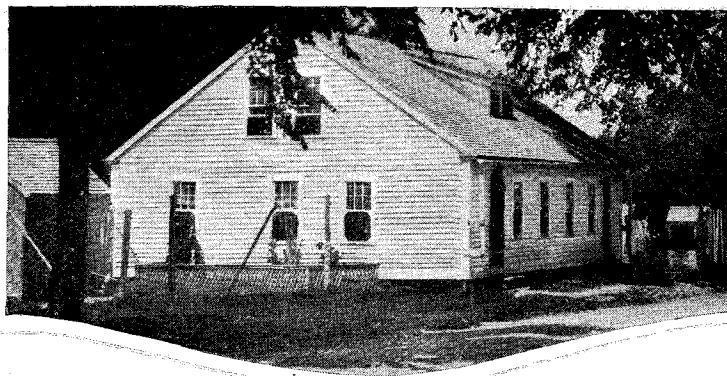




The WORLD'S CORSET KING



The pleasant home in which David Hale Fanning was born in Jewett City, Connecticut, on August 4, 1830.



His forefathers were American colonists, Revolutionary soldiers, ship carpenters, and stalwart blacksmiths

time has covered the most turbulent and highly competitive industrial era ever known to the world. Throughout his labors industrial supermen were battling for control; the way had to be carved as they went along; methods of mass production had to be invented; modes of National and international distribution had to be created. There were no set rules to go by, no previous experience to guide their efforts.

"I don't see how you did it," said a recent visitor to the Royal Worcester plant.

"We work, work, work!" exclaimed the veteran founder instantly.

Judge Gary was a boy in Wheaton, Illinois, and Charles M. Schwab had not been born when David Hale Fanning founded America's first establishment for the manufacture of corsets. When the late J. P. Morgan had just entered

business as a young man of twenty-three, when James J. Hill was working in a steamboat office in St. Paul, when the twenty-one-year-old John D. Rockefeller was junior partner in the firm of Clark & Rockefeller, commission merchants in Cleveland, and when Marshall Field was a dry-goods clerk in Chicago, David Hale Fanning had already established the concern which is now the Royal Worcester Corset Company. Mr. Fanning made an extensive clearing for himself in the thickets of American business before any of these Titans of affairs became established, and to-day he survives nearly all of them.

THE CHIMING OF THE CHURCH BELLS

The gift of quick decisions has been one of Mr. Fanning's conspicuous traits throughout his extraordinary career as

a manufacturer. The first of these decisions of which there is record occurred in the year 1846. He was sixteen years old and was living with his brother's family in Jewett City, Connecticut. One bright Sunday morning he stood at the family well, pumping a pail of water. The sound of a neighboring church bell crossed the sunny landscape to his ears. The bells had a disturbing effect upon the boy; a sense of restlessness pervaded him; new longings took possession of him; there was an answering ring of inner chimes.

At that moment he decided to fare into the world and to make his own way. He hurried to his room, left a note for his brother explaining what he was about to do, assembled a handful of personal belongings, wrapped them in a red bandanna handkerchief, and set out over the tranquil New England road



The world's corset king lives modestly in a democratic, unpretentious home on Woodland Street, Worcester, where he takes keen delight in the plants and flowers of his conservatory

The Outlook Advertising Section

with his meager pack and a heart full of eagerness and courage. In his pocket were two dollars and fifty cents in money and a copy of the Bible. That day he trudged twenty miles.

"What do you think I paid that day for my supper, a night's lodging, and my breakfast?" he asked with a twinkling eye.

I named a sum that made him chuckle. "Sixteen cents," he replied.

During the following years he worked and saved. He worked as a factory hand in Clinton and Worcester, Massachusetts; learned the machinist's trade; became the proprietor of a general store at Groton Junction, Massachusetts; lived for a time in Cleveland, Ohio; and was employed from 1857 to 1861 as a salesman. Balked in his desire to enlist in the Civil War, he resolved to invest his small capital in business, and chose the manufacture of hoop-skirts, then the fad.

He carried in his business the courage and tenacity of a long line of colonial forefathers, among them Edmund Fanning, a soldier in King Philip's War, who was granted land at New London, Connecticut, in 1664.

