THE NEWS IN A NUTSHELL.

THE VERY LATEST FROM ALL THE WORLD OVER.

Interesting Items About Our Own Country, Great Britain, the United States, and All Parts of the Globe, Condensed and Assorted for Easy Reading.

CANADA.

A plot to release two prisoners awaiting trial in Hamilton Jail was frustrated on Friday.

Hannah Hatton, aged about 23 years, was murdered half a mile from Holland, Man., on her way home about 10 o'clock at night.

A petition is being extensively signed asking Rev. C. H. Shutt, accused of tampering with the mails in St. Catharines, to resign his rectorship.

Ottawa Women's Council is working to shorten the hours of labor for women and children. Some startling examples of underpaid garment work were discussed.

Representations are being made to the Dominion Government to secure the removal of the quarantine regulations against American and English stock imported into this country for breeding purposes.

Captain Gamble Geddes, who occupied the position of aide-de-camp and private secretary to Mr. J. Beverley Robinson during the latter's tenure of office as Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, died on Friday at his residence in Toronto.

It is understood in St. John, N. B., that the Allan Steamship Company will have the Parisian ready on the 18th inst., presumably under some arrangement with the Imperial Government, to carry the Eighth Hussars to London.

The Executive of the Hamilton Council of Women has forwarded to the Provincial Board of Health a memorial suggesting the appointment of dental inspectors to visit the schools and public institutions and examine children's teeth.

At a meeting of the Montreal Board of Trade it was decided to hold a Canadian International Exhibition in that city. A committee was appointed to wait on the Dominion Government to ask for a subsidy of $250,000 to carry out the proposed exhibition.

The Canadian Pacific has notified the Chairman of the Transcontinental Passenger Association that it intends to withdraw all of its intermediate business from under the association agreement, as the Great Northern Railway business of the same class is exempt.

A deputation from the Dominion Trades Congress waited on the Government at Ottawa to ask recognition of the eight-hour day. The scheme will be tried in the Printing Bureau and Public Works Department, and the Ministers all expressed themselves as willing to grant the deputation's request.

Mr. W. Macdonald, the millionaire tobacco manufacturer, has intimated his intention of donating a further sum of $150,000 towards the endowment fund of the engineering and physics buildings in connection with McGill University. He has just given half a million dollars to the University.

At the annual meeting of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Montreal the report took a hopeful view of the outlook for this year. Sir William VanHorne announced the agreement with the Grand Trunk for running powers over the line between Toronto and Hamilton, and the old board of directors was re-elected.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The new first-class armored battleship Mars was launched at Birkenhead.

The British Medical Journal defends Dr. Playfair, the defendant in the recent famous slander suit.

Anthony Hope Hawkins, who eliminated his last name when he took to literature, will visit the United States next winter.

An educational bill has been introduced in the Imperial Parliament providing for the support of voluntary schools.

The week of June 15 has been chosen for the convention of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire, which will take place in London.

The Tivoli, London, Music hall has introduced a novelty in the shape of a religious song, entitled Jerusalem, which is sung nightly with great fervour.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain is considering the suggestions and proposals of the Dominion Government regarding tenders for a fast Atlantic steamship service.

The exports from Sheffield to the United States for the first three months of the present year amount to £166,444 as compared with £112,602 for the same period of the previous year.

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough arrived at Blenheim palace, on Wednesday, having returned from their honeymoon journey. They were given an enthusiastic reception.

Mr. Long told Dr. Montague that he was not able to hold out any hope that the British Government would be able to modify the cattle bill, but would be compelled to consult the interests of the farmers.

Owing to the gravity of the situation in South Africa, the Imperial Government are taking steps to despatch five thousand troops to the Cape of Good Hope as soon as possible, in order to be ready for emergencies.

The Grand Trunk Railway's half-yearly report shows increased earnings, but the working expenses have so largely increased that the net deficit is £23,151. The Grand Trunk of Canada earned profits of £58,771, but the United States lines lost heavily.

Mr. Wm. Weeks, of Cloverton, Chippenham, England, one of the British tenant farmers who visited Canada in 1893, has despatched a party of forty men and boys who are due at Winnipeg in a few days, for all but one of whom places have been secured in advance on farms in Manitoba and Eastern Assiniboia.

UNITED STATES.

"Brick" Pomeroy, the western editor, is at the point of death.

Mrs. Mary E. Lease announces that she intends to begin a trip around the world next year.

Bishop Potter of New York, has been invited by the authorities of Cambridge University to be a select preacher to the University during the month of May.

Wesley Bellis, 12 years old, of Egypt Mills, N.Y., dragged his little sister from a furnace while she was ablaze, and saved her life by plunging her into a creek.

