

Science Siftings

By 'Volt'

The Rice Paper Tree

The rice paper tree, one of the most interesting of the entire flora of China, has recently been successfully experimented with, in Florida, where it now flourishes with other sub-tropical and Oriental species of trees and shrubs. When first transplanted in American soil the experimenters expressed doubts of its hardiness, fearing that it would be unable to stand the winters. All these fears have vanished, however, and it is now the universal opinion that it is as well adapted to the climate of that country, as to that of the famed Flowery Kingdom. It is a small tree, growing to a height of less than fifteen feet, and with a trunk or stem from three to five inches in diameter. Its canes, which vary in color according to season, are large, soft and downy, the form somewhat resembling that noticed in those of the castor bean plant. The celebrated rice paper, the product of this queer tree, is formed of thin slices of the pith, which is taken from the body of the tree in beautiful cylinders several inches in length. The Chinese workmen apply the blade of a sharp straight knife to these cylinders, and, turning them round, either by rude machinery or by hand, dexterously pare the pith from the circumference to centre. This operation makes a roll of extra quality paper, the scroll being of equal thickness throughout. After a cylinder has thus been pared, it is unrolled and weights are placed upon it, until the surface is rendered smooth throughout its entire length. It is altogether probable that if rice paper making becomes an industry in the United States, those primitive modes will all be done away with.

The Tides of the Ocean

Of all the operations of nature in the whole world (says an exchange), there are none more regular in their courses than the tides of the ocean. So perfect is their action and so constant are they in their ebb and flow that the big maritime governments are able to figure out the height of each and every tide for every day and night more than a year in advance for any part of the earth's surface.

In most places the tides run about four to the twenty-four hours, two being flood, when the water sweeps in from the sea, and makes what is known as high water, and two being ebb, when it sweeps back to the ocean, leaving low water.

Each of these tides lasts about six hours—that is, for five hours or more, the waters are on the move, rushing in or out, and they cease for a time, standing quite still in some places.

Sometimes a tide will run flood on the surface while it is running ebb, below near the bottom. Places where this happens, are always likely to make danger spots for the mariner.

In the majority of places the tides rise and fall only a few feet, but on shores where the banks are very steep, falling off abruptly into deep water, it often happens that the tide, when it rises, comes in so fast that it pours through all narrow openings in cascade-like torrents, making such things as the famous 'bores' which may be seen in places like the Bay of Fundy.

In other places, again, there will be more or less than four tides in the twenty-four hours. Furthermore, there are localities where hardly any tidal action at all can be observed. All these peculiarities have been studied, and are taken into account nowadays by the observers, who make up the tidal tables.

The First Iron Bridge

The first iron bridge ever erected in the world, and which is in constant use at the present time, spans a little river in the country of Salop, on the railroad leading from Shrewsbury to Worcester, England. It was built in the year 1778, and is exactly 90 feet in length. The total amount of iron used in the construction, was 378 tons. Stephenson, the great engineer, in writing concerning it, said, 'When we consider the fact that the casting of iron was at that time in its infancy, we are convinced that unblushing audacity alone, could conceive and carry into execution, such an undertaking.'

The largest structure on the earth when compared with the size of the builders is the ant hill of Africa. Some of these mounds have been observed 15ft high and 9ft in diameter. If a human habitation were constructed on the same scale it would be more than seven miles high.

Intercolonial

The combined ages of seven members of the Queensland Legislative Council is 524 years.

On Sunday, Oct. 20, his Lordship Bishop Higgins opened a new church at Dimboola, in the Horsham mission.

An exchange states, that one member of the New South Wales Assembly, filled twenty-four pages of 'Hansard' with his speech on the Address-in-Reply.

Mr. Daniel O'Connor has returned to Sydney, (says the 'Catholic Press'), after an absence of two years and a half, in the United States and Europe. He is full of reminiscences of the great people he met. In Rome he had an audience with the Holy Father,

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of a new convent at Gulgong, took place on Sunday, Oct. 13, the ceremony being performed by his Lordship Bishop Dunne. The subscriptions promised and paid at the ceremony, amounted to £400.

On Sunday evening, Oct. 13, Sister Mary Alphonsus died in St. Joseph's Convent, Mount-street, North Sydney, after a lingering illness of many months' duration. This Sister was a native of Dublin, but had passed the greater part of her life in Australia, spending 34 years in the convent.

The ceremony of blessing and laying the foundation stone of a new church at Bemboka, was performed by his Grace Archbishop Kelly, on Oct. 6. The new Church will cost about £1000. The collection at the ceremony amounted to over £400.

In the presence of a very large assemblage on Sunday, Oct. 20, at Nathalia, his Lordship the Bishop of Sandhurst, Right Rev. Dr. Reville, O.S.A., laid the foundation stone of the new presbytery. The sum of £700 was received in cash and promises.

The contract price of the new convent at Camperdown, in the diocese of Ballarat, the foundation stone of which, was laid by his Lordship Bishop Higgins, on Sunday, Oct. 13, is £1386. The subscriptions at the ceremony amounted to £350. There was £222 in hand, and the promises totalled £312.

His Grace the most Rev. Dr. Kelly, Coadjutor-Archbishop of Sydney, opened and blessed St. Patrick's school-hall, Bega, on Sunday, Oct. 20, in the presence of a large number of residents of the town and district. The hall is of brick, and cost about £700. The Rev. J. Gunning, P.P., announced that the church debt amounted to £720. The sum of £206 was handed in at the close of the meeting towards the building fund. His Grace delivered an address on Education.

Miss Marie Narelle is now fully restored to health, and after giving concerts in various parts of New South Wales, she will leave for England, with the intention of making a tour of the United Kingdom. Miss Narelle will probably sing in London at the Irish National concert on St. Patrick's Day. Her tour of the United Kingdom will extend into August, when she will leave for America, where her stay will be, so far as can be judged at present, indefinite.

His Eminence Cardinal Moran, on Sunday, Oct. 20, opened the home for blind children, and the additions to St. Anne's Orphanage, Liverpool. He blessed the foundation stone about 12 months ago. At present there are 78 children in the institution, which is solely for females. With the additions the Sisters of Charity hope to accommodate more orphans, and to care for about thirty blind. The work of ministration to the blind has been taken up by the nuns, at the suggestion of his Eminence the Cardinal.

A commencement was made on Oct. 21. (says the 'Advocate') with the erection at Elsternwick, between the Rosstown railway, and the Brighton line, towards Garden Vale Station, of the second college for Catholics priests in Australia; the first being that at Manly, Sydney. The Elsternwick edifice is to be called the Richard O'Neill College, as the funds for its construction are being provided by Miss O'Neill, out of the estate of her deceased father. The site is elevated, commanding a fine view of the Bay, and the College itself, judging by the plans, will be a great ornament to the landscape. The architecture is Romanesque, a blending of some of the best points of the Gothic and most of the modern styles executed in red brick, with cement ornamentation.

DEAR ME!

Forgotten that SYMINGTON'S COFFEE ESSENCE! Whatever shall I do? Call at the nearest Store and ask. THEY ALL KEEP IT