

GEOGRAPHY AT THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

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[Addressed to the Society in the Library, Tuesday, November 27th, 1900.]

YOU have all been more or less interested as geographers in the Paris Exhibition. I visited the Exhibition in the office of Secretary to the Paris International Assembly. It differed largely from its predecessors in having not only a character of technical and scientific interest, but also a very marked geographical interest. Of course, the promoters had to consult practical convenience a great deal, still there was more order and classification than might have been expected.

First of all, come the art galleries, and close at hand was the enormous range of greenhouses. The exposition was one which was pre-eminently technical if you will, but it was everywhere permeated by historical interest, and history, as you know, is the other eye of geography, and geography the other eye of history.

One feature struck me very forcibly, and that was the way in which the side shows—the entertainments and the amusing parts of the Exhibition—were neglected for exhibits of more scientific interest and educational value. History predominated everywhere. A world-wide education in history was really before us.

The geographical movement was further expressed in the great development of plans and maps bearing on the material improvement of the world; for instance, some of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and of the Canal Systems of Russia. The great exhibition of maps and panoramas was most instructive. One very notable exhibit which I think deserves mention was the relief map of France, which was a large map in true detail and proportion without that unfortunate exaggeration of the scale which makes relief maps so much discredited; also the great globe of the world in relief may be mentioned as particularly interesting. The panorama of Mont Blanc was a really magnificent panorama on a large scale, and was the work of the same author, the painting of which had taken four summers.

As I had only six months in the Exhibition, I had not time to see the whole collection.

The Colonial exhibits of the different countries were often of great interest and great beauty; for instance, it was a great revelation to me to see that perfect architecture of the Soudan. In the same way, with many other strange countries, one was able to see the actual life and manners of Ashantee, and other strange lands which previously were merely names to us. On the other hand, some of the exhibits from British Colonies were so poor that I was pleased to be shown a

letter from an eminent Colonist, received by an official of the Exposition, who said that from a feeling of friendship he would not attack him in the newspapers, but would address him privately by letter, and so far was he from appreciating the collection of Colonial exhibits that he bitterly grudged the time it took to get past them, a statement with which I cordially agreed. You will perhaps recall that we have all seen in exhibitions—exhibitors of some great and important industry who seem to have had nothing better to do with their exhibits than to arrange them in a kind of kinder-garten pattern or to use them in the construction of a dome or an obelisk. I was much impressed in the Exhibition with the way in which places that were most empty of visitors were those places which were most inartistically arranged.

Passing along, one came to the exhibits of Algeria, the Byzantine, and then to the Moorish, all very interesting and instructive. One went through at once the region and the history of the country, and was able to form an idea of the whole. I made, with my own children, the experiment of turning them loose in the Exhibition, and they went to these panoramas again and again, and in this way educated themselves by the eye as the public were also doing. This education by the eye received here its greatest and fullest development. You will recall how largely unfavourable to the Exposition had been the press, not only in England, for the French press also was not so very much more generous towards it than that of other countries. One reason of this was, I take it, that the literary world, the writers, poets, and so on, were little interested in this exhibition of teaching by the eye, and so it came upon them rather as a shock.

The culmination of the whole, the real clue to the Exhibition was, I think, to be found in the Rue des Nations—the Street of National Buildings. Here was represented Byzantine, Spain, Germany, Finland, Norway and Sweden, Belgium, England, Hungary, Bosnia, Austria, America, Italy, and a great many other nations. The historical character was obviously expressed; even the United States building was historical, the dome of the Capitol at Washington being reproduced in miniature. Here were the wooden buildings of Norway and Sweden, the Renaissance Buildings of Spain, the Mansion House of our own country, the Palace of Hungary, and the Châlet of Bosnia. Also the geographical character was notable in many cases, some were Geographical Museums; and I would like to call to your memory the Exposition of Norway and Sweden, and still more remarkable and typical was the Museum of Finland. It was interesting to observe the way in which place determines institutions, and institutions determine families, and families develop interests, and so on, so that all are linked in some organic way. This is one view of things which we may call the fatalist view of geography, but the other side of this argument, the conception that man is master of his fate, was also worked out for us in this Finnish Pavilion. Here this strange, brilliant people, had shown us the way in which their strenuous social life was extending itself and expressing itself not only in crafts, but in the highest arts. Here was worked out experimentally the type and character of regional museums.

I should like to say a few words of the project of our Association which, not content with expounding the Exposition during the summer,

is now trying to preserve some of its best lessons for future purposes, not only for the benefit of Paris, but for wider influence throughout the whole world.

In the educational galleries there were many interesting exhibits, and all the spaces were filled with the heads of great academies, colleges, etc.

These national pavilions are all coming down, but still the attempt has been worth something, as showing a type of a new and still higher geographical movement in which all the different countries have co-operated in expressing their individuality and general character.

SATARA NOTES, BOMBAY.

A VERY curious phenomenon was noticed in many parts of this district. An extraordinarily severe cold was felt on the 13th and 14th ult., and water stored in earthen pots turned into ice. One cannot easily guess the feelings on such an occasion of an illiterate native who is out of touch with the busy world outside where tons of ice are turned out for daily consumption; but the curious part that the atmospheric influences played was to actually burn some of the standing crops, a thing unheard of by the cultivator. I happened in those days to be away from home, and in the interior of the district, and have seen with my own eyes a field with a crop of sweet potatoes raised thereon, actually blanched with cold. It would not be surprising to hear that water was turned into ice in places like Mahabeshwar, where I know for certain that in the month of October it does often reduce water kept in earthen pots to a rather solid state; but it is out of men's memory that cold ever burned standing crops in districts where the cold prevails at most but for a month in the year, and even then cannot be called severe. The phenomenon looks very much like the blight which the Irish farmers often complain of.

Satara seems to be the spot marked out for the location of the Research University. There has been a good deal of correspondence going on in the local press ever since Mr. Whiting's able letter made its appearance in the *Times of India*. Mr. Whiting has really handled the subject very ably, and the Research Commission should not let go unnoticed such an opinion of one of the engineering experts of the Bombay Presidency. Now that it is settled that the Research University is not to be located anywhere outside the Bombay Presidency, and taking for granted that crowded places like Bombay, Karachi, Poona, Ahmedabad, or Belgaum will not suit the plans of the Research University, Satara has a fair claim to be chosen, being not only a central place in the Presidency, but answering also all the requirements of an institution of the category of a Research University. If memory fails me not, the late Dr. Lisboa happened once to strongly impress the fact on his audience that there was no place in the Bombay Presidency so suited for the occupation of either botanist, geologist, or mineralist as that spur of the Sayadris which traverses the Satara district. He hinted, of course, at Mahabeshwar and Mahabeshwar would really be a capital place for a Research University, but for its one drawback, the heavy rainfall which prevents people from staying there throughout the year, and Satara, which is only 32 miles off, with a climate as good as Mahabeshwar and the research fields scattered about, cannot but be the place for the Research University.—*Catholic Examiner*, March, 1901.