To the Pupils of
The Grammar Schools of New Jersey,

Dear young friends:

I have been asked to write a letter to the boys and girls of the Grammar Schools in New Jersey, telling something of my own school-days. Such a letter as that would be very short, for I really never had any school-days as you understand them. I was rather delicate when a small boy, and instead of sending me to school, my mother, who had been a High School teacher, educated me herself at home. She had only the one pupil, which was fortunate for me as I received thoroughly sound teaching. My mother also taught me how to read good books quickly and correctly, and this opened up a great world in literature. I have always been very thankful for this early training.

I was fond of experimenting, so when I was about 12 years old I got work as a train newsboy in order to earn my own pocket money to buy chemicals and apparatus with which to experiment. My train ran from Port Huron to Detroit, and this gave me opportunity to go to the libraries in the latter city and read books that could not be found in Port Huron, where I lived. I always kept busy and had lots of adventures in trying to add to my store of knowledge, but to tell you the whole story would make my letter too long.

School-days are very different from what they were when I was a boy fifty years ago. You now have beautiful schoolhouses with modern conveniences and apparatus, and your studies include many interesting subjects relating to the arts and sciences. It seems to me that the boys and girls of the present time ought to be very happy in having these fine opportunities of preparing to do big things in the world.

With all good wishes for your future, I remain
Yours sincerely,

Thomas A. Edison

TAE/ES