

# VOCATIONAL AND MORAL GUIDANCE

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TO  
THE BOYS AND GIRLS  
WHOSE LIFE PROBLEMS ARE THE SOURCE  
OF THIS BOOK

## PREFACE

This manual of vocational and moral guidance is prepared in response to a demand for more detailed information regarding the work that was originated by the writer in the Central High School of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The bibliography appended has been compiled with the assistance of the Grand Rapids Public Library. Mr. Samuel H. Ranck, librarian, has placed every privilege at the disposal of the writer and has coöperated in the preparation of the lists. This bibliography is not exhaustive. The lists that have appeared in earlier bulletins have been thoroughly tried out. Books that did not prove valuable in the hands of the pupils or the teachers have been discarded. The attempt has been made to select a few books that were adapted to the pupils of the several grades, and that were most suited to the purpose of the work in hand. As new books are constantly appearing along the lines studied, teachers and counselors should be on the lookout for up-to-date material in this rather new field.

Practically no references have been made to periodical literature, for it seemed impracticable to attempt a bibliography of this type. It should be noted, however, that vocational and moral topics are receiving more and more attention in the current magazines. Professional and business journals, too, representing a great variety of vocations, contain from time to time articles of value to the student

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interested in some particular vocation. All this material should be used a great deal by both teachers and pupils.

Realizing the fact that many localities are ready to begin work in vocational guidance, but are not familiar with the details of getting the work under way, a collection of blank forms, outlines, and reports has been added to show how others have attacked the problem. For these the author is indebted to the workers who have so readily contributed their material for this purpose.

An expression of sincere appreciation is due to the teachers of English in the Grand Rapids Central High School who have taken up the work of experimentation so sympathetically and so loyally, and whose suggestions have proved so valuable in completing the scheme outlined in these pages. Special credit is due to the work of one of these teachers, Miss Nellie M. Hayes, who has been of great assistance in preparing the manuscript of this book.

The movement for vocational guidance is now in its beginning. Each worker is attacking the problem from his own point of view. In fact, not all have yet agreed upon a definition of the term "vocational guidance." In preparing this manual the writer realizes that much of the work suggested is still in the experimental stage, and that his own ideas are in a process of constant transformation. These pages have been written solely with the idea that the suggestions made may be of help in starting others in the field of investigation and experiment, and with the hope that the ideals set forth may prove to be an inspiration to all readers who may be interested in the vocational and moral guidance of youth.

J. B. D.

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## PART ONE

### VOCATIONAL AND MORAL GUIDANCE THROUGH EDUCATION





## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes. — DISRAELI

Why do from fifty to seventy-five per cent of the pupils who enter the high school leave before graduation? Why do fifty per cent of those who finish the eighth grade or meet the requirements of compulsory education never enter the high school? What are the causes of failure to do passing work in the high school? What causes underlie certain conditions made evident in student life by the kind of outlawry and disorder that indicates a lack of loyalty to the school and an antagonism toward authority? These are questions that educators have been asking and discussing for many years. Some will answer that the school does not offer what certain pupils need and, therefore, that they either leave or remain a restless and disturbing factor in the school. This is undoubtedly true as far as it goes, but it does not tell the whole story. The introduction of vocational courses in the high school and the establishment of industrial and trade schools will hold many of those pupils who have heretofore dropped out, and will keep their interest for a time. However, a little deeper study into the answer to these questions will show that the foundation of the difficulty lies in the problem of getting the pupil into

the right school, starting him in the right course of study, and giving him an aim that will hold his interest.

In spite of the fact that so large a percentage of our pupils do not enter the high school and that so many drop out before graduation, high schools are universally crowded, and but few cities have been able to erect buildings fast enough to meet the demand for secondary education. This increasing desire for training beyond that of the grammar school is introducing new problems into the field of secondary education. The high school of to-day is a very different institution from that of ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago. The course of study has been revolutionized. Teachers of long experience claim that they cannot maintain the high standards of scholarship that they formerly held. The very composition of the school itself has undergone a great change, and in this fact lies the basis of our difficulty. The high school was originally a preparatory school for college or university. Then, the pupils who attended were from the well-to-do families and were looking forward to the learned professions. To-day, the pupils are from all manner of homes and represent every nationality; they are of varying types of mentality and are destined to follow widely differing walks in life. The great problem of the cosmopolitan high school or of secondary education in general is to assimilate this great mass of students who are sent on every six months to be prepared, not necessarily for the college or the university, but for the work-a-day world as well. This means, again, the problem of adjusting the individual pupil to the right school, the right course of study, and the right aim in life, according to his peculiar qualities and abilities.

## INTRODUCTORY

The great demand for vocational guidance has arisen from the evidence of so great a number of misfits in life. Vocation bureaus are doing a noble work in helping these poor unfortunates to adjust themselves and to start over again in a more fitting vocation. How much more worthy the demand to prevent the existence of these misfits ! Undoubtedly the public schools are guilty of causing many of these unhappy failures in life. The transformation that is at present taking place in our educational system is big with possibility for the future generations, but we must remember that the changes are being made in the interest, not of industry, nor of commerce, nor of professional careers, but in the interest of the individual child, that he may become a self-supporting, contented worker, successful according to his ability, and useful as a loyal citizen in his community.

It is with this great transformation in our public school system in mind that the plan of vocational and moral guidance outlined in this volume is set forth. If by means of the suggestions made, some lives may be led into right paths ; if the methods of the schools may be made to savor less of the middle ages and more of modern life ; and, if the revolution that is bound to come in our system of education may be brought about without upheaval, this volume will have performed its mission.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PROBLEM OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The true teacher finds his crowning opportunity in revealing to his students some appealing career and compelling purpose which shall be to them what teaching is to him. — ANON.

