

CHAPTER IX

THE SOUTHERN STATES

THE South, although in some parts settled early, has been slow in establishing an organized system of public schools. In the earlier years this was due largely to a prevailing sentiment against such school organization, and in favor of private schools, or education within the family by means of tutors. As a consequence, the poorer classes were not educated, or were forced to attend the so-called "pauper school." There were, however, many private schools and academies of a high order throughout the South, and those who were able to pay for educational opportunities found them in abundance. Especially was this true of the girls, for the South was a leader in the founding of seminaries for them. But it was not until the close of the Civil War that the states took up the problem of the education of the masses, and most manfully have they struggled with it since that time, in the face of odds not equalled in any other part of the country. Many conditions have made the problem difficult. First, the region, never a wealthy one, had been impoverished by the tremendous expense of a war fought within its own confines, with all the devastation which that means. Second, six million of totally uneducated colored people had been freed and left upon their hands for assimilation and some form of education. This involved the setting up of a double system, with all the extra expense which such a plan involves. Third, the population was largely rural, necessitating a greater outlay of money to bring the school to every child than though it had been more fully urban;

and fourth, no part of the country had so large a proportion of its population within the limits of school age as it; a most encouraging fact from some points of view, but perplexing to the financiers of public school problems.

Yet, previous to 1870, every Southern state had made constitutional and legislative provisions for free schools and a general system of education. Twelve had some form of state control, eight had provided for county supervision, normal schools had been started in six, agricultural and industrial colleges in a still larger number, and progress had been made in grading the schools in the large cities. It is true that the North had helped in this work through the Peabody and other funds, and the federal government had extended its aid; but the great bulk of the labor and funds came from the South itself. Considering that but thirty years have elapsed since its educational machinery was really started, magnificent progress has been made. In that time the percentage of total population enrolled in the schools, as well as of children of school age, has doubled; the actual number of pupils attending school more than quadrupled; ten days have been added to the school year, and the per capita expenditure for school purposes nearly doubled. The South to-day taxes itself more heavily for its schools in proportion to its wealth than does the great Western portion of our country, though not as yet quite so heavily as the North and East. P. 455.

Yet, in spite of the fact that the South has for a generation made such rapid progress in school matters, its start was from such a plane as to leave much to be done before they are upon the same footing of general excellence as the other portions of the country. Appendix K.

Kentucky

Mrs. Jane Comes, the wife of one of the earliest settlers at Harrodsburg, taught the first school in Ken-

tucky. This was probably in the spring of 1776, when the colony was not more than a year old. The following year there was a school at McAgee's Station. Others soon followed. These earliest schools were private, and must have been very primitive in character. They were the first representatives of the "Old-field," or "Hedge-row" schools.

The Virginia legislature made its first grant for education in Kentucky in 1780, by setting aside 8000 acres of land for an academy, as soon as it should be convenient to establish one. Three years later, 20,000 acres were granted for founding Transylvania University, and trustees were named. This was to be a state institution, though it was never without denominational flavor. Though called a university, the institution was little more than an academy. The first instruction in connection with it was in the home of Rev. David Rice, at Danville, in 1785. During the next ten years a number of schools, both of elementary and secondary grades, were opened within the various settlements and had a fair attendance. In the closing years of the century, educational interest centred about the academies, more than 30 being established in different parts of the state. Each was given 6000 acres of land by the legislature and was also granted permission to raise \$1000 by lottery. These privileges were soon extended to each county for school purposes, and previous to 1820, 47 of them had county academies in operation, some of which, by special enactment, had received double the usual grant of land. But they led but a precarious existence. Educational sentiment had not yet been properly aroused, the people were not willing to tax themselves for school purposes, the lands were poorly managed, and the academies soon languished. But their failure served to turn popular attention to educational questions, and in 1821 a committee was appointed by the legislature to make a study of the school systems

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of the East and to suggest remedies for the difficulties in Kentucky. Barnard calls the report of this committee "one of the most valuable documents upon common school education that had at that time appeared." This report favored the New York system, with its local taxes supplemented by state appropriations. Unfortunately, the legislature took no action, except to print the report.

