Review: Kant's Cosmogony: Review

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This points to a difficulty arising from a curious anomaly in the political geography of the sea. Every nation has full power over all ships sailing or fishing under its flag, wherever they may be, and it can also enforce police regulations with regard to vessels of any nationality within the 3-mile limit from shore which bounds territorial waters, but not a yard beyond. For many years British trawlers have been excluded from the Moray firth in order to see whether by so doing the fish-supply, which had been rapidly declining, would revive; but as a great part of the forbidden area is more than 3 miles from land, it has become a happy hunting-ground for trawlers under foreign flags, and of course it is impossible to test the value of prohibiting trawling in such conditions. The guarded expression of sympathy with the difficulties arising from this state of matters will, we may hope, facilitate international arrangements for obviating the trouble which now frequently occurs, not only in the Moray firth, but in other waters where it may be British vessels are sometimes tempted in their turn to cross boundaries forbidden to the native fishing fleets.

KANT'S COSMOGONY—REVIEW.*

PROF. HASTIE has conferred a favour on those English students of astronomy and physiography who are not proficient in any language but their own, by his careful translation of the works of Kant relating to Cosmogony, and by his very able Introduction. He reminds us that Kant was a man of science first, a philosopher and metaphysician afterwards, and he puts in a remarkably clear light the contrast between the nebular hypotheses of the origin of the solar system and of the universe put forward by Kant and Laplace, hypotheses which writers of reputation—more familiar, probably, with the titles of the works of these originators than with the works themselves—have very frequently confounded or treated as identical.

From the nature of the treatises selected for translation, the work naturally lies in great measure outside the scope of geography, however widely that too elastic term may be stretched; but the arguments in the memoir on the retardation of the Earth's rotation are essentially geographical. The idea of tidal friction familiarized by the calculations of Lord Kelvin, Prof. Tait, and Prof. Darwin, and popularized in an almost startling form by Sir Robert Ball, is here shown to be no novelty of the later nineteenth century, but to have been presented with admirable clearness in the year 1754.

* 'Kant's Cosmogony as in his essay on the Retardation of the Rotation of the Earth, and his Natural History and Theory of the Heavens,' with Introduction, Appendices, and a Portrait of Thomas Wright, of Durham. Edited and translated by W. Hastie, D.D. Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons. 1900.

Prof. Hastie refers at several points to the interest which Kant took in physical geography, but it was not part of his design to treat this fully. It is, however, a matter very well worthy of being treated, and we hope that an author who has proved himself so much in sympathy with the mind and methods of this great scientific organizer, and so competent to handle his views in the light of the most recent advances of science, will not ignore the "Physical Geography."

Kant's system of geography was elaborated with a logical completeness far in advance of the mere knowledge of facts in his day, and perhaps in ours. If it had not been lost sight of—drowned, we might almost say, in the flood of discovery which it ought to have controlled—it is possible that we would not now be confronted with the disgraceful antithesis of "geography and science," or troubled by the lurking suspicion that perhaps, after all, the geographer may deserve a lower place than say the physicist or biologist in the hierarchy of natural knowledge on account of some intrinsic demerit in his methods.

ADMIRALTY SURVEYS DURING THE YEAR 1900.

UNDER the orders of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, seven of His Majesty's vessels, with three small hired steam-vessels, manned by 66 officers and 629 men, have been employed on hydrographical surveys on the home and foreign stations.

The following is a brief summary of the work accomplished, as detailed in the report prepared for presentation to Parliament:—

Reports of 272 rocks and shoals, which were dangerous to navigation, have been received at the Hydrographic Department, and were notified to the public by notices to mariners; 1167 miles of coast have been charted, and an area of 10,733 miles has been sounded.

On the south coast of England:—The bar of Portsmouth harbour was resounded; the general depths were found to be 29 feet, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 feet greater than in 1897. The bar is mainly formed of shingle, and was deepened in 1894 to 29 feet.

There were found some very remarkable deep holes with as much as 35 feet in them, which bear eloquent testimony to the force of the scour of the tide, and to the movable character of the material forming the bottom.

The present depths show that the force of the stream is working mainly on the bottom.

Fowey harbour was resounded after the recent dredging operations.

The bay and bar of Salcombe river were resounded.

The survey of Dartmouth harbour was completed.

The examination of the dredging at the Cremill shoal by sweeping was completed, a depth of 30 feet being obtained. This, with the removal of the Vanguard and Bubble shoals, completes a great improvement of the entrance to the Hamoaze.

On the east coast of England:—The survey of the Orwell river from Pin Mill to Ipswich was completed. The Shingles Patch was resounded; it is still slowly growing in height and area.

The survey of the lower portion of the Humber river was completed.

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