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Written For The Advance.

America's Greatest Inventors

Near the village of Westborough, Mass., on the 8th of December, 1765, a little babe was born. The parents of this little one, Mr. and Mrs. Whitney, decided to name their child Eli, an old Hebrew name. Being in great poverty, they could not give him the advantages they would have liked to. But, nevertheless, he was one of those sturdy, self-reliant Massachusetts boys, who, like many other Yankee boys, had worked his way unaided through college.

Having graduated from Yale college at the age of 27, he went to Georgia to accept a position as teacher in one of her schools, but upon reaching there, much to his disappointment Mr. Whitney found the place already filled. Being a stranger in that part of the country, without a friend near, he at last sought employment from Mrs Greene, wife of the famous Nathaniel Green of revolutionary times. Mrs. Greene thought the young man a very bright and intelligent person, but declined his services as a tutor, though kindly inviting him to make his home at her house during his stay in Georgia.

As Mr Whitney felt somewhat discouraged by his failure in not getting the position as teacher, besides being physically worn out, he thankfully accepted the good lady's invitation. During his stay with her he made her a number of household articles, including a tambour frame, which so pleased Mrs. Greene that she declared him capable of doing anything.

A short time after this a number of planters called to see Mrs. Greene. During the evening after they had conversed upon a number of well known subjects one of the gentlemen spoke of the depressed condition of the southern states since the close of the war. One planter said that, having met with such poor success in the line of cotton raising, he had about decided to give it up entirely. Not that cotton would not grow on his land, he said, but the cost of cleaning it from the seeds was so great that, after selling it he could no more than pay expenses. He was but one among hundreds. One gentleman said he was confident that it was possible to invent a machine which would gin the cotton, and thus save the great expense of picking it over by hand, if they could but find the man capable of undertaking this great work.

"Is it a machine you want?" said Mrs Greene. "Then, gentlemen, you have but to tell my young friend, Mr. Whitney, for he can make anything."

Eli was sent for at the request of the gentlemen, and after being introduced to them by Mrs. Greene, the subject of the conversation was stated to him, and he was urged to undertake the making of the machine so much needed. He had never seen a cotton seed in his life, he told them, and declared himself unable for the task proposed. In spite of all the difficulties he saw in the way the planters urged him to at least make an attempt, telling him that if he was successful he would make his fortune by it. Let us see how true this afterwards proved.

At last Eli agreed to think the matter over, and the planters, filled with hope, took their departure. Mr. Whitney did carefully and thoughtfully consider the matter, and at last decided to attempt it for his own gratification, if nothing else He went down to the wharf at Savannah, where he obtained a small quantity of cotton fresh from the cotton field, and carrying it to his room began his experiments. Having confidently told Mrs. Greene of his plans, she kindly allowed him the use of any room in her cellar, where he carried on his work all that winter, with the patience and energy seldom given to any new adventure. Of course, as with everything, difficulties arose before the young man. Tools that were needed to carry on the work could be found nowhere, not even in Charleston. Mechanical skill, however, came at once to his rescue. Thus he conquered all difficulties by making his own tools, and even the wire he used, and experienced the pleasure of seeing his work—the long-looked for cotton gin—completed that spring. After putting it in working order one morning, he invited a number of planters near by to come in and see the machine work. A few balls of cotton were thrown in by one of the men and were quickly cleansed. The planters were wild with delight and urged Mr. Whitney to lose no time in putting it on the market, saying that it was not only a complete success, and the lucky inventor would make a handsome fortune, but that it would also be the means of making the South very wealthy. With the machine 1000 pounds could be cleaned in a single day by one man. Formerly it took a negro slave, and a smart one at that, a whole day to pick over one pound, which made cotton so extremely expensive that none but the rich could buy it. Now everything was changed with the invention of the cotton gin. The machine was so simple, too, that it seems strange that it had never before been invented. It consisted of nothing but a number of parallel wires placed like the bars in a grating, but so close together that the seeds could not pass through them. Under this revolved saws, which snatched the cotton from the seeds. The seeds, unable to pass through the bars, were left behind and, completely stripped of the fiber, ran out in a stream through a spout at one end of the trough.

The good this invention did to Eli Whitney did not amount to the snap of on's finger. Not one cent did he make. Although the invention was patented, it was so simple that infringement without number were made upon it. No South ern jury would give Mr. Whitney a verdict, as he was a Northern man. In 1808 his patent expired and he withdrew a poorer man than the day he carried the few balls of cotton to his room in Mrs. Greene's house. But Mr. Whitney was one of those men who always remembered to "look not mournfully into the past," but "wisely improve the present, it is thine." His success was yet to come, for, later, having made some great improvements in fire arms, and also having the honor of being the inaugurator of the system of progressive improvement in fire arms, his genius was at last rewarded. He made a fortune which not only allowed him to live in luxury the remainder of his life, but also to leave a handsome estate to his family. The lady whom he married was Miss Edwards, a daughter of Judge Pierpont Edwards, and a young lady of high character and many accomplishments. Mr. Whitney died at the age of 60 in New Haven, Conn, June 8, 1825.

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AO.U.W.—meets every first and third Monday in each month, in their lodge room Strain's Block, Flesherton, at 8 p. m. Price Teetzel, M.W.; A. M. Gibson, Recorder, W. J Bellamy, financier. Visiting Brethern invited.

PRINCE ARTHUR LODGE, No 333, A F & A M, meet in the Masonic Hall, Strain's Block, Flesherton, every Friday on or before the full moon. Geo. Mitchell, W M, W J Bellamy, secretary

DUFFERIN LODGE, No 186, I O O F, meets in Clayton's Hall every Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock. Visiting brethren cordially invited

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J. P. MARSHALL,

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Office over McCullough & Young's bank. Hours—8.30 a.m. to 6 p. m.
Visits Flesherton the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Office at Munshaw's hotel.

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