APPENDIX E


Some countries are so paramount by their civilization, their history and their commercial relations that we must become familiar with them. To know England should mean to have live, vivid ideas of what England is, what her landscapes, what her shores, what her people, her cities, her villages, and above all, how she lives and what she stands for. How in English history is to be found that idea of representative government which was the germ of our form of government, and has served Europe in the present century as the model on which she has shaped her moderate infusion of constitutionalism.

To know Germany should mean to have some image in the mind of German landscapes and German life and industry, and above all to have a notion of what German patience and thoroughness mean to modern science, and how Germany owes her modern place in the world as distinctly to the strength of union—one great state from many little ones—even as our American republic. To know the Germany of today, one needs must know something of Bismarck, something of the rise of Prussia.

So in studying France we must not allow the pupil to be ignorant of that French pre-eminence in matters of taste that impresses itself on French relations with all the world.

A few countries, made real in landscape, life and institutions, and those countries of greatest importance—that is my ideal of the geographic attainment in point of facts for the eight years of the grades.

And again . . . in "Out of Door Work in Geography," (a paper he presented to the National Education Association, and later published in the Journal of Geography, IV, No. 2, February 1905, pp. 49-57):

The sub-committee on geography of the Committee of Ten, including Americans distinguished for their geographical attainments the world over, admitted that results now attained are not proportionate to the time they cost. They suggested observational geography from the start and went into valuable details in describing what they meant. They emphasized above all the need of teaching more geography to the teachers . . . The Committee urged in 1893 that an elementary course in physical geography be put in the last year of the grammar school, while physiography should be taught in the last year of the high school as soon as properly trained teachers could be obtained. This physiography I take it would differ from physical geography by using the strict logical arguments of geometry, physics and chemistry in the treatment of causes and effects. While such teachers could not be obtained, a course in geology might take its place. Either of these courses to be given as advanced work with field work and laboratory work. They declared that without such courses as these "a serious danger threatens the whole line of geographic study in the schools, for the great mass of teachers of geography have not taken courses beyond the high school—and if they are not taught the elementary processes and principles of these sciences there, they will have little strength as teachers of geography. They cannot go much beyond mere facts and formalities." The committee thought in this way to utilize the time given to geography. This programme has been in print now for ten years. What has been accomplished? A year ago I made an investigation into the status of geography in the high schools of Michigan. While that state may not
accurately reproduce the conditions of the country at large, it may fairly be called a representative state. One hundred and twenty-nine of the largest high schools of the state reported and the general conclusion I draw is that not a dozen schools in that great state are doing what was advised. The last year in the high school has physiography in but two schools and geology in only six. Only a third of the schools reporting did any out of door work and a quarter of them any laboratory work. Add to this that physical geography is not generally taught in our grammar schools and we have the net result that the course in physiography or geology is simply omitted and the grammar school physical geography pushed up into the first year of the high school. The mass of the teachers are still receiving no preparation for good work in geography.

An unusual opportunity for him to speak on behalf of his geographic viewpoint presented itself when a "Commission on Secondary School Geography" was appointed to present a report concerning the status and needs of geography in United States secondary schools, to the National Education Association in 1909. This Committee, chaired by J. Chamberlain (Los Angeles, Cal.), included W. Field (Milton, Mass.), M. Genthe (Hartford, Conn.), M. Jefferson, W. Moore (South Hadley, Mass.), W. Snyder (Hollywood, Cal.), and R. Whitbeck (Trenton, N.J.). The group never met, owing to the amount of travel that would have been involved. Members corresponded one with the other, writing a report by consensus of opinion through the mail. The committee was soon dominated by Chamberlain, Whitbeck, and Jefferson, and by chance circumstances Jefferson's views were to be given preferential treatment. Whitbeck had sent his report to Chamberlain stating Jefferson was in agreement with the text of his message. Whitbeck had exchanged correspondence with Jefferson and came to believe that Jefferson and he were agreed on certain matters relating to secondary school education in the United States. Jefferson learned from Chamberlain of Whitbeck's unfortunate dispatch and at once expressed concern at the manner in which the report was being compiled. (See the letter: Mark Jefferson to Ray Whitbeck, February 18, 1909, p.p. M.J.). Chamberlain and Whitbeck, assuming apologetic roles, allowed Jefferson to incorporate many of his ideas into the report of this Committee on Secondary School Geography which was read before the science section of the National Education Association, Denver Convention, on Friday, July 9, 1909 (Report of the Committee on Secondary School Geography, Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the National Education Association, Denver 1909, pp. 820-828). The Committee was favorably disposed towards the finished report, which had significant impact on geography in the secondary schools.

