

Science Siftings

BY 'VOLT'

To Telephone With Light Rays.

Inventors have been busy for some years trying to make a practicable system of wireless telephony in which the medium of communication is a beam of light. The most recent device in this line is the invention of a Frenchman named Ancel, and is an improvement on an earlier form devised by Ruehmer. It is seemingly perfect in operation, but not likely to be used practically, because anything that cuts off the light between the transmitting and the receiving station also puts a stop to communication.

Concrete Houses Not New.

A series of cities has been uncovered by the Harvard exploration expedition in Guatemala, showing the remarkably advanced state of the vanished Maya civilisation. Terraced pyramids were houses of worship, and some of these indicate that they were 'poured' concrete, ante-dating Edison's plan some twenty centuries. Several cities had been discovered previously, and the Harvard men found four more, with new facts as to the grade of civilisation reached by the extinct race of men.

Wonderful Memory of Animals.

The memory of animals running through generations is one of the astounding facts of science which it is most difficult to account for. Take any animal whose daily life entails a certain line of work, and put him in an environment where neither he nor his children unto the one hundredth generation will be able to carry out this work, then bring the remote descendant into the original environment of his fathers and he will go about the duties of his kind as if he had been schooled in them. Recently it was found that some beavers were living in their villages near Avignon, on the Rhone. For at least 300 years they had had no trees to fell for their dams, so for thirty generations they had burrowed in the banks and built mud walls about their lodgings with their tails. A Polish Count became interested in one of the colonies and removed a few of them to a forest-grown estate. Immediately the beavers established themselves by a stream, cut their trees and built their villages as their fathers had not been able to do for three whole generations.

Cold Light.

Where there is light there is heat, and where there is intense light there is often intense heat, and further where there are also inflammable moving-picture films, we may have disastrous fires. It will be welcome news, therefore, that a 'cold light' has been produced that can be used in the cinematograph, not only lessening the danger, but permitting the use of gelatine films, and relieving lecturers, managers, insurance companies, and audience of considerable nervous strain. Light without sensible heat has been hitherto obtainable in only two ways: first by exciting phosphorescence or luminescence electrically, especially in gases; and second, by straining out the non-luminous heat-rays with some transparent substance like rock-salt, that does not transmit them. Of course, some heat accompanies all light; all we can do is to avoid or remove the 'dark heat' that usually accompanies the light rays. Neither of the methods mentioned above is in commercial use for lantern-projection, although the 'straining' method has been so used in laboratories. Light accompanied by as little heat as possible is desirable for this purpose—witness some recent disastrous fires caused by lanterns using combustible films. A recent French inventor, Dussaud by name, uses a light that flickers so rapidly as to be steady to the eye and yet remains dark long enough between its luminous periods to cool off completely. This he calls 'cool light.'

The End in Sight.

Colonel Goethals has definitely stated before the House Committee on Commerce that the Panama Canal will be completed by September, 1913. The probabilities are that the great work will be practically completed some months before that time, for the Colonel has shown himself to be a conservative as well as eminently efficient engineer. He further stated that the cost will be 360,000,000 dollars, including all appurtenances. His appearance before the committee was for the purpose of urging the enactment of legislation fixing the shipping tolls which will govern the passage of vessels through the canal. He asserts that this is essential, as the shipping interests of the world demand at least eighteen months' advance notice of the rates, which certainly seems reasonable enough when one considers the amount of readjustment of traffic that will inevitably result from the opening of the canal. Incidentally, it is noticeable that less is heard at present of the amount of excavation accomplished and more about the material to be used in the locks and other construction. For example, word comes from Pittsburg that shipments of steel plates and fabricated material and castings are now going out to the Panama Canal on contracts at the rate of 40,000 tons a month.

Intercolonial

The Very Rev. Father O'Sullivan, S.M.A., is at present lecturing on behalf of the African Missions in the diocese of Armidale.

The parish and outside donations to the presentation to Dr. Clune on his consecration as Bishop of Perth amounted to £2722, of which members of the Hibernian Society contributed £706.

