

TWO INFANT PRODIGES RECALL OTHERS

Harvard's New Boy Wonders Not the First at That Institution; World Famous Children Who Did Not "Flatten Out."

BY JOHN ELFRITH WATKINS.

HARVARD is all agog over its two new infant prodigies, William James Sidis and Norbert Wiener. Sidis is the 11-year-old wonder who has just entered the university with the highest honors and whose unsurpassed record for scholastic precocity includes such feats as reading and spelling at 5 1/2 years old; operating the typewriter expertly at 4; studying French and Latin, writing a book and qualifying as an accountant all before 8; entering Brookline High School at 8 and inventing a new system of logarithms at 10.

Oddly parallel with this interesting case is that of young Wiener. He is another Boston lad, who attended college at the age of 11, but his original alma mater was Tufts College. When he matriculated there in the Fall of 1896, he was found to be far in advance in philosophy and chemistry than the ordinary senior. He was graduated last June, when, at the age of 14, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with honor, and this Autumn he has entered the graduate department of Harvard, where he will take an advanced course in biology and chemistry.

The strange similarity of these cases is not one of age alone, but the fathers of the precocious youths were both born in Russia, are both men of science, and have both been connected with Harvard, the one as a student, the other as a professor. Dr. Boris Sidis, the father of the new Harvard prodigy, is a psycho-pathologist, practicing at Brookline, while Leo Wiener, father of the Tufts prodigy, is assistant professor of Slavic languages at Harvard.

Other Harvard Prodiges.

Indeed, Harvard seems to have a monopoly on our chief phenomena of this category. It used to be Edward Everett who was its prize prodigy, he having entered when but 12, and having been graduated with the highest honors at 17. He was, indeed, a marvel of precocity, gaining the reputation of an accomplished scholar and eloquent divine when but 15, while at 21 he was appointed professor of Greek at his alma mater.

And when our fathers were young Cambridge was excited over the arrival at Harvard of the boy wonder, Truman Henry Safford. This lad, born on a Vermont farm in 1836, had commenced to show mathematical genius as early as the age of three, when his parents commenced to amuse themselves by testing his strange ability. When he was 6, if given the number of rods around any farm in the county, he could mentally calculate the number of barleymorns contained, and one of his mental calculations at this age was that there were 617,500 barleymorns in 1600 yards. When 7 he was studying books on algebra and geometry, and soon afterward higher mathematics and astronomy. Wanting some logarithms, he found them himself by the formulas, and in his 20th year he published an almanac of his own computation. That year a skilled mathematician who examined him produced a sum of 18 figures which he asked the boy to square, and the correct answer was given within a minute. He could at the same time multiply four figures by four figures as rapidly as could be done upon paper.

Astronomical Discoveries at Eleven.

