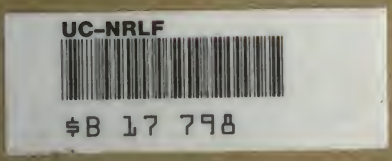

The Rural Problem and the Catholic School

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To

The Rt. Rev. Joseph F. Busch, D. D.

Bishop of St. Cloud

This Monograph is Respectfully Dedicated.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

One of the many serious questions that confront the American people is the Rural Problem. This problem has direct reference to forty-eight per cent of our people and in an indirect way concerns the other fifty-two per cent. Gradually we have become an urban nation, developing urban attitudes and interests and are, therefore, prone to neglect the needs of our rural population.

The exodus of rural people to industrial centers many Sociologists, Economists and Churchmen believe to be detrimental to the common good of the nation. This rural depopulation is one of the factors to be noted in the solution of the Rural Problem but it is not the prime factor. The Rural Problem is rather the development and maintenance on our fertile lands of a permanent, satisfied, agricultural population living in harmony with the best of American ideals. Defined in this manner, the problem presents many viewpoints, the Economic, Social and Educational. In this dissertation, we shall consider the problem from a Catholic educational point of view. We believe that a partial, if not a complete solution of it is to be found in religion, based on the love of God and neighbor. This necessitates a short survey of the country church. Moreover, in the Catholic economy, the Church and the School are intimately connected and one presupposes the other. In the Catholic system of education are found characteristics that are not met with in the State system; these likewise must be noted. Regarding the Catholic rural school proper, after calling attention to the need for it, we shall endeavor to map out its organization and supervision and shall submit for consideration various substitutes now employed. Positing the existence of the school, the position of the teacher, her preparation and qualifications will be discussed. The curriculum also enters into our

general plan and at the conclusion of this study are presented a few examples of Catholic rural educational effort to show what may be accomplished to meet the needs of rural people. The aim in this discussion is to discover a means by which the Rural Problem can be solved from a Catholic educational viewpoint.

CHAPTER I

The Priest in the Rural Parish

One of the outstanding problems in American rural life today is to be found in the decline of the rural church. Surveys conducted in recent years point to this defect as one of the cancers that are eating the vitals out of American public life. Religion must enter into the hearts of the people or evil looms up for the future. It is, indeed, only too true that the country church, both in Catholic and non-Catholic circles, is not fulfilling the mission for which it was intended.

During the last year of President Roosevelt's administration the report of the Commission on Country Life was presented to the American public. [1] In this report emphasis was laid on the necessity of a strong, deep religious spirit that would permeate the entire rural population and create a contented and satisfied state of mind in the farmer. "The forces and institutions that make for morality and spiritual ideals among rural people must be energized. We miss the heart of the problem if we neglect to foster personal character and neighborhood righteousness. The best way to preserve ideals for private conduct is to build up the institutions of Religion. The Church has the greatest power of leadership. The whole people should understand that

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1. The personnel of the Commission on Country Life comprised the following:
Professor H. L. Bailey, New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y., Chairman;
Henry Wallace, *Wallaces' Farmer*: Des Moines, Iowa;
Kenyon L. Butterfield, President Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherest, Mass.;
Gifford Pinchot, U. S. Forest Service, Washington, D. C.
Walter H. Page, of North Carolina, Editor of *The World's Work;*
Charles S. Barret, Union City, Ga.;
William A. Beard, Sacramento, Cal.

it is vitally important to stand behind the rural church and to help it to become a great power in developing country-life ideals. It is especially important that the country church recognize that it has a social responsibility to the entire community as well as a religious responsibility to its own groups of people."[2]

The Commission on Country Life stated expressly that it did not wish or intend to dictate religious policies or to offer advice to religious societies or sects. It stated, however, that "any consideration of the problem of rural life that leaves out of account the function and possibilities of the church, and of related institutions, would be grossly inadequate. This is not only because in the last analysis the country life problem is a moral problem, or that in the best development of the individual the great motives and results are religious and spiritual, but because from the purely sociological point of view the church is fundamentally a necessary institution in country life. . . . The time has arrived when the church must take a larger leadership, both as an institution and through its pastors, in the social reorganization of rural life."[3]

Any attempt to solve the rural problem, whether from a social, economic or political point of view, must of necessity embrace the religious side of life. "Society can be healed in no other way than by a return to Christian life and Christian institutions."[4]

Problems that so vitally affect the entire social group must be solved in the light of Christian ideals of life. "The cooperation of many agencies is required for the reconstruction of rural society. Few writers on Rural Sociology neglect to assign to the Church an important place among these agencies, but the Church itself must aspire to a more important place in rural society than

2. *Report of the Commission on Country Life,* New York, p. 27.
3. *Report of the Commission on Country Life,* New York, p. 138.
4. *Leo XIII Encyclical "Rerum Novarum,"* 1891.

is usually allotted to it even by the most friendly sociologists. It must do so because its own well-being is so definitely bound up with rural life."[5]

The Catholic Church does not confine its activities to functions that are of mere social import; it is, first and foremost, concerned with the spiritual welfare of man. It is in this regard that many sociologists writing on the rural problem make their mistake. They conceive the Church as an organization ministering to the material wants of man primarily and secondarily attending to their spiritual needs. The Catholic Church, if it is to attain success in rural communities must, in the first place, provide for the spiritual nature of man and then look to his material wants. The future of the Catholic Church is intimately bound up with rural life. "Since the country is the prolific source of population it is obvious that the Church which ministers to rural congregations is assured of the future in the city as well as in the country. Notwithstanding the prolific increase of the first generation of city dwellers, cities tend to extinction, through a restricted birth rate, caused voluntarily or otherwise. That the children are actually in the country may be seen by a comparison of the school attendance with the total population in city and country gathered from the thirteenth census.

	Rural	Urban
Total population	53.7	46.3
School attendance	57.4	42.6

"Even this high percentage of children in the country probably does not clearly represent the facts because of the low rural school attendance. The neglect of the country by the Church will mean not merely the loss of numbers in the future, but the loss of leaders because the country has been the natural training school

5. *A program of Rural Action,* Edwin V. O'Hara, L. L. D., 1922, Washington, D. C., p. 4.

of individualism and initiative, as it has also been the most favorable field for the development of religious vocations.''[6]

It is patent therefore that the Church which devotes its energies to the development of a rural population will be insured of its future. As has been stated previously, the ''country is the natural training school for individualism and initiative;'' the individual living in the open country has untold opportunities for the development of self-reliance and initiative. In urban surroundings when need overtakes us, we immediately call for an expert to minister to us; but in the country we have to rely on our own resources and there learn to work out our own salvation in meeting daily needs. In the country is found the remnant of the industrial home and it is due to the educational opportunities which the industrial home offers that self-reliance and initiative are more easily developed in the country than in the city. ''The constant presence of both parents and of the adult members of the home group furnished opportunity for constant instruction of the children in all the practical affairs of life, while the life-sustaining industry carried on within the precincts of the home furnished material for physical education and sensory-motor training of a high order. The will of the child was strengthened and his character developed by the responsibilities which he gradually took over and by the atmosphere of love in which he lived. The real interest which called forth his efforts acted as a powerful stimulus in developing his various faculties.''[7]

The first factor in any plan or method of Catholic rural school action is the Catholic priest living in the rural parish. He must be the religious leader of the community, but before this is realized the Catholic

6. *Ibid.* p. 5.
7. Shields, Thomas E., *Philosophy of Education,* Washington, D. C., 1917, p. 282.

Church in general must be made aware of the importance of the rural church. In other words, the parish in the small town will have to assume a new status. Any state of mind that might lead one to look upon the small town as a place of probation, which must be endured until the day arrives when the country pastor betakes himself to a large city parish, should be eliminated. This concept of the country pastorate as a stepping stone to the urban parish acts as a drawback and, having this idea, the country pastor either consciously or unconsciously is hindered from putting forth his best efforts. The individual priest cannot always be blamed because in many instances rural life is alien to him. He has been reared in urban surroundings and all his natural interests are centered there. Hence the bishop in appointing men to such parishes should take into consideration this fact.

The importance of the little rural parish is sometimes under-estimated. In the small parish the priest represents the entire Catholic Church; with him its influence rises or falls; and thus the best type of men should be selected for the rural charges. The large city parish can to some extent depend on its prestige but the standing of a little country parish depends on the personality of the pastor. In the open country judgment, diplomacy, activity, progressiveness and leadership are the natural virtues required in a priest.

"We must have a complete conception of the country pastorate. The country pastor must be a community leader. He must know the rural problems. He must have sympathy with rural ideals and aspirations. He must love the country; he must know the country life, the difficulties that the farmer has to face in his business, some of the great scientific revelations made in behalf of

agriculture, the great industrial forces at work for the making or the unmaking of the farmer, the fundamental social problems of the life of the open country."[8]

The rural pastor in America, although confronted with difficulties that are unknown in urban surroundings, has advantages and opportunities of which his fellow-priest in the large city parish is deprived. Since he serves a small number of people, he is enabled to enter into their lives and become acquainted with their needs and difficulties. He has the opportunity to become the spokesman of the community not only in religious matters but also in social and economic affairs that affect the district in which he lives. In most cases the people look to him for aid and advice. The attitude of mind in rural people offers a problem for psychology. They transfer the priest's authority in matters religious to matters social and regard his word in many instances as final. Often, he is the only individual in the community, with the exception of the village doctor, who has received a college training and has an understanding of Sociology and Economics. Many priests and ministers realize the amount of confidence that rural people have in their pastors and respond to the situation, thereby aiding the community not only in a religious but also in a social and economic way.

"If the Church were to surrender its leadership at this time, when so much is at stake, it would cause little short of a calamity. The strong young men and women of correct vision and initiative who are to set up new standards of living in the country community should acquire their preparation under the inspiration and guidance of religious motives. The tendency of the day is to reduce everything to worldly standards. The Church

8. *Report of the Commission on Country Life,* New York, 1911, p. 144.

has been the saving force in the habits and the moral conduct of the country people; it must ever continue as such."[9]

Altho replete with opportunities for the zealous priest, country life also presents obstacles that impede effective work. One of the difficulties encountered in the small parish is the question of revenue. In some of the country districts, especially in the Western dioceses of this country, the revenue is so scant that the priest finds it impossible to supply the necessaries of life under modern conditions. The salary of the country pastor should at least be sufficient to enable him to live according to his station in life. Curates in many of the city parishes are better situated financially than country pastors. This state of affairs is irksome and has a depressing effect that shows itself in the pastor's work. If the country parish is unable to support the pastor, and the number of people in the community demands a resident priest, the deficit should be supplied by a central fund furnished by the diocesan authorities.

Another objection to country parishes is their isolation. The country priest is cut off from his fellow priests and unless he is a student he is very apt to find rural life unpleasant. This is especially true in the parish that is unable to erect or support a parochial school. This factor of isolation is rapidly disappearing owing to the advent of the automobile and the perfection of the means of communication.

Considering the opportunities and the difficulties we are led to think American rural life is in dire need of another St. Benedict, a man fired with zeal for souls and with a deep realization of the vast possibilities for good in American rural life. Many of our bishops, aware of the possibilities, are endeavoring to build up Catholic rural communities. The late Archbishop of St. Paul,

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9. Foght, Harold W., *Rural Denmark and its Schools*, 1915, p. 334.

John Ireland, saw the opportunity of a rural Catholic population and instituted settlements in various parts of Minnesota. Colonies were opened up at De Graff, Clontarf (Swift County), Adrian (Nobles County), Avoka, Fulda (Murray County), Graceville (Big Stone County), Minneota and Ghent (Lyons County).[10] The above settlements, although started thirty and forty years ago, still have a strong Catholic rural population. With one or two exceptions, each of these towns has a large parochial school which is a credit to the zeal of the Catholic people.

Probably the greatest example of rural church leadership in modern times is to be found in the person of the Lutheran Bishop Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig of Denmark. The middle of the eighteenth century found Denmark in a deplorable condition; the urban trend was marked; landlordism was in the ascendancy; education was at a standstill; in short, the national life of Denmark presented a sorry spectacle. Reforms began in 1781, but the Napoleonic Wars left the nation politically and financially stranded. From 1823 to 1835 more than one-third of the large estates were sold and measures were enacted that afforded relief to the nation. The War of 1864 with Germany again retarded progress but under the leadership of Bishop Grundtvig a new outlook and philosophy of life was adopted by the Danish people. He maintained that "Education must become universal, practical and democratic and that hereafter Denmark's defense must be built on the foundation of broad intelligence rooted in the love of God and home and native land."[11] With the assistance of Kristen Kold he built up the system of "Folk High Schools," an institution which played the greatest part in the rehabilitation of rural Denmark. The first school was opened in North

10. *Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. XIII, p. 368.
11. Foght, H. W., *Rural Denmark and its Schools,* 1915, New York.

Slesvig at Rödding in 1844.[12] Due to troublesome times and the German War of 1864 the school was temporarily abandoned and after the treaty of peace was moved across the boundary line. Here under the name of "Askov Folkeshöjskolé" it became the pattern of all other Danish Folk High Schools. One remarkable feature about this school is to be found in the spirit that it inculcates into the pupils. "It is claimed that they have discovered the way to educate young men back to the farms, and if this be true, it is worth while to note how they do it. Some main causes are principal and some are contributory. In the first place, all their courses and experiments are associated with the sense of the dignity of labor. They teach not caste, nor self-conscious pride that looks for contrasts and distinctions, but a simple love for the farm, the forest and the sea—the dignity of the farmer's occupation, let other occupations be what they may."[13] That the schools have educated the individual for rural life can be seen from a consideration of the census.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the rural population numbered 733,000 while the urban population reached 196,000.[14] When the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century set in, Denmark in common with other European countries experienced an urban trend and agriculture suffered a distinct loss. This fact is illustrated in the following graph which gives the annual increase per 10,000 persons:

12. Foght, H. W., *The Danish Folk High Schools, U. S. Bureau of Education,* Bulletin, 1914, Number 22, p. 15.
13. *Biennial Survey of Education,* 1916-1918, Vol. II, p. 456.
14. Foght, H. W., *The Educational System of Rural Denmark, U. S. Bureau of Education,* Bulletin, 1913, N. 58, p. 9.

