Chapter VI
Few readers in the present century would disagree with the notion that the editor of a newspaper, if he chooses to do so, may offer comments of his own on the facts reported, and may invite or permit others to use his columns for that purpose, too. Yet an editor may feel that he is serving the public best if he refrains from writing “animadversions.” There were some early London papers whose authors announced emphatically that no editorial remarks would be added to the reports. The first issue of London’s earliest daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant* (11 March 1702), had in its “Advertisement” the editor’s declaration that he would not print any comments or conjectures of his own but would relate only matters of fact, “supposing other People to have Sense enough to make Reflections for themselves.” In the *Evening Post*, number 10 (16 September 1709), the author made a particular point of promising that there would be “no Remarks or Reflections made for the Reader.” Unlike the *Tatler*, which began earlier that same year, the *Evening Post* was not designed to tell its readers *what to think*.¹ This detachment may at first sight seem laudable; but an alert and influential editor has ideas and standards of his own and will not always be satisfied merely to repeat what he hears. In fact, all references to the “liberty of the press” would be pointless
if editors were compelled to stifle their opinions and print only bare statements. A great journalist's reputation is based on the twofold foundation of veracity in reporting and courage in commenting.

It will be found that, although many an early provincial newspaper has not a single word of direct comment on items in the news, some of them have editorial opinions expressed quite frankly and vigorously. An instance of spirited reporting with strong opinions woven into the texture of the news and also added in a following comment may be seen in the Leedes Intelligencer's account of the violence shown by the people of Holbeck, who in August and September, 1754, demonstrated their unwillingness to welcome their new curate. This is what readers found in the issue of 27 August 1754, the adjectives and indeed the very types carrying evidence of the editor's indignation:

On Sunday last the Rev. Mr. Fawcett, attended with near 1000 People from LEEDES, and all the Constables of the Burrough, 18 in Number, made a second Attempt to perform Divine Service at the Chapel of HOLBECK, to which he was deservedly nominated by the VICAR OF LEEDES, the legal Patron, and duly licenc'd by the Archbishop of York; but immediately upon his approaching the Chapel, he was opposed by a furious, frantic, lawless Rabble of HOLBECKERS, who assaulted him with Dirt, Stones, and Brickbats, and whatever Instrument of Violence their Fury cou'd furnish. Being treated in this insolent, unheard of audacious Manner, and finding that no Access cou'd be gained to the Chapel, but by his Attendants exerting Violence and repelling Force by Force, he thought proper (consistent with his truly Christian Disposition) to retire under the Conduct of those, who went there voluntarily to protect his Person.

When a spotless, innocent CHARACTER, ABILITIES equal to the ablest of his Brethren, and a FUNCTION that shou'd be held Sacred can claim no Respect; nay more cannot protect from personal Injuries amidst a Set of People who call themselves Christians; what may not be apprehended! Whose Property is secure? or whose Life is not in Danger.

270
No one would call this an impartial report, but for that very reason the Holbeck items in the *Leedes Intelligencer* during the last months of 1754 make entertaining reading now.

Griffith Wright could use vehement language no matter what he decided to condemn. His third piece of local news in the *Leedes Intelligencer*, number 16 (15 October 1754), had something of the uncompromising severity which Cowper later put into his condemnation of public houses in *The Task*. “Last Tuesday, and several Days preceding, even Sunday not excepted,” wrote the Leeds editor, “many loose idle Fellows were observ’d playing at *Shake Cap* in Lands-Lane.” Then followed editorial censure of the offenders, a hint that the paragraph represented the view of reputable members of the community, and an exhortation to the authorities to take some action:

... this practice is frequently continued all Day, and when Night comes on the *Unfortunate* in Gaming retires Home greatly chagrin’d, often Penny-less, and vents his *ill Humours* on his Wife and poor Children; while Fortune’s Favourite resorts to the Ale-house spends the *Pence* he cannot deem his own and ends the Night with Revelling and Drunkenness; These are not the worst Consequences arising from such Practices, ... At the Request, therefore, of some well-disposed People, we make this *notorious*, that our Magistracy, agreeable to their wonted Vigilance, may bring the principal Offenders to *condign* Punishment, or take such Methods as will put a Stop to this infamous Practice.

Here is a journalist who clearly sees his function to be that of commentator, not just reporter.

A hundred other passages of vigorous editorial comment attached to items of news could be brought forward at this point to show that one does not have to turn to London papers to find fearless expression of views. One further example will have to serve. In number 334 of the *Colchester Journal* (18 August 1739), John Pilborough
FRESHEST ADVICES

did what was unusual in those days, though he had occasion­ally done it in earlier issues of his own paper: he placed important Colchester news on the front page. That particular issue began with “Foreign Affairs,” and then, under the caption, “COLCHESTER, Aug. 17,” he gave a seventeen-line obituary notice of “one of the People call’d Quakers,” eight lines on a drowning accident, and then a full account of the assizes held at Chelmsford the preceding week, “when several Prisoners were try’d, but none capitally convicted.” After listing the convictions, Pilborough wrote seventeen lines about a case in which, after a trial of more than four hours, the verdict was given in favor of the defendant. It was an action brought against Edward Long, a tailor, who had refused to pay “a certain Fine demanded for his following his Employment, and keeping an open Shop in the Corporation aforesaid, not being a Freeman thereof, contrary to Custom.” Here was a matter demanding comment by the editor. Pilborough’s editorial ran to more than forty lines, his contention being that a tradesman wishing to carry on business in Colchester ought to be required to purchase his “freedom” at a reasonable rate or else be compelled to pay a substantial fine.

The Decision of this Affair as above, having occasioned some Heat and Disorder in the contending Parties, I cannot forbear wishing, that Colchester was govern’d in like Manner to London, for soon after a Tradesman sets up in the said City, not being free, he is summoned before the Chamberlain, who commands him to purchase his Freedom on the next Court-Day, (once a Month Courts are held for making Freemen and binding Apprentices) and on his Neglect or Refusal so to do, is subject to a Penalty of 5£ every Time he is seen following his Employ­ment within the City, by which Means, he is forced to comply, or quit his Undertaking, and thereby make Room for some body else, for the Freedom of London is refused to none who make Application for it, and will purchase the same. . . .
Pilborough added that he hoped his observation would not be displeasing to Colchester people, and he declared that his reason for setting forth his views was that he knew "many credible Inhabitants . . . would willingly purchase their Freedom at a reasonable Expence (tho' hitherto deny'd them)." Once again, this is a fearless and timely expression of opinion about a local matter.

