

WHAT UNCLE SAM IS AT.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ABOUT THE BUSY YANKEE.

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

In Mexico City Hop Lee advertises an American restaurant.

An unusual perquisite of ragpicking fell to the lot of a Louisville woman, who found a \$20 gold piece in the rag heap of a business house.

Sweet almonds and chestnuts have been raised with success in parts of Oregon, where it had been thought no palatable nuts would grow.

There are a dozen doctors and just the number of lawyers, who, if they were tailors, would make one man, to a population of 1,100 in Bad Axe, Mich.

Five cats were boxed up by the patient possessor of twenty-three, in Punta Gorda, Fla., and expressed to the Mayor of Arcadia, and on the third day after shipment each cat had come back.

Somebody in Columbia, Ky., has sent out and got printed in the West a story that the Green River at that place has been so low lately that swine have taken to wallowing in it and catching and eating fish.

During a temperance revival at Cedar Rapids, Ia., a young man who was converted confessed that he was guilty of a robbery for which another man has been imprisoned since last fall. He was arrested.

According to the experience of a Topeka clergyman people out there will pay more to be married than they will to hear the Gospel preached. He says he makes more by performing marriage ceremonies than he does by preaching.

There is one Tennessean, anyway, who will not practice the habit of holding a toothpick in his mouth any more. A sneeze caused him to swallow one the other day and he is considerably exercised over its whereabouts and possible effects.

It is said in Virginia that the people of Kansas believe that the Confederate notes ought still to be good money, and are willing to make them good by accepting them, and it is told that at least one Kansan has written the Richmond Chief of Police asking for all of them that he can get.

Gentle shepherds of the olden sort are not likely to inspire future poets of Montana. At White Sulphur Springs a big ranchman has been experimenting with a bicycle for use in sheep-herding and he pronounces it such a success that he believes the wheel will soon be in demand for that kind of work.

On the floor of a private dining room in a Minneapolis restaurant a waiter found a \$100 bill one night. The next day the proprietor of the place was called to the long-distance telephone and a man told him of having lost a \$100 bill. The waiter who found the money identified the man by his voice.

For an hour and a quarter a mine engineer near Bourne, Or., was whirled around with the fly wheel, into which he had fallen, but when he recovered consciousness after the wheel was stopped, it was found that he was not seriously hurt. The wheel was a 20-foot one, and was making 125 revolutions a minute.

An Indiana professor who took out a \$3,500 insurance policy in 1850 received an offer from the company 20 years ago, to cash the policy for \$2,000 or pay him an annuity of \$410. He elected to take the annuity, and now, at the age of 90 years, has drawn from the company more than \$8,000.

A rope with a loop in the free end left dangling over the street from a telephone wire in Easton, Md., caught a button on a carriage which was being driven up the street and, wrenching the top from the vehicle, threw out a woman who was riding in it. She was severely injured and died in the house to which she was taken.

Of an operation commonly looked upon with more resignation in this world of wickedness and small woes, a Mississippi paper says: "Some fiend incarnate, with the roaring furnaces of hell staring him in the face, entered the residence of John Jones Sunday night and stole the Presbyterian Sunday school collection."

E. J. White, of Bernidji, a pioneer trapper and hunter, of Minnesota, stakes his reputation on the prediction of a cold winter. He says, the wild animals, deer particularly, have especially thick coats this year, and that the muskrats are building their houses high and with thick walls—signs which, he says, have never failed within his experience.

Experiments upon a sub-stratum of swampy soil on the Myrtle Grove Farm in Queen Anne county, Md., have developed a new fertilizing material and a new stock for a brown and durable paint. The mud, when subjected to an evaporating process, hardens into crusty blocks. This substance, when crushed, has been found available for fertilizing or as the body of a paint if the usual mixing fluids be added.

Basil Hayden, who as a Confederate soldier, has lived in good health in his house at Bloomfield, Ky., since 1863, and not once in all that time has he set his foot on the ground. The Lord was not good to him in allowing his negroes to go free, he said, and he vowed never to put foot on the Lord's earth again. Such is the story told in connection with a report of a mule sale conducted by Hayden at his home.

NEW CANADIAN OIL FIELDS.

Working for Wealth in Secret—Everything Favourable for Development.

