

At the Sign of the Wooden Leg

By "Silas Wegg."

The Bonehead Perspective.

My esteemed friend Bonehead — Harding Stonehinge Bonehead is his name in full, and he lives at Rockliffe—often tells me that I do not have "the right perspective." What he means by that, my dear uneducated reader, is that I do not see things with the eyes of the Bonehead Family. And he is mistaken in that, as I had a great grandfather by the name of Bonehead. A tintype, rather the worse of wear, is in existence revealing his features as they were when he was sixty-five or so. Gaffer Bonehead had rather a flinty face. Mrs. Wegg calls the tintype the Snark, because she finds it, she says, "handy for striking a light." Yes, Gaffer Bonehead had a flinty face and a flinty mind, too, if family traditions can be relied upon. He it was that, in his declining years, had me called Silas. He rather insisted on Silicon, which was his own name, but compromised on Silas with my mother who wished to name me Anastasius. Some say that I resemble my great grandfather in mental qualities. Others go so far as to say that I inherited my wooden leg from him. At any rate, when any Bonehead says that I cannot appreciate his point of view he does not know my family history. I do not bear the Bonehead name and have not the Bonehead arms quartered on my shield, but blood will tell, and here is my leg as Exhibit A in support of that proposition. The family arms can be bought at any junk-shop, but when it comes to "claims of long descent" trust to the family legs.

After these few personal remarks, Mr. Chairman, I may proceed to the subject in hand, which, as you are aware, is the Bonehead Perspective. A-hem! The Bonehead, or Right, Perspective may be defined as that view of life which can be obtained without the exercise of the pivotal functions of the cranium. If, in addition to this, the Bonehead can maintain a certain rigidity in the ocular muscles, he is entitled to be called a thirty-second degree Bonehead and to be relieved from all further examinations. Boneheadism thus consists in "seeing life steadily," but with no special provision for "seeing it whole." To this latter phase Boneheadism is indifferent, for life to us Boneheads is an aggregation of facts and not a system of ideas. We believe in the gospel of "one thing at a time." We have no sidelights, except they be of the hirsute kind which serve as blinkers. For us the supreme invention of the ages is the microscope, which enables us to direct the gaze upon single isolated facts without the fear of being disturbed by flashes from some golden sunset or by smiles from some happy face. The sunsets and the smiles will be observed in their turn, but we do not go out of our way for them.

We are useful people, are we not? And you are quite sure that you admire us? You know Harding Stonehinge Bonehead perhaps. He has made his way in the world. He says that I have not the right perspective, but he mistakes a certain pivotal motion of my body, due to the inequality of the axes on which my body moves,