

JAMES PERRY AND THE MORNING CHRONICLE 1790-1821.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the career of James Perry, editor and proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, from 1790-1821. Based on an examination of the correspondence of whig and radical politicians, and of the files of the Morning Chronicle, it illustrates the impact which Perry made on the world of politics and journalism. The main questions discussed are how Perry responded, as a Foxite journalist, to the chief political issues of the day; the extent to which the whigs attempted to influence his editorial policy and the degree to which he reconciled his independence with obedience to their wishes; the difficulties he encountered as the spokesman of an often divided party; his considerable involvement, which was remarkable for a journalist, in party activity and in the social life of whig politicians; and his success as a newspaper proprietor concerned not only with political propaganda, but with conducting a paper which was distinguished for the quality of its miscellaneous features and for its profitability as a business enterprise. There is also some account of the whigs' attempts to gain the support of other newspapers, but they had little success in this field. The structure of the thesis is chronological, with the exception of chapter four which contains an account of Perry's advertising policy, and illustrates for the first time the amount and importance of a

newspaper proprietor's income from advertisements. The absence of any collection of Perry papers has precluded a study of the internal management of the Chronicle, but it is shown that from a political point of view Perry enjoyed, despite increasing criticism of him after about 1807, a position as the whigs' leading journalist for over thirty years, and that he exercised great moral influence in raising the character of the press.

Preface

Attention has recently been drawn to the importance of Perry's career by Professor Ian R. Christie in his essay "James Perry of the Morning Chronicle, 1756-1821" in Myth and Reality in Late-Eighteenth-Century British Politics and Other Papers (1970) pp. 334-58. No important material has come to light to supplement Professor Christie's account of the activities of Perry, and his co-proprietor James Gray, up to their acquisition of the Morning Chronicle in 1790 (Ibid. pp.334-44), and this thesis therefore begins at the outset of Perry's career as chief conductor of the new whig newspaper.

CHAPTER ONE1790-1794

When Perry and Gray took control of the Morning Chronicle in December 1790 the prospects for the whig party in terms of its parliamentary strength and the number of loyal newspapers were bleak. The whigs had not recovered from the disappointment and unpopularity of the Regency crisis; although there had been some revival of parliamentary activity in the spring of 1790, and the growth in the party's organisational activity had continued, the whigs had failed to make any gains in the general election of that year, and the incipient differences within the party on the French Revolution threatened to become more explicit with the publication of Burke's Reflections in November. Even on the question of the impeachment of Hastings, a far less potentially divisive issue for the party than the Revolution, parliamentary reform, religious toleration or the slave trade, Fox's indifference was encouraging Burke to seek ministerial co-operation.¹ The prospects for the whigs out-of-doors were equally inauspicious. Whereas in the summer of 1789 they had enjoyed the support of seven daily morning newspapers, by the autumn of 1790 the government had reduced this number

1.) F.O'Gorman, The Whig Party and the French Revolution(1967) pp.50-7

to four, and all of these were ailing.¹ The Chronicle was only just paying its way; the Morning Post's circulation was less than 500; the Gazetteer had just lost the services of Perry; and the editor of the Argus had just been the subject of an ex-officio information for libel.² In addition to the problem of the government's superior financial and legal resources for controlling the press, the virtual saturation of the newspaper market did not augur well for an attempt to revive the struggling Chronicle. To a certain extent, however, the situation had the qualities of its defects. If the state of the party was bad, it had some scope for improvement, as the Ochakov crisis showed, and if competition among newspapers was fierce there

1.) The Spurious Star had ceased in June 1789 for fear of prosecution; the Morning Herald, under threat of prosecution, had fallen under government control in June 1790; and the General Advertiser had disappeared under government pressure in October 1790. (Lucyle T. Werkmeister, The London Daily Press 1772-92 (Lincoln, Nebraska. 1963) pp. 325, 330, 335)

2.) [S. Morison] History of The Times (1935) i.33; Werkmeister op.cit. p.336. Although Dr. John Trusler thought the Post and Gazetteer were among the six papers with the highest sale (London Adviser and Guide (1790) p. 136) and the Gazetteer was still selling well over 1,000 copies (R.L. Haig, The Gazetteer 1735-97 (Carbondale, Illinois 1960) pp. 211, 230), both papers were in the process of decline.

were rich rewards for editors who could provide an early and comprehensive coverage of political news. The new conductors of the Chronicle took the initiative in two main ways: they established the Chronicle's reputation as the most serious political newspaper, offering the most comprehensive coverage of parliamentary, foreign and miscellaneous news, reported with accuracy and integrity; and they developed the paper as a Foxite organ by consulting with the whigs on editorial matters and accepting financial assistance which enabled a link to be formed with the evening Star.

The two main ingredients of a newspaper were the parliamentary debates and foreign news. Although Perry is known to have regretted the expense which debates entailed through the employment of several reporters and the sacrifice of advertisements, it is clear from the frequent announcements in the Chronicle, apologising to advertisers and other readers for the sacrifice of other matter to debates, that their importance was fully realised. As was explained in 1792: "That we may preserve to the readers of the MORNING CHRONICLE, the space necessary for an ample and regular Report of the Proceedings in Parliament, we intreat our Correspondents on miscellaneous subjects,

to be as brief as possible in their Communication." ¹ The public demand for debates is shown by the occasional publication of a second edition of the Chronicle, as after the split between Fox and Burke, and by the fact that even when all sixteen columns of the paper had been devoted to a debate the report might be resumed at a later date to cover the last speeches. ² However, the risk of this comprehensive coverage was that the paper would lose its less politically minded readers. Thus it was announced on 27 February 1792, before a debate on the Russian armament, that arrangements had been made "to give to-morrow morning a full account of the proceedings, and at the same

1.) MC 30 Jan. 1792; also 17 Dec. 1790; 29 Jan., 15, 23 Feb., 14 April, 1791; 15 Dec. 1792; 20 Jan., 31 May 1794; 11 Feb. 1795. The rare occasions that debates were subordinated to advertisements were because on the previous day all advertisements had been sacrificed to debates. e.g. MC 21 Mar. 1799.

2.) "In compliance with the very general demand for our Paper of Saturday... we have taken advantage of the intervening day, and have printed A SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED." (MC 9 May 1791; also 22 Feb. 1792 during debates on the aftermath of the Ochakov crisis). MC 18 Feb. 1793 contained a further $6\frac{1}{2}$ columns of a debate on the French war which had filled the paper on 13 Feb. 1793.

time to preserve the desirable miscellany of the regular publication. -Complaints are made by many of our readers when the whole Paper is devoted to Parliamentary Report...To accommodate our readers generally, we have determined...to publish A SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET." This supplement would be filled with the debate, while the usual paper would contain the regular news and only a summary of the debate for readers who did not want to purchase both sheets. Unfortunately the debate did not take place, and although it appears that the public approved the idea, the possibility of a supplement was not raised again, doubtless because of the additional labour and expense entailed.¹ A more successful method of reconciling parliamentary with other intelligence was the widening of each column by one-fifth of an inch during the parliamentary session. Announcing the impending resumption of debates in 1794

1.) MC 28 Feb. 1792. The Oracle, owned by the enterprising John Bell, had an extra two pages of debates on 17 Dec. 1792, but this was exceptional (L.T. Werkmeister, A Newspaper History of England 1792-3 (Lincoln, Nebraska 1967) p. 150).

the editors observed "We have enlarged our Columns for their accommodation, that the Paper may preserve as much as possible its characteristic miscellany."¹ This was a resource frequently used, since the columns could be widened, without involving any additional costs other than slightly higher compositors' wages, and they could be discreetly narrowed during the recess without the public noticing that the paper contained less news.

The successful coverage of debates by newspapers was largely due to the relay method of reporting which Perry had introduced when editor of the Gazetteer; by using several reporters in turn, he had greatly reduced the amount which had to be written up and set in type after the House had adjourned, and had thereby reconciled a full and accurate account of the debate with an early publication.² Although this method had been quickly copied by other newspapers, Perry was able to present it as an innovation when he took over the Chronicle, since his chief predecessor William Woodfall had attempted to report the debates single-handed. Woodfall's activities as editor, printer and reporter

1.) MC 29 Dec. 1794. On 9 Feb. 1793 the length as well as breadth of the columns was increased, but this was unusual. Also MC 27 Sept. 1796, 26 Feb. 1798.

2.) Haig, The Gazetteer pp. 191-3.

had led to extreme fatigue, inaccuracies in his reports, dependence on assistance from members of parliament, neglect of aspects of the paper other than debates, a late publication which inconvenienced customers and encouraged malpractices by newsvendors, and an impossibility of doing justice to both Lords and Commons.¹ Woodfall's inadequacies had been such that during the long debates of the Regency crisis he had been forced to appeal to public sympathy, when he admitted on one occasion that he had not looked at his correspondents' letters for ten days, and could not predict whether the paper would be published at midday or midnight.² In contrast the new conductors of the Chronicle were able

1.) A. Aspinall, Politics and the Press c. 1780-1850 (1949) p. 444; "The reporting and publishing of the House of Commons' Debates, 1771-1834" in Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier ed. R. Pares and A.J.P.T. Taylor, pp. 237-8. Apparently a late publication encouraged newsvendors to hire a paper before delivering it perhaps because they could claim the delay in delivery was due to the late publication (MC 31 Jan. 1789).

2.) MC 14 Feb., 31 Jan. 1789. On 25 Jan. 1789 he said "The Printer...from having been two days together at the Bar of the House till mid-night, without having been able to retire to rest, was so sensible of fatigue, that he was under the necessity of curtailing his sketch of yesterday's Debate as much as possible."

to claim: "we have made an Arrangement, perfectly new in its principle, to report the Proceedings in both Houses of Parliament, so as to publish a full Account of the longest Debate, a few hours after the rising of the Houses."¹ The intensification of parliamentary activity during the Ochakov crisis gave the editors an opportunity to fulfil their promise; after the critical division of 12 April they could announce "we have given an indubitable proof of the value of our Arrangement - for with two Debates on successive days, each fifteen columns in length, the Paper was delivered to the Vendors for Publication by Noon, an instance of rapidity unprecedented." As a rule, it was possible to publish the Chronicle, containing a dozen or more columns of debates, by ten or eleven in the morning, and it would appear that this combination of detail and priority had a dramatic effect on the paper's circulation.² Another feature of Perry's management of debates was his attempt to

1.) MC 31 Jan. 1791.

2.) MC 14 April, 16 Feb., 17 Mar. 1791. On 31 March 1791 it was stated: "from the unprecedented importance of the Debate, and perhaps from an idea, that it was more truly detailed in fifteen columns than in six or seven, to which it was confined in all the contemporary Prints, the request for the MORNING CHRONICLE was great beyond precedent."

combine impartiality with an account which was favourable to the whigs. The editors pledged themselves to "rigorous impartiality" in the parliamentary reports, doubtless in order to attract a wide range of readers and distinguish the Chronicle from its more partisan rivals.¹ But while this impartiality required that ministerial speeches be given a full and accurate coverage it did not preclude reporters from favouring opposition speeches with more space, presenting them in the first person singular, and interpolating the accounts with appreciative comments. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which opposition speeches were given more space, since this varied with the subject, quality and length of the speech, as well as with the political views of the orator, it is clear that Fox's speeches received particular attention.² It is unlikely that there was much validity in the editors' claim that "Ministers do us the justice to say, that though we oppose their measures their arguments are fairly, and honestly stated

1.) MC 17 Dec. 1790. Perhaps there was also, as on the Gazetteer, the motive of making the Chronicle a paper of record. (Haig, The Gazetteer p. 193).

2.) e.g. His speech on the Quebec bill was given further coverage a month after the original report. (MC 9 April, 3 May 1791).

in the CHRONICLE." The Foxite William Plumer was probably closer to the truth when, during the debates on the Aliens bill, he reported that his ministerial neighbours "are much pleased at the speech of the D[uke] of P[ortland] as it is represented in the Ministerial Prints of last Saturday. I shew them the account of that Speech, as it is given in the Morning Chronicle, but that they will not attend to; they deny the Truth of it." ¹ Indeed, some conservative whigs felt that the Chronicle's accounts were very prejudiced. Lady Spencer exclaimed in December 1792, when the rift between the Portland and Foxite whigs was openly revealed in parliament "How ill Mr. Perry conceals his inclinations in his account of the debate! Mr. Fox and his partisans are so evidently well-treated in their speeches, being made so much of, and the contrary is so evidently the case of those of his opponents, that I can't bear it." A fortnight later Sir Gilbert Elliot complained that his speech had been "put in so wrong in the Morning Chronicle that it must be intentional." ² To Foxites, however, the Chronicle's reports were

1.) MC 14 Feb. 1793; Plumer to Adam, 26 Dec. 1792, Blair-Adam MSS.

2.) Lady Spencer to Lord Spencer, end. 16 Dec. 1792, Spencer MSS.;

I owe this reference to Mr. Michael Collinge; Countess of Minto ed.,

Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto 1751-1806

(3 vols. 1874) ii.99. Perry accidentally omitted the whole of a speech

by Burke (MC 15, 17 Dec. 1792).

generally satisfactory. A friend of Whitbread's thought that one of his speeches had been "given very well" in the Chronicle, and the Yorkshire reformer Samuel Shore said in mid-1792 that the Chronicle was considered by some people to be now "the best Reporter of the debates," though he thought it gave but a poor account of the speeches on the repeal of the Test Act. In 1794 Caroline Fox thought that it was in the Chronicle alone that the opposition's speeches were "to be found well stated."¹

Perhaps even more important than the coverage of debates during the early 1790s was the treatment of foreign news. Events on the continent had a particular appeal for opposition editors; comments on French rather than domestic political proceedings were less likely to expose a paper to prosecutions for seditious libel, and whig journalists had a particular interest in describing what was initially regarded as the progress of liberty. If a newspaper could obtain priority in continental intelligence it might counter the advantage enjoyed by Treasury papers

1.) J. Browne to Whitbread, 6 April 1792, Whitbread MSS.; C. Wyvill, Political Papers (6 vols. 1794-1802) v.44; Caroline Fox to Holland, 21 Feb. 1794, Add. MSS. 51,731 f.197. Canning thought in 1794 that the Chronicle's reports were better than those of the ministerial Sun. (Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 295 n.8).

through priority in domestic news, and whether or not priority could be achieved, a full coverage of foreign news in the summer was desirable as filling up space and helping a paper's circulation at a time when parliament was in recess and people moved out of London. Perry and Gray were quick to grasp the potential of the situation, and on the day after the dissolution of parliament in June 1791 they announced: "The proceedings of Foreign Nations, rendered more important than ever by the congenial spirit of freedom...will demand from us the most attentive regard," and they expressed the hope that their accounts of events in France would be an example to moderate reformers in Britain.¹ In order to avoid dependence on the usual sources for French news, the Parisian papers and part-time correspondents, neither of which could be relied upon in point of accuracy, impartiality or punctuality, Perry created a precedent for newspaper proprietors or editors by going to Paris himself to report for the Chronicle. The same good fortune attended Perry as he had enjoyed earlier in the year: just as the interest in debates had been stimulated by the Ochakov crisis in the spring, so interest in French events increased with Louis XVI's attempted flight

1.) MC 11 June 1791. Perry had always stressed the importance of French news on the Gazetteer, before the revolution began. (Haig. op.cit. p.203).

in late June, and thus it was at an auspicious moment that it was announced on 12 July 1791 that one of the Chronicle's proprietors had arrived in Paris and almost established a correspondence which would give the Chronicle priority over all its rivals.¹ Before the end of the month it was claimed that the Chronicle's French reports gave "the events of two entire days which...every other paper must be content to copy this day." Although Perry's summary of events at Paris had only one day's priority, his reports of the proceedings of the National Assembly consistently had two day's priority; they were published on Tuesday, and gave the debates up to the preceding Friday evening, whereas other papers only gave the proceedings up to

1.) Perry had arrived in Paris by 7 July. According to Grenville's informant, Christie of the General Review was also there. (The Correspondence of Edmund Burke June 1789-Dec. 1791 vol.vi.ed. A. Cobban and R.A. Smith (1967) p.451 n.2). This may have been Thomas Christie, a Unitarian, who went to Paris in May 1791, and was founder of the Analytical Review.

Wednesday, and had to reprint the Chronicle's accounts next day.¹ Although there was little attempt in the late eighteenth century press to highlight important items by typographical means, since it was assumed that the public read the whole of a paper, Perry's reports were given prominence by the use of a slightly larger type, wider spaces between the lines, and a heading which included the time of day at which the report was finished. This rather personal, dramatised effect was enhanced by the use of the first person singular, which stressed that the information was authentic and first hand.² According to Grenville's informant, Perry stayed in

1.) MC 27 July 1791. The claim of priority was repeated intermittently for the rest of the year (MC 2 Aug., 22 Nov., 20 Dec. 1791; 3 Jan 1792) The ministerial Diary copied the reports verbatim but omitted remarks stressing the moderation of the revolution (eg. Diary 3 Aug., 21 Dec. 1791). There was truth in the gibe that such papers "add so little to the previous circulation of what they thus judiciously borrow." (MC 11 Jan. 1792).

2.) e.g. at the procession of Voltaire's body "I took pains to be everywhere in the thickest of the crowd" (MC 18 July 1791), and when the new constitution was presented to the King at the Thuilleries "I had the good fortune to be permitted to pass in with them, and saw the ceremony." (MC 9 Sept. 1791).

Paris in the capacity of a deputy of the English Revolution Society, and he would certainly have been welcomed as a representative of the Foxite whigs, conveying their moral support and giving sympathetic publicity to French events. This standing appears to have helped him on occasions such as when the galleries of the National Assembly were full, he was able to get a seat near the President "by good interest, and the friendship of the Commissioner."¹

The only serious rivalry in 1791 to the Chronicle's foreign news service came from the Morning Post in which it was announced on 15 August that an Englishman going on a continental tour would be sending a letter by every mail containing "such illustration as...is never to be met with in the Parisian Journals."—a claim which stressed the inadequacy of those English newspapers dependent on extracts from French papers. It is clear from Gray's complaint, that the Post's correspondence was being confused by readers with the Chronicle's,² that it made an impression on the public, and it certainly had more detailed comments on Parisian affairs than Perry's; but it is unlikely

1.) MC 23 Sept. 1791. Perry would have benefited from the higher status enjoyed by journalists in France.

2.) D.E. Ginter, "The financing of the Whig party organisation 1783-1793.", American Historical Review lxxi. Jan. 1966 p. 437.

that this rivalry did much to undermine the Chronicle's position, for the Post did not give detailed reports of the proceedings of the Assembly, and its correspondent took an extreme radical view such as would have repelled good whig readers.¹ It is a testimony to the success of Perry's initiative that other papers followed the Chronicle and Post in improving their foreign news service: in May 1792 a new correspondence was established for The Times in Paris and Brussels, and in 1794 Macdonnel of the Gazetteer and Bell of the Oracle both went to Flanders to establish a regular correspondence and set up a chain of agents to transmit it, in order

1.) Gray thought the Morning Post's letters "outrageously democratic." (Ibid.) It was stated in the Post on 15 August, 1791 that "our Correspondent is decidedly of Democratic principles, and, though an ENGLISHMAN, an original member of the Jacobine Club." The proceedings of the Assembly were the most important item of French news; in the summer of 1791 the English Ambassador, Earl Gower, started sending Grenville regular copies of Le Logographe "As the Assembly is now become the great channel for information." (Oscar Browning ed., The Despatches of Earl Gower, (Cambridge 1885) pp. 100, 103).

to lessen their dependence on foreign newspapers and the Post Office.¹ An incidental benefit derived from Perry's trip to France was an increase in the Chronicle's continental as well as English circulation; it was claimed that "The establishment of this correspondence has a double advantage, for besides the priority of intelligence which it ascertains, the circulation of the MORNING CHRONICLE in France makes known the sentiments of the friends to general liberty in this country to the French people." Perry remarked that all the political clubs in Paris

1.) History of The Times i. 42-3; Haig, The Gazetteer pp. 232-3; S. Morison, John Bell 1745-1831 (Cambridge 1930) pp. 32-3. Even a provincial newspaper, the radical Manchester Herald, had its own foreign correspondent in 1792. (Donald Clare, "The local newspaper press and local politics in Manchester and Liverpool 1780-1800" Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society lxxiii-iv. 1963 p. 112.) James Mackintosh had sent contributions to the Oracle during his continental tour in 1789, and William Jackson, an ex-editor of the Morning Post, had sent reports to the Oracle when on the continent escaping from his creditors in 1793, but neither established a regular correspondence. (Robert J. Mackintosh ed., Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh, (2 vols. 1835) i. 50, 53-4; Werkmeister, A Newspaper History of England 1792-3 p. 165).

took the Chronicle, it could be obtained in every town on the continent by application to the main Post Office, and by December 1792 it had a reputation as the "English Ambassador at Paris."¹ Perry himself had returned from Paris early in 1792 after a visit of about six months, but his early and detailed reports were continued by his successors, of whom there appear to have been two, an Englishman who had been resident in Paris throughout the Revolution and a Frenchman.²

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- 1.) MC 14, 22 Nov. 1791; 26 Dec. 1792. In 1797 Perry claimed that the Chronicle was the only English newspaper admitted into Paris. (James Greig ed., The Farington Diary, (8 vols. 1922-8) i. 183).
- 2.) MC 11 July, 24 Aug., 1792; 3, 25 Jan. 1793. Although F. Knight Hunt states that Perry remained in Paris "upwards of a year" (The Fourth Estate (2 vols. 1850) ii. 104), it is clear from a letter of Perry's to Adam of 4 March 1792 (Blair-Adam MSS) that Perry could not have been away for more than eight months, and it seems most likely that he would have returned in time for the beginning of the parliamentary session on 31 Jan. 1792. In October 1791 Perry was listed in the Chronicle as a steward for the celebration of Fox's election to Westminster, but he would have been appointed to this office in the previous year, and it is clear from his reports that he did not attend. Tierney told Grey that "of French news I can give you none better than what the Morning Chronicle affords." (4 Nov. 1792, Grey MSS.).

