

**THE NEWSPAPER PRESS, IN
PART OF THE LAST
CENTURY, AND UP TO THE
PRESENT PERIOD OF 1860**

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The Newspaper Press, in Part of the Last Century, and Up to the Present Period of 1860 by
James Amphlett

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JAMES AMPHLETT

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THE
NEWSPAPER PRESS,

IN PART OF THE LAST CENTURY,
AND UP TO THE PRESENT PERIOD OF 1860.

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF

JAMES AMPHLETT,

WHO HAS BEEN STYLED

THE FATHER OF THE PRESS,

EXTENDING OVER A PERIOD

OF SIXTY YEARS IN CONNEXION WITH NEWSPAPERS,

LONDON AND THE COUNTRY.

"Using heels instead of head
I have seen what thou hast read."



LONDON:
WHITTAKER & Co., AVE MARIA LANE,
AND
W. WARDLE, SHREWSBURY.
1860.

258. i. 58.

DEDICATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,

It is not from any particular or general concurrence in your views and opinions that induces me to dedicate this small volume to you, but from the higher consideration, that the undisputed ascendancy of the *Times* has made it the National Journal, and a paper necessary to be read by every statesman on the continent who is desirous of knowing and appreciating the relative and varying interest of this Country in the European compact. This may be said without any disparagement to other daily papers, which have a large proportion of public support, and merit sufficient to sustain it.

By a daring and liberal expenditure, you have retained the available talent of public writers in the different departments of your Journal, at home and abroad, and are of more service to the government in being independent of it either as an official or semi-official organ.

You shrink not from the free discussion of all public measures, and the conduct of all public men; I exercise the right of my own private judgment, and differ no further with others, than may tend to disclose the respective independence of mens minds.

I take the broad maxim, that what a man believes to be right, is right to him.

I have the honor to be, respected Sir,

Your's faithfully,

JAMES AMPHLETT.

SEVERN COTTAGE,
SHREWSBURY, FEBRUARY, 1860.

The following Notices of the death of the Author of this Work are extracted from the Shrewsbury Newspapers.

DEATH OF THE "FATHER OF THE ENGLISH PRESS."

We have this day to record the death of one of the oldest and most respected members of "The Fourth Estate" in England—Mr. James Amphlett, who departed this life, yesterday, at his residence, Severn-cottage, in this town, full of years and journalistic honours.

The death of Mr. Amphlett has broken one of the few remaining links which bind, as it were, the past and present age of journalism together. Writing his first "leader"—and leaders were scarce things in country newspapers at that time—upwards of sixty years ago, in a Staffordshire newspaper, the mind can scarcely grasp the idea that it was only some nine years since his last composition of the kind was inserted in our contemporary the *Journal*, of which paper he was for several years editor. Having a nice perception of the amenities of journalism, he was open-hearted and generous as a political opponent, and while he upheld his party he never endangered personal friendships. Since his retirement from the active duties of editorial life he has contributed much to various newspapers, our own among the number; and whilst the decadence of his once-masculine powers was visible in his compositions, there were the unmistakable signs of that strength of intellect which unrelenting Time had in process of years been gradually deadening. In early days Mr. Amphlett was a powerful, vigorous, and sarcastic writer, his apt illustrations, witty points, and extensive reading combining to give force to the productions of his pen. His last effort was the compilation of a volume of "Recollections," but he did not live to see them published (although nearly ready.)

Mr. Amphlett was well known to and intimate with several of the leading politicians and theatrical celebrities of the earlier part of the present century, and many were the curious anecdotes of their sayings and doings he stored in his retentive memory. During his long life he was connected with various newspapers either as proprietor or editor, and his comprehensive knowledge of foreign politics caused his writings to be greatly noticed.

Cheerful and intelligent, a hearty and jovial companion, his society was extensively courted, and "many a time and oft" has he set the table in a roar by his sallies of wit or his ready repartee. He has departed from among us in a green old age, having attained some fifteen years beyond the proverbial "three score and ten;" and while we, as brother journalists, say, "Peace to his ashes," we may be permitted to add our personal tribute of sincere esteem and regard for him as a friend.—*Shrewsbury Chronicle*, July 20th, 1860.

THE LATE JAMES AMPHLETT, ESQ.

