

SCIENCE SIFTINGS

By "Volt."

Discovery of Petroleum.

Petroleum is first mentioned by a priest, Joseph d'Allion, a French missionary laboring among the Indians. In a letter, written by him in the year 1629, he tells how he went from western New York to northern Pennsylvania, where he found a well from which oil flowed. The savages, he declared, thought highly of the oil for medicinal purposes.

A New Artificial Eye.

The high Velocities and high explosiveness of the present day projectiles often result in facial wounds of most horrible appearance in the repair of which the surgeons meet with extreme difficulties. In particular soldiers return from the line of fire not merely with an eye shot out, but with the entire lid and eye-socket destroyed, and the absence of these foundations has often made the insertion of an artificial eye impossible. Until now there has never existed any means for concealing this disfigurement and restoring to the unfortunate victim the appearance of a normal man possessing two eyes. But quite recently a French oculist, Henri Einus, has made it possible to do this even when the eyelid is entirely missing. In its essential features the apparatus consists of an artificial eye, equipped with a lid of any convenient plastic material—paraffin or moulding paste, colored to match the subject's complexion. This eye is furnished also with lashes, to give to it the fullest possible extent the appearance of a natural eye. It derives its support from fine metal wires attached to eye-glass or spectacles, so adjusted that when the latter is placed upon the nose, the artificial eye falls accurately into its cavity.

New Zealand Iron.

"There are many deposits of iron ore throughout the islands of New Zealand," states the final report of the Dominion Royal Commission, "but the only one of any real magnitude is at Parapara, on the west coast of the South Island. Its contents have been variously estimated, but the total is undoubtedly very large. The ore is of good quality, suitable for foundry purposes and for making basic steel, but the requirements of the New Zealand market would not at present justify the outlay necessary for conversion into steel. It was suggested to us that a market could be found for the ore in Japan, and we are of opinion that it would be in the interest of New Zealand that it should be exported to as many markets as possible in order that its quality should be thoroughly tested. It would be welcomed in the United Kingdom, but we fear that the cost of freight would render shipment there impossible. New Zealand has an asset of great potential value in the iron sands on the West Coast. The metallic iron contained is virtually free from deleterious ingredients, and the supply is practically inexhaustible. But to convey it to any distance in its present form would be very costly, whilst its conversion would on all probability involve treatment in electric furnaces. This asset is essentially so valuable that it is not likely to remain permanently neglected." The report adds that towards the end of 1916 a beginning was made with the utilisation of the iron sands of Taranaki for the production of iron and steel. The statement of the report that the Parapara deposit of iron ore is "the only one of any real magnitude" in New Zealand is sweeping in view of the limited amount of prospecting work that has been undertaken in connection with the known iron deposits (says the *Dominion*). There is a bed of iron ore about sixty feet thick on the west side of Mount Peel, in Canterbury, for instance. Samples of the ore have been shown to contain 56 per cent. of metallic iron, and the deposit has been traced for a distance of three miles. An extensive deposit of iron ore (limonite and glauconite) occurs on the western slope of Mount Royal, in Otago. It contains about 37 per cent. of metal, and has been stated by experts to be important as regards both quality and position.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY,
SOUTH DUNEDIN.

The annual meeting of St. Patrick's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society was held in the schoolroom, South Dunedin, on July 24. The Rev. Father Delany presided, and there was a good attendance of members. The report and balance sheet were read and adopted. The statement of accounts showed receipts as follows:—Subscriptions, £30 19s 2d; donations, 6s 9d; collection, £15 1s 3d; balance forward, £34 5s;—total, £80 12s 2d. Expenditure—Groceries, £26 6s; drapery, £9 10s; coal, boots, and sundries, £6 9s 5d;—total, £39 9s. Balance in bank, £41 3s 2d.

The report stated that the activities of the society for the past year had been satisfactory. Twenty-two sewing meetings were held, which, although showing a slight falling off, were well attended. The conference desired to suggest to the present members the advisability of each introducing at least one new member. The poor and the sick have been visited and their wants attended to. A donation of fruit and sweets was sent to the orphanage on the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul. During the year the conference entertained the orphanage children to a picnic at Waironga, and the members of the conference record their sincere thanks to Messrs. Thomson and Co. for the use of the grounds, and also to other gentlemen for donations, which enabled the conference to give the little ones an enjoyable outing. The members also provided breakfast for about 86 children, who made their first Holy Communion on All Saints' Day. During the year Miss Cameron resigned the position of president, and the conference records sincere thanks to her for past services. Mrs. Mullin was elected to fill the position. Two children were baptised: 156 articles of clothing have been distributed, and a large quantity sent to the orphanage for remaking. There were 45 orders for groceries, 16 for coal, and four for boots issued during the year. The conference desires to thank all who have assisted in any way during the year. The following officers were elected:—President, Mrs. Mullin (re-elected); vice-president, Mrs. Marlow, and Mrs. Nelson; treasurer, Mrs. Hade (re-elected); secretary, Miss Reidy (re-elected); buyers, Mrs. Roche and Mrs. O'Brien; wardrobe-keeper, Mrs. Lennon (re-elected); wardrobe assistant, Miss Layburn.

It is cheering to see so many thrifty families paying spot cash for seven weeks' supply of NO RUBBING LAUNDRY HELP—total amount, 1/-.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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MRS. ROLLESTON,

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