

IN MERRY OLD ENGLAND

NEWS BY MAIL ABOUT JOHN BULL
AND HIS PEOPLE.

Occurrences in the Land That Reigns Supreme in the Commercial World.

Speckled straw helmets are now being worn by the High Wycombe police.

The Clacton Urban Council has decided to grant cab licenses to those cabbies only who are local ratepayers.

By a large majority the Northumberland Miners' Council agreed to join the Federation of Great Britain.

A cat belonging to the Barnes Common keeper is nursing five kittens in the forked branches of a poplar tree.

Aged eighty-two, Joseph Reynolds has just died at Little Salinck, Essex, in the house in which he was born and lived all his life.

At Worcester 100,000 pigeons, which had arrived in hampers by six special trains, were set free, and at times the sky was dark with birds.

Through the driver losing control a heavy traction engine dashed down a steep hill at Weston-super-Mare, demolishing a tree in its career.

Miss Hannah Perkins, nineteen, of independent means, has been found dead with a bullet wound in her head in a field at Gnosall, near Stafford.

Signor Marconi, who has been inquiring into spiritualistic seances in Rome, has, it is stated, made some startling discoveries.

In honor of a woman inmate of the Southampton Workhouse, who celebrated her 100th birthday, the guardians gave a tea party in her ward.

Miss Sarah Bedford, formerly a landlady of a public house on the Duke of Bedford's estate, has bequeathed her residence at Whittlesea to the Duke.

A blind inmate of the Epping Union Workhouse spends his time in carving out wood chains from three to six feet in length, for which he finds ready purchasers.

A little boy named Arthur Biggins crawled under a standing train at Middlesbrough to fetch a marble which a playmate had thrown there, and was killed by the train starting.

Strayed from the deep waters of the tropic seas, a very rare and beautifully-colored fish has just been discovered stranded in about a foot of water at Woolacombe Sands, Devon.

In accordance with the provisions of the Wilde Charity, Bibles were raffled for at the parish church schools, St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, and three boys and three girls were winners.

The Derbyshire Pennine Club have recently unparthred at Rainster Rocks, in the Peak district, four bronze coins assigned to the period A.D. 250-280, an axe-head, and many varieties of pottery.

Indignation is being expressed at St. Albans, Herts, at the action of the tenant of St. Michael's Manor in erecting a close fence, eight feet high, enclosing a picturesque stretch of the River Ver.

Quarr Abbey House, near Ryde, where Princess Henry of Battenberg spent her honeymoon is again to become a monastery, having been sold to the Benedictine Society of St. Pierre of Solesmes.

Seeing from a window a boy struggling in the Regent's Canal, near the Albany barracks, a trooper of the Life Guards scaled some railings 12 feet high, jumped into the water, and succeeded in saving the boy's life.

Record business is being done by Bri-

ish motor-car firms, the orders to 50 per cent. more than last year. Many customers will have to wait for their cars, but foreign-made cars are gradually pushed out of the market.

The death is announced of Mr. Binns, who was widely known in the Sunday school world, especially in connection with its musical character. Mr. Binns was conductor of the Opera Palace children's Protestant School, and of the London School Cantata Choir.

A white paper just issued shows that at the close of last financial year the national debt amounted to £77,000,000. This sum is still £135,244,773 in excess of the total debt at the opening of the year. The present Government, since the present Government came into power, has succeeded in reducing the debt to £22,570,000, while a larger sum is to come off in the current year.

A LURID PAGEANT.

(By a Banker).

In almost the last of these articles an attempt was made to describe the beauties of a most gloriously gorgeous display of lightning which the writer had the fortune to witness a good many years ago. Since that article was written a usual and quite startling exhibition of electrical energy has passed over the British Isles, which respects was altogether diverse from the ordinary thunderstorm, and quite different to the brilliant electrical display above referred to.

Immediately after the twilight faded away an intermittent, luminous light from time to time illumined the horizon, gradually increasing in intensity and advancing nearer and nearer. Soon the light itself appeared to be in a blaze of fire, so vivid and dazzling and so brilliant that the landscape was lit up as though it were broad daylight. Gathering more and more in intensity, streams and cataracts of electric fire, hither and thither; now, with a convulsed movement, pulsating wildly across the skies; now, a narrow, throbbing cascade of fire, hurdling downward to the earth, convulsive spasm a cloud of flaming fire, rushing forth from a broad, river of the Armament, until the heavens were in a raging chaos of turmoil and fire. And, adding to the sublimity of the grandeur of the spectacle, the centre of one of those great glowing globes, a great splendour, suddenly appeared, a moment and then as suddenly faded away, probably descending to earth, though its descent was not observed.

And all through this fiery display of the elements the rolling clouds crashed and detonated; now like a discharge of musketry; now a peening, rending blast as if broadside of great guns had been discharged, and now a fine reverberating which rapidly recedes into the distance with a succession of even fainter muffled throbs; until at last the turmoil of the elements is over, the lurid fires no longer flash, and a calm and clear sky once more asserts its sway.

But once there was a far more awe-inspiring display of lightning, when the Majesty of Heaven deigned to visit this earth in order to deliver to His servants the Ten Commandments, written on the finger of God, which are the commands of the Almighty to all men for all time. And yet how many of us ignore these commands; and

THE LOST BRIDE

"YES," announced the princess, "I shall be happy to take a husband should there be one found to my liking."

The whole day before the princess had sat deep in thought, scarcely tasting the food placed before her. It was only that morning that the ministers of state had respectfully called upon her and suggested that it would please her people overmuch should she take a husband. The king, her father, had been killed while hunting a full year ago, and the queen had died soon afterward from grief. While the princess was as wise as she was beautiful, still her subjects felt the kingdom needed the firm hand of a king—therefore this request.

Now, a princess so young and beautiful could have no lack of suitors, but then she was very, very hard to please, so that a proclamation was sent far and wide telling the world of her desire to choose a husband.

Soon the courtiers began to arrive from far and near. Some were tall and some were short; some were fat and some were lean; but all bore high-sounding titles and possessed great wealth. Each bestowed upon her a magnificent gift—that is, all except one. Exactly one hour before the trumpet blew announcing the close of the time for all aspirants to appear, there was admitted to the court a youth who, though very handsome, had come on a forlorn-looking horse and whose clothes were decidedly threadbare.

Advancing toward the throne, he humbly knelt before the princess and begged her to accept the gift he handed her—a poor, little bouquet of roses. Carelessly hidden smiles of scorn could be seen on the faces of the other suitors.

The princess who, until now, had been wearily looking on this scene, seemingly not in the least interested, now roused herself. Graciously taking the flowers, she asked, not unkindly: "And whom have I the pleasure of addressing?"

At this the noble courtiers around smiled broadly. Surely the princess must be making sport of this ill-kept stranger, a vagabond more fit for the alley than the court.

"Is I who have all the pleasure in the addressing, lovely princess," returned the youth, and the words fell musically upon the ear. "I am Prince Leo, of the Kingdom of Oriaco. My father until recently was ruler over that country. A short time ago he was slain by a neighboring monarch, and I despoiled of my inheritance, so that what I carry



with me is all that I possess—that, I take courage to ask you for I feel it will not be long before my faithful sword has won again a kingdom and a fortune for me." "Bravely spoken, prince," said the princess. "Now," said she to all the suitors, "for one year I shall choose my husband. A year of courage and fidelity. A year of and I shall expect to see you again. He who then can tell me most glorious deeds accomplished in the year will be chosen as ruler of my kingdom. Till that day each wears faithfully the ribbon I place in his keeping as a token of service to me."

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