

Science Siftings

By VOLT

'Falling Dew' Fallacy.

Although the poets have spoken of the 'falling dew,' it is now a scientific truth that dew is for the most part formed of vapor rising from the ground. A proof of this is seen in cold weather, when the hoar frost (which is really frozen dew) is abroad. If leaves are lying about, the coating of hoar frost is found on the underside of the leaf. Much of the moisture seen on the plants after sunset, however, is not dew at all, but is simply caused by the exuding of the watery juices of the plant. These form in little 'diamond drops,' which are often mistaken for dew. The real dew, on the other hand, is generally distributed evenly over the whole surface of the leaf. Dew, in short, is simply the moisture of the earth and air, which, as vapor, is condensed into water by a fall in temperature.

Cities Built on Islands.

Ghent, Belgium, is built on 26 islands, most of which are bordered by magnificent quays. The islands are connected by 80 bridges, having as many canals or waterways as streets. Ghent is the capital of East Flanders, lies on the Scheldt and the Ley, or Lys River, as well as on the insignificant Lieve and Moore, which flows through the city in numerous arms. Venice is built on a still more numerous cluster of small islands, numbering between 70 and 75, in the north-west portion of the Adriatic. Owing to the lowness of the islands, the city seems to float upon the sea. Amsterdam is divided by the Amstel River and numerous canals into 100 small islands, connected by more than 300 bridges. Almost the whole city, which extends in the shape of a crescent, is founded on piles driven 40 or 50 feet through soft peat and sand to a firm substratum of clay.

Meaning of Word Calibre.

There is surely no word in the nomenclature of guns, big and little, which has caused, and is causing, so much confusion in the lay mind as the word calibre. The confusion arises chiefly from the use of the term in an adjectival sense to indicate length, as when we say a 50-calibre, 6-inch gun. The word calibre as applied to artillery signifies essentially and at all times the diameter of the bore of a gun. A gun, then, of 6-inch calibre is a gun whose bore is just six inches. For convenience, and because the power of a gun, when once its bore has been decided upon, depends so greatly upon its length, artillerymen are in the habit of defining the length of the gun in terms of the calibre. The six-inch rapid-fire gun, as mounted on the latest ships of the navy, is a trifle under 25 feet in length, and is, therefore, known as a 50-calibre gun. In the case of small arms, the calibre is expressed in hundredths of an inch, as when we say a 22-calibre or 32-calibre pistol, meaning that the bore is .22 or .32 of an inch in diameter.

Powerful Drops of Water.

A drop of water, even three or four drops, falling on the head, seems a thing unworthy of attention; nevertheless, in China a slow and continuous dropping of water on the head has been found to be a method of torture under which the most hardened criminal abjectly howls for mercy. When a professor in the Sorbonne stated this to his class recently one of his students laughed incredulously, and said it would take a good deal of that sort of thing to affect him. The professor assured him that even one quart of water dropped slowly on his hand would be beyond endurance. He agreed to experiment. A quart measure filled with water was brought in, a microscopic hole was bored in the bottom, and the performance began, the professor counting. During the first hundred drops the student made airy remarks. With the second hundred he began to look less cheerful, then gradually all his talk died away, and his face took on a haggard, tortured expression. With the third hundred the hand began to swell and look red. The pain increased to torture. Finally the skin broke. At the four hundred and twentieth drop the sceptic acknowledged his doubts vanished, and begged for mercy. He could bear no more.

The thrifty housewife, who is just now making provision for the severe winter weather, cannot do better than inspect the white colonial blankets at the D.I.C., Dunedin, which are quoted at very low prices....

Intercolonial

Tenders are being called for the building of a new Catholic church at Glen Innes at a cost of about £4000.

The comparatively new Church of the Holy Trinity, Granville, was almost completely destroyed by fire on May 16.

Word has been received in Sydney that his Holiness the Pope has received in audience the Most Rev. Dr. Kelly, Coadjutor-Archbishop of Sydney. Archbishop Kelly was Rector of the Irish College, Rome, for a period of ten years.

The death occurred at Crookwell on May 16 of the Rev. T. J. Carroll, who passed away after a long and painful illness, at the age of 55 years. The deceased was a native of Tipperary, and had labored in Australia for thirty years.

According to the census of 1901 there were 4486 Catholics in the city of Hobart and 3033 in the city of Launceston. In the rural districts there were 22,795, or a total for Tasmania of 30,314. The estimated Catholic population on December 31, 1906, is put down by the Registrar-General as 32,303.

A tender for the erection of the Dalton memorial church at St. Ignatius' College, Riverview, has been accepted. The cost will be about £3000. The church is being erected by former students and friends of the college to perpetuate the memory of the late Very Rev. Father Dalton, who was one of the founders and also first Rector of the college.

The members of the H.A.C.B. Society, to the number of 500, received their annual Communion at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, on Sunday, May 17. At the conclusion of the Mass the annual breakfast was held, when his Eminence Cardinal Moran presided. Speaking of the operations of the Society during the past year, the district president, Mr. L. Cotter, said he was pleased to report that the increase in members had been 433, making a total of 7323 members; the net increase in district funds amounted to £2428 15s 3d; increase of branch funds, £3657 12s 1d; while district funeral fund totalled £18,170 17s 2d, and the branch sick fund showed £25,253 9s 6d, and other funds £1227 6s 8d. The funeral claims met during the year amounted to £700, constituting a record, whilst the interest earned by the funeral fund amounted to £790 17s 6d. Thus not only was the principal untouched, but after satisfying the claims out of the interest earned, £90 17s 6d remained.

When asked his opinion about the attack of a Presbyterian minister at the Sydney Presbyterian Assembly on the morals of Broken Hill, Dr. Dunne, Bishop of Wilcannia, said: 'The statement is too sweeping. I don't think from the surroundings of the place, that Broken Hill is worse than other centres. As far as the Catholic churches are concerned, there were never larger congregations than now, nor greater unity of faith. Of course there are matters here, just the same as elsewhere, that could be amended; but Broken Hill bears favorable comparison with other mining centres. Better attention might be given to the question of children being brought up under dubious surroundings, and a truant inspector should be permanently stationed in the city. Just as the late inspector,' concluded Bishop Dunne, 'was commencing to do good he was taken away, with the result that things became just as before.'

Messrs. Dwan Bros., of Wellington, report having made the following hotel sales:—Mr. A. M. Gow's interest in the lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Central Hotel, Lambton Quay, Wellington. Mr. T. P. Firman's interest in the lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Club Hotel, Carterton. The late Thomas Wilkinson's interest in the lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Alhambra Hotel, Cuba street, Wellington. The lease, furniture, and goodwill of the Brunswick Hotel, Willis street, Wellington. Mr. H. Shotlander's interest in the lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Inglewood Hotel, Inglewood. The lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Central Hotel, Hawera. The lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Terminus Hotel, Picton. Mr. Thos. Kelly's interest in the lease, goodwill, and furniture of Barrett's Hotel, Lambton Quay, Wellington. The lease of the Clyde Quay Hotel, Clyde Quay, Wellington. The lease, furniture, and goodwill of the Ship Hotel, Nelson. The lease, furniture, and goodwill of the Normanby Hotel, Normanby. Mr. William Pacey's interest in the lease, goodwill, and furniture of the Pier Hotel, Kaikoura. The lease and goodwill of the Tavistock Hotel, Waipukurau, Hawke's Bay.

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