

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.

City taxes in arrears to date amount to \$70,647.

Chatham will sink a civic test well for gas at a cost of \$2,000.

Mr. O'Brien, Principal of the Hamilton College of Music, is dead.

Mr. A. J. Foran has been appointed a County Judge at Rossland.

Diphtheria is spreading in Montreal and in portions of Quebec Province.

A big departmental store is talked of in London.

There is a serious outbreak of diphtheria throughout the Province of Quebec.

Kingston electors will vote on a by-law to purchase the Midland Central Fair grounds for \$17,000.

The Court of Revision has reduced the assessment of Ottawa by \$92,525, making the final revision amount to \$21,964,735.

A shipment of six thousand dollars' worth of carriages is to be made from Ottawa to South Africa in a few days.

John Bottrell was given three years in Kingston at Stratford for stealing a pair of boots. But he has a history.

Hamilton Aldermen are discussing the appointment of a purchasing agent to buy supplies for every department of the city.

Mr. Greenway is expected in Ottawa shortly to interview Mr. Laurier with regard to promoting Icelandic immigration to Manitoba.

An unknown man was run over by a train at London and so badly injured that recognition of the countenance is impossible.

The sheriff has been put in charge of Hintonburg, a suburb of Ottawa, for the sum of six thousand dollars, owing to the Molsons Bank.

Some 8,000 water services have been cut off in Montreal for non-payment, and the Board of Health fears an epidemic in consequence.

Frank McLaughlin, St. Catharines, was knocked down by a runaway horse, which fell on him. The young man died in a few hours.

Mr. Alex. Bell, Manager of the Scottish-Canadian Loan and Investment Company, of Montreal, has disappeared, leaving a number of clients out of pocket.

Commander Spain, of the Canadian Fishery protection fleet, has returned to Ottawa. He reports that the stories of destitution in Labrador are fully borne out by what he saw.

Mrs. Martin, an old lady of 72 years, of Hamilton, wandered away from home and was found near the bay half buried in mud. She was out all night and died from exposure.

Mr. Fisher, the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, will start for Washington in a few days to secure from the American authorities the removal of the ninety days' quarantine regulations.

The parents of the late wife of J. Reginald Hooper, for whose murder he is suffering life imprisonment, have petitioned for his release, being convinced that he did not murder their daughter.

By the accidental explosion of 150 pounds of dynamite at Round Hill mine, British Columbia, Charles Berger and Chris Miller were blown to atoms and the mine was badly damaged.

Letters have been received in Montreal from a number of those who left some months ago to settle in Brazil. The Canadians there are suffering great hardships.

Ald. Scroggie was appointed City Treasurer of Guelph, and the Council passed a strong resolution in favor of more adequate punishment of the late defaulting Treasurer Harvey.

The Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society has received an anonymous gift of \$10,000, the annual income therefrom to be used for the maintenance of the inmates of the ladies' benevolent institution.

While in Nova Scotia, Dr. Borden visited Fort Anne, one of the oldest stations in the Dominion. It is in an extremely dilapidated condition, and the Minister is inclined to do all he can towards having it repaired.

The Government proposes to arrange for an extensive service of refrigerator cars weekly on railways for the carriage of perishable food products to Great Britain. Plans for the cars are now being considered.

Sir Richard Cartwright issued yesterday his first quarterly report as Minister of Trade and Commerce. The leading Canadian exports to Great Britain during the past nine months show a considerable increase over the corresponding period of last year.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Dr. Nansen has received fifty thousand dollars from a firm of London publishers for his coming book.

Admiral Sir George Richards, K.C.B., conservator of the Mersey, is dead. He was seventy-six years of age.

The personal estate of the late Geo. DuMaurier amounted to £47,000.

The Hamilton district fruit-growers' present to the Queen has arrived in London.

Mr. Barney Barnato, the South African diamond millionaire, denies any intention of sending agents to the British Columbia gold field.