Much of the failure and disappointment in life and possibly much of the crime that abounds may be attributed to the fact that so large a proportion of our youth go out from our public schools imperfectly prepared to meet the demands of the world in which they find themselves compelled to make some kind of a living. Accepting as sufficient for all purposes the elementary training that the law may force upon them, a vast army of children, several million strong, drop out from our public schools every year to enter the fields of unskilled labor. Drifting about from one occupation to another, they seem to mix themselves up about as unsatisfactorily as if some superhuman power had shaken them up in a mighty deal box and had thrown them in every direction. All about us we find men struggling along in occupations for which they have no liking or fitness. A mechanical genius is wasting his time at the law, and many a physician would have made a better farmer. The unskilled laborer is chafing at his task and rarely can see that his real need is the education that will lift him out of his thralldom. That the world is filled with

men and women who have not found their proper places in life, who have not risen to the highest that their abilities demanded, who have not made use of the power for service that it was their privilege to seize, is a self-evident truth. Thoughtful people are seeing that our public school system, as efficient as it may be to-day, is under some obligation to this vast throng of unfortunates, who may be considered, in part at least, as victims of its neglect.

The fact that the public schools have failed to meet the needs of the masses is a result of antecedent conditions from which the secondary schools have been slow to free themselves. Higher education in this country was founded for the ministry and slowly broadened out to include the other learned professions. The academies and high schools were expected to prepare students for the universities. Only in comparatively recent years have the universities extended their courses to include engineering and other special departments, and, even with the opening of these wider fields of opportunity, they have allowed the entrance requirements to remain dominated by the traditional academic curriculum. As a result, the high school course of study is still under this powerful influence, and much of its work is preparatory for professional rather than for industrial or commercial life.

The wave that is now sweeping over the country for more of the practical in education is forcing upon the high school a very difficult situation. While the large high school of the city is attempting to meet this demand, it must be remembered that the present excellence of the high school curriculum is due to that very dominance of the college that it is now attempting to throw off. Whatever the changes

that may be made, each *new* subject must meet a standard of educational value that is the equal of any part of the present curriculum. When this has been accomplished, and not until then, should the high school demand that the college accept these new courses as a preparation for entrance.

But what about the high school as a preparation for entrance into the great university of the world's activities? Modern business has developed most wonderfully along all lines during the past decade and is now demanding trained men with no less preparation for their life work than that of professional men. Business methods have been reduced to a science, experts are required for all lines of progress, and efficiency has become the key word to success. Large corporations are looking for young men whose ability and training have given them the power to grow in their work. From the fact that so large a proportion of the graduates of the public schools do not enter professional life or even go to college, but go out into the wide world of business opportunity without chart or compass, we must realize that the traditional curriculum is failing to meet the requirements of modern civilization. In the light of the present demand for efficiency in all undertakings, the by-product or waste of the public schools is sufficient to force them into bankruptcy and to demand the appointment of a receivership. With approximately ninety per cent of those who enter the first grade dropping out before the year of graduation from the high school, there must be some real and practical reason for their deliberate action. While many may leave for causes beyond their control, my observation and investigation show that fully sixty per cent of those who leave the high school do

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so because it does not offer them what, in their opinion and experience, they need for the work that they desire to enter or feel that they are called to do. Not having been given a vocational aim, they drift into the first job that offers, and in the school of "hard knocks" they stand or fall without the aid that the schools should have given them.

The great majority of men now past middle age will testify that they came into their present occupation almost entirely by chance. Very few can say that they had a definite ambition and planned to reach a certain goal. The history of most men is one of drifting — drifting through school as far as they went, drifting into the first occupation that seemed to offer immediate returns, drifting from one thing to another until some fortune, good or bad, fixed them at one occupation for the remainder of their years. Those who succeeded to a comfortable position in life did so largely as a result of moral character rather than of training — as a result of favorable influence and opportunity rather than of schooling. Those who are living unhappy lives of discouragement and failure were possibly lacking in moral qualities and may not have had an equal opportunity. The fact remains that in the lives of most men there has been a great loss of time and energy in the search for their place in the world's work. The main cause for this great economic loss may be laid at the door of our public schools. We have failed to inspire our youth with the necessity for an aim in life. We have held out the ideal of education as a means to professional careers, and have ignored the fact that the right sort of study in preparation for other careers is just as worthy and just as necessary as for those designated by high-sounding titles.



In response to these demands the curriculum is rapidly undergoing changes that are somewhat revolutionary in character. Colleges and universities are hastening to meet the conditions that secondary schools are placing before them as a righteous demand of the people who support the schools. What the future content of the high school curriculum will be is not yet fully worked out. However, it can be seen that the practical side of life is to have its due consideration. Improved commercial and industrial courses will be evolved, and wider opportunities will be given our boys and girls to choose their training and to prepare for broader fields of service. Yet this will not of itself solve the problem of securing for the individual the particular line of training that may be best for him, for it will be seen at the outset that this very opportunity of immature pupils to make such a choice, brings us face to face with a most serious problem. The so-called "elective" system was the beginning of the movement for pupils to follow what seemed most profitable to them, and the success of this system has often been called in question. However, the old curriculum was so dominated by purely academic subjects that a pupil finding himself on the wrong line of study could change about without very serious loss in his preparation for his future work. But the recent introduction of technical and commercial courses, and in many cities of trade or industrial schools receiving pupils at from fourteen to sixteen years of age, will force many pupils to make a very positive choice of a career very early in life. Having once decided between an academic course, a business, or an industrial course, the pupil will find that they diverge more widely as the work goes on, and that the