

makes the Editor's life burdensome, and his death too often premature. His labours do not consist, as many people seem to suppose, in simply filling up a certain number of columns with letters and words so many times a week; those letters and words must have a meaning, and a specific meaning; and the amount of good or evil which they are calculated to do depends, in part, upon the personal character of the Editor, and in part, also, upon the assiduity with which he applies himself to his task. How often, when the citizen, 'good, easy man', has drawn about his head the curtains of repose, when the quick-eyed constable thinks of no 'summons' save that of his wife to supper, when the only 'steps' the members of the Roads Board are considering are those which lead to their respective dormitories, when the last votary of the billiard-table plays a good-night cannon, and looks gloomily at his empty glass, might the Editor still be seen driving his weary pen over sheet after sheet, to feed the impatient and insatiable press, or busy amid bewildering heaps of 'copy' and 'proof'. Yet he must not be regarded as a mere quill-driver: he is the guardian of the rights of the community, and a magistrate responsible to public opinion. No man's integrity is more severely tested than his; no man's private character more exposed to the attacks of malicious or unthinking individuals. The days of Editorial duelling indeed are, in British lands, gone by, but there are still ways of annoying an Editor, without spitting him with a rapier, or riddling him with a pistol bullet; ways by no means overlooked or neglected by a large class of persons, who do not consider, or do not make allowance for the perplexities of their self-made foe. Nothing can be more cowardly or in worse taste, than a direct attack upon an Editor; not because he is unable to resent or punish it, but because his position, and the duty which he owes to the public, naturally deter him from doing so. A personal attack upon an Editor, is an indirect injury to the public safety; for the more entirely the Editor is devoted to the service of the community, the less capable is he of resisting such an attack on equal terms. Even the Editorial 'we' has been carped at, as a mask for personal malice. Now this 'we' is, in fact, of great service to every community possessing a newspaper, for it enables the Editor to separate his person from his office, and to write more boldly on subjects which, more or less, impugn the powers that be, thus forming a simple, but efficient safeguard to the freedom of the press. Perhaps no one has so great a power of injury as an influential Editor, and yet no one is, by a strict adherence to his duty, so entirely prevented from using that power; for he is to some extent a public inquisitor: he knows something about everybody, and often much more than anybody supposes; so much indeed, that sometimes the reputation, if not the personal safety of individuals, is in his hands, but his integrity is, or should be, unimpeachable. The name of Woodfall will go down to posterity with that of his more talented correspondent Junius, because no threats and no bribes were sufficient to make him untrue to the public trust, and every good Editor deserves to share the praise which Woodfall's conduct gained for him.

Were the perplexing niceties of an Editor's position duly considered by the public, such sallies as that with which these remarks commence, would be only striking by their stupidity, and those cases would be very rare in which an indignant individual considers himself entitled to burst into a newspaper office, and fiercely 'demand' to 'see the Editor!'¹⁵

News gathering during the early pioneering years of journalism was crude and amateurish. News collecting was done mainly by newspaper proprietors themselves who were in most fledgling establishments self-sufficient as their 'own reporter, compositor and often pressman'.⁶ News came to the newspaper office from almost any source. It came mainly by word of mouth from private indi-