The Newsbooks and Letters of News of the Restoration

ON Monday, 25 June 1660, the house of commons resolved 'that no person whatsoever do presume at his peril to print any votes or proceedings of this house without the special leave and order of this house.' On 9 July 1662 a question even arose about the publication of the debates of the Irish parliament in the English *Intelligencer*, and a letter was sent from its Speaker to Secretary Nicholas asking him to prevent it.¹ The disability thus imposed on the printing press enhanced the special importance of the written compilations of news even more than the severe censorship maintained in the reign of Charles II, for they supplied a want which the 'newsbooks' could not. As a collector of news the writer of letters of intelligence was in a better position than any one else to write a newsbook. He had his office (where the folio sheets that he wrote were multiplied by copying clerks) and his correspondents all over the kingdom, many of whom received his papers free of charge, or on reduced terms, on condition of supplying news. Owing to the delay in 'composing' printed matter there was no very great difference in the amount of time required to set up and print off a newsbook, and that taken to multiply a necessarily more limited number of written papers of news by the aid of several clerks. In the fact that late news could be immediately added the 'letters of intelligence' or 'of news,' as they were called, had the advantage of the newsbooks. For this purpose it was customary to leave a wide margin, which will generally be found to be written on lengthways. Their great defect was their expense. And, as this restricted their circulation to the higher classes and the coffee houses, their long immunity from the censure and other restrictions is at once explained. Five pounds a year was the customary subscription for letters of news, while the newsbooks were sold at the price of a penny.²

¹ *COMMONS JOURNALS, MERCURIUS PUBLICUS*, 21-28 June 1660 (2nd edition), and *IRISH COMMONS JOURNALS*, II. 91-5.

² The cost of the letters of intelligence is given in *State Papers, Domestic*, Car II, 275, no 39 (1670). Anthony à Wood paid his Oxford bookseller 2s. 'quarteridge' for both the 'newsbooks' down to the time of the *Gazette*. He purchased the *London Gazette* through a friend in London at a penny each (*Wood's Life*, ed. by A.

At the end of the Protectorate there were two editions of the government newsbook, the one entitled *Mercurius Politicus*, the other the *Publick Intelligencer*, published on Thursdays and Mondays respectively, and written by Marchamont Nedham. No others were permitted. Each newsbook contained the news for the seven days previous to its date of issue; consequently the two overlapped each other very much and it was only necessary to subscribe to one of them. These arrangements continued until the year 1664, when they became consecutive and were pagged and numbered together (as if one periodical) irrespective of their titles. They were generally spoken of collectively as 'the newsbook' and sometimes styled the 'intelligence' or 'diurnall,' for their titles are rarely mentioned and as a rule were changed with the writers. Several reasons combined to bring Nedham into disgrace with the Rump in 1659. The ostensible cause was his disreputable private life, but the secret fear that his powerful and venal pen might be sold to the enemies of the Commonwealth had the greatest weight.

Other newsbooks which had existed prior to the destruction of the licensed press by Cromwell were suffered to reappear. Two—the *Faithfull Scout* (no. 1, 22–29 April)—a title changed with its twelfth number to the *National Scout*, and again with no. 14 to the *Loyall Scout*, and the *Weekly Post* (no. 1, 3–10 May)—were on 16 and 19 July respectively marked 'published by special authority.' A third, the *Weekly Intelligencer of the Commonwealth* (no. 1, 3–10 May), clearly possessed this authority, but did not openly claim it. It is possible that Thomas Scot, the secretary of state, salaried a number of writers at this period, so that Nedham's monopoly could not be renewed. Aubrey in his *life of Berkenhead*¹ says that forty shillings was the fee for writing a pamphlet, and, as in *Mercurius Politicus*, a *Private Conference between Scot and Nedham concerning the Present Affairs of the Nation* (published in 1660), Nedham is made to say in connexion with his final dismissal under Mönck, 'There's four pound a week gone beside advertisement halfcrowns,' the inference is justified that two pounds was the fee that they all (Nedham in the end included) received for each pamphlet of news that they wrote. With so much competition (there were seven in all) the work could not have been very remunerative.

Clark, v. 87 and ii 413, footnotes). As *Mercurius Publicus* only is among his collections for 1660–3, presumably the *Parliamentary* and *Kingdomes Intelligencers* were lost or given away. The *News* for 24 September 1663 cautions the people that the booksellers were charging twopence a sheet (i.e. a copy), while it was 'never set to them at above a fourth part of the price.' For the booksellers to make their profit therefore it also must have been retailed at a penny, and not a halfpenny, as Nichols inferred from this statement. The question is also set at rest by H. Peacham's *The Worth of a Penny* (ed. 1664).

¹ *Brief Lives*, ed. by A. Clark, i. 105.

On 18 May 1659 Nedham had been deprived of his pension and prohibited by the house of commons from 'writing the weekly intelligence,' and an old anabaptist preacher—one John Canne—ordered to take his place. He commenced the *Moderate Informer* (no. 1, 12–19 May) in opposition.⁴ Canne's appointment excited derision, one pamphlet (*Chester Queries*) asking whether he 'did not see his brother Mercury to accommodate him with those four Latin words he made use of in his newsbook, viz. *Bellum episcopale* and *Bellum presbyteriale*;⁵ and if he did so what such a scantling of the language of the beast might stand him in,' with a reference to his project of making 'the days of the week (commonly called Sunday, &c.) Anabaptists, like himself.' But the *Moderate Informer* soon came to an end, no doubt owing to the authorization given to five other newsbooks—clearly through Canne's incompetence. On 15 August Nedham recovered his post. He had written a book against the royal cause. No more was heard of his morals, and the pamphlet already quoted pertinently inquires 'whether Mr. Nedham's writing the *Current* again be not a plain confutation of the book he lately published entitled *Interest will not Lie*.' However, the monopoly of news had been abolished.⁶

Two other newsbooks appeared during the interval and deserve attention. They were both entitled *A Particular Advice*, &c. (no. 1, 28–30 June) and *Occurrences from Foreign Parts*, &c. (no. 1, 28 June–5 July), and came out twice a week, alternately giving the leading place to the first and second title. Their author, Oliver Williams, was the assignee of a patent for advertising offices granted by Charles I to Captain Robert Innes in 1637 for the term of forty-one years, and not including anything of the nature of a newsbook.⁷ Nedham (and it is clear not Canne) was attacked

⁴ He could not have retained the writing of *Mercurius Politicus*, for the *Moderate Informer* was published on the same days, viz. Thursdays.

⁵ In the *Publick Intelligencer*, no. 188, 8 August 1659, p. 640; also *Mercurius Politicus*, no. 87, 11–18 September 1651, and *The Spy*, no. 1, 23–30 January 1644.

⁶ In addition to the periodicals mentioned in the text the following appeared during 1659: the *Weekly Account* (no. 1, 25 May–1 June); and in *Mercurius Politicus*, 4–11 August, the *Diurnal* is alluded to (this however is probably one of the newsbooks described above). Publications of the humour of the times were *Mercurius Democritus, Communicating Faithfully the Affairs both in City and Countrey* (? no. 1, 19–26 April), *Mercurius Democritus: a Perfect Nocturnal* (no. 1, 8 May); *Mercurius Democritus; or, the Smoking Nocturnal* (no. 1, 22 May); *Mercurius Democritus in Querpo* [i.e. *cuero*, 'naked'] (no. 9, 14 June–8 July); *Mercurius Pragmaticus, Communicating his Weekly Intelligence from All Parts* (no. 1, 30 August–6 September) [this states, 'The late monopoly of news hath been put down']; *Mercurius Pragmaticus, Impartially Communicating the State of Affairs in the Three Nations* (? no. 1, 16–23 December).

Mercurius Pragmaticus (simply) was an undated pamphlet (published on 20 June) and not a periodical, which states that 'poor old Prag'—'poor Judas' (i.e. Nedham)—had lost his pension. All these were ephemeral.

