

Payne need not be personally denounced for holding an opinion at variance with that of some other educators.

MESSRS. GURNEY AND MYERS have replied, in the January issue of the *Journal of the Society for psychical research*, to the criticisms made upon the literary committee, of which they are the executive officers, by certain members of the society. These criticisms were based upon the fact that the literary committee had not officially examined certain evidence for the so-called 'physical phenomena' of spiritualism. In reply, the secretaries state that they had to begin somewhere, and that two good reasons existed for selecting, as the first subject for consideration, the phenomena known as cases of 'spontaneous telepathy,' the discussion of which is so large a part of their lately published book, 'Phantasms of the living.' The first reason was that these phenomena seemed to connect themselves in a natural way with the results of experimental thought-transference, the investigation of which had been undertaken even before the formation of the society. The second reason was that a very large proportion of the answers received by the committee in response to their public appeal for evidence of psychical phenomena dealt with cases of spontaneous telepathy. So, that this subject should come first in the work of the committee was perfectly natural.

The secretaries further urge that it is not to be forgotten that the evidence in the cases of 'physical phenomena' of spiritualism is distinguished from the evidence in the case of spontaneous telepathy, automatic writing, mesmerism, and so forth, by some radical differences. In the first place, the alleged phenomena have been, for the most part, observed in the presence of professional mediums, persons having a pecuniary interest in their production. The evidence has no longer to do with the validity of perceptions, but with the validity of inferences, with the correctness of the interpretation of subjective impressions. Furthermore, this evidence differs in form from that in the other topics dealt with by the committee. It does not consist of records sent in manuscript to the committee, and previously known but to a few persons; but most of it has already been published in periodicals and in books. Much of the evidence, too, is offered by persons of no training in the kind of observation required, and

of no special aptitude in the arrangement of tests. On all of these grounds the literary committee feels that the sifting and criticism of this evidence is a task beyond their normal functions, and state that a special committee is forming to which all such evidence is to be referred for investigation and report.

WE ARE THOROUGHLY PLEASED to learn, that, at the recent meeting of the Massachusetts state teachers' association, the peddling of text-books and school-journals was prohibited. The ambitious agents of school publishers and journalists have infested state and county association meetings so often in the past, that they thought themselves perfectly secure in the enjoyment of their privileges. But some firm hand has put a stop to the practice in Massachusetts, and we trust the example will be generally followed. Legitimate advertising is commendable, and an agent is to be praised rather than blamed for his assiduity. But the publishers of text-books and school-journals have carried the thing so far that they interfere largely with the regular work of a teachers' association meeting. It is not the use of the privilege, but its abuse, that we decry; and we want to see plenty of imitators of the independent stand taken in Massachusetts.

THE AIMS OF GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION.

Mention all the names of places in the world derived from Julius Caesar or Augustus Caesar.

Where are the following rivers: Pisuerga, Sakaria, Guadalete, Jalon, Mulde?

All you know of the following: Machacha, Pilmo, Schebulos, Crivoscia, Basecs, Mancikert, Taxhen, Citeaux, Meloria, Zutphen.

The highest peaks of the Karakorum range.

The number of universities in Prussia.

Why are the tops of mountains continually covered with snow (*sic*)?

Name the length and breadth of the streams of lava which issued from the Skaptar Jokul in the eruption of 1783.

THE above table, taken from Professor Ravenstein's lecture before the Royal geographical society,¹ is very probably a combination of the more atrocious questions on several examination-papers. It none the less will serve as a text for our paper; and this because it fairly represents the ideas of certain so-called 'teachers of geography' as to the limits of the science they were attempting to teach. To them geography simply meant the cramming into a child's mind so many isolated facts, so many heights of mountains, so many lengths of rivers, so many names of places,

¹ *Royal geographical society, report of the proceedings of the society in reference to the improvement of geographical education.* London, Murray, 1886.

