

**GENIUS.**  
What seest thou on yonder desert plain,  
Large, vague, and void?  
I see a city full of flickering streets;  
I hear the hum of myriad engine beats.  
What seest thou?  
I see a desert plain,  
Large, vague, and void.

What seest thou in yonder human face,  
Pale, frail, and small?  
I see a soul by tragedy worn thin;  
I read a page of poetry and of sin.  
What seest thou?  
I see a human face,  
Pale, frail, and small.

What seest thou at yonder dim cross-roads  
Beside that shuttered inn?  
Untraveled Possibility,  
The Inn of splendid Mystery.  
What seest thou?  
I see the dim cross roads  
Beside a shuttered inn.  
—Florence Wilkinson in McClure's.

## "Knockers" Last "Granny."

(By Frank Caldwell.)

Perched high on the steel framework of a tall building, "Knocker" sat moodily eating his noonday meal. There was something wrong with his appetite that day, for he did a very uncommon thing—he left the second plate untouched.

From where he sat on the flat roof truss, the lad could look down on any side through a tangled web-work of steel beams, nine stories below. To any one not accustomed to climbing, this would have seemed a dizzy height; but to Knocker, who had helped erect the building, it was a very uninteresting thing.

Knocker had won his remarkable name from the many positions he had held on the Claypool Building. Beginning in the basement as water boy, he had worked his way up during the erection of the building to the dignity of rivet-beater. That was something to be proud of, thought Knocker; but after all, what did it amount to if he could not become a union man?

That had been the height of Knocker's ambition, to become a union man, and march with the iron workers in the Labor day parade. But Labor day had come, and it had found Knocker keeping solitary watch over the building while the union men were off enjoying the holiday.

"All on account of not knowing how to tie the square hitch!" muttered the boy to himself, as he closed the lid of his dinner basket.

All the long summer Knocker had been diligently preparing for the examination he would have to pass before entering the union. The day before he had taken the examination, and had failed in it. It was, as he said, all on account of not knowing how to tie the square hitch.

"Big Jim," one of the top men, and the boy's good friend, had given him lessons in tying knots and rigging. Jim had repeatedly warned his young pupil about that knot, but it seemed so easy and simple to him that Knocker had given it slight attention. When, however, he appeared confidently before the board of examiners, and they told him to tie the square hitch, he became confused, and did the very worst thing possible; he tied a "granny."

The only difference in these two knots is that in the square hitch the two lines forming the loop are parallel, while in the granny they are crossed. The latter will sometimes slip when placed under a strain.

Perhaps only a structural iron worker or a sailor would have noticed the mistake; but among these two classes of men the offense of tying a false knot cannot be overlooked. The head of the examining board, an old man who had grown gray in erecting iron work, saw the error in an instant, and kindly but firmly refused to proceed further with the examination.

"They wouldn't even give me a chance to show what I know about iron work!" said Knocker, hotly, that evening, as he related his failure to Big Jim.

"Well, according to rules, you can send in your application again in three months. In the meantime learn to tie the square hitch."

Big Jim meant that for consolation, as well as advice, but it fell short of the mark. The true cause of Knocker's deep desire to enter the union did not come from the dollar and a half increase in wages.

To Knocker a fearless iron worker was a hero. What would his boy friends have thought when they saw him marching with such men in the parade? That would indeed have been a triumph.

"Three months! Much good it will do me then to be in the union!" was Knocker's mental comment, as he looked round for some source of amusement. "I don't care whether I ever learn to tie the square hitch or not."

Just then a band down the street struck up a tune, and Knocker became all excitement. He knew the different unions were forming for their march. In a few moments the great Labor day parade would pass the Claypool Building.

Knocker looked round for a place from which to watch it. Picking up a long scaffolding board, he ran one end of it far out past the edge of the building, and hastily made the other

end fast to one of the roof trusses. Then he boldly walked out on it and sat down, allowing his feet to dangle over the end of the board.

