

**VOCATIONAL  
PREPARATION OF YOUTH  
IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

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Vocational Preparation of Youth in Catholic Schools by Mary Jeanette

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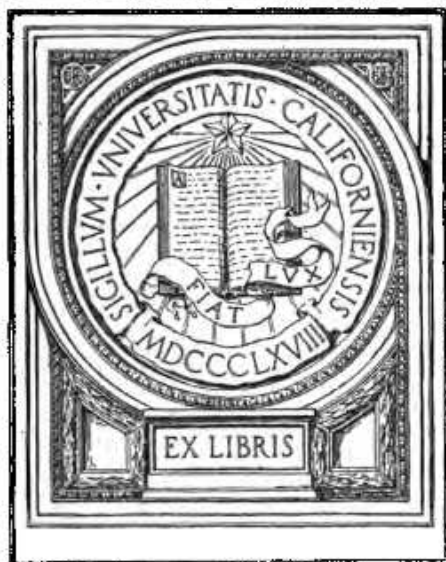
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**MARY JEANETTE**

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# Vocational Preparation of Youth in Catholic Schools

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BY

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## A DISSERTATION

*Submitted to the Catholic Sisters College of the Catholic University  
of America in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy*

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

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## PREFACE

The movement towards attaining and improving vocational education in the state schools has made rapid progress in the last two decades. It grew from the conviction that the large majority of pupils received no adequate preparation for their life-work, as only a small percentage availed themselves of the opportunities afforded by secondary schools. The danger to which a large number of these children was exposed after leaving school at an early age, grew to be a menace to individual and industrial development. Many educators sought the remedy for this evil in a radical change of the educational system, and a course of study so arranged as to afford to the pupils a preparation for their career. On the other hand there were those who strenuously opposed this movement because they considered it undemocratic and tending to the formation of a caste system. The attempt to reconcile these two extremes has caused the introduction of vocational education in addition to the usual courses offered by secondary schools, and resulted in the creation of our ever-increasing number of vocational schools.

A study of the history of Monastic schools reveals the fact that these afforded excellent opportunity for vocational training; but their motive and aim in preparing their pupils for life's work was not, like that of our modern state schools, primarily utilitarian. The success achieved in art and industry was due largely to the motivation that inspired the students of Monastic schools to exert all their powers in the realization of their high ideals. The influence of St. Benedict and his followers changed the then prevalent attitude toward labor, invested manual work with the dignity of prayer, and brought untold blessings upon the people.

In the course of time other agencies undertook the vocational training of children and continued to do so until recently. In the last few decades, however, the social environment of the child has undergone a decided change. Again it devolves upon the school to offer to the pupil sensory-motor training in addition to the training of the mind and heart. The same problem that confronts the state schools must also be

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solved by Catholic teachers. The limited resources of the Catholic schools render it more difficult for them to provide industrial training. In the state schools the financial burden is considerably lightened by state and federal aid. However, Catholic educators are anxious to provide our pupils with every advantage that can be secured, and it is their ambition that the pupils attending Catholic schools receive the very best preparation for their future work. It is the purpose of this dissertation to indicate the causes and outline the history of the vocational education and vocational guidance in the state schools; to compare the motives that prompt this movement with the motives that prevailed in the Monastic schools; and to indicate ways and means which are available for the development and guidance of vocation in our Catholic schools.

The term "vocation" has at the present time a variety of meanings. Literally it means a calling, as does the Latin "vocatio" from which it is derived. This meaning is retained in the Catholic Church, where the call to the religious life is designated as a vocation. By modern writers and educators it is used to denote a career, an occupation; and by some authors it has even been restricted to those occupations in which manual and industrial laborers are employed. In its widest sense vocation is a call to the life-work of each individual, whether this be to serve God in religion or in the most humble occupation.

The teaching of the Church, the history of her institutions, the example of the saints, but above all the Christ-Child, are the guides of the Catholic teacher in the sublime work of vocational preparation of youth.

## CHAPTER I

### CAUSES LEADING TO THE INTRODUCTION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE STATE SCHOOLS

The Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia caused American manufacturers to compare our products with those of other countries.<sup>1</sup> This comparison revealed the fact that only the abundant resources which our country commands enable us to compete in the markets of the world with goods produced in Europe. In every instance of successful competition this has been due, not to superior handicraft, but to the abundance of cheap raw material easily obtained in America. Each succeeding year, however, it became more apparent that the supremacy in international trade rests on the basis of manual skill. Schools for art in industry were established soon after the above-mentioned exposition, and a decade later manual training schools came into existence in manufacturing cities. Though an improvement on the system then prevailing, these were unsatisfactory in regard to the purpose for which they had been planned because what was taught in the manual training school was not sufficiently related to the specific occupation in which the child would later be engaged. Here we find the first incentive to vocational training in the state school system of our country; it was the need of better trained workers that suggested the schools as a means to supply the required skill.

Meanwhile the complaints about the school system increased in number and intensity. Employers claimed that pupils coming from the schools lacked initiative, intellectual capacity, and habits of order and promptness—qualifications which are necessary for success in their work. A similar complaint came from the higher institutions of learning, the universities and colleges. Parents complained, saying that even if they were willing to make sacrifices so as to afford the children a prolonged term of training and education, it did not secure for the children any advantage in their future career, but on the contrary, often served to "train them away from the forge and the shop."

<sup>1</sup>Bulletin, 1916, No. 21.—*Vocational Secondary Education*, Washington, D. C., p. 10.