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HOW TO SUCCEED AS A JOURNALIST

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HOW TO SUCCEED AS A JOURNALIST

BY

JOHN PENDLETON

AUTHOR OF

“OUR RAILWAYS,” “NEWSPAPER REPORTING,” “THE IVORY
QUEEN,” ETC.

LONDON

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HOW TO SUCCEED AS A JOURNALIST

CHAPTER I

THE COMING PROFESSION

A NOTABLE politician recently remarked that journalism will be the profession of the future. It is already a profession of considerable power, and has for years been distinctive as the "Fourth Estate." Its wealth, energy, and influence are increasing daily, and the Press is becoming, if it has not already become, one of the most vigorous agents in political and public life.

Its Money Value

The remuneration it offers as a livelihood depends entirely on the ability of the journalist himself. Though he may never amass a fortune as great as the man who has "gone into trade," he is tolerably certain, if he is an expert shorthand note-taker, a facile writer, or a good organiser, to command a salary that places him beyond want, and sometimes opens the door to affluence. The goddess Fortuna, at all events, gives him an infinite variety of pay to select from—he may get from £75 a year as the

reporter on a country newspaper to £2,000 a year or more as the editor of a London daily.

Interest in Journalism

There has been, and probably always will be, an air of mystery about the profession of a journalist. He is not as other men. He reverses the order of Nature, sleeping when other people are awake, and working when other people are asleep. There is the flavour of Bohemianism about his outgoings and his incomings. Out of the office he never seems to be busy. He is invariably interesting as an acquaintance, because his talk does not run on money, the stock markets, the state of trade, or the weather.

The Press as a Career

There never was a period in English life when so much interest centred in journalism. The newspapers have prompted general comment by their recent developments and news-getting enterprise in war and peace. They have not been very successful in pictorial illustration, and some of the portraits they give are travesties of art; but, with an exception here and there, the morning, evening, and weekly papers are well-written, bright and readable, dabbling in current literature as well as in news. Quite a new era in newspaper production has arisen. The institution of halfpenny evening papers and halfpenny morning papers in many cities has created a greater demand for pressmen; and parents and guardians, at their wit's end to know what to do with their boys—and girls—are sanguine that journalism is a profession which affords scope for the youth of both sexes.

Not a Sinecure

The experienced journalist, who has had many ups and downs in his career, and sees comparatively little fascination in working ten, twelve, and sixteen hours a day for a smaller fee than a solicitor gets for half-an-hour's drafting of an apprentice's articles, smiles grimly at this enthusiasm, and says, if consulted, that he would prefer to make his son an authorised plumber rather than a pressman, because the artisan is paid at a much higher rate for the work he really does. Nevertheless, little heed is given to this counsel, and the question, "How can I become a journalist?" is put to the editor of this or that newspaper nearly every postal delivery by someone burning to get on the Press.

Newspaper Work

The most practical way of replying to the question—a question of great importance to many—is to point out the character of the work on a daily paper, and the qualifications necessary to its accomplishment; to give some idea of the reporter's varied duty, the sub-editor's nightly struggle with masses of news, the editor's ceaseless effort and resourcefulness, the night overseer's dogged persistence, and the concentration of mental, physical, and mechanical activity absolutely necessary to the issue of a paper.

A Pariah

No profession makes greater calls on the strength and self-sacrifice of the worker than journalism. He is bound to put the best of his mind and body into

his work, frequently done under great strain ; and he must of necessity deny himself to a considerable extent the pleasures of home life and social intercourse. He is in a sense a pariah from society ; or rather, a slave to his profession. The nature of his work renders him so unconventional, such a breaker of the rules of a well-ordered household, that some thinkers have boldly asserted that the journalist has no right to marry. But if not within the pale of the ordinary life of mankind, he has compensations. Usually he is devoted to duty, he loves his work, and occasionally gets diversion in it ; for newspaper production is inseparable from exciting incident, annoying or entertaining, as the case may be.

London at Dawn

In "Pendennis," Thackeray speaks of "that great engine, the press," and then tells how his hero got on it. Acting on this precedent, it may be well, before dealing with the various departments of newspaper work, to give a general notion of what "the Press" really means. London at night is an instructive city. After the roar of traffic has died away, the mother city of the world, the heart of our great empire, seems to be at rest, till the darkness breaks into the saffron fog of dawn, and Fleet Street awakens, outwardly, to vigorous life.

The Newspaper Train

The old-fashioned thoroughfare, whose historic landmarks are gradually being supplanted by modern buildings in nearly every style of architecture, is the greatest news-gathering street in the world. In the

newspaper offices that border it there is the hiss of steam and the noise of machinery, and the daily journals, wet or dry printed, are flung from the windows, or trundled along passages, or carried in huge bundles through the doorways into the street. The vehicles on the pavement edge are rapidly filled. Newspapers heap like phantom pyramids in the murky light. There is a clatter of horses' feet, and the shouting of hoarse voices, and then the morning race begins. Time is precious, and the carts must move quickly if their loads are to catch the newspaper train.

At the Termini

At Euston, King's Cross, St Pancras, Marylebone, or other terminus, the platforms are, by-and-by, littered with bundles. There are newspapers for everywhere. Thousands of news-sheets are flung into this or that van for transit. The guard impatiently waves his green flag, and shouts "Right away!" and the newspaper train throbs out on its long journey to northern or western city. Similar scenes, soon after midnight, may be witnessed at the big railway stations in the North, the Midlands, and the West; for newspaper production is almost as up-to-date in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Bristol as in London, and the newspaper train runs as readily for the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Manchester Guardian* as for the *Times*.

By Wire and Tube

You get from this bustle some idea of the despatch of the daily newspaper, and yet know little of the

method of its production Through the silence of the night the telegraph, telephone, pneumatic tube, and special messenger have been busy. News from far and near has been clicked, spoken, or carried into a score of newspaper offices, from Printing House Square to the Strand—news telling of war, intrigue, state function, crime, disaster, festivity, and commercial enterprise. All this intelligence, carefully winnowed by the sub-editors, and commented upon in the editorial department, has been set by linotype machines or by compositors, corrected, revised, locked in forme, swung into the foundry, stereotyped, and rattled through the machines, from which the newspaper comes not only printed, but folded, ready for sale.

Who gets the Facts?

Out of the hurly-burly of the production, transit, and circulation of a daily journal, spring the questions: Where does the news come from? Who gets the facts? A great deal of the news comes from Parliament. The reporter, according to the Standing Orders, is still "a stranger" in the House, and any member can demand his withdrawal; but the once haughty prejudice in Parliament against the journalist—whether leader writer, correspondent, lobbyist, or reporter—is not so acute as it was half a century back. Formerly, the pressman was obliged to take notes by stealth. Now he is given facility for work, and even for recreation, within the precincts of the House.

Our Own Reporter

Nearly every journalist, at some period of his career, has a laudable desire to enter "the Gallery";

but it is in general duty that "Our Own Reporter" has the most varied experience. The sub-editor's work—the selection and preparation of news for insertion in the daily journal—now and again becomes monotonous and exhausting. The reporter, on the other hand, finds his toil lightened by frequent change. He is in the world, and of it. He goes everywhere. He reports everything, from a political demonstration to a colliery disaster, from a king's journey to a smart wedding. Nothing is too important, nothing too trivial for record by his pencil.

A Fearless News-gatherer

He is ubiquitous and fearless in his news-gathering. He will go up in a balloon, down a mine, row to a wreck, and risk death by fire in his zeal for news. The lady journalist assumes such characters as those of crossing-sweeper, flower-girl, and factory lass in her eagerness to write on new subjects. There is ample room for her pen, and she has given quite a new phase to journalism, yet long before her advent the reporter was prepared, in the ordinary course of duty, to enter upon even more novel exploits, and to disguise himself in almost any garb to achieve a similar object. In fact, it has become almost a truism that the young man, or young woman, who is indefatigable, enterprising, impervious to rebuff and never disheartened, will do the best work when he or she becomes a journalist.

CHAPTER II

BOHEMIANS

IN the last century "all sorts and conditions of men" drifted into journalism. The newspaper, weekly or daily, was the source of sustenance to many Bohemians who lacked the inclination or opportunity of settling to a trade or profession. Some prospered, and became famous, others went to the wall, or appeared now and again, by flicker of fortune, amid the shabby and thirsty bar-haunters of Fleet Street.

One Safeguard against Failure

Drink is the syren not only of genius, but of less brilliant effort, and the youth who wishes to succeed as a newspaper man must give it a wide berth, and be strong against temptation. Indulgence in drink means loss not only of time, but of mental capacity; and the men who have become distinguished on the Press have been, and are, either exceedingly moderate drinkers or have not touched the tankard or the wine-cup at all.

Success

Principle, sobriety, industry, and shrewdness are infinitely more important to the young journalist

than fine writing without stability of character. Setting out in life with a purpose to achieve, and the determination to achieve it, invariably results in success in any profession, and the satisfactory outcome of this resolve can be seen in nearly every newspaper office in London, as well as on the staffs of the provincial dailies

Journalistic Instinct

The chronicling of news, and comment on it, become easy to the ordinary intellect by practice, experience, and association, and some of the least likely men have developed what is known in newspaper offices as the "journalistic instinct." Though perhaps laborious writers themselves, they have been able to discern good work and command it, to introduce new features into their journals, to anticipate the wants of readers, to "grasp the public demand," and to produce newspapers that have become valuable properties, and brought them both dignity and honour

Men of Ideas

It is a common saying among journalists that a well-conducted paper is "a gold mine"; but it is a singular fact that the gold mine has been worked, not so much by the brilliant writer as by the capable man of business—by the man often advertised for to-day—the man with ideas, and the strength of will to carry them out. Mr John Walter, of the *Times*, Mr W. H. Mudford, of the *Standard*, and Sir John Robinson, of the *Daily News*, though clever journalists, will be remembered rather as enterprising and skilful news-

HOW TO SUCCEED

paper managers than as newspaper writers, for they never lost an opportunity of improving their papers, of swiftly acquiring news, and of getting the most competent staffs that money and influence could procure.

Two Examples

Sir William Leng, editor and part proprietor of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, was originally a chemist at Hull; Sir John Jaffray, the proprietor of the *Birmingham Daily Post*, was an agriculturist before he became a reporter and a newspaper proprietor, and both these men amassed wealth by successful newspaper management and enterprise rather than by their leading articles, though Sir William Leng has always written brilliantly and trenchantly.

The New Era

In the new era of journalism, the meteoric age of the Press, the prosperity of the halfpenny morning and the halfpenny evening papers that sell the best depend upon racy news, extraordinary sensations, novel special articles, sport, scrappy literature, and crude, though up-to-date, illustrations, rather than upon academic writing.

A Wider Field

Owing to the rapid multiplication of newspapers and journals of every kind, morning, evening, weekly trade, sporting, religious, chatty, illustrated, the capable journalist has an infinitely wider field of occupation than he had twenty-five years ago; and

though he may not get the pay of a Sala, who was wont to boast that he had the salary of an ambassador, he is tolerably sure of a comfortable living, unless, by gross neglect of duty, he throws his chances away.

The Brain of the Paper

But the controller of the paper—the brain of the paper—like the director of any other great business, gets the emolument. A fair conclusion is, then, that any youth of average ability, with ambition and intensity of purpose, may obtain a good position on the Press, if his zeal and inclination trend towards newspaper life.

Some Contributors

Neither the man who has gained distinction at Oxford, nor the barrister who has taken silk, thinks it derogatory to write for the Press. The hauteur, such as Major Pendennis expressed to his nephew, against “those newspaper fellows,” has become less intense. Emperors and kings send congratulatory messages to editors, peers and statesmen consult them and contribute to their columns, and the divine, the novelist, and the artist do not disdain the newspaper as a market.

Humble Representatives

Yet the British Press, with its two thousand five hundred journals, conducted and produced in the main with ability, was built by very humble thought, material, and handicraft; and to this day in remote towns and villages the country correspondent to the morning paper that circulates in the district is the

local bookseller, or the clerk at the colliery, or the village schoolmaster. There is indeed a story in Press circles that for years the best journalist in a northern town was an itinerant pieman, who sold his succulent morsels and gathered his news to such advantage that he secured a competency.

An Open Gate

The Institute of Journalists may sooner or later adopt an examination test of entrance into the Fourth Estate, but at present the Press is open to everyone, poor or rich, low or high. As Mr. W. H. Lucy says: "The first thing the youth who turns his face earnestly towards journalism should convince himself of is that the sole guiding principle which controls admission to the Press, and advance in its ranks, is merit. In journalism, more than any other profession, not excepting even the Bar, a man gets on by his own effort, and only by that. Amongst the crowd struggling to enter journalism, the reiterated rebuffs they meet with naturally lead to the conviction that it is a sort of close borough, those already in possession jealously resenting the efforts of outsiders to breach its sacred portals. Nothing could be further removed from the fact"

Beginnings

With one or two notable exceptions, the men who hold conspicuous positions on the Press to-day had very lowly beginnings. Circumstances were, in some cases, favourable to their advancement, and in journalism, as in any other career, "opportunity is a fine

thing"; but few of these men can look back on their useful and busy lives without remembering that in earlier years they had help, counsel, and encouragement from comrades on the Press, who neither disputed their entrance into the profession nor showed jealousy at their progress in it.

The Proprietor

The newspaper proprietor, risking his capital, of course rakes in the profit if his paper flourishes; but as he notes the inevitable changes in his literary staff, he is inclined to say. "After all, I am only the ladder up which my men climb to better positions, either in journalism or in literature" There is a type of newspaper proprietor, it is true, that does not admit self-abnegation into his vocabulary, and occasionally sends memoranda to his reporter, or his sub-editor, in this strain: "There is no greater curse in the world than disobedience. Please explain why you did not do as you were ordered." But the fidgety and unreasonable director of the daily journal is happily becoming rarer

Despotic Individualism

The limited company and the combine have, to some extent, destroyed individualism, and the almost paternal control that obtained in some old-fashioned business houses, but the withdrawal of despotic individualism from some of the great newspaper properties has not been altogether without advantage to the working journalist.

The Just Editor

The editor, as a rule, bears the brunt of attack from the shareholders. He is a working journalist himself, and though he is bound, for his own credit's sake, and for the paper's existence, to insist on good and careful work, he holds the balance evenly. The precocious schoolboy said of his apparently pedantic master: "He is a beast, but he is a just beast." The editor of a great morning journal is not a beast; but he is invariably just. While doing his duty with rare devotion to his proprietors, he declines to badger his staff. It consists of capable men, probably, in the main, of his own appointment. He knows that they can do their work well, and he is as zealous of their reputation as he is of his own.

Recognition of Good Work

"I never get complimented, however good the work I do," remarked a journalist not long ago. "Have you had a grumbling note from the editor?" asked another pressman. "No," replied the journalist. "You're lucky," replied the pressman, with a meaning smile. "I look upon the absence of reproach as the greatest possible compliment." Nevertheless, a compliment is very welcome to a willing worker; and at the close of the last general election, the editor of a Yorkshire daily, departing from the custom of silence, won the gratitude and esteem of his staff by a letter of thanks, in which he said his men had not only covered more ground, but done better work than at any previous election.

CHAPTER III

HOW TO GET ON THE PRESS

THERE is a tendency to introduce university men to the literary departments of the daily papers ; but the youth who has not had the scholastic advantage of Oxford or Cambridge, and is obliged to hustle for a livelihood long before his beard comes, usually gets a footing in journalism in some capacity at any age from fourteen to eighteen. He enters a newspaper office either as a "punter's devil," copyholder, or editor's amanuensis, or is articled to learn the art and mystery of reporting.

Drifting into Journalism

One authority on the newspaper as a career says that "most men drift into journalism by way of the paragraph and the contributed article." The assertion is verified by the testimony of many of the most prominent journalists of the day, by the men who have passed with patience and resolution through every phase of newspaper work till they have reached the goal of their ambition, and become the editors of our great daily papers.

What the Editors Say

With the object of indicating to the beginner and the aspirant the most practical method of starting on the rough and chequered path of journalism, the author wrote to the editors of the front-rank daily newspapers, asking if they would be good enough to state how they got on the Press. The editor of an English daily, though indefatigable in collecting news and special information, both personally and by means of his staff, dislikes to part with it, except, of course, through the columns of his paper. He is inclined to adopt the chief characteristic of the oyster if you wish to pump any facts out of him—he invariably holds his tongue. But the query met with more courtesy, perhaps, than its bluntness deserved. Such replies as: “I have no answer whatever to give to such an inquiry,” and “The editor declines to give the information for which you ask,” were counter-balanced by the following notes, which should be of the greatest value and encouragement to the youth who intends to be a journalist.

A Veteran's Advice

Sir John Leng, who recently celebrated his jubilee as editor and managing proprietor of the *Dundee Advertiser*, writes:

“I began sending letters to the editor of the *Hull Advertiser*, which attracted his attention, and led to my engagement, first as reporter, and then as sub-editor. Giving my views on how a newspaper should be conducted in my application for the editorship of

the *Dundee Advertiser*, I was preferred before sixty or seventy other applicants, and I resolved to do all in my power to justify the appointment. I worked night and day for months and years after going to Dundee. I procured new type and a new printing machine, and soon put a new face on the prospects of the paper. At first I was not only editor, but sub-editor, reviewer, and musical and dramatic critic all in one. For the benefit of younger men, I unhesitatingly say that one secret of a long, useful life is to be temperate in all things, and another secret is to cultivate a hopeful, truthful, kindly disposition."

Energy and Organisation

Of Mr. J Nicol Dunn, the editor of the *Morning Post*, a journalist who knows him intimately gives this estimate:

"It is difficult to say how Mr. Dunn got on the Press. In boyhood his favourite pastime was to produce papers of his own, limited to one copy an issue, and printed with pen and ink. Subsequently he edited the magazine of a young men's literary society. During a term in a law office, he wrote articles for papers and magazines, and to his surprise got them accepted. He was thus more or less on the Press when Sir John Leng gave him his first professional appointment. The qualities that have contributed to his success are:

- " I. He has never known what it is to be tired
- " II. He has the gift of organisation.
- " III. He has the journalist's faculty of anticipating events.

- " IV. He has the power of getting and keeping around him men who can serve the purposes of his paper.
- " V. He has a clean-cut method of expressing himself, and an appreciation of style in other writers "

A Real Love of Journalism

Mr W. J. Fisher, editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, writes .

" My own experience was, perhaps, a little exceptional ; certainly it cannot be taken as typical. While in Germany I wrote a few things for an English newspaper then published in Berlin. Having finished my studies, and wishing to remain in Germany some time longer, I applied to the editor of the paper for a regular engagement, and was appointed assistant editor. The qualifications that have, I think, chiefly contributed to such success as I have met with are a certain amount of general knowledge, some familiarity with foreign languages, and a real love of my work."

Resolute in Endeavour

Mr. H. J. Palmer, editor of the *Yorkshire Post*, and President of the Institute of Journalists, gives the following account of his early struggles :

" When I got the idea of journalism firmly fixed in my mind—when I was twenty-one—I practised shorthand assiduously, joined amateur manuscript magazines, read hard at standard literature, made the acquaintance of the reporter of the *Gloucester Mercury*, and induced him to let me do many of his

minor engagements, note-taking and descriptive. I also began to write social sketches and local notes. This went on for three years in my leisure, and I never asked a penny for my work until the fourth year, when the local notes had become a popular feature, and then I was paid ten shillings a week. By this time I had plenty of specimens to submit, and in July, 1877, I sent some to Mr. Leng, (now Sir William Leng, editor and part proprietor of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*). In six months he offered me a junior sub-editorship, which I accepted early in 1878, at the age of twenty-four."

From the Bottom of the Ladder

Mr T. Reach, editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, says :

"I began newspaper work at the bottom of the ladder in a weekly newspaper office, practically an office boy, at three shillings per week. I had to address the newspaper wrappers, and act as copyholder during the proof reading. I learnt shorthand, and having a good education, was able in time to act as reporter. By a piece of rare good fortune, I got an appointment as reporter on a Yorkshire daily, and from that time never looked back."

Began as a Contributor

Mr. Jeans, writing for the editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, says: "Sir Edward Russell, began his business-life in a London bank; but during his leisure he contributed articles to a suburban paper. His ability was recognized by the proprietor, and he was very soon offered a regular engagement, which

he accepted. He joined the *Liverpool Post* as sub-editor some thirty-eight years ago”

Through Every Grade

Mr. G Wynne, editor of the *Liverpool Mercury*, writes .

“With regard to your inquiry for your new book, I may say that I got my first footing in journalism through studying shorthand, and taking a position as a junior reporter. Then I worked up through every grade”

Enterprise

Mr. R. H. Dunbar, acting editor of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, gives the appended narrative of his youthful efforts .

“My father had a bookselling and printing business in Galashiels, where I was born. Mr Alexander Russel, better known as ‘Russel of the *Scotsman*’—the greatest editor Scotland ever produced—came here often, with other friends, to fish in the Tweed. My father and Russel were well acquainted, and I frequently heard them talking about newspapers. I began, unknown to my father, to write for the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. One day Russel said to my father, ‘Dunbar, the *Courant*’s getting some very readable paragraphs from Galashiels. We must get to know who is sending them.’ I felt very guilty, and stopped my contributions for a time; the pleasure of seeing myself in print was pay enough then. The *Courant* people wrote asking how it was I did not continue to send paragraphs. They ad-

dressed the letter to my father's shop—and the murder was out

“I forgot to say that we had a small paper—the *Galashiels Record*—and I assisted in setting the type, and in the printing of it. The Edinburgh reporters were in the habit of coming to my father's house, and once, hearing me speak of a picturesque place in the neighbourhood, they went to see it, saying that they would be back in time for the night meeting they had been instructed to report. The pressmen, three of them, lost their way, however, and failed to attend the meeting. I had some knowledge of shorthand—Pitman's, the eighth edition—and did all that was needed for my father's paper. In the absence of the reporters, I did the meeting as well as I could. I wrote accounts which varied a little for each paper, and sent off the reports by train. When the three journalists returned, soon after midnight, they went to bed thinking all was over with them. Opening the papers, however, next morning, they were amazed to see the reports of the meeting. They were poor reports, but they were correct enough as far as they went. I had watched how the reporters did their work, and I put each man's name on the top of the first slip of copy.

“The pressmen were very grateful to me, said that I was, like my father, ‘a born pressman,’ and they did all they could to forward me in my career. Afterwards my father started the *Huntly Express*—an express once a month to begin with! But the paper succeeded. Then I began writing for the magazines—poetry chiefly, for which I was better paid than for

my prose—met Englishmen, and sighed for the South. I scanned the advertisements, answered one, was accepted, and came to Sheffield over thirty years ago as editor of the *Sheffield Times*.”

In Preference to Teaching

Mr John Derry, editor of the *Sheffield Independent*, writes:

“I began as a leader writer on educational and political topics; but also was a competent reporter before adopting journalism as a profession in preference to teaching. When I turned to journalism, almost all the work was what I had been doing, on and off, for various papers for years—district reporting, causeries, and leaders.”

The Lobbyist for the “Times”

Mr W. E. Pitt, who is responsible for the “Political Notes” in the *Times*, writes:

“I drifted to the Press after five years in the Bradford textile trade, my first regular situation on a newspaper being that of a district reporter at Tavistock. Then I went to edit the *Sheffield Evening Star*, having had at that time only seven months’ journalistic experience. On quitting Sheffield I joined the Press Association, and after ten years on that agency, I was appointed on the *Times* in 1891. This year is my seventeenth year in the Lobby. Such small progress as I have made is due:

- “ I. To genuine journalistic instinct.
- “ II. To an early conviction that the specialist has the best chance in modern journalism.

- “ III. To the possession of a fair share of tact and *bonhomie*, coupled with a keen perception of other men’s foibles and eccentricities
- “ IV To the power of keeping a secret when necessary.
- “ V. To a thorough knowledge (though it may sound egotistical to say so) of past and current politics, and of parliamentary procedure ”

A Book Lover

Mr Clement Shorter, editor of the *Sphere* and the *Tatler*, says.

“ I think it was a wild enthusiasm for Carlyle and Emerson, Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold, and a passionate zest for desultory reading, that made me a journalist I entered journalism solely through a desire to gossip about books, and without the faintest notion that I should ever come to make any money by that profession ”

Hard Work and Perseverance

Mr. John Latey, the editor of the *Illustrated London News* and the *Sketch*, entered journalism on the first number of the *Illustrated Penny Paper*, of which he became the editor Mr Latey, who is a versatile author and playwright, as well as a journalist, modestly writes :

“ The qualities that have contributed to my success have been hard work and perseverance—that is, if I have secured any measure of success.”

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A Whimsical Quality

Mr. F. Carruthers Gould, the cartoonist of the *Westminster Gazette*, of which he is assistant editor, sent the following characteristic note :

“I did not get on the Press. Like Topsy, I ‘grewed’, and the Press and I foregathered by a process of evolution. The quality which has contributed principally to my success is the lack of any consciousness that I have any such quality.”

CHAPTER IV

WORKING JOURNALISTS

ONE or two controllers of prominent daily journals, university men of attainment, have not "gone through the mill," and scarcely come within the category of working journalists, but with these exceptions, the beginner, however obscure his social position or poor his prospects, has encouragement in the fact that the majority of the editors of our daily papers are men who, almost without influence or fortunate circumstance, have come to the front. They have had lives of struggling, and devotion to duty; they have succeeded entirely by their own efforts. Like Mr. W. H. Mudford, for many years the brilliant and fearless editor of the *Standard*, and Mr. Curtis, his equally judicious successor, they have got into the front rank by minding their own business, which in journalism is the world's business, and by putting "heart, soul, mind, and strength" into their newspaper work.

Merit

These examples are instinct with dogged endeavour; and they are full enough of valuable hints to keep alive the hope of the beginner till he has solved the

problem—how to get on the Press. Merit will undoubtedly get him on the Press; and merit (taking the word in its widest sense—excellence, worth, desert in character and work) will keep him on it, and lead to his advancement, if he takes advantage of every chance of progress.

When the Chance comes

Notwithstanding the increase in the number of newspapers, every journalist cannot be an editor. "There are not many editorships knocking about" is a familiar saying among pressmen. But the chance comes most unexpectedly to some journalists, and the man who seizes it with astuteness and determination is, at all events, on the threshold of a sphere of usefulness. He may even enter upon the more important career of administrator, for Lord Salisbury and Lord Milner were both pressmen.

On the Alert

The journalist who gains high position is, of course, of different calibre to the rank and file. He is not content with reporting or sub-editing. He is ambitious. He has an object in life—to get on; and while doing the work to his hand with loyalty and to the best of his ability, he pursues his object with eternal vigilance.

Two Forces

A versatile writer who recently tried, but tried in vain, to get on the leader-writing staff of a great morning paper, said somewhat contemptuously: "Oh,

any barrister can get on the *Times*, and any Oxford man on the *Manchester Guardian*!" Possibly the journalist had cause for his sneer, but the beginner will do well to remember that academic training and legal knowledge are two forces to be reckoned with in competition for a livelihood on the Press. Certainly in three or four newspaper offices, unless the aspirant is an Oxford man, or has been called to the Bar, his chance of getting into the leader-writing corridor is exceedingly remote. Cambridge hardly counts in the new-century estimate of journalistic fitness.

Step by Step

Even if he has no prospect of acquiring these advantages, the beginner should not by any means be disheartened. In other offices, with energy and ability, he may steadily climb by attention to duty, good work, and capacity to originate, till he is appointed chief reporter, chief sub-editor, editor, or better still, managing editor, with the possibility of securing a part proprietorship in the paper. In fact, the journalist who began his newspaper career with a broom in the editor's den, and has worked his way through every department of the office, is more likely to make the really capable director of a great daily paper than a 'varsity man, or a barrister, whose journalistic experience is limited to the production of "longs" and "shorts"—of leading articles, however excellent they may be. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., writing on university training in relation to journalism, says. "It does not do a young man any harm to

go through a university ; but I cannot say that I think it does him so very much good. After all, there is no university for one who has to make his living so good as the university of life."

New Life

There is, undoubtedly, a career open to the journalist who has the strength of will and the capacity to take charge of any dull morning paper, delete its fads, remodel it, put new life and variety into it, and make it so interesting that the reader will no longer yawn and say, "It's very dry," or toss it aside with the remark, "There's nothing in it!"

CHAPTER V

NOTHING STALE

THE beginner who wishes to get on the Press by sending paragraphs or contributed articles should adopt a policy of method. He does not need an introduction. If his paragraph is worth using, and his contributed article well written and of suitable subject and length, they will be inserted and paid for. But the paragraph must be new, and the article must deal with an up-to-date subject. The sub-editor has no mercy on stale news; and the editor groans as he wades through twenty slips of antiquity.

One Side of the Paper

The intimation that correspondents should write on one side of the paper only is so familiar to newspaper readers that they seldom act upon it when sending letters to the editor; but the contributor who desires payment for his work, and is anxious to climb the press ladder, is foolish if he does not heed the warning. An editor can endure, with more or less philosophy, contumely and calumny, but his patience and fortitude are soon exhausted if he is confronted with a special article written on both sides of the paper.

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“Copy” of this kind is tantalising to newspaper production. The kindest editor is tempted to pitch it ruthlessly into the waste-paper basket, if he relents as the manuscript balances on the verge of the wicked precipice, he relents with a sigh of weariness. Such MS. is difficult to correct and folio. Being backed, it is also difficult to cut for setting in “takes” by the compositors, and work is hindered.

