ELEMENTARY GEOGRAPHY

Ambleside Geography Series

by

Charlotte M. Mason

BOOK I	*Elementary Geography*
BOOK II.	*The British Empire and the Great Divisions of the Globe*
BOOK III.	*The Counties of England*
BOOK IV.	*The Countries of Europe, Their Scenery and Peoples*
BOOK V.	*The Old and the New World: Asia, Africa, America, and Australia*

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PREFACE

This little book is written on the lines laid down by the Old Code for the Geography of Standard II. It is confined to very simple reading lessons upon "the Form and Motions of the Earth, the Points of the Compass, the Meaning of a Map: Definitions." The writer is unable to conceive of any other course of early lessons so practically useful and necessary.

The shape and motions of the earth are fundamental ideas—however difficult to grasp.

Geography should be learned chiefly from maps, and the child should begin the study by learning "the meaning of a map," and how to use it.

These subjects are well fitted to form an attractive introduction to the study of Geography: some of them should awaken the delightful interest which attaches in a child's mind to that which is wonderful—incomprehensible. The Map lessons should lead to mechanical efforts, equally delightful. It is only when presented to the child for the first time in the form of stale knowledge and foregone conclusions that the facts taught in these lessons appear dry and repulsive to him.

An effort is made in the following pages to treat the subject with the sort of sympathetic interest and freshness which attracts children to a new study.

A short summary of the chief points in each reading lesson is given in the form of questions and answers.

Easy verses, illustrative of the various subjects, are introduced, in order that the children may connect pleasant poetic fancies with the phenomena upon which "Geography" so much depends.

It is hoped that these reading lessons may afford intelligent teaching, even in the hands of a young teacher.

The first ideas of Geography—the lessons on "Place"—which should make the child observant of local geography, of the features of his own neighbourhood, its heights and hollows and level lands, its streams and ponds—should be conveyed vivâ voce. At this stage, a class-book cannot take the place of an intelligent teacher.

This little book is intended for children of seven and eight, who understand the lessons quite well and take pleasure in them.

Children should go through the book twice, and should after the second reading be able to answer any of the questions from memory.

Charlotte M. Mason

Ambleside, 1906

CONTENTS

I. How All Things Praise the Lord 1

II. Our World, Part I 2

III. The Sailor-Boy's Gossip 5

IV. Our World, Part II 7

V. The Star 11

VI. Our World and Other Worlds, Part I 12

VII. Our World and Other Worlds, Part II 16

VIII. The Sunshine 20

IX. Day and Night 22

X. The Blind Boy 25

XI. Poles and Axis 26

XII. The Four Seasons, Part I 30

XIII. The Voice of Spring 33

XIV. The Four Seasons, Part II 34

XV. Summer 37

XVI. Harvest Thanksgiving. 39

XVII. Winter 40

XVIII. Hot Countries and Cold Countries, Part I 41

XIX. The Humming-Bird. 44

XX. Hot Countries and Cold Countries, Part II 45

XXI. The Land of Ice at the South Pole 49

XXII. Parallel Lines. 50

XXIII. Day-Break. 54

XXIV. Sunrise and Sunset 55

XXV. Evening 59

XXVI. Why the Sun Rises and Sets 60

XXVII. Mid-Day Lines 63

XXVIII. The Points of the Compass 67

XXIX. The Mariner's Compass 71

XXX. The Plan of a Room. 74

XXXI. The Plan of a Town 78

XXXII. Map of a County 81

XXXIII. How Maps Are Made 86

XXXIV. The Surface of the Earth, Part I 89

XXXV. The Surface of the Earth, Part II 92

XXXVI. Highlands and Lowlands 96

XXXVII. Rivers 101

XXXVIII. Countries 106

XXXIX. The Waters of the Earth, Part I 111

XL. The Waters of the Earth, Part II 114

XLI. The Oceans and Their Parts . . . 117

Lesson I

HOW ALL THINGS PRAISE THE LORD

Sun, moon, and stars, by day and night,
At God's commandment give us light;
And when we wake, and while we sleep,
Their watch, like guardian angels, keep.

The bright blue sky above our head,
The soft green earth on which we tread,
The ocean rolling round the land,
Were made by God's almighty hand.

Sweet flowers that hill and dale adorn,
Fair fruit trees, fields of grass and corn,
The clouds that rise, the showers that fall,
The winds that blow—God sent them all.