Another aspect of the Chronicle's foreign news service was the emphasis on the importance of Indian news, even at the risk of undermining the impact of Perry's Parisian reports. Although the Indian wars did not involve the same principles of liberty which attracted the whigs to French affairs, and the impeachment of Hastings had become a bore to all except Burke, in 1791 India provided a better issue than France on which to criticise the ministers, and it was unlikely to arouse differences among the whigs. Perry and Gray were adept at the traditional opposition tactic of criticising ministerial measures rather than putting forward alternative policies. In an attempt to maintain the impetus which threatened to decline when the Ochakov division of 15 April showed that the government's majority would not diminish further after its initial setback, the editors of the Chronicle warned that the Indian war had been neglected by the public from a mistaken belief that it would be financed by the India Company, and reprobated "the late extraordinary attention of the Minister's friends to the French Revolution."¹ This line of argument was taken to the extent of saying, only a week before the announcement of Perry's arrival in Paris, that "it cannot be too often repeated, that the people of this country, instead of disputing about the principles of the French Revolution, would be much better employed in watching the conduct of Ministers at home."² The risk of highlighting

1.) MC 23, 25, 29 April, 1791.

2.) MC 6 July 1791. The impending celebrations of 14 July threatened to reveal whig differences.

Indian news was that giving too much publicity to military reverses might be regarded as unpatriotic, but this problem was partly circumvented by contrasting the courage of the army with the incompetence of ministers. It appears that the editors were in touch with gentlemen who had a private correspondence with India, which on one occasion led them to anticipate government sources and provoked an enquiry from the Home Office.¹

While the basic political facts were supplied in the debates and foreign reports, comment was supplied in the form of the occasional leading article, or essays and letters from contributors. Correspondence was often rejected on the grounds that the first duty of a newspaper was to record facts, and it was less important "to publish the volumes of Essays that we receive on the subject of Government," than to give "details of the practical experiments which are now making in the science."² Argument and discussion were better presented in pamphlet form, which was more concentrated and compact, more detailed, and more enduring than a newspaper, without being any more expensive, since the

1.) MC 9, 13 Dec. 1791; The Correspondence of Edmund Burke vi. 461.

2.) MC 21 July 1791, 23 Nov. 1792. Examples of the sacrifice of correspondence to foreign news are in MC 25 Jan., 21 Sept., 8 Oct., 14 Nov. 1792; 21 Jan. 1793; 28 Aug. 1797.

limitations on space in a paper meant that long articles were serialised in several issues each costing 4d. in the early 1790s. Consistent with their primary role as vehicles of information newspapers, including the Chronicle, usually contained under their sub-heading in the body of the paper a few paragraphs of news with no coherent structure or unifying theme. The Chronicle, however, occasionally had interpretative articles often over a column long written by Perry or Gray arguing a particular point of view which served both as a piece of whig propaganda and as an outline of matters too detailed or complex for the ordinary reader to grasp.¹ The Chronicle's political reputation was also enhanced by the quality of the features from contributors of which the outstanding example was the series of twenty-seven letters from "A Calm Observer" which criticised the coalition against France and the partition of Poland, and which were often as many as six columns in length, appearing intermittently from July 1792 until June 1793. Priestley said of

1.) Perry had developed these on the Gazetteer (Haig. op.cit.p.201) It seems certain that Gray wrote the most serious articles, for several of his contemporaries testified to his knowledge and profundity (Christie, Myth and Reality p. 344). It appears, however, that some articles, though without even a pseudonymous signature, were from correspondents (MC 18 Nov. 1793).

the author, Benjamin Vaughan, that "There is no person...in England who is better acquainted with France and French affairs," and the editors of the Chronicle might not have been exaggerating when they claimed that the articles were the most distinguished newspaper feature to appear since the Letters of Junius in the Public Advertiser over twenty years earlier.¹ Another contributor was William Godwin, who wrote some strictures on the high treason trials of 1794.² There were also a series of twenty-six articles on Fox in 1793

1.) MC 15, 18 July 1793. The articles, which were published as a book, were in MC 20, 25, 28, 30 July; 2, 6, 13, 28, 29 Aug.; 3 Sept. 1792; 1, 13, 25, 29 March; 19, 29 April; 2, 4, 16, 21, 23 May; 7, 11, 14, 17, 20, 25 June 1793. The author is identified as Benjamin Vaughan, a onetime pupil of Priestley, returned as a member of parliament on Shelburne's influence in February 1792, in W.H. Chaloner, "Dr. Joseph Priestley, John Wilkinson, and the French Revolution 1789-1802" Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 5th series viii. 1958 pp. 27-30; John G. Alger, Englishmen in the French Revolution (1889) pp. 89-97.

2.) C Kegan Paul, William Godwin; his Friends and Contemporaries (2 vols. 1876) i.118; MC 21 Oct. 1794.

probably written by Perry and Gray, and fifteen letters from a pseudonymous correspondent Hampden in 1794 taunting Portland for his apostasy, which were republished as a pamphlet.¹ In addition to such special items there were numerous essays and letters which alone might have sufficed to give the Chronicle its leading political reputation, which was maintained until Perry's death.²

These articles from contributors were not always on political subjects. Perry had recognised as editor of the Gazetteer that "it is the miscellaneous quality of a Newspaper which recommends it to general acceptance," and immediately upon taking over the Chronicle the new editors stressed that entertainment was, apart from politics, the main purpose of the paper, and they were "sensible that a Journal can only be valuable by its Miscellany."³ Variety and amusement were

1.) Articles on Fox were in MC 24, 27 June; 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 15, 17, 20, 25-27, 30 July; 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 17, 27, 30, 31 Aug.; 4, 7 Sept. 1793; Hampden's letters were in MC 22, 28, 30 Aug.; 4, 5, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 23, 26 Sept.; 11, 18, 28 Oct. 1794.

2.) e.g. the banker Thomas Coutts wrote to Adam "Can you tell me who is the author of a Letter signed Phocion in the Morning Chronicle last week- it is an uncommon performance," and Thomas F. Palmer drew Adam's attention to an article on Scotch juries (16 Nov. 1794, 11 Nov. 1793, Blair-Adam MSS.; MC 13 Nov. 1794, 29 Oct. 1793).

3.) Haig, op.cit. p. 199; MC 13 Dec. 1790.

essential ingredients if the Chronicle was to compete with the "West End sheets" such as the Post, Herald and World which regaled their readers with society gossip and scandal. As was announced early in 1791 "a Newspaper to be generally read, must be accommodated to the taste of as great a variety of readers as morality and decorum will permit" and "It will ever be our aim to embellish the Paper with coveted variety, except when subjects of National Importance demand our undivided attention."¹ As evidence of their good intentions the editors introduced a section headed "THE MORNING MIRROR," to distinguish general from political news, which was changed after a couple of months to "The MIRROR OF FASHION. To shew the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure," and which included an exclusive item on each Monday giving "Arrangements in High Life for the Week."² Miscellany also included, apart from society news, frequent poems and theatrical reviews, a regular coverage of legal proceedings and provincial news, and minor items such as stock prices, births, marriages and deaths, promotions

1.) MC 22 Jan., 14 April, 1791.

2.) MC 14, 21 Feb. 1791.

taken from the Gazette, shipping news, and sports reports, particularly of racing, hunting and boxing.¹ In their desire to be comprehensive and entertaining, Perry and Gray were at one with their contemporaries; John Walter the elder had observed that a newspaper "like a well covered table...should contain something suited to every palate," and Perry's most distinguished rival, Daniel Stuart, wanted the Morning Post to be "cheerfully entertaining, not entirely filled with ferocious politics."² Nevertheless the rationale of the Chronicle was its coverage of political news, and despite a promise that "In this political pursuit, we shall not overlook the gayer duties of a daily paper" pressure on space forced the editors to admit that "Daily occurrences allow but little room for miscellany."³

The chief non-political feature for which there was usually room was poetry, which it was promised would form "a regular portion of the daily Miscellany."⁴ Perry and Gray showed more discrimination than

1.) The editors were aware of the importance of such features: an accurate and daily report of stock prices was promised "which monied men may implicitly trust" (MC 22 Mar. 1791), and the coverage of births, marriages and deaths was extended to those taking place in India (MC 23 April, 1791).

2.) History of The Times i.26; W. Hindle, The Morning Post 1772-1937 (1937) p. 76.

3.) MC 11 June 1791; 11 Feb. 1795.

4.) MC 11 June 1791.

most editors in rejecting the sentimental verse, originated by Robert Merry, which had been so popular in the fashionable papers in the late 1780s. They showed a growing impatience with the contrived, vapid verses which were churned out by the poet laureate, James Henry Pye, on state occasions; although his new year and birthday odes continued to be published, they were mocked as "too flat and too stale to be much longer continued."¹ The chief contributors of original verse and literary articles to the Chronicle in the early 1790s were Coleridge, Burns and Richard Porson. According to Daniel Stuart, Coleridge's connexion with Perry began when he offered an anonymous poem in return for the loan of a guinea; Perry obliged, and asked for further contributions, which included the dozen "Sonnets on Eminent Characters," which were published for the first time in the Chronicle in the winter of 1794-5.² Burns contributed occasional

1.) MC 1 Jan. 1791, 5 June 1793, 2, 7 Jan., 27 June 1794.

2.) B. Stuart, "Anecdotes of Public Newspapers," Gentleman's Magazine Aug. 1838 p. 124; MC 1, 9, 11, 15, 16, 23, 26, 29 Dec. 1794. 10, 14, 29, 31 Jan. 1795. Other poems by Coleridge were in MC 15 July 1793 (published without his knowledge) 7 Nov. 1793, 23 Sept., 30 Dec. 1794.

poems after November 1791, but he turned down the offer of a salary in return for regular contributions.¹ Richard Porson, the Professor of Greek at Cambridge, who was a close friend of Perry's and later married his sister, wrote several pieces for the Chronicle after 1793. Many of them were of a literary character, displaying his classical scholarship, but they also included the celebrated one hundred and one epigrams, which were inspired by the account Perry gave him of the arrival of Pitt and Dundas at the Commons when drunk.² The brevity of political squibs made them admirable material for a daily newspaper, and the editors of the Chronicle published many anonymous satirical verses; even the ministerialist, Bland Burges, was moved to remark on the neatness of wit of those attacking the Duke of Portland in 1794.³

1.) MC 3 Nov. 1791, 4 Oct. 1793, 5, 10 May 1794. See below p, 89.

2.) MC 20, 28 Feb., 2, 4, 7, 13 Mar. 1793; Rev. Richard Warner, Literary Recollections (2 vols. 1830) ii.6-7 n.; his contributions are identified in Martin L. Clarke, Richard Porson, A Biographical Essay (Cambridge 1937) pp. 43-4, 46, 48-9, 71-2, and are partly quoted in John Selby Watson, The Life of Richard Porson (1861) pp. 133-5, 191-217.

3.) James Hutton ed., Selections from the Letters and Correspondence of Sir James Bland Burges (1885) pp. 273-4.

In addition to attempting to fill the Chronicle with variety the editors also tried to establish its reputation as a newspaper free of scandal and corruption, conducted with integrity and a reasonable degree of accuracy and impartiality. The public were told by the new proprietors on 13 December 1790 that "Above all they are bold to say that the vice, which more than any other has lowered and disgraced the periodical Press of England, shall not be imputable to the MORNING CHRONICLE.-Venality." Allied to this refusal of suppression or contradiction fees was the avoidance of any scandal or personal gossip. Perry had experienced how unpleasant it was to be the victim of scurrility when he had been dragged into a dispute by Bate Dudley of the Morning Herald in 1781, as a result of an indiscreet story he had related in a moment of inebriation, and the bad publicity had probably cost him his job as editor of the General Advertiser.¹ The same contempt which Perry had shown for bicentiousness on the Gazetteer was frequently emphasised as a distinguishing feature of the Chronicle: "The tide of Billingsgate that has set in, and that deluges the periodical press, is a disgrace to letters. We at least shall keep one paper out of the impure current." Readers were assured that while "no Anecdote that may throw light on character without glancing at personality, shall escape our vigilance,"

1.) There is a detailed account of this episode in Werkmeister, The London Daily Press 1772-92 pp. 34-6, 40-2, 50-6, 59-60.

at the same time "we never break into the dining parlour, nor the bedroom, for licentious Anecdotes to glut a vitiated taste. We have never addressed ourselves to the first floors of Mary-le-bone."¹ This scrupulousness was extended to rejecting correspondence which contained invective against individuals, and to a refusal to make political capital out of the private life of ministers; just as Perry had refuted in the Gazetteer a rumour that Pitt had taken a mistress in 1790, so in 1797 he rejected some levities about Pitt and Eleanor Eden with the admonition that "We never imitate the coarse manners of the Treasury prints of carrying our political hostilities into private life."² Of course, any Foxite editor was compelled by his hero's indiscretions to distinguish sharply between public and private virtue, but Perry's sense of decorum was genuine, not merely prudential, and it greatly contributed to raising the status of his profession. A concomitant of this integrity was a respect for differing opinions and a belief in the value of stating both sides of the case; thus the editors promised that "both parties may be sure of our endeavours to make room

1.) Haig, The Gazetteer pp.194, 199-200, 265; MC 27 Aug. 1796; 5 July 1797; 1 Jan. 1798. Similar claims were made in MC 2, 26, 29 Aug., 1 Nov. 1791; 15, 22 Nov. 1792; 27 Mar. 1793; 18 Mar. 1795.

2.) Haig, op.cit.p.197; MC 9 Jan. 1797. There was a remark in MC on 10 Dec. 1790 that Grenville's prospective wife had insisted on his peerage "to make up in shew what might be wanting in service," but this was only a few days after Perry and Gray had acquired the paper.

for their essays," and a letter supporting the slave trade was published with the optimistic remark that "we have no objection to communicate to the public the opinions and arguments of those from whom we differ, fully persuaded that nothing so effectually promotes the cause of truth, as frequent and free discussion." Although strict impartiality was irreconcilable with the Chronicle's role as a Foxite paper, it would be true to say that Perry and Gray lived up to their promise that "They will never, in the maintenance of their own opinions, forget that other gentlemen may entertain opposite sentiments from conviction and motives as pure as their own." ¹

Under its new conductors the Chronicle met with considerable initial success. Perry had ensured that many whigs would buy the paper right from the start of his and Gray's proprietorship by sending out a circular letter drawing attention to the independence, integrity and decorum with which it was intended to conduct their journal. ²

1.) MC 22 Oct. 1792; 24 June 1791; 13 Dec. 1790. A concern for accuracy is shown by the numerous rejections of letters, reports of court cases, and of births, marriages and deaths which were anonymous or unauthenticated, but it was not until 1818 that arrivals and departures from town also required authentication. (MC 23 Jan. 1818).

2.) Perry to David Hartley, n.d. [late 1790,] Hartley MSS. F.108. Berkshire Record Office. I owe this reference to Mr. Gordon Elliot.

After only a couple of months it was claimed that the Chronicle's sale was increasing, and at the beginning of 1792 Perry could claim, for the only time in his life, that it had "the most extensive sale of any Morning Paper in London;"— a claim which is corroborated by Burke's comment that its sale was "amazing."¹ As a vehicle of whig propaganda the Chronicle received a subsidy paid by the party magnates. The party's connexions with the metropolitan press in the 1780s had not been very successful: although John Almon's General Advertiser had been subsidised for most of the decade and attained a circulation of 2,000, it had collapsed in 1790.² The whigs' attempt to turn the

1.) MC 3 Feb., 31 Mar. 1791, 30 Jan. 1792; Christie, Myth and Reality p. 345.

2.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 271-2; Werkmeister, London Daily Press 1772-92 pp. 138-9. The whigs had also apparently conducted a Saturday paper, the Englishman, in which Sheridan, Fox, Burke, Fitzpatrick, Lord John Townshend and others were said to have written, and which ran to 17 numbers in 1779; and the Jesuit, written wholly by Dr. French Lawrence, which lasted for 18 numbers 1782-3. (Obituary of Sheridan in MC 15 July 1816, in which it is stated that the Englishman existed 1777-8; Lord Broughton, Recollections of a Long Life ed. Lady Dorchester (6 vols. 1909-11) i.204).

English Chronicle into a propaganda organ had been a complete failure: according to Fitzwilliam, as an impartial paper it enjoyed good intelligence and a considerable sale, but after the playwright and party agent Joseph Richardson, in receipt of a subsidy, had taken sole possession of it and converted it into a party organ, its sale declined disastrously and he was forced to abandon it. The party had failed to purchase a half-share in The Times during the Regency crisis, and Carlton House's purchase of the Morning Post could do little good apart from silencing the rumours about the Prince's marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert since the paper's circulation was so low.¹ In addition to attempting to subsidise and purchase papers, the whigs made payments to several journalists for certain services, and attempted to organise a press campaign during the Regency crisis, but with no conspicuous success.² Despite these indifferent results the whigs felt it was essential to give some aid to the press in order to counter the government's advantages in manipulating newspapers through the use of secret service money, ex-officio informations, priority of intelligence, taxation, and the creation of 'trouble' at the Stamp Office. It would

1.) Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 451-2, 272, 274.

2.) Ibid. pp. 446-9, 283. But Werkmeister speculates that the Spurious Star's attack on the World, planned by Sheridan in April-June 1789, forced the government to postpone the election for a year. (op.cit. pp. 321-2).

appear that during the Regency crisis, and as the election of 1790 approached, the party became more conscious of the importance of influencing opinion in the country through the provincial press. In 1789 an ex-Scottish member, James Murray of Broughton, drew up a plan for superintending the provincial press in the event of a Regency, which included the distribution of London papers to the country for copying by the provincial printers; the journalist Charles Stuart had recommended to Adam, in a plan for fighting the general election, the insertion of paragraphs about the excise "in all the capital country papers;" and although there is little evidence of whig financial aid it is known that several hundred pounds were advanced for the provincial press in the election campaign.¹ The idea of influencing the provinces by linking an evening with a morning paper was suggested some six months before

1.) Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 445-6; D.E. Ginter, Whig Organisation in the General Election of 1790 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967) pp. xxxv. 105, 210, 248 and American Historical Review lxxi. Jan. 1966 p. 436. The York Herald was started in January 1790 on the initiative of a local printer Thomas Wilson, and while Fitzwilliam and the Yorkshire Club gave it advertisements and subsidised its distribution at a cost of about £140, its foundation cannot be seen as an aspect of general party policy. (Robert Sinclair to Fitzwilliam, 2, 15 Feb., 14 Mar. 1789; Wilson to Fitzwilliam, 22 May 1790, Fitzwilliam MSS. (Sheffield) F34(h)187-9; F 115(a) 20,36).

Perry and Gray took over the Chronicle by an aspiring party agent Robert Frazer; in requesting financial aid for the purchase of a morning paper for the party, he added: "it is intended to ground upon it an evening paper for country circulation and for which no further assistance will be required. And if I am honoured by this support I shall point out a plan attended with great economy of extending the influence of the Party to the principal country papers in the kingdom." ¹

In this context it is not surprising that the subsidy of £300 per annum given by the whigs to the new proprietors of the Chronicle should have been aimed at influencing the provincial rather than the metropolitan press. Its main purpose was to enable the acquisition of such an interest in the Star as to ensure the full reprinting of the Chronicle's debates which could then be copied from the Star by the provincial papers. ² The Star had several qualifications as an adjunct for the Chronicle: it had been founded in May 1788 and hence

1.) Frazer to Adam, 6 May 1790, Blair-Adam MSS. Frazer's idea came at a time when Adam was preoccupied with election activities, and would not have been very receptive to a new venture, involving at Frazer's estimate, £1,000.

2.) The arrangement is described in Christie, Myth and Reality pp. 345-7.

although initially a ministerial paper with a low circulation it had had two and a half years in which to become established by the time the connexion was formed at the end of 1790.¹ It had been edited since 1789 by an able Scotsman of moderate political views, Alexander Tilloch, who had the advantage of being a part-proprietor and was to retain his post for over thirty years.² Most important, the Star was the first successful daily evening paper, an exclusive advantage which it enjoyed until the foundation of the Courier and Sun in the autumn of 1792.³ As an evening paper, it could print news which arrived too late to be included in the morning papers, and as a daily paper it often had priority over its tri-weekly evening rivals.

1.) Peter Stuart, one of its proprietors, said it had a sale of only 200-300 as a result of consistently supporting the government. (S. Morison, The English Newspaper (Cambridge 1932) pp. 191-2).

2.) Memoir in the Imperial Magazine [Liverpool] March 1825, vii.cols. 209-21, which is the basis of other obituaries. Tilloch founded the Philosophical Magazine in 1797, and was also prominent in the development of stereotype printing, and as a scientific and religious thinker.

3.) It appears that the first daily evening paper existed briefly in 1742. (D.N. Smith, "The Newspaper" in Johnson's England ed. A.S. Turberville (Oxford 1933) ii. 358n.1).

It was stated that it had "uniform priority in...communications from the Royal Dock-Yards, and from every Court in Europe, which we derive from our arrangements in not printing the STAR till after the arrival of the Post and Mails each day. This, no Morning Rival can obtain- and it is obvious, that Evening Papers printed but every other day, must necessarily be three times a-week our copyists and retailers." An additional bonus, it was claimed, was that the Star had its own foreign correspondents, whereas the conductors of its tri-weekly rivals were unwilling to risk this expense since the uncertainty of the winds meant that the news might not arrive on the day of publication, and might therefore be pre-empted by the morning papers.¹ Like all evening papers, the Star had two further advantages: it was cheap to produce, since printing staff could be employed at day rates and much matter could be copied from the morning papers, without the expense of employing reporters;

1.) Star 29 Mar. 1791, 3 Jan. 1792. A disadvantage of being a daily paper was that it cost subscribers twice as much as its rivals; this however was turned to advantage by the claim that it was a guarantee to advertisers that it was sold in the best circles (Ibid). One of the motives for publishing the Evening Mail on the unusual days of Monday, Wednesday and Friday, appears to have been "the advantage of a day's post in respect to the Foreign Mails." (advertisement in MC 25 Feb. 1789).

and, more important, it had a larger provincial circulation than morning papers since it could be published in time to catch the evening post, and would contain the latest news, particularly in respect of more detailed accounts of the later part of the debates. There was no allusion in the Star to its connexion with the Chronicle, for such an admission would have undermined its appearance of impartiality and independence, but there was a mention, soon after the formation of the link, that "the most extensive arrangements" had been made to secure priority in foreign news and the fullest coverage of debates, and editorial pronouncements exhibited the same regard for accuracy and disdain of scandal which characterised the Chronicle.¹ It is clear that the subsidy succeeded in its purpose for the Star averaged an impressive circulation of nearly

1.) Star 2, 15 Feb. 1791. Also 29 Mar., 26 April, 13 July, 21 Oct. 1791. It claimed priority in its coverage of such notable events as the Birmingham riots and Louis xvi's acceptance of the new constitution. (Star 18 July, 24 Sept. 1791.)