Neatness

The journalistic aspirant, moreover, cannot be too careful in the neatness of his contribution. The editor may indulge in the most remarkable whims in his own method of work. He may write in his shirt-sleeves, and straggle his leader across the insides of soiled envelopes and the vacant pages of old letters; but he has an intuitive respect for clean paper, and neat writing which does not gallop over the edge, and down the other side of the sheet. We all know the subtle power of dress, not only in society but in business. The well-dressed have always an advantage over the slovenly. The “well-groomed” manuscript has a similar advantage over the bedraggled contribution.

Hints

Typewrite your manuscript; if not, write legibly on one side of the paper.

Don't crowd too much on a page.

Avoid the splitting of a word at the end of the last line of the folio.

Break your matter into paragraphs.

Insert cross-headings if the article extends beyond a quarter of a column.

Remember that a newspaper column contains about two thousand words

Always bear in mind that a short article has a better chance of insertion than a long one.

Don't labour your introduction.

Get at the facts

Cultivate a style of your own, and let your diction be simple, but vigorous.

How to Write

The contributor must be on guard against himself—against the youthful tendency to the “high falutin,” the flamboyant. The beginner is usually bubbling with zeal, he has a vivid imagination and an unrestrained pen; but he should remember, in the moment of his wildest inspiration, the calibre of the man likely to scan his article. The editor has gone through the impulsive, poetic fever years ago, he snorts at such phrases as “tender greenery,” “the ruby and gold of the sunset,” and “the murmur of the rippling stream.” He is practical, shrewd, cool, calculating; he is on the look-out for information on any interesting subject that will instruct or please his readers, but he will not have mere word-spinning.

A Peril

Above all, the young journalist should be sure of his facts, for what, in the hurry of writing or in humorous freak, seems only a little playful exaggeration, may mean a libel action, with the penalty of

heavy damages to the newspaper that has accepted his article. There is an unwritten law on the Press that the name of the writer must not be disclosed. The publisher takes the responsibility; and if the libel is proved, he is bound to apologise or pay. The alteration of the law of libel, making a public speaker, if fairly reported, amenable for his own utterances, has lightened the newspaper proprietor's burden a little; but he is never out of the wood. Thoughtless correspondents or contributors may land him any day in a mess; and in face of the legal policy of squeeze and compromise generally adopted, the publisher must either fight the action or be ready with compensation. Many libel actions are settled out of court; but however great the loss, the owner of the journal has to grin (or look glum) and abide. He seldom descends to the despicable meanness of making the contributor, or regular member of his staff, pay the damages and costs by instalments out of his salary.

" Copy "

The contributor may possibly be a gainer even by the size of the "copy" paper. Foolscap is unwieldy and irritating; manuscript about the size of commercial notepaper is perhaps the most convenient. It obtains among the leader writers, sub-editors, and reporters in most of the newspaper offices, and is handy alike for writers and compositors.

Sending Manuscript

The contributor should write his name and address on the top right-hand corner of the first slip; collect

and "paper fastener" his matter when completed; and in sending his manuscript to the editor, enclose a stamped directed envelope for its return if rejected. A journalist, unless he is well known, flings his time away whenever he writes to an editor merely to ask if he may send an article on approval. Infinitely the best policy for the beginner is to forward the MS., and let it "take its chance." The contributor, in his accompanying note, should not shelter himself behind the plea that it is his first effort, or express the idiotic hope that it will perhaps fill a spare corner in the paper; or indulge in praise of his work. "The least said is the soonest mended"; and a terse note, something after this fashion, will be sufficient, either for its acceptance or—rejection!

The Editor

DEAR SIR,—I send you the enclosed article, about 1,000 words, on "Coronation Pageants." I hope you will find it suitable, and remain, yours very truly,
MARK DIAMOND.

Where to Forward It

Nearly all the London daily and evening papers, and many of the penny and sixpenny weeklies, accept special articles, ranging from five hundred to two thousand words each, and pay for them, but the beginner will think and write in vain, unless he can for the moment put himself mentally in the editor's place, and decide quickly and unerringly on a suitable subject—on a subject that is of keen interest to newspaper readers at the time.

The Kind of Article

A newspaper is not an encyclopedia, though several newspaper proprietors have lately, with remarkable business enterprise, got rid of a vast number of encyclopedias in their desire to blockade the homes of the people with general knowledge. The young journalist should remember that the life of the newspaper is transient. The daily journal, like the parliamentary candidate, is "here to-day and gone to-morrow." It has only a fleeting interest to the reader, and now it comes with perforated edges from the printing machine, it has even lost its domestic value. The housewife no longer stores it for use on her kitchen shelves! But while it lives, the newspaper must assert itself to prosper, and the journal that can give the latest and the most exclusive news, and the shrewdest and cleverest articles on the newest topics, is the journal that gets a name, and becomes popular. It is vital, therefore, to the beginner that he should have his wits about him. "A writer for the papers" should be a diligent reader of the papers. He should, as it were, have his fingers on the pulse of the world, and be ready at any moment to indicate the nature of its beating. In his daily experience, or in going through the morning paper, half-a-dozen suggestions or subjects will occur to him; but he must not dally with the one he decides to tackle.

Material

He must get his material at once from books, his own mind, and from other men; from other men

preferably, inasmuch as the expert is invariably the enthusiast, and the enthusiast is eager to impart, to the latest development, everything he knows.

When to send MSS

A story is current of a journalist who was so slow that he invariably finished his long leader a quarter of an hour after the paper had gone to the press, and whenever he attempted to write a descriptive article, he fiddled with it for a month. He was a thoughtful, and even a brilliant, writer, but irritating because of his tortoise-like pace. A ruthless editor, recognising his ability, but abhorring his method, scathingly said of him, "Ah, Mole is a nice fellow, and can write—he'd do for a quarterly!" That is a paradoxical reputation the beginner must avoid at all hazards. Whatever he has to do must be done quickly. The first in the newspaper field, either with news or with original matter, wins. The daily journal, like time and tide, waits for no man, and however great the trouble and mental strain, the best time to send a manuscript in to the editor is the earliest possible moment.

Specialising

Mr. Pitt, the lobbyist for the *Times*, has shrewdly written that "the specialist has the best chance in journalism." Another journalist recently asserted: "Specialising is the great game nowadays." These hints apply not only to the outside contributor, but to every member of the literary staff in the newspaper office. The necessity of specialising is imperative.

The journalist with sufficient originality and enterprise to "strike out a new line" must succeed.

There is abundant scope. He may possibly introduce a new feature into the paper, or open up a new source of information, or write on an altogether new subject, or even deal with an old subject in such a fascinating style that he makes it appear new. One noted journalist made a name by his familiarity with colliery working, and his graphic and accurate account of a pit explosion, another by his absorbing interest in everything that related to railway management; a third by his grasp of the science and tactics of war; and a fourth by his intimate knowledge of cricket and football.

An Insatiable Demand

As a leader writer, the journalist is of additional value if he can write with special knowledge on a particular subject. As a contributor reporter or descriptive writer, his work makes its mark if he can not only deal with an event or a subject intelligently, but shed new light from his own or other people's knowledge on a discovery, invention, new method of progress, trade development or social movement. Modern life is instinct with physical and mental activity. The newspaper reader wishes to know everything about every phase of it. There is consequently, an insatiable demand for the specialist.

Cricket and Football

The sporting daily, and the evening paper issued at noon and after that half-hourly, in a diurnal frenzy

of racing, football, and cricket editions, do their utmost to gratify the public appetite for sport. The morning paper, too, depends to a considerable extent on its sporting and athletic news for its circulation, and consequently specialises every recreative event of any importance, whether it be University boat race, Henley regatta, a match at Lord's, a big football tussle, or a big race. The all-round man is consequently not of so much account on the morning paper as the specialist, and this fact is noticeable in the eagerness of editors to obtain men who are able to write gracefully and authoritatively on sports and pastimes. "I want," recently wrote the editor of an influential daily, "a first-rate cricket man to do us special introductions for the Lancashire matches played at Old Trafford. Can you recommend one? It is indispensable that the work should be done in a critical and picturesque style, and not be a mere catalogue of hits"

Graceful Writing

The old style of writer still flourishes here and there, and gravely tells the reader how the "leather" (the cricket ball) was smartly cut to the boundary for four; or the "sphere" (the football) was cleverly dribbled and grandly kicked to goal. Even the sporting and athletic services supplied by the news agencies cling now and again to antiquated or hackneyed phrases in their descriptions of race or match, but, on the whole, these accounts are better written than formerly, and are often supplemented, or altogether superseded, by the specialist, by the descriptive writer who is an

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authority on cricket, football, boating, golf, or cycling, and can produce an article not only free from slang and the pet terms of the professional, but an article characterised by grip of subject and grace of diction.

CHAPTER VI

A STRIKING FIGURE

THE beginner, attached to a newspaper, is on a different footing to the outside contributor. Studying shorthand, he soon flatters himself that he can write and transcribe it, and he has not been in the office a year before he holds the secret conviction that he is indispensable to journalism, and on the highway to fame, if not to fortune. The young reporter is a striking figure in English life. Like the actor, he sometimes indulges in singularity of dress and artistic hair, and he patronises everybody, so consummate is his assurance, till a little buffeting with the world (and he gets it speedily) brings reflection, courtesy, and common-sense.

Qualifications of a Reporter

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing”; and the youth who considers that an acquaintance with the rudiments of shorthand fits him for the editor’s chair has a great deal to learn, and something to unlearn. “Shorthand,” writes a well-known pressman, “is to the capacity of the general reporter what the chisel is to the genius of the sculptor.” This is simply

an assertion, poetically, that shorthand is the tool or implement of the reporter's work. The young journalist needs many qualifications beyond the capacity to write shorthand Eugene Field has set them out—“good health, the news instinct, a sense of humour, the ability to write a simple style in a legible hand, eternal vigilance, temperance, patience, determination, and ambition ”

Thoroughly Equipped

The confidence of youth is sublime, and even the schoolboy capable of writing shorthand at the rate of sixty words per minute has not the least doubt that he is thoroughly equipped for a reporter's career. He is not only disheartened but resentful if the editor he consults advises him to increase his shorthand speed to one hundred and fifty or two hundred words a minute, and to be sure that he can read his shorthand notes, whether carefully or hurriedly written. The editor of a daily paper received not long ago the following letter.—

“SIR,—As I am a telegraph messenger, and find that there is a poor chance of making anything, I should be glad if you will inform me the best way to become a reporter.

“Yours truly,

“FRANK SHARP.”

The letter, of which the signature only is fictitious, represents the yearning of many a youth to get on the Press, regardless of aptitude or qualification.

The Best Training

A country newspaper office, in which he does a variety of work, and escapes the temptations of a great city, is undoubtedly the best training place for a youth who is anxious to become a journalist. In fact, unless he is a lad of remarkable ability, he may on a daily newspaper, be kept low down on the reporting staff for a year or longer, engaged on such routine work as attending police courts and inquests. His eyes, no doubt, are opened to the seamy side of life; but he makes comparatively little progress in the responsible work of journalism.

Ignorance

The chief reporter of a daily newspaper must maintain the reputation of his journal for accuracy, and he is chary of entrusting a youth with important work. Even the best educated and most experienced reporter is liable to err, but it gives a shock to both proprietor and subscriber, on perusing the newspaper at breakfast, to find that, according to the reporter's transcript of his speech, Lord Salisbury has spoken with admiration of "Ellen of Troy" instead of "Helen of Troy," or that in his otherwise readable description of a fashionable garden party, the reporter, with superficial insight into Nature, has made the "laburnums fling their golden tresses to the breeze" in the autumn, instead of in the spring.

Valuable Experience

The white-aproned printer is looked upon by some dilettante journalists as a barbaric being, but the

young and supercilious pressman might, with advantage to himself and the paper he represents, spend a year at type-setting either at case or machine. Some of the most notable journalists have worked through every department. Years ago they wetted the paper, or used the ink-roller, or turned the handle of the old-fashioned printing machine, or stood at the frames, composing sticks in hand, filling galleys with type. Now they are editors, or managers of newspapers, or write books, that owe some of their thought, character and incident to the experience the writers gained in the newspaper office

Longhand Reporters

Though shorthand is practically only the tool with which the reporter does his work, every pressman should possess it. He is, except in editing and sub-editing, of comparatively little use without it. The days of Woodfall and Proby, and of the longhand reporters who flourished till the middle of the last century, have gone by, and the modern reporter is expected

“ By characters to write with such a speed
As may of all be thought a worthy deed ”

One of the last of a notable race of swift longhand writers for the Press was Mr. Henry Carson, many years reporter to the *Derbyshire Advertiser*, and his dexterity, particularly in giving a nearly full report of a Railway Meeting or a Town Council Meeting, won the admiration even of expert shorthand writers.

Shorthand Necessary

The men of the Press Association, when instructed to send a column report of a political speech to various newspapers, invariably write the report in long-hand as the meeting is in progress; but shorthand is absolutely necessary for verbatim reporting, and the reporter who is unable to write it and transcribe it quickly finds his sphere of toil restricted, and his newspaper value discounted.

Useful to the Sub-editor

The sub-editor, though it is his duty to select and arrange "copy" rather than to create it, has the notion that shorthand is seldom, if ever, required in his calling, yet the time is certain to come when he will bitterly regret his ignorance of the art of rapid writing, particularly if he is obliged some night, when a full report of a statesman's speech comes in late, to cross-head the flimsy, and hurry the speech to the printers before he has been able to get material from it for the summary—the short account of the speech which appears in big type, with other summary of domestic and foreign news, in the column preceding "the long" or first leading article.

Instructions by Telephone

An editor, whatever his own deficiencies, naturally imagines that the members of his staff are fully qualified for their allotted tasks, and not long ago the editor-in-chief of an important daily paper received quite a shock on ascertaining that one of his sub-editors could not write shorthand. He was an editor

up to the neck in politics. After attending a meeting at which a leader of his party had made a big speech, he whisked the statesman home to supper, and asked through the telephone connecting his house with the office whether the long leading article commenting on the meeting was ready for perusal. The article was read to him by telephone. He objected to the leader writer's conclusions in the third paragraph, gave instructions that the matter should be deleted, and said: "Send a sub-editor to the basement telephone to take a new paragraph of the leader."

Very Annoying

The sub-editor went to his somewhat novel duty. "Are you there?" came the editor's voice impatiently. "Yes," replied the sub-editor. "Very good," replied the editor. "Substitute for last paragraph of long leader the following—'The Government, as the Right Honourable gentleman had the courage to declare, have been guilty of a flagrant piece of—'" "I should be glad if you would speak slowly, sir. I cannot write shorthand," the sub-editor interrupted; nor was his anger at the necessity of the confession assuaged by the remarkable exclamation that issued from the editor's lips, and reverberated in his ears. Another pressman with a knowledge of shorthand was quickly at the telephone. The paragraph was taken, dictated, written, set in type, and the paper issued as usual; but, to use the language of the Stock Exchange, there was a temporary slump in the mutual regard of editor and sub-editor.

The Antiquity of Stenography

Shorthand is undoubtedly a most useful agent, either in a business house or a newspaper office, and a knowledge of it cannot be otherwise than serviceable to every member of the literary staff of a daily journal, on which every time-saving appliance is invaluable. Stenography was practised in the time of the Romans, and Cassien, a shorthand writer, who distinguished himself at the trial of Metellus by flinging his tablet at the magistrate's head, was sentenced to a sardonic punishment. The judge ordered his pupils to tear the man to pieces with their pencils, and they carried out the sentence, cruelly chanting that thus they paid him back for the thousand notes he taught them.

A Whimsical Description

The fate of Cassien, if he ever read of it, must have given satisfaction to Charles Dickens, for, prior to his admission to the Gallery of the House of Commons as a reporter, he had a terrific tussle with Gurney's system of shorthand, and actually acquired a knowledge of it, though a friend warned him that the learning of it was about equal in difficulty to the mastery of six languages. In "David Copperfield" he gives a humorous description of his shorthand progress: "When I had mastered the alphabet, then there appeared a procession of new horrors called arbitrary characters—the most despotic characters I have ever known; who insisted, for instance, that a thing like the beginning of a cobweb meant 'expectation,' and that a pen-and-ink sky rocket stood

for 'disadvantageous.' When I had fixed these wretches in my mind, I found that they had driven everything else out of it; then beginning again, I forgot them; while I was picking them up, I dropped the other fragments of the system. In short, it was almost heart-breaking."

The Best Shorthand System

Notwithstanding the introduction of shorthand into the curriculum of the academy, and the possible advantage of schools of journalism, a knowledge of shorthand is not easily acquired. Many reporters on the daily Press, like Charles Dickens, have become remarkably expert in note-taking and transcribing, but only with hard study and continuous practice. The English systems of shorthand—Bright's, issued in 1588, Bales' in 1597, Gurney's, in 1753; Byrom's, in 1767; Blanchard's, in 1779, Taylor's, in 1788, and Pitman's, in 1838, have accounted for many headaches and much despair among students and pressmen, nor do the latest systems appear to give much mental relief, otherwise faith in Pitman's system would have been shaken long ago. Undoubtedly, though it has many rivals and some glaring faults, phonography is the most useful system of shorthand for press work. The majority of the reporters in the Gallery and out of it write that system, and it has stood the test of rapid speaking for half a century, not without many slips, but on the whole successfully.

Humorous Blunders

The similarity of outline of one word to another, or the omission of a necessary vowel, occasionally

leads to humorous blundering. The story of the reporter who made it appear that the venerable archdeacon advocated the breaking of heads, instead of the breaking of bread, in the vestry, can be capped by nearly any pressman out of his own experience, for the most accurate shorthand writer has, in the course of his career, plunged into diverting or annoying error of transcription, applied the fiercest adjectives to his own obliquity, and regretted that he had not even the discretion to act on the reporter's motto, "When in doubt, leave it out." The writer has given in another work many examples of mistakes in reporting that have become historic, but new evidences of the reporter's fallibility crop up almost daily, and the pressman is savage when he reads in cold print that he has written, "A teetotaller is worse than a thief," instead of "A tattler is worse than a thief", that "Idleness rests the mind," for "Idleness rusts the mind"; and that "To be pressed is more sweet than pressing," as a variant of the speaker's words, "To be praised is more sweet than praising."

An Unfortunate Slip

Even in the quietude of the editor's den shorthand sometimes goes off at a tangent, and a journalist, who ultimately obtained a name in his profession, was held back for many years owing to a slip in the transcription of his shorthand notes. The editor, an impatient, whirlwind kind of man, having a great repugnance to writing his own leading articles, invariably dictated them, as he strode about his

room, to a shorthand-writing member of his staff. Usually they were accurately taken down, and transcribed into longhand for the printers, without error. One night, however, after dictating his leader, the editor hurried away to a political banquet, and being busy on his return with the criticism of a politician's speech, omitted to glance through the proof of the article he had dictated earlier. This leader dealt with the appointment of a new judge, and praised him lavishly for his legal acumen, shrewdness, and dignity. Throughout, the editor had spoken of his lordship as the "puisne judge." When the paper appeared, the editor was aghast, and his readers delighted. The phrase, "puisne judge," had been transcribed "puny judge." The article was sprinkled with such sentences as "The high qualities of this puny judge," and "the moderation and courtesy of the new judge of the puny court." The newspaper caused exceeding diversion, but the editor and his lordship were of one opinion—they saw nothing to laugh at.

CHAPTER VII

ACCURACY

PITMAN'S phonetic letter-press, with its curious-looking words, strikes the reader who is not an enthusiast as an amiable and erratic fad, but Pitman's system of shorthand, of writing by sound, improved year by year with new grammalogues or phraseograms, is, perhaps, the most perfect system of shorthand extant, and the general accuracy of the reporting to which it is applied with skill and thought is certainly remarkable, considering the pressure under which the reporter's work is often done

Difficulties

Twenty or thirty years ago, when riots were more frequent, the reporter was occasionally hustled by the mob, and his note-book trodden to rags, or flung far away by roughs. He has still to take notes in awkward circumstances, amid the excitement and uproar of political meetings, and the ugly rush of crowds eager to hear a statesman speaking from a railway carriage window. He needs a cool head and an equable disposition, as well as a swift hand and brain, and it is to his credit that he acquits himself so well,

for whatever the actual difficulties of reporting may be, your favourite journal contains a report of the speech next morning

Equal to any Speaker

Whatever the conditions of toil, the reporter must be equal to his duty. Lord Sherbrooke, better known as "Bobby Lowe," one of the fastest speakers that ever appeared on platform, tried the reporter's skill to the utmost. The late Lord Wharncliffe, a singularly quick and fitful speaker, embarrassed many a pressman, and Mr Marshall Hall, K.C, the lightning speaker of the new century, is calculated to turn many a reporter's hair grey; but fast or slow, every variety of speaker must be tackled, and Pitman's phonography has not yet collapsed under the strain.

Shorthand

"Which is the best method of learning shorthand?" is the question that naturally arises in the mind of the youth anxious to become a newspaper man. There is no royal road to its acquisition. Shorthand can only be grasped and subjugated by perseverance. Hundreds of persons begin the study of it with zeal, fired by ambition. Perhaps they get a tolerably lucid acquaintance with the consonants and vowels; but they are appalled by the word formations, the grammalogues, and the phraseograms, and abandon phonography in despair at the critical moment, perhaps, when a little additional application would give them victory over the spider-legged characters that have filled them with dismay.

Study

The modern impatience of study of any kind is against the success of the majority of learners. They begrudge the time necessary for the acquirement of the art. They will devote an afternoon or evening to cricket, football, cycling, or other recreation, but they will not devote an hour a day to shorthand. Yet only by constant, methodical study and practice is it possible to become a shorthand writer worthy a position on a daily newspaper staff. The rudiments of shorthand imparted by teachers in schools, colleges, and night classes are of advantage as an introduction to, and grounding in, the art, but shorthand as written by the average student, and by the bulk of the shorthand clerks to business houses and legal firms, is altogether too slipshod and elementary for newspaper work.

Persistent Practice

The shorthand writer who wishes to become an expert newspaper reporter must approach phonography seriously. Shorthand written at the rate of eighty, one hundred, or one hundred and twenty words a minute is almost absolutely useless for verbatim reporting, and the speed indispensable to take a full note of a rapid speaker, say from one hundred and fifty to two hundred words a minute, cannot be attained without a solid knowledge of the art, and the most persistent practice. Shorthand should be as familiar as longhand to the reporter, and till it is he is unlikely to make, in press phrase, "a good man"—that is, a journalist who can be sent out

with perfect confidence to report any speaker. Every youth has not equal mental endowment; but one may hazard the opinion that a boy of fair intelligence and decision of character can become an expert shorthand writer in a year, if he gives an hour a day to actual study, and such other time as he can monopolise, impressing on his mind what he has learnt with both thought and pencil.

A Journalist's Struggles

A journalist who has reported the speeches of many statesmen during the last quarter of a century, notably those of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Bright, Lord Salisbury, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Chamberlain, has been good enough to give me some notes of his own shorthand struggles for the benefit of the youth of to-day. "Shorthand," he writes, "was a rarity when I was a boy. Anyone with a knowledge of it was considered a prodigy. A young lady—a friend of my sister's—presented me with a copy of the 'Phonographic Teacher,' and I devoured it. From the first dip into the alphabet, shorthand had a fascination for me. I worked at it, without guidance, every spare moment. In six months I was through the first book, and half way through the 'Manual,' and at the end of a year's study I had got a grip of the 'Reporter's Companion,' with its terser style. I produced my note-book in church, chapel, at lecture and meeting, and found, to my delight, that I could take a prettily-formed note, though I could not, without difficulty, read what I had written."

First Attempt at Reporting

"My first attempt at reporting was at a lecture given by Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, and his tongue ran far ahead of me. My pencil staggered hither and thither in a vain effort to keep abreast of his utterances, and I went home disheartened. But I tried again, and again, and again, improving slowly and almost imperceptibly, but still improving, till one Sunday afternoon, when reporting the rector's sermon in a country church, I was somewhat startled by the preacher's disturbing inquiry: 'Who is that young man taking notes?'

Infatuation

"Shorthand became almost a mania with me. I wearied my relatives and friends by pestering them to read to me, so that I could write from dictation. I laboured at shorthand before breakfast, and after supper, and phonographed through 'Milton's Paradise Lost,' many of 'Macaulay's Essays,' the greater part of the New Testament, and hundreds of leading articles, irrespective of their political leaning. I formed every tradesman's sign, every book title, every remark I heard into shorthand, as it were, in my head; and I became so imbued and saturated with shorthand that to this day, though I no longer write it for a livelihood, I never read a word of print or hear a word spoken but the phonographic sign that represents it flashes instantaneously into my brain."

A Proud Moment

Students of shorthand will remember that in Pitman's text-book one of the earliest examples of

transcription begins, "Long on Golconda's shore a diamond lay concealed." It is a proud moment for the student when he has, out of the bewildering chaos of thin and thick strokes, curves, dashes and dots, placed his fingers deftly on the caligraphic diamond that enables him to keep pace with thought and expression, and sparkles on many a new branch of knowledge. There is perhaps only one more exquisite sensation in the world of journalism and literature—the feeling of delight that one experiences on seeing his first contribution in print, or on reading the publisher's business-like note that his first book has been accepted.

CHAPTER VIII

PROSPECTS

PRESUMING, then, that the youth has acquired sufficient shorthand dexterity to be tolerated on a reporting staff, though his work is crude and needs "licking into shape," he has cause for satisfaction. He is in a newspaper office, and has practically the making of his own future. He will have many trials and disappointments, and, metaphorically, many slaps in the face; but if he is courteous, obliging, eager for duty, and careful in his work, there is scarcely any position on the Press to which he may not attain.

Importance of General Knowledge

However complete he considers his education, he must let no opportunity slip of gaining knowledge.

A well-stored mind is invaluable to a newspaper reporter. He should have a knowledge of Latin and French, and of geography, history, and politics. He should know something of art, science, literature, industry, and sport; and, indeed, pretty well everything, from heathen mythology to the rules of debate in the House of Commons; for he will find every fact he has gathered of the greatest use sooner or later in his career.

No Limit to Opportunity

During his probation, if he is wise, the young reporter will not attempt the impossible. When he has proved his ability, he will take his full share of responsible work. There will be practically no limit to his opportunity. As one writer puts it: "If the down train runs into the up, he is sure to be found on one of the engines. If a murder is committed on a lonely heath, the representative of the Press happens to be passing. If Majesty slips and sprains its ankle, a reporter assists it to its feet. The whisper of the drawing-room, the gossip of the club, the rumour of the lobby, the cipher of the ambassador are the food on which he lives. Disaster, crisis, tragedy are his native atmosphere. He is the confidant of every great man and the gallant of every great lady. Secrets of State are dropped into his ear. The tip of the Stock Exchange filters through his fingers. To him nothing comes unexpected, and past him nothing goes unheeded. He holds us all in his hand. If we dread anything more than his observation, it is his neglect."

The First Year's Duty

In the first year of his Press experience, however, he will think this description of the reporter's duty savours of romance. He will probably become restive with the monotony of his engagements, with attendance at police courts, inquests, and comparatively unimportant meetings. He will think that street accidents and local paragraphs give little scope for genius, and wonder why his chief does not entrust him

with better work. The young reporter seldom under-rates his capacity, he has the notion that he is capable of reporting the quickest speaker, and of writing a column of bourgeois on any subject, from Egyptian exploration to wireless telegraphy and signalling with Mars

A Favourable Impression

Meantime his chief, a man of experience, a man of the world, discovers, perhaps, that there is something in him, decides to give the lad a chance, and earns his gratitude by marking him in the Reporter's Diary either to assist at a big meeting or to write an account of a tragedy, or to interview some celebrity. If the young reporter succeeds in gaining the confidence of his chief he will escape some drudgery, and be entrusted with more responsible work. He is on his mettle he strains every nerve, and gets through his task creditably.

Down for the Royal Visit

"Brown's account of the murder is very readable," says the chief, as he scans that morning's issue, and enters the latest engagements in the diary, from the advertisements on the front page of the paper, or the letters, notes, and circulars he has received by post, requesting him to send a reporter here, there, and everywhere.

"Yes," replies his deputy, "and he takes a good note, too."

"He has a gentlemanly appearance, and I like his manner. I'll put him down with you for the Royal Visit," adds the chief, placing the initials of Lindsay,

his deputy, and Brown, the youngster, opposite the engagement.

A "Good Man"

Brown, on looking through the diary later, thrills with pride on seeing his name linked with that of the best descriptive writer on the staff, and for such an important engagement as the Royal Visit. When the eventful time arrives, he is indefatigable in getting facts, and writes his share of the account so sensibly and gracefully that he is henceforth looked upon as one of the responsible members of the staff, capable of dealing with any engagement—a "good man."

The Reporter's Diary

The reporter's diary, of which mention has been made, is an interesting book. It is the chief reporter's remembrancer for the direction of his staff, and in it he or his deputy enters day by day, beneath the date of occurrence, every engagement, political gathering, conference, fashionable wedding, function of any kind worthy of report or description, and it is the reporter's duty to glance at the diary to ascertain the engagement for which he has been marked. Now and again the reporter gets a letter on his breakfast table from his chief, instructing him what to do, and is saved the trouble of going to the office; but usually he knows at night the nature of his next day's duty. Otherwise he must go to the office in the morning, and if the diary is not marked, or his initials do not appear in it, he awaits instructions.

