Advertisements.

Now fitting out with all Expedition,
For a Cruise against the French,
The PRIVATEER ISAAC,
A noted prime Sailor,
Under the Command of Captain David Clatworthy.

She mounts 16 Carriage Guns, and to have 130 Men — All Gentlemen Seamen and able bodied Landmen, who are willing to enter on board her, will meet with suitable encouragement, by applying to Mr. R. Towseend, merchant, in King's-street.

On MONDAY the 16th Instant,
At Mr. Hardy's Dancing-School in the New-market,
Will be performed a CONCERT of MUSIC,
For Mr. PERKINS and SON,
Who will endeavour to please on the Hautboy.
The principal musical performers in town will assist.

NOW in Mr. George Cowper's Warehouse in Cleveland's Square,
a Hoghead of Sugar, black mark N' H No. 136, which has been there by neglect since June last. Whoever produces a just title to the same may have it by paying for advertising.

John Urmlton, Upholsterer,
AND
John and James Glover, Cabinet-makers,
From LIVERPOOL,
At their shops in the Corn-market, Warrington, make and sell all sorts of Upholstery and Cabinet Goods in the newest taste, and at moderate prices.

Best Tobacco SNUFF,
Sold wholesale at the Maker's price,
By W. BARKER, GROCER, in Water-street.
Advertising

Persuading people to buy something and pay for it is the basis of business, and no better means of bringing seller and buyer together can be devised than what the English-speaking world has for a long time called "advertising," itself now a big business. A man who "advertises" is simply giving notice, making a statement intended to influence others. For over three centuries English newspapers have provided a convenient medium for the issuing of such notices; and although newspapers are no longer the sole medium for persuading members of a community to part with money, it is beyond dispute that newspaper advertisements have accelerated the growth of trade in commodities of all kinds, including newspapers themselves. A dignified gentleman may feel annoyed that his newspaper gives more space to tradesmen's notices than to political news and editorial paragraphs, but he would pay guineas instead of pennies for his paper if it carried no advertisements. Advertisers say that he would pay more for everything else, too, if there were no advertisements.

The fact remains that in some circles advertising is frowned upon, and it was so in the eighteenth century.
In the first issue of the *Liverpool Chronicle* (6 May 1757), the observation was made that not many years before that date "it was thought mean and disreputable in any tradesman of worth and credit to advertise the sale of his commodities in a public Newspaper." Mean and disreputable it may at first have been; but by the time that remark was printed in the *Liverpool Chronicle*, there were not only many London newspapers which were called "Advertiser" but nine country papers so called and fifteen others with the word in the subtitle. "Advertisements are now so numerous that they are very negligently perused. . . ." That statement could have been made this morning; the words were written two centuries ago by Samuel Johnson in one of his "Idler" essays. Johnson had London papers in mind, to be sure, but country papers had for many years been giving large portions of their space to notices intended to warn, persuade, or inform.

Because the advertisements in early provincial newspapers have been too negligently perused or not perused at all by those who have attempted to trace the development of advertising, it is commonly supposed and sometimes said in print that until the last decades of the eighteenth century the newspaper advertisements were few in number and were mainly about farms for sale, runaway servants, strayed horses, and quack medicines. That the public announcements were numerous, and that they dealt with every conceivable aspect of normal and abnormal life in English communities, can be seen at a glance if one picks up a copy of almost any English country newspaper from 1710 onward.

Before there were any provincial newspapers, the London papers of the seventeenth century had many notices either sent by or intended for readers in the country. Readers living outside of London who saw the *City and Countrey Mercury* (1667)¹ would be interested in its advertisements and its twice-weekly dialogues
ADVERTISING

on economic conditions. Country people must also have read with delight—as who does not?—the friendly notices inserted by John Houghton, F.R.S., in his Collection For Improvement of Husbandry and Trade (1692-1703). "I know of several Estates to be sold," he wrote in number 11 of volume V (9 November 1694); and again, "I sell Chocolate made of the best Nuts, without Spice or Perfume, at 5 s. and 6 s. and with Vinelloes and Spice at 7 s. the Pound, which I know to be a great helper of bad Stomachs, and Restorative to weak People. I'll answer for their Goodness."

Once the provincial weeklies got started, advertisements soon began to appear in them. The earliest extant issue of a provincial newspaper—number 91 (12 August 1704) of the Bristol Post Boy—has at the bottom of its final column an advertisement offering the services of John Mitchell, "Licensed Physician and Chyrurgion," who lived at the Two Blue Balls in King Street, Bristol; and the first of the provincial newspapers to be established in the eighteenth century, the Norwich Post, had numerous advertisements, every surviving issue for 1708 and 1709 having seventeen or more, the offerings ranging from "very good Cart Greece" to "14 couple of good seized and well manag'd Beagles." One of the unusual opportunities advertised as available to Norwich people is announced in number 413 (23 July 1709) of the Norwich Post:

This is to give Notice to all persons in this City, that over-against the Three Feathers in St. Peters Hungate, there is one lately come from London who teacheth all sorts of Pastry and Cookery, all sorts of Gellies, Greens and Pickles, also all sorts of Collering and Potting, and to make rich Cakes of all sorts and everything else of that Nature. She Teaches for a Crown down, and a Crown when they are fully learn'd, that her teaching so cheap may encourage very many to learn.

This anonymous London expert in "all sorts and everything else" was outdone in versatility, however, by a
specialist in another art, according to a well-displayed advertisement inserted “By Permission” in the *Norwich Post*, number 594 (5 July 1712):

These are to give Notice to all Gentlemen, Ladies and Others, That Mr. Clench of Barnet, who imitates the Horn, Huntsman and Pack of Hounds, the Sham Doctor, Old-Woman, Drunken-Man, the Bells, Flute, Double-Curtel, the Organ with Three Voices, by his own Natural Voice, to the greatest Perfection; (being the only Man that ever could attain so great an Art) Will perform the same this present Evening, at Mr. Bosley’s Dancing-School.

Beginning exactly at Six a Clock.

Price One Shilling. Vivat Regina.

All Gentlemen and Ladies are desired to come exactly at the Hour, for later is not Convenient for the Performance or the Place.

Less than a month after Mr. Clench of Barnet emitted his assortment of noises in Mr. Bosley’s Dancing School, the government imposed the first tax on newspapers and the first one-shilling levy on newspaper advertisements; but the temporary setback which resulted was followed by irrepressible expansion of both newspapers and the advertisements in them.

It is true that in the half-century before 1760 there were some country newspapers in which only a few advertisements appeared, and it will be noticed that several of these particular papers did not continue very long. Only one advertisement is to be found in the six surviving issues of *Sam. Farley’s Bristol Post Man* (1713-16); several early issues of the *Reading Mercury* have no advertisements, or only one or two; and most of the extant issues of the earlier *Hull Courant* have no advertisements.

From the first decade of the century, on the other hand, one finds papers in which more than a quarter of the available space was occupied by advertisements. As early as 1709 and 1710, the *Norwich Gazette* had its fourth
page filled with advertisements, and thirty years later that paper had an even larger proportion of its space given over to advertising. It took Francis Howgrave a few weeks to build up the advertising in the *Stamford Mercury* which he started in 1732, but in the period 1736-39 this paper had five full columns out of twelve given over to paid notices. At the same time newspapers in other towns regularly had their last three or four columns filled with advertisements. Practically every issue of the *Newcastle Journal* from 1739 onward had dozens of advertisements, and those printed in the *Newcastle Courant* during its first half century number many thousands. During the decade 1751-60, there were many papers which regularly had six, seven, even eight columns out of twelve filled with advertisements. It was an extensive business.

