

the development of the old stocking frame, which was invented by an English clergyman during the time of Queen Elizabeth. The inventor took his 'frame,' so the story runs, to the Queen, but she gave him no encouragement, and he went to France. There he met with favor and prospered. From that time on dozens of inventors devoted their time and talents to the task of building a lace-making machine. Finally a man in Nottingham did succeed in building a machine that proved of practical value. After that the advance was rapid, and for years the masters of the industry in Nottingham enjoyed a monopoly. In fact, it was not until eleven years ago that a few Americans decided to build a mill and bring over a few of the curtain-making machines. They built their mill near Fordham, N. Y., and put up three machines, each of which cost about \$5,000.

The experiment proved successful, and a number of other plants were constructed. At present there are mills at Tariffville, N. J., Patchogue, Long Island, Philadelphia, Wilkes-Barre, Penn.; Scranton, Penn.; Columbia, Penn.; and Nottingham, Tex. It is a difficult task to give a detailed description of one of these machines. Suffice to say that it is a heavy and cumbersome structure of iron and steel, yet the mechanism is very delicate and complicated. The capacity of a machine is, of course, limited to its size and strength, but on an average each machine, provided it is run night and day, will turn out 3,000 pair of curtains every twenty-four hours. The workmen who are in charge of these machines are called 'twist hands' and earn \$25 a week. There is a deal of preliminary work to be done before the machines are called into use. Probably the most important part of the process is the 'patterning.' By that I mean the preparation of the pattern, or design, for the curtain.

First of all, an artist submits a design, and these designs are only valuable when they can be treated by the draughtsmen, who, in turn, must adapt them to the gauge of the machine, and draught them so as to bring the best result. This process is both costly and uncertain, for after the draughtsman has spent a week over the design he may find it worthless. Even if he is satisfied with the result, it must be passed on by the 'reader,' who adjusts and adapts the pattern to the machine. The completed pattern weighs about 100 pounds, and costs \$80. A year's supply of patterns for the average mill will cost, at a rough estimate, \$10,000 and the stock must be constantly replenished. When the patterns are once decided upon the linen is fitted to the grooves and the machine started. After the lace leaves the machine goes to the mending-room. There skilful needle-women mend any rip or imperfection, although in some mills a 'harning machine' is used with excellent results.

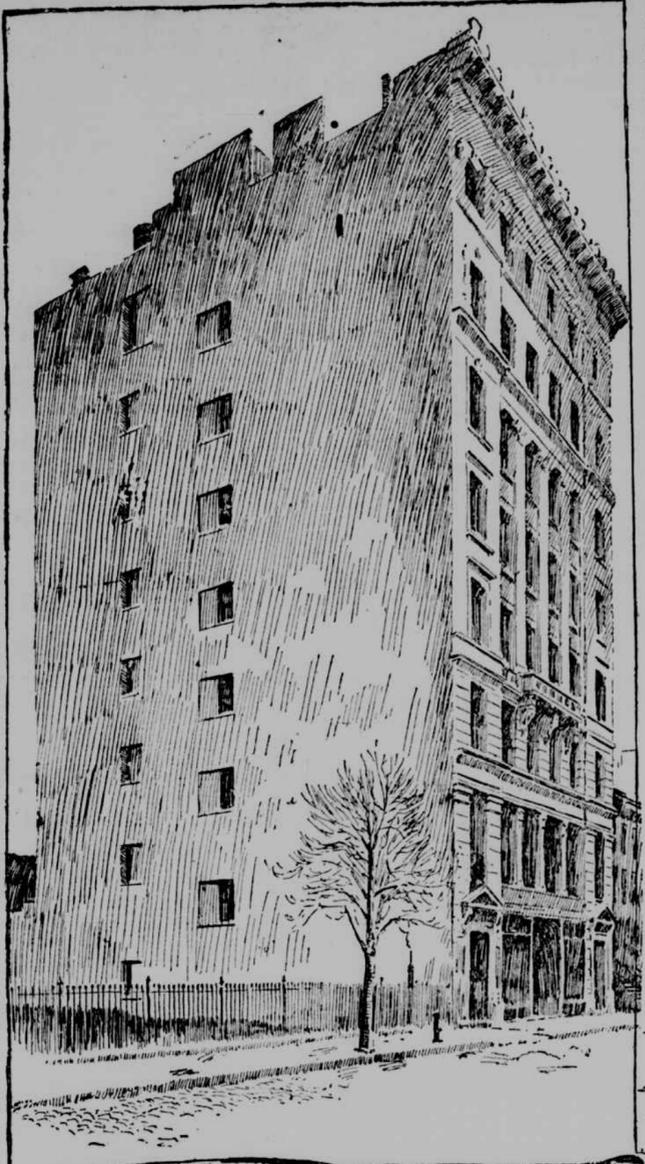
When these curtain-making machines were first introduced in this country the English experts declared that only the cheaper grades of curtains could be manufactured here on account of the climatic conditions and lack of skilled labor. As a matter of fact, the American mills are to-day turning out grades of lace which cannot be excelled by any of the foreign mills.

