

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 fifty barrel oil well was struck on the Porter farm near Petrolia.

St. Thomas clergymen have formed a Ministerial Association.

The building permits granted in London amount to \$357,000 for the year.

Mr. Oliver Teft of Hamilton is reported to have fallen heir to \$500,000.

Senator McClellan has been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick.

There has been a discovery of gold-bearing quartz at Stony Mountain, Man.

Prof. Robertson wants Canadian farmers to go into the business of shipping canned butter to India and China.

The deposits in the Government savings banks for November were \$244,000 and the withdrawals \$264,000.

The Ogilvie Company sent another special train with flour for Australia to Vancouver on Saturday.

Anti-toxine is being used with great success in the London City Hospital in the case of diphtheria patients.

Messrs. Hoffman and McLellan of Berlin are negotiating for the purchase of the St. Thomas Street Railway.

Sir William Van Horne denies the truth of the revived rumor that he is about to retire from the Presidency of the C. P. R.

The young son of John Neil Wilson, of Ridgestown, narrowly escaped being burned to death. His night-dress caught fire from a grate.

The Dominion Government is being strongly urged to repatriate the Canadians who were recently induced to emigrate to Brazil.

It is not expected that the next session of the Dominion Parliament will be called for the despatch of business before the end of March.

It is announced in Ottawa that a commission will forthwith be issued to enquire into the efficiency of Indian schools in the North-West.

The Dominion Government will be asked to interfere to prevent the barbarous practices which prevail among the pagan Indians in the North-West.

Archibald McGowan probably fatally injured Margaret McKenzie with an axe at Charlottetown, P. E. I. He has been placed in an asylum to await trial.

Judgment has been given against Arthur E. Butt, and in favor of Adelaide Ferris, at St. John, N.B., for \$2,500 for breach of promise of marriage.

The appeals of the Dominion and Province of Quebec against Ontario concerning the payment of Indian annuities have been dismissed by the Privy Council.

It is stated at Montreal that the Dominion Government has taken over the Baie des Chaleurs Railway, which will hereafter be run in connection with the Intercolonial system.

Frederick Small, the contractor who pleaded guilty to defrauding the Hamilton House of Refuge out of \$100, was sentenced by Magistrate Jells to pay a fine of \$400, which he at once paid.

Mr. J. S. Larke, the Canadian commercial agent in Australia, states that the trade with that distant colony is greatly hampered by the want of transportation facilities.

Dr. Borden, Minister of Militia, at the annual dinner of the Ottawa Garrison, repeated his declaration that he was in favor of the annual drill of the entire militia force.

Messrs. Harry Murphy and David Spicer fell through the vault while working on the ruins of the Sparks street fire at Ottawa. Spicer died in a short time and Murphy is not expected to recover.

The Montreal Council has revived the project of building a viaduct from St. Henri to Bonaventure station at a cost of \$1,000,000 to carry the G. T. R. tracks and do away with level crossings.

The Winnipeg Grain Exchange Council has arrived at the conclusion that with a properly equipped boat for crushing ice navigation at Fort William could be lengthened for two or three weeks.

Nightwatchman Eastman of Welland was attacked by burglars whom he was attempting to drive from Brown Bros' liquor store and beaten insensibly. The burglars escaped but failed to blow open the safe.

Miss Ethel Smith, of Toronto, was presented with the Sanford gold medal by the Royal Canadian Humane Association for bravery in clinging to the boy and baby Galbraith when wrecked on Strawberry Island last July.

The boiler of a threshing engine at work at the farm of Mr. Archibald Ferguson, Yarmouth, exploded. Mr. Alexander Forbes, who owned the engine, was struck by a flying piece of the boiler in the back of the left ear and instantly killed. Three other men were injured.

An investigation will be held by the Fire and Light Committee of the Ottawa City Council into the recent extensive Sparks street fire to ascertain if there was anything wanted in the management or appliances of the fire department.

The Ogilvies intend to erect early next year a new elevator at Montreal with a capacity of 500,000 bushels, and another in Winnipeg with a capacity of 150,000 bushels, making their total elevator capacity for Manitoba wheat 4,500,000 bushels.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The Clyde seamen and firemen have gone out on strike and are endeavoring to prevent the sailing of the Anchor and Allan Line steamers.

A colliery has been flooded near Abernethy, in the south of Wales, and one hundred and twenty men who were in the mine had a race for their lives. Six of them were drowned.

The British army is to be strengthened with eight new battalions of infantry and eighteen new batteries of artillery of four guns each, and the cavalry force is to be reorganized.