Although it bent in a manner most frightful to the onlookers, who were filling the street below, Knocker knew the plank was of yellow pine, and would bear five times his weight.

A moment later the crowd's attention was attracted toward the street corner below.

Knocker also looked in that direction, and saw the leading band swinging round the corner into the street. Close behind came a company of perhaps a hundred men, dressed in gray caps and blouses. Knocker at once recognized them as the iron workers who had just completed the erection of the Claypool Building.

The boy's recent disappointment was instantly forgotten as he became filled with enthusiasm at the sight of this company leading all others in the parade. These sunburned men from the Claypool Building would have rejoiced an old erection boss; to Knocker, each one of them was a hero. The boy, forgetting where he was, began to spring up and down on his airy seat, keeping time to the music of the band as he waved his hat and cheered.

But all at once, when the band was directly underneath and the Claypool company half a square away, Knocker became aware that something was wrong with his seat. Letting go his hat, the boy bent over and clutched the end of the board with both hands. When the plank came to rest, Knocker found his end had sunk down three feet below the edge of the building; and although he had ceased to spring up and down, it still continued to sink. Like a snail it crawled past the angle of twenty, then thirty degrees, while the boy sat clutching the board in horror.

He realized what was happening. In his excitement in tying down the other end of the plank, Knocker had used, instead of the square hitch he had intended, the terrible granny. Slowly but surely it was giving way.

At last the boy opened his eyes in relief to find the board had come to a standstill. He remembered that in one end of the lashing he had used there was a hard knot. Thinking this knot had traveled up to the granny, and that the latter was now as safe as a square hitch, Knocker began to squirm back up the plank. But this proved an indiscreet move, and almost a fatal one.

The granny had not been stopped by the hard knot, but merely by a frayed edge on the rope. Hardly had the boy made his first move when this pulled through, and the plank gave a little lurch downward.

Knocker had all but overbalanced, and saved himself barely by again clutching the end of the knot. It seemed then as if Knocker had ruined his only chance for life. The plank slowed down again to its former movement, but it continued to sink under the boy's weight.

Below, the parade came to a halt, all but the leading band, which, unconscious of the pending catastrophe, went marching gaily up the street.

All other eyes were gazing at the helpless boy. As the plank passed the thirtieth degree and seemed fairly to stand on end, some turned away their faces, unable to watch longer.

Among the iron workers were men who had witnessed some fearful falls and terrible accidents, but even they were rendered helpless at the sight of their youthful friend in such a position.

There was one exception, however. A big man, with courage and determination showing in his clear blue eyes and square jaw, sprang from the ranks and pushed his way swiftly through the crowd. A moment later he reached the high board fence which shut in the Claypool Building from the street. With agility that would have done credit to a sailor, Big Jim scaled the fence and disappeared inside the enclosure.

Meanwhile, with each instant Knocker found his position harder to maintain. Splinters from the pine board pierced his hands cruelly, but the boy only set his jaws and gripped the harder.

He knew he had one chance left. If the hard knot came in contact with the granny before the board reached a slanting position, he might be saved.

There seemed little hope of that, however, for the plank had already passed the forty-fifth degree. Knocker's weight on the end would have started it sliding down that had it not rested in a slight indentation in the pine, caused by the rough iron on the edge of the building.

Then a slight quiver ran through the plank. Under other circumstances Knocker would not have noticed it; but under the high-strung condition of his nerves he felt it quite distinctly, and grew sick at heart. The boy closed his eyes.

It was only the hard knot coming in contact with the granny that caused the plank to quiver. An instant later Big Jim arrived on the spot. Readily his quick eye took in the situation, and he knew in an instant what to do to save the boy.

Like one in a dream Knocker, who had now given up all hope and was about to let go, heard his old friend begin to speak to him in an every-day tone of voice—drawing his mind from the danger, cheerily encouraging him.

