

will give a real basis for the study of geometry.

Short cuts and tricks and time-savers in both algebra and geometry are plentiful, and should be searched out and used by the teacher.

HENRY A. CONVERSE

## A GEOGRAPHIC PERSONALITY

*The geographer believes that places teem with life that gives them local color and individuality. Recognizing geographic personality has a legitimate place in the classroom.*

**P**RACTICALLY all cultural items with which the study of geography is concerned may be spoken of as having geographic personality. A written geographic personality statement is a brief description that gives the outstanding relationships between man and his environment. It includes the unit understandings that are organized around a definite core of thought. These show ways in which the human pattern is related to the natural. In such statements detailed items and minor geographic relationships are omitted, while certain elements in the personality are brought out rather sharply. For example, in the study of Alaska its relative emptiness is pointed out, an attempt being made to account for it; in the study of Denmark a big thing is made of the ability of a dense population, through its inclination to cooperate, to make a living on a relatively lean land; and in a study of a tropical forest area—the Congo, the string of settlements along the river is noted with interest.

The psychologist might well object to the nomenclature "geographic personality" as applied to an inanimate body of material. The geographer believes, however, that certain places are not necessarily spiritless but that they are teeming with life that gives them local color and individuality. The

term *personality* as applied to a human being is a thing that is difficult to define, but it is generally conceded as that something which identifies the individual, or that which makes him a being—a person apart from a thing abstract. In written form a personality statement would again include the distinctive thing that bobs up persistently—that which gives character to the being and helps to make him an individual in himself. Hence, a geographic personality must also include the outstanding geographic characteristics of a given product, industry, city, country, or group of countries. It has its place in the classroom, especially when it is utilized in summarizing or in testing exercises. The geographic personality that follows brings out the characteristics of a Western Hemisphere area. It summarizes the outstanding relationships in a given unit. Since many enjoy an element of chance, the following personality sketch is written in the form of a conundrum. Read it to the pupils and ask them to guess the answer or have them read it carefully and write the answer at the end of the paragraph.

This so-called land bridge is in reality made up of a number of separate countries, each facing the ocean. Population concentration is chiefly in the valleys among volcanic mountains. These centers of population are more or less independent of each other, and are separated by broad stretches of unproductive country, inadequately served by transportation facilities. Traffic moves from these isolated population groups to and from the coast, and exchange is made with foreign powers rather than with members within the area. Land usage by people, indisposed to labor, is characterized by a primitive type of subsistence agriculture, by the growing of coffee on the higher slopes, and by the capitalistic production of tropical fruits on the low trade-wind coasts. Exploitation of the forests, grazing of cattle, as well as mining, fit into the oc-

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Anna Wise Homes, '12, is living in Bowling Green, Va. She has two daughters and plans to send them to H. T. C. as soon as they are ready for college.

Anne Gilliam, '23, is teaching in Baltimore.

Ruth Nickell Evans, '27, is living in New York City. She is teaching just outside the city.

Elizabeth Greaves Page, '16, is living at Coke, Gloucester County, Va.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Miller Jett (Frances Cabell, '28), of Nineveh, Va., announce the arrival of their second son, Robert Miller Jett, on February 25, 1934.

## A GEOGRAPHIC PERSONALITY

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cupational pattern. Exportation of raw materials is contrasted to the importation of manufactured products—foodstuffs, textiles, and machinery.

The adult guesses at once that this land bridge in the Western Hemisphere is none other than Central America. Should the pupils encounter difficulty in selecting the correct answer, the teacher might well ask questions and add comments that would aid in the solution. For example: "What group of countries in the Americas might well be spoken of as a land bridge? Does the distribution of the population agree with that of the country or countries you mentioned? A number of countries that you have studied were inadequately served by means for transporting products. Just what area does the transportation pattern fit? In what section were the people engaged as they are in the preceding paragraph? Notice what these people have to sell. Consider also what they bring into their country. Products entering into the trade groups of the several countries might well be listed. Which did the writer have in mind in this description?"

ANNE M. GOEBEL

## IN SUCH A WAY!

The trouble never has been and never will be that schools teach too much Latin and Greek, but that they teach them in such a way that a boy's mind automatically closes as soon as the classics are mentioned. Instead of considering them the threshold to every intellectual adventure, he regards them as a barren discipline that has unfortunately survived from the Middle Ages.—ARNOLD WHITRIDGE.

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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