

## HOW LONDONERS "MURDER" ENGLISH

Peculiarities of the Cockney Dialect—Campaign for Pure Speech.

London, June 14.—Much interest has been aroused by the work of the Pure Speech League of Horney, which has begun a campaign to reform the Cockney dialect. The members of the league, however, are not the first champions in the field. For a number of years the education department of the London County Council have been making earnest attempts to teach young Londoners to speak correctly, and Dr. Kimmins, the chief inspector, says that an improvement is already manifest. "Compared with a few years ago," he says, "the reading of the children, even in the lower classes is remarkable for its purity of enunciation. Aspirates are properly sounded, and the vowels are distinctly more correct than they were. The children may use a different speech when they get outside school, and they may revert to Cockneys when their school days are over. I cannot say. But I am very sanguine about the ultimate results of the movement."

A number of members of the Pure Speech League have made a hobby of collecting "Cockneys." The gem of the collection so far was picked up at Horney by Canon Horsley. The clergyman asked one of his parishioners what the baby's name was, and received the answer: "Byby's nymie's Jyne, plume Jyne." It is vainly imagined that the Cockneys are confined to the uneducated classes. When pointing this out, the Londoner, who regards his own speech as perfect, is as likely as not to say "saw" for "saw."

A curious document is preserved at the law courts. Some of the briefless juniors amuse themselves by taking phonetic records of the utterances of a successful practitioner. The gem of the collection is this: "Dilger say ye sawer in in the lane?" The witness being a Londoner himself, correctly interpreted the question as, "Did you say you saw him in the lane?"

Some distinguished persons are so fond of the Cockney dialect that they never use any other. An alderman at a city dinner said to the lord chancellor, "Do you think 'Ighrate pretty?" The chancellor confessed that he had not noticed any difference in the alderman's appearance. "I'm not talking about myself," said the bewildered alderman. "I said 'Ighrate."

Dr. Skeat, professor of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge University, whose life

work has been the study of words—their sound, spelling, meaning and history, and who is one of the foremost philologists in the world, says Cockneys change rapidly. "The Cockneys of today," he says, "are quite different from those recorded by Dickens. I was born in London, and I lived there for ten years. Not until thirty or forty years ago did I ever hear the substitution of 'I' for 'a'." I can well remember the shock of surprise with which I first heard a porter shout, "Myden Lync" when we got to the station of Malden Lane.

"London has an enormous influence on the accepted pronunciation of English, and that influence will prevail more and more. It is quite possible that in course of time the standard of educated English speech will be affected by it."

"That is a matter of importance, for the spoken word, and that alone, is only its picture or representation to the eye, and frequently represents it imperfectly. We have five vowels in the English alphabet. To represent correctly the vowel sounds used in England, we should require a hundred. Dr. Wright, in his dialect dictionary, gives sixteen different pronunciations of the word 'down,' prevalent in various parts of England. The consonants are the same in every case; the difference is in the vowel sounds, and those have to be expressed by special signs with an arbitrary value."

## YOUTHS' THEATER IN NEW YORK

New Venture Born of Children's Experimental Stage Work—Twain a Director.

New York, June 14.—There is to be a new theater in town, not built by Oscar Hammerstein or by any of the managers whose names so seldom get into the newspapers, nor is it to be a theater of the usual order, although it will be a "regular theater," as all its actors, patrons, and managers will testify.

The new theater filed a certificate of incorporation at Albany. The names of some of the directors demonstrate that it does not lack either capital or moral backing or the special talent and management which go to make a theater successful. It is to be called the Education Theater for Children and Young People.

While it is the outgrowth of the Children's Educational Theater, which has been in existence long enough to demonstrate its right to live in connection with the Educational Alliance in East Broadway, the new theater really will be a new adventure in New York.

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Winnipeg, June 13.—Although the past week has been characterized by heavy showers, alternating with spells of heat, and nights generally have been cool, and from reports received the young crop does not appear to have suffered.

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Starting with Manitoba, the reports are most gratifying. Portage Plains showed better prospects, and farmers there are already talking of an immense yield. Heavy rains in Southern Manitoba are bringing the crop along nicely, while in the north, where much of the land is new, there is not a single adverse report. In Saskatchewan everything is doing well along the main line of the C. P. R., and now it is quite clear that the frost of a few weeks ago did no permanent damage. In the Regina district, where, owing to heavy rain, the crop is generally a little late, wheat is now twelve inches high, while similar conditions prevail on the Arcola branch and the Soo line, where there is a considerably increased acreage seeded in flax and oats. Moosejaw reports grain remarkable for its sturdiness, with roots well stooped out.

Farther north reports are equally encouraging. Saskatchewan has nothing but wide tributary country, while Lloydminster says crops have never been so advanced during six years of settlement, the only danger being that of a late start. Calgary says the crops are all that could be wished, especially fall wheat and coarse grains. Heavy rains have been prevalent, but do not appear to have injured the crop. Macleod reports fall wheat 35 inches high and just beginning to head out, while spring wheat is well advanced. Lethbridge says cool, wet weather has caused grain roots to grow deeper and stronger, and spring wheat is well advanced. Rain has gone on nicely, and no grain has been drowned out. Grass is in excellent shape, with cutting already starting, and home and rye grass in districts all look splendid, and similar reports come from Edmonton, Swift Current and other western points. So far there is no fly in the ointment of crop of the prairie west.

Further north reports are equally encouraging. Saskatchewan has nothing but wide tributary country, while Lloydminster says crops have never been so advanced during six years of settlement, the only danger being that of a late start. Calgary says the crops are all that could be wished, especially fall wheat and coarse grains. Heavy rains have been prevalent, but do not appear to have injured the crop. Macleod reports fall wheat 35 inches high and just beginning to head out, while spring wheat is well advanced. Lethbridge says cool, wet weather has caused grain roots to grow deeper and stronger, and spring wheat is well advanced. Rain has gone on nicely, and no grain has