehouses for all these; and they not only furnish the country shopkeeper, but give them large credit and sell them great quantities of goods....

1

London exerted an almost irresistible commercial attraction and, indeed, as all the intermediary functions were provided in the capital there was no incentive to look elsewhere for middlemen. It was indeed true that "the magnitude of the city influences the whole nation".<sup>2</sup>

S.D. Chapman traced the dominance of London as the base for distributing stockings and hose manufactured in the counties of Nottingham and Derby. These were traditional centres of stocking production that received a boost with the establishment of cotton spinning mills in their vicinity. Gradually much of the stock produced was made of cotton yarn, superseding linen, silk and wool. Between 1770 and 1775 Chapman discovered nearly seventy manufacturers from those regions with identifiable distributive ties with London. Some marketed their merchandise through a commission agent, others maintained a warehouse in the Wood Street, Lawrence Lane district off Cheapside. Some of this number even kept up a house in London to facilitate the London side of the business. But in all cases London remained the pre-eminent distribution centre, no competitive provincial site arose to challenge London's pre-eminence as the national distribution centre.<sup>3</sup>

1. Daniel Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman, (Dublin, 1726), pp. 259, 263.
2. Ibid, p. 259.
3. S.D. Chapman, "Enterprise and Innovation in the British Hosiery Industry", Textile History, vol. 5, 1974, pp. 33-5.

However the manufacturers of checks, chintzes and fustians had, since the inception of the trade, taken a hand in the sale of these products. The Manchester men, for example, had been one of the principal vendors of fustians and other cotton merchandise for well over a century by 1750: the manufacturers supplied these travelling traders themselves. Their practice of circulating far and wide about the country was well established and they continued to traverse across Britain along the ancient pedlars' ways that connected the many regions of the kingdom. Accompanied by heavily laden pack-horses the Manchester men brought their stock-in-trade to the shopkeepers, fairs, markets and households along their route. These specialized pedlars were awarded recognition for "extending the home consumption of cotton goods, especially for women's wear" in 1704 when they were exempted from the tax on hawkers.<sup>1</sup> The string of pack-horses trekking across the landscape was a common sight that continued up into the middle of the century. By that time fairs were of less importance than they had been previously as sites for the trade and purchase of textiles. However as the fairs declined shops proliferated in all those villages without competing markets.<sup>2</sup> These retail outlets would have represented comparable custom for the Manchester men in the decades of mid-century. During this time alternate systems of supplying cotton textiles were developing and eventually these methods supplanted the slow and cumbersome circuits of the Manchester men.

Manufacturers of cotton textiles and textile goods took the marketing of these products into their own hands. This phenomenon has been well documented, one of the earliest of these enterprises being the J. & N. Philips Company, manufacturers of small wares and tapes. The records of the Philips Company provides unique early documentation of the marketing

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1. Wadsworth & Mann, pp. 46, 238.

2. T.S. Willan, The Inland Trade, (Manchester University Press, 1976), p.88.

ventures undertaken by the manufacturers themselves. The activities of the Philips brothers has long been recognized.<sup>1</sup> But what has been overlooked is the competition such marketing presented to the large London-based wholesalers, who, as we shall see, preferred to retain complete control over the distribution of Lancashire's products.

The earliest surviving remnants of the Philips' business records is a letter book for the years 1753 to 1769. John and Nathaniel Philips began their career in the textile trade in 1747, specializing in small wares and tapes - an essential component in the making of clothes.<sup>2</sup> The success of this firm depended upon broad markets beyond the immediate confines of Lancashire. Thus the partners conducted wide-ranging expeditions through many regions of Britain, calling on shopkeepers and soliciting sales for their merchandise. They regularly canvassed East Anglia and the Midlands; subsequently they made a tour of the region around Bristol and eventually travelled as far as Scotland in search of new customers. The collection of bills for the year 1756 illustrate the location of some of their customers in towns such as Bristol, Burton, Wolverhampton, Nottingham, Cambridge, Sandy and Manchester.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Philips sold their tapes and small wares to London warehousemen and it was these tradesmen who revealed their very great disinclination to have the manufacturers of the goods continue as salesmen. The warehousemen were not satisfied to receive a portion of Philips products; they wanted the complete output. Several requests were made to Philips by London warehousemen asking to handle all of Philips' stock and arrange all of the wholesale distribution. These requests were always refused. Petitions such as these reflect the reluctance of the London warehousemen to tolerate competition in the

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1. Wadsworth & Mann included excerpts from the records and summarized much of the J. & N. Philips Company activities.
  2. M 97 Je NP, J. & N. Philips & Company Records, Manchester Public Library.
  3. M 97/3, Philips Records.

provision of tapes to retailers. The warehousemen appear to have wanted a strict delineation of function with themselves as wholesale distributors and firms like Philips operating exclusively as producers. However the manufacturers in the cotton trade persisted in conducting the considerable portion of their trade themselves, regardless of the grumblings of the London tradesmen. Philips refuted one warehouseman's charge that he was being undercut by Philips' trade. This charge was answered in a letter written in 1754, with Philips stating that:

You don't do us justice in charging us with selling  
small Quantities to Haberdashers as cheap as to  
you, and we assure you we never did. 1

Philips, like many other Lancashire manufacturers, retained control of the marketing of their products to a great extent. Moreover, Manchester carried on as a centre of manufacturer-retailing, where the producer was integrally involved in the cultivation of markets and the retail and wholesale distribution of fabrics. The table below indicates the growth of Manchester's wholesale capacity.

Table 3:2

<u>Manchester Wholesale Distributors</u>			
<u>1773</u>	<u>1788</u>	<u>1794</u>	
50	60	141	2

Manchester could not match the size of London's diverse wholesale network. However where the London tradesmen dealt with all the multitude of textiles that poured into London from Britain, Europe and the East, Manchester's warehousemen concentrated solely on the sale of the locally made fabrics. When considered in this light the extent and capacity of the Manchester-based system becomes more apparent. This industrial centre aspired to

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1. M 97/3, Philips Records.
  2. Elizabeth Raffald, The Manchester Directory for the Year 1773, (Manchester Press Co. Ltd., reprinted 1886), pp. 5-52.; Lewis's Directory for the Town of Manchester and Salford for the Year 1788. (Manchester, Lewis, reprinted 1888), pp. 5-33.; The Universal British Directory, vol. III, 1794, pp. 789-858.

challenge London's commercial hegemony in the wholesale dispersal of British-made cottons, ultimately succeeding in this endeavour. Furthermore the numbers of wholesale distributors based in Manchester would include all the manufacturers who undertook the sale of their own merchandise. With each passing year Manchester assumed a greater stature as the distributive centre for the cotton trade. The manufacturers in smaller outlying towns and villages were obliged to retain warehouse space in Manchester as year by year that town attracted more and more customers. In 1773 over one hundred fustian manufacturers and twenty-four check manufacturers from the neighbouring cotton manufacturing towns of Lancashire, Cheshire and Derbyshire, arranged warehouse space in Manchester to display their goods. In 1781 this number had grown. Approximately one hundred and seventy fustian manufacturers and twenty-eight check manufacturers were represented in Manchester along with the many local producers.<sup>1</sup> Only Macclesfield, out of all the many cotton towns, contained a warehouseman.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the resentment displayed by London's wholesale dealers towards the competitive merchant manufacturers in the cotton trade Manchester's wholesale and retail distribution flourished. London dealers, such as Samuel Salte, for example, continued to press for the exclusive rights to the distribution of choice textiles, but this was always refused him. Oldknow, too, knew the benefits of retaining a degree of independence in the marketing of his cottons. In fact a list of Oldknow's customers between the years 1782 and 1786 yielded nearly 110 names from twenty-nine destinations, both in trade and private purchases.<sup>3</sup>

The progressive decline of the Manchester Men over the mid-century did not ring the death knells for all the itinerant pedlars and hawkers

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1. Wadsworth & Mann, pp. 255-260.

2. Universal British Directory, vol. III, p. 897.

3. Oldknow Papers, 773, John Rylands Library, Manchester.

supplied from Manchester. Despite the slow but steady growth of retail outlets throughout the nation the hawkers, pedlars, and travelling Scotchmen remained a significant source of textiles for the tens of thousands of Britons living their lives on hillsides, in valleys or in other rural surroundings distant from established retail centres. The hawker brought the fashions of the town to the country, though albeit a little late. The roving pedlars formed an essential link between the manufacturers of fashionable low-cost fabrics and the vast diffuse market of settled people living outside the towns and villages. A virtual army of pedlars continued to ply their trade throughout the country undiminished in their efforts in the face of the great transformations taking place in the number and sophistication of the urban shops.

The Rev. James Woodforde, residing in the East Anglian countryside, noted in his diary the arrival in May 1778, of Hannah Snell at the local inn. Miss Snell, using her notoriety as a former infantryman, attracted customers for her trade in hosiery and haberdashery wares.<sup>1</sup> The paths of the pedlars and hawkers intersected the provinces. Rev. Woodforde later wrote of another pedlar who called in November 1781. Mr. Alldridge, "who goes about with a Cart with Linens, Cottons, Lace etc." received a bonus with his call on the minister, for the Rev. Woodforde was entertaining guests at the time. The goods Alldridge carried were sufficiently attractive that several sales resulted. Woodforde wrote that:

I bought of him some Cotton 6 Yards for a morning gown for myself at 2/6 per yard, pd. 0.15.0 Some Chintz for a gown for Nancy 5 yds and  $\frac{1}{2}$  I pd. 1.14.0. ...Nancy also bought a Linen Handkerchief etc. of him. Mrs. Howes bought a silk handkerchief of him also.

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The extent and utility of the pedlars' trade even as late as the last

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1. Woodforde, vol. 1, pp. 224-5.
  2. Woodforde, pp. 332.

decades of the eighteenth century can be judged by the response of the cotton manufacturers to the threatened legislation designed to abolish the migrant traders. A torrent of protests poured from the cotton manufacturing centres of Britain. In the petitions to Parliament from "merchants and wholesale dealers of Liverpool" and the "Linen Committee, Silk Manufacturers and Callico Printers of Glasgow" the value of the sales dependent on the pedlars was asserted; "Sale, which is generally from House to House in Country Villages and Districts, remote from Towns where Shopkeepers reside". The petitioners insisted that without the services of the hawkers the pedlars "great Quantities of British Manufacturers" which were now sold would not find a market.<sup>1</sup> In those counties in the north where settlements were scarce and retail outlets scarcer, the rural inhabitants depended almost entirely on the fabrics and haberdashery brought them by the pedlars. The pedlars' trade differed from that of the settled mercer or draper not only in the wide geographic region served, but also in the provision of goods on long-term credit, in consideration of the seasonal income of the land-based households. The merchandising activities of the pedlars complemented those of fixed retailers, asserted petitioners. Furthermore, as the Kendal-based pedlars or Scotchmen insisted, they had always to "have Stocks of Goods on Hand, and to give Credit with the greatest Part of their Goods to a very great Number of Persons at considerable Distance from each other". In summary, the pedlars and their champions insisted that they served a profitable market of some considerable breadth.<sup>2</sup>

The extent of the trade can be judged from the petition of The Society of Travelling Scotchmen, centred on Bridg<sup>n</sup>orth, Shropshire. Michael Macmichael, one of the principal traders of that society, had £5,000 capital

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1. J.H.C., vol. 40, pp. 1038-9.

2. J.H.C., vol. 40, pp. 1018.

invested in stock-in-trade. Debts amounting to £3,000 were owed him by his many customers. Although not every member of the society possessed an equivalent investment, most had over £1,000 committed to the trade. All of this evidence testifies to the magnitude of the trade. These pedlars and firms of travelling Scotchmen were supplied directly from Manchester and other cotton manufacturing centres with a volume of merchandise that contributed substantially to the dissemination of "Silk, Cotton, Linen, and Worsted, and... almost every other Article of Female Attire".<sup>1</sup> In fact several Manchester warehousemen combined that trade with work as chapmen, complementing wholesale distribution with itinerant retail vending.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the distributive function of the travelling tradesmen to the British cotton industry is further suggested by the juxtaposition of manufacturers and these tradesmen in the smaller manufacturing centres. In Stockport approximately seventy cotton manufacturers were settled by the end of the century, producing checks, fustians and some muslins. Unlike Manchester there was no associated concentration of warehousemen or other wholesale distributors: the draw of the Manchester network acted strongly on those towns in close proximity, concentrating the distributive activity in one urban area. However, what was present in Stockport and several other towns was a significant collection of traders designated "huckster" in the directory. It was no coincidence that nearly twenty firms and individual hucksters grew up in the vicinity of the cotton town of Stockport. A village named Newton in the Willows, in the neighbourhood of both Wigan and Warrington was the base for four other firms of travelling pedlars.<sup>3</sup> Clearly the proliferation of the "hucksters" resulted from the vigour of the local cotton manufactories, in Stockport, Newton, Black-

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1. J.H.C., vol. 40, pp. 1017-8.

2. Manchester Directory, 1773, p.12.

3. The Universal British Directory, vol. V, p. 143.

burn, and other towns outside the immediate environs of Manchester.<sup>1</sup> The pedlars' ancient occupation remained an essential component of the distributive network in the textile trade and centres like Stockport, as well as Manchester, thrived in the provision of the fabrics.

The progress of the cotton textiles from the workrooms of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire to shelves and counters in shops around the nation depended on the extensive carrier system in operation along most stretches of the nation's roads. The turnpike carriers like Pickford, Bass and Twiss, are well known. But in addition to these were men and women running short-distance carrier services, like Mary Baxter who travelled from Liverpool to Warrington. She was described in The Universal Directory as coming to "Luke Carrol's in Elbow-lane, every Wednesday; returns the next morning with goods for all parts of the road."<sup>2</sup> Similar services were noted for thousands of other intermediate destinations. Henry Marsh, for instance, arrived in Liverpool at Dale Street each Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday and returned the same day "to Warrington, Manchester, Stockport, Macclesfield, Knutsford, Leicester, Nottingham, all parts of Derbyshire, Sheffield, and all parts of Yorkshire."<sup>3</sup> So as well as serving the main centres of Lancashire, Marsh continued on with cargoes for all points east, southeast, and northeast on the map. The diverse range of carrier services ensured deliveries between cities and town, between town and village, and even to the individual houses along the route. Road transportation centred on the inns that dotted the routes, as well as the inns at the start and end of the journeys. Organized around the specific hostelries, the innkeepers acted in conjunction with carrier and coaching firms. They provided information, collected

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1. The Universal British Directory, vol. IV, pp. 477-82; vol. V, pp. 18, 143.
  2. Ibid, vol. III, p. 668.
  3. Ibid, vol. III, p. 668.

fares on occasion, arranged the transfer and forwarding of packages between carriers and provided temporary warehousing for the consignments dropped off to await collection.<sup>1</sup> Along the highways of Britain and most secondary roads as well, an army of carriers moved mountains of goods from ships to workrooms, from warehouses to shops, from sellers to buyers. In 1766 it was computed by a contemporary observer that "312 tons of cloth and Manchester wares" travelled from Manchester through Stafford weekly.<sup>2</sup> The regularity of this enormous undertaking attests to the relative efficiency of the bulk transportation system, an essential mechanism in servicing the home market with the products of the cotton industry.

Where once a man would have seen little if any improvement in transportation during his lifetime, by the last quarter of the eighteenth century improvements and innovations were appearing with ever increasing regularity. The services outlined in Baldwin's 1753 guide was adequate: notable improvements were made in the next ten years.<sup>3</sup> John Byng, an inveterate traveller, remarked in 1781 on the improvements made for travellers through Oxford. "Oxford has been lately much improv'd in its Inns, (which were so justly complained of); and the new stables at the Angel are excellent." Four years later, on another visit, Byng made further comments on changes being made in the city. Byng had made "a long walk...to survey the progress of the new pavement from Mary Magdalen, to St. Giles Church, which should be strong to endure the traffic of the numberless stage coaches, which hourly pass."<sup>4</sup> But not all of the improvements in transportation and distribution were to Byng's taste. "I wish with all my heart that half the turnpike roads of the kingdom were plough'd up, which have imported

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1. Turnbull, pp. 5-6.
  2. R. Whitworth, The Advantages of Inland Navigation, 1766.
  3. R. Baldwin, A Complete Guide..., 1753, Two examples of additions to the services are as follows:
 

Bath	1753,	6 - 8 coach trips,	5 carrier trips/wk.	
		1763,	15 - 18 coach trips,	15 carrier/wk.
Kidderminster	1753,	1 carrier trip/wk.		
		1763,	5 coach/carrier trips/wk.	
  4. G.B. Andrews ed., The Torrington Diaries, (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936) vol. I, pp. 5,206.

London manners...I met milkmaids on the road, with the dress and looks of strand misses."<sup>1</sup> No matter how repugnant these changes were to Viscount Torrington, they marked momentous modifications in the availability of cheap, abundant, and fashionable fabrics for milk-maids and their ilk all throughout Britain. Byng rightly blamed the turnpike road system and the on-going series of improvements in the coach and carrier service for the changes in dress and manner.

Newspapers during this period were constantly announcing new additions to existing services. In 1767 the Oxford "Machine" left from Oxford Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, to arrive in London on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Thame stage coach left on Thursday, calling at Chinnor, Bledlow and Risborough. Once passengers and parcels had been collected from these villages the coach then lumbered on to London.<sup>2</sup> In the same year the "Birmingham and Stratford Fly" advertised a one day journey along the London to Birmingham route, with coaches leaving three times a week.<sup>3</sup> Baggage and parcels were permitted on all these vehicles, although unaccompanied goods paid a higher tariff. Information about the "Leicester Constant Stage Waggon" was placed in the local paper for the convenience of tradesmen, detailing the route through Earl Shilton, Hinckley, Smockington, Lutterworth, Welbourn, Northampton, and on to London, a journey that in 1771 took from Tuesday to Saturday.<sup>4</sup> By 1777 the Birmingham Post Coach boasted an eighteen hour trip to London, while the Northampton Diligence made the journey into the capital in only ten hours.<sup>5</sup> Improvements in the construction of the coaches were proudly announced in the Manchester Mercury, where a coach could be had, set "Upon STEEL SPRINGS" for a more

1. The Torrington Diaries, p.6.

2. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 24 January 1767.

3. Ibid, 25 April 1767.

4. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 10 August 1771.

5. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 13 April 1777; 15 April 1777.

comfortable run into Liverpool.<sup>1</sup> The five volume Universal British Directory, published intermittently from 1790 to 1797, was the ultimate in guides. It was the climax of a long series of individual directories for towns, begun in London a century earlier. Reflected in its four large volumes were the unprecedented requirements of the nation's tradesmen for detailed and accurate information on routes and services available for the shipment of goods. The catalogue of coach and carrier services to and from Manchester, for example, comprised five closely printed pages.<sup>2</sup> Market demand had accelerated the rate and efficiency of distribution in the same way as it had the actual production of the textiles.

### iii Retailers and Wholesalers in the Cotton Trade

Considerable importance has been justly ascribed to the proliferation of permanent shops and stores in towns and villages of even modest size. The well-known saying by a late seventeenth century commentator that, "in every country village where is (it maybe) not above ten houses, there is a shopkeeper,"<sup>3</sup> may not in fact have been true. However the advent of permanent shops and settled tradesmen was so widely apparent that it appeared to be true to men of that time. The provincial shop with all manner of merchandise provided a retail outlet which by its very nature facilitated and even encouraged the consumption of products, of which British-made cottons were a part. B.A. Holderness maintains that although the "'retailing Revolution' is rightly located in time no earlier than about 1860,...the mercer's shop, dealing almost exclusively in ready-made goods, had made its appearance in country towns and in some villages at least two centuries before. These shops acted as filters

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1. The Manchester Mercury, 22 Feb. 1780.

2. Universal British Directory, vol. III, pp. 781-6.

3. Quoted in Willan, The Inland Trade, p.99.

through which imported and domestic goods percolated to the 'middling sort' of provincial household"<sup>1</sup>

Few historians, with the notable exception of T.S. Willan, have turned their attention to the legion of eighteenth century shopkeepers, as pioneers in the new retailing practices. Part of the reason for this omission undoubtedly lies in the dearth of documentation from this section of society shopkeepers. It is certainly crucial for this study to examine shopkeepers' records in order to make an assessment of both the uniformity of merchandise provided by the tradesmen and, if possible, the sources of their supplies. Fortunately several collections of records of this type have come to light. The abundant cache documenting the trade of the Kirkby Stephen shopkeeper, Abraham Dent, first used by T.S. Willan, provides a continuing fund of information about tradesmen during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Dent was served by well over one hundred suppliers, among whom were six from London and eight from Manchester. As far as can be determined three of those London tradesmen sold Dent textiles or textile goods. Mr. Samuel Dales carried on a trade with Dent for at least four years, from 1762 to 1766.<sup>2</sup> Dales was listed in Mortimer's Guide to London of 1763 as a linen draper, residing on Cheapside.<sup>3</sup> Another of the London suppliers was Mr. Thomas Elton, a haberdasher on Milk Street.<sup>4</sup> Elton served Abraham Dent from 1769 to 1774. While the final one of the group were the Messrs. Maltby, who traded with Dent for only a year, 1768, providing worsted and woollen goods. They were described as Norwich Factors operating out of a warehouse on Queen Street, Cheapside.<sup>5</sup>

There are no detailed invoices remaining. However in some instances

1. B.A. Holderness, Pre-Industrial England, (London, Dent, 1976), p.139.
2. WDB/63/2, Records of Abraham Dent, Cumbria Record Office.
3. Mortimer, Guide, 1763, p. 119.
4. Ibid, p. 122.
5. Lowndes, Directory, 1776, p. 108.

it is possible to determine the volume of business conducted. Elton sold a quite substantial amount of goods to Dent, amounting to £256.10.3 for the year 1769. This appears to have been the average volume of sales for all the various bits and pieces provided by haberdashers, items essential for the making of clothing. In 1773, for example, Dent had purchased £290.10.2 for merchandise from Thomas Elton. Samuel Dales, in contrast, sold little to Dent: £6.15.2½ for 1762 and £4.12.3½ for 1763, while Thomas and George Maltby made but one sale to Abraham Dent of £9.3.0.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion that can be drawn from these records is that Dent was prepared to try several London wholesalers, for reasons which at this juncture can only be speculated upon. Perhaps he sought to try new products, or was tempted to purchase a cheaper line of goods. However Dent retained a long-term business relationship with only one of the London textile suppliers and that firm did not deal in cotton yard goods, but rather in the caps, hats, tapes, ribbons and smallwares stocked by haberdashers. It is doubtful that the London suppliers provided Dent with any of the many sorts of checks, cottons, or fustian materials sold from his shop: Dent looked to Manchester for British-made cotton textiles.

From 1756 to 1774 eight Manchester-based tradesmen sold merchandise to Abraham Dent. Of the eight, three were not listed in the 1773 Manchester directory. In the cases of Samuel Miller and Son and George Webster, small amounts of goods were sold to Dent over periods of three years: Miller, 1756 to 1759 and Webster, 1761 to 1764. Flittcroft made only two sales, in January and June of 1767. The absence of these men from the Manchester directory of tradesmen and the nature of their sales patterns suggest that they were chapmen or part of a firm of pedlars, supplied from Manchester making long meandering journeys through the north of England.

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1. WDB/63/2.

These men carried items required by Dent and he took advantage of their arrival in Kirkby Stephen to supplement his inventory. Samuel Miller passed through Dent's village each June and February for three years.<sup>1</sup> The final payment made by Dent was received by John Bullough, a representative for Miller & Son, thus supporting the suggestion that this was a firm of travelling Scotchmen or pedlars unlike Webster who appears to have operated alone. Webster appeared in Kirkby Stephen twice annually at six month intervals, making small sales to Dent over the years. All of these concerns took as part of their trade the sale of Manchester goods to shopkeepers along their route.

The four remaining tradesmen are all included in The Manchester Directory for 1773. John Lawrence is described as a check manufacturer, Richard Mather as a silk and fustian manufacturer, the Messrs Bartons as fustian manufacturers. Joseph Gough is also listed as a fustian manufacturer.<sup>2</sup> None of the men is described as a warehouseman so on the surface they are unconnected with the distribution of cottons. They were all manufacturers. Yet each was integrally involved in the sale and distribution of their products across the country, as their business with Dent indicates. Joseph Gough and Joshua Manby sold little to Dent, small orders over several years. However, John Lawrence, the Bartons, and Richard Mather all conducted lengthy and extensive trade with Dent, each selling their own particular stock.<sup>3</sup> The credit ledger of sales from Dent's shop includes, for example, everlasting, thickset, linen check, striped cotton, fustian, velvet and cotton check, assortments of fabric for which Manchester and the neighbouring region were renowned.<sup>4</sup>

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1. WDB/63/2.

2. Manchester Directory...1773, pp. 8, 31, 34, 22.

3. WDB/63/2.

4. WDB/63/3a.

The sums expended by Dent for these fabrics were not enormous. In the relationship with the Messrs Bartons, from 1757 to 1774, Dent purchased approximately £275 worth of textiles. Richard Mather also provided Dent with cotton fabrics for many years, leaving a record of purchases from 1766 to 1774 at the close of the ledger. During that period Dent bought comparatively more goods from Mather, to the value of approximately £215.<sup>1</sup> All of the above mentioned manufacturers utilized the then new system of distribution where by orders were taken by either the owners of the firm or their representatives. In the same manner as the partners in the Philips company, afore mentioned, the tradesmen from Manchester travelled a circuit around the nation soliciting sales of their fabrics from sundry of Dent's confederates.

