

Leacock, in his "Too Much College" states it thus: "All that is best in education can only be acquired by spontaneous interest. Real education should be a wonderful beginning, a marvelous initiation --- and life will carry it on." To use his phrase again, to express what I am trying to emphasize here, it is "the difference between a spirit and a mechanism."

I want to make this perfectly clear. Let me offer you a concrete illustration. My youngest son attends an experimental school which is exploring educational methods. That school has been testing pupils lately to determine how much of detail they are getting out of their reading assignments. You know the techniques used. Did the hero come in from the right, the center, or the left of the stage? Questions like that. Solemn stuff. Scientific testing, and all that. Well, our lad had the flu lately. Our physician advised him to stay abed. Saturday came. Mrs. Brown had some shopping to do and was going downtown with me in the morning. Except for the maid, he would be alone in the house all day. When we went to his room before we started, he said, "Gee, it's going to be lonesome here. And I've run out of anything to read. Can't you get me something?" We went down to the family library. I brought up Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," - Mrs. Brown, one of her girlhood classics. My selection he greeted with, "Aw, dad, that looks like biography, and I hate biography!" None too successfully I tried to interpret the book. He remained unconvinced. I didn't get far. I didn't carry my point.

That evening when we returned, Mark Twain was untouched, but he had almost finished reading the other book. School has taught him to read fast, and he does a lot of it. I asked him whether he enjoyed the book. Yes, he had. He was enthusiastic about it. "It's a fine book, Dad. Did ya' ever read it? A dandy book. Really, I liked it! All but one chapter. That almost spoiled it for me.