

GEOGRAPHY AS A PROFESSION

INTRODUCTION

MODERN geography is a young science, and usually college students know little of its content. If they think of it at all, it is usually as a subject which they were forced to study when young, but sloughed off when they became men. They do not recognize that the causal element now stressed so strongly has given it a content which has placed geography in the university curriculum and added greatly to its practical worth.

RELATION TO OTHER SCIENCES

The first point to appreciate is that a liking for geology, physics, biology, mathematics, astronomy, history, economics, anthropology, or ethnology, excludes no one from becoming a geographer. Geography is not an isolated science. It is an intensively interlocking combination of other sciences directed towards a broad, but specific field of study. The great war, if it has proven anything, has proven that geography and its ramifications present problems worthy of the keenest and best trained intellects of the day. The fact that geography is now understood to be of value in settling disputes between new states, in understanding the possibilities of commerce open to this nation's newly created merchant marine, and in interpreting to the advantage of all concerned the prides, prejudices, and virtues of those with whom foreign trade does or may bring close contact, has added greatly to the prestige of the science and those professing it.

OPPORTUNITIES IN GEOGRAPHY

Several types of employment are open to the geographer. The following list is not exhaustive, but suggests the major opportunities offered.

1. The government now recognizes as never before the value of trained geographers. There can be little doubt but that its need of such men will increase.

2. Map-publishing houses must employ skilled geographers.

3. Great corporations, commission houses, and banks, as the United States expands its foreign trade, are recognizing more and more

the necessity of having trained geographers on their staffs. Certain banks have found it necessary to establish their own schools in order to give adequate geographic training to men in whose charge they wish to place their foreign branches.

4. Although the world is commonly thought of as pretty well explored, the facts are that many large areas even on our own continent are known only very superficially. Skilled geographers are needed to accompany scientific exploring expeditions, and with the increasing need of tropical products, the demand for such men will increase.

5. Men can not take advantage of the preceding opportunities without adequate training. At this present moment, universities are handicapped in giving this because of the lack of trained teachers. The supply by no means meets the demand. The student who prepares himself to teach university geography is taking advantage of one of the best opportunities in the entire pedagogical field and rapid promotion is certain for him if he deserves it.

TYPES OF INVESTIGATION POSSIBLE

The main types of investigation possible are as numerous as are the sciences allied to geography, with almost innumerable subordinate lines under each. A study of the table of contents of a half dozen leading geographical journals at home and abroad will give some idea of their variety. Within their covers will be found studies of all phases of weather and climate, of the physics of the atmosphere, of map-making and map-interpretation; explanations of the distribution of the races and languages of man, and of the relations between man and his natural surroundings; discussion of why some countries are great and others weak; accounts of exploration; reasons for the courses and materials of trade; and the whys and wherefores of the surface of the land and the bottom of the sea. This is just a hint of the variety of interesting, instructive, and profitable studies which come to the geographer.

COMPENSATION

Few geographers will become rich. The desire for wealth can never be the compelling

reason for entering this subject any more than others. There are, however, varied reasons why a young man may well consider it as a life pursuit.

1. Vigor of body is the natural reward of the active geographer. This needs no amplification.

2. The geographer is brought into intimate contact with many lines of human interest and endeavor. Soils, crops, commerce, landscapes, weather, all kinds of natural resources, both developed and potential, interest him. And, if he travels, as he must to progress far in his science, he gains an insight into the hearts of men and nations second to none. The geographer becomes in reality a "citizen of the world" with much power to promote international understanding and good-will.

3. The modern science is young—younger even than its sister science, geology. Two important results follow:

(a) The opportunities for employment are numerous. Those who enter the subject now are on the "ground floor" as it were, in a movement which promises to be of much educational and economic importance.

(b) The opportunities for original discoveries and contributions are great. With their accomplishment comes the reward which the consciousness of having added to human knowledge always brings. The full power of this needs to be experienced to be understood. There is also the additional satisfaction which comes from being a pioneer in the development of new aspects of an important subject.

These advantages are on the whole quite similar to those of geology. In this connection, it may be interesting to know that while numerous men enter geology from other subjects, few leave it—and of those who do, by far the larger number change into this closely allied science, geography. The application of the broad learning of many years to a study which opens unlimited possibilities for bringing to mankind material prosperity, mutual good-will and friendly understanding, is intensely fascinating to the maturing man who feels a call to serve humanity, yet desires to labor and investigate in his chosen fields of science. Any

young man who has seriously thought of scientific work as an attractive life profession must find in geography an appeal which merits his careful consideration.

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NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

VIENNA

WHILE in Vienna last summer I was like other visitors deeply impressed with the supreme importance to the world of the problem of relieving this sadly stricken capital. At that time the exchange rate for the Austrian crown was about 600 to the dollar and it has since fallen to a rate of 10,000 to the dollar. The average salary of the professional man even six months ago was only the equivalent of between \$100 and \$200 a year, and the recent financial panic has brought the intellectual worker to straits which are almost beyond belief.

There are, it seems to me, three reasons why the situation in Vienna makes a unique appeal to the professional men and women of America. In the first place the actual suffering is far greater in Austria than in any other country outside of Russia. In the second place, there is at stake here not only the life and health of individuals but the life of a civilization, one of the most liberal and enlightened in the world. The universities and schools of Vienna have for centuries been the eastern outposts of the intellectual life of western Europe and in music, in medicine, and in many other arts and sciences her contribution has been unrivalled. In the third place, a peculiar responsibility rests upon America in this connection because the recent panic would have been entirely prevented if the congress of the United States had not delayed for six months the passage of the foreign debt funding bill which was essential to the carrying out of the Ter Meulen plan for the financial rehabilitation of Austria.

We can take great pride in what has been done by the American Relief Administration, the American Red Cross and the Friends Relief Mission to mitigate the suffering of the people of Vienna. With the passage of time, however, it is natural that the enthusiasm of