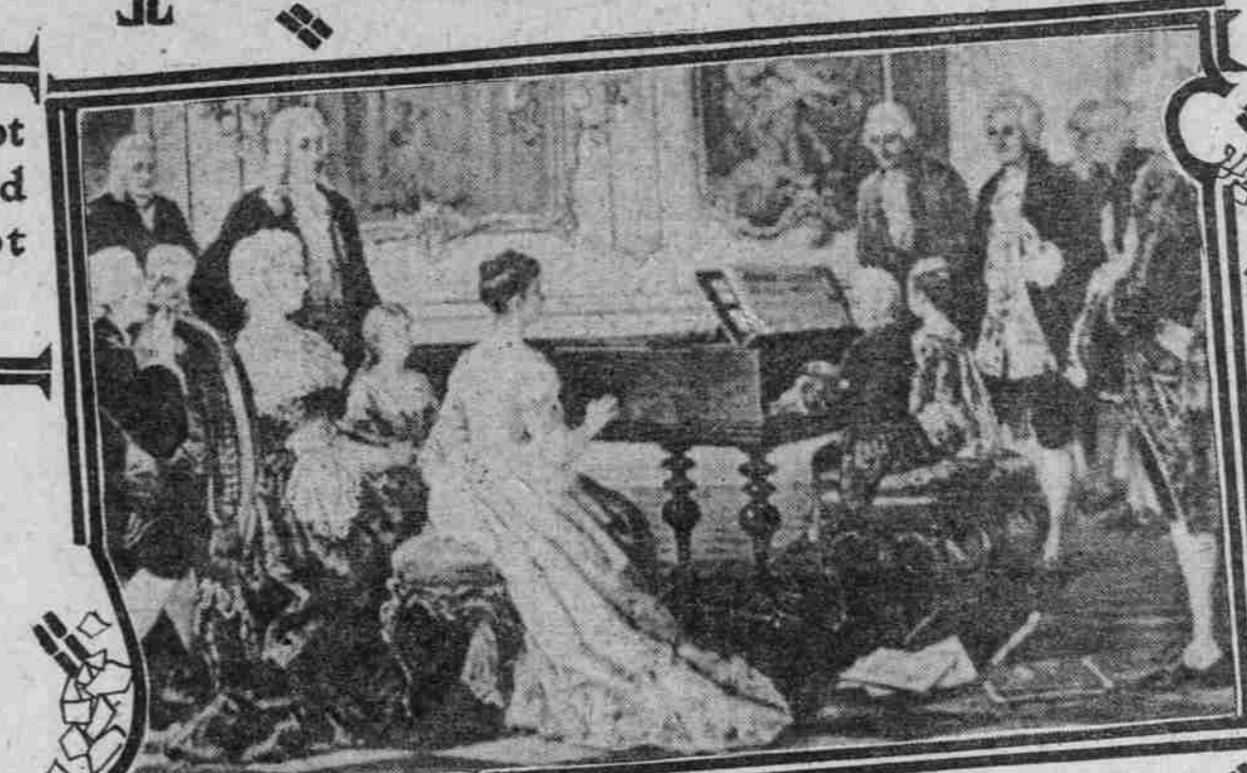
When 11 he turned out five almanacs, one of which, compiled for Cincinnati, reached a sale of 24,000 copies. The same year, by systems of his own invention, he reduced by one-fourth the labor of calculating the rising and setting of the moon and learned by one-third the trouble of calculating eclipses. But he

had a range of genius wider than mathematics and including chemistry, botany, philosophy, geography and history. He took his degree at Harvard in 1854, when only 18, and was engaged until 56 in a series of computations of orbits of planets and comets, commenced when he was only 14. Afterward he became director of the observatory at Harvard, professor of astronomy at the Chicago University and at Williams College, at which latter institution he remained until his death, eight years ago. His all-round precocity, so rare in the usual stage "calculator," was similar to that of Andre Marie Ampere and Carl Friedrich Gauss, who had gone before him. Ampere was born at Lyons in 1775 and learned to count when three or four by means of pebbles. Soon he became noted for such mental calculations as those of Safford, and like him, followed a scientific career, in which he became celebrated through his investigations in electro-dynamics. And Gauss, the son of a poor German family, first displayed his marvelous aptitude at 3, when he followed a mentally a calculation of his father's relative to the wages of some workmen, and detected an error in the amount. At 10 he was studying higher analysis and at 11 he had begun to master classical languages, while at 14 he had read the works of Euler, Lagrange and Newton. He became one of the foremost mathematicians and his "Disquisition on Arithmetic," published when he was but 24, is the foundation of the modern theory of numbers.

Another Vermont Phenom.

