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.

Ottawa had 1,128 deaths last year.

A young son of Louis Smith, fisherman was scalded to death at Victoria. B. C.

The French theatre, a home for opera, will be built in Montreal next summer.

Shipments of Northwest wheat by Fort William aggregated 17,600,000 bushels in 1897.

There were 514 births, 337 deaths and 236 marriages in Hamilton during the last half year.

According to reports from Victoria, B.C., there are eight British vessels in the harbor at Esquimalt.

Mr. Cochrane, partner in an eating house, was stabbed to death at the Crow's Nest Pass.

There was no truth in the reported formation of a Canadian regiment for service in the East.

Mrs. Boomer was elected a High School Trustee at London by the Council, being the first lady who has ever served on the board.

Two Hamilton shoe dealers were fined $1 each for keeping their stores open after 7 o'clock in Christmas week. Another case will be appealed.

There will be 75,000 names in the directory of Toronto for 1898, and the publishers claim that this entitles the city to a population of 225,000.

The Dominion Treasury Board has issued a circular warning civil servants against wire-pulling as a means of securing promotion or increase of emolument.

At Brantford, William Steves, a lad of eighteen years, pleaded guilty to uttering one dollar notes raised to ten dollars and was sent to Kingston Penitentiary for three years.

Mayor R. Wilson Smith, has purchased a seat in the Montreal Stock Exchange, for $5,500, and advance of two thousand dollars over the last sale He proposes to go into the brokerage business.

Little Freddie Guerin, the nine-year-old son of Mr Joseph Guerin, of Hamilton, was alone in the house when a lamp exploded. He threw it outside, and with the aid of a policeman extinguished the fire in the house.

Exports of poultry from Montreal the past season are the largest in the history of the trade. Exports of eggs in 1897 were one hundred and seventy-two thousand cases, compared with one hundred and forty-two thousand in 1896, and ninety-five thousand in 1895, largely to the United Kingdom.

The fire losses of Toronto for the year 1897 amounted to $666,879, of which $117,155 was on buildings and $549,724 on stock. The insurance on these losses was $2,250,000 The four chief fires were: the Electric Light Company's; Murray's; Eckhardt's and the Eaton's, which totalled $47,000 of the amount.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The collapse of the great English engineers' strike is rapidly approaching.

The British imports from Canada for the past year showed an increase over the previous year of twenty-five per cent.

Prince, the murderer of William Terriss, the actor, was found guilty, but the judge accepting the medical evidence, sent him to a lunatic asylum.

The investigation into the cause of the London, England, fire shows that the loss was $3,050,000. The jury returned a verdict of arson.

Lord Charles Beresford, Conservative, was elected in York by a majority of 11 over Mr. Christopher Furness, Liberal. The seat was formerly held by Sir Frank Lockwood, Liberal.

The London Morning Post says President McKinley is hopelessly drifting in trying to satisfy everybody, that the result will be chaos in the Republican camp, and the rapid growth of Bryanism. It further says that the Dingley tariff is a failure.

UNITED STATES.

Mrs. Ballington Booth is declared out of danger.

Mr. Mark Hanna has been elected Senator for Ohio.

Neither the crematories nor cemeteries of San Francisco will take the body of Durrant, the murderer.

President P. A. Largy, of the State Savings Bank, of Montano, was assassinated at Butte on Tuesday.

The dispute between the train despatchers and the Canadian Pacific railway has been amicably adjusted.

John J. Overton, said to be 109 years of age, was married to Mrs. Mary J. Henderson at Charleston, West Va., on Monday.

Robert Gudgeon, saloon keeper, was shot and killed at Chicago on Monday night by robbers, who escaped. He would not "hold up his hands."

In the Guldensuppe case, Mrs. Nack on Monday pleaded guilty to manslaughter, and was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

Further time has been given by the U. S. House Committee on Commerce for the building of the proposed bridge over the St. Lawrence from St Lawrence Co., N. Y.

Instructions have been sent to collectors at American ports not to interfere with sealskin garments if shown to have been purchased before December 29 last.

