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A HALF-TIME MILL SCHOOL

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SPECIALIST IN RURAL SCHOOL PRACTICE



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A HALF-TIME MILL SCHOOL.

I. THE SOUTHERN MILL PROBLEM IN GENERAL.

Introductory statement.—Until a few years ago the Southern States were considered in the main an agricultural section. More recently the advantageous location in respect to raw materials, minerals, water, and electric power of the South Atlantic States has occasioned an almost unprecedented growth in manufacturing industries. Particularly has the cotton manufacturing industry made great progress. In the early seventies there were few cotton mills in the South, and the raw materials were shipped to Massachusetts and other New England States for manufacture.

In 1916, however, South Carolina ranked next to Massachusetts in the number of spindles in use, then totaling 4,743,193, or 14.2 per cent of the entire number of spindles turning in the Nation. North Carolina, in the same year, ranked third, with 12.2 per cent of the total number of spindles in the country. In the number of persons employed and the value of its annual cotton manufacturing output, North Carolina heads the list of Southern States—being second in this only to Massachusetts—with 48,525 operatives employed and an annual output in cotton fabrics of \$72,680,382. South Carolina ranks next with 46,342 operatives and an annual output valued at \$65,929,598. In 1916 the mills of North Carolina consumed 1,067,288 bales of cotton, and those of South Carolina 914,532 bales. Meanwhile, Massachusetts consumed 1,462,188 bales. It should also be noted that the southern mill areas are comparatively few in number, but they are compact. A small number of counties with advantageous location produce the larger part of the output. Thus, Spartanburg County, S. C., heads the list, with cotton mills aggregating 830,016 spindles; Greenville and Anderson Counties, S. C., rank, respectively, second and third in the South, with a slightly smaller number of spindles; and Gaston County, N. C., comes fourth with 379,091 spindles.

These figures are enumerated here because they emphasize the important place cotton spinning has taken in the South—particularly so in North and South Carolina—and the many complex problems that this rapid change from soil tilling to industrial life has forced upon the public.

Who the mill people are.—The rapidly increasing demand for industrial workers has drawn many of the less prosperous class of the southern rural population from the hill and mountain districts to the mill centers. As a people they are homogeneous; they are all English-speaking and of Anglo-Saxon and Huguenot origin. They are, in the main, of good blood and of fair native ability, but are badly in need of direction and, above everything else, education. They have brought down with them from the hills and mountains their own social standards and manners and customs, which do not fit into the new mill environment to any extent. The greatest hindrance to progress and industrial efficiency among the mill operatives is the prevailing large amount of illiteracy, which is the unfortunate heritage from their life in the remote hill and mountain sections. It is well to emphasize, on the other hand, that the average mill family should not be considered as inferior to other people. There are as many bright minds and true hearts among them as in any average community. One southern educator, President D. E. Canak, of the Textile Industrial Institute, near Spartanburg, S. C., feels that "they have been, as it were, waiting in the mountains and hill country till civilization needed them." "With the proper training of leaders within their own ranks," he thinks, "they will speedily develop a citizenry of remarkable strength and character."

Educational needs of the mill community.—The mill community springs up usually on the edge of one of the larger incorporated towns or cities. It has none of the advantages of modern city policing and sanitary inspection, and little of school education. It is neither urban nor rural, and is often permitted to develop with little regard to public control. The operatives' homes are usually the property of the mill corporation. The schools are often organized and maintained by the same authorities, and general welfare work, so far as there is any, is under corporate control.

The mill operatives are, with few exceptions, poor and have large families. Many of the adults among them are entirely illiterate and have a very limited outlook on life. Most of them were obliged to go into the mills at an age when other children are in school or spending their time in the out-of-doors, at play. The little schooling they are able to obtain is seldom of such a nature as to prepare them for places requiring greater skill. Women work in the mills in almost as large numbers as the men. Many married women who yet have children in arms spend most of the daytime at the spindles or at the looms.

This raises the serious question as to what to do with the children who are left all day long largely to shift for themselves. Child labor conditions also have added to the seriousness of the problems con-

fronting the mill community. Children under 14 years of age have until recently been permitted to work in the mills in most of the Southern States. Under these conditions great numbers of boys and girls are growing up with little education and with a very limited comprehension of the real significance of home and community life, and the girls, particularly, are weaned away from a desire for or ability in housekeeping.

Recently South Carolina took a great forward step in the matter of child labor when the State placed on its statute books a drastic law forbidding any person to hire operatives for the mills who are under 16 years of age unless they have met certain standard educational provisions. This measure, together with the new Federal child-labor act,¹ under which interstate privileges are denied the output from mills which employ children below 14 years of age, or who work more than eight hours a day for six days out of the week—excellent as the measures are—places an additional perplexing problem upon the mill community, namely, what to do with the children during the first 16 years of their life.

Briefly, the educational needs of the mill community can be summed up in the following statements:

1. How to organize school education for the children from babyhood up to the sixteenth year of their lives.
2. How to blot out the withering blight of illiteracy, adult or otherwise, which is seriously limiting the efficiency of the mill population.
3. How to instruct the adult population so as to increase their efficiency, and so enable them to become more than mere "hands" in the mills.
4. How to assist the mill women to become better housekeepers, and the men to become better supporters of their homes and upholders of community life.

The prevailing type of mill school.—Some southern mill schools are maintained as regular public schools, drawing State and local aid through public taxation, and are regularly supervised by State and local officials. Other schools of this class are supported in part from public funds and in part by the mill corporation. Many of the mill schools are owned and maintained wholly by the mill authorities, and thus lie entirely beyond the jurisdiction of public-school officials. Some of the schools are poorly organized and inefficient, while others of this class are among the very best in their respective States. For their efficiency the privately owned mill schools must depend wholly on the public spirit of the corporation.

