

# **HINTS ON HOW TO TEACH THE FRYE GEOGRAPHIES**

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Hints on How to Teach the Frye Geographies by F. R. Hathaway

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**F. R. HATHAWAY**

**HINTS ON HOW TO  
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# Hints on How to Teach the Frye Geographies

BY

F. R. HATHAWAY

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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## PREFACE.

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THIS booklet is not intended for a teachers' manual, but rather as a means whereby teachers may be put in sympathy with the author of the Frye Geographies. The difficulty of such an undertaking is fully realized, for the writer has never had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Frye. His conclusions are therefore those which come to him as a result of carefully studying these text-books. It is quite possible that in trying to explain the underlying principles of Frye's Geographies there may be a little light thrown upon what some persons are pleased to call "the new Geography."

The following pages comprise in a condensed form the series of geography talks given by the writer to the teachers of Grand Rapids during the winter of 1898-99, and are published at the request of several teachers who listened to those talks.





# HOW TO TEACH THE FRYE GEOGRAPHIES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE.

WHEN a person puts forth a book it is safe to say that he has, or thinks he has, at least one idea which he wishes to lay before his readers. Unless he has such a message he should for the sake of humanity remain silent. In case the person is the author of a text-book, his new idea will, in all probability, be merely a new method which he wishes to introduce into the schools of the country. The subject-matter of the book may be as old as truth; the only new feature may be its method of presentation. This second aim of an author is not to be deprecated; in fact, in many lines of school work the chief question is, "How to present a truth," not "What is the truth?" The latter may have long since passed into the category of undisputed facts; the former may be a point around which still centers many a battle of opinion.

If we who are teachers will think back to the time when we were students in school, we shall remember that the geography taught us was merely the geography of location. Lessons were assigned us by the inch; if

the questions were short and numerous, the teacher gave us two inches and a half per day; if they were longer, we took three inches and a half, and if the printer had by chance leaded the lines, the teacher lengthened our lessons proportionally, giving us possibly five or six inches. When the recitation time came these questions were asked us in definite order and we were expected to answer each in turn. Looking back at such a drill, we must confess that but two benefits were derived — we learned the location of many places on the surface of the earth and memory was trained. In the absence of other exercise, the remaining powers of the mind would have atrophied.

Following this method of teaching geography there came another, which we may dub "the straight line method." It propounded such questions as: "In traveling from New York to Chicago, along what parallel would you journey; through what cities would you pass; across what states would you move?" Possibly this method had its value, but as the *genus homo* never thus moves in straight lines, his offspring rebelled at being forever considered birds of passage, and crows at that.

Method number two had its day, and teachers began to wonder if it were not possible to devise some plan to interest children in a subject which thus far had been the most uninteresting in the school curriculum. Some one hit upon the "journey method," and teachers and children made zigzag tours over the entire face of the earth. This plan had at least the defect of being somewhat rambling. Interest had been aroused, but

even the child's imagination ultimately revolted against forever making believe and never actually performing.

Finally an author, Tilden, impressed with the importance of the business relations of the world, gave us a text-book whose underlying principle is: "the commercial relations man bears to man." This book, though marking a decided advance, left out of consideration the causal relations existing between physical forces and human occupations. Moreover, the book does not profess to be adapted to beginners. It is only a text for advanced grammar grade pupils.

From time to time authors wrote so-called "Physical Geographies," whose place was distinctly marked as belonging to the high-school department. These books leaned heavily toward geology, and served to give many boys and girls the only glimpse they ever received into that wonderful story which the hand of God has written in the structure of the earth.

The time was ripe for a change — a clean-cut, well-marked and decisive transition. Mr. Alexis E. Frye finally gave to the pupils of the grammar school his Primary and Complete Geographies, the underlying principle of which is that

*The vital geography, political geography and commercial geography of the world grow out of and are dependent upon the physical geography of the world.*

True, this was not a new thought. Humboldt had long since shown the operation of physical forces in shaping the surface of the earth for the abode of man; Darwin had demonstrated the effect of those forces upon the animal and vegetable life, and Buckle had