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Notes on geographical education

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in 1901 to bring together in worthy form complete translations of them all.

It is idle to speculate as to the probable result of an effective Spanish occupation of the Solomon Islands in the sixteenth century. The yoke of Spain lay heavy on her great trans-oceanic acquisitions. A kindly providence doubtless preserved the Solomon islanders then and for three hundred years more from attempts at subjugation or serious interference by the white man. The whole group of islands (Bougainville excepted) has at length come definitely under a British Protectorate, with a resident Deputy Commissioner, one of whose functions is the safeguarding of the personal, trading, and landed rights of the natives. From his last report it is gratifying to learn that the commerce of the islands is growing, and that while the number of foreigners living on the islands has increased, three years have passed without any white man being murdered by the islanders. The interior of the larger islands is still unexplored: their mineral resources are still unprospected. Their future, therefore, cannot be forecasted. But few readers of these volumes will fail to have their interest in the Solomon Islands awakened, and to hope that from a wisely controlled contact with civilised men, the inhabitants may in time become docile and humane, and that to them will accrue a large share of the gain arising from the development of the islands' resources.

The Hakluyt Society has done well in issuing these volumes. The Spanish texts have, after much labour in deciphering and collating, been translated into most readable English and fully annotated. They have been prefaced with an excellently written introduction by Mr. Basil Thomson, and followed by an elaborate index. Two very complete maps and a large number of fine illustrations elucidate the narratives. In his preface to the work Lord Amherst of Hackney acknowledges his indebtedness to those who have aided him. To himself the indebtedness of all interested in geography and anthropology is much greater.

NOTES ON GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION.¹

By A. J. HERBERTSON, PH.D.

1. *Examinations.*—It used to be supposed—and in some quarters it is still supposed—that anybody can teach geography without any training, and even without any knowledge beyond the scrappy information obtained at school. Under such conditions the geography lesson is naturally disappointing both to master and pupils. A common remark of many headmasters is that geography is of no use for educational purposes, and is included in the school curriculum because the parent demands it, and some examination authorities have recognised it. For many parents and examining bodies the purpose of geography is to

¹ The first of a series of notes on matters of current interest in geographical education; other articles will appear from time to time.

teach children where places are, and both are contented when this is attended to.

I shall be told that this is a description of the past, not of the present, and no doubt this is the case as far as the teacher who makes the objection is concerned. All teachers have not learned to teach geography rationally. It does not pay them to do so, is the reply.

Unfortunately there is some truth in this rejoinder. A recent analysis of examination papers, published in the first number of the *Geographical Teacher*, shows that in the preliminary examination paper, set by both Oxford and Cambridge local examiners for about nine thousand pupils in secondary schools, not a single question involved any reasoning whatever; and in the junior examination paper, set for nearly thirteen thousand candidates, the conditions were not much better. The higher papers were not so objectionable.

We are in a transition period of geographical teaching. These local examination papers represent the old traditions. In others mentioned in the same article the wiser and more rational conceptions of geography are more in evidence, and questions of the type set by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society's examiners, which may be seen in back numbers, occur.

The teacher is in a difficult position. The syllabus may be excellent, but if the examiner has no sympathy with it, and has never thought of geography as more than an informational subject, the paper is sure to be disappointing to both teacher and pupils, enthusiasm is checked, and improvement arrested. That is no excuse for return to bad, routine methods, which involve less trouble. The lazy teacher has his excuse ready. So has the lazy examiner, who differs from the man oblivious to any improvement in methods of teaching geography. The lazy examiner is he who knows what is right, and does it not because rational questions, as a rule, require more thought, and also more time to correct than topographical lists, and he is inadequately paid for his dreary work as it is. He tells us that there is no good asking rational questions as the children are not taught rationally at school, that consequently none of them would get any marks, and that the examination authorities would have a bad quarter of an hour when the results were published.

There is just a little truth in this contention. I have spoken to a number of examiners in geography, and we are all agreed that the answers to the questions involving reasoning are, as a rule, very disappointing. In the present conditions in public competitive examinations it is necessary, in the interests of fairness, to pass gradually from the older to the newer tradition, with rather more of the new than of the old. Evidences that this is being done can be traced in many civil service and other examination papers.