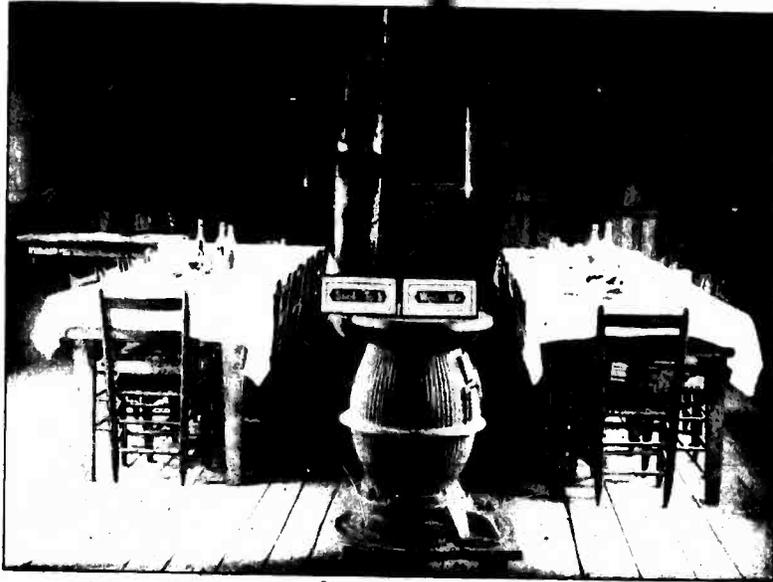
¹Not in effect now, having been declared unconstitutional.

which maintains them, and on the ability and clear vision of the local manager in charge of the mill. Often the school buildings are poorly constructed and ill adapted to school needs. Uncertificated teachers are occasionally employed, compulsory attendance is badly enforced, and in many other respects the schools fail to give the mill community that vital form of education so necessary to lift the mill operative above the hard conditions under which he lives.

It is significant that the public is now generally aware that it has a mill problem, and State authority is beginning to take action to remedy the old evils. In South Carolina, for example, a State supervisor of mill schools has been appointed by law to have charge of this particular group of schools. Similarly, Winthrop Normal and Industrial College, at Rock Hill, has begun to reach out to assist the mill villages in practical welfare work, which reaches from the school right to the operatives' homes, and Clemson Agricultural College is doing an equally good work in teaching thrift through home gardens, horticulture, and the like.

Catron Hall, Saxon Mills, Spartanburg County, S. C., typical of the best in this kind of village school.—Thoughtful mill owners are as quick to see the advantages of good schools and practical welfare work as anybody. The best among the mill schools are organized to teach the village children in the rudiments of learning and also to assist the parents in various ways to make the most of the new life in the mill village. A good illustration of this kind of activity, at its best, can be studied at Saxon Mills, in the outskirts of Spartanburg, S. C. The mill corporation has erected and equipped the school building—Catron Hall—which is operated in part only on public funds. Here the children from the mill homes may acquire an elementary education, no better and no worse than is procured in village communities elsewhere. The school is not particularly well adapted to prepare and instruct the children of people with limited traditions and of narrow vision for responsible citizenship and increased industrial efficiency. In this respect, all the mill schools are weak. The school does, however, give the younger children the elementary school subjects and removes from them the blot of illiteracy which has marked their parents. But this is about all it can do for the children.

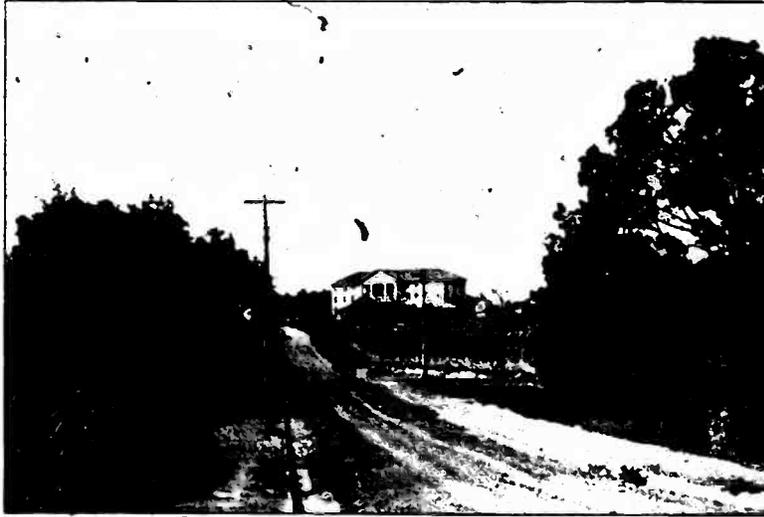
On the other hand, from the school emanate welfare activities that reach every home in the village. The work is in charge of a special community worker connected with Winthrop College, who receives her remuneration from the mill corporation. The community building, which is also used for school purposes, is fitted to meet the general social needs of the village. In it are an auditorium that seats 500 people, a lodge hall, a library having approximately 900



1.—DINING ROOM IN THE TEMPORARY BUILDING.



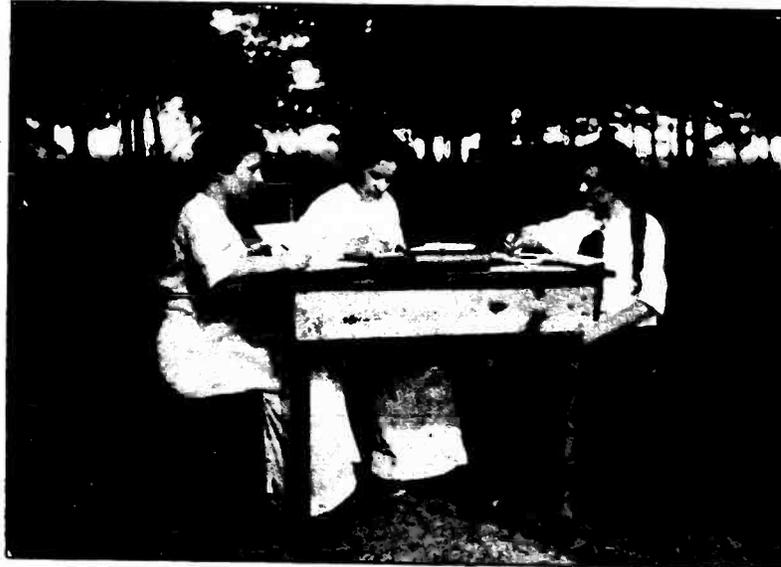
2.—TEMPORARY QUARTERS IN WHICH THE SCHOOL WAS OPENED.



