

chairs are of metal, with head-rests of pneumatic indiarubber, which are subjected to frequent disinfecting. The basins are made with pedal taps to avoid the contaminating touch of human fingers. Everything your eyes rest on seems to say, "There are no germs on me."

The barber is clad in sterilised overalls. He explains that that is to prevent any of his own personal and private stock of microbes from migrating to you. Before beginning to operate on you he dips his hands in some germ-destroying solution, and he assures you that the razor is sterilised afresh for each customer.

From a capsule he empties into a sterilised vessel just enough soap powder to supply the lather needed for one shaving job. It seems that danger may lurk in soap that has been used to shave some other fellow.

The price charged for the operation is sixpence.

In the precincts of the London Stock Exchange, just after the House closed on the Saturday previous to the leaving of the 'Frisco mail, much excitement was caused by an audacious attempt by three men, said to be foreigners, to obtain a cast in wax of the key, opening the pillar-box in Draper's Garden. The postman was collecting the letters; one man took the key, out of the lock, and passed it to another, and the third tried, by engaging the postman in conversation, to distract his attention. The postman, however, noticed the key was gone, and raised an alarm. One man got away through Austin Friars. The other two bolted into Throgmorton-street, throwing away a box filled with wax, in which an impression of the key, it is asserted, had already been taken. A man is now in custody at the Guildhall Court.

At the Guildhall on Monday afternoon, Henry Conrad (51), a well-dressed man of gentlemanly appearance, who described himself as an agent, and who refused his address, was brought up in custody, charged with being concerned with another man not in custody, in unlawfully obtaining an impression on wax of a key of a post-office letter box in Copthall Court with intent to steal letters therefrom.

Mr Arnold prosecuted on behalf of the Post Office authorities. He said that a postman was engaged on his collections in Copthall Avenue on Saturday afternoon, and as he was about to open the letter box the accused came up to him, and on the plea of having dropped half a sovereign if he would find it for him. The postman opened the door with the keys, and the door swung round with the keys in the lock. At this time a man dressed as a painter came along, carrying a pot of paint. As he passed he upset some of the paint on the keys and apologised, saying he would wipe it off again. He took the keys out for that purpose, and whilst he was doing it the prisoner tried to attract his attention from the keys. He, however, saw the painter take a small box from his pocket and press the key of the letter box into some wax in the box. He returned the keys and walked away.

A pretended Boer got into trouble in England the other day. The police got information that a young man who had taken up his quarters at a farmhouse near Stonehaven was representing that he was the son of a Johannesburg farmer sent to this country by his father to look out for the best market for the produce of the farm. He said he arrived in Inverness in a ship, and had a large quantity of tea, coffee, rice, tobacco and other samples; but, unfortunately, on his arrival he met two obliging men who showed him around the place, and at the same time relieved him of all his money, so that he could not get the Custom House clearance, and was forced to leave his goods behind. He then tried in vain among the farm servants to get 30/- to send a cablegram to his father for money, promising that when the cash arrived he would give them £10. He also tried to obtain 5/- to clear the Custom House. He told the farm servants that his father had a very large farm, and had 100 black ser-

vants; that he wanted men from this country as overseers to look after the blacks; and offered the cattle-man £5 a week and a free house, which the latter thought was too sweet an offer to be wholesome. The visitor also gave a pawn ticket to his "landlord" at the farm for a watch he had pawned in Aberdeen last week. On Monday morning Constable Davidson paid a visit to the farm, and saw the young "Boer," who repeated the same story to him. The constable then conveyed the man to headquarters, where he still persisted in his story, giving his name as William Henry Herman. The Chief Constable, however, suspected the "Boer" was wanted in Lindithgowshire on a charge of obtaining some 3/- under the name of Ernest Paul. His description was wired to the police there, and an officer arrived in Stonehaven, and charged the young "Boer" with being Ernest Paul, which he admitted. He was escorted south, and on Tuesday he was brought before Hon. Sheriff-Substitute Turnbull, at Linlithgow, on a charge of having, on September 1, obtained 30/- from Daniel Haggerty, engineer, Broxburn, by false representations.

Auckland is particularly fortunate in the way of testamentary bequests. To the long list of benefactors to whom we are indebted for many of our public institutions has to be added that of Mrs Mackechnie, wife of the late Edmund Augustus Mackechnie, solicitor. Mrs Mackechnie, who died this morning, after making legacies to personal friends (she leaves no relatives), in pursuance of a wish expressed by her late husband bequeaths his valuable library to the Auckland City Council; £2000 is bequeathed to the Auckland Institute, of which the late Mr Mackechnie was one of the most enthusiastic supporters, it being provided that the interest accruing on the investment of this sum shall be expended annually in the purchase of scientific works of repute, not less than 80 per cent. of them in the English language, to form a useful library of reference or study in scientific subjects. There is a further bequest of £500 for the general purposes and objects of the Institute; £2500 is bequeathed towards the erection of an art gallery by the Society of Arts to be used for the exhibition of pictures and allowing such works to remain therein on sale when the gallery or building is not required for exhibition purposes. There is a proviso attached to this latter bequest, that if the Society of Arts cannot obtain a site for the proposed art gallery and the City Council is willing to set apart a site for the same the money shall go to the City Council for the same purpose. Mr O. Nicholson, Mr Mackechnie's partner in the firm of Mackechnie and Nicholson, solicitors, is sole trustee under Mrs Mackechnie's will, and will see to the due carrying out of the wishes of the testator.

