

Science Siftings

By 'Volt'

A Digging Fish.

The digging fish is a native of the lakes and rivers of central Africa. When the dry season approaches it burrows in the mud at the bottom of its residence to the depth of two or three feet, goes to sleep and awaits the return of the wet season.

Elasticity of Glass.

Among solids glass is apparently perfectly elastic. A plate of glass bent under pressure and allowed to remain under stress for 25 years, when released and carefully tested for any permanent set, was found to have returned to exactly its original shape.

Trinidad's Lake of Pitch.

The Great Pitch Lake of Trinidad covers 99 acres, and contains millions of tons of so-called pitch. This is in reality a mixture of asphalt and oil, which is continually oozing up through cracks and crevices beneath the pressure of the strata of rock above.

The Bell Bird.

The bird whose voice has been found to penetrate to the greatest distance is the bell-bird of New Guinea. It is a white bird, about a foot long from beak to tail, and its note, which resembles the tone of a bell, has been heard at the distance of no less than three miles.

Gnat Eggs.

The eggs of the gnat are arranged by the parent insect in the form of a raft which floats with its concave side uppermost. If upset it speedily readjusts itself and cannot be kept under water. At the proper time a valve in the lower part of each egg opens and the insect escapes into the water beneath.

Monkeys and Colors.

In order to prove its power of discriminating between colors the scientist Dahl made some interesting tests upon a monkey. He colored some sweets with a certain colored dye and some bitter substances with that of another color. After a few attempts the monkey learned to leave without even tasting those articles of food colored with the dye which indicated bitter tasting substances and seized at once upon those which indicated sweets. Varying the experiments sufficiently he found that the monkey distinguished all the different colors readily, save only dark blue. Many savage tribes cannot distinguish dark blue from black and even children distinguish this color later than all others.

Still Learning.

When in Paris, says Edison, the inventor, I asked the eminent scientist, Dubois, what makes my finger go when I move it? What force telegraphs from my brain to my toe when I move it? He looked at me, and said frankly—'Monsieur Edison, I have been working for thirty years on that question, and it is still unanswered.' These and other things interest me deeply, and soon I hope to take them up. The phonograph, battery, cement works, and other things will make the path easier, and then I shall ride my hobby of science. Are we far advanced? you ask. No, no; we are living on the ragged edge of knowledge; we are still very low down; we do not know one one-thousandth part of one per cent. as yet, but we are learning.

'The publication of an advertisement in a Catholic paper shows that the advertiser not only desires the patronage of Catholics, but pays them the compliment of seeking it through the medium of their own religious journal.' So says an esteemed and wide-awake American contemporary. A word to the wise is sufficient....

MYERS & CO., Dentists, Octagon, corner of George Street. They guarantee the highest class of work at moderate fees. Their artificial teeth give general satisfaction, and the fact of them supplying a temporary denture while the gums are healing does away with the inconvenience of being months without teeth. They manufacture a single artificial tooth for Ten Shillings, and sets equally moderate. The administration of nitrous oxide gas is also a great boon to those needing the extraction of a tooth....

Intercolonial

On Sunday, December 30, Mrs. Cronin, who has resigned the position of church organist at St. Mary's Church, Geelong, and is leaving for Tasmania, was, on behalf of the past and present members of the choir, presented with a gold brooch.

Lady MacMahon, widow of the late Sir Charles MacMahon (second Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, from 1871 to 1874), has returned to Victoria. Lady MacMahon has been spending about two years in Ireland attending to business connected with the estate of her late husband.

Dr. J. D. Houlihan, who arrived in New South Wales from Ireland only a few weeks ago, and commenced practice in Morpeth, has received news of the death of his brother-in-law, Mr. William Joseph Menton, a well-known lawyer and leading citizen of Roscrea, Ireland. Deceased was in his 50th year, and was well-beloved by all classes in the community.

The death of the Rev. Father Thomas Patrick Sheehy, O.S.F.C., took place at the presbytery, Quirindi, on December 21. He had been ailing about a month, and a fortnight previous to his death he went to Sydney, returning to Quirindi only three days before he died. The cause of death was heart failure. Owing to his advanced age—he was 68—his medical attendant had little hopes of his recovery. The late Father Sheehy was born in County Kerry, Ireland, and was a member of the Capuchin Order.

Two deaths from lightning were recorded in New South Wales on New Year's Day. A severe thunderstorm occurred at Mahonga. Two men were struck by lightning, Edward Hopkins being killed instantaneously, and his companion, Dennis, being paralysed. Hopkins was a married man. In a storm that passed over Leura, a girl named Ethel Heffernan, aged 12, who was on a visit from Newtown, Sydney, was struck dead. She was watching three young men taking down a tent, when the storm came on, and they took shelter under a tree. The tree was struck, and the four of them were felled to the ground. One of the young men sustained concussion of the brain, but he is progressing favorably. The body of the girl was much burnt.

A happy manner of celebrating the first anniversary of his consecration was hit upon by his Lordship Dr. Duhig (writes the Brisbane correspondent of the 'Catholic Press'). He invited all the members of the various Catholic societies in the city to a conversation in the Hibernian Hall on Monday evening, 10th December. The gathering turned out to be the most pleasant in the recollection of all present. It brought the Catholics socially together, and thus accomplished one great object the Bishop has in view. During the evening the members of the H.A.C.B.S. and the C.Y.M.S. offered special congratulations to his Lordship, and the latter body presented him with a handsome silver inkstand.

Burglars broke into the sacristy of St. Thomas' Church, Lewisham, on the night of January 1, and a large iron safe was dynamited. The robbers did not enter the church proper at all, but broke a window and went into the sacristy. Half of the safe was blown to pieces. This was on the side nearest the doorway, where the explosive had evidently been inserted. The door was almost torn off its hinges, and pieces of the iron were imbedded in the door. The room was strewn with sections of the burnt safe. A silver chalice, valued at £30, was broken in halves, and the monstrance and a lot of the church plate were injured by the explosion, to deaden the sound of which precautions were taken by using some material found about.

Young Neal Macrossan, of Nudgee College (writes a Brisbane correspondent) is the most remarkable student that has gone through the Brisbane school since the days of Thomas Joseph Byrnes. First, Macrossan won a State scholarship, then in the Junior University examination he scored seven first-class passes, winning also the Byrnes gold medal. Now, in the senior examination, he has taken eight first class passes, came first in the list of Queensland exhibitors, and prox-accessit for a big Southern scholarship. From the Queensland Government he is entitled to £100 a year for three years. It is said that he will enter Sydney or Melbourne University to study medicine. Neal is the second Queensland exhibitor from the Macrossan family.