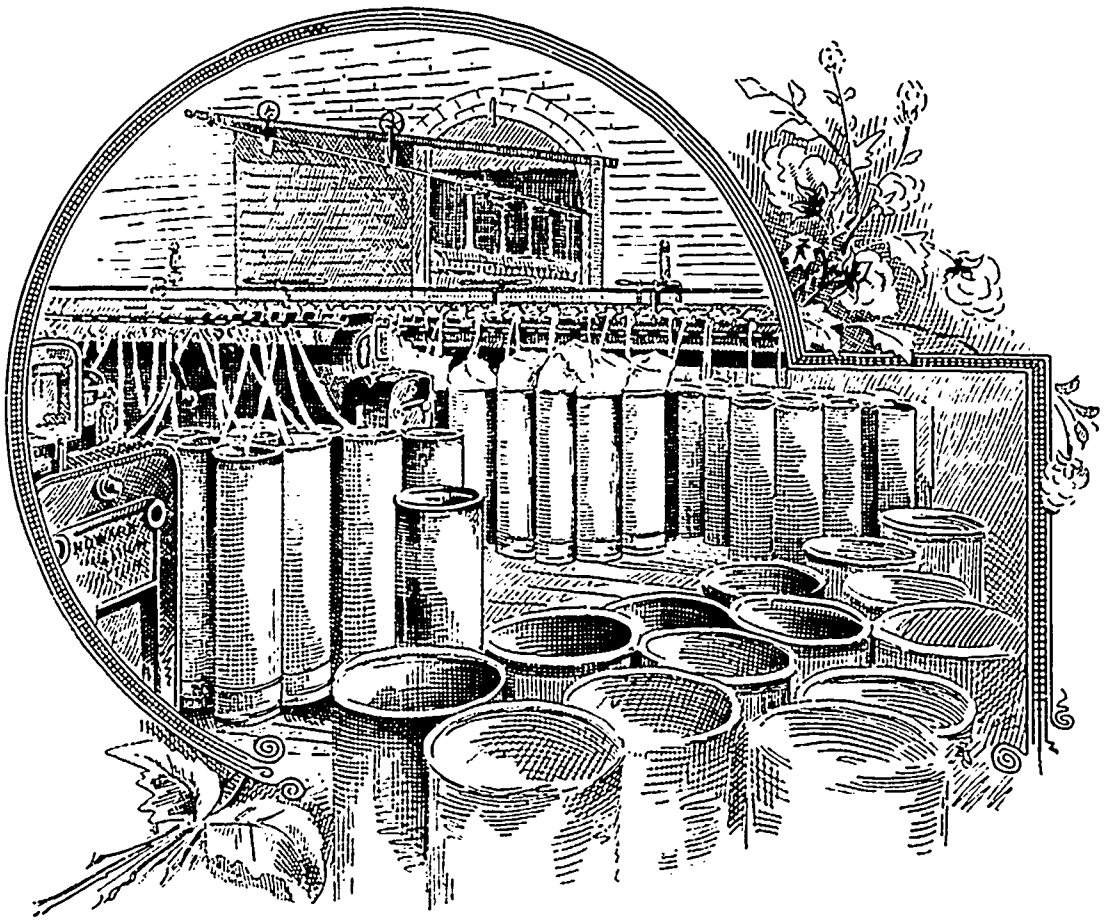

"GATHERS ITSELF TOGETHER INTO A SOFT CORD OF AN INCH THICK, AND QUIETLY COILS ITSELF INTO NARROW, DEEP, TIN CANS."

when the winter is cold and steady. Otherwise they fancy too soon that the spring has come; venture out in spring clothing; and get killed.

Meantime, after much inspection and classification of full, half, and quarter grades; fair, and middling fair; good middling and low middling; good ordinary and ordinary: strictly, barely, and fully, the Cotton is on its way to Canada, to distribute itself over our spinning and weaving mills.

The earliest spinning machine was the spindle and distaff. The distaff was a stick with a bundle of soft material fixed loosely on, and which was held in the left hand or stuck in the belt. The spindle was a smaller tapering stick to which the thread was attached. By a dexterous twirl of the hand the spindle was turned and at the same time pushed away from the spinner, the material being pressed between the fore finger and thumb of the right hand.

The idea of this original mode of spinning is the same which has run through all the stages of improvement in more recent times. The spinning-wheel did really the same work as the distaff and spindle, but the spindle was set in a frame and made to turn around by a wheel, either by hand or treadle. The process generally fell to the lot of the women of the household. Indeed no woman was considered ready for her share in life's work until she could spin and weave for herself. It was the "finishing" point of her education, and very proud she was of the achievement. Our word *spinster* is a relic of those days, although we have thrown a meaning into it which it did not then possess. So late as the beginning of the present century the spinning-wheel, which now decorates our halls and drawingrooms was the bread-winner of many a family of sturdy Scotch children, peasant boys and girls, whose mothers sat in one end of the house and spun for the father in the other end to weave.

Interesting and aesthetic as it may be, the spinning-wheel could give us but one thread at a time, and as the growing needs of the world clamoured for more, invention set to work to improve, until now we can spin many hundreds at once.

The cotton comes to us in great bags and bales, pressed solid, and clasped round with strips of iron. The first process is the *opening*. It is teased out from its lumpy condition by being passed through rollers covered with small spikes. The raw, dirty, tough cotton is fed in at one end, and at the other it comes out a new creature. Still it is not clean enough, nor loose enough. It is sent through shafts in which a fierce current of air is blown, the result of which is amazing. Before, you don't want to look at it. Now, you want to make its acquaintance, and be good friends. It is then laid, very evenly and smoothly, on a machine which takes it under rollers, and brings it out a layer of cotton called a *lap*, a large solid roll of soft and white stuff very pretty to look at, and still prettier to touch. It is important to weigh the quantity in the lap, as upon that will depend the kind of yarn, the coarseness or fineness of the thread to be spun.