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**A Genius of the
Press-Room**

MR. ROBERT MERCER AND HIS
SERVICES TO THE "GREAT
ART."

By ALEX. A. PARSONS, J.P., in The
Newfoundland Quarterly.

The above title refers to a genial, brainy, resourceful machinist of today, of unbounded energy, untiring industry and endless persistence in the ways of the world in general and the newspaper world in particular, which qualifications have helped to much of success and worthy achievement in his occupation; a man who has been for many years known to the printers of the entire city—and of late to the printers of the whole country.

Although so long identified with newspaper work here and elsewhere, he has nothing to do with parties or politics. With the true instinct of a born "industrialist," he prefers good clean business to the rascalities of politics. Singleness of purpose has been a prominent cause of the success

that has attended his efforts. All his undertakings have been natural developments of the line of work on which he first set out. Wherever he has seen an advantage along his own legitimate path, he has followed it up, but he has never wandered off into side issues to the detriment of his regular way of doing things. It is to such men of one purpose, of which there are far too few, that the "craft" and the country owes its best work.

Mr. Robert Mercer was born at Bay Roberts in 1856. He comes from a brawny race, being a descendant of one of those sturdy old Devonshire "adventurers" who came to Newfoundland in the days of the "floating Surrogates," and whose ancestors gloried in their connection with the British Empire-builders of days gone by—the men who, under renowned leaders like Drake, Froisher, Hawkins, Howard, etc., made "the flag of old England" the emblem of civil and religious liberty "all over and around the Seven Seas." But Mr. Mercer's disposition is somewhat different from that of his forebears, inasmuch as he is a lover of the arts of peace rather than the arts of war. And so he thinks

"They were made to exalt us, to teach us, to bless. Those invincible brothers—the Pen and the Press."

However, since his early boyhood he has been pretty closely identified with "the art" preservation of all arts—the noble art of printing. As already intimated, the particular department with which he has been in touch during the greater part of his active life is that of the all-important and indispensable press-room, where the stereotyped plate is made from the matrix and where the intricate and complicated printing machine, which requires the most careful and unremitting attention, supplies the city and country with the indispensable morning and evening newspaper.

Mr. Mercer's first knowledge of the printing business was acquired when a boy in the office of the Weekly Telegraph, printed and published by the late John T. Burton. Here he spent a period of six years. Afterwards he proceeded to Montreal, entered the employ of Messrs. John Lovell & Sons, book publishers, where he remained the greater part of a year. Thence he moved on to the United

States and obtained work at once in the big printing establishment of Adams, Weston Co., at Rouse's Point, in the State of New York. There he continued till 1887, when he returned to Newfoundland and to his native town of Bay Roberts. He soon returned to St. John's, where he linked up his time and talents with the Evening Telegram, and where he still remains—"the genius of the press-room" there!

The position of press-man or, properly speaking, press-room engineer—as all who possess a practical knowledge of the printing business will admit—is a most exacting one. To him the editor and proprietor looks for the regular and satisfactory appearance of the paper. When anything gets "out of gear" in the press-room the issue for the day is held up till the difficulty has been located and removed. Under Mr. Mercer's personal supervision and careful direction, trouble with the press-room machinery seldom occurs, and when it does, this sensitive ear, keen observation and long experience enable him to locate and remove it immediately.

Mr. Mercer is a firm believer in the axiom that "Great things can be done by application and industry." He says: "The man who sits down on the road to success and waits for a free ride, will be left; and the man who jumps on the tailboard of someone's else's success will be greeted with a cry of 'Whip behind!'"

As a matter of fact, whatever success the Evening Telegram has achieved in the domain of journalism—and it has long been regarded as the leading newspaper here—must be largely attributed to the efficient services of Mr. Robert Mercer. Nor does he confine his operations to the press-room of that paper. His services are always available to others in distress, and I think I am safe in saying that pretty well all the printing concerns in the city have, from time to time, in emergencies, availed of his generous assistance. I notice that Francis Quarles, in his "Quaint Fancies," likens the world to a printing concern, and makes the following "quaint" estimate of the universe:—

"The world's a printing house;
Our words, our thoughts,
Our deeds, are characters of
Several sizes;
Each soul is a compositor,
Of whose faults
Or whose virtues
Heaven revises;
Death is the common press
From whence being driven,
We're gathered, sheet by sheet,
And bound for heaven."

