MULE COTTON FRAMES.

CHAPTER III.

SIR RICHARD ARKWRIGHT AND COTTON SPINNING.

A VERY remarkable illustration of individual industry is found in the rise and progress of our cotton manufacture. Cotton is one of the main staples of British industry; Lancashire is the great seat of the cotton spinners, and Manchester is the metropolis of the cotton trade.

When the Normans effected the Conquest on the field of Hastings, and the last of the Saxon kings lay dead, Lancashire was a wilderness. When, six centuries later, the Scottish King became the King of England, Lancashire was described as a country lying beyond the mountains, towards the Western ocean; one hundred and thirty years ago the roads of the Shire were villanous, and Manchester a mean little village of no account: but there was a penny barber born to change the complexion of the country; a

man who, laying aside razor and lather, and taking off his bibbed apron, should do that for the cotton trade which Watt did for steam power, and George Stephenson for railways.

On the the 23rd of December, in the year 1736, Richard Arkwright was born, at Preston, in Lancashire; his parents were very poor, and he was the youngest of a large family —number thirteen, generally esteemed an unlucky number;

A FROLIC.

and very unlucky it may have seemed to Arkwright the elder, when the cupboard was bare and the pocket empty, and there were a baker's dozen of hungry ones all—silently, very likely—shouting for their dinner with hungry mouths.

Where little Dick received his education, or whether he received any at all in the book learning way, is not known. Probably he went to one of those village dames who boast—

"Unruly brats with birch to tame."

But his school days, if he had any, were soon over, though

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