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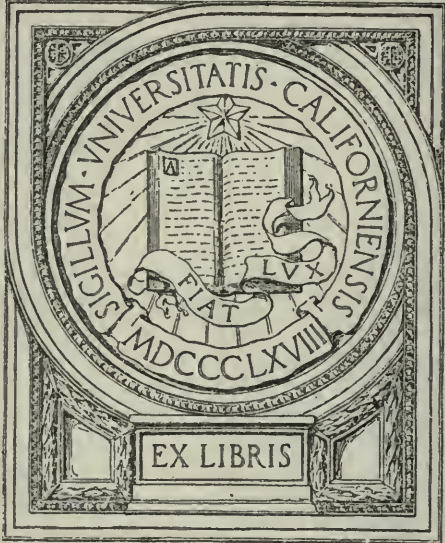
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FIFTH EDITION.

NEWSPAPERS
and their
MILLIONAIRES

WITH SOME
FURTHER MEDITATIONS
ABOUT US

By
VISCOUNT NORTHCLIFFE

LONDON
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Price 3d.

NO. 1000
ANNEX 100

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 311

LECTURE NOTES

BY

NEWSPAPERS
AND THEIR
MILLIONAIRES,
WITH SOME FURTHER MEDITATIONS
ABOUT US

By **VISCOUNT NORTHCLIFFE**

I shall be glad if everyone, before reading this, will realize that the wages question in metropolitan daily newspaper offices in no way resembles the wages situation in Agriculture, the Mines, the Mills, the Railways, the Shipyards, the Ships, the Engineering shops, and factories generally.

The London daily newspapers are controlled by a number of very rich people who are merely competing with each other, and not with foreigners as are our coal-owners, shipbuilders, and engineers.

Good wages of printers of daily newspapers do not mean loss of trade to Great Britain, but low wages mean the disappearance of skilled British printers to the United States, where, I regret to say, I have met hundreds of them.

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CHAPTER I.

EVERY now and then the question of the ownership of newspapers becomes a topic of public discussion, and doubtless new legislation is required in Britain.

There are countries in which wise legislation has been enacted to make the actual ownership of all newspapers a public matter, so that, for example, Bolshevik and Japanese propaganda might be rendered more difficult. There are countries in which it is compulsory to reveal the actual sale of every newspaper and publication inviting advertisements.

In some parts of our Dominions it is compulsory to publish the name of the writer of every political article during a campaign. A stupid rule, in my opinion, because in *The Times*, for instance, there is often a single leading article by at least five men, each of whom contributes his specialist part.

* * * * *

In whatever part of the world you travel you find the newspaper an increasing topic, though its proud position is about to be challenged by broadcast wireless. I lived in a house on my world tour where they had loud-speaking broadcast wireless. I do not like it—perhaps because I am a newspaper owner.

Broadcast wireless means that every one of you who reads this article will one day, I fear, be able to subscribe to a news agency and get all your sporting, financial, political, and general news spoken in any room you choose in your home by wireless telephone. I have been using the wireless telephone for a couple of years, but do not particularly care for it. It is improving, but even now the sound is often like that of the last-century gramophones. There are many atmospheric interruptions, and occasionally blank silences of hours.

None the less the wireless telephone, which the Americans have already reduced to a small portable box not much larger than a Kodak—the Radiophone—is used in the United States and Canada on a scale we know only by hearsay.

I asked some American friends who used the Radiophone how they liked it compared with the newspaper.

They said: "What we chiefly like is that our children every evening get a spoken bedtime story by wireless. What we do not like are the interruptions. And the ladies of the household say they cannot manage without the advertisements, which only the newspaper supplies."

THE GREAT
BRITISH ASSOCIATION

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

I believe that eventually the spread of the Radiophone will affect evening newspapers. Some American evening newspapers broadcast news from their own offices, thus hoping to keep the goodwill of their subscribers. I cannot ascertain whether this means a loss of readers or gain, and, after all, the struggle of newspapers has been for readers since the beginning of newspapers.

* * * * *

The question of newspaper ownership in Great Britain has again come to the fore by the action of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, and in particular by that of the *Morning Post* in a recent issue.

There were great discussions about newspaper ownership in the 'sixties of last century, when financiers, including the famous Albert Grant, got hold of a good many of them. In the early 'eighties there was a panic in Fleet Street about the arrival of the late Mr. Carnegie, who threatened to buy up the British Press and burned his fingers badly in the process.

I remember writing for one of his "Echoes," as they were called, when leading articles were written in London, cast into stereotype form, sent down by train to his provincial "Echoes," and sawn into various lengths, according to the requirements of the paper. His was the Ironmaster's view.

At about the same time other capitalists came on the scene. We journalists have no objection whatever to capitalists owning newspapers and thus creating employment. But I object to being a member of a Combination in which capitalists ignorant of Fleet Street dictate terms to those who have spent their lives trying to understand the complex questions of a newspaper.

* * * * *

This present contribution to the controversy arose in the following manner:—

* * * * *

I was taking a walk one morning with my little Cocker spaniel, "Pretty," when she was nearly run over, owing to her inexperience, by a Ford motor-car belonging to the *Morning Post*. Out of the car nimbly stepped a young man with a brush, a pot of paste, and a placard. On the placard I read "Lord Northcliffe and his Colleagues."

"That is very interesting," I thought. "The *Morning Post* very often writes about Lord Northcliffe; now the public will know something about my colleagues." Putting my little dog under my arm, I entered the shop to which the placard had been attached and purchased the paper.

When I opened the paper I was, like many others, disappointed. Although the placard was to be found in every street in the south of England *there was nothing about my colleagues.*

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

There was merely the same list of newspapers and controversial matter as had appeared elsewhere, though in heavy type.

