

Sewing-machine, n. A mechanical contrivance which forms one of the most valuable inventions of the 19th century. Its discovery originated from the fertile brain of an ingenious, but poor mechanic, one Elias Howe, a native of Mass., who, in 1841, after painful and laborious efforts in the elaboration of his project, obtained a patent therefor in May of that year. Not succeeding at first in inducing his own countrymen to patronize his invention, Howe went to England, where he met with as little encouragement; and was obliged at length to sell his patent for \$1,250 and a royalty of \$15 per machine, to a staymaker. On his return to the U. States, Howe found his patent pirated by a wealthy company, but after considerable litigation, he succeeded in establishing his rights, and ultimately realized a fortune. Howe's invention worked what is called the *lock-stitch*, but so many improvements and modifications have been introduced by subsequent inventors, resulting in varieties of the machine, that we consider it beyond our limits to enter into the various details of their construction. In fact, these machines are so well and widely known, that such descriptions would be needless. The principal of the machines now in use are:—1. *Machines which sew with one thread*; of which one kind make the *through and through*, or *shoemaker's stitch*; while another makes what is termed the *running-stitch*. The *chain-* or *tambour-stitch* is also a single-thread stitch. 2. *Machines which sew with a double-thread*, as the well-known examples patented by Wheeler & Wilson, and others. Machines have also been patented both in this country and in Europe for sewing the soles on shoes and boots, for gloves, for embroidery, &c. Sewing-machines are largely exported from this country to Europe, where they have become in almost as common demand and use as they are in this country.