

TEN YEAR OLD GIRL MASTERS EIGHT TONGUES.

Phenomenal Achievements of Little Miss Stoner Startle Observers.



Winifred and Some of Her Pets.



Mrs. Stoner and Winifred.



Riding Her Burro.



She is a Circus Dancer.

SO amazing have been the intellectual achievements of Winifred Sackville Stoner, Jr., a 10-year-old Pittsburgh girl, that investigators persuaded her mother and chief teacher, Mrs. Winifred Sackville Stoner, to write the whole story of the child's education in a book.

The unusual little girl is already prepared for college, in addition to studying astronomy and some other branches. She speaks eight languages; she can recite a thousand poems, and she has written nearly 600 poems and jingles herself.

Winifred plays the piano well. With no lessons, except the game of "making up stories on the piano," she can read over a page of Schubert's "Serenade," close the book and play it accurately and with much expression. She can also hear a difficult selection played, and, so keen is her concentration, she can immediately sit down at the piano and play it. Winifred draws well and paints admirably. Like Brownie, one would imagine she will hardly know which to choose for her life work, music, art or writing, but she is very decided as to what she expects to do. Winifred is going to earn and buy and be the editor of a great children's magazine.

In tracing Winifred's development chronologically it may be said that she: Used polysyllables in conversation at the age of 1 year; read at the age of 16 months; wrote her own name on hotel registers and began keeping a diary at the age of 2; learned the musical notes and played simple airs on the piano, and amazed adults at spelling at 3; learned the Latin declensions and conjugations as singing exercises and received a diploma in Esperanto at 4; wrote stories and jingles for the newspapers, spoke eight languages, translated Mother Goose rhymes into

Esperanto, learned the waltz, two-step and three-step at 5; learned the outlines of Greek, Roman and Scandinavian mythologies at 7; composed a poem, naming and locating all the bones in the human body at 8; and was elected president of the Junior Peace League of America at 10.

How can readers account for the fact that Winifred is a perfectly normal, happy child, romping, singing, loving and lovable, gay as the canary she is giving the freedom of the entire house and teaching to whistle and to keep perfect time to all the music that she whistles? Winifred has a hundred dolls. As fast as she learns anything she imparts it to her dolls and pets. She is ardently devoted to sports. She swims, races, plays ball, dances and physically she is as well as she is mentally. Her little muscles are strong as armor bolts. She is as large as an ordinary 12-year-old girl and can walk five miles without the least fatigue.

Winifred's father is a Colonel and a surgeon in the Marine Corps Hospital Service of the United States. Now he is stationed in Pittsburgh. From him Winifred undoubtedly gets her splendid physical care, and she is a perfectly well child. She is practical, like her father, and possesses all her mother's love of art and music and the gift of writing.

No less remarkable is the little girl's mother. Mrs. Stoner in her book, "Natural Education," seems to find nothing in little Winifred's development that might be attained in any healthy, naturally bright child. If this is conceded for the sake of argument, it would have to be admitted that very few children would have the advantages of the extraordinary cleverness of a born teacher, such as Winifred's. In fact, Mrs. Stoner has employed methods peculiarly her own.

It might be said that Mrs. Stoner has given ten years of constant labor to the education of her daughter, labor that was not merely constant, but that was intelligent and imaginative as well. For the whole secret of Winifred's learning has been the play spirit. Whatever she was taught, it came to her not as toil but as play. She lived in a land of fairies, and giants and gnomes.

In explaining her system, Mrs. Stoner starts out with the assumption that every child is born with a distinctive tendency or talent and that this will always bear fruit, if discovered and cultivated in babyhood. It is the mother's part to discover this in infancy and to try to develop it just as much as to keep its body clean and see that it has the proper food. The mother's obligation begins before birth and imposes upon her the duty of keeping herself so healthy and serene, both mentally and physically, that the baby will not have to start out with handicaps on its very first day.

Not being able to sing, Mrs. Stoner chanted the lines from Virgil's "Aeneid" to put the baby to sleep and taught the child's negro nurse to do the same. She declares that the meter is very soothing and that she has seen many another child yield to the soporific influence of "Arma, virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris."