The prominence of that list made me realise for the first time that behind every single London daily newspaper, with the possible exception of some sporting journals and a Labour publication, of which I know nothing, there is a multi-millionaire, a millionaire, or a very wealthy colleague, a Shipping King, a Cotton-waste King, Coal Kings, an Oil King, and the rest of them.

As I motored about during the day I pondered why the *Morning Post* should issue this nice advertisement of me and omit every reference to my colleagues.

The ways of the *Morning Post* are delightfully feminine—and no one knows much about feminine things. None the less, it has to be considered, and is the only newspaper in the world directed, and ably directed, by a woman.

The situation is just this: While I was travelling round the world, trying to find out what the Japanese are doing and where best our surplus population should emigrate, there arose a movement, of which I was not informed, for the reduction of the wages of printers of metropolitan daily newspapers.

On my return to Europe I heard about the matter. I then set about making inquiries as to the financial condition of the public Press and the status of the printers themselves. As a result I let it be known that, on the newspapers with which I am concerned, *there would be no reduction in wages.*

In the last thirty years the status of the British printer has greatly improved. He is one of the most highly skilled craftsmen we have. He is subject to a daily strain that few of my readers understand. I rejoice at his better state.

* * * * *

My action was fiercely resented in a certain quarter. A representative of one of the Colleagues referred to came to see me to remonstrate. He said: "The wages are preposterous. Some of these men have motor-cycles and sidecars; more than one of them drives a motor-car."

"Why shouldn't they?" I replied. "Our men are at least as skilled as the American and other foreign workers. If American printers are able to own Fords why shouldn't ours? British newspapers are just as prosperous as at any time in their history."

The replies were vague and unsatisfactory.

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

"My contention," I continued, "is that if we wish to retain the best skilled labour we have in this country we must pay it properly. There are, I regret to say, more than enough skilled British mechanics in the United States. I never visit an American newspaper office without being introduced to half a dozen of them, and *none of them comes back.*"

"But," he continued, "you are a member of the Newspaper Proprietors Association, and one of your representatives joined with the others in the reduction of wages movement."

I said that he, the mysterious Mr. X referred to, might have troubled to send me a wireless before he took a step involving the welfare and home comforts of hundreds of families. He is young and he has not travelled much as yet.

"Then," continued my colleague, "there are the unskilled workers who are always threatening us and the newsagents."

"That is a different matter," I said. "They may be getting more money than they deserve. If they are naughty we shall have to clout them as they have been clouted elsewhere, in Paris and New York, with the same result every time, but I have not had time to investigate the position."

"Then there are those who wish to interfere with the internal organisation of newspapers and even with their contents."

I read him the following letter I wrote to one of my employees, a Mr. Isaacs (not a Jew). Mr. Isaacs had had the impudence to attempt to interfere with the editorial policy of *The Daily Mail* during the railway strike. That letter was as follows :

"I hope you will understand that I have no intention of allowing my newspapers to be influenced in this or any other matter by anyone. I am entirely satisfied with the attitude of my journals towards this national calamity (the railway strike of 1919), and rather than be dictated to by anyone, or any body of men, I will stop the publication of these newspapers, and, in view of your letter, I have so informed the Newspaper Proprietors' Association."

"But surely you do not propose to break with the Newspaper Proprietors' Association?"

"Indeed I do," I replied. "I have only a few votes in it, and can be swamped at any time by the rest of my colleagues. I do not propose that they should interfere with my affairs, and equally I have no desire to be mixed up with theirs."

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

And so, although it is not a matter of the importance given to it by practically every newspaper in the country (except our wise friend, Lord Beaverbrook), my newspapers have withdrawn from the combination of the Colleagues.

As there is likely to be long, and I have no doubt acrimonious, controversy as to whether a printer ought or ought not to own a sidecar, I propose giving the public a little information about the capacity of my colleagues in return for the immense amount of information my colleagues have for thirty years given about me.

Among the most curious collections I have seen is one of what is called Northcliffeana, made by an assiduous collector of newspaper clippings about myself and one or two other public men.

There are eight volumes of cuttings from the *Daily News* all about myself. I wonder if Mr. Cadbury has ever realised the accumulation of most un-Quakerly references to myself which have appeared in his sporting and other publications.

Well, the Cadburys are the chocolate millionaires behind the *Daily News* and *Star*, and their printers should be well able to afford sidecars. They have a bounding circulation again, I notice.

* * * * *

✓ Lord Burnham, whose fine work for the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, along with my friend Lord Riddell, during the war secured him a well-deserved step in the Peerage, neither now nor at any other time has advocated low wages for printers. Since his grandfather's time the *Daily Telegraph* has always been a happy family. I like the *Daily Telegraph*, perhaps because—although I have been in strong rivalry for many years—no unkind reference to myself has ever appeared. It has, on the other hand, gone out of its way on many occasions to say nice things, and I not unnaturally rejoice at the prosperity of what is probably the soundest "property" of its kind in the world.

Lord Burnham is the millionaire behind that newspaper, and his millions have not spoiled him.

Another kind of millionaire by inheritance is Sir Edward Hulton, the son of a printer, and therefore well acquainted with the private lives of printers. I do not know whether he is in the wages reduction movement, but if he is he should not be. I do not say it because his newspapers hardly ever avoid introducing an oblique hostile reference to myself or my publications, or to France, or because his *Evening Standard* masks some curious publications in Manchester, but he can have no excuse to belong to any wages reduction movement.

