

WORLD'S BRIGHTEST BOY IS NATIVE OF COLUMBIA

Norbert Wiener, Whose Father Now Teaches at Harvard—Mother a Missourian—At Seventeen, Youth Will Be Doctor.

"The brightest boy in the world," according to Hampton's Broadway Magazine, was born in Columbia. He is Norbert Wiener, son of a Harvard professor, and the Broadway has this to say about him in its December number: "At Tufts College, in Massachusetts, a boy will graduate next June at the age of fourteen, and we will all have to take off our mortar-board caps to him. He is Norbert Wiener, the son of a Harvard professor. This remarkable boy was born in Columbia, Mo., Nov. 26, 1894. He could repeat the alphabet at the age of eleven months, could read and write at three years, and at the age of eight he was fitted for college in mathematics, philosophy, modern languages, and the sciences. It required less than three years of schooling, after donning short trousers, for him to prepare for college. Boys seldom do this in less than ten or eleven years; usually it requires an even dozen, and often longer.

Here's What He Reads.

"When Norbert Wiener entered Tufts in the autumn of 1906, he had gone further in chemistry and philosophy than the average senior. He was required to take several entrance examinations, mathematics among them, in which he was found to be far in advance of the freshman class. So, as a freshman, he did upper-class work in the theory of equations and in determinants, while in philosophy it was found necessary to place him in a class by himself. He had read Spencer, Haeckel, Darwin, Huxley, and many others. Now he has read Locke, Hobbes, and other English philosophers; he has translated Homer and several plays of Aeschylus, as well as a similar amount of Latin. In mathematics, he has delved into the Galois Theory of equations, and has completed differential and integral calculus. He will continue this branch this year, and will study

the philosophies of Leibnitz, Spinoza, and Kant. In Greek, he will read Herodotus and Sophocles; the rest of his time will be taken up by biology and organic chemistry. In June, 1909, he will have completed the regular four-year course in three years, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts before he has reached the age of fifteen. But the work he has covered will equal the amount usually completed by a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

A Doctor at Seventeen.

"In the autumn following his graduation at Tufts College, he will enter the Harvard Graduate School, where he will elect work in higher mathematics, with a supplementary course in biology or chemistry. After receiving the doctor's degree at seventeen—an age when many students are not yet contemplating the entrance examinations—he will spend two or three years in Germany and France, devoting himself to philosophy and science. That is, at an age when the average boy has still two years of work ahead of him for his bachelor's degree, young Wiener will be doing advanced scientific work among the gray-bearded savants of a German university.

"Prof. Leo Wiener, of the department of Slavic languages at Harvard, is of Russian parentage; the boy's mother is a native of Missouri. The other children of the family do not differ from other boys and girls of their ages. Apart from the fact that his capacity for learning is phenomenal, Norbert Wiener is like other boys. His physical development is excellent; he is a good tennis player and an expert swimmer. He is a tall boy, and a strict vegetarian. His head is normal in size, but his blazing, black eyes are almost uncanny in their power. Personally, he chooses mathematics as his favorite study. Philosophy he calls his 'fairland.'"

Princeton's Cross Country Meet.

Princeton will again hold an inter-scholastic cross country meet this year. The first meet of this sort was held at Princeton in 1907 and was a great success, schools from Philadelphia, New York, Newark, Pittsburg, and many of the larger preparatory schools sending teams to compete. Mercersburg Academy won the championship

in 1907, and Central High School, of Philadelphia, won the meet last year. The course is about three and an eighth miles long, just half the length of the inter-collegiate course.

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BAD GRAMMAR IS WORRYING YALE

New Scheme Formulated to Bar Students Ignorant of English.

PROF. LOUNSBURY IS PUZZLED

Task Exceedingly Difficult, He Says—How Some Applicants Spell.

"If you want to solve educational problems easily never be a teacher," remarked Prof. Thomas R. Lounsbury of Yale to a New York Times reporter the other day. After many years of teaching he has come to the conclusion that the education question, especially as regards the teaching of English, is more puzzling than ever.

The immediate occasion for his remark was the recently announced intention of the authorities at Yale to insist that would-be Yale students use proper English not only on examination papers in the regular courses in English provided at the university, but on all other examination papers as well.

Another important result which those who have had the new rule passed hope to bring about is the raising of the standard of instruction in English in the preparatory schools. On this phase of the case Prof. Lounsbury lays particular stress. As soon as the schools which prepare boys for Yale know of the increased attention being paid to the quality of English on examination papers—all irrespective of subject—they will naturally safeguard their pupils against failure by careful attention to their English.

Commenting on the blunders found on entrance examination papers, Prof. Lounsbury said:

"There is one thing to be remembered about the English language—namely, that its spelling is absolutely arbitrary—it does not depend upon reason, as does the spelling of, say, Italian and Spanish. An Italian or Spanish boy who cannot spell correctly is an idiot. But it is otherwise with the English speaking boys. Excellence in spelling depends largely on knack, like excellence in anything else. Take my case—since childhood, when I used to go to the spelling bees, I have had marked facility in spelling. Both at these spelling bees and at school I almost invariably stood at the head. Yet I don't feel that I deserve any credit for this. It simply means that I have that kind of memory. For other things my memory is not good at all.

Home Training Counts.

"Aside from the question of spelling, the excellence of a man's preparation in English depends not so much on his immediate schooling as upon his ancestors. Training at home is what really counts. "That is where the English have the advantage over us. There have been cultured families in England for many centuries.

