



The Story of Eli Whitney and the Cotton Gin

Frances M. Perry

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Originally published in 1901 as a portion of the author's larger "Four American Inventors: A Book for Young Americans," and equivalent in length to a physical book of approximately 60 pages, this Kindle edition describes, in simple language for young readers, the life and work of the man who invented the cotton gin, which automated the removal of seeds from raw cotton.

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Sample passage:

His idea was to mount a cylinder on a strong frame, so that it could be turned by hand, or by horse or water power. The cylinder was to be provided with rows of teeth, which passed through narrow openings in a curved plate or grating of metal. The rows of teeth, or circular saws, were to be about three fourths of an inch apart. The cotton was to be put into a box, or hopper, so that it rested against the grating through which the saw teeth protruded. When the cylinder was turned, its sharp teeth would catch the cotton and drag it through the grating, tearing it from the seeds and dropping it on the other side, soft and clean. The seeds, which had been left behind, would fall to the bottom of the hopper and pass out through an opening just large enough to let them pass. They would be uninjured by the process, and ready to be planted for another cotton crop.

Mr. Whitney worked rapidly in spite of many inconveniences. But when all was done except the cylinder, progress stopped for a time. His idea had been to make circular saws and mount them one after the other on the cylinder. To make them, he must have tin or steel plates. As he could not buy or make such plates, he was obliged to contrive some other way of making the teeth on the cylinder.

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