AS A JOURNALIST

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Breakfast

There is one advantage about newspaper work on a morning paper. The pressman can scoff at the adage, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise" In winter, in a great city, enveloped in fog, or sloppy with snow-broth, his lot is a happier one than that of the toiler who is obliged to catch an early train or tram, and journey to work shivering and discontented Only in emergency does his duty necessitate early rising He may, it is true, be called in the middle of the night to get facts about a big fire, a railway accident, or a pit explosion ; but, as a rule, he gets up when the world is warm, and can count on breakfasting without hurry, and on doing justice to a substantial meal, the very best foundation on which to build a long day's toil.

In the Forenoon

Journalists engaged on evening papers are obliged to scurry away from home about seven or eight o'clock in the morning, after the fashion of the crowd intent on ordinary business ; but the morning paper reporter, if he enters the office at eleven o'clock, will probably satisfy his conscience and his chief. At this time he is ready and eager for work, though he may have been on late duty the previous night, and have had only six or seven hours sleep. His colleagues, four, six, eight, or ten in number, as the case may be, saunter or hurry into the reporter's room. There is greeting, comment, and gossip One or two pressmen rush away to early engagements ; others consult the time-table, and equip themselves with note-books and

telegraph passes, for out-of-town appointments, or finding that they are down for a night meeting, or special inquiry in town, take life easily, write a letter or two, or smoke, or chat, till the hour comes for urgent duty.

A Day's Engagements

The day's work entered upon and accomplished by the reporting staff of a morning paper is of great variety, covering such events and inquiries as follow —

Monday

Police Court.
 Inquests.
 Town Council (Special Meeting).
 Royal Visit to Chatsworth.
 Beer Poisoning Inquiry.
 Cotton Trade Conference
 Railway Collision at Blackburn.
 New Water Scheme.
 Wife Murder.
 Collapse of Tunnel.
 Fashionable Wedding
 Mr Chamberlain at Leeds.
 Burglary.
 Fire in Colliery.
 Mill Accident.
 Bazaar (Duke of Devonshire).
 The Theatres.
 Lecture on Wireless Telegraphy.
 Inquiries—Miners' Wages, Lord Mayor's
 Reception, Absconding Cashier, Street
 Improvements, Clerical Scandal.

AS A JOURNALIST

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The newspaper reader has little idea of the trouble, ceaseless effort, endurance, and expense that the gathering of even one day's news entails

Delicate Inquiry

The reporter must be a diplomatist, as well as skilful in his business. He has not only to report the utterances of statesmen, give graphic details of disasters, and secure thrilling narratives of all kinds, but he has also to make the most delicate inquiries, and be sure of his facts, unless he would land his paper in libel. He has probably to beard the Cabinet Minister who has absolutely nothing to communicate to the Press, interview the chairman of a limited but unstable company, ask a stockbroker if he has really failed, ferret into a bank robbery, get a description of a bride's dress, or ascertain from a choleric merchant if his daughter has really eloped.

CHAPTER IX

REMUNERATION

THE reporter's salary varies according to the standing of the paper and his position on the staff; roughly, from £75 to £300 a year. The chief reporter on an influential newspaper is paid from £250 to £400 a year, and the journalists on sessional engagement in the Reporter's Gallery of the House of Commons get from five guineas to eight guineas per week; the lobbyists and parliamentary sketch writers making their own terms with the proprietors or editors of the journals they represent, and in some cases receiving very generous remuneration.

Additional Income

More particularly in the provinces, the reporter gets additional income from the taking of special notes for an official receiver, business house, litigant, or other private client. Formerly he had the privilege of making money also by lineage—by sending news to papers in other towns at one penny or three halfpence per line, and was often spoken of with contempt as "a penny a liner." But the morning papers, with one or two exceptions, have prohibited the practice, and lineage is now chiefly done by outsiders, by

enterprising correspondents who owe allegiance to no particular journal.

A Bygone Perquisite

Ten or twenty years ago the lineage connection on such papers as the *Manchester Examiner*, the *Yorkshire Post*, and the *Sheffield Independent* was of considerable value. The reporters not only contributed the important news they gathered to their own journals, but sent it to the London, the provincial and the Scotch papers. The Press Association, the Central News, and other agencies have, however, taken "the gilt off the liner's gingerbread." Their cheap news supply, from correspondents in every part of the kingdom, or from their special reporters, is taken in every newspaper office, and the "liner's" occupation is no longer a very lucrative one, unless he obtains special intelligence, knows how to use it, and makes what is termed "a good haul" .

Little Leisure

The reporter, unlike the artisan, has no eight-hour day. Whatever his salary, he is supposed to give his whole time to the office, and must not even take his coveted "night off" if there is a pressure of work. So far he has not rebelled, and is now and again on duty, ten, twelve, and even fourteen hours without seeing his own fireside. The considerate chief frees him whenever he can according to the duty list, which sets forth the precise moment when the reporter should be at liberty to leave the office. The work, however, is so arranged by an astute chief that the reporter's room is never deserted.

The Journalistic Watch-dog

Important information may come in at any hour, and special news be lost to the paper unless there is a pressman in attendance to receive it. There is also a journalistic watch-dog by night as well as by day. The reporter on duty at night, on "late turn" as it is called, must keep his eyes and ears open till midnight, or even till one o'clock in the morning, give any special news that comes in, make the late calls at the police office and the infirmary, and report fire, murder, or accident that may occur when he is on duty.

Sunday Work

The reporter's tribulation is Sunday work. Years ago newspaper proprietors discouraged Sunday duty, would not permit their compositors to enter the office till midnight, and checked the zeal of their reporters on the Sabbath. A reporter in the Midlands, thinking his employer's scruples sincere, deliberately missed a big fire one Sunday, and did not give a line of it in Monday's issue.

"I am sorry you have neglected your duty," said the proprietor next morning. "Why did you not give an account of the fire?"

"I remembered your counsel, sir, never to do Sunday work."

"But this was a big thing!"

"Quite so—I realised that fact; but after what you had said, I did not think the excuse that it was a great conflagration would carry much weight at the resurrection!"

And the proprietor went away pondering.

The Volatile Bishop

The qualms with regard to newspaper work on Sunday have been stifled. The clergy and ministers of all denominations, who like to see their sermons in print, are chiefly responsible for the reporter's Sabbath-breaking. Bishop Fraser, for instance, dragged pressmen all over his diocese on the Sabbath, and one utterly weary reporter once remarked: "I shall get no rest till Fraser's in heaven!"

A Popular Day

Now the Sabbath has become popular rather as a day of recreation than rest, the reporter's Sunday is busier than ever. He has to report sermons, socialist meetings, labour gatherings, and Sunday lectures, and also to describe processions. By-and-by, though newspapers may not be actually issued in this Christian country on Sunday, it will scarcely differ from an ordinary day in the variety of its reporting engagements.

Life Crowded with Incident

The reporter's life is novel—a life of change, diversion, and work, perhaps that is the secret of his toleration of it, with all its inconveniences and drawbacks. Certainly the reporter's career is crowded with incident. Carlyle has left it on record that "true literature—and in true literature he includes the best journalism—as a business is the most painful and the worst paid of all." The journalist seldom becomes rich, or makes much profit out of his travelling expenses charged to the office; but he gets an insight into every phase of human life.

Adventures

He has not yet rivalled the French journalist, who recently spent several hours far beneath the surface of the sea in a submarine boat; but he has been up in a balloon, down a pit, and on the foot-plate of an express engine; he has passed a night in a lodging-house, run risk in a riot, and ventured into a coiner's den. He has done almost as clever detective work as Scotland Yard can boast of, and one of his latest freaks took the form of criminal stalking, for he was out in the Perry Woods at night with the police and the warders, hunting for the escaped convicts, Soar and King

Strange Positions

The reporter has written his graphic account of a colliery explosion by sputtering candle-light, in a jolting cab on a dark country road at midnight; and he has transcribed his shorthand notes into longhand in the guard's van of a luggage train, in fear, meantime, lest the jerking, swaying thing should arrive at the terminus too late to enable him to hand in his "copy" for the first edition. This or that pressman can recall the day when he was asked to take notes behind a curtain, or beneath a table. He has been brusquely refused admission to a political meeting; or venturing within, he has been vigorously "chucked out." Grotesque accommodation is occasionally provided for the reporters. The Duke of Devonshire (when Lord Hartington) was the chief speaker at a public banquet in a Derbyshire town. Space was scanty, and the dinner-givers were in a fix how to

dispose of the reporters. The platform was decorated with exotics, and in this jungle the pressmen were finally placed. They had a prickly time of it, and came out of the tropical forest indignantly when their work was done. A wag, sitting near, had, in a very audible whisper, likened them to "the wild beasts at Ephesus," and they looked savage enough to devour him.

A Rebuke

It is imperatively necessary that the reporter should obtain news sometimes in circumstances that render his presence objectionable. The King has always been a staunch friend to journalists, and they would not wittingly offend him, yet on the death of the Duke of Clarence, when every scrap of information was eagerly sought, the zeal of certain journalists prompted rebuke, and they received the following telegram from Sir Dighton Probyn: "I ask you to remember and respect the deep sorrow into which the Prince of Wales and his family have been plunged by this terrible affliction."

The Queen's Death

No hint of the kind was required during Queen Victoria's illness and death. The pathetic scene at Osborne, the Royal pageant, and the obsequies at Windsor and Frogmore, were described vividly but delicately; and with two lamentable exceptions, the journalists whose duty it was to give every bulletin, to note every change in the condition of the Sovereign, so truthfully spoken of as "a most queenly woman,

and a most womanly Queen," did honour to the Press both in vigil and writing.

An Impressive Spectacle

The journalists, a hundred in number, who waited patiently at the Lodge gates at Cowes on the nights preceding the Queen's death, included representatives not only from English, but American, German, French, and many other foreign newspapers. By the command of the King, they were afterwards admitted to the chapel at Osborne, to the chamber of death; and the correspondent of the *Morning Post* wrote: "No heart could fail to be touched by the simple, dignified pathos of the scene. There was not the pomp of outward show to appeal to the imagination. No monarch ever rested in chapel with so little of ostentation. The surroundings simply breathed an atmosphere of religion. The Queen was the defender of the faith. Her devoutness at all times in its observance was an example to her own subjects and a pattern to the pious men and women of the whole world. What more fitting, then, than that this hallowed chamber of death should teach the greatest of all lessons for the human race? Very slowly we, who have been bidden to represent the great world without, the world of mighty millions which for more than sixty years has enjoyed the beneficent sway of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, pass around the bier. The emotions that rise within us make it painful to pause for long. We have seen, and we are content to have reverently gazed on this sacred spectacle."

Bribery

The journalist has possibly more temptations than other men. Drink is offered to him as freely as if he were a cabman. People, with base purposes to serve, imagine, too, that he will take a bribe as readily as an elector before the ballot. In one case a bank-note was sent by a financier to a pressman, with the polite request that he might see his way to "suppress a few lines of no public interest" in a Company's meeting. The reporter returned the bank-note with an equally polite intimation that he could not garble his report. A few weeks afterwards the financier was in prison.

Checkmated

In another instance, a defendant in the police court went to the reporter's table, placed half-a-crown by the pressman's side, and said "Of course you won't think it worth while to give such a paltry case?" The reporter was indignant, but he had a reputation for taciturnity. He slipped the half-crown into his pocket without comment, then added the following foot-note to the paragraph he had written: "The defendant in this case gave our representative half-a-crown to suppress the report. The money will be returned to him on application at the office of this paper"

The Mysterious Parcel

Yet it is almost possible for bribery to be lifted out of the slough of dishonour to the pinnacle of virtue. The reporter is not always engaged in describing great disasters. It is his duty to attend the humbler

tea-meeting. A pressman sent to report one of these festive gatherings was assiduous in collecting facts, and took a shorthand note of the pastor's speech. "You'll give us a good report, won't you?" inquired a bland, fussy gentleman at the door, deftly insinuating a tissue-paper parcel into the journalist's hand. "Oh—yes! What's this?" asked the reporter, stepping back into the schoolroom to examine the mysterious packet. The deacon had presented to him a piece of plum-cake!

Sinful Reporters

Many anecdotes of attempts at the conversion of reporters are on record. They are a scoffing set, and need supplication. According to a Scotch newspaper, however, at least two journalists have shown a desire in public to amend their ways. These reporters attended a Salvation Army meeting in Glasgow, and sat just beneath the platform. They were the object of much solicitude, and wondered at it, till one of the officers, bending down from the platform, tapped one of them on the shoulder, and said they must vacate their seats unless they wished to be saved. They were sitting on the penitent form!

CHAPTER X

PRESS AND PARLIAMENT

NEWSPAPER reporting is infinite in its variety, and the chronicling of the proceedings of legislative and other assemblies differs somewhat in method. The great political demonstration, the ordinary public meeting, the railway-station gathering addressed by the politician from a train, the labour conference, the Church Congress, the limited company's meeting, the meeting of railway shareholders, and the debates in Parliament, necessitate the attendance of pressmen, but the House of Commons demands the most attention and the most elaborate arrangements for reporting the speeches of its members.

The drowsy nobility of the House of Lords and the verbosity of the House of Commons have created both humorous and dramatic incident in the British Parliament, which has become more refined in its tastes and manners since the seventeenth century when one debate was carried on so interminably that it killed two Speakers and a wearied member piteously remarked, "The House grows empty; so do our bellies."

Ruthless Legislators

The legislators were not content with political wrangling. They were furious against the writers for the Press who dared to enter the House to give the public outside some idea of the wine-flavoured oratory that sparkled within, and the reporters who clung to their hazardous employment in the eighteenth century were hunted from Parliament, persecuted, fined, and treated with ignominy. Resolute effort and resource, and longhand and shorthand dexterity, backed by the force of public opinion, ultimately overcame the prejudice and opposition of honourable members.

One, indeed, had the temerity to assert, in the whirl of conflict: "The best thing you can do with the Press is to let it alone. It may publish some very bad speeches, but it is impossible that it can publish very much worse speeches than some that are made in this House, and many of them are very much better."

In "The Gallery"

Dr. Johnson, listening furtively to the debates, reported them after his own fashion, with much embellishment, in garret or coffee-house; Woodfall, with singularly retentive memory, "took notes in his head," and wrote the speeches for the *Morning Chronicle*, and Perry, the young man from Aberdeen, forcing his way into the front rank of London journalism, formed the first staff of parliamentary pressmen, "making arrangements with the door-keepers of the House for the admission of his re-

porters in relays, in order to publish the principal parts of the debates the next day in an authentic form ”

The Élite

The Reporter's Gallery became the training ground of many famous men, from Charles Dickens to Lord Russell of Killowen ; and to-day the parliamentary reporters, instead of being derided and thwarted in the House, “ constitute what may be considered the élite of the honourable fraternity, a seat in the gallery being one of the chief guerdons of the profession ”

Strangers

Parliament is nevertheless jealous of its prerogative, and reserves to itself the power to expel journalists at any moment. “ Dod's Parliamentary Companion,” a useful handbook for the young journalist, as well as for the new member, sets forth : “ It is contrary to the standing orders of both Houses that strangers should be present, and an individual member can demand that the order be enforced.”

Dignified Exit

Seventeen years ago, on Mr. Biggar's caprice, strangers were ordered to withdraw from the House, and the reporters were obliged to retire, but they did so in good company, for the King—then the Prince of Wales—and several noblemen in the Peers' Gallery, had no alternative but dignified exit. But, on the motion of Mr. Disraeli, the order was promptly suspended, and the members of the Press and other strangers readmitted.

Angry if not Reported

Only, perhaps, in great national crises, would any hon. member venture in the new century to get up in his place and say, "I spy strangers in the House." The Reporter's Gallery is a necessity to Parliament and the nation. As one writer says: "The Press has become the acknowledged representative of the people. There, in the gallery, is the eye of Europe. The House of Commons is unroofed, and the world is looking in." So remarkable is the change in the attitude of the members towards the pressmen, that they no longer feel chagrin if their speeches are reported. Their anger is rather expressed if their speeches are severely condensed, or not reported at all.

The Speaker's Eye

Every novice in the House, like the erratic hero in the comic song, knows how difficult it is to catch the "Speaker's eye"; but the parliamentary journalists sitting in the Press gallery, behind the Speaker's chair, have accomplished the feat. The changed relations between the Press and parliament were significantly indicated several years ago, when the Right Hon. Arthur Peel vacated the Speakership. The gallery committee, representing the reporters in the House, expressed their deep regret at the retirement of Mr. Speaker, thanked him for his courtesy and consideration, and also for the increased facility he had been instrumental in securing for them, and assured him that the good wishes of the parliamentary journalists attended him on his withdrawal from the

high position he had so conspicuously adorned. Mr Peel made graceful reply to the Press tribute, saying it was most gratifying to him to reflect that anything he had done had promoted in any way the interests of the Press, and he assured the parliamentary journalists that he was very sensible of the official and personal goodwill of the gentlemen whose services no one recognised more fully than himself

Ahead of the Government

The Speaker's pleasant association with the reporters is reflected through the House. The independence and courtesy of the Press has won the respect of honourable members, and its enterprise has called forth admiration in the House, for now and again the newspapers have been ahead of the Government with special information, and news messages from abroad have forestalled official telegrams and despatches.

Accommodation in the House

Cynical journalists are apt to say that the British Parliament—the Mother of Parliaments—has made its arrangements for recording debates grudgingly and parsimoniously, and that the accommodation for reporters in the House is worse than that provided by any other national assembly. But the journalists, though cramped in the Press gallery, are treated with greater consideration than the newspaper men who took notes in Parliament at the beginning of the last century.

The Best Club in Europe

Note-taking is awkward in the Press gallery because of the limited space and the increasing demands upon it; but no fewer than eleven rooms are now set apart in the House for pressmen, for work, sustenance, and recreation. During a recent recess a new suite of rooms was reserved to them for additional writing accommodation, with much better access to and from the gallery; and the new smoke-room, in which honourable members occasionally hob-nob with the Press, is a large and handsome apartment, above the site of the Star Chamber. The amenities of parliamentary and Press life have not only developed into chess tournaments and golf handicaps; but the catering for the reporters, for years undertaken by a private firm, has at last been entrusted to the kitchen committee of the House itself, so that the parliamentary journalists, whatever inconvenience they have to endure in the gallery, enjoy beyond it most of the advantages of the best club in Europe.

Press Tickets

No pressman is admitted to the gallery without a ticket, and during the exciting period in Irish history—"the roaring eighties"—extraordinary precautions were taken lest dynamitards should creep into the House, and blow honourable members into Erebus. Between two and three hundred tickets are issued by the Sergeant-at-Arms to the parliamentary journalists, artists, lobbyists, leader-writers, special correspondents, summary writers, and reporters. The

tickets, which also give admission to the gallery of the House of Lords, are not transferable, and their production is rigidly insisted upon. The chief reporter of the *Times* has the best seat in the gallery in the House of Commons, exactly behind the Speaker's chair, and the representatives of the London morning journals, the official reporters, the combination staffs of the provincial newspapers, and the Press agencies have seats right and left of the representative of the leading journal

A Gallery-Reporting Corps

A gallery-reporting corps consists of from four to twelve, or even sixteen pressmen, in addition to the summary writer, who also directs the staff. At the commencement of the sitting a reporter's time-table is drawn up indicating the moment when each reporter must take his place in the gallery. There is only room for one man on each staff at a time, and the reporting is carried on by a sort of jack-in-the-box, "you come in as I go out" arrangement, which is rather trying to the nerves of a beginner, but works smoothly enough with a staff of expert shorthand writers, through a long debate

How the Work is Done

With a staff of half-a-dozen men to call on, the task on an ordinary night is moderately easy. The instructions are as follow :—

HOW TO SUCCEED

Section.		Time.
A	Boyd	3
B	Cash	3 30
C	Melville	4
D	Brown	4.30
E	Mills	5
F	Johnson	5.30

Balfour, first person, fully.

Chamberlain, first person, fully.

Morley, third person, good summary.

Each man, in the box half an hour, has ample time to transcribe his notes on quitting it for the writing-room, inasmuch as he is not due in the Press gallery to take up his next turn for two hours and a half.

A Big Night

On a big night in the House, the night of an important debate and critical division, the long turns are superseded by three or five-minute takes of shorthand, and more rapid transcription, so that the debate, reported, as it were, hand over hand, by large staffs, is sent quickly through by telegraph, telephone, or messenger to the various newspaper offices. On the provincial papers it may be in type when the division is announced, and only the figures for and against the Government need insertion to complete the page that is bothering the stereotypers and delaying the first edition.

The Reporters in a Fix

Question time is embarrassing to the young journalist, owing partly to the difficulty of hearing, but

chiefly to his ignorance of the personality of the members, and the multiplicity of affairs at home and abroad that call for inquiry and reply. But he was in a greater quandary on the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill in April, 1886. "The House was so packed with descriptive writers, leader-writers, correspondents, and artists, that in several cases the reporters were unable to get to the boxes to relieve colleagues, with the result that some men had to take notes for half an hour instead of the five-minute turns originally arranged," and the transcription of the speech—a memorable speech extending over twelve columns—was thrown altogether out of rotation, and finished with difficulty, amid a growl of adjectives.

A Sessional Engagement

A sessional engagement on the reporting staff of an influential paper is on the whole a very satisfactory appointment. Such a berth is never advertised. The Press gallery resembles a lady's boudoir in one respect—it echoes with gossip, and immediately there is whisper of possible vacancy there are many applicants. The position is invariably given to a tried man, who gets it through friendship, influence, or merit, and though a sessional engagement of from five to eight guineas per week does not realise everybody's idea of affluence, there are possibilities of advancement not only to higher positions on the Press, but in literature, law, and politics. Gallery men have become famous authors, have won distinction at the Bar, and taken a prominent part in the legislation of the country.

CHAPTER XI

AT THE REPORTER'S TABLE

THE reporter's table at a political demonstration is, to the fringe of crowd around it, almost as interesting as the statesman's speech. The hall in which the meeting is held is packed with electors and non-electors. They surge with excitement, but give the "gentlemen of the Press" elbow-room. If any impulsive champion of Radical or Conservative leader attempts to break through the group of journalists, he is warned into politeness by brusque comment, such as: "Nah, then, fool! Why doesn't thah keep off t' reporters?"

Hero-Worship

The pressmen, whose mode of livelihood is altogether out of the beaten track of industry, attract considerable attention, though their demeanour is passive, and their expression indicative of boredom. "They're going to take down the speech in shorthand," is audibly whispered behind their backs, as they furtively or boldly, according to individual temperament, produce note-books, pencils and "fimsy" (the thin oiled paper on which several copies can be written simultaneously). A knowledge of phonography is

the fortunate possession of many people; still these reporters who have acquired remarkable dexterity in the practice of the art cannot be otherwise than exceedingly clever. They share the hero-worship of the moment with the orator who comes, bowing, across the platform.

Ancient and Modern

The political meeting has changed in character since the time of Charles Dickens. Then it was more or less of a rabble, and in Forster's life of the novelist we were told the author of "Pickwick," as one of the reporters of the *Morning Chronicle*, journeyed into Devonshire by coach, and reported the speech of Lord John Russell, in a storm of rain, and amid a lively fight of the vagabonds of the locality. Now the political demonstration is better organised, and more peacefully conducted. Elaborate arrangements are made for the comfort of the speakers, and the convenience of the Press; and also with the telegraphic service for the transmission of the statesman's words through the kingdom and the world.

The Entertaining Side

The gathering is not only the disseminator and the strengthener of a political creed, it is something of an entertainment, and tickets of admission to the best places are sold as at the box-office of a theatre. You can book your seats to hear Lord Salisbury, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Morley, or Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, in a public hall, as readily as if you desired to go into the dress circle to

see Sir Henry Irving or Mr Beerbohm Tree. There is, too, a flavour of the theatrical in the modern political demonstration in a great city—flowers, banners, music, songs, and the ladies, whatever their treatment in the House of Commons, grace the meeting with their presence, in fine raiment and party tint.

Criticism

The central figure, the orator himself, is oftener grave than jaunty. He has a serious purpose to serve—an important message to deliver; and he must word it carefully, or expect merciless criticism. We have become so highly civilised that riot is rare, and interruption exceptional at a political demonstration. The statesman is listened to attentively: but his utterances are open to the trouncings of leader writers, the traverse of opponents, and the contempt or ridicule of the newspaper reader.

How is a Great Speech Reported?

Whatever the matter and style of the speech, if it be the speech of a front rank politician, the reporters have not lost a word of it. They awoke to vigorous, systematic effort immediately the member of the Cabinet rose to address the meeting; and a verbatim report of the speech, under conspicuous heading, and with attractive cross-heads in small capitals to render perusal easier, appears in the morning paper. A modest two-line paragraph at the end tells you that the right hon. gentleman resumed his seat amid loud and continued cheering, having spoken an hour and twenty minutes. The speech extends over five news-

paper columns, in minion type, and it is such a faithful record of the statesman's utterances that you involuntarily ask. "How on earth is a great speech reported?"

Transcription

Newspaper readers make all sorts of guesses and hazards. Some cling to the impression that the reporters simply take the speech in shorthand, and hand their note-books to the telegraphists or to the printers for transmission and type-setting. When that method of transferring the speech from the note-book to the newspaper is in general practice, we shall be within measurable distance of the millennium. It will not be possible till all telegraphists and printers have a knowledge of shorthand, and every reporter writes the same system probably it will be difficult even then, for the admission must be made that one man cannot always read another man's notes. Indeed, the shorthand writer himself, however carefully he has "taken down the speaker's words," is not always able to decipher the shorthand characters at sight.

"Make the Thing Read"

Many a capable reporter has been driven half-mad by a hieroglyphic sign in his own note-book. The unreadable form has jumped unaccountably into the middle of some poetic illustration, statement of policy, or brilliant peroration, and it resembles the Chinese writing on a tea-chest. It is a grimace in caligraphy. It outrages every canon of shorthand, and defies transcription. If a check note has been taken of the

speech, the perplexed pressman is helped out of his difficulty. If not, the chief reporter growls: "Make the infernal thing read."

The Reporter of the Future

An ambidexterous journalist, who can take a shorthand note with the left hand, and transcribe the note into ordinary caligraphy with the right hand simultaneously, has lately aroused comment on the Press. The phonograph, however, will probably be the reporter of the future. The receptive machine may have its appointed place at political demonstrations, take, unerringly, a full report of a statesman's speech, and grind it out again to the operator of linotype or other mechanical type-setter, in the newspaper office.

Responsible Work

Meantime the task of reporting a big speech is a responsible and delicate one. It is done in this way. Lord Salisbury has risen, say, in a crowded meeting in Edinburgh to denote the policy of the Government, or Mr. John Morley is on his legs at a Liberal gathering at Manchester to reinvigorate the Opposition. Each daily paper has sent a representative. These reporters (for the sake of explanation, eight in number) have combined to report the speech. They are all proved men, skilful in note-taking, and transcription, and unlikely to stick at a word, or to make slip or error.

A "Ring"

These journals have, in press technicality, formed a "ring." The chief of the ring, usually the chief

reporter of an important morning paper, shrewd, calculating, and capable of dealing with a mass of copy, has been chosen. He has placed his watch on the reporter's table, and handed to the pressmen the following mystical diagram, reminding one of a chess problem —

GENTLEMEN OF THE STAFF.					
THREE MINUTE TURNS, PLEASE					
Howarth, ...	A	I	R	Z	
Shovelton, . .	B	K	S	AA	
Flint,	C	L	T	BB	
Pettigrew, . .	D	M	U	CC	
Harrison, . .	E	N	V	DD	
Fletcher, . .	F	O	W	EE	
Mallett, ...	G	P	X	FF	
Taylor, ...	H	Q	Y	GG	

The First Turn

The statesman begins his speech. Mr. Howarth, in response to a nod from the chief, takes the first turn, reporting the speaker for exactly three minutes.

Tapped on the shoulder he knows the time is up, desists from shorthand writing at the end of the sentence, and proceeds to transcribe the notes he has taken into longhand. With carbon paper and "flimsy," he manifolds eight copies, marking the pages "A 1," "A 2," "A 3," and so on till he has transcribed his notes—till he has finished his turn. Then he writes on the last slip, "End of Section A. Section B follows."

Note-Taking by Section

Mr Shovelton, succeeding Mr. Howarth, takes shorthand notes of the speech for three minutes, ceases note-taking and transcribes his shorthand into longhand, folioing his copy, "B 1," "B 2," "B 3," and writing on the last slip, "End of B Section. Section C follows." Mr. Flint and the other reporters in the ring each take a shorthand turn of three minutes, successively transcribing their notes into longhand. This system of note-taking and shorthand writing by section is continued through the alphabet, and if needful twice and even thrice through it, so that the reporter taking the last turn of the orator's peroration, may find it necessary to mark his copy not "AA 1," but "AAA 1."

Misgiving

To the uninitiated this method of reporting a speech seems a little disquieting. Even the reporter himself on his first admission to a "ring" does not accept the honour without qualm. He is thoroughly aware that if he fails, the nice reporting arrangement will be thrown out of gear, and that he will be subject to the

badinage, pity or contempt of his colleagues—that confidence in his ability will be shaken, and years of good work will not blunt the memory of a moment's incapacity. Nevertheless, the young reporter takes the risk immediately the opportunity comes. The probability of failure to an expert shorthand writer, with tolerably steady nerves, is remote. Mr. Howarth, the first note-taker in the ring, is followed by no fewer than seven reporters, each taking shorthand notes for three minutes. He has, consequently, twenty-one minutes in which to transcribe his shorthand notes into longhand, and he does this with time to spare. In fact, he is ready to begin his next shorthand turn when called upon.