Commander Booth-Tucker, recently appointed to take charge of the Salvation Army in the United States, has arrived at New York on the steamer Majestic.

By a vote of seventy-one to eleven, the Methodist Episcopal Conference held on Friday at Chester, Pa., decided to favour the admission of women as lay-delegates to the General Conference.

Col. William Ludlow, military attache of the United States Embassy in London, has been inspecting the principal canals of Europe. He says he thoroughly believes in the feasibility of the Nicaraguan canal.

The United States Secretary of War has sent to the House of Representatives the report of the survey for a canal connecting Lake Superior with the Mississippi river. The cost of such a canal would range from seven to thirty million dollars.

Congressman Mahany recently introduced a bill into the United States House of Representatives appropriating two million dollars to be expended by the Government in widening the locks of the Erie canal, to permit the passage of torpedo boats to the great lakes.

Thomas Wharton, Sunday editor of the Philadelphia Times, fell from a four-story window of the house in which he lived early on Friday morning, and was instantly killed. It is generally believed that he committed suicide.

Some time ago it was announced that the Prince of Wales had become an honorary member of the Thirteen Club of New York. Surprise was felt at this, as the club is openly in favour of the Cuban insurgents. It now turns out that the Prince of Wales declined the honour, and that a forged letter was read to the club.

The trade situation in the United States remains practically unchanged, though the winter weather has modified somewhat, and an increased movement is naturally expected, but so far anticipations in this direction are not as yet realized; the chief reason given is the lateness of the season, and one serious feature of the situation is that a large number of wage-earners are still unemployed. Prices in iron and steel are expected to be sustained by the "gigantic combine" just effected, one of the proposals of the organization being, of course, to limit production. But to find any positive encouragement at the present moment in the trade outlook generally, the scrutiny has to be very minute.

GENERAL.

Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria is visiting in Constantinople.

The Chinese Government has decided to enter the postal union.

A commercial treaty has been ratified between Germany and Japan.

The telegraph line between Korosko and Mural Wells, in Egypt, has been cut.

The rainy season has put a temporary check on hostilities in Abyssinia.

Three duels were fought in Berlin last week, one of which resulted fatally.

Latest despatches from South Africa tend to allay the anxiety as to the complications in the Transvaal.

King Menelik and all of his chiefs except the Ras of Tigre have retreated from Kassala, their provisions having given out.

The French Senate has again voted no confidence in the Cabinet, but the Ministers do not seem to pay any attention to it.

Sir Hurcules Robinson, Governor of Cape Colony, has declined President Kruger's offer of assistance in quelling the uprising in Matabeleland.

President Kruger has assured the British Agent at Pretoria that no obstacles will be placed in the way of burghers desiring to be enrolled for service in Rhodesia.

In consequence of the decision of a portion of the Vienna fire brigade to go out on strike, all the firemen have been retired from duty, and soldiers have been substituted for them.

There are signs at the different French dockyards and arsenals of preparations for grave events. Stores and ammunition are being overhauled, and the fleet is being strengthened.

The Emperor of Austria kept Ash Wednesday with mediaeval devoutness. As he knelt before the high altar during the penitential offices the court chaplain strewed ashes on his head.

The new Chinese Anglo-German loan of £16,000,000 was closed six hours before the time advertised for the cessation of bids. The loan was oversubscribed in London alone.

Fifteen soldiers who were working at a fire in Lille, France, on Sunday, went to a druggist's shop and drank some poison, which they mistook for gin. Six of them died as a result of the draught.

The St. Petersburg papers vie with each other in heaping abuse upon England. The Novoe Vremya says:—"England's action has been one of mystification and deception, practised upon the powers who joined her."

A despatch from Bucharest says it is announced that a military convention has been concluded between Russia and Bulgaria, by which in the event of war Bulgaria cedes two Black Sea ports to Russia, Russia to maintain Prince Ferdinand on the Bulgarian throne.

Many of the leading men of France have become teetotallers. The reason for this is they claim they cannot attain the success in business they desire and drink. Among them are President Faure and his Cabinet, Alphonse Daudet and other writers.

By the death in Paris of the Duc de Vicence at the age of 81 the dukedom becomes extinct, and with it the family of De Caulaincourt in the male line. The deceased was the son of Napoleon's Ambassador at the Court of Russia from 1807 to the beginning of the French invasion.

Pope Leo XIII. has purchased the Palazzo Altempo in Rome and presented it to the Queen Regent of Spain. The palace was formerly a monastery, and was rebuilt and decorated by Cardinal Marco Altempo. Recently the Queen Regent of Spain expressed a strong desire to own a palace in Rome.

