WITH THE FREHEST ADVICES FOREIGN AND DOMESTICK.

FROM SATURDAY JUNE 3, TO SUNDAY JUNE 10, 1721.

From Stanley's News-Letter, June 3.

Yesterday the Committee appointed to Enquire who was the Author of the Traitorous Letter in Mill's Journal of Saturday last, and other Affairs, sat in the Speaker's Chamber and Examined Mr. Crawford, Marchal of the King's Bench, and the Prison Books in Relation to the Action of 900 l. laid against Mill, as also a Stationer who is Plantiff in the said occasion, and time begin to be, that this Action is only a Sham and Contrivance to keep Mill out of Newgate. This Committee is composed of the Lord Hinchenbroke, Chairman, and Mr. Walpole, the two Mr. Poultenys, Sir Richard Steele, Mr. Kellet, Mr. Stanhope, and 4 or 5 others.

The same Day the Committee of the House of Commons gave the following Allowances to the Rest of the late Directors, viz.

To Theodore Jansen 5000 l. on a Division 18 against 118. Sir Jacob Jacobson 10000 l. which is the whole of his Inventory. Arthur Ingram 2000 l. Sir John Lambert 5000 l. Mr. Harcourt Mafter 7000 l. Mr. Morley 18000 l. which is the whole of his Inventory, except 96 l. 10s. 3 d. Ambrose Page 10000 l. Col. Raymond 30000 l. Samuel Read 10000 l. Thomas Reynolds 14000 l.

The further Consideration of Publick Crie was deferred to Wednesday, after some Debates, wherein a Controversy happened between Mr. Walpole and Mr. Leachmore about Proroguing the Parliament for a short time, in Order the better to confirm the Resolution of the Grand Committee, for remitting part of the 7 Millions, Mr. Walpole argued the Necessity of a Prorogation, and Mr. Leachmore that there was no Necessity, but nothing was done in this Affair.

We hear some of the greatest Lawyers are of Opinion, that Mill's Case amounts to high Treason.

We are assured that the Report from the Secret Committee, formerly mentioned, will certainly be made on Monday next, and in all likelihood it will be very Extraordinary, there is the greatest Expectation imaginable to hear the Contents of it, and what will ensue thereon.

This Day the Committee of the House of Commons allowed Mr. Sawbridge 5000 l. Mr. Tillard 10000 l. Mr. Turner 8000 l. which was the whole of his Account, except 96 l. Mr. Surmon 5000 l. And Mr. Grigsby is deferred to Monday.

Some Letters from Paris mention, That Mr. Robert Sutton has procured the release of the Protestants who are Galley Slaves for Religion:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Constantinople, May 5. The youngest Son of the Sultan is dead. The Head of Ali Pasha, late Governor of Egypt, is brought hither from Grand Cairo, and is laid before the Secreglio. And that the Bohang-Basha, prime Favourite of the Sultan, who espoused his Daughters, is fallen into Disgrace, and will be Stript of his Employments, and it is thought will be Brangled.

Price Three-half-Pence.
News from Far and Near

From the primeval days of drum-thumpings and smoke signals in the jungle to twentieth-century electronic devices on and above the earth, man has had a lively interest in the getting and sending of bulletins about his neighbors; and it appears that the Englishman's desire for "intelligence" has been more vehement than that of any other human being.

The Love of News is ne'er to be supprest,
With great and small, it reigns in ev'ry Breast.

So reads a couplet—one of twenty-six—in a set of verses "On the Pleasure of reading News" printed in Ayscough's Nottingham Courant, number 239 (7 June 1760). "There is no Humour in my Countrymen," wrote Addison in the Spectator, number 452 (8 August 1712), "which I am more inclined to wonder at than their general Thirst after News." With his usual touch of light satire Addison suggested that it did not matter much to his compatriots

Fig. 6.—The written newsletters regularly received from London were widely used as sources of information about House of Common affairs. (By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)
whether the reports they read so eagerly were good or bad, trivial or tremendous: "A Victory or a Defeat is equally agreeable to them." Addison was enjoying himself by laughing at his contemporaries' eagerness to hear "the latest," but it was this same eagerness that led to the establishing of newspapers all over the country, and no matter what these papers were called—Journal, Gazette, Mercury, Courant, and so forth—their substance was chiefly what many a subtitle announced as freshest advices, foreign and domestic.

"Great must be the Curiosity of the Kingdom, which can support such a Cloud of News-Writers, who live cheerfully upon the publick Thirst of Information." So wrote "Historianus" in his letter to "Criton" in the British Journal on 14 December 1723. His point and his method were very much like Addison's eleven years earlier, but he emphasized more sharply the failure of news writers and news readers alike to distinguish between the significant and the trivial.

... a Story of a Prince, and a Story of a Drayman, are told in the same Style, and with the same Decorations, and with such thorough Information, that neither can a Prince strain his Ankle, nor a Drayman put his Knee out, but presently their Disasters, with the sending for Surgeons, and the Hopes of Cure, are committed with Care to divers faithful Three-Halfpenny Records itinerant.

Continuing the banter, "Historianus" complained that the printers of news usually separated foreign dispatches from the accounts of happenings at home, and suggested that it would be more agreeable if the two sorts of news were mingled. Then came examples of the proposed arrangement, for the guidance of "that Curious and Communicative Society, who daily and weekly instruct the World in what the World is doing":

_Hamburgh; October 19._ Letters from Petersburgh relate, That the Persian Ambassador hath concluded a Treaty
of Alliance between his Czarish Majesty and the young Sophi. Hereupon the Ambassador entertain'd the Court at a sumptuous Banquet.

From York they write, That Barnaby Thunder and Anthony Hotspur Esquires, of that County, have put an End at last to their long Family Quarrel about the Boundaries of a Brick-Kiln; and, by the Mediation of the Curate, have consolidated their Fox-Hounds, intending for the future, as a sincere Mark of Reconciliation, to hunt together. Upon which, as a Seal of Peace and Friendship, they drank two Days and two Nights Hand to Fist.

"Historianus" supplied other illuminating examples, and concluded with advertisements in the same vein.

These essays in the Spectator and the British Journal, like Tatler papers number 18, 155, and 178, and Goldsmith's observations on the same theme in the fourth and fifth Chinese Letters, were written in fun. A more serious tone is detected in a letter from "Ned Friendly" to "Caleb D'Anvers" of the Craftsman, in number 546 (18 December 1736), on the subject of news writers and their blunders and artifices. The men who write news, says Ned, will doubtless allege in defense of their fictitious reports the plain fact that human beings are naturally eager for news of any kind, and as the newsmen have to publish something regularly, they might as well give up their papers if they cannot feel free to make up the stories they print. Besides, he adds, the printers of newspapers have found that their readers are as much pleased with false news as true; and if real news is scarce, they think there can be no harm in concocting acceptable imitations of the real thing. Coffee-house politicians have always been eager to read and—like Politic in Fielding's Rape upon Rape or Squeezum in Bernard Miles's Lock up Your Daughters—to believe whatever they see in print.

Scarcity of genuine news must in all ages be the newsman's nightmare, for the gaping columns have to be filled. "Not one Article of News in this Day's Gazette," said Robert Goadby in his Sherborne Mercury on 5 January
1756; and this was a complaint not infrequently made by others. "We hope, in the present Scarcity of News, the following Poems will not be unacceptable to our Readers," said Raikes and Dicey in the Gloucester Journal of 4 January 1725, and in other issues they made a point of promising that "in the Dearth of News" they would keep their Journal pleasant as well as profitable to readers by inserting "something New and Entertaining."1 "I desire you to erase out my Name from among the Number of your Subscribers," wrote a correspondent in the British Spy early in December, 1728, "unless in your next you give me a just Reason of the Barrenness of your Intelligence"; and in number 79 (5 December 1728) S. Hodgkinson protested that it was hard to give his readers in Derby and vicinity the full measure which they expected every week:

When the Mails fail us, and the People are unactive at home, when great Folks are so ill-natur’d as neither to marry nor die, nor beget Children, we are upon the Search for that scarce commodity call’d Wit, which, ’tis well known, is in these our Days as hard to come at in any Week (especially in Derby,) as Intelligence.

Indeed everybody recognized that there would inevitably be times when advices from home and abroad would be sparse and that other matters must on occasion serve in their place.

But news was the staple, and it was a rash proprietor who allowed other things to crowd out the news.2 Samuel Johnson, who was not easily pleased by news writers, spoke for thousands of Englishmen when he declared in the first issue of the London Chronicle (1 January 1757), "The first Demand made by the Reader of a Journal is, that he should find an accurate Account of foreign Transactions and domestick Incidents." If some proprietors were willing to run the risk of losing readers by printing revenue-producing advertisements in place of news, there
were many who let it be known that letters and contributed pieces would never be allowed to crowd out the news. Isaac Thompson, author of the very successful *Newcastle Journal*, made a clear statement to this effect at the top of his first column in number 15 (14 July 1739):

> We hope our Correspondents will not take it amiss that we do not immediately give their Letters a Place in this Paper; whenever the publick Intelligence will admit of it, we shall be sure to oblige every one in this Respect, as far as possible: But we have not Room this Week for any Essay; and perhaps (considering what Affairs at present seem to promise) this may often be the Case, which we believe our Readers will not only excuse, but expect.

The following issues of the *Newcastle Journal* even sacrifice Thompson’s own treatise for the sake of news, as is explained in number 16 (21 July 1739): “The Quantity of News at present obliges us to publish our Geography by very short and abrupt Pieces.”

News, then, was the *sine qua non* of the provincial weeklies, and not fictitious news either. It was the constant demand of the proprietors—as it really was of their readers—that the news should be true. Veracity, said the energetic John Jackson of the *York Gazetteer* (number 14, 15 December 1741), was “the only Substantial Qualification for one in our Business.” Honest efforts were made to print only what was trustworthy, and several newspapers particularly requested correspondents to send in only well-attested reports. John Newbery and Charles Micklewright perhaps intended to impress readers as much as voluntary reporters when they placed this notice at the head of their *Reading Mercury* in 1742 and later years:

> As the Proprietors of this Paper are desirous to have it correct, and, as near as they can, to insert nothing but Facts, they hope their Correspondents in all Parts will take care to transmit no Accounts but what they know to be
true; and all Intelligence that is genuine will be thankfully receiv’d.

A notice with precisely the same wording was placed at the head of the Doncaster Flying-Post; or, Hull and Sheffield Weekly Advertiser in 1755, and the printers of several other papers made a similar request.

Such pleas for veracity were undoubtedly necessary, for many inaccurate reports were sent in and printed in good faith. “We are assured from Shrewsbury,” wrote Thomas Aris in his Birmingham Gazette, number 391 (8 May 1749), “that the Account sent from thence last Week, and inserted in this Paper, in relation to the Fireworks there, was an entire Falsehood.” Newspaper men may on occasion, like Daniel Defoe, invent news rather than wait for the mails to bring interesting stories, but they hesitate to print accounts invented by others, unless, like Robert Whitworth of the Manchester Magazine, they place suspicious items under the heading “Rumours.”

Printers of newspapers in Derby were notably reluctant to print details not well authenticated. S. Hodgkinson of the British Spy: or, Derby Post Man may have felt it wise to be especially circumspect because of an attack by a local clergyman, but he showed admirable editorial caution in number 14 (13 July 1727) in describing the effects of “an astonishing Sort of a Whirlwind, followed by a violent Tempest of Wind.” The storm killed Jermain Harrison, a malt miller, and the lightning melted the coins in his pocket. “I hear of other Effects likewise of this Storm; but not being thoroughly inform’d of the Particulars, must omit the Insertion.” In number 22 of his British Spy Hodgkinson protected himself from a possible charge of prevarication by naming the voluntary reporter and implied a degree of skepticism about a six-year-old girl’s visions by the use of “he says”:

Derby, Sept. 14. One Thomas Bostock of Buzlum near Newcastle under Lime, gives us the following Narrative,
When Sam Drewry, printer of the *Derby Mercury*, read a report of Commodore Anson’s successes at sea in 1742, he could have been pardoned for being slightly skeptical about the statement that Anson’s prizes included five millions of pieces of eight, but he nevertheless printed the account, for it had been sent in “a private Letter to a Gentleman in this Town,” and was, he said, “thought to be authentick.”

It is one of the hazards of journalism that a piece of “intelligence” may prove to be ill-founded; and if there is no time to verify a report before press time, the editor has to decide which of two risks to take: should he miss the opportunity of printing a good story or suffer the embarrassment of having later to correct a false one? The *Weekly Worcester Journal*, number 856 (19 November 1725), printed an exciting story about the finding of a body. The detail about the exact depth of the soil and the precise description of the clothing seem convincing:

*Worcester, Nov. 18. Last Week as some Workmen were digging in the Yard in the Foregate-Street, commonly call’d The Pound, where now a handsome House is building, they found buried within 8 inches of the Surface, a Man having on a Calimanco Wastcoat, Holland Shirt, Jersey Stockins, and Boots; but as soon as his Apparel or Flesh was touch’d it fell to Dust. His Corps was taken thence and buried in St. Oswel’s Hospital-Burying-Place.*

But the next issue contained a note which shows how easy it must have been to accept as genuine a circumstantial report that came in just before press time:
In the *Worcester* Paragraph of our last Paper, our Readers are desired to take Notice, that it was a false Report brought us last Thursday a little before the News was compleated, of the Corpse of a Man found buried in his Cloaths; whereas upon examining the Workmen, do find it appear to be no more than some dry human Bones and a Skull, which they put in a Kipe and buried in the Hospital Burying-place close adjoyning. The Person that brought the Account nam’d the Person that buried the said Corpse, which proves as false as its having on Cloaths, or Flesh, on the Bones. . . .

The printer had not yet learned that reports brought in by excited onlookers needed confirmation before they were set up in type.

A more exciting piece of news reached the editor of the *Bath Advertiser*, who used italics for a heading and enclosed in quotation marks a special report, printed as the last item of news in number 46 (28 August 1756):

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> "This Evening were brought in here, five French ships, "one of 60 Guns, one of 50, and three frigates, taken by "Admiral Boscawen, Part of a Convoy; more are expec­"ted, as a very great Firing has been heard for many Hours "in the Channel."

The report aroused the greatest excitement in the South of England; but a week later, Stephen Martin, printer of the *Bath Advertiser*, set as his first item of news under the heading “Bath, September 4” a second announcement to the effect that “the wish’d-for good News, after the strictest Enquiry” had proved to be false. It was not five enemy ships that had appeared in the Channel but a Dutch man-of-war, with a convoy, “brought to by the Admiral to be examined for contraband Goods.” Strange flags and the firing of salutes had occasioned the reporter’s mistake; and “a Desire of giving the earliest Intelligence to our Readers” had been responsible for the premature insertion of the paragraph.
NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

It would be easier to condemn a provincial editor for fumbling credulousness if it were not for his readiness to correct the error, which was often not his fault. Again and again a report taken from a London "print" or from one of the well-established written newsletters proved to be erroneous. A typical example is the account "From Wye's Letter, October 7" copied verbatim in the Gloucester Journal, number 288 (10 October 1727):

They write from Bristol, that the Colliers of Kingswood, who, assembled in great Bodies to pull down the Turnpikes, are now busy in mending the Highways, particularly the sandy Lane which lies between them and that City, which they are making a very good Road; they chuse to do this themselves rather than pay a Toll which they may never know the end of, but whether they will be excused or no on this Account, a little Time will shew, for the Commissioners are going to set up eleven Turnpikes in the Room of those pull'd down.

In the following issue of the Gloucester Journal was a very different statement of what the Kingswood colliers were doing:

Gloucester, Oct. 14. The Account from Bristol, by the way of London, incerted in our last, relating to the Colliers repairing the Roads, proves a Mistake, and the Truth is as follows. That by a former Order of the Quarter Sessions at Gloucester, 6d. in the Pound hath lately been rais'd on the Land Holders in the Parish of St. Philip and Jacob, for repairing of their Highways; Sir Abraham Elton, Bart. and another of his Majesty's Justices, being appointed Expenditors for the said Purpose; the Colliers being not at all concern'd in it, except any of them that are hired for Day Labourers.

