

A SHORT SKETCH ON KID GLOVES.

THE use of gloves may reasonably be said to ante-date any definite history of them, though in that remote period they were not apparently worn for other than a protection against the inclemency of the weather or the thorns and brambles of the forest. The skins and sinew of wild beasts furnished the material. The Egyptians seem to have been first to make gloves a distinct fashion, proofs of which may be seen on many monuments and carvings and, indeed, the article itself of that period, in elbow length, is exposed in the Louvre in Paris. The Persians, Romans and even the ancient Greeks of the second century adopted them, not specially for protective purposes, but as an adjunct to the luxurious dress of the period. In spite of the condemnation of the Moralists and the contempt of the Stoics, the fashion grew to great proportions and while on the one hand the glove became of practical use when furnished with steel coverings for protection in battle, on the other it was a fashionable fad. No limit was placed upon the workmanship and value of the embroidery of pearls and precious stones generally on a fabric of silk or linen.

The glove has always been used as a symbol in various ways; as a defiance to an enemy, as a pledge of good faith to a friend. In the middle ages it was considered part of a royal insignia and when sent by royalty in response to petitions was a warrant of approval highly prized.

As early as the thirteenth century the use of the glove, though still of silk, was considered indispensable by ladies of fashion, quite as much so as in the present day. But it was not till the reign of Louis XIV that French kid gloves of light weight skins, very much as we know them to-day, appeared and were exported largely to other countries. Even yet it is one of the great industries of that country. Grenoble, one of the most delightfully situated and picturesque cities in the world appears to have been from the first identified with kid glove making. Its proportions and success attracted the cupidity of Louis XIV. It was taxed and hampered by him as a means of revenue. Yet under him it was so protected from undue competition and defective workmanship that a reputation for quality was established which gave a prestige to the goods and made them famous the world over. Competition, however, arose in Germany and Switzerland early in the eighteenth century. Many new factories appeared, but the increased supply was met by an equal demand. This condition never altered except during and after the revolution, when high foreign tariffs killed French exports and the home demand died with the nobles. So it was not till the year 1834 that Grenoble attained its former position. The invention of Xavier Jouvin revolutionized the mode of glove cutting and introduced

an accurate standard scale of sizes till then unknown. But it was only after many years of patience and struggle against opposition that his idea was recognized. Not till some 20 years after his patent had expired was it universally adopted by the other makers at Grenoble with largely increased production. The production just before the Franco-German war was estimated at over 900,000 doz., probably over one third the entire aggregate production of France, Paris and Milan being next in point of output.

Since that date other countries have competed with great energy for the world's supply, Germany, Austria and Belgium in lamb; schmaschen skins largely monopolize that class of demand. This competition has seriously affected the French glove product, which appears to have reached a maximum volume. Italy, especially for low-grade in suede, glace and men's whites, is well-known. England is famous for men's gloves, which are exported to every

centre of fashion in the world. In point of excellence, fit and general "style" they are without competition from other sources, except in light-weights of kid or lamb. It is safe to say that over one and a half million dozen gloves are manufactured in England yearly, and probably as much more of all kinds imported. Prague, in Austria, is a most important glove manufacturing centre, principally devoted to lambskin quality. In 40 years the output jumped from 30,000 dozen to nearly 600,000 dozen, and, owing to the energy and ability of its makers, it is constantly increasing. England is its greatest customer, as indeed she appears to be that of every country the world over. The United States produce largely certain qualities of gloves, but, in spite of hostile duties, is a heavy buyer of the foreign article, chiefly of lighter weights.

Canada may be proud of the quality and style of the goods which her several large factories turn out. No better heavy and lined gloves are made anywhere, while the

"mocha" undressed grades meet the wants of the most crucial trade. Our own makers pretty well monopolize the home market, not necessarily on account of protection, but on the strength of merit. Our people are per capita large consumers of kid gloves. They are generally very exacting, preferring good, reliable qualities. The trade is well served by French kid glove agencies, several of the best French houses having regularly constituted agents in this country.

LADIES' GOODS.

S. Greenshields, Son & Co. are showing an exquisite line of ladies' leather belts for spring and summer season, in white, Danish red tans, cream and black, in 1½, 1¾, 2 and 2½ inches. Also elastic belts in black and navy, 2½ and 3 inches. Elastic belting by the yard.



Mr. Edward Gurney, President Toronto Board of Trade.