The Birmingham Post of Wednesday confirmed the report that an entente has been arrived at between the powers, and that a large fleet will be mobilized near the Bosphorus, and Turkey forced to carry out reforms.

Mr. Gladstone has been afflicted with frequently recurring attacks of shortness of breath since last Thursday. The doctors attending the ex-Premier state that there is no cause for anxiety, but it will be necessary for Mr. Gladstone to spend the winter at Cannes.

A thinly attended conference was held on Thursday in London of those favourable to the reform of the fiscal policy of Great Britain. Mr. Lowther, who advanced, advocated a duty on grain, saying that the British farmer must not be ruined either by foreign or colonial competition.

UNITED STATES.

Col. John R. Fellows, New York District Attorney, is dead.

At Butte, Mont., a club of Cuban sympathizers is being organized to join the insurgents in January.

Private post-cards, larger than the official cards, were authorized by Congress at Washington on Wednesday.

Samuel Rosenbaum, aged 60, shot his wife and himself at Rochester, on Tuesday. Both are probably fatally injured.

The Kentucky Court of Appeals has refused a new trial to Scott Jackson, charged with the murder of Pearl Bryan.

At Dunbar, Pa., on Tuesday an earthquake started the people. The shock was felt in several of the surrounding towns.

T. L. Lewis, secretary of the Ohio Miners' organization, predicts a general miners' strike as the result of the Pittsburgh meeting.

The fire loss of the United States and Canada for November amounts to \$5,211,800. The total loss for 1896 will be about \$115,000,000.

A frenzied man, crazed by his wife's death, buried his teeth in an officer's arm at Atlanta City, N.J. The arm will have to be amputated.

By a vote of 104 to 7 the United States House of Representatives has passed the bill prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors at the capitol.

A sensation has been caused at Auburn, Ind., by the discovery that Daniel W. Fair, the retiring treasurer of De Kalb County, is \$13,500 short in his accounts.

Mrs. Walter Castle, who was convicted of shoplifting in London, Eng., has undergone a surgical operation at Philadelphia, with the hope of being cured of her affliction.

The Buffalo wholesale dealers say that Canadian dressed beef is killing the local trade, and complain that the twenty per cent. tariff is not enough to protect them from Canadian competition.

The Albright & Wilson Electro-Chemical Company of Great Britain have closed a contract with the Niagara Falls Power Company, and will move to Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Theophile Le Blanc, a French-Canadian, and his wife, who have lived six years in New York, have been found on the verge of starvation, Le Blanc being out of work. He is an architect and a painter.

Secretary Olney has received a message from Senor Andrade, the Venezuelan Minister to Washington, stating that the Venezuelan Government has accepted the agreement reached by the United States and Great Britain for the definition of the disputed boundary.

At this time of year the condition of trade everywhere is only of a holiday nature, and the activity in various lines is usually of a transitory kind. The break in prices was expected, and is not considered of more than passing consequence. The coming holidays and some doubt as to the action of Congress are the ostensible reasons given for an ordinary quietness in trade just before Christmas. Talk as to crop conditions here and abroad is wild and various, but the opinion of conservative business men is that good prices for grain may be expected to endure. General trade is quiet, and the labour market is for the present again depressed. No positive change in business conditions is possible until we are well into next month.

GENERAL.

The Hamburg dockers' strike continues.

Herr Ernest Engel, the German statistician is dead at Berlin.

A despatch from Bombay states that the bubonic plague is spreading everywhere.

The famine which threatened the whole of India has been partially averted in certain districts by the recent rains.

Fourteen of the crew of the British ship Feer were drowned in the wreck of the vessel on the South African coast.

It is reported that the Negus of Abyssinia has ceded to Russia a small stretch of coast between Obok and Erithrea as a coaling station.

The German steamer Salier, with a crew of 60 men and a large number of passengers, foundered off the coast of South Africa with all on board.

A despatch from Caracas says that public opinion has triumphed, and that Venezuela will withhold her consent to the arrangement entered into between Lord Salisbury and Secretary Olney.

The British steamer, Castle Eden, from Sierra Leone, with 600 African labourers for the Panama canal, has arrived at Colon, Columbia, a number of the labourers suffering from small-pox.

A serious uprising of the natives is reported at Lorenzo Marques, Portuguese South Africa. The Portuguese and British forces are acting together, but the British column, which numbers five hundred men, is facing thirty thousand warriors, and great anxiety is felt.

At Xeres in the Province of Andalusia a house containing 25 persons collapsed without warning, burying all of its inmates in the debris. The house fell upon an adjoining tenement building, which also gave way. The tenement house was inhabited by 85 persons, all of whom were buried by the wreckage. Eleven dead bodies and 40 seriously injured have been taken from the ruins, and the work of excavation for the purpose of recovering the others is progressing.