This correcting of a false report redeems Raikes from the charge of gullibility, but his best defence was the fact that he indicated where he had found the story.

Where did the news printed in these country papers come from? It can be said at once that most of it was
taken directly from what were often described as "the most reputable Prints and Letters," by which were meant the printed newspapers and the written newsletters, mainly from London. All the accounts of what was going on in London, most foreign news, and even much of the matter under the caption "Country News" came to local printers from the London Gazette, from the other London papers—daily, thrice-weekly, twice-weekly, and weekly—or from the written newsletters of Stanley, Wye, and fifty others. For news of shipping there was Lloyd's List, which apparently was available as early as 1726.

A few printers of provincial newspapers gave no hint whatever of the sources of their news, merely indicating the days on which the several posts brought the usual selection of London papers. The Norwich Post, for instance, had a standard phrase in the heading of each of the three batches of news: "This Day's Post brought the following Advices." No indication of the source of news is given in Pilborough's Colchester Journal. In its earlier years John White's Newcastle Courant excluded all reference to the papers from which news had been abstracted; though in number 95 (8 March 1712), White disclosed that he customarily drew upon several sources; refuting the Newcastle Gazette's charge of "stuffing his Paper with Notorious Falcities," White admitted that some errors might occasionally be found "amongst so great variety of Intelligence from so many different Persons and Places."

Some printers—Stephen Bryan, of Worcester, for example—gave vague and non-committal hints that the news they printed was "From the London Prints," "From one of the London News Papers," "From Dyer's Letter and other Intelligence," "From Wye's Letter, St. James's—, the London-Evening-Post, and other Prints." Until the Plymouth Weekly Journal had been appearing for five years, its printer gave no hint of the papers from which news was usually transcribed; it was only in 1724 that E. Kent began to put at the end of groups of paragraphs
such acknowledgments as 

"(So far St. James's Eve. Post)" or "(Dormer's Letter)."

Most printers throughout the period 1700-1760 indicated quite definitely in one way or another the several papers from which they regularly took their pieces of news. In 1757, Whitworth's Manchester Advertiser had under its date line the forthright assertion, "This Paper contains more News than any other sold in these Parts; and is collected from the London Gazette, all the Evening Posts, Daily Papers, Lloyd's List, and sometimes private London Letters." More precise evidence concerning London papers regularly taken by a local printer is the notice in F. Farley's Bristol Journal, number 98 (11 April 1746):

"Any Merchant that may want to oblige a foreign Correspondent with the London Gazette, London and General Evening Posts, as also the Daily and General Advertisers that come on a Friday, may be supply'd therewith at an easy Rate, by applying to the Printer hereof.——Loose London Papers for several Months back may now be had.

Robert Walker and William Jackson assured readers of their Oxford Flying Weekly Journal that the twopence which they paid for a copy of the paper brought them the equivalent of an arm-load of daily and weekly newspapers from all over the kingdom and from Western Europe:

The Advices inserted in this Journal are collected from the following Papers, viz. Amsterdam, Utrecht, Hague, Brussels, Paris and London Gazettes; the Paris Ala-Main; London, General, St. James's and Whitehall Evening Posts; London Courant; Daily Advertiser; General Advertiser; Daily Gazetteer; Craftsman; Westminster Journal; Dublin and Edinburgh News-Papers; Wye's, Fox's and other written Letters, and from all Country News-Papers, and Private Intelligence.

An almost identical list was placed at the head of the first column in the Cambridge Journal, printed by Walker and
Thomas James; and a similar list stood at the top of the first column of the paper which J. Keating printed in Stratford.

There were some—among them the *Northampton Mercury*, the *Reading Journal*, and Schofield's *Middlewich Journal*—which assured their readers that the news was authoritative by printing at the top of the first page a list of papers usually quoted, with a key to the abbreviations attached to the several articles or groups of articles in the columns below. Others omitted the list but attached to the individual items of news abbreviated acknowledgments like "Gen. Ev." or "Lond. Ev. Post." Where this was done it is possible to take almost the whole paper apart and uncombine the components, tracing them with the utmost ease to the exact columns in particular newspapers from which the "author's" scissors-and-paste method had taken them as he compiled each issue.

Nowhere is this synthetic process more obvious than in the *North Country Journal*, printed in Newcastle by various members of the Umphreville family from 1734 to 1739. The clues are listed in a note at the top of the first column, with the heading, "To the Reader":

This News-Paper being Collected from the following London Prints, &c. the Letters at the end of each Paragraph shew from which the same is taken, viz.

| G. E. | General Evening | L. E. | London Evening |
| P. | Postboy | S. J. E. | St. James's Ev. |
| Cr. | Craftsman | D. A. | Daily Advertiser |
| W. M. | Weekly Miscellany | D. C. | Daily Courant |
| D. J. | Daily Journal | W. L. | Wye's Letter |
| C. J. | Corn Cutter's Jo. | D. P. | Daily Post |

It is a very simple exercise to "unstick" all the items in any one issue of the *North Country Journal* and find the exact spot from which each was taken out of one con-
temporary London newspaper or another. It is a question whether anyone found this acknowledgment particularly reassuring; but the device had at least the merit of complete frankness, and the compiler could feel exonerated from any charge of having invented news; he honestly admitted that it was all stolen.

One important ingredient in the hotchpotch—material taken from written newsletters—is less easily traced to the original publication than are the excerpts from London or other “prints”; but that is so only because few of the written newsletters have survived. The General Post Office Letter and the bulletins supplied regularly by Stanley, Wye, Fox, Jackson, Le Bourdery, King, Godwin, Fountain, Calcroft, Tompkins, and many others throughout the period were widely quoted in country newspapers, especially for political news, the acknowledgment being either an abbreviation of the title appended to a quoted passage or a special caption preceding it, such as “From Green’s News-Letter, October 9.” Stanley and Wye were especially useful as sources of news from elsewhere in the provinces.

One provincial newspaper deserves special mention for its exceptional treatment of news from foreign journals. Ordinarily such news came to London printers in French or Dutch or Spanish newspapers and reached the provincial printers only after having been translated and printed in the London papers. This took time; and as not all printers had translators on their staffs, the first translation to appear in print was unblushingly copied by any printers who desired to use it. The provincial printers as a rule simply accepted whatever translations or summaries reached them. Among the items which Adams’s Weekly Courant, number 885 (Tuesday, 28 March 1750), reprinted as having reached Chester in Saturday’s post was “From the Paris A-la-main, March 27: An Arret of the Council of State is issued for suppressing a certain immoral Work, intituled, The History of TOM JONES,
translated from the English.” In Adams’s Weekly Courant, as in other papers, foreign news invariably stood at the head of every batch of news. But Andrew Hooke of Bristol and a “Society” of associates responsible for the publication of the Oracle: Or, Bristol Weekly Miscellany made a special feature of taking in the continental newspapers themselves and of translating selected articles for their readers. The gain in time was considerable.

The plan was explained in an announcement standing at the head of early issues of the Oracle—for example number 3 (Saturday, 17 April 1742): “... our Intelligences are directly transmitted to us from abroad; ... all our Foreign News is translated by our selves from original Authorities, and, most commonly, composed for the Press before it comes from London in the English Papers.” The issue of 8 May 1742 frankly stated that the latest news to come by that day’s post had already been set up in type in the Oracle office: “it came to hand in the Original Papers Thursday, was translated here, and composed for the Press yesterday.” Within a few weeks the proprietors of the Oracle were doing what must have seemed marvelously modern and efficient: they were posting their latest foreign news in a public place many hours before their rivals could exhibit their freshest advices. Hooke’s headquarters were at the St. Michael’s coffee house “in Maudlin-Lane, near St. James’s Church-Yard.” There, as one sees by a prominent notice under the date line of number 20 (14 August 1742) and subsequent issues, “the original foreign Gazettes from which our Intelligence is taken, with their English Translations, may be seen, generally a Day, and many times two Days, before it comes to any other Coffee-House.” This notable effort by the proprietors of a provincial newspaper to provide their readers with the latest foreign dispatches is most praiseworthy, for the service could not have been more direct.

It remains a fact that much of what filled the columns
of news in the provincial papers did not originate locally; but it would be quite wrong to suppose that every item of news in country newspapers had already been published elsewhere. Examples quoted above and others to follow serve to show that, in addition to foreign and domestic advices copied from London newspapers, from papers printed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, or Belfast, from the weekly newsletters, from Continental or colonial newspapers received by the local printer, and from other country newspapers, there was no lack of news derived from local and regional sources or sent in by correspondents at a distance. The news which is most entertaining and most illuminating to read now, indeed, is the news, not taken from printed newspapers and written newsletters, but either secured by the personal efforts of the local editor and his engaged reporters or sent in to him by friendly readers; the reports of local observers, the dispatches of special correspondents, and communications of traveling townsmen make a body of quite delightful reading, no matter what the subject.

Not every item of news introduced by such words as “They write from Eye in Suffolk” or “We hear from Trowbridge in Wilts” is necessarily a first-hand account, for these are formulas frequently used by Stanley and other writers of newsletters, and the passages so headed may have come by way of London. Sometimes the date of the account in relation to the date of the newspaper in which it occurs is sufficient to prove that the incident was reported directly, if the interval of time is too short for the story to have been copied from another publication. It is obvious that a report dated at Shields on 9 July 1717 announcing that “Yesternight came in here the Friendship of Boston in New-England, Mr. Rich. Mayhair Commander from Virginia ...” was sent direct from Shields to Newcastle, for it appeared in small type as the final item of news in the Newcastle Courant, number 930 (10 July 1717). It can be assumed that the report
FRESHEST ADVICES

of an incident in the Gloucester Journal, number 237 (18 October 1726), did not come from a London newspaper, for it begins, "Gloucester, Oct. 15. They write from Wootton Underedge, in this county. . . ." Similarly an account dated at Exmouth on 18 December and printed in the Sherborne Mercury, number 408 (20 December 1756), cannot have been taken from another newspaper; and a long letter dated at Liverpool on 13 April 1759 and printed in the Union Journal (Halifax) on 17 April cannot have reached the Union Journal office via a London paper.

Best evidence of originality is to be detected in specific references to "Our Correspondent in Oxford" or to the writer of particular accounts. "We thank our Correspondent at East Knoyle for his Occurrences," wrote Robert Raikes in the Gloucester Journal, number 231 (6 September 1726), "but his Letters not coming to hand till the 31st of August, we could not insert them till this Week." In this and subsequent issues are printed several items of news sent in by the anonymous reader at East Knoyle. A special letter from Yarmouth addressed to William Chase, the printer of the Norwich Mercury, reported "the Case of Elizabeth Thompson, who was executed here Yesterday." The Newcastle Courant had in its issue of 19 January 1734 a report "sent us from one of our Correspondents" concerning a charge laid against a Durham customs officer for assaulting John Armstrong, the Sutherland carrier, on the road. The Salisbury Journal reported that the previous week the western post had been stopped by three footpads near Coker Hill, about three miles below Yeovil, and that a later communication told of a second attack: "Last Night about 8 o'clock in the Evening, an Express came here from Sherburn in Dorsetshire, with an Account that the Western Post Boy was robb'd early in the Morning by three Foot-Pads near the same Place, and suppos'd to be the same Persons that robb'd it on Tuesday last as above mentioned. . . ."
News could be even fresher if it was brought in person by a witness rather than sent by a messenger. The *Gloucester Journal*, number 499 (2 November 1731), gave the first exciting account of a fatal duel, fought in a nearby city, which at that time had no newspaper of its own. The report, a single breathless sentence, was printed in italics:

*Early this Morning a Man pass'd thro' this City for Herefordshire, by whom we have an Account, that one Mr. Price, a young Gentleman, whose Father lives in that County, was shot dead on the Spot Yesterday in the Afternoon at Bath, in an Engagement between him and an Irish Gamester, who is a very lusty Man, and has absconded.*

Later issues of the *Gloucester Journal* gave more details, including an advertisement inserted by the father of the victim and a letter sent to the printer from the Hague by Charles Jones relating “the Particulars of the Duel fought between him and the unfortunate Mr. Prise at Bath the 31st ult. . . .”

It is perfectly clear that the printers of the *Salisbury Journal*, the *Gloucester Journal*, and numerous other country newspapers often set up news from manuscript copy received from local or regional sources rather than from London “prints” and newsletters; but that is not all: there were several country papers which had special correspondents in London itself, whose reports supplemented those in the regular London paper. Caesar Ward provided readers of his *York Courant* in 1742 with special reports on affairs of state sent to him by “R.F.,” whom Ward referred to as “our Correspondent at London.” Thomas Aris, as was pointed out in Chapter II above, gave special prominence to reports sent to him by his London correspondent, and there is point in the subtitle of his *Birmingham Gazette: or, the General Correspondent*.

It is not clear how long and on what terms these London correspondents served, and there is the same uncertainty
about correspondents in America. One paper, *F. Farley's Bristol Journal*, made a special feature of direct communication from across the Atlantic, in much the same way as Andrew Hooke five years earlier had boasted about his prompt translating of foreign newspapers for readers of his *Oracle*. On 14 November 1747, *F. Farley's Bristol Journal*, number 1589, printed items of news dated at New York and Boston and received "From our Correspondent at Boston in New England, by the Greyhound, Capt. Adlam." Farley then added a note implying that these rapid-transit dispatches—they were only about seven weeks old—were an exclusive feature in his *Journal*:

N.B. The above Boston Correspondent (as also the Printer at Philadelphia) has engaged to supply us with the most early Intelligence from their Parts of the World, by all Opportunities.——Such Advantages cannot but render this Paper of still greater Amusement to its Readers—who increase in such a manner, as to oblige us to make several *extra* Impressions almost every Saturday, whilst the *Interlopers* in the Opposition die away with the *utmost Contempt*.

Farley apparently expected that news would be brought to him direct from the American colonies by ships putting in at Bristol. This really was giving his readers special service; for ordinarily, like readers of other provincial papers, they could expect to hear of events that had taken place across the Atlantic only after the reports had been printed in London papers and copied in the local paper. There was plenty of American news, especially after the '45 had ceased to swell the columns; but only papers printed in or near seaports could ever offer American dispatches before they were seen by London readers. Some of the most interesting reports reached the provincial printers and their readers because alert observers took the trouble to write unsolicited accounts of occurrences witnessed by them. "As I imagine a particular
Narrative, from an Actor in it, will prove more satisfactory, than what the London Papers collect; I therefore send you the following, which please to receive as the first Offering of an Indian Correspondent; who intends (with your leave) occasionally transmitting what further occurs, in this Part of the Eastern World, . . . and what he can safely assert to you as authentic.” So wrote Samuel Beaven from on board the “Revenge,” Captain William Dick, “in Gariah Harbour (the late Capital Fort of Angria) in Lat. 16. 33 N. about 30 Leagues to the Northward of Goa.” The communication, addressed to Benjamin Collins, author of the Salisbury Journal, was dated 18 March 1756, but would undoubtedly be read with interest by Collins’ subscribers in the issue dated 29 November 1756. In number 78 (23 December 1755) of his Leedes Intelligencer, Griffith Wright offered readers an “Extract of a private Letter from a Gentleman at Lisbon, to a Merchant in this Town, dated Nov. 20.” It gave a vivid account of the effects of the devastating earthquake in Lisbon at the beginning of November.

