

# “Press Characters” from *Press News*, 1869

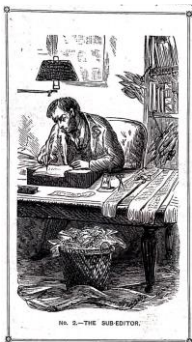
William Dorrington, Editor



## The Provincial Editor

(*London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News*, January 15, 1869, 13-15)

“Unlike your metropolitan editor, who is for ever shrouded in his cloak of oblivion, your Provincial Editor is known by every one in town, and his company is courted like that of a royal nabob in a despotic State. His praise is courted by all, and his anger is more to be dreaded than that of the officiating bishop of the district.”



## The Sub-Editor

(*London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News*, February 15, 1869, 13-15)

“A competent Sub-editor must be a man of some tolerable literary pretensions... It is next to impossible to keep a clever and aspiring man to the drudgery of sub-editing; when once a man finds he possesses the required ability for original composition, he will never permanently settle down to the cobbling task of mending other people’s bad work... To qualify a man for the position of general and managing editor, he must begin as the liner, advance to the reporter, and rusticate for some time as a Sub-editor.”



## The Advertisement Canvasser

(*London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News*, March 15, 1869, 13-15)

“He must be acute, civil, courteous, affable, pleasing, and know exactly to a nicety how far to push his argumentative powers without giving offence... A successful Advertisement Canvasser should not only know the peculiar connexions and circulation of every journal published, but should be able to describe their exact influences.”



## The Reporter

(*London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News*, April 15, 1869, 13-15)

“When our young Reporter can safely manage his 100 words per minute...he could not do better than spend a few hours each day in a quiet corner of some police-court... [He] soon finds out that sharp ears, common sense, and quick discrimination as to what is evidence and what is nonsense, is of much more use to him than all the stenography he has been labouring so many months to acquire.”



## The Penny-a-Liner

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, May 15, 1869, 13-15)

“Humble, unappreciated, snubbed, bullied, cheated, and despised, the Penny-a-liner is nevertheless an indispensable actor in the dramatis personae of newspaper life... It is quite possible for any man of ordinary shrewdness and common sense, possessing the full use of his eyes and ears, to earn a comfortable living of a couple of pounds a week on the average, all through the year.”



## The Dramatic Correspondent

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, June 15, 1869, 13-15)

“Theatrical criticism, beyond all doubt, is the weakest point in our present Newspaper Literature... There is so little real criticism to be heard of nowadays that it is no wonder if newspaper readers come to the conclusion that there are no critics. What would the men who wrote Cooke, Garrick, Kean, and the Kembles into popularity think of the puff paragraphs, now miscalled criticism, that appear in our time?”



## Jemmy Sparks, the London Newspaper Fire Reporter

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, July 15, 1869, 13-15)

“The reason why the foremen of the fire-engines were so particular about Jemmy going with them to every fire was because he always worked their names up into the reports, and stated which engine arrived first, and which did the most execution; and as this all helped to bring the men into note, they would never go without him if they could help it.”



## The Newspaper Compositor

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, August 15, 1869, 13-15)

“While editors and literary men are greatly assisted in their well-paid duties by the intellect, the applicability, and the unflagging energies of the Compositors, they sadly oppress them in their health and pocket... By their own procrastination or utter neglect of business regularity, they are too often...the only cause of Newspaper Compositors passing many hours in stifling, heated, gas-lighted atmospheres in dirty, dingy, ill-ventilated printing offices when they might either have been in bed or in the open air.”



## The Machine Manager

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, September 15, 1869, 13-15)

“Quality now gives way to quantity; the engineer is considered much the better man to manage the rapid printing machines introduced by Americans and others than a mere printer... Machine Printers now form a numerous, well-paid, and highly skilled class of Press workmen, all of whom, when considered competent, earn wages second to no other branch of the business.”



## The General Manager

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, October 15, 1869, 13-15)

“Literary men are all very well for editors, leader writers, and contributors, but the reins of government should be in the hands of practical business men only. Yet some news-proprietors seem to be possessed with a mania that no other than a popular writer can know how to manage a newspaper; whenever any of these gentleman have been so placed failure has inevitably followed. Slowly but surely this mistake is dying out.”



## The Constant Reader

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, November 15, 1869, 13-15)

“The Printer’s Reader, from the very nature of his duties, cannot help being a sort of semi-literary character... No Printer’s Reader ought to consider himself satisfied until he has either mounted to the top of the tree in his own profession, or else snugly ensconced himself into a sub-editor’s chair in some newspaper office.”



## The Newspaper Proprietor

(London, Provincial, and Colonial Press News, December 15, 1869, 13-15)

“Recent events and future prospects, at the close of 1869, will doubtless cause many News proprietors to have a severe reckoning up and overhauling of their expenses... In these days of severe competition among penny papers, and the inroads made upon their circulation by the success of halfpenny ones, editorial salaries must give way if living profits are to find their way into the pockets of Proprietors.”