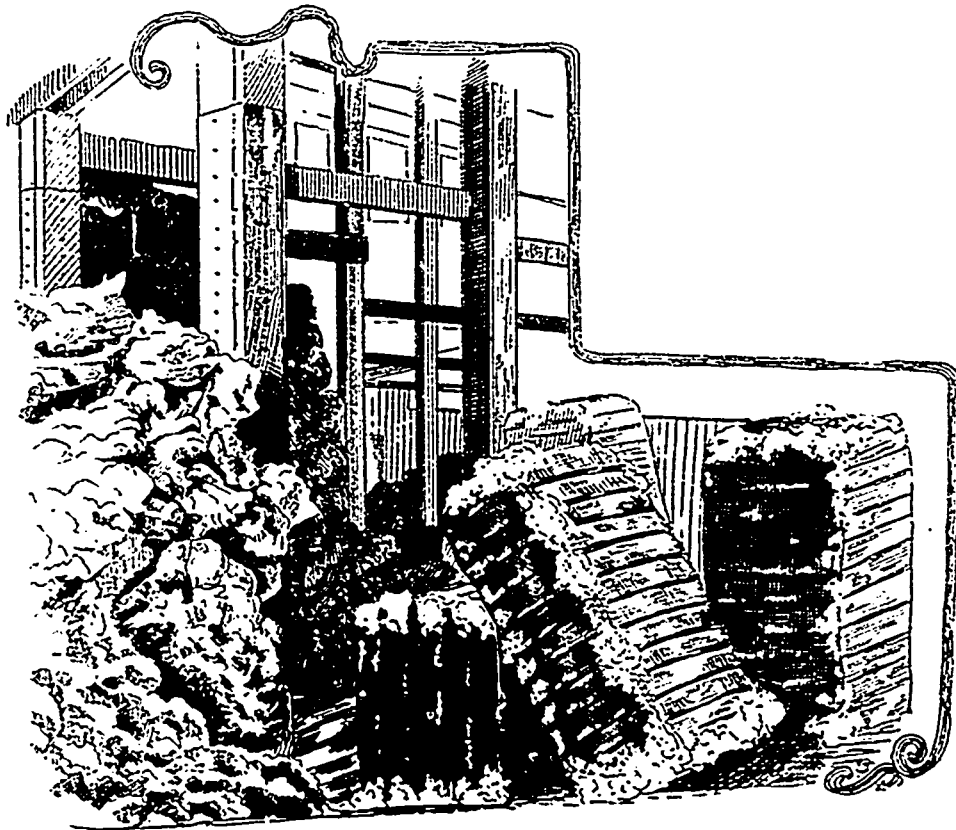


AN AFTERNOON IN OUR COTTON MILLS.

Who has not heard of the Cotton fields, with their romance of song and sunny scenes, where grows the plant that has become almost the most imperious necessity of our modern life! A very delicate plant it is, too, and one that has ways of its own, and needs a good deal of coaxing and wheedling before it will give us enough of soft white bolls to satisfy us. We are very greedy of them. We consume prodigious quantities of them. If you look around your pretty house, and into

your well-stocked wardrobe and bureau you will form some idea of what we use them for.

The fields are prepared during the winter months, and the cotton is sown in March. In five or six days you will see its tiny head above ground, and the men going out to weed and thin it out until only two or three plants remain in one spot. Later you will see them topping the plants—nipping off the ambitious shoots that keep pushing up towards the sunlight. In



"IN GREAT BALES AND BAGS, CLASPED ROUND WITH STRIPS OF IRON."