WHAT UNCLE SAM IS AT.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ABOUT THE BUSY YANKEE.

Neighborly Interest in His Doings—Matters of Moment and Mirth Gathered From His Daily Record.

Boston has a floating hospital.

American railroads have 35,000 locomotives.

The 23,000 newspapers in America employ 200,000 men.

New York has a temperance society that permits moderate drinking.

The Johnsons outnumber the Smiths by 700 in the Chicago directory.

One-third of the deaths among American Indians are due to consumption.

United States Fish Commissioners are hatching 50,000,000 lobster eggs.

One of the largest sassafras trees in this country is in Central park, New York.

Most of American slate is quarried in Eastern Pennsylvania and New England.

Secretary Gresham is the prize smoker of the Cabinet. His allowance of cigars is 20 a day.

The thirty-two teeth in the mouth of John McDarby, of Salmon Falls, Mass., are all double.

The dredging of Ogdensburg harbor, for which $20,000 is available, will shortly be commenced.

Reports from Arkansas indicate that the cotton crop will be the largest ever picked in the State.

The customs authorities of Boston have decided that the works of Zola are immoral, but not obscene.

Major Fred Brackett will be general manager of the Baltimore centennial exposition to be held in 1897.

A little store in Philadelphia has this sign beside the door: "Coal, oil, wood, milk and other notions."

The Hotel Guernsey at Asbury Park was burned. The guests escaped and lost nothing but their clothes.

A planter in Apalachicoal, Fla., has grown an immense cabbage; a single stalk with four well-developed heads.

Dr. Burtsell, who has just returned from Rome, says the papal delegation to America is to be a permanency.

The only surviving full rank lieutenant-generals of the Confederacy are Generals Gordon and Longstreet.

Miss Elizabeth Fleming has been chosen court crier in the United States District Court in Portland, Ore.

General A. J. Pleasanton, originator of the blue glass theory, died at his home in Philadelphia, aged 86 years.

After a courtship of two hours Jas. Wood and Miss Mary Stewart were married recently near Youngstown, O.

A passenger who arrived from Havre at New York the other day was named in the steamer's list as Jules Verne.

At Red Cliff, Col., a woman candidate for Mayor, was defeated at a recent election largely by the votes of women.

The water that pours over the Falls of Niagara is washing the rock away at the rate of five yards in four years.

Among Edison's recent patents is one for an improved form of lamp filament and a method of magnetic ore separation.

There are more artesian wells in California than any other state in the Union. One county claims 457 of these wells.

Sam Stevenson, of Michigan, is the richest member of the lower house of Congress. He is tall and thin and wears hand-me-down clothes.

The New York Central has consolidated the New York and Chicago limited with its north shore limited between New York and Chicago.

It cost George De Johan, of New Orleans, a fine of $117 the other day for plucking three rare exotic flowers in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.

It is said the first horse was brought to this continent in 1518. There are now in the United States alone 14,056,750 horses, valued at $941,000,000.

Reading receivers have agreed to the plan for the rehabilitation of the road drafted by a sub-committee of the Earl Olcott reorganization committee.

An order has been issued by the New York Central and Hudson River railroad forbidding the employment of father and son on the same engine.

One meal a day is all that is eaten by the Rev. John S. Eberle, of Glendale, Pa., and that is eaten at noon. For thirty years this has been his habit.

Charles McIlvaine, an American expert on fungi, claims to have eaten full meals of over 400 species of toadstools without ever having been poisoned.

A trust mortgage for $1,200,000 on 139 miles of the east end of the Burlington, including the equipment and depot grounds in Chicago, has been filed.

After judgments aggregating $93,566 had been secured against Weber Brothers, a Milwaukee dry goods firm, a receiver was asked for and appointed.

Miss Kitty Wilkin, of Idaho, is the owner of a brown mare named Mollie, who, although 38 years old, has just become the mother of a handsome colt.

Biddeford, Me., has a 98-year-old physician, Dr. Westbrook Farrar, who is still in active practice, and, what is still more astonishing, visits patients on a bicycle.