The schools of Louisville led those of the state. Here, in 1829, was a free school, conducted on the Lancasterian system. The city appropriated \$2050 for its support for a year, but at the end of that time the system of fees was again adopted, and the free school was a thing of the past. But in 1840 tuition fees were abolished and the schools of Louisville made free. Night schools were established especially for apprentices in 1834. In this same year there was appointed a school agent, whose duty it was to visit all the schools each quarter and report upon their condition. His duties were soon enlarged, and by 1838 corresponded in general to those of the present city superintendent.

A system of public schools for the state was made possible by a law of 1838, which included the following provision: a school fund, a state board of education, a superintendent of schools, school districts with trustees for each, county commissioners, and a local school tax. At this time there were 175,000 children of school age, of whom perhaps not more than half had enjoyed any school advantages. But because of opposition and indifference it was not until 1853 that the law was in operation in every county of the state. During the Civil War but little educational progress was made, and at its close the question of negro education was added to the already unsolved school problems. The Peabody and other funds contributed throughout the North for this purpose aided materially in its solution, but the burden of the work has been undertaken by the state. In 1866 all taxes paid by the negroes, except such as were

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27: 335.Georgetown Col.
Lewis, p. 141.Evening Schs.
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minded, p. 476.Kentucky Univ.
p. 284.
Lewis, p. 83.

needed for the support of the charitable institutions of the race, were devoted to these schools. A little later a negro poll tax was established and devoted to the same purpose, and since that time the state has made generous appropriations. In 1884 an act was passed calling for the election of county superintendents of schools by popular vote, and under the direction of these officials the schools have prospered.

Better attendance, too, has been secured by the compulsory school law of 1896, which requires at least eight weeks of continuous attendance per year on the part of children between the ages of seven and fourteen.

Text-book legislation, p. 219; Sch. organization, App. F; St. Supt. Pub. Ins. App. G; Cert. of teachers, App. H; Teachers' Inst. App. I; Comp. Ed. Laws, App. J; Ed. Statistics, App. K.

Tennessee

"It is the indispensable duty of every legislature to consult the happiness of a rising generation, and fit them for an honorable discharge of the social duties of life," is a part of the preamble to the act which chartered Davidson Academy at Haysboro in 1785. And when the North Carolina legislature passed the act, it also endowed the academy with 240 acres of land, and declared all the school's property exempt from taxes for ninety-nine years. The school opened the following year in a stone church, where it continued for at least twenty years, with Rev. Thomas Craighead as teacher. This was the beginning of Nashville University. In 1806 Congress granted to Tennessee 100,000 acres for each of two colleges; 100,000 acres for academies, one in each county, and 640 acres for every district six miles square for school purposes. By a single act the legislature incorporated twenty-seven boards of trustees who should have charge of the academies and lands of their several counties. Unfortunately the public lands and

funds of Tennessee were not well handled, and have never brought to the support of schools what they were expected to contribute. The early legislation did not provide for special elementary schools, as is clearly shown in a declaration of 1817 that colleges and academies "should form a complete system of education." In 1830, however, there was formed a definite plan for public instruction, beginning with the elementary work. At that time provisions were made for organizing school districts, with five trustees to each, who were to select county commissioners, hire teachers, and report annually to the commissioners, who in turn were to report to the legislature. If legislative enactments could have brought it to pass, Tennessee would have had one of the best school systems in the country. The amount of money appropriated by the state was not, however, sufficient to support the schools, and the people were not ready to tax themselves for the education of the children of others. As a result, the school term was short, and education was largely a private concern. At the close of the war each county was given supreme control of its own schools, with the result that in 1872 only twenty-nine out of ninety-three counties levied any tax. Some of the counties had "not a single school, either public or private, in operation." The following year (1866) the state superintendent's office was revived, and county superintendents and district directors were appointed. These changes met with serious opposition, but on the whole schools began to improve. In 1891 a law was passed providing for graded schools, five years being devoted to primary work and three to higher instruction.

Text-book legislation, p. 219; Library legislation, p. 485; Sch. organization, App. F; St. Supt. Pub. Ins. App. G; Cert. of teachers, App. H; Teachers' Inst. App. I; Comp. Ed. Laws, App. J; Ed. Statistics, App. K.

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