**Cello Recital Will be
an Exceptional Treat**

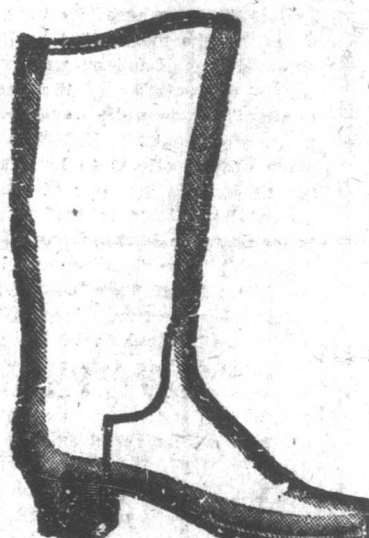
The announcement that Mr. Fritz Bruch, the Cellist, who has been delighting the patrons of the Majestic for some weeks past, is to give a recital on Sunday night, should, and will, evoke a welcome response from all music-lovers of St. John's. We still have vivid memories of Holman, the veteran Cellist, who came here about 18 years ago, and those who crowded to his farewell concert on the Sunday afternoon are still talking of his wonderful playing. The opportunity is again with us to hear a Great Cellist. We advise all to make sure that they hear Mr. Bruch on Sunday. Mr. Bruch honours his profession and is an honor to it. His playing reveals a personality that responds sympathetically to the wonderful resources of that most wonderful instrument, the Violoncello, whose tonal loveliness and capability of expression are unsurpassed. In other words Mr. Bruch plays with feeling, and with a happy combination of mind and soul that reaches the hearts of all. He has given a programme of splendid variety during his engagement at the Majestic, but naturally has not given such pieces as would properly be classed as recital numbers. He will play at the recital several of these "big" numbers, as well as those short pieces which appeal to many as being particularly adapted to the Cello. Mr. Bruch is also a composer, and will play at least two of his own compositions, one "Oriental," and an exquisite lullaby which he dedicated to his little boy, and which will prove to be one of the most charming pieces

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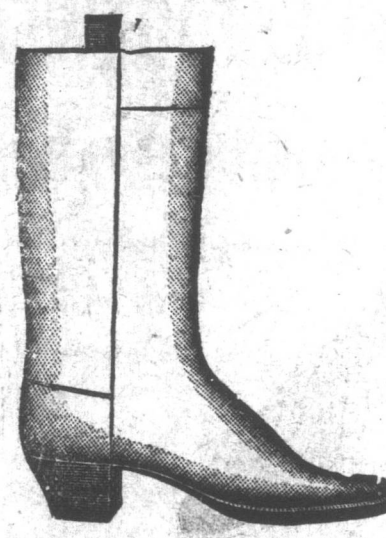
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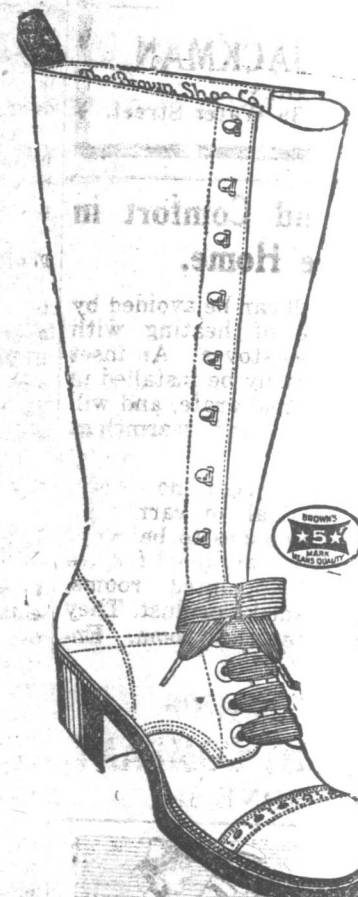
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