End of Message

The system, with a watch that doesn't play tricks, a cool-headed chief, and an expert staff, works so smoothly that the speech is "written up"—taken in shorthand and transcribed into longhand—almost as rapidly as it is delivered. Indeed the reporter on the last turn has occasionally only a couple of sentences to transcribe and writes "end of message" on the final slip, as the enthusiastic cheering, the tribute to the political leader's eloquence, dies away.

The Speech in Type

The sorter, the extra pressman sitting in the "ring" to collect and arrange the "copy" for transmission to its various destinations, has all through the speech-making a busy time of it. Messengers from the local newspaper offices, and from the telegraph departments, have besieged him with their eternal demand: "Copy,

sir." He has done his best to satisfy their ravenous appetites, dealing out the "flimsy" adroitly on the completion of each section; and the speech is in type in the composing rooms in the city, and nearly "through"—the whole of it wired to distant papers—before the wearied statesman has donned his night-cap.

Welcome Manuscripts

Years ago, prior to the days of cheaper press messages, when wealthy newspapers chartered special trains to bring their reporters back from out-of-town engagements, the politicians of the time now and again facilitated the work of the pressmen by writing their speeches. Sir William Harcourt, in the zenith of his popularity, invariably prepared his speech in this fashion, even to the apparently impromptu jokes; and the reporter for the *Times* was usually favoured with his manuscript a few hours before the meeting began. In this event, the reporter's task was easy. He had simply to attend the meeting, punctuate the manuscript, "flimsy," or proof, with "Hear, hear," "cheers," "laughter," or "loud cheers," and send the speech in to the printers.

An Audience of One

Life is not so leisurely now, and political leaders, speaking frequently, are too busy to write speeches. Possibly they rehearse in secret. A pressman, ushered some years ago into a Yorkshire mansion to get a dictation of a Cabinet Minister's speech, unwittingly made an audience of one at an oratorical effort of this kind. Requested to "wait in the library," he opened

the door, and found the statesman there already. The table was littered with blue books, copies of questions to be answered in the House, and despatches. Beside a huge letter bag, that resembled a flour sack, stood the right hon. gentleman. He was fiercely declaiming, with tumbled hair, bristling beard, outstretched hands, and powerful voice, against the leader of the Opposition. Knowing the writer's purpose, he concluded his scathing criticism, polished it off with a flowery peroration, and flinging himself into his arm-chair, said "Now, sir, what do you think of that? I fancy it will make my opponent writhe!"

Mr Chamberlain's Sympathy

Though nowadays the reporters rarely obtain a copy of any statesman's speech, they have one advantage remaining. Work that is accurately gauged is the most skilfully done, and there is, at nearly every political demonstration, an undertaking between the party leader and the pressmen as to the probable length of the speech. Mr. Chamberlain recently said: "Often and often when I have stood upon a public platform, I have had sent up to me a little scrap of paper on which I have read 'How long are you going to speak?' And when I have replied, 'Oh, about the usual hour,' I have seen a look of despairing resignation and mute reproof steal over the countenances of the pressmen, and I have felt ashamed of myself, and disgusted with that English custom which will not allow that a man has anything to say, unless he can take an hour to say it."

Tantalising

Sympathy does not always exist, however, between speaker and reporter. It is awkward when the statesman wears an eye-glass, and the pressman, sitting opposite, but a little below him, sports one also. Confronted, they quickly lose every amiable trait. They focus their lenses, and glare like Corsicans, each indignant at the other's impertinence. The journalist, now and again, quite unconsciously tortures the orator. At a meeting in the North of England, a famous but sensitive speaker, noted for the grace of his metaphor, stopped abruptly in the middle of one of his most eloquent passages. The crowd was not only amazed but curious. He did not heed them for the moment, but bent towards the reporter's table. A reporter's eye-glass had checked his rhetoric. The fiendish aid to vision, windowed with contortion and grimace in the reporter's eye, blazed and flashed at the orator so relentlessly, that it quite unnerved him. With flushed face, and voice hoarse with emotion, he said: "Would you take that looking-glass out of your eye, sir? It irritates me!"

Erratic Eloquence

On the other hand, the speaker may be devoid of malignity, and yet annoy the reporter. Mr. Bradlaugh, with his strident voice, gave many a journalist a headache. But even this torture was preferable to the Scotch reporter's experience. It was his duty to take a shorthand note of the speech

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of a politician who worked himself into a frenzy and expectorated freely. The spray fell "as the gentle rain from Heaven upon the place beneath"—upon the reporter's head. The pressman, exasperated beyond endurance, and reckless of the accuracy and continuity of his report, sprang to his feet, and gazing fiercely at the select group on the platform, asked in defiant tones that vibrated through the hall: "Wha's that sputten?"

CHAPTER XII

MR. GLADSTONE

REPORTING a statesman's speech, with a competent staff in a public hall, requires skill and concentration; but it is easier than reporting a statesman's speech in a crush on a station platform, or at the speaker's elbow in a railway-carriage. Mr. Gladstone addressed meetings everywhere, on nearly every topic; and soon after his death it was stated that the Press Association were poorer by £2,000 a year because of the loss of his speeches. Certainly as an orator by train he was irreplaceable.

The Disconcerted Deputation

Mr. Gladstone's style of speaking was so quickly fashioned and refashioned on his swift emotions that it was absolutely unique—and he had the gift of humour, whimsically revealed on one occasion when he did not speak. In the summer of 1892, on his way to Edinburgh to take part in political campaign, he found himself in an awkward position. He was presented with an address at Lockerbie station. It was a gratifying address. Read ponderously by an imperturbable Scotchman, it seemed to be in-

terminable The crowd, eager for Mr. Gladstone's reply, grew impatient, but their muttering was in vain. The reader of the address went steadily on with his duty, till he heard the guard's whistle, and saw the green flag waving. Then his cheeks glowed like two patches of tartan. The express was moving out of the station, and at the window of the saloon carriage stood Mr. Gladstone, making profound and inscrutable bows as he was whisked northward. Wags said he bent his face low to hide the flicker of amusement upon it—that for once he really got satisfaction out of a policy of silence.

Journeying Together

On another of Mr. Gladstone's visits north, two journalists sought to journey in the Premier's saloon set apart for his use, but the station-master was aghast at their effrontery. He curtly declined their very reasonable request; and in their dilemma the pressmen appealed to Cæsar, or rather to Mr. Gladstone, who welcomed them with a kindly reference to the debt he owed the Press, and permitted them to journey with him.

Notable Speech-Makers

The swirl of life and the noise of traffic seemed to vitalise Mr. Gladstone, and he was undoubtedly not only the first but the most versatile railway orator that England, or the world, has produced. Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery have, owing to pressure of public opinion, imitated him; but awkwardly. Indeed, Lord Rosebery, when in office, frankly

admitted that "standing at an obtuse angle half-way outside a railway carriage is not favourable to oratory" Mr Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour, however, have adroitly adapted themselves to the exigencies of railway-carriage speaking.

The Resourceful Pressman

So has the journalist. Wherever the statesman pops his head out of a slowing train, to speak to a platform crowd, the reporter is near, with his notebook handy. He is quite equal to any development of political speaking by rail; he may ultimately not only travel with statesman on tour, and take down his words in shorthand on the platform and in the saloon, but with improved telegraphy, despatch the message to the office of his paper from the flying express.

At the General Election

During the general election the reporter is obliged to race through the country after statesmen, or prominent candidates, to take down speeches in all sorts of places, and often to use the railway-carriage as a reporter's room. Now and again he is even mistaken for a parliamentary candidate or an official prompter.

Special Engagement

The reporter is paid on special election engagement from one guinea to two guineas per day, and travelling expenses. He has little difficulty in securing appointment if he has a reputation for steadiness and ability as a shorthand man and descriptive writer. He may be away from the head office for days reporting

or writing election prospects, and it is necessary, therefore, for the paper's good name, that he should be a journalist, not only of ability, but of integrity—a man in whom the chief reporter can place reliance. Such a reporter, of course, will not be asleep when the air vibrates with political rumour. He will assume that the dissolution is nigh, and offer his services to the paper that he thinks is likely to give him an engagement, applying, something after this fashion, to the editor or the chief reporter

DEAR SIR,—I note that a general election is imminent, and should be greatly obliged if you would be good enough to give me an engagement on your special staff,—Yours very truly,

HAROLD SCOTT

The political situation develops, the date of election is fixed, and the applicant gets a telegram or letter, telling him to report himself at the office that night, or next day, ready for duty. He arrives promptly, is sent thirty or sixty miles away to report an hon. member who has hurried down to address his constituents, or into a division nearer home to write a special article on the political feeling of the constituency

What is Expected

The reporter is expected to give renewed hope to the disheartened politician, to prove to the electors that he is the only man worthy of support, and to obtain if he can from the density of the election agent some idea of how the contest is going, and what are the prospects of success. His own confidence

in the candidate must be absolute: he must defend him against vituperation and slander, be first at the telegraph office with the result of the polling, and in his description show how his candidate gained such a magnificent triumph, or, if he is defeated, claim for him the inevitable "moral victory."

An Acute Ordeal

The reporter, in an election campaign, is upset in a rickety conveyance, stranded knee-deep in mud, and goes through many adventures by road and rail in the interests of the party his journal champions; but there is one journalistic engagement, unconnected with politics, which surpasses in its intensity all the varied incidents that follow a dissolution of Parliament. Reporting the half-yearly meeting of a great railway company is undoubtedly the most acute ordeal the young pressman can undergo.

Impassive Shareholders

Unless he arrives at the meeting half-an-hour before the time arranged for it, he finds the hall thronged with shareholders, and the reporter's table crowded with journalists. Possibly he cannot get a seat, and must take a shorthand note of the chairman's speech, bristling with figures, either on his knee, with one foot wedged on the nearest bench, or standing without any support whatever. Unless he has a snug holding in the company, the meeting tends to depress him. It lacks excitement—the enthusiasm of a political gathering. The men and women are impassive. Some ancient shareholder, who has attended the half-yearly meeting regularly

for the past forty years, will perhaps grin at another wrinkled proprietor on the next seat; but there are no hearty greetings. The business is too serious for the conventionalities of life. Existence is focused in the balance-sheet.

The Glib Chairman

The chairman, followed by his directors, appears on the platform from the side door. There is a shuffle of feet, and slight applause in the hall. The chairman bows to the shareholders, takes his seat, and says, "I will ask the secretary to read the notice convening the meeting. Is it your wish that the seal of the company should be affixed to the register of shareholders?" The notice is read, the seal is affixed, and the chairman, polite, glib, a master of railway oratory, altogether different in its style from that of the statesman's, is handling the half-yearly report, dealing like a skilful conjurer with huge figures, initiating the shareholders into the mysteries of mileage, traffic—passenger and goods, wear and tear, extension, development, and instilling into the grumpiest of them, meantime, renewed confidence in his management, and satisfaction at the dividend, though they were not captivated with the announcement of it in the report.

Nearly Overwhelmed with Figures

The railway chairman is not worthy of his position and emolument if he declaims. It is his business to persuade, and the persuasive tone of speaking, not too loud, but earnest, intense, is often rapid. The journalist, and especially the young journalist, has

consequently his work cut out when he begins to grapple with the troops and squadrons of figure suavely but irresistibly flung at him by the chairman. The decimals harass him; the millions threaten to overwhelm him. His brain is in a swirl of terms such as expenditure, revenue, demurrage, compensation, arbitration, and with thousands of dancing figures but suddenly the speaker's voice becomes soothing. The chairman has ended his statistical rhetoric, and now utters a few platitudes about the prospects of the company and gracefully finishes his speech.

Tension

The questions that follow are not difficult to report but the journalist is probably in a twitter as to whether he has got the figures in the chairman's speech correctly, and is perfectly miserable till the end of the meeting, when he may be able to compare notes with some well-disposed pressman, or better still, penetrate to the secretary's office, and gratefully discover on the desk there, a longhand or type-written copy of the speech that has made his brain crack. With other journalists, perhaps for years "in the know," he does his share of "flimsying," till the necessary number of copies have been made, and returns to his office, if he has to journey by train with his report of the meeting completed, and no longer a prey to despair.

Complacency

The discreet reporter, aiming at the highest efficiency will not, however, be altogether satisfied with the good fortune that has enabled him to surmount the

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difficulty He will compare his notes with the written speech Probably another surprise will be in store—the revelation that notwithstanding his tremor and agony during the note-taking he has, with the exception of a discrepancy here and there, due rather to nervousness than to inability, got a verbatim note of the terrifying speech, and that he could, with honour and credit to himself, have reproduced the chairman's utterances without any reference whatever to the official manuscript Such a revelation—and it has come to many men on the daily Press—tends to complacency "Reporting in the House is nothing," said a pressman recently "You should hear old Scrip conjure with capital at the half-yearly If you can take a verbatim of him you can report a flash of lightning!"

CHAPTER XIII

AN EXCITING INTERVIEW

THE journalist who aspires to a career beyond note-taking and transcribing of speeches, has an excellent opportunity of revealing his versatility in interviewing. The interviewer has become an important member of the daily newspaper staff. He must not only be well-dressed, but shrewd, ready of speech, and possess resource and courage.

A reporter was instructed to interview a manufacturer recently returned from New York with information with regard to the probable imposition of new tariffs, and had an exciting experience. It was important that his paper should give the information in some form in its next issue. The manufacturer lived in a mansion two miles away. The reporter drove there late at night. The house was in darkness; so were the grounds. The journalist rang the bell. There was a deafening clang, the barking of dogs, and the rattling of chains. Then an upper window was flung open, a night-capped head appeared white in the gloom.

"Can I see Mr.——?" shouted the reporter.

"Who are you? What are you prowling about

here for?" asked the lightly-clad figure; and there was a gleam of steel on the window-sill.

"I represent the ——. I want some information about the American business."

"Well, I'm ——" growled the figure. "If you're not off this minute, by Heaven I'll shoot you!"

And the reporter, thinking discretion not only the better part of valour but of newspaper enterprise, retreated hurriedly.

Impervious to Rebuff

He was not so philosophical as another journalist, a polite, indomitable man. It was this gentleman's duty to go every year on "the twelfth" to the grouse moors to interview the sportsmen, and ascertain the number of birds they had killed. Generally he was received courteously, and got his facts without difficulty; but one sportsman was obdurate. He was a rich man and surly; he always refused to give a return, and never gave a civil answer. He was asked politely year after year how he had fared; but he only grunted and slammed the carriage door in the inquirer's face. The reporter had ascertained, however, in a long experience, that everything comes to a man if he can wait. So he smiled and waited, till one glorious August day, when the moorland was bright with sunlight, and the stream sparkled in the glen, and the world seemed glad. He waited an hour for the return of the shooting party, sitting contentedly on a moss-grown stone at the road bend.

The sportsmen dribbled along the highway in twos

and threes, and told him of their success or failure willingly, amid badinage and laughter. Then with a shawl across his shoulders, and a scowl on his face, Mr. Brusque came puffing and panting along. The reporter put his stereotyped question :

“What sort of a bag have you made, sir?”

The gruff old man passed on with an angry stare, not deigning to reply, and was assisted into his carriage, for he was of full habit. The door was shut by the keeper; but the reporter re-opened it, and asked with pleasant voice :

“Did you say one brace and a dog, sir?”

The Parliamentary Candidate

Probably the easiest person to interview is the Parliamentary candidate. He is gratified to discover he is worthy the trouble, and he reels out his views in a fussy, pompous, or dignified manner, according to his individuality. Sometimes he endeavours, if he has been in Parliament, and is seeking re-election, to gather from the reporter what the constituency really thinks of him.

“Do you think I'm popular?” once asked a candidate.

“Yes, fairly,” replied the pressman; “but they say you talk a lot of rubbish about the working man, and that you are thoroughly aware of the fact when you give anything away!”

On the whole, the Parliamentary candidate is interesting; in theory, he is the most generous man the world produces. He will promise everything before he is elected; afterwards, he has a habit of

shying even at a cricket club or football subscription. But he is, as a rule, though no orator, a shrewd, sensible, well-ballasted man.

A Narrow Escape

Occasionally an erratic candidate springs out of the dead level of English life ; and although he does not always succeed on the polling day, he gives an entertaining fillip to political warfare. It was once a reporter's duty to interview a very lively candidate—a military man—who had such faith in his sabre that he took it into the contest, and startled the self-introduced journalist by going through the most terrifying sword exercise in the hotel bedroom. The same night the intrepid officer addressed a meeting of his constituents. His speech, distinctly novel, was received with roars of laughter. The reporter dealt with it from a humorous point of view, producing a column of entertaining reading in the next day's paper. But the candidate did not peruse it in a Pickwickian sense. He took the report seriously. Grasping his sword he rushed to the newspaper office, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." He roared with anger in the passage, and there was the jingle of spurs and the flash of steel in the counting-house. Great and small fled before the man of valour. He cleared several departments in a twinkling ; but the reporter who had caused the diversion was fortunately out of town at another engagement.

Nothing to Disclose

It is the journalist's duty to interview the explorer, the inventor, the actor, and the society beauty, though the latter celebrity has lately become the special preserve of the lady journalist. He has interviewed the statesman knee-deep in official correspondence, and the general departing on campaign. In his zeal to get facts, he has awaited the arrival of a musical star at the railway station, taken him to the nearest hotel, carried his bag and rug, poured the water into the washing basin in his bedroom, questioned him all the time, and rushed away to the office to get the account of the interview into the evening paper. The reporter has waited an hour to see the chairman of a great railway company, been ushered into his office, put a host of questions without eliciting a fact with regard to new policy, or the attitude of the directors in an industrial crisis, and been shown out with the polite but unsatisfactory remark: "My dear sir, there is really nothing to disclose; no new development. If anything of interest should arise, I will not fail to let you know!"

The Hangman

"During my own reporting career," writes a well-known journalist, "I interviewed many people, from explorers to hypnotists, and revivalist preachers to rescued colliers; but my most dramatic interview was with the hangman. It is impossible to approach a hangman jauntily. It would not be in good taste, for instance, to slap him on the back, and say: 'How

do you do? I'm glad to see you.' On entering the little shop by the church at Horncastle, where Marwood tipped and tapped at his boots and shoes, I gave him respectful greeting. I did not shake hands with him; but I told him the object of my visit, and after an instructive chat on the importance of effacing criminals, bade him adieu. My brief talk in the remote Lincolnshire town was merely a preliminary one. A few days afterwards I received a letter from him. It was on blue paper, bearing the figure of Justice as a crest, and beneath, the words: 'William Marwood, Crown Official.' The communication, in somewhat whimsical English, was as follows:

“‘HORNCASTLE, Feb. 22th, 1879.

“‘DEAR SIR,—This is to inform you that i have reseaved your kind Letter this Morning Conserving ouer meeting at Leeds on Tuesday next the 25th Day of Feb. acording to ouer arangement at Leeds whear to meet this is to Let you now that i have reseaved this Morning a Letter from the Rev. P. Mackenzie of Leeds. So i Can Let you now whear we Can meet at Leeds on Tusday the 25th Day of Feb. Sir i have sent you the address of the gentleman Whear We will meet i will be as Quick as i Can from the Prison as near 10. o Clock as i Can you may Depend on me to be thear i will Drop a Line to that gentleman at Leeds to Let him now that a gentleman will meet me at his House on Tusday Morning the 25th Day of Feb.—Sir i Remain yours Truly,

“‘WILLIAM MARWOOD.

A Notorious Criminal

"Feb. 25, 1879," he continues, "was the day on which Charles Peace was executed. I had seen a good deal of the desperado. I saw him after his leap from the express in futile endeavour to escape. I saw him lying amid the straw within the armed police guard in the luggage van of the train that took him to Wakefield on his committal for trial. I heard Mr. Justice Lopes sentence him to death in the Crown Court at Leeds Assizes for the murder of Mr. Dyson, and noted his vicious face, and the work of his muscular hands on the brass rail of the dock, as he murmured in impotent rage: 'It's no use my saying anything.'"

The Crown Official's Yearning

"I did not see Peace hanged, because only two reporters were admitted to the execution; but I waited on the snow-sprinkled waste at Armley till the black flag was hoisted. Then I sped on the mission with which I had been entrusted. If my memory does not play me falsely, the house to which I was directed was in Hunslet. I was heartily welcomed by the Rev. Peter Mackenzie, the rugged minister who had known Marwood in his youth. Scarcely had he ushered me into the breakfast-room when the hangman arrived, methodical, cool, chatty. 'The Irish call me the Prince of Executioners,' he said with a smile, dropping his valise, which contained the rope and straps by the aid of which he had taken Peace's life. Seated at the fireside he conversed about the skill he

had attained in the science of hanging, and favoured me with a long story of his motives, methods, and achievements; but I found the interview somewhat embarrassing, for he told me, with soft voice and meaning smile, that he had not yet had the privilege of hanging a reporter!"

The Interviewer Detested

At the opening of the new century many notable men and women were interviewed by telegraph, and their opinions given on numerous subjects in various newspapers; but the personal interview is not likely to fall into desuetude. Some statesmen, soldiers, and divines shrink from the ordeal, and the Rev. Dr. McLaren, the famous Nonconformist minister, is very severe on interviewers, saying that they are an abomination—that he detests them.

A Chat with a Divine

Nevertheless, he consented to see one pressman. The journalist was instructed to get an interview, avoiding controversial topics, and dealing chiefly with his experiences as a preacher, and in social work. When the doctor knew the object of his visit he was in a flutter; but he exercised considerable self-restraint, and said other people knew more about his career than he did. His bark was worse than his bite, and the newspaper-man obtained from him a very interesting resumé of his opinions on some of the leading questions of the day.

The Bishop's Reply

The interviewer is not always so successful, however. A journalist received three years ago a letter from the

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editor of a religious paper in London asking him to interview the Bishop of Manchester, writing: "It will be necessary to keep him on general topics, such as rescue work and Sunday observance; and to keep him off subjects now agitating the Church, and also from anything likely to hurt Nonconformists." His Lordship kept off these subjects without prompting. In reply to the pressman's request for an interview, he wrote:

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am obliged to refuse all applications of the kind which you have made to me. I am, yours respectfully, "J. MANCHESTER."

In Bed and at Sea

The impromptu interview is perhaps, after all, the most instructive or amusing. The story that a war correspondent interviewed General Buller, in his morning tub, in the camp, in the Transvaal, is probably a fiction; but a parliamentary candidate has been interviewed in bed by an enterprising journalist; and a yachting duke, overhauled at sea by a pressman who wished to learn his Grace's feeling with regard to a new departure in Government policy, exclaimed: "Good — ! here's that — newspaper fellow again. If the craft went down, — me, I believe he'd follow me to the bottom."

Which Party?

Mrs. Gladstone, perhaps, was the most amusing heroine of an interview with a journalist. She mistook a reporter, whose political leaning was certainly not in the direction of Radicalism, for one of her husband's worshippers. The reporter was

sauntering towards Hawarden to attend a meeting, when he saw an elegant, white-haired lady hurrying towards him. She made a graceful inclination, held out her hand, and said. "What a lovely day! I'm so pleased to meet you. Wasn't Southampton jolly?" The journalist didn't care twopence about Southampton. He politely acknowledged her salutation, adroitly waived all reference to Southampton and the Liberal victory there, and hurried away lest he should reveal his despicable indifference to political striving; but he left the lady awkwardly, and she had an intuitive misgiving that he was a Tory wolf prowling about the Radical fold.

The Editor's Instruction

General Grant, on his visit to England, was dumb in the presence of the interviewer. He never opened his mouth except to put a cigar in it. On the other hand, Mr. Chamberlain is seldom reticent—when he wishes to use the Press as his henchman. It is a misfortune to journalism that he was born wealthy and has become a statesman. If Mr. Chamberlain had been obliged to work for his livelihood, he would, inasmuch as he is so perky and unabashed, have made a smart interviewer. Anyhow, the peculiar duty appeals to him, and speaking in Birmingham several years ago, he said

"I have a kindly feeling even to the interviewer, and there is still a warm place in my heart for that American reporter who met me on my first arrival in the United States, who gave a flattering account of me, in which he said that if I had only been dressed

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better I might have passed for an American; and then took his article to my private secretary in triumph, and said: 'You know, sir, that my editor told me to give Chamberlain hell, but I think he has got the makings of a good fellow about him, and I am not going to spoil him in his early years.'

CHAPTER XIV

DESCRIPTIVE REPORTING

THE pleasantest work on the Press is undoubtedly descriptive writing. It takes the journalist everywhere—to big nights in the House, to political meetings, to great fires, to pit explosions, railway accidents, ship launches, wrecks, race meetings, cricket matches, and Royal Visits. The special article, or special description, on whatever subject, or event, has become more interesting to the newspaper reader than the old-fashioned, three-decker leading article, and the journalist who is fortunate enough to make a reputation for this class of writing is relieved to a considerable extent from the “slog” of note-taking, and secures practically the cream of newspaper work

The Best Engagements

Not only does he monopolise the best engagements in the reporter's diary, but his suggestions are listened to, and often accepted by editor or chief reporter. Consequently, if he mentions a topic or subject likely to yield an interesting column, he is invariably asked to deal with it. The facts may be far away, and necessitate a railway journey or a sea

trip. The monotony of office duty is broken ; he sees new sights, and enlarges his knowledge of the world. Nor does he work in every instance under pressure as in actual reporting "Don't worry to send in your copy till you get back," said an editor to a reporter, as he was leaving the office to describe a coach-drive in a picturesque county.

At the Academy

Even more free and easy was another editor, who said :—"I want you to run up to town for a few days, and write something about the Academy. Don't give too much attention to the pictures. Send a couple of articles over the private wire, chiefly about the smart people." The work was easy and delightful. The journalist presented his bill of expenses in due course ; but the editor declined to initial it. "It's absurd," he said, "no man could live in London four days on a beggarly pittance like that. We'll double it"—and he did.

Obstacles

There are more imperative engagements than these, and the journalist, who is not only a quick and graceful descriptive writer, but energetic and unwearied in getting facts, and smart in placing his copy on the overseer's desk, or in transmitting it by telegraph or telephone into the sub-editor's room, is worthy of a good salary on any newspaper, inasmuch as he cannot achieve his object without overcoming many obstacles that seem specially placed in remote districts to hinder him in his duty. The journalist, for instance, who has the patience, diplomacy, and astute-

ness, to make the rural telegraphist thoroughly understand the vital importance of his news message, and to get it through to his office in time, by tact, persuasion, laborious instruction, and the slow reading of slip after slip to the bewildered clerk, whose attention is divided between his village shop and his instrument, possesses the qualifications that go to the making of a Prime Minister

How to Deal with a Colliery Explosion

Before an event can be properly reported it is necessary to gather all possible information relating to it, often when pressed for time, and under considerable difficulty. Hastily reaching the pit-bank, after a colliery explosion, and passing the police outposts, it is imperative that you should seek some official who can tell you the depth of the pit, the system of working, the method of ventilation, the distance from the bottom of the shaft to the benches, or working places, the daily output of coal, the character of the seam, the number of men employed in the mine, and if he can or will tell it, the cause of the explosion, its particular locality, and the exact time of its occurrence. On such a foundation of facts the reporter who knows his work can, with comparative celerity, turn out his introduction, or start his Press message on the wire; and the other details follow in natural sequence.

Thrilling Narratives

From the mining engineer he can obtain an expert opinion of the condition of the pit, and the possibilities of rescue; from the explorers a description of the havoc of the explosion, and of the work they have

been able to accomplish, with an approximate estimate of the number of killed and injured. He must be on the alert for any interesting intelligence—the message of sympathy from the King—the rigging up of temporary means of ventilation, the taking of food and restoratives into the mine, the bringing of the dead to the pit-bank. He has to mention the consultation of officials, give a list of the killed and injured, describe the excitement and grief of the crowd; and when the rescued colliers are brought up, whether injured or unhurt, he must get from them or their relatives the thrilling narratives that indicate the peril and heroism of those engaged in the mining industry. He will be obliged to make many other inquiries to complete his account, to the date of the inquest, and the fixing of the Government inquiry; but this rough outline will give some idea of how a colliery explosion is described “By our Special Correspondent.”

At a Railway Disaster

The description of a railway collision is more difficult, for it is the policy of the officials to be reticent, and to avoid publicity. The reporter may have been interrupted while attending some meeting by a note from his chief: “Get on to Penistone. Train off line. Many killed!” Enclosed, perhaps, is the local correspondent’s telegram, wildly asking for a reporter. The pressman is in a hansom, and on the station platform speedily. By express, or on a special engine, or in the tool van of the breakdown train, he reaches the scene of the accident. He must ascertain

the starting-place and destination of the train, its composition, number of passengers, names, ages, social condition or trade description of the killed and injured, the names of the driver, stoker, and guard, and how they acted at the supreme moment. get what he can from the officials as to the cause of the accident, whether from fractured tyre or axle, and if so, name of maker, quality of steel, and if fracture has come through fault of converting, frost, strain, or wear.

