

The first Model School at Cass Station was located on the site of the old Wofford Academy, which had burned some years before. It opened February 17, 1903. Here children received a basic education in the classroom, and were taught practical skills, such as cooking and sewing for the girls, carpentry for the boys. It was well-attended, and an asset to the community.

At 2:00 in the morning of April 27, 1905, the little schoolhouse burned to the ground. The cause was thought to be arson. Until a new school could be built, children attended classes in a small shed on the property of Mr. and Mrs. M. L. "Mack" Johnson. A new, 2-story structure was completed in 1906.

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The Massachusetts Model School in Georgia

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THE free school system of the Southern States is barely thirty years old. Before the Civil War, the South had schools, some of them excellent, but no system of education designed to meet the needs of all her people. This was in part owing to the presence of slavery; in part to the scattered condition of the population. To the lonely dweller in the mountains or the wiregrass, miles away from his nearest neighbor, and beyond the reach of railroads or newspapers, schools were impossible, and the knowledge of anything outside his isolated environment practically unattainable.

Thus the close of the great conflict found the South with nearly five millions of Negroes entirely illiterate, and with twenty per cent of her white population also unable to read and write. To the more thoughtful minds it was evident that some system of free education which should meet the needs of all classes and of both races was imperative. But the means for es-

tablishing such a system were pitifully inadequate. In no State could there be made provision for a school term of more than three months in the year, and the pay for each pupil was only five cents per day of his actual attendance. Nor was there at that time in the South a single Normal School, nor a common schoolhouse that was the property of the State. The whole system had to be built from flat nothingness. From such small beginnings the good work has advanced steadily if slowly. Progress of any sort must be based on economic independence, and that the South is still struggling to attain.

For the Negroes, Northern philanthropy began at once its work. They shared also, as of course was entirely right, in the State appropriations. The Peabody Fund, that blessed benefaction to the white South in the hour of her extremity, founded the Peabody Normal College at Nashville and provided a limited number of scholarships for each Southern State. By degrees

every State established one or more normal schools of its own, although the number is still inadequate to the need. The public schools of the larger towns and even of the villages have advanced constantly in efficiency, and in the better class country communities, schools are usually open seven months of the year. It is in the thinly settled districts, districts in which the en-

seven in Massachusetts, and ninety-nine in Rhode Island. No wonder to these scattered little ones, these babes in the woods, the good school-house and the good teacher have been long in coming.

But public attention has been drawn to the needs of these rural schools in the last few years, and governors of States, university presidents, business men, and elect



THE MASSACHUSETTS MODEL SCHOOL IN BARTOW COUNTY, GEORGIA. A FESTAL DAY.
MANY FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL ARE PRESENT

tire population of both races is sometimes less than fifteen persons to the square mile, that conditions remain bad. Eighty per cent of the Southern population is rural; yet the number of white children of school age in Georgia is only seven to the square mile, in Alabama six, and in Mississippi five; as against ninety-

women, not a few are engaging actively in their behalf. The lack of material resources is still a hindrance to a degree hard for an outsider to estimate. The last census gave to Massachusetts a taxable property of more than \$1,419.00 to each man, woman and child in the commonwealth. Georgia's was but

\$205.00; Louisiana's \$155.00; Mississippi's \$143.00. And yet there are in the eleven Southern States more than three and one-half million people unable to read! It is needful that the wisdom and the conscience of the nation be roused in their behalf.

One evidence of the growing interest in rural education in the South has been the establishment here and there, for both races, of what is

The Massachusetts-Georgia Model School, in Bartow County, Ga., founded by Mrs. Granger of Cartersville, and maintained by the Federation of Women's Clubs in Massachusetts, has completed its first year's work, and in that time given full proof of its value. The neighborhood in which it is located was once peopled by families of refinement and culture. Some of their descendants remain, but most of the



THE LARGE SCHOOLROOM IS PLAINLY BUT SUITABLY FURNISHED

known as Model Schools. The purpose of these is in some cases to give aid to a backward community, in others to set some standard of excellence for adjacent schools. These enterprises, few in number as yet, owe their origin as a rule to women's Clubs, or to the activity of some school superintendent. One of them is unique in that it was projected by a woman and owes its financial support to the club women of a distant State.

scattered families belong to the tenant class, those sad nomads of our modern rural civilization; owning no land of their own, and moving year after year to rented farms without much bettering their own condition or that of the soil they cultivate. The children of these families stand greatly in need of just the help that the Model Schools are designed to give.

The schoolhouse, a neat frame building painted white with green



A CORNER OF THE WORKROOM

blinds—certainly a great step beyond the rude log house so often seen in the poorer rural communities—was built by the neighborhood in proof of its interest in the enterprise. It stands on a low hill covered with a scattered growth of trees and shrubs. The steeple now bears a United States flag, the gift of the Youth's Companion. The large front room is plainly but suitably furnished; has maps, blackboards, an excellent globe, and a small case of books; the two last the gift of individual members of the Federa-

tion. The photographs of these far away friends hang on the walls, with a number of other pictures, and the benevolent face of Mr. Robert Ogden, much beloved in the South, smiles down upon teacher and pupils.