⁷ S.P., Dom., Chas. I, 878, no. 75; *A Prohibition to all Persons who have set up any Offices called by the Names of Addresses, Publique Advice or Intelligence*, b

by him in *Occurrences* for 5-12 and 12-19 July for attempting to suppress his newsbooks; but, commencing with 19 July, they both were also 'published by authority.' With 29 July they added 'a true account of the daylie occurrences from Westminster' to the foreign news and 'advice' (i.e. advertisements), and Williams, as we are afterwards told, 'kept up a constant correspondence' with Thomas Scot, whose organ his newsbook may be considered to have been in preference to any of the others. On 6 January 1659-60 *A Particular Advice* changed its leading title to *An Exact Accompt of the Daily Proceedings in Parliament*.

A new journalist appeared at the end of December 1659 with an unauthorised newsbook which, unlike the rest, was not a revival. His name was Henry Muddiman, and the importance of his work has been obscured in modern times through a series of mistakes. Born in 1629, he was baptised at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on 5 February, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he was entered as a pensioner in 1647. He is probably the author of the pamphlet published in 1659 (11 June) under his initials, H. M., *A Pair of Spectacles for this Purblind Nation*, violently attacking the Rump as 'mungrel new Athenian republican tyrants,' in a manner which leads one to suppose that his family had suffered for their royalism, although his father, Edward Muddiman of the Strand, had been nominated a collector of the assessment for St. Martin's-in-the-Fields for Fairfax's army in 1645. At the coronation review also, when the city forces were mustered in eighteen regiments before the king in Hyde Park on 7 May 1661, his uncle Sir William Muddiman commanded the lord mayor's troop of horse, 'all citizens; ' for state before him was led a good-like horse, with bridle, saddle, and furniture, after the Indian manner, and a tall, swarthy-complexioned man leading him, clad also in a loose garment, cap and boots or buskins after the same manner'—in allusion to Catherine of Braganza's dowry of Bombay.² When General Monck's brother-in-law, Clarges, whom Ludlow describes as a 'known royalist,' arrived in London from Scotland in December 1659, and commenced publishing pamphlets on what was evidently a plan preconcerted with Monck, Henry Muddiman, who down to that time had been a schoolmaster, also began under his directions to issue a newsbook.³ He had, he says, 'never writ anything of this sort till entreated to it for a just

Oliver Williams, and no. 1 of *A Particular Advice*. See more of him in the present writer's article on 'The Early History of London Advertising,' *Nineteenth Century and After*, November 1907.

² *Hist. Manuscripts Commission, 5th Report*, App. p. 203.

³ See Oliver Williams's personal attack on Muddiman in *An Exact Accompt*, no. 103, 22-29 June, and the latter's reply in the *Parliamentary Intelligencer*, no. 27, 25 June-2 July 1660. On 26 December (the day of issue of the *Parliamentary Intelligencer*) Clarges wrote to Gumble, 'The scene of affairs is much altered here in one week, as

vindication of his excellency and the army, to give faithful intelligence of their transactions, which were so basely and falsely represented by the pamphleteers then in being.' Muddiman issued the first number of his *Parliamentary Intelligencer* in opposition to the *Publick Intelligencer* for Mondays, 19-26 December 1659, marking it *Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via*. His object being to 'represent the numbers that desired a free parliament' he was compelled to 'write in a disguise,' in order to avoid 'suspicion being cast upon' those for whom he wrote and 'to free' himself from Williams's 'prying master,' Scot.

As General Monck was at the time about to march down from Scotland to support the Rump against the English army leaders, his newsbooks, while not concealing their object, naturally also supported the parliament, although in private life he was at no pains to dissemble his hatred for the Rump and its members.¹⁰ Giles Dury joined him ten days later as his assistant, and a Thursday edition of the newsbook in opposition to Nedham's *Mercurius Politicus* was started. The short title of this, *Mercurius Publicus* (no. 1, 29 December-5 January 1659-60), was a daring revival of the old royalist *Mercurius Publicus* of 1648, though it did not (like the older journal) add 'for the further discovery of that mystery of iniquity the present parliament at Westminster and the timely information of the abused people of England.' Certain scoticisms are observable in the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* about this time (e.g. Finsburgh for Finsbury), which show that Dury was a Scotsman. General Monck appeared in London on 3 February, and, as addresses in favour of a free parliament were showered upon him on his way, the newsbooks ensured a truthful account of them as

you may perceive by the enclosed diurnal, which is a book published by my directions, for I have been a great printer since I came hither. Captain Goodwin will show you two printed pieces of my contrivance: one is *Hypocrites Unmasked*, and the other is called *A Letter from a Colonel in Scotland to an Officer at London*, &c. (*Leyborne-Popham MSS.*, 1699, p. 187.) Captain Goodwin must have been the writer of the *Faithfull Intelligencer from the Parliament's Army in Scotland*, published at Edinburgh (no. 1, Tuesday, 29 November, to Saturday, 8 December) and printed by Higgin. The preface of this states that the writer was an officer in the army. It contains an attack upon the 'numerous and uncouth catalogue of lyes' about Monck in the 'late *Politicks*, commencing Thursday, the 17th of November.' This, and not the *Mercurius Caledonicus* of 1661, so often cited, was the first purely Scottish newsbook, written as well as printed in Scotland.

¹⁰ Pepys's mistake is obvious when he says of him on 9 January: 'a good scholar, an arch rogue, and owns that though he writes new books for the parliament yet he did declare that he did it only to get money, and did talk very basely of many of them.' But his newsbook was not authorised, nor was he an arch rogue for abusing those who did not pay him. Pepys was a casual acquaintance, clerk to the treacherous Downing, and the last person likely to have had Monck's plans confided to him. As there were then a number of newsbooks 'published by authority' Pepys would naturally conclude, if only from its title, that the new *Parliamentary Intelligencer* was yet another addition to the list. The late Professor Masson (*Life of Milton*, v. 672) is clearly in error in his remarks on this.

well as of his movements. To counteract the effect of this, fabricated addresses, such as the Watermen's address of congratulations (obtained by fraud) and Barebones' Petition, presented to the Rump, were set out in full in Williams's newsbooks.¹¹ From 20 February until the council of state's authorisation the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* was marked, '*Non sic minantia pila. Quam tutatur amor.*' On 9 January it had been marked, '*Facile est imperium in bonis* (Plant. in Mil.).' An attempt to suppress it seems to have been made and stopped by Thurloe (who returned to office with the secluded members on 21 February). From the passage in an *Exact Account* already referred to, the *Post*, *Scout*, and *Weekly Intelligencer* collapsed then or a few weeks previously.

On the dissolution of the Long Parliament (18 March 1659-60) one of Monck's council of state's first acts was to discharge Nedham and sanction the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* and *Mercurius Publicus* to 'go forward,' as Wood says, in lieu of Nedham's two newsbooks. The *Parliamentary Intelligencer* no. 14, for 26 March-2 April 1660, was the first number 'by order of the council of state' (no. 13 was for 12-19 March), and in it the order was set out by which Nedham was discharged and Muddiman and Dury authorised to issue their two newsbooks, the former on Mondays and the latter on Thursdays.¹² By the next number (no. 15, 2-9 April) Nedham in addition was 'prohibited,' the Stationers' Company being ordered to see that no other newsbooks were published on the same days. Nedham continued his newsbooks nevertheless until 12 April (no. 815 of *Mercurius Politicus*) and then absconded. His *Mercurius Politicus* and *Publick Intelligencer* were without a week's delay then carried on by Williams, the only difference being an alteration in the full title, their renumbering, and the addition of a quantity of advertisements. Williams had also issued a new *Perfect Diurnal of the Daily Proceedings in Parliament* on 21 February.¹³ In the meantime Muddiman had been busy editing the papers

¹¹ An exposure of the Watermen's address by Pryne, 'A Declaration of all the Watermen in and about the City of London between Gravesend and Stanes; or, a Hue and Cry after Colonel Whitton and his Decoys' (reprinted in John Williams's *A Happy Handfull*).

¹² This first copy of the order has a mistake as to the names of the newsbooks (see note 16, *infra*). White Locke's *Memorials* assign 9 April as the date of the order, and are wrong. Mr. H. R. Fox Bourne (*English Newspapers*, I. 24) gives an account of the origin of the two newsbooks which is contradicted by the facts in every detail.