When Winifred was six weeks old her mother began reciting selections from the English poets. The baby's favorites seemed to be Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" and Macaulay's "Horatius at the Bridge." By the time Winifred was a year old she could repeat "Crossing the Bar" and scan the first 10 lines of the "Aeneid." The mother invented a game in which she would roll a ball to the baby and say "Arma." Winifred would roll it back and say

"Virumque," and in this way the Latin words and meter were fixed in the baby's memory.

From the very beginning the mother would carry her baby about the house, point out chairs, tables, etc., and pronounce their names carefully. She found it was just as easy to teach the baby to say "train" as to say "choo-choo car," and just as easy to teach her to say "dog" as to say "doggie."

She surrounded the baby with colored pictures. To teach her colors Mrs. Stoner would take a box of variously tinted yarns. She would play she was "Mother Red," and baby would be "Mother Green," and they would look into the yarn for their children, those of green tint, of course, being the babies of "Mother Green."

Winifred's first toy was a red balloon, which was tied to her wrist, where she could admire it. Each day thereafter for several weeks there would be a balloon of different color and shape, until the child speedily came to know whether a balloon was light, round, red, green and would go up and come down. She was never permitted to hear anything but the best English, although the mother was not finicky about vigorous, expressive slang.

As soon as the child had learned to speak English reasonably well her mother began teaching her Spanish. By the time she was five she had learned to express herself in eight languages. Mrs. Stoner declares, however, if she had it to do over again she would teach Esperanto first. Throughout all this preliminary instruction, Winifred was encouraged to take all the outdoor exercise possible, and soon was the peer of the boys of her age in the neighborhood at wrestling, or throwing or catching a ball.

From that time, Winifred's life be-

came a prolonged play of the game of "Let's Pretend." Sometimes she and her mother would "be somebody" and often each would be herself and an alter ego. This is, Mrs. Stoner would play one minute that she was herself and the next minute that she was her dear friend, Nellie, and Winifred would alternate between being herself and her dear friend, Lucy. In this way they often could get up rather a sizeable party when about to make some new exploration into the realm of knowledge.

Perhaps nothing is more illuminative in Mrs. Stoner's book than her account of how she taught the child mathematics. Winifred had failed to get any sort of grasp on the subject, she says, until the mother was in despair, fearing the child's mind might be lopsided. At a Chautauqua meeting in New York, however, the mother met Professor A. R. Hornbrook, a woman mathematic teacher, who soon put her on the right track.

Professor Hornbrook explained that Mrs. Stoner had been successful in teaching music, art, poetry, history and languages, because she herself loved those studies and had failed to teach mathematics because she had not brought the "fairy interest" into it. She volunteered to send weekly outlines of work, which Mrs. Stoner was to employ according to her own ideas.

Mother and child then began playing games with small objects, such as beans and buttons. These objects would be placed in a box and they would take turns drawing them out to see which could get the most at a single grab. With helping the maid shell peas they would try to see how many peas there were in two or more pods. In this way rudimentary lessons in addition were taught.

To make greater progress they

played parcheesi with small dice and got practice from adding up the spots. First they used two dice, but finally they used five, and Winifred was soon able to add all the spots without conscious effort. They played all sorts of games which would require simple addition and multiplication. In learning subtraction they would have battles with tin soldiers and marbles, and whenever a "cannon shot" would topple over a given number of soldiers Winifred was able to decide how many were left standing without stopping to count. They worked out their own multiplication tables.

Cancellation became a battle, one of them playing the numbers on one side of the dividing line and the other playing the other. There never were any quizzes, because Winifred was taught to get results and was not taught rules. She learned the values of money by the actual use of coins and the values of market products by going to market herself. To learn pharmacist's weights and measures Winifred played at keeping drug store and sold things to her mother. And so it went through the whole subject, until at last the girl became fascinated with the funny doings of Mr. X and got interested in algebra. Things she could make with cardboard and scissors gave her a start into the mysteries of geometry.

Winifred never suffered the humiliation of physical punishment. When she did well, the good fairy Titania would hide goodies under her pillow, and when she was bad the fairy failed to appear. If she was 10 minutes tardy about some task that meant 10 minutes lost which had to be taken out of her next recreation time. She soon learned that offenses could bring about their own unpleasant consequences, while good behavior meant tangible re-

ward. She was never permitted to stay at a single task when the point of fatigue had arrived.