Editors did not always attach their opinions to a paragraph of particular news. Occasionally paragraphs of editorial comment are found among items of local and regional news, though not attached to any one of these. The tone is sometimes explosive, particularly if a rebuke is being administered, but here and there one comes upon a dignified statement such as this in the *Gloucester Journal* number 1908 (19 December 1758):

Glocester, Dec. 16.

It is observed with Regret, by Persons who wish well to their Country, that many of the Inhabitants of the several Parishes in this County, who have been bred to Labour, desert their lawful Callings, and betake themselves to the idle Practice of Begging, under Pretence of Want of Work, &c. tho' it is well known that Employment enough may be had if they were disposed to undertake it—This is a Grievance which calls loudly for Redress; and it more particularly demands the Attention of those Persons whose Duty it is to examine into and remove such Causes of Complaint, as it is a growing Evil, and certainly productive of Consequences very pernicious to Society.

This remark was not used merely as a space filler, for in that particular issue seven paragraphs of local and regional news follow the statement.

Expressions of editorial opinion are seldom attached to contributed pieces, but there are a few examples. Robert Whitworth, of Manchester, was moved to write with some vigor when he printed in his *Manchester Magazine*, number 458 (5 November 1745), a colorful
description of a military life sent to him by a correspondent, for he added a hundred words of wartime propaganda:

The above Paragraph is inserted to rouse, if possible a Spirit which seems to languish more in this County than in most others in the Kingdom; a Spirit necessary to preserve all that is dear and valuable to us; a Spirit of Self-Defence. But can we unarm'd, undisciplin'd, defend ourselves against armed and disciplin'd Foes? Why not arm then? Many wait for an Example. Who then will have the Glory of being the first in this momentous, this highly-important Cause. A Soldier is, now more especially, the greatest, the most amiable [sic] Character. O Liberty! O Virtue! O my Country! should be in the Heart as well as the Mouth of every Briton.

The style of this appeal is uneven, but the intention is clear and commendable.

The remarks and observations in a newspaper need not all come from the pen of the editor or his associates, and it is obvious that in papers dedicated to the support of a party or a cause of any sort one may expect to find letters, contributed editorials, and selected essays that had a bearing on matters of current interest. Essays on controversial matters reprinted from the Craftsman and other London newspapers outnumbered the communications written expressly for publication in provincial papers, but correspondents sent in pieces on all sorts of local and regional affairs.

Eighteenth-century editors were not always willing to print unsolicited communications, and they had many reasons for rejecting them. They were less insistent than twentieth-century editors that the sender of a letter give his name, but they demanded that the postage be paid in advance, that the style be succinct, and that the tone be inoffensive. Rejection was seldom stated with such severity as was used by Caesar Ward in the York Courant, number 860 (6 April 1742), when he printed in eye-
catching italic this blunt sentence: "The Writer of a Letter, sign'd S. D. [the Post-Mark on which is WAKEFIELD] may well be ashamed of his Name, since 'tis hard to determine whether his Ignorance, his Lies, or his ill Manners are the most conspicuous." Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, was usually quite firm in rejecting communications which were wordy, whether the matter was news or opinion. In the Gloucester Journal of 9 January 1728, for instance, he gave this explanation for not accepting a contribution:

The Letter from Wilts of December 21, is come to hand, which being too prolix for the Limits of our Paper, we are obliged to omit inserting: However, we cannot but acknowledge, that the Author's Remarks are very just, and that we shall always be willing to oblige that ingenious Gentleman or any other of our Correspondents, provided the Subject be concise, and free from Personal Reflection or Scandal.

While Raikes and Dicey were still partners in their other successful paper, the Northampton Mercury, a letter from "an Anonymous Gentleman at Lutterworth" was rejected on the ground that its subject matter might jeopardize the Mercury's reputation: "as publick Reflections may bring an Odium upon the Paper, the Business of which is rather to amuse than reform, we beg the Gentleman's Pardon for not inserting it."

This caution was shared by other editors. Thomas Cotton, of Kendal, in the Kendal Weekly Courant on 12 February 1732, expressed hearty thanks to correspondents who had sent agreeable and instructive contributions, but he felt it necessary to state with some emphasis his editorial policy:

... I must entreat my Correspondents, (especially one who dates his Labours from Lancaster) to forbear sending me any private or publick Scandal, or any Innuendo of either. I am determin'd not to Print the Letters or the
Versificatons of any Person (let the Conceits of them be ever so Witty in the opinion of the Authors) which attack the Reputation of another: For I will not suffer my Paper to be a Conduit to convey Envy, Detraction, Picque or Prejudice.

Cotton’s caution may have proceeded from a personal desire to keep the tone of his paper decent, or at any rate inoffensive, or he may simply have wished to avoid suits for libel.

Often, one may suppose, an unsolicited contribution was tossed aside without explanation. Certainly few editors took as much trouble to justify their rejection of a manuscript as Roger Adams of Chester did in his Weekly Courant, number 151 (15 October 1735). There were, he said, three good reasons why he could not print a letter which he had received from Preston. In the first place, the subject was not likely to have a general appeal to readers; in the second place, it was “too Copious for a News Paper” and would fill “many Sheets of Print”; in the third place, “It would take up too much of a Printers time to Read, consider, and reduce the Arguments to form. . . . ” All these excuses were unanswerable, for the editor had the last word.

Nevertheless a bookful of “letters to the editor” could be compiled from the unsolicited communications in the columns of eighteenth-century country newspapers. There are letters on the Excise Bill, on the Broad Wheel Scheme, on the bad habit of high tipping, on the improvement of the roads, on lotteries, on the cruelty of throwing at cocks, on a plan for supporting the widows and orphans of clergymen, on the education of poor children, on efforts to reduce profanity, on the heartlessness of the wealthy—this last sent by “A Cornish Tinner” to the Western Flying-Post for the issue of 14 January 1751.

In these communications addressed specifically to the editor of the local paper, the tone is sometimes facetious, as in the letter dated at Manchester and printed in the
EDITORIAL COMMENTS

*Chester Weekly Journal* of 5 July 1732 on the subject of the Tithe Bill; the five ironical arguments, in the manner of Swift, begin with the declaration that the passing of this Bill "would greatly lessen the exorbitant Incomes of the rural Clergy," who were said to receive on the average so generous a stipend as ninety pounds a year; "whether this is not an extravagant Allowance for only getting up in the Pulpit once a week, and reading an old Sermon, let every understanding Englishman consider." More often the tone is serious, and the prose is not infrequently dull. There is dignity and strength in the unsigned letter "To the Author of the Stamford Mercury" on 13 April 1738 urging that the Ministry immediately declare war on Spain if by the middle of May the English merchants who had suffered from the Spanish depredations had not received "ample Satisfaction."

