established trade. Some short time prior to the year above mentioned, William Lee, a native of Woodborough, in Nottinghamshire, had been expelled the University of Cambridge for marrying against the statutes. Thus, without other resources, the clerkly young husband found himself depending for his daily bread upon his wife's dexterity at knitting. No doubt he felt this to be very humiliating; at any rate he conceived the idea of making fingers of iron that should be made to form several loops at once, whereas his wife's could form but one. Many weary days and nights he pondered over the crude idea. Had mechanical powers and motions been as well understood then as now; had there been as suggestive models as are everywhere to be found now, William Lee's difficulties would have been comparatively trifling. Though even at this day, inured as we are to the daily phenomena of new inventions, a machine displaying so much original ingenuity as the stocking frame could not fail to attract universal admiration. Since Lee's machine came to light two hundred and seventy-six years have passed away and many thousands of inventive minds have explored the realms of mechanical science and the stocking loom in its fundamental principles has survived all changes. In all parts of the world thousands are this day working almost entirely unaltered, even by the side of the rotary machines to be presently noticed.

Lee was not merely an inventor without worldly wisdom, for he displayed a great deal of energy and business tact in introducing his frame and setting it up, first at Calveston, near Nottingham, and afterwards in London. Yet he was doomed to disappointment and poverty, and a cruel death in a foreign land. According to Mr. Felkin, Lord Hunsdon entered into a kind of partnership with Lee, and thus one of the Tudor family became the first stocking maker's apprentice.

However this may be, it is certain that that nobleman and his son accompanied Queen Elizabeth when she went to see Lee working at his frame, and it is equally certain that his lordship interceded with her Majesty to obtain a patent for the invention.

The answer of good Queen Bess on this occasion shewed great regard for the welfare of her subjects. "My lord," she said, "I have too much love to my poor people who obtain their bread by knitting to give my money to an invention which will tend to their ruin, by depriving them of employment and thus make them beggars. Had Mr. Lee made a machine that would have made silk stockings, I should, I think, have been somewhat justified in granting him a patent for that monopoly which would have affected only a small number of my subjects; but to enjoy the privilege of making stockings for the whole of my subjects is too important to grant to any individual."

Our inventor then applied himself to silk work, and in 1596 succeeded in making plain silk stockings from a twenty gauge frame. Of these he erected nine, worked by apprentices. In the meantime the Queen died, and his prospects of obtaining a patent from James were so small that he accepted the munificent offers some time before made by the French ambassador, Sully, to remove with his machinery and workmen to his country. Having established these at Rouen, he repaired to Paris where he was introduced by the Duke of Sully to Henry IV., but just as prosperity was about to reward all his anxious toil the king was murdered, and Lee falling under the ban of proscription against protestants sought refuge in Paris, where he died in poverty.

Lee's brother, however, and all the work people except two returned to England. The two who remained were allowed to retain one frame. Every exertion was now made to recommence operations. Those of the trade resident in London petitioned Cromwell for a charter of incorporation. The petitioners urge that it is nothing different from the common way of knitting "but only in the number of needles at an instant working in this more than in the other by an hundred to one, set in an engine or frame composed of above 2,000 pieces of smith's, joiners' and turners' work after so atificial and exact a manner, that by the judgment of all beholders it far excels in the ingenuity, curiosity, and subtility of the invention and contexture all other frames or instruments of manufacture in use in any known part of the world."

The "Lord Protector" however, paid no attention to their petition, and the stocking knitters guild owe their charter to Charles II., in 1663.

In 1669 there were in England 660 frames, of which 390 were employed on silk. In 1714 there were about 8,000. In 1753, 1,400; in 1782, 20,000; in 1812, 29,590, including 1,449 in Scotland, and 976 in Ireland. In 1844 there were in the United Kingdom 48,482 frames. Since that time so great has been the improvement in the manufacture of hosiery, that, with a great reduction in the price of goods, stockings have become a common article of apparel in parts where formerly they were little known.

Large numbers of people are employed in the trade in Nottingham, Derby and Leicester, in England, and Hawick and other places in Scotland.

Early in the last century English emigrants introduced frame knitting into the United States, a