2,000 in 1791, and Perry claimed it had gained great influence in the country, particularly in the north.¹

Despite its initial success, however, the arrangement was short-lived. The conservative whigs might have been willing, as late as the summer of 1793, to subscribe thousands of pounds for the relief of Fox's debts, but they were not prepared to donate a few hundred towards the propagation of his opinions. Although there is evidence that Perry and Gray were anxious in 1791 not to alienate the party magnates,² they conducted the Chronicle with an outspokenness which makes the apprehensions of their patrons, apparent as early as the spring of that year, understandable. The editors' exuberant support for the French revolution, their peremptory dismissal of Burke, their sympathy for dissenters, the publicity they accorded to radicals through advertisements and correspondence, and their outburst in

1.) Star 3 Jan. 1792; Christie, Myth and Reality p. 346. Perry's remark about the north is consistent with the mention in the Star of distributors at Liverpool and Leicester (26 Sept., 26 Oct. 1791); during 1792 half a dozen southern towns were named in the colophon as places for the receipt of articles and advertisements, which may be an indication of a growing circulation. (Star 3 April, 25 May, 6, 21 June 1792).

2.) Christie, op.cit.p.346.

favour of parliamentary reform in the spring of 1792 help to explain Burke's fear that the Chronicle's effect was "to root out all principle from the Minds of the Common People, and to put a dagger into the hands of every Rustick to plunge into the heart of his Landlord." ¹ Like Fox, Perry and Gray took an optimistic view of the Revolution in the belief that anything which weakened the power of the crown must be conducive to liberty, and although they never deserved the epithet of Jacobin with which the Treasury press vilified them throughout the 1790s, they did occasionally, as one historian has observed, use "language that might have been borrowed from Priestley or Paine." ² It would be a mistake to take such paragraphs at their face value, written as they were in the haste and excitement of the moment, and to regard them as representative of the editors' opinions, but it is natural that the Portland whigs should have seen them in this light. In 1791 the Revolution was heralded in the Chronicle as "the triumph of liberty," "a spectacle which every rational friend of liberty must contemplate with peculiar pleasure;" the political world was described as divided into two parties, the one attempting to establish the true rights of man by reason, the other to perpetuate bondage by the bayonet, and in this conflict

1.) The Correspondence of Edmund Burke vi. 449

2.) R.R. Fennessy, Burke, Paine and the rights of man (The Hague 1963) p. 236.

Britain was allied to France not only by a commercial treaty but by a "communion of freedom." ¹ In the autumn Perry welcomed the new French constitution as better than the English: "If with so little influence on the side of the people- with only a defective representation exerted septennially- with powers in the Crown so inordinate- with means of corruption so uncontroled- we have yet been able, through the organ of the Press, to give efficacy to the eloquence of our Patriots...what may not be expected from the new order of things in France, where every industrious citizen has a voice in the Representation- where it returns to him biennially- where the King's power is clearly limited and defined, and cannot be abused by any ministry for the purpose of their own ambition." ²

Any misgivings aroused by such language, which could be taken to imply sympathy for the extension of French practices to England, would have been confirmed by the publicity given in the Chronicle to the radical Societies. Although the editors said they disliked the ideas of Paine as much as those of Burke, ³ and although publicity for his writings was likely to have the effect of frightening people into a more conservative attitude and of distracting their attention from the real issue of moderate reform to the question of the spread of sedition, which was playing into the government's hands, nevertheless

1.) MC 22 Jan., 10, 29 June, 14 July 1791.

2.) MC 7 Sept. 1791.

3.) MC 9 June 1792.

there appeared in the Chronicle, during the summer of 1791, numerous advertisements from the Constitutional Society and its provincial branches recommending the Rights of Man.¹ While the editors did not support the programmes of the radicals, and disapproved of correspondence between English political clubs and the National Assembly as an encroachment on the government's functions, they appear to have regarded the radicals as useful in mobilising out-of-doors opinion against the government, and went so far as to claim that the Chronicle was "the established Paper of all the Societies instituted in every part of the kingdom for Constitutional purposes."² In addition to printing the radicals' advertisements and inserting letters such as those from an anonymous Irish correspondent hoping that England would follow the example of a Dublin Society in

1.) There were some 20 advertisements from the Constitutional Society and its Manchester and Cambridge branches between 11 May and 12 July 1791. The celebration of the fall of the Bastille was advertised 13 times. An impression of the Chronicle as a radical publicist could be gained from the issue of 18 June 1791, when advertisements for two constitutional societies, for the celebration of 14 July, and for the Friends of the Liberty of the Press, were placed together on the front page.

2.) MC 11 June 1791.

distributing the Rights of Man at only 6d. a copy, the editors of the Chronicle also reported the proceedings of the Unitarian and Revolution Societies.¹ The meeting of the Unitarians helped precipitate the split between Fox and Burke, by encouraging Burke to express his views on the Revolution, and on this split Perry and Gray took a decisive line. They had supported Burke on the question as to whether a dissolution of parliament occasioned an abatement of the impeachment, and had denied that he was going over to the government when he consulted with ministers on this issue. But disapproval of the Reflections was soon shown by the publication early in 1791 of extracts from Priestley's letters to Burke, denying the need for a civil establishment in religion, and by a series of four pseudonymous letters, signed 'Somers', which acknowledged Burke's qualities but were critical of his views on the Revolution. A letter

1.) MC 15 April, 29 May, 25 June, 5 Nov., 1791.

from De Pont, to whom the Reflections had been addressed, was also published, taking a more optimistic view of events in France.¹ After Burke's break with Fox Perry and Gray published on 12 May 1791 their celebrated announcement of Burke's retirement from parliament. This was not such a severe interpretation of the split as it might seem, for on the 11 May, five days after his break with Fox, Burke had twice mentioned his approaching retirement, and the statement in the

1.) Burke was supported over the impeachment in MC 16, 22, 25, 27, 29 Dec. 1790. Priestley's letters were published in MC 10, 13 Jan. 1791, a few days after the prominent dissenter Samuel Heywood had advised Perry that temperate letters from dissenters would "push the paper in every part of the country." (Ginter, American Historical Review lxxi. Jan. 1966 p. 437). Somers's letters were in MC 22 Jan., 1, 21 Feb., 7 Mar. 1791. The tenor of these letters was not one of "venom and spite" as Dr. O'Gorman implies (The Whig Party and the French Revolution p. 57 n.3); this would have been out of character with the tone of the paper. Somers acknowledged Burke's "exquisite sensibility of heart, the inseparable attendant of great genius" and said his errors were born of virtue. (MC 21 Feb. 1791). De Pont's letter was in MC 8, 9 Feb. 1791.

Chronicle was confirmed by his resignation from Brooks's and his request in June that Fitzwilliam stop giving him financial assistance.¹ Nevertheless, the announcement doubtless coloured Burke's view of the Chronicle as a seditious newspaper; in the same letter to Fitzwilliam in which he described Perry and Gray as agents of the National Assembly, he complained, referring to the paragraph of 12 May, that "Instead of being suffered to retire with Credit, and with a kind acknowledgement of service, my retreat has been imperiously ordered," and he also remarked in his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs that the paragraph had "an air of authority. The Paper is professedly in the interest of the modern Whigs, and under their direction." Although five extracts from The Appeal appeared in the Chronicle immediately after its publication in August 1791, there was no attempt to heal the breach, and

1.) The Correspondence of Edmund Burke vi. 271; Carl B. Cone, Burke and the Nature of Politics (Lexington, Univ. of Kentucky. 1964) ii. 357.

extracts from George Rous's letter were published as "a complete answer" to all that Burke had written on the Revolution.¹ Burke's hatred of the opinions expressed in the Chronicle was exacerbated by his fear that its editors were French agents. According to Fitzwilliam Perry advertised himself in the French press as a protégé of the National Assembly, and the ministerial writer William Miles was convinced that Perry and Gray received a "large monthly allowance" from Chauvelin, the French Ambassador. But this

1.) The Correspondence of Edmund Burke vi. 450; footnote to an extract from The Appeal in MC 4 Aug. 1791. Prof. Ginter states that the Chronicle was undoubtedly under the direction, as well as the influence of those to the left of Fox after the break with Burke, but any such direction would probably have been only advisory, without any financial link. (American Historical Review lxxi. Jan. 1966 p. 437). The Appeal was in MC 4, 5, 6, 12, 18 Aug. 1791; Rous's letter was in MC 18, 22, 24 Oct. 1791. There were occasional kind remarks (MC 6 Sept., 13 Oct. 1791) but Burke was still criticised for his inconsistency in 1793. (MC 4 Mar., 27 May, 1793).

seems unlikely for it would have been both out of character and financially unnecessary, and such insinuations by the Treasury press were always denied in the Chronicle.¹

The editors of the Chronicle also incurred the displeasure of the conservative whigs by their advocacy of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and the abolition of the slave trade. Both were good Foxite causes, and although they were only minor issues in

1.) Ginter, op.cit.p. 448; History of the Times i. 65. Denials of such allegations are in MC 1 June, 25 Sept. 1792; 1 Jan. 1794. Miles's opinion cannot be dismissed as that of a mere "Treasury hireling," for he showed some independence in his writings (Howard V. Evans, "William Pitt, William Miles, and the French Revolution. "Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research xliii. Nov. 1970 pp. 198-9), and it is probable that Chauvelin had, as Miles said, been dining with opposition editors, and that this gave rise to the rumour. (C.P. Miles ed., The Correspondence of William Augustus Miles...1789-1817, (2 vols. 1890) i. 440). The rumour was perpetuated by John Gifford, founder of the Anti-Jacobin Review in 1798, who implied in his partisan biography of Pitt that the Chronicle was "notoriously in the pay of the French government." (A History Of the political life of the right honourable William Pitt (3 vols. 1809) iii. 150-1).

the context of the French Revolution, at the same time they assumed a greater significance by virtue of the Revolution, which made the conservative whigs tend to regard any reform as likely to precipitate, rather than prevent, convulsion. After the Birmingham riots a considerable correspondence supporting relief for dissenters was published in the Chronicle, in the questionable belief that "there is no subject, in our opinion, of more importance, or on which the minds of men in general are at present more accessible to argument."¹ This correspondence included letters to Priestley from the Jacobin and Unitarian Societies, the London and Norwich Revolution Societies, and the Manchester Constitutional Society, and also a letter from Priestley dismissing the account in The Times of the celebration of 14 July as a "malicious lie."² The Birmingham riots, it was argued in the Chronicle,

1.) MC 22 Oct. 1791. There was a letter from a country gentleman, "bred a High Churchman, a Country Squire, and a Fox Hunter," of a family of "rank Tories," admitting his astonishment at discovering that dissenters were industrious and law-abiding. (MC 14 Sept. 1791). It is possible, though, that some letters were written by the editors themselves.

2.) MC 23, 24 Aug., 13 Sept., 14 Oct., 27 Dec., 20 July 1791. It was stated after Price's death that his name would be remembered along with those of Washington and Paine (MC 20 April 1791).

had made the relief of dissenters even more important, and occasional letters on the subject were still published in 1792 and '3, including one from Priestley denying Burke's charge that he had belonged to a political society, though he had in fact been a member of the Warwick Constitutional Society.¹ The question of the abolition of the slave trade, to which the conservative whigs were less disposed than Pitt, also received much publicity in the Chronicle; there was a series of nine brief articles supporting abolition early in 1791, and several letters advocating the boycott of goods produced by slaves. It was

1.) MC 11, 15 Aug. 1791; 14, 20, 25 Jan. 1792; Priestley's letter in MC 7 Mar. 1793. Priestley knew Perry; he dined with him in Mar. 1792, and in April of that year he told a Birmingham correspondent "I will take care to get the article from your paper into the Morning Chronicle and Star, if I can." (Perry to Adam, 4 Mar. 1792, Blair-Adam MSS.; John T. Rutt, Life and Correspondence of Joseph Priestley (2 vols. 1831-2) ii. 182). But on 18 and 20 Sept. 1792 it was argued in the Chronicle that the dissenters should repudiate the Regium Donum if they were still to demand repeal of the Acts. Catholic Relief was also supported in the Chronicle, and it was hoped that Mitford's bill would be a first step towards complete emancipation (MC 15, 24 Feb. 1791).

argued that, just as the Birmingham riots might have been avoided by the concession of relief, so the massacres at St. Domingo could have been prevented by abolition.¹ During the two months before the Commons voted for gradual abolition in April 1792, a running commentary was given in the Chronicle on the number of petitions supporting abolition as proof of the strength of opinion in the country.²

Perry's and Gray's support for parliamentary reform also offended the whig magnates, particularly as on this issue they came out in support of the Friends of the People in the spring of 1792, whereas Fox at this time wanted to play down the matter in the interests of party unity. Although the question of free elections had been raised by the trial of George Rose in June 1791 for corrupt interference in the Westminster election of 1788, reform did not become a major issue in 1791, and advocacy of it in the Chronicle was confined to occasional remarks as to the importance of arousing opinion out-of-doors and heeding "the voice of the people," for as one correspondent argued, reform could not be expected to come from those with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.³ In March 1792 Philip Francis, addressing

1.) Articles in MC 14, 15, 19, 22, 25, 28, 29 April, 2, 9 May 1791; letters in MC 24 Sept., 19, 26, 29 Dec. 1791; 6 Jan 1792.

2.) MC 23 Feb., 12, 17, 20, 26, 30 Mar. 1792.

3.) MC 20 Jan., 15 April, 1 June, 30 July 1791. There was also a detailed article supporting the redistribution of seats in MC 15 Jan. 1791.

a meeting of the electors of Westminster convened to consider Rose's conduct in 1788, urged the agitation of reform by association, and gave this opinion an air of authority by mentioning that he had been converted to reform by Fox. This speech precipitated an outburst in the Chronicle supporting "a systematic plan of Association extended through the whole Island, maintained by subscription, connected, informed, and disciplined by correspondence" as the only effective means of gaining parliamentary reform.¹ The foundation of the Friends of the People in April was supported by Perry as one of the original members, though he did not sign the Declaration presented to the Commons on 30 April, probably lest it compromise his anonymity.² He stressed in the Chronicle the importance of the pressure of public opinion expressed by "Addresses, Petitions, Associations and Instructions," in the optimistic belief that "the voice of the people pronounced with firmness and unanimity, will always be effectual in drawing from their Representatives, the correction of whatever is wrong in our system." This agitation was accompanied by the publication of frequent advertisements from the London and Manchester Constitutional Societies supporting reform, recommending part two of the Rights of Man,

1. MC 22 Mar. 1792. Also 21, 23, 27 Mar. 1792.

2. Wyvill, Political Papers iii. Appendix p. 130.

which Fox was to disown as a libel on the constitution, and displaying correspondence with other constitutional societies.¹

The Chronicle's support for reform in 1792 could only have confirmed the conservative whigs' decision to withdraw the subsidy in the autumn of 1791. As early as April 1791, only four months after the subsidy had been arranged, Fitzwilliam had warned Adam that his subscription would cease if the press did not stop "forwarding the machinations of Mr. Payne or Dr. Price", and Portland had already expressed this opinion verbally.² By July Fitzwilliam had decided to terminate the connexion with the Chronicle; he wrote to Portland "I hope our connection with Perry is declared off. I am sure a day is not to be lost in doing so, considering the whole tendency of his paper, for I think it gets worse & worse-"³

1.) Reform was supported in MC 5, 12, 14, 17, 23 April 1792. The main advertisements displaying correspondence were in MC 28 Mar., 4 April, 8, 25 May, 18, 25 June 1792.

2.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 448; Portland wrote to Fitzwilliam "Adam shewed me Your Letter concerning the press in which You know I most heartily & entirely concur with You. I had before told A [dam] that I would not subscribe another shilling to it if it was not shut against the reception of all the doctrines of the Price etc. [?] School-" (21 April 1791, Fitzwilliam MSS. (Sheffield) F115(d)-54).

3.) Portland, quoting a letter from Fitzwilliam, to Adam, 1 July 1791, Blair-Adam MSS.

By the autumn it was agreed that the whig magnates would only subscribe to the party's general fund on the condition that no money was used to subsidise the press.¹ It is surprising that Perry still did not know, in June 1792, whether the subsidy was going to be continued, and he complained that he had been kept in "irksome suspense" for almost a year. It would seem possible that Adam's Foxite sympathies made him reluctant to inform Perry of the conservative whigs' attitude in the hope that a rapprochement might take place, and he probably presented Perry's case sympathetically to the whig magnates, for Portland still considered it necessary to remind him in September 1792 that "not one farthing" of his money was "to be applicable to Perry," and when Adam was winding up the general fund in 1793 Fitzwilliam was still re-iterating that no money was to be applied to the press.² The result of the

1.) Ginter, American Historical Review lxxi Jan. 1966 p. 438 and n.61; Whig Organization in the General Election of 1790 p. 234.

2.) Perry to Adam, 8 June 1792; Portland to Adam, 3 Sept. 1792, Blair-Adam MSS.; Aspinall, op.cit. pp.451-3. It is clear that Perry received no more money after 1791. Adam assured Fitzwilliam in the autumn of 1793 that "Ever since the arrange[men]t of two Years ago, I have given up all Idea that it would be fit to ask Your Lordship or The Duke of Portland to do anything more upon that score- I mean of the News Papers." (26 July 1793; also 19 Sept., 3 Oct. 1793, Fitzwilliam MSS. N.R.O. Box 45).

withdrawal of the subsidy was the termination of the connexion with the Star. The loss of sales of the Chronicle due to the public waiting for the publication of the Star in the confidence that it would contain a full account of the debates, and the loss of advertising income due to the sacrifice of advertisements to make space for the debates, meant that Perry and Gray were unwilling to maintain the link without financial assistance.¹ The connexion was probably ended soon after June 1792 when Perry would have received an answer to his query about the subsidy. This is indicated by an increase in the amount of space given to advertisements in the Chronicle early in 1793, and by the fact that reports of debates in the Star were on average nearly two columns shorter than the Chronicle's reports.² The suggestion by W.S. Bourne in

1.) Christie, Myth and Reality pp. 346-7

2.) Advertisement space increased from 46% in the first half of 1792 to 52% in the first half of 1793, but this might be attributed merely to a growth in advertising custom, and not to the accommodation of notices hitherto rejected for want of room. During the parliamentary session, from 13 December 1792 to 21 June 1793, the Star's reports of debates were on average $1\frac{2}{3}$ columns shorter than the Chronicle's on days when the Chronicle had 4 columns or more of debates, and it is clear that different parts of the Star's debates were copied from different papers.

November 1792 that he change his Observer into a daily evening paper in order to counter the impending partisan reports of debates in the ministerial evening Sun indicates that the Star was no longer serving its purpose, while the foundation of the opposition evening Courier in September of that year could be seen as an attempt to compensate for the loss of the Star's services. ¹

It would be unjust to Perry and Gray to confine an account of their conduct of the Chronicle to the manner in which it was regarded by the conservative whigs. In many respects they showed an awareness of the need to maintain party unity, and if at times they were tactlessly enthusiastic in their support for reform, at other times they showed a moderation which makes Portland's judgement, that the Chronicle was "avowedly inlisted in the cause of Anarchy" appear very unbalanced. ²

The editors insisted in 1791 that they did not countenance the spread of French practices to England; they affirmed that "The Whigs of England,

1.) Aspinall, op.cit.p. 450. Werkmeister states, but without reference, that the subsidy and the link with the Star continued in 1793, the subsidy being paid by unspecified friends of Fox. (A Newspaper History of England 1792-3 p. 166). A rumour that the Star had changed hands in Nov. 1792 might have been an exaggeration of the end of the connexion. (Star 8 Nov. 1792).

2.) Portland to Fitzwilliam, 23 Sept. 1793, Fitzwilliam MSS. NRO. Box 45.

of whom Mr. Fox is the great organ and leader, desire only to secure and improve the blessings of our Constitution, not by levelling the high but by elevating the low— not by abridging privileges, but by extending them— and all this by pursuing the legal course of reform." With regard to the celebration of 14 July they welcomed the decision not to raise any question concerning English affairs, complained that critics of the celebration failed to see the "distinction between rejoicing in the overthrow of despotism, and meditating the introduction of licentiousness," and denied that because "the Duke of PORTLAND, LORD FITZWILLIAM, and Mr. FOX (names never to be separated), and the great body of the landed interest of the country" were the enemies of despotism, they must be the friends of anarchy.¹ Although Perry and Gray had been outspoken in their dismissal of Burke after his split with Fox, they had attempted to avert the breach by playing down Fox's enthusiasm for the Revolution, and had claimed, only a fortnight after his description of the revolution as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty," that "Mr. Fox's opinion on the French Revolution, was never expressed on any occasion, but as a warning to those in power, against adopting the mischief making principles of the old French Court." After Louis xvi had accepted the new constitution in September 1791 Perry's reports from Paris upheld the prerogative against the encroachments of the National Assembly, affirmed the King's sincerity, and welcomed an assertion of his authority as a reassurance to other powers.²

1.) MC 2 June, 28 May, 30 June, 11 July 1791 respectively.

2.) MC 29 April, 23 Sept., 5, 11 Oct., 19 Nov. 1791.