A representative letter addressed originally to the printer of a country newspaper is the unsigned plea which a stay-at-home reader at Beverley in Yorkshire sent "to the Publishers of the Newcastle Journal." The letter, printed in number 654 (19 October 1751), deplored the migrating of Yorkshiremen to Nova Scotia:

Gentlemen, Beverley, Oct. 12.

I am informed by a private Letter from a Friend in the South, that several Families design for Nova Scotia in the Spring, and are actually disposing of their Effects, with a full Determination to settle in that Part of the World, where great Encouragement is given to all labouring Men, that embark from hence, who, in a few Years, may make a very opulent Fortune, as they have Land, in a Manner, for Cultivation: Here is daily great Numbers about leaving off Business, in order to go next Spring for Nova Scotia; this is a general Intention among the Husbandmen and Farmers in Several Counties of England; so that Two Hundred Farms and upwards have been given up in Yorkshire, and the like hath happened in some other Counties Southward. Those Proceedings well deserve the Consideration of the Legislature, to prevent such Numbers
evacuating Great Britain, and leaving her destitute of her most valuable Hands; by which, in Length of Time, we shall be reduced to the same deplorable Condition with Charles XII. of Sweden, who depopulated his Kingdom so much by War, that his Nation became in a Manner desolate, and the Women were obliged to till the Ground.

Many letters dealing with aspects of national prosperity appeared in London papers and were copied in local newspapers, but this gloomy letter from Beverley is a fair sample of communications sent directly to provincial printers.

There were, of course, numerous letters on purely local concerns—on the establishing of a hospital in Norwich, on the viciousness of crimes committed in Gloucester, on a change in the postal routes near Halifax, on the leasing of the waterworks in Nottingham, on the instituting of a Chamber of Commerce in Liverpool, on the appointment of Dr. Osbaldiston as new Dean of York in 1728, and, on the front page of the Leedes Mercury, number 1072 (25 February 1746), “Serious Reflections on the Succession to the Vicarage of Leedes humbly address’d to the Candidates and Electors in Trust to the same.”

A good example of these special messages to readers is the communication filling the front page of Adams’s Weekly Courant, number 847 (4 July 1749). It is given extra prominence, for it has one of the few headlines to be found in an eighteenth-century newspaper: “The CASE of Mr. Samuel Cocks, one of his Majesty’s Messengers in Ordinary.” According to the account sent to Mrs. Adams, Cocks had given offence in high places by entering a sutler’s tent with his hat on while he was on an official mission from the Duke of Newcastle’s office to “his R----l H-----ss the D-- of C-----d” in Flanders, and he had been put into prison. Appeals for release had been in vain. “He has now no other Resource, than to make this public Appeal to his Country, to throw himself under the Protection of the C----l Laws of England. . . .” Mrs. Adams
offered no comment, but she printed as introduction to the statement of Cocks's predicament the full text of the accompanying letter addressed to her by a reader in "Newcastle-under-line":

... I herewith send you a fresh Instance of most tyrannical Usage, viz. that of murdering Folks by Piece-meal, by starving a poor innocent Family. This is the deplorable Situation of the distressed Household of my unhappy Kinsman: And be assured, that there is sufficient Evidence to warrant every Fact and Circumstance contained in the following extraordinary Account. . . .

It is disappointing that no editorial observations follow the letter and the statement, but Mrs. Adams wisely saw that the communication was strong enough to speak for itself.

Newspaper editors sometimes found that local happenings gave rise to controversy which filled the columns with disputatious observations by readers and required little or no editorial comment. In September and October, 1727, the *British Spy* of Derby and the *Weekly Courant* of Nottingham gave much space and small print to the disturbances caused by opponents of the Rev. Dr. Michael Hutchinson, minister of the parish church of All Saints in Derby, with but little comment from the Derby editor. During the winter months of 1751-52, the columns of the *Norwich Mercury* frequently contained letters strongly opposing or strongly supporting "Mr. Wheatley the Methodist," who was at that time addressing many gatherings in Norfolk. In the *Leedes Intelligencer* during August and September, 1755, there were several letters in which the authors jeered at each other for "throwing indigested Hints into a common Newspaper" and for "officious intermedling in other People's Business."

One of the most refreshing qualities of eighteenth-century prose is the vigor with which rebukes were administered, often in the public press. In the *Suffolk
Mercury on 23 April 1733, a reader at Sudbury declared that his character had been “scandalously aspers’d by a Gentleman commonly known by the Name of Doctor Scarling,” and he addressed a letter “To the Candid Reader” in the hope of shaming the offender into better manners. The tone of the letter makes one think of Samuel Johnson’s letters of censure:

Sir,

To go into Inns, and other Publick Houses, and, amongst the Rabble in the Kitchen, to set up your self for a Great Man; to say you are the only Physician in Sudbury, and that I am but a Quack; slyly to desire a Friend to enquire into my Character at the University, and to injure my Reputation in my Absence; are mean and scandalous Arts, that may perhaps catch the unthinking Vulgar, but amongst Men of Sense and Learning, will always be look’d upon as unworthy the Character of a Person who sets up for a Gentleman and a Physician. . . .

Mr. Taverner’s friends in Sudbury must have chuckled to read in later sentences his references to physicians “degrading themselves into the Characters of tattling old Nurses” and “keeping Company with the Scum of the People.”

There were occasions when an editor who printed such abusive or libelous or seditious matter in his columns had to apologize or even suffer penalties of great severity. When the rector of Padworth, in the Reading Mercury on 9 September 1723, charged Loftus Brightwell with misleading the churchwardens into swearing “what they knew nothing of” and publicly called on Brightwell to justify himself if he could, there was no response, but the editor of the paper three weeks later printed a special note in italics: “We think ourselves oblig’d to ask Mr. Brightwell’s Pardon, for the Injustice done him in one of our former Papers; and not having sufficient Room in this Mercury to vindicate ourselves, we beg to be excus’d till our next.” The following issue, unfortunately, is not
extant, but it is likely that whatever the editor of the Reading Mercury wrote, he would be out of the rector's good graces for a time.

