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ST. JOHN STAR.
ST. JOHN, N. B., FEB. 20, 1909.

BRITAIN'S SOCIAL PROBLEM.
Despatches this week referred briefly to a very important sociological report issued in Britain. For upwards of three years a royal commission consisting of men and women experts in the administration of poor law and in social economics, have been carefully investigating every detail of the industrial and social conditions of the poor laws which have brought about unemployment, and which have led to the production of men and women who cannot be employed. The investigation went fully into the requirements of every branch of industry, but in addition considered phases of life which have developed that class of people now described as unemployed, that is those capable of working, but who refuse to work. This report is regarded as the most important prepared in many years. After an exhaustive review of the conclusions reached as a result of the investigations, the commission makes some hundreds of recommendations. Some of the most striking of these, in which both the majority and the minority agree, are the abolition of general workhouses and boards of poor law guardians, the establishment of separate treatment for the aged, weak, able-bodied unemployed persons and loafers, the compulsory detention of persistent idlers for periods varying from six months to three years, the institution of labor exchanges and the discouragement or prevention of child labor. Throughout the reports an appeal is made to the prosperous to co-operate by personal service in the relief of the poor, especially to set the poor a good example. The increasing extravagance in dress, the craving for amusement and the subordination of the serious side of life to frivolity are declared to be habits that are responsible for much pauperism and distress. If reforms in these directions are to be effective, the example, says the report, must come from above. The evidence given showed that city-bred populations degenerate. A great majority of the unemployed are city-bred. It is impossible to give in cable limits more than a meager outline of the proposals, which are drastically revolutionary, and which, if adopted, completely alter social conditions in some directions. It is noteworthy that the commission is the first great Royal Commission having women members.

THE CITY PAYS.

The action against the city brought by Messrs. McArthur and McVey, has been settled. The city, as usual, pays the bills. There has scarcely been a case in the last generation in which St. John has done otherwise than hand out cash in suits brought against it. In the present instance the contracting firm, which performed a section of the water system extension, sued the city for payment for additional work rendered necessary during the carrying out of the contract. The principal contention was that the specifications and plans prepared by the city were at fault. By arranging the settlement which has just been completed, counsel representing St. John tacitly admit the contention of the contractors. It is settling but simple justice, that men who undertake to do a certain work for the city should be paid for their work, and hence it is admitted that the information on which the contract was based was faulty, no criticism can be offered regarding the settlement. Messrs. McArthur and McVey are no doubt entitled to what they have received, but this does not get away from the main point that St. John has been stuck for the money and that the city is always in the same fix. Any man, woman or child who cares to bring action, can hold up the corporation and get practically whatever amount is asked. It is cheaper to pay than to go to law, for in event of a trial, the city invariably loses. It always has lost, for whenever a suit is entered, some one in authority, who should have come to his senses months before, awakens to the realization that the city has been negligent and has no defense to offer, that servants who have been employed and paid, have neglected their work and left the corporation open to action. Surely there should be some way of taking precaution against such developments and of overcoming the looseness which now prevails in practically every branch of civic administration.

COMMERCIAL SPORT.

One cannot help but remark on the rather unusual development in amateur sports now taking place in St. John. It is true that we are as yet without any really active athletic association; that although a number of second-rate clubs exist, none of them are sufficiently strong to exert any influence in any particular direction, and that we will need a capable executive body, not influenced by personal prejudice which could handle all important matters in athletics with strict impartiality. Yet even in the face of these weaknesses there is being aroused, chiefly among commercial and mercantile houses, a spirit of rivalry, which is doing much for the development of young men and towards the creation of a healthy sporting instinct. This movement has been going on more or less quietly for the past two or three years, but it is only within the last year that it has become a prominent feature. Practically all of the larger business houses now have their own teams for bowling, for basketball, hockey and other games. Hundreds of young men who previously took little interest in sport of any kind, are now devoting themselves with no little enthusiasm to various forms of athletics, all of which is of value to the community.

SATURDAY SERMONETTE.

STORMS.

It was a storm, a snow storm, that kept him from going home. The roads were blocked with drifts. Snowflakes and sleet would have to shovel and plough out the roads before he could get home, although it was only ten miles away.

At home a child was very ill, perhaps dying, and it was agony for him to be away from her.

Impatiently he walked the floor and looked out of the window as the early night came down that storm winter's day.

He would have taken his horse and gone out in the wild storm if he had not restrained him.

He will never forget that night. It was after midnight before he went to his room, for he knew he could not sleep. Would the night never end? He heard the muffled tones of a clock, several rooms away—striking the half hour.

The wind shrieked at times like a lost soul the said to himself, and then cried and moaned like a sick child. And then he must have dozed, for the next time the clock struck he counted four strokes.

Morning, he said, as he sprang from bed. Morning and daylight hours away that long winter's night.

He went softly down stairs that he might not wake the sleepers. He replenished the fire quietly, and then waited as patiently as he could for daylight.

The storm had passed away and he looked from the east window for the first glint of dawn. "As those who watch for the morning," he said to himself. "But there is no light long enough to keep back the morning." And with it he dreamed of days, the household are awake.