A. A DISTANT VIEW OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING.



B. THE MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING.



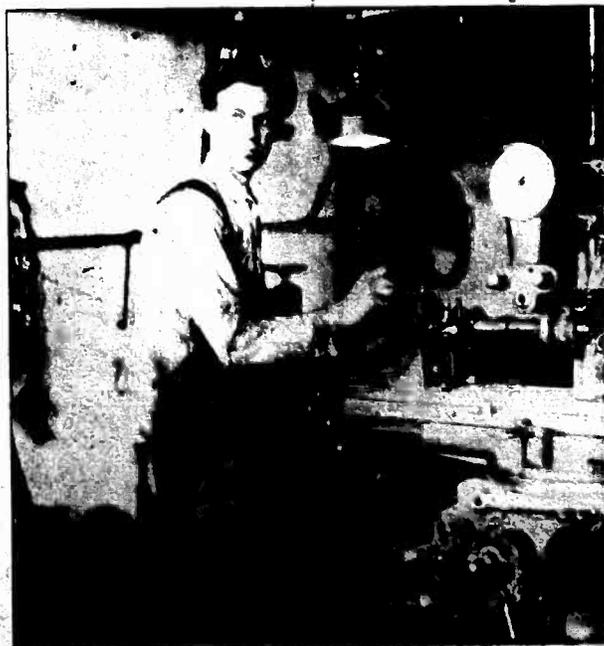
A. YOUNG WOMEN STUDYING ON THE CAMPUS.



B. A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS TAUGHT BY A PUPIL OF THE MILL SCHOOL.



A. A STUDENT EMPLOYED AT A LOOM.



B. A STUDENT WHO WORKS HALF THE TIME IN A MACHINE SHOP.

volumes, a reading room, a play room, a sewing room, a basement fitted with showers, and a room equipped as domestic science laboratory. The welfare worker has charge of the activities of the building, where lectures are held, and entertainments, games, and sewing and cooking classes. All of these are well attended by the mill community. The domestic science laboratory, in particular, has been a great blessing to the housekeepers who in their earlier days had little opportunity to learn practical housekeeping.

The welfare work embraces, among other things, living conditions in the school community, sanitary housing, and house-lot upkeep; measures to prevent disease; modern recreation, including baseball, supervised playground activities, and in the winter time hockey on the mill pond. Recently a "better babies" campaign was instituted. This culminated in a better babies' contest, in which 60 babies were entered. The babies were all examined and measured by the American Medical Association standard. It is interesting to know that 10 of the babies scored above 99 per cent, the test being made by four dentists, two ear-and-throat specialists, one mental examiner, three physicians, and a child specialist. The examination would seem to refute many of the startling tales one hears of child suffering in the southern mill village.

II. THE TEXTILE INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTE.

A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL IN WHICH TO PREPARE LEADERS FOR THE SOUTHERN MILL PEOPLE.

Wherein the ordinary mill school falls short.—The ordinary mill school at its best can do little more than provide a fair degree of instruction in the elementary school subjects for the youngest children and offer their parents occasional night-school classes. High-school facilities are practically unknown in the mill villages. Very few children complete even the elementary school course. Some drop out for lack of interest, others—in the past at least—have been taken from the school in their fourth or fifth school year and put to work in the mill. If any are so fortunate as to complete the elementary school and their parents chance to have the means and the disposition to encourage further school work, the children must go elsewhere for a secondary education. This usually means that the mill community loses them altogether.

Mill people ought to have schools that can give them more than the fundamentals of an elementary education. This kind of school should teach the importance of good birth, good health, and sanitary living. It should make clear to people their responsibility and opportunity as members of the larger social group in community.

and State. It should offer practical and technical work that will help the operative to advance in his calling from a plain day laborer to a position of leadership in the textile industries. The school might include courses in textile designing, in mechanical drawing, in phases of mathematics, including mill calculation, and in electrical and steam engineering, and similar work.

The Textile Industrial Institute seeking to solve the problem.—To bring together into school the capable young men and women working in the mills who have energy and desire to improve their lot, to make of them economic and social leaders in the village community—is the aim of a new type of educational institution recently established near Saxon Mills, in the environs of Spartanburg, S. C. The purpose of the school is better expressed by President D. E. Camak in the following language: "To find, train, Christianize, and prepare leaders for the 500,000 cotton-mill population in the South."

This efficient local leadership is obviously needed outside the mills just as much as inside of them. It is needed in every-day social life, in religious work, and in industrial affairs. When each mill village can have leaders trained from among its own people, much of the present sway of political demagogues and religious fanatics will disappear, and the mill people will develop into a citizenry of remarkable strength and character.

History of the institute.—The school was founded in 1911 by Rev. D. E. Camak, of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. The founder has been a life-long student of mill people and mill conditions. He has been among them for years as preacher and teacher. When Mr. Camak first propounded his unique educational method now operative at the Textile Institute, his most intimate friends declared it "laudable but Utopian," and did what they could to dissuade him from his enterprise. But he persisted in his determination to try out the enterprise. At last the school was opened in a small way. Mr. Camak's half-time scheme had made its appeal to the president of the mill corporation, who gave the use of a small building in which the work began. Gradually students were attracted to this unique school, coming from mill villages far and near, both from South Carolina and from other States. By the close of the first winter 40 had enrolled in the school. For three successive years the institution struggled along in its overcrowded quarters. Then at last substantial aid came from a group of interested philanthropists and mill operators. One mill president gave \$4,000 worth of real estate, and one Spartanburg woman gave \$17,000. The citizens of Spartanburg contributed over \$30,000. The Southern Railway Co. hauled building material free of charge; stone-quarry owners, dealers in building materials, and architects vied with each other to assist in getting the new school firmly established.

The permanent location of the institute is on a commanding elevation. In addition to an attractive, well-wooded campus, the school owns and operates an adjoining farm of 115 acres, which supplies the school with vegetables and milk and with some of the required eggs and meat. The first building (Plate 2) is already crowded to capacity, since it has to be used for class purposes, dormitory, and boarding quarters, and living rooms for the principal and his family and the other instructors. Additional funds are, however, fortunately in sight with which to erect a second building similar in appearance to the one appearing in Plate 2.

The friends of the school hope to erect a large central administration building a little later, when the first two structures will be converted into dormitories for boys and girls.

The instructional work is at the present time done by Mr. Camak and Mrs. Camak, both of whom are college people, being graduates respectively of Wofford College and Winthrop Normal and Industrial College, assisted by a corps of well-trained instructors.