The moderate Feuillans were consistently supported against the Jacobins; they were, in their dislike of radicalism, "to France, what the temperate conductors of your Revolution were originally, and are still to England- the solid and compact body- who steer the middle course, like your Whigs, between the Despotism of Kingly power and the licence of Republicanism."¹ In August 1792 the editors of the Chronicle deplored the suspension of the French monarchy and condemned the massacres in September as unparalleled in the history of man. In 1793 they lamented the unjust trial and execution of Louis xvi, opposed the French conquest of Holland, and denied that Fox had exulted in the French victory of Jemappes in the previous year, although he had welcomed Brunswick's retreat with even more delight than he had Saratoga and Yorktown.² On the question of parliamentary reform the editors of the Chronicle took a moderate line

1.) MC 3 Jan. 1792. Perry's successor as chief Parisian reporter was criticised by a correspondent for being too critical of the Jacobins (MC 7 Aug. 1792). Typical of their moderation was Perry's and Gray's donation of 5 guineas to the subscription for the expatriated French laity and clergy (advertisement in MC 29 Oct. 1792), and their criticism of those who allowed political differences to prevail over the spirit of charity (MC 13 Sept., 12 Oct., 9 Nov. 1792).

2.) e.g. MC 29 Aug., 8, 21, 24 Sept. 1792; 9, 22, 24, 25 Jan., 7 Mar., 14, 20, 25 June 1793.

after the defeat of Gray's motion for reform in April 1792. It was argued that the difference among the whigs on reform was one of means, not of ends; and when in May the conservative whigs supported, contrary to the Chronicle's confident prediction, the Proclamation against seditious writings, it was affirmed that a difference of opinion on one question had produced firmer union on all others— a view which Fox maintained at the Whig Club in June. Instead of espousing reform, Perry and Gray confined themselves to stressing Pitt's inconsistency on the matter by publishing quotations from his speeches in its favour in 1782 and '85. ¹

When in the winter of 1792-3 the whig party began to break up Perry and Gray continued to conduct the Chronicle in a way which seemed anarchical to a conservative whig and moderately reformist to a Foxite. At Perry's trial before the Lords in 1798 Lord Minto, who had followed Windham's Third Party in 1793, said that the editors of the Chronicle had systematically endeavoured to undermine the constitution by their "encomiums on the doctrines of anarchy and horror," and was attempting to show that even the war itself might be partly ascribed to the paper

1.) MC 2, 14, 24, 29 May, 6 June 1792; extracts from Pitt's speeches in MC 7, 30, 31 May; 2, 8 June 1792. There were also a few remarks upholding the unity of the Friends of the People, after the secession of five members (MC 13, 14 June 1792).

when he was called to order. The Foxite Duke of Bedford on the other hand argued that "through the whole of the French Revolution, Mr. Perry's language had been discriminate, and his conduct uniform," and he rightly pointed out that while Perry had supported the first reforms in France, he had deplored the massacres. Lord Derby also assured the House that he had always heard Perry "express the utmost reverence for the constitution."¹ The language used by Minto shows how much easier it was for the conservative whigs to attribute sedition to a Foxite newspaper than to Fox personally; in a sense the Chronicle was a useful scapegoat, for it could be subjected to criticism uninhibited by personal ties. During the crisis of late 1792, when the retreat of Brunswick in October had precipitated the revival of reform agitation in England, Perry and Gray, whilst advocating parliamentary reform, tried to play down the differences between Fox and Portland, and in 1793 and '4 stressed the dangers from the influence of the crown as a unifying issue. The support

1.) MC 26 Mar. 1798; Parliamentary History xxxiii. cols. 1310-13; Parliamentary Register 3rd series. v. pp. 349-55. It is surprising that in October 1792 the moderate Robert Adair should have complained of Perry's "insolence", and suggested running the Courier as a party paper as a possible means of reclaiming him. Adair feared that the Whigs would be associated with the September massacres, but these had been deplored by Perry; perhaps Adair was still thinking of the Friends of the People. (Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 450).

for reform in the Chronicle in November reflected the Friends of the People's decision to introduce a motion in the coming session; although it was suggested that biennial or triennial parliaments be adopted, and the franchise be extended, this was not such a departure from Fox's outlook as had occurred in the spring, for Fox had been provoked to a more radical view by the meeting of Burke and Windham with the ministers, and the foundation of Reeves's Association, on the 13 and 20 November respectively, and Perry may have been right in claiming that Fox supported reform.¹ At the same time it was stressed that recognition of the principle of reform was not incompatible with declarations of loyalty to the constitution, and advertisements from Reeves's Association were displayed with those from the Constitutional and Revolution Societies.² Before the meeting of the Whig Club on 4 December it was stated that "every endeavour to separate the great constitutional characters of England has failed," and in the report of the meeting

1.) MC 22, 24, 28 Nov. 1792. Dr. O'Gorman thinks that Fox "was against bringing forward reform proposals at this time" (The Whig Party and the French Revolution p. 111 n.2) but Prof. Butterfield states that Fox took "a decisive turn" in favour of reform after 13 Nov. (Cambridge Historical Journal ix. 1949 p. 324).

2.) MC 6 Dec. 1792.

it was claimed that Portland's reception of Fox's speech "proves that there is but one opinion in the firm phalanx of the constitutional opposition."¹ But Portland did not arrive at the meeting until after Fox had finished his main speech, and Sir Gilbert Elliot justifiably complained that the impression was being given that Portland "appears to be acting with Fox and we appear acting in opposition to all our friends."² Any attempt to exaggerate the unity of the whigs had to be abandoned once parliament had assembled in mid-December, when it was clear that the conservative whigs were acting in concert with the government against radicalism, and the editors of the Chronicle could

1.) MC 4, 5 Dec. 1792. A pamphlet published by Ridgeway, stating that Fox had declared his opinions on parliamentary reform and toasted "Equal liberty to all mankind," was refuted in MC 10 Dec. 1792.

2.) L.G. Mitchell, Charles James Fox and the Disintegration of the Whig Party 1782-1794 (Oxford 1971) p. 201; Minto, Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot ii. 84. Elliot was writing on 18 Dec., and was not specifically referring to the Chronicle, but to "the misrepresentations of Fox's newspapers."

only emphasise consolations such as that Portland had not coalesced with ministers and could not forget the manner in which they took office.¹

During the gradual secession of the conservative whigs in 1793 and '4, the editors of the Chronicle attempted to counter the right-wing reaction which followed the foundation of Reeves's Association and the declaration of war on France by arguing that the real danger to the constitution came from the influence of the crown, not from radicalism. In this sense Perry and Gray were more old-fashioned than Portland's followers, for like Fox they still saw the basic political issue in the terms of 1782-4, as the struggle between the executive and the legislature, and not in the terms of the French Revolution, as the conflict between the propertied classes and those excluded from political life. The influence of the crown was the best issue with which to trouble Portland's conscience, for in addition to it having been the main whig bogey throughout the century, it was thought that the exertion of this influence, in parliament and the country, had

1. MC 24 Dec. 1792. Naturally the editors took the most optimistic view of setbacks, such as the secession from the Whig Club in March 1793, and exaggerated the importance of hopeful signs, such as the subscription to pay Fox's debts in the summer of 1793. Sir Gilbert Elliot's appointment as Commissioner at Toulon was still denied about a week after he had accepted it, and it was promised that none of the old Rockingham whigs would take office. (MC 25, 29 Sept. 1793).

placed and maintained in office the very ministry which the conservative whigs were inclined to support. It was not, according to the Chronicle, an "Over-strained Whiggism" which threatened the constitution, but "high churchmen, placemen and pensioners," and whereas the Fox-North coalition had been essential to check the "rapacious hordes of court invaders" there was no such justification for a Pitt-Portland coalition.¹ At the beginning of 1794 the troubles of the country were attributed to the machinations of secret advisers: "The secret history of the period we neither fully can, nor dare, develop...The pulpit, the army, the bar, and the press, all furnish the shocking evidence that Spanish and Italian arts may flourish on an English Soil," and it was claimed that there was a party "to which all the calamities of this country, from the accession of the Stuarts to the present hour, are to be attributed." Two days before the coalition was completed the two main faults of Pitt's administration were identified as the manner of its taking office, and its association with "those secret advisers, who through the whole of the present reign, have dictated from their dark station."² A conspiracy theory about secret advisers had several advantages to the whigs: by virtue of the advisers' secrecy, evidence of their activities did not have to be revealed, and criticism of the King's counsellors

1.) MC 26 Dec. 1792; 17, 20 July 1793.

2.) MC 1 Jan., 17 Mar., 2 June, 5 July 1794.

rather than of the King himself enabled opposition to be reconciled with loyalty. But Perry and Gray did not attempt to raise the theory of a secret cabal to the importance it had held in the 1760s and '70s. As journalists reacting to events on a day-to-day basis they were necessarily opportunistic, and on occasions they argued that the crown's influence was being usurped, not by irresponsible advisers, but by Pitt, who through the distribution of sinecures was "bartering away the public influence of the Crown, in order to create a private influence for the Minister."¹

The other main device used to taunt the conservative whigs was the presentation of their conduct as motivated by greed for office. Although Fox argued that Portland's followers should not be censured too hastily, for they were guilty of only "mistaken apprehensions", and it was occasionally admitted in the Chronicle that they were carried away by the "delirium of the moment" or a mistaken but honest fear of French principles,² their behaviour was usually attributed to baser motives. The first seceder, Loughborough, was accused of having been converted to government when Thurlow resigned, but it was not explained why in that case it had taken him seven months to assume office. In November 1793

1.) MC 11 Dec. 1790. After the 'Glorious First of June' it was claimed that it was only due to the King's "personal interference" that Admiral Howe had been called forth to prominence (MC 16 June 1794).

2.) MC 12 Nov. 1794; 15 Jan., 28 Sept. 1793.

an article appeared entitled "The fruits of conviction" listing a dozen whigs, notably Malmesbury and Elliot, who had succumbed to the lure of places, pensions and honours, and in the following month an allusion was made to the Northite character of the seceders when the Whig Club was described as "freed from the contamination of those who only joined them for a time, from interest."¹ The editors of the Chronicle also published several imaginative interpretations of the motives and consequences of the seceders' conduct: "A Warning Voice!" feared that Pitt was blackmailing the conservative whigs by threatening to end the war and support parliamentary reform, and a few days before the coalition was formed Portland was warned that Pitt might revert to his old reforming opinions and leave him with the problem of conducting the war.² It was also argued that a coalition would replace the old division between whig and tory with one between republican and royalist, so that attempts at moderate reform would be

1.) MC 5 Feb., 21 Nov., 4 Dec. 1793. There were several fictitious letters from the main seceders, including Auckland who had not been forgiven, to the "Proprietor of Pitt's Specific," testifying to its salutary effects. (MC 14 Feb. 1794).

2.) MC 28 Sept., 11 Nov. 1793; 28 June 1794. "The Duke of PORTLAND will probably recollect how the fox decoyed the goat into the well, took advantage of his shaggy back and long horns to slip out himself, and left the goat to be drowned." (MC 4 July 1794).

discredited by being associated with radicalism, but the editors had themselves contributed towards this tendency by publicising the activities of radical societies. ¹ After the coalition had been formed it was attributed to "the blandishments of the Court- the love of power- and the intrigues of office," and throughout the autumn numerous letters, epigrams and verses, addressed mainly to Portland, dwelt on the vices of place-hunting. ²

The years 1793 and '4 were inevitably a dispiriting time for Perry and Gray, as the circulation of the Chronicle declined along with the parliamentary strength and popularity of the Foxites. On top of the political disappointments of these years, the editors of the Chronicle also had problems in the sphere of labour relations. In October 1793 they attempted to economise on their costs of production by employing apprentices to help set the type. This move was probably precipitated by the paper's depressed circulation during the parliamentary recess, and by the fact that the compositors had recently been granted a wage rise of nearly 15%, from 31/6 to 36/- per week, which would cost a newspaper with a companionship of some eight compositors about £100

1.) MC 27 June 1794. Advertisements sometimes associated Foxite whigs with radical opinions, as when the Corresponding Society thanked Fox and Lauderdale for trying to prevent the war. (MC 2 Mar. 1793).

2.) MC 8 July 1794 and seqq. It was admitted that the coalition was "a mortal blow to party." (MC 19 July 1794).

per year. The compositors on the Chronicle resigned in protest against the threat posed to their employment by the use of apprentices, and Perry had to advertise for five new compositors, all but one of whom were to be full-hands.¹ It is probable that he had some difficulty in obtaining new staff, for the retiring companionship circularised a statement of their grievances, and it was said that the Chronicle "was shut from every good man, none but the veriest wretches from book-house rat-holes were found to fill up the vacancies." Those who did join the Chronicle, were, according to the News Compositors Report of 1820 "neglected, despised, and ultimately driven from the profession."² Nevertheless, the printer Lambert managed to find four compositors, one of whom had worked on the Gazetteer, and four apprentices, who were assisted by a compositor and two apprentices from the printing house of Perry's friend, William Woodfall. Nicholas Byrne, who had been printer of the Morning Herald, and was later to edit the Morning Post for thirty years, acted as the Chronicle's proof-reader.³ Although the inexperience of the apprentices cannot have benefited the Chronicle's typographical standards, it was not until 1799, when Perry's fortunes

1.) Ellic Howe ed., The London Compositor (1947) pp. 381-4; MC 15, 19, 22 Oct. 1793.

2.) Howe, op.cit. pp. 118, 385.

3.) St. Bride Institute, Trade Documents, file 394 nos. 142, 151 n.d.

were reviving, that further advertisements appeared for compositors. Most journeymen apparently remained unwilling to work on the Chronicle until 1805. ¹

Perry and Gray found some consolation for these troubles in the fact that they struck a blow for the liberty of the press when they were acquitted in December 1793 of a charge of seditious libel. The alleged libel was in the form of an advertisement of a declaration by the Derby Society for Political Information which had been printed in the Chronicle a year earlier. ² The fact that the government prosecuted on the strength of an advertisement, rather than of an editorial opinion, indicates the discretion with which the Chronicle had been conducted. The defendants won a procedural point shortly before their trial when it was ruled, on the precedent of a prosecution against the printer of the Craftsman some sixty years earlier, that a new jury need not be called for a new term, and it might well have seemed to Perry and Gray that the delay in bringing them to court indicated the weakness of the

1.) MC 20 May 1799, 15 Jan., 25 June 1800, 21 Feb., 25 May 1801, 5 April 1802; Howe, op.cit.p. 118.

2.) The declaration, which was made on 16 July 1792 and published in MC 25 Dec. 1792 is quoted in full in Carl B. Cone, The English Jacobins (New York 1968) Appendix A. pp. 225-8.

government's case. The climate of opinion, however, did not augur well for the outcome of the trial; Braxfield's judgement in Muir's case, that support of reform was tantamount to sedition, the severity of the sentences on both Muir and Palmer, and the arrest of the leaders of the British Convention on 5 December, only four days before the trial began, were indications of the growing policy of repression. But Perry refused to argue, as a mitigating factor, that the advertisement had been inserted during the bustle and confusion caused by a change of the Chronicle's printing office, because he wanted the trial to be a test case for the liberty of the press, and he was not going to concede the principle of guilt in the hope of getting a lighter sentence. The Attorney-General, the future Lord Chancellor Sir John Scott, argued that the tendency of the advertisement was to stir up sedition by its one-sided portrayal of the nation's ills, though he had to acknowledge that while it advocated parliamentary reform it disclaimed "riot and confusion." Erskine, apparently rising from his sick-bed to defend his friends of seventeen years standing, broadened the argument respecting the tendency of the advertisement into a consideration of the tendency of the Chronicle as a whole, which contained many notices supporting the government. He also stressed the implications of Fox's libel act, whereby the jury had to decide not merely the question of fact as to who were the proprietors, but also the question as to whether the alledged libel was in law a libel, of wicked and seditious intent. Although Lord Chief Justice Kenyon summed up against the defendants,

the jury, after a retirement of five hours, returned the verdict "guilty of publishing, but with no malicious intent." Kenyon refused to recognise such a verdict, and after a further nine and a half hours' consideration the jury decided that the defendants were not guilty. ¹ The prosecution and acquittal of Perry and Gray was in a sense a fair reflection of their conduct of the Chronicle during the early 1790s for as they pointed out themselves, the prosecution was a testimony to their exertions in the cause of freedom, and the acquittal proof that such exertions need not entail sedition. ²

1.) MC 26 Nov., 10-12 Dec. 1793. It is said that the defendants owed their acquittal to the perseverance of a coal merchant called Martin: "After arguing pro and con for some time, the coalman pulled out his night cap, and...said he should speak no more, but take a nap till they came to think better on the subject. The others gave in..." (F. Knight Hunt, The Fourth Estate ii. 104-5; Farington Diary, i. 27-8).

2.) MC 1 Jan. 1794.

CHAPTER TWO1795-1805

The late 1790s were perhaps the leanest period of Perry's forty-year career as editor of a newspaper. Both Foxite politics and journalism were at a discount. The coalition of the Portland whigs with Pitt was followed by a national reaction against reform as tainted with the excesses of the French Revolution, and the traditional whig preoccupations of curbing the executive and maintaining civil liberties enjoyed little support when confronted by the fear of radicalism and the French war. Whig pessimism in the face of Pitt's massive majorities was reflected in the Foxite secession from parliament in 1797, which undermined the Chronicle's prime function of reporting whig speeches, and stressed the futility of attempting to influence public opinion. The position also deteriorated from the purely journalistic angle: the increase in the stamp duty in 1797 forced newspaper proprietors to raise their prices by 33%, and the acts of 1798 and '9 facilitated prosecutions for libel by enforcing the registration of proprietors and printers, thus ending the slight advantage which the press had enjoyed over public meetings as a medium of expressing opinion since the acts of 1795. Perry's response to this situation was broadly two-fold: he moderated the political opinions of the Chronicle, doubtless partly to avoid alienating readers, and partly because it was futile supporting lost causes;

and he gave greater emphasis to the miscellaneous character of the paper so that it might be read for other than just its political content.

Perry's growing moderation was most clearly evinced in his attitude to parliamentary reform. During 1795 there were occasional signs that the enthusiasm of 1792 had not wholly abated, as when an approving reference was made to the Friends of the People's proposal of household suffrage, and it was remarked that one of the measures most likely to reduce the price of bread was "a radical reform in the Representation of the People".¹ The Chronicle still carried advertisements from the London Corresponding Society, and the correspondence of such exiled radicals as Muir, Palmer and Skirving.² But after the passage of the 'Two Acts' at the end of 1795, Perry did not raise the question of reform again, except when Grey proposed a motion in May 1797, and then he confined himself to vague and moderate generalities. He affirmed that at Burdett's reform meeting "the spirit of moderation was equal to the zeal", and that "we equally deprecate the doctrine of divine right, and of universal suffrage" and want only "to restore to the three orders of the Constitution their respective functions and to keep them each within its place". There was no discussion of specific measures, and readers were assured that to raise the question of reform was not to threaten the social order, for "the multitude is sufficiently sagacious to know that industry can

1.) MC 18 May, 16 July 1795.

2.) MC 11, 14, 27, 29 July 1795.

only be preserved by keeping every thing in its place. They know that there must be one body of men to consume as well as another to provide; and they are perfectly aware that the industrious classes of the French people are to this day paying the penalty of driving the Nobles into exile".¹ This was very different from the tone of 1792, or of 1809, 1816-17, and 1819, when the climate of opinion out-of-doors was more favourable, and Perry could reveal his true colours as a reformer to the left of Fox. Perry of course still upheld the right of radical societies such as the LCS to hold meetings, and he criticised their dispersal, but with the qualification that he thought it "indiscreet and unseasonable" to raise the question of reform after the naval mutinies, and with the reassurance that "we have never approved of the intemperate expressions of those societies whose avowed object is Parliamentary Reform".² There was no further important reference to reform in the Chronicle for ten years. Perry alluded in passing to its "indispensable necessity" on the occasion of Fox's birthday in 1798, but otherwise confined himself to such remarks as that the best case for reform was the sort of people who opposed it.³ In the autumn of 1800 there were several leaders in the Chronicle arguing that parliament's lack of vigilance towards the executive showed that

1.) MC 19, 22 May 1797.

2.) MC 1, 2 Aug. 1797.

3.) MC 16, 25 Jan. 1798.

it should be made more representative of public opinion, but the measures recommended were only petitioning, and greater contact between members and their constituents "should it even be by instruction and remonstrance", and there was no suggestion that the Commons should actually be reformed.¹

On the leading, and for the Foxites the most damaging question of the late 1790s, the war with France, there was less Perry could do to moderate his position, even had he wished to. Parliamentary reform was a dispensable part of the Foxite creed, but it was axiomatic that the war should be opposed as an unjust attempt to interfere with France's constitution, which had the effects of increasing the influence of the crown, impoverishing the country, aggrandizing either France or the continental powers, and entailing the suppression of civil liberties.² The Chronicle was firmly established in the eyes of ministerialists as Jacobinical, and was tediously abused as such by the Treasury press throughout the 1790s. The best Perry could do to mitigate this impression was to emphasise that to oppose the war was not the same as to countenance an extension of French principles to England, and he

1.) MC 6, 15 Sept., 23 Oct. 1800. It was later remarked that a long duration of Addington's ministry would be a good argument for reform, but this was not developed. (MC 23 Sept. 1801).

2.) MC 7, 11, 19 Mar., 14 June, 18 July, 31 Aug. 1793.

accordingly gave an unqualified welcome to the four great naval victories of Howe, Jarvis, Duncan and Nelson. At the same time Perry was careful to allow no credit to accrue to ministers, and he explained the victories in terms of the gallantry of the sailors, or even "A guardian Providence" which "counteracts the malignity of our rulers".¹ The technique of attributing success to the forces and failure to the ministers was one constantly practised by Perry throughout the Napoleonic wars, and enabled him to reconcile an anti-ministerial line with a patriotic celebration of victories. Where Perry was most vulnerable was that in welcoming French successes such as Bonaparte's in Italy in 1796, which were described as "so splendid as to make the records of all history insignificant on the comparison" he exposed himself to the accusation that he was trying to demoralise England, and he attempted to counter this by expressing alarm at France's growing power. It was perhaps fortunate for Perry's reputation that the failure of Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign, and the success of his coup d'etat prevented further exultation in the Chronicle at his achievements. Windham noted after the 18th Brumaire that even the Chronicle "does not seem to venture to talk of the usurpation as anything which they conceive the present Government of this country can be expected to listen to",

1.) MC 13 June 1794, 4 Mar., 14 Oct. 1797, 3 Oct., 2 Nov. 1798.

and Perry's disillusionment with the dictator is reflected in his claim that Bonaparte had ordered his arrest when he mistakenly thought he was in Paris.¹

Perhaps less damaging to Perry than his orthodox Foxite line on the war was his attitude towards the influence of the crown as exercised through places, pensions and sinecures. This was the safest issue to raise as anti-ministerial propaganda, for it did not appear to threaten national security or the balance of the constitution to the same extent as did opposition to the war or support of parliamentary reform. Nevertheless Perry took a more moderate approach to the question in the late 1790s in that he concentrated more on exposing the machinations of influence than on suggesting a remedy. In 1794 a correspondent, 'Hampden', had argued that to attempt to curb influence by economical reform would only "compel the poison to take a more secret and dangerous course", and that the only effective remedy lay in parliamentary reform.² But after 1794 such radical proposals were dropped and Perry confined himself to exposing the increase in the establishments of government offices necessitated by the Portland coalition and the war, and to maintaining that the driving motive of Portland and Windham was love of place.³ It was far better for the Foxite's morale for them to read

1.) MC 20, 27 July, 2 Sept. 1796; L.S. Benjamin ed., The Windham Papers (2 vols. 1913) ii. 143-4; MC 19 Nov. 1818.

