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Geographical Education in Training Colleges and Elementary Schools

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## GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION IN TRAINING COLLEGES AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

THE following letter on the subject of the prizes offered by our Society for geographical proficiency to the students of Training Colleges, has been received by General Sir Beauchamp Walker, one of the delegates of the Council in connection with the recent examinations for the Society's prizes :—

“ EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, *Feb.* 25, 1888.

“ DEAR SIR BEAUCHAMP,

“ We have pleasure in fulfilling the promise made to you and to Sir Peter Lumsden in the course of our yesterday's interview.

“ We cordially appreciate the judgment and liberality displayed by the Council of the Royal Geographical Society in offering prizes for proficiency in geography to the Successful Candidates at the Certificate Examination; and we believe that the scheme will have an excellent effect both on the students in the Training Colleges, and on the professors and lecturers in those institutions.

“ As you are probably aware, the examinations for certificates are not competitive; and no prizes or honorary distinctions are awarded by the Department to the best candidates. All who pass become provisionally entitled to recognition as masters or mistresses of public elementary schools. It may interest you to learn that last year 1383 young men came up from 18 Training Colleges, of whom 534 passed in the First division, 698 in the Second, and 149 in the Third; and that at the same examination 1854 female students presented themselves from 26 Training Colleges, of whom 516 passed in the First Division, 1139 in the Second, and 189 in the Third. The Department does not prescribe books or methods, but publishes each year a syllabus indicating in general terms the scope and character of the Certificate Examination.

“ The subject of geography is for the most part taught with much care and intelligence in these 44 Colleges. The instruction is mainly oral, and is given in the form of lectures and conversations, supplemented by text-books, maps, apparatus, and books of reference. The maximum number of marks assigned at the annual examination to Geography is 75; and the papers which you saw yesterday were fair though not exceptional samples of good papers, to which marks ranging from 60 to 70 had been awarded. If it be borne in mind that the average marks attained by the whole 3000 students lie between 45 and 55, you will be able to form a fair estimate of the general level of success reached in the teaching of this subject.

“ Having regard to the number and variety of the subjects necessarily included in the Training College course, and to the importance of allotting a due share of time and attention to each of them, your Council will probably agree with us in thinking that the object of the prizes offered by the Society should not be to claim additional and disproportioned effort on behalf of the one study of Geography, but rather to give honourable recognition to the exertions of the best students and teachers of that subject, and to keep before them a high standard of excellence, in regard both to the knowledge of Geography and to the methods of imparting that knowledge in elementary schools.

“ In considering how this object may best be attained, it has occurred to us that some slight modifications may be desirable in the proposals of the Society, as they were at first formulated in the letter of General Strachey, addressed to this Department on the 15th of March last. Any suggestion, however, on this point may be properly reserved for the present. After some experience of the working of the plan,

and after learning the views of some of the Principals and Lecturers, at our visits to the Colleges during the present year, we may probably feel at liberty to communicate to the Council some further observations.

"It will greatly add to the value of the whole scheme if, besides the 'G' which the Education Department proposes to affix in the Class Lists to the names of the prize-winners, the Society will publish those names in its own report, and will add the designation of the Colleges at which the students have been trained.

"It will probably interest you to look at the documents appended to this letter, and to learn from them what is the character of the instruction in Geography already prescribed by this Department for scholars in elementary schools and for their teachers. You are doubtless aware of the general purpose of these papers. The *Code* defines the legal conditions under which grants in aid are made to school-managers. The *Instructions to Inspectors* contain directions as to the manner in which schools are to be examined; and indicate generally the spirit in which the requirements of the *Code* are to be interpreted. The *Syllabus* describes in general outline the course of instruction to be pursued in the Training Colleges.

"We have marked the passages most likely to interest the Council of the Geographical Society. They are:—

"(a) The 'Schedule of Class-Subjects' (*Code*, pp. 20-21), showing a graduated course of geographical instruction for scholars in elementary schools from about the 8th to the 14th year.

'Standard 1.—To explain a plan of the school and playground. The four cardinal points. The meaning and use of a map.

'Standard 2.—The size and shape of the world. Geographical terms simply explained, and illustrated by reference to the map of England. Physical geography of hills and rivers.

'Standard 3.—Physical and political geography of England, with special knowledge of the district in which the school is situated.

'Standard 4.—Physical and political geography of the British Isles, and of British North America or Australasia, with knowledge of their productions.

'Standard 5.—Geography of Europe, physical and political. Latitude and longitude. Day and night. The seasons.

'Standard 6.—Geography of the world generally, and especially of the British colonies and dependencies. Interchange of productions. Circumstances which determine climate.

'Standard 7.—The ocean. Currents and tides. General arrangement of the planetary system. The phases of the moon.'

"(b) The 'Pupil-teacher Schedule' (*Code*, pp. 26-27), showing the requirements under the head of Geography for each of the four years of apprenticeship, usually from the age of 14 to 18.

*'First year.'*

'The British Islands, Australia, and British North America. Physical geography of mountains and rivers. (Maps to be drawn in this and the following years.)

*Second year.*

'Europe and British India.

'Latitude and longitude.

'Climate and productions of the British possessions.