The beasts that graze with downward eye,
The birds that perch, and sing, and fly,
The fishes swimming in the sea,
God's creatures are as well as we.

But us He formed for better things,
As servants of the King of kings,
With lifted hands and open face,
And thankful heart to seek His grace.

— Montgomery

Lesson II

OUR WORLD

PART I

PERHAPS you have not yet thought much about places far from the town or village where your home is. No doubt you have heard of the wonderful sights of London, if you have not seen them, and you know that London and many other towns are in our own country, England. Perhaps, too, you have friends who have travelled, and who speak of far-away places they have seen. And you may have thought, as you listened, how very big the world must be to hold so many places!

Our wonderful, beautiful world is very large and very full, with more people and places and things in it than you can ever know about. Indeed, there are many parts of it which nobody has seen yet, though brave men often make difficult and very dangerous journeys to find out and explore these unknown places. But, after all, the strange thing is, that our world must come to an end somewhere. Have you ever thought of that? It was a great puzzle to learned men who lived long ago, and who did not know so much about some things as

you may learn before the end of this lesson. They knew the world was not everywhere; that the sun and moon which shine above us are not part of the world, but are a great way off. So they said, Why do we never come to the end of the world? If we journey on over land and sea for years, surely we should come to the end then? And what is the end like? Would we fall off the edge, just as a cup might fall off the edge of a table?

At last it was discovered that people never came to the end of the world on account of its shape. There are certain things we use which you might run your finger along all day without ever coming to an edge. Round things, such as balls or oranges, have no edge, no end. And our world is round. It is more the shape of an orange than of a ball, because it is a little bit flat at what we may call the top and bottom.

This was a wonderful thing to find out. You can see that a ball is round; even if it were a ball as big as the house, you could see enough of it to know its shape. But only God above can see the whole of this huge world; how then could men discover its shape?

You would not understand all the reasons which prove that the world is round, but three are easy enough. The captain of a ship found out, that, by sailing on and on, and never turning back, he came at last to the very place he had started from. Try that plan on a straight table, and you will find that the farther you go, the farther you will be from your starting place. Try on a ball which you have first stuck a pin into for a mark. After you have moved your finger half way round the

ball, the farther you go, the nearer you get to the pin, until at last you touch it, and have reached again the point you started from. As people now very often sail round the world in this way, we know that the world is round in one direction. The other two reasons we shall find in the fourth lesson.

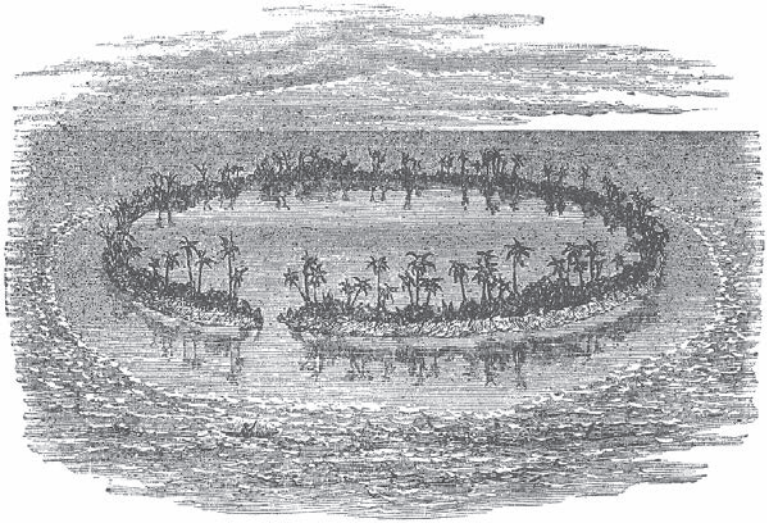
Lesson III

THE SAILOR-BOY'S GOSSIP

You say, dear mamma, it is good to be talking
With those who will kindly endeavour to teach,
And I think I have learnt something while I was walking
Along with the sailor-boy down on the beach.

He told me of lands where he soon will be going,
Where humming-birds scarcely are bigger than bees,
Where the mace and the nutmeg together are growing,
And cinnamon formeth the bark of some trees.

He told me that islands far out in the ocean
Are mountains of coral that insects have made,
And I freely confess I had hardly a notion
That insects could work in the way that he said.



