

**THE OXFORD  
GEOGRAPHIES. A  
COMMERCIAL GEOGRAPHY  
OF THE WORLD**

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The Oxford Geographies. A Commercial Geography of the World by O. J. R. Howarth

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**O. J. R. HOWARTH**

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OF THE WORLD**

**BY**

**O. J. R. HOWARTH, M.A.**

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION**

**WITH 33 DIAGRAMS**

**OXFORD**

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I HAVE to express indebtedness to Professor A. J. Herbertson and to Mrs. Herbertson for much help, suggestion, and the loan of maps. The regions of the world, which have been recently worked out by Professor Herbertson, are quoted in their entirety in the first chapter, as it is desirable to establish the connexion between them and the political divisions dealt with in the closing chapters; but no attempt has been made here to give more than an outline of the physical conditions on which they are based. It is a commonplace, but no less a duty, to acknowledge the great utility of Mr. G. G. Chisholm's *Handbook of Commercial Geography*. To Professor H. N. Dickson I owe much, and am particularly grateful for two most suggestive chapters in his *Climate and Weather* (Home University Library: Williams and Norgate). The *Statesman's Year-book* supplies statistics for all countries; official *Statistical Abstracts* are published for the United Kingdom, the British Empire, and Foreign Countries, and the *Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom* leads further into detail. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edition) provides notices on products, industries, and commerce under the headings of the various countries, divisions, and towns, and also in articles on the chief commodities and industries indicates their geographical distribution. The *Britannica Year-book* (1913) gives later particulars. It is unnecessary here to refer to special works consulted.

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6. AUTHOR'S NOTE

As to the table in the Appendix giving statistics for various countries, where the import and export figures are stated to be 'generally' based on an average of five years, it should be explained that in a very few cases, from one cause or another, either figures for that term were not obtainable or the average appeared to be so far from representing existing conditions as to be valueless. It appeared unnecessary to specify these cases, as it is hoped that the figures as they stand afford a proper basis for comparison.

## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

*Influence of Climate and Relief on Commerce and Industry.  
Natural Regions.*

THE foundation of a knowledge of commercial geography is a knowledge of the different Natural Regions of the World and their products. It is necessary to know where different products are found, and why they are found there. Most products of plant and animal origin depend on the climate of a region. The contrast between the rich vegetation of the hot wet equatorial forest and the bareness of the hot dry desert of the Sahara, or of the icy desert of the polar regions is obvious. On climate depend the distribution of natural vegetation and (in part) of animals in the natural state, and also the ability of man to cultivate certain plants or domesticate certain animals in certain regions. In connexion with climate there have to be considered physical features. The study of land-forms bears not only upon the questions of distribution above mentioned, but especially upon the means of transport. Climate and weather affect also transport, especially by sea. The direction, variability, and strength of the winds determine certain routes, especially of sailing ships. Even on land if the climate is too dry it may be difficult for man to supply himself, his beast of burden or his railway locomotive, with water. The distribution of mineral products does not depend on climate, but man's ability to work a mineral deposit profitably is often dependent on it. For instance, we shall see how difficult