That newspaper advertisements were not scanty and sporadic is to be inferred from the fact that Parliament sought to raise money from them. By the Stamp Act of 1712 a tax of one shilling was imposed on "every Advertisement to be contained in the *London Gazette*, or any other printed Paper, such Paper being dispersed or made publick Weekly, or oftener." Just as it is unthinkable that the newspaper Stamp Tax was imposed with the expectation that it would stifle the press, so it is ridiculous to suppose that a tax would be imposed on newspaper advertisements unless substantial revenue could be produced thereby. The truth is that by the middle of the eighteenth century there were tens of thousands of advertisements in the London and country newspapers every year, and from them the Treasury garnered thousands of pounds annually.

Proof that this statement is not unwarranted is to be seen in the Audit Office accounts in the Public Record Office, which show the amounts of advertisement tax collected annually; and the *Journal of the House of Commons* (XXVII, 369 ff.) has an account of the gross produce (that is, including office charges) of the duty

153
on advertisements at one shilling each for the seven years from 2 August 1749 to 2 August 1756. The total for those seven years was over £52,585, the annual figures ranging from £6,113 in the year ending 2 August 1750, to £8,477 in the year ending 2 August 1756. The figure for the penultimate year in the period covered was £8,955, this being the duty collected on 179,100 advertisements. For the same number of advertisements in the year ending 2 August 1758, the duty collected would be £17,910, since the tax was doubled by the Act of 30 George 2, c. 19 [1757]. But let it be remembered that these figures include returns from the London as well as the provincial papers. The yield from the country papers was at first much smaller than that from London papers, but the proportion steadily increased, as Professor Aspinall points out. The figures at intervals of ten years show the increase both in the totals and in the proportion that came from country papers. The figures here given show the amounts paid at the Head Office (A), the amounts paid to the collectors in the country (B), and the totals for the year indicated ending 2 August (C):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>£1,319 14s. 0d.</td>
<td>£136 7s. 0d.</td>
<td>£1,456 1s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730</td>
<td>1,882 7 0</td>
<td>486 17 0</td>
<td>2,369 4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>2,969 6 0</td>
<td>814 10 0</td>
<td>3,783 16 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>4,951 0 0</td>
<td>1,248 18 4</td>
<td>6,199 18 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>11,239 0 0</td>
<td>4,567 15 6</td>
<td>15,806 15 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>15,642 18 0</td>
<td>9,505 18 0</td>
<td>25,148 16 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>20,796 19 6</td>
<td>15,748 19 0</td>
<td>36,545 18 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sharp increases resulting from the doubling of the advertisement tax in 1757 are reflected in the figure for 1760, but it is to be noted that after 1757 the figures are larger for another reason: the Act of 30 George 2, c. 19 [1757], imposed for the first time a tax on advertisements in papers published at intervals longer than one week.
These totals have their usefulness as a graphic demonstration that advertising in newspapers increased rapidly, but they do not reveal what payments were made by any one newspaper for a given period. Fortunately that particular information is available to the utmost degree of accuracy. All one has to do to find out what amount of duty was payable on the advertisements in the *Gloucester Journal* for 1729 or the *Norwich Gazette* for 1742—or any other year—is to count the advertisements. Whether or not the proprietor ever felt tempted to cheat, he could not do so for there was no way of concealing the evidence.

That substantial sums were actually paid by the proprietors of provincial newspapers is shown by receipts written by the collector. The statute of 10 Anne, c. 19 (section cxviii) stipulated that the officer must “without any other Fee or Reward, . . . stamp with the proper Stamp, to be provided for that Purpose, one Copy of such Advertisement or Advertisements, or . . . give a Receipt for the Duty or Duties hereby charged thereupon, in Testimony of the Payment thereof.” It does not appear to have been the practice of local collectors to use a “proper Stamp” as a means of showing that the duties on particular advertisements had been paid; and the reason is a perfectly good one: the stamp would have to be applied to every single advertisement.

The alternative method provided by the statute was much simpler. It may well be that some collectors wrote out a formal receipt on a separate slip of paper. Certainly some of the collectors preferred to write the receipt in the margin of one copy of the newspaper itself. Occasionally the note was made by the printer himself. Thus William Norris noted in his *Taunton Journal* on 1 August 1726: “I Paid Mr Greenway 0–16–0 for the Duty of 16 Advertisements on this and several former Journals, in full to that day.” But this is a memorandum, not a receipt. Ordinarily it was the collector who recorded the payment, as the office copies of several papers show. On 4 February 1729/30 Sam Worrall, the official distributor
of stamps in Gloucestershire, wrote this statement at the foot of the front page of the *Gloucester Journal*, number 404 (30 December 1729), affixing his signature:

Rec’d Feb. 4, 1729 of Mr. Robt Raikes Eight pounds one shilling for one hundred Sixty one Advertisements from Sept. 30, 1729 Inst. to Dec. 30, 1729 Inst.

In the fourteen issues of the *Gloucester Journal* from number 391 (30 September 1729) to number 404 (30 December 1729) there are actually 171 advertisements. Was Worrall being careless, or lenient, or did he close his eyes to the brief note by the printer in numbers 400 and 402, and look upon eight notices by the Commissioners of Turnpikes as not subject to tax?

Samuel Worrall, of Gloucestershire, was certainly lenient in the matter of the time of payment. The statute required that the duty on advertisements had to be paid “within the Space of thirty Days after the Printing or Publication of such . . . Advertisements,” the penalty for failing to comply with this stipulation being the payment of “treble the Duties . . . chargeable thereupon.” Worrall often let the thirty days go by without making any collection. The most striking evidence that he was dilatory is the receipt written by him in the bottom margin of the fourth page of *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal*, dated 27 July 1754:

Rec’d Oct. 25, 1754 in account this day settled fifty four Pounds ten shillings in full for the duty of one thousand & Ninety Advertisements in this Journal from Aug. 4, 1753 to this Paper both included

Sam Worrall

Worrall had allowed a whole year to go by before receiving payment from Felix Farley.

By Worrall’s computation there were 1,090 advertisements in *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal* in the course of a
year, or an average of twenty-one in each issue. Receipts written by William Wharton, the collector in Newcastle, indicate that the average number of advertisements in the *Newcastle Journal* in 1741 and 1742 was close to thirty per week, as, of course, is obvious from a glance at the papers themselves. Wharton made a practice of writing his receipt in the space between the second and third pages of the paper, and (with some difficulty, because the papers are now bound in volumes) the receipts can still be read. In number 156 (27 March 1742), for example, he wrote

Reced of Mr Isaac Thomson & partners Eleaven pounds eighteen Shillings for 238 advertisem\textsuperscript{2}. inserted in their Journals from No 149 to & with No 156 both inclusive.

Witness my hand

Wm Wharton Collr.

Similar receipts are in the Newcastle Public Library copies of several other issues before and after number 156. These show that Wharton received payment for 255 advertisements on 27 June 1741, for 202 on 7 September, for 659 on 15 February 1742, and for 298 on 4 June. Payment for the 229 advertisements in numbers 166 (11 June 1742) to 174 (31 July 1742) was not made until 30 August, but the next payment, £18 13\textshilling\textsuperscript{s}, for 373 advertisements in numbers 175 (7 August 1742) to 187 (30 October 1742), was made more promptly, on 9 November of that year. In the sixty-one issues of the *Newcastle Journal* from number 127 to 187, there were 1,797 advertisements, for which the government ultimately collected £89 17\textshilling\textsuperscript{s} through William Wharton.

