

involves the taxation of land-values, and not of land; and neither Oriental empires nor Western nations have ever applied that principle. Land taxes have indeed been applied, but a land tax becomes in effect and in fact a tax on land-using, and so becomes a tax at last on labor. But the single tax is a tax on land values, falling only upon valuable land, and in exact proportion to its value, without regard to its use or its improvement. It is thus not a tax on the use of land, but upon the monopoly of land; and it therefore cannot possibly be shifted upon labor, nor can it have any other effect than that of encouraging the best and fullest use of all valuable land. It would simply kill land speculation.

Warren Worth Bailey.

JOHNSTOWN, PA.

¹ The reader is also referred to the note on this subject on pages 156, 157 of THE CENTURY for May, 1898. — EDITOR.

Note on Burns's Portrait.

REFERRING to the note in your February, 1898, number accompanying a "Burns Portrait," the William McQuhae mentioned, who probably painted Burns's portrait, was born, not on May 10, 1779, as there stated, but, as quoted from my grandfather's family Bible, on July 10, 1775, and died June 22, 1818. From what I have heard my father say, who himself was an amateur artist, I have no hesitation in saying that William McQuhae could have painted this "Burns Portrait," as he was twenty-one years old at the time of the poet's death. The poet's sons were boarded for two summers with my grandmother in the neighboring parish of Balmaghie.

CASTLE DOUGLAS, SCOTLAND.

Jane McQuhae.



A Musical Fable.

WITH PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR.

JOHN COUNTERPOINT was mad. It is no new thing for a musician to be accounted insane by his friends (and by other musicians), but the symptoms of the alienation of John Counterpoint's mind were various and interesting. The madness of your ordinary musician is not so, consisting mainly in a rise of inner pride and a fall of outer scorn.

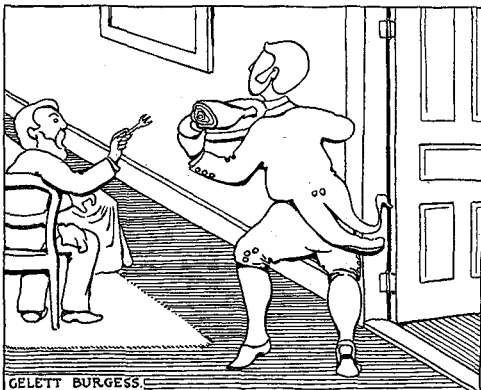
John had filled every post in the orchestra. He had lungs for the trombone, nerves for the violin, lips for the flute, and muscles for the drums, as well as that nice adjustment of the mind which is absolutely necessary for the rendering of the subtle triangle. He was, in short, all things to all instruments. His soul was poised, yet

rhythmic, and he copied scores with neatness and accuracy.

It was the surprising technical proficiency that he possessed which finally unhinged John Counterpoint's mind. Music came to mean to him mathematics rather than philosophy, and a discord offended him as the square root of a minus quantity offends an algebraist. Truly there are surds in music, as there are affected quadratics in harmony. John's dream was to square the musical circle; to reduce the whole world to its greatest common multiple, as one might say, speaking mathematico-musically; to orchestrate the universe.

Musicians agreed with him that the world's voices were badly correlated and the ensemble was musically poor. They did not think of the possibility of there being a higher mathematics of music, a musical calculus, a non-Wagnerian harmony, to which they had not yet grown, which might explain the thunder-storm motif and distinguish its permutation in the yapping of a dachshund. But musicians, as a rule, have forsworn thinking; it is theirs to feel.

