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New Knitting Machines.

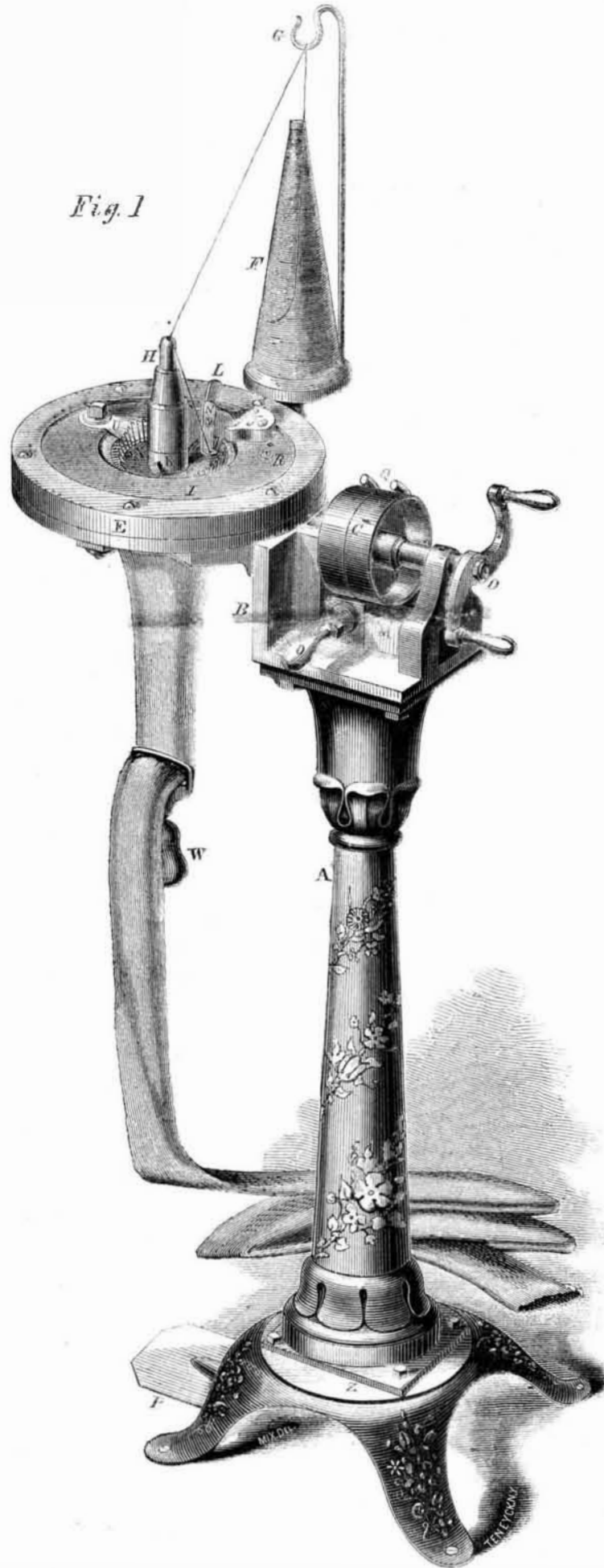
The art of knitting is one of the most useful inventions, because it is really the only method by which textile goods of a truly elastic character can be manufactured. In connection with a description of the beautiful and improved knitting machines which illustrate this article, we will give a brief history of the rise of the art.

Superficial orators and authors often speak and write of this art as if it were as ancient as father Noah himself; but there is no substantial evidence of it having been known or practiced prior to the early part of the sixteenth century. Savery, a French author, states that about that time it was invented in Scotland, thence introduced into France, from which country it soon spread over all Europe. Its utility was at once appreciated, and it was not only eagerly learned by the female peasantry of the cottage, but high-born dames, in castles and courts, met together and knit their husbands' hose, while they chatted over the news of the day, each furnishing her quota of information to the charming circle, in the absence of newspapers.

Prior to the invention of knitting by hand, all stockings and hose were made of milled cloth; but these were soon discarded after the new fabrics appeared. The natives of the Shetland Isles, with the fine wool which they have at command, knit some very beautiful and fine hose; and it is a matter of history, that one of the girls of that northern country had once knit a pair so fine that they were drawn through her finger-ring, and afterwards presented to George the Fourth, who displayed them at his levees.

