

# Topics of the Day.

By Our London Correspondent.

## A MISSING SWORD.

**A**S a rule ceremonials in which Royalty figure are carried out with such automatic precision that one is apt to forget that the time-worn maxim concerning "the best laid schemes" applies just as much to the great as to the humble.

It has leaked out this week that a little comedy as well as an impressive ceremony was performed within the ancient walls of Carnarvon Castle last Thursday. It seems that when the ceremonial was about to commence, and the Prince was due to arrive at the Castle, it was discovered that the Sword of State had been mislaid.

Whether some official had blundered in not sending it on to Wales is not known here. At all events, the Earl Marshal and his staff were in a state of perplexity, for in a few minutes the King's procession was due at the Castle, and the Sword of State was to be borne before him by Earl Beauchamp.

The Duke of Norfolk, however, proved himself resourceful, and hit upon the idea of a substitute emblem. For this purpose he borrowed the civic sword of Chester, which, in accordance with precedent, had been borne before the Mayor in his progress through Carnarvon. This sword, a massive and handsome one, proved a good substitute, and no one was the wiser, and certainly none the worse, for the little scheme that was played.

The sword of Chester was presented to the city by Henry VII. in 1506. By the charter of that monarch the sword is allowed to be carried before the Mayor in the presence of the King's nobles with the point erect. A sword given to the city by King Richard II. in 1394 disappeared, and the more ancient sword of Hugh Lupus, once at Chester, is in the British Museum.

A second amusing incident of the Royal visit to Wales occurred at Machynlleth Station, Montgomeryshire. In compliance with the Royal consent to accept an official welcome, the county council had prepared an ornate illuminated address. This was to have been presented to the King at Machynlleth by the chairman of the Council.

The clerk had charge of the address, which was carefully conveyed with his luggage, but though the clerk's wife kept a close watch over it, the luggage mis-carried on the journey from Carnarvon to Machynlleth. The loss was discovered some hours before the arrival of the royal train, and his Majesty was promptly notified of the incident.

As a result, the chairman at once improvised an address. Some parchment was secured, enclosed in the most appropriate case that could be found, and tied around with ribbon. Fortunately the arrangements were that the address should not be read, but merely handed to the King, and his Majesty received the improvised blank scroll as graciously as though it had been the real document.

## £8000 FOR A FIGHT.

Jack Johnson must be accounted a lucky man. He may not have made much out of his fight with Tommy Burns at Sydney, but he scooped in a very large pile of dollars when he dressed down the white man's stale hope at Reno, and now the big negro is in for the big end of a purse of £8000 which is to be found for a match between him and Bombardier Wells. This match will take place on or before September 30th, and meanwhile Johnson will keep his hand in, and earn a nice little sum by taking the ring with Petty-officer Curran—a man whose boast it is that though beaten many a time he has never succumbed to a knock out.

Nothing approaching £8000 money down for a boxing match has been dreamed of in any part of the world. Heavier amounts may have been paid out as the result of gates, but in hard cash the deposited £8000 has not so far been approached. The syndicate giving the money have faith in their venture, and have agreed to deposit the full amount with the "Sportsman" four days prior to the contest. By way of a start a cheque for £200 was paid over on Saturday. Johnson and Wells and the syndicate finding the money look like furnishing us with the biggest thing in gate-money matches ever seen—anyway in England. The public have read much of the champion and of his wonderful skill and cleverness. We all know how he toyed with Tommy Burns, and of the way in which he defeated Jeffries. In mimic warfare, he has been seen on the halls, but as a fighter Johnson is still a stranger to England. A little over two months and Jack will be on view as a fighter, and that in opposition to the best material we can put in the ring against him.

Judging by the records of the two men Johnson should have little difficulty in disposing of Wells, but the match may not prove such a bad one for the white man as it looks on paper. The soldier has shown us that he is pretty fast and fairly clever, and under a steady course of physical culture he has filled out until he tips the beam in good settle at 14 stone or thereabouts. When he fought Gunner Moir, the Bombardier looked more like an overgrown youth, his long, lean, lathy build contrasting queerly with the stocky, muscle-clad frame of the Gunner. He looked as though a punch in the middle piece would settle him out of hand, and it did.

When he took the ring against "Porky" Flynn, and beat that plucky American pointlessly, Wells was somewhat more "furnished" about his body, but was still a bit weedy. Undoubtedly, however, he has filled out a good bit, and his friends aver that he has continued to develop marvelously in the right direction under the tuition of Tom Inch, the well known "strong man" and physical culturist.

Possibly, therefore, Wells may prove the Simon Pure among the white man's hopes that have been put forward dur-

ing the past two years, but Johnson is very high game indeed for a man with Wells' limited experience to tackle. However, he is the best we have got, of that there is no doubt.

Win or lose Johnson will, of course, get the lion's share of the purse. The terms of division are not public property, but it is said that, whatever the result, Johnson will pick up a good deal more than the £8000 Tommy Burns got when the big black beat him in Australia.

