What is Geography ?

[Addressed to the Society on Tuesday, December 13th, 1904, in the Memorial Hall, Albert Square.]

By Ernest W. Davit, B.A., F.B.G.S.

WE have set ourselves to-night to answer a very difficult and debatable question. The more one considers the amount of discussion that has been recently taking place upon this important subject, the more rash and presumptuous does it seem for a comparative youngster to rush in where editors and professors fear to tread, and to commit the indiscretion of trying to settle the limits of a subject upon the scope of which so many of our leading scholars are so divided. For any such rashness I apologise.

It is no part of my purpose to endeavour to improve upon the many masterly definitions of our subject which have been given to the world by its greatest teachers.

Dr. H. R. Mill says : " Geography is the exact and organised knowledge of the distribution of phenomena on the surface of the earth, culminating in the explanation of the interaction of man with his terrestrial environment."

Another great teacher, Mr. H. J. Mackinder, says this : " I have ventured to define geography—if it be a definition—by saying that it answers two questions. It answers the question Where ? and it then proceeds to answer the question Why there ? Now, of course, the old memory geography answered the question Where ? in respect of names. It did not even answer the question Where? completely, and so far as Why there ? was concerned, I have seen text-books which did not attempt it. Let me venture to say what I think geography is at its highest. We are now developing geography as a University study, and we claim that geography is entitled to the position of a University study, that it is worthy of the life-study of specialists. You will not therefore be surprised if, as the ultimate aim of your very best pupils, who are to have all the chances, we take a very high standard indeed. I believe that geography contains in it elements of three things : Elements that are essentially of science, elements that are essentially of art, elements that are essentially of philosophy—of science, in being reasoned, measured, ordered knowledge ; of art, geography is half art, partly fine art ; of philosophy, for the philosophies of history, politics, economics all contain a large geographical element. When you have got your myriad facts, registered with the labours of all the generations which have gradually given us the map of all the World in all its infinite details, you have to acquire the ability to see with the mind's eye, not the mere map of Italy with the boot at the end of it, but the blue sky, and the blue sea, and the brilliant sun, along a hundred miles, and again a hundred miles, of brown coast, rising high into mountains clothed with the dark tint of the chestnut forests, rising still higher on to Alps, as they are called, with a neutral tint, crowned at certain seasons, at any rate, with white caps of snow, and to see, down along the coast here and there, shining brilliantly white in the sunshine, the towns, Salerno, Naples, and the rest of them, along the coast. We have got to be able not only to see the picture, but to prolong it, by an effort of imagination, beyond the horizon. To visualise is the very essence of geographical power, which should be cultivated until it becomes possible to think of the whole World's surface at once in all its complexities, with its girdles of all kinds, telegraphic, railway, steamer, girdles of power, girdles of thought, for every touch of the helm of government, either at Westminster or in the City, produces & ripple which goes right round the World, like the wave in the air emitted from Krakatoa meeting obstacles and producing varied results. Nothing happens without producing results in every part. You cannot estimate the price of wheat on the Corn Market, as it will be a few months hence, without taking into account the probabilities of harvests in all parts of the World. You must be

able to think and visualise on the stage of this round World. This is geographical power on its artistic side ; and it is essential to an Imperial people. I venture to say that at times when the vote of Englishmen may decide the life and death of millions in various parts of the World—nay, the fate of this country itself—that our aim is here very practical. There is a third element—philosophy. The philosophy of history has a very geographical side. Any real philosophy of politics—any economic philosophy—at the present day must also have a very important geographical side. Therefore I believe that in its highest, development, when expressed in the highest culture, geography is at once scientific, artistic, and philosophical." This is a magnificent utterance by a magnificent teacher, and demonstrates very faithfully the highest conception of the study of geography. Nor is it mere vapouring. The teacher who would succeed in his particular sphere of culture must have unbounded faith in it, and a thorough grasp of aims and principles. If he be enthusiastic, he will find that enthusiasm infectious ; if he be broad-minded, his pupils' ideas will broaden. So, let us take a noble conception, such as I have quoted, for a starting-point ; let us see at what we are aiming ; let us appreciate the limitations of our environment and of our students ; and let us finally arrive at some conclusion as to what geography is, or ought to be, as practically worked out in education.

