A NEW IDEA ABOUT VACATIONS: BY RAYMOND RIORDON

THERE is more harm done body and soul of the youth in this land during the so-called "vacation" months than the nine months of the school year can ever hope to offset. It is too warm for concentrated mental work in a schoolroom during the summer, but the fact that school today means, largely, book-learning, is confessed when we idle during a third of the year. If schoolgoing meant education, each day, each minute of the twelve months would have its lesson and its result. The summer months are long and dreary ones. The industrious lads—and there are many—seek employment, generally to their great moral disadvantage. Driving grocery wagons, serving soda and like occupations throw children into contact with an environment that is not desirable. The sons of the well-to-do go to summer camps where idleness is accentuated or useless sports are given first place in the boys' minds. Some camps add to the novelty of the sport by giving prizes or letters or whatnot—the whole basis of such effort but bringing the individual into a stand of self-aggrandizement.

Why not utilize the boy's summer in the application of his schoolroom instruction? Why not treat these months as a term devoted to the improvement of the community? Why not make his vacation one where self-effacement can be brought about through honest delving into that unknown sphere—the land of effort for others' good?

Down in Berea, Kentucky, is Berea College. It doesn't happen to be a college, however, it is just a school with a fine purpose guided by an unselfish band of men and women. At Berea the mountain slopes from five States, toboggans, figuratively, to the school. Down the slopes pour nearly two thousand boys and girls—almost men and women. These people—of whom Daniel Boone was one—get "schoolin'" for various parts of each year, just such time as they can spare. Fifty miles many come on horseback, fording streams and undergoing danger, to go to school. Berea wants to make citizens of these Americans—the straggling population so few in numbers in this flooded land, who really are Americans. Her field is broad for in these regions dwell 3,000,000 not "blue bloods" but "red bloods."

Up in the mountains these souls live in log huts, the women weave and dye and farm, which is good; they also smoke and drink, which is bad. The men hunt and fish and kill big game, which is good; they also drink, distil bad whisky and kill each other once in a while, which is bad. Berea intends that all that is best and right in their lives that bespeaks the habits and customs, the crafts and traditions of the people of
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The mountains, shall be retained, developed and explained in their relationship to a better civilization. All else, Berea hopes to remove. And the one way to bring things into right relationship is through education. Book-learning is not education. The pupils at Berea are taught to associate with each other; they are taught to read and write and so appreciate the thoughts of a standardized people. That men and women—those who teach them—will devote themselves to bringing in a better plane of happiness and usefulness, in itself opens up a great vista of understanding to these wary, suspicious, but always brave Americans. Through the schoolroom agencies, through constructive activity, through a careful teaching that each as an individual is as good as his neighbor, provided he is as useful; through showing the giant that his strength has the glory of the knight because he defends the woman of his race, rather than exploiting his physical power in putting the shot; through teaching that the swish of the axe and the fallen tree tell the tale of manhood far better than the punt of the pigs—through every honest agency that scientific education in the real has shown us, these boys and girls are being brought to the joy of living, to usefulness, independence, greatness.

At Interlaken School we make great effort to do exactly what Berea is doing—to develop an American citizenship. But at Interlaken we must begin at the other end. Here we are already the product of a poorly standardized civilization. So we make our endeavor through going backward to the days of the pioneer—we do our own chores, we build our own houses, we attend to our own needs. We clear the land, use the logs for our shelter and our heat, we plow, we sow, we reap. The axe is our weapon of our own construction. The red blood of the mountain our model for reconstruction. Berea's people must be book-read; the rest of us must become learned in the lore of activity for defense, muscles must obey the demand for shelter, for food, for woman's protection. In the mountains we must find the extremes—and extremes lead to dissipation. In the cities we must find the other extremes, and likewise do such extremes lead to dissipation.

And so in the midst of summer—boys of the city, or of the village, or even boys on the farms. Let us consider the boys, say of a town of 50,000 or 60,000—such a town is generally the one where boys are at their worst. Such towns are likely factory

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Material for frames

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50 lineal ft.
100 lineal ft.
60 lineal ft.
60 lineal ft.
800 lineal ft.
60 lineal ft.

A chart for estimating materials for log house.
towns, where one industry has brought about a boom and a very mixed population has rushed "to squat." Some succeed; many fail, but stay; others hope for the day when they can leave—and all have children. All such towns have each corner lot and pool room crowded with half-grown lads and girls without a serious thought; with only idleness and incipient vice in their minds and on their tongues. As these children grow up, so shall their children be. Cigarettes, liquor, dice, cards—even worse—and then the future with its ever-increasing census of delinquents and its ever-decreasing number of people capable and daring enough to prevent or to amend. This needs attention.