Elizabeth Adams, of Chester, also got into trouble with a churchman, or rather two churchmen. In Adams's Weekly Courant, number 814 (29 November 1748), she used large type to print her apology and that of her son:

I Elizabeth Adams, Widow, Printer of the Paper, call'd Adams's Weekly Courant; and I John Adams, son of the said Elizabeth Adams, both of the City of Chester, do hereby publickly confess and declare, that we are guilty of printing and publishing a base and scandalous Libel in the said Courant, of Tuesday, August 2, 1748, against the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Chester; for which we humbly beg his Lordship's Pardon; and do hereby testify our Shame and Sorrow for such unjust and unprovok'd Usage of his Lordship's Character, and shall ever be thankful for his Acceptance of this our Submission, instead of that just and legal Punishment, which our Crime has deserv'd.

We also hereby acknowledge, that in the same Paper, we did very unworthily treat the Character of the Reverend Doctor Powell, Dean of St. Asaph, for which we also humbly desire his Forgiveness. Witness our Hands this 14th Day of November, 1748.

Elizabeth Adams.
John Adams.

Base and scandalous libels of individuals are always dangerous, and Elizabeth had good reason to feel relieved that the two churchmen accepted her apology.

On at least one occasion Charles Micklewright, of Reading, had to acknowledge an error. In his Oxford Gazette and Reading Mercury on 20 October 1752 and on 11 December of that same year, he had printed queries and a letter concerning the proposed new gaol in Reading. These had caused much annoyance to "those . . . entrusted with the Execution of the Laws and Administration of Justice," and in number 375 (15 January 1753)
Micklewright gave a prominent place on the third page to his lengthy expression of regret. His signed statement ended, "I do hereby most humbly ask Pardon in this Public Manner for the Offence I have given in publishing the said Queries and Letter." There were still limits to the liberty of the press.

But not all controversial matters ended in apologies by the printer. If the subject evoked extensive comment in other provincial papers, the editor of the original paper might enjoy the unusual satisfaction of having his journal quoted in London. That happened to the Gloucester Journal's twenty-two-hundred-word "Essay on Riots; their Causes and Cure," which followed reports of the weavers' riots in Wiltshire in the last weeks of 1738. This essay was violently attacked in the columns of the Salisbury Journal in January, 1739, but it was reprinted in the London Evening Post on 23 December, and from there copied in the Leeds Mercury, number 673 (2 January 1739), filling the first four and a half columns. It is apparent that traffic between London and provincial newspapers did not all move in one direction; the Gloucester Journal—in fact all of the newspapers of the West Country—seem to have been watched with particular attentiveness in London.

It was noted in Chapter V that several provincial printers were called to account for printing reports of Parliamentary debates. Printers were more frequently prosecuted, and sometimes more severely punished, for printing direct reflections on the government or on the sovereign. In 1716, Philip Bishop, printer of the Exeter Mercury, was imprisoned for publishing a pamphlet called Nero Secundus, which was construed as disloyal, and he died in prison. Earlier in that same year, according to the Nottingham Mercury of 22 March 1716, William Ayscough, printer of the other Nottingham paper, the Weekly Courant, "was fined and obliged to give Security for his Behaviour, &c. for the False and Scandalous Re-
EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Two years later, Henry Cross-grove, printer of the *Norwich Gazette or the Loyal Packet*, found himself in difficulties for having "inadvertently" (he said) offended the government. As he recorded in his paper on 13 December 1718, two of His Majesty's messengers were sent down to take him into custody; but he was not in his shop when they arrived, and they left without him, taking some papers and letters which they found on his premises. A week later, his paper carried the announcement that Cross-grove had surrendered himself to the Secretary of State. By 27 December he was still in custody in London, but he sent a cheerful message to readers of the paper: "... he wishes all his Customers a merrier Christmas than he is likely to have, and [as] Happy a New Year as he would wish himself."

A summons to London came also to John White in Newcastle, as several papers reported—the *British Spy* of Derby, number 192 (4 February 1731), among them:

A Printer of News at Newcastle upon Tyne is taken into Custody of one of his Majesty's Messengers, as we hear, for reprinting Part of the Craftsman of last Saturday was Se'nnight, and the Saturday before, and is bringing up to Town by the said Messenger.

John White and other country editors might have taken warning against copying matter from the *Craftsman* and other outspoken London papers, for the newspapers frequently reported the arrest of printers and venders. "Last Night several Messengers went to the Printer of the Craftsman and seiz'd the whole Impression of the Day."

So stated a report taken from the *London Evening Post* of 10 December 1737 and reprinted in several country papers, among them the *Leeds Mercury*, number 618 (13 December 1737).

No provincial printer in the reign of George II got himself into more serious difficulty than Edward Farley, of Exeter, who rashly reprinted from *Mist's Weekly Jour-
nal, number 175 (Saturday, 24 August 1728), a letter signed "Amos Dudge" which was said to be "a perfect Relation of the present state of Affairs in Persia." This was in no sense news; it was a thinly disguised allegorical hint that there was justice in the Pretender's claim to the throne. The uttering of such matter was in direct violation of the Statute of 6 Anne, c. 7, under which one Matthews had been convicted and executed in 1719 for high treason, the charge being that he had printed an affirmation of the Pretender's right to the Crown. In the "Amos Dudge" letter, King George was referred to as an usurper, "Esreff" by name, and the Young Pretender was described as "the unfortunate young Sophi." Uncomplimentary things were said about "Esreff" and his ministers:

You will naturally be suprised [sic], that a Prince so unequal to Imperial Dignity [as Esreff is], directed in all his Counsels by a Minister who is as famed for Corruption as Sejanus, and for Cruelty as Nero, should be able to maintain the Possession of the Empire, in Opposition to a lawful Sophi, whose undoubted Right is supported by the affection and Duty of the Generality of the People, by whom hourly Prayers are offered up for his Restoration.

Small wonder that Wye's letter on 29 August reported that "The Town was never so shock'd at the Reading of any Thing, like that contain'd in Mist's Journal of Saturday last." Small wonder that all the country newspapers copied out paragraph after paragraph about the King's exasperation, about the search for Mist's printer, Wolfe, about the sixteen persons taken into custody because they were suspected of having had some part in the printing or the distributing of the offending paper, about the official refusal to let Mist's Weekly Journal be distributed through the post office.

