

INTRODUCTION

There are two phases to the geography of a region; one deals with the *physical features* as such, and is termed Physical Geography. The other deals with *the region as the home of man*; this is geography in its larger meaning. The non-physical phase of the study is sometimes called human geography, and sometimes it is called applied geography. Physical geography reaches back into geology and includes a discussion of:

- (1) the rock structure of the region,
- (2) the surface features—both land and water,
- (3) the climate,
- (4) the natural resources, including
 - (a) the soil,
 - (b) the minerals,
 - (c) the forests,
 - (d) the fisheries,
 - (e) the navigable waterways,
 - (f) the water powers,
- (5) the plant and animal life.

The human or applied geography, while it is never distinctly separable from the physical, includes those geographical conditions for which man is responsible, such as:

- (a) the establishing of cities, towns, counties, states, roads, railroads, ports, etc.;
- (b) industries—mining, lumbering, farming, fishing, manufacturing, trading, and transporting.

Physical geography has its foundation in the science of geology; and applied geography, while having its foundation in physical geography, deals mainly with the industries, commerce, and other occupations of the people.

Man and His Geographical Environment. On account of his intellectual superiority civilized man dominates lower animals and lower races of men and is able greatly to modify the physical

conditions amid which he lives. Lower animals and savages do little more than passively accept the conditions in which they find themselves, getting a living and a degree of comfort out of the natural world about them, but doing practically nothing to improve their own condition. Civilized man seeks constantly to utilize the resources and forces of nature in ways that will advance his own well being. As man rises in the scale of civilization his wants increase, and he applies himself to such industries as he thinks will satisfy these increasing wants. But, while man may cultivate, and improve, and manufacture, he cannot create the elements of his own physical world. These he must take as he finds them and turn them to his use, improving and adapting them wherever he can. He must accept the hills and mountains, rivers and lakes, climate and soil, minerals and forests, as he finds them in nature, and then turn them to his advantage if he can. He may develop industries, but those industries will be closely shaped by the physical conditions and natural resources which already exist.

The Aim of Applied Geography. Applied Geography seeks to explain how the people of a region utilize the resources of the region, what industries they develop, where and why they build cities and establish routes of communication. One man may cultivate the soil, another catch fish, or mine coal, or cut timber, or follow any one of many occupations. Yet he cannot successfully cultivate the soil unless the soil and climate are favorable to agriculture; he cannot mine coal unless nature has placed it there; he cannot catch fish in the desert or cut timber on the prairie.

Two Other Factors in Geography. But there are two other very important factors besides the nature-made ones which enter into the making of the applied geography of the region.

The Race Factor. We may anticipate some matters which are to follow and use the Fox River Valley to illustrate our point. During the last 300 years, three quite different types of people have lived in the Valley,—the Indians, the French, and the Americans. During the Indian, French, and early American occupation, the natural resources, the topography and the climate of the Valley were about the same, yet the life and industries of the Valley differed widely from period to period. The Indians—prior to the white man's coming—did little more than eke out an existence while they fought the tribes around them. They moved about, lived in wigwams, dressed in skins, followed the chase, raised a little corn, but carried on only the most primitive indus-

tries. Had they been unmolested down to the present they would still be doing the same. In the 17th and 18th centuries the French came; not mainly the French directly from Europe, but Canadian French from the St. Lawrence Valley, often mixed with Indian blood. As a class, they were roving, light hearted, pleasure-loving sons of the forest. They did not settle upon the land and cultivate it, but preferred the hunt, the fur trade and the free life of adventure. Had Wisconsin and the rest of the Northwest been left wholly to these people and to the Indians with whom they so easily mingled, the country would have been long retarded in its development. In the second quarter of the last century a third class of people came into the Valley; they came from New England and New York and from the agricultural lands of Europe. They loved settled homes, loved the land, loved order and education, had mechanical and business genius, and found little in common with either Indians or adventure-loving French. The French period, a century and a half in length, was a fur-trading period and little else. The American period quickly became a period of agriculture, of lumbering, of roads, railroads, and manufacturing. Neither Indians nor French used the Valley as the Americans used it. This illustrates the second point in the discussion, namely, the importance of the human factor, the race-factor, in determining what use is made of a region and its resources. The physical geography was substantially the same in all of the three periods of occupation of the Fox River Valley, but not so with the applied geography.

The Stage of Development. A third point requires emphasis. As we called the second point the human, or race, factor, so we may call the third the *time factor* or the *stage*.

With the progress of time, the applied geography of a region does not remain the same even though the physical factors and the race factor do. As time goes on, exhaustible resources like the forests may be used up, new resources may be discovered, better means of communication are effected, population increases, cities spring up, and the entire industrial life of the region changes. The story of the Fox River Valley will amply illustrate this. Thus, there are three primary considerations in the geography of any region:

- (1) the region as nature made it;
- (2) the kind of people who inhabit it;
- (3) the stage of development which the region has reached.