CORAL ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC

ELEMENTARY GEOGRAPHY

He spoke of wide deserts where the sand-clouds are flying,
No shade for the brow, and no grass for the feet;
Where camels and travellers often lie dying,
Gasping for water and scorching with heat.

He told me of places away in the East,
Where topaz, and ruby, and sapphires are found;
Where you never are safe from the snake and the beast,
For the serpent and tiger and jackal abound.

I thought our own Thames was a very great stream,
With its waters so fresh and its currents so strong;
But how tiny our largest of rivers must seem
To those he had sailed on, three thousand miles long.

He speaks, dear mamma, of so many strange places,
With people who neither have cities nor kings,
Who wear skins on their shoulders, paint on their faces,
And live on the spoils which their hunting-field brings.

Oh! I long, dear mamma, to learn more of these stories,
From books that are written to please and to teach,
And I wish I could see half the curious glories
The sailor-boy told me of down on the beach.

— Eliza Cook

Lesson IV

OUR WORLD

PART II

We cannot go round the world for ourselves, but there are some ways of knowing its shape which we can try.

If you are on a hill or tower, so high that you can see over all the buildings near, and beyond them as far as the eye can reach, you will find that you are in the middle of a great circle or ring. Everywhere, all round you, the world and the sky seem to touch one another. It is not that they really do so; but the eye can see no farther, because the world, everywhere beyond this circle, dips down out of sight, as the sides of an orange might to a fly on the top. The place where the earth and sky seem to meet is called the *horizon*.

All over the world, wherever anybody stands so that he can have an unbroken view, he finds himself standing in the middle of such a circle.

That the surface of the world is everywhere rounded in this way is one proof that the world is round; or rather, that it is a *sphere*, a name given to objects which are round in every direction like a ball. *Globe* is another name given to objects of this shape.

As the world is rounded everywhere, this roundness hides very distant objects from view, as a hill might. Thus you may sometimes see the top of an object when its lower part is hidden by the round swell. The dome of Saint Paul's may be seen from a great distance; while the doors would be hidden by this rounding of the earth, even if there were no buildings between you and them.

The best way to understand this is to stand on the sea-shore and watch a ship just coming into sight from below the horizon. The sea looks so flat, it is hard to believe there is any roundness there, and yet, something rises between you and the ship. Instead of seeing the whole of her, you see only the slight masts. The large heavy hull, the part which you would expect to show most clearly in the distance, is quite hidden from view.

What hides it? The rounding of the waters. The sea, which covers part of the world's surface, has everywhere just the same curve or roundness as the land.

Questions on Lessons II and IV

1. What is the shape of the world?

Round, like an orange; that is, a little flattened at the top and bottom.

2. Give one reason for supposing that the world is round?

A ship may arrive at the place she started from, by sailing right on without ever turning back.

3. Does this prove that the world is round in every direction like a ball?

No; only that it is round in the direction in which the ship sails.

4. Why do we say the world is a sphere or globe?

Because it is round in every direction, like a ball.

5. How is this proved?

When nothing hides the view to a great distance, the land sinks out of sight all round us, and we are standing in the middle of a circle.

6. What causes this effect?

The rounding of the surface of the world; we cannot see straight on as if it were flat.

7. Does this prove that the world is a sphere?

Yes; because the same effect may be seen in every part of the world; it is round in every direction.

8. What is this circle called?

The horizon; the world and sky seem to meet all round.

9. Can the roundness of the world be seen in any other way?

Yes; it rises between us and objects at a distance, hiding the lower parts of them from view.

10. Mention such an object?

A ship coming in to land: when she first appears we cannot see her hull.

Lesson V

THE STAR

Twinkle, twinkle little star;
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light—
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark;
He could not see which way to go
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
Yet often through my window peep;
For you never shut your eye
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright but tiny spark
Lights the traveller in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle little star.

— Jane Taylor

Lesson VI

OUR WORLD AND OTHER WORLDS

PART I

About three hundred years ago, there lived a wise man, named Galileo, who spent his nights in watching the stars, and in considering how they moved. Perhaps you think the stars are little shining lamps, lit up in the sky every night, which do not move at all. Galileo

THE EARTH

knew better; and, in his long night-watches, he found out some wonderful things about our world which you shall hear.