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

He has so often referred to myself that I am not being personal when I say that his racing establishment is one of the most perfect and costly in the country. As to his French attitude and other matters, more on another day.

* * * * *

A new Colleague—a welcome one—is Lord Beaverbrook, whose career is a credit to Canada. It is a fact, as I have pointed out before, that whereas the United States is exporting *farmers* to Canada, *Canada is exporting heads of great businesses to the United States*. It is a happy accident of fortune that Lord Beaverbrook should have come to England. I look forward to the day when the young Australians and New Zealanders who are, I am sorry to say, *also* going to the United States, will come here, to the Motherland, where there is plenty of opportunity for their activity. Would that more came to our great schools and universities!

Beaverbrook is not of the wage-reducing type, and his millions have been earned by brains and what the Canadians possess to the full—initiative.

Many people predict a Beaverbrook-Hulton “merger,” which would be an extremely good thing for the tone of some of the Hulton publications.

As to the *Daily Chronicle*, which is in the list printed by the *Morning Post*, it is a political organ supported by millionaires, and millionaires who support political organs should not be, and in this case are not, mean to workpeople.

Next in the list I find the *Daily Graphic*—a better paper than most people are aware. Behind it is the great Berry fortune. The Berrys are buying up Fleet Street and its environs. I have met one of them, and he left upon me no impressions of a wage-cutter.

Coming to the *Westminster Gazette*—my friend Lord Cowdray’s toy—a few weeks ago I was dining with the Chief Justice of Ceylon in his charming bungalow high up in the Highlands of Newara Eliya. We were talking over things, men, and politics at home, and he said, “I am going to stand myself the luxury of a year of Alfred Spender. I have sent my subscription to the *Westminster Gazette*, which is going to be a morning newspaper.”

I do not know whether the subscription arrived—Cowdray can no doubt find out—but I am afraid the Chief Justice is getting very little Spender.

* * * * *

I told Lord Cowdray (Sir Weetman Pearson) the other day that his newspaper is about as good as my first oil well and pipe-line establishment would be. Looking at it reminds me of a man playing golf for the first time. If Cowdray would go

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

down to the office and use a little of his foresight and great sense of humour he might one day be able to approach the inevitable, *the net sale certificate, to which all of us have to come as advertising becomes more scientific.*

There are one or two Sunday and sporting papers of which I know nothing. But for the whole of the rest in the list issued in reply to the mysterious Mr. X there is a millionaire, and sometimes several, in the background, with the solitary exception of the *Daily Herald*.

As to evening papers, all the four London papers have millionaires behind them. One of them (not me, please) is said to be worth fourteen millions.

I am sure if the millionaires will go and look at the production of their newspapers they will not want to reduce wages. The strain on the editorial and mechanical staffs is about as much as human beings can bear. I have done some of the work myself. I know.

As to the *Daily Herald*, I see that it belongs to this combination. They will no doubt remain in it. They will, like me, do just as they choose.

I think it curious that in Britain, with a population eight times that of Australia, our workers cannot produce a daily Labour newspaper. The reason is a very simple one.

Take the *Daily World*, of Hobart, for example. That is no mere small propaganda sheet filled with racing tips and crankisms. Both in Hobart and in Brisbane I find that the general public read the Labour dailies for the simple reason that they provide as good a home and foreign news service as the so-called capitalist organs.

I visited the offices of the *Daily World* and found them sensible newspaper producers with strong Labour views which I respected. Their first object was to get readers and advertisements. I found no undignified howling for a "rally" or a dole. Labour had appointed a first-rate *editor*, Mr. Grey, not a cranky amateur. If you buy the *Daily World* you need buy no other newspaper. If you buy the *Daily Herald* and want the news, you must buy another newspaper.

The other newspapers in the list belong to my brother Rothermere, who is not at all inclined to reduce wages, and is as determined as I am not to be dictated to by extremists of the Labour Party, who are just as stupid as the extremists of the Tory or any other party.

Of the provincial Press it may be stated that the morning papers are perhaps not as prosperous as they were. But the provincial evening newspapers have rarely, I am told, known such net sales and such cheap paper.

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

Some of the provincial papers, like some of the London newspapers, are maintained by wealthy men for the purpose of political and social advancement. There is nothing wrong in that. But there is something wrong in doing it at the expense of the comfort of the workers and their wives.

* * * * *

I did not think that my late colleagues of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association would be so unwise as to enter upon a public controversy on the question of the wages of newspaper workers, but now that they have started it they will no doubt continue, and it will spread to other branches of the printing trade, such as, for example, the general printers.

Here an entirely different state of affairs prevails. Our daily newspapers are, as a matter of fact, corporations or individuals competing only with each other in Great Britain. The general printer has to compete with excellent Dutch and other printers. I was sorry to notice, when travelling, that a number of English publications have Dutch imprints. The workers ought to look into this matter.

The general printer has an easy life. He has none of the rush and tension of the linotypist, the men in the composing-rooms and foundry or machine-room of a daily newspaper, and especially of an evening newspaper.

If the printers are wise they will see that this kind of work, in which we compete with foreigners—and there is going to be a great deal of it—should be performed by members of their craft unable to stand the strain of the daily newspaper life and ready to accept lower wages and easier conditions. Otherwise that kind of printing will leave England.

* * * * *

As this controversy advances I strongly advise the readers and the workers to investigate that pompous phrase "economic unsoundness."

I notice that a correspondent of *The Times* the other day pointed out that this phrase was used by a provincial newspaper which was charging twopence for a penny paper and circulating among its shareholders a balance-sheet showing extraordinary profits. I have the balance-sheet.

In the afternoon I motored down to Eton to see some boys. I found that the whole place was alive and the road thereto with "Lord Northcliffe and his Colleagues."

