

common sense and prevents good conduct. We know the contrary to be the case, at least, in many institutions as proved by the eventful career of several of our most distinguished citizens. We will not refer to the success of many able British statesmen who became eminent as men of business before entering public life after having completed a college course; but we will merely recall what was said by Principal Dawson, in his inaugural address, that the majority of the successful merchants of Boston have graduated in Harvard College, and join with him in the expression of our sincerest hopes that not only McGill College but that all other Colleges will be to Canada in that respect, what Harvard College has been to the city of Boston.

PIERRE J. O. CHAUVEAU.

Catechism on Methods of Teaching.

TRANSLATED FROM DIESTERWEG'S "ALMANAC," (*Jahrbuch*.) FOR 1855 AND 1856,

BY DR. HERMANN WIMMER.

(Continued from our last.)

VIII. GEOGRAPHY. BY ABENRODE..

11. *What is the value of a preliminary course, (Vorcurfus), intended exclusively for explaining the fundamental conceptions?*

Those conceptions are indispensable; but to bring them all together in an especial course and to premise them to further instruction, is a pedagogical mistake, more inexcusable, in proportion as the course is more extended and abstract. In the same measure as instruction proceeds, the detail and quantity of accurate geographical notions may increase. But the beginning is sufficiently taken up by the first and most general of them, which are to be immediately applied. Excessive and premature expansion is injurious instead of useful. Much more is to be gained by actual observation of the elements of the neighboring landscape, with a view of frequent application afterward.

12. *What are the practical details requisite in geography.*

There is much to be observed, compared, understood, deduced, combined, impressed, represented. These, therefore, must be cared for, in teaching. The means of observation ought to be used in manifold ways, in order to gain the most correct image of the nature and life of the countries, and to illustrate and fix the same by all sorts of proper comparisons of the portions treated.

The teacher's statements should be clear, careful, stimulating, graphic, and definite; ought to leave the map only exceptionally; and should be adapted to fix the image in the pupil's mind. He must show how to draw conclusions from given natural conditions, to infer elements from given relations, to transfer the relations of the neighborhood to distant countries, and to combine partial notions into a whole. So far, the teacher's work is substantially that of communication. More reading, or uninterrupted talking, does not in the least accomplish the right work of geographical instruction.

The next important object is drilling, by a repeated review in the same order, or by an appropriate course over similar fields, by exhibiting sufficient representations of objects which can be impressed only mechanically, by imaginary travels with or without the map, by drawing maps from memory, by written answers to principal questions etc. Hence, it follows that teaching geography requires manifold efforts, and that the teacher must be a good geographer and an able teacher, to be very successful.

13. *What position in geographical instruction is due to reading from the map?*

At present it is no longer sufficient, with text-book in hand, to merely point on the map, what is spoken of in the book,—situation and boundaries of countries, beds of rivers, chains of mountains, places of cities, etc. The teacher must know how to read maps, and to teach them; *i. e.*, not only to describe what figures and in what order and connection they stand on the map, but to translate the map, line by line, into the real world, in order that this be faithfully impressed in the mind, to be at any time reconstructed from

it. He must understand the contents and meaning of the hieroglyphics of the map, and know how to exhibit them in an orderly and appropriate way, as we read a book. In reading a book, it does not suffice to find out the letters, to comprehend the single words and their conceptions, but the whole idea must be clearly understood and reproduced. The study of the map ought to render a great deal of the usual contents of the geographical text-books quite superfluous, that the pupil may not cling slavishly to the dead letters of the text book, but may depend on the lively picture of a good map. (See Bormann and Sydow on reading maps.)

14. *What is the value of the "comparative method" of teaching geography?*

If the material were such that all parts of it should be learnt quite separately from each other, it would not be worth while to use this method; for the gain in mental cultivation would be small. But since numerous conditions are the same or similar in many countries, it is natural, even for externally facilitating the understanding, to try, by comparing them with those of other countries, to know the nature of both countries and the effect of those conditions on nature. Situation, boundary, size, elevation, watering, climate, produce, population, means of commerce and travel, etc., and many other subjects, are suitable for comparisons. The comparison itself is an excellent introduction to the object, induces more acute observations, memory, reflection, a sagacious detection of differences, and becomes thus an efficient means of cultivating the mind. It is this which makes geography a refreshing as well as scientific exercise of the mind; since the mastering of a more or less extended scientific apparatus is both a means and an end. However, even in a small sphere and at the first beginning, these comparisons may be used, and then, as the student's horizon gradually expands, they will become more various, attractive and instructive, and will preserve the mind from that fragmentary and mechanical learning, by which the end can not be attained.

15. *What success may be expected from geographical pictures?*

Maps are but symbols of real nature: they represent by a hieroglyphic type a number of natural elements for large territories, without being able to represent correctly the real objects of small areas. But, a well-designed and sufficiently copious collection of vivid and correct pictures, on an appropriate scale, well colored, containing mountains, valleys, plains, rivers, woods, prairies, fields, houses, bridges, ships, men, animals, etc.; or a choice collection representing the cooperating elements of nature in the most various places, in all zones, would be in a high degree instructive for the more advanced scholars. Then the eye might survey the whole landscape of natural and human life in its mutuality and connection, and would bring near the characteristics of the most distant countries nearer than is possible by the most vivid description in words with the map only. For beginners, such pictures would be distracting; but, at an advanced period of instruction, nothing could be more useful. They would enliven the oral descriptions, and their impression would endure for life. With this conviction, some editors of maps, (see Vogel's Atlas,) have renewed the illustrations of maps, common in the middle of the past century, by no means merely for mere ornament, and have added marginal designs from the natural history of the world. Even in mathematico and physico-geographical maps, (see Berghaus' Physical Atlas,) this idea is made use of.

16. *What is the value of the so-called characteristic pictures, (CHARACTERBILDER)?*

It may be said, briefly, that the geographical *Characterbilder*, *i. e.*, characteristic representations or descriptions of certain districts, afford a sensible view of the real life of nature, by developing, as upon a single characteristic locality of the globe, by the use of elements found elsewhere, with some modifications, the totality of this life in its various respects and relations. By a well-selected succession of such representations, the sections, as it were, of a picture of the whole earth, are given, and may afterward be joined into a whole. If they are written ably and sensibly, they have, besides their geographical importance, a great influence on æsthetic and linguistic education. It might be questioned whether near or distant countries are to be chosen, since the latter contain the greater number of unknown things; but practical teachers will prefer to begin with what lies nearest, and must, therefore, be most important for every one; as moreover this material contains enough to be learned by a beginner. (See Vogel's and Grube's "*Characterbilder*.)

17. *What position should be allowed to the geography of civilization, (culturgeographie)?*

It is not the earth, with its life, but man upon it, with his life, which is most interesting to man. The former interests us only on account of its intimate connection with the latter. To explain this