It need hardly be said that there are still many false conceptions of our subject. One is apt to assume that other folk, who perhaps do not profess to specialise in it, have progressed as rapidly as we, and it is a rude shock to find that scholars are still taught, as of yore, on the principle of wearisome repetition, bad text-books, and physico-political abortions called by the facetious name of wall-maps. The days are far from being over when we hear the rigmarole of " Great Bear Lake, Great Slave Lake, Athabasca, Winnipeg, Winnipegosis ; Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario ; Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe, Aire, Calder, Don, Derwent ; Flamborough Head, Spurn Head"—and so on. No ; " there is much rubbish." On the other hand, it cannot be too emphatically stated that the theory of sound geographical teaching and its practice are two very different things. We are passing through successive paroxyms of new-fangled syllabuses, some complex, some bald and over-generalised, and some which waste much valuable space in instructing teachers in the rudiments of their art instead of putting them on the broad, common-sense track. Who needs to be told how to institute comparisons between mud-bearing gutters and mud-bearing rivers ? And what teacher needs be instructed how to illustrate the difficulties of travelling uphill, and so on ? There are many syllabuses which look charming on paper, but which no practical person would ever attempt to work out in a school.

Geography has, as we have already seen, many sides. It treats of the earth, as its name implies. The earth, indeed, is only a part of a great universe, and therefore we should know something of this great universe, and of the aggregate of cause which produced this globe. We must know its size, its shape, and its constituents, too, as well as its place and importance in the great whole. When we have gained a broad conception of its substance, we can begin to consider its outer crust. So far, then, we have ranged through a wide field of astronomy, to appreciate which a good knowledge of mathematics is necessary, and we have then introduced a fairly exacting course of geology. And yet we have barely touched the fringe of what is conventionally known as geography. The study of the surface of the globe makes it necessary for us to search from the Globigerina ooze of the ocean to the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas. We must know of the ocean, currents, of sea and land breezes, of rain and sunshine, and of the manifold conditions which affect the surface of land and water. We need to treat of vegetation—in fact, we are now losing ourselves in botany, not to mention agriculture !—and of living creatures, and here we are being drawn into the vortex of zoology. We range over continents and oceans, and we survey islands, icebergs, and the like in the mass and separately. Having considered the whole, we can consider its parts, and treat of the lands in detail. This leads us to study the inhabitants of the lands, and brings us to the last

branch of our study, man on earth, anthropology, history, political economy—there is no end to it. Geography, then, in its widest sense, is a compendium of the sciences. I do not mean to contend that the perfect or ideal geographer is the possessor of a universal knowledge. I simply mean that the subject is sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy any ordinary mortal's thirst for knowledge, and still to leave him very, very incomplete. Is not that the hall-mark of *all* science ?

We have, then, something to aim at. It only remains to be seen how far we can go ourselves, and how far we can take our pupils. Teachers of geography have very different ideas as to the scope of their work. We have, on the one hand, the geologist. The danger with him is that, in his excess of zeal, he may allow his geology to run to seed. His pupils will listen with amazement to his descriptions of the development of this old, old world. They will be confused with much that is mere theory, more that is part of the pet notions of the teacher himself or the school to which he belongs, and they will gain a valuable modicum of indisputable fact. But such mundane matters as exchange of productions, such sordid and unphysical considerations as mere trade routes, and such dry-as-dust and primitive things as the study and comparison of significant statistics are too prosaic. Many a geological geographer trembles with horror at the sight of figures, as James I. did at the sight of a drawn sword. What have they to do with cold, dry statistics who can " draw unlimited cheques from the bank of time—and they are all honoured !"

The question of the position of geology is indeed a difficult one. It is absolutely necessary, for the proper understanding of geography, to have a good working knowledge of the sister science. I do not say that it is impossible for the non-geologist to become a very finely equipped geographer. But the two subjects are too closely connected to be regarded as distinct. The one is the ancient history of the other, and in places the two are indistinguishable. Geology has a distinct bearing upon scenery, and scenery is a distinct branch of our geographical study. (Here several slides were shown.)

