

Science Siftings

By 'Volt'

A Rare and Valuable Substance.

Over three hundred and thirty milligrams of radium, worth £2000, has just been received by Mr. W. Martindale, Ph.D. At the London Medical Exhibition a portion of the radium, amounting to eighty milligrams, is being shown. This little pinch—scarcely more than a grain—is alone worth £480. It is stated that this consignment is by far the largest that has ever reached England.

The Coldest City.

The coldest city in the world is Yakutsk, Eastern Siberia, in the Empire of the Czar of Russia. It is the great commercial emporium of East Siberia, and the capital of the province of Yakutsk, most of whose area of 1,517,063 square miles is a desert, the soil of which is frozen to a great depth. Yakutsk consists of about 400 houses of European structure, standing apart. The intervening spaces are occupied by winter yooorts, or huts of the Northern nomads, with earthen roofs, doors covered with hairy hides, and windows of ice.

Postal Employees.

Some interesting statistics have recently been published by the Universal postal Union as to the number of postal employees in the different countries composing the union. Germany heads the list with 242,000, the United States comes next with 239,000, and Great Britain is third with 181,000. None of the other States in the Postal Union possesses 100,000 postal employees. France has 81,000, Austria 59,000, Russia, 57,962, and Japan 57,985. Every other country falls below 50,000.

Durability of Posts.

Convincing evidence of the relative durability of posts set in natural position and those inverted has been given by Andrew Whiton, an American mechanic. Posts set in Connecticut in both positions were carefully marked, and after nine years the inverted ones were found to be practically sound while others were much decayed.

The 'Mountain-High' Waves.

The size of the Atlantic waves has been carefully measured for the Washington Hydrographic Bureau. In height the waves usually average about 30 feet, but in rough weather they attain from 40 to 48 feet. During storms they are often from 500 to 600 feet long and last ten or eleven seconds, while the longest yet known measured half a mile and did not spend itself for twenty-three seconds. In a storm the average speed of waves is 81 feet per second, and this may increase when the wind reaches a cyclone to 91 feet. It is about 56 feet in an ordinary high wind, 34 in a good breeze, and only 23 when the breeze is gentle.

The Cost of Coal Mining.

Lecturing at Newcastle (England) on the increased cost of coal-raising, Alderman Briggs remarked that everything that could throw light upon what to do and what not to do in the introduction of electricity to mining must be of the greatest use to all who were interested in the mining industry. It would follow in an increasing extent from the much higher price of labor which ruled to-day, and which was likely to rule for a long time to come, that they would be driven to the use of machinery more largely in coal mining operations than they had been in the past. When he looked to the cost of mining fifteen or twenty years ago, without machinery at all, and by hand labor only, raising coal in small quantities by primitive methods, he found they were then able to get coal at 2s a ton less than they could get it to-day. That was accounted for entirely by the increased cost of labor in coal-getting—not only by the higher remuneration which miners had obtained, but by their doing less work than they used to do, and the consequent employment of more men. This only showed that the use of machinery would be forced upon them whether they liked it or not, and among the agencies they would have to use electricity was the foremost one.

The Very Rev. Dean Phelan in a letter to the managing editor of 'The Austral Light' states that he will leave London on January 19, and will probably arrive in Melbourne about February 23.

The Home

By 'Maureen'

The Kitchen Sink.

Too much care cannot be given the kitchen sink. More dangers arise from one that is not well cared for than from anything else in the house. The waste pipe should have boiling water and soda or ammonia poured into it at least once a day and once a week it should be thoroughly scalded with a strong solution of chloride of lime.

Uses of Ammonia.

Ammonia is of such value in household matters that no housekeeper should be without it. Machine oil stains can be removed by rubbing them with ammonia. When the garment is washed the stains will have disappeared. When acid has been spilled on cloth and has taken out the color, if ammonia is rubbed on the spot and chloroform afterwards applied, the color will be restored. It is useful in cleaning and for removing grease, and added to the water in which glass and silverware are washed, they are easily cleaned and will be very brilliant.

Etiquette Notes.

Widows on being re-married wear neither the wedding veil nor orange flowers. The dress should not be white, but of some light, delicate color.

In making an introduction the gentleman is presented to the lady. 'Mrs. G., allow me to present Mr. D.,' being the usual formula.

A gentleman after an introduction to a lady on a subsequent meeting must wait for her to bow first before he may venture to claim her further acquaintance.

A lady does not call upon a gentleman unless professionally or officially. When such a call is made she should send in her card and make her call both ceremonious and brief.

Good manners may be said to be the result of a good heart and a good training; bad manners show selfishness, a coarse nature, and the lack of training it is a duty for every child to receive.

The servant should always be informed beforehand what he or she is to say to all comers. It is very embarrassing for a caller to be admitted by the servant and afterwards informed that the mistress of the house cannot see her; for this reason every caller admitted should be seen if possible.

How to Spoil Umbrellas.

'In most cases umbrellas are not fairly worn out; they are ruined through carelessness of their owners,' said A. L. Kent, an umbrella and cane man, of Boston, recently. 'When I see a man walking with an umbrella tightly grasped in his hot hand I smile to myself, because I know very soon that man will be wanting a new umbrella. There is no surer way of making an umbrella wear out quickly than the habit of carrying it about by its middle. Again, after being out in the rain you should turn your umbrella upside down and let the water drain off as it stands with the handle downward. By doing this you will prevent the water from getting in the framework and thereby protect the ribs from rusting. Some men open their umbrellas before they stand them up to dry, but this is a bad plan, because the umbrella may stretch when it is wet. Another thing, too, never roll your umbrella up, as to do so cuts the silk.'

Maureen

Dr. W. A. West, of the Glebe, Sydney, who died at the comparatively early age of 46, was fourth son of the late George W. West, barrister, of Kildare, Ireland. Dr. West was educated in Dublin, and was but 24 when he arrived in Sydney.

HOW TO PAINT A HOUSE CHEAP.

Carrara Paint In White and Colors, Mixed Ready for Inside and Outside Use. CARRARA retains its Gloss and Lustre for at least five years, and will look better in eight years than lead and oil paints do in two. USE CARRARA, the first cost of which is no greater than lead and oil paints, and your paint bills will be reduced by over 50 per cent. A beautifully-illustrated booklet, entitled 'How to Paint a House Cheap,' will be forwarded free on application.

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