It was small wonder, too, that in Exeter a few weeks later the Grand Jury at the General Quarter Sessions on
7 October took notice, "with greatest Detestation and Abhorrence," that Farley's Exeter Journal, number 276, had reprinted from Mist's Weekly Journal what the fifteen jurymen looked upon as "an infamous, scandalous, seditious Libel, calculated and published with no other view but to instil groundless Jealousies into the Minds of his Majesty's Subjects, to endanger our Religious and Civil Liberties, and to disturb the Peace of his most Sacred Majesty. . . . " The full text of this presentment and one drawn up in similar terms on 10 October 1728 by "the Grand Jury at a General Goal Delivery for the City and County of Exon" were printed in Brice's Weekly Journal on 18 October 1728. Brice had frequently assailed Farley in the columns of his Weekly Journal, and it has been stated that Brice had actually challenged Farley to reprint the "Amos Dudge" piece.

For Mist and all who were connected with his printing and publishing of the notorious issue the consequences were most serious; for Edward Farley the outcome was calamitous. Apparently the treasonous libel, reprinted in Farley's Exeter Journal on Friday, 30 August 1728, had been set up by Farley's compositor, Richard Stretchley. It is not clear whether Farley deliberately selected the piece, knowing its intended meaning, or whether he was innocently careless. Many months later in his pathetic petition to the Queen (the King being at the time in Hanover), Farley said that this particular issue of Mist's paper had reached him "by the General Post in the usual Manner as it had before been constantly Sent to him, and was not sought out by any evil contrivance," and that as soon as it came to his hands he "inadvertently Suffered the Same to be reprinted in his newspaper without reading or being acquainted with the contents thereof." These words seem clearly to exonerate Farley from knowingly printing matter that implied the Pretender's right to the Crown. But on the strength of statements by the two witnesses for the Crown it was asserted in an unsigned
but official communication to Lord Townshend dated 24 November 1728 that Farley must have understood clearly the implications of the allegory about "Esreff" and the "Sophi" because he had added a paragraph of his own. The truth of this assertion about the adding of a paragraph could easily be checked if a copy of Farley's Exeter Journal for 30 August 1728 could be found; but most of the copies were destroyed by the troubled printer. As soon as it had been pointed out to him that he would probably be prosecuted for printing and publishing a libel "he immediately gave orders to his Servants that the s[d] papers should be burnt which was accordingly done before twenty of the said news papers were dispos'd of."\(^8\)

One of the two witnesses called by the Crown was Farley's father-in-law, Richard Science, who must have felt that in his first statements he had been too explicit, for he later proved "so far from being a willing Witness," the Crown's solicitor reported, that nothing could be drawn from him but what was "forced by Questions."

And he now recedes from the most material part of his Evidence . . . and pretends that Farley was not in the Printing Office when Mr. Score came there the 30\(^{th}\) of August in the morning, and that Score expostulated w.\(^{na}\) Farley's wife, and not with Farley, for printing and dispersing the s[d] Journal or Libel and that Farley did not understand the Paper or know the meaning of it.\(^9\)

Farley's hasty burning of all but twenty of the printed copies, presumably after Mr. Score's visit, cannot be taken as evidence of his knowing beforehand that it would be dangerous to print the "Amos Dudge" letter; but there is no doubt that he immediately became terrified, spending three or four days in hiding at the house of the Rev. Richard Long, of Broad Clyst, a village five or six miles from Exeter.

Mr. Long was called to appear before Lord Townshend on 14 October because a letter which had been "taken out
of y* Pocket of Mrs. Farley on Fryday September 20th 1728” and which began “Mr. Farley” was on the outside addressed “To the Reverend Mr. Richd Long, Broad Clyst, to be Sent from Mr. Thomas Tronnicks, Exeter.” Mr. Long’s quavering signature stands at the bottom of the record of his declaration that the letter “never came to his hands” but that Farley had stayed three nights at his house. A contemporary note on the letter itself indicates that the writer, William Kittoe, intended the letter for Farley but had directed it to Mr. Long “for y* more safe Conveyance.” Obviously Kittoe wrote the letter to confirm Farley’s suspicion that the offense was dreadfully serious and that his position was precarious. Dated Monday, 9 September 1728, the letter repeated the statement in Wye’s letter of 5 September that because of the great demand which there had been for Mist’s Weekly Journal of 24 August a “certaine Printer” had reprinted it and had been “taken into Custody, carried to Hampton Court, Examined, remanded into Custody, and ordered to be prosecuted by the Attorney Genl for Treason.” That word and Kittoe’s final sentence must have struck terror to Farley’s heart: the grand jury of Middlesex had recommended that all the guilty printers and publishers should be “brought to Condign Punishment.”

There is no doubt that Edward Farley paid heavily for his mistake. Having been indicted for treason at the Exeter assizes—after a postponement because the text of the indictment had a flaw in it—he languished in prison month after month, loaded with irons (as he said in his petition to the Queen), not just pending judgment but while the highest legal authorities in the land were trying to decide whether the copying of the letter from Mist’s Journal should be declared a misdemeanor or an act of high treason. It was seen that in the absence of two strong witnesses Farley could not be convicted of high treason, and yet it was felt improper to let the offence be tried merely as a misdemeanor. The question was
carried from the assize court to the attorney-general, to
the Council, and to the Lord Chancellor. In the end,
Farley was granted a pardon. Perhaps Sarah Farley and
her father were relieved when word of the royal mercy
was brought to Exeter; it made no difference to Edward
Farley, for he had died in prison.

It was not only offending the government that got
editors into trouble; a bold statement assailing the local
authorities could also stir up official resentment and lead
to fines or imprisonment. William Chase, of Norwich,
found this to be so when in April, 1729, he openly accused
the Tories of having permitted deceptions to be practised
at the common-council elections earlier that month. In
his Norwich Mercury for Saturday, 19 April 1729, Chase
incorporated his charges in his report of the election,
naming several persons who had cast votes to which they
were not entitled:

On Monday last the Scrutineers for the late Election of
Common-Council-Men met again, when the Managers for
the Tory-Poll gave fresh Instances of their fair and honest
way of Proceeding therein, as is evident by the following
Examples. One Stephen Rant poll'd in the Name of Wil­
liam Fake, who dy'd in London near a Year ago; and tho'
the WHIG Managers would have prov'd this be sufficient
Evidence, yet they could not be permitted. . . .

