MOST descriptions of land surfaces are qualitative. Geographers and geologists have been adept in describing how and why land surfaces differ in their physiognomy, but not in stating to what degree they differ. The need for more precise, or quantitative, descriptions is evident when closely related, or very similar land types are compared, and when land types are being evaluated for some particular use as, for example, a type of farming.

As a consequence of reflections such as the foregoing, and as an attempt to supply a need for quantitative comparisons in connection with recent research in the differentiation of natural land types and in the evaluation of kinds of land in relation to agricultural use, the author has devised a scheme for the graphic comparison of slopes and has developed some additional ideas for comparing land on the basis of the number and areal extent of significant land components.

The scheme for the graphic comparison of topographic components is based upon the premise that any given area of natural land surface has inequalities. There is no part of the earth's land surface that is absolutely flat or entirely devoid of relief. Local differences in elevation may be only a few feet, or at the other extreme, the relief features may be of mountainous magnitude, but in either case the surface area of any tract of land is composed of three parts, viz., (1) the highland, relatively level, as the top of a knoll, the crest of a ridge, the table land of a high plateau; (2) the lowland, as a valley bottom, a basin, a gentle swale or any other kind of depression; and (3) the slopes connecting 1 and 2. The respective percentages of these three components constitute criteria for the evaluation of land; and further, the expression of these components in some quantitative way may be very useful in purely academic comparisons of separate physiographic divisions. The slope component may be subdivided into classes on the basis of range in gradient and the percentage of

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