A serious Indian uprising is reported in Oklahoma Territory, where the Seminoles have gone on the warpath to avenge the lynching of a couple of members of their tribe.

GENERAL.

Dr. Jamieson intends becoming a candidate for the Cape Parliament.

Martial law which was proclaimed in Prague on December 2nd, has been withdrawn.

The Japanese transport steamer Nara was wrecked on December 24th and eighty lives were lost.

The capital of one of the Moluccas Islands has been visited by an earthquake and fifty lives were lost.

Great Britain has a pledge from King Menelek, of Abyssinia, that he will not block the advance of the Anglo-Egyption expedition.

There was a riotous demonstration in Havana on Thursday against the United States and there is talk of an armed intervention.

The French Government has decided to prosecute M. Zola, the novelist, on account of his connection with the Esterhazy-Dreyfus scandal.

A music hall singer and several accomplices have been arrested at Budapest on the charge of blackmailing King Alexander of Servia.

Steamers which have just arrived at Sydney, N.S.W., report a tribal war at Tanna in the New Hebrides. There is said to have been considerable blood shed, and the natives were also causing the traders much trouble.

News of the renewed fighting in Uganda, has been received from Fort Lubwas, in the Usoga country. Lieut. Macdonald, brother of Major Macdonald, the commander of the British forces, and Mr. Pilkington, the missionary, have been killed.

WEDDING PREPARATIONS.

This usually takes the form of getting together a large and fashionable trousseau, and in possibly taking a few lessons in cookery, on the part of the lady, but if her future husband happens to make any sort of personal preparations, he keeps the matter to himself generally. It is not de rigueur that he should do anything to qualify himself for the new condition of life which he is about to enter. It is possible that he might with advantage take a hint even from the savages of South Africa in the matter of the training of the masculine candidate fort matrimonial felicity.

Before a man is permitted to enter the holy estate he has to show of what metal he is made, and whether he is possessed of sufficient patience to endure the fret and worry of married life. In order to decide the point, the would-be bridegroom's hands are tied up for a couple of hours in a bag containing five fire-ants.

If he should succeed in bearing unmoved the torture of their stings, he is considered fully qualified for matrimony, for surely a man of such exemplary patience and fortitude could not fail to make an admirable husband, even supposing his wife to be the most nagging of her sex.

WHEN MARRIAGE IS A FAILURE.

Marriage is a failure if neither husband nor wife has married for love, but merely for money, or any other mundane motive.

If the meals are ill-cooked and badly served.

If two young people rush into matrimony and take upon themselves all the burdens of married life, when too young to realize the awful responsibility of it.

If the income, though well managed and made the most of, cannot cover the expenditure. If the husband be a faddy, fidgetty man, perpetually prying into household matters, and thinks he knows more about them than anybody else.

If both parties are absolutely resolved to see only the worst side of each other's characters.

If the husband tries to be mistress as well as master, or the wife master as well as mistress of the house.

If, when dark days come, husband and wife forget that they took each other for better for worse, for richer for poorer.

If the wife is a fine lady totally ignorant of even the rudiments of domestic economy, and thinks more of her dress than her husband's comfort.

ABOUT WEDDING RINGS.

There have been various explanations given of the origin of wedding-rings. Wheatley says the ring was anciently a seal by which all orders were signed and things of value secured; and therefore the delivery of it was a sign that the person to whom it was given was admitted into the highest friendship and trust. Hooker regarded the ring, from its shape and portability, as a pledge of sincere affection. Other authorities say that it was originally a pledge of the woman's dowry, or regard it simply as a token of the mutual bondage to each other into which marriage brings husband and wife. It would appear that wedding-rings were worn by the Jews prior to the Christian era. The ring has been much used at betrothals as well as at weddings, and in many parts of Europe the husband as well as the wife wears a wedding-ring. The left hand was chosen to show the wife's submisson, and the third finger, either because a small vein was supposed to run from it direct to the heart, or because the thumb and first two fingers represent the Trinity.