HONOR, DISGRACE, DEATH

FROM A PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION TO A CONVICT'S CELL.

Such is the Experience of William Houghton, an English Adventurer in Far-Off Abyssinia—His Companion, an English Settler, shot for Infringe Against the King.

There has just been landed in jail the only man that has tasted the sweets of power that a Prime Minister wields, and has run the gamut of crime that concluded with the convict's stripes.

William Houghton is the individual to whom has fallen this remarkable experience, and the distinction is accorded him of being one of the most brilliant criminals and blackmailers that history is cognizant of.

In the course of his career, the distinguished portion of which began with the year 1878, he was ruled a kingdom. He was the Prime Minister of Abyssinia, the chief adviser of King John; his word was law, and he could order the execution of any one but the King and his immediate relatives. This height of power Houghton reached from the plane of life of the ordinary adventurer. For years he maintained his power and when at last fortune forsook him he turned to the capitals of Europe for fresh tributes to his genius as a swindler.

Houghton first achieved notoriety in 1876. In that year he journeyed from England to Egypt. A man named Major Barlow, who had been an officer of the Yorkshire, England, Yeomanry, was his companion. Both had planned out a programme of adventure that was as daring as

IT WAS DANGEROUS.

Just at that time the relations between the Khedive and the King of Abyssinia were very strained. Houghton and his partner made their way into Abyssinia, and in a manner that no one seems to be thoroughly familiar with, ingratiated themselves with King John. Major Barlow was the first of the two to gain prominence, for he induced the King to give him a very excellent appointment on the military service. King John was more than willing to have his troops receive the benefit of the military knowledge of an English officer, and it was not long before Barlow was placed at the head of the Abyssinian army. No sooner had he gained this point than he began to labor with the King in the interests of Houghton, with such excellent results that the English adventurer became King John's political adviser, and later Prime Minister of all Abyssinia.

By this time Major Barlow had so won the King over that the title of General was created for him, and he was formally appointed Commander in Chief of the Abyssinian forces, with 70,000 to 80,000 warriors under his command. Included in this force was the famous brigade of Amazons who were placed in such a state of efficiency by this man that they became a tremendous power in themselves, and won fame that to this day has made them well known.

While Abyssinia is in a state of semi-civilization, there is yet a strong leaning toward the semi-barbaric, and at the time these events occurred that predilection was even greater than now. So the two Englishmen, quickly perceiving that to maintain prestige and power they must conform to the native customs, decided to impress the fact of their high position and favor with the King by a series of ceremonies both long and weird. For a week the soldiers of the army danced and feasted, the ceremony being witnessed by the King, Houghton and Barlow, the latter at the time wearing a uniform of English officers. This had all the desired effect. The Englishmen found themselves thoroughly established.

WITH ROYALTY AND PEOPLE.

Power was not all these gentlemen were looking for. Their mission to Egypt and Abyssinia was principally to gain tremendous wealth, and this they seemed now in a fair way to secure. They deliberately appropriated gold and silver and ivory from the stores of the King's subjects, aparing no one but the King himself. How much they managed to secure no one but the King will ever know, but certain it is that the amount was enormous. Wealth achieved, the pair of adventurers turned their attention to politics, and very soon had the Egyptian Government and King John by the ears.

While all this was going on Houghton and Barlow lived as well as Abyssinia could permit. When they traveled it was in state chairs, carried by Amazonian warriors. Each had a harem, and for this the youngest and prettiest Abyssinian girls were selected. Presently these two grew too reserved to even dine with the King, and had their meals served apart from him, prepared by an old Abyssinian whom they had inducted into the mystery of the preparation of the English dinner.

Uninterrupted success made them still bolder, and they induced the King to present them with a large quantity of gold dust, which they proceeded to transform into a nest egg by placing it to their credit in a bank at Berlin, Germany, to which point they forwarded the treasure from Abyssinia. About all the King possessed in the way of valuables of which they failed to get at least a portion was an enormous ruby worn as an royal armband. They told the King that he should give them that ruby so they could present it to Queen Victoria, and that on receipt thereof she would be so pleased receipt thereof she would be so pleased plete annihilation of King John's Egyptian enemies. For some unknown reason, however, the King remained obdurate, and that is why he

STILL POSSESSES THE RUBY.