The British National Union of Conservative Association has adopted resolutions favoring a commercial federation between Great Britain and her colonies, the restriction of the immigration of pauper aliens and the creation of a national reserve of breadstuffs.

The British steamer Benin has arrived at Liverpool from the west coast of Africa and reports that she was not allowed by the Liberian authorities to communicate with Cape Palmas. As the Benin approached that place she was fired upon by the Goronamah, the sole vessel comprising the navy of Liberia.

UNITED STATES.

It is claimed in Chicago that vegetable powder has been discovered which, mixed with water, develops a very high electrical power.

The citizens of Lawrence, Mass., have decided to ask the next Legislature to pass a bill making the playing of football a misdemeanor.

President and Mrs. Cleveland entertained at luncheon on Wednesday Dr. John Watson, known in the literary world as "Ian Maclaren," and Mrs. Watson.

Edward W. Curry, of Des Moines, Iowa, died on Wednesday of blood poisoning, the result of injuries he received at his initiation into the Elks' Lodge a few weeks ago.

Judge Isaac Parker, the well known jurist, is dying at Fort Scott, Ark. He has probably passed the death sentence on more men than any other judge in the United States.

In his last Thanksgiving day proclamation President Cleveland mentioned the name of Christ, and for this departure from precedent Rabbi Machol, of Cleveland, Ohio, is taking him to task.

GENERAL.

Mrs. Scott Siddons, the actress, died in Paris.

Twenty-five persons were killed in a mine explosion in Westphalia.

The next session of the Pan-American Medical Club will be held at Caracas, Venezuela.

Picardians have been posted in Canaan inciting the Mussulmans to a holy war against the Christians.

It has been decided at Madrid to send ten thousand troops to the Philippine Islands at once.

The Spanish Government loan of two hundred and fifty million pesetas has been greatly over-subscribed.

The Metropolitan and all of the leading newspapers at Moscow have opened subscription lists for the relief of the famine sufferers in India.

Dervishes have raided the country in the vicinity of Tokar, killing five men and looting a number of cattle. Troops have been despatched in pursuit of the raiders.

By a clever ruse a man disguised as a postman on Tuesday secured a bag of registered letters, of the value of forty-two thousand francs, from a mail-car in Paris, and decamped.

Mexican tobacco promises to take the place of Havana tobacco in the markets of the world, and already great tracts of country are being operated as tobacco plantations.

The Regent and the Queen of Holland will spend the winter in Italy, where Queen Wilhelmina will be betrothed to an Italian captain of royal blood who has won the Queen's affection.

HELEN KELLER'S SUCCESS.

The pathetic story of Helen Keller, the marvelous blind and deaf girl, of whom the whole world has heard, has acquired new interest by news of her success in passing with high credit the seven preliminary examinations of Harvard University, entitle her to enter Radcliffe College. Helen Keller is but 16 years old, yet her mental development, in face of appalling physical deficiencies, is one of the marvels of the age. Because of her misfortunes and the remarkable facility with which she has acquired knowledge by peculiar methods, her name is known throughout the world, and everywhere there has been awakened the liveliest interest and sympathy. In London an institute for the education of blind mutes has been named after her, and if her life is spared the future has great triumphs in store for this marvelous intellectual child of misfortune.

Helen Keller has had a wonderful though sad career. She was born and spent her early childhood at her father's home, in Tuscumbia, Ala. She was born blind, deaf and, as her parents soon discovered, mute. She had none of the senses, except that of touch. She had not even the sense of taste. Up to her seventh year her mind was a blank. Her family could only communicate with her by means of the crudest signs. Therefore all that she has accomplished is the work of a little more than eight years. To Miss Sullivan, her intelligent and faithful teacher, is due much of the credit of unlocking the mysteries of this child's wonderful mentality. With but one sense to aid her—that of touch—one can form an idea of the tremendous obstacles the teacher had to overcome. Miss Sullivan began by a code of signs impressed upon the palm of the child's hands, and, after much patience, succeeded in conveying the first gleams of understanding to the virgin brain. The next task was to teach her to speak, and this, too was soon accomplished, thanks to the child's eagerness to learn. The method of teaching her to utter words was to have her place the tips of her fingers upon her teacher's lips, and thus by the sense of touch convey to her the idea of sound. She was also taught the raised alphabet, and thus in a short time was able to read.