Later, on the occasion of The Transcontinental United States Geographical Excursion, one of Jefferson's evening addresses provides ("Geographic Instruction in America," Proceedings of the Philosophical Society, University of Virginia, 1911-1912, pp. 131-134):

The influence of the universities on the schools has been to encourage purely physiographic and geomorphologic work. In 1892 this encouragement took the form of the geographic part of the report of the famous Committee of Ten. It was characteristic that the committee thought physiography essential in the high schools if elementary school instruction in geography was to be saved from perishing. It thought something might be done towards this end by introducing courses in geology into the high school until teachers could be trained in the new physical geography. The Geography Conference of that Committee did
recognize other aspects of geography than the rational explanation of land forms—calling them applied geography—but thought they ought to be taught in connection with the sciences to which they were most intimately related—as botany or zoology or history. It is plain that this university conception of geography is less broad than that prevalent in Europe, as represented by our distinguished visitors and also less broad than that which prevails in our elementary schools in which man and the relations of man to the Earth are regarded as essentials. We are more narrowly trained as individuals than our colleagues from across the sea. This excursion has shown us that every day. As a whole our European friends have more collateral training, in languages, ancient and modern, in botany and drawing, without appearing to lose anything from their geological preparation. It is likely that the elective system in America has brought it about that an American scientist of the present generation may have a range of training much more limited than would be possible for a European. That this narrow range of the American geographer usually lies within geomorphological lines is due to the fact that geography in higher instruction is wholly indebted for what place is granted it to a group of talented men whose work has been in the study of the forms of the Earth's surface.

Of human relations there was no note in the report of the Committee of Ten, but when the attempt was made to put physiography into the schools, the publishers, closely in touch with the schools, at once insisted on bringing "man" in to an extent that grew from year to year as the schools were heard from. For the American publisher is a close student of his market. He manufactures books to sell them and is keenly alive to the importance of satisfying the demands of "school men," a body of men who are not usually specially trained, but have a broad general education and are applying excellent judgment and common sense to school problems.

Commercial geography has a place now in the universities and regional courses are beginning to be more numerous but probably a larger percentage of city high schools offer commercial geography than of colleges. The public school demand is that geography shall explain not so much the forms of the earth as the activities of man upon the earth. I believe that it is this demand of the public schools that is now meeting recognition in the universities too. A very useful and influential agency in discussing and shaping geographic adventures in high and normal schools in the last fifteen years has been the Journal of School Geography, later the Journal of Geography, under the able editorship of Professor Dodge, of Teachers College, Columbia University.

The teachers in the elementary schools and in the smaller high schools are trained in the normal schools and colleges. Of these, between public and private, we have nearly three hundred. In all of these geography is taught, and there are about fifty professors of geography, rather more than half of them men, who give their whole time to the work. Some of these have one or more assistants. In a good many cases they have had some special training, but in the university it could only be in physical geography. Their own acquaintance with the schools has shown them their needs though they have little help in satisfying it and less leisure for the task. They have not generally taken an active part in offering new conceptions of geographic instruction but have faithfully reflected and supported the resistance of the schools to efforts at sidetracking "life" and "man".