I have shown these slides, then, with the intention of demonstrating the inter-action of geology and geography, and it is *here* that I would draw the line. When geology presents us with facts, we are glad to utilise those *facts* in our geography. Where it is merely speculation and theory, we must leave it. Palæontological geology is merely interesting to us. When it has finally established a conclusion, then we may thankfully use that conclusion. Take, for instance, the Glacial Period.

No one can give a generally-accepted explanation of the formation of our Cumberland lakes. Lord Avebury says : " That the North Country and Welsh lakes are drowned river valleys no one will deny. Their narrow, winding courses and general appearance leave no room for doubt on this point. But the difficulty is to account for the dam at the lower end." Then he propounds three theories : (1) That or change of level, due to earth movements ; (2) that of a dam of merainic matter ; and (3) that of glacial erosion. All the geographer can do, then, under the circumstances, is to map out his lake, sound it, describe it, and leave it.

I am disposed to set some store by the study of local geological maps and localised excursions, in which a knowledge of this science is a great help ; but there is a great deal that is unnecessary in the purely speculative treatment of some parts of our earth's surface. Take, for instance, this passage, which I have extracted from a very fine monograph upon Anatolia and its surroundings :—

" With the exception of those dividing the coasts of the Caspian from the inland plateau, and those bordering the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, the parallel mountain ranges generally stretch from north-west to south-east. They are considered to present the same geological features as the Zagros chain, which consists of cretaceous mimmulitic rocks. The Zagros is

the whole mountain range from Ararat to Shiraz, forming the gigantic frontier wall between Persia and Turkey. The occurrence of metamorphic rocks has also been noticed, as well as an extensive area of volcanic formations, some of very recent origin. Both the north and south slopes of the lofty Elburz range are rich in coal and iron. The highest peak of this range, which overlooks the shore of the Caspian, is Demavend, a beautiful mountain not less than 19,000 feet in height. Of the southern borderland of the Persian plateau, Blandford remarks that the part traversed by him appeared to consist of low ranges running east and west, which, except near the sea, were almost entirely composed of unfossiliferous sandstones and shales associated with a few beds of nummulitic limestone, apparently belonging to the older Tertiary epoch."

Until the world is properly surveyed, and its rocks thoroughly known, it is very unsafe to theorise. No one knows that better than the geologist. Professor Suess writes from Vienna : " In this second half of the third volume a plan of the trend-lines of the earth will be found. It will be a first attempt, burdened by all the difficulties, perhaps too all the errors, arising from this circumstance ; but it will have fully accomplished its purpose if it is found fit to serve as a link to the fresh observations which unceasingly succeed each other." Let us, then, leave geology when it ceases to present us with facts, and be very grateful for the amazing strides made in recent years by this marvellous subject.

Then again, we have the historical geographer. He is often so charged with the one study that he is tempted to snub the other. He wanders off into bewildering and unnecessary details, and leaves himself with no time nor opportunity to give the main ideas on the geographical side of his work adequate treatment. Or again, there is the statistical fiend. He has a hard head and an appalling penchant for *facts.* He will hurl them at you with ceaseless pertinacity—how many bales of cotton entered such and such a port in such and such periods ; the price of wheat per quarter for the last seventy years ; the navigable length of every river you can mention; the exact number of locks in the Canal du Midi.

Far be it from any of us to underrate the value of each and all of these gentlemen. We cannot know too much of the structure of our world ; we can hardly exaggerate the significance of the interaction of geographical and historical cause ; statistics, judiciously used, speak volumes, and some should be accurately remembered ; but we must think of the pupil. These days of specialisation demand teachers of great ability, who are at the same time scholars of no mean attainments ; and it is the hall-mark of a good teacher that he be able to select just the appropriate matter—no more, no less—to impart to the pupil. Let us try, then, to come to some conclusion, some practical conclusion, as to the nature of the matter which may be suitably taught in schools.

