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CENTRAL SHOW ROOM

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## LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, May 21, 1920.

### MAN MANSION TO CINEMA

For a long time there has been much speculation as to the future destiny of the Devonshire House, Piccadilly, one of the most famous dual mansions in London. The news that this property in the market excited the ambition of powerful and wealthy syndicates on both sides of the Atlantic. Possessed of frontages to Piccadilly, Leinster Street, and Stratton Street, the old mansion held out the temptation of a West End site of immense value, and among those known to be angling for it there was at least one American millionaire, who crossed this country in the hope of securing the property for the erection of a monster hotel. A certain significance attaches to the fact that the competition has now ended in the triumph of the interests, who, outbidding their rivals, have landed the prize for one million guineas. It has gone to Shur-Sibthorpe, of Holborn, London, Laurence Harrison, the well-known Liverpool steamship owner, purchasers propose to dispose of the site, and on the remainder at fronting Piccadilly—it is intended to erect a mammoth building which will combine a super-cinema of 5,000, a restaurant, and a magnificent dancing hall.

### MAN BONDS ON THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

The London stock exchange is passing through a domestic crisis which has just reached a head. It had been discovered that a number of Japanese Chinese bonds held in Germany found their way into the London market, despite the fact that by the terms of each bond from abroad to be accompanied by a certificate stating they had not been the property of enemies. The bonds in question came from Holland. An inquiry instituted, and it was found that the firm of stockbrokers which had the bonds had not exercised sufficient care and that the proper certificates had not been attached to the bonds. The matter was considered a serious one, and although the firm in question is one of the oldest and biggest on the stock exchange the partners have all been suspended for a period of two years. In a large firm this only one department was suspended, but the punishment, of course, falls on all. Other firms which also shown laxness, though not to the same degree, have been cautioned. The affair has caused much discussion and some strong feeling. Germany has joined the Allies. The other-

man holders of foreign stock transferred their bonds to Holland towards the end of the war, and it is believed that a good deal is still there seeking for entry into the markets, and strenuous efforts are being made on all exchanges and bourses to defeat all attempts to realise.

### THE INTERNATIONAL OF THE BOY SCOUTS.

A big international Boy Scout Exhibition will open at Olympia, London, on July 30. Contingents of scouts are to come from about thirty different countries, and everything so far seems to point to an invasion of London by scouts. A hundred thousand scouts are spoken of as possible visitors for the first week in August. There are to be no youthful representatives of Russia or the Central Empires. Russia started a scout organisation a short time before the war, but it seems to have disappeared during the revolution. Germany and Austria raised battalions of boys, but these were really cadets camouflaged as scouts. Apparently no such character attaches to this country's national boy scout movement. The British War Office, anyhow, does not recognise it. Some time ago the British military authorities were approached by the organisers of the boy scouts' "jamboree" for a loan of some tents which it was hoped to erect at Richmond as a temporary camp for the scouts. The War Office have now replied that it can only assist "cadet organisations and other genuine bodies having the official recognition of the country associations." Among the announced objects of the "jamboree" is the promotion of "a spirit of brotherhood among the rising generation throughout the world." As an educative influence on the scouts to the ideal of the League of Nations there will be a stall set aside for propaganda. There are to be representations of principal local industries from various parts of the country. Newcastle scouts are bringing down a model coal mine (the pit-head section at any rate) in which they will work. It is hoped that each troop and country team will bring with it at least one pet animal or bird to form a boy scout zoo. Manchester scouts are going to bring the Brontosaurus—the famous animal of their own manufacture.

### ITALY'S NEW DREADNOUGHT.

The Caracciolo, which the Italians have just launched at Castellamare, is one of two very powerful fast battleships which were laid down before Italy joined the Allies. The other—

the Cristoforo Colombo—which was being built by Ansaldo at Genoa, has not been proceeded with. The Caracciolo is of 30,900 tons displacement, and with turbines developing 100,000 horse power, she will have a speed of 25 knots. Her thickest side armour is nearly 14 inches, and her armament consists of eight 15 inch guns, sixteen 6 inch guns, and twenty 4 inch guns. She will burn oil fuel.

### ROTTEN ROW IN 1920.

With the unmistakable arrival of summer Hyde Park has at least come to its own. The wide spaces of greenward look their best and freshest, with a gentle sun lighting up their beauties, and the big tower beds bordering Park Lane bear their gay load once more. Along the side of Rotten Row heavy clumps of rhododendrons lend a sparkling air to the scene, but even with their help the change that has come over the Rotten Row is only too apparent. Looking up the Long Mile, groups of horses catch the eye at intervals instead of the moving masses of cavalry of former days, and on coming closer they disintegrate themselves chiefly into hired hacks and very unfinished performers, men and women alike. The Speaker of the House of Commons is generally to be seen doing a round on a chestnut of a good weight-carrying stamp, while Cunningham Graham, on a long-tailed, heavily-manned bay cob, is a fairly regular attendant. For the rest, what is one to say of dowdy horsemen and smart horse dealers who think the Row a proper place to smoke a pipe, or ladies who will insist on riding astride, well turned out though some of them may be? The fact is that the motor has altered old ways more than we knew, and with the coming of speed a noticeable laxity of turnout is manifest.