The cases of the papers set by examiners for the Education Departments and the Universities are different. These bodies are not concerned merely with selection of suitable mandarins. Their problem is not merely to test the individual but to encourage sound methods of teaching. The method of doing this through examination papers set to thousands of candidates from all parts of the country is of course most

unsatisfactory. As long as it prevails, however, it ought to be utilised. The papers should be so framed that they demand trained intelligence rather than a vast memory for satisfactory answers. Only in this way can all manner of schools be treated fairly and rational teaching encouraged.

2. *Geography at the Universities.*—When we speak of applied geography we too often limit the term to commercial applications. Educational applications of geography are even more important. As nearly every teacher has to use geography as one medium of education, it is natural to expect that much stress will be laid on geography applied to education—that teachers will be trained in the science of geography in general, and in its applications to education in particular. Gradually this is being recognised, although I am informed that in some Scottish training colleges there is no geographical department. The universities must take the lead in this matter. This is not the occasion to write about the scope of a geographical department of a university, but it is opportune to point out that in all universities future teachers are being trained, and that they cannot obtain adequate training in this subject outside the two oldest English universities. In this matter of geography Oxford has made greater progress than any other English-speaking university, and its special diploma granted after a year's work at the School of Geography is designed to meet the requirements of teachers as well as of many others whose work involves a knowledge of geography, while the research B.Sc. is open to geographical students who can fulfil the preliminary conditions. The syllabus for the diploma is so drawn up that a candidate can within reasonable limits specialise in the geographical aspects of his own special subject, be it classics or history or natural science. Full particulars may be obtained by writing to the Curator, School of Geography, Oxford.

The Victoria University for some years has been in advance of the others in permitting geography to be chosen as an optional subject for the ordinary pass degree. Now the new University of London has recognised geography in its economic aspects, and made it an optional subject in the examination for the B.Sc. in economics.

3. *New Magazines.*—The appearance of two new magazines written for teachers of geography is a cheering sign. The Geographical Association, to which all teachers of geography should belong,¹ has published the first number of the *Geographical Teacher*, which will be issued three times a year. It is devoted entirely to papers, notes, and reviews of geographical subjects of interest to teachers as teachers. No. 1 contains articles on Methods of Teaching Geography, Limitations and Possibilities of Geography in Day Schools, Difficulties in Lower School Geography, The Use of Maps in Teaching, Photography as an Aid, School Excursions, The Teaching of the Configuration of the World, Notes on Books and Papers about the British Isles, Notes on Recent Maps and Apparatus, and the article on Examinations already referred to.

¹ The annual subscription, five shillings, should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, Mr. J. S. Masterman, St. Margaret's, Dorking, and teachers should state the name of their school and their position in it.

It is interesting to contrast this Table of Contents with that of the Austrian Quarterly (*Vierteljahrshefte für den Geographischen Unterricht*, Wien, Hölzel. 10 M. per annum), edited by Dr. F. Heiderich, which is more than double the size of the British magazine. The chief articles are—Biogeography in School Teaching, Mathematical Geography as intermediate between an empirical and mathematical science, Historical Atlas of the Austrian Alps, and the question of representation of relief, The Relief of the Bed of the Adriatic, with a map, Report of School Geography Section of the Thirteenth Congress of German Geographers. There are a number of short articles, numerous notes on current geographical papers and other works, and reviews. In short, the new Quarterly resembles this *Magazine* much more than the *Geographical Teacher*. Some of the articles we propose to notice in a future number.

The American *Journal of School Geography* has amalgamated with the *Bulletin of the American Bureau of Geography*, and will now appear as the *Journal of Geography*. The Editors are Professors Dodge, Goode, and Sehnerts.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

MEETINGS IN APRIL.

On the 3rd April, in Edinburgh, the Rev. Thomas Lewis read a paper on "Life and Travel among the People of Congo." The Chair was taken by the Rev. Dr. James Stewart of Lovedale.

Mr. Lewis repeated his address to the Glasgow Branch on the 7th, when Dr. Robert Gourlay presided.

MEETING OF COUNCIL.

At a meeting of Council held on the 2nd April the following new member was elected, viz.: David Russell; and the Ordinary Diploma of Fellowship was conferred on Mr. Alexander Macdonald.

The Council passed a resolution recording its sense of the loss sustained by the Society through the death of Mr. James A. Wenley, who had acted as one of its trustees since 1893. The Council also recorded its regret at the death of Mr. L. F. U. Garriock, a Member of Council who represented the Dundee Branch.

OBITUARY NOTICE.

CECIL JOHN RHODES

(BORN 5TH JULY 1853; DIED 26TH MARCH 1902).

LONG ago Thomas Carlyle told us that "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men,