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THE STORY OF "THE TIMES"

THE STORY OF "THE TIMES"

By
WILLIAM DODGSON BOWMAN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

FOR nearly a hundred and fifty years *The Times* has been foremost among British newspapers ; and for more than a century, a World institution of vast power and influence.

To foreign countries it has been the voice of Great Britain ; to the Empire and the Dominions that of the Mother Country.

No other newspaper has exercised such authority and influence in International affairs. Emperors and Princes have heeded its counsels. Statesmen have courted its favour, and winced at its admonitions. Through the long years of stress and strain it has helped to guide the fortunes of Great Britain and the Empire ; and its voice in times of national crisis has more than once been a deciding factor.

Generally the influence of *The Times* has been beneficent ; sometimes it has been baneful. Often it has taken the official rather than the right view of public questions. It has been content to follow where others led ; to reflect rather than to mould public opinion. It has been timid and halting when it should have sounded the note of challenge. It has buttressed constituted authority, and left to others the task of blazing the trail of progress. It has nourished impossible loyalties and defended lost causes, and the banners of the hosts it led, have trailed in the dust of defeat.

At the zenith of its power it voiced the opinions of Philistines and Barbarians—those materialistic

Victorians whose deities were steam and machinery, and encouraged them to believe that the belching smoke which blackened the country-side, symbolized the golden age of progress, and that in sanctified selfishness the free-born Englishman found his code of duty. *The Times* measured their mental and moral altitude with amazing precision. It catered for their foibles, re-vitalized their prejudices, and nursed their slumbering antipathies.

But despite its lack of vision and limited ideals *The Times* showed marvellous enterprise and performed gigantic services for its readers. It provided them with an immense and never-ceasing stream of information. At great expense correspondents were sent to all countries and continents so that this supply should never fail. It exposed the plots and counter-plots of politicians, demonstrated the weakness and inefficiency of officials; and gave its readers advance information on affairs of state. Its news service was so organized, that often the heads of the British Government first heard of important events in world affairs through its columns.

Born in a period of change, *The Times* saw many changes. It watched the French Revolution with apprehension, and stood shoulder to shoulder with the British Government in the long and disastrous war that followed. It witnessed the rise of Napoleon, the glory of Trafalgar, and the crowning mercy of Waterloo. It saw the changes wrought in the face of England by the age of steam, and the vast development of the Industrial system that followed. It took part in the great battles that raged round Catholic Emancipations, Constitutional Reform, the Test Acts, the Corn Laws, Irish Affairs, and the Taxes on Knowledge. It exposed the weakness and abuses of the British military system during the Crimean War, and championed the cause of the private soldier.

During the Irish Potato Famine, the Indian Mutiny, the Civil War in America, the Franco-German War of 1870–71, the Russo-Turkish War, as well as in the Crimean War it gave its readers the benefit of the devoted labours of correspondents, who witnessed the events they described.

Critics have sometimes complained that *The Times* has lost its character for judicial impartiality.

The answer is that it has never been either judicial or impartial, except, as one of its writers said, "at periods of comparative stagnation, when no pressing question occupied the public mind, when no necessity for any declared attitude existed and when the function of the journalist was reduced to that of a mere chronicler of passing events." Its influence was never so great as during the worst period of the Crimean War, when as the same writer points out "its excesess were howled over, alike in Parliament and in the Press".

No, *The Times* has never claimed impartiality, but it has through the long years since John Walter first set its presses running, jealously guarded its independence. Statesmen have flattered and whispered secrets in the ears of its editors and correspondents; foreign potentates have cringed and offered bribes; politicians have angled for its support; wealthy corporations have tried to buy its influence, but withal *The Times* has held fast to its independence. It may have bolstered up a falling ministry or supported some powerful statesman, but this only from a sense of public duty, and not from hope of fee, or fear of obloquy and abuse.

The Times at no period has been the mere instrument of Government, party, clique or faction. This independence has been the source of its strength and influence.

With the advancing tide of democracy have come

other newspapers that have far outstripped it in circulation and revenue. But amid this crowd of new competitors for popular favour *The Times* still wields much of its ancient authority, and holds the confidence and affection of its readers.

At a complimentary dinner given to Mr G. E. Buckle, the editor, by the Staff on February 27, 1909, Mr Buckle said :

> "Though it is nearly a hundred years since the second John Walter, the real founder of the greatness of *The Times*, created the post of Editor by devolving in about the year 1816 or 1817, part of his functions upon Barnes, there have been only four Editors in the whole time—Barnes, Delane, Chenery, and I. That is surely a remarkable record. How many Prime Ministers do you think there have been in that time ? I had the curiosity to look this up and find that there have been eighteen, and thirty distinct Ministries. Our record of only four Editors may help to explain why *The Times* has become a solid British institution —almost part of the Constitution itself."

One virtue these editors possessed in common, that virtue which Emerson called " wise courage ". " If only it (*The Times*) dared to cleave to the right," complained the author of " English Traits ", " to show the right to be the only expedient, and feed its batteries from the central heat of humanity, it might not have so many men of rank among its contributors, but genius would be its cordial and invincible ally ; it might now and then bear the brunt of formidable combinations, but no journal is injured by *wise courage*."

From her high tower History watches succeeding generations as they pass in endless procession and sees those battlefields of the eighteenth and nineteenth century with clearer eye than those who took part in the conflicts. The mists of ignorance and prejudice have rolled away, and made clear what was once obscure and doubtful. The views of these events as

recorded in *The Times* were those of writers whose eyes were blinded by the dust of the battle, and may to critics who look down from the vantage point of the Twentieth Century seem sometimes hasty and prejudiced. But these contemporary judgements which lie buried in that great repository of collective wisdom—the file of *The Times* newspaper, are none the less of surpassing interest and value.

Not all men take the same view of these records. More than one hundred years ago (in 1823) the Edinburgh *Review*, then strongly opposed to *The Times* in politics, pronounced a harsh and premature judgement :

"*The Times*," it said, "takes up no falling cause, fights no uphill battle, advocates no great principle, holds out a helping hand to no oppressed or obscure individual ; it is ever strong upon the stronger side ; its style is magniloquent, its spirit is not magnanimous."

In 1841 Greville said that "latterly its apparent caprices and inconsistency have deprived it of all right and title, and much of its power to influence the opinion of others". A critic of 1850, evidently of a robust constitution, describes a *Times* article then current as "a mass of impotent fury and revolting vulgarity and impertinence, without genius or argument or end or object—mere abuse in the coarsest and stupidest shape".

After this the abuse of the Duke of Newcastle, who, during the Crimean War, spoke of the paper as the "ruffianly" *Times*, while his friend Lord Passmure called it the "villainous" *Times*, sounds rather mild.

These were not considered opinions. They were rather the outbursts of exasperated opponents and rivals who hated and feared the paper.

Another criticism, again the writer is Greville, who

had become a staunch Palmerstonian, shows *The Times* in a light that will be strange to many of its friends. Writing in 1855 he says :

> "The Press with *The Times* at its head", he says, "is striving to throw everything into confusion, and running amuck against the aristocratic element of society and of the constitution. The intolerable nonsense and the abominable falsehoods it flings out day after day are none the less dangerous because they are falsehoods and nonsense, and backed up as they are by all the regular Radical press, they diffuse through the country a mass of inflammatory matter, the effect of which may be more serious and arrive more quickly than anybody imagines. Nothing short of some loud explosion will make the mass of people believe that any serious danger can threaten a constitution like ours, which has passed through so many trials and given so many proofs of strength and cohesion. . . . They (the people) are told that it is not this or that minister who can restore our affairs, but a change in the whole system of government, and the substitution of plebeians and new men for the leaders of parties and members of aristocratic families, of whom all governments have been for the most part composed. What effect these revolutionary doctrines may have on the opinions at large remains to be seen ; but it is evident that *The Times*, their great propagator, thinks them popular and generally acceptable, or they would not have plunged into that course."

In this passage from the "Greville Memoirs" (Third Part, Vol. I), the diarist reflects the attitude of the nobility and gentry towards *The Times* in the late fifties. That the Radicals were even more downright in their hostility we see from a speech by Richard Cobden delivered at Manchester in support of John Bright's candidature in 1857. In this he said :

> "I took the opportunity of saying that the newspaper press of England was not free, and that the reformers of England ought to set about to emancipate it. Well, I got a most vicious article next day from *The Times* for that, and *The Times* has followed us both with a very ample store of

venom ever since. Any man, who has lived in public life as I have must know that it is quite useless to contradict any falsehood or calumny, because it comes up again next day just as rife as ever. There is *The Times* newspaper, always ready to repeat it and the grosser the better."

In a letter to a friend on the same subject, Cobden added :

"My plan has always been to meet that journal with a bold front, and neither to give nor to take quarter. I may add that if ever I have succeeded in any public proceedings it has always been in spite of the opposition of that print. You may take my word for it, you can never be in the path of success in any great measure of policy unless you are in opposition to that journal."

It is not without significance that these charges were levelled at *The Times* at the period of its greatest influence and authority, when statesmen of all factions either angled for its support, or bespattered it with abuse. In comparison with its contemporaries it was as a giant among pigmies, and its circulation was nearly six times that of all the London daily morning papers put together. It was then as it had been for many years a real power in the State—a menace to the wrongdoer, a foe to incompetence, a supporter of ordered progress. Leading statesmen were jealous of the influence it wielded. Its rivals in the press regarded it as a huge monopolist, while Radicals of the stamp of Bright and Cobden looked upon it as a champion of Toryism and the chief obstacle to reform.

This was clearly shown when Milner Gibson in 1854 brought in his proposal for the reform of newspaper taxation. One of the reasons adduced by the supporters of this change was that it would tend to damage and weaken *The Times*. It was also rumoured that the Government of the day looked benevolently on the proposal for the same reason.

That brilliant journalist, Albany Fonblanque, in an article in *The Examiner*, exposed the real motives of the Manchester politicians, but his witty comments are chiefly interesting for the light they throw on the standing of *The Times* in mid-Victorian days.

> "It is held now," he said, "in certain quarters, high and low, that the power of the Press has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. The chief offender in this case being *The Times*, it is proposed at the particular desire of several persons in Manchester, to take measures to compass the destruction of the said *Times*, or at least to cripple it very considerably. But why do this in a roundabout way, involving in the injury other properties that are not obnoxious either to Manchester or to Downing Street? Why not bring in a bill of pains and penalties, setting forth the inordinateness of the power of *The Times*, and that no ministry is safe under it, and enacting what may be thought calculated to render it less formidable? . . . There is not room enough in this broad land for both government and *The Times*, and, as we must have a government, however bad, we must not have a *Times*, however good. Haman cannot suffer Mordecai in the gate."

In the same year that the Newspaper Stamp Act was passed, to be precise, on November 3, 1855, appeared the first number of *The Saturday Review*. This number contained an article on "Our Newspaper Institutions" in which the writer declared open war on *The Times*, and pointed out the urgent necessity for slaying this bloated monopolist. This article, like that just quoted, shows how strongly *The Times* was entrenched as a great British Institution.

> "No apology," said the writer, "is necessary for assuming that this country is ruled by *The Times*. We all know it, or if we do not know it, we ought to know it. It is high time we began to realize the magnificent spectacle afforded by British freedom—thirty millions of *cives Romani* governed despotically by a newspaper! . . . The independence of

The Times and its immorality—its adequacy to great questions, and its industry in hunting out infinitely small ones —the power and humour which it occasionally displays, the sham wit and counterfeit energy which it often puts upon us—each of these has no doubt distinctly assisted in procuring for it some class of readers, or contributes sensibly to its existing influence. That influence *The Saturday Review* proposes to undermine."

With the coming of new rivals, brightly written and more attractive in " make-up ", in the sixties the monopoly of *The Times* came to an end. Some of these new rivals far excelled the great organ of Printing House Square in circulation, and for a short period in the last years of Delane's control it suffered some diminutions in prestige and authority. Its enemies talked with glee of " the decline of *The Times* ", and declared that it had lost its magic touch. Professional critics asserted that for a paper of its class *The Times* was one of the worst-informed papers in the world, and that when it touched on foreign affairs it " was more ignorant or more misguided than any of its leading contemporaries, faulty as they might be ".

Among the many attacks made on it at this period perhaps the most formidable was that made in *The Examiner* early in 1871. This onslaught concerned the Irish policy of the paper.

" One relic of its past *The Times* still hugs, with unalterable fondness—its Irish policy," said the writer. " What that policy has cost both the English and Irish nations before now it boots not to inquire at length. How often have dispassionate witnesses borne testimony to the fearful exasperation that awoke among the tortured people when in the melancholy time of the great Irish exodus *The Times* raised its song of triumph over the flight of the famishing myriads, exclaiming with thoroughly English exultation over calamity, that the Celts were going 'with a vengeance'. The

lesson of hate once taught is not easily forgotten, and we know how to return 'with a vengeance' has continued to be the aspiration of the survivors, and heirs of the expatriated Celts. This office of *The Times* is only too well appreciated in Ireland. When the provisions of the last Peace Preservation Act increasing the remedies against incendiary writing were being introduced, one of the commonest remarks called forth by the measure was, that while *The Times* continued to lavish its daily diatribes against Ireland, Fenianism would never stand in need of any other incendiary writing. To this hour the bitter insults of *The Times* continue to be the texts for the most passionate appeals of the anti-English party. It is useless to assure large classes of Irishmen that when the leading English journal writes thus, the majority of Englishmen are not of the same opinion, and perpetuation of Celtic hatred is part of the price paid for the reputation of *The Times* as a representative journal. More than that it does form the opinion of many Englishmen, and that most mischievously. Everyone who reads the Irish correspondence of *The Times*, its sensational telegrams, its reports of outrages, its prominent narratives of Lotharios horse-whipped and robberies expected, must find it difficult to remember that Ireland is the least criminal country in Europe, that the breach of the social virtues is almost unknown, that except an odd squireen or land-agent, who has generally richly deserved the execrations of the community, the Kerry hills and Tipperary mountains, the midland pastures and the Southland tillage fields are as safe as Fleet Street or the Strand."

This is a highly coloured partisan view, and a gross travesty of the Irish policy Delane pursued for thirty years, and the file of *The Times* shows how unjust it is. Through the forties and fifties it censured the landlords and Orangemen as severely as the Young Irish party, and condemned both parties when occasion required. As early as November, 1847, Delane declared that force by itself is no remedy, and that "Whig principles are at an end, when a Whig ministry is compelled to repeat the tactics of its adversaries".

For the Orangeman he had some plain words, and declared that he had no patience with partisans

> "who in the name of religion and liberty give full scope to the impulses of a senseless and brutal fanaticism." "The Orange party in Ireland must feel that, while they are stained with the blood of their fellow-countrymen, shed to gratify their own puerile vanity, and to commemorate their own insane days of jubilee, they have no sympathy to expect from England. The name of their party has now become the subject of public execration."

These attacks by *The Times* greatly astonished the Ulster garrison in Ireland, and according to Lord Clarendon—then the Lord Lieutenant, had "a stunning effect". "They will", he said, "put a curb on the mouth of those furious Orangemen who, with their principles and their parsons, are quite as subversive of law and order as the priests and Young Irelandians."

Those who remember the bitter controversies that followed the introduction of Mr Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill and the determined and violent opposition of *The Times* to that measure may, like the writer of *The Examiner* article just quoted, have regarded *The Times* as the implacable opponent of Irish Nationalism. But whatever later editors may have felt and thought on the subject, their great predecessor Delane was the advocate of a broader and more liberal policy. He recognized that Irish discontent was the result of English misgovernment. He supported Lord Clarendon's Coercion Bill as a temporary and unsatisfactory expedient, recognizing that though some landlords had behaved badly, there was no justification for murdering them. In December, 1847, and January, '48, he published a series of leading articles pointing out the urgent need for the development of agricultural industries and fisheries, and the organization of self-help and practical instruction.

So far from always supporting the ascendency party in Ireland *The Times* was its unsparing and most relentless critic. Lord Clarendon, most clear-sighted and impartial of Lord Lieutenants, deplored Delane's lack of sympathy with the landlords, while other critics less scrupulous attacked him for his disloyalty and open sympathy with the rebellious peasantry. But the editor was not to be moved by a hairbreadth by the line he had taken. In an article (April 22, 1847) full of savage contempt for the bigotry and ignorance of the class he believed responsible for Ireland's troubles he declared : " If the Irish landlords have not been the cause of getting the country into her present deplorable state, their legislative wisdom will never be the means of helping her out of it."

By its independence *The Times* exposed itself to the fire of every political battery. Its policy cut across the boundaries of each parliamentary group, vague and indeterminate as these were at that period. There was always uncertainty as to the particular line the newspaper would take, and its comments on the politics of the day kept the Tadpoles and Tapers of the clubs in a perpetual flutter of excitement. Even when, as in July, 1846, *The Times* promised its support to the Russell administration, the Whigs were uncertain as to the backing they would receive, and their transports of joy over the event were soon turned to chagrin.

This event was hailed by Greville with a great flourish of trumpets. " The new Government ", he said, " have concluded an alliance with the leviathan of the Press, *The Times*, which gives them a temperate, judicious, but very useful support." But the new Government had not got under way before " the wicked paper ", as the Prince Consort called it, made what he described as " a furious attack " on one of the Cabinet appointments, while Sir John Easthope, the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, and a Whig

Member of Parliament, always obedient to the Party Whip, was bitterly angry that Government information was sent to *The Times* instead of his own paper. "If you will be ruled", he said to a member of the Government, "by *The Times*, *The Times* has showed you already by a specimen that you will be ruled by a rod of iron."

Two years later we find the paper, whose support of the Government had been growing more and more luke-warm, describing Lord John's Ministry as having "limped through a long session of infirm purposes and immature counsels", and reminding the Prime Minister that though "the English people liked any government better than no government, it infinitely prefers a strong one to a weak one".

Feared, abused, censured, flattered, *The Times* under the successive control of Barnes and Delane marched onward from strength to strength. Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst described Barnes as "the most powerful man in the country". In a later era there were many who regarded Delane as the maker and breaker of Cabinets. Ministers were jealous of the power *The Times* wielded, but they continued to offer its editor information, hoping by these services to soften antagonism or gain support.

But Delane was not to be propitiated or won over by any form of bribe. He accepted all information but reserved to himself the right to comment on it in his own way. One very strong attack made on him in the House of Lords by Lord Derby, just before the Crimean War, drew from Delane a definition of the respective responsibilities of the statesman and the journalist, that is not without its interest for present-day politicians and scribes.

The occasion of the controversy was the publication in *The Times* of March 11, 1854, of an article on some diplomatic correspondence in which the Czar

of Russia made a proposal to the British Government in January, 1853, for a partition of Turkey. This proposal was at the time a jealously guarded secret of the Foreign Office, and its disclosure in the columns of *The Times* caused a sensation in political and diplomatic circles.

In the House of Lords *The Times* was bitterly attacked for publishing the information. Delane took as high a tone as the offended statesmen, and made a spirited reply.

A few days later Lord Derby again returned to the attack, and this time he had a fresh example of the perfidy of *The Times* to disclose. Three weeks before (on February 27) the British Government had sent an ultimatum to Russia. This important document was sent out in the charge of a trusted Foreign Office messenger, and every possible precaution had been taken to prevent the premature disclosure of its secret. But the messenger was forestalled by *The Times*, and the Czar received the intelligence from its columns. Lord Malmesbury and Lord Derby commented on this indiscretion in the severest terms.

> "How is it possible," asked Lord Malmesbury in virtuous anger, "that any honourable man, editing a public paper of such circulation as *The Times*, can reconcile to his conscience the act of having made public that which he must have known was intended to be a Cabinet secret?"

To this Delane made a stinging rejoinder. He pointed out that he obtained his information, not through any clandestine understanding with the Government, but through his own resources.

> "We hold ourselves responsible, not to Lord Derby or the House of Lords, but to the people of England for the accuracy and fitness of that which we think proper to publish. . . . Lord Derby failed to make the honourable portion of the Press his ally. He will fail to make it his slave, for

he cannot intimidate it, and although he passes for a proud man among his peers, he will meet with at least an equal amount of pride and independence in the ranks of those journals which he has idly attacked and unjustly accused."

This appeal to the multitude—the favourite device of the hard-pressed demagogue, comes rather strangely from the editor of the world's most powerful newspaper, which the journal then was.

Though *The Times* did a great national service in exposing the weaknesses of an effete military system during the Crimean War, there can be little doubt that it was also, as Kinglake the historian maintained, guilty of grave indiscretions. In W. H. Russell's despatches from the seat of war, which were printed without any excisions, important military information was made public that must have given "aid and comfort" to the enemy. The comments in the leading columns were often violent and overstrained. But as Sir Evelyn Wood and other high military authorities have told us, Russell's stories of the sufferings and privations of our soldiers saved the remnant of those grand battalions that went out to the Crimea.

Critical as Kinglake was of the attitude and actions of *The Times* during the Crimean War, he had also to admit that "no more able, more cogent appeals were perhaps ever made than those on which its great writers insisted again and again that the despatch of reinforcements must be achieved with an exertion of will strong enough to overthrow every obstacle". With a candour that discounts the force of his indictment of *The Times* he admits that when the tidings story of Inkerman reached England the journal expressed "the very soul of a nation", and, "seemed clothed with a power to speak, nay almost one may say, to act in the name of a united people".

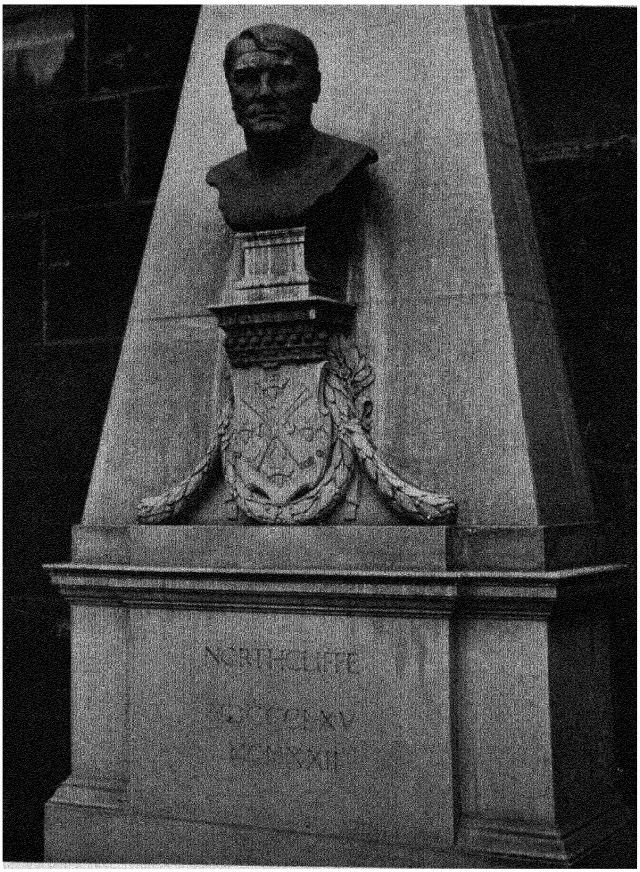
The relations between the Court and *The Times* were not always of the happiest, and especially during

the ten years before Lord Palmerston's death, when the journal accorded that statesman's policy a general support. The Prince Consort seems to have disliked Delane and hotly resented his criticism of the Austrian and Prussian Governments. More than once he alluded to articles in *The Times* as being " positively too wicked ". When in October, 1861, the coronation of the new King of Prussia was celebrated, *The Times* made some comments on the King's speech to the members of the Prussian chambers. In this address the King had enlarged on his Divine Right, and privileged position as the Lord's Anointed. *The Times* compared this with the claims of the early Stuart Kings. The diplomatists were horrified by the comments of *The Times*, and Lord Clarendon who had gone to Berlin to attend the ceremonies as British representative, wrote to the Queen drawing her attention to " the enormous and wanton mischief done by the article in *The Times* ".

The Queen on the receipt of a second letter wrote to Lord Palmerston as " the only person who could exercise any influence over Mr Delane ". " It will be important ", her Majesty said, " that that gentleman should know the mischief his writings are doing, and that the Government sincerely deplore it."

Lord Palmerston wrote, as desired, and a few days later Delane's answer was shown to the Queen. The letter began by stating that the writer would be very glad " to give the Prussians a respite from that most cruel of all inflictions—good advice ". This was a chaffing retort to Palmerston himself, who was notorious for his constant interference with the concerns of his Continental neighbours.

> " Indeed," Delane continued, " I would not have intruded anything so unwelcome during the splendid solemnities of the coronation had not the King uttered those surprising anachronisms upon Divine Right. Pray observe too, in



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extenuation of my offence, that I sent a faithful chronicler to Königsberg who has described all the splendours in a proper and reverend spirit, and done what man can do to render such ceremonies intelligible and the recital of them not too wearisome to those who believe in Divine Right as little as your Lordship's very obedient servant John T. Delane."

When the Queen was shown this letter she described it as "almost incredibly impertinent". We have it on the authority of J. Rhodes, the historian, that the attitude of *The Times* during the American Civil War caused more irritation and bitterness in the United States than either Palmerston's speeches or Lord John Russell's despatches.

An even more striking tribute to the influence of *The Times* in America is Abraham Lincoln's pronouncement of 1861—"*The Times* is one of the greatest powers in the world ; in fact I don't know anything which has more power, except perhaps the Mississippi."

Less than a year after this pronouncement Delane through his leader-writers used language about Lincoln that recalls Wilkes at his coarsest : "Is the name of Lincoln", asked *The Times* (of October 14, 1862), "to be classed in the catalogue of monsters, wholesale assassins and butchers of their kind ?"

Abraham Lincoln's is one of the few radiant figures of that unhappy period, and the terrific broadsides that Delane and other assailants flung at him recoiled only on themselves. W. H. Russell, a close personal friend of Delane, and correspondent of *The Times* in America during the Civil War, complained strongly of the bitter leaders in the journal which caused such irritation and bitterness in the United States ; whilst John Bright in a speech at Rochdale (December 4, 1861) said that "in *The Times*, the most powerful representative of English opinion, at least of the richer

classes, there has not been, since Mr Lincoln took office, one fair and honourable and friendly article on American affairs." As will be shown more fully in succeeding chapters, *The Times* took a leading, and on several occasions a dominating part in the countless controversies and discussions of the nineteenth century. It supported Governments whose general policy it approved, but was ever a fearless and candid critic of their follies and blunders. As political meteorologists its earlier editors, Barnes and Delane, were unexcelled. With ample information at their disposal their eyes were ever on the political barometer, and they read the signs of the sky with an accuracy that often seemed uncanny. Parliamentarians as well as general readers turned eagerly to their leading columns to find portents of the gathering storm, that made shipwrecks of the plans of statesmen and parties ; or signs of the favouring gale that wafted them to fortune and renown. *The Times* made plain to the student of affairs the enigmas and riddles of statecraft, and supplied him with a stream of information so full and copious that those who read it with care could claim to be fully conversant with public affairs. In the days of its greatest authority its power almost rivalled that of the Government, while its influence on public opinion was greater than that of any single statesman. British ambassadors abroad had often the difficult and delicate task of appeasing the wrath of foreign potentates who had been attacked in the columns of *The Times*, while at different periods the King of the Belgians, Louis Napoleon of France and the King of Prussia sent special envoys to Printing House Square for the purpose of establishing more friendly relations between the journal and themselves. Several times, during the lifetime of the Prince Consort and after his death, Delane had the temerity to lecture Queen Victoria, which so exasperated that

august lady that on one notable occasion she sent a letter of remonstrance to the editor for publication, in which she replied with dignity and spirit to the journal's criticisms.

With the end of Delane's control in 1878 the influences of *The Times* began to decline. Its circulation drooped, and in less than five years it had lost twenty-five per cent of its readers.

For this loss it is not difficult to account. The journal had lost an editor who enjoyed the confidence of the world's principal rulers and statesmen, and was the ablest gleaner of news, journalism had ever known. Thomas Chenery, Delane's successor, was a man of a different stamp. When, in 1877, he was appointed editor he had been a regular correspondent of the paper for more than twenty years. But by the public he was better known as Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford and translator of " The Assemblies " by El Hariry.

Lord Beaconsfield shook his head doubtfully when he heard of the appointment. Talking over the matter with Edmund Yates, another keen judge of an editor's capabilities, the veteran statesman remarked " I have heard that Chenery held a chair of Arabic somewhere, but I do not consider that an essential qualification for an editor of *The Times*". Yates ventured to disagree and said that Mr Chenery was an excellent journalist and had twenty years' experience of the traditions of Printing House Square.

But Lord Beaconsfield was not convinced and persisted—" But is he versed in social diplomacy like Mr Delane? That ", he added, " is an important part of his duties."

If Chenery lacked the social gifts and political insight of Delane he proved himself an able editor and worthily upheld *The Times* tradition.

Though the resignation of Delane was a great loss

to the paper, its decline in influence and circulation was due to other causes. For years past conditions had been gradually changing. The remission of the so-called Taxes on Knowledge had brought into the field a host of new rivals, and rejuvenated old competitors. *The Morning Post*, *The Standard* and *The Daily News* were all ably edited newspapers of wide circulation, while a younger paper, *The Daily Telegraph*, already far exceeded *The Times* in sales. Then there were great provincial dailies like the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Birmingham Daily Post*, and many others that offered a news service equal to that of the leading London dailies. To these *The Times* lost many of its country subscribers. This was a serious blow, if not the worst ; for the journal was now attacked on the editorial as well as the publishing side. Other newspapers adopted more enterprising and business-like methods, and so diverted a part of the golden stream that for many years had poured like a flood into the coffers of the advertisement department of *The Times*. But, and this was the greatest of all losses—the old journal had lost its magic power as a sounding-board. Conditions in newspaper land had changed. In former days a whispered conversation in a Mayfair dining-room was broadcast next morning to 60,000 subscribers from Printing House Square. Now the recently created press agencies collected these plums of official news and published them—not in one—but in hundreds of newspapers.

The Times still offered, as it had done since the beginning of the century, a wonderful news service. Its parliamentary reports were unrivalled ; its money article and commercial intelligence were authoritative ; its foreign correspondents in the principal European capitals were journalists of international reputation ; its law and police reports were the fullest and most accurate, published ; and its leaders though strongly

partisan in tone still reflected the independence of outlook which had ever characterized the journal.

Lord Beaconsfield's "spirited" foreign policy attracted Chenery's sympathy and support, and *The Times* under his direction became more and more anti-Gladstonian in tone. Gladstone, like Lord John Russell, was not impressed by these tactics and regarded them with lofty contempt. In a letter written in September, 1878, he said: "*The Times* seems to have taken a tone towards fury, an amusing variation. There have been few duller newspapers for the last three years, and they seem to wish to rival Delane in his decay."

When the Liberal statesman again took office in April, 1880, Abraham Hayward tried to patch up an alliance between Gladstone and *The Times*. These efforts, which are described in Hayward's Correspondence, were, however, unavailing. Gladstone lacked the suppleness of his great political antagonist, and as Chenery had succumbed to the seductive power of Disraelian charm, he remained until his death on February 11, 1884, an acute and determined critic of the measures brought in by the Liberal Government. Mr George Earle Buckle, who succeeded Chenery as editor, followed the policy of his predecessor, and for many years *The Times* could scarcely be distinguished from a Conservative journal.

This was due principally to Mr Gladstone's mysterious attitude to the Irish question and his intrigues and negotiations with the Nationalist leaders. Early in 1886 the Prime Minister sprang Home Rule and Irish Land Purchase Bills on Parliament. The country was not prepared for so revolutionary a change, and the Liberal party was rent in twain. *The Times* led the attack in the Press, and many influential newspapers which had hitherto consistently supported the Liberal party followed its lead. In London, the only

daily paper that supported the Government was *The Daily News*.

The Times attacked the Government and the Irish party with extraordinary virulence, and in its series of articles on Parnellism and Crime set out to prove that lawlessness and anarchy were the outcome of the operations of the Land League, and that the speeches and writings of those who were connected with this organization, were in revolt against law and order.

Had this been all, the articles and the charges they contained would long since have been forgotten. Five years before Lord Frederick Cavendish, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Mr Burke, the Under-Secretary, had been murdered in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, by the agents of a murder society known as the " Invincibles ".

In April, 1887, *The Times*, in one of the series of articles on Parnellism and Crime, published a facsimile letter purporting to bear Mr Parnell's signature, in which sympathy was expressed with the Phœnix Park murderers.

The appearance of this letter, prominently displayed in *The Times*, came as a bolt from the blue, and many even of Mr Parnell's friends thought that the disclosure had shattered his reputation. There were exciting debates in Parliament on the subject, in the course of which Parnell gave a simple denial to the charge that he was the author of the facsimile letter.

In 1888 a Special Commission, composed of three judges, was appointed to investigate *all* the charges made by *The Times*, but the point on which public interest centred was the charge of inciting to murder levelled at the leader of the Irish Nationalists.

In this rapid survey but a few notable events in the history of *The Times* are mentioned. They are, with many others, more fully dealt with in the chapters that follow. Among them will be found the

full story of the Parnell Commission, and Sir Charles Russell's dramatic cross-examination of *The Times*' witness, Piggott, who finally admitted that he was the forger of the facsimile letter.

This disclosure dealt a blow to the prestige of *The Times*, and it suffered heavily in credit both morally and financially. MacDonald, the manager of *The Times*, never recovered from the shock of the Parnell affair, and died in the following year (1889).

For a time Mr. Arthur Walter took the reins, but soon resigned them to the more capable hands of Mr Moberly Bell, who became manager in 1890.

In a statement made by Mr Bell to the partners of *The Times* in 1908, given in " The Life and Letters of C. F. Moberly Bell ", it was shown that the concern was unable to meet its liabilities.

In this doleful story it was disclosed that the revenue of *The Times* began to shrink in the second year of Chenery's control, and that the Parnell litigation, following a long period of declining revenue, brought the proprietors face to face with a desperate financial position.

Moberly Bell had had no business training. He was before all else a literary man. But he had the sunny optimism that goes with high courage, a vast store of energy, and he essayed the Herculean task that confronted him with a purpose that never faltered. Of the stern rearguard action he fought and the gains and losses in that terrific struggle, some account is given in the following pages.

One outcome of this struggle was the sale of the controlling interest in the newspaper to Lord Northcliffe. The new proprietor found this the strangest and most remarkable enterprise he had ever undertaken, and he rightly regarded the control of the world's greatest newspaper as the crowning achievement of his dazzling career. But soon his restless spirit chafed at

the bonds imposed by *The Times* tradition. Under his guidance the make-up of the paper was vastly improved, and he introduced several modern features. But when he tried to mould *The Times* to his heart's desire, and sought to tamper with its independence, he met with only slight success, and found that even his iron resolution was not strong enough to break down the passive resistance of a staff that had worked under the guidance of principles which the first John Walter impressed upon the journal.

In *The Times* of January 1, 1888, appeared an account of the first volume of *The Times*, written by Mr James R. Thursfield, in which these principles are admirably summarized. They are as follows :—

"To recognize commerce and industry as a contributory source of the greatness of England.

To uphold the cause of humanity and freedom.

To spare no effort in the collection of intelligence, and no pains in securing its accuracy and authenticity.

To discuss public affairs with moderation, good sense and a single-minded regard for the welfare of the country, the stability of its institutions, and the maintenance of its position among the great Powers of the world—in a word, to look at all public affairs, and all matters which concern or interest the public with the eye of an English citizen of virtue, good sense, and intelligence, and to express judgements upon them in a style not unworthy of our noble English tongue."

CHAPTER II

Early feuds between Authority and the Press—The Wilkes Case—The Libel Laws—Famous eighteenth-century journalists—The first John Walter, and The Daily Universal Register.

CENTURIES passed before the bitter feud between authority and the Press was finally adjusted, and the newspaper achieved its present position as an important factor in social and political life.

In this long contest the decisive battles were fought and won in the eighteenth century. Royalty frowned on this new power that had arisen in the State, and Ministers watched with jealous eye its continued growth and steady development.

In the reign of Queen Anne, politicians began to recognize the value of publicity, and Whig and Tory used the pamphlet journals of the period as an instrument of political warfare. In later years the cynical Walpole bought the ever-ready pens of the journalists with pensions and bribes. With the accession of George III the struggle between the contending forces became openly hostile. The successive Governments of Bute, Grenville, Rockingham and Grafton, each of which became in turn more subservient to the King, vainly tried to bludgeon the journalists into submission and obedience. One result of this ill-starred policy was, that for a period of ten years Court and Parliament engaged in an undignified and humiliating contest with Wilkes, the editor of *The North Briton*.

This struggle, the most memorable in the history of journalism, arose through what Junius describes as

"some unwarrantable insinuations", in an article which Wilkes wrote for his journal. In this essay as the same authority remarks, "He said more than moderate men would justify", but not enough to arouse personal resentment.

For his offence Wilkes was illegally arrested, and four times expelled from Parliament, and on each occasion was re-elected by his constituents. When after his imprisonment he was elected to a new Parliament, his persecutors made no attempt to keep him out of his seat. In the same year (1774) he was elected Lord Mayor of London, out of his turn. In 1782 the resolution passed by the House of Commons declaring his incapacity, was expunged from the journals of the House "as subversive of the rights of the whole body of electors". With this decision Wilkes gained his final personal triumph; while the King and his Ministers who had violated the fundamental laws of the constitution suffered bitter humiliation. But apart from the larger issues involved the persecution of Wilkes had other and not unimportant results.

After his release from the Tower, he instituted proceedings against the Government for unlawful imprisonment, and the wrongful seizure of his papers. In this action he recovered damages of £5,000. After this his publisher, Kearsley, and printer, Balfe, as well as others connected with *The Monitor* who had suffered in common with Wilkes, were also awarded substantial damages. In all the publishers and printers of journals who had been arrested in connection with this affair, recovered from the Government, as Lord North admitted, fully £100,000.

The moral advantages of these legal victories were equally substantial. The Press took a more independent tone, and its rights and liberties were more firmly established. It was left to Junius to point the moral of these illegal actions in the trenchant

letters he addressed to the King and the Duke of Grafton :

> "It is the misfortune of your life," so began his letter to the King, "and originally the cause of every reproach and distress which has attended your government, that you should never have been acquainted with the language of truth until you heard it in the complaints of your people."

After a comprehensive indictment of the policy of past and present Ministers of the King the letter concludes:

> "The people of England are loyal to the House of Hanover, not from a vain preference of one family for another, but from a conviction that the establishment of that family was necessary to the support of their civil and religious liberties. . . . The name of Stuart is only contemptible ; armed with the sovereign authority their principles are formidable. The prince who imitates their conduct should be warned by their example, and while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the crown, should remember that, as it was acquired by one revolution, it may be lost by another."

The letters of Junius were published in *The Public Advertiser*, the most influential daily newspaper of the period. It was the direct descendant of *The Daily Post*, which Daniel Defoe helped to found in 1719, and its editor and printer was Henry Sampson Woodfall.

For a long time the King and Government had been compelled to bear the attacks of Junius in silence, for the letters were written with such caution and skill that it was difficult to find in them any passage on which a charge of libel could be based. But the letter to the King so outraged the feelings of his Ministers and supporters that, despite all considerations of prudence, they decided to take action. As the name of the author could not be discovered, it was decided to proceed against Woodfall, the editor, and he was

tried before the court of King's Bench on June 13, 1770. In his charge to the jury, Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, who presided, told them in so many words that they had nothing to determine except the fact of printing and publishing ; that they had not to decide whether the King had been libelled or not.

In this case the jury brought in a verdict of " guilty of printing and publishing only ".

A few weeks later John Miller of *The London Evening Post* was brought to trial for libelling the King by reprinting and publishing the Junius letter. Here the jury brought in a verdict of " not guilty ".

The journalists were jubilant over these verdicts, but their triumph was short-lived. For Lord Mansfield's ruling in the Woodfall trial established a precedent under which publishers and printers groaned for more than twenty years. In the hands of Ministers it became a most dangerous instrument for the punishment of political opponents, and was employed in a long series of Press prosecutions. In a debate in the House of Lords, Lord Camden, a great lawyer, roundly declared that " Lord Mansfield's doctrine is not the law of England ", while Burke in the Commons subjected the Chief Justice to a rhetorical broadside. He pointed out that under the presidency of such judges the courts must lose their value. " To the people they appear ", he exclaimed, " the temples of idols and false oracles, or rather as the dwellings of truth and justice converted into dens of thieves and robbers."

Strangely enough Charles James Fox, who still looked up to Burke as his political mentor, took the opposite view and warmly commended the Government for putting an end to the " infamous lampoons and satires " that were published.

The House of Commons accepted Fox's view that the Government had the right to decide whether any

published matter was libellous, and that the function of the jury was limited to deciding whether the person or persons charged with publishing such matter had actually done so.

Lord Mansfield's ruling, which was endorsed by both Houses of Parliament, had a threefold effect. It vastly increased the power of the Crown ; limited the power of juries ; and gravely affected the liberty of the Press.

Ministers and court favourites took the fullest advantage of the license afforded them by this new doctrine. The law of libel was uncertain and undefined and Governments interpreted it to suit their own purposes, while juries were powerless to do more than register their decisions. Denied the protection of the Courts of Justice, printers and booksellers were for a long period in a deplorable position.

One example of the treatment to which they were subjected may be cited. On February 2, 1773, an article appeared in *The London Evening Post*, in which that notorious politician the Earl of Sandwich, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, was charged with selling an office of trust for £2,000. Almon and Miller the editor and printer of the journal were brought to trial for libelling the Earl, and the case was heard before Lord Mansfield. Lord Sandwich scarcely troubled to rebut the charge, for which strong evidence was tendered by the defence. Lord Mansfield was greatly shocked by the temerity of the defendants in proving the truth of such a charge, and regarded their action as an aggravation of the offence. He instructed the jury to take this into consideration in awarding damages. The jury awarded the Earl £2,000 damages, an amazing amount for those days.

Can we wonder that John Almon who had frequently been prosecuted said in reference to this and other cases :

> "A man had better make his son a tinker than a printer or bookseller. . . . The law of libel is unwritten, uncertain and undefinable. It is one thing to-day and another to-morrow. No man can tell what it is. It is sometimes what the King or Queen pleases; sometimes what the minister pleases; sometimes what the attorney-general pleases."

Bentham put the point more tersely, "Anything which any man, at any time, for any reason, chooses to be offended with, is a libel".

But prosecutions for libel were not the only troubles that afflicted publishers and printers. Fiscal burdens also oppressed them, and these with the passing years were constantly made heavier. In 1757 the stamp duty on every half-sheet sold was raised to one penny, and the tax on each advertisement printed was raised to two shillings. In 1776 the stamp duty rose to three half-pence, and thirteen years later to twopence. The advertisement tax was also raised to half a crown. Again in 1797 the stamp duty was advanced to threepence, with a discount of sixteen per cent on sums amounting to £10. This discount was allowed only for newspapers not sold at more than sixpence, and was considered by Pitt, who imposed this additional tax, as "a reasonable compensation to such publishers of newspapers who shall not advance the price of their papers beyond the amount of duty imposed thereon by this Act". Once again in 1804, but this time entirely as a war measure, the newspaper duty was raised to threepence-halfpenny, and the advertisement duty to three shillings and sixpence.

When it is further explained that this newspaper duty of threepence-halfpenny was at the beginning of the nineteenth century charged on a four-page sheet which contained less matter than two pages of a modern London newspaper, it is possible to realize how heavy were the burdens of the newspaper owner

and how mistrustful and suspicious successive Governments were of the strange and mighty engine which had grown up under his fostering care.

Though the Press had been growing in influence for a hundred years or more, the majority of journalists were only now learning to use the power it conferred with a real sense of responsibility. Addison and Steele, Swift and Defoe, Fielding and Dr Johnson, had developed its latent possibilities, and given it dignity and authority. But the lesser breed—the Grub Street hacks who sold their pens to the highest bidder, and became the hirelings of unscrupulous politicians—retarded its progress for generations. Dipping their quills in venom, and sheltered by the anonymity of the Press, these creatures launched their lampoons and satires against high and low. For their calumnies and slanders they exchanged pensions and office ; they were despised by the politicians whose tools they were, and it is on record that Sir Robert Walpole, one of the first English statesmen to recognize the value of publicity, shrank back in horror from personal contact with the scribblers who accepted his bribes. Crabbe, the poet, had few illusions about the news writers of his day, and he describes their shifts and wiles with amusing cynicism :

> "Some, champions for the rights that prop the crown ;
> Some, sturdy patriots, sworn to pull them down ;
> Some, neutral powers, with secret forces fraught,
> Wishing for war, but willing to be bought ;
> While some to every side and party go,
> Shift every friend, and join with every foe ;
> Like sturdy rogues in privateers they strike
> This side and that the foes of both alike—
> A traitor crew, who thrive in troubled times,
> Feared for their force, and courted for their crimes.
> Such are our guides."

But though the state of public morality was low

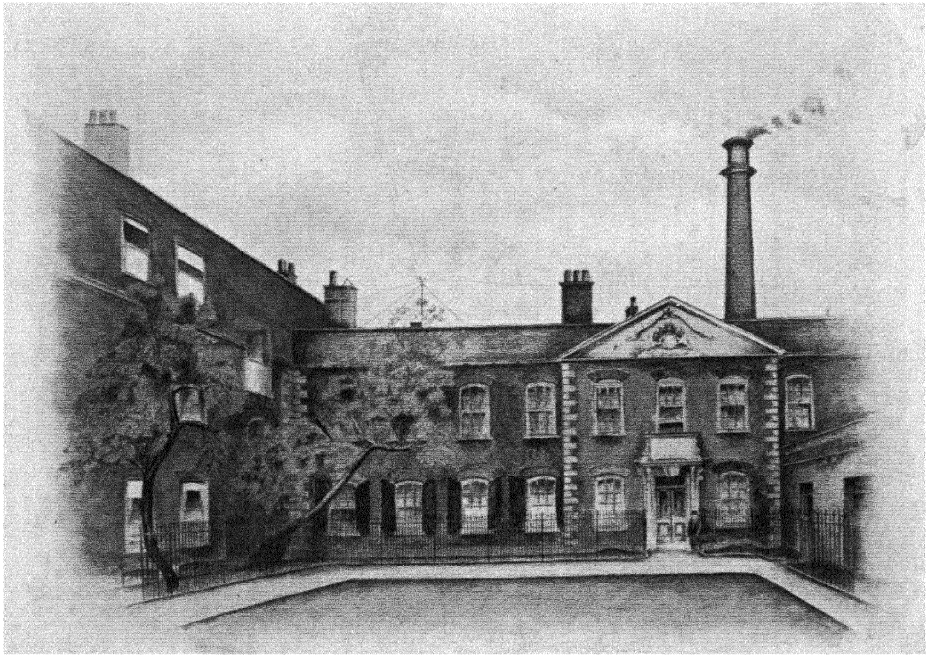
and Ministers continued to debauch and persecute the Press, daily and weekly journals were gradually rising in popular favour. The pamphlet journal of a former age was dead, and the public appetite for news, whetted by stirring events abroad and at home, manifested itself in a growing demand for the London daily newspapers. Many who had rarely, if ever, read before, now turned to the public journals to discover what was happening in the world around them. Crabbe in his poem "The Newspaper" deplored this curiosity and sadly admitted that

> "A master passion is the love of news".

Apostrophizing the newspaper he said :

> "To you all readers turn ; and they can look
> Pleased on a paper, who abhor a book.
> They who ne'er deigned their Bibles to peruse,
> Would think it hard to be denied their news.
> Sinners and saints, the wisest and the weak,
> Here mingle tastes and one amusement seek."

Seventeen years before *The Times* was established the House of Commons issued a proclamation forbidding the publication of its debates. In this the Commons were within their legal rights, and they had moreover the excuse that all or nearly all of the summaries of debates then published were inaccurate and sometimes slanderous. But the time for this action was ill-chosen. Only three years before dangerous riots had broken out in the country as well as in London, when Wilkes was expelled from Parliament and thrown into prison after his election for the county of Middlesex. Wilkes in that struggle had vindicated the right of the Press to discuss public affairs, and the public regarded this proclamation as another attempt to gag the printers, and prevent the publication of information vital to national interests.



"THE TIMES" OFFICE : PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE, 1794

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Shortly after it was issued eight printers were summoned to the bar of the House for setting this proclamation at defiance. One of the printers who disobeyed the summons was taken into custody under a warrant from the Speaker, by Whittam, a House of Commons messenger. The printer, Miller, sent for a constable, and gave his captor into custody on a charge of assault. Both then appeared before Crosby, the Lord Mayor, at the Mansion House, who was sitting with Wilkes and another magistrate name Oliver. The magistrate dismissed the charge against the printer, but committed the House of Commons messenger for trial at the next quarter sessions. Wilkes also wrote to Lord Halifax, protesting against the illegal prosecution of the printers.

Two days later (March 18, 1771) the Lord Mayor and Oliver who were members of the House were ordered to appear on separate days in their places, and give an account of their conduct. Wilkes was also ordered to appear at the bar of the House. In reply Wilkes stated that as he had not been addressed as a member of Parliament the summons was informal, and he should not obey it.

On the 19th Lord Mayor Crosby, though very ill, drove to the House in state, attended by an immense crowd of cheering citizens. In a speech to the assembled members, he made a long and elaborate defence of his action, and maintained that it was his duty to protect all citizens from assault by outsiders. He also asked that he should be further heard through counsel. This was granted, and the same privilege was also granted to Oliver.

Then the House with an inconsistency amazing in any deliberative assembly but a Georgian Parliament controlled by King's placemen, and without waiting to hear counsel's addresses, ordered the Lord Mayor's clerk to produce the City minute book. The House

then compelled him, despite the protests of many members, to erase from it the record of the proceedings against the messenger Whittam. As a protest against this action Burke and many members of the Opposition walked out of the House. "The act of a mob, not of a Parliament" was Lord Chatham's verdict on this amazing affair.

The curtain went up on the next act in this drama when on March 25 Crosby and Oliver went down again to the House of Commons. The City was aflame with anger at the insult offer to its magistrates, and the crowd that accompanied the City members was larger and more indignant than before. The clamour outside the House was so great that members could scarcely hear each other speak.

The Lord Mayor and his fellow-alderman now announced that they had decided not to employ counsel, but were prepared to abide the consequences of their actions. The House debated the subject again, and came to the conclusion that its privileges had been grossly violated. Judgement on Lord Mayor Crosby was deferred, as he was obviously very ill. When he left the House his supporters unharnessed the horses and dragged his carriage through cheering crowds to the Mansion House. Oliver in his address to the House, took a more militant tone than his colleague and declared that he gloried in what he had done, and as he expected little from the justice of ministers he defied their power.

Oliver was ordered to the Tower. The Lord Mayor attended the next meeting of the House. Part of the immense crowd that accompanied him filled Palace Yard, and members who were well-known supporters of the Government were the objects of a hostile demonstration when they tried to reach the doors. They were hustled and jeered at, and many were pelted with stones and mud. Lord North

suffered personal injury and his carriage was smashed to pieces. Evidently cowed by these successive demonstrations of popular feeling the Government was now disposed to adopt a more conciliatory attitude, and it was proposed that in consideration of the Lord Mayor's health, he should be merely placed under the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. But Crosby would accept no compromise, and replied

> " I ask no favour of this House. I crave no mercy from the Treasury bench. I am ready to go to my noble friend at the Tower if the House shall order me. My conscience is clear, and tells me that I have kept my oath and done my duty to the city of which I have the honour to be chief magistrate, and to my country. I have no apology to make for having acted uprightly, and I fear not any resentment of such conduct."

Crosby was granted the crown of martyrdom he and his friends desired, and he joined Oliver in the Tower.

The public outcry that followed was cleverly stage-managed by Wilkes, the astutest publicity organizer of the century. A stream of letters appeared in the public prints condemning this outrage on the city. Burke lent his powerful aid to the agitation. " Junius ", writing under the signature of " an Englishman ", fulminated against " the triple unions of crown, lords and commons ", and declared that " The three estates, instead of being a control upon each other, are let loose upon the constitution ". Crosby and Oliver became popular heroes and were visited in the Tower by their friends and political sympathizers. At the end of six weeks it was apparent even to so obtuse a politician as Lord North that the only result of the struggle was to render his Government more obnoxious than ever, and on May 8 when Parliament was prorogued the prisoners were released.

This incident marked the end of the conflict between Parliament and the Press. Thanks to the aid of the City the printers of newspapers won a victory which added greatly to the dignity and influence of the Press. It was apparently a drawn battle, for the right of the newspapers to report Parliamentary proceedings was never officially recognized. But since that time no general attempt has been made to prevent them making and publishing reports. On certain special occasions during the American war of Independence, and during the war with France that followed, the galleries were closed, and the House of Commons sat in secret session. But these were isolated instances which served as reminders that admission to the reporters' gallery was a privilege which Parliament may grant, and not a right that can be claimed.

Grudgingly granted though it was, the value of this concession to the Press cannot be over-estimated. Brought under the searchlight of publicity, corruption sought out new hiding-places, and members of Parliament learned to realize their responsibility to their constituents and the nation. From the debates in Parliament the public learned many things that were vital to their interests.

The people were roused to a fuller and deeper interest in national affairs, and a more informed and enlightened public opinion was created which influenced the deliberations of Parliament, and guided the decisions of Ministers. Through its representatives in the Press the nation took part in the affairs of State, and the collective voice of millions of unenfranchized citizens helped to shape its destinies. This enlightened public opinion found its natural expression in the Press, which now was invested with authority and became the Fourth Estate of the Realm. With its added responsibilities it attracted a new body of men to its service who raised its moral



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standards, and brought to the tasks it offered, trained intelligence, sanity of judgement, and a wider appreciation of its possibilities as a cultural influence.

The steadily increasing demand for newspapers brought wealth to the proprietors of some of the better-class journals, and they became independent of political support. But there were still several of the baser sort who accepted the subsidies and bribes of the party chiefs.

The Press had few friends among the politicians. Whig and Tory alike were jealous of its growing influence. The King's Tory Ministers had encouraged their own organs to slander political opponents, and had rigorously prosecuted the opposition journals that attacked them ; while the Whigs were as boisterous about the licentiousness of a Tory paper as they were clamorous for the liberties of their own. Each side demanded freedom for their own papers. So long as the Press had been subservient, it had admirably served the purposes of scheming partizans. But now as a power steadily growing in strength, it interfered with their plans and poached on their preserves. As we have seen they tried to destroy it, or at least limit its sphere of action. But their efforts came to nought, and the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century witnessed a remarkable development of newspaper enterprise in London.

It was at the beginning of this era that John Walter entered the lists as a newspaper proprietor, and established *The Daily Universal Register*, which after running for three years, became *The Times and Universal Register*, and subsequently *The Times*.

John Walter, the founder of the great newspaper with which the name of his family has been associated for nearly a century and a half, was a man of many business interests, though these were concerned prin-

cipally with bookselling and printing. Born in 1739, he was bound as apprentice at an early age to Robert Dodsley, the famous bookseller and publisher. At that time booksellers were closely identified with newspaper enterprise, and many of them were owners of journals or other classes of periodicals. Thus among the names of the proprietors of *The Morning Chronicle*, we find the names of six of the fraternity—John Murray, William Griffin, T. Evans, J. Spilsbury, James Robson and Peter Elmsley. Another name in this list of proprietors that still figures prominently in the world of business is that of Christie, the auctioneer. At Dodsley's then it is highly probable that young Walter became thoroughly acquainted with the technicalities, not only of book-publishing but of periodical production as well.

When the term of his apprenticeship was completed, John Walter went into business on his own account. He opened a shop at Charing Cross, where he carried on a flourishing trade as bookseller for some forty years.

But long before this period elapsed Walter had heated other irons in the fire, and engaged in many profitable speculations. Among his business associates he was known as a shrewd and daring underwriter at Lloyds. He also engaged in speculations in coal, which he bought in large quantities and sold at substantial profits. He was for eighteen years director of the Westminster branch of the Phœnix Fire Office (Nichols, " Literary Anecdotes ", vol. vi, p. 443). There is also a report that he lost a large fortune through the capture of a merchantman he had insured, by a French privateer.

But his principal interest outside the bookselling business was in printing and publishing, and this he was able to gratify when in 1783 he acquired premises in Printing House Square for the purpose of developing

a new printing process, known as logography. This process was the invention of one of his employees, a compositor name Henry Johnson, while Walter was its patentee and "part contriver". The new method was described by its inventor in "An Introduction to Logography" by Henry Johnson (1783). Its principal feature was the use of metal castings of words, instead of separate letters. Walter and Johnson both firmly believed that the use of these castings would make composition easier and quicker, and therefore more economical. They also thought that greater accuracy would be ensured.

In this faith Walter persevered in his project, and had roots, prefixes and terminations cast in single types, as well as entire words. The innovation did not answer expectations. But Walter's faith in it was deeply rooted, and he attributed its failures to careless and indifferent workmanship on the part of his compositors rather than to any internal defect in the system. In *The Daily Universal Register*, August 10, 1706, he wrote : "Embarked in a business, into which I entered as a mere novice, consisting of several departments, want of experience laid me open to many and gross impositions, and I have been severely injured by the inattention, neglect and ignorance of others."

The printers were maliciously amused by Walter's efforts to popularize this innovation and nicknamed him the Logographic Printer. One of the wits of the town suggested that his orders to the type-founder were made up as follows :

> "Send me a hundred-weight of type, made up in separate pounds of *heat*, *cold*, *wet*, *dry*, *murder*, *fire*, *dreadful robbery*, *atrocious outrage*, *fearful calamity*, *alarming explosion*, *honourable gentleman*, *loud cheers*, *gracious Majesty*, *interesting female*, and other words and phrases common to newspaper phraseology."

But ridicule failed to move Walter from his purpose, and it was not until *The Daily Universal Register* had been running for a year and a half, and several books and pamphlets had been printed by the new system, that Walter realized the embarrassments and difficulties caused by crowding his founts with vast numbers of words that were seldom used, as well as to keep a sufficient store of those most in use. Then at last Walter realized that the new method was a failure and he decided to revert to the general practice of his fellow-printers, though for some years longer a modified form of logography was made use of in Printing House Square.

But John Walter had other plans beside that of developing the new system of Logography he had patented. Owning the business at Printing House Square, it was natural that he should consider the feasibility of printing and publishing a newspaper there. When he ultimately decided to carry out this project, the manifest advantage to be derived from keeping his staff and plant fully occupied must have powerfully influenced him in coming to this decision.

This venture *The Daily Universal Register* made its first appearance on January 1, 1785. The price of this new journal was fixed at twopence-halfpenny, a halfpenny less than that of most of the other dailies, and Mr Walter made the gratifying announcement that it should be published punctually at six o'clock every morning. He also promised that all advertisements should invariably appear on the day after they had been sent in, even if it was found necessary to issue an extra half-sheet, to make room for them.

John Walter was liberal in his promises, and in a signed article, which appeared in the first number, told his readers that the *Register* would combine the virtues and advantages of all its contemporaries.

"It is very far from my intention," he said, "to detract from the acknowledged merit of the daily papers now in existence. . . . Nevertheless it is certain some of the best, some of the most respectable, and some of the most useful members of the community have frequently complained (and the causes of their complaints still exist) that by radical defects in the plan of the present established papers they were deprived of many advantages which ought naturally to result from daily publications. Of these some build their fame on the length and accuracy of their parliamentary reports. . . . Others are principally attentive to the politics of the day, and make it their duty to give satisfaction to the numerous class of politicians, who, blessed with easy circumstances, have nothing better to do than to amuse themselves with watching the motions of ministers both at home and abroad, and endeavouring to find out the secret springs that set in motion the great machine of government in every state and empire in the world. There is one paper which in no degree interferes with the pursuits of its contemporaries; it looks upon parliamentary debates as sacred mysteries that cannot be submitted to vulgar eyes without profanation. Political investigations it apprehends to be little short of treason and therefore loyally abstains from them. It deals almost solely in advertisements, and consequently though a very useful, it is by no means an entertaining paper. Thus it would seem that every newspaper published in London is calculated for a particular set of readers only; so that, if each set were to change its favourite publication for another, the commutation would produce disgust and dissatisfaction to all. The politician would then find nothing to amuse him but long accounts of petty squabbles about trifles in parliament, as panegyrics on the men and measures that he most disliked, or libels on those whom he most revered. The person to whom parliamentary debates afford unspeakable delight would find himself bored with political speculations about the measures that the different courts in Europe might probably adopt, or disgusted with whole pages of advertisements in which he felt no concern; whilst the plain shopkeeper who wanted to find a convenient house for his business, and the servant

who purchased his paper in hopes of seeing in it an advertisement directing where he might find a place to suit him, would have their labour for their pains in perusing publications filled with senatorial debates, or political essays and remarks which would direct them to nothing less than the house or place they wanted. A newspaper, conducted on the true and natural principles of such a publication, ought to be the Register of the Times, and faithful recorder of every species of intelligence. It ought not to be engrossed by any particular object, but, like a well-covered table, it should contain something for every palate."

