

## Science Siftings

By 'VOLR.'

### Lost Arts.

Current tradition credits the ancients with many 'lost arts.' It is still common to hear people say that means unknown to us must have been employed to erect the pyramids, that the Damascus blade is beyond the power of modern cutlers, and that the art of hardening copper died with some little brown Aztec. In point of fact (says the *New York Tribune*), larger stones than any found in the pyramids have been quarried in Maine, carried across the sea, and erected in buildings in England and France. If anyone cared to pay the cost, there are plenty of contractors who would build a replica of the largest pyramid, and would not take so very long about it. It is doubtful whether a 'Damascus blade' will stand as much as a good modern hand saw or the spring of a cheap clock. Copper can be hardened by modern methods to equal any specimen that has been left to us by the ancients. Many arts that are supposed to be lost are simply abandoned because there is no modern need of cultivating them, and others are not even abandoned, but employed every day and improved upon.

### To Last Four More Centuries.

The ingenuity with which clever workmen restore damaged masterpieces of painting is shown by the means recently taken to rescue a famous Madonna by Botticelli. The Madonna was painted on a wooden panel at least four hundred years ago. Not long since the wood began to crack, and it was feared that the painting would be ruined; but a restorer was found who said that he could save it. His first step was to paste thin strips of tissue paper on the face of the picture, pressing the paper into the uneven surface of the paint. He added layer after layer, until a thick body of paper concealed the picture. Then the restorer turned the picture over and began to sandpaper the board away. After many months of careful work he had all the wood removed, and nothing but the paint adhered to the paper. Next he glued a piece of linen canvas very carefully to the paint, and slowly and patiently removed the paper bit by bit. The work took nearly a year; but when it was finished the painting was in a condition to last another four centuries.

### The Possibilities of Aerial Fleets.

A remarkable feat was performed on April 17 by Mr. G. Hamel, the aviator, who flew from Dover to Cologne without a stop. This remarkable flight, which began at 12.40 p.m. from Dover Harbor, and ended in the famous German city at 4.58 p.m., was made in a Bleriot monoplane. We (*Universe*) are not enthusiastic over the prospect of adding to the horrors and destructiveness of warfare which this feat brings within the bounds of possibility, but until the nations seriously begin to consider the question of 'turning their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks,' we are unfortunately compelled to look to our weapons of offence and defence if we intend to hold what we possess. Mr. Hamel's flight across five frontiers and over the soil of four foreign nations proves that we are rapidly approaching the time when aerial fleets will render the battleship more or less obsolete. War will be 'in the air' in a very real sense. Of what use would land fortresses or warships be against the attack of hundreds of winged monsters dropping deadly explosives on to the helpless combatants below? Possibly, however, human ingenuity will devise means of counter attack; and so the deadly rivalry goes on, and will go on until we arrive at the realisation of the poet's dread, 'the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World.'

### ELECTRIC MASSAGE.

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## Intercolonial

From Mr. John Redmond, M.P., leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Rev. Father G. A. Robinson, of Camberwell, Victoria, the foundation stone of whose church in honor of Our Lady of Victories was blessed on Sunday, May 25, has received the following cable:—'Have heard with delight great success attending your noble work. Congratulate your distinguished Archbishop, yourself, and good Australian people.'

On account of the inclement weather, the ceremonies arranged for the celebration of Corpus Christi at Manly on Sunday, May 25, had to be abandoned. A procession was held, however, through the cloisters of St. Patrick's College. His Grace the Archbishop carried the Blessed Sacrament under the canopy, accompanied by the students of the college chanting appropriate hymns. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was afterwards given by the Archbishop, to which a large number of people who had journeyed to Manly hoping that the celebration would take place, were admitted.

The estate of the late Dr. John Joseph Donovan, of Sydney, has been valued for probate purposes at over £50,000. Among his charitable bequests were the following:—The Particular Council of Sydney for St. Vincent de Paul Society (for distribution in such proportions as the council might think expedient among the several conferences of the society in Sydney and suburbs for the relief of the poor), £300; the Home for Aged Poor, Randwick, £300; St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, £500; Lewisham Hospital, Sydney, £400; St. Joseph's Hospital, Auburn, and the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, North Sydney, £300 each; Sacred Heart Hospice, Darlinghurst road, £200; St. Anne's Orphanage, Liverpool, St. Michael's Orphanage, Baulkham Hills, St. Brigid's Orphanage, Ryde, St. Joseph's Orphanage (for girls), Lane Cove road, St. Joseph's Orphanage (for boys), Kincumber, the Good Samaritan Industrial School, Manly, St. Vincent's Industrial Home Westmead, St. Martha's Industrial Home, Waitara, the Foundling Home, Waitara, and St. Magdalene Refuge, Tempe, £200 each; Boys' Orphanage, Goulburn, Girls' Orphanage, North Goulburn, and the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Waratah, £100 each; St. Joseph's School for Poor Children, William street, Sydney, and St. John's School for Poor Children, Kent street, Sydney, £50 each.

The largest gathering which the beautiful Melbourne suburb, Camberwell, has ever known, assembled on Sunday afternoon, May 25, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Church of Our Lady of Victories, the noble edifice which, thanks to the Rev. Father Robinson, is about to be erected. The attendance (says the *Age*) must have numbered well over 30,000. It was a glorious afternoon, and by 2 o'clock all manner of vehicles—motor cars, motor 'buses, landaus, waggonettes, and the rest—were making for the same destination. A special railway service was run, but it failed to cope very effectively with the rush, and at Flinders street station the supply of tickets gave out. Above the allotment on which the church is to be built long lines of flags were garlanded, and a space, quite inadequate for the purpose, was railed off for the accommodation of those participating in the procession. This is the church for which Father Robinson has invited the voluntary contribution of 50,000 stones, and the estimated cost is £25,000. Rev. Father Robinson read a cablegram from Cardinal Merry del Val, secretary to his Holiness the Pope, as follows:—'Holy Father learns with pleasure success attending great undertaking on auspicious occasion of laying foundation stone. Most lovingly imparts Apostolic Benediction to his Grace the Archbishop, his Grace the Coadjutor-Archbishop, your reverence, and all the faithful of Australia and New Zealand who co-operate in raising the beautiful church in honor of Our Lady of Victories.' His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne, assisted by the Most Rev. Dr. Mannix, performed the ceremony and delivered an address.

**C. M. Simpson**

MONUMENTAL WORKS

COLINGWOOD STREET, NELSON.

Cemetery work completed in any part of the district. (Established 1873.)