2.) MC 23 Sept. 1794.

3.) MC 21 Jan., 10 Feb., 4 Mar. 1795; 27 Aug., 15 Sept., 8, 12, 14 Oct. 1796.

that the government was "loudly cheered by the well disciplined band of sinecure placemen, greedy jobbers, bloated contractors and hungry expectants, who surround the Minister's seat, tremble at the name of Reform, and thrive on the spoils of a plundered and insulted people", than it was for them to confront the fact that parliament reflected opinion in the country.¹ While Perry avoided alienating moderate opinion by suggesting any fundamental remedies for corrupt influence, he did little to court the latent hostility of county opinion towards corruption and extravagance. In making uncompromising remarks such as that the election of 1796 had been decided two years ago when the bargains for seats had been arranged on the formation of the coalition, or that the ministry "almost solely rests on the precarious and purchased support of placemen, pensioners, jobbers and contractors", Perry would have afforded some consolation to Foxites, but would have made little appeal to the unconverted.² On the other hand Perry did make some attempt to appear more reasonable. This might take the form of quoting from Blackstone's Commentaries to show that the crown had "gained almost as much in influence, as it has apparently lost in prerogative", or of publishing impressive lists of the number of Pitt's supporters who held places, contracts or titles.³ It was also reflected in Perry's

1.) MC 22 Dec. 1796.

2.) MC 13 Aug. 1796, 5 Feb. 1798.

3.) Blackstone in MC 12 Nov. 1795, 16 Jan. 1796; lists in MC 8, 12 Jan. 1798.

attempt to portray some of the Portland whigs as less bad than others. Fitzwilliam, for example, though stronger in his support of the war than many Pittites, was at least acknowledged to be sincere and consistent; and even when he accepted the Lord-Lieutenancy of the West Riding in 1798 was criticised not as an opportunistic place-hunter, but merely as a dupe. Spencer too, was allowed some credit for his work at the Admiralty.¹ Such concessions might have been intended to make the Chronicle's propaganda appear not merely factious, but discriminating, and to encourage some of the conservative whigs to return to the Foxite fold, though doubtless the main aim was to discredit Portland and others by contrast.

Apart from corrupt influence, the war, and parliamentary reform, there was little in the way of substantial political issues which Perry could discuss, and it became increasingly necessary for him, if he were to maintain the sale of a paper espousing a minority cause, to emphasise the miscellaneous quality of the Chronicle. The heavy rise in stamp duty in July 1797, which forced the price of newspapers up from 4½^d to 6^d, made it essential to give the Chronicle as comprehensive a character as possible, for as Perry observed, the tax "will induce many to diminish the number of papers they have been accustomed to read".²

1.) Fitzwilliam in MC 12, 14 Oct. 1796, 19 Feb. 1798; Spencer in MC 1, 22 Feb. 1797, 2 Nov. 1798.

2.) MC 5 July 1797.

The expense of newspapers was an important consideration for readers, including those of the upper classes; Lady Wentworth, for example, though still reading two newspapers after the rise in stamp duty in 1789, regretted that "I must dash through them instantly as the same papers serve several Houses".¹ To the less prosperous it could mean having to go without a daily paper: in 1795 Wordsworth had to ask a friend to arrange for the Chronicle to be sent free to him in Somerset, "as we only see here a provincial weekly paper, and I cannot afford to have the Chronicle at my own expence", while in 1802 Hannah More remarked "that our economy had cut off the expense of a London paper".²

1.) Lady Wentworth to Lady Fitzwilliam, 11 Oct. 1789, Fitzwilliam MSS. N.R.O. Box 40. She read the Herald and Post, paying 1/6^d a week as her share, less than half the whole cost price.

2.) Ernest de Selincourt ed., The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 2nd edition revised by Chester L. Shaver (Oxford 1967) i. 159; Robert & Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (5 vols. 2nd edition, 1839) iii. 75. Mitford regretted in 1820 that retrenchment necessitated "the discontinuance of my beloved 'Morning Chronicle'." (A.G.L'Estrange, Life of Mary Russell Mitford (3 vols. 1870) ii. 94).

Perry assured his readers that they could rely on the Chronicle as a source of entertainment as well as of information: "It is the wish of our most distinguished subscribers that we should combine all the variety of topics for which they have heretofore looked to more papers than one. This shall be our constant task..... we shall pay regard to lighter matter, and make the MORNING CHRONICLE a miscellany of all that is passing in the world. No trial of consequence in the Courts of Law, - no Occurrence than can interest or amuse, - no anecdote that may throw light on Character without glancing at personality, shall escape our vigilance".¹

Similar declarations of intent had been made earlier in the 1790s, but there was more scope now for fulfilling them. The three chief miscellaneous items in a newspaper were poetry, theatrical criticism, and law reports, and some attempt was made to improve the Chronicle's coverage of all these fields during the late 1790s. Perry's literary policy never achieved the distinction of that of Daniel Stuart, who by 1800 had gained Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge as regular contributors to the Morning Post.² But the Chronicle had a regular

1.) MC 5 July 1797.

2.) R.S. Woof, "Wordsworth's poetry and Stuart's newspapers 1797-1803" Studies in Bibliography (University of Virginia, Charlottesville) xv. 1962, pp. 149-189.

flow of the works of minor poets who enjoyed a considerable reputation in their time, and one major scoop, when in January 1801 it was announced that several original poems by Thomas Campbell, celebrated for The Pleasures of Hope published in 1799, would shortly appear. Perry had asked Campbell early in 1800 to contribute some poems to the Chronicle,¹ and with the prospect of having the sale of his published works enhanced by contributions to the press Campbell responded with the offer of twenty-four poems at two guineas a-piece, which he reduced to twenty lest his name become too hackneyed. It was perhaps this fear of excessive publicity which explains why only nine of the poems were signed, but this was enough to impress readers with the fact that the Chronicle enjoyed the contributions of one of the leading poets of the day.² The most prolific contributor during the

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- 1.) John Allen to Brougham, 19 May 1800, Brougham MSS.
 - 2.) William Beattie, Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell (3 vols. 2nd edition, 1850) i. 327-9, partly quoted in A. Andrews, History of British Journalism (2 vols. 1859) i. 265-6. Campbell's signed poems were in MC 3, 6, 8, 15, 22, 30 Jan., 9 July, 12, 31 Aug. 1801; his unsigned ones included 'The Exile of Erin' in MC 28 Jan. 1801. Some of his poems had already appeared in MC 23 Nov. 1799, 8 July, 22 Aug. 1800.

decade after 1795 was George Dyer, who is chiefly remembered as the eccentric friend of Charles Lamb; he offered some twenty verses and epigrams which ranged from a song on the independence of Middlesex in 1802 to some lines "on seeing a beautiful young female maniac in Bedlam". There were also several verses by Peter Pindar (John Wolcot), perhaps the leading satirist of the day, and some contributions from Captain Charles Morris, whom Perry thought "the best lyric writer of the age".¹ On a more serious level there was a series of eight sonnets by Helen Maria Williams, who had won renown by her Letters from France during the revolution; half a dozen pieces by Anna Seward, the old friend of Dr. Johnson; and a series of eight poems by Anne Bannerman.²

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- 1.) Dyer in MC 13 Sept. 1802, 29 Aug. 1799. Also MC 15, 27 June, 30 Nov. 1796; 20 April, 8, 11, Sept. 1797; 9 Mar. 1798; 30 Aug. 1800; 25, 26 Aug., 29 Sept., 8 Oct., 21 Nov. 1801; 24 Sept. 1802; 6 Jan., 21 April, 27 Nov. 1804. Pindar in MC 14 Sept., 5 Oct., 2 Nov. 1797; 16 Oct., 4 Dec. 1798; 7, 16 Jan., 24 May, 17 July 1799. Morris in MC 19, 22, Sept. 1794; 30 June 1795; 21 Oct. 1797.
- 2.) Williams in MC 27, 30, 31 Aug., 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 Sept. 1796; also 21 Jan. 1796, 17 Nov. 1801. Seward in MC 31 Mar., 2 May 1796; 5 Aug. 1797; 17 April, 13 Sept., 18 Oct. 1799. Bannerman in MC 4, 6, 16-18, 26, 29 Sept., 9 Oct. 1800.

Although these poems were taken from published works, they would have been more welcome to readers than the original effusions of less distinguished writers. Several contributors came from Perry's friends in whiggish literary circles: they included Samuel Rogers, who was to turn down the laureateship in 1850, Leigh Hunt, who contributed ten poems in 1801, Perry's old friend Thomas Holcroft, the Duchess of Devonshire who wrote three pieces, one of which was copied the next day by Stuart in the Post, Fox, who celebrated his domestic felicity in a brief verse, William Roscoe, who was represented by several poems in addition to extracts from his famous Life of Lorenzo de Medici, William Lamb who contributed a satirical verse addressed to the editor of the Anti-Jacobin, and the radicals John Gale Jones and Capel Lofft who were the authors of some translations.¹ Perry also published the works of

1.) Rogers in MC 9, 23 Feb., 8 June, 1 Oct. 1797; 11 Jan. 1803. Hunt in MC 4 Feb., 10 June, 6, 8, 20, 22 Aug., 11, 14 Sept., 3, 15 Oct. 1801. (Louis Landré, Leigh Hunt (2 vols. Paris 1935) 1.35), 27 Jan., 30 Nov. 1802, 1 Jan. 1803. Holcroft in MC 12 Sept. 1794, 17 Oct. 1796. Devonshire in MC 13 May, 20 Dec. 1799, 29 June 1804, & Morning Post 21 Dec. 1799. Fox in MC 11 Mar. 1799. Roscoe in MC 10 Oct. 1797, 28 June 1799, 28, 30 July 1800; extracts in MC 22, 24, 25, 28 Oct., 14, 15, 25 Nov. 1796. Lamb in MC 17 Jan. 1798 (Lloyd Sanders ed., Lord Melbourne's Papers (1889) p.4). Jones in MC 14 Aug. 1801, 13 Sept. 1803. Lofft in MC 6 Oct. 1801. There was also an extract from a poem by Lord Carlisle in MC 10 Oct. 1800, and several long verses by the whig W.J. Dennison in MC 25 July, 8 Sept., 10 Nov. 1803, 4 April 1804, 27 Feb. 1805.

dead poets who still enjoyed a high reputation: there were a dozen of Burns's verses in the Chronicle after 1796, and a few by Thomas Chatterton and William Cowper, some of which were claimed to have been hitherto unpublished.¹ In spite of the importance of the literary department, Perry appears to have been careful not to allow the eminence of a contributor to blind him to wider political considerations. In the summer of 1796 he refused to insert a couple of politically offensive poems by Coleridge; one reflected on the failure of the marriage of the Whig's ally, the Prince of Wales, and the other eulogised Horne Tooke who had just opposed Fox at the Westminster election.² In 1797 Perry appears to have been reluctant to insert a poem that was too right wing rather than too radical; Anna Seward complained in April of that year that the editor of the Chronicle had not inserted her critical reply to Southey's

1.) Burns in MC 24, 25 Aug., 8, 29, 30 Sept., 13 Oct., 24 Dec. 1796; 23 May, 19 Sept. 1797; 4 Aug., 25 Sept. 1800; 5 Jan. 1802. Chatterton in MC 4, 15 Jan. 1803. Cowper in MC 9 Jan., 15 Aug. 1801; also one before his death in MC 15 Jan. 1799.

2.) E.V. Lucas ed., The Letters of Charles Lamb (3 vols. 1935) i. 33. The poems were On a Late Connubial Rupture in High Life and Verses: addressed to J. Horne Tooke...

Joan of Arc, a poem she thought, though anti-ministerial herself, inimical to the constitution. It was not until after a delay of four months that Seward's reply appeared, and then it was immediately preceded by a sonnet by Southey on the slave trade.¹

Perry's failure to procure regular contributors of the eminence of those employed by Stuart on the Post was not due to any lack of exertion. He offered the security of a salary to Burns, Coleridge and Thomas Campbell, but in each case without success. Burns had contributed several poems to the Chronicle in the early 1790s and late in 1794 Perry offered him an annual salary to help him support his family if he would come and settle in London and write regularly for the Chronicle. Burns, though appreciative of the generous offer, could promise no more than to send Perry the occasional bagatelle or prose essay from Dumfriesshire, since he feared a regular position would jeopardise his place in the excise which was his chief means of support.² In 1796 Perry's need of assistance in the Chronicle office became more acute, when the death of James Gray on 27 June deprived him of his co-proprietor and editor. Gray had been attended on his deathbed at Bristol by Coleridge's friend, Dr. Beddoes, and Perry, visiting his dying colleague, asked Beddoes to tell Coleridge that he would receive enough to support himself and his wife if he came to

1.) Letters of Anna Seward 1784-1807 (6 vols. Edinburgh 1811) iv. 328. Seward's reply was in MC 5 Aug. 1797; there were poems by Southey in MC 3, 25, 29 Aug., 14 Nov. 1797.

2.) The Complete Works of Robert Burns (6 vols. New York 1886) vi. 146-8.

London and wrote for the Chronicle. The exact nature of Perry's offer is unclear: Coleridge at first remarked that "I rather think, that Perry means to employ me as a mere Hireling without any proportionate Share of the Profits", though he later acknowledged that it was "a very handsome offer", whilst Lamb was under the impression that Coleridge had been offered the joint-editorship, "a very comfortable and secure living for a man". It is probable that the position offered was as a salaried editor, for Coleridge could not have afforded to buy up Gray's share in the paper, even had Perry wished to sell it. Although Coleridge initially accepted the offer in general terms, it is clear that he did not take it up; his need of money was more than counter-balanced by his dislike of "temporary politics", his aversion to London life, and his natural indolence.¹ He may also have been influenced by his unsuccessful experience of journalism on his provincial paper The Watchman a few months earlier, and by an awareness that he was too radical to have free scope for his opinions in the Chronicle. As Lamb put it: "can you write with sufficient moderation, as 'tis called, when one suppresses the one half of what one feels, or could say, on a subject to chime in the better with popular lukewarmness?"² In the Spring of 1800 Perry

1.) E.L. Griggs ed., Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (6 vols. Oxford 1956-71) i. 222, 226-7. Lucas, op.cit.i. 35.

2.) Lucas, op.cit. i. 35-6.

again tried to recruit a poet for the Chronicle's staff. John Allen reported to Brougham at Edinburgh that "if Campbell wishes to come to London, Perry can give him an immediate situation in the Morning Chronicle office..... and in this situation Campbell might enjoy independence and look about for something better".¹ Since Perry had by this time the editorial assistance of Spankie, he probably wanted Campbell only as a contributor of paragraphs and verses, and he seems to have made the offer from kindness as much as from necessity, for with Allen he warned Campbell against the risk of becoming "a drudge for life" on a newspaper. Although it appears that Campbell did write a few articles for the Chronicle early in 1801, as well as contribute poems, it is clear there was no regular engagement.² One other attempt during this period was made to improve the Chronicle's literary content, but it was an unqualified failure. Charles Lamb had been writing scurrilous paragraphs for the Albion, and after the collapse of that paper, he was introduced by George Dyer to Perry, who in September 1801 engaged him to write squibs and paragraphs. But Lamb's efforts were very poor, and the engagement lasted scarcely a fortnight. "I soon found" Lamb recalled "that it was a different thing writing for the Lordly Editor of the great Whig Paper to what it was scribbling for the poor Albion."

1.) Allen to Brougham, 19 May 1800, Brougham MSS.

2.) Beattie, Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell i. 367.

More than three-fourths of what I did was superciliously rejected;...."¹
 Perry does not appear to have been excessively fastidious in refusing Lamb's contributions, for when Lamb later worked for the Post, Stuart complained he could not accept one-fifth of what he offered.²

There is less evidence of Perry's attempts to improve the Chronicle's theatrical reviews and law reports, and the activities in these fields of John Campbell, the future Lord Chancellor, are the only ones of which some record remains. In 1798 Perry announced that the Chronicle's theatre critic would be quite independent of theatre managers, and would serve as an impartial guardian of the public taste.³ But so long as journalists received free tickets for the theatres, and newspapers carried theatre advertisements for only the price of the duty, it was unlikely that a real independence could be maintained. Nevertheless Campbell claimed that during his five years of reviewing for the Chronicle, between October 1800 and December 1805, he achieved such a reputation for independence and honesty that the success of a play "depended a good deal on the award of the anonymous critic of the Morning Chronicle".⁴

1.) Lucas, op.cit. i. 266-7, 272. Lamb's squibs were in MC 1-15 Sept. 1801.

2.) Charles Lamb, The Essays of Elia ed. by Malcolm Elwin (1952) p. 362 n.3, p. 367 n.2.

3.) MC 15 Sept. 1798.

4.) Mary Hardcastle ed., Life of John, Lord Campbell (2 vols. 1881) i. 109-10.

He thought that whereas in other papers like the Sun and Star the reviews consisted of "a few cant terms upon which different changes are rung to answer private ends" in the Chronicle they approached "something like philosophical criticism, and, unconnected with authors and actors, have boldly spoken the truth of both". Although Campbell's many duties as a reporter and critic, as well as a law student, meant that on one occasion he had to write a review of a play without having seen it, he would appear, at least by his own account, to have helped restore the Chronicle's reputation for theatrical reviews which it had enjoyed under Woodfall.¹ Perry also made some attempt to improve the Chronicle's law reports. In January 1800 he announced that henceforth regular reports would be given of cases in the Court of Common Pleas, as well as in the King's Bench.²

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- 1.) Ibid. i. 114-15, 120, 163, 178-9. In Sheridan's The Critic (1779) Mr. Dangle remarks "I hate all politics but theatrical politics. Where's the Morning Chronicle?" (Act. 1 Scene 1). The only evidence corroborating Campbell's high opinion of his work is Leigh Hunt's remark in Jan. 1805, that the Chronicle's criticism of a friend's play was "perfectly just." (Thornton Hunt ed., Correspondence of Leigh Hunt (2 vols. 1862) i.15).
- 2.) MC 20 Jan. 1800.

He also defended the right of newspapers to report trials as they proceeded. While upholding Eldon's opinion that the proceedings of police offices before a trial should not be reported, lest it harm the prisoner's cause, Perry maintained that it was quite legitimate to publish court cases day by day, as he had himself done with great success during the Keppel-Palliser case, because the courts were open, the public should read what they could hear, and an accurate report was better than rumour. But such pleas were of no avail, and during the trial of the Bantry Bay mutineers at Portsmouth in 1802, Perry had to console himself with the fact that he had at least been saved the expense of daily expresses.¹ Campbell thought that law reporting was "a department in a newspaper which is very much attended to in London", and Perry seems to have been well aware of this, for reports of important cases like that of Despard for treason took up almost the whole paper, and a description of the execution occupied most of the front page.² It is probable that Campbell was a very competent law reporter, for although he had to arrive in court at nine o'clock in the morning, after attending parliament or the theatre the night before, he had as a law student every incentive to be attentive, and sitting in the students' box he need not have been inhibited from note-taking by the fear that identification as a journalist might jeopardise his legal career.³ In addition to poetry, the theatre, and court cases, the

1.) MC 11 Dec. 1801; 6, 8 Jan. 1802.

2.) Hardcastle, op.cit. i. 57; MC 10, 22 Feb. 1803.

3.) Hardcastle, op.cit. i. 60-1, 63, 70.

Chronicle's miscellaneous content also included a few literary features, which were more frequent during the parliamentary recess. These might take the form of anecdotes about characters such as Gibbon, Dr. Johnson or Madame de Genlis, or be of a quite esoteric nature, such as a couple of articles discussing the power of music upon animals with particular reference to elephants.¹ Correspondence on matters other than politics was a constant feature, but it was mostly pseudonymous, and perhaps the leading series of letters was that of William Woodfall and John Almon discussing the authorship of Junius, though it unfortunately degenerated into personal abuse of their respective merits as journalists.² With regard to fashionable and court news Perry had in 1794 and '5 attempted to take a more serious tone, declaring that it was ridiculous that papers should be filled with descriptions of fashions at the royal birthday celebrations. But he soon relented and by 1797 he had increased the space given to the Queen's birthday from half a column to two, and by 1803 a whole page was used.³ In common with most political journalists, Perry made little attempt to improve the physical appearance of the Chronicle. He had on acquiring it in 1790 changed the roman head in favour of the gothic, and he ensured that the print was clear and consistent by purchasing a new type at what was usually five-yearly intervals; but the only important change he made was in

1.) MC 2 April, 15 Oct., 7 Nov. 1796; 25 Aug., 1 Sept. 1798.

2.) MC 12, 15, 16, 20, 23, 28 Aug. 1799.

