

The Bishop of London, preaching at a memorial service at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, said that he wanted to see people free from that superstition of perpetually visiting mediums for the purpose of getting into communication with the other world. He had never seen any information which had given them the slightest help, and such proceedings, in his opinion, were a waste of time and made persons restless and unhappy.

Sir Thomas Mitchell, builder of the first Dreadnought, recently died at Southsea, England, aged 75. He was asked to build the ship in the record period of 18 months, and did it in 12. He was knighted at the launching of the sister vessel Bellerophon. Practically the whole of Sir Thomas' life was spent in dockyards. He began at Chatham as an ordinary apprentice. His son, Lieutenant Alexander G. Mitchell, 21, was killed in a German air raid on a French hospital, where he was lying after an operation.

The war record of the Cunard Steamship Company, states that of their original fleet of 26 steamships, 15 were lost. Of the ships acquired subsequently, eight were also sunk, making an aggregate loss of 56 per cent. of the fleet's total tonnage. In addition, seven chartered vessels went down. Altogether, 650 seamen were drowned. Serving as armed cruisers, transports and hospital ships, the fleet steamed 3,500,000 miles, nearly a million soldiers and sailors, and ten million tons of food-stuffs and cargoes were transported, in addition to a hundred thousand tons of fuel oil for the Navy, which was carried in the double bottoms. In two years, the company managed nearly 400 ships other than their own, and nearly 500,000 American soldiers were brought to Europe, the Aquitania being responsible for 60,000 in nine trips.

During the course of his visit to Liverpool, Sir David Beatty, in reply to a question as to what he thought the odds were against Jutland proving to be the last naval battle in history, promptly said: "A thousand to one against." This statement has since been challenged by several leading admirals, whose comments have appeared in "The Weekly Despatch." Admiral Sir Hedworth Meux says: "It would seem an inevitable concomitant of human life that wars should occur. They have been taking place since the world was created, and there appears no ground for imagining that we have reached the millennium. Consequently, there will be battles, not entirely on the sea, perhaps, but below and above it." Admiral Sir William May: "I cannot believe there will be no more battles." Admiral Sir George Callaghan: "Naval battles will recur so long as the sea flows and human ambitions exist."

Any person who is at all superstitious would have had an anxious time if he had been on board the troopship Athenic, which left New Zealand in June last with the 39th Reinforcements. Bishop Sadiier mentioned in his address to the Nelson Senior Cadets recently that before the vessel left Wellington the ship's cat went ashore, which was considered a bad omen, but it was captured by the crew and taken aboard again. The vessel left on the 13th of the month, and in the Panama Canal the cat fell overboard, and to prevent it from drowning it was shot by a soldier—another ominous happening. During the voyage it transpired that there were 13 officers on board and there were 13 boats on the ship. At Jamaica the Athenic went ashore, and the troops were transferred to a Dutch cargo tramp and called at New York. The voyage across the Atlantic occupied 13 days, and the convoy consisted of 13 destroyers, and they arrived at Liverpool on 31st August (the figures reversed). Incidentally, Bishop Sadiier mentioned that the O.C. celebrated his 39th birthday on board (three times 13), and they were the 39th Reinforcements!

A supplement to the "London Gazette" recently contained a complete list of Victoria Crosses awarded between August, 1915, and the Armistice, and for the first time dis-

closes the locality in which the Crosses were won. In all there are 346 awards, 139 being to officers, 111 to N.C.O.'s, and 96 to men. Crosses were won near London and as far afield as Hafiz Kor, India, where there was serious fighting. All the "bad places" on the Western front, which to thousands of men will be a dreadful memory for years, are in the list, including Ypres, more than a dozen times; Thiepval, Hamel Wood, Paschendale Ridge, Le Transloy, Villers-Bretonneux, Trones and Delville Woods, the Yser Canal, Arras, Poelcapelle, Martinpuich, and Gievenchy. The battlefields of East Africa, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Dardanelles also figure, while records of brave flying are found in the awards to Captains Ball, McCudden, and Bishop. Men from almost every part of the British Empire are in the roll—Canadians, South Africans, Australians, New Zealanders, and men of the Indian Empire. Among the V.C.'s are three clergymen and five doctors, including the late Captain N. G. Chavasse, who won his V.C. in 1916 and a bar to it a year later.

The death recently occurred at Pretoria, South Africa, of Jack Hindon, the Boer scout, known as the "Train-wrecker," who was largely responsible for Lord Kitchener's difficulties on the Delagoa Railway in the later stages of the South African War. He was born in Scotland, but, going to South Africa at an early age, afterwards sided with the Boer population. Many stories were told about Hindon's strange career. He was said to have been a British private who fought with Sir George Colley at Majuba, but he always denied that he served in any British force. During the South African War he saved a British officer whom the Boers had captured and decided to shoot, by smuggling him away in a waggon. During his successes as a train-wrecker several expeditions were told off to capture him, but he proved as elusive as de Wet. He surrendered at Balmoral in May, 1902.

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At a recent test of the Isaac Pitman Shorthand Writers' Association (states "Pitman's Journal"), Mr. Herman J. Stich, an American court reporter, wrote under most rigorous rules at the rate of 300 words a minute for five consecutive minutes, and then presented a transcript that, with only two immaterial errors, almost reached perfection, the percentage of accuracy being 99.9. Mr. Stich's performance is described as the finest in the history of shorthand.

"It is an extraordinary thing, but no matter what New Zealand produces, that production is of the best quality in the world," remarked Mr. J. C. N. Grigg in his address at the Christchurch branch of the Royal Colonial Institute. Incidentally, Mr. Grigg remarked on the enormous value of the Panama Canal to New Zealand, and said that whatever New Zealand could spare would have a great market in New York in future, a matter which it would be extremely foolish to ignore.



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