Annual increase of population per 10,000

Periods	Capital	Provincial Towns	Rural	Total per cent rural
1801-1840	48	112	85	79
1840-1880	190	177	82	72
1880-1890	325	230	21	67
1890-1901	259	252	28	61
1901-1906	152	110	999	66

It will be seen that the urban trend increased rapidly till the close of the eighties, while in 1890 the cooperative and educational enterprises became stronger and the cityward tide somewhat abated.[15]

We would not convey the impression that the Folk High Schools and the elementary school system of Denmark were solely responsible for the break in the urban trend but they were undoubtedly the most prominent factor. Bishop Grundtvig saw the possibilities of a rural Denmark and left no stone unturned until his plan was realized and today Denmark stands before the world as an example in rural education and farmer's cooperative associations. From the social viewpoint, rural life in Denmark has ceased to be the compliment of city life and isolation and lack of social intercourse have virtually ceased to exist. These latter factors are due to a large extent to the presence of a strong rural church, whose ministers understand the place of the Church in country life.

The change brought about in Denmark contains interesting and significant lessons which the American public might well imitate. In 1790 only 3.4 per cent of the population of the United States was urban; in 1890

15. *Ibid.* p. 10.

it reached 33.1 per cent and in 1920 the urban population had surpassed the rural with a percentage of 51.9 while the rural had 48.1.[16]

In the United States we can expect that the great industrial centers will continue to increase but this increase should not be at the expense of the rural communities. "We should so organize our agricultural affairs that American rural districts may hereafter retain a majority of the rural minded people who now live upon the soil, as well as their natural increase from year to year. This would mean the gradual organization of a natural agricultural population, capable of greatly increased production. Then would cease the beguiling call of 'back to the land' of those who have already moved away from the land and who had just as well stay away because they are not rural minded."[17]

We mentioned above that the Catholic priest has the opportunity of becoming the community leader, due to his position as minister of the gospel. There we had in mind his attitude toward Catholic and non-Catholic interests. Now we intend to present his attitude towards organizations that concern only members of his own church. This is an age of organization and unless an organization is imbued with Christian principles it becomes a menace to the public welfare. Cooperative agencies are multiplying more rapidly today than at any other period of the world's economic history and it is essential that correct principles be incorporated into their by-laws and constitutions. Much can be accomplished in these matters by Catholic farmers in cooperation with their pastors. The country priest can organize associations to study all phases of the agrarian question and to inculcate Catholic principles into their cooperative enterprises.

16. *Fourteenth Census of the United States,* Washington, 1922.
17. Foght, H. W., *Rural Denmark and its Schools,* New York, 1917.

In speaking of the country pastor's attitude toward cooperative associations, we might mention another allied factor. This is the need of recreational and social organizations in rural districts. During the past few decades the rural church has neglected this phase of human activity and consequently other institutions in the form of fraternal organizations have assumed many of the social and even religious duties proper to the Church. In many rural communities these organizations are the only means by which the people can come together and satisfy their instinct for social intercourse. "These organizations not only compete with the Church socially, but they absorb time, energy and money that might otherwise, in part at least, be devoted to the Church; and worst of all, they sometimes produce the impression that, so far as human welfare is concerned, they are almost as serviceable as the Church."[18]

The open country affords few opportunities for the gratification of the farmer's social instinct. The American farmer is still isolated in spite of the advent of modern conveniences and the social meetings, in the form of husking bees and barn raisings, which featured the pioneer days, have passed out of American rural life. The farmer is conscious of this isolation and his children even more so; the country pastor, if he is awake to the possibilities, is presented with an opportunity of which few city parishes can boast. In the city youth frequents commercialized places of amusement but country life is singularly free from this, and it is the duty of the country Church to offer some form of amusement that will satisfy the social instinct of the individual. The lack of recreational and social activities is one of the prominent causes of rural disintegration; man is a social being and

18. Butterfield, Kenyon, *The Country Church and the Rural Problem*, University of Chicago Press, 1911, p. 100.

craves companionship, and if this is not forthcoming in the country, he seeks other places where it can be obtained.

We have endeavored to present the ideal attitude of the Catholic priest toward rural life. The rural problem is not a question of increased production but rather of the "establishment on the land of a permanent, satisfied agricultural population made up of the rural-minded people now there, and their natural increase from generation to generation."[19] To attain the solution the Church and other agencies must come to the assistance of the farmer, because reform to be effective must always come from within.

"The miracle to be wrought," says George W. Russell (AE), "is the creation of a rural civilization. Civilization implies some measure of luxury and comfort; it can only be obtained when the community is organized and has the strength to retain some surplus of wealth beyond what is required for the bare necessities of life . . .because the farmer is more isolated by the nature of his employment than any other class he is the last to be organized, and his industry has suffered more in modern times than any other. Mutual aid, cooperative action—clan or communal—were instinctive with ancient rural communities. This was the true foundation on which alone a rural civilization could be built up."[20]

Dr. Edwin O'Hara, of the Rural Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Council, presents the rural problem as "the problem of maintaining on the land a sufficient population, effective and prosperous in production, and happy and content by reason of a highly developed social and cultural status."[21]

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19. Foght, H. W., *The Rural Teacher and his Work*, New York, 1917, p. 35.
20. *Russell, G. W., quoted in "A program of Catholic Rural Action,"* by Edwin V. O'Hara, 1922, p. 4.
21. *Ibid.* p. 4.

Any attempted solution of the problem from a Catholic viewpoint necessitates the realization of the importance of the priest. With this realization comes the place of the parochial school in rural life.

CHAPTER II

Distinctive Features of the Catholic Rural School

Prior to the discussion of the role of the Catholic school in American rural life, it is necessary to take note of the characteristics that differentiate the Catholic school from the school that is supported and controlled by public authority. Many of the difficulties that confront the State school are not found in the Catholic rural school and problems that the Catholic rural school experiences do not affect the State system of education. We shall consider, in the first place, features that are common to all Catholic schools, and later take up the characteristics of Catholic rural schools.

First among the distinguishing marks of the Catholic school is the philosophy that underlies the entire Catholic system of education. There is a direct relation between the Catholic Church and her school system and the principles which determined the origin and development of parish schools in the United States are the same as those which guided Catholic schools in the past. "These principles sprang from certain definite views about God and man, and the relationship of man with God—views that are as unchangeable as Christianity itself, and are indeed of its very essence—that man is a moral being; . . . that God has made a revelation of truth through Christ, outside of the natural order of things; that man is destined for another and a more perfect life beyond the grave, for which his life on earth has been ordained as a preparation—these are concepts that lie at the root of Christian education."[1]

1. Burns, J. A., *Principles, Origin and Establishment of the Catholic School System in the United States,* New York, 1912, p. 16.

From the above concepts have developed many distinct principles regarding Catholic education, its aims, content and means.

One of the fundamental differences between Catholic and State schools is to be found in the stand that the Catholic Church takes on the question of moral education or the education of the will. "An education that quickens the intelligence and enriches the mind with knowledge, but fails to develop the will and direct it to the practice of virtue, may produce scholars, but it cannot produce good men. The exclusion of moral training from the educative process is more dangerous in proportion to the thoroughness with which the intellectual powers are developed, because it gives the impression that morality is of little importance, and thus sends the pupil into life with a false idea which is not easily corrected."[2]

It is generally admitted that mere information or knowledge is insufficient for the formation of character; something more is needed and this is moral training, the direction of the will in education. But moral training postulates a norm, a standard by which morality can be measured; a distinction between good and evil, vice and virtue. This complete norm is not to be found in the natural order and recourse must be had to the supernatural. For the Catholic, the norm of morality is his absolute end, God; hence the necessity of religious teaching in Catholic schools. The exclusion of religion from the schoolroom, Catholic educators maintain, is a mistake and non-Catholic educators are endeavoring to find some standard for conduct in school procedure by which the child may be guided in the formation of his character.[3]

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2. *Pastoral Letter of the Bishops,* Washington, D. C., 1919, p. 74.
3. *Character Training in Childhood,* Mary S. Haviland, Boston, 1921, p. 259, also: Horne, H. H., *The Philosophy of Education,* New York, 1915, p. 126.

Speaking of the religious inheritance of the race, Nicholas Murray Butler says "no student of history can doubt its existence and no observer of human nature will undervalue its significance. We are still far from comprehending fully the preponderant influence of religion in shaping our contemporary civilization; an influence that is due in part to the universality of religion itself, and in part to the fact that it was, beyond dispute, the chief human interest at the time when the foundation of our present superstructure was being laid. It has played a controlling part in education till very recently, although it has too often played that in a narrow, illiberal, and uninformed spirit."[4] Dr. Butler continues to lament the fact that religion, due to the separation of Church and State, has been omitted from the curriculum and proposes solutions for the inclusion of religious instruction. He maintains that this duty of imparting religious instruction should devolve upon the Church and the home, but experience teaches that religion, to be effective, must be of daily contact and cannot be imparted piecemeal to the individual. The Sunday School is incapable of giving adequate religious instruction. The attendance cannot be made compulsory; parents are neglectful and it is estimated that only about fifty per cent of the children in the United States attend Sunday School.[5]

The Catholic school aims at the "development of *Christian* character, based upon the supernatural virtues and teachings of Christ, not distinct from the natural virtues, but including them and much more besides, which the Christian school places first among its duties, as the thing of most fundamental importance to the child."[6]

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4. Butler, N. M., *The Meaning of Education,* New York, 1911, p. 281.
5. Harris, W. T., *Proceedings of the National Educational Association,* 1903.
6. *The Principles, Origin and Establishment of the Catholic School System in the United States,* Burns, J. A., New York, 1912, p. 18.

For the Catholic, the ideal of character is that established by Jesus Christ himself; and this ideal constitutes a radical difference between the Catholic school and the institution that does not permit the teaching of religion. The ideal of character being different, the means by which it is attained are likewise different. A knowledge of the higher moral law revealed to us by Jesus Christ, joined to the practice of the moral and the Christian virtues is, according to the Catholic view, the necessary requisite for the training of character. If, however, "the ideal of character is that of natural man and not of Christ, the doctrine of Herbart, which is coming more and more into favor, is sufficient for the attainment of the ideal."[7] Herbart and his followers maintain that "school discipline and instruction in the common branches, if illumined by fundamental moral ideas, may be the adequate means for the development of moral character."[8] Non-religious schools may be called a recent innovation in education. It is only since 1840, due to the demands and efforts of Horace Mann and other educators, that religion has been omitted in public school curricula. Lest we convey the impression that these men were enemies of religion, let it be said that they realized the importance of religious training for the young, but considered religious instruction as the duty of the Home and the Church. However good their intentions, this much is certain, that when religion is banished from the schoolroom, it likewise disappears from the home. Out of the total population of 105,710,620 people there are in the United States about 41,926,854 who belong to some religious sect or body.[9]

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7. Monroe, Paul, *A Brief Course in the History of Education,* New York, 1911, p. 329.

8. De Garmo, Charles, *Herbart and the Herbartians,* New York, p. 56.

9. *Fourteenth Census of the United States,* Washington, D. C. 1922.

Although the majority of people does not profess positive religious belief, nevertheless they still cherish certain Christian standards and desire that their children be imbued with the same. But with religion excluded from the schools, there is wanting a firm basis for the standards and this defect constitutes one of the most striking differences between the Catholic and non-Catholic systems of education. Speaking on this question, the late Archbishop John Ireland says, "Morals not imbedded in the conscience are but shadowy conventionalities, powerless in the presence of strong temptation; and the conscience to be the moral censor, as it is destined by the Creator to be, must be permeated with, solidified in, religion; the conscience without God and the Saviour is as a tribunal without a judge."[10]

The inclusion of religion in the Catholic rural school curriculum will differentiate it from that of the State rural school course of study. Religion offers untold opportunities for correlation with other subjects, especially Nature Study. Through Nature Study the child can come to know the visible creation and through visible creation arrives at the knowledge of his Creator.

A second difference between Catholic and State schools is to be found in the manner of support and maintenance. The problem of school support presents an interesting story in the history of Catholic education in the United States. The first schools, especially in the French and Spanish colonies, were patterned after the schools of the mother country and, following the custom then in vogue in France and Spain, the Catholics looked for assistance from the civil authorities. "In the English colonies there was also State support for denominational education, but whether the Catholics could or could not secure a share of the public funds depended

10. Ireland John, Archbishop, *Pastoral Letter, Catholic Schools for Catholic Children,* St. Paul, 1913.

on local conditions. When the States adopted their constitutions, they did not introduce any change in this respect."[11] It was the gradual "rise of dissentient religious bodies in the colonies and States due to the influx of immigrants and other causes, that brought about important changes which led to the establishment of a 'nonsectarion' system of schools."[12] The increase of schools after the American Revolution brought the question of State support to the fore. The first attempt to obtain State support was made by Father Richard in Detroit in 1808; he failed in his effort although he received temporary assistance.[13]

At Lowell, Mass., two Catholic schools received State assistance from 1836 to 1852. The School Controversy of 1840, in which Bishop Hughes played a conspicuous part, had its origin in the question of State support. Many plans have been employed whereby Catholic schools have received support from public funds, e. g., Savannah, Georgia; St. Augustine, Florida; Poughkeepsie, New York; Lima, Ohio; Stillwater and Faribault, Minnesota.[14] The last named instance gave rise to the famous School Controversy of 1891-92. The Faribault plan was referred to the Congregation of the Propaganda and a decision was rendered on April 21, 1892, to the effect "that considering the peculiar circumstances and character of the arrangement, and the agreement by which the plan was inaugurated, it may be tolerated."[15] This plan was later abandoned in Faribault and Stillwater although it is still in vogue in some places in Minnesota.

