

Science Siftings

By 'VOLT.'

Maturing Cheese by Electricity.

An industrial electrician of Rotterdam is reported to have discovered a method of giving age to cheese by means of electricity. After a long series of experiments, he found that he could take an absolutely fresh cheese and give it all the consistency, taste, and appearance of a fine cheese that had been stored away and carefully aged for two years. He takes a fresh cheese and subjects it to an alternating current, says *Grocery*. At the end of twenty-four hours of constant alternating electrical currents through this cheese it is said to possess all the properties of a fine two-year-old cheese. This has naturally aroused great interest in Holland, where cheese-making is one of the big industries. It is said the electrician claims he can do many other things with cheese by means of electricity, including an apparatus that will enable the manufacturer to so graduate and direct electrical action of this nature as to give cheese any taste desired and any consistency that may be needed to supply the wants of a fastidious market.

The Phenomenon of Sound.

A strange scientific discovery has been made by Professor de Quervain, the well-known Swiss explorer of Zurich, on the Jungfrau Mountain. The workmen used twenty-five tons of dynamite while constructing the highest section of the line, and there were explosions which were distinctly heard within a radius of thirty miles. Then within a zone of the next fourteen miles there was silence, but further up to a concentric circle of fifty miles the noise was again heard clearly. This intervening zone the Swiss scientist has named the 'zone of silence,' but he states that he is unable to account for the phenomenon. He asks whether the discovery does not in a way clear up the mystery of the Austrian General Duan, who in the Seven Years' War 'deserted' General Loudon when the latter was being attacked by the army of Frederick II. at Leignitz, about forty miles away. General Duan stated afterwards that neither he nor his staff heard firing, while many miles behind his army the boom of cannon was heard.

Collecting Ostrich Feathers.

A very small proportion of our ostrich feathers comes from the wild birds nowadays. Twenty years ago there were but few ostrich farms, and the great majority of ostrich feathers came from wild birds which were killed by the hunters in South Africa. Of course, after the ostriches were killed the feathers were pulled out, but now that the ostrich farms thrive and the birds are stripped of their plume feathers and turned loose to grow more greater care has to be taken. The white ostrich feathers are not fully developed. There are also black and drab feathers on the same bird, but when the white feathers are fully developed they lose a great deal of their whiteness, and in the olden days had to be bleached. Now the ostriches are blindfolded with a hood on the farms and led into a sort of crate-like coop, where the black and drab feathers are carefully pulled out; but the white feathers are never pulled out, as this would so damage the great sockets in which the large quills grow that no more would be forthcoming, so the quills of the white feathers are carefully cut off and the quills allowed to remain for several months, when they come out naturally and the new feathers start. Fifty years ago there were only eighty-two tame ostriches known in all South Africa. And in that year only sixteen pounds of feathers were exported, and they came for the most part from wild birds, brought down by the hunters. Last year there were about 800,000 domesticated ostriches in South Africa, and nearly 900,000 pounds of feathers were exported at a value of more than a quarter of a million sterling.

Intercolonial

On September 13 the Very Rev. Father J. O'Donohoe, Adm., Hamilton, received a cable from Ireland announcing the death of his sister, Sister Mary Joseph Patrick, at the Presentation Convent, Clonmel, County Tipperary. She was in the 49th year of her age, and the 30th of her religious life.

A contract was let recently to make extensive additions and alterations to the premises used by the Little Sisters of the Poor at Randwick, as homes for the aged. Two wings are to be added, and each will be four storeys in height, 140 feet in length, and 35 feet in width. Each wing is to be flanked with a tower. The interior of the existing building is to be altered so as to provide more accommodation, and when the whole of the works embraced in the contract are carried out the Little Sisters of the Poor will have considerably more than twice their present accommodation.

An idea of the attendance at the various churches in Bathurst on a recent Sunday was given in a census taken by a local paper. The figures give a total of 1885 at the Catholic churches as against 1645 for the whole of the Protestant churches combined, thus showing a majority of 240 in favor of Catholics. The figures of the various denominations are as follow:—Catholics, 1885; Anglican, 657; Methodist, 439; Presbyterians, 158; Salvation Army, 132; Baptist, 126; Congregational, 95; Undenominational Mission, 38. The figures, of course, include persons who attended more than one service. The population of Bathurst is about 8500.

The Rev. J. M. Guis, a devoted member of the Sacred Heart band of missionaries, passed away on Sunday, September 14, in St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, after a serious illness. Deceased possessed exceptional literary and musical ability, and was regarded with affection by all who knew him. Father Guis was born at Marseilles in 1869, served three years in the army, and became lieutenant. He entered the Novitiate at Marseilles, and subsequently went to New Guinea, where he was ordained in the year 1893. After spending some years in the mission there, Father Guis came to Sydney, and was appointed Procurator of the Missions.

The fund, which was opened just three weeks ago to mark the esteem in which the Very Rev. Dr. O'Mahony is held by the people of Tasmania, was closed on Wednesday evening (says the *Monitor* of September 12), and a magnificent result followed on the work of the committee who had the matter in hand. Donations literally poured in from all parts of the State, and when the secretary (Mr. W. Tynan) announced to the meeting of the general committee that, with some further promises which were yet to come in, the amount would reach the sum of £600, the cheers were loud and long sustained. The amount had far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of any of those present, and gave striking testimony to the esteem in which Dr. O'Mahony is held by the people of Tasmania.

The missionary fruits of the visit of the Rev. Father Goodman, M.S.H., to the King's Island, off the coast of Tasmania, resulted in the laying and blessing of the foundation stone of a new church there by the Right Rev. Mgr. Gilleran, V.G., of Hobart, on August 31. Mass was celebrated in the morning in the local public hall, at which an instructive address was given by the Rev. Father O'Flynn. At the evening devotions the sermon was preached by the Rev. Father Goodman, M.S.H. At the ceremony of the blessing of the foundation stone there was a large gathering of members of all denominations, the occasional address being given by Monsignor Gilleran. In response to the appeal by Father Goodman the sum of £104 was subscribed. On the following evening Monsignor Gilleran, V.G., was entertained at a public banquet, presided over by the Rev. Father Goodman, M.S.H. Speeches were delivered by Monsignor Gilleran, V.G., Rev. Father O'Flynn, Rev. Father Goodman, Messrs. G. Maloney, R. Forrest, T. Farrell, Warden Robinson, Rev. J. M. Devenish, Rev. N. G. Higgs, Canon Shoo-bridge.

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