

The destruction of Venice, declares Grand Admiral Montecuccoli, of the Austrian fleet, would be the first act of the Austrian navy should war break out with Italy.

When the newspapers got to work recently in San Francisco "boosting" a relief movement for the starving Belgians, £20,000 was raised in an hour, and in a few days a relief ship headed for Great Britain loaded to the Plimsoll with a collection of Californian foodstuffs.

The "King's Oak" at Tilford, the age of which is estimated by some authorities at 1000 years, has lately become seriously decayed, and in danger of collapse. The decayed portion is being removed, and the cavity filled with masonry, under the supervision of an expert from Kew Gardens.

The percentage of loss is much less than was reckoned on before the war. Out of 4000 British ships engaged in foreign trade, only thirty-nine have been sunk by the enemy, or just under 1 per cent. in all. The rate of insurance for cargoes, which on the outbreak of war was fixed at five guineas per cent., has now been reduced to two guineas per cent., without injury to the solvency of the fund. For hulls, as apart from cargoes, the insurance has also been considerably reduced.

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Passengers by the steamer Ophir, which has just reached Sydney, were privileged to witness two of the greatest sights of the century. One day 40 odd steamships were passed, carrying the first Australian Expeditionary Force to the front. On another occasion over 80 ships went by, laden with the second contingent from India. This latter force, numbering over 80,000 men of all arms, has now landed in France, and is in the field in support of the Allies.

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