

# THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

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THE MEANS AND METHODS OF  
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1920

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## PREFACE

THIS book is written as a companion volume to *Industrial Education — Its Methods, Problems and Dangers*, and *The Means and Methods of Agricultural Education*. Like those books it is addressed to the great army of men and women who are concerned with the education of that large majority of our population which receives its education in the lower schools, and depends upon that education for the development of cultural ideals and vocational aptitudes. It is intended to appeal to students in colleges and normal schools that offer courses in household arts and other vocational courses for women, to school superintendents and principals, to directors of vocational schools, to social workers, to vocational advisers of girls and women, and to the growing number of lay readers who are beginning to study educational problems and affairs.

No attempt has been made to deal with that ever increasing number of professional occupations into which women are now entering, as this branch of the subject is not likely to be neglected, and it is felt that the education of the fourteen to sixteen year old girl is of more vital importance to the nation at large. At this time it is essential that we should not lose sight of the fact that the character of our people will depend even more in the future than it has done in the past upon the education we give to our girls and to our women. Notwithstanding the new avenues of

employment opening up to them in industrial, commercial, and professional life, owing to reorganized schemes of education, lessening opportunities of marriage, and the withdrawal of men from industrial occupations, homemaking is and will become more and more the one industry the character of which will determine the caliber of the nation.

Much has been done towards the vocational education of girls and women both for homemaking and industrial pursuits, but all educational programs have a tendency to become stereotyped, and to fail to respond to changed conditions and new demands. There comes a time when it is wise to take an inventory of what has been accomplished, to make plans for further progress in view of changed conditions, and to consider the obstacles that have to be overcome before that progress can be made. The aim of the book is to do this in the limited though very important field to which it addresses itself.

The primary purpose of this work is not to make original contributions to the subjects discussed, though it is hoped that these are not absent. The purpose has been to present condensed and clear-cut statements of problems, examples of various attempts at their solution, and critical estimates both lay and professional, in as impartial a manner as is possible, of their respective weaknesses and advantages. Little discussion of theory has been attempted. Care has been taken to give the authority for practically every important statement of fact that has been made. Although the book deals mainly with the weaknesses of this branch of our educational system it is confidently hoped that a spirit of optimism pervades the work, an optimism based on the knowledge of progress and achievement in educational affairs, inspiring us to greater efforts in the future.

The book is the result of many years experience in practical work in manual training, household science, and industrial education in general. The author has had particular opportunity to study school conditions at first hand in Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, United States, and in the government service of the Province of Ontario.

I am under special obligations to the authorities whose works I have quoted so freely; to Miss E. King of the Library of the Department of Education, Toronto, whose courtesy, whose knowledge of current educational literature, and whose industry in searching for required material have been of great assistance; to the Bureau of Education, Washington, whose admirable series of bulletins are absolutely indispensable to the student of education; to the authorities of those institutions who have so kindly loaned photographs; and finally to my wife, whose careful criticism, stimulating encouragement, and constant self-denial have rendered this work possible.

ALBERT H. LEAKE.

TORONTO, November 1, 1917.

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# THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- I. A neglected subject.
- II. Homemaking women's greatest industry.
- III. Talent for homemaking.
- IV. Women must work.
- V. Conclusion.

**A neglected subject.** The social, economic, and educational demands of the twentieth century have forced into the realm of practical politics many questions that were previously considered as the fantastic dreams of doctrinaires, theorists, and visionaries. Among such questions two stand out prominently: the position of women and the problem of industrial education. At first sight there seems to be no intimate relationship between these two questions, but on closer examination the connection becomes more apparent, and they really merge into one problem, which may be termed the "woman in industry."

Until recent years the question of women in industry outside the home was not considered worthy of discussion, and any discussion that did take place was directed towards keeping women out of industry rather than towards helping them to work satisfactorily in the occupations in which they were engaged.

One striking feature of the mass of educational literature that has been issued from the press during the last twenty years is the attention that has been given to the question of industrial education. Though its methods are still perhaps chaotic and in a state of flux, its necessity is no longer seriously questioned. In studying this literature one is impressed by the fact that remarkably little attention has been paid to the industrial education of girls and women. One can read thousands of pages without finding a single specific reference to the needs and requirements of the girl. Even in one of the most recent books the following passage occurs: "The discussion deals largely with the work that has been developed for boys. It is believed, however, that the principles apply also to the field of girls' work and it is hoped that this somewhat neglected side may receive some stimulus from this presentation."<sup>1</sup>

The basic principles which apply to the industrial training of boys and men certainly apply to some extent to the training of girls and women, but the points at which their training should be differentiated are so many as to make the training of girls almost a separate problem.

In a recent bulletin it is stated that "in the many reports published in the United States concerning industrial and commercial education in Germany, comparatively little space has been given to continuation schools for girls. This has been due to the relative unimportance of these schools industrially and commercially compared with the schools for boys."<sup>2</sup>

There are several reasons which make it advisable to study

<sup>1</sup> Leavitt and Brown, *Prevocational Education in the Public Schools*.

<sup>2</sup> "Problems of Vocational Education in Germany." United States Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1915, No. 33.

the vocational education of girls and women as though it constituted a problem entirely different and distinct from that of the vocational education of boys and men.

The proportion of women entering industry is constantly growing, and this gives rise to special questions as to the effect of this increasing employment on the conditions of home life and particularly on the rearing of children. The condition of women wage-earners is in many respects less satisfactory than that of men.

Fewer skilled occupations are open to women, and they are entering the low-paid unskilled industries in larger numbers. Those who enter the industries from fourteen to eighteen years of age may marry before they reach the age of twenty-five, and with this possibility before them they look upon their employment as a temporary makeshift and therefore are not anxious to learn their trade properly. As a result of this they are able to command wages which average only about one half those that are paid to men. The legislatures of the various states have long agreed that special legislation is necessary for the protection of working women, and the Supreme Court of the United States has declared that woman's "physical nature and the evil effects of overwork upon her and her future children justify legislation to protect her from the greed as well as the passion of men."

The National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education in 1912 appointed a special secretary for the consideration of women's requirements in the direction of legislation and education. All these facts tend to prove that the vocational education of girls and women needs consideration apart from that of men.

**Reasons for the neglect of the subject.** *Education for girls considered unnecessary.* Until recent years extended