Miss Keller can now converse with any one. Her utterance is a little imperfect, as is to be expected of one who knows not the sound of her own voice, but she has no difficulty in making herself understood. The only way, however, by which she can receive oral communications is by the sense of touch. Let her place her finger tips upon the throat or lips of any one speaking, and there is instantly conveyed to her brain understanding of what is said. Miss Keller has been an inmate of the Wright-Humaston School for the oral instruction of the deaf for more than a year, and it is here that she has made her most rapid progress. She has rapidly acquired knowledge of French, German and history, and already she has written much in these two languages, and her own as well. She has a very strong poetic temperament, and her diary, which she has been keeping for two years, abounds with beautiful thoughts, most beautifully expressed. What fate may have in store for this strangely gifted child no one can predict, but her future will be compassionately regarded with the keenest interest by all of civilized human kind.

PAYING THE BLOOD TAX.

QUEER CUSTOM SURVIVING IN THE NAVARRESE PYRENEES.

Spaniards and Frenchmen Abide by an Agreement Made Six Hundred Years Ago—The Latter Pay Yearly Tribute of Bullocks to Buy Peace on the Frontier.

There is a vague tradition that some time in the thirteenth century, in the high pasture lands of Arles, in the Pyrenees, some shepherds of the valley of Roncal, in Navarre, were murdered by shepherds of the valley of Barston, in Bearn. One is shown on an upland lawn on French soil stones that are said to cover the graves of the victims, and the story lives on in a chanson still sung in the canton of the Baretonais. In consequence of this massacre, the Baretonais were condemned in perpetuity to the payment of a tax to the Roncalais, and this they accepted apparently as an alternative, or possibly as an end to a vendetta. The tax has been paid during the last six or seven hundred years. The extraordinary thing is that it survived the revolution.

The scene of the transaction—for, as will appear, it is more a mere ceremony—is the Pierre de St. Martin, a frontier stone remote from roads and villages under the Pic d'Arles. In the afternoon we were ascending the mountains by way of the immense forest of Isseaux, of which the timber went in former days to the building of the French navy. There was a dense mist, and it was not without difficulty that, on emerging from the forest, we made at 7 o'clock the cabane, where we were to pass the night. It was a strange "interior." More than twelve of us slept in the little hut, round a wood fire, unassisted by a chimney, after a supper of boiled goat's milk into which we had broken our coarse bread. In the ascending reek the nineteenth century was felt to waver, to recede, to disappear! Excepting our four or five shepherd hosts we were all on the same errand, spots and Baretonais bound for the Pierre de St. Martin. One incident only disturbed the night. The huge Pyrenean wolf-hound's deep bay gave

WARNING OF A BEAR

in the neighborhood, and one of the shepherds went out and fired a gun to alarm the intruder. In addition to this big game we had come upon frequent tracks of wild boar, the turf torn up by his tusks, but otherwise there were few signs of animal life in the forest. Up at daybreak we found the mist cleared by a south wind, a glorious morning "flattering the mountain tops," out leaving the valleys thick with clouds, which lay below us in every direction—lakes and seas of cloud out of which the summits appeared as islands or reefs. The remainder of our journey lay first in the forest through a singular defile, the Barricade de Quillan separating the Bearnaise and Basque countries, a rugged, ascending way, strewn with stones, between rock walls, Dantesque in its features, where one expected to see, and did see, snakes; then over a bare mountainous region, where the rocks were in form like huge tables—whence, indeed, the name of a neighboring height, the Fic Table des Trois Rois—till finally the verge was reached and we looked over the gray slopes, scarcely clothed with dwarf pines, in the striking contrast to the thick beech forests of the French side. We passed here a cross to the memory of five Spanish contrabandists who perished in an April avalanche not long ago; the names of four are given, the fifth unknown, with the striking and suggestive commentary, "De Prondis." The rendezvous was reached at 8 o'clock, and by 9 a company of about 150 had assembled, including the Sous-Préfet, of the Basses-Pyrenees, who attended, however, merely as a spectator, the cure of one of the Baretonais villages and his vicar, and some gardes des montagnes, and douaniers. The Spaniards were the last to appear, heralding their approach by musket shots, and on their arrival the business of the day began.