AGRICULTURAL

FATHER HAS SOLD HIS WHEAT.

There is nothing too good for us now,
I shall have a new sealskin sacque,
And Johnny is going to get him a horse
That can pass anything on the track;
And mother will dress up in silks,
And, oh, but life's easy and sweet—
Everybody's polite and clever and kind
Since father has sold his wheat!

We'll build a new house in the spring,
And we'll store the old organ away,
And as soon as the dicker is made,
I shall have a piano to play.
The fellows are coming in droves
And life is deliciously sweet—
Oh, every one seems just too lovely to us
Since father has sold his wheat!

FALL OR WINTER MANURING.

After all that has been said and written on the subject of manuring, it does not seem to be well understood that it should be done some time before the crops are to grow. There are five things that are especially needed by the soil—humus, nitrogen, potash and phosphoric acid with water to permeate and dissolve them.

Humus is the decayed and decaying vegetable matter in the soil. It gives it that dark rich color, as we call it. It makes it light and porous so that it will hold large quantities of water, just as the sponge does. And in it live the little "invisible friends" the myriads of bacteria which fix or hold the nitrogen that certain plants gather from the air, and make it available for the coming crops. Stable manure will make the humus. So will crops that are plowed under, such as the clovers, cow peas and soja beans. And the nitrogen which they at the same time bring to the soil is much cheaper than that bought at a big price in fertilizer bags. Indeed nitrogen is far the most costly of the manures when it is bought. The merchant bases his price for mixed fertilizers more on the nitrogen they contain than on any other ingredient. Moreover, when it is in the structures of these plants it is in a much less dangerous condition and is more easily appropriated by the succeeding crops than in the form of mineral nitrates or animal refuse. These latter really do considerable harm if applied directly to tender seeds or rootlets, and should be well mixed with the soil at about the time the plants will need the nitrogen to stimulate their growth, for it is very volatile when turned into ammonia by union with water.

Phosphoric acid and potash must also be applied properly. Many persons fail to get the good effects from them which they might reasonably expect. This is one point that should be thoroughly understood by farmers, fruit-growers and gardeners. The preventive measure is to apply potash and phosphoric acid in the fall or winter and let the rains and melted snows thoroughly dissolve these mineral manures and mix them with the soil. Then when the crops are sown or planted the next spring, the potash and phosphoric acid will be in condition to do only good work. If a crop of clover of any kind is on the ground they will gradually reach the roots as they permeate the soil, and stimulate them to greater action than would be possible without them. They will gather more nitrogen, and this with the other manures will together be in condition to be taken up by the following crop. It takes time to digest and prepare it for use. If you cannot have all the winter and early spring to prepare them have all that is possible. We do not feed a horse and have the strength from that self same food ready for use the same hour. And so with the food in the soil except nitrogen, which is almost immediately available. Nitrogen in the soil is like a whip to the horse—it acts almost at once or is gone by evaporation as ammonia.

Furthermore, do not waste money on freight, sacking and handling of a lot of useless materials. Buy concentrated manures—such as dissolved bone or acid phosphate and muriate of potash. Mix them to suit your needs, unless you can get some reliable merchant who has machinery to do it for you at reasonable rates. And do not be afraid to apply them liberally. It does not pay to half-feed the soil any more than it does to half-feed fattening stock. This half-feeding often leads to discouragement and disbelief in mineral fertilizers. A little will do some good, but it takes about 300 pounds of dissolved bone, and the same amount of potash or twice that amount of phosphate rock to give a crop of almost any kind a good annual meal. Full feeding means net profits, while half-feeding only keeps things running at cost or a little below it.

OATS FOR COLTS.

Few farmers seem to realize that the first winter of a colt's life to a large extent determines its future usefulness and value. With the majority of our acquaintances the one thing they aim at the first winter is toughen the colt, and in many cases he becomes so "tough" that he never makes a serviceable or profitable horse.

