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The Leaven and the Loaf

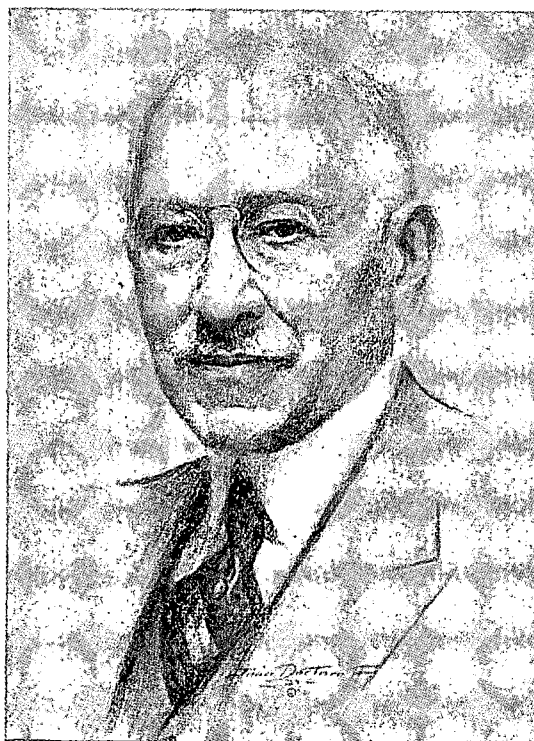
By MARY ROSS

THE February rain came in slanting sheets across the paved road and froze crackling over the fields of dried cotton stalks and the grove of tall pines whose sighing could be heard a quarter mile away. It was one of the worst days of a Georgia winter, and naturally enough the Clarke County Training School held only a fraction of the 150 brown girls and boys who ordinarily would have been there in the height of the schooling season. Cotton picking may last pretty well through December; planting starts again in March. For the bigger ones particularly these events eat inexorably into both ends of the legal nine months' school year and school learning must be done when farm work cannot be done.

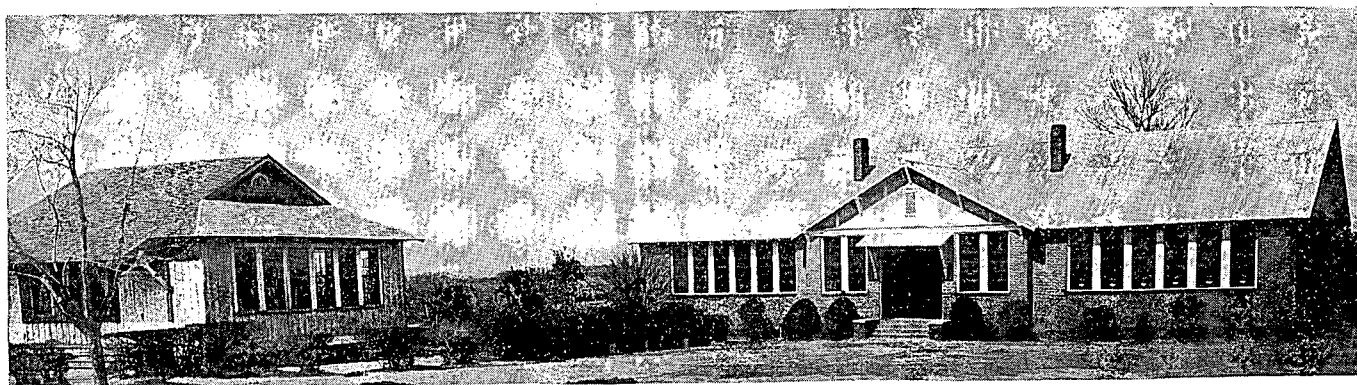
This was a bad enough morning to walk in thin clothing and worn shoes a stretch down the hard road that goes past the school, still worse to come sliding for two or three miles down the red clay gulleys into which the side roads had degenerated. There was only a baker's dozen in the primary room, which ordinarily would have held from seventy to eighty shining faces—from five- and six-year-olds up to big over-alled boys in their teens still trying to patch together enough pieces of schooling to get through the fourth grade. In the three other class rooms, where the older boys and girls went through the rest of the nine grades, through first year highschool subjects, home economics and agricultural training, there was a somewhat larger

representation. The principal, Mrs. Judia C. Jackson Harris, had an unusually good opportunity to set her ninth-grade class in education at its books, and stop to sit by the wood stove to tell the story of the trim red brick school which had come into being through her initiative and the help of friends, southern and northern, white and Negro, through nearly thirty years.