Formerly the actual stock was brought on the round by the Manchester Men, slung on the back of a train of pack horses. However, this procedure spent time and money on unnecessary carriage of bulky textiles with no guarantee of sales. By the 1750's most manufacturers of cotton textiles sent travellers on a tour of the country, carrying only the samples of company wares. The Messrs Barton took this task in turn as Henry, Richard and then George arrived in Kirkby Stephen to display their goods to Dent. A division and specialization in the distribution of cotton fabrics had begun in that the manufacturer was no longer directly concerned in the carriage of orders to his customers. For that he depended on the carriers and should a shipment go wrong then it was to the carriers that the manufacturers directed their customers for compensation.<sup>2</sup> In this way the

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1. WDB/63/2.

2. The Philips Company received a complaint from one of their customers about an order that was damaged in transit. Philips responded that, "we are sorry for the damage to the Goods - you know we have nothg to do with the Goods after they are delvd to the Car<sup>r</sup> - you look upon the Carrier for any loss". M97/3, Letter, Sept. 1754.

the manufacturer was left free to concentrate on the production of this cotton textiles and their sale to shopkeepers throughout the country. Journeys were necessarily quicker, the territory covered broader, and the shopkeepers served more efficiently. Sample cards were used to display the array of colours and patterns available from the various producers, an innovation ideally suited to facilitate the selection of fabrics however distant one might be from the source.<sup>1</sup>

Abrahm Dent is the first of the tradesmen examined, a tradesman typical of his period, stocking a wide and general supply of merchandise and retaining vigorous commercial links with many areas of the country. However in spite of Dent's connections with the London commercial world, both as a customer for teas, haberdashery and worsted goods and as a supplier of stockings, Dent did not choose to arrange the provision of cotton textiles from that centre. There can be no doubt that the supplies were available in London, as was the means of delivering the shipments. Nonetheless Dent chose instead to be served from the manufacturing source for these materials and by the energetic and efficient representatives of the cotton trade.

The same preference was shown by a later eighteenth century mercer, Mr. John Thomas of Hinckley, Leicestershire. A collection of sixty invoices remains to provide insights into his trade from 1782 to 1787. Thomas had twenty-four suppliers and only one of these firms, McKeand & McGauchin, came from outside Manchester, and in their case they were Glasgow manufacturers

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1. An American trader sent a pattern card to his partner in America, writing him that, "I have sent you a paper of patterns from Nash, Eddowes & Martin...When there are anyone likes a pattern, send the number and say what species of goods it is and I can send it to you." The entire process of ordering was greatly simplified with the use of pattern card, and could operate from any distance with a minimum of difficulty and confusion.  
Joshua Johnson's Letterbook, 1771-4., ed. J.M. Price, (London, London Record Society, 1979), p. 8.

with a warehouse in Manchester.<sup>1</sup> Thomas was supplied by these manufacturers with a range of textiles, from muslins to Genoa corded velveret, cotton lining to jean, as well as handkerchiefs and table cloths, shawls and muslin petticoats. The variety of merchandise was enormous. The London branches of these trades could not compete with those established in such close proximity to the manufacturing centre and who exhibited such expertise. Thomas was only a short journey from the centre of the cotton industry. Thus it is hardly surprising that the stock that he required should be supplied directly from the manufacutrers.

The irregular and intermittent nature of the existing invoices makes it impossible to calculate the full extent of Thomas's trade, or of the volume of textiles sent him by each manufacturer. However there is value in assessing the invoices and the manufacturers from whom they came in order to acquire insights into this individual example of the national distribution of cottons.

Thomas appears to have run a thriving shop and the fabrics to have been popular with his customers. Certainly the fashions of the 1780's encouraged the use and wear of British cottons in all their many forms, and from the steady stream of orders sent Thomas the demand for these cottons seemed as strong in Hinckley as elsewhere in the country. Fashionable printed chintzes were sold Thomas by Robert Peel & Company; Livesey, Hargreaves, Anstie, Smith & Hall; Peel, Yates, Tipping & Halliwell; and T. Usher & Company. On at least one occasion apologies were sent Thomas along with the invoice for discrepancies between the order placed with the travelling representative and the goods eventually sent. Livesey, Hargreaves & Co. wrote in January, 1786, that, "We are sorry it is not in our power to send the Cho[colate] Stripe Chtz Patches - Those Patterns we believed at the Warehouse during the last Journey were to be worked 5/4 - we lately found on our coming into the Warehouse that they have all

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1. Eng. MSS. 1192, invoices from the papers of Mr. John Thomas & Co., Hinckley, Leicestershire, John Rylands Library, Manchester.

been worked in 4/4 only."<sup>1</sup>

The standardization of pattern and sample cards enabled the Manchester producers to offer an ever increasing choice of textiles to the legion of retailers across Britain. Mr. Thomas received regular visits from both representatives and owners as the notes on the bottom of invoices show. Jonathan Haworth & Sons of Canon Street affirmed that:

Our Travellers will wait upon you as usual;  
and, be assured, that every possible care and  
attention shall be paid to your Interests. 2

While the clerk of the cotton manufacturers John and Thomas Rideout noted at the close of the invoice that "Mr. John Rideout will be at Hinckley in Three Weeks Time when our Order will be esteemed a favour".<sup>3</sup> This systematic and routine canvassing of shopkeepers like Dent and Thomas speeded up the diffusion of new products throughout the country. Orders could not be guaranteed to be complete every time, but the basic workings of the system produced a greater efficiency in the distribution of goods. The 1788 tradecard of Leicester draper, mercer, and haberdasher Thomas Lomas testifies to the efficacy of the distributive system. An impressive catalogue of cotton textiles and ready-made "Manchester gowns" are included on this sheet. (See Tradecard, Appendix) Within weeks or months of a product becoming available to the London public the same fabrics would be stocked by shopkeepers in rural villages. Such an acceleration in the rate of dispersal of textiles represented a qualitative leap in the distributive mechanism of the cotton trade.

As a shopkeeper situated centrally in Britain, on the route of major turnpikes, Thomas received cottons in as wide an assortment as he desired. Muslinet, printed velvet, tape-striped muslin, as well as the sturdier fabrics for working men's clothes were all stocked. A test of the distributive capacity of Britain's cotton trade would be to check against this

1. Invoices, Livesey, Hargreaves & Co., Manchester 27 Jan 1786, Eng. MSS 1192.

2. Invoice, Jonathan Haworth & Sons, Manchester 21 Jan 1785. Ibid.

3. Invoice, John & Thomas Rideout, Manchester, 22 Jan 1786. Ibid.

stock the variety of fabrics available in a more peripheral area of Britain. This can be done using the extensive draper's ledger of sales of John and Mary Morgan, of Neath, South Wales. The ledger contains a few entries for the late 1780's but the bulk of the ledger is devoted to the purchases of their customers through the 1790's and into the nineteenth century. Beginning several years after the close of the Thomas records, the Morgan draper's ledger quite naturally contains items that were not listed in Thomas's invoices. More ready-made articles were sold by Morgan than were listed in the Thomas inventories. Several sorts of ready-made gowns, such as the "Super Chintz Gown" and the plain "cotton gown" were available from Morgan, plus waistcoat shapes in several sorts of fabrics.<sup>1</sup> All of these goods were familiar from advertisements in London and other newspapers. There is no indication that Thomas had available to him types of textiles that were not available for sale in South Wales. The common fustians and checks were ever-present, as were printed calicoes and furniture checks. The various sorts of corded cloths were not generally specified as they were in the Thomas invoices. This may indicate that there was no demand for "Queen Cord", "Genoa King Cord" and "Tabby Cord" as there was around Hinckley. It is more probable, though, that Morgan either did not take the time to identify each sort of corduroy as he listed the sale, or that the sorts of corduroy changed over the years. A "Nelson's Cord" was purchased by the smith in Neath, as was plain corduroy. "Wild boar Tammy" was an especially popular fustian in that region,<sup>2</sup> and there was never a mention of this fabric in Thomas's invoices. There can be no disputing the fact that the many estates, villages and hamlets served by Morgan were provided with all the varieties of fabrics and ready-made

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1. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 66, 87, 109, 110.

2. Ibid, pp. 334, 165, 166, 255.

textile goods required. Marseilles quilting, Japan muslin, printed calico furniture check, bed ticking, Genoa velvet, Wigan stripe and plain and printed cotton were all the products of the British cotton industry.<sup>1</sup> While there are no records remaining that would provide a clue as to the suppliers of these goods, their point of origin can not be disputed. Morgan may have received the cottons from a Bristol warehouseman or from Manchester manufacturers, or warehousemen. But without doubt this relatively remote area was as much a part of the market and provided with as broad a range of textiles as were other regions of Britain. For tradesmen such as Dent and Thomas, Manchester representatives provided the bulk of cotton merchandise sold, while chapmen provided the occasional addition to stock. The extent and vitality of the distributive system for the cotton trade is reflected in the trade of these eighteenth century shopkeepers.

One of the most valuable documentary sources illustrative of the breadth and variety of Manchester distribution appears in the day book of sales of an anonymous Manchester firm.<sup>2</sup> The volume portrays the business activities of a Manchester manufacturer who also engaged in retail and wholesale trade. Few such records remain for this period, and even less that contain within its pages a parade of some of the most active participants in the cotton industry as well as documenting textile sales to all elements of British society.

The day book of sales records from 1773 to 1779, providing insights into the divergent individuals, shopkeepers, and tradesmen supplied, as well as the geographic area served and the rate at which shipments were dispatched. The unidentified Manchester firm sold to hundreds of customers of all different classes, from many areas of the country, both tradesman

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1. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 263, 67, 248, 243, 166, 334.

2. MC:MS. ff 657 D43, Day Book of Sales of an Unknown Manchester Firm, 1773-9, Manchester Public Library.

and non-trade customers. The entry "Ready Money" occurs regularly in the ledger as well, indicating that the firm also served customers who came in off the street, thus acting as shopkeepers in addition to selling in volume as wholesalers. Cash sales tended to be for small amounts. One of the most popular articles was ready-made gowns. These sold from between 8/ to 24/, for either a cotton or moree gown.<sup>1</sup> On occasion, however, the heading "Ready Money" hides the identity of one of the larger tradesmen who paid cash for goods urgently required. A case in point was the cash sale on 29 June 1776 of twenty-two dozen silk and muslin handkerchiefs, one of the first times this article had been noted. Conceivably this entry represented the efforts of a keen tradesman anxious to beat out the competition by stocking the latest sort of accessory.<sup>2</sup>

Anonymous cash sales were, however, the exception. In all other cases the names and frequently the town, city or occupation of the buyer were recorded. Sometimes even without these additions it is still possible to discover some of the destinations of the orders with the aid of contemporary directories. The Day Book, supplemented by supportive contemporary indexes, yields extensive and incisive information on the distribution of a whole range of textiles and textile goods made in and around Lancashire, balancing the study of national distribution with an appraisal of a large wholesale distributor.

One feature of interest in the retail function of this firm was the multitude of individual customers served, who bought textiles from this company for their own needs. The Earl of Sussex purchased several ready-made sorts of clothing as well as a large piece of silk; while an overseer, John Wright, presented several orders for the cheapest cloth available to be sent to the workhouse and its inmates.<sup>3</sup> In addition to those two

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1. Day Book, pp. 327, 346, 359, 364.

2. Day Book, p. 351.

3. Day Book, pp. 266, 291, 299.

very disparate customers this firm sold goods to all sorts, in a diverse cross-section of the population; church warden, barber, reed maker, book keeper, shopkeeper, Irish woman, coal man, whitster, weaver, fish woman, packer and esquire, bought textiles and textile goods of every description, ready-made and by the yard.<sup>1</sup> In many instances the orders were very modest, as was that of George Piedford, weaver, who bought a silk and cotton gown for sixteen shillings. The sum of money was not insubstantial in itself, only in comparison to the orders for hundreds of pounds which this firm dealt in weekly. On occasion some of the more humble customers made surprisingly substantial purchases. A "Fishwoman", for example, bought nine ready-made gowns one spring and she paid cash.<sup>2</sup>

The entries in the Day Book reveal as wide an assortment among trade customers as among the private ones. It is possible, however, to separate trade from private shoppers by the frequency and size of the orders, although there appears to have been no difference in the prices charged. A Miss Elizabeth Atkinson appeared frequently in the ledger and the small size and frequency of her purchases led to the conclusion that she ran a small retail trade of some kind. In fact, the 1773 Manchester Directory identified Miss Atkinson as a milliner and linen draper with a shop on Smithy-door Street.<sup>3</sup> The orders she presented to the firm were placed regularly. One November in 1775, for example, Miss Atkinson bought one silk and cotton gown for seventeen shillings and the next week ordered two more. The pattern remained the same throughout all her dealings with the Manchester firm. Seemingly Miss Atkinson did not carry much stock, buying as and when goods were needed. Over a period of one year, from the autumn of 1775 to the autumn of the following year, Miss Atkinson

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1. Day Book, pp. 324, 312, 639, 641, 265, 436, 320, 293.

2. Ibid, p.436.

3. Manchester Directory...1773, p.6.

bought only £32.6.10<sup>1</sup> worth of merchandise - a modest expenditure. (See Appendix IX for itemized account of purchases) Most of the money spent went towards the purchases of ready-made gowns, though in addition various types of handkerchiefs and several sorts of textiles were bought to supplement her stock.<sup>1</sup> In this, as in many other cases, the Manchester firm acted as both manufacturer and wholesaler. Undoubtedly Miss Atkinson received a saving from the elimination of carrier charges and other middlemen. But this favourable practice was made possible because of her proximity to the source of supply in Manchester.

Although it would have been cheaper to buy direct from large wholesalers, not all shopkeepers followed this practice. Some received their goods third or even fourth hand through a successive chain of middlemen. This progression of distributors appears to have been common. One partnership of Manchester mercers and wooldrapers announced in their advertisement in the Manchester Mercury that "Country Shopkeepers and Taylors will have every regard paid them in this shop."<sup>2</sup> Similar advertisements in London papers have also been mentioned. In these cases the retail mercer and draper who sold the "newest and most fashionable Cloths" to the public also supplied the tradesmen from further afield. One did not have to travel to London or Manchester as Joseph Harper did to make a personal selection, or depend on the arrival of the travellers to provide fabrics needed. Using the services of another tradesman would have obviated what might have been for some provincial shopkeepers a tiresome business, selecting the right sorts of fabrics and haberdashery. Inherently this sort of arrangement left much of the selection of colour, pattern and variety of fabric in the hands of the larger mercers. Thus the stock on the shelves of a village draper or mercer reflected tastes and style

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1. Day Book, pp. 281, 304, 322, 366, 386, 390.

2. Manchester Mercury, 11 January 1780. The advertisement of Bussey, Eckles & Barlow, mercers and wooldrapers.

set in London, made in Lancashire and transferred to the counter of the less enterprising shopkeepers. One might safely conjecture that some of the smaller retail establishments sought supplies routinely from larger mercery businesses in the closest urban centre.

However to determine the range of areas supplied by Manchester firms one cannot do better than consult the Day Book of the unknown Manchester firm. The proprietors of this business dispatched point to point shipments to over sixty known destinations in Great Britain and Ireland. (See Maps A for national, and B for Lancashire destinations and Appendix X for listings of the customers) In addition the company sold goods to merchants outside the British Isles in both Amsterdam and Philadelphia. From the many names inscribed in the ledger it has been possible to identify and place almost one hundred and seventy customers. This catalogue of names does not comprise the total of those served by this firm, only those about whom information was given, or whose stature in the fields of commerce or manufacture ensured some type of public record.

Trade within the cotton industry featured prominently among the ledger sales in this firm. Nearly fifty of the total known, trading with the Manchester firm, resided in that town. Cottons of every available width, texture, consistency, colour and pattern were exchanged among the various dealers as each attempted to acquire the widest selection of merchandise. Each tradesman, manufacturer or warehouseman had his own set of clients and an order book to fill for these customers. To retain the patronage of their clients they had of necessity to look to producers other than themselves for the range of fabrics not of their own manufacture. Robert and Nathaniel Hyde, for example, manufactured all sorts of cotton, linen and cotton-linen checks.<sup>1</sup> However in the diverse consignments from the

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1. Invoices, 12 March 1767; 10 January 1768; 20 March 1771.  
The Beekman Papers.

Hydes to James Beekman there were in addition to the checks "Fine Dark Cotton Gowns", "Olive Ververets", womens "black Mitts", "Color'd Thread" and "Shoe Bindings", among other things.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the Hydes did not produce all of these products. But to satisfy their customers and retain their patronage the Hydes would have scouted round the warehouses of other manufacturers, placed orders with them and ensured that the required goods were available for their customers through them.

The Day Book of the Manchester firm records many small but regular purchases by Robert and Nathaniel Hyde over the years.<sup>2</sup> Manufacturers and tradesmen familiar with other records were also to be found in the ledger of the Manchester firm. J. & N. Philips Co. bought six silk and cotton gowns in August 1773, for instance,<sup>3</sup> while Abraham Dent's suppliers John Lawrence and Messrs Barton traded for years with this firm, during which time they probably would have bought goods which eventually were sold to Dent. Manchester check manufacturer Edward Place bought fabric from the unknown Manchester firm, as did fustian manufacturer John Hardman and check maker William Hanson.<sup>4</sup> Textiles frequently travelled between two or more wholesalers even before reaching the retail distributor, as individual tradesmen added to their inventory. This process ensured the standardization of supplies held by wholesalers and available from these firms to customers throughout the country. Textile tradesmen stocked more kinds of goods in response to demand and looked to other producers for articles which they themselves did not manufacture. Buying, selling and trading among the chief manufacturers and warehousemen transferred stocks, creating a pool of common commodities.

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1. Invoices, 12 March 1767; 10 January 1768; 20 March 1771. Beekman Papers.

2. Day Book, pp. 53, 410, 423, 425, 426.

3. Day Book, pp. 19.

4. Day Book, pp. 537, 539, 530, 474, 487, 368, 343, 312, 382, 390, 472, 1, 2.

The firm of fustian manufacturer and chapman, Samuel White & Company,<sup>1</sup> was one of the most regular customers in the Day Book, with orders appearing right through the period encompassed by the ledger. An examination of the purchases made by this company reveals the breadth of products he had decided were necessary for his perambulatory trade. As well as mundane items such as the linen and cotton checks, check handkerchiefs, and ticking, White bought crimson and scarlet plaid cottons, worsted plaids, silk damask, velveret, fashionable mallabar handkerchiefs, and inexpensive ready-made cotton gowns, followed in several months by the more costly moree gowns.<sup>2</sup> Samuel White spent a total of £655.14.1½ with the Manchester firm in the thirteen orders presented over 1776. The variety of merchandise purchased by a known chapman takes hypotheses about the variety of goods available to rural Britons from the realms of speculation and reveals the facts. As a fustian manufacturer White would have had a range of utilitarian materials from which to choose. Add to this the collection of ready-made and textile goods purchased from only one of the many Manchester firms and it becomes clear that the active sale and trade of products within the community of tradesmen ensured a homogeneous assortment of textiles available nationally, thus reinforcing taste and the national demand for cotton textiles. Freeman commented that:

The use of cotton clothing may possibly be dated as far back as 1780 but there were likely marked regional variations in its spread.

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In fact the date for the general use and wear of cottons can be pushed back at least ten years. More importantly, the general use and wear of cottons came about as a result of the comprehensiveness of the domestic system for distribution, which was national rather than regional in scope,

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1. Manchester Directory...1773, p. 51.

2. Day Book, pp. 269, 305, 311, 313, 329, 342, 352, 360, 369, 380, 386, 399, 493.

3. Freeman, Perspective, p. 14.

and uniform rather than selective in content.

Sixty-three known destinations received shipments from the unknown Manchester company, in addition to consignment sent to London and trading within Manchester itself. Customers were situated in most areas of the north, including Scotland, central and western Britain, the Isle of Mann, as well as in the west country and Ireland. (Goods also went by sea to America and Amsterdam.) At first glance the sites mapped out showing destinations of consignments might appear disparate and scattered across the country. A second look shows that in fact the parcels of textiles sent out to customers in different corners of Britain followed the clear and improving transportation grid of turnpikes that interlaced the country. Not surprisingly the pattern of ordering varied among the customers listed in the Day Book. The London and local Manchester merchants operated on a different set of market criterion, where strong demand and easy access to stock resulted in a constant series of orders. However for the other tradesmen and firms listed, the frequency of orders tended to be a function of distance as well as of the size of the market served. Taylor & Almond were Nottingham tradesmen who made regular and routine purchases from the Manchester firm. Between November 1776 and November 1777 Taylor and Almond placed fourteen orders. These were received at intervals of from two to three weeks throughout the year, establishing an intermediate pattern of ordering goods, confirming the ease of delivery and a steady demand with that city.<sup>1</sup>

Distance had a greater impact on the Glasgow customers William and John Dowglass. The first mention of this Glasgow concern appeared near the close of the Day Book, but even in the limited time in which their purchases are listed it is possible to observe common features with other long-distance customers. Shipments of fabrics to Scotland from Manchester

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1. Day Book, pp. 402, 410, 416, 436, 438, 431, 451, 457, 467, 477, 481, 488, 508.

were sent several times weekly.<sup>1</sup> However the lengthy journey involved more time, and, in the winter, greater hazards than trips along more populous and heavily-travelled routes. During the summer months Scottish customers would have received their Manchester goods within one or two weeks, while deliveries during the winter were at the mercy of the weather. Commonly orders from long-distance customers were large and placed at several monthly intervals. Examination of the business conducted by Benjamin Bothomly illustrates how the distribution of textiles was influenced by the distance goods had to travel and the time required for delivery. In this case the customer was situated in Amsterdam. Benjamin Bothomly, and later his widow, traded with the Manchester firm over the whole period of time covered in the Day Book. Over the twelve months from November 1775 only six orders were placed. Four fell in the months of winter and spring, while one was in summer and the other in the autumn of 1776. Bothomley spent just over £595 on the various textiles.<sup>2</sup> For the customers at some distance from the source the frequency and size of the orders had to take into account the time spent in delivery as well as possible hazards that could delay consignments and interrupt or inconvenience business. The size of William and James Dowglass's orders were very similar to those of Bothomley, though the timing of the Dowglass orders differed. In August, October and November, 1777 the partners received three orders from Manchester. The first, sent by carriage, was for £112.9.10½ of cotton check; the second, for £75.2.1½, paid for an order of mixed quality cottons; while the last, £343.16.4½, covered the cost of a huge shipment of mixed cottons of high and low quality.<sup>3</sup> At greater distance from a source of supply the Glasgow tradesmen could not take any chances on a mischance that could leave them low in stock thus the orders tended

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1. Universal Directory, p. 782.

2. Day Book, pp. 280, 290, 303, 337, 354, 385.

3. Day Book, p. 482, 507, 514.

to be larger than all but the largest London dealers.

The London route was one of the busiest, offering a variety of carrier services with different schedules. On the road south there were also set stops to off-load parcels and make collections. The route Pickford followed ran from Manchester through Poynton, Macclesfield, Stony Stratford, Dunstable and on to London. The small package of cloth sent to Woburn, Bedfordshire, for example, would have passed along most of the London route, leaving the wagon to be stored at an inn for transfer to a local carrier between Stony Stratford and Dunstable.<sup>1</sup> In 1777 Pickford had three trips weekly leaving Manchester and the metropolis simultaneously; by 1788 wagons departed every day but Sunday and the time the journey took had been halved.<sup>2</sup>

A glance at the map of the areas served by the Manchester firm reveals a wide area of eastern and southern England wherein there was virtually no indication of the sale of Manchester cottons. London is notable as being the sole and solitary destination in that wide triangular area of the country. A steady flow of Manchester textiles passed along the road to London, but no other purchase centre appears in a circumference of nearly one hundred miles around London (with the one small exception of Woburn and one delivery to Kent.) The economic shadow cast by the capital drew all merchant and commercial men to look to London for the products they required and the directories of the period confirm the abundance of products available in the capital.<sup>3</sup> The effects of London's commercial hegemony were felt in all the home counties, and even in those areas in indirect proximity to the metropolis. These ties were strengthened further

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1. Day Book, p. 326.

2. Turnbull, pp. 21-3.

3. Lowndes's 1797 Directory notes among the many tradesmen in London "Boot & Shoe Warehouses", slopsellers, Coventry warehouses, Stafford warehouses, Birmingham warehouses, Hardware warehouses, Nottingham warehouses, and "Chip & Leghorn Hat" warehouses.

by the amelioration of road access to and from London. The volume of textile goods shipped to London were consumed not only within that city, but also in the towns, villages and rural areas served by the retail and wholesale establishments redistributing merchandise from London. London newspapers abounded with notices of auctions of textiles and these were aimed to attract tradesmen in the surrounding counties. There was, for example, the announcement in the London Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser of an auction of:

About two hundred lots of men, women and childrens wearing apparel, table linen, blankets, etc. consisting of coats, waistcoats, breeches, shirts, hats, neckcloths, etc. silk, linen, and stuff gowns... petticoats; stays, shifts, white and coloured aprons... sheets, pillow-cases...and a variety of other articles. 1

The auction was to take place in St. Mary Cray, Kent and catalogues were left at various inns in Eltham, Bexley, Foot's Cray, Farningham, Woolwich, Bromley, Dartford, Shoreham and Borough.<sup>2</sup> Notations in advertisements such as "worth the attention of country mercers and merchants trading abroad"<sup>3</sup> accompanied many itemized lists of textiles for sale placed by drapers, warehousemen and other tradesmen. The newspaper ads reflect the established commercial pre-eminence of London over all the surrounding districts. The volume of cottons shipped to London, the absence of other delivery points and the extensive distributive system confirms that it was to London that provincial shopkeepers of the eastern and southern regions travelled to buy the Manchester wares.

