

Children's Column.

MATER'S LETTER BOX.

Mater invites children to send in stories for this column, or correspondence which will be replied to through these columns. All matter to be clearly written in ink, and on one side of the paper only. Name, age, and address, must be always given, and correspondence directed to "Mater," care of Editor, "The Digger," Box 310, Invercargill.

THE GIPSY GIRL.

(Continued).

(By Alice Rhodes).

"I am just going for a walk with Helen before it is time for the evening performance," Dorothy said quietly.

"You are going to do nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Crewe. "You are going to come home with me, and I will find something better for you to do."

"Won't you excuse Dorothy this once, Mrs. Crewe?" pleaded Helen. "Could she not come and have tea with auntie and me? I should love her to come."

"No, I will not allow her to go to anybody's house to tea," Mrs. Crewe said, then turning to Dorothy she added, "Come along and help me with the work in the caravan."

So Dorothy had to leave her friend and return to her home with her stepmother.

Mrs. Crewe set her to work at once to wash the floor of the caravan. Unfortunately Dorothy upset the bucket of water all over the floor, and was made to mop it up while her stepmother stood over with a stick in her hand. When five o'clock came round Dorothy felt very tired for her stepmother had made her work hard all the afternoon. She could not appeal to her father, for he was afraid of his wife, and Dorothy felt very lonely and sad.

When everybody was asleep that night Dorothy dressed herself quietly. She wrote a little note to her father telling him how sad she was at leaving him, but that she could bear this life no longer. She then undid the latch of the door and crept softly down the steps of the caravan. Once outside she slipped on her shoes and ran as fast as she could go. She stopped at an old elm tree, and dropped a note in for Helen. This tree was a secret hiding place between Dorothy and Helen, and they often put letters there for each other.

The next day when Dorothy's disappearance was discovered a search party was sent out, but they could not find her.

When at last Helen found the note Dorothy had left she wept over it, for she had learned to love Dorothy dearly.

Many years later when Helen was about twenty years of age a lady called to see her, who would not give her name. She was shown into the drawing-room, where she waited for Helen to come.

"Don't you know me, dear?" said Dorothy, as Helen entered the room. She had called to see her friend, for she had not forgotten her, although it was such a long time since she went away.

"Is it really you, Dorothy? I thought I should never see you again," exclaimed Helen. "I was very sad when you had gone." Oh, it is good to see you, and now tell me what you have been doing all this time, I am so eager to know."

Dorothy told her that she had become a professional singer. After she had left the old elm tree she had wandered on and on until at last she had fainted with fatigue and hunger. A kindly old man who happened to be passing saw her and carried her to his home, where his wife took care of her, and finally adopted her.

One day she was playing over the music of one of her favourite songs on the piano, when she began to sing. Her foster father was delighted with her beautiful deep voice, and said she must certainly have it trained.

Dorothy worked hard, and became an enthusiastic student. She passed many examinations, and at last was allowed to sing in public. When the people heard her, her success was established, and she soon became a great public favourite.

O Fate! let me glide on a sun-lit tide,
To the land where no grief may get!
Bear me, I crave! on an opal wave,
To the kingdom of Let-Us-Forget!
Where the cascades flow 'neath a
tropical glow,

In an equable temperature;
And glad hearts know the blessings they
owe

To Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.

The Home.

TO PICKLE HAMS.

This recipe for the curing of hams with a flavour of garlic has been given before, but as it has been asked for again here it is: And if the taste of garlic is approved, the writer thinks no hams can be better than those cured with it. Chop less than a quarter of a pound of garlic fine, take two ounces of salt-petre, half an ounce of sal-prunella, and one pound of coarse brown sugar or treacle. Mix with as much salt as you deem sufficient, a pound or rather more. Rub the pickle well into the hams every day, then turn them in the pickle for a month, pouring it over them. It is sufficient for two hams weighing about twelve or fourteen pounds each. One bulb of garlic will probably be sufficient for a ham. When removed from the pickle send the hams to be smoked; or smoke essence may be brushed over them, about a tablespoonful is sufficient to give a slight smoky flavour. Garlic may be disliked, in that case it would be omitted and the pickle used without it.

