

## CHAPTER VII.

### STYLE DESIGNING.

#### IMPORTANCE OF DESIGNING.

Designing has much to do with the success of the muslin-underwear manufacturer. The houses that are able to create and put out novel effects can more readily sell their output. Often new designs are used as leaders to aid the selling of staple lines. Therefore, the manufacturer who employs a competent designer is better able to meet the demands of the market than the manufacturer who attempts to satisfy the trade with staple lines.

The bulk of the finer grades of women's muslin underwear is sold directly to retailers, while the cheaper lines are still handled to a great extent through jobbing houses. Styles in finer grade garments change very frequently, and no manufacturers carry a stock of this description, such garments being usually made to order for retailers. On the other hand, the cheaper grades remain more uniform in style and consequently offer greater advantages to the jobber. Furthermore, the cheaper grades are generally manufactured by the smaller concerns of limited capital which are unable to afford the increased credits and the selling organization necessary to reach the retailer.

As has been stated above, the rapid change in styles has had the effect of making orders smaller. No retailer will run the risk of being left with a large stock of goods on hand, due to a radical change in styles, which he will have to sacrifice at a loss. Therefore, he prefers to buy direct from the manufacturer rather than through a middleman, as he is assured of more prompt delivery and can often make a closer price. Many large retail stores have their own designers and will take sample garments to the manufacturers to have them made up. The lowest bidder will receive the order, and this has made competition very sharp.

A complaint constantly heard was in regard to manufacturers copying the styles of one another. It was said that a concern would go to great expense and trouble in getting out a new design, which, if it proved to be popular with consumers, would be imitated by many rivals, who, by making up the garment of cheaper material, would undersell the original designer and manufacturer and thus deprive them of the reward that should justly have come to them. A manufacturer interviewed said:

If an article could be branded, thereby making it necessary for a retailer to carry same on account of the demand, matters would be much simpler, but there is not enough distinctiveness in muslin underwear to make this practical.

The manager of an establishment which had a patented garment had the following to say concerning this practice. Large sums had been expended in advertising this garment which was then copied by others and sold by them all over the country. A salesman was sent to various cities and instructed to buy specimens of the copied garment