A striking instance of Mrs. Stoner's methods, as well as an illustration of the child's intellectual bias, is the story of Winifred and the bumblebee. In her zeal to study the insect at first hand she picked one up. The natural consequences followed. While she was yet suffering Winifred described her experience in these lines:

One day I saw a bumblebee humbling on a rose,
And as I stood admiring him he stung me on the nose.
My nose in pain it swelled so large it lacked like a potato,
So daddy said, but mother thought 'twas more like a tomato.
And now, dear children, this advice I hope you'll take from me,
And when you see a bumble bee just let that bumble be."

Another poem of Winifred's, which she describes as "a kind of solemn rhyme," was composed last Summer while down in the tunnel beneath the Horseshoe Falls at Niagara. "The words," she says, "came right out of the splashing, roaring waters as if they were actually talking to me."

"NEARBY NIAGARA FALLS.
While standing 'neath Niagara Falls,
A voice to me from heaven falls,
And asks me in deep thundering tones,
'Mortal man, you stand alone?
Do you believe there is no God,
Or works like these but tricks of earth?
Did nature only give them birth,
Or was there an immortal hand
Brought them to life by his command?'"
The roaring waters seem to say—
'To God, our maker, homage pay."
Like his mother Winifred believes in woman suffrage. She has written several poems in behalf of equal franchise rights, which have been published in various newspapers and magazines. Her "Valentines for Suffragettes" are decidedly clever and have helped the cause.

WEALTHY AMERICAN WOMEN HOMELESS AND HUNGRY

Sterling Heilig Writes From Switzerland of Troubled War Conditions on Continent.

BY STERLING HEILIG.
LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Sept. 1.—(Special Correspondence).—Refined American women, with their pockets full of money—and not sure of a bed to sleep in.

Elegant American women, offering wads of bank notes—and not able to buy a penny bun!

Sitting on their trunks—and glad to do it, because hundreds cannot get their trunks through—their husbands run from bank to bank, and hotel to hotel. The hotels are full, and the banks refuse to honor their good American letters of credit!

Such are the sights of the panic and boarding period that ushered in the great European war—and in a neutral land at that!

The money disappeared by magic. One day we were proudly demanding gold in change for our English, French and American bank notes; and the obsequious shopkeepers took back their current Swiss 4 and 10 bills and gave us the yellow metal, all we wanted. The next day, they laughed at our paper money; and no shop in Lausanne would change even a German 100-mark note. A day later, the banks themselves refused to change them—and we had the astonishing spectacle of Americans full of good money, yet unable to buy a shoestring!

We had stuck up our noses at silver dollars (5 francs or lira pieces, current all over), and there had been a moment when the banks gave them out in bags, in place of gold. Now, anyone who has gold hoards it against some great need; and we hug silver dollars and 40-cent pieces as our best friends. We don't dare spend them lightly. Instead of taking tea of an afternoon, we buy a cake!

ers, etc., away, replied snappily: "Have you pieces?" (meaning silver or nickel money). Now, as you cannot have even nickel money without getting it in change for silver, nor silver without getting it in change for gold or notes, the American ladies' plight was evident. "No," they answered proudly, "but we have Swiss 4 notes."

"No good," said the girl. "I cannot change them."

"But I must have my cup of tea," faltered the more elderly American lady. Tears ran down her cheeks, because she had been through a lot—quitting Germany in panic, without her trunks, because all the baggage cars had been requisitioned for the mobilization. (Later, the passenger cars also). She had also quit her automobile, which the German army had seized; but that is another story. I jumped up. "Madame," I said, "I am rich; listen—and I jingled a pocketful of nickels. We are fellow Americans. Permit me to offer you all three a cup of tea!" It cost me 30 cents; but what did I care?

The lady asked me what they were to do. "You have only to wait five more days," I explained to them, "and the Swiss government will issue one and two-dollar bills. These, it is calculated, will bring out the small silver again, or at least the delightful, precious nickels. You are lucky to have Swiss bank notes."