Having enlarged on the shortcomings of his prospective rivals, Walter next outlined his own policy. *The Register* was, he assured his readers, to be much more than an advertising sheet, and it was his aim to make it a chronicle of well-authenticated and interesting news, and a trustworthy guide of public opinion.

"Moderate men, therefore, I trust," he continued, "will countenance a paper which has for one of its objects to cool the animosities, stifle the resentments, manage the personal honour and reconcile the principals of contending parties, while the favours of those will be courted who support principles by fair argument, and think that a good cause may be injured by personalities and low invective. The correspondence of such as descend to illiteral abuse, and attack the man rather than the measure, will always be disregarded. *The Register* instead of dealing in scurrilities and abusing the great men in power, or the great men out of power, or instead of deifying the one or the other, will reserve to itself the right of censuring or applauding either as their conduct may occasionally appear proper or improper."

Finally, with a touching regard for the susceptibilities of his readers, he assured them that even the most innocent might read the columns of *The Register* without fear of contamination.

"Nothing," he said, "shall ever find a place in *The Universal Register* that can tend to wound the ear of delicacy

or corrupt the heart. Vice shall never be suffered therein to wear the garb of virtue. To hold out the former in alluring colours would strike at the very root of morality, and concealing the native deformity of vice might seduce unsuspecting innocence from the paths of virtue."

The Daily Universal Register did not fulfil the fair promises of Walter's pretentious article, nor did it combine the best features of its contemporaries. " The logographic newspaper," as its owner called it, was unfortunate from the start, and proved an unprofitable speculation. Much ridicule was heaped on it by rival journalists, but it attracted little notice from the general public. With its insignificant circulation *The Register* could have had little influence in " cooling the animosities, stifling the resentments, and reconciling the principals of contending parties "—which was one of Walter's declared objects in establishing the newspaper.

He had also more formidable opposition to contend with from the other daily papers than he realized. Of these the oldest and most influential were *The Public Advertiser* and *The Morning Chronicle*. The first of these, edited by Henry Sampson Woodfall, contained an excellent summary of domestic and foreign news, and original articles. But the attraction which brought it hosts of readers was its correspondence. In its columns appeared letters on all kinds of subjects, and of all shades of opinion. Between 1767 and 1772 the letters of Junius appeared in this journal, as well as the replies of the public men he criticized. From that time onward *The Public Advertiser* became a forum in which men of all parties aired their views, and made pronouncements of greater or less importance. Henry Woodfall, the editor, was one of the few really independent men of his time. Nichols, the author of " Literary Anecdotes ", speaks highly of his impartiality and independence. " With regard to the line of

conduct he had adopted", says this writer, "respecting his paper in a pecuniary point of view, it was always most scrupulously honourable and correct, and though frequently offered money to suppress certain articles of intelligence not pleasant to the particular individual, yet never could he be prevailed upon to forgo what he deemed it his duty to the public for any consideration of such kind, however much to his personal advantage."

Evidently he took the modern editorial view that what public men wish to suppress is good "copy", and that what they wish to see printed is propaganda.

The Morning Chronicle, first published in 1769, was conducted for twenty years by William Woodfall, the younger brother of Henry Woodfall. To him belongs the distinction of being the originator of the Parliamentary report. Before he took up this work the public had to be satisfied with a few lines summary of the previous day's debates in the two Houses. Woodfall altered all this. He had a marvellous memory, and acting as his own reporter he sat night after night in the galleries of the Houses of Parliament, and the next day wrote out extended summaries of the speeches he had heard.

> "Without taking a single note," we are told by Nichols, "to assist his memory, without the use of an amanuensis to ease his labour, he has been known to write sixteen columns after having sat in a crowded gallery for as many hours, without an interval of rest. He took pride in his exertion which brought him more praise than profit."

Woodfall's amazing exertions and wonderful powers of memory helped to make *The Morning Chronicle* very popular.

Another contemporary with which Walter had to reckon with was *The Morning Post*, which had already voyaged twelve years on the stormy seas of popular literature when the new paper was launched from

Printing House Square. *The Morning Post* is the only newspaper of that period, besides *The Times*, which still survives in the twentieth century. But in those early years it displayed none of those sterling qualities that foreshadowed its future standing. At first it was a scurrilous sheet issued in the interests of Lord North's ministry, and upheld the cause of the King's Party. From 1775 to 1780 it was edited by the Rev. Henry Bate, who was notorious as duellist, prize-fighter, and rake, and the author of several licentious plays.[1] Bate's personal abuse of his political opponents, and the vulgar social gossip which was a prominent feature of the paper, lowered *The Morning Post* to the position of a gutter sheet. Referring to Bate's duel at the Adelphi tavern, Macaulay, in his essay on Croker's "Boswell", says: "It certainly seems almost incredible to a person living in our time, that any human being should ever have stooped to fight with a writer in *The Morning Post*."

As a champion of the King's party Bate enjoyed an immunity from prosecution that must have made the mud-slingers of the opposite camp envious, but at last he discovered that even in this sheltered position he was not safe himself from the clutches of the law. In 1780 he charged the Duke of Richmond, in the columns of *The Morning Post*, with conducting a treasonable correspondence with the French Government, which at that time was believed to be contemplating an invasion of England. For this libel Bate was prosecuted and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. So ended his connection with *The Morning Post*. The paper was continued on the same lines for some years by another disreputable clergyman, William Jackson, who was regarded by some critics of the period as a writer of exceptional merit.

[1] For a further account of Bate's exploits, see the author's "The Divorce Case of Queen Caroline", pp. 94–8.

Meanwhile, Bate had been released from prison. Having inherited a large fortune, he assumed his benefactor's name of Dudley, and laid out some of his newly acquired wealth in establishing *The Morning Herald and General Advertiser*. The new journal began its career on November 1, 1780. Mr Bate Dudley's preliminary announcement suggested that he was about to mend his ways and follow the path of sober journalism. He told his readers that his newspaper was to be conducted on Liberal principles. The article continues : " His power, not being equal to the suppression of obscene trash and low invective, he trusts such articles will never stray from their natural channel to defile a single column of *The Morning Herald*."

These pious hopes were not realized. *The Morning Herald* strongly supported the Carlton House faction, and as *The Morning Post* owed allegiance to Pitt and the King's party there was bitter rivalry between the two newspapers. Sheridan, who was the Prince of Wales's right-hand man, gave what help he could to so zealous a supporter of his master, and many pungent articles and witty paragraphs of his appeared in the *Herald*, but for the most part the new paper was inexpressibly dull. There was no " bite " in its attack, its satire lacked finish, while the never-failing stream of " low invective " that flowed through its columns must have proved exasperating to the least sensitive of its readers.

But John Walter had still another rival to measure his strength against—a rival much more formidable than any that have yet been mentioned—James Perry. When Walter was vainly striving to vitalize *The Daily Universal Register*, Perry was engaged in the still more thankless task of transforming the old and moribund *Gazetteer* into a modern newspaper.

Perry's career is typical of that of many Scotsmen

born in humble circumstances. His father was a builder in a small way of business, but he was able to give the boy a good education, and hoped to launch him in one of the learned professions. But the son had ideas of his own as to his future, and his father's dreams were shattered when he discovered that James had joined a company of strolling players, of which Thomas Holcroft was a member.

Perry was not destined to shine as an actor—whatever dramatic ability he possessed was discounted by an appalling Scots accent, which made his speeches unintelligible to his audiences, and after a year's trial the kindly players besought him to seek other employment. This was in 1774, when he was eighteen years of age. He travelled to Manchester, where he became a clerk in a cotton-spinner's office. He remained in this situation two years, and prepared himself for more remunerative employment by diligent study in his leisure hours. In 1777 he resolved to try his fortunes in London. He brought with him from Manchester a letter of introduction to Richardson & Urquhart, the well-known firm of booksellers. He was kindly received by Urquhart, who promised to find him a situation. Eager to make a start, the young man called day after day at the shop, only to be told that no opening had occurred. Then one morning when he arrived he found Urquhart chuckling over the latest issue of *The General Advertiser*.

" I have heard of nothing to suit you, but if you could write such articles as this ", said Urquhart, handing Perry the newspaper he had been reading, " I could give you work at once ".

Perry started in surprise when he looked at the article, and joyfully told his patron that this was one of several articles he had amused himself in writing, and had sent anonymously to the paper. In confirmation of his claim to authorship, he produced another

article from his pocket, which he said that he intended to use in the same way. Urquhart took the manuscript which Perry handed him with some diffidence, read it carefully through, and then, clapping his hand on his knee, exclaimed, "That's the very thing! I am one of the principal proprietors of this paper, and we want just such a writer as you. We have a meeting to-night, and I shall propose you."

On the following day, Perry, to his great joy and satisfaction, found himself an accredited member of the staff of *The General Advertiser*. His satisfaction however must have been damped when he learned that his services were to be remunerated at the modest rate of one guinea a week, with an extra half-guinea for general work on *The London Evening Post*—an afternoon paper that appeared three times weekly.

The General Advertiser did not carry heavy enough guns to meet the broadsides of its competitors, and although Perry in the seven years he served it scored some valuable "scoops" that revealed rare journalistic ability, and resulted in temporary increases of circulation, the newspaper never became prosperous. While he was still with the paper he helped to establish *The European Magazine*, and edited it during the first year of its existence.

In 1783—two years before John Walter projected *The Register*—he accepted the editorship of *The Gazetteer*. In taking this position he stipulated that "he was to be left to the free exercise of his political opinions, which were those asserted by Mr Fox".

During his editorship of *The Gazetteer*—which was a trade organ of the booksellers and therefore rather unsuitable for his purpose—Perry introduced a great reform in parliamentary reporting. As we have seen, *The Morning Chronicle* was the only daily newspaper that furnished long reports of the proceedings in both Houses of Parliament. But this had been the work

of William Woodfall alone. The defect of this one-man service was that after a long debate it was impossible for Woodfall to get his report of several columns written out and set in type in time for a morning issue of the paper. In consequence of this *The Morning Chronicle* was often not published until late in the afternoon. This was naturally irritating to readers interested in politics, but as no other newspaper published parliamentary reports, they submitted to the delay with a good grace, and remained faithful to the *Chronicle*.

Perry conceived a plan of breaking down the monopoly of *The Morning Chronicle* by furnishing the readers of his paper with adequate reports. He also hoped to improve on his rival's methods by publishing the accounts of debates the morning after their occurrence. His plan was to employ a staff of reporters to do this work, which would be much quicker and less laborious than Woodfall's method. After much trouble, occasioned by Parliament's jealous regard for its privileges, Perry's plan was finally carried through, though not before he had severed his connection with *The Gazetteer* and become editor and part-proprietor of *The Morning Chronicle*, the monopoly of whose former proprietors he had shattered.

This change occurred in 1789, a year after John Walter changed the name of *The Daily Universal Register* to *The Times*. Under Perry's control *The Morning Chronicle* became the most prosperous and influential of London journals, though *The Times* under the first John Walter became in a few years a strong and dangerous rival.

Perry might be called the Georgian Delane, for he had many of the qualities of the great Victorian editor. No journalist of his time, we are told, enjoyed a tithe of his personal popularity. His candid friends said

that he was "a little of a coxcomb" and "fond of the society of lords", but all agreed that he was honourable, generous, and frank, and was distinguished for strong natural sense and quick tact. With such qualities, we are not surprised to learn that he "was the depository of many most important secrets of high personages".

Among the contributors he enlisted under the banner of *The Morning Chronicle* were Sheridan and James Mackintosh, while Thomas Campbell, Tom Moore and Samuel T. Coleridge sent in some notable poems.

John Walter was a cool, level-headed business man, and none knew better than he the strength of the competition he had to face when he began to publish *The Register*. But this did not disturb him for he was calmly confident that his improved method of printing, in which he had a fanatical belief, would enable him to outdistance his rivals and withstand any opposition. It is probable then that too much time devoted to the new system of logography coupled with lack of editorial experience accounted for many of the "disasters" that overtook *The Register* during its short and illstarred career.

Walter himself attributed his troubles to the unfortunate name he had chosen for the newspaper. In the first number of *The Times and Daily Universal Register* which appeared on January 1, 1788, he proclaimed his woes at great length.

> "*The Universal Register*", he said, "has been a name as injurious to the logographic newspaper as Tristram was to Mr Shandy's son. But old Shandy forgot he might have rectified by confirmation the mistake of the parson at baptism —with a touch of a bishop have turned Tristram to Trismegistus. *The Universal Register* from the day of its first appearance to the day of its confirmation has, like Tristram, suffered from unusual casualties, both laughable and serious,

arising from its name, which on its introduction was immediately cutailed of its fair proportion by all who called for it, the word *Universal* being universally omitted, and the word *Register* being only retained. 'Boy, bring me *The Register!*' The waiter answers, 'Sir, we have not a library, but you may see it at the New Exchange coffee-house.' 'Then I'll see it there,' answers the disappointed politician, and he goes to the New Exchange and calls for *The Register*, upon which the waiter tells him he cannot have it as he is not a subscriber, and presents him with *The Court and City Register*, the old *Annual Register* or the *New Annual Register*, or if the coffee-house be within the purlieus of Covent Garden or the hundred of Drury, slips into the politician's hand *Harris's Register for Ladies.* For these and other reasons the parents of *The Universal Register* have added to its original name that of *The Times* which being a monosyllable bids defiance to corruptors and mutilators of the language."

Walter then goes on, at considerable length, to reiterate the promises he made in the first number of *The Register*, and assures readers that under its new title greater pains than ever would be taken to give prompt and accurate information under separate heads,

"the literary, political, commercial, philosophical, critical, theatrical, fashionable, humorous, witty, etc., each of which are supplied with a competent share of intellects for the pursuit of their several functions, an endowment which is not at all times to be found even in the heads of the state, the heads of the church, the heads of the law, the heads of the navy, the heads of the army, and though last not least, the great heads of the universities."

After this tremendous broadside against leaders in Church and State, the writer again proclaims his incorruptible patriotism :

"The political head of *The Times*," he states, "like that of Janus, the Roman deity, is double-faced ; with one countenance it will smile continually on the friends of Old

England, and with the other will frown incessantly on her enemies. . . . The alteration we have made in our head is not without precedents. *The World* has parted with half its *caput mortuum*, and a moiety of its brains. *The Herald* has cut off half its head and has lost its original humour. *The Post*, it is true, retains its whole head, and its old features, and as to the other public prints they appear as having neither heads nor tails."

CHAPTER III

The first number of The Times—*The first printed matter in the first issue of the paper—The change of title—The general contents and advertisements—Advertisements from various numbers—An article on prize-fighting—A description of a prize-fight with swords on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre—John Walter and William Pitt—Report of Warren Hastings' trial*—The Times *advocates the abolition of slavery—Extract from an article on the subject—Apologies for the incompleteness of Parliamentary Reports—Another manifesto from* The Times—The Times *and its rivals—John Walter imprisoned for libel —His life in prison—Announcement in the paper of Pitt's Declaration of War against France—Paragraph article on the retirement of President Washington—Article on Lord Mayor's Day in* 1796—The Times *announces the Battle of the Nile on October* 3, 1798—*Country sports attended by George III and his family—Lord Nelson's victories at Copenhagen and Trafalgar*—The Times *of June* 22, 1815, *with tidings of Waterloo.*

THE first number of *The Times* appeared on New Year's Day, 1788.

It was the centenary year of the Revolution which delivered Britain from Stuart tyranny. But there was little else to mark the year in which the newspaper appeared under its new title, as memorable. The political sky was without a cloud. England and Europe were at peace. The youngest and greatest Minister England has known, William Pitt, was absorbed in his herculean task of strengthening and consolidating its power and resources. He had just negotiated a commercial treaty with France, and was meditating far-reaching fiscal and parliamentary reforms, —undisturbed by fears of the tremendous cataclysm that was to shatter many of his most cherished projects. But as yet there were no signs of the coming storm. The strength and solidity of the Bastille—that symbol of

the ancient order—was still unchallenged. Robespierre was striving to earn a competence as a country lawyer, while Buonaparte was but an obscure artillery officer!

Nor was there anything in this change of titles and the reiteration of John Walter's principles in the first number of *The Times* to excite more than passing notice. None guessed, and least of all its proprietor, that with this first number a series of journals had begun in which the history of England and of the civilized world would be recorded for more than a century, and that within a few short years, this paper so modestly begun would attain a power and influence unparalleled in the history of journalism. But if such dreams of a golden future ever crossed Walter's mind he must hastily have dismissed them, for the effects of the disasters that had overtaken him during the last three years had still to be made good, and the problem of making the paper a paying proposition demanded early solution. To these tasks he addressed himself with energy and enterprise.

In the heading of the new series, the words "*The Times*" stood out in bold lettering. Underneath them were the Royal arms, and below the arms the alternative title "or *Daily Universal Register*", followed by the words "*Printed Logographically*".

That Walter regarded the new paper as identical with its predecessor is evidenced by the fact that the first issue of *The Times* is numbered 940.

The price of the newspaper was also raised from twopence-halfpenny to threepence.

After running two months and a half the alternative title was dropped, and from the 17th of March onwards the newspaper appeared with the simple title *The Times*.

In appearance the new paper was not impressive. It consisted of four pages, a little larger than foolscap size, each of which was divided into four columns. The front and most of the back pages were devoted to

advertisements ; while the inside pages contained news and comment.

The first printed matter in the first issue of the paper, interesting in itself as well as from the circumstances of its position and appearance, is the following advertisement :

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.
By His Majesty's Company
This Evening
Will be presented The Tragedy of
Julia
or, The Italian Lover.
The Principal Characters by
Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons.
The Prologue will be spoken by Mr. Kemble
and The Epilogue by Mrs. Siddons.
With new Decorations, etc.,
To which will be added
The Deserter.
Henry, Mr. Kelly ; Skirmish, Mr. Bannister Junr. ;
and Louisa, by Mrs. Crouch.
To-morrow (By Desire) The Wonder with the 6th Time, Harlequin June. On Thursday, The Tragedy of Percy ; Elwina, Mrs. Siddons."

A few days later (on the 5th inst.) we find the great Queen of Tragedy engaged in the prosaic but eminently practical task of selling tickets for her benefit, at her house in Gower Street, as the following announcement shows :

"Mrs. Siddons respectfully informs the Publick that her Benefit is fixed for Monday the 21st instant. On which night will be presented the Tragedy of *King Lear* (not acted this many years at this Theatre).
King Lear, Mr. Kemble
and Cordelia, Mrs. Siddons.
(Being their first appearance in these characters.)
With a Farce as will be expressed hereafter. Tickets and Places for the Boxes to be had of Mrs. Siddons, Gower Street, Bedford Square ; and of Mr. Fosbrook at the Theatre."

In the first number of the paper there were a few paragraphs of general news, the greater part of the editorial space being taken up by the manifesto and explanation of the change of title already quoted in the second chapter.

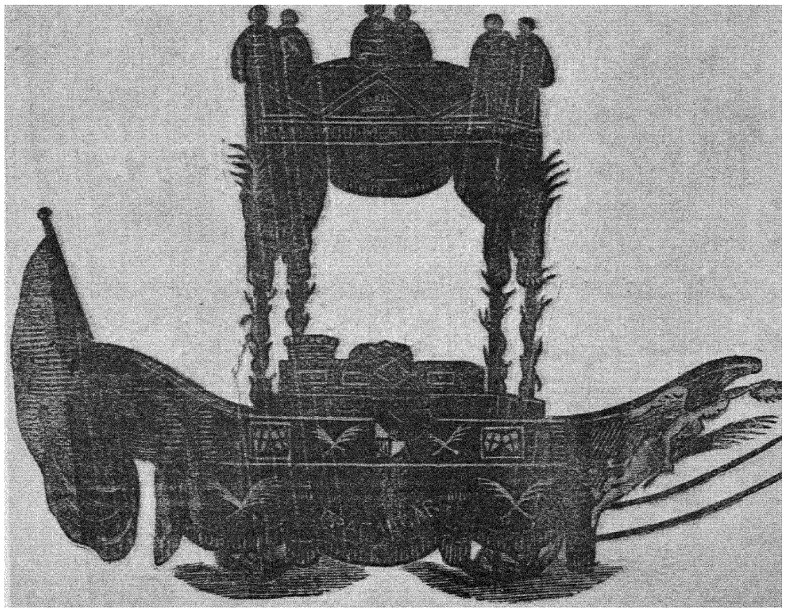
Among early paragraphs we find the following : "As this paper has traced *every incident* respecting Lord George Gordon for several months past, it takes the liberty of announcing his Lordship's return to St. George's Fields, early in the ensuing term."

In the following paragraph the eighteenth century journalist points his jokes with a liberal use of italics :

> "Lord George Gordon is preparing to *beard* Mr. Attorney General on the question of bail ; and Mr. Attorney General on his part is preparing a *cutting* argument for trimming Lord George ; but though his Lordship has been so long in the *suds*, it is not thought that shaving will take place until the day of *judgement*.
>
> * * *
>
> "The paragraph which appeared in a certain respectable Morning Print, relative to the discharge of a person from St. James's for having paid a grateful attention to Lord George in his distresses is however not true—indeed the report was too ungracious to be so."

In another item surprise is expressed "that Bedford Street, one of the great leading avenues to the Strand, should continue to remain in so confined a state towards the bottom. It resembles a great bottle with a small neck ; there is not literally at its entrance from the Strand room for two coaches to go abreast, yet forty yards higher it is roomy and spacious."

In his haste to suggest a remedy the old-time scribe omits a necessary verb from his third subordinate clause. But as his intention is obvious, we have no difficulty in supplying the missing words, which are given in brackets.



The only difference in the appearance of the Funeral Car from the engraving is, that, contrary to what was at first intended, neither the pall, nor coronet appeared on the coffin. The first was thrown in the stern of the Car, in order to give the public a complete view of the coffin; and the coronet was carried in a mourning coach. We had not time to make the alteration.

FUNERAL CAR OF LORD NELSON

[*face p.* 56

"If", he says, "the houses which form so great a bulk on the right hand, where Cato the pawnbroker lives, were thrown down, and an elegant range of new buildings (erected) to match the opposite corner where Messrs. Humble and Henderson's upholstery warehouse is, it would certainly be equally commodious with either Catherine or Southampton Street."

These and other items were at first given under the heading of "The Cuckoo".

The earliest issues of the paper contain several advertisements of interest to the modern reader, as they indicate institutions and customs that have long since vanished.

"Sales by Candle", in which the last bid before a candle flickers out secures the "lot" put up for auction for the fortunate bidder, may still be held in remote country districts occasionally, but everywhere else this survival of a leisurely age vanished with the post-chaise and tie-wig.

But from early issues of *The Times* we find that many "Sales by Candle" took place at Garraway's Coffee House and other places, where house property was auctioned. Lotteries were also freely advertised.

An advertisement in the first number discloses the fact that novels were sometimes printed at the Logographic Press in Printing House Square. In the stilted phrases of this announcement we have a typical example of the style effected by the publishers of that period when proclaiming the virtues of their books. The advertisement is as follows :

"In Three Volumes, Price 9*s*. sewed.
The Miniature Picture
or
Platonic Marriage.
A New Novel
By Mrs. Cartwright.
This lady displays throughout the work, a perfect know-

ledge of the human passions, and the characters are pourtrayed in the most chaste and elegant language.

Printed at the Logographic Press by J. Walter, Printing House Square, Blackfriars; and sold by T. Longman, Paternoster Row; Robson and Clarke, New Bond Street; and W. Richardson, under the Royal Exchange."

Another announcement brings before us the name of a surgeon, then becoming famous, many of whose witty sayings have become part of our proverbial wisdom. The notice runs:

"Anatomical Lectures.—Mr. John Abernethy, Assistant Surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, will begin a course of anatomical lectures at one o'clock on Saturday, the 19th of January, at 17 Bartholomew Close; whose proposals may be had."

In these old newspapers there are many appeals with which the study of the advertising columns of modern newspapers have made us familiar. Quack doctors quote convincing testimonials as to the efficacy of their nostrums, and warn intending purchasers against buying fraudulent imitations of their invaluable specifics; landladies speak in terms of glowing eulogy of the elegant and comfortable apartments they wish to let; governesses timidly set out their modest attainments, and inform anxious mothers that they can teach reading, writing, simple arithmetic and the use of the globes.

There are others, too, in later issues that could only belong to an age when appointments in the Government service were secured by patronage or purchase. Thus in *The Times* of July 3, 1797, we find the following attractive offer to those who drove a lucrative trade in selling official positions.

"The sum of £500 will be given to any Lady or Gentleman who may be able to procure the appointment of assistant Commissary to the Forces in Great Britain, for a Young Gentleman who has a strong knowledge of business; or

to any person holding that appointment and willing to resign in favour of the advertiser, who has sufficient interest to carry such succession into effect. If he should be disappointed in this, an adequate sum will be given for a Situation in any of the offices under Government. The strictest honour and secrecy may be relied on—Address A. B., Nando's Coffee House, Fleet Street."

Another advertiser, evidently of an indolent disposition, wants a position that does not make an excessive demand on his energies. This advertisement appeared on April 16, 1801—the number that contained the official despatches about Lord Nelson's victory at Copenhagen.

"500 Guineas will be given to any lady or gentleman who can procure the Advertiser a Permanent Situation of proportionate value in the Exchequer or any other office under Government where not more than three hours' daily attendance is required. Strict secrecy may be relied upon if requisite. Address to Mr. Mason at 4 Salisbury Street, Strand. None but principals will be treated with."

In other advertisements of this kind, sums varying from £20 to £100 are offered for minor posts under Government.

Every age has its own types of malefactors. At the end of the eighteenth century the highwayman and the footpad were serious menaces to society, and made travelling a risky adventure. But the methods of the highwayman, if less subtle, were more direct, as the following advertisement shows, than those of the modern mail robber.

"Two Hundred Pounds Reward
General Post Office July 3, 1798.

"The Post-Boy carrying the Mail from Bromley to Sevenoaks last night was stopped about two miles from Farnborough between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock by a single Highwayman who presented a horse-pistol and

demanded the Mail, which the Boy gave him. He offered the Robber half-a-guinea, but he declined taking it.

"The Robber is described to be a young man, middle-size, had on a drab-coloured great coat, and rode a horse with a white face. The same man, as supposed, passed through the Turnpike Gate at Pratt's Bottom, towards Riverhead on horseback about seven in the evening, and asked his way to Croydon. He had a pair of small saddle-bags, and had the appearance of a London Rider, in the opinion of the Turnpike man."

To turn from the advertising to the editorial columns, we find that *The Times* in early days set its face strongly against boxing and prize-fighting, which it regarded as a sign of the depravity of the age, and a disgrace to the young bucks who encouraged it.

For many of the bloods, it seems, ordinary fist-fighting was too tame, and some of them organized prize-fights that were nothing less than public duels, in which swords were used as weapons.

In the third number of the paper there is an account of one of these affrays under the heading "Prize-Fighting":

"We announce it, and Humanity will shudder—the brutal exercise of boxing is to be succeeded by the still more barbarous exhibition of *prize-fighting*. This amusement is carried on with the broad-*sword*, and one of the combatants must at least be *wounded*. In the memory of many Sherlock, an Irishman fought a German brought over by the late Duke of Cumberland for the special purpose of prize-fighting. The combat was on the stage of the Theatre in the Haymarket, and the fight was bloody. The German laid open the Irishman's cheek, from his ear to his mouth—the wound was sewed and bound up—and the second act terminated with the German's life; his antagonist with a backhand blow, cutting him from hip to hip, and so deep as to divide his bowels; so that his exit from the stage and from the world were on the same instant. This spirit or

rather this inhuman passion for cruelty which now pervades the young nobility may by their flatterers be called Roman; but on *The Times* it stamps the impression of savages."

But even the milder code of Cribb and Belcher met with the stern disapproval of the paper, though strangely enough it missed no opportunity of publishing thrilling accounts of these battles, and in so doing satisfied the curiosity of less scrupulous readers. On January 12, 1788, and again on the 18th we find the following paragraphs on the subject:

"*Anti-Boxing*.—There cannot be a greater proof of the depravity of the age than that which the brutal custom of boxing exhibits—and that such a *low* and *barbarous* pastime should become *fashionable* reflects the greatest disgrace on those who encourage it. . . ."

On the 15th it quoted the names of some leaders of fashion as supporters of its attitude:

"The Prince of Wales has declared a pointed disapprobation of *prize-boxing*. His Royal Highness after returning from the match, at which he was present, was affected with extreme sickness; he *then* expressed the injury his *feelings* had suffered from seeing human nature degraded; and this *The World* construed into 'want of feeling'. The Duke of Bedford and Lord John Russell have made similar declarations. In fact none of the *nobility* and very few persons of credit attended at the meeting of *Humphreys* and *Mendoza*, though there were many great men's *parasites*, and the tribe of black-legs present."

In the long course of its existence as a public journal, *The Times* has published thousands of columns of news and comment about Ireland and its affairs. Its first reference to this ever-thorny subject is to be found in the issue of January 4, 1788. Under the heading "Ireland", we find:

"Our accounts from the capital of the sister Kingdom all concur in applying brilliancy to

The Buckingham Administration ;

brilliancy not emanating merely from a splendid Court, but from *actions* illuminated by *virtue*, and every outward sign of inward spirit and grace."

The writer of the article then discussed optimistically the measures of reform that this administration proposes to undertake—" a plan of commercial arrangement " that will remedy many injustices and bring peace and prosperity to Ireland ; retrenchments, " by lopping off *sinecure* places " and the discharge of supernumerary clerks, and the establishment of dockyards for the building of King's ships.

From " A Political Reflection ", which appears in *The Times* of January 26, 1788, we get a clue to J. Walter's attitude towards the Government of William Pitt. Through the troubled years that followed *The Times* gave a strong but independent support to Pitt's administration.

It was from the middle-classes, of which Walter was a typical representative, that the great Minister derived the strength which made him independent of adverse votes in the House of Commons. The dazzling success of his financial policy won him the allegiance of manufacturers and traders. Five years before when he took office the nation was all but bankrupt, and public credit at its lowest ebb. Within two years public confidence was restored. The huge debt accumulated during the American War had been funded, a sinking fund established, and economies were effected in every department of the public service. Even his failures revealed the vastness of his conceptions, and the high sense of responsibility he brought to the discharge of his many official duties. He was the one statesman of his age who understood the

needs of his country at that fateful period, and with unfaltering purpose attempted to satisfy them ; and though he was worsted in the grim struggle with the triple forces of bigotry, ignorance and greed, the conflict threw into high relief qualities of mind and heart, that endeared him to the average Englishman.

We have seen in the manifesto that John Walter published in the first number of *The Register* his declaration that the real strength of the country was derived from its commerce and industry. Can we wonder, then, that when he saw the financial stability of the country restored, and the revenue rising despite the abolition of many custom duties under Pitt's wise administration, he supported the young Minister in the columns of his newspaper ?

The following is an extract from the article "A Political Reflection" :

> "Should Silesia prove a bone of contention between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, none can say how far the flames of war may spread. Happy Britain (while Continental States are in alarm she has the sea for her barrier ; the anchor of Hope and of Safety in her possession. Opposition and discontent strangled at the foot of patriotism and vigilance, she is resuming her former glory with strength and unanimity ; a Premier at the helm whose activity and abilities have been distinguished, not only in peace, but in preparing for and preventing a war—What have we to fear ? ")

As we turn from page to page and number to number of these old files we find news and comments on events that reveal many aspects on the multi-coloured life of the time. In some we get gruesome details of brutal affrays ; others concern trivial happenings like the departure of the Prince of Wales from Windsor to Brighton, or the defalcations of a clerk. Others again rise to the dignity of history, as in the case of the trial of Warren Hastings, the first report

of which appeared in *The Times* of February 14, 1788. The description of the scene at the opening of the trial, as given by the journal's reporter, may seem a little flat and prosaic to those who remember the highly coloured rhetoric of Macaulay's famous essay ; but as we read the newspaper report, plain and unadorned as it is, we feel a sense of actuality and closeness to the event, which the historian's prose fails to convey. The faded crinkly papers remind us that other eyes than ours scanned these columns more than a century ago, and in fancy we find ourselves transported to another age, and sit cheek by jowl in the coffee-houses with the merchants, the bucks, and the politicians, who are reading the news in similar sheets which have just come damp from the press.

The reporter seems to have been much impressed by the scene at the opening of this famous trial, and was at pains to describe the dresses and jewellery worn by the more notable spectators :

> "A trial such as that which commenced yesterday," says the writer, "must impress upon foreigners the most respectable idea of the dignity, the justice, and the wealth of this country. Inside and outside the Court there were proofs of both.
>
> "The appearance of the assembly, confining the idea to the personages who formed the Court, affected the mind with awe and wonder. Every man in his official robe, and bearing the insignia of place—*the people of England* by their *representatives* accusing—and the prisoner brought to the bar in custody to answer their charge—brought from a situation wherein he commanded millions of men and money—with power to dispose of their lives and fortunes. The Chancellor must not be forgotten—Nature never formed a countenance of more judicial features,—a head of more judicial knowledge—Saul had not stronger qualities of person for a King than Thurlow had for a Judge.
>
> "Above and all around there was a blaze of beauty. The style of dress was more gay and less brilliant than when

Kingston's Duchess stood at the bar. There were few feathers, and these very low."

After this there follows descriptions of the dresses and jewels worn. Then there are details of the proceedings, and an account of Burke's speech impeaching Hastings.

"Mr. Burke", says the writer, "was full correct and animated throughout, and spoke with a firmness and precision which fully evinced his thorough knowledge of the subject. The speech was interspersed with a variety of entertaining and apposite remarks, which were heard without the smallest interval of inattention on the part of his auditors. His sublimity at times had a force such as is very seldom witnessed, and the minuter parts of the detail, a perspicuity which impressed itself on every hearer.

"It was perhaps the most eloquent oration ever delivered in a Court of Judicature."

The year that saw the birth of *The Times* also brought the question of the Abolition of Slavery within the sphere of practical politics. At the instigation of his friend, Mr Wilberforce Pitt introduced a Bill in the House of Commons, which if passed would have put an end to this iniquitous traffic. But this was too much for the Prime Minister's followers in the House. The sacred rights of property were assailed, and the measure aroused a storm of protest from those to whom the claims of flesh and blood meant nothing. *The Times*, to its honour, strongly supported Pitt, and in its issue of March 5, 1788, appeared, among others, the following curious article on "Slavery":

"The reasons against the Slave Trade are *many*—they are founded in Scripture—in policy—and in interest. The black fellows and wenches are certainly descendants of Noah's impious sons, who when their father slept in a state of intoxication ridiculed him with indecency.

"Therefore they are condemned to make spirituous

liquors to intoxicate the whites, and sugar to make it palatable and therefore they are condemned to a state of indecency themselves—the men to go naked and the women to be prostitutes—therefore they are denied the rights of human nature, and the lights of religion.

"If the Slave Trade be prohibited, the Creoles will want human creatures to perform labours which have been found too severe for the endurance of beasts.

"The famous Coventry blue flannel will rise considerably in price for want of indigo. The common people of England will find it difficult to enervate their constitutions with sipping tea twice a day, from the high price of sugar."

But despite *The Times* and its sarcasm, the Abolition Bill was defeated through the fierce opposition of the Liverpool slave owners.

At the end of some of the earlier Parliamentary Reports there are editorial appeals for the indulgence of readers, expressed in terms of such simple candour that even the most exacting subscribers must have found them irresistible. We find an example of this in the issue of March 6, 1788. The afternoon before a debate was opened in the House of Commons on the India Declaratory Bill, and this discussion lasted until seven o'clock next morning. In its report *The Times* reported two or three of the earlier speeches, but was silent about the long discussions that followed. The figures of the division, taken at 7 a.m., were, however, given. Below the figures of the division appeared this note :

∴ "Our last reporter not having returned from the House at six o'clock this morning we must entreat the indulgence of our Readers to excuse our not being able to insert more than the division."

After another day's Parliamentary Report, which ended with a short summary of a speech by Charles James Fox, another note commands our sympathetic interest :

∴ "We are sorry we are so much exhausted as not to be able to do Mr. Fox's admirable speech more justice."

After running three months under its new title *The Times*, on March 25, made further proclamation of its faith, and announced further developments in the following manifesto :

> "To record with *fidelity* the events which occur in the world of Politics, Commerce, and Fashion ought to be the peculiar province of a *newspaper*. How little this is attended to, the present state of the diurnal publications will fully answer. Instead of conveying to the liberal and enlightened mind information and rational amusement, they too frequently present details of events that never took place, prostitute the language of eulogium to persons and things unworthy of public favour ; or what is still more reprehensible sacrifice, without any regard to truth, the reputation of private individuals, whose manners are unoffending ; or wantonly stab the professional character of those who are candidates for popular applause."

Having censured his competitors with becoming dignity, the editor then assures the world that he is "solicitous to correct enormities so flagrant", and that his dearest wish is "to present the world with a newspaper, such as, in the opinion of the conductors of this publication, a newspaper *ought* to be."

The writer proceeds to explain the steps by which this ideal is to be realized, and with modest pride points out the progress that has already been made :

> "*The Times* was established—it claimed a liberal support and did not fail to receive it—to render its merits still more conspicuous, and ensure an extensive patronage, it is now further improved by an acquisition of correspondents of the first literary abilities which this country can boast ; consequently highly capable of executing the avocations of the different departments which they have undertaken to

fill ; and the reputation of whose names, were we at liberty to publish them, would on the first mention insure to this paper a sale infinitely more extensive than that of any contemporary publication.

"The Debates in Parliament will be given with a marked correctness and impartiality, highly gratifying to the public curiosity—our Reporters being of the first class, equally incapable of perverting the language of debate to serve the purposes of Faction, or to support the popularity of administration.

"With respect to Politics, both domestic and foreign, such arrangements have been made as cannot fail to enable us to present our readers with the most authentic and early intelligence.

"On matters of Commerce—that great source of national prosperity—pre-eminent, as from our earliest publication we have been, recent efforts have enabled us to convey in future accumulated information.

"The World of Fashion, we have taken effectual measures to represent as it may be found ; and to record with prompt authenticity the events which occur in high life, whether they consist of fashionable levities, or *unfashionable* virtues.

"In what respects the Stage and every Candidate for Public Favour, or reports as they ever have, so they ever shall be, wholly unbiassed by rancour, and uninfluenced by capricious partiality ; for in the one instance we think an opposite conduct *illiberal*—not to say unjust—in the other we think it highly reprehensible.

"To *indecent* language or *double entendre* no place shall be given in *The Times*, nor shall it contain any passage capable of insulting the eye, or ear of modesty, or suffusing the cheek of innocence with a blush.

"With such claims to general patronage we presume to solicit it ; and trust that by such a conduct joined to the aid of superior abilities, we shall obtain it in a degree as extensive as we shall endeavour to merit."

It need scarcely be said that though many improvements were made in the paper, and that those who

conducted it showed a commendable spirit of enterprise, a long interval was to elapse before the promises made in this rather bombastic address were fulfilled. *The Morning Chronicle* still far outstripped *The Times* in the length and fullness of its Parliamentary Reports. This older newspaper, which under the able management of James Perry was for years to be the most powerful rival of *The Times*, also paid more attention to dramatic criticism, and furnished better law reports than the organ of Printing House Square. Columns of foreign news frequently appeared in *The Times* as in other London papers, but as these were derived from French newspapers they were not always dependable.

What strikes the modern reader as remarkable—and this applies not only to *The Times* but to every journal of the period—is the small amount of space devoted to " home news ". As we scan the old files we catch but a pale reflection of the vigorous life of the period.

The ten years following the American War of Independence are memorable for the amazing growth and expansion of the country's trade. Steam had become the handmaid of industry, and commerce took the first steps in that progress which was to make England the workshop of the world. Science and invention kept pace with industry in its formidable advance, and the arts lagged not far behind. The vast increase of wealth that followed this expansion of trade proved a strong stimulus to social life in London, which throbbed with feverish activity.

But for any adequate account of the life of the period, and its myriad manifestations, the historian must turn to the diaries, memoirs, and correspondence of the principal actors in that bygone drama, rather than to the newspapers, which then lacked the resources for depicting them with fidelity and fullness.

But *The Times*, though still in the earliest stages of its development, was making steady progress, and under the virile management of John Walter it soon outpaced the majority of its competitors. Himself a man of the strictest integrity, his journal bore the impress of his own individuality. By slow degrees its circle of readers widened, and it began to attract readers of consequence. Thus on December 12, 1789, we find Horace Walpole writing to the Countess of Ossory : " Madam, have you read Mr Cambridge's excellent verses called ' The Progress of Liberty ' ? They appeared in a paper called *The Times*."

But unfortunately for John Walter there appeared in his paper, about the same time, a paragraph that attracted attention in more exalted but hostile quarters, and plunged him in a sea of troubles.

In this paragraph it was stated that the Royal Dukes were insincere in their professions of joy at the King's recovery from the illness that robbed him of his mental faculties. This statement of a notorious fact, the Duke of York's legal advisers regarded as a libel on His Highness, and for this, Walter was brought to Court in December and sentenced to pay a fine of £50, to stand in the pillory for an hour, to be imprisoned for a year, and after that to give security for his good behaviour for seven years.

But this was not all. While he was in Newgate gaol and endeavouring as best he could to conduct the paper from that place of confinement, two further libels appeared in *The Times*. In one of these both the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York were severely criticized ; in the other, the Duke of Clarence was censured for absenting himself from his ship without permission of the authorities.

For these attacks, Walter, in the following November, was sentenced to another year's imprisonment, and ordered to pay fines amounting to £200. The

fines he had to pay, but he was excused from the pillory, and for many weary days he bore his long imprisonment with such patience as he could command.

But the loyal support he had given the King's party in its bitter feud with the Prince of Wales's faction, won him friends at Court, and thanks to their unremitting efforts he was, through the personal intercession of Sir Thomas Erskine, released in March, 1791, after sixteen months' imprisonment.

It may be pointed out that as these incriminating paragraphs were published nearly three years before the Libel Act of 1792 became law, the juries had, as explained in the last chapter, merely to decide as to the publication of the paragraphs.

Like many other sentences passed on printers and publishers, they were fantastic travesties of justice.

Even if the paragraphs had been libellous, which the prosecutors never troubled to prove, a much lighter sentence would have met the ends of justice. But Walter had given a strong and consistent support to the policy of William Pitt, and this, in the eyes of the Carlton House party, was an unforgivable sin. Party controversy was then carried on with extraordinary savagery and ruthlessness, and John Walter fell a victim to political rancour. A man of the strictest honour, both in professional and private life, he keenly resented the punishment meted out to him. Of this we find evidence in his correspondence. In a letter that he wrote to James Bland Burgess from Newgate in February, 1790, he says :

> "Little did I expect ever to be an inhabitant of this vile receptacle, or that any political sin could doom me to so severe a sentence. I am the more astonished when I daily read in the opposition prints the most opprobrious libels and treasonable paragraphs against those who gave birth to my prosecutors, and yet without notice. . . . Newgate was

undoubtedly a receptacle for felons, though it is the fashion of the Court at present to extend it to misdemeanours, by which means we are subject to more solitary confinement than felons who are guilty of murder and the greatest outcasts of society. Though I am confined in what is called the state side, and by paying for a room have one to myself, yet the same entrance leads likewise to the felons, and whenever any are brought into the gaol the outward door is shut, and they are fettered in the common passage so that it discourages my friends from access ; and such is the audacity of some of the turnkeys that they will frequently keep them and those who bring my provisions for an hour at the door, even when they are lolling in their chair in an adjoining room ; and what is still worse, at eight o'clock I am locked up every evening in common with the felons, after which time no soul is permitted to have a person with him. . . . Were a person ever so ill, they might call their hearts out before any assistance could be procured. Judge then what a man must feel who has till lately enjoyed even the luxuries of life."

After his release from prison Walter found himself involved in such serious difficulties that for a time he thought of abandoning the paper. But finally these troubles were smoothed over ; and he worked with redoubled energy to regain the ground his paper had lost during his enforced absence.

Under the stimulus of Perry's competition he showed enterprise that must have astonished his rivals. He spent considerable sums of money in order to get exclusive news, and appointed secret agents in several Continental towns, who sent him the earliest intelligence of important events.

When Pitt declared war on France in 1793 French newspapers became contraband, and *The Times* lost one of its most important sources of information. Walter overcame this difficulty by keeping a light cutter running backwards and forwards across the

Channel, the skipper of which bought up any French papers obtainable and sent them on to Printing House Square.

The first definite announcement of the war that saw the rise and fall of Buonaparte and in which for a time the country waged a desperate fight for existence against a world in arms, appeared in *The Times* of January 26, 1793, as follows :

> "We continue to have reason to suppose that on Monday next the War with France will be taken into consideration in the House of Commons. We believe it was yesterday finally determined on in the Cabinet Council which sat at Buckingham House from twelve till two.
>
> "The departure of M. de Chauvelin which we announced on Thursday as likely to take place within forty-eight hours is now confirmed ; and ere this paper is read by the public this Jacobin emissary will be on his return to France. Our Government only waited for the news of his most Christian Majesty to give M. de Chauvelin notice to quit the Kingdom."

In the same number of the paper are other items of historic interest. In one, half a column is devoted to an account by an eye-witness of the execution of Louis XVI. The French King's will occupies a further two columns.

A summarized report of the proceedings of the National Convention of January 21 is three columns in length and includes a speech by Danton, in which the Revolutionary Leader in his most militant vein declares :

> "Let us make War against all Europe, without making it upon ourselves. Let us make it with a national prodigality which will insure its success. Let us not dread the whole world. Each of our soldiers thinks himself stronger than twenty slaves. Organize the Ministry of War ; occupy yourselves seriously by completing the Constitution . . . and animated with our first successes be per-

suaded that we are already constituted into a nation when we are proclaimed victorious."

In a column of short paragraphs, news items are oddly jumbled with such comment as the following :

"The murderers of Charles I will be, if not totally forgotten, considered only as subaltern assassins, to the butchers of the National Convention of France. The Regicides of the 18th, who dare call themselves Philosophers, are undoubtedly more criminal than the enthusiast associates of Praise God Barebones, etc., of the seventeenth century."

The Times of November 9, 1796, contains an announcement of the resignation of George Washington, President of the United States of America. This is embodied in the following short leading article :

"We are sorry to announce the Resignation of George Washington, Esq. of his situation of President of the United States of America.

"This event was made known yesterday by the arrival of the 'Belvidere' from New York, with letters from thence of the 27th of September.

"Notwithstanding the intention of General Washington had been long announced, it was expected that the solicitations of his friends would have prevailed upon him to continue in office, for the peace of America. He has however declined all further public business, and, in resigning his station, has concluded a life of honour and glory. His address in resigning his office is a very masterly performance ; and we shall give it at length.

"It is expected that Mr. Adams will be chosen his successor."

This issue contains two closely printed columns of President Washington's address, the remainder being published in the next day's paper.

In the same number are several items of interest. Despite the paper's disclaimer, there is more than a hint of scandal in the following paragraph :

"The Earl and Countess of Jersey continue on a visit to the Prince of Wales at Critchill, where they have been on a sporting party since the beginning of last week. One of the Public Papers which pretends to be in the Prince's interest affects to discredit this information, just as if there was any scandal in it."

The author of this item wrote it with his tongue in his cheek, for he knew, like everyone else, that the Countess of Jersey was the Prince's mistress at that time; and eighteen months before had been sent by Queen Charlotte to meet the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, the Prince's bride, when she arrived at Greenwich.

There is also an article on "Lord Mayor's Day", from which the following is extracted:

"The Anniversary of this grand City Festival affords us an opportunity of observing on the conduct of the last Mayoralty; and in doing so we have peculiar pleasure.

"Seldom has it happened that the City Chair has been filled by a Gentleman who has done more justice to the public, and more honour to the City than the late *Lord Mayor,* Mr. Alderman Curtis, who this day resigns his office to Brook Watson, Esq. With a magnificence which few fortunes are able to afford, Mr. Curtis has united the character of private worth with public liberality and independent spirit. As a Chief Magistrate his conduct deserves every praise, for his impartial administration of justice; and though the times have been far from auspicious to the popularity of any man in his public situation, owing to the extreme dearness of provisions, particularly Bread, which bears so hard on the lower classes of society; yet, even in this particular, his exertions have been so far successful, as to have withstood the combination of a few monopolizing individuals to keep up the price of Flour beyond its fair average with the value of Wheat. The latter part of the Mayoralty has been a scene of contention between the public duty of the Magistrate and the contrivances of the mealfactors. It is a known truth that the latter have

declared that Mr. Curtis should not have the happiness of reducing the price of Bread during his Mayoralty. The Act, however, which the late Lord Mayor proposes to introduce, for the erection of Public Grinding Mills, will, we hope, remedy the inconvenience which is so much complained of."

It is significant that although nineteen years had still to elapse before the "crowning mercy" of Waterloo brought peace to Europe there was already, as the article just quoted shows, scarcity of essential food in England.

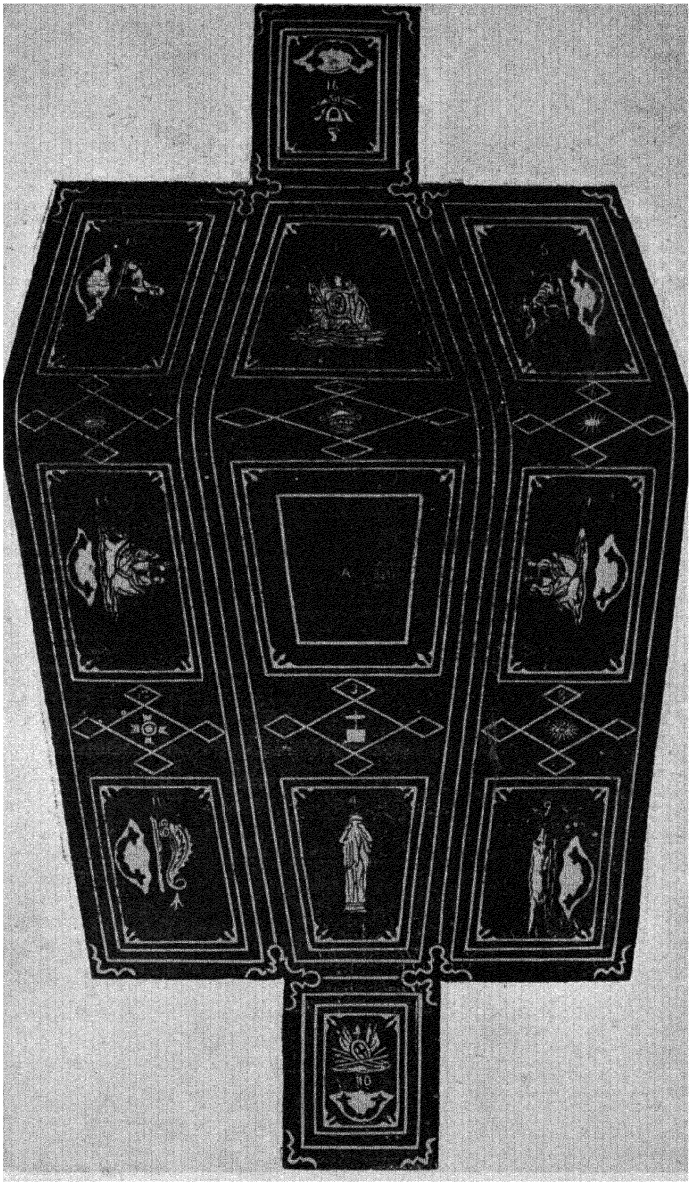
In this number there is a long list of bankrupts ; nearly a column of ship news ; a report of the capture of a French privateer ; while the House of Commons report is confined within the space of three lines, and is as follows : "Business in the House of Commons this Day.—Third Reading of the Navy Bills Bill ; and second reading of the Land Tax Commissioners Bill."

From one drapery advertisement, that of Macfaull, Cranbourne Street, Leicester Square, we discover the bargains that attracted ladies in the closing years of the eighteenth century. Mr Macfaull informs the ladies that he has an

"extensive Assortment of the most fashionable Articles in Millinery, Muslin, Callico and Gingham Dresses, and with every Article in ready-made Linen, much cheaper than can possibly be made at home, with the neatest and best work. Fashionable printed Callico and Gingham Dresses from 10*s.* 6*d.* upwards ; plain Muslin 12*s.* and figured Muslin 14*s.* upwards."

Muslin Caps are also offered from 12*s.* per dozen upwards, and other lines to which attention is drawn include "Sleeping Waistcoats, Pockets, and Powdering Gowns."

In the place of honour, at the top of the first column



THE PALL ON LORD NELSON'S COFFIN

[*face p.* 76

of the front page, is an announcement that must have thrilled nature students with joyous excitement, for we read :

"Extraordinary Large Reptile.—The curious are hereby informed that there is now to be seen the largest and most beautiful RATTLE SNAKE ever imported to this Kingdom. Its length is between 9 and 10 feet, and is one foot in circumference. Its bite is attended with immediate dissolution ; and notwithstanding the length of time since it was caught (8th of May last) it is in as full vigour as when first taken. It receives no kind of nutriment,—indeed it has been pronounced by all who have seen it, to be one of the greatest rarities ever exposed to public curiosity. The Nobility and Gentry are informed that the Snake is so well secured that there is not the least danger, and that it may be closely inspected with the greatest pleasure.

"The Proprietor will attend any Lady or Gentleman desirous, at their own Houses. To be seen from 10 till 4 at No. 422, Oxford Street, near Charles Street, Soho."

An issue of *The Times* two years later, October 3, 1798, had news to cheer the drooping spirits of Englishmen, and brought a sparkle to the eyes of many of its readers, to whom the rising price of bread presented an ever-baffling problem. In this number was published news of the Battle of the Nile, which had been fought two months earlier. The details of the battle, given in the two despatches printed here, made it clear that the Nelson touch had still a potent spell, and *The Times* like other heralds of fame blazoned the Admiral's renown.

Commenting on this engagement the paper says :

"The official news of the GLORIOUS VICTORY obtained by Admiral Nelson over the French Fleet near Rosetta, arrived at the Admiralty yesterday morning at a quarter-past eleven o'clock. It was brought by the Hon. Captain Capel, one of Lord Essex's sons . . . from the Admiral's flag-ship.

"The Park and Tower guns and the merry peals of the

bells from the steeples of several churches soon announced this happy news to the public.

"The narrative of this glorious action is much too concise to satisfy the curious eye of the public; it is written in the true style of a seaman who understands how to lead his fleet to victory, better than to write a long letter."

The article then goes on to recount the principal details of the action, and discusses at length the influence the victory must have in rousing Europe to concerted action against France. And it concludes:

"We have always asserted that the only way to make a safe peace with the Directory was by vigorous and successful exertions; and the prospect before us re-animates our hopes of seeing a termination of this calamitous war, in the only way it can be terminated either with honour or security. Motives of private interest or State necessity may have induced some Cabinets to make peace with France, and even to become her allies. But though France may have allies, it is impossible that the French Republic can have any, who are so sincerely."

"The capture of the French fleet", writes an exultant correspondent in the same paper, "by Nelson has reduced Buonaparte in Egypt to the situation of Macbeth:

'There is no going hence, or tarrying here'."

We also have evidence of the joy and enthusiasm this victory brought to the overtaxed and war-weary citizens of London:

"A person last night in the gallery of Drury Lane House, we are told, calling frequently in a boisterous manner for the tune of 'Britons Strike Home', was immediately silenced by the appropriate observation of another at some distance from him—'Why damn it, they have, haven't they?'

"After the play, the news of Admiral Nelson's victory produced a burst of patriotic exultation that has been rarely witnessed in a theatre. 'Rule Britannia' was lustily called

for from every part of the house; and Messrs. Kelly, Diguinan, Sedgewick, Miss Leak, and Mrs. Bland came forward and sang it accompanied by members of the audience. It was called for and sung a second time. The acclamations were the loudest and most fervent we have ever heard.

"The following lines written for the occasion were introduced by Mr. Diguinan and Mr. Sedgewick:

Again the tributary strain
Of grateful Britons let us raise
And to the heroes on the main
Triumphant add a Nelson's praise.

The audience were not satisfied with this repeated mark of exultation, but in the effusion of enthusiastic loyalty called for 'God Save the King', which was received with reiterated plaudits."

Many paragraphs in *The Times* show that that terrible fellow the highwayman, who figures in romantic story as a courteous and polished gentleman, was a menace to the timid, and made travelling a perilous adventure. Judges administered stern justice in the Courts, and Members of Parliament fashioned laws at St. Stephens. But the mob ruled the street and the highwayman the turnpike roads. The latter was this spiritual ancestor of the car bandit, but his courage redeemed him from the commonplace, for in the adventures of his generally short and exciting career he carried his life in his hands. The rotting corpses of highwaymen and pirates hung on gibbets in the Edgware Road and the skulls that lined the top of Temple Bar, served as a constant reminder that when he *was* caught the reckoning would be sharp and stern. If extreme punishment for crime had been an effective deterrent, England would then have been a crimeless country, for there were more than one hundred and sixty offences—some of them very trifling—for which men and women were hanged, and every

six weeks the mob had a reminder of this as the cart-load of condemned prisoners made their melancholy progress from Newgate to Tyburn.

But the law had no terrors for evildoers. Pedestrians went in constant danger of assault and robbery; coaches were stopped in the West End streets, while ambassadors and noblemen were rarely safe from molestations when they entered St. James's Palace. The depredations of highwaymen and footpads were so common that journalists regarded them as every-day occurrences that required no comment, as these extracts, taken from one issue of *The Times* in October, 1798, show :

"On Monday evening last between six and seven o'clock, as Mr. Vernon of the Treasury and another gentleman were returning to town in a post-chaise, they were stopped near Merton Turnpike by two foot-pads who robbed them of their watches, money, and a trunk containing wearing apparel.

"The same evening Lieut. Miller of the Royal Horse Guards was stopped in a post-chaise near Stevenage by two highwaymen who robbed him of a gold watch and some money.

"An affray happened last night opposite to the Admiralty where the crowd was very great. The mob, as usual, insisted on every person of genteel appearance pulling off their hats; six officers passing along were ordered to pay the same compliment to the mobility, and refusing to do so, the populace attempted to force their hats off. The officers drew their swords, and it was said that some persons were wounded.

"A meeting of a hostile character took place on Putney Common on Thursday morning last, between Captain H—— and Colonel A——, on account of a supposed injury in Ireland."

Duels were then so prevalent that even schoolboys of sixteen were sometimes encouraged to engage in them by their parents, whilst among students at the

Universities they were quite common. Members of the Royal family, ministers of state, members of Parliament, judges, and even clergymen had affairs of honour.

The editor of a London newspaper of that period confesses that

> "duels have become so common that we cease almost to hear of their immediate causes. It is now deemed by those who record passing occurrences, quite sufficient to say that a meeting took place between two gentlemen, as if it were an interview of pleasant courtesy."

But if it was an age of violence as well as elegance when the people found pleasurable excitement in bear-baiting, cock-fighting and pelting the unfortunates who stood in the pillory with mud and filth, they had also simpler and more innocent amusements, as the following extract from *The Times* of September 30, 1798, shows :

> "Weymouth. This being the anniversary of the birth of her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Wurtemburg, their Majesties' eldest daughter, the morning was ushered in with the usual demonstrations of joy.
>
> "The King, Queen, and all the Princesses, with a number of the Nobility went to Maiden Castle near Dorchester, to see the sports of the country people. The sports were announced in the following handbill :
>
> "'All persons of jovial, friendly, and loyal disposition are invited to be present at, and to partake of the undermentioned country sports, which with others to be declared upon the ground are intended, if the weather is fine, to be exhibited at Maiden Castle, near Dorchester, this day at eleven o'clock, in the morning, in honour of the birthday of her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Wurtemburg.
>
> "'To be played for at cricket, a round of beef : each man of the winning set to have a ribband.
>
> "'A Cheese to be rolled down the hill, prize to whoever stops it.

" ' A Silver Cup to be run for by Ponies, the best of three heats.

" ' A pound of tobacco to be grinned for.

" ' A barrel of beer to be rolled down the hill ; prize to whoever stops it.

" ' A Michaelmas goose to be dived for.

" ' A good hat to be cudgelled for.

" ' Half a guinea for the best ass in three heats.

" ' A handsome hat for the boy most expert in catching a roll dipped in treacle and suspended by a string.