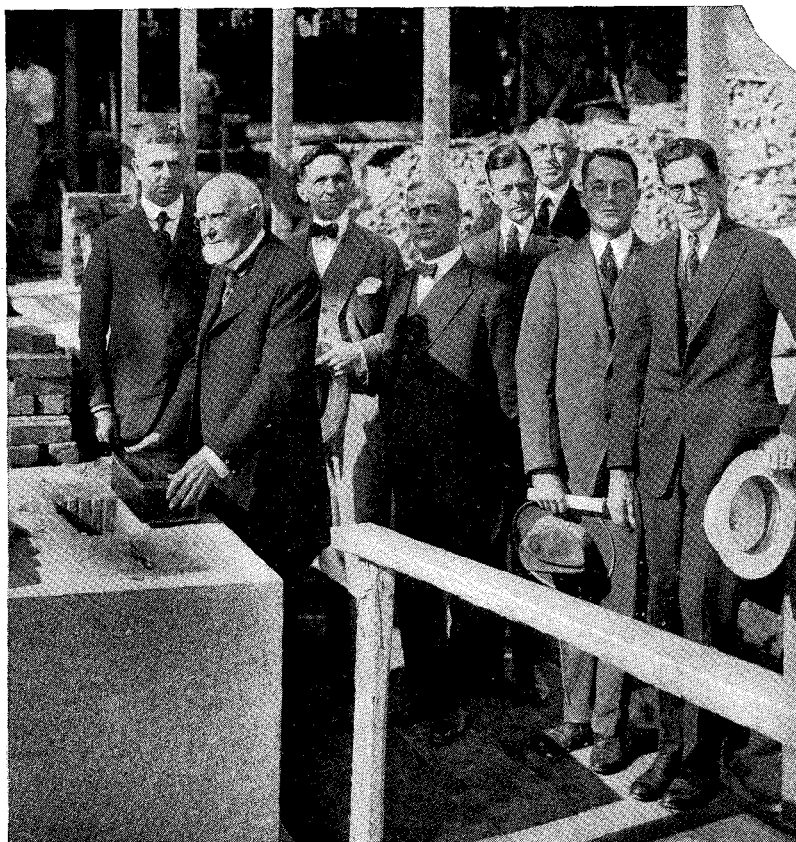
In a small loft room in the rear of the building at Front and Main Streets, Worcester, he began, with two women employees, to manufacture some of the very first hoop-skirts. He drove from place to place with a horse and buggy and established his own distribution for the product. The Fanning hoop-skirts were so excellently designed, so well made, and so altogether satisfactory to the women of his time that his manufacturing facilities were soon greatly overtaxed by the demand.

CORSETS SUCCEED HOOP-SKIRTS

But the hoop-skirt was destined to give way to more modern modes of dress, and Mr. Fanning saw what was coming. From Germany, where the modern corset was invented, and from France, where the ladies of the Revolution had adopted them, there were being imported to America the corsets that were worn here at the time. This gave David Fanning an idea. He perceived that corsets would be more and more in demand, and he soon converted his hoop-skirt manufactory into a corset establishment, the pioneer plant of its kind in this country.

Corsets were not unknown in Rome; and from the steel bands of that ancient time down to to-day continuous flux and change have characterized corset fashions. Few industrial enterprises have been compelled to adapt themselves with more flexible response to the times than those engaged in the manufacture of corsets. And this discloses one of the foremost traits of David Hale Fanning. The amazing resiliency with which he has alertly pursued the windings of his business requirements is one of the engaging spectacles of American industrial performance.

The "skeleton" corset, without fabric



Mr. Fanning placed a sealed copper box of interesting industrial documents in the corner-stone of the new wing of the plant on the morning of September 5, 1919, in the presence of his colleagues

between the bones, with a waistband made of scrim, was one of his first inventions. Marshall Field soon placed

large orders, and the model became extremely popular in the late 1860's. He next won bronze medals in 1876 at the Centennial Exposition with a hand-made corset of black silk with white embroidery, and with his "Queen Bess" model. The silk serge model, with clasps of watch-spring steel, jumped into vogue in 1885, and the high stiff affairs with shoulder-straps appeared in 1892. The Empire girdle, spoon clasp, and wasp-waist models followed each other, and gave way in turn to the straight-front devices of latter days.

MAKERS OF HISTORY

Since the inaugural ball of 1861, when Abraham Lincoln encircled the ballroom with the beautiful wife of Stephen A. Douglas on his arm, there has not been an inaugural ball in Washington in which the corsets manufactured by David Hale Fanning have not figured conspicuously. And since Ellen Terry's historic first appearance in America with Henry Irving, and since Fanny Davenport's first appearance at Niblo's Garden in "Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady," the corsets of this company have never been absent from the American stage.

There must be something about Worcester County, Massachusetts, that fosters distinguished achievements. It was



The height of corset fashion in 1899 was the so-called French model Bon Ton

The Outlook Advertising Section

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A SPOTLESS PLANT

A black and white engraving of a man, likely a historical figure, wearing a high-collared coat and a cravat. The man has dark, wavy hair and a serious expression. The engraving is framed by a simple border.