"But we only have \$40 worth," they faltered, "and all the hotels are full." I got them into the Beau-Sejour, not by offering big prices, not by flourishing a roll of bills with the Swiss ones outside, but just by working on the sympathies of Monsieur Pasche, the proprietor. "I don't know how I'm going to get men to serve them," he said dubiously. "My porters, room and hall valets, sub-chefs, washers, furnace men, life men and dining-room waiters have left me in quantity to go to the mobilization, mostly Swiss, but some Austrians, Germans and Italians." (Most of the Italians are staying, so far). It is not food that lacks, at present. I could feed the clients I have for four months—but am I to pack my bedrooms and hallways with refugees,

but the government closes them when they try it. You understand, monsieur, they would just as soon." She means they would rather keep their stock than sell at "normal" prices. "But the government won't let them refuse to sell." So, between getting their doors closed and opened twice a day by government, they put in their sales hours by the aid of disputes, misunderstandings, haggling over change and exasperatingly slow transactions.

Yet the common Swiss are better off than in normal times. An elegant American lady of perhaps 45, in black for the loss of her son in an Alpine tragedy, sat lonely, after dinner, in the lounge of the Beau-Sejour. She looked so sweet and sad, I spoke to her,

She was Mrs. O., of Cleveland, living in her sumptuous villa at Morges (on the lake just below Lausanne), with her daughter, who is married to a wealthy young Swiss, an officer in the landwehr. Just as the daughter went to a Lausanne clinic to have her first baby, the young husband was ordered out in the Swiss mobilization. He had to go. And the clinic, crowded with similar emergency cases, had no room for the young wife's mamma. Pasche admitted her to the Beau-Sejour, though I cannot imagine where he found a bedroom for her. And the prospective grandma, so young and sympathetic, an American lady abroad, very much alone in spite of her beau-

tiful villa, sat mopping her eyes furiously in the hotel lounge.

I say I spoke to her and introduced her to the group of American women who hold together here in a beautiful manner—from my own mother, their doyenne, to Mrs. G.'s little ones, and a lovely young Russian girl, temporarily adopted by Mrs. R.—because her mamma is in a Lausanne clinic and her father and brothers are Russian officers at war. Sorrow and trouble!

Well, Mrs. O. says that, before quitting her Morges villa, she wanted to give the considerable stock of live chickens and pigeons and a great garden full of vegetables, to the worthy peer of Morges. "No need to trouble

yourself," replied the Mayor to her; "we are on the point of requisitioning all those things of yours to divide equally among all the families of the commune."

Mrs. O.—herself, who arrived with hand-satchel, small trunk and masses of wonderful jewels on her hands and neck, was allowed to draw out just \$100 from her ample account in the Morges bank.

It is the boarding period and nobody knows what is to come. They talk about 10,000,000 combatants being thrown on the fields of war and 10,000,000 more reserves armed, from Boy Scouts of 15 to old territorialists of 60.

Eighty million dollars per day may be spent in transports, equipments, armaments, powders, soldiers' food, Red Cross work and the destruction of towns, farms, fields, growing crops.

They fear all factories will be closed, the countryside deserted and commerce paralyzed in the great European countries. Banks risk breaking, governments will go bankrupt, railway trains will stop, ports be closed and great cities lack food.

No wonder little Switzerland is nervous! Both France and Germany have again solemnly guaranteed Swiss neutrality. They swear they will respect it, and they doubtless mean it, or they would have said nothing. Switzerland is also the road to neutral Italy.

The Maximum Profitable Ride.
The report on cost of individual passenger transportation in Boston, abstracted elsewhere in this issue, arrives at the conclusion that a five-cent fare will permit a four-mile ride for each passenger and just cover operating expenses, interest and depreciation. This rate of 1-4 cents a mile applies, of course, only to the conditions existing in Boston, and this rate could not be safely applied to any other set of conditions because of the effect upon the result of variations in the determining factors. If the average passenger is transported for his four miles in a badly under-loaded car, for example, it is hardly likely that the fare of 5 cents will prove profitable, and the same condition will exist if the schedule speed is unduly low, thereby limiting the effective work obtained from both car and crew. As a matter of fact it is probable that the latter possibility exerts a more potent influence upon profitable haul than the former, and for this reason the time basis really serves better for calculations and comparisons than the distance basis used, in this case, for Boston—Electric Railway Journal.



They Sit, Homeless and Hungry, On Their Trunks