### NO AIR RAID MEMORIAL.

London, it appears, is far from desirous of perpetuating the memory of her scars of war. It was suggested that she should embellish herself with memorial tablets partaking of the character of wound stripes. These permanent reminders of honorable scars were to be erected on each building in Westminster hit by German bombs during the air raids, but when the proposal came before the City Council they restricted the scheme so that only the first mark of distinction. It so happened that the last building in that district which was unfortunate enough to stop a bomb from the air was the Lyceum Theatre, and the directors of that place of amusement, not wishing to perpetuate the memory of the misfortune, viewed the plan with disfavour. Hardly less discouraging was the first to be hit. They insisted that the memorial should be placed in a position so lofty as to be unsuitable. The result of this chilling reception has been that the whole scheme has fallen through to (be it said) the financial advantage of the ratepayers, for each memorial tablet was to have cost £20.

### THE AEROPLANE AND RECUPERATION.

Is it attributable to the irony of fate or to the revolutionary effect of Peace that the aeroplane, one of the mightiest weapons ever forged in the fires of war, has now become a source of delight as well to the aged as to the children? Last year flying became a favourite pastime at the majority of the seaside resorts, and this summer promises to see the new sport—for sport it now is—gaining a firmer hold than ever upon those faded business men who seek in a pursuit of novelty that bracing exhilaration which alone can bring relief from mental stress. Anticipating a boom,

aeroplane companies are laying their plans at all resorts of note to provide pleasure trips for the holiday makers, and flying has already commenced at Margate and Blackpool. But these organisations are including travellers, too, within their scope, and daily services are being inaugurated between London and Brighton and Eastbourne. That they will be well patronised is certain; the discomforts involved in a slow night journey in overcrowded railway carriages will ensure that.

### THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

The Queen-Mother is now able to take her daily drives through London when the weather is favourable, but she will make very few public appearances in the next few weeks. She hopes to remain in London until the end of the season, and to attend the Royal Tournament, the International Horse Show, and the Richmond Horse Show. Afterwards she will pass some time at Sandringham. She has not yet decided whether she will visit Denmark this summer.

### Trade Secrets.

There are at least two trade secrets which have been so jealously guarded that they have remained close secrets for hundreds of years, and may never be known to the world at large. One is the Chinese method of making the bright and brilliant color known as vermillion, or Chinese red, and the other is a Turkish secret—the inlaying of the hardest steel with gold or silver. Among the Chinese and Turks these two secrets are guarded well. Apprentices, before they are taken for either trade, are compelled to swear an iron-clad oath to reveal nothing of what passes in the workshop. They must also belong to families of high standing, must pay a large sum of money as a guarantee, and must furnish certificates of good character and honesty. These secrets have been handed down faithfully from one generation to another for hundreds of years.

### Strike in Building Trade 3,000 Years Ago

Builders, brick-layers and masons have gone out on strike! Picketing has been resorted to by the strikers! A deadlock having been reached, the chief of police has appealed to the King, who has appointed a Board of Arbitration! Men and employers have accepted the terms offered by the Board and work has been resumed! These read like extracts from the latest editions of daily press, whereas in actual fact they are translations of inscriptions found in a tomb of an ancient Egyptian, and recount incidents that happened in the land of the Pharaohs three thousand years ago. Archaeologists have laid bare a curious story. It appears that Egyptian laborers, weary of the abominable working conditions which prevailed in that country, went out on strike. Violent picketing was resorted to and when hunger began to pinch, the mobs menaced the palace of Pharaoh himself. The Chief of Police was a man named Mahu. He was called upon to quiet the rioters, but so far from doing his duty he refused to allow a spear to be raised or an arrow to be shot against the strikers.

Then, seeing that a deadlock was inevitable he went to Pharaoh and laid the strikers' case before that monarch. So eloquently did he plead that Pharaoh appointed a Board to investigate and the strikers won a sweeping victory.

Mahu was very proud of his share in the struggle and ordered a full account to be inscribed on the walls of his tomb. There is was found by modern archaeologists and by them transcribed.

One pictured inscription shows Mahu receiving deputations of strikers and reading their demands. Another shows him explaining to strike breakers that they were endangering the welfare of the Egyptian worker by continuing to work. But Mahu did not hold with revolution or what we might call Bolshevism. He quelled any attempts in that direction, and one picture shows him bringing three hand-cuffed malefactors to Pharaoh for judgment and execution.

After all Solomon was not far wrong when he declared that there is nothing new under the sun. Scholars are not without hope of some day unearthing an Egyptian worker's union ticket!

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