The first machine for knitting stockings of which we have any record, was invented by William Lea, of Woodborough, England, and its origin is founded on a romantic love affair. While a student in Cambridge he fell in love with a pretty girl, and being of an ardent temperament, he married her, in contravention of the statutes of the University, and for this cause was expelled by the hard-hearted old professors, who knew all about Latin and Greek and but little about an inventor's love. The prospects of William Lea's advancement in the Church were now cut off, and being poor, it is stated that he was supported by his young wife, who was a most skillful knitter of stockings. One evening, while musing sadly at seeing his young wife working late by the solitary lamp, it occurred to him that iron fingers might be made to do the work imposed on her for him, and that quite a number of loops could be made almost in an instant. He at once devoted himself to the construction of such a machine, and success soon crowned his efforts in the pro-

AIKEN'S KNITTING MACHINE.



duction of what is called "the old stocking frame," which was used for two centuries just about in the same condition as he left it.

He exhibited his knitting-loom before Queen Elizabeth, but that haughty dame refused him a patent, on the ground that his invention

would deprive the poor hand-knitters of employment—a stupid notion not yet entirely eradicated from society. Lea, however, was not dismayed at this result, as we read that he had no less than nine knitting-frames in operation in 1597, and that it was esteemed a high honor by every man who was employed by him, inasmuch as each wore a silver needle, ornamented with a chain and clasp, for a breast-pin.

That enterprising monarch, Henry the Fourth, of France, having heard of Lea's invention, and how he was so ill-treated both by Queen Bess and her successor, King Jamie, invited him to that country, with all his machines and workmen, and Lea soon commenced the business at Rouen, in Normandy. Everything at first promised success to his undertaking, but the king, his patron, having been assassinated by a bigoted monk, he was soon proscribed on account of his religion, and having been compelled to flee for his life, sought refuge in Paris, where he soon afterward died in great poverty. Such is the brief history of the inventor of the first knitting machine who was a benefactor to the human race. His frame made plain knit fabrics only. In 1756 Jediah Strut, of Derby, England, invented the machine for making ribbed hosiery, and by enlarging it Guernsey frocks and undershirts were also made. All these were knit with selvages, which had to be closed by hand in forming the seams. The round or circular knitting machine is said to have been first invented in France.

We have not been able to ascertain when the first knitting-frames were introduced into our country, but it is claimed that water and steam-power instead of hand-power were first applied here to operate them, and that the improvements which have been called forth to adapt them for such power, have made the American machines the best in the world.

The two represented by the accompanying figures are the result of five years' study and experiment, and no expense has been spared in bringing them to a state of the greatest perfection and simplicity. They are what are called "self-acting," and the latch-needle invented by James Hibbard, from whom the patent has been purchased, is employed in them, and no less than four other patents of recent dates are embraced in various parts and movements in them. Fig. 1 is a circular machine for knitting ribbed hosiery, cuffs for shirts, and bands for drawers. A is the stand, or pillar which supports the machinery on cap B; its base is bolted to the foot-piece Z. There is a fast and loose pulley, C, on the small shaft, D. A bifurcated shipper, Q, moves the belt from the fast to the loose pulley to stop the machine when a certain length of hosiery, S, is knit; when the weight, W, which feeds off the knit fabric reaches the treddle, P, it bears it down, and a rod inside the pillar, connected with a spring, then moves the shipper, and directs the belt on the loose pulley, when the machine stops. After the weight, W, is again moved upward on S, the belt is placed on the fast pulley by the hand-lever, O, in catch, M, and the knitting again proceeds.

K is a metal cone connected to the ring-plate, I, by a bent arm, J. The plate, I, is revolved by having a ring-gear on its under side, matching with a pinion on the inner end of driving-shaft, D. There is a cam groove

[Continued on page 328.]

[Concluded from the first page.]

in the underside of the revolving plate, I, which actuates the inner end of the looping needles, and pushes them in and out alternately, to throw off made loops in rows and form new ones. There are two sets of needles, one vertical and the other horizontal, and one thread feeds them both, from the spool, F, passing over guide, G, through the cone eye, H, thence into another eye in traveler, N, which, as it revolves, feeds it on to the needles, the one set working alternately between the other and making the ribs. A cam-groove in the cone, K, moves the vertical needles up and down alternately. E is a stationary ring-plate on the machine. L is a tension-bar which keeps the needles firm, and v opens any latch of a needle which, from any cause, may have been kept closed, so that devices are arranged to meet every contingency that may arise in the operation. A needle can be put in or taken out of the conical hub, K, at any moment by removing a key, X; the same facilities are furnished for removing and adjusting the horizontal needles in plate, I. The *throw* of the needles, to make long or short stitches, can be changed by turning a screw, R. As each hooked needle has a revolving latch on its end, when the thread is laid in a hook the latch closes, the hook is drawn in, then thrust out again, when the latch opens, permitting the loop to pass up on the needle-shank, then another thread is laid on the hook of the needle, the latch closes, is drawn in again, and the loop formed on the needle is pushed off and over its point, forming part of the knit fabric, and so on, each needle doing its part in the circle. The two series of needles work harmoniously together, producing a continuous web, S, of ribbed fabric. Any girl of ordinary ability is capable of tending with ease ten of these machines, making about 70 dozen pairs of fine ribbed hosiery per day—each loom using but a single thread, and the total making 108,000,000 loops per diem. The circular ribbed tubular fabric, after being taken from this machine, is cut into proper lengths for stockings, which are footed on the machine represented by figure 2, which we will now describe.

