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James A. Ramsay M.A.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY.—Documents for the study of Armenians both in their own and in other European languages are not wanting. The following are some of those in English:—H. F. B. Lynch: *Armenia: Travels and Studies* (London, 1901) (see *S.G.M.*, 1902). Curzon: *Armenia* (London, 1854). H. Barkley: *A Ride through Asia Minor and Armenia* (London, 1891). Rolin Jacquemyns: *Armenia, the Armenians and the Treaties* (London, 1891). Mark Bell: *Around and about Armenia* (see *S.G.M.*, 1890). Anglo-Armenian Association: *The Case for the Armenians* (London, 1893). Dr. Felix Oswald: *Explorations in Armenia*.

THE USE OF PLACE-NAMES IN THE TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY.¹

By JAMES A. RAMSAY, M.A.

PRESENT-DAY ideas concerning Geography have shown us how very comprehensive the subject is. The matter dealt with and the methods adopted in teaching the subject have also shown that Geography draws largely upon many other sciences, including Geology, Physics, Astronomy, and Botany, and to a small extent Ethnology. There is also, however, another "side-issue" which might be treated, namely, place-names. The aspect of the subject has, so far, been almost entirely left in the hands of a few enthusiastic philologists; it has not yet entered to any appreciable degree into the teaching of Geography, and it is because I have found place-names, their meanings and their "story" so interesting, that I venture to lay my arguments before you.

Isaac Taylor in his *Words and Places* says: "The names which still remain upon our maps are able to supply us with traces of the history of nations which have left us with no other monument. . . . The knowledge of the history and the migrations of such tribes must be recovered from the study of the names of the places which they once inhabited, but which now know them no more—from the names of the hills which they fortified, of the rivers by which they dwelt, of the distant mountains upon which they gazed. . . . Language adheres to the soil when the race by which it was spoken has been swept from off the earth, or when its remnants have been driven from the plains which they once peopled into the fastnesses of the surrounding mountains."

To study place-names in detail, and follow the movements of all nations on the earth as traced through place-names, would involve a task beyond the scope of the teacher of geography, and far beyond the grasp of his pupils. The teacher will mention in his teaching the meanings and significance of such names only as he thinks his class will comprehend thoroughly. Hence his use of Etymological Geography is of necessity limited in extent, but, however few be the names he deals with, he can by their means make his subject more vivid and realistic. The imagination of his pupils will be stirred, and the results will be an

¹ A paper read at a meeting of the Geographical Section of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow on 5th December 1912.

awakened interest and a more intelligent view of the world and of mankind in the history of the world.

It has been argued that the study of place-names lies within the province of the historian rather than the geographer, and place-names are undoubtedly a very useful adjunct to the study of history. The movements of peoples, their conquests, their settlements, may all be followed out by studying names. Geography, however, deals with the conditions under which men live, and these same conditions may be the cause of their migrations. Therefore I contend that in so far as the circumstances under which or owing to which a people moves and forms new settlements with names of their own are geographical, it lies within the province of the geographer to deal with these names.

But even if it be granted that the story of place-names lies in the province of history, still the teacher of history makes little or no use of these names in order to show colonial expansion or any movement of nations. His work in schools is usually confined to our own islands and Europe. The rest of the world's history is a closed book to the pupil. Why, then, should not the teacher of geography take up this line of study? It is a branch of education of great value; the child can be told to look for names in a particular language on the map. Such names indicate the presence of a particular people in the country at some period in history. Take, for example, Spanish, French, and English names on the map of North America.

The main point, however, lies in the fact that geography and history are in certain important respects closely related. As I have already said, geographical environment may be the cause of historical events; the configuration of a country determines the sites of battlefields, fortresses, etc. No teacher can study the geography of a country, say one of our colonies, without indicating to a certain extent the facts which led to its discovery or exploration. The motive may have been—and it frequently was—a commercial one. Commerce, as we know, depends largely on geographical circumstances. The crops and products generally—vegetable, animal, or mineral—depend on certain conditions; the observation of these conditions, principally in connection with vegetation and animal life, and the showing how they are related to these products, form a large and important part of the domain of geographical teaching. Plants, as we know, are very susceptible to differences in temperature and amount of moisture, etc.; the finding of lands suitable for their growth, the colonisation and the eventual commercial activity of these lands, must therefore be within the sphere of geographical teaching.

