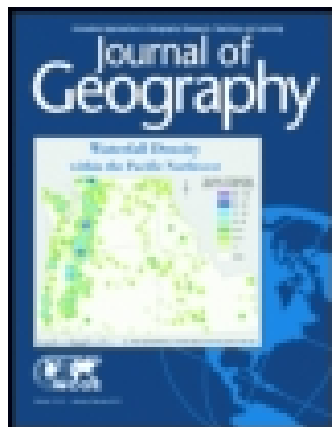


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GEOGRAPHY MADE REAL BY FIELD STUDY*

By JENNIE HALL

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BEFORE discussing any form of teaching, we must first answer the question,—Why do we teach? To introduce and acquaint the child with that great heritage that civilization constantly leaves behind in the way of interpretation and application of Nature's few great but simple laws. Our task is a huge one, especially when we consider that all this realm of knowledge must flow into the human mind from or by means of experience only.

We talk of laboratory work, field work, text-book work, etc., as though they were things apart and separate. Not so,—all real teaching is laboratory or field teaching, if laboratory or field work means actual contact with the thing or principle studied, and no true teaching can be other than laboratory or field. It is contact study, contact of mind with matter or principle that governs matter and without this contact the mind can not grow. This law is as certain and definite as the law of gravitation.

If I teach within the four walls of a room and bring into that room every possible illustration of the subject being taught, explain, talk, study, apply those illustrations with my pupils until they become a part of each one's mind, the science teacher will say—"that is laboratory work;" the psychologist or training teacher will say—"that is supervised study or socialized study or humanized study," and I am privileged to call it field study, for what does it matter whether I take my class into the field, or bring the field to my class, if one is more convenient than the other, as it often is? I should like in this paper to discuss field work in this great, broad way for I do insist that it is all the same, but my time is too short to do justice to the complete subject so I shall include only that part of the work done outside our school room.

Then, first, why take the child out? We constantly hear that the interest in science in the High School is decreasing. Physical Geography is on the wane; we must admit that it is not the fault of geography, but of its presentation. I am confident that so long as there are boys and girls, there will be interest in any and every subject that is made interesting. It is not the subject matter, nor the text-book, nor the boy or girl that makes the interest, but it is

* A paper read before the Geography section of the Wisconsin State Teachers' Association, Milwaukee, November, 1917.

the teacher. It is the question of who is master—subject, book, boy, or teacher.

We, as teachers, must recognize the fact that the normal boy and girl is verifying the law of variation—that the youth of today is not like the youth of yesterday; whether better or worse matters not. If our normal subject of instruction is changing, our method must change and change at an equal rate. It is not easy to change a method; it takes more time, brain and nerve energy, but reason demands the change. Our normal boy today is of several types, unfortunately all in the same school group—the pampered child of overfond and unwise parents, expecting amusement and coddling, good marks and little work; the carefully guided child of other fond and wise parents, full of information resulting from much reading and seeing, always ready to advance and learn; the unguided child without initiative, using memory, with good and bad results; the unguided child, with initiative familiar with all the town, shop and street can offer. These and still other types—boys and girls—are congregated into a group because they accidentally have advanced at the same rate in our public schools, and are called a class and given us to teach.

It does not take a psychologist to know that something is wrong, but all that matters not. While the psychologist is learning to regroup and resolve our problem, we have the group to teach. At present the problem is ours. We must get results, without friction. How?

One of the greatest hindrances to results is the habit of memorizing, learning what the book says, reading only lines, not between the lines. The page of the book makes no impression on the brain, a definition is only words. The normal boy glances at the lesson telescopically and then kills time. The normal girl either does nothing or reads microscopically, focusing only on the printed words, and recites phonographically. But if interest in the subject matter is first awakened by experiment or observation or illustration, then the book used, interest, thought controls, not memory. Impressions are the result, not mere tracteries.

I would divide field work into problem and illustrative. A concrete example will best illustrate what is meant by problem work. For instance, before studying stream formation, I would take a group through a small stream bed, looking for the work of the water, using no names, but noticing where the pebbles and sand were deposited, where banks were cut, small rapids, falls, curves, etc., questioning as to reasons. Then I would give this group the test, asking them to find descriptions corresponding to what they had seen, and reasons for the same. Immediately the

text becomes a puzzle; every illustration is studied with interest and even the diagrams and graphs mean something. This book study I would follow with a second field trip to the same or new fields for verification and identification of name and formation. Practically all of Physical Geography can be studied in this manner.

I would include under illustrative work the visiting of factories, business firms, quarries, etc. Much of Commercial and Industrial Geography can be done in this way.

In the problem work, the small towns have a decided advantage for there man has not meddled with nature, and it is but a short distance to fields rich in material. On the other hand, the cities offer many times the opportunities for illustrative work.