In 1885 the star of the Englishmen began to wane. The Egyptian Government made up its mind that there could

be no peace with Abyssinia until the Englishmen were out of the country. So an expedition was sent out after them, under Osman Pasha, the best officer in the Khedive's army. Strongly enough, he managed to capture them and they were carried to Cairo. Here they were treated with extreme consideration, and after the bare formality of a trial a sentence of banishment was imposed. Major Barlow had no fancy for leaving a country that flowed with milk and honey; so by forging a number of letters, by continuing his policy of intrigue, he gained permission to take a quantity of gunpowder with him, travel East and exchange it for ivory. He then bribed an Egyptian official, shipped tons of gunpowder into Abyssinia, was detected, fled and finally succeeded in making his way back to the nation that had made him a power. Retribution finally overtook him, however, for the rod of iron with which he ruled King John's army produced a mutiny, and Barlow was killed by the very men he had trained in arms.

Houghton accepted his sentence, and took passage on a vessel bound for France. He was not content, however, to refrain from evil even on an ocean voyage, and so he very shrewdly made overtures to the Captain of the vessel to become a pirate, assuring him that within two months he would make him immensely wealthy. It so happened, however, that the Captain was a rather clever and thoroughly honest man. Instead of joining in with Houghton's schemes, he landed him on the coast of France at the

THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.

So trifling a misadventure as this did not daunt Houghton in the least. He made his way to Paris and posed without delay as the accredited representative of the King of Abyssinia. He had considerable money which, with the Berlin nest egg, gave him ample capital for the time being. His life was one of almost oriental luxury. Social honors of all sorts were his. All classes honored him, and did all possible to make life pleasant.

All things have an ending, however, and finally Houghton and the woman with whom he had cast his lot were forced to leave Paris in disgrace. It was in the spring of 1887 that Houghton and his companion reappeared in Boulogne, and now his talent had been turned to blackmail. The system he pursued was almost fiendish, and the victims of his machinations were practically ruined so far as reputation was concerned, in the minds of their friends. Careful notice was kept of the marriage and birth notices in the Boulogne papers, and whenever addresses were given, letters were sent to these persons. So cleverly was the purport of the letters concealed that the victims almost always replied. These letters were forwarded to an English confederate and blackmail followed.

At last, however, the French police arrested Houghton, and he was sent to prison for two months. In the fall of 1888 he made his way to England, and there began the career of swindling that has ended in a prison. From time to time he was connected with very shady transactions, and always managed to avoid arrest until a short time since, when he tried to blackmail a London broker, was arrested, tried, and sentenced to 18 months at Wormwood Scrubs Prison, a London place of punishment for criminals of the more degraded type.

THE RETIRED BURGLAR.

His Most Unexpected Recovery of a Long-Lost Dog.

"Speaking of watch dogs," said the retired burglar, "I never owned a watch dog, but I did own once a jolly little mongrel dog that we called sometimes Nibs, but mostly Nibsey; a lively, sensitive little fellow, but no watch dog. You might have played a brass band outside and he'd never hear it; but let anybody he knew walk across the floor and he'd wag his tail in his sleep. "Well, after we'd had Nibsey a number of years we lost him; he just disappeared one day and didn't come back, and we didn't know whether he'd been run over by a train of cars or strayed away and got lost, or whether somebody had picked him up and carried him off, or what was the matter; but he didn't come back, and we missed him very much, because we all liked Nibsey."

"Now, maybe you can guess what happened? One morning early, about 2 or half-past 2, some months after that, as I was moving slowly in the dark, across a room, on the second floor of a house that I called at some fifty miles from where I lived, I felt the legs of a small dog thrown against mine. I couldn't see the dog at all, but it was standing on its hind legs and resting its fore legs against me, and I could tell by the movement of them that he was wagging his tail violently. It was Nibsey, of course. He'd known my tread, soft as it was, and woke up to receive me."

"Well, you know, glad as I was to find Nibsey, I'd rather not have found him right there, because he was almost certain to make trouble for me. He began to whine with joy, the first thing and then he gave a little yelp. That was just what I was afraid of. He didn't want to make any trouble for me, but that one yelp was enough. A man in bed sits up and pulls a string and turns on a light and says: "Now, what's the matter?" "And I puts up a great polar bluff and says: 'You swiped my dog, and I've come to get him.' " "Swipe nothing!" he says, 'I swipe you in about a minute,' and he wasn't getting out of bed and coming for me all the time he was talking, and a good healthy, powerful looking man he was, too. But Nibsey was bright. Nibsey made just one dive at the man's feet, but that was enough to stop him until I'd got turned and started; and a minute later I was going down the road with Nibsey coming on behind."

THE LAST JOY.