¹³ The *Perfect Diurnal* was published on week days from 21 February to 16 March inclusive. The *Votes of Both Houses* was also started by Williams (no. 1, 13-20 June), and with *Mercurius Veridicus* (no. 1, 5-12 June) was a cause of the house of commons resolution of 25 June. Other newsbooks in 1660 were the *Monthly Intelligencer* (no. 1, December-January 1659-60), a folio of eight pages; *Mercurius Aulicus*; or, *the Court Mercury* (? no. 1, 2-9 April); *London's Diurnal* (no. 1, 1-8 February); and *Mercurius Civicus* (? no. 1, 10-17 April). In a different class were *Mercurius Fumigatus*; or, *the Smoaking Nocturnal* (no. 1, 11-18 January), *Mercurius Phantasticus*; or, *Mercury Temporising* (no. 1, 7-14 March), *A Perfect*

printed by Monck. Of these by far the most important was the decisive *Remonstrance and Address of the Army*, signed by about forty officers and first presented by Charles, Lord Howard, on 9 April. It was then printed by Macock 'for Henry Muddiman, gent.,' by a special order set out on the title-page directing the latter to print and publish it, and was circulated for the signature of the rest of the officers. The king's restoration without bloodshed was the result of this document, which bound the signatories to obedience to whatever the forthcoming convention parliament should decide.¹⁴ These were services for which not only his newsbooks eventually became official, but also he received, by order of Secretary Nicholas, the privilege of free postage,¹⁵ by which his letters of news were circulated without charge, and letters which contained intelligence were franked to him at his own private office, the Seven Stars, in the Strand. In return he supplied intelligence to the government. On Dury 'giving over,' probably with the cessation of the authority of the council of state at the end of May, and owing to Muddiman's services no longer being required by Monck, Oliver Williams with considerable effrontery set up a claim to the sole right of publishing newsbooks (on the strength of his patent of 1637) in *An Exact Account* for 22-29 June 1660.¹⁶ Williams's pretensions led to the revival of the system of licensing newsbooks, and only the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* and *Mercurius Publicus* were now suffered to

Journal; or, the Daily Proceedings in the Conventicle of Phanatiques (no. 1, 10 March), *Mercurius Honestus, or, Tom Tell-Truth* (no. 1, 14-21 March), the *Phanatick Intelligencer* (no. 1, 24 March), *Mercurius Fumigosus; or, the Smoking Nocturnal* (no. 1, 28 March), *The Man in the Moon Discovering a World of Knavery under the Sunne* (no. 1, 19-26 April), undated numbers of *Mercurius Fumigosus; or, a Perfect Nocturnal*, *Mercurius Phanaticus* (no. 1 [? 23 May]), an attack upon Lilly the astrologer, and *The Wandering Whore* (extremely scurrilous—no. 8, 12 December).

¹⁴ Professor Firth (*Judith's Memoirs*, ii 240) says this declaration was framed by Clarges. Clarendon describes Monck as having had 'no other education than Dutch and Devonshire.' Clarges even drew the drafts of his letters (there are many among the British Museum manuscripts), but was not himself very literate, if the pamphlet *Hypocrites Unmasked* be taken as a specimen. It seems probable that the final form of all Monck's documents published through Muddiman's printer, Macock, was given to them by Muddiman, and that Dury was brought down from Scotland to help him, in order that he might be free for the purpose. This would explain Dury's ostensibly writing *Mercurius Publicus* during the brief period over which the council of state's order held good, and then, as Anthony à Wood says, 'giving over' The king's letter to the army has a direction by Monck to Muddiman to publish it set out on the title-page (23 May), and he also published *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Fleet* on 23 December 1659. In later years Muddiman seems to have been the author of the first complete translation of Erasmus's *Colloquies* (by H. M., gent., 1671).

¹⁵ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 160, no. 149, paragraph 1, and 180, no. 61.

¹⁶ See Wood's notes in *Athenae Oxonienses*, vol. iii c. 1185. The order of the council of state is incorrectly set out in the *Parliamentary Intelligencer*, no. 14, and leaves it to be inferred that Dury was to write the *Parliamentary Intelligencer*, and on Thursdays, whereas this was the Monday's edition. The mistake was corrected in nos. 15, 16 and the succeeding numbers. Nichols (*Literary Anecdotes*, iv. 62), copy.

appear. Henry Muddiman then became sole journalist of England and Scotland for the next three years as regards printed matter. And as he also supplied the written news his was even a greater monopoly than that of L'Estrange, who supplanted him.¹⁷ Henceforth for many years the privileged newsbooks and succeeding official newspapers that took their place were without any competition, though they were themselves restricted in what they were allowed to publish.

At the commencement of June 1660 Roger L'Estrange published a book entitled *L'Estrange his Apology*, setting out a number of forgotten pamphlets and broadsheets which he had written in the royal cause during the past year. His ostensible and somewhat far-fetched motive was that he had been accused of being Cromwell's instrument, but his real aim was to obtain preferment for his services and sufferings. He considered that his own appointment as Nedham's successor was his just due for his exertions as royalist pamphleteer, and the collection of extracts from Nedham's newsbooks referring in insulting terms to the king, which was published on 7 September 1660 under the title of *A Rope for Pol*, was, there is no doubt, written by him and with the motive of rendering it impossible for Nedham to be reappointed in case he recanted, as he had done once before.¹⁸ At this date the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* and *Mercurius Publicus* were no longer privileged, the council of state's authority having expired with the council itself. Nothing however was done for him. On 2 November Sir John Berkenhead was appointed master of the faculties. He had written

ing from Chalmers (*Life of Ruddiman*), sets out the incorrect order, also attributing it to no. 16 (in order to make it agree with Whitelocke's mistake as to the date). As a consequence Dury has been credited with the *Parliamentary Intelligencer*, for which he was never at any time responsible. In Nichols's list (pp 51-3) of the newsbooks of 1659 and 1660 out of twenty-eight entries only four are entirely correct, four (including two *Parliamentary* and one *Kingdoms Intelligencers*) are of apparently fictitious periodicals, one document was not a periodical, three are reduplications, and every footnote and comment is either totally wrong or incorrect.

¹⁷ Mr. Fox Bourne (L. 29) says 'Nedham's real successor was John Berkenhead.' Masson (*Milton*, vi. 325) thought that Berkenhead 'partly' edited the two newsbooks. But he merely licensed them. Nothing more opposed to Berkenhead's style than Muddiman's newsbooks can well be conceived. He himself on Secretary Nicholas's retirement says he 'suffered' nothing to come forth in the newsbooks (Egerton MSS. 2538, ff. 186, 189), an expression inconsistent with his having any share in them. Moreover, Rugge, L'Estrange, Sir Joseph Williamson, and Anthony & Wood (writer of Berkenhead's life) all distinctly state that Muddiman wrote both newsbooks. Nearly twenty years after Muddiman's death the *British Mercury*, no. 369, for 30 July-2 August 1713, speaking of this period, says, 'The famous Muddiman was then the only newsmonger'. It should be added that Berkenhead was never given either the office or title of 'surveyor of the presses or Imprimery.'

¹⁸ The date of *A Rope for Pol* from a memorandum on the British Museum copy (Wood queries his date). The preface to this pamphlet, with its 'Goliath of the Philistines, whose pen was like a weaver's beam,' etc., is unmistakably written by L'Estrange.

the *Mercurius Aulicus* at Oxford seventeen years previously, and (though this was not a periodical of general news) had therefore a knowledge of journalism, and became (presumably under the Star Chamber order of 1637, as the archbishop's deputy) licenser and censor of the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* and *Mercurius Publicus* from this date. Secretary Nicholas assumed the general control of the press, and the newsbooks were now published 'by order' simply. But on 1 January 1659-60 the *Parliamentary Intelligencer* came to an end with the convention parliament, and Muddiman discarded that 'compellation,' as he contemptuously termed it in giving his reasons for renaming it the *Kingdome Intelligencer*. From this date both newsbooks were marked 'published by authority.' L'Estrange now became a great champion of the church of England in controversy with the nonconformists, the presbyterians being the special objects of his aversion, but in August 1661 his disgusted *Careat to the Cavaliers*, incidentally recounting his services to Secretary Nicholas in searching for disloyal publications, again brought to notice the fact that neither preferment nor reward had been given to him.