The sun is coming up to a cloudless sky. There is scarcely a breath of wind. The day will be fine, the roads will be cleared, and in a few hours he will be home.

He followed the shovellers and snow plough as closely as he could for, he said, they will work faster when they see how anxious I am.

He will never forget that drive as he will never forget the night before.

The slow travelling made him think of a funeral procession. "Two or three days from now I will be following a hearse," he said. At last the journey is over; he is at home. How fast his heart beats, how nervous he is. But what face is that at the window? Surely not the face of the sick child he had thought dead. And then he hears glad shouts. "Father has come." "The child is better, almost well. She slept well last night." And he thinks of his sleepless night and his foolish fears, almost with shame.

And that is your story and mine (with variations). For more times than we can remember we have been as foolish. Away from home in some storm of the night, we have imagined the house buried down, wife sick, children dying. All sorts of disasters and we not there to protect them or share their trouble.

A hundred times we have dreaded to go down the street to our home afraid we should see crepe on the door.

A hundred times we have crossed bridges before we came to them. A hundred times we have seen (in imagination) funeral processions, and we have met bridal ones. And a hundred times we have said we will never be such fools again, and, a hundred times we will be such fools again.

DIAMOND JUBILEE OF TRAGEDIAN.

On March 2 of this year there falls an anniversary which cannot conceivably be allowed to pass without some worthy recognition on the part of the theatrical world. On that day Mr. Hermann Vezin, the famous actor— one of the few links now left us with the "palm" days of great tragic acting— reaches his fifty birthday. Incidentally he celebrates his diamond jubilee as an actor, for although he did not make his first appearance in England until 1859 he had already "walked on" in Berlin.

Not only fine actor, but essentially a gentleman and scholar, Mr. Hermann Vezin has thus upheld through sixty years the highest traditions of a calling that has suffered possibly as much from its recent social vogue as from its earliest struggles with poverty and neglect. Though approaching his sixtieth year, Mr. Vezin is still in the full enjoyment of every faculty, endowed with a keenness, vigor and enthusiasm that remind one curiously of the late Victorian Sardou. He is, as he himself will cheerfully admit, a "better actor now than ever he was." He is still, moreover, a passionate believer in the dignity of the actor's art, and a whole-hearted optimist as regards the future of the English stage.

In the little circle of the Strand—choke-full of souvenir portraits and artistic treasures—where Mr. Vezin has lived now for over thirty years, a Daily Chronicle representative had a delightful chat with the old actor yesterday afternoon. With a vivaciousness that was in itself perfectly amazing, Mr. Vezin recalled old memories and personalities.

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His recollections are, too, curiously cosmopolitan. Of French Huguenot descent, Mr. Vezin was born far away in Philadelphia, where he took his degree at the Pennsylvania University when he was 18. He was one of fourteen children; his father, who was connected by marriage with Rouget de Lisle, the author of the "Marseillaise," having gone to America from Germany.

Of his youth in America Mr. Vezin has some illuminating stories to tell. "Philadelphia was then," said he, "a city of the future. It was the theatre, but my father, who remembered the great Talma, used to confess to me that he also had had feelings towards the stage, though he was against my becoming an actor."

The great American tragedian of those days was Edwin Forrest. I remember him well. A little more cultured than we have now, perhaps, the greatest actor who ever lived. He had a glorious Herculean physique, and combined with it the passion of Edmund Kean. He was certainly the finest Rhesus I ever saw, and a magnificent King Lear.

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Mrs. Andrew Savoy, Grattan, N.B., writes: "In the year 1900 I was taken sick and did not think I could live any length of time. My trouble was with my heart and people said me that nothing could be done for a case like mine. I consulted the very best doctors but they could do me no good. For seven weeks I could hardly cross the floor. I had no pain, but was so weak nobody in the world can believe how I felt. I had given up all hope of living and had given my little girl to my sister-in-law."

"One day a friend came to see me, and calling me by name, said, 'Listen, if I were you I would try a dose of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills as they are good for heart trouble.' My husband got me a box, but for two days I was not better, but on the fourth day my husband said, 'I believe these pills are doing you good.' I said to myself, 'Yes, I feel a deal better this morning.' He said, 'Well, I will get you another box.' He said, 'Well, I took two boxes and three doses out of the third one, and I was perfectly well and have not been sick since then.'"

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Let us give the boss a rest, We have hunted him with zest, But little was our glory when we'd strung him to the laugh. He was easy, he was tame, And we longed for bigger game— It's the boss behind the boss behind the boss we're after now.

Let politicians rest, They are only tools at best; They are paid to take a licking when the public wants a row. We decline to waste an arrow On the boy that wheels the barrow; It's the boss behind the boss behind the boss we're after now.

Ye lords of toll and trade, Ye Water Kings afraid; Ye skulking magnates, to whom our statement bow: We, too, like you, can mix With effect in politics; It's the boss behind the boss behind the boss we're after now.