Our grand-grandfathers marveled at an American prodigy who, like Safford, was a Vermont farm boy. This was Zerah Colburn, born in 1794. He was regarded as a backward child until the end of his sixth year, when, after he had been at school but six weeks, his father asked him the product of 12x37, and immediately got the answer, "324," the result of mental calculation. The father at once started with Zerah upon an exhibition tour about the country, and at the age of 8, just when our second war with Great Britain was breaking out, he was taken to London, where he astounded an audience by mentally determining the square root of 106,929 and the cube root of 268,536,125 as quickly as these numbers could be written down. It was not until arriving in London that he commenced to learn reading and writing, and after eight months at a Paris school, he returned to London, where the Earl of Bristol took an interest in him and sent him to Westminster School, but in three years his father took him out of school and started him upon an unsuccessful career as an actor and playwright. This was when he was 15, after which he taught school, became a computer and returned to America, where he was employed as Methodist preacher and finally as language teacher in a seminary. He died at the age of 25. While making his earliest childhood calculations, he underwent contortions, like those of St. Vitus' dance, and he also had six fingers on each hand besides six toes on each foot.

The last great mathematical prodigy seen here was Jacques Inaudi, an Italian, who exhibited himself in our cities in 1901 and 1902. He was born in 1867, passed his early boyhood minding sheep, and began his career as a calculator by doing peasants' accounts for them at lightning speed. At 7 he could mentally multiply any five figures by five figures. When 12 he begged his way to Paris, where he was taken in hand by a caricaturist, who started him in the music halls. He did not learn to read and write until he was 20, and outside of



MOZART AND SISTER BEFORE EMPRESS MARIE THERESA



JOSEF HOFMANN, 1887. OTTO HEGNER

mental calculation had a poor memory and only fair mental ability.

A Ten-Year-Old Paderewski.

But the most famous boy prodigy of this generation was Josef Hofmann, the 10-year-old pianist. This lad was born in Cracow, Poland, in 1877, his mother being an opera singer and his father a music teacher. Josef had a piano of his own before he was five, and in six months had written several trifling compositions. When he was 6 he played at court, and the well-known painting by Borkmann shows him, at this age, playing a duet with his little sister, Mari-

anne, before the Empress Maria Theresa. Before he was 8 he had published six sonatas, and when 12 he wrote a mass, which he conducted in the presence of the entire court. And Meyerbeer played at a concert when 6 and was recognized as the master pianist of Berlin when only 9, while Liszt made his concert debut at 9 and at 13 made the great triumph at Vienna which ended in Beethoven's kissing him when he finished playing.

Maude Adams began at 9 months. Infant prodigies have grown to be successful artists in the drama, also, as in the case of Maude Adams, who had a speaking part on the stage as early as 6

when, in 1877, she played Little Schneider in one of J. K. Emme's "Fritz" plays. But this was not Miss Adams' stage debut, by any means, for at an important event had occurred at the age of 3 months, when she played the title role in "The Lost Child." Julia Marlowe made her debut as Josephine in "Pinks" at 12, and Ada Rehan first bowed to the footlights when at 13 she played Clara in "Across the Continent." On Skinner played a negro part at Wood's Museum, Philadelphia, when 12, and Henry E. Dixey was only 10 when he began as Paganini in "Under the Gallies." But of all American artists on the stage today, Elsie Leslie made the greatest

success as a child actress. When 5 she played with Jefferson as Little Mendie in "The Yawp," and when only 6 she so pleased Mrs. Burnett by her acting the title role in "Editha's Burglar" that she was selected to originate this part in "Editha's Burglar" in which she became famous as the 7-year-old star. After starring also in Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper," she left the stage at 10 to study until she was 15.

Such careers as the most of these tend to explode the old notion that unusual precocity augurs premature death or a long life membership in the Great Mediocrities.



CARL FRIEDRICH GAUSS



PATTI AT THE AGE OF SEVEN

PRETTY WASHINGTON, D. C., GIRL TO MARRY ARMY OFFICER.