*Third year.*

'Asia and Africa.

'Winds and ocean currents.

*Fourth year.*

- ‘The world generally.
- ‘The seasons, the sun, moon, and planetary system.
- ‘The tides.’

“(c) The ‘Syllabus’ for students in Training Colleges and other candidates for certificates, showing the course of instruction for two years, generally from the age of 19 to 21.

*‘First year.*

- ‘I. Elementary knowledge of Physical Geography, with special reference to :—
  - (a) Shape, size, and motions of the earth.
  - (b) The atmosphere, rain, clouds, and vapour.
  - (c) Winds, currents, and tides.
  - (d) Causes which affect climate.
  - (e) Effect of climate on industry, productions, and national character.
  - (f) Distribution of plants and animals.
- ‘II. General Geography of the British Isles and the Continent of Europe.
- ‘Sketch-maps, such as should be drawn by a teacher in the illustration of lessons, may be required of the British Isles, France, and Italy, *and the courses of the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Danube.*

*Second year.*

- ‘I. The Geography, Physical, Political, and Commercial, of the British Empire.
- ‘II. Sketch-maps of the principal British colonies and dependencies.’

“(d) The ‘Instructions’ (paragraphs 38 and 40), explaining the mode of testing the knowledge of Geography, and suggesting the most suitable method of teaching it.

- ‘The Code recognises as the means of instruction in geography and elementary science, reading books, oral lessons, and visible illustrations. But it does not prescribe the exact proportions in which these means shall be employed for each standard, and for each subject. Those proportions should be determined partly by the special plans and aptitude of the teacher, and partly by other considerations.
- ‘To obtain the mark “good” for geography, the scholars in Standard V. and upwards should be required to have prepared three maps, one of which, selected by the inspector, should be drawn from memory on the day of inspection. Geographical teaching is sometimes too much restricted to the pointing out of places on a map, and to the enumeration of such details as the names of rivers, towns, capes, and political divisions. It is hardly necessary to say that geography, if taught to good purpose, includes also a description of the physical aspects of the countries, and seeks to establish some associations between the names of places and those historical, social, or industrial facts which alone make the names of places worth remembering. It is especially desirable in your examination of the fourth and higher standards, that attention should be called to the English colonies and their productions, government, and resources, and to those climatic and other conditions which render our distant possessions suitable fields for emigration and for honourable enterprise. In order that the conditions laid down for the geographical teaching of the lower classes may be fulfilled, good maps, both of the county and of the parish or immediate neighbourhood in which the school is situated, should be affixed to the walls, and the exact distances

of a few near and familiar places should be known. It is useful to mark on the floor of the schoolroom the meridian line, in order that the points of the compass should be known in relation to the school itself, as well as on a map.'

"It only remains to add, that we shall be happy to co-operate with your Council, by making from time to time the needful revision and reports, and that we shall watch with much interest and sympathy the working of the Society's new and useful experiment.

"We are, dear Sir Beauchamp,

"Very truly yours,

"H. E. OAKELEY, } *H.M. Inspectors of*  
 "J. G. FITCH, } *Training Colleges.*

"General Sir C. Beauchamp Walker, K.C.B."

## GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

**Award of the Royal Medals and other Distinctions for the Year 1888.**—The Council, at their meeting of the 23rd ult., awarded the annual honours as follows:—The **FOUNDER'S MEDAL** to Mr. CLEMENTS R. MARKHAM, on his retirement from the Honorary Secretaryship of the Society after twenty-five years' service, and in acknowledgment of the value of his numerous contributions to geographical literature during the last thirty-five years, and his merits as an active explorer in the Eastern Andes and in Abyssinia. The **PATRON'S MEDAL** to Lieutenant H. WISSMANN, in recognition of his great achievements as an explorer in Central Africa, which he has twice crossed from sea to sea, and especially for the arduous and adventurous journey in which he traced the river Kassai from its upper waters to its previously unknown junction with the Congo. The **MURCHISON GRANT** to Mr. J. M'CARTHY, Superintendent of Surveys in Siam, for his excellent map of Siam, published in the Society's 'Proceedings' for March 1888. The **CUTHBERT-PEEK GRANT** to Major FESTING, for his services as a cartographer on the Gambia river and the country in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone. The **GILL MEMORIAL** to Mr. CHARLES M. DOUGHTY, for his important work on Arabia, and the map of the country. The three Honorary Corresponding Fellowships of the year were awarded to Dr. G. RADDE, of Tiflis; Dr. H. RINK, of Copenhagen; and Dr. REIN, of Bonn.

**Lieutenant Van Gèle's Exploration of the Mobangi.**—The 'Mouvement Géographique' of April 22nd contains interesting details, from Lieut. Van Gèle's own narrative, of his recent ascent of the Mobangi, a telegraphic report of which was announced in our April number. It will be remembered that the Rev. G. Grenfell was turned back in 1884 in N. lat. 4° 20', by the rapids of Zongo. Lieut. Van Gèle, with a large party, left Equator Station in the steamer *En Avant* on October 27th, 1887, and reached the foot of the Zongo rapids on November 21st. These rapids are six in number, extending over a distance of 24 miles, and it took the party twenty days to surmount them. At the first