Brooklyn has eight miles of water front, where over $300,000,000 of goods are stored every year. It is the fourth American city in manufactures, producing over $180,000,000 a year.

Clifford Breckinridge, of Arkansas, recently appointed Minister to Russia, once declined to fight a duel on the ground that he was then studying for the Presbyterian ministry.

It is estimated that no less than $100,000 reached the treasuries of the missionary societies during 1893 from the Christian Endeavor societies in the various denominational churches.

A freak of nature, a large tree which possess the characteristics of a pine and an oak, may be seen near Ashburnham, Mass. In the fall of the year pine burs fall on one side and acorns on the other.

John Jacob Astor is the inventor of an automatic road sweeper, on which he has taken out a patent, and which, it is claimed, will be of great service in clearing roads of dust and other obstructions.

A Boston syndicate has purchased the Eiffel Tower, and that structure will be brought there. The promoters of the Baltimore centennial celebration, which is to be held in 1897, are said to be the purchasers.

William Armstrong, of Norwalk, Ohio, died recently at the age of 98 years and four months, left six daughters and one son, and grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great-grandchildran to the fifth generation.

John Boyd Thatcher, of Albany, N. Y., has presented that city with the original bill signed by Queen Anne and Earl Godolphin to compensate Albany's first mayor, Peter Schuyler, for taking four Indian chiefs to England in 1710.

A company of Philadelphia capitalists is negotiating for the purchase of a volcano of Popocatepetl. The company proposes to construct a railway up the mountain to mine the sulpur in the crater, and ship it to the United States for sale.

A promoter in California proposes to build an electric railway through the mountains, sixty-two miles to the Yosemite Valley, and by utilizing the water power furnish electric light and motors for al that region. About 4,000 tourists visit the Yosemite every year, paying $35 each for the stage ride.

A peculiar incident happened recently in connection with the rifle practice of a New York regiment at the New Jersey State camp at Sea Girt. While one of the officers was firing at a target 300 yards away three blackbirds flew across the range and at the crack of the rifle one of the birds fell. Upon examination it was found that the bullet had gone through the body of the bird, and, without deviation, had buried itself in the centre of the target.

THE ANTIQUITY OF TENNIS.

It is the Oldest Ball-Game of Which History Has a Record.

The antiquaries affirm that there is no reference to ball-playing of any kind in the Sacred Scriptures, and that there is no allusion to it among the Assyrian inscriptions. Isaiah, however, says that the Lord will surely violently turn and toss the wicked like a ball into a large country.

The game of Hand-ball, from which Tennis is derived, is known to have been popular in England and France in remote times. The French King Louis X. is said to have died of a severe cold caught while playing ball at Vincennes, in the fourteenth century, and an old plan of Windsor Castle, made in the fifteenth century, exhibits what is termed a "Tennys Courte."

Tennis evidently sprang from Racket, and Racket appears, according to Mr. F. Philpott, to have been merely a transition from the ruder and less scientific mode of propulsion adopted by our forefathers in their ball-play, who always play "Hand Tennis" with the naked hand. By degrees the glove came into use, and the glove was sometimes lined. The glove was afterward exchanged for a sort of *reticulata manus*, the naked hand being bound with thongs or cords made of what is popularly, but improperly, termed catgut, as likely to increase the power and velocity of the ball; this, in turn, gave way to artificial palms of the hands, or rackets. Tennis lay dormant in England for many years, and until Croquet died a natural death, not long ago; and Lawn Tennis sprang from the ashes of croquet balls, stakes, and mallets.

A PATCHED PONY.

Tricky Indians Make Use of a Rabbit Skin.

"These stories of Indian troubles in the southwest remind me of an experience that I had down in New Mexico," said Henry Davidson of Albuquerque. "I was new to the region then, and although I had heard all sorts of strange tales about the trickiness of the Indian, I did not know that he was as shrewd as I afterward found him to be.