"Such compendious, but irregular Methods of Scrutining
[sic], were never known in this City before," added
Chase, giving several other examples. But on the following
Wednesday he was in jail. No charge, he said, had been
mentioned in the warrant of commitment, but he assumed
that his fault was in printing the paragraph about the
scrutineers. The mayor, who had already been told about
the irregularity before Chase's paper appeared, apparently
decided to exercise his authority against the Whig journal-
ist rather than against the Tory scrutineers, for the record
of the Quarter Sessions held in the Guild-hall on 19 July
1729 shows that Chase was fined £40.\textsuperscript{13}
One of the best examples of newspaper criticism of civic maladministration is to be seen in William Dicey’s *Northampton Mercury* in 1734, when it was noticed that new names were being added to the list of voters. In the *Northampton Mercury* of 8 April 1734, Dicey pointedly observed that the corporation had lately “admitted a great Number of Honorary Freemen, in Order (as is conceived) to support the Interest of a certain Gentleman, whom they’ve invited and prevailed upon to stand as a Candidate at the ensuing Election for a Burgess of the said Town, to represent them in Parliament.” This procedure, said Dicey with telling restraint, was “extraordinary in its Kind,” never having been attempted before in Northampton except when John Willoughby was mayor in “the unhappy Reign of K. James II.” Dicey’s handling of the matter was clever, and it must have been effective: he inserted a list of the names of all who had been admitted honorary freemen “as well in the Mayoralty of the said Mr. Willoughby, as of the present Mayor.” The lists were continued in following issues, with a cumulative force which left no doubt in anyone’s mind that political trickery had been exposed. Nor was Dicey alone among provincial editors in boldly censuring a civic corporation for corrupt practices. Another audacious newspaperman—at a time when audacity was needed—was James Jopson, printer of *Jopson’s Coventry Mercury*, who appears to have been undaunted in his attacks upon the disgraceful misuses of power which was concentrated in the hands of the Coventry Council. According to an entry in the Coventry Council Minutes under date 23 October 1742, it was resolved by the council to prosecute Jopson for scandalous reflections on the corporation or on its members. Here again is a newspaperman threatened with official severity because, acting as a spokesman for the community, he presumed to denounce the improper use of power by the civic authorities.

The hazards of exposing iniquity in the columns of early newspapers are more strikingly illustrated in the struggle
of Andrew Brice, of Exeter, to obtain fair treatment of prisoners in one of the local jails. Brice was a keen participant in any controversy and seemed to rejoice when others joined in, or even when two other parties used the columns of his Weekly Journal for exchanging their differing opinions. For example, in Brice's Weekly Journal, number 236 (22 August 1729), nearly the whole of the first page was occupied by “A Letter to Mr. John Vowler, Senior, by J. Hallet, jun.,” the tone and theme being indicated by the Rev. Joseph Hallet's declaration, “You have studied to injure my Reputation in the tenderest Point, by endeavouring to persuade People, that I have declared Christians are under no Obligations to practice moral Virtue.” The controversy continued in the next five issues. But it was one thing for correspondents to quarrel with each other in Brice's columns, quite another for him to have to defend himself in his own paper from attack by forces too strong for him to withstand. It is not often that a journalist in the right has to abscond.

The story of Brice's campaign to expose the keeper of a jail for alleged cruelty and slovenliness is told piecemeal by Brice himself in several issues of his Weekly Journal, by “T.B.,” of Ottery, in a letter which gave “a just Account of honest Mr. Brice's Case” in the issue of 25 September 1730, in “The Author's Case” appended to Brice's Freedom: A Poem, Written in Time of Recess from the rapacious Claws of Bailiffs, and devouring Fangs of Goalers (1730), and in an article by T. N. Brushfield a hundred and fifty years later. Brice had for some months been disturbed by reports of heartlessness and filth in some of the jails in Somerset and Devonshire; and in September, 1726, he had printed a twopenny pamphlet under the title An Appeal for Justice, and the Impartial World, with a subtitle indicating that this was “a true and faithful Narrative, and just Complaint, of the unparallel'd and unjustifiable Barbarity and hellish Cruelty exercis’d on L. Hill, Esq; a Prisoner in the County Goal
of Somerset, at Ilchester, by the Keeper thereof and his Adherents.” A year later he printed in the columns of his *Weekly Journal* the first piece of evidence sent to him by “some cruelly oppressed Prisoners” in the jail in the St. Thomas ward of Exeter. This he did not just as a matter of popular interest; Brice was waging a campaign, and he was ready to accept for publication the complaint of Charles Lanyon, a merchant of Newlyn, near Penzance, who had been unsuccessful in appealing to George Glanvill, the keeper of St. Thomas’s prison. Lanyon had been in prison over a year by the time he managed to get word to Brice, and from 6 February 1727 had been “confined in the Dark house, . . . double-gyved with the largest Irons which could be got in Bridewell.”

Alert journalist that he was, Brice seized the opportunity to emphasize Glanvill’s severity by commending in number 72 (27 October 1727) the keeper of the Southgate prison, whose humanity and good nature were very different from the “Revenge, Savageness, Cruelty, and a long ET Cetera of abhorred Things” which made Glanvill notorious. Within a few days Glanvill had sued Brice for £500 damages. Brice pleaded his cause in the columns of his own newspaper, later (in number 260, 27 February 1730) complaining that the case had never come to fair hearing in court—“that is to say, never a single Word of my Side was heard.” Yet penalties were apparently imposed, and Brice had either to pay a fine of £103 or go to jail. He absconded. During the many months he remained in hiding, Brice suffered in many ways: his mother and his wife died, his business was left to others to conduct, his health was impaired; but he deserves to be remembered as a journalist who audaciously exposed a public scandal, insisting that a prisoner might as effectually be prevented from escaping by “Stone Walls, and Pondorous Chains, and Iron Grates . . . above Ground, in comfortable Light and wholesome Air, as by his being buried alive, to rot, and perhaps engender a Pestilence, to
the Destruction of the Nation." This editor of an Exeter newspaper in 1727 showed admirable courage and alertness to appalling conditions which most of his fellow countrymen had long continued to ignore. Brice's courageous and self-sacrificing attempt to turn the public eye upon the unspeakable horrors of English jails and prisons should be remembered along with the effort of the "generous band" appointed a year or two later to investigate prison conditions, and along with the better-known efforts of John Howard half a century later.