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11. Turner, William, *Catholic Encyclopedia; Article, "Schools,"* Vol. XIII, p. 556.
12. Burns, J. A., *The Principles, Origin and Establishment of the Catholic School System in the United States,* New York, 1912, p. 360.
13. *Ibid.* p. 196.
14. Burns, J. A., *The Growth and Development of the Catholic School System in the United States,* New York, 1912, pp. 248, seq; *Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. XIII, p. 560.
15. *American Ecclesiastical Review, Supplement,* June, 1892.

The question of maintenance constitutes one of the difficulties of the Catholic rural school. Quite often the number of Catholic families is limited and they are unable to finance a parochial school, but the public school does not depend merely on the number of families in a locality but rather on the attitude of the local school board working in conjunction with the State.

One of the defects found in State rural schools is usually not found in the Catholic school system and this is the "one-teacher school." The one-teacher school system has its friends who maintain that it has served the people well in the past and advocate its continuance. We likewise hold that the one teacher-school had been a saving force in American life but "it has served its day." Poets have sung the praises of the "little red schoolhouse" and its associations are dear to us all. The little red schoolhouse or the one-teacher school belongs to a generation that has passed, and "is typical of a primitive social order in which each individual was a jack-of-all-trades, fitted to do all things passably well, and no one thing especially so."[16] For those who extol the advantages of the one-teacher school, we would say that it is well for them to remember that the one-teacher system came first and that it was supplanted by the graded system which is regarded as an outgrowth and also an improvement. In the one-teacher school, where there are from six to eight grades, there are at least four daily recitations for each grade. This demands more work and energy than one teacher is capable of and the result is usually the hastening over of lessons due to the curtailment of time.

Another defect in the one-teacher system is the following: "The small number of children enrolled very frequently makes an uninteresting school and never fails,

16. Carney, Mabel, *Country Life and The Country School*, Chicago, 1912, p. 141.

even in larger schools, to necessitate the formation of some classes of one, two or three children. Such conditions are abnormal and anti-social. The stray children of these classes consequently lose interest, dawdle, and often drop out of school altogether, through the simple lack of companionable associates."[17] One of the most important phases of school life is the social phase in which the child comes into contact with children of his own age. In the one-room school this stimulating and beneficial influence is absent due to the scarcity of numbers in the classes. The child fails to see the advantage of team and cooperative work; he is not brought face to face with problems that affect other children and he leaves school without an understanding and an appreciation of cooperative effort. There are in the United States about 212,000 schools of the one-teacher type in use in rural communities and they are the only means of education for a large percentage of the children.[18] At the present time the one-teacher school in American education is one the wane and the consolidation of the small schools is constantly growing. Although a law was passed in Massachusetts as early as 1869 for consolidation it had little or no effect until the district system fell into disuse in 1890. From Massachusetts the movement spread westward to Ohio and Indiana. At the present the consolidation movement has passed the state of experimentation and has been accepted as a national policy in American education. In 1918 there were about 10,500 consolidated schools in the United States. "The most satisfactory type of consolidated schools is planned to give the rural community just the kind of education required by an agricultural population. Broadly cultural, and yet practical; preparing them for happy, wholesome, remunerative living on the land. Many of

17. *Ibid.* p. 143.
18. *Biennial Survey of Education,* 1916-1918, Vol. I, Washington, D. C., p. 167.

the early consolidated schools were planned as big graded schools offering courses of study in no wise adapted to the needs of rural districts. The new type of schools are organized with a view of preparing for the new agricultural era of a permanent farming population of highest ideals.''[19]

Happily, in the Catholic system of education, the one-teacher school is practically non-existent. This is due to the fact that most of the teachers in the Catholic system are Religious and do not accept schools which do not warrant the presence of at least two teachers. Two or three teachers in an outlying district are necessary in order that their religious life may not be interfered with. Again, where the parish can afford the erection of a parochial school, there is usually a sufficient number of children to demand the attention of at least two or three teachers. Hence the Catholic rural school does not have to contend with the problem that the State system has to meet.

Another mark of differentiation of the Catholic rural school is the inclusion of subjects that are not found in the city parochial school. The content matter will differ but slightly but the attack on new subject matter in the curriculum will be different, due to the pre-school experience of country children. The Catholic school will then include in its curriculum, subjects such as Nature Study, Elementary Agriculture and Household Economics. All the branches of the rural curriculum will make special reference to country life and needs.

To sum up the differences between the Catholic rural school and the State rural school: first and foremost is the distinction in regard to religion; secondly, in the manner of support; thirdly, in the Catholic system there are no one-teacher schools and the personnel of the

19. *Biennial Survey of Education*, 1916-1918, Vol. I, Washington, D. C., p. 168.

teaching staff is composed largely of women living a religious life. The characteristics that are proper to the rural Catholic school are about the same as those found in the Catholic urban school with the exception that in the rural school there are added a few new subjects and the attack on subject matter is slightly different, due to the environment and the interests of the child.

CHAPTER III

The Catholic Rural School

Part I. The Need.

The American public mind is awakening to the need of establishing a permanent, satisfied population in the farming districts and of putting a check to the cityward trend of our rural inhabitants. This awakening has been caused principally by economic conditions. Economists, sociologists and statesmen are loud in their clamor for a remedy to alleviate the lot of our farming people. Catholic leaders share these ideas of their fellow Americans and are insisting that the Church take cognizance of the rural problem and attempt its solution. All Catholic and non-Catholic leaders are agreed that the beginning of the solution is to be found in the rural school.

The question of rural education in the United States constitutes one of our greatest educational problems. The rural school typified in "the little red schoolhouse" of pioneer days has won for itself a place in the hearts and affections of the common people. It is an American institution suited to supply the demands of pioneer days but unable to meet the exigencies of modern rural life. Pioneer life was fraught with difficulties and trials, and each individual farmer had to struggle with the forces of Nature to obtain the bare necessities of life. His attention was centered on the material aspect of things and he had little opportunity to consider the cultural and educational advantages of life. "Consequently the school terms were short, attendance was low, and

teachers were miserably paid and poorly qualified for the work. The whole school was crude and primitive in the extreme, but as life in those days was exceedingly simple, in both the open country and in the towns, and school work did not go far beyond the 'three R's,' a school of this kind served the needs of the people fairly well."[1]

The growth of industrial and manufacturing centers caused many social and economic changes and the city schools took cognizance of the changed character and altered their methods of procedure to meet the new needs of the people and thus kept abreast of the times. The rural communities likewise assumed new characteristics, especially during the Economic Revolution. From the trials and privations of pioneer life, the American farmer first rose to a state where he received reasonable returns from his labor and then to economic independence. The introduction of labor saving machinery after the Civil War completely changed the work of the farmer. Despite this change in the economic and industrial phases of agricultural life, the school has remained stationery; it has stagnated until at the present day we have a primitive educational institution serving 12,000,000 boys and girls living under modern conditions and preparing to take an active part in modern life.

The problems of rural life and especially the rural schools received little attention and publicity until President Roosevelt appointed the Country Life Commission and not until the comprehensive report of this Commission was presented to the public did the American people realize that "a national crisis existed in rural life conditions." The American farmer at that time, apparently at least, was successful in achieving financial

1. Arp, Julius B., *Rural Education and the Consolidated School*, 1918, p. 5.

results from his labors; the introduction of labor-saving machinery had removed much of the drudgery from farm life and had made agriculture more profitable. But these advantages affected only the material side of life. The intellectual and spiritual interests of the rural population were but slightly influenced. The American farmer was in a state of discontent; his social status was not in accord with the conditions of modern life; the country church was nearly bankrupt; the school a blot on the civilization of the twentieth century; in fact, all those influences that go to make for the higher and spiritual betterment of man were peculiarly lacking in American rural life. The report of the Commission evoked reforms of various sorts; suggestions were manifold—elaborate articles were compiled on the "Back to the Farm Movement," and other idealistic and visionary schemes were proffered to relieve the situation which was seen to be confronting a large portion of the people.

After a long and careful analysis, rural sociologists and economists placed the remedy in: 1, a satisfactory social life; and 2, an efficient school system. The two defects that stood out notably in American rural life were an unsatisfactory social existence and an antiquated and inefficient school system. The remedying of the former defect lies within the scope of the country church and we have noted this fact in a previous chapter. The case of the rural school will occupy us in the present chapter.

We have mentioned that one of the alarming conditions in American rural life is the urban trend. This depletion of country people can, in four out of five cases, be explained by inefficient rural schools. E. P. Cubberly depicts the rural school in the following words: "The strong, virile, rural school of a generation ago has passed, and in its place is a primary school, weak in numbers and lacking in efficiency. The school buildings are poor,

unsanitary and ill-equipped. The school enrollment is constantly decreasing. The supervision is wholly inadequate. The cost of instruction is higher than in the cities. The terms are short. The teaching body is immature and lacks proper training. Of the 12,000,000 rural school children, constituting a clear majority of the youth of school age, less than 25 per cent are completing the work of the grades."[2] Strange as it may seem, this type of school is still to be found ministering to a majority of the people on whom the strength and civilization of the nation rests. The urban centers depend on the country; the cities cannot thrive if rural life is unsatisfactory. "If the rural schools fail, rural civilization will fail; if rural civilization fails, American civilization will fail."[3]

Our agricultural wealth and rich farming lands have in the past seemed so vast that we as a nation have neglected to consider the plight of the farmer, socially and educationally. The recent World War revealed to us the vast importance of a sturdy agricultural population which provided food stuffs for the Allies as well as for ourselves and reminded the American people that this country was the granary of the world. The American farmer responded to the call of increased acreage of wheat and other food materials but the war taught this lesson that "as a permanent food producer, America must be aroused to the urgent and immediate need of modern, intensive and efficient farming, both in war and in peace."[4]

Increased food production is not the solution of the rural problem; it is rather the establishment on our fertile lands of a permanent, contented agricultural pop-

2. Fairchild, E. T., *quoted by E. P. Cubberly in Rural Life and Education,* New York, 1914, p. 97.
3. *National Education Bulletin, Commission Series, Number four,* 1918, Washington.
4. Arp, J. B., *Rural Education and the Consolidated School,* St. Paul, 1918, p. 144.

ulation receiving adequate returns from their labors and leading a social existence that modern American life demands. To establish this permanent population the beginning is to be made in the schools and in the country church; in fact, in all those agencies that make for the betterment of man. Attention must be centered on the country if results are to be achieved. Urban problems have too long engaged the attention of the American mind, whereas the farmer has been left to his own initiative to work out his salvation. Neither the Church nor the State, except in recent years, has put forth organized effort to relieve the situation of the farming class. Economically, educationally and socially the American farmer is on the verge of despair.[5]

Inflated land values have given rise to a form of landlordism, the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few. This form of exploitation is not unlike the European system of "absentee landlords." Educationally, the farmer sees his children getting an unsatisfactory education while his city friends enjoy the advantages and benefits of a more thorough educational system. Socially, his life is one of isolation and drudgery. Such a condition gives rise to a state of discontent and dissatisfaction.

To remedy this state of affairs the Catholic Church is called upon, and as in times past, she must respond to the situation. The rehabilitation of rural America is just as important and honorable as the work performed by St. Benedict and his followers in sixth century in Western Europe.

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5. In 1916 the Federal Farm Loan act was passed which provided "capital for agricultural development, to create a standard form of investment based upon farm mortgage to equalize rates of interest upon farm loans, to furnish a market for United States bonds, to create Government depositaries and financial agents for the United States, and for other purposes."

Some prominent churchmen advocate the organization of a religious community that will devote itself especially to the rural work. Whether such a plan would prove feasible remains to be seen, but the issue at stake is certainly worth the trial. "The experience in Australia of a religious community of women who devote themselves to the religious instruction of children in the remotest country districts is full of significance for us in America, and the beginnings which they have already made of similar work in our country should be encouraged and multiplied.[6]

If the Catholic Church is to vitalize and rehabilitate the rural communities, the work is to be done through the medium of the Catholic rural school. Catholic rural education at present is only in its initial stage due to the fact already mentioned that only about 19 per cent of our Catholic population is classed as rural. Nevertheless the welfare of the minority is to the advantage of the majority.

The ruling of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore with regard to the establishment of schools did not take into consideration the distinction between urban and rural communities and the obligation of erecting and supporting schools was clearly set forth in the decrees of the Council:

"I. Near each church, where it does not yet exist, a parochial school is to be erected within two years from the promulgation of this Council, and this is to be maintained *in perpetuum,* unless the bishop, on account of grave difficulties, judge that a postponement be allowed.

"II. A priest who, by his grave negligence, prevents the erection of a school within this time, or its

6. O'Hara, Edwin V., *Proceedings of the Catholic Educational Association,* Vol. XVII, 1920, p. 241.

maintenance, or who, after repeated admonitions of the bishop, does not attend to the matter, deserves removal from that church.

"III. A mission or a parish which so neglects to assist a priest in erecting or maintaining a school, that by reason of this supine negligence the school is rendered impossible, should be reprehended by the bishop and, by the most efficacious and prudent means possible, induced to contribute the necessary support.

