

Jerrold, are of the class intended and designed to be acted, as the first and main object, of their composition. In both there has been a return to modern historical, and to classic subjects; as in "Richeieu," "the Foscari," "Wilhelm Tell," "Virginus," "Spartacus" and "Damon and Pythias." Thus have we returned, if not in tone or in treatment, by a law apparently hereditary, to the same class of subjects, in the reign of Queen Victoria, which excited the enthusiasm of our ancestors, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

I have already made allusion to the suppression of stage plays during the commonwealth era. To the same period we can trace the rise of our periodical literature. If it is an accurate estimate, (that of Dr. Craik in his *History of English Literature*) to make, that 30,000 pamphlets appeared during the quarrel between Charles I. and his Parliament, they must have issued from the press at the rate nearly of thirty a week—with the frequency and continuousness of modern periodicals. Such an enormous mass of ephemeral print must of itself have suggested the field for periodical publications, and accordingly we may trace the rise of the newspaper as an English power, to the same years, as the rise and fall of Cromwell. It is true some ingenious artist did indeed impose upon the British Museum certain copies of a pretended "English Mercurie" of the year 1588—the Armada year—which were thought a great prize, till they turned out to be forgeries. But the true date comes sixty years later. When the civil war between king Charles and the Parliament broke out, the daily demand for news in London, led to the establishment of a whole nest of journals, whose strong family resemblance may be read in their names: *News from Hull*, *Truths from York*, *Tidings from Ireland*, the *Dutch Spy*, the *Scots Dove*, the *Irish Mercury*, the *Parliamentary Kite*, and the *Secret Owl*. Then squibs and crackers also flow in profusion about the streets; "*Mercurius Acheronticus*," says Chalmers, "brought them hebdomadal *News from Hell*; *Mercurius Democritus* communicated wonderful news from the Moon; the *Laughing Mercury* gave perfect news from the Antipodes; and "*Mercurius Mastix*, faithfully lashed all Scouts, Mercuries, Spies and Posts, and other Intelligencers." In some of these originals we can see the venerable ancestry of Mr. Punch, and his rivals, and in others, the antetype of the legitimate "news-paper" which lay on your table this morning, at breakfast.

In the ninth year of the next century (1709) our periodical literature took its second great step under the tuition of that ex-Ensign of the Guards, best known to posterity, as Sir Richard Steele. This venture was the tri-weekly *Tatler*, the sprightly parent of a numerous progeny. The *Tatler* was succeeded by its more celebrated first born, and heir, the *Spectator*, early in 1711, as a daily paper, price six pence, of which as many as 20,000 copies were known to have been sold in a day. I need not mention the *Guardian*, and other imitators, till we come to Johnson's *Rambler*, in the middle period of the century,—the second in celebrity of all the offspring of Ensign Steele's fertile imagination and generous spirit. The *Rambler* was a semi-weekly, and was not popular in its day: the sale in only one case, ever exceeded 500 copies, and that was a number written by Richardson the Novelist (No. 97) in which Johnson had no hand whatever. It is not too much to assert that the *Rambler* was, in its kind, quite as well written as the *Spectator*; but it certainly wanted the charming variety, the flexibility, and the novelty, of that greatly successful periodical essayist. However we must remember also that the *Rambler* as we have it, is not the *Rambler* as it appeared every third day of the week: Johnson almost re-wrote it, in after years, making no less than 6,000 changes and alterations, in the first impressions. He lived to see ten large editions of it, in the corrected form, published in England, besides those printed without his authority, beyond the reach of copyright, in Ireland and the Colonies. It has been usually the case, of late, that our writers for the press, commenced in that vocation as very young men; but the ripeness of judgment in the old essayists will be accounted for, when we remember that Steele, Addison, and Johnson, were all three verging close upon the fortieth year of their lives, when they assumed the duties, of voluntary Ministers of Public Instruction.

A successful attempt to combine the newspaper proper, with the periodical essayist paper was made in the last years of George I. (1724), by a Mr. Jenour, in his "*Daily Advertiser*." This paper was owned in shares, which were sold at public auction at high premiums. In the last decade of this reign and the first half of the next, the use of such a newspaper, combining original articles, domestic and foreign news, and advertisements, as a political lever, began to be felt. It is instructive to find in the middle of Queen Anne's reign, Bolingbroke working the *Examiner*, and Lord Chancellor Cowper, answering one of his attacks, through the columns of the *Tatler*. The *World*, owned by Horace Walpole, Lord Chesterfield, and others (1753 to '66), and edited by Moore, author of the *Gamster*, was another specimen of "a party organ," of a class now so familiar to