One boy said to me: "Nunkie, we bought the *Post* this morning because we thought we should find something about you in it, and there was nothing."

"Stick to the family organs, my boy," I replied as I tipped him farewell. "You will find it all in the *Daily Mail* on Monday. We do not issue misleading contents bills."

* * * * *

There is no case for a reduction in the wages of our daily printers, and as regards what are called the Northcliffe journals there will be none.

THE MINDS BEHIND THE LONDON DAILY NEWSPAPERS



COUNTESS BATHURST,
Controller of the "Morning Post."

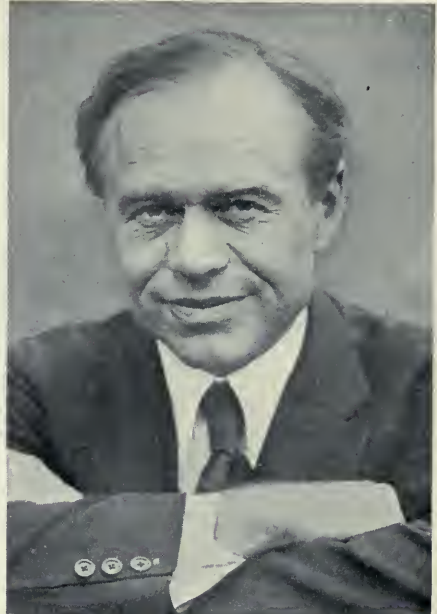
VISCOUNT ROTHERMERE,
Proprietor of the "Daily Mirror"
and many leading provincial and
Scottish organs.



THE MINDS BEHIND THE
LONDON DAILY NEWSPAPERS



Viscount Burnham
"Daily Telegraph"



Lord Beaverbrook
"Daily Express"



Sir Edward Hulton, Bart
"Evening Standard" and other journals



Lord Inverforth
"Daily Chronicle"

THE MINDS BEHIND THE
LONDON DAILY NEWSPAPERS



Viscount Cowdray
"Westminster Gazette"



Sir William Ewert Berry, Bart
"Daily Graphic"



Sir John Leigh, Bart
"Pall Mall Gazette"



Viscount Northcliffe
"The Times," "Daily Mail," "Evening News"

THE MINDS BEHIND THE
LONDON DAILY NEWSPAPERS



MR. CADBURY.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN I had delivered myself of the foregoing, I thought no more of it till there began to arrive at Printing House Square, Carmelite House, The Fleetway House, and at my various homes, a mass of letters, grateful, argumentative, suggestive, informative, and abusive—the abusive ones anonymous.

Then began a few timorous replies from newspapers—very, very timorous, especially from Sir Edward Hulton, who, as I said the other day, has assailed me as assiduously as he assails France.

Some of the Press cuttings from the provinces spoke gloomily of Press monopolies—a very old bogey.

When John Walter the Second boasted that the sale of *The Times* equalled that of all the Press in London, he was called the Monopolist. Let dreary prophets of Press Monopolists take comfort by looking at the provincial evening Press—the wonderful evening newspapers of Glasgow, Edinburgh (alas! the old independent *Edinburgh Evening News*), Dundee, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, York, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Swansea, Plymouth, Portsmouth, East Anglia, and the rest.

Moreover, provincial *morning* papers are being injured by metropolitan competition, and will be more and more hurt when aeroplane delivery becomes a certainty rather than a costly and capricious joke. But, as I have hinted, provincial *evening* journals—some of which, as in the United States, are immensely profitable—are gaining ground every day and in every way. No London newspaper is better than the *Evening News* of Manchester, the *Evening News* of Glasgow, or the *Yorkshire Evening Post* (whose borrowings—may I tell it?—from my newspapers are forming the subject of a little examination at the moment.)

But provincial morning newspapers, even those published close to London, can give the metropolitan Press a most unpleasant time. That dreadful *Birmingham Daily Post* is sold at the same price as my *Daily Mail*, and is *larger*. It has an unpleasant way of getting all the advertising. It follows up a successful morning's work by issuing one of the brightest sheets in Great Britain, the *Birmingham Mail*.

So much for the cry of " Press Monopolists " from London.

* * * * *

The correspondence swelled by every post, but until I met Lord Cowdray (Sir Weetman Pearson), who like Lord Inchcape (Sir James Mackay), is, in my opinion, one of the greatest modern British pioneers, I had not come into personal contact with anyone, outside my small circle, who had read my article.

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

Friend Cowdray twitted me agreeably about my little sally, of which this is a further chapter. We are going for a walk and a cigar one of these mornings on Hampstead Heath. I shall not talk about his *Westminster*.

Cowdray is known in the United States as the man who gave the Standard Oil Company "the biggest shake-up in its little life." You may also remember that when the Americans failed to make the tunnels under the East River in New York they called for Cowdray, who got clear through to the other side, but at the risk of his life. *It is his rule never to give a workman a dangerous task unless he has essayed it himself.*

The making of those wonderful tunnels is a story I cannot tell yet, for I find it difficult to get Cowdray to talk of it. But I happen to know an American who worked under water with him, and he has promised to give me the narrative.

When I look at his wasteful *Westminster Gazette*, its ignorance, provincialism, extravagance, mismanagement, and muddle written all over it, and no Alfred Spender, I cannot in any way connect Cowdray with it.

I shall not refer to the *Westminster* again, except to say that, coming back from my world tour, I very much missed the old *Westminster*.