One of the best examples of this close connection between geographical environment and colonial expansion may be instanced in the case of the rise of the Portuguese navigators in the fifteenth century. The motive of their movements was purely commercial, and was due to the then important spice trade. The spices, as is well known, came from the East—India and the East Indies—by the overland route, a route which was beset with difficulties and dangers which led to the spices becoming very expensive. The Portuguese, under their famous prince, Henry the Navigator, had studied the maps of the world as it then was supposed to

be. They determined to find a way to the Indies by sea, and after a long and arduous struggle they succeeded. All along the course of their voyages are to be found place-names in the Portuguese language. The names Madeira, Canary, Cape Blanco, Cape Verde, Lagos, Guinea, are of Portuguese derivation. The Dutch followed up the Portuguese after the defeat of the latter country at the hands of Spain; hence the Dutch settlements in Africa with their characteristic Dutch names—Orange, Vaal, etc.—and the Dutch East Indies, the main source of Holland's wealth to-day.

The stories of the discovery and development of new lands are of immense value to geographical teaching. The motive, the course of the voyages, the maps, the products obtained—all form part of the material at the disposal of the geographer, and so, also, do the *names*.

There are, of course, other circumstances which may have induced movement on the part of a people—the sterility of a country, as in the case of the Persians and Arabs; in these cases there was a struggle for existence, a struggle which eventually led to invasion and the forming of vast empires. Look how the names in Southern Spain indicate the presence of the Arabs once upon a time; the teacher or geographer cannot pass this point when dealing with this country. In the case of the Phœnicians there was an inhospitable hinterland. Expansion was impossible in that direction. The finding of a particular shellfish which produced a valuable purple dye led to the formation of settlements where such shellfish were found. Here they could extract the dye and leave the dead-weight behind; this was more suitable than taking the shellfish to their homes at Tyre and Sidon.

Then we may mention the use of copper and tin by the Phœnicians, their journeys in search of these metals, and the routes they followed—the valley of the Rhone, and thence by the Seine to the shores of France and Britain. Traces of their settlements may still be found in the place-names in certain parts of Italy, Sicily, and Spain.

The sterility of the land may be given as the cause of the invasions and consequent settlement by the Franks, the Longobards, the Vandals, the Huns, and the Turks, and it is interesting to note the names of the portions of Europe occupied by these peoples; they are named after the people who settled there (France, Lombardy, Andalusia, Hungary Turkey).

The question may now be raised—can the significance and meaning of place-names be dealt with by pupils of all ages? There most certainly must be a limit somewhere; very young pupils are practically out of the question altogether. But in elementary schools the subject can be discussed with a measure of success; the amount of success or of interest excited will depend on the teacher. He must use his own judgment concerning which names can be explained to his class; the ages and intelligence of the pupils must be considered. Names are frequently descriptive in character, indicating size, colour, or some other outstanding characteristic, and the lesson can be made vivid, the imagination of the pupils can be awakened by the description of the place showing why the name was given.

In higher classes or in Secondary Schools the task is much easier. Here the education of the pupils is farther advanced, they have a knowledge of languages which is of immense value, and the work of the teacher is easier.

It would be a serious mistake, however, to exaggerate the importance of place-names and their meanings in relation to the other work dealt with in geographical teaching: there are many factors of greater importance in geography than names and their import, *e.g.* climate, productions, occupations of the people. In certain classes, where the field of work is extensive, the time spent in dealing with names must be of necessity very limited. There is no reason, however, why in certain higher classes a special study of this branch of geography should not be undertaken.

If no special examination be in view, there is a splendid opportunity offered to the teacher of geography to take up some special department of geography for study in these classes, and the story of place-names might form a very useful and interesting study.

The results of a course of study of place-names, however scanty be the amount of work done in this department, are of great and far-reaching importance. I have already mentioned the voyages of the Portuguese in their search for the sea-road to India. The story of this famous exploit would form a most interesting lesson, the names dealt with would give an added interest to the narrative, and no doubt the lesson would create a desire to learn more concerning these early navigators. There is, therefore, a distinct effect on the reading of the pupils. Lives of great navigators and explorers form most interesting and instructive reading, and the very mention of Frobisher, Parry, Franklin, Magellan, Cook, as recalled by parts of the world's surface commemorated by their names, should act as an incentive to a healthy outlook on life.

I have examined at various times copies of text-books of geography used long ago, and in quite a number of cases there were given lists of names and their meanings, showing that our grandparents saw some important facts in mere names, and made use of these in the teaching of the subject. It seems as if I am really attempting to revive an old interest; it has been lying hidden away among the dust of the past, and if this interest be reawakened and put to practical use in our schools in connection with the teaching of geography, I am sure the results will be all for the benefit of education and the training of those faculties which tend to make a boy a good citizen.

NOTE.—Among the books which the teacher may use are:—A. J. Bury, *The Association of History and Geography* (Library of Pedagogics); J. B. Johnston, *Place-names of Scotland* (1903); Sir Herbert Maxwell, *Scottish Land-Names* (1894).