There's a memory of my childhood, Of a blissful time long gone by, Which just now I sadly ponder— 'Tis not coffee—no, nor pie. Where are now the dames who made it? Love can't buy it—ah, nor cash— Smoking, brown—and crusty rapture— Good old-fashioned turkey-hash.

THE CHAIR DID IT.

How a Good Man Got Behind the Penitentiary Bars.

I went through the penitentiary recently and while passing by one of the cells I was impressed by the quiet and entirely inoffensive appearance of the inmate of that particular cell. Indeed I was so impressed that I asked permission to speak to him. The request was granted and I said: "What has brought you here, my poor man?"

He burst into tears and said: "The ill-advised kindness of my best friends!"

"I don't understand."

"They—they gave me a—a—chair!" he said between his broken sobs.

"Pray calm yourself and tell me all about it."

"I will," he said manfully, as he wiped his eyes upon the coarse striped sleeve of his convict's jacket. "You see it was like this: I was, I may say, popular, alas! too popular with the boys in the great mercantile establishment of which I was cashier, and on one of my birthdays they got up a surprise party and came out to my house with a superb \$75 chair."

"Well?"

"Of course my wife and I were greatly elated over it, but the carpet in our parlor was worn a good deal where the chair had to stand, so we bought a fine rug to lay in front of the chair. Well, the rug made the carpet look worse than ever, and although we couldn't afford it, we got a fine new carpet to go with the rug."

He blew his nose violently and added: "Well, the carpet cheapened and brought out all the defects in our old parlor furniture so we carted it all off to the auction room where we got almost nothing for it and bought new furniture throughout for the parlor. Of course that made the hall carpet and furniture look shabby so we had to refurbish the hall."

He wiped his eyes again before saying: "Well, the dining room opened right out of the hall and the new things in the parlor and hall brought out the shabbiness of the dining room things so forcibly that we couldn't stand it and almost before we knew it we'd gone in debt another \$200 to make the dining room match the hall and parlor. Well, the sitting room connected with the parlor by double doors and when these doors were open the sitting room looked horribly shabby, so it had to be refurbished to harmonize with the other things and so—"

He gulped down a rising sob and said: "Well, these and a lot of other improvements we made didn't harmonize with my salary and I—I—well, I sort of borrowed funds from the firm I worked for to pay the bills; only I was foolish enough to do my borrowing with the firm's consent, and

they got wind of it and first of all I knew my books were being examined and I was

that chair my friends gave me at the bottom of the whole business. If I ever get out of here alive it won't be healthy for any of my friends to come around with another chair, now you hear me."

CHEAP ELECTRICITY.

It Will Soon be Produced Direct From Coal.

One of the greatest problems of the end of the century—how to derive electricity direct from coal—is, in the light of recent discoveries, a stage nearer solution. The work of Dr. Jacques in this direction, which has received the recognition of the highest scientific authorities, has been lately called in question on the ground that reports on the efficiency of his process were based on the amount of carbon consumed within the pots, and no data have been given as to the amount of coal consumed upon the grate, or the power necessary to run the air pump—factors which might greatly modify the commercial efficiency of the apparatus when put into use. Dr. Jacques has now effectually answered these criticisms in a complete story of the invention. He proves that the phenomenon exhibited, i. e. the generation of the current, was not due to thermoelectric action, but to the chemical combination of oxygen with carbon to form carbonic acid. He also demonstrates that under proper conditions the electrical energy obtainable from one of the generators is substantially equal to the potential energy of the weight of carbon consumed with the pot. The invention is not yet by any means perfected. As compared with modern steam engines, only relatively small carbon electric generators have as yet been built; and with this generator, as with the steam engine, increased size means increased efficiency per pound of coal, particularly in the coal consumed in the grate. A two-horse-power carbon electric generator, in an occasional use over a period of six months, gave an electrical efficiency of 82 per cent of that theoretically obtainable. This means an efficiency of 12 times greater than that of the average electric light and power plant in use in this country, and 40 times greater than plants of corresponding size. But while showing these extraordinary results Dr. Jacques concedes that many details have still to be worked out, and many improvements to be made before the carbon electric generator can be put into general commercial use on a scale comparable with that of the modern steam engine. The data given, however, are most encouraging to those—and there are many—who regard the commercial obtaining of electricity direct from coal as a possibility of the very near future.

RESERVOIR FISHING.

Lady, shocked.—Pardon me, sir, but I overheard you remark that you were going fishing in the reservoir. Am I to understand that people are allowed to fish with horrid worms in the reservoir from which we get our drinking water?

City Employee.—Oh, no, mum, I don't use worms; I use big hooks with nothing on them. You see, I fish for bodies of suicides.