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.

Hall & Co., bankers of Holland, Man., have assigned.

One dollar Dominion notes, raised to fives, are in circulation at Winnipeg.

A number of aldermen, it is said, favor municipal control of the street railway.

The herd of Buffalo at Silver Heights will be shipped to Banff National Park about the end of April.

The centralization of Wabash railway freight crews in St. Thomas will increase the population of that city 150.

Doyle, alias Sullivan, tried on a charge of murder at Nelson, B.C., has been found guilty and sentenced to be hanged.

The Yukon military expedition will be brigaded at Ottawa about the middle of April and sent forward from there after inspection.

The eight Italian laborers from Buffalo who were arrested for working on Sunday in Toronto, were fined in the Police Court on Tuesday.

A reduction of ten cents per thousand feet has been made in the price of gas at Hamilton, the nominal price being $2, with a 30 per cent. discount.

The Toronto Board of Trade Council has appointed a special committee to consider and report on the question of an expert duty on nickel matte.

City Engineer Barrow of Hamilton has demonstrated that coal can be used with success for the filtration of sewage, the coal not being injured in the process.

Police Inspector Talbott, of Bradford, Eng., has arrived at Halifax to take charge of Hall, the embezzler of that city, who was arrested two weeks ago on his arrival from England.

Prosecutions against smugglers are in active progress in Nova Scotia. A United States Consul-General has been dismissed by President McKinley in connection therewith.

It is reported at St. Catharines that John D. and James Neelon, sons of the late Capt. Neelon, have been offered $50,000 for their shares in a Colorado gold mine.

Mr. W.T. McCoun has been appointed horticulturist at the Ottava Experimental Farm, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. John Craigi who left the Government service last autumn.

An order-in-Council has been passed, providing that those persons who obtain leases for dredging for minerals in the rivers in Manitoba and the North-West must take out free miners' certificates the same as on the Yukon.

Mr. E. A. Macdonald is bringing suit against the directors of the Toronto Street Railway Company, charging them with having obtained their franchise by bribery and fraud, and asking on behalf of the city $8,000,000 damages.

The next session of the Supreme Court will be held on the third of May next. In connection with appeals to be heard during the term notices have been posted to the effect that the last day for filing cases is April 12, the last day for filing printed factums 16th April, and the last day for inscribing appeals for hearing is April 18.

Dominion Analyst McFarlane has issued a bulletin giving the result of his official examination of condensed milk and fertilizers. The bulletin will give many cases in which condensed milk offered for sale was found to be prepared from skim milk, instead of whole milk, with an addition of sugar to give it body and appearance. It is likely the department will take action against the parties offering this adulterated milk for sale.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Mr. James Payne, the English novelist, is dying.

Great Britain is not, it is reported, plotting for the absorption of Hawaii.

It is said in London that the Earl of Elgin is desirous of resigning the viceroyship of India.

England has sent the torpedo destroyer Rocket to Halifax to join the North American squadron.

The British Government has decided to spend $12,000,000 in buying sites and erecting buildings for the great public departments, including a new War Office.

UNITED STATES.

The California orchards have been badly nipped by frost.

The United States Cabinet is said to have determined that the present state of affairs in Cuba must end.

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, the well-known novelist, has instituted suit for divorce from her husband, Dr. Swan M. Burnett.

William Olmstead, a farmer of Cass county, Michigan, has left a will bequeathing all his estate, valued at $15,000 to the Barnum and Bailey circus.

The Pacific Mill, at Tacoma, Wash., the largest shingle mill in the world, operated by Metcalfe & Ware, has been completely destroyed by fire.

Julius M. Price, artist, of the Illustrated London News, and Lionel Harris, of the London Financial News, are at New York en route to the Klondike.

Puget Sound merchants have stolen a march on Canadians in connection with the Yukon trade. Eight complete stocks for general supply stores have been landed at Wrangel for Glenora and Teslin Lake, consigned to Yankee traders, who will establish themselves at these points.

Edward B. Coombs, a former coroner of Brooklyn, N. Y., was, on Monday, sentenced to one year and seven months imprisonment in the penitentiary, and also to pay a fine of $1000, for malfeasance in office during his term as coroner. There were 49 specific charges in the indictment of his having recorded bogus inquests on which he collected about $2,200.

