

PHONETIC PIONEER.

Sometimes we hear of a stupid slight having been put upon these useful gentlemen, such as inadequate accommodation at a would-be public meeting, or even inadequate food at a would be public dinner, and lo and behold! the meeting or the dinner might just as well have not been held, for the space that should have been devoted to them in "our columns," is filled up with the complaints of our outraged ministers—who shut up their notebooks, upon the occasion in question in disgust, or, having the artistic gift, draw caricatures in them instead of reporting. Moreover, now and then, a singular circumstance takes place: we have been (say) to Covent Garden last night, where the Prima Donna was ill who was to have established the new opera, and where a younger *cantatrice* and an older opera had to be substituted, nevertheless, in the morning paper we find this was not the case, but that the new piece *was* introduced with complete success, and that Madame Squeakalini, the favorite, even outdid herself, and exhibited a breadth, compass, a conception, and a number of other things quite without parallel, particularly in the aria entitled *Boie-voie-to-te-celle-oi*. It remains, therefore, that either we ourselves were exceedingly intoxicated last night, or the musical reporter—Well, we charitably abstain from conjecture, and content ourselves with concluding that these mysteries of the Fourth Estate are far too deep for us to fathom. Now, however, thanks to Mr. Charles J. Gratton, we know all about them, and are admitted behind the sheets.

This gentleman gives us a narrative of reporting in Parliament from the time of Sir Simon d'Ewes, who took notes in shorthand of the debates, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, until now. Parliament, it seems, was always violently averse to any publication of their proceedings till 1641, when, after abolishing the Star Chamber, it printed its own doings in *Diurnal of Occurrences, or Daily proceedings of both Houses in this Great and Happy Parliament*. This, however, afforded but scanty intelligence, and did not satisfy the public, for whose edification other and more diffuse journals were speedily set up. Thereupon the House grew wroth, and it was ordered, "That no member shall either give a copy or publish in print anything that he shall speak here without the leave of the House;" and about ten days afterwards, a second resolution was passed, "That all members of the House are enjoined to deliver out no copy or notes of anything that is brought into the House or propounded or agitated in the House." This resolution was soon broken, for we find that on the 2nd of February, 1642, the Commons resolved, "That a book by Sir Edward Dering, *A Collection of Speeches, &c.* is against the honor and privilege of this House, scandalous to the House, shall be burned by the

common hangman, himself be disabled from sitting, and a new writ issued." By a vote of 85 against 61, sentence was pronounced against him by the Speaker, and he was committed to the Tower.

Andrew Marvel was one of the members, who described the daily proceedings of Parliament, when the newspaper accounts were suppressed, from 1660 to 1678, he regularly transmitted to his constituents at Hull, a faithful account of each day's proceedings—a fact which, it must be allowed, puts his patriotism beyond cavil. We wonder how the honorable member for Hull would like the little job in these days! Such information could not, however, be made general, and the public demand still beget its supply of illegal intelligence. News-writer after news-writer was summoned by the sergeant-at-arms, and made to acknowledge his wickedness before the House upon his knees; and in 1727, no less a person than Mr. Edward Cave was imprisoned for the like offence. This crafty gentleman confined himself for the future to evading the law instead of defying it, and printed his reports in the following mitigated but somewhat transparent fashion: "The speech of Sir J——n A——gn, Bart., one of the knights of the shire for the county of C——nwall." Sir Robert Walpole was similarly referred to as Sir R.——t W——, and Mr. Wyndham as Mr. W——nd——m. Even this modest device being interdicted, "Cave opened his Magazine in June, 1738, with an article entitled 'The Debates in the Senate of 'Magna Lilliputia,' " in which he artfully deplored the prohibition which forbade him to present his readers with the consultations of their own representatives, and expressed a hope that they would accept as a substitute those of that country which Captain Lemuel Gulliver had then so lately rendered illustrious, and which untimely death has prevented that illustrious traveller from publishing himself. The Dukes were styled "Nardacs;" Lords, "Hurgoes;" the Commons, "Clinabs," and the letters in their respective names were transposed or slightly disarranged. Thus, the Duke of Bedford appeared under the transparent disguise of "The Nardao Bedford;" Lord Talbot, "The Hurgos Toblat;" Walpole, "Sir Rubs Waleup;" Lyttleton, "Lettyltno;" Bathurst, "Brustath;" Fox, "Feauks;" Wynn, "Ooyn." Under this fiction, he continued to publish the debates of the British Parliament. The above terms Cave explained to his readers by annexing to his volume in 1738 feigned proposals for printing a work called *Anagrammata Rediviva*. The *St. James' Chronicle* published 'The Debates of the Representatives of Utopia,' and the *London Magazine* favored the public with a 'Journal of the Proceedings and Debates in the Political Club,' and gave Roman names to the speakers. So it was not an un-

common thing to read an elaborate account of the speech which Octavius Augustus delivered on such a day on the increase of the income-tax question, or be informed how Julius Caesar bored the House with a three hours' speech on church-rates."

The way in which Cave obtained his reports was this. He was Inspector of Franks to the Post-office, and therefore brought much into contact with the officers of both Houses, who readily gave him access thereto. When anything of importance was going on, he would go down to the House accompanied by a friend; and these two persons, from the gallery of the Commons, or some obscure and out-of-the-way place in the Lords, would remain for hours taking stealth notes of the speeches—unknown to Sergeant-at-arms, or Black Rod—sufficient to form the groundwork of a more extensive report at a future time. Cave's first editor of the debates was Guthrie, author of the continuation of Smollett's *England*; and his second, as everybody knows, was Samuel Johnson. The information supplied to Johnson by the above means was meagre enough, and, indeed, Sir John Hawkins declares that the reports were often entirely fictitious, and the fruit of John's imagination. "I wrote that in a garret in Exeter-street," said the doctor at a certain dinner-party, when one of Mr. Pitt's speeches was being extravagantly lauded. "I never was in the gallery of the House of Commons but once.—Cave had an interest with the door-keepers. He and the persons under him got admittance. They brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the various arguments adduced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches they now have in the Parliamentary debates; for the speeches of that period are all taken from Cave's Magazine." This account, however, rests solely upon Mr. Murphy's authority, and Smollett, (although cautioned by Hawkins,) always treated Johnson's debates as genuine, and has quoted largely from them in his history.

Cave, however, was a second time brought, quite literally, upon his knees, and the science of reporting suffered a long eclipse. It was a fine of £100 to mention a peer's name in connection with the proceedings in the House; and one of them, Lord Marchmont, was accustomed "to examine the newspapers every day with the ardor that a hawk prowls for prey; and whenever he found any lord's name printed on any paper, he immediately made a motion in the House of Peers against the printers for a breach of privilege. "In November, 1759, the printer of the *Gazette* published in his paper a paragraph stating that the thanks of the House of Lords