A piece of unsolicited reporting worth noticing appeared in the Norwich Mercury on Saturday, 16 September 1727, in the form of “A Copy of a Letter sent from Mr. Percival at Barton-Mills, to Justice Mott in Norwich.” It is an account of a disaster at Burwell in Cambridgeshire on Friday evening of the previous week. One hundred and nineteen men, women, and children, who had assembled in a barn to enjoy a puppet show, lost their lives within four minutes when the barn caught fire from a “lanthorn” left lying in an adjoining hayloft by a man and a boy while they tried to see the show through a hole in the wall. Eleven other persons were severely burned, one of whom died soon after. Percival had not seen the blaze but got his information from Robert Kedal, one of the thirty-two survivors, and from one other person who, wrote Percival, “This Minute . . . acquainted me, That he saw two Cart-Loads of Dead Bodies put into the Ground, some
with Arms and Legs burnt off, and others with their Heads miserably burnt, and one quite off." The report gave figures: ninety-three Burwell people died in the flames; and of the twenty-six others, four were from Lanward, eight from Reach, one from Upware, two from Great Swaffam, four from Soham, two from Exning, one from London, and four were the "Show People." 9

It is beyond question, then, that the columns of news in English country papers two centuries ago contained reports of occurrences in many places and that the separate reports came from many sources, some printed, some written, some by word of mouth. The "editing" of a country newspaper may in some offices have been not much more than a physical process, a wielding of scissors, and journalism in such places was only a crude dissemination of secondhand bits and pieces; but in other offices—most of them, in fact—there was a commendable attempt to gather news and to prepare it for a special community of readers. Evidence that the country editor did not simply mark with an X the paragraphs to be set up in type by his obedient compositor but took the trouble to handle the news himself is to be seen in the newspapers published in Northampton and Gloucester by Robert Raikes and William Dicey. In the Northampton Mercury of 22 January 1722, one is given the impression that an editor has carefully gone over the printed and written newsletters from London, selecting items, rewriting some of them. Here are chatty editorial notes that almost make the bulletin read like a direct and personal communication: "Notwithstanding the Account we gave you in our last, Page 451, taken from the St. James's Evening Post, of the Pope's having granted to the Emperor the Investiture of the Kingdom of Naples, we find by the Holland Mail in this Post. . . ." "This is the Bulk of the foreign and domestick News in the London Gazette and Evening Post. . . ." "Having given our Readers all the Material Occurrences in the St. James's Post, we will now see what

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the Whitehall Evening Post will afford. . . . ” “And thus we have gone thro' all the News in the Printed Papers with Observation; and will now proceed to the Occurrences in the written Letters. . . . ” “In Wye's Letter there is the following Comment. . . . ” “And now having given our Readers the very best Occurrences by Tuesday's Post . . . we will proceed to Thursday's News in the same manner.” This painstaking process is revealed in the Gloucester Journal, too, number 13 (2 July 1722), for example. Other newspapers usually reveal less patently their authors' personal supervision in the preparation of copy.

To “chuse, fashion, and dispose these Materials so as to merit the general Approbation” would require, according to James Keating, of Stratford, “the Skill and Industry of an ingenious Artist”:

Art, Application, and Care are capable of converting Things, which at first sight appear rude and unprofitable, to very useful Purposes, and it must be own'd, that among the Exuberance of daily, weekly, and other Papers, there are some valuable Materials out of which an elegant Composition may be made. . . .

The question now to be considered is this: what sort of art, application, and care were exercised by Keating and the hundred and eighty others who chose, fashioned, and disposed the materials which went into the country papers here examined?

As to “art,” there seems at first glance little to commend in the treatment of news extracted from other bulletins, printed or written; for most editors were content to transcribe verbatim whatever they selected for their readers; or if they altered the matter at all, it was to reduce its bulk by striking out unnecessary details. Yet the eliminating of nonessentials is the true journalist's most enviable talent, for newspapermen know that in writing as in other
arts the part is often greater than the whole, in spite of what the mathematicians say.

This refashioning is most clearly seen in the treatment of local or regional news sent in by correspondents. Robert Raikes of the *Gloucester Journal* did what most other country editors did when such communications were sent to the newspaper office, sometimes inserting them with or without comment, sometimes summarizing them, sometimes omitting them entirely. In the issue of 26 March 1738, for instance, he printed this notice: “N.B. The Letter from Tiverton, and that from Tetbury, are come to Hand, and will be incerted in our next”; but in the following week’s issue, although he gave nearly two columns to the Tetbury letter, he reduced the other one to a single sentence: “They write from Tiverton, that one Will. Rice passing thro’ the Lock there, slipt from off the side of the Boat into the Water, and was drowned.” Raikes could put into twenty or thirty words what an untrained correspondent took ten times as many words to say. Clearly a man was at work editing the material for his paper, wielding a pen, not a pair of scissors.

Local journalists sometimes added comments of their own. These remarks were usually attached to news which did not come from London papers. Thus Francis Howgrave in his new *Stamford Mercury*, number 9 (10 August 1732), reported that “On Friday last the Assizes began and ended at Oakham in the County of Rutland, where neither Prisoner nor Cause was try’d.” Then he added his own compliments: “... which shows the good Management the Administration of Justice is under in that County, as well as the honest and peaceable Disposition of the Inhabitants. Perhaps not to the Joy of the Council and Officers of the Court, tho’ much to their Ease.” An ampler comment on the findings of the local assizes is in *Williamson’s Liverpool Advertiser*, number 137 (5 January 1759). Williamson gave special emphasis to his views on local crime by having the passage set up in italics:
We are very sorry to observe that the many hitherto unheard of acts of cruelty which have happened in this town of late, loudly call for a punishment justly due to delinquents who openly defy the laws of God and man; and what may we not expect if a stop is not immediately put to them. It is with pleasure we assure the public that our magistrates are endeavouring to detect all such offenders, and are determined to put the laws strictly in execution.

Comments such as these were neither infrequent nor insignificant.

Nevertheless the early provincial editors clearly saw their main business to be that of printing supposed facts, not expressing views about the implications of those facts. This is not to argue that there was no need for editorial opinions; it is a question of whether it was not better—as it has long since been found better—to have the newspaper's views set forth in a separate department as "editorials" or as contributed critical essays and letters to the editor. In most provincial newspapers it was the selecting of news rather than the writing of original observations upon the events reported that gave the local editor his opportunity to exercise his "art"—as Keating, of Stratford, used the word. Notable exceptions will be mentioned in the next chapter, in which the expression of opinion as distinguished from the reporting of news will be considered more fully.

Meanwhile it is expedient to note that there were readers who saw the local paper as a medium for directly influencing people both by the selecting of news and by the treatment of it. One of the "Constant Readers" of the Salisbury Journal wrote a vigorous letter to the "author" on 19 June 1738 expressing delight at the increase in the number of local presses and provincial newspapers but strongly recommending that unsavory news should be omitted, or if inserted "should be guarded with some proper Animadversions." He referred specifically to "the Slips and Failings of the Fair-Sex," declaring that elopements and similar goings-on "are often related
in such a humorous and comical Manner, as . . . rather tends to encrease than diminish the Number of such Adventures."

A virtuous, a generous or benevolent Action may be trusted in a News-Paper, without any Comment or Animadversion annex'd . . .: But in the Case of vile and criminal Actions, I conceive it to be not only needful, but even a Duty to caution the Readers against the Danger of receiving evil Impressions.

Here is one man's view in a matter which has been debated for centuries and is not yet settled to the satisfaction of all.

Unfortunately this "Constant Reader" gave a specimen of the sort of editorial comments which he felt desirable, but his 650 words of censure degenerated into tiresome rant, much less readable and certainly much less effective as a deterrent than the forthright account of a deplorable act reported in the Salisbury Journal two weeks later without the benefit of "proper Animadversions."

*Crewkerne, July 2.* About four o'clock on Tuesday Morning last, at Wayford, two Miles from this Place, a horrid Murder was committed by one Richard Elswood of Clapton in this Parish, on the Body of Farmer Norris his Uncle, in the following Manner: Elswood's Wife usually absenting herself from her Husband several Days together, on Friday last according to Custom, she went away while her Husband was at work, and as it now appears, went to this Mr. Norris's, who for some Time had a criminal Conversation with her: The Husband having some Information of it, got up early on Tuesday Morning last, and took out one of Norris's Windows, got into the House, went immediately up Stairs into his Chamber, found his Wife in Bed with his Uncle Norris, and in a Fury took up the Bar of the Door and gave the old Fellow such a Blow on his Head, that made the Blood fly all over the Cieling of the Chamber, and following his Blows, killed him on the Spot. He likewise beat his Wife so very cruelly that he left her for dead, but she is now in a fair way of Recovery, altho'
she is blind and much bruised: Then he went into the Streets, and told the Neighbors the Story, and likewise advis'd them to go into the House, to see how he had killed his Uncle, saying he was resolv'd that the old Man shou'd never commit Adultery more. He did not attempt to go off, but was taken before a Justice of the Peace and committed to Ivelchester Goal.

It is to the credit of William Collins, the printer of the Salisbury Journal, that he published the “Constant Reader's” letter; it is more to his credit that he refrained from adopting the ill-.advised suggestion to write a paragraph of reproof and warning about such stories as the one quoted above.

The principle by which Collins and his contemporaries decided what to print and what to omit was indubitably less restraining than the code of the most dignified English newspapers of the twentieth century, but its basic implications were the same. The implication in the report of a murder is that homicide, like other kinds of criminal violence, is abnormal, an offence against the whole community. That is why it is reported. If homicide were as common as mowing the lawn, it would never get into the papers. There are always people who drool over stories of lust and brutality, but no English provincial newspaper of two centuries ago pandered to that kind of imbecility. The violence that was reported was sometimes described with surprising realism, but that was good reporting rather than reprehensible indifference to public morals. The principle was the same as that enunciated forcefully by Milton in Aeropagitica a century earlier: a mature person can claim to have virtue only if he has looked on the bad as well as on the good and has preferred the good. At any rate, the eighteenth-century country editors knew which was which, and did not suppose the reporting of a vicious act implied their approval of it. Besides, Collins referred to Elswood's beating the life out of his uncle as a “horrid” murder; was further animadversion needed?
EDITORIAL discrimination had to be exercised no matter what news came in and no matter where it came from. The country editor knew that he had to fill out his four, eight, or twelve columns with articles selected from a mass of material occupying hundreds of column-inches in the London papers regularly received, plus whatever usable matter came in to his office from other sources. Obviously, in the attempt to decide which items to use and which to omit, the editor’s sense of the relative significance of each dispatch would provide some sort of guide; and yet, unless the editor allowed political bias to settle the matter for him, it cannot always have been easy to choose which of four or five accounts of the same event he should use. It is amusing to find one editor, William Craighton of the Ipswich Journal, doggedly printing in parallel half-columns (in number 143, 7 November 1741) both versions of a “private Letter from the Hague” which he had found in that week’s London papers. He did not choose; he said nothing about the difficulty of choosing; he let his readers see the conflicting views concerning expected political developments abroad. Such offering of a choice to readers was most unusual, of course. Ordinarily Craighton, like other provincial editors, made up his mind which of several accounts he would use and ignored the rest.

From our point of view in the third quarter of the twentieth century, much of what the early Georgian readers found in their newspapers seems at first glance remote and unimportant indeed; though on second thought one realizes that the proportion of permanently significant news is not really less than in our own papers. It turns out that almost every issue of an eighteenth-century newspaper has something to catch the eye of a modern reader. That is true partly because overleaping the gap of two centuries—a romantic and exciting experience—is so easily brought about by the simple act of holding in one’s hand the very paper which, “full charg’d with
news” and damp from the press, was so long ago held in the hand of its first reader, partly also because of one’s natural curiosity to see what sort of news got into the papers read by our ancestors in the days of Swift, Fielding, and Johnson. What reports reached West Country readers concerning Marlborough’s victory at Blenheim and Admiral Vernon’s triumphs at Porto Bello? In what papers can one find references to music, hospitals, education, labor disputes, attacks on Methodist meetinghouses, the building of the new assembly rooms at York, the return of Halley’s Comet, the Porteous riots in Edinburgh? What space was given to the escapes of John Sheppard in 1724, to the coronation of George II in 1727, to the capture of Dick Turpin in 1739, to the execution of Lord Lovat in 1746, to the trial of Mary Blandy in 1752? Did provincial readers see reports of Parliament’s proceedings, in spite of rigid regulations prohibiting the publication thereof?

The only satisfactory way of getting answers to these questions is to examine the newspapers themselves. Because these original papers are scarce, it is expedient to quote examples, if only to show how wide was the area covered, how extensive the range of theme, and what degree of journalistic skill was achieved. For every item quoted there are ten thousand buried in the columns of the original papers, for the period here covered is very large—over three thousand weeks.

It is easiest to begin with reports from the most remote places—India, China, and the Near East. Such reports were comparatively few in number, brief, and—unless written by eyewitnesses like Samuel Beaven of the “Revenge”—lacking in interesting details. In the late summer of 1741, there were reports that Commodore Anson had rounded Cape Horn; and on 20 August of that year, the Nottingham Post repeated, as did other country papers, the undated announcement in London papers, “There is Advice from the East-Indies, that
Ponti-Cherry and Madras are both attacked by the Indians; the former (a French Settlement) by an Army of one hundred and fifty Thousand Men, Foot and Horse, and the latter by one hundred Thousand Men." Ship arrivals from various Eastern ports were occasionally announced. "The Royal George Indiaman, Capt. Beamish, is arrived at Portsmouth from Bengal. General Clive is come home in her." So began a forty-seven-line report of affairs in India included under the heading "Sunday's Post" in the *Union Journal: or, Halifax Advertiser*, number 76 (15 July 1760).

Naturally the news reaching England from across the Channel was much more abundant. As is still true, some of the reports from Continental cities were merely gossip about royal or noble personages. The Nottingham *Weekly Courant* of 14 January 1727 reprinted from Wye's letter the news that "The King of Poland has had one of his Toes, which began to mortifie, cut off by his Physicians." In the *Salisbury Journal* it was solemnly reported from Paris, under date 5 July 1730, that on the third the King had "review'd . . . the Gensdarmes and the Light Horse of his Household, and the next Day his Majesty took Physick by Way of Precaution." Most of the news from the Continent was, of course, serious and of direct concern to English readers, partly because their sovereign was also Elector of Hanover, partly because England's "standing" army seldom stood still. It is a memorable fact that in Rupert Brooke's sense of the words there was many a corner in a foreign field that during the first sixty years of the eighteenth century became forever a part of England, for thousands of English sons, brothers, husbands, fathers—like their ancestors at Crecy and Agincourt—fought and died and left their dust to merge with the soil on many a bloody battlefield of Continental Europe.

To transcribe even the most exciting war dispatches that were read all over England in this period would fill
a dozen books. With what a strong sense of getting "freshest advices" (right from the horse's back) one comes upon this report in the earliest surviving issue of an eighteenth-century provincial newspaper, the *Bristol Post Boy*, number 91 (Saturday, 12 August 1704):

Whitehall, August 10. This afternoon arrived an Express with a Letter from his Grace the Duke of Marlborough to my Lady Duchess written on Horseback with a Lead Pencil. A copy whereof follows.

August 13 N.S.

I have not Time to say more than to beg of you to present my Humble Duty to the Queen, and to let Her Majesty know, that Her Army has had a glorious Victory: Monsieur Tallard and two other Generals are in my Coach, and I am following the rest. The Bearer my Aid-de-Camp, Colonel Parkes, will give her Majesty an Account of what has passed. I shall do it in a day or two by another more at la[r]ge.

Marlborough.

* The Gentleman who brought this Express is gone to Windsor, to give her Majesty an Account of the Particulars, which will be published at his Return.

Here is history staring us in the face.

Wars and rumors of wars were naturally exciting to Englishmen at home, since so many Englishmen away from home were engaged in military or naval activities. There was a direct correlation between war and news, and therefore between the expansion or even the founding of a newspaper and the extra abundance of news which war or the threat of war provided. There was no "iron curtain" in those days, and news came over the water in vast quantities. Nottingham readers of Thomas Collyer's *Post* in the summer of 1741 had in their hands all sorts of "intelligence" from both St. Petersburg and Stockholm concerning the growing tension between Russia and Sweden; then, in the issue of 20 August, they
saw the full text of "The Motives at large which have induc'd the King of Sweden to declare War against Russia." The *Nottingham Post* is typical of forty contemporary provincial newspapers. The issue of 20 August 1741 had 85 out of 129 column-inches devoted to war news from the Continent. In these reports there was no evidence of censorship, though undoubtedly there was much official silence, and occasionally the only statement that could be printed in the newspapers was that "This Day one of the King's Messengers arrived with Dispatches of great Importance from Hanover." Since this was the last item of news in the *Nottingham Post*, number 608 (20 August 1741), perhaps it would whet the appetites of readers for the next week's issue. There was enough war news in that issue to last for a whole week, surely.

