An introduction to physical geography

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TWENTIETH CENTURY TEXT-BOOKS

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The Grand Canyon of the Colorado River.
The cliffs and terraces above are carved from strata, hard and soft. The depths of the gorge are in granite. See page 71.
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AN INTRODUCTION TO
PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

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PREFACE

The authors have striven to adapt this book to the earlier stages of the high-school course. To this end the statements are simple, technical terms are sparingly used, and when employed they are promptly defined. Thus approached, Physical Geography may well serve to introduce young students to the spirit and method of science. The aim of the volume as thus set forth will explain the omission of a few of the more difficult conceptions of land physiography which appear in some school texts.

The treatment, so far as possible, is concrete. Wherever practicable, each subject is opened with a type case, in the description of which the terminology is called forth and the principles begin to appear. Other examples follow, with a systematic statement of principles, and the principles are further illustrated by application. This is believed to be in the line of good teaching, and is a method to which our subject lends itself with special effectiveness.

While the principles of Physical Geography belong to the earth as a whole, and type cases are cited from all regions, the greater emphasis is put on our continent. A separate chapter on North America would pass our limit of space, but when the entire text has been read, all the greater features of the continent will have received attention.

The average judgment of teachers has been sought in apportioning the space to the several greater departments of the subject. Nearly one-half is given to the lands. The relation of organisms to the earth is introduced wherever appropriate, and the two closing chapters add further illustrations, and treat the principles in a systematic way.
The order of topics has been adopted after deliberate consideration. The study of the lands is brought in early, in the belief that here is the sure appeal to the students' interest and previous knowledge. Alike for their familiarity, variety, and dynamic interest, the stream and its valley come first. This order is also conveniently adjusted to the school year; field excursions, associated with the study of lands, can begin in the autumn, and map study and other laboratory exercises can be carried on during the winter, as may be desired. The atmosphere will be reached during the cold season, which, however, is as favorable as any other for practical exercises in this subject. The ocean is put late, because it is remote from most schools, and has not been seen by the majority of young students. It is plain that shore-lines should follow both land and sea, and that the formal treatment of life should be at the end.

The illustrations are closely correlated with the text, and their titles are accompanied by supplementary explanations. Many cross-references are given, especially where one figure shows features described in different chapters.

The teachers' pamphlet which accompanies this volume contains suggestions for teaching the several chapters, with bibliography, lists of practical exercises, and further elucidation of certain points in the text.

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The Authors.