The working plan of the school.—The Textile Institute was organized for young men and women without means to pay their way through school and who, as a matter of fact, were obliged to work for a living and so had no time to attend school. Its great appeal is to the more or less illiterate mill workers in the South Atlantic States from 14 years of age and upward, who would otherwise probably go through life without an education. To be more exact, the school's appeal is to those within this group who have strong personal ambition and are willing to make real sacrifice and work hard to get an education; for the schedule of the Textile Institute is a hard and long one, which only young people of unusual determination and physical endurance can master. The real purpose and working plan of the school can best be stated in the language of President Camak as given in a recent pamphlet outlining the work of the school. He says:

The essential difference between this and any other school is the fact that no students are admitted who can pay in money. Only those are taken who must earn a living and an education at the same time by the sweat of the brow. Arrangement has been made with the Spartanburg Cotton Mills to employ students in pairs, each working every other week, and thus keeping one hand on the job constantly. The partner who is off duty in the mill is, of course, on duty in the school. There is little or no friction at either end of the line, since the pair of student workers is jointly responsible for the operation of the machinery assigned, and since in the school work the entire student-body is divided into two sections, which alternate as such. Thus two separate schools are conducted by the one corps of teachers, each school having vacation, as it were, every other week. During this week of mill work, however, they are still under school discipline, for certain courses, not taken up in day time the week before, are this week taught at night. Thus the student makes a long link in his educational chain during the day time one week and a short link during the night of the next week. In this way he manages to spend the equivalent of

school months at books, while by working vacation he can get paid for 7 months' mill work in 12.

Who the students are.—The daily schedule of the school is strenuous. One week calls for work in the mills from 6.30 a. m., with one hour for noon intermission—11 hours daily except Saturday, when there is a half holiday. The operatives thus work 60 hours a week. During the work week some of the students undertake in addition a limited amount of night-school work. The next week is devoted entirely to study and recitations. It should be borne in mind that many of the students are practically illiterate, but well advanced in years, the average age being about 22. Under such conditions, it is readily seen that only young people of the best physical stamina and of exceptional grit can hope to make their way through the school. But the students who get through usually emerge as prospective leaders for the mill folk. The school authorities have this to say:

None but young men and women of determined character and fixed purpose can stand the acid test of half-time work and study. Even after careful selection by form of application there is a shrinkage after enrollment. Those who have not the moral courage necessary to achieve the difficult drop out after a few weeks, leaving the other 75 per cent to settle down to a long, hard battle with poverty and ignorance. This condition of affairs insures a student body of wonderful fortitude. It is a survival of the fittest.

A careful inspection of the student body, both at the school and in the mills, disclosed that most of them are in exceptionally good physical health. In a few cases only did they appear a little sallow and worn with work. These were usually beginning students who had suffered from mal-nutrition before arriving at the institute. Every applicant for a place must produce a doctor's certificate as a guarantee that he has no contagious or infectious disease and that he is in reasonably good health. Similarly, he must have a pastor's certificate to certify "that he is a person of high moral character, capable of learning, worthy to be trusted, and deserving the special advantages offered by the school."

Each applicant must, further, answer in writing such questions as these:

- Are you really in earnest about going to school?
- How much have you attended school?
- Your age?
- Are you willing to do good honest work in a cotton mill every other week in order to get to go to school every other week?
- Do you promise faithful obedience to the rules of the school and of the mill?
- Do you promise to stay as long as 12 months with the school, if possible?
- Could you go to school without working your way?
- What can you do in a mill?

Such questions are intended to aid the school authorities in making up their judgment as to whether or not to receive the applicant.

How the half-time scheme suits the mill operators.—Many might be skeptical on the question of how this half-time scheme works out in real practice. What is the verdict of the mill superintendent and his assistants in the matter? Is it possible for people working in pairs at the loom or the spindles—one of the two working this week and laying off the next when the team mate takes up the work—to do as good service as if the operative were on the job regularly from day to day? The answer is invariably in the affirmative. The investigator interviewed the president of the Saxon Mills and several superintendents and foremen in the various departments, and all declared the fullest satisfaction with the type of work done by the half-time students. The operators declared, furthermore, that the new education gives the student additional zest and zeal in proportion as his mental faculties are awakened. They can somehow make use of this to inspire in the mill operatives as a whole a new esprit de corps.

Statements like these coming from men in position to know are of vital importance. If investigation should have proved that the half-time workers were not so efficient as full-time workers, Mr. Canak's whole scheme would have failed. As it is, his fondest dreams seem fully realized.

The student in social leadership.—The managers of the mills are loud in their praise of the influence exerted by the half-time students on the religious and social atmosphere of the mill village. It is here that they get the first opportunity to show their true manhood and womanhood. One young man interviewed by the investigator had come out of the North Carolina hills some four years before, practically illiterate. He now holds a good place in the mill, is superintendent of the local Baptist Sunday School, and takes great interest in Young Men's Christian Association work and general welfare work.

A young woman who has been in school four years, having had, all told, less than nine months of schooling when she arrived at Saxon, is now preparing for Lander College. Her ambition is to become a settlement worker. She is a leader in local missionary work, active in general welfare work, and a leading Sunday-school teacher. It is hard to overestimate what the Textile Institute has done for such people as these and what they are doing in return for the religious and social welfare of the mill village.

Where the students go after leaving school.—An inquiry of the student body for 1915-16 resulted as follows:

- 10 per cent desired to become textile experts.
- 12 per cent desired to become ministers of the Gospel.
- 3 per cent desired to become teachers.
- 2 per cent desired to become foreign missionaries.
- 6 per cent desired to become social workers or home missionaries.

Fifty-eight per cent were already active Christian workers; 75 per cent wanted to help improve social conditions of mill operatives. The latter group included practically all the students at that time in school.

Four per cent of the students who have completed the school's course are in college. Seven in this 4 per cent are studying for the ministry, and three young women are preparing to become foreign missionaries. A few of the graduates have gone back to the farm and others are following a variety of pursuits, from civil service to barber trade; but three-fourths of all the students have returned to the mills, many from choice, others from necessity. Returning to the loom and workshop, the students carry with them new ideals for their less fortunate fellow operatives. They are instrumental, often, in helping their fellows to throw off the shackles of ignorance, with the assistance of the new school. Although the institute has been in operation less than six years, many of its products have already climbed well upward in the textile industries from ordinary "hand" to "section man" and even to the position of "mill boss."

The course of study and methods of instruction.—Student classification is necessarily very flexible, and recitation work individual rather than by groups, as they come to school with every degree of unpreparedness. Some students are practically illiterate, having had perhaps only a few weeks or months of public school instruction. Others are of mature years and some of them learn very slowly and others very rapidly. In exceptional cases students have completed the work of two or even three elementary grades in a single year. The elementary subjects form the background of the curriculum. These are taught in as practical a way as possible. Many students are obliged to begin with the primer; others are well along in the grades when they enter. Courses in elementary textiles are emphasized for the young men, and courses in home-making for the young women. The plan of work does not go above the eleventh year, this being the State requirement for high-school graduation in South Carolina. However, there is no attempt to build up, as the school authorities put it, a "proud curriculum," as the school's one great motive is to fit itself to the needs of its students.