If the great mass of news from the Continent was read with a consuming interest week after week by people all over England, the same can be said about the growing body of news which reached them from the colonies in North America. There is in all the provincial newspapers before George III came to the throne a perceptible eagerness, a lively, well-disposed interest in what was going on in the lands across the sea. Knowing of this popular and increasing thirst for information about life in the New World, the editors of newspapers gladly printed not only the American news which they found in London papers but letters sent to local townsfolk from English soldiers in Nova Scotia and English merchants at Kingston, Jamaica. Essays on the economic importance of Cape Breton were copied from other newspapers; numerous advertisements invited English families to settle in Maryland or Pennsylvania; reports of ship arrivals from New York and Boston were frequent; and there were often detailed lists of cargoes brought back in those ships—everything from rum to rhubarb, from mahogany logs to supplies of Seneca snakeroot for the cure of fevers. Reports from Boston in New England and (after 1749)
Halifax in Nova Scotia were more often in the papers than accounts of what was happening in Boston in Lincolnshire and Halifax in Yorkshire; Charlestown in South Carolina was mentioned in English papers more often than Coventry. It was natural, perhaps, that Bristol people should be interested in news that came from the lands to which the Cabots had so long before sailed from a Bristol quay, and Newcastle whalers would undoubtedly have some feeling for or against the English-speaking colonials whom they encountered in their long cruises in northern waters.\textsuperscript{15}

Transatlantic traffic in goods and people is a study in itself, and there is abundant evidence in the Bristol, Plymouth, Liverpool, and Newcastle papers alone to show that the “Plantations” had a strong attraction for the more venturesome; at the same time many negro slaves and “transported” malefactors were taken there against their will. So much was going on that was different from the settled ways at home that there were (as there have always been in Britain) many whose sturdy spirit made them look with eagerness toward the New World, undismayed by the strange stories of Indian massacres, of tempestuous storms, of hardships on the “frontier.”

Most readers of newspapers do not know personally the men and women or boys and girls whose fortunes and misfortunes are reported, but news would never be read so eagerly if the names were omitted. Even a dead body is more interesting (except to a mortician) if it has a name. The “Extract of a Letter from an Officer at Fort Cumberland, in Nova Scotia,” printed in \textit{Eyres’s Weekly Journal} at Warrington on 13 July 1756, has the twofold merit of being written in the first person by an eyewitness and of naming one of the victims of an Indian raid:

As for news I have only to let you know, that on Monday last a number of Indians (supposed to be large) advanced towards fort Monkton, garrisoned by Capt. Hill, with 70 regulars, and killed nine; and the next day paid

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us a visit, and had the Impudence to send some of their
number to this side Tantamar creek early in the morning,
and killed one of the regulars, and took or killed one Noah
Williams of Taunton, a young lad of our troops, belonging
to captain Gilbert's company. I am fearful he is killed, as
we have found the body of the regular stript naked, and
scalped, and the lad's coat; this has set us in an alarm, and
we are preparing to send a large body to Gaspereau to‐
morrow.

It was this kind of direct report which, even though it
was not printed until ten weeks after it had been written,
established a link of communication between the home‐
land and faraway Fort Cumberland that must have been
all the more appreciated because of the remoteness in
time and distance.

Dispatches, rumors, reports, and letters from America
were naturally more numerous and more exciting at times
when growing animosities broke into open hostilities, as
they did along the coast of North and South America in
1740, after many months of what might be called guerilla
warfare at sea between English and Spanish ships. There
had been countless incidents of the sort which infuriated
rather than terrified the skippers sailing under the British
flag, and many of the encounters took place in American
waters. Under the front-page caption "New England,"
the Nottingham Post, number 499 (3 August 1738),
gathered from the London papers six paragraphs dated
at Boston on 12 June, two of them reporting Spanish
interference with American vessels bound from Jamaica
to Boston. The same paper reported the Admiralty’s
commissioning of fourteen men-of-war on 28 July, and
referred to the general jubilation of Londoners at the
strengthening hopes of a war with the Spaniards, "to
avenge the Robberies, Murders, and Insults committed
on the British Subjects for Years past." Anti-Spanish
feeling grew to a high pitch, especially when rumors
circulated about the cutting-off of Charles Jenkins's ear.
During the next year or two, there was no news more eagerly looked for in the papers than reports of Admiral Vernon's operations against Spanish ships and fortifications. The Leeds Mercury, number 739 (8 April 1740), had on the front page a detailed account of the battle of Porto Bello, together with a two-column picture and a letter written on board the "Burford" by William Richardson giving "a more particular Account of Admiral Vernon's glorious Achievements" in the Porto Bello engagement. Before long there were further reports of a victory across the water. Some of the reports and letters proved to be inaccurate, but there was no lack of well-attested dispatches, and each success was observed with tumultuous rejoicing in English towns and villages.

The event most eagerly awaited was the capture of Carthagena, Spain's most strategic stronghold in America. Finally the word came. On Monday, 18 May 1741, the London Gazette printed the official announcement that on the previous day letters dated from the harbor of Carthagena had been brought to His Grace the Duke of Newcastle by Captain Laws, commander of the "Spence," a sloop. The twenty-five-hundred-word statement was shortly afterward followed by a supplementary account prepared by William Richardson, the same eyewitness as had earlier described the engagement at Porto Bello. Both reports were widely reprinted in the country newspapers, several of which later published an " Exact Plan of the Town of Carthagena." There was wild excitement everywhere. At Nottingham, according to the Post, the welcome news "seem'd to give new Life to our Inhabitants, and diffus'd an universal Joy throughout the Town." At Leeds, as the Mercury recorded on 26 May, the agreeable news of Admiral Vernon's success at Cathagena arrived on the twenty-second, and again the town went wild:

... the Bells in our three Churches rang all Day. In the Evening the Gentlemen of the Corporation, with several
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others met at the King's Arms, where Healths of his Majesty, the Royal Family, the Admirals Vernon and Ogle, and Brigadier Wentworth, with their further Success, went merrily round, whilst the Dragoons quartered here fired several Vollies. About Nine, the whole Town was illuminated in the most splendid Manner, which with Fireworks, Bonefires, and loud Acclamations from the Populace, concluded one of the most pleasing Scenes of Joy, that ever was known in this Place.

The newspapers of other towns told the same story; the rejoicing was nation-wide. And there were more formal expressions of the nation's gratitude to the intrepid British commanders. All the newspapers mentioned Vernon's election to Parliament, but they gave equal space to another distinction: on London's day of rejoicing for the conquest at Carthagena two lion cubs were whelped at the Tower of London, and they were immediately named Vernon and Ogle. As Humpty Dumpty said later, "There's glory for you!"

Meanwhile, and for long afterward, the newspapers carried accounts of other acts of aggression at sea, in which English mariners were often victims of one of the most indefensible yet most picturesque kinds of aggression — privateering. Whole books could be written about this very extensive mode of licensed marauding, in which Spaniards, Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Americans all engaged; and no one who has ever seen English or American newspapers of the 1740's and later can forget the exciting reports of privateering which they carried in almost every issue. St. Sebastian was the most notorious lurking place for the Spanish privateers, and the name became a byword for ruthless and often successful attacks on English merchant ships. To sink or capture a French or Spanish privateer was to do a national service. When Captain Gwynn blew up one of the Spanish privateers early in 1741, the London insurance men, merchants, and others concerned in trade collected a purse of guineas as an expression of their gratitude. The Nottingham Post,
number 586 (19 March 1741), reported one circumstance in Captain Gwynn's exploit that had not previously been made public. At the time when his men sighted the Spaniard, the Captain was confined to his cabin by the gout. On that account, the report continued, he might have been excused from "exposing himself to the Shot of a much superior Vessel";

but as soon as he was inform'd that they made a Ship, and suspected her to be an Enemy, he ordered his Men to carry him up, and place him on his Couch upon Deck, to animate his People, and give the necessary Orders himself for fighting the Ship, which answer'd so successfully, and in all Probability preserved many of our Merchants Ships and Mariners from visiting St. Sebastians, and wearing Spanish Shackles.

Dread of those shackles must have darkened the thoughts of many an English sailor, but none of them stayed ashore on that account.

An adventure with a privateer is reported in succinct and homely prose in the Hull Courant, number 107 (13 September 1757), which tells of the ordeal suffered by William Lawson, mate of the "Mills," after a French privateer had captured his ship off Nantucket nearly a year before. It is easy to imagine how Lawson and the others felt when, early in September, he brought the masterless ship back into its home port.

On Sunday last arrived here, the Mills, burthen about 300 Tons. M'Cloude, late Master of Hull, from Virginia, who was taken by a French Privateer from Louisbourgh off of Nantucket Shoals in October last. The Frenchman took out the Master and most of the Crew, leaving the Mate William Lawson, second Mate, Carpenter, and two or three more Englishmen on board, along with 32 Frenchmen, with an intent to send her to Louisbourgh. By distress of Weather they were beat off the Coast, having exhausted all the Provisions, even till they were obliged to eat the Cat and Dog, a Shark's Tail that was nailed on the Vessel Stern, a Horse's Hide, designed to preserve the rigging
when gauled, and Fowls Dung fry'd in Oil, they resigned in December the Ship to the Hands of the English, who carried her into Placentia Harbour in Newfoundland, having then little or no Water left, and in the utmost distress for all the necessaries of Life. . . . As soon as they got in (notwithstanding the Frenchmen had resigned the Ship to Mr Lawson, none of them being capable to keep an Account of the Ship's Way) . . . the Frenchmen . . . pretended to be in Possession of her . . .; however Mr. Lawson would not quit his right, wintered with them, and left Placentia Harbour in June last, and then proceeded for Hull.

There is hint enough in this short newspaper report for a full-length novel or an exciting film.

London and country newspapers also had reports of full-dress naval conquests over the enemies of England on the broad Atlantic. One of these "epics of the sea" was described in a communication from the chaplain of the "Oxford," man-of-war, to the rector of Eyam in Derbyshire. The rector, the Rev. Thomas Seward, sent the account to James Lister, printer of the Leeds Mercury, along with a letter in which he asserted that most of the newspaper reports of the taking of the "Princessa," a Spanish man-of-war of sixty-eight guns, by Lord Augustus Fitz Roy, Commodore Mayne, and Captain Durell were "not only exceedingly false, but wrote with a scandalous Design of taking all the Honour from the brave and noble Youth to whom the greatest part of it belongs, and ev'n of casting the detestable Slur of Cowardice upon him." By inserting a genuine and authentic account of the action, said the rector of Eyam, the printer would oblige many constant readers in Derbyshire and at the same time vindicate the character of the young man. Lister printed the Rector's letter and the Rev. Mr. Woodward's statement in the Leeds Mercury, number 746 (27 May 1740).

News from abroad aroused much interest in English towns and set many a bonfire alight; but there were many
purely domestic occasions for celebration, too—the birth of a prince, a royal wedding, the annual commemoration of a victory or a coronation, the result of an election—so many, in fact, that as one reads through the newspapers the number of bonfires per annum seems high. But life was lived with much gusto in those days, and bonfires did no harm—except that doubtless they consumed copies of local newspapers which we should now like to have. Besides, most of the “domestick Advices” did not stir up anything but conversation in the public houses and other places where people met for a chat. That the news in the local paper was talked about is not to be doubted, whether the events reported took place in Charlestown, Coventry, or Cardiff.

News from Wales did not often appear, which is the less surprising if one remembers that there was no newspaper in Wales, in either Welsh or English, until later in the century.¹⁷ News from Ireland was printed as often in the provincial papers as in the London ones, and in some papers the news taken from Dublin or Cork or Belfast newspapers¹⁸ (via London) was set apart under a special caption, “Ireland.” Irish news concerned with shipping was fairly common, but otherwise there was little to interest readers in England. Too often there are only such statements as that in the Nottingham Post, number 616 (15 October 1741), that according to letters reaching London from several parts of Ireland many of the people had been successful in counteracting the recent outbreaks of fever “by eating Apples, and drinking Apple-Water.”

News from Scotland, similarly set under a special caption, was much more abundant, both during the uprisings in 1715 and 1745 and at other times. It was reported in the Halifax Union Journal on 8 May 1759 under the caption “Scotland” that a group of Highlanders, who had been discharged and pensioned after being disabled at Ticonderoga and other places in America, had arrived in Edinburgh “in their way to their native coun-
try." The wounded men declared that on their way through England they had been "extremely well used. . . ." Echoes of their talk seem to have been caught up in what follows:

They say the Indians are so fond of the Highlanders, that they would rush into the thickest of the enemy's fire to rescue them, and that they would frequently carry them on their backs for several miles, when they happened to be either sick or wounded. In short, we may attribute the success of the last campaign, and the present flourishing condition of our colonies, in a great measure to the Highlanders, as they are agreeable to the natives, and terrible to the French: they are hardy and enterprising, inured to fatigue, and capable of supporting all the vicissitudes of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and there is so much enthusiasm in their love for their officers and chiefs, that under their conduct, they will surmount the greatest obstacles, and achieve the most dangerous adventures.

These words of cordial tribute were penned in Edinburgh; they were printed and read in England, only thirteen years after Culloden.

The whole body of news about happenings outside of England was, from the first, much larger in bulk than the reports concerning events within the borders of England, but there was nevertheless a good deal of what is now called "national" news—reports of events in London or elsewhere in England of interest to everyone in the country. Some of this "national" news consisted of the London bills of mortality and lists of bankrupts, of newly elected members of Parliament, of the dates and presiding justices in the several circuits of the quarterly assizes, of state and ecclesiastical preferments. Not all these items are to be found in every issue of every provincial newspaper, but almost every newspaper provides examples of news of the sort which papers of our time would doubtless print, and in much the same language. In the *Kendal Weekly Mercury*, number 13 (Saturday, 3 May 1735), for instance, is the *London Journal*'s report of a fire:
On Thursday Morning between Twelve and One, a Fire broke out in the Dwelling House of Mr. Stocking, a Baker in Swallow-street near Piccadilly, which entirely consumed the same, and damaged some others.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Delware, and several other Noblemen, were there in Presence, animating the Firemen and others, in extinguishing the Fire.

William Gurney, a Fireman belonging to the Sun Fire Office, was so much hurt, that he lies in the utmost Danger. It is said His Royal Highness and the Noblemen gave him some Guineas and sent him home in a Chair.

One unforgettable report, in the Hull Journal, number 183 (Tuesday, 20 March 1759), tells of the execution at London of Joseph Halsey, the twenty-three-year-old Boston-born mate of a merchant ship, convicted of beating to death Daniel Davidson on the high seas and condemned to be hanged “and afterwards his Body to be anatomiz’d.”

A fair sampling of the London news to be found in a single issue of a provincial paper is given in the Sherborne Mercury, number 16 (Tuesday, 7 June 1737). Half a dozen articles selected from the twelve columns of this paper will serve to show the sort of news from London which the printers thought their readers would be glad to see.

On Sunday the Rev. Dr. Gilbert, Dean of Exeter, and Sub-Almoner to his Majesty, preached before their Majesties, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Princesses Amelia and Caroline, at the Chapel Royal at St. James’s. His Majesty, according to Custom, offer’d Gold, Myrrh, and Frankincense; and it being Collar-Day, the Knights of the Garter, Thistle, and Bath appeared in the Collars of their respective Orders. Their Majesties afterwards din’d in Publick.