At this time the authorities were extremely anxious to suppress seditious pamphlets and unlicensed printing, and in their anxiety L'Estrange found his opportunity at last. The Stationers' Company had given great dissatisfaction as being composed of the disseminators of disloyal books, and a number of printers petitioned for incorporation and formulated an elaborate scheme of proposals and regulations.¹⁹ The signatories' names were sufficient to secure its failure. It was decided to employ an overseer or surveyor of the presses, and Thomas Dawks, stationer, petitioned for the office and for power to search for disloyal books.²⁰ On 8 December 1661 L'Estrange addressed another 'apology,' this time to Lord Clarendon. Someone had accused him to the chancellor of having sold intelligence to Cromwell, and in the first paragraph of his denial he again bewailed 'the malice of my fortune, which has left me neither worse to fear nor much better to hope for.'²¹ He was

¹⁹ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 22, nos. 8, 8 i, ii, and iii (undated). The signatories were Rie. Holgkinson (not Hutchinson), John Grismard, Robert Ibbitson, Thomas Mabb, Da. Maxwell, Tho. Roycroft, Wm. Godbid, Jo. Streeter, James Cottrel, John Hayes, and John Brudenell. All had been printers of newsbooks, and Maxwell of the *Mercurius Fædicus*, for a mistake in which he was ordered to be summoned before parliament on 25 June 1660. Brudenell was afterwards imprisoned by L'Estrange. The documents are most carefully planned and thought out in every detail.

²⁰ *Ibid.* vol. 48, no. 104.

²¹ He was at the time involved in controversy with Bagshaw, the presbyterian—the enemy of the famous Bunby—and it seems as if he was setting a further trap for him (in another pamphlet he admitted himself guilty of 'prophaneness and drunkenness'—a bait greedily swallowed), for in enumerating the occasions on which he had met Cromwell he omits to mention a musical party. Bagshaw at once gave currency to the spiteful falsehood of his having been 'Oliver's fiddler.'

rewarded by being employed as 'surveyor of the presses.' A general warrant empowering him to seize seditious books and their writers was granted him on 24 February 1662.²² This he found insufficient, and asked (in his capacity as 'surveyor of the press') for a general search warrant also. It is to be presumed that Secretary Nicholas scrupled to sign a document of questionable legality and granting such arbitrary powers, for although one was engrossed on parchment it was neither dated nor executed.²³ He must also have been consulted with regard to the proposed licensing bill, an abstract of which is among the State Papers.²⁴ Another book followed on 11 April 1662, entitled *A Memento to all that Truly Revere the Memory of King Charles the Martyr*, and was dedicated to Clarendon. It contained a large number of extremely controversial statements, and bitterly attacked Bagshaw. Bagshaw addressed to Clarendon on 10 May 1662 a short letter in reply, in which he termed L'Estrange 'Cromwell's spy' and 'the Protector's earwigge,' and furnished him with the opportunity he desired for gaining notoriety. *Truth and Loyalty Vindicated from the Reproaches and Clamours of Edward Bagshawe* appeared on 17 June 1662, and was dedicated to the privy council. In sixty-four pages of verbose and vituperative narration L'Estrange cleared himself, ended the controversy, and silenced his opponent. He was now a famous writer.

In May 1662 the licensing act was passed, and in October Secretary Nicholas was superseded by the king's favourite, Arlington, with whom L'Estrange found greater favour than he had with Nicholas. L'Estrange, as he says, was now employed to draw up proposals for the regulation of the press, and accordingly submitted a document in which he again asked that the surveyor of the press might be authorised to search and seize all seditious books, and in addition should have the control of all licensing (with certain exceptions), and that 'for his pains' he should have 'the printing of all narratives and intelligences not exceeding two sheets of paper' (i.e. the right of bringing out the newsbooks), 'and all bills and advertisements, with a fee of 1s. per sheet on other works.' This not very modest demand was supplemented by the 'Minutes of a Project for the Preventing of Libells,' which was aimed at

²² S.P., Dom., Charles II, 51, no. 8. The solitary unofficial periodical, other than of advertisements, which attempted to appear between 1660 and 1678 was *A Monthly Intelligence Relating the Affaires of the People Called Quakers* (no. 1, August-September 1662). Some of the *Nocturnals*, &c., however, appeared.

²³ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 89, no. 92, and vol. 51, no. 9. The warrant is addressed to 'Roger L'Estrange Esq., the surveyor of the presses,' and is not entered in the entry book, as stated by the *Calendar*. The minute of it—no. 10—does not annex no. 10, i, 'The Minutes of a Project for Preventing Libells,' nor has it any connexion with the latter document.

²⁴ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 39, no. 95.

manuscripts, and by which he proposed to bring the written news within his grasp by inserting a clause into the licenses of coffee-house keepers.²³ This led to an attack from Berkenhead, probably on behalf of Muddiman, whom L'Estrange thus openly sought to supplant. Berkenhead (who had been appointed a master of requests in January 1668) seems to have criticised verbally a passage in L'Estrange's *Memento*. L'Estrange at once sent a memorandum to the secretary of state announcing that he had been charged by Berkenhead with writing a book against the king, and that the king had denounced him for it to parliament. He denied 'not only the one and the other,' but with considerable spite carried war into his enemy's camp and obliged himself 'to a proof of more than that amounts to,'²⁴ and, as usual, turned the accusation to his further advertisement by publishing his remarkable *Considerations and Proposals in order to the Regulation of the Press*. This pamphlet was published on 9 June 1668 under the imprimatur of the chaplain to the archbishop of Canterbury and was dedicated to the king, containing one epistle dedicatory to him and another dedicatory to the lords and commons. He alluded to the proposals he had been employed to draw, and, as might be expected, in the first epistle attacked Berkenhead, even accusing him of speaking against the king, and exhibited himself in his favourite character as a defender of royalty.

In reward, and in compliance with his proposals, the surveyorship of the press was now erected into an office and conferred on him by royal letters patent at the end of August 1668.²⁵ His proposals were carried into effect, and in the same patent he was constituted sole licenser of the press (with the exception of books on law, divinity, &c.), and among a multitude of minor things was granted the sole right of writing, printing, and publishing newsbooks and advertisements. A general search warrant was also conferred on him by it. He was not however given the fee of 1s. a sheet on books which he had also requested, nor had he power to interfere with manuscripts. *Mercurius Publicus* and the

²³ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 39, no. 94, and 51, no. 10, i. This last truly remarkable document informs us that the written news was also sold by the stationers, that written libels were 'forty times as many' as the printed ones, 'and by the help of transcripts wall-nigh as publick as the other.'

²⁴ The exact force of the accusation is difficult to follow, but it is contained in the memorandum in L'Estrange's handwriting and signed by him, dated 31 March 1668. S.P., Dom., Charles II, 70, no. 59, and an extract endorsed 'the cause of the affront offered to Mr. L'Estrange,' in which the passage from the *Memento* (p. 240) is cited—a statement referring to an 'insufferable' affront to Charles I (S.P., Dom., Charles II, 25, no. 97).

²⁵ A copy of the warrant addressed to the 'attorney or solicitor general,' directing the drawing of the grant, is dated 15 August 1668 (S.P., Dom., Charles II, 78, no. 96). This is not an order for a warrant, as described in the *Calendar*—an important difference.

Kingdoms Intelligencer therefore came to an end with the month of August.²² However, Muddiman's right of free postage (exaggeratingly said to have amounted to 400*l.* a year—a great sum for the times) remained unaffected by L'Estrange's patent, and a similar privilege 'was denied' to the latter, who eventually secured it 'by favour of the countess of Chesterfield,' one of the farmers of the Post Office.²³ He signalised the grant of his patent by obtaining a writ of *quo warranto* and the suspension of the Stationers' Company's charter until they had made terms with him.