As he talked the big man was not idle. He braced himself and was pulling steadily down on the lashing. In a moment more he had the plank down and made fast in its original position.

Then, amid a deafening cheer from below, Big Jim walked out and carried

the half-conscious Knocker back to safety.

Down on the street the bands began to play more merrily than ever, and the different unions fell into line again.

"Jim," said the boy, faintly, "I'm making you miss the parade."

In that moment Jim saw the look of affection in Knocker's eye, and knew the true cause of the boy's desire to enter the union.

"Since you did not fall, I am glad it happened," answered the big man. "We will watch the parade together."

From the different companies passing along the street below cheer after cheer rose to the big iron worker and the small rivet-beater, standing together on the edge of the skeleton iron work of the Claypool Building.—*Youth's Companion.*

### FAMOUS OLD ARITHMETIC.

In It Children Two and a Half Century Ago Studied Multiplication.

The present generation is inclined to think of Daboll as the father of arithmetic, and those who possess a copy of his work think they have a treasure, indeed. The Star representative, however, has the privilege of reviewing a text book in mathematics published seventy-three years before the famous Daboll was born. This book is undoubtedly one of the oldest owned in Otsego County, and is considered a great curiosity by all who have seen it. It is the work of Edward Cocker, printed Nov. 27, 1677, by John Collins, two years after the author's death. The work is famous since it was for years considered a forgery of Collins, and in its day caused much discussion in the colleges of England. Collins, who was an actor and poet and an intimate friend of Edward Cocker, dispelled the accusations against him by proving the manuscript for the book to have been Cocker's. The latter was one of the most famous authorities on arithmetic of his day, and published many books. The work, a copy of which has recently been brought to light here, was his last manuscript.

The book is nearly complete and in good condition. It is interesting from a typographical point of view, and the subject matter is most peculiar as compared with modern text books.

The fact that the multiplication table appears in the book gives some force to the common expression, "As old as the multiplication table." Primary pupils of today who are inclined to believe that this combination of figures was especially prepared to rack the memory should find some satisfaction in the knowledge that children of at least two and a half centuries have drilled upon it.—*Oneonta Star.*

### HE KILLED THE GRASSHOPPER.

Nebraska Man's Story of the Way It Saved His Crops.

A gentleman who used to live at University place was growing wheat in Southern Nebraska when the grasshoppers struck him. He had a forty acre field of wheat that year, promising a big yield, and the prospect of its having to go to feed his enemies, the grasshoppers, was galling almost beyond endurance. Very soon after the vanguard of the hoppers appeared, however, this gentleman made an entomological discovery that saved his crop.

"I found," he said, "that the grasshoppers were in the habit of climbing the wheat stalks every morning to spend the day feeding on what was intended to feed me and my family. I used to go out to the field to see how they were getting on every morning, and in my impatience at the liberties they were taking with my wheat I would occasionally strike at a clump of them as they hung to a stalk and knock them to the ground.

"After a while I noticed that when a grasshopper was thus dislodged he made no further effort to get his dinner, but remained on the ground until the regular time to climb the stalk next morning. Immediately on making the important discovery I went and took down our long wire clothes line, and called my wife to come and help me. Then we went through that forty acre field, dragging the clothes line over the wheat between us, and knocked all the grasshoppers to the ground. There they stayed till the next day.

"Next morning we gave the hoppers just time enough to get well started up the stalks when we went out and repeated the proceedings of the day before. The result was the same, and in the course of a few days every grasshopper in that field had died of starvation. Our neighbors came out every morning to jeer at us, and called us a pair of old idiots, but we harvested the only wheat crop in that part of Nebraska that year."—*Nebraska State Journal.*

### Painting With Milk.

Mr. Guy E. Mitchell tells of a strange use for milk. He and others have used it for painting barns and outbuildings. Into a gallon of milk are stirred three pounds of Portland cement and enough pigment to give the proper color. This mixture spread on the wood makes a coating that after six hours becomes as good and lasting as oil paint. It makes the best possible paint for trees where large limbs have been pruned or sawed off, says Mr. Mitchell.

