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THOMAS A. EDISON

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On October 20, 1928, Secretary Mellon presented Thomas A. Edison a medal, as an acknowledgement of honor conferred upon him from our nation.

Edison was born at Milan, Ohio, February 11th, 1847. His endurance and strength were inherited from his father, who walked one hundred and eighty-two miles from Canada to the United States, without a moment's sleep. His mother was Nancy Elliot, a pretty Canadian schoolteacher who was also known for her strength and endurance in walking through the cold storms of Nova Scotia to the little country school house in which she taught.

The following is an account of his boyhood days as told by himself. It will be sure to encourage pupils who try and yet have trouble with their studies. This account of Thomas A. Edison will prove that people who are not smart in school can be of great use in the world if they try.

In infancy he was what mothers and nurses would call a "good" child, for he seldom cried, and his temper—from the moment when he could distinguish between pleasure and pain—was an angelic one. He is said to have cracked jokes when a baby, and from the time when he began to "take notice" he was quite conscious of the humorous side of a situation. This characteristic he probably inherited from his father, who, like Lincoln, enjoyed a good story. The serious side of his nature came from his mother, not so much as an inheritance perhaps, but because during his early years he was constantly with her. To him his mother was something more than a fond parent, and his love for her was of that quality which ever remained one of the strongest attributes of his nature. Many years later—long after her death, when fame and fortune had come to him—interviewers would ask the inventor to tell them something about his mother. But her loss had been so great a grief to him that he never could speak of her to strangers.

"I did not have my mother very long," he said on this occasion, "but in that length of time she cast over me an influence which has lasted all my life. The good effects of her early training I can never lose. If it had not been for her appreciation and her faith in me at a critical time in my experience, I should very likely never have become an inventor.

"Her years of experience as a schoolteacher taught her many things about human nature, and especially about boys. After she married my father and became a mother, she applied that same theory to me.

"I was always a careless boy, and with a mother of different mental caliber I should probably turned out badly. But her firmness, her sweetness, her goodness, were potent powers to keep me in the right path. I remember I used never to be able to get along at school. I don't know now what it was, but I was always at the foot of the class. I used to feel that the teachers never sympathized with me and that my father thought that I was stupid, and at last I almost decided that I must really be a dunce. My mother was always kind, always sympathetic, and she never misunderstood or misjudged me. But I was afraid to tell her all my difficulties at school, for fear she too might lose her confidence in me.

"One day I overheard the teacher tell the inspector that I was 'addled' and it would not be worth while keeping me in school any longer. I was so hurt by this last straw that I burst out crying and went home and told my mother about it. Then I found out what a good thing a good mother was. She came out as my strong defender. Mother love was aroused, mother pride wounded to the quick. She brought me back to the school and angrily told the teacher that he didn't know what he was talking about, that I had more brains than he himself, and a lot more talk like that.

"She was so true, so sure of me, that I felt that I had some one to live for, some one I must not disappoint. The memory of her will always be a blessing to me."

Even when a baby he thought. When puzzled over any matter he would scowl, press his lips tight together, walk fast with a step that showed all kinds of determination.

At four years of age he was friendly with all the neighboring children—especially boys—and every one liked him. He was ready to take part in any escapade suggested, and when his mother's back was turned for a moment he would slip out of the house, take a short-cut to the canal by scrambling down the bluff, and a few minutes later his anxious parent would detect him from one of the windows running along the tow-path as fast as his sturdy legs would carry him. From

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