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KNITTING AND KNITTING MACHINERY.

In writing of almost any process of manufacture in the present advanced stage of improvement which characterizes so many branches of the world's industry, it becomes absolutely necessary to note the principal progressive steps from the beginning. In the absence of this historical guide, the general reader would fail to comprehend the wonderful advances made; thus missing the gratification which such reading yields, as well as those incentives which the earnest reader often feels to emulate those illustrious laborers in the world of progress, to whom a just sense of our obligation can be best manifested by becoming models for emulative imitation to the next generation.

In view of the encouragement due to home manufacture, we propose to call attention to the interesting Machine Knitting Factory recently established in this city by Mr. Simpson, May, 1865, and for the reasons above given, to take as rapid a survey of its history as is compatible with our object and limits.

The word *stocking* does not necessarily imply any article of apparel, as the Roman *tibia* did but designate the manner in which the work of making it was done.

It was *stocken*, Saxon (past participle of *stican*), because it was made with *sticking* pins, now, with perhaps less propriety, called *knitting needles*.

This kind of work, so far as we are aware, has no antiquity to boast, as those who sometimes confound *netting* with *knitting* might imagine. We know that ancient nations made nets, which they used in fishing and hunting, and there is no doubt but those were reticular in their structure as they are to-day. Network was also used for ornamentation—ecclesiastical, domestic and personal. Beekman remembered having seen "retiform hangings in old churches, and on old dresses of ceremony, borders or trimmings of the same kind; and in the middle ages, the mantles of the clergy had often coverings of silk, made up of meshes, similar to those of our fishing nets. Knitting is a modern invention. Like netting, it consists of one thread only; but instead of being formed into meshes, secured by knots, it repeats upon itself a series

of loops secured only by a fastening at either extremity. This is essentially the case in all true knitting, whether done by hand or machine. Knitted stockings seem to have appeared in England in the reign of Henry VIII. His majesty ordinarily wore cloth hose, 'except there came by great chance a pair of silk hose from Spain.'"

Savary tells us that in 1527 knitting had become a considerable branch of industry in France; that the brethren of the craft formed themselves into a guild, and for their patron saint they chose *St. Fiacre of Scotland*, believing, as they did, that in that country the art was invented; and in the sixteenth century, which could not have been more than 27 years prior to their incorporation, it was the general belief that the first knit stockings seen in France came from Scotland. However this may be, we have no knowledge whatever of such things till we hear of bluff King Hal enjoying the occasional luxury of a pair, which, by great chance, came from Spain. Scotland could not have produced many, nor France many, nor could it have become an extensive branch of industrial occupation in Spain or Italy, or surely the powerful and extravagant monarch of England would not have been compelled to encase his royal limbs in hose of rigid cloth, clumsily made by a tailor. The French guild, if not a myth, had existed 20 years when Edward VI. succeeded his father on the throne, and yet stockings were not so plentiful; but "great notice" was taken of a pair of black Spanish silk ones being presented to that king by Sir Thomas Gresham. Besides, Queen Elizabeth wore stockings of cloth all her life up to the third year of her reign, 1562, when Mrs. Montague, her silk woman, presented her with a pair, and so great a luxury did she find them, that, "she never wore cloth any more."

It is related by Stow, the historian, that the first pair of woollen stockings made in England were the work of a London apprentice, who, seeing a pair, brought from Mantua, in the shop of an Italian merchant, borrowed them, took them home, and imitated them perfectly. This occurred in 1564. Fifteen years later, when Elizabeth visited Norwich several female children appeared before her, some of whom were spinning worsted yarn, and others knitting hose of the same material. Ten years later, in 1589, just 25 years after William Rider, the London apprentice, knitted the first pair of woollen stockings in England, there came a revolution in knitting, such as startled people.

The peaceful avocation of knitting for a livelihood had been pursued in several counties by large numbers of the inhabitants, and it had become an