"It is exceedingly hard for the teachers at a preparatory school to overcome the influence of home training, when this training has had a bad effect on a boy. For instance, take the case of a boy who hears continually at home the phrase 'I done it.' That boy will be obliged to make a conscious effort every time he substitutes 'I did' for 'I done.' And he will frequently slip back into the old way in moments of excitement.

"One curious phase of the situation in this country is the fact that boys whose parents are immigrants and who come to this country when very young have a better chance of learning good English than the native boys brought up in homes where bad English is spoken. This is due to the fact that such immigrant boys have no bad English to unlearn. As soon as they arrive here they at once go to school and are carefully taught good English—hence they should grow up speaking that.

"I am sorry to say that, in my opinion, the new English requirements in colleges have not had the slightest effect toward increasing the taste for good literature among young men. Actually, I fear, a great many men have acquired instead a violent hatred for English literature, owing to the preparation required in it.

"Of course this preparation does good to some men, but not men in general. Results depend very largely on the influence of the teacher over his class. There are some teachers, you know, who make the best subject uninteresting."

Thinks Task Difficult.

"How would you remedy present conditions?" Prof. Lounsbury was asked. "Well, my ideas are still in an inchoate condition. It is a very difficult subject.

"You see, the question reduces to this: 'If the requirement of direct study of literature does not result in a boy's liking literature then the course adopted

has been a failure. But, on the other hand, what is to be done about it?"

"There has been a great deal of disappointment in American colleges owing to the poor results of the new system of requirements in English. These requirements are entirely modern. They have all been introduced since the Civil War. Before the war a student might enter college without ever having heard the name of an English author mentioned.

"One great stumbling block in the way of teaching young men to appreciate English is this—they do not consider it knowledge. Arithmetic, for instance, is knowledge. However disagreeable the study of it may be to them they recognize the necessity of learning arithmetic, and they do so. But when it comes to acquiring taste in English literature, that is another matter.

"Taste is not knowledge—they see no necessity for acquiring it.

"The longer I live the greater the problems of education appear to me."

English at Yale.

Some idea of the kind of English which sometimes appears on examination papers for entrance into Yale may be gained by the following gems written by a candidate for admission:

"I have failed five times; this time I hope to soothe your rekwirements."

And further along on the same paper was this:

"If possible, pless pass this paper."

"Why, take any word and misspell it any way you please," said a Yale professor, when asked for more samples of examination English. "No matter what extraordinary combinations you make you will do no injustice to the English of some of the men who want to enter Yale.

"Some of these never, under any circumstances, capitalize a letter at the beginning of a sentence—and they either never paragraph at all, or make every sentence a paragraph."

The new rule regarding English on all examination papers will go into effect as soon as the Yale catalogue for the current academic year is published. It is already in proof.

There is no hard and fast rule as to the marking of errors on the examination papers in courses other than the regular English ones. The question as to whether or not a candidate for entrance into Yale is to be considered illiterate is left entirely to the judgment of the various professors and instructors who conduct the examinations. No one blunder will throw out a man. But, as stated above, the new rule, although it will bring about no very drastic change in the state of affairs, will make it absolutely impossible for men without a decent knowledge of English to become students at Yale.

"In short," declared one Yale professor, "it will amount to a sort of veto power."

ROOSEVELT ENVIED

DR. ELIOT'S REPORTS

He Wished His Messages Were Read As Widely.

After President Roosevelt had sent one of his interminable messages to Congress, he is said to have asked one of his Harvard classmates what he thought of it.

"It's a great document," came the reply, "but it's too long—people won't read it. Why, it's longer than one of President Eliot's reports."

"Why," exclaimed the President, "if I really thought anywhere near as many people would read it as read President Eliot's reports I'd be tickled to death."

It was thus Harvard's most exalted graduate stated, what there is much reason to believe to be the truth, that the formal utterances of no man in America today are more widely read or eagerly awaited than the annual reports of President Eliot to the Overseers of Harvard University.

The prospect of having to go without them, after President Eliot's resignation goes into effect on the 19th of next May, is a matter of concern to a vastly greater proportion of the American public than will feel regret at the cessation of Rooseveltian messages on the 4th of next March.—New York Evening Post.

20 MILES FOR A DRINK

"Jag Cars" Are Run Between Two Connecticut Towns.

WINSTED, Conn., Nov. 19.—Such large crowds from Winsted—no license since Nov. 1—are patronizing the saloons in Torrington, ten miles south of here, that the trolley company is running special cars at night to accommodate men who like liquid refreshments.

The extra cars have already been christened "jag cars." Four hundred Winsted people were in Torrington Saturday night and as many visited the sister borough tonight, three extra cars being run. It is estimated that at least \$50,000 will be left in Torrington by Winsted people during the coming year.

Unhygienic Roosting.

The Countryman: Down here, sir, we make it a rule to go to bed with the chickens.

The Britisher: Er—don't you find it beastly unhealthy?—Puck.

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Rules About Rooms.

The faculty of the University of Kansas has drawn up contracts which all persons who rent rooms to students must sign before they will be

approved. Boys and girls cannot be taken as roomers in the same house and a number of similar rules are included. Nebraska rose to this level several years ago and Iowa is about to follow suit now.

GOOD THINGS TO EAT

- Plum Pudding
- Mince Meat
- Cherry Preserves
- Strawberry Preserves
- Olives, Dates
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- Apples
- Oranges
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