

Land and Water

THE best way to learn what the world is like is to study the school globe. There are no clouds round it to hinder our view, and we see clearly the position of the water and land areas. Before we take any more imaginary journeys, then, it will be useful for us to learn from the globe a few facts about the earth as a whole.

The first thing that strikes us is that the greater part of the earth's surface is covered with water. It would not be very difficult to measure in a rough way how much of the area of our school globe represents land and how much is sea. We should first cut a number of patches or gores of a transparent tracing paper ruled in squares, sufficient to cover the whole globe. We should then place each of these gores over the part of the globe which it was meant to cover, and shade with pencil or chalk the parts where we see land through the paper, leaving the sea white. We then count the number of squares that are shaded and the number left unshaded on the various pieces of tracing paper, adding as many as we think necessary for the squares which are partly land and partly water. We should find that there are about three times as many unshaded squares, representing water, as there are shaded squares, representing land. Those who have measured carefully the area of land and of water respectively tell us that three fourths of the earth's surface is covered by oceans and seas, and only one fourth by land.

If we turn the globe so that the southern part of the Pacific Ocean is near the centre of what we see, we shall find that the hemisphere we are looking at is almost wholly covered with water. Australia and part of America are the only large pieces of land which we see. If we then move round to the opposite side, so that the British Isles are in the centre of our visible hemisphere, we have before us the greatest amount of land which we can see at a glance on the