

CHILD PRODIGY IS OFTEN TIMES ARTFUL DODGER

Each Year Produces Marvels of Infant Genius Along Varied Lines.

SOME ARE BORN FRAUDS

BY FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

NEW YORK CITY—The child prodigy is now a familiar figure among us. Nearly every week the pictorial supplements of the newspapers contain the photograph of at least one child genius who is early blossoming into fame. Last year, one of the greatest sensations of the season was a child pianist of 11, and this year it is a 9-year-old chess champion. Columbia University has just matriculated a 14-year-old boy, who is said to acquire his high marks without studious effort, and Harvard, of course, has had a child mathematical genius for two or three years.

But the development of child prodigies has not been confined to the arts and sciences. They are also springing up in amazing numbers in criminal circles. New York is witnessing a rash season of small artful dodgers who are surprisingly skilled in relieving people of their watches and pocketbooks under very noisy and noisy circumstances.

There is Sniffski, for instance, aged 6, a product of Greenwich Village, who is a master mind in his own line. Sniffski was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but with a great talent for acquiring something of the kind for himself. He is one of a large family of ill-clad children who look very much alike, with the exception that Sniffski has an unusual pair of large, expressive, somber eyes, which he has learned to use to good advantage.

Just when Sniffski began to recognize their value is not known, but beginning with this fall the people living in Sniffski's neighborhood were touched by their appeal. A young woman artist, one of the first victims of their magic power, she was entering the corner drug store to buy a sundae when she beheld a small boy with a towel head and ragged clothes staring in the window. The whole little figure seemed to express a tremendous longing, and she thought vaguely that the child would make a good sketch, but forgot about him in ordering her sundae. As she took the first bite, however, she happened to turn to the window and encountered the eyes—large brown eyes, swimming, the artist told a friend later, "in a perfect sea of wistfulness." Well, the immediate result was that Sniffski was brought into the drug store and treated to a sundae.

SYSTEM USED BY ONE BRILLIANT ARTIST.

One night later, the same young artist entering the corner drug store, found Sniffski seated on a stool beside an old lady, drinking an ice cream soda, and the night after that he was doing the same thing in company with a genial old man. But on the next night the climax came. As the young woman approached the drug store, she saw Sniffski add in the clutches of the neighborhood cop.

"Now just you run home as fast as you can, if you can run at all, after drinking all that sugar and soda," admonished the boy in a stern voice, which became less stern as he encountered the dark, somber eyes. "The little deal had five sodas tonight," he explained to the interested onlookers, "and I'm afraid to let him have another."

There's a limit to his stomach, but there is no limit to the number of people who are willing to buy drinks for him. This put an end to Sniffski's ice cream soda game for a while, but he soon discovered another equally as good. It did not work so quickly, but it provided a fair amount of small change, whereas the other had cost him money. He began to study the people of his neighborhood and to pick out those with kindly, good-natured faces. Working one street at a time he would go along and turn upon them the full power of his dark, wistful eyes, and tiny smile. The kindly souls, entirely unsuspecting of a plot, were greatly flattered by attention from a child. They were just in the right frame of mind for Sniffski's final stroke of genius, which usually came about the third morning. This time the neighbor was rapidly approached by Sniffski, his large eyes shining and greeted with, "Say, mister, today's my birthday."

Invariably the neighbor inquired concerning Sniffski's age, and invariably Sniffski promptly answered, "Ten." And always the same result was one more dime in Sniffski's small pocket.

In another section of New York an equally clever child prodigy has been working an even more complicated scheme, for separating trustful persons from small portions of their cash. This enterprising lad, who has a cherubic countenance, rings the bell of a house where there is no telephone. Many such houses still exist in New York, especially since the telephone company has become so indifferent to increasing its business.

FAKE PHONE CALL QUITE POPULAR.

By careful inquiries the boy has ascertained that furnished rooms are rented in this particular house, and has secured the names of the lodgers.

So on a Sunday morning, Mr. Hibbs, who lives in the third floor front, is informed by his landlady that he is wanted on the nearest drug store telephone. The drug store happily called the boy to tell him, the landlady explains, breathless from running up three flights of stairs.

As Mr. Hibbs dashes hurriedly into his clothes he wonders who on earth it can be who has called him up in such a fashion. Is it the red-headed flapper he met the other evening, who asked him to join a hiking club, and who inquired so insistently as to how she could reach him on the 'phone? No; it couldn't be. He is sure that he didn't tell her about the drug store. Too bad he hadn't. Ah, now he knows who it is—it is Brown, of course, who has come to town, found out where he lived, called him up. Only Brown would think of calling him from the nearest drug store. It will be great to see Brown again—always was an entertaining chap.