The process of toughening is very simple. The colt is left to shift for himself. He may wander over a field of bare corn stalks through the day and gather himself at night in the shadow of a wire fence unless so fortunate as to find a straw pile that is unoccupied by cattle and hogs. He has neither victuals nor drink offered him—he simply roughs it.

The colt would make a much tougher horse in the good sense if given proper food. And taken all in all there is no food that is so generally raised that is so well adapted for the colt—for all horsekind—as oats.

Speaking of oats as the food for horses and of their especial value as food for the colt, a writer says, "The oat is a natural food for horses at any age. It has just the kind of nutrition to make the muscle and bone, and, conjoined with exercise, these are the basis of strength.

"It is especially important that the colt should begin to develop muscle at an early age. If he is allowed free room in which to run, the colt fed a few oats daily will do all ess that is needed. He will even groom himself by rolling on the ground or in the snow when snow is on the ground.

"Besides a pint of oats twice a day making only a quart a day, will keep the colt growing, when with only hay he will have a rough, staring coat and grow very little the first winter.

"What is worse, the colt thus underfed is likely to have its digestion injured. The hull of the oat prevents it from injuring the colt when fed in such small quantities. Towards spring the amount of oats may be increased to a quart at each feeding. At a quart a day it is less than a bushel per month, and at the largest it is less than two bushels per month.

"What is ten bushels of oats in comparison with the increased value of a thrifty horse instead of having an unthrifty one?

GRAPE GROWING.

Plant on a gentle eastern, southern or southeastern slope. Any good garden soil will produce grapes. If the land is a clay soil tile it. Set two-year-old vines. Get them of a good nurseryman—not of agents. Plant in the fall 10x10 feet apart. Lay down on the ground during the winter and cover with any kind of litter. Stake while one and two years old and the third year put on trellises. These trellises can be made of posts and wire. Prune carefully. If the vine is weak cut back to one bud, but if strong to two, and if very strong leave three buds. Do not practice summer pruning except to pinch back and keep off suckers. Take off ground in March or April.

PROTECTING TREES.

While there are innumerable remedies recommended and used for the protection of young trees against the depredations of rabbits, mice and other animals, there is nothing better and more reliable than small meshed wire netting wound around the tree and tied together with a wire. It is inexpensive, durable, does not keep out light and air, and is in every way preferable to tarred paper, tin and any of the close coverings recommended.

THE WINTER STRAWBERRY BED.

Where heavy winds prevail, and the ground is not covered with snow the mulching material on the strawberry bed is very apt to be blown off, or become displaced. It is therefore quite important to examine the beds from time to time and replace the covering on the bare plants. It costs nothing and is time well spent. Broken and interrupted rows in the strawberry bed are a discouraging sight at picking time.

DISTRESS IN CUBA.

Awful Stories of the Suffering People Described in a Letter.

"Things are getting worse every day and the misery is terrible. No words can describe it. Even in the hospitals in the different charitable institutions the wretched Cubans die of hunger and of disease unassisted, because they are too numerous to be well attended. The societies are too poor to help them. They can give only what they receive daily from some kind hearted families. We suppose that the Government really gives some money to help the poor, but it goes through too many hands before reaching the needy. That is why they receive nothing.

"Women and men are often found seated or lying down beside the bodies of their dead relatives in the streets etc., and their wretchedness is such that they find no words to express their sorrow. They remain tearless and quiet, as if they had also lost their mind. I have often heard mothers exclaim, "I hope God will take away my children," or "May God allow my children to die soon, because it is a torture to hear them cry for food without being able to give them anything to eat, and to see them suffer so much is unbearable.

A SURPRISING APOLOGY.

A young advocate before the Scotch Lords of Session, on hearing a decision against his client, which he deemed contrary to law and justice, so far forgot himself as to exclaim that he was "surprised at such a decision." Their lordships were very angry, and were considering how to mark their sense of the advocate's impertinence when a pawky old councillor rose, and besought their lordships' forgiveness for the slip his young brother advocate had made. "It was purely lack of experience that led him into error. Had he known your lordships half as long as I have done, I'm hanged if he would have been surprised at anything your lordships said or did."