The total commerce of Abyssinia is about \$9,000,000 a year.

## Meanest of All Crimes.

By the Rev. Thomas B. Gregory.

It is not lying, it is not stealing, it is not even murder, it is ingratitude to parents that constitutes the meanest of all crimes.

To be a thief, to be a liar, to be a murderer is bad enough, in all conscience; but more displeasing than thief, liar or murderer is the man who "goes back" on his father and mother.

These ingrates belong in the category of those seen by Dante in his journey through hell, and of whom it was declared that they were "hateful to God and to the enemies of God."

In other words, they are despised not only by God and His angels, but by the devil and hisimps.

It is a sad and shameful story that comes from a wretched little rear room in a miserable tumble-down tenement in this city. In that dingy little room, on a cot, lies an old man, poor, sick without nourishment, without even the simple medicines that might alleviate his pains.

Besides the old man, but powerless to help him beyond such words of sympathy as she may be able to speak, sits his aged wife, bowed down, like her husband, with the weight of years and with the unspeakable pain that is born of the thought of loneliness and want.

The old couple have three grown children, two sons and a daughter, all of whom deserted them many years ago, when the father met with the financial reverses that swamped him.

These children have never contributed a cent toward their parents' support; and the woman and mother would not be where they are today and protected them when they were weak and helpless, are left by them to starve or to be carted off to the poorhouse.

Do these children know where their parents are and what their condition is? If not, why not?

What sort of a son or daughter is it that loses track of father and mother or that does not know whether father and mother are sick or well, happy or in distress? Son! Daughter! It is mockery to call them by such names.

"Son" and "daughter" are human terms but the children we are talking of are inhuman. It would be wrong to call them brutes, for the brutes would not do what they are doing.

If the children of whom I speak were what they ought to be, their poor old father and mother would not be where they are today. The dear old mother would not be obliged to hobble about the streets begging to keep her husband and herself alive.

Oh, the hardness of some human hearts! And of all hard hearts the hardest is that of the son or daughter who has forgotten father and mother, or who has ceased to be moved by the thought of their sorrow and want.

There seems to be no special punishment by the State for such ungrateful sons and daughters as we are now concerned with, but fortunately State punishment in such cases is not needed.

It is punishment enough to be such a heartless child.—*New York American.*

## The Point at Issue.

What Japan Wants of Korea and What Russia Wants of Her.

By Homer B. Hulbert.

WHAT does Japan want of Korea and what does Russia want of her? The interest of these two powers in the peninsula are quite different. Japan demands that Korea shall have a clean and enlightened government which will lead the people to a peaceful development of the resources of the country. It demands a good monetary system, a good police system, a good system of taxation.

All these things will benefit Japanese trade in Korea, and at the same time will be of equal value to the Korean people themselves. These conditions are the only ones that will help Korea tide over the transition period and finally become a genuinely civilized power. Russia, on the other hand, cares nothing about reform in Korea. The stronger and the cleaner the government of Korea becomes, the greater obstacle she will be in the way of Russia's ambitions. It is not Korea trade or Korean development or Korean welfare which she can arm and in which she can trench herself, but the whole trend of her policy in the far East during the last century confirms it.

The matter is summed up in the one statement that Japanese demands in Korea lie parallel with the interests of the Korean people, while Russian aspirations are directly opposed to them. Take one glaring instance. Japan secured a concession for building a railway from Fusan to Seoul. This will perhaps pay a fair dividend after years of work, but its value in Korea is beyond estimate. It opens up the whole interior of the country and quadruples the value of every foot of land within twenty miles of its line. A foreigner in Taiku wrote the other day that the coming of the Seoul-Fusan railway had already raised the price of property in that town three hundred per cent. The Russian timber concession on the Yalu River. This was arranged secretly with a bribed foreign minister who divided with the government the proceeds of the deal. By this act there was put into the hand of Russia property to the value of at least fifty millions of dollars. The government of Korea received possibly a quarter of a million. These two transactions illustrate perfectly the attitude of the contestants.—*The Century.*

## Some Aspects of "Society."

By Mrs. Burton Harrison.