The Madrid Liberal published an article recently, ascribed to Senor Valera, formerly Spanish Minister at Washington, which recommends that Spain should form an alliance with Great Britain, France and Holland, to protest against the interference of the United States in the colonial affairs of European powers.

SINGERS IN PARLIAMENT.

More Musical Talent Among Members Than Might be Supposed.

The Commons is noted rather for its disorder than its harmonies. But although the Parliament orchestra as a whole would be eminently unsuitable for an orchestral concert, yet a number of individual musicians might be selected from among them who, as solo performers, could be relied upon to provide an excellent entertainment. Foremost among musicians in the Commons must be mentioned J. W. Sidebotham, who has taken the degrees of bachelor of music, and can discourse as learnedly on the musical art as on the political situation. Then comes C. Stuart-Wortley, who, although he is wont to speak with great modesty of his musical achievements, has written two excellent songs, "Why Does Azure Deck the Sky?" and "The Gypsy's Dirge." Arthur Balfour, too, is a cultured musician, who delights not only in listening to the best performers, but in playing the pianoforte for his own pleasure. It does not appear that Mr. Gladstone, with all his marvellous versatility, ever came forward as an instrumentalist. But in the bygone days the eminent statesman delighted in singing, and it is on record that his favorite song is "My Pretty Jane," a ballad that is not so familiar to-day as it was a generation or two ago. Sir Richard Webster is well known as a member of

A CHURCH CHOIR

and he has appeared on the platform at concerts with great success. Sir Richard inclines toward sacred and serious music; Sir Edward Clarke, if report be true, leans towards the humorous, and can render a coster ditty with marvellous effect.

The labor members are specially strong in musical talent. John Burns, when a rosy-cheeked youngster, sang in a surpliced choir; and Keir Hardie is not only a performer on the melodeon, but can put pathos and force into a Scotch ballad. His favorite song is "Mary of Argyll," and his rendering of it has frequently evoked the plaudits of his admirers. And specially prominent, of course, is William Abraham, familiar to the Welsh people and to the Commons as "Mabon." Mabon can, by singing "The Men of Harlech" or "Land of My Fathers," rouse a Welsh audience to the wildest pitch of enthusiasm. The honorable member has, it is true, never raised his voice in song within the House, itself, but he is able to boast that he has sung at the request of a Speaker.

It arose in this way. In the short Parliament of 1885 Mr. Peel invited all the labor members then in the House to a special dinner. After the repast an adjournment was made to the library, and here, at Mr. Peel's request, Mabon favored the company with a vocal selection. No one was more delighted than the then Speaker, who beat time on his knees as the singer proceeded. There is an excellent story told of Mabon's exchange of compliments with Mme. Patti. At a concert in Wales, Mabon and the great prima donna were among the performers. The concert over, Mme. Patti stepped up to the M. P. and observed, with a pleasant smile, "You sing really well, Mr. Abraham." "Yes, madam," responded Mabon, gallantly, "and so do you."

THE IRISH PARTY

can boast of a number of vocalists. The veteran T. D. Sullivan has written the words of many an Irish ditty and has sung them with great effect at numerous political and festive gatherings. Tim Healy, too, is much given to rendering Irish ballads, "Mary Donnelly," being his favorite song. Mr. Healy plays his own accompaniment; while his brother Tom, who sits for North Wexford, is an accomplished pianist. Dr. Tanner can sing a good song, and so can Tom Condon and Dr. Fox.

The Scotch members do not appear to be so musical as their brethren from Wales and Ireland. It is true that Parliamentary caricaturists not infrequently depict one or the other of the representatives of Scotland playing a solo on the bagpipes, but it is doubtful whether in reality any Scotch member of parliament is in the habit of performing on an instrument that is regarded by the unappreciative Southron as a fearsome and unholy invention.

There is one member who probably owes his seat in the Commons to the sweet singing of his wife; and, indeed, music at political meetings is becoming quite in vogue. Capt. Grice-Hutchinson, Mr. Newdigate, and R. J. Price, who are now M.P.'s, sang to the electors at the general election, and who know how many votes, which otherwise would have gone to their opponents, were captured by their musical efforts! Mr. Price, be it said, used to render "Catching the Speaker's Eye," with great gusto. He has since had plenty of opportunities of catching the august optic of that august personage. If the practice of having musical election meetings grows, there ought to be a great field among Parliamentary candidates for teachers of instrumental music and voice production.

GOOD RULE.

Scotland Yard, London, has issued an order to the police force to the effect that if a constable sees a drunken man approaching a public house he is to prevent his entrance, and if a drunken man does get inside a public house the policeman is to call the landlord's attention to his condition.