—Another Way.—

Another good pickle for a ham weighing about sixteen pounds consists of one pound common salt, one pound treacle, or coarse sugar, one ounce of bag salt, half a pound of sal-prunella, and an ounce of black pepper. Rub this well into the ham for six weeks. Hard rubbing is most essential, or the salt will not penetrate as it should, and in very frosty weather neither will the meat take salt.

SAVING GAS MANTLES.

We know that gas mantles are very brittle articles to deal with, only with care can they be made to last a reasonable time. Soak them in vinegar before use. Put a long hat-pin through the little loop at the top and dip the mantle in a jar of vinegar till well soaked. Lift out gently and place across another jar to drip and dry thoroughly. When absolutely dry, fix it in its place, and burn off the stiffening in the usual way. By this device the mantle lasts twice as long, gives a clearer light, and will stand a good breeze from an open door. This method has been found most successful in lengthening the service of gas mantles. Indeed, it took a prize for the best hint offered in a domestic magazine.

TO TAKE BRUISES OUT OF FURNITURE.

Wet the part with warm water; double a piece of brown paper five or six times, soak it, and lay it on the place; apply on that a hot flat iron till the moisture is evaporated. If the bruise be not gone, repeat the process. Generally, after two or three applications, the dent or bruise is raised level with the surface. If the bruise be very small, merely soak it with warm water, and apply a red hot poker near the surface; keep it constantly wet, and in a few minutes the bruises will disappear.

SCOTCH FLOUR SCONES.

Melt an ounce of butter, or substitute, in a pint of hot milk, pour it over a pound and a half of flour, stirring it quickly till it becomes a stiff dough; knead it well, and roll out very thin. Cut into small round cakes or scones and bake quickly on a girdle for three or four minutes. These scones eaten with cold bacon give a relish to it; spread with a good butter substitute they are very good, honey or marmalade likewise, but as these desirable additions are not always to be had as they were before the war, the cakes are very good eating without either. They take only a short time to make and to bake; a fact that those who have to prepare breakfast will not be slow to appreciate.

TO USE UP DRY CHEESE.

Peel and boil until soft a pound and a half of artichokes and put them in a pie-dish; mix one and a half tablespoonfuls of flour in half a pint of milk, to which add half a breakfast cupful of grated dry cheese, a small piece of margarine, salt and cayenne to taste. Boil milk, etc., until quite smooth (about five minutes), pour it over the artichokes, scatter brown bread crumbs on top, and bake in the oven for a short time.

The New South Wales State Loan, of three millions, will bear interest at the rate of 5½ per cent., and will be payable in four instalments, the first of which is due on December 1.

WEDDING BELLS.

HEATCOTE—CUTHBERTSON.

On Wednesday, 23rd September, a great company of residents of Wairoa, Woodlaw, and surrounding districts assembled at the home of Mrs and Mrs Alex. Cuthbertson, "Robin Hood," Woodlaw, to celebrate the marriage of their eldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth, to Mr Robert Heathcote, of Wairoa (late No. 36864, N.Z.R.B.), and son of the late Mr A. Heathcote, for many years head teacher of several Southland schools.

The bride, who was given away by her father, wore a beautiful white silk dress, with an overdress of white silk lace and the usual veil and wreath, with shower bouquet. The bride was attended to by her sister Miss Cis Cuthbertson, who wore a cream gorgette dress and navy blue hat with roses. Mrs Cuthbertson, mother of the bride, wore navy blue crepe-de-chine. The bridegroom had for his chief supporter his brother, Mr Jas. Heathcote of Invercargill. The bridegroom's present to the bride was an exquisite pendant and chain, and to the bridesmaid a gold brooch with beetle in amethysts and pearls, the bride presented the bridegroom with a gold mounted ribbon watch guard.

