

"Where is A?" This may be contradicted in the books teachers write for one another, but even among those who profess higher things on paper there may be found some who are worse—after the fashion of this world—than their words. This treatment of geography has at least the cardinal merit of being, when properly handled, well within the comprehension of small boys and girls, whereas physical and historical geography on philosophical lines, too often resolves itself in practice into an attempt to explain the half-known by appeals to the incomprehensible.

When, for instance, we teach a fifteen-year-old class the commonly accepted account of the atmospheric circulation, we begin with a description of quite hypothetical currents, and then pass lightly over an elaborate tangle of diathermancy, convection, radiation, expansion, and pressure, friction, inertia, and condensation, to explain how these currents (which, as a matter of fact, do not blow precisely as they ought to do to fit the reasons stated) originate. It requires either an exceptional memory of youthful experiences, or else an exceptional sympathy, to realize how the boyish mind feels as this dry light falls upon it. On the other hand, a mere topography, that lapses into explanation only when it is or appears to be inevitable, rather than a teaching that deliberately strains after reasonableness, may be made very attractive to the immature mind.

School masters and mistresses in the past unhappily found a way of making such an intrinsically characterless thing as topography almost disgusting. They practised the list method of teaching, and reduced the mental image of the world's surface to the form of pigeon-holes. I know one dear old lady, who was a proficient at that Georgian geography, and even yet she knows quite a

respectable host of names, though many have in the course of years got into the wrong compartments. She has a kind of mental cabinet, England, with a pigeon-hole for each county, one for Europe subdivided into countries, and beyond large receptacles labelled "In Asia," "In Africa," and so on. Liverpool is in Lancashire, she knows, for instance, and Birkenhead is in Cheshire; but it has been elucidated that she is unaware whether these two places are one or a hundred miles apart.

Excellent people, by-the-bye, within quite recent years have devised games of cards for the mastery of this valuable form of geography, and have modestly (or for business reasons) attributed the greater glory of their invention to Froebel. Each leading town has a card devoted to it, and there are county cards as well, with lists of towns, and the ideal George and Tommy sit round tables and make up complete counties in a mood of ecstatic enjoyment, as the picture outside the pack witnesseth to any that doubt.

However, the practical school-master and parent are growing out of this kind of thing, and the next higher level is no doubt atlas teaching. Instead of having your list in books, your pupils find the places first on maps, and so construct their own lists. We go over the map in class together, dabbling our fingers on geographical features and intoning their names.

And here, by-the-bye, one may notice an important matter for school-masters inclined to this method. Our atlases vary flagrantly. In one atlas you may find a desolate plain where in a second there is one long ridge of mountains, in a third a radiating system of spurs, and in a fourth a system of parallel chains. Let the teacher who doubts this assertion compare the contours of East Anglia in half-a-dozen respectable maps by