

Science Siftings

By 'Volt'

A Motor Sleigh.

A simple and speedy motor sleigh has been invented, which makes a speed of 20 to 35 miles an hour, carrying a load of four to eight people. The motor-power is a wheel, which grips the ice and snow and is set in motion by an engine.

A Combination Chair.

A combination chair and life-preserver is a recent invention. The chair, which resembles the ordinary folding-chair has a hollow back in which there is a cork life-preserver. It is ready for immediate use and every chair is a life raft; no adjustment is necessary, all that needs be done is for the shipwrecked passenger to cling to his chair and he is safe.

Artificial Silk.

About seven tons of artificial silk is now made daily in different parts of the world. The basis of it is a solution of cellulose or vegetable fibre, which forms a thick, ropy liquid that may be drawn out into fine threads and dried. These products are not more than half as strong as real raw silk.

A New Life-Boat.

The United States Life-Saving Service has introduced a new form of boat. Like all the others it is self-righting, self-bailing, non-sinkable, but in addition to the sails and oars found on such boats it has a gasoline engine, which propels the boat, relieves the crew of the most exhausting kind of labor, and enables the men to husband their strength for the work of assisting shipwrecked people.

A Glass Bridge.

Colorado is about to astonish the world with a glass bridge. Across the gorge of the wonderful Grand Canon of the Arkansas River, near Canon City, a suspension bridge has been built more than 2600 feet above the surface of the river. Its floor is of plate glass, so that tourists may look down into the wonderful gorge, the deepest in the Rockies. The floor of the bridge is about a mile and a half above sea level. An electric railway from Canon City will carry travellers to the edge of the gorge.

The Value of Fresh Air.

In the museum connected with the Edinburgh University, is an exhibit that is a striking object lesson of the value of fresh air. A professor has secured the lungs of an Eskimo, a Londoner and a coal miner. He has them preserved by chemical process, and they are now side by side in a glass case. The Eskimo's lungs are pure white, the Londoner's lungs are a dirty brown and the miner's lungs are a jet black. The Eskimo had kept his lungs clean not because he knew more about breathing than the Londoner or the coal miner, but because he lived in a land of snow fields and spent his time in the open air.

Harnessing the Waves.

Apparatus by which the waves can be harnessed and made to furnish motive power for all human needs is patented by a Californian. This invention consists of one or more barges—scow-like floats, launched upon the sea and anchored at such a distance from the shore as to be always in deep water, where it will operate uniformly and in all weather. Along the bottom of each float runs a metal track, upon which are two little cars, one at each end, bearing heavy weights. The cars are connected by a rod, and as the boat rocks they roll back and forth along the track, at the same time operating a pair of pistons which compress air, and, through a tube, furnish pneumatic power operating machinery upon shore. The pumping mechanism may also be adapted to suck water from under the boat and pipe it to shore in a steady stream with sufficient force to operate a water-motor on the beach. Thus is power had without recourse to coal. Such an invention, if practicable, would of course be preferable to the solar engine or windmill which can store up energy only while the sun shines or the breeze wafts friskily. Neptune is never at rest, and would be a more dependable slave in harness than either old Sol or old Boreas.

Intercolonial

Rev. J. J. Malone, P.P. (Daylesford), will leave in January next on a twelve months' trip to Europe.

Father Fitzgerald, O.F.M., in a letter to a friend, says that in Galway he met Father Masterson, S.J., who is much improved in health.

The Catholic schools (says the Sydney 'Freeman') are strongly represented in the Crown Prosecutors appointed for the country circuits this month. Thus: Patrick Kinchela White, Dubbo; Andrew Robert James Watt, Lismore; John Daniel Fitzgerald, Bathurst.

The plans of the new Catholic church at Naran-dara are in the hands of Father Gray, and the initial portion of the work will shortly be commenced. The building, when completed, is estimated to cost between £6000 and £7000.

His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne concluded his visit to Bendigo by laying the foundation-stone of the new Catholic school of St. Joseph's, Quarry Hill. The funds are being provided out of the estate of the late Dean Backhaus. The Archbishop delivered an important address on the Education question.

The Misses Tobin, of Alma road, St. Kilda, have handed to his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne the sum of £50 in fulfilment of a wish of their father, the late Mr. Andrew Tobin, who had expressed his intention of contributing that amount to the fund for the liquidation of the debt on the Cathedral Hall.

His Eminence Cardinal Moran recently launched a new 12 horse-power motor boat for the Sisters of St. Joseph's Boys' Orphanage, Kincumber, in the presence of a large gathering of clergy and laymen. The boat cost £500. After his Eminence had blessed the boat and named her the 'San Jose,' a trial trip was made, and everything proved satisfactory.

There died in Brisbane the other day Mr. Michael Martin, who was born in 1833 at the foot of the Galtees. He remembered the horrors of the famine, and was an eye-witness to the terrible tragedy in Kilclooney wood, when Peter O'Neill Crowley was shot by the police, who were endeavoring to arrest him for a political offence.

Among the successful candidates at the recent music examinations in Northam (says the 'W.A. Record') was Veronica Dally, aged only nine years, who secured 99 marks out of a possible 100. She gained the highest number of marks at the examination held in Northam, and was educated by the Sisters of the St. Joseph's Convent.

By the latest mail Monsignor Long (Administrator of Bathurst diocese) received intimation from Rome (says the 'Freeman') that his Holiness the Pope has conferred the degree of D.D. on the Rev. J. J. Brophy, LL.B., of Dubbo. Father Brophy—or, as we must call him now, Dr. Brophy—is already qualified to practise at the Bar; will, we believe, soon be qualified to practise in medicine; and the Divinity degree makes him perhaps the best academically-equipped gentleman in Australia. And he is as modest as he is learned.

At Goodna, Queensland, on Sunday morning, September 16, Mr. John Byrne, the oldest man in the Commonwealth, died at his residence, at the age of 108 years. His death was somewhat sudden. Despite his great age his mental faculties were sound up to the last, and he was always able to converse intelligently on topics of the day. The late Mr. Byrne was born in the Loughs of the Seven Churches, County Wicklow, Ireland, on June 8, 1798—an eventful time in the history of his native land. When 54 years of age, with his wife and family, he came out to Queensland, arriving in Brisbane on January 10, 1853.

The meetings addressed by Mr. Devlin, M.P., in North Queensland (says the Sydney 'Freeman's Journal') have been of a most enthusiastic character, and very successful from a financial point of view. Owing to the number of engagements remaining to be fulfilled in New South Wales Mr. Donovan was unable to accompany Mr. Devlin beyond Rockhampton. During the latter part of September Mr. Donovan addressed meetings at Murwillumbah (where a sum of £100 was subscribed), Lismore (£120), Casino (£60), and other centres. Mr. Devlin, M.P., spoke at Townsville on September 12, when the subscriptions totalled over £120. On the envoys' return to Sydney they will address meetings at St. Benedict's and Parramatta. They are expected to return to Melbourne about November 18.