HAPPINESS NOT FAME.

Willey—I tell you, it's better in the end to be honest. Did you ever know a rogue who wasn't unhappy?

Shalley—No; but, then, one would hardly expect a rogue to be happy when he is known. It's the rogues who are not known that are happy.

THE EGYPTIAN SOUDAN.

THE REGION THAT BRITAIN WILL CONQUER FOR CIVILIZATION.

A Hot But Singularly Fertile Country—Political Motives Behind the Present Movement—Decline of the Mahdi's Empire—The Land and Its Inhabitants.

An inspection of those maps of Africa which have been published in the last few years shows the existence of a new power in the heart of the Dark Continent. The former charts represented the Egyptian dominions as extending from the mouth of the Nile along the whole course of that river, with a great province called Equatoria in the lake region. In the later maps Egypt terminates on the south not far from Dongola, while up the stream from that point lies a vast region, with indeterminate boundaries, marked "Empire of the Mahdi." With the disaster to Hicks Pasha's army and the unfortunate termination of Gordon's expedition to Khartoum, the Anglo-Egyptian control of all the Egyptian possessions up the Nile vanished, and from that time to the present no attempt has been made to reclaim this region to civilization.

Now, however, it is evident that the time is deemed propitious for a forward movement, having for its purpose the reconquest of the Egyptian Soudan, and the expedition that last week left Cairo for Dongola is probably the forerunner of a more imposing force that will probably be needed ere the conquest is made complete. The men engaged in this enterprise do not anticipate so easy an undertaking as that of conquering Ashantee, when the whole opposing force of blacks were put to rout with Roman candles and sky rockets, for the troops of the Mahdi are

HARD FIGHTERS,

are well armed, and have proved their steadiness in more than one severe action, but that the conquest will ultimately be effected, no one can doubt who looks over the map of Africa and sees the spheres of influence exercised by the great European nations on that continent.

Immediately south of the vast Saharan Desert with its shifting sands and sparse population lies Soudan, "Land of the Blacks," a region that stretches clear across the continent. It has never been fully explored, but the accounts brought back by travellers who have penetrated it here and there show it to be a country of marvelous possibilities. So far as climate is concerned, it is one of the hottest regions on the globe, there being many places where the mean annual temperature exceeds 85 degrees, but it differs from the Sahara in an abundance of rainfall, and consequently in fertility also. The entire region comprises an area of 1,500,000 square miles, and of this great domain from a fourth to a third is forest. No one yet knows how great are the resources of this country, nor how vast the value of the exports that will flow from it, when once it has been opened to commerce, but as its population is estimated at from 10,000,000 to 30,000,000, it will, no doubt, prove a valuable acquisition to the civilized States that in future will control it.

At present it is divided among over a hundred native African or Arab rulers, often at war with each other—some semi-civilized, some decidedly barbarous, others entirely savage, but most of the States having a population of sufficient intelligence to appreciate the benefits that would arise to them from closer association with the whites. The expedition that has just now started from Cairo is one move in a game for supremacy between the French and English. The former have long been aspiring to large possessions in Africa, and when the Dark Continent was divided among the great powers of Europe, France managed to add to Algeria the Western Sahara, excluding Morocco and the land of the Moors, so as to unite the Senegambian coast with Algeria. In addition to this, the French secured a large section of country north of the Congo, and immediately began the task of extending the French influence into the interior. It is said that this work has been attended with such success that the sphere of French influence now extends far to the west of Lake Tchad, even into Darfoor, and therefore comprises two-thirds of

THE WHOLE SOUDAN.

The object of the French Government is to acquire a belt of country stretching entirely across the continent, but in the Nile valley the opposition of the English is instantly encountered. Forced out of the Upper Nile Valley and the Egyptian Soudan by the growth of the Mahdi's power, the English have never relinquished their nominal claim to the country, and the British East African Company actually occupies an enormous area of land on the east coast, extending inward to Lake Victoria Nyanza and northward to the boundaries of the Mahdi's domain. The reconquest of the Egyptian Soudan would unite Egypt with the possessions of the British East African Company and give England control of the entire Nile Valley, with access to the ocean on the east. A most effectual bar would thus be placed to the growth of the French influence toward the east, and England would become the dominant power, not only in Egypt and Egyptian Soudan, but also in the whole lake region of Central Africa. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that not only the French, but other powers interested in Africa, should look with impatience on this fresh aggression on the part of Great Britain, for if this plan be carried out, there will be little to prevent that power from establishing a solid line of colonies from north to south through the heart of the continent, uniting Cape Colony with Egypt, and thus enabling a traveller to pass from Cape Coast Castle to Alexandria without even stepping off British soil. It is a great plan, but then the English are people who make great plans, and carry them out with as much audacity as they make them. It is quite evident that the British Government is not going into this Soudan enterprise merely for the fun of the thing, and it is quite possible that in the considerations which have impelled it to undertake the reconquest, the extension of French influence as far as Darfoor, which is next door to the Egyptian Soudan, has had a prominent part. For if the French should gain control of the Upper Nile, it is not impossible that they might be able to destroy the value of the lower river, for all Egypt is dependent for its existence, to say nothing of its prosperity, on the annual overflows of that river, and French engineering skill might find means to divert the course of the stream and thus