Rushing enthusiastically down the stairs, he is about to reach the front step with one leap when he is stopped by a small boy with a cherubic face, who says in a small but determined voice:

"I brought the message, Mister." "Oh, you did," laughs Mr. Hibbs, "and you want a nickel, I suppose—well, here it is."

Mr. Hibbs continues to dash down the street and in the drug store, where he rushes to the telephone booth, explaining that a call is waiting for him.

"A call," repeats the druggist pityingly. "There is no call for you. Haven't been a call from outside here this morning?" "You told you there was a little boy? I see. Gave him a nickel, of course, didn't you? Well, that's just their game. You aren't the first one that's been stung. It's a regular business, ringing people to the phone and getting a nickel from them when there isn't any call."

FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD REASON WITH \$4,000.

Perhaps the most notable of all child prodigies in affairs of this kind is Elliott Michener, the 14-year-old office boy, who recently walked out of the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia with \$4,000 belonging to the company in his pocket.

Writes New Book



KATHERINE MAYO.

Miss Katherine Mayo, one of the best known women in the world of letters, has come into public notice again through one of her works recently published. It is a critical account of the work of the Y. M. C. A. with the A. E. F. in France, and is said to be her most notable work.

Miss Mayo was born in Pennsylvania and educated in Boston and Cambridge. One of the first things which brought her fame was "Justice to All," a history of the Pennsylvania State police force. The late Colonel Roosevelt wrote the introduction and presented a copy of the work to each member of the New York State Legislature in 1917, the year the New York State police force was created.

Miss Mayo was active in the campaign for the passage of the bill which created that force.

"The Standard Bearer" is another of her books and she has long been a contributor to the Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's, the Saturday Evening Post, and other publications.

and who was arrested here in New York only after a long search.

Elliott is also blessed with a cherubic countenance, which attracted every motherly woman to him on his travels, and helped him to remain above suspicion for a long period. Elliott decided to take the money as soon as it was handed to him. As told the police later, "Sure I took it. Who wouldn't? I was getting \$8 a week as an office boy and they handed me \$4,000—I had to count it, you know—and told me to take it to the paymaster. It was more money than I had ever laid eyes on before. It looked awful big, and it felt awful big—I blew."

With cool determination, Elliott started for the Camden ferry as soon as he left the Baldwin plant. He remained in Camden just long enough to buy an overcoat and three suits of clothes, each with long trousers—his first—and then took a train to New York. From New York he went to Chicago, from which city he expected to go to San Francisco.

But here he read an account of his theft in the newspapers, which said that he would probably go to Spokane, where his father was. So Elliott decided not to go West at all, but to take the first train back to New York. From there he returned to Philadelphia and stayed at the Bellevue-Stratford for several days, after which he moved to the Hotel Lorraine, which is only a short distance from the Baldwin works.

Finally, he became restless and again went to New York, where he at last bought a ticket for San Francisco. It was this act that betrayed him. The ticket office agent became suspicious at a small boy paying \$134.50 for a ticket, and called in one of the railroad detectives. Photographs of missing boys were produced, and Elliott was recognized as the most conspicuously missing of them all.

"That's who I am," said Elliott, when confronted with the photograph. "I care. I'm tired of spending money anyhow."

1,147 BOOKS ARE CIRCULATED.

The West Indianapolis Book Library had the biggest week in its history last week, when it circulated 1,147 books. Of this total 52 per cent were by adults. The demand of the men, which outnumbered that of the women, was correspondingly heavy for works by George Ade, John Bangs, Stephen Leacock and Mark Twain.

Handy tin boxes of 12 tablets cost but a few cents—Larger packages. Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monocetisacidester of Salicylicacid

PERFECT HEARING FOR THE DEAF

The Little Gem Ear Phone awarded the GOLD MEDAL, highest award for Ear Phones in competition with all hearing instruments at Panama Pacific Exposition. Look at it and you will see the simplest and smallest device in the world; use it and you will feel that you have the most wonderful piece of mechanism ever devised for suffering mankind. Let us prove what we say.

FREE DEMONSTRATION At Our Store from 9 a. m. to 5:30 p. m.

Commencing Tuesday, Dec. 28, and Balance of Week THE LITTLE GEM EAR PHONE, the latest patented perfect hearing device. With it you can hear under all conditions in the church, theatre and general conversation. The AUTO EAR MASSAGE stops head noises and makes the cure of deafness possible.