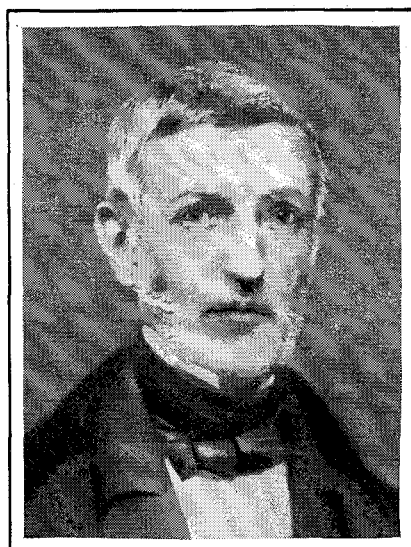
Lynx-eyed inspectors search each cc

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Corsets, Fosters Distinguished Achievements



Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, was a Worcester County woman



George Bancroft, the historian, was a product of Worcester County

set for flaws throughout the process of manufacture. Inspections begin long before the corset-making starts. The first inspection is for color—under powerful arc-lights, where the cloth is closely

examined for correct coloring. There are many shades of a given color that come from the mills, but only identical shades are permitted to enter each corset. Stringent tests for strength are

also made upon receipt of all materials at the Royal Worcester Corset Company shops. Every bolt of cloth, every spool of cotton and silk is tested for strength and rejected if it falls short of requirements.

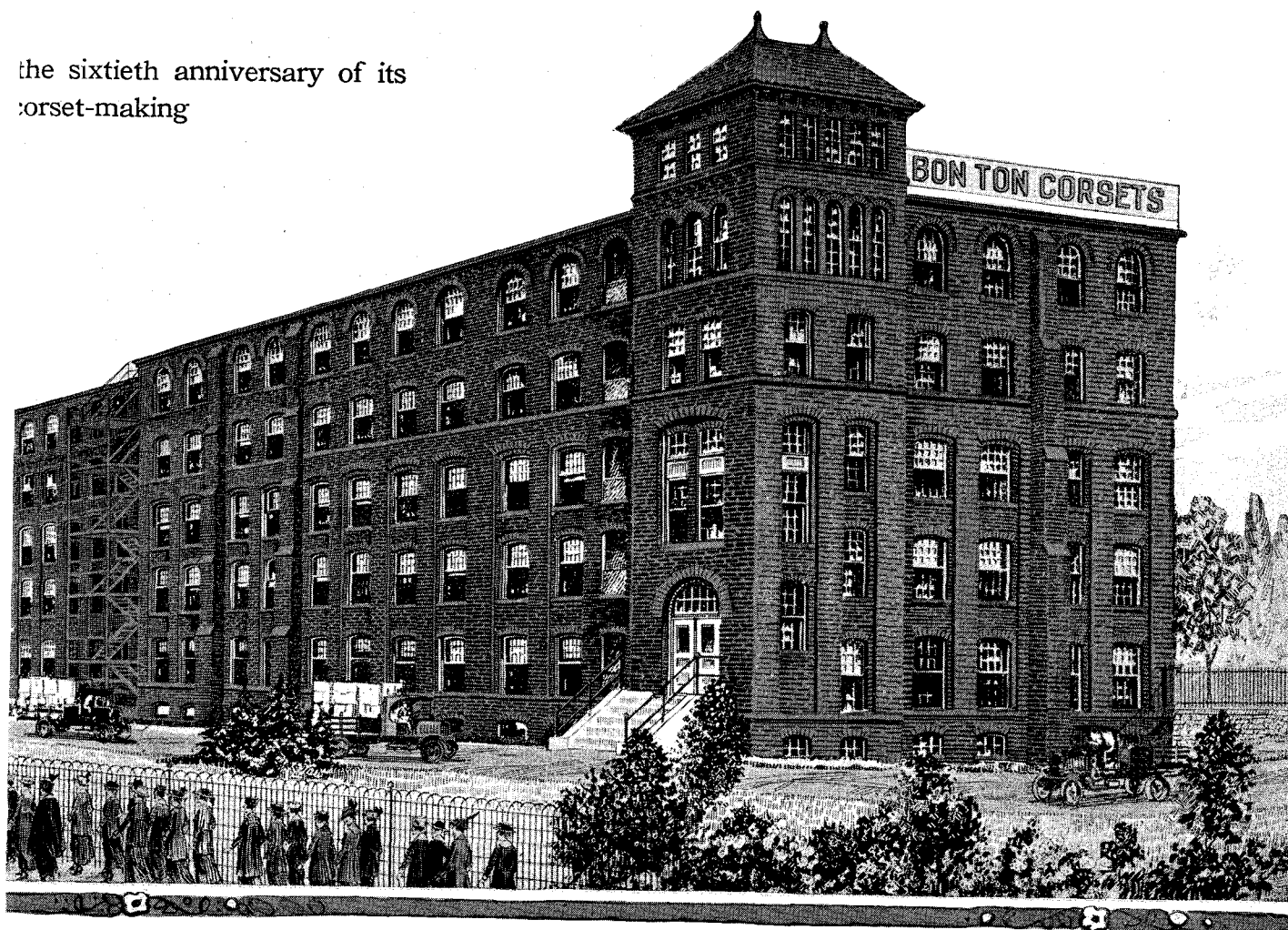
The cutting is done by hand; twenty-four thicknesses of coutil are cut at one stroke of the keen-edged knife. Cloth is always cut so that the strongest threads will pass around the body. When the many different sections of cloth that are to enter the corset have been cut, they are placed carefully in a box to keep them clean on their way to the next operation; in case of the Bon Ton, which is the super-product of the Royal Worcester shops, the parts are placed in bags after every single operation in order that soiling will be reduced to the minimum.