" ' A leg of mutton and a gallon of porter to the winner of a race of one hundred yards in sacks.

" ' A good hat to be wrestled for.

" ' Half a guinea to the rider of the ass who wins the best of three heats by *coming in last.*

" ' A Pig, prize to whoever catches him by the Tail.' "

History does not record what impression the King derived from these rural diversions. But we can well believe that they helped to banish his melancholy, as he returned from his stay in Weymouth much improved in health.

In the same number of *The Times* we encounter Mrs Siddons again ; this time strenuously endeavouring to satisfy the demands of a clamorous public :

" Among the wonders of the present day ", writes the journal's correspondent with enthusiasm, " Mrs Siddons' late achievements at Brighton, Bath and London should not be forgotten. She positively performed at each of these places within the incredible short space of ninety-six hours."

We subscribe to the writer's astonishment, and marvel at the great actress's endurance in performing such a feat.

Turning to another memorable number of the paper (April 16, 1801), we find the despatches from Admiral Sir Hyde Parker and Lord Nelson, dated the 6th instant, giving an account of an attack made four days earlier on the enemy's ships composing the line of defence

at Copenhagen. The despatch states that after a severe conflict of several hours the principal part of the line was silenced and that of twenty-six of the enemy's ships that were engaged in the action, eighteen were either destroyed or captured.

In his comment on this naval battle the editor regrets that owing to the lateness of the hour at which *The Gazette* was published he is unable to give his views at length on this engagement, but he finds time to pay a warm tribute to Nelson, and says :

> " His Lordship is reported to have outrivalled even the heroic actions he performed at Aboukir in the late memorable battle. It is much owing to his example and exertion that we are indebted for our signal successes, as it will be perceived by *The Gazette* that owing to adverse circumstances some part of the fleet could not be brought into action. . . . The lateness of the hour at which *The Gazette* was published prevents us from making any further remarks in our paper of this day on this glorious achievement, . . . but it will form a very memorable epoch in the annals of our history which had run so adverse against us in consequence of the treachery and disaffection of our former allies."

Two other numbers of *The Times* are devoted almost exclusively to the great Admiral whose bold strategy and consummate seamanship brought hope and consolation to Pitt in the earlier years of that interminable war. But the news was now of Trafalgar, when joy and grief were strangely mingled, and Britons felt that great as was Nelson's achievement in destroying the combined French and Spanish fleets this advantage was but as dust in the balance, against the loss of the Nation's Idol. This view is clearly set out in *The Times* of November 7, 1805. In this number the story of the battle is in the grave and simple terms of Collingwood's despatches.

At the head of the leading column is the announcement, " The Publication to the Newsmen finished this

morning at 7.30, from which we may infer that the demand for this issue was unusually heavy.

Then follows an article on the battle. In the course of this the writer says :

> "The official account of the late naval action, which terminated in the most decisive victory that has ever been achieved by British skill and gallantry will be found in our paper of this day. That the triumph, great and glorious as it is, has been dearly bought, and that such was the general opinion, was powerfully evinced in the deep and universal affliction with which the news of Lord Nelson's death was received. The victory created none of those enthusiastic emotions in the public mind which the success of our naval arms have in every former instance produced. There was not a man who did not think that the life of the hero of the Nile was too great a price for the capture and destruction of twenty sail of French and Spanish men-of-war. They felt an inward satisfaction at the triumph of their favourite arms ; they mourned with all the sincerity and poignancy of domestic grief their Hero slain."

In an adjoining column of this number appeared an unsigned ode on Nelson and Collingwood, the energy and pathos of which doubtless heartened many of the stout fellows who were stubbornly contesting Buonaparte's claims to control the destinies of Europe. But like many other contributions to the Press that deserved a better fate, this poem lies buried in the "vast abyss" of newspaper files. As De Quincey sadly reflected when writing of the best journals of his time, "Worlds of fine thinking lie buried" in them "never to be disentombed".

Under the heading "Covent Garden" there is also a paragraph which shows how the public took the momentous news :

> "The proprietors of this Theatre ever alive to the National glory produced a hasty but elegant compliment to the memory of Lord Nelson. When the curtain drew up,

we were surprised with a view of a superb naval scene. It consisted of columns in the foreground decorated with medallions of the Naval Heroes of Britain. In the distance a number of ships were seen, and the front of the picture was filled by Mr. Taylor and the principal singers of the Theatre. They were grouped in an interesting manner with their heads turned towards the clouds, from whence a half-length portrait of Lord Nelson descended. Mr. Taylor and the other performers then sang 'Rule Britannia', verse and chorus."

Under the shock of a national loss, the public was too deeply stirred for more exuberant manifestations.

A month later a number is devoted to Lord Nelson's funeral. On the front page is a large picture of the coffin, and another on the second shows the hearse. The order of the funeral procession and a list of eminent people who attended the burial service are also given.

As we turn from these last Nelson numbers to that of June 22, 1815, in which Wellington's first despatches from Brussels with an account of the battle of Waterloo, are given, we naturally find a different note. The "Corsican ogre" has been beaten, and his power shattered. The menacing clouds that hung for years over England have been banished, and the war that has lasted twenty-three years is at an end. *The Times* leading article on this wonderful news, which apparently emanated from Edward Sterling's quill, is written in a tone of almost frenzied jubilation.

"Such is the great and glorious result", says the writer, "of those masterly movements by which the Hero of Britain met and frustrated the audacious attempt of the Rebel Chief. Glory to Wellington, to our gallant Soldiers, to our brave Allies! Buonaparte's reputation has been wrecked, and his last grand stake has been lost in this tremendous conflict. *Two Hundred and Ten Pieces of Cannon* captured in a single

battle, put to the blush the boasting columns of the Place de Vendôme. Long and sanguinary indeed we fear, the conflict must have been; but the boldness of the Rebel Frenchmen was the boldness of despair, and conscience sits heavy on those arms which were raised against their Sovereign, against their oaths, and against the peace and happiness of their country. . . . *Two Hundred and Ten Cannon!* When, where, or how, is this loss to be repaired? Besides, what has become of his invincible Guard, of his admired and dreaded cuirassiers?

"Again we do not deny that these were good troops; but they were encountered by better. We shall be curious to learn with what degree of coolness, of personal courage and self-possession Buonaparte played his stake. . . . Already we hear numerous desertions have taken place from the Rebel Standard; and soon it is to be hoped the perjured wretches Ney and Desnouettes, and Excelmaus and Lallemand, and their accomplices in baseness and treason will be left alone as marks for the indignation of Europe and just sacrifices to insulted French honour."

The letters of "Vetus" referred to in the following paragraph were the work of Edward Sterling, at that time the principal leader writer of *The Times*. Of Sterling some account is given in the next chapter. This paragraph appeared in the Waterloo number of the paper:

"A weekly paper entitled *The Sunday Monitor* has, we learn, published, or does still publish some letters with the signature of 'Vetus', intimating to its readers that they are the production of our valued correspondent who uses that signature. We do not know what kind of readers they are that may be imposed upon by such a fraudulent insinuation—enlightened ones no doubt—but we assert, with the utmost confidence that the person whose designation is thus surreptitiously adopted has never since written or suggested a line of politics to any other journal whatsoever than *The Times*."

CHAPTER IV

Progress of The Times *under the first John Walter—John Walter the second—Difficulties with the Government—Edward Sterling, leader-writer—Dr. Stoddart, first Editor of* The Times.

IN the years following his release from prison, John Walter found himself faced by stronger and more intensive competition. The Grub Street hacks either found their occupations gone, or were put to the more mechanical tasks. Men of wit and talent took the higher positions, and journalism became the handmaid of literature, and helped brilliant writers to keep the pot boiling in the intervals of more serious work. Perry was making *The Morning Chronicle* the most influential newspaper of the period, with the help of Sheridan, Charles Lamb, James Mackintosh and the poets, Thomas Campbell and Thomas Moore. Coleridge was also an occasional contributor. Walter, as we know, had boasted that he employed the ablest writers of the day, but he could not show such an array of talent as this. One of the wittiest and most arrogant of Perry's men was Mark Supple, one of the famous reporters of the time. Like many of his class Supple won no lasting fame, and his work lies buried in the musty files of *The Morning Chronicle*, but Knight Hunt in the " History of Newspapers " keeps his memory green.

Supple was amazingly popular with members of Parliament. He took his wine freely with them at Bellamy's, and charmed them with his witty conversation, as he discussed the political topic of the day. After this pleasant interlude he went up into the

Gallery, and, according to his friend Peter Finnerty, " reported like a gentleman and a man of genius ". The members scarcely recognized their speeches again when they read Supple's versions of them in cold print, but they greatly admired his bold and original method of doctoring them, and " none of them ever went to the printing office of *The Morning Chronicle* to complain that the tall Irishman had given a lame sneaking version of their sentiments ".

One of Supple's exploits convulsed the Town with merriment, and is even mentioned to-day as a notable breach of Parliamentary decorum. One evening he sat watching proceedings from his point of vantage in the Gallery. On this occasion he was in a particularly frivolous mood and according to his colleagues, " full of meat and wine ". Addington, the prim and dignified, was then Speaker. Suddenly a dead silence fell upon the House. Supple laid down his pencil, and looked round in surprise. As the silence continued his look changed to one of bewilderment. Then, feeling " that something might as well be going forward he called out lustily ' A song from Mr Speaker ' ". Utterly unprepared for such an interruption, Addington gasped with surprise. A yell of laughter rang through the House, and Pitt, it is said, could hardly keep his seat so much was he amused. When the confusion had died down the sergeant-at-arms was sent to the Gallery to discover the culprit. Subsequently Supple confessed his guilt and was placed under arrest for an hour or two.

Another rival journal which John Walter took more seriously than he should have done, was *The Sun*, a Tory evening paper founded by George Rose and others, at the instigation of Pitt.

Walter evidently did not know in 1792 who the owners of this paper were, for in October of that

year he called on James Bland-Burgess, who was Foreign Secretary to Charles Long, afterwards Lord Farnborough, and complained furiously of the partiality shown by the Government, and especially by Mr. Rose, to *The Sun*. He pointed out his long services, and the many advantages which the Government had derived from *The Times*, and thought he deserved better treatment. "He told me", said Bland-Burgess, "it was well known that Rose recommended *The Sun* and patronized its publisher; and he threw out strong hints of Mr Aust giving early accounts of foreign translations which he also stated to be very ill-usage."

Mr Bland-Burgess does not seem to have formed a favourable opinion of John Walter's demeanour at this interview, and describes him as "sulky and impudent". At the end of the conversation Walter rather mysteriously declared that "he certainly should not suffer himself to be ruined by the success *The Sun* must certainly meet with from a priory of intelligence which he had undoubted information came from the Treasury and the Foreign Office".

But Walter soon discovered that he had little cause to fear the competition of *The Sun*, as the paper quickly acquired an unsavoury reputation, for, as *The Edinburgh Review* shrewdly remarked some thirty years later, "*The Sun* appears daily, but never shines".

More serious opposition came from *The Morning Post*, which in 1795 was bought by Daniel Stuart, one of the ablest and most business-like of journalists. For seven years before he bought the property Stuart had been printing *The Morning Post*. It was then owned by Mr Tattersall, the horse-dealer, and edited by Dr Wolcot—better known as Peter Pindar. But under this control the *Post* did not prosper; and when in July, 1792, Lady Elizabeth Lambert brought an action for libel against it, Tattersall had to pay

£4,000 damages. The paper's reputation and its circulation sank nearly to vanishing point. But it was still a good property, as it derived a considerable revenue from advertisements of horses and carriages, and Tattersall had little difficulty in disposing of it for £600 to Stuart and some of his friends. As this price included not only the copyright but the house in Catherine Street, Strand, and all the plant. Stuart had secured a bargain, and he showed his appreciation of this fact by buying the shares of his friends, as soon as he was able to raise the money.

Daniel Stuart's reign on *The Morning Post* was short but brilliant. When he bought the paper it had sunk to the lowest ebb any journal could reach. Its circulation was only 350. Literary pretensions it had none, and the only contributions to its columns that any decent-minded person would read were the satiric verses of Peter Pindar.

Stuart changed all that. He was but twenty-nine when he took control, but in an incredibly short time he far outdistanced his most powerful rivals. By 1798 the sales had risen to 2000, though part of this increase was due to the purchase of two other dailies, *The Gazetteer* and *The Telegraph*, with a joint circulation of 700. Five years later the sales exceeded 4500, the next highest average being that of *The Morning Chronicle* with 3000. Other leading dailies like *The Times* lagged far behind the lower figure.

When Stuart sold *The Morning Post* in 1803 he received £25,000 for a property he had acquired for £600 nine years before. Stuart also bought *The Courier*, an evening paper with which he was equally fortunate. It is remarkable that these newspapers sank into insignificance again when he ceased to guide their fortunes.

Stuart took great pride in his achievements, and

his pride was legitimate. For not only did he make a fortune from his papers, but he also instituted a new and higher order of journalism, a journalism which took account of the arts, that enrich life with beauty. Under the hands of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey and Mackintosh, even the trivial and ephemeral acquired a grace that satisfied and charmed.

The tone of self-satisfaction, and alone-I-did-it attitude of Stuart's "Reminiscences" grate a little, when we reflect on the men who helped him in his enterprises, and the work they did.

James Mackintosh, who won his literary spurs by his "Vindiciæ Gallicæ", an answer to Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution", was Stuart's brother-in-law. Mackintosh was a sound journalist as well as a skilled controversialist, and not only did he contribute largely to the paper, but he advised his relative editorially, and gave him political information. Mackintosh also secured the services of Coleridge, and through Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey, as contributors to *The Post*.

It was to the columns of this paper that Coleridge contributed his "war eclogue", "Fire, Famine and Slaughter", in 1798. In addition to other poems, Coleridge wrote a long series of political articles for *The Post* that astonished and delighted its readers, and are among the most remarkable and brilliant contributions that have appeared in the columns of any newspaper.

In the year that Stuart sold *The Morning Post*, John Walter retired from the management of *The Times*, and his son John, a boy of eighteen, became "joint proprietor and exclusive manager".

To John Walter the first belongs the distinction of founding *The Times*. He did not live to see the full fruition of his work, but he made this child of his dreams influential and prosperous, and second

only in standing to one other London daily—*The Morning Chronicle*. Lord Northcliffe used in conversation to say that the credit for raising *The Times* to the supreme position it subsequently attained belonged solely to the second John Walter. But this view scarcely accords with the known facts. For the building of a structure so august and mighty as *The Times*, a structure that grew in strength and magnitude from its inception in the eighteenth century until in mid-Victorian days it dwarfed all rivals into insignificance, the credit belongs not to one, but to many. But of those who reared the fabric, the claims of the man who first planned and laid its strong and solid foundations, cannot be denied.

John Walter died on November 16, 1812, nine years after his retirement. "He was a man", says the kindly Nichols, "of the strictest honour, both in professional and private life, and his unbounded benevolence was only exceeded by his urbanity and uncommon flow of spirits".

Perry and other journalistic rivals must have been amazed, and doubtless were humorously sarcastic, when they saw a boy of eighteen directing the fortunes of *The Times*, and managing a considerable printing business.

But it was an age of young men. A generation before politicians of all parties had scoffed when a young man scarcely past his majority became Prime Minister and leader of the House of Commons. The jeers however turned to wonder, and the wonder to surprise, when Pitt's genius was revealed. Similarly, though the process was much slower, Fleet Street learnt that Walter's confidence in his son had not been misplaced.

Like his father, the second John Walter took a keen interest in printing processes, and he fully realized that if he could improve on the printing

methods then in vogue, he would be able to withstand the fiercest competition. But he saw at once that the logographic system of composition still in partial use at Printing House Square was a failure, and abandoned it. He began to consider the possibilities of steam as applied to printing machinery. Steam had transformed the appearance of Lancashire and revolutionized the cotton industry. Boats driven by steam were sailing on some of the Scottish lakes. There was even talk of locomotive engines being driven by the same mysterious power. Why not printing presses ?

A year after young Walter took control, Thomas Martyn, a workman at *The Times* office, invented a self-acting press. He showed it to his employer, who approved the plan, but saw that much experimental work would be required before a practical working model could be made.

Walter gave Martyn every encouragement. He provided funds for further experiments, and these as far as possible were carried out in secret, for the other printers, like the hand-loom weavers of Lancashire, bitterly resented the introduction of new-fangled machinery, and promptly destroyed any that was set up in Printing House Square.

Martyn continued his experiments for some years, but as nothing resulted from them, Walter became convinced at last that nothing practical would result from them, and abandoned this project.

But though he had lost confidence either in Martyn's inventive powers or perseverance, he had still a profound belief in the possibilities of steam power and knew that sooner or later printing presses would be driven by it, and that the first to adopt it would have a manifest advantage over his rivals. As yet, however, he was only a junior partner in the concern, and much as he would have liked to do so was not empowered to pursue investigations farther afield.

It is also not improbable that his father, now grown old, was disinclined to try new methods.

But in 1812, when his father died, and he himself took full control of *The Times*, Walter at once got into communication with Frederick Kœnig, the inventor of the steam-printing press. Kœnig's press had been patented two years before, and further improvements in it had been made in 1811 and again in 1812. Walter quickly came to terms with the German inventor. A house next to *The Times* office was taken. Here Kœnig and his assistant, Bauer, were installed, and proceeded to erect their machinery. All was done with the greatest secrecy. But the printers in *The Times* office got an inkling of what was going on, and became so threatening that the German engineers ran away and remained in hiding for three days. For a time it seemed that the inventor would be unable to carry out his contract, so terrified were he and his assistants of the angry printers, who believed they were being robbed of their daily bread. But Walter was determined not to be baulked by ignorant prejudice. Finally his will proved the strongest factor in an ugly situation, and all difficulties were smoothed over.

Readers who would know more of Kœnig's remarkable invention, and the assistance he received from John Walter in bringing it to public notice, may with advantage turn to the clear account of it given by Samuel Smiles in "Men of Invention and Industry". In *The Times* of July 29, 1847, the story of the printing of the first number by steam is told with dramatic effect :

> "The night on which this curious machine was first brought into use in its new abode was one of great anxiety and even alarm. The suspicious pressmen had threatened destruction to anyone whose invention might suspend their employment—'destruction to him and his traps'. They

were directed to wait for expected news from the continent.

"It was about six o'clock in the morning when Mr. Walter went into the press-room and astonished its occupants by telling them that *The Times* was already printed—by steam; that if they attempted violence there was a force ready to suppress it; but that if they were peaceable, their wages should be continued to every one of them till similar employment could be procured—a promise which was no doubt faithfully performed; and having said so, he distributed several copies among them."

The issue printed under such unusual conditions was that of November 29, 1814.

In this transaction young Walter displayed grit and courage beyond all praise, and the vision and will-power that marked him out as a natural leader of men. But his triumph made him a little arrogant, and his announcement of the new method of printing has the extravagant flourishes of a quack introducing a cure-all specific.

"Our journal of this day," he says, "presents to the public the practical result of the greatest improvement connected with printing since the discovery of the art itself. The reader of this paragraph now holds in his hand one of the many thousand impressions of *The Times* newspaper which were taken off last night by a mechanical process. A system of machinery, almost organic, has been devised and arranged, which, while it relieves the human frame of its most laborious efforts in printing, far exceeds all human powers in rapidity and despatch. That the magnitude of the invention may be justly appreciated by its effects, we shall inform the public that after the letters are placed by the compositors and enclosed in what is called the form, little more remains for man to do than to attend upon and watch this unconscious agent in its operations."

The article concludes with a description of the process, and the statement that "the whole of these complicated acts is performed with such a velocity

and simultaneousness of movement, that no less than eleven hundred sheets are impressed in one hour."

Through editorial skill and enterprise, *The Times*—as is shown in the following sections—had been steadily forging ahead. But the steam press placed it far in front of its competitors. By the old process an issue of three to four thousand copies could not be printed in less than nine or ten hours. With the Kœnig press the same work could be done in three. By labour-saving the cost of printing was much reduced. But this was the least of its advantages. For it enabled the editor to give the public later news, and the publisher to get his paper in the hands of subscribers hours before his rivals.

The owners of the wealthier papers quickly followed Walter's example and installed steam presses. But his enterprise won Walter public notice, and his paper a standing it had never before attained. Sales rose rapidly and steadily, and advertisers in increasing numbers found *The Times* a profitable medium for advertising their wares. In little more than five years the circulation was doubled, and John Walter had the satisfaction of knowing that at last his paper occupied a pre-eminent position, and in sales and advertising far outdistanced its most formidable rival, *The Morning Chronicle*.

But Walter did not rest on his oars. He had great mechanical ingenuity, and perceived that the Kœnig press was but a crude form of what it might yet become, and he set his engineers to work to improve it. Partly through his own inventive skill the capacity of the steam press was so developed that the number of copies printed was raised from eleven hundred to more than seven thousand an hour.

It is on the character and quality of its editorial department that the fortunes of a newspaper ulti-

mately depend. Mechanical devices may enable a newspaper owner to market a better and more cheaply printed paper than his rivals. Influence may bring him advertising, and his method of distribution may be unequalled. But if his organization for obtaining news is imperfect, and that which is published lacks variety and interest, if, moreover, the paper has no settled policy, and its editorial comment lacks authority, the advantages it enjoys will be more than neutralized. Circulation will droop, advertisers fall away, and prosperity vanish.

These considerations John Walter fully appreciated, and from the day he took charge of *The Times* in 1803, he bent his energies to the task of making it the best and most influential daily newspaper in the country. Whatever his own views may have been at this early stage of his career, he accepted those of his father without question, and throughout life pursued the policy of giving a disinterested support to the Government of the day. An account of his early experiences as editor is given in *The Times* of February 11, 1810:

> "On his commencing the business," we are told, "he gave his conscientious and disinterested support to the existing administration, that of Lord Sidmouth. The paper continued that support of the men in power, but without suffering them to repay its partiality by contributions calculated to produce any reduction whatsoever in the expense of managing the concern; because by such admission the Editor was conscious he should have sacrificed the right of condemning any act which he might esteem detrimental to the public welfare."

Walter had not been long in the saddle before he showed that his attitude of independence was something more than a pose. For in 1804 he published a series of bitter attacks on Lord Melville, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty. In these articles

he boldly censured Melville for the malpractices which afterwards led to his impeachment.

Lord Melville took a mean revenge. Instead of openly denying the charges made against him, or suing Walter for libel, he used his official authority to deprive Walter of his position as printer to the Customs, a position he and his father had held to their profit and advantage for twenty years.

> "The Editor," said Walter in the article already quoted, "knew the disposition of the man whose conduct he found himself obliged to condemn. Yet he never refrained for a moment on that account from speaking of the Catamaran expedition as it merited, or from bestowing on the practices disclosed in 'the tenth report' the terms of reprobation with which they were greeted by the general sense of the country. The result was as he apprehended. Without the allegation of a single complaint, his family was deprived of the business, which had so long been discharged by it, of printing for the Customs, a business which was performed by contract, and which he will venture to say was executed with an economy and a precision that have not since been exceeded. The Government advertisements were at the same time withdrawn."

Ministers, unfortunately for Walter, were suspicious of a newspaper that gave them only independent support, and reserved any intelligence they wished to make public for thick-and-thin partisan organs. But Walter did not depend on Government sources for his information. He showed remarkable enterprise in organizing a dependable foreign news service, and spent large sums of money in getting the latest news obtainable. In addition to the cutters already mentioned, Walter employed agents abroad to procure foreign newspapers and transmit them to England by the regular packet boats. But here again the Government obstructed his efforts to provide an efficient service of news. The editor's packages

from abroad, explained Walter, were always stopped by the Government at the outports, while those for the ministerial journals were allowed to pass. The foreign captains were always asked by a Government officer at Gravesend if they had papers for *The Times*. These, when acknowledged, were as regularly stopped. The Gravesend officer, on being spoken to on the subject, replied that he would transmit to the editor his papers with the same punctuality as he did those belonging to the publishers of the journals just alluded to, but that he was not allowed.

Walter made strong representations to the Home Office, and asked why he was treated so unjustly. The cynical official he interviewed blandly informed him that he might receive his foreign newspapers as a favour, but that he on his part must promise to the Government "a corresponding favour in the spirit and tone of his publication". Walter resented this attempt to control the policy of his paper and sturdily refused. He made repeated appeals to Ministers for common justice, only to be told that "provided it could be known what party in politics he meant to support his foreign papers would be delivered to him". Walter lacked the meek submissive spirit of the party hacks, and refused to submit to dictation. He matched his wits against those of the Government's agents, and at length succeeded in obtaining news from abroad through independent channels. So well was this news service organized that he often had information from the seat of war in advance of the Government. A notable triumph was the news of the capitulation of Flushing in 1809. This was published in *The Times* at least a day before the Government had official news of the event.

In the autumn of 1806 he formed a new plan for giving the readers of his paper a fuller supply of war news, that must have seemed a little startling

to his Fleet Street rivals when they heard of it. This plan came to fruition in January of the following year when Henry Crabb Robinson, the friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth, went out to Altona as special correspondent of *The Times*. Robinson was then a young man of thirty-two, and anxious, when Walter first met him, to obtain literary employment. Robinson's duties were precisely given in his employer's instructions. He had not to go to the actual seat of war or send reports from battlefields, but to reside in Altona while the interest in the Napoleonic war was strong in that neighbourhood. "I was to receive from the editor of the *Hamburger Correspondenten*," said Robinson, "all the public documents at his disposal, and was to have the benefit also of a mass of information of which the restraints of the German press did not permit him to avail himself."

Crabb Robinson carried out his duties to the satisfaction of his editor and the public. Commencing in March, 1807, a series of letters "from the banks of the Elbe", containing his impressions of Napoleon's campaigns, were published in *The Times*. The last of the series from this address appeared in August. On his way home Robinson also sent further letters from Stockholm and Gothenburg.

When he reached London Robinson was given a position at Printing House Square, where he was employed in translating the foreign papers, and writing on foreign politics.

> "It was my practice to go to Printing House Square," he said, "at five, and to remain there as long as there was anything to be done. It was my office to cut out odd articles and paragraphs from other papers, decide on the admission of correspondence, etc.; but there was always a higher power behind. While I was in my room Mr. Walter was in his, and there the great leader, the article that was talked about was written."

In 1808 Robinson again acted as a special correspondent, but this time he went to Spain, and the letters he sent to *The Times*, which began in August of that year, and continued until January of the next, were vaguely addressed as from "the shores of the Bay of Biscay". His objective on this occasion was Corunna. Of his sojourn there he says:

> "I put myself in immediate communication with the Editor of the miserable little daily newspaper, and from him I obtained the Madrid papers and pamphlets. My business was to collect news and forward it by every vessel that left the port, and I spent the time between the reception and transmission of intelligence in translating the public documents and in writing comments. I was anxious to conceal the nature of my occupation, but I found it necessary from time to time to take some friends into my confidence."

In the earlier years of his control Walter was both editor and general manager of *The Times*, and exercised a close supervision over the associated printing business. But as the influence of the paper grew and sales increased, he became more and more engrossed with the printing side, and began to delegate some of his editorial work to others. When he first took charge, Walter's literary adviser was Combe, the clever and witty author of that work—so dear to the hearts of collectors, "The Travels of Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque". Combe was then a prisoner living within the rules of the King's Bench, but as in these easygoing days the regulations of that formidable institution were quite elastic, he was allowed many holidays, and these he spent at *The Times* office, in the company of John Walter.

Probably at Combe's suggestion, a young clergyman, the Rev Peter Frazer, was engaged to write the 'flash' articles. "He used," Crabb Robinson tells

us, " to sit in Walter's parlour, and write his articles after dinner." Of Frazer little is remembered beyond the fact that he afterwards became rector of Kegworth in Leicestershire.

We learn on the same authority that when Frazer was away the articles were written by Edward Sterling.

But here there is some confusion. If Thomas Carlyle's account of Edward Sterling in his " Life of John Sterling " is correct, Edward's connection with *The Times* did not begin until 1812, whilst Robinson ceased to write for the paper when he returned from Spain early in 1809. On this point Carlyle is probably right, as he gives a detailed account of Sterling's activities through the years that followed the resignation of his captaincy in the Militia.

Sterling was the most notable of the earlier leader-writers of *The Times*, and it was due to the force and vigour of his style that the paper came to be known, " with a curious mixture of mockery and respect," as " The Thunderer ". During his long connection with the paper,—he did not retire until 1843—there were other famous contributors to the leading columns, but none enjoyed Walter's confidence more completely than this volatile Irishman. He received a salary of £2000 a year, a sum regarded by his contemporaries as absurdly generous, but there can be little doubt that he earned it.

A native of Waterford and grandson of the Clerk of the Irish House of Commons, Edward Sterling graduated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was called to the Irish Bar. But when in his twenty-fifth year the Irish Rebellion broke out, he raised a corps of Volunteers and fought at Vinegar Hill and in other engagements. He remained in the army for some years after the Rebellion was quenched, but finding this a desultory sort of life, he took up farming. This proving equally unsatisfactory, he began to



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send letters to *The Times* on military and political subjects over the signature "Vetus".

Of these letters, which attracted much public attention, Carlyle says :

> "Out of my own earliest newspaper reading I can remember the name Vetus as a kind of editorial hacklog on which able editors were wont to chop straw now and then. . . . The tone, wherever one timidly glances into this extinct cockpit, is trenchant and emphatic : the name of Vetus, strenuously fighting there, had become considerable in the talking political world ; and no doubt, was especially of mark, as that of a writer who might otherwise be important, with the proprietors of *The Times*."

The letters were, as Carlyle suggests, at first voluntary. But the connection "widened and deepened itself, in a slow, tentative manner ; passing naturally from voluntary into remunerated : and indeed proving more and more to be the true ultimate arena and battlefield and seedfield, for the exuberant impetuosities and faculties of this man."

But though two series of the Letters of Vetus had been published in book form, and were sufficiently in demand to necessitate a second reprint, it was some time yet but a definite connection between Sterling and *The Times* was established. According to Carlyle it was not till long after the tar-barrels of Waterloo had flared into the summer sky that Sterling was regularly employed as a leader-writer.

Many estimates of Sterling have been written, friendly and inimical, but all agree in conceding his sincerity, sense of responsibility, and a knowledge of the temper and opinion of his time. Knight Hunt says that in his articles "he clothed his case so admirably in its garment of words that all the world—except those he hit at—were charmed".

A more illuminating comment is quoted by his son's Biographer :

"There is not a faculty of improvising equal to this in all my circle. Sterling rushes out into the clubs, into London society, rolls about all day, copiously talking modish nonsense or sense and listening to the like, with the multifarious miscellany of men; comes home at night; reducts it into a *Times* Leader—and is found to have put the essential purport of the world's unmeasurable babblement that day with an accuracy beyond all other men. This is what the multifarious Babel sound did mean to say in clear words; this more nearly than anything else. Let the most gifted intellect, capable of writing epics, try to write such a Leader for the Morning Newspapers! . . . An improvising faculty without parallel in my experience."

Carlyle himself, through the love he bore the son, also admired this Captain Whirlwind, hasty, impetuous and fiery as he was. For there burned within him "a steady central lava-flood which truly was volcanic and explosive . . . but did rest as few others on the grand fire-depths of the world."

Carlyle knew nothing of the controlling influence that directed Sterling's movements, and shaped and guided the policy of the paper. To him, as to many others, Sterling seemed to have his finger on the world's pulse, for he says:

"The emphatic, big-voiced, always influential and often strongly unreasonable *Times* newspaper was the express emblem of Edward Sterling; he more than any other man or circumstance was *The Times* newspaper, and thundered through it to the shaking of the spheres, and let us assert withal that his and its influence, in those days, was not ill-grounded but rather well; that the loud manifold unreason, often enough vituperated and groaned over, was of the surface mostly; that his conclusions, unreasonable, partial, hasty as they might at first be, gravitated irresistibly towards the right; in virtue of which . . . his *Times* oratory found acceptance, and influential audience, amid the loud whirl of an England itself logically very stupid, and wise chiefly by instinct."

Three years after Crabb Robinson left his employment, Walter (in 1812) engaged his first editor—Dr Stoddart. Stoddart was a lawyer and previous to his appointment held a legal position in Malta. A man of considerable attainments and learning, he lacked the moral qualities that mark the competent editor. He was devoid of discretion, and a man of extreme opinions. He was a friend of Coleridge's, and in earlier days had been an ardent supporter of the French Revolution. But he was now just as violently opposed to it. When he joined *The Times*, he prated endlessly in its columns about the excellence of the British Constitution, and abused France and its rulers with a rancour and vehemence, that was astonishing to readers who regarded freedom of expression as a virtue.

So long as the war continued, Stoddart's diatribes against Napoleon displeased neither Walter nor his readers. But when hostilities ceased, Stoddart, an extremist by nature, was unable to accommodate himself to new conditions. Walter became more and more dissatisfied with his direction of the paper. Quarrels ensued, and in January, 1817, Stoddart was dismissed with the offer of a substantial pension. This the editor declined, as he had already made plans for his future that would have rendered the acceptance of the allowance impossible.

Stoddart joined a competitor of his old journal called *The Day*, and induced its proprietors to alter the title to *The Day and New Times*. Under his direction a vigorous and determined effort was made to win over the readers of *The Times* to the newer paper. A few months after Stoddart became its editor, the title was again altered to *The New Times*, and a large sum of money was spent in making it a force to be reckoned with.

But Stoddart was not the man to make the reputa-

tion of a new paper or sustain the fortunes of one that was established. He was a doctrinaire, not a practical man of affairs, and offered his readers, not the spiced meats of current politics, but the dry husks of abstract doctrine. Subscribers tired of his endless screeds on the Constitution, and *The New Times* fell into obscurity and soon disappeared.

So far from being injured by the competition of *The New Times* and Stoddart's vindictive efforts to revenge himself on his old employer, *The Times* emerged from the struggle, if struggle it can be called, with renewed life and vigour. The competitors who in former days had crowded and hampered its progress were left far behind. Under the inspiration and guidance of a new editor it had outdistanced all competition and was becoming an institution of world renown.

And the editor who led it to this position was Thomas Barnes.

CHAPTER V

The Times *under the editorship of Thomas Barnes.*

THE journalist is the modern herald. He blows the trumpets of Fame, and blazons the achievements of others, but concerning his own fortunes he is mute. He records the history of the world from day to day ; moulds and directs public opinion ; influences the thoughts and habits of his readers ; and entertains and instructs them.

Yet the public, whose guide and counsellor he is, knows little or nothing of him. For the veil of anonymity, which tradition ordains, hides him from the popular gaze ; and the public, incurious about those who are not brought immediately to its notice, learns little or nothing about him.

In recent years the veil has been slightly raised, and the signed article acquaints us, at least, with the name of the writer who edifies us with his periods. But in the days before the War, even the names of the majority of those who ministered to our curiosity concerning world affairs were shrouded in mystery.

Defoe, Fielding and Dr Johnson ; Campbell, Coleridge and Thomas Moore ; Hazlett and Charles Lamb, are all familiar names, the names of famous men of letters who dabbled in journalism. But what of James Perry, Daniel Stuart, John Black and others who evolved the newspaper as we know it to-day, and devoted their lives to this work. We glean a few facts about them in old magazine articles ; find some references to them in diaries and biographies, and learn something more from short obituary notices.

For the rest their thoughts and imaginings are buried in the files of the papers they loved and controlled.

Of Thomas Barnes, who more than any other person was instrumental in making *The Times* an institution of world-wide influence, all too little is known. In his admirable book on " The Examiner " Mr Blunden expresses regret that no biography of Barnes exists, and hopes he may yet receive the tribute that is his due.

But the known facts about Barnes and his life are soon told. Born in the year *The Daily Universal Register* was first published—1785—Barnes was educated at Christ Hospital. Here he met Leigh Hunt, who became one of his earliest and closest friends. Barnes, who had an aptitude for languages, taught his friend Italian.

In his " Autobiography " Hunt speaks in the highest terms of Barnes's mental capacity, and says that " No man, if he had cared for it, could have been more certain of attaining celebrity for wit and literature." In another passage Hunt declares that " He was a sound scholar, wrote elegant Latin verse and a classical English style, and might have assuredly made himself in wit and literature had he cared much for anything beyond his glass of wine and his Fielding."

As a youth Barnes was very handsome, and Hunt describes him as having a profile of " Grecian regularity ", but " it was painful in after life to see his good looks swallowed up in corpulency and his once handsome mouth thrusting its under-lip out, and panting with asthma."

Hunt had many pleasant memories of boating and bathing excursions with his friend, and in after years they were brought together by common interests.

Barnes wrote articles on the drama and politics in *The Examiner*, conducted by the brothers Hunt, and he also contributed to *The Reflector*, a quarterly conducted by Leigh Hunt.

Barnes began to write for *The Times* in 1807, when he was twenty-three. At first he was but an occasional contributor; but a few months later he became a member of the staff and was employed as Parliamentary reporter. This gave him a certain amount of leisure, which he employed in writing for other papers. He was a voluminous writer and his literary output does not seem to have been affected by his unsteady habits.

Among the papers he wrote for was *The Champion*, then a weekly of some pretensions edited by Cyrus Redding. To this periodical he furnished a series of literary criticisms signed "Strada" in 1812, and the authors dealt with were most of the living poets, including Campbell and Rogers. He also attempted estimates of Milton, Shakespeare and Spenser.

Of these papers Cyrus Redding spoke in the highest terms, and declared that they showed great acumen and delicate taste, and were free, when he had to give unfavourable verdicts, "from the rude dogmatism and scurrility that disgraced his angry ebullitions when he became 'The Thunderer'."

It may be noted that both Sterling and his editor were known by this title.

As these articles attracted a great deal of notice and gained *The Champion* many new readers, the editor was naturally anxious to secure their continuance. But here was a difficulty. Barnes was anything but methodical, and his habits were notorious. The editor complained; Barnes was doubtful and apologetic. The complaints of irregularity continued till at last Barnes himself suggested a remedy, which when tried proved successful. Redding's own account of the plan followed may be of interest:

> "Writing materials were placed upon a table by his bedside, together with some volumes of the author he was to review, for the purposes of quotation, for he was already

fully imbued with the characteristics and conversant with the works of all our great writers. At his customary hour he retired to rest, sober or not, as the case might be, leaving orders to be called at four o'clock in the morning, when he arose with a bright, clear, and vigorous intellect, and immediately applying himself to the task, achieved it with a completeness and rapidity that few could equal, and which none perhaps could have surpassed. Be it recorded to his infinite praise that, in later life, he must have totally conquered all the bad habits to which I have alluded."

Whatever may have been Barnes's habits and weaknesses in early days, he accomplished an amazing amount of work in addition to his regular duties as Parliamentary reporter—and it was work of very high quality, as we see from Redding's testimony. That he performed the duties that fell to his share on his own paper, and that he did them so capably as to win Walter's esteem and confidence, cannot for one moment be doubted. Otherwise he would never have been chosen to undertake the responsible duties of editor-in-chief. We may also safely assume that his habits of early days were reformed, for the work that he did as editor could not have been accomplished by a man of careless and intemperate habits.

If Walter proved himself a manager of enterprise and foresight, Barnes was no less distinguished for his initiative and tireless industry. He wrote much in the paper himself, and his copy was distinguished by extraordinary vigour and pungency, as Greville at a later date noted. He never lost an opportunity of gaining new contributors, and he did not look too closely at their party labels when engaging them. Whig, Tory and Radical were all pressed into service.

The Times, still a strong and consistent supporter of Tory Government, was independent only in the sense that its owner accepted no subsidy from party funds.

Yet, despite this, many Whigs and Radicals supported it with literary contributions. Tom Moore and Macaulay both had poetry in *The Times*, whilst Brougham was for many years a regular leader-writer and received a salary of £100 a month. Once, in 1822, when Brougham was ill, Barnes proposed that Moore should undertake this work until the Radical lawyer was well again, but Moore refused the offer. Barnes's success in inducing brilliant writers to forget their ancient loyalties and enlist under his standard was in no small measure due to the fact that he was able to offer higher remuneration than other papers.

John Walter believed that if his newspaper was to maintain its position as the principal London daily he must have the most capable and efficient staff procurable. This, he knew, he could not get at current market rates. But he was always prepared to pay more ; and he treated his staff so liberally, that in the days of the Regency, a position on the staff of *The Times* was regarded as one of the " plums " of the journalistic profession.

When the London newspaper proprietors agreed to fix the remuneration of reporters at five guineas a week, Walter refused to be bound by this decision, and continued his policy of paying generously for good work.

Fleet Street regarded this as foolish and extravagant, and some pessimistic wiseacres shook their heads and said that John Walter was treading the road to ruin.

But the prophets of evil omen were confounded. *The Times* not only prospered, but continued to make progress. The *Edinburgh Review* might sneer that it was " pompous, dogmatical and full of pretensions ", and " elaborate but heavy ; full but not readable ", but it also admitted that it " sells more and contains more than any other paper ". This double-edged compliment was the *Edinburgh's* way of commenting

on the low state of public intelligence, but it was none the less a tribute to the popularity of the journal.

One instance of John Walter's kindness may be mentioned. John Dyer Collier, father of John Payne Collier, the antiquary and Shakespearean student, had been a Parliamentary reporter for *The Times* from 1806 to 1809. Afterwards the son took his father's place in the Gallery. This position he held until 1819. But on June 14 of the latter year *The Times* reported Mr Hume as having said in the House of Commons that Canning had risen above the sufferings of others by laughing at them. At the following sitting of the House Canning complained that Hume had made insulting remarks about him and substantiated the charge by quoting *The Times* report. Hume repudiated the accuracy of the report. Bell, the publisher of *The Times*, and Collier, who had written the report, were called before the bar of the House. The culprits apologized, but Collier was placed under the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms for one night, the House having refused the Government's request that he should be committed to Newgate for an indefinite period. On the following day he was dismissed with a reprimand, after paying the Sergeant's fees, which amounted to about £15. Walter was much annoyed by the occurrence, and strongly resented the action of the Ministers. Feeling that Collier had been treated outrageously, he handed him a note for £50 for the purpose of paying the fees, and told him to keep the balance.

Walter never forgave Canning for the part he played in these proceedings, and to the end of that statesman's life was his implacable enemy.

Walter's dislike of the great statesman, and the attitude of his newspaper towards Canning's foreign policy, had one interesting result—it raised up a new rival to *The Times*.

Canning acknowledged the power of the Press, though he was indifferent to its criticism. His attitude to it is best defined in his own phrase : " I acknowledge its power, I submit to its judgement, but I will not be summoned to its bar."

It is difficult now to understand the hostility of the Press of his own day to Canning. Led by *The Times* the daily newspapers were ever barking at his heels. Possibly this was due in some measure to Canning's aloof attitude towards them, and his unwillingness to give them official information. It has been more than hinted that this hostility was partly due to the receipt of bribes from abroad, and that in this respect the hands of *The Times* itself were none too clean. But whatever the cause *The Star* was the only paper that gave him consistent backing.

This state of affairs caused some of Canning's friends anxiety, and Murray, the publisher, who supported him in the *Quarterly*, thought that the Foreign Minister's policy should be expounded in the daily press. Murray discussed the matter with Disraeli the younger, then a boy in his teens, and the result of these confabulations was seen when Disraeli was sent down to Scotland with the commission to propose the establishment of a new Canningite newspaper, of which Lockhart was offered the editorship. The name of the new journal was *The Representative*. Scott and Lockhart received young Disraeli with great kindness, and they both approved of the project. But Lockhart had serious doubt about accepting the editor's chair. He felt that such a position was scarcely compatible with his status as a country gentleman, and at last he felt compelled to decline the proposal. There was also another hitch.

John Wilson Croker, the irrepressible, also had his views as to the prospects of a new journal. Croker was a man of amazing energy and industry. We meet

him everywhere in the memoirs, biographies, diaries and other records of late Georgian and early Victorian times. He knew everyone, saw everything, and went everywhere. Like Pepys he spent many years at the Admiralty, and like that famous diarist his probing finger was poked in every pie. Macaulay bludgeoned him in *The Edinburgh Review*, and Disraeli caricatured him in "Coningsby". A born henchman, he was Lord Hertford's man of business, and general factotum to the King and his Ministers. He listened with rapture as the Regent and Sir Walter Scott exchanged reminiscences at the Royal table, and promptly recorded their conversations in his note-book; and when the Regent came into his own, took the responsibility of advising him to strike the Queen's name out of the Liturgy, as he considered her past praying for. He discussed matters of State with the Iron Duke, was intimate with John Murray the publisher, and knew the Walters, father and son. The secrets of editors' rooms were as familiar to him as the political intrigues of politicians. For had he not as long ago as 1801 addressed a series of letters to *The Times* on the French Revolution? He founded the Athenæum Club, and gave the Canningites and Young England Tories a new name, and they were henceforth known as Conservatives. These are his chief titles to fame.

To his friend who asked for advice about a new journal, Croker was dark and mysterious.

> "If anything of the kind were practicable", he replied, "it ought to be done in the most profound secrecy, and every possible precaution against even a suspicion should be taken; and the minister who should undertake it and you—'his conveyancer', as Junius calls it—should throw in here and there such a slight mixture of error or apparent ignorance as should obviate suspicion of its coming from so high a source."

LORD MAYOR'S Day. — FIVE GUINEAS will be given to any person who may have THREE TICKETS of Admission to Guildhall on that day.

Address to W. S., at Mr. Twaites's, Bunch of Grapes, Dowgate Hill.

FOR RHEUMATISM, SPRAINS, CHILBLAINS, &c.—Dr. STEERS OPODELDOC.—This medicine, from its warm, penetrating, and attenuating qualities, is found to be an excellent remedy for external Rheumatisms, and by its strengthening powers it speedily restores the parts which have been injured by Bruises or Sprains. It is of great service in cramp and numbness, stiffness and weakness of joints, and as an embrocation for the soreness of the feet after violent exercise, as also in promoting a proper circulation in the limbs when in a paralytic state. It is also particularly recommended for Chilblains, and, if used in time, will prevent them breaking; but in this case should be dissolved and applied warm. The genuine Opodeldoc is prepared and sold only by F. Newbery and Sons, No. 45, St. Paul's, on the Coachway, 4 doors from Cheapside, 2s. 6d. per bottle, duty included; but as a variety of counterfeits are offered to the public in the names of Dr. Steers, of Charing-cross, and Mr. Newbery, are fraudulently made use of, purchasers are requested to observe whether the words "F. Newbury, No. 45, St. Paul's," be engraved in the stamp; if not, the Preparation must be spurious. Sold, also, by their appointment, by Dicey and Sefton, Bow Churchyard; Bacon and Co., No. 150, and J. Piddling, No. 76, Oxford-street; J. Wade, Old Bond-street; Bayley and Co., Cockspur-street; J. Ward, Middle Row, Holborn; T. Tutt, Royal Exchange; W. Clarke, Borough High-street; and by J. Harris, Successor to Mr. C. Newbery, Bookseller, corner of Ludgate-street.

CHILBLAINS are prevented from breaking, and their tormenting itching instantly removed, by WHITEHEAD'S ESSENCE of MUSTARD, universally esteemed for its extraordinary efficacy in Rheumatism, Palsies, Gouty Affections, and Complaints of the Stomach, but where this certain remedy has been unknown or neglected, and the chilblains have actually broke, WHITEHEAD'S FAMILY CERATE will ease the pain and very speedily heal them.

Prepared and sold by R. Johnson, Apothecary, No. 15, Greek-street, Soho, London; the Essence of Pills at 2s. 9d. each, the Cerate at 1s, 1½d. Sold by every medicine vendor in the united kingdom.—The genuine has a black ink stamp with the name of R. Johnston inserted on it.

TO BANKER'S CLERKS.—Wanted to Superintend a BAKING CONCERN, a few miles from town, a respectable middle-aged man, accustomed to money transactions. As the situation will be made a very desirable one, and much confidence reposed, it is requested no one will offer whose age, connections, and qualifications are not likely to answer the above description.—Address, post-paid, to Mr. Adamthwaite, No. 7, St. Michael's-alley, Cornhill.

A CAUTION to CAPTAINS, PURSERS, and Others, trading to India, &c. REEVES, and Co., Superfine COLOUR PREparers, to her Majesty and Royal Family, No. 80, Holborn Bridge (only), beg leave to caution persons of whom they purchase colours and other articles used in drawing for the India Market, &c., as a number of their friends have been taken in by a Jew selling them colours and other articles, warranted to have been the manufacture of Reeves, and Co., with their names and arms on the colours, which have turned out to be counterfeits of a very bad composition. Reeves, and Co., wholly disclaim having any dealings with persons of that description, therefore hope their friends will apply as above, where they will be supplied with the Original Colours, &c., fitted up in boxes of every description, useful for Artists, with Drawing Papers and Black-lead Pencils, Hair Pencils, Crayons, &c., warranted, likewise durable Ink for writing on Linen with a pen, which nothing will discharge without destroying the linen.

A GENTEEL YOUTH is anxious to learn the profession of a Printer.—Well educated.—Correspondence by letter only.—E. B., 14, Long Acre.

THE CREDITORS of HENRY MARTIN, late of the Crescent, in the City of London, Merchant, may receive a second Dividend of his Estate and Effects, by applying at my office, any morning before 12 o'clock.

Edward Bigg, Hatton Garden.

A YOUNG MAN wishes to engage himself to an elderly single Gentleman, or Gentleman and Lady, out of livery; has lived 18 months in his last situation. He objects serving a family, as he is inclined for retirement.

Should any gentleman consider the above worthy their attention, by directing a few lines (post-paid) to A. D., No. 16, Chenies-street, Bedford-square, will be immediately attended to.

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Having thus carefully explained how the innocent reading public may be hoodwinked, Croker complacently relates his own journalistic experiences :

> "When I used to write", he said, "I lived altogether with my political friends, and knew what I was doing and what ought to be said. The success of that period . . . was so complete that it turned the Press—I mean the preponderating part of the press—right round. The Government had the voice of the journals, and the opposition . . . complained loudly of the licentiousness of the Press ; which only meant that they were no longer able to wield it to their own purposes."

In 1826 the newspaper which Mr Murray projected at last appeared. Its name, *The Representative*, had previously been borne by a Sunday paper which had come out under the auspices of Murdo Young. The new Tory paper was launched with a great flourish of trumpets, and its proprietors spared no expense in making it an efficient exponent of Canning's policy. Many able writers were engaged at handsome salaries, and foreign correspondents appointed in the principal European capitals. Dr Maginn, whose writings in *Blackwood's* had made him famous, went to Paris as the new paper's representative. But these elaborate preparations proved unavailing. *The Representative* did not appeal to the public, and the class for whom it was designed gave it little or no support. After a short and inglorious run of six months it disappeared, and the £15,000, which had been spent on it was lost.

But another new paper that represented the high Tories like Wellington and Peel had better fortune. This new paper, *The Standard*, was an offshoot of the *St. James's Chronicle*, which had flourished as an evening paper since 1761. *The Standard* made its first appearance on May 21, 1827, and was edited by Stanley Lees Giffard. The new paper, in spite of one glaring

indiscretion which greatly angered George IV, served its friends well, and soon was recognized as a consistent champion of Church and State.

For many years *The Times* had given a general support to successive Tory Governments, but it showed a disposition from time to time to take the popular side when public opinion was roused against the acts of particular Ministers.

In 1820, when Queen Caroline returned to England, and George IV, eager to divorce her, compelled Lord Liverpool and his colleague to bring in the notorious Bill of Pains and Penalties, and thus made the Queen a national heroine, *The Times* took the popular side and championed her cause against King and Government. The paper's attitude to Canning also surprised and bewildered the younger Tories.

But as George IV's long reign drew towards a close, signs were not wanting that Tory domination was coming to an end. The country was clamouring with greater and greater insistence for those reforms which Pitt had promised a generation before.

With the coming of the long war, the great statesman's thoughts and energies had been concentrated on the task of saving Britain from the conflagration that threatened to engulf Europe, while the later excesses of the French Revolution rendered Tory and Whig timorous of all change. When peace at last came, the old system of despotism and repression remained unchanged. Ministers were all-powerful, as the opposition was weak and divided, and between Whig and Radical an impassable gulf was fixed. But the demand for reforms grew in volume, and this change John Walter and Barnes were quick to perceive, and they began to trim their sails. From 1828 to 1830, the years of the Duke of Wellington's last Ministry under George IV, they endeavoured to convince their readers

that any needful reforms must come only from the Duke and his supporters.

But gradually *The Times* veered to the left, and, as its critics unkindly suggested, made political capital out of the popular agitations for reform. When in November, 1830, Lord Grey displaced Wellington as Prime Minister, the attitude of the leading journal much dismayed the Tory leaders and their friends. Greville, the ever-curious, in a pleasant flutter of excitement, wrote on December 19, 1830 :

> " Mr. Stapleton, Canning's late private secretary, called on me to discuss the subject, and the propriety and possibility of setting up some dyke to arrest the torrent of innovation and revolution that is bursting in on every side . . . an *Anti-Radical* upon the lines of the *Anti-Jacobin* might be of some use, provided it was well sustained. I wrote a letter yesterday to Barnes remonstrating on the general tone of *The Times*, and inviting him to adopt some Conservative principles in the midst of his zeal for reform."

Barnes knew his own business better than Greville and ignored the diarist's advice.

But Greville's friends were not discouraged by this first repulse, and all through the following year they endeavoured to induce Barnes to change his attitude. In November, 1831, Greville has another entry on the subject. This time he reported that Henry de Ros had seen Barnes and " opened negotiations ", and had tried to persuade the long-suffering editor that " the interest of the paper will be in the long run better consulted by leaning towards the side of order and quiet, than by continuing to exasperate and inflame. He seemed to a certain degree moved by this argument, though he is evidently a desperate Radical."

But " the desperate Radical ", who was really a political opportunist, turned a deaf ear to these over-

tures. The tide of Reform was in flood and *The Times* sailed serenely on the swiftly moving waters.

During the long debates on the first and second Reform Bills, the paper strongly supported Earl Grey. And all through 1831 Croker and Greville jealously noted that the Whig premier was giving private information to *The Times*. Day after day paragraphs appeared in the paper that apparently came from what Greville calls "the Durham shop" (Lord Durham was Earl Grey's son-in-law).

On February 29, 1832, the publication in *The Times* of extracts from a letter of Lord Harrowby to Lord Grey caused a ripple of excitement in the Whig camp. Of this Greville wrote—"I have little doubt that this as well as former extracts came from the shop of Durham & Co., and so Melbourne told me he thought likewise."

But a short week later there was a change of tone in *The Times* that astounded the world, and caused Greville to think that the paragraph in question which praised the Duke and the Tories, and denounced Harrowby and Wharncliffe, was merely an exhibition of "rage and mortification". Two days later the indefatigable diarist notes: "*The Times* yesterday and the day before attacked Lord Grey with a virulence and indecency about the peers that is too much even for those who take the same line, and he now sees where his subserviency to the Press has conducted him."

Greville and his friends were shocked at the indecency of a Whig premier doing work which they would themselves only be too happy to undertake.

After this *The Times* gave little suppport to Lord Grey's Government. Where before there had been friendly co-operation, was now aloofness; and the paper took up a detached position, distributing praise and blame with seeming impartiality.

The Times has been much censured for its atti-

tude at this period. Carlyle, in his "Life of John Sterling," attributes it to Edward Sterling and his fiery impatience :

> "The sudden changes of doctrine in *The Times*", he says, "which failed not to excite loud censure and indignant amazement in those days, were first intelligible to you when you came to interpret them as his changes. These sudden whirls from east to west on his part, and total changes of party and articulate opinion at a day's warning, lay in the nature of the man and could not be helped. . . . Thus, if he stormed along ten thousand strong, in the time of the Reform Bill, indignantly denouncing Toryism and its obsolete insane pretensions ; and then if, after some experience of Whig management, he discerned that Wellington and Peel . . . were the men to be depended on by England. . . ."

Mr H. R. Fox Bourne, in his "English Newspapers", says:

> "The precise reasons for that sudden turning round have not been disclosed ; but they can easily be guessed. John Walter, the principal proprietor of *The Times*, was now about to enter Parliament and, though he never called himself a Tory, all his leanings were towards Toryism, and the threat to swamp the House of Lords with Whig peers in order to pass the Reform Bill, which was now being uttered and discussed in the inner political and courtly circles, frightened many besides Lord Wharncliffe."

Yet another explanation is that of Greville the Diarist. On February 26, 1833, there appeared in *The Times* a devastating attack on Lord Grey's Irish Coercion Bill. Writing of this attack Greville says :

> "Always struggling as this paper does, to take the lead of public opinion, and watching all its turns and shifts with perpetual anxiety, it is at once regarded as undoubted evidence of its direction, and dreaded for the influence which its powerful writing and extensive sale have placed in its hands."

None of these explanations meet the case, though in each is a spice of truth. Carlyle's account credits Edward Sterling with much more authority than he possessed. For this "Captain Whirlwind" neither formulated nor directed the policy of the paper. On this point we have his own written evidence.

In January, 1835, Mr Roebuck made a bitter attack on Sterling, and other journalists, in a pamphlet "The Stamped Press of London", in which he said :

> "Some time since I was in the habit of meeting Mr. Sterling in society, and was not a little amused by the charlatan game he played to hide his editorship of *The Times*. If anyone had assumed the fact, he would have taken it as an affront. There was a painful resemblance between this man's position and that of a bravo spy in Venice. They both had a secret and irresistible power—the one slew you, the other merely ruined your reputation."

In reply to this Sterling wrote, "I never have been technically or morally connected in any manner with the editorship of *The Times*, not possessing over the course or choice of its politics any power or influence, nor, by consequence, being responsible for its acts."

This denial was sufficiently explicit to satisfy even Roebuck, and he withdrew his statement and apologized.

The denial disposes also of Carlyle's theory that Sterling was responsible for the sudden shifts and changes that distinguished the policy of the paper in those days.

But there remains in Carlyle's account just this residuum of truth—Sterling did not possess any power or influence over the policy of the paper, but there can be no doubt that in giving expression to that policy in his leading articles, he coloured it with his own personality so strongly that to those who

knew him like Carlyle, his individuality and the character of *The Times* were inextricably blended.

We may also dismiss Mr Fox Bourne's suggestion that the sudden change of policy was due to John Walter's entry into public life. This writer is nearer the truth when he suggests that the new attitude of the paper was due to Lord Grey's revolutionary proposal to swamp the hostile majority in the House of Lords, by the wholesale creation of new peers.

John Walter and Barnes, like hundreds of thousands of people of moderate views, believed that the rotten boroughs should be disfranchised and that the House of Commons should represent a wider electorate, but were not disposed to see the power of the Upper House destroyed in the process. The House of Lords, whatever its shortcomings, is still regarded as an essential part of the British Constitution, and a valuable check on the House of Commons. When in pre-war days it was suggested that Mr Asquith's Government should adopt the course proposed by Lord Grey eighty years before, the suggestion was met with such a storm of hostile criticism that it was speedily abandoned. Is it strange then, that in 1832 the owner of *The Times* and his editor met the wild threat of the Whig Premier with uncompromising hostility?

Greville's comment that *The Times* always accommodated its policy to the changing phases of public opinion, will not bear examination. There were occasions, under Barnes, when it adopted this "safety first" course, but generally it was guided by a carefully formulated policy, and so far from being led by public opinion, it had often formed and educated it.

By whom the policy of *The Times* at this period was fixed and settled we do not know, though such evidence as we possess tends to show that it was formulated by Barnes after consultation with John Walter.

Barnes did not go much into society like his suc-

cessor Delane, but he kept in touch with statesmen and others with political influence. We have seen that Greville, Henry de Ros and others were constantly disturbing him with their counsels and persuasions, whilst writers like Brougham, whose services he secured for the paper, brought him information of the latest political developments.

An oft-quoted anecdote of Greville's affords us a glimpse of the influence that Barnes then wielded. The story was told to Greville by Sir Denis Le Marchant, private secretary to Brougham when Lord Chancellor.

> "Le Marchant called late one night many years ago, on Barnes at his house", said Greville writing in 1847, "and while there another visitor arrived, whom he did not see, but who was shown into another room. Barnes went to him, and after a quarter of an hour returned, when Le Marchant said, 'Shall I tell you who your visitor is?' Barnes said, yes, if he knew.
>
> "'Well then, I know his step and his voice; it is Lord Durham.' Barnes owned that it was, when Le Marchant said, 'What does he come for?' Barnes said that he came on behalf of King Leopold, who had been much annoyed by some article in *The Times*, to entreat they would put one in of a contrary and healing description. As Le Marchant said, here was the proudest man in England come to solicit the Editor of a newspaper for a crowned head!"

