

Savannah. On board he met the widow of General Nathanael Greene of Revolutionary fame, and this lady invited him to visit her plantation at Mulberry Grove, near Savannah. What happened then is best told by Eli Whitney himself, in a letter to his father, written at New Haven, after his return from the South some months later, though the spelling master will probably send Whitney to the foot of the class:

New Haven, Sept. 11th, 1793.

. . . I went from New York with the family of the late Major General Greene to Georgia. I went immediately with the family to their Plantation about twelve miles from Savannah with an expectation of spending four or five days and then proceed into Carolina to take the school as I have mentioned in former letters. During this time I heard much said of the extreme difficulty of ginning Cotton, that is, separating it from its seeds. There were a number of very respectable Gentlemen at Mrs. Greene's who all agreed that if a machine could be invented which would clean the cotton with expedition, it would be a great thing both to the Country and to the inventor. I involuntarily happened to be thinking on the subject and struck out a plan of a Machine in my mind, which I communicated to Miller (who is agent to the Executors of Genl. Greene and resides in the family, a man of respectability and property), he was pleased with the Plan and said if I would pursue it and try an experi-