A Graphic Account

The journalist must lose no opportunity of interviewing. The remarkable story of the engine-driver, how he was flung off the footplate into the adjacent field; the thrilling tale of the passenger who had his head forced through the roof, or was miraculously pitched beneath the angle of the carriage end, and came scathless out of the havoc and ruin—these are the facts that make the account readable; nor is it less interesting if the journalist gathers from this or that passenger the object of his or her journey—that so-and-so, lying grievously injured, at the nearest farm, was on his way to town to meet his sweetheart, or to receive a legacy, or to go abroad, and had a presentiment as he went for his ticket that something would happen

The Journalist's Primary Duty

However sensitive or unnerved the reporter may be at a great railway disaster—the lifeless forms twisted in the wreckage, and the cries and groans of the injured are piteous—he must remember that he cannot write if he gives way to sentiment. The

reporter at a pit explosion, a big fire, or a railway accident, has given ready help, and done courageous deeds, but official or volunteer succour is, except in very rare instances, at hand before the journalist has arrived on the scene. In that event he should remember that his primary duty is to his paper, and it is important that he should control his emotion till he has finished his press message.

The Picturesque

Though the journalist should curb his sentiment, he need not, as is the custom of old fogey reporters on old fogey daily journals, report a railway disaster as if it were a missionary meeting. An account beginning "There was an accident at eight o'clock last night on the Great Northern Railway near Doncaster, by which four persons were killed and twenty injured," does not wake up the newspaper reader; it resembles the effort of the musical critic who always commenced his paragraph: "There was a concert last night." The halfpenny morning and evening papers, going to the other extreme now and again, prompt ridicule by their sensationalism; but the newspaper reader can tolerate and indeed prefers a vivid description of the accident, to a bald statement of fact which may be accurate enough, but gives little idea of the dramatic incident on the line.

CHAPTER XV

THE FREE LANCE

THE descriptive writer, like Mr William Senior, for instance, for many years the special correspondent of the *Daily News* has usually a secure position on an influential newspaper, but he is occasionally what is known on the press as a "free lance," not attached to the staff of any journal. He is open to special engagement; he is ready, on call, to write about a general election, to describe a King's coronation, the departure of an army corps to the seat of war, a great calamity or a national rejoicing—any event that requires special record.

Literary Journalism

Meantime he may be busy on a useful book or an entertaining story. Every year there is a closer affinity between newspaper work and literature, and not only the "free lance," but the reporter, sub-editor, and editor, are bookmakers. Mr. William Black, who produced his earliest works of fiction while busy as a pressman, wrote. "Journalism is most useful in the making of a novelist, inasmuch as it gives him experience of a large sphere of life. The newspaper itself has changed, and is ready to take anything on

any subject—literature, science, art—from anybody, providing only that it is interesting.” Many of our modern novelists, have been journalists, notably Rudyard Kipling, J. M. Barrie, and Hall Caine, and the writer of “A Fleet in Being” still looks upon the daily newspaper as the best agency for the diffusion of his poetry. Literary men, whatever their speciality, perhaps with the exception of ancient history, have little difficulty in finding an outlet for their inspiration and work on the daily and weekly press.

Fiction

Stories, long and short, are a distinctive feature not only of the weekly papers, but of several morning and evening journals; and though the penny morning paper at present chiefly confines its romance to the war news, and declines to run anybody’s novel, the serial story may ultimately “arrive” in the most conservative daily newspaper, for some cynics do not hesitate to assert that journalism has always had a tendency towards fiction.

What to do

The beginner, striving to be not only a journalist, but a novelist, should never commit the indiscretion of pestering an editor with his earliest effort in fiction. He should write, write, write, till he has satisfied himself that there is plot, life, action, and sensible or witty dialogue in his short story—to attempt a long one, till later, is absurd. Then he should communicate with the Authors’ Syndicate, or

with Messrs. Tillotson, or a literary agent, and send his MSS. If he has written a story—not rubbish—they will do their utmost to place it, either in a magazine or newspaper, for we live in an age of mediocre novelists, and the agent fortunate enough to discover a new writer—a genius—thrills with delight, and echoes the sentiment of Confucius “He who discovers a new pleasure is a benefactor to society.”

An Unlimited Market

The young journalist will act wisely if he lets bookmaking severely alone till he has acquired knowledge and experience of some particular subject, or is confident that he is a born story-teller. Even then, as a well-known writer points out: “A course of journalism is the very best training that a writer of fiction can undergo” And in this course of journalism, whether the staff of a newspaper, or as free lance, the ambitious writer should not neglect the descriptive article, for it has an unlimited market, and important possibilities

The Fate of an Article

If the journalist has an attractive subject, or exclusive material; if he can give a pen-and-ink picture of anything likely to interest the public, this or that editor in England or America will readily accept his manuscript, and pay him for it. An interesting incident occurred to a northern journalist in this connection. He sent a sketch, dealing with the business life of Manchester, to a local paper. It was rejected. The description of the bustling crowd and the trade effort

had no attraction for the assistant editor. But the article met with a very different fate in New York. The editor of *Collver's Weekly* accepted it, and in enclosing a cheque for payment wrote: "I read with much interest the account of the business life of your great city."

Never Destroy a Manuscript

The young journalist, with a gift for descriptive writing, should convince himself that every slip of "copy" he turns out means time and money. If his manuscript is rejected in one direction, let him try it in another. If it comes back declined "With compliments and thanks," or with the curt intimation "No room" or "Unsuitable," he should look upon these rebuffs as necessary to his discipline. He is a fool if he gives way to anger or melancholy; he is a greater fool still if he destroys his manuscript. If he safeguards it, the hour will come when he can use the "bones" of the article, though in different garb. No effort in journalism, even if it be an apparent failure, is effort in vain.

Editors not Infallible

The pressman who thirsts for the editor's blood, on the return of his bulky MS. with the stereotyped regret that he is "quite unable to use the enclosed," should remember that editors are human, and likely to err. Editors do not always decide wisely, either on question of policy or the fate of manuscript. Accident, forgetfulness, a score of contingencies arise. The pressman, however conceited, cannot argue away the

fact that his manuscript has been rejected ; but there are conditions of rejection the reverse of hopeless. Not long ago the editor of a London paper returned an article to a pressman " With thanks and regrets." The editor was reminded that he had already accepted the article, and telegraphed " Yes ; mistake Send it again."

The Courtesy of the "Times"

The writer's experience of editors is that if they can possibly accept an article, they prefer to do so rather than reject it Here, for instance, is a letter received by a pressman from the *Times* "The article you suggest would no doubt be interesting, but our space is, of course, particularly limited during the Parliamentary session. If you can send the article on the chance of our having room, we shall do our best for it" The writer was a stranger to the editor. He had no friend at court, but of course, on receiving such a considerate letter, he forwarded the article without delay. To his delight, it was accepted, and paid for generously.

More Good Fortune

Nor did good fortune end with the cheque A few days after the appearance of the article, which dealt with the literary associations and railway development of a Midland county, the writer received a note, forwarded from the *Times*, in which a publishing house in London asked him to undertake an important work. He did not shrink from the task ; and the outcome of that haphazard article, and an

editor's kindness, was not only a lucrative dip into literature, but much pleasant association.

Disinterested Help

No man can go through life without bitter disappointment, and the journalist has his share ; but if he is honest, gentlemanly, and can write tolerable English, he has, on the whole, a very satisfactory calling, and finds, perhaps more than workers do in any other business or profession, that people will go to a great deal of trouble to oblige him, even when they have no self-interest to serve.

Lord Hartington's Consideration

Commissioned to supply a bi-centenary article to the *Illustrated London News* on the Revolution of 1688, and more particularly the first Duke of Devonshire's connection with it, a journalist asked Lord Hartington (the present Duke of Devonshire) if he could, from the papers at Chatsworth, throw any new light on the subject. Some days afterwards his private secretary wrote : " I have at Lord Hartington's request examined letters of the year 1688, but find none bearing on the politics of the time. In one or two letters allusion is made to the impossibility of safely writing on such subjects, which, I suppose, is the reason that no letters are in the collection." The private secretary's note represented several hours' research, and showed the utmost willingness to give information if possible.

A Lack of Self-restraint

Another pressman, who sought facts from the giver of a banquet in the North, was not so politely treated. "—— you!" said the enraged parvenu; "you're always pestering me Get out; or, by ——, I'll kill you!" And he chased the startled journalist from the banqueting room with a carving knife.

Special Literary Work

Descriptive writing is becoming daily of more account on morning and evening newspapers, and the late Sir Walter Besant's article in the *Daily Chronicle* on life in London half a century ago was a model on which the young journalist might frame his style. Not only the Metropolitan but the provincial newspapers have, during the past fifteen years, made a feature of the special article on subjects not necessarily within the range of news, and journalists who have cultivated this department of Press work have obtained many instructive glimpses into the political, religious, inventive, and literary life of the country.

George Eliot's Letters

For instance, some years ago a journalist was fortunate enough to come across a number of George Eliot's unpublished letters, dealt with them in a special article, and received the following letter from his editor: "Your account of the George Eliot letters has brought down here Mr Cross, her husband, who is to do a biography of his late wife, and who

wants to get at the letters. He brings an introduction from Robinson of the *Daily News*. I have promised that you shall go on to him at his hotel as soon as you can, and I have said that I think you will feel justified in taking him—in his capacity of husband and biographer—to your informant, as I understood that his express desire was to reserve the letters for the use of some such authorised representative of George Eliot”

Payment

The payment for special descriptive articles varies, of course, according to the custom or position of the newspaper. The *Manchester Guardian* pays a couple of guineas for a column of readable matter in bourgeois. Other journals pay from one guinea to three guineas per column, with the exception of the *Times*, which is the most generous of all English journals, and gives an honorarium of from £5 to £7 10s. for a special article

Journalistic Exploration

There are, of course, special articles much more costly. Only the editor or manager who knows the outgoing, or the newspaper proprietor who goes through his cheque-book, can give an idea of the enormous price paid for them. Even in peace the special correspondent is a luxury, whether he explores a new land, or goes on an Arctic expedition. Mr. Stanley's discovery of Dr. Livingstone in Africa cost the *New York Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* £32,000, probably £1 a word. Mr. Edmund

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O'Donovan, the intrepid correspondent of the *Daily News*, did not penetrate to Mery, study the trend of Russian aggression, and safely return to Fleet Street, at the cost of a trip along the Rhine

Smart Newspaper Men

The article written by Mr Archibald Forbes in the *Daily News* descriptive of the wreck of the emigrant ship, *Cospatrick*, off the Cape in 1874, was not secured without lavish expenditure, for the famous correspondent was obliged to charter special steamer and special train to get his facts, and bring them to Fleet Street. Nor were Dr. Nansen's contributions to the *Daily Chronicle* cheap. His letters, dealing with his adventures in the Arctic zone, revealed the fact that he was a poet as well as an explorer. And he also proved that he could make a profitable bargain, and was one of the smartest newspaper men of his time.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WAR CORRESPONDENT

DURING the earlier stages of the Boer War a journalist was gravely maintained that the most capable war correspondents had been kept at home, with the object of showing in Fleet Street what our officers ought to do in South Africa. Mr. Spencer Wilkinson and Mr. Charles Williams certainly did excellent service by their military criticism; but while these two journalists were writing articles on tactics in town, there were many pressmen at the seat of war, braving the dangers of the campaign, and enduring hardship with fortitude, and the eccentricity of the censor with mingled feelings, inasmuch as this authority, however refined and polite, is a drastic sub-editor, without scruple when dealing with the war correspondent's copy.

Two Notable Names

The war correspondent, who must possess the best qualities of the trained journalist and the hardihood of the seasoned campaigner, has never had a holiday task. The distinction has been claimed for Mr. Grunieson, who represented the *Morning Post* in the

Carlist War in the early part of last century, that he was the first war correspondent. He managed to get his descriptions through to the office of his paper, without encountering obstacles such as hampered Sir William Russell, the famous correspondent of the *Times*, in the Crimea, and Mr. Archibald Forbes, the intrepid correspondent of the *Daily News*, in the Franco-German, Russo-Turkish, and Zulu Wars. Both these men overcame difficulty and opposition, practically created, and exalted the position of the war correspondent, and became notable in English journalism, not simply in consequence of their thrilling descriptions of fighting and suffering, but because of their own fearlessness and independence. Neither Russell nor Forbes were bound, or if at all were only loosely bound, with red tape; they described what they saw, and wrote what they thought.

What the Position Demands

The position of war correspondent has been styled the blue ribbon and the Victoria Cross of journalism; but whatever the honour of the appointment, the young journalist aspiring to fill it should consider whether he has grit enough to acquit himself creditably in an arduous campaign; whether, taking it for granted that he is a capable newspaper man with some military knowledge, he can ride like a Cossack, follow a trek like a scout, endure privation and hunger with the stoicism of the American Indian, advance coolly in the fighting line in face of the enemy's withering fire, and if not picked off, or wounded in the engagement, hurry away to write, to get the censor's consent

to dispatch, and to put his message, long or short, on the nearest wire for home.

Get your Message Through

Archibald Forbes was a brilliant writer. He was an artist of the pen, and in his vivid account of the second battle of Plevna, one can realise the fierceness of the onslaught. But Archibald Forbes won his spurs as a war correspondent because of his remarkable aptitude in overcoming every hindrance. From the day on which he "climbed the rickety staircase of the old *Daily News* office," and heard Sir John Robinson say, "I want you to start for Metz to-night," he recognised the paramount importance of his objective.

Whatever he did, he did quickly. He was not the man to drone out long letters about stale engagements, per mail boat or train. He blazed into journalistic enthusiasm at the crucial moment, and by swift calculation, diplomacy, skilful relay, or a mixture of effrontery and dash, and with unlimited resources at his back, invariably got his message through first.

A Night Ride

After the battle of Ulundi he anticipated Lord Chelmsford's dispatch carrier, riding fearlessly through the night, the forest, and imminent peril, with the news of victory. "The longest twenty minutes I ever spent in my life," he wrote, "was while sitting on my trembling horse in a little open glade of the bush, my hand on the butt of my revolver, waiting

for the moon's rays to flash down into the hollow. At length they came, I discerned the right direction, and in half an hour more I was inside the reserve camp of Etonganeni, imparting the tidings to a group of eager listeners." But there was no rest. Pushing on to Langman's Drift, he got through his hundred mile ride in safety, placed the message on the wire, possibly with a thrill of satisfaction, and it was read in both Houses of Parliament.

There are on the Press a thousand graceful writers; but in this feat Archibald Forbes sharply and boldly defined the difference between a jog-trot descriptive man and a smart and resourceful journalist.

Peril and Death

Many war correspondents have encountered peril, and risked death, in the interest of the papers they represented. MacGahan, in the Russo-Turkish War, declined to seek cover from shrapnel shot, saying, "Lightning never strikes twice in the same place." Edmund O'Donovan, who prophesied that he was "doomed to die with a spear-head the size of a shovel in his breast," was slain in the disaster to Hicks Pasha's army near El Obeid. The Soudan has ruthlessly claimed the lives of many newspaper men; and disease, maiming, or violent death was the portion of several war correspondents in South Africa. Here, too, the irony of fate crept in. Mr G. W. Steevens, who wrote: "The Soudan is a man-eater, red gorged, but still insatiable," came scathless out of the battle of Omdurman, and the peril of the desert, to die from fever in besieged Ladysmith.

Method and Philosophy

The war correspondent goes through every variety of adventure. He may be flung over a cataract, or taken by the enemy and flung into prison. There is every probability, if he gets to the front, that he will be killed in action. Yet Mr. Bennett Burleigh, the veteran war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, and Mr. Frederick Villiers, the versatile war artist, appear to be invulnerable. They go well equipped, for journalistic purposes, to war. They do not shirk danger if thrilling fact or striking picture is to be obtained; but they bring method and imperturbable philosophy to bear upon the risks and hardships of the campaign. They leave the more striking rôle of soldier-journalist to men surging with adventure, like Mr. Winston Churchill, whose hazards in the Soudan and in South Africa have rivalled those of Stanley Weyman's heroes.

An Expensive Luxury

With longer range of rifle and gun, with smokeless powder, and greater mobility of foe, the duty of the war correspondent increases in risk and difficulty. One writer asserts that a war correspondent, from the newspaper proprietor's standpoint, is as expensive a luxury as a racing stable. He has a retaining fee of £300 to £600 a year to hold himself in readiness to go anywhere, on the shortest notice, on the outbreak of hostilities; he receives a salary of £20 per week, or more, while on active service; and in case of accident (a courteous reference to his death), his wife and family are provided for by agreement.

Equipment

His equipment may be costly or otherwise, according to individual taste. One man will go through a war with a couple of suits, the fewest necessaries, and a soldier's fare. Another will require a host of things in the way of camp furniture, cooking utensils, medicines, and food. For instance, in the last Ashanti War a correspondent, who had to face a six weeks' journey through the bush, from Cape Coast Castle to Kumasi, engaged quite a regiment of bearers, who carried a Willesden tent, a Gordon patent folding table, camp bed, rubber bath, wire pillow, pair of blankets, mosquito curtains, hanging lantern, a Pasteur water filter, folding chair, specially designed clock, pocket compass, towels, table-cloths, gauze lights, and enamelled pots and pans. The stock of provisions was extensive; and the correspondent's defensive kit consisted of two revolvers and a carbine, and five hundred rounds of ammunition.

Latest Appliances

The artist goes to war with almost as many sketch books, cameras, and slides as if he were an itinerant tradesman; and in the Boer War a daring photographer "followed the fortunes of our troops in the field with his very complete sets of apparatus, and in his ardour got well to the front in many an engagement." The newspaper man, whose description is worthless if it arrives late, has already utilised the field telegraph, the telephone, and the heliograph for the quick transit of his message; he may ultimately, when the aeronaut has acquired the art of steering

through atmosphere, make more use of the balloon in action, and as I have written elsewhere, "soaring high above the seething havoc, he may be able to send his description by wireless telegraphy from his aerial outlook to his office in Fleet Street."

Agents of Progress

The war correspondent's kit costs little in comparison to the expense of his agents of progress. He has invariably to tramp through the forest in a country like Ashanti; but in desert lands he must have camels and dragomen; and in other countries he needs horses or mules, either as mounts or baggage carriers. The Cape cart, marvellous in storage capacity, was often a nuisance to the correspondent on the veldt, because of the difficulty of obtaining any animal to pull it, especially on rapid march. The war correspondent's steed, or baggage team, seems to have a weakness for knocking up when haste is imperative; and immediate replacement in remote and inaccessible region means a serious drain on resources.

Press Boats in War

The Press boats chartered by the New York journals in the Cuban War were a costly novelty in journalism. "One newspaper sent three steamers to see the bombardment of Puerto Rico, and all of them missed it. One got bottled up in Martinique, with a Spanish cruiser waiting outside to pounce on her. Another had to buy coal at £5 a ton in preparation for being chased, and just after taking a cargo of it aboard at this 'bombardment price,' had the mortifica-

tion of seeing a rival getting fifty tons from an American collier following the fleet, and discovered that the Admiral had given instructions that the Yankee Press boats were to have as much coal as they liked free of cost! The rent of each Press boat was £1,500 a month, and added expenses were prodigious—but so, too, was the sale of the papers”

The Greatest Cost

After all, the greatest expense the war correspondent incurs is in transit and telegraphic charges, inasmuch as a single message, cabled to a London office from a distant base of operations, may cost from £250 to £1,000. So enormous was the cost of obtaining the descriptive accounts of the fighting in the Boer War that the London and provincial newspapers formed themselves into economic groups, dividing the expenses of their war correspondents, and equitably sharing the news from the front. This recourse to co-operative journalism was a distinct relief to many newspapers, but others, with a comparatively poor exchequer, found the war a great tax, and one manager, nearly demented in his financial efforts to make both ends meet, made no secret of his desire that the Boers might speedily be blown to Erebus.

Zeal

Though the cost of war news occasionally staggers the newspaper proprietor, the war correspondent earns every penny he receives. He is never overpaid even on the wealthiest journals, whatever his salary. No monetary consideration compensates him for the risk

he takes. He is prompted to go into the field rather from journalistic ambition, or love of difficult achievement, than for high salary, and though every campaign develops greater obstacle and peril, he is eager, at the first suggestion of strife, to forsake the humdrum of peace for the discomfort of bivouac and the excitement of conflict.

An Ideal Correspondent

A journalist who distinguished himself with pen, if not with typewriter, on the battlefield has given his notion of an ideal war correspondent, saying: "He ought to possess the gift of tongues—to be conversant with all European languages, a neat assortment of the Asiatic languages, and a few of the African tongues, such as Abyssinian, Ashanti, Zulu, and Soudanese. He should have the sweet, angelic temper of a woman, and be as affable as if he were a politician canvassing for a vote; yet, at the same time, be big and ugly enough to impress the conviction that it would be highly unwise to take any liberties with him. He should be a competent judge of warfare, conversant with all military operations, from the mounting of a corporal's guard to the disposition of the army in the field. He ought to have supreme disregard for hostile fire when real duty calls upon him to expose himself to it, and his pulse should be as calm when shells are bursting around him as if he were watching his bosom friend undergoing the ordeal of the marriage service. He must also have a real instinct for the place and day of an impending combat'

How to Get an Engagement

The war correspondent worth his salt should also keep abreast of the quickly changing conditions of the modern campaign, and to do this, he must not only have a shrewd head, but be young, vigorous, and indomitable. A war anywhere consequently gives splendid opportunity to the young journalist. Archibald Forbes stalked into the manager's room at the *Daily News* office, and urged that he should be sent to chronicle the Franco-German war. Frederick Villiers wrote to the editor of the *Graphic*, offering his services as war artist in the Servian-Turkish campaign. Both men got their wish, and proved their aptitude. There is no reason why the young journalist should not go and do likewise. Any position worth having on the Press is worth asking for.

The License

Upon appointment, the war correspondent will discover that the conduct of a campaign is akin to the conduct of a great business. He will be obliged to prove to the military authority that he represents a responsible newspaper, that he is a man of integrity, and willing to obey the rules the Commander-in-Chief deems imperative—not to thwart the war correspondent, but to keep the slightest hint of important military operation from the foe. He cannot, in fact, act as a war correspondent until he is accredited, and secures a license worded after the following fashion :

“Mark Dyson, having signed the declaration attached to the rules for newspaper correspondents

with the army in the field, is hereby licensed to act as correspondent for the *Daily Herald* with the force under General Sir Redvers Buller."

Limitations

The license, which is signed by a staff officer, the censor for the time, authorises the correspondent to draw rations for himself and servant, and to draw forage for one horse, and is apparently highly satisfactory. The rules attached to it, however, are drastic enough to check the ardour of the most enterprising journalist. He must not go beyond the outposts without special permission; he must not send his message in cypher, and he must not send it at all till it has been dealt with by the censor, who has full power to alter or detain the communication if he thinks such a course necessary in the interests of the army. Nemesis haunts the correspondent even after his message, in whatever shape, has got through, inasmuch as it is one of the conditions of his presence in the field that a copy of his paper must be forwarded to the censor, who is lynx-eyed to discover if any tricks have been played with the cablegram, and may wax furious at the imbecility of the head-line, a product of the sub-editor's imagination, for which the correspondent at the front is in no way responsible.

At the Censor's Mercy

The war correspondent is practically at the mercy of the censor; and if he misconducts himself in any way, he is liable to be tried by court-martial or to have his license revoked. A pressman who has left home and country, with his life in his hand, determined

to do his duty to his paper, and to act honourably, has much to endure. Like the wicked parrot, he thinks a good deal; but he says little about his own treatment. He would as soon think of defying the censor, and infringing his license, as an officer would think of breaking his parole.

Hardships

Yet he needs not only a capacity for ubiquity, but the virtue of self-restraint, judging from the description given by Mr Hales of the vicissitudes of a war correspondent's life: "You hear the guns on the right at work, and the long level ripple of rifles, and you know that there is a pretty big thing on. Off you go, and you play your part; you ride near the guns, jump off your horse, pull out your glasses, and commence to make notes. By-and-by an officer rides towards you and asks politely, 'What the devil are you doing there?' You tell him; and he, nine times out of ten, says you are a fool, and recommends you to the father of evil. Off you scuttle again, for you must see the onward rush of the troops if you mean to do justice to your description. You suddenly find yourself in the thick of it without knowing why. You see fellows fall, and see them picked up and carried away. . . . Having picked up all that is lying around loose in the shape of general information, you skirmish round for details, and get hold of non-commissioned officers and privates, and so pick up many an unconsidered trifle, little acts of heroism that the men speak of while their blood is hot; next day they won't talk of such things at all."

CHAPTER XVII

ROUGH-AND-READY CRITICISM

THE axiom is generally accepted that a man need not be a great painter, or permeated with the art culture of the Royal Academy, to detect a flaw in a picture. A journeyman tailor pointed out not long ago that a full-length portrait of one of our statesman was spoiled because there were three buttons and four button-holes on the frock-coat, and a cavalry man, asked to admire the portrait of his superior officer, said it was exactly like old Brimstone Face, but he wondered why the Colonel had been painted without his sword-belt.

Art and Music

Nevertheless, it is essential that the journalist deputed to criticise work in the artist's studio, at private views, and picture shows, or notice concerts, recitals, operas, and musical festivals, should possess knowledge enabling him to deal sensibly with these engagements. Unless he really knows what he is writing about, the pressman who poses as art critic, or musical critic, is on dangerous ground, and should beware of pitfalls. The reporter who went in perturbation to a high-class concert, and boldly asserted in print that the player of the oboe solo was evidently

suffering from serious indisposition, diverted attention from his own ignorance of instrumental music by turning the laugh on the performer, but the ill-informed journalist, however smart, is not always so fortunate. He will inevitably make his paper look ludicrous by some egregious slip, and be found out

Self-concert

It is quite true that the reporter and the descriptive writer, with splendid assurance, occasionally venture on art and musical criticism, and persuade themselves, after acquiring a little art jargon, and dipping into an encyclopedia of music, that they are thoroughly qualified to "sit upon" either painter or composer, but except on obscure papers, these men are not taken at their own estimate. The art and musical criticism in the influential daily papers is done by well-paid specialists, usually altogether outside the literary staff of the office, and the *Times*, *Standard*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News*, *Yorkshire Post*, and *Manchester Guardian* do not, by incompetent or foolish criticism, render themselves so vulnerable as the editor of the evening paper who was obliged to admit that his reporter could not tell the difference between Handel's "Messiah" and dance music, and that his musical education had been sadly neglected

A Hint to Shakespeare

The dramatic critic, too, is a being quite apart from the ordinary pressman. The first-nighter was not, in years past, an authority on the literature of the

drama, on stage plays and stage technique; otherwise John Campbell, one time reporter of the *Morning Chronicle*, would not have shown his ignorance of Shakespeare, and suggested in his notice of "Romeo and Juliet," performed at Drury Lane, that the piece was too long, and that "the author, before he put the play on the stage again, should cut it down."

The Modern Dramatic Critic

But the modern dramatic critic, whether he represents a London morning paper or an important provincial daily, is admirably qualified for his task by inclination, education, training, and experience, and seems to inherit or develop "the judicial as well as the critical faculty" He is liberally paid, because his work is special, and requires much study and observation. The dramatic critic has faults; but his criticism is in the main graceful, scholarly, just, and fearless, though it will undoubtedly gain in the latter quality when the press box, the ivory ticket, and the pass are completely abolished, and the critic, paying like any other person for his seat, whatever his paper, is absolutely unfettered, and free from every sense of obligation. The theatre advertisement in the daily paper, and the journalist's pass to a private box, or to the dress circle, have now and again hypnotised the critic's pen.

The City Editor

The contributor of the money article is somewhat of a hybrid pressman. On a London daily he is the autocratic city editor; on a provincial paper he is

styled the "commercial man," and his nightly record of the doings on 'Change is subject to correction by the sub-editor. By whatever title the journalistic Cræsus—who is always telling us that money is cheap—is known, he is supposed to be immaculate. There have been one or two exceptions; but though he dabbles with pen and ink in millions, the city editor of a reputable daily paper is above suspicion.

The Money Market

In his article, he gives you every possible information—that home rails were quiet in the early hours, but rallied; that the market hesitated on foreign securities, and that on De Wet's escape mining shares again dropped. He tells you the closing price of consols, and the latest quotation of the War loan. He speaks mysteriously about par, premium, backwardation, and contango, but he does not advise you to buy the shares of a rotten company, or to become the plaything of bull and bear. He is a man of integrity. Principle, and a handsome salary, unite to make him immovable against temptation, and the most adroit financier can neither bribe nor cajole him.

As Counsellor

He declines to laud a cooked prospectus, or to recommend over-capitalised undertaking. Like the creditable inside stockbroker, he tells you the state of the market, but he does not urge you to invest. What he practically says to the newspaper reader is this: "Here are the facts; use your own judgment." He leaves to the gutter-paper the insertion of the

money article written by the needy adventurer, and flavoured by money consideration, or big advertisement, or both. When he ventures upon a few lines of comment, he does it in the public service, using the flail vigorously, and warning investors against plausible but wild-cat scheme.

The Paper's Good Name

There is no position on the Press more honourable than that of city editor; and the appointment is worthy of the aspiration of the young journalist, who has a liking for figures, and is interested in the rise and fall of the financial barometer. If he obtains it, he should remember that he holds the good name of the journal he represents in the hollow of his hand.