THE TWO PEOPLES

drew up in line on either side of the frontier stone in their respective territories. Immediately opposite the stone was the Alcade of Isaba, wearing a black coat edged with crimson, with a hood and long false sleeves, and round his neck a large white pleated collar. He wore a costume dating from 1600. He carried a black baton tipped with silver—the wand of his office as Chief Justice of the court. He was attended by a notary and supported by the Alcades of Urzainqui, Garde, and Ustarroz—the other villages of the Roncal concerned—habited in long, full-skirted, black, eighteenth century collarless coats, long waistcoats, and the usual broad violet waistbands, knee breeches, and black stockings of the Navarrese. A number of their followers were armed and stood to attention with their guns loaded. A herald by the side of the President carried a javelin, to which was attached a crimson streamer—a sign of just revenge. On the other side it must be confessed that the French presented a less imposing appearance. They wore their blue blouses and Bearnaise caps, and here and there were some in the red-striped waistcoats said to be peculiar to the Baretonais. The mairies of Arlette, Lanne, Aramis, and Issor were distinguished only by their tri-color scarfs, which they wore round their waists over their blouses. (It was noticeable by the way, that the national colors were not displayed on the Spanish side.) The French herald carried a javelin bearing a white streamer—sign of the pacific intentions of those for whom he acted, all of whom were unarmed.

The order of proceedings is fixed by a document bearing the date of 1875. The President, the Alcade of Isaba, speaking in Spanish, demanded of the French if they desired peace. The mairies replied "Yes" in the same language. Their herald then advanced and laid his javelin on the top of the stone,

in line with the frontier. The Spanish herald then drove his lance into French soil close to the stone, the two lances thus forming a cross. One of the French mairies then placed his right hand on the section of the cross on the stone, then an Alcade his hand on the Frenchman's, and so on in order, the Alcade of Isaba's hand being the last. Then on the pile of hands the latter rested the taton of justice, and all took.

THE OATH OF PEACE.

The President then cried three times, "Faz davans" ("Peace henceforth"), and at this signal the Spaniards discharged their pieces over the heads of the Frenchmen, and consequently in the direction of France. Then followed the impot du sang. Originally the payment was three white mares, but these being difficult to procure, the Baretonais were allowed to substitute three heifers of a particular color and breed. Six or seven of these creatures had been brought. The Spanish veterinary having taken the oath by placing his right hand on the top of his baton (that he would deal fairly), proceeded to examine the animals. One of the three first offered was rejected, and this gave rise to a very likely dispute before the Alcade, who, it may be observed, with his shaven face, serious judicial air, and perfect self-command, acted his part to perfection. Unmoved, apparently, by the display of feeling on both sides, he listened to all, spoke little, but apparently to the point, and succeeded finally in quelling the storm. The affair of the animals (which were valued at about 25 each) having been settled, and an account of it drawn up by the notary, it was asked if the compact between the two valleys had been observed during the past year, and if any one wished to speak. No one replying, the alcade then presented his baton to the two Spanish and to the two French gardes de montagnes, who, placing their right thumbs on it, swore as representatives to observe the convention. The notary then defined the signatures of the Alcades and mairies to his process-verbal for judgment among the archives of the Roncalais. This closed the proceedings, and the assembly broke up.

