

Scientific and Sanitary

Underground Ireland is almost unknown. M. Martel, the French cave explorer, proposes to hunt for Irish caves and to examine those he finds thoroughly. He has devised a system of portable ladders, telephones, and electric lights for cave exploration.

The result of recent analyses show that the loss of weight suffered by coal from exposure to the weather is considerable. In some cases it reached 33.08 per cent., while the deterioration in quality for purposes of fuel or gas making reached a still higher figure.

Vesuvius is an interesting sight just now. One stream of lava flowing down from the centre is a hundred feet wide, and from seven to fourteen feet deep, while a hundred other smaller streams are running down the cave and a big column of black smoke rises into the sky.

Friedrich August Kekule, professor of chemistry at the University of Bonn, who has just died at the age of 77 years, by the discovery of the fouratomic character of carbon established the basis for the modern theory of chemical combinations. The paper describing this discovery and Kekule's later paper on the theory of benzole are the most important speculative works in chemistry of this generation.

The British Medical Journal condemns for its evil effects what it describes as "a practice which can be seen in full swing every day at any of our seaside watering places—little children 'paddling' with their clothes tucked up, their feet chilled, and their heads exposed to the blazing sun. No doubt they enjoy it, but the danger it involves is very great. The thickness of the child's skull and of the soft parts covering it is less than in the adult, and the fact that in some cases, where recovery takes place, permanent paralysis results shows that definite local mischief is produced in the brains of patients attacked in this way."

SUBMARINE FRESH WATER—"Proceeding on the theory that the variations in temperature ought to cause shearing strains between the upper and lower layers of the granite rocks, and in that way produce horizontal crevices into which the water from the surface would percolate," says The Engineer, "Nordenskjold had a well sunk in the islet of Arko, off the Swedish coast in 1894, and at the depth of 110 feet fresh water was found, supplying 4,400 gallons a day. Since then six other wells have been bored, and water found at about the same descent, the object of the research being to provide light-houses and pilot-stations with a permanent and plentiful water source."

"When a war-ship is steaming at high pressure, and the weather is at all rough," says The Railway Review, "some difficulty has been experienced in communicating promptly and effectually between the bridge and engine-room, as well as between other parts of the ship. The Admiralty are now taking steps to have this difficulty removed. The service voice pipe has long been condemned as a source of worry to all who have been called upon to use it, and the Admiralty have prudently hesitated before introducing the telephone, except in such parts of a ship as are not disturbed by the rattle of machinery or affected by electric currents. The Naval and Military Record says that during last year's manoeuvres the Homocoustic voice pipe was tried on the cruiser Fox, and although it was not a success at first, it was found that when three seamen from the deck and three stokers from the engine-room had become acquainted with each other's voices the sound could be distinctly heard. The apparatus has now been so improved as to absolutely insulate the sound, and it has been fitted with satisfactory results in the torpedo-boat destroyers."

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