Floods are doing great damage in Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Dayton, Ohio, is in great danger and the northren portion of the town is completely under water, Pittsburg, Pa., is a great sufferer, and fears are entertained that the flood will be as great as in 1884. Bridges are being carried away at many points in these States.

GENERAL.

Admiral Zopoff, aide-de-camp of the Czar, is dead.

Russia has withdrawn its demand of the Sultan of Turkey for the $3,500,000 arrears of the Russo-Turkish war indemnity.

Amboyna, a town on the island of Ambona, one of the Malacas, was completely destroyed by an earthquake. Sixty persons were killed.

Radical Italian deputies demand that ex-Premier Crispi be tried on the charge of complicity in the Bank of Naples scandals.

It is reported that the French expedition sent against Bossiris in Madagascar has met with a serious reverse, losing six officers and 100 men.

Cuban insurgents on Saturday night dynamited the iron railroad bridge near Madruga, Province of Matanzas, partly destroying the structure.

A heavy southerly gale cleared the Newfoundland coast of ice on Sunday This will allow the sealing steamers to prosecute that industry with some prospect of success.

The Czar has authorized an increase of over $2,000,000 yearly for six years, in addition to the present special grant of over $60,000,000, for naval purposes.

The Japanese parliamentary election returns show that the two parties will have about equal strength and that some fifty neutrals will probably hold the balance of power.

The Newfoundland Government has introduced a pension bill retiring Chief Justice Sir Frederick Carter, of the Supreme Court of the colony, now in his 80th year, with a salary of $8,000.

The bill to incorporate the Customs duties on pigs and pork products was adopted by the French Senate on Tuesday. In reply to a statement that the United States might retaliate the Premier said that the United States would make a bad mistake in resorting to reprisals, since the United States was the first to protect herself with high duties.

PREACHED BY A BLIND MAN.

The Best Sermon That an Eminent English Clergyman Ever Heard.

An English clergyman of eminence was asked by a group of London friends whose was the best sermon he had ever heard.

"If you mean," he answered, "the sermon which has influenced me most directly and never been forgotten, I can tell you at once. It was preached in the streets of Boston many years ago by a blind man."

He had been preaching, he said, in Phillips Brooks' church and had started to walk back to the house where he was staying. Being a stranger in Boston he became confused and turning to a man who was behind him asked to be directed to the house.

"Why, it is the preacher!" exclaimed his companion. "I know you by your voice, for I was in the church and heard you preach. I am blind, but I can show you the way. I can take you to the door."

The clergyman protested that he could not think of troubling the blind man and that he could find his way by himself.

"Surely," said his new acquaintance, "you will not refuse me the pleasure of conducting you. I am not a beggar. Every one is so kind to me and it is seldom, indeed, that I can render any one a service."

So the two men went on arm in arm and in ten minutes they were at the right door and parted. During that short walk the best sermon which the clergyman had ever heard was preached.

"It was simply," he said to his English friends, "the story of a man blind from his birth, whose face was shining with contentment and peace and whose heart was thrilled with a sense of his mercies and blessings.

"His parents had sent him to a school for the blind where he had been taught to read by raised letters and they had left him a small income which sufficed for his wants. He lived alone, but he could go about the streets without a guide. He told me that he considered that he ought to be thankful for being born blind because he had so much leisure for quiet thought. There would be time enough in another world for him to see everything.

"I have never forgotten that sermon," added the clergyman. "His example of contentment and sincerity of mind has never ceased to be helpful to me. I have told the story often to my English congregations and it has always deeply affected them.

INVENTIVE BELLBOY.

Sarcastic Traveling Man—Bellboy will you kindly tell me how that fire you built in my room three minutes ago managed to go out?

Bell Boy—Well, sir, the window was open and the fire escape right in sight.

AGRICULTURAL

PRACTICAL POTATO GROWING.

The finest quality of potatoes can be grown on sandy soil but the heaviest yield is usually obtained where there is considerable vegetable or alluvial deposit. Potatoes cann be grown profitably on almost any soil, with the exception of heavy wet clay,.