The government's revenue from advertisements might have been much higher. Had the scheme proposed on 16 March 1731 by a disreputable London bookseller come to anything, the development both of the newspaper and of its advertising might have been very seriously impeded.
Recognizing that taxes on newspapers and the duty on advertisements were sources of revenue not fully utilized by the government, Edmund Curll pointed out to Sir Robert Walpole and the other Lords of the Treasury that the size of the sheet or half-sheet on which a newspaper might be printed was nowhere defined, nor was it officially laid down what number of words should be allowed as a maximum in any one advertisement. Restricting the size of paper might have forced newspapers to remain tiny or might have led to the use of whole sheets at a penny tax instead of half-sheets at a halfpenny tax; in the same way advertising might have been hampered by the restriction in size or by a sharp increase in the duty on advertisements exceeding the legal maximum permitted at the minimum rate. Curll estimated that if an inspector were appointed to enforce such restrictions as he proposed, there would be a gain in revenue amounting to more than ten thousand pounds per annum. Curll doubtless hoped he would receive the appointment. Wisely the Commissioners of Stamp Duties reported to the Lords of the Treasury on 1 June 1731 that there already was a qualified "Register" to collect the authorized duties and that they did not think it necessary to put the government to the expense of engaging an inspector of newspapers and advertisements.11

That newspaper advertising brought substantial revenue to the government cannot be disputed. But that was not the reason why the proprietors of country newspapers put notices in their columns; what they had in mind was increased income for themselves, and it was just a happy circumstance that the tax did not deter merchants and others from paying both the printer's fee and the government's duty. There were occasions when a printer announced that he was quite willing to print advertisements in his columns free of charge. That was easily done in the years before the advertisement tax was imposed in 1712. After having announced in his first two issues (7 and 14 December 1706) that advertisements would be
ADVERTISING

inserted in the *Norwich Gazette* “at reasonable Rates,” Henry Cross-grove apparently decided to strive for a local monopoly by inserting advertisements at no cost to the advertiser. Attracting particular attention by using a cluster of six asterisks and a large initial, he announced in number 129 (Saturday, 5 March 1709):

Advertisements are still put into this Newspaper for Nothing, upon the following Conditions:

1. That they are put into no other *Norwich* Newspaper.
2. That each Advertisement exceeds not 70 Words.
3. That they be not about trifling impertinent Matter.
4. That they be sent in Writing before Friday Noon.

But all Persons must pay for all such Advertisements as are not within the said Conditions, if inserted herein.

After the Act of 10 Anne, c. 19, came into effect on 1 August 1712, a printer might decide to collect no fee for himself, but the customer none the less was required to pay the duty on his advertisement. For a limited time William Parks and his partner in the *Reading Mercury* offered to print notices at no cost beyond the shilling duty, clearly as a means of doing what Parks had failed to do in Ludlow, namely, develop a clientele. Their third and fourth issues (22 and 29 July 1723) had this notice on the back page:

N.B. Till Michaelmas next, Advertisements will be taken in to be inserted in this Paper gratis, paying only One Shilling each Time of Advertising, which by Act of Parliament we are oblig’d to pay to the Government: So that any Persons who have Houses or Estates to be Lett or Sold; or have lost Horses, Cattle, &c. or would have any Business made Publick 40 or 50 Miles round, may for a Shilling have it advertis’d in this Paper, by coming to the Printers hereof, or sending by the Persons who carry out this News.

It was not long before standard rates were established for advertising in the Reading papers.
Other reasons than a desire to build a business connection occasionally justified a printer in remitting the regular charge for an advertisement. Thus it was announced in Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser, number 27 (26 November 1726) and the next two issues, that a charitable subscription for the relief of the wives of men impressed into naval service had been opened at the bank near the Exchange; such an advertisement would normally have been inserted at a charge of half a crown, but the office copy bears the notation “gratis.” Williamson apparently donated the space, but he undoubtedly had to pay the shilling tax. It is probable that a printer would be obliged to pay the shilling tax even on an advertisement that had been cancelled too close to press time for it to be removed. For instance, Caesar Ward may have had difficulty in collecting the full fee for an advertisement in the York Courant, number 1465 (13 November 1753), in spite of this statement set in small print on an inner page of that issue:

‘.‘ The new-built Dwelling-house at Knaresborough (advertised to be lett or sold in the last Column of the last Page) is lett. The Order for discontinuing it came too late.

Ward would doubtless be held responsible for the duty on the Knaresborough advertisement. The same is true of a facetious and fictitious advertisement which a reader of the Bath Advertiser sent in. The issue of 1 March 1760 has at the end of its last column this note:

A humorous Advertisement of a new Magazine is received, but the Author, cannot expect to have it inserted at the Printer's Expence; the usual Dues remitted, it shall be inserted next Week.

The principle had to be explained again in the next issue:

The Author of the Burlesque Advertisement will be pleased to remark that the inserting a Piece of Poetry has
ADVERTISING

no Duty to be paid to the Government for it; but an Advertisement, serious or not, has a Duty of Two Shillings charged on it. If the Author will give it another Form, instead of an Advertisement, (which must be paid for) we shall with Pleasure comply with his request.

The government did not try to stop advertising; but it did demand its shilling or two for each notice, whether the printer collected his own charges or not.

The government’s demand of a shilling undoubtedly seemed equally annoying and ineludible; but tax-dodging, if morally deplorable, has its allurements for some people, and there were ingenious Englishmen who saw a way of evading the tax without breaking the law. John Newbery, of Reading, saw the way; Andrew Hooke and Felix Farley, of Bristol, actually tried it. The statute which imposed the shilling tax on newspaper advertisements explicitly limited itself to advertisements in papers dispersed or made public weekly, or oftener. It was not until forty-five years later that a duty of two shillings was levied on advertisements “contained in or published with any Paper or Pamphlet whatsoever, printed in Great Britain, to be dispersed or made publick yearly, monthly, or at any other Interval of Time exceeding one Week.” Now no one in the intervening years cared to establish a fortnightly newspaper in any country town; but John Newbery in 1740 realized that a weekly paper could be given an alternative title every second week and be therefore ostensibly a different paper, neither publication being “dispersed or made public weekly, or oftener.” In his account of John Newbery, Charles Welsh quotes the following passage from Newbery’s private memorandum book:

Let Mr. Micklewright print a Reading Mercury and Advertiser once a fortnight, and J. Carnan print a Reading Mercury and Weekly Post once a fortnight, and by that means save the duty of advertisements. Note, let the titles be The Reading Mercury, and The Reading Courant.
But the notion does not appear to have been carried into actuality in Reading. By the beginning of 1743, however, Andrew Hooke, of Bristol, perceived that he could avoid any payment of advertisement duty by publishing the *Bristol Oracle, and Country Intelligencer* on one Saturday and the *Bristol Oracle, and Country Advertiser* on the next Saturday, each paper having its own serial numbering. Hooke did precisely the same thing with two later papers, the *Bristol Oracle* and the *Country Advertiser*, which likewise appeared on alternate Saturdays. “The Variation in the Title,” said Hooke above the date line of the *Country Advertiser*, number 2 (11 May 1745), “is in Consequence of a private Agreement that does not concern the Publick.” Does this declaration imply willing connivance by Samuel Worrall, the Gloucestershire collector?

The same artifice, apparently, was used by another printer in Worrall’s territory. This was Felix Farley, who from December, 1743, to the end of August, 1746, and for a time early in 1748 published on alternate Saturdays *F. Farley’s Bristol Journal*—there were variations in the title—and *Farleys Bristol Advertiser*. All of this must have been confusing to subscribers; presumably it brought to Samuel Worrall a sufficient degree of obfuscation or satisfaction to insure his silence.

The other printers and proprietors of country newspapers found it simpler to collect the duty and pay it on demand to the local collector. What gave the printer greater concern was the possibility that the advertiser might neglect to send the duty along with the text of his advertisement; payment for the printing of the advertisement was expected in advance, too. Most printers insisted on “ready money” for advertisements. “As one Shilling Duty is paid to his Majesty for each Advertisement every respective Time it is inserted,” said Ward and Chandler upon taking over the *York Courant* in 1739, “it cannot be expected that the Printer should give Credit for
Advertisements.” Elizabeth Adams, of Chester, repeatedly insisted that no advertisements would be accepted for her *Weekly Courant* unless payment was made in advance. Bitter experience seems to lie behind the handwritten note in the office copy of number 549 (14 October 1749) of the *Newcastle Journal*: “NB. Mind that you take in no Adv without money unless you know them to be good hands, but never never trust any of the running ons.” Quite clearly some of the “running ons” in this and other papers were not paid for in advance. The office copy of the *Salisbury Journal* dated 30 October 1738 has in the margins (top and bottom) of the front page this note: “Rec of Mr. Sheerer one pound in full for Advertisements of Squire’s Elixir to the 30th of Oct. Inclusive.” William Collins, the printer of the Salisbury paper, could retain only part of that pound, since one shilling went to the Crown for every insertion of the advertisement. And the balance may not have been all his to keep. Contemporary manuscript notes on the office copies of some papers indicate that it was a common practice for a printer to allow his peregrinating newsmen a commission of two-pence for each advertisement which they brought in. The clearest evidence of this is to be found in manuscript notes in the issues of the *Oxford Gazette: and Reading Mercury* for 1755-59 which are in the office of the present *Reading Mercury*. Advertisements which came by post would bring in the full rate to the printer, for the printers always insisted that the postage be prepaid by the sender. Setting aside the duty, then, the printer retained every penny which he collected from the advertiser except what he agreed to pay his newsmen for bringing in advertisements.