After the ceremony which was performed the Rev. A. McDonald, of Otautau (who had married the bride's parents), the guests retired to a large marquee where a bounteous repast was set out. After the good things had been done full justice to and the cake tasted, a most interesting speech was given by the Rev. A. McDonald, in which he gave a resume of his work in the early days before the country was divided into farms, he having had charge of a large district up till a few years ago.

In the evening a large ball was held in Mr Geo. Bain's hall, Wairoa, at which over fifty couples took part in the grand march, led off by the newly married couple, the bride wearing her wedding gown. Songs were sung during the evening by Miss M. Forde, Mr Strudwicke, Mr A. Keen, and Mr Faulkner, and all went well until the early hours of the morning. Excellent music was supplied by Egan and Stroud's orchestra while Mr C. Spillane carried out the duties of M.C. in his usual capable manner.

The presents to the newly married couple were both handsome and useful and made a handsome show, together with a large number of substantial cheques received by them.

The happy couple left by next morning's express for Christchurch where the honeymoon is to be spent, the bride wearing a navy blue costume, white silk blouse, black crepe-de-chine hat with gloria rose.

THE ANCIENT BROTHERHOOD OF LEAD SWINGERS.

(By W. A. Platt, in "Forethoughts.")

Our years of war have passed, and now the executive committee of our brotherhood has decided to make public for the first time the doings of a society which, from small beginnings, has grown to an incredible degree. We realise that we incur some risk in making this disclosure; but pride in our great achievement has banished caution. This article will serve its purpose if it convinces those who have not yet joined the brotherhood how powerful is the organisation with which they have to deal, and how futile are their efforts to check its progress. Early in the war, when enthusiasm for battle was high, and men preferred the gory bayonet to the feathered bed, the faithful band who began the movement almost despaired of success. But now we number among our members countless high officials and officers in high command in England and at the base camps. Wise men—they have long realised the expediency and profit of membership in the brotherhood, and nothing would shake their resolution to remain true to its principles. We have worked long and cunningly to sow the seeds of our faith among even the most war-enthusiastic of the army officers. Our work has been crowned with quite inspiring success. We can boast with confidence that we have the almost undivided support of the rank and file. Almost every man is a most loyal and energetic lead swinger. Their opportunities are not so great; but their enthusiasm for the cause fills the hearts of the executive with pride.

The greatest menace to our progress is the medical officer. For some reason, though often willing to belong to the brotherhood himself, he will suffer no other to enjoy its privileges. Ordinary devices fail completely in his presence, his power is great, and he has caused the executive no little thought and anxiety. "The Psy-

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chology of the M.O." a pamphlet written by a high authority who has recently been classed "C" at base, and is shortly to return to New Zealand, will be found most illuminating. Several other publications have been issued, mostly in pamphlet form. We recommend "Gas, its Symptoms and How to Produce Them," as a most valuable booklet. Experience has shown gas to be our most powerful friend, and any man desiring an early return to New Zealand, is advised to study it carefully and to practice the exercises, particularly those dealing with the control of the voice. A correspondence course has been compiled on the art of swinging the lead. It includes information given in our pamphlets, and in addition a series of test papers, each a severe cross-examination by an M.O., of a man suffering from one of the common complaints. This should prove of great assistance to nervous brethren, the only stipulation made by the executive is that green envelopes only shall be used by correspondents. Our most important publication, "The Compleat Wangler," is still in the press. An appendix on "Permanent Positions in Base Camps, How to Obtain Them, and the Qualities and Attainments Necessary," should be of much value.

Our headquarters are naturally in France where the need of our services is greatest; but from time to time encouraging reports come to us of the doings of members in England—at the hospitals and camps there. It has recently been decided to confer the "Grand Order of the Dodge" upon fifteen stalwarts at Hornchurch.

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TO HOUSEWIVES!

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