The yield will be largely governed by the preparation of the land. A thorough plowing in the fall is undoubtedly the best, for a deep soil will hold moisture and thus be in a better condition to withstand drouth. Potoes are also a deep feeding crop and for this reason require a deep, mellow soil in which their roots can ramify in all directions.

In order to obtain the best results, plenty of barnyard manure should be applied, as few crops will give such good returns from manure as the potato. If applied in the fall, plow under. If not put on until later, it can either be plowed under lightly or thoroughly mixed with the surface soil by means of a cultivator. Do not plant land until it is in just the right condition, as there is nothing that pays so well as thorough tillage. Where sod is to be planted, it is immaterial whether it be plowed in the fall or not. Many of the most successful growers differ upon this point. Some prefer a clover sod plowed in the spring and the surface well cultivated, to any other preparation. It would be advisable to plow an old turf in the fall so as to allow it to rot before spring. The early varieties should be planted as soon as the land can be thoroughly prepared in the spring. For the later sorts cultivate the land again and plant as soon as through with the other spring seeding.

If good results are to be obtained, perfect seed must be chosen. Select medium-sized, well-formed, smooth potatoes, free from scab, Practical growers advise different methods of cutting, while some do not cut at all. The usual method, however, with the best growers is to cut in pieces containing from two to three eyes.

Potatoes may be planted either in hills or drills. Though the yield will be much the same in either case, the latter method is preferable, for the planting, cultivating and harvesting can be much more easily accomplished since horse labor will, to a large extent, take the place of hand work. Many very successful growers still plant in hills. The drills may be 30 inches apart for small varieties and 33 or 35 for the more growthy sorts. Ten to twelve inches is a good distance apart in the rows. Cover two or three inches deep with the plow, or if the furrows were ridged together a plank, scraper or coverer may be used, which would cover two rows at once. A common and very successful way is to plow the land lightly, planting in every third furrow. Those who grow potatoes on a large scale will find it profitable to use a regular planting machine.

If dry weather is feared immediately after planting. Harrow the ground just as the potatoes are coming through It will be wise to repeat this once or twice. Never plant potatoes in a field where the crop was formerly affected with either the rot or the scab, for there will be a sufficient number of pores left in the ground for several years to spread the disease. If either of these diseases is feared the best remedy is to spray with bordeaux mixture at intervals of two weeks. In order to destroy the bettles at the same time, Paris green may be added in the usual proportions, viz., 1 lb to 200 gallons of the mixture.

GRAFTING.

In speaking of grafting at this season, we do not have reference to the nursery operation known by that name, but rather to what is called "top-working," which is done in the spring and not in the winter, as is the case with the grafting of seedlings in the nursery. Top-working on growing trees is not a difficult operation, and may be made to bring good results in many cases. Many varieties, too tender to be grown in a locality, can be made to do well when grafted on hardier sorts, and some that for various reasons are found unsatisfactory when other methods are pursued with them, do well when grafted on other varieties. The Wild Goose plum, for example, does not give general satisfaction, but, if top-worked on the Wolfe or De Soto, can be relied on for good crops. Many valuable combinations can also be made with the apple, and, for the home orchard, kinds that are valued, but lack hardiness, can be secured in this way. It is best to cut the scions for grafting in December, but they may be cut during the winter at any time, after a few days of mild, open weather. If cut when the temperature is low, the bark is pretty sure to shrivel. Plum and cherry trees can best be grafted late in March, before the sap starts, and the wounds should be covered with grafting wax. Apple trees may be top-worked in April, just as the buds are swelling. If it is preferred to bud instead of graft, this may be done as late as the last week in May. Cherries and plums are usually propagated in this way, though cherry seedlings cannot be budded until August or September. The essential feature of successful grafting is that the inner bark and cambium layer of the scion stock shall coincide for as much space as possible, and that the air shall be excluded by the application of grafting wax, so that it will not dry out. Cleft grafting consists of splitting the stock and holding the cleft open with wedges, inserting the scion after shaping it smoothly to a wedge-shape, taking care to bring the inner bark of the scion and the stock together. In whip grafting, the scion and stock are both shaved off diagonally and brought together in that way. A little practice on branches of green wood of almost any kind will soon enable the learner to make the cuts so that they will come together smoothly and bring the inner bark of both together. A common formula for grafting wax, is three parts resin, three parts beeswax and two parts of beef tallow, melted together. A cheaper, harder and better composition is four parts resin, one part beeswax and one part linseed oil.