PURELY CANADIAN NEWS.

INTERESTING ITEMS ABOUT OUR OWN COUNTRY.

Gathered from Various Points from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Ore sampling works are being built at Rosebery, B.C.

The Merchants' Bank will open a branch at Edmonton, B.C.

There are 45 patients in the Gravenhurst Home for consumptives.

Rev. S. Daw, of Hamilton, slipped on the sidewalk and broke his arm.

John Overholt is re-building the flour mill recently burned at Wellandport.

A branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce will be opened at Dresden shortly.

Archdeacon Phair, of Rupert's Land is in Montreal in the interest of Indian missions.

The bartenders of Montreal have formed a union, and will demand a raise of wages.

T. L. Linlop has been re-appointed assessor of St. Thomas on the casting vote of the mayor.

Tilbury's great gas well has turned out to be a water well—and a salt water well at that.

Friday night a man was discovered trying to set fire to the Dumas Hotel, Chatham. He escaped.

Dr. Whitehead, V.S., of Strathroy, is a prominent candidate for collector of customs at that point.

The demands for dogs for the Klondike has made dog-stealing a thriving industry in Vancouver.

A weed burner is the latest farming implement invented and patented in Portage la Prairie, Man.

The body of Napoleon Boulanger, was found in the lake at Nelson, B. C. How he got there is a mystery.

James Vannell, who tried to flim-flam a St. Thomas jeweller out of a diamond ring, has been committed for tiral.

Prince Edward Island exported $300,000 worth of cheese last year. Six years ago thei sland did not export a pound.

The Glencoe Council of 1897 voted themselves a salary at their last meeting. They took time by the hot-lock.

Mr. H. Collier Grounds, of Ottawa, has been appointed organist of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Montreal.

Real estate in Vancouver is advancing, and the citizens of the Terminal City are formally hoping for the return of boom days.

Four hundred and fifty tramps were given shelter in Chatham police cells during the past year. Most of them were foreigners.

Louis Laurence, who escaped from the storehouse of the Kingston penitentiary, was recaptured at Hamilton and taken home.

George Brigham, of Mitchell, has received word that his eldest son has been smothered in a well he was digging in Manitoba.

Miss Jane Dooner has been given a verdict of $1,200 against the city of Montreal. She fell on a bad sidewalk and broke her leg.

Rabbits are very numerous around Point Pelee. Bert Gardiner shipped 62 of the pets to Detroit the other day and got four cents each for them.

The T., H. & B. railroad, says the St. Catharines Journal, is so exorbitant in price for mail service that it is probable the line will not be awarded a contract.

Patrick O'Connor, a Guelph carpenter fell from the roof of a house to the ground 24 feet. He was badly jarred, and will be under repairs for a month.

There is still a trifle of $5,000 between the price the C.P.R. are willing to pay for F. Aug. Heinze's railway and smelter and the price he is willing to take for them.

The Edmonton Bulletin estimates the cost of police maintenance in the Yukon at $2,000 per annum, and thinks this will likely absorb all the royalties that can be collected.

A man named Joly who assaulted Chief Hebert, of St. Cunegonde, about a year ago, escaped to the United States. He foolishly came home for the holidays, and now he is doing five years.

Fifteen men in McNair's lumber camp, on the Tobique River, N. B., were taken seriously ill from eating pork. When the pork was taken in the carriers to lighten the load, threw away most of the pickle.

An Indian named Somyer has confessed that he killed a storekeeper named Francis Jones at Hall's Crossing, B.C. They had a dispute over some change, and Jones went at the Indian with an axe. The Indian took the axe from him and used it.

HER METHOD.

Uncle Bob—Yes, my wife allus b'lieved in tying a string to her finger to remember things.

Uncle Bill—She has one on her finger most of the time, I notice.

Uncle Bob—Yes, 'ceptin' when she has somethin' very pertikler to remember. Then she leaves off the string, an' when it ain't there she remembers why.