In the first place, it seems to me only common sense to lay down the important principle that the student should know his own district thoroughly. [In case any of my audience have not had an opportunity of seeing the special cheap edition of Ordnance sheets issued to schools, I have brought down some specimens of such, which have been in use for a month or two at the Manchester Municipal Secondary School. The boys have, so far, marked out the amazing network of electric tramway routes, in red ink, radiating from Manchester, Oldham, Middleton, Salford, and Ashton-under-Lyne. They have also coloured rivers, canals, and reservoirs blue. With the aid of these maps, issued to each individual pupil, a great deal more can be done than the mere teaching of topography. One instance only will suffice. If two or three of Bartholomew's beautifully coloured half-inch sheets be displayed, and a fine piece of workmanship like Kiepert's German Empire, the whole principle of contours, which, believe me, is bewildering to the average schoolboy, can be readily explained, and the scholars soon taught to read their contours *without* the help of colouring. These sheets would have done a great deal if they merely succeeded in interesting the children in maps. But they do more than

that ; they not only quicken the child's interest in his own district, they not only afford invaluable instruction in map-reading, and a number of other vitally-important geographical principles, but they also stimulate the interest of parents—and that is a great thing. Wherever the municipal or other purse can run to it, teachers will do well to take advantage of the great concession made by the Board of Agriculture in this matter. One says " wherever practicable" advisedly ; many Education Committees would very promptly stop any attempt to lay out five pounds or so in such a way. The fact that the sheets cannot be sold would be quite enough for some City Fathers. This class of work has three advantages—it is interesting to the boys themselves, it is in no small measure utilitarian, and it is highly educational. It ought, then, to please most people.] It is really amazing to find how absolutely ignorant the average scholar is of any but his own particular district. A very large proportion of Manchester boys have never been on the other side of the Irwell. Salford to them is only a name, connected with docks and dinginess. One often finds Heaton Moor folk who have never heard of Heaton Park, and *vice versâ*, and many a child that frequents Queen's Road has never heard of Lamb Lane, its continuation. Grown-up folk as well as children persist in going about with their eyes, to all intents and purposes, shut—and those eyes must be opened. No more congenial way than this under consideration can be found for causing the pupil to find out things for himself. It is a pleasure to see a class of lads ferreting out the anachronisms on the six-inch sheet. I have been constrained to dwell rather upon this point, because it is really the case that many teachers look upon this issue of Ordnance sheets as a new-fangled fad and a very unnecessary and reprehensible pampering of children. It is hardly necessary to refute that charge here.

It is in gaining knowledge of the home district that the geologist is of great service. In this Pennine region we are specially favoured ; the mountain limestone, the millstone grit, the coal measures are all near to hand. The large warehouses, especially in their lower courses, give us good specimens of various important rocks. The Derbyshire caves, the remarkable dearth of many important plants, and the great abundance of, say, rhododendrons, all afford a fine field for observation and research. The geologist, in fact, can interest his pupils by his special knowledge of the rocks of the district. He will explain the process of denudation by which the coal measures have settled down upon both the Lancashire and Yorkshire sides of the range, and will contrast with the low-lying coal measures of Scotland. It will be possible in some cases to take classes to inspect some of the geological phenomena of the district. Outdoor excursions are more easily spoken about than put into practice, unfortunately. One is dependent upon the weather and restricted by distance and expense, besides being confronted by the difficulty of cutting across the work of masters who take other subjects ; for outdoor excursions take time. It is one thing to put open-air work into syllabuses ; it is quite another to carry it out. The botanist, too, can do an equally useful work, and more readily too, for many reasons, in examining, with and by the aid of his scholars, the flora of the particular region in which they live.