"NEW WOMAN" OF GERMANY.

The "new woman" of Germany is a very harmless being, familiar to us now for years, at any rate, if she aspires no higher than the young lady whose doings are immortalized by the Jewish Chronicle. A Berlin correspondent of this paper writes: "On my way from the Leipziger Strasse to the exhibition, whilst sitting on the top of a tramcar, a young lady of some seventeen summers, with a fine, intelligent, and unmistakably Jewish face, came on and sat herself beside me. The maiden blushed as maiden never blushed before, and my curiosity was aroused to its highest point when I noticed every person in the car stare at her with a smile of approbation. Nay, more, on the route she stopped and looked at her. Men raised their hats and women waved their handkerchiefs. Indeed, children looked through the windows and kept their eyes fixed on the top of my tram till they could see it no more. What could all this mean? That the young Jewess at my side was 'the woman of the hour,' a person whom Berlin was idolizing, some public benefactress, to whom the denizens of the capital were giving evidence of their thorough appreciation and heartfelt gratitude, was patent to all who had eyes to see. What, then, was her heroic deed? Why did every person in the car say most cordially, 'Ich gratuliere Ihnen, Fraulein,' when the lady was about to descend?"

"The solution of the mystery was as singular as it was amusing. It had, by the vigorous laws and customs of the Teutons, been denied until the morning in question to the fair sex to ascend the steps of an omnibus or tramcar throughout the length and breadth of Germany. But at length the ladies had their way—as ladies always will—and the great privilege was reserved for me to sit beside the young Jewess whose name ought to be handed down to posterity as most probably the first female in Germany who was bold enough to ascend the steps of a tramcar."

CARELESS BACKS.

It is curious how many people dress themselves as if they were paper dolls. They have everything well arranged and becomingly put on in front, while the back seems quite a secondary consideration. Yet a neat looking back, with hair, neck-ribbon, waistband bows, etc., all accurately and methodically placed, is most attractive. It seems hard to realize, in looking at one's reflection in a mirror, that the reverse of the picture is quite as much, if not more, seen by the people in general, and that a well-dressed woman should scan her back carefully by the aid of a handglass before leaving her room. Hair particularly should be especially studied at the back as at the front, with the additional reason for care in that to very few women is it given to possess a pretty nape of the neck, with the hair growing tidily about it. "It is the only place where Nature shows herself a bit of a sloven—she's apt to leave it unfinished," said an artist critic, speaking of this particular spot. So it is well to let judicious art supplement Nature at this point, and to endeavor to make it attractive.

NEVER SAW PARLIAMENT.

It is a curious circumstance that Queen Victoria has never seen her "faithful Commons" in session. She is denied a spectacle that may be witnessed by the humblest of her subjects. It can hardly be said with truth in these times that the presence of the sovereign in the House of Commons would influence debate. Neither does the other old constitutional theory that the presence of the sovereign would be a violation of the freedom and the secrecy of the debates hold good in these days of verbatim newspaper Parliamentary reports. Her Majesty could indeed be an unobserved spectator of the House of Commons at work if she sat behind the grid of the ladies' gallery, but this would not be consistent with the dignity of Victoria, and the fact remains that she has never been in the House of Commons.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

A Few Paragraphs Which May Be Found Very Readable.

The Japanese, up to 1856, were vaccinated on the tip of the nose. Three copies of the Bible, written on leaves of the fan palm, are in the British Museum.

A codfish recently caught off Flamborough Head, England, had inside of it fifty-nine fish-hooks.

Queen Victoria frequently examines her will. It is engrossed on vellum, quarto size, and is beautifully bound.

Women comprise two-thirds of the church members of the United States, but only one-thirteenth of the criminals.

Counting all classes of reserves, Germany can in twenty-four hours raise an army of four millions of disciplined men.

One of the most prominent duties of a German soldier is to take care of his feet, so that they will always be in good condition.