A special correspondent writes to the Financial News, London:—If only a portion of the reports which are to hand concerning the value of the oil wells in Canada and the United States are reliable, the riches of the Klondike gold fields almost fade into insignificance. A great deal of excitement prevails at present in Canada, where, in eastern Quebec, the Gaspé oil fields have created something like a boom.

For the past two or three years an English company, known as the Petroleum Oil Trust, Limited, has been carrying on operations with great secrecy, all the employees being bound not to divulge anything, they might learn about the company's business; so that up till recently it has been very difficult to obtain anything like complete or reliable information. But certain facts have now leaked out, and the potential wealth of the Gaspé oil fields no longer remains a secret. The proprietary company referred to owns over 48,000 freehold acres of oil-bearing lands and of mineral and oil-bearing rights in perpetuity, which are free of rent and royalties. All the necessary features which usually betoken the existence of petroleum in quantities obtained in the peninsula of Gaspé.

NATURAL ADVANTAGES.

The geographical position of Gaspé, and the fact of its being on the sea-board within seven days passage of London, and 1,000 miles nearer to European markets than the United States oilfields, give it many advantages in the matter of carriage and freight. Labour, timber and fuel are cheap and abundant, while the climate is favourable for petroleum mining all the year round.

As to the productive power of the Petroleum Oil Trust territory, it is stated officially that, at the lowest estimate, from 10,000 to 12,000 wells may be sunk upon the property. In this prosaic nineteenth century it seems almost impossible to believe that during the twenty-two years previous to 1887 profits amounting to the enormous sum of £120,000,000 were made from petroleum and its products.

THE MONEY IN IT.

Mr. Rockefeller, president of the Standard Oil Trust, alone became worth from £21,000,000 to £31,000,000 sterling, all out of petroleum, and it will now be seen that the Standard Oil Trust, is no longer going to retain the whole of the business itself, as the British Petroleum Oil Trust will compete with it, and, having the advantage of possessing oils of such high quality, should command the market. The company has, in addition, to its already vast properties within the past month obtained grants from the Canadian Government of mining rights over large plots of land in the neighbourhood of its other properties, thus controlling practically the whole of the oil-bearing region.

AN EARLY TALKER.

"Love is blind," according to the proverb, but the proverb cannot be true of maternal love, for the average mother easily sees in her baby a world of things which nobody else can discover.

"Does your baby talk any yet?" one woman was heard to ask of another. "Talk? Well, I should say he did talk," replied the mother, almost indignantly. "He says just anything! His little tongue runs steadily from morning till night. He can ask for anything he wants at the table or any place else. I never had a child that talked so early or said so many things at his age."

"My sister-in-law has a little boy eight months and four days older than this child, who don't begin to talk as much nor as well, although, of course, I wouldn't say so before her. She thinks the child is a wonder, but he don't compare with his little cousin here. Johnnie, say bread and butter, for the lady."

"Bed an' buttum," said Johnnie. "There! You see how perfectly he says it, and the best my sister-in-law's baby can do is to say 'bell an' bullaw,' and he calls sugar 'coogah.' Johnnie, say sugar and I'll give you a lump when we get home."

"Soogum!" "There! You see the difference. It's just so with everything, but I never brag about it to my sister-in-law, for she's real sensitive about it."

"But I guess you wouldn't ask if this child could talk if you could hear him once! Of course he's, but I guess he can talk; and I don't see who he gets it from, either! There are no great talkers in my family nor in his father's."

A FEATHERED SURGEON.

A story is told which would indicate that swallows have considerable surgical skill as well as intelligence. A certain physician found in a nest a young swallow much weaker than its mate, which had one of its legs bandaged with horse-hairs. Taking the hairs away he found that the bird's leg was broken. The next time he visited the nest he found the leg again bandaged. He continued to observe "the case," and in two weeks found that the bird was cautiously removing the hairs, a few each day. The cure was entirely successful.

REMARKABLE CUTLERY.

The most remarkable knife in the world is that in the curiosity room of a firm of cutlery in Sheffield. It has 1,890 blades and 10 blades are added every 10 years. Another curiosity is three pairs of scissors, all of which can be covered with a thimble.

KING OF THE PICKPOCKETS

A STORY ABOUT FRED AND THE PRINCE OF WALES.

