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Mercantile Summary.

THE Ormonde cheese factory at Hastings has been destroyed by fire. Loss (including cheese), \$5,000; insured for about \$2,000.

KINGSTON ratepayers will shortly vote on the question of giving \$50,000 towards the erection of an arts and science building for Queen's University.

IN Montreal there is at present a supply of coal only sufficient to last about a month, and the great strike of anthracite coal miners in Pennsylvania is causing much anxiety among manufacturers.

KIRKWOOD & MCKINNON, of Owen Sound, are building a new side-wheel steamer to be known as the "City of Owen Sound," to ply between Owen Sound and Sault Ste. Marie. She is to have accommodation for 110 passengers and is expected to make 16 knots per hour.

THE question of immediately erecting suitable postoffice and customs house buildings at Paris is now engaging the earnest consideration of the Government, according to recent telegrams from high officials. This step, if adopted promptly, will hearten up the citizens to rebuild the town in good style.

THE supply of gutta percha material is so restricted that large electrical enterprises, such as the Pacific cable, are dependent to a marked degree on the question as to whether or not the necessary gutta percha can be secured. The latest source of supply, says the Electrical Review, seems to be gutta percha leaves. A firm in Singapore states that it manufactures, in this manner, gutta percha that cannot be told from the true gum. It requires, however, sixty-five tons of leaves to yield one ton of gutta percha, and, as the leaves are not always to be had in sufficient quantities this source of supply cannot be considered a very stable one. The inventor who can devise a satisfactory substitute for gutta percha has his fortune made.

PEOPLE abroad have more than once asked, what is the substance called excelsior? It is a sort of wood shavings, only instead of being an inch or two wide the shavings are about the size of a knitting needle. It was first made in the United States about 1862. The present output amounts to many thousands of tons annually. Basswood and poplar are the woods largely used in the production. The logs are sawed into lengths of 18 inches, which is the length of a fiber of excelsior. These blocks are split into halves, and the wood is properly seasoned. Excelsior is made of different degrees of coarseness and fineness of fiber. In the manufacture a series of knife points run down the face of the block, cutting into the wood in parallel lines that are spaced according to the width of the fiber to be made. A following knife slices off the whole face of the block thus scored. The fibers curl and commingle as the knife sets them free. The usual commercial package of excelsior is a bale weighing about 250 pounds.

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