Remember, we would not allow such a demonstration in our store unless we had investigated the instrument thoroughly. An expert from New York City will be with us on the above days. We most earnestly request you to make a test privately and receive expert advice without charge. Every instrument guaranteed. Ask for booklet. Tell your deaf friends.

Wm. H. ARMSTRONG CO.

34 West Ohio Street

Any Way You Figure This Thing of Jobs the Other's Better

Druggist Uncovers Few of Psychic Reasons for Crime and Bad Table Manners.

"Talk about psychological reaction of people toward kindness," granted the druggist after he had supplied a Mary Garden sundae to the youthful customer. "A woman came in here the other day and asked me to keep her two kids while she went downtown, and when she got back she gave each one of them a piece of candy she bought some place else and took them on home with her without even thanking me. The next day she called up and told me that her daughter had torn her skirt on a nail while over here. I answered the emergency bell of charge and requested me to see that the damage was made good."

"The things that make you sore," he continued, "are when you have to get up in the middle of the night on a special call and then find that your customer wants you to change a dime so he can use the telephone. One night last week I answered the emergency bell of charge that a man wanted to pay a cabman who couldn't change a ten. What I said that time I would have to tell you."

The lecture on the impositions of the innocent public upon the poor middleman continued with the information that his store does a rushing business in wrapping up purchases at other stores with the additional remark that some packages are returned to be rewrapped by the careful owner, gratitude," he snifled.

"Last year a woman called up and asked me to send out a \$10 money order. When the clerk got over there she gave him the \$10 and told him to charge the 10 cents charges since her pocketbook was upstairs and it was too much trouble to go up and get it. And she never did pay it, either," he concluded.

Just then his attention was attracted by an impatient ringing at the telephone. He shook his head dolefully when he returned to his audience.

"That was a fond parent," he confided, "at whose police entreaty we delivered two pieces of peppermint stick candy to her promising offspring. Just now she called up to tell me that our boy was out there with it, but her son has changed his mind and wants lemon now, so she is sending the peppermint back, and she wants the lemon sent out at once."

"And speaking of some of the things people will ask you to do," he continued. "The other day a man came in here all dressed up to look like a million dollars and bought postage stamps for twenty or thirty letters. He informed me that he was afraid to lick them himself for fear he might get sick and would I please do it for him. If it had been a woman who was afraid of losing some of the paint I would not have thought so much about it, but a man."

Then the monologue was diverted to the subject of articles asked for which belong to a department store.

"If we carried all the junk some folks want we would be running a combination of all the department stores and 10-cent stores in town," he said. "The other day a man came in here and asked if we carried ribbon. His little girl had lost her hair ribbon and he wanted to get her a new one. Safety pins, hair pins and needles seem to be the most desired objects of the consumer."

Just about that stage of the affair one of the spectators decided to embark out the front door minus his umbrella. Upon having the same restored to the possession of its owner business was resumed, the druggist informing his audience that he had so many umbrellas left that he was seriously considering taking up the business of second hand rain protectors.

"Why I haven't had to buy an umbrella for the last twenty-five years, and yours more I don't expect to have to for the next fifty," he stated with finality.

"There isn't any business that can best that of returning things," he declared, "and the best of it is transacted in magazines. We've got a bunch of people around this neighborhood who will take a magazine one evening and bring it back the next day and swear up and down that someone else in the family bought one just like it and they didn't know it. Usually the magazine shows signs of having seen service since it left the rack."

The conversation was interrupted by the neighbor's young man bound on an errand.

"I want a bottle of quinine for the baby," he announced. The audience grinned approval and the druggist scratched his head.

"I reckon he means quinine," suggested one hopefully.

"Oh, yes," murmured the druggist, "he means quinine."

SHOPLIFTER GETS SESSION ON FARM

Xmas Cards, Perfume and Kerchiefs Found on Man.

"I don't think the State needs more witnesses after I have heard the defendant's own story," said Judge, Walter Pritchard yesterday in city court, as he sentenced Ben Maxwell, a negro, to serve thirty days on the Indiana State Farm and fined him \$1 and costs. The sentence was for petit larceny.

Evidence showed that a city fireman saw Maxwell steal Christmas cards in a five and ten-cent store and pointed him out to Lieutenant Houston, who arrested him. The officer then found a bottle of perfume and more than a dozen handkerchiefs on Maxwell, who claimed to have purchased them in a department store, but when he was taken to the store the clerk denied she had sold him the handkerchiefs.

In court Maxwell stated he bought the handkerchiefs from "Henry," but he did not know "Henry's" last name.

Anglo-Canadian Deal in Russia Reported

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The representative, McBugow, was said to desire rights to land not included in the grant to American capitalists arranged through Washington D. Vanderlip.