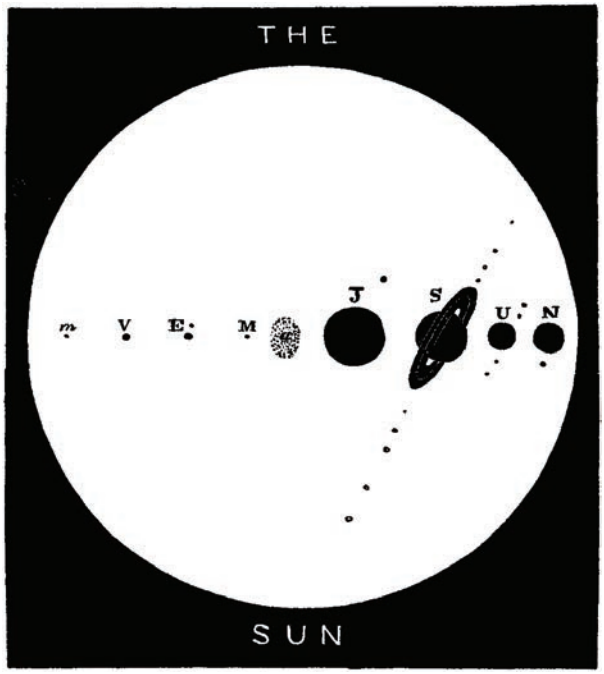
Not that he was exactly the first to make these discoveries. But Galileo was among the first who wished to make others as wise as himself. He wrote his wonderful secrets in a book and taught the people. Alas, his books were burned, and he, himself, was imprisoned. Men said his strange tales were not true, and were angry with the man who wished to teach them.

Have you noticed that things look smaller and smaller the farther you are from them? That a kite flies up, till it looks like a speck; that a man in the distance looks no bigger than a child? Get far enough off, and the very largest thing looks no bigger than a dot. Even our own great world would seem no larger than one of the stars in the sky if we could get far enough off to see it so small; which we never can, because we cannot get out of our own world.

Galileo's wonderful discovery was, that nearly all the stars we see in the sky are as large, some of them many times as large, as our world. They are so far off that they look small to us, just as our world would look if seen from a star.

Then he went on to tell that our world is really a kind of star, which, with seven others something like it, is always going round the sun. These eight stars, which are always wandering round the sun, are called planets, a word which means wanderers. Our world is a planet, and its name is Earth; another planet is called Venus;

and each of the other planets has a name of its own which you may learn some day.



But, you say, the stars all shine like lamps; how then can our earth look like a star? It is not on fire. It is true that most of the stars do shine and burn like the sun, but these eight planets, of which our earth is one, shine in another way.

Have you ever seen the windows of a house look red and bright when the sun was shining on them in the evening? Sometimes you would think the house was on fire, they look in such a blaze; but it is only the light of the sun which they are sending back, or reflecting. On a sun-shiny, hot day by the sea-side you can hardly bear to look at anything. Water and houses

and pavement dazzle you so with the sun's light, which they are reflecting, that it is almost as bad as trying to look at the sun himself.

If we were off our earth, far, far away, up in space, we should not see houses, trees, and water, but just a ball shining all over with the light of the sun, which it is giving back or reflecting. And that is how it is that these eight planets, and our moon also, shine like bright stars, though they are not really bright themselves. They send back, or reflect, the bright light of the sun.

