

Science Siftings

By 'VOLT.'

Floating Naval Factory.

A floating naval factory, three storeys in height, is to be constructed for use at the new naval base at Cromarty. The turbine electrical power plant for this factory will be situated in one of the watertight compartments constituting the hull. The workshops will include a foundry, a machine shop, an electrical shop, a boiler shop, a smithy, a joiner's shop, and a pattern shop. Above the factory there will be housing accommodation for 136 officers and men.

World's Largest Bridge.

It is probable that next year a commencement will be made with the construction of the railway bridge between Rugen and the mainland, which will be the longest in the world, exceeding even that over the Hohangho, with its 3,580 yards. The cost of this great engineering work is not expected to amount to more than £1,000,000, or less than a third of that of the Forth Bridge. When the bridge, which, it is said, is to include a track for pedestrians, though none for road traffic, is completed, it will substantially shorten the journeys between Berlin and Hamburg on the one hand, and Stockholm and Christiana on the other.

Railway Timed by Wireless.

The Compagnie du Nord of France is the first railway of the world officially to adopt the regulation of its timepieces by wireless time signals. Railways ordinarily regulate the station clocks on their lines by means of signals that are transmitted over the telegraph wires. This method frequently interrupts the regular telegraphic service, and is open to objections. Wireless time signals, on the other hand, cause no interruption of the regular service. They are received each morning at seventeen of the principal stations on the line of the French railways from the national bureau in the Eiffel Tower. The receiver, which is a small and portable apparatus, is connected with a very simple 'aerial,' made up of one wire or two parallel wires 150ft or more long, stretched between two ordinary telegraph poles.

Sugar from Sawdust.

In the course of a paper read before the London Royal Society of Arts, Mr. A. Zimmerman described a process by which sugar might be manufactured from sawdust. In its natural state, he pointed out, wood contains no sugar, but when sawdust has been subjected in closed retorts to digestion with a weak sulphurous acid solution under pressure of six to seven atmospheres a very remarkable transmutation takes place, as much as 25 per cent. of the material being converted into sugar. In this Mr. Zimmerman claims that we have a valuable feeding stuff for horses, cattle, and sheep. Draught horses in whose daily ration 4lb of 'cacchulose-molasses' were substituted for 4lb of oats were kept under observation for seven months, and were all found to have increased in weight, whilst a colt which was in so weak a condition that veterinary surgeons advised its destruction put on 260lb in six months, and is now in excellent condition. The food has also been tried in a large Durham colliery, with the result that it kept the pit ponies and horses in good and hard condition. Many other uses, it was suggested, would be found for this converted wood—for example, in the manufacture of explosives, of margarine, of synthetic rubber, and, in virtue of its characteristic as a non-conductor of heat, as packing for refrigerators, incubators, ice-chambers, and so on.

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Wrey's Bush

(From an occasional correspondent.)

At the annual meeting of St. Patrick's Club, held recently, the president, Very Rev. Father Lynch, announced that the books ordered by the society some time previously had arrived, and that the work of carrying on a Catholic library in connection with the club would now commence. The Rev. Father has chosen a splendid collection of suitable books for the use of members, and no doubt all will avail themselves of this excellent opportunity of obtaining good reading matter.

The bazaar held in December last was the means of leaving this portion of the parish in the happy position of being free of debt; and the sincere thanks of the parishioners are due to our worthy pastor, Very Rev. Father Lynch, to whose energy and resourcefulness is due our present satisfactory position. Few in the diocese know the great work that has been done in this parish during the past three years, and it is the ardent wish of all that Rev. Father Lynch will be long spared to minister to the spiritual needs of his people.

Timaru

(From our own correspondent.)

February 23.

The Misses Hanna, milliners, of Christchurch, have opened a branch shop in Timaru.

A very old and esteemed colonist passed away on Tuesday last, in the person of Mr. Patrick Sullivan, in his sixty-sixth year. The deceased was, through his long life, a sterling Irishman and fervent Catholic, and he reared a large family in the right traditions. His funeral on Thursday was largely attended.—R.I.P.

Messrs. Lusk and Moriarty, architects and building surveyors, are leaving South Canterbury shortly for Melbourne, where they intend to establish the headquarters of their business. The firm have put up some of the most important buildings in Timaru and district, and considering the full measure of their success here, only the strongest inducements have made them determine to go to the Victorian capital. Mr. Moriarty won his laurels as a church builder by the erection of our magnificent Church of the Sacred Heart, under the pastorate and guidance of our Very Rev. Dean Tubman.

A well attended meeting of the Catholic Federation was held in the Brown street Hall on Sunday afternoon. The Very Rev. Dean Tubman presided. A good deal of routine business was got through, and arrangements were made to collect this year's subscriptions, and to complete the enrolment of the parishioners in the Federation. On the motion of Mr. W. Angland, seconded by Mr. T. Neall, it was resolved to tender the branch's congratulations to the Southland Federation on their recent successful gathering. Complimentary references were made to the work of Mr. J. Leigh, the newly appointed secretary, and a successful meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks to the chair.

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