The last stage of the newsbooks now began. Sir Roger L'Estrange entitled his Monday's pamphlet the *Intelligencer* (no. 1, 31 August 1663) and his Thursday's edition the *News* (no. 1, 3 September). Though he had an office and a correspondence he supplied the printed news only, and the way in which he did it was very much in Muddiman's favour as privileged newsletter writer. Whatever may be the defects or merits of his pamphlets from a literary point of view there can be no doubt that as a journalist he was a complete failure. In his very first newsbook, after triumphantly announcing that the censorship and newsbook alike were now in the hands of 'one and the same person,' he actually stated his objections to the publication of news and forecasted the appearance of only one newsbook a week. As if by way of earnest of what might be expected the number only contained six separate items of news, the rest consisting of the declaration of his views and intentions. On Monday, 1 August 1664, he gave notice that the *Intelligencer* would be discontinued after the 8th of that month; but this led to such an outcry that he had to abandon his plan, though, as he somewhat insolently remarked on 15 August, still reserving to himself a 'freedom of complying with what I shall find more commodious upon further tryal.' Their scanty news was carefully spaced out and printed in large type. The two newsbooks were also consecutive, so that both had to be purchased in order to obtain the full news, and their size was reduced by exactly one-half (to one sheet of eight pages), without any reduction in price. By these means he made them bring in treble the amount they had done in Muddiman's time. When war broke out with Holland in 1665 L'Estrange doubled the *News* on 27 April, thus making it the same size as its predecessor, the *Mercurius Publicus*. He followed suit with the *Intelligencer* on 5 June, this return to the original size being unaccompanied by any increase in price.²⁴ As he says that an 'overture' was now made to Nedham it

²² Rugge (*Brit. Mus.*, Add. MS. 10117, f. 430) says, 'In this month the newsbook was written by one Mr. Roger L'Estrange, a famous writer, and Muddiman put by as to that employment.'

²³ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 130, no. 61.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 135, no. 24. The statement in the preface to the *Calendar* of 1665-6 (as in the *Calendar* itself) that he 'doubled the size and price' is quite wrong. This letter (31 October 1665) is summarised below, p. 266.

is evident that he was not satisfying official expectations as a pamphleteer. With regard to his news, his accounts of the naval battles left much to be desired, and he frequently had to publish supplements, as in the case of the battle on 8 June between the duke of York and Tromp: 'all were dissatisfied with his relation of it. There was no account of the duke of York's singular encounter with Opdam; Prince Rupert was not even mentioned.'²¹

At the time there were two 'principal secretaries of state;' Sir William Morice and Sir Edward Nicholas had been first appointed when the king came to his throne, and Nicholas had been superseded by Lord Arlington in 1663, as we have stated. Sir Joseph Williamson, keeper of the state papers (his knighthood came later), was also secretary to Lord Arlington, as he had been to Nicholas, and his principal left all matters almost entirely in his hands. There are numbers of letters addressed to him offering bribes for places, and the contempt with which his contemporaries occasionally speak of him shows that this future principal secretary of state, if able, was not held in honour. He had the business-like habit of never destroying his letters and papers. The letters of intelligence which Williamson sent out at this period were written by Muddiman, whose letters from his correspondents were occasionally and after a time usually addressed to Williamson's office. This would seem to have been the reason of Lord Arlington's request to Williamson to help L'Estrange on the latter's first taking office.²² At this time Williamson had no professional news correspondence of his own.²³ During the height of the plague Muddiman took Williamson's place in London, looking up treaties for Lord Arlington, and taking abstracts of Williamson's letters, but sending the foreign letters to Williamson unopened, 'not knowing how it might be taken at court were he to view them.'²⁴ One result of the general dissatisfaction with L'Estrange was that Williamson early in 1665 formed 'the design' of getting the 'public intelligence into his hands.' He 'several times desired a list' of Muddiman's correspondents' names, but was 'refused,'²⁵ and he must have known from his own experience in helping L'Estrange that it was not much use attempting to write a news-book without a wider correspondence than that which he then possessed. He therefore employed one James Hickey to obtain a list for him. Hickey was the clerk in the Letter Office who usually signed Muddiman's letters as franked. He was a servile, hypocritical creature who supplemented his official salary of 100*l.* a year by

²¹ B.P., Dom., Charles II, 134, no. 25.

²² *Ibid.* 70, no. 112.

²³ *Ibid.* 184, no. 118. 'I have received of late from Mr. Muddiman two letters of intelligence, by your order, he tells me' (Dr. Rawlinson to Williamson, 16 October 1665).

²⁴ *Ibid.* 182, no. 28, and 120, nos. 44 and 46.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 180, no. 149, paragraph 8.

himself sending out letters of news. Muddiman was in the habit of presenting him with four copies of his own letters every week in order to help him in this. With the aid of this fellow, Williamson commenced a sordid intrigue, having as its objects the ousting of L'Estrange from his position as official editor and the obtaining of Muddiman's correspondence for the foundation of a new journal. His obvious plan was to relegate the latter to the position of salaried editor, and to obtain the surplus profits of both newsbooks and letters of news for himself. In August 1665 Muddiman discovered that Hickes was writing to his correspondents, and suspecting his motives seems to have arranged for the bulk of his intelligence to reach him unknown to either Hickes or Williamson, but purposely refrained from leaving the latter because 'while he was with him he [Williamson] could not send for a list of his correspondents to the office.'

On 6 October 1665 Lord Arlington received a grant of the office of postmaster-general for ten years, to commence on the expiration of the grant to Daniel O'Neale, deceased, and a weapon was thus put into Williamson's hands of which he was not slow to make use. The plague had driven the court to Oxford. He decided to engage Henry Muddiman to write a new journal there. This would infringe L'Estrange's patent, but being done within the jurisdiction of the university there would be difficulty in stopping it. He himself was a fellow of Queen's College. The plan had the additional recommendation that with Muddiman away at Oxford Hickes would have a better opportunity of copying the addresses of his letters and so obtaining the desired list of correspondents. Having made his arrangements Williamson wrote to L'Estrange from Oxford on 15 October 1665—

I am sorry the distance in which we are from you deprives me of the occasion of helping and directing you in the composing of the publick news, as would be better for his majesty's service and your own reputation. I have often advised you to agree with Mr. Muddiman in this matter, who having had the good luck and opportunity of falling into the channel of these things would have been very useful to you, and in despair of seeing this effected in the future I take the freedom to propose to you that if you will relinquish to me your whole right in the composing and profit of the newsbook I will procure for you in recompense of it a salary from his majesty of 100*l.* per annum, which shall be paid through my hands. . . . If I place it too low you must blame yourself for having told me several times that the duty of it is very burthensome and the profit inconsiderable.

On this L'Estrange wrote to Lord Arlington on 17 October, treating Williamson's letter as being from him, referred to the 'miscarriage' in public intelligence with which he says it charged him, and added—

As to Mr. Muddiman, I did once make use of him. I found him very short of intelligence, but it was during Mr. Williamson's sickness, and that perchance might be the reason of it. Now if Mr. Williamson would be pleased to engage him to deal more openly with me I should take the same agreement again for an obligation and immediately put that we held again in motion.

The consideration offered for the newsbook, he said, would 'utterly ruin' him, 'it being come to above 400*l.* a year.' He had not complained of any loss over the newsbook, but 'of the excessive charge of maintaining spys and instruments for the reducing of the press,' on which he expended 500*l.* the first year, and if Arlington had not then charitably procured 200*l.* from the king for his supply he had 'found greater obstruction in the work.' On the 19th he again wrote a lengthy letter, reminding Arlington of his promise that he should not be dispossessed, when, before his patent had passed, he had foreseen what was now happening, and of the renewal of that promise 'upon the last occasion I had to trouble your lordship with this subject about the overture made to Nedham.' He had to satisfy a total debt of 'near 3,000*l.* contracted in the king's service.' And although he was as yet no gainer by his office, yet, however his writing was 'denied, even according to Mr. Muddiman's own calculation' the newsbook was then worth treble what he found it. The 'quality of my employment,' he says, 'was to tease and persecute the whole rabble of the faction, which I have done to such a degree that I have drawn upon my head all the malice imaginable,' and the newsbook was given me 'to balance my service about the press; and in doing my work be judge, my lord, if I do not deserve my wages.' He was now 'marked out for beggary, infamy, and contempt, and briefly for the worst that can befall an honest man, and (to deal sincerely) without being informed of my offence.' Receiving no answer, he again wrote another long letter on the 21st, recapitulating what he had already said and repeating that he had only complained of 'the charge for the service of the press,' and that since then he had 'improved the book, and at length by doubling the sheet I doubled also the value.' From 200*l.* a year, as he found it, he had brought it up to above 500*l.*, or 400*l.* at the worst. In offering to comply with Arlington's recommendation of Muddiman he hoped to answer his duty of complying with the former's care of his composing his intelligence as he ought.

