

Science Siftings

By VOLT

Cold Ten Miles Up.

A balloon was sent up from Berlin in 1895 equipped with self-registering thermometers and barometers. It came down in Bosnia, with the instruments in good condition. The barometer registered an elevation of 53,872 feet and the thermometer a temperature of 52 degrees below zero F.

The Great Salt Lake Bridge.

The longest bridge in the world stretches across Great Salt Lake. It was constructed at an enormous cost to save time and money. Before the bridge was built the railroad skirted the north end of the lake. Now it cuts off forty-three miles of road and runs directly from Ogden to Lucin. The cost of this remarkable bridge was £1,000,000. The piles were brought from the Oregon and Texas forests. By placing all the piles together they would measure nearly 600,000 feet. There are more than eleven miles of permanent trestling, nearly the entire length being under water, which is from thirty to thirty-four feet deep.

Fireproof Wood.

Though there are a number of different kinds of wood, ebony, ironwood, etc., of such close, hard fibre that even the fiercest fire has difficulty in 'getting hold' of it, there is only one sort, so far as now known, that is practically fireproof. This is a small, scraggy tree, a native of South Africa, called the shopala, with thick, tough, stringy bark full of a sort of fire-resisting sap. This curious shrub grows largely on the great, grassy savannas, which are swept by fire almost every year during the heat of the summer. There it thrives splendidly, for the annual scourge only kills off its bigger and harder competitors and leaves the ground free for the growth of this vegetable asbestos.

Snakes.

Prof. H. A. Surface, State zoologist of Pennsylvania, is showing that the hatred and prejudice still almost universally exhibited against the snake family is unjust both to the serpents and to ourselves. After collecting, watching, dissecting, and photographing many hundreds of snakes of all kinds, Prof. Surface disposes of a number of popular fallacies as to their habits and appearance. Snakes do not and can not draw milk from cows. They do not strike from a regular coil, but keep the forepart of the body free and the after part only coiled. No snake strikes from a straight position and none springs from the ground clear. None is able to spit poison. The story of the hoop snake with its tail in its mouth rolling downhill is a myth. Snakes are not 'slimy,' as commonly supposed, their bodies being covered with dry scales. Belief in the medicinal qualities of parts of snakes is mere superstition, and it is nonsense to say that a second bite of a snake in the same place will effect a cure.

Book Plates.

It was within half a century from the invention of printing that book plates were introduced as identifying marks to indicate the ownership of the volume. Germany, the fatherland of printing from movable type and wood-cutting for making impressions in ink on paper, is likewise the homeland of the book plate. The earliest dated wood cut of accepted authenticity is the well-known 'St. Christopher of 1423,' which was discovered in the Carthusian Monastery of Buxheim in Suabia. It was to secure the right of ownership in a book that the owner had it marked with the coat-of-arms of the family or some other heraldic device. Libraries were kept intact and passed from generation to generation, bearing the emblem of the family. The first book plate in France is dated 1574; in Sweden, 1575; Switzerland, 1607, and Italy, 1623. The earliest English book plate is found in a folio volume, once the property of Cardinal Wolsey and afterwards belonging to his royal master. The earliest mention of the book plate in English literature is by Pepys, July 16, 1688.

The boy stood on the school house step
When the master opened the door.
'Hello!' said the master, 'You're first at last!
'You were always behind before.'
'I'm early because,' replied the lad,
'I've taken the health renewer
To cure the cough that was so bad—
It's Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.'

Intercolonial

A cedar tree, cut down on Boomi Creek, Wooden-bong, was conveyed to a Casino sawmill. The tree when felled girthed 15ft, and was cut up into five lengthy logs. The butt log realised the price of £30, four other logs bringing some £60 to £80. One log was left in the scrub.

On Monday, May 25, the celebrations in connection with the beatification of Blessed Mother Barat, foundress of the Order of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, took place at Rose Bay Convent, Sydney, when Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by the Right Rev. Dr. Dwyer, Coadjutor-Bishop of Maitland.

Colonel Waddell, Officer Commanding the New South Wales Military forces, died very suddenly in Sydney on Sunday, May 24. The deceased was a native of County Monaghan, and was 62 years of age. He was a patriotic Irishman, and always took an active part in the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Sydney.

The experiments carried out by the Commonwealth authorities in the use of motor cars for postal purposes have proved so satisfactory that tenders have been called for the supply of a car for a period of twelve months, with a thoroughly reliable chauffeur, for the purpose of clearing the postal pillars in Melbourne and suburbs.

Mr. Edward Thynne Real, who has been admitted a barrister of Queensland, is a son of Mr. Justice Real, a leading Catholic and Irishman of that State. Young Real has graduated LL.B. at Sydney University, with first-class honors, and has had the honor of taking the University medal at that examination. He was called to the Bar in New South Wales on May 24, 1907.

That his Grace the Archbishop is held in very high respect and esteem by public men (writes a Melbourne correspondent) is a well-known fact, which was emphasised by the sheaf of letters and telegrams which awaited the Most Rev. prelate at Adelaide. Amongst others who sent best wishes for a pleasant voyage and safe return were Sir Rupert Clarke, Bart., Rev. Professor Rentoul, and Mr. F. Tate, Director of Education.

Rev. Mother Mary Stanislaus O'Neill, whose death occurred recently at the Convent of Mercy, Yass, was one of the noble band of pioneers of the Sisters of Mercy who founded the convent in Yass in December, 1875. Deceased, who was 52 years of age, had not enjoyed the best of health for several weeks past, the immediate cause of her death being heart trouble. During the past three years she was Superioress of the convent.

The expansion of Brisbane (says the 'Catholic Press') emphasises the need of another great hospital. The Sisters of Mercy will place such an institution at the disposal of the citizens of the State, and an £80,000 building was commenced on Sunday, May 24, when his Eminence Cardinal Moran blessed the foundation stone of the new Mater Misericordiae Hospital, South Brisbane. For the present, of course, only the first section of the hospital, which is estimated to cost £20,000, will be proceeded with. With the £1500 previously received and some subsequent promises the total amount in hand in connection with the laying of the foundation stone is about £4000. Mr. Naughton, of Bundaberg, gave the handsome donation of £1000.

The promoters of the 'Eva' of the 'Nation' testimonial (says the Adelaide 'Southern Cross') do not propose to close the fund until a larger amount has been raised in Victoria and New South Wales. They desire to raise a total of £1000, and appeals are still being made in the country districts in the Eastern States. The amount of the Victorian fund is £247, but this includes contributions from West Australia and New Zealand. South and West Australia have already raised their share, and Tasmania has also raised its quota. Mr. Hugh Mahon, M.P., has been, and is, working hard touring the country, delivering lectures, and asking the Irish people of Victoria to contribute towards the fund.

'Catholic Marriages'. The book of the hour. Single copies, 1s posted; 12 copies and over, 8d each, purchaser to pay carriage. Apply, Manager, 'Tablet', Dunedin.

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