"I wanted a pony for some reason and I communicated my desire to a friend of a crowd of the greasy citizens of the outskirt. The next day I was besieged with offers. I looked all over the lot and picked three or four to make my final selection from. After several hours I settled on an animal that I thought to be in the pink of condition and form. I took him for a good round sum and a trade thrown into the bargain.

"I rode home on the animal. As I got into my quarters I noticed that the horse appeared to be uneasy, as if suffering from injury. As I live, I found that a patch of skin several inches square had come off his back. I looked into it and discovered that the horse was raw there and that he had been patched up with rabbit or some other skin for the time being. Those Indians stood by each other too, for I could never locate the scoundrel who had swindled me. I have since concluded that they were all wrong and that had I bought the outfit I would have found the oddest assortment of patched horses that it was ever the fortune of a white man to look upon."

Beauty Feeds on Lilies Now.

A new vegetable is offered and the roots or tubers of the calla lily are being adapted in this country. In Japan and in Egypt, where the bulb of the favorite household lily grows to great size, it has long been an article of food. It is cooked much like a potato, either boiled, fried, baked or roasted. A certain toughness is best overcome by first boiling and afterward finishing in some other way. It is eaten with cream dressing, or with butter, and is regarded as more delicate than potatoes. Beauty has long been able to feed itself on rose petals, and now the stately white lilies themselves are food for her dainty wants.

Deserved Arrest.

A sharp advertiser, who offered for a small sum to supply women with cheap substitutes for hat pins, has been arrested in Boston for misusing the mails. He sent two rubber bands to each inquirer with the advice: "Sew one end to the hat and aten the other behind one of your ears."

ABOUT THE HOUSE.

Adding a Small Plant Room.

The addition of a bay window for the accommodation of plants means the tearing away of a considerable portion of one side of a room, and frequently makes the room thereafter inconvenient for the arranging of furniture. The illustration, Fig. 1, shows how a plant window may be added with

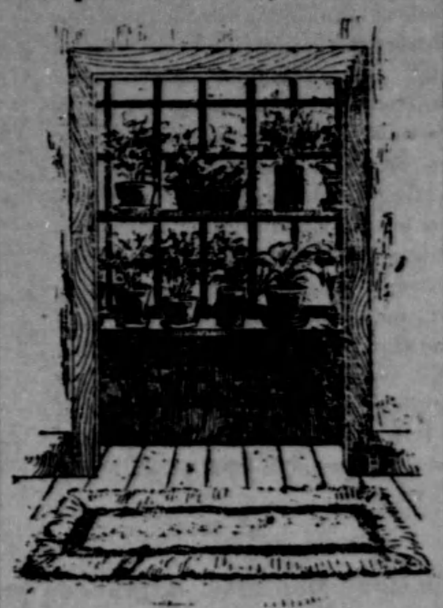

FIG. 2. INTERIOR VIEW OF PLANT ROOM.

very little change in the original room. An ordinary window is cut down to the floor, making a door of it, while outside of this is built a rectangular addition that will make a charming little room for plants. Of course the width and depth of the addition can be made to suit one's fancy. The glimpse which one has from the sitting-room into such a plant room is exceedingly pleasing, as shown in Fig. 2, particularly if the doorway is hung with a pretty portiere. Such a room should have double windows, then, if the portiere is drawn back at night, the heat from the sitting-room would keep the plants from freezing even on a cold night.

Household Hints.

A solution of oxalic acid will remove ink stains from books without injuring the print.

Postage stamps will stick, and not turn up at the corners if the face is wet after applying them.

Pumpkin seeds are very attractive to mice, and traps baited with them will soon destroy this little pest.

To clean kettles easily, pour a little boiling water into them and put a cover on; the steam will soften the dirt so that it may be easily removed.

Pounded glass mixed with corn meal and placed within the reach of rats, it is said, will banish them from the premises; or sprinkle cayenne pepper where they go.

Spots on varnished furniture can easily be removed by rubbing them with essence of peppermint or spirits of camphor, and afterwards with furniture polish or oil.

"Sticky" varnish may be dried by applying a coat of benzine, and after two or three days apply a coat of good varnish and let dry thoroughly before using the furniture.