3.) MC 5 June 1794, 20 Jan. 1795, 19 Jan. 1797 & 1803.

relinquishing the long 'f' in 1805, six years after it had been dropped from The Times, which had the effect of making the lines seem more open and regular.¹

Despite the considerable emphasis on miscellaneous news in the late 1790s, the two staple ingredients of all newspapers continued to be the reporting of parliamentary debates and foreign news. The chief feature of Perry's coverage of debates in the decade after 1795 were his attempts to gain the whigs' co-operation in correcting their speeches, and the growth in the number and quality of his reporting staff. The difficult conditions of reporting made it almost impossible to do justice to a speech without the aid of the speaker; as Cobbett remarked of his projected Parliamentary Register, its success "must depend upon the corrections and amplifications which the speeches of our friends will receive from their own hands".²

1.) New type was announced in MC 21 Nov. 1791, 20 Jan. 1800, 1 Jan. 1805 when the long 'f' was dropped, & 31 Dec. 1810. John Bell had dropped the long 'f' from the English Chronicle twenty years earlier in 1786 (Morison, The English Newspaper p. 177). Perry's type was cast by Messrs. Wilsons & Sons of Glasgow, who according to James Montgomery of the Sheffield Iris, made better plain founts at 20% lower than London prices (J. Holland & J. Everett, Memoirs of James Montgomery (7 vols. 1854-6) ii. 54).

2.) Cobbett to Windham, 21 Nov. 1803, Add.MSS. 37, 853 f. 101.

This was less true of a daily paper which had to report a speech the next day, but important speeches were quite often given a second account in the Chronicle after they had been revised. It appears that Perry had considerable difficulty in obtaining the whigs' co-operation in this task: Fox, for example, only corrected two speeches in his life, as did Francis Horner; Ponsonby said he never corrected a speech for publication; and Grey affirmed that he "uniformly declined authorising or correcting any reports, or part of any report, of his speeches", for as he later confided to Holland "to publish anything like an accurate report would be out of my power, without a degree of labour, which I could not undertake".¹ The causes of such reluctance were not merely indolence; Fox believed that a speech which was good to listen to could well be bad to read, and Caroline Fox and Windham

1.) Lord John Russell ed., Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox (4 vols. 1853-5) iii. 365n.; Leonard Horner ed., Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner (2 vols. 1843) ii. 66-8; Michael Roberts, The Whig Party 1807-12 (2nd edition 1965) p. 48; endorsement by Grey on letter from Lewis Goldsmith, 17 Nov. 1810, Grey MSS.; Grey to Holland, 13 May [1817] Add. MSS. 51, 553 f.88 (copy).

expressed some concern that an enlarged report might appear curious, perhaps suggesting vanity on the part of the speaker.¹ However, Perry did have some success in gaining the whigs' collaboration. The Chronicle's report of Fox's celebrated speech on the state of the nation in March 1795 was "carefully revised, enlarged and collated with the notes of several members of the House", and was published as a pamphlet, and in January 1798 Fox's speech on the Requisition bill was initially given five columns in the Chronicle, and then ten days later, presumably after consultation, was given a further thirteen columns.² The nature of Perry's efforts is best illustrated by his letter to Holland in February 1800, after Fox had delivered a brilliant speech on the government's refusal to negotiate with France, which had not received justice in the Chronicle owing to the lateness of the hour. "My very earnest desire", Perry wrote "to give the public

1.) Loren Reid, Charles James Fox (1969) p. 375; Caroline Fox to Holland, n.d. [27 July 1798], 24 Aug. [1798]. Add.MSS. 51, 735 ff. 64, 73; Windham to T. Grenville, n.d. [Jan. 1804], Add. MSS. 41, 854 ff. 327-8. Nevertheless Windham spent two days writing out thirty pages of his speech on the estimates for Cobbett, and Creevey assisted Cobbett in the report of a speech (ibid.; Cobbett to Creevey, 21 Mar. 1804, Creevey MSS., microfilm).

2.) MC 27 Mar. 1795; 5, 15 Jan. 1798.

a more perfect Sketch of Mr. Fox's impressive Speech, as well as the lively interest which his best friends take in it have made me collect materials for it, but I fear that I shall not after all be able to do it to please myself, on account of my indisposition on the night of its delivery. It will particularly benefit the publication if your Lordship, Mr. Adair, Mr. St. John and Mr. Grey would have the goodness to look over the manuscript, which I shall have ready forthwith".¹

A couple of Holland's own speeches were also repeated in more detail in the Chronicle in 1800; one, on the army reduction bill, was evidently enlarged on his own initiative, and after a first report of only thirteen lines was later given in two columns.² Sheridan and Philip Francis were also co-operative in revising their speeches. Brougham recalled that Sheridan's speech on the Defence Act in 1805 was "reported most accurately, probably from his own notes", and no doubt Sheridan took a hand in the repeats of three of his speeches in the Chronicle.³

1.) Perry to Holland, 12 Feb. 1800, Add. MSS. 51, 821 f. 242.

2.) Holland to Caroline Fox, n.d. [late Dec. 1800], Add. MSS. 51, 735 ff. 230-1; MC 24, 29 Dec. 1800; also MC 15, 17 Feb. 1800.

3.) Henry Brougham, Historical Sketches of Statesmen who Flourished in the Time of George III (3 parts 1839-43) p.121n.; MC 7, 11 Feb. 1799; 21, 22 Nov. 1800; 7, 8 Mar. 1805.

Francis on one occasion in 1803 had his son write out his speech after dinner in time for publication the next day, and he is sure to have instigated the two enlargements of his speeches in the Chronicle in that year, one of which was given a month after his original speech.¹ It is to Perry's credit that he does not seem always to have kept what assistance he could obtain to himself, for on one occasion in 1799 he sent an account of a speech in Holland's handwriting to Benjamin Flower for insertion in the Cambridge Intelligencer.²

Information about Perry's reporting staff is largely fragmentary and anecdotal, but it is clear that during the late 1790s he engaged the assistance of two men who were to emerge as important figures in the world of journalism: Robert Spankie, who became editor and part-proprietor of the Chronicle, and Peter Finnerty, who was to report the debates for over twenty years. Spankie, who enjoyed a reputation as the most outstanding man of his year at St. Andrews, joined Perry's

1.) B. Francis & E. Keary ed., The Francis Letters (2 vols. 1901) ii. 532; MC 11, 12 Aug., & 3 Sept. 1803 giving speech of 2 Aug. when reporters had been excluded.

2.) B. Flower to Holland, 29 Mar. 1810, Add. MSS. 51, 825 f. 21.

staff in the winter of 1795-6, for Brougham assured Horner at this time that "You was [sic] not mistaken about Spankie - he is reporter to the morn[ing] chron[icle] at the salary of 2 guineas per week".¹ Spankie was to prove an able substitute for Gray, who died in June 1796, as a reporter and leader writer. He seems indeed to have made a greater impact as a journalist than he did in his chosen career as a lawyer: one obituary recalled that he "was considered one of the best parliamentary reporters of his dayand.... wrote some of the most masterly articles which ever appeared in the columns of a newspaper".² James Grant thought that as a reporter Spankie was the fastest he ever knew, and he could write out a whole column in an hour.³ As a leader-writer he was equally impressive: John Campbell commented on his admirable essays, and when some anti-Gallican editorials appeared in the Chronicle late in 1802, Cobbett remarked "the writer of the excellent articles in the Chronicle is a Mr. Spankeyhe holds no ordinary pen, and I would much rather have him for a friend than an enemy".⁴ Although the tendency towards

1.) Brougham to Horner, 9 Jan. 1796, Horner MSS. vol.i.f.6; for a brief biographical sketch of Spankie, see Christie, Myth and Reality p. 348.

2.) MC 3 Nov. 1842.

3.) James Grant, The Great Metropolis (2 vols. 1836) ii. 223-4.

4.) Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i.45; Lewis Melville, Life and Letters of William Cobbett (2 vols. 1913) i. 171.

polemical rhetoric which was common to all journalists in this period makes it difficult to identify Spankie's editorials with confidence, there is discernible, particularly in some leaders on foreign affairs, an analytical rigour which would have been uncharacteristic of Perry. Spankie's gifts were such that Perry was willing to sell him a one-third share in the Chronicle.¹ It is difficult to explain why Perry should have wished to do this, for he was clearing nearly £4,000 on his advertising profits in 1798, and he had felt secure enough to marry in that year, while there is no indication that his position deteriorated after this time. The only explanations would seem to be either that Perry was too cautious to want to be wholly dependent on a newspaper for his income and wanted to raise capital to invest in other businesses such as the Surrey Iron Railway, or that he was

1.) He was described as part-proprietor by John Campbell and Cobbett. (Ibid.) Daniel Stuart said Perry owned two-thirds of the Chronicle. (Stuart to James Mackintosh, 30 May 1807, Add. MSS. 52, 451 ff. 178-9).

seriously in debt as a result of having lost thousands of pounds in backing an abortive scheme for manufacturing cloth without weaving or spinning.¹ Nor is it evident how Spankie could have afforded to become a part-proprietor, for it is unlikely that he received more than £400 a year as editor, and his father was only tutor to the Duke of Athol.² Nevertheless it is clear that he did have a minority share in the Chronicle, and consequently had considerable influence. John Campbell remarked in April 1802 that whether he obtained a new engagement on the paper "depends entirely on Spankie", and when Campbell sought a commissionership of bankrupts from the whigs in 1806 it was Spankie who contacted Erskine's secretary on his behalf.³

1.) P.L. Gordon thought the scheme, which was Gray's initiative, cost them about £9,000, but two-thirds of this was spent on mills which could be utilised for other purposes. (Personal Memoirs (2 vols. 1830) i. 243-7). The cottage at Merton belonging to Perry, Gray and the inventor Booth was burnt down, uninsured, but the mills and factory were saved. (MC 20 Jan. 1796). Shortly before his death, Perry claimed to be a poor man, "greatly in debt for his purchases at Merton, etc." but his will shows this was not so. (Hunt, The Fourth Estate ii. 106-7.)

2.) "Editors and newspaper writers of the last generation, by an old apprentice of the law". Fraser's Magazine lxxv-lxxvi. May, July 1862, pp. 604-5, 32.

3.) Hardcastle, op.cit. i. 87, 180.

It was sometimes to Spankie, not Perry, that the whigs addressed themselves on matters of editorial policy, and during the whig press campaign of 1807 Spankie was exchanging letters with Brougham on what policies to pursue.¹ After some nine years on the Chronicle, Spankie left in the autumn of 1807 to make his fortune at the bar, and eventually attained the lucrative position of standing counsel to the East India Company.

A less able but more enduring recruit of Perry's in the late 1790s was the Irishman Peter Finnerty, who joined the Chronicle as a reporter in 1799, and later probably wrote some of the leaders on Irish affairs.² Born in Loughrea, in County Galway around 1768, he was the son of a tradesman, and received little formal education. After training as a printer in Dublin he became in 1797 editor and nominal proprietor of the Press, a radical paper established by Arthur O'Connor. He appears to have conducted it with some vigour,

1.) Fox asked O'Bryen to put Spankie right on a misunderstanding on foreign affairs, 19 Nov. 1805, Add. MSS. 47, 566 f. 242; Brougham told Allen he had received two letters from Spankie, n.d. Sat., [April 1807], Add. MSS. 52, 177 f. 104; also n.d. [24, 25, 27 May 1807], Ibid. ff. 117, 119, 128; Spankie to Brougham, 5 June [1807], Brougham MSS.

2.) Obituary in MC 15 May 1822; Fraser's Magazine lxxv. Feb. 1862 pp. 171-2. There is a sketch of Finnerty's career in Michael Macdonagh, The Reporters' Gallery (1913) pp. 321-9.

for the Irish Lord Chancellor, Lord Clare, thought that it "had no inconsiderable influence" in promoting the rebellion, and after only a few months Finnerty was sentenced to two years imprisonment for a seditious libel.¹ A subscription was held on his behalf in England, but after serving only eight months of his sentence he was released in August 1798,² and made his way to England with a letter of introduction to Perry from his counsel, John Curran. According to one literary raconteur Finnerty was "the most celebrated reporter of his day",³ and there are some indications that he could show enterprise and resourcefulness. On one occasion in the autumn of 1819, when attending an inquest at Oldham on a victim of the Peterloo massacre, Finnerty, along with several other reporters, was turned out by the coroner for taking notes, whereupon he managed to persuade the

1.) Bishop of Bath and Wells ed., Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland (4 vols. 1862) iv.40; Thomas MacNevin ed., The Lives and Trials of Eminent Irishmen (Dublin 1846) pp. 494-545. Lansdowne's son, Lord Wycombe, thought the Press inflammatory. (Wycombe to Holland, 23 Oct. 1797, Add. MSS. 51, 683 f. 118.)

2.) MC 23 Jan., 13 Aug. 1798.

3.) C.H. Timperley, An Encyclopaedia of Literary and Typographical Anecdote (1842) p. 841 n.

radical Samuel Bamford to furnish him for several days "with notes and verbal communications" about the proceedings.¹ Most of the evidence concerning Finnerty however relates to his political activities in Westminster elections and Ireland, his attempt to accompany the Walcheren expedition in order to write its history, and his libel on Castlereagh and subsequent imprisonment. He cannot have been a very reliable reporter for the Chronicle, for he appears to have been connected with several other papers,² and the extent of his activities would have precluded regular attendance at parliament. Although Cobbett had a great regard for him, and Bamford thought him, for all his faults, "a rather remarkable man" with "much goodness at heart", he undoubtedly drank to excess, and there might have been some truth in Place's description of him as a "low lived reprobate" and a "notorious profligate".³ Brougham put it more delicately when

1.) Samuel Bamford, Passages in the Life of a Radical (2 vols. 1841-2) ii. 201-3.

2.) J.C. Hippisley to Grey, 11 Nov. 1810, Grey MSS.; Finnerty himself claimed to have "some influence with other papers." (E. Phipps ed., Memoirs of ...R. Plumer Ward (2 vols. 1850) i. 397-8).

3.) Melville, Life and Letters of William Cobbett i.72; Bamford, op.cit. ii. 202-8, 217; Gordon, Personal Memoirs i. 295-300; Add. MSS. 35, 145 ff.13-14, 1810. I owe this last reference, and that of note 1, to Dr. John Dinwiddy.

after Finnerty's imprisonment he said he "is not quite the kind of subject in whose person one should wish to see the liberty of the press & c. tried".¹ Finnerty's reporting was sometimes more imaginative than accurate; Brougham remarked on one occasion that "a speech kindly made for me by P. Finnerty in the Chronicle of today, about blessed liberty & c.... is almost all a fiction, but well meant, he thought I ought to have said it and that it was better than what I did say".² Perhaps less excusable was Finnerty's intemperate behaviour, as when he narrowly escaped imprisonment in 1819 after telling the messenger of the House, who had asked him to close his note-book, to 'go to Hell'.³ Despite these faults Finnerty was clearly useful to Perry, for after Spankie's departure he appears briefly to have been Perry's assistant editor,⁴ and his close contact with such leading politicians as Sheridan, Brougham and Whitbread, which was unusual for a reporter, would have made him a useful source of information. By his own account, he was "a veteran in the management of Elections", and knew the business "from its root, through all its ramifications"; his activities ranged

1.) Brougham to Holland, n.d. [June 1811?] , Add. MSS. 51, 561 f.80.

2.) Brougham to Lady Holland, n.d. Tues., Add. MSS. 51, 565 f.49.

3.) Aspinall, in Pares and Taylor ed., Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier pp. 233-4.

4.) Independent Whig 18 June 1809 p.1,056. I owe this reference to Dr. John Dinwiddy.

from campaigning for Sheridan at Westminster in 1806 and '7, to helping Brougham in Westmorland in 1818.¹ His position as a reporter greatly strengthened his hand in such activities: he could propose himself as Whitbread's election agent with the offer that he would reduce the heavy expense of advertising by ensuring that all speeches were fully reported; while with regard to his own speeches he could always present them in the most favourable light. One of his speeches was apparently broken ten times by laughter and applause, but no other speaker received even one such interruption.² Finnerty continued to report for the Chronicle until his death in 1822, and in spite of his dissipation and unreliability, he deserves to be remembered as one of those relatively few reporters who did not work for the press merely as a stepping-stone to a legal career, and who carried their political commitment, as Perry did himself, into activities beyond their mere duties as journalists.

Perry's other reporters emerge as much less prominent figures than Spankie or Finnerty. John Campbell only reported debates for

1.) MC 3 Oct., 15, 17 Nov. 1806; 13, 15, 16, 18 May 1807; Finnerty to James Atkinson, end. 23 Feb. 1818, Brougham MSS.

2.) Finnerty to Whitbread, 28 Aug. 1811, Whitbread MSS.; MC 3 Oct. 1806.

the Chronicle for a couple of years, lest it jeopardise his legal career,¹ and after June 1802 he confined himself to theatres and law courts. Despite the brevity of his experience, he claimed to have achieved some skill, and had the most important speakers assigned to him. Unlike Spankie he did not use short-hand, but preferred an abbreviated long-hand which he thought better conveyed the spirit of a speech.² Less reliable was Finnerty's drinking companion and fellow Irishman Mark Supple. He was, according to the recollections of the journalist William Jerdan in 1852 "an Irish escentric of the first wáter", and "the licensed wag of the gallery", who "possessed more of the humour of a Dean Swift, without acerbity or ill-nature, than any individual perhaps that has lived since his date".³ But though an amusing colleague to work with, he appears to have been an inaccurate reporter, for he was quite happy, if he had been excluded from the gallery, to base a speech on only hearsay, and one contemporary recalled that "In reporting the speeches he paid but little attention to their correctness".

1.) Christie, Myth and Reality pp. 349-50.

2.) Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i. 105-113.

3.) William Jerdan, Autobiography (4 vols. 1852-3) i.86-7.

He died in October 1807, having worked on the press for some twenty years, but was perhaps appropriately remembered in the Chronicle as the "well-known wit", rather than as a reporter.¹ Perry's Lords reporter, Proby, was also remembered by his contemporaries more for his eccentricities than for his powers as a journalist, and the only information about his work is that he relied on memory for his reports. Though extremely punctual, and the author of some novels depicting the manners of his time, his health and financial position were ruined by a weakness for cream cakes, and he ended his days in the Lambeth parish workhouse.² It is possible that during the late 1790s Perry was also served in the Lords by William Woodfall, for Campbell recalled that Woodfall had been contributing "very scanty and meagre" reports to the Chronicle at this time.³ Woodfall was an old friend of Perry's, and after the collapse of his Diary and his failure to become City Remembrancer in 1793, he was dependent on the profits of his Parliamentary Register and printing business to maintain a large family, and Perry might well have supplemented his income by paying for some reports. It is clear from a mass of

1.) Christie, op.cit. p. 349; MC 10 Oct. 1807.

2.) Christie, op.cit. p. 350; Jerdan, op.cit. i. 157, 167-8.

3.) Hardcastle, op.cit. i. 108.

circumstantial evidence, however, that any such employment must have been on a highly informal basis.¹ There is no evidence of other staff employed at this time by Perry, apart from a man called Reid whom Fox thought might have reported debates for the Chronicle in 1805, and William Spankie, who may have been employed as a reporter and translator.² Although some of Perry's reporters were too prone to dissipation, they seem to have possessed between them the necessary

1.) There was no mention of Woodfall having worked for the Chronicle during the 1790s in his obituary in MC 2 Aug. 1803; he does not appear from his letters in the Chronicle to have been a regular reader of the paper (MC 12, 16, 23 Aug. 1799); he sent a parody of Lord Auckland's to the Gazetteer and Oracle, but not the Chronicle (Woodfall to Auckland, n.d. [before Mar. 1797,] Add. MSS. 45, 730 f. 41); and in April 1799 Perry asked Woodfall to obtain some information so that the Chronicle's reporter could do justice to Auckland's speech. (Bath and Wells, op.cit. iv. 94).

2.) Fox to O'Bryen, 10 Oct. 1805, Add. MSS. 47, 566 f. 231; the Courier, 8 Nov. 1806, said Read, formerly a reporter on the Post, now worked on the Chronicle; Christie, op.cit. p. 349; Hardcastle, op.cit. i.67.

qualities, ranging from the speed and accuracy of the Scotsmen to the intuitive flair of the Irishmen. The team could be strengthened when necessary by Perry himself: in 1802 he was still sitting up in the Commons until four o'clock in the morning, writing three columns of report. His abilities as a reporter were considerable: Burke thought that in reporting his speeches Perry was "without a competitor", and Hazlitt recalled that "He possessed a most tenacious memory, and often, in the hottest periods of Parliamentary warfare, carried off half a Debate on his own shoulders".¹

Although Perry was able to work as a reporter, the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars prevented him from making any further visits to Paris as the Chronicle's foreign correspondent, and his activities in the field of foreign news were confined to ensuring that the Chronicle's reports were punctual and accurate. The public were largely dependent on private correspondence and the London press for continental news, since French newspapers were difficult to obtain, and cost about twice as much as English papers.² It was very difficult for editors to decide what was worth reprinting from the foreign journals, for as Perry said they "readily admit whatever is reported to them, and

1.) MC 17 May 1802; Burke's opinion is in a memoir of Perry in MC 10 Dec. 1821; W. Hazlitt, "The Periodical Press," Edinburgh Review xxxviii. May 1823 pp. 362-3.

2.) Advertisement in MC 30 Nov. 1795 for Paris papers at one guinea per month, except the Moniteur at one and a half guineas.

they present therefore a heterogeneous mass of matter, one paragraph of which confuses if it does not contradict the other. It requires some pains to extract the truth from the compound". Perry's only remedy was "to translate the various accounts of the most respectable and opposite writers, that the public may judge for themselves".¹ There were two important instances in which Perry showed a discrimination superior to that of most editors. In February 1796 Daniel Stuart attempted to discredit some of his rivals by forging a French newspaper containing false news of an armistice between France and Austria. It was published in several papers, notably the Telegraph and The Times, but Perry did not give it until the following day, when he listed a dozen reasons as to why its authenticity should be doubted.² The other occasion occurred in December 1805 when Robert Ward of the foreign office circulated falsely optimistic accounts of the continental situation after Austerlitz. Fox complained

1.) MC 26 Oct. 1796; 31 July 1797. The reliability of the French press fluctuated with the degree of liberty it was allowed e.g. MC 15 Jan. 1796, 24 July 1799.

2.) MC 13, 16 Feb. 1796. The ensuing court case, the Telegraph v. the Post, was reported in MC 4 July 1796, but not in the Post.

that nearly all the newspapers foolishly published the paragraphs, but Perry, though he undoubtedly received them, was a notable exception.¹ Perry did little to publicise the merits of his foreign correspondents, and only occasionally drew attention to their letters: in 1797 he claimed the services of an experienced, and apparently foreign, diplomat at Lisle; in 1800 of a friend in Hamburg; and early in 1802 of a gentleman who sent fifteen letters describing all aspects of Parisian life.² Later in that year both

1.) Fox to Lauderdale, 17 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS. 47, 564 f. 252. Grey thought such behaviour would harm ministers in the long run. (Sir Herbert Maxwell ed., The Creevey Papers (2 vols. 1903) i. 45.).

