

Science Siftings

By 'VOLT.'

Porcelain Houses.

Mr. W. Hales Turner, a member of a great pottery family, has a scheme for building houses of porcelain. He has spent forty years in obtaining porcelain tiles strong enough to build a house of the required strength and cheapness, and it is his contention that such a house would be specially suitable for rural districts. His houses will consist of a steel framework to which are fitted by simple means large porcelain tiles which no other designer has yet been able to manufacture. The tiles are one inch thick, and the doorways and wainscots are of steel. The walls, floor, and ceiling are all of porcelain, and not only waterproof but steam-proof also.

Then and Now.

Those who attach importance to anniversaries will be interested to know that 61 years ago the first mail steamer from Great Britain to Australia completed her voyage at Sydney, having called at Melbourne six days previously. This was the P. and O. steamer Chusan, which left Southampton on May 15, and made her voyage by way of St. Vincent and the Cape of Good Hope. In these days of mammoth liners, it is strange to read of this vessel of 709 tons and 80 horsepower spoken of as representative of the ocean-going vessels of her time. An arrangement had just been made with the British Government for a monthly service, commencing in the following April. The Chusan, which was described as 'barque-rigged and with the appearance of a man-of-war,' thus anticipated the contract service by several months.

Improvements in Telegraphy.

When the Submarine Telegraph Company's business was taken over by the Post Office in 1899 telegrams to and from the Continent averaged from 11,000 to 12,000 daily (says the *London Universe*). Since that time not only has the volume of business enormously increased, but the mechanism and methods of transmission have left behind the old way as far as the modern locomotive has surpassed the 'Puffing Billy,' culminating in the Marconi triumph of wireless telegraphy, the gift to the world of a clean-handed Italian gentleman, although some Englishmen have sadly soiled their plumes in the business. In a dozen years foreign messages have increased from 12,000 to 30,000, and the staff of the foreign section of the service from 190 to 400. The general business has risen to the enormous volume of more than 89 million telegrams a year, a daily average of 250,000, the staff of the Central Office having been augmented from 500 to over 4500. The number of offices has increased from 3000 in 1886-7 to 14,000, and the system comprises 310,000 miles of wire, as compared with 60,000 miles in 1870. Inventions and improvements have multiplied apace. Multiplex simultaneous messages over a single wire have superseded the single message. Mechanical transmitters have further multiplied the power of transmitting messages tenfold. A speed of sixty words a minute in 1870 has given place to a possible 600 words a minute, and a fixed working standard for some circuits of 400 words a minute. Other time-saving apparatus have added to the miracle of modern telegraphy, and to crown all comes the Marconi invention for dispensing with apparatus by the marvel of radio-telegrams. The number of British ships now equipped with wireless apparatus is 425.

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Intercolonial

The second anniversary of the death of Cardinal Moran was observed in St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, with Solemn Office and Requiem Mass at which his Grace the Archbishop presided.

On Thursday, August 14, his Lordship Bishop Kelly, of Geraldton, celebrated the anniversary of his consecration. On August 14, 1898, his Lordship, who is a native of West Australia, was consecrated first Bishop of the newly-created diocese of Geraldton. The ceremony took place at St. Francis' Xavier's Cathedral, Adelaide.

The death in Dublin of the Rev. H. Lynch, S.J., well known in the Australian Mission, was announced by cable on August 19. Deceased, who was about 57 years of age, left Australia about fourteen years ago, and was stationed at Gardiner street, Dublin. Three years prior to his departure he was professor at St. Ignatius' College, Riverview.

Victoria spends £800,000 on education, and yet, notwithstanding this huge expenditure, the Minister of Education says that some of the public schools are a disgrace to the State. On the other hand the Catholic schools in the archdiocese of Melbourne alone accommodate over 24,000 children, and are fully staffed and equipped in an up-to-date manner.

On the eve of his departure from Dubbo, the Rev. Father Parker was entertained in the banquet-room of the Empire Hall by a large number of parishioners and friends, the latter including several members of other denominations. The Very Rev. Dr. Brophy presided, and on behalf of those present, in tendering Father Parker a gift of a handsome silver chalice, chased with gold, and a cheque, said that the mutual love, appreciation, and respect of the Catholic people for their clergy were too well known to need more than a passing reference.

Mr. Thomas Curran, ex-M.P. for Sligo, died in England on August 13. He was a retired Australian merchant, having lived in the Bombala district of New South Wales in the early seventies, where he was also a justice of the peace. In 1886 he was appointed a commissioner for N.S. Wales to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London, filling a similar office two years later at the Melbourne Exhibition. In 1892 he was elected for Sligo as an anti-Parnellite, and sat in the House of Commons till 1900. After he was elected to the House of Commons, and when funds were badly needed, he lent the Irish Nationalist Party £5000. His son, who was educated in Sydney, and admitted to the English bar, was also a Nationalist member of the House of Commons.

At the ceremony of blessing and laying the memorial stone of the additions to the Church of the Holy Angels, Balaclava, his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne made felicitous reference to the cordial relations that exist between all creeds and classes of the people. We were singularly blessed, said his Grace, in having such a splendid inheritance as Australia. Its many riches gave an opportunity to all, and he was glad to see that our people were enjoying their fair share of prosperity. His Grace eulogised the Rev. J. Barry (pastor) and Rev. T. Bride for their energy and zeal in the discharge of their sacred duties. No parish in the archdiocese had made greater progress in twelve months than was the case in regard to Balaclava. The Archbishop gave £25, the total amounting to £600. An address was read by the Hon. John Gavan Duffy, K.S.G., in which the loyalty and reverence of the parishioners for their chief pastor were felicitously voiced. On the motion of Mr. T. C. Brennan, LL.B., a hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Archbishop.

PILES.

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