Lesson VII

OUR WORLD AND OTHER WORLDS

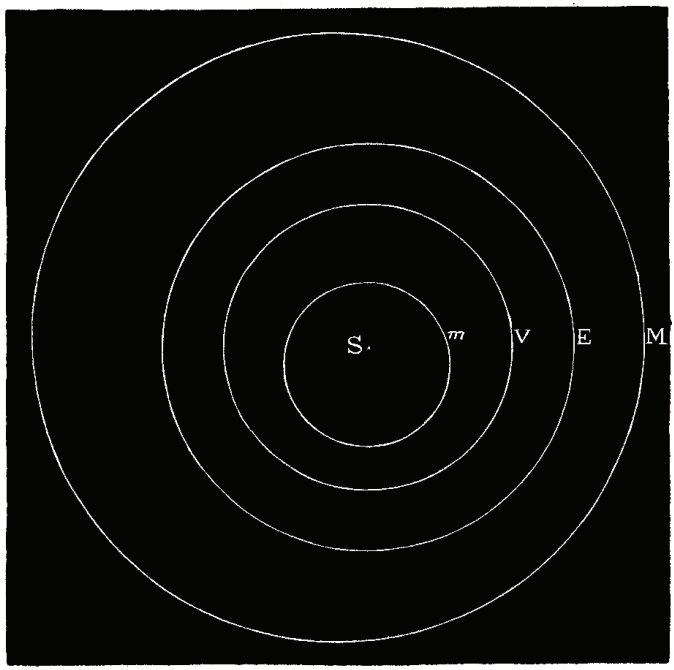
PART II

The great sun is very glorious and beautiful, and is always pouring out floods of light and of fierce heat. His light gives day to all the planets; and his heat enables corn to grow upon our earth, and men to live there; and makes warm summer days when children may play in the fields.

But his fiercest heat does not come to our earth; we are far, far away from the great fire of the sun; and only get the gentle warmth which makes our world pleasant. Some parts of the world get much more of the sun's heat than others; why they do so, you will know soon; but it is nowhere scorching hot. Everywhere, nearly, people and animals may live, and plants grow; and the sun is a kind friend which gives life and pleasure to all living things.

Day and night, never resting for a moment, the eight planets are continually moving round the sun. When the journey is finished they begin again, silent, punctual,

never tired; so punctual are they, that astronomers (the wise men like Galileo who study the stars) know just in what part of the sky to look for a planet at any time. And it comes—more true to time than a railway train, but without any blowing of whistles or ringing of bells, without any bustle or noise or smoke. And the astronomers are filled with delight to see how well these wonderful works of God obey the law He has given them.



The eight planets do not travel round the sun side by side. Some are much farther from the sun than our earth. Some are nearer to him. As each one keeps at a regular distance from the sun all through its journey, the more distant the planet is, the longer is the time it takes to finish its course. The length of our year is 365

days, but the planet Saturn, which is much farther from the sun than the earth is, has a year nearly thirty times as long as ours. That is to say, he has a far larger circle to move round, so it takes him nearly thirty times as long as it takes the earth to go round the sun. Supposing each of the planets left a shining track which we could see as it went on its course, there would be eight shining circles round the sun at different distances from him. These would show us the *orbits* or paths of the planets. The path our earth takes through space in her journey round the sun is her orbit. Not that there is any real path or waymark of any kind for her to follow. Yet, year after year, she journeys over the same course, and never gets nearer to the sun or farther from him. Should she lose her way by any chance, and get nearer to the sun, terrible things would follow. Trees, grass, and houses would all blaze up; the very hills and ground would burn; and our whole world would become a great fire, kindled by the fierce heat of the sun. But there is no chance in the matter. God keeps the earth and the other planets moving round in their own places by two wonderful laws which cannot be broken. But you are too young to understand about these yet.

Questions on Lessons VI and VII

1. What discovery did Galileo make?

   That our world is a planet.

2. What is a planet?

   A body that looks bright like a star, and travels round the sun.

3. How do planets shine?

   By reflecting the sun's light. They have none in themselves.

4. Is not our world larger than the stars and planets?

   A great deal smaller than the stars, which are very far away; smaller than most of the planets.

5. What is our world's name as a planet?

   Earth.

6. How long is our year?

   Rather more than 365 days.

7. Is there any reason why our year should be 365 days in length?

   That is the time the earth takes to perform her journey round the sun.

8. What is the path she takes round the sun called?

   Her orbit.

Lesson VIII

THE SUNSHINE

I love the sunshine everywhere,
In wood, and field, and glen;
I love it in the busy haunts
Of town-imprisoned men.

I love it when it streameth in
The humble cottage door,
And casts the chequered casement-shade
Upon the red brick floor.

I love it where the children lie
Deep in the clovery grass,
To watch among the twining roots
The gold-green beetles pass.

How beautiful, where dragon-flies
Are wondrous to behold,
With rainbow wings of gauzy pearl,
And bodies blue and gold!

How beautiful on harvest-slopes,
To see the sunshine lie;
Or on the paler reapèd fields.
Where yellow shocks stand high!

THE SUNSHINE

Oh! yes; I love the sunshine!
Like kindness or like mirth,
Upon a human countenance,
Is sunshine on the earth!

Upon the earth; upon the sea;
And through the crystal air,
On piled up clouds; the gracious sun
Is glorious everywhere.

— Mary Howitt