It was always a "kept" paper. For years it passed from one millionaire to another, and swallowed money in buckets. 'Twas amusing to watch the records of each new proprietor's wife's entertainments in their turn. But the old *Westminster* had a cachet of its own, and for the life of me I cannot understand why, having got one of the few men who know how to edit a daily political newspaper, Mr. Alfred Spender, they did not grapple him to their hearts with hooks of steel.

In the collection of Northcliffeana, referred to in Chapter One, I was shown two volumes of criticisms, cartoons, and quips, at my expense, from the old *Westminster*, good natured for the most part.

CHAPTER III.

I OBSERVE in my examination of the letters and newspaper cuttings which this controversy has produced, a statement in a favourite, but not very well-known weekly review, the *New Statesman*, that I once offered Mr. Spender the editorship of *The Times*.

That is not true. I did once say to a well known public man on the Liberal side that, in my opinion, Mr. Spender was one of the very few men who *could* edit *The Times*, adding that his treatment by the Liberal Party, and especially by Mr. Asquith, was no encouragement to young political Liberal journalists. In my opinion Mr. Asquith has been most ungrateful to him.

Is it too late for the Liberal Party to recognise eminent journalistic service? Is there not a vacant Directorship of the Suez Canal, such as the Earl of Balfour secured for his secretary, my friend Sir Ian Malcolm? I was told when I was at Suez that there *is* such a vacant directorship.

* * * * *

One response to the article was an amusing dialogue between Sir William Berry and Lord Beaverbrook, at a meeting of newsagents, in which they quite exaggerated the power of the newsagents, and wept copiously, but I am sure merrily, over the dreadful attenuation of the Beaverbrook and Berry millions. I do not know which is the wealthier of the two, Lord Beaverbrook or Sir William. They are enormously rich; and humorous withal, unlike most people with too much money.

There are alarming rumours in Fleet Street of a tremendously rich Berry somewhere down in Wales. Perhaps he is the gentleman who is constantly offering, through a well-known firm of lawyers, ten million pounds to buy my control of certain newspapers. I wonder!

Well, as for these millionaire amateurs, the more the merrier. With a fourteen-million pound baronet behind the *Pall Mall Gazette*, with whose identity I was unacquainted when I wrote the first chapter—Sir John Leigh—and a Berry, a great big Berry, looming down there in Wales, there is obviously plenty of employment for printers and paper-makers in the future, though some of our amateurs buy foreign paper and thus rob the British paper-maker of his due.

* * * * *

One or two of these amateurs have been to see me at various times. There was the Lancashire millionaire who started—and wrecked—the now-forgotten *Tribune*.

NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR MILLIONAIRES.

I gave him, as a result of experience in several parts of the world, honest information as to the size of his page. I heard afterwards that he thought I was actuated by fear of opposition, and so he ordered machinery a quarter of a century out of date for the size of its pages !

Another enormously rich amateur came to see me at the moment when I had obtained control of *The Times* ; a shrewd, clever financier, who would have skinned me alive on the Stock Exchange more easily than I could have skinned him in Fleet Street. He wanted to buy *The Times*.

* * * * *

I was placed in a most invidious position, because, as a matter of fact, unknown to anyone, I had for some time been in control of *The Times*, but owing to preoccupation in Newfoundland I was unable to attend to the matter.

He spoke with a certain accent, and I said to him : " What do you want to control *The Times* for ? Are you a pro-German ? "

He replied : " No, I am not a pro-German, but I think every step should be taken to promote harmonious relations with Germany and with Japan. "

" Do you object to the policy of *The Times* ? "

" Very much. It is affecting Anglo-German business. "

" Would you propose changing *The Times* ? " I asked.

" Oh, yes, " he replied. " It must be changed, or it will die. I have got all the particulars from my lawyers, and it is now selling fewer than thirty thousand copies a day [which was almost true]. There are great internal struggles. " [Which had been true.]

Then he said : " What I came to see you for, Lord Northcliffe, was to ask you how these things are managed. It seems to me that a newspaper must be a kind of manufacturing business. Who buys the paper and ink, for example ? Is it the editor ? Who looks after the accounts ? "

I replied : " So far as I know, *The Times* accounts are kept by Mr. Moberly Bell in a penny note-book which he keeps at home. " [Which was true.]

" Well, well, well ! " he said. " It's a funny business, and I shall not offer more than a preliminary deposit of £180,000. " To which I replied, quite truly : " I am afraid you will not get it. "

CHAPTER IV.

THE next person with whom I discussed the matter was an old journalist with a very long memory.

He said: "These battles of millionaires in Fleet Street, which have existed as long as I remember, though never so acutely as at present, always end in the failing spirits of the amateurs. And how *very* shy some of them are, by the way, of net sale certificates! I wonder how many amateurs old Mudford, of the *Standard* downed?" "The commodity millionaires in journalism are not new features," he continued; "don't you remember Mustard Kings, Patent Medicine Kings, Mineral Water Kings—one of them a German—all having a flutter in Ink Street?"

I remember talking over this particular matter with the late Lord Glenesk—always kind to me—whom my father knew in his own earliest days. Glenesk was not only a first-rate conductor of a newspaper, one who accomplished many great news "exclusives," but also perhaps the best Paris correspondent a newspaper ever had, excepting only the great De Blowitz and Laurence Oliphant. Glenesk was anxious about the future of journalism towards his latter days, but not on account of the golden amateurs. He left a brilliant boy, Oliver, and little did people think at the time of Oliver's unexpected and always lamented passing that the *Morning Post* would wax fatter under the direction of his gifted daughter than at any time in its long and honourable career. But it is true.

* * * * *

I said to the old journalist (let me call him Senex): "Who is the most powerful woman in England, outside the Royal Family?"

"Lady Astor, M.P., of course!" he said.