When Lord Grey's Government was wrecked in 1834 through his Irish Coercion policy, the genial and cynical Lord Melbourne was induced to take the reins of office. During the four short months he was Premier, and as Disraeli said, was "sauntering over the destinies of a nation, and lounging away the glory of an Empire", *The Times* realized that his administration was but a make-shift arrangement. As it was politically impotent, and useless as an instrument of Government, the editor felt that he would be

performing a public service by terminating its existence, and so the Premier and his Lord Chancellor were attacked with astonishing venom and pertinacity.

The attacks on Brougham are the more remarkable from the circumstances that he was a regular contributor to the paper.

Greville, who noticed everything, was evidently a little surprised by these attacks.

> "A fierce war", he says, "has been waged by *The Times* against the Chancellor. . . . All the power of writing which the papers can command—argument, abuse, and ridicule—have been heaped day after day upon him, and when it took a little breathing time it filled up the interval by quotations from other papers. . . . I do not know what are the secret causes which have stirred up the wrath of *The Times*."

A born intriguer himself, Greville was convinced that there must be some "secret cause", and he was too cynical to believe that the directors of a great newspaper would act from any other motives than those of personal likes and dislikes.

Strangely enough, Greville's belief was partly confirmed by a curious story that was circulated some time later, though of this the diarist himself obviously knew nothing, for he never mentions it. It is said, though on what authority we do not know,—that one day one of Brougham's clerks saw the Chancellor reading a letter which he afterwards tore up and threw on the floor. Curious to know what his master had been reading the clerk took possession of the torn pieces of paper and carefully pieced them together. When this operation was completed, the note read as follows :

"Dear Brougham,—What I want to see you about is *The Times* : whether we are to make war on it or come to terms. Yours ever, Althorp."

This letter, it seems, came into Barnes's possession, and greatly annoyed him. So much so, that he determined to teach Brougham a lesson.

A much more credible explanation is supplied by Brougham's public conduct which at this period was particularly outrageous, and as *The Examiner* pointed out, gave an unusual exhibition of his arrogance and vanity.

At a banquet in Edinburgh attended by Lord Grey, Brougham publicly insulted his former chief. The feelings of the proud Whig peer may be imagined when he heard the Lord Chancellor extolling his own virtues at the expense of his colleagues past and present.

> "These hands are pure", he exclaimed with dramatic gesture. "In taking office, in holding office, in retaining office, I have sacrificed no feeling of a public nature, I have deserted no friend, I have abandoned no principle, I have forfeited no pledge, I have done no job, I have promoted no unworthy man, to the best of my knowledge; I have not abused the ear of my royal master, and I have not deserted the cause of the people."

It was of this lawyer, adorned with such overwhelming virtues, that *The Times* predicted: "Lord Melbourne would soon find him out as the honest men of the community were an overmatch for the knaves." The only reasonable excuse the paper could find for his extraordinary behaviour was that he "laboured under a morbid excitement seldom evinced by those of his majesty's subjects who are suffered to remain masters of their own actions".

Barnes had on an earlier occasion another experience of Brougham's eccentricity. Wishing to see the Chancellor, he went to the Court and waited in Brougham's private room until he left the bench. On a table he found a copy of *The Morning Chronicle* in

which he read an article replying to another that had appeared in *The Times* of the previous day. He had not read far when he recognized the style, and smiled sardonically. "Well", he remarked to the Chancellor when he appeared, and pointing to the paper, "it is really too bad of you to demolish yourself in this way." Brougham was nonplussed, and at last admitted that he had been answering his own *Times* article in *The Morning Chronicle*, a journalistic feat almost as remarkable as writing a complete number of *The Edinburgh Review*, which has also been credited to him.

Brougham does not seem to have borne malice for the attacks made on him in *The Times*, for at the end of Lord Melbourne's short administration we find him providing Barnes with a new sensation—this time at the expense of his own reputation and career.

On November 15, 1834, there appeared in *The Times* the following sensational paragraph:

> "We have no authority for the important statement which follows, but we have every reason to believe that it is perfectly true. We give it without any comment or explanation, in the very words of the communication which reached us at a late hour last night. 'The King has taken the opportunity of Lord Spencer's death to turn out the Ministry, and there is every reason to believe that the Duke of Wellington has been sent for. The Queen has done it all'."

The origin of this paragraph is interesting. According to Greville, whose account is confirmed from other sources, Lord Melbourne tendered his resignation to the King on November 14. He did this, entirely on his own responsibility, and his colleagues in the Ministry knew nothing about it. But Brougham happened to call on him that evening, and he took the opportunity of disclosing the important fact to

his Chancellor, but exacted a pledge that not a word should be said about the matter to anyone. Brougham promised to keep the secret, but went straight from Lord Melbourne's house to Printing House Square and told Barnes what had occurred.

On the day the report appeared in *The Times*, the Duke of Wellington, who had been summoned to the Royal presence, discussed the situation with the King, and urged him to keep the Melbourne Government in office. But as the conversation went on Sir Henry Taylor entered the room and showed the offending *Times* paragraph to the King.

"There, duke", said the angry King, when he had read the offending paragraph, "you see how I am insulted and betrayed. Nobody in London but Melbourne knew last night what had taken place here, nor of my sending for you. Will your grace compel me to take back people who have treated me in this way?"

Lord Melbourne never again invited Brougham to be his Lord Chancellor.

When it was known that the Duke of Wellington was again prepared to become Prime Minister, Greville and his friends became exceedingly anxious to secure the support of *The Times* for the new government. On November 17, Greville himself interviewed the Duke and Lord Lyndhurst. The Duke admitted to Greville rather sorrowfully that he was aware he had formerly too much neglected the Press, but he did not think *The Times* could be influenced.

(Probably *The Times* never received a more splendid tribute to its power and independence than was expressed in these doubts of the blunt old warrior.)

Lord Lyndhurst was charmed by Greville's suggestion, and said there was nothing he desired so much,

but that he was afraid of placing himself in the power of the Press. Greville then offered to act as intermediary, as he knew Barnes.

Thereafter there were many whispered confabulations, and much shaking of heads, till at last after a fortnight's negotiations Greville confided to his diary on November 19 that at his instructions Henry de Ros sent for Barnes who put on paper the terms which would be agreeable to him. He demanded among other things that there should be no tampering with or modification of the Reform Bill, or other constitutional measures, that had recently become law, nor any change in foreign policy. These proposals were handed to the Duke and Lord Lyndhurst for consideration.

At a subsequent interview Greville says that Lyndhurst exclaimed, "Why, Barnes is the most powerful man in the country". On the 23rd Greville records the receipt of a note from De Ros enclosing a letter from Barnes expressing his dissatisfaction at not receiving any specific answer to the terms he proposed. Greville at once sought out Lord Lyndhurst and showed him the note from Barnes. Lyndhurst was alarmed, and says Greville "took me away with him and stopped at the Home Office to see the Duke and talk with him on the subject".

Wellington promised to consult Peel; which he did, and on the following day, communications were made to Barnes that fully satisfied him. On the 26th we learn from the industrious diarist that "Barnes is to dine with Lyndhurst and a gastronomic ratification will wind up the treaty between these high contracting parties".

This dinner, which advertised the association of the Tory Government and *The Times*, was a diplomatic error, and caused the diarist to moralize on the strange lack of knowledge of the world which great lawyers

sometimes show. Under the date of December 5 he writes :

> "The dinner that Lyndhurst gave to Barnes has made a great uproar as I thought it would. I never could understand the Chancellor making such a display of this connection ; but whatever he may be, he is a lawyer, and how great soever in his wig, I suspect that he is deficient in knowledge of the world, and those nice calculations of public taste and opinion which are only acquired by intuitive sagacity exercised in the daily communion of social life."

Yet despite Greville's moralizing nothing serious happened, and the union between politician and Press was short but blissful, for Greville notes later, " Lyndhurst is doing all he can to draw closer the connection between *The Times* and the Government, and communicates constantly with Barnes."

If the Whigs had made common cause with the Radicals, and the various sections of the latter had been in agreement, this weak-kneed Tory Government would never have come into existence. For the spirit of Reform had not spent its force and there were loud demands for redress of grievance which Peel and his followers were unwilling to grant. In his rôle as apologist for this Government, Barnes had a difficult part to play. He now blessed where formerly he had censured, and abused those he had formerly cheered. Instead of stimulating the Government with bracing criticisms he pronounced solemn benedictions, and readers were bewildered and dissatisfied. The prevailing mood was tersely expressed by Rintoul of *The Spectator*, one of the shrewdest political meteorologists of the day.

> " Within a few weeks, and while the whole country was staring at a change more extraordinary than any which the wooden sword of Harlequin has achieved this Christmas, *The Times*, that boasts of leading three-fourths of the people

of England in their opinions, has taken up and supported two opposite systems of politics. The effect of this remarkable tergiversation is evident in the leading articles of the paper. They are impudent without being energetic, and abusive but not vigorous." (*Spectator*, January 1, 1835.)

But if Barnes was wounded by public criticism of his most recent change of policy—which is highly improbable—he received balm for his outraged feelings in a letter which Sir Robert Peel addressed privately to the Editor of *The Times* on April 18, 1835 :

"Having this day delivered into the hands of the King the seals of office, I can, without any imputation of an interested motive, or any inpediment from scrupulous feelings of delicacy, express my deep sense of the powerful support which the Government over which I had the honour to preside received from *The Times* newspaper. If I do not offer the expressions of personal gratitude, it is because I feel that such expressions would do injustice to the character of the support which was given exclusively on the highest and most independent grounds of public principle. I can say this with perfect truth, as I am addressing one whose person even is unknown to me, and who during my tenure of power studiously avoided every species of intercourse which could throw a suspicion upon the motives by which he was actuated. I should however be doing injustice to my own feelings if I were to retire from office without one word of acknowledgement ; without at least assuring you of the admiration with which I witnessed, during the arduous contest in which I was engaged, the daily exhibition of that extraordinary ability to which I was indebted for a support, the more valuable because it was an impartial and discriminating support."

To this, so Carlyle writes, " with due loftiness and diplomatic gravity and brevity, there is Answer, Draught of Answer, in Edward Sterling's hand, from the Mysterious Entity so honoured ".

To The Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart.

SIR,—

It gives me sincere satisfaction to learn from the Letter with which you have honoured me . . . that you estimate so highly the efforts which have been made during the last five months by *The Times* newspaper to support the cause of rational and wholesome Government which his Majesty had entrusted to your guidance; and that you appreciate fairly the disinterested motive, of regard to the public welfare, and to that alone, through which this Journal has been prompted to pursue a policy in accordance with that of your administration. It is, permit me to say, by such motives only, that *The Times*, ever since I have known it, has been influenced, whether in defence of the Government of the day, or in constitutional resistance to it; and indeed there exist no other motives of action for a Journalist, compatible either with the safety of the Press, or with the political morality of the great bulk of its readers.—With much respect I have the honour to be, Sir——

"The Editor of *The Times*."

As we turn over the files of successive years we notice that while the news and comment are more varied and interesting the advertisement columns are too like our own to excite special attention. They lack the archaic flavour of the early numbers, and recall no old customs. There are no offers of rewards for the arrest of highwaymen or footpads; no advertisements of auctions by candle; no country lodgings to be let in villages that are now miles within the London County Council area. The phrasing also of the advertiser has changed. It is no longer elegant and stilted, but direct and matter-of-fact. Even a century ago the trader who sought publicity had learned the great truth that only by the best use of his space could he make his advertising pay. But this very terseness and economy of words while it doubtless serves the turn of the advertiser, and brings

custom for his wares, is less attractive to students in search of the odd or remarkable.

But occasionally we come upon an announcement that has more than a passing interest. Thus in *The Times* of March 26, 1836, may be seen the first public notice of the forthcoming publication of " The Pickwick Papers ".

The advertisement is as follows :

> " The Pickwick Papers.—On the 31st of March will be published, to be continued monthly, price One shilling, the first number of the Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, containing a faithful record of the Perambulations, Perils, Travels, Adventures and Sporting Transactions of the Corresponding Members. Edited by Boz. Each monthly part embellished with four illustrations by Seymour. Chapman and Hall, 186 Strand ; and of all Booksellers."

CHAPTER VI

Thackeray's Reviews—Disraeli's Runnymede Letters—His speech at Aylesbury specially reported—The Times *attacks on Daniel O'Connell and his defence—Attack on Alderman Harmer—Lord Durham's Canadian Report—Death of Barnes.*

BARNES was tireless in his search for new talent. He kept his eyes on the rising men, and did not confine his quest to the politicians. For he realized as few editors had done, that politics alone do not " carry " a paper, and that newspaper readers have many interests.

He secured the services of many brilliant writers, and among his captures was William Makepeace Thackeray, then a struggling and almost unknown journalist. A short time before, Thackeray, at the age of twenty-five, had been installed in Paris as French correspondent of *The Constitutional.* This new periodical was the property of a company of which Major Carmichael Smyth, Thackeray's step-father, was chairman, and was edited by Samuel L. Blanchard. The journal was hailed as a triumph of enterprise and the young writer sent it a long series of brilliant and vivacious letters from the French capital. But like so many papers that have started under the happiest auspices, *The Constitutional,* though ably edited and written, expired from lack of support. After the collapse of the paper Barnes enlisted Thackeray among his contributors.

Most of the work Thackeray undertook for *The Times* at this period was book reviewing, and the articles that can be traced to his pen include a long

review of Carlyle's "French Revolution", which appeared on August 3, 1837; another on "The Duchess of Marlborough's Private Correspondence"; and he also noticed Lady Charlotte Bury's "Diary Illustrative of the Times of George IV". It was of the latter book that he wrote:

> "It does worse than chronicle the small beer of a Court; the materials of this book are infinitely more base; the loud tittle-tattle of the sweepers of the Princess of Wales's bed-chamber or dressing-room, her table or ante-room, the reminiscences of industrial eavesdropping, the careful records of her unguarded moments, and the publication of her confidential correspondence, are the chief foundations for this choice work."

This review, as readers of Lady Charlotte Bury's Diary know, was unfair and lacking in generosity, but it is pleasant to remember that Thackeray thought better of the book in later years, and put much of the material he found in it to excellent use in his lectures on "The Four Georges".

In addition to other articles and reviews that Thackeray wrote for *The Times*, was an estimate of "The Poetical Works of Dr. Southey, collected by himself". This review appeared on April 17, 1838, and seems to have been the last of his contributions to the paper.

When his novels had brought him renown Thackeray sometimes looked back half-regretfully at those early days when he earned a few guineas by his work for *The Times*. "I turned off far better work then than I do now," he said, "and I wanted money sadly; but how little I got for my work! It makes me laugh at what *The Times* pays me now when I think of the old days, and how much better I wrote for them then, and got a shilling where I now get ten."

Another contributor, but of a different stamp, was Benjamin Disraeli. Unlike his future rival whom Macaulay described as the "rising hope of those stern, unbending Tories," young Disraeli up to 1835 was not regarded by Tories, unbending or otherwise, as anything but a clever and fickle politician, whose talents might some day be of use to the party. But when in that year his "Vindication of The English Constitution in a Letter to a Noble and Learned Lord" was published, it was apparent to the more discerning that here was a young man of more than superficial talents.

Some of the reviewers on the Whig papers also perceived this, and one writer of *The Globe* in discussing the merits of the book taunted Disraeli on his inconsistency in changing from Radicalism to Toryism. On January 9, 1836, a letter of Disraeli's appeared in *The Times* in answer to *The Globe's* abusive notice. A lengthy controversy followed, Disraeli's part being conducted in the columns of *The Times*. Disraeli's final letter is interesting as illustrating the robust methods of political controversy a century ago. In this letter Disraeli wields the bludgeon with great effect and gives his opponent some resounding whacks, but his periods lack the polish and ease of his later style ; and he sings his own praises with a candour that rather nauseates. He says :

> "The Editor of *The Globe* has been pleased to say that he is disinclined to continue this controversy because it gratifies my 'passion for notoriety'. The Editor of *The Globe* must have a more contracted mind and paltrier spirit than ever I imagined, if he can suppose for a moment that an ignoble controversy with an obscure animal like himself can gratify the passion for notoriety of one whose works at least have been translated into the languages of polished Europe and circulate in thousands in the New World. It is not then my passion for notoriety that has induced me to

tweak the Editor of *The Globe* by the nose, and to inflict sundry kicks upon the baser parts of his base body ; to make him eat dirt and his own words, fouler than any filth ; but because I wished to show to the world what a miserable poltroon, what a craven dullard, what a literary scarecrow, what a mere thing, stuffed with straw and rubbish is the soi-disant director of public opinion and official organ of Whig politics."

In the previous summer Disraeli had done a series of leading articles for *The Morning Post* which had attracted Barnes's attention. This controversy with *The Globe* brought the two men into closer association. What Barnes really thought of this political neophyte we do not know. Did he, with that instinct which is the birthright of true journalists, penetrate that mask-like exterior and see in this young man those mental and moral gifts that would, in time, enable him to grasp the golden keys of power ?

This is one of those enigmas that can never be resolved. But Barnes's actions show that he had profound respect for Disraeli's ability both as a writer and orator. For not only did he commission an important series of letters from him for *The Times*, but even sent down a special staff of reporters to Aylesbury to report a speech he was to make at a Conservative banquet. At this time Disraeli had not even become a member of Parliament. Yet his was the only speech at this gathering that was reported in the first person.

The series of Letters which Disraeli wrote for *The Times* were signed Runnymede, and afterwards known as the Letters of Runnymede. Written in the style of Junius, but lacking the rhetorical power and pitiless logic of that famous Unknown, they nevertheless made a sensation and caused a considerable fluttering in the Whig dovecotes. The first of the series, addressed to Lord Melbourne, appeared on January 19, 1836. It was followed in that year by eighteen others. In

1837 a few more were published. Three were addressed to Melbourne, two to Sir Robert Peel and Lord Stanley ; and others to leading members of the Government. In the letters to political opponents, the tone is, to modern taste, much too personal, the invective often brutal and unmeasured.

Of Daniel O'Connell, the Irish leader, Disraeli says : " He is a systematic liar, and a beggarly cheat, a swindler and a poltroon. . . . His public and his private life are equally profligate ; he has committed every crime that does not require courage."

Lord John Russell is let off more lightly and is described as " a feeble Catiline ", and as " an individual who on the principle that good vinegar is the corruption of bad wine, has been metamorphosed from an incapable author into an eminent politician ".

Disraeli's description of Lord Palmerston as the " Lord Fanny of diplomacy ", who displays an astuteness " which seems a happy compound of the smartness of an attorney's clerk and the intrigue of a Greek of the lower Empire ", is too far-fetched to be effective. The indictment degenerates at the end into coarse abuse. " Our language ", comments the stern moralist, " commands no expression of scorn which has not been exhausted by the celebration of your character ; there is no conceivable idea of degradation which has not been at some period or another associated with your career."

We turn with eager anticipation to the letter of the cynical Disraeli to the equally cynical Melbourne, but come away disappointed, for this is a forcible-feeble and unequal composition. The young politician holds up the old statesman to scorn for his cynical indifference to national interests. But a further phrase, in which he charges Melbourne with " sauntering over the destinies of a nation, and lounging away the glory of an Empire ", is in the happiest Disraelian vein.

The letter to Sir Robert Peel, overloaded as it is with extravagant eulogy, causes readers who recall the venom and ferocity of Disraeli's subsequent attacks on the Tory statesman to rub their eyes with astonishment.

> "In your chivalry alone," exclaims the impassioned author, "is our hope. Clad in the panoply of your splendid talents and your spotless character we feel assured that you will conquer. . . . Pitt himself in the plenitude of his power never enjoyed more cordial confidence than is now extended to you by every alleged section of the Conservative Party."

In the letter to Stanley he extolled the virtues of the Conservative Party and rejoiced that the party was united and England saved. Then followed the names of the patriotic statesmen who had brought about this happy result. "In a Peel, a Stanley, a Wellington, and a Lyndhurst," said the writer, "the people of England recognize their fitting leaders". These fortunate leaders had merely to contend with "the acrid feebleness of a Russell, and the puerile commonplace of a Howick; Melbourne's experienced energy and Lansdowne's lucid perception".

Some of the expressions in the Runnymede Letters were so coarse and abusive that Barnes, accustomed as he was to full-blooded methods of controversy, protested to Disraeli—"You have a most surprising disdain for the law of libel."

Barnes, it may be remarked, was equally indifferent to it, as will be shown in succeeding pages.

Before the series of Runnymede Letters was completed Disraeli contributed a series of articles to the paper entitled "A New Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor, recently discovered". In these articles names of leading statesmen were thinly disguised and political history was explained in allegory. This fantastic treat-

ment of humdrum politics did not please Barnes. "I do not see much object", he wrote, "in allegorizing a subject or set of subjects which have been and are daily discussed in the plainest and most intelligible terms."

Disraeli also sent in "An Heroic Epistle to Viscount Mel——e". This poem was published in the issue of March 20, 1837.

But when the irrepressible author at a later date wished to send in another poem in blank verse, Barnes declined the offer. "Your verses have a stately march," he said in a note returning the MS., "and the sentiments are just, but they want variety. The tone is a high one, but the sound is monotonous."

We have already alluded to the methods of controversy prevailing in the thirties of the last century and Barnes's indifference to the law of libel. A few examples will show that pressmen as well as politicians flung dignity to the winds, and lost all sense of decency in their unseemly wrangles on politics and religion. And in this *The Times*, ably as it was conducted, was as serious an offender as any of its contemporaries.

Let us take as the first example the speech, already alluded to, which Disraeli delivered at Aylesbury. As Barnes sent down a staff of correspondents to report this speech it is almost certain that Barnes had discussed this with Disraeli, and knew not only its subject but its general purport as well. He knew it would make good copy for his paper, and was at pains to secure the best possible report of it.

If Barnes had objected to any particular passages in the speech nothing would have been easier than to strike out the offending sentences. As however *The Times* printed the entire address, Barnes was as responsible as Disraeli himself for anything offensive it contained.

THE TIMES.

LONDON TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 1815

OFFICIAL BULLETIN.

"DOWNING STREET, June 22 1815

"The Duke of WELLINGTON's Dispatch, dated, Waterloo, the 19 June, states, that on the preceding day BUONAPARTE attacked, with his whole force, the British line supported by a corps of Prussians; which attack, after a long and sanguinary conflict, terminated in the complete Overthrow of the Enemy's Army, with the loss of ONE HUNDRED & FIFTY pieces of CANNON and TWO EAGLES.

During the night, the Prussians under Marshal BLUCHER, who joined in the pursuit of the enemy, captured SIXTY GUNS, and a large part of BUONAPARTE's BAGGAGE. The allied armies continued to pursue the enemy. Two French Generals were taken.

Such is the great and glorious result of those masterly movements by which the Hero of Britain met and frustrated the audacious attempt of the Rebel Chief, Glory to WELLINGTON, to our gallant Soldiers, and to our brave Allies! BUONAPARTE's reputation has been wrecked and his last grand stake has been lost in this tremendous conflict. TWO HUNDRED AND TEN PIECES OF CANNON captured in a single battle, put to the blush the boasting column of the Place de Vendome. Long and sanguinary, indeed, we fear, the conflict must have been; but the boldness of the Rebel Frenchmen was the boldness of despair and conscience sate heavy on those arms which were raised against their Sovereign, against their oaths and against the peace and happiness of their country. We confidently anticipate a great and immediate defection from the Rebel cause. We are aware that a great part of the French nation looked to the opening of this campaign to hear that he fled with cowardice; but we greatly suspect that he did not court an honourable death. We think his valour is of the calculating kind, and we do not attribute his surviving the abdication at Fontainebleau entirely to magnanimity.

To the Official bulletin we have as yet little to add. The dispatches, we understand, were brought by Major PERCY, Aide de Camp to the Duke of WELLINGTON; and we have heard but we hope the statement is premature, that among the British slain was that gallant and estimable officer Sir THOMAS PICTON. But whoever fell on this glorious day cannot have fallen in vain. The fabric of rebellion is shaken to its base. Already we hear numerous desertions have taken place from the Rebel standard,; and soon, it is to be hoped, the perjured wretches NEY and DESNOUETTES, and EXCELMANS, and LALLEMAND and LABEDOYERE and their accomplices in baseness and treason, will be left alone as mar s for the indignation of Europe and just sacrafices to insulted French ahonour

Those who attended minutely to the to the operations of the Stock Exchange yesterday, was pursuaded that the news of the day before would be followed up by something still more brilliant and decisive. Omnium rose in the course of the day to 6 premium, and some houses generally supposed to possess the best information were among the purchase rs. For our own parts, though looking forward with that confidence which we yesterday expected, we own this full tide of success was more than we anticipated. We were very well satisfied that Mr. SUTTON's account, so far as it went was correct.—that BUONAPARTE's grand plan had been frustrated, and that he had not only been penetrating between the English and Prussian armies, but forced to fall back again behind the Samber. How far the Duke of WELLINGTON and Prince BLUCHER

A short extract will suffice to illustrate the character of this speech :

> " A denunciation has gone forth," said the orator, " against the House of Lords, and from whom ? From the paid agent of the Papacy. It is as natural of Mr. O'Connell to cry out ' Down with the House of Lords ' as for a robber to cry out ' Down with the gallows '. Both are national institutions very inconvenient in these respective careers. . . . When I listen to him I am reminded of what the great Dean Swift said of a gentleman who was almost as anxious to plunder the people of Ireland as Mr. O'Connell himself, though not quite so successful—I mean William Wood, who tried to impose on them with brassfarthings—' These are the last howls of a dog dissected alive.' "

But Disraeli's comments on O'Connell were as " water unto wine " compared with what *The Times* thought it fitting to say about the great agitator. Its issue of November 26, 1835, contained the following choice gem, which caused howls of delighted laughter in the more exclusive clubs, and won the unaffected admiration of the squires and parsons of rural England. The lines are addressed to Daniel O'Connell :

> " Scum condensed of Irish bog,
> Ruffian, coward, demagogue,
> Boundless liar, base detractor,
> Nurse of murders, treason's factor !
> Spout thy filth, diffuse thy slime,
> Slander is to thee no crime.
> Safe from challenge, safe from law,
> Who can curb thy callous jaw ?
> Who would sue a convict liar ?
> On a poltroon who would fire ? "

There are sensitive souls who would regard these lines as bordering on the offensive, but the sentiments they conveyed were scarcely spiced enough to suit the delicate palates of *Times* readers. But the paper made manful efforts to meet the wishes of its readers.

In September of the following year O'Connell in a House of Commons debate suggested that he knew something discreditable about Lord Lyndhurst. *The Times* jealous of the honour of eminent statesmen, generously rushed to his defence. The following extract from a long leader on the subject is edifying :

> "What an unredeemed and unredeemable scoundrel is this O'Connell to make such a threat, and at such a time too ! If he has not lied more foully than it would have entered into the imagination of the devil himself to lie, he makes the threat with his own wife dying under his very eyes ! O, how long shall such a wretch as this be tolerated among civilized men ! But let him mark us well—as surely as he dares to invade the privacy of the life of Lord Lyndhurst, or of any other man, woman or child that may happen by themselves or their relatives to be opposed to him in politics, so surely will we carry the war into his own domiciles at Darrynane and Dublin, and show up the whole brood of O'Connells, young and old."

To this elegant and dignified pronouncement O'Connell made a long reply, in which he expressed his opinion of *The Times* and the party it supported with refreshing candour. " It is an exquisite specimen of that party to whose base passions you are the mercenary panderers," he wrote. " Of course it is not my purpose to bandy words with creatures so contemptible as you are." Having expressed the lofty intention of not bandying words, he immediately proceeded to do so :

> "Your rascality," he wrote, "is purely venal, and has no more of individual malignity in it than inevitably belongs to beings who sell their souls to literary assassination, and who from their nature would be actual assassins if they lived at a period of history when the wages of villains of that description bore a reasonable proportion to the hire you receive for different, only because a bloodless atrocity. . . . I do not condescend one remark on the turpitude of the

party to which *The Times* is now attached, and whose patronage it earns by a political and personal meanness hitherto unknown in the history of British literature. You have made literary vileness a byword. It is really discreditable to Britain that it should be known that so much atrocity, so depraved, so unprincipled a vileness as *The Times* has exhibited should have found any countenance or support."

In those days when William IV's short reign was drawing to a close, the verbal bouquets these disputants threw at each other were the commonplaces of political controversy. No one believed in the truth of the accusations that were hurled about on all sides. These dubious methods were used by controversialists merely to show in what degree they differed from their opponents ; and as our ancestors liked their politics " piping hot ", gladiators were always ready to step into the ring and oblige.

The Times, despite its position as the most important newspaper in England, was ever foremost in the fray. It was in 1835, when young Charles Dickens was racing about the country by coach and post-chaise zealously reporting for *The Morning Chronicle*, that *The Times* (on June 13) described *The Chronicle* as " a disgraceful morning print, which, made up of such contributions as the licentiousness and leisure of stock-jobbing may furnish, actually feeds on falsehood and lies so largely day by day that one might think in its case increase of appetite had grown by what it fed on."

In its issue of the same date *The Chronicle* lamented that " the poor old *Times* in its imbecile ravings resembles those unfortunate wretches whose degraded prostitution is fast approaching neglect and disgust."

On another occasion *The Times* pleasantly alluded to *The Chronicle* as " that squirt of dirty water " ; whilst at an earlier day (June 16, 1832) it spoke of *The Standard* as " a stupid and priggish print, which

never by any chance deviates into candour". A month or two later *The Standard* retaliated by dilating on "the filthy falsehood and base insinuation put forward by *The Times*". The same newspaper also referred to *The Globe* as "our blubber-headed contemporary".

To *The Age*, however, must be awarded the palm for ingenuity in fashioning these complimentary references. In its issue of May 4, 1839, this journal contained a paragraph as follows: "It is actually impossible to express the unmixed disgust with which we have read a series of beastly attacks upon his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland in that most filthy of all filthy papers the old *Times*."

In the following paragraphs the same paper shows that it is capable of still loftier heights:

> "Old Jerry Bentham's paper, *The Globe*, is, we perceive, in high dudgeon with us for calling Mr. Peel a rat. It adds that we have designated Lord Lyndhurst a rat also. To the first we answer, that no one but such an old dotard as the author of 'Chrestomathia' doubts it; and to the last that it was not we, but Cobbett, Jerry's old friend the bone-grabber, who christened the Lord Chancellor Rat Copley."

A remarkable man of that period, who has long since been forgotten, was Alderman James Harmer, the Radical. Harmer was one of those men whom Dr Smiles loved to moralize about. His father was the son of a Spitalfields weaver, and died when the boy was ten years old. Handicapped by lack of friends and money, he was so successful that at sixty years of age he retired from a solicitor's business that had brought him in £4000 a year. When he died in 1853 he left behind him an estate of more than £300,000. Much of this money had been earned for him by *The Dispatch*, of which he was owner and business manager.

In the days of the first Reform Bill and long after, this journal had a very large sale, and exercised great influence. In 1840 its sales as a sixpenny paper were said to exceed 60,000 a week, which at that time was an enormous circulation for any periodical.

Harmer, its owner, had long been a member of the City Council, and was elected Alderman of Farringdon Without in 1833. The following year he served as Sheriff, and in 1840 it was his turn to be Lord Mayor.

Harmer's paper, *The Dispatch*, had often been attacked for its advanced views. Now the darts of its enemies were turned on Harmer himself. The Tories raised a loud clamour, and declared that it would be a scandal to the City to allow such a revolutionary to occupy the civic office.

The Times was foremost in this agitation. A group of liverymen issued a long protest against Harmer's election, based principally upon the ground that his journal was a public nuisance, " of the most fearful character ", and had " broadly and repeatedly recommended the overthrow of the monarchy ". A further count in the indictment against *The Dispatch* and its owner was that it " constantly and deliberately reviled the Christian faith and its professors of every class and denomination, and gave the preference to infidels and blasphemers of every description ".

This protest was prominently displayed in *The Times* of September 21, 1840, and in the same issue a savage attack on Harmer was published. But the paper was careful to explain that its opposition was based on public grounds. " The object ", the article declared, " is not merely to reject Alderman Harmer. It is far higher and more important than this ; it is to stamp with the blackest possible mark of reprobation the principles of *The Dispatch* in the person of its chief and responsible proprietor ".

For a week or two until the election day, October 7, there was a battle royal between the friends and opponents of the Alderman ; and in this contest *The Times* took its share. Day after day in its columns *The Dispatch* was vilified and its owner abused. In the election that followed Harmer was defeated by more than four hundred votes, although the 2294 recorded in his favour showed that he had many sympathizers. *The Times* chortled with glee at its victory and took the fullest credit for having achieved it.

The public was much surprised when on February 10, 1839, *The Times* alone of all London papers came out with a complete copy of Lord Durham's Report on the administration of Canada, and that no other morning newspaper made reference to it.

Here was a mystery that demanded solution ; and Greville and other investigators equally curious were soon hot on the track.

Greville quickly found out that Lord Durham had given a copy of the Report to Sir John Easthope, the proprietor of *The Morning Chronicle*, and a supporter of the Whig Ministry in the House of Commons. But in handing this important document to Easthope, Lord Durham had stipulated that it must not be published until he gave permission. Sir John replied that he wished he had kept his copy to himself, as " he could have obtained one elsewhere which he should have been at liberty to publish, if he had not accepted his with the prohibition ".

Barnes had been much more fortunate. Lord Durham's Report had been prepared principally by Charles Buller ; but it contained two paragraphs concerning Church lands to which some members of the Cabinet took strong exception. These offending paragraphs had been inserted at the instance of Gibbon Wakefield. This gentleman, who was anxious that

they should not be deleted, believed that he could best secure this object by securing their publication. He accordingly sent a copy of this original report to *The Times*.

Lord Durham was furious at the disclosure, but not more so than Sir John Easthope, who felt that he had been badly let down by his party chiefs.

The dissensions in the Melbourne Government in 1840 gave Barnes an opportunity of developing his views on Lord Palmerston's policy of constant and irritating interference in the affairs of other continental nations. This policy, which often estranged his colleagues, and frequently caused displeasure in Royal circles, was bitterly opposed by Barnes, and for many years by his successor, Delane.

The immediate cause of Palmerston's action was the policy of Louis Philippe's Government on the Syrian question. Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell very much disliked the Foreign Minister's attitude. In this they had the support of Sir Robert Peel and his Tory followers, as well as *The Times*.

Palmerston, fighting a lone hand, was championed strangely enough by *The Morning Chronicle*, the official mouthpiece of the Government. It may however be noted, as Dr Mackay says in *Through the Long Day*, that Sir John Easthope, the proprietor of *The Chronicle*, rendered himself conspicuous by his all but slavish worship of Lord Palmerston. His devotion to that chief was ultimately rewarded by a baronetcy. The articles in *The Chronicle* greatly annoyed Lord John Russell, who, according to Greville (October 1), wrote a letter to Guizot, then French Ambassador in London, begging him not to regard the articles that had appeared in *The Chronicle* as having the approval of the Government.

In a later note Greville says : " An article appeared in *The Times* strongly in favour of peace and harmony with France, and the acceptance of the Egyptian

Pasha's offers. Guizot, of course, was delighted with it." *The Morning Chronicle* the next day followed this with an article which Greville describes as " violent, declamatory and insulting to France ".

But the effect of this screed, " sanctioned, if not dictated, by Palmerston ", was more than neutralized by the pacific influence of *The Times*, in whose leading articles the views of the Prime Minister and the majority of his colleagues were expressed. The French Government were satisfied that with the organ of Printing House Square against him the Foreign Minister was shorn of much of his influence. Palmerston knew this also, and he never forgave Barnes for interfering with his plans.

It had, until Melbourne became Prime Minister, been the invariable practice of *The Times* to support the Government in office. But during the seven years of his administration it gave a general support to the Opposition leaders. Occasionally it showed something of its ancient spirit of independence ; as when early in 1839 it declared war against the Corn Laws, and urged their repeal or modification. There was great distress throughout Great Britain both in town and country. Wages were low and food at famine price. There was much unrest and discontent in the country, but the question of the Corn Laws had not become a burning political issue, for the simple reason that the classes of people who suffered through their operation were not voters ; and as they had no political power, politicians felt they could safely be ignored.

The Times articles startled them like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, and brought them sharply face to face with a pressing problem. The smouldering fires of discontent which had been slowly spreading were fanned into flame by *The Times* articles ; and squire and parson felt that they had been wounded in the house of a friend.

Greville and other prophets who daily scanned the political skies, and regarded *The Times* as an infallible barometer, shook their heads sadly as they predicted the coming storm. Greville confided to his diary on January 24, 1839, the following significant entry :

> "The repeal or alteration of the Corn Laws, and the declaration of war against them on the part of *The Times*, has produced a great effect, and is taken as conclusive evidence that they cannot be maintained, from *the rare sagacity* with which this journal watches the turn of public affairs. Besides that, its advocacy will be of the greatest use in advancing the cause which it already had perceived was likely to prevail."

The Conservative papers—*The Morning Herald* and *The Morning Post*—at once sounded the war drum, while *The Standard*, which affected to believe that *The Times* was leading the people down the steep places into the morass of revolution, amiably tried to convince its contemporary of the error of its ways.

For years this question of the Corn Laws had occupied the minds of acute observers. But the men who discussed it publicly had little influence. The populace took little notice of political economists like Ricardo, or academic Radicals like Hume. Charles Villiers year by year brought in his annual motion for Repeal, but this was a gesture that excited no one. Lord Palmerston had made occasional Free Trade speeches, but these were little more than academic statements of theories he had learnt from Dugald Stewart.

For a time it seemed that *The Times* had been premature in bringing the question of Repeal into the limelight, and events justified *The Standard* and *Morning Herald* in their opposition. For at the General Election which took place in the midsummer of 1841 the Conservatives came back with a great majority pledged to maintain Protection, and Sir

Robert Peel's Ministry, which included Stanley, Sir James Graham and Gladstone, then a young man of thirty-two, was a bulwark strong enough to defy the most desperate assaults of economic heresy advocates. "Yes, decidedly *The Times* had been wrong," said the political wirepullers, for in spite of the formation of The Anti-Corn Law League and Chartists' risings, a strong Conservative Government was now firmly entrenched.

But Barnes's action was justified by events. Unlike the politicians who saw only what they wished to see, he was a cool and dispassionate observer, and had sources of information undreamed of by men whose mental outlook was confined to Whitehall and Mayfair. Forces were at work—strange and mighty forces—that swept up statesmen in their onward rush, threw parties into hopeless confusion, and wrecked parliamentary majorities.

Barnes did not live to see these strange developments, but he pointed out the handwriting on the wall, and warned the Conservatives of the imminence of the catastrophe, that was to drive them into the wilderness and destroy their power as an instrument of government for a generation.

Barnes died suddenly and without warning on May 7, 1841, and his passing was, as Greville said, "an incalculable loss to *The Times*, in whose affairs his talents, good sense and numerous connections gave him a preponderating influence."

During the twenty-four years of his editorship the newspaper rose almost to its zenith as an institution of world-wide influence. How far this stupendous result was due to Barnes's genius as a journalist, or to John Walter's business enterprise, and the vast improvements he introduced on the mechanical side, cannot be definitely estimated. In the early days, the introduction of steam printing put *The Times* far ahead of its

competitors. Walter also showed initiative in giving subscribers a sheet of eight large pages against the four of other papers. To Barnes was allotted the infinitely more difficult task of fashioning a newspaper that, both in its home and foreign news, its Parliamentary, Legal, Commercial reports, and the authority and weight of its comment, excelled all other journals. How well he performed this task the unrivalled position of the paper when his task was ended sufficiently shows.

Of the man himself we know all too little, and the files of the paper during his tenure of office afford us no glimpse of his elusive personality. But as we turn over these grey old numbers and trace out the policy he pursued and note the variety of the subjects he featured, we are conscious of a feeling of profound admiration for what Sir Robert Peel described as " the extraordinary ability " and the keen discrimination and judgement he showed in directing the fortunes of the journal.

CHAPTER VII

*John Thadeus Delane appointed Editor in succession to Barnes—Some members of his Staff—His relations with Greville—Friendship with Lord Aberdeen—*The Times *and Sir Robert Peel—The Corn Law Agitation—Premature announcement of Repeal in* The Times*—Dispute with French Government—The Railway Mania—Death of J. Walter.*

BARNES'S successor in the editorial chair was John Thadeus Delane. It would be impossible to imagine a greater contrast. The one shy and elusive, the other a radiant personality with social gifts that made him known to everybody worth knowing ; the one prematurely aged by years of incessant toil and responsibility, his successor a young and untried man of twenty-three.

Delane was born at South Molton Street, London, on October 11, 1817. Educated first at King's College, London, and by private tutors, he matriculated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. Young Delane was passionately fond of horses, and some of his exploits as a horseman won him renown among the undergraduates, while his tutor, Dr Jacobson, wrote that "he, like the centaurs of old, is part and parcel of his horse".

But the small allowance he had from his father when at Oxford was not sufficient to defray stable expenses. In order to find means for this, for he was determined not to be baulked of his favourite pastime, Delane tried to augment his income by writing articles for the press. In this, says Kinglake, he had "more success of the kind he sought than, except perhaps in America, had ever been compassed before by any lad under age".



Rischgitz Photo

J. T. DEIANE, 1817-1879

Delane's father had a country house at Easthampstead in Berkshire, and was a neighbour and friend of John Walter of *The Times*.

Walter took the keenest interest in the welfare of the Delanes. The father was appointed financial manager of *The Times*, and the boy, whom Walter had many opportunities of studying, was promised a position in the office as soon as he was ready to make a start in the world.

In 1839 Delane took his degree, and in July of the following year he joined the staff of *The Times*.

His apprenticeship was of the shortest, and he appears to have spent this interval in studies that had no direct bearing on the profession he was adopting. For we learn that he read some law, and found time to walk the hospitals as well. But we know also that he was always ready to turn his hand to any work that was given him, and was diligent in attending Parliamentary debates, and making summaries of the speeches he heard.

In those early days young Delane shared lodgings with John Blackwood, the son of the Edinburgh publisher, from whom he must have learnt much about the famous writers who contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*.

Then came the sudden shock of Barnes's death, and the world wondered who would take the great editor's place. But John Walter did not keep the gossips long in suspense, and one morning a few days later Delane burst open the door of Blackwood's room and, rushing in, exclaimed : "By Jove, John, what do you think has happened? I am editor of *The Times*."

And so this young man—"florid, bright-eyed, brimming with zeal," as Kinglake describes him—shouldered the vast responsibilities entailed by the editorship of the world's greatest newspaper.

Delane found, in his new office, everything at his disposal that could contribute to the maintenance of the paper's influence and renown. He had an unequalled band of writers and correspondents, unlimited means, a more complete and better organized news service than any of his competitors, an unrivalled system of distribution ; and the backing of the shrewdest and most enterprising of business managers.

Delane had sage and experienced counsellors at call to help him in the mighty task he had undertaken. But even with this aid the work involved a strain that would have tested the moral fibre of the most resolute. And he was as yet only an unfledged journalist ; but he knew enough of the pitfalls and dangers of the course he was taking to realize that a lapse of memory, an instant's hesitation, or a rash impulse, might bring his career to sudden and inglorious disaster.

His employer also was a Colossus among newspaper men. He had devoted his working life to the newspaper, and before Delane was born had edited and managed *The Times*. When John Walter took charge of the paper it was a small four-paged sheet, and its sale scarcely more than 1000 copies a day. Now it was normally eight large pages and its circulation more than 30,000. Much of this progress was due to Walter's initiative, enterprise, and business acumen. He had, moreover, the gift of organization, for which commerce reserves its richest rewards ; and he possessed an instinctive knowledge of public needs and wants. Few men knew more of the minds and characters of the statesmen who directed the affairs of Great Britain and its continental neighbours. His correspondents in many capitals made him acquainted with secrets that were whispered in the inner rooms of Chancelleries ; and he had been a Member of Parliament since 1832.

It was under such a mentor that young Delane took up the duties of his new office ; and it may be assumed with confidence that, in the early stages at least, he not only consulted his employer about every important step he took, but also closely followed a policy laid down by Walter himself. Of this there are many indications in the tone of *The Times* leaders prior to 1847, when John Walter died.

Delane's first step was to add to his army of writers. Edward Sterling's home-life had been clouded with domestic sorrows, his " thundering " days were over, and he retired at Barnes's death. Among the new men was Roundell Palmer, who over a period of two years wrote articles for the paper on ecclesiastical subjects. Another, quite unknown to readers of the paper, was Mr Chivers, who joined the staff in 1841 and served till 1895, through the whole of Delane's editorship, the whole of Chenery's, and eleven years of Mr Buckle's—a period of fifty-four years. The old gentleman was still alive in 1909, when at a staff dinner Mr John Brainerd Capper, the Assistant Editor, made a sympathetic reference to his devoted service and shrewd and kindly humour.

W. H. Russell, destined in future years to be the first of the great war-correspondents, was also one of Delane's recruits. The Rev Thomas Mozley—the brother-in-law of Newman—most fertile and tireless of leader-writers, did not join Delane's staff until 1844. It was of the strain thrown upon leader-writers, by the rapidity with which they were called upon to write concerning the gravest questions, that Kinglake compares them professedly, on the authority of Mozley, to " crouching tigers waiting to spring ".

At *The Times* staff dinner, already mentioned, the writer heard Mr R. B. Carter—another of Delane's chosen band—comment on Mozley's " crouching tiger " simile in the following terms :

"I had the pleasure of knowing that kindly, humorous, and genial gentleman in the 'forties, when he was Rector of Cholderton in Wiltshire, where a church of no common beauty still preserves his memory. Anyone less resembling a crouching tiger it has never been my lot to encounter; and if he were really responsible for the metaphor, I fancy he must have smiled when giving utterance to it. I have never felt in the least like a tiger myself, unless it were on an occasion when Mr Delane, after inserting a leader in which I had criticized an address delivered before the British Association, wrote to me saying, 'Come down to-night, and make another meal out of the carcass'."

Henry Reeve, the editor of Greville's Diaries, and afterwards of *The Edinburgh Review*, joined the paper a few months before Delane took charge. His writings were principally on foreign affairs.

Delane's conception of the duties of an editor differed from that of his predecessor. Barnes rarely emerged from the privacy of his sanctum, and hid himself from the common gaze. He shrouded himself in mystery and was almost as impersonal as the paper he conducted. When, as on one notable occasion, he dined with Lord Lyndhurst, the Lord Chancellor, the gossips of the clubs hailed it as an event of political significance.

All this was changed with the advent of Delane. The mysterious entity of the newspaper that made and unmade Governments was personified in a athletic young Oxford man, whose charm of manner and unpretentious bearing made him welcome in Mayfair drawing-rooms, and popular in Whitehall.

He felt it his duty to share the work of the company of newsgatherers who recorded the world's history day by day for *The Times*, and assigned himself the most difficult and responsible share of this task. In this Greville the Diarist was of considerable service to him in early days.

It was characteristic of that inveterate intriguer, that at his first contact with Delane he tried to take advantage of the young editor's lack of experience by sending him an anonymous article, in which some of Greville's political enemies were bitterly attacked. But the net however was spread in vain.

But Delane soon found that this new acquaintance had qualities that commanded respect. As Clerk to the Privy Council, Greville knew the leading statesmen and politicians of the day. An aristocratic Tory of the old school, Greville had the prejudices and narrowness of outlook of his class. But he was also a shrewd and cool observer, and long experience of the inner workings of the political system had made him cynical. Perhaps not an ideal mentor for a young man on the threshold of a career, but Delane derived some advantages from his friendship. As Reeve, the editor of the Greville Memoirs, writes :

> "The friendly relations which had for some time subsisted between Mr Greville and Mr Barnes, were strengthened and consolidated under the administration of his successor. Mr Delane was well aware that he would nowhere meet with a more sagacious adviser or a more valuable ally. He owed to Mr Greville his first introduction to political society, of which he made so excellent a use, and where he gradually acquired the esteem of all parties, and a position which no editor of a newspaper had ever before enjoyed."

Greville no doubt at first gave Delane valuable introductions, but he did no more than the young editor could, in time, have done for himself. For Delane had the qualities that ensure confidence. Statesmen soon discovered that he respected their confidences, and stated their views with moderation and good sense. They found, moreover, that he was the last person who could be used as an instrument

to further their schemes, and that no cajolery or influence would induce him to act against his better judgement.

To Delane belongs the credit of raising the social status of the journalist ; for he was the first of his profession to meet the great ones of the land on terms of equality. In the early years of the century the traditions of Grub Street still lingered in men's minds, and the journalist was identified with the scribe who earned a precarious livelihood by writing libels, and the party hack who sold his pen to the highest bidder. By public men the newspaper scribe was regarded as a kind of upper servant who did dirty work that they did not care to soil their fingers with. Of this we have an illustration in the reluctance of Lockhart (Walter Scott's son-in-law) to accept the editorship of the new journal John Murray was projecting, for the significant reason that it was incompatible with his dignity as a country gentleman to hold such a position. We know also that Robert Southey refused the editorship of *The Times*, probably for the same reason. But in the next twenty-five years the London newspapers, and especially *The Times*, grew so rapidly in influence, that when in 1841 it became known that the editor of this paper, a University man of good breeding, was available for their parties, London hostesses sought him out, and sent him invitations.

Among others, Greville introduced Delane to Lord Aberdeen, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Sir Robert Peel's Government. To this introduction the young editor owed much. Aberdeen became his lifelong friend, and in those early years initiated him into the mysteries of foreign politics. Absorbing Aberdeen's precepts Delane naturally learnt to distrust and fear Palmerston's policy of irritating interference in the affairs of other nations, and for many years he became the most relentless critic of that bluff and

pugnacious statesman. From the outset there was a kind of informal partnership between the Foreign Secretary and *The Times*. Aberdeen kept Delane informed of the latest developments in foreign affairs, and the editor in his turn gave the minister's policy a steady and judicious support in the columns of his paper.

In this Delane found constant employment, for in the years Peel's Government was in office there were foreign entanglements in plenty to straighten out, and Palmerston, relieved for the present from the task of writing fiery despatches to foreign Chancellors, was busy scribbling "Jingo" articles for *The Morning Chronicle*.

When in 1842 Lord Ashburton negotiated the Washington treaty by which the boundary-line between Canada and the United States was adjusted, Palmerston saw in this agreement a reckless abandonment of British rights, and as Greville says on September 24 :

> "opened a fire upon the American treaty in the beginning of last week, which has been well sustained in a succession of articles of very unequal merit. To these *The Times* has responded, and in my opinion very successfully. It was amusing to me to read in the columns of *The Chronicle* all that I had been hearing Palmerston say *totidem verbis*. His articles were merely a repetition of his talk, and that as exactly as if the latter had been taken down in shorthand."

Though *The Times* was unsparing in its criticism of the Government, it continued to maintain friendly relations with the Foreign Office, and Lord Aberdeen missed no opportunity of giving Delane advance information of any important event. In 1843 when in Ostend, Lord Aberdeen was notified of Louis Philippe's intention to force Queen Isabella of Spain and her sister to marry his kinsmen. On his return to London, Lord Aberdeen at once sent for Delane and gave him

this important news. Delane communicated the news to Greville who remarked on it in his journal : " Notwithstanding the hostile and offensive tone which *The Times* has adopted towards the Government generally, particularly Peel and Graham, this formidable paper is in a sort of alliance with the Foreign Office, and the communications between Lord Aberdeen and Delane are regular and frequent."

Apart from John Walter's personal dislike of Peel, it is difficult to understand the hostile attitude of *The Times* to this great statesman in the first four years of his administration. The Reform Bill had wrecked the Tory Party, and Peel, by untiring attention to registration, skill in organization, and effective exposure of the weakness and ineptitude of the Whig administration, had welded his followers into a compact and united fighting force. When in the midsummer of 1841 he came back from the polls with a large Conservative majority and drove the Whigs from office, it was realized that at last the country had a stable Government, and a resolute Minister capable of averting the ruin that threatened.

From the first the attitude of *The Times* to Peel and his Government was aloof, and dictatorial. From some lofty moral height its censures were showered impartially on Conservatives, Whigs and Radicals, and politicians might have exclaimed of *The Times* as did the students of Trinity of their Master, Dr Thompson, " He casteth forth his ice like morsels. Who is able to abide his frost ? "

When in the first session of the new Parliament, Peel proposed a lower scale of duties on foreign corn, and to make good the deficit foreshadowed a revival of Pitt's income tax, *The Times* in the interests of its wealthy subscribers met the latter proposal with strong opposition.

This was legitimate criticism. But its general

attitude to the Prime Minister and Sir James Graham during the troubled years of this administration was one of studied insolence, and Delane lost no opportunity of sneering at them. In 1843, when Peel introduced his Irish Arms Bill, and again two years later when the scheme for endowing Maynooth College was introduced, *The Times* attacked Peel with a virulence that was scarcely matched at a later date by Disraeli, when conducting his famous vendetta against the same Minister. According to Greville, who was on terms of friendship with Delane, the series of articles on the Maynooth Endowment were " by far the most disgraceful that ever appeared on a political subject in any public journal ".

There was a great popular outcry when in July, 1844, it was discovered that the letters of Mazzini, the Italian patriot, had been opened at the General Post Office under a warrant from Sir James Graham. *The Times* and the Whig newspapers industriously fanned the flames of popular indignation, and there were heated debates in Parliament on the subject. " The Press took it up ", says the cynical Graham, " the Whig Press as a good ground of attack on the Government, and especially Graham ; and *The Times* merely from personal hatred of Graham, whom they are resolved to write down if they can on account of his honest support of the Poor Law." Graham bowed to the storm and appointed a select committee to inquire into the matter. But his critics were not appeased. As the diarist remarks, " this concession by no means disarmed his opponents, and *The Times* particularly, has continued to attack him with the utmost virulence, but so coarsely and unfairly as quite to overshoot the mark."

Though many public questions occupied the attention of the 1841–6 Parliament, the one subject that

overshadowed all others was that of the Corn Law. When at the end of the war with France the price of wheat fell from over 100 to 65 shillings a quarter, landlord and farmer saw ruin staring them in the face. The farmers were in a particularly unenviable position, for during the war their rents had been more than doubled. Both classes demanded help from Parliament, and the House of Commons, then a house of landlords, and more than willing to oblige their friends, passed the Corn Law of 1815, under which the importation of foreign corn was prohibited until wheat stood at 80 shillings a quarter. As Mr G. M. Trevelyan says in his "Life of John Bright": "To maintain rents which had doubled while the people starved, it was determined to perpetuate by law the artificial conditions which the war had created."

Though the landlords had warmly supported this piece of legislation the people were ill-bred enough to protest, and in this the Lord Mayor and Common Council of London set the example. All the large towns held meetings and petitioned Parliament against the Bill, and *The Times* published several leading articles in which it championed the cause of the people, and remarked that "in the present agitated state of the public mind, no subject but that of the Corn Laws appears worthy of attention".

In 1828 a sliding scale was adopted which afforded only a trifling relief, for when the price of foreign wheat was low the duty raised it to a prohibitive figure. This sliding scale remained in force till 1841. Sir Robert Peel was triumphant at the polls, and had at his back a solid majority of Protectionists pledged to support the agricultural interests.

But the situation grew more difficult year by year. The development of industrialism had brought in its train a rapid growth of population, so that even in years of good harvests the home crop was insufficient

to supply the nation's needs. By 1841 the difficulties of the situation for a Conservative statesman pledged to maintain the existing order, appeared unsurmountable.

Trade was stagnant. In the industrial districts there was terrible distress and the statistics of deaths by starvation were appalling. In Stockport more than 70,000 people received relief, while in one district of Manchester 2000 families were without a bed. One Duke, greatly affected by the sufferings of the poor, recommended the starving operatives to take an occasional pinch of curry powder in a little water to allay the cravings of hunger.

Peel tackled his task manfully. He altered the sliding scale of corn prices so that instead of 64 shillings it now became 56 shillings. He also abolished most of the remaining export duties on manufactured goods, and helped the manufacturers by reducing import duties on raw materials. He made good the deficiencies by reintroducing the income tax. Through these beneficent measures he was able to boast four years later that " notwithstanding the hostile tariffs of foreign countries the declared value of British exports has increased above ten million pounds during the period which has elapsed since the relaxation of duties on your part in 1842 ".

John Bright admitted that Peel's financial proposals, so far as the reduction or change of taxes was concerned, were beneficial.

But he as well as the Corn Law repealers were disappointed with Peel's new sliding scale of duties on wheat. Even Macaulay, who would have no dealings with the Anti-Corn Law League, said of Sir Robert's plan : " It is a measure which settles nothing ; it is a measure which pleases nobody ; it is a measure which nobody asks for, and which nobody thanks him for ; it is a measure which will not extend trade nor relieve distress."

Richard Cobden, one of the new members, bitterly assailed Peel's sliding scale and made a speech that caused young Mr Gladstone on the Treasury bench to remark prophetically, " Cobden will be a worrying man about corn ". On Horace Twiss, one of the principal writers of *The Times*, this speech of Cobden's does not appear to have made much impression.

> " He appeared ", said John Bright, who sat near him in the gallery of the House of Commons, " to have the greatest possible horror of anybody who was a manufacturer or a calico printer coming down into the assembly to teach our senators wisdom. As the speech went on I watched his countenance, and heard his observations ; and when Mr Cobden sat down, he said with a careless gesture, ' Nothing in him ; he is only a barker '."

We have seen that when the Corn Law was first before Parliament *The Times* strongly opposed it, and that again shortly before Barnes's death it advocated the repeal of this measure. It still advocated the same cause, and believed that repeal was the one panacea for popular discontent. But for the men who were educating public opinion on the question and were devoting their lives and fortunes to the task, it had nothing but measureless contempt. Mr Twiss's " Barker " was an innocuous term compared with many that *The Times* hurled at Cobden. He and Bright were generally spoken of as incendiaries while the League whose work they furthered was described on March, 1843, in a leading article as an " extra-constitutional association, and impaired the vigour and defaced the purity of the Constitution, and destroyed or rendered useless the liberty and privileges once really and still professedly guaranteed to her subjects by the State ".

At an earlier date (August 21, 1841) *The Times* was coarsely abusive about a conference of seven hun-

dred nonconformist ministers which assembled in Manchester. At this gathering the ministers, after hearing statements submitted to them by leading members of the League, passed resolutions in which taxation of corn was condemned as impolitic and unjust. *The Times* dubbed this assemblage a " freak " as being no less absurd than " the British Association for the Advancement of Science ". After expressing its intention " to put an extinguisher on both ", it concludes with words that display the impeccable taste and good breeding of its writer. " Lord Ducie and Mr Cobden were decently dressed, but that none of the Dissenting Ministers could show a clean shirt at the conference." Other papers which championed the Protectionist cause were quite as coarse, but more downright in their proposals. Thus Mr Trevelyan quotes *The Standard* as saying " England would be as great and prosperous as she is now, and all useful Englishmen as happy as they now are, if all the manufacturing towns and districts of the Empire were involved in one common ruin."

The Morning Post was not quite so unkind. " Take your manufacturers away with you ", it says, " by all means, and exchange them anywhere you will from Tobolsk to Timbuctoo. If nothing will serve you but to eat foreign corn, away with you, you and your goods, and let us never see you more."

But in spite of abuse, contempt and threats of prosecution, the League continued to attract adherents from all sides. Money poured into its coffers in a continuous and never-ending stream. Town and county meetings were held in every part of Great Britain. Covent Garden Theatre was engaged for fifty nights at an expense of £3,500. While Mr Baring, a member of the Government, was defeated in an election for the City by the Free Trade candidate Mr Pattinson.

The Times viewed the growth and progress of the League with jealousy and alarm. But its directors were realists, and when deciding policy gave due consideration to the facts of the case, and did not allow their judgement to be clouded by prejudices. Its opinions, therefore, when definitely expressed, were regarded by political experts not only as forecasts of its own policy, but of changes which were actually impending. So that when, on November 18, 1843, the following article appeared in its columns Free Traders and Protectionists alike hailed it as an indication of the coming triumph of the Anti-Corn Law League :

"*The League is a Great Fact.* It would be foolish, nay rash to deny its importance. It is a great fact that there should have been created in the homestead of our manufacturers a confederacy devoted to the agitation of one political question, persevering at it year after year, shrinking from no trouble, dismayed by no danger, making light of every obstacle. It demonstrates the hardy strength of purpose, the indomitable will, by which Englishmen working together for a great object are armed and animated. It is a great fact that, at one meeting at Manchester, more than forty manufacturers should subscribe on the spot each at least £100, some £300, some £400, some £500, for the advancement of a measure which, right or wrong, just or unjust, expedient or injurious, they at least believe it their duty or their interest or both, to advance in every possible way.

