

receive their chief supplies of water from the Alps, on account of the heavy rainfall and snowfall of that area. Since the snow on the mountains melts during the summer, these rivers are enabled to maintain their flow, and do not dry up to the extent that would otherwise be the case. A large proportion of the rivers of Europe are, in fact, well suited for navigation, having slow, steady courses, and being subject neither to extreme floods nor droughts; while the value of many has been enhanced by artificial deepening, and by their interconnection by canals.

River valleys, as well as rivers, often aid commerce, since they form natural routes which in many cases can be easily followed by roads and railways. On the whole, the most important river in Europe is the Rhine, since it affords a route through the central plateaus to the heart of the continent. The Danube is also very valuable, since it defines a great route to this point from the east; while the Adige and the tributaries of the Po form valley routes across the Alps, both to the Rhine and to the Danube, thus linking together the north-western, south-eastern, and Mediterranean regions. The Adige is only separated from the Inn tributary of the Danube by the low Brenner Pass; and the road following these valleys and crossing this pass has been a great highway across the middle of Alpineland of commercial and strategic importance since earliest historic times. From the Danube there are fairly easy routes, not only over to the Rhine Valley, but also to the Elbe, and to the Oder by way of the March tributary of the Danube—all of which routes were much frequented in the past, and are now followed by railways.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. On what conditions will the value of a river to man depend? Give examples of cases where rivers which are not navigable are yet of great use to man, and others where rivers which are navigable have but a slight value.
2. Why is it advantageous for a river to flow through a lake? Give instances where this occurs in the case of European rivers. Is it a condition which is likely to remain permanent?
3. Compare the size of the area drained by rivers to the Baltic (1) with that drained to the Mediterranean Sea, (2) with that drained to the Black Sea.
4. What is peculiar with regard to the water in nearly all lakes which have no exit to the sea? Give examples of such lakes from the Mediterranean region.
5. Compare the suitability of a river and of a water-parting to form a political frontier. To what extent do either form the frontiers of countries in Europe?
6. What are the advantages or disadvantages to a country of being situated at the mouth of a river which brings down a large quantity of silt?