All this was in vain, for on Thursday, 16 November 1665,²⁸ no. 1 of the bi-weekly *Oxford Gazette* appeared, licensed by Arlington in direct infringement of L'Estrange's patent, printed in

²⁸ No. 1 was not dated, but contained news inclusive of 14 November. It was not in London on the 16th (S.P., Dom., Charles II, 187, no. 18), but had arrived on the 17th (*ibid.* no. 24). No. 2 was dated for 18-20 November.

Oxford by the University printer, Leonard Litchfield, and reprinted in London by Thomas Newcombe, the printer of the *Intelligencer*, 'for the use of some merchants and gentlemen who desired them.' The *Oxford Gazette* was but 'half a sheet in folio' of two pages. But the printing was much closer, in double columns instead of single, and the type much smaller. It at once 'gained great reputation, for being in so small a volume it could be sent anywhere.'²⁷ This remark, coupled with its size and shape—that of the sheets of written news—and the title *Gazette*—an obvious reference to the fact—shows that it was actually intended to be ancillary to the letters of intelligence, and it represents the lowest state of degradation of the printing press. It was an open recognition of the fact that it was no longer possible to print news freely.²⁸ The 'general applause' with which it was received²⁹ speaks eloquently of the condemnation of Roger L'Estrange by the public.

The immediate collapse of his newsbooks stung L'Estrange into an attempt to imitate the style of the *Gazette*, and on Tuesday, 28 November 1665, he temporarily ceased them, and also published a 'paper'—*Publick Intelligence*—closely resembling it in all points. He marked it significantly 'with sole privilege,' and commenced it by saying, 'By this time you may perceive, my masters, that your *Intelligencer* has changed his title, his form, and his day, for which I could give you twenty shrewd reasons if I were not obliged to gratify a point of prudence in myself.' The old *Intelligencer* was back again however on Saturday, 2 December, and Monday, 4 December, and the *News* on Thursday, 7 December, as usual, the only difference in them afterwards being that they were marked 'with sole privilege.' He had no written news to send with them, and besides had found a better plan—he appealed to the king in person. Charles II could not very well refuse to protect so devoted a servant as L'Estrange, and ordered that, in addition to 100*l.* a year to be allowed him out of the profits of the newsbooks, 'in consideration of their being taken into the secretaries' office' a further sum of 200*l.* yearly should also be paid him by Lord Arlington out of the secret service money. L'Estrange, therefore, came remarkably well out of the transaction and was pensioned with 300*l.* a year. He retained his patent with all its privileges, and Williamson did not receive a grant of the newsbooks—they were 'taken into the

²⁷ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 187, no. 99.

²⁸ The *Gazette* was the first printed newspaper. The terms 'news paper,' 'news-paper,' and (resulting from them) 'newsletter' were now gradually evolved. Where the terms 'newsletter' and 'news letter' appear in the *Calendars* previous to the year 1666 they in no case are used in the documents described, the terms employed being letter 'of news' or 'of intelligence,' 'paper,' and 'sheet of news.' Being a single piece of paper, the *Gazette* could not be called a 'newsbook.'

²⁹ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 187, no. 88.

secretaries' office.'¹⁰ Accordingly, after 29 January 1665-6 the *Intelligencer* and the *News* ceased. The 300*l.* annuity was regularly paid down to the end of Arlington's tenure of office, but fell into arrear when Williamson succeeded him. L'Estrange had to appeal to the attorney-general and the solicitor-general, and his documents were 'fraudulently conveyed from him, taking advantage even of that opportunity,' i.e. in 1680, 'that forced him out of the kingdom for safety.'¹¹

Daily during the week beginning Monday, 27 November, and ending Saturday, 2 December, Hickes took lists of the addresses of Muddiman's correspondents and sent copies of them to Williamson, remarking on 8 December that he left to him the 'management' of them. These lists, showing correspondents in Paris, Antwerp, Scotland, and Ireland, prove how far-reaching and important the correspondence was. Muddiman was warned of Hickes's proceedings, and despatched his letters for the future under cover to another clerk in the Letter Office, Edmond Sawtell. As a consequence of this Hickes wrote to Williamson on 10 January 1665-6, a letter which he terminates with a prayer for 'a contented heart to live to God's glory,' and in the postscript makes the venomous suggestion—

I do still pray you to write two or three smart words to the purpose that my lord understands I detain the king's letters longer in my hands than I ought . . . The reason I hint this much is Mr. Muddiman's agent, Mr. Sawtell, when I am going suddenly to make up [the letter bag] gallops to the tavern whence I must send for him to make up Mr. Muddiman's . . . And as I am informed he [Muddiman] threatens me, as yet I dare not send away my letters without his; if I do I shall hear of it to some purpose . . . If I stray a hair's breadth beyond my lord's orders and yours—hang me.

On 13 and 16 January Sir George Downing had written to Williamson that 'a friend' had said

his instrument was discontented and wished to go to Secretary Morice and carry him intelligence, as he had done to Williamson, and thus help the other *Gazette*

(the newsbook being taken into the secretaries' office there was nothing to prevent both secretaries issuing one), but was 'stopped for a time,' telling him to make use of the information 'to keep him to you.' Williamson at once ordered Hickes to stop the letters to Muddiman, for on 17 January Hickes writes that he has done so. There then was some attempt on his part to patch up an arrangement, for on 20 January Hickes writes that he at all times treats Mr. Muddiman with respect, and after saying that he personally had not

¹⁰ Ormonde MSS. vol. III. N.S. pp. 351, 352. Case of Roger L'Estrange and certificate of Lord Arlington.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

had a line from him for a long time (meaning the gifts of sheets of news had been stopped) admits that he had been opening his letters by saying, 'I do perceive what bombast he writes,' and concludes—

I do therefore hint thus to you, that except his services to you be owned very amply it will not suit with your interest and interest of this office to pass his letters free to the value of four hundred pounds a year to the king's account.

The king returned to Hampton Court on 27 January, and to Whitehall the following week, so that the last number of the *Oxford Gazette* (no. 23) appeared at the end of January. The continuing paper was called the *London Gazette* with no. 24, and after no. 25, published on Thursday, 8 February 1665-6, Henry Muddiman declined to write it.⁴² Williamson could not write the *Gazette* himself. He therefore called in Charles Perrot, of Oriol College, who Anthony à Wood says wrote the *Gazette*, though not constantly, until about 1671. Perrot, in his reply to him dated 4 February, arranges to see him on Wednesday, the 7th.

Muddiman now directed all his correspondents to send their letters to him for the future at the office of John Cooke, secretary to Sir William Morice, and handed Hickes Secretary Morice's order for free postage. There is among the State Papers a letter of his (with the address defaced), dated 16 February, giving these directions; and therefore the initiative came from him. He saw Hickes the same day, to make sure of the matter, and promised Secretary Morice's 'general order' on finding that he disputed the other's sufficiency.⁴³ But Williamson had determined to make another attempt to secure the correspondence now slipping out of his hands, and so Hickes is found writing to him with a sample circular on 14 February, 'that you may view and judge the fitness of communicating some part of the same.' There are two copies, one of which is dated 13 February and the other 13 and 15 February, and it was eventually sent round by Hickes to Muddiman's correspondents. Williamson before causing this to be done must have decided to set the two principal secretaries at variance and to trust to Arlington's greater influence with the king gaining the day over Sir William Morice.

The circular states that Muddiman, whose letters had formerly come franked to their hands, was

dismissed from the management of that correspondence he formerly was instructed with for that he hath contrived and managed that correspondence to his own particular advantage and not for the service of his majestie and those persons of honour [Arlington and Williamson] as he ought and they expected he should have done,

⁴² The last number written by him is fixed by his circular of Saturday, 24 February, *infra*, p. 270.