"IV. All Catholic parents are bound to send their children to the parochial schools, unless either at home or in other Catholic schools they may sufficiently and evidently provide for the Christian education of their children, or unless it be lawful to send them to other schools on account of a sufficient cause, approved by the bishop, and with opportune cautions and remedies.

As to what is a Catholic school, it is left to the judgment of the Ordinary to define."[7]

The above decrees, in a general way, have been carried out, especially in the cities and towns but they have had little or no effect in the rural or remote places of the country. As a result, Catholic education in the cities has made wonderful progress but in the matter of rural education Catholics have made little effort. Recently there have been indications of a concerted action on the part of the Church to consider and develop Catholic rural education. Means are also being devised for the instruction of those children who are unable, for one reason or another, to attend a Catholic school. The first one to make a move in this direction was Reverend Edwin V. O'Hara of Lane County, Oregon. Dr. O'Hara presented a paper at the New York meeting of the Catholic Educational Association in 1920 in which he surveyed the rural problem in its religious and educa-

7. *Decreta* N. 199, *Conc. Plen. Balt. III.*

tional aspects and emphasized the need of a thorough Catholic rural education which would minister to the needs of Catholics dwelling in the open country. In June, 1921, at the meeting of the Catholic Educational Association in Cincinnati, a paper was read on the "Catholic Rural School Curriculum" and also one on "Catholic Rural Extension Education." During the summer of 1921 the National Catholic Welfare Council deemed it necessary to institute a special department devoted to questions and problems pertaining to Catholic rural life. This bureau will form part of the Department of Social Action and Dr. Edwin V. O'Hara has been appointed the director.[8]

Efforts have also been made in regard to Catholic Vacation schools and some dioceses have started correspondence courses in Religious Instruction for those who are so situated that they are unable to enjoy the benefits of oral instruction. We will consider this question after we have surveyed the Catholic school proper.

Part II. Organization and Supervision.

In the formation of a Catholic rural school the question of organization and administration is of paramount importance. In the Catholic system of education we meet with three elements of authority; the diocese, the religious community and the individual parish. Each of these has jurisdiction over the school, but their jurisdiction is confined to a special sphere so that there is no overlapping. The jurisdiction of the diocese is usually exercised thru a diocesan superintendent whose authority extends over all the schools of the diocese. In this respect his office is quite similar to that of the State superintendent who exercises jurisdiction over all the

8. *National Catholic Welfare Council Bulletin,* January, 1922, Washington, D. C., p. 24.

schools of the State. In the individual school the representative of the religious community is the Superioress who acts in the same manner as does the State school principal. The parish priest, as the representative of parochial authority, is responsible to the diocesan authorities for the administration and management of the parish school. He is by law the school principal, but rarely does he exercise the duties of this office, except to a certain extent. "The Pastor is the supervisor, the banker, the motive power, the soul of the school. He must bear all the worries, to obtain the necessary funds to meet the expenditures; but, large as these responsibilities are, his duties would be comparatively light if these ended here. He should show that everything that is done in other schools is done also for those in the parish school. He should show that the future belongs to the people who will educate their children; show them how the business world is taken over by the Jews because of the great sacrifices they make to educate their children; show them that, as a Cardinal of the Church has said on matters of religion, a people may, in thirty years with no Catholic education, no Catholic thought, no church, and by the reading of irreligious and socialistic books, lose their faith and become as their surroundings."[9]

In a large city parish, with its many and varied responsibilities, it is well nigh impossible for the pastor to personally fulfill all of his duties towards the school. The reverse is true of the small country parish; the priest can devote a major portion of his time to the activities of the school proper; altho in the actual work of the classroom, which demands technical training, he should be aware of his limitations. The American priest, altho a moral teacher *par excellence,* has had little oppor-

9. Cassidy, Charles A., *Proceedings of the Catholic Educational Association,* 1920, p. 182.

tunity to receive pedagogical training. This lack of specific training, for the duties of teaching is not the fault of the individual priest but of the seminary curriculum. In recent years the science of Pedagogy, has been making its way slowly but surely into the seminary course. The introduction of Pedagogy and kindred studies will do much for Catholic education and especially in rural districts, where the priest has more time at his command and where his duties are not so many. The priest who has had technical training can easily conduct classes in many of the subjects that are proper to the rural school, e. g., Elementary Agriculture, as some priests at present are doing. If, however, he is lacking in pedagogical skill, caution must be exercised in matters that demand technical training; because in this case more harm can be done that good accomplished. An energetic pastor who is aware of the possibilities of a Catholic rural school can focalize the entire community around the institution. Where there is the alternative of either erecting a church or a school the school should come first. A combination church and school building might be erected which for the time being would serve the parish very efficiently.

The Catholic rural school should be the social centre of the community in which it is placed; around it should be gathered all the activities that make for the betterment of the countryside. Social activities especially should receive attention and in the construction of the school this matter should be taken into account. The school plant should be so arranged that institutes, entertainments and other forms of recreation could be held in the building. If we conceive the school merely as a building in which the child receives formal instruction in the various branches of the curriculum, we are making a serious mistake. This however, has been the attitude in the past. In the future, not only the child but also

the adult will receive benefit from the school, if not along purely educational lines, at least in a social and recreative way. This is especially true of the rural school of the future. The lack of recreative facilities has made rural life unattractive and boring, but with the right use of the school plant much of the unpleasantness of life in the country can be eliminated. "The schoolhouse standing alone in its isolation and aloofness from all community interests and activities may still be found. Such a schoolhouse has a cold, forbidding appearance. It attracts neither the child nor the parent. Under compulsion the child goes to school in the morning and leaves with joy when school is over. It may be the only building in the neighborhood with a room large enough for an assembly. It may stand in the midst of lowly homes whose occupants are waiting to be led to higher standards of living. It may be the sole instrument available for transforming the district into a cooperative body working for their common interests. In spite of these opportunities and needs, the school continues to serve its owners but a few hours of the total number possible and in an educational field limited to classroom instruction."[10] This type of school is still prevalent in many communities and it is clear that it is not fulfilling its responsibilities to the people who support it. The Catholic rural school should be the dynamic center from which the countryside is to derive its power, energy and inspiration.

One factor in country life that receives little attention but which could easily be supplied by the rural school is the library. People living in towns or in the cities enjoy the benefits of a well-organized library. The farmer however is deprived of this. To supply this need in country life, the school should have a well equipped

10. Strayer, George, and Englehardt, N. L., *The Classroom Teacher*, New York, 1920, p. 372.

library for the use of the community. The establishment of a rural school library will give the country resident, whether adult or youth, an opportunity to procure just as good reading material as his friend in the city. The farmer and his children seek suitable reading matter for the same reason that the family in the city does. Their isolation and lack of social intercourse make reading in the home almost a necessity. Altho there is much work to be done about the farm, there is a time during the year, and especially during the winter, that could be given over to the perusal of good literature, either for enjoyment or inspiration. "The school, as a central point from which books may be obtained for general reading in the home, should, and does in most instances, offer a safeguard against the selection of books that contain nothing in particular to recommend them."[11]

The raising of money to support the library could easily be put in the hands of one of the parish societies or the necessary funds might be realized through public subscription. The selection of books for the school library could be made by the diocesan superintendent working in conjunction with the pastor, the teachers and a few laymen of the community.

There are some libraries that contain books that are useless because of the fact that they are not suited to the people's tastes or needs. The judicious selection of books is to be taken into account when the library is formed which will supply the needs of country people. The principal reason for the presence of a school library is to develop in the pupils a taste for and an appreciation of the best literature. In the early years of adolescence habits are easily formed; hence if the proper books are placed at the disposal of the child he will form a habit

11. Graham, A. B., *The Tenth Year Book of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 1911, p. 25.

of good reading. The presence of such a school library will make itself felt in the farm home; it will raise the standard of living and contribute much to the elevation of country life. "Literature is perhaps the most spiritualizing influence of the average farm home, but much of the reading done in the country is of a desultory character. Too little attention is given to the upbuilding of systematically planned libraries. Books are often indiscriminately purchased from agents or at bargain counters and are carelessly thrown about the house until lost or worn out." [12]

In recent years the various States have recognized the importance of libraries for country people and have devised means of meeting this need through the establishment of county libraries and branch stations located in convenient centers, as the country store or school. Another form of library is the "travelling library" which in the short period of its existence has certainly proven its worth. "Its purpose has been accomplished wherever it has received fair trial. And this is in truth in many places, for not alone has it been adopted as a regular form of library work in almost every State in the union, but it is penetrating the remotest corners of states where hitherto library privileges were practically unknown." [13]

At present the average rural inhabitant is far behind the urban resident in the matter of good reading. The lack of good books in the average farm home is pathetic and the character of the daily or weekly paper commonly received in the home is anything but uplifting and inspiring. The duty of cultivating the habit of good

12. Carney, Mabel, *Country Life and the Country School*, 1913, Chicago, p. 32.
13. Foght, H. W., *The American Rural School*, 1913, New York, p. 271.

reading devolves on the school. A community that is devoted to reading is invariably a progressive community.

Thus far we have considered the Catholic rural school in a community that is predominantly Catholic. But there are many districts in this country that are unable to support a Catholic school, owing to the scarcity of numbers, and the needs of these must be taken into consideration. It is generally conceded that about seventy families are necessary to support and maintain a parochial school efficiently. A small number of families makes the erection and support of a parochial school an impossibility unless several parishes combine for the purpose. The following plan, we think, could be adopted in many places throughout the country. The school could be located in a town or village and take on the appearance of a boarding school. This type of school is called the "Five Day Boarding School" because the children are at school from Monday morning until Friday evening, when they return to their homes. This system has its good features and also its disadvantages but it seems to be the only solution of the difficulty. "The idea has been carried out in some country parishes and the pastors are enthusiastic over the good results. It seems possible to board a child for about ten dollars a month at the present time, a sum which parents are willing to pay for the advantages received, especially, when the importance of the matter has been brought within reach of their understanding."[14] The child under this plan is not entirely removed from home influence which, as we know, is so important in the early years of childhood. He is in school about four and one-half days and the remainder of the week he spends at home with his family. This plan entails extra work on the part of the teachers who have to act in the capacity of prefects and demands an extra

14. *Superintendent's Report,* Archdiocese of St. Paul, 1921, p. 14.

quota of Sisters who have to devote their time to the preparation of the pupils' meals and other household cares incidental to the running of a boarding school. This method does not entail heavy expense on those families who are compelled to send children to a school of this kind. Usually the board is quite reasonable because of the fact that the farmers supply much of the food stuffs gratis and thus the institution is saved considerable expense. A plan similar to this will eventually come into vogue, because there are many districts that cannot and will not be able to support a school. In fact this type of school is gradually appearing in the Western dioceses and the results thus far point to its still greater development.

In the matter of the supervision of a Catholic rural school, the part played by the diocesan superintendent is of paramount importance. One of the drawbacks in many parochial schools is the lack of professional supervision. The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore realized this defect in the schools and embodied in its decrees rules and regulations for the formation of a "Diocesan School Board" and defined its duties.[15] This "Board System" correlated to a large extent Catholic school work. "The central board was found to be an admirable institution for the settlement of educational questions of a practical character, but these questions had to be brought before it. The members were not primarily educators, but pastors. They had little time to give to the study of educational problems, even if they had the requisite training for it. They visited the schools, but the inspection was more often characterized by a spirit of kindly, paternal interest than by practical insight. It soon became evident that the central board needed to be supplemented by a man who, to scientific training in Pedagogy, should add those qualities of zeal, discretion

15. *Acta et Decreta, Conc. Plen. Balt. III, N.* 203, 204.

and large mindedness which would fit him to act as the executive officer of the board."[16] The School Board of the Archdiocese of New York was the first to recognize this need and in 1888 appointed as inspector of schools, Rev. Wm. J. Degnan, D. D.[17] Other dioceses throughout the country have followed this example until at the present day there are about forty-three superintendents. Many of these men have received their training in the Department of Education at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. The duties and function of the diocesan superintendent are ably put forth in the following words of a member of the Department of Education, Catholic University: "The superintendent is an executive, to be sure, and an administrator; he is likewise, to some extent, an inspector. But these duties are but secondary to his real work. He is more than a judge of schools and teachers; he is, in the truest sense of the word, an educator. The whole diocese, bishops, priests, teachers, and people look to him for leadership in all that affects the school. The future, as well as the present, of the diocesan system rests with him. His must be the vision required to recognize the greater things that can be accomplished and the judgment necessary to choose the proper means. It is not such a great task to organize the educational facilities of a diocese and to develop some kind of a working system, but it is a tremendous task to organize a system that is living, that is built on principle and not on prescription, that has within itself the power of growth and development. Thus, for example, any one can sit down, and with the aid of paste and scissors, work out a fairly decent course of studies to which all the teachers of the system must strictly conform. But to recognize that a course of studies must be real and vital; that it is a means and

16. Burns, J. A., *The Growth and Development of the Catholic School System in the United States,* 1912, New York, p. 206.
17. *Ibid.* p. 206.

not an end; that it must be elastic and adaptable to meet the varying needs of children and communities; that while it gives adequate direction, it should never cramp that most precious of our educational assets, the initiative and individuality of the teacher—all, of this requires a grasp of educational principles that cannot be achieved in passing, a quality of knowledge that is the fruit of much concentration on a rather wide number of subjects.''[18]

The need of a superintendent in a diocese which is largely rural is even more urgent than in a diocese which is urban, because in the latter case there is some intercommunication of ideas and methods of teaching, while in the rural districts each school forms an isolated unit and very little interchange of methods or ideas is possible. The lack of properly qualified superintendents in rural dioceses constitutes one of the main drawbacks in Catholic rural educational activity and unless these dioceses are properly supplied with men who have had a technical training, there is little hope for Catholic rural education.