"These are facts important, and worthy of consideration. *No moralist can disregard them, no politician can sneer at them, no statesman can undervalue them. He who collects opinions must chronicle them ; he who frames laws must to some extent consult them.*

"These things are so. It matters not that you tell us, as you may tell us with truth, that the league has another character, and other objects, than those which it now professes. The league may be a hypocrite, a great deceiver, a huge Trojan horse of sedition. Be it so. But we answer, The League Exists. You may tell us, and with truth, that

there are men in the league sworn foes of the church and crown, to peers and dignities, to bishops and judges ; that, now speaking, and declaiming, and begging, and taxing, and, an' you like, plundering even, to resist the corn-laws, this monster being will next raise its head, and subdue all laws beneath it. You may tell us that its object is not to open the ports, to facilitate commerce, to enrich England, but to ruin our aristocracy, whom leagues envy and detest. You may tell us that no man of honesty or intelligence could, consistently with their honour and their knowledge seek to rifle an embarrassed state of that just subsidy which all states impose upon articles of the most necessary consumption. You may tell us that, whatever may be the specious pretext which they hold out, or the disguise under which they work, they can really only look forward to that disastrous crisis in the annals of a kingdom when indiscriminate plunder consummates the work of hopeless and inextricable confusion. You may tell us that the league has whined and canted about the sufferings of the poor ; that its orators wink with malicious cunning at the 'point' they make about the miserable victims of landlord legislation. In all this there is doubtless much truth.

"But, we ask, tell us this : who created the league ! Who found the ribs and the planks of this *infandum monstrum* ? Who filled it with armed men, and introduced its perilous presence within the walls of the constitution ? We answer, *Experience set at naught, advice derided*, warnings neglected ; these brought the league into existence ; these gave it power, and motion, and vital energy ; these gave it an easy and unresisted ingress into the very sanctuaries of our domestic life.

"A New Power Has Arisen In The State : and maids and matrons flock to the theatre as though it were but a new 'translation from the French'.

"Let no man say that we are blind to the possible mischief of such a state of things. We acknowledge that we dislike gregarious collections of cant and cotton-men. We cannot but know that, whatever be the end of this agitation, it will expire only to bequeath its violence and its turbulence to some successor."

Needless to say, this manifesto had the sensational effect its authors intended. The landlords and parsons must have turned apoplectic as they read that catch-phrase—" The League is a Great Fact ". The phrase imprinted itself on men's minds, and they saw in an instant what hitherto they had dimly perceived. The Protectionists were panic-stricken. *The Times* article came as a flash of lightning that illumined the political sky and made visible the shadow of the monster that was advancing to their destruction. It sent *The Standard* and *Morning Post* into hysterics, who tearfully besought the landlords to rouse themselves from the apathy and indolence into which they had sunk. Conservative politicians called on their friends to rally to the defence of the Ministry, and of their own interests. But these appeals met with little response, for the Protectionists were losing heart, and felt that they could make no headway against the wave of enthusiasm that in three more years was to sweep away the Corn Laws. *The Times* article, despite its unjust and ridiculous imputations, delighted the Repealers, and encouraged them to greater efforts.

Three months before (on August 1) an article had appeared in *The Times* on the election of John Bright for the cathedral city of Durham which showed how accurately the Printing House Square barometer gauged the prospects of Repeal. In this article it was laid down that total Repeal was only a question of time unless some compromise was adopted in the form of a moderate fixed duty, instead of the existing sliding scale.

This article, significant of coming change as it was, attracted much less notice than that already quoted which goaded Ministerial supporters into transports of furious rage. Of this article W. N. Molesworth in his " History of England, 1830–1870 " (in Vol. II, p. 197) says : " Perhaps no royal speech, no State

paper, no public document of any kind, ever caused a stronger sensation or attracted more general attention than this leading article of *The Times* newspaper."

This tribute to the leading organ is not overcoloured, as may be shown by contemporary records, and the effect of this and other articles in the paper goes far to illustrate the fact that already under Delane's skilful guidance it had all but reached the zenith of its influence.

With the passing of Sterling the leading articles were no longer written in the heavy thundering style. They now had a quieter tone which Mozley introduced when he joined the paper in 1844. The following extract is from an article published on February 28, 1845, in which John Bright's speech in the House of Commons on the Game Laws admirably illustrates the type of composition that now found favour with Delane :

> "The country gentleman puts on scarlet, Mr Bright drab of the soberest brown. The farmer brings out his full-mouthed pack, the latter his not less noisy league. The one then hunts down a fox, the latter a landowner or monopolist. The sportsman bags pheasants and hares, the Quaker bishops and lords. The former rejoices to be in at the death of a fox and carries off the brush to adorn his hall ; it is the acme of Mr Bright's anticipation to witness the death-blow of a favoured class. His trenchant blade is ever at hand to lop off the whole amount of its protection, and the achievement, measured by percentages and puffed up into enormous sum totals, will doubtless some day hang over his mantelpiece to stimulate the hereditary prowess of future generations of Brights."

In the autumn of 1845 events moved rapidly towards a crisis. The potato famine that halved the population of Ireland convinced the Government that a drastic change was inevitable ; the rains which ruined the harvest caused Lord John Russell and the

Whigs to swing into line with Cobden, and Peel to abandon the Corn Laws. On November 29 Bright writes exultantly to a relative, "The whole Whig Press and *The Times* also are fairly with us, and with their writing and our speeches we shall run the monster down."

On December 4, five days later, the following announcement appeared in *The Times* :

> "The decision of the Cabinet is no longer a secret. Parliament, it is confidently reported, is to be summoned for the first week in January ; and the Royal Speech will, it is added, recommend an immediate consideration of the Corn Laws, preparatory to their total repeal. Sir Robert Peel in one house and the Duke of Wellington in the other will, we are told, be prepared to give immediate effect to the recommendation thus conveyed. . . . It is said that the decision has been made with that unanimity which perhaps the compulsion of circumstances alone can inspire. The reported exceptions are both insignificant and doubtful . . . an announcement of such immeasurable importance, and to the larger part of the community so unspeakably gratifying, almost precludes the possibility of comment. No pen can keep pace with the reflections which must spontaneously crowd upon every thoughtful and sensitive mind."

With this announcement *The Times* scored the greatest scoop of its existence. The news caused the wildest excitement among politicians and the general public. Sir Robert Peel was mystified and very angry, for the announcement in some particulars was untrue. Many disbelieved *The Times* story and suspected that it was nothing more than a shrewd guess on Delane's part. Cabinet Ministers, who knew the exact position, sat down to write letters of resignation. John Bright and his friends accepted the announcement as gospel. Writing to his sister-in-law after a glance at the papers, Bright says, "*The Times* says the Corn Law is to be repealed the first week in the

New Year. I believe this is quite true. Glorious news for us and for the world ! I am almost ill with reading the announcement." The cynical Greville was neither so happy nor so credulous.

> "The whole town", he says, "was electrified by the article in *The Times*, announcing with an air of certainty and authority, that the discussions and disputes in the Cabinet had terminated by a resolution to call Parliament together early in January and propose a total repeal of the Corn Laws, and that the duke had not only consented but was to bring forward the measure in the House of Lords. Nobody knew whether to believe this or not, though all seemed staggered, and the more so because *The Standard* though affecting to disbelieve *The Times* and treating it as a probable fiction did not contradict it from authority, as might naturally have been expected, if it had been untrue."

The other Tory paper, *The Morning Herald*, took a more emphatic tone than *The Standard* in denying *The Times* announcement, but Delane stuck to his guns. On the 6th and again on the 8th he reiterated his assertion and laughed to scorn the efforts of "Mrs Gamp" and "Mrs Harris"—as the Tory organs were always called in *The Times*—to discredit his announcement.

Again on the 9th *The Times* alluded to the story as correct. On the 10th Greville reports :

> "Yesterday morning I called on Wharncliffe who was still ill in bed and very low. He complained of *The Times* for saying that the Duke of Wellington had broken up the Government by changing his mind, first consenting and then withdrawing his consent ; that 'it was hard on the old man' who had behaved admirably throughout, never having flinched or changed, but he had said to Peel that he (Peel) was a better judge of this question than himself, and he would support him in any course he might take. I said 'the old man' would probably not see the paper, and certainly not care a straw if he did."

Wharncliffe also told Greville " that the original statement in *The Times* was the more extraordinary, because on the very day when it appeared, Thursday, the Government was virtually broken up ".

Though the public was soon to learn, through the rapid political changes that occurred in December, 1845, and January of the following year, what measures of truth there was in *The Times* announcement, the origin of the report itself was for a long time wrapped in mystery. According to the gossips of the period the information was given to Delane by Mrs Norton, who in her turn had it from Sidney Herbert. This story has no foundation in fact. Its falsity has been demonstrated many times, but it crops up again and again.

There is an American proverb which says that a lie will travel from Michigan to Texas while Truth is putting on her boots. The story of Mrs Norton illustrates the truth of this saying. How often it has been repeated and denied may be gathered from the account of it given by Sir Edward Cook in " Delane of *The Times* " (p. 24). According to Sir Edward's account the story was published in Justin McCarthy's " History of our Own Times " (1880). When in 1884–5 George Meredith's " Dream of the Cross-ways " was published the public identified the great editor, Mr Tonans, as Delane, and the beautiful woman who brought him the information as Mrs Norton, and the myth which had grown faded and emaciated suddenly renewed its strength. In the year that Meredith's novel appeared the true story of Delane's scoop was given to the world in the Greville Memoirs, Second Part, 1885. But this made no difference. The story about Mrs Norton was too romantic to die a natural death, and in 1894 it was revived in the autobiography of Sir William Gregory. In this book the story was embroidered

with details that gave it an air of verisimilitude, and the public was told that Mrs Norton received £500, and there was a touching account of Sidney Herbert's confession to Peel, and Peel's generosity in forgiving his erring colleague. But unfortunately for Sir William Gregory's reputation for accuracy, he names Barnes as the editor who figured in this transaction. But Barnes died in 1841, four years before this affair took place. Sir Wemyss Reid gave the Norton myth a fresh lease of life in an article on " Cabinet Secrets ", which appeared in *Cassell's Family Magazine* (December, 1894). The story was again contradicted by *The Westminster Gazette*, and also by Lord Dufferin, a kinsman of Mrs Norton. Sir Wemyss Reid withdrew his statement, and Lady Gregory cancelled the offending passage in a second impression of her husband's autobiography.

But a year later the story appeared again, this time in *The St. James's Gazette* ; and again Lord Dufferin contradicted it.

Sir Robert Meade, a relative of Sidney Herbert, made a valiant effort in *The Times* of December 21, 1895, to kill and bury the story, and his letter was, as Sir Edward Cook says, " the fullest exposé of the matter ". He embodied in this communication the substance of an interview he had with Mr Reeve, Greville's editor. But even this did not dispose of the Norton myth, for in the *Quarterly Review* of July, 1897, it reappeared again as Mrs Norton's betrayal of the secret communication to Barnes ".

The true story as told by Greville and confirmed by Lord Stanmore in his " Memoirs of Sidney Herbert ", though not so sensational as the Norton legend, casts a curious light on the methods of statesmen, and shows that even in the " Hungry Forties " Government chiefs had a keen appreciation of the value of publicity. It also illustrates the penetrative

power of the great sounding-board of Printing House Square.

The ruined harvest in England and the potato famine in Ireland, put Peel and his Cabinet in a desperate position in the autumn of 1845. Food had risen to famine prices, the people were angry, and the landlord Pharaohs hardened their hearts, and turned a deaf ear to all appeals. But the people, —in Bright's phrase,—refused to die quietly. The cynical selfishness of the monopolists had driven them to the point of exasperation, and they expressed their resentment at stormy meetings which were held in all parts of the land. At many of these gatherings orators recited Byron's savage lines from the "Age of Bronze" to the accompaniment of thunders of applause :

"For what were all the landlord patriots born ?
To hunt, and vote, and raise the price of corn. . . .
They roared, they dined, they drank, they swore they meant
To die for England. Why then live ? For rent.
And will they not repay the treasures lent ?
No. Down with everything and up with rent. . . ."

Already Sir Robert Peel and two or three of his colleagues were convinced that the Corn Laws must be repealed, but they were in a painful dilemma. If they refused to act, riot and even revolution might ensue ; if, on the other hand, they tried to repeal the Corn Laws, the Government would be wrecked, and the Conservative party split in twain.

Difficult as the position was, Peel resolved to act. He framed some proposals for dealing with the Corn Laws, and put them before the Cabinet, but they were rejected by all his colleagues but Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham and Sidney Herbert.

Then on November 28, Lord John Russell, the leader of the Whig party, published his famous Edin-

burgh letter in which he declared : " It is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty." The Whigs, like obedient sheep, fell in line behind him.

In the issue in which Lord John's letter was published, *The Times* declared this missive to be " the final death-blow of the Corn Laws ".

After reading this article in which the writer regrets that Sir Robert Peel and his Cabinet had not done on its own initiative what it would now have to do under compulsion from the Whig leader, Prince Albert notes in a letter, " *The Times*—barometer of public opinion—became suddenly violently Anti-Corn Law ".

Here Greville takes up the story, which is best told in his own words :

> " Aberdeen sent for Delane, and told him that Peel considered the letter mischievous, but the article far more mischievous than the letter. In the course of this and other conversations he gave Delane to understand what his own opinions were, and told him pretty clearly what sort of a contest was going on in the Cabinet."

Lord Aberdeen sent for Delane again a week later and told him that Peel had read a written statement to the Cabinet in which he outlined his proposals for a gradual reduction of duties on corn. No definite decision was arrived at, but Wellington promised Peel his support. (" Rotten potatoes have done it all," he remarked to a friend. " They put Peel in his damned fright.")

Delane paid Aberdeen another visit on the following day, when the Foreign Minister gave him some further information. When Delane rose to leave the Minister's room, Aberdeen asked him what he intended to do with the information. " Why, publish it, of course ", answered the Editor.

How inaccurate the statement in *The Times* was is shown by the fact that on the day it was published

Peel wrote to the Queen to inform Her Majesty that the situation had "very materially altered". On the following day he tendered his resignation.

That Lord Aberdeen misled Delane, as Dasent, Delane's biographer, suggests, we cannot believe. Nor is it likely that so shrewd and capable an interviewer as Delane would carry away a false impression of what the Foreign Secretary had told him. Lord Aberdeen was a man of unimpeachable honour, and incapable of intentionally misleading anyone, least of all the editor of a great newspaper. Delane would have been the first to resent treatment of this kind ; and the simple fact that this incident in no way disturbed the close friendship of the statesman and the editor is convincing proof that there had been no misunderstanding between them at the fateful interview. Lord Aberdeen and the Prime Minister also remained on terms of undisturbed friendship, which would not have been so if there had been any truth in the further suggestion that Lord Aberdeen made his communication to *The Times* without the knowledge and consent of Sir Robert.

Events moved faster than either Aberdeen or Delane anticipated, and they were both misled. At a time of political crisis the situation often changes daily and even hourly. We have the evidence of the Premier's letter to the Queen that in two days the situation had very materially altered ; and it is not improbable that at the very time Lord Aberdeen and the editor were in conclave, and the former was assuring Delane that the heads of the Government were agreed on Repeal, some of his colleagues like Lord Stanley and the Duke of Buccleugh had actually decided on resignation.

Greville thought that Delane had been indiscreet. He wrote on December 9 :

> "There is no doubt that Delane in the excitement of the moment said more, much more than he ought to have said,

for the Cabinet, so far from being agreed on a measure, was in a state of disagreement amounting almost to dissolution. Delane was very imprudent for he might have guarded his statement, and yet produced precisely the same effect."

Few experienced journalists will agree with the last sentence. If *The Times* had published a carefully qualified statement it would have created no sensation, and would have been airily dismissed as an intelligent anticipation of a probable event.

Curiously enough subsequent events justified Delane's predictions. For Lord John Russell failed to form a Government, and—as Disraeli cynically remarked—handed "the poisoned chalice" back to Peel, who in his turn reconstituted his Government and in January brought in his Anti-Corn Law Bill.

In a previous chapter some account was given of John Walter's enterprise in introducing the steam printing press, and the initial advantage it gave him over his competitors. This, however, was but one of the ways in which he showed enterprise that made light of difficulties, and an optimism that took no account of cost when any improvements could be made in the service he rendered his readers.

When peace came to Europe after the fall of Napoleon, the London daily newspapers, including *The Times*, sent correspondents to the principal capitals. The other papers used the general post for the transmission of news from these correspondents. But this arrangement did not suit John Walter, who knew how untrustworthy the arrangements of the General Post Office were, before Rowland Hill transformed that institution into a business-like organization. Walter from the first made his own transport arrangements, and established a separate service of couriers on both sides of the Channel. He established a small fleet of fast sailing boats for crossing to and from England.

This was, of course, very expensive, but the cost was more than justified by results. Walter's express service was much more speedy and dependable than that of the Government ; and very often important items of foreign news reached Printing House Square hours before either Government offices or other newspapers received them.

This speedier news-service vastly increased the popularity of *The Times*, and its rivals found it so formidable a competitor that in time they were compelled to follow its example and have special posting services of their own. Walter's enterprise paid him well, for the additional expense was more than made good by the heavier receipts of his publishing department.

But when the opening of the overland route to India in 1827 necessitated an extension of this organization Walter found it prudent to share its benefits and expenses with *The Morning Chronicle* and *The Morning Post*.

Under this new arrangement a courier of the three newspapers met each mail boat that arrived at Marseilles from Suez and received letters and papers for them, which were then dispatched with all speed to London.

For several years this machinery for swift news conveyance worked smoothly. But in 1845 there arose a dispute between the French Government and *The Times*. For some years Guizot, who was as fond of intermeddling in the affairs of other countries as Palmerston himself, had been jealous of *The Times* foreign news service. It was outrageous that this London paper should receive news from the East hours before the French couriers reached Paris. Sometimes it happened that *The Times* containing news of important foreign events was on sale in the French capital before Guizot learnt of them from official despatches. So, instead of expediting his own service, Guizot

determined to obstruct that of *The Times*, and as the couriers of the paper had to travel across France from Marseilles this was quite easy. On the pretext that there was some informality about his passport, *The Times* courier was detained until the official mail bags were delivered.

When he found that protests were without avail, and that he could get no redress from the French Government, Walter, who was determined not to be baulked by stupid officialism, drastically altered his arrangements. Instead of meeting the mails at Marseilles, a *Times* courier now awaited the arrival of the Indian packet at Suez. On receiving his mails the courier took them on a swift dromedary to Alexandria, where an Austrian steamer awaited them, and they were then conveyed to a port near Trieste. From this port they were carried by the shortest route to Ostend, and thence by special steamer to Dover, and from Dover by express train to London. The first service under this new arrangement left Suez on October 19. It reached London on the 30th of the same month, and the greater part of the news conveyed in this mail was printed in *The Times* of the following day.

The first experiment was remarkably successful. The regular mail was beaten by nearly a fortnight, and the heads of the French Government were much annoyed when they found that once more *The Times* had scored. At that period France was much behind other countries in transport facilities, and railway construction was only beginning there. But Guizot was unwilling to confess defeat, and he decided to demonstrate the superiority of the French route for the conveyance of mails.

Baldwin of *The Morning Herald* had also a special service of news from the East, and Guizot set himself the task of getting through the mails of this rival

in record time. In this he so far succeeded that the *Herald* November parcel from India reached London two days before that of *The Times*.

The contest between the English paper and the French Government was watched with amused interest throughout Europe. The Austrian Government, doubtless thinking it would be advantageous to be on good terms with a newspaper of such influence, came to the help of John Walter and put the most speedy means of transport through its dominions at his disposal. The elements also came to the assistance of *The Times*. Stormy weather in the Mediterranean Sea so hindered the progress of the Marseilles mail boat that *The Times* despatches sent via Trieste arrived in London many days before those of the *Herald*.

For some time longer this exciting contest continued, till at last Guizot recognized that he was making himself ridiculous by engaging in such an undignified struggle, and *The Times* couriers were again allowed to pass through France without hindrance. As the French route was safer and much cheaper Walter was only too glad to avail himself of this concession.

It was while this contest was in progress (in 1845) that *The Times* rendered a most important public service in exposing the sharks and swindlers who were profiting by the mania for speculating in railway shares.

The coach and the post-chaise were soon to be relics of the past. Engineers and surveyors were planning iron roads through England's green and pleasant land, and company promoters were displaying feverish activity. Every day new projects took shape, and new prospectuses were issued, and the public believed that here was a prospect of wealth such as had never been known before. When they heard that wealthy speculators and " railway kings " were speculating with

vast sums in these undertakings their cupidity took on a sharper edge, and they feverishly joined in the mad game. According to *The Times* of November 17, 1845, no fewer than 1,200 railways were projected, and the capital demanded from the public was more than £500,000,000.

As Greville said :

> " It is incredible how people have been tempted to speculate ; half the fine ladies have been dabbling in stocks, and men the most unlikely have not been able to refrain from gambling in shares, even I myself—though in a very small degree, for the warning voice of the Governor of the Bank has never been out of my ears."

Greville here mentions the Governor of the Bank, who protested against this madness and predicted a ruinous reaction. But there were few cool heads at that time, and very few echoes of his warning. Thackeray in *Punch* ridiculed the craze, but it was left to *The Times* to extinguish this financial flare with a steady stream of cold water. Unlike some of its daily contemporaries, which were reaping a rich harvest from the advertisements of the company promoters, *The Times,* against its own financial interests, exposed the rascality of the share pushers, and warned its readers to tighten their purse-strings. Day after day the exposure went on, and it was due principally to the public-spirited action of the paper that the results of the reaction when it did arrive were much less serious than those of the South Sea Bubble in the eighteenth century.

This crusade added greatly to the confidence its subscribers felt in *The Times*, and gained it many new friends.

In 1846 John Walter became dissatisfied with the financial management of the paper, and he expressed his opinions with no uncertain voice. Expenses had

mounted like a rising tide, and profits sank almost to vanishing point.

The position was one of some delicacy. Delane's father, the financial manager of *The Times*, and John Walter, were old neighbours and friends. But the interests of an institution like *The Times* were of paramount importance, and naturally took precedence even of the claims of close friendship.

For a time the storm raged furiously, and while it lasted the young editor felt some anxiety about his own position.

Then a member of the Rothschild family was called in to arbitrate on these differences ; and at his suggestion Mr Delane, senr., resigned his position as financial controller, and took up a legal appointment.

The editor's status was, however, unaffected by this change. Like all men who have built up great undertakings, John Walter was a keen judge of men, and his confidence in young Delane never for one moment wavered. He knew that this stripling, whom he had watched for years, had in him the stuff of which great editors are made, and the five years of Delane's service had confirmed his judgement. In appointing so young a man to so exalted a position many observers thought that Walter had recklessly preferred the claims of friendship to those of merit. When they discovered that the beginner had justified his employer's confidence they were amazed, and spoke of it as miraculous. But John Walter in his long career had worked many miracles, and the greatest of these was the mighty change effected in the fortunes of the newspaper he had directed for more than forty years.

His work for the paper ended with the year 1846, and seven months later he died, at the age of sixty-three. On his retirement his place was taken by his eldest son, John Walter the third. Greville, who

misses nothing, notes on February 25 : " Old Walter is dying, and his son is about to succeed (in fact, has succeeded) to the throne of *The Times*, and to all the authority, influence and power which the man who wields that sceptre will exercise. He seems mild, sensible and gentleman-like."

In an article which appeared in *The Times* of July 29, 1847, the day following John Walter's death, we find an *apologia* for the independent and sometimes capricious policy that the paper pursued under its old director. We may also read in it Delane's own confession of faith—that party labels are meaningless and that politicians and philosophers should be judged, not by professed principles and theories, but by the practical application of these principles in everyday concerns. Writing of John Walter, Delane's leader says :

> " Whilst other men found a refuge for intellectual weakness or moral instability in pledging their faith to a statesman, a party, a theory or a class, he never forgot that such things were made for man, not man for them. No sooner did he perceive that a party was irreclaimably selfish, or a minister irremediably committed to anti-national measures, to corrupt associations, or to an imbecile and therefore injurious, policy —no sooner was it evident that the temptations incident to power had prevailed over the public spirit of the statesman, than he promptly and openly withdrew the support that had been tendered only for the public advantage. A slavish attachment to a man, or a clique, or a class, or a crochet, he justly despised as a hollow and too often criminal consistency of fools and of knaves, whose whole and sole boast is that they have never, excepting by accident, done any good thing."

CHAPTER VIII

The Times *and Lord John Russell—Lord John and the Press—Lord Clarendon and* The Times*—Delane and Lord Ashley's Ten Hour Bill—The Hampden controversy—The Removal of Jewish Disabilities—The campaign of* The Times *against Palmerston—Its fierce assaults on the Government—Palmerston's triumph—Palmerston's complaint to the Queen, of Delane and others—His dismissal from office.*

IT seemed inevitable that *The Times* should give Lord John Russell's new administration, what Greville described as "a temperate, judicious, but very useful support". It was equally inevitable that sooner or later Government and newspaper would be at odds, and quarrel.

For the two principal members of the Government were rivals and political enemies. Lord Palmerston, the new Foreign Secretary, was as much a bugbear to Russell as he was to Delane.

Lord John was one of the political misfits of the nineteenth century. Born fifty years earlier, he would have been an invaluable henchman to Charles James Fox, whose principles he cherished. He had crossed swords with Canning, who had gravely and courteously admonished him when he introduced his Reform resolutions to a Georgian House of Commons. Thereafter he bore his part in passing the Reform Bill and other supplementary constitutional measures. But with the passing of these his zeal for progress evaporated, and for thirty years he became a political Mrs Partington, and tried to keep back the tide of progress that threatened the strongholds of privilege.

One distinction he possessed. Of all the statesmen of his time, he alone refused to have dealings with the

Press. He acknowledged its power ; he appreciated its support ; he resented its criticism ; but he was too proud to seek its favour, and would do nothing to gain its aid.

In the negotiations that secured the support of *The Times* for the new Government, Lord John therefore took no part. But he knew of the arrangement, and when Sir John Easthope, the proprietor of *The Morning Chronicle*, came to him and complained that *The Times* was receiving official information while he, a supporter of Lord John in the House, was left in ignorance, the Prime Minister replied rather contemptuously that " he did not wish to have any Government paper, but could not repudiate the support of *The Times* ".

Though the Premier was too aloof to have dealings with mere mortals like the editor of *The Times*, and Palmerston sat in the seat of the mighty at the Foreign Office, where once the friendly Aberdeen reigned, Delane suffered no inconvenience in getting the information he required. For Lord Clarendon, President of the Board of Trade, was constantly in communication with him ; and the Vice-President, Lord Granville, cultivated his friendship. In Dasent's biography of Delane it is stated that the letters of Lord Clarendon to Delane would fill a volume.

But if the paper supported the new Government its attitude was critical from the start. In its issue of July 3, 1846, it says :

> " The Ministry deserves what it will probably obtain, a fair trial at the hands of all parties. We are not aware of any particular objection to which it is liable, unless it be the right honourable baronet selected for that very important and arduous place, the Board of Control. Surely it was not necessary to inflict on us, by his return to that office, the painful recollection of his former most unfortunate official career, especially when his qualifications are such as to assure us that his failure was something more than misfortune."

This allusion to Sir John Hobhouse's support of Lord Auckland's Afghan policy excited resentment at Court. In Volume II, p. 102, of "Queen Victoria's Letters", the Prince Consort is reported as saying: "They got *The Times* over by giving it exclusive information, but the wicked paper added immediately a furious attack upon Sir John Hobhouse."

In the second year of Russell's Ministry Lord Ashley succeeded at last in passing the Ten Hours Bill. With this Factory Act his name has ever since been identified. Bright and the philosophic Radicals objected to this moderate measure because it ran counter to the sacred principle of individualism or *laissez faire*. They contended that bad as the conditions were in the coal-mines and factories of the North, the lot of the agricultural labourers in Lord Ashley's own county was even worse. But it is difficult to understand how any unprejudiced student who has read the Report of the Commission of 1840 can believe this.

Lord Ashley pressed his Bill and with the help of the country squires, who were anxious to be revenged on the Corn Law repealers, the measure became law, and a hideous blot on the page of industrial history was obliterated.

Delane, to his honour, took a more enlightened view of this question than the professors of the dismal science. "When", said his leader-writer (May 3, 1847), "time shall have given the lie to the ratiocinations of political economists, when flourishing manufacturers, increasing exports, and a happier people shall testify the truth of other arguments and the reality of other views, then the supporters of the Bill who have borne the heat and burden of the day will reap a full reward in the gratitude of the poor, and the approval of all good men."

So in the file of those far-off years we see *The Times*

threading its way through the highways and bywa of the forties, and recording its impressions. Ofte the subject is of but trivial importance ; sometim it rises to the dignity of history. In its colum we find echoes of controversies that have long be forgotten ; of prejudices that later generations ha exchanged for others quite as unreasonable ; an feverish discussion of questions that leave us cold an uninterested. Sometimes we find particulars of son ancient quarrel that has a strangely modern aspe as in the case of Dr Hampden, who was offered t see of Hereford by Lord John Russell. This clerg man some years before, in delivering the Bampt Lectures, had declared the authority of the Bible greater weight than that of the Church. Oxford w shocked, the clergy scandalized, and a merry here hunt began. In that spirit of Christian charity whi theologians generally display when matters of doctri are in question the disputants dealt each other hear "Apostolic blows and knocks"; and the Dean Hereford sternly informed the Prime Minister th he would vote against Dr Hampden's election to t bishopric. To this Lord John with bland courte replied: "I have had the honour to receive yo letter of the 22nd in which you intimate to me yo intention of breaking the law."

The Times supported the heresy hunters, a ridiculed the newly appointed bishop for forcing hi self upon a diocese that did not want him and sai

> "After taking the creeds to pieces—more pieces, in fa than he can ever put together again—he next proved, up his own person, how little power either Church or Universi has to interfere in such dangerous exhibitions. His l performance has been doubtless against his will, but pursuance of his destiny, to show up that venerable illusio the share which the Church has in making a bishop (January 13, 1848.)

When two years later (September 1850) the Pope issued a Bull establishing a Romish hierarchy in England with territorial titles for its bishops Lord John Russell characterized this action as "insolent and invidious". This attack roused slumbering prejudices and for the time "The Throne and Church in Danger" became a popular cry. Bigots emerged from their lurking places and roused the populace to excitement and indignation, and a demand was made for legislation to counter Papal aggression. Lord John Russell brought in an Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. But before this had passed through Committee in the House of Commons the public agitation had subsided. The Bill reached the Statute Book, but it had been so mangled in the House, and its provisions so weakened, that it became a dead letter.

Through this turmoil *The Times*, in its desire to stand well with all parties, gave a cautious support to Lord John Russell. Greville, cool and cynical as usual, had his doubts about the sincerity of Lord John and *The Times*.

> "Some affect to be very angry", he said, "and make a great noise because they think it answers an end. John Russell is somewhat in this way, for I don't believe he *really* cares very much; *The Times* newspaper does the same and blows up the coals for the sake of popularity; but Delane, who begged me not to write, as I am inclined to do, something in mitigation of the movement, told me he thought the whole thing gross humbug and a pack of nonsense. . . ."

Delane strongly advocated the removal of Jewish disabilities in the columns of his paper, probably through his friendship with the Rothschild family. When in 1847 Baron Lionel de Rothschild was returned as member for the City of London, Delane not only powerfully assisted Rothschild's candidature in the paper, but also gave his personal help. From

his diary we learn that on June 26 he went to the Rothschilds' house in Piccadilly "to assist him in preparing his address". An entry on July 30 reads: "Saw Rothschild with his brothers Anthony and Nathaniel in the City and was overwhelmed with thanks."

But the advocacy of *The Times* and Delane's efforts were of no avail against the opposition of the House of Lords, and it was not until 1858, when a Relief Bill was passed, that Baron Rothschild was able to take his seat in the House of Commons.

The "temperate and judicious support" Delane had promised the Whig administration was of little benefit to the Ministry. For it was quickly withdrawn when administrative blunders disclosed the Government's ineptitude, and it was patent to the most casual observer that its various elements did not coalesce. Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston were incompatible as political bedfellows, and as the latter had his own newspaper, *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Times* made him the target for its most venomous abuse; and at the same time did its best to controvert and discredit the views and statements of its contemporary.

In Paris as in London there were two rival statesmen, Guizot and Thiers.

Guizot enjoyed the favour of the English Court, and the confidence of Lord John Russell and Lord Aberdeen. But to Lord Palmerston the husband of the Princess Lieven was an object of aversion and distrust.

Early in 1847 Greville went to Paris to find out the true bearings of the quarrel between the French statesmen, and to learn how far British interests were affected by this feud. The comments in his memoirs are illuminating. On January 20 he wrote:

"*The Times* has been writing articles abusing Palmerston and giving out that public opinion is all against him, and

inclines to Guizot, doing all the mischief it can. These articles were received with a great deal of chuckling by Guizot and his people."

Two years later *The Times* was scolding Palmerston as violently as ever. According to Greville the Foreign Secretary was " dreadfully nettled " at some attacks on him in the paper. Sir Charles Wood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, sent for Delane and asked him to stop this. Delane promised that for the present there would be a truce and that as " they had recorded their opinions and did not want to do any more ".

Behind the attacks which " dreadfully nettled " Palmerston lies an old but interesting story, in which the editor of *The Times* plays what writers of American fiction would call the " sleuth ", and this terrible Foreign Secretary, the villain of the piece.

According to Henry Reeve, whose authority as editor of Greville's Memoirs, and leader-writer on *The Times* is unquestioned, Delane went hunting one day with the West Surrey hounds. For the time being he was free from editorial cares, but his eyes and ears were ever open, and experience had taught him that news was to be found in the most unexpected quarters. So it happened that at this meeting he met Tom Hood, the army contractor, who told him that with Lord Palmerston's connivance arms were being shipped from Woolwich to the Sicilian insurgents. Delane made some inquiries and found that Hood's statement was substantially correct.

" *The Times* ", says Reeve, " perceived the importance of it, and soon afterwards charged the Government with having connived at a supply of arms from the Queen's stores to the Sicilian insurgents. No notice was taken of this first charge. It was therefore repeated in stronger language. Upon this Lord John Russell (who knew nothing of the matter) took it up, and said he must inquire into it, and that

the charge must be contradicted, or the practice stopped. On inquiry he found it was all perfectly true, and he compelled Lord Palmerston, sorely against his will, to make a formal official apology to the King of Naples, the man whom he most hated and despised in the whole world."

To such humiliation did *The Times* bring Lord Palmerston. The time was to come when Delane would do reverence to Palmerston as Britain's greatest Minister of State, but as yet he was under the glamour of Lord Aberdeen's influence and saw nought but evil in this Foreign Secretary who controlled a department of the War Office before Waterloo, and learnt his statesmanship from Canning.

The Times did not confine its criticism to Lord Palmerston. Other Ministers on occasion felt the lash, and the Government collectively was not spared. Its attitude as a " temperate and judicious " supporter of the Administration changed by rapid and easy stages to one of open hostility.

At first it reproaches Ministers more in sorrow than in anger. Even in 1848 (March 10) it speaks of " our respect for the individual members of the Cabinet ". It cannot " repose entire confidence in the Minister and his plans ", and mournfully complains that " little is promised, and still less is done. Important measures are hung up. There is a want of momentum and a certain vacillation betrayed." This lack of energy and decision made *The Times* impatient, and in words that must have rather startled its leisurely country subscribers it says: " The people ask not revolution in the common sense, but some decided progress; and if we cannot get that progress from one Minister it will require him to abdicate and give place to another."

These are temperate and well-deserved criticisms that doubtless brought nods of approval from those

that read them. They might also have been fairly applied to other administrations besides that of Lord John Russell.

Referring to the article just quoted Greville says (March 10, 1848):

> "The Government have been sadly vexed at an article in *The Times* on Friday, speaking of them, and Lord John especially, very contemptuously. The truth is *The Times* thinks it has sniffed out that they cannot go on, and wants according to its custom to give them a shove ; but matters are not ripe yet for a change, nor anything like it."

Judicial and balanced views are always irritating to the partisan and man of prejudice; and Greville despite his coolness and cynicism was both.

Early in 1851 the Government got into difficulties. Sir Charles Wood sacrificed its popularity by renewing in part the hated window tax. But before the fate of this measure was decided the Government was defeated on a private members' motion to assimilate the county franchise to that of the boroughs, and the majority against Ministers was fifty. Next day *The Times* had the exclusive privilege of announcing that the Government had resigned.

As no single party had a clear majority Lord Aberdeen tried to form a Coalition Government of Whigs and Peelites. But as this and other attempts were abortive Lord John Russell and his friends came back.

Lord Palmerston had scored a notable triumph when in June, 1850, votes of censure were moved on his foreign policy in both Houses of Parliament. The motion was carried in the House of Lords by a majority of 37 ; but this did not matter greatly as the result was anticipated. But in the Commons, where Palmerston was present to defend himself, the Government secured a majority of 46.

In the course of a four nights' debate Palmerston

delivered a speech that, for a man of his years, was an amazing feat of endurance. He was then sixty-six, and the toil and stress of forty years of public life had left their marks on frame and feature. Some of his opponents looked forward hopefully to his early retirement from Parliament. He began his speech in the mellow light of a summer evening. Before he brought it to a close the sun of another day was rising in the sky. That five and a half hours' address is one of the most memorable achievements in Parliamentary annals.

It was a great fighting speech. There was no hint of apology in its tone. His enemies were many—some of them of his own party—and he dealt with them faithfully. He took up every point in the indictment against him, and slurred and omitted nothing. His vindication was complete, and the Court, Parliament and Press were vanquished and crestfallen. Among them, as Lady Clarendon points out in her Journal, "that mighty potentate *The Times*".

The newspaper found consolation for its defeat in the reflection that the Government had received a severe lesson. "The majority", it says, "is probably just sufficient to enable Ministers to retain office without disgrace ; but they have received such a lesson on the conduct of the foreign relations of the Crown as the boldest of them will not readily forget."

But Delane soon had the satisfaction of seeing his political enemy humbled and driven from office.

Meanwhile, as we learn from Queen Victoria's Letters (No. 314), Palmerston carried the war into the enemy's camp, and in August, 1850, prepared a Memorandum in which he complained to Prince Albert about a "plot which had been got up in this country against him". This plot he alleged had been urged on by foreigners, and amongst these conspirators were Lord Clarendon, Greville of the Privy Council,

and Reeve. These gentlemen were charged with attacking him in *The Times*, and Delane with aiding and abetting them. Others engaged in this intrigue were Guizot and the Princess Lieven.

Lord Palmerston had good reason to complain of Guizot and his wife, for the latter was eternally engaged in plots and intrigues in the interest of her old employer the Russian Czar ; whilst Greville, who had a whole-hearted hatred of Palmerston, was one of her confidential correspondents. But there was little to complain of here. Palmerston cordially disliked the French statesman and his methods, and lost no opportunity of expressing his sentiments. He inspired, if he did not actually write, a series of ferocious attacks on Guizot in *The Morning Chronicle*, which caused flutters of nervous apprehension at Court and much ill-feeling between England and France.

In his protest against *The Times*, Palmerston was on surer ground. Many of the strictures on his policy in this newspaper went far beyond the bounds of legitimate criticism, and were unfair and lacking in generosity. The more gross of these diatribes were the work of Reeve, who wrote most of *The Times* articles on foreign policy. For these, of course, Delane was responsible, but as we know from his writings in later years Reeve frequently exceeded his instructions, and as he says " led us into endless scrapes and contradictions, and constantly made us the advocates of an unpopular and anti-national policy ".

Of Reeve more will be said later. Here we are concerned with Delane's confession of his failure to exercise proper supervision of a contributor's articles. Let it be said at once that with Delane the occasions for such confessions were exceedingly rare during the thirty-five years he edited the paper. He wrote little or nothing for *The Times* himself, but he had a gigantic task in supervising, correcting and controlling

the work of a staff whose contributions came from all quarters of the world. He was the most careful and painstaking of men, but he would have been more than human, if in the feverish rush of preparing copy for the printers, he had succeeded in deleting every indiscretion, and noting every paragraph or sentence that did not adequately express the views of the paper. Yet this was the daily miracle he all but achieved, and in so doing maintained *The Times*, despite adverse conditions, in its position of proud pre-eminence.

On December 1, 1851, Louis Napoleon carried out his famous *coup d'état* in Paris. This event had important political consequences in England. Palmerston, in his delight, hastened to express his acceptance and approval to the French Ambassador, without first consulting his colleagues or informing the Queen.

There was much fluttering in the dovecotes of Whitehall. Russell and his Cabinet were seriously embarrassed by Palmerston's precipitancy. Reeve attacked the new French Government in the columns of *The Times* with malignant persistency. So violent was the tone of the paper, that Clarendon and other members of the Administration took alarm and made representations to Delane; while in France Louis Napoleon was "irritated and annoyed beyond measure by the language of *The Times*".

Palmerston suffered for his indiscretion. The Queen naturally felt that he had treated her with discourtesy, and expressed her views with frankness to Lord John Russell, who in his turn asked Palmerston for explanations. These were not satisfactory, and a vacancy occurred at the Foreign Office, which Lord Granville was destined for a very short time to fill. On Christmas Eve *The Times* jubilantly presented this great news to its readers as a Christmas box. But its parting words to the dismissed Minister were not

seasonable, though the pill was slightly coated to make it palatable. The paper spoke of Palmerston's "indefatigable activity in the public service, vast capacity for work, courage in presence of dangers, and charm of social manner". But, notwithstanding these virtues of the departing Minister, *The Times* complimented the country on securing as Foreign Secretary one who would "preserve her boasted neutrality without either compromise or petulance; without offering the right hand to rampant despotism and the left to democratic conspirators".

There was great rejoicing at the fall of Palmerston. On the Continent statesmen and diplomatists made the event an excuse for high revelry. At home some of the acutest observers thought that his star had set for ever. There was rejoicing in Royal Palaces, Lord Aberdeen heaved a sigh of relief, and Lord John's brow lost its lines of care.

But it was impossible to keep Palmerston down. According to the rules of the game he should have gone into retirement and sulked. Instead of this, he was present at the opening of the new session. A few days later (February 20) an amendment he moved to the Government's Militia Bill was carried by a small majority, and he was thus instrumental in bringing down the Administration from which he had been unceremoniously dismissed a few weeks before.

After the fall of the Russell Cabinet Lord Derby, the leader of the Protectionists, with the aid of his chief lieutenant Disraeli, formed a stop-gap Government. But like the other groups in the House of Commons it lacked a majority, and as neither Whigs nor Peelites would give it support it was impotent, and remained a Ministry of Care-takers.

Disraeli was very cordial and effusive with Delane, and tried to win his favour. In correspondence he spoke of "the admirable tact" of *The Times* articles

on the new Government. He also sent the editor an early copy of his Manifesto to the electorate. But Delane distrusted " Dizzy " and was not to be moved by his blandishments, and his organ described the new leader of the House as " an inimitable illusionist " and his programme as full of " sweet words and the vapours of some spiritual chloroform ".

But office without power had no attractions for Lord Derby and his brilliant colleague, and after limping through some months of humiliation and defeat the ill-starred Ministry resigned, and in December the Queen sent for Lord Aberdeen.

CHAPTER IX

The Times *and the Crimean War—Delane supports Lord Aberdeen's Government, but urges stronger handling of the Eastern Question*—The Times *attacks Russia—Delane's Quarrel with Lord Derby*—The Times *publishes the Ultimatum to Russia before the Czar receives it —W. H. Russell's despatches from the Crimea*—The Times *brings down the Government—At the zenith of its influence.*

THE task of forming an effective Coalition Government is one of almost superhuman difficulty. Too often it means reconciling the irreconcilable. A coalition that does not coalesce is powerless, however talented its individual units may be.

This Lord Aberdeen found when he induced the Whigs through their leader, Lord John Russell, to join forces with the Peelites. It was easy enough to fill up the various offices with men of great ability and high character. But as sections of these politicians had different ideals and convictions to their colleagues the problem of bringing the discordant elements into unison was one that demanded consummate tact and persuasive power as well as infinite patience. Lord Aberdeen can scarcely be blamed if he found the task beyond his power. His Ministry, like other Coalitions before it, was made up of " all the Talents ", and like these, it contained rival factions and was weakened by divided counsels.

In the new Government Lord Palmerston, who was too powerful a man to be ignored, became Home Secretary, and Lord John Russell went temporarily to the Foreign Office.

Delane, as one of Lord Aberdeen's warmest friends, was prepared to give him all the aid that *The Times*

could afford, but Fate, in the person of the Czar of Russia, decreed that the leading paper should in time become this Government's most remorseless critic, and bring it ultimately to destruction.

For years war clouds had been gathering in eastern Europe. When Aberdeen and his Ministers took office the situation had become menacing. The Czar wished to drive the Turks out of Europe and take possession of Constantinople. He made a proposal in January, 1853, to Great Britain for the partition of Turkey. This proposal, which had been kept a close secret by the Foreign Office, was disclosed in a famous *Times* article on March 11, 1854.

From the first the Cabinet was hopelessly divided on this eastern problem. Lord Aberdeen was as staunch an advocate of peace as any Quaker, and he and his friends were anxious to make any possible terms with Russia. Palmerston and his followers stood for firmness and war-like preparations. Unable to agree on any settled policy they acted with hesitancy and showed indecision.

The Times advocated a bolder handling of the question, but at the same time preached counsels of moderation. In June, 1853, we find it loftily admonishing *The Morning Herald* and other papers which were attacking the Prime Minister and demanding his impeachment. A month later (on July 12) Greville notes that :

> "*The Times* newspaper, always famous for its versatility and inconsistency, has lately produced articles on the Eastern question on the same day of the most opposite characters—one war-like and firm ; the next vehemently pacific, by some other hand. This is of small importance, but it is indicative of the difference which exists in the Cabinet on the subject, and the explanation of the inconsistency of *The Times* is to be found in the double influence which acts on the paper."

He goes on to point out that Palmerston had advocated a vigorous policy, and wished to employ more peremptory language and stronger measures towards Russia; while Aberdeen had been most reluctant to agree to the timid and halting steps which had been taken. Clarendon, who had now taken Lord John Russell's place at the Foreign Office, had to accommodate himself as best he could between these extremes. Greville also points out the significant fact that the temperature of public feeling was rising and that part of Clarendon's task was

> "to stimulate Aberdeen and persuade him to adopt a course more congenial to public opinion in this country, which however inclined to peace is not at all disposed to connive at the aggrandizement of Russia. . . . When the two articles appeared in *The Times* to which I particularly allude, Clarendon approved of the first and found great fault with the other, while Aberdeen wrote to Delane and expressed his strong approbation of the second and his conviction that the public would sooner or later take the views therein set forth."

As public attention was drawn more and more to the Eastern question, and the Emperor of Russia became the target of popular anger and derision, the attitude of *The Times* became more and more aggressive.

Delane was not convinced of the necessity of war with Russia, but like his employer he felt that it would be useless to try and swim against the tide.

In John Bright's Diary there is a note of a conversation he had with John Walter as late as March 24, 1854. Bright urged Walter to seize any chance of preserving or making peace. But Walter replied that when the country would go to war it was not worth while to oppose it, "hurting ourselves," and doing no good.

A month later Bright heard Delane's opinion, which he says "agrees precisely with my own".

But *The Times* was already openly hostile to Russia. Three months earlier it published a savage attack on Russia that delighted the jingoes and hardened the determination of the masses to see this matter through.

> "To bully the weak, to cajole the strong, to seize by force or to circumvent by fraud", it said of the Czar, "are now recognized as the uniform tactics of the once great upholder of order and treaties, and arbiter of the disputes of Europe. The combined Governments of England and France have exhausted their diplomacy, their remonstrances, and their patience, and they now see themselves apparently reduced to the alternative of quitting for ever their high stations among the nations of the earth, forfeiting their promises and abandoning their Allies, or having recourse to war—the sport of barbarous sovereigns, but the dread of free and progressive governments. There is no alternative. It is a decision. With whatever reluctance, the western powers must accept the challenge so insultingly flung at them."

Then follow the significant words : "We have not sought war, we have done all in our power to avoid it ; but if it must come, we trust its evils and sacrifices will be cheerfully borne, as we are sure its perils will be manfully confronted."

As war drew near *The Times* got into hot water with Lord Derby, the leader of the Tory party, and for some time a private war was carried on with great spirit between Delane and some members of the House of Lords.

On March 11, 1854, *The Times* published the article —already referred to—in which the proposal of the Czar for the partition of Turkey was disclosed. There was great perturbation in Whitehall at this disclosure, and in the House of Lords the perfidy and lack of any sense of responsibility displayed by the leading newspaper was hotly denounced by Lord Derby and others. Members of the House thought that the secret had

been let out by Lord Aberdeen, for it was generally known that he and Delane were close friends. But Lord Aberdeen denied all knowledge of the article, and said he had no idea how *The Times* obtained the information.

Delane was not intimidated by Lord Derby's denunciation, and met the attack with spirit, but in a bombastic tone that recalled Edward Sterling's rhetorical efforts :

> "This journal never was, and we trust never will be, the journal of any Minister, and we place our own independence far above the highest marks of confidence that could be given us by any servant of the Crown. The part we have the honour to take in public affairs is guided and supported by as high a sense of the honour of our profession and the interests of the country as will be met with among those who pursue in public life the distinctions of personal power or the emoluments of office. . . . Since it is our good fortune to be independent of party and fearless followers of honesty and truth we are little moved by the railing or misrepresentations of contending statesmen. Nor have we any inducement to exchange the modest obscurity which enshrines our labours, for the empty notoriety which rewards their efforts. As long as we use the information we obtain and the influence we possess for the honour and welfare of the country, the people of England will do us justice."

On the 17th, when the debate in the House of Lords was resumed, Lord Derby returned to the attack. But now he had a new charge to bring against *The Times*. The Government, as he pointed out, had sent an Ultimatum to Russia on February 27, and every precaution that ingenuity could suggest had been employed to prevent this secret from leaking out. But, said Lord Derby, "on the next morning but one following the meeting of the Cabinet at which it was decided upon, it appeared *in extenso* in *The Times*".

The announcement to which Lord Derby objected was as follows :

> " The Governments of England and France have resolved to address to the Emperor of Russia a formal summons calling upon him to give within six days from the receipt of that communication a solemn promise and engagement that he will cause his troops to evacuate the principalities of the Danube on or before the 30th of April. The couriers who are the bearers of this despatch from London to Paris started on their journey yesterday morning. The refusal on the part of Russia to comply with this just demand will be regarded by the Powers as a declaration of war."

Lord Malmesbury was even more severe than Lord Derby in his comments on the action of *The Times*, and asked : " How is it possible that any honourable man editing a public paper of such circulation as *The Times* can reconcile to his conscience the act of having made public that which he must have known was intended to be a Cabinet secret ? "

Delane, who had heard the debate in the House of Lords, replied next morning, in a spirit that bordered on arrogance. Writing of Lord Derby he declared that he preferred " to live with men who shape their conduct to a purer standard of sincerity and truth " ; and said that in accusing the paper of publishing early and correct intelligence, when there was no possibility of proving that this had been obtained by improper means, was to pay it the highest of compliments. He further maintained that in making a premature disclosure of the terms of the Ultimatum he was doing a public service.

Then he turned on his accusers and reminded them of their misdeeds and his own forbearance.

> " Lord Derby ", says the article, " might have extended the catalogue of our misdeeds. He might have reminded his noble friend Lord Malmesbury that we were not ignorant

of the transactions in which they thought fit to engage with Russia, Austria and Prussia at the time of the accession of Louis Napoleon to the Imperial throne ; and possibly these noble persons will settle by which of the members or adherents of their own administration these circumstances were brought to our cognizance. Nor was this the only occasion on which Lord Derby found us more forbearing adversaries than he deserved, but he has forgotten the silence in which we suffered many of his actions to pass by, though he remembers, apparently with some acrimony, the hands which helped to unmask the hypocrisy of the Protectionist cause, and laboured to consign to speedy defeat and dissolution the most unworthy administration that has ever governed England."

The Times make unexampled arrangements for giving its readers news about the war which was now beginning. It had long been the voice of England ; it was now to be its eye. It was through Delane's initiative that a new calling was established, and journalism for the first time in history saw a war correspondent appointed. This correspondent, William Howard Russell, had already shown his competence as an experienced and dependable observer. He had acted as Irish correspondent of *The Times* during the potato famine in 1845 and 1846, and had also represented his paper in Denmark in 1848. These were but his more outstanding services, for he had been connected with the paper for thirteen years, and in the performance of his many duties had done more than enough to establish his claim to Delane's confidence and esteem. But he was now to earn undying fame, and make known his name wherever the English language was spoken. From the day Russell landed at Varna he was the eye and ear of England, and it is no exaggeration to say that during his fifteen months' stay in the Crimea his brilliant despatches were read by English-speaking people with

more absorbed and fascinated interest than any other form of reading matter.

In the preface to his book, " The British Expedition to the Crimea ", Russell writes :

> " I was with the first detachment of the British Army which set foot on Turkish soil, and it was my good fortune to land with the first at Scutari, at Varna, and at Old Fort, to be present at Alma, Balaklava and Inkerman, to accompany the Kertch and Kinburn expeditions, and to witness every great event of the siege, the assaults on Sebastopol, and the battle of the Tchernaya. It was my still greater fortune to be able to leave the Crimea with the last detachment of our army."

In after years Russell had to contend in friendly rivalry with other able and distinguished war correspondents. Some of them showed themselves as enterprising, daring, and fertile in resource, but Russell's despatches from the seat of war have never been surpassed. Their simple but vivid phrasing, directness, and the sincerity that was apparent in every line, brought home to the British people the criminal negligence and ineptitude of the military authorities, and the heroism and sufferings of the soldiers.

Another of Delane's correspondents was Laurence Oliphant, whom that prince of journalists, M. de Blowitz, described as a marvellous recorder of war news. Oliphant was one of those restless souls for whom the daily round of humdrum life had no attractions, and was happy only amid turbulent excitements. Shortly before the Crimean War began his book, " Russian Shores of the Black Sea ", came into Delane's hands. This work contained an account of the author's travels in Russia, and the editor found in it much curious and useful information. He sought out Oliphant and offered him a position as special

correspondent. Oliphant joyfully accepted the offer, joined the Turkish forces, and in a series of graphic letters told the story of Omar Pasha's Trans-Caucasian campaign.

In former years Delane had more than once to complain that his Constantinople correspondent favoured Turkish rather than British interests.

When war broke out Delane thought it necessary to make a change. The Turcophile was dismissed and a young Oriental scholar, Thomas Chenery, went to Constantinople in his stead. It seemed a strange choice, but Chenery quickly justified his selection, and showed that he was as much at home in the world of affairs as in the study, and proved himself a valuable asset to the paper. His pictures of Constantinople in war-time were instructive and entertaining, and threw light on some aspects of the Eastern question that were doubtful and obscure.

Other correspondents of *The Times* who did excellent service were William Henry Stowe, a Fellow of Oriel, and Lieu Charles Nasmyth. Stowe died of camp fever at Balaklava. Nasmyth did excellent work for his paper, and services for his country, that not only brought him military distinctions but earned him unstinted praise from Kinglake, the historian of the Crimean War. Nasmyth was a young officer of the East India Company when Delane engaged him. He was stationed at Silistria on the Danube. When the Russians besieged Silistria, Nasmyth helped to organize its defence, and encouraged the Turkish garrison to hold on. On June 26, 1854, the Russians raised the siege, and abandoned the marshes of the Danube. Of Nasmyth, Kinglake says :

> "The lustre of his achievement was in some degree shed on the keen and watchful company which had the foresight to send him into the midst of events on which the fate of Russia was hanging ; for whilst the State armies of France

and England were as yet only gathering their strength, *The Times* was able to say that its own officer had confronted the enemy upon the very ground he most needed to win, and helped to drive him back from the Danube in great discomfiture."

Still another *Times* representative in the Crimea was the Hungarian exile, General Eber, who like Alan Breck was a " bonny fighter ", and sniffed the battle from afar. A soldier by profession, he took up writing as a side-line, and at the suggestion of his friend Delane, acted as *Times* correspondent in Russia. For several years he represented the paper in Vienna. Afterwards he was one of Garibaldi's right-hand men in Italy, where he was ever foremost in the fighting, and described the varied incidents of the struggle for readers of his newspaper.

From the first the military authorities hopelessly mismanaged affairs, and Russell was unsparing in his criticisms, though he praised whenever praise was due. He paid high tribute to the courage and fortitude of the British troops.

Russell had no official status, and like other camp-followers was described by the officers he met as a " travelling gentleman ". But his charm and wit, as well as more sterling qualities, soon won him friendship and respect, and as he was remarkably popular with officers and men, he found no difficulty in getting the information he required.

His telling exposures of bungling and mismanagement caused a great outcry at home, and his charges formed the basis of several stormy debates in Parliament. So serious was the state of affairs disclosed in his letters, that Delane himself went out to the Crimea in the autumn in the company of Kinglake, the historian. On his return he confirmed all that Russell had previously reported, and had much to say about the failure of the War Office to form an army of reserve,

as to send reinforcements to supply the casualties that occurred. This, however, was but one count in the indictment.

The true state of affairs was revealed, and the conscience of the nation aroused by a long series of articles that followed. Of these Kinglake says :

> "No more able, more cogent appeals were perhaps ever made, than those in which its great writers insisted again and again, that the despatch of reinforcements must be achieved with an exertion of will strong enough to overthrow every obstacle interposed by mere customs and forms. When the story of Inkerman reached them, they uttered, if so one may speak, the very soul of a nation. . . . When a few days later the further accounts from our army showed the darkening of the prospect before it, the great journal using its leadership, and moving out to the front with opportune resolute counsels, seemed clothed with a power to speak, nay, almost one may say to act, in the name of a united people."

But the editor of *The Times* did not restrict himself to rousing the people to action. He attacked Lord Raglan and the Government with a ferocity that shocked London society and caused consternation and alarm in ministerial circles.

On December 23, 1844, appeared an article in which readers were told that "the noblest army ever sent from our shores has been sacrificed to the grossest mismanagement" ; that

> "incompetency, lethargy, aristocratic hauteur, official indifference, favour, routine, perverseness, and stupidity reign, revel, and riot in the camp before Sebastopol, in the harbour of Balaklava, in the hospitals of Scutari, and how much nearer home we do not venture to say. We say it with extreme reluctance, no one sees or hears anything of the commander-in-chief. Officers who landed on the 14th of September, and have been incessantly engaged in all the operations of the siege, are not even acquainted with the face of their commander."



Photograph: Elliott & Fry

SIR WILLIAM HOWARD RUSSELL

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Then the writer proceeded to make a number of recommendations for the removal of abuses. Among his suggestions one may be quoted as an example.

> "Send out", he said, "some man with competent administrative powers to the necessary basis of our operations, Constantinople; give him the command of the hospitals, that present so scandalous a contrast to the French hospitals; the command of the post-office, and of the transports waiting for orders; and give him also the ordering of such supplies for the army as can be procured in the neighbourhood, and which the French have not obtained before us. Nobody has yet had the command of this important station, who is fit for anything else than to be the figure-head of his own ship."

A few days later Greville writes contemptuously of the "violent articles which *The Times* emits day after day" and the "general resentment and disgust" they caused among his aristocratic friends. He complains that the paper overdoes everything. "But as those who complain most of *The Times* still go on reading it", he remarks, "the paper only gets more rampant and insolent, for as long as its circulation is undiminished it does not care what anybody thinks or says of it." Other comments on the paper and its correspondents were even more downright.

The Queen wanted to know by what right the editor of *The Times* tried her officers. Lord Clarendon was reduced to "despair at the doings of *The Times*". Sidney Herbert, with the judicial detachment that befits a British statesman, expressed the hope that the army would "lynch the *Times* correspondent". While the Prince Consort airily dismissed the same gentleman as a "miserable scribbler".

But the "general resentment and disgust" of which Greville speaks was felt only in official circles and among Government supporters. The opinions and recommendations of *The Times* were approved

by its readers, and enthusiastically endorsed by thinking people of all classes. Seldom, if ever, have the administrative acts of any government been subjected to more searching and informed criticism than that applied to Lord Aberdeen's government during this War. Ministers wilted beneath the exposure of their administrative follies and weaknesses, but they took no measures to protect themselves. Lord Clarendon complained that "three pitched battles gained would not repair the mischief done by Mr Russell, and the articles upon his letters" (Maxwell, II, p. 100), but no attempt was ever made to establish a military censorship; and Lord Raglan's despatch of November 13, 1854, in which he reported that he had communicated with the correspondents of *The Times* and other papers, and pointed out to them "the public inconvenience of their writings and the necessity of greater prudence in future", was but one instance of the forcible, feeble methods of the higher military command.