Plans for the future.—The students of the Textile Institute pay nothing for tuition and lodging. The only charge is for board, and this is surprisingly small. Under the conditions, the institute must depend largely on voluntary contributions for its maintenance. This has been accomplished by means of scholarships and through direct donations from public-spirited men and women.

Testimony of students.—Many students, both at the school and in the mills, were interviewed and were asked to express their opinions and feelings in regard to the work the school has done for them. A

few of these testimonials are reproduced. The first two are excerpts from prize essays written by two students. The first is from the pen of William Glenn Smith, of Anderson, S. C., and the second is by Irma Wade, of Lattrens, S. C.

William Glenn Smith writes:

I began work in a cotton mill at the age of 8, and have done little else. In those early days of toil, I used to see numbers of boys and girls passing to and from school, and my heart burned with the desire to go. Then, just as it seemed that I was about to have to enter life without even an elementary education, I heard of the Textile Industrial Institute, and my heart leaped with joy that at last I was to have the chance of buying with my own labor those privileges which should have been my childhood heritage. I had reached the age where even the thought of attending a graded school was humiliating to me.

As I recall the past four years that I have attended the Textile Industrial Institute and see the great opportunities that I have had and what I would have missed had I not come, I rejoice and thank God from the very depths of my heart for a great school like the Textile Industrial Institute. Though being a grown young man and starting at the bottom in books, I have come through the past four years in the Textile Industrial Institute without being humiliated or feeling embarrassed, simply because the students are all men and women studying together the common branches which they should have had when they were children.

I know many more who will seek to enter the institute as soon as they realize that here is at last a school where a grown young man may begin at the bottom without embarrassment and learn rapidly under the sympathetic guidance of living teachers, teachers whose only object seems to be to help folks that need help that they may help others.

We who work in the mills, and whose lives will be given in some way to the uplift of our fellows, realize deeply the meaning of such a school. Only those who know at first hand the serious handicaps of the rising mill boys, and at the same time the burning ambitions of many of them, can fully realize the future effects of the school.

It may be seen from the following why a mill boy needs a school like the Textile Institute.

Three young men from the graduating class last May entered college this fall. One of them will preach, and he expects the rest of his life to serve the mill people. Oh! I would to God that we had such schools as the Textile Industrial Institute in other parts of the United States.

A young woman who was an operative in the cloth room came to the institute, obtained enough education to return home and take charge of the cloth room as "overseer." Think of it! And she teaches a Sunday School class with 30 girls in it.

A man who is now attending the Textile Industrial Institute was "second hand" in the mill. But he lost his position because of his lack of literary training. He entered the institute, and he is now prepared to enter the mill again and take an "overseer's" position. But, the most beautiful thing of all, this man while a student in the Textile Industrial Institute has seen a vision; viz, that consecrated, Christian mill men can lead their operatives for right and righteousness.

Irma Wade writes:

The most important reason why the mill girls of to-day need an education is because they are to be the mothers of our next generation. They will have to

guide the footsteps of the boys and girls of to-morrow, and so much depends on their view of life. If the mother is narrow and has low ideals, her children are more than likely to be like her. If she is uneducated, she will not try to educate her children, because she can not realize the importance of it.

Most of the girls are needed and must help at home until it is too late for them to go to the public schools, and they have not the means to go to the other high-priced schools. Then, what are they to do? Where can they go to get the training they so much need? The problem was solved when the Textile Industrial Institute was established a few years ago. There the ambitious girl can go and earn her living and get an education at the same time. She is watched over, cared for, guided, and influenced by the best women. There she receives a regular high-school course which develops her mind, broadens her view, helps her to find and develop her natural talents and to appreciate the highest and best things.

Besides this, she is given a course in home making. She is taught not only how to prepare the food for her family, but also the value of the different food and the foods which the body needs, so that she will know how to select the food which will do most toward making the members of her family strong, healthy, and happy, instead of feeding them canned goods and other things which are harmful and expensive.

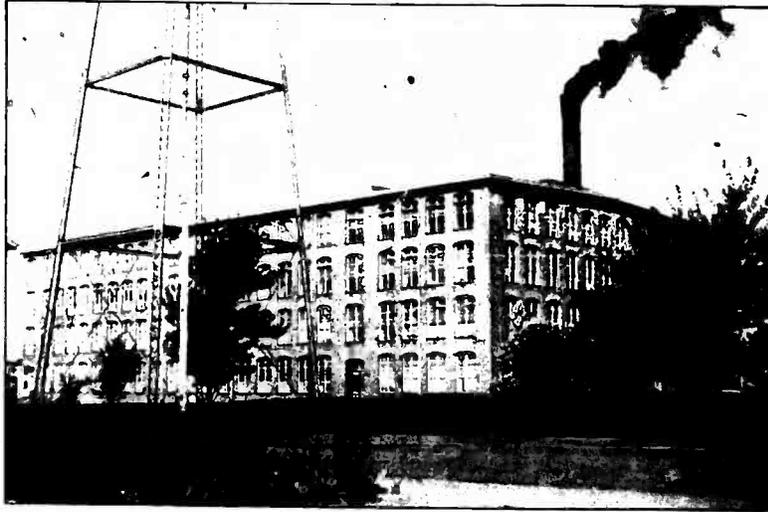
One of the greatest lessons taught there is the lesson of economy, which is learned from necessity. They work only half time, and are forced to live on half what they have been accustomed to have, often working early and late to do this. They, therefore, learn something of the value of money and learn to do without the things they do not really need. Because of this lesson, they will make more economical homemakers and their homes will be much happier.

Letters from former students of the institute.—The following extracts from letters written by former students further illustrate graphically what the half-time school can do for young people who have grown up under adverse circumstances, in sections where the school facilities have been bad, or the people too poor to take advantage of such schools as have been offered:

My father was an unsuccessful farmer of North Carolina. When the price of cotton became so low that he could no longer support his family he left the farm and moved to a cotton mill in South Carolina. A few months later he had a stroke of paralysis and died after two years of helplessness, leaving my mother with nothing except a houseful of children.