FANCY GOODS AND NOTIONS.

A cynical old merchant, who has spent forty years of his life in the drygoods district, voiced the opinions of a dozen of his colleagues yesterday when he said:

"To my mind the cleverest men in this trade are the fellows who make money out of the fancy goods business. A bright man may master the mysteries of any branch of the drygoods line in twenty years, but it takes a lifetime to gain even a fair knowledge of the ins and outs of this 'Yankee notion' business. Why, a chap has got to know the value of about every blessed thing from a needle to an oil painting, and what's more, he's obliged to keep in touch with the market every minute of the day or he will be lost."

The cynical old merchant spoke the simple truth. Think of a single house stocked with a million dollars' worth of all sorts and conditions of odds and ends! Think of the wear and tear on the mind of a man who must keep a mental record of the changing price of pins, needles, fans, corsets, picture frame, cravats, dress shirts, infants' bonnets, perfumery, ribbons, laces, leather goods, stationery, buttons, jewelry, glue, underwear, feathers, embroidery, canvas, collars and cuffs and a thousand and one other articles! Think of the enormous amount of work and the mental strain required to stock



000, and stored away on the shelves of another room are \$100,000 worth of needles, pins and small cutlery. Samples of cravats and neckwear cover the counters of an entire floor, and the fragrance of a thousand different blends of perfume sweeten the atmosphere of the top floor. There are rolls of silks and satins and there are thousands of yards of gorgeous plush and velvets. There are thousands of umbrellas and tons of stationery. There are cartloads of gewgaws and a full line of jewelry and bric-a-brac. To sum it all up, the stock of a New-York fancy goods store is so large and complicated that none of the firms ever dream of making a catalogue and shudder at the necessity of taking an inventory. "We do the bulk of our business," said a member of one of the leading firms, "through the mediumship of drummers, but a great many of our country customers prefer to come to the city and do business directly with the house. We can furnish a country store with a \$20,000 stock in ten hours, provided the merchant has the money with the market, know when to buy and how and when to sell. Of course we have suffered during the hard times, and I doubt if any house in this line of business is to keep in touch with the market, know when to buy and how and when to sell. But times have taken a turn for the better now, and we are confident of making a good profit out of our spring season, which begins next month."

The busy seasons with the fancy goods people are in the spring and fall. During the summer the trade is stagnant.

DRESS SHIELDS.

One of the industries essentially, in fact exclusively, American is that of the dress shield, which, as its name implies, is an article designed to protect women's dresses in summer from the effects of perspiration. Its manufacture is confined almost wholly to New-York

that makes them look like silk. In fact, silk itself, and often silk of fine quality, is used for dress linings. But the varieties are almost innumerable, both in color and texture. The business in New-York is increasing rapidly and some of the domestic varieties are exported to South and Central America and Mexico. It is hoped also that Canada will soon open its ports to them. It is estimated that 200,000 people are employed in the manufacture in the mills and factories that supply New-York. One mill alone employs 600 hands. The best linings of a middle grade come from Belfast, Ireland, and there are importations likewise from France, England and Germany. Most clothes also take a large quantity of this material.