There was one further reduction in the possible gross income from advertising, and that was the discount offered for repeated insertions. This discount was fair enough, since a continuing advertisement would not have to be reset for the second and subsequent printings.
William Norris charged three shillings and sixpence, without limit of size, in his Taunton Journal, but he said in his colophon on 1 October 1725 that he would “Continue them for Two Shillings per Week.” This was a favorable rate, since his paper was issued twice a week. Felix Farley, boasting that the demand for his Bristol Journal was so great that he had been forced to print three impressions of number 70 (11 May 1745), offered a new low price on advertisements, both for first insertion and for repeated insertions: “the Price thereof will, after this Week be fallen to 3s. Entrance, and 2s. 6d Continuance, or 10s. for four Insertions, without any thing for Entrance.” A few weeks later Farley made it clear that these rates applied to small advertisements only; large ones were to be charged “in Proportion.” Twenty years earlier another Farley announced somewhat higher rates for advertising in his Bristol News-Paper: “Advertisements are Enter’d for 4s. If they don’t exceed 10, or 12 Lines; and Continued for 3s. per Week after”; and these charges did not discourage advertisers, for with number 36 (8 January 1726) there were more notices and the paper itself was printed on larger half-sheets than before.

Prices charged for advertisements were not uniform throughout the kingdom. In the first issue of the York Mercury (23 February 1719), Grace White and Thomas Hammond, Jr., offered to insert advertisements at two shillings each. In the far southwest in the previous year, William Kent charged three shillings for inserting notices in his Plymouth Weekly Journal, and more than that if they exceeded ten lines in length. In David Henry’s Reading Journal in 1748, the rate was half a crown for twenty lines. The printers of several other papers—the True British Courant, for instance, and the York Courant—gave half a crown as their normal charge, but were less definite about the maximum length which would be accepted for that sum. In 1747, Elizabeth Adams charged three shillings and sixpence for the first insertion of
ADVERTISING

advertisements “of a moderate length” in her Weekly Courant.

The phrase “of a moderate length” is not much more specific than “as long as a piece of string.” Some printers were much more definite. William Dicey placed under the date line of his Northampton Mercury in 1756 a plain statement of rates: for notices of twenty lines or less, the charge was three shillings and sixpence for the first insertion and half a crown for each subsequent insertion; for every four lines (or less) above twenty lines, the additional charge was sixpence. The office copy of C. Micklewright’s Oxford Gazette: and Reading Mercury for 1753 and 1754 shows that Micklewright made weekly calculations of his income from advertisements, jotting down at the foot of the fourth page the number of paid notices in each issue—22, 34, 38, 32, and so on—and marking the price charged for each. Small advertisements were charged three shillings; those of thirty-six to forty-one lines were charged four shillings; one of forty-six lines was marked four shillings and sixpence, and one of seventy-seven lines, seven shillings. Another clear statement of a graduated scale is in the Newcastle Journal—number 378 (5 July 1746), for instance. For any advertisement containing up to one hundred and forty words the charge was half a crown the first time and eighteen pence thereafter; these charges were increased by sixpence for each hundred words in excess of one hundred and forty, and sixpence was also charged for “any Addition to, or Alteration in a running Advertisement, if under 100 Words.” The charge for advertisements occupying two full columns or more is in most instances not known precisely. Mr. K. G. Burton draws attention to the payment of two guineas for an advertisement occupying the whole of the second page of the Oxford Gazette: and Reading Mercury, number 743 (19 November 1759). Prices for advertisements rose by one shilling when the duty was increased by that amount in 1757; but the
net profit to the printer was not affected unless the number of advertisements was reduced because advertisers refused to pay the extra charge. It did not take long for the new rates to be accepted. Both in 1757 and earlier the printers of provincial newspapers made strong efforts to overcome resistance to the duty.

In the attempt to develop the sale of a newspaper, the proprietor did everything he could to make it easy for people to get the paper; in the attempt to attract advertisers he had to make it as convenient as possible for people to put their advertisements into the printer’s hands. This was easy enough if the advertiser lived in the same town as the printer of the paper, for the notice, with payment, could be brought right to the printing shop. Sometimes there were two or three places in town where advertisements could be left. For some months in 1749 and 1750, Edward Ward stated under the title of his *Bristol Weekly Intelligencer* that advertisements would be taken in at the printing office in Castle Street, by Messrs. Hickey and Palmer in Nicholas Street, and by T. Cadell in Wine Street. Andrew Hooke, author of the *Bristol Oracle*, hoped for printing work as well as advertisements when he announced that customers could leave orders and advertisements at his printer’s shop at the sign of the Bible in Shannon Street, but said that he himself might be spoken with every day between the hours of twelve and two at St. Michael’s Coffee House in Magdalen’s Lane or at the London Coffee House in Corn Street.

Arrangements for the placing of an advertisement were less easily managed if the advertiser lived out of town; but many printers listed out-of-town agents who would receive advertisements and forward them to the printer. Anxious to secure all the advertisements his two alternating *Bristol Oracles* could carry, Andrew Hooke placed under the date line—in number 21 (22 October 1743), for instance—a notice which shows that he made arrange-
ADVERTISING

ments to have postmasters all over the country receive paid announcements for him:

Advertisements for this Paper, (which is at present circulated by Post to all the considerable Towns North and South, from Liverpool to Plymouth, throughout Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and all South Wales, and is extending itself farther every Week) are taken in by the Deputy Post-Masters on all the Cross Roads throughout England, or they may be sent, (under Cover to Mr. Thomas Pyne Postmaster in Bristol) directly to the Author, who will take Care to insert them, according to Order, at the lowest Prices. To prevent Mistakes, all Advertisers are desired to give Directions in Writing how long they are to be continued.

The implications are clear: Hooke was not merely willing to accept advertisements; he made special efforts to obtain them.

Other printers of newspapers were equally keen, and most of them took the trouble to name their agents in distant places. Many papers have in the imprint or the colophon a lengthy list of booksellers and others who could take in advertisements. Forty such lists could be cited, but a few will have to suffice. The Leeds Mercury, number 897 (12 April 1743), named twenty-nine persons by whom the paper was sold and advertisements taken in, the places thus served numbering thirty-three; and in addition there were news carriers in eighteen other places, as well as the Derby and Bakewell posts. During the early months of 1744, the proprietors of the Reading Mercury attached to their imprint the statement that advertisements were taken in at the Bible and Crown in the Reading market place, and then added that they were also taken in at their warehouse without Temple Bar in London and by thirty-six named persons in towns all over the south of England from Bicester to Portsmouth and from Salisbury to Tenterden in Kent. The receivers of advertisements for the Sherborne Mercury in 1744
included nine named persons in nine towns, as well as the men that carried the Mercury. By 1747, the list had extended to twenty-four towns, in three of which there were two takers of advertisements, not just one. These twenty-seven collectors of advertisements for the Sherborne Mercury included booksellers, merchants, tavern keepers, three saddlers, a schoolmaster, a tobacconist, a farrier, and a jeweller—all in addition to the Sherborne Mercury newsmen and the printers themselves. After John Keene had taken over Boddely’s Bath Journal—“one of the most Extensive Country Papers in the Kingdom”—the list of persons prepared to take in advertisements for Keene even included the printers of four other newspapers: Goadby in Sherborne, Collins in Salisbury, Raikes in Gloucester, and Berrow in Worcester.

