

**ESSENTIALS OF
GEOGRAPHY: A
MANUAL FOR TEACHERS**

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Essentials of Geography: A Manual for Teachers by Albert Perry Brigham & Charles T. McFarlane

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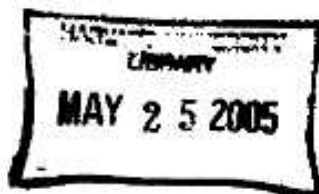
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CHAPTER I

THE NEW GEOGRAPHY

Geography in the Elementary Schools. — For many years geography has held an honored place in our elementary schools. In most of these schools some part of each school day for a period of several years is devoted to its study. During this time the children are expected to learn about their own country in some detail and less fully about other parts of the earth. On the whole, the fact that the subject has held so prominent a place in school work for so long a time may be taken as evidence of a widespread belief that children ought to know something about the world in which they live.

It can hardly be expected that, in these days of educational experiments, the place and value of this subject would go unchallenged. A few years ago some educational authorities became very critical of the amount of time devoted to it. A few even went so far as to suggest that the study of geography be given up or that it be limited to one or two years in the lower grades of the elementary school. For the greater part, however, criticism of geography as now taught in our schools has not been so destructive and sweeping, and has had to do chiefly with the kind and amount of subject matter taught and with the methods of teaching.

Before the World War. — Before the outbreak of the World War it was the universal practice in American schools to spend most of the time given to this subject in a study of our own country. Such time as was given to the rest of the world was chiefly spent in a study of certain important foreign countries. These were usually countries of large population and great wealth as well as countries with which our own had close commercial relations.

To spend most of the time upon the geography of our own country was natural, and, to a degree, commendable. For many years our people had been chiefly concerned with the development of our own resources. Politically we had avoided foreign alliances. Industrially we had catered to home markets, had erected a tariff wall to protect our home manufactures, and had sought in foreign markets only such raw materials as we did not have and such manufactures as we did not make. Commercially we had permitted the overseas carrying trade of the world, including our own, to pass to other nations.

Concerned chiefly with the exploitation of our great natural wealth we failed to notice the extent to which we were becoming dependent upon other countries for materials absolutely necessary in our industries. We raised and manufactured cotton and we mined coal, yet we imported fine cotton goods made from American cotton in British mills and dyestuffs for our textiles and medicines for ourselves made in Germany from our own