In a large diocese one superintendent will find it impossible to supervise efficiently all the schools under his control. This condition of affairs necessitates the appointment of another man, or perhaps two men, to assist the superintendent. The Archdiocese of New York at present has three men who devote their time to school work, one of whom confines his activities to schools located in rural districts. In the near future, we hope that other dioceses will follow this example.

Another very important officer for the organization and supervision of Catholic rural schools is the community inspector. Almost every religious congregation

18. Johnson, George, *''The Training of the Diocesan Superintendent,'' Catholic Educational Review,* Washington, D. C., p. 127.

that has schools in cities and large towns has its community inspector but the presence of such an officer in rural districts is still to be hoped for. This is particularly true of Western dioceses, but indications point to improvement in this regard. The duty of the community inspector is to keep the Superiors of the religious teaching orders in touch with the schools which they control, "with the individual teachers employed and with educational methods in general * * *" The inspector is not a mere delegate or examiner but rather a sort of general school officer of the teaching body, whose whole time is spent in visiting schools, reporting on conditions and persons, and whose knowledge thus acquired is of great advantage for the future placing of teachers and the further development of works."[19] All admit the necessity of an inspector in city schools and the reasons advocated for the presence of such an officer there, might well be adduced to establish the need in rural schools. Such community inspectors are even more necessary for the little school, situated in remote districts; for each school is isolated and the superintendent is able to visit the school only once a year; hence the individual school is practically deprived of any kind of supervision.

Part III. Various Substitutes.

There is one other matter which we wish to touch on before concluding this chapter on Catholic rural schools. It will be some time before there are parochial school facilities for every Catholic child, not only in the country but also in the city. It is estimated that about fifty per cent of our Catholic children do not attend Catholic schools. Whatever religious instruction they receive depends on the initiative of the local pastor and in many instances the children grow up ignorant of the

19. Sauer, George H., *Proceedings of the Catholic Educational Association*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, 1916, p. 358.

fundamental truths of the Catholic religion. There are many localities throughout the country, especially in rural districts, where the priest visits only once or twice during the year and his work then is generally limited to the administration of the Sacraments. There is very little opportunity for him to give catechetical instruction and the children in these places are in many cases lost to the Faith. To meet this difficulty various means have been devised. Some of these activities deserve commendation and we propose to consider them briefly.

In the Archdiocese of Chicago, under the leadership of Rev. John M. Lyons S. J., the Catholic Instruction League was organized in 1912. The main object of the League is to instruct in Christian Doctrine Catholic children whom the parochial school cannot reach and also working boys and girls and even adults who may be in need of such instruction.[20] The League is a lay organization under the direction of priests and the instruction proper is given by lay workers, men and women. Since its organization in Chicago in 1912 it has extended to the dioceses of Milwaukee, Omaha, Duluth, Davenport, Fort Wayne, Bismarck and Rockford.[21]

The extent of the work can be seen from the fact that from 1912 to 1917 in Chicago, 6000 children have been prepared for First Holy Communion.[22] In the Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota, which is a typical rural diocese, the League is well established and is accomplishing splendid results. Bishop Wehrle of Bismarck in a letter to the priests of his diocese says "Means must be found to gather all Catholic children of every mission on all Sundays of the year for religious instruction. Where the priest cannot give this weekly instruction let him select some persons who will act as

20. Lyons, John M., *Practical Plan of the Catholic Instruction League*, Chicago, p. 2, 1919.
21. *Ibid.* p. 5.
22. *Ibid.* p. 6.

Sunday School Teachers. . . . Where many children live far from church, organize Sunday Schools in different parts of the missions, so that every child can reach the place of instruction without difficulty. Catholic families are glad to offer their homes for such purposes.''[23]

The Diocese of Pittsburgh solves the problem of catechetical instruction through an organization known as the ''Missionary Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.'' The Society is composed of laymen and women who are banded together for the purpose of organizing and conducting catechism classes in mining towns, rural districts and other localities where there are Catholic children in need of religious instruction. The organization is under diocesan control with headquarters in Pittsburgh. The activities of this Society from November, 1918 to October, 1919 are tabulated as follows:

Catechism classes	166
Teachers	500
Children enrolled	14,010
Average attendance	9,000
Children prepared for First Holy Communion	1,592
Children received First Holy Communion	1,695
Children Confirmed	566
Children and adults baptized	100
Catholic children removed from Protestant Sunday Schools	1,000
Fallen away Catholics brought back to the Faith	62[24]

The annual expenses for carrying out this work amounts to about $10,000. This includes cost of transportation of teachers, hall rent for catechism centers and distribution of catechisms. The teachers receive no salary. The expenses are met by voluntary subscription.

This method might easily be adopted in other dioceses where there are outlying districts and where the Catholic children are deprived of religious instruction. The work should, however, be under diocesan control and

23. *Quoted in ''The Teachers Manual of the Catholic Instruction League,* Chicago, p. 6.

24. *Report of the Missionary Confraternity of Christian Doctrine of the Pittsburgh Diocese.*

expenses defrayed by diocesan funds. The dependence on voluntary subscriptions is accompanied by difficulties and efficiency is hindered. In every diocese there might be a number of priests appointed who would instruct lay catechists in the truths of the Catholic Faith. Supplied with this knowledge, the catechists might reach regularly many remote remote localities where the priest seldom visits.

Another method of imparting religious instruction is through the medium of correspondence. The Diocese of Helena, Montana, during the summer of 1921, opened such a correspondence course in Religion. The object and method of the plan is explained in the following words—"This First Communion Catechism Correspondence Course has been devised to give children whom the pastor cannot teach regularly an opportunity to prepare for their First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The pastor will send out one lesson weekly. The children, with the assistance of parents or friends, will read the story part of the lesson, study the picture, answer the proposed questions on printed question sheet. They will then return the questions and written answers to their pastor to prove that they have studied the lesson, and finally they will memorize the questions and answers, and prayers printed in blackfaced type at the end of each lesson. They are also asked to keep the lesson thus learned in the cover sent at the beginning of the course. The pastor will examine the answers and correct them, if necessary. He will return the corrected paper to the pupil with the proper marks. This paper the pupil will send back with the answers to the next lesson and the pastor will file the same for the inspection of the bishop."[25] The Course comprises twelve lessons; each lesson is divided into four parts. First there is an in-

25. *First Communion Catechism Correspondence Course adopted for the Diocese of Helena,* 1921.

struction on some religious truth, then follows a picture depicting or illustrating the instruction; then a prayer and lastly a story illustrating some virtue. This method has its advantages and disadvantages. It will reach children who are deprived of religious instruction and afford them some knowledge of religious truths. It assumes however that the child is able to write in order to answer the question. Many children are unable to write at the age when they receive First Holy Communion. Again, effective instruction depends to a great extent on the person who is giving the lesson; in this method, the written word replaces the spoken word and here also is a disadvantage.[26] The plan is still in the stage of experimentation and at present we are unable to gauge results.

The Catholic rural school can contribute much to the solution of the rural problem provided it is properly organized and supervised. Organization and supervision are two essentials for any educational institution and, especially, for rural schools that are located in remote districts. Our Catholic schools in the city enjoy a fair degree of organization and supervision, due to the fact that we have centered our attention on urban education. In the near future, we hope the same will be true of rural education. The gradual increase of diocesan superintendents throughout the country augurs well for the future of Catholic education in the United States. With a rural school system efficiently supervised and properly organized, the Catholic Church can answer the call to rural action and accomplish wonderful results.

26. Bagley, William C., *Educative Process,* New York, p. 267.

CHAPTER IV

The Preparation and Qualifications of the Teacher in the Catholic Rural School

The most important factor in any school is the teacher. With capable, well trained teachers, the success of almost any school is assured. On the other hand, with teachers who are incapable, lacking professional knowledge and skill, no school, however rich in material equipment or in courses of study, can hope to accomplish the end for which it was intended. Such a school may even do positive harm; it will retard the pupil's mental development and give him a wrong impression of the meaning of education. The evils that have resulted from the presence of incompetent persons in the teaching profession have caused the various States to enact laws defining the qualifications the prospective teachers shall possess before they are permitted to enter the classroom. The Catholic church likewise, has realized the importance of trained teachers and has enacted legislation pertaining to teacher preparation and normal training.

Since the school has been established by the State for the purpose of educating future citizens, each child within the State has the right to as good an education and as competent a teacher as the State can afford. The lack of untrained teachers is one of the difficulties that confronts American educators. The National Education Association in Commission Series, No. 3, informs us that "of the 600,000 public school teachers in the United States, 200,000 have had less than four years beyond the eighth grade; 300,000 have had no special professional preparation for teaching; 65,000 are teaching on permits, not being able to meet the minimum requirements of the

county superintendents; of the twenty million children in the United States, ten million are taught by teachers who have had no special preparation for their work and whose general education is clearly inadequate."[1] To overcome this deficiency the National Education Association advocates higher salaries for trained teachers and higher academic and professional requirements, thereby excluding the incompetent.

In the Catholic system there are no statistics available by which we may judge of the competency of the men and women who are actually engaged in teaching, but we are inclined to believe that teacher preparation and training could be greatly improved.

In discussing the teacher in the rural school many questions present themselves. We shall however confine ourselves to a consideration of certification, her professional training, and her relation to the home. As regards certification it is not necessary to consider in detail the various methods now employed but it will be sufficient to indicate some of the deficiencies in the different plans. The diversity of requirements in the various states has proven an obstacle to many teachers. It tends to patronize "home talent" and to exclude teachers from other States. Again the absence of reciprocal relations between the States in the matter of certification is often a handicap to teachers.

The following States do not recognize certificates granted in other States: Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, North Dakota, West Virginia, Louisiana and Florida. Colo-

1. *Commission Series of the National Education Association,* No. 3, Washington, D. C., 1919.

rado, New Hampshire, Florida, North Dakota, Ohio, Louisiana and West Virginia recognize graduation or credits from standard institutions outside the State.[2]

The necessity of universal recognition in the matter of certificates and diplomas is paramount for the cause of American education. The educational requirements of the various States should be unified. Each State, we grant, has the right to set its own standards; but a State with low requirements cannot expect that its certificates will be honored by a State requiring higher standards. "It is possible for every State to evaluate the credentials from other States in terms of its own, if equivalents are accepted and a little flexibility allowed. It this is done it is then possible to arrange an accredited list of normal schools in and credentials from other States, which may be accepted by the local certificating authority in place of an examination. A fundamental principle should be, that the certification door should always be open for competency and from whatever quarter this competency should come."[3] Localism, or the employment of "home talent," is the result of non-recognition of diplomas and certificates issued by other State authorities. It is one of the problems that the Catholic teaching communities have to encounter as they may have the Motherhouse or Community Normal in one State where their certificate is issued but when they are sent to another State to teach, their certificate is not recognized.

As already stated, the Church, like the State, has recognized the importance of the role of the teacher in the classroom and has laid down regulations concerning their competence to teach in the parochial schools. In

2. Cook, Katherine, *State Laws and Regulations Governing Teachers' Certificates, United States Bureau of Education,* Washington, D. C., 1921, p. 30.

3. Cubberly, E. P., article *"Certification of Teachers" Encyclopedia of Education,* Vol. I, p. 562.

1875 the Propaganda issued an "Instruction to the Bishops of the United States" in which, after enumerating the dangers to which the Catholic children are liable in the public schools, the Congregation exhorted the bishops to establish and maintain schools. "Every effort then, must be directed towards starting Catholic schools where they are not and, where they are, towards enlarging them and providing them with better accommodations and equipment until they have nothing to suffer as regards teachers and equipment by comparison with the public schools."[4] This instruction formed the basis of much of the educational legislation of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884. Two aims the Fathers of the Council had in view in its educational legislation, the increase of schools and the perfecting of them. The teacher, they realized, made the school and if the school failed to prosper and make progress the blame was due in large measure to the incompetent teacher. To prevent the entrance of the unqualified teacher the Council issued a decree which provided a central examining board in each diocese whose duty it was to examine prospective teachers and to issue certificates to the successful candidates.[5] If we consider that few States required certificates of any kind at this time the action of the Council in demanding certificates of all teachers is noteworthy. After the promulgation of this decree it remained for the bishops to enforce this legislation in their respective dioceses. Some bishops appointed examining boards who faithfully carried out the decrees of the Council. In other dioceses, with the introduction of the superintendent system, the certification and examination of teachers became a regular phase of the work. Much good has been accomplished by the above mentioned legislation, but we are of the opinion

4. *Instr. S. C. S. OFF.*, Nov. 24, 1875 (*New Collectanea*, N. 1449).
5. *Acta et Decreta, III Conc. BALT.*, DEC. N. 203.

that at the present time some new means must be devised to meet the requirements in the matter of certification.