This Clarke County Training School, in the country five miles outside Athens, Georgia, is one of 4,138 Negro schools built in the southern states since 1913, and known as the Rosenwald schools because a share of the funds for the building and equipment was given by Julius Rosenwald, the Chicago merchant, at first personally and later through the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which he established in 1917 for "the well-being of mankind." The initial momentum of the idea came through Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, with whom Mr. Rosenwald worked out this means of extending to the great mass of colored children some of the elements of education which had proved successful at Tuskegee. Obviously the public school system was the point of departure, and the interest and aid of the local community, Negro and white, was essential if the work was to be kept going. The first schools, built in Alabama and supervised by Tuskegee Institute, adopted the principles which have been found to work with increasing success through the succeeding fifteen years: cooperation of all the inter-



Julius Rosenwald, whose leaven has raised schools for half a million Negro children



Thirty years, the indomitable dream of a young teacher, the funds of far-seeing foundations, and the love, work and money of countless friends are built into this trim Clarke County Training School and its adjacent shop building

ested parties; adaptation of the school work to the practical need of the families from whom the children come; and careful planning of the school buildings. In 1920, with the extension of the program through the Fund, a central office for the South was established in Nashville.

That worn word "cooperation" means that the local school authorities, state, county or town, agree to maintain the school when built as part of the regular public school system—and that white and colored groups share in the cost of its building and equipment. More than \$20,000,000 has been spent for the 4,354 Rosenwald school units, including school houses, industrial shops and teachers' homes. Of this by far the largest amount, \$12,156,438, has come from tax funds; white neighbors raised \$903,252 by gifts; \$3,333,852 came from Mr. Rosenwald personally or through the Fund; and the Negroes themselves have given \$3,914,837 in dimes and quarters and dollars, a significantly larger amount than the Rosenwald contribution, aside from their gifts in labor. Every school, even the smallest, has at least one industrial or community room and at least two acres of land about its building for gardens and playground.

The story of the school on the Danielsville road begins far back of the Rosenwald idea, however. In 1900 Judia Jackson, just out of Atlanta University, came back to teach in the colored school of Athens. She first chose for the subject of her graduating thesis "The Equitable Distribution of Rights and of Property Among Individuals," but upon further thought renounced this over-ambitious subject and wrote on "The Future Opportunities for the Trained Teacher." These opportunities, she saw, did not begin or end in the schoolhouse but must grow out of the whole life of her people. From the days when she was a child she had often gone in summer to see cousins outside the city in this rolling stretch of cotton tenant farms and pines—a piece of land which once had belonged to the French aristocrat, Madame Gouvaine, friend of Napoleon and the Empress Josephine, who had bartered it with General d'Estang for the island of Martinique. Mrs. Harris still cherishes a piece of the bodice Mme. Gouvaine once wore when she danced with Napoleon at a court ball, given her by the great lady's grand-

daughter. But the land had passed into the hands of other white folks, and in 1900 the Negroes farmed it as tenants.

They must own the land, the young teacher believed, if they were to work themselves out of the wandering and profitless life of the tenant. She drove out to the August camp meetings and talked to them the religion of thrift and education, of better farming, home ownership and a chance for their children. In a house crowded with shining faces, she asked those who owned land to hold up their hands. Only one wavered up, that of a man who had inherited four acres from his wife.

So an association was formed to organize land clubs, and the money came in by dimes and quarters. Judia Jackson refused to take charge of it herself, but she gave them her "religious promise" that not a penny would be lost. After the harvest, when the money for the crops came in, there were several dollars, a few ten-dollar additions, and one of \$25. The first land club had accumulated \$108 in its treas-

ury when a forty-acre tract came on the market; they paid down \$100 to secure it, had \$8 for the lawyer's fees, and cleared off the remaining \$250 in the next two years. Gradually 147 acres were bought in this way, and rented out until they were fully paid for, then divided among the club members by lot according to their contribution and the value of the various parcels, Judia Jackson taking her chances with the rest. The division, which might well have brought controversy to an older cooperative enterprise, was accomplished with amity and satisfaction. Ultimately as club after club was formed, the land owned by the Negro farmers grew to a total of 2,000 acres, and despite the hard times that have brought so many southern farms down to despair and defeat, most of this land is still held by the Negro owners.