Remove stains from teacups with a little baking soda, rubbed on with the fingers. Some say a little table salt is just as good.

To make shoes waterproof and make them last a long time, dissolve beeswax and a little sweet oil to thin it. Before the shoes are worn, warm the soles and pour the melted wax on them with a teaspoon, then hold it close to the fire till it soaks into the leather; then add more until the leather ceases to absorb it.

To check vomiting, give a teaspoonful of whole black mustard seed. A tablespoonful may be needed in severe cases.

To clean light kids, put the gloves on the hand and rub thoroughly with white corn meal, using a piece of cotton flannel for the purpose.

One ounce flour of sulphur to one quart of water. Shake well at intervals for a few hours, and when settled saturate the head with the clear liquid every morning. This is said to cure vexatious dandruff, a disease of the scalp.

To remove grease from broths for the sick, after pouring in a dish, pass clean white wrapping paper quickly over the top of broth, using several pieces, until grease is all removed

Lace Curtains.

The best way to wash lace curtains is, to shake the dust well out of the lace, put in tepid water, in which a little borax has been dissolved, and wash at once carefully with the hands in several waters, or until perfectly clean; rinse in water well blued, also blue the starch quite deeply and squeeze, but do not wring. Pin some sheets down to the carpet in a vacant room, then pin down the curtains stretched the size they were before being wet. In a few hours they will be dry and ready to put up. The whole process of washing and pinning down should occupy as little time as possible, as lace will shrink more than any other cotton goods when long wet. Above all it should not be allowed to "soak" from the mistaken idea that it washes more easily, nor should it be ironed.

Another way is to fasten them into a pair of frames, which every housekeeper should have, made very like the old-fashioned quilting-frames, thickly studded along the inside with the smallest size of galvanized tenter hooks, in which to fasten the lace, and having holes and wooden pins with which to vary the length and breadth to suit the different sizes of curtains. The curtain should always be measured before being wet, and stretched on the frames to that size to prevent shrinking. Five or six curtains of the same size may be put in, one above the other, and all dried at once. The frames may rest on four chairs.

A good way to bleach muslin is to take one pound of chloride of lime for thirty yards of goods, and dissolve in two quarts rain water; let cloth soak over night in warm rain water or long enough to be thoroughly wet; wring out cloth and put in another tub of soft water, in which has been added chloride of lime. Let it remain for about twenty minutes, lifting up the cloth and airing often and rinse in clear rain water. This will not injure the cloth in the least, and is much less troublesome than bleaching on the grass. Only be careful and rinse very thoroughly.

A BETTER OUTLOOK.

An Eminent Banker's Opinion on Business Prospects—Better Times are Close at Hand.

Keen observers in the United States have begun to predict the return of better times. In many cases, no doubt, the wish is father to the thought, but where restoration of confidence is chiefly what is wanted the thought is often precursor of the fact. If Canada has suffered less than other nations from the world-wide loss of confidence it has not escaped the business depression that has clouded the financial horizon. Our momentary institutions have, it is true, successfully weathered the shock that has shattered hundreds of banks in the United States, but the volume of our trade has under its influence contracted, and progress has practically been suspended. That the tide has now taken

A FAVORABLE TURN

there can be no manner of doubt. The opinions entertained by bankers on such a matter have a tendancy to be conservative because they are in a specially good position to know all the unfavorable symptoms. When, therefore, they speak hopefully they keep well within the mark. Hopeful is, in the main, the view taken by Mr. B. E. Walker, general manager of the Bank of Commerce. That gehtleman, whose eminent position in the financial world has been recognized by his election to the presidency of the Bankers' Association, is always regarded as a safe authority on such matters. He observes signs of a gradual improvement rather than a sudden return to generous prosperity. As Mr. Walker points out, one of the causes of the depression is gradually supplying the remedy for it. At a time when the idea gets abroad that there is a dulness in business, the situation is aggravated by the general desire it inspires for economy. Even people who have money, feeling the sympathetic influence of the prevalent opinion, draw in their horns and cease to buy as liberally as usual. Such a period of general retrenchment we have of late, in common with other countries, been experiencing; that purse-strings will be loosened, and trade flow once more freely in its various channels, is the natural sequence of this state of affairs. Economy has placed the people in a better position to discharge their indebtedness, and has thereby taken the first step that is necessary to the full

RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE.

