

Signatures are written in full. A prefix is never used. A married woman signs her name 'Mary Robinson,' not 'Mrs. William Robinson.' When writing to a stranger a woman should place beneath her signature, toward the left '(Mrs.) William Robinson'; or '(Miss) Ruth Gray,' as the case may be, in order to indicate by what title she is to be addressed.

The termination for a business letter should be 'Yours truly.' Between friends or acquaintances the close may be 'Yours sincerely,' or 'Sincerely yours.'

Precision in placing a stamp is important. It should be placed perfectly straight in the upper right-hand corner of the envelope. Stamps put on crookedly, or upside down, show unpardonable carelessness on the part of a letter-writer. When writing to a stranger on one's own business that calls for a reply it is etiquette to enclose a stamp.

Addresses are written in full on envelopes, and care is given to the proper spelling of names.

Type-written letters are strictly for business communications. Postal cards should be used only for most matter-of-fact correspondence.

TWO BOYS' COMPOSITIONS

School compositions occasionally turn out better, from a literary point of view, than teachers anticipate. A South Island teacher asked her pupils to bring in 'three items of information' about the river which flowed by their town; and from one boy she received this model of concise composition:

'I have lived near it.
'I have scated over it.
'I have fallen into it.'

Another teacher set her pupils at work on the subject: 'What should little boys not do in school' and from one of them received the following effort:

'Little boys at school should not make faces at the teacher and should not study too hard cause it makes them near-sighted, and should not do long examples in arithmetic cause it uses up their pencils too fast.'

THREE EUROPEAN CITIES

The city of Ghent, in Belgium, is built on twenty-six islands. These islands are connected with each other by eighty bridges. The city has 300 streets and thirty public squares. It is noted for being the birthplace of Charles V. and John of Gaunt, whom Shakespeare called 'time honored Lancaster,' and as the scene of the pacification of Ghent, November 8, 1576, and of several insurrections, sieges, and executions of well-known personages. It is associated with American history by the treaty made there December 24, 1814, terminating the second war between England and the United States, known as the war of 1812.

Amsterdam, in Holland, is built on piles driven far below the water into the earth. The city is intersected by many canals, which are spanned by nearly 300 bridges, and resembles Venice in the mingling of land and water, though it is considerably larger than that city. The canals divide the city, which is about ten miles in circumference, into ninety islands.

The city of Venice is built on eighty islets, which are connected by nearly 400 bridges. Canals serve for streets in Venice, and boats, called gondolas, for carriages. The bridges are, as a rule, very steep, rising considerably in the middle, but have easy steps. The circumference of the city is about eight miles. The Venetians joined the Lombard league against the German Emperor, and in 1183 gained a great victory in defence of Pope Alexander III. over the fleet of war vessels headed by Otto, son of Frederick Barbarossa. In gratitude for this victory the Pope gave the Doge Ziani a ring and instituted the world-famous ceremony of 'Venice Marrying the Adriatic Sea.' In this ceremony the doge, as the chief ruler of Venice used to be termed, with appropriate ceremonies dropped a ring into the sea every year in recognition of the wealth and trade carried to Venice by the Adriatic.

FAMILY FUN

THE SUSPENDED EGG.

Fasten four pieces of white cord to the four corners of a strip of white netting—say, about eight inches long by five across,—mosquito netting will do. This done, soak the whole in a very strong brine, and let it dry thoroughly before beginning your experiment. It will also be necessary to have an egg from which the contents have been drawn, so that only the empty shell remains. When ready, place a light cane or wooden stick on the backs of two chairs and tie the four upper ends to the cane, so that the net will look somewhat like a hammock. Take the egg-shell and put it in the net. Now ask someone to strike a match, and apply it to the cords that hold the hammock. These will flame up, but the net will remain stationary, still holding the egg-shell. The salt preserves sufficient of the fibre to keep it so.

THE SHOT RABBIT.

This is a trick which can best be played on a billiard table. Take a glove, blow into it, and put it lightly on the table with the palm of the glove downwards and the fingers slightly bent. Then going to the end of the table shoot a ball sharply into the glove, which will turn a complete somersault, not unlike the flop of a rabbit when shot.

On the Land

Bananas have been successfully ripened this year in Napier and New Plymouth.