This study of a district is readily widened. One cannot treat of Liverpool without treating of New Orleans and Egypt, and it is hardly possible to speak of South Lancashire without interesting the class in cotton and many of the important questions connected with cotton supply. And who could leave this subject without discussing the great Industrial Revolution, the Bridgewater Canal, the power loom, the fly shuttle, the steam engine, and so on, without mentioning Napoleon's Berlin decrees, and their salutary effect—the opposite to that intended —upon industrial England, or without telling of the Corn Laws and the massacre of Peterloo ? In all such subjects broader and still broader considerations are bound to be introduced. We speak of metropolitan England, and are naturally drawn to a comparison between London and other great cities of the world, and to an examination of the causes of their existence. We speak of the great railways of the country, and this leads us to examine the course of rivers and the difficulties of mountain communication. We discuss rivers and lakes and the

sea, and the research of the geologist again proves of immense value both in observation and deduction. The action of water, both constructive and destructive—all this takes us all over England and all over the world, to the Yellowstone region, to Harrogate, to New Zealand, to Bath. When we have extended our detailed knowledge of these islands far enough to know their position, their structure, their climate, their vegetation and productions, their population, their commerce, and some of the history of their peoples, the study of the great trade routes radiating from Britain will naturally lead us to treat of other countries.

In dealing with schoolboys and schoolgirls, some such course as this just briefly sketched seems a reasonable introduction of the youthful mind to the subject. It carries out the important principle of " from the known to the unknown." As the pupil ripens mentally and becomes more and more familiar with the subject, so it will be possible to introduce more and more of the crucial parts of the science. And here, before going further, we must try to put into its place each of the great branches of geography which were enumerated in such appalling array a little while back.

In assigning a place to each branch of geography it must be remembered that a great deal is gained by allowing the teacher to pay special attention to his particular study. We all dabble in geology, but let the man who has had the advantage of a close knowledge of this important science, and its attendant chemistry and so forth, apply it in some detail on the geographical side, *but on the geographical side only*. In most schools the physiography masters relieve us of a considerable part of our work, and that is a great gain. They teach the origin and action of winds, and their effect on climate. We take that knowledge and apply it to several and separate countries, and extend it to show how these physical conditions affect production and distribution. The physiography teacher tells of the origin and action of rain. We teach its distribution. So it is with the historical student. One could hardly give a better idea of the geographical features of the Iberian Peninsula than by taking in some detail the campaigns of Sir. John Moore and Wellington. True, it is the duty of the history master to treat of the Peninsula War, but he co-ordinates it with the story of the rise and fall of the great genius of the French Republic and Empire. The geographer puts it side by side with Roland and Roncesvalles, and the Black Prince and Navarette. There is no harm in a class hearing the same subject treated from different points of view. Europe and our islands are a fine field for the historical geographer. The west coast route *viâ* Carlisle from Scotland tells us of the Battle of Preston ; the eastern route, from Preston Pans to Northallerton, bristles with the battlefields of the past. The great mud flat where road and river meet gives us a spot for the growth of the greatest city of the world. The Netherlands border, the Gate of Metz, the approaches to Vienna, the portions of poor dismembered Poland, lozenge-shaped Bohemia, dark Thermopylæ, Constantinople and the Crimea all teem with interest and abound in food for both philosophic study and valuable teaching. If the teacher be a botanist, and botany be taught in the school, he can illustrate many a biological lesson by calling in the aid of one's knowledge of the earth ; and he can, on the other hand, make one important branch of geography of living and great educational usefulness. There is a very welcome attention being paid to nature study nowadays, and nature study is a pursuit in which the master can gain the willing and helpful co-operation of his classes. Lastly, in this connection, statistics are often of the most vital importance in clinching important truths. An ounce of fact is worth half a hundredweight of theory.

It is hardly necessary to apply what has been said already to the more detailed study of the world. If one can only have the necessary apparatus, it is easy enough to study or teach geography on broad lines. (Here slides were shown illustrating the world systems of vegetation, isotherms, isobars, and winds, in January and July.)