Sporting

There are, as indicated, many phases of work on a newspaper, quite independent of general news-gathering at home or abroad; and one of the most important departments in a daily journal is that devoted to sporting. Racing, football, cricket, and other sports and pastimes, roughly, come under the designation of "sporting" in the newspaper office, though they are placed under distinctive headings in the paper itself.

Scruples

Betting is more general to-day than even in the time of the Georges, which was notorious alike for dice-throwing and wagering; but several daily newspapers, though they give descriptions of races, refuse to print the tips of the sporting prophet, or the

figures of the latest betting. One of these journals was formerly so zealous for the uprightness of its townspeople that it declined to insert either theatre advertisement or dramatic notice, but it has backslided, and makes no further attempt to withstand public opinion.

An Ingenious Plea.

Other newspapers, making a special feature of sporting intelligence, shelter themselves under the plea that the betting prices, say, such as "5 to 1 Duke of Westminster," or "10 to 1 Nasturtium," offered and taken for the Derby, are news items, and should be given as news. Possibly the publication of the latest betting is the least of two evils, inasmuch as the betting fever, like the drink thirst, must be satisfied somehow, and the sight of the odds in the paper may save the time and money of the infatuated person who would have gone in quest of the information elsewhere.

The Wiles of the Prophet

But is there any necessity for the newspaper life of the sporting prophet? He is a smarter person than he was twenty years ago, when his presence was inseparable from alcoholic aroma, and he sprinkled his vest, and the immediate neighbourhood, with snuff, but by whatever name he signs himself out of the classical dictionary, "Pegasus" or "Bucephalus" cannot tell with any greater certainty than the average "man in the street" what horse will romp in for the "Leger," or the "Cup," or other race, and his prophecies and selections are the merest vapouring.

Sophistry

The sporting prophet is amusing whenever he attempts to explain how the horse he so boldly named for win or place made fiction of his prophecy. If, by luckiest hazard, he actually names the winner, he arrogates to himself a greater power than Calioistro. If he is quite out of it—and that is his frequent fate—he takes refuge in sophistry; and though his tip has proved disconcerting to the backer, and given the bookmaker the opportunity of chuckling, he goes on prophesying with such convincing turf wisdom that he hoodwinks the credulous till the winning numbers go up. Then comes disillusion, and a desire for revenge on the prophet.

The Turf Reporter

The sporting reporter, however treasonable may be the assertion, is at a higher level than the prophet. He does not delude anybody. He has something to chronicle; and he undergoes fatigue, and overcomes difficulty in the course of his duty. Whether you take an interest in sport, or otherwise, it is instructive to be beside him at a classic race. On a lofty stand, at the Derby, the St. Leger, or Goodwood, he watches the start through his race-glass. He knows the colour of every stable, the name of every jockey, the move of every steed, and dictates quickly and unerringly to his note-taking deputy how the horses got away in a cluster, and Rising Glass made the running, and Minstead nursed the rail, heading at the bend; but Darling stalked in on Giraffe, winning by a neck. The hubbub around, and the rush of

telegrams from gratified winners and frantic losers, scarcely stir his blood, for he is inured to the sights and sounds of the race-meeting; but he is a conscientious worker, and is both energetic and resourceful in flimsying his account of the race, and in dispatching his message.

The Scene on the Course

Usually the sporting account suffices for an ordinary race; but in big events such as are run at Epsom and Doncaster, the reporter's modest half column is pre-faced by a special description in large type. The descriptive writer, "Our Own Correspondent," may possibly mention the winner, but he generally leaves the racing and its mysteries to the expert, and gossips about the weather, and the crowd, and the smart people in the enclosure and on the stands. He produces a column of pleasant chat about nothing; still, it is a more or less faithful picture of the life on the course, and the reader who has been at the race, and returned home in good temper, and with his purse heavier because he has backed his opinion lucratively, smiles as he peruses the article, and says: "Ah, I heard that joke. It was deuced clever. I wonder how that newspaper fellow got hold of it! He puts it neatly—far better than Johnson; but then Johnson lost his money!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LADY JOURNALIST

THE news-letters sent from London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the aristocracy in the provinces, telling of the life at Court, and giving the gossip of the ball-room and the coffee-house, were often inspired and sometimes written by women. Much later, but at least thirty years ago, there were two, if not more lady reporters, with a workable knowledge of shorthand in this country. Yet the lady journalist is regarded as an innovation in newspaper life.

Possibilities

A writer, seeking to dissuade women from becoming lady journalists, says that Press work is "a mill-horse grind for men." Granting that it may be even worse for women, the possibilities of the career of the lady journalist, as vividly imagined in Robert Barr's story, "Jennie Baxter: Journalist," are great. The female is a diplomatist from the cradle. The male asserts that "there's no managing a woman," and she easily twirls the most obstinate man round her finger. The lady journalist, the most resolute of her sex, has

indomitable energy, and an essentially feminine method of treating rebuff. No obstacle deters her.

Unappreciated

The lady journalist, however, is not altogether appreciated. Some editors receive her coldly—look askance at her. If a woman brings important news of movement of fleet, of foreign intrigue, of Cabinet decision, or Government appointment, she is welcomed, and generously paid, but if she invades the editor's den merely to offer routine journalistic service, or to submit manuscript for approval, the newspaper Jove, though his throne may be dingy, inclines to the majestic, crushes the hope out of her, and wonders "Why the deuce the woman doesn't stay at home!"

An Inexorable Duty

But inasmuch as there are one million more women than men in the country, it is the inexorable duty of many women, who are without private income or secure position, to seek employment, and journalism offers a readier field of occupation than that of lady doctor, lady barrister, lady architect, or even lady costumier. If a woman elects, then, to be a lady journalist, surely she has a perfect right to follow the calling. Certainly she has already shown that she has aptitude and ability for work on the daily and weekly Press, as well as in magazine, review, and in book-making, and Sir John Leng, of the *Dundee Advertiser*, is not the only newspaper proprietor who has gallantly asserted, in humorous paradox, that "some of the best men on my paper are women."

At Work

The lady journalist has obtained salaried appointment, or occasional work, on several newspapers in provincial cities. One of the Lancashire morning journals has a remarkably energetic woman writer on its staff, and the *Sheffield Telegraph* gives constant employment to a lady journalist. But London, because of its wondrous variety of life and event, provides the lady journalist with the most frequent opportunity, and her pen is busy on all sorts of journals. The *Times*, the *Standard*, and the *Daily News* have been indebted to her for news, and some editors have confidence in her as a special correspondent not only in continental cities but in campaign.

Capable

La Fronde, the Parisian newspaper, is edited and produced by women; but the lady journalist does not, at present, direct and control any great English morning paper. Nor does she, except on purely ladies' journals, do much sub-editing; but she is capable and adept as an interviewer, correspondent, reviewer, and leader writer on particular subjects beyond the knowledge of man. Like the widow's cruse of oil, her comment, supply of celebrity chat, society gossip, and news gathered in the strangest quarters, never fails.

Endurance

It is doubtful whether a woman who gets her livelihood as a lady journalist can be classed as weak. Neither smoking nor drinking are necessary as

palliatives to her toil. She will, if imperative, work all day, or far into the night, on a slice of dry toast and a cup of tea, and cling to her journalistic object with a tenacity that no man can rival

Woman's Tongue

Shakespeare's description of a female's gift of speech :

“Do not tell me of a woman's tongue
That gives not half so great a blow to hear,
As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire.”

has a flavour of the ludicrous when one knows how powerfully persuasive is the voice of the lady journalist. Her tongue is absolutely resistless. It opens every door, and she ferrets into palace, mansion, Government department, city office, workshop, everywhere, and tells you of royalty, famous men and women, society beauty, political development, commercial enterprise, how the masses toil and live—and the newest thing in bonnets! The Russian proverb says. “Women have long hair, and no brains”, but whatever the quantity, or marvellous the fashion in which the lady journalist wears her hair, she has certainly brains beneath it

The Feminine Side

Prejudice against the lady journalist dies hard, and there are diverting stories as to her feminine characteristics. One of the funniest of these was told recently at a gathering of newspaper men. A reporter, chatting with a bishop at the Church Congress, remarked: “My lord, I have at last seen that

rara avis, a lady journalist." "Really," said his lordship, intensely interested, "what was she like?" "I thought at first," replied the pressman, "that she was a very heartless creature, altogether lacking the finer qualities of her sex. I went to a great deal of trouble to get proofs of the papers to be read at the Congress, and she did not deign to thank me." "How very ungrateful!" murmured the prelate. "Not at all, my lord," broke in the reporter; "you are quite mistaken. This morning I discovered that I had won the lady journalist's regard. She stopped me, with a lovely blush upon her cheek, and feverishly opening her reticule, said in a voice trembling with emotion 'Will you take an acid drop?' 'No, madam,' I replied with dignity. 'I thank you; but I am not thirsty!'"

Prepared to go Anywhere

Notwithstanding this humorous taunt, the notion that the lady journalist cannot move at the editor's instruction till she has packed her dress-basket, and filled her bag with hair-pins, *poudre de beauté*, scent, veils, and gloves, no longer obtains. There are women workers on newspapers who are prepared, at an hour's notice, to go anywhere, with comparatively little outfit, except a change of apparel, a pocket comb, a note-book, and a pencil.

At a Disadvantage

The popular idea is that the lady journalist is exclusively occupied in interviewing actresses, costumiers, and milliners, or in describing dress at the

Drawing Room, weddings, receptions, and evening parties, or in writing chatty articles on impossible cookery, and the strange experiences of paying guests. Many women write on these topics, and they are particularly apt in recording the swiftly changing freaks of fashion. No pressman, were he a Mantalini, could equal that fair scribe, the lady journalist, in the description of a bride's dress, or *débutante's* gown. He does not know that everything at a wedding is lovely, exquisite. He is ignorant of the poetic fact that a silk or satin robe at such a delightful function is not a garment, but "a creation." Lacking technical knowledge, artistic sympathy, and superlative adjectives, his account of the marriage ceremony and the brilliant throng is as cold as it is clumsy, and arouses the contempt and scorn of every good woman.

Daring

The lady journalist having won a decisive victory over man in this dainty department of newspaper work, is by no means content to limit her sphere to the feminine side of journalism. The woman writer, with the mind of Rienzi, and the stride of the Guardsman, is not difficult to find. "I have," said an editor recently, "a woman in my office who would not hesitate to march in the fighting line, or risk the peril of earthquake, in quest of really good facts"

Adventures and Disguises

Miss Banks, as already indicated, has described how she disguised herself as domestic servant, American tuft-hunter, Cockney flower-girl, laundry-maid, and

crossing-sweeper for journalistic purposes. A lady journalist, now industriously turning out copy in London, besought the writer three or four years ago to give her a commission to do a series of special articles descriptive of the daily lives of pit-brow lasses, factory-girls, and organ-grinders. She was eager to don disguises adapted to the conditions of these toilers, intended to work and trudge with them, and thought lightly of possible suspicion, badinage, hardship, and danger.

Nearer Equality

The lady novelist no longer curtsseys to man as a writer of fiction. The lady journalist also seems likely to get on an equality with the pressman in general work. She is, undoubtedly, of different calibre to the titled lady who plays at editing and contributing. She is willing to undertake the most arduous journalistic engagement. Given the opportunity, she is, perhaps, capable of doing what the newspaper man styles "a good slog"—the rapid transcription of a long speech, or the writing, against time, of a vivid description of an important event.

Across the Water

In New York the lady journalist already competes with the pressman in every phase of duty. That development has not yet arrived in Great Britain; but it is coming. To the sensitive it may appear somewhat revolting and unwomanly that a lady journalist should report a colliery explosion or a railway disaster but a hospital nurse goes through

scenes quite as hideous without swooning and without reproach

The Fair Competitor

The lady journalist will, probably before the next decade has run out, apply for and obtain permanent employment on the reporting staff of the morning newspaper, see her initials daily in the reporter's diary, and take her full share of work, whether it be attendance at police court, bankruptcy court, or assizes, the reporting of speeches at City Council, public meeting, or great political demonstration, the description of wedding, ship launch, or Royal visit; or the diplomatic quest of special information, and the hunting up of the latest details of tragedy and disaster. There is, perhaps, only one appointment calculated to unnerve her. If she has any tendency towards hysteria, she may reasonably be excused from chronicling the grim incident of a private execution.

The House

One of the ambitions of the lady journalist is to gain admission to the Reporter's Gallery in the House of Commons, and to report the speeches in Parliament. The pressman did not get into the House easily. The lady journalist has, so far, tried in vain. Ten years ago she made formal application for admission, and Mr. Bradlaugh, rising in his place, asked whether, if a vacancy occurred in the Reporter's Gallery, there was any order of the House prohibiting a lady from occupying it?

The Speaker's Disquietude

The Speaker replied that there was not any order of the House against a lady entering the gallery as a reporter. An application had actually been made to the Sergeant-at-Arms for admission by a lady, who stated that she was the representative of a journal which advocated the political and social rights of women. But the Sergeant-at-Arms, he thought very properly, had replied to the lady that he had no authority to depart from the existing practice. The Speaker added, with a sense of the seriousness of his own position, that it would not be right for him to interfere in any way unless he had the express and direct sanction of the House in a matter possibly leading to consequences which would be difficult, at that moment, for the House to foresee.

On the Threshold

Notwithstanding the dreadful consequences foreshadowed in the Speaker's reply, the House, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, must be of adamant to withstand the importunity of the lady journalist. Honourable members may cage high-born and lowly ladies in the other gallery as ruthlessly as the Norman knights imprisoned Rowena, and for a time deny to the fair sex the right to vote and sit in Parliament; but their attitude has no terrors for the lady journalist. Being a woman, she will have the last word, and inevitably take her place in the Reporter's Gallery.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SUB-EDITOR

A FACETIOUS journalist was once asked, "What becomes of worn-out reporters?" "They shrink into sub-editors," he replied, with a cynical smile. The sneer was scarcely justified. The sub-editor of a daily journal, whatever the position he has relinquished, to toil through the night selecting and arranging news, is of little use as a newspaper builder if he is broken either in body or mind. He must be physically strong, mentally acute, and always wide awake. He is a sort of journalistic Prometheus. Though not chained to a rock like the son of Titan Japetus, he is tied to his desk for six or eight hours nightly. He has to work like a galley slave when everybody else is in bed, and he has to exercise more forethought than Prometheus, while the printer's overseer, the insatiable vulture of the night, preys upon him mercilessly for "copy."

A Busy Den

In the daytime, the sub-editor's room, if used only for morning paper work, is deserted. The littered den, with its impassive books of reference and dusty official documents, is as silent as the Chinese city in

the story of "The Golden Butterfly." The only living thing in it is the office cat, a grave, thoughtful animal, that sits reflectively by the hearth, as if it were pondering on the subject for to-morrow's leading article. At night, however, the sub-editor's room has an altogether different aspect. Energy is let loose in it. The dingy chamber is ablaze with light, and instinct with quick thought and rapid movement. It resounds with eager inquiry and brusque instruction; it echoes with the messenger's footstep, the whirr of the telephone bell, and the hiss and clank of the pneumatic tube. Into it, torrent-like, rushes news from home and abroad, and along the private wire is flashed political secret, or perilous rumour about some banking-house, or grave charge against someone in office.

When Parliament is Sitting

The night may be an important one in the House, Parliament has been opened by the monarch. The King's Speech, read from the throne by His Majesty, has taken the place of the historic Queen's Speech, for so many years read by deputy; and special descriptions of the imposing ceremony, and of the distinguished throng, as well as the ordinary parliamentary sketch and the speeches, crowd the wires. Or perhaps the two great political parties have had a three-line whip, and gathered in strength for division. Speech after speech is ticked into the telegraph room at the chief office by nimble and untiring fingers. The debate develops swiftly into a "scene." Hon. members hurry from dinner. The House is crowded

The fate of the Government is in the balance. The Ministry have been placed in jeopardy by the cool, philosophic onslaught of the leader of the Opposition. Confidence is slowly but surely restored by the powerful reply of the right hon gentleman who is at the head of the particular department assailed, and intends some day to be Premier. The sub-editor's desk is piled high with the flimsy or special wire report of this parliamentary oratory, and as he wades through it, with blue pencil, on the look-out for solecism, or omission, or error, he may, unless he has degenerated into a human mill for grinding "copy," be conscious of a slight pulsation of political strife in his own veins.

News from Everywhere

Three or four colleagues are also up to the elbows in work. Many parcels of news have been brought in from the railway stations. Hundreds of telegrams are coming through the tube, bringing accounts of crime, disaster, and daring deed. The state of the cotton market is cabled in mystic cypher from New York. The rises and falls on the Stock Exchange—more interesting to investors than any novel—are taken from the tape, and all this intelligence adds, little by little, or heap by heap, to the vast pyramid of news on the sub-editor's table, where the story of a rescue at sea, or a description of a Royal pageant, or narrative of a pit explosion, or prospectus of a commercial enterprise, jostle the slips of paper that tell the latest value of the rupee and the Clearing House quotations for silver.

An Erroneous Estimate

It is a common notion that the sub-editor, in his nightly struggle with the mass of work, in the imperative filling of the paper with the best news, displayed in most attractive fashion to tempt the reader, becomes a surly creature of routine, devoid of ambition, and with every spark of humour hammered out of him. But this estimate of the quiet, self-reliant, somewhat sarcastic man, who doggedly arranges the daily newspaper, whether the telegraph has been broken in storm, or a political mob is howling around the office, is erroneous. It is true that his work socially effaces him. He is not, like the editor, or the reporter, seen at demonstration and banquet; but he gets relief, or diversion from hard work, even out of the maze of news.

The District Correspondent

No night passes without revealing the idiosyncrasy of the correspondent, the freak of the telegraphist, the politician's move in ambition's game, the newest phase in the effort of mankind, and perchance a flash of wit. The rural correspondent is better educated than he was twenty years ago, but in certain districts he clings to a singular style of composition. His adjectives are numerous and pathetic, and his descriptive power, in a rude way, rivals that of the great Lord Macaulay. What, for instance, could be more touching—ignoring the question of lucidity—than the following account of the weather at a notable man's interment in the North?

“It was a boisterous winter’s day, with fitful showers of rain and hail, and as the polished coffin was borne into the church, the lid was sprinkled with rain like dewdrops on a laburnum leaf, which was a great contrast to wreaths of flowers, as the deceased did not approve of them”

Fact and sentiment are alike involved in this strange reference to the deceased, but the paragraph is not quite so mystifying as the appended account of an extraordinary tragedy that recently perplexed a sub-editor in Lancashire

“It transpires that the man Kelly, who was shot by a man named Callaghan, and who was afterwards killed by a blow from a crowbar at Ballanderry, is not dead, but his condition is critical”

Curious Paragraphs

Not only is the country correspondent a vigorous writer, but he is a bold inventor of head-lines. Nothing is too trivial or too stupendous for his pen. He will send, by train or by special messenger, a paragraph with the sorrowful heading, “Sad Suicide of a Horse,” and describe how the steed, “getting the halter round its neck, tugged itself to death, in sight of its sorrowing companions” He is prolific in such startling items as “Daring Burglary in a Hen-house,” and “Awful Fire in a Tallow Factory.” The sub-editor discounts his zeal and his adjectives, altering the head-lines to “Fowl Stealing” and “Destructive Fire,” passing even the latter modified heading reluctantly, muttering meantime. “The wretched thing is

scarcely worth giving, there's only a little fat in the fire!"

Splendid Enthusiasm

Every journalist who has had experience of sub-editing on a provincial daily will readily admit that the country correspondent possesses one splendid quality—he is superior to disappointment. Whatever the fate of his "copy," whether mercilessly cut down, or savagely flung into the waste-paper basket, he writes on day after day, hoping to soften the adamant heart of the sub-editor, and to see his "stuff" in print.

If any important event occurs in his district, he thinks his opportunity of fame has come. He will scour the country-side for information, and overwhelm himself with facts. At midnight the sub-editor receives from him a bulky parcel containing, perhaps, twenty or thirty lead-pencil-written slips, telling, in impressive and grandiloquent language, how the "terrible murder" or the "fearful explosion" has resulted in loss of life, and "cast a gloom over the whole neighbourhood."

There is the stamp of endeavour, the evidence of a painful struggle with syntax, in every sentence of the long report, and the sub-editor, knowing the personal worthiness of the correspondent, does not sacrifice the man's manuscript without a feeling of self-reproach. He thinks he could have made the thing readable; but there is a terse account of the disaster already in type. The telegraph, with its winged words,

forestalled the country correspondent two hours ago.

Freaks of Genius

Before the sub-editor's task is done, he receives many shocks. It is possible that he may receive by telegram singular testimony to the remarkable vitality of human nature. For example, he may read :

"A woman, aged seventy-three, living at Atherton, is cutting a fresh set of teeth. Seven new molars have made their appearance, and the lady has experienced no pain. Visitors, with more or less dental difficulties, are frequent."

The sub-editor wonders whether the chronicler of this nonsense has cut his own wisdom teeth ; then deftly takes up another sheet of flimsy, and whistles softly. The latest telegram gives details of a narrow escape from death on the line, and contains this merciless passage :

"The man was laid with his head on the metals, but unfortunately no train passed by, or undoubtedly he would have been killed !"

The thousand-and-one duties of the sub-editor on a busy night are not conducive to poetic imagining, and he fails to appreciate the descriptive power of the indefatigable correspondent who has written :

"The glare of the fire was so great that the birds, thinking it was early morn, assembled in the trees, and warbled forth their sweetest notes."

Those Telegraphists

When the errors of the telegraphist are added to the whims of the newspaper reporter and the fine

writing of the country correspondent, it may be imagined that the sub-editor has a harassing time. The telegraph clerk, generally zealous and painstaking, puts his hand to remarkable phrases in moments of mental abstraction or caligraphic weariness. In one of Lord Randolph Churchill's speeches at Bradford, that statesman was made to say:

"We are now at the parting of the ways. Will you take the path that is full of footfalls and precipices?"

Devotion to athletics led the telegraph clerk astray, and he wrote "footfalls" for "pitfalls." His lapse, though entertaining, was not malicious. It did not defame anybody. It did not arouse so much indignation as the following message:

"The League of the Cross looks with favour upon the effort to rescue the Pope from the curse of intemperance."

This telegram, of course, should have read that the League of the Cross looked with favour upon the effort to rescue the people from the curse of drink.

The sub-editor does not often get such an exquisite morsel as "No cross, no crown" telegraphed "No cows, no cream!" but he receives many telegraphic perversions of the truth. An instance occurred some years ago at Liverpool. Mr. Justin McCarthy was made to say that he had forsaken *Liberalism* to show the electors that there was something in Home Rule. What he really said was that he had temporarily forsaken "literature" for that purpose. One of the most remarkable telegraphic slips in modern journalism contained intelligence from Cam-

bridge University, and set forth that the adjudicators of the Thirwall Prize were of opinion that the essay by Mr Hibbert, of St. John's, on "The Development of English Girls," was well worthy of publication. One can imagine the flutter of amazement this news would have created in the breast of the *New Woman*. The telegram should have read, "The Development of English Guilds"

Humour and Desperation

The sub-editor occasionally, without discovering his frolic till next morning, contributes to the reader's amusement himself. For instance, a paper that prides itself on its farming and grazing news, in giving a notice of the Smithfield Cattle Show, gravely said, describing one of the cattle classes. "The second prize in this class goes to Mr Bridges, of Hooley. He is a massive beast, somewhat wanting in form"

Clever, but not immaculate, the sub-editor sometimes trips in another direction. It is his duty to suggest subjects to the leader writers, to be familiar with every historical event since the time of Montezuma, and to be acquainted with every language living and dead, but he is, now and again, doubtful of the rendering of Latin, French, or German phrase that comes, with telegraphic deformity, in verbatim speech. The "Er—ah—aw—not quite sure, you know!" of the only classical scholar on the staff is well meant, but rather accentuates than removes the doubt. The sub-editor, in the whirl of effort at midnight, cannot devote half an hour to verifying the phrase. He

puts his blue pencil through it, or desperately lets it go, and in either case there is an editorial storm.

In Emergency

Many forces fight against the sub-editor. If not ever on the alert, he may plunge his paper into libel, or kill—in print—some man still bristling with health and strength; or inadvertently, in type, send the prosecutor instead of the felon to prison. He manages, amid many difficulties, to produce a readable newspaper, but, after all, he is best seen in emergency. On the night of President Carnot's assassination, unshaken by conflicting telegrams, he killed the French statesman, entirely on his own responsibility, for the first edition. The memoir of Queen Victoria was, of course, in type in every well-organised newspaper office; but amid the vast heaps of copy that crowded his desk night after night succeeding Her Majesty's death, the sub-editor needed every keen journalistic quality, particularly the capacity swiftly to select and attractively place the news that poured in from every part of the world.

He has grimly gone to press, determined to catch the newspaper train, whatever the fate of the Ministry, and he has, with peremptory voice, stopped the machine, and suppressed the partially printed edition on receiving in the small hours the disquieting telegram: "For Heaven's sake, don't publish the news I sent; it is inaccurate and without foundation. I shall get into desperate trouble if you do."

CHAPTER XX

WHERE THE NEWSPAPER IS BUILT

MR. CHARLES PEBODY has given a vivid picture of the sub-editor's room. "It is not," he wrote, "a place to impress a stranger very much. It is a place of litter and confusion. But there are few more interesting spots in the world than those where, under the glare of half-a-dozen gaslights, all the telegraph wires of the world are, as it were, gathered into a focus, and are whispering the transactions and secrets of the globe into the ears of the sub-editor and his assistants. All through the silent hours of the night they are listening to voices from every point of the compass—to the eloquence of statesmen, to the taunts of leader of the Opposition, to the consultations of physicians gathered around the sick-bed of sovereign, to the shouts of victory that echo from the field of battle, to the plaudits that signalise the appearance of new star upon the operatic stage, or to the cry of distress that ever and anon sounds over land and sea"

The journalist who has entered the profession with the set purpose of becoming an editor or a manager should seek experience in every department; but it is

particularly important that he should get some idea of the work in the sub-editor's room. It is here that the newspaper is built, and it depends almost entirely on the chief sub-editor and his staff whether the paper is readable or dull, whether it is popular or a drug in the market.

Politics

An editor may air almost any peculiar craze in his leader; he may be a crank on policy, and foster the derision of a community; nevertheless, the paper will be purchased for the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and attractiveness of its commercial and general news, and the cleverness and variety of its special articles. It is a singular fact that in two notable cases a Radical journal thrives in a Tory county, and a Conservative paper flourishes in a county that clings tenaciously to Liberalism. The inference is that both papers give the best pennyworth in the districts in which they circulate, and that though the readers may be eager enough for political news, they think lightly of, and tolerate or ignore, political comment, except, perhaps, during the excitement of a general election. Still, a newspaper that takes a political position, and holds it with courage, honour, and dignity, is a credit not only to English journalism, but to the national life; and no doubt Lord Salisbury was laughing in his sleeve when he said to the editor who asked his advice: "I think the best newspaper is one that has no politics whatever!"

In Charge of the Paper

The sub-editor is practically responsible for the life of the paper. It will not sell if the news is scanty and ill-served, and if the journal has no circulation, business people will not advertise in it. The newspaper proprietor is realising that he is more and more dependent on the sub-editor for the prosperity of his property, and now and again, almost in a panic, he offers a handsome salary to a man of special aptitude and long training to see his paper nightly through, from the giving out of copy to the issue of the first impression of the first edition, which is scanned for errors, and scored with blue pencil for the "lift," to make room for later news.

Crushed Out

The work is hard and unsatisfactory, however well done. News for which somebody sought insertion is crushed out, and the editor, or the chief reporter, or the special contributor, or the country correspondent, or the ordinary reader, who always imagines he has a vested interest in the paper, wants to know, with such degree of courtesy as his ancestors have bequeathed to him, why the deuce that very interesting article, or paragraph, or that important meeting does not appear, and what will be the fate of the paper if it is sub-edited in that idiotic fashion?

Discipline

Sub-editing is excellent discipline for the young journalist, especially under a querulous editor, who, after complaining that he has omitted a paragraph

of interest, or wondering why he did not inform the leader writer of the latest development of the coal crisis, asks him to write a "short" leader on cricket, or electric lighting, or the housing of the poor, though his desk is heaped with general news that must be dealt with, and he is expecting a verbatim of a political speech. Under nightly torture of this sort, with the overseer's incessant demands for "copy," the mass of meetings and paragraphs from the reporters, the heaps of telegrams from everywhere, and the ring and drivel of the telephone super-added, the young sub-editor is apt to express his amazement, in soliloquy sometimes verging on the blasphemous, that birth, marriage, or luck has placed such an erratic editor in control of the paper.

Impulse

Even the experienced sub-editor (who should be impervious to peevish notes and verbal criticism) becomes desperate now and again with perpetual pin-pricking and goading. Not many years ago a sub-editor on a morning paper, who had been pestered by blunt messages from the editor, and most unjustly charged with gross dereliction of duty, indignantly quitted his chair and the office, saying: "The —— paper can get itself out!"

