



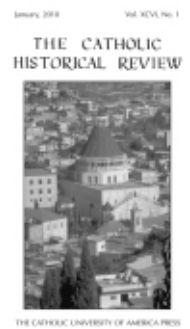
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*Cornelia Connelly's Innovations in Female Education,
1846–1864: Revolutionizing the School Curriculum for Girls*
(review)

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turing element" (p. 576). He convincingly argues that this antimodernism was a conventional position in bourgeois society. Far from being concentrated in traditionally pious areas such as Brittany, the society flourished in the same towns where other bourgeois associations took root. The careful prosopography indicates that members were ordinary bourgeois men. They fathered larger families than their contemporaries (or their own parents), and they were more likely than the general population to raise a child with a religious vocation, but, on the whole, their educational aspirations, professional achievements, and private lives were unremarkable. In the practice of charity, the Catholics of Brejon de Lavergnée's sample learned to live the Catholic critique of the Revolution at the same time as many of their fellow Frenchmen were internalizing the practices and values of the republic. The Vincentian contribution to the nineteenth-century project of "recreating a society between the State and the individual" was to insist that any meaningful society had to create both horizontal and vertical ties—linking individuals to one another and to God (p. 538).

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Cornelia Connelly's Innovations in Female Education, 1846-1864: Revolutionizing the School Curriculum for Girls. By Roseanne McDougall. [Hors série.] (Lewistown, NY: Edwin Mellen Press. 2008. Pp. 288. \$109.95. ISBN 978-0-773-45187-2.)

Sister Roseanne McDougall, S.H.C.J., assistant professor of religion at La Salle University, has produced a masterly work on educator Cornelia Peacock Connelly, published in the bicentennial year of Cornelia's birth in Philadelphia. During the eighteen-year period studied in this book, Cornelia offered a solid education to girls from all walks of life: the poor, teachers-in-training, the middle classes, and the upper class, beginning in Derby, England.

Cornelia had received most of her experience of American Protestant education in Philadelphia between 1809 and 1831. Education for girls was important in that city of intellectual and artistic vitality. Married to the Reverend Pierce Connelly in 1831, Cornelia accompanied him to Natchez, Mississippi, to take up her role as wife of the Episcopal minister of Trinity Church. Their first two children, Mercer and Adeline, were born in Natchez.

Studying the attacks against Catholics during the Nativist movement in the United States, the couple came to know and embrace the Catholic faith. En route to Rome in 1835, they stopped in New Orleans. As their ship was delayed, Cornelia was received into the Catholic Church and received her First Communion from Bishop Anthony Blanc in St. Louis Cathedral.

Pierce made his profession of faith in the Catholic Church in Rome, and both were confirmed. English Catholics whom they met in Rome would later call Cornelia to her educational apostolate in England in 1846. Financial mat-

ters caused their return to the United States. They were invited to Grand Coteau, Louisiana. During their years (1838–43) there, Pierce taught English at the Jesuit St. Charles College, and Cornelia taught music at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, where she had been welcomed into the retreats of the Religious of the Sacred Heart and into their school. Pierce eventually decided to seek ordination as a Catholic priest, which changed their life.

The family returned to Rome. While Cornelia was a quasi-postulant at the Trinità dei Monti in Rome, Adeline was a student at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, and little Frank lived there with his nurse. Pierce was ordained to the Catholic priesthood, but several years later left the Church.

McDougall situates this work in the context of girls' education in mid-nineteenth-century England. Education for the poor was minimal, less for girls than for boys. Schools sponsored by religious groups added religion to the basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, which emphasized rote learning. Religious congregations had been active in education before Cornelia's arrival in 1846, but they were severely repressed. The Roman Catholic Relief Act (1829), the Oxford Movement (1833), and the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England (1850) fostered the climate for flourishing of Catholic faith-based education.

In 1856 the Roman Catholic Training College began at St. Leonards-on-Sea. The community that Cornelia had been called to found, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, had moved there from Derby. Among the graduates in its eight-year normal school history were more than a hundred teachers, both lay and religious. McDougall cites extensive observations of educational authorities during the years of the training college, that is, from Her Majesty's Inspector and the Catholic Poor School Committee. Religion was an intellectual study and an important component of moral development. Moreover, Cornelia provided time for the students to develop their spirituality.

That same year, 1856, at St. Leonards, a Boarding School for Young Ladies enrolled a mere sixteen students. There was also a middle school, St. Michael's School, and St. Aloysius, the poor school. The environment at St. Leonards was highly positive—filled with enthusiasm for learning, mutual trust, simplicity, and a zest for life.

Curriculum for the School for Young Ladies at St. Leonards reflects *Cornelia's Book of the Order of Studies*, which is referenced in John Marmion's "Cornelia Connelly's Work in Education, 1848–1879" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1978).

McDougall's style is pleasant to read and invites the reader to learn more about this Cornelia who was wife, mother, founder, and educator. The scholarship in this work is impressive, giving extensive bibliographical materials for further reading.