

practice this mistake disappears. It is not a mistake of the kind we are apt to suffer from ; and I mention it chiefly because it might at first naturally follow from the acceptance of the advice already given, to the effect that teachers should be widely informed before beginning to teach.

In contrast with this, I may mention a mistake of quite another kind, and probably the most serious of the difficulties that now afflict geography. This comes with teachers whose preparation is insufficient. They feel their weakness. They see necessity of strengthening their teaching, but not possessing the elements of strength in themselves, they try to borrow, and then too often add difficulty instead of value to their instruction. It is for this reason that there is so much useless memorizing in the study of geography. It must be very stupid work to both teacher and pupils. A teacher, well informed on the subjects introduced briefly in the text-book, would feel choked if he had no opportunity of bringing in appropriate side-illustrations and explanations. A teacher not well informed, has no sufficient fund of illustrations with which to refresh the tiresome facts of the page, and therefore they alone constitute the subject of his teaching. Too great stress is then necessarily laid on *verbatim* recitations, for there is nothing else with which to occupy the time. This is a sad difficulty, and it attends poor teaching in all subjects. I know of a case in which a teacher of history, feeling that his class was not doing work enough, required each student to memorize the names and dates of the Popes, in order to give more body to the class work—a poverty-stricken expedient. I have been told of another case in which a class in geology had to recite from Dana's *Manual of Geology*, word for word—a most shocking misuse of that excellent

compendium. Is there, however, any subject in which this error is so common as in geography? It is not only the fault of the teachers. Many text-books are evidently prepared with the idea that every word is to be learned. How, except by rote, could a scholar make intelligent report of such a paragraph as this, extracted from a well-known English text-book of physical geography :

"The Danube receives a large number of tributaries, of which the most important are, on the right, the Isar, Inn, Raab, Drave, Save, Morave and Isker. On the left are the Altmühl, Regen, Waag, Gran, Theiss, Temes, Aluta, Sereth and Pruth. Many of these are large streams with other important tributaries. The Danube drains upwards of 300,000 square miles of country."

Pages could be filled with quotations of that kind ; yet to what do they lead? If it be conceived that any one should ever wish to know facts so unimportant, let them be learned from the map, where they are more expressive than in a printed list. If it is important for the tributaries of all rivers to be stated outside of the maps, place them in tabular form, and utilize the space thus gained by inserting something worth remembering about one or another of the examples ; something that is not better presented in maps or tables. It is sad to think of children being perplexed with such stuff as is given in the above quotation ; yet the book from which it is taken reached a fifth edition only twenty years ago.

It should be noticed that the correction of this error does not lie so much in the substitution of one text-book for another, as they are now constituted, but in the improved use of books by giving less attention to the unimportant paragraphs. This correction is in the hands of the teacher ; he must, from his own knowledge,