"When," said a Brooklyn manufacturer, "the duty on dress linings is so arranged that it will remain steady for six or eight years, this country will import the machinery necessary for turning out the fine grades now imported, and we shall gain to the extent of more than \$100,000 annually in our volume of trade. The business has assumed such importance that every large drygoods house has now a department of its own with a manager at its head."

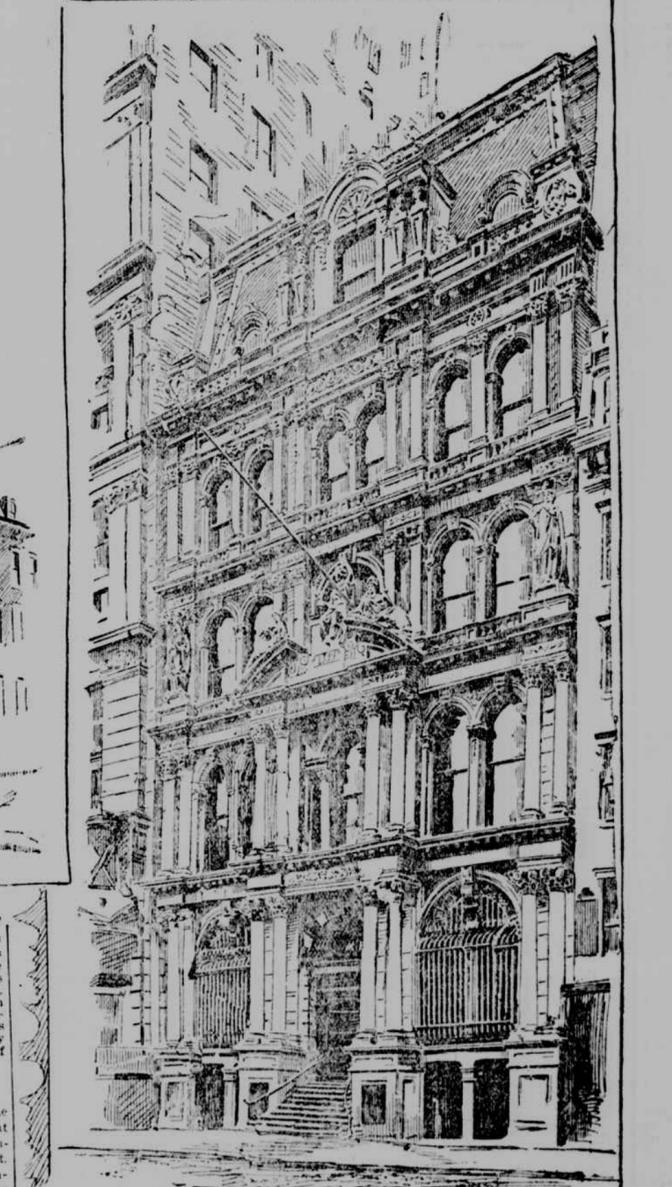
ELDERDOWN CLOTH.

Elderdown to the uninitiated means the ready-made clothing of the elder duck, but in the drygoods trade it is a known and recognized variety of cloth of very recent invention. Elderdown is the sort of cloth that Van Cortlandt Van de Peyster prefers for his bath robe, and Beau Brummel never had the same, for it was not invented until 1850. Elderdown for such a purpose has only one derogatory feature, and that is that it was invented by an American. It is a cotton cloth, so far as its back is concerned, and it has a wool

of a variety and beauty to make it available for any garment requiring goods light, warm and durable at the same time. Elderdown is made in imitation of ermine, and in a thousand other grades of fanciful conception it is now much used for children's cloaks and their trimmings. In 1892 the sales of this class of goods amounted in New-York to over \$1,000,000, and the volume of the output has been steadily increasing since. At the World's Fair, in Chicago, elderdown in the piece was exhibited by a New-York firm and received a medal and testimonial. Since the establishment of the industry by French & Ward at their factory at West Stoughton, Mass., and the placing of the goods on the New-York market, a number of other mill-owners have embarked in the manufacture of the new fabric. It is now to be had by the yard over the counter in any first-class retail drygoods store.

