

ARKWRIGHT, Sir Richard, the celebrated inventor of machinery for spinning and carding cotton. He was originally a barber at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, and in low circumstances. But about 1767 he changed his line of business, and travelled through the country, buying hair; when coming to Warrington, he got acquainted with one John Kay, a clockmaker. To this man he spoke of some mechanical project he had in view; and by him his design was changed and his attention turned to the spinning of cotton. A machine was projected, and they applied to Peter Artherton, Esq. now of Liverpool, who enabled them to construct it. For this machine Mr Arkwright afterwards took out a patent. He next joined in partnership with a Mr Smally of Preston in Lancashire, but being straitened for money, they went to Nottingham, where they got such support as enabled them to erect a cotton machine, which was worked by horses. Mr Arkwright afterwards erected works at Crumford in Derbyshire; and acquired a very great fortune. It has been said he enriched himself at other men's expense and ingenuity; but though much attention had been paid to the invention of machines for spinning cotton, before Mr Arkwright engaged in it, it had been hitherto unsuccessful; and the perfection to which he brought them, overcoming numerous difficulties, shows him to have been a man of great genius, and unwearied perseverance. That his inventions have been of great national value, almost every corner of the country testifies. Upon presenting an address from the high sheriff and hundred of Wirksworth, he was knighted, in 1786, as high sheriff of the county of Derby. He died at his works at Crumford in Derbyshire, Aug. 3, 1793.