Nevertheless the reader looking for a great body of distinguished journalistic writing in the early provincial newspapers will be disappointed, for, with the exception of Andrew Brice and a few editors in Manchester, Chester, York, Coventry, Bristol, and Norwich, the fearless crusading journalists came into prominence only after the discreetly anonymous "Junius" had shown the way to audacious criticism in print and John Wilkes had campaigned with equally memorable boldness for the right of Englishmen to speak their minds about their government or anything else of public moment. On political matters most country newspapers printed before 1760 declared their intention to remain strictly neutral. Sam Farley announced on the title page of his Bristol Post Man in 1715 that the paper would be "free from all Party Cause, or Personal Reflections," and the first statement in the proposals of the Newcastle Journal in 1739 began with these words: "We declare we have no Design to enter into the Service of a Party. . . . " A few years earlier Francis Howgrave had said in the first issue of his Stamford Mercury that he would be "proud of any Assistance" from readers of the paper, provided their contributions were "neither Political, Personal, nor Obscene."

There were many kinds of political matter in which strict neutrality was possible. At suitable times formal declarations of loyalty to the sovereign were drawn up by the mayor and the others in the corporation of a town,
and those addresses were reprinted in the local paper and copied into others. A printer can hardly be charged with political bias if after an election he reports without comment how many votes each candidate has polled, or if he prints a complete list of the members of Parliament, or announces (as the Gloucester Journal did on 5 September 1727) that the annual meeting of the Three Choirs Festival is postponed because of the elections. An unbiased editor may be only concerned to keep his readers in touch with current political thought when he reprints political essays from London papers, and perhaps no leaning toward one party or another can be detected in an article on the necessity of improving roads or the desirability of migrating to Nova Scotia.

Freedom from prejudice is a merit in newspapers as in men; but the rigid observance of neutrality in the press does not win elections and may lose readers who prefer fighting words to dispassionate exposition of principles. It is a clever proprietor who can please Whigs and Tories at the same time. Even editors who professed to be free from party allegiance or control had to decide which London papers to quote, and that choice involved some recognition of party, since there is abundant evidence that several London papers were heavily subsidized as political organs of this party or that. When a city or a country editor proclaimed his intention to remain severely non-partisan and in the same paragraph declared his entire satisfaction with “the present Happy Establishment,” it is apparent that he was more “neutral” to one side than to the other! And it is difficult to detect impartiality in the language of “A Chester Plumper,” who addressed a letter to the editor of Whitworth’s Manchester Magazine, number 3154 (28 October 1755), commending his political writing:

... You have uniformly and constantly endeavour'd to promote a Love for the present happy Constitution, for
Liberty Civil and Religious, and to prevent the terrible Effects of the treasonable, enthusiastic Stuff, so long circulated in that Sink of Scandal and Nonsense, the *London Evening Post*, and in some *Country News-Papers*. . . .

From our twentieth-century point of view, the prejudices of 1755 are neither absurd nor deplorable; they are merely amusing.

In the long view, accounts of partisan ranting are more entertaining to read than sober declarations of principle, and it is not at all displeasing to find that there was plenty of what a correspondent in *Adams's Weekly Courant*, number 765 (22 December 1747), called the “Hurry and Brangle of political Dispute.” Probably there is no activity of civilized man so productive of controversial letters to the press as campaigning for election to Parliament. Some of these communications are written by accomplished arguers, but most political observations soon lose their flavor and sparkle, unless one turns over the files of old newspapers in order to trace the progress of a particular struggle. For such purposes one might well begin with *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, which was started in 1753 primarily as a political paper.17 *Schofield's Middlewich Journal*, even in its short lifetime, had on many a front page a political letter addressed “To the Printer of the Middlewich Journal”; and several other papers, among them the Chester and Manchester newspapers, had original contributions which were usually anything but neutral.

Some of the liveliest political writing published outside of the London papers, indeed, is to be found in *Adams's Weekly Courant*. Between this paper and Robert Whitworth's paper in Manchester raged a vigorous and incessant controversy which must have stimulated the sale of both newspapers all over that corner of England. The most notable participant was John Byrom, and front-page space was often given to more or less witty pieces in prose and verse by “Will. Whiglove,” “Roderick Roast-Rump,”
“John English,” and “H. Hotspur.” In 1749, Elizabeth Adams published *Manchester Vindicated* . . . , a little volume intended to preserve for posterity the controversial pieces printed in her paper and in Whitworth’s during the period 21 October 1746 to 26 January 1748.

That such fervid exchanges were taken seriously in their own time is to be seen in a letter addressed to the Duke of Newcastle by Bishop Samuel Peploe, of Chester, on 11 November 1740.18 The Bishop was much concerned over “the unwearied industry of some to poison the common people with ill thoughts of the administration, with fair pretences of great respect to the King.”

This Poison is . . . chiefly conveyed by a couple of newspapers dispersed all over these and the neighbouring parts. We have a printing-press here at Chester, another at Manchester, another at Leeds and other places, all under the direction of seditious and disloyal men, scattering their papers all over the country at low prices. If any means could be thought of to stop them or make the reading of them dearer than it is, it would be happy. The authors pick their news out of the London prints, and give by halves, or with some sneer, whatever is favorable towards it.

Nothing was done to make the reading of newspapers “dearer” until a halfpenny was added to the Stamp Tax seventeen years later; and that tax had no lasting effect on the dissemination of political writings.

A glance at the *Gloucester Journal*, the *Sherborne Mercury*, and many other papers of wide circulation in 1740 and 1741 shows that months before and after Bishop Peploe’s letter the papers were filled with letters and formal announcements concerning the candidates for the general election and certain by-elections. In London and all over the nation particular attention was directed toward the vigorous contest between George Fox and Cholmley Turner in the York by-election late in 1741. As the *Nottingham Post*, number 616 (15 October 1741),
reported, the general expectation in Yorkshire was that the struggle for election as knight of the shire in "the Room of the late Lord Morpeth" would be as strong as was ever known in that county, for the two men were "making the utmost Application possible on this Occasion."

What that special effort meant in terms of newspapers was (a) the printing of duplicate issues—differing considerably—of Caesar Ward's York Courant,
(b) the establishing of the York Gazetteer, with fiery John Jackson as printer and publisher, and (c) the printing of numerous letters and formal notices in the York papers, in the Leeds Mercury, and even in the Daily Gazetteer of London. In the contentious months following the death of Viscount Morpeth early in August, 1741, strong support for Turner, the Whig candidate, came from the pen of a young parson living at Sutton-in-the-Forest, later to be celebrated as the author of The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy. Laurence Sterne's share in the controversy has been ably discussed by Mr. C. Collyer, who shows that Sterne, as the author of several letters in the York Courant and the York Gazetteer, wrote largely under the direction of his influential uncle, Dr. Jaques Sterne.