It is said that in Packingtown every by-product is utilized with the exception of the squeal. As high a degree of efficiency prevails in these corset shops; if a scrap of cloth measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ x $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, it can still be used.

2,700 STITCHES PER MINUTE

The enormous stitching-rooms, with their hundreds of power-driven sewing-machines, have the roar of a swarm of airplanes. Some of these machines sew

the sixtieth anniversary of its corset-making



Advertising Section

✧ The WORLD'S CORSET KING ✧



Since Ellen Terry's début, corsets made in Worcester have enhanced the charms of countless favorites of the theater.

respectively with two, three, four, and five needles at a time; 2,700 stitches per minute is the speed of the machines;

millions of stitches per day are taken under the roofs of the plant. In one of the stitching-rooms alone there are as many as 350 Singer sewing-machines, all power-driven; a one horse-power motor operates as many as eleven machines. Thousands of needles are used per week.

The original source of the whalebone, the whale itself, no longer supplies the stays for the modern corset. The boning consists of a specially prepared steel, highly flexible in character, and covered with a special compound; Wundabohn is the name of the boning used in Bon Ton corsets; it is made by a special process, and will not rust nor break; it can be tied in a knot but will return to its original shape when released; it outwears the corset itself. The boning is all done by hand.

THE DANCE OF THE NEEDLES

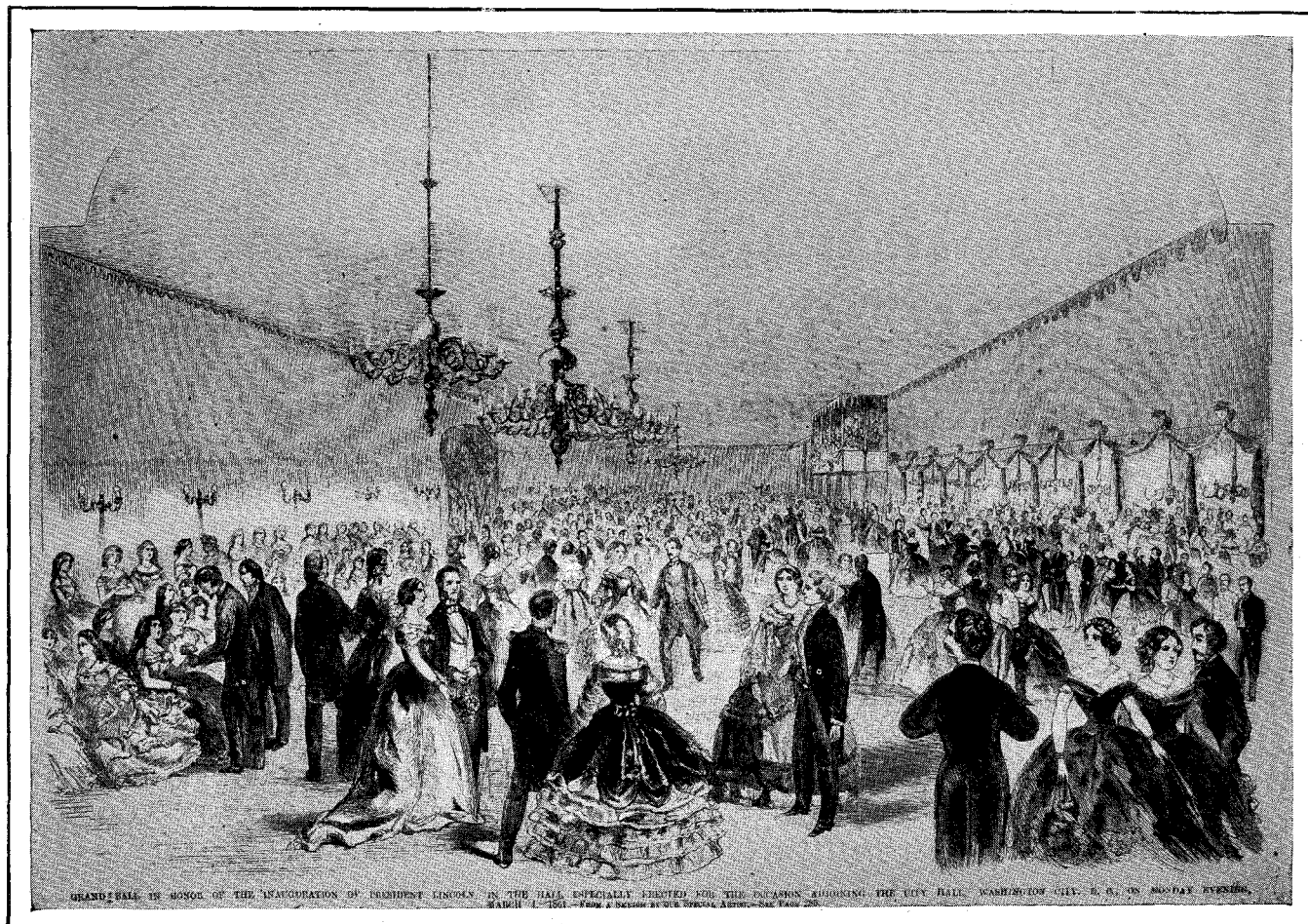
The silk flossing and tacking, done on sewing-machines by highly skillful operatives, is an engaging sight; like an eccentric dancer the sprightly needle roves to and fro, missing the bones by the breadth of a hair. It takes exceptional craftsmanship to avoid hitting the bones with the needle; if a collision occurred with the metal bones at the velocity with which these needles operate, the