One of the Queer Acquaintances of the Prince of Wales and a Story About Him.

The Prince of Wales has many queer acquaintances, some of them respectable and others quite the reverse, but as a rule, each of them distinguished for pre-eminence in some particular art, calling, or even mere trick. One of the strangest of these acquaintances, and certainly one of the cleverest was an individual who was known by the name of "Fred," and who was wont to style himself the "King of the Pickpockets," a title that was accorded to him with a certain degree of deference, not only by his brethren of the craft, but likewise by the police authorities in London and all over the continent of Europe. He has just died prematurely and sincerely regretted by a large host of admirers, including the Prince, whose pocket he picked on one memorable occasion about 8 years ago.

It happened in this way. One day while attending the races at Newmarket Fred attempted to pick the pocket of Baron Hirsch. The latter, who knew Fred well by sight, the latter having been pointed out to him in Paris by some of the private detectives in his employ, turned laughingly to him and exclaimed:—

"Fred, my friend, you have made a mistake to-day. If you will look at that pocketbook which you have just taken you will find that it is quite empty, as luck has been against me. The best thing you can do is to give it back to me."

STOLEN FROM THE PRINCE.

Fred was so much mortified by this break on his part that he determined to repair his damaged prestige by means of a master stroke. So when shortly afterwards the Prince of Wales attended the races at Epsom he manoeuvred so cleverly that he was able to possess himself of the pocketbook of his future King without the latter perceiving his loss. Fred was so tickled by this feat that he could not refrain from addressing the following letter to the Prince, which was carefully preserved among the latter's correspondence at Marlborough House. It runs as follows:—

"Sir:—Your Royal Highness will have noticed on returning from Epsom that your pocketbook had disappeared, containing bank notes to the following amount. Here follows a list of the notes. I think it my duty to inform Your Royal Highness that the pocketbook is in my possession, and that it has in my eyes a double value, not so much on account of its contents, as by reason of its former ownership. I had the honor to take it from Your Royal Highness as you were leaving the royal stand."

"I remain, sir, with the most profound respect, your Royal Highness' humble servant,

"FRED, King of the Pickpockets."

HE FORGAVE HIM.

The Prince was so much amused by this letter that he sent for the man promising that no harm should befall him, and had a long and most entertaining conversation with him in Sir Francis Knollys' room at Marlborough House, the Prince subsequently expressing a warm appreciation of the man's astounding slight of hand and knowledge of the world, especially his unerring and pointer-like instinct as to the game worthy of being followed. It may be added that although Fred's description was known at every police office throughout Europe, yet he was never arrested, so far as known, since he never allowed himself to be caught in flagrante delicto. Indeed, the only time that he made what may be described as a faux pas was when Baron Hirsch laughingly requested him to return his empty pocketbook.

SANITARY SCIENCE IN ENGLAND.

Remarkable Reduction in the Death Rate During the Victorian Era.

Some interesting statistics collected by Dr. Louis Parkes to indicate what sanitary science has done towards the preservation and prolongation of human life in Great Britain during the Victorian era, show that the mortality from small-pox had diminished by 96 per cent in 1891-5, as compared with the mortality in 1838-42. In the same period the deaths from fever had declined 82 per cent, while since 1871-5 there had been a decrease of 95 per cent in the mortality from typhus, and of 60 per cent, from enteric fever. Since 1861-5 the mortality from scarlet fever had fallen 81 per cent, although that from diphtheria had risen in recent years, and was now very much the same as it was thirty years ago. In zymotic diseases there had been a decrease of 24 per cent, and in measles 21 per cent, though epidemics of measles and whooping cough were as common as when the Queen came to the throne. In phthisis the mortality had fallen 43 per cent, though it was still high. Cancerous diseases, on the other hand, would appear to have increased, nor was the whole of the increase attributable to more precise diagnosis. Ague had been nearly eradicated owing to the better cultivation of the soil. Only those who died from acute alcoholism were returned as having died from the effects of drink, yet the deaths from that cause were as numerous as they were twenty or thirty years ago. Dr. Parkes holds that the general effect of improvement in sanitation is such that 600,000 persons have reached the age of 21 years who would have died at the beginning of the Queen's reign. A curious fact pointed out by Dr. Parkes is that the expectation of life diminished in males after 26 years, and in females after 44 years of age.