⁴³ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 160, no. 149, paragraph 7.

and concludes with a broad hint that Hickes himself was prepared to supply his place in assuring them of 'that respect upon your commands so far as in my power.' Hickes at the same time was careful to meet Sir William Clarke, Monck's secretary, in the city and to retail to him the same false account of a dismissal. It appears from a memorandum at the foot of one of the two lists of correspondents that Williamson wrote to a few of them himself, but there is no copy of his letter. When Muddiman heard of this he went in a 'great huff and heat' and ordered Hickes to recall his circular, and on his refusal sent out (24 February) a circular of his own, contemptuously terming Hickes a 'little fellow of the post office,' and saying that

upon a misunderstanding between Mr. Williamson and myself about the *Gazette*, which I wrote at Oxon and till the last week at London, I thought it most advisable to quit that office wholly [i.e. the State Paper Office] and turn my correspondents to Sir William Morice, his majesty's first principal secretary of State. I shall write as fully and constantly as formerly and with the same privilege and post-free.

He adds that he had detected Hickes in 'some practices,' had not entrusted him with his letters to sign,

nor given him, as formerly, a copy of my letters to write after, but as he is disowned in it by those he pretends orders from so I shall make him sensible of the forgery.

The forgery was, of course, Hickes's attempt to pass off his own newsletters in lieu of Muddiman's privileged ones. The bad faith of the first circular is rendered clearer by the correspondence being immediately continued, another Letter Office clerk, Hall, signing the letters as franked.

On this Hickes addressed a formal petition to the two 'principal secretaries of state,' hypocritically protesting that he had discharged his duties 'as in the presence of Almighty God' and asking that Muddiman might be ordered to 'repayre' him for the charge of forgery (to which he was careful to attach a wider meaning than that plainly intended). This was not a wise step. Hickes was ordered to state his case, and drew up in numbered paragraphs his lengthy 'Narrative of the Discourse betwixt Mr. Henry Muddiman and James Hickes, senior, concerning his Correspondence.' Like the petition this document could not possibly have been drawn up by Hickes unaided, and it is chiefly remarkable for giving the history of what had happened, from which the preceding story has been in part taken. Its probable date was the end of April, when Sir William Morice decided to take action. In it Hickes reiterated his accusation of a dismissal, abandoned his charge of Muddiman's continuing the correspondence to his own advantage, and tacitly admitted that he was entitled to do so. He added a new inculpa-

tion of sending out letters of other business in which neither the king nor himself was concerned, to the end that they might go free, pointed out the large number of letters he despatched, and, after accusing him of sending out nothing but the common newsbooks, alleged that there was 'not one letter in answer to most of the letters he sent, receiving yearly stipends of from 40s. to 40l. per person,' and admitting that he had intimated his intention of preventing his despatching his letters before the *Gazette*, said that it was his 'scandalous circular' which occasioned his 'humble petitioning.' Throughout all this, Williamson appears to have kept himself in the background and to have 'disowned' Hickes. It is only from Hickes's letters to him that he is revealed as the actual instigator. The accusation of sending out nothing but the newsbooks was well calculated to cause mischief, as the clerks in the Letter Office by an abuse of their privilege of free postage were accustomed to do this, selling them at a large profit.

In the meantime Secretary Morice, finding that there were renewed attempts to interfere with Muddiman's letters, 'took it ill and required an account of it,' although Hickes wrote confidently enough on 25 March (1665 in mistake for 1666)—

I long as a woman very big to know my lord's resentment and yours as to the business of my petition, and I expect a vindication or a judgment, with punishment if guilty, of what he hath calumniated me with.

A complaint by Hickes to Williamson on 9 April was that Sir William Morice was described as *first* principal secretary of state, which was not unnatural in the circumstances, and, owing to his seniority, was strictly true, and Hickes wished 'his lordship' (Arlington) 'might not be thus reflected on longer.' " Secretary

" This letter is the only basis for Mrs. Everett Green's misleading statement in her preface to the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, for 1665-6, that Muddiman 'insinuated everywhere that Morice was the principal secretary—the one most trusted by the king.' Mrs. Green's other remarks to the effect that Muddiman contrived to secure a renewal of his privilege of free postage, obtained by his having been 'news-collector' to L'Estrange, that Williamson wrote on 15 October to L'Estrange 'declining an application for assistance in collecting news,' and that 'the editorship was handed over to' him are all equally unsupported by the documents. Especially is this the case in regard to her statement as to a comparison with Francis's newsletters. Indeed, this volume of the *Calendar* cannot be accepted as giving an adequate or in all cases a faithful description of the documents. The petition of Hickes (dated 2 December?) does not annex the secretly taken lists of correspondents; it annexes Hickes's circular of 13-15 February, and refers to Muddiman's circular of 24 February, and is therefore three months later in date. The 'Narrative of the Discourse betwixt Mr Henry Muddiman and James Hickes, senr., concerning his Correspondence' (S.P., Dom., Charles II, 160, no. 145) is rendered into 'Statement by James Hickes of his Correspondence with Henry Muddiman,' and the summary gives an incorrect impression, nor is the phrase 'though he could no longer see private letters' in the original.

Hickes's letter of 25 March 1666 (vol. 116 no. 21) was dated by him 1665 in mistake, being the New Year's Day of the times.

Morice's influence was evidently set at naught. But the powerful under-secretary had miscalculated the strength of the adversary he had to deal with, and the result was a severe defeat. Sir William Morice at last took action, and in a manner that was a public rebuke to Williamson and completely silenced Hickes.

Muddiman was authorised to write a second official printed 'paper'—*Current Intelligence*. This appeared in open opposition to the *Gazette* (to which it was similar in all respects), and on the same days (Mondays and Thursdays), under Sir William Morice's licence, and the first number was dated Monday, 4 June 1666. The printer was John Macock.⁴³ In January the next year Morice opposed Williamson and secured his rejection when he attempted to enter parliament as member for Dartmouth, obtaining the election of his own candidate instead. No. 6 of *Current Intelligence* contains a curious announcement, from which it may be concluded that the *Gazette* also was never intended to contain advertisements.

The publication of books, medicine, and other such things being remote from the business of a paper of intelligence [the term also applied to the written news], this is to notify that we will not charge the intelligence with advertisements, unless they be matters of state, but that a paper of advertisements will be forthwith printed apart, and recommended to the public by another hand.

A similar announcement appeared in the *Gazette* on 17 June. L'Estrange however acted on his patent and at once stopped both by issuing a pamphlet called *Publick Advertisements* on 25 June. This characteristically greedy enterprise failed and was his last essay in journalism.⁴⁴ That the management of *Current Intelligence* was enterprising is evident from Hickes's letter to Williamson on 8 August 1666, in which he says—

Mr. Macock and Mr. Muddiman gave the 'bookwomen' [i.e. the women employed to sell the papers] 20s. each, invited them all to Hornsey to his house to dinner, and provided them coaches to take them there and back. L'Estrange gave them all monthly a quire of books and quarterly 5s. each; to encourage them in his service. Mr. Newcombe [the printer of the *Gazette*] only gave them 10s. amongst them last quarter. [He] hoped Williamson would be as good a master to them as L'Estrange was; they knew the single *Gazette* far exceeded in profits L'Estrange's double sheets.

The position of the *Gazette* now became very serious. It was

⁴³ *Hist. Manuscripts Commission, 10th Rep.*, app. iv. p. 449; Fleming, *Cal.* p. 40 (761); *Stationers' Register*

⁴⁴ The *Observer*, though a periodical, had no connexion with news, and the advertisement sheets called *City Merceries* (some written by Oliver Williams, and the first in 1667 by Thomas Bromhall) were merely licensed by him, and probably had to pay him for the privilege of appearing.

saddled with L'Estrange's 100*l.* a year, and there was Perrot's salary to be paid, which at the rate of the times must have been about 200*l.* a year. If it had held the field unopposed there would have been, on L'Estrange's probably too favourable estimate of 400*l.* a year, no very great margin. But it had an unskilled writer, with the ablest journalist of the day actively hostile to it and powerfully supported. Williamson also had to organise a news-letter correspondence for the two-fold purpose of competing with Muddiman and of supplying the *Gazette* with news. In spite of a considerable number of payments for news,⁴⁷ and the alienation of one or two correspondents by the distinctly fraudulent means adopted, he failed in both objects. The *Gazette* was rescued from extinction by an accident. In the Great Fire of London, which began on 2 September 1666, the printers of both the *Gazette* and *Current Intelligence* were burnt out. Both papers stopped after Monday, 3 September. When the *Gazette* reappeared on 10 September (being printed for a time in an evil-smelling churchyard) the other paper did not. There was not room for two conflicting official papers and there must have been a question as to whether L'Estrange's annuity should be shared between them. Probably Williamson obtained terms over this. In any case the purpose of *Current Intelligence* had been served, and it was clear throughout that Muddiman did not desire a newspaper crippled and hampered by restrictions, but the untrammelled and far more profitable newsletters.⁴⁸ The *Gazette* remained alone, the last of the government 'diurnals'—surviving in our own times—henceforth to exist solely by reason of its official position and foreign news.

