

the cub without difficulty, but when they began to drag it down the cliff it made a noisy protest, and by the time the men entered the boat with their prize they discovered the old bear bounding downward in pursuit. Just at the mouth of the creek a large rock projected over the water, and toward this point the bear advanced.

Several shots were fired at her, but not one took effect. The men thought that they could easily row away from her, but, to their consternation, just as they were abreast of the rock she sprang from the extreme point directly into the boat!

The celerity with which the gentlemen vacated the premises was really astonishing. Over the side of the skiff and into the water they plunged and swam to land, regardless of guns and wet clothing. The situation was ludicrous, or would have been so to persons in a less perilous position.

Meantime the boat had acquired sufficient headway to carry it down the river in midstream, with the bears still in it. Later it drifted ashore and was recovered, but the bears had escaped.

### THE FIRST WRITING PEN

In any large city can be found in use to-day the first type of pen and the latest. A fine hair brush was the first instrument used by man for writing purposes. The Chinese laundryman of to-day marks his tickets and keeps his accounts with a camel's hair pen dipped in ink. Next door probably is a white merchant who uses the latest make of steel pen.

Between the two in the long history of the pen came the reed, then the quill. Steel pens are almost in universal use now, and are made by the ton and in increasing volume every year.

Confucius used a hair brush for a pen, and his ancestors for thousands of years before his time. The reed came into use for writing in the marshy countries of the Orient. It was hollow and, cut in short lengths with sharpened ends, it was some improvement on the hair pen.

The value of the quill was discovered at an early date in the history of civilisation, and its use spread from the East over Europe and then to the New World. Before the day of the metal pen England annually was importing more than 25,000,000 quills for pens. They were from the swans of Iceland, the Irish geese, the geese of the Hudson Bay country, etc.

Early in the nineteenth century the metal pen began to be used in England, the first one being one piece of metal for holder and point. The improvement of making the point detachable followed quickly, and to keep the point from being so stiff the sides were slit, as they are to-day. Steel pens in the early days cost 1/- each, sometimes double that.

### AN AGED PUN

There are times when the pun, much abused and poverty-stricken and aged as it generally is, seems to justify its appearance. One day, when Mr. Potter was trying to read a romantic story to his matter-of-fact wife, he had recourse to a pun to save his temper.

'And so the evening wore on,' read Mr. Potter, 'And—'

'What did it wear?' inquired his wife in her driest tone.

'My dear,' said Mr. Potter, after a scarcely perceptible hesitation, 'if you must know, it was the close of an autumn day.'

### FAMILY FUN

GUESS THE ANSWER.

Why does a dressmaker never lose her hooks?—Because she has an eye to each of them.

What is the difference between a cow and an old chair?—One gives milk and the other gives way (whey).

Why are quinine and iron like the Germans?—Because they are two tonics (Tentonics).

Why is a sleepy policeman like a rainbow?—Because he rarely appears until the storm is over.

Why is a little dog's tail like the heart of a tree?—Because it is farthest from the bark.

What word, by changing a letter, becomes its opposite?—United—untied.

Why is a thunderstorm like an onion?—Because it is peal on peal.

What did the potter say to the clay?—Beware.

When is a fowl's neck like a bell?—When it is rung for dinner.

What is the difference between a fool and a looking glass?—A fool speaks without reflecting, and a looking glass reflects without speaking.

What is it that the fewer there are to guard it the safer it is?—A secret.

Why is a pawnbroker like a drunkard?—Because he takes the pledge, but cannot always keep it.

## On the Land

An important thing that buyers overlook is the number of teats on a sow. She should have at least twelve, and fourteen are better, because if she is a good breeder all will be needed to take care of a large litter of pigs.

The average threshing tallies for the threshing mills in the Ashburton County for the season just closed are about 43,000 bushels of mixed grain, which is fully 20,000 bushels short of last year. This represents a shortage of 800,000 bushels for the Ashburton County, the falling-off being mainly represented by wheat.

At the Addington stock sale last week there were fairly large entries, and a good attendance. Fat cattle showed little or no change in values. Store sheep were dull of sale in consequence of the unsatisfactory outlook for feed for the winter. Fat lambs were not quite equal to last week's rates, and prime fat sheep were firm, whilst others were easier. Store cattle were dull of sale, and dairy cows in keen demand.

Writing of linseed-growing in the Levin district, the *Chronicle* says that a field was sown in lint on Mr. J. R. McDonald's farm at Heatherlen, by Mr. J. Cameron. The crop grew and developed astonishingly well, and the opinion of Mr. Cameron is that the lint proved itself to be one of the field products most easy of cultivation that he has had experience of. The linseed was threshed out of the stocks, with flails, some two months ago, and now it only needs a final clean-up with fanning machine to make it ready for the market. The crop is certain to return a highly profitable revenue in comparison to expenditure.

The following is an extract from a report by the Agent-General for Tasmania:—'My attention has been directed to what appears to be the profitable treatment of separated milk at the milk factory, and also whey from the cheese factory. From these products I am informed it is possible to obtain casein by precipitation, worth about 30s per cwt. in England. From the liquid remaining after the precipitation of casein, by evaporation lactose is obtained, and it is worth at the present time 45s per cwt. I am informed that the yield to the manufacturer after paying expenses is 3d per gallon for the separator milk and whey. The plant to treat 500 gallons per day is estimated to cost about £200, and I understand a second-hand plant could be obtained for about half that amount.'

'You've got the make, you've got the shape, and you've got the legs,' remarked a recent arrival from New Zealand, 'but the point which at once strikes every New Zealander who lands in Melbourne or Sydney is the fact that your draught horses—I am speaking strictly as regards the horses used for town work—carry neither condition nor polish. They have got the frames, but they are leg-weary and out of condition, and it seems hard to understand that the carriers in two such great centres as Melbourne and Sydney cannot afford to give better attention to their animals. The bulk of your horses appear to run to the half-draught type, and even when of this type are so inefficiently cared for that they do not appear to the casual observer to be fit to draw what one may term a fair load. During the last 12 months New Zealand draughts have earned a wonderfully good name in Australia. To the casual visitor from New Zealand your half-draught, or what is termed your general purpose horse, is very well represented, but specimens of your Clydesdale or Shire horse are hard to meet. I fail to see why a high-class draught mare or gelding should not be bred in Australia, and, if you will allow me to say so, I have failed to find specimens of such in your streets.—Sydney paper.'

At the Burnside stock market last week there was an advance of 10s per head in the price of cattle as compared with the previous week's market. During the past two weeks (says the *Otago Daily Times*) the price of cattle has increased to the extent of fully 30s per head, and it is considered that it will go a great deal higher before the maximum is reached. About 140 head were yarded, and the highest price reached per head was £14. The quality was not good. In fact, the cattle that have been offering of late would at ordinary times be classed as stores, but there is not a sufficient number of good quality cattle in the market to meet the demand. As an indication of what is to be expected in the way of dear meat, it is reported that an Invercargill butcher has entered into a contract with a southern stock dealer to supply him with cattle during the winter and the early spring at the rate of 40s per 100lb, which is equivalent to £14 for an animal turning the scale at 700lb, which can only be classed as a medium sized beast. About 3300 sheep were penned, and while there were a few pens of good wethers, some of which made up to 24s each, the bulk of what was offering comprised ewes. About 200 lambs were yarded, and showed in a marked degree the effects of the drought.

Nothing grieves the careful housewife more than to see her good furniture mishandled by careless carriers. If you have to shift, be wise and get a reliable firm like the **NEW ZEALAND EXPRESS COMPANY** to remove your things. They are very careful, and charge reasonably too. Their address is Boud street....