FOUND GOLD AND POISON, TOO.

A Miner's Health Wrecked by a Vegetable He Discovered in Alaska.

A man has just arrived from Alaska who would like to swap for a remedy for the mysterious poison which he took into his system while he was putting the gold into his pockets. It all came of his knowing too much about botany and being too curious about green weeds which he had never seen before and which had a pleasant taste. He was unconscious for three weeks, and he has been almost paralyzed ever since.

His name is L. Goth, and he was up in the Yukon country for four years. Previous to going thither he was a landscape gardener at Seattle. He has brought back with him \$15,000 or \$20,000 in gold dust, title to valuable claims on Birch and Deadwood creeks, ruined health, a mysterious ailment and information of a new kind of vegetable poison. He was prospecting early this year on Birch Creek with a few companions. They were about thirty miles from Circle City, where a mountain rises abruptly from a shelf along the shore of the creek. As they neared a knoll at the base of the mountain the temperature grew very much warmer and on the knoll they found 3 springs of boiling hot water. The only vegetation near the springs was a vivid green weed, which grew on the very brink of the stream, bare of leaves, and had a long stem, bare of leaves, and on the end a single, bulb-like green flower. If Goth had known nothing of botany and cared as little about genera and species as most prospectors he would not now be a physical wreck. But that green plant was like nothing he had ever seen in his experience as a landscape gardener, and his curiosity was aroused. He plucked one of the green stems and examined it carefully. It had a pleasant odor, and as he smelled it he thoughtlessly bit off one of the petals of the bulb. The taste was agreeable and he chewed and swallowed it.

"Half an hour afterward," says Mr. Goth, "I suddenly became very dizzy and fell down unconscious. For three weeks I knew nothing, except that occasionally I would come to a sort of half-consciousness for a few minutes. But such periods were like dreams disturbing a deep sleep. I can barely remember them. When I finally came to my senses I was too weak to lift hand or foot, and for four months was almost paralyzed, and in yet, and in every muscle of my body I could feel the effect of the poison I had taken into my system by chewing the one small piece of that strange plant. I can now drag myself about but all the strength of my body seems snapped. No one to whom I have described the plant knows anything about it, and I suppose my experience with it will result in adding a new and powerful poison to the pharmacopoeia."

TEASED TO INSANITY.

A Young Woman's Reason Dethroned by the Taunts of Brothers and Sisters.

A despatch from New York says:—Constantly teased by her brothers and sisters because she could not speak English, Ida Grudberg, the pretty nineteen-year-old daughter of Barnett Grudberg, an actor, living at No 142 Irvington street, became insane on Wednesday, and was removed, a raving maniac, to Bellevue Hospital.

The girl is one of a family of seven children, boys and girls. The younger children, playing in the street, learned to talk English rapidly. Ida remained indoors and kept herself busy about the house. Her father and mother both understood and conversed in the English language. The result was that the eldest daughter found herself isolated from the family. Her brothers and sisters, and mother and father as well, teased her about her inability to learn to speak like the rest of the family, and the younger ones were accustomed to gather around her and tease her until she became frantic with rage. This pleased the children. The unfortunate young woman became morose, and finally she had a fit. Then she had several fits at short intervals. These fits became so frequent that a doctor was called in, and he prescribed a medicine which relieved her. The children kept up the teasing, however. For days at a time the young woman refused to talk to anybody in the house and went about muttering to herself. The young children came in from the street on Wednesday afternoon and began as usual to tease their sister. Suddenly she jumped from the chair in which she was seated and seizing the youngest of the children, she lifted it clear of the ground and was about to swing it around her head to strike another of the family, when she was restrained by one of her brothers. She scratched and bit those who went near her. Her brother, becoming alarmed, called in a policeman, who, seeing the condition of the girl, called an ambulance, and she was taken to Bellevue Hospital. There it was said she was suffering from acute mania, caused by the incessant teasing by the other children and by brooding. She has probably lost her reason forever.

JUVENILE GALLANTRY.

Johnny always stands up in the car and let's a woman have his seat—don't you, Johnny?

Yes'm; I'm allus 'ferd she might sit down on me.

UNRELIABLE.

He—If you do not accept me I shall shoot myself.
She—But you change your mind so often.

