

Special Papers.

SECOND BOOK GEOGRAPHY.*

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IN considering this important subject I shall endeavor to make my remarks as practical and pointed as possible, for the market where the teacher buys his information on "How to Educate" seems at present to be glutted, so to speak, with theory—theory which often brings confusion and failure, instead of aid and success to the young and inexperienced teacher.

In our almost endless collection of voluminous text-books, in our excellent journals and periodicals, in our much vaunted and dearly beloved Normal Schools—aye, and even at our Teachers' Conventions, where the cream of the intellect of the community is collected, do we not too often hear, are we not too often told what we should accomplish instead of how we are to accomplish it? The object to be aimed at is everlastingly hung before us in the dim distance, while the (to us at least) insurmountable obstacles are left between, as dark as night and as difficult to overcome as a crooked politician.

In accordance with these views, then, imagine yourself to be placed before a newly-graduated Second Class, to give them their first lesson on the wonders of the earth's surface, the combined product of the works of God and man. What shall we say, where shall we begin? Begin just where the other teacher left off, whether that teacher be your chum in the next room, or the pupil's grandma or grandpa. If the four points of the compass be all the geography to be taught First Form pupils, then after a few minutes questioning, you, in all probability, arrive at the conclusion that you should have exchanged rooms with the First Form teacher when she was giving that particular part of her instruction. For by the time round-faced, curly-headed Tommy has gone through the excitement of a promotion, been wound up three flights of spiral stairs, passed through half a dozen halls and doors, and been placed in the north-east corner of the south-west room, his knowledge of topography will be badly mixed. Or, if the said innocent Tommy be a rosy rustic with well-ventilated nether garments dangerously suspended by a single brace, who has been told at home that over Thompson's barn is north and the gap in Wilson's bush south, he, too, may be somewhat hazy after having walked three miles to school and taken four near cuts over meandering cow paths to the little brick school on the second concession. Are you then to ask them to point northward? If you do they will likely point out of different windows. That won't do; so get the pupil to think, and ask him how he would find the north in a strange place out of doors. That's a sticker, but bright Tommy jerks up his hand, "Please ma'am, ask somebody!" You conclude Tommy is deserving of a question, so you ask him if he faces the setting sun and raises his left hand, which way will he point. He at once sees you are giving him a leader and answers promptly, "To the north, please." Thus you see how easy it is to find out how thoroughly your pupils have been grounded on the cardinal points in out-door geography.

Now the practical teacher hangs up her maps and proceeds with her questioning again. She soon finds that nearly all know that the top is north, some know that the bottom is south; but in the matter of right and left—east and west—they are sadly muddled. I said the practical teacher would act in this commonplace manner, but would the theoretical teacher? Oh, no! she would dismiss her room, and, with her innocent little brood in tow, tramp down stairs, to the consternation of her fellow teachers and chagrin of other pupils, and philosophically proceed to the midst of a farmer's field or the top of some neighboring hill, and there patiently wait for 12 of the clock. Then would she cause those forty cherub faces to be upturned to the noon-day sun (if he happens to be shining that day), and those chubby hands to point north, east, south and west, until each pupil imagined himself to be a mariner's compass. She would then spread out on the grass a map of that township in

which she taught, and have Tommy dance about with both arms extended until he stood upon his own pa's farm, and search among his pretty little toes for the cross which marked his school house, and thus see the exact direction in which he travelled to get there.

Some teachers of long experience might suggest something about the impracticability of such a procedure.

One says she teaches geography in the afternoon, another takes dinner at twelve, and a third has seen the weather so outrageously unreasonable as to rain and storm on geography days. But the pushing, energetic teacher, full of snap, zeal and tact, will remain undaunted by any such trifles, will overcome all difficulties and succeed in furnishing her pupils with information and brains at once.

Let us now return to that humdrum practical old teacher. She will in all probability have her forty humming pupils each with an old ruler hacked in the middle, well chewed at both ends, with half the figures obliterated, measuring the length and breadth of their deeply carved and scratched old desks, drawing a picture of the same on the scale of one-half inch to the foot on their three by four slates, on which will be traced in faint blue wiggling lines, a shapeless caricature not unlike a gerrymandered constituency for a Dominion or Local election. Thus will they be groping, dimly groping for the principles on which are based the many illustrations showing townships and concessions, town lines and side roads, rivers and railroads, villages and towns, all crushingly depicted on a variegated county map.

How slow, how wearing to thus kill time, waiting and watching for the almost imperceptible progressive growth and development of this embryonic young imagination.