Since the days of Fanny Davenport, corsets made by Mr. Fanning have figured prominently on the stage

needle would splinter and delay the work.

The machine shop is a service station



Since Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural ball there has never been an inaugural ball in Washington in which corsets manufactured by David Hale Fanning have not figured

The Outlook Advertising Section

✧ The BON TON Corset Shop's 60th Anniversary ✧

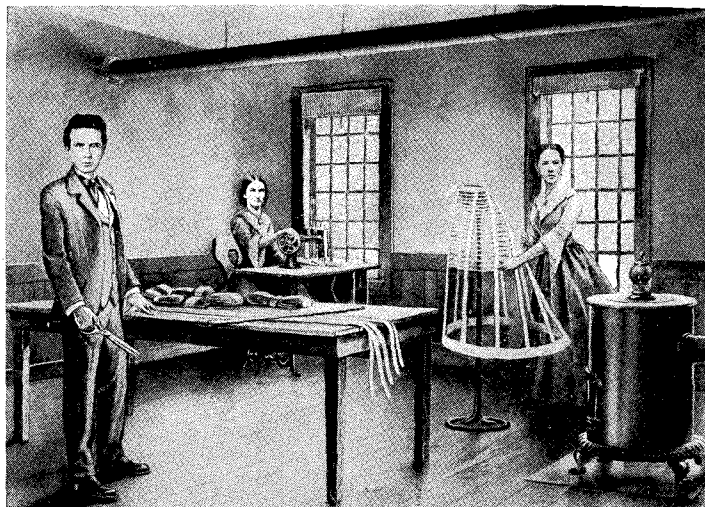
for the more than one thousand sewing and other machines of the plant. It takes ten machinists to look after the many batteries of machines that make Royal Worcester products for their patrons the world over. Hundreds of spare parts are carried at all times to minimize delays in the workrooms.

An ingenious lace-threading machine is the invention of the Royal Worcester Corset Company. The eyelet machines, tacking machines and flossing machines are also achievements in ingenuity. Another machine does joining and stripping at the same time.

A highly organized printing plant is one of the unusual features at Royal Worcester. Fine color work is done by the six printing-presses. Here the company prints all of its labels, tags, forms, folders, booklets, catalogs, and printed exhibits for dealers' window displays throughout the world.

Mr. Fanning has also installed the company's own box factory. It consumes approximately twenty-five tons of box-board per month, or 600,000 pounds a year, turning out pasteboard boxes at an incredible clip, one for each pair of corsets that issues from the workrooms.

One gains still another conception of the magnitude of this company's operations when it is recorded that it transforms into corsets over one million pounds of cotton cloth per year, and that it requires fully 10,000 acres each year to raise the cotton that goes into the product. It takes over 3,500,000 yards of trimmings alone to carry on the labors of this establishment.