Mr. J. R. Scott, secretary of the South Island Dairy Association, has received cable advice from Home that the cheese market is at 6ls, with a very strong market. Best New Zealand butter is quoted at 107s for salted, and 112s for unsalted, with the market good for choicest qualities, but dull and declining for secondaries, which are in heavy supply. Danish, 118s.

Recently the hemp market took a jump at as high as £17 15s, and lasted at that for a week, but since then prices have taken a turn for the worse (says the *Dominion*). The output has fallen off rather heavily. This is due to the low prices causing some of the mills to close down. The closing down is chiefly in the Auckland province, and in Southland. The Wellington output has not decreased so heavily.

Among the blocks of land that will be thrown open by the Government for settlement in Canterbury shortly are—Allanholme, adjoining the Waihao Downs, and Drayton, situated at Templeton. The plans for these two blocks are expected to be out any day now, and both will probably be in the market by April 25 of this year. The settlement at Waihao Downs is being surveyed now. Its area is 2200 acres, but only 1900 acres of this amount are to be offered at present. The land is being cut up into 23 farms, and a few small five-acre lots. This block will be ready for selection on June 1.

At last week's sale at Addington there was a big yarding of sheep, for which the demand was weaker than at the previous sale. Prime wethers fetched as high as 17s 6d, and ewes up to 14s. There was a full supply of fat lambs, the bulk of which was of good quality. Some extra good lambs sold as high as 18s 3d, and the average price ranged from 9s to 15s. There was a small supply of fat cattle, for which there was fair competition. Steers ranged from £8 to £11 15s; heifers, from £6 to £10, and cows, £5 to £8 17s 6d.

Ripened cream is more 'churnable' than sweet cream. The churnability of cream may be described as the power of the cream to yield its fat as butter—the more churnable the cream the more butter will be obtained in the process of churning. The quality of cream, or the percentage of fat it contains, affects the flavour of this commodity to some extent. Cream containing from 40 to 50 per cent. of butter fat is of a pleasant flavour. Thin cream has a milky flavour, whilst very thick cream is to most people quite unpalatable, and too oily in flavour for use in tea.

An indifferent, careless, or bad-tempered milker is a luxury the dairy-farmer cannot very well afford to indulge in, although at the present time, with the limited supply of such labor, he is often compelled to put up with men and boys who are very ill-fitted for the work. The bad-tempered man very soon makes the quietest cow nervous and difficult to manage, whilst a careless milker, through neglect of proper 'stripping,' is indirectly robbing his employer of the best part of the cow's produce. Those of our readers who were born in Ireland, and had anything to do with dairy-farming, will remember that, generally speaking, the farmer's wife supplemented the work of the maids by 'stripping' the cows, for, long before the Babcock or other tests were heard of, she was well aware, from practical observation, that this was the richest portion of the milk—and the portion that was specially reserved for the breakfast table. Proper attention to this part of the milking will assist materially in improving the quality of the milk, and contribute in no small degree to an increase in quantity.

At the annual meeting of the New Zealand Sheep-Breeders' Association, held recently in Christchurch, the question of oiling and coloring sheep for show purposes was discussed. Mr. H. D. Vavasour (Blenheim) spoke strongly against the practice indulged in by many exhibitors of artificially preparing sheep for show purposes by an excessive use of oils and coloring. He brought forward a motion to the effect that A. and P. Societies be approached with a view to the disqualification of any breeder who exhibits sheep that have been artificially treated. The majority of the members present, while expressing themselves as opposed to the excessive use of preparations on sheep sent forward to shows, pointed out that the climatic conditions of the South Island affected the appearance of the sheep, and it was necessary, in preparing them for show purposes, to use oils and coloring. It would be absolutely impossible to prohibit the use of some preparations for getting sheep up for shows. Mr. A. Murdoch (Southland) remarked that Southland sheep had the same bleached appearance as the sheep from some of the districts further north, and it was at times necessary to apply some softening material to the wool previous to showing. Mr. T. Little, the well known Ngapara breeder, said it would be impossible to prevent the use of preparations, and that if sheep were not so treated they would not prove so attractive to the public. Mr. Vavasour's motion was seconded pro forma, and on being put to the meeting was defeated.