us all. Smollett commenced the *True Briton* with Lord Bute at his back, and Wilkes the following week started his *North Briton* with the aid of Lord Temple, and the Pitts. In the *Public Advertiser* of which Woodfall was the manager, Garrick was a shareholder, and was systematically puffed accordingly; but this paper is best known to us as the vehicle of the letters of *Junius*, whoever he was. The sixty-nine letters appeared between January, 1769, and November, 1771, but it is a curious fact to us, that before the letter to the king appeared, at the close of the first year of *Junius*, this writer had made no sensible impression on public attention. The letter to the king by its unexampled boldness, sold off 1,750 extra copies of the *Advertiser*: the letter to the Duke of Grafton, 700 extra, and that to Lord Mansfield only 600. It has been shown by Mr. Knight Hunt in his "Fourth Estate" that while the circulation of Woodfall's paper, had been increasing steadily at the rate of 60 per cent before the contributions of *Junius* enriched its columns, it only continued to gain during that writer's connection, at the rate of 12 per cent. The monthly sales rose from 75,000 to 83,000 copies; from say, in round numbers, from less than 3,000 to about 3,300 copies, per day, (sundays and holidays excluded.) By these curious figures—

"Chaps that will na ding,
And dare na be disputed,"

we see that the traditional immediate popularity of *Junius* must not be taken without salt; that at all events, he certainly did not make at once his own public, as Addison and Steele must have done. Of the gradual development of the London daily press, from the *Junius* period downwards, it will be perhaps, enough for me to mention the long and brilliant reign of James Perry of Aberdeen, as editor of the *Morning Chronicle* from 1771, to 1818; the *Morning Post* started by Sir Bate Dudley in 1772, and still flourishing; the *Herald* commenced by the same gentleman, on separating from his partners in the *Post*, in 1780; and the *Times* begun by Mr. John Walter of Printing House square, on the 1st of January 1788. These are the most conspicuous morning papers: of their older evening contemporaries, we may mention the *Evening Post* (1727); the *Courier*, (date uncertain) which rose during the Napoleonic wars, to a sale of from 8 to 10,000 an evening; the *Globe* and the *Sun*, still flourishing. Cobbett's *Weekly Register*, founded in 1800, and sustained almost single-handed by that great writer for thirty years, was the most eminent of all the weeklies; the *John Bull*, High-Church and Tory, when it counted Tooke, Maginn, and Cooley on its staff, was the most brilliant competitor of Cobbett. With very much that is coarse and occasionally repulsive in utterance, it is doubtful if any one writer of our language, ever sustained for so long a period, so uniformly powerful a paper as Cobbett's *Register* was from 1800 to 1830. His best writings are among the very best, that ever adorned our language. Cobbett may be said to have closed the tripartite dynasty of Wilkes and *Junius*: the great press Corporations, (especially after the adaptation of steam to the mechanical labors of the art, in 1814), expanded beyond the power of any individual writer however able, or individual publisher however wealthy, to contend with, or contend against.

If we take the *Times* as a sample of our English daily press, we will find that in the eighty years of its existence, its fortunes have been marked by many vicissitudes. The first Walter graduated at Newgate for an alleged libel on the sons of George III, and is said to have stood in the pillory; while the second, some twenty years ago, left a princely fortune to his son, in city and country estates, and a personality sworn under £90,000 sterling. The paper early went into opposition to the all-powerful Pitt, and remained steadily anti-Tory, until the passage of the Reform bill. Under its best known editors, Barnes, Stoddart, and Stirling, during the Regency, and the reign of George IV, it counted Lords Melbourne Russell, and Brougham, and Tom Moore, among its regular contributors; as the *Post* and *Herald* had Lord Palmerston's help, and that of Coleridge, Gifford and Southey. In short most of those we class strictly as literary men wrote for one or other of the political "organs" of the day; as did very many of the actual chiefs of parties.

Of what may be called, the highest class of periodical literature, this century has been prolific. The *Edinburgh Review* dates from 1802, the *Quarterly* from 1809, and "Blackwood" from 1817. I have lately seen a statement in the newspapers, that there are at present above one hundred magazines published monthly in Great Britain. In 1850, there were published in London one hundred and thirteen papers; in England, outside London, two hundred and twenty-three; in Ireland, one hundred and one; in Scotland, eighty-five; in Wales, eleven; in the Islands, fourteen. Of these the political classification was in 1850—liberal, two hundred and eighteen; conservative, one hundred and seventy-four; neutral, one hundred and fifty-five; for which—merely by way of forming an estimate of some sort of total,—if we were to suppose two thousand readers (not subscribers), to be