This machine knits plain work with one set of needles, and makes a common web with a selvage at each side. A represents the frame-work to which the operative part of the machine is attached. B is the needle-plate in which the needles slide; C is the driving pulley, and D the main shaft. R is a reciprocating bar for operating the needles. On the middle of shaft D is a pinion, K, fitting into one, O, on the vertical stud, H, which has a slotted crank, J, attached by a pin to the vibrating rod, T, and is secured by a pin to the bar, R, that moves back and forth operating the needles, and also carrying the two threads from the spools, F, on frame, L, through the eyes on carriers, N N, and delivering them on the needles to form two loops for the footing of a pair of stockings at one operation. Y is a toothed bar for keeping the fabric in its proper position while being knit. This bar swings upon pivots, U U, and is brought forward by pressing the spring, Q, downward, and when down a new stocking is put on, or one that is footed taken off. The weights, W W, feed off the knit fabric as in figure 1. Z Z are gages for setting the length of a foot to be knit. E E E are guide-bars, under which the reciprocating bar, R, moves. P P P are selvage guides, by which the threads from the spools are, at every stroke, guided over the needles, making a perfectly true selvage without a failure. By the screw, X, the throw of the needles can also be increased or diminished. The loops are formed by latch-needles in this machine, in the same manner as in figure 1.

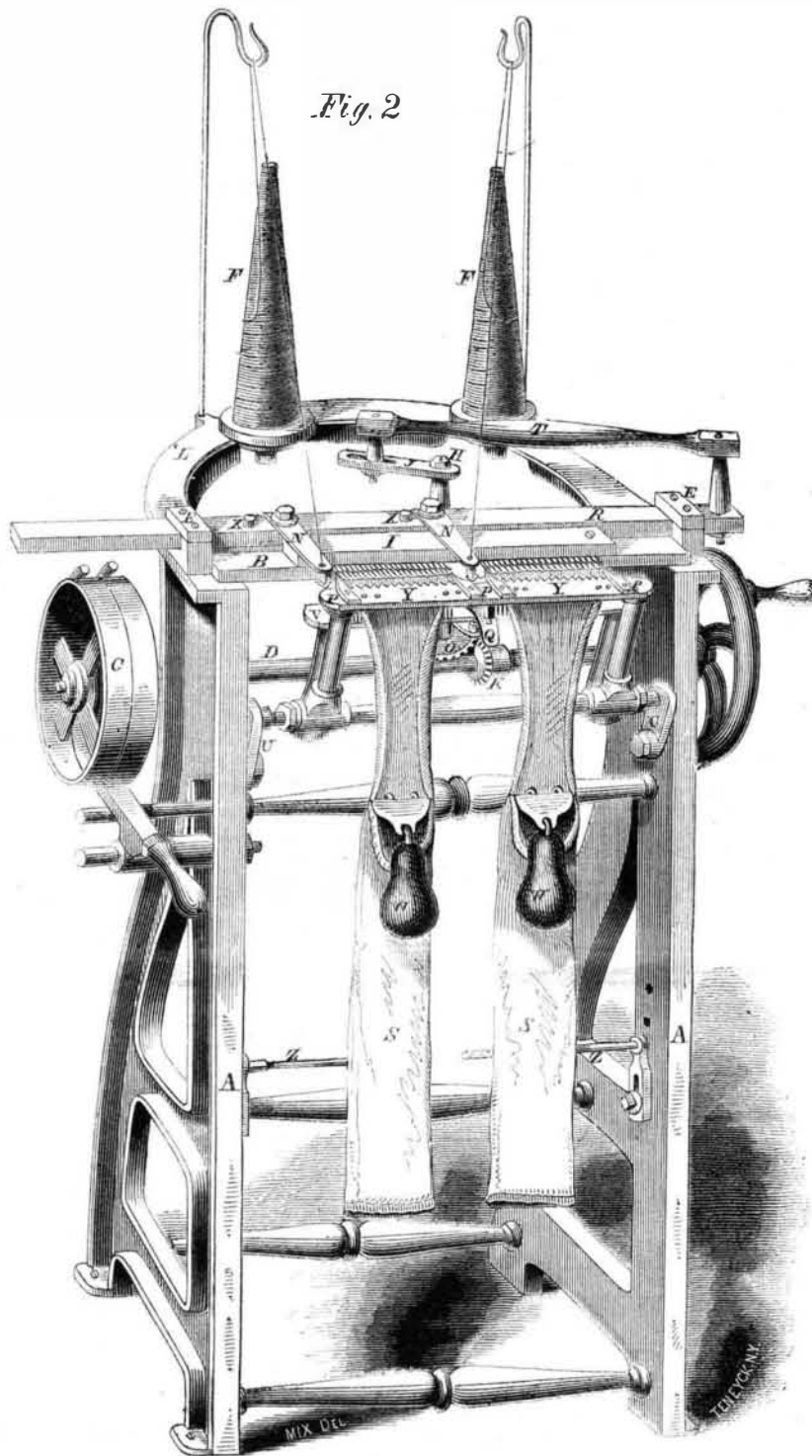
It will be understood that the feet of these hose are closed at the sides by hand, but this is an easy and short operation. One of the machines (Fig. 1) can fit on a stand like a sewing machine, and may be operated in the