THE young people are still the real rulers of Eastern society. In Boston, where high thinking and intellectual supremacy once rode over the waters as if in an ark, we are told that society is given over into the hands of the very youthful set, whose dinners and balls and house parties are the chief social events and topics. In New York the elders of a certain set still meet at large functions with the juveniles, but the debutante and her playfellows usurp a large share of room and public attention. In Philadelphia there still are dinners and suppers where the heads of the community assemble and maintain their old character for agreeability, but the young generation requires—and secures—its full share of entertaining. In Baltimore, where beauty and youth have ever shined renowned with terrapin and canvas-back ducks, the mothers and fathers frankly stay at home and let their children have the fun abroad.

One is sometimes led to speculate upon the very apparent subsidence of the sentimental relationship of the sexes in our age. Certain it is that the young man who dares not and the girl who cares not to achieve matrimony are a frequent spectacle. In the man's case who can blame him, acquainted as he generally is with the stress of money-getting and informed on every side of the expectations and the necessities of a wife "in society"? As for the girl, it is the habit of well-to-do American parents so to equip and prepare their daughters for life among the highest; they so commonly provide her with luxuries unknown to their own youth, with suites of rooms, maids, horses, vehicles of her own; they carry her so much abroad, that she cannot find herself tempted to give up this ease and variety for the humdrum estate of marriage and a husband who must daily work down town. \* \* \* I think in this matter of wanting to remain single because she is better off than if married there is a menace of grave import to the nation.—*Everybody's Magazine.*

### CRACKED VOICES.

A Lack of Muscular Control is What Causes the Break.

The pitch of the human voice depends primarily upon the number of vibrations per second of the vocal cords, and they in their turn, depend on the length, size and degree of tension of the cords, which increase in length with the growth of the larynx. One of the deepest bass notes, from the greater length of the cords, has only eighty double vibrations a second, while a soprano voice can give 992 such vibrations in the same time. The size of a lad's larynx is, roughly, that of a woman's, but when the piping schoolboy is shouting up into manhood his larynx grows rapidly and the vocal cords become elongated nearly in the proportion of three and a half to two. The cartilages by which their tension is regulated also share in this growth, as is seen by the swelling of the so called "Adam's apple."

Now, all these parts do not increase with equal rapidity; hence the muscular control, which must be very exact, is rendered uncertain and the voice is said to "break." A similar change takes place in the case of women, but very much less in amount, and a further compensation in the formation of the upper part of the larynx serves to disguise the effect.

Popularity of the Walking Stick.  
For the past few years walking sticks have been more generally used by the gentlemen of the frock coat. They will, however, be seen on all occasions during the spring and summer season. The well groomed man carries his walking stick to business for service all through the day, and the man who spends but a few hours about the business district of town likewise leans on his stick.

Some are of white walnut, stained with acid to the taste of the owner. English furze is very popular, as are likewise the Madagascar and cherry. Partridge wood and the pimenta are sought, and oak is always in demand. It would be quite impossible to say what style of handle is most favored. Each is good if not clumsy in treatment. Thoroughbred carry the cane for service rather than to twirl in the hand.—*Sartorial Art Journal.*

Mustard water will remove the odor of onions from the hands.

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## BARGAINS!

The readers of this paper are constantly upon the alert to ascertain where goods can be purchased at the lowest prices, and if a merchant does not advertise and keep the buyer conversant with his line of goods, how can he expect to sell them?

THINK OVER THIS!