

the Oddfellows Hall. Mr. John Smith occupied the chair, and the first speaker was Mr. James Brown. He said.” Doubtless it is better to open the report by noting the special features of the meeting, and when the occasion is sufficiently important much skill can be shown in the writing of the opening paragraphs. When the work is done well the reader profits. But of late years this business of the “lead” has been dreadfully overdone. It has become a matter of convention. First, every article must have an introduction, whatever it may be. Secondly, the form of the introduction has become conventionalized; all the principal facts or features must be contained in the first paragraph; often an effort is made to crowd them all in one sentence. From a highly deleterious book on newspaper reporting which a satiric friend gave me I quote three precious sentences which illustrate this point. “The lead itself,” this Professor of Journalism writes, “is always paragraphed separately. Usually it consists of a single sentence, although it is much better to break it into two than to make the sentence too long and complicated. Many editors require that the lead consist of one long sentence *and yet it must be grammatical.*”^{*} This solemn precept shows that it is a matter of principle to begin every article with one long sentence, packed with diverse facts; too often the reporter’s skill fails and we have a lumbering procession of ill-related clauses, grammatical but horrible. For example, a recent issue of the *New York World* began in this fashion a very long article describing the solution of a mystery which long had vexed the community:—

The *World* this morning discloses the remarkable career and the full identity of the mysterious “Oliver Osborne” from his birthplace at Gloversville, N. Y., through a life of crime and mercenary romance, extending from coast to coast, to the Pennsylvania train which will land him at the Pennsylvania Station here at 5.28 this afternoon from Chicago, to stand trial for grand larceny and as a material witness in the trial of Rae Tanzer, accused of using the mails in an effort to mulct James W. Osborne, the criminal lawyer, out of \$50,000.

^{*} The italics are not in the original.