

declared heir to the throne, and nobody ever expressed a wish to hear the rest of his story, for he said it was impossible to come to the other part of it till he had done with the locusts."

To-day there are many signs of something better in the teaching of Geography. There are the lecture-ships in Oxford and Cambridge; but the poverty and feebleness of this movement may well be contrasted with the wealth and seriousness of Germany, which has fifteen chairs of Geography alone, the professors holding which are in every respect equal to their colleagues, and capable of filling the office of Rector of their University. Then there are the prizes offered by the two Royal Geographical Societies of London and Edinburgh; and last, not least, there are the better books and the more clearly printed atlases which are now finding their way into our schools. The new writers of Geographies do not disdain the humanum that Terence insists upon; and even poetical quotations find their way into the new books. There is also here and there a praiseworthy attempt at giving a certain unity of impression regarding a country—at summing up in one paragraph the most striking characteristics of the region described.

Let us now come to the discussion of the subject of the evening. I have to plead guilty to having written a Geography of the British Empire; but I will try to atone for my fault by suggesting a method which may make the collection of knowledge regarding that immense region a pleasure rather than a grind, an attractive pursuit instead of a burden and a task.

I.—First of all, I should say that this book, if used at all, should not be given out in lessons; should not be "learned"; should not be "got up." I can suppose a set of young students

reading portions of the book aloud with a large map of the world in front of them; discussing each with the teacher (who is for the time being a mere chairman or chairwoman) or with each other; comparing this number with that number, this distance with that distance; and referring each datum to some standard or table of standards which they have made for themselves and fastened upon the wall of the schoolroom. The size of each considerable town in the colonies compared with some town in England, adopted as a standard of measurement; the distances by sea compared with the run across to New York or the shorter run between Hull and Copenhagen; the distances by rail and the time taken as compared (or contrasted) with the eight hours' run of 400 miles on the Great Northern between London and Edinburgh; the differing productions of each colony—these and many other things would form easy subjects for discussion during the hour. After reading a chapter, each member of the class might write a short summary of the chapter—not from memory, but with the book before them. This exercise would give a training in an art of great value for the cultivation of the judgment—the art of estimating the relative value and importance of each fact and statement. To the untrained mind, one fact is as important as another; and his mental picture is as devoid of perspective as the painted picture of a Chinese. It is, indeed, remarkable how, even in the case of practised writers, facts and incidents of small importance occupy as much space and are printed in as large type as events which are almost revolutionary in their results. This defect is seen at its worst in the case of writers of school histories. I looked into one of these histories a few days ago; and I found twenty-two distinct events—all of the most various value—recorded