

WHAT UNCLE SAM IS AT.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ABOUT THE BUSY YANKEE.

Neighborhood Interest in His Doings—Matters of Moment and Girth Gathered from His Daily Record.

Mary Ellen Brown, colored, has become a notary public at Georgetown, Ky.

Three drummers at Danville, Ky., got on the horse scale and balanced them at 1,059 pounds.

It is said in New England that Bath, Me., has more smokers than any other town of similar size in that country.

In Kansas City a horse wandered away from its stable and fell into an abandoned well, 22 feet deep, but was not injured.

Two white-winged crows make daily visits to Robert Mullini's farm at Ilchester, Md., but so far they have eluded efforts to capture them.

Asa Bitters and his son took a morning off recently and captured ninety-nine rats which had been feeding on his grain, near Russell, Kan.

Residents of Jefferson street, Topeka, have been victims of a trained or perverted dog which stole their newspapers and took them to its master.

Winter has been so long in some of the Washington State valleys, that it is said that no hay will be left by the time the spring crops are in, as unusual condition.

Lurene Rudy, 4 years old, of Hagerstown, Ind., is said to embroider beautifully the daintiest fabrics, working out intricate designs, and blending colors in delightful harmony.

Four years ago, when wool was low, a Jonesboro, Me., man sold all his sheep but one, which each year since then has raised a black lamb, until this year, when it had a pair of white ewes.

Harry Zimmerman, of Snyderburg, Md., shot and captured without doing it any serious injury a gray eagle which measures 3 feet from beak to tail, and 7 feet 3 inches across the wings.

La grippe has not been known in White City, Fla., and the town is so unpropitious to physicians that two of them who sought a practice there have left the place, and it is now without a doctor.

Hezekiah Eradds, sexton of a Baptist church at Kansas City, having been abandoned by his wife, who took away all their household goods, made his domicile in the church steeple and instituted suit for divorce.

H. R. Ragan, of Grove, N.C., says of a Poland China sow that he owned for three years that he sold \$41.50 worth of her pigs and has \$25 worth left, and that, including the sow, he killed 2,000 pounds of pork.

At Norfolk, Va., a plant has been established with capacity for five tons of peanuts daily, for the manufacture of peanut oil, peanut flour, and stock feed, the estimated combined yield representing more than \$400 a day.

Of three young men who shocked the Episcopal Church, of Dodge City, Kan., by giving a Midway Plaisance entertainment some time ago, two have been killed, and the other has been maintained for life, all in railroad accidents.

In and about Tipton, Mo., there has been distributed a circular signed by a Christian evangelist who offers a reward of \$100 for a passage in the New Testament teaching that sprinkling is Christian baptism, or for a passage of Scripture teaching that denominations are good things.

Charles Roberts and his wife and four children walked almost all the way from Clay county, Kan., to their former home in Anne Arundel county, Md., being helped to a railway ride over one stage of the journey by sympathetic people at Bengies, in Baltimore county, who took up a collection for them.

Misfortune has overtaken William Byers, whose 600-acre crabapple farm of 30,000 trees near Leavenworth, Kan., has been seized by creditors. It was supposed to be the largest crabapple orchard in the world. In the early prohibition times Byers planted all the trees he could get and coined money out of cider which he sold all over the State. The free sale of liquor during the last two years ruined his market.

The Rev. William C. Mullenix, of Wheaton, Ill., 64 years old, was married last month at Grand Meadow, Minn., to Mrs. Mary Beesen, aged 62, of Grand Meadow, the ceremony being performed by the Rev. Mrs. Mullenix, the bride's daughter, and the daughter-in-law of the bridegroom. The bridegroom had preached the funeral sermon of his bride's first husband and had married her to her second husband. He is her third husband, and he has, himself, been twice a widower.

So heavy have been the snowdrifts in Sargent county, N.D., that it is said a farmer of Harlem township has added thirty-five feet of tubing to his well pipe in order to raise water above the snow. A hotel proprietor, Z. O. Patten, has had to build a barred wire fence around the roof of his barn to keep away stray stock, a horse having one day crashed through the roof while a walking over what appeared to be a snow-covered hill. Sidney Mull claims to have dug thirteen feet into a drift to get at the top of his windmill.