There is probably no better inducement to advertising in a particular journal than firm assurance that the advertisements will be seen by a large number of readers. As the proprietors of the Bristol Gazette declared in 1774, the advantage of advertising in a successful journal is obvious: “the benefit arising therefrom is always in Proportion to the Number of Readers and Variety of Places into which a News-Paper is circulated.” This is a point which modern advertisers and the proprietors of modern periodical publications alike insist upon; in our century the “net sworn circulation” largely determines the scale of charges for advertising space. This was so to only a very limited extent in the eighteenth century, for, as we have seen, the rates did not vary widely; but claims of wide distribution were made in emphatic terms.

Again and again throughout the eighteenth century the link between a newspaper’s circulation and its usefulness as a medium for advertising was proclaimed. As early as 27 September 1715, when Sam. Farley launched his Salisbury Post Man, it was stated on the title page that the paper would be “made Publick in every Market Town Forty Miles distant from this City”—several would be
sent as far as Exeter—and this wide distribution was declared explicitly to be for the encouragement of all those who might have occasion to “Enter Advertisements.” Within a few years of its establishment, the Gloucester Journal gave prominence to the claim that it covered a larger circuit than any other country newspaper in England; and at the end of April, 1725, when the proprietors were concerned to keep the tax from affecting circulation, the confident assertion was made that the Gloucester paper was “of far greater advantage for Advertising any Business than any other News-Paper on this side the Country, by reason of the Number of Men employed to disperse them. . . .” Robert Williamson of Liverpool was only saying what many others might also have said when he referred in number 59 (8 July 1757) to his paper’s wide circulation, “which has been daily manifested, by applications from different Parts of Great Britain and Ireland, to those who have favoured us with their Advertisements.”

As was observed earlier, these claims of extensive circulation lack the irrefutable evidence which only firm and verifiable figures could give. Yet it is worth noting how frequently the printers said in their own words what William Cooke declared under the date line of his Chester Weekly Journal in 1732: “N.B. This Paper being carry’d through Nine Counties, and some Thousands Sold Weekly; all Persons may consider the Advantage of Advertising herein.” Ward and Chandler said the same sort of thing in the York Courant in 1739;¹⁷ H. Berrow in 1753, reporting that the sale of his Worcester Journal had increased considerably, declared that since the paper was distributed “in great Numbers, and with the utmost Dispatch” through several counties, “the Purpose of Advertising in it must, of Course, be sufficiently answer’d”; and in number 25 (3 April 1756) of the Bath Advertiser, Stephen Martin assured those who advertised in that paper that it was “constantly and regularly distributed
FRESHES ADVICES

country not far from sixty miles in one direction, westward; and above seventy eastward; and so in proportion all around," being so well received that the demand for the paper was steadily increasing.

It is understandable that the printer of a country newspaper should assure those who advertised in it that they would have their notices read by people in all adjacent counties and perhaps in remote parts of the kingdom.

It is of particular interest that the printers of several country papers from 1750 onward made a point of sending copies regularly to London coffee houses, to the advantage (they said) of all who advertised in them. The benefits claimed for this practice are nowhere better stated than in the announcement printed in the Western Flying Post, numbers 87 (24 September 1750) and 112 (18 March 1751):

All those who have Occasion to Advertise any Thing, are desired to take Notice, That the Proprietors of this Paper have now made a very great Improvement, for the Benefit of those who Advertise in it; for besides circulating it through all the Towns and Parishes of Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Devon, Cornwall, and Part of Wiltshire, they now send regularly every Week, a Paper to each of the following much-frequented Coffee Houses, &c. in the Cities of London, Bristol, and Bath; viz. in London, at Batson's Coffee-House, Cornhill; Lloyd's, in Lombard-street; the Royal Exchange Coffee-House, Threadneedle-street; Sam's, near the Custom-House; Chapter Coffee-House, St. Paul's Church-yard; Richard's, in Fleet-street; George's, Temple Bar; Knight's, in Essex-street; Somerset-House Coffee-House, in the Strand; Forrest's, at Charing-Cross; Seagoe's, in Holbourn; Cocoa-Tree, Pali-Mall; the White-Bear-Inn, Piccadilly; the Bear and Ragged Staff, in Smithfield; and Hyde-Park Corner Coffee-House. At Bristol, the Exchange Coffee-House. At Bath, Morgan's Coffee-House; and the Booksellers Shops.

"As by this Means the Advertisements are seen and read by Thousands in London, as well as in the Country, it cannot fail of being of considerable Advantage to those
who have Occasion to advertise Estates, Houses, Goods lost, Horses stolen, &c. And must in all Probability answer their Expectation in Advertising.

Anyone desiring wider coverage than the Western Flying Post afforded him could get it easily enough (at higher cost) by sending his advertisement to other papers published in London, in the eastern provinces, in the midlands, and in the north—there were thirty-five other provincial papers to choose from in 1750—but no other single paper could place an advertisement before the eyes of readers in thirteen London coffee houses and in the four western-most counties of England.

Both in the area to which the papers were distributed and in the area from which advertisements were received, then, the scope of advertising in provincial newspapers became very extensive indeed. There is one other respect in which, as has already been suggested, advertising became extensive, and that was in the space occupied in the columns of the newspapers. Printers who found that half their column space was filled with advertisements could hardly object, since those advertisements brought in half their net income; but after 1725, this congestion became a problem, for it was not possible to use more than a half-sheet of paper for each copy without having to pay a whole penny in tax instead of a halfpenny. Yet space was needed for news. The printers knew, of course, that they could conserve space by using small types. This now seems contrary to the principle that notices should be so legible that he who runs may read, but it is obvious from a glance at the newspapers of 1730 and later that printers sometimes preferred to use small type for paid notices. Ward and Chandler in 1739 said they were using paper of large size for their York Courant and had gone to the extraordinary expense of buying a new set of small type “purposely for Advertisements.” The use of smaller types for long advertisements was common both in the
London and the provincial papers; for short notices most printers used a variety of type sizes, often quite attractively displayed.

The pressure of space was none the less embarrassing. In the York Courant, number 700 (13 March 1739), Ward and Chandler admitted that they had on several occasions felt obliged to hold back some advertisements in order to make room for news. Some advertisements, "which ought to have been inserted this Day," they said, had been left out of that very issue. Other printers had the same comfortless words for their advertisers. "Advertisements omitted this Week, will be in our next," said Felix Farley in his Bristol Journal on 27 July 1754. The problem became acute if advertisements came in close to press time. The difficulty was genuine, for the printer had to choose between the immediate income from paid notices and the ultimate income from the extensive sale of an acceptable newspaper. "I do not mean that it has been absolutely impossible to insert them," wrote William Craighton in his Ipswich Journal, number 914 (7 August 1756), but he requested an angry advertiser to recognize that "a considerable Part of a News Paper ought to be allowed for News, and also for many other things which are equally agreeable to the Readers of it":

... I might indeed make great Profit of this Paper for a single Week, if I should fill it with Advertisements from Beginning to End, without one Line of News; and this I cou'd easily do, by only taking in those that are offer'd me, relating to Books or Medicines; for which I shou'd be as well paid as I am for any others. But then, who wou'd buy the Paper the next Week? and the third Week, who wou'd think it worth their while to advertise in it?— and what, in a short Time, wou'd become of all the Pains that I have been taking, for many Years, to establish and extend it?