I was then 8 years old. Mother managed to keep me in school until I was 11. By that time all my older brothers and sisters were married except one brother 13 years old, who was working in the spinning room for 40 cents a day. There were two children younger than I, so it was, of course, necessary for me to go to work. I had just completed the third grade and was very anxious to go on to school, but I realized the need at home and was glad that there was a way for me to help. Mother tried to get us into an orphan's home, but there was no room for us. She bought a cow and by sometimes keeping boarders we were able to live.

After a few years my brother and I were making fairly good wages and decided to take it time about and go to school. He went one winter. I started the next fall, but was called home before the session was out. I was naturally of a studious nature, and it was a blow when I realized that there was to be no more school for me. I do not remember the time when I did not want an education more than anything else, and this desire grew as I grew older and came to

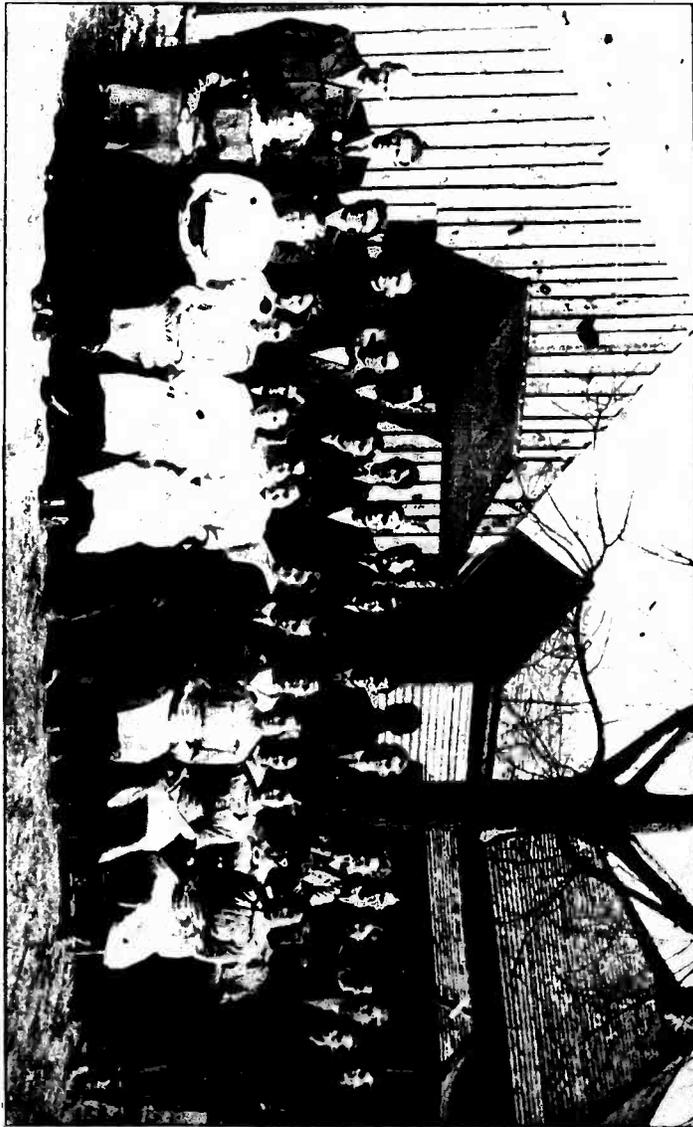


A. SAXON MILLS, IN WHICH MANY OF THE PUPILS WORK.



B. A CLASS IN TEXTILES AT THE SAXON MILLS.

At the conclusion of lectures at the school the pupils often go to the mill for practical demonstration.



THE STUDENTS OF 1914.

realize the need of it more. When I was still a child my pastor and his wife would often give me magazines, and I soon became a passionate reader. But I had no one to direct my reading and no one to help and encourage in the studies that I might have taken at night. Consequently, I spent most of the hours when not at work reading whatever fell into my hand, and it was often that which was not good for me. But I did receive a great deal of good. I received encouragement, inspiration, ambition, and learned to think through the things I read.

I became a Christian and joined the church when I was 12 years old. My successive pastors took an interest in me and I became very much interested in the church work. It was a small mill church. The pastors were earnest, consecrated men, but they had little help and had to divide their time between three other churches. We had no leaders of ability, seldom had an organist or anyone to lead the singing and but few teachers who could interest a Sunday-school class. So it was no wonder that the church was weak and seemingly did little good. For lack of a better teacher I was given a Sunday-school class when I was 16. I met them every Sunday but did little good unless it was to set them an example of faithfulness. I realized that many others as well as myself were unfitted for the places they held, but there was no one else to take them who could do any better. It was then that I began to see how much the cotton-mill people needed education and educated leaders. I saw that they were not getting out of life what was due them. They did not know how to spend the money they earned, to make themselves and their homes attractive, to care for their babies or to keep their communities in a sanitary condition. More than that, they did not know how to enjoy their leisure time. Of course their lives were dull; with many it was simply the drudgery of making a living.

I believed that this state could and should be altered. I loved them; they were my friends and neighbors, and in my heart there was born a desire to help them. But what could I do? I knew little more about how things ought to be than they; besides, my older brother had contracted consumption, and it was all I could do to care for him and provide for my own home. This continued until I was 24 years old. Then my brother died, and other changes took place that made it possible for me to get away from home. I began to look around to see what I could do. Going to school seemed impossible. I had no money; I had passed the public-school age, and the thought of entering school and having to start in the lower grades was embarrassing to me. Yet I knew I could do nothing worth while until I did get more education. These thoughts haunted me until I was on the verge of despair. Of course, I prayed and believed that God would in some way direct my life, but little dreamed that He would lead me in the path that He has.

I went to church one morning with an unusually heavy heart. After the sermon a young man whom I had known in the mill arose and asked permission to speak. He told about a school that had been established in Spartanburg for the benefit of the young men and women who were ambitious enough to work for an education. He was then a student there, and as he went on to explain the plan on which it was run tears of joy sprang to my eyes. I knew at once that that was the chance for me. Before he had finished speaking my mind was made up and in less than two weeks I was a student at the Textile Industrial Institute.

I arrived on Saturday afternoon. I was assigned work in the classroom on Monday and attended my classes all that week. The next week I went to the mill where work had been arranged for me. The work was hard and the pay was disappointing. I found that I could only make enough working half time

to pay my board. But fortunately I had clothes enough to last for a while and by doing my own laundry I was able to pay my expenses. I had to sacrifice some things that were very dear to me when I went, and the first few months were hard, because I had so many adjustments to make; but still I think they were the happiest months of my life. I knew that God had answered the longings of my heart. My dreams were coming true, and I saw larger fields and a richer life opening up before me. I found myself among a set of honest, sincere young people with much the same ideals and ambitions as my own. Some were older than I, and many were not as far advanced, but we all understood all were working for the same purpose, and we were bound by a tie of love and sympathy seldom found outside the family circle. I soon learned that the majority were not working only for themselves, but that they might get something to carry back into their home communities. With such a spirit combined with the influence of the Christian men and women who were there to help us, we could not help but be inspired to do our best.

