

the moment, being understood to consist, not so much in the quality and amount of the thing produced, as in the disclosure of fresh methods or fashions of production. Of the actual work of the Eighteenth Century a sufficient report will be found in the biographies and extracts which follow; here, it is proposed to take note only of those new forms of literary expression which distinguish the age from those ages which went before. That, on or about the date of the Restoration, a change began to be apparent both in the matter and manner of English Literature is admitted even by those who find its cause uncertain and its course obscure. Of this change, in the last decades of the seventeenth century, Dryden is allowed to have been the chief exponent; in the first decades of the eighteenth century, it was maintained and developed under Pope and his contemporaries. Broadly speaking, although its leaders were writers of verse, it consisted in the existence of a state of things which was more favourable to the perfecting of prose. The spirit of a new criticism was abroad, tempering imagination and repressing enthusiasm, endeavouring after symmetry and uniformity, averse alike from decoration and invention. To be direct and clear, to be logical, to regard right reason and plain sense, to be governed by the teaching of the Ancients (filtered through the medium of French criticism), became by degrees the unwritten code of the times. Working prosaically, its chief gifts were in prose. It gave us the first daily Newspaper; and, by the pen of De-foe and his humbler allies, an extraordinary and unprecedented development of Journalism; it gave us, by the pens of Addison and Steele, a form of Essay, which, differing as widely from the essay of Bacon as from the essay of Temple, set the model to its own day and to ours. Under Richardson and Fielding it gave us what was practically the modern Novel; under Hume and Robertson and Gibbon, what was practically the modern History. Finally, it gave us in its earlier years a Poetry of Convention unexampled in its mechanical accomplishment, which, while presenting many of the features of an age of Prose, was still Poetry, and which, exhausting itself after a career of exceptional vigour and brilliancy, left the soil prepared for the gradual but irresistible growth of a truer Poetry of Nature and Romance.

Among these Eighteenth Century innovations, Journalism, which has lasted the longest, begins

the first. There had been newspapers, no doubt, in the preceding century, even as there were brave men before Agamemnon. There was the *Public Intelligence* of L'Estrange, and the still-existent *London Gazette*, which dates from November 7, 1665, when Charles II. was keeping Court at Oxford by reason of the plague. There were the News Letters of Dyer and Dawks (Steele's 'honest Ichabod') which had blank spaces left 'for any Gentleman, or others, to write their private Business to their Friends in the Country,' and both of which the great Mr Edmund Smith one of Dr Johnson's poets, if you please celebrated in Latin Sapphics:

Scribe securus, quid agit Senatus,
Quid caput sterit grave Laubethanum,
Quid Comes Guildford, quid habent necorum
DAWKSQUE DYERQUE.

But it was not until the first year of Anne's reign, and indeed but three days after King William died at Kensington, that the first daily paper made its modest appearance. This was the *Daily Courant*, a little double-columned sheet fourteen inches by eight, printed on one side only, and excusing its exiguity (or lack of advertisements) by a praiseworthy desire 'to save the Publick at least half the Impertinences of ordinary News-Papers.' Its news is exclusively derived from the *Paris Gazette* and the *Haarlem* and *Amsterdam Courants*, but it speedily grew into flourishing life, being promptly followed by a crowd of rivals and imitators, *Posts*, *Post Boys*, *Packets*, *Observers*, *Registers*, *Mercuries*, *Medleys*, *British Apollos*, *Athenian Oracles*, and the like, not all of which were, in the strict sense, journals. One of the most remarkable of these latter was the *Review* of Daniel Defoe, a sheet of eight (afterwards four) small *quarto* pages, written in Newgate (where its author was confined), and, like the first *Daily Courant*, professing to be 'Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News-Writers* and *Petty-Statesmen*, of all sides.' The full title was *A Review of the Affairs of France*; but it was, in reality, a history of the domestic and foreign affairs of Europe, while in a section entitled *Mercurie Scandaleux; or Advice from the Scandalous Club*, which began in the second number, its author professed to collect contemporary gossip. As may be gathered from the description of Defoe's *Review*, a main feature of all these organs was their foreign intelligence, which, being easier to obtain than home news, naturally predominated. Indeed, it is pretty