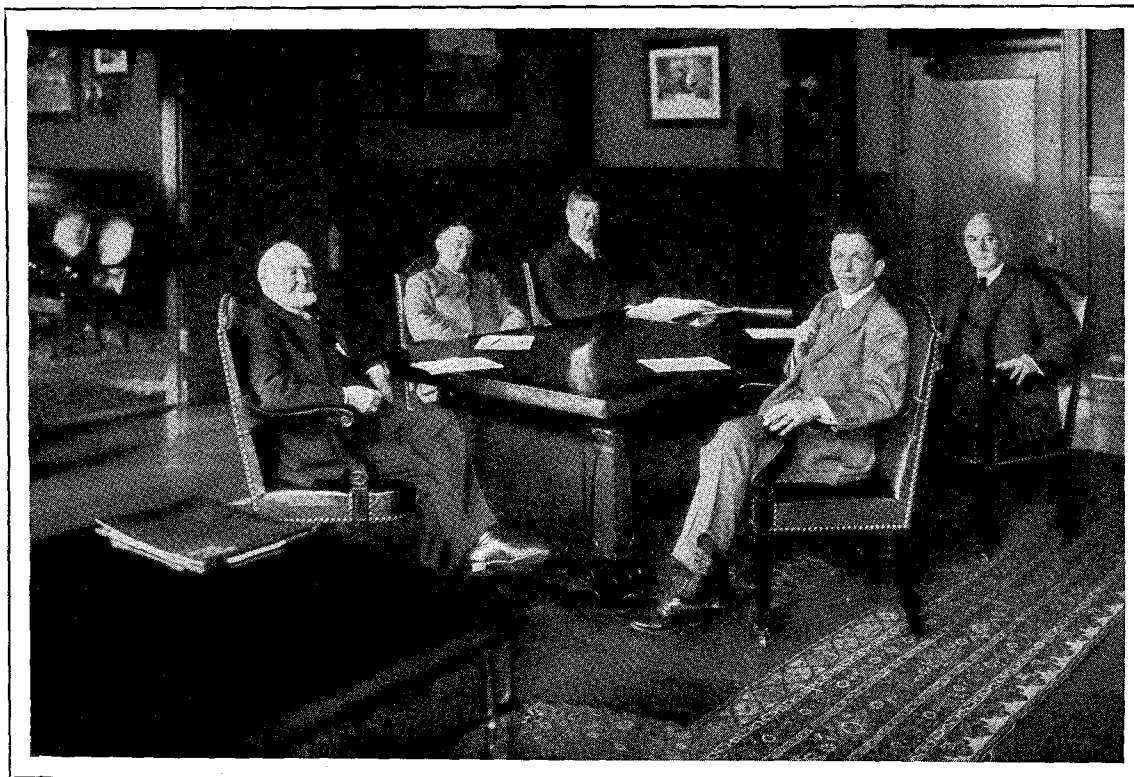
In a small loft room, assisted by two employees, David Hale Fanning laid the foundation of his present large industry by manufacturing hoop-skirts for the women of the 1860's

NEVER HAD A STRIKE

There has never been a strike in the whole sixty years of the history of this company. During turbulent periods, when other factories have been racked with animosity, the employees of David Hale Fanning have worked contentedly on. This reflects unusually good treatment. There isn't a pleasanter place to work in New England. The workers are paid not only a living wage, but a sav-

ing wage. All workers in the shops receive in addition to their wages each week a bonus equal to twenty per cent of their wages. Some of the women in the stitching-rooms have worked there for forty-four years; many have worked there for twenty, twenty-five, thirty, and forty years.

The kindly watchfulness of Mr. Fanning toward his family of workers is everywhere apparent. If a girl is losing weight or looking badly, he sends her



David Hale Fanning F. R. Batchelder E. P. Bennett E. J. Seward W. F. Brooks

The veteran corset manufacturer in conference with his Board of Directors

The Outlook Advertising Section



A thousand power-driven sewing-machines roar like a swarm of airplanes in the vast stitching-rooms of the shops

away to recuperate at one of the numerous institutions he has endowed. He looks after his help with the same fatherly eye that watched over his employees when he was manufacturing hoop-skirts in the tiny loft room sixty years ago. The shops are equipped with spacious fire hallways and stairs; the entire plant can be emptied of all its workers in a few seconds. The flower-gardens flood the workrooms with fragrance throughout the summer.

A FACTORY FLOODED WITH SUNSHINE

There probably is no sunnier manufacturing plant in the world than that of the Royal Worcester Corset Company. Mr. Fanning has himself thought out the architectural composition of each new unit of space that has been added; his architects have merely designed the definite ideas furnished by him. The workers thrive in the airy, sunny work-rooms.

If the visitor to the Royal Worcester is impressed by the splendor of Mr. Fanning's executive office, with its imported rugs, gleaming mahoganies, gold medals, Dutch tiles, the huge loving-cup made to order by Tiffany and presented by the employees, he is sure to catch his breath in amazement when he enters the palatial restaurant and recreation-room which Mr. Fanning has built for his workers. There is nothing like it in America. It is artistic and vastly inviting. The sun can pour in from three sides of this room.

The windows are hung with tapestry shades and silk hangings, the floors and walls are hand-made tiling. The auditorium seats more than 1,600 people; when used for a lunchroom at noon, its tables seat fully 800. There is a roomy stage with piano and row of footlights. Interior decorators must have tackled the sun-parlor with relish; its steamer-chairs and wicker furniture, upholstered with tapestry, are very alluring.

An orchestra composed entirely of workers gives frequent concerts at the noon hour.