The London-based Manchester warehousemen, also uniquely important, had a distinct position among the host of tradesmen entered in the Day Book. Many of those whose names repeatedly appeared in the ledger were

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1. The Gazetteer & New Daily Advertiser, 4 Oct. 1779.

2. The Gazetteer & New Daily Advertiser, 4 October 1779.

3. Ibid, 30 January 1779.



the vigorous trade in which both companies were involved.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Kettle & Mandeville an order a week would be placed with Manchester firm during their busiest season. The volume of this trade is a far cry from the provincial commerce of Abraham Dent, who in 1767, spent a total of £677 on merchandise for his business.<sup>2</sup> Dent's expenditure more nearly matched the year's purchases of Samuel White & Company. Set against these more modest concerns the vast extent of the trade in which the London-based merchants were involved becomes more apparent.

One of the most popular items with the London merchants were the ready-made gowns which came in several fabrics and a multitude of prints and colours. It is probable that the fabrics, and perhaps a sketch of the gown as well, were included in the sample cards presented to tradesmen for their perusal. In any case the sale of ready-made gowns by both large and small retail shops in London was well established. (See Trade cards 2-6 Appendix, for examples of goods sold) The rate at which the London warehousemen ordered the gowns indicates the speed of the turnover of stock in their establishments. In April 1776, Kettle & Mandeville bought fifty-one gowns and ordered seventeen more in the following month, while J. & E. Kenworthy purchased sixty-nine gowns of varying types over the same period.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the year from September 1777 to September 1778 Kettle & Mandeville bought over eight hundred ready-made gowns of different fabrics, colours and prints; all of which were shipped to their London warehouse.<sup>4</sup>

The London market incorporated an urban area of unequalled size and economic diversity and a distributive system of great scope which tapped the demand for cottons of the surrounding counties. The combined market

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1. Day Book, pp. 261-375, 492-581.

2. T.S. Willan, Abraham Dent: An Eighteenth Century Shopkeeper, (Manchester University Press, 1970), p. 28.

3. Day Book, pp. 321-2

4. Day Book, pp. 492-581.

size and distributive capacity of the tradesmen explains the ordering practices of the London-based Manchester warehousemen. As has already been shown these warehousemen maintained a high level of shipments from Manchester. The transit time had dropped to a level that did not inhibit the flow of merchandise between the two centres and so goods were shipped to the metropolis as and when they were required. However these products were not always required at a steady rate. On examination of the entries for Kettle & Mandeville it is apparent that the shipments did not arrive at a uniform and unvarying pace. In the distribution of textile products to London, as in the movement of merchandise elsewhere in the country, patterns emerged that were characteristic of the market activities of the region to which the articles were bound.

A seasonal pattern emerged from the record of orders from Kettle & Mandeville. Expenditures increased markedly in the early autumn, remained high in December through to the early spring, to drop sharply in the summer months. In the two years during which the expenditures of Kettle & Mandeville were noted the pattern remained true. (See figures in Appendix XI for September 1777 to September 1778) An explanation is required to clarify the evidence of a seasonal rise and fall of commercial activity. In fact such highs and lows should come as no surprise since patterns of ebb and flow affect commercial life even now. But while the incidence is similar the causes of these fluctuations would vary considerably.

The eighteenth century continued to be dominated by the seasonal demands of agriculture. Labour requirements and the dearth and plenty of the seasons moulded markets, incomes and employment patterns well into the nineteenth century. The harvest remained the "heart-beat of the whole economy"<sup>1</sup> in spite of the rhythmic clatter of mills and machines lately introduced. Therefore a seasonal concentration of activity on

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1. W.G. Hoskins, in B.A. Holderness, Pre-Industrial England, p.7.

the agricultural requirements of the nation would be consistent with a drop in trade during the summer months. The cyclic highs and lows in the movement of Manchester wares to London mirrored the seasonal fluctuations in the surrounding countryside, when the focus of attention was shifted briefly from the capital. The gradually escalating rate of orders through the autumn and winter corresponded to the re-awakening of the city after the summer lull; the resurgence of political, mercantile and social rounds that continued with hardly a break into the spring. London's season involved not only the immediate participants, but the thousands of subsidiary players and suppliers, underpinning the recurring social pantomime. The commercial stimulus *resulting from* these elaborate entertainments spread through every layer of the city. This boost was compounded by the influx of seasonal visitors intent on Parliament and trade. A general rise in consumer spending at every level would have resulted. Increased demand would then be translated into larger and more frequent orders from the London warehousemen to their Manchester suppliers. Robert Owen described a similar fluctuation in trade as an apprentice to the drapers Flint & Palmer, of London Bridge. Owen worked in that shop and experienced himself the strains of the trade during the peak spring period.

Between eight and nine the shop began to fill with purchasers and their numbers increased until it was crowded to excess...and this continued until late in the evening; usually until ten, or half-past ten, during the spring months...When the spring trade ceased, and the business became less onerous, we could take our meals with some comfort, and retire to rest between eleven and twelve, and by comparison this became an easy life.

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Various London districts were affected to a greater or lesser degree by the fluctuations in trade, but all felt the effect to some extent.

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1. Robert Owen quoted in Alison Adburgham, Shopping in Style, (London, Thames & Hudson, 1779), pp. 43-4.

The commonest mode of transporting bales and boxes of textiles from Manchester to London was by carrier. Occasionally, however, orders were dispatched by coach. There was not a significant portion of cargoes sent off this way; only 2.6% of the 1035 orders dispatched in 1776 went by coach. But of that total two-thirds of the orders sent by coach that year were bound for London. The benefit of sending consignments of limited size by coach was obviously in the speed at which the goods were delivered. Certainly the overall travel time had decreased for the wagons going from Manchester to London. But the rapidity of coach travel cut down the travelling time even more radically than did the still lumbering wagons. The "Flying Machine" sped along the route in less than a day and a half in 1780, a trip that had taken three days in 1760.<sup>1</sup> In 1793 the journey to London took only twenty-eight hours on the royal mail coach.<sup>2</sup> The diminution in the time the journey took was very important, tying the production centre more closely to the London-dominated market area, making the manufacturer become more attuned to the demands and requirements of the market. The ledger entries reproduced in Appendix XII record the consignments sent to London during 1776. In all cases the cargoes had a value sufficiently high to ensure a return to the retailer for the extra cost of transportation. Here again the number of times it was decided to send an order by coach corresponds to the acceleration in the rate of ordering during the winter months. More orders were sent to London in December than during any other month. Indeed the orders shipped by coach during the months of November and December outnumbered the total coach shipments from all other months.

Ready-made gowns ranked high in the list of goods requested urgently from the Manchester firm. Undoubtedly Kettle & Mandeville reflected

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1. W. Harrison, "The Development of the Turnpike System in Lancashire and Cheshire" The Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 1886, p. 87.
  2. Universal Directory, vol. III p. 780.

in their ordering the requirements of their retail customers who made specific requests for the red moree gowns which appeared in the order book the month before Christmas 1776. The red gown had an immediate success. Speed was of great importance in the provision of this holiday attire, for the sooner these gowns arrived the sooner they could be displayed in the shops. Kettle & Mandeville were sent the first consignment of red gowns on December 17th. Further shipments were sent off on the 24th and the 31st of the month by coach. Rapid delivery was essential to capitalize on the transient seasonal demand for a gown of this colour which was one shilling more than the price of the plain moree gown, which cost twenty-two shillings. So while a large load of textiles and ready-made goods was sent on by wagon, the parcels of specially dyed gowns travelled ahead by coach.<sup>1</sup> This exemplified the manner in which the Manchester merchants catered to the needs of the London market.

Aside from gowns, coach transportation was usually reserved for small shipments of expensive fabrics. Edward Rogers, a London-based Manchester warehouseman, had five orders of expensive cloth sent him by coach in 1777 and the next year eight more shipments were sent the same way.<sup>2</sup> The relatively few orders sent by coach to London alternated between the sorts of costly fabrics required by specialist London mercers and the vast selection of ready-made gowns required by London tradesmen. That coach transport was reserved for goods of this sort was not accidental. These two varieties of merchandise had some of the highest values of general textile goods. Moreover, each was, in its way, dependent for healthy sales on the public demand for fashionable commodities. When the speed with which articles appeared in the shop determined their success, when

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1. Day Book, pp. 405, 409, 411.

2. Ibid pp. 442, 455, 450, 458, 465, 541, 553, 558, 561, 565, 599, 606, 612.

fashion's quirk could declare clothing outmoded and slash the retail price that could be asked, then speed was a critical factor in the marketing of these commodities. The periodic shipments from Manchester to London by coach represented the determination of the Manchester producer to meet the demands of the London market, however short the notice. Dominated by fashion, the London market required that those who served it maintain a rapport between the productive units and the retailers in the capital. The unique features of the London market account for the special distributive arrangements which grew up between the two centres.

Outside London very few of the other customers listed in the Day Book required the use of coaches to deliver goods. Of the shipments sent by coach very little was of the quality of textile Edward Rogers had ordered for his London shop, neither were any ready-made gowns included in these orders. The merchandise was in general composed of medium quality mercery goods; "Cotton Holland", "Cotton Checks", "Cotton Plod [plaid]", and "Sheetg dyed blue".<sup>1</sup> The best quality of fabric were the "Plain Silk Velvets" and the "Feathered Tabbynetts" sent by coach to Richard Davies in Exeter.<sup>2</sup> The invoices of goods sent from Manchester to John Thomas of Hinckley confirm the rather different use of coach transport as compared to that used for the London region. Only one of the invoices notes an order sent by coach. The Manchester manufacturers Billinge, Mellor & Billinge had been unable to fill Thomas's earlier order and on receipt of the fabrics sent the two pieces of fine cloth on to Thomas by coach, with the remaining order to follow by carrier.<sup>3</sup> Clearly use of coach transport outside the Manchester to London route was dictated only by necessity. In some cases the goods were not delivered

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1. Day Book, pp. 310, 482.

2. Day Book, p. 607.

3. Invoice, 4 Oct. 1786, Eng. MSS 1192.

to their ultimate destination by coach but rather taken only part of the way. John Kent of Lincoln had his parcel of cotton checks sent by coach to Rotherham; while the bundle of textiles for Michael Rasor of Leake, near Boston, travelled only to Sleaford by coach.<sup>1</sup> Covering part of the journey by coach facilitated the transfer to a local carrier. However, in all but these few cases customers around the country were content to rely on the somewhat slower services of the many carriers.

The cost of transportation by carrier was an important component of the total price of the cotton goods distributed throughout Britain. Both the retail price of cottons and the profits for the distributor were influenced by the charges levied for the shipment of the cloth to the retailer. Eric Pawson summarized the analysis of Jackman and Albert on the general movement of carriage rates, based on the limited documentation available. The assessments of the three historians concurred. Between 1750 and 1800 the cost in real terms of road haulage dropped, indicating that improvements in road surfaces and carriers' equipment which led to faster trips, offset the rise in feed costs and industrial prices.<sup>2</sup> Broad general analyses such as these are important in clarifying conditions in the economic environment in which the manufacturers and tradesmen functioned. However more specific indices of the cost of transportation and the percentage of this cost in the retail price of cotton goods would be of even greater value. Unfortunately the evidence is not available that would make that sort of assessment possible. The ledger entries for the anonymous Manchester firm indicates shipping costs only when goods are not sent by wagon. These orders being exceptional warranted an additional notation; whenever the method of shipping varied from the

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1. Day Book, pp. 272, 360.

2. Eric Pawson, Transport and Economy, (London, Academic Press, 1977) pp. 296-7.

norm it was noted.<sup>1</sup> But for the vast majority of orders the shipments were sent by carrier. The Day Book does not record the standard rates charged, or even the individual carriers employed to transport the goods. Without the exact costs of the shipments to the various destinations, and the cost/weight ratio, it is impossible to apportion the percentage costs of transportation to the final price of the goods.

One series of entries in the day book provides additional insights into the question of transportation. James Gee was a customer who made large and regular orders with the Manchester firm. One such typical order was for fabrics of various sorts to the value of £189.9.3½ (See Appendix XIII) At the close of the ledger entry the clerk indicated that Gee had received a credit of fifteen shillings on the order because he had collected it, rather than having it delivered.<sup>2</sup> James Gee placed further orders with the Manchester firm and whenever the merchandise was collected the total was reduced by an amount that appears commensurate with the transport costs to Stockport, where Gee was a resident. Gee was the only customer to initiate the practice of collecting his orders, which were composed exclusively of bulky bolts of cloth. In so doing he appears to have eliminated the costs of a commercial carrier, substituting instead his own transportation. This series of incidents provides some indication of transportation costs of high bulk cargoes over a comparatively short distance. However without a corresponding chart relating the various pieces of cloth to weight and weight to cost over various distances, once again the information is only suggestive of the sorts of costs involved in the movement of consignments of cottons around Britain.

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1. One example of a method of transport unique in the ledger was the use of coastal vessel to transfer a cargo from London to Plymouth. The Plymouth tradesman had ordered a very cheap, coarse linen/cotton cloth and the lowest-cost transport was indicated. Under the entry was written "by Cooper (a London carrier) to Chamberlains Wharf London from thence by first coaster, Carr<sup>g</sup> pd 3/10d." The order cost £3.16.1½.
  2. Day Book, p. 335.

In studying the changing methods of distribution of cottons in Britain during the eighteenth century it becomes apparent that the generalized availability of the textiles produced in Lancashire and the surrounding counties depended upon the network of turnpike and post roads binding the country together. Once passable roads were assured the manufacturer did not have to depend on seasonal tours of provincial centres or lengthy regional meanderings to facilitate sales. Neither did the local retailer have to accept whatever the Manchester Man brought with him. The collective sales of the pedlars, hucksters and travelling Scotchmen continued to provide the only ~~effective~~ means of access to much of the rural population. However as villages grew and the cities swelled it was the requirements of the settled retail tradesmen that stimulated the institution of new methods of soliciting for sales. With the use of travelling representatives closer ties were formed between manufacturers, retailers, and consumers. Manufacturers very quickly learned from the orders sent by post or placed with their travellers which of their fabrics the public favoured and could adjust production accordingly. Moreover with consumer goods so quickly delivered to town and village the retail trade received a tremendous boost. Shopkeepers and tradesmen however distant from the production site had available to them a wide and growing supply of textiles and other products of the British cotton industry.

The cotton industry differed from that of the cotton hosiery trade in that a powerful regional centre of distribution grew up outside London, in Manchester. None of the neighbouring provincial towns active in the production of cotton textiles competed in any way with this function, neither did specialist middlemen settle outside Manchester. Towns such as Blackburn, some distance from Manchester, with about sixty cotton manufacturers resident in the town might be expected to attract some middlemen,

though in fact not even one warehouseman appeared in the town directory.<sup>1</sup> Certainly some manufacturers conducted their own wholesale distribution. However those not engaged in wholesale trade came to Manchester as the most prominent specialist centre in the northwest. In 1794, as Table 3:2 shows, Manchester supported one hundred and forty-one warehousemen. While London's complement of middlemen in the textile trade topped two hundred, not all of these would have been trading in cottons. Much of London's wholesale strength would have been directed towards the export market and the redistribution of a large assortment of fabrics, so in that respect the two cities possessed an almost comparable strength of wholesalers, with Manchester almost certainly having a greater number of wholesalers of cotton textiles. The concentration of travelling hucksters in many cotton towns seems to have been the sole specialized distributive activity to thrive outside the London/Manchester axis. The only other sites to contain warehousemen specializing in the sale of Manchester goods logically were discovered at right angles to the powerful London/Manchester commercial line. Just one Manchester warehouseman set up trade in Bristol. The northeast offered more fertile ground for local middlemen and three Manchester warehousemen were to be found in Newcastle by the end of the century.<sup>2</sup> These were the exceptions. The absence of other contending, or even complementary centres of distribution points out the tremendous commercial authority concentrated in Manchester and London. The opposing geographic positions in the country assisted in perpetuating the hegemony of the two very different cities, as dispersal centres for the British cotton industry.

The success of Manchester wares in London and the velocity of the orders sent to the capital, the variety of products available to provincial

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1. Universal British Directory, vol. V, 1797, p. 18.

2. Bailey's Northern Directory, 1784, pp. 249-53.

shopkeepers like Dent, Thomas and Morgan, and the range of sales of one Manchester firm throughout Britain, all reflect the developments in the distributive system of the cotton industry. Improvements in distribution and transportation did not dispense with all of the inconveniences imposed by distance, but overall the domestic trade in the cotton industry quickened as advantage was taken of the faster and more reliable transportation network. Throughout the country retail tradesmen, served by the several means of distribution developed over the preceding fifty years, were able to offer their customers a homogeneous selection of textiles consistent in its contents from one side of the country to the other.

Throughout the eighteenth century London was justly acclaimed as the largest city, the largest entrepot, and the largest redistribution centre in the nation. Yet however extensive the facilities for the distribution of cottons, however vast the warehouse and numerous the tradesmen, the capital did not succeed in establishing a monopoly over the sale and dispersal of British-made cottons the way it had of the Indian precursors. The long-founded Manchester Men set the pattern of distribution of locally-made fabrics that remained fixed long after those tradesmen had been superseded. Manchester flourished as the hub of a network supplying London wholesalers, as well as the manifold company of shopkeepers seen in towns and villages across the kingdom. Only London's neighbouring stretches in the south and east fell under its mighty mercantile domination. The traders elsewhere, almost uniformly, looked to the travellers from Manchester for the cloth and clothing required. A small venture into the provision of locally made linens and cottons, ultimately established Manchester as the chief distribution centre for cottons for most of the nation.

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPING CONSUMERISM AND THE COTTON INDUSTRY:  
THE POPULARIZATION OF FASHION AND THE GROWTH OF A  
READY-MADE CLOTHES TRADE IN BRITAIN, 1750-1800

i The Importance of Publications in the Spread of Fashion.

Fluctuations and variations in dress of British men and women over the centuries have intrigued many of the subsequent generations. During this century the study of costume has progressed far beyond a preoccupation with curiosities. The interest in textiles and dress is fully justified. The manufacture and consumption of textiles and clothing is a fundamental activity in organized society and acts as a barometer of economic and social change. Mid-eighteenth century Britain was an amalgam of economic and social movements. Change was implicit in that society. Two significant innovations were the popularization of fashions and the growing production of inexpensive, attractive Lancashire textiles for an increasingly sophisticated domestic market. The repercussions of these movements on British consumer habits will be the subject of this chapter.

The movement to lighter materials in wearing apparel has been well documented, beginning in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century large quantities of linens and the Indian cottons were imported to meet this demand, but gradually British artisans began to produce textiles that suited contemporary tastes. The ebb and flow of styles during the eighteenth century figure as a record of significant economic activity, involving most of the nation to some degree or other either as producers, consumers, or both. Following the dictates of fashion became increasingly popular among a wide section of society at a time of rising personal income, inaugurating a period of intense preoccupation with the new materialism in Britain. J.H. Plumb's Georgian Delights catalogues the expanding material advantages enjoyed by all but the poorest citizens of Georgian Britain. In relating instances of developing consumerism and <sup>the</sup> corresponding rise of expectations Plumb presents what he sees as one of the most frequently overlooked factors contributing to the developing materialism, that is, "the will, the desires, the ambitions, and the cravings of the men and women who wanted change and promoted it."<sup>1</sup> No other area of economic and social

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1. Plumb, p.10

life more cogently reveals the ambitions and desires of the members of society than does fashion in that period.

Traditionally fashions were intended only for the elite. Elaborate dress was created and devised as a glorious reflection of temporal authority. The creation of these garments involved the metropolitan master craftsmen in their hundreds, but did not concern the thousands of journeymen artisans, weaving, dyeing, and finishing the cloth which would then be roughly cut and sewn to form the countryman's smock or the tradesman's jerkin. The advent of lighter fabrics, less durable and therefore more frequently replaced, encouraged a fundamental change in the clothing styles of the British populace. New modes and changing fashions could now be incorporated into the collection of clothes worn by the middling and lower orders: they could now, theoretically at least, participate to some degree in the world of fashion.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the entry into a fashion-conscious world did not presuppose continuous large expenditures. Accessories played an important part in contemporary fashions. Aprons, pockets, handkerchiefs, caps and sleeve ruffles were an integral part of the dress and cost of fraction of the cost of a new gown while substantially altering the appearance.<sup>2</sup> The abundance of printed cottons, linens and fustians, as well as small-wear and ribbons of all sorts, made in Britain, guaranteed stocks of goods at low or moderate prices. To elevate oneself to the ranks of the fashionable might entail no more than the wearing of a petticoat of the prescribed colour, an apron suitably embroidered set at the right length, a printed

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1. Price was undoubtedly one of the many influential factors in the spread of New Draperies and light textiles, but while of considerable importance, an examination of price data is outside the scope of this paper.
  2. "Tale of a Puce Dress" in Costume, vol. 6, 1972, p. 100, provides an example of a dress altered almost yearly from 1781 to 1788; additions of steel buckles, a new gauze handkerchief, and a new apron, all extend the useful life of the garment and retain a fashionable appearance; also Proceedings...Old Bailey, October, 1984 p. 1281 where a woman recognized/stolen silk dress as she had altered it many times over ten years.

handkerchief agreeably draped or the retrimming of a gown or petticoat to meet the current mode. These touches denoted the aspirations to fashion in whatever rank of society they were placed. Contemporary comment both before and during the eighteenth century suggests that the lure of fashionability affected the dress of most of the ranks of British society. The farmers' wives noticed by visiting Swedish botanist Per Kalm, drew his attention precisely because of their air of fashionability. He wrote of the Hertfordshire women that, "Here it is not unusual to see a farmer or other small personage's wife clad on Sunday like a lady of quality at other places in the world and her everyday attire in proportion."<sup>1</sup>

Anne Buck, a costume historian, has determined that Britain differed from the rest of Europe in the manner in which their citizens dressed. No one was precluded from certain sorts of dress. One's social station or type of work did not impose an immutable costume. And although there was "gradation and overlay between rank and rank with differences in detail... no dress is so different that it shows a completely unrelated, independent style."<sup>2</sup> Throughout most of the eighteenth century the construction of women's garments changed very little and the styles that there were appeared commonly in all regions and in all classes. Two sorts of garments predominated: one was essentially a two piece robe, open at the front, worn over a petticoat; the other, popular at the beginning of the century and again in the 1780's, was a closed gown with a fall of fabric from the bodice, over which an apron was worn. The only other type of gown was known as

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1. Per Kalm, Account of his Visit to England in 1748, p. 326. See also R. Reuss, Londres et L'Angleterre en 1700, stating that, "Their dress is more than luxurious and one sees the wives of tailors and shoemakers wearing clothes embroidered in gold or silver and adorned with gold watches." Daniel Defoe wrote in The Complete English Tradesman, (Dublin edition, 1726), p. 250, that "the working manufacturing people of England...make better wages of their work and spend more of the money upon their backs and bellies, than in any other country".
  2. Anne Buck, "Variation in English Women's Dress in the Eighteenth Century" Folk Life, vol. 9, 1971, p. 5.

a bedgown. It wrapped over, closing at the front and was usually knee length, commonly worn by working women.<sup>1</sup> The styles of the gowns were generalized, quality being distinguished by the cut, fabric and trim: this alone differentiated the humble from haute couture. The basic construction of women's attire was uniform all over the country and it was therefore the minutiae of fashion that determined the disciple of "la mode". Knowledge of the popular colours, new ways of trimming gowns, and current vogues being worn in the metropolis, were the ultimately restricting forces. Without regular, accurate information on the current fashions provincials were condemned to be forever trailing the current modes, by months or even years. The potential was certainly there for every woman of modest means to have at least one fashionable gown; the insuperable obstacle was the limitations imposed by geography.

For much of the eighteenth century the country dwellers and those living in small towns and villages depended for their knowledge of the latest modes on shopkeepers and others who travelled to London or to the nearest provincial centre or fashionable spa. Country tradesmen, tailors and ~~manu~~-makers depended on travellers for the current styles and to this end dolls were routinely carried along to provide a scaled-down edition of fashions. For those country dwellers attempting to present an elegant appearance, success depended on the rate at which the new styles could be incorporated into an existing wardrobe. Distance imposed the greatest restraints, unless there was by chance a fashionable peer in the vicinity from whom the latest vogues could be culled. The Duke of Hamilton was such a peer, bringing north to his estates fashionable clothing for his wife and himself.<sup>2</sup> However that was a hit and miss situation. By mid-century no means had yet been found to satisfy the demand for information about the latest fashions

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1. Buck, p. 18.

2. Rosalind K. Marshall, The Days of Duchesse Anne (London, Collins, 1973) pp. 86-8, 92-3.

generated by the vast numbers of the middle ranks who had no direct connection with high society, but who had a burning desire to emulate the dress and manners of the elite. The society of country and city was acknowledged to be quite separate and distinct in that era, both in conduct and costume. Lady Louisa Stuart wrote in her Memoir that in the early decades of the eighteenth century, "a period when there were no stage-coaches, no post-horses, no turnpike-roads....The habits of town and country were then, of course, much more distinct from each other."<sup>1</sup> Thus the greatest barrier inhibiting the middle ranks from displaying a fashionable appearance was the isolation from metropolitan centres and the outdated and insufficient news of the London modes that were the result. Demand for this sort of news inevitably had its effect. The dissemination of fashion-related information followed the establishment of the principal turnpike roads, linking together the furthest corners of the country. Once the lines of communication were fixed the flow of all sorts of news, in the form of journals, newspapers and magazines, joined the growing array of merchandise dispatched along these routes.