Commandant De la Rey is 54 years of age, Louis Botha 34, De Wet is not yet 40, Kemp, one of De la Rey's best lieutenants, is only 26, Fraser about 27, or 28, and the ages of many of the Boer commandants range from 21 to 39.

The detectives of England are a little—just a very little—sharper than the Auckland article, who have failed to " nab" the burglars there. An English contemporary tell how detectives came upon two thieves in the act. The thieves made off in a dogcart; the detectives followed and captured the horse and cart, though the thieves escaped. The detectives thought the situation over for a little and they took charge of the dogcart and an old grey horse. They put him on short rations for a couple of days and then harnessed him to the cart and gave him his liberty. He turned carefully and made his way to a certain farm, and entering by a back gate drew up near a barn door. The police crept themselves within the barn and waited. Presently a man came through the barn, and going into the yard cried, "Why, here's old Bill! Come back home, did you? You old rogue!" The old horse whinnied and rubbed his head against the man's shoulder. Him the police arrested, and on being examined at the police station he was found to be an old convict. Three waggon

loads of plunder were found in the barn.

Our Mercer correspondent writes: "The Waikato is now looking very picturesque, and great activity is apparent along its banks here, where the Maoris are busily engaged in fixing up their canoes for the coming regatta. The large canoe events will excite keen interest, for the four noted rival canoes, the Papatara, Wao-nui-a-Tane, Matiu Hanatai, and Whawhakia, will again face the starter for the two mile race."

A city lady, being very hard pressed recently, was ill-advised enough to engage a domestic without a "character." Before she had been in the house three days, this interesting maid-of-all-work complained of being ill, took to her bed, and her mistress sent for her family physician to attend to the sufferer. As soon as he saw the girl's face the doctor turned to her mistress and said, laughingly, "So she has taken you in too?" That was the fourth time, the doctor told the lady, that he had been called in by her charitable mistresses to attend to this same girl, with whom there was absolutely nothing the matter. Her ruse had evidently been to take an engagement and to fall ill almost immediately afterwards. The majority of mistresses so placed would be only too glad to pay the girl a month's wages and send her about her business. Relying on this, the girl had been taking situations right and left, which she never meant to keep, with the result—to the doctor's personal knowledge—that she had received six months' wages in as many weeks.

A London cable states that the British War Office has ordered two thousand pairs of the patent pneumatic boot heels, invented by Mr W. Lingard, of New Zealand. Mr Lingard, who is an old resident of Wanganui, some time ago left the colony to push his invention, and judging from the cablegram appears to be well on the road to success.

There is far too much in these days of cheap sneering at the women of the world who constitute what is called "Society." True, it springs from ignorance, but it is not less reprehensible on that account. Before talking of a thing, certainly before writing of it, wisdom should counsel a little knowledge on the subject if common justice does not. The truth is, says "Madam," that the "woman of the world," so far from being merely the butterfly of fashion she is so often considered, is usually a very busy person indeed. To begin with, it is hardly fair of the greater public to forget how much is owed to the efforts of women in high places by the charities from which it so greatly benefits. If it were not for the time, trouble and thought they do not grudge in helping hospitals and other institutions, many of these charities would long since have

had to practically close their doors. And many other examples of the work of "the woman of the world" might be given—but it is beside our present purpose. What we should like to point out is that the well-being of thousands of needy workers in the East depends on the social activity of the fashionable women of the West. The considerable sums of money often expended in single entertainments in the fashionable world permeate through every one of the varied strata of society, from the highest to the lowest.

They tell this story of a military officer at a parade. He is apparently in the sweetest of tempers and discusses mildly the new drill-book with an instructor:—"Very good book, Mr. So-and-So, very good book indeed. I practically wrote it myself 25 years ago. Colonel Blank is a personal friend of mine and knows my views. He has embodied them in the book. . . Carry on, Mr. So-and-So." Mr. So-and-So carries on. The officer, suddenly changing his position, "D—, d—, d—, d—, etc. That is not the way to do that movement, Mr. So-and-So. I won't have it done that way. D—, d—, d—, etc." The instructor: "But begging your pardon, sir, the book lays it down, sir, that it must be done in that way, sir, and no other, sir!" The officer (with emphasis): "Well, d—the book!"

Americans have lately been called upon to take notice of the verse of a child of eight tender years, and now comes the announcement of a first volume of poems by an Englishman of 76. The unknown author has given many decades to the polishing of the rhymes which are supposed to reflect his life's experience. It is much to be feared that the academic perfection of one poet will be as wearisome as the empty crudities of the other. What stretches of correct, staid and flat verse are visible between these two extremes to-day! A well ordered kitchen garden are the Muses now tending. Here are trim paths, bean vines neatly bound up, cucumbers doing well, pumpkin heads rejoicing—but where are the wild, exquisite blossoms of the poet's inspiration? In pretty book and decorated periodical we find poetry with all the elegance and facility that Holofernes could ask us for—but where be the golden cadences? Why has mankind grown so unpoetic? The pursuit of material things does not explain it altogether. What has become of the lyric strain that is compensation for even rough metre and forced rhyme? Mediocrity, self-sufficiency, self-consciousness, imitativeness mark most of the poetry current in these opening years of the new century. Would that the rhymersters could be persuaded to turn to prose and let us wait with untortured ears and eyes for some master with the old time gift of "music and sweet fire."

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