Judia C. Jackson Harris, founder and principal of the school

With the acquisition of land came too the desire that had always been the driving motive of the young teacher—a real school, with a tight roof and well-lighted rooms and trained teachers, to take the place of the three miserable little shacks that went by the name of schools, two on church property, adjoining unpainted weather-bitten churches, one a decrepit log cabin with great



Across the highway from the school Mrs. Harris built herself a home, where girls from remote cabins could board during the week, and where all might practise the gentle ways of living little known on the poverty-stricken farms

chinks where the wind and rain beat in. In Georgia the county pays the salary of the teacher in the little country schools, but it is up to the school district itself to provide and keep up the building, while the children buy their books—if they can. Hence the common practice of the school as an adjunct to the colored churches. Ordinarily money for a real school building is obtained by bonding the district, but the shifting group of white tenant farmers along the Danielsville Road and the absentee white landlords weren't interested in bonding to provide a school for colored children, and in elections it is the white vote that counts. It was more than an ordinary school which Judia Jackson had as her ideal—a school which would teach the whole community thrift and order and the gentler aspects of living which they had not known, which would be used as a meeting place for social gatherings, as the consecrated church buildings cannot serve in this country, and would in turn train girls and boys to make the most of their lives and to go out to teach others of their people likewise.

Judia Jackson was then principal in one of the city schools in Athens and through her work there she managed to interest northern friends. She offered four acres from her share in the land allotment for a site, the General Education Board gave \$600 for the building and pledged the salary of a teacher for the first three years; the county helped with the equipment, and in 1903 the three-teacher frame building of the Clarke County Training School was built to serve the district which had been covered by the three meager little shacks. It was called a training school, for one of its specific aims was to train its graduates to go out to teach others—and as such it was the pioneer in a movement,

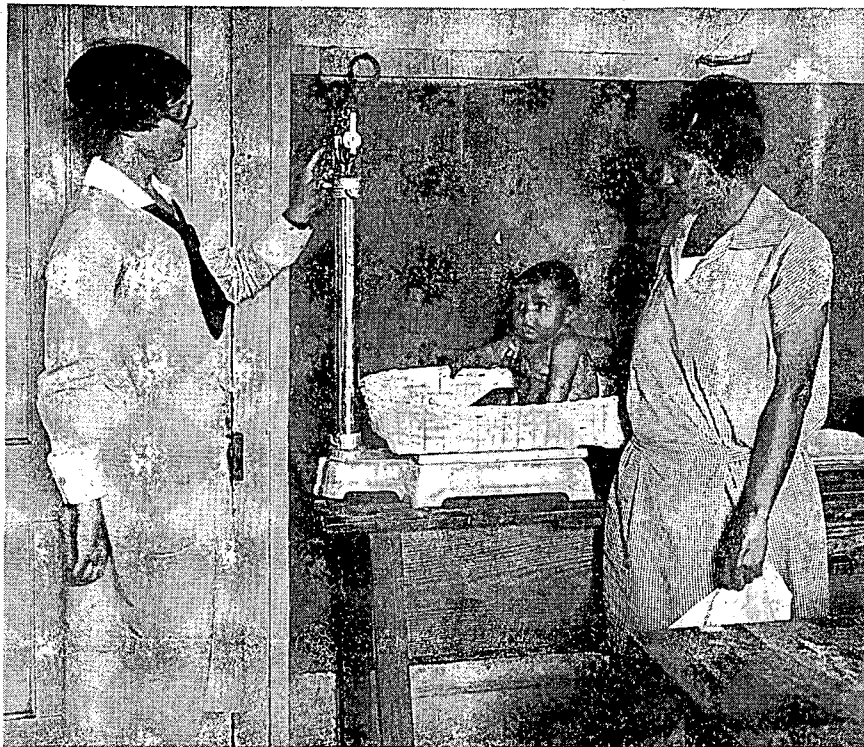
since 1911 a chief interest of the John F. Slater Fund, which now numbers 328 county training schools in southern states. Judia Jackson resigned her city job to take charge of it. The following year she built herself a home on her land across the road from the school and went to live among her scholars and their families. Her house was open to them; her gleaming white bath-tub a center of interest and exhilarating adventure; her pictures and books their delight. Her kitchen was used in supplementing school work with instruction in home management, and from time to time girls who lived a distance from school came to board with her.