The columns of the York Courant in 1741 and 1742 exhibit the usual eighteenth-century pattern of political campaigning: the calling of general meetings of the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders (a Tory set and a Whig set) to nominate a proper person to represent the county in Parliament; public announcements of the candidates' names; formal thanks for the nomination, requests for votes, and promises of dedicated service by the chosen men; sneering and panegyric flung about in print by pseudonymous gentlemen, clergymen, and freeholders moved by a sense of duty to cast aspersions or to ask embarrassing questions; a "progress" through the constituency, with bonfires, feastings, drinking of healths, and
EDITORIAL COMMENTS

reports to the effect that one or other of the candidates would be elected by a great majority.

The other York newspaper caught up in the excitement of the Turner versus Fox campaign—indeed, causing much of the excitement—was the York Gazetteer. In the earliest surviving issue, which appeared only a month before the York by-election, the printer asserted in his imprint that the paper had been started partly "to correct the Weekly Poison of the York Courant." Jackson, the author, said he hoped the "Well-wishers to the Cause of Liberty and Protestantism" would give it encouragement, and he drew attention to the inclusion at least every other week of a political essay which would be in no other newspaper in Great Britain. This spirited and outspoken journal is most delightfully one-sided in its views: whatever Mr. Turner said or did was presented in the most laudatory terms; nothing Mr. Fox did was right. In the issue of 15 December 1741, for instance, two political entertainments at Pontefract were reported, one all black and gloomy, the other beaming with happy assurance:

We hear from Pontefract that on Tuesday last Sir John Bland's Steward, attended by one or two Gentlemen, came to this Town to treat the Freeholders in Favour of Mr. Fox. For this Purpose a grand Entertainment was provided at the Sign of the Bull and Boar; but, not being able to prevail upon any more than five Persons who have Votes to come to them (tho' there are above ninety in Pontefract) vex'd at their Disappointment they made their Stay here too short to create any great Profit to their Landlord.

And Yesterday Sir Rowland Winn, and several other Gentlemen, accompanied by the Corporation, made an Entertainment at the Star for the Friends of Mr. Turner, to which the Freeholders came almost to a Man, where they expressed the highest Satisfaction upon the Occasion; and amongst many loyal and honest Healths that were then toasted, they drank to Mr. Turner's good Success, Prosperity to the County of York and to the Trade thereof, and
that we may never want a HOME BORN BAIRN to represent the one and protect the other.

That affectionate reference to a "home born bairn" was probably not what won the election for Cholmley Turner; but it was undoubtedly very tempting to Turner's supporters to insist that Fox was a "stranger."

Jane Austen said somewhere that in her opinion nothing was quite so amusing as the sight of a man in a fit of temper; to a twentieth-century reader the fervor and vehemence of political writing in the newspapers of 1741 seem equally ridiculous. But opinions were expressed; well before the middle of the century provincial journalism had begun to fulfil its second basic function, that of making comment on the events of the day.

1. "Isaac Bickerstaff" did not expect this remark in *Tatler*, number 1, to be taken literally; but in number 178 (30 May 1710), he may well have been serious when, in commenting on extravagant passages in the newsletters, he said, "These reflections, in the writers of the transactions of the times, seize the noddles of such as were not born to have thoughts of their own, and consequently lay a weight upon every thing which they read in print."

2. The passage is quoted in W. J. Clarke, *Early Nottingham Printers and Printing* (Nottingham: Forman, 1942); but Mr. Clarke did not recognize that the issue of the *Nottingham Mercury* dated 22 March 1715 belongs to 1716. In the same volume is quoted (p. 14) an entry in the *Records of the Borough of Nottingham* showing that on 19 July 1728, William Ayscough's widow, Anne, was charged at the Quarter Sessions with having printed "several scandalous and indecent expressions in a paper entitled the *Weekly Courant* Dated Thursday 11 July, 1728, tending to bring the King's Ministers of State into contempt."


4. In the Public Record Office are many documents relating to the incident. Among them is a list (S.P. 36/8/64) of twenty-two persons charged with having been implicated. These include not only Mist's workmen, apprentices, devils, but even his housekeeper and seventy-year-old Elizabeth Nutt, who, with her daughter Alice and her agent, Anne Nevill, and three other "mercuries" had offered the offending paper for sale. Notes on this "List of Prisoners" show that among those arrested
was Mist's nephew, Robert Coombstock, "a little Boy," who was to be discharged and sent to Mist's house. One of Mist's devils, James Ford, was to be discharged "as below punishment"; Thomas Randal, Mist's other devil, was described as "a good one who gave us ye clue to printing and publishing"—that is, presumably young Randal had given the investigators the names of all persons concerned. Nor was Mist's printing office the only one visited on this occasion by His Majesty's messengers. William Burton, a neighboring and neighborly printer, had allowed Mist's men to use one of his presses for the printing of the paper containing the libel, and Burton himself was arrested, together with three of his employees.

5. Stretchley was named as one of the two witnesses in the case against Farley. He was thus described in the statement of William Gill, "Solicitor for the Crown below": "The sd Stretchley was born in the City of Exon, and his Parents left him a handsome fortune, with he has profusely and extravagantly spent, and he, having had some university Learning, became Farley's Composer of his Press for Bread."

12. The arguments against bringing Farley to trial for high treason and against prosecuting him for a misdemeanor are set forth with perfect clarity in a letter written on 14 July 1729 by P. Yorke to the Lord Chancellor, recommending a pardon (Public Record Office S. P. 36/13/69). As Yorke said, Farley had lain in prison almost a year, "which is some punishment, tho by no means adequate to so heinous a crime."

13. Norwich Quarter Sessions Minute Book, 1722-1732, now in the Norfolk and Norwich Record Office. The entry is on page 61.

14. A 14g, p. 67. 1742, Oct. 23. I am indebted to Miss Joan C. Lancaster, of the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, for this reference. The issues of Jopson's Coventry Mercury for 1742 are not extant.


17. The first regular issue of this paper, on 5 May 1753, had above the title the words, "News Boys! Election News"; and two experimental issues were entitled News, Boys, News! or the Electioneering Journal (11 April 1753) and News, Boys, News! More and more News! Or, The Electioneering Journal with Improvements (25 April 1753).
18. The text of the letter is reproduced in the *Manchester Guardian* of 22 January 1890.

19. Fifteen issues from number 829 (1 September 1741) to 846 (29 December 1741) in the file of the *York Courant* at the York Public Library are in two forms, in one of which the second and third pages are considerably different from the inner pages of the other in arrangement of items and in actual substance. The first and fourth pages in one set are the same as those in the other set.