

LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, Nov. 30, 1920.
FOUR NEW BATTLESHIPS SUGGESTED.

Lord Beatty has completed a year in office as First Sea Lord, and within the next few days, his Board will begin to frame the Navy Estimates for presentation to the House early next year. The expectation is that even if no new ships are authorized in the spring, the Admiralty will announce its intention to build four great ships before long, and the sanction of the House of Commons will be obtained forthwith, so that armour and ordnance manufacturers may prepare in advance. If this is not done, the vessels cannot be turned out promptly, seeing that the plant at Sheffield and elsewhere has been out of use for two years.

KIDWELLY MURDER TRIAL.

No murder trial in recent years has aroused more interest in London than the case in the ancient Guildhall of

Carmarthen, in Wales. Harold Greenwood, a Kidwelly solicitor, is arraigned on the capital charge in connection with the death of his first wife, a sister of Sir Thomas Vansittart Bowater, Lord Mayor of London for the year 1913-14. The public interest in the trial is reflected in the large number of applications for admission, many of them from well-known people in London. The fact that Mr. Justice Shearman presides will ensure that the proceedings will be brief and businesslike, for he is a judge of a very marked objection to theatricalism in court. Before him there is an imposing array of counsel. Sir Edward Marlay Samson, a Welsh K.C., who did some notable work in connection with the pensions administration, leads for the Crown. The defence is in charge of Sir Edward Marshall Hall, K.C., whose reputation as a pleader in criminal cases has no equal to-day.

Solicitors are beginning to complain

that present-day barristers show a too prevalent tendency towards compromise. Many of the better known counsel, men who have made their names, are so inundated with briefs that they simply have not time to see every case through, and prefer to "settle" rather than entrust the conduct of the brief to a junior. Certainly when counsel sincerely believes that his client will "go down", compromise, if skillfully manoeuvred, is in the client's interest, but there are too many eleventh hour settlements, often in Court itself, which are made because there is only a "chance" of success. The ordinary client feels that a fighting barrister, really keen on a battle for its own sake, is infinitely better than any famous counsel who up to the last moment makes every effort to reach a settlement. But such men are not plentiful. What are wanted are more barristers like Sir Charles Matthews, K.C., whose flood of words, it has been said, not even the Lord Chief Justice himself can stay.

A CHRISTMAS SHADOW.

The continuance of that delectable luxury, the Christmas pudding, in the realm of British traditions will depend this year wholly on sentiment, for, according to expert prognostications, it certainly won't be worth the money. London fruit merchants are particularly pessimistic, and foretell a rise in the price of dried fruits generally and raisins and sultanas in particular. Blame is indirectly attributed to America, which, being dry, is now offering to Spanish and other growers the largest and most remunerative markets. Though at the moment there is a keen demand for sultanas in this country, there is no indication of falling prices, and they are now selling in London at anything up to 154s. (\$30.80) per hundredweight, while raisins can be run to 145s. (\$29.00). Neither are there any stocks of these high-priced dainties, merchants being unwilling to import large quantities until certain that the consumer will buy. Currants, however, will be plentiful, the Food Ministry having some 13,000 tons on hand, so currant pudding will be substituted at the festive board, unless of course it is dulled Christmas pudding just for the occasion and for auld acquaintance sake.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANTOMIME.

Though the number of pantomimes presented in the Metropolitan area at Christmas time is nothing like as great as it was some years ago, preparations are already afoot for such productions at several houses in both the West End and the suburbs. Drury Lane, because of a striking spell of success with "The Garden of Allah," is to pass on its usual show to Covent Garden, and thus the series of Drury Lane "Christmas annua's," as for a while they were pompously called, which has been so continuous so long, will be broken. Time was when Covent Garden and Drury Lane ran rival pantomimes, but that has long passed, the only serious West End competition with Drury Lane in recent years having been the Lyceum. The suburban theatres will give their patrons "Cinderella" and "Robinson Crusoe," "Aladdin" and "Sinbad the Sailor," "All Baba" and "Jack and the Beanstalk," as for so long they have done; and if one suggests that the public might like some fresh theme, the effective reply is that this is just what the public have proved by experience they do not desire. The "Yellow Dwarf" is taken as a theme; children and grown-ups alike yawn in advance, and decline to have their old favourites replaced. There is nothing in which theatre-goers are so conservative, and highbrow critics who rebuke managers for not modernizing the pantomime by the introduction of fresh themes have not to bear their pecuniary loss which would follow the acceptance of their counsel.

THE PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS' SCHEME.

As compared with the boxer who can win a fortune in a night and athletes in many other professions, the supreme golfers are poorly rewarded for their skill. Vardon and Ray, it is said, have each made \$12,000 as a result of their three months' boom tour in America, but this is exceptional. In this country Vardon, Braid and Taylor have perhaps earned as much as \$8,000 a year each, but then the scales slide very abruptly until you have good men receiving \$12 and \$16 a week. When Duncan won the championship his prize was \$280 and a gold medal. This is an insignificant reward for the man who proves himself to be the best golfer of the year. The competitors in the championship merely play for the money they have subscribed in the way of entrance fees, and unless they go cap in hand they cannot hope, under present conditions for richer rewards. The professionals are now putting forward their own scheme for better financial reward, but whether they will succeed is doubtful. Their idea is to have their own works to produce the implements of the game, with the players acting as agents. More feasible is their plan to possess a national course on which all the big events of the season could be played. J. H. Taylor is the father of this proposal, links beside the sea or inland, the test could be made sufficiently exact-

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The Special Session of the Grand Lodge of Newfoundland, L.O.A., called for December 1st, will open in Victoria Hall at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, December 1st.

J. MILLEY,
Grand Secretary.

nov30,21

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