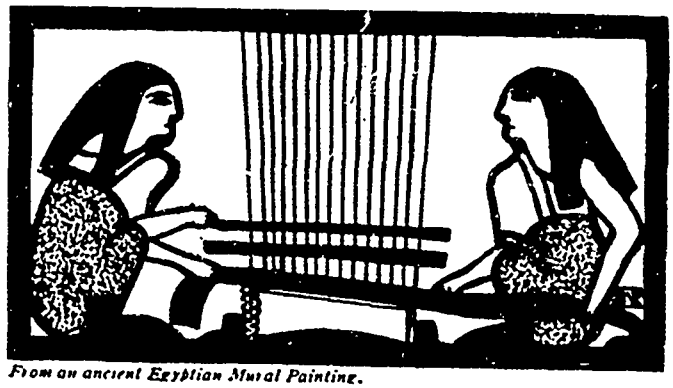
THREAD BY MOUSE POWER.

Thrift is generally acknowledged to be one of the leading characteristics of the natives of Fifeshire, and it never was more forcibly exemplified than in the person of David Hatton, a native of Dunfermline, who actually proved that even mice, those acknowledged pests of mankind, could be made not only to earn their own living, but also to yield a respectable income to their owners, says "The Scotsman." About the year 1820 this gentleman actually erected a small mill at Dunfermline for the manufacture of thread—a mill worked entirely by mice. It was while visiting Perth prison in 1812 that Mr. Hatton first conceived this remarkable idea of utilizing mouse power. In an old pamphlet of the time, "The Curiosity Coffee Room," he gave an account of the way in which the idea dawned on him. "In the summer of 1812," he wrote, "I had occasion to be in Perth, and when inspecting the toys and trinkets that were manufactured by the French prisoners in the depot there my attention was involuntarily attracted by a little toy house with a wheel in the gable of it that was running rapidly round, impelled by the insignificant gravity of a common house mouse. For a shilling I purchased house, mouse and wheel. Inclosing it in a handkerchief, on my journey homeward I was compelled to contemplate its favorite amusement. But how to apply half-ounce power, which is the weight of a mouse, to a useful purpose was the difficulty. At length the manufacturing of thread seemed the most practicable. Mr. Hatton had one mouse that ran the amazing distance of eighteen miles a day, but he proved that an ordinary mouse could run ten and one-half miles on an average. A halfpenny's worth of oatmeal was sufficient for its support for thirty-five days, during which it ran 736 half miles. He had actually two mice constantly employed in the making of sewing thread for more than a year. The mouse threadmill was so constructed that the common house mouse was enabled to make atonement to society for past offences by twisting and reeling from 100 to 120 threads a day, Sundays not excepted. To perform this task the little pedestrian had to run ten and one-half miles, and this journey it performed with ease every day. A halfpenny's worth of oatmeal served one of these threadmill culprits for the long period of five weeks. In that time it made 3,350 threads of twenty-five inches, and as a penny was paid to women for every hank made in the ordinary way, the mouse, at that rate, earned 9 pence every six weeks, just one farthing a day, or 7 shillings and 6 pence a year. Taking 6 pence off for board and allowing 1 shilling for machinery, there was a clear yearly profit from each mouse of 6 shillings. Mr. Hatton firmly intended to apply for the loan of the old empty cathedral in Dunfermline, which would have held, he calculated, 10,000 mouse mills, sufficient room being left for keepers and some hundreds of spectators. Death, however, overtook the inventor before his marvellous project could be carried out.

COTTON GROWING IN CEYLON.

A writer in the Times of Ceylon points out that there is every reason to believe that Ceylon could successfully grow cotton for the English market. Experiments on a considerable scale have already been made by private individuals, the results proving beyond doubt that cotton can be grown luxuriantly in many districts in the northern province, while similar experiments are shortly to be made in the south. As yet, although the possibility of the actual cotton growing has been clearly demonstrated, the costliness of the experiment has prevented it from being carried out to such an extent as to show whether a cotton industry could be established in the island on such a basis that it could compete profitably with other cotton-growing countries. The longer route, by the Suez Canal, puts Ceylon at a disadvantage compared with African countries, but at least the experiment merits a further trial in the interests not only of Ceylon, but of trade within the Empire. It is suggested that a commission should be appointed by the Government to enquire fully into the question of transport, labor, cost of machinery, and other difficulties which at present appear to bar the way to successful establishment of a new Cingalese industry.



From an ancient Egyptian Mural Painting.

WEAVING: AN ANCIENT CRAFT.

Weaving of figured cloths, one of the most intricate industries, was one of the earliest crafts to be developed by man, for mankind, having reached even a low degree of enlightenment, must have raiment to clothe his body, to protect it from the elements, to satisfy his modesty. And then later, when he builded him a home, he must have hangings to cover the bare stone or wood, for such his luxury-loving sense teaches him.

The simple technique of weaving has been known from earliest historic times, and even beyond the time of known things we have reason to believe that weaving was carried on by the more enlightened races. In the simplest form the art consisted of warp threads (haute lisse) stretched tightly in vertical rows. Then colored threads were worked in, as a housewife darns a worn stocking, and beaten tight by rod or batten. The illustration at the head of this article is drawn from an ancient Egyptian mural painting. It represents a loom, and we must believe depicts the way in which the hangings of Pharaoh's temple were woven, long centuries ago, on the banks of the Nile. The Phoenicians, a race of peaceful people who came out of Asia and settled in the land on the east coast of the Mediterranean, were among the world's first dyers. Their country was protected by a great wall of mountains, and they lived among themselves for centuries, and so had time to occupy themselves with the arts of peace. From a certain mollusk that lived in the waters along their shores a beautiful purple dye was obtained with which they dyed the fleece of their herds, then wove it into splendid, rich-hued stuffs. Moses, in the wilderness, gave careful instructions for the tapestries of the Holy of Holies.

Babylon, that grand old city of forgotten times, which modern scientists are now unearthing from beneath the debris of time, was famed in her day for the figured cloths woven by Babylonian artisans. Connoisseurs have recognized in the relief sculptures on the ancient Palace of Nineveh, which dates from about eight centuries before the Christian