

at a game of ball, and my eldest born is not so old but that he would tip over the ink on these papers if he were not completely engrossed with his house of blocks. I do not view what I am writing about either from a balloon or through a telescope. As an old boy I talk to the young boy, and don't ask him to do all the *fielding*. I shall take the boy by the hand and not by the ear. If the talk is too long and too dry for him, then I am to blame. All work and no play makes

Jack, they say, a dull boy; but all play and no work makes Jack a useless boy; a thing that can't fairly be called a *boy* at all—something that sleeps, and eats, and plays, but doesn't work. How can such a—well, such a young person—make a living or repay those who supported him when he was, or might have been, a boy? I write no sentence for such a person; 'twould be unjust to call it a *boy*. I will write for the boy or youth who expects to grow up to be a *man*.

WIT AND DIPLOMACY IN DICTIONARIES.

BY C. W. ERNST.

DICTIONARIES may not be altogether amusing, but there are few dictionaries which do not contain some amusing statements. Dr. Johnson defines a lexicographer grimly as "a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original and detailing the signification of words." This drudgery has been relieved partly by the voluntary and involuntary jokes of the dictionary-maker himself, partly by the reception with which his work has met at the hands of his professional brethren and the people at large. No dictionary could be more sober and matter-of-fact than Weigand's excellent German "*Wörterbuch*." Every edition of it defines a crab, or *krebs*, as "the well-known insect." The "*Dictionnaire des Dictionnaires*," by Napoléon Landais, contains this entry: "*Yanquis—nom d'un peuple des Etats-Unis d'Amérique*."—"Yankees—the name of a people who live in the United States of America.

The amusing definitions which abound in Johnson's dictionary of 1755 are fully matched in Richelet's French dictionary of 1698, and in Riemer's Greek dictionary, which

used to be popular in Germany. Johnson defines oats as a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people. Richelet observes under the head of *bain*, or bath, "*Quand les médecins ne savent plus où ils en sont, ils ordonnent le bain à leurs malades*."—"When doctors do not know which way to turn, they order their patients to take a bath." He defined the Augsburg Confession as "*la déclaration de la création de Messieurs les Protestans*"—the declaration that Messieurs the Protestants had come into existence. Johnson defined excise as "a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but by wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid." Richelet remarks under the head of *épicier*, or grocer, that "these people wrap some of their merchandise in gray paper, or in a few sheets of wretched books, which one sells to them because one has been unable to sell them to others. The translation of Tacitus by the little man d'Ablancourt has had this misfortune." Richelet is cautious enough to express this lexicographic