SIDIS COULD READ AT TWO YEARS OLD

Youngest Harvard Undergraduate Under Father's Scientific Forcing Process Almost from Birth.

GOOD TYPEWRITER AT FOUR

At 5 Composed Text Book on Anatomy, in Grammar School at 6, Then Studied German, French, Latin, and Russian.

Special to The New York Times.

BOSTON, Mass., Oct. 17.—Further details of the achievements of William James Sidis, the 11-year-old prodigy who has just entered Harvard with the highest honors are published here to-day, and go to show that the youth who is gravely declared to be the most learned undergraduate that has ever entered the Cambridge institution, is a wonderfully successful result of a scientific forcing experiment, and as such furnishes one of the most interesting mental phenomena in history. His precocity is the fruit of a parental theory of mind growth put into practice from the very beginning of his life.

Young Sidis is the son of Dr. Boris Sidis, a Boston psychologist, who years before the boy's birth had developed very advanced ideas on the subject of child training. On the basis that as soon as a child begins to grow its brain begins to grow also, and that the brain is less and less sensitive to training as age increases. Dr. Sidis had planned and developed an elaborate system of training. This system he applied to his son.

The child's training was begun with a set of alphabetical blocks when he was a little over a year old. When his young son, sitting on the nursery floor, said "ba ba," Dr. Siddis took two of these blocks, denoting A and B respectively, held them before his eyes, and showed him first, the "B" block and then the "A" block.

Later Dr. Sidis reversed this order and showed him the other sound that was represented by these two letters. In a little while, on being shown, first, the "A" block and then the "B" block, the child would say "Ab." Thus, not yet 2 years old, he learned to talk, read, and spell all at once.

Before he was 2½ years old precocious William James would sit on the floor in the midst of his blocks and spell out various words. This was his way of playing. The child was next taught to count. Then, because he wanted the child to know something about the idea of time, Dr. Sidis gave him some calendars, explaining to him the meaning of them. For weeks he played with these.

One day he startled his parents by announcing that he was able to tell on what day of the week any given date would fall. It was first thought that in his play with the calendars he had memorized some of the dates. Upon investigation, however, it was found that he had worked out all by himself a method of counting enabling him mentally to calculate any date demanded of him.

When William James, (or "Jimmy") was 3½ years old he could use a typewriter, and at 4 he was an expert operator. He was also much interested in fairy stories, learned them by heart, and was soon studying elocution and learning how to recite them to the best advantage.

By the time he was 5 years old he was not only able to read, write, and speak English and to use a typewriter, but he was an expert accountant, had begun to study French and Latin, and had written a text book on anatomy and another on English grammar—presumably for his own use.

Entering a grammar school when 6 years old, he moved up several grades in six months, and entered Brookline High School at 8 years. In six weeks there he had completed the mathematical course and begun writing a book on astronomy. Then he plunged into the study of German, French, Latin, and Russian.

On leaving school he began the study of mathematics in real earnest. Integral and infinitesimal calculus became his hobbies, and in addition he invented a system of logarithms based on the number 12 instead of 10. This was inspected by several well-known mathematicians, and pronounced perfect in every detail.

Much has already been made of the story of the three years spent in endeavoring to secure admission to Harvard, Sidis's age being an obstacle which the university authorities could not see their way clear to override till this year.