## LONDON'S "DROUGHT."

London, and indeed the country generally, is at present suffering from drought. In England fourteen days without rain is, officially, a "drought," and as for the past twenty-one days there has been no "official" rain in the metropolitan area, we reckon it to be quite a severe visitation. It is not an unprecedented occurrence for Jupiter Pluvius to go on a three weeks' holiday during our summer, but it is, to say the least of it, a most unusual procedure on the part of the rain-maker. He has done so only five times in 54 years, his longest spell being in the year of Jubilee, 1887, when he absented himself for 25 days. And once in the early spring he allowed his watering can to remain idle for 29 days. This was in 1893, and is the record drought within the memory of even "the oldest inhabitant."

Apart from the lack of rain, which is spoiling the beauty of the flowers and vegetation in our gardens, parks and open spaces in town, and doing considerable mischief to the crops in the country, London is at present a place to get out of. The hot, muggy atmosphere has a terribly depressing influence on the mind and nerves of those tied to town. The mental lassitude and physical torpor, with the absence of appetite and lack of enthusiasm for action of any kind, which have been produced by hot, windless days, are felt even by the most vigorous. Indeed, it seems that the weather affects the strong more adversely than the weak, who seem to derive a certain amount of extra energy from continued heat and sunshine, whereas the average healthy Londoner seems quite unable to thrive and do his best work with the temperature anywhere above 75 degrees in the shade.

But it is an ill-wind that blows nobody good, and our "drought" should mean good times ahead for Antipodean producers of butter and cheese, and maybe for grain raisers, fruitgrowers, apiarists also.

Almost everywhere in the country cows are suffering from the lack of pasturage, and the supply of milk is showing a marked decrease; already they are being fed on cake, at a season when they should yield milk without it.

Harvesting has started, and whilst oats and barley show a great deal of straw, the grain is small. The sweeties are suffering from mildew, while the green fly and black spot that have come to orchards and vegetable gardens in the past few days in myriads are an added danger.

The honey dew is making its appearance on the trees, to the great disgust of apiarists, for the bees will accept it when nothing better offers, and the result is unsaleable honey.

## THE CURE OF CANCER.

"For the first time it is fully demonstrated that it is wrong to make statements of a disquieting nature about the increase of cancer in general." That is the most remarkable thing that has been said for years about the most dreaded of all human diseases, and it is Dr. Bashford, the general superintendent of research and director of the laboratories of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, who says it. Such a declaration, coming as it does from the highest authority, should demolish the widespread impression that cancer is a disease which is increasing its hold on the race.

This is the good news contained in the report on the progress of the Cancer Research Laboratories towards the discovery of a cure for this, the most horrible scourge of mankind. Though we are assured that the investigations of the past years have been of the utmost importance, it does not appear from the report that any particular progress has been made in the direction of discovering a cure for the disease. Certain facts, however, have been established, which are no doubt, of the greatest importance. For example, to use the scientific jargon of the report, it has been proved that "the relation of each malignant new growth to the affected animal is a new one, parallel to that obtaining between the organs of the body and the organism as a whole."

"More precise conceptions have been obtained," Dr. Bashford states, "of the influence of heredity in place of the indefinite and contradictory views previously current."

It has been ascertained that during the period 1801-1909 the increase of deaths attributed to cancer was referable to certain anatomical regions, and not to others.

Among men, the main increase was in the alimentary tract, especially the stomach, whilst among women it was also mainly in the stomach and intestines, but also affected the breasts, while other parts showed little or no increase. Most of the increase chiefly affected the higher age periods.

It has also been established that the practice of peculiar customs, involving the subjection of particular parts of the body to chronic irritation, provokes the disease in situations and organs from which it is absent when these customs do not obtain.

"So definite," writes Dr. Bashford, "is the evidence of the mediate causation of certain forms of cancer by chronic irritants, that the possibility of variations in the cancer death-rate must be admitted as regards particular organs and regions of the body. The possibility of a variation of the main incidence of cancer, in conformity with changes in certain customs, must also be admitted."

As the result of the most elaborate experiments, Dr. Bashford claims that "the individuality of cancer would thus appear to have been placed at last beyond all further discussion. . . . A long step has thus been taken in defining the direction in which the future investigation of cancer is alone likely to be profitable."

A number of cases of natural healing of spontaneous malignant new growths has been observed in mice affected with spontaneous cancer, and Dr. Bashford concludes that the changes leading to natural cure appear to depend, as in propagated cancer, on an altered condition of the cell and its contents, rather than on an alteration in the general condition or constitution of the affected animal.

"Means must be devised," he states, "for elucidating the nature of the change in the cell before curative measures can be discovered."

## Thinking in Bed.

"Thinking in bed killed Harriman. He worked all day and thought out his problems at night," says J. C. Stubbs, director of traffic of the Harriman lines. The "thinking in bed" habit, comments a writer in "Mansley's Magazine," is full brother to worry, and both are by-products of our consuming business life. As a nation, we never know when to quit, and the result is that we are the most nervous people in the world. Mr. Harriman once declared that he would retire when he became sixty, but he went beyond that mile post. Death caught him still bound to the wheel of his masterful ambition.



WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

American Fathers of British Peersess March in Ancestral Costume in the Coronation Parade.