We are warned, however, not to expect that the volume of trade will at once expand to normal proportions. Nature's most beneficent laws act slowly, and the same may be said of the laws of business. In a country like Canada the prosperity of the farmer is the foundation of all prosperity. When we see, therefore, that the agriculturist is improving his condition we may be sure that the improvement will not stop with him. If on the whole his crops this year are up to the average it cannot be denied that prices are somewhat discouraging. But here the useful effect of the late lesson in economy will be felt. With no larger return that he secured last year the farmer will, in the opinion of a man of such wide experience as Mr. Walker, be better able to live and meet his obligations than he was twelve months ago. His prospects are, however, growing brighter every day. From the West comes word that the yield is more than was expected, while rain in Ontario has ended the drought that threatened the cheese industry. Wheat, no longer profitable to export, will through the failure of the United States corn crop yield a good return when fed to pigs. Throughout the country farms are being improved, new fences and new barns are telling the story of new hope, the lumbering business is brisk, and gradually the feeling of busy prosperity is taking possession of the people. Their is indeed something more than the wish behind the thought that better times are close at hand, whether they come by degrees or at a bound.

Look Out For Nervous Girls.

Famous Dr. Weir Mitchell says that as much domestic unhappiness is caused by nervousness among women as by dram-drinking among men. He holds that every girl ought to be examined as to her nervous temperament when about to go to schools and at frequent intervals afterward; that leisure, exercise, and wholesome meal ought to be compulsorily diminished, or discontinued altogether the moment the well-known signs of overstrain appear. If girls are maintained in normal nervous condition until they are seventeen, they may study almost as hard as they please afterward without imperiling the woman's life. But let there be no mistake about it. Overwork and unnatural worry from eight or nine to seventeen means ruin and wretchedness from seventeen till early death.

Mrs. Besant Among the Hindus.

Mrs. Besant seems to have taken to Hinduism and all its dogmas most heartily. She believes in the Hindu gods; she tells Hindu audiences that she was a Hindu *pundit* in a former birth, and is visiting her own land after a sojourn in the West, where she was incarnated to know the nature of the materialistic civilization of those regions; she upholds the caste system as a necessary part of the law of *Karma*, those in the lowest caste being there as a result of their former works. It is no wonder that she gets crowded audiences to listen to her. She is a forcible speaker; she knows how to adapt herself to her audiences; and hence they do not hesitate to call her Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning.

British and Foreign.

Clwydfardd, the archdruid and bard of Wales, was recently stricken with paralysis. He is 94 years old.

The Earl of Albemarle, who died lately, was one of the earliest volunteers and among the first to take up cycling. He married a Canadian girl.

A winter palace has just been added to the attractions of the Jardin d'acclimatation in Paris. The main building contains a large concert hall that will accommodate 4,500 persons.

Marshal Bazaine's son has lately returned from Mexico, where he tried in vain to obtain the restitution of his mother's property, confiscated by the Mexican Government. The family is now in abject poverty.

An international journal for African languages has just been started in Germany, aided by a liberal subvention from the Government. The Secretary of the Colonial Society is editor, and six parts are to appear each year.

Dampness has made the Corinthian capitals of the church of the Madeleine in Paris crumble, and recently pieces of stone have fallen, endangering the passers by. The capitals are to be removed and new ones put in their place.

Eisleben, the birthplace of Martin Luther, is sinking into the moor upon which it is built. Measures have been taken in recent years to drain the bog, without avail, and the inhabitants are seriously thinking of abandoning the town.

M. Camille Jansen, formally Governor of the Congo Free State, has just gone to Chili as one of the arbitrators to settle the differences between that country and Great Britain in the matter of the indemnities arising out of the late civil war.