At the present time it is evident that the day is not far distant when the State will demand certification of all teachers, whether they teach in public, private or parochial schools. The States of Nebraska and Arkansas are demanding State certification of parochial school teachers and indications point to similar legislation in other States. Some Catholic educators would have our teachers meet State laws and regulations in obtaining their certificates. Some would go further and have our teachers undergo the same preparation as public school teachers. While there are a number who favor State certification it is our opinion that at present it would be unwise to accede whole-heartedly to the various States and ask to have our teachers certified. We should however be prepared to meet the situation when it does arise. The following plan might be followed with some modifications and thus, while preserving our own autonomy, we can at the same time be prepared to meet future legislation in the matter of State certification. "Certificates might be issued in each State by the ecclesiastical authorities of that State. These certificates would render the recipient eligible to teach in any parochial school of that State, nor would a Religious be allowed to teach in the schools if she did not hold such a certificate. Where there would be more than one diocese in the State, a governing body would be formed, consisting of a representative of each bishop. There would likewise be an advisory committee including representatives of the various communities whose Motherhouses were in the State. A schedule would be drawn up, which might include everything that the State demands and more. Certificates would be issued upon the successful passing of an examination that would be prepared by the governing board and administered by

the local authorities in each diocese. Provision might be made, because of present exigencies, to grant temporary, renewable certificates to teachers in service who have not had the advantage of completing their normal course before going out to teach. Exemption would only be made in the case of those teachers who have completed a certain term of successful experience."[6] With this plan in operation we would have an effective and standardized method of issuing certificates and as stable as that of any of the States. The State authorities would have little cause for interference because we would have evidence that the standards are adhered to. If the above plan were carried out we would be supplied with an efficient means of certifying our teachers and preventing the entrance of the unqualified aspirants. This plan, while meeting the requirements of the various States, would still be controlled by ecclesiastical authorities.

Another very important problem that must be dealt with in regard to the teaching staff in the Catholic rural school is the question of professional preparation or teacher-training. The chasm between the immature, undeveloped child and the social heritage of the race is to be bridged over by the teacher. She is to act as interpreter or intermediary between the immature being and the vast amount of subject matter crystallized under the form of the curriculum. Hence to meet this situation the teacher must be acquainted with the child mind, its growth and development, the interests and activities of the individual, if success is to be assured. This idea of the function of the teacher has given rise to the normal or training schools for teachers.

Due to the influence of Horace Mann the first State Normal School was opened at Lexington, Massachusetts,

6. Johnson, George, *Proceedings of the Catholic Educational Association,* Vol. XVIII, p. 391 (1921).

in 1839.[7] Since that time the normal school has grown in popular favor. "Now every State and territory has its public and private normal schools, and it has come to be generally recognized that only through the perfecting of the methods of the normal school and its continued development, together with a wider application of the fundamental principles for which it stands, can we hope to add to or even maintain the progress that has been made thus far in the way of better teaching in the elementary school."[8]

Years before Horace Mann emphasized the need of normal schools, the religious communities, following the rule laid down by their respective founders had regularly established normal schools for their prospective teachers. In the normal school, the novice was supposed to receive one or two years of professional training. Often the demand for teachers exceeded the supply and the untrained teacher was sent into the classroom, ill-prepared and in many cases devoid of all professional training. The curtailment of the normal course was not the only defect in the community training schools. While the science of pedagogy had established a firm foundation in the State normals it was not fully anchored in the novitiate training schools. The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, cognizant of this defect, determined to remedy this evil and stated in its decrees that the community training schools are "to be in suitable establishments, in which the young may be trained by skillful and experienced teachers, during a sufficient period of time . . . in the various studies and sciences, in Method and Pedagogy."[9] The communities endeavored to make amends for the defects in the training of teachers and

7. *Life and Works of Horace Mann,* Vol. V, Boston, p. 220.
8. Burns, James A., *The Training of the Teacher,* Philadelphia, 1904, p. 11.
9. *Con. Plen. Balt. III, Acta et Decreta,* N. 205, Baltimore, 1886.

reform was obtained in the larger communities. In the smaller teaching Sisterhoods conditions were bettered to some extent and they accomplished as much as possible under adverse circumstances. Much good has been accomplished by the legislation of the Council but we are still far from the ideal in regard to normal training. Our religious teachers are striving to the utmost to meet the demands of ecclesiastical and State authorities, but under the stress of circumstances, unqualified and ill-prepared teachers are still sent into the schools and here they receive training in the school of experience, a school that demands an excessive fee both from the teacher and the pupils.

Many communities, and especially, the smaller, find it impossible to support and maintain a community normal because of the lack of trained teachers and necessary equipment. The following plan with some modifications could be employed in many of the States or ecclesiastical provinces and special consideration might be given to prospective rural teachers in these establishments. Under this method, the question of financial support, faculty for the training schools and the necessary equipment could easily be solved. To meet the problem of teacher training we propose a system of provincial normal schools for religious teachers under control of ecclesiastical authority and supported by the various ecclesiastical provinces. We advocate provincial rather than diocesan normals because many of the smaller dioceses would find it difficult to support a normal, whereas, if several dioceses combine in supporting a school of this nature the burden will naturally be divided and no one diocese will find it unbearable. In order that the religious life of the individual be not interfered with each prospective teacher should be required to have completed her full term of the novitiate before she is admitted to the normal school. The administration of

this system of normal schools would be in the hands of the Archbishop of the Province together with the suffragan Bishops. The faculty would be drawn from the province; if possible each diocese could supply one professor. The feasibility of having Sisters on the faculty is a question open to considerable discussion but it seems that some plan might be devised whereby they could assume the office of teaching. Undoubtedly, some of the best talent in Catholic educational circles is to be found among our religious teachers and it seems a waste of energy to have this ability unused. The faculty would have to be of such a calibre that the individual teachers would have special preparation in the subjects that they are called upon to teach. The funds necessary for the support and maintenance would be met by the respective dioceses in proportion to the number of students they send to the normal school. As regards the religious life of the prospective teachers while they are pursuing their studies at this proposed institution, it would be much the same as it is at the Catholic Sisters' College at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. It would be preferable for each community to have its own house of study, situated in close proximity to the normal school, to ensure the proper religious spirit for their subjects and also for the convenience of the students.

The curriculum of the normal school will take into consideration the requirements of the State in which it is situated. Assistance could be obtained in this regard from the Digest of State Laws prepared by the Bureau of Education of the National Catholic Welfare Council. The course of study should place special emphasis on the professional equipment of the prospective teacher. To ensure this, entrance requirements would be insisted upon and no one admitted unless she can present satisfactory evidence of having completed a standard high school course.

The course of study would in general outline take the following form:

I. Psychology, Educational and Social; Philosophy of Education; History of Education; School Administration and Management and a Study of the School laws of the respective States.

II. Methods of Teaching in the following subjects:

(A) Religion, Christian Doctrine and Bible History.

(B) English, Mathematics, Science, Art, History and Geography.

Since we are interested in the teacher of the rural schools, the normal will take cognizance of the Sister whose work will be in these schools. We admit that there are common interests between rural and city peoples; that the course of study in their schools will have many elements in common; but there are important differences in occupation and environment. Hence there will be a difference in the method of instruction; the subject matter of the curriculum will have to be attacked from a different angle; and the problems of the country child and of rural people in general will have to be understood if the teacher is to do effective work in the classroom. In order that the rural teacher may become a real impelling force in a community, and contribute her part of the rehabilitation of the country school, she must be prepared in a special manner in the normal school. The following subjects should therefore receive special consideration: Nature Study; Elementary Principles of Agriculture; Sanitary Science and Hygiene; Domestic Science and a Survey of Rural Sociology.

The course in Nature Study furnishes a starting point for the rural teacher's special training and it likewise offers a foundation for a course in Elementary Agriculture. Thru experience man learns that he must cope with other living forms, some of which are his friends and other his enemies; some that are a constant help in attaining life purposes and others that are opposed to him; and in order to make the most of life it is necessary to know what living things are doing in order to form proper attitudes. The aim of Nature Study is to acquaint the child with the living things in Nature that influence human life. The following aims should be kept in view in the Course of Nature Study:

I. To afford a knowledge of Nature;

II. To acquaint man with the useful and harmful in nature;

III. To form a basis for the study of agriculture;

IV. To make the individual realize the goodness and omnipotence of God towards His creatures.

The subject matter would embrace a study of:

I. Bird Life, both the harmful and useful species; their habits; protection and their economic value to the community.

II. A study of insects; harmful and useful species.

III. Study of plant life including the economic and aesthetic phases.

Elementary Principles of Agriculture:

Using the basis furnished by Nature Study this branch would include a study of:

I. The Soil, from a chemical, geological and physical viewpoint; its constituents, depletion, conservation and preparation for seed.

II. Seeds; principles determining selection; germination tests; forage and filed seeds; also a study of the weeds both useful and noxious.

III. Live stock, embracing the different varieties and their respective economic values.

IV. Study of Trees; the orchard; the economic and aesthetic aspects.

Sanitary Science and Hygiene:

There is an opinion prevalent amongst the American people that the open country is a place singularly free from the ravages of disease and sickness. In theory, the open country is a healthier place to live in; but, due to the absence of organized health controls, disease takes its toll because of the ignorance of those afflicted. The ravages of the Hookworm disease in the South with its attendant ills emphasize the need of a thorough understanding of health on the part of the teacher. The good health of the pupil is of fundamental importance in education and much retardation and other mental defects can be traced to an inadequate understanding of the elementary laws of health. If the school is to prepare for complete living the welfare of the body must be taken into consideration and it devolves on the teacher to be fully prepared to go into a community, armed with the latest discoveries of medical and sanitary science, not

only to teach the children the rudiments of sanitary knowledge but also to implant in them habits and appreciations of the fundamentals of health preservation.

Rural Sociology:

This subject represents an innovation in most normal schools and institutions for the training of rural teachers. For many teachers both in the Catholic and State systems the first experience in rural life begins when they are appointed to teach in the open country. They have lived in an urban atmosphere and their interests are centered there, and it takes some time before they realize the difference between the environment of country and city children. To reach the heart of the child; to understand his difficulties as well as the problems that confront country people in general, the prospective teacher should have some acquaintance with Rural Sociology and Economics.

One defect in nearly all our Catholic normals at present is the absence of the "model" or "practice" schools. In most of our normals the teacher is given a rather good course theoretically, but no opportunity is afforded her to try out the principles learned in the lecture room. She must go into the school, experiment on the pupils, and note their reactions. Sometimes this mode of procedure consumes time and energy both for the pupil and the teacher. In any proposed scheme of normal schools, whether they be community, diocesan or provincial, the place of the "model" school should be emphasized. The school should be a model in the true sense of the term, in regard to architecture, sanitary requirements, administrative staff and properly qualified teachers. The actual erection and support of a model school would entail little expense in a system of provincial normals, as the burden would be borne by the

various dioceses; and greater effectiveness would be secured when such schools are properly equipped and supplied.

A system of normal schools established on the provincial plan would afford the necessary preparation for prospective teachers in Catholic rural schools. In establishing a system of such normals, two facts must be taken into consideration. 1. Each community, either through tradition or otherwise, tends to have its own methods of teacher preparation. 2. The different communities invariably overlap diocesan and provincial boundaries. It follows that the provincial normal should be strictly neutral, that is, not under the control of any particular teaching community, but rather under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority of the province.

All educational agencies, Catholic and State, are clamoring for more and better teachers. The lack of properly qualified teachers is found in both systems. Any attempt to solve the rural problem from a Catholic educational viewpoint must of necessity regard the question of teacher training and preparation. In addition to training, another important element is required in order that the teacher in the rural school meet with success. She must be in sympathy with life in the open country. She must really feel that her call to teach in the small parish schools is as important as the work in a large city parish.

For the public school teacher it is often a matter of economic concern where she teaches, but for the religious teacher it is a matter that finds expression in the very life that she leads. The soul of the country child is just as pleasing in the sight of the Creator as the soul of the child in the city, and the work of teaching in the rural school is just as important and meritorious as in any other place. The Catholic teacher will play a large role

in the rehabilitation of rural America; but, to play this part, she must be prepared to do her work efficiently and in the right spirit.

In the rural school, where the number of children is usually smaller than in the city school, the teacher can enter into closer relationship with the home. The school can greatly increase its influence by taking parents into its confidence, and the teacher can increase her efficiency when she understands the home conditions of the child and the difficulties which the parents have to meet in every-day life. To come to an understanding of the respective duties of the home and school, the teachers could either visit the home or meet the parents and discuss matters that have an intimate bearing on the life of the school. To bring about better accord and more effective cooperation between the home and school, organizations known as Parent-Teacher Associations or Mother's Clubs should be encouraged. The Parent-Teacher Association "is an organization seeking to restore the understanding between the home and the school which existed in the early days of our public school system when the teacher, in lieu of a living salary, 'boarded round.' After spending a week or a month with the families from which his pupils came, the teacher could understand many of the peculiarities of the children and could work more intelligently with them; through this contract, also, the parents understood what the teachers wanted to accomplish through the school agency, while the child himself, knowing that this understanding existed, fell into harmonious action with the cooperating forces about him.

Since that day a chasm has gradually developed between the home and the school, and to bridge this chasm

the Parent-Teacher Association has come into existence.''[10]

The various Catholic women's organizations in conjunction with their pastor and teachers can accomplish much in solving problems that have an intimate bearing on the training of the child and, with a thorough understanding of the relationship of home and school, the Catholic rural teacher can increase her efficiency a hundredfold.

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10. *Handbook of The Parent-Teacher Associations and Mothers' Circles,* Washington, D. C., 1921, p. 2.

CHAPTER V.

The Curriculum of the Catholic Rural School

The efficiency of the Catholic rural school depends upon three factors, the parish priest, the teacher and the curriculum. We have discussed the first two in previous chapters and now we propose to consider the third, namely, the Curriculum. The Curriculum is the means by which the aim of education is achieved and will differ according to the end set forth by the philosophy which underlies a particular system of education. The aim of Catholic education has been clearly stated by the late Reverend Dr. Thomas E. Shields in the following words: "The unchanging aim of Christian education is, and always has been, to put the pupil in possession of a body of truth derived from nature and from divine revelation, from the concrete work of man's hand, and from the content of human speech, in order to bring his conduct into conformity with Christian ideals and the standards of the civilization of his day."[1] This statement of the aim of Catholic education is a conclusion derived from the principles enumerated in Chapter II, where we discussed the distinctive characteristics of the Catholic rural school. The ultimate aim, then, of the Catholic rural school will not differ from the aim of the Catholic school located in the city; and as a consequence the curriculum will not differ substantially in the two types of schools.