Delane took the fullest advantage of the amazing liberty accorded him, and adjured his correspondents at the front to tell him everything that occurred. The public clamoured for facts, and these must be given at any cost. Under the pitiless searchlight set up by *The Times*, the failures and mistakes, the follies and defects of organization of the War Office, and the commanders at the seat of war were fully revealed, and nothing was hidden that might bring discredit on the Government.

To members of the old aristocratic families, Whig and Tory alike, the comments of the leading newspaper on these revelations seemed little short of revolutionary. From time immemorial they had regarded the chief positions in the Government services, and especially those in the Army and Navy, as perquisites of their own class. *The Times* urged that birth alone was not

a sufficient qualification for high position, and pointed out that many of these demanded mental and moral gifts of a high order ; and illustrated its contention by mentioning many examples of incapacity and inefficiency. As count after count was added to this formidable indictment popular anger became more manifest and articulate. At last when Mr. Roebuck demanded a committee of inquiry into the management of the War, the Government fell to pieces, and in January, 1855, Lord Palmerston formed an administration.

To *The Times* belongs the credit of bringing down Lord Aberdeen's Coalition Government, but it achieved other results which were of infinitely greater importance at the time. It initiated drastic changes in military administration ; and roused the warm-hearted British public to the needs of sick and suffering soldiers. As Sir Evelyn Wood—who as a military man might excusably have been antagonistic to *The Times* and its correspondents—said of W. H. Russell, " But few unprejudiced men who were in the Crimea will now attempt to call in question the fact that by awakening the conscience of the British nation to the sufferings of its troops, he saved the remnant of those grand battalions we landed in September " (Atkins, I, p. 257).

In the new Government, of which Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister, Lord Panmure succeeded the Duke of Newcastle as Secretary of War. Sir James Graham, Gladstone and Sidney Herbert also accepted office, but when they discovered that the Prime Minister had determined to press forward the inquiry into the conduct of the war which Roebuck demanded, they resigned.

The Times rejoiced at the withdrawal of the three Peelite members of the last Cabinet, and continued to urge the necessity for making the proposed inquiry

as searching and complete as possible. It also de manded improvements in military organization. Bu it was no longer personally hostile to Lord Palmer ston. The war had brought Delane and his ancien political enemy within speaking distance, if not o terms of actual co-operation. Their views on wa policy coincided ; and the editor recognized in th Prime Minister those qualities of leadership that ar invaluable to a nation in times of crisis.

With the examples of their predecessors befor them, the leading members of the new Governmer were careful to fall into line with the organ of Print ing House Square. Lord Clarendon, who had i former days done his best to lead Delane into path of righteousness, exploded now and then when h read some particularly unpleasant article. On on occasion—according to Maxwell's " Life and Letters —he said : " Great irresponsible power was neve more abused ; it is despotism committing high treaso every day with impunity." Lord Panmure's opinio of *The Times* was no better than that of the Duke c Newcastle, but he was careful to heed the counsc that it gave him. As Kinglake says : " What *Th Times* had been enjoining he made it his first dut to do. What *The Times* had asserted he held mus be taken as true until the contrary were shown othe wise."

During the war Delane brought about a ne development of journalistic activity by establishin *The Times* fund for alleviating the sufferings of th sick and wounded. To this fund the paper invite voluntary contributions from the public. Reade of the paper cheerfully responded and a sum c £20,000 was raised. Mr John C. Macdonald wer out to the East to administer the fund and arrived Constantinople on November 7, 1854. Afterwarc he was assisted by Sidney Godolphin Osborne, a

well as by Florence Nightingale and her assistant nurses.

For this work, at least, *The Times* received unstinted praise from all sides, and the example then set has been followed by many other newspapers in support of various causes.

The Times interpreted the mood of the nation during the Crimean War with amazing fidelity. We read in its editorial comment the inflexible determination of a great people to protect the weak from the strong, and to banish the menace that threatened millions of British subjects in the East. In this struggle the leading newspaper performed services of incalculable value, and it emerged from the conflict with heightened influence and greater power. Statesmen and administrators were jealous of its authority. Lord John Russell spoke bitterly of Delane as being " drunk with insolence and vanity ". Greville complained that

> " the intolerable nonsense and the abominable falsehoods it flings out day after day are none the less dangerous because they are nonsense and falsehoods, and backed up as they are by all the regular Radical Press, they diffuse through the country a mass of inflammatory matter, the effect of which may be more serious and arrive more quickly than anyone imagines."

Some of the aristocratic Whigs who were Greville's friends took alarm at Delane's sensible views that birth and position were not the only qualifications for high office, and described them as " revolutionary ".

The critics of *The Times* were on firmer ground when they charged it with giving " aid and comfort " to the enemy, by publishing in full detail its correspondent's uncensored despatches. It is undoubtedly true that in the course of the war the Russians gained information of military value through the columns of

The Times. Russell's despatches disclosed—as Lord Raglan's letters of complaint show—the changes in the disposition of our troops, the effects of the enemy's fire, the condition of the troops, and the resources of the Allies. These details were as enlightening to the Russian generals as they were to our own people, and must have encouraged the enemy to prolong their resistance.

For these indiscretions the responsibility must be shared by Lord Raglan and the editor of *The Times*. Kinglake, not the most impartial of historians, lays the blame on Delane alone. But this is unjust, for the ultimate responsibility for the publication of war news must lie with the military authorities. Lord Raglan complained that Russell's despatches militated against the success of his operations. Yet when Russell offered to submit his telegrams to the Head-quarter's staff for revision, his offer was declined, and the correspondents had license to send any messages they wished to the paper. Delane may have been to blame for not carefully editing Russell's despatches, and striking out details that would be of use to the enemy, but Raglan was equally culpable for allowing this information to leak out. If the generals in the Crimea believed with Lord Clarendon that "three pitched battles gained would not repair the mischief done by Mr Russell", it was their plain duty to have rendered that gentleman's messages innocuous. This however they neglected.

At the end of the war *The Times* emitted a yell of exultation over the losses of the enemy that would have come more appropriately from an African savage who had triumphed over his foes, rather than from the leading newspaper of a Christian country.

"Whatever be the losses and disappointments we have undergone," it said on December 31, 1855, "whatever the reverses of our arms, whatever the

drains upon our treasury, these evils have been as nothing compared with the tremendous visitation that has fallen on our stubborn and overbearing enemy."

Referring to John Bright and others who had sacrificed popularity by setting themselves against the tide of public feeling, which the newspaper itself could never be accused of doing, it said :

> "There have not been wanting those who strove to persuade the masses that their blood and their treasure were being sacrificed for no adequate object, and that any concessions were better than perseverance in a war so unjust and unprofitable. But the clear instinct of Englishmen enabled them to see and feel that there was more at stake in the matter than the blind guides chose to admit, and to adhere to the cause they had taken up with a steadiness and pertinacity which put to shame the vacillating counsellors who first involved us in war and then told us that it was vain to contend with the manifest destiny that urged Russia on to the conquest of the East."

But who were the " blind guides " ? This question History has yet to decide.

CHAPTER X

*Palmerston and Delane—Delane's isolation and his change of policy —The taxes on knowledge—*The Times *attitude : the paper unaffected by altered conditions—The enterprise of its Editor and Proprietor— Its leading writers—The Chinese War—Indian Mutiny—*The Times *and Napoleon III—The Queen's anger with* The Times*—Lord Granville's indiscretion.*

WHEN in February, 1855, Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister, there began once more an era of stable government in England. The repeal of the Corn Laws had hopelessly divided the Conservative Party ; while the Radicals of the Manchester school distrusted and despised the Whigs who formed the majority on the Liberal side. Of the five groups—including the Irish members—not one could command a clear majority in the House of Commons.

But with Palmerston as Prime Minister the position changed. From the day he took office under Lord Aberdeen his stock had been rising in the country. The long negotiations that preceded the break with Russia, and the early stages of the war, revealed him as the one member of the Cabinet with knowledge of foreign politics, who showed energy and decision.

His unpopularity with the Queen and the Prince Consort helped to endear him to the British people.

He had moreover the qualities that command the regard and admiration of the average Briton. He was fond of athletics, kept his stable of hunters and race-horses, was affable, sociable, and pugnacious by turns, and could give a good account of himself in a tussle with either a diplomatist, a Parliamentary

opponent or the Radical butcher of Twerton. But the people liked him most of all for his high courage, his sturdy defence of national rights, his freedom from party prejudice, his tireless industry and his clear common sense. He was an edition de luxe of the average man, and the average man adored him, so that when in the later days of the Crimean War he became Premier, there was no other to compete with him in popularity.

Delane carefully noted this ; and now having done all that abuse and misrepresentation could achieve to obstruct and retard the statesman in his upward progress, the editor bettered Emerson's counsel and hitched his wagon to the new star.

But there was also another reason for Delane's change of attitude. The new Ministers showed no disposition to be helpful and expose its secrets to a newspaper which was hostile, and had attacked them in the past, with or without provocation. For Delane, it was a position of some difficulty. Without official information *The Times* would lose much of its influence, yet where or how was he to learn those precious Cabinet secrets. Lord Palmerston confided his views and intelligences to his own paper, *The Morning Post.* Lord Clarendon, now Foreign Secretary, and Sir William Molesworth, Colonial Secretary, had been members of Lord Aberdeen's administration and retained bitter recollections of Delane's unmerciful treatment of them during the Crimean War. Moreover Henry Reeve, that useful go-between, had been dismissed from his position as leader-writer. While this break had also caused a coolness between Delane and Greville, the diarist, who had often ferreted out valuable news for him.

As Abraham Hayward wrote to Gladstone on January 2, 1856, " Since *The Times* breach with Lord Clarendon and Reeve, they are no longer so well up

in information as they used to be. Molesworth is another loss to them."

This and other straws showed the direction of the wind. *The Times* was no longer the repository of State secrets, and was losing ground. Rival journals were profiting at its expense. Palmerston the powerful had shown that he could do without *The Times* ; but *The Times* needed his aid. The day of decision had arrived.

Delane was before all else a man of action, and he acted promptly. An opportunity soon occurred of making Palmerston's acquaintance, and he took it. He became a guest at Lady Palmerston's parties, and soon statesman and editor were on friendly terms. Palmerston was too great-hearted a man to bear malice, and he responded cordially to Delane's advances. Soon they were on the footing of allies, wrote or saw each other daily, and Delane became a visitor to Lord Palmerston's seat at Broadlands.

This friendship between former enemies was noted with envious derision by Palmerston's political opponents. Disraeli, who had longed to establish similar relations with Delane, said in a speech at Slough in 1858 :

> " Innocent people in the country who look to the leading articles in the newspapers for advice and direction, who look to what are called leading organs to be the guardians of their privileges and the directors of their political consciences, are not the least aware . . . that leading organs now are place-hunters of the Court, and that the once stern guardians of popular rights simper in the enervating atmosphere of gilded salons."

Then there was that stormy petrel Mr Horsman, who a decade later became a leader of revolt against Reform and led Robert Lowe into the Cave of Adullam. Horsman, who had previously been a member

of Lord Palmerston's Government, in 1860 made an extravagant attack on the Prime Minister, Mr John Walter, and *The Times*, in the course of the debate on a Reform Bill. In answering Walter's speech, Horsman contended that the former speaker had made a wicked aspersion on the honour of the House by suggesting that the votes of members might be influenced by thoughts of a coming election. The orator denounced this as flat treason, and pointed out that the matter was made much worse by the fact that what Walter had said had been written the day before in the paper of which he was the principal proprietor. Walter rose to explain that he had nothing to do with the article which had appeared in *The Times* and had neither written nor inspired it.

But Horsman was not appeased, and in gloomy tones accused *The Times*, its owner, editor, and writers of being conspirators against the State, and spoke of Walter as the paymaster of " midnight depredators " who attempted to destroy the liberties of Parliament. Then he commented on " the personal influences by which *The Times* is supposed to be affected ; on the peculiar influences that draw Mr Delane to Lord Palmerston ; and the anomalous position and proceedings of Mr Lowe on the Treasury Bench ". (Mr Lowe was then a leader-writer on *The Times*, and Vice-President of the Council on Education.)

In reply to this ridiculous attack Lord Palmerston denied that he was able to exercise any influence over the conduct and opinions of *The Times*. His only wish was that he could plead guilty of the charge, and said that

> " if there are any influences which have fortunately led Mr. Delane to me, they are no other than the influences of society. I have had the pleasure," he added, " of meeting Mr. Delane frequently in society ; and he has occasionally done me the honour to join in society under my roof ; that

society was, I may add, composed of persons of all shades of politics and of various pursuits. I need hardly say I feel proud when persons so honour me without undertaking any other engagement than that which Mr. Delane always makes good—of making themselves agreeable during the time of their stay."

The Prime Minister's protestation of innocence deceived nobody. For though there was no formal alliance between Palmerston and the editor of *The Times*, there was a working agreement, the evidence of which was often seen in the paper, as well as in the policy of the Government on many public questions.

In the meantime the Press was being slowly relieved of the burdens and restraints that oppressed it. In 1853 the advertisement tax was abolished. In the following year, on May 16, 1854, the House of Commons adopted a resolution of Mr Milner Gibson's in favour of revision of the laws in reference to the newspaper stamp.

The abolition of the stamp duty had long been advocated by politicians of the Manchester school like Bright and Cobden, and the question was now ripe for settlement. So long had an agitation been carried on, in the Press and on the platform, for the removal of the "taxes on knowledge" that Parliament as well as the public were now convinced that the change was inevitable. This was shown when Mr Gibson's motion was assented to without a division.

On this subject the attitude of *The Times* was uncertain, but generally it was fiercely hostile. Occasionally, however, it echoed the popular cry for abolition, as on the occasion of the debate on Mr Gibson's motion. In reference to this it published on May 17, 1854, an article in which the case for the abolition of the duty was forcibly stated.

"With all our talk about knowledge, about the achievements of science, about education, schools, churches, enlightenment, and heaven knows what not, there is something positively ridiculous in taxing the intelligence which really constitutes the great medium of a civilized country. We make a great stir about teaching everybody to read, and the State—that is, the Nation—pays a quarter of a million a year in teaching children to do little more than read. Then we proceed to tax the very first thing that everybody reads. In this way the newspapers pay for the education of the country, for they find their expenses aggravated and their circulation restricted by an impost about equal to the sum spent in educating the masses. But we have several times enlarged on the absurdity of a tax which, as it is a tax on news, is a tax on knowledge, and is thus a tax on light, a tax on education, a tax on truth, a tax on public opinion, a tax on good order and good government, a tax on society, a tax on the progress of human affairs and on the working of human institutions."

No Radical of them, not John Bright himself, could have stated the case for the abolition of the stamp duty more clearly than the writer of this article. It apparently expressed the firm and settled convictions of the leading newspaper. But it was not so. For the good reason that the removal of the duty deprived the paper of a monopoly it enjoyed and threatened its commercial supremacy.

The Times could go post free all over the country, and also make several journeys from place to place with a single impressed stamp for a penny. On the other hand, under the postal arrangements the stamps needed to cover a single postage cost far more. The duty however had to be paid if the newspaper did not go through the post at all. Under these conditions a newspaper like *The Times*, which had a large number of country subscribers, really paid no stamp duty on the papers sent to these subscribers, and got a cheap postal rate into the bargain ; while

newspapers with a local sale paid the duty on papers that were merely passed across a counter.

In March, 1855, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, Palmerston's Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced a Bill rendering it optional for every newspaper to issue all or any copies stamped or unstamped, the stamped copies being allowed the same postal privileges as before.

In supporting this measure, which had a smooth passage through Parliament, John Bright referred to *The Times* article quoted above, and said he should not be surprised if *The Times* of the next morning contained an article of opposite purport. It was a shrewd prediction.

The next day's issue of the paper (March 20, 1855) contained an angry screed against the Bill, which it condemned as a treacherous expedient for weakening the position of *The Times*, and for helping cheap and unscrupulous rivals to thrive by stealing the news it collected and published.

> "What the London papers have to expect," it contended, "is that in the metropolis, and still more in the manufacturing districts, there will be published early in the day, and circulated by private hands, a cheap class of papers giving all the news which *we* believe to constitute our principal attraction, and to obtain which we spend immense sums of money. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is above this vulgar appetite for news. He has no relish for an event until it has been five years in the wood, and as many in the bottle. But we must beg to assure him that the people of England are actually impatient for news, and would rather it were not even a day old. So we can easily conceive that it will answer the purpose of enterprising gentlemen to republish our news in a cheap form for the metropolitan circulation, and two and four o'clock for the provincial districts."

But *The Times* attack on this Bill was not confined

to its own columns. Robert Lowe and other Members of Parliament, who were on the staff of the paper, offered determined opposition to the various clauses of the measure as it passed through Committee, and pointed out the need of protection for copyright matter from piracy.* But Parliament thought the danger of piracy negligible—as indeed it proved to be,—and turned a deaf ear to these warnings.

At the time this Act was passed (1855) *The Times* still towered high above all competitors in circulation, the average of which was 60,000 daily ; while the combined circulation figures of its principal competitors—*The Daily News*, *The Morning Advertiser*, *The Morning Post*, *The Morning Herald*, *The Morning Chronicle*, and *The Public Ledger*—did not amount to more than 20,000, or a third of those of *The Times*.

Many of those who hated *The Times* and all it stood for confidently believed that it would be swamped by the new competition that would follow the passing of the Newspaper Act of 1855. But neither this nor the abolition of the paper duty had this effect. Competitors sprang up on all sides. One or two in London, and many in the Provinces, but, despite their best efforts, its rivals were unable to rob the leading paper of its prestige or deprive it of its subscribers.

Nor were the fears of those who directed the fortunes of the newspaper realized. None of the London and provincial papers that were now launched pirated the news of *The Times*. The new owners were as honourable and straightforward as Delane himself, and would have scorned to make money by pilfering information at the expense of other journals. The daily newspapers established in the Midlands and the North of England became prosperous and gained hosts of readers, but this only slightly affected *The Times*. Many people bought a local sheet in addition to the London paper, but for the most part the new

readers were recruited from a class who for the first time could afford to buy newspapers.

The invention of the electric telegraph and the development of railway and steamboat transport rendered the system of news-conveyance which the second John Walter had devised obsolete, and destroyed the monopoly which Printing House Square had long enjoyed. But the enterprise of Walter and Delane kept pace with the progress of invention and discovery. Though it was now possible for readers of local papers in Glasgow, Manchester and Sheffield to glean tidings of events hours before the London newspapers arrived in those centres, *The Times*, thanks to its great resources, its army of correspondents, and its free use of telegraph and railway facilities, was able to give a more complete and detailed news service than any other British newspaper. Many of its writers were also men of distinction in politics and letters. There were in the earlier years of Delane's editorship such leader-writers as Canon Mosley, Horace Twiss, Gilbert a'Beckett who found relief from the labours of a magistrate by contributing to *Punch* and writing for *The Times* ; George Wingrove Cooke, who, in addition to leader-writing, acted as special correspondent for the paper in the Chinese War of 1857, and undertook a mission to Algeria ; and Alexander Knox. Others who came a little later were Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke. Lowe is chiefly remembered to-day as a zealous opponent of reform who brought in an unpopular Budget when Chancellor of the Exchequer. Matthew Higgins, best known as Jacob Omnium, whose attack on the Palace Court earned Thackeray's commendation in some notable verses in *Punch* ; and Sidney Godolphin Osborne, of whom more hereafter. Abraham Hayward, who wrote much for *The Saturday Review* and was an old contributor to *The Morning*

Chronicle, also wrote occasionally for *The Times*. Then there was William Howard Russell, whose contributions as special correspondent in many parts of the world did more than those of any other writer to enhance the reputation of the paper. After serving in the Crimean War Russell was sent on many important missions. In 1856 he went to Moscow to witness the coronation of the Czar Nicholas ; later he hastened to India as soon as cables announced the outbreak of the mutiny.

Such spirited and lavish enterprise helped to maintain the reputation of *The Times* as the most authoritative, interesting, and informative of newspapers, and rendered it impervious to the fiercest assaults of competition.

A year or two under the new conditions satisfied Delane and the chief proprietor that the paper was too strongly entrenched to fear assault from any quarter. So when in 1861 the last of the "taxes on knowledge" was removed by the abolition of the Paper Duty, the editor was not perturbed and greeted the decision of Parliament with a gesture of contempt. In *The Times* of May 28, 1861, his comment on the subject was as follows : "We hope and trust that this will be the very last day of this Paper War, and that from this day forward every Englishman will not only have in his house a cheap Bible, but also a penny newspaper, a Cocker's Arithmetic, a Miscellany, a novel in weekly parts and a bandbox, duty free."

With the abolition of the duty on paper, the price of *The Times* was reduced to 3*d*., at which price it remained for another fifty-two years.

The alliance between Lord Palmerston and Delane was watched with suspicion by the opposition groups in Parliament, and even by some members of the

Cabinet as well. But the most implacable of the Premier's enemies were the Radicals of the Manchester School, who were ever on the look-out to score off him. Their chance soon came. In 1857 a British coasting schooner—*The Arrow*—was seized by the Chinese authorities. The British Government responded by attacking Canton. Richard Cobden moved a vote of censure condemning Lord Palmerston's high-handed action. Tories and Peelites supported this resolution, and the Government was defeated by a majority of sixteen.

This victory over its chosen hero greatly annoyed *The Times* and it roundly abused Disraeli, Gladstone and Cobden for uniting in so unpatriotic an enterprise. "The result", it said, "of an appeal to the country will prove that we are not mistaken in this estimate of our national spirit, for even a triple coalition of party chiefs will not muster a majority of the British constituency round its questionable tricolour." (March 4, 1857.)

The Times prediction as to Lord Palmerston's popularity proved correct at the ensuing General Election. The battle was fought on one issue only —did the Prime Minister deserve the confidence of the country? The question was answered in the affirmative and the Government came back with a majority of 79.

Scarcely was the General Election over before the country had to face another crisis in its affairs. Alarming news came from India that a mutiny had broken out among the native troops. The news caused consternation and even panic in some quarters in Great Britain. At this juncture *The Times* did excellent service in allaying public feeling.

As Delane was convinced by information he received from friends in India as well as from Lord Palmerston, that the mutiny would not be quelled

without a long campaign, he decided to send W. H. Russell to the East as special correspondent.

On his arrival, Russell was cordially welcomed by the authorities, and the Commander-in-Chief of the army in India, Sir Colin Campbell, assured him that he should see all headquarter reports and any assistance the headquarters' staff could give him.

Russell made the best use of the opportunities afforded him, and his brilliant messages, for the first time sent by cable, brought joy to Printing House Square and satisfaction to readers of the paper. The charge for cabling Russell's articles from India came to £5000, but as Mr MacDonald, the manager of *The Times*, told him in a letter of encouragement and congratulation, " It was, however, one of those occasions on which it would never have done for us to have been content with moving neck and neck with the penny papers." (Those " cheap and nasty " penny papers were still a bugbear !)

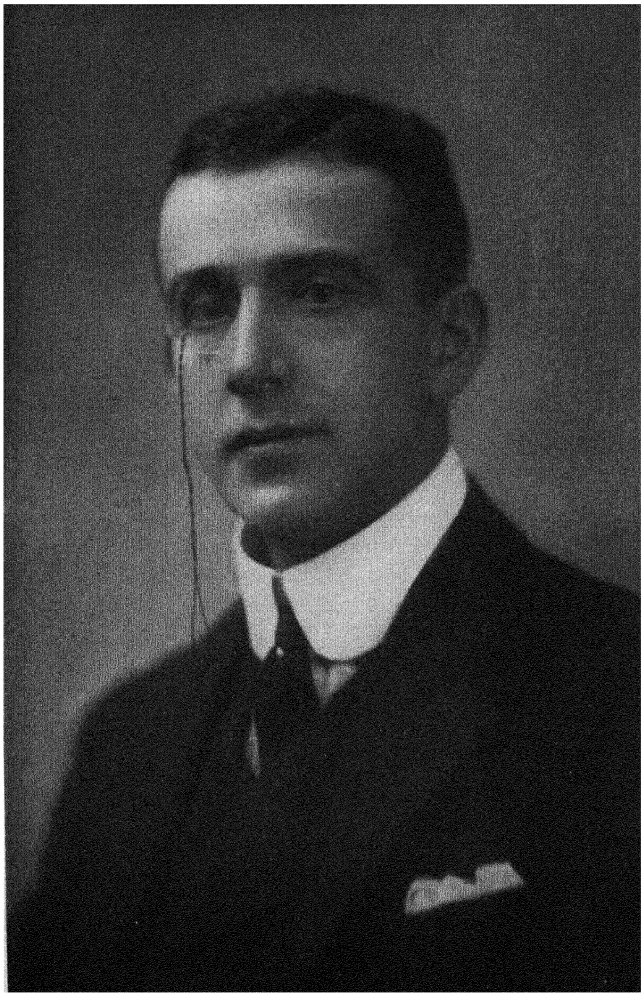
Delane wrote Russell in even warmer terms. Under the date of April 8, 1858, he said :

> " I have nothing but to congratulate you on the perfect success with which you have sustained your fame. I feel myself, and hear everybody saying, that we are at last beginning to learn something about India, which has always been a mystery—as far removed from our sight and which it was as impossible to comprehend as the fixed stars."

The Times was never on friendly terms with Napoleon III, and from time to time it attacked him with extraordinary bitterness. Many of Robert Lowe's most trenchant leading articles were levelled at the French monarch ; and these effusions often caused serious alarm and concern to British statesmen, who were desirous of maintaining cordial relations between Britain and France. During Lord Derby's short term of office in 1858–9 that statesman

was gravely concerned by Delane's renewal of attacks on the Emperor.

Lord Derby spoke to Greville on the matter and asked him to use his influence with *The Times* "to get them to abstain from writing any more irritating articles about France". Lord Derby assured Greville that these articles, published as they had been at a period when "nothing but the utmost care and moderation on both sides enabled the two governments to go on in harmony, were goading the French almost to madness". Greville then tells a story which establishes the fact that like other illustrious people the Emperor of the French was anxious to establish friendly relations with the British leading organ. Greville draws quite a different conclusion from this little story. "Persigny (the French Ambassador) called on Lord John," he says, "and told him he was come in strict confidence to show him the letter which the Emperor had written to the King of Sardinia, but which he must not mention even to his colleagues, except of course to Palmerston. Lord John promised he would not, and a day or two after he read the letter in *The Times*." Lord John, according to Greville, sent for Persigny and asked for an explanation. Persigny could give no explanation, but said he would write to Walewski, the French Foreign Minister. Lord John Russell also wrote to the British Ambassador in Paris, who in his turn spoke to Walewski on the matter. Walewski was at a loss to understand how his master's letter had got into *The Times*. He thought it must have been sent from Turin and said he would write to that Court and complain of the indiscretion. He also said he would speak to the Emperor. For some days there was a hubbub of excitement among diplomatists and Foreign Ministers. Then Walewski sought an interview with the Emperor, told him what had occurred, and showed him the



Photograph: Elliott & Fry

W. F. MONYPENNY

draft of the letter he proposed to send to Turin. "No," replied the Emperor, "don't write at all; take no notice of the publication. The fact is, I sent the letter myself to *The Times* correspondent!"

Greville's explanation of the Emperor's motive in sending this letter to the paper is even more extraordinary than the story itself.

> "A most extraordinary proceeding," he says, "and showing the extreme difficulty of all diplomatic dealing between the two governments. The Emperor is by way of being indignant with *The Times*, and never fails to pour out abuse of the paper to whomsoever he converses with. He did so to Cobden, for instance, to whom he gave an audience at Paris. But who can tell whether this is not a pretence and a deceit, and whether he may not all the time have a secret understanding with *The Times*?"

Greville's suggestion is preposterous and scarcely worth discussion. Whatever its attitude on other matters, *The Times* and its editor had never wavered in their hostility to Napoleon. On no occasion had Delane shown the slightest friendliness towards the Emperor. What advantage could possibly accrue to either or both of the parties to a secret understanding, when they were, according to Greville's own showing, avowedly unfriendly?

Greville was so familiar with the tortuous ways and habits of thought of politicians, that he failed to discover the motive that impelled the Emperor to send this letter to *The Times*. Yet the motive is at once apparent to those who read the diarist's story. The Emperor's position was perilous, his throne insecure. For years the most influential newspaper in Europe had been hostile and frequently attacked him. He saw an opportunity of doing this paper an important favour, by granting it the exclusive privilege of publishing a State document. Without consulting

his own Minister—he was probably ashamed to do so —he sent this letter direct to *The Times*, and doubtless hoped that the friendly overture would lead to more friendly and profitable relations. Delane had been approached in this way before, but he had never shown any disposition to respond to these advances.

Announcements and premature disclosure of official information in *The Times* frequently caused mental perturbation to ministers. Sometimes they caused anger and excitement in more exalted circles.

When in 1859 Lord Derby's Government fell, the Queen, instead of sending for Lord Palmerston, who had been Premier before this short-lived Administration was formed, invited Lord Granville to take office. A few days later, on June 12, Lord Granville notified Her Majesty that he was unable to form a Cabinet, and advised her to send for Lord Palmerston.

On the 14th there appeared in *The Times* a full and accurate report of the conversations between the Queen and Lord Granville in conducting these delicate negotiations. In pulling aside the curtain and revealing the mysteries of the council chamber, *The Times* gave its readers the benefit of a thrill such as they rarely experienced. For once it saw Royalty, not as on formal State occasions, but in its everyday guise, and *The Times* article was read, discussed, and criticized everywhere. But the Queen was very angry at this outrage on the decencies of public life. She promptly wrote to Lord Granville and told him she was shocked to find the whole of her conversation with him repeated in *The Times*. She rightly maintained that her confidential intercourse ought to be sacred ; and pointed out that communications with the Press was the more objectionable because, in the event of any misrepresentation, the Queen would have no protection, as she could not

insert contradictions or explanations in the newspaper herself. ("Queen Victoria's Letters," III, 443.)

The leading lights in the political world were gravely perturbed by this affair. "Who", they asked each other, "was safe, when the confidence of a Sovereign was not respected?" In the clubs the news caused a sensation, and provided members with a topic for endless discussion. "Who had given Delane the information?" everybody asked. No one could answer this with certainty, though it was generally believed that Lord Granville, who was known to be on very friendly terms with the editor of *The Times*, had been guilty of the indiscretion.

On June 16 Lord Derby raised the subject in the House of Lords, and spoke with becoming indignation of this violation of the common decencies, but acquitted Lord Granville of the charge of sanctioning the publication.

> "Only two or three persons," he continued, "could have been present at that conversation—Her Majesty, probably the Prince Consort, and my noble friend. It is therefore perfectly obvious that my noble friend's confidence has been grossly abused by some person or other. No doubt there was someone with whom it was his duty to communicate on receiving that communication from Her Majesty, but clearly that person was not the editor of a newspaper."

In reply, Lord Granville said that he had "no hesitation in saying that he was not guilty of that breach of confidence from which the noble earl had been kind enough to exculpate him". He then went on to explain that Her Majesty had given him permission to explain to his friends what had occurred, and that the same evening when in the company of friends, some of whom were political and others private, he made a general statement about the interview, "but", he continued, "I never meant in respect of any one

circumstance to give Her Majesty's language." Lord Granville surmised that the article in *The Times* was founded on one or more of the statements he made the previous evening.

The generation which this affair so sorely perplexed never learnt the truth about it. This was only disclosed fifty years later, when in 1908 Delane's "Life and Correspondence" was published. In this work, written by Delane's nephew, Arthur Irwin Dasent, there is a letter from Lord Granville (I, 313) dated June 12, 1859, in which an account is given of the writer's conversation with the Queen, Her Majesty's words being given in inverted commas. This letter was addressed to Delane. It was written after Lord Granville's return from Buckingham Palace, and it contained this significant remark: "If you make use of this information, pray wrap it up as you know how to do."

From this it appears that Lord Granville wanted the editor to publish the information. On the following day, when the report of the conversations between the Queen and Granville was published by *The Times*, Granville professed to be shocked at the newspaper's lack of taste and discretion. In a letter which he immediately sent to the Queen he said :

> "Lord Granville was extremely annoyed this morning at seeing the article in *The Times* of to-day, repeating with some accuracy but in a vulgar inflated manner the account which Lord Granville gave yesterday afternoon to many of his political friends, and which he believed your Majesty had authorized him to do."

Delane, as we have seen, never disclosed the source of the information on which he based this sensational article, and years afterwards Lord Granville thanked him for a thousand great favours.

CHAPTER XI

Matthew Arnold and The Times—*The newspaper's pro-Austrian tone—Our old friendship with Prussia—Violent articles in* The Times *attacking Prussia—German hatred of Palmerston—Delane's admiration for Palmerston—*The Times *on Gladstone's defeat at Oxford and the Civil War in America—Delane's quarrel with Cobden—Death of Palmerston and Cobden—Lord John Russell ignores* The Times—The Times *and Gladstone's Administration—The Franco-German War and Eastern Question.*

AS we watch the progress of events through those issues of *The Times* in the mid-Victorian period, we note with admiration and sometimes amusement the comments in the leading columns on these happenings. However trivial or important the subject, the leader-writer has always something interesting and appropriate to say about it. And the comment is as varied as it is interesting. Sometimes statesmen are admonished and counselled to mend their ways ; in other issues foreign countries are gravely warned that England views their actions with disfavour. On some occasions, the journal is all for advancement and new methods ; on others, it advises moderation and caution.

As we read we are reminded of that figure conjured up by Matthew Arnold in " Friendship's Garland ", when he speaks of *The Times* as

> " a gigantic Sancho Panza, following by an attraction he cannot resist that poor, mad, scorned, sublime enthusiast, the modern spirit ; following it, indeed, with constant grumbling, expostulation and opposition, with airs of protection, of compassionate superiority, with an incessant by-play of nods, shrugs and winks addressed to the spectators ; following it, in short, with all the incurable recalcitrancy of a lower nature, but still following it."

For many years *The Times* was pro-Austrian and had no sympathy for the Italian patriots who were trying to win back the liberties of their country. But in 1859 Delane, probably through Lord Palmerston's influence, or, as the cynics asserted, because the cause was now assured of success, became a supporter of Italian liberation. As the Court was pro-Austrian, the change of tone gave offence to the Queen and the Prince Consort. But though he was sympathetic to Italy, Delane disliked and distrusted the Emperor of the French and was averse to giving him diplomatic or military support. In an article on January 6, 1860, *The Times* said :

> "We wish well to Italy, but we do not 'go to war for an idea'. If we did so we should prefer to do so on our own policy, and with confidence in our own right. If we did so, we should moreover prefer to have some control over our own position, and some confidence that our allies would fight out the whole fight with us, and not make peace at inconvenient seasons."

From the middle of the eighteenth century England and Prussia had been bound by the closest ties of friendship. English and German soldiers had fought side by side in America as well as Europe. British gold had financed Frederick the Great's many campaigns, and this Prussian monarch was more popular with the English populace than their own King. To this fact the weather-beaten signboards of many wayside inns still bear witness.

The alliance continued. In the Peninsular campaign and at Waterloo the King's German Legion bore its share of the heaviest fighting, while Blücher, who came to Wellington's aid in the deciding conflict, was hailed as a demigod when he visited England.

Forty years later the tradition still lingered, and though Prussia declined to join forces with the Allies

in the Crimea a Royal German Legion was formed and volunteered for service against Russia.

Then came the change of feeling of which we see evidence in articles in *The Times*. What the causes of this change of sentiment may have been, it is not our purpose here to inquire. In 1858 the Princess Royal, Queen Victoria's eldest daughter, was married to Prince Frederick William, Crown Prince of Prussia. Three years earlier (September, 1855) Delane heard of the engagement and expressed the strongest disapproval of the alliance in his newspaper. His leader-writer wrote in the most contemptuous terms of the King of Prussia, and sneered at " the bankrupt dynasties that yet for a little while encumber the central thrones of Central Europe " ; and as a parting shaft declared that " the people of England, at all events, has no wish to improve its acquaintance with any Prince of the House of Hohenzollern ".

In another of its many attacks on Prussia, at this period *The Times* invited the British people " to contemplate the prospect of the Princess Royal becoming anti-English in feeling, and being sent back to them at no distant date as an exile and a fugitive ".

These attacks gave much offence at Court. Of the first of the articles the Prince Consort said : " *The Times* fired off an article that is at once truly scandalous in itself, and degrading to the country, with a view to provoke hostile public opinion, but happily it has excited universal disgust by its extravagance and discourtesy."

The Prince Consort's biographer, Sir Theodore Martin, writes in more emphatic terms : " *The Times* article ", he says, " was one of the worst of a series by which the leading journal has done its best to make England detested throughout Germany, a result not to be wondered at when the tone and language are considered, which the writers, professing to

represent English opinion, thought proper to adopt." In another paragraph Sir Theodore refers to the cause of these attacks. "The only reason", he says, "*The Times* gives for its dislike of Prussia is that the Prussian and English Courts are connected by personal ties, and that British independence demands that everything proceeding from the (English) Court should be watched with the most jealous suspicion."

Little did Delane guess when he inspired these mischievous articles that "the bankrupt dynasties" would in half a century become an Empire powerful enough to face a world in arms. His journal did much to banish the old feeling of friendliness between Britain and Prussia.

It is mere folly to attribute to these effusions and the articles on the Danish question that followed, as some writers do, the bitter hatred of Britain that in the twentieth century caused German statesmen to plan the subjugation of Europe, and the overthrow of the British Empire.

The abuse and violence of *The Times* under Delane unquestionably did much harm, and intensified the dislike that Germans in the early sixties felt for all things British, but they had no lasting effect. Lord Palmerston's autocratic manner of dealing with ministers and ambassadors was a much more potent source of mischief, and the humourless Prussians expressed their exasperation at his rebukes and snubs in the rhyme :

"*Hat der Teufel einen Sohn*
So ist er sicher Palmerston."

But "the Devil's son" and his aggressive policy were forgotten, when in the years following the Franco-German War Bismarck urged the need for expansion, and declared that Germany must have colonies and warships to protect them. These grandiose

schemes and the overweening vanity and arrogance of Wilhelm II were the real causes of the deep-rooted antagonism that sprang up between Great Britain and Germany.

The Times lost no opportunity of holding up Lord Palmerston to admiring readers as a model of tact, firmness, and moderation. Contrasting him with Disraeli, it said in one article (December 31, 1861) :

> "Lord Palmerston represents the precise state of the national mind in opposing unnecessary changes without setting up resistance as a principle, and in countenancing all foreign approximations to the political theories and system of England. It is a minor merit that in all party skirmishes he opposes consummate tact to his opponent's versatile ingenuity."

Lord John Russell and W. E. Gladstone, who refused to truckle to *The Times*, were regarded with disfavour. Delane rightly regarded Lord John as a timid faddist and weak administrator, whose one panacea for all the nation's ills was an extension of the franchise. The paper acknowledged Gladstone's genius in finance, but rarely lost an opportunity of sharply criticizing him for his steady opposition to Palmerston's spirited foreign policy. But Delane came to recognize Gladstone as the man of the future, and he was greatly exasperated when in 1865 the Oxford Tories secured the defeat of this distinguished Peelite, and by so doing drove him into the arms of the Radicals. Commenting on this election, *The Times* said :

> "The enemies of the university will make the most of her disgrace. It has hitherto been supposed that a learned constituency was to some extent exempt from the vulgar motives of party spirit, and capable of forming a higher estimate of statesmanship than common tradesmen or tenant farmers. It will now stand on record that they have deliber-

ately sacrificed a representative who combined the very highest qualifications, moral and intellectual, for an academical seat, to party spirit, and party spirit alone. Mr. Gladstone's brilliant public career, his great academical distinctions and literary attainments, his very subtlety and sympathy with ideas for their own sake mark him out beyond all living men for such a position. Henceforth Mr. Gladstone will belong to the country, but no longer to the university. Those Oxford influences and traditions which have so deeply coloured his views and so deeply interfered with his better judgement must gradually lose their hold on him." (July 19, 1865.)

Generally mischievous in its reference to foreign affairs, *The Times* excelled all previous records in its comments on the American Civil War. Many distinguished people in this country, including Lord John Russell and Mr Gladstone, sympathized with the Southern States in their effort to secede from the Union, but no attacks on the Federal Government from this side were so violent and malignant as those of *The Times*. The quality of its comment may be judged by its reference to the President of the United States whom it classed " in the catalogue of monsters, wholesale assassins and butchers of their kind ". We may smile now at this supercharged abuse, but at the time, and for many years afterwards, much of the suspicion and dislike felt by leading Americans of Great Britain and its policy was due to the hostility shown by *The Times* during the Civil War.

Even William Howard Russell—most favoured of all correspondents—felt the weight of his editor's displeasure, when in describing the battle of Bull's Run he dared to express his own opinions. For this temerity he was recalled.

Dr Charles Mackay, the New York correspondent of the paper, whose views were in accord with those

of his editor, was more fortunate than Russell, and for years—from 1862 till the end of 1865—he subjected Lincoln and his Government to a galling fire of criticism. In Dr Mackay's book, "Through the Long Day" (II, 272), we get an interesting account of the newspaper war that then raged between the journals of the two countries, and learn something of the trials to which correspondents were subjected. Mackay says :

"Among the most violent of the onslaughts made upon me by the ultra-republican and abolitionist press was one brought on my innocent head by an unfortunate alteration made in the proof-sheet of one of my letters to *The Times*. Writing of the frequent battles between the brave Confederates and the equally brave Federals, I stated that the results of these sanguinary engagements in no wise helped to bring the war to a conclusion, and that in fact 'they proved *nothing* but the courage of the combatants on either side'. This passage was queried by the proof-reader, and so brought to the Editor's notice, and misinterpreting my meaning he changed the word '*nothing*' into '*anything*'.

"When the copy of *The Times* containing this unlucky alteration arrived in New York the vials of wrath were opened against me by the *Herald* and other papers of anti-English politics, of which there were very many during the war. . . . I was denounced in the most violent terms for accusing the Americans, both of the North and of the South, of cowardice, though nothing was further from my intention. The *Herald* went so far as to hint that it might be a just punishment for the libel of which I had been guilty to burn my house over my head. . . . I afterwards learned that there was great joy in *The Times* printing-office, and in the sub-editor's room, and among all the officials who had been called to account for the foolish, though not ill-meant, tampering with my 'copy', when the delinquency was traced to the great Jupiter Tonans himself, who in a moment of confusion, forgetfulness, or perhaps of sleepiness, had taken it upon himself to set me wrong when thinking to set me right."

In the same work Dr Mackay also relates that he was told by an intimate friend of Mr Seward that the Secretary of State was willing to give him " a liberal proportion of secret service money ", if he would zealously support the cause of the North in *The Times*. But as Mackay admits that such a proposition was never formally made to him, it may be assumed that the statement had no foundation in fact.

On this and other matters of policy, Radicals like Bright and Cobden were in opposition to Lord Palmerston, and his ever-watchful ally, Delane. Lord Palmerston cordially hated Bright and all he stood for, and could scarcely be induced to speak to him with civility. Delane, who took more interest in home affairs than his ally, believed that the country's supreme need was sound administration ; and thought that the extension of the franchise advocated by Lord John Russell and Radicals of the Manchester school was but the first stage in a campaign of spoliation which Bright and his friends had planned.

" If we were fairly represented ", said Bright in a speech on the land question, " feudalism with regard to the land of England would perish, and the agricultural labourer throughout the United Kingdom would be redeemed from that poverty and serfdom which up to this time have been his lot."

These remarks, which sound very innocent in days when responsible statesmen talk of raiding " hen-roosts ", sent *The Times* into fits of hysterical wrath. On the following day (November 26, 1863) it said :

> " This language so often repeated and so calculated to excite discontent among the poor and half-informed, has really only one intelligible meaning : ' Reduce the electoral franchise ; for when you have done so you will obtain an assembly which will seize on the estates of the proprietors of the land and divide them gratuitously among the poor.' "

On December 3 the paper again returned to the charge, and spoke of " the satisfaction with which the poor might regard Mr Bright's proposition for a division among them of the lands of the rich ".

The monstrous suggestion that Bright wished to divide the lands of the rich among the poor led to an angry correspondence between Cobden and Delane.

On the day following the second of these articles Cobden sent a long and offensive letter to *The Times* in which he warmly defended his friend. He described the insinuation against Bright as " a groundless and gratuitous falsehood ", and at the same time remarked that it was only a specimen of the " too habitual mode of dealing, not merely with individuals but with the interests of society ", characteristic of *The Times* and its editor. Cobden went on to speak of the shameless disregard of the claims of consistency and sincerity on the part of its writers, that have long been recognized as the distinguishing characteristics of *The Times*, and placed it in marked contrast with the rest of the periodical press.

This violent letter was returned on the 7th with a note from the editor of *The Times*, stating that " Mr Cobden had no right to expect him, upon a pretext entirely irrelevant, to publish a series of most offensive and unfounded imputations upon himself and his friends ". After a puerile defence of the attacks, he concluded : " Perhaps the editor is mistaken in supposing Mr Cobden desires the publication of his letter. If, however, he should think that it conduces either to his own interest or to the injury of *The Times* he can probably find some more appropriate organ than *The Times* itself."

Cobden was too good a fighting man to ignore the challenge, and the letter a day or two later was prominently displayed in *The Daily News* and *The Morning Star*. On the 9th he followed this up with another

letter, still more intemperate, in which he addressed Delane personally by name. " I cannot allow you ", he said, " to suppress your individuality, and shelter yourself under the third person of the editorial nominative in a correspondence affecting your personal responsibility for a scandalous aspersion on myself . . . as well as on Mr Bright."

Then Cobden proceeded to show how unjustly and venomously he and Bright had been attacked for many years past.

More letters followed on both sides, and an amused and rather contemptuous public were favoured with the spectacle of two men of eminence indulging in a vulgar and undignified controversy.

Cobden had an excellent case, but he weakened it by the unmeasured terms in which he presented it, and his offensive manner diverted much sympathy to his opponent. On the other hand, Delane, perhaps wisely, made not the slightest attempt to justify his charges against Cobden and Bright, and his lame defence, with its evasions and shufflings, caused much mocking laughter in Fleet Street, and *The Times* emerged from the controversy weakened in reputation and dignity.

Within eighteen months of this unpleasant controversy, Richard Cobden died, and political gossips turned on the morning of April 3, 1865, to see what *The Times* had to say of the man who had been one of its most implacable foes. But Delane had buried or forgotten his resentment, and the only word of criticism in his obituary notice was a passing reference to his " impatience of contradiction ". For the rest it spoke of Cobden as " a great man and a benefactor to his country ".

The death of Lord Palmerston in October of the same year, marked the close of an epoch, and the end of the power of the Whig oligarchy. With the passing

of the predominant partner the alliance, which had given *The Times* such unexampled authority, was also dissolved, and Delane had to seek new political connections.

With a true sense of historical perspective, Delane devoted nine columns of his space to a memoir of the deceased statesman as well as a leading article. In the former it was claimed for him that

> "there never was a statesman who more truly represented England than Lord Palmerston. His name is now added to that splendid but very short list of Ministers, from Walpole to Pitt and from Pitt to Peel, who in times of great difficulty have rendered England prosperous at home and famous abroad, and who, while obtaining place from the Court, have derived their chief power from the country."

Lord John Russell, as we already know, was too proud to truckle to the Press ; and when on Lord Palmerston's death he became Prime Minister, a request went out to his colleagues in the Cabinet that no official information should be given to Delane.

That the ban was effective may be seen from a letter of Delane's (May, 1866), in which he tearfully complains that he no longer receives official help. He says he is "deeply grieved and mortified" at the cessation "of that friendly intercourse on political affairs by which in happier times I have so largely profited". Of Lord John he speaks with the respect due to one who has consistently refused to make obeisance to him. "As to Lord Russell, it is no new thing that I should not be among his followers, but", he adds with an air of conscious virtue, "I have at any rate left him unassailed, and if I have felt obliged to oppose some of his measures, I have always endeavoured to be respectful to himself."

But Delane was not left long in outer darkness. The Reform Bill which Lord Russell and Gladstone

brought in was carried through its second reading by a majority of five ; but on an amendment brought forward in Committee, the Government was in a minority of eleven.

As no question of principle was involved in this amendment, some members of the Government as well as the bulk of its supporters thought that the Prime Minister should have retained office. Delane also urged this course privately on Lord Granville, as well as in *The Times*. Later the Queen asked Lord Russell and Mr Gladstone to reconsider their decision, on the ground that a defeat on the relatively unimportant detail of a bill could not be regarded as a vote of want of confidence. But Lord John and his chief lieutenant were not to be moved by counsel, even from so august a source. In an article on June 27 *The Times* again tried its persuasions, and said :

> "Every loyal subject will rejoice to find her Majesty taking decidedly a more sensible view of the matter than her late advisers. It certainly requires not only explanation, but apology, that with half Europe in arms, and diplomacy rapidly quickening its pace, as well as widening its range, the Government of this great Empire should throw down the reins upon such a detail as the choice between rateable value and estimated rental."

In 1867 Lord Derby's new administration took its famous "leap in the dark", and passed, with the assistance of Gladstone and Bright, a much more radical Reform Bill than that of the previous session. The Liberals were sore at being "dished" and deprived of the credit of instituting a reform they had advocated so long. But, as *The Times* pointed out, they had ignored the advice given them the previous year, or, to put it in the paper's own words, "the conventional right of Lord Russell and Mr Gladstone to give their names to a Reform Bill has been waived for

the present by the errors of judgement and deficiency in tact which caused or excused the defeat of the Bill of 1866. The country cares little whether the Conservatives are entitled to the honour of performing a task which has become indispensable to the national welfare."

Scarcely had the storm and stress of the mighty struggle for Reform ended, than once more the political skies darkened. Fenian outrages and disturbed conditions in Ireland, brought the Irish question to the fore, and with this Disraeli, now Prime Minister, was not strong enough to deal. In a debate on the subject, Gladstone declared that the time for a severance of the tie between Church and State in Ireland had come. This declaration was followed by a disestablishment resolution, which was carried against the Government by a majority of sixty-five. After further adverse votes Parliament dissolved, and at the general election which followed, the Liberals were returned with a large majority.

Of Mr Gladstone's new Government *The Times* spoke in very laudatory tones, and declared that " since the dissolution of the Aberdeen Government in 1856 no Cabinet had included ability so great and various ".

Delane now showed that his views on the Irish question were broad and tolerant, and not those that are supposed to accord with *Times* traditions. He believed that ordered government should be maintained, but recognized that Ireland had legitimate grievances, and that merely repressive legislation only aggravated and did nothing to remedy them.

From the moment that Mr Gladstone first raised the question, *The Times* powerfully urged the need for this tardy act of justice. When the electorate endorsed this view at the polls it seemed as if the Bill would pass triumphantly through all its stages. But the House of Lords was stubborn, and for Delane as well as the

Prime Minister, who were then in close touch with each other, there were tense and anxious weeks. Delane was afraid that the Bill might be shipwrecked, and he took a considerable part in the negotiations with members of the Upper House that ensued. But at last a compromise was arranged, and the confident predictions of *The Times*, that the Bill would become law, was verified.

Delane through his paper also strongly supported other important measures brought in by the Gladstone Government. The Irish Land Bill, the Ballot Bill, Abolition of Purchase in the Army Bill, and W. E. Forster's Education Bill were hailed by *The Times* as just and necessary measures ; and for a time the newspaper seemed to be infused with the spirit of a Radical broadsheet. Of the Irish Land Bill it wrote with unqualified enthusiasm, and described it as

> " without doubt the most considerable proposal of constructive legislation that has been presented to Parliament since 1832. We frankly confess that the Bill exceeds our anticipations. We may be permitted to say that we long ago indicated the lines upon which it is drawn ; but in a design of such extent and complexity there must ever be present a fear, until the construction is completed, that the hand will falter in some part of the work. The present Bill dispels such fears."

In the fervour of his enthusiasm for this Bill the writer of the article even endorsed John Bright's pronouncement, and described it as a " just and comprehensive measure ".

No more thorough-going support than this has ever been given to a Radical measure by even the most advanced newspapers.

In his vivacious and entertaining " Tale of a *Times* Correspondent ", Mr Charles Lowe, who represented

the paper in Berlin from 1878 to 1891, says, that once when lunching with John Walter he mentioned that Count Herbert Bismarck had been complaining bitterly about the anti-German tone of the paper. Mr. Walter protested warmly against the reproach ; and as a proof of its impartiality he said that on the eve of the Franco-German War he had " gone down himself one night to Printing House Square, and with his own hand inserted a few sentences in a leading article in order to accentuate its reprobation of the conduct of France ".

But though the Germans undoubtedly regarded *The Times* as a paper generally hostile to them, they recognized also its authority and influence, and it is not without significance that Bismarck selected the organ of Printing House Square as the medium for publishing, ten days after war was declared, the Benedetti Treaty, for the partition of Belgium between France and Prussia.

The document was posted on Bismarck's instructions to the Prussian Ambassador in London, Count Bernstorff, and was taken down to Delane's chambers in Serjeant's Inn by the Minister's son, Count John. Delane was told by the messenger that he had express instructions to show him the Treaty, and that he was further at liberty to copy and publish it.

The publication of the text of this *Projet de Traité* created a profound sensation. By the terms of this treaty it was provided that should the emperor of the French send his troops into Belgium, or to conquer it, the King of Prussia should support France " with all his forces, military and naval, in the face of and against every other Power which should in this eventuality declare war ".

Here, then, the identical issue was raised that afterwards confronted British statesmen in 1914. According to the terms of this proposal, the treaty of 1839

was to be regarded as of no more importance than " a scrap of paper ".

By revealing this secret treaty Bismarck allowed it to be assumed that this scheme emanated from Napoleon III. Benedetti, the French Minister at Berlin, admitted that the handwriting of the draft was his, but protested that Bismarck was the real author of the plan.

If it had been the Prussian Chancellor's purpose in making this disclosure through *The Times* to turn the public opinion of Europe against France, he succeeded admirably ; and it was recognized on all sides that Napoleon would allow no scruples about the rights of small nationalities to interfere with his ambitious plans.

On the day the secret treaty was published in *The Times*, Mr Disraeli declared that the extinction of Belgium would be " a calamity to Europe and an injury to this country ". In a letter to John Bright, Mr Gladstone pointed out that " this publication has wholly altered the feeling of the House of Commons. . . . But neither do we think it would be right, even if it were safe, to announce that we would in any case stand by with folded arms, and see actions done which would amount to a total extinction of public right in Europe " (Morley's " Gladstone ", II, 341).

But the Prime Minister had already taken action—a fortnight before the disclosure in *The Times*. For on July 16 Mr Gladstone instructed the Secretary of War " to study the means of sending 20,000 men to Antwerp with as much promptitude as at the Trent affair we sent 10,000 to Canada ".

But more than this was now needed ; and the Press, under the leadership of *The Times*, clamoured urgently for some action that would secure the independence of the Belgium nation.

Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, acted with promptitude, and circumstances favoured his diplo-

matic efforts. Neither of the belligerent nations wished to appear at the bar of public opinion as the oppressors of small nationalities, and each of them assured the Foreign Secretary that it was the enemy who cherished these wicked designs, and that they themselves had no wish to violate the integrity of Belgium.

Having received these assurances, Lord Granville invited the representatives of France and Prussia to join in a treaty with Great Britain which, in addition to maintaining the articles of the treaty of 1839, provided a further guarantee to the territorial integrity of Belgium ; and stipulated that if either of the armies of the belligerents invaded Belgium, Great Britain would co-operate with the other to repel the invader. Germany and France agreed to this proposal and signed the treaty.

At the outbreak of the Franco-German War, William Howard Russell, who had already served *The Times* as war correspondent in Russia, India, Austria, and the United States of America, at once set out to Berlin to join the staff of the Prussian Crown Prince.

By the Crown Prince, Russell was received with such consideration, Charles Lowe tells us " as to cause a jealous German colleague to blow his brains out at this preferential treatment of an English rival ".

But the old days of ascendency in war correspondence were over for *The Times*. Russell was, as of yore, brilliant and dependable, and in this war served his paper with great distinction and achieved some notable triumphs. His long experience of military operations helped him to make his descriptions of the various phases of the war more authoritative and dependable than those of any other writer. But he was no longer sole unofficial war chronicler to the English-speaking world. Several British newspapers, London and provincial, sent out correspondents to the

war zone, and one of these, Archibald Forbes, who represented *The Daily News*, far outstripped Russell by his resourcefulness in gaining intelligence and the speed with which he transmitted it to London. This was not all. Some of Forbes' battle pictures have a power and sense of actuality that Russell in his most brilliant despatches never compassed.

To Delane, who had originated this form of enterprise fifteen years before, it was mortifying to see younger men eclipsing his own correspondents, who in many fields had proved their solid worth. This, however, was but one of the many indications of that severe competition which was depriving *The Times* of its regal position in the newspaper world.

Though he had many rivals in this campaign, Russell emerged from it with credit, and won fresh laurels for *The Times*. He had the good fortune to send his paper an authentic report of the conversation between King William of Prussia and Napoleon III at that famous interview in the Bellevue Château, Doucherg, on the morning after the battle of Sedan. As Atkins says in his "Life of Sir William Howard Russell", "The conversation as summarized by the Crown Prince in his diary, and by Russell, as reported to *The Times*, is almost identical, and forms a striking tribute to the accuracy and judgement of the great correspondent."

Russell was first with the news of the negotiations for the capitulation of Paris. He also won great renown with the German people by his lucid and critical account of the achievements of the German armies in the field.

In "Friendship's Garland", Matthew Arnold paints a gay and diverting picture of the homage paid to Russell at Versailles at the end of the war :

> "A group had formed before the hotel near us, and our attention was drawn to its central figure. Dr Russell of

The Times was preparing to mount his war-horse. You know the sort of thing, he has described it himself over and over again. Bismarck at his horse's head, the Crown Prince holding the stirrup, and the old King of Prussia hoisting Russell into the saddle. When he was there the distinguished public servant waved his hand in acknowledgement, and rode slowly down the street, accompanied by the *gamins* of Versailles, who even in their present dejection could not forbear a few involuntary cries of '*quel homme!*' Always unassuming he alighted at the lodgings of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, a potentate of the second or even the third order, who had beckoned to him from the window."

The foreign policy of Lord Granville, much less aggressive and spectacular than that of Lord Palmerston, did not impress the electorate, and soon after the end of the Franco-German War the Gladstone Government began to lose ground. In particular, the public regarded the agreement to decide the validity of the claims of the United States against Great Britain arising out of the depredations of the *Alabama*, a Liverpool privateer, by arbitration, as a weak abandonment of British rights. When the terms of the award were published there was great popular indignation, and Mr Gladstone and Lord Granville were denounced as traitors to their country.

One of the most remarkable features of this long-standing controversy was the part *The Times* took in it. For ten years before Lord Palmerston's death, Delane had been a consistent and thorough-going supporter of that statesman's foreign policy—a policy which readers of *The Times* had cordially endorsed. During the American Civil War, his own correspondent, W. H. Russell, wrote Delane that "the bitter leaders in *The Times* do the harm and excite the people"; while John Bright, in a speech at Rochdale in December, 1861, said that "in *The Times*, the most powerful representative of English opinion, at least of the richer

classes, there had not been since Mr Lincoln took office in March last, one fair and honourable and friendly article on American affairs". Yet in the matter of these claims arising out of the war, Delane —and his paper reflected his views—was all for moderation and sweet reasonableness. *The Times* strongly supported the policy of arbitration, and throughout the long negotiations between the United States and Great Britain, Delane was in constant touch with Lord Granville, and at the end welcomed the settlement in the leading columns of the paper (September 18, 1872) with "an immense sense of relief".

Robert Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had for many years been a leader writer on *The Times*. But when in 1871 he introduced his Budget, which included a tax on matches, he found to his mortification, that the paper in which he had so often trenchantly denounced the plans and proposals of others, was dealing just as faithfully with his own ill-starred imposition. The new tax raised a storm of opposition. The Queen wrote a remonstrance on the subject to the Prime Minister ; while the working classes, who had been unmoved by Lowe's philippic against them in the debates on Reform, showed that choleric gentleman that, vote or no vote, they were quite capable of taking care of themselves where their material interests were concerned.

Through this and other unpopular measures Mr Gladstone's Government became discredited, and was eventually brought down when his Irish University Bill was defeated in the House of Commons on March 11, 1873, by a majority of three. For some months longer Mr Disraeli kept the Government in office. When in February of the following year a General Election took place, the Conservative party for the first time in thirty years found themselves in a position of pre-eminence. Mr Disraeli had more than once been

in high office. Now for the first time he enjoyed real power, and had a Conservative majority of fifty in the House of Commons at his call.