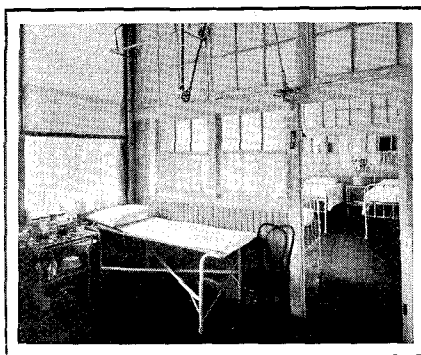
Mr. Fanning's welfare work does not end with the workers. He has endowed numerous philanthropies. The Hahnemann Hospital and the new Girls' Trade

School, both in Worcester, and the charming public park in Jewett City, Connecticut, his birthplace, are notable results of his benefactions. He has also made recent substantial money gifts to the endowment fund of the Slater Library in the latter city.

A WORLD-WIDE LEAGUE OF MERCHANTS

It is no wonder that merchants throughout the world are eager to handle a product manufactured by workers doing their tasks under such attractive conditions. The tranquil craftsmanship that prevails in this establishment is a guaranty of quality that no mere printed slip could possibly impart. The name Bon Ton or Royal Worcester on a pair of corsets enables a merchant to hold his customers because they are satisfied customers, whether he provides corsets for miners' daughters in Alaska, for the bonnie ladies of Scotland, for the slim waists of Siam, or for the fashionables of Patagonia.

The strength and centralized control of Royal Worcester distribution are notable in modern merchandising. The company sells only to the dealer direct; there is no chance for misunderstandings through middlemen or jobbers. The one-price policy inaugurated at the start by Mr. Fanning has never been abandoned. There is no bickering, no concessions for large orders. Whether you place an order for one dozen or for 100,000 dozen pairs of the company's



Working conditions are unusually sanitary and hygienic, complete in all details, down to a sunny hospital ward and a special water supply

The Outlook Advertising Section

The BON TON Corset Shop's 60th Anniversary



Royal Worcester employees enjoying a dance after luncheon in the palatial recreation and luncheon hall recently built for them by Mr. Fanning

product, you pay the same price. This protects the small merchant, and does not give the large merchant a selling advantage with his patrons.

The best materials, workmanship, and design are unfailing features of this product. The O-I-C corset clasp, invented and patented three years ago, has proved immensely popular. The nub or post of this clasp is conical in shape, so that when hooked the clasp cannot pinch the flesh, break, squeak, twist, always stays flat, and the nub cannot pull out.

A SCHOOL OF CORSETRY

The Bon Ton School of Corsetry is conducted entirely through the mails and is one of the very few of its kind in America. It was established by Mr. Fanning to train saleswomen, and is of great advantage to merchants. It pro-

vides a valuable service to the purchaser of corsets, since it teaches saleswomen the technique of correct measuring, fitting and lacing; it teaches alteration; it includes the study of form and anatomy. There are 2,000 pupils now enrolled in this course, and 1,000 diplomas have already been awarded to pupils who have completed it. This course is offered free of charge. It was undertaken upon the recommendation of one of the company's sales representatives to fill a definite dealer need. It is of general value to the industry as a whole, since the course is in nowise restricted to saleswomen employed in stores handling Bon Ton and Royal Worcester products.

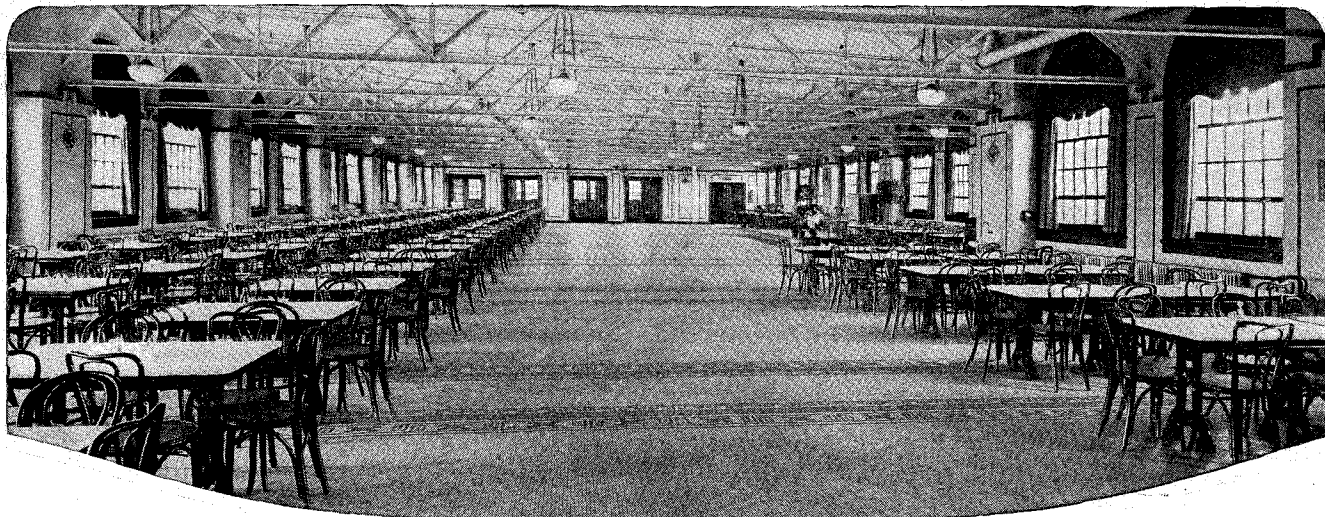
Between 300 and 400 different styles are carried in the pattern room of this foremost of corset manufactories. The sizes range as high as 54. Curiously, there is but one State in the Union where corsets of size 54 are regularly