Sir William Morice resigned his office at Michaelmas 1668, but there is every evidence that Muddiman's privileged position as official newsletter writer was not curtailed by the loss of his right of free postage. His newsletter correspondence was organised on a scale the like of which had never been seen before, and became so large that it attained the dimensions of an institution.⁴⁹ Williamson's efforts to compete with him were futile, and the *Gazette* itself

⁴⁷ Although the gift of *N.* on 6 August 1666 (S.P., Dom., Chas. II, 167, no. 57), sent to his news agent, Silas Taylor, at Harwich for distribution among the wounded sailors cannot be included among these, yet it is discounted by Williamson's desire to ingratiate himself with Monck and the fact that he had difficulty in obtaining correspondents in the neighbourhood. The 'nobility and gentry' thought 'all business of consequence was entrusted to Sec. Morice' (1 September, J. Knight of Ipswich to Williamson, *ibid.* 176, no. 8).

⁴⁸ On 17 October 1666 the house of commons appointed a committee to inquire whether there was 'any illegal patent or any abuse in the licensing or stopping the lawful printing of books' (*Commons Journals*).

⁴⁹ Cf. Sir George Etherege's comedy, 'The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Floutier,' act iii scene 2 (1678); Roger North's *Life of Sir John North*; *Wood's Life and Times*, by Andrew Clark, ii. 452, iii. 28, 124, 155, 180, and 298; *Hist. Manuscripts*

was well-nigh crushed out of existence by his written news. From all parts of the country complaints of the *Gazette* now reached Williamson, and with unfavourable comparisons. When Muddiman's newsletters appeared the *Gazette* 'was never asked for.' People 'declined the *Gazette*' in favour of his newsletters, and 'persons of the greatest quality' were 'constrained to betake themselves to them.' The newsletters were 'much noticed, chiefly as communicating the diurnal debates and proceedings in parliament.' He was begged to 'enlarge his news.'¹⁰

On 27 December 1667 Hickes himself admitted that there was a general complaint of the *Gazette* wanting domestic intelligence, and that some in the office who sent fourteen or sixteen dozen weekly, then only sent half the number. Twenty dozen less than formerly were sent.

The people so much slight them, *they having nothing in them of the proceedings of parliament*, which Mr. Muddiman writes at large. Were there but as much printed as he writes it would keep up the *Gazette* far beyond what it now is. Mr. Muddiman gives far larger accounts to his correspondents than you do, which makes them much desired.

There is the same tale the following year, for on 20 August 1668 Hickes wrote—

Mr. Newcombe prints not above one-half he before printed, which in time they hope you will find a way to help.

Hickes's own privilege of free postage, and therefore the bulk of his profits out of the *Gazette*, vanished. Sir John Bennet, the deputy postmaster (not, it may be suspected, without instigation) issued new rules in 1667, under which the clerks in the Letter Office were forbidden to send either their own letters or copies of the *Gazette* free. Hickes clamorously protests in a series of complaining letters to Williamson that he 'shall take his leave, live upon salt and water, and rest upon God,' as he gets 'not a candle nor a cup of beer, as formerly granted, and the taking away of these poor petty things.' He had received nothing from Williamson but 'fair words.' Previously to this time he has, as he says, sent out thirteen dozen copies of the *Gazette* on Thursdays and fifteen dozen on Tuesdays, 'for which some pay 2d. or 3d. each.'

It is certain that Williamson's own newsletter correspondence was

Commission, 4th Report, Appendix, p. 250; 7th Report, Appendix, p. 468; 12th Report, App. ix. p. 77, &c. In 1677 Muddiman was arrested for writing that the Spaniards intended war (*Hist. Manuscripts Commission, 5th Report, p. 318*). Wood also records (*Life, li. 180*) that the judges of assize (the notorious Street) at Oxford charged against newsletters, particularly Muddiman's, in 1686, in the days of James II. His letters were stopped coming to Oxford, 'yet other true and lying letters came.' They were back again in 1689 (vol. iii. p. 298).

¹⁰ S.P., Dom., Charles II, 176, no. 163; 179, no. 21; 193, no. 84; 205, no. 83; 207, no. 180; 214, no. 125.

an actual loss to him. The report to him of his chief clerk, H. Ball, while he was in Holland in 1674, states the gross income for the year ending that Michaelmas as amounting to 174*l.*, of which 120*l.* was paid in salaries to four copying clerks, 9*l.* 12*s.* went for office expenses (not including rent), and the rest he retained for himself, whether in full satisfaction of his claims or not does not appear. He makes complaint that subscribers are uncertain in their payments, and that the payments to correspondents and other expenses are not shown.⁴¹ To what expedients Williamson resorted may be seen from the numbers of Muddiman's newsletters to be found calendared among the State Papers from 1666 for many years onward. They are all addressed to different persons at various dates (all letters of news so addressed almost without exception being by him), and were intercepted in the post by Hickes and forwarded to Williamson for his use in making up the contents of the *Gazette* and his own newsletters. There are many veiled references by Hickes to what he was doing, and in the autumn of 1668, when Williamson was staying at the countess of Thomond's at Billing, near Northampton, he supplies an open proof. He had written on 20 August,

I am glad I suit with your opinion and sense concerning the particular letters now and then sent you, of which I shall say no more,

and on 7 September commenced his letter by saying, 'I sent yesterday a letter for you with two enclosed of H. M., and desired Mr. Francis' (then Williamson's newsletter clerk) 'to send it to you without opening it.'⁴²

Henry Muddiman died at the beginning of the year 1698 and was buried in Kensington Parish Church. There is a complete collection of his newsletters from 29 April 1667 to 12 October 1689 in the marquis of Bath's library at Longleat. Their dates are on alternate days and they are contained in fourteen folio volumes, formerly the property of his wife. This collection of some thousands of consecutive newsletters by one person, is quite unique, and,

⁴¹ Ball's report in appendix to the *Williamson Correspondence* (Camden Society).

⁴² S.P., Dom., Charles II, 245, nos. 7 and 190. These statements are omitted in the *Calendars*, and the two particular letters are attributed (like many others) to Francis. The latter's letters are easily recognised from their being only half the size and undressed. Muddiman's were always headed 'Whitehall,' and, though newsletters were never signed unless they contained a personal message, can generally be identified also by the seal. He was aware of the leakage of his news, and several times changed his seal 'to prevent Hickes's designs.' Down to 1666 this was usually a lion rampant. He then adopted a new device, on account of Hickes's thefts, which may be described as four crosses radiating from a centre (rather than a crosslet), with a circle round each lower limb. From 1670 he used the Panlett arms and crest, differentiated by a crescent. His office was first at the Seven Stars and afterwards at the Peacock, both near the New Exchange, in the Strand, and his private house was at Brompton. In 1667 'divers persons' presented a bill of complaints to the postmaster with regard to the 'opening' and 'miscarriage' of letters (S.P., Dom., Charles II, 221, no. 44).

considering his privileged position, should be of high value when alendared.¹³ He identified himself with the large number of thoroughly loyal but disgusted royalists who became known as the 'country party,' of whom his protector, Sir William Morice, was a type. Dry and didactic, his style of writing was altogether lacking in the forcibly picturesque verbiage of that arch-controversialist L'Estrange; and yet, as the public reliance on him shows, he was infinitely more consistent and trustworthy than the despicable Nedham. As journalist pure and simple he was the greatest of the three, and dealt with facts rather than opinions; indeed, his avoidance of the latter is noticeable. His permanent memorial will always be the *London Gazette*, to which he gave its form and the actual appearance which it retains to the present day.

J. B. WILLIAMS.

¹³ On 22 December 1694 the house of commons resolved 'that no newaletter writers do, in their letters or other papers, that they disperse, presume to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of this house' (*Commons' Journals*).