MISS DIANA IRELAND NORTON. WASHINGTON, Nov. 20.—(Special).—One of the prettiest of Washington's society girls has just announced her engagement. She is Diana Ireland Norton, daughter of Edward Stevens Norton, of Belmont street, and granddaughter of Colonel E. M. Norton, of West Virginia, who was a friend of Lincoln and served, by appointment, as Marshal of West Virginia. Miss Norton is to marry Captain Clarence N. Jones, who is attached to the Third Cavalry and for two years has been stationed at Fort Meyer.

PRACTICAL POLITICIANS OPPOSE NEW CONTROLLER OF NEW YORK STATE.



CLARK WILLIAMS. NEW YORK, Nov. 20.—(Special).—The practical politicians do not look with favor on the appointment of Clark Williams to be Controller of the State of New York. When Martin Glynn, a Democrat, held office he made an unprecedented record for clean, non-partisan administration. Since his day the office has been in the hands of politicians. Mr. Williams was made Superintendent of Banks by Governor Hughes. He was known then as opposed to the political administration of public office; and it is thought he will institute reforms in the Controller's office which will make him very unpopular in the circle of "practical" politicians.

JEWS IN NEW YORK CITY

Ray Stannard Baker in American Magazine. HOW much the Jewish population means in the life of New York City few people realize. Within the last few years, quietly, almost without notice, the Jew has become the chief single element in the population of our principal American city—and in very real sense one of the dominating factors of our life. Out of the total population of Greater New York nearly one million are Jews, or more than one in every five.

Nowhere at any time in the world's history were so many Jews gathered together in one locality. Jerusalem the Golden in all the 500 years of its history never had a quarter as many Jews as now live in New York City, and all Palestine today, in spite of the efforts of enthusiastic Zionists to fire their people with a desire to return to their home land, has not as many Jewish residents as may be found in half a dozen blocks in the East Side.

Not only are they the dominant factor on the crowded East Side, but they occupy whole neighborhoods in other parts of the city—in Harlem and the Bronx, in Williamsburg and Brownsville—almost to the exclusion of other population. And they are not mere renters of homes and tenants; for a considerable proportion of the valuable land on Manhattan Island is now held by Jewish owners.

The largest single industry in the city—clothing manufacture—is almost wholly in the hands of Jews. They control many of our greatest banks and other financial institutions, and their domain in finance is rapidly extending; they dominate and direct almost exclusively the amusements, both theaters and opera—of the greatest American city.

About half of the principal newspapers of the metropolis are owned by Jews—and some of the other papers have Jewish editors in important positions. They control the greater part of the wholesale and retail trade. Many of our ablest lawyers, doctors and scientists are Jews. More

and more the Jew is becoming a great factor in politics. If Campaign Hall is beaten at the polls this year, the Jew will do it.

Many Jewish judges now administer our laws, and not a few Jews in our Legislature and in Congress are helping to make them. The education of the children of New York City is, to a surprising extent, in the hands of the Jews—and becoming more and more so. I examined the lists recently published of newly appointed teachers for the public schools. It reads for long spaces like a directory of the East Side.

Not a few Christian churches, slowly surrounded by Jews, have given up their struggle and their buildings have finally been purchased and converted into synagogues. It may come as a surprise to many people, but it is a fact, that there are now far more synagogues (organizations, not buildings) on Manhattan Island than there are Christian churches. The number of Jewish synagogues in Greater New York is 500, of which 500 are in Manhattan Island and the Bronx. Assuredly New York City has become the New Jerusalem of the Jew.

Stephen Chalmers.
Loyal and pure;
Sweet and sure;
Love of mine, far away;
Earnest and strong;
Patient—all long and day,
Waiting for me and a day.

When the wind falls;
When the mist pales;
Brighter your star-eyes shine,
When the moon calls,
When the tide falls,
Dignity to you, love o' mine.

Haven your breast
Calls me to rest,
Light o' the harbor bar,
Glimmer that my press
Turns to you now,
Out from the stormy star.

Of the Philippine Islands, the one which probably has the most productive soil is Mindanao.