The Stationers' Company had obtained a monopoly for the publication of women's almanacks in 1704 and they produced The Ladies Diary or The Woman's Almanack. In 1750, a black and white engraving of a fashionable gown was included at the front of this volume, in response to the interest in fashions evinced by its readers. Pictures of this sort were included in all subsequent editions, depicting styles of full dress, undress, head coverings, bonnets and accessories. In 1770 the monopoly was successfully disputed by other publishers and a flood of pocket books and memorandum books were produced, all with engravings of fashionable figures displayed on the front pages.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lady Louisa Stuart, Memoir in Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke, ed. Earl of Home, 1889, vol. 1, p. xv, (2 plates)
  2. Hollar to Heideloff (catalogue from an exhibition of fashion plates Costume Society, 1979) pp. 21-2.

These small volumes enjoyed a wide popularity. They circulated all round the country, illustrating established modes for those with no other models to follow. The small engraved figures in the women's pocket books were the first fashion illustrations devised for that purpose in Britain.<sup>1</sup> No doubt these books came to be regarded as authoritative guides by their readers, in spite of the booklets' limitations, being produced only once a year and so unable to take into account new styles. An example of the pre-eminence of these illustrations is found in Oliver Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, where the character Mrs. Hardcastle remarks that she has arranged her hair in the manner of "a print in the Ladies' Memorandum-book for the last year".<sup>2</sup> The first modest essay into the field of fashion news achieved a notable success, prompting imitators and competitors of different sorts.

The Gentleman's Magazine had inspired the production of several magazines for women, most of which were short-lived. One of these journals, The Lady's Magazine, edited by Oliver Goldsmith, ran from 1759 to 1763, and in the first year a full page black and white engraving was issued. Entitled "Habit of a Lady", it was the first fashion plate to be issued in an English monthly magazine, "For the assistance of those in the country who, as they have not the opportunities of seeing the originals, may dress by the figure".<sup>3</sup> The specific intention of the publishers, to provide information on fashion for those outside of London, not intimates of the fashionable, confirmed the importance of this sort of endeavour and the unceasing demand it sought to meet.

In 1770 the first volume of The Lady's Magazine; or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex appeared in bookshops. Advertisements for this publication appeared in newspapers around the country.<sup>4</sup> It was a widely

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1. Hollar to Heideloff, p. 22.

2. Oliver Goldsmith, She Stoops to Conquer, The Miscellaneous Works of Oliver Goldsmith, vol. IV, London, John Murray, 1837, p. 299, Act 2 Sc. 1.

3. The Lady's Magazine, December 1759.

4. The Bristol Gazetteer, 8 Feb., 1776; The Exeter Flying Post, 4 Jan., 1792

read journal, being the only one of its kind in England at this time. The editors had a clear appreciation of their role in the spread of fashion throughout Britain and of the interest shown by their readers in this subject. They explained their policy with regard to fashions as follows:

But as external appearance is the first inlet to the treasures of the heart; and the advantages of dress, though they cannot communicate beauty, may at least make it more conspicuous, it is intended in this collection to present the sex with most elegant patterns for the Tambour, Embroidery, or every kind of Needlework; and as the fluctuation of fashion retards their progress into the country, we shall by engravings inform our distant readers with every innovation that is made in the female dress, whether it respects the covering of the head, or the clothing of the body.

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The first issue of The Lady's Magazine contained a coloured engraving of "A Lady in Full Dress", but other fashion plates appeared only at irregular intervals until 1780, when they were produced each month. However, though purists in the study of fashion plates contend that the first decade of the journal showed only a scattering of fashion plates,<sup>2</sup> for our purposes there were a far greater number of examples of contemporary fashions illustrated than this statement would suggest. Every edition of the magazine included short stories. Adjacent to these tales were engraved plates, most frequently picturing exquisite men and maids, or matrons and children, in dramatic postures. In almost all of these illustrations the models were shown wearing fashionable contemporary clothing. From the pages of this magazine women readers could determine what was being worn in London. Items could then be bought to modify existing clothing or completely new suits of clothes purchased to reflect the new modes. The market for clothing was being unified, with common standards established and fashions set which applied from one end of the country to the other. The homogeneity of taste which resulted would be further influenced by the expanding production in

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1. The Lady's Magazine, introduction, vol. 1, January, 1770.
  2. Hollar to Heideloff, p. 30.

the Lancashire textile industry. Styles depicted in The Lady's Magazine became the model for British women. One engraving, first presented in The Lady's Magazine, became so popular that, wrote the editors, "we find it imitated by most of the editors of the annual pocket-books for the use of ladies."<sup>1</sup> Thus the costume copied by the engraver attending various social events or a new play would be reproduced in publications around the country and consulted by the patrons of the various publications as the model for their own dress.<sup>2</sup>

The Lady's Magazine added further to the amount of fashion information offered to their readers with small monthly dissertations. For the month of February, 1773 it was announced that an undress should consist of:

The hair in front, with small puff curls; a cap, made with wings; narrow ribbon, in small puffs; a double row of lace; ditto lapelled, double and puffed; a very small crown of blond, lined, and coming so high behind as to admit a very low bag of hair; gown as rich of sattin or tabby as the lady likes...short black apron of joining lace; double ruffles very deep; a flounce at the bottom of the gown...round the neck a very narrow collar....

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A rather less elaborate toilet was suggested for the undress in 1775. "All sorts of worked gowns over small hoops. ...Night gowns in the French jacket fashion, flying back, and tying behind with large bunches of ribbon. Sashes round the waist, and fastened with a small buckel. Short Aprons. Shoes with buckels."<sup>4</sup> Thus were readers advised to adorn themselves.

Interest in the fashions of the day was not restricted exclusively to the women's journals and pocket books. Significantly in the early years of fashion publications, it was in a region very distant from London, principally rural in nature, that there appeared a regular bulletin on the London

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1. The Lady's Magazine, vol. 1 November, 1770. p. 179.

2. The Magazine à la Mode, London, 1777, p. 3. The Lady's Magazine vol. 1, January, 1770.

3. The Lady's Magazine, vol. 4, 1773, p. 72.

4. The Lady's Magazine, vol. 6, 1775, p. 235.

fashions, in the local newspaper. Those living in close proximity of Bath or other spas, or to a commercial or provincial centre would not have required this type of detailed instruction. Residents in those more cosmopolitan centres would have had access to modish shops and suppliers as well as seeing members of the elite dressed à la mode, advantages not shared by those immured in a bucolic environment. The Sherbourne Mercury produced in its appendix a segment entitled "The dress of the Month as established at St. James's, and in Tavistock Street". What followed was a description of the latest fashions for gentlemen, which in July, 1773 read as follows: "Gentlemen in general wear plain clothes...laced hats, without gold garters...." Ladies were advised that current styles favoured "in general white silk night-gowns, with tambour flowers...India chintz sacks...satin slippers, with different coloured roses; and small hoops."<sup>1</sup> Later, in the 1780's and 90's, the London newspapers included periodic references to dress. Usually these comments were included in the columns devoted to the social calendar of the high and mighty. Many times the commentary was a synopsis of the styles observed at events like the Earl of Salisbury's Supper and Ball for example, or the Drawing Room on the King's birthday.<sup>2</sup> If, on occasion, an elaboration of the latest styles was printed in a paper, this was usually balanced with references to the newest extravagances in dress. The editor of The Public Advertiser printed an amusing comment on the effect of the ballooning craze on fashion. "The ballooning handkerchief is much worn: The appearance of it is promising, and balloonifies the bosom, to a magnitude, at least capable of raising one person from the earth!"<sup>3</sup> Thus notice of the London fads and fancies spread around the country with the delivery of the newspaper.

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1. The Sherbourne Mercury, Appendix 12 July 1773.

2. The Public Advertiser, 9/11 January 1787; 25 June 1787.

3. *Ibid*, 16 October 1784.

Through newspapers and periodicals, local and national, all aspects of the contemporary vogues were described to the smallest detail, with regular illustrations.<sup>1</sup> The spread of the influence of fashion across the country established a standardization of dress as well as occasioning growing consumerism of related products. Literate and fashion-conscious women eagerly assimilated the standards and models of dress reported and displayed on the pages of the printed media.

The Barbara Johnson Sample Book exemplifies the pre-occupation and fascination of the middle classes with the fashions of the age. Barbara Johnson was the daughter of an English clergyman. Her father held a living in the midland parish of Olney, the centre of which was a village of that name southeast of Northampton. The comparative remoteness of her bucolic setting from the centre of fashion was no obstacle to Miss Johnson's study of the latest modes from the capital. From about the age of eight until her death in 1825 Barbara Johnson kept a scrap book and fashion diary. Recorded in the pages of this book were lists of clothing purchases with squares of fabric pinned to the page along with the price per yard of the goods. The volume provides evidence both of the rate at which new clothing was purchased, with notes on where the goods were bought, and illustrates the place of cotton fabrics in her wardrobe from 1746 to 1800. Some of the pages provide simple records of the textiles bought and the garments made. (See illustrations 1 and 2, Appendix) However on many of the other leaves in the book Barbara Johnson pasted in a variety of fashionable engravings from which she could glean information on the newest styles. These illustrations were clearly of great importance to her, conveying in the simple line drawings the latest intelligence on the current fashions in gowns, trimmings and accessories. The first prints appeared in the years

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1. The Sherbourne Mercury, Appendix, 12 July 1773.  
The Ladies Annual Journal or Compleat Pocket Book, 1771.  
The Lady's Magazine, vols. 1-8.

1757 and 1758. They were the very popular engravings that appeared in the front piece of pocket books. Some of the pictures were clearly incompatible with Miss Johnson's style of living, such as the fashion plate of Court Dress for 1768. However these prints were not omitted from her collection and her persistence in preserving such prints attests to the strong attraction fashion held for women no matter how distant from their immediate experience the dresses might be. Nowhere is there a better indication of the power of the printed information on the dissemination of fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Further on into the last half of the century the fashion prints reflected styles of clothing more within the practical realization of Miss Johnson. In 1770 she included a plate of a morning gown and in 1771 an undress was pictured, and for several years prints of headdresses were featured.<sup>2</sup> These prints focused the interest of consumers more sharply, piqued their interest and stimulated them to emulate their ideals. The prints presented the possible; the latest styles of fashion within their capabilities to imitate. Within this period fashion stepped down from the pinnacle of the elite, no longer functioning as the distant ideal enjoyed only by nobility. Modes for the middle ranks and even more humble labouring classes became eminently possible. The proliferation of cheap printed information on the newest styles marked this move towards generalized consumerism among almost all classes of society, as opposed to solely aristocratic conspicuous consumption which characterized earlier centuries.

More and more fashion plates appeared in Barbara Johnson's sample book as the years continue. Almost every page boasted at least one or two printed examples of headdresses, undress and "Dresses of the Year". These fashion plates were garnered from many sources. The English Ladies Pocket Companion, Lane's Pocket Book, and the New Royal Pocket Companion supplied several prints as did women's magazines and other journals to which Miss Johnson

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1. Barbara Johnson Sample Book, pp. 6-17, 19-27.

2. Ibid, pp. 14-17.

had access. One of her brothers later moved to Kensington and perhaps her visits there enabled her to augment her supplies of journals as well as her clothes.<sup>1</sup> These illustrations formed the most obvious and enduring link between modest consumers such as Miss Johnson and the source of British fashions in London. The influence exerted by such prints and their importance to a host of women throughout the country cannot be over emphasized.

Ladies magazines and newspapers were not the only proponents of fashion among the range of periodicals. A satirist had quipped in The Lady's Magazine that there ought to be an express journal devoted solely to the vagaries of fashion, the object of this satirically proposed journal being that "no gentleman or lady who may live within the bill of mortality, need appear on a Sunday either in church, at a park, or at a private visit, with the least deviation from the pink of the mode; if they would on the Saturday peruse the lucubrations and intelligence of this judicious and indefatigable journalist."<sup>2</sup> However far-fetched this waggish proposal seemed in 1774, three years later a periodical appeared the scope of which was bounded by the dictates of fashion. The Magazine à la Mode stated that its aim was "to convey early and useful information to those who are in any respect concerned in furnishing Articles of Dress, either in Town or Country."<sup>3</sup> As well as informing those in trade of alterations in fashions, the magazine was also designed to appeal to a general readership. Prospective readers were promised in the advertisement carried in many newspapers that this journal was "Adapted to the use of all Ranks of People" and that "In this Performance will be given an Account of the reigning Modes of Dress both for Gentlemen and Ladies. The Materials of which the Dresses are Made, will be properly explained; and the earliest Notice...given of the minutest

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1. Johnson Sample Book, pp. 35-8, 40.

2. The Lady's Magazine, vol. 5, 1774, p. 540.

3. The Magazine à la Mode, January 1777, p.1.

Alterations adopted by the fashionable world...."<sup>1</sup> A co-ordinated investigation and illustration of the newest styles superseded the former haphazard selection of costume dependent on whatever caught the engraver's eye. The process of reportage and dissemination of fashion news had achieved a new degree of professionalism.

Certainly the literary content of the magazine made it acceptable reading matter to those outside of trade: however, it was to the thousands of milliners, mantua-makers, mercers and tailors that the detailed and timely reports would have been most important. The hope of the journal, and most probably its readers in trade as well, was that with the help of careful illustrations and explicit descriptions of the London fashions, these styles could be reproduced anywhere in the country. The style of dress of London and the nobility and gentry was filtered through the ranks of British society. As the time-lag shortened in the reproduction of current London styles in newspapers and periodicals, the national market for clothing was further consolidated and the demand increasingly standardized. The tastes of consumers and the expectations with which they entered the market conformed more and more to the ideal presented through the pages of magazines, almanacks and newspapers.

The incipient demand for news of fashions in the mid-century had grown as bit by bit tantalizing glimpses of the fashionable world were provided and the passport to such a world<sup>was</sup> seemingly furnished in the fashions themselves. J.H. Plumb has described the inception of the idea of "the pursuit of happiness...entangled in social emulation"<sup>2</sup> in concert with "a revolution in availability of information, in movement, and most important of all, a growth of affluence amongst the middle and upper-middle classes."<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Public Ledger, 1 April 1777.

2. Plumb, p. 8.

3. Plumb, p.9.

The dissemination of fashion news exemplifies the social movement described by Plumb. Several decades after the first publication of fashion plates there was an outpouring of fashion news from many sources which was readily devoured by aspiring belles and beaux. This in turn fed the textile and clothing industries of Britain. In the editorial of the first issue of The Magazine à la Mode the editor reaffirmed the link between promulgating fashions among the many middle classes of society and developing British industry. The editor wrote that:

every variation of the fashions gives new life to trade, both in town and country: and in the latter, an early correct communication of the true fashions, will be particularly beneficial to our manufacturers, for the traiterous [sic] propensity to French Manufacturers will not there prevail, as it does among the guilty great of London; it will be sufficient to have dresses made up in the reigning mode of British Materials.

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A ready example of fashionable dress was all the stimulus the middling orders required to fire the aspiration for like costumes. Once the knowledge of the styles had been spread the urge to buy an approximation invariably followed, accelerating purchases of Lancashire velvets, chintzes, and hollands; textiles designed in imitation of their more costly precursors. However, in the rounds of escalating consumer demand for clothing of first importance was the provision of information, stimulating both interest and acquisitive instincts.

The Magazine à la Mode was followed by other British fashion journals, such as The Gallery of Fashion. Several French periodicals were also influential. In addition, women's periodicals, such as the Lady's Monthly Museum paid regular attention to the contemporary vogues in a feature called "Cabinet of Fashion" which included coloured engravings, plus detailed descriptions of the costumes illustrated.<sup>2</sup> Coloured fashion plates became generally available after 1780 and the whole business of presenting appealing

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1. The Magazine à la Mode, January, 1777, p. 4.

2. Lady's Monthly Museum, vol. 1, 1798, p. 60.

displays of apparel became more and more sophisticated.<sup>1</sup> However, while the publishers of these magazines presented an ideal ensemble for the approbation of their readers, they were in fact selling only the idea of the self-striped muslin gown or the striped silk apron. The most desirable end to all this circulation of fashion news was not that several thousand daughters of the country gentry should be attired in emulation of their London cousins; but rather that hundreds of thousands of women from the middle ranks and working classes should purchase gowns in a general approximation of their social superiors and regularly refurbish their gowns in imitation of the latest modes. The development of the cotton industry in Lancashire and vicinity progressed in concert with the expanded influence of fashion in the domestic market. The products of this industry were a vast and growing supply of fabrics - checked, striped, printed and dyed - from low to high quality with comparable prices, made to clothe, not the leaders of society, but all the other degrees from which British society was composed. From the spread of fashion's influence it must be inferred that there was developing, simultaneously, a profoundly different pattern of clothing consumption than had hitherto obtained. Joan Thirsk has decribed in Economic Policy and Projects the onset of the trade in clothing accessories, such as hose and caps over one and a half centuries earlier.<sup>2</sup> This earlier economic inception does not negate the assertion that it was only in the last half of the eighteenth century that there was a qualitative change in the rate of consumption as well as in the national character of the market for clothing. What will follow is an assessment of the manner in which the buying of clothes and the sorts of clothing bought altered during this period.

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1. Lady's Monthly Museum, vol. 1, 1798, p. 144; vol. 2, p. 228; Hollar to Heideloff, pp. 21-30.
  2. Joan Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, (Oxford, 1978, Clarendon Press) pp. 3, 7-9.

Clothing was a valuable commodity in the eighteenth century. However it was no longer a perpetual family possession to be handed from mother to daughter and father to son. An element of selectivity had entered. Certainly items of clothing were still part of bequests; but in most cases the items passed on to an heir were of particular value. The Rev. James Woodforde noted in his diary that he had given his niece Nancy "an old brown silk gown very good never the less, and was my late Aunt Parrs." Nancy later had this gown trimmed with fur to very good effect.<sup>1</sup> A farmer's wife with an extensive wardrobe bequeathed many articles to friends and relatives; things like a "Musland Apron with a Broad trim" and "A last Apron and a Sute of Linnen of the same".<sup>2</sup>

However one did not have to die in order to dispose of unwanted clothing. Clothes were redistributed within a household in several time-honoured methods. Upper servants, such as lady's maids, regularly received their mistresses' clothes as a perquisite to the job. In one instance too-eager maid servants were prosecuted by the executors for their precipitate seizure of their late mistress's clothing and linens. Dispersing such goods among the maids upon the death of the master or mistress was also accepted practice. But in this case the unconsidered removal of muslin gowns and handkerchiefs, cotton petticoats, aprons, shawls and sheets called down punishment on the heads of the perpetrators.<sup>3</sup> Other less exalted employees or pensioners might also be given clothes as charity.<sup>4</sup> Both of these means of redistributing clothes were well documented methods typical of the period.

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1. Woodforde, pp. 41, 46.

2. Silvia Druit, "The Will of Jane Youngs of Burley in the County of Southampton" Costume, no.11, 1977, p. 113.

3. Proceedings on the King's Commission of the Peace...for the City of London, and also...for the County of Middlesex; Held at...the Old Bailey, December, 1784, p.155.

4. Madeleine Ginsburg, "Rags to Riches: The Second-Hand Clothes Trade, 1700-1978" Costume, no. 14, 1980, p. 121.

Clothes were also sold through a vast network of pawn shops and second hand clothes shops. The former were numerous in London and all major cities. The sign of the three golden balls would have been familiar in principal market towns as well for the pawn broker fulfilled an important function in providing small, short-term loans in the days before co-operatives, banks, and building societies allowed money to be made available to the wage earner.<sup>1</sup> Clothing was commonly pawned by working men and women for cash when it was required. This practice resulted in the pawn shop becoming major centres for the disposal of stolen clothing. The theft of clothing or yard goods was one of the principal crimes of the age, most probably because of the ease in disposing of the articles. The Old Bailey proceedings record case after case of thefts of clothing by servants, fellow lodgers, acquaintances, and just plain crooks. The response of Hannah Francis when charged with the theft of four shifts, eleven handkerchiefs and three caps was typical. "She owned she had taken and pawned them; and directed me to the several pawn brokers, where I found them."<sup>2</sup> Thus with the combined input of legal and illegally pawned clothes pawn shops became one of the chief outlets where second-hand clothes could be purchased. (See illustration no. 3, Appendix ).

Clothes brokers operating second-hand clothes shops also offered a range of used clothing for sale. The trade in cheap goods in London centred around Houndsditch and Rosemary Lane.<sup>3</sup> However, most districts where working people resided would have at least one such shop, as the sale of used clothing appears to have been an integral part of the process of buying clothing among the labouring classes. Chelsea, for example, had one pawnbroker and

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1. Nottingham, Bury, Worcester, Berwick-upon-Tween, and Canterbury all had one pawnbroker each, for example, while Birmingham and Bristol had twenty and twenty-one pawnbrokers respectively, operating in their precincts; according to The Universal British Directory, vols. II-V.
  2. Proceedings...Old Bailey, February, 1770, p. 139.
  3. Ginsburg, "Rags", p. 121.

one salesman in its environs in 1793.<sup>1</sup> The following list of items stolen from a clothes broker in Monmouth Street suggests the quality of some of the goods available from these brokers: a quilted petticoat, a silk cloak, a black calamanco coat with grey lining, a camblet gown, a green stuff gown, a silk mode cloak and cotton stockings. Another "salesman" on Broad St. Giles who sold both new and used clothing lost more practical garments, like corduroy breeches and a suit of clothing.<sup>2</sup> Pawn shops and second-hand clothes shops featured regularly in court proceedings both as the recipients or the victims of light-fingered clientele. But whatever the source of the clothing offered for sale there is no doubt that these agencies played an important intermediary function in the distribution of used clothing.

It has been suggested that the trade in second-hand clothes was the almost exclusive preserve of London tradesmen. London newspapers certainly carried advertisements from these tradesmen promising "Most Money given for rich and plain Clothes". One of the brokers delineated his territory as anywhere within ten miles of the capital.<sup>3</sup> The trade in used clothing assisted the working classes. In the large cities the poorest social groups availed themselves of the very cheapest clothes stocked by the clothes brokers. However it was not unusual for others more affluent to buy second-hand clothes as well. In some cases this provided fashion conscious men or women with pieces of apparel of excellent quality, for a fraction of the cost of the item when new.<sup>4</sup> Sir Frederick Eden commented disapprovingly on the common practice among the labouring classes living near London of buying used clothes in preference to making new ones.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The Universal British Directory, vol. II, 1793, pp. 754-5.

2. Proceedings...Old Bailey, September, 1776, pp. 361-2.

3. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 15 February, 1777.

4. Buck, p. 7; Madeleine Ginsburg, "Tailoring and Dressmaking Trade, 1700-1850" Costume, no. 6, 1972, p.67.

5. Sir Frederick Eden, The State of the Poor, edited and abridged by A.G.L. Rogers, (London, George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1928), p.108.

owner. The advertisement also gives the impression of a broad market for used clothes. Furthermore, from this passage it is apparent that the clothing destined for re-sale was not culled from the London market area alone, but was bought during regular sojourns in the provinces. It is also possible that as barter was still practised, payment in kind would have been accepted by country shopkeepers. Thus among the wide range of merchandise the general shopkeeper sold he may also have dealt in articles of second-hand clothing. The well-known shopkeeper Mr. Abraham Dent of Kirkby Stephen, for example, sold "an old Coat" to a labourer on the turnpike, for one shilling and six pence.<sup>1</sup> Practices such as this may have been far more common than the remaining records indicate.

Some very significant inferences can be drawn from this insight into the practices of sale and re-sale of clothes. From tradesmen such as Matthews who dealt with "London" and "the Country" it can be confirmed that the clothing market was reasonably homogeneous throughout the nation. The expectation, at least, was that similar styles would prevail across the country and the clothes bought in one region would be perfectly acceptable to those in another. There is also the suggestion that trade in second-hand clothes was not exclusive of the other sorts of retail trade, leading to the conclusion that the buying of used clothes was commoner than might have been thought. A late seventeenth century writing on the state of apprentices contains a description of the master's London trade as follows:

My master was not only a taylor but kept a broker's shop, wherein he sold all sorts of clothes new and old. He lived in one of the principallest streets in the City, and was in good esteem with his neighbours, who were all persons of some quality.... 2

Another important factor in what appears to be the habitual resale of clothing was a return, however small, of part of the original sum invested in the clothing. The absence of any price series on second-hand clothes makes

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1. WDB/63/3a.

2. Meriton Latroon, The English Rogue, 1668/9, II, p. 163.

ii Changing Patterns of Clothes Buying.

Once outside London the question remains, what happened to the clothes owned by country and town dwellers that were no longer needed? Little evidence exists on the market for clothing in the rest of the country. Madeleine Ginsburg concluded that probably the unwanted clothes would be refitted for other family members, or else pawned, in preference to being sold, since the small towns lacked the large concentration of population which would have facilitated re-sale.<sup>1</sup> Quite possibly all of these strategies were put into play to get the maximum benefit from the investment in the clothing. But contrary to current belief there were in fact clothes brokers who operated from country centres outside London, touring the provinces buying up old clothes. John Matthews, describing himself as a salesman from London, planned on spending two weeks in Oxford and would travel up to twenty miles out from town to meet prospective customers. His business, he stated, was buying:

Ladies and Gentlemans cast-off Cloaths, either laced, embroidered, or brocaded, full trimmed or not, of every Colour and Sort, and will give the most money for any: As I deal for London, the Country and Abroad, nothing can be out of my Way, according to the Price and if any Person has any thing to dispose of and will favour me with the Sight of it they may depend on having the full Value of their Goods. ...I likewise buy all Sorts of old Linnen, Gold and Silver lace, burnt or unburnt, School Boys Cloaths, and Servants Liveries. 2

As it was unlikely that Matthews was the sole clothes broker to operate nationally it must be assumed that others engaged in the same trade. Evidence of at least two second-hand clothes shops in eighteenth century Chester has come to light.<sup>3</sup> It is evident that even town and country dwellers could obtain some return for clothes no longer useful to their

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1. Ginsburg, "Rags", p. 122.