most of them of no possible importance to the student. Indeed, so far and wide has this erroneous idea of geography spread, that there are books actually made for the purpose of teaching this sort of thing. For instance: there is a compiler who has been known to assert, and to assert with pride, that, by the use of his book, one might learn the names of seventeen thousand places in the course of a few years. Just as though there were any object in one's turning one's self into a walking gazetteer, when gazetteers in plenty could be found on the shelves of a neighboring library! In fact, one is irresistibly reminded of the paragraph in the introduction to Mrs. Green's 'Short geography of the British Islands,' the introduction being the work of the brilliant writer, though inaccurate historian, the lamented J. R. Green. He says:—

"No drearier task can be set for the worst of criminals than that of studying a set of geographical text-books, such as the children in our schools are doomed to do. Pages of 'tables,'— 'tables' of heights and 'tables' of areas, 'tables' of mountains and 'tables' of tablelands, 'tables' of numerals, which look like arithmetical problems, but are really statements of population,— these, arranged in an alphabetical order or disorder, form the only breaks in the chaotic mass of what are amusingly styled 'geographical facts,' but which turn out to be simply names,— names of rivers and names of hills, names of countries and names of towns,— a mass rarely brought into grammatical shape by the needful verbs and substantives, and dotted over with isolated phrases about mining here and cotton-spinning there, which pass for industrial geography. Books such as these, if books they must be called, are simply appeals to the memory: they are handbooks of mnemonics, but they are in no sense handbooks of geography."

This, of course, applies more particularly to British geographical text-books. But, so far as the present writer can see, the same remarks are applicable to many of our most popular (with the teachers) text-books. That this is so, is no reflection on the teachers: it is the fault of their early education. And for this our college and normal school authorities are more especially responsible. The evidence that improvement in such respects must come from the university downwards seems to be irresistible. Nor should the publishers be blamed. If they could see the evidence of the demand for better school-books,— books that were not miniature gazetteers,— they would undoubtedly supply it. I remember only a year ago taking a set of the best and most popular school-maps made in Germany to a well-known and enterpris-

ing publisher of text-books. I suggested that perhaps some arrangement could be made with the German publisher by which the maps could be adapted to the use of English-speaking scholars. The gentleman very frankly replied that he could not sell a set of the maps, even if the names were in English. He added, that our people wanted maps colored differently; that is, so as to obscure the physical features. A short time afterwards the same publisher brought out a set of maps of the United States with little angles marked on them so that the scholars could draw the state lines with accuracy, as though that was the end of geographical education. But it was not his fault. His business was to supply the demand, not to get out good maps.

If the learning of seventeen thousand names 'in a few years,' or the 'bounding' of countless states, or the making of maps that will look well on exhibition, is not the end of geographical teaching, what is the use of teaching it at all? What is the aim of geographical education?

In the first place, geography, properly studied, gives one a clear and accurate knowledge of the physical conformation of the earth's surface. This is physical geography, and should be studied first. But this is not the mere learning of 'tables of heights,' etc. It is something entirely different. One may have a very good knowledge of the formation of the earth, and yet be densely ignorant of the height of the Karakorum range. And, as a general rule, the less of such stuff crammed into a child's head, the more physical geography he will know. He should rather be taught to observe phenomena. It is true that such knowledge is hard to get at on examination; but that is not so much the fault of the knowledge as of the examination. Then the flora and fauna of each region of the earth's surface should be properly associated in a child's mind. In this connection, it may be said that nothing is less calculated to convey this knowledge than the ideal or 'model landscapes' too often to be found in our school-rooms. Geography aims also to teach the influence of geographic factors upon the development of the human race. This influence is frequently exaggerated. But the working-out of such problems, even on insufficient data, must have a stimulating effect upon the mind. It may be said that the teaching of the distribution of the flora belongs rather to botany. So undoubtedly any detailed study of the various floras does belong to botany. But a knowledge sufficient to enable one to assign to any given region its appropriate plant-life, and to trace the influence of that floral environment on man, is surely within the domain of geography.