2.) MC 20 July 1797; 18 Sept. 1800; 9, 15, 16, 18, 26, 28, 30 Jan., 1, 2, 11, 12, 22, 27 Feb., 2, 8 Mar. 1802. Friedrich von Gentz thought the Chronicle, Times, True Briton and Cobbett, which together represented the main shades of political opinion, showed a complete lack of insight on foreign affairs, and complained of "cette ignorance totale de vos écrivains politiques par rapport au caractère et aux dispositions des cours continentales." (Gentz to Mackintosh, 6 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS. 52, 451 f. 46.).

Spankie and Campbell joined the throng of English visitors to France, and sent a few reports to the Chronicle comparing Parisian with London life, and criticising Bonaparte's autocracy; but neither of them enjoyed any privileged access to information, for as Perry confided to Holland "I am fearful that the liberties which the Morning Chronicle has taken in commenting on the recent events in France, have deprived my recommendations of all weight".¹ Perry does not seem to have had a network of foreign agents comparable to that employed by Walter on The Times, which could be used to by-pass the official channels of intelligence. When Perry complained in October 1805, the month in which Walter attempted to stop paying for the Post Office's delivery of papers, that communications with Strasbourg had been interrupted, Fox observed: "The M[orning] C[hronicle]'s complaint about intelligence is a very serious one but I am afraid there is no chance of redress. The only way would be to get some intelligent correspondent at the Hague or at Rotterdam to send them the principal contents of the French Papers, but this may be very difficult".² During the invasion

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- 1.) Perry to Holland, 20 July 1802, Add. MSS. 51, 822 f.130; Spankie was in France for about three weeks, and reports probably by him are in MC 19, 22, 24, 27, 28 July, 3, 6 Aug. 1802. Campbell was in France in Sept., and had a letter in MC 11 Sept. 1802. (Hardcastle, op.cit.i.101,103n.3)
- 2.) MC 30 Oct. 1805; Fox to O'Bryen, 30 Oct. 1805, Add. MSS. 47, 566 f.234; History of the Times i. 42, 98-100, 106-8.

scars of 1803-4, foreign papers frequently took from two to three weeks to arrive, instead of the usual five to eight days, but there was little Perry could do to offset this delay, other than establish a brief original correspondence from the south-east coast in November 1803.¹ Two features of Perry's presentation of foreign news, which are typical of his character, were his stress on the importance of correct translation, and his refusal to inflate the importance of a story to excite his readers. Perry's knowledge of French would have been perfected by his visit to Paris in 1791, and while he conceded that "at times in the hurry of copying from others (the inevitable doom of all journalists) we may adopt their errors", he was careful to maintain the highest standards of translation, avoiding the use of Gallicisms, and occasionally pointing out errors in other papers - an exercise of scholarship which he would have enjoyed.² Perry usually avoided the temptation to give credence to rumours when there was little else to write about. During September 1803 he frankly remarked of a rumour that French troops had entered Spain. "It must be confessed that this story forms a very striking paragraph for the present dull and uninteresting period. We are very much inclined to doubt, however,

1.) MC 3, 15-19, 21-23, 25 Nov. 1803. Perry warned readers against "a disingenuous vanity in some of the editors, who pretend to have in their hands Foreign Journals of a later date than they actually possess."

(MC 10 Oct. 1805).

2.) MC 14 May, 26 Sept. 1795; 9 May, 8 Nov. 1796.

whether there be any foundation for it," and a few days later he admitted, in a manner alien to twentieth-century journalists, that "During the present dearth of political intelligence, even the correspondence from the watering places has begun to assume a new degree of importance".¹

Perry's exertions in the conduct of the Chronicle during the decade after 1795 were rewarded by a growth in circulation around the turn of the century. The sale of the Chronicle in the late 1790s was at a low ebb largely because of the climate of opinion in the country. Its delivery outside London may well have been impeded, for Burns complained in 1795 that several of his copies had never reached him in Dumfriesshire.² The situation in Scotland was particularly bad: an Edinburgh lawyer remarked in 1794 that journalists were reluctant to comment on the criminal law debates, for they were "terribly afraid of their customers; and they have reason; as the least suspicion of criticism would have a dangerous effect upon their business"; and Lord King reported in 1799 that Glasgow was "the only town in Scotland where the Morning Chronicle

1.) MC 9, 13 Sept. 1803.

2.) The Complete Works of Robert Burns vi. 154-5.

is openly taken in the public coffee houses; I have not seen it even at Edinburgh. This prudence may be necessary where sedition is so quickly discovered".¹ Thus it is apparent that in spite of Perry's relatively moderate tone at this time, the Chronicle could be regarded as seditious in places where the Pittite reaction was strongest. The Chronicle's sale was also undermined by the progress of three rival morning papers. Daniel Stuart's moderately anti-ministerial politics and excellent literary policy on the Morning Post helped raise that paper's circulation from 350 in 1795 to 2,000 in 1798. Stuart absorbed two opposition papers in 1797, the Telegraph and the Gazetteer, and it is probable that the readers of these papers would have turned to the Post rather than to the Chronicle.² The Morning Herald also grew in reputation; Colonel McMahon thought in 1796 that it was a "formidable" paper, and would make an invaluable ally for the Carlton House interest "for it has considerable tone in the world, and

1.) John Clerk to Adam, 19 April 1794, Blair-Adam MSS.; King to Holland, 13 Sept. 1799, Add. MSS. 51, 572 f. 37.

2.) Hindle, The Morning Post pp. 45, 82; Haig, The Gazetteer, pp. 258, 260. The Post fell to 1,000 in 1801, but rose to 4,500 by 1803 (History of the Times i. 75, 120-1).

is held in a sort of regard and awe by all parties". By 1801 it was selling 2,440, which was 750 more than the Chronicle.¹ The Morning Advertiser also progressed in this period; established in 1794, it had built up a circulation of 2,000 by 1801, though it appears to have prospered largely at the expense of the Daily Advertiser, and may not have impinged on the Chronicle's readership.² Estimates of the Chronicle's sale indicate that it was not more than between 1,100 and 1,700 during the period from 1797 to 1801, and in 1801 there were at least four other daily papers with a higher sale, The Times, Herald, Morning Advertiser and Oracle.³ It was some

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- 1.) A. Aspinall ed., The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales 1770-1812. (8 vols. 1963-71) iii. 288; Annual Register lxiv. 1822, p. 350. Farington thought the sale of the Herald increased from 800 in 1793 to 3,500 in 1798. (Farington Diary i. 28, 228).
 - 2.) Annual Register 1822 p. 350; Gentleman's Magazine July 1838 p. 25.
 - 3.) The estimates are 1,148 for March 1797; 1,537 for March 1798; and the stamp office figure of 1,690 in 1801. (Andrews, History of British Journalism i. 234; Annual Register 1822 loc.cit.) Farington thought the Chronicle's sale had declined to 2,800 in 1798, as a result of the new duty of 1797, but this seems improbable (Farington Diary i.228). The sale does appear to have been boosted by Perry's imprisonment in 1798. (MC 14 June 1798). The True Briton might also have had a higher sale than the Chronicle, but it is difficult to calculate because its stamps were issued in conjunction with the Sun's.

achievement, however, for the Chronicle to have survived at all, for five newspapers had been forced to amalgamate between 1794 and '98.¹ Perry never lost his position as conductor of the leading opposition newspaper: the Post was too moderate and fluctuating in its opinions to be regarded as Foxite; the Telegraph and Gazetteer collapsed; and the Courier and Star as evening papers would not seriously have threatened the Chronicle's sale, and it was said to be selling 3,000 in 1803.² Its position as the leading opposition morning paper was consolidated as the Morning Post became ministerial, and under the auspices of Tierney supported Addington's government.³

1.) The Oracle and Public Advertiser (Mar. 1794), Morning Post and World (July 1794), Morning Post and Telegraph (Mar. 1797), Morning Post and Gazetteer (Oct. 1797), Daily Advertiser and Oracle and Public Advertiser (Sept. 1798). (New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature (1971) ii. cols. 1337-40.).

2.) Christie, op.cit. p. 351 n.3; Hindle, op.cit. p. 82. Cobbett thought the Chronicle's sale in 1802 was only 900, because of the decline of interest in news after the peace of Amiens. (History of the Times i. 75).

3.) Cobbett thought Tierney had a share in the Post, and Lord Morpeth thought he was influencing it. (Cobbett to Windham, 30 Dec. 1803, Add. MSS. 37, 853 f. 110; Morpeth to Holland, 24 Nov. [1803], Add. MSS. 51, 577 f. 41.)

Cobbett started a daily paper in October 1800, called the Porcupine, run in conjunction with an evening paper the Heart of Oak, but since its main aim was to oppose the peace negotiations it could not have attracted readers of the Chronicle, and it was abandoned at the end of 1801.

The probability that a gradual revival of Perry's fortunes took place after about 1798, as indicated by the growth of reporting staff and the circulation figures, receives further support from several other developments. In June 1798, on the day of Perry's release from prison, it was announced that the editorial and printing offices of the Chronicle had been united in one building, at 143 Strand, adjoining the Turk's Head Tavern. This arrangement might well have been prompted by the fact that Perry had been imprisoned for the publication of a paragraph which he had not seen, for it would now be easier for him to supervise the production of the paper. Perry had evidently been wanting to unite the offices for some time, for he had in 1792 removed the printing office from Shire Lane in the city to Exeter Street, near the Strand, so that it would be nearer the editorial office on the corner of the Strand and Lancaster Court. The new, centralised arrangement proved satisfactory, and was retained for the rest of Perry's career.¹ Perry also consolidated his position on a more

1.) MC 24 Dec. 1792, 14 June 1798.

personal level. In August 1798 he married Anne Hull, a young lady of twenty, less than half his age, who by all accounts possessed many personal and domestic virtues. Holcroft remarked on her "pleasing manners and intelligent countenance", Thomas Campbell rapturously described her as "an angel", and Perry himself testified to her "highly cultivated understanding" and her gentle character.¹ Though her health was delicate, she bore Perry eight children during their seventeen years together, and would have been an invaluable asset to him as an elegant and amiable hostess at his frequent dinner parties. It was probably at this time that Perry became more active in expanding his estate at Merton, a rural Surrey village only eight miles from London. It is not clear when Perry bought his attractive house on the banks of the Wandle, but by mid-1801 he was enlisting Porson's aid in negotiating the lease of nearby land held of

1.) Elbridge Colby ed., The Life of Thomas Holcroft (2 vols. 1925) ii. 180; Andrews, History of British Journalism i. 266; obituary in MC 2 Mar. 1815.

Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and he eventually built up a holding of one hundred and sixty acres, which included a valuable corn-mill leased at a rent of £680 per year.¹ Perry increased the value of his property by investing in the Surrey Iron Railway Company, which built a railway from Wandsworth to Croydon and beyond, which ran through Merton, and facilitated the transport of grain for the mill. Perry was one of a committee of thirty appointed in 1801 to supervise the construction of the railway, and he often used the columns of the Chronicle to point out the advantages that railways had over canals in point of speed of transport, cheapness of construction, and general reliability.² Shareholders in the company received a 5% return on their capital, and Perry appears to have been well satisfied with

1.) Clarke, Richard Porson, A Biographical Essay pp. 118-119; Henry R. Luard ed., The Correspondence of Richard Porson (Cambridge 1867) p. 70; [Messrs. Robins], The Merton Estate (1822). Gordon recalled that Perry was known as the "miller of Merton," but Perry denied that he had ever been a dealer in corn, and said he simply let his mills. (Personal Memoirs i. 247; MC 6 Sept. 1811). Perry does not appear to have moved into Tavistock House in Tavistock Square, until about 1810, for it was advertised for lease in that year. (MC 19 June 1810).

2.) MC 25 May, 10 June, 10 Nov. 1801; 9 Jan., 4 June, 27 Sept., 4 Oct. 1802; 11 June, 29 July 1803; 27 July 1805. The Wandsworth-Croydon railway was opened on 26 July 1803.

his investment, for he remarked to Adam with commendable candour in 1802 "I shall be happy to take your share in the Railway off your hand. At the same time it is right to tell you that it is likely to turn out a very good thing".¹ Perry certainly appears to have been prospering at this time, for the Chronicle's advertising profits in 1800 were nearly £4,300, and they were to increase at an average of over 11% per year for the next six years. He could afford to cement his political contacts by lavish entertainment: both John Campbell and the journalist James Boaden commented on the grandeur of the concert Perry gave to celebrate the christening of his first son, and on the number of whig celebrities who were present.²

There is little evidence in the late 1790s of Perry having much contact with the whigs, either in general political activity or in the formulation of editorial policy. With the revival of the party's activity under Addington, there are indications that Perry acted as a valuable source of information to prominent whigs such as Whitbread,

1.) Perry to Adam, 15 Oct. 1802, Blair-Adam MSS. Perry had a scheme for making the railway valuable to the Duke of Bedford's estate. In 1803 Perry reminded Sheridan to attend the Commons for the second reading of the Surrey Iron Railway Bill. (Cecil Price ed., The Letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (3 vols. Oxford 1966) ii. 194).

2.) Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i. 72; James Boaden, The Life of Mrs. Jordan (2 vols. 1831) ii. 139-40.

and that the whigs in general, and Fox in particular, became more conscious of the need to use the press. They failed however to organize the press in a systematic and effective manner; their contributions to the Chronicle were desultory, and usually concerned relatively minor issues, and though they were dissatisfied with having only one party paper, they did little to remedy the situation. Moreover Perry's conduct of the Chronicle as a party organ in the early 19th century was not wholly successful; he certainly established it as one of the best written and most respectable papers, but his coverage of the debates was frequently criticised, and after the agreement between the Foxites and Grenvilles in 1804, his opinions and editorials were, for the next two years, of considerably less interest to the whigs than those of Cobbett.

Perry's position as editor of the leading whig journal, allied to the strength of his political convictions, led him to be involved in various party and political activities, which illustrate both the intimacy of his connexions with the whigs, and the extent to which his political commitment took him beyond his mere duties as a journalist. In the summer of 1793 he helped Adam distribute literature relating to the appeal for the payment of Fox's debts, circulating advertisements throughout Britain, and sending copies of the proceedings to prominent

whigs. In the same year he acted as secretary to a meeting in support of the Polish cause at the Mansion House, at which £4,000 was subscribed.¹ In 1795 Perry managed a subscription for the relief of the radical Joseph Gerrald, who had been transported, and his illegitimate daughter; subscribers included Parr, Mackintosh, Holcroft and Godwin, and nearly £500 was raised.² Perry was also active as a steward at various whig dinners, such as those held to commemorate the elections of Lord William Russell for Surrey and Fox for Westminster.³ Although Perry did not hold an official position in the whig club, he was as its chief advertiser and reporter only second in importance as an intermediary and organizer to its secretary and treasurer. Holland in 1802 used Perry to mobilise the secretary of the club to consult with Fox on some unspecified activity, and when in 1806 Sheridan wanted to convene

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- 1.) Perry to Adam, 13, 27 June 1793, Blair-Adam MSS.; MC 25 Aug. 1814. Perry mentioned this when defending himself against a charge of being unsympathetic to Poland.
 - 2.) The administration of the subscription led to a prolonged disagreement between Perry, Parr and Mackintosh, which is clarified by Mackintosh in a statement which includes copies of two letters from Perry of 13 July 1803, and 6 May 1813. (16 Jan. 1822, Add. MSS. 52, 182 ff. 90-95; also Mackintosh to R. Sharp, 9 Dec. 1806, Parr to Mackintosh, 12 Dec. 1821, Add. MSS. 52, 451, f. 155, and 52, 453 unfol.)
 - 3.) Advertisements in MC 26 June 1797; 14 Sept. 1799.

a special meeting of the club, he suggested that Holland write to Perry as well as the regular officials.¹ Perry's constant attendance at the club, which met eight times a year, would have helped consolidate some of his useful contacts among the lower echelons of whig supporters. John Bellamy, the founder of the club, could as door-keeper of the Commons facilitate the passage of reporters to the gallery, while the solicitor, Thomas Lowten, one of the eight founding members, was a source of valuable legal counsel. Perry later testified to "the benefits we have derived from his able and honourable advice, in every instance in which any article in The Morning Chronicle was brought into discussion in Westminster Hall".² Perry once acted as a steward of the

1.) Perry to Holland, 25 April 1802, Add. MSS. 51, 822 f.99; Price, Letters of...Sheridan ii. 299.

2.) Obituary of Lowten in MC 3 Jan. 1814. Bellamy's death was announced in MC 30 Sept. 1794. Perry commissioned Flaxman to sculpt a monument in memory of Bellamy. (Farington Diary i. 162) The whig club flourished in the late 1790s, perhaps as a substitute for activity in parliament. Fifty new members were admitted in the first three months in 1796, and later entrants included the Duke of Northumberland and Holland. Two hundred were said to have attended in 1800. Activity declined after the peace of Amiens, the annual number of meetings was reduced from eight to six, allegedly owing to rising costs, and sometimes there was no report of a meeting in the Chronicle, though a revival occurred with Pitt's return to power. (MC 13 Jan., 3 Feb., 9 Mar., 9 Nov. 1796; 8 Nov. 1797; 2 April 1800; 2 June 1802; 9 May 1804). Fox remarked in 1796 "I really think it is a very useful institution and has contributed more than any thing to keep together the remains of our former Party out of Parliament." (Fox to Duke of Northumberland, 4 Sept. 1796, Alnwick MSS, microfilm no. 309).

club, and was in 1806 one of the nine members who called for a special meeting to consider ways of expressing their memory of Fox.¹ In 1802 Perry, as a freeholder of Middlesex, was invited by Burdett to assist at his election for that county, but it is not clear what form, if any, his activity took.² More definite evidence exists of Perry's intervention at a public meeting in Southwark in 1805. When an attempt was made to introduce a clause into an address to the King giving ministers some credit for the battle of Trafalgar, Perry was able to use his known friendship with Nelson to great effect. He claimed he had in his pocket "a letter from Lord Nelson, written a few days previous to the engagement, which, would have satisfied every [sic] man present, that the disposition of the naval force at that period deserved censure, not praise". Although, as was pointed out in the Courier, Perry's claim was inconsistent with earlier praise in the Chronicle of the Admiralty's positioning of the fleet, this inconsistency did not prompt any one at the meeting to ask Perry to produce the letter,

1.) MC 16 Nov. 1802; 20, 24 Sept. 1806. Perry was also a member of the small Fox Club, instituted in 1790. (Add. MSS. 51, 516 p.2. n.d.; T. Lowten to Adam, 6 Aug. 1799, Blair-Adam MSS.)

2.) MC 25 Feb. 1819. Perry recalled this when criticising Burdett.

and his intervention had the desired effect.¹ On at least two occasions in this period Perry co-operated with the whigs on issues which they were raising in parliament. In 1800 a bill was introduced for the incorporation of the London Flour Company, which was opposed by mill-owners as threatening a monopoly. As a mill-owner himself, Perry was particularly interested in opposing the measure, and he wrote several letters to Adam, who led the unsuccessful parliamentary opposition to the bill, enclosing information and asking for tactical advice. He even helped some of the bill's opponents in the Lords prepare their speeches: "I am making out" he wrote "a short paper of Observations on the Argument, or rather the declamation of Mr. Garrow, for the Duke of Clarence, the Earl of Westmoreland and others. - I wish... to press your reasoning on the disability of Magistrates who may be members of the Corporation. Where can I find the ground for it? What think you of the enclosed idea?"² It is rather surprising

1.) This episode was not reported in the Chronicle. Political Register 30 Nov. 1805, cols. 848-50; 14 Dec. 1805, col. 911; Courier 5 Dec. 1805. The Admiralty was praised in MC 12 Nov. 1805.

2.) Perry to Adam, 18 July 1800; also 2 June, 17 July 1800, Blair-Adam MSS. The other speakers Perry was helping were probably Lords Stanhope and Hobart. Garrow was counsel for the bill. A report of a Lords debate was given half the paper (MC 22 July 1800), but there were no editorials.

that Perry did not campaign against the bill in the Chronicle, but he may have feared exposing himself to criticisms of special pleading, and he was enough of a realist to appreciate the limitations of a newspaper's influence on such an issue. The other occasion occurred in 1804, when Perry supplied Whitbread with some detailed information about the Scottish Lord Advocate, Charles Hope, whom the whigs were attacking in parliament.¹ These instances are not of course an accurate reflection of the extent of Perry's party activity, for most of his contact with the whigs would have taken place through conversation and would not have been recorded in correspondence. Perry was in the regular habit of strolling round the heart of London's clubland, and visiting whig bookshops such as Becket's and Ridgeways's. One contemporary recalled how he "was every day to be seen in the sauntering lounge along Pall Mall and St. James's Street", collecting and exchanging information, and indeed he appears to have become something of a social institution, for Tierney twice alluded in his letters to this area of London as "Perry's highest circle".²

1.) Christie, Myth and Reality pp. 352-3.

2.) William Miller, Biographical Sketches of British Characters recently deceased (2 vols. 1826) i. 148; Tierney to Lady Holland, n.d. Frid. Add. MSS. 51, 586 f. 17; Tierney to Grey, 26 Sept. 1814, Grey MSS.

Holcroft noted in his Diary that Perry spoke to him at Debrett's "when he had done with Lords and M.P.'s", and Cobbett, with more acerbity, described Perry as standing "in a bookseller's shop, surrounded by a committee of gaping politicians" and "like Cato, giving laws to his little senate".¹

Perry's intimacy with the whigs was reflected in more than just his political and social activities. When he suffered commitment by the House of Lords in 1798 for a breach of privilege, they rallied round with considerable moral and legal support. Perry did not on this occasion have the benefit of Erskine's eloquence or of a jury as he had in 1793, and Lord Minto had no difficulty in gaining a large majority for his motion that a paragraph in the Chronicle suggesting that their Lordships attempted to vindicate their importance by regulating the length of the dresses at the opera, was a gross and scandalous libel upon the House. Perry pleaded in mitigation that he had been ignorant of the insertion of the offending paragraph, and the printer, Lambert, claimed he had unintentionally inserted it in the haste of going to press, but such arguments were to carry little weight until the libel act of the old Chronicle reporter Lord Campbell was passed in 1843. The Duke of Bedford and Lord Derby testified, from their personal knowledge, to the integrity of Perry's character, and

1.) Colby, Life of Thomas Holcroft ii. 147; Robert Huish, Memoirs of the late William Cobbett (2 vols. 1836) i. 406.