2. Jackson's Oxford Journal, 17 March 1770.

3. These shops were noted in S.I. Mitchell's doctoral thesis, Urban Markets and Retail Distribution, 1730-1815, (Oxford, 1974), p. 365-6.

it impossible to determine the percentage return on the sale of used clothes, but even ten percent would have added an amount to limited incomes. Thus when clothing ceased to be used, the owner still recouped a portion of the original cost which could then be put to the cost of new clothes. Among the many hundreds of thousands of citizens with limited or fluctuating incomes, the sum received for old clothes must have been a welcome addition. The percentage of income spent on clothing would then be more flexible when a portion of the cost of a new suit of clothes, a gown or accessories, could be counted on from the re-sale of old clothes.

iii Growth of the Ready-made Clothes Trade.

The final deduction that can be drawn from the existence of a large, wide-spread market for second-hand clothes in Britain is that people of that period were accustomed to buying garments already made-up. This is an important point; one which has frequently gone unnoticed or underrated. The common impression today of the clothing trade in the eighteenth century is that consumers bought fabric and then either made the garments themselves or paid a tailor or mantua-maker to sew up the item to their specifications. There is no doubt that the monied classes did indeed have all their clothes made to their very specific tastes, at times taking great pleasure in unwarranted criticism of the garment in order to emphasize the superiority of their standards. In the early nineteenth century the radical tailor Francis Place complained of the fashionable customers who routinely found fault, insisting on unnecessary alterations to their bespoke clothes.<sup>1</sup> But the customers at this end of the scale are not the concern of this study. There was a much larger and more diverse consumer group, composed of the families of tradesmen, innkeepers, shopkeepers, tenant farmers, artisans, and wage earners, from lightermen and coastal seamen to carters and coach drivers, none of whom was afflicted with the excesses of taste which characterized members of the higher orders. The members of this group made up

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1. Place, p.216

the majority of the population and as such they had to be active consumers of textile products in order for there to be a profitable domestic market. It was to this group that the manufacturers in Lancashire directed their products. The clothing which the members of this consumer group wore is the principal interest of this section.

Some of the clothing worn by all but the poorest folk would have been made to order, purchased from local tailors or drapers. According to the findings of Sir Frederick Eden, only in the most northerly counties and parts of Scotland was it still common practice to make a substantial portion of the family's clothing in the home.<sup>1</sup> This may be attributed more to a restricted market than to any predilection for needlework on the part of female inhabitants of those areas. In the main population centres of mid and southern England consumer practices had already altered considerably from those of their northern neighbours, or indeed from the practices of their grandparents decades earlier. Shopkeepers now supplied nearly all clothing wants. Sir Frederick Eden confirmed that: "In the Midlands and Southern Counties, the labourer in general purchases a very considerable portion, if not the whole, of his clothes from the shopkeeper."<sup>2</sup> While it must be acknowledged that an unknown percentage of the clothes worn would have been made to order, yet it must also be asserted that a part of the clothing bought in Britain at this time was second-hand and therefore, already made-up.

In the small amount of research that has been done on the topic of clothes production and consumption in eighteenth century Britain it has already been asserted that new, ready-made clothes were virtually unknown.<sup>3</sup> The one history on the manufacture of women's clothing states that ready-made garments were a product of the nineteenth century. Margaret Wray writes:

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1. Eden, p. 109.

2. Eden, p. 108.

3. Mr. David Corner has been researching this topic for the University of London. His work includes an as yet unpublished paper on "The Clothing Trade, 1600-1800."

There was little production of ready-made outer clothing for women. The earliest manufacturers were retail shopkeepers. The department stores, in the second half of the nineteenth century, in order to keep their workroom staff occupied at times when they had a small demand for bespoke garments, began to make rather simpler garments for sale ready-made. Other pioneer manufacturers began, in the 1890's and early 1900's, to produce aprons, mob caps, sun bonnets, frillings, blouses, overalls and cloaks.

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In fact the history of ready-made clothing extends much further back than might be supposed. The first organization to sell ready-made clothing in Britain had a vast production unit, materials were cheap, and the product was designed to be low cost, appealing to the widest market. The commercial characteristics of this enterprise have the hallmark of a modern manufacturing company. It was, in fact, the East India Company, headed by Sir Josiah Child, that late in the seventeenth century began the first large-scale sale of ready-made goods in England. Child was concerned about a possible over-abundance of Indian fabrics in Britain and worried about a possible fall in the price of Indian cottons as a consequence of this over-stocking. Child decided to diversify the goods imported and at the same time try to extend the market for Indian cottons. Child sent written orders to Fort St. George requesting that they arrange for calicos "to be strongly and substantially sewed for poor people's wear" in order to attempt an unprecedented product substitution of cotton for linen and encourage "the wearing of calico in shifts".<sup>2</sup> While the bulk of the cotton shifts imported were made of strong blue and white fabric suitable for seamen and labourers, there were also two other sorts made. Shifts of middling quality were thought suitable for tradesmen and others of their like; while fine white cotton was carefully sewn to make shifts suitable for ladies and gentlemen. Child specified that 200,000 shifts in all be manufactured for sale in

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1. Margaret Wray, The Women's Outerwear Industry, (London, Gerald Duckworth, 1957) p. 18.

2. Despatches from England 1681 to 1686 (Fort St. George), 9 Oct. 1682 p. 15, quoted by Chaudhuri, p. 287.

Britain and other parts of northern Europe.<sup>1</sup> This venture marked the first marketing on such a massive scale of ready-made clothing. The level of production makes this case unique. However, indications from other sources show that some ready-made clothing was common in many tailors' shops, haberdashers, or mantua-maker's establishments.

From the beginning of the century ready-made apparel of some description was sold to consumers. Joan Thirsk has documented and described the onset of the trade in several sorts of ready-made accessories such as knitted stockings, nearly two centuries earlier. Therefore one would expect at the very least the continuing availability of these sorts of apparel.<sup>2</sup> However records reveal that many more items were available than simply selected accessories. More recently Margaret Spufford has considered the availability of ready-made clothes in her latest work The Great Reclathing of Rural England. She discovered records of six men described as "salesmen" conducting their businesses in Kent from 1680 to 1721. These men sold many sorts of light cotton and linen clothing such as shirts, drawers, petticoats, and frocks. In addition they supplied heavier garments among which were ready-made gowns of worsted fabric and damask mantuas, plus many kinds of breeches. Dr. Spufford speculated that these tradesmen may have been the precursor of later tradesmen in ready-made goods, for without doubt instances of the trade in ready-made clothes became more and more common as the century progressed.<sup>3</sup>

Individual shops which supplied yard goods and made garments to order frequently contained a variety of ready-made clothing. The 1722 inventory of mercer John Winter from the Stafford area, contained "1 Cotton wasecoat and three Cotton Caps", as well as a dozen pairs of cotton hose and six

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1. Chaudhuri, p. 287.

2. Joan Thirsk, Policy, pp. 6,8.; Joan Thirsk, "The fantastical folly of fashion; the English stocking knitting industry, 1500-1700" in Textile History and Economic History, eds. K.G. Ponting & N.B. Harte, (Manchester University Press, 1973).

3. Margaret Spufford, The Great Reclathing of Rural England ,(London,) pp.123-5, Hambledon Press, 1984.

pairs of socks.<sup>1</sup> The 1721 inventory of goods of the Tonbridge mercer Thomas Webb contained an even wider assortment of ready-made goods. Webb had in his shop at the time of inventory, ten girls' coat stays in two sizes, eleven petticoats both quilted and unquilted, six round frocks, one man's waistcoat, four boys' frocks, four boys' waistcoats, a boy's coat, eight pairs of breeches, and two cloaks.<sup>2</sup> These items comprised only a fraction of the textiles and other merchandise in the shop. But the variety of ready to wear clothing confirms that apparel such as this was probably routinely produced and stocked by retailers in the textile and clothing trades. It is evident that shopkeepers who sold a very wide selection of goods normally carried some simple, fully made items at the very least. In the day book of sales of a Stafford grocer there was listed the sale of both a handkerchief and a checked apron in one week's entry,<sup>2</sup> while other tradesmen produced a wider range of articles for their customers. S.I. Mitchell noted that the 1750's inventory of Chester grocer William Brazegirdle there was stocks of handkerchiefs valued at over twenty pounds, stockings at nearly ten pounds, gloves at over four pounds, as well as cloaks and ready-made gowns at nearly two pounds.<sup>3</sup>

There are also records of eighteenth-century tradesmen who produced more elaborate sorts of ready-made garments. These were commonly morning gowns or banjans, for men, women and children. The earliest example was the 1718 "Original Gown-ware-house at Baker's Coffee-house Exchange alley, Cornhill" and a later trade of the same type was "Harrison's Ware-House, against the King on Horseback, Charing Cross".<sup>4</sup> At these sorts of establishments ready-made gowns for lounging at home were sold. The earlier advertisement announced that gowns for "Men, Women, Boys, Girls and Children in

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1. Hand Morgan 39/1, William Salt Library, Stafford.

2. Hand Morgan, 24/2, William Salt Library, Stafford.

3. Mitchell, p. 350.

4. The Post-Boy, 26 February, 1718; The Country Journal, 3 August 1728.

Arms, are continued to be sold by Wholesale and Retail".<sup>1</sup> These were offered in addition to the caps, sashes, and quilted petticoats which were also stocked. The gowns were made up in many sorts of silks, and fine worsted, and prior to 1721, in calicos as well. By 1733 ladies' gowns "with Silk Waddings" were on hand for the London shopper, as too were striped and plain mantuas. Evidence of five London gown warehouses specializing in morning gowns has been discovered by the mid-1730's, several of them also dealing in women's morning gowns.<sup>2</sup> London tradesmen displayed special characteristics, producing relatively dear ready-made clothing intended for the moneyed classes, not for common consumption. Tradesmen such as hosier John Hill offered to the less affluent Londoner "Women's Cotton, and Worsted Pettycoats, and Waistcoats".<sup>3</sup>

Any shopkeeper in the business of supplying clothing would have had need of some kinds of goods ready-made. Handkerchiefs regularly appeared in invoices and inventories. The handkerchief was an essential part of the dress of the eighteenth century woman. Tucked round her neck or draped round the shoulders, it was an accessory used continually during this period. At the least a handkerchief required hemming, a process easily mastered by even an indifferent seamstress. Handkerchiefs may have been made up by the mercer's employees; but they could just as easily have been hemmed by members of the weaver's family or by women employed by a merchant, much in the way that caps and stockings were produced by part-time cottage workers.<sup>4</sup> In fact Thomas Mortimer notes in his 1763 edition of The Universal Directory to London that, "the common Morning Cap for men are sold by most Haberdashers, requiring little skill or ingenuity in making, and being generally .

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1. The Post-Boy, 26 February 1718.

2. The Country Journal, 3 August 1728; 4 November 1732; 18 May 1734; 15 June 1734; The Post Boy, 26 February 1718.

3. The Country Journal, 23 March 1734.

4. Thirsk, Policy, pp. 6-8.

performed by poor women."<sup>1</sup> The same modes of production almost certainly applied in the making of all simple accessories. Aprons, caps, ruffles, and pockets were equally commonplace retail items. None of these commodities needed a great deal of skill to make and it is not surprising to find them listed repeatedly in records from the early part of the century. The 1740 inventory of a bankrupt draper in the Northampton area listed fifty-seven handkerchiefs and two dozen caps among his stock. The articles worthy of greater note, however, were the cotton gown, the women's bodices, stomachers and the women's wrappers, all of which were sold in this draper's shop.<sup>2</sup>

When presented with the evidence of the contents of the shops in London, Kent, Northampton and Chester, there can be no doubt that articles of dress were prepared beforehand to be ready for customers who wanted clothes immediately and cheaply, and did not require custom-made merchandise. It appears to have been quite common for simpler sorts of apparel to be manufactured; this had been the case for some time. The more complex articles of clothing also began to appear in the inventory of individual shops as early as the late seventeenth century and on into the eighteenth century; arriving with greater frequency as the century progressed and consumer custom adapted.

The East India Company stands out as the largest producer of ready-made clothing to date, and that during the seventeenth century. However it was not the only producer on a large scale either during the seventeenth or in the eighteenth century. The manufacture of clothing for the military took place throughout this period, but since in the case of the land forces these were specific uniforms, and not ordinary working garb, they have not been of interest to historians dealing with the question of clothes production. Clothing for the navy, for the common sailor, was different and is

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1. Thomas Mortimer, The Universal Directory, (London 1763), p. 14.

2. YZ/8366, Northampton Record Office.

of direct relevance in the history of ready-made clothes. Sailors' dress was not uniform. Only in 1663 were the most basic injunctions on the standard of dress issued by the Duke of York, that the "Monmouth caps, red caps, yarn stockings, Irish stockings, blue shirts, white shirts, cotton waistcoats, blue neckcloths, canvas suits and rugs,...are alone permitted to be sold."<sup>1</sup> The idea devised was that supplies of clothing would be stocked on board ship in slop chests, so called after the name slops given the wide-kneed breeches worn by sailors. Sailors could then purchase items required for a reasonable sum.

Merchants were contracted to supply various of the cheap, ready-made garments and with the process emerged the first large scale production of common, ready-made apparel. The size of the orders were vast. Bales of breeches, shirts, jackets etc. were sent from London to the principal naval ports.<sup>2</sup> However the importance of this sort of clothing did not end with the navy. The styles of the garments were those of commonplace working men's attire, therefore the market for these clothes extended beyond the needs of the navy. So successful was the production of slops that this type of clothing was used extensively by different segments of the population. The men condemned to transportation in Australia were kitted out with basic supplies of clothing through this system.<sup>3</sup> But, more importantly, the working classes in and around London and other port towns could purchase shirts, breeches, jackets, caps and drawers from the tradesmen operating slop shops. The word slop entered the language as a description of sailor's loose trousers, but shortly thereafter came to mean "ready-made, cheap or inferior garments, generally".<sup>4</sup> Just so the slops manufactured in Britain

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1. Admiral Sir Gerald Dickens, The Dress of British Sailors, (National Maritime Museum Publication, 1977), p.4.
  2. Adm. 49/35; Adm. 106/2584, Public Record Office.
  3. I am indebted for this point to Margaret Maynard, lecturer, Dept. of Fine Art, University of Queensland.
  4. C.T. Onions, ed. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, vol.II (O.U.P. 1973), p. 2021.

ceased to be exclusively nautical gear and became part of the wear of the labouring poor wherever shops were established. The principal trade in slops was centred around London and the thirty six shops in the city by 1790 were situated in the areas close to the docks, like for example, Wapping, Wapping Wall, Fenchurch Street, Thames Street, Lower Thames Street, Billingsgate and Execution Dock.<sup>1</sup> These retail establishments supplied new, ready-made clothing at reasonable rates.

Several circumstances combined late in the eighteenth century to encourage and promote the development of a ready-made clothing industry in Britain. The first of these factors was the extraordinary diffusion of the influence of fashion throughout Britain; across the counties and down through the social orders. This phenomenon tied consumers of clothing to one impulse, which when it moved out from London commanded all consumers to varying degrees. The impact of the rapid dissemination of styles through national publications, centralized production of fabrics, and an improved distribution network via the turnpikes resulted in relative uniformity of tastes and of consumption. In addition, the largest section of the market for clothing had some experience of second-hand clothes as well as certain ready-made items. This group of consumers was accustomed to buying some clothes ready to wear, yet at the same time had at least some inclination to fashion. It can safely be assumed that the amount available to be spent on clothing varied, but in all cases would be limited. Aspirations to fashionability required small, continuous expenditures on various elements of dress at the very least. Lancashire textile products solved the dilemma of the British consumers. The vast array of textiles offered a low cost, attractive means of dressing that would enable them to create a facsimile of the newest modes at a fraction of the cost of the exquisite London gowns depicted in illustrations. The success of the cheap British-made cotton,

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1. The Universal British Directory, vol. I, 1790, pp. 49-345;  
H. Lowndes A London Directory, 1797.

of the Bristol merchant John Peach in The Beekman Mercantile Papers who described the extent of his trade as follows:

Besides Irish Linens I deal largely in Irish  
Sheeting Brown and White and Dyapers of all  
Breadths, Brown Hemen and Flaxen Sprigg  
Linen and Hesses and Holles. Likewise printed  
Linen, Cotton and Printed Hats.

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The trade in linens and cottons appears to have been naturally extended to include printed caps and hats made of the same fabrics. Peach acted as the putter-out, sending the materials out to be variously printed and made into head gear, after which he arranged the sale of these goods, sometimes providing his relation Samuel Peach with merchandise for overseas trade. John Peach exemplified what was probably a common arrangement among tradesmen and merchants, whereby simple pieces of clothing were manufactured in large quantities for an equally large market. The size of these sorts of manufacturing enterprises is suggested in the volume of caps, for example, which would be sold in one order. In 1757, Peach & Pierce sent one customer sixty dozen caps of ten different colours, in one consignment. The orders for handkerchiefs matched those for caps.<sup>2</sup> Altogether the trade in ready-made clothing accessories comprised a small but significant portion of the textile trade at this time.

It is impossible at a distance of over two hundred years to <sup>list</sup> accurately all of the many fabrics, in their numerous woven patterns and blends of fibres, that were then produced in Lancashire, but as has been shown they numbered many hundreds. It is possible to determine general categories of cloth, but neither spinning or weaving had become sufficiently standardized to eliminate the personal stamp of the producer of the materials. Production units were still small, often a single family, and the woven cloth reflected the technical expertise and imagination of the individual weaver. Fabrics composed of several fibres abounded. Moreover, no authoritative list of these textiles remains. Invoices, inventories and

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1. Philip L. White, ed., The Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1956, vol. II pp. 662-3.

2. Invoices, Peach & Pierce, 29 March 1757, Beekman Papers.

fustian, and blended fabrics mirrored the earlier achievement of the East India Company. Like the East India Company, the Lancashire-based entrepreneurs realized the benefits of diversifying their products and creating other sorts of textile commodities. The development of a large scale production of ready-made gowns and other apparel grew out of the expansion of the cotton industry.

In the late 1750's invoices of orders of various Lancashire wares reveal the inclusion of several sorts of ready-made clothing. One order requested five types of breeches, in different colours and quantities. Caps had also been ordered; two seam caps, printed with flowers, or scarlet, of several qualities. The caps ordered the following year were coloured predominantly blue and white.<sup>1</sup> These sorts of goods regularly appeared in invoices during the 1750's. The work involved in these simply made garments allowed for ease of manufacture.<sup>2</sup> Breeches, in contrast, required skilled cutting, although the seams could be set with minimal training.<sup>3</sup> The demand for caps, handkerchiefs, and aprons would have been steady, as changes in fashion, the low cost<sup>4</sup> and the light fabrics of which they were made guaranteed regular replacement purchases. Lancashire produced many types of fabric by this time and British printers were proficient in the variety of patterns and skill with which they printed these designs. The diversity of fabrics from which to choose allowed for an equally diverse assortment of accessories for the national market.

Little documentation remains of the merchants or tradesmen who undertook the manufacture of this sort of clothing. However there is some mention

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1. Invoices, Peach & Pierce, 12 March 1757; 12 April 1758. Beekman Papers, New York Historical Society, New York.

2. Joan Thirsk mentions the cottage production of knitted caps, felt hats, and Monmouth caps in the seventeenth century, for both home and export markets. Policy, pp. 2, 115, 129.

3. Place, p. 95.

4. Wholesale prices for caps as found in the Beekman Papers ran from 5/6 per dozen to 9/ per dozen; therefore from 5½d. to 9d. per cap.

advertisements provide some indication of the diversity of Lancashire products. But probably the most detailed record of these textiles came about through a case of international espionage.

John Holker was a Jacobite who fled to France after narrowly escaping execution for his political activities. He had been raised in the Manchester area and quickly put his knowledge of the region and the textile industry there to use for the French government. In 1750 and 1751 Holker made clandestine trips to Lancashire to try to determine the state of the industry. Holker returned to France with a sample book containing one hundred and fifteen samples of different cloths of which almost one hundred were the product of the burgeoning cotton industry: fabrics in linen and cotton, silk and cotton, wool and cotton and all cotton.<sup>1</sup> He also gave extensive accounts of the fabrics manufactured. (See Chapter I) For our purposes though of greatest interest are the nearly one hundred textiles, most of which were produced for domestic consumption.

The irrevocable effect of such a proliferation of new textiles was a commensurate change in consumer habits. As the new sorts of materials appeared they were put to use in clothing and furnishings, in continuation of the trend in consumerism begun with the new draperies and Indian cottons. The qualities of the Lancashire textiles made them appropriate for a multitude of uses in substitution for other fabrics. For instance, heavy thick-sets, velveteens, and corduroys gradually took precedence over leather as the preferred medium for breeches. Francis Place described the decline of his master's business in bespoke leather breeches, a process which continued until they had to rely entirely on making ready-made breeches and selling them at the Rag Fair - the Monmouth Street trading area for cheap or second-hand clothes. However even these extremes could not salvage his trade. Place explained that:

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1. G.G.2, 1-115.

The Rag-fair breeches trade was rapidly declining in consequence of the increase of the cotton manufacture, corduroy and velveteen were now worn by working men instead of leather. ...Gentlemen rode in Corduroy and Cassimere Breeches, and leather was no longer commonly worn by any class of persons. 1

Francis Place wrote those words late in the 1780's. Encapsulated in those two sentences was a change in the common costume of British people; a change in consumer tastes and practices of tremendous significance. The inventories of the seventeenth century salesmen and, later, the Tonbridge shopkeeper provided the first recorded instance of ready-made breeches. The continuing progress of the cotton industry provides many more examples of this sort.

The late 1760's saw the first of a growing line of women's ready-made clothing. Once again there are examples of ready-made gowns for sale early in the century, but it is probable that the production of this sort of garment centred around existing mantua-makers' shops. It is unlikely that ready-made gowns were manufactured more than one or two at a time and this would have been more an extension of an existing retail trade rather than a separate business with a substantial output. The first recorded orders for ready-made gowns appearing in association with the cotton industry came in 1767. At that time orders for "12 fine Cotton Gowns" in "Handsome Colours" were sent to Robert and Nathaniel Hyde, Manchester check manufacturers and warehousemen. The gowns were priced at nine shillings each.<sup>2</sup> References to ready-made gowns recurred in others of the orders sent to the Hydes; however, orders from the same customer for Lancashire textiles sent to Bristol merchants Peach & Pierce contained no requests for cotton gowns.<sup>3</sup> The inference that can be drawn from this omission is that the manufacture

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1. Place, pp. 8,110.

2. Invoices, Robert & Nathaniel Hyde, 12 March 1767; 10 January 1768, Beekman Papers.

3. The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. II, pp. 857, 861-864.

of ready-made gowns was centred in the Manchester region. It was to this area that orders for ready-made gowns had to be directed. Subsequent documentation confirms that Manchester was the chief centre for ready-made women's wear. At the heart of the production source and supplied with both labour and materials, Manchester ideally suited this venture.

A vigorous and thriving ready-made industry grew up beside and in conjunction with the Lancashire cotton industry.<sup>1</sup> Far from being an unknown commodity in the eighteenth century, ready-made clothes can be shown to have<sup>been</sup> both widely known and popular, low-cost, fashionable attire. The comprehensive evidence of the abundance of ready-made clothing in late eighteenth-century Britain comes from the records of an unidentified Manchester firm. The day book of sales of this Manchester firm, running from 1773 to 1779, records sales of ready-made gowns to customers in many parts of Great Britain and Ireland: Nottingham, Liverpool, Chester, Hull, Buxton, Chesterfield, Sligo, and London, to list but a few of the destinations.<sup>2</sup> However, London provided the very largest market for ready-made clothes of all descriptions. The firm shipped thousands of ready-made gowns to the city each year, to the many wholesalers established in its environs. One of the largest customers received over eight hundred gowns in a variety of colours and patterns and in several fabrics, over a one-year period from 1777 to 1778.<sup>3</sup>

This Manchester firm sold several sorts of gowns. The cheapest was a cotton gown which was sold variously from 8/ or 8/6 at the start of the ledger and 7/6 or 7/9 by 1779. The next in price was the silk and cotton gown which cost from 16/ to 17/ in 1773 and from 11/6 to 15/6 in 1779; while the most expensive was the moree gown, made from a cloth which might

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1. Note in the table of Manchester trades produced in Wadsworth & Mann, p. 257, the inclusion of five petticoat manufacturers in the list for 1781. This can be seen as a progression from other specialized production, such as hat and fringe manufacture, responding to demand for ready made clothing.
  2. Day Book of Sales of an unknown Manchester Firm...1773-79, MC:MS ff 675, D43, Manchester Public Library, pp. 280, 318, 322, 470, 444, 371, 4
  3. Day Book , pp. 492-581.

have been a mixture of wool and cotton but could also have been a high quality cotton with a watered finish. The moree gown sold for anything from 21/ to 43/ and occasionally as low as 16/ or 17/.<sup>1</sup> The range of prices for the moree gown reflects the various refinements in dyeing and printing that the firm offered to its customers. The cotton gowns were usually offered in dark or light shades, and gowns so described were the ones most commonly sold. As well, though, the cotton gowns were available in blue-and-white and pink-and-white patterns, plus plain pink; for the more elaborate patterns and the colour pink the customer always paid a higher price.<sup>2</sup> The moree gown was offered for sale in the greatest number of patterns and colours. A figured moree gown cost an extra shilling; one printed with darts two shillings more; spots cost an extra five shillings. Gowns dyed either pink or red always cost more as these dyeing processes were lengthy, whereas an orange moree gown cost only the standard 21/.<sup>3</sup> Not only were these ready-made gowns available in a multitude of colours and printed patterns, but the firm also accepted commissions for more elaborate ready-made gowns. In June, 1777, Mrs. MacNeale of Buxton received her first consignment of four sorts of specially patterned gowns costing from 36/ to 43/. The following month she ordered three more such gowns. Next summer a further order was placed for additional custom-made gowns, including one which was to be "Flowered in the Loom".<sup>4</sup>

The ready-made gowns sold by the Manchester firm appealed to a wide section of consumers. The cheapest cotton gown cost only 7/6 just slightly more than the 6/6d. deemed by Sir Frederick Eden an acceptable expenditure for "a common stuff gown".<sup>5</sup> The additional shilling procured an attractive,

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1. The author of The Merchant's Warehouse laid open: Or the Plain Dealing Linen-Draper, published in 1695, describes moree as "a Callico in use in Drawing of Work, for Petty-coats and waste-Coats", thus the later product is most probably a facsimile of the Indian moree.

