

## "WHEN A BOY TIRES OF SCHOOL."

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I AM asked to tell the readers of the *Interior* what I think should be done "when a boy tires of school." Obviously the first answer that suggests itself is—it depends upon the boy. And certainly some boys tire of school because of disappointment at their slow progress or through some inherent weakness of a nervous character; such boys, it is unnecessary to say, need to be encouraged to pursue their studies. Others, again, tire of school because of having not the slightest interest in their studies. It is not only uphill work but it is positively most disagreeable work; they cram but to recite and forget. Their only goal is the class room, outside of which their studies have not the slightest interest for them. Indeed so poor are their recitations that they would be dropped, as so many are, but that good conduct keeps their name on the school register. What shall be done with these boys?

Back of this question, however, and containing the basic principle by which the answer to the question must be tested, another inquiry arises, What is the object of this schooling? Is it supplied for purely decorative purposes? Is it obtained as an approved method for providing intellectual gymnastics, that the mental faculties may be sharpened by the exercise? Or is the boy sent to school and then to college just "for the name of the thing"—that he may graduate, and by writing the cabalistic letters A.B. after his name become a member of that mystic fraternity which claims superiority over all who live outside the charmed circle? Or is the aim of all schooling or Preparation (not education, please, for that is

a life work) utilitarian in the highest and best sense? However some may regard this matter, I shall assume that in the utilitarian idea lies the true conception of the real object of schooling, speaking generally—for special studies are often pursued simply for one's pleasure, though even here a useful purpose is served. But in the main I take it that the aim and object of schooling is to enable the boy to develop the faculties with which he has been especially endowed—and which differentiate him from every other boy—to the fullest extent possible, that he may devote them to the very best purpose.

Now, boys differ, and very greatly so; they differ more widely than trees or animals of the same species differ. As Ruskin says, the higher the organism the greater the corruption at death, so the higher the civilization and the more complex his environment the greater will be the difference between boys. In our latter day civilization some boys are born mathematicians; they lisp in numbers, and the numbers come; some are born linguists and classicists, they absorb Greek roots and Latin gerunds as naturally as the babe drinks in its mother's milk; others again excel in measuring the forces of nature, the scientific trend shows itself in an early love for ornithology or botany or geology or zoology.

Right here I recall the case of a New Haven boy who from earliest childhood showed an intense delight in everything relating to the structure of animals. One day, during the absence of his parents, he took the house cat and put it in a pot of boiling water that was on the stove. When they returned the dish of