

PREFACE.

The subject of Geography is, in many respects, one of the most important of all Public School studies. There is certainly no other subject of the course which includes so many branches of study or which has such a direct bearing on the general development of the pupils' knowledge. Much of the teaching in History, Literature, Elementary Science, and in object and general information lessons, comes properly under the head of Geography, or leads up to the more formal study of the subject.

The general plan of the book is directly based on the recommendations of the "Committee of Fifteen," bearing on the teaching of Geography; and the central idea of treatment throughout this work is *man*, in his relations to physical environment—his history, customs, industries and commercial relations as modified by the forces of nature. The pupil is led to observe the peculiarities of nature about his own home, and from this starting point he is gradually brought to the conception of the world as a whole. The various races of mankind, and their more important characteristics and distribution, have been presented in such a manner as to interest those for whom this work has been prepared.

Special attention has been given to the varied productions—animal, vegetable, and mineral, of the different countries. An intelligent study of a country's natural resources must be based on knowledge of its physical features. The commercial relations of any country is largely dependent upon its productions. Commercial geography has been given prominence, because commerce, domestic and foreign, is the dominant interest in the affairs of the leading nations of the world. It involves a systematic presentation of the resources and industries of the different countries, as dependent upon climate, soil, mineral deposits and other physical conditions. Commercial geography also includes the most important information concerning manufacturing, distributing, and mining centres. Attention must also be given to the main systems of transportation, both domestic and international.

All the recent political changes which have taken place throughout the world have been carefully noted. The partition of Africa among the powers of Europe has been treated with special care. It is confidently expected that the work will be found up to date.

The relief and colored maps have been prepared by the most expert map makers on the continent. They will be found valuable both for direct reference and for progressive map study. No pains have been spared to make them accurate, attractive, and helpful to the student. The relief maps contain the names of the more important physical features; they will, therefore, not require "keys" to adapt them to the needs of practical use in the class-room.

The portions dealing with the British Empire will be found of special interest, in view of the present relations between Great Britain and her various dependencies. While special prominence has been given to Canada, all the other parts of the empire have received due consideration. No attempt has been made to prophesy political changes; at the same time, the matter has been so presented as to prepare the way for the consideration of changes which seem inevitable.

In view of the limited time given to geography in our schools, this treatise has been made as concise as possible, without limiting its usefulness as a work of reference. This is not only desirable but necessary on account of the large type used in the text and the space given to pictorial illustrations.

The pictures, many of which have been reproduced from original photographs by Wm. Notman & Son, Montreal, have been so arranged on the pages as to serve a really useful purpose, by way of illustrating the text. They have been selected and disposed with this object mainly in view.

The purely statistical matter has been placed at the end of the book. This arrangement will, it is believed, be found more convenient for ready reference, than to have the information distributed throughout the text.