2. Day Book, pp. 304, 300, 315, 329.

3. Day Book, pp. 317, 318, 340, 347, 349.

4. Day Book, pp. 465, 470.

5. Eden, p. 110.

fashionable gown for the consumer. Moreover a cotton gown had several advantages over a woollen one, being easily washed and probably aesthetically more pleasing in a colourful print. The silk and cotton offered a better quality at less than a pound. The other major advantage of this clothing was that it was all ready to wear, no preparation or sewing was necessary before it could be worn and even Sir Frederick Eden had to admit that:

It is generally acknowledged that articles of clothing can be purchased in the shops at a much lower price than those who made them at home can afford to sell them for.... 1

The moree gowns offered an equally convenient costume to the consumer. However the cost of this dress would have restricted it to those slightly more affluent members of the middling classes. The fashionability of the dresses was assured, made as they were in Britain and at a time when substantially improved transportation facilitated both the transmission of fashions to the manufacturing centres and the easy distribution of the goods across the country. The Manchester manufacturers kept close watch on all the changes in fashion, so fabrics could be produced in accordance with the newest styles. The manufacturer Samuel Oldknow was advised by his London distributor Samuel Salte to "vary the spot, barley corns, leaves, and other little fancy objects"<sup>2</sup> so as to make more varied goods and thus increase demand. The producers paid the closest possible attention to the shifts and changes in London fashions to ensure that their products met with the approval of the metropolitan customers. Those who manufactured ready-made gowns were equally assiduous in their attention to the demands of the London market. In the late autumn of 1777, for example, London warehouses began to order red coloured moree gowns, in response to the demand for gowns of that shade. Right through the holiday season consignment after consignment of red moree gowns were sent to London, some by fast coach and others by

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1. Eden, p. 109.

2. Letter from S. Salte to S. Oldknow, 13 June 1786. Oldknow Papers, English Ms., 751, John Rylands Library, Manchester.

wagon.<sup>1</sup> This sort of concerted effort to meet market demands points to the responsive nature of the Manchester merchants and manufacturers, both striving to serve the domestic market. A correspondent to the London Magazine confirmed the success of Lancashire's entrepreneurs, writing in 1783 that "Every servant girl has her cotton gown and cotton stockings whilst honest grograms, tamines, linsey-woolsey and other articles of wool lie mildewed in our mercer's shops...."<sup>2</sup> Yet however much some in Britain might repine over the changes in dress of the middle and working classes, the commercial trends could not be reversed, nor could the aspirations of the populace be stifled.

The presentation of a modish appearance was important to the men and women of middle incomes and for the first time aspirations to <sup>be</sup> stylish were attainable. One newspaper recorded rather sardonically the parade of these lesser folk through the London parks.

The very fine weather on Sunday gave the small gentry another opportunity to sport their fine cloaths before the dreary season of winter, and accordingly the fields and city roads presented no unpleasant appearance. All the world was there, and the Park about two o'clock had a tolerable show of West-country ladies.

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The Manchester firm's day book of sales revealed that new sorts of clothing came on the market with each passing year. Not all of these items were ready to use or wear immediately, waistcoat shapes were just such items. The day book records the sale of eleven varieties such as "Ververet Buff Shapes", "Print'd Waistcoat Shap", and "Silk Waistcoat Shapes", reflecting in those purchases the three distinct consumer groups to which the goods were directed.<sup>4</sup> The velveret would have been hard wearing, the printed one probably less so but decorative, while the silk waistcoat would have been much more attractive. These articles were not made up; they were not ready to wear. However the most difficult part of converting yards

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1. Day Book, pp. 411, 418, 442, 458, 462

2. The London Magazine, 1783, vol. LII, p.128.

3. The Public Advertiser, 18 October 1785.

4. Day Book, pp. 361, 543.

of cloth to clothing had been completed. The shapes were cut and ready to be sewn. As in the production of ready-made gowns, in this instance also skilled labour was employed at a central production point to turn out the shapes. In fact the waistcoat shapes were probably of much more practical value unsewn. The style during that period was for tambour embroidery (See extract from Sherbourne Mercury, p.216). The Lady's Magazine carried new patterns for this sort of needlework, to provide the latest patterns for needlewomen in the provinces.<sup>1</sup> Obviously it was much more practicable to work on the waistcoat pieces rather than the whole garment.

In addition to gowns and waistcoat shapes the Manchester firm supplied other sorts of clothing. Standard linen and check handkerchiefs were joined by much more exotic and expensive sorts of handkerchiefs. Mallabar handkerchiefs, printed after the fashion of cotton goods sent to East Africa, became a popular article as did the silk and muslin handkerchiefs.<sup>2</sup> By 1776 silk cravats had been added to the list of merchandise supplies by the Manchester firm. Simple sorts of soft furnishings were also produced, such as counterpanes, doyleys and tillies - the last two being types of cloths to be placed under and over, respectively, objects on tables and dressing tables.<sup>3</sup> The common factor in all the goods were the British-made textiles out of which they were manufactured.

London offered probably the largest assortment of ready-made clothing to the eighteenth century consumer. By 1790 approximately 36 salesmen traded in London. Shopkeepers displayed all the products of Lancashire's looms, but the unique characteristics of the London market encouraged the development of an indigenous ready-made industry. Linen draper Harry

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1. The Lady's Magazine, introduction, vol. 1, 1770.

2. Day Book, pp. 293, 339, 387.

3. Day Book, pp. 340, 350.

Barker of 11 Pall Mall offered ready-made cotton shirts in calico as well as check, in addition to a multitude of other goods of this sort.

(See Tradecards 2 - 6, in Appendix, for examples of this and other London tradesmen in ready-made clothing). The development of such an industry presented no great obstacle or required arrangements other than the established production modes in the metropolis. Many London tailors employed an extensive work force with numbers of up to one hundred journey-men tailors.<sup>1</sup> The proprietors of London clothing warehouses, aiming to serve the local market and the thousands who passed through the city, realized it was to their advantage to provide certain sorts of clothing ready-made. In terms of production, all that would have been necessary was a stable work force to produce the garments throughout the year instead of for a specific order much as the slops were made. Francis Place and his wife undertook just this sort of out-work during hard times; sewing breeches for a tailor, sixteen to eighteen hours a day, seven days a week.<sup>2</sup> London offered both the market and the abundant cheap labour, requisite ingredients for a ready-made clothes industry.

The majority of the large traders in ready-made clothes operated clothes warehouses open to the public. The attraction of these emporiums was the promise that prices would be lower and the selection wider than in smaller or more select shops. In 1763 Robert Blunt operated a warehouse for ready-made shirts at Charing Cross.<sup>3</sup> Advertisements in newspapers of the day reveal at least two other "Linen and Shirt Warehouses", one at St. Paul's and the other at Charing Cross.<sup>4</sup> The notice for "Bromley's Linen and Shirt Warehouse", in Charing Cross, promised "Any Gentlemen having immediate Call for ready made Shirts may be supplied with any Quantity,

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1. The Universal British Directory, vol. I, 1790, pp. 49-345.

2. Place, pp. 123-4.

3. Universal Directory, 1763, p.111.

4. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 8 Jan. 1778; The Public Advertiser, 14 Jan. 1771.

from 5s.6d. to 21s. finished in the neatest manner."<sup>1</sup> In addition to shirts these warehouses stocked handkerchiefs, stocks, neckcloths, and table linen. There were several other sorts of warehouses offering ready-made clothes. One type was the petticoat warehouse, selling petticoats of all sorts, in every type of fabric, plain or quilted.<sup>2</sup> Some warehouses specialized only in quilted petticoats, such as Mr. Taylor's "Quilted Coat Warehouse", the newest of which was opened in Ludgate Hill in 1779. He owned two other petticoat warehouses, one in Covent Garden and the other in Bishopsgate Street. At the opening of the Ludgate Hill premises Taylor promised that he had "laid in a very large assortment of fresh quilted coats, in new and elegant patterns, never before quilted" and he assured customers that "should they not be able to suit themselves with petticoats at either of his warehouses in Covent-garden or Bishop-gate-street, they may depend on being accommodated at his warehouse upon Ludgate-hill, as much greater variety is kept there, it being a more central situation."<sup>3</sup>

Besides the warehouses selling linen, shirts and petticoats there were those who specialized in waistcoat shapes. One advertisement stated that their establishment sold waistcoat shapes already embroidered.

An Elegant Assortment, just finished, of the newest and most admired Patterns, suitable to the Season, on rich Sattin and other Grounds, worked in Scheneels, Gold, Silver, and Colours. Likewise great choice of plain and spotted Silk Shaggs, Velvets, etc. Gentlemen going to the East or West-Indies may be supplied with great Variety of Patterns, suitable to those Climates, on proper Terms for Exportation. Good Allowance to the Trade and those who make them up.

4

London appears to have provided not only the waistcoat shapes for shoppers, but had them embroidered as well, and in some cases sewn ready to wear.

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1. The Public Advertiser, 14 Jan. 1771.
  2. The Public Ledger, 1 April 1771; The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 14 Jan. 1779.
  3. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 14 Jan. 1779; 12 Oct. 1779.
  4. The Public Advertiser, 16 Jan. 1771.

Other establishments, like Mr. Bryant's "Great Coat and Mecklenburgh Cloak Warehouse" sold their stated speciality and supplied all sorts of men's apparel as well. Mr. Bryant's warehouse carried supplies of "Breeches of various kinds of the Manchester manufactory, such as ribdeleur, ribdurant, barragon, sattinet, everlasting, corderoy, jennet, stockinnet, etc. etc. all of the best kinds at 16s. per pair".<sup>1</sup> There were also millinery warehouses which specialized in head gear and an enormous range of accessories. At the "New Millinery Warehouse" in Jermyn Street, caps, aprons and other millinery were advertised to be "of the newest fashion ready made up, or made to order".<sup>2</sup> Moreover smaller London shops supplied ready-made goods as well. Drapers, mercers, and milliners sold many sorts of ready-made clothing and accessories, their goods commonly being supplied by larger warehouses.<sup>3</sup> A millinery room off Hanover Square listed some of the kinds of merchandise they stocked as "Genteel trebel gauze ruffles eg'd with blond, 6s. short gauze aprons handsomely trimmed 6s. [plus]...a great variety of ready trimmed hats, cuffs, tippetts, etc."<sup>4</sup> Mr. Clowes of Conduit Street advertised that in his shop "is always kept the greatest variety of every different sort of cloaks, and all kinds of millinery, ready made; with a proper assortment of his patent interlined cloaks, so superior for warmth and lightness. Good black mode cloaks, lined, wadded, and trimmed with neat lace or mock sable, 24s."<sup>5</sup> Unquestionably ready-made clothing of every description was a common constituent of the merchandise sold in London's retail shops, large and small.

Occasionally very large lots of clothing would be offered for auction to tradesmen both in London and the neighbouring county of Kent. Several

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1. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 1 August 1771.
  2. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 8 September 1779.
  3. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 9 September 1779.
  4. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 3 April 1779.
  5. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 27 October 1778.

"Wholesale Cloathes Warehouses" as well as ready-made shirt and linen warehouses carried on business in London in the 1790's<sup>1</sup> Evidently bankruptcy of the original merchants brought goods up for sale. The size of consignments of clothing confirmed, if confirmation was needed, the extent of the hitherto undetected trade in ready-made clothes. Two bales of 320 cloaks, jackets, drawers, and coats were included in one sale, as well as 120 pieces of fabric from which the clothing was probably made. The textiles were comprised of several sorts of heavy-weight cottons, such as pillow, thickset, fustian and velveret.<sup>2</sup> Listed in the announcement of another auction was the information that two hundred lots of "men, women and childrens wearing apparel" were to be sold. The garments included in the sale were "coats, waistcoats, breeches, shirts, hats, neckcloths... gowns; silk and other petticoats; stays, shifts, sheets, pillow-cases, table cloths and variety [sic] of other articles."<sup>3</sup> From these sorts of auctions tradesmen could acquire stocks of ready-made clothing at a discount, which would then be added to the stocks of ready-made goods available to their customers.

The general availability of cheap ready-made clothing in London led to the suggestion from one lady organizing the clothing of the poor in Hertfordshire that the authorities look to London for ready-made garments. Her basic proposal centred on a cheap method of sewing garments locally in the Sunday schools. However the author of the plan acknowledged that,

Another way of providing the above commodity suits of clothes and apparently the most eligible, is by purchasing at the Slop Shops in London, where they are ready made...of a much better and more durable quality than those before mentioned, with only a small addition in price.

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1. The Universal British Directory, vol. I, 1790, pp. 56, 98, 280, 300, 340.
  2. The Morning Chronicle, 6 October 1784.
  3. The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 4 October 1779.
  4. B.M. 1609/1131, Instructions for the Cutting out Apparel for the Poor. (London, 1789), p. 56.

During the late eighteenth century the production of ready-made clothes developed on many fronts to serve the requirements of the nation. But whether this trade developed in direct affiliation with the cotton industry, or to serve institutions, or local markets, cotton fabrics were incorporated more and more in these garments as the qualities of the textiles suited the requirements of the apparel so well.

Ready-made clothes were as common if not in as great supply among the town and country tradesmen. The inventory of a bankrupt eighteenth century milliner, Elizabeth Brown of Norwich, was reproduced in the 1977 edition of Costume. The stock-in-trade was valued in 1785. The shop does not appear to have been a fashionable one, but rather catered to the middle classes.<sup>1</sup> Among the extremely detailed listing of her remaining stock there was an abundance of ready-made articles and though it would be possible to determine the value of yard goods as opposed to ready-made merchandise this would not be an accurate representation since her stock had been allowed to run down drastically prior to the inventory. However it is interesting to note the range of goods which this unremarkable millinery shop furnished for its customers. Not surprisingly Miss Brown had a wide assortment of head gear: lawn caps, muslin caps, hair caps, children's quilted caps, "Drest Capps", boys' caps, scarlet hoods for cardinals, white hoods for cloaks, black caps, bonnets, and a flowered lawn cap. In addition there were matching cap and apron sets, sets of ruffles, many sorts of handkerchiefs, gloves, sets of purses and worsted caps, children's frocks, stomachers, muffattees, cloaks, and a quilted petticoat.<sup>2</sup> There was certainly a sufficient quantity of ready-made merchandise to suggest the availability of these goods outside London and the immediate Manchester

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1. Pamela Clabburn, "The Provincial Milliner's Shop in 1785" Costume, no. 11, 1977, p.100.

2. Clabburn, pp. 103-110.

area. Tradesmen designated as "salesmen" or shops described as a "clothes shop" appear in many principal English towns at the end of the century. In many instances the sale of ready-made clothes was combined with another retail trade such as the draper and salesman or the leather-seller and salesman, both from Birmingham. Three other salesmen conducted their trade in Birmingham at that time. One would expect the large port of Bristol to have tradesmen of this sort and indeed there were six in that city. The county seat of Worcester contained both a salesman, saleswoman and a draper/salesman, while even the market town of Banbury had one tailor/salesman in residence. Joseph Lamonby owned a shop in Wirksworth specifically designated "Clothes Shop" by the owner.<sup>1</sup>(See Tradecard 1, Appendix)

West country wool-draper, tailor and merchant John Totterdell, of Bath, not only stocked ready-made suits and other garments but contracted to manufacture huge quantities of clothing. Exports of these goods appeared from the advertisement to have been standard practice. But the probability of an extensive home trade can also be inferred from Totterdell's remarks. The announcement printed in a 1766 newspaper stated that,

Any gentlemen or Merchants, that chuses to contract for Five or Six Thousand Pounds worth of Cloaths, for Exportation etc., may have it made to Order, in four or five Months Time.

by their most humble servant  
John Totterdell.

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He would almost certainly have used fabrics other than woollens or worsteds to complete orders of this sort. But the paramount feature of this record is the insight it provides into the truly vast manufacture of ready-made apparel throughout this period.

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1. The Universal British Directory, vol. II, 1793, pp. 132-184, 208-241, 254; vol. III, 1794, pp. 50, 799, 859, 863, 789-858.

2. Pope's Bath Chronicle, 25 September 1766.

Another indication of the prevalence of ready-made<sup>clothing</sup> beyond those areas of the country served by provincial centres or in close proximity to the capital comes from the Morgan drapers' ledger.<sup>1</sup> The Morgan family operated a drapery business serving the Neath, Briton Ferry, Morgan and Neath Valley area, as far north as Brecon. The remaining records for this business run from 1789 into the nineteenth century, although references to an earlier ledger confirm that the trade dated from at least the beginning of the 1780's.<sup>1</sup> The ledger records customers' purchases over this period. Among the many and varied items sold by the Morgans were all of the ready-made articles noted earlier. As well as goods such as hats, gloves, mittens, handkerchiefs, hose, socks, and shoes, these drapers also sold silk and velvet collars, shawls, both plain and muslin, stuff gowns, cotton gowns, and chintz gowns, waistcoat shapes, waistcoats, quilted petticoats, cotton caps, shirts, pockets, and breeches.<sup>2</sup> Some of the goods may have been made locally, such as the lambwool socks.<sup>3</sup> However the appearance of quilted petticoats, waistcoat shapes and various sorts of ready-made gowns verified the hypothesis that ready-made garments, produced as a by-product of the Lancashire cotton industry, were sold nationally as common consumer items. Furthermore the cost of the different sorts of gowns, from 6/- to 22/- falls within the same price range as gowns in other parts of Britain.<sup>4</sup> Certainly the size and density of the town and country market areas could not compare with London and other densely populated parts of the country. However the country residents were served with the same sorts of goods that lined the shelves of the London shops and filled the warehouses. All areas of Britain were served with equal efficiency by the Manchester

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1. Morgan Drapers Ledger, D/D ma 139, Glamorgan Record Office, Cardiff.
  2. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 7-11, 15, 41, 46, 50, 56, 60, 64, 66, 68, 86, 87.
  3. Morgan Drapers Ledger, p. 64.
  4. Morgan Drapers Ledger, pp. 8, 11, 56, 60, 66, 68.

manufacturers: the homogeneity of demand, the standardized tastes based on London fashions opened all of Britain as a potential market for the Lancashire ready-made clothes. The creation of a national market for fashions was observed despairingly by the conservative Mr. Hardcastle in Goldsmith's play written in 1773. Hardcastle bemoans the currency of fashions in the country stating that:

In my time, the follies of the town crept  
slowly among us, but now they travel faster  
than a stage coach. Its fopperies come down  
not only as inside passengers, but in the  
very basket.

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#### iv Conclusion

In 1750 the first steps were taken to provide ordinary women with a model of the current fashionable costume. Less than thirty years later a whole segment of the press was concerned with just that question, providing the nation with the latest details of fashion through words and pictures.<sup>1</sup> Fashion became a marketable ideal among the general population leading to the development of businesses devoted to the promotion of fashions. The institutionalized promotion of fashions was an unprecedented economic development, reflecting the ongoing economic and social changes in Britain. For the first time a significant portion of the population desired to dress in clothes approximating as closely as possible the ideal which they had seen and read about. A low rank did not preclude a fashionable dress. Popular fashions were further encouraged by the increasing variety and volume of low-price textiles manufactured in Lancashire. Dressing well had become an important preoccupation among the young men and women of Britain, like Francis Place's sweetheart, whose "wages were not more than sufficient to provide her with a good stock of cloathes and as she expended her money on purchases of cloathes she had no money by her."<sup>2</sup> If the older folk were not motivated by the same burning desire to "cut a dash"

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1. Goldsmith, She Stoops to Conquer, p. 253, Act I, Scene i.

2. Place, p.100.

among their companions, they could certainly appreciate an attractive inexpensive garment.

The late eighteenth century ready-made clothes trade grew out of the national demand for cheap and fashionable clothing. Conditions had been created favourable to the production and marketing of ready to wear clothing and both the Manchester manufacturers and London tradesmen responded with a profusion of ready-made apparel. Ready-made clothing met the needs of consumers of various incomes, who appreciated attractive gowns, caps, petticoats, and aprons, sturdy breeches and handsome waistcoats, all for less than the cost of having the garments made to order and without the delay and labour involved in making the clothes themselves. Consumerism had developed apace under the combined influence of popularized fashions, a growing British cotton industry and a small but impressive trade in ready-made clothes.

## CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

No attempt has been previously made to assess the role of the domestic market in relation to the progress of the cotton industry during the last half of the eighteenth century. However the importance of the home market as the chief support of the British cotton trade called out for such a study. Recent research into the population structure and movement, and the economic condition of Britain during the years from 1750 to 1800 assisted the laying out of a clear backdrop on which the diverse sources related to the interaction of the home market and the cotton industry could be traced. There can be no disputing the impact that the strong, continuous domestic demand exerted on the nascent cotton industry, which began as a small adjunct of the linen trade and finished the century as the first mechanized trade. Within less than forty years the numbers of different cotton textiles increased nearly three fold. Moreover demand was not restricted to one portion of the population only. The broad basis of demand throughout British society was an important factor in stimulating the production of diverse varieties and qualities of cotton goods. The demand generated by the needs and tastes of labourers, skilled workers, tradesmen and professionals led to a corresponding expansion in the products of this trade. The strength of the British cotton industry lay in serving all sections of society.

The quality of eighteenth-century domestic demand has implications beyond merely the impact of this economic stimulus on the cotton industry. This broad examination touches many aspects of contemporary British society and provides insights into the general nature of demand in Britain for entirely new consumer commodities, the replacement of which was no longer determined by simple necessity. The demand for cotton textiles was a distillation of many amorphous desires and aspirations that were only now fostered throughout much of British society through travel and the

printed page. The urge to present a fashionable appearance was at the core of the generalized taste for light textiles which had determined public demand for over a century. This was not a frivolous whim on the part of a small host of women, but a powerful economic force which might be tapped through the female section of the population, but which permeated almost all classes of society. When the demand for fashion was translated into a demand for inexpensive, attractive cottons, the industry was tied to one of the most potent commercial forces of that period.

The powerful economic drive incorporated in changing demand resulted in a nation wide disruption of established textile marketing. The linen industry had already benefitted from the altered national tastes by 1750. However within the succeeding twenty years the fortunes of industry favoured the expanded production of cotton textiles. External impediments to the supplies of linen yarn provided timely incentives, prompting manufacturers to concentrate on the production of cotton textiles. Subsequent improvements in the technology of spinning almost certainly resulted from the economic pressure to find an alternative to the linen yarns that were now becoming relatively more expensive. This sequence of events broke the long alliance of the cotton trade with linen, and established the cotton industry as a separate industrial entity.

The next few decades confirmed the advance of cotton textiles over linens. The wool and silk trades also suffered from the incursion by cotton textiles into markets long their exclusive preserve. Over the last half of the century the stock of cotton manufactures was expanded both to meet market demands and to cultivate new markets where none had previously existed. The novel ready-made garments created by an offshoot of the cotton trade served the requirements of that sector of society where demand was most elastic. Gowns were prepared in unprecedented volumes for a largely homogeneous market. Styles varied hardly at all

throughout society, only the quality of the materials differentiated social ranks. This is a pertinent reflection on the changing nature of British society. The demands of the market suited the mass production of clothing as well as textiles. Ordinary people were offered attractive choices: how they dressed themselves and decorated their home was now a matter of personal choice, uniformity need no longer be observed through necessity. The provision of abundant, varied and inexpensive textiles allowed the individual tastes of even the humble shopper to be indulged, marking the arrival of a popular consumer society, the by-product of industrial production.

Aside from the distinctive novelty of ready-made clothing, the success of the products of the cotton industry displaced many traditional textiles from the home market. The composition of British dress was unalterably changed and the substitution of the many sorts of cotton textiles for varieties of wool, silk and leather amounts to what is probably one of the most radical and wide-ranging alterations in a fundamental facet of the daily life of the British population. Few more comprehensive popular changes appeared during this period.