LADIES' TAILORS.

The late Mr. Worth, of Paris, who for many years told Emperors and Czarinas what they should wear, when he first saw what is now known as a "tailor-made gown" said: "A woman so attired looks like a stable boy." In later life he changed his opinion of such clothing, and the great house of Worth now makes cloth suits for women who want them. The tailor-made gown is a triumph of the utilitarian over the aesthetic. It is for women what the jacket suit of tweed is for the business man. The age of the distinctly feminine and softly luxurious silks and satins for street wear is long past. The frout-frout of skirts in Broadway is no longer to be heard, for "homo-



City, and it is exported to the continent of Europe and to England, as well as to the South American republics and Mexico. The business has, however, fallen off fully 25 per cent since 1895, not so much on account of hard times as to the introduction of the washable waist. There is something over \$1,000,000 invested in dress shields; there are six mills or factories engaged in their manufacture, which do a business of \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000 annually and employ 2,000 hands. All these mills are in the city of New-York excepting one.

DRESS LININGS.

One of the most extensive branches of the vast drygoods trade of this country is what is known as dress linings. New-York is essentially its headquarters and its distributing point. Some dress linings, the finer grades, are imported and carry a duty of from 30 to 40 per cent. Others are manufactured in this country. The money invested in this line of goods amounts up into hundreds of millions of dollars; the annual volume of trade is estimated at \$250,000,000 in this city alone, and tens of thousands of hands are employed in its handling and manufacture. Upward of \$100,000,000 is paid in wages alone. The principal mills and factories are in New-Jersey and Long Island, all of which have offices in this city. There are also a few factories here, while the cutting and making up afford a living to a great number of women. Many firms are called converters, that is to say, from the plain cotton or other fabric they give the linings a finish and a gloss



such a store and keep the stock in order after it is once secured! There are hundreds of these stores in this city, with stocks of goods ranging in value from a million down to \$50,000. These facts show the responsibility resting on the shoulders of the men who are the official heads of such establishments. It is absolutely impossible to give an accurate estimate of the amount of capital invested in this line of trade in New-York. None of the leading men in it are able to give such an estimate, for the simple reason that they have no standard upon which to base their calculations. But they are a unit in declaring that the grand total of capital will foot up to at least \$40,000,000. Furthermore, they say that the margin of profit is so small

that it requires constant care and rare ability to so conduct the business that it will yield a profit. And yet, despite these ultimate handicaps, it is a matter of record that the business does pay, and in good years yields a substantial profit. The modern "fancy goods" establishment is nothing more or less than the magnificent development of the "Yankee notion" store of a century ago. It is an establishment where a man can buy almost any small article of a useful or luxurious character. It is the store to which the country merchant first directs his steps after arriving in the city, and it is the store in which he lingers the longest. In a word, the wholesale fancy goods stores of New-York are the greatest department stores in this

or any other country. The stock of one of these mammoth establishments is purchased directly from the manufacturers, and that means that the firm must have buyers in every nook and corner of the world. For example, one house on Broadway is at this very moment receiving its next summer's stock of fans—a stock which cost \$200,000, and was bought months ago from the leading manufacturers in Japan, Germany, India and the United States. It represents the product of two large corset factories. There are also samples of dainty shirt blouses made of the richest silks and the choicest linens for this year's summer wear. The leather goods department alone represents an investment of \$100,

face, or surface, so soft and so luxurious as to suggest its name, "elderdown." Originally, it was used but for the soft linings of Arctic over-shoes and of driving gloves. Mr. Ward, of the present firm of French & Ward, of New-York, invented the machinery to produce it in "piece goods" for the purpose of making garments. In colors and designs, the material can be made

spuns" and "Scotch chevrets" do not do business that way. The "tailor-made gown" as it is now known made its appearance in London seventy-five years ago. Women, needing riding habits and were taught that they did by the inconvenience of riding in flannel trousers in ordinary garments. Women who spent much time in the saddle