Two Killed When Train Hits Auto

RICHMOND, Ind., Dec. 29.—Mrs. Alice Culbertson and daughter, Vera, of this city, were killed instantly Tuesday afternoon when a Big Four train hit the automobile in which they were riding at a crossing three miles west of Union City. Otto M. Culbertson, husband of the dead woman, was driving the car and was probably fatally injured. He is in a hospital at Union City. The automobile was completely demolished and the two victims were carried some distance down the track and crushed in the wreckage.

The family was on its way to Union City and approached the railroad track from the west. The train came from behind at an angle, going east.

The Fletcher American of Indianapolis

Over 350,000 miles of wire, enough to girdle the earth fourteen times; more than 2,000 employees, and an investment exceeding \$14,000,000 testify to the magnitude of the Hoosier Capital's telephone business.

The telephone plays an important part in this bank's service to individuals and business institutions.

Fletcher American National Bank of INDIANAPOLIS

To Buy or Sell a Business

If you have a business to sell—a store, a factory, whatever it may be, you cannot depend on the old word-of-mouth method. The modern way is the Want Ad way. Describe your business in detail in a Want Ad in this newspaper where thousands will see it.

Or, if you wish to purchase a business read the Business Chances Want Ads in this paper regularly. Many splendid offerings are made there. If you don't find just what you want try a Want Ad of your own.

Big Deals Have Resulted from Want Ads Like These

GROCERY FOR SALE—Stock \$12,000. Fixtures \$1,000. Delivery equipment about \$100. Reasonable price. Owner must retire. All health. Great opportunity for enterprising man. Fine location. ADVERTISE.

HARDWARE STORE WANTED—Experienced hardware man with good cash sales to buy established business. Must be located in live town. Reply by letter stating actual sales, inventory, class of trade, principle lines handled, etc., and terms of payment. ADDRESS:

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THE FAIR

TRAUGOTT BROTHERS 311-321 West Washington Street

Our Greatest After-Christmas Sale of Women's

\$25 and \$30 COATS

Gorgeous fur trimmed styles, many handsomely lined with beautiful silks.

There are silver-tones, velours, silk plushes, broadcloths and suedines, etc., in all the desirable colors, in all sizes 16 to 44.

When we say that these are the best coats that we have ever sold at \$15.00, you can well realize the greatness of the sensational savings. Regular \$25 to \$30 coats on sale tomorrow morning promptly at 8:30 for \$15.

\$25 Children's COATS \$8.75

Beautiful broadcloth and velour. Special Thursday while they last.

Our Greatest After-Xmas Sales! Women's \$20 and \$25 Dresses

Handsome embroidered, beaded, braided, pleated, tulle and straight line models of all-wool serges, velours and satins, in navy blue and black—a good assortment of the brighter colors, too! When you see these wonderful dresses we know that you will want three or four—so come when the store opens tomorrow in order to avoid possible disappointment.

After-Christmas Clean-Up of Skirts \$7.50 Women's and misses' skirts, pleated and fancy models, in all wool serge \$3.98

Thursday Specials for Men \$2.00 MEN'S SWEATERS—Large shawl collars. Sizes 34 to 46. Special 95c

\$2.50 MEN'S UNION SUITS—Heavy weight ribbed; sizes 30 to 46. Special \$1.24

\$1.50 MEN'S SHIRTS AND DRAWERS—Fleece lined and ribbed. Sizes 30 to 46. Special 69c

House Dresses and Aprons for Women \$3.00 Fleece Lined House Dresses Fleece lined house dresses for women, in dark blue patterns; neatly trimmed; sizes 36 to 46 \$1.98

Coverall Aprons Stout Size Aprons Coverall Aprons, in button front or sash back styles; Rick-Rack or plain braided trimmed. Special \$1.00

Stout Size Aprons Stout size aprons for large women, of good quality percales; dark blue or light figured percales— \$1.49

Important Notice Broad Ripple City Cars

Beginning Jan. 1st, 1921, the fares on Broad Ripple-Indianapolis cars will be as follows:

From Indianapolis or any intermediate stop south of Fifty-Third Street to any stop north of Fifty-Third Street, including Broad Ripple, the fare will be 10 cents.

From Broad Ripple or any intermediate stop north of Fifty-Third Street to any stop south of Fifty-Third Street, including Indianapolis, the fare will be 10 cents.

Between Indianapolis and any intermediate stop up to and including Fifty-Third Street the fare will be 5 cents. Between Broad Ripple and any intermediate stop up to and including Fifty-Third Street the fare will be 5 cents.