Numerous questions naturally come to the teacher regarding field work, such as—When can we do it? How find time for it? What about discipline? All of these are serious questions requiring much judgment, wisdom, tact and planning, for if not wisely answered in the teacher's mind before attempting the work, failure is apt to result.

The ideal time, of course, is within school hours, though this is not always possible for the time is too limited. If the program can be so arranged as to give the last two periods of the day to the work, it is ideal. I have found little trouble in getting the pupils to do the work after school when necessary. In such an event equivalent time was given them from recitation or laboratory periods. When the pupil for any reason feels that he can not go out of school time, I have been in the habit of assigning him so-called equivalent reading to report on. Usually such pupils have found a way to join the class, often at the last moment.

The argument might occur to some that this sort of work takes more time, and that already too much is required in a given time. To such I would say that it has been my experience that the interest is so much greater, the impressions so much stronger and the knowledge so much more certain that time is saved rather than lost.

Regarding discipline:—In field work, as well as class room and laboratory work, interest takes care of discipline; it is the idle, uninterested boy who becomes a nuisance; so in field work the secret of discipline is plenty of work. The teacher should know her field absolutely and the route to the field should be very definite. An excellent opportunity is given for a good lesson in civics in connection with field trips—teaching the pupils the rights of property owners and the function of the school as well as the debt of the pupil to the state. A very definite outline of the

study expected, should be given to the pupils and a very thorough recitation with possibly a written exercise should follow. Care must be taken not to include too much in one trip, but to get the little very thoroughly. The groups should be small enough to be able to gather about the teacher and hear all that is said. A larger group becomes uncontrollable. I have found that the discipline is easier and the interest greater in segregated classes, —boys, as a rule, are not interested in the same subjects that girls are, and their interest in the same subjects differ. The boy becomes restless through the necessarily long explanations that have to be made to girls.

It has been my custom to allow entire freedom on the outgoing trip to the field of study, requiring only that the group keep together near me, ready to stop and listen at a signal. When the field of study has been reached, I require the conversation to be strictly relative to the subject; note-books are taken out and outlines followed. At a signal from me, pupils gather for any remarks or directions or explanations I may wish to make. I then hold myself ready to answer their questions or guide their study. The lesson over, if out of school hours, I dismiss the class, letting each go home his own way.

In visiting factories, etc., I have found it best to go over the ground first, making arrangements and letting those who are to show the class about know what I most want the boys and girls to know and see. I have found business men more than ready and glad to give time and attention to this work.

What does field study do for the pupil? It does all that we most want to do, induces responsibility; for each one must solve his own problems and control himself throughout the trip; reliability, for he finds that he can solve his problems, and he becomes more reliant and self-respecting; individuality and originality, for the work is independent; moreover it gives a greater opportunity for real contact between teacher and pupil which reacts upon both, if the teacher is a true teacher.

It has been my experience that even the most troublesome children become less troublesome after such a trip, that classroom attitude and spirit are improved, that interest is stimulated, that teaching becomes more of a pleasure. In short, I am confident that no substitute for actual field study can bring the results that field study brings.

Possibly a part of the benefit comes from the contact with God's wonderful sunshine. Maybe the inoculation of our souls with that sunshine renews something within us. Often, when out on these trips, ideas such as these run through my head:

Build ye a city oh men,
Build ye a city fair,
But forget ye not, the soul must live,
And keep for us, here and there,
A plot of grass, a towering tree
Where over our heads, we, skies may see
And silvery stars on high.
Build ye a city oh men,
Build ye a city fair,
Our bodies needs must live by bread
But keep for us, here and there,
The good brown earth—the boundless sky—
Lest our souls ahungred, grow faint and die
Mid thy towering city fair.
Build ye a city oh men,
Build ye a city fair,
Build Gothic arch and marble hall,
But keep for us, here and there,
A plot of green, a waving tree,
Where, in times of stress, our souls may see
The light, for thy city fair.

SOME RESULTS OF THE LOCATION OF AUSTRALIA

By STEPHEN S. VISHER

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THE location of Australia has largely determined its climate, has greatly affected its commerce, and has had a powerful influence on the character of its biota and population.

Effect of Latitude. The location of "The Island Continent" in latitude, mostly between the 15th and 30th parallels of south latitude and nearly bisected by the Southern Tropic, puts most of the area in the Trade Wind Belt. Since Trade Winds blow towards the Equator, from the south-east in the southern hemisphere, and hence into warmer and warmer latitudes, they are able to hold more and more moisture as they advance, and therefore normally are drying winds. Only where they are cooled by rising do they drop much moisture.

With the seasonal shift in latitude of the wind belts, the southern tips of Australia are reached by the Westerly Winds in "winter" (June-August), and are watered by them. These areas resemble Southern California in climate. Northern Australia is