Very Rev. Father D. Hogan, P.P., of Shepparton, Victoria, who recently celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood, was entertained by the parishioners, and presented with gifts in honor of the occasion.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are now working in the vast diocese of Geraldton, W.A., where Bishop Kelly has entrusted to their charge the parish of Leonara, in the Eastern Goldfields districts.

Bro. R. P. Cleerehan, Treasurer of the No. 1 Victorian District of the Hibernian Society, who is about to take a six months' trip to Ireland and America, was entertained by the past and present officers of the District Board, who made him a presentation.

On Sunday, April 2, the new Church of St. Augustine was opened at Kyabram by his Lordship the Bishop of Sandhurst, Dr. Reville, O.S.A., assisted by Prior Malone and Fathers Morrough and Hoynes. There was a very large congregation, visitors coming from all parts of the district and neighboring townships to witness the ceremony.

Rev. Father Peter Hayes, of Bunbury (says the *W.A. Record*), has been appointed Administrator of the Cathedral parish, Perth. Father Hayes has been more than eight years a resident of West Australia. His first appointment was to Kalgoorlie. From Kalgoorlie he went to Bunbury five years ago. Father Hayes has been at all times and in all places a great favorite with every class of the community.

The Rev. A. May, well known for his work amongst the poor children of the city and suburbs (writes the Melbourne correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal*), was given a send-off at the Flemington Town Hall previous to his well-earned holiday. The hall was crowded by a representative gathering of priests and laymen. Dr. H. J. Cahill, who presided, eulogised the guest for his large-hearted charity to the poor. Mr. W. P. Furlong, LL.B., followed in a similar strain, and said that Father May was the poor man's friend. Warm tributes were paid by a number of the city and suburban clergy and the two Galway priests, Fathers Carr and O'Sullivan. Father May was deeply touched, and made a feeling reply.

Widespread sorrow (says the Melbourne *Tribune*) was felt, not only in Brunswick, but in every part of the archdiocese, when it became known that the Rev. Father Luby, the beloved pastor of St. Ambrose's Church, Brunswick, had passed away suddenly on Easter Monday morning. Father Luby, who had been twenty-two years in charge of his parish at Brunswick, was a familiar and well-loved figure, not only amongst his own parishioners, but with every section of the community. He was born in County Tipperary, Ireland, about 55 years ago, and was ordained at All Hallows' College, Dublin, in 1878. He came to Australia some thirty years ago, and ministered in several parishes, including West Melbourne and Brighton.

Rev. Brother Colomba Dillon, of the Christian Brothers' College, Wakefield street, Adelaide, after a long illness, borne with cheerful resignation, passed to his reward on April 6. The deceased was an old scholar of the Brothers in Brisbane. He spent some years in business in that city, earning for himself the high esteem of his employers. Feeling himself, however, destined for a higher vocation, he entered the novitiate of the Christian Brothers in Sydney, and, after two years spent in their training college, was sent to Adelaide, where he labored for the last ten years of his life, making himself a great favorite in the junior classes by his mild manner, and proving himself by examination results to be a most efficient teacher. For some time back, owing to failing health, he had to retire from active work.

By the Japanese mail steamer, Yawata Maru, which sailed on April 19, the Very Rev. Father P. M. Lynch, of the Redemptorist Order, with the Rev. Fathers D. Mitchell and F. Gilmartin, of the same Order, left for the Philippine Islands, to take charge of the Redemptorist mission there (says the *Catholic Press*). The mission, of which Father Lynch will be Superior, embraces six islands, with a population of 40,000 Catholics, the monastery being at Opong, on the Island of Maruan. The natives speak Spanish and a Filipino dialect, called Visayan. The mission was founded six years ago by the late Father Boylan, C.S.S.R. (afterwards Bishop), who was accompanied from Sydney to the Philippines by that venerable Redemptorist missionary, Father Thomas O'Farrell, for many years Superior of the Order in Australasia. Father Lynch's departure is regretted by Catholics all over the Commonwealth and New Zealand. He has given missions everywhere, and, besides eloquence, he possesses personal magnetism in a singular degree, which is responsible for the great success that has invariably attended his work.