The above definition of the aim of Catholic education indicates the source of the subject matter of the curriculum. "The food required for the nourishment and development of man's conscious life is to be found

1. Shields, Thomas E., *Philosophy of Education*, p. 171.

in the following four sources: first, in the truth and beauty and goodness of the Creator as reflected in nature; secondly, in the direct revelation of the truth and beauty and goodness of God that reaches the individual through revealed religion; third, in art regarded as the concrete embodiment of human thought and action; fourth, in the manifestations of the human mind and heart that reach the individual through the arbitrary symbols of speech."[2]

The aim of Christian education places proper emphasis on the various needs of the individual; religious, moral, intellectual, social and physical. It likewise takes into consideration the demands of society and implies a proper recognition of the utilitarian and cultural elements of education.

We are wont to consider education as preparatory to life; this attitude has characterized the traditional curriculum since Spencers' time with the result that future needs were given the precedence over present ones. This preparatory character of the curriculum is quite evident when we examine the various branches of the course of study. The "reader" is used as a means of preparing the child to read later. Spelling, which has been closely associated with reading, is taught in anticipation of employing such words as the pupil may need later on in life. In fact, this idea of preparation is still dominant in many of the texts now employed in schools. We admit that the school subjects are preparatory but this characteristic should not crowd out the present needs of the child.[3]

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2. *Ibid.* p. 43.

3. Junius L. Meriam of the University of Missouri, maintains that the traditional curriculum is not meeting the needs of modern civilized life and a new vitalized curriculum should be devised that would be related more closely to the child's life. In order that the course of study meet our present needs, he offers five principles that should guide educators in curricula formation.

1. The curriculum should contribute primarily to enabling boys and

Bonser, writing on the curriculum of the elementary school, says, "The curriculum represents the experiences in which the pupils are expected to engage in school and the general order of sequence in which these experiences are to come. Very generally, the curriculum has consisted of material found valuable in carrying on life activities in the best way, but it has been presented apart or separate from the uses which it serves in these life pursuits. There has been an assumption that the activity called upon was learning the material represented by the curriculum so that it could be expressed in oral or written form. The school's problems were those of developing a small number of skills in interpreting symbols and expressing meanings by their use —reading, spelling, writing, number, drawing, music; memorizing the content of some text books as in geography, history and science; and of conducting some manual activity to develop dexterity and to aid in the understanding of some ideas and principles, as by work in laboratory, shop and garden. Many of these elements, processes and principles were used in carrying on the real activities of life were included in the curriculum, but *without relationship to the activities themselves.*"[4]

This description of the curriculum applies in a very special manner to the rural schools. The content of the course of study has not only been selected from out-of-

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girls to be efficient in what they are now doing, only secondarily to preparing them to be efficient later.

2. The curriculum should be selected directly from real life and should be expressed in terms of the activities and the environment of people.

3. The curriculum should provide for great scope and flexibility to meet individual differences in interests and abilities.

4. The curriculum should be so organized that it will admit of easy arrangement of the schedule for any day, of the work of any grade, and even of the transfer of work from grade to grade.

5. The curriculum should lead the pupil to appreciate both work and leisure, and to develop a habit of engaging in both. Meriam, Junius L., *Child Life and the Curriculum*, 1921, P. X.

4. Bonser, Frederick Gordon, *The Elementary School Curriculum*, New York, 1921, p. 2.

school experiences but it has been selected from the life activities of the city.[5] The main defect in rural school curricula is that we have taken over almost in its entirety the course of study used in city schools, a course of study that was intended for children surrounded by urban environment and destined to supply urban needs. The result has been that boys and girls living in the open country lose interest in school work, become dissatisfied with their environment and wend their way to the city because of the fact that their education in a large measure has turned them from, rather than to, the country.

Education is an adjustment between the individual and his environment. Regarded in this light education must be considered from two points of view; that of the individual who is to be adjusted and that of the environment in which he moves. Under the term environment are included the religious, moral, physical and social influences that affect the individual. These influences are constantly changing and education must take cognizance of this dynamic character of life and the course of study must change to meet the altered condition. When life was simple the curriculum embraced the three "R's." Parker, writing on the curriculum used in the Colonies, says: "The curriculum of the American Elementary school down to the American Revolution included reading and writing as the fundamental subjects, with perhaps a little arithmetic for the more favored schools. Spelling was emphasized toward the end of the period. The subjects that had no place were composition, singing, drawing, object study, physiology, nature study, geography, history, secular literature, manual training."[6]

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5. Foght, H. W., *The American Rural School*, New York, 1913, p. 22.
6. Parker, S. C., *History of Modern Elementary Education*, New York, 1912, p. 84.

After the War of 1812, the urban trend became marked and the great industrial centers were started. A new era was opened that changed the entire social and economic life of the country. The opening and settlement of the Northwest and the beginnings of foreign commerce gave rise to a need of geography, and by 1826 it became a part of the elementary school curriculum.[7] The desire to perpetuate the ideals of the Revolution and to acquaint the foreign element that was flocking to our shores with the principles underlying our government, brought about the introduction of United States history. In fact all the subjects of the present curriculum were destined to supply a need that society felt, with the possible exception of Nature Study. The attempt to meet the needs of society is characteristic of only the urban schools. City educational systems have taken into consideration the rapidly changing environment of American life and have attempted to meet these altered conditions through a reconstructed course of study. Rural education, on the contrary, has remained static and failed to adapt itself to the changed conditions of rural life. In the past few years, wonderful strides have been made in agriculture; cooperative enterprises are gradually developing and rural life is losing much of its drudgery through the introduction of modern conveniences and inventions. If the school is to keep abreast of these advances, the beginning is to be made in a new curriculum that is based on rural needs. By a new curriculum for rural schools we do not mean that the course of study will represent an entire departure from city school curricula. The subjects taught in rural schools will not and should not differ greatly from those taught in urban schools; they must, however, be redirected and made more applicable to rural life.

7. *Boston Board of Supervisors, School Document,* No. 3, 1900.

There are two ways of drawing up a curriculum for rural schools. The poorer and less scientific method is what is known as the "paste and paper" method. This is merely copying from other curricula already in use without regard for the needs of the locality or the occupation of the people. The other method, which is more scientific and at the same time more effective, is to interpret life objectives and life needs and endeavor to have the curriculum meet these demands. In general, men engage in five lines of activity; activities that have reference to health, practical efficiency, citizenship, leisure and religion. For the Catholic, the last named activity is the basis of the other objectives of life. The curriculum of the Catholic rural school should therefore meet these fundamental needs of man in order that the individual may become an efficient member of the social group. The evaluation of any subject in the Catholic rural school curriculum depends on the degree that it contributes to the above mentioned life activities. To meet the needs of country people, the various subjects have to take into consideration the peculiar circumstances that occur in rural life. Health conditions in most rural communities demand radical improvement. To meet this need, the study of physiology and hygiene must be redirected. Questions that relate to soil, water and milk pollution; contagious diseases; unsanitary conditions of the farm home, etc., should find place in the curriculum. The neglect of the school in regard to the health of the individual is largely responsible for the extensive spread of the Hookworm disease in the South, and the prevalence of typhoid and malaria in many rural sections.

Physiology, to meet rural needs, must be studied from a hygienic rather than an anatomical viewpoint. "How and what to eat, the importance of fresh air, the nature and prevention of disease, the importance of proper attention to bodily disorders, and the evils of

intemperance are types of information of which rural people stand in particular need, and boys and girls on leaving school should carry such practical knowledge away with them and apply it to their lives."[8] The health needs of a rural district are more pressing than those of an urban center because, in the latter case, the individual is guarded by boards of health and when disease afflicts him, clinics and hospitals are at his service. In rural communities, the health of the individual depends in a large measure on his own discretion. Health education to be effective must be begun in the elementary grades. At an early age it is comparatively easy to instill correct health habits. "It is becoming increasingly evident that we have begun too late with our health instruction. The child is the fittest subject in which to instill proper health knowledge; he has no prejudices; his mind is virgin soil. He delights in the knowledge of simple things which relate to his daily experience. . . . In most matters habits are not yet formed and it is almost as easy to form good habits as to form bad ones."[9]

A redirection in the tool subjects is likewise imperative. In arithmetic, problems and projects should be given that relate to rural rather than urban life; moreover, much of the matter now included in the elementary course of study could be eliminated with little educational loss. "During the first six years, the fundamental operations—addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers and simple fractions, both common and decimal should be emphasized together with percentage and its simplest applications to interest."[10]

In the matter of reading, pupils are often taught to read from a reader, but the inculcation of a love and

8. Cubberly, E. P. *RURAL LIFE AND EDUCATION,* New York, 1914, p. 265.
9. *Health Education,* No. 9, *United States Bureau of Education,* p. 4.
10. McMurry, Frank M., *Elementary School Standards,* 1921, New York, p. 167.

appreciation of good literature is sadly lacking. The rural school should not only afford a knowledge of reading but endeavor to instill into the pupil habits and appreciations of good literature.

A new conception of the aim of geography is needed if it is to meet the demands of rural life. "Thirty years ago geography was eminently the 'science of location.' Countries were bounded, mountain systems and rivers were traced, and cities were located, without limit. Maps and map drawing were resorted to in almost every recitation as one means of reviewing and fixing position, and drills on such facts were as prominent as drills in spelling. The highest aim was the vivid picturing of the earth's surface, or, better, of maps; and as everything was conceived of as in a fixed status, 'static geography' was the only kind known." [11]

Geography should show the interdependence of man on his fellowman and how commodities of life are interchanged. In rural schools, the beginning should be made in home geography, a study of local environment and earth controls. This will form a basis for a study of distant countries. Geography is very apt to become a book subject unless it is related to home environment and correlated with other branches of the curriculum, especially history, nature study and agriculture.

The aim of history teaching, both in city and country schools is unquestionably the same, to develop intelligent patriotism and responsible citizenship. Too often, however, the child leaves school with the idea that history is a mere collection of dates, and of wars through which his country has passed. To participate intelligently in the political and civic enterprises of the country, the individual should not only have a knowledge of military events but also an understanding of the eco-

11. *Ibid.* p. 137.

nomic and social developments which his native country has experienced. The misunderstanding and lack of appreciation of American ideals are due to the false interpretation that the child receives in school. The individual completing the elementary course in a rural school remains profoundly ignorant of the industrial and agricultural expansion of the United States, although he has a few isolated facts of history, usually of a military character that have no influence over his conduct toward his fellowman and society. The citizen of tomorrow should not only have a knowledge of his nation's wars and military leaders but also a knowledge of the struggles waged against physical forces and an acquaintance with the leaders in other lines of activity, men who have built up the industries and who have produced our art and literature. As a complement to history, civics should receive special attention in the rural school. The memorization of the United States Constitution and other civic facts will not contribute to good citizenship unless it is bound up with real life. Rural communities in many instances suffer from the lack of government; health inspection is neglected and the only police protection rural people have is represented by the district sheriff, which has proven to be quite inefficient. "Rural America needs government to make it physically wholesome and healthful; to protect it from the social vice which finds in the rural community's unprotected condition, an opportunity to debauch the unsuspecting youth; to give efficiency and economy in the management of its schools; the construction and upkeep of its highways; and in the organization of its quasi-public social-economic institutions and organizations."[12]

Music in many rural schools is yet unknown and where it does enter into the course of study it is limited

12. Foght, H. W., *The Rural Teacher and his Work,* New York, 1917, p. 257.

to a few songs learned in rote fashion. The tastes and appreciations of American people in regard to music stand in need of much improvement and if the rural schools are to take cognizance of the finer and higher things of life, the proper appreciation of music must be insisted upon. "Thru music, love of God and fellowman may be made to dominate the emotions and passions of youth and home may be made a center from which joy and culture will radiate into a larger social circle."[13]

In the teaching of two subjects, nature study and elementary agriculture, the rural school possesses advantages over schools in the city. Nature study ought to find a place in every curriculum, because there are ample opportunities for correlation with other subjects, geography, history, elementary science and elementary agriculture. Moreover in the Catholic school this study takes on a new meaning. It should "lead the pupils to behold and admire in the visible creation, the wisdom, the goodness, and providence of God for His creatures and the duty of being kind to dumb animals." In a word, every object of creation speaks to the child of an all powerful and provident God and the little country child should

"Find tongues in trees, books in running brooks
Sermons in stones and good in everything."

The child raised in the open country has lived in the very heart of nature, and often he has remained a stranger to its beauties. He is prone to judge nature by a commercial and industrial standard rather than to love nature for its own sake. To change this misconception the school is called upon to develop in the pupil a love and an understanding of nature and her laws and an appreciation of her beauties. Viewing nature study from a purely pedagogical standpoint, it is replete with educational opportunities. The country child is intim-

13. Shields, T. E., *Philosophy of Education*, p. 241.

ately associated with nature, he sees the green fields, the rivers, the birds and animals; using this mass of information as an apperceptive basis, the teacher can begin with nature study proper. Nature study and agriculture are intimately associated and no school offers such excellent opportunity for efficient instruction in these branches as do our rural and village schools. From the beginning, nature study should involve experimental gardening on the school grounds; this necessitates the use of a school garden where projects can be worked out under the supervision of the teacher. The study of agriculture should not begin earlier than the sixth grade and not later than the seventh, because if introduced earlier it is very apt to take on vocational aspects and the other subjects of the curriculum will suffer in consequence. This subject like nature study has an intimate connection with and relation to the world in which the country child lives. Beginning with a study of the soil, its composition, cultivation and fertility; plant life and seeds, their selection, tillage conditions and testing and the diseases that are common to plants, it can lead up to and include a study of the insect, bird and animal life of the community. Elementary agriculture as a branch of the curriculum can easily become a book subject, if the teacher confines herself to a text. To escape formalism, it must be made a living subject. This will mean that most of the work is to be done out-of-doors where the pupils work with real soil and where they select, plant and cultivate and finally assist in the harvest of the grain or seeds. To carry out projects in a study of livestock, a nearby farm might be visited and there the varieties of animals could be explained, altho in most cases, excursions of this nature are unnecessary as the children are already acquainted with the various kinds of farm animals.