Yesterday Morning early a Fire broke out at the House of Mrs. Cooper in Denmark-street near St. Giles’s Church, which entirely consumed the same, and Goods to the Value of 200 £.
The same Day the Bill relating to common Players of Interludes pass’d the Hon. House of Commons.

On Sunday last the Wife of Mr. Martin of Ratcliff was deliver’d of four Children at a Birth, viz. three Boys and a Girl, by Mr. Cole of Brookstreet near Ratcliff-cross, and is in a hopeful way of doing well.

Mr. Ryley, the Maltster at Kingston, who was last Week robbed on Putney Heath, received such a Wound in his Arm by the Villains, that he has been obliged to have it cut off; and continues so dangerously ill, that his Life is despair’d of.

The Lords in a Committee went thro’ the Oyster Bill. Read a 2d time the Bill for settling a Jointure of 50,000 £ per Ann. on her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales; and in a grand Committee went thro’ the Bill for restraining the Liberty of the Stage, and order’d it to be read a 3d time on Monday, and all the Lords to be summoned. ’Tis remark’d, that the Excess of Theatrical Entertainments fill both Town and Country with Idleness and Debauchery, and, from being under no Restraint, exhibit to the Publick Encomiums on Vice, and laugh away the sober Principles of Modesty and Virtue; and that our Italian Opera’s soften and enervate the Minds of the People, and also carry great Sums of Money out of the Kingdom.

These pieces comprise only about one-quarter of the London news in this particular issue of the Sherborne Mercury.

None of these reports—not even the one about quadruplets—can be said to have any enduring interest; but it is worth noticing that the Sherborne Mercury did not hesitate to reprint reports of what was going on in Parliament. This was in direct contravention of the wishes of the kingdom’s legislators, though the printers of news had long defied both houses and continued to do so, not always with impunity. As early as 1640, there were London news books which reported Parliamentary votes and proceedings. From time to time official reports were permitted, but immediately after the Restoration and frequently thereafter there was strict prohibition against the reporting of Parliamentary matters in newspapers. For
some years John Dyer was audacious enough to include accounts of Parliamentary proceedings in the newsletters which bore his name, and on several occasions he found himself in trouble on that account. For many years Abel Boyer’s monthly paper, the Political State of Great Britain, offered straightforward summaries of Parliamentary debates; but unlike Dyer he was seldom in difficulties with the authorities, perhaps because he reported the doings of Parliament only after the session had ended. So Elizabeth Adams of Chester in her Weekly Courant boldly printed “The Proceedings of the last Sessions of Parliament.”

It was clear to Dyer, to Boyer, to Elizabeth Adams, to Edward Cave of the Gentleman’s Magazine, to the proprietors of the London Magazine, and to the authors of newspapers in town and country that their readers were eager to read about the deliberations of both houses of Parliament and to examine the texts of the sovereign’s addresses to Parliament; it was also clear that if they were determined to include Parliamentary news in their columns they must either disguise their reports or run the risk of prosecution for violating the privilege claimed by both houses. The written newsletters of Wye, Stanley, and others often had a good deal of Parliamentary news, and it was in these written newsletters that the country news printers found the accounts of Parliament which their readers were eager to see. In the Ipswich Journal of 1721, lengthy passages transcribed from Stanley’s News-Letter can be read; speakers are named and portions of their speeches are quoted. John Bagnall quite openly declared his policy in number 29 (4 March 1721): “We having Weekly given an Account of the Proceedings of both Houses of Parliament (as transmitted to us by a discerning Hand) and particularly that Part relating to the late South-Sea Directors, . . . the following Debates of the Lords and Commons, . . . will (we hope) be an acceptable Amusement to our more Curious Readers.”

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Most country printers of newspapers avoided direct naming of the members by printing "the D. of M----h" instead of "the Duke of Marlborough," "the C----r of the E----r" instead of "the Chancellor of the Exchequer," and "Mr. At----ey Gen----l" instead of "Mr. Attorney General." Some, like Cave in the Gentleman's Magazine, James Lister in the Leeds Mercury, and Andrew Hooke in the Bristol Oracle, went to more trouble and printed thinly disguised reports described as "the Debates of a certain Society."

Country printers sometimes found themselves in difficulties for infringing the regulations; distance gave them no protection or immunity if official inquiries were made. Instances of punishment for mentioning decisions and discussions in either house were not numerous in provincial towns, except in the West, where there seem to have been both exceptional audacity on the part of printers and special vigilance on the part of government agents. One of the early printers of newspapers in that area, Joseph Bliss, apparently had no fear that he might suffer for reprinting Parliamentary debates, for on 25 January 1717 he announced in his Protestant Mercury that he was about to resume twice-a-week publication, hoping to give satisfaction by inserting in the paper "such Things as are most material, especially during the Sitting of Parliament." On 28 November 1718, as The Journal of the House of Commons shows, all three of the Exeter newspapers printed accounts of the proceedings of Parliament, and the three authors, Andrew Brice, George Bishop, and Joseph Bliss, were all ordered to present themselves before the House of Commons. Two of them dutifully obeyed; Bliss evaded the messenger. By the middle of January, 1719, all three had admitted their guilt—Bliss by letter—and were discharged after being reprimanded. Brice and Bishop said the Parliamentary reports which they had printed had been taken "from News-Letters sent to Coffee-Houses at Exeter."
The Journal of the House of Commons recorded many complaints that the writers of newsletters and the printers of newspapers had been so bold as to give accounts therein of the proceedings of the House; and at each complaint the members reaffirmed their conviction that the less said about their deliberations the better. On 13 April 1738, for example, it was formally resolved,

That it is an high Indignity to, and a notorious Breach of the Privilege of, this House, for any News Writer, in Letters, or other Papers (as Minutes, or under any other Denomination), or for any Printer or Publisher of any printed News Paper, of any Denomination, to presume to insert in the said Letters or Papers, or to give therein any Account of the Debates, or other Proceedings, of this House, or any Committee thereof, as well during the Recess as the Sitting of Parliament; and that this House will proceed with the utmost Severity against such Offenders.

This policy had many times before been spread on the pages of The Journal of the House of Commons, but it was a losing battle.

The whole story of that struggle need not be told here; it is enough to pick up the threads at 23 January 1723. On that day the House, hearing complaints that the debates and proceedings were frequently "misrepresented" in written and printed newsletters and papers, formulated two resolutions intended to cope with the nuisance: first, that "no News Writers do presume in their Letters or other Papers . . . to intermeddle with the Debates, or any other Proceedings, of this House"; second, that "no Printer, or Publisher, of any printed News Papers, do presume to insert in any such Papers any Debates, or any other Proceedings, of this House, or any Committee thereof."

Five years later—on 30 March 1728—that double resolution was read from the pages of the Journal to refresh the memories of the members, for a flagrant case involving both written newsletters and a printed news-
paper had been brought to the attention of the House. The offending paper was the Gloucester Journal, number 310 (Tuesday, 12 March 1728), in which Robert Raikes had copied from Wye's letter a report beginning, "Yesterday the House of Commons, . . ." It was a report that the House had resolved itself into a "Grand Committee to consider of the State of the Nation in relation to the National Debt." When the division was taken, the report continued, there were 97 yeas and 256 noes; "so the main Question was resolved in the Affirmative." In the copy of the Gloucester Journal now at the Gloucester Public Library is a manuscript note identifying this as "The woful Paragraph" and stating that "this Paragraph cost R R 40 L." Raikes and his Bristol agent, John Wilson, bookseller, of Horse Street, were ordered to attend the House on March 28 to be questioned. On the appointed day the two men were present, Raikes admitting that he had printed the issue of the Gloucester Journal complained of, explaining that Wilson had nothing to do with the printing of the paper, and declaring that he had received the paragraph in question from Edward Cave of the post office. Wilson was discharged, Raikes was taken into the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, and Cave was ordered to present himself at the House on the following Saturday morning. When Cave came, according to this command, he said that he had sent to Raikes several written newsletters which contained intelligence relating to the proceedings of the House, and he brought with him as samples copies of newsletters written by William Wye, John Stanley, John Willys, and Elias Delpeuch, all of them containing references to the debates and decisions of the House of Commons. Cave was adjudged guilty of a breach of the privilege of the House and was ordered into custody; the four news writers were required to attend on the following Tuesday morning. There were delays, but on 3 April it was ordered that Wye, Stanley, and Delpeuch should be taken into custody.
The news of what had happened to the Gloucester printer and to the men who had furnished him with prohibited news reached other parts of the country; “The Publick cannot expect to have an Account of the Proceedings of the Hon. House of Commons in this or other News Papers,” wrote Thomas Gent in his *Original Mercury, York Journal: or, Weekly Courant*, number 138 (2 April 1728), “since the Printer of Gloucester is taken into Custody of the Serjeant at Arms for inserting the same; nay, even those who write, and transmit such Accounts, it seems are not excusable, four of whom being ordered to attend the Hon. House of Commons on that Account also.”

In the issue of the *Gloucester Journal* bearing that same date, 2 April 1728, it was frankly stated that the printer of the paper had been “order’d into Custody of a Messenger, for Printing the Votes of the House from a written News-Letter or Letters,” and that Wilson had been discharged; but a protest (in italics for emphasis) was registered against a false inference from the facts:

Since the Printer hereof hath been under the Displeasure of the House, it hath been industriously and maliciously insinuated, that it is for Printing against the Government; which is a false and scandalous Aspersion.

Readers of the *Gloucester Journal* were no doubt pleased to find in the paper two weeks later an announcement that “On Monday last the Printer of this Paper was discharged out of the Custody of the Serjeant at Arms, on paying his Fees.” Raikes had sent to the House of Commons on 5 April a petition in which he expressed his sorrow for the offence and humbly begged pardon, praying, “in regard he has a Wife and Family in the Country, to provide for, and his Affairs will suffer very much by his Absence,” that he might be discharged. On 8 April, he was brought to the Bar of the House; there, upon his knees, he received a reprimand from the Speaker, and was
ordered to be discharged out of custody. A day or two later Cave, Wye, Stanley, and Delpeuch, all of whom had sent petitions, were released on similar terms. This is precisely what had happened to Andrew Brice and George Bishop ten years before; but this time the suppliers of news, not just the printers, were taken into custody.

Much to the annoyance of the members of the House of Commons, and presumably to the annoyance of Raikes as well, a repetition of the offence took place early the following year, for the Gloucester Journal had in one of its columns on 11 February 1729 a passage of news about the proceedings of the House, and one of the messengers of the sergeant-at-arms served Raikes with an order to attend the House on 4 March. This time Raikes was—or said he was—so ill with a fever that he was unable to travel to London. His petition to be excused was read to the House on 26 February and was granted. His message, as recorded in The Journal of the House of Commons, contained the direct assertion that the offending paragraph had come from a newsletter “sent by Mr. Gyttens, Clerk of the Bristol Road, or his Assistant, to the King’s Head in Gloucester.” Once again this reference to a coffee house shows how Raikes was accustomed to get his copies of the written newsletters. But it is surprising to find as well an assertion which suggests that, in spite of his unhappy experience the year before, Raikes was in the habit of letting his compositor or some other workman in the printing office decide what should be copied from Wye’s and Stanley’s letters. He said that before the opening of the current session of Parliament he “gave Orders to his Servant not to insert in his Journal any of the Votes or Resolutions of [the] House”; the paragraph complained of was taken, he said he had been informed, from the newsletter sent by Gyttens, and had been inserted without Raikes’s knowledge. Perhaps the Gloucester printer was simply driven by illness and desperation to wriggle out of the full editorial responsibility which he
would normally have faced manfully; or perhaps he could not bear the thought of humbly kneeling once again before the House.  

There were equally stringent regulations concerning the publication of references to the deliberations of the House of Lords and to individual members of that House, yet one does not have to look very long in the provincial newspapers to find brief accounts of matters discussed in the upper house; and sometimes the reports were long, as when the *Leeds Mercury*, number 747 (3 June 1740), in response to popular demand, gave the full text—nearly five columns of small print—of the speech delivered in the House of Lords by “the Duke of A-----” on the taking of Portobello by Admiral Vernon. Printers of newspapers soon discovered that they need not even observe the letter of the law, provided there was nothing libelous or derogatory in the published observation.

Certainly no official objections were raised when, after his defeat in the rebellion of 1745, Lord Lovat was named with vituperation in practically all the public prints in England. His flight, his capture, his progress to London, his trial, and his execution were all set forth in vivid detail week by week in the London and provincial papers alike. Here, if ever, the printers of eighteenth-century newspapers should have discovered the usefulness of headlines. What screaming types would have appeared if the twentieth-century style had been anticipated: “Rebel Chief Vanishes”; “Lovat found in Hollow Tree”; “Peer on Trial at Westminster”; “Axe Faces Condemned Lord”; “Grand-stand Collapses at Lovat Beheading”; “Jacobite’s Head Shown to Crowd.” All of the incidents suggested by these imaginary captions were described in newspapers then being published in the provincial towns.

Throughout the months of rebellion, most of the provincial newspapers eagerly copied from the London papers the reports of the movements of the Stuart forces and of the King’s troops under General Wade, General Cope,
General Ligonier, and later the Duke of Cumberland. Many of the reports were only rumors and had subsequently to be corrected. For that reason one cannot safely base a history of the rebellion on the contemporary newspapers, though as R. C. Jarvis has pointed out these paragraphs have a special interest because they were written when no one knew what the next week's news would be or what places in the line of march would be thrown into disorder. When Sam. Drewry in his Derby Mercury of 20 September 1745 prefaced his paragraphs of northern news with the words, "The Trouble in Scotland being now the principal Subject of Enquiry . . . ," he did not know that before long his paper would regularly have a section headed "By the North Mail to Derby, on Tuesday Night," and that by early December the marching columns of Stuart supporters would fill the streets of Derby, only to make in that very town their momentous decision to turn back instead of going on to the expected triumphs in London.

As was true of other national news, much of what the local papers printed about the progress of the 1745 rebellion came through the London Gazette or the London Gazette Extraordinary or another of the London papers and was necessarily long out of date by the time it was reprinted in provincial papers. By the time one week's "Advices from the North" reached London and were then reprinted in such places as Norwich and Gloucester, the rebellion had moved into another phase altogether. The exciting news of the Duke of Cumberland's victory at Culloden on 16 April 1746 reached London only after seven days, and even in northern towns the news was slow to arrive. The Preston Journal of 25 April 1746 had excerpts from private letters written in Glasgow reporting the three-hour battle and the defeat of the rebels by the Duke of Cumberland; readers of the Manchester Magazine and of the York Journal did not see the report until 29 April, thirteen days after the blood of English and Scots had congealed in the sod of Straghalen Moor.
Although much of the news of the '45 in local newspapers was anything but fresh and often consisted of rumors and speculations rather than known facts, the excitement grew rapidly and the reports became bulkier. So keen were Englishmen to know what was happening in the North—particularly after the rebels had begun to move West and South across the border—that gradually foreign news yielded place to what in August and early September had been labeled “Scottish Affairs” but soon appeared under a caption less suggestive of remoteness; and new papers—the Eton Journal early in October, 1745, and the York Journal on 26 November 1745—were founded expressly to carry the war news to impatient and anxious readers. “This Paper was first published on the breaking out of the Rebellion in the North,” wrote the printer of the Eton newspaper in his number 61 (8 May 1746), “and for the more ready Intelligence, published twice a Week.”