I took some eighth-grade subjects that year, in others I was as low as the fifth grade. Though I entered late my teachers saw that I was in earnest and spared no pains in helping me. With their help I soon caught up with all my classes and covered enough ground that year that I was able to take all the tenth-grade work the next year, thus finishing the course in two years. Although I had not been higher than the fourth grade in school, I had learned enough through my reading that I was able to take higher-grade work in some subjects. In others I doubled, doing two or three years' work in one.

Before I finished there I had made up my mind to go back into the mill villages and teach. I chose this work because I felt that I could do more good in that way than any other. My problem then was how I was to continue my education after leaving there. For some time this worried me, but again I felt God's leading hand. Through one of my teachers I secured a scholarship at the Normal and Collegiate Institute in Asheville, N. C., where, by doing house work for a portion of each day, I could get my board and tuition. I entered the Normal last September, just a few weeks after leaving the Textile Industrial Institute. I am taking a teacher's training course which it will take me two years to complete. I expect to continue my preparation as long as possible; then I hope to find some place where I can pass on the blessings which I have received.

Some think there will be no need of such a school as the Textile Institute after a few years, now that we have compulsory education and the children will have a chance to go to school. I believe that will only create a greater need for it. The children will get enough from these public schools to interest them and cause them to see the value of an education. The lack of this interest has kept many away who might have gone to school. Then, instead of having to give much time to the primary work, it may be given to the higher grades and to the home making, gardening, and textile courses which the people need above all else.

I saw an advertisement in a paper that there was a school at Spartanburg, S. C., where I could go to school half of the time and work the other half. I said it was the place for me. But I thought I would come and investigate and see if it was even so, and I will say that I found it to my surprise the greatest place I ever saw, so I moved my family to the mill village and started to school, myself one week and my oldest boy goes the other week. We take it time about going. While I am at work he is in school, and I go to school the other week and he works. I have three children in the public school here in the village, so I am going to see to it that by the help of the Lord my children are not as I am.

We have been going to school at the Textile Industrial Institute for about seven months, and it just seems like home to us. I think the best teachers in the world are at the Textile Industrial Institute. I am 35 years old and I hope to get through here in about three years.

I went to work in the mill when I was 9 years old. I went to school only one session before I went to work. The lack of opportunities was due to the fact that my father needed my help in order to support the family. I know the Textile Industrial Institute offers splendid opportunities for men like myself. I entered about the fourth grade when I came to the institute. I hardly knew what English grammar was and was a beginner when I started. I had only been to school 12 months in my life. I am in line for promotion in the mill and am connected with religious and social activities of the community. I was 24 years old when I entered the institute and finished the tenth grade when I was 27.

From my earliest recollection I had but two advantages, that of Christian parentage, and ambition. My ambition was curbed and almost killed by the awful poverty which I had to endure. This robbed me of the carefree days of childhood. As early as in my seventh year I had to assume the responsibility of helping to keep the wolf from the door. We lived in a rural district only one mile from school, but I never had the opportunity of attending more than three months each year. The little time I did attend, however, I applied myself diligently. Many nights I studied until midnight and then arose before daylight in order to spend another hour with my books.

Year after year passed in the same monotonous manner. I realized that I was almost a young woman. Others of my age, and even younger, went away to good schools and came back greatly improved. I do not know myself how I ever endured the pangs which my heart was forced to endure. Yet somehow I was never completely in the clutches of despair. I always imagined that I could see a ray of hope just ahead. I puzzled my brain no little to map out some way for self improvement. Many times did I steal away and cry my young heart almost out and pray the best I knew how for some way to be opened for me. Many nights have I sobbed on my pillow until sleep came through sheer exhaustion. Thus passed the first 18 summers of my life.

After much persuasion my people consented to move to a cotton mill. I thought I could save enough money in one year to go to school the next. We found the mill people to be big-hearted, good neighbors. We received many kindnesses from both overseers and operatives. I soon learned to weave and I made very good wages. Yet I still found it hard to save much, after I paid my board and bought my clothes and met the little incidentals which naturally came up. During the second year of mill work I donated my small hoard to my sister to help her in school. This I did willingly, yet it was a case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul." I was growing despondent concerning my own case.

One day I read something about the Textile Industrial Institute. I fairly hugged the piece to my heart. From then on I watched every paper and read every word eagerly. I always felt that each piece was written for me especially. It was hard to believe all I read and heard. It seemed too good to be true. I made up my mind to go, if I could get admission. I decided that to be in school every other week was better by far than never to go. I went in person to apply. How grateful I felt when told that they would make room for me. The principal told me frankly that I would find it hard. I did; yet the very difficulty of the undertaking made it seem of more value to me. The struggle was made bearable by victory. The school was like a home when

we gathered around the table or in the classroom, we felt like one big family. There was an influence for good everywhere and in everything. * * * I know that the improvement in my narrow life was not so noticeable to others, yet I realized it fully. I learned many things outside my books. I learned many rules of etiquette, and something of plain sewing and plain cooking and food values. It was surprising how rapidly a student could advance, although in school only every other week.

I landed at the Textile Industrial Institute 23 years of age, and had been to school only a few months. Of course I had to start almost at the bottom. I started in the fourth grade and worked in the cotton mill every other week to pay my expenses, and completed the eighth grade within two years. I was a country boy and knew nothing about millwork. This was a little disadvantage, but I soon learned to cover rollers, and it paid me \$1.10 a day, which enabled me to remain in school. Before going to the Textile Industrial Institute I, as every other countryman who does not know the mill people, thought they were degenerate and not worth bothering with, but when I came to the Textile Industrial Institute and began to associate with the young men and women of the school I soon saw that I had been misinformed. I found that there were some of the brightest minds, best hearts, and finest characters among the mill people. By working and studying with the struggling men and women at the Textile Industrial Institute they commanded my utmost respect and love, and in a very short time we came to be most intimate friends.

The Institute is the place where the moral, religious, industrial, and social leaders are found, trained, and given a chance to express their lives in service for others.