These words form part of a lengthy explanation offered to Matt. Hopkin at the Brandon Black Bull, who, like a thousand others, had taken it for granted that the printer
of a newspaper always had room for any number of advertisements that happened to be sent to him. For several years, said Craighton, there had not been one week in which he had not received many more advertisements than he could find room for. He had, in fact, actually set Hopkin's advertisement for the preceding issue but had been obliged to omit it and "above 20 others."

The earlier an advertisement could be sent in, the more likely it was to be in the next issue. There was another advantage in having the advertisement reach the printer early. In the Cambridge Journal, number 181 (5 March 1748), the proprietors promised to take the greatest care of advertisements, especially if they came in as early in the week as possible, "which means," they said, "we shall be enabled to oblige them with a good Place in the Paper."

That the advertisers and the newspaper men—if not the readers—were conscious of the advantage which position might give to a notice is attested by a statement under the date line and also in the colophon of a London paper, the Daily Journal, number 4303 (1 November 1734): "Advertisements of this Paper, of a moderate Length, that require no Preference of Place, Character, or Disposition, are taken in at Two Shillings each." Psychologists may now be able to explain why particular spots in a newspaper are more advantageous to advertisers than other parts of the paper.

Generally speaking the advertisements in a country paper printed during the first decades of the eighteenth century were at the very end, whether the paper was set in two, four, six, eight, or twelve pages; but some of the four-page papers kept part of the last page for the latest news. It is not altogether uncommon to see single advertisements or groups of advertisements inserted between the second and third batches of news. Occasionally early twelve-page papers had notices on the verso of the title page, and the Suffolk Mercury in 1727—an eight-page paper—had the lower three-quarters of the title page itself
occupied by the printer’s own advertisements of writing ink and a cure for the itch. Until the middle of the century not many printers of four-page papers were willing to have advertisements on the front page, but after 1750 some papers regularly used part of their front-page space for display advertisements. A good example is the Bath Journal, which, in number 31 of Volume VIII (21 October 1751), had more than half its front page filled with advertisements. What the printers of the Cambridge Journal meant by a “good Place in the Paper” was perhaps only the top or the bottom of a column, or the first or last place in a group of advertisements. In such positions a notice would more easily catch the eye than if it were smothered in the middle of a column. The lack of classification and of conventional sequence is probably not to be looked upon as evidence of the printer’s carelessness or unconcern; it was doubtless recognized that readers would be more likely to scan the whole set of notices if there were no groupings.

The position of an advertisement is important; its typographical design is more so. We have seen that the printers of country newspapers made no more attempt than did their London brothers to choose display types to head important items of news; it was altogether different in the setting up of paid notices, at least from the third decade of the century onward. In early papers one sees a succession of short notices in type mainly of uniform size, each hardly distinguishable from those before and after; horizontal rules or spaces were used to separate consecutive advertisements, and there was usually a deep initial at the beginning, or a font of larger type was used for the whole of the first line. One could discover what the advertisements were about only by reading through the whole series. By 1725, some attempt was made in most papers to separate each announcement from the others by the use of a special caption—“To be SOLD,” “To be LETT against Lammas next,” “This Day is
Publish’d,” “Notice is hereby given”—or by the use of a simple cut—a book, a keg, a dwelling house, a horse, a spouting whale, a ship in full sail.

These woodcuts enliven the page, but they had a particular purpose: they served to indicate instantly the theme of the advertisement. That is what Robert Goadby, the proprietor of the Western Flying-Post, had in mind when he announced on 26 November 1753 that he had gone to the expense of having eye-catching cuts made for the purpose of “distinguishing” the advertisements in his paper, and he added that the extra charge for notices so distinguished was only sixpence. These cuts were used to classify the notices, which were not (as now) grouped according to subject. It may be that in the eighteenth century there were people with time on their hands who read all the advertisements as a matter of interest. Advertisers were less concerned to keep these curious idlers occupied than to catch the eye of someone who might be induced to buy a mahogany voider, try a new cure for abdominal misery, attend the Three Choirs Festival, or take his family to Maryland.

The second phase of newspaper advertising was reached when printers began to use larger types for prominent words and phrases to compel the casual reader’s attention. It is pleasant to find in early country newspapers a good deal of what can properly be called display advertising, in which, though limited in width to a single column, varied type sizes and fonts and symmetrical arrangement caught the reader’s eye. The intricate visual, mathematical, aesthetic, and psychological aspects of types in advertising deserve the most careful study, but here it is sufficient to note that in many papers the advertisements have a commendable degree of homogeneity in the types, yet there is enough variety of type size, of line length, and of spacing to attract attention. Large and varied types were used more lavishly in some papers than in others. William Cooke had well-set advertisements in
his Chester Weekly Journal in 1732, for example, and excellent specimens are in the Norwich Gazette in 1741-42, the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer in 1750, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in 1752-60, the Bath Advertiser in 1756, and the Liverpool Chronicle from 1757 onward. In spite of the wretched habit of using small type for the body of long advertisements, many a full page of notices in the eighteenth-century newspapers can be examined with greater ease and more immediate comprehension than those of the nineteenth century.

Printing an advertisement in large and legible type makes it easy for people to read it but does not guarantee that they will read it. One way to lure people into reading advertisements was to print the announcement in the form of news. It is a device still in use, though now the item so printed is usually set in a slightly different type from that used for the authentic news, and some printers insist on putting a tell-tale label ("Advt.") at the end. The collector of the advertisement tax may have been willing to ignore informal announcements included as pieces of news, and the printers may have accepted these announcements without charging the usual fee—though it is difficult to understand why they would do that. In any case, there are several good examples of professional men receiving effective publicity in what appear to be ordinary items of news.

This deceptive form of advertising through the medium of what is ostensibly news was commonly used by the managers of traveling companies of actors or other entertainers. The tone of this piece of regional "news" in the Gloucester Journal, number 1693 (5 November 1754), leads one to suspect that the statement was prepared by a member of the troupe as informal advertising:

They write from Ledbury that, last Night, the Company of Comedians there left off Acting at that Place, where their Performances always met with the general Applause of a crowded Audience. Some Day next Week they are to open

176
ADVERTISING

at Hereford, from whence they will proceed to Leominster, Brecon, &c.—The Publick may be assured no Care nor Expence shall be wanting to make their Entertainment still more agreeable, and Mr. Ward takes this Method of informing them, that he has very lately purchased from London a large Quantity of Rich Modern and Roman Habits, that the Characters in the several Plays the Company perform may be properly dressed.

This sort of solicitation is sometimes quite startling—something like hearing "So-and-so's pills are just the thing" as the second line of "Hark, the herald angels sing." The Cambridge Journal, number 637 (11 December 1756), has a paragraph about the Reverend Mr. Sharpe's having been presented by the Bishop of Ely to the living of Trinity in Cambridge. That is news. Then comes a reference to the "very handsome" tribute drawn up in Latin (naturally) by the public orator in the name of the University and read in the Senate House as a compliment to the chancellor. That, too, is news. Then follows what looks exactly like another piece of news; but the theme is somewhat less academic:

Mr. Powell the celebrated Fire-Eater, returns his humble Thanks to the Ladies and Gentlemen for the great Encouragement he has received during his Stay in Town; and begs Leave to inform them that this present (Friday) Evening, and To-morrow (Saturday) Evening will be positively the last Nights of his performing in this Town. ——He will perform on Monday Evening next at Newmarket.

Did the proprietors of the Cambridge Journal print this announcement free of charge in return for two complimentary tickets to the fire-eater's Saturday night farewell performance?

Advertisements in the form of news stories concerning remarkable cures of physical ailments are more numerous than those concerning actors and other people of the theater. There is in the single surviving issue of the Man-
FRESHEST ADVICES

Chester Journal (24 August 1736) a report of Mrs. John Byrom's recovery from a painful illness (ischuria), but the astoundingly precise clinical details and the unctuous tone—"she is thro' Gods Help totally relieved by Roger Booth, Apothecary and Surgeon in the said Parish"—show that the "news" is no more than the cleverly designed advertisement of a local practitioner. Equally curious is the "news" of a remarkable cure by one Dr. Mohun, who made no acknowledgement of divine collaboration (Mohun shone by no reflected glory). The account is ostensibly an exciting piece of "front-page" news—though it occupies three quarters of the third column on the second page in the Gloucester Journal, number 217 (10 May 1726). A crude half-column cut of a man hanging from a gibbet draws attention to what begins like an ordinary piece of news headed "Gloucester, May 7."

