

As is the case with many other branches of learning, History cannot properly be isolated; it must necessarily encroach on the domain of Physical geography for us to thoroughly understand the influences at work in building up a national character. We must inform ourselves of the climate in which the inhabitants live, the mountain ranges that traverse the country, the rivers that form the avenues of trade, the seas that lave the shores, and last, though not least, the natural products that supply the necessities or the luxuries of life. Without this additional information our knowledge must be cramped and confined; and it is a matter of regret that this subject, evidently so important, has been practically left out of our studies altogether. Physical geography is undoubtedly one of the most important as well as one of the most interesting subjects that can engage the attention of youth, and why it should be practically ignored has always seemed a grievous mistake. The neglect of it often causes the most egregious blunders, and most unscientific notions of important facts. Breadth and accuracy of thought—the great principles of generalization—can be formed only when we obtain a comprehensive view of the dependence of the one subject on the other. A most mistaken idea seems to prevail—that any subject to be treated in a scientific manner demands advanced pupils. There can be no greater mistake. There is a science in teaching the very elements of a subject, and in these very preliminaries of instruction often the greatest skill and discernment of the teacher are required. No one thanks an instructor for the abil-

ity shown by a few clever boys that he may be successful with. Without him these boys would be clever. But the man who builds a sure foundation, whose motto is *lenite festinare*, consistently with solid instruction, fulfils the great end of teaching. The old adage, "Well begun is half done," is of universal application in learning. The great defect in our schools is that there is not enough of this kind of instruction. There would be little difficulty if we had a manual suitable for giving our junior pupils a clear and accurate conception of history—if what may be termed the salient points were selected. It would be a great boon if such a book were introduced, especially into our Public Schools. In these the history labours under this difficulty—the thorough uselessness of our ordinary text-books. If an idea were also given of contemporary history, the skilful teacher would have little difficulty in adding what may have been omitted. At present, the youthful aspirant to a High School course, has to wade through such an amount of matter that he becomes thoroughly bewildered and lost in inextricable mazes. "What is worth doing is worth doing well." The time that a boy spends at school is limited to a few years, in the most of cases, and during that period the best instruction is that which leads him to deal with the leading features of any subject. Instead of becoming the system of Mnemonics, to which it has been reduced, history might become of invaluable worth as a means of mental training and discipline. How far it has become so the Examiners for the "Intermediate" know best.