

Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations,
1851.

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SECTION IV.—FINE ARTS, CLASS 30.

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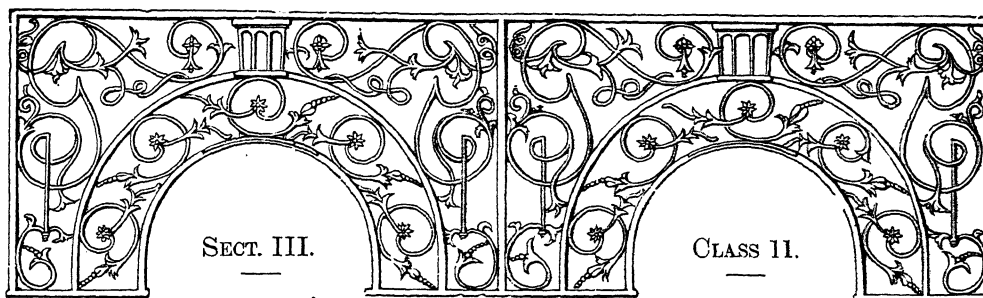
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COTTON.

INTRODUCTION.

ANOTHER and third Section of the Exhibition is introduced by this Class, which includes the Manufacture of Cotton. This Section contemplates those results of human industry which naturally succeed to the Sections of Raw Materials and Machinery. The substance to be operated upon having been considered, together with the mechanical assistance necessary to carry forward the processes through which it has to pass in its progress from the raw material to the manufactured article, it now becomes an interesting study to turn attention to the product of the industry occupied in the preceding departments. While objects in the first Section may be regarded as in a passive or preparatory state, objects in the second must be considered in an active, and in the third in a complete condition, awaiting only their application to the purposes of life. This condition generally renders the articles contained within this Section less attractive than in the preceding and succeeding Sections. Rightly viewed, however, objects in this Section must receive a degree of attentive consideration not inferior to that bestowed on the former. The manufactured article may and should be regarded as the test of the perfection, first, of the raw material constituting its foundation, and, secondly, of the mechanical arrangements co-operative in its production. If the raw material has been wanting in any of the properties for which it is employed in the preparation, or if the manufacturing machinery has been defective in operation, the manufactured article offers, in many cases, certain evidence of these facts. And, conversely, the purity and perfect fitness of the material, with a state of efficiency in the manufacturing machinery, combine to produce a certain superiority in the manufacture which may be generally ascertained upon its careful examination.

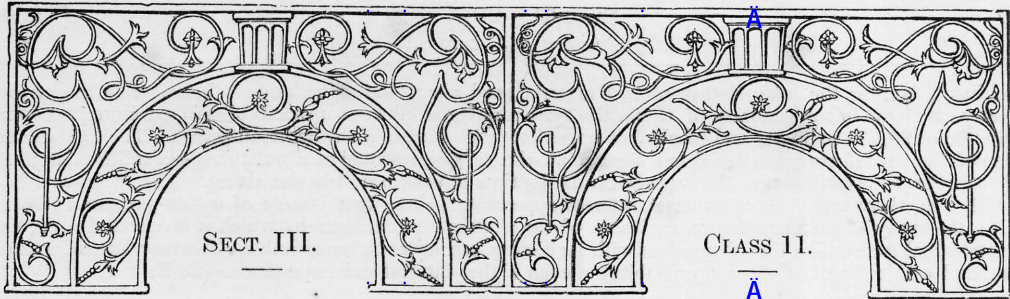
The subject of the Class more immediately under notice, the Cotton Manufacture, receives, from its vast importance, a first position among manufactured articles. It comprises—A. Cotton Yarn and Thread; B. Calicoes, such as Sheetings, Long-cloths, Shirtings, &c.; C. Cords and Beaverteens; D. Muslins, as Cambric and Jaconet, Figured, Striped, &c.; Shawls, Handkerchiefs, &c.; E. Dimities for Furniture, Quilting, &c.; F. Colonial Woven Cotton, Handkerchiefs, Ginghams, &c.; G. Oiled Calicoes, &c.

The number of Exhibitors in this Class is not large, and their productions will be found grouped together in Areas I. J. from 1 to 8, at the North-western end of the Building, on the Ground Floor, near the Nave.

Various methods of manufacture are illustrated which must receive the notice of those concerned in this important department of commercial activity. The fitness of some articles, also, for the peculiar markets for which they are specially prepared, suggests, even to the casual observer, interesting reflections on the different physical conditions of those for whom these articles are manufactured. There are several new applications of cotton to textile purposes. The most instructive parts of this collection, to those who have no technical interest in it, are those which contain arranged specimens in illustration of the stages of manufacture. The manufacture of thread is thus represented from the raw cotton to its completed condition. A case has also been carefully arranged which contains illustrations of the progress of the manufacture of cotton from the raw material to the finished results in the coarse and fine departments of the trade. One of the wonderful objects contained in this Class is a specimen of muslin made from No. 5,408 cotton-yarn, believed to be the finest ever made. That machinery could be brought to the degree of delicate movement, and precise and accurate adaptation to the slender materials of which this muslin is composed, may well be considered a great industrial triumph.

The history of the cotton manufacture in Great Britain presents several facts of the most wonderful description. No other manufacture represents this country in a position so important and influential, and in none has any department of industry attained, within the same interval of time, proportions so vast, and relations so powerful. The cotton manufacture may be justly regarded as an evidence of the mechanical capabilities of this country. A little before the commencement of the present century it was in its infancy. One by one the great mechanical difficulties attendant upon its preservation were resolved. The spinning-frame was suggested by an accident, spinning by rollers was twice abandoned, and then successfully accomplished; the first mule worked in an attic, the first spinning-jenny in a cottage. Hargreaves and Crompton were poor weavers; Arkwright was a barber's apprentice. The beginning of this stupendous manufacture was truly insignificant, and contrasts wonderfully with its present position.

The following statistics form data by which this manufacture in its present state may be duly estimated:—The average annual imports have been estimated at about 550,000,000 lbs. weight, exclusive of deductions for exports. Of this quantity 500,000,000 lbs. are employed in manufacture, the annual value of the raw material thus employed being about ten millions sterling. About thirteen millions sterling are annually paid away in



SECT. III.

CLASS 11.