Irving and Florence Gilbert, brother and sister, have astonished their friends in Sioux City, Ia., where they are well known, by starting for Newton, Mass., to buy a small farm and work out an independent future after a peculiar idea advanced by the brother. Their plan is to raise on the farm all that they need and only what they need, to sell nothing, and to do without whatever is to be had only by purchase. They are to cultivate the land themselves and make their own cloth-

ing. Miss Gilbert was graduated from the Sioux Falls High School, and she taught in the schools there. She was active socially in the city's life. Her brother became known in Chicago during the World's Fair, where he was employed as an architect on some of the buildings. He is a victim of dyspepsia and nervous prostration, and he believes that both, which he thinks came as the result of the high tension of city life, will disappear in a life of simplicity.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR COAL.

SOLIDIFIED PETROLEUM IS THE LATEST INVENTION.

Smokeless, Cheap, not Bulky—Handy Fuel for Ships and Railroad—Army Camp May Use It.

Science now comes to the front with a substitute for coal. A French engineer, Paul D'Humy, knows how to solidify petroleum. He reduces it into small blocks, which when burned give out intense heat. These burn only on the surface, give out no smoke or smell, and produce but 2 or 3 per cent. of ashes. The process is, of course, his own secret.

The finest grades of anthracite coal make at least 10 per cent. of ashes, and bituminous coal fully 20 per cent. of ashes. In this respect solidified petroleum has an immense advantage as a fuel sufficient to render it far preferable to coal. In household use, on steamers, on railroads, and in manufacturing the removal of ashes is an expensive item.

CHEAP AND COMPACT.

The new fuel is also far cheaper and far less bulky. A single ton of it, in blocks of whatever size may be wanted, represents at least thirty tons of coal, possibly nearer forty, and its cost to the consumer, as now figured out, will be only from \$5 to \$10 a ton.

It has still one other admirable quality; it requires very little draught to burn it and very little trouble to set it ablaze. A cubic inch of it, will produce a light blue flame many hundred times larger in volume, and a flame which with a strong draught will travel a long distance. The experiments already made have proved that after oxygen it supplies the greatest heat obtainable.

From this it follows that its greatest value will be where enormous heat is required, where there must be great supplies of fuel, and wherever every inch of space has value. Nowhere are these conditions more evident than in the cases of warships, ocean steamers and the colossal steel factories that dot England and the United States. Ship designers are now greatly handicapped by the provision they are forced to make for the coal-bunkers. Men-of-war carry from 3,000 to 6,000 tons of coal.

USE IN THE NAVY.

Then, too, every war vessel must stop frequently for coaling. This has entailed enormous expense. England has very nearly the whole surface of the globe punctuated with coaling stations. The necessity of coal has stared her in the face at every step of her foreign policy.

The space saved could be devoted to extra machinery, guns, ammunition and men, and it would at once relieve the present cramped quarters in which officers and others have to live on board the ships of to-day. To the trans-Atlantic greyhounds solidified petroleum would also be of the greatest importance. A big ocean liner now uses from 2,500 to 3,000 tons of coal a trip.

Compressed petroleum is especially adapted for use in the manufacture of steel, for it contains no sulphur. In England coke is generally used in the blast furnaces. About two and a half tons of coke are required to make a ton of steel, and the cost of this is from \$12.50 to \$15. To get the same quantity of unvarying intense heat necessary to manufacture a ton of steel about 500 pounds of solidified steel would be necessary. This would cost about \$1.50, equal to ten per cent. of the present cost.

AVAILABLE SUPPLY.

D'Humy estimates that the production of petroleum is now more than 3,000 times in excess of the consumption, and that further supplies are available. D'Humy has also made a fuel out of coal tar and pitch. Another device of his is disintegrated wood mixed with solid petroleum. Still another is a block of common oil for domestic use, a fuel that can be mixed with ashes or earth and burned in any ordinary kitchen range or grate. This fuel, it is understood, can be put on the market at a dollar a ton, a ton being equal in burning capacity to three tons of coal. This, too, is smokeless, without smell, and leaves practically no ashes at all.

Perhaps the most interesting one of D'Humy's inventions is his "ready re-ference fire for soldiers on the march." Troops in bivouac often find it hard to gather sufficient wood for fires. D'Humy offers to be cut into small pieces of petroleum to be cut into small cakes of an ounce or so each. These, he says, can be put into each soldier's knapsack. Each little block will stand being mixed with 600 times its volume of common earth, and thus in a few minutes immense fires could be made to spring up all over a camp, with practically no trouble at all.

THE MODERN SHARK.

The modern shark is deteriorating. In ages gone by there were ferocious sharks, such as would make a mouthful of you without blinking, 70 feet in length. Plenty of their teeth have been found which are five inches long, whereas the biggest of the teeth at the present day are one and a half inches long.

FASTEST VESSEL AFLOAT.

