

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THREE GENERATIONS OF ENGINEERS.

"Of no use are the men who study to do exactly as was done before, who can never understand that to-day is a new day."—EMERSON.

### THE FIRST GENERATION.

In the year 1810 Samuel Spalding entered the service of the United States Government as a maker of musket barrels, wherein he made such a reputation that he was invited in 1818 to take up the same work in a private armory. After six years in the latter, he left the business and in 1824 started the first manufactory of buttons on American soil, with building and machinery planned and constructed by himself.

Two years later, he bought a mill-site, upon which he built a dam and water-wheels, for a machine-shop and factory. Near the latter he built dwellings for his work people.

The button factory, machine-shop, mill and dwellings were built of bricks, made in a brick-yard that he established for the purpose, at a date when almost all such structures were made of wood.

In 1828 he had the business in full operation, producing webbing for surcingle, and similar uses, from the raw cotton.

Like the button works, it was the pioneer, on this side the Atlantic. Every part of the outfit was designed by him, and built on his own premises, under his own supervision.

The button works was discontinued after his decease, because there was nobody to carry it on, but the webbing business has been added to, from time to time, until there were seven mills, all devoted to that industry. It was the first in America to make elastic webbing and is still a great concern.

### THE SECOND GENERATION.

Henry Curtis Spalding, the youngest son of Samuel Spalding, had the run of these works all through his boyhood. Experience gained at that impressionable age, as well as the inherited tendency, has influenced all his after life.

He was apprenticed to a silversmith, where he learned the art of making spoons, spectacles and thimbles; but the destruction of the works by fire left him free, at 18, to enter a factory for making brass clocks.

After he had learned that art, he entered an optical works, wherein he became acquainted with the production of nautical, astronomical and surveyors' instruments. The old type of Morse telegraph instruments, which are now curiosities, seldom seen, were also made there.