

dynamic systems of high complexity is present in units of extremely small dimensions.

In the present state of our knowledge, the intrinsic properties of 'living' matter are as mysterious and as fundamental as those of an inanimate atom or electron, and it seems more logical to accept these properties as fundamental concepts than to assume prematurely that they can be defined in terms of purely physical laws. Certain properties are common to matter in the living and in the non-living state, and the study of these properties has led to a much deeper understanding of many of the activities of living cells or animals. The intrinsic potentiality of living matter has, however, no physical parallel, and for its study biology must be the mistress and not the servant of the physical sciences; she must make her own foundations and not attempt to force the wine of life into bottles designed for use in the simpler fields of chemical science.

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GEOGRAPHY

LORD MESTON in his presidential address to Section E (Geography), entitled "Geography as Mental Equipment", dwells on the cultural side of geography. While geography is a synthetic science, a function of a number of sciences, it is not imperative that the ordinary man should be a skilled astronomer, geologist or historian in order that geography should offer him a vast field of intelligent interest.

To many there is a particular attraction in that remote corner of the field where geography stands disclosed as a science, not of immutable, but of changing data, the changes of catastrophes of the past—carrying the fancy back into the Tertiary Age, or to the conditions in which human races were evolved and migrated over the face of the earth. To many lay students of geography the visible and superficial changes, as opposed to the vaster geological movements, in the face of Nature have a particular attraction, involving research in climatology, meteorology, oceanography and so on. Another aspect of geography is that side of it which is concerned with history—political geography. Geography and economics have shaped history, and without some knowledge of them our study of history is liable to be both arid and misleading.

If we turn to physical geography, we are thinking mainly of how the forces of Nature can be observed and calculated in their action upon

the habitable globe, how they make it more or less endurable for human beings. Here a plea is entered for the older exponents of environmental influence, such as Bodin and Buckle, especially for the telling patches of colour in the latter. Is there not wide scope for investigating the part geography plays at first in shaping religions and afterwards in maintaining morals? The contrast between Greece and India is full of suggestion; while in connexion with two other great religions, Judaism and Islam, is it altogether fanciful to surmise that geography has been directly concerned in their development?

Human geography on its material and practical side studies nothing less than the eternal struggle of Nature versus man, as for example the Alpine barrier affected the relations of Italy and Central Europe, and the Appalachian barrier for long determined the range of colonisation in North America. The chief purpose of human geography is to record how these forces are arrayed to-day: what are the natural resources of the country, how are its industries geographically conditioned, what are the conditions of labour and transport.

Geography's relation with economics is as intimate as it is with geology, while in the study of movements of population, changes in industry affecting the employment of labour, and competition for the world's markets, geography may be a useful agency from the point of view of international peace. The whole purport of the address is a plea for greater attention to geography, and a more scientific method of teaching it in our educational system generally and in our elementary and secondary schools particularly.

THE GOLD STANDARD

IN his presidential address to Section F (Economics and Statistics), Prof. J. H. Jones discusses the problem of the gold standard. He points out that the economic conditions under which the post-War gold standard was called upon to work differed materially from those which had enabled the pre-War standard to enjoy so large a measure of success, that it was taken for granted as an integral part of the modern economic system.

First, the pre-War standard was of slow growth and the economic conditions of each country were adapted to its requirements. The wage, cost and