

Science Siftings

By 'VOLT.'

Movements of the Crocodile.

One effect of the great length of the crocodile is, that on land the creature cannot quickly turn itself. Thus, though when angry they can run with considerable speed, an active man can easily baffle their pursuit by quickly turning and doubling like a hare. In the water, however, the case is entirely different. The long tail then becomes a powerful rudder, as well as a propeller, and the huge animal can dash hither and thither like a fish. Enormous as is the size of the full-grown reptile, the egg is not quite so large as that of a goose, the length being about the same, but the diameter less.

Biggest Railway Station.

Without any ceremony the largest railway station in Europe, and probably the largest in the world, was opened recently to the public at Leipzig, Germany. The station has taken ten years to construct, and when it is finally completed it will have cost seven million pounds. With its Royal, ordinary, and emigrant reception and waiting rooms, its restaurants, hairdressers, baths, and its dozen shops for all manner of travellers' requisites, from books to bouquets, the station has a magnificent frontage of nearly a thousand feet, whilst it covers eighty thousand square yards, double the area of Leipzig's largest square, the Augustusplatz. The great roof of iron and concrete covering the main line platforms is the largest single span ever constructed. When all the lines converging on Leipzig are brought to the central station there will be eleven different routes, occupying 28 quadruple platforms.

International Time Conference.

The International Time Conference, which convened recently at the Paris Observatory, has agreed to adopt Greenwich time universally, to send out signals at exact hours, and to arrange that there shall be no over-lapping. The most suitable wave-length for the transmission of wireless signals was also fixed. The States represented at the conference were Austria, France, Russia, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, United States, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Great Britain, Sweden,

Switzerland, Greece, and Monaco. A 'Commission Internationale de l'Heure' will be established shortly, with an executive bureau at Paris. This bureau will endeavor to secure uniformity at the different stations, and will compare the various signals received with the object of examining their general accuracy. Nine stations will be selected for comparative work, and these will be located at different parts of the globe. A powerful plant is under construction at Laeken for the study of the perturbation of radio-telegraphic signals by atmospheric agents.

Jesuit Scientists in India.

Baron Hardinge, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, who so narrowly escaped assassination lately, referred in a recent speech at Jaipur to the 'great observatory' built by the late Maharaja Jai Singh II. 'It is worth recalling (says the *Catholic Herald of India*) that the Jesuits played a conspicuous part in the construction of observatories at Jaipur, Delhi, Benares, Muttra, and Ujjain. Jai Singh was reputed for his scientific knowledge, and is said to have despatched a scientific embassy to Lisbon, which resulted in the organisation of a Jesuit astronomical mission to Jaipur. In 1733, the Maharaja invited two of the French Jesuit Fathers of Chandernagore to help him in his observations on a coming eclipse. These were Fathers Pons and Claude Boudier, who worked in the Maharaja's observatory at Jaipur in August and September, 1734. Two years later, the Maharaja secured the services of two Bavarian Jesuits—Anthony Gabelberger and Andrew Strobel. The former died in 1741, while the latter went to Delhi in 1743, presumably to take charge of the observatory in that city. With the death of Jai Singh (1743), the Jaipur observatory fell into ruin, the manuscripts became scattered, and the instruments were sold as old copper.'

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