

on, misfortune again overtook him, to the extent that the boat was upset.

His wife, realising the danger he was in, ran frantically along the side of the stream, crying for help in a pitiful voice; when, to her sheer amazement, she was suddenly brought to a standstill by her husband yelling out:—

"If I'm drowned, Molly, don't forget that flour's gone up two shillin' a sack!"

SERVICES RENDERED.

He entered the station-master's office in an I've-got-no-business-here sort of manner, and quietly asked the busy man if he could speak to the station-master.

"I am he," replied the official, without raising his eyes from the desk. "What do you want?"

"One of your trains killed my dog a few days ago, and I thought I would step in and —"

"Well, he had no business on our line. You should have kept him tied up."

"Yes, I know," meekly responded the caller, "but I didn't, and he got on the line and was killed, and I thought you ought to —"

"But we won't! We don't pay for killing dogs on this line!"

"Who said anything about pay?" replied the ex-dog owner. "I'd been trying for a month to get someone to drown the brute, and as the railway has killed him for me I thought you ought to be paid for the job. Here's five bob."

SMILE RAISERS.

Schoolmaster: "Robert, here is an example in subtraction. Seven boys went down to the pond to bathe, but two of them had been told not to go into the water. Now, how many went in?"

Robert: "Seven, sir."

"Tommy," said the hostess, "you appear to be in deep thought."

"Yes'm," replied Tommy; "ma told me somethin' to say if you should ask me to have some cake or anything, an' I bin here so long now I forget what it was."

Phrenologist: "This large lump running across the back of your head shows that you are inclined to be curious to the point of recklessness."

Client: "You are right. I got that by sticking my head into a lift-shaft to see if the lift was coming up, and it was coming down. My curiosity was more than satisfied."

Last Christmas a vicar was invited to dinner at the house of one of the leading men in the town. At the dinner table he was placed opposite a goose.

The lady of the house was seated on the vicar's left. Seeing the goose, he remarked:—

"Shall I sit so close to the goose?"

Finding his words a bit equivocal, he turned round to the lady and said, in a most inoffensive tone:—

"Excuse me, Mrs. Blank, I meant the roast one."

Why you should learn GREGG SHORTHAND—Because:

1. It can be mastered in 18 MAIL LESSONS.
2. SENTENCES written at the FIRST Lesson, LETTERS at the Seventh.
3. There are FEW rules—no exceptions, no shading, NONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES of other systems.
4. Students have written 70 to 80 words a minute in TEN WEEKS, 100 words a minute in THREE MONTHS.
5. It has been adopted by the N.Z. Military Authorities as the official system to be taught to disabled soldiers in England and in France.

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J. Wyn Irwin, M.A.,

N.Z. REPRESENTATIVE : Box 199, CHRISTCHURCH.

SCIENCE SIFTINGS

By "VOLT."

Are You a Barometer?

Undoubtedly there is a great relation between the elements and certain complaints, in the same way that some seasons of the year render certain people liable to illness more than others.

The lower we investigate in the animal world the more prone are its subjects to be affected by the weather. A cat for as much as three days beforehand feels a coming storm; a horse's fine nostrils can sniff approaching rain in an uncanny manner. The birds of the air have but to be watched to see the way in which they seek their nests at a hint of danger in the air.

The very trees and plants tremble in a peculiar manner before a severe storm. Many human beings are just as sensitive to the march of the elements, but do not always realise the significance of their sensitiveness. People who suffer from gout, rheumatism, or neuralgia know at once when bad weather is approaching.

Old wounds make themselves felt at certain times, and the stumps of members long since amputated give pain.

Medical men have never satisfactorily explained these strange phenomena, neither can they tell why some people instinctively become restless and excited, or moody and sullen, before a thunderstorm.

King Platinum.

Nobody with metallurgical knowledge has any doubt about it. Platinum is the King of Metals, and likely to remain so. Had they been acquainted with oro blanco—white gold—as the natives of Colombia originally called it, the old-time alchemists, who wasted valuable years and tons of charcoal in vain endeavors to transmute base metals into gold, must promptly have devoted their crucibles, their alembics, and their alembroth to its service. Not that the last, a concoction of mercury and ammonia, or any other tools of their mysterious craft, would have greatly affected platinum, for it is pretty certain that if the ancient transmuters had been familiar with the metal, which is not very likely, it would not have been amenable to any heat in their power to generate. Its transmutation into gold, or the present equivalent, however, is the simplest thing in the world. Old arithmetic books call the process exchange and barter. Five times the value of gold, or thereabouts, is the present market price, and "first catch your platinum" the only essential preliminary to a swift and satisfactory exchange transaction.

A writer, advocating the disuse of gold for currency, recently suggested that platinum might take its place, dethrone the yellow metal, and usurp the most important of its functions. But as the maximum annual production of the world during the last decade has not exceeded 300,000 troy ounces, the supply would only suffice for a yearly distribution in metal coinage of one-quarter of an ounce of platinum amongst every 1000 people in Europe, all the rest of the world having to do without. In Russia, the chief source of supply, platinum has already been used for currency purposes, but was discontinued for various reasons, one being that it was easy to counterfeit, and another that it became too costly.

For Bronchial Coughs, take
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PILES

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