Dan Beard spends his summer at one school in the middle West, and boys pay large sums—comparatively speaking—to study woodcraft. The boy—the average boy—can't go to such a school. Another group of boys go to the country for the summer or part of it. They are thrown often with people too tired to be careful of the little decencies; they mix suddenly with animals and sex knowledge becomes gross because they have no previous instruction on the subject; they are alone too much; they pay board and so usefulness is not to be thought of. Another group of fellows go to expensive camps where they idle the entire day—boating, swimming, fishing, having athletic meets—and smoking. What all boys should do is to mix under guidance, and surprise the town by becoming useful members of the very com-

Rear view of the house at Interlaken which is the result of vacation work.
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We know there are social centers, we know all the devices to bring children to school and to get people to use the schools; we also realize what modern thought has done in the way of specialized architectural whims in making buildings beautiful, attractive, complete. But this one log building erected through the efforts of the children of the community, used by them or other children or persons in the community afterward, improved and maintained by them, will mean more to every living soul in its vicinity than a half million dollar structure possibly could.

The plan given in this article is of a building built by boys—even to the hauling of the gravel after stripping the top off the pit and digging it out. The structure was completed in thirty working days, but the boys worked in three shifts—eight hours each. Oak logs were used and these were not stripped but bark was left intact. For the building you build, though, strip the logs and creosote them, using the creosote as the finishing color. The building was used as complete bench and machine shop and was equipped with power machinery run with a twelve-horse power gasoline engine. It contained sanitary plumbing and a large cellar took care of the heating apparatus. No interior scheme is shown, for such a building would be built to meet the demands of the particular community in which it was erected. It might be finished for an assembly hall, it might be a library, it might be a schoolhouse. In any event Craftsman interior plans occurring all the time in the magazine could be followed in fitting the interior to its uses.

Skill is not the first essential in building such a structure. The fellow in command needs the skill—the rest will imibe it if there is unity of purpose and a central desire. If such a craft achievement could become the schoolhouse of a section of the city—though built through the efforts of boys from all over the city, the school spirit—that indefinite, ever-necessary thing, would manifest itself throughout the school world. To erect and equip a building of this character, many boys could be kept busy and happily busy, educationally busy during the entire vacation time.

The plans would have to be made, the business details attended to, the materials selected, the excavating done—the son of the man with teams should run this job—the logging done, the logs hauled or shipped, the timber stripped and stained, the foundation put in after the gravel had been hauled and the forms built—get busy, you sons of cement men, you offspring of carpenters, get the mill work—windows, doors, sashes, made. Then follow the furniture or interior woodwork, the decorating, the landscaping. What a big man in the community, what a genuine citizen the Superintendent, the Principal, the Mayor, or the Police Chief would be, if he organized, guided, completed a real building—beautiful, useful, "our own," during the months of wasted energy, wasted soul, accumulated viciousness? Mr. Police Chief, here is your chance to make your department constructive; Mr. Fire Chief, here is the plan to make you a greater hero than carrying the child from the burning building; Mr. Mayor, here is an opportunity to put you in the governor's chair because we need governors like this. And Mr. School Superintendent, here is the chance to prove yourself a teacher, not a hireling, not a pedagog, but a teacher. Do this thing and make every angle prominent—for this outline is but a brief of a most comprehensive idea—and you will deserve the name—teacher. You won't reach the capitol, you won't accumulate riches, you will have to stay where you are, the children need you, the parents need you and they won't let you go—but see what a great reward you will have won.

If you are in a village, build right in the town; if in a town, get near the center of things; if in the country get a view and set your building high, if possible, or in full sweep of the eye; if in the city, and there isn't a place, get near the outskirts, in which event what a meeting place this temple of logs would make on Saturdays, especially if it sat on a piece of farm land where things could be raised and given to—not charity, but the fellow who hasn't a place to raise anything.

The traditions of this country stand firmly on daring, enterprise, constructive activity. Shall we cast tradition to the winds and wait the rise of a more virile race from elsewhere to come and drive us into the sea of oblivion, or shall we remember the men of the mountains and struggle for the needed thing? And that needed thing for you and me—we almost hybrid twentieth century product—that needed thing is usefulness to the State. Education of the child is the only rock everlasting.