As one of the most important aims of the real teacher of history is to instruct his pupils in the use and making of historical works, so in geography one of the most important things is the teaching of the use and construction of maps. And it may be said, that to the student of history or of geography, to the traveller or military commander, the ability to read a map is next in importance to the ability to read a book. And it is something not easily acquired. It may be said that there can be no difficulty in distinguishing a river from a mountain. And very likely there is none; but such knowledge is no more map-reading than the distinguishing *a* from *x* is book-reading. Nor is map-making cartography. To some minds the two seem inseparable; and the student is required to draw a map with the nicety of a practised cartographer, under the pretence that he is learning geography. He is doing nothing of the kind. The ability to go out of doors and make a good working sketch of the surroundings of one's own school-house is of more value, geographically speaking, than the ability to construct, from sketches and details of survey, a map of Cape Cod with all the accuracy of a Swiss cartographer. No one confounds the art of writing and that of printing. Then why should he confound the describing geographical features with geographical symbols and reproducing the same with the greatest accuracy for permanent use? Geography is not cartography, nor is it topography, although both these elements combine in geography. Properly taught, map-drawing is the best guide to map-reading.

To sum up the aims of geographical education, or perhaps I should say its only aim, is to make men understand what is going on around them,—to converse intelligently upon the present crisis in Bulgaria, or the economic changes which will be wrought by the Panama canal, if it is ever opened; to travel abroad with some degree of satisfaction to one's self, and to one's readers if one writes a book; to read with interest and appreciation articles on campaigns, like those now appearing in the *Century*. For what information can a map, accurately drawn with contour-lines or hachures, convey to a man who does not know what those symbols mean? And, finally, the student of modern history who is not familiar with the geographical features of western Europe can gain only a very dim idea of what the everlasting changes of boundary really mean. The marked difference between the books now being produced by French, English, and American travellers, on the one hand, and German explorers, on the other, is too great to escape attention. That difference is due entirely to the fact that in school and uni-

versity the German is taught, in the first place, to see, and, in the second place, to understand what he does see. This power (for such knowledge is power) is fast pushing the German to the foremost place in war, in commerce, and in exploration. If he could also be taught to relate in clear and simple language what he thus has learned, it would be a positive gain to mankind.

EDWARD CHANNING.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

THE society held its annual meeting at the rooms of the Boston society of natural history on Jan. 11. The auditorium was crowded, it having been announced that there would be shown some 'apparent thought-transference' and some muscle-reading.

The thought-transference was performed by Dr. Minot, with the assistance of Mr. C. B. Cory, and was designed to show the character of the dangers arising from fraud introduced into experiments on mind-reading, similar to some of the experiments made by the committees of the English society for psychical research. The audience were at first not informed of the ultimate purpose of the experiments, and were for the most part entirely deceived, although many were suspicious. Several persons took a card, and, having fastened their attention upon the card, they approached Dr. Minot, who proceeded to draw it upon the blackboard without having seen the card. There were two failures, one of which was partial only, and two successes. Later in the evening Dr. Minot explained that the experiments were fraudulent, and had depended upon Mr. Cory's skill in card-forcing, so that the persons had not really chosen their cards, but had taken them from Mr. Cory. It had been arranged in what order the cards should be given, so that every one was known to the *mind-reader*, and his failure-drawings were intentional blinds. The signals used to indicate what person was coming were also described. Dr. Minot then added a few words, which made clear the lesson intended; namely, that in many of the English experiments, which offer the only evidence worth heeding, of thought-transference, there existed evident opportunities for fraud, and that therefore the experiments in question are inconclusive. He expressed his unwillingness to believe in thought-transference in consequence of the evidence yet presented, and his hope that the amusing demonstration made by Mr. Cory and himself would serve the serious and grateful purpose of emphasizing the dangers of credulity in these matters.