

One day the minister met Sandy walking irresolutely along the road. The good man at once guessed the cause.

"Sandy," he said, earnestly, "I'm sorry to see ye in this state."

"Ah, weel, it's for the good o' the cause," replied the delinquent happily. "Ye see, meenister, it's a' through these subscreeptions. I've been down the glen collectin' fun's, an' at every hoose they made me hae a wee drappie."

"Every house! But—but surely, Sandy, there are some of the kirk members who are teetotallers?"

"Aye, there are; but I wrote tae those!"

PARDONABLE CURIOSITY.

A commercial traveller was advised by a friend to call on a certain tradesman with whom he had no account. He took the hint, called on the man, and was received most genially.

"May I show you my samples?" inquired the traveller.

The tradesman had no objection, and from an insignificant-looking bag the visitor produced quite a surprising quantity of specimen goods.

"Well," said the affable shopkeeper, when the bag was at last emptied, "there's only one thing I want to-day."

Out came the order book.

"Thank you, Mr. Binks," remarked the traveller delighted at opening a new account: "and what is that?"

"Why," was the reply, "I want to see how you're going to get all those samples into that little bag again!"

SMILE RAISERS.

Customer: "I've had two bottles of your stuff to make the hair grow, and it hasn't done it."

Barber: "That's very odd. I don't quite understand it."

Customer: "Well, look here. I don't mind drinking another bottle, but that's the last."

Benevolent Old Gent: "But that is not the same tale that you told me a few days ago, you know, my man!"

Cheerful Mendicant: "No, mister: you didn't believe that one."

"Happiness," declaimed the philosopher, "is only the pursuit of something, not the catching of it!"

"Oh, I don't know," answered the plain citizen. "Have you ever chased the last tram on a rainy night?"

Teacher: "Willie, have you whispered to-day without permission?"

Willie: "Only wunst."

Teacher: "Johnny, should Willie have said 'wunst'?"

Johnny: "No'm—he should have said twist."

Vamper (having failed for the third time to get the key of the air, hummed over by a bush vocalist): "I've tried you on the white ones, and on the black ones, and on the white and black ones mixed. It's no use—you're singing between the cracks!"

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SCIENCE SIFTINGS

(By "VOLT.")

Brooms from Pine Trees.

One of the latest discoveries due to the war search for substitutes is a new use for pine needles.

It has been found that the needles of the pine make a fair substitute for bristles in brushes and brooms. They are found in great quantities on the ground in fir forests, and, owing to the large amount of silica in them, they are hard, and do not decay rapidly.

The pine needles are dealt with in two ways. Where they are long they are simply bunched together and tied firmly, and a stick is pushed down the centre as a handle. The other plan is to insert clusters of smaller needles in holes in a thickish piece of wood. These holes are filled with hot pitch, and when this material has set hard and dry the pine needles are held firmly in place. Elaborate tests have shown that pine needles wear well. They are not more easily broken than much of the material which has been commonly used in broom-making, and owing to their hardness they can withstand a good deal of friction.

War Tests of Locomotives.

It sometimes happens that an invention pioneered in one country is taken up by another and developed more rapidly and successfully than in its original home. This did not occur, however, with the invention which created the modern industrial era—the steam engine. Both in the stationary form and in the locomotive, British engineers have never lost the lead which the genius of Watt and Stephenson gave them. For speed and efficiency the performances of the modern British locomotives are unsurpassed. During the war British railways carried an enormously increased traffic, although hundreds of locomotives were sent to France, and some even as far as Mesopotamia, for military transport purposes. In France and Flanders, moreover, hundreds of miles of light railway were constructed and equipped from locomotive and rolling-stock factories in Britain. New types of engine were rapidly evolved for this unusual form of transport; and Sir Douglas Haig has testified to the remarkable efficiency of the locomotives and other equipment turned out in large quantities at short notice. The success of the British locomotive works in this phase of military engineering is due in part to the fact that for many years they have been turning out locomotives for every variety of special purpose—mines, quarries, docks, plantations, factories, and so on—in every part of the world. The experience they have gained during the war will be therefore of positive assistance in solving the transport problems of countries overseas. Moreover, the war has increased their productive capacity and encouraged the adoption of means for achieving a more rapid output of locomotives with steel and other metals of the highest grade and machined within the finest limits of precision.

A SHORTHAND REVOLUTION.

Mr. Wm. Wheatcroft, one of the foremost authorities on PITMAN'S Shorthand, Editor and Author of the new editions of the "Teacher," the "Primers," etc., after a close study of

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and writing 80 words a minute after less than 6 WEEKS' study, writes:—

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