One thing in passing. It is exceedingly difficult to persuade the makers of syllabuses in schools to countenance a course in geography which does not include a solid year's work at

" The British Empire." We are often thrown into collision with people who would teach Canada without reference to the United States. For instance, Michigan is not one of the Great Lakes. There are no Rockies south of the forty-fifth parallel. The luckless porkers of Toronto have no connection with those that are put to death with such characteristic carelessness and brutality in Chicago. There is no such region as German West Africa ; there is only Walfisch Bay. These worthy people will dodge with the utter absence of effort from British Guiana to British North Borneo, and from British North Borneo to Gibraltar, Aden, or Hong-Kong, without a single qualm. It was with some difficulty that one could get the other geographical teachers in a very large school here to accept as a four years' syllabus, the British Isles, Europe, the World (with special reference to the British Empire), and General Geography. The World is a year's work ! It was all that they could do to get through the English Possessions ! Such sentiments may be patriotism ; they are not geography.

In studying our own part of the earth, then, we have been led into comparisons and contrasts which have carried us all over the globe. If we take Eurasia on broad lines, followed by Europe itself in detail and Asia in detail, we shall be able to treat North America and the three southern continents as we please. And what shall we teach ? To begin with, less and less geology, for we cannot persuade the scholar to grasp ideas of which he can only have hazy and theoretical indications. He is beginning to develop ; let him, if he will, specialise in that study if he goes to some University. There is abundant opportunity for him here in Manchester. To continue, more historical geography, and more and more economics. The former depends largely on the region studied ; there is nothing deliriously dramatic, for instance, in the story of Verkhoyansk. The latter is a study which is not taken up, as a rule, half early enough. The schoolboy positively revels in what I may perhaps call informal economics. He will be found quite willing to study, in the light of his geographical learning, many a principle of political economy. He appears at the present time to be taking a great interest in the fiscal controversy. All power to him ; let him go on and prosper, and through all his childish blunders come to the truth at last.

The upshot of the whole matter is this. Geography has certain easily-defined limits. It has also a large and extensive fringe of bordering subjects such as have been indicated. It is absolutely impossible to follow up more than one of these studies ; it is absolutely necessary to appreciate the value of, to be in sympathy, and to have at least a bowing acquaintance with them all. The geographer must extract from such treatises as Schimper's " Plant Geography on a Physiological Basis," or Professor Suess' " Das Antlitz der Erde," or Oman's " Peninsular War," such matters as will help him to gain knowledge of the conditions and phenomena connected with our globe and life upon it. He will not need to classify each individual plant that Schimper mentions. He must study them in the mass. He need not take sides upon the argument for the permanence or continuity of the continents. He only need appreciate such facts as are established, and pray for a Newton or a Darwin to propound some gigantic and all-satisfying theory. He need not criticise the British War Office of 1812 ; he only need understand the reasons for the movements of Wellington, Marmont, and Massena. He can skim off the geographical cream of many subjects. If he can do no more, well and good. He has done something. If he can become a biologist, a geologist, a historian too, all the better. He is a geographer in either case.

" Geography is not claimed to include the sciences whose results form its raw materials, any more than a house can be said to include the quarries, the forests, and the mines which hare yielded its stone and timber and metal work."

But I have said enough. We have seen what geography is, in its widest sense. I have tried to define its limits, loosely. There are many ways of developing special sides. One man may have a genius for cartography and a passion for surveying. He may, under certain circumstances, find play for his faculties. But there is much, essential in a University course, which

cannot be included in a school curriculum. One feels rather inclined to discourage map-making—or rather, map-copying—in schools. The drawing of sections, the enlargement or reduction of portions of sheets, and so on, have all their value. But one cannot do much with an hour and a half a week. *This is the root of the whole matter*. It is very necessary to remember that geography is not the only subject taught in schools. A class may come downstairs from a chemistry lesson with its head full of formulæ and calculations. It is led straightway into a discussion upon climate and productions, and goes away to be charged with a dose of Euclid. It is essential that its knowledge shall be made to *last*. Its learning must go home. Ephemeral work avails nothing, and children must be made to learn. It is very entertaining for them to look at slides and to read descriptions ; but much of the geographical teaching of the past was good in one sense, in that the children were compelled to work. We must see to it that they work now. The tendency of modern education is to take the work off the child and put it upon the teacher. This must not be. Modern common-sense education must make the pupil work, and work hard too, or we shall merely bring up a generation of loafers with ideas too big for their position. We must riot despise the past, but we ought to be very thankful that there is a future too. Let our large ideas, our broad conceptions, remain. But let us never forget that we must come from theory to practice every day we live and teach and learn. Then, and then only, shall we be truly practical and truly educational.