A Diplomatic Missive

He was absent for a couple of hours, and lurched into the sub-editor's room at midnight, accompanied by an aroma of whisky and soda, and evolving a very awkward proposal for the ejection of the

editor; but he was pacified somehow, fell asleep, and was taken home in a cab. His colleague did his work, the paper was published as usual, and the indiscreet sub-editor sent the following note to the journalist who had stepped into the breach:

“A thousand thanks for your great kindness to me last night. I was altogether out of health. Forgive and forget”

The Mainstay

As a rule, however, the sub-editor is sober, reflective, methodical, enduring, the backbone and mainstay of the paper. The story is told, and it is founded on fact, that the overseer of a daily paper who was ordered to the seaside for rest and quiet was discovered late one night on the curbstone opposite the composing room, gazing at the lights in the windows as if the massive, dingy building were paradise. He could not tear himself away from the scene of his nightly toil. The sub-editor has no sentimental yearning of this kind; when his work is done he is eager enough to forsake his untidy room, ankle deep about his desk with rejected copy, but often the dawn breaks before he can conscientiously depart.

War and Night Duty

“I would rather starve than be a sub-editor,” said a journalist recently, commenting on his experience during the Boer War, when he was on duty in the office from nine o'clock at night till six o'clock in the morning, to deal with the latest telegrams, and see the “morning express” edition in print. The statement

was either rash or Pickwickian ; but unless the young journalist has a strong physique, a will of his own, and is impervious to criticism, he will probably be happier in some other department of newspaper work than in sub-editing.

Conditions of Toil

On a provincial paper the sub-editor begins his toil at six o'clock in the evening, and is busy, as a rule, till two o'clock the next morning. On the London morning paper he begins duty later in the evening, but he stays longer after midnight. The sub-editor is expected to work and work incessantly the whole time, practically without a break, and often without food, except such scanty sustenance as he brings. Two or three newspaper proprietors are thoughtful enough to provide supper for the staff ; but on the majority of journals the sub-editor must be his own caterer, and he is not expected to leave the office till his work is done. One wonders what the working man, with his eight-hour day, pleasantly broken with an hour for dinner, would say and do if his employer demanded that he should work eight hours "straight off the reel" on a sandwich, without quitting his bench.

The Reward

Ten years ago three sub-editors were considered an adequate staff to deal with the news to "get the paper out," even on a front-rank daily ; but the supply of "copy" has increased so enormously that on many papers the sub-editing staffs have been doubled, and are "still up to the neck in work." The pay is the

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reverse of princely, ranging from £150 to £350 a year. It is true that higher salaries are given, but only in exceptional circumstances, and for practically "body and soul" devotion to the paper—for a life, on the sub-editor's part, of self-immolation.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BRIGHT SIDE

EVERY cloud has its silver lining, and there is a bright side to sub-editing. The man who husbands his strength and goes to bed instead of to convivial haunt when he leaves the office can, if he desires, devote his forenoon to literary work, and after the rush of getting to press, the calm and quietude of his study, the writing of special article, short story, or chapter of book, gives him an interest in life. The other advantage of sub-editing is that it may afford opportunity of advancement; in fact, one of the shrewdest editors on the English Press to-day was for many years a sub-editor.

A Living Wage

In some offices the sub-editor is looked upon as a machine only fitted for the work he does; in others, the sub-editor may possibly be placed in charge of the London office, or become leader writer, assistant editor, or editor; and however great the drudgery of the editor's life, it is more tolerable at £1,000 a year than the sub-editor's, with the drudgery increased and multiplied, on a living wage.

The London Office

The London office of a provincial newspaper is a costly adjunct, but it is necessary to the prosperity of the journals published in such cities as Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin. Fleet Street and the Strand are crowded with these offices, which give occupation to many pressmen—London editors, London correspondents, sub-editors, descriptive writers, money article compilers, reporters, and telegraphists.

What is Done in It

Many of the daily journals have private wires, and over these the reports of the debates in Parliament, and of various meetings and conferences, are transmitted from the London office to the telegraph room at the chief office of each provincial paper. London letter paragraphs, special news, notices of new plays, the bulk of the money article, a hundred items of intelligence, as well as private messages of inquiry and consultation, follow each other in rapid succession on the "talking tape"

The Night's Work

Mr J J Fretwell, one of the most capable journalists in Fleet Street, has given the author a very interesting account of the night's work. "The wire," he writes, "opens at half-past five o'clock in the evening for the purposes of the morning paper. The first matter dealt with consists of that day's prices and transactions on 'Change in British and foreign stocks, mines, and industrial enterprises.

The intelligence is carefully coded before it is put on the wire, and consequently much time is saved. Other financial news takes precedence also, such, for instance, as the money article, mining and stock introduction, and the freight market. A financial leading article, or financial notes, giving in pithy form the leading incidents of the commercial day, may follow; and it is the Draconian law in a London office that the financial news must be sent through first, not only because of its intricacy, but because the commercial pages of the paper should be the first to enter the stereotyping foundry.

Gaining Time

“By-and-by the ‘Notes from the Lobby’ and the ‘Parliamentary Sketch’ begin to come in, the ‘copy’ being brought to the office by a corps of special messengers. Meantime, the London correspondent has settled down to his night’s work, and as a lull occurs, his matter is put on the wire. One’s eyes and ears are on the watch and listen continuously, for there are five instruments in the office, and at any moment important news from the War Office or elsewhere may be put on the column printer, or the Exchange tape, and by using these instruments, at least an hour and a half is gained over the news agencies, who send the same matter along the public wire. The advantage is, in fact, inestimable, especially if the news has to be dealt with editorially, or records the death of a prominent man whose obituary notice has yet to be written.

At High Pressure

“Then the late editions of the London evening papers have to be carefully gone through, and the chief sub-editor at the head office advised as to the items of news worth having. An intimation from the latter by telephone or wire as to the space available in the paper indicates to the London sub-editor how he must deal with the intelligence he thinks it needful to forward. Occasionally the news is so vital that he has to advise his colleague at the other end to make more room, and in this event great discretion is necessary. On ‘Gazette’ nights—Tuesday and Friday—from one to two columns of naval and military changes have to be wired, together with all bankruptcies, adjudications, and dissolutions of partnership in which the paper is interested. At the same time, casual contributors bring ‘copy’ on approval; and there may be special introductions of great gatherings such as the Church, or other congress, to be dealt with. In fact, the wires have to be fed at high pressure till about two o’clock in the morning, when the rush of the night is over

Not an Idle Moment

“Often there has not been an idle moment from the opening of the wires to the closing up of the forms for the country editions. I say ‘wires,’ because some offices are equipped with duplex wires, over which the messages are sent simultaneously, and these are worked by eight operators, four in London, to despatch the news, and four at the other end to write out the ‘copy.’

The "Morning Express"

"From two o'clock to a quarter-past three o'clock in the morning quietude reigns in the office. Then the London morning papers begin to arrive, and are immediately scanned for interesting news, both home and foreign, of an exclusive character, which is promptly telegraphed. The last of these papers reach the office at a quarter past four o'clock, and at a quarter to five o'clock in the morning the cream of the intelligence in the London papers, and the sporting tips, have been despatched. At five o'clock the office is closed, but reopens at nine o'clock, when the day's work begins for the evening papers having private wires.

Telephone and Tape

"Most of the London provincial offices are in telephone communication with the head office, and in case of any breakdown of the wires by storm the 'copy' is telephoned—a long and most laborious task. The prevailing idea is that 'though the heavens fall' the provincial daily must have its London news, and lately that news has been infinitely the most important. The use of the tape machines frequently enables a provincial paper to score a point if an important War Office telegram comes just as the journal is going to press, inasmuch as it is enabled to save an edition, and this happened repeatedly during the Boer War."

The Fussy Contributor

Several of the evening papers, notably the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Yorkshire Evening*

Post, give considerable day-work to the private wires, but midnight is undoubtedly the busiest time. The desks in the sub-editor's room, at the head office, are not perhaps yet clear of district news, evening service telegrams, Press Association messages, and the interminable nightly record of everything that has happened abroad. And the sub-editor, working his way through the "copy," glares at the fussy contributor, who comes up smiling and irresponsible, with a paragraph about an accident to a 'bus horse, and wonders if there is a scarcity of news—if there will be any difficulty in filling the paper!

Temperament

The comfort or discomfort of the sub-editor's position depends greatly upon his temperament. One man takes hard knocks, fighting, and sits tight after every encounter. Another resigns in disgust; a third, patient and forbearing, toils on till he is superseded or deposed, or death frees him from his nightly grapple with news. The work must be done, and there is little difficulty in getting men to do it.

Recruits

The sub-editorial rank is filled up by the strangest recruits—the youth, who will give a year's work to get into a newspaper office, so that he can learn the routine of sub-editing. The "printer's devil," who has picked up all his knowledge in the composing-room, knows the various sizes of type, and how many "sticks" there are in a column, develops into a useful sub-editor, practical and steady-going rather than brilliant. He is worth coaching, rather than the son

of a doctor or bishop who is sent into the room to "see how he likes journalism," and soon comes to the conclusion that the work is irksome and disappointing.

The university man, capable of writing a readable leading article or reviewing a book, is useless as a sub-editor till he has been trained, and his patience is invariably exhausted in the ordeal. He has no more notion of dealing with news than an octopus. He cannot cut it down, display it, or arrange it. He gets long press messages, general evening telegrams, and local "copy" into inconceivable tangle, and leaps wildly about the office with stockinged feet. How is it that the Oxford man cannot work comfortably till he has, like "Fred Bayham," discarded the bulk of his attire, and taken off his boots?

Contempt

The broken-down minister, the unappreciated actor, the unfortunate tutor, and the irrepresible man who once had a business in the city, have all tried sub-editing, but the most capable sub-editor is fashioned out of the newspaper reporter. There is, of course, an exception to every rule. The reporter, coming into the sub-editor's room with a cigar in his mouth and a handful of "copy," has rather a contempt for the silent, apparently impassive man, who discourages conversation and keeps his blue pencil methodically moving whoever enters or quits his den; but the reporter called in, as he is occasionally in some offices, to assist in sub-editing, quickly changes his opinion amid the heap of work thrust upon him. He hopelessly wonders how he is to get through the "infernal

stuff," and escapes to his own free-and-easy duty at the earliest possible moment

The Policy of Secretion

Now and again the reporter-sub-editor, called upon in emergency, is either overpowered by the rush of news or deals with the matter in erratic fashion. A humorous freak is recorded of a reporter who acted as sub-editor for one night only. This gentleman, an exceedingly capable pressman in his own department, had no idea of sub-editing. He sent out a few paragraphs by messenger, or pneumatic tube, to the printers, then shuffled the "copy" about on his desk till he could make neither head nor tail of it. Still, he gradually reduced the heap of news, and his colleague imagined that he had learnt the art of sitting still, and was buckling to the work, but by-and-by the foreman rushed into the room in a fury, and said:

"Why the —— don't you send in the district news? It's nearly midnight, and I haven't got a quarter of a column."

The pressman had received in news parcels and by telegram nearly four columns of matter—and the bulk of it was secreted beneath his desk!

Good Material

The reporter with "his head on," to quote a newspaper man's expression, has, notwithstanding the freak of the secretive pressman, the making of the best sub-editor. He knows the kind of reading the public want. He is a quick worker, and with a little direction he is equal to any emergency either in news

supply or in getting to press. But the capable reporter is chary of becoming a sub-editor. If he is caught in the spider's web, in the maze of news, he may—possibly weary of reporting—reconcile himself to his new position, but for a time he is like a caged bird.

Adaptability

Fortunately for the newspaper reader, it is a wise provision of nature that a man can adapt himself to anything. One sub-editor, who had for years been engaged chiefly on district intelligence, was recently instructed to deal with the wire "copy" of the Parliamentary debates, and spoke, with tears in his eyes, of his "beloved news parcels," henceforth to be consigned to another journalist's tender mercy. An editor, who ought to know better, lately confessed that he was happiest as sub-editor; and a journalist who gained some repute as an author, was so affected on quitting the sub-editor's chair that he dropped into poetry, and left the following pathetic verses on his desk:

Farewell, Corrective "Readers," who
 Espy the errors others make,
 How many a morning but for you
 I should have rued the night's mistake.

Farewell, Compositors or "comps,"
 With nicknames like familiar snubs,
 For caligraphic quibs and pomps
 Of editors, reporters, subs.

Farewell, farewell, oh, "private wires"!
 That knit us with the busy "Fleet,"
 That 'lectric tic which never tires,
 That talking tape a thousand feet.

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That tape which talks the Latest News,
The "London Letter," "Weather," "Court,"
A "leaderette," with "leaded" views,
Or breach of promise case report

The special of the Premier's speech,
The fashionable marriage too,
And bridegroom's message to beseech
A printed marriage line or two

Farewell, machines that shake the floors,
And stereotyping fumes and noise,
And rattling windows, banging doors,
And telegraph and printer's boys

CHAPTER XXII

THE MAKER OF OBITUARIES

THE staff of nearly every daily newspaper includes a quiet, observant person who is familiarly known as the "undertaker," and he has the melancholy task of preparing the obituary notices of distinguished or notorious people before they are dead. An emperor, statesman, explorer, or New Woman may die at midnight, or at two o'clock in the morning. So suddenly has the mystery of death come, that there is only a few minutes' interval between its ruthless visit and the issue of the paper, yet the next issue of the daily journal gives one, two, three, or more columns telling you where the distinguished person was born, how he or she strove, achieved, and died.

The work is occasionally done swiftly, and at great inconvenience, by the sub-editor on duty. For instance, on the night of the death of Hugh Conway, the author of "Called Back," the chief sub-editor of a daily, though worried with the news on his desk, wrote a notice of the novelist's career, nearly a man in length, in an hour, the printer's boy taking copy slip by slip to the compositors.

Individuality

But, as a rule, the literary "undertaker," the specialist, or the reporter has anticipated the event. In some newspaper offices the reporting staff is responsible, at all events, for the memorial notices of prominent local men. "The plan of requisitioning the services of the reporters is," contends one writer, "the best, as many of the personal characteristics of the subject which have impressed themselves upon the reporter's notice are quite unknown to the specialist; and it should be borne in mind that the most readable and interesting obituary is not that which teems with dates of appointments, but that which deals with the individuality of the person."

In Type

Whoever does the work, it is, in a well-organised office, done systematically, and the sub-editor, if he wishes to avoid anxiety, keeps in touch with it. In that case he knows that the memorial notice of this king or that bishop is complete in manuscript ready for the printers, or is already in type; and immediately he receives the telegram containing authentic intelligence of the death of the sovereign or prelate, he has merely to preface the long account with an expression of regret, and an indication of the time and place of the sad event, and rush it into the paper, on the best page available if any of the formes are locked up.

Up to Date

The system that enables the newspaper "undertaker," or reporter, to keep pace with the time and

events is a simple one. He has an indexed list of great people, of those who are ever springing into fame, and of leading local men. He collects from "Who's Who," from this or that encyclopedia, and from books, magazines, and newspapers any interesting facts relating to their lives. He is provided with a pigeon-holed cupboard arranged alphabetically, and in this receptacle he places envelopes containing the rough outline or the already written account of the career of this or that celebrity. It is the journalist's duty to keep these packets up to date, to note that the monarch has loosened the reins of despotism, that the Prime Minister has made a new departure in policy, that the inventor has wrested another secret from the grasp of science, that the author has written a new work, and that the painter has given evidence of greater genius. It is his province in the office of an influential daily paper not only to prepare the material, but to commission, under the editor's direction, the writing of obituaries.

The newspaper accounts of the lives of kings and princes, and of notable men in religion, politics, science, and literature, are invariably written by clever pens. Indeed, the enterprising editor never thinks of the cost if he can secure the service of a notable writer for this purpose. A very large sum was paid by an English journal for the obituary notice of the late German Emperor, and one journalist had a novel experience of an editor's daring in trying to secure the best work for the most money. As far back as the eighties this editor wrote to Sir Theodore Martin, requesting him to prepare a notice

of the Queen's life, on his own terms. Money was no object. Sir Theodore was at liberty to fix any price he chose, but he said he was fettered by honour, and declined the tempting commission. The editor, however, though politely snubbed in one quarter, succeeded in another.

The Tribute to Queen Victoria

The trouble and expense of producing the obituary notice of an exalted personage was indicated, even to the ordinary reader, by the Press tributes to Queen Victoria. The *Times*, *Standard*, *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Yorkshire Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, *Leeds Mercury*—indeed, every journal of any note in the kingdom—contained page after page descriptive of Her Majesty's homely personality, lofty mind, great influence, and remarkable industry. These memorial notices were not rough-and-tumble journalism; they were literature—thoughtfully and gracefully written estimates of a good woman's life, and of the empire's progress during her reign.

Inevitable

Lord Salisbury, and many other distinguished men in England to-day, know perfectly well that in the offices of the daily journals "the story of their lives from year to year" is being steadily prepared. An irascible person might naturally blurt out that this anticipation of the inevitable is an outrage on good taste, but it does not disturb the equanimity of a well-balanced mind. Even a statesman, however astute and diplomatic he may be, cannot hoodwink

Fate Death is not amenable to diplomacy, like a foreign power; and he must submit to it with what balance of grace his policy has left him in life's account. He knows that he cannot control the political situation when the autocratic King comes; but he may be of Shakespeare's opinion that "the sense of death is most in apprehension," and, imperturbable in great crisis, consent, like Harriet Martineau, to write his own obituary.

The Fortunate Prince

Except in rare instances, newspapers speak gently of the dead. It seems a pity that the ruler, the statesman, the pioneer, the man of mark in any calling, should not be able to read the nice things written about him before his exit. Possibly he has some curiosity on the point. Lord Elgin certainly had, for just before he expired, he whispered: "I wonder what the *Times* will say of me?"

King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, was more fortunate than Lord Elgin. During his severe illness a quarter of a century ago, his recovery appeared hopeless. Every newspaper had a sketch of his career in type, and acting editors were in a flutter of expectancy for the death announcement. But the Prince, to everybody's delight, recovered. When convalescent, he wished to see what estimate the newspapers had really formed of his character and life. Accordingly, the printed slips of the most important obituary notices were sent to him in a scrap-book, and His Majesty treasures that book as the most unique volume his library contains.

Dead in Print

Lord Brougham had an opportunity of reading his obituary notice. It is said that he prompted the false news of his own death in a spirit of grim humour, suspecting that his career would be subjected to strong criticism. Nor was he disappointed. Since then many men, besides Robert Louis Stevenson and Viscount Milton, have had the privilege, owing to the impetuosity of newspaper enterprise, of reading the startling announcement that they were dead. Sir Claude Macdonald, the British Minister at Peking, was frequently killed, in print, during the recent Chinese rising, and the kindly notices of his career that appeared in the English newspapers must have been very gratifying to the plenipotentiary. Nor could he reasonably complain of the pathetic references to his death. They were exquisite proofs of what vivid imagination can achieve, and were productive of mirth rather than sadness.

The Effect

The tendency of the obituary writer is to the extreme. A pressman who made this peculiar branch of newspaper work a speciality, had the boldness to assert that it did not tend to melancholy. "My occupation," he wrote, "has no depressing effect whatever on my countenance, and at social gatherings my laugh rings out the loudest and merriest." Another maker of obituaries, however, has been unable to find any frolic in his employment. He has grown old and grey in scraping together records of life and death. Even his pleasures have a flavour of duty.

He spends his leisure in collecting material for his own obituary notice, and finds his chief recreation in attending interments!

The Overseer

The sub-editor, who must get his paper to press in time to catch the newspaper train, now and again shows scant courtesy to the literary staff, and has even dared to hold over a leading article rather than imperil the dispatch of the first edition; but however imperious, the sub-editor is obliged to reckon seriously with the overseer. The overseer is a big, hard, stern man, capable of handling a vast mass of manuscript, and the heterogeneous staff of compositors or type-setting machine hands, who put the news in type. He is laconically respectful early in the evening, but as the night hours go by and the copy heaps about him, he begins to snarl and becomes ferocious. In fact, he seldom goes through his midnight fever of getting to press without desiring to murder the chief sub-editor.

In the Swirl

The sub-editor is determined that all the news, however late, shall go in the paper. The overseer resorts, possibly, to discourteous language, stamps and shouts: "It's no use sending the —— stuff to me! We've columns too much. I winna, canna, shanna set it."

If the sub-editor wishes the paper to appear, he will constitute himself rather a spectator than a critic of the overseer's rage, which is simply the paroxysm of an over-wrought system, and a safeguard against

apoplexy. The man has, very likely, during the night been irritated by every department. The local "copy" estimate has probably been far exceeded, the sub-editor has been obliged to force in special news, and the editor has given instructions for the insertion of an important contribution, on which his leader is based. The overseer is at his wit's end. To taunt him is madness. He glares at you, and swithers away in a fury.

Out of the Crisis

The half-hourly measurement shows that there is altogether too much matter in type on the galleys, and the news supply is still prodigal—it is pouring in on the public and the private wires. Notwithstanding his fierce threat the overseer continues to give out imperative "copy" to the type-setters. Whatever the state of his galleys, he must complete the leader, the London letter, the domestic and foreign summary, and get in every line of the big disaster or tragedy that will be the chief feature of the issue. The men begin "making up"—placing the matter in column for imposing in page—when the sub-editor quietly comes to the rescue. He places a "lead" on this or that matter, indicating that the meeting, descriptive article, picture notice, or local news may be held over for the next go—for the town edition. The formes are locked up. The odour of stereotyping wafts through the office. The printing machines get to work—and the overseer is no longer a tornado: he is a man.

Through Fire and Water

But the overseer is never estimated at his true worth. A martinet he may be—he must be; but he is devoted to his paper, and will go through fire and water for it. Of this fact an example was given a few years ago in the office of a Northern daily. It was midnight. The nimble fingers of the compositors were skipping madly in and out of the type boxes, the correctors were busy on the revises, there was the hurry of feet, the rattle of side-stick, the bustle of locking up the first news formes for stereotyping, when the place was suddenly enveloped in smoke, and there was the cry of "Fire!"

"—— the fire! We must get to press!" growled the overseer, giving out the latest bit of intelligence, "New York Prices," to the compositor who was at his desk side.

Forme after forme was prepared for the machines with the celerity that comes from method and experience, but the adjoining building was undoubtedly in flames. There was the shout of people, the clatter of horses' feet, the rumble of the fire engine; then the rush of men up the staircase, the bursting open of the printing office door, and the hurried entrance of two firemen, dragging a hose.

The overseer sprang from his seat, confronted the intruders, and asked: "What the —— are you doing?"

"We're going to play on the back of the building," replied one of the firemen, amazed at the foreman's anger.

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“Then, hang you, play somewhere else!” shouted the overseer, trying to shoulder them out.

“But the place is on fire!” persisted the men with the hose pipe. .

“I don’t care if the city’s on fire—we must get to press,” blurted the foreman savagely; and he did, though the water from the leaking pipe stood in pools on the office floor, and the windows were ruddy with the glow of flame

CHAPTER XXIII

THE EDITOR

WHEN Milton wrote about the "Dread fury with the abhorred shears," he was no doubt thinking of the maddened sub-editor, running, scissors in hand, round the office at midnight in search of matter to fill up some unexpected gap in the paper. When one of our statesmen, irritated at the publication of a Cabinet secret in a London daily, spoke scathingly of "that Sphinx of the Press," he no doubt referred to the editor, who kept his own counsel, and declined to give up the name of his correspondent. The sub-editor is a man of effort, dogged or impulsive. The editor, though he has no light task, in control, direction, and actual work is an epitome of dignity.

Old and New

Amarinth, in "The Green Carnation," says: "Newspapers are very enervating. I wonder what a journalist is like? I always imagine him a person with a large head—with the particular sort of large head, you know, that is large because it contains absolutely nothing." This imagining, senseless though it sounds, is not altogether a satire. There are to be found on our newspapers editors with large

heads containing absolutely nothing, slovenly men with brains devoid of ideas, and apparel more or less without buttons, but the old-fashioned, snuffy, shuffling editor is dying out. He only lingers in some remote country office, where he patches up his leading articles from any source except his own mind, and the paper goes to press somnolently once a week, but the editor of a modern daily is an altogether different person

Qualities

Whether his head is large or small, he must have something in it. The thirst for news is so insatiable, and newspaper competition so keen, that the editor of a morning or evening journal must have energy, resource, culture, initiative, and commercial instinct. Not only has he "to collect and keep together contributors, to settle with them the line that shall be taken upon all the questions of the day, and to live a good deal in society," but he has to keep cognisant of the world's life, to take a political and social part in it, to show remarkable sagacity in the swift acquisition of important news at any cost, and to spend six or eight hours nightly in his own den. It is his duty to get the best possible work out of his literary staff, to guard his paper from folly of policy or expression, to steer clear of libel, to alter, suppress, and revise till he has produced a newspaper that is creditable to himself and attractive to the reader.

Indifferent to Humour

The daily paper editor is inclined to become staid and serious in his perpetual endeavour to please

every condition of reader, and to comprehend the political crises that in these eventful days arrive and depart so quickly. Lord Beaconsfield, in his novel, "Endymion," tells us that "a country like England, accustomed to fogs, and possessing a powerful middle class," requires grave statesmen. The country also requires grave editors—and she gets them. The editors of our great dailies are, almost to a man, indifferent to humour. The contributor is continually disheartened and dismayed to find that his wittiest sentence, or his most brilliant metaphor, or his smartest joke, has been ruthlessly struck out; and it is possible that in the midst of his disappointment and rage, he may receive a curt note in this phrase:

"DEAR SIR,—I beg to remind you that ours is not a comic paper —Yours truly, THE EDITOR."

Humour, in newspaper control, has not appeared except with fitful spark since the eighteenth century, when the editor of the *Daily Courant* wrote: "I will give no comments of my own in this paper, as I assume that other people have sense enough to make reflections for themselves"

Overcome

The editor of an English daily escapes nowadays the indignity that was meted out to John Walter, the founder of the *Times*, when he was sentenced for libel "to stand for an hour in the pillory at Charing Cross," but his position is not always an enviable one. Charles Lamb, in one of his essays, gives an enchanting description of editing in the office of the

Morning Chronicle, with its rosewood desks and silver inkstands; but Charles Dickens, though his office appointments were luxurious, was not so enamoured of newspaper work. He wrote the prospectus for the establishment of the *Daily News* with enthusiasm, and set forth that the paper "would be kept free from personal influence or party bias, and devoted to the advocacy of all rational and honest means by which wrong might be redressed, just rights maintained, and the happiness and welfare of society promoted." But his Utopia bristled with thorns, he occupied the editorial chair nineteen days, or rather nineteen nights, then resigned, tired to death, and quite worn out.

Tenacious Men

Editors like Mr Delane, and Professor Chenery of the *Times*, and Mr Mudford of the *Standard*, were of different journalistic stamp. They made no fulsome promises, but were shrewd in news-getting and in policy, and not easily turned from their purpose. They entrenched themselves, as it were, in an honourable and responsible position, and allowed neither difficulty nor opposition to weaken it. Mr. Delane, brilliant as a journalist, and the most famous editor of the *Times*, was not a writer, but "he was a man of keen common sense, of clear, decisive intelligence, with the habits and manners of a man of the world, and with an eye that detected a false note in an article, a heightened expression, or an inconclusive argument, as a man with a good ear detects a false note in music. He was to be found in his room from ten o'clock at night till three or four in the morning,

and with the exception of an hour for a canter in the Park, for a chat with those whom he happened to meet there—a Cabinet minister, an ambassador, a man of letters, a bishop, or a leader of Opposition—all the rest of his day was spent in preparation for the work of the night; at his club, in the lobby of the House of Commons, or in the society of men whose minds and wills guided Senates and controlled Cabinets.”

A Precarious Position

The conditions of several of our daily papers have recently changed so quickly, either with regard to politics or to financial holding, that the position of editor has become somewhat precarious. He may, to some extent, safeguard himself by agreement; but he cannot honourably maintain his position on a paper whose proprietary is not at one with him in politics.

Dr Parker

The work, as Dr Parker discovered in his week's editorship of the *Sun*, is not easy. That zealous divine wrote: "This is only my second day of editorship, and already I feel that something should be done for editors all over the world. Talk about the sweating system! Talk of shorter hours for shop assistants! I should not be far wrong in thinking that the most hard-worked creature in existence lived in a perpetual Bank Holiday compared with the editors of daily newspapers."

Yet no one interfered with Dr. Parker's policy. He had permission to convert the journal into a religious newspaper for a week, and in two days was heartily weary of his self-imposed task. What would

have been his mental condition if he had been obliged to decide, for conscience' sake, on a line of policy that he knew would arouse the ire of his proprietors ?

A Convenient Leading Article

Probably Dr Parker would have wished himself in the happy position of the editor of the local paper who asked Dr. Wallace to supply him with an article on "a light theological topic" The article, headed "The Relations between the Presbyterian Churches and Modern Thought," was duly sent in, and, to the amazement of the editor, made forty columns of type. "Both editor and printer were puzzled how to get rid of it They began by using it in pieces, and whenever the printer said to the editor, 'We've got no leader,' the reply was, 'Eh, mon, just sneek off about a column and a quarter o' Wallace' In this way the contribution was used, first working down from the beginning, then upwards from the end"

An Awkward Edict

Whatever the vicissitudes of the English editor, he has the advantage of his Celestial comrade of the pen, inasmuch as the Dowager Empress of China, during the recent *coup d'état* at Peking, issued the following embarrassing edict: "As newspapers only serve to excite the masses to subvert the present order of things, and the editors concerned are composed of the dregs of the literary classes, no good can be served by the continuation of such dangerous instruments; and we hereby command the entire suppression and sealing up of all newspapers published within the Empire, while the editors connected

with them are to be arrested and punished with the utmost severity of the law." Many a man trounced in a newspaper in this country would, no doubt, rejoice if the editor were beheaded; but such a fate is not permissible in English law, and the editor, on one journal or another, contrives to live, and to wield considerable power among us, notwithstanding the peculiar difficulties that surround him

Commiseration

A distinguished foreigner, introduced to a lady in a London drawing-room, on ascertaining that she was an editor's wife, said: "Madam, you have my profoundest commiseration." But the editor has compensations. There are newspapers on which he is the absolute dictator of policy, and on which he can, by the use of a competent staff, keep aloof from drudgery. Drudgery is rather the portion of the assistant editor, leader writer, sub-editor, and reporter, than of the editor. The editor-in-chief of an important daily paper sees that his staff does the bulk of the work. He writes little, but he has, of course, great responsibility and considerable supervision. His duties are onerous, but most men are prepared to accept responsibility at a salary that runs into four figures, and in the case of the *Times* editor, equals a Cabinet minister's.