But is the bran new theoretical teacher going to wait among the clouds of fossilized old-fogyism for any such process? No; she hies off to her trustees and has them build her a tight and safe balloon with a strong and spacious wicker basket attached, into which she packs her precious young treasures, cuts her guyropes, rushes up a few thousand feet, stops and behold! What a view! Those forty little faces look down upon one of the grandest panoramic pictures that ever met their gaze. There lies—spread out before them—their own real living rushing township, all seen at one glance. No hill or bush obscures the view of the straight and narrow road, the waving corn fields, the moving forest, the glittering pond and winding railway with its puffing iron horse, and a small stream winding through grasses on to the river with its boats, and the ragged truant boy catching trout on its banks. The mysteries of direction and relation are cleared before the young and struggling mind like mists before the morning sun. She now raises her delighted load, and the township gradually contracts and the county comes in view with all its sister counties nestled about; a few more thousand feet and our provinces are seen surrounded by rivers and lakes, with "Uncle Sam" stealing fish from their shores. She now descends to Mother Earth, hangs up her map and all is plain as a pike staff.

Let us again turn and see what Old Practicability has done. Why, she has actually spread out her maps over two desks, placed a boy at each corner to pull tightly, while the other pupils have gathered around, presenting an arrangement somewhat like an old-time quilting bee. She then goes to her desk, takes therefrom a small compass for the children to push about and slowly spell the names of the surrounding townships. She then hangs up maps while the pupils see that the top is north, right hand east, and left west. She drills on this and writes word "east" to right side of map on board, and word "west" to left of map on board.

We are to educate our pupils through the eye, if possible; if not, then through the imagination—a faculty which, together with memory, is early developed, much earlier than that of inductive reasoning. Thus a picture or a comparison will put a child in possession of a fact in a much shorter time than the most convincing and plainest course of reasoning would do it.

If direction and relative position be not yet plain, let teacher place her compass on a desk; have pupils bound that desk with regard to other desks, or, to vary the work, have one pupil take a low seat in the middle of the room, place compass on his head, have pupils stand around where each

can see the needle, and have each give his direction from the seated pupil. Under favorable circumstances this might be transferred to the school grounds, the boundaries of which could be readily seen.

Our class is primed and ready. Where now shall we begin? With the township or with the continent? Should the geography of a county in minutiae, or the geography of the world in general, be taught a second class, or should both be taught? And if so, which first? My answer is, teach both if possible; begin with the county. Teach it, but not in all its minutiae; then the world generally. Return and finish the county. But why adopt this zig-zag course? Why not begin by drawing a map giving boundaries of the school room, school grounds, farm, town block, village, township, etc., until we end with the continent? Simply because it is not practicable. If you don't believe me, try it. Besides the teacher should always bear in mind that pupils are liable to leave school at any time, and that it is her duty as teacher to give them (while under her charge) such information as will broaden their ideas, arouse their curiosity and guide the imagination. Let us then consider whether an exact knowledge of the topography of one county out of forty-five, or a general idea of the land and water relations of the whole world, will be of more service to a man or a woman through life. The answer is evident. You say, give them the world; then why not begin with the world? Why begin with the county? Because the power that is required to comprehend the world, is much greater than that required to understand their own county, the mastery of which makes the mastery of the whole world easier. First, because the outline of the county is more regular; it can be properly represented on a plane surface; we are proceeding on the correct principle of "leading from the known to the unknown."

Now we are ready to proceed with our township. Shall we again hang up our county map and again begin the endless song?—for I believe that if half the maps in Ontario were destroyed and half the remainder turned into blackboards and *black globes*, geography would be much better taught than it is at present. A map should contain nothing but what we intend to teach at that particular time; hence our first map should show nothing but the outline of our own township, shaded, if you wish, and the surrounding townships in fainter lines, unshaded. Of course no such maps are furnished us, and we must draw them ourselves.

"But I can't draw." "Oh, yes, you can." Any teacher can draw a straight line if she has a long enough ruler. "But I haven't a long enough ruler." Well then, make a staunch friend of some bad boy by asking him to make you one, and smothering him with praises and thanks for the ugly thing he has brought you. The details of the township may be made the subject of a future drawing lesson, double lines representing the roads, and single ones the lots and farms, which may be neatly numbered in Arabic and concessions in Roman characters, while the marking of towns and villages will give practice in printing. A model map should be drawn on the board, some evening after four, which would serve for a whole term. But should the children be asked to learn the whole county like this? I should say not. A knowledge of the location of each post office in the county may be of use to an agent, a politician, or a school inspector, but to others it is of little moment. We generally know from a surer source, or take Tommy's advice and "ask somebody." Again, does it not seem silly to teach the piece of railway or river that crosses our township, without giving some idea of "whence it cometh and whither it goeth?"

Having completed our county geography as a preparatory step towards continent geography, let us now turn our attention to our continent. Shall we again hang up our map—a wonderful invention showing a convex surface on a plain one, but which to the pupil is nothing more than two blurred irregular masses suspended in a circle, the whole presenting an appearance not unlike the man in the moon during the last quarter. Shall we again resort to the blackboard? Yes, if you cannot do better. "But I can't draw" is again heard, and the rule Tommy gave me is of no use now. No, perhaps not, but the rule you gave Tommy will

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