I spent two years at the Textile Industrial Institute, after which I entered Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N. C. Had it not been for the Textile Industrial Institute, I, with all the young men and women which it has blessed, would have remained illiterate.

I heard of the Textile Industrial Institute at Spartanburg, S. C. I was in Charlotte, N. C., at that time. I heard of the advantages it offered poor boys and girls who wanted an education and were willing to work for it. Here was my opportunity. I grasped it. I had no money and could do nothing but weave, but the principal told me that was all I needed. I knew I could weave; I was willing to work; so I went at it. This was my only chance, weave and study at the same time. I remained in the Textile Industrial Institute two years and graduated in May, 1915, with the first class it ever sent out.

While still a student I heard the still small voice calling me to go back to the cotton mill communities of South Carolina and there give my life in service to the mill people as a preacher, and help them to a higher plane of living and a better understanding of citizenship. I knew I needed more education and more training for this great work, and I wanted to go to college to get it.

I came to Furman University in the fall of 1915 with about \$9 in money in my pocket to enter college. I had no idea where I would get the money to pay my college expenses or where I would get any work to help defray them. I asked the board of ministerial education for some help, and they granted it. I then got a job to deliver papers for a few hours in the afternoons. From these two sources and what little I could borrow I managed to stay in college the first year. I came back in September of 1916, and by struggling hard again I shall be able to complete my second year's work in college.

Time and space would fail me to tell of what I think of the Textile Industrial Institute as a means by which the worthy young people of our cotton mills in

the South may climb to positions in the mill and the professions where they may be of immense value to their local communities. The Institute was a stepping stone to college and to larger things for me. It has been the same to some half dozen others who are now pursuing their studies in other institutions of higher learning. From personal knowledge I know that these students are going back to the cotton mills from which they came, some to preach, some to teach, and some as social workers. Many others who have not had an opportunity to go to college have gone back as laborers in the mill itself and are fast working up to places of honor and trust, while at the same time making a power for good as leaders in the church and community.

Now we may ask ourselves this question, What is going to be the social effect of this sort of thing? I can answer it in a few words. It is going to mean the salvation of the best class of working people in the whole South, lifting them out of the quagmires of illiteracy and placing them where they belong, on a high plane of living and thinking, with a clear knowledge of their duty to the community, to the church, to the State, and to our country.

Additional testimony from students.—The following excerpts from letters and personal conferences with students shed further light on how they view the work of the half-time school:

I am 29 years of age. I was reared in the mountains of North Carolina, where I managed to get about 11 months of schooling. When I came to the textile institute, I could read a little. In the short time I have been here I have worked through the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades of work. I am studying English, mathematics, geography, and United States history at this time. It has been slow work for me, but I am doing well. You may be interested to know that I have managed on the side to help support my mother and the children at home. I am superintendent of the local Baptist Sunday school.

I am 19 years of age. I came to the institute in 1913. My early preparation was fair as I had attended elementary school for five years. In the 2½ years that I have been in the institute, I have learned rapidly, having just finished the tenth grade. I am working as "section man" in the Saxon Mill. I draw \$1.80 a day. On the outside I am assistant to the village welfare worker. I love the work.

I was born in the hills of Georgia, coming from a large family, where the children had to shift for themselves. The best I could do at home was to get altogether nine months in public school and night school. I succeeded finally in getting away, coming to the textile institute where I have just completed the eleventh grade of work. It is my hope to work along and earn enough in the mill to go away to college. I expect to make settlement work my life work. I am interested in Sunday school work, where I have a class. I am also doing a little home mission work and am one of the assistants in the settlement work here now.

I worked up in the mill as high as I could go without a better education. Having almost lost hope of going to school any more, I worked on in this way until the future seemed almost a blank. It was then that I heard of the textile institute. I am here now that I may get an education and be able to do good work and help others as well as myself. My aim is to prepare for mill work and to help those in the mill communities who can not help themselves. My wife and I have been in the mills here three years. We both go

to school one week and work one week. My wife is about two years ahead of me in the books.

When at the age of 12 I took a position in the Anderson Cotton Mill to earn my living, as my parents were dead, I had no one to help me from that age until now, and I had to support myself and never had the privilege to go to school. But never did I cease to pray for a way to be opened to me, and it seems to me, ever since I heard of the Textile Industrial Institute, it came as an answer to my prayer. As long as I stay here it will be a good home and, as you know, it is a bad thing for a girl to be without a home.

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

It has been shown in the foregoing paragraphs that the average mill school at its best can do little more than provide a fair degree of instruction in the rudiments of an elementary school education for the youngest children. Very few complete the elementary school course, as most of the children are for one reason or another retarded in their class work and go to work in the mills as soon as the child-labor age limit is reached. Very few of the mill-town population ever enter high school. The few who are so fortunate as to complete the elementary school course, and whose parents are able and disposed to have them continue work in high school, must seek such instruction elsewhere.

Then there is the large class of operatives to be considered who enter the mills from the outside—from the hill and mountain sections of the South, where living conditions are hard and educational facilities meager. Many of these youths begin their work in the mills almost wholly illiterate. How best to plan for the education of this class and the large number of children schooled in the mill village on a limited educational fare is the problem of the mill community.

There are now about 1,025 textile mills scattered over 12 Southern States. These mills employ many thousands of operatives, and around them have sprung up villages or city suburbs, as the case may be, where the wives and children and relatives of these operatives dwell. All together this comprises the population of hundreds of thousands of persons. It should be borne in mind, too, that these industrial places are of recent origin and have come much as an accretion to the well-fixed rural and urban establishments of the South, and have therefore not yet received the fullest educational consideration. The mill-town schools require special treatment.

1. Because of people's general illiteracy and their want of education traditions;
2. Because their poverty requires them to get to work in the mills as early as the law will permit; and
3. Because most of them have recently been transplanted from agricultural to industrial life.

These people need an education preparing them specifically for the broadest social efficiency, and for the industrial occupations peculiar to southern cotton spinning. To this end it would be well to recommend:

1. Special State legislation in each of the Southern States where this problem is acute, with provisions for the careful organization, administration, and supervision of the mill schools in charge of special State officers working under the several State departments.
2. Encouragement of the part-time school, which has already been successfully demonstrated in the Textile Industrial Institute at Spartanburg.
3. Provision for the establishment of such part-time schools as public schools, considered as part of the public-school system.
4. Organization of these schools to meet the requirements of the Smith-Hughes Act for Federal aid to schools of this type.
5. Special provision for the establishment of continuation school classes for the adult operatives under State and Federal cooperation.