A point to be made here is that the number of news reports and letters first printed in several of these local papers was considerable. They do not all yield original matter. Except for reports of spontaneous celebrations whenever good news arrived and announcements of regional “associations” organized for marshaling men and money in defense of the realm, there was in the papers of the South and the East little purely local news concerning the excitement evoked by the rebellion. But as one examines the files of papers printed in Midland and Northern towns—Newcastle, York, Preston, Manchester, Derby, Stamford, Birmingham, Worcester, Northampton, Cambridge, and even Gloucester—one comes upon many direct communications much fresher than those reprinted from the London papers. There was, of course, no paper in either Liverpool or Carlisle. Of the Leeds Mercury only one issue from those critical months—number 1072 (25 February 1746)—appears to be extant; no issue of the Kendal Weekly Journal for the period of the rebellion is extant; no Hull paper printed earlier than 19 August 1746.
has survived; there are now no copies of the Nottingham Weekly Courant for 1745 and 1746; and all issues of Adams’s Weekly Courant (Chester) between July, 1741, and December, 1746, have disappeared, though many articles from those missing issues and some later ones were brought together by Elizabeth Adams in The Chester Miscellany. Being a Collection Of Several Pieces, both in Prose and Verse, Which were in the Chester Courant from January 1745, to May 1750 (Chester: Elizabeth Adams, 1750).28

Communication must certainly have been difficult, but remarkably energetic efforts were made to gather and spread news. Newcastle-upon-Tyne was one of the centers from which, in one form or another, war news reached other places. On 26 October 1745, the Cambridge Journal and other papers reprinted a dispatch dated at Newcastle ten days earlier reporting the anxiety felt there for “one of the Persons employed in getting Intelligence of the Motions of the Rebels,” since it was rumored that he had been captured and hanged; but the Newcastle news-gatherer demonstrated the falsity of the rumor by returning safely. One reads of a professional carrier of news who reached Newcastle on Friday night, 15 November, delivered a letter to Marshal Wade, rode most of Saturday night to Kendal, and from that place at eight o’clock Sunday night sent an “express” which reached Manchester about five o’clock Monday evening, concluding that particular report—it is in the Manchester Magazine dated Tuesday, 19 November 1745—by saying, “I think to stay a few Days longer, and shall continue to give you as good Accounts as possible.” In the Scots Magazine of February, 1746, is “A particular account of the surrender of the town of Stirling. Published in the Newcastle Journal, and afterwards in the London papers.” Four months earlier, Robert Whitworth’s Manchester Magazine, number 455 (15 October 1745), had a “Copy of a Letter from Newcastle, to a Gentleman in Manchester, dated Oct. 11, 238
and the following week's issue had similar communications from Newcastle and from York to recipients in Manchester.

One naturally turns to the Preston and Manchester and Derby newspapers in the hope of finding accounts of the incidents which occurred as the rebel forces moved through Lancashire into Cheshire and Derbyshire. The hope is justified. By good fortune a file of the Preston Journal for the months between September, 1745, and March, 1746, has recently come into the hands of a private collector in London, and three issues of the rival Preston paper, the True British Courant, also survive, one each for September, October, and November, 1745. The whole mass of report and speculation in these two newspapers cannot be described here, but it can be said that one no longer has to be satisfied with guessing what news may have reached local readers as the rebels moved in and about Preston. The reports range from a Preston tradesman's account of the defenses of Newcastle (in the Preston Journal of 18 October) to dispatches from Penrith (25 October), excited but uncertain communications from Dumfries (8 November), and two columns of fairly up-to-the-minute news from Kendal, Penrith, Newcastle, Carlisle, and Whitehaven (in the Preston Journal of 15 November). The dispatch from Whitehaven is a vivid firsthand description of what had been seen at the rebels' camp just outside Carlisle by a gentleman "disguised Countryman-like." The next issue of the Preston Journal, number 269 (22 November 1745), is missing; number 270 covers the gap from 22 November to 20 December and reports in some detail the retreat of the rebel forces through the town, for Friday the thirteenth saw the departure of the last of the Pretender's marching troops and the arrival of some of the King's forces.

In the November issues of the Manchester Magazine, Robert Whitworth printed many direct communications from the areas through which the rebels had passed or
were expected to pass. Then, as in Preston, came silence; there was no *Manchester Magazine* on 3 December or 10 December, just as there was no *Derby Mercury* on 6 December. Manchester was occupied by the rebels at the end of November, and Whitworth did not attempt to bring out his paper; Derby saw the rebel forces turn back toward Scotland less than forty-eight hours after they had entered the town, but in the confusion the *Mercury* could not be prepared. We are not left in doubt about the feelings of disgust for the invaders in either place. When Whitworth resumed publication on 17 December, he let his language reveal his animosity:

> In general it may with Truth be affirm'd, that such a Parcel of shabby, lousy, shitten Scoundrels were never seen in England before. The Majority of them deserve no better Character, and the whole of them have every where done enough to convince all who are not stupify'd with Notions of Hereditary Right . . . that nothing that is just or good can be expected of them.

The only known copy of the following week's issue of the *Manchester Magazine* is defective, but four full columns of its two surviving pages give in successive, dated paragraphs “An Account of the Rebels from their first Coming to MANCHESTER, to the last Time they left it.”

After its silence, the *Derby Mercury* also offered a long account of what had been going on in the two weeks before number 38 appeared on 13 December. An eye-witness told of the rebels' bedraggled state when they entered the town on Wednesday afternoon, 4 December, “dress'd in dirty Plaids and Shirts, without Breeches, their Stockings not halfway up their Legs, some without Shoes, or next to none, and generally so fatigued with their long March, as to demand our Pity more than Fear”; and a letter written by a Derby gentleman described the insolent conduct of six rebel officers and forty men who
had taken up quarters in his house. "Most of these Men," he wrote, "looked like so many Fiends turn'd out of Hell to ravage the Kingdom."

As historical documents, these and other newspaper accounts of the second attempt to place a Stuart on the throne of England by force of arms may be of dubious significance; as eyewitness reports, they are realistic and immediate enough to stir one's imagination long after the events described.

If it appears that less had been made in local papers about the earlier rising of the Jacobites, it is simply because there were few newspapers in 1715. Of special interest would be accounts in newspapers published close to the actual fighting; but there was no newspaper at Preston, or Kendal, or Leeds, or Halifax, or York. At Newcastle there was John White's Courant; and although no copies printed in 1715 have survived, there are numerous brief reports and references to the uprising in the issues of January and February, 1716. Number 695 (9 January 1716), for example, has a long list of "the most Considerable Chiefs in Scotland, and the Number of Men they can Raise"; number 704 (30 January 1716) has the text of the declaration of loyalty to the King presented on behalf of the people of Newcastle; and number 707 (6 February 1716) has communications from Edinburgh and from London, dated alike on 2 February, the former including a statement that, according to the Duke of Argyle's aide-de-camp, the rebels had retired from Perth at two o'clock in the morning the previous Monday (30 January), and two other encouraging reports, also from Edinburgh direct: "We hear General Cadogan is marched towards Dundee with a strong Body of Horse and Foot, to take Possession of that Place, and that Campbell of Glenlyon with some Highlanders, have been taken in the Castle of Tullibardine by some of his Majesty's Forces in their Way to Perth." The Stamford Mercury printed long extracts from the Evening Post and from the written
newsletters of Miller and Fox relaying reports from Stirling and from Oxford, where Jacobite sympathizers had been seized for having “encouraged the Scholars to drink the Pretender’s Health.”

Papers published far away in the South of England gave the uprising the attention one would expect in view of the fact that there were threats of local risings in that region of Britain. In Exeter, Joseph Bliss offered readers of his Protestant Mercury a good deal of news about the excitement, both in reports that came from London and in others sent directly to him from other places. In his number 10 (28 October 1715), for example, is a report dated at Taunton two days before:

There are already come into this Town about 500 Dragoons, well arm’d, and a Regiment is expected to morrow, besides a great Number of Foot Soldiers. A great many Arms (some say a Ship Load) are seized at Pool; and the Rebels design’d to rise this Week in several Towns in Dorset and Somerset. Yesterday several Persons were apprehended in Sherborne, and committed to Dorchester Goal. Great Hurry of Expresses passes to and fro.

During the following weeks, Bliss provided plenty of news about the rebellion, and on 2 December inserted another note from Taunton, this one reporting that “A great Quantity of Swords, Pistols, Carbiners, &c. being Arms that were seized at the Bath, and mentioned lately in this Weekly Paper, are now brought to this Town in a Waggon for his Majesty’s Service.” On 9 December the Protestant Mercury carried a report that at Oxford on 30 November a shipment of “12 Dozen of Swords and Bayonets,” directed to one Mrs. Greenaway, had been seized in a barge that had come from London; and in the same issue a local instrument maker advertised that gentlemen and others who had occasion for kettle drums and other drums for the militia could be supplied at reasonable rates by George Light, living near the East Gate in Exeter.
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Swords and bayonets seized in Oxford and Somerset and drums on sale in Exeter—they must have made the Devonshire people fully aware of the actuality of the Jacobite rising, but it was to Scotland, naturally, that the people looked for the most startling news, though the reports invariably came in a roundabout way. Bishop's Exeter Mercury on 28 October 1715 had reports about the rebellion from Edinburgh, Dumfries, and Berwick, copied out of the Post Man, the Flying Post, St. James's Evening Post, the Gazetteer, and Dormer's letter. Four weeks later, Bishop reported that a message reaching London by way of Edinburgh told of the great rejoicings at Manchester upon news of the rebels' defeat at Preston, and added that "one Tho. Syddall, who was a principal actor in pulling down the Meetinghouses in those Parts, and committed to Lancaster Goal for the same, was releas'd by the Rebels, and retaken by the King's Forces at Preston, and afterwards hanged." This issue of the Exeter Mercury also had an account of the Preston engagement; it was dated at London on 19 November and had been taken from "Private Letters by Yesterday's Post from Preston."

Norwich, in the East, doubtless had its reports of the Jacobite rising in 1715, but no copies of Henry Crossgrove's Gazette or of William Chase's Weekly Mercury issued in that year have survived; and there are no copies of the other local paper of the time, the Norwich Courant: or, Weekly Packet.

Worcester people did not wait for formal confirmation from London when letters from the North brought news of victory. They were in the mood to celebrate anyway, for on the last Sunday of October, 1715, they had observed the Prince of Wales's birthday by ringing bells and by "such other innocent Rejoycings, as the Sabbath would justly permit"; later they indulged in more demonstrative hilarity, for on Monday night "the Soldiers burnt the Effigies of the Earl of Mar, Pretender, Pope, and Devil in
a Bonfire made for that Purpose," and "Plenty of Liquor . . . was given among the Soldiers." Then, on Wednesday, 16 November, word came of the decisive action at Preston, and the town was elated. The *Worcester Post Man*, number 334 (18 November 1715), recorded under the date of Thursday, 17 November:

Great Rejoycings were made here yesterday all the Day, upon Advice that some Persons receiv'd by Letters from their Friends towards Lancashire, of an entire Victory obtain'd by the King's Troops over the Rebels at Preston, on Sunday and Monday last, killing, and taking most, if not all, Prisoners, after a desperate Fight, wherein many were kill'd on both Sides. The Particulars of which Action, you may expect at large, in our next, by way of London.

The following issue of the *Worcester Post Man* was filled with accounts from Whitehall, Edinburgh, Stockport, and other points.

Apart from these two periods of special stress within the nation, there were many minor crises to be reported, and a multitude of the everyday events which constituted normal life. It is startling to see how swiftly the excitement over "the '45" gave way to a general anxiety about the incidence of a disease affecting horned cattle. There was a good deal of tittle-tattle about giant radishes, strange lights seen in the sky, the trying out of a new fire engine at Godmanchester, the death of a one-hundred-and-four-year-old parrot at Exeter, and such things.

One of the best ways of studying the country-wide treatment of "home" news is to see how quickly the papers in various regions picked up the accounts of a notorious murder and the ensuing trial of the alleged murderer. Of the many such affairs which the eighteenth century witnessed, there were few to equal the Blandy case, if one is to judge by the attention paid to it in the provincial newspapers. It is not in the least surprising that the thirty-three country newspapers which were being printed
at that time—1751-52—gave far more space to Mary Blandy's poisoning of her father than they gave a few months later to the change in the calendar or indeed to anything else that happened in England that year. Her name was on everybody's lips. This was not a London "case"; it originated in Oxfordshire. There was no newspaper in Oxford then; the nearest were at Reading, Gloucester, Stratford-upon-Avon, Northampton, and Worcester, but all the reports appeared first in London papers. The affair must at the beginning have seemed to be only one more death in the provinces—regrettable, of course, but nothing to fuss about, since these things happened so often. But it soon appeared from the inquest, held on 15 August 1751, that this particular homicide had all the concomitants that newsmongers gloat over—foul play suspected; daughter (fortunately quite lovely to look upon and to read about) believed implicated; daughter's lover also involved; startling disclosures by many witnesses at the inquest and at the trial; Miss Blandy—people began to call her Molly—incarcerated in Oxford Castle to await trial; a report—false—that Mary had escaped; a report that Oxford refused to permit the trial to be held in the theater, but would allow the Divinity School to be used; the trial itself, in March; the verdict—"guilty"; the sentence—death; the execution on 6 April.

So far as the newspapers and the public were concerned, the story did not end when the unhappy girl from Henley breathed her last; detailed accounts of the trial and of Mary's lover continued to fill many columns. As late as 16 May 1753, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal printed "An Elegy [by 'Draco'] for Miss Blandy, Who was executed at Oxford, Monday April 6, 1752, for poisoning her Father." Altogether the "Female Parricide" can be held accountable for news reports, letters, verses, transcripts of various hearings spread over half a year, and advertisements in newspapers from one end of England to the
other. The *Cambridge Journal*, number 392 (21 March 1752), managed to find room for both the Blandy trial and an article on the proposed change in the calendar, but other papers gave priority to Mary. Joseph Harrop's new *Manchester Mercury* gave front-page space to "Miss Blandy's Own Narrative" and put on an inside page the eagerly awaited account of the execution of John Swann and Elizabeth Jeffries. Neither the escapes of John Sheppard nor the execution of Jonathan Wild had made such a stir in the counties of England as the *cause célèbre* of Mary Blandy and her conspiring lover, Cranstoun. Only the trial of James Annesley in November, 1743, produced anything like as much public interest.

There was no lack of intimations of immorality from all parts of the country. Two illustrations picked out of hundreds will serve to show how such matters were treated in country newspapers. The final paragraph of news in the *Sherborne Mercury*, number 16 (7 June 1737), reached the editor through his London correspondent, who, on June 4, communicated to him a two-hundred-and-eighty-word report dated at Canterbury on June 1. It told of the arrest and confession of Margaret Wickes, a single woman about twenty-two years of age, who had been "committed to his Majesty's Gaol of St. Dunstan's," near Canterbury, on suspicion of having murdered Lydia Fagg, eighteen-month-old daughter of her employer, a gentleman of Dover.

This Maid Servant got up from the Bed where she lay with the Infant, at her Master's House in Dover, about four of the Clock on Saturday Morning last, and before she went out of the House, as she now says, she went up and kiss'd the Child three several Times, and at last took the Child from the Bed, and carry'd her asleep to the Seaside; when a great Wave wash'd the Child out of her Arms; that she saw the Child struggle several Times, and went into the Sea after it to save it, but could not. But 'tis confidently reported by strong Circumstances, that she flung the Child into the Sea, to be reveng'd of her Mistress.
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She can give no Reason for carrying the Child so early in the Morning to the Sea-side. This hard hearted Creature afterwards, instead of going Home, rambled about three Miles to St. Margaret's, where she was found, conceal'd in one of the Cliffs about ten o'clock the same Morning; and the Child about the same time was taken up in one of the Fishermens Nets.

A twentieth-century reader of this account, finding himself thinking of a folk ballad or of an incident in a Hardy or a George Eliot novel, is moved to wonder what distress of mind prompted Margaret Wickes to her strange action.

The other episode chosen here to represent stories of violence reported in country newspapers is much too bloody to suggest either Hardy or George Eliot. Bryan Connell's motive for attacking a butcher at "Lousey Weedon" appears to have been robbery, but why did he give his victim fourteen or fifteen blows and then cut off his head "so that it hung only by some Sinews"? At the Northampton assizes in March, 1741, Connell was convicted, largely on the strength of testimony presented by Elizabeth Watson. According to the report in the Nottingham Post, number 586 (19 March 1741), and in other papers shortly afterward, she "gave so exact an Account of every Circumstance attending that cruel Murder, that the Judge and all the Hearers were perfectly satisfied."