They write from Taunton in the County of Somerset, that one William Collard, Servant to Mr. Ayers of Streat, near Glastenbury, was Executed the 29th of March last, at Marshal's Elm, near the Place aforesaid and afterwards hang'd in Chains, for the barbarous Murder of his Dame, the Particulars whereof have been already related in our Journal of the 21st of December last.

As the Gloucester Journal had reported nearly five months before, Collard had also attacked his master's twelve-year-old daughter, cutting and beating her so fiendishly that he thought he had killed her. The reader of this subsequent report now learns that the girl has miraculously recovered, but only through the skill of a man who, whatever else may be said of him, clearly does not care to remain anonymous:

... People presently coming in, and perceiving some breath in the Girl, Dr. MOHUN of Glastenbury (a most ingenious and admirable safe Practitioner in Physick and Surgery) being immediately sent for, strangely recovered her to Life. ...
It is just as well, perhaps, that Dr. Mohun did not attempt to restore Collard to life.

These thinly disguised testimonials are crude in comparison with the clever and elaborate “press releases” concerning a man whose journeyings across the face of England for several decades were heralded by more “news” than ever marked the movements of the Duke of Marlborough or the royal family. This was John Taylor, esquire, who let it be known that he was “Doctor of Physick, Occulist to the King, Knight of the Order of Portugal, Fellow of the Imperial Academy, and of the Academies of France, Spain, Italy, Sweden, &c.,” This was the man of whom Samuel Johnson said on 24 April 1779—seven years after Taylor’s death—“Taylor was the most ignorant man I ever knew; but sprightly.” Taylor’s technique for building eager expectation in advance of his visits had all the marks of the professionally planned publicity campaign. “The celebrated Dr. Taylor” was reported in a dozen papers to have been surrounded by a “vast Concourse” of people wherever he went; he gave lectures on “the Make and Beauty of the Eye” to select audiences; he invited “the Gentlemen of the Faculty and Curious” to witness his operations; he saw to it that his published treatises on diseases of the eye—“so well receiv’d Abroad as to be translated into all the Neighbouring Languages”—were advertised in local papers as he moved about the country in one “Progress” or another; he announced his itinerary weeks in advance, and sometimes had to inform his throngs of admirers that pressure of appointments delayed him. He even announced in the *Newcastle Courant*, number 2532 (3 July 1742), that persons who had previously been under his care or were “of inferior Circumstances” would be treated free of charge if they attended his clinic immediately after his arrival in town.

The items of Taylor’s “news” which appeared in the *Newcastle Courant*, the *Weekly Worcester Journal*, the
York Courant, the Norwich Gazette, the Cambridge Journal, and other newspapers make delightful reading; they were probably all written by Taylor himself, and they make a bulky portfolio of self-advertisement. He liked to announce publicly that he had out-stripped his past achievements, and he sometimes listed persons cured by him. On one occasion “Chev.” Taylor appears to have used more subtlety than was usual with him by arranging to have the account of his itinerary (in Aris’s Birmingham Gazette, number 116, 30 January 1744) preceded by a ghastly story showing the regrettable consequences of being treated by a non-professional. It was reported that a Shropshire wagoner suffering from a dislocated shoulder “was prevailed on by a Farrier in his Neighbourhood to submit to an Operation of his,” the procedure being that the farrier fastened the man to a post, tied cloths round his arm, and engaged stalwart helpers to apply their strength; but they “pull’d so violently, that they tore his Arm from his Body, and the Man died on the Spot.” This, said the writer, “should be a Caution to Persons to make use of those Gentlemen only, whose Profession and Experience must render most serviceable.” The next paragraph begins, “Dr. Taylor, Oculist to his Majesty. . . . ” Ordinarily the itinerant eye-man simply drafted six or eight notices and sent them at appropriate intervals to the local papers before, during, and after his visit. John Taylor’s horn-blowing to herald his approach and the trailing clouds of glory which followed his departure may have been entirely justified by phenomenal success in the restoring of sight; but even if he was an unmitigated quack, his advertising methods were superb.

There were ethical considerations which kept some advertisements from being printed, even in a century which accepted without a qualm all sorts of notices about horse breeding and cures for loathsome diseases. “We are sorry we cou’d not decently insert the advertisement receiv’d last Week,” said J. Jopson in his Coventry Mercury,
number 887 (3 July 1758); "it's Wit is really too coarse for our Paper: So wou'd recommend it to the Author to have it carefully philter'd against some other Opportunity." In general the tone of advertisements is matter of fact, sometimes detached and dull, occasionally personal and vivacious. If there is little of psychological subtlety, there is a wide range of theme, and (as in a good proverb) there is frequently a hint of dramatic situation or forceful character.

William Cowper found himself amused by the advertisements in the newspaper which came to him on a wintry night, and it is probable that a reader's amusement in that "wilderness of strange / But gay confusion" is increased rather than diminished by an interval of two centuries. Many an early newspaper proves to be diverting just for the variety of its paid notices. One column has advertisements of olive oil, beeswax, fustick, and organ voluntaries; another invites readers to join the crew of a privateer, attend an auction, subscribe to a lying-in hospital, or enjoy a concert at which Mr. Perkins and his son will "endeavour to please on the Hautboy"; the same page has a grocer's announcement to peruke makers that he has for sale hair of all kinds from a London warehouse, a wholesaler's offer of molasses and English bar iron, and the business card of James Stephenson, "Druggist and Chymist" who sells "Colours of all sorts, for Faces, House, or Ship Painting." One Liverpool flour merchant in 1757 offers at reasonable prices "Ten Pipes of Raisin Wine, a Parcel of Bottled Cyder, and a Negro Boy." A Newcastle man offers the unexpended provisions of two whaling ships just back from Greenland. In 1755, Daniel Stainer of Sherborne, trumpeter to the sheriffs of Dorset, Somerset, and Bristol, invites gentlemen of the best fortune to visit the Mermaid Inn, which he has just taken over, offering "civil Usage," stabling for fifty horses, and a special attraction at no extra charge: "Music on the Trumpet, French Horn, Violin, Bass Viol, &c. either singly
or in Consort.” Besides farms, hats, harness, and Newfoundland codfish, one could buy drums, fishhooks, lottery tickets, biscuits for funerals, does (a guinea each), a coal mine, a spinet, artificial limbs, milch asses, and ready made shrouds. In St. Ives, a grocer (friend of some modest parson) said in 1718 that he had for disposal “a Choice and Private Composure of Manuscript Sermons, in a legible Hand, and never in Print.” Here a pipe organ is to be raffled; there a thousand oak trees are “expos’d to sale,” or “a Large, Beautiful Ox, six Years old” may be acquired.

Then, as always, the buyer had to be on his guard. “If Folks have their Senses,” said Robert Whitworth in his advertisement of the Original Cordial Elixir in 1741, “there never was more Occasion to use them than now; for almost every one cries up what he deals in, whether he thinks it good or not, nay many use all Arts, however scandalous they are, to promote their own Gain.” This was particularly true of the claims made for medicines and services. There were in the eighteenth century no “reduce now, pay later” advertisements, but there was no imaginable ailment for which a cure was not proposed. As was pointed out in the preceding chapter, the printers themselves often sold medicines. It is no concern of ours whether James Lister, printer of the Leeds Mercury, ever swallowed the “Cordial Tincture for the Cholick and the Gripes” which he advertised on 24 February 1741, but he could hardly be blamed if he felt tempted to open a bottle, since this concoction, his own advertisement stated, was “of such a chearing, sweetning, warming, searching, cleansing, friendly, balsamick, restorative Nature and Quality, that it immediately pacifies the most severe and terrible raking Pains, frees the Body from vicious Humours, defends the Head from noisome Vapours, takes away Dizziness and Megrims; being the most speedy and effectual Remedy yet found out.” Similar enthusiasm was displayed by those who prepared and offered for sale a
hundred other mixtures. Someone ought to gather together a few of these advertisements of potent pills and medicines; they would make a diverting section in a volume compiled for holiday reading.