PRUNING GRAPE VINES.

The trouble with an unpruned vine is that it bears too much fruit, and this means poor quality. Take a thrifty Concord vine to illustrate this matter. At the end of the season such a vine, in good soil, kept well tilled, should have somewhere near 300 fruit buds on the new growth of the past season. Now, a good Concord vine should bear about twenty pounds of first class fruit each season; if it does this steadily year after year, no more should be expected. To bear that amount of fruit, not more than fifty buds are required. But as we have seen, our vine has about six times that number, hence many in excess of the need. Leave the vine untrimmed, and the 300 buds will overbear, and the yield will be very inferior. Prune to reduce the number of buds to fifty, and a good crop of fruit may be expected. That is the simple proposition needed for guiding your pruning knife. Cut away, therefore, enough of the young canes to bring the buds down to the right number. A fair rule with Concords is to remove all the canes but five, and cut these back to nine or ten buds each. The Delaware class should have even less. Prune and tie up so as to have a good distribution over the trellis. The pruning should not be deferred beyond this month if it can be helped.

LITTLE KINDNESSES.

To those of us who observe everyday happenings it is a remarkable fact that the seeming trifles are the things that make life bright or dark. And it is the person who remembers to do the little things who is the maker of happiness for others. Few of us can write out a check for our friend; and if we could, the chances are that she would feel intensely uncomfortable in accepting it. But we can each say the bright word to those with whom we come into contact, and can utter the cheerful "Good-morning!" to each member of our household. Even our servants work with a better will when the mistress is cheerful.

But the little duties do not stop with saying cheerful things. There is actual genius in remembering the especial ailment or worry that each acquaintance has, and in inquiring about that particular trouble. There is nothing else that so thrills one with a comfortable sense of his own importance as to find that some one thinks of his little complaints, and the person who thus remembers is sure to win the love of those who know her. The price of popularity is certainly eternal vigilance—the vigilance that notices other people and their pleasures and troubles. Such vigilance and tactful thoughtfulness are not hypocritical, for by practising an appearance of an interest that at first may be only feigned we soon learn to feel it truly from the heart. And surely there is no harm in trying to make others love us if in so doing we promote their comfort. Such an aim and such means cannot be base.

Those of us who are already burdened with the cares of life often long to do great things for our friends, and since we cannot do these we settle down into the conviction that we can do nothing. We are not like Lowell's heroine, who

Doeth little kindnesses
Which most leave undone or despise,
For naught that sets one heart at ease
Or giveth happiness or peace
Is low esteemed in her eyes.

There are many people to do the great deeds that must be done. What this weary old world needs is more people who will remove the pebbles from the pathway of those who are foot-sore, and lift by even a finger's weight the burden on some weary back. It may be just that pebble which would wound the foot, and just that finger's weight which would make the burden intolerable.

WRITING TO THE QUEEN.

The paper on which letters to Queen Victoria are written must not be folded. No communication which bears evidence of having been creased will ever fall into Her Majesty's own hands. The proper method is to write on thick, glossy white paper, and to despatch the missive in an envelope which fits it. Any folded communication never reaches the Queen, for the simple reason that she never looks at it. All such letters are opened by the Mistress of the Robes, and, as a rule, their contents never get beyond her, or, if the letter is of importance, it is returned to the writer with the directions how to forward it.

THE MEANEST YET.

What made you quit Grimly, Watty? Wasn't he paying you a good monthly salary?

Yes, but the old skinflint wanted to dock me because February was such a short month.

FACTS ABOUT LAKE SUPERIOR.

Peculiarities of the Largest Body of Good Drinking Water in the World.

