

# **HOW TO WRITE FOR THE PRESS**

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How to write for the press by E. P. Davies

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BY  
E. P. DAVIES

AFFORDING  
Comprehensive Instructions for  
Reporting all kinds of Events

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# How to Write for the Press.

## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD.

THE object of this little work is to be seen in a glance at its contents, and I believe it will supply a long-felt want. The text of the work is a copy of a pocket-book gradually compiled by myself in shorthand, which I have carried in my pocket for years, steadily adding to it from time to time as experience dictated. I have on innumerable occasions found it exceedingly serviceable, especially in "hunting-up" particulars of proceedings at which I did not happen to be present. With such a book in his hand, on any occasion, it is almost impossible for a reporter, at all up to his work, to slip any important item, or omit to make any very particular inquiry in connection with the ordinary run of gatherings and events of which he is required to give an account. Whilst in the train on my way to a public gathering (as the representative of a provincial newspaper giving very full reports), I have often opened my pocket-book and entered the questions to be

asked during the day in my note-book, leaving blanks for the answers to be filled in ; and at the end of the proceedings, finding that the blanks had all been filled up, I was sure that I had obtained all the particulars I required, and that I could have missed nothing of importance.

It may be said that many of the questions are superfluous. So they may seem on the surface, and may indeed be so to the representative of a morning or evening paper, whose instructions are to only "give a few sticks" of this or that proceeding ; but the reporter for the local weekly may desire to get the fullest details, and in that case he will find every question set down useful. It must be borne in mind that the book is not written for any special class of newspaper scribes. It will probably be conceded that the information which the work imparts will prove valuable to the tyro ; but I venture to think that it may be of some advantage also even to the proficient and experienced pressman, reminding him of many things connected with the business in hand which he is likely to forget or overlook ; whilst the terms and phrases given will aid his memory by giving him the expression which, for the time being, he cannot call to recollection. Again, many of the questions given are intended, not so much with the view of obtaining direct



answers to them, as to lead the person questioned, and even the questioner himself, to think of and mention other matters, which might otherwise escape notice, connected with the proceedings under consideration.

E. P. DAVIES.

## GENERAL HINTS.

THE difficulties which beset the path of the young journalist, who has not enjoyed the advantages of a regular professional training, are neither few nor slight. Still, given certain primary qualifications and conditions, they are difficulties which may be very speedily surmounted, provided the novice is determined to achieve success in his adopted calling. The subjoined suggestions, which are based upon actual experience, are intended to supply, to some extent, the lack of preliminary instruction.

The primary qualifications of a representative of the Press may be very briefly summarised. They comprise a sound mind in a sound body; a good English education, combined with some knowledge of, at least, the Latin and French languages; and an active physical and mental temperament. There is need, too, for moral courage, to enable him to resist all inducements to diverge from the strict line of duty; and, as he requires to be prompt both in decision and action, he should possess a clear judgment. "The man who has decision of character," says John Foster, "will not re-examine his conclusions with end.

less repetition, and he will not be delayed long by consulting other persons after he has ceased to consult himself." These qualities, however, are but the foundations. Without them there is little hope of success in journalism. We shall assume that the foundations have been well and faithfully laid, and proceed to consider how the superstructure of professional competency is to be raised.

The junior reporter may be placed either upon the home staff of his journal, or, which is not unfrequently the case, he may be stationed in an out-district, the whole of the news of which he is expected to glean, and to forward to the head office day by day. In the latter case his difficulties will be greater, from the fact that he has no one to instruct him, and has to be guided to a large extent by his own judgment. That judgment, unless it is aided by the counsel of one who has passed through similar experiences, is likely at times to lead the beginner astray.

One of the primary virtues which a newspaper reporter ought to possess is that of punctuality, and if this is cultivated assiduously at the outset of his career it will in time become to him a sort of second nature. Its advantages are obvious. The reporter frequently obtains information at the commencement of a meeting which cannot be had afterwards, save at the expense of a considerable amount of time and trouble; he is able to secure a full and correct list of names, where it is necessary to give it, with, perhaps, copies of resolutions intended to be moved, and of documents