

**COAST LINES; THE
GEOGRAPHY OF
COAST LINES**

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Coast lines; The geography of coast lines by William Lawson

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WILLIAM LAWSON

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COAST LINES.

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**GEOGRAPHY OF COAST
LINES,**

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

In studying the geography of a country, three points should particularly engage our attention:—the position, contour and surface; these points being determined, we could almost deduct the rest from them. The position,—that is the latitude and longitude,—would help us in determining the climate; the contour and surface would still further help us. Upon the outline, or contour, would depend whether the climate was temperate or extreme; whether dry or humid. The surface also considerably affects the climate, since an elevation of 350 feet makes a difference of 1 degree Fahrenheit. Having thus determined the climate, we may infer, in some measure, the quantity of rain that would fall, and this fact, taken in connection with the surface and contour, will help us in discovering the probable size and direction of the rivers. The surface would also assist us in determining the soil and minerals. From the soil, climate, and rivers we might infer the productions—vegetable and animal, and thus the whole physical geography.

Having determined the productions, contour, rivers, and climate, we might next determine the character of the inhabitants, whether pastoral, agricultural, or manufacturing. On the character of the people, the size of the rivers, and the facilities for commerce, depend the trade—the imports and exports—and large towns.

Of course, it is not pretended that we could determine *accurately* the geography of any country from the

data before mentioned, but the general features we could determine; and to say the least, that which we do learn from books would make a much deeper impression, if we could thus see the connection one thing has with another, and trace everything, as far as possible, up to the points with which we began.

These few remarks may, perhaps, lead some to look from a new point of view in studying this subject; and may be of assistance to them in drawing up notes on geography. At present, however, we intend, more particularly, to consider the contours, or *coast lines* of countries; and to remark occasionally on the great influence they exert in physical and political geography. Due attention has not, we think, been given to this particular branch of geography, and some of the reasons why we consider the studying of coast lines so important, we shall now mention:—

1. As we have before remarked, upon the extent of coast line depends the character of the climate—whether it is extreme or temperate—moist or dry.

2. Upon the length and *character* of the coast depend the facilities for commerce: hence the commercial advantages enjoyed by Great Britain.

3. The extent of coast has an effect upon the character of the inhabitants. Deeply indented shores, like the diversity of internal structure in a country, produce differences of local character in a people. The diversity of character among the Greeks, and the generous rivalry between the different states, depended upon the articulation of the shores of Greece, as well as upon the character of the surface. Again, who does not see that from the articulation of the shores of Europe, we have the number of countries into which it is divided? Each country has a separate people for its inhabitants; hence that national rivalry and mental activity which raises Europe above the other Continents. Contrast Europe with Africa, and the importance of studying coast lines becomes apparent.

4. A careful study of the coast gives us some notion

of the interior—by noticing the imports and exports. In many instances I have endeavoured to illustrate this by mentioning the principal imports and exports. For examples I refer to the coast line of the United States of America.

5. The shores of a country become important when studying historical geography. When nations *act* upon each other, the shores are generally the first points of contact. This is especially the case in Europe, owing to the extent of coast line. Hence the geography of coast lines is full of historical interest.

Lastly, another reason for studying coast lines, and one which becomes of practical importance to school-masters, is, that this study makes our knowledge of the relative position and form of countries *accurate*. It has always been felt, that to get up the capes and bays of any country, or to teach them to a class, is dry work; yet we feel they must be taught, since they help to fix in the memory the form and outline of the country. Now, in the succeeding pages, we have endeavoured to take away this dryness; and while including every fact of any importance, have, at the same time, we think, made the study of the coast at least as interesting as any other branch of geography.

I may here remark that the matter in the following pages is much condensed; as it is intended for a text-book rather than a reading book. Much has been left to the student's own research, as it was not desirable to make this a large book. Yet I trust the facts have sufficient clothing to make them interesting. I should recommend that in reading the descriptions, the student should always have his atlas before him; let him find out each place as it occurs, and endeavour to picture out to himself what he reads.

The contents of these pages were given to students preparing for the Government Examination: they are now offered to others who may be similarly engaged; at the same time I trust they will be acceptable to all

engaged in this interesting study, and that they will not only afford useful information, but convey it in an agreeable form.

COAST OF GREAT BRITAIN.

I. GENERAL CHARACTER.

Commencing at Cape Wrath, in the north of Scotland, the coast runs eastward to Duncansbay Head, and is bold and rocky; turning south west this rocky character continues to the Ord of Caithness. Then round Dornoch, Cromarty, and Murray Firths, the shores are low and sandy, but from Burg Head eastward to Kin-naird's Head, and as far south as Arbroath, the coast, though in some places sandy, is mostly bold and rugged. From Buchanness to the Firth of Tay there is scarcely a good harbour. The shores of the peninsula of Fife are mostly rocky, though not high. The coast round the Firth of Forth is of great beauty—"in part rocky, in part a pleasant beach."

Then as far as St. Abb's Head the coast is generally low, but it then assumes a bolder character, which it preserves as far south as Flamborough Head. This part of the coast line is not much indented. The coast again becomes low, and this is especially the case from the Humber round the Wash to Hunstanton Cliff. We next have chalk cliffs as far as Lowestoft; then cliffs of clay and gravel. The shores of Essex are low, especially near the Thames. In Kent chalk cliffs again appear until we arrive at South Foreland.

The coast now inclines to the south west, and is low and marshy. From Beechy Head a large curve brings us to Selsea Bill, when chalk cliffs again appear. The shores now become much indented, and are again low as far as Purbeck Isle. From this point to Weymouth we again have cliffs of chalk. From Weymouth to Lyme Regis the shore is again low, but it then assumes