The room in the rear, 16 by 20 feet, is used only for manual work, and is much too small for the purpose it must serve. There is a good cooking stove in it and the other necessary furnishings of a kitchen and pantry. A home-made table of pine serves for meals on days when cooking lessons are given, and at other times is a work table for the classes in handiwork. A set of shelves contains an outfit of tools for the simpler forms of woodwork, and another set is filled with the materials for plain sewing, basketry, and hat making. The two windows are screened by lambrequins

ingeniously constructed of short joints of Indian corn, a decoration pleasingly in keeping with the rest of the interior.

The pupils are what Southern country children are everywhere; happy-hearted, unsophisticated, affectionate,—delightful material to work upon. Their physical and mental appetites are alike unjaded; and, while not disciplined to accuracy or continuance, they are usually quick to learn, very obedient and respectful, and responsive to every good thing which the school

can offer them. Most of them do well in their books; but all, without exception, are delighted with the manual work. To those who possess no intellectual inheritance, and to whom even the rudiments of learning are a formidable affair,—some of them, poor things, have come unable at the age of seventeen to read

in the neighborhood are used in the cooking lessons and in all the forms of handiwork; this being, in itself, one of the most important lessons the children could learn. Raffia is used for some of the baskets, but other very pretty ones are woven of the common grasses growing within a few rods of the school-



A COOKING LESSON IN THE SMALL WORKROOM

and write—the different handicrafts appeal with telling effect. The training in these simple industries and in the ordinary domestic arts not only quickens their dulled faculties, but has a direct practical value in their poor and crowded homes. As far as possible, materials grown

house; and the hats made of white corn shucks are really artistic and charming.

The worth of this industrial training has become evident to even the most unlettered of the patrons of the school, and has enlisted their interest and cooperation to an extent



THE EQUIPMENT FOR THE WOODWORK

beyond what the best of mere book teaching could have done. On Saturdays a cooking-class is held for the mothers of the neighborhood, a much needed help in homes where the cooking often sins against every law of hygiene and sometimes of economy as well. Indeed, in all the work of the school the homes are sharers in the general benefit. Around the firesides at night, where there is such pitiful lack of fresh subjects of thought, the children repeat what has been studied or talked of at school; an older brother or sister, at work all day in the field, copies the knitting or sewing or basket-making which a younger child has done under the teacher's eye; and it is safe to say that the books brought home from the school library are read with even acuter interest by the parents than by the children themselves.

The prime favorite in the little collection is Robinson Crusoe, and it is a touching proof of how little reading matter the children have had that the second-hand school readers and primers with colored pictures come next in popularity. A few of the books in the small library are for older readers, and

there are some pupils far enough advanced to enjoy them. The library is also found useful in the Sunday School, which, in the absence of any church building, is held in the schoolhouse on Sunday afternoons, men and boys being largely in the majority in attendance. The teacher, a Georgia woman and trained in the State Normal at Athens, finds enough work to engage their energies each of the seven days of the week.

A few hundred yards from the schoolhouse stands a low frame dwelling in a grassy yard. Its four small rooms are entirely neat, but their furnishing is of the plainest. The rag carpet in the best room is the wife's own work; the collecting and weaving of the materials for it seem to have been the one satisfying achievement of her twenty years of married life. Her manners are gentle, her voice sweet; but her face has in it that indescribable pathos which comes only from a lifetime of intellectual and social starvation. "Oh, I hope the school is going to be a settled thing," she says, "it means so much to the neighborhood. And then," with a heightening color



A HOME IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE SCHOOL

in her gentle face, "it means so much to me. The teacher boards with me, and it is so good to have her around."

Not far from this house is another, the temporary abode of a tenant family. The house is of rough logs, set close to the roadside on a slope of red clay. There is but one room, unceiled overhead or on the sides; the floor of rough boards loosely laid; the wide fireplace at one end, but not a window! The one room is bedroom, kitchen, and parlor for the parents and their eight children. The woman says, bitterly, that last year she lived in a larger house and could "run" four beds and so have one for company; now she "runs" only three. The three are all in the windowless room, together with a family of kittens, a few cooking utensils, the eating table, several home-made chairs, and sundry trunks and boxes, to say nothing of five mournful family portraits, crayons in wide gilt frames, which the ubiquitous Chicago agent has imposed on un-

suspecting ignorance at the rate of six dollars apiece. The woman is barefooted and untidy, but she has really strong features, and had life been kinder to her, she would have made a woman of influence in any community. Six boys and girls are with her husband at work in the fields; the two younger children she is going to send to the school as soon as she can get them "fixed up." When she does, a new influence will begin its silent work in this home where as yet, through the long years, only poverty and ignorance have held their sway.

This Model School is blessing the individual lives that have come under its gracious ministry; but it is perhaps accomplishing an even greater result in bringing together in a common cause the women of two widely distant States. Surely the men and women of the South merit warmest sympathy as they struggle in the face of so much difficulty to build up the waste places and to give the children of both races their rightful heritage.