MANY TIMES UNDER FIRE.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF HAS HAD A CHARMED LIFE.

Lord Wolseley's Many Escapes from Death in Action Told by a Correspondent—What He Has Gone Through.

A correspondent to the North British Daily Mail sent in the following interesting letter concerning Lord Wolseley's wonderful escapes:—

No living soldier, so far as I know, has experienced more remarkable escapes from death than Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley. Campaign after campaign he has seemed to bear a charmed life. His first escape occurred in the Burmese war, when an ensign in the Eightieth Regiment. Along with another officer who was killed, he was leading a storming party against the fortified position of Myattoon, when struck by an iron jingal ball on the left thigh; the artery was laid bare but not cut; otherwise he would have bled to death in a few minutes. His condition, however, was most critical, and required the constant attendance of a soldier for six months. Several narrow escapes took place during the Crimean war. One in the trenches before Sebastopol in February, 1855, when his coat was pierced by a bullet; another, two months afterward, when he was slightly wounded by the debris scattered by a round shot; and another, when, with Captain Peel, R. N., he dashed into a powder magazine, the entrance of which had been set on fire by a shell, and managed to extinguish the flames. At the taking of the Quarries a ball passed through his cap, knocking it from his head, and shortly afterwards he was wounded in the thigh by canister shot, and lost a considerable quantity of blood.

On the night of August 30, he was nearly killed in the trenches. Along with two sappers, he was engaged in refilling some gabions with stones, when a round shot struck the gabions and scattered their contents with terrific force. The two sappers were killed, and Wolseley was hurled to the ground, with the utmost violence. His face and body were cut and battered all over. He was severely wounded in the leg. Both eyes were closed, and the sight of one totally lost. Many thought that he would never recover, but he did, after spending a number of weeks shut up in a cave in complete darkness.

In the Indian Mutiny he frequently passed through a "perfect shower of shots and bullets." To employ his own words, "The bullets hopped off the tires of the guns like peas off a drum." When storming the Motee Mahul at Lucknow a soldier, who had been his servant in the Crimea, was shot, and fell on the street. Wolseley sprang out to carry him under shelter, when a mutineer at a distance of five or six yards took deliberate aim at him and fired; but the bullet, instead of striking him, passed through the body of the soldier. In the Red River expedition in 1870, during a severe storm, of thunder and rain at night, a tree was thrown down, and in falling crushed a boat close to the spot where Wolseley was sleeping. In the Ashantee campaign, during the attack on the village of Ordaslu, Wolseley, while

SITTING ON A SMALL STOOL.

was struck on the helmet by a slug shot and knocked to the ground. If the slug had not been arrested by the pugaree folds, the career of the commander-in-chief, would have been ended. After the night march before the battle of Tel-el-Kehir, when the troops had halted, Lord Wolseley proceeded in advance of his staff to reconnoiter the position of the enemy. He dismounted, and was gazing with his glass through the darkness, when suddenly a shell, fired, it is supposed, at random, fell between him and his horse. It buried itself in the sand, and did not explode. If it had, in all likelihood Wolseley would have been blown to pieces. Not a few envy the numerous honours and high position Lord Wolseley has attained, but how many would undergo the same hardships, dangers and wounds to secure them? Felis amat pisces sed non vult tangere plantas.

SALUTATIONS.

The Arabians shake hands six or eight times. Once is not enough. If, however, they be persons of distinction they embrace and kiss one another several times, and also kiss their own hands. In Turkey the salute is to place the hand upon the breast and bow, which is both graceful and appropriate.

In Burma, when a man meets a woman, he puts his nose and his mouth close to her cheek and draws a long breath, as if inhaling a delicious perfume. He does not kiss her cheek, strange to say. A man is greeted in exactly the same way.

In the greater part of Germany it is considered an act of politeness, not of gallantry, for a man to kiss a woman's hand. In Italy that privilege is allowed only to near relatives, while in Russia it is extended to kissing the forehead.

The men of Continental Europe have a custom that would seem queer, not to say laughable, here. They greet one another with a kiss if they be friends, not on the cheek, but right on the lips.

CONGRATULATIONS ALL AROUND.

Scott—I hear you are to marry the eldest Miss Binks. Let me congratulate you on your good taste!

Knott—Oh! that has been declared off.

Scott—Congratulate you on your good sense!