Lake Superior, is, to begin with, the largest body of fresh water in the world. It is water of wonderful purity, which it holds too; and some time and in the not very distant future, either, the people who live in the large cities to the west and south will come to this lake to get the water for their homes. It will not be so remarkable an engineerng feat to pipe the water of this lake, pure and sparkling and fresh from its cold depths, to these cities which are now struggling with the question of their water supply and meeting all sorts of difficulties in their efforts to get water fit to drink.

All down through this thousand feet of blue there is a peculiar coldness. At the very most the temperature varies through winter and summer not more than 6 degrees. Winter and summer this great lake never changes to any appreciable extent, so that if you dip your finger tips in the blue surface on a day in July, or if you test it some day in the early winter when you have been out on some belated, ice-mailed fishing smack, or when you have gone out to watch the fishermen spearing their supplies through the thick ice in mid-January, you will find but a trifling difference in the temperature. Away down at the bottom, too, there is, but little variation in the temperature, for it stands at nearly 40 degrees Fahrenheit at the bottom, and varies from 40 to 46 degrees winter and summer, at the surface. The other lakes though cold, are not in this respect like Superior.

The whole bottom of the lake is believed to be a strong rock basin, though it would seem that there must be great springs at the bottom to help keep up the enormous volume of water. From the north there is a large amount of water, pouring into the lake year in and year out, the swift-rushing, narrow-banked Nipigon and other streams furnishing no small part of the supply. These streams in a large measure make up for the loss from the surface. One of the old lake Captains, a bronzed, kindly faced man, who had been for thirty-five years on the lakes and had faced death many a time in the frightful storms which sometimes sweep across these beautiful bodies of water, told me, as we were passing along one day near the north coast of Superior, with the headlands and inlets and glossy green bluffs of that most picturesque shore in full view, that the theory that the lake was slowly going down in size was true. He maintained that he could tell from certain landmarks along the shores, with which he is as familiar as he would be, with the streets of his old Scottish birthplace that the lake was slowly—very slowly—but surely receding. However, it will be some centuries yet before there will be any appreciable lessening of the great lakes, so that we need not be concerned.

Strange as it may seem, the lake has tides, too, well-defined tides, discovered in 1860. It is what is called a self-registering tide, with a regular flux and reflux wave, caused, so the scientific men say by the sun and moon. The average rise and fall every twenty-four hours is 1 14-100 of a foot; the maximum tide at new and full moon is 1 28-100 of a foot.

JUNGLE JOKES.

The Animals Make Facetious Remarks About Each Other.

"Bosh!" said the wise Anaconda to the Chameleon. "You think you know it all, when as a matter of fact you're a regular child as far as knowledge is concerned."

"Oh, I don't know," replied the Chameleon, turning pink; "I'm not so green as I was."

"Papa," said the Baby Elephant to his father, "I don't think us Baby Elephants is strong enough to carry trunks like you big ones."

"What on earth would you have instead?" demanded the father.

"A dress suit case," giggled the Baby.

"It is a wonderful dispensation of nature," said the Hairless Dog from Mexico, "how we are always adapted to the climate in which we live. It's awfully hot in Mexico, and, as you see, I am hairless."

"With us," said the Polar Bear, who had wandered in, "it is the climate that is adapted, not ourselves. If it wasn't for the ice in the polar regions I should simply melt with all this fur on.'

"I wish I could get my mane out of tangle," sighed the Lion.

"Why don't you ask the Fox and the Rooster to help you?" suggested the Mouse. "Borrow the brush from the Fox and a comb from the Rooster."

"What is this weed at the foot of this tree here?" asked the Rabbit of the Giraffe.

"I really can't say," replied the Giraffe. "All my investigations in botany have been in the higher branches, Shall I throw you down a date?"

"Why did you call that Flea Sherlock Holmes?" asked the Lioness of her lord and master.

"Because it doesn't take him a second to get on to anything he takes an interest in," explained the Lion.

"You ought to go to Paris," said the Anaconda to the Boa-Constrictor. "You'd be quite a swell there."

"Oh, I don't know," said the Boa-Constrictor. "They don't cultivate serpents at Paris, do they?"

"I suppose they do," said the Anaconda. "I saw in one of the French papers that Boas were quite fashionable there this winter."