Some of the edible oysters of Port Lincoln, South Australia, are as big as a dinner-plate. One of them, fried, is enough for a meal.

While digging near a blasted tree, on his farm, in Beech Grove, Texas, Sampson Gilder found an iron pot which contained \$5,550 in gold.

The bay bird of India catches big fireflies and fastens them to the side of its nest with wet clay. At night the nest looks like a street-lamp.

The residence of J. S. Miller, of Linden, Wash., took fire during the absence of himself and wife, and six of their children perished in the flames.

The grandson of Queen Victoria rules Germany, her granddaughter is Empress of Russia, and another granddaughter is Crown Princess of Roumania.

A floating island in the Sabine River, fifty acres in extent, and covered with water hyacinths, floated for a week up and down the stream, near Orange, Texas.

In Lagos, on the western coast of Africa, when a king is about to be placed on the throne, he must first take an oath that during his reign he will not drink intoxicants.

Two mischievous boys in Haskell, Me., touched a match to a squirrel's tail to see if it would burn. The animal ran under a house, and the blazing tail set it on fire.

Ida P. Hollingworth, of Anderson, Ind., aged eleven, was rebuked for truancy, and became so mortified that she took rat poison. A physician and a stomach-pump saved her life.

Some regard for decency is displayed by the proprietor of a restaurant in Asburn, Ore. A sign on the wall reads thus, "Gentlemen are requested not to swear when ladies are present."

The motormen of Philadelphia have many friends in that city. A petition signed by several citizens requests that the motormen be protected from the weather by an inclosure fronted with glass.

A couple in Kansas City got along amicably until they secured a tandem. No where is trouble between husband and wife. When they are intent upon a ride, she wants to go in one direction, and he in another.

A meek husband in Dawsonville, Ga., sought legal separation from his wife on the ground that she had "whipped him in the presence of company." He could endure the whipping in private; but the worm turned when she thrashed him in public.

The servant girls in Decatur, Ill., have formed a union to regulate wages. One of the laws is that when a girl is employed in a family which is increased by the addition of a "little stranger," the wages of the servant must be advanced one dollar a month.

A wife in Florence, Mo., having failed in her own efforts to reform her toper husband, tried one more method. She threatened to get drunk every time he did. She did so on one occasion, and he was so disgusted at the sight of her that he has not touched liquor since.

Mrs. Rinda Ritchie, of Knott County, Ky., was laid out for dead, and her body prepared for the grave. She arose in her coffin, and soon became well. She predicted that her death would occur on a certain date, thirty days later, and her prediction proved true.

A Parisian storekeeper wrote thus to one of his patrons: "I am able to offer you cloth like the inclosed sample, at nine francs the metre. In case I do not hear from you, I shall conclude that you wish to pay only eight francs. In order to lose no time, I accept the last mentioned price."

THE SULTAN'S TROUBLES.

Three inmates of His Harem Have Managed to Escape.

The Sultan has had an annoying domestic upset to add to his troubles. It has been rumored for weeks past that something serious had occurred in his Majesty's harem, for the chief eunuch had frequent audiences with the Sultan, and Izzet Bey was known to have been holding a secret inquiry involving the examination of a large number of harem officials. It is now learned, on what seems to be reliable authority, that the trouble had its origin in the eternal Armenian difficulty. The Sultan had in his harem three young Armenian women, and when the news of the last massacre in the streets of the capital penetrated within the harem the Turkish and Circassian women maltreated the Armenians so brutally that they resolved upon the desperate expedient of fleeing from the harem. An escape of that sort is virtually unprecedented, but the young women managed to get out, and not a trace has since been found of them. Two old harem slaves, both Armenians, confessed under torture to aiding the fugitives, but were unable to say where they took refuge. The slaves were quietly killed, and the same undoubtedly awaits the fugitives if captured. The impression prevails in Constantinople that they found an asylum in one of the embassies, and the Sultan is satisfied himself that this is the only possible explanation of the failure of his agents to find them.