Our obituary of this week contains the death of this highly-esteemed gentleman, who has for some years past occupied a somewhat prominent position in this town as one of its literary celebrities. He was for a great number of

years connected with the newspaper press, for so many years indeed that he was considered its oldest member, and has been styled, perhaps not inappropriately, the "Father of the English Press." He commenced his literary labours, some sixty years ago, as the editor of the *Staffordshire Advertiser*. Since that time he had been almost uninterruptedly connected with the broadsheet. From 1845 to 1853 he was the editor of this *Journal*, after which time his active mind found congenial occupation in contributing to many first-class journals and periodicals, with which his compositions found ready acceptance, from the talent with which they were written. As a social companion he had few equals, his retentive memory, and his acquaintance with long bygone historical and political incidents and prominent personages, ever affording him ready opportunity of keeping alive the interest of a company, either by his sterling intelligence or by his piquant sallies of wit and humour, for which he was remarkable. His latest production, and one which it was the last and dearest wish of his heart to see published, a wish destined not to be realised, was a volume of "Recollections of the Newspaper Press," which is now nearly ready for publication. Mr. Amphlett has passed from among us at the ripe old age of 85, with faculties almost unimpaired to the last, respected and regretted by a large circle of friends and acquaintances.—*Shrewsbury Journal*, July 26th, 1860.

DEATH OF JAMES AMPHLETT, ESQ.

We regret the duty devolves upon us of announcing the death of James Amphlett, Esq. which took place on the night of the 19th instant, at his residence, Severn Cottage, in this town, at the patriarchal age of 85. Mr. Amphlett has been, and not unjustly, often styled "the father of British Press." It is more than sixty years ago when he commenced his Editorial career in Staffordshire; from that period until about eight years' ago, he has been either as proprietor or editor, actively engaged in journalism, when he resigned the editorial management of *Eddowes's Journal* with which he had been for several years connected. His abilities as a journalist were well known and duly appreciated by a large circle of readers, amongst whom he numbered many warm friends, and we believe few, if any, were his enemies. Though at the period we have named he retired from the more onerous duties of an editor; he did not give up entirely his connexion with the press, but up to a short period before his death, he was in the habit of contributing to various Journals—*Liverpool Albion*, the *Shropshire Conservative*, and others. He possessed an unusually intimate acquaintance with foreign politics, his knowledge of them, which was the growth of years of careful study and observation, rendered him an authority of no mean order upon many of the most important European topics of the day. During his long career he had mixed with many men of eminence in the political, the literary, and the theatrical world, and profited by the intercourse; his fine memory being richly stored with a copious fund of information and anecdote, from which he willingly drew for the amusement of those with whom he was in company. His vigorous intellect was well supported by a constitutional cheerfulness which never forsook him, and when at last—full of years—he shuffled off this mortal coil, he resigned with perfect tranquillity his spirit to Him who gave it. He was a genial companion, social, and affable, ever ready to contribute to the enjoyment of those with whom he associated; and his loss will be felt and deeply regretted by those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and not least of all by the writer of this brief obituary notice. Mr. Amphlett's last literary work, embracing "Recollections of his life and times," unfortunately he has not lived to see in print; it will however soon be published, and will be a volume of more than ordinary interest. In recording the departure of so gifted a member of the profession to which we belong, we cannot help saying to ourselves, "it is not likely, be our career long or short, that we shall meet with his like again." Farewell old friend, *Sit tibi terra levis*.—*Shropshire Conservative*, July 21st, 1860.

P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the present volume of *Miscellanies*, must apologise for a number of verbal and literal errors which will appear in the work, from his not being able to read the proofs, nor with the dull ear of eighty-four follow a reader with accuracy.

It is now about ten years since I was told by several personal friends,—a fact pretty well known to myself—that I had passed half a century in connexion with the Newspaper Press; and that I ought therefore to publish a small volume of political and poetical scraps, descriptive of characters and events worth noticing. I observed that with the advantage of my being in possession of files and documents I might do something in getting such a work out, but that I had not preserved a single scrap of prose or verse during the previous fifty years.

An implied bargain was then made;—I took the records and recollections of the past, and a few ladies and gentlemen took the scissors and old newspapers and paste, and *voilà tout*.

I offer no excuse for the freedom of my political strictures; I had defended through all times, and against all comers, the integrity of the constitution in Church and State, subject to such improvements and reforms as were called for, and justified by the increased knowledge and intelligence of the people.

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