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Teaching the History of Science

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SCIENCE BULLETIN

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TEACHING THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

We are living in a scientific age. Science has contributed more to our comfort, well being, and happiness than any other branch of knowledge. The other branches of knowledge are now taking the scientific method for the solving of their problems. Is it not important that science teachers should find some place in their teaching to teach some of the history of the development of science? An excellent method of doing this is through the study of the lives of our great scientists. It seems that the lives of politicians and soldiers are often emphasized much more than are the lives of such men as Pasteur, Darwin, Newton, or Faraday. Might not the study of the lives of our great scientists rather than that of our great soldiers contribute towards the abolishment of wars. Let us idealize the work of these great benefactors of mankind rather than that of the warriors of history. The lives of our great scientists are often dramatic and illustrate the highest type of devotion and sacrifice for the good of mankind. It takes more real courage for a Lazzar and a Noguchi to sacrifice their lives in the conquest of yellow fever than it does to lead an army into battle. Sir William Osler says of Pasteur,—“To no other man has it ever been given to accomplish work of such importance for the well being of humanity”. It has been said of Lister that he by the application of the principles of bacteriology to surgery is responsible for the saving of the lives of more men than have ever been killed in battle. Darwin by his work changed the thinking of a whole world and we came to realize that we are living in a dynamic and not in a static world. The lives of these great scientists are intensely interesting and the stories of the discoveries of

science will appeal to high school boys and girls. Why not teach more of the history of science?

WINTER BIRD STUDY

What birds are to be found in your vicinity during the winter months? We would like to have observers from different parts of Iowa report to us a list of the winter birds they find, giving us the date of observation and the locality. We will be glad to publish your reports. If we can get reports from all parts of the state, we will have a valuable record. Make sure that your determinations are accurate and make the list as complete as possible. Our suggestion would be that you definitely plan two or three field trips for a bird survey. You may be surprised at the number of birds that are to be found in your vicinity. The success of this project will depend upon you. Let us have your reports.

By the way, why not introduce some winter bird study into your biology course? Field study does not need to cease during the winter. Nature has much of interest during the winter months. Why not have a feeding station? You may be surprised at the interest that this will create in birds.

EXHIBITS AS AN AID IN TEACHING

Complaint is often made that science subjects are difficult to teach. Many feel they are so abstract that there is nothing tangible with which to start. Since most of our industrial products are now very closely controlled by physical principles and chemical processes, it ought not to be difficult in the study of these subjects to arouse interest by calling attention to their uses in the industrial process.

Many of our manufacturing concerns being anxious to bring their products to public attention have prepared exhibits of their finished products and some have exhibits showing the steps in the processes of preparation. The last feature is splendidly illustrated in the construction of the modern light bulb. To look at a finished bulb one would get but little idea of the process of