Amongst other Things, there was an extraordinary Piece of Evidence given by Elizabeth Watson, That walking some Time after the Murder, just upon the Spot of Ground where it was committed, with Bryan Connell, and one or two more of that Gang, he saw a Robin Red Breast in a Bush, and threw the Stick he had in his Hand at it and knock'd it down, and bringing it to Elizabeth Watson said, this is not the first Thing kill'd here, this is the Place where we murder'd the Butcher.

The report concluded with the statement that Bryan Connell was to be hanged in chains on the spot where the murder was committed.
It is pleasant to turn from this gruesome matter to consider briefly a few examples of more varied and more diverting provincial news taken from London papers and set up in type at country printing houses. One reads in the *Norwich Post*, number 594 (5 July 1712), that the workmen engaged in building “Blenheim,” the Kingdom’s gift to the Duke of Marlborough, were suing the Duke for £40,000 “owing to them for work done there.” In the *Reading Mercury* on 8 July 1723 was a report from Chester that the Rev. Mr. Henchman had discovered and opened the coffin of Hugh Lupus, the first Earl of Chester, nephew to William the Conqueror, the most remarkable feature of the disinterment being that “the String which ty’d the Ancles together was whole and entire,” although it was “more than 630 odd Years since the Interment of the Body.” The *Derby Mercury* reported on 4 November 1743 the sad case of a Bristol cobbler bitten by a cat; the cat as well as the cobbler died from the effects. On 18 May 1745, the *Cambridge Journal* printed details of the attack on a Methodist meetinghouse by an unruly mob in Exeter earlier that month. On 24 October 1747, the *Ipswich Journal*, number 454, reported from Manchester a porter’s successful demonstration that a cask supposed by some to contain snuff really was filled with gunpowder; in support of his contention he had dropped a live coal into it.

These and thousands of other delayed reports about provincial life are encountered in the country newspapers throughout the period; but each report can be read in a London paper dated a few days earlier. This is in some cases neither surprising nor disappointing, for it is perfectly natural that the news from Newcastle, Lancaster, and Kendal in the *Protestant Mercury; or, the Exeter Post Boy*, number 14 (11 November 1715), should have reached Joseph Bliss, the printer, by way of London. What strikes one as curious is that even news from nearby places sometimes reached local readers by way of
London. News of the collapse of a house in Taunton on November 22 did not reach readers of the Sherborne Mercury until two weeks later, the report being taken from a London paper, though Taunton is not much more than thirty miles from Sherborne.

As was observed earlier, whatever value the provincial newspapers have as contemporary records of events is to be found in the news that came from near-by places but not by way of London. Even here the lapse of time was sometimes great. St. Ives in Huntingdonshire is not fifteen miles from Cambridge, but it took more than a fortnight for a strange piece of news to be brought before the readers of Robert Raikes’s new St. Ives Post-Boy, number 3, on Monday, the last day of June, 1718.

St. Ives, June 28

We hear from Cambridge, That on Sunday was sen-night in the Afternoon, the Vice Chancellor turn’d all the People out of Great St. Mary’s-Church; but for what Reason is not yet known.

During the following week a corrected account came in, and Raikes said in the fourth issue of his paper that the story from Cambridge had proved to be a mistake. “My Correspondent there,” he said, “has given me the Right of it. . . . It being Commencement Time, . . . some Persons had got into a Place, call’d the Pit, which Place is only Appropriated to Masters of Arts, which some intruders got into, and therefore were deservedly turn’d out.”

Raikes and his partner Dicey were much more prompt in reporting current events after they moved to Gloucester. A paragraph in the Gloucester Journal of 20 August 1722, presumably taken from the current issue (no longer extant) of the Worcester Post Man, gave an account of the execution of four persons condemned at the Worcester assizes. An act of intended mercy made the spectacle extraordinarily interesting:
FRESHEST ADVICES

Soon after they were turn'd off, some Person, who had been desir'd by Blackwell to do so, pull'd him by the Legs with such Force, that he pull'd him down. When he was put into the Cart again, he was speechless, but coming to himself a little after, he spoke again to the People, and was turn'd off a 2d time.

Raikes and Dicey were prompt enough also in reporting fully the assizes held in the Booth Hall in Gloucester on the 9th, 11th, 12th, and 13th of the following March, for the first article in the Gloucester Journal, number 50 (18 March 1723), filled the available space on the front page and three quarters of the second page with details of the trials of persons charged with crimes that brought sentence of death to five—including John Powel for stealing a black horse valued at six pounds, and a woman who was to be burnt at the stake for giving her husband "one mortal Wound on the Navel with a Knife"—and transportation for seven years to five others—including John Cranham for stealing "one Sixpenny Loaf, a Pair of Nut-crackers, a Bottle of Geneva, to the Value of 1s., together with a coarse Towel."

If one ranges through the columns of the Gloucester Journal or any other country newspaper for a few decades, one sees that they frequently reported exciting events in nearby places; for besides the assizes and the executions that inevitably followed, there were fires, floods, riots, explosions, and local calamities of many kinds. Reference was made earlier in this chapter to a direct and detailed report of a fire at Burwell in the Norwich Mercury on 16 September 1727; and there were vivid accounts of fires in Dorsetshire in the Sherborne Mercury, number 274 (18 May 1742) and number 303 (7 December 1742). The violence and rioting over turnpikes at Ledbury were reported effectively in the Weekly Worcester Journal, numbers 1303 (14 June 1734) and 1370 (26 September 1735); the Salisbury Journal, number 46 (11 December 1738), gave an account of the rising of the weavers at
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Trowbridge; the Leeds Mercury, number 743 (6 May 1740), reported the Dewsbury riots; and Aris’s Birmingham Gazette, number 118 (13 February 1744), gave an ample account of the violence of a mob which moved about in the area of Wednesbury, Darlaston, Walsall, and West Bromwich attacking all whom they took to be followers of John and Charles Wesley. Heavy damage by flooding at Kendal and Milnthorpe was reported immediately in the Newcastle Journal, number 185, on 16 October 1742.

Many of these pieces of regional news can be read with much interest now because the events are in themselves quite out of the ordinary or because they were reported with a certain forthright simplicity, if not sprightliness, of style. There is something memorably matter-of-fact about the report in the Reading Post under the date 26 May 1735 that “On Monday last a poor Man was unfortunately kill’d, at Berrings Hill in the County of Oxon, by the Drag Chain breaking and throwing him down, whereby the Wheel went over his Body and squeezed his Guts out.” One is tempted to quote in full the incredible post-mortem account of James Richards, of Milverton in Somerset, who, according to the obituary notice in Norris’s Taunton Journal on 5 January 1728, died at three-score years and ten the day after Christmas. Knowing that the old man had experienced peculiar internal symptoms ever since he had some months before drunk water from a brook, a surgeon at Wellington performed an autopsy and discovered in the stomach of the deceased a small animal resembling a combination of prawn and caterpillar. There was “Life in it after it was taken out,” the report said, but it soon died and “is since Buried at the request of the Deceased’s Daughter.” On a somewhat different level is the exciting account in the Ipswich Journal, number 421 (7 March 1747), of a French privateer stranded at Trimley, near the opening of the Orwell estuary.

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Anyone in search of a plot for a disagreeable novel can find it in *Howgrave's Stamford Mercury*, number 12 (31 August 1732), which gave a full column to the strange story of William Alcock, the miller of Bourne, in Lincolnshire. Eighteen years before, Alcock had left his wife because she had palsy; but when a personal enemy revealed his whereabouts, he returned, paid fifty pounds to compensate the town authorities for keeping her during his absence, and then strangled her. The same issue of Howgrave's paper carried a long advertisement announcing that the town of Bourne would pay a substantial reward to any person who apprehended Alcock.

The amount of strictly local as distinct from regional news is equally impressive—reports in the Norwich papers of what was going on in Norwich, the Exeter news in Exeter papers, and so on—for as one looks at the whole corpus of purely domestic news-writing, one discovers that the amount, the variety, and the journalistic skill are quite deserving of attention. It is true that in the course of six months there may have been in some communities little to report but the assizes, or a heavy fall of snow, or a bonfire; during the week separating one issue of the town paper from another not much may have happened, for floods, murders, riots, assaults on the Methodists, and visits of the Bishop did not occur every week. Too few men bit dogs. Another point is that even if a violent wind did tear the roofs off a few houses, everybody in town knew what happened long before the weekly paper appeared. Nevertheless there was local news even in some of the first provincial papers to be established; and by the middle of the century, there were a good many papers that regularly had half a column or more of mixed local and regional news, in addition to all that had come from the London papers.

There is little to show that in the reign of Queen Anne the authors of country newspapers made a point of trying to procure local news; but in the course of the next two
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reigns, the authors were not satisfied merely to print what was sent to them. It is noteworthy that when proposals were drawn up in December, 1758, announcing the first newspaper in Halifax, the Union Journal, it was naturally said that the paper would be “collected from all the London Papers,” but there were to be other merits, among them good coverage of happenings near at hand. “As every one is desirous to know the Occurrences of his own Neighbourhood, Care will be taken to publish every remarkable Event, in this and other adjoining Parishes, a number of Gentlemen having engag’d to supply the Printer with Intelligence of this Sort.” It appears that some printers were at first reluctant to insert local news, thrusting the short bits in just before the bankrupts or the advertisements and often in smaller type than was used for the London and foreign news. But at least the distinctly regional or local news had a place to itself; one soon becomes accustomed to looking for such pieces in the third column of the third page.

At this point a word of caution is necessary. In looking through files of country newspapers one frequently sees a passage of news dated at the place of publication of the paper, but it is soon perceived that the report really concerns a nearby place and is not “local” but “regional” in the sense in which these terms have been used here. The St. Ives Post-Boy, number 6 (21 July 1718), for instance, has at the end a separate date line, “St. Ives, July 21,” but the paragraph below this heading tells of a fire at Over, a Cambridgeshire village four miles to the east. In the Maidstone Mercury, number 25 (27 May 1725), is a paragraph beginning “Maidstone, May 24,” but it tells of a misshapen piglet at Cranbrook, some fifteen miles to the south.

It is inexpedient in the present work to compile an inventory or even a classification of local news in the one hundred and fifty English country papers which at one time or another during the reigns of Queen Anne and the
first two Georges were in circulation; but if one examines representative papers from each of the three reigns, it is soon apparent that the country papers published before 1715 gave little space to firsthand accounts, and that in the reign of George I and particularly in that of George II both the new papers and the continuing ones gave more and more space to original as distinct from borrowed reports. “If we (as some Ignoramus’s would have us) were to be silent in what happens in and about this City,” said Thomas Gent of York in his *Original Mercury*, number 160 (3 September 1728), “yet we see other Papers will not be so”; and he cited the practice of the *London Evening Post*—“since Authorities must be quoted”—to show that it was quite the accepted thing for a newspaper, whether published in London or in the country, to print news about local people. To omit such accounts, Gent declared, would be inexcusable. By 1754, no one would be surprised to read in the first issue of the *Leedes Intelligencer* (12 July 1754) the declaration by the proprietor that he expected local news to be more acceptable than what came from the London papers.

Accounts of Occurrences, &c. in the Neighbourhood, whether serious or jocose, of our rural Diversions, and the like would be more Entertaining to the Generality of Readers in the Country than any Thing we have yet heard of the Routs, Riots, Drums, and Hurricanes of the Town.

Nearly forty different newspapers were being printed in English provincial towns when these remarks appeared in the *Leedes Intelligencer*; copies which are extant yield passages of original local news by the hundreds.

If the reign of Queen Anne yields very little local news, it is partly because there were only twenty-one country newspapers in all, partly because most of the issues have disappeared. Seven of the Queen Anne provincial papers have left no trace, or have survived only in later issues. For evidence about the nature and amount of local news
in country journals published before the Queen died at the beginning of August, 1714, one has only a few scattered issues of fourteen papers, four of them printed in Norwich, two in Exeter, two in Newcastle, two in Stamford, two in Nottingham, and one each in Bristol and Worcester. There is no Bristol news in the four extant issues of the *Bristol Post-Boy*, and the surviving issues of two early Exeter papers likewise yield nothing of interest about Exeter apart from advertisements. The two surviving issues of the *Nottingham Post*, dated 18 July and 19 December 1711, have no Nottingham news of any particular interest except an announcement of the prizes to be run for at a horse race. There is no local news in the two surviving issues of the *Stamford Post* (17 July 1712 and 31 July 1712).

Although only nine issues of the *Norwich Post* have survived out of its twelve years of continuous publication, those nine issues tell a good deal about the old Norfolk city and the surrounding district; they regularly gave the prices of wheat, barley, and oats on the local market, indicated the numbers of Norwich persons baptized or buried during the preceding week, and, in addition to numerous and revealing advertisements, had such single-sentence reports as these: “This week a Man Impress’d for a Soldier, broke out of the Castle, and made his Escape” (in number 348, 1 May 1708); “Last Saturday came on the Election for the Mayor of this City, and Alderman Havers was unanimously chosen for to serve the ensuing Year” (in number 349, 8 May 1708); “Thursday last being the Day appointed for a General Thanksgiving to return Thanks to Almighty God for the Glorious Successes of the last campaign, it was observed in this City with the usual Solemnity on such Occasions” (in number 390, 19 February 1709). Elizabeth Burges, the printer of the *Norwich Post*, apparently felt that the inclusion of local news would increase the sale of her paper in the region round about Norwich.
From the surviving issues of the other Queen Anne papers, one can glean a handful of local items; and in the following reign there were papers which occasionally had district news. The remark made by Mr. H. L. Evans about the lack of local news in the *Stamford Mercury* is indubitably true of that paper: “... what now comes within the general category of ‘local news’, even if it existed, found no place in the journals of those days”; and that is true enough of the *Plymouth Weekly Journal*. In Nottingham the two newspapers published during the reign of George I—Ayscough’s *Weekly Courant* and John Collyer’s *Nottingham Mercury*—printed very little local news. York’s first newspaper, the *York Mercury*, recorded no local happenings except the assizes, and its successor, Thomas Gent’s *York Journal*, did not print local news until later. On the basis of the twenty-eight issues of the *Manchester News-Letter* which have survived, one surmises that the printer did not think his readers would be interested in anything happening in Manchester.

Papers which did not regularly have local news occasionally printed accounts of special events. The Exeter papers issued during the reign of George I ordinarily had no local news, but once in a while occurrences of special interest were reported, sometimes at considerable length. In Bliss’s *Protestant Mercury*, number 18 (1 June 1716), nearly two columns were given over to an account, taunting and satirical in tone, of “Notorious Behaviour of some Mobbing Tories in the Parish of St. Thomas.” In his paper of 26 April 1717, Bliss reported an event which presumably had come to his notice just too late to be inserted in the previous issue. Under the caption “EXON,” he put a column and a half beginning with this well-packed sentence:

On Friday the 19th of this Instant April, one John Hinston, a Taylor, of the Parish of Blackaunton, lying between Totness and Dartmouth, was brought Prisoner to
High-Goal, for (as his Mittimus expresses) barbarously
Beating and Wounding his poor Wife two Days before till
she dy'd.

With an eye for the unusual detail, Bliss added that the
alleged wife-beater weighed nearly four hundred pounds!
In 1726, Andrew Brice proudly reported in considerable
detail the jubilation of Exonians when a local boy revis­
ited his native city, not as plain Peter King, but as
the Lord High Chancellor of England; Brice's Weekly
Journal, number 11 (26 August 1726), has an account
five hundred and fifty words long followed by compli­
mentary verses by the editor himself, “Not a Line being
written ’till Yesterday,” he said, “nor compos’d for the
Press ’till 4 a-Clock this Morning. . . .”

