

THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

JULY—AUGUST, 1880.

A GEOGRAPHY LESSON.

Educational Journal of Virginia.

THAT is the way St. Paul preferred to pray and sing and teach. Hear St. Paul's declaration to the Corinthian Church. "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue." No more important educational apothegm was ever uttered, than "5 plain words are better than 10,000 pompous sounds." The understanding of the learner must keep step with the understanding of the author of the text-book, or of the personal teacher, as far as any real improvement is made.

Poets have sung the "Pleasures of Hope," and the "Pleasures of the Imagination;" but the *pleasures of the understanding* surpass them all in intensity and permanency.

It is often said that mathematical and scientific studies can be, to a limited extent, *understood*, but that descriptive geography, history, &c., depend on memory, and hence should be studied to recite *memoriter*. To a limited extent this is true, but the real pleasure and profit of such studies depend on the exercise of the learner's own

powers of observation and reasoning.

Let us suggest a model, or at least a novel Geography Lesson. Let the pupils, young or older, have a map of the world before them; Mercator's is best, but any will do. The teacher may ask *some* questions for them to answer, and probably *some* that he will have to answer himself. In what respects do the Eastern and Western Continents agree, and wherein do they differ? The intelligent pupil will notice that the Eastern, including Europe, Asia and Africa, is about double the area of the Western consisting of North and South America. That the Western is long and narrow, extending North and South, while the Eastern is very wide, extending East and West. The prevalence of large and long rivers and great lakes in the Western Continent will suggest a greater annual rainfall to supply them, and the vast riverless areas in the Eastern will be attributed to a deficiency of rain and snow. By suggestive hints the pupils may observe that the highest mountains of the Western Continent are south of the equator, and of the Eastern, north of it, and also, that the Western has