same manner; and from their portability and completeness, it appears to us, that in their present state they must soon occupy a position in families equal to the sewing machine.

One girl can tend two of these represented by figure 2, and foot 30 dozen pairs of fine

hose per day. The machine illustrated by figure 1 is the invention of J. B. Aiken, and the one by figure 2 that of W. Aiken. The circular-ribbed machines can be used to advantage on various kinds of work, without the aid of the footing one figure 2. J. B. Aiken manufactures circular-ribbed and plain

AIKEN'S KNITTING MACHINE.



knitting machines of all sizes and gages, from one which knits the smallest misses' stocking up to one which makes a heavy knit jacket. Patents for these machines have been applied for, through the Agency of this office, in foreign countries, and further information concerning their price, &c., may be obtained by addressing J. B. Aiken, No. 84 Elm-street, Merchants' Exchange, Manchester, N. H., where they may be seen at all times in operation.

Barking and Renovating Trees.

The *Gardener's (London) Chronicle* says:—"The system of stripping the bark off the trunks of trees, for the purpose of destroying the insects which infest them, has now been generally applied to a large number in the Champs Elysees, and elsewhere in Paris, and has led to the discovery of a curious but important fact. It appears that trees may be deprived of the whole of their bark, not only without experiencing any injury, but even with considerable advantage, the operation tending to increase their power of vegetation. Elms, for example, which, before the oper-

ation, did not increase more than one or two millimetres in diameter in each year, have been found to increase four or five when stripped of their bark. Trees having a very thin bark, such as the birch and others, need not be stripped to obtain a similar result; it is sufficient for the purpose to make longitudinal incisions in the bark by means of a kind of three-bladed scarificator. It is now intended to subject all the young elms in a languishing state to this treatment throughout Paris, it having answered perfectly with those planted on the fortifications. It has long been the practice where trees have been denuded of their bark by cattle, to coat them over with some kind of composition, and in most cases the result has been highly satisfactory."—[As we have seen this paragraph copied into other papers we would state that we understand it to mean, not the removal of the entire bark to the wood of the trunk, but the outside rough bark, leaving the under cuticle unbroken. As the sap of trees flows between the outer bark and the wood of the trunk, the removal of the entire bark would be fatal to their life.—Eds.]

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OF THE
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

ENLARGEMENT.

Volume I., Number 1—New Series.

The Publishers of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN respectfully announce to their readers and the public generally, that, on the first day of July next (1859), their journal will be enlarged and otherwise greatly improved; and at that time will be commenced "Volume I., No. 1, New Series," which will afford a more suitable opportunity for the commencement of new subscriptions than is likely to occur again for many years.

The form of the journal will be somewhat changed from what it now is, so as to render it better adapted for binding and preservation and instead of eight pages in each number as now, there will be sixteen and in a completed yearly volume the number of pages will be doubled to 322, or 416 more than now.

The SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN is published at a price which places it within the reach of all; and as a work of reference for the Workshop, Manufactory, Farm and House, hold, no other journal exceeds or even equals it in the value and utility of its information. Its practical recipes alone oft-times repay the subscription price ten-fold. Inventors will find it, as heretofore, the mirror of the Patent Office, and the reliable record of every claim issued weekly by the Office, the list being officially reported for its columns.

With the enlargement of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, we shall be enabled to widen the sphere of our operations, omitting none of the features which now characterizes it, but adding many new ones, which will render the work more valuable to all classes of the community than it has heretofore, among which is the devoting of space to a Price Current, and a column or two to the Metal and Lumber markets, and such other branches of trade as may be interesting and useful.

The increased outlay to carry out our design of enlargement will amount to eight thousand dollars a year on our present edition; and in view of this we appeal to our readers and friends to take hold and aid in extending our circulation. Think of getting, at our most liberal club rates, a yearly volume containing about 600 original engravings and 322 pages of useful reading matter, for less than three cents a week! Who can afford to be without it at even ten times this sum?

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