The article of February 18, in which *The Times* commented on the resignation of Mr Gladstone and the acceptance of office by Mr Disraeli, was, we learn on Mr Dasent's authority, written by Delane him elf. In this essay the writer traced the course of events that led to the Liberal Premier's downfall, and in a memorable passage paid a high tribute to the retiring statesman ; but at the same time pointed out that

> " the feeling of personal ascendency and of popularity with the masses, if it encouraged him in arduous enterprises, inspired him also with a confidence which not infrequently misled him. High-handed acts which startle those who are not at all constitutional precisians, and a disregard for the spirit and obvious intention of an Act of Parliament, are natural in one who thinks that he holds a general commission from the public."

Delane then goes on to show that Lord Palmerston during his first administration made the same mistake as Mr Gladstone, but the defeat of 1858 taught him a lesson, " and from that time to the day of his death his conduct was unexceptionable. Mr Gladstone need not be supposed to have less sense or less discretion ".

With the Conservative Prime Minister, Delane had long been friendly, but had rarely given him any political support. When Mr Disraeli for short periods had been in office but not in power, *The Times* had been chary of helping him. Now, however, he was hailed as a model of equanimity and patience. " The quack doctor and inimitable illusionist " who offered " sweet words, and the vapour of some spiritual chloroform " in 1852, had now in 1874 become " so completely master of the situation that the murmurs of the boldest die away at his approach ".

Sir Algernon West tells a story of a meeting between Disraeli and Delane which has frequently been quoted but will bear repetition. " A lady told me ", he says, " that she was present when Disraeli and Delane first met. Disraeli overwhelmed the editor with flattery. ' Did you like it ? ' said my friend to Delane afterwards. ' No,' he replied, ' but I like to think that Disraeli thought I was of sufficient importance to make it worth his while.' "

Disraeli was a profound believer in the use of flattery, and there were few occasions when he did not think it " worth his while ".

The Conservative Government had only been in office for a year when the Eastern question was forced once again into prominence by a rising in the Balkans. First Bosnia and Herzegovina, and soon afterwards Bulgaria rose in revolt against Turkish misrule. Russia took up the cause of the small nationalities, and at once there was excited controversy in this country between politicians of opposite schools. The Government and the Conservative party were determined opponents of Russian aggression. Mr Gladstone, who had retired from the leadership of the Liberal party when Mr Disraeli took office, was aflame with indignation at the atrocities the Bulgarians had suffered at the hands of the Turks, and wrote a pamphlet in which he demanded the expulsion of the Turks, " bag and baggage " out of Bulgaria.

Delane, now worn out and stricken with mortal illness, was inclined to cry, " A plague on both your houses ! " He had followed the Eastern problem through its changing phases since the days of the Crimean War. The conditions, in Delane's judgement, had not altered in twenty years. Russia was still aggressive and eager to extend her sphere of influence. Turkey still misgoverned and oppressed the small nationalities subject to her rule. He saw

nothing to admire in either. So long as the Turk misgoverned his subjects there was always the danger of Russian intervention. Six years earlier he had written : " We must try to keep out of another war in support of the blessed old Turk " ; and the only hope he saw of a satisfactory solution was through internal reform in Turkey.

On September 4, 1876, he met Mr Gladstone at dinner. This was just before Gladstone issued his pamphlet on Bulgarian atrocities. Of this meeting, the Liberal statesman said (Morley's " Gladstone ", II, 552) :

> " I had a long talk with Delane. We, he and I, are much of one mind in thinking the Turks must go out of Bulgaria, though retaining a titular supremacy if they like. . . . The pamphlet was reviewed by *The Times* in a leading article (September 7) which dismissed as ' portentious nonsense ', good enough only for ' the electors of Bucks ', the idea that it was a British interest ' to maintain unabridged the authority of the Ottoman Government '."

For some time after this—as Gladstone and Abraham Hayward noted—*The Times* reflected its editor's indecision. Sometimes it was anti-Turk, at others anti-Russian. During September, when Delane was taking a short holiday in Scotland, his leader writers, possibly influenced by the Liberal statesman's " pilgrimage of passion ", took a strong anti-Turk bias. Delane hurried back to London when he discovered this and, as Dasent tells us, a series of articles by one of his most accomplished writers showed how cleverly the delicate art of curvature may be practised by executing " a retreat from a false position so skilfully as scarcely to have been perceived until the movement was completed, and the coveted position once attained has ever since been most successfully defended ".

Though Delane, as Sir W. Frazer tells us in

"Disraeli and His Day", found consolation in the reflection that "if there is to be a war, Disraeli will conduct it", he was strongly opposed to intervention, and in article after article *The Times* demonstrated the folly of going to war on behalf of Turkey.

> "She has had her opportunities—only too many," said the paper on October 19, "she has thrown them all away, and it would be criminal folly to expend the smallest amount of English blood or treasure in her support. Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby by their uniform language have given a sufficient pledge against our being betrayed into such an error. They have told us again and again with ever-increasing emphasis that they must consider English interests exclusively. That exclusiveness, if a little questionable previously, must now be maintained without qualification."

Lord Salisbury undertook a special mission to Constantinople, but the resulting Conference was a failure, and in April, 1877, Russia and Turkey went to war.

CHAPTER XII

Delane of The Times *and the men who worked with him.*

IN November, 1877, John Thadeus Delane resigned his position as editor of *The Times*. He was then only sixty years of age, which to octogenarians like Palmerston would seem comparative youth. But he was worn out. He had given his working life to the newspaper, and the thirty-six years he devoted to its interests, had sapped his energies and undermined his constitution.

There is infinity of pathos in the record of those last shadowed years. Before he could persuade himself to sever his connections with the paper, which meant to him bringing his life's work to a close, he fought a long and losing battle with ill-health. Early in 1876 he had a severe attack of bronchitis. On February 17 he wrote to his old friend and colleague, W. H. Russell: "I have been ill for weeks, but this was only the explosion; but it was very violent, and I had time for a very deliberate survey of that undiscovered region from whose bourne no traveller returns."

His friends were solicitous and anxious. His colleagues in *The Times* office begged him to give up night work, but he determined to hold on. The new Viceroy of India tried to persuade him to take a tour in the East and visit Delhi, but Delane felt that he lacked the strength for such a journey. Lord Granville, ever friendly, wrote: "Please remember, that what Shakespeare says about a giant and his strength equally applies to a man with a constitution of iron"

But Delane had not a " constitution of iron ", though he had the will to attempt all that a man so endowed might do.

The work in which he had been immersed for so many years was as the breath of his nostrils. He knew that once he was shut out from the atmosphere of shocks and thrills, which he had absorbed for thirty-six years, life would lose its savour, and he stuck to his task with pathetic eagerness. In November, 1876, Abraham Hayward noted in his diary: " I have dined frequently with Delane of late ; he is very much altered."

Charles Lowe in " The Tale of a *Times* Correspondent " mentions that he saw Delane only once, at an annual dinner given to the editorial staff by Mr Walter at his house in Upper Grosvenor Street. This dinner Delane attended and sat on Mr Walter's right hand. Lowe describes him as having the look of " an extinct volcano—pallid, silent and washed out ".

In April of the following year, when the war tocsin sounded and the Russian forces poured over their frontiers to grapple with the pugnacious Turk, Russell found his old chief clinging obstinately to his post, but obviously weak and ailing. The contrast between this invalid, and the Delane of the Crimean War and the Mutiny, struck his friend with painful intensity. " Ah me ! how broken he is, to be sure," writes Russell, " thin, old, bowed, speaking slowly, with glassy eye. My dear friend," he adds, with a burst of generous emotion, " how I wish I could get him away, but he is incarnate obstinacy."

A few months later Delane found that he could no longer mount his horse. This discovery revealed the unwelcome fact, as nothing else had done, that his days of usefulness were drawing to a close.

In August he went to Homburg, where Sir William

Frazer, who frequently dined with him, found him trying to be cheerful but looking melancholy.

Again he returned to Printing House Square after his holiday in Germany, hoping that the rest would enable him to cope with his accustomed work. But strength had departed, and Russell, who went to see him, wrote on October 22 : " I found Delane in the old chair in the old room, but oh, so changed in everything else : no papers, no piles of proofs, no mass of letters, no editor's work in fact. Well, it was to me a sad interview indeed. I am very fond of him. He was ever my champion, my guide sometimes, my friend always."

Delane's work was done. On November 8 he resigned his office as editor of *The Times*, and retired to his country house at Ascot. In the few months that remained to him he bore suffering without complaint, and faced the unknown,—fearless and undismayed. On November 22, 1879, came the end. The great editor had furnished his last news item.

Delane had none of the modern passion for self-advertisement. Though it was generally known that he was editor of *The Times*, and the greatest of modern journalists, he was to the public a shadowy and elusive figure. The readers of his paper were acutely conscious of the skill, wisdom, and enterprise, with which it was directed, but knew nothing of the hand that guided its fortunes.

Statesmen who came into intimate contact with him admired his independence, trusted his judgement, and knew him for a man of sterling honesty, who never betrayed a confidence. But they had difficulty in understanding his apparent lack of consistency. Clinging themselves to rigid dogmas which were but imperfectly expressed in the measures they supported, they failed to comprehend Delane's creed,—that

policy should be guided by circumstances which were ever changing, and not by abstract principles.

Every one in the society of his time knew Delane, and there was no more familiar figure in Victorian drawing-rooms. In the biography of his uncle, Dasent published extracts from the diary of Delane's engagements, which show that he knew and met every one of social consequence. He rarely missed a dinner-party during the London season, and was a regular visitor at many country houses. He took great interest in sport and was a regular frequenter of race-meetings. King Edward—then Prince of Wales—was often his guest at Ascot Heath House.

Yet in this rushing, whirling life, Delane never forgot or neglected the interests of his paper. Like many great men, he understood the secret of finding time for everything. In a letter Charles Dickens wrote to Macready in 1869 he says: "I dined at Greenwich with Delane; he asked me about you with much interest. He looks as if he had never seen a printing-office, and had never been out of bed after midnight."

Probably the best account of Delane's editorial work is that given by Dr Wace in a pamphlet reprinted from the *Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post*. Dr Wace was for long a leader-writer on *The Times*, and one of Delane's most valued contributors.

> "He maintained an absolute mastery of the whole of the paper in all its details. He 'read', in the Press sense of the word, everything which was to appear in the paper next morning, and edited it so as to ensure that the whole was in harmony and was fitted to produce one clear impression on the public mind. The telegrams, the correspondents' letters, the observations in Parliament, were all kept in view in the leading article, and were themselves kept in due relation to one another. He insisted on being himself responsible for all the news supplied to the public; he was

solely responsible for the interpretation of those news and for the comments upon them. He selected the letters addressed to *The Times* which were to be published; he chose the books which were to be reviewed, and exercised an independent judgement on the reviews which were supplied; he was scrupulous as to the way in which even small matters of social interest were announced and handled. In short, the paper every morning was not a mere collection of pieces of news from all parts of the world, of various opinions, and of more or less valuable essays. It was Mr. Delane's report to the public of the news of the day, interpreted by Mr. Delane's opinions, and directed throughout by Mr. Delane's principles and purposes. This method of editing was infinitely laborious. Even when *The Times* was much less than its present size, the task of 'reading', correcting and controlling from forty to fifty columns of new matter every night was immense. But Mr. Delane never shrank from it, and it certainly gave the paper as a whole a unity, a cohesion, an interest and an effectiveness which can be attained by no other method."

These observations may be amplified. Delane's average day was a long one, but it was full of varied interest. He rose at noon and took a meal which did duty for both breakfast and luncheon. After a ride, in the course of which he met two or three political or social friends, he began the serious work of the day. Mr MacDonald sifted the letters for him, but none were given out until Delane himself had seen them. The reading of the letters was in itself a considerable task, for often there were more than two hundred. Many of these also demanded answers. The replies to the more important were written in the editor's own hand. He also selected from the letters sent in for publication those that were to be published in the paper. This was a task of importance, as the correspondence column of *The Times* has always been one of the most interesting features of the paper. Next followed other duties—

the study of the list of articles in hand, and of the diary list of the day's events to be "covered", as well as the consideration of the space available for all these. This matter of space often presented that problem—which embitters sub-editors—of compressing a quart of good liquor into a pint pot. As Delane humorously complained in a letter to W. H. Russell :

> "There is nothing so entirely wonderful to anybody who has to work a newspaper as the way in which the public ignore all its difficulties. . . . Why, the list last night presented 72 columns, of which 70 were thoroughly good matter, and these had to be reduced to 48 by a process compared with which that little business of Herod's was a joke. At the same time the Duke of Sutherland thinks it very hard I can't put in two columns about his steam plough, and fifty correspondents demand, *each as a matter of justice*, that their letters shall be inserted. All this while *The Spectator* complains every week that the debates are not reported at sufficient length, and MacDonald that we never get in any advertisements."

Delane, though no autocrat, kept the reins in his own hands. Foreign correspondents, reviewers, reporters, and leader-writers all received his instructions, and he watched their work with a jealous eye to the interests of the paper. He was quick to recognize merit, but refused to tolerate slackness or inefficiency. He sought out the best writers in their own subjects, but did not hesitate to revise and amend the scripts of even authors of eminence. Disraeli consulted Delane as to the line he should take in writing the "Life of Lord George Bentinck". The editor freely gave him advice on the subject. But when, as Dasent says, Disraeli wished to nominate his own reviewer for the book, the editor wrote him so stern a letter that, for once, theim perturbable statesman was humbled, and apologized for his "stupid suggestion".

Delane's night work began about 10.30 and continued until 4 or 5 in the morning. This was the heaviest labour of all—proof-reading, settling queries brought him from different departments, revising leading articles, issuing prompt decisions on important matters, scrapping less important news to make room for some momentous item that had just arrived. In his "Days of the Past" Alexander Shaw describes Delane as the most remarkable of all the editors he knew.

> "His instinctive perception," he writes, "his sagacious prescience of the tendency of events was only paralleled by his prompt decision. A message coming in at the last moment, pregnant with issues in foreign politics or home affairs, never found him unready. On one momentous occasion I had expressed my wonder and admiration to his brother-in-law, Mowbray Morris; for although utterly taken by surprise, a few days had justified his action. Morris's answer was: 'It is those flashes of sure intuition that save him: if he were in the habit of hesitating he would often be blundering.'"

The correspondence in the famous quarrel with Henry Reeve—who has already been mentioned in this narrative—illustrates Mr Walter's attitude to his editorial staff, and also shows how jealously guarded was his right to dictate the policy of *The Times*. The facts are as follows. Delane took a holiday in September, 1855, and went abroad, leaving his brother-in-law, Dasent, who was assistant editor, in full charge. Shortly afterwards Reeve, who wrote most of the leading articles on foreign affairs, sent a number of letters to Dasent in which he complained that "trashy" articles were being published in the paper on subjects that required delicate handling, and could only be dealt with properly by himself. This and a further letter, in which he objected very strongly to an article by Robert Lowe on the marriage of the Princess

Royal, were very offensive in tone. He also expressed his intention of sending no further contributions to the paper under Dasent's management. Reeve had evidently no intention of terminating his engagement on the paper. His real purpose was made evident when he began to pull strings, and sent letters to Mr Walter from Lord Clarendon and Charles Greville, suggesting that Reeve was indispensable and that "Dasent should be removed from his post without scruple or hesitation". Reeve was a writer of great power, and few men of his time possessed greater knowledge of foreign affairs. His biographer, strangely enough, thought it insufferable impertinence on the part of an acting editor to claim the right "to discuss foreign questions in accordance with his own opinions rather than in accordance with those of his powerful contributor".

But Mr Walter was not to be intimidated by this "powerful contributor" or that gentleman's still more powerful friends. He promptly put an end to Reeve's engagement as leader-writer.

From Delane's comment we learn not only his view of the affair, but also his opinion of Reeve; and we find also, by his own confession, that sometimes he allowed a licence to a strong-willed contributor like Reeve, that was not in the best interests of the paper.

Writing to Dasent he said:

> "I regret the quarrel, because I hate all quarrels, and perhaps the same cause of difference would not have produced one if I had been concerned—not that my conduct would have been unlike yours, but that Reeve would have abstained from anything offensive to me, though he thought he might bully you with impunity if not success. However, as Palmerston said at Romsey, there are some things more intolerable even than quarrelling, and much as I hate it, I would rather quarrel with a whole parish of Reeves than submit to such insolent assertions as his letters display. He

just wanted to job the paper to his own purposes, to prove to his patrons that he was supreme and to receive their pay in flattery and dinners while he was taking ours in hard cash. I am delighted you found such a cordial supporter in John Walter. His entire 'loyalty' in all such cases is beyond praise. So much for the quarrel itself. As to its results, I don't think the paper will lose more than it will gain by Reeve's withdrawal. Certainly he was a most ready writer, always willing to work, with a great deal of information, and much adroitness in using it; but he was a thorough jobber, and never thought himself repaid for his labour unless he sold it twice over. His dynastic tendencies, or rather those of his patrons, have led us into endless scrapes and contradictions, and constantly made us the advocates of an unpopular and anti-national policy. In losing him no advantage of judgement will be lost, for no man was ever more inclined to take the wrong line, and Chenery will more than supply his place as a writer."

Delane had profound admiration for Robert Lowe's ability as a leader-writer, and made heavy demands on his services, even after that choleric little gentleman entered Parliament and sat in state on the Treasury bench. Mr. Patchett Martin, in his "Life of Lord Sherbrooke", writes of occasions when the editor despatched a special messenger to Lowe's house at midnight. On these occasions Mrs Lowe would leave her bed, and take down an article to her husband's dictation, while the messenger waited.

But Lowe too often dipped his pen in vitriol for Delane's peace of mind, and he had often to hold his brilliant contributor in check and tone down his more violent outbursts. In Dasent's biography there are several quotations from Delane's letters that throw light on this. There was an added touch of bitterness to Lowe's comment whenever the subjects were reform, or French and Prussian affairs.

"I think we shall do ourselves instead of him injury if we continue to abuse him," wrote Delane

to Lowe in reference to the latter's bitter attacks on Louis Napoleon.

After receiving another article by Lowe, Delane writes : " Bob Lowe wrote such an article upon John Bright ! It made my hair stand on end, and I have had to alter it almost beyond recognition."

Another essay of Lowe's so exasperated the editor that he had to resort to decisive action : " Pray do not let Lowe write any more upon any personal question. We must always remember that he is shooting his own arrows from behind our shield, and that it is we who suffer when his shots provoke public indignation."

Leader-writers under Delane had little excuse for going wrong in handling the subjects they were instructed to write upon, for the editor was always ready with advice and suggestion. As Mr Brodrick, the Warden of Merton, says : " He possesses in a rare degree the art of inspiring articles by short and pithy notes, suggesting but not dictating the line to be taken." He was equally happy, as Dr Wace points out, in his verbal instructions. " His influence," says the Dean, " in such conversations was due not so much to his authority as editor, as to the impression he produced of mastery of the whole situation. To talk to him was like talking to the great political or social world itself, and one's mind seemed to move in a larger sphere after a short discussion with him."

The work of the leader-writer was then more responsible because the leading article itself was then more important than it is in this age of the paragraph, and scare head-lines. The reader of the twentieth-century newspaper turns first to what in journalistic slang is known as the " splash " pages, and reads the most important items, to which attention is drawn by headlines. But in Victorian days the practice was different. News and comment were not kept rigorously apart as they are in the best modern newspapers. No attempt

was made to group items according to subject matter. There were no descriptive headings nor any attempt to make the pages interesting or inviting by the use of various types.

The reader of Delane's day who wished to learn something of the latest political sensation or other important event turned at once to the first leading article ; and in the first paragraph of this he found what he wanted. Most of the great " scoops " made by *The Times* were announced in this way. The announcements of the forthcoming Repeal of the Corn Laws ; of the ultimatum to Russia that preceded the Crimean War ; the resignation of one Government and the formation of another, were found only in the leading article.

Herein we notice an important difference between mid-Victorian days and our own in journalistic practice. Millions of newspaper readers to-day rarely if ever read leading articles, yet never miss any news item of significance. In Delane's day they were compelled to read part of the leader in order to gain the latest intelligence, and in doing so were often led into reading further paragraphs, into which were concentrated the knowledge and judgement of the editorial staff, on the topic of the day.

Between them, John Walter the second and Thomas Barnes made *The Times* the world's greatest and most influential newspaper. It was reserved for John Thadeus Delane to raise it to still higher pinnacles of authority and power ; and it may be counted as not the least of his achievements that, despite the absence of those advantageous conditions under which the paper first rose to eminence, he maintained its prestige as long as he remained its editor.

After Delane's death (November 22, 1879) an article by one of his friends appeared in *The Times* in which the curtain was pulled aside a little, and the

public was afforded a view of the great editor at work. From this we learn something of the problems he had to solve, the difficulties he encountered, and the heavy burden of responsibility that for thirty-five years rested on his shoulders, and at last beguiled him of strength and vitality.

> "An editor it has often been said, sometimes not very seriously, must know everything. He must, at least, never be found at fault," says the writer, "and must be always equal to the occasion, as to the personal characteristics, the concerns, the acts and utterances of those who are charged with the government of this great empire. . . . With a large class of critics a small mistake counts as a large one, but everybody is liable to make mistakes, and an editor labours under the additional danger of too readily accepting the word of writers, some of whom will always be too full of ideas to pay needful attention to such matters. . . . It frequently happens that a long night's work has to be thrown away, including many carefully revised columns of printed matter, to make room for an overgrown parliamentary debate, a budget of important despatches, or a speech made in the provinces. Often has it been said at two in the morning that a very good paper has been printed and destroyed to make way for a paper that few will read. . . . The editor of a London daily newspaper is held answerable for every word in forty-eight and sometimes sixty columns. The merest slip of the pen, an epithet too much, a wrong date, a name mis-spelt or a wrong initial before it . . . may prove not only disagreeable but even costly mistakes; but they are among the least to which an editor is liable. . . . The editor must be on the spot till the paper is sent to press, and make decisions on which not only the approval of the British public, but great events, and even great causes, may hang. . . . He must see the world, converse with its foremost or busiest actors, be open to information, and on guard against error."

Delane proved himself more than equal to these exacting responsibilities.

CHAPTER XIII

Henri Stephan de Blowitz and his Exploits.

TO no famous personage or character in modern history has *The Times*, since it was established, devoted so many commemorative articles as to Henri Stephan de Blowitz. The great ones of the world when they passed from the busy scene—Sir Robert Peel, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, Lord Beaconsfield, Charles Darwin, David Livingstone, Charles Dickens and W. E. Gladstone—to mention only a few eminent men—all received their meed of praise, but none such honour as this famous Paris correspondent. At his death on January 18, 1903, an obituary notice of six and a half columns appeared. The centenary of his birth was celebrated in a laudatory article of two and a quarter columns. On the fiftieth anniversay of the war-scare which he exposed in 1875, his praises were loudly sung in a special article. Yet again on April 3, 1927, when a tablet was unveiled at Blowitz in memory of the great man, *The Times* printed a leading article in which a slightly-bored public were reminded of his virtues.

A Bohemian by birth, Blowitz, who was born in 1825, settled in France while still a young man. For many years before the Franco-German war he was a professor of foreign languages and literature, first at Angers and afterwards at Marseilles. But the Franco-German war and the Revolution that followed made shipwreck of his fortunes. M. Thiers, whom he visited on political business in Paris, promised him a consulship, but nothing came of this and he

looked elsewhere for employment. Amongst those he visited was a Mr Frederick Marshall, who introduced him to Laurence Oliphant, then a special correspondent of *The Times*. A week or two later Mr Marshall told Blowitz that Oliphant wanted temporary assistance, as his colleague, Mr Hardman, had just left Paris and would be away for a fortnight, and he would like to engage someone who could at least do a part of Hardman's work. Blowitz accepted the offer without hesitation, and the three men met to talk the matter over. Oliphant carefully explained the duties he wished Blowitz to undertake and asked him to begin on the following day. But Blowitz was in a difficulty which he did not venture to express. Oliphant noticed this and said, " You seem to hesitate. Did you expect me to speak of remuneration ? "

And Blowitz, as he tells us in his " Memoirs ", replied, " Not at all. In this case it is not a question of money ; it is something more embarrassing. Before beginning I should like to see a copy of *The Times*." The two Englishmen looked at Blowitz in amazement. " You do not know *The Times* ? " asked Oliphant.

Blowitz's reply is a delightful piece of unconscious humour. He began by stating that he knew *The Times* very well, and knew quite well what it was, but added, " I have a friend at Marseilles who concludes all his political discussions with the words, ' There can be no question about that—*The Times* says so.' The phrase has become proverbial among his friends. But I have long been living in the somewhat remote Southern departments, and I have never seen a copy of the paper."

Oliphant broke into a roar of delighted laughter, and then went out of the room, and returned a moment later with a twenty-page copy of the paper. Laying the newspaper on the floor he pointed out and explained

its many features to the astonished novice, who was delighted to find employment, even for a time, on a newspaper of such stupendous proportions.

The next day he started on his new duties. He went to Versailles to see M. Thiers, whom he found in an irritable mood and wrathful with all parties in the State. Blowitz did not venture to tell the statesman that he had come to see him as a journalist, and came away seemingly empty-handed. But when he reflected on what Thiers had said in conversation, he drew up a note which he sent to Oliphant. "A genuine hit," said Oliphant delightedly when he read the note. "There is not a word to alter in it. You are a born journalist." Oliphant then sent off Blowitz's first telegram to *The Times*.

The day after his first wire was published, Blowitz again called on M. Thiers, but this time with uneasy forebodings. The President had been waiting for this visit with some impatience, and as soon as Blowitz was admitted he waved aside all formalities and came at once to the point.

"Tell me," he said, "how it comes about that *The Times*, and after it all the French papers, were able to publish a conversation which I had with you when none else was present."

Blowitz saw that the time for concealment was past and told him the truth at once.

Thiers was much surprised at this curious turn, but as he saw that the new correspondent might be useful to him, he became more confidential, and Blowitz came away with material for another telegram to the journal.

Blowitz enjoyed the new life immensely, and carried out his duties with zest. He also showed a sense of news values that astonished and pleased Laurence Oliphant.

Then, just as Blowitz was getting familiar with his

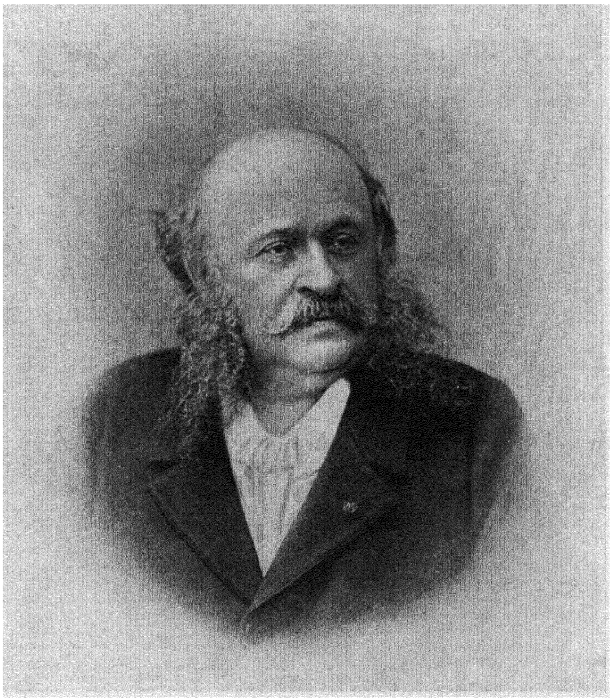
new duties, Mr Hardman returned to Paris. This was a hard blow, for as he said he "had drunk too deeply of the sweets of a life, the very struggles of which were full of delight".

M. Thiers was disappointed when he learned that this temporary appointment had come to an end. He liked Blowitz and had found that his discretion could be relied on. He thought of writing to the editor of *The Times* suggesting that Blowitz should be given a permanent position. But Laurence Oliphant vetoed this proposal, and said that this intervention would be fatal to any chance Blowitz had of becoming a member of the staff.

On the day following Hardman's return Blowitz was just on the point of setting out for Versailles to see M. Thiers and remind him of a consular appointment he had promised, when Oliphant came into his room waving a telegram. Hardman, it seemed, had been recalled, and Oliphant had wired *The Times* that he needed assistance and put forward Blowitz's name. The telegram, he now brought, contained an offer to Blowitz of a permanent appointment.

Blowitz soon revealed the fact that he was a journalist of exceptional talent. In Oliphant's absence he took charge of the non-telegraphic correspondence, and had the satisfaction of seeing his first letter copied into the newspapers of every country. Later—in 1872—he secured a "scoop" for the paper by an interview with the Comte de Chambord which he reported from Antwerp. Shortly after this he was fortunate enough to win the commendation and goodwill of Delane.

In April, 1872, Delane paid a short visit to Paris. Blowitz accompanied him to Versailles, and was present with him at a sitting in the Chamber when M. Thiers delivered a long and important speech. The same night Delane left for London and Blowitz



(*By permission of Edward Arnold*)

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accompanied him to the railway station. At that time there were no satisfactory arrangements for reports of proceedings in the Chamber. Delane expressed his regret at this and added : " If we could have given that speech from one end to the other in to-morrow's paper, what a glorious thing it would have been."

This remark set Blowitz thinking. He had listened attentively to the speech and as he had a marvellous memory, he believed that he could recall it word for word. What then occurred is best told in his own narrative :

> " I went at once to the telegraph office. . . . I obtained writing materials in an empty room. There I put into operation my mnemonic process. Alternately I shut my eyes to see and hear M. Thiers, and then opened them to write out the speech for the wire. I was able to recall and report all his speech, which was, of course, instantaneously transmitted to London. When Mr Delane next morning opened *The Times* in England, he found in it two and a half columns reporting the speech he had heard on the previous afternoon at Versailles."

After the resignation of Laurence Oliphant and the death of Hardman, Blowitz, on February 1, 1875, was appointed *The Times* representative in Paris. A month or two later he accomplished what *The Times* and its editor regarded as one of the greatest feats of journalism—the exposure of the warlike designs of Germany. According to Blowitz and his principal informant, the Duc Decazes French Minister for Foreign Affairs, the military party in Germany, alarmed by France's amazing recovery after the war of 1870–71, and the establishment of its Fourth Battalion, was preparing to overrun France once more. Blowitz was urged to publish a despatch in his paper so that the plot of the German War Lords might be exposed to the world, and a crime against humanity prevented.

Blowitz wrote to the editor, giving him the facts of the situation as he understood them, and asked for permission to write a despatch on the matter for *The Times*.

But Delane was cautious, and demanded proof. He wrote, further, that such a charge against a civilized nation could not be risked by *The Times* unless it was backed up by "absolute and crushing proof".

The Duc Decazes, to whom Blowitz showed the editor's letter, was much perturbed when he read it. However, as he felt that a terrible war could only be averted by publishing the information he possessed, he decided to show Blowitz a secret report he had received on the subject from the French ambassador in Berlin. This report was based on information given to the French ambassador by M. de Radowitz.

Now armed at all points Blowitz again approached his editor and revealed the entire plan of the German military party.

Delane was deeply impressed by his correspondent's letter, but he determined before taking any action to make independent inquiries. He instructed Chenery to make investigations in Paris, and also tested other channels of information. What he learnt convinced him that the French Foreign Secretary had some grounds for his uneasiness, and so on May 11 the Blowitz letter appeared under the title "A French Scare".

Commenting on this the paper said :

> "We print this morning from a French correspondent what would certainly spread uneasiness throughout Europe if the apprehensions which it describes were well founded. We hasten to say, however, that we believe these fears to be due only to the heated fancy of our French neighbours ; but we give them publicity because it would be worse than folly to hide any grave misgivings which may be disturbing

> Paris. . . . We could do no better service to the cause of international peace than by thus stating, in all the crudity of their extravagance, the fears of these Parisian politicians."

But the Parisian politicians, or at least their representatives in the Press, were not in the least grateful to *The Times* for its interference, and as Blowitz himself admits, heaped on the author of the letter " the most incredible insults ". Nor was the German Press any better pleased, for the Berlin journalists naturally resented the imputation on the honour of their country's statesmen.

But the outraged feelings of France's defender were soothed by the following letter which Delane sent him on May 18 :

> " I did not need your very interesting letter of the 14th to appreciate the entire success of that startling public letter by which you alarmed Europe to a sense of its imminent danger. It has been of the greatest public service, and, as I sincerely believe, has done even much to spare the world the horrors of another war. No greater honour than to have aided in averting war is within the reach of the journalist. As to the French and German Press, I hope you have philosophy enough to bear their attacks with contemptuous equanimity."

But what Blowitz forgets to mention in his " Memoirs " is, that he was not the first journalist to draw public attention to the strained relations of the French and German Governments at that time. In " The Tale of a *Times* Correspondent ", Charles Lowe points out (p. 91) that a week before Blowitz's " French Scare " letter appeared in *The Times*, the *Post*, the leading Conservative paper in Berlin, published an article with the heading " *Ist Krieg in Sicht ?* "

The *Post* took an opposite line to Blowitz. Its tone was even more apprehensive, but it was afraid of France and its Government. It distrusted the new

French President, Marshal MacMahon, and pointed to the Fourth Battalion recently created by the National Assembly as evidence of France's warlike intentions. The paper also drew attention to the pastoral letters of the French Bishops, in which it affected to find the threat of a Catholic League against Germany.

Here, then, we have evidence that France and Germany were suffering from an attack of nerves. Each charged the other with pursuing a warlike policy.

Behind these scare articles from London and Berlin we can trace the master-hand of Bismarck. In the following year, when addressing the Reichstag, he explained his handling of the war-scare in homely metaphor. He denied that he had warlike intentions, and pointed out that those who cried "fire" when they see a house burning were not incendiaries and should not be branded as such.

Through the article in the *Post* Bismarck directly raised this outcry; and indirectly through the French Ambassador in Berlin and Duc Decazes he inspired Blowitz's alarmist letter in *The Times*.

The exposure of the war-scare helped to revive the waning influence of *The Times* and won Blowitz international fame. This he increased by a further and greater exploit when, in 1878, at the Berlin Congress, he secured an early copy of the Treaty of Berlin and published it in *The Times*, at the very hour it was being signed by the leading statesmen of Europe.

When Blowitz received instructions to attend this historic Congress he was very dubious about his reception in Germany. He knew that the Chancellor and most of his supporters resented the letter of 1875. He reflected moreover that English diplomatists make it a rule to communicate nothing; that the Russians would distrust the correspondent of an English news-

paper ; and that the representatives of other nations would be afraid to open their mouths.

Wondering if it would not after all be waste of time to attend the Congress in Berlin, he asked Prince Hohenlohe, the German Ambassador in Paris, whether he was not liable to meet with a reception that would render his mission very difficult, if not impossible. The Ambassador was able to reassure him on this point, and told him he would be well received.

But though Blowitz made elaborate preparations for gleaning intelligence at this gathering, he was doubtful of achieving much. As he remarked to a German diplomatist when he was on the point of starting for Berlin : " In Paris the fish talk ; in Berlin the parrots are dumb ".

To help him in his hunt for information Blowitz secured the aid of a young man who was an accomplished linguist with charming manners. He helped this assistant to get a secretaryship with one of the deputies at the Congress. Blowitz told the young man, who was to be present at all the sittings, that he did not wish him to commit the slightest indiscretion or disclose the smallest secret. Nor did he wish him to speak of things about to be done, but that when the Congress adopted articles, he was to communicate them.

Blowitz had a pleasant reception in Berlin ; but the Plenipotentiaries who had assembled for the Congress were as dumb as oysters. Prince Bismarck had warned them that indiscretions must be avoided at all costs, and that the journalists who had invaded Berlin must be prevented from sending their papers anything authentic.

On June 13 the Congress opened. The journalists walking outside in the Wilhelmstrasse were in despairing mood, for they had learned that the Chan-

cellor had made the members take a pledge of absolute silence.

On the evening of that day Blowitz had an interview with his young friend—the only one during the sittings of the Congress. "He brought me," says Blowitz in his "Memoirs", "some summary information of no great importance, but which served me as a starting-point, and enabled me, indeed from the very next day, to give my correspondence a more dignified character and to collect some positive facts."

Blowitz and his assistant agreed that it would be ruinous to their plans to meet again, or to hold any direct intercourse. Nor could they make use of an intermediary. Finally a simple plan of communication was arranged, which Blowitz thus describes :

> "I was staying at the Kaiserhof. Every day he came there for lunch and dinner. There was a rack where hats were hung up. He placed his communications in the lining of his hat, and we exchanged hats on leaving the table. When I was to dine out, I gave him notice overnight, and told him at what hour before or after dinner I should take tea."

This arrangement worked without a hitch, and the short notes Blowitz received enabled him by interviewing the different members of the Congress to piece things together, and so get a fairly complete description of the sittings.

He gives an amusing example of his methods. One night he found in his hat a note that read : "I have not gleaned much. Prince Gortschakoff has made a speech which caused a little amusement, ending with the words : 'Russia is more jealous of gathering the laurels of glory than the olive of peace'."

From this morsel, the wily Blowitz built up an imposing pyramid of information. He called on one

of the Russian Chancellor's greatest friends, and when the conversation turned to the Congress remarked that some members ridiculed the speech just made by Prince Gortschakoff, especially the phrase mentioned in the note.

The diplomatist resented the suggestion, and said, " I hope you are not going to be the echo of these unjust witticisms. The Russian Chancellor's speech was very acute and clever." He then proceeded to justify this contention by repeating some passages of the speech.

Gratified by his success in drawing this gentleman, Blowitz made some further calls, with the result that towards midnight he wired a report of the speech, so accurate that Lord Salisbury, who met Blowitz on the following evening, jocularly remarked, " You forgot a few commas and semi-colons, but with that exception the speech was given quite accurately."

Bismarck was much annoyed when he saw Gortschakoff's speech reported at length in *The Times*. Next day he was seated at the Congress next to a diplomatist from whom he believed Blowitz had got the report of the speech. As he sat down he lifted up the table-cloth and remarked to his neighbour, " I am looking to see if Blowitz is not underneath."

There were thorny problems to solve at this Congress, and it was known that England and Russia were in open disagreement on the Bulgarian question. Stock markets were nervous ; politicians anxious ; there was danger of a rupture. The world was impatiently waiting for news.

" Lord Salisbury is a lath, painted to look like iron ; but that old Jew means business," was Bismarck's gruff estimate of the British representatives. That " the old Jew "—as Bismarck called Lord Beaconsfield —meant business became more apparent when it was known that he was tired of the diplomatic fencing, and

had ordered a special train for Monday, June 24, to take him back to England.

The bluff succeeded, and the Russians came to terms. On Saturday the 22nd, *The Times* published the agreement signed the night before by the representatives of the great Powers.

The tension was relieved. The news given in *The Times* announcement was wired to Berlin and published by the Wolff Agency, and it came as information even to many members of the Congress, for the agreement had only been effected at midnight.

From whom Blowitz got a copy of the Berlin Treaty before it was signed, he does not tell us in his memoirs. Probably the unknown diplomatist was M. Waddington, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, who knew Blowitz very well. In his book Blowitz says that M. Dufaure deputed him, " two days before the formation of his Cabinet to ask him (Waddington) whether he would consent to take over the portfolio of the Foreign Office ".

What Blowitz does tell us of his famous feat is that when on July 5—a week before the Congress closed—he was reading a letter in the hall of the Kaiserhof, a diplomatist who was passing stopped and said, " Have you been getting bad news ? " Blowitz showed him the private letter he was reading from a friend, in which the hope was expressed that the correspondent would succeed in being the first to publish the Treaty.

The diplomatist asked Blowitz how he was going to get a copy of the Treaty. He replied that he thought Bismarck would grant him this favour.

His friend replied, " No, do not ask him till you have seen me again. Walk out to-morrow between one and two in the Wilhelmstrasse, and I will see you."

The next day Blowitz saw his friend again, who said,

" Come for the Treaty the day before the end of the Congress, and I promise that you shall have it."

With these welcome tidings Blowitz was much elated, and he proceeded to make such arrangements as would ensure the speedy transmission of the text of the Treaty by telegraph from Brussels. He also employed his arts in throwing dust in the eyes of his journalistic rivals, who kept a jealous watch on his movements. He requested Prince Hohenlohe to ask Prince Bismarck to give him a copy of the Treaty. On the morning of the 12th—the day before the Congress ended—Blowitz went to his friend and received a copy of the Treaty, minus the last two articles, which had not yet been adopted, and the Preamble.

After this he awaited the answer of Prince Bismarck, which was as follows : " I much regret being unable to give you a favourable reply, but considering the ill-humour of the German Press, the Chancellor is afraid of irritating it too much by giving you the Treaty."

Blowitz affected great anger ; had his luggage packed ; paid his hotel bill, and engaged a compartment in the 12.30 train. He told his many friends that he was not going to wait for the final sitting of the Congress, and announced as his reason for this sudden departure that he was enraged at Prince Bismarck's action in refusing him a copy of the Treaty. In confirmation of this he showed the other journalists the letter he had received. Blowitz also apprised his colleague, Mr Mackenzie Wallace (afterwards Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace), that he was leaving, and begged him to come along with him. Next he called on the French Ambassador in Berlin and induced him to read aloud the Preamble and the last articles. Then he joined his secretary and Mr Mackenzie Wallace at the railway station.

The train started. Mr Wallace and the secretary

had not yet been let into the secret, and were disconcerted at the rebuff which they imagined their chief had received. But once the train had threaded its way through the suburbs of Berlin, Blowitz told his secretary to get out his writing materials. He dictated the Preamble and the last articles. Then he produced the copy of the Treaty.

"Here are needles and thread," said Blowitz to Wallace. "Open your coat; we will sew the Treaty and Preamble inside, so that you will not have to trouble about their safety."

In true conspirator's style Blowitz added further instructions:

> "We are evidently being watched," he said, "I more particularly. At the first large station you will leave this compartment and go into one some way off on the left. I shall pretend not to know you. . . . At Cologne you will take the Brussels train, and you will arrive at five in the morning. You will go straight to the telegraph office."

Things happened as Blowitz arranged. The Treaty of Berlin was telegraphed from Brussels, and published in *The Times* in a late morning edition. It appeared in the original French text along with an English translation.

For many years Blowitz was regarded in the world of journalism as easily first among foreign correspondents. He served under three editors—Delane, Chenery and Buckle. He brought off many brilliant coups, interviewed many famous people; but in being first to publish the Berlin Treaty he accomplished the greatest feat of modern newspaper history.

CHAPTER XIV

Thomas Chenery succeeds Delane as Editor.

TWO years before Delane's death he was succeeded in the editorial chair by Thomas Chenery, who for more than twenty years had been one of the most trusted correspondents of *The Times*. He represented the paper in Constantinople during the Crimean War, and in later days proved himself a competent and distinguished journalist.

But Chenery, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, had other attainments. He was an Oriental scholar, and Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford, also a member of the Old Testament Revision Committee of the Convocation of Canterbury.

When Edmund Yates told Lord Beaconsfield of Chenery's appointment the latter asked, "But is he versed in social diplomacy like Mr Delane?"

He was not. Chenery cared little for society, and the library had much more attraction for him than the drawing-room. He lacked Delane's social gifts—his genius for friendship, his ready tact, his intuitive perception, and that mysterious compound of attributes we term personality.

Nor had he Delane's marvellous range of sympathy and interests. Like Pepys the diarist, Delane was possessed with an insatiable curiosity about anything and everything.

Delane gathered more important news for the paper than any single member of his staff. Most of the sensational coups scored by the paper when under his control were due to his own skill in ferreting out the facts.

Chenery left this part of the work to others. He was at no pains to maintain the old connection between Ministers and their representatives, which had been such a source of strength to *The Times* in bygone days, and he had the scholar's scorn for the wiles and the greed of the average politician.

Nor could he gauge like his predecessor the varying gusts and eddies of public sentiment, and subtle changes in opinion, that enable an editor skilled in such interpretation, to appear to lead when he is really following in the wake of popular sentiment.

It was Chenery's misfortune, that when he accepted the editorship of *The Times*, the days of the paper's ascendency were gone. Where in old days there were half a dozen puny rivals, there were now, in town and country, a hundred powerful competitors. Nor was there any monopoly of news. Indeed, conditions were so altered that even Delane in his prime could not have made headway against them. Some of the younger rivals of *The Times* like *The Daily Telegraph* had many more readers than the older paper, while *The Standard*, which was the recognized Conservative organ, possessed as great if not greater political influence.

Under Chenery *The Times* gave a consistent and undiscriminating support to the Conservative party. Some of the leader writers of Liberal views, like Leonard Courtney, sought and found more congenial employment.

When Mr Gladstone again took office after the General Election of 1880, Abraham Hayward, who was on terms of intimate friendship with Chenery, assumed the mantle that had graced the shoulders of Greville in a former era, and tried to form an alliance between the new Government and *The Times*. Writing on April 24, 1880, Hayward says : " It was a great point to secure *The Times*, so after being told (by Gladstone) the exact state of affairs, I went off in

the middle of the night to *The Times* office, where I saw Chenery the editor . . . and the first leading article of to-day was the result."

But Hayward found that he had little cause to congratulate himself on his diplomacy. Chenery had little sympathy with Gladstone's programme. The new Government's ill-starred interference in Egyptian affairs gained the support of his paper, which also approved of the stern measures for repressing disturbance in Ireland, which W. J. Forster applied after the Phœnix Park outrages.

Nor was there any pronounced change in the policy of *The Times* when on February 11, 1884, Chenery died, and the editorship came into the hands of Mr George Earle Buckle.

Speaking of Chenery and his great predecessor, as well as other members of the staff, at a dinner many years afterwards, Mr Buckle said :

> "The greatest of all the servants of the paper I cannot recall. It is my profound regret never to have seen Delane, only to have joined the paper after his death, though but six years intervene between his resignation and my appointment. But I think of Chenery, a man of great learning, sound judgement, and a wide knowledge of foreign affairs, of a warm heart under what, in his last days when his health was declining, was an irritable exterior, set down too late in life to a work in which he would otherwise have brightly shone, and very unfairly attacked because he was compared with the incomparable Delane."

Mr Buckle, like Delane, took command when he was yet a young man. He was twenty-nine, and his Assistant Editor, Mr John Brainerd Capper, who was appointed at the same time, a year younger.

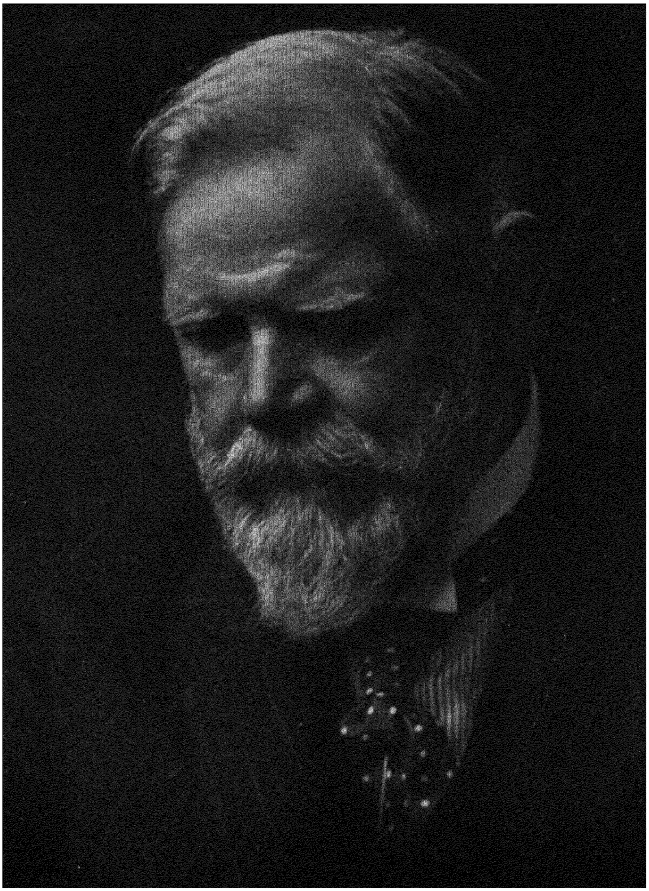
In the first years of Mr Buckle's editorship the Irish problem dominated all other political issues. In 1885 the Gladstone Government was defeated through a temporary alliance of the Irish members with the

Conservative party, and for the next few months a stop-gap Conservative Government was kept in office by Parnell and his followers.

In the General Election that followed the Liberals had a majority of 86 over the Conservatives, but with his 85 supporters Mr Parnell was master of the situation. On February 1, 1886, Mr Gladstone was again Prime Minister, pledged to bring in a measure of Irish Home Rule.

When this Bill was brought in on April 8, 1886, it caused turmoil such as has rarely been known in political history. The Liberal party was rent in twain. Lord Hartington, Sir Henry James, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr Trevelyan and Mr Goschen left the Government and for the rest of their political lives were identified with the Unionist party ; and, strangest spectacle of all, John Bright, the uncompromising enemy of Toryism, cast off for ever his old political allegiance and henceforth voted with those, who through his long career he had uncompromisingly opposed. Religious as well as political issues were raised. The Nonconformists, the backbone of the Liberal party, were alarmed by Mr Gladstone's Bill, and when it was seen that influential leaders of religious thought like Mr Spurgeon and Dr Allon were strongly opposed to the proposal of granting Home Rule to Ireland, political observers knew that Mr Gladstone's Bill was doomed.

The Irish question affected the fortunes and policy of many newspapers. In London *The Times* led the opposition to Home Rule, while *The Daily Telegraph*, which had long given a vague and uncertain support to the Liberals, now took the same line as its rival. In the provinces, *The Scotsman*, *The Glasgow Herald*, and *The Birmingham Daily Post*, which had hitherto staunchly supported Mr Gladstone, were bitter opponents of his Irish policy.



Photograph : Beresford

MR. G. E. BUCKLE

[*face p.* 284

But Mr Gladstone was not discouraged by his defeat. Experience had taught him that there is no finality in politics ; and he set upon the task of converting Britain to Home Rule with amazing confidence and enthusiasm.

In the long and embittered controversy that followed *The Times* took a leading part.

In March, 1887, it began the publication of a series of articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime". In these articles it was contended that Parnell was conducting a movement, the objects of which were revolutionary ; and that its main purpose was the overthrow of British authority in Ireland.

These powerfully written articles, which were well supported by evidence, excited much attention, and exercised no little influence.

But on April 18, 1887, one of the articles of this series included a facsimile reproduction of a letter, purporting to bear Parnell's signature. The body of the letter was in another handwriting. The letter was dated May 15, 1882, and referred to the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke, which took place nine days before the letter was supposed to have been written. The letter is as follows :

"DEAR SIR,—

I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him, and all others concerned, that though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to the House of Commons.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES S. PARNELL."

Needless to say, the publication of this letter created a sensation. The name of Parnell was a household word in two continents, and millions of people of Irish stock regarded him with a devotion that bordered on veneration. He was the spiritual descendent of Daniel O'Connell ; the Moses who was to lead his people to the promised land ; the ally of Gladstone and the Liberal party.

The Irish people bitterly resented the accusation of *The Times*. The Liberals were anxious and perturbed ; the Tories, frankly delighted.

The subject was raised in Parliament. Parnell denied all knowledge of the letter in the most emphatic terms, and members on the Government benches listened to his denial with an air of polite scepticism.

The Unionists were exultant at their good fortune. Here it was shown, in what John Morley called " the most serious, the most powerful, the most responsible newspaper in the world—greatest in resources, in authority, in universal renown "—that their inveterate enemy had written to a criminal associate condoning murder. Here was political ammunition that should bring hundreds of thousands of voters round their banners. They made haste to use it.

When the letter appeared in *The Times* a by-election was going on at Taunton. The Unionists at once got out a circular containing a copy of the facsimile letter, and this was sent to every elector.

The principal newspapers in the United States reproduced it, and the Unionist party performed the same kindly office by poster and pamphlet.

Parnell wished to bring an action against *The Times*, but some of his friends—among them John Morley—dissuaded him from doing this. The Irish members wished to have the charges investigated by a committee of the House of Commons, but the Government would not hear of this, and pointed

out that Parnell should seek his remedy in the Law Courts.

Again, after a long interval, Parnell demanded a Select Committee of the House to investigate the charges, and again the Government refused, for, as Mr St John Ervine says in his book "Parnell", Lord Salisbury's Government "had no belief in the infallibility of the Pope, but they had a profound belief in the infallibility of *The Times*; and they rendered unto the Walters, who owned it, that respect which they would not render unto the Vicar of Christ".

But at last the Government so far yielded to Parnell's wishes as to agree to appoint a commission consisting of judges, to inquire into the allegations and charges made against Members of Parliament by *The Times*. In other words, the judges were given a roving commission to inquire into any or every outrage mentioned in the articles on "Parnellism and Crime".

The sittings of the Commission began on September 17, 1888, and the presiding judges were Mr Justice Hannen, Mr Justice Day and Mr Justice Smith. In the course of this interminable inquiry, which did not end until November 22, 1889, four hundred and fifty witnesses were examined. But for the first few weeks little or no public interest was taken in its proceedings. But on February 14, 1889, when the Commission held its fiftieth session, the particular business which had led to its establishment was reached, and evidence was given about the facsimile letter.

On April 18, 1887, when the facsimile letter was published in *The Times*, there appeared in the first editorial an incisive comment on this disclosure, in which the leader-writer said:

"We possess and have had in our custody for some time documentary evidence which has a most serious bearing

on the Parnellite conspiracy, and which, after a most careful and minute scrutiny, is, we are quite satisfied, authentic. We produce one document in facsimile to-day, by a process the accuracy of which cannot be impugned, and we invite Mr. Parnell to explain how his signature has become attached to such a letter."

Yet in spite of these brave words about "a most careful and minute scrutiny", it was admitted in evidence before the Parnell Commission by no less a person than Mr Soames, the solicitor for *The Times*, that when his clients published the facsimile letter they had no evidence that could stand examination at a legal inquiry that the letter was genuine.

By a searching cross-examination of two or three *Times* witnesses, Parnell's counsel, Sir Charles Russell, and Mr Asquith, elicited some curious facts about the facsimile letters. It seems they had been unearthed by a Mr E. Caulfield Houston, formerly a reporter of the *Dublin Daily Express*, but afterwards secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union. Houston, in his anxiety to prove himself a zealous and useful servant to his new employers was indefatigable in digging out information, the publication of which was likely to throw discredit on the Nationalist leaders. Among those to whom he appealed for assistance was a Mr Richard Pigott. Pigott was a man of shady reputation, who at one time had owned three journals, which he sold to the Nationalist party. He earned a precarious living in dubious ways, and was regarded by the people of Dublin as a man who would stoop to any rascality in order to raise money. He professed sympathy with the Loyalists, and had figured as an extremist. But he was a most accommodating man, and ready at any time to serve either party, so long as he was well paid for his work. Houston must have known that he was thoroughly untrustworthy. Nevertheless, he sought Pigott out, and Pigott, always willing to oblige, gave

him information, which he embodied in a pamphlet entitled "Parnellism Unmasked".

The good people of Ulster were much edified by this sensational screed, and encouraged by its success Houston, in the autumn of 1885, went again to see Pigott. To Pigott, the zealous secretary came as a ministering angel, for he was then in the throes of a financial crisis, and knew not how or where to raise money. Houston asked him if he could find evidence of Parnell's association with the Invincibles and other extremists. Pigott explained that he could do so if he could visit France and America. A bargain was quickly concluded, and Houston agreed to pay Pigott a guinea a day, in addition to hotel and travelling expenses, as well as a considerable sum for any incriminating letter or other document that might be unearthed.

Pigott pursued his investigations in a leisurely way. The old days of stress and poverty were over for the present; and he enjoyed pleasant trips to the United States, Switzerland, and France, at the expense of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union.

But as weeks lengthened into months without any sign of progress, Pigott's paymasters became impatient and anxious. They wished to see some tangible evidence of Parnell's guilty associations, and Houston became insistent and demanded his money's worth.

At last in March, 1886, Pigott announced, with an air of mystery appropriate to the occasion, that some incriminating documents, which had been left or mislaid by some of the extremists, were at that moment to be found in a black bag at a certain address in Paris. Of these documents Pigott had made copies. They were eleven in number. Six of them were letters signed by Patrick Egan, the treasurer of the Irish Land League. The other five were letters signed by Parnell.

Armed with these letters, which with unquestioning faith he accepted as genuine, the practical Houston at once rushed off to London in order to sell them. But buyers were shy. He showed them to Mr G. E. Buckle, the Editor of *The Times*, and Mr W. T. Stead of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, but neither of these gentlemen were responsive.

So far Pigott had only supplied copies of the letters. His employers now demanded the originals. At Pigott's suggestion, Houston and Dr Maguire, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin, journeyed to Paris and put up at the Hôtel des Deux Mondes. Here they were visited by Pigott, who brought with him the original letters. He told Houston and the Professor that two of the extremists were waiting downstairs, and that those men demanded prompt payment of the money promised, or the immediate return of the letters. The flurried Professor and the excited secretary found themselves suddenly whirled into a scene of stage melodrama ! Here were letters worth many times their weight in gold. Downstairs were two hungry and desperate men impatiently waiting for money !

The Professor and the secretary retired to an inner room to examine their prospective purchase, and were soon agreed that the letters were worth the heavy price demanded. Dr Maguire lent Houston £850 in Bank of England notes to pay for them. Houston returned to Pigott and handed him £605. Of this sum £500 was for the men downstairs, and £105 for Pigott himself. But as no one ever saw the mysterious Brown and Murphy, and as, in fact Dr Maguire and Houston did not even ask to see them, it may be assumed that the whole sum went into Pigott's own pocket.

Houston again tried to turn his discoveries to account. After a rebuff by Lord Hartington, he called on Mr Buckle of *The Times*, who declined to

have any dealings with the letters. But the manager of the paper was more accommodating. It could be shown in a hundred instances that Mr John Cameron Macdonald was a shrewd, clear-sighted man of business. He had, moreover, a full share of that caution that is attributed to men of his race. But here he was blinded by party prejudice, and never for a moment doubted that the letters attributed to Parnell were genuine documents. Without asking questions he bought the letters, and so took the first step in that sequence of events that brought his paper to the brink of ruin, and clouded his remaining days with unavailing grief.

In the witness-box, Macdonald gave a pitiable exhibition. Parnell's junior counsel, young Mr Asquith, meditatively surveyed the manager of *The Times*, and in quiet, suave tones put a succession of probing questions that at first bewildered Macdonald, and finally drew from him a humiliating confession of folly and rashness. Spectators in court listened in amazement when he admitted that he knew little of Houston personally, yet had accepted his word without question ; that he had not asked Houston where or from whom he had got the letters, or in what way they had come into his hands. Houston had produced the letters ; they were then shown to Mr Soames and to Mr Inglis, a handwriting expert. As these gentlemen raised no objection he bought them and paid Houston £1,780, so that he could spread the tale of Parnell's infamy to the world !

This cross-examination established Asquith's reputation ; poor Macdonald's sank to zero.

So far, though many questions had been asked and answered, the kernel of the problem had not been touched. *The Times* got the letters from Houston ; Houston bought them from Pigott ; but how and where had Pigott acquired them ? These were ques-

tions that Pigott alone could answer ; and the world was on tiptoe of expectation to hear what he would say. The evidence of Soames, Houston and Macdonald had whetted the public appetite for more, and the air of mystery that surrounded Pigott's proceedings deepened and intensified the interest. The most casual spectators realized that here was the culminating point of the drama which was being played before the members of the Commission, and Parnell's fate depended on the evidence Pigott might offer. If he could show that the letters were genuine, the Irish leader would be ruined ; if they turned out to be forgeries, as the Irish members asserted, then *The Times* case would be irretrievably shattered.

No one was more acutely conscious of this than Sir Charles Russell, whose duty it was to cross-examine this important witness. "About a week before Pigott was called", says Mr R. Barry O'Brien in his "Life of Lord Russell of Killowen", "Russell grew restless and irritable. . . . His expression was grave, thoughtful, anxious ; and his face and manner showed that the strain upon him was intense."

This long awaited witness tendered his evidence on Wednesday, February 20. His appearance created a stir in Court. According to the newspapers of the day he appeared to be a most respectable man, and looked, as Mr Barry O'Brien says, "well and pugnacious". His evidence in chief, which ended at lunch time on the following day, was not illuminating. On the subject of the letters he told the Court that the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union had employed him to make a search for documents which would prove Parnell's association with criminals. He also testified that in Paris he had met an agent of the Clan-na-Gael, who had no objection to injure Parnell for a "valuable consideration", and from him he had bought the facsimile and other letters.