"Lady Astor!" I replied; "it is true that she controls the *Observer*, but in my opinion, Senex, the most powerful woman in England *without exception*—other than Royalty—is Lady Bathurst, the beautiful and accomplished director of the *Morning Post*. You may not always agree with her methods and policy; you may not always agree with the enormous headlines, but you will admit that, right or wrong, the *Morning Post* is bright, consistent, sometimes flighty, but always English."

Senex, at first surprised by the suggestion, agreed with me, as will every thinking person.

Knowing the internal organisation of the *Morning Post*—for every newspaper knows the internal organisation of every other newspaper, just as every army knows the organisation of every other army—I know that this paper is produced by the

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genius of a woman, assisted by just two really capable men. If she were living in America her name would ring from one end of the Continent to another, and be hurled at Great Britain as a sign of American national superiority.

"We talked about the *Daily Herald*. "There have been more Labour papers started in Fleet Street than you seem to remember," said Senex; "none of them has ever published *news*, as you truly said of the *Daily Herald*."

I replied: "What baffles me is the fact that Australian and even German Labour knows how to produce a newspaper with news in it, but British Labour seems to think that it can force people to buy propaganda without news."

"Do you think London the right place for a Labour newspaper?" he asked.

"No," I replied, "I do not. Organised Labour commenced in the north of England, and that is where Labour is. I see that the *Daily Herald* is now being sold at what is known as the fatal price—twopence. Twopence is no price, as I found when I had *The Times* at twopence.

"The price of newspapers is a mysterious factor in their success. It is notorious that both the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* have bounded up by the mere reduction of their price to three-halfpence. *The Times* alone has already gathered some 70,000 new purchasers (net) per diem since I returned from my world tour, and I believe that the *Daily Telegraph* has also gained an immense number of readers. The equivalent of the British three-halfpence, the American three cents, the French three sous is, for some psychological reason I am unable to explain, the price of successful newspapers in many parts of the world."

Senex asked me why.

"I do not know why," I replied, "but I know it is so. The newspaper is an enigma. I learn something about newspapers every day that I did not know the day before, and I have been studying newspapers in almost every part of the world since I was a boy."

CHAPTER V.

IT is a curious fact, but it is a fact, that most of these amateur millionaires are anti-French. That is one of those things no fella can understand, as Lord Dundreary said. Old Mr. Cadbury, whose advice was that we should allow Germany to overrun Belgium and France (the latter, incidentally, the greatest rival of the British chocolate trade, with its *Chocolat Menier*), has been always anti-French. He was anti-French before the war. He had to stop during the war, but he is anti-French again now.

What is this old man like?

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Well, I happen to have had a talk with him, and a very curious conversation it was.

A good many years ago he asked me if I would, some time when passing through Birmingham, come and see him. The invitation was pressed again and again. It happened shortly that I was going through Birmingham on one of my regular visits to Manchester.

I was met at New Street Station by a nice provincial brougham, with sleek horse, and a young Cadbury; driven some distance to a pleasant suburb and a large provincial house, such as you see outside Pittsburg or Manchester.

A great feast had been spread. My companion and I could not for the life of us imagine why Mr. Cadbury should want to see us. My point of view is so different from his, and known to be different, that I was "intrigued," as the newspapers keep on saying now that they have finished with "adumbrating," at this mysterious invitation.

Old Mr. Cadbury is a nervous man—not, at any rate, at that time, the vindictive kind of old gentleman you would imagine after reading the *Daily News* for a few years.

We got through the meal somehow and after a long and awkward silence he said nervously: "I have asked you here because we do not like the tone of the Birmingham papers. They print all kinds of horrible things and horse racing, and we think the high tone of the Press as important to this city as the quality of its water supply." "We want a new Birmingham paper," added the distinguished member of the Society of Friends.

"But," I said, "Mr. Cadbury, let me say at once that I have no intention of joining you in any newspaper enterprise."

He replied: "I will supply the capital; I will interfere with you in no way whatever. I notice that your newspapers are singularly free from crime and vice."

"But," I retorted, "I am not a Pacifist, and unfortunately I believe that we shall one day be at war with Germany. I know about the Germans. I believe that the only salvation of the world is an Anglo-American-French alliance."

"I do not care what you say on these subjects if the paper can do something to purify the Press of Birmingham," he answered.

A somewhat awkward interview ended and my companion and I returned to New Street puzzled and, as Garvin is fond of saying, "bemused."

CHAPTER VI.

SINCE I wrote the above I have received more and more letters—some asking about my little Cocker spaniel, Pretty, who was nearly run over by a *Morning Post* Ford delivery waggon. One lady writes: "Has she recovered from the shock, poor little dear?" Pretty had no shock. The person who had some little shock was myself when I saw all round London, and especially round my homes, the *Morning Post* placard, "Lord Northcliffe and his Colleagues."

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A good many folk think that I have been too patient under the abuse I have received from these Colleagues for the past many years. But I mind what Mr. Moberly Bell said to me when he induced me to get him out of his trouble at Printing House Square. He had a little printed list, which may still be in existence, of frightful words used about *The Times*.

He said, showing me the penny memorandum book in which he kept the daily circulation: "We are suffering from lack of abuse. Look at that list which has been compiled since 1840, seven years before John Walter the Second died. Look at it. There were personal reflections on the morality of Mr. Walter; there were statements that we filled up coachloads of *The Times*, sent them down to Brighton, and dumped them into the sea at night in order to maintain the boast that we sold more papers than any other paper in London. We were accused of financial trickery, of being in the pocket of every politician since 1785. And look at this: One paper actually called us 'the bloody old *Times*.'"

