

tion, yet the saving of time, capital, and labor has been incredible since the sewing machine has been introduced. In 1862 it was estimated that in the United States each machine saved to its owner 50s a week, or say £130 per annum, in wages alone, or an aggregate saving in wages for the whole country of about thirty millions sterling. In 1875, that aggregate saving had risen to one hundred millions sterling, and to-day these figures must be greatly increased.

The sewing machine may be said to have been the friend of all and the enemy of none. The tailoring trade has been vastly improved, and the condition of the workman has been elevated from that of comparative serfdom into opportunities for achieving competence. Every branch of textile industry has received an impetus, for nearly every kind of material is manipulated rapidly and deftly by the machine. Goods made from leather, gutta-percha, india-rubber, furs, straw, felt, woolen, linen, cotton, silk, mohair, and many other materials, are all subject to the wondrous spell of this creative genius. And so is nearly every article used in trimming garments, such as buttons, braids, sewing cotton, thread, sewing silk, linings of infinite variety, canvas, and a host of other manufactures too numerous to mention. Then it was calculated that in the year 1877 no less than 100,000 persons were employed in the manufacture of the machine itself and the various trades connected therewith in England. In the United States the number was much larger. In France and other European countries the number was estimated at 50,000.

It will be universally admitted that when a sewing machine can be sold retail at a few shillings, and that a boy's suit can be produced, at a profit, for as low as a shilling, no age in the world's history has done so much to provide the outer man of the very poorest with protection. As we have before observed, the original cost of the machines was from thirty to forty pounds. This was the result of the heavy royalties, costs of litigation, and other similar causes. In England, however, since the date of Thomas' patent for Howe's invention, over 250 patents have been granted for improvements in sewing machines. Hence the gradual reduction of price.

Nothing, however, is perhaps more extraordinary than the rapidity which has characterized the adaptation of the machine to the wants of the whole civilized world. This was most notably the case in the United States. In 1860 it was ascertained that on that great continent, with a population of 25,000,000, there were in use no fewer than 200,000 machines. In Great Britain, however, there were not more than 25,000.

### HOW WOOL IS AUCTIONED.

London's wool trade is done in Coleman street. The salesroom in which the auctions are held is large enough to seat 520 persons. In the season the sales go on continuously from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. for five days of each week, and for a few hours on Saturday. As much as 17,000 bales have been sold in a day, but the average is about 13,000 bales a day, a quantity which is quite sufficient to keep the buying brokers and salesmen at work for fourteen hours a day.

Within easy distance from the salesroom there are ten great warehouses where the wool is stored and shown for sale. They are good warehouses, but not so well lighted as the wool warehouses at Sydney and Melbourne. The bales are placed on their sides in tiers of three high, and each bale is cut, so that it may be easily sampled or examined. In cases where there is the slightest suspicion of uneven qualities being in the pack, the contents are almost completely pulled down on the floor. The brokers are very keen in the work of inspection, and there is not the slightest chance for tricks to be played on the trade.

Before four o'clock in the evening the catalogues are marked, and the crowd assemble in the room. The public have a small space at the back of the brokers' seats. The auctioneer, with his two clerks, takes his position, and the battle commences. From the moment that the first lot is called there commences a din of shouts and screams, which never ceases for two hours or more,

when the last principal lot is sold and the star or small parcels are entered upon.

The only unexcited one of the party is the auctioneer. He never raises his voice above its ordinary speaking range, and he has to be sharp of eye to pick out which was the first bidder. The difficulty with the auctioneer is to pick out of the ten gesticulating, excited bidders who was the first. Right or wrong the man is named, and down goes his name. This sharpness in getting first on what is likely to be the limit of the bidding is of great importance. In some lots a halfpenny advance would mean from £40 to £60 or more. The buyer has to go slow when large lots are under the hammer.—*Sydney Herald*.

### THE SAXONY HOSIERY DISTRICT.

A few miles south-east of Thalheim, the little village of Hornersdorf lies, perched right up amongst the mountains. Here the old house-industry is still alive, and turns out goods in brown for dyeing purposes, made on 27 gauge, 30 gauge, and 33 gauge frames. Like the other villages that have adhered to the old methods, Hornersdorf has lost its importance, and is being drained of all the able young workpeople, who cross the mountains to Auerbach and Gornsdorf. These two villages are rapidly growing in importance, owing to the introduction of modern machinery. Walking for a short time in a northerly direction, we arrive at Auerbach, and all along the road at intervals of about five minutes, we pass factories, and by the time we have traversed the length of the second village, Gornsdorf, we shall have noticed sixteen or more factories, some of considerable size. Five years ago, both these places could not boast of a factory, being entirely devoted to house-industry. It is a remarkable feature of these factories that they are occupied by a great number of independent tenants, some having only three or four machines, for which they rent just as much space as they require. The rent includes lighting and steam or water-power. In one amusing instance, seven brothers-in-law occupy parts of a building owned by their common father-in-law.

The machinery used in these two villages is chiefly on the Cotton's Rotary system, Hilscher's and Paget's styles, and a fair proportion is 33 gauge. About 1852, circulars were introduced into Gornsdorf, and were used very extensively for many years, but now, of about 40,000 dozens weekly, made in the two villages, quite two-thirds are full fashioned. The circulars now made are chiefly 7/1 and 1/1 ribbed. A few plain circular hose with mock seams and fashioned French feet are also made. It is an interesting fact that in 1805 all the yarn used in this village was hand-spun by the inhabitants, the finest number produced being 40. Before passing on, attention should be called to the strange way in which most of these Saxon villages are built, as the two just discussed are a very good example of it. The houses do not cluster together and form groups, but are strung on each side of a long road running down the middle of the valley. Many villages are miles long, and take two hours to walk through entirely, although having only 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants. Gornsdorf joins nearly on to Meinersdorf, the seat of the fine circular goods. The very cheapest goods that can be made are turned out here. A whole dozen of women's hose can be purchased for 10d. Cotton's Rotary machines, however, have made their appearance here too, of late years, and children's ribbed hose, with circular and straight legs and French feet, are becoming quite a feature. Formerly, circular goods were turned out here by the ton, but the production has gone down steadily. It is estimated that about 5,500 circulars are made weekly now. The production of full fashioned goods is 2,000 dozen, and nearly 4,000 dozen of various ribbed goods are manufactured. There are two factories here full of 33 gauge Cotton's Rotaries.

Ten miles due east of Meinersdorf lies Gelenau, hedged in on all sides by high mountains, which are appropriately named the Gelenau Alps. Some years ago the entire village was inundated by the melting snows from the mountains, and a monument commemorates the event and perpetuates the names of those who lost their lives. Within the last ten years three very important factories have been erected, besides several smaller ones. The large factories chiefly employ 33 gauge Cotton's Rotaries, but