GREAT BRITAIN'S LATEST TORPEDO BOAT DESTROYER.

She Will Steam Thirty-Three Knots an Hour, or Nearly Thirty-Eight Miles—The Problem of Furnishing Air to the Crew is a Perplexing One.

The British Government is engaged in building what will be when complete the fastest boat in the world. This marvelous craft that Britain is building will be able to steam 33 knots an hour, a trifle less than 38 miles.

"The Express," for that is the name of the coming record breaker, is now in process of construction at the shipyards of Laird Brothers, at Birkenhead. Her engines will be capable of attaining 10,000 indicated horse power. The tremendous power of this tiny boat, for she is only of 350 tons burden, can best be appreciated by considering the fact that she will be able to develop fully as great an engine power as the Renown, a battleship now building for England, which will have a displacement of 12,350 tons. The Express will have as an armament one twelve-pounder quick-firing gun, five six and three-pounder, quick-firing guns, and two Whitehead torpedoes.

THE MACHINERY.

While it is not known with certainty how the machinery will be arranged or the exact dimensions thereof, it is understood they will be as follows. Each set of engines will have four cylinders, the dimensions of which will be: High pressure 18 3/4 inches; intermediate, 32 1/2 inches; two low pressure of 33 1/2 inches. Each engine is of the three stage compound type, the stroke for all cylinders being 18 inches. The most noticeable point about the engine lies in the arrangement of the valves. The high and intermediate pressure cranks are similarly located, although at right angles to the high and intermediate cranks.

The arrangement described renders the design of the valves adopted possible. All the valves are combined in pairs, one above another in one chamber, each pair having a common valve rod. The result of this is a reduction of the number of moving parts and rearrangement of placing the engine in less fore and aft space. The air pump is worked direct from the main cranks shaft. This later is prolonged through a small crank shaft, a coupling joining the two. The diameter of the pump is 19 inches and its length of stroke four inches. The material used is such as to render breakage necessary rare, for both piston and top cylinder covers are made of forged steel.

A cylindrical copper condenser, each with 929 five-eighths-inch tubes, is attached to every main engine. The total cooling surface is 3,040 square feet, and the total heating surface is 178 square feet. In front of the boilers are air bulkheads, the air accident doors of which close automatically whenever a bursting tube or other accident causes an escape of steam and a resulting pressure on the boiler-side of the bulkhead. The construction of the boat with regard to safety, if the plans are carried out, will be as remarkable as her capacity for speed. She will have all the compartments her size will permit, and although the ordinary torpedo boat can be smashed like an egg-shell, this destroyer will be armed with a ram that could pierce the sides of a battleship. As far as danger to herself is concerned, if a battleship, or any other armored craft, should strike her a fair blow, she would be more likely to turn turtle than to sink. Her steering apparatus is of such a nature that it will act much more quickly than that of the ordinary craft. If she answers her helm perfectly it will be possible to turn the boat almost as quickly and easily as one would rein a horse to either side of the road, or turn about.

THE AIR PROBLEM.

The accommodations for officers and crew will be superior to those in any torpedo boat destroyer afloat. The problem of air to the people who live between decks has always been very unsatisfactory in point of solution. No matter how perfect the apparatus for giving them plenty of oxygen, there has always been a sad lack of the elements that go to make up the purity of atmosphere. The Express, however, will have vents for the foul air and modes of ingress for fresh air with a full measure of supply all of which the lungs need so much. Beside this, the ventilating system is a great improvement over that of all other craft of a similar class. It is further apparent, too, that while on vessels of this sort the crew is compelled to remain below when the sea is at all heavy, on the Express the decks will be of use in very rough water.

The Express will carry no sail, what mast and rigging she has being intended for signal purposes. The executive officer, or the Captain, as the case may be, stands on the little square bridge just abaft the winch and cons the ship from that point. From the conning tower and turret combined, on which the bridge rests, projects the twelve-pound, rapid-fire gun. Most of the guns, however, are between decks, and the firing is done through portholes. A shot from the twelve-pounder, however, would send the majority of the torpedo boats, with all on board, to Davy Jones's locker, for when a torpedo boat sinks, there is as a rule, small hope for those who man her. That she will make the speed intended Laird Bros. are willing to pledge a heavy forfeit.

MIKADO'S HEIR.

Prince Yoshihito Harunomiya, the heir to the Mikado's throne, is to visit Europe, Russia in particular next year.

John Tweed, of Chelsea, and once of Glasgow, has been commissioned to execute the statue of Cecil Rhodes, which is to be erected at Bulwago.

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