The Teacher's Part In The Preparation of A Course of Local Geography.

By John J. Cardwell.

[Addressed to the Society in the Library on Tuesday, March 29th, 1904, at 7-30 p.m.]

IN reading through the Syllabus of Instruction recently issued by the Royal Geographical Society, perhaps the most striking feature is the importance attached to a study of the local geographical conditions—to a thorough grasp of the features surrounding the pupil's own home, whether that home be in the town or in the country, before proceeding further afield.

The highest importance is rightly attached to a preliminary study of the local geographical conditions, for two very good reasons :—

In the first place it emphasises the fact that geography is no longer a mere memory subject, but in its natural aspects is also an observational study, and one capable of affording much mental development to the pupils in reasoning out the relationship of cause and effect which frequently arise. In the second place it is a clear recognition of the fact that geography, to be effectively taught, must proceed on the lines of contrast and comparison—contrasting and comparing the unknown which the pupil is never likely to see, but only to hear and read about—with the known, which he can clearly see, grasp, and mentally comprehend. And we are encouraged to take the course of local geography first, because, whether the teacher be dealing with the town or with the country, the world, throughout the temperate and industrial zone, at any rate, is very much a replica of our own home, and for the rest it is, as I have said, easily understood on the principles of contrast and comparison.

It may appear a small and easy matter to describe the geography of one's own district, but the difficulties are such as only one who has tried to prepare a course of local geography can fully appreciate.

At the outset it must be clearly understood that any preparation of a course of local geography entails a good deal of hard work on the part of the teacher, not mere reading of guide books, sitting comfortably in one's study at home, but actual travelling out and about the area to be dealt with in class. In fact the teacher ought to be so very familiar with the details of the district as not only to be able accurately to describe his own experiences, but also to be able

to deduce from his pupils living in the district their observations and inferences, and to utilise to the fullest extent the information at their command, whether obtained in their walks to and from school or in moving about the district in the ordinary avocations of the day. Of course some will say all this is nature study under a new name, and so it is if nature study is not rather Practical Geography carried out in rural districts ; whereas our study includes town as well as country.

In the course of his preparation the teacher would, in the first instance, traverse the district in every direction—on foot, by tram and train, and on the cycle—seeing what there was to be seen on the surface, and possibly nothing more, except it be, to read into his new experiences the result of other observations made elsewhere, for each district will be found to differ somewhat in detail, and possibly require different treatment in the working up of its geography.

But wheresoever the district be, whether the pupil lives in the town or in the country, the first thing is to teach him to read and understand the meaning of the several lines which make up the map, plan, or chart of the district. For on his ability to do this will largely depend his future progress when he comes to study countries, which he cannot see but only read about, and the several and varying features of which he can fully realise only from a study of the map, assisted by the textbook. From this last remark it will be seen that we are reversing the old order of things in which the textbook was the be-all and end-all in the teaching of geography, and the map nowhere.

In my own case, when preparing a course of local geography—physical, political, historical, or commercial—whether for beginners or for advanced students, my first care was to do exactly as I have said—that is, to travel over the district to be dealt with, not merely the highways but also the byways, in which are situated the warehouses, works and workshops, mills and manufactories, with the homes of the industrial or artisan population.

Having done this, map in hand, I was in a position to read and understand the guide books, local histories, and other sources of information in which one might expect to find some explanation of many things, difficult to understand, except on historical grounds, and so not easy to clear up to the students without such reading.

Such a careful inquiry and travel out and about the homes of the pupils not only enables the teacher to deduce by question and answer much valuable information from the students themselves, but also enables him to make valuable suggestions as to additional things to be seen by the way, and so to help on the observational powers of the pupils when next they go in that direction, either in excursions, on their own account, or in a body as a class.

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