RUIN THE LAND

of the Phaorahs. All these things are possibilities that were probably taken into the account when the enterprise was under consideration, and unquestionably had a share in determining the course that has been resolved upon by the British Government.

Aside from the political aspects of the case, however, the Egyptian Soudan is well worth conquering for its own sake. The opponents of the British Government's policy have loudly proclaimed the worthlessness of the region, and declared that the whole country is not worth the blood that was shed for it during the campaigns already made there, but this is merely the talk of an opposition party which considers itself under obligations to object to whatever the Government proposes, no matter how obvious may be its expediency. During the Egyptian occupation of the region, the exports from the Soudan down the Nile and by means of caravans to Cairo amounted to about $9,000,000 a year, besides as much more that went abroad through the Red Sea ports and from the Somali coast. A district that can export $18,000,000 worth of goods every year is certainly worth having, for a country from which this amount of surplus wealth can be annually spared for export, under so bad a Government as that of Egypt, would certainly prove of almost incalcuable wealth if its own affairs were properly administered and the people given an equitable system of taxation. The Egyptian domain comprises Kordofan, Nubia, Senaar, Taka and some provinces still further south, an area estimated at a little less than 1,000,000 square miles, with an unknown population.

The country is as different from Egypt proper as can be easily conceivable. Instead of the arid sands and brazen skies, from which rain never falls, there are forests and swamps, long stretches of what we call prairie land, and frequent plateaus, considerably elevated above the river, which furnish

EXCELLENT PASTURAGE

for wild antelope and the flocks and herds of the inhabitants. Here and there are arid spots, even along the river bank, where the shadoof, or curious mechanical contrivance which answer the farmers instead of a pump, is put into practical operation, in order to secure for the growing crops the amount of water necessary to their proper growth, but as a rule the rainfall is sufficient for all purposes, and little artificial irrigation is practiced. The soil is so fertile that anything which can be raised in a tropical or sub-tropical climate will grow with luxuriance in the Egyptian Soudan. It is the native home of the sweet potato, the yam and the watermelon, and in the hot sunshine of the Upper Nile Valley, and in the clearings made by the natives in the great forests of Equatoria, these vegetables grow to a size and with an abundance unknown in other parts of the world. A traveler in that region some years ago said that all the tables of Europe could be supplied with fruits and vegetables from the Egyptian Soudan, and when this region is pierced by railroads, the time may come when oranges, bananas and pineapples, figs, dates and melons, from the heart of Africa, may be seen on the tables of Paris and London. That day is yet far away, however, the exports of the region being at present limited to such articles as will bear the long, hot journey to the markets of Cairo or the Red Sea coast. Ostrich feathers have for many years formed the greater part, in value, of the Soudan exports, while wax, coffee, a large variety of gum, and an enormous quantity of fine skins and hides made up the remainder. It is plain that under proper conditions the region can be made enormously productive, and those conditions will be attained when the land has been reconquered for civilization by the Anglo-Egyptian troops.

SIMPLE AND PRETTY.

This quilt design illustrates the attractiveness of a dainty, simple pat

tern. In the original block the materials are white and pink figured muslin.

REASON FOR PRIDE.

The Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise have just celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, and however the marquis may be looked down upon by his royal relatives in his country of pedigree is considered superior to that of the Hanoverians. A traveler who told one of the Duke of Argyll's tenants that the duke's son was to marry a princess was met with the astonishing reply: "Ech, sir, but it's a proud woman your queen will be the day when her daughter marries the son of MacCallum Moore!"

LOCOMOTIVES IN THE WORLD.

One hundred and nine thousand locomotives are at present running on the earth. Europe has 63,000, America, 40,000; Asia, 3,300; Australia, 2,000; and Africa 700. In Europe, Great Britain and Ireland take premier positions with 17,000 engines, Germany has 15,000, France, 11,000; Austria-Hungary, the second largest continental country, has 5,000.