

and not merely the meritless circumstance of having believed in it. But I should be very loath to call myself an artist, and have to explain whether tonsorial or musical or delineative; or to accept the label of socialist and have to say whether I followed Bernard Shaw or the McNamaras; or to plead to the charge of being an imperialist and not know whether I was accused of wanting to tax my British brother's food or of merely thinking that every subject of King George ought to have a word to say and a duty to perform in regard to the world-policy of the Empire. And similarly, in the absence of any official information as to what is and what is not a journalist, whether the essential qualification is ability to write shorthand or ability to get passes on a railway, I take the simple ground that I may be one and that I may not; I have not the faintest idea. I may add, further, that I have never described myself as "a member of the fourth estate," and that I have never known a working newspaper man, born subsequent to 1850, who was willing to do so. The phrase appears to survive to-day only in the language employed by toast-movers and chairmen in the flow of post-prandial oratory; and it is an interesting fact that none of those who use it ever know what the other three estates are.

The business of newspaper-making,—I know nothing about the profession of journalism, — has suffered severely in the past and suffers yet from the misconceptions fostered by these high-sounding and meaningless terms. Or rather, the individuals who have gone into that business have suffered; for the business itself, as a business, seems to get along very nicely in spite of all the unjust demands that are made of it and the preposterous abuse that is hurled at it. When I left college I went into the newspaper business in all lightness of heart. "Drifted in" is the term usually employed to describe the process by my more respectable relatives, and it is perfectly accurate, for I was borne along by the irresistible current of a desire to express myself in print; but I am not sure that that is just what they mean by