At the German army manœuvres this year a new quick-firing gun is to be tried in the cavalry operations. The gun is a sort of mitrailleuse and so light that one horse can draw it, while another draws the ammunition. If the experiment is successful, every cavalry regiment will be supplied.

In the India Office Library is the largest collection of printed Sanscrit books in the world, larger than the one in the British Museum, and comprising many early and rare editions. These are now being catalogued by the former librarian, Dr. Rost, who has already published the catalogue of the Sanscrit manuscripts in the office.

Tawhiao, the second Maori King, died recently of influenza in New Zealand. He was elected in 1860, and for fifteen years fought the New Zealand Government, his Maoris proving the best fighters that the English have had to meet in this generation. The last outbreak was between 1879 and 1881. Two years ago he gave up all his pretensions and accepted a pension of £225 from the Government.

Of over five million children in elementary schools in England only 890,000 pay for their schooling, and of these half a million pay no more than a penny a week, according to a recent official statement. Of the "voluntary schools" in which the whole or part of the tuition is paid by the parents, 5,000 receive from 10 to 20 shillings a head for the children in attendance, 4,000 between 5 and 10 shillings, and 5,000 under 5 shillings.

Sultan Abdul Aziz, the new young Sultan of Morocco, does nothing without consulting his mother, who is a woman of tact and talent. After the discovery of the recent conspiracy at Fez she persuaded him to spare the lives of culprits of lower rank and to pardon his brother, who was involved. The European powers have been requested to send no representatives to Fez for the present in order to avoid complications.

Mrs. Henry Wood, Edna Lyall, and Rider Haggard are the three most popular writers among those who take books out of the London free libraries, but the favorites are not the same in any two districts. At the Hammersmith Library, where the male readers outnumber the female, though the books oftenest taken out are "Jane Eyre," "Middlemarch," and "the Caxtons," the authors at the top of the list are Marie Corelli, Rider Haggard, and "Rita," closely followed by Robert Buchanan and Hall Caine.

M. Stambouloff, the ex-Premier of Bulgaria, has been speaking out his mind lately. He describes the Czar as "a type of the Russian moujik, honest, orthodox, narrow-minded, and as obstinate as an ox;" while Prince Ferdinand "is simply gambling away the little popularity he still enjoys in Bulgaria. He is undoubtedly a clever man, but wastes his cleverness on petty matters. He is nervous and excitable. He reads everything written about him and tears a newspaper into pieces if it contains disparaging remarks."

Of 12,907 vessels now registered in Lloyd's list, only 304 have a speed of 15 knots or over, and but 18 a speed of 20 knots or more. Of the latter, 10 are paddle-wheel steamers used on the Channel or Irish Sea, the others are screw steamers, of which two ply between Newhaven and Dieppe, the other six being the Paris, New York, Campania, Lucania, Teutonic, and Majestic. There are but 45 steamers with a higher speed than 19 knots of which 25 belong to Great Britain, 7 to Belgium, 5 to Germany, 3 each to Holland and France, and 2 to the American line. The list does not include war vessels and river and lake steamers.

Germany leads the list of of beer-producing countries, according to the trade report for 1893, just published, with 1,202,132,074 gallons, an increase of over 34,000,000 gallons over 1892; 33¼ gallons a head was the average for the empire, the product ranging from 62 gallons in Bavaria to 12 in Elsass-Lothringen. Great Britain was a good second with 1,164,752,952 gallons of malt liquor, over 30 gallons a head. American (including South America), came next with 1,084,433,460 gallons, 16 gallons per head. Then come Austria with 385,256,168 gallons, Belgium with 209,856,174, France with 196,630,500 gallons, Russia with 98,638,892 gallons; Denmark brewed 45 million gallons, Holland 33 million, Sweden 28 and a third million, Switzerland 26 and a sixth million gallons. The other countries for which statistics are given all produced less than 20 million gallons apiece. The total output of malt liquors in Europe and America was 4,500 million gallons, in making which 7,270,000 tons of malt and 82,000 tons of hops were used.