

## NOT FREDDIE'S FAULT.

Freddie's father always expected instant and unquestioning obedience from his children. One day there was a sudden downpour of rain, so he told Freddie to go upstairs and close the trapdoor in the roof.

"But father—" began Freddie, remaining in his chair.

"Fred, close that trapdoor at once!"

"Yes, father, but I—"

"Frederick!"

Without another word Freddie went upstairs and closed the trapdoor.

An hour later, when the family sat down to tea, Freddie's brother did not appear, and his father asked what had happened to him.

"Well," said Freddie, "he was out on the roof when you told me to shut the trapdoor, and it has been raining ever since."

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## SMILE RAISERS.

Visitor (to butler who is showing him through the picture gallery): "That's a fine portrait! Is it an old master?"

Butler: "No, that's the old missus."

¶

A vicar announced several Sundays ago: "The collection to-day is on behalf of the assistant curate, and I hope you will give liberally to this deserving object."

The deserving object suppressed his mirth with difficulty.

¶

Teacher: "Why, Willie, when I was your age I did sums twice as hard as these."

"Willie: "Perhaps you had a better teacher, sir."

¶

"Any luck on your fishing trip, old man?"

"Very little. If fish go in schools, they always seem to be playing truant or having a holiday when I go after them."

Wife: "Don't you think this is a duck of a hat, dear?"

Husband: "Yes, but I'd prefer a duck with a smaller bill."

¶

Two stage hands were discussing their manager, and decided they didn't like him because of his meanness.

"Why," said one, "he's that mean, if he was a ghost he wouldn't give you a fright."

¶

Teacher: "As an example in fractions, suppose a man kept a butcher's shop, and a customer called for five pounds of meat when he had only four to sell. What would the butcher do?"

Johnny (a butcher's son): "Keep his hand on the meat while he was weighing it."

## SKIN CONTAGION.

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## Science Siftings

By "Volt"

## Milk From Trees.

It is generally supposed that only animals give milk, but in tropical countries the dairyman has competition from the vegetable kingdom.

A tree in the West Indies, known to the natives as the hyahya, yields from its bark and pith a juice richer and thicker than cow's milk. The people who live where the hyahya grows use its juice as we use milk. The tree when full grown is almost 40ft high and 18in in circumference.

The Gingalese have a tree, the kirighuma, which yields a milky fluid, while in the forests of Para grows the massenodendron, another species of milk-tree. The milk of the massenodendron can be kept for an indefinite length of time and shows no tendency to sour.

## How Weather Experts Classify Winds.

We talk glibly of a "gale" of wind, and very often we are wrong. Wind must attain a certain velocity before it can be classed as a gale.

Wind blows in twelve distinct forces. The first of these strengths, "Force 1," is a wind blowing at three miles an hour. It barely deflects the smoke from chimneys, and is scarcely felt at ordinary walking level. "Force 2," is a six-mile-an-hour wind. This is sufficient to make the leaves of trees rustle and is felt on the cheek. It is the "gentle zephyr" of the poet.

A breeze is termed "moderate" if it ranges from ten to sixteen miles an hour. Such a wind is sufficient to scatter bits of paper and leaves that are lying about the streets. On the coast it would be termed a "fair" breeze for sailing.

At thirty miles an hour the wind is high enough to impede walking. This is "Force 6." It makes telegraph wires "sing" and whistles round the gables of houses. The largest trees are swayed when the wind reaches a speed of 36 miles an hour, or "Force 7."

"Force 8" is the official designation of what we term a gale. Here the wind reaches a speed of 45 miles an hour. It is a jump from "Force 8" to "Force 11." The latter is a wind blowing at 70 miles an hour. It is not common inland, but on the more exposed parts of the coast this speed is frequently reached. Such a wind is likely to cause shipwreck and destruction to light buildings.

Finally, we have "Force 12," a wind blowing at more than seventy miles an hour. This is commonly termed a "hurricane." A wind blowing at a greater velocity in this country is more or less a freak. But higher velocities are reached. At the beginning of 1922 a speed of 108 miles an hour was recorded.—*Tit-Bits* (London).

## Electricity From Sand.

Electric batteries that will last thousands of years before running down are a possibility of the near future if a Birmingham scientist's theories become actuality.

Mr. J. B. Kramer claims to have discovered a new generative source of electricity, by which energy will be drawn in limitless quantities from vast natural resources of radio-active substances and harnessed to the service of mankind. Fuel and chemicals are not needed.

Mr. Kramer gave details of his discovery, the principle of which is based on a perfectly natural process.

"It is so noticeable and elementary," he said, "that scientists appear to have overlooked it."

"Briefly, it consists of placing radio-active material between plates of different metals, such as copper and aluminium, which by virtue of their differences have a quality of discriminating between the positive and negative elements in the radio-activity, and storing them up in a charge of electricity which can be drawn off in the usual way."

"The world is full of radio-active substances—there are countless millions of tons available."

"There are some kinds of sands on the shores of India and elsewhere which are radio-active, and upwards of 20 different minerals have similar properties. Most of these substances endure for thousands of years, and the energy would be good for the whole of the time."

"This radio-activity is a natural process. It is going on ceaselessly, and it remains only for man to devise some means of storing it and turning it into electrical energy."

Mr. Kramer believes that he has done this. With his apparatus he has succeeded in driving a small engine, which he hopes to demonstrate shortly.

"Imagine the progress applied to wireless," suggested Mr. Kramer. "With a cell made up in this way you would have a constant source of energy, which would last, at a moderate estimate, 2000 years, in substitution for the present troublesome high storage batteries."

Mr. Kramer is now hard at work on an instrument by which he will demonstrate the practicability of his discovery.

"I can foresee," said Mr. Kramer, "electronic batteries built up with metal plates, an acre or more in area. There seems to be no reason why every house should not have in an outhouse at the back a battery of cells of this kind to provide power and lighting."

"Such batteries would require no attention, and there would be no maintenance costs whatever."

"There are millions of tons of radio-active substances available, which go on discharging energy for a minimum period of 2000 years."

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