

TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL KNOWS EIGHT TONGUES

By ROBERT A. MOULTON



SHE IS A CLEVER DANCER.

AMAZING have been the intellectual achievements of Winifred Sackville Stoner, Jr., a ten-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.

This unusual little girl in 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 five hundred 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 Browning, 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 polyalphabets in conversation at the age of one year; read at the age of sixteen months; wrote her own name on hotel registers and began keeping a diary at the age of two; learned the musical notes and played simple airs on the piano and amazed adepts at spelling at three; learned the Latin declensions and conjugations as singing exercises and received a diploma in Esperanto at four; 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 five; learned the outlines of Greek, Roman and Scandinavian mythologies at seven; composed a poem naming and locating all the bones in the human body at eight; and was elected president of the Junior Peace League of America at ten.

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 twelve-year-old girl and can walk five miles without the least fatigue.

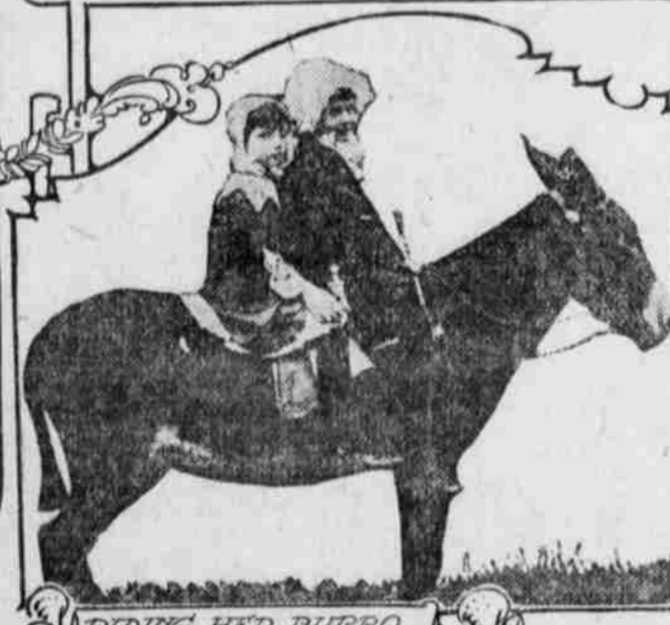
Winifred's father is a colonel and a surgeon in the Marine hospital service of the United States. Now he is stationed at Pittsburgh. From him Winifred undoubtedly gets her splendid physical care, and she is a perfectly well child. She is practical, like her father, and possesses all her mother's love 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 not 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,



WINIFRED AND SOME OF HER PETS



RIDING HER BURRO



MRS. STONER AND WINIFRED

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 ten 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 tints, 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 became 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. That 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 Prof. A. R. Hornbrook, a woman mathematics 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 "fairly 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. When 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 parchesi 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.

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.

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 ten minutes tardy about some task, that meant ten 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 reward. 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, bumbling on a rose.
And as I stood admiring him he stung me on the nose.
My nose in pain it swelled so large it looked 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 bumblebee just let that bumble be.

Like her 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.

OUT-OF-ORDINARY PEOPLE

BRITISH FIRST SEA LORD A GERMAN



The first sea lord of the British navy is a German. Admiral His Serene Highness Prince Louis of Battenberg is his mouth-filling title, but it may be reduced according to taste beginning eliminations at either end. Whether the title is used in whole or in part, its holder is the directing force back of his majesty's ships, the greatest navy the world has ever known.

The present first sea lord came to England to live when he was but fourteen and was naturalized. He took to the sea immediately and has been there ever since, a total of 46 years. The peculiarity of his present position is emphasized by the fact that he married Princess Victoria Alberta of Hesse, forming another tie to the Fatherland. This was somewhat mitigated by the fact that the Princess Victoria was a granddaughter of the late English queen of the same name. His advancement has been due largely to his technical skill and knowledge. He is a scientist and inventor, having to his credit such creations as a cone signaling apparatus which can flash lights that may be read at a distance of 20 miles. It was because of his technical knowledge that he became adviser to the board of admiralty and director of naval intelligence and was, as early as 1882, placed in command of a battery of galling guns which landed at Alexandria.

GERMAN WHO INVADES GERMANY

Gen. Carl Rennenkampf, who commands the Russian army now invading Prussia, is a German himself. He is German in blood, habits and education. There is not a drop of Slavic blood in his veins, yet he is leading the forces of the czar against the fatherland.

Less than a century ago the grandfather of the present czar invited the Rennenkampf family to come to his domain and join his forces. The Rennenkamps came, settled in the provinces on the Baltic, which are thickly populated with Germans, and the general is the first of the children of the old German family to be born in the land of the Muscovites. When the Germans of the Baltic provinces objected to being Russified, it was Rennenkampf who repressed them ruthlessly. In the war with Japan he was in command of a huge force of Cossacks. His merciless tactics had much to do with the failure of the uprising of 1906, and after that he became a notorious oppressor of the Poles and Jews.

To his military staff and his army of Cossacks and soldiers Rennenkampf has been a constant enigma—an unsolvable riddle. Though severe by reputation, he has been known to display the most incomprehensible acts of kindness to his soldiers. While aloof and reserved in manner, he at times showed himself to be more than democratic by nature, mingling with his army, drinking and celebrating with them, entirely unconscious of his high rank. This is usually followed by reactions which have been the dread of those who know him well.

Like Bismarck, Rennenkampf believes in the force of the mailed fist, in the rule of iron and blood.



BRILLIANT YOUNG SEA FIGHTER



Rear Admiral Sir David Beatty, the English victor of the first naval battle of the war, is the youngest man of his rank in the British service. He is but a little over forty. He has an especial interest for Americans as the husband of a daughter of the late Marshall Field of Chicago. They are immensely wealthy and Lady Beatty is one of the foremost social leaders in London. She is now earnestly working on behalf of a fund for the relief of soldiers' families. She is young and noticeably beautiful.

Admiral Beatty gave the first demonstration of a new and unexpected use of the submarine in war. With his cruiser fleet hanging on the horizon he sent in beneath the impregnable defense of Helgoland two of these mosquito craft. One pretended to be disabled and the other pretended to go to his companion's aid. By ingenious maneuvering they succeeded in luring a detachment of German cruisers out into the open sea, where Beatty destroyed three of them. He is a man of exceptional ability and initiative and will probably be given high command in the later developments of the war.

JAPAN'S GRANDEST OLD MAN

There is only one Okuma in Japan or in the world. He is a positively unique character. As far as years go he is called an old man and should long ago have been Osesterized. But he is really only seventy-six years young and has declared that he expects to live 50 or so years longer. And in spirit he is certainly still a young man.

He has never been called one of the "elder statesmen," but he deserved the appellation as much as they did. He was prominent in public service before any one of them; but he was sidetracked into private life because he dared to differ with the policies of others who later rose into prominence and he has been kept in the background because he was considered too liberal, even too radical. He has survived all except three or four of his old colleagues and rivals.

Okuma's career has been a long and versatile one. He has been politician, statesman, educator, orator, author, horticulturalist, etc.; and he has shone in every capacity, in every position. In his political life he shares with Count Itagaki the honor of pioneering in the agitation for constitutional government and in the organization and development of political parties.