After lunch on Thursday Sir Charles Russell rose to cross-examine Pigott. At the advocate's first words, the Court was hushed into silence, and the people in the crowded room listened with strained attention to the encounter that followed.

Russell began in an unusual way. Turning to the witness with an air of great politeness, he said : " Mr Pigott, would you be good enough, with my Lord's permission, to write some words on that sheet of paper for me ? Perhaps you will sit down in order to do so ? " A sheet of paper was passed over to the witness.

Pigott had not expected this kind of opening, and his expression showed that he was surprised, and probably expected a trap. Russell tried to reassure him by suggesting again that he should sit down. " Oh, no thanks," replied Pigott.

Then the President intervened and said, " Well, but I think it is better that you should sit down. Here is a table upon which you can write in the ordinary way—the course you always pursue."

Pigott then wrote a number of words at counsel's dictation. Amongst these were the names " Patrick Egan " and " P. Egan ". These names Sir Charles uttered with emphasis as though he attached peculiar significance to them. Then, in an airy tone, he continued, " There is one word I have forgotten. Lower down, please, leaving spaces, write the word ' hesitancy '—with a small ' h '."

When Pigott had written the last word, counsel asked him to hand back the sheet of paper. Pigott was about to blot the writing when Russell stopped him with the sharp command, " Don't blot it, please."

Believing, after closely examining the handwriting, that Pigott had triumphantly passed Russell's test, Sir Richard Webster, the Attorney-General, suggested to the judges that the handwriting should be photo-

graphed. He little guessed that Pigott had already fallen into a trap that Sir Charles had set for him, and strengthened Russell's conviction that the witness had himself forged the letters. For one of the letters bearing Parnell's signature, bought by *The Times*, ran as follows :

January 9, 1882.

"DEAR E.—

What are these fellows waiting for? This inaction is inexcusable ; our best men are in prison, and nothing is being done. Let there be an end to this hesitancy. Prompt action is called for. You undertook to make it hot for old Forster & Co. Let us have some evidence of your power to do so. My health is good, thanks.

Yours ever truly,

CHARLES S. PARNELL."

In this letter the word " hesitancy " is spelt " hesi*te*ncy ". It was also incorrectly spelt " hesi*te*ncy " in the sheet Pigott handed back to Russell. Here, then, was a definite clue. But Russell did not then press his advantage ; as he did not wish to come to grips with the witness until he had gained more information from him.

Questioning Pigott about the Parnell letter counsel asked, " You were aware of the intended publication of the correspondence ? " Pigott said he knew nothing about it.

Russell repeated the question in various forms, but Pigott stoutly denied that he knew anything about the publication of the incriminatory letters in *The Times*.

" Were you not aware ", asked counsel impressively, " that there were grave charges to be made against Mr Parnell, and the leading members of the Land League ? "

Pigott denied that he knew anything about the articles, or the charges embodied in them, until they

began to appear. As Russell persisted in questioning him on the matter Pigott's tone became aggressive and even defiant.

"Do you swear that?" asked counsel.

"I do," replied the witness with emphasis.

"Very good," retorted counsel. "There is no mistake about that."

Then Russell took a letter from a bundle of papers and handed it to Pigott and asked in a matter-of-fact tone: "Is that your letter? Do not trouble to read it; tell me if it is your letter."

Pigott admitted that it was.

Sir Charles, turning to the judges, explained that the letter he had shown Pigott was written at Anderton's Hotel, and addressed to Archbishop Walsh. It was dated March 4, three days before the appearance of the first of the articles on "Parnellism and Crime".

He then read the letter, which was headed "Private and Confidential".

"MY LORD,—

The importance of the matter about which I write will doubtless excuse this intrusion on your Grace's attention. Briefly, I wish to say that I have been made aware of the details of certain proceedings that are in preparation with the object of destroying the influence of the Parnellite party in Parliament."

Stopping the reading of the letter at this point, Russell turned to Pigott and asked: "What were the certain proceedings that were in preparation?" Pigott could not recollect. After much pressing he was confident that the expression did not refer to the incriminatory letters, but to the forthcoming articles in *The Times*.

"I thought you told us", said Sir Charles, "you did not know anything about the forthcoming articles?"

Pigott, now quite confused, replied: "Yes, I did. I

find now I am mistaken—that I must have heard something about them."

After cautioning the witness against making the same mistake again, Russell continued the reading of Pigott's letter to Archbishop Walsh :

> " I cannot enter more fully into details than to state that the proceedings referred to consist in the publication of certain statements purporting to prove the complicity of Mr. Parnell himself, and some of his supporters, with murders and outrages in Ireland, to be followed in all probability by the institution of criminal proceedings against these parties by the Government."

Russell questioned Pigott closely about this extract from his letter, but received only vague and unsatisfactory answers. Pigott said he had no idea who gave him this information—he could not swear that the letter did not refer to the incriminatory letters—yet he might have had them in his mind when he wrote.

Russell again continued the reading of Pigott's letter : " Your Grace may be assured that I speak with full knowledge, and am in a position to prove, beyond all doubt and question, the truth of what I say."

" Was that true ? "

" It could hardly be true," replied Pigott.

" Then did you write that which was false ? "

" I suppose it was in order to give strength to what I said," replied the witness lamely.

" You believe these letters to be genuine ? "

" I do."

" And did at this time ? "

" Yes."

Russell turned to Pigott's letter again and read : " And I will further assure your Grace that I am also able to point out how these designs may be successfully combated and finally defeated."

" How," asked counsel, " if these documents were genuine documents, and you believed them to be

such, how were you able to assure His Grace that you were able to point out how the design might be successfully combated and finally defeated ? "

To this and many further questions on the point Pigott could furnish no satisfactory reply. " My memory is really a blank on the circumstance "— " I say the thing has completely faded out of my mind "—were examples of his answers when pressed to disclose the means by which the designs against the Nationalist leaders might be combated and defeated.

" May I take it then ", said Russell, speaking with emphasis, " your answer to my Lords is that you cannot give any explanation ? "

" I really cannot absolutely."

Again Russell read an extract from Pigott's letter : " I assure your Grace that I have no other motive except to respectfully suggest that your Grace would communicate the substance to some one or other of the parties concerned, to whom I could furnish details, exhibit proofs, and suggest how the coming blow may be effectively met."

" What do you say to that, Mr. Pigott ? " asked Russell.

" I have nothing to say except that I do not recollect anything about it absolutely."

" What was the coming blow ? "

" I suppose the coming publication."

" How was it to be effectively met ? "

" I have not the slightest idea."

" Assuming the letters to be genuine, does it not even now occur to your mind how it could be effectively met ? "

Pigott shook his head hopelessly and replied, " No." And so the pitiless cross-examination went on. Other letters of Pigott's were read, and the poor wretch when invited to explain them tried to get himself out of difficulties either by inventing new

falsehoods, or stating that he had quite forgotten the letters, and that his mind was a blank on the subject.

He admitted that he paid for the letters ; he stated emphatically that they were genuine ; and agreed that they gravely implicated the parties from whom they were supposed to come. He believed that the charges against Parnell and Egan were true. Having secured these admissions Russell confronted him with a passage from one of his letters to Archbishop Walsh, which was as follows :

> " I need hardly add that did I consider the parties guilty of the things charged against them, I should not dream of suggesting that your Grace should take part in an effort to shield them ; I only wish to impress on your Grace that the evidence is apparently convincing, and would probably be sufficient to secure conviction if submitted to an English jury."

Then when Russell invited him to reconcile the differences between his former admissions and the statements in this letter he showed plainly in his demeanour that he was a broken and beaten man. He gave confused and incoherent answers.

But Russell gave him no quarter, and pricked him remorselessly with reminders of his treachery to friend and foe. His deceit and rascality were laid bare to the world in the begging letters he had written which were now read out in court. He had appealed to W E Forster and asked for a large sum of money as a reward for his services to the Crown ; and had also approached the other side asking for money for the work he had done for the Nationalist cause.

Pigott's attention was called to these letters, as also to the curious fact that the word " hesitancy " was spelt hesit*e*ncy in one of the incriminatory letters as well

as in the sheet of words that he had written at Counsel's dictation.

When the court adjourned on Friday, February 22, until the following Tuesday, Pigott had shed his last shred of reputation, and every one was convinced that the case of *The Times* was smashed.

On Tuesday morning, February 26, a great crowd gathered in court to witness the final act in this exciting drama. The scene was set. Judges and Counsel were in their places, but Pigott was not present. His name was called but there was no response. The usher made inquiries from the court attendants, and for a time there were whispered consultations. "Where is the witness?" asked Russell, but the Attorney-General could give no information. Sir Charles Russell then said, "If there is any delay in his appearance I ask your Lordship to issue a warrant for his apprehension, and to issue it immediately." Next day the warrant was issued.

The comedy now turned to tragedy. On Saturday evening, the day after his last appearance before the Commission, Pigott called at the house of Mr Henry Labouchere to discuss the case with him. Labouchere knew that he was guilty of forgery for he had already admitted it in Parnell's presence, but refused to put his statement in writing. He now expressed his willingness to do so. On hearing this Labouchere sent a message to George Augustus Sala, the famous journalist, who was his neighbour, asking him to come round and witness Pigott's confession. Labouchere took down the statement. From Sala's account of the transaction, which is given in the "Life of George Augustus Sala", we learn that Pigott seemed to regard the crime he had committed as of little consequence, and dictated his confession with a cool detached air.

In the confession Pigott said :

"The circumstances connected with the obtaining of the letters as I gave in evidence are not true. No one save myself was concerned in the transaction. I told Mr Houston that I had discovered the letters in Paris, but I grieve to have to confess that I simply fabricated them, using genuine letters of Messrs. Parnell and Egan in copying certain words, phrases, and general character of the handwriting. I traced some words and phrases by putting the genuine letters against the window and placing the sheets on which I wrote, over it. . . . Some of the signatures I traced in this manner, and some I wrote. I then wrote to Mr Houston, telling him to come to Paris for the documents. I told him that they had been placed in a black bag with some old accounts, scraps of paper, and old newspapers. On his arrival I produced to him the letters, accounts and scraps of paper. After a brief inspection he handed me a cheque for £500, the price I had told him I had agreed to pay for them. At the same time he gave me £105 in bank-notes as my own commission."

Two days after signing this confession Pigott eluded his police guards and fled to the Continent. On March 5 police officers visited the hotel in Madrid where he was staying, armed with a warrant for his arrest, on the charge of perjury. To the officers who showed him the warrant he said, "Wait until I go to my room for some things that I want." As the policemen waited, there came to them the report of a pistol-shot from an upper room. They rushed upstairs to Pigott's room, where they found him stretched on the floor, with a bullet wound through his brain.

The letters published by *The Times* were withdrawn. "Parnellism and Crime", the Parnell Commission, and the action brought subsequently by the Irish leader against the paper cost *The Times* an immense sum of money. But serious as was this financial loss, it was completely overshadowed by the loss of influ-

ence and authority the paper suffered. For the first time old readers and subscribers realized that not only was their favourite organ fallible, but that those who guided its fortunes displayed astounding recklessness, and a lack of all sense of responsibility in this extraordinary affair. As Mr St John Ervine says in "Parnell":

> "When the forgery was finally exposed, the people of England were astounded to discover that *The Times* had purchased the letters with as little care or caution as a child purchases candy. If Parnell himself had arranged a plan to increase his reputation, he could not have devised accomplices more empty of intelligence and general gumption than was displayed by the directors of *The Times* over the Pigott letters."

Here was a great journal, the leading newspaper in Great Britain, attempting to destroy the reputation of a public man of distinction by levelling serious charges against him, which they afterwards admitted were not supported by a shred of evidence. Such cynical levity shocked the British public, and *The Times*, which had sunk to the level of a rabid party organ, became for a time the sport of the wits, and an object of contempt to the general public.

CHAPTER XV

Mr Moberly Bell becomes Manager of The Times—*The financial position of the paper—The Foreign Department of* The Times—*Subsidiary publications—The "Encyclopædia Britannica"—The Times Book Club—War with the publishers—Libel action against* The Times.

MR CAMERON MACDONALD never recovered from the strain and humiliation of the Parnell Commission. The shock of the disclosure that the Parnell letters were stupid forgeries, and the loss in cash and credit which the disclosure cost the paper, plunged him into inconsolable grief and melancholy. He was so distraught that he was unable to attend to the ordinary routine of the office. He went for a holiday to his native Highlands in search of renewed health and spirits, but he carried his cares with him, and he returned to London a shadow of his former self. At the end of the year 1889 he died.

In March, 1890, Mr Moberly Bell was appointed manager and with his advent began a new era in the history of *The Times*. Mr Bell was born in Alexandria. When he took up his duties in Printing House Square he was 43 years of age, but for several years he had been the correspondent of the paper in Egypt. He had also been engaged in commerce, and the experience of business thus gained, he turned to excellent use when he took up his new duties.

But as E. H. C. Moberly Bell explains in the loyal but discriminating life of her father ("The Life and Letters of C. F. Moberly Bell") Mr Bell's position at first was nominally that of assistant to Mr Arthur Walter, the son of the chief proprietor. Mr Arthur was jealous of his titular rights and at first

would concede no authority to his new assistant, but most, if not all of the work soon fell on Bell's shoulders. This ill-defined position in which the new manager had to walk delicately, and often refrain from taking action where he saw the need for it, for a time chilled his spirit, and made it difficult to establish proper relations with the staff.

But as Mr Walter in time left the work almost entirely in his assistant's hands, and confined his own efforts to signing cheques and writing an occasional letter, Mr Bell was soon recognized as the real manager, and his hands were freed.

The task he had to face was one of appalling difficulty. Even a financial wizard, with a life-long experience of the managerial working of a great newspaper, would have been daunted by the intricate and baffling problems that faced the new manager. Moberly Bell was one of the most energetic workers the writer has ever encountered. He was courageous and self-reliant, and his incorrigible optimism in the face of a sea of troubles amazed and encouraged those who worked with him. He faced every difficulty squarely. He was inclined sometimes to bluster and bully ; he formed hasty and mistaken judgements ; but he was the soul of generosity, and the most loyal of friends. Those who criticized him so freely should remember that without notice or preparation he was weighted with tremendous responsibilities, and confronted with problems of unparalleled difficulty, which he had to settle single-handed. To those who knew, the wonder is, not that he sometimes blundered, but that he was not oftener at fault.

To straighten the finances of *The Times* was the first of the problems to which Moberly Bell addressed himself. How serious was the position may be judged from the following statement, which in 1908 he drew up for the consideration of the partners :

"When I came to England early in 1890 to assume my present office, I found *The Times* insolvent. The entire assets (exclusive of goodwill) were £61,000, and the liabilities were at least £102,000—we could not in fact have paid 12 shillings in the £, and while the revenue was falling, and had for fifteen years been falling at the rate of £9,000 a year, there was a growing tendency to increase the size of the paper and to increase the relative expenditure, and there was no capital whatever from which we could pay our debts or expend in developing the resources of the business."

Here was a job complicated enough for any man to tackle who was not a genius in finance, but it was really more tangled than the statement just quoted indicates.

From 1785 onwards, when *The Daily Universal Register*, which afterwards became *The Times*, was first published, the printing business at Printing House Square and the newspaper had been separate concerns financially ; *The Times* for several years after it was established being regarded as subsidiary to the printing concern. John Walter the second, who did so much to make *The Times* prosperous, was exceedingly generous and from time to time made presents of shares or half-shares in *The Times* to his friends or principal employees. The shares were further subdivided by inheritance, so that when John Walter the third died *The Times* was still a private partnership of which the Walters held half the interest, while the other half belonged to about one hundred other partners. The printing business, however, together with the Printing House Square property, and the machinery, furniture and fixtures it contained, belonged to Mr Arthur Walter and his half-brother Mr Godfrey.

One consequence of these divided interests was that *The Times* was printed under a contract by the Walter

Press. This contract had been made many years before. By its terms Moberly Bell's hands were tied, and it was therefore impossible to effect any reduction in the cost of paper or printing.

Another factor, much more alarming, was the heavy fall in the circulation of the paper. When Delane laid down the reins the daily sales of the paper were 65,000. They had now fallen to 40,000. This serious drop in circulation had already affected the advertising revenue, and might lessen it more in the future, for advertisers are keen business men, and quick to notice any change in the "pulling" power of a newspaper.

Crippled as his paper was for want of capital, it must have been exasperating for Moberly Bell to see rivals like *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Morning Post* consolidating the value of their properties by spending immense sums of money in new enterprises.

Until 1870 and for some years afterwards *The Times* had enjoyed a practical monopoly of *small want* advertisements, and so great was the influence of the journal in those days, that when clients brought in their announcements, the officials in the advertisement office assumed a lofty and independent air, and though they consented to receive the advertisements, and the money in payment for them, they would make no promise as to when these announcements would appear in print.

The public naturally did not like this treatment, and when *The Daily Telegraph* not only offered a guaranteed date of publication, but also opened a West End office for the convenience of customers, advertisers freely offered this younger rival their patronage.

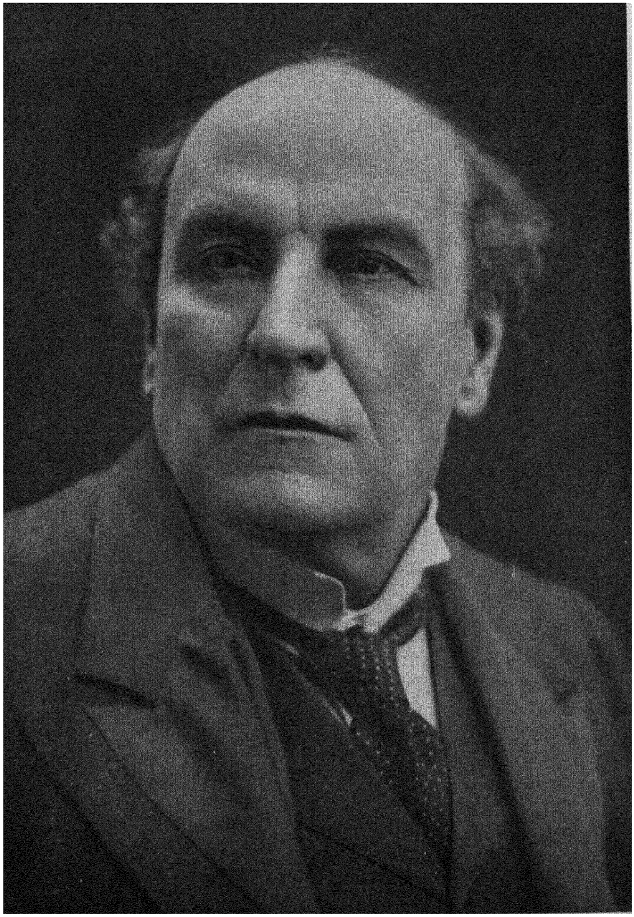
Moberly Bell entered on his gigantic task with gusto. There were immense arrears of correspondence to deal with, and he dealt with them,—not in the con-

cise terms of a business man, but in the more leisurely style of a person of literary tastes, accustomed to dealing with a subject in all its bearings. For he was before all else a man of letters, and owed it to his literary conscience that each letter must be a perfect example of epistolary art. The examples given by Miss Bell in his "Life and Letters" make most interesting reading, for they are vivacious, and pregnant with wisdom and suggestion. All are self-revealing, and many humorous. It was always a pleasure to receive a letter from him, for whatever the subject, whether important or trivial, the recipients always found that he paid them the compliment of dealing with it fully, so that they should know exactly what his point of view was.

To one subscriber who complained of the advertisements of stock-dealers he wrote on October 7, 1890 ("Life and Letters of Moberly Bell", p. 136):

> "It is not the case that we publish tips—it is a fact that we give sporting intelligence. It is also a fact that we publish the advertisements of stock-dealers. It is extremely probable that many advertisements are misleading, and I am afraid that if we were to refuse all advertisements which has this tendency none would remain. As a paper only exists by its advertisements the course you recommend would result in the suppression of the Press. . . . We are extremely careful to exclude from our advertisements anything of an immoral character, and daily refuse advertisements on this ground."

As these letters of Moberly Bell were written in his own hand, for as yet he had no secretary, and typewriters were not then in general use, it is difficult to understand how he succeeded in replying to all his correspondents. For the daily mail-bag of *The Times* was always very heavy and he made a point of keeping in constant touch with the representatives of the paper both at home and abroad.



Photograph: Beresford

C. F. MOBERLY BELL, 1908

[*face p.* 306

This voluminous letterwriting also meant a dissipation of much energy that might with advantage have been employed in other directions.

He performed one great service for the paper in organizing a Foreign Department at *The Times* office with a responsible chief acting under the editor's supervision, whose duty it was to deal with foreign affairs. Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (the Mr Wallace who left Berlin with Blowitz, and carried a copy of the Berlin Treaty to Brussels), was appointed to this position. Other famous foreign correspondents whom Moberly Bell enlisted in the service of the paper were Mr Chirol (afterwards Sir Valentine Chirol), who succeeded Sir D. M. Wallace as Foreign Editor ; Dr G. E. Morrison, the famous traveller, and known to the world as Morrison of Pekin ; and Miss Flora Shaw (afterwards Lady Lugard) who travelled for the paper in Australia, South Africa, Canada, and Klondyke.

Moberly Bell was able to effect important economies in the Foreign Correspondence Service, by careful oversight. He made contracts with the cable companies at special cut rates. He also limited the amount of personal expenses that a correspondent might charge the paper. He rationed the number of columns that each correspondent might telegraph on subjects that were not of outstanding importance. As he wrote to a war correspondent :

> " In unimportant matters there is no good being lavish in telegrams. In really important matters telegraph freely. The merit of a correspondent depends on the quality not on the quantity of his despatches. . . . Remember that telegrams are for facts ; appreciation and political comment can come by post."

But these and other economies did not go far towards liquidating the debts owing, and Moberly Bell

looked out for other sources of revenue. He decided to start, what Sir Valentine Chirol described as a number of " side-shows ". In other words he began to compete with the book publishers. His first venture was " The Times Atlas ". This was a good Atlas. The maps were accurate and well-drawn, and coloured. But its chief attraction from the point of view of the public was that it bore the imprint of *The Times* on its title page ; so that booksellers and public took an interest in the venture and it yielded a fair profit.

Encouraged by the success of this experiment Moberly Bell became more ambitious, and issued an English edition of Busch's " Bismarck " and other works like the " Century Dictionary " and " Fifty Years of *Punch* ". These publications brought in grist to the mill, but they were dwarfed into insignificance by another and much more ambitious venture —the issue of " The Times Encyclopædia Britannica ".

One day in 1898 a representative of the firm of Messrs Hooper & Jackson, a well-known American publishing house, called on Moberly Bell at Printing House Square and put before him a novel proposition. Hooper & Jackson had bought up an edition of the " Encyclopædia Britannica ", the first volume of which had been published by Messrs A. and C. Black in 1875, and the last, ten years before in 1888. Hooper & Jackson's representative proposed that this Encyclopædia should be sold as " The Times Encyclopædia Britannica", and should be introduced by *The Times* to its subscribers and readers by means of full-page advertisements. But instead of paying for these advertisements in the usual way, it was suggested that the proprietors of *The Times* should share the risks and participate in the profits of the undertaking. The set of volumes were to be sold at fifteen guineas a set, of which *The Times* was to receive one guinea, and Hooper & Jackson

the remaining fourteen. It was further proposed that *The Times* should advertise that readers could have a copy of the Encyclopædia on payment of the initial guinea, direct to *The Times*, which was the paper's share of the profit, but that Hooper & Jackson should take the risk of recovering the remaining fourteen guineas. It was a one-sided bargain. The Encyclopædia was out-of-date, and a reprint of an old edition. Yet *The Times* was called on to advertise it, and promote its sale by lending it the name which for a century had been associated with all that was best in journalism. Hooper & Jackson were, it is true, offering the book at a figure much below its published price, but they were making a very handsome profit. They also enjoyed the considerable advantage of getting the leading British newspaper to advertise it for nothing. All that *The Times* received for lending its name and giving its advertising space was one guinea per set.

The offer to Messrs Walter and Moberly Bell was too attractive to be resisted, and they accepted it. The new "side-show" was a great success—financially. Hooper & Jackson saw to that. American methods were used in promoting the sale of the Encyclopædia. American copy writers provided the "copy" for the advertisement, and made a generous use of adjectives in their public appeals. A time limit was fixed within which readers could avail themselves of this wonderful offer. They were implored to write for an illustrated booklet which they could obtain by filling up a form, and signing on the dotted line. Finally those who had written for the booklet, but had not ordered the set, received long telegrams reminding them that unless they at once responded by accepting the great offer, they would be too late.

This advertising campaign took readers of *The Times* by surprise. Though a host of them sub-

scribed to the Encyclopædia, many old friends of the paper felt that this catchpenny method of advertising *The Times* was a departure from its great traditions. Many cancelled their subscriptions, and the circulation of the paper continued to decline.

Though many purchasers felt aggrieved when they discovered that the Encyclopædia contained no articles less than ten years old, and that some had been published more than twenty years before, they had no legitimate grievance against Moberly Bell. To all correspondents who wrote to him on the subject he replied : " As stated in every advertisement we have published, the edition we are reprinting is the ninth, and it is the last edition. Its publication began in 1875, it was completed in 1888, again reprinted in 1894, and again in 1896. It is now being reprinted again in 1898."

When the sale of this issue of the " Encyclopædia Britannica " ended, further supplementary volumes were prepared under the editorship of Sir D. M. Wallace. This great task was completed in three years, and brought the work up to date.

By these various books, issued by *The Times* Publishing Department, Moberly Bell had the satisfaction of knowing that the revenue of the paper had been increased by more than £150,000.

The connection formed between *The Times* and Hooper & Jackson did not end with the sale of the " Encyclopædia Britannica ". It was renewed again when in 1904 Moberly Bell consulted Horace E. Hooper about the financial position of *The Times*. Moberly Bell told his American friend that the paper needed an increase in revenue of £30,000 a year to put it in a good position, and wished to know what he could suggest. After discussion it was arranged that Hooper should take charge of the Advertisement

Department, and share with *The Times* any increase of net revenue in excess of the income of the paper in the year 1903–4. Any loss on the 1903–4 figures, or extra expense incurred, was also to be shared by the contracting parties. Various expedients were tried in order to bring about the desired result. In one direction at least the new partnership was fruitful. The advertisement revenue was considerably raised. But a reduction in the subscription rates to special subscribers, from £3 18*s.* to £3 did nothing to help the circulation of the paper. If anything the journal lost ground. For the new scheme annoyed the news-agents, both wholesale and retail. They suspected that Moberly Bell was trying to cut them out by establishing directed relations between *The Times* and its subscribers, and they refused to co-operate in the scheme.

The continued fall in sales of the paper puzzled and exasperated Moberly Bell. He knew that without circulation all hope of maintaining advertising revenue would vanish, and he cast about in all directions for some expedient that would send sales on the up-grade once more. At last a new plan took shape in his fertile brain. He was convinced that he must give his subscribers even better value for their money than they already enjoyed. Again he consulted his friend Mr Hooper, who strongly approved of his idea of starting a Book Club for the benefit of subscribers to *The Times*. Hooper undertook the management of the club.

According to the new scheme books were to be on sale to anyone at lowest current prices ; whilst any registered subscriber to *The Times* could have any three on loan at one time without charge.

On September 11, 1905, *The Times* Book Club opened, and old subscribers at once flocked to it, to take advantage of the new privileges offered them. They found a varied and admirably chosen stock of

new books from which to make out their lists. There was also a considerable influx of new subscribers, and the circulation figures rose to heights that had been unknown for years. The prospects of the new venture were of the rosiest, and Moberly Bell and Hooper rubbed their hands with satisfaction.

The prospect quickly changed. The new craft which had been launched on smooth and sunlit waters, soon encountered storm and tempest. The newsagents had been alarmed by a previous scheme. Now it was the turn of the booksellers, who naturally resented this new form of competition. The publishers also took alarm, and echoed the protests of their customers.

The trouble between *The Times* Book Club and the publishers arose through the sale of second-hand books. The publishers recognized the right of a bookseller to sell as second-hand any book that had previously been in the possession of a purchaser, and they accepted Moberly Bell's definition of a second-hand book, in which he said, "We consider that a book is second-hand when it has been used by more than two subscribers, and when it has been returned in such a state that it cannot be sold as a new book."

But the practice of *The Times* Book Club did not then quite conform with Moberly Bell's precept. Books were sold there which were unsoiled, within a few weeks of publication, at figures far below the published prices. A notable example was Winston Churchill's "Life of Lord Randolph Churchill". For this the publishers had paid a large sum of money. It was published at 36*s*. Yet it had scarcely been on the market for a few weeks, when unsoiled copies of it were to be had for 7*s*. 6*d*. at *The Times* Book Club. All this involved the publishers in considerable loss, and caused endless confusion in the trade.

In October, 1905, the publishers found the posi-

tion so intolerable that their Association held a special meeting at which it was decided to demand an undertaking from *The Times* that no book should be sold second-hand until six months after publication. To this Moberly Bell replied, "We decline to bind ourselves not to sell books second-hand until six months after publication."

So began the famous book war. For a long period a bitter controversy raged in the columns of *The Times* on the subject; and the Book Club and its methods were severely criticized in other newspapers.

In June, 1906, a new "net" book agreement was submitted to booksellers by the Publishers' Association, but this Moberly Bell refused to sign. In his letter to the Publishers' Association he says: "I must leave the public to judge between our conduct and that of the Publishers' Association, which condescends to retaliate by withdrawing its advertisements, and boycotting one bookseller in order to enforce a regulation carried behind the back of that bookseller, and avowedly directed against him alone."

The war between the two forces now raged more furiously than ever. The publishers withdrew their advertisements from the columns of *The Times*, which meant the loss to the paper of an income of £10,000 a year. To this the Book Club retorted by inserting in books published by members of the Association the following notice:

> "The publishers of this book decline to supply *The Times* Book Club with copies on ordinary trade terms, and subscribers who would co-operate with *The Times* to defeat the Publishers' Trust may effectively do so by refraining from ordering the book as far as possible until it is included in *The Times* monthly catalogue."

In this controversy subscribers, who were getting very generous value for their subscriptions, sided with

the paper, and many of them signed the memorial prepared by that industrious publicist, Mr. Henniker Heaton, protesting against the policy of the Publishers' Association. But beyond those directly interested very few people gave more than passing attention to the dispute. Authors with two or three notable exceptions sided with the publishers.

The book war came to an end when in May, 1908, Mr John Murray, the publisher, brought an action for libel against *The Times* and recovered £7,500 damages.

On May 7, Moberly Bell, much against his will, hoisted the white flag, and shortly afterwards surrendered, and the Publishers' Association regained absolute control of the book trade.

One evening in December, 1907, Lord Northcliffe attended a party at a house in Berkeley Square, where Paderewski was to play. During an interval in the recital, a fellow guest told him casually that the moribund *Standard* was being amalgamated with *The Times*. Acting on this hint he made inquiries and found that there had been some rather indefinite negotiations between Mr Arthur Walter, the principal proprietor, and Mr C. Arthur Pearson, the managing director of *The Standard*. On January 5, 1908, there appeared in *The Observer*, which then belonged to Lord Northcliffe, a paragraph in which it was hinted that *The Times* had been sold to Mr C. A. Pearson.

Moberly Bell saw this announcement but regarded it as one of the many rumours which were then current. But on the evening of the following day he found a paragraph which amazed him. It was from Arthur Walter, the chief proprietor, and had been sent to the editor for insertion in the following day's issue. It was worded as follows :

"Negotiations are in progress whereby it is contemplated that *The Times* newspaper shall be formed into a Limited Company under the proposed chairmanship of Mr. Walter. The newspaper as heretofore will be published at Printing House Square. The business management will be reorganized by Mr. C. Arthur Pearson, the proposed managing director."

This announcement bewildered and alarmed the staff. It created consternation among the partners, whose principal anxiety was profit. To Moberly Bell it came as a staggering personal blow. For years he had withstood the enemy at the gate. Here he was wounded in the house of his friend. For many years he had taken the whole of the managerial work on his own shoulders, and at every important step had sought and obtained the sanction of Arthur Walter for any action he took. He had also taken effective steps to straighten out the difficulties that during the past three years had arisen between the principal proprietor and his partners. Now in an indirect way he discovered that he was to be cast aside, and another who knew nothing of *Times* traditions and methods was to take his place. In the letter of protest he wrote to his employer there is a note of forbearance that is astonishing to those who knew Moberly Bell's fighting qualities. "Forgive me", he wrote, "if I say that I cannot help feeling deeply hurt at the want of confidence you have shown in one who has tried to serve you faithfully, and who regarded you as a friend."

But to his astonishment Moberly Bell found that his services were not dispensed with, and that he was still free to act. Mr Arthur Walter was warned that the editor and manager thought the Walter-Pearson scheme,—which meant an amalgamation and an exchange of shares,—unsound and detrimental to the best interests of the paper. While he was trying

to frame an alternative scheme, and looking about for some wealthy capitalist to finance it, Moberly Bell received an intimation from Lord Northcliffe that it was his intention to buy the controlling interest in *The Times*, with Moberly Bell's assistance if possible, but that in any case he meant to bring it within his sphere of influence. Negotiations followed. With Northcliffe's assistance Moberly Bell was enabled to put a scheme before a Judge in Chambers under which *The Times* was re-organized as a Limited Liability Company. This scheme was approved by the Judge, and the Walter-Pearson arrangement quashed. Other schemes were brought forward by groups of proprietors ; one in which Mr Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal Prime Minister, was interested, just before his death. Another was, to quote Moberly Bell's words, supported " by Britons of the name of Koch and Speyer ".

For a few days the supporters of the various groups canvassed the proprietors with all the vigour and enthusiasm of candidates seeking Parliamentary honours. In this campaign General Sterling, who had inherited his shares from that famous ancestor the Thunderer of *The Times*, threw himself wholeheartedly into the fray in support of the Northcliffe scheme. For this, the support of more than two-thirds of the proprietors was at last forthcoming and the proprietorial control of the paper passed into the hands of Lord Northcliffe.

The Articles of Association of the new company provided that " the efficiency, reputation and character of *The Times* newspaper shall as far as possible be maintained at the present high standard, and that on all existing political questions the independent attitude of the paper shall be maintained as heretofore ". Of the new company Mr Arthur Walter was appointed chairman. Mr Moberly Bell became

managing director, while Mr Buckle, the Editor, Mr Monypenny, an Assistant Editor, and Mr Chirol of the Foreign Department were elected directors.

In the background were Lord Northcliffe and Mr Kennedy Jones watching developments.

CHAPTER XVI

The Times *under Lord Northcliffe—His relations with the Staff—His influence—War clouds—The Zabern trial—Pressure on* The Times—*The War—Mr. Wickham Steed becomes Editor—Death of Lord Northcliffe—*The Times *sold to Major the Hon. J. J. Astor, M.P.—Mr. Geoffrey Dawson again the Editor.*

WHEN Lord Northcliffe obtained control of *The Times* he gained the crown of his ambition. Journalism was more to him than a career or the means of amassing a large fortune. It was the absorbing interest of his life. Every stage of newspaper work exercised a fascination for him, and the sight of the first issues of the various editions of his many papers gave him a succession of daily thrills.

At first he seemed anxious that his connection with *The Times* should be kept a secret. But this in the nature of things was impossible ; and not many weeks elapsed before W. T. Stead divulged the facts of the change of ownership in *The Review of Reviews.*

Old members of *The Times* staff were dismayed when they heard the news, and dreaded the effect of this pouring of new wine into old bottles. Fleet Street confidently predicted that the old traditions of the paper would be impatiently brushed aside, and that *The Times* would become a mere glorified edition of *The Daily Mail.* Older readers of the leading organ shook their heads sadly when they heard of the change and prophesied unutterable things.

But for a year at least there was little change in the paper. Lord Northcliffe had not much reverence for institutions that had little to recommend them but their antiquity, but he had a genuine admiration for *The*

Times, and was profoundly convinced that in the impartiality with which it stated the facts for or against a cause, in its sturdy independence, and its courage, it represented the more sterling elements in our national character. It had made profound mistakes, and occasionally had gone grievously wrong, as in the Pigott case ; but these were lapses inseparable from human effort, and in view of the long and honourable record of the paper might be condoned. To various members of the editorial staff he expressed his eagerness to understand *The Times*, and to improve it in accordance with its early traditions.

But the part he had voluntarily chosen was a difficult one to play,—foreign to the nature of a man of volcanic energy. He had created other organs of public opinion that perfectly expressed the popular will and temper. But here was another, the child of other men's minds, infinitely more complicated than any of his own, which with a relatively small circulation exercised a more potent influence than any of his own papers. Before he touched or tampered with it, he must learn the secret of its power, grow familiar with its traditions, and adapt himself to them.

Meanwhile, in accordance with the agreement he had made with Moberly Bell, he turned his attention to the business side of the paper ; and here he had the valuable help of Kennedy Jones, his partner. Every department was overhauled. Emissaries from Carmelite House visited Printing House Square at all hours. A file of accountants invaded *The Times* offices, and spent strenuous days checking accounts, auditing books, and preparing financial statements. Moberly Bell was bombarded with daily letters and telegrams. In the principal revenue department it was found that £50,000 was owing by clients, and that many of the accounts had been on the books for seven or eight years. Officials were dismissed for neglect of duties

or incompetence, and other members of the staff were invited to state in writing the duties they performed, and the time they took in accomplishing them. But the result of the first year's working was disappointing, and Lord Northcliffe was deeply chagrined. He had not bought his interest in *The Times* in the expectation of making money from it, but he had invested an enormous sum in the paper, and as a business man he knew that there must be something seriously wrong when an old-established newspaper with a large advertising and publishing revenue, did not pay its way. He began to probe more deeply into affairs. The managing director had to listen, with such patience as he could command, to a loud and insistent chorus of complaint and criticism. His subordinates were inefficient ; there was a lack of system and co-ordination ; extravagance and waste were rampant ; the managing director must get a stronger grasp of the situation and display more initiative.

Many changes took place. Moberly Bell, much against his will, was compelled to put an end to the Book Club war. A new manager, Mr Murray Allison, took charge of the advertising department, and Mr Frank Harcourt Kitchin, who had done sterling work as editor of the *Financial Supplement*, and was afterwards assistant manager of the paper, resigned this now difficult office and accepted the editorship of *The Glasgow Herald*. Kitchin's successor, Mr Nicholson, though nominally the assistant, was virtually the manager, and Moberly Bell, now shorn of his powers, could not decide anything without Nicholson's agreement or consent.

Similar developments occurred on the editorial side ; and Mr Buckle, the editor, together with his co-directors, found the position wearing and difficult. Lord Northcliffe was the most careful and vigilant of observers. He studied the paper every morning for



WICKHAM STEED

two hours or so, and no fault or mistake escaped his eye ; and these omissions or errors were plainly pointed out to editor or managing director—omissions of important items of news, faulty or unworkmanlike make-up and often the policy of the paper, were all noted, and tersely criticized by letter or telephone.

Lord Northcliffe exercised a more widespread influence in public life than the majority realized, and that only statesmen and others versed in international affairs appreciated or understood. His name was a household word from China to Peru ; and in the most distant of Empire Dominions was held in honour and esteem.

His business career was a romance, and the record of it would form a fascinating supplement to Dr Smiles's masterpiece. But money making was not the aim and end of his career. He cared little for wealth, but he loved the power it brought him. And this power he exercised sometimes wilfully and capriciously, but often for the benefit of his fellows. He revolutionized the modern newspaper. Those who examine the files of daily newspapers of Victorian days can see at a glance the remarkable transformation that was due to his initiative and example. Heavy articles were replaced by bright and pithy paragraphs ; Parliamentary reports shrank to their proper proportions ; and readers with a sigh of relief noted the absence of the long reports of speeches of tedious politicians. With the vision of the born journalist, the young newspaper owner saw that the public was interested in many and diverse subjects. So he engaged able descriptive writers, and sent them to all parts of the world to report on matters strange and new. Whitehall, chagrined at this change of the spotlight, described *The Daily Mail* as a newspaper "written by office boys for office boys".

During the Boer War, Alfred Harmsworth—to use the name he then bore—first emerged as a force in public affairs. At that time the opinion of the world was against Great Britain. Every country in Europe was frankly hostile, and America coldly neutral. On all sides Great Britain was abused and misunderstood. Propaganda was needed, and this Harmsworth supplied. From that time onward his name was of those that counted.

Great issues appealed to him, and he had an abiding interest in politics. But he disliked and despised the politicians. Balfour, Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith and Lloyd George—he began by praising them all. But when they had been put in the crucible of office, and tested by the flame, he found them all wanting, and denounced them in turn. Joseph Chamberlain alone among statesmen won his allegiance and commanded his respect.

His enemies tried to belittle him by describing him as an enigma that was not worth solving, or as a sounding-board that broadcasts messages not worth repeating, but, as Mr J. A. Spender points out in "Life, Journalism and Politics" (p. 170), "He was immensely important, however much solemn people might try to blink or evade the fact. He and his imitators influenced the common mind more than all the Education Ministers put together; of all the influences that destroyed the old politics and put the three-decker journalist out of action, his was by far the most powerful."

But if great issues attracted him, he fully understood the importance of little things—those apparently insignificant details that in the aggregate profoundly affect people in their business or private lives.

One Christmas morning, when the Publisher of *The Times* was at the office, looking through the letters to see if there was anything needing immediate attention,

the telephone bell rang. When he answered the summons he was surprised to hear the voice of the "Chief". "I am speaking from Paris", said Northcliffe, "and have just seen some copies of the paper that have come through the post. The wrappers round the paper are not wide enough, and one of the newspapers is torn and frayed at the ends. This is not right. A subscriber who pays for a newspaper is entitled to a clean and perfect copy. Will you get some wider wrappers at once?"

The Publisher agreed, but pointed out that he had more than a million of the old ones in stock.

"Never mind that," was the answer. "It's more important to please our readers than to save a few pounds on newspaper wrappers."

He was also tireless in insisting that all intercourse with correspondents and callers should be conducted in a spirit of courtesy. "Politeness costs nothing. There's no lubricant so useful in social and business life," he often reminded members of his staff. "Some people", he once remarked to the writer, "who are merely flies on the wheel, imagine that they make it go round, and act accordingly. When you see people in your office rude or brusque with callers, remind them of their real position in the scheme of things. Sometimes", he added, "a rude remark will cause incalculable mischief. An advertising agent once told me that his father, many years ago, had been insulted by the Advertisement Manager of *The Times*. That insult cost the paper £120,000."

No one could meet Lord Northcliffe without being profoundly impressed by his dominant personality. He was brimful of vitality. Beside him other men seemed inert or asleep. His handsome mobile face, his voice and gestures were all expressive of energy and purpose. His enthusiasms were manifold, and his outlook ever clear-eyed and youthful. The passing

of the years neither damped his enthusiasm nor weakened his initiative, and until illness fretted his nerves he retained that buoyancy of spirit which added charm to his manner, and made him one of the most brilliant of conversationalists.

As early as 1909 Lord Northcliffe,—unlike the majority of publicists in this country,—knew that Germany had decided to strike a blow for world power, and that before many years were over Britain would be involved in war with her continental neighbour. At a dinner which he gave in that year to *The Times* staff he told his hearers that from private reports he had received from Saunders, *The Times* correspondent in Berlin, and from Wickham Steed in Vienna, that Germany was undoubtedly preparing for war ; the military party was dominant in that country, the German people were unfriendly and even hostile, and that sooner or later public feeling would force the Kaiser to decisive action.

When Lord Northcliffe, through his newspapers, warned the country of coming dangers, and strongly supported Lord Roberts's plans of compulsory national service, he was roundly abused as a scaremonger and firebrand. *The Times* in article after article tried to rouse the public from its apathy, but the effort was fruitless. The English people, beyond an occasional fit of irritation at the German Emperor's ridiculous poses and bombastic speeches, took little interest in foreign politics, and at this period probably knew less of continental affairs than any other nation in Europe.

The death of King Edward on May 7, 1910, removed the last and greatest obstacle to the German plans ; and from then onward to August, 1914, signs of the coming storm came thick and fast.

A few months later the German Emperor, who now regarded himself as the leader of Europe, in a speech

to the City Fathers of Vienna, who had presented him with an address, said : " Methinks I read in your resolve the agreement of the city of Vienna with the action of an ally in taking his stand *in shining armour* at a grave moment by the side of your most gracious Sovereign." From that fascinating book, " Through Thirty Years ", in which Mr H. Wickham Steed tells the story of his journalistic life, we find that at the close of 1910, when he was foreign correspondent of *The Times* in Vienna, he felt so strongly " the necessity of rousing people at home to a sense of the danger ", that he decided at the end of the year to return to England, " in the hope of doing something to this end, in and through *The Times*, if possible, but if not through some other agency ".

He communicated this decision to Northcliffe, who promised him a congenial sphere of work in London. Pressing duties prevented Mr Steed from carrying out this plan. Meanwhile, events occurred which strengthened his conviction that propaganda work in England was urgently needed. The " Agadir " incident, when Germany sent a cruiser to a " closed " harbour in South Morocco, was a threat to British as well as French interests. The incident was handled with firmness and skill by Sir Edward Grey and the British Ambassador in Paris, Sir Francis Bertie ; and was brought to a close by Mr Lloyd George's speech at the Mansion House on June 21, 1911, when he said :

> " If a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests are vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that a peace at that price would be a humiliation, intolerable for a great country like ours to endure."

The Times led the British Press in a chorus of praise of this defiant utterance, while Germany and Austria

howled a hymn of hate. But the German Government, whose arrangements for the clash were not quite complete, " climbed down " and gave the Foreign Secretary assurance of the innocence of its intentions. For the part he took in bringing this incident to a satisfactory conclusion, Germany never forgave Sir Edward Grey, and for a long time the newspapers of the Fatherland reiterated the catch-phrase—" Grey must go ".

Then followed the two Balkan wars, from which, to the chagrin of German and Austrian statesmen, Servia emerged victorious.

Through these troubled days, which brought care and anxiety to those who scanned the future, Germany, according to programme, was spending colossal sums on armaments, and living on money borrowed from the French banks ; while in England politicians were engrossed with the Irish question, and Lord Haldane was more usefully employed in forming the nucleus of his Territorial Army.

In *The Times* office there were changes. At the beginning of 1912 Sir Valentine Chirol, the Foreign editor, retired, and seven months later Mr Buckle, who had edited the paper for twenty-eight years, followed his example. The new editor, Mr Geoffrey Robinson, was experienced in administrative work, and had been secretary to Lord Milner in South Africa. Afterwards he did excellent work as editor of the Johannesburg *Star*.

Lord Northcliffe was told by Mr Wickham Steed, who returned to London in November, 1913, that as he knew that a European war was within measurable distance, he intended to do his best to make English people understand the position. To this end he delivered lectures in Cambridge, Oxford, and the Royal Institution in London.

Mr Steed became foreign editor of *The Times* in January, 1914. But while he was still in temporary

charge of that Department he was fortunately enabled to give the country an object lesson in Prussian methods and ideals that must have come with a shock of surprise to the good people who believed that Germany was being wickedly maligned by scaremongers and Jingoes.

He went to spend a short holiday in Strasburg, at the house of a friend. When he arrived he found that Colonel von Reuter, of Zabern, was about to be tried by a Military Court for ill-treatment of civilians. Wickham Steed resolved to report the trial for his paper. He had no credentials from *The Times* with him, but managed to gain entrance to the press-box in the court room.

In his evidence, Colonel von Reuter stated that he had demanded that the police should protect the soldiers rather than the citizens. He instructed his soldiers to use their weapons freely, and admitted that he said it would be good if blood were shed. He had insisted that the people must be prevented from walking about the streets, and had given orders that if civilians " stood about and laughed the troops should open fire ". When he was asked if he had exceeded authority, the Colonel replied with solemn pride, " I am a Prussian officer. I command Prussian troops, and I execute the orders of my King."

The evidence of the Colonel's assistant, Lieutenant Schad, was even more extraordinary. He had dispersed some children in a crowd with his drawn sword, and arrested civilians whom he suspected of laughing at the soldiers. No, he had not seen them laughing, but he suspected it, and added aggressively, " Him whom I suspect of laughing, I arrest." He further admitted that he broke into houses, but explained that it was in order to catch them laughing.

After this humourless ruffian had given evidence, the Military Court considered its verdict and the Colonel and Lieutenant were acquitted.

Commenting on this example of military rule, Mr Steed wrote in *The Times* of January 12, 1914 :

> " In Prussia the army is supreme and, through Prussia, the army rules Germany. Another lesson is the fragility of a European peace that may depend upon the escapades of a boy Lieutenant in an Alsatian town. The trial establishes the extreme probability that but for the ludicrous accident of the arrest of civilian judges by Lieutenant Schad, machine guns would have come into play against the laughing crowd."

The report of this military trial in *The Times* excited much public interest, but the exposure did not greatly please German residents in Great Britain, though the German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, was at pains to make Mr Steed's acquaintance.

Through the early months of 1914 the Germans made strenuous efforts to mould English public opinion. Members of the Government were assured of the Kaiser's pacific intentions, and friendship for this country. Hosts of officers and other emissaries from Berlin went to Ireland and made careful inquiries about the prospects of civil war in that country. Professor Schiemann, the German historian, came over to London and in April saw Mr J. A. Spender, as he tells us in his " Life, Journalism and Politics ". The Professor declared that Russia had announced for the coming September a mobilization of a million men against the German Empire, and that war between Germany and Russia was inevitable. Then he asked if England with her boasted democratic institutions was going to step in between Germany and Russia, and throw her weight on the side of the barbarians. This Professor interviewed other eminent journalists and publicists and put before them the same arguments. Mr Wickham Steed, who describes the Professor as the German Emperor's chief spy, noted his presence

in London, and his conviction was strengthened that the inevitable crisis was drawing very near.

Then on Sunday, June 28, came the news that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife had been assassinated at Sarajevo. *The Times* office that Sunday afternoon was in a ferment. Wickham Steed, the Foreign editor, was in the country, and except an obituary notice there was little information available. But at 7 o'clock, Steed, who probably knew more about Austrian affairs than any man in England, returned. But even he was puzzled by this strange event, though he had uneasy forebodings as to its consequences.

A few days later the position was clearer ; and by the middle of July it was known in *The Times* office that the Austro-Hungarian Government, on the strength of the promise of the German Emperor's support, had decided to send an ultimatum to Servia.

On July 21, Mr Wickham Steed lunched with Count Albert Mensdorff, the Austrian Ambassador, who asked the journalist to use his influence in the British Press to make the position of Austria-Hungary understood. Then, without beating about the bush, he told Mr Steed what was about to happen. Servia was to be punished. "If", said the Ambassador, "*The Times* will give the lead, the rest of the Press will follow, British public opinion will remain friendly to us, and the conflict may be localized."

But Mr Steed pointed out that there was no such easy way out, and predicted what would happen with unerring precision. "At the first shot you fire Russia will cry 'Hands off'. Germany will summon Russia not to intervene. . . . Germany will then mobilize, and will bolt through Belgium into France ; and when England sees German troops in Belgium she will intervene against Germany and against you."

Returning to *The Times* office, Mr Steed gave an

account of this memorable interview to Lord Northcliffe and the editor. It was agreed that the public should be enlightened on the situation.

On the following day, July 22, the first of a series of articles was published in *The Times* on the critical position. This first article was entitled " A Danger to Europe ". The threatened ultimatum had not yet been delivered, but in this pronouncement the Austrian Government was warned against the consequences of the rash step it was contemplating. The article concluded with the words : " But it is not clear that Austria-Hungary, did she draw the sword, would localize the conflict if she could, and it is clear that the decision would not rest with her alone. That at once makes her action a matter of European concern."

At this period of confusion and divided counsels, the articles in *The Times* threw a flood of light on the situation, and created a deep impression on the public mind. They served also as a reminder to continental nations that Britain would respect her treaty obligations, and that her decisions were a factor in the situation that could not be ignored.

In the fateful days that followed, the Germans renewed their pressure on politicians and journalists in the endeavour to make England stand aside. A German magnate in the City warned Mr Chisholm, the financial editor of *The Times*, on July 31, that the leading articles in the paper were driving the country to war, and told him that they must cease immediately. England, declared this despotic City man, must maintain strict neutrality. The same gentleman also saw Lord Northcliffe and told him that he (the magnate) had received such tidings of Germany's strength in arms that if England entered the war " the British Empire would be swept off the face of the earth in a few weeks ". But these efforts to intimidate Lord Northcliffe and *The Times* were, needless to say, so



MAJOR THE HONOURABLE JOHN JACOB ASTOR, M.P.

much waste of breath. On the following morning (August 1) the paper took a still stronger tone :

> " Peace is not," read the article, " at such a moment our strongest interest, however dear it may be to us and however earnestly we may strive to maintain it. Our strongest interest is the law of preservation, which is common to all humanity. . . . Soberly but resolutely we must play our part in this unprecedented encounter should the need arise. And if we have to intervene the whole country will shrink from no sacrifice to emerge victorious from a struggle which may even threaten our national existence."

An impudent attempt by Herr Ballin, the millionaire shipowner, to secure the publication in *The Times* of a short article, in which he explained the benevolence of the Emperor's attitude to England, did not succeed, though it had an interesting sequel. Both Lord Northcliffe and the editor felt it would be impolitic to publish this message at a time when the British Government had come to no decision, and the German Emperor's troops were massing on the French frontier. In the Ballin essay an accusing finger is pointed at Russia as the instigator of the war, and this is emphasized in the final sentences : " It must be stated again, Russia alone forces the war upon Europe. Russia alone must carry the full weight of responsibility."

In April, 1915—eight months later—Herr Ballin favoured a special correspondent of *The New York World* with his views on the origin of the war, but this time laid the blame entirely on Sir Edward Grey. *The Times* published an account of this interview, and below it printed Ballin's letter of August, 1914.

Herr Ballin retorted by denying the authenticity of the article of August, 1914, and referred to " this new piece of villainy ", and " the art of unscrupulous distortion as practised by *The Times* ".

The paper replied to this abuse on April 23 by

giving a full account of the affair and publishing with it a facsimile of Ballin's original telegram.

The British Press found conditions in the Great War very different to what they had been in former times. During the Crimean War, Delane, as we have seen, sent his correspondents to every part of the war zone, and they sent home what messages they pleased. As late as the South African War correspondents enjoyed exceptional freedom. Now all was changed. The number of war correspondents on each front was strictly limited, and every message from the front, including the private letters of officers and men, were rigorously censored. The newspapers were also subjected to other harassing restrictions, and Government officials, civil and military, watched their activities with jealous eyes.

But despite these restrictions on its liberty of action the Press, under the leadership of *The Times*, worthily maintained its high standing in those dark years of turmoil and suffering. Where others faltered, it sounded the high note of courage, and hardened the resolution of the British people to struggle and endure. It brought men in their tens of thousands to the Colours ; supported the War measures of the Government ; made known the work that this country was doing to our Allies, and the world ; and exploited the fathomless generosity of our people for the benefit of sick and wounded.

The journalists who ran these newspapers realized, as even eminent Parliamentarians did not, that the victory of the central monarchies would mean the extinction of public right in Europe, and that an inconclusive peace could only lead to a renewal of the conflict. This view expressed in the determination to win despite every difficulty and hazard, was even in the darkest days of the War, kept steadily before its readers by *The Times* newspaper.

In carrying out an effective propaganda campaign during the last six months of the War, journalists and other writers performed a service that contributed in no slight measure to the victory of the Allies. The aim of this campaign, which was initiated and devised by Lord Northcliffe and Mr H. G. Wells, was to let the soldiers and civilians in enemy countries know the exact truth about the position, and explain to them the intentions of the Allies.

The propaganda was in the form of leaflet and pamphlet, and was written in simple German. The principal method of distribution was by small balloons. Most of the leaflets fell within an area of fifteen miles behind the German front line, though some were wafted more than a hundred miles into enemy territory.

The enemy quickly took alarm at this new form of attack. German newspapers contained many references to it, and the soldiers of the Fatherland were warned not to " believe the false reports and omissions of the enemy ". Of these leaflets, nearly four millions were distributed in August ; nearly as many in September ; 5,360,000 in October ; and 1,400,000 in the first ten days of November.

The information spread in this way did its work. German soldiers began to learn the truth, and lost confidence in their leaders, and the *morale* of the army was weakened. At long last it dawned on the German General Staff that Truth, which, as the Hebrew writer says, " endureth and is always strong ", exercised a more potent influence in a distracted world than swords and guns. The success of the Enemy Propaganda Department may be measured by the abuse that the Germans heaped on its Director. Lord Northcliffe was described by Von Hutier as " The Minister for the destruction of German Confidence ", and as " the most thorough-going rascal of all the Entente ".

The end of the War brought changes at *The Times* office. Mr Geoffrey Dawson had been Editor throughout this difficult and anxious period, and the weight of the responsibilities he had borne so long made him desirous of being relieved of them.

On February 7, Lord Northcliffe informed Mr Wickham Steed that Mr Geoffrey Dawson had resigned, and offered him the position. Mr Steed went to Avignon to discuss the matter with his Chief. At this interview Mr Steed outlined a policy, and suggested that if Lord Northcliffe agreed with it he, as editor, should be free to carry it out without interference. He also made it a condition that if he accepted the offer of the position, Lord Northcliffe would initiate no policy of his own. To this Lord Northcliffe agreed.

Mr Wickham Steed entered on his responsible duties with definite aims and ideals. These he placed before Lord Northcliffe, who, though very ill, heard them with interest and warmly endorsed them. As set out in Mr Steed's book, they are as follows : To maintain the independence of *The Times* towards all parties and politicians ; to work for a settlement of the Irish question ; to support the Allies in their just claims ; to advocate and support the League of Nations ; and to deal fairly with labour demands and movements.

During his short editorship, Mr Wickham Steed not only restored *The Times* to its highest traditions, but he bettered them. Unlike Delane, who voiced the opinions of others, he was the champion of causes dear to his own heart. And those causes he advocated with astonishing power and energy. In three short years he did much to restore *The Times* to its old position as the world's foremost newspaper. Under his control it achieved wonders in reducing chaos to

order, and in bringing back a war-maddened Europe to sanity, and a sense of its responsibilities.

To Mr Steed and his paper belongs the credit of initiating and outlining the scheme which finally solved that century-old problem, the Irish question. Who could have imagined that the paper which thirty years before had strenuously opposed Home Rule, and besmirched the reputation of an Irish leader by publishing the forgeries of Pigott, was now first among those who condemned the Irish policy of the Coalition Government. Mr J. A. Spender, no great admirer of Lord Northcliffe, speaks of that campaign as " one of the most powerful efforts in the journalism of my time ".

In January, 1920, a Minister told the editor that a Cabinet Committee reported in favour of a scheme which in all essentials was the same as one *The Times* had drawn up for a settlement of the Home Rule problem, but that the Prime Minister was likely to reject it because it would enable " Northcliffe and *The Times* to shout victory ". Mr Steed assured the Minister that if the Government's scheme was identical with that of *The Times* to the last comma, *The Times* would not claim credit for it in editorial comment, or even in a headline. The Cabinet Committee reported to the Prime Minister. The scheme approved by the Committee was drafted, and subsequently became the Government of Ireland Bill.

Though this scheme for granting Home Rule to Ireland was not of his own devising, Mr Lloyd George deserves a tribute of praise for his moral courage and loyalty to democratic ideals in introducing and passing this measure. There was little open opposition to the Bill. But the Tories, who formed the backbone of the Coalition Government, hated it, and their admiration for the statesman who had been their idol at the end of the war, changed to suspicion and hostility.

Without the aid of *The Times* and its editor, Wickham Steed, the Bill could never have been passed.

The newspaper incurred much unpopularity by its support of this measure, but never in its long career had it performed a greater service to the State.

A year later the Black-and-Tan campaign of the Government, which *The Times* had consistently opposed, was brought to an end by the truce of July 11, 1921. Among those who congratulated Steed on this notable victory was Lord Morley of Blackburn, who sent " a word of admiring gratitude, appreciation and respect for your most powerful, persevering and splendid share in the great event of the day ".

On August 14, 1922, Lord Northcliffe died. A few days before the end the editor received a last message from him : " Give me a full page in *The Times* and a leading article by the best available writer *on the night.*" This in full and generous measure was accorded the man who at a critical season had saved the great paper from shipwreck and energized it from his own abundant store of vitality.

In October *The Times* passed into the hands of Major the Honourable John Jacob Astor, M.P., in association with Mr John Walter. A month later Mr Geoffrey Dawson again took up the editorship, which he still conducts with distinction and success.

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