

British Gossip

PARLIAMENTARY rumours have been rife in England recently, not only with regard to such appointments as Chief Secretary and Minister of Education, but with reference to lesser positions and smaller fry than hold such exalted office. The vague and promising expression, "general reshuffling," has been quoted more than once with consequent fluttering and trembling among those who have the faintest reason to hope for preferment.

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The Duke of Abruzzi has been out-distanced by Peary in the race for the North Pole, but the ducal adventurer has succeeded in interesting King Edward and the Prince of Wales in his ascent of the Rurvenzori Range, those mysterious Mountains of the Moon which baffled the Pharaohs and from which the Nile takes its source. They are almost on the line of the equator and rise far above the limits of snow. Hence they may fifty years from now form the most fashionable health resort for the residents of the Hot Continent.

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Lady Marjorie Sinclair, who is remembered in Canada as girlish Lady Marjorie Gordon, is working hard to get a fund (contributors to be Scotch only) for providing the Prime Minister with a portrait of himself. It is not yet decided who the artist shall be.

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It is announced that an American syndicate has acquired several tin mines in Cornwall and intends spending several millions in developing them. Central smelting works will be established, and Penzance will be used as the port for shipment. The old traditions of Cornwall and its islands may be revived with new Twentieth Century lustre.

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There is a general heart-searching in the Old Country on the subject of sport, newspapers, magazines and clubland joining in the discussion as to whether the sportsman of to-day is a sickly descendant of his hard-

riding and deep-drinking great-grandfathers. In spite of the victories won by the South African visitors, the general conclusion is one of complacent satisfaction with the present "Islander."

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The motor car continues on its triumphant way in Great Britain, one of its latest uses being that of delivery vans for the "Glasgow Evening News," which employs seven of these latest vehicles for strictly commercial purposes. Canadians accuse the British Isles of being slow but in this respect they are setting the pace for the Montreal "Star" and the Toronto "Globe." The public is not informed as to whether the gasoline is the perfumed sort, but in any case the "News" readers have highly-flavoured articles.

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That indefatigable baronet, Sir Thomas Lipton, has lately turned his attention to motor boats and his newest possession, the "Britannia," which can do fourteen knots an hour with positive ease, is driven by two six-cylinder 50 h.p. motors. It has had its picture taken and looks like a decidedly enjoyable launch. But what has gone wrong with Sir "Tummas" that he should call his new toy, "Britannia"? Has he forgotten the "Erin" and the "Shamrock"? There are a few Irish names left which he would do well to exploit before going over to the Saxon in this fashion.

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The suffragettes have by no means ceased to add to the trouble of Hon. Mr. Asquith and the gaiety of nations. Lord Tredegar has made the cheerful suggestion that the suffragettes should pair off matrimonially with the passive resisters and thence go off for a long honeymoon. This is the most unkind solution yet offered for the situation. The passive resister has dared to be a Daniel but that is no reason for his being thrown to the suffragettes.

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Mr. Beerbohm Tree's visit to Berlin, at the invitation of the Kaiser, to take place in April interests all classes of Englishmen. It will be a gigantic undertaking to transport three

great spectacular Shakespearian productions from London to Berlin and back again in a fortnight. Mr. Tree will present in the German capital "Antony and Cleopatra," "Merry Wives of Windsor," and "Twelfth Night," in addition to appearing in "Hamlet."

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A new company, with the comfortable capital of nearly seven hundred thousand pounds, is to be formed and will be called the Egyptian Mail Steamship Company. The new concern is to improve transit facilities between Western Europe and Egypt. With that end in view a new line of fast turbine steamers will be established between Marseilles and Alexandria.

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A distinguished Chinese resident of England has recently drawn attention to the fact that there is a great influx of undesirable Chinese into Great Britain and warns the authorities that thousands of the criminal class will shortly attempt to land in England.

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Mrs. Henty Smith, the famous "Queen of the Gypsies," died last month, aged ninety-eight. She was buried in Handsworth Cemetery, near Birmingham, and the funeral was witnessed by many thousands of spectators, including two hundred of her descendants, who sang a weird gypsy chorus as the coffin was lowered into the grave.

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The Lancashire cotton operatives have evidently grasped the importance of the attempt which the British Cotton Growing Association is making to acquire land for the purpose of growing cotton for the Lancashire mills as over 30,000 factory workers in one district are contributing a day's wages to the funds of the Association. Imperialism is travelling far indeed when a company sets out to obtain empire-grown cotton.

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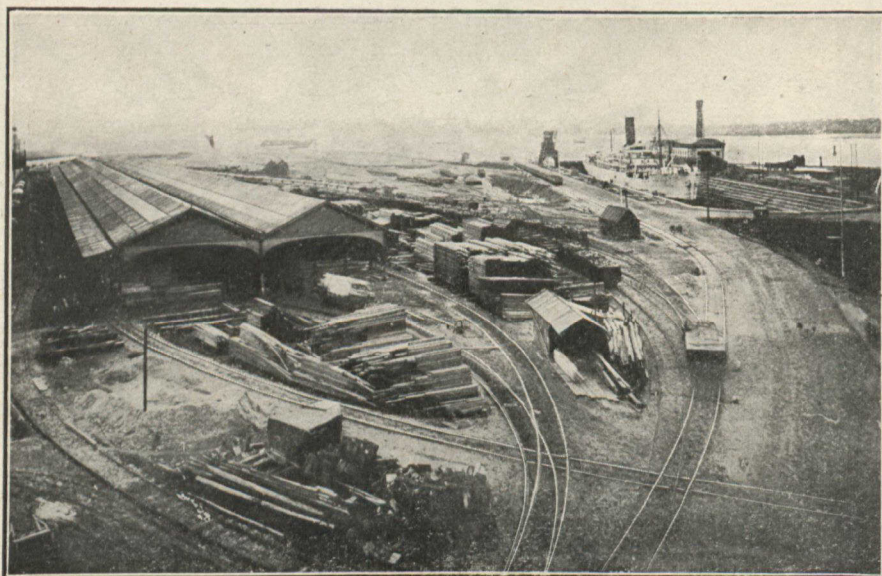
General Baden-Powell has given a bust of his ancestor, Captain John Smith, the founder of Virginia, to Louth School, where Smith was educated. "B. P." ought to be a guest at the great Jamestown Exposition.

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At St. Peter's, Mancroft, in Norwich, the bell-ringers have struck because the vicar has removed an old brown jug which has been in the custody of the ringers for hundreds of years. The jug is of noble dimensions, holding four gallons of refreshment on the occasion of church festivals. There is a certain romantic flavour about these Norwich "curfew-shall-not-ring-to-night" strikers, which is lacking in the telephone tie-ups of this western world.

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In the Olympic games to be held in London in 1908, the automobile will play a prominent part. Speaking of the auto car, Rev. R. S. de Courcey Laffan, secretary of the British Olympic Association, says: "Some people think automobilism an anachronism in Olympic games, but I am inclined to break a lance with them. Automobilism is the nearest modern equivalent to the chariot race, only in place of a four-horse car we have one of forty-horse power."



At Southampton, England, a new Dock is to be built on the spot shown in this picture. The London and South-Western Railway will spend two and a half million dollars. The dock will have nine berths and a depth of forty feet. The main quay will be 1650 feet long. When the improvements are made the White Star Line Steamers will sail from this port.