And so when John Counterpoint would grow white with terror if two men coughed in non-related keys, his fellows smiled, and said, "Poor old John, how he must suffer in this noisy world!" But they were partly wrong, for John was no fool, though he was a musician; he was only mad. His mind had soared far above the petty distractions that agitate the third-rate artist. He chafed no more at solo performances; it was with him a question of harmony, not melody. The popular song—*pouff!* John's philosophic ear overheard all its obvious phrases, all its crude sequences, all its inevitable intervals; he idealized it, reset it in

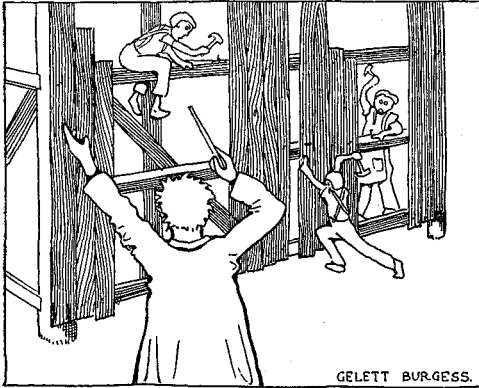


The butler was never allowed to enter the room in any of John's conducting the motive with a bow.

some abstruse key of his mind, and heard it glorified, a type of what might be. No sound was to him a mere noise, but an element. Upon his musical palette he could mix the crude colors of vibration and extort pleasure from the squeak of a rusty hinge. He was mad. If a barrel organ was not actually out of tune he could not only endure, but encourage it. He could enjoy one bagpipe, but not two.

John's idea was first to create a musical nucleus in his own home, and then expand the circumference of harmony, proselytize and legislate, until the whole country beat in time to his mad theories. Like many musicians, the center of his home was the dining-room. John's house was old, and in the dining-room floor were seven squeaky planks, over which the butler carried in, every day, John's dinner.

The old man—for John was now old and rich, very rich for a musician—always waited in an agony for this moment, dreading to hear the badly composed series of squeaks that the butler's foot-



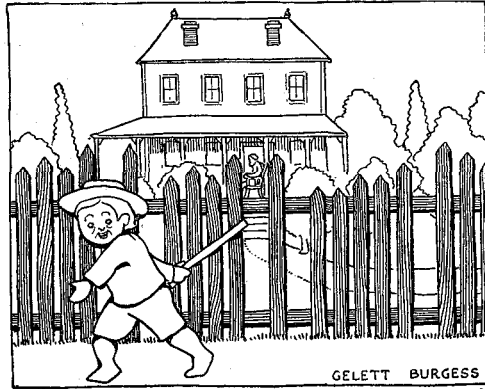
In an instant old Counterpoint was outside driving, leading the men with his conductor's baton.

steps would make as he walked. Every day, after dinner, John got down on his hands and knees and played upon the planks as if they were the keys of some stupendous organ. In fact, John, recognizing that his floor was some strange new musical instrument that he must learn to play, called it a stupend; hence "stupendous."

One day the butler entered as usual, staggering under the burden of a huge joint, and as he tottered to the table, John heard the divine intervals of the Wagnerian Wotan motif, as if the Wanderer had entered, plunging downward with his spear. The butler, startled by a cat that had entered, had looked round, taking a pair of eighth and one quarter steps before proceeding.

The servant was instructed and practised, and was never allowed to enter the room in any other way, John conducting the motif with a fork. This was the beginning.

From this the harmony spread. John was awakened one morning by the sound of hammers. Carpenters had begun to build a shed in the yard, and nails were entering the boards with cacoph-



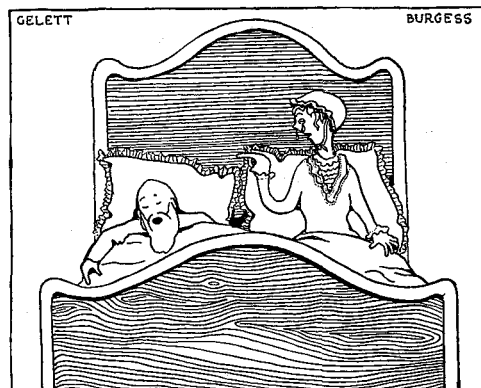
His xylophonic palings became famous for leagues around.

onous percussion. In an instant old Counterpoint was outside in his night-shirt, leading the men with his conductor's baton. By careful training he succeeded in arranging their work so that the notes of the nails at each stroke composed with the vibrations of other nails, and all day the chorus of harmony floated from the shed, tinkling like a beautiful shower. Shed after shed was thus built to satisfy John Counterpoint's craving for new musical harmonies.