In the school building a library of 1,400 books was gradually accumulated to serve the pupils and the large community (even at the present time the city of Athens has no free public library, much less the smaller towns and mere settlements such as surrounded the Judia Jackson school). A rose hedge 200 feet long was planted along one side of the playground in front of the building; demonstration gardens were started behind, to one side of the big pile of wood that the parents haul in and the children chop to stove length; a white neighbor gave a cow to aid in the agricultural teaching; plays, parties and pageants became part of the program each spring, while the fall sees an agricultural fair, with exhibits of the prize livestock, garden products, handiwork and the like of neighbors as well as pupils; and canning and sewing classes for the women were organized evenings.

It was after the war, in 1920, that the Rosenwald Fund entered the story by providing \$1,200 for re-modelling and modernizing the school-house and building a new shop and vocational building, while



The vaccinating line forms in valiant array to meet the health officer and the county nurse



Through the rural schools, the Clarke County Health Department brings its health lessons to the whole family, young, old, and middling

white and colored friends gave a little more than \$1,200 to complete the necessary amount. Miss Judia Jackson that year became Mrs. Harris through her marriage to the principal of the first accredited colored highschool in the city. In the shop building a picture of Mr. Rosenwald looks down on the domestic science room, where the girls learn cooking and canning, and make clothing and attractive useful articles for their homes out of flour sacks or whatever other material is at hand. There still is no regular domestic science teacher, and that branch of the work is added to the classes in history, Latin, algebra, English, education and arithmetic which the principal herself carries with assistance from the two other women teachers. A second room provides the place for teaching carpentry and masonry.

Through the Smith-Hughes Act, the school gets a subsidy from federal funds to carry half the salary of the fourth teacher, a young man recently graduated from Tuskegee, who gives half his time to agricultural teaching and demonstration, working out farm projects with the children in their homes and on the school grounds. After Georgia passed its Barrett-Rogers Act in 1919, authorizing state subsidy to consolidated four-teacher rural schools which reached certain academic and vocational standards, the Clarke County Training School was the first in the county, white or colored, to qualify for its stated allotment of \$500. For the past six years the school has received an annual appropriation from the Slater Fund, at first of \$400 a year; and now, in accordance with the policy of the Fund to reduce subsidies by easy stages, \$200 a year.



agreement, but they contented themselves with raising their guns and firing through its windows.

DUE to the understanding leadership of the white community in Athens, Clarke County, however, has never experienced the darkest terrors of racial antagonism. This leadership and the respect among both the colored and white citizens was shown dramatically when a flaw in the chimney set fire to the school in 1924 and it burned to the ground. With it went the cherished rose hedge and the trees planted by the pupils, though they managed to save the shop. Again the General Education Board came to the rescue with a grant of \$5,000 for the brick building which now stands on its site, and this time the county came forward with the substantial sum of \$1,500, especially substantial in the years when boll weevil, crop failure, and ensuing bank failures have wracked the district.

The inter-racial committee in Athens called a mass meeting which pledged \$500 on the spot, and Mrs. Harris took that list of donations and raised it to \$1,000 by the end of the week in gifts from white and colored friends. The Negro Business Men's League in Athens pledged \$200 and colored artisans in the city and the county gave their labor in the rebuilding. The Athens Rotary Club had the bricks hauled for the building and a Rotarian himself took charge of loading them on the trucks in the city. The Women's Club of Athens pledged itself to replace that precious library of 1,400 books; the shelves in the little room just inside the entrance are again well-stocked.