Entertainment of many kinds was available to contemporary readers of the eighteenth-century country papers. Our ancestors could drink the chalybeate waters "very lately discovered at Brosely in Shropshire"; they could venture to engage in sea bathing at Aldeburgh; they could gaze at five hundred pounds' worth of wax-works to the accompaniment of chamber organ music; they could watch—or participate in—wrestling, backsword ("No Head to be deemed broke unless the Blood runs an Inch"), and dancing competitions; they could visit a showing of auriculas in April, or set eyes on a female rhinoceros—"the real unicorn." There were numerous performances of plays to be enjoyed or endured: *Oroonoko, The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and unheard-of pieces by local playwrights; there was music in practically every town in the kingdom, from performances of the Three Choirs in Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester to the celebrations of St. Cecilia's Day in various centers and the annual musical festival in Salisbury; there was even a moving-picture machine to be wondered at. Not least attractive among the diversions frequently advertised in the country papers were the battling of cocks, horse racing, and bull baiting.

Few of these quaint and sprightly advertisements prove so stimulating to the imagination as those in which a turn of phrase or a hint of circumstances gives a glimpse of an individual human being. This is a quality which modern advertisers continue to strive for. One touch of nature serves. Perhaps the advertisement is no more than a notification that Mr. Curtis, "very old and weary with Trading," is going out of business in Bury St. Edmund's in 1726; or the announcement by Mr. Hughes of Plymouth in 1723 that his apothecary's shop "with a very Fashion-
able Set of Bottles” is to be disposed of; or a profuse apology by Thomas Wells of the Devizes in 1725 for having publicly called his neighbor’s wife “an Old Pox’d Whore.” The situation may be deplorable, or ludicrous, or both. Someone in St. Ives in 1718 decides to expose the fraudulent practices of “an Illiterate and Impudent Pretending Quack . . . a Person who stiles himself, Dr. Vulverstone.” A journeyman nailer in Foregate Street, Worcester, beseeches his eloped wife to return because their young child, “which suck’d at her Breast,” will die soon if the said breast does not come back. A lath cleaver in Framlingham challenges any other lath cleaver in Suffolk to match him in making a load of oaken rift into lath, “and the Lath as good, . . . let the Timber be great or small or twisted.” A distant relative of a later poet fumes with rage in June, 1755, because “on Monday last some Person or Persons did cut off, or otherwise deprive of his Tail, a Hound, belonging to Bish Shelley, Esq.,” and the reward for the discovery of the person or persons is to be five guineas. A disgruntled barber and periwig maker of York finds himself with a large stock of wax candles made, as usual, for the minster; but “by Reason he poll’d for Sir Miles Stapylton in the late Election,” he has been disappointed in the sale and must sell them off at two shillings a pound. A spirited lady—likely to make herself heard in her community whether she remained in England or migrated to America—has a strong statement to make on a family matter in the Gloucester Journal of 10 May 1726:

Mr. Richard Harwood being a Reproach to his Family, hath nothing to say for himself, but that Mrs. Lucy Stokes, his Aunt, hath defrauded him of an Estate: Therefore she declares she is ready to shew her Title to the said Estate, at Longford, and bids Defiance to any body that says she defrauded them.

This is gossip, and gossip is the most ephemeral of all
ADVERTISING

human communication; but the defiance of Lucy Stokes and the annoyance of Bish Shelley, like many of the wants and warnings and money-making efforts reflected in these old newspaper advertisements, have a charm which does not dwindle.

1. The first issue was entitled True Character of Mercurius Urbanicus & Rusticus, and from number 14 the title was Mercury, publishing advertisements of all sorts: as of Persons run away, lost or spirited; horses, or other Things lost or stolen.

2. 10 Anne, c. 19, An Act for laying several Duties upon all Sope and Paper made in Great Britain, or imported into the same, . . . And upon several Kinds of stamp’d Vellum, Parchment, and Paper; And upon certain printed Papers, Pamphlets, and Advertisements, for raising the Sum of Eighteen hundred thousand Pounds by way of a Lottery towards Her Majesties Supply. . . .

3. A.O.3/950 to 1026. The figures showing the gross produce of the advertisement duty in Great Britain for the years 1713 to 1798 have been assembled by Professor A. Aspinall in “Statistical Accounts of the London Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century,” English Historical Review, CCXLVI (1948), 201-32.


5. The authorities kept an eye on Norris. A month later he wrote on the front page of his paper, “Taunton, Septem 3rd. this Day Mr Hollis Inspector of the Stamp Duties was at my House in Taunton.” The copies on which these notes were written are now in the library of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, Taunton.

6. The copy on which this receipt was written is in the Clifford Collection, deposited in the Gloucester City Libraries.

7. “A Chariot and one Pair of Harness to be sold, all little the worse for wear. Enquire at the Printing-Office in Gloucester.”

8. 10 Anne, c. 19, section cxviii.

9. The office copy of this paper is in the Bristol Municipal Library.

10. Worrall’s tardy habits appear also in the Audit Office accounts in the Public Record Office (A.O.3/952 to 954), which show annual unpaid balances usually amounting to more than two thousand pounds due to the receiver-general from the Gloucestershire collector. For the year ending 2 August 1755, for example, the outstanding balance due from Worrall for all kinds of duties was £2,197 17s. 5½d. Of this total, the sum of £252 16s. 19½d. was owing for duties of “Several Kinds,” including the duty on advertisements.

11. Curll’s letter and the report of the Commissioners of Stamp

12. 30 George 2, c.19 [1757].
14. Details have been assembled and interpreted by K. G. Burton, op. cit., pp. 54-55, and 254.
15. An advertisement commending an edition of Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels occupies two and a half columns on the first page of the Derby Mercury, number 51 (2 March 1744).
17. "We print every week several hundreds more than our Predecessors in the Printing Office ever did, which makes the Advantage of advertising in the York-Courant too obvious to require any Thing farther to be offered on this Hand."
18. London publishers frequently advertised their books in provincial newspapers before as well as after 1760.
19. Long before 1750, James Abree used pages one, three, and four for advertisements in his Kentish Post: or the Canterbury News-Letter.
21. Taylor's titles became more glittering as time went on. In Jopson's Coventry Mercury, number 927 (9 April 1759), he was called "the Chevalier Taylor, Ophthalmiate (Oculist) to his present Majesty, to the Pontificial and Imperial Courts, and to the several other Crown'd Heads, &c." But back in 1732, the Newcastle Courant, number 349, declared that its earlier report of Taylor's having been "complimented with the Degree of Doctor" at the University of Edinburgh was false.
22. In Aris's Birmingham Gazette, number 35 (12 July 1742), there appeared as 'news' the statement that Taylor would "return to London from Chester in the following Manner: Will arrive at Hull the 9th of this Month, 17 Lincoln, 20 Nottingham, 21 Derby, 23 Leicester, 24 Stamford, 27 Harborough, 28 Northampton, 29 Warwick, 31 Worcester, August 2d Hereford, 4th Gloucester, 6th Cirencester, 9th Bristol, and from thence by Bath for London."
23. The Task, IV, 78 f.
24. This was Mrs. Hurck's "Moving Paper Machine," exhibited at Shrewsbury in August 1742. It was reported in Aris's Birmingham Gazette, number 140 (16 August 1742), to be "the most curious and surprising Piece of Machinery . . . ever seen, every Figure resembling Life so near, and in their proper Motion, as not to fail raising the greatest Wonder and Satisfaction in the Beholder."