

this way the plant turns its whole attention to what is left, and puts its entire strength into the cotton instead of into stem and leaf. Most of us, when we are robbed of part of our possessions and aspirations, hopes and desires, follow the example of the cotton plant by staking all the more on what is left.

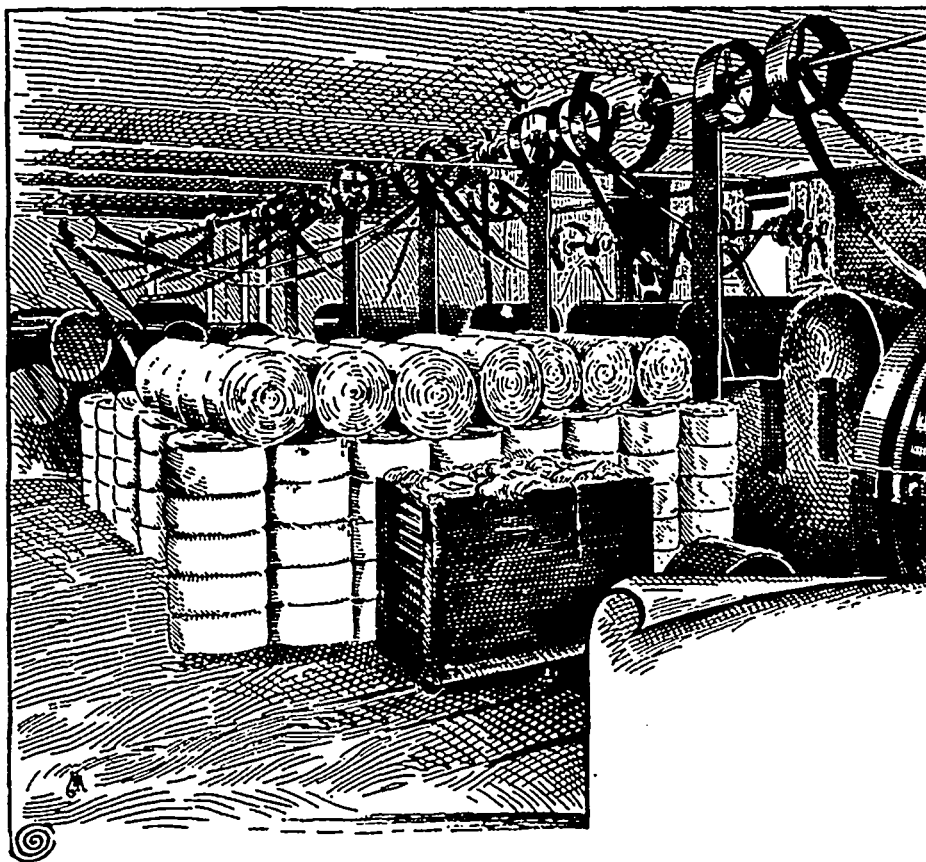
If the weather be warm and moist at first, the little plant thrives well. It likes plenty to drink and plenty of heat. It will bloom in June, and if the weather should get dry later on, the cotton is in its glory,—ready for picking in August, in soft fluffy balls, white and tempting, and will go on ripening and tempting us till the first touch of frost, when it will be so offended at Master Jack that not another pinch of fluff will it give for love or money. It is a busy scene. All the farm hands are at work. Massa is in good spirits, and Sambo works hard. Baskets and bags are quickly filled, and carried off on willing shoulders to make room for more. On they go, Sambo and Dinah with their bags and baskets, chattering, joking, and singing. How we should love to be with them. Not too hot either, only from sixty-eight to eighty-three even in July,—superb,—an oasis of hammock and song. Although India, Egypt, Central Asia, and Brazil have their cotton fields, give me the plantations of the Southern States, with their memories of warm-hearted masters and devoted servants; their idle-busy life; their song and their dance. With “de old-fashioned banjo” “de cabin door” “de boat lying low,” the “way down upon de Swance Ribber”: was there ever life or love in the world’s history that pictures so exquisitely the happy contentment of simple unaffected parents and children. There is no country in the world; there is no life but that of the cotton plantations, that has produced anything like the tender filial tie of

“ Massa made de darkies love him,
Cayse he was so kind;
Now dey sadly weep above him,
Mourning cayse he leave dem behind.
I cannot work before to-morrow,
Cayse de tear drop flow;
I try to drive away my sorrow,
Pickin on de ole banjo.”

or that could hear the plaintiff chorus

“ Down in de corn-field,
Hear dat mournful sound:
All de darkies am a weeping,
Massa’s in de cold cold ground.”

But it is not all sunshine and song with the little cotton plant. It has its enemies in the midst of Sambo’s love. Tiny eggs are laid on the under side of the leaves in May or June, three or four of them on a leaf. In a few days, from each egg out comes a worm to look about it. He gets hungry with the delicious summer air, and, like most of us, makes for the best he can find. Away up at the very top of the plant you will soon find him, devouring the sweetest and tenderest leaves. When he has eaten all the dainty bits there, he springs away to the next plant, and helps himself without saying “thank you” to the fluffy bolls. When he has



“A LAP:—A LARGE ROLL OF SOFT AND WHITE STUFF: VERY PRETTY TO LOOK AT, AND STILL PRETTIER TO TOUCH.”

eaten too much he wraps himself up cosily under the shade of a pretty leaf in a bed of silk, and lies there to sleep. In the midst of his sleep he grows into a moth, and all of a sudden takes to flying around, chiefly at night, and all the time eating and nibbling away. Scarcely has the moth got its wings when it begins to lay eggs, for more worms and moths. It will lay four hundred of these eggs, so you may form some idea of Sambo’s disappointments when he finds his fields devoured. The very juiciest leaves, the very choicest morsels are what it feeds on, at the very centre of the leaf, at the very root of the cotton fluff. Now and again he will fly away and have a fling at some of Massa’s nice ripe fruit, and come back all the more ravenous.

As many as seven broods of these hungry pests will come out of a summer, and they swarm most as the plant is coming into bloom. Nice little nests, too, they make for the next year, under a sheltered log, or in the bark of a tree. And the fragile creatures like best