Two provincial papers in which both local and regional
news became notably abundant in the reign of George I
were Stephen Bryan's Worcester Post-Man and the
Raikes-Dicey Gloucester Journal. Both papers had lively
and pointed accounts of all the usual events of the two
places. In the Gloucester paper one finds accounts of such
things as the suicide of an hostler at the Star Inn, the
fining of a local constable, the action taken by the mayor
to lower the price of corn, the announcement of Samuel
Worrall's appointment as distributor of stamps for the
county, and the ordaining of priests and deacons by the
Lord Bishop—in other words, precisely the sort of local
news now printed in provincial newspapers. Such items
as those just mentioned, together with many pieces of
news from nearby places, contributions of verse and prose
by local authors, the “Gloucester Weekly Bill of Mor­
tality,” local prices, and an abundance of commercial
advertisements and personal notices, give one a fair
glimpse of life in that corner of England. Local items
were few in number in the Worcester Post-Man in 1713
and 1714, but they increased in number and interest in
the third decade of the century. By 1730, it was as natural
to look for Worcester news in the Worcester newspaper as it is today.

The next thirty years saw a considerable expansion of this element in the country newspapers; and if some of them—Howgrave's Stamford Mercury, for example, and the Sherborne Mercury—continued to give very little space to reports of local events, there were many more papers in which almost every issue had something, and the total for any one year was remarkably extensive. To suggest that either the local or the national and foreign news in those papers was all significant would be ridiculous. News was not written for posterity, and its worth should be tested only by the perennially valid standards of journalism. Novelty is legitimate in a newspaper, if etymology means anything. Would a twentieth-century reader of the Salisbury Journal not be excited by a report that a trout "of a prodigious Size... 9 Pound 13 Ounces" had been caught within the town limits? Such a report must have been just as exciting on 19 June 1739. What resident of Ipswich would not be interested to read in his local paper next Friday that the man who had just been made bailiff had at the same time won £10,000 in a lottery? That twofold change of fortune was reported about a man named Thirkie in the Ipswich Journal, number 462 (19 December 1747). Yet novelty soon fades, and one looks for other virtues before declaring the lasting worth of news.

It would be easy to enumerate the seven cardinal virtues of journalism, but at the head of anyone's list must surely go these three: succinctness, clarity, humanity. A news story sixty words in length is ineffectual if its substance could have been set forth in thirty words; it is less than satisfactory if it leaves any significant element in doubt; it falls short of its potential impressiveness if the human aspect is neglected. Judged by this threefold standard, how does the local news in the country papers in the reign of George II compare with the reports
in the best newspapers of our time? The question cannot be settled by the quoting of a few samples, but it is easy to find in the early provincial papers a thousand statements as admirably direct and economical of words as this announcement in the *Cambridge Journal* on 11 August 1750: "On Friday last the Rev. Dr. Paris, Master of Sidney-Sussex College in this University, was unanimously chosen Principal Librarian of this University, in the room of Dr. Middleton, deceas'd." Brevity is not everything. James Lister's full-column report of violence in the streets of Leeds makes good reading now, in spite of its eight hundred words, for the account—it is in the *Leeds Mercury* of 3 July 1753—gives enough detail to evoke a sense of being there:

... When Night came on and Candles were brought in, the Shutters of the Windows of the Room the Magistrates were in being closed, the Mob grew more outrageous than ever, and with large Stones knocked down the Centinels, broke their Firelocks, drove the Window Shutters and Windows into the Room, and continuing to pour into the said Room large Stones dug out of the Pavement in the Streets, obliged the Magistrates for the Preservation of their Lives to leave that Part of the House. ...

Lister wrote his report with an admirable blend of detachment and concern. It could have been a frenzied tirade; instead it is a controlled statement of fact, with just that kind of implication of basic principle on the side of law and order which one expects from a responsible journalist.

One of the best samples of reporting in the country papers of two centuries ago is John White's account, in his *York Courant*, number 286 (2 March 1731), of the ceremonies observed at the laying of the corner stone of the new assembly rooms—here called "the Theatre"—in Blake Street. There are three paragraphs, and (apart from the text of the Latin inscription, which is given in full) the account is completed in four compound sentences. It begins with the most important fact:
York, March 1. This Day the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor, and Aldermen, with the Gentlemen in Town, lay'd the Foundation-Stone of the Theatre which is to be erected on a Plan of the Right Honourable the Earl of Burlington's, our Lord Lieutenant and Governor.

Then came dimensions and details of the structure itself, which was "to be for all publick Diversions, such as Assemblies, Concerts of Musick, &c."

... the Building will be 92 Feet in the Front, (where there will be a magnificent Portico) and it will be 136 Feet in Depth, and will consist of Seven fine Rooms, amongst which will be a spacious Hall, after the Egyptian Manner, 112 Feet in Length, and 40 in Breadth, and the same in Heighth, which will have a Colonnade of 48 Corinthian Pillars, supporting the upper Part of the Building, which will be enrich'd by the same Number of Pilasters, to the Number of 44, for the Convenience of Air in the Race Week.

The human touch followed:

... and for the Benefit of the Populace, in case a Crown'd Head should ever grace this Place, there will be a Gallery all round on the Out-side, where People may look in at the Windows, and see all that Passes in the Inside.

The ceremony proper was described in the simplest terms:

At 12 a'Clock, Three Troops of General Churchill's Regiment march'd in Order to the Lord Mayor's, who, attended by the Gentlemen, went to the Ground, and perform'd the Ceremony of laying the Stone, which had the following Inscription fix'd to it in Brass, and several Pieces of our Coin of the Year 1730, lay'd under it.

The inscription named "Richardus, Comes de Burlington, Hujus Urbis Praeses, Saeculi MAECENAS" as the builder of the edifice, which was dedicated to various social purposes:
NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

Quo Publici Exhbeantur Ludi,
Quo Proceres undique Confluant,
Quo Artes efflorescant Liberales,
Quo (dilatanta Negotio) Gloriam Pristina
Novo EBORACI Splendore
Obumbretur.

The account closed with a brief statement of the general jubilation which marked the occasion:

During the Ceremony, the Troops gave several fine Vollies, the People huzzaing, Long live King George and Queen Caroline; and the Evening concluded with Joy, there being a fine Assembly, Drinking of Loyal Healths, Ringing of Bells, Bonefires, &c.

It gave the writer of this book a pleasant sense of “being there” when, ten minutes after reading this account in the York Courant of 1731, he joined a company of Yorkshire people and others at a formal gathering in that same “theatre”; there were no “fine vollies” and no “bonefires,” but the colonnade of Corinthian pillars maintained the solid dignity of York’s 1731 splendour, and the place was full of wonderful ghosts.

Beyond doubt, the news in the York Courant and the other country newspapers offering freshest advices foreign and domestic was stimulating and informative to our eighteenth-century ancestors. It is no disparagement to say that two centuries later much of its original freshness has gone. The wonder is that it can still entertain so delightfully and inform so amply.

1. For an account of such entertaining matter, see Chapter VII.

2. When Robert Dodsley, of London, tried to avoid raising the selling price of his Public Register in 1741 by omitting the news so that the Register could be printed on unstamped paper, he found that his readers, “particularly in the Country,” were “very desirous” of having the news.
FRESHEST ADVICES

included in the paper, and he was obliged, therefore, to resume the printing of news, using stamped paper for that part of his publication.

3. These lines in a set of stanzas printed in the Churchman; or Loyalist's Weekly Journal, number 27 (3 December 1720), show that Daniel Defoe was regarded as especially skilled in fabricating news:

The Post ye call Daily
If Mails shou'd e'er fail ye
Has an Author can guess ev'ry Sentence
And make out his Grub,
A rare Tale of a Tub
Oh! Father thou grant him Repentance.

A note at the foot of the page identifies the author as "Robinson Crusoe, alias De Foe."

4. Local papers printed in nearby towns were sometimes quoted by provincial editors, often without acknowledgment. W. Craighton of the Ipswich Journal, by way of exception, was careful to show where he had found the country news which he printed. In number 130 (8 August 1741), for example, several articles are marked "Colchester Journal," "Bury Post," "Norwich Gazette," "Norwich Mercury."

5. Newcastle papers often had direct news of ship arrivals and departures at Shields, a few miles down the Tyne. As early as 1712, John White requested readers of his Newcastle Courant to provide him with shipping news. The issue of 12 January 1712 has this invitation at the end of the fourth page: "Whereas many Persons, living in or near Newcastle upon Tine, receive Letters from their Friends or Relations, giving an Account of the Arrival of Ships in diverse Ports (and sometimes of other Occurrences that happen in their Voyage) the knowledge whereof would be very acceptable to others, who may have Concerns in the same Ships; The Printer therefore of this Courant gives Notice, that if any of his Acquaintance, or others, will be pleased to communicate such Intelligence, or a Copy of it, to him so that it may be inserted in this Paper for the Benefit of the Publick, They may be sure of a kind Reception, and Acknowledgment of their Favour, with a suitable Return and Gratification for it."

6. Some London newspapers enjoyed the services of a foreign correspondent. When George James, printer of the Post Boy, was questioned officially about the source of a paragraph dated "From the Hague, October 7, N.S." and printed in the Post Boy on 3 October 1727, he said he has received it "from a private Correspondent at ye Hague, who furnishes him with what he calls his Hague Letter, wth in ye said Post Boy is distinguished from ye other News by Commas. . . ."

7. In the course of an official examination Edward Berington, printer of the Evening Post, said that the paragraph dated at Madrid on 28 June and printed in number 3119 (17 July 1729) of his paper had been taken from the Daily Post of that same date (P.R.O., S.P. 36/13/104).
8. Stephen Martin may have been able to print a notably large amount of American news in his Bath Advertiser because his Bristol agent, Samuel Nayler, helped him to get hold of reports reaching Bristol by sea.

9. In the issue of the Norwich Gazette on the same date, 16 September 1727, Henry Cross-grove did not give a lengthy account of the fire, stating only, "We hear that in the dreadful fire at Burwell, one Mr. James Brinley (a Wholesale Turner) and his Wife, who had been marry'd but that Morning, perish'd in the Flames: As also one Mr. Rhodes an Excise-Man and his Wife, who went to the Show after they had put their 4 Children to Bed: And a Woman who rose out of Bed from her Husband, to see the Show." But Cross-grove had already printed by itself on a stamped half-sheet selling for three half-pence what was labelled A True Copy of a Letter . . . ostensibly written to Mr. Cross-grove on 9 September by an eyewitness, George Large by name. Cross-grove gave names where Chase in the Percival letter did not, but there are strong grounds for suspecting that the George Large letter is a concocted substitute for the genuine letter actually sent from Barton Hills to Justice Mott.

10. From the introductory address "To the Public" in the Stratford, Shipston, and Aulcester Journal, number 1 (5 February 1750).

11. Henry Fielding made much of conflicting newspaper reports in his True Patriot a few years later.

12. The Bath Journal of 13 July 1752 refers in its first column to "the great Dearth of News, and the little Expectations of a War, which is the Fund for News-Writers."

13. Collyer copied the text from the St. James's Evening Post of 18 August.

14. For example, the issue of the Nottingham Post just referred to has among the items of news from London under the date of 18 August the notice that "The Torrington Man of War, Capt. Purcel, is daily expected from Jamaica, with a large Fleet of Ships under Convoy." It was presumably supposed that foreign agents did not read English newspapers. Movements of ships and troops were reported freely and in detail.

15. It was reported in the first issue of the Reading Mercury (8 July 1723) that according to letters received in London on 2 July and dated at Rhode Island on 28 April, one of the Rhode Island sloops had caught a whale of a "prodigious Size, which was reckon'd worth 800 £ including the Blubber."

16. The present rector of Eyam, the Rev. E. M. Turner, has assured me that the initials "T.S.," with which the letter to Lister was signed, must be those of the Rev. Thomas Seward, who was rector of Eyam from 1739 to 1790, though Seward spent less time at that village than in the comforts of the Close at Lichfield, where he was canon residentiary and prebendary. As Boswell recorded, Thomas Seward was known to Samuel Johnson, and was the father of Anne, the "Swan of Lichfield."

17. Trysorfa Gwybodaeth was published at Carmarthen in 1770. For an earlier effort to establish a Welsh newspaper, see Chapter I, p. 17.
18. Most of Dublin’s numerous papers are listed by Crane and Kaye. Before the end of 1760, Belfast had only the Belfast News Letter (from 1737 on); Cork had the Cork News Letter (1723-25), the Cork Evening Post (1754-96), and George Swiney’s Cork Journal (1754-69); there was also for a short time a Waterford Flying Post (1729), printed by the Thomas Cotton who later printed the Kendal Weekly Courant and the Whitehaven Weekly Courant.

19. See F. S. Siebert, Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1952), p. 286. For the most important aspects of the early history of Parliamentary reporting, see that same work, pp. 202-18, 279-88, and 346-63. For the whole matter, see also Laurence Hanson, Government and the Press, 1695-1763 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), passim.

20. XIX, 30, 42, 43, 44, 53, 54.

21. Gyttens (or Gythens, or Giddins; the name is spelled in all three ways in The Journal of the House of Commons) was ordered to appear, and identified the author of the letter as John Stanley. When Stanley presented himself and admitted that he had written the letter, he was ordered to be taken into custody. Subsequently he petitioned to be released from custody, and a few days later he was discharged, having piously promised that in future nothing would induce him “to offend in the least against any Order of the House, upon any Account whatsoever.”

22. In April, 1747, the printers of the Gentleman’s Magazine and the London Magazine were called to account before the House of Commons for printing the trial of Lord Lovat; but scores of newspaper references to the distinguished leader in the Stuart cause went unchallenged.


24. From 8 May onward, Pote said, his Windsor and Eton Journal would be published only once a week, because “the late happy Defeat of the Rebels” had removed the necessity of printing news twice weekly.

25. No Exeter newspapers and no copy of the Western Flying Post published in the months of the rebellion have survived.

26. “Among these,” wrote Mrs. Adams in the Preface, “are some Journals, whose Contents (having been carefully extracted from the London, and other News-papers) will give a Series of Accounts relating to the Insurrection of the Scots, A.D. 1745.”

27. Hints of what was going on in Whitworth’s office at this time are seen in later issues of his paper, particularly numbers 491 (22 July 1746) and 497 (2 September 1746). During July, August, and early September, 1746, the Manchester Magazine printed on its front page the details about the trials of several Manchester men who had been charged with having joined the rebel forces. One of these men, Thomas Deacon, was identified by Whitworth’s apprentice, Thomas Bradbury, as the man
who "in the absence of his Master [i.e., Whitworth] . . . brought him a Paper which they call’d a Manifesto, and said that he must print 3000 of them against Morning."

28. A copy of the Derby Mercury, dated 13 December 1745, is described in the Nottingham Journal of 9 August 1946 as having in the margin a brief letter written by a man at Derby to his children, who were apparently in Norfolk. The note draws attention to the Mercury's vivid account of the turmoil caused by the presence of the rebels in Derby.

29. The account was copied in other newspapers, among them the Newcastle Journal of Saturday, 21 December 1745.

30. Charles Micklewright, of Reading, published a pamphlet with these words in the title on 24 February 1752—that is, two weeks before Miss Blandy's trial. It was sold also by Benjamin Collins of Salisbury.

31. Early in April, the Norwich Mercury and the Cambridge Journal advertised that a work on Mary Blandy was about to be issued in weekly numbers. The Salisbury Journal—and likewise the local edition entitled the Portsmouth and Gosport Gazette—advertised in the issue of 2 March 1752 a "Curious Print of Miss Molly Blandy . . . Taken from the Life in Oxford Castle. Sold at the Printing Office in Salisbury." On 31 March, the printer of Orion Adams's Weekly Journal provided for his readers a free supplement on the Blandy business; in the Manchester Mercury on that same day his rival, Joseph Harrop, printed a "Letter from a Clergyman to Miss Blandy" and promised the detailed story in the next week's issue.

32. Manuscript notes in a copy of the Union Journal which is in the library of York Minster indicate that the author of the proposals was the Rev. John Watson, M.A., who not only contributed much prose and verse to the columns of this paper but "performed, when Curate of Ripponden, the Editorial Duties to the Newspaper."