Nature study in the seventh and eighth grades will naturally diverge for the two sexes and instruction that has reference to the domestic duties of the present rural home should be offered the girls. Besides the general work of school gardening and nature study, the girl should be given instruction in the household arts, household or domestic management, clothing and textiles and also household decoration.

In the Catholic rural school, the study of religion must always remain the center of the curriculum, around which the other branches should be organized and from which they draw their energy and power. The child in the open country, as in the city, must learn to know God and the first duty of the Catholic rural school is to teach Jesus Christ and His mission on earth and to bring the individual's conduct into harmony with the ideal set by Christ. Modern education is profoundly secular although protagonists of the modern school are wont to speak of religion, but religion to them is social service.[14] When they speak of religion, they do not include the idea of a personal relation between the individual and his Creator. "The evangelical notion of religion as a purely personal relation between God and the soul, setting man apart from his fellows, is widely regarded as an exploded fiction. Religion is now seen to be a social growth, like speech. It roots itself in social relationships and expresses itself therein. If it is of worth it must make such relationships easier not harder, and must enrich, not impoverish them."[15]

If the curriculum is to meet present needs it must make provision for religious instruction as one of the fundamental demands of rural society. In a previous chapter we dwelt on the bankruptcy of the country

14. Bobbit, F., *The Curriculum*, p. 166.
15. McGiffert, A. C., *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, N. Y. 1915, p. 273.

church and the solution for the problem from the Catholic viewpoint is the Catholic rural school wherein religion is taught. Rural sociologists and economists are clamoring for a panacea for the evils that are menacing the American farmer. Their slogan is "community service" or "cooperation" but they neglect the very element that is fundamental in Christian society, Faith in Jesus Christ and His Mission on earth. This element forms the basis of every obligation and duty and obliges the individual to regard his neighbor as his brother in Christ. Religion is disappearing from rural districts and the rehabilitation of the country is possible only thru the reintroduction of the teachings of Christ. The most efficient means that the Catholic church has at Her disposal is the school and if She wishes to establish and maintain on "the land a sufficient population, effective and prosperous in production, and happy and content by reason of a highly developed social and cultural status," the beginning is to be made thru the Catholic rural school with a course of study that meets the needs of country children and offers them an education that modern American life demands.

CHAPTER VI

Examples of Catholic Rural Schools

This chapter will be merely illustrative and descriptive, its purpose being to present a few examples of Catholic rural educational effort. Obviously, no attempt can be made here to describe more than a few typical examples and it is not claimed that the examples enumerated represent the best efforts of Catholics in behalf of rural education. They are typical, however, and illustrate what may be done in meeting the rural problem from a Catholic educational viewpoint.

I. St. Mary's School, Tontitown, Arkansas, Diocese of Little Rock

This school is located in the midst of an Italian immigrant community at Tontitown, Arkansas. Thirty years ago the locality was a veritable wilderness; only a small portion of the land was cultivated and the community was unprogressive. The future prospects for this colony of immigrants were far from bright. Without church or school facilities the religious, social and economic life of the inhabitants was at a low ebb. Today the community is prosperous, progressive and is one of the most successful farming districts in the Southwest.[1] The changed character of this settlement is due to the zeal of an Italian priest, Father Pietro Bandini, who erected the first church and school in Tontitown. Newell Sims in his work "The Rural Community" describes the community in the following words: "On entering Tontitown from Springdale the first building that comes into view, standing out prom-

1. *Reports of the Immigration Commission,* Washington, D. C., Vol. I, p. 567.

inently among the farms, is the new parochial school; the next is the parish house, set in a garden of flowers, and a short distance away is the Catholic church. These three buildings were erected by the Italian settlers. The church is already too small to hold the rapidly growing congregation and plans are now under way to remodel and enlarge it."[2]

Father Bandini realizing the need of a school, opened one in 1898. This building proved too small for the community and a new school was erected in 1908. The present building has ten rooms, furnished throughout with modern equipment and is one of the best schools in State of Arkansas.[3] The teachers belong to the Ursuline Order, whose Motherhouse is located in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1921 the school enrolled 107 pupils.[4]

The complete change of the social, political and economic life of this community is, according to Sims, due to the presence of an energetic Catholic priest and the Catholic school. "In fine, the one fact that stands out clearly in the development and progress of this colony and in contrast to several others studied is the efficient and intelligent leadership which it has enjoyed. Perhaps no Italian colony similarly situated has made more rapid or surer material, educational, political advancement. A leader who knows both his own people and Americans; who has vision as well as sound business sense; who has secured and can retain the confidence of his followers; who desires to develop a true Americanism and to inspire and instill the love of the highest moral, educational and political ideals of American life in the foreign born, is worth a score of years in the progress of a newly established colony. The training of such leaders to protect

2. Sims, Newell, *The Rural Community*, New York, 1920, p. 179.
3. *Ibid.* 181.
4. Ryan, James A., *Catholic Directory of Schools and Colleges*, Washington, D. C., 1921.

and teach these children in American life and ideals is a matter worthy of at least as much attention by the body politic as the establishment of schools for the civic training of the children in years. The history of Tontitown bears witness to the value of such leadership and such teaching.''[5]

II. Holy Cross School, Buena Vista, Iowa, Archdiocese of Dubuque

A course in Nature Study

Nature Study in this school is begun in the primary grades and extends thru all the elementary grades. In the higher grades it embraces a study of agriculture proper. In the first grade the pupils study the bird life of the community including the economic and aesthetic value of birds in general. A study of the flora of the surrounding country follows; the children are taught how to appreciate flowers and to distinguish between the beneficial and noxious types. The children are taught how to select and test seed grain; what kind of grain is best for the community. Then follows a study of the soil; how to test and what substances are necessary if the soil is found to be sour or depleted. In the study of seeds and soil the children are asked to observe the various farms in the neighborhood and note the deficiencies they find there. They are also told to ask their parents what remedies they employ when the soil is deficient.

The children bring the monthly cream checks to school and comparisons are made as to the per cent of butter fat obtained from the various types of dairy cattle. This necessitates a certain amount of elementary bookkeeping on the part of the children but the children enjoy the work and manifest great interest in it.

5. Sims, Newell, *The Rural Community*, New York, 1920, p. 181.

In the Spring a project is given the entire school, the subject being a "hot bed." The boys do the necessary planning and construction and find out whether or not the soil is in need of fertilizer. The girls test the seed and plant it. This project evoked great interest on the part of the pupils and many of them started like work at home, thus carrying out in real life what they have learned in school.

In the Spring the pupils of the seventh grade were given various projects; vegetable gardens; caring for poultry; preserving fruit; etc. "Each child must keep a diary of his own project and report on it when school reopens in September. The diaries of the children are then collected and formed into an 'agricultural booklet' which forms part of the school exhibit at the County Fair."[6]

Reports from this school indicate that the course in Nature Study links up the home life of the pupils with their school experiences. The use of a text book is advised but most of the work depends on the initiative of the teacher.

III. St. Camillus Academy, Corbin, Kentucky, Diocese of Covington

A Kentucky Mountain Catholic School

Many attempts have been made by various religious organizations and individuals to reach the adult illiterates who dwell in the South Atlantic Highlands. The introduction of "moonlight" schools in many sections of the South has contributed in a large measure to the elimination of adult illiteracy.[7]

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6. *Letter to Author.*
7. Foght, H. W., *The Rural Teacher and his Work,* New York, 1917, p. 209.

The work of the denominational schools in the mountainous regions of Kentucky is likewise accomplishing results in the attempt to remove illiteracy among the younger members of the population. Notable among these educational institutions are Berea College; Sue Bennet Memorial College at London, Kentucky; St. Johns Industrial School; and St. Camillus Academy, which is the only Catholic school in the mountain regions. Corbin, Kentucky is in the southern part of the State, close to the Tennessee border. Until to a few years ago, the Catholic people had little opportunity to practice their religion due to the absence of a priest. The opening of the mines in this section brought in a number of Catholic immigrants and the only educational opportunities, in many cases, were the denominational schools, wherein many children lost their faith. It is a repetition of the early pioneer days when the Irish immigrants came through the Cumberland Gap from Virginia to settle in the Kentucky mountains; they had no priest to minister to them and no schools for their children and thus they fell away and their descendants today are without the Faith.

Father Ambrose Reger, O. S. B., travelling thru these regions and ministering to the scattered Catholics, saw the necessity of a Catholic school and left no stone unturned until the school became a reality. In 1902, Corbin numbered 300 people; amongst this number he found 12 Catholic families. With this as a nucleus, he opened a school, engaging a laywoman as a teacher. The first year's enrollment averaged 22 pupils. In 1908 the Sisters of Divine Providence from Newport, Kentucky, took charge of the school. The Sisters did not confine their activities to the classroom but went about the community improving home and living conditions of the inhabitants. The school grew so rapidly that new quarters were necessary and in 1915 a new building was

erected. At the present time, St. Camillus has the reputation of being the most efficient school in that part of the State. The present enrollment numbers about 165 pupils, 30 of whom are boarders. "Among the boarders, Germans, Hungarians, Italians and Syrians find room beside their native Kentuckian or Virginian sisters. As a civilizer, St. Camillus does all that a high-class school can accomplish. Its departments are conducted by cultured and experienced educators, who evince the utmost zeal and conscientious care in their work. The children are not only instructed in the ordinary branches, but an earnest effort is made to impress upon them from the beginning respect for authority and love of truth and honesty. They are taught the value and nobility of work and domestic science forms an important part of the training. Travellers and investigators who have had occasion to observe the hovels of many mountaineers and the distressingly slovenly 'shacks' of the coal miners, will realize what the home-making courses at St. Camillus will mean to the next generation of mountaineers. Hence the girls are taught to mend their clothes, to care for a home, and while music and art are by no means neglected at St. Camillus, the Sisters realize that here the home-making courses are not a 'fad' but a necessity. This is assuredly 'social work' of the best type."[8]

IV. St. Mary's School, Salem, South Dakota. Diocese of Sioux Falls

A Catholic Boarding School

One of the difficulties encountered in Catholic rural education is the financial support in a parish where the number of Catholic families is quite small or where they are distributed over a wide area. Reverend B. Weber of Salem, South Dakota, in the Sioux Falls diocese has

8. Reger, Ambrose, *America Press*, New York, November 26, 1921, p. 141.

apparently solved this problem. There are about 135 families in this parish, two-thirds of whom are farmers and many of whom live eight and ten miles from town. When the parochial school was erected, those residing at a distance did not feel they were obliged to render assistance, inasmuch as it was impossible for them to send their children to school. The pastor succeeded in obtaining the promise of those members of the parish to support the project by donating food stuffs which they produced on their farms. In return he promised to "give their children board, including lodging for four cents per meal."[9] The parochial school originally furnished accommodations for fifty boarders but after a few years a building was erected that accommodated one hundred and twenty children. The farmers bring their children to school on Monday morning and the pupils return home Friday afternoon. The success of this school caused a member of the parish to donate a farm of one hundred and sixty acres; the proceeds of which go toward the upkeep of the school. In 1912 another farm was purchased which supplies the necessary staple products to the boarding school. "Other parishioners remembered the boarding school in their last will, so that, with God's help the four cent meal system is guaranteed for all future times. Let it be said that at no time has the four cent meal system met with a loss. Boarders from outside the parish are admitted at the low rate of eight dollars per month."[10] There are many schools of this type throughout the Sioux Falls diocese and reports indicate that they meet with success wherever they receive fair trial.

9. Peschong, L., *The Salesianum*, Milwaukee, January, 1916, p. 2.
10. *Ibid.* p. 3.

CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion suggests certain working principles that may indicate the procedure of Catholic educators in attempting to meet the Rural Problem from an educational viewpoint.

I. The Catholic church through its leaders is called to rural leadership and the rural clergy must be made aware of the vast opportunities that lie dormant in country districts.

II. The erection and maintenance of a system of schools is paramount for the material and spiritual well being of Catholics residing in rural communities. This is possible only through a systematic organization of educational resources on the part of the Church authorities.

III. An adequate system of supervision is essential in order that the school afford effective instruction to the child.

IV. The teachers employed must be duly qualified and prepared especially for their work. This necessitates the erection and support of diocesan or provincial normal schools.

V. The curriculum employed must take cognizance of rural needs and should reflect all the aims of life: Health; Practical Efficiency; Citizenship; Recreation and the highest aim, Religion.

In conclusion we maintain that any attempt to solve the Rural Problem must of necessity take into consider-

ation the function of the Catholic Church and the Catholic School. These two institutions are fundamental, because in last analysis, the rural problem is a moral problem that has an intimate relationship with the spiritual nature of man.

The economic and social status of the farmer is in dire need of improvement but the mere amelioration of economic and social conditions will have little effect unless they are reinforced by a Christian view of life and Christian institutions.

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