

INTRODUCTION

SOME authors have said that when they write their books the characters take the narrative into their own hands, and the story develops into something quite different from the original conception. That has been my experience with this contribution to the history of the Press.

I had been playing golf one day at Walton Heath with Sir George Riddell and my colleague James Douglas, and in the course of the round Sir George asked me how I came to take up journalism for a career. When I told him my modest story he asked why I did not write a book about my experiences, and the question came from him with added force, as many of my friends had often told me that I ought to do so. Hitherto I had never thought that such an undertaking would interest anyone outside the circle of my intimate friends, but I now began to wonder if in the course of my experience I had gathered facts and knowledge which would be appreciated by a wider circle of readers.

When I reached home I jotted down some notes about my early experiences and the way in which Mr. Ernest Parke gave me my first real start in life, together with a few other recollections, but believing that a writer is not the best judge of his own work, I determined to obtain the opinion of someone whose judgment I could rely upon. It seemed to me that my friend, Sir Gilbert Parker,