

or designs of embroidery or lace, called medallions, are set into the yokes. Medallions and short pieces of embroidery and lace are worked up into many intricate patterns. Much artistic skill is exercised in trimming muslin underwear, and all manufacturers are compelled to produce new designs constantly. They copy much from one another, and salesmen are expected to buy samples of attractive garments made by competitors and send them to their factories to be imitated. When new garments are made in a factory that has a high-priced designer, and sold to the stores, samples are very soon bought by representatives of other factories, so that when a novelty is put on the market the originator can retain the benefit of it but a short time, perhaps a few days only.

Showy underwear is popular. It is the opinion of many manufacturers that most women care more for showy effects than for the quality of the materials used. In New England, however, there is still a considerable demand for underwear made with fine seams, hems, and tucks, and neat embroidery.

Until about five years ago muslin underwear was somewhat standardized. Manufacturers made large quantities of garments of the same materials, the same design, and the same standard of quality. The products of factories were then largely sold through jobbers. In the last few years there has been an ever-increasing demand for new styles. The constant change of style is the greatest uncertainty of the industry and the greatest problem of the manufacturer. The demand for new styles is probably greater in the muslin-underwear trade than in any other branch of manufacture, except the manufacture of outer apparel. A large underwear factory has hundreds of designs and gets out new samples every week. A traveling salesman that goes over his route four times a year must show new styles each time or he can not sell goods. Each design is made up in much smaller quantities than were formerly produced in any style. Changes are so numerous and frequent that no manufacturer can afford to risk making up large quantities of stock, especially in the higher-priced goods. Except in the cheaper styles, no goods are made in quantity until samples have been sent out and orders received. This system necessitates the making up of goods for many small orders and for many varied styles, and materially increases the cost of designing and manufacturing. Under this system also it is very difficult to enforce efficiency rules in any factory. Piece prices are fixed on each new style, and often there is trouble with the employees about fixing them. More skill is required of employees than was the case when the product was mostly in staple styles. Wages have steadily increased and working hours have been shortened.

In the last five years new machines have been invented which have greater speed than the old machines. These include special machines for hemstitching, tucking, ruffling, for sewing rows of lace and embroidery together, and for attaching them to the bodies of the garments. Competition between manufacturers is keener than ever. They now sell more largely to retailers direct than formerly. To do a successful business it is necessary for a manufacturer to give close and constant attention to the changes of fashion and to adapt his designing, manufacturing, and selling methods to new labor and trade conditions.