One of the concomitant developments in the growing prosperity of the cotton industry was the growth of an inland trade in cotton textiles. The distributive mechanism which emerged depended for the physical movement of the products on the road network and the companies of carriers who carted the bales of cloth from manufacturer to wholesaler, and wholesaler to retailer. The dependence on road transport in the shipping of cotton throughout Britain determined several subsequent developments in the distribution system. Over the middle decades improvements in the domestic carriage of people and goods aided the marketing of cotton manufactures and the dispersal of orders by energetic entrepreneurs. Inns in small and large centres became the meeting ground for wholesalers and retailers.

These sites assumed progressively greater importance as way stations for bundles and bales dispatched from the cotton producers to the shopkeepers of Britain. The giant London market naturally exerted the greatest draw on manufactured cottons from the northwestern, and midland industrial regions. Weekly and then daily trips brought mountains of cotton textiles into London. Traditionally a collection of London inns served as the base for the carriers from Manchester, and with the growth of <sup>the</sup> cotton trade these inns became the hub of one of the chief distributive centres in Britain. At the outset of the cotton trade with London the four or five inns probably provided sufficient temporary warehousing, although finally the capacity was stretched to the limit as the volume of cottons increased. The establishment of specialist warehousemen for <sup>the</sup> cotton trade centred in the neighbourhood of these inns and the expanding trade can be traced through the numbers of warehousemen and Manchester warehousemen that appeared in the London directories from year to year. Gradually specialists in the wholesale distribution of cotton manufactures established themselves in the vicinity of Cheapside, close to the delivery points at the inns. By the close of the century several hundred tradesmen took part in the provision of British-made cottons to the retailers of the nation supplied from London.

The available documentation suggests that London dominated only a part of the country as the principal distributor of cottons. Individual London wholesalers may indeed have served trade customers the length of Britain. However as Manchester gained in strength in the heart of the cotton industry, that city also expanded its distribution network. Manchester supplied London; London in turn sold cotton manufactures throughout the southern and eastern parts of the nation retaining a virtual monopoly of these areas. Both centres utilized travellers to carry their business to the furthest villages. Those rural regions too remote for

the travellers were supplied with the latest cotton fabrics by chapmen and travelling Scotchmen, the majority of whom would have received their stock directly from Manchester. Manchester's advantages as the distributive hub of the cotton industry lay in specialization.

As the productive capacity of the cotton industry increased Manchester continued to prosper as the supplier of wholesalers and retailers throughout most of Great Britain. The London warehousemen, though at first resentful of the competitive challenge from provincial tradesmen, ultimately resigned themselves. Putting the competition between the two distributive centres aside, the final result of the extensive trade of these two centres was a national homogeneity of supply. Metropolitan life was no longer a prerequisite to receiving fashionable supplies of the latest fabrics. Certainly London received consignments faster than any other area of Britain. But the rest of the country no longer waited years for the newest modes and fabrics. Within weeks or months all of Britain could buy the cotton textile that the Wood Street wholesaler sold to the Covent Garden draper for the delectation of the London elite. The homogeneity of supply throughout the country was one of the crucial characteristics of the cotton industry, reflective of the economic vigour of the hundreds of manufacturers determined to present their products to the whole of the British market. The model of distribution developed here stands as a significant addition both to the history of inland trade and as an example of the diffusion of a mass produced consumer product in early industrial Britain.

The citizens of pre-industrial and early industrial Britain participated in their thousands in small commercial transactions with retailers, thereby generating a profound economic ground swell. The wave of individually insignificant purchases of cotton textiles grew to unforeseen dimensions and the combined momentum of the new industrial and commercial

activities reshaped Britain. The humble and the lowly have always remained in relative historic obscurity: treaties and contracts were not the products of their labour. Rather, clothing and home comforts were the aim of the common man's daily toil. Monitoring a fundamental alteration in the habits of consumption of this mass of people sheds light on changing aspects of ordinary eighteenth century life. A phenomenon of this sort incorporates within it a myriad of changing economic and social factors involving not only the outstanding entrepreneurs, but also the tens of thousands of Britons who participated in the new consumerism and, indeed, sustained the growth of the cotton industry.

In spite of efforts to discern the process through which these changes in demand, distribution and consumption took place not all of the facets could be uncovered. However the ultimate results are clear. Manchester developed into the prototypical industrial city of the new age, while the national consumption of cottons rose yearly. Yet this scenario does not entirely explain how Manchester was able to maintain its steady advance in the face of London's longstanding national pre-eminence as an entrepot for a host of regional manufactures. Two factors combined to provide the opportunity for Manchester's competitive development. First, the distance between London and Manchester buffered the latter from the overwhelming economic and commercial influence of the capital. At the same-time Manchester was so situated as to allow relatively easy access to the population centres of Great Britain. Second, and most simply, the cotton trade was new, newly developed and with no long, encumbering medieval traditions to restrict efficient production and distribution. Every feature of the trade was novel to some degree, both the textiles and the demand of the home market. Therefore the participants in the cotton trade were free to develop it in the most efficient manner.

As there were no fixed precedents for the conduct of the cotton trade,

the entrepreneurs could develop new relations of production just as they could devise new distributive methods. Documentary sources of the period reflect the verve and inventiveness of the manufacturers, who refused to relinquish control of wholesale activities into the hands of London middlemen. Thus, in line with the other inventions that resulted from this trade, the cotton industry stimulated the development of a new distributive centre in the heart of the manufacturing district.

As the results of recent research accumulate, historians are coming to recognize a feature of economic development in the last half of the eighteenth century never before sufficiently acknowledged. This quality in the economic life of the nation set it off from all previous eras. During that time an economy developed and prospered that was geared to the profits of popular fashions, produced cheaply and in quantity for the mass market. Fashion for the common people was an unparalleled concept: it had never before been the rationale for production. The introduction of these new ideas and new productive practices sparked off social upheaval and economic innovation. Social distinctions were diminished as for the first time the institutionalized dissemination of information on the newest fashion through the printed media initiated a self-perpetuating round of popular fashions. The nascent consumer society was launched, powering the first of the industrialized trades. It was to the working and middle classes that the cotton industry looked for its markets; it was on these groups the cotton industry depended for its commercial vitality; on these sections of society were founded the great new consumer markets of the early industrial age.

Prices and Varieties of Linen and Cotton Checks and Plain

(prices given per yard)

	<u>1753</u>	<u>1754</u>	<u>1755</u>	<u>1756</u>	<u>1757</u>	<u>1758</u>	<u>1759</u>	<u>1763</u>	<u>1767</u>
yard wide linen checks	13d	12d		13½d	10½d		12½d	13½d	12/13d
fine yd. wide linen checks	15d			16½d	11½d				
fine yd. wide linen checks	16d			18½-18¾d					
fine yd. wide linen checks	16½d			20d					
fine yd. wide linen checks	18d			20d-2/					
fine yd. wide linen checks	20d			22½-2/2d					
7/8 wide linen checks	11d			12d-12½d					
fine wide linen checks	12d			12½d					
fine wide linen checks	13d			13½-13¾d					
fine wide linen checks	13½d			14-16d					
fine wide linen checks	14½d			15½-18½d					
3/4 wide linen checks	9½d			8d				9½d	9d
fine wide linen checks				8½d				10d	
1 3/8 wide linen check	18d	19½d						19d*	
<hr/>									
yard wide cotton checks	13½d	13½d	12½d	12d	12½d	12d		14½d	14½-13d
No. 2 wide cotton checks			13d	13d		12½d			
No. 3 wide cotton checks			15d					15d*	
No. 4 wide cotton checks			16d			19d		15½d*	
fine wide cotton checks			18d	18d					
superfine cotton checks			19d	19d	19d				
7/8 wide cotton checks									13½d
fine 7/8 cotton checks									14d
3/4 wide cotton checks									9½d
fine 3/4 wide cotton checks									
1 3/8 wide cotton checks	20d	20d	19d	18½d	18½d	18½d		21d*	20d
fine 1 3/8 cotton checks									21½d
6/4 wide cotton checks			2/.						
superfine 6/4 cotton checks									

\* = 1764

Price information taken from the Beekman Papers, invoices from suppliers of Lancashire textiles, Peach & Pierce, Bristol and R. & N. Hyde, Manchester, 1753 to 1770

Organization of Textiles by Price  
1775-85

<u>Under 12½d</u>	<u>Range of Price</u>	<u>Range of Widths</u>
<u>Checks</u>		
10 (linen check)	7½d - 12½d	10 Nails* - 1 yd
1 (cott/lin check)	12d	3/4yd
8 (cotton check)		10Ns - 7/8 yd
<u>Stripes</u>		
8 (cotton; cotton/linen)	9½d - 12d	10Ns; 11Ns; 3/4 - 1yd
1 (holland)	12d	
<u>Plaids</u>		
2 (linen plaids)	10½d - 12d	7/8 - 1yd
2 (turkey plaids)	9d - 10d	7/8 - 1yd
<u>Cottons (plain)</u>		
9 (sheeting)	8d - 12d	3/4; 6/8; 7/8; 1yd
2 (holland)	12d - 12½d	yd
1 (ticks)	11½d	3/4
1 (roles)	7d	
2 (cotton)	11½d - 12½d	3/4 No.1 - 1yd
<u>Handkerchiefs</u>		
8 (check)	5d - 11½d	7/16 - 1yd
1 (mallabar check)	6½d	7/8
1 (mallabar)	10½d - 11d	yd; 15Ns.
1 (romall)	5½d	
1 (cotton check)	11½d	yd
<u>Fustians</u>		
1 (figured diaper)	10½d	½ ell
3 (jeans)	9½d - 11½d	½yd - ½ell
4 (pillows)	7½d - 8½d - 12½d	½yd - ½ell - yd
1 (towelling)	5½d	10Ns
1 (fig'd dimity)	10½d	
1 (corded dimity)	12d	
<u>13d to 24d</u>		
<u>Checks</u>		
17 (cotton check)	13d - 2 d	fine 3/4 - 1 3/8yd
4 (linen check)	13d - 16d	sup. find 7/8 - yd
1 (½ cott. check)	22d	1 3/4yd
7 (furniture checks)	15½d - 19d	7/8 - yd

(\*1 Nail = 2½ inches, Nails hereafter Ns)

13d to 24dStripes

6	(striped furniture)	22d - 2/	1 & 2 colours on gr'd
12	(assorted cotton striped)	14d; 18d; 20d	yd.; 6/4 - 1 3/8yd

Plaids

20	(assorted cotton)	13d - 23½d	yd
3	(assorted linen)	13d - 18d	yd

Cottons

7	(sheeting)	13d - 21d	yd; ell; 1 6/8yd
5	(holland)	13d - 16½d	yd
2	(bleached)	15½d - 16½d	yd
8	(cottons)	13d - 23d	fine 7/8 - 1 3/8yd

Fustians

7	(erminett)	13d - 22d	yd
2	(nankeen)	13d - 16d	yd
9	(pillows)	13d - 18d	½yd; ½ell
3	(velverett, all cotton)	13d - 21d	½ell; ell
1	(corded tabby)	2/	
1	(corded dimity)	13½d	
2	(jeanett)	1/8d - 1/9d	½ell
1	(drabett)	21d	3/4yd
1	(jeans)	13½d	
3	(cotton thickset)	18½d - 24d	½ell; ½yd
1	(linen thickset)	18½d	½ell
1	(sattinet)	24d	½ell
3	(drawboy)	19d - 21d	yd

Handkerchiefs

6	(silk/linen)	16d - 24d	11Ns - 15Ns
2	(silk and muslin)	22d - 24d	
1	(silk and cotton)	24d	

2/ to 11/6dChecks

1	(cotton check)	2/1d - 2/0½d	1 3/8yd
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Striped

1	(cotton)	2/1d	6/4
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Cottons

1	(plain)	2/4d	6/4
2	(Marseilles quilting)	5/6d - 6/6d	ell
1	(Flowered in the loom)		

2/ to 11/6dFustians

total

<u>20</u>	(corduroys)		
3	Genoa	3/ - 4/6d	
1	King	3/6d	½ e11
1	Pr. of Wales	2/9d	½ e11
2	Queen	2/4d - 2/7d	½ e11
2	Corded Tabby	2/ - 3/	½ e11
1	Brunswick	10/ - 11/6d	
3	Cotton Cord	2/6d - 8/6d	½ e11; e11
1	Cotton Faced Cord	7/6d	
1	Corded Thickset	3/	½ e11
2	Cotton Rib	25½d - 32d	½ e11
2	(Denim)	3/2d - 3/7d	
	(Velveteens)		
1	Genoa	5/	½ e11
	(Ververets)		
2	All cotton	24d - 25d; 27½d - 29d	e11; ½ e11
1	spotted	5/2d	½ e11
1	Genoa	4/6d	
1	Printed	3/4d - 4/6d	½ yd
1	(Batwing)	5/4d	
1	(Printed Jenet)	2/10d	½ yd
2	(Barragon)	2/4d - 2/6d	½ yd
1	(Sattinet)	28d	½ e11

Handkerchiefs

1	(silk and cotton)	32d each	
1	(silk and muslin)	32d	
1	(muslin)	25d	
2	(Black yd Hkfs)	44d - 48d	yd
2	(Black Hkfs)	32d - 36d	14Ns; 15Ns.
1	(Barcelona Hkfs)	72d	

## Sources:

The Day Book of Sale of an Unknown Manchester Firm, MC:MS ff 657 D43  
Manchester Public Library.

Eng. MSS. 1192, John Rylands Library, Manchester.

The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 2 Aug. 1777.

The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. III, ed. Philip L. White,  
(New York, N.Y. Historical Society, 1956).

Prices of Cotton and Linen Textiles  
Pence per yard

1753	1754	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	1761	1761	1763	1764	1765	1766
yd. lin.	13	12	13½	10½	12½	12½	10½	13½	12½	13½				
7/8 lin.	11		12½											
1 3/8 lin.	18	20		19										

1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772	1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1784
yd. ct.	13½	13½	12½	12½	12½	12½	12½	12	12½	13½	13½	12½	11
7/8 ct.	20	19½	19	18½	18½	18½	18½	18½	10½	11½	11½	11	12
1 3/8 ct.	20	19½	19	18½	18½	18½	18½	18½	21	21	21	19	19

1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772	1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1784
yd. ct.	14½	14	13½	13½	12½	12½	12½	13	13½	13½	13	13	12½
7/8 ct.	13½	13	11	12	11½	11½	11½	12	12½	12½	12½	11½	11
1 3/8 ct.	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	18½	19	20½	19	20	18½

Sources:

The Beekman Mercantile Papers, vol. III, ed. Philip L. White, (New York, New York Historical Society, 1956).  
The Day Book of Sales of an Unknown Manchester Firm, MC:MS ff 657 D43, Manchester Public Library.  
Eng. MSS. 1192, John Rylands Library, Manchester.  
Morgan Drapers Ledger, D/D ma 139, Glamorgan Record Office, Cardiff.

## APPENDIX IV

English imports of flax and yarn and the approximate linen  
equivalent, 1700-90

Year	Flax imports (cwt)	Approx. linen equivalent ( '000 yards)	Yarn imports (cwt)	Approx. Linen equivalent ( '000 yards)	Total approx. linen equivalent ( '000 yards)
1700	62,701	7,885	17,921	5.048	12,933
1706	35,908	4,515	13,996	3,942	8,457
1710	43,024	5,410	15,984	4,503	9,913
1715	40,300	5,067	25,151	7,085	12,152
1720	37,310	4,692	27,458	7,735	12,427
1725	50,430	6,342	26,191	7,378	13,720
1730	61,397	7,721	23,660	6,665	14,386
1735	56,885	7,153	30,015	8,455	15,608
1740	69,572	8,749	27,071	7,626	16,375
1745	74,464	9,364	40,307	11,354	20,718
1750	124,694	15,681	40,672	11,457	27,138
1755	113,833	14,315	44,792	12,618	26,933
1760	73,059	9,187	62,537	17,616	26,803
1765	120,413	15,142	21,705	6,114	21,256
1770	121,683	15,302	95,349	26,859	42,761
1775	169,165	21,273	83,882	23,629	44,902
1780	146,734	18,452	91,914	25,891	44,343
1785	193,307	24,309	76,816	21,638	45,947
1790	145,056	18,241	79,855	22,949	40,735

Source. Flax and yarn imports are totalled from E.B. Schumpeter, English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697-1808 (Oxford, 1960), tables XVI and XVII.

Source: N.B. Harte, "The rise of protection and the English linen trade, 1690-1790" Textile History and Economic History 1973, p. 104.

Account of seizures of various East India textiles made by Customs Officers from 1769 to 1773 and 1778 to 1782 inclusive.

	<u>1769</u>	<u>1770</u>	<u>1771</u>	<u>1772</u>	<u>1773</u>
1.	3953	2859	2064	1348	1769
2.	294	221	369	254	141
3.	285	239	96	163	154
4.	<u>1525</u>	<u>463</u>	<u>565</u>	<u>1375</u>	<u>830</u>
Total	6057	3782	3094	3140	2894

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	<u>1778</u>	<u>1779</u>	<u>1780</u>	<u>1781</u>	<u>1782</u>
1.	791	295	4099	1641	1567
2.	591	232	152	131	479
3.	248	249	106	56	107
4.	<u>987</u>	<u>359</u>	<u>997</u>	<u>616</u>	<u>839</u>
Total	2627	1135	5354	2444	2992

Accounts of seizures of various East India textiles made at Out Ports by Customs Officers from 1769 to 1773 and 1778 to 1782 inclusive.

	<u>1769</u>	<u>1770</u>	<u>1771</u>	<u>1772</u>	<u>1773</u>
1.	1178	854	230	540	1051
2.	145	85	59	126	364
4.	1122	641	237	747	186
3.	<u>000</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>45</u>
Total	2445	1666	547	1469	1646

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	<u>1778</u>	<u>1779</u>	<u>1780</u>	<u>1781</u>	<u>1782</u>
1.	1273	574	1172	562	487
2.	193	18	97	112	231
4.	1000	343	333	256	181
3.	<u>61</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>151</u>	<u>25</u>
total	2427	987	1659	1081	924

1. Calico and Muslin pieces and remnants
2. Silk pieces and remnant
3. Chintz pieces and remnants
4. Silk and remnants of silk handkerchiefs

Source: House of Commons Sessional Papers of the Eighteenth Century, vol. First Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the Illicit Practices used in defrauding the Revenue, 1783, Appendix No. 4, p. 246-7.  
 Account of seizures of East India... vol. 38.

APPENDIX VIImports of East India Textiles

Years	Pieces sold by the Company	Value	Pounds Weight of Cotton imported
1771	868,357	£1,435,475	2,677,042
1772	1,067,452	1,653,912	5,390,685
1773	964,234	1,797,508	3,097,501
1774	874,184	1,815,008	5,816,363
1775	752,116	1,609,597	6,841,354
1776	842,418	1,621,777	6,380,705
1777	972,838	1,660,892	7,401,671
1778	1,177,467	1,663,069	7,393,044
1779	457,203	747,121	4,790,016
1780	608,462	1,257,868	7,564,629
1781	445,237	850,703	5,198,778
1782	579,908	1,287,110	11,811,781
1783	548,969	1,143,046	7,816,645
1784	610,726	1,055,722	11,482,083
1785	840,347	1,560,847	18,400,384
1786	845,154	1,570,217	19,475,020
1787	852,496	1,439,043	23,250,268
1788	745,794	1,202,871	20,467,436
1789	820,099	1,229,360	32,576,023
1790	1,054,694	1,752,356	31,447,605

Source: House of Commons Sessional Papers of the Eighteenth Century vol. 91, ed. S. Lambert, Report of the Select Committee...upon the Subject of the Cotton Manufacture of this Country., 1793, p. 92.

Changing Composition of Clothing Purchases by Barbara Johnson, 1746-1800

	1746-1751	1751-1753	1753-1756	1756-1758	1758-1760	1760-1764	1764-1767	1767-1769	1769-1771	1771-1776	1776-1779	1779-1780	1780-1782	1782-1785	1785-1788	1788-1792	1792-1794	1794-1795	1795-1797	1797-1799	1799-1800	total	
silk	4	3	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	37
wool	1	1	2	4	3	1										1							10
silk/ wool		2	1			1																	4
linen		2	2			1				1	1	1											8
silk/ linen										1													1
cotton				1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	4	1	2	1		28

Travels of Joseph Harper1734Winter/Spring Travel:

Rugby	17-18 Jan.; 24 Feb.; 3 March; 2 April; 30 April.
Coventry Fair	8 March
Coventry	23 April
Oxford	25 April
London	13 March (two days to arrive) 15-22

Summer/Autumn Travel:

Coventry Fair	13 June	
Rugby	5 June; 27 June; 10 July; 19 Sept.; 29 Oct.	
Tamworth	6 June	
Lilbourne	11 July	
Litchfield	23 August	
Atherstone Fair	9 Sept.	
Hinckley Corn Fair	20-21 Oct.	
Rugby Fair	11 Nov.	Routine travel to Hinckley 3-4/week

1735Winter/Spring Travel:

Lutterworth	30 Jan.
Rugby	31 Jan.
Kettering	1 Feb.
Arbury Hall	5 Feb.; 18 Feb.
Northampton	6-7 Feb.
Atherstone Fair	27 March
Atherstone	13 May; 20 May; 27 May
Coventry	9 April
London	15-28 April
Nuneaton Fair	3 May

Summer/Autumn Travel:

Atherstone	3 June; 10 June; 17 June; 24 June; 1 July; 8 July; 15 July; 22 July; 5 Aug.; 19 Aug.; 26 Aug.; 2 Sept.; 10 Sept.; 30 Sept.
Atherstone Rag Fair	10-11 Aug.
Rugby	19 June; 13 Nov.
Hinckley Fair	15 Aug.
Market Harborough	1 Sept.
Coventry Fair	20-23 Oct.
Coventry	4 Nov.

1736Winter/Spring Travel:

Arbury Hall	6 Jan.	
Atherstone	13 Jan.; 10 Feb.; 14 Feb.; 2 March	
Warwick	14 Jan.; 8 April	
Coventry Fair	19 March	
London	22-27 March	
Coventry	4 April	
Leamington	9 April	
Tamworth Fair	23 April	
Bosworth Fair	27 April	Routine travel to Hinckley

Summer/Autumn Travel:

Hinckley Fair	7 June	
Branston	8 June	
Coventry Fair	25 June	
Rugby	7 July; 4 Aug.	
London	7 Aug. (two days to travel) 9-16; 25 Oct.-1 Nov.	

1737Winter/Spring Travel:

London	20 Jan.; 20 Feb.
Coventry	24 March

Summer/Autumn Travel:

Coventry Fair	10 June
Lutterworth	25 Aug.
Rugby	27 Aug.
Manchester	15-19 Sept.
Newcastle	20 Sept.
Coventry	20 Oct.



Customers served by Anonymous Manchester Firm, 1773-79. MC:MS ff 657 D4

ENGLANDAshbourne:

Mrs. Hawkins

Bakewell:

Mrs. Bullock

Barton:

John Greenhalgh

Mrs. Hodson

James Parrin

Bewdley:

Mrs. Ann Scrimshipe

Birmingham:

Thomas Warren

Thomas Careless

William Barns

William Fitter

Blakley:

John Tetlow

William Dawson

Bolton:

Mrs. Horridge

Bristol:

Tagart &amp; Green

Parsons &amp; Studley

Peter Goodwin

Bury:

George Ormerhead

George Ormrod

Buxton:

Earl of Sussex

Brian Hodgson

Mrs. Hodgson

Rev. Robert Thorpe

James Brock

Mrs. Brock

Nelly Bath

Thomas Bath

Nelly Burton

Mr. Dawson

William Bott

Elizabeth Brandereth

Chadwick:

Roe &amp; Kershaw

Chester:

William Wood

Thomas Garratt

Ralph Wilcoxson

Chesterfield:

Joseph Hanson

Congleton:

Mrs. Hodgeson

Robert Hodgston

Mrs. Swettenham

Derby:

Thomas Lowe

Eccles:

Rev. Mr. Crookhall

George Ashcroft

Mrs. Royle

Exeter:

John Read

Roger Rowe

Richard Davies

Halifax:

John Made

Heaton, Lancs:

Sarah Partington

Hull:

Samuel Hall

Kings Cliffe nr. Stamford:

J. Weldon

Leake nr. Boston:

Mitchell Razor

Leeds:

James Hazelton

Thomas &amp; Samuel Tles

Leicester:

Joseph Noble

Lincoln:

John Kent

Liverpool:

Henry Wharton  
 James Brownbill  
 John & Samuel Livesey  
 Messrs. Lakes  
 Joseph Broster  
 Rodney Taylor  
 Robert & Matthew Nicholson  
 Captain William Ainsworth  
 Kenwright & Sutton

London:

H.H. Deacon  
 John Hankinson  
 Thomas Jones  
 Daniel Cookson  
 Henry Evans  
 John Augustus Street  
 John Shaw  
 Thomas Portens  
 Ellis Needham  
 John Shuttleworth  
 John Nickson (Nixon)  
 James Mangnall  
 Kettle & Mandeville  
 William Robinson  
 Lewis & Worsley  
 Edward Rogers  
 John Ticknell  
 Mrs. Fernyhough  
 Yates & Miller  
 J. & E. Kenworthy  
 Marsh Reeve & Co.

