

## Science Siftings

### Not a Modern Invention.

It is a popular fancy that fountain pens are quite a modern invention. As a matter of fact, an old work of reference published in 1795 contains an illustration of a fountain pen, the appearance of which is very much like those sold at the present time. Its construction, however, was somewhat elaborate and clumsy, the pen consisting of various pieces of metal, which had to be screwed and unscrewed before the pen could be used.

### Largest Hanging Bell.

What is perhaps the largest hanging bell in the world is to be seen in Mandalay. This is the Mingun bell, on the right bank of the Irawadi, almost opposite the city of Mandalay. This immense bell measures as follows: Height to crown, 12 feet; diameter at the lip, 16 feet 3 inches; thickness of metal, from 6 to 12 inches. It weighs about 80 tons and is suspended on three massive round beams of teak placed horizontally the one over the other, their ends resting on two pillars of enormous size, composed of masonry and large upright teak posts. This bell was cast at the end of the eighteenth century under the superintendence of the reigning king.

### Rapid Writing.

A rapid penman can write thirty words a minute. To do this he must draw his pen through the space of a rod, sixteen and one-half feet. In forty minutes his pen travels a furlong, and in five hours and a third a full mile. He makes on an average sixteen curves or turns of the pen for each word written. Writing at the rate of thirty words per minute, he must make eight curves to each second, in an hour 28,000, in five hours 144,000, and in 300 days, working only five hours each day, he makes not less than 43,200,000 curves and turns of the pen. Here we have in the aggregate a mark of 800 miles long to be traced on paper by a single writer in a year. In making each letter of the alphabet we make from three to seven strokes of the pen, on an average three and a half to four.

### Thousands of Tons of Concrete.

Engineers on the Panama Canal are dealing in vast figures these days, and the 'Canal Record' conveys in a graphic manner an idea of the magnitude of the work to be done upon the locks of the canal. It is stated that the amount of concrete to be used in building these locks would suffice to construct 22,842 eight-room city houses of the generous size of thirty by thirty feet, with two storeys and basement, and with concrete floors and concrete roof. Allowing each of these houses a seventy-five foot lot they would make a continuous street from New York to Philadelphia, with enough houses left over to make a row on one side of the street from Philadelphia to Washington. The houses would furnish suburban homes for 320,000 people, or, according to city standards, would house a population equal to that of Christchurch and Dunedin.

### Ashes as a Fertilizer.

Those who have open grate fireplaces or wood stoves in which a large quantity of wood is burned have in the ashes a valuable product for their gardens. The ashes vary in fertilizing value according to the quality of the fuel from which they are produced, but anyone who knows their importance as a plant food will not allow those from any source to be wasted. Ashes from hard wood contain greater fertilizing constituents than those from the soft varieties. The wood burned in grates is invariably of a hard character, and is, therefore, among the best for making fertilizing ashes. Wood ashes contain a large proportion of potash, and for this reason they make one of the best manures for grains, grasses, vegetables, and fruit trees. Soot from chimneys and coal stoves is also a product worth reserving as a fertilizer. Aside from its value in adding plant food to the soil, it tends to drive away many insect pests, and it also holds some plant diseases in check. Like ashes, soot must not be exposed to the rain before it is distributed upon the soil.

'I had a very distressing attack of influenza, and decided to give TUSSICURA a trial. After taking a few doses I found great relief, and when I had finished two bottles I was completely cured.'—Mrs. T. Johnston, Gisborne.

## Intercolonial

His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne left for Europe on Tuesday of last week by the 'Mongolia.'

The death is reported of the Rev. Thomas Cahill, S.J., which occurred on Easter Sunday, at St. Ignatius' presbytery, Richmond. The deceased was in his 81st year, and spent 36 years in Victoria. The late Father Cahill was a native of Carlow.

The Rev. E. W. O'Reilly, of Merriwa (who recently celebrated his sacerdotal silver jubilee), is leaving, with Rev. Father Roche, of Muswellbrook, on a well-earned holiday in the Old Country. Father H. Ward, of Hamilton, has been appointed to the charge of Merriwa during Father O'Reilly's absence.

The late David Syme, proprietor of the Melbourne 'Age,' was worth nearly one million. He left £50,000 to public charities, £500 to Mr. Schuyler, editor of the 'Age,' £500 to Mr. Benjamin Hoare, his leader-writer, and legacies to other members of his staff. The paper passes into the hands of his sons.

May (says the 'Catholic Press') will be a busy month for his Eminence the Cardinal. Besides attending to the enormous mass of work that usually falls to his lot, he will go to Young to dedicate the new church on May 10. Then on Sunday, May 24, he will be in Brisbane to lay the foundation stone of the new Mater Misericordiae Hospital.

The list of killed in the recent railway disaster at Braybrook Junction, Victoria, included Mr. Thomas McCann, of West Melbourne, who only a few weeks ago was married at St. Patrick's Cathedral to Miss Gorman. He was on a visit to Ballarat with his bride, who, however, did not return with him in the ill-fated train, as she had arranged to stay with her relatives until the end of the week.

In his will the late Father D. J. Byrne, of Dalby, who died in November last, made the following charitable bequests:—The priests of the archdiocese of Brisbane for religious purposes, £300; the Magdalen Asylum, £300; Dalby Hospital, £100; a bursary in a Catholic Ecclesiastical College, to be awarded by the Catholic Archbishop, according to his judgment, £1000; the Sisters of Mercy, Dalby, to be expended on their convent, £500; bell for the Catholic church, Dalby, £100. He further directed the residue of his estate to be handed to the Archbishop of Brisbane, to be expended as his Grace might judge most conducive to the good of religion in the diocese.

Mr. Thomas Loughlin, of 'Killarney,' Warrenheip, near Ballarat, is about to pay a visit to Ireland for the purpose of attending the ceremony connected with the opening and dedication of a new Catholic church which he has built in his native parish of Kilkenny at a cost of £30,000. The edifice, which is to be presented by Mr. Loughlin to the Bishop of Kilkenny on behalf of the diocese, in memory of the deceased relatives of the donor, has been constructed under the supervision of an eminent architect. It has been arranged that the opening ceremony will be performed in July, and those present will include a number of Australians who will at the time be on a visit to the home countries. Among those who are expected to join in the proceedings will be the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Bishop of Ballarat, the Archbishop of Hobart, and priests from various dioceses of Australia. A number of ladies and gentlemen belonging to the laity of the diocese of Ballarat will also be present.

In a circular letter just issued His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne, who is about to leave for Rome, says:—'I have appointed the Very Rev. Dean Phelan Administrator of the diocese for the time being, and permanent Vicar-General, and I feel confident both that his ability, energy, and zeal will enable him to discharge the onerous duties of these offices with marked success, and that his labors will be lessened by the loyal and brotherly co-operation of every priest of the diocese. I have appointed the Rev. John McCarthy, Chancellor of the diocese. It will be his duty to safeguard the financial interests of the diocese—to look after the diocesan accounts, the title deeds of Church property, insurances, the annual parochial balance sheets, the minutes of the meetings of Catholic Trusts' Corporation, the wills of the clergy, and such other matters as appertain to the temporal interests of the diocese. From the proofs he has already given of singular aptitude for the fulfilment of these various duties, we may feel assured that no labor will be spared by him to keep the temporalities of the diocese in perfect order.'

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