

increased business in plain and fancy flannels for blouse purposes. In the heavy woolen districts there have been some orders placed in army cloths for abroad, and there is a fair business moving in low serges and in light woollens for dress purposes, the most successful being imitations of the higher-priced costume cloths, which have been so largely worn for jackets and skirts. The trade is opening out more in fancy sealskins, but the makers of blankets and rugs are quieter, and complain about the extreme cutting of prices.

NOTTINGHAM.—The activity in American business is reflected in the trade returns for last month. In that month the value of the exports of cotton lace and patent net was £231,801, against £186,884 for March, 1896, and £201,600 for March, 1895. Although details of the destination of the goods represented by these values are not given, there is no doubt that the better part of the increase is in increased shipments to America. Simultaneously with this there has been a marked improvement in buying for the home trade. Fashion is eminently favorable, and a large special trade is anticipated from the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. From the continent, too, some considerable orders have come, and altogether the tone in the warehouses is healthy. Fancy cotton millinery laces are among the best off. After a period of something approaching depression, this department has improved week by week for a couple of months past, and is now very busy. Assortments of Valenciennes, from narrow edgings to wide laces and insertions, are selling freely for the home, continental and American markets. Ivory is the tint most in request. Butter and white, however, are being eagerly taken up for special buyers. Grass lawn shades and grass lawn with white effects are fashionable. Fair quantities of malines, bruges and other fine imitation laces are being bought. The same will apply to Point de Paris laces, insertions and nets. But stocks are exceedingly large, and the fierce competition among manufacturers and dealers prevents anything like fancy prices being obtained. This competition is especially strong in Maltese, torchon and guipure goods. The production of Oriental laces at home and abroad is very much above the demand, and the position is unsatisfactory all round. Silk laces show an improved tone, and manufacturers of Chantillies speak cheerfully of the present demand and the immediate prospects. Honiton braids and beadings in linen and cotton keep up well for export and trimming purposes. American trimmings are better, but not so good as they might be. Swiss emroideries and everlasting trimmings, on the other hand, are only in limited request. Lace curtains and window blinds are selling in quantities for the home trade. Furniture laces and toilets have also revived. Corded goods in laces, insertions, curtains and toilets are selling in larger quantities. In caps, aprons, collarettes and gopherings, also, there is a big business on hand, and large consignments of plain and chenille falls and veilings are going off. The plain net department is busier than ever. It is being taxed much beyond its capacity of production, and one hears of inconvenience to home buyers, who cannot obtain delivery by reason of the extraordinary demands for fine nets for the continent for emroidery purposes. There is something like a corner just now in this commodity.

LEICESTER.—The amount of business doing in the wool market is unsatisfactory, and prices are in favor of buyers where sales are forced. Users are quite content to take small lots to keep their stocks assorted to meet actual consumptive requirements, and speculation is avoided. Choice bright-haired fleeces are kept back by holders, and the best qualities of Shropshire wools are steady, but all secondary and inferior grades are exceedingly dull. Skin wools are steady, and the supplies are ample. Good colonial wools are in fair request at late rates. The yarn market is quiet, and production is being reduced to prevent the accumulation of stocks. The delivery of hosiery fabrics has greatly reduced stocks, but buyers are acting with extreme caution, and the business is very partial.

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND.—The retail drapery trade in Glasgow is not improving very quickly. Warehousemen blame the cold, wet weather. So far there has not been much sunshine, and consequently there has been little inducement to customers to invest in

summer wear. Very seldom have merchants been so well prepared for a busy season as they are now, and it will be a keen disappointment if the year's turnover is a poor one. The wages of the Kirkcaldy floorcloth and linoleum printers who are engaged on piece-work will be advanced 5 per cent. on May 1. A new linen factory is about to be built at Kirkcaldy. It is expected to give employment to 500 or 600 hands. The building is to be fitted with the most improved machinery. Two of the floorcloth factories are undergoing considerable extension. The textile industries at Kirkcaldy are exceedingly brisk, and large quantities of goods are being despatched weekly. The rush to get linen goods sent to America from Dunfermline is over. Manufacturers did not know when the new American duties become law, but they showed great anxiety to have their goods in the States prior to May 1. It is anticipated that business will be quiet for a time. The home demand continues fairly good. The Forfar Factory Workers' Union is in a flourishing condition, and the state of the finances is extremely satisfactory. The income greatly exceeded the expenditure, and the funds at the credit of the association amount to £3,615 13s. 5d.

BELFAST.—The past month has not been productive of much change in the general state of the market, but recently a rather better inquiry has sprung up in many departments, and buyers have operated on a somewhat more generous scale. Prices all over continue steady at recent figures, with an advancing tendency in some instances. Only odd parcels of flax have been sold at fairs since last review, and the season is now at an end. Sowing for the new crop has now commenced, but it is very generally expected that the acreage will be at least a third less than last year. Ex-store a fair business is passing at unchanged prices. The yarn market has been decidedly quiet throughout the month, but, with the exception of fine counts of tows, prices have been steady. Whilst buying all along has been conducted with great caution, still the turnover has been fairly good, and as manufacturers are still well engaged this is likely to continue to be the case. Coarse tow yarns, say below 25's, are scarce, and fine lines above 100's are in good request, but medium counts of both are sluggish and going into stock. In the manufacturing branch of the market any change at all has been by way of improvement, and though the market is by no means brisk, nevertheless a very fair trade is passing in most branches of the manufacture at full rates lately current. Powerloom bleaching cloth is being bought steadily and in rather larger quantity, and very trifling concessions on full rates would be productive of a substantial increase in the turnover. Boiled-yarn goods have met with a ready sale, and there has been more inquiry for green-yarn makes since the turn of the month. Cloth for dyeing and hollands has been rather quiet, at unchanged prices. Narrow roughs have been in active request where quick delivery could be given, and stocks of these are entirely cleared out. Prices firm. Damasks have gone steadily into consumption, and though current orders are about sufficient to absorb the output, forward contracts would be acceptable. Unions of all kinds have met with a steady and gradually growing demand, and prices, though quotably unchanged on the month, have a hardening tendency owing to the stiffening of cotton yarn rates. The improved demand for medium and fine sets of linen handkerchiefs has been maintained, but the coarse end up to the present has shown little improvement. Brown handloom goods in the various makes have been bought fairly well, though the demand at the moment is quieter. No change in stocks, as the output from the looms is now smaller; prices unchanged.

LYONS.—The situation in the Lyons silk industry continues the same, but the demand for fabrics has not been sufficiently large of late to cause satisfaction and some complaints are heard by manufacturers about poor business. The reassortment demand for the Paris market does not show much life, but retailers there are commencing to increase their sales, and an increase in the demand from that quarter for staples and novelties may be looked for soon. A beginning has already been made and some business has been done in lines which had been neglected up to recently. For the London market an improvement in demand is also looked for soon. What the market lacks is a little life in the order business for fall. Some