Longnor, Staff.:

Thomas Oliver

Ludlow, Shropshire:

Thomas Gerrard

Manchester:

Mrs. Hume  
 William Pilling  
 Leigh(s) & Darwell  
 Edward Place  
 John Heywood (King St.)  
 Dawson & Clegg  
 William Heywood (Hunts Bank)  
 William Wilde (Hunts Bank)  
 James Smith  
 Benjamin Bancroft  
 Grant & Edge  
 William Hanson  
 Hames Clough  
 William Hampson  
 William Arrowsmith  
 Samuel White & Co.  
 Thomas Slack

Manchester: contd.

Thomas & John Tipping  
 John Hardman  
 Henry Worrall  
 Josiah Birch & Son  
 Thomas Johnson (High St.)  
 Thomas Johnson (Market St.)  
 William Birch  
 Thomas Marriot  
 Mrs. Hodson  
 John Hadfield  
 Robert & Nathaniel Hyde  
 Isaac Moss  
 Robert Saxton  
 Richard Tibson  
 Richard Mather  
 Joseph Rigby  
 James Touchet  
 William Wood  
 Robert Callow  
 Messrs. Bartons  
 James Swift  
 Dawson & Clegg  
 Lowe, Bate & Wright  
 John Heywood (Market St. Lane)  
 Bentley & Boardman (?)  
 Dinwiddie, James & Gilbert  
 Low, March & Low

Melton Mowbray:

Josiah Noble

Milnthorpe, Westmoreland:

Cragg & Son

Milton:

Josiah Noble

Newport Pagnell:

Josiah Bugbee  
 William Bugbee

Nottingham:

Taylor & Almond  
 Benjamin & William Waddington

Oldham:

Thomas Hobson Sr.  
 Thomas Hobson Jr.  
 Misses Cleggs

Openshaw:

Mrs. Field

Ormskirk:

Henry Livesey

(41c) Penketh:  
John Richardson

Plymouth:  
Leonard Arthur

Rochdale:  
James Lord  
John Stitt  
Richard Gore  
John Kershaw (and in Stockport)

Salford:  
Mrs. MacNeale

Sankey:  
Samuel Lomax

Sowerby:  
John Tattersall

Stockport:  
William Fowden  
James Standerling  
David Hyde  
Mayers  
James Gee  
John Kershaw

Wakefield:  
Dr. Richardson

Warrington:  
Thomas Morris  
Richard Clarke

Wigan:  
Thomas Barton  
Catherine Woods  
Mrs. Fogg  
George Hodson  
Miss Hodson

Wirksworth:  
Francis Harding

Wooburn, Beds.:  
James Hallowill

York:  
Hugh Robinson

ISLE OF MANN

Peel:  
Sandford

SCOTLAND

Beeth nr. Glasgow:  
Robert Stevenson

Dalkeith:  
Richardson  
John & William Wordlaws

Edinburgh:  
James Russell

Glasgow:  
James Campbell  
John Burns  
William & James Dowglass  
Bogle & Scott

Greenock:  
Robert Williamson

IRELAND

Donnegal:  
James Richardson

Dublin:  
William Richardson

Newry:  
James Lawson

Sligo:  
James Winterscale

Wexford:  
John Walmsley Holme

NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam:  
Benjamin Bothomley (& Widow Bothomley)  
Box & Co.

U.S.A.

Philadelphia:  
Price & Salmon

Orders of Kettle & Mandeville September 1777-8  
from an anonymous Manchester firm

<u>September 10, 1777</u>	p. 492		£	s	d
2 Ps. yd Linen Chk			3	14	9½
8 Moree Gowns		22/	8	16	
			£12	10	9½
<hr/>					
<u>September 17, 1777</u>	p. 494				
8 Moree Gowns		22/	£8	16	
<hr/>					
<u>September 20, 1777</u>	p. 495				
6 Moree Gowns		22/	£6	12	
<hr/>					
<u>October 8, 1777</u>	p. 500				
3 Ps. yd Lin. Chk. 102 .. 100½ Ells		13d	5	8	10½
22 Ps. 7/8 Lin. do. - 746½ .. 735½		11½d	35	4	10½
3 Ps. Fine 7/8 Lin. 101 .. 99½ Ells		11d	5	16	1
2 Ps. 32 In Cra 69 .. 68		12½d	3	10	10
1 Ps. 34 In do. - 35 .. 34½		13d	1	17	4½
24 doz. Gray Doylees		3/6	4	4	0
6 doz. Blue Lin. do. -		5/	1	10	0
6 doz. diaper do. -		6/6	1	19	0
18 Red Gr'd Moree Gowns		23/	20	14	0
24 Dark do. - do. -		22/	26	8	0
4 7/4 Bunts		12/6	2	10	0
8 8/4 do. -		17/6	7	0	0
17 Cotton Gowns		8/3	7	0	3
			£123	3	3
<hr/>					
<u>October 11, 1777</u>	p. 501				
1 Moree Gown		22/	£ 1	2	0
<hr/>					
<u>October 18, 1777</u>	p. 504				
4 Moree Gowns		22/	4	8	0
18 Red Gr'd Do. -		23/	20	14	0
			£25	2	0
<hr/>					
<u>November 1, 1777</u>	p. 508				
29 Red Ground Morees		23/	33	7	0
30 Purple Do. - Do. -		22/	41	16	0
2 Ps. Blue Str Furre	87 Yds	23d	8	6	9
			£ 83	9	9
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## APPENDIX XI

Page 2

November 5, 1777 p. 509

		£	s	d
22 Red Ground Moree Gowns	23/	25	6	0
3 Purple Gr'd Do. - Do. -	22/	3	6	0
		<u>£28</u>	12	0

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November 12, 1777 p. 511

23 Red Gr'd Moree Gowns	23/	21	9	0
5 Purple Do. - Do. - Do. -	22/	10	10	0
2 Ps. Lin Chk	13d	3	12	0½
		<u>£35</u>	11	0½

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November 15, 1777 p. 511

22 Red Moree Gowns	23/	25	6	0
3 Purple do. - do.-	22/	3	6	0
8 Pink do. - do. -	24/	9	12	0
1 Ps. Sca't Erminett 31 yd.	22d	2	16	10
3 Purple Gr'd Moree more	22/	3	6	0
		<u>£44</u>	6	10

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November 22, 1777 p. 513

21 Purple Gr'd Morees	22/	23	2	0
21 Red Do. - Do. -	23/	24	3	0
9 Pink Do. - Do.-	24/	10	16	0
		<u>£58</u>	1	0

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November 29 1777 p. 514

3 Pink Gr'd Moree	23/6	3	10	6
16 Red Do.- Do.-	23/	18	8	0
23 Purple Do.-Do.-	22/	25	6	0
		<u>£47</u>	4	6

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December 6, 1777 p. 516

16 Maroon Ground Morees	23/	18	8	0
31 Purple Do.- Do.-	22/	34	2	0
		<u>£52</u>	10	0

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December 13, 1777 p. 517

12 Maroon Gr'd Moree Gowns	23/	13	16	0
45 Purple Do.- Do.-	22/	49	10	0
		<u>£63</u>	6	0

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December 24, 1777 p. 520

		£	s	d
12 Maroon Gr'd Moree Gowns	23/	24	3	0
60 Colour'd Do.- Do.-	22/	66	0	0
		<u>£90</u>	3	0

December 31, 1777 p. 522

21 Moree Gowns	23/	24	3	0
20 Pink Do.-	23/6	2	7	0
30 Purple Do.-	22/	33	0	0
		<u>£59</u>	10	0

January 8, 1778 p. 523

3 Ps. yd Linen Chk 12 & 4 at blue				
103½...102 Ells	13d	5	10	6
5 Ps. Nankeen 178 yds	13½d	10	0	3
25 Ps. Starratts	10/6	13	2	6
20 Dozn No. 1 Gray Doylees	2/8	2	13	4
		<u>£31</u>	6	7

January 10, 1778 p. 524

12 Moree Gowns	22/	£13	4	0
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January 12, 1778 p. 524

12 Ps. 7/8 Linen Chk 409...403 Ells	11½d	£19	6	2½
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January 19, 1778 p. 526

2 Maroon Gr'd Morees	23/	2	6	0
48 Purple Blk & Light Gr'd Do.-	22/	52	16	0
20 Ps. Starratts	10/6	10	10	0
		<u>£65</u>	12	0

January 23, 1778 p. 526

30 Doz'n Scar <sup>t</sup> Bord <sup>d</sup> Doylees	4/6	£ 6	15	0
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January 26, 1778 p. 527

9 Pink Gr'd Moree Gowns	23/6	10	11	6
42 Dark. Light. Green &c -	22/	46	4	0
		<u>£56</u>	15	6

February 3, 1778 p. 529

1 Pink Moree Gown	23/6	1	3	6
21 Purple Light &c	22/	23	2	0
		<u>£24</u>	5	6

February 12, 1778 p. 531

		£	s	d
22 Rich Moree Gowns	22/	24	4	0
1 Do.- Do.- 5 yd.		1	7	0
12 Ps. 7/8 Linen Chk 4 & 2 No. 2				
441...434½ Ells	12d	21	14	6
	11½d	11	4	3
		£58	10	3

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February 24, 1778 p. 534

31 Rich Moree Gowns	22/	£34	2	0
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February 24, 1778 p. 534

23 Rich Moree Gowns	22/	£25	6	0
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March 7, 1778

26 Moree Gowns	22/	28	12	0
1 Do.- Do.- - 4½yds		1	6	0
		£29	18	0

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March 11, 1778 p. 537

6 Ps. 7/8 Linen Chk 4 & 2	206½...203½ Ells	11½d	9	14	6½
2 Ps. Gr <sup>n</sup> Str <sup>d</sup> Furn <sup>re</sup>	88½	23/	8	10	1½
			£18	4	8

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March 18, 1778 p. 539

11 Moree Gowns	22/	£12	2	0
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March 25, 1778 p. 540

12 Ps. yd 5/8 Cotton Chk No. 1				
206½...203½ Ells	20d	16	19	2
8 Ps. 7/8 Linen do.- 4 & 2				
271...267 Ells	11½d	12	15	10½
		£29	15	0½

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March 28, 1778 p. 541

4 6/4 Bunts	8/6	£ 1	14	0
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April 11, 1778 p. 545

18Ps. 5/8 Linen Chk 4 & 2				
609...600 Ells	11d	£28	15	0

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May 2, 1778 p. 550

42 Rich Morees	22/	£	s	d
10 Red Gr'd Do.-	23/	46	4	0
		11	10	0
		£57	14	0

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May 6, 1778 p. 551

32 Cotton Gowns	8/	12	16	0
40 Ps. 7/8 Linen Chks 4 & 2				
1361...1341 Ells	11d	61	9	3
4 Ps. 30 In Cran <sup>y</sup> 140½...138½ Ells	11½d	6	12	8½
6 Ps. 11 Ns. Linen Chk. 207...204 Ells	8½d	7	0	3
4 10 Ns. Do.- Do.- 137½...135½ Ells	7½d	4	4	8½
		£92	2	11

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May 13, 1778 p. 553

16 Moree Gowns	22/	£17	12	0
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May 20, 1778 p. 555

19 Moree Gowns	22/	£20	18	0
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May 30, 1778 p. 558

10 Ps. 7/8 Linen Chk 4 & 2 341½...336½ Ells	11d	£15	8	5½
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June 1 1778 p. 559

28 Moree Gowns	22/	£30	16	0
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June 3, 1778 p. 560

23 Rich Moree Gowns	22/	£25	6	0
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June 6, 1778 p. 561

2 Ps. yd Lin Chk 68½...67½ Ells	12½d	£3	10	3½
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June 10, 1778 p. 562

14 Rich Moree Gowns	22/	£15	8	0
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July 8, 1778 p. 571

14 6/4 Bunts	8/	5	12	0
5 8/4 Beds	24/	6	0	0
		£11	12	0

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July 11, 1778 p. 572

1 Moree Gown	22/	£	s	d
		£1	2	0

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July 29, 1778 p. 576

3 Ps. Lin Chk 102...100½ Ells	12d	£5	0	6
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August 5, 1778 p. 578

52 Light Moree Gowns	22/	£54	12	0
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August 15, 1778 p. 581

8 7/4 Bunts	11/9	4	14	0
2 Ps. yd Linen Chk 30 & 6 67½...66½ Ells	12d	3	6	6
		£8	0	6

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Total £1279 7 7½d

sub total	Sept., Oct., Nov.	-	£474	13	2½d
	Dec., Jan., Feb.	-	£328	3	0½d
	March, April, May	-	£324	4	1½d
	June, July, Aug.	-	£152	7	3½d

Shipments to London by Coach  
1776

May 18, 1776

J. & E. Kenworthy

14 Straw Coul'd Morees (Gowns)	22s.	£ 17	12	0
2 Do. 7/4 do. do.				
Carr'ge by Coach - 16. a 2½ wrapper 8			4	
		17	16	0

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April 25, 1776

J. & E. Kenworthy

22 Rich Straw Morees (Gowns)	22s	24	4	0
2 Do. 7/4 wide do.	22s	2	4	0
Carr'ge by Coach & wrapper			6	
		26	14	0

---

June, 1776

J. & E. Kenworthy

1 Ps. Sup. fine yd. Cotton 41 yd.	19d	3	4	11
Carr'ge by Coach 2/6 Wrapper 1/				
		3	4	11

---

August 8, 1776

J. & E. Kenworthy

1 Ps. Sup. fine yd. Cott(on) Chk		3	6	6
Carr'ge by Coach 2/6 Wrapper 1/				
		3	6	6

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October 23, 1776

Kettle & Mandeville

26 Moree Gowns	22s	28	12	0
4 Ps. 3/4 Ticks	d			
Carr'ge by Coach 6/				
		35	12	3

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October 28, 1776

Kettle & Mandeville

29 Moree Gowns	22s	31	18	0
Carr'ge by Diligence 6/8			6	8
		32	5	8

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November 9, 1776

Kettle & Mandeville

42 Moree Gowns	22s	46	4	0
Carr'ge by Diligence 10/ wrap'r 1/			11	0
		46	15	0

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November 15, 1776Yates & Miller

2 Ps. Fig(ure)d Silk Cord	8/6	£ 8	10	0
Carr'ge by Diligence 3/ Wrapper 1/			4	0
		8	14	0

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November 16, 1776J. & E. Kenworthy

18 Moree Gowns	22s	19	16	0
3 Do.	17s	2	11	0
Carr'ge 7/6 Wrapper 1/6			9	0
		22	16	0

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November 16, 1776Kettle Mandeville

20 Blk & W'te Moree Gowns				
68 Rich Do.				
Carr'ge 16/6 Wrapper 1/6				
		96	14	0

---

December 2, 1776Kettle & Mandeville

47 Moree Gowns	22s	51	14	0
Carr'ge 11/ Wrapper 1/			12	0
		52	6	0

---

December 9, 1776J. & E. Kenworthy

10 Moree Gowns. 1 No. 1	17s		17	0
9 No. 2	22s	17	11	0
Carr'ge by Diligence 4/7 Wrapper 1/			5	7
		18	13	7

---

December 17, 1776Kettle & Mandeville

11 Moree Gowns-Red Ground	23s	12	13	0
9 Do. Do.	22s	9	18	0
Carr'ge by Diligence 4/6 Wrap'r 18d			6	0
		22	17	0

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December 24, 1776Kettle & Mandeville

23 Moree Gowns-Red Ground	23s	£ 26	9	0
Carr'ge by Diligence 6/ Wrap'r 1/			7	0
		<u>26</u>	16	0

---

December 31, 1776Kettle & Mandeville

25 Moree Gowns	22s	27	10	0
14 do. do. Red Ground	23s	16	2	0
Carr'ge 3/6 Wrap'r 6d			4	0
		<u>43</u>	16	0

---

December 31, 1776J. & E. Kenworthy

5 Rich Moree Gowns	22s	5	10	0
21 Com(mo)n do. do.	17s	17	17	0
Carr'ge 7/ Wrap'r 1/			8	0
		<u>23</u>	15	0

---

December 31, 1776Yates & Miller

5 Ps. Fig(ure)d Silk Cords. 10yd. Ea.	8/6	21	5	0
Carr'ge 6/ Wrap'r 1/			7	0
		<u>21</u>	12	0

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James Gee's Orders in Day Book of an Anonymous Manchester firm

May 14, 1776 p. 335

James Gee Stockport

3 Ps. 7/8 Cottn Chk 103½...102 Ells	12½d	5	8	4½
3 Ps. yd. do. - do. - 103...101½ Ells	13½d	5	16	3
13 Ps. Fine yd. Cottn Chk 443½...437	15½d	28	4	5½
3 Ps. Fine 7/8 do. - do. 102...100½ Ells	14½d	6	1	5½
8 Ps. Cottn Holl'd 252½yds	12d	12	12	6
45 Ps. Lin. Chk 1514½...1492	8½d	54	7	11
2 Ps. Lin. Holl'd 90yd.	10½d	3	18	9
1 Ps. 36 In <sup>h</sup> Crank <sup>y</sup> 35...34½	12½d	1	15	11½
2 Ps. yd. Lin plod. 66½...65½	12½d	3	8	2½
1 Ps. 32 In <sup>h</sup> Crank <sup>y</sup> 34½...34 Ells	11½d	1	12	7
1 Ps. 34 In <sup>h</sup> Do. - 34...34	12d	1	14	0
50 Ps. yd 3/8 Cottons	18½d	64	8	10
Cred <sup>t</sup> Him for Call <sup>g</sup> the above 15/		£189	9	3½

June 4, 1776 p. 343

5 Ps. yd. Cott <sup>n</sup> Chk 170...167½ Ells	13½d	9	11	11
2 Ps. Fine yd. Do. - 68½...67½ do.	15½d	4	7	6
Call <sup>d</sup> -/6d		£13	19	5

August 6, 1776 p. 365

4 Ps. 7/8 Cott Chk 136½...134½ Ells	13d	7	5	8½
1 Ps. 7/8 Cottn Chk 33½...33 Ells	15d	2	1	3
4 Ps. Sup fine 7/8 Do. - 133½...131½	16½d	9	1	1½
1 Ps. Fine 3/4 Cottn 34...33½	13½d	1	16	11½
Call <sup>g</sup> 5/		£20	5	0½

August 20, 1776 p. 370

2 Ps. 7/8 Cottn Chk 68½...67½	13d	3	13	1½
3 Ps. Fine 3/4 Cotton 103...101½	13½d	5	14	2½
Call <sup>g</sup> 2/3		£9	7	3½

August 27, 1776 p. 373

1 Ps. 7/8 Cott Chk 34½...34 Ells	13d	1	16	10
3 Ps. Fine 7/8 Do. - 100½...98½ Ells	15d	6	3	5
6 Ps. Fine 3/4 Do. - 208½...202½	13½d	11	7	9½
2 Ps. ha. In <sup>h</sup> Sca't Plod. 34½...34	20d	2	16	8
1 Ps. ha In <sup>h</sup> Gr <sup>n</sup> Do. - 34...33½	20d	2	15	10
1 Ps. 36 In Cran <sup>y</sup> 35...34½	12½d	1	15	11½
Call <sup>g</sup> 5/6		£26	16	6½

November 19, 1776

10 Ps. 7/8 Lin Chak 338...333 Ells	11½	15	12	2½
24 Ps. 3/4 Chk & Str. 817½...805½ Ells	9½d	31	17	8½
Call <sup>g</sup> 5/		£47	9	10½

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**THOMAS LOMAS,**  
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HABERDASHER.

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---	---

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 Striped, and Spotted ditto  
 Mullins  
 Callicoes  
 Dimitys  
 Quiltings  
 Checks  
 Bays and Flannels  
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 Hosiery  
 Thread ditto  
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 Worsted ditto  
 Childrens' ditto

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 Linen, and Cotton Night-  
 caps  
 Nett ditto  
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6 fine Nichelets	5/9	1 14 0
6 Sturmont Bond Handys	6/6	1 13 0
Marking		1 0
Making 12 Puffled Shirts	4/	2 8 0
Woolbanding & Puffing 2 do		4 0
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*Checks of different kinds & breadths, Striped  
 Cottons, &c. Cotton Hollands, Cotton Gowns,  
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 Thicksetts, White Stripes, half y. & y. wide Diapers,  
 with Sundry other sorts of Goods.*

**NB.** Luke Cotes resides at Manchester, & Manufactures the  
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Sell all Sorts of

<i>Turbans</i>	<i>Sattins</i>	<i>Mosqueras</i>	<i>Scotch Plaids</i>
<i>Ducays</i>	<i>Modes</i>	<i>Venetian Corded</i>	<i>Worsted Damasks</i>
<i>Plain, Striped &amp;</i>	<i>Thread, Sattins</i>	<i>Plain Poplins</i>	<i>Fig. &amp; Plain Yard-</i>
<i>Flon, Lustrings</i>	<i>Inkle Lustrings</i>	<i>Porsetteens</i>	<i>wide Stuffs</i>
<i>Marinets</i>	<i>Brolies</i>	<i>Camblets</i>	<i>Scarlet Cloths &amp;</i>
<i>Peruans</i>	<i>Messinets</i>	<i>Callimancoes</i>	<i>Shuffels</i>
<i>Black Silks</i>	<i>Silveretts</i>	<i>Russets</i>	<i>Flannels &amp; Boys</i>

*Nottingham Grapes and Bombazines*

<i>Quilted Peacocks</i>	<i>Cloth &amp; Duffel</i>	<i>Lady's Silk Hats &amp;</i>	<i>Gentlemens</i>
<i>Satin &amp; Silk</i>	<i>Cardinals &amp;</i>	<i>Bonnets</i>	<i>Gowns &amp; Velvet</i>
<i>Cardinals</i>	<i>Cloaks</i>	<i>Riding Habits</i>	<i>Caps</i>

Wholesale and Retail.

a Laylock figured Lincaps  
 Nightgown. twenty two yards  
 half ell wide.  
 five and ninepence a yard.  
 four dozen and half of  
 trimming. 6/6 a dozen.  
 From Mrs. Russel. June. 1767.

a purple & yellow Ducape  
 Night-gown fourteen yards  
 and a half half-ell wide  
 five & sixpence a yard.  
 a dozen & half of trimming  
 five & sixpence a dozen



Lining Ticket 24037

39 16



A Lady in the latest Dress of  
 the Year 1768.



The Undress. The Dress.

a Garner Lustring Night-gown  
 three q<sup>rs</sup> wide. 1768.  
 nine yards. at 4/6 a yard

a white Lustring gown  
 five and sixpence a yard  
 eight yards. 5 q<sup>rs</sup> wide  
 1768



a purple and white  
 Loken Gown 1768.  
 five & sixpence a yard



Page from Barbara Johnson's album, 1767-8, showing fringed trimmings and the amounts needed, 54 yards for a sack for the Races, 18 yards for a nightgown. It was trimming of this kind which Mrs. Russel discussed with her sister-in-law in 1769, saying she had 30 yards for a nightgown. (Victoria and Albert Museum, Crown Copyright)

Illustration 2

a flower'd Calice long sack 1746



a Blue damask Coat 1746  
half a Guinea a yard



a flower'd Cotton Jacket 1747



a flower'd Cotton Jacket 1747



a flower'd silk Robe Coat 1748



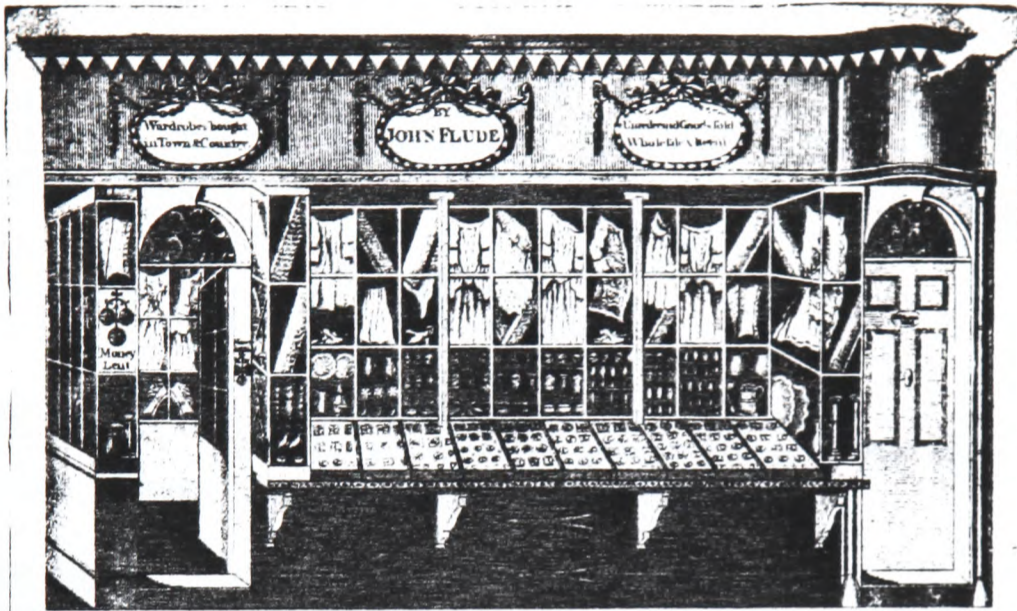
a Green Lamber Coat 1749



a Flower'd Silk Coat  
7:6 a yard.

a Striped Lutestring Coat  
7 a yard. 3 quarters wide.





*John Flude & Co*  
**PAWNBROKER and SILVERSMITH**  
*N. 3 Grace Church Street*  
*London.*

*Lends Money on Plate, Watches, Jewells, Wearing Apparel,  
 Household Goods, & Stock in Trade.*

*NB*  
*Goods sent from any Part of y<sup>e</sup> Country directed as above,  
 shall be duly attended too & the utmost Value lent thereon.*

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