What the Editor does

The editor moves in a vortex of conflicting interests, and perhaps fails now and then to accurately gauge the motives of the people with whom he comes in contact; but he gives fair play, and recognises good work. He puts his mind and physique

into his own duty, and fills a difficult position honestly and fearlessly. He is zealous for his party, works unstintingly for many good objects, and bears himself like a Saladin against shams. Though would-be contributors, who have tried in vain to pass the janitor on the stairs in their earnest "wish to see the editor," may think otherwise, he really exercises a great deal of self-control and patience. Threatened with action for libel, and even with personal chastisement, he is obliged to be a master of suavity and defiance. He prefers to exercise the former quality, because it is essential to his work that he should keep a quiet mind, but if he cannot soothe his exasperated foe with rhetoric, he dares the ruffled individual to do his worst.

Conscientious and Painstaking

And of all men, the editor is most conscientious and painstaking. One editor, it is true, on applying for a new appointment, was asked: "Where should you be when the paper goes to press?" and he replied, "In bed!" But invariably the editor does not quit his post till the paper is on the machines, and he can go home at dawn with a clear conscience. In fact, the writer knows an editor who reads almost every line of the first edition, in proof and after it is printed, and turns out the latest edition as absolutely perfect as thought and energy can make it. He is the friend and counsellor of his staff and contributors, and probably sat for the following pen-and-ink sketch; "There is something pathetic in the spectacle presented by the editor, who has discovered, or believes

he has discovered, some spark of merit in a contribution which reaches him from the outside. He talks about it all day. Then he makes changes which his wisdom suggests, and prints the manuscript, with the result—in the majority of cases—that he gets abused for mutilating it.”

CHAPTER XXIV

NEWSPAPER ENGLISH

THE editor has crotchets—what man is without them? It is said that neither Sir John Jaffray, the proprietor of the *Birmingham Post*, nor his bosom friend from the North, had in middle life lost entirely their Caledonian turns of speech, and on one occasion the privileged chum corrected Jaffray's pronunciation, severely remarking, "Ye shouldna say Aapril; ye should say Aprile!" The editor, as a rule, is correct in his pronunciation, but he is occasionally superior to the dictionary. To him the King's English is a mere phrase. He insists on the use of Editor's English. He has given instructions that the word "while" must be written for "whilst," that "jeopardy" was quite inadmissible—it should be "jeopard"; that "staunch" should be spelt "stanch," and that "no fewer than" must always supersede the stupid phrase, "no less than" in his columns. He has even asserted that there is no such word as "reliable," and that the word "transpired" is a vulgarism.

Handwriting

The editor has perhaps only one heinous fault—he cannot or will not write legibly. An editor once

turned out a leading article, contending that all great men, like Horace Greely, wrote a wretched fist, and his own manuscript was almost undecipherable—consequently he was a great man himself. On the night of the first Home Rule debate, another editor went to the House of Commons, wrote a leading article criticising Mr Gladstone's scheme, took his copy to the London office of the paper, gave instructions that it should be sent by private wire to the head office, and strode jauntily away with a friend. Half an hour afterwards the West End clubs were scoured in frantic hope of finding that editor. The telegraphists at the London offices, unfamiliar with his erratic penmanship, could not make out his copy.

Fireworks

The editor's vigorous and graceful comments were so terribly mutilated on the wire that the chief sub-editor at the other end could make neither head nor tail of the leading article. As transmitted, it was nonsense, and he sensibly withheld the article, writing a descriptive summary of the debate, and using a "stand-by"—an emergency article—in its stead. The editor, on returning to the office, was furious, till he heard the chief sub-editor's explanation, and saw the "copy." Then he apologised, and went home sadly. So erratic was his handwriting that it splashed and sputtered over the paper like a pyrotechnic display. He was known among the compositors as "Fireworks," and they received extra payment for setting his manuscript in type.

Chances

The salary of the editor varies perhaps more than that of the journalist lower down the staff. It may be any sum from £200 a year on a county paper to £1,000 a year on a provincial daily, or from £2,000 or more on a London morning paper. The young journalist has perhaps only a remote chance of becoming editor of the *Times*, but he may possibly get the editorship of a provincial paper, and ultimately even sit in the editorial chair of a London daily; indeed, it has been facetiously remarked that the journalists on a morning paper recently established in town "are all editors!"

Opportunity

The pressman is unwise if he curbs his ambition. The responsibility of an editor's life need not fidget him till he has the opportunity of grappling with it. Opportunity is everything. If it comes to him, or if he can make it, he need have little fear about filling the position creditably. His journalistic training has prepared him for the position, and he has the encouragement of precedent.

Leader Writers

The editorial staff of a well-equipped morning paper includes from three to six, or even more leader writers, and they consult in the afternoon or evening with the editor-in-chief on choice of subject, and possibly on line of policy, if he happens to think two or more heads are better than one, and has a doubt as to his own omniscience. There is a legend to the effect

that the leaders in the *Times* are cogitated by many minds, and written, altered, and rewritten by many pens; but the line taken by even important daily journals is often decided by a chat between the editor and his assistant at the telephone.

Editorial Method

The editor of a London morning paper rather prides himself on the fact that he edited his journal (noted alike for its fearless policy and its news supply) chiefly with the help of his bicycle and the office telephone. Another editor, in charge of a provincial daily, has been nicknamed the "Mountebank." His literary staff are under the impression that he turns a somersault on the office steps and alights in his study at home two miles away. Anyhow, he has no sooner left the editorial department than he is ringing somebody up at his house telephone. A third editor was known for years by the soubriquet, "Anything stirring?"

A Useful Query

His life was a life of interrogatory in the interests of his paper. Morning, noon, and night, his salutation in every class of society was the enthusiastic inquiry, "Anything stirring?" The expression enabled him to gather a great variety of news. It was also his staple remark in editing the paper. "Anything stirring?" he would ask, by telephone, from his snug library at home; and the acting editor at the office would reply: "Yes; I think we might deal with the Chinese business in the long" (the first leading article).

Topics

"Oh! anything new stirring?" "The dispatches are coming in." "Throw any light on the bungling?" "No, they are very guarded; still, they might yield something." "Well, let Humphrey deal with the thing. He could give the Government a dig for its feeble diplomacy. Don't you think so?" "Yes; that, and the Russian attitude, should give him plenty of scope." "All right. Send proof of leader by messenger. Stay; let copy holder read it to me at eleven. Anything stirring for a short?" (short leading article). "We might get a short or two out of the beer scare and the proposed twopenny tube."

Suggestions

"Hum! I'm afraid the one is stale, and the other premature." "What about the revelations in the legal profession?" "Yes, that would do. Some of the lawyers are cultivating a taste for imprisonment. Evans had better write the short. Tell him to be careful; it's a bit ticklish." "Have you anything to suggest?" "I thought of the gas profits, the overhead electric system, juvenile smoking, the need for more thorough commercial education, and the way the King's framing!" "Thank you. I think we shall do admirably. Which article would you like for a stand-by?" "Oh, any except the gas profits—use your own judgment." "Very good, sir."

An Authority

The free-and-easy instructions given to the acting editor indicate that editing is based on common-

sense, and a knowledge of public affairs. They also indicate that the leader writer, whoever he may be, has given attention to speciality—that he is an authority on foreign crisis, domestic legislation, social questions, trade, finance, science, literature, or art. The impulsive editor who insisted that his leader writer, though ignorant of Mr. Gladstone's policy, should comment upon it, because he could start fair without prejudice, no longer obtains

He does his Best

The leader writer, as a rule, has the advantage of congenial topic, whether it be war, military reform, bi-metallism, or the fortunes of the Ship Canal. He may be able to write "long" or "short" leading article leisurely after late dinner, or be called on at midnight to criticise important debate, or comment on unexpected event, or great disaster; but whenever, and on whatever, he writes, he puts his best work into his leader or leaderette, though the column, or quarter column of bourgeois, may not strike the reader as a very brilliant production.

Erratic Writing

Now and again, indeed, the leader writer may excite ridicule. On the *Times* staff there is a tradition that an error is never allowed to creep into the paper; but other journals are not so immaculate. Not long ago a leader writer gravely asserted that a pit disaster was caused by excessive ventilation; and in another "short," on the death of a notable man, appeared this exquisite paradox:

“The announcement of his death will be the first intimation of his birth to thousands of our readers”

True to his Word

The leader writer is not often carried away by his subject, but this calamity has happened once or twice, and some years ago an enthusiastic writer startled the public with a leading article over two columns in length. He evidently had a misgiving that he had gone beyond the limits of prudence and patience, and he was considerate enough in a footnote to state that he did not intend to inflict such a long leader on his readers daily. He was either true to his word, or broke the heart of the management. Anyhow, the paper never appeared again.

The Assistant Editor

On the London morning papers each sub-editor keeps somewhat rigidly to his own department, home or foreign, and the assistant editor is practically the editor's understudy, and does not often go outside the range of editorial duty. Sir John Robinson, who recently severed his connection with the *Daily News*, was for a time both editor and manager of the paper. The position, however, was unique.

Varied Duty

On the provincial paper the duty of the assistant editor is more elastic than on the London morning journal. He occasionally writes a leading article, long or short, edits descriptive articles, deals with answers to correspondents, and goes through the letters to the editor. Possibly he may also have the disposition of

books for review; and he is, to all intents and purposes, the editor's handy man—a versatile man, otherwise he could not perform with credit to himself and his paper the varied duties of research, verification, and comment that devolve upon him.

One Fault

The assistant editor has to be watchful lest he slips into a groove. He is apt to get fads about news, to accept one particular style of article, and to tolerate dubiously the introduction of any new feature into the paper. He does not, unless he is a new man, with up-to-date ideas, originate. He deals conscientiously with the matter that comes to his desk; but he clings to old head-lines, and to old styles of setting, and he believes in a paper of solid pages. He is not sufficiently fossilised, perhaps, “to bind his Bradshaws”; but he wonders what the Press is coming to when the sub-editor ventures to let “daylight” into the paper—when he breaks long speeches into cross headings and paragraphs, and gives the statesman's utterances, whatever their quality, attractive setting. As an editor, chatting recently about his assistant, said: “Oh, no, he's not afraid of work; but he's fifty years behind his time!”

CHAPTER XXV

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE London papers, except in the "silly season," when they pander to, and participate in, any craze that lets public garrulity loose, deal severely with the correspondence from the "Constant Subscriber," the "Disgusted Reader," the "Lover of Justice," and other peculiar people who have reached the psychological stage of mental aberration at which they are impelled to write to the newspapers. The provincial journals deal more kindly with these humble, pompous, sarcastic, indignant, or delirious letter writers. If they observe the conditions of the "Notice to Correspondents"—if they write on one side of the paper, and send their names and addresses as guarantees of good faith, they are likely to obtain insertion of their letters, whatever diivel they contain.

Questions

The assistant editor, or his deputy, has his patience tried in searching for correct answers to correspondents. The questions asked are not confined to the insane queries, "Is Liverpool a seaport?" and "Does upward of a hundred mean more or less than a hundred?" but range through the world's history,

and are by no means limited to the habitable globe, but reveal curiosity about the solar system and the firmament. Many of these questions are formulated in clubs, hotels, and public-houses, not with the object of spreading knowledge, but to decide bets. Otherwise it would be difficult to account for the whimsicality of such questions as :

“Does the Man in the Moon smoke?”

“Did King Solomon, who was arrayed in purple, and fine linen, get the latter from Glasgow or Manchester?”

“How long can a man breathe, with comfort, at the bottom of the sea?”

“Did Mr. Gladstone say, about twenty years ago, that Sir Stafford Northcote was a storm-bird?”

“Can you tell me in whose poem the words occur : ‘Ha’ welded strength an’ mind i’ one?’”

“What was the colour of the Queen’s bonnet when she drove to Chatsworth as Princess Victoria?”

Answers

No; the Man in the Moon does not smoke. The moon has only reflected light, and there is no pleasure in smoking in the dark.

The presumption is that King Solomon got his fine linen from Egypt, which has long been noted for its cotton crop.

A pearl diver can remain two minutes at the bottom of the sea without discomfort, owing to his abnormal lung capacity. A man in the most approved diving dress can remain below almost any length of time

with uninterrupted air supply, and untangled life line.

Yes; Mr. Gladstone, on his visit to Leeds, with the Marquis of Ripon, spoke in the Town Hall and the Cloth Hall. At the former place he described Sir Stafford Northcote as a political storm-bird.

The poem or rhyme, in which the words "Ha' welded strength an' mind i' one" appears, was published in the "Reliquary" in October, 1864. The effusion, attributed to Mr. Walter Strickland, is in the Derbyshire dialect, and the first verse reads:

"I' Derbyshire who're born and bred
Are strong i' th' arm, bu' weak i' head,
So the lying proverb says
Strength i' th' arm, who doubts shall feel,
Strength o' th' head, its power can seal
The lips that scoff always "

A writer, describing the Queen's visit to Chatsworth, when Princess Victoria, in 1832, says: "She looked most engaging in a pink bonnet"

Infinite trouble is taken to give a correct answer even to the most absurd question, and the journalistic searcher, consulting the newspaper file or book, reference library, expert, oldest inhabitant, every available source for the desired information, feels a thrill of pleasure when he gets it, for it is a point of honour with him never to be beaten or disheartened by any question, however difficult or perplexing. Only in rage or despair does he write: "Don't know," or "Consult a Dictionary."

Queer Correspondents

But the "Letters to the Editor" unsettle him. They are ceaseless in number, dreadfully prosy, or wildly dictatorial, and possibly libellous. Their writers are angry if every line does not appear; but the paper is not elastic, and must contain news and advertisements as well as "Letters to the Editor." Consequently the letters are cut down, often ruthlessly, though one editor, who makes a feature of these effusions, insists that three or four columns of his space should be devoted daily to the project, self-advertisement, or repining of any person who has an axe to grind, or wishes to see himself in print, or is possessed of a querulous spirit. The correspondent who writes gravely, informing you that he has read your paper for the past twenty years, and that his wife has eloped with the lodger, places you in a quandary; but you enter into the humour of the wag who ridicules the paragraph about the early appearance of the cuckoo, and says: "I heard the cuckoo when I was a baby in arms, and found its notes very soothing." You pity the lunatic who writes that he has a dreadful buzzing in his head, after dreaming that he saw Wodin, the God of War, who was taking a drive in a flaming chariot through the sky, and incidentally dropped the remark that the world would come to an end next Friday.

The Man with a Craze

But you have no pity for the fussy, important, indefatigable man who has a perpetual craze on such subjects as right of way, drainage, protection, bi-

metallism, decimal coinage, and the taxation of ground values. No editor can choke him off. He will not believe that the hint about the great "pressure on our space" applies to him. He sends in column after column on his pet subject, with a polite note, expressing the opinion that the matter is of the greatest possible interest to your readers, and will make an attractive feature in your "valuable paper." When bluntly told, in a two-line paragraph, "This correspondence must now cease," he bobs up serenely with a column letter on a new but even drearier subject, and he will, notwithstanding neglect, snub, and the enormous capacity of the waste-paper basket, continue writing to the papers till the ferocity of the assistant editor has reached its apex.

Book Reviewing

The assistant editor has, in some newspaper offices, charge of the book reviewing, and on the front-rank papers it develops into an onerous duty. The outsider has no idea how large is the number of books sent for review. They pile here and there in heaps, particularly during the two publishing seasons, and give a vast amount of work, not only in selection of reviewer, but in reviewing itself. The author has a distinct advantage over the business man. The latter must pay, and often pre-pay, for his advertisement in the newspaper.

Privileges of Authorship

The author can count on, at least, two advertisements gratis—the preliminary paragraph stating that he is writing a book, and the book notice, long or

short, when the volume appears. Being human, he prefers a kindly notice ; but if he is "slated" (drastically criticised), he has the consolation of knowing that "hard words break no bones," and like the enterprising trader who was kicked in public, he can exclaim . "Yes, it made me squirm ; but think of the advertisement!" Opinion differs as to whether a slashing attack, by arousing curiosity or exciting ridicule, increases the sale of, or spoils the chance of a book in the market ; but there is a touch of the sublime in the effrontery of the author who takes adverse criticism fighting, tilts fiercely at the reviewer in a letter to the editor, and thus obtains a third advertisement!

An Important Department

Miss Marie Corelli was both ungrateful and unjust in her assertion that "The criticism does not depend on the merit of the book, but on the disposition of the reviewer." The allegation might have been made truthfully twenty years ago, perhaps, when book reviewing was done by anybody about the office, or the personal friends of the editor ; but nowadays—at all events, on the leading daily journals—book reviewing is one of the most important departments of journalism. The notion still obtains that any fool can review a novel ; but books dealing with history, politics, science, art, exploration, travel, with any subject likely to add to the world's knowledge, are given out for notice with care.

Reviewers as Educators

Expense is seldom considered in securing the services of a reviewer specially fitted by study and experience to criticise particular work, and it has happened that the reviewer has not only been able to show where the author has been slovenly, or has failed, but to throw entirely new light on the subject. Even novels are criticised from the standpoint of merit—certainly not on “the disposition of the reviewer.” If a story is trash, surely the reviewer is justified in revealing the fact. He has had the tedious duty of wading through it, and his honest estimate of the book may induce other people to husband both money and leisure.

“He does not understand English, and is ignorant of the mechanics of blank verse.”

“He kindly warns us that another book will shortly appear from his pen.”

“It is possible that five tales marked with a richer, deeper vulgarity have never before been given to the world.”

These comments, taken from the book reviews of a prominent daily newspaper, were no doubt unpalatable to the authors pilloried, but they were probably appreciated by newspaper readers.

No Sinister Design

The notion, held even by some well-known book-makers, that the reviewing is done by the most ignorant or the most malicious person on the editorial staff, or by some stealthy individual seething with spite against authors, is so ridiculous that one wonders

how it survives even among the most sensitive of literary men and women writers. Neither the editor nor his assistant editor gives fiendish instructions to the effect that this or that author should be flayed alive.

Business-like

There is no intention to wreck any novelist's reputation in the polite and business-like circular sent to the reviewer :

"The editor presents his compliments to Mr. Jones, and would be much obliged if he will notice the accompanying book. The notice should not exceed half a column in length."

Mr. Jones has probably never heard of the author ; but he is an authority on the subject treated, and criticises the work conscientiously on its merit, possibly to the writer's chagrin. But Mr. Jones has certainly not been actuated by malice in stating that the book contains nothing new, and has been written upon rudimentary knowledge.

The Binding

The author, altogether unassociated with the literary staff of a newspaper, is, in fact, likely to be let down more gently than a man connected with the paper. Ten years ago, a journalist wrote a very entertaining book, which obtained many favourable notices, and gave much diversion. The reviewer on the paper to which he was attached was evidently delighted with the work, for he wrote an exceedingly fulsome notice of it, and retailed some of the best stories from it about the office ; but the notice

never appeared in print. The editor considered that it would be invidious to crack up a member of his own staff in his own paper, and another notice of the book was given, so cautiously lukewarm that it chiefly praised the binding

Other Things "For Review"

Competition in trade has become so keen that not only books but articles of every kind are sent for review—inventor, manufacturer, and merchant hoping to get cheap advertisement, and to push, with the disinterested help of the newspaper proprietor, their wares on the market. These include music, diaries, Christmas cards, soap, blacking, scent, furniture polish, sauce, a hundred articles of food, or for household use and personal wear

Dissatisfied

The most amazing instrument deposited for review at a daily newspaper office was a barrel-organ recently left in an editor's room. The printed instructions indicated how he could grind out the appropriate tune, "The Dawn is Breaking"; but the editor was not musical, and said he should prefer an organ that would enable him to grind out his leader, and get home to bed before the dawn broke—he had seen the dawn break so often that the spectacle, though picturesque, was becoming monotonous.

Honorarium

Whatever the faults of the reviewer, he is well qualified for his work. The *savant* is no longer

HOW TO SUCCEED

criticised by the novice; and the young journalist who yearns to become a book reviewer must not only reveal the critical faculty but cultivate special branch of knowledge. The payment for reviewing is generous, ranging from five shillings for a paragraph notice to two guineas or more per column, very high prices being paid for special reviews by famous pens. The book, after notice, becomes the property of the reviewer, unless there is stipulation to the contrary. In that event, on the return of the volume to the newspaper office, the editor may place it in his own collection, or in the editorial reference library, or consign it to the book parcel for gift to philanthropic institution. Anyhow, he does not, as some writers of fiction would have us believe, slink out with the work to the nearest second-hand book-stall, and turn it into money, and the money into drink, with the facility of the thirsty character in Robertson's comedy.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DAILY PAPER OF THE FUTURE

MR. WALTER CRANE says where the present century will probably develop its art most particularly will be in books, magazines, newspapers, and especially in the daily paper. He also expresses the quixotic opinion that in the future there will be no letter-press at all—only pictures. The newspaper of the future, unless it is to be an eternal disgrace to art, will be infinitely better illustrated; but pictures will never entirely supersede letter-press. The greatest painter is dependent upon words, he is obliged to give title or description to his work, whether he depicts the sunset glow like Turner, or revels in allegorical mysticism like Watts. Mr Ruskin said that sculpture is the handmaid of painting. He should have added that language is the interpreter of both.

Less Prolix

So long as the world's tongue wags, there will be letter-press in newspapers; but it will be less prolux. The Press, on the Queen's death, and at her obsequies, distinguished itself by its tact and energy in news-getting, and by the grace of its comment; but the

enormous bulk of literary matter given by the more influential daily papers overwhelmed the reader. He was surprised at the size of his favourite journal, with its bewildering number of columns, in "turned rule" mourning. He made solemn vow to read through the whole of the paper—when he could find time; but leisure is at a premium, especially in every great city. The paper containing a history of modern England for one penny was carefully put away in desk, drawer, or box, for subsequent perusal; but the opportunity has not yet come

The Terse Journal

The terse paper will undoubtedly be the newspaper of the future. The long leading article, already skipped by many busy people, will probably be superseded by leaderettes in lighter vein. The debates in Parliament will be cut down to a couple of columns, or less, or dealt with, except in great crisis, by parliamentary sketch.

A New Reporting Arrangement

Some journalists incline to the belief that the news agencies, which have made remarkable progress during the past fifteen years, will ultimately, by more comprehensive organisation, be enabled to undertake the whole of the newspaper reporting in the country, and render the maintenance of independent reporting corps unnecessary on any daily paper. The notion is not, whatever the reporter may think of it, altogether beyond the range of practical journalism.

What some Newspapers are Doing

Several daily journals formerly represented by their own staffs in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons, and at every great political meeting, are now content to get parliamentary report, and verbatim or column report of statesman's speech, from the Press Association, the Central News, or other agency. These papers depend upon their descriptive writer, in parliamentary sketch, or in bourgeois introduction to big demonstration, to give piquancy to the report, and to sustain the individuality of the paper

Descriptive Writer and Artist

The descriptive writer and the artist will be two of the most important factors in the production of the newspaper of the future. The trend of shrewd daily journalism is towards condensed reports of public proceedings, and the putting of mere local news in a nutshell. Consequently the descriptive writer and the artist will have a freer hand; and the daily journal will become more attractive if these men are equal to their opportunity.

Irritating

The descriptive writer has already shown that he is abreast of his task; but the newspaper artist is often irritating. The first pull of his picture, whether monarch's head, lordly castle, scene of explosion, or shipwreck, "comes out" satisfactorily; but when the illustration appears in the paper it arouses comment, humorous or sarcastic, both inside

and outside the office. The artist clings to detail; the pressure and rapidity of the printing machine, and the "slim" character of printer's ink, are alien to the refined reproduction of the illustration.

An Alleged Portrait

The picture is almost at every impression hideously blurred; in fact, the alleged portrait of a new Member of Parliament given recently in a morning paper was absolutely libellous. It was so battered and smudged that it gave one quite a shock; the new member had changed from a cultured gentleman on the "zinc" to an abandoned ruffian, with an eye suspiciously bunged up in the paper, in the journal that had championed his cause, and credited him with every political and social virtue.

The Art of Illustration

America is ahead of England in newspaper illustration; but our weekly illustrated papers have made gratifying progress, and are very artistic publications in comparison to the earlier issues of the *Illustrated London News*, in which, in the forties, the sketches were exceedingly crude. The *Illustrated London News* is now more creditable to British art, and the *Graphic*, *Sketch*, *Black and White*, *Sphere*, *Tatler*, and one or two other journals, keep abreast of and try to outstrip it. Competition is keen, and the outcome of striving is the production of many attractive pictures, notably of home, rural, city, and political life, and of great public events. The weekly illustrated papers are undoubtedly seeking altitude in art, and reveal a desire to adopt new process.

They give every opportunity to the smart photographer who can use his camera deftly in any part of the world; and they offer a brilliant career to the black-and-white artist, or other limner, who is conspicuous not only for the quality of his work, but for his quickness and originality.

Nothing to Brag About

The warrior who "crossed a torrent roaring loud, on the unsteady footing of a spear," would be scarcely bold enough to deny that every daily paper has the largest circulation; but the morning newspaper, however arrogant with regard to its circulation and influence, has not yet begun to brag about the loveliness of its pictorial illustration.

The caricatures by Harry Furniss, Carruthers Gould, and "Kester," all clever, are robbed of some of their effectiveness by the rough usage of newspaper production, and whenever a morning journal ventures to supplement its letter-press with pictorial illustration, whether of famous man, notable building, state pageant, disaster, map of new territory, or sketch of battlefield, the result is invariably disappointing.

A Pioneer

Hedley Fitton, depending upon the finest lines in his sketches, has been, so far, amongst the most successful of artists who make a speciality of pictorial illustration for the daily journal, but dry printing, good quality of paper, and the greatest possible care in production are indispensable to the artistic life of

his pictures, and these conditions have hitherto been too costly, or too irksome, for general adoption by the daily press.

Drawbacks

The photographer renders the greatest service to the newspaper by the swift provision in emergency, of reflex of great event, rejoicing or disaster; but the sketch, however faithful to the photograph, is seldom a work of art in print. The "block" and the printing machine conspire to do their worst; and the artist, deserving the sincerest sympathy, and receiving the most scathing criticism, gives a fierce look at the smudgy travesty, and proves that he is at least a master in expression—of superlative adjectives. Mr. Walter Crane's foreshadowing has the merit of novelty; but unless art and mechanism combine to produce infinitely better illustrations in the daily journal, the letter-press newspaper will certainly be preferable to the sheet that contains only pictures.

Remarkable Development

The unsatisfactory condition of newspaper illustration is no doubt a source of annoyance and perplexity to many a proprietor. On the other hand, the daily journal has made great progress during the past quarter of a century. Requisitioning every possible scientific and mechanical appliance, it has developed enormously both in contents, rapidity of production, and quick transit. It penetrates everywhere. It circulates not only news and comment, but the best literature; and indignantly repudiating, except in

one or two regrettable instances, the gutter writer and his ways, it remains cleanly and honourable

An Attractive Career

The career of the journalist, though inseparable from disappointment and perpetual struggling, is not an unattractive one. The prizes on the Press are comparatively few; but journalism yields a livelihood to many, and it has this great advantage; The barrister and the doctor must spend a large capital, and wait years for brief or patient. The journalist, with a knowledge of shorthand, and a good general education, can start at once, and usually begins with a salary of some sort. He requires neither capital nor special training; only indomitable energy and journalistic aptitude. With these qualities, he may in two or three years command a salary not great, but large enough to arouse the envy of clerk on railway, in bank, and in counting-house, and even that of briefless barrister and the medical man who has a practice to make.

The Guiding Principle

Moreover, he has the prospect of obtaining very substantial income if he is steady, shrewd, and indefatigable, and knows how to originate, organise, and write. The young man who becomes a journalist should bear in mind that without exorbitant fee, heavy premium, special examination, or weary probation, he has been admitted into an honourable profession, and that if he is worthy of it, he will prosper; at all events, he will be paid in ratio to his ability, and may reach a high and lucrative position.

On the look-out for a guiding principle in his journalistic battle of life, he cannot do better than accept Mr Palmer's thoughtful dictum :

“The British Press, as a commercial undertaking, is controlled by capitalists ; as a moral force, it is controlled by journalists, and it is so controlled because journalists in this country have proved themselves worthy of their trust. The two forces are interdependent. When its journalists cease to be the trusted interpreters of public interest and public duty, the British Press will cease to be a moral force—it will fall to the level of a posting station ; and when it ceases to be a moral force it will cease to be a great commercial property ; it will become in this country what Bismarck was right in calling that on the Continent—only ‘printer's ink on paper.’”

THE END