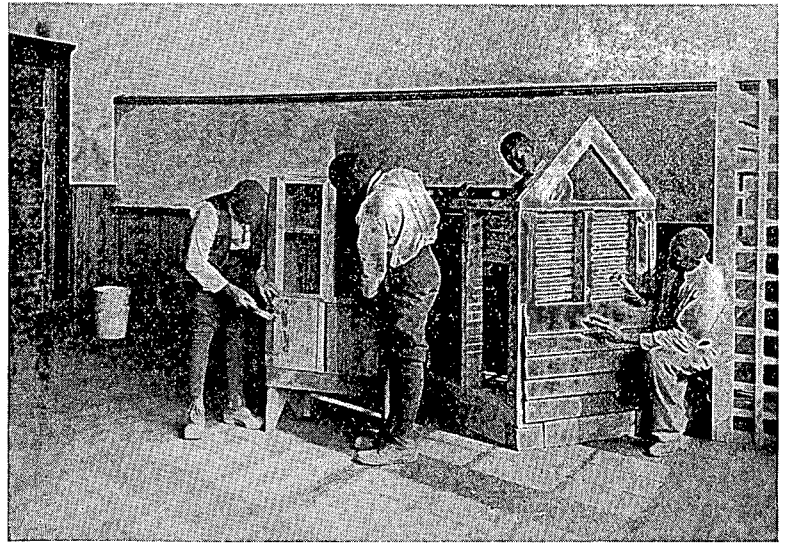


The overseer in charge of the road gang of convicts working outside on the new hard road brought his men in to re-grade the playground in front. And the white man, who had shot through the windows of the old schoolhouse so many years before, unknown to anyone but Mrs. Harris, came back to work for wages on the new building, though the boss of the bricklaying was a Negro.

To anyone accustomed to the homogeneous classrooms of consolidated schools in more prosperous country districts, it might seem that the Clarke County School was still struggling against almost insuperable obstacles. On a crisp sunny day I went back to the school with Dr. B. B. Bagby, director of the Athens and Clarke County Health Department. There had been a case of smallpox on a neighboring farm and he was trying again to round up unvaccinated children. The primary room was full that day—seventy odd children, sitting two and even three to a desk.

One teacher with three grades—with a class that fluctuates from a dozen to eighty or even more, from wriggling urchins up to big lumbering, self-conscious adolescents, without books for the children whose parents cannot afford to buy them—that would seem a super-human order in education.

BUT watch Mrs. Ellen Wilson, crisply serene, separating the sheep—those with vaccination scars, from the goats without them who eyed the doctor's bag apprehensively; lining up the former, setting the others at the tasks that differed with each child. There were health charts for each, which had been made out by the nurses of the county health department when the regular health examinations were held in the schools. While the vaccinating line formed, she went over the charts with the doctor, noting his comments on teeth that needed filling, tonsils that required care, on records of underweight or other conditions that might make it hard for a child to learn. The sunny room was quiet and orderly despite its eighty occupants, despite the line, with anxious eyes and rolled-up sleeves, often ragged but almost without exception clean. The



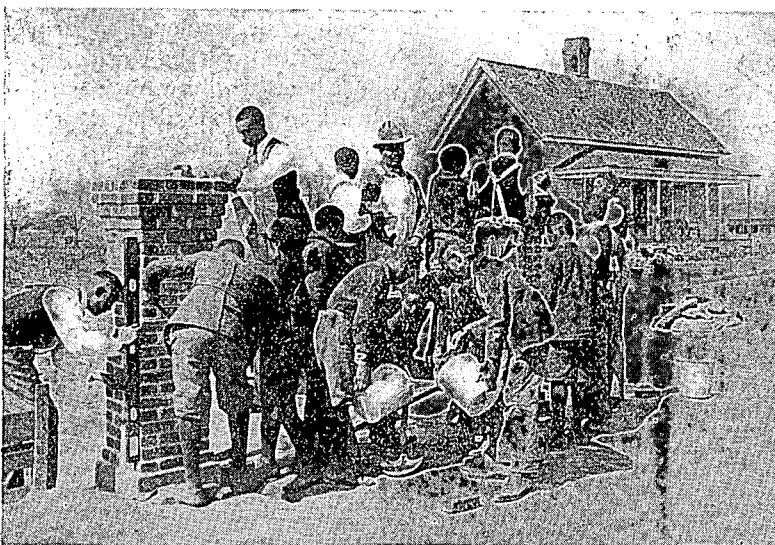
Modern disciples of learning by doing would delight in watching carpentry and arithmetic dovetail in Hartwell's program

children filed past the doctor as he sat by the stove in the corner, administering a deft prick in each brown arm, while the teacher encouraged the fearful, reinforced the doctor's advice on teeth and tonsils and food as the health charts were reviewed, interpreted in turn to the doctor the conditions at home that had made it difficult or impossible for the parents to follow his advice, and at the same time kept a watchful eye and a helpful word for the others at their desks.

Here was a kind of education which faced its limitations frankly and cheerfully and proceeded capably to do its best—and a very capable best. It is significant that the doctors and nurses of the county health department, which has just concluded a five years' health demonstration in cooperation with the Commonwealth Fund, speak regretfully of the opportunities they lost during the interval between the burning of the old school and the building of the new, when there was no center in that district for their work, for the schoolchildren, for the babies and runabouts, whose clinics are held in the schoolhouse, and for the parents, educated through their children in the health of the entire family.

