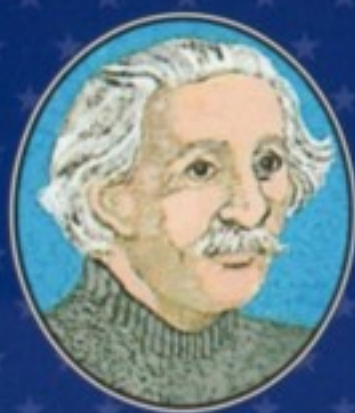


Childhood of Famous Americans



ALBERT EINSTEIN

Young Thinker



by MARIE HAMMONTREE
illustrated by ROBERT DOREMUS

The Compass

ONE DAY in 1884 Mr. Hermann Einstein came home from work carrying a small package. It was a present for his five-year-old son, Albert, who was in bed with a cold.

“I thought Albert would enjoy this compass,” he said to his wife. “He’s such a serious boy.”

“A compass!” Mrs. Einstein took the strange-looking present and examined it closely. It was a tiny round box with a glass lid. Under the glass, a needle swung on a pivot or pin in the center of the box. One half of the needle was colored dark. The bottom of the box bore the words *North, East, South, and West*.

“Now watch the compass work,” said her husband. Slowly he turned the compass in one direction, then in another. “See how the needle spins around? No matter which way the box is turned, the dark end of the needle will point to the north.”

It did indeed! Mrs. Einstein watched with interest as her husband turned the compass.

Now Mr. Einstein continued. “All you have to do is move the compass so that the word *North* is under the dark end of the needle. Then you can tell the other directions easily.”

Mrs. Einstein was delighted. “Albert loves puzzles,” she said, “and that’s a puzzle if I ever saw one.”

“Then this compass should keep him busy for hours,” said Mr. Einstein.

Mrs. Einstein laughed. “You’re going to be a busy man, Hermann. Have you forgotten all the questions that Albert will ask?”

Mr. Einstein pretended to groan. How well he remembered! Most of the time Albert was so quiet that people hardly knew he was about. When he was puzzled about something, however, there was no end to the questions he could ask.

Then Mr. Einstein began to laugh. "It will be a good joke on me, Pauline. I suppose I might as well take the compass in to Albert now and face his questions."

"Yes, Hermann, and I'm going with you. I just know Albert is going to be a great professor someday. I would like to hear what he thinks of this compass."

A STORY FOR ALBERT

The Einsteins were a Jewish family who lived in Munich, Germany. There were four persons in the family—Mr. and Mrs. Einstein, Albert, and his three-year-old sister Maja. Mr. Einstein's