"Do not worry about lack of abuse, Mr. Bell," I said. "When I have time to reveal my identity as controller of *The Times* you will get all the abuse you want." He lived to see my prophecy come true.

Bell died in his chair at Printing House Square, and I should like to say that there is no doubt that there was one moment in the history of *The Times* when he saved its life.

* * * * *

So far, all has been about myself and my colleagues by myself. There follows something from Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, in their journal the *New Statesman*. I print it at length because, though unfavourable to me, it does agree that we working journalists have a right to be dissociated from the amateur millionaires who are seeking titles and social advancement by the old road of Fleet Street.

I am glad to see that the writer specifically excepts my friend Beaverbrook from among the amateur millionaires. He works as hard as I do. I hope he will not mind my saying that I very much doubt the genuineness of the grief exhibited by him and Sir William Berry at the newsagents' banquet over their shockingly over-drawn banking accounts. Beaverbrook is quite unlike Lord Inverforth or Mr. Cadbury or Sir John Leigh. He is a worker in his newspapers, and the fine position they are gaining is not due to Millions but to Mind.

Senex asked me to say something about the sharks that assemble round these millionaires when the glad news reaches Fleet Street that another mug is coming.

Well, I will reserve those remarks for my forthcoming *magnum opus*, "**MONSTERS OF THE FLEET STREET DEEP.**"

CHAPTER VII.

INDEPENDENT REMARKS BY THE "NEW STATESMAN."

(Reprinted without permission from that often very well written organ of public opinion.)

Lord Northcliffe claims to be one of the very few newspaper proprietors who has made his money out of newspapers, and the rest he regards as interlopers. He is not prepared, he declares, to accept in his own business of producing newspapers the dictation of Shipping Kings and Cotton Kings and Coal and Cocoa and Oil Kings. The argument as he states it is perhaps a little over-strained, but it is one which will arouse a sympathetic echo in the heart of many a professional journalist who has no reason to entertain a tender regard either for Lord Northcliffe or for his views.

On the whole, newspaper production is the most chaotic and inefficiently-organised industry in the country, and journalism accordingly the most unsatisfactory of professions, precisely on account of the fact to which Lord Northcliffe refers. It is largely at the mercy of rich amateurs, who not only do not understand the business themselves, but are so indifferent both to the financial and to the professional side of it that they do not even take the trouble to secure competent professional advice, or to apply those tests of efficiency which in their own business they would regard as indispensable. To them a newspaper is a toy or possibly a political lever. It is true that in the hands of the more careless and the more incompetent it is apt to become an extremely expensive toy, with the result that newspapers are always dying or changing hands, but as there is always a new "millionaire" ready to try his luck, this form of natural selection is not very effective.

Very little is ever heard by the public about the inside working of the newspaper world. Those who are fortunate say little for quite simple reasons, and those who are not do not care to incur the suspicion of seeming to bewail their own misfortunes or disappointments. There are, besides, so many stories which cannot be told.

Journalism is the only profession in which exceptionally able and successful and experienced men are chronically subject to the direction of their inferiors. They are forced to be the servants not of the public but of the (journalistically) ignorant millionaire. Often they must scheme and flatter for the very right to exercise their own professional judgment, knowing that pliancy counts for more than competence with people who easily appreciate the one but have no standards by which to estimate the other. ✓

There are a few old and well-established newspapers which have a professional tradition, and to them of course these strictures do not apply; but the section of the Press which is subject to constant reincarnation is a very large one, and most journalists have experience of it.

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The outstanding merit of Lord Northcliffe is that he is himself a journalist. He has always been a journalist, and he has proved that he knows his business. He is a millionaire, but since he has made his millions out of newspapers directly controlled by himself, he has acquired a moral right to bully or sack his employees which no ironmaster or soapmaker who has purchased a newspaper can ever possess. That, from the journalist's point of view, is a matter of infinite importance, for in it is involved the whole question of the status of the profession.

One may dislike Lord Northcliffe's methods or his standpoint and decline to work for him, but his decisions and his orders are professional decisions and orders, which no one who has accepted employment under him has any right to resent.

Lord Beaverbrook is in a somewhat similar position. He made his money, it is true, in quite other enterprises, but he entered the newspaper world while still a young man, and he became a journalist. He does not merely finance his newspapers; he runs them and devotes all his time to them. He too, therefore, as an editor-owner has earned a certain right to expect his employees to bow to his views without feeling humiliated. The merits of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* are not here in question. The point we wish to emphasise is that the existence of such papers, so controlled, tends definitely to raise the status of the profession of journalism as such, just as the existence of certain other papers, which we will not name—and with the views of which we are in far closer agreement—tends equally definitely to lower that status.

The curse of journalism is the absentee proprietor, behind whose edicts there is no authority save that of the purse, and who more often than not appoints as his mouthpiece someone whose claims upon the respect of the profession are scarcely greater than his own.

We have one example in England of the ideal newspaper, but we owe it to a most rare and fortunate combination of circumstances. We refer, of course, to the *Manchester Guardian*. Mr. C. P. Scott is its owner, and, by common consent, one of the greatest journalists in the world. The *Guardian* as we know it to-day is his creation. He edits it in the fullest sense of the word, writing himself many of its more important leading articles. He combines great literary and political judgment with a first-rate capacity for business organisation, and the combination has enabled him to create a great "property" without sacrificing either his principles to his circulation or his circulation to his principles.

He cannot, however, we fear, be regarded as a type, for to his unique personal qualities was added the good fortune of obtaining proprietorial control at an early age. It is not to such happy concurrences that we can look for any real or permanent improvement of the standards of British journalism.