All his doors were next rehung, tuned, adjusted, so that the progress from room to room was registered by a succession of augmented ninths as one after another slammed. The servants were directed to slam the doors. They would have slammed them, anyway.

It was the Counterpoint front fence that was John's greatest trial. Boys passed and repassed, and never by any chance did one forget to drag a stick across the pickets. John's madness had so far confined itself to internal reform. It was time to commence extraterritorial proceedings.

Day after day he sat upon his veranda, writhing at the harsh rattle of sticks against his palings. He made, however, no attempt to reform the boys; it was the pickets that gave offense. He hoped, in time, so to adjust the world that, were it peopled entirely with small boys, all sounds would yet be musical and well composed.

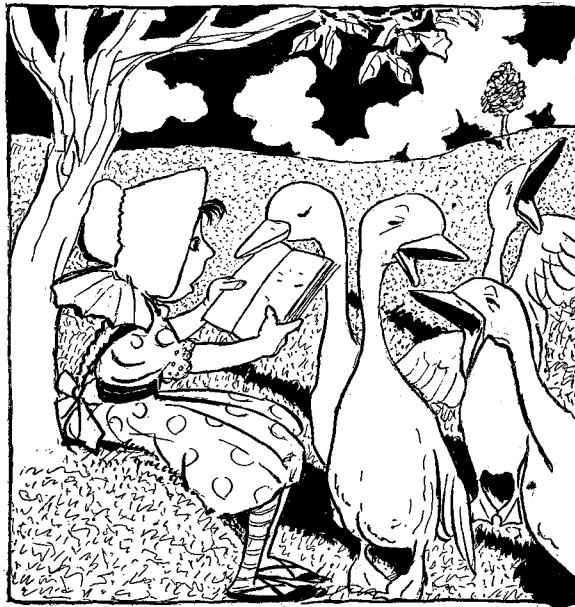


"John," she cried, weeping, "you snore in B!"

A Child's Primer of Natural History.

TEXT AND PICTURES BY OLIVER HERFORD.

(SEVENTH SERIES.)



Some Geese.

Ev-ER-Y child who has the use
Of his sen-ses knows a goose.
See them un-der-neath the tree
Gath-er round the goose-girl's knee,
While she reads them by the hour
From the works of Scho-pen-hau-er.

How pa-tient-ly the geese at-tend!
But do they re-al-ly com-pre-hend
What Scho-pen-hau-er's driv-ing at?
Oh, not at all; but what of that?
Nei-ther do I; nei-ther does she;
And, for that mat-ter, nor does he.

At last John had an inspiration. He would make the fence a xylophone, and arrange the pickets so that when a small boy's stick was drawn across them it would rattle out a pleasant melody. This was easily accomplished, and of a sunny afternoon John Counterpoint could often be seen seated upon his veranda, watching for the next performer. His xylophonic palings became famous for leagues around. They were set for a little air from Mozart's "Serenade," cunningly devised so that even when played backward the tune was not unpleasant.

But by this time John's madness had become more violent. He began to have wilder fancies. He could not see a man with three days' growth of beard upon his cheeks but he was reminded of the bristling cylinder of a music-box, and he would lose himself in thought speculating upon what tune the bristles would produce if the man's head were revolved across the teeth of a musical comb. He tried to experiment upon his butler, but the servant objected, and gave notice.

The telegraph wires about the house next aroused John's interest, and he planned to adjust them so that they would act as Æolian harps. From this he was diverted to the howling of his terrier, and he established a kennel of dogs and tried to train them to bark in minor chords. He had the middle tines of his table-forks removed, and all his cutlery was retuned. But by this time he had come to the state when his mind was easily distracted, and his ideas jumped continually from B sharp to C natural. It was only a question of days when something would achieve the final catastrophe and his mind would go to pieces in an orchestral crash. One cannot continue a crescendo indefinitely.

The end came soon. The climax of John's insanity arrived. He married.

MRS. COUNTERPOINT, too, was a musician. It is this in-and-in breeding that has produced so many cranks. One night Mrs. Counterpoint awoke with a shriek. "John," she cried, weeping, "you snore