In your trenches deeply laid, You are not the least dismayed? You're a puzzling proposition, we will readily allow. Perhaps we'll have to fret you, For we don't know how to get you, But we're going to keep a-trying till we find out how.

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Ab, happy is the man who rises with the dawn, More so, by far, indeed, than that hard-working mart, Who, when the dread alarm sounds, hustles garments on, And gets a catch-scratch-on shave all in the dash.

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These damages have been variously estimated as from fifteen to twenty million dollars. The Coal Company's offer disposes of future damages and the question now arises whether the contract having been assigned to a trust company for the benefit of the bondholders, whether the amount to be received from the Coal Company for its breach should not be paid to the trust company. If this is a correct view nothing will be left to pay the floating indebtedness or over due interest on the preferred stock which amounts to about forty-two per cent. The Nova Scotia Legislature can by act legalize the payment to the Steel Company instead of to the trust company for breach of contract.

NOTICE TO MARINERS.

Notice is hereby given that the "Anticosti" Lightship anchored on Larcher shoal, off Yarmouth, N. S., has broken her moorings, and is now in Yarmouth. It will be replaced on Sunday, the 1st instant, weather permitting.

J. A. LEGERRE, Acting Agent, Marine and Fisheries Department, St. John, N. B. 20-3

SONG OF A ROUSED PEOPLE.

Let us give the boss a rest, We have hunted him with zest, But little was our glory when we'd strung him to the laugh. He was easy, he was tame, And we longed for bigger game— It's the boss behind the boss behind the boss we're after now.

Let politicians rest, They are only tools at best; They are paid to take a licking when the public wants a row. We decline to waste an arrow On the boy that wheels the barrow; It's the boss behind the boss behind the boss we're after now.

Ye lords of toll and trade, Ye Water Kings afraid; Ye skulking magnates, to whom our statement bow: We, too, like you, can mix With effect in politics; It's the boss behind the boss behind the boss we're after now.

In your trenches deeply laid, You are not the least dismayed? You're a puzzling proposition, we will readily allow. Perhaps we'll have to fret you, For we don't know how to get you, But we're going to keep a-trying till we find out how.

THESE LATE SUN-UPS.

Ab, happy is the man who rises with the dawn, More so, by far, indeed, than that hard-working mart, Who, when the dread alarm sounds, hustles garments on, And gets a catch-scratch-on shave all in the dash.

DIAMOND JUBILEE OF TRAGEDIAN.

On March 2 of this year there falls an anniversary which cannot conceivably be allowed to pass without some worthy recognition on the part of the theatrical world. On that day Mr. Hermann Vezin, the famous actor— one of the few links now left us with the "palm" days of great tragic acting— reaches his fifty birthday. Incidentally he celebrates his diamond jubilee as an actor, for although he did not make his first appearance in England until 1859 he had already "walked on" in Berlin.

Not only fine actor, but essentially a gentleman and scholar, Mr. Hermann Vezin has thus upheld through sixty years the highest traditions of a calling that has suffered possibly as much from its recent social vogue as from its earliest struggles with poverty and neglect. Though approaching his sixtieth year, Mr. Vezin is still in the full enjoyment of every faculty, endowed with a keenness, vigor and enthusiasm that remind one curiously of the late Victorian Sardou. He is, as he himself will cheerfully admit, a "better actor now than ever he was." He is still, moreover, a passionate believer in the dignity of the actor's art, and a whole-hearted optimist as regards the future of the English stage.

In the little circle of the Strand—choke-full of souvenir portraits and artistic treasures—where Mr. Vezin has lived now for over thirty years, a Daily Chronicle representative had a delightful chat with the old actor yesterday afternoon. With a vivaciousness that was in itself perfectly amazing, Mr. Vezin recalled old memories and personalities.

"I AM LEAR!"

His recollections are, too, curiously cosmopolitan. Of French Huguenot descent, Mr. Vezin was born far away in Philadelphia, where he took his degree at the Pennsylvania University when he was 18. He was one of fourteen children; his father, who was connected by marriage with Rouget de Lisle, the author of the "Marseillaise," having gone to America from Germany.

Of his youth in America Mr. Vezin has some illuminating stories to tell. "Philadelphia was then," said he, "a city of the future. It was the theatre, but my father, who remembered the great Talma, used to confess to me that he also had had feelings towards the stage, though he was against my becoming an actor."

The great American tragedian of those days was Edwin Forrest. I remember him well. A little more cultured than we have now, perhaps, the greatest actor who ever lived. He had a glorious Herculean physique, and combined with it the passion of Edmund Kean. He was certainly the finest Rhesus I ever saw, and a magnificent King Lear.

"A good story is told of him in this last character. One day a fellow actor complimented him on his play, he played Lear. 'Play Lear!' exclaimed Forrest. 'I play Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, but by G—d, sir, I am Lear!'"

It was at Berlin, where, as a young man of 20, he began his career in a cure for falling eyelids, that Mr. Vezin first "met the footlights," walking on in Shakespearean plays, under the German actor Hendrich, "the ideal Romeo." Next year