

**GEOGRAPHICAL READING  
BOOKS. EUROPE AND  
AMERICA (EXCLUDING  
BRITISH POSSESSIONS)**

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GEOGRAPHICAL READING BOOKS

EDITED BY F. W. RUDLER, F.G.S.

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# EUROPE AND AMERICA

(EXCLUDING BRITISH POSSESSIONS)

BY

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# EUROPE AND AMERICA.

## LESSON I.

### EUROPE, I.

#### OUTLINE—SEAS.

WE will begin our lessons on the geography of Europe by considering the most obvious and striking feature of that continent. When we see it represented on a map of the world, the one thing that none of us can fail to observe is that its outline is much more varied than that of any of the other continents. Peninsulas are here more numerous than anywhere else. The whole of the west of Europe may indeed be considered as formed of two great peninsulas with the adjacent islands.

One of these peninsulas is made up of Norway and Sweden, composing together Scandinavia; and the other is the whole of that part of the continent which lies between the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean. The latter peninsula has attached to it a number of smaller peninsulas, most of which are yet large enough to make great countries. It is only in the east of Europe that there is any great extent of unbroken land, and even in

that quarter there is no spot more than a thousand miles inland.

But why is it of such importance to be near the sea? We shall see in our subsequent lessons that there are more reasons than one for reckoning this as an advantage, but the principal reason is that it favours commercial intercourse. In all countries the inhabitants have need of more than they produce for themselves; and those commodities which they do not produce for themselves they must buy from the inhabitants of other countries, giving in exchange what they can produce in their own country in excess of what they require for their own use. Now in making this exchange, it is manifestly of importance to be able to do so as cheaply as possible, and transport of goods can usually be effected more cheaply by sea than in any other way. On the sea no roads or railways have to be built and kept in repair. All that is necessary is to have ships fitted to carry merchandise, and sailors to manage them. When these are provided, the articles of commerce, that have been brought to the seaports, can be conveyed at comparatively little cost to any other country that borders on the sea, and so also foreign products can be introduced at equally little expenditure from the same countries. On the land, one road will only take you to one place, but the sea will carry you anywhere, except to countries that have no sea-coast.

Since Europe is thus so largely broken up into islands and peninsulas, the waters that wash its shores are more or less isolated from the ocean, and different names are given to the portions partially cut off in that way. They are called seas and

Seas and gulfs.

are more or less isolated from the ocean, and different names are given to the portions partially cut off in that way. They are called seas and



gulfs. In the north of Russia there is the White Sea, communicating by a comparatively narrow strait with the Arctic Ocean. Between the two great peninsulas of which Western Europe is mainly composed there lies, as we have seen, the Baltic Sea; and the branches of this sea in the north and east are called the Gulfs of Bothnia, Finland, and Riga; the Gulf of Bothnia lying between Scandinavia and Finland, the Gulf of Finland on the south of the territory from which it takes its name, and the Gulf of Riga on the west of Russia still farther to the south.

By the two straits of the Kattegat and Skager-Rack, to the south of Scandinavia, the Baltic communicates with the North Sea or German Ocean, which separates the British Isles from the European mainland, and in the south this sea is connected with the English Channel by means of the Strait of Dover. The name of the Bay of Biscay (from the Spanish province of that name inhabited by a people known as the Basques) is given to the large bay between the west of France and the north of Spain.

Finally, in the south of Europe lies the Mediterranean with its branches and continuations, separating this continent from Africa and from Asia. Both the Adriatic Sea, between Italy and the Balkan Peninsula, and the Archipelago or Ægean Sea, between the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor, may be considered as essentially belonging to the Mediterranean, though sufficiently isolated to receive separate names; but the Sea of Marmora, the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azof, while communicating with the same great sea, are cut off from it and from each other by very narrow straits.

The smallest of the seas mentioned is the Sea of Marmora, which is about one-thirteenth of the size of England, while the Mediterranean Sea, including the Adriatic and the Archipelago, but without counting the islands scattered over it, is more than eleven times the size of Great Britain.

But the mere extent of surface occupied by the different seas affords little idea of the volume of water which they contain. The seas situated on the north of Europe are so shallow that they might be looked upon as submerged portions of the mainland, while those on the south, except the Sea of Azof, are so deep, that we are tempted to regard them as portions cut off from the ocean.

If we compare the Baltic in particular with the Mediterranean, the contrast just indicated is not the only one that exists between the two. They are suitable for comparison, inasmuch as they are both inland seas, communicating by comparatively narrow straits with the ocean. But they are inland seas placed by the difference of their situation under different conditions. The Mediterranean lies in a latitude in which the sun is never very low at midday even in winter, and rises very high at midday in summer. Its rays are here consequently always very powerful. A great amount of evaporation is thus produced, and consequently the Mediterranean loses more fresh water through the action of the sun than it gains from the rivers that flow into it. Hence its waters tend to become salter, and they actually are salter, than those of the ocean. Hence, too, the loss of water due to evaporation has to be made up by some other means

Extent and depth of the European seas.

The Mediterranean and the Baltic compared.

than the influx of rivers, and this is done by a current which constantly flows inwards from the Atlantic Ocean through the Strait of Gibraltar.

In the case of the Baltic it is exactly the opposite. There the rivers from Germany and Russia, and still more the numerous rapid streams that flow into the Gulf of Bothnia from Sweden, pour into the Baltic a greater abundance of fresh water than it can get rid of by evaporation—a process which there goes on much more slowly than farther south—and hence the surplus water flows outwards to the ocean in a current which sweeps through the Kattegat and Skager-Rack. For this reason, too, the waters of the Baltic are much fresher than those of the ocean, and all the more because the sea is so shallow.

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## LESSON II.

### EUROPE, II.

#### **BOUNDARIES AND EXTENT—GENERAL RELIEF OF THE LAND.**

WHEN we consider the land surface of Europe, we find that the mainland extends through nearly 80 degrees Length and breadth. of longitude<sup>1</sup> and 35 degrees of latitude.<sup>2</sup> Its length, from the extreme north of Norway to Cape Matapan in Greece, is about 2,400 miles; and its

<sup>1</sup> 70° E. in the north-east of Russia to about 9½° W. in the west of Portugal.

<sup>2</sup> About 36° N. in the south of Greece to about 71° N. in the north of Norway.