Lord Northcliffe, on the other hand, is a type—though a very remarkable type—and he will have successors, worthy or unworthy. He is something of a politician nowadays, but he is a journalist first. He never pressed or indulged his personal views and predilections until he had made quite sure of his public. He has a real sense of journalistic values. When he bought the *Times* he played no tricks with it and made no substantial alterations until he felt strong enough to carry his public with him

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Sir Arthur Pearson, who very nearly bought it over his head, would almost certainly have killed it as he killed the *Standard*; but Lord Northcliffe knew his business—knew, that is to say, how to modernise *The Times* without sacrificing an appreciable fraction of its European prestige. Men who work for him know that good work, estimated of course by his standards, will not escape observation; also that bad work will be visited with abrupt dismissal without the smallest compunction. His methods may sometimes be brutal, but they imply a comprehensible standard, a professional standard.

To give examples of an opposite kind from the recent history of other papers and other proprietors would be easy but invidious. We may perhaps, however, refer to a remarkable fact which illustrates vividly enough the defects of what we may call non-professional control. That fact is that the two greatest Liberal journalists in this country—Mr. J. A. Spender and Mr. A. G. Gardiner—have both been allowed to disappear from daily journalism. Mr. Spender's supreme technical capacity as a leader-writer is universally recognised. He made a small evening newspaper one of the great political forces, not merely of this country but of Europe.

In America the views of the *Westminster Gazette* were more widely quoted than those even of *The Times*. Lord Northcliffe, it is said, once offered Mr. Spender the editorship of *The Times*. We can well believe it, for Lord Northcliffe recognises professional merit. But the people for whom Mr. Spender was willing to work have allowed him to retire! Such are the ways of the amateur capitalist in journalism!

As for Mr. Gardiner, we suppose that as a political writer he has a larger and more devoted public than any other journalist in Great Britain, with the possible but by no means certain exception of Mr. Garvin. Yet he, too, is silenced, because an old gentleman who lives near Birmingham, and very likely has scarcely ever seen the inside of a newspaper office, chooses to indulge a personal prejudice. It is surely an outrageous fact that such men should be subject to such whims and chances. A Lord Beaverbrook might have quarrelled with A. G. G., but he would not easily have let him go.

The subject is for journalists a fascinating one, and we are tempted to write at too great length on it. We might easily fill as many more columns as we have already filled without getting near an end. And it is a subject which, after all, is of quite vital importance to the future of literate democracies. There is no doubt, we suppose, that Liberal and Labour opinion is numerically dominant in Great Britain at this moment; yet where is the Liberal and Labour Press?

Lord Northcliffe's papers are Independent, Sir E. Hulton's are Independent Conservative, and Lord Beaverbrook's are more Liberal than Conservative. But as a whole, the Press is overwhelmingly Conservative. London has no first-class Liberal paper at all. There has been failure after failure, each more depressing and complete than the last, and the position at this moment seems more hopeless than ever. Yet, quite obviously, there is room for a Liberal daily which would be a great "property." Labour is in an even worse case. It has only one daily newspaper in England, and that one ekes out an extremely precarious existence by what Lord Northcliffe quite justly calls "undignified howling for a 'rally' or a dole."

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The idea that a successful Labour newspaper can be created by relying upon the "loyalty" of Trade Unionists to induce them to purchase an inferior article—as suggested in a little book just published by Mr. Norman Angell—seems to us entirely fallacious and unsound. Liberal and Labour newspapers will always fail until their promoters learn (1) that they must recognise professional standards and employ the best professional talent they can buy; and (2) that in a daily newspaper news must come first and politics second—that is to say, that you must win your public before you dare to press your views upon it. The news in the *Daily Herald*, for instance, is not only skimpy but more tendentious (by selection and presentation) than that of any other paper in the country. That may suit the faithful, but it will not suit those who are not yet faithful and whom it is the business of such a paper to influence.

The giving of full and accurate news is a matter of purely professional competence and professional morality, having no relation whatever to any political opinion; and so far as that side, which is the most important side, of a newspaper is concerned, the test of circulation is the fair and proper test. Outside its leader columns a daily newspaper has no business to be "propagandist" at all, and a paper which ignores that simple axiom, under present economic conditions, will quite surely fail.

A successful Labour newspaper, for instance, cannot, and never will, be run by a Committee of Trade Union Secretaries, unless they are wise enough to enlist the best journalistic talent they can obtain and then to give it a really free hand. Likewise, Liberal capitalists, if they want a paper which is more than a toy, and which can compete with the professionally-owned Press, must learn to distinguish between first-rate professional advice and third-rate professional advice. Success in newspaper production follows close on the heels of technical excellence. Lord Northcliffe should have taught all of us that by this time. A rich man does not ask a country solicitor to conduct a great commercial case in the High Court, nor for a dangerous operation does he choose his doctor on grounds of accidental personal friendship.

But just such things are constantly happening in journalism. It all comes back to the question of the recognition of the professional status of the journalist. Lord Northcliffe is perfectly justified in poking fun at his "millionaire" colleagues. The well-meaning and public-spirited amateur, who does not understand journalistic values and has not grasped the subtlety of that faculty which enables some men to know what their readers want much better than the readers know it themselves, has no place in the journalistic world. Unintentionally, he degrades journalism and destroys its security as a profession. Usually he pays high for experience and then cuts his losses before he has had time to learn his lesson. And so the weary round goes on, until journalists of all political colours are almost driven to pray for more Northcliffes.



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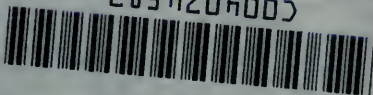
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