ordered—the State of Maine. The head designer declares that, as a general rule, the bigger the city, the smaller the waists of women.

The favorite corset colors in various parts of the world are an interesting study. In the United States the only colors in general demand are pink and white, pink representing sixty per cent of the demand, and white forty per cent. France indulges in a much wider range of colors; the various pastel shades are ever in demand, including blues, yellows, orchids, and lavenders; and even black is not uncommon in French corset shops. Holland likes écrus and drabs. Swiss women go in almost entirely for white.

A PERMANENT INSTITUTION

For twenty-five years the Royal Worcester Corset Company has carried on



The recreation and luncheon hall contains a completely equipped cafeteria, presided over by an expert chef and assistants, where wholesome, well-cooked food is served at cost to all employees. Several warmers are provided for the use of those who bring their own food from home

The Outlook Advertising Section

✧ The WORLD'S CORSET KING ✧



The employees' rest-room is artistic and vastly inviting. There is nothing like it in any other factory in America

an extensive world trade; it is a pioneer in the world-wide distribution of American-made garments. The sales representatives of the Royal Worcester Corset Company traverse the world. One, a woman who lives in Sydney, Australia, makes an annual journey to the coast towns of South Africa, to many of the interior points, and to all of Tasmania. She is known by merchants from Portuguese East Africa to the ends of New Zealand.

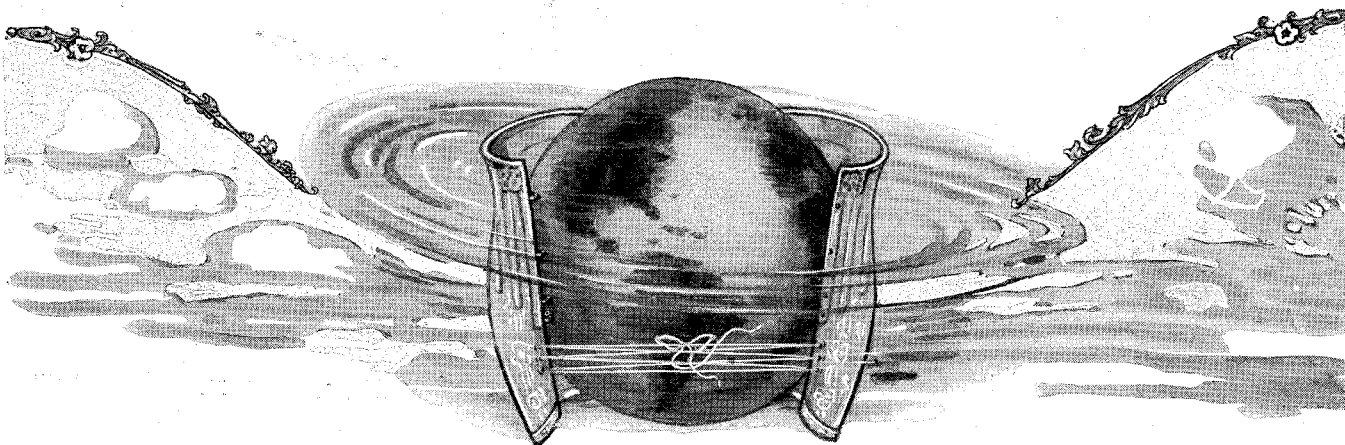
The executives of Royal Worcester have maps of the world beneath the

glass tops of their desks. Mr. Fanning has picked men of huge horizons as his lieutenants. His own desk is equipped with more electric push-buttons than I ever saw on a desk before. He can instantly summon assistants from any part of the big plant. One almost expects him to press a button and call in a salesman from the Transvaal.

At the age of ninety-one this untiring manufacturer, who was born when Andrew Jackson was President of the United States, who has run his business without an interruption for sixty years,

remains a star performer in the world of affairs. He sits at his desk instead of at his fireside. While others are retiring from business, he rears up with a new invention and patents it. While many others talk grandly about service, he performs it.

He has manufactured not only an important product, but an important and permanent institution. He has helped many thousands of merchants to earn a good living and has enabled many millions of women to be stylish with comfort.



The Outlook Advertising Section