After the doctor had gone through the four rooms of the Judia Jackson school, he went on to the white school down the road, a little two-room frame building, scantily painted, the source of some of the resentment among white neighbors because it is of obviously lower caliber than the colored school. Soon it will be consolidated by the county in a big new school on the edge of the city, with school buses to take the children to and fro, but it is at least ten years behind the progress that the colored community has won for itself. The parents of these white children are mostly tenant farmers, here this year, gone the next.

The difficulties that teachers and health officers face from the tenant system were only too apparent; just before Christmas Dr. Bagby had got that school 100 per cent vaccinated, for the case of smallpox had been in a white family. Just after the holiday he came back to check up, and found that the school group had so shifted in the annual re-making of farm (Continued on page 212)



The Hartwell Training School is getting new gate-posts and its pupils are learning a trade which pays a good living locally

New Schools Abroad

By GERTRUDE HARTMAN

IN October, 1889, a young man, named Cecil Reddie, opened Abbotsholme, a new school for boys, in Derbyshire, England. Not an especially remarkable event, one might think, but it was. This was a young man with unusual ideas, and the school was the first "new" school. Brought up in one of the famous public schools of England, and later a student at one of the great universities, young Reddie, a sensitive idealist, had suffered much from the ceaseless round of hard competitive cramming of studies in the class-room in the morning, followed by the hard competitive grind of sports on the playing fields in the afternoon, which go to make up the greater part of the day of the English schoolboy and youth.

It was a time of heart sickness [he tells us]. Our education, instead of leading to unity and harmony, was producing, day by day, a feeling of hopeless division and discordance. The mass of conflicting principles which kept entering our minds, these we were left to coordinate as we might find possible, and from them construct a rule of conduct suited to our actual life. In class, while others attended more or less to the work in hand, I watched the living play before my eyes, striving to divine the motives which moved the actors in the drama.

My own problems were of this kind: What is this world? What is our real duty? Why do we learn this, and not that? And I wondered that neither boys nor masters seemed interested in such problems. . . . The mind was wearied by the attempt to realize the meaning of the subject-matter, and distracted by the unending excursions after dull grammatical rules. The atmosphere of such work was so unnatural and conventional that one was glad to look out of the windows and see the real trees and hills still there. . . . Nothing learned at school seemed to give a clue to the actual life of the big world.

Much more Dr. Reddie has to say along the same lines. How familiar it all sounds—just like a page out of one of last month's educational journals. It is difficult to believe that it was written forty years ago. Only the most advanced educators today are attempting to do the things that Reddie advocated. So long does it take new ideas to get over into practice.

Reddie had discovered that many other boys like himself had been starved in school when they should have been fed, and he resolved to open a school that would be "different," where his

dreams and aspirations should find fulfilment. It was to be a school "to help create a higher type of human being, able to cope with the increasing extent and complexity of modern knowledge and modern life, and able by a better development of the affections to develop a more wholesome type of human society." Thus this young reformer set out upon his educational project, without, he tells us, knowing anything of the history or literature of education, and not aware to what extent other minds were working on the same problems.

Dr. Reddie chose a stately country-house set in spacious grounds, giving an atmosphere of dignity and culture to the school home. Beautiful country surrounded it, permitting a free and open life. Farm lands were part of the school estate. What were the ideas underlying this new experiment? As the central purpose was the harmonious development of the whole boy—mentally, physically, and spiritually—all the resources of the school were made to interact and thus reinforce one another to minister to this end. A great effort was made to show the use of what was taught. As part of their mathematics the boys kept the expenditures of the school and the accounts of the farm, the gardens, the food, and the fuel. Practical experience in surveying was carried on in connection with work in map-making, and the

country-side, with its hills and vales, its spreading meadow lands, its woods and brooks and winding river, were an ever-open textbook in geography and nature study. In all studies progress was from direct contact with the concrete and particular to the more abstract generalizations, and planned so as to give successively deeper and deeper analyses of life and the world.

There was always plenty of work to be done about the place: engineering jobs, such as the making and draining of roads or building a bridge across the river; the making of a duck pond or a pigeon cote. Things needed by the school were made in the work-shop, where a great variety of arts and crafts was carried on. The long free afternoons were spent in riding, or in various games, or in pursuing a particular hobby, or in boating and swimming in the river. The evenings, instead of being devoted to the customary preparation of work for the following day, were



A lesson in history, geography, home economics and handcraft at the spinning wheel at Bedales