

Science Siftings

By 'VOLT.'

World's Strongest Cable.

All records for cable strength are said to have been surpassed when a 3in steel cable withstood a pulling test of 751,600lb, or practically 376 tons. This cable is to form part of the longest and strongest hoisting cable in the world, and is to be used in a mine in Cuba. It weighs 15.7lb to the foot, and is made in lengths of 8000ft. This cable has a hemp centre, around which are wound six strands consisting of nineteen steel wires each.

Making Aeroplane Wings.

Various kinds of material, including linen, silk, cotton, celluloid films, and aluminium foil, have been tried for covering the wings of aeroplanes, but none has proved so satisfactory so far as linen covered with several coats of a rubber solution. This coating increases the strength of the linen about 5 per cent., makes it more enduring under varying weather conditions, and causes it to stretch to an absolutely smooth surface, a feature that is of the utmost advantage in fast flights. Silk, which would seem to make an ideal covering on account of its lightness and strength, has been found unsatisfactory, as it does not withstand exposure to sun and rain, and does not lend itself readily to the application of coating compounds.

Old Time Sealing Wax.

Interesting results have been obtained by the Government chemist by making analysis of old wax impressions on documents in the Public Record Office. The seals examined dated from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, and differed but little from modern sealing-wax. Most of them consisted of a mixture of beeswax and resin, others of pure beeswax. Two seals, of the dates 1399 and 1423 respectively, were composed of wax the characteristics of which agreed more nearly with those of East Indian than of European beeswax. The wax composing an impression from the Great Seal of 1350 agreed in composition and physical characters, with pure beeswax of to-day. The pigment in the red seals was vermilion, while the green seals contained verdigris.

Decey Periscopes Used.

Such things exist as decey periscopes—short lengths of pipe held upright on a float and looking exactly like the real periscope. The submarine sets them adrift for you to find, sometimes matters several of them. When one is sighted you cannot stop to consider whether the little object dancing on the sea half a mile or so distant does or does not mean 200lb of high explosive coming straight at you. Maybe you will see an aeroplane manoeuvring over it in a way that carries conviction that it does. You don't dare to take any chances, and so you train all the guns at it. Then the real submarine sinks upon the other side of the ship, and with the swift rush of its torpedo the latest of sea tragedies comes to an end.

How Panamas Are Made.

About 15,000 Panama hats are made annually by the women of Santa Barbara, Honduras. The most tender palm leaves, called 'junco' leaves, are selected and exposed to sulphur smoke, moisture, and the rays of the sun, and two dozen leaves, costing 9d are needed for each hat. A round block, called 'horma,' is used as a form for making the crown. After this part is finished a table is used, provided with one or more holes, into which the crown is dropped and the rim woven on top of the table. These hats are sold at from 4s 6d to £2, according to their quality. They are made during the wet season, as the straw breaks during the dry. Even in the wet season a damp cloth is constantly used to moisten the straw while weaving. When they are finished they are placed in a large box, and again subjected to sulphur fumes, after which they are ready for the market. It generally takes about two weeks to make an ordinary Panama, and a month for a fine one.

OBITUARY

MRS. BLANCHFIELD, GREYMOUTH.

(By telegraph, from our own correspondent.)

Quite a gloom was cast over the Catholic community of Greymouth on Monday, July 26, at the very sudden death of Mrs. Annie Blanchfield, beloved wife of Mr. Patrick Blanchfield, of this town. The general sympathy of the entire community is extended to the bereaved husband, and family of four—the youngest being only a week old. The deceased was a very prominent worker in all matters appertaining to the welfare of the Church, and her untiring efforts on behalf of various societies won for her the esteem and goodwill of the entire Catholic community. The funeral was attended by a large gathering of mourners from all parts of the West Coast. The members of the Hibernian Society, of which the husband was treasurer for many years, acted as pall-bearers, and headed the procession. A Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased was celebrated in St. Patrick's Church, and the service at the graveside was conducted by Very Rev. Dean Carew, R.I.P.

MR. JAMES MOLLOY, REEFTON.

There passed away, at the residence of his daughter, Blackball, after a short illness, a very old resident of Reefton, in the person of James Molloy, of Church street. The deceased, who was a native of King's County, Ireland, arrived in New Zealand in the year 1862. He was one of the early pioneers of the West Coast, and in the 'sixties was engaged in general storekeeping at the Twelve Mile and also at No Town, where he was the first to sell goods. Writing of his reminiscences at the time of the jubilee celebrations in Hokitika, Mr. Molloy referred to the time when he had paid £1 10s for a bag of oats, but had made 10s for it the next day by selling flour at the rate of £3 10s for 50lb. At the time of the notorious Burgess-Kelly bush-rangers, Mr. Molloy was one of the principal gold buyers of the district, and on one occasion, when they were lying in wait for him, he fortunately averted his fate by taking a boat down the river instead of following the track as he had intended. This was three days after the murder of Dobson, and in the confession of Burgess later, he stated, 'Verily, we were the murderers of Fox and Molloy in intent.' At the time of the Old Man flood, Mr. Molloy suffered considerable loss, having his stores swept away and the whole of his stock lost. After this he took up his residence in Reefton, where he was engaged as road and bridge contractor for a great many years. Since the earliest days of Reefton, Mr. Molloy had never been missing from his post at the taking of the census and also acting as returning officer at the various elections. A man of wide reading, he was a staunch supporter of the Church, a keen politician, and a true patriot. His wife predeceased him some eighteen years ago. He leaves a family of four daughters to mourn the loss of a devoted father—Mrs. T. Kinsella (Blackball), Mrs. Staples, and Miss A. Molloy (Rotorua), and Miss N. Molloy (Wanganui). R.I.P.

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