

**INTRODUCTION AND  
EARLY PROGRESS OF THE  
COTTON MANUFACTURE  
IN THE UNITED STATES**

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Introduction and Early Progress of the Cotton Manufacture in the United States by Samuel Batchelder

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"How strange it is that so few attempts have been made to trace the rise and progress of this great branch of industry, the Cotton Manufacture; to mark the successive steps of its advancement, the solidity of the foundations on which it rests, and the influence which it has already had, and must continue to have, on the number and condition of the people!"—*McCulloch, Edinburgh Review.*

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## P R E F A C E.

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The Cotton Manufacture has attained such importance in the United States, as to excite an interest as to its early history. Many circumstances, apparently of little consequence at the time, depend at present on personal recollection, and unless placed upon record now, will, a few years hence, only be recognised in the uncertainty of tradition.

I propose therefore to bring together such particulars as I have collected from time to time to gratify my own curiosity, and to add such as can still be obtained from any reliable authorities, in relation to the introduction and progress of the Cotton Manufacture in this country; and some sketches of the state of the business in other countries, particularly in Great Britain, at the time when their cotton machinery was introduced here.

In pursuing my inquiries, besides the information received from many others, I have

to acknowledge my particular obligations to Mr. Zachariah Allen of Providence, Mr. Edward E. Manton of the Manufacturers' Mutual Insurance Company, Boston, and to Col. Joshua Herrick, who at the age of about eighty years, is still actively engaged in the employment of the government, and able to communicate personally his recollections of the first Cotton Factory built in this country, at Beverly, Massachusetts.

It has been very difficult to obtain such information as I wished respecting matters of which there is no record, and in which no one has hitherto felt sufficient interest to transmit, in any available form, the facts within their knowledge; so that the following pages should only be considered an imperfect attempt to preserve such fragments as may be useful to some one, who may in future be able to treat the subject more satisfactorily.

SAMUEL BATCHELDER.

*Cambridge, October, 1833.*



## COTTON MANUFACTURE IN THE UNITED STATES.

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WHEN our attention is called to the history of the Cotton Manufacture, we cannot fail to be struck with the change that has taken place, both in this country and in Europe, during the life of a single generation. Nor is this change confined to those actually employed in the business, but extends to the habits, occupation, and condition of a great proportion of the population.

It was only by reason of a fortunate concurrence of several improvements in labor-saving machinery that such an extension of the cultivation and manufacture of cotton was rendered possible.

Without the application of rollers to the drawing of the thread, and the consequent use of water-power in spinning, the whole population of Great Britain, exclusive of those employed in agriculture, would not be able to produce the quantity of yarn now

spun in that country; and without the application of steam-power, all the waterfalls in the island would be insufficient to drive the machinery.

Without the invention of Whitney's cotton-gin it would have been impossible for this country to have supplied the raw material for the increasing wants of the manufacturer;—and when by these means the production of cotton yarn had exceeded the ability of the hand-loom weaver, to convert it into cloth, the invention of the power-loom not only supplied the deficiency, but gave a new impulse to all the preliminary branches of the manufacture.

It is thus that mutual wants concur to stimulate improvements; and the introduction of cotton machinery,—which in England was opposed by mobs and violence on account of an apprehension that laborers would be thrown out of employment, and in this country was regarded with little favor, from the fear that the female part of the population, by the disuse of the distaff, should become idle—has resulted in the profitable employment of a much larger number than could have been supported by the business in the former laborious process, without the aid of machinery, and, besides, has reduced the cost of cotton

clothing to a degree which adds much to the comfort and probably also to the average duration of human life.

In speaking of the cotton manufacture, I wish to be understood as indicating such operations as are carried on by the use of machinery driven by water or steam power, or by other means than the direct application of human labor. The introduction of such machinery marks a great era in the world's history, not simply in relation to those directly employed in the business, but also by the market afforded, and the encouragement given for raising such quantities of the raw material as the whole population of the world would scarcely be able to spin and weave, by the use of the single spindle and the hand-shuttle.

Until about forty years previous to the commencement of our Revolutionary War, all the fabrics made of cotton were woven on the common loom, in which the shuttle was thrown through the web with one hand, and caught with the other, and this operation repeated for every thread of the woof. The yarn was spun upon a wheel with a single spindle, and the cotton was prepared for spinning by the laborious operation of carding with a pair of hand-cards.

Stock cards were substituted for hand cards