Lansdowne provocatively suggested that even a reprimand would be too severe. But most peers agreed with Lord Chancellor Loughborough that the paragraph was one of "impudent malignity", and Perry and Lambert were sentenced, by 69 votes to 11, to three months in Newgate and a fine of £50 each.¹ It is characteristic of Perry that he should have attempted to make a constitutional issue out of his imprisonment. He told Mrs. Adam that the Lords "have given me a great and a glorious question to try....I shall not cease to revere the true privileges of the House of Lords, because they may have in my instance gone further than their jurisdiction. I shall be solicitous only of settling a great point of the Constitution".² Within a few days of Perry's commitment, Erskine, Adam and Mackintosh had decided to enlist

1.) The libellous paragraph was in MC 19 Mar. 1798. Accounts of the proceedings against Perry on 22 Mar. are in Parliamentary History xxxiii. cols. 1310-1313; Parliamentary Register 3rd series, v.pp. 349-355; MC 26 Mar. 1798. Hunt and H.R. Fox Bourne are incorrect in saying Perry was committed for calling the Lords a Hospital of Incurables, or for supporting the French. (The Fourth Estate ii. 105; English Newspapers (2 vols. 1887) i. 266). Minto later shook hands with Perry on the dispute when they met at Nelson's house in 1805. (Minto, Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot iii. 370-1).

2.) Perry to Mrs. Adam, 24 Mar. 1798; Perry to Adam, 29 Mar. 1798, Blair-Adam MSS.

the aid of Holland and Lauderdale in petitioning the Lords on his behalf. Erskine failed to gain the assistance of the ex-Lord Chancellor Thurlow, but Fox responded to Perry's request for advice with a realistically pessimistic assessment of his chances of obtaining redress.¹ The lawyer and antiquarian Francis Hargrave was commissioned to draw up a detailed memorandum on the legal position, and he concluded that the only course would be to petition the Lords praying that Perry be heard by counsel against sentence on the grounds of error.² The projected petition, however, was never presented. Perry claimed that he did not wish to take up parliamentary time during the crisis of the Irish rebellion, and admitted that many supporters of the cause had retired to the country for the summer. Although readers were assured that the question was still under consideration, it is

1.) Adam to Holland, 28 Mar. 1798, Add. MSS. 51, 595 f. 46; Fox to Perry, 28 Mar. 1798, printed in MC 5 April 1810, when Burdett's commitment raised similar questions. Fox thought there might be a case for a civil action for false imprisonment, but that there was no hope of gaining satisfaction from parliament.

2.) Hargrave's memorandum, 20 May 1798, Add. MSS. 51, 821 ff. 102-140; Perry to Adam, 27, 28 May 1798, Blair-Adam MSS. Hargrave thought it possible to dispute the Lords' right of committing for libel while also imposing a fine.

clear that the whigs had decided the petition had no chance of success.¹ Perry thus failed to strike a blow for the liberty of the press, as he had in 1793, and was to do in 1810, but he received some consolation from the solicitous concern shown by the whigs. On one occasion Erskine took the members of a club dining at the British Coffee House along to Newgate to toast Perry in prison; the whig club paid him due honour at one meeting; and the Fox Club presented him with a cup to commemorate his imprisonment.²

Although Perry was on intimate social terms with some of the leading whigs, and sometimes co-operated in their political activity, he was anxious not to allow this involvement to undermine his independence as a journalist, and reduce him to the status of a mere party hack. So long as the party was more or less united by the dominating figure of Fox, Perry did not feel it necessary to make the public declarations of independence which he was to make in later years, and indeed he made no explicit admission of disagreement

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- 1.) MC 14 June 1798. The Duke of Leeds refused to present the petition (Perry to Leeds, 4 June 1798, Add. MSS. 28, 067 ff. 190-1). In Dec. 1798 Thomas Bigge advised Wyvill to expunge a passage in his pamphlet on the Lords, lest he meet the same fate as Perry (Wyvill, Political Papers vi.32).
- 2.) Henry Angelo, Reminiscences (2 vols. 1828-30) ii. 314-15; MC 5 April, 1798; T. Lowten to Adam, 6 Aug. 1799, Blair-Adam MSS. Perry took exercise in Newgate by playing the highland broadsword on the roof. (Angelo, op.cit. 312-3).

with the whigs while Fox was alive. There are indications, however, that Perry was disappointed by the Foxite secession from parliament after the failure of Grey's motion for reform in May 1797. It is difficult to believe that the editor of a newspaper, dedicated to supporting a party and reporting the speeches of its members could have welcomed a defeatist attitude which not only negated the journalist's axiomatic belief that public opinion could be influenced by rational argument, but which also tended to undermine the sale of the party paper. Perry of course realised that openly to criticise the secession would do no good either to himself or the party, and on the face of it he was loyal to Fox's withdrawal. After the meeting of parliament in November 1797 Perry defended secession on the grounds that opposition was unavailing against Pitt's massive majorities, and he even went so far as to argue that it was disliked by ministers, who felt their measures had a better appearance when carried after a full debate than when unopposed. Perry also admitted in passing that Foxite opinions were at a discount in the country. Whereas in 1796 Fox's views on the war were claimed to be the "generally received opinions of a great majority of the country", Perry admitted in a report of a meeting of the whig club in 1798 that such views were out of fashion.¹ On the other hand, it is significant that Perry's

1.) MC 16 Nov. 1797; 25 May, 13 Sept. 1796; 5 Dec. 1798.

first comment on the secession expressed neither approval nor disapproval, but described the political prospect as gloomy now that the nation was deprived of the counsels of its best men. Fox's occasional interruptions of his domestic tranquillity were greeted by Perry with great satisfaction, as on the Irish debate in 1798, and at the end of that year it was remarked in the Chronicle that "it would be almost a sufficient Reform of Parliament to bring it to constant attendance".¹ Fox did not attend parliament at all in 1799, only once in 1800, and only three times in 1801, and after the assumption of office by Addington, whom Perry saw as the incompetent cypher of Pitt, there were several leaders in the Chronicle calling for greater vigilance towards the executive. Perry denied that Addington should be given the customary fair trial, and while admitting that the peace preliminaries could not be opposed in principle, urged that they should be criticised in detail, and warned that to give Addington a general confidence because of the peace would be to hazard what remained of the Commons' control of the government.² This attitude reflected not only Perry's frustration at Fox's passivity, but also his disappointment at the sympathy some whigs such as Tierney, Sheridan and Erskine had for Addington, though he made little explicit comment on the activities of this group, just as he had been silent on Tierney's activity in the late 1790s, since he did not want to draw attention to

1.) MC 27 July 1797; 19 June, 31 Dec. 1798.

2.) MC 6 July, 10, 14 Aug., 23 Sept., 14 Nov. 1801.

whig disunity. At the root of Perry's resentment of the opposition's lack of vigour was his traditional whig obsession with the danger of a powerful executive. Perry took the classical liberal view that political parties were the safeguard of liberty, and could enlighten public opinion without necessarily endangering the efficiency and stability of the state. In a leader regretting the indifference in the debates on the peace, he argued "It certainly is not to be desired that the measures of Government should be embarrassed by a captious or even general Opposition, provided a laudable system be generally pursued: but it is highly advantageous to the State that Ministers should be watched with a Constitutional jealousy. Entire unanimity, either with regard to general politics or particular measures, is neither to be expected, nor, perhaps, to be wished in this country. Differences of opinion, parties, and divisions..... are very salutary. They tend to the conservation of the true principles of our Government".¹ Nearly twenty years later, during the passage of the six acts after Peterloo, Perry's real opinion on secession was expressed with a clarity which would have been impossible while Fox was alive. An editorial welcomed the refusal of the electors of Westminster and Southwark to instruct their members to secede with the observation: "Good men may despair of public affairs; but it is not the part of a wise and good

1.) MC 20 Nov. 1801.

man to act on so unmanly a sentiment;..... there is no period of our history when a constitutional Opposition in Parliament has not been of service to public liberty".¹ There is no evidence that the Foxites detected the note of criticism in Perry's attitude towards the secession, but it does appear that the diminution of political activity made them less informative than usual. On several occasions when discussing opposition tactics Perry added such qualifications as "We do not affect to speak as in the confidence of the Gentlemen who have seceded" and "We know nothing more than what has come to our knowledge by mere report".² These were frank admissions from the editor of a newspaper which would have been read by many seeking authoritative announcements of whig activities, and they corroborate the impression that Perry was rather disillusioned with the party's lack of activity in parliament and the press at this time.

A more explicit deviation from Foxite orthodoxy occurred in the Chronicle in 1802 in the form of leaders by Spankie advocating a more belligerent line towards France. The peace preliminaries had been initially welcomed in the Chronicle, but after a couple of days it had, as Cobbett remarked, "retracted its approbation, too hastily bestowed", and it was argued that better terms could have been obtained, and at earlier times.³ This line was anti-ministerial rather than

1.) MC 13 Dec. 1819. The editorial was probably by Black, but there is no reason to suppose it did not reflect Perry's views.

2.) MC 16 Nov. 1797; 24 Feb. 1801; also 23 Nov. 1798.

3.) MC 3, 5 Oct. 1802; The Windham Papers ii. 174.

anti-French, but early in 1802 there was a hardening in the editorial policy towards France. Several leaders deplored Bonaparte's "shameful and disgusting rapacity of ambition" reflected in his annexation of Piedmont and consolidation of his authority in Italy; it was regretted that the government intended to abandon Malta which was essential as a base to check French designs on Egypt and Turkey, and Addington was urged to promote co-operation between Russia and Austria as a check on France in Europe.¹ No attempt was made to court the new opposition "We have nothing in common with the WINDHAMS and the GRENVILLES" it was affirmed "But are we to be told by Frenchmen, or by Englishmen, that we are not to lament the aggrandisement, or arraign the usurpations of France?"² In the following autumn, when Fox was travelling in France, and was to return more convinced than ever of Bonaparte's pacific intentions and of the desirability of maintaining peace, Spankie wrote a series of long editorials advocating in general terms the promotion of a continental coalition against France. The connexion between France and Russia offset the insularity of the government's foreign policy, and in September Spankie asserted that "We have an interest wherever it is practicable to oppose the extension and aggrandisement of France. This can only be done by a judicious

1.) MC 8, 16 Feb., 11 Mar. 1802.

2.) MC 22 Mar. 1802.

alliance with those constitutional powers which have the same interest to pursue". It was argued that Bonaparte's annexation of Piedmont ought to have provoked a just war, for he was being allowed gradually to erode Britain's position, while the ministers did not have the stature or influence to form any continental connexions.¹ In November, shortly before Fox's return from France, Spankie replied to an article in the Moniteur on Britain's policy against France in Europe during the last century: "Did Great Britain never interfere in the affairs of the Continent but when she had a direct territorial right?... what direct interest had we in the war of the succession? Did Europe then think our interference degrading? Did the Emperor of Germany feel our aid destructive when an English army saved his crown in the glorious battle of Blenheim?" Measures to contain France's European expansion, it was claimed, "We ever thought.... were of more importance, even to us, than a sugar or a spice island; and if the last war had been begun, or conducted on proper principles, might have been continued for such objects".² This was strong language indeed for a Foxite paper, and it did not pass unnoticed. The Duke of Orleans expressed himself "much pleased" with an article in the Chronicle which argued that the Bourbons should be protected by the English government so long

1.) MC 21, 30 Sept., 16 Oct. 1802.

2.) MC 2 Nov. 1802; also 4, 9 Nov. 1802.

as they did not have hostile designs against France; while Cobbett quoted several of the editorials in full in his Grenvillite Register, showing how closely one of them reflected Windham's arguments against the peace.¹ At the same time Coleridge published a couple of pseudonymous letters in the Morning Post attacking Fox's attitude towards France, which explains Creevey's misapprehension of the 8th November that the Chronicle and Post were in the pay of the Grenvilles.² It is clear that there was no Grenvillite contact with the editors of the Chronicle, for when only a week later Parry or Spankie attempted to provoke some opposition to the re-election of the ministerial candidate as speaker by puffing Thomas Grenville for the post, Thomas Grenville complained that the Chronicle was trying to make him speaker when he had no intention of standing.³ With Fox's return to England in mid-November the belligerent leaders ceased.

1.) H.M.C. R.R. Hastings (1934) iii. 221; MC 17 Sept. 1802; Cobbett's Annual Register 25 Sept., 2 Oct., 6 Nov. 1802, cols. 362, 411-16, 554-58.

2.) Morning Post 4, 7 Nov. 1802; French Laurence thought the letters "very powerful, though a little overlaboured" (Laurence to Fitzwilliam, 15 Nov. 1802, Fitzwilliam MSS. N.R.O. Box 61); Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 281.

3.) MC 15, 16 Nov. 1802; H.M.C. Dropmore vii. 127.

It is not clear if he had any influence in this, though he did complain that the press was giving the misleading impression that public opinion favoured war.¹ Perry soon made it clear that he had no sympathy with the Grenvilles or their foreign policy. Whereas in early November it had been claimed that war would not be unpopular, by late December it was asserted that people wanted peace, and the new opposition were attacked as "destitute of public principle", interested only in gaining office regardless of whether catholic emancipation, the pretext of their resignation, could be implemented. "There is no dignity, no fortitude in the conduct of the new opposition. It is the importunate clamorous cowardice of a base rabble, who think they are wise when they censure with vehemence, and brave because they would plunge into the most rash and intemperate measures".² While Bonaparte was still criticised for his encroachments on the peace, no measures were urged against him,

1.) Fox to Holland, 21 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS. 47, 574 f. 214; he made a similar complaint in Jan. 1803, (Russell, Memorials and Correspondence iii. 209.), He appears to have noticed Coleridge's letters, for he said "You know that I have done with Politicks and I should hope that my general Reputation will not be much affected by Newspaper Paragraphs." (Fox to O'Bryen, 19 Nov. 1802, Add. MSS. 47, 566 f. 126).

2.) MC 30 Dec. 1802; 14 Feb. 1803.

and when war was renewed in May 1803 Perry anticipated Fox's line in denying that Malta was worth a resumption of hostilities, and supported the proposal for Russian mediation.¹

By the beginning of 1804 Fox and Grenville had agreed to co-operate in a systematic opposition to overthrow Addington and form a broad-bottomed administration. It might be expected that Perry would have had some reservations about this alliance, in the light of the Grenville's war-like record, and their conservatism on parliamentary and economical reform. But once war had been resumed in May 1803, the imminent threat of invasion made the Grenvilles' vigour seem more justifiable, and the prospect of forming a ministry which could carry catholic emancipation was much more important, particularly after the disturbances in Ireland, than retaining one's theoretical purity on a dormant issue like reform. Perry and Spankie urged that the war be conducted with vigour, rejecting Addington's defensive strategy as too prolonged and expensive, and though they admitted that it was difficult to propose an alternative one, there was some talk of using Britain's naval power to launch military expeditions.² There was also a revival of interest in the catholic question after Emmet's rebellion, which was marked by a series of five letters in the Chronicle from "An Impartial Observer" sympathetic to the catholic cause; these stimulated other

1.) MC 7 Jan., 7 Feb., 10 Mar., 20, 23, 30 May 1803.

2.) MC 20 June, 20 Aug. 1803.

correspondence, including a letter urging Moira to come out against Addington in the catholics' favour.¹ At the end of December 1803 there were a couple of long articles in the Chronicle paving the way for the impending agreement between Fox and Grenville and even for a coalition including Pitt. It was argued in general terms that whilst the preservation of party was essential to liberty, a coalition was justifiable in a crisis as in 1757, and that an alliance between great men such as Fox, Pitt and Grenville would be more probably founded on public principle than one between men like Addington and Tierney. Rejecting the aims of the present government, which were "the attainment of particular ends, the protection of a favourite, the prolongation of a low piddling system of administration", the editors called for a "bold, vigorous Government, founded upon the union of all the talents fitted to serve the country, at this time of peril and difficulty". The articles were noted by the Marquis of Buckingham, who observed sarcastically to Lord Grenville that he was sure Addington would find them very gratifying.² Although Perry thus welcomed the Fox-Grenville agreement as conducive to the eventual formation of a coalition government, he never explicitly admitted

1.) MC 29 Aug., 12, 27 Sept., 26 Oct., 4 Nov. 1803, and 29 Sept. 1803.

2.) MC 28, 30 Dec. 1803; the first article was said to be by a correspondent. The need for a coalition of talents had been mentioned before in MC 11, 14 Mar. 1803, and was repeated in MC 10 April, 4 May 1804; H.M.C. Dropmore vii. 203.

that it existed, and indeed he published five division lists of March 1804 in an attempt to show that none of the different groups in opposition were co-operating, but that they simply shared no confidence in Addington, with the assurance that where Fox "has concurred with persons who heretofore held opinions opposite to us, it was on topics congenial to the uniform sentiments of his life".¹ No doubt Perry wished to avoid confronting the latent but real differences of opinion between the Foxites and Grenvilles, and wanted to scotch any rumours that Fox was co-operating with Pitt, though he was quite prepared to countenance such co-operation once it had taken the form of a coalition ministry, since it was easier to defend a sacrifice of principle once it had been compensated by the attainment of office.

While Perry was realistic enough to share Fox's rejection of the old Rockinghamite view that the whigs should only take office if they controlled all the important cabinet places, he showed less realism in his attempts to explain why Fox was proscribed from the Addington and second Pitt ministries. It was axiomatic to Perry, as to all good whigs, that the King had a responsible adviser for every act, and could therefore do no wrong himself. This tenet was useful in enabling loyalty to the King to be reconciled with opposition to his ministers. Perry sometimes stressed that certain measures, such

1.) MC 9 April, 1804.

as the dismissal of Fox from the privy council in 1798, were taken on the advice of ministers "that his MAJESTY may not be implicated in the odium of the act".¹ However it was unsatisfactory to Perry to have to attribute the long exclusion of Fox from office to the opinions of ministers, since their parliamentary majorities pointed to the conclusion that Fox was excluded for the very good reason that he was not widely supported in the country. It was much more acceptable to ascribe the proscription to the machinations of secret advisers who were misleading both King and ministers. Perry had partly attributed the Pitt-Portland coalition to their influence in 1794, but apart from one reference to them during the passage of the 'Two Acts' in 1795,² they had not been called upon as an explanation of political developments in the 1790s. When it was rumoured in March 1803 that Addington's ministry would be reconstructed on the basis of

1.) MC 12 May 1798; it was said with regard to Ireland in 1797 that readers would know "how to distinguish between his MAJESTY'S real sentiments, and the measures which his servants call upon him to countenance with his sacred name." (MC 27 Mar. 1797). Perry criticised Fitzwilliam for insulting the memory of Rockingham by claiming that he accepted the Lord-Lieutenancy of the West Riding by command of the King alone, which was impossible, since the King could act only on ministerial advice. (MC 16 Feb. 1798).

2.) MC 5 Dec. 1795.

the exclusion of Fox and Pitt, Perry warned that it would lead to "the completion of that plan of policy, so admirably exposed by Mr. Burke, in his "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents", by which the favour of the Court has been substituted for the opinion of the People in the choice of Ministers; and the House of Commons, instead of a controul, is become (we fear irrevocably!) the uniform and the willing instruments [sic] of the power of any set of ministers the Crown may name". Perry did not enlarge on this, but when war was renewed two months later, he traced its underlying cause to the nature of Addington's ministry, which he saw as the nominal part of a double cabinet, and "the progeny of a system, which, for upwards of forty years, has operated as a dead rot onthe constitution of this country". Burke's Thoughts were again cited to show how the system of the double cabinet rendered the executive ineffective, and made it the prey to the machinations of foreign powers.¹ It is rather surprising to find Perry resuscitating Burke's ideas so faithfully, for while it is understandable that the events of 1782-84 should make a whig indelibly impressed with the danger of the influence of the crown exercised in parliament and at elections, it is less easy to understand why Perry

1.) MC 16 Mar., 23 May 1803; for a discussion of Burke's Thoughts see Christie, title essay in, Myth and Reality pp. 27-54; John Brewer, "Party and the Double Cabinet: Two Facets of Burke's Thoughts" Historical Journal xiv. Sept. 1971 pp. 479-501.

should revive doctrines promulgated over thirty years ago, which had never been generally accepted at that time on account of their vagueness and implausibility. Perhaps such a conspiratorial interpretation of politics was the only consoling explanation as to how a statesman of Fox's calibre could remain on the sidelines while the ministry was led by a man of such moderate abilities as Addington. As Addington's parliamentary position deteriorated in April 1804, the spectre of secret advisers was raised again, and readers were reminded that "to drive men of honour from the public service, has been the constant invariable aim of that court faction, which has been whispering its pernicious counsels in the ear of the Sovereign, more or less, during the whole course of his reign", and it was the task of the opposition "to vindicate the principles of the constitution, against that most dangerous assumption of the present reign, that any creature of the court may be the Minister of Great Britain against the voice of the Representatives of the People".¹ When it was clear that Fox had been proscribed, Perry denied that it was due to any objection on the part of the King, for he would put his duty before his personal feelings, as George II had done with Chatham. Thus although the King was to express a preference for civil war to having Fox in his cabinet, Perry affirmed "Let it not be believed by the nation that the KING is to blame... Let them enquire who have been the KING'S counsellors, who only have had

1.) MC 23 April, 1 May 1804.

access to his closet; who are the makers of the New Administration".¹ Perry's implausible interpretation was shared by Lord Archibald Hamilton, the whig member for Lanarkshire, who published a pamphlet arguing along similar lines, parts of which were quoted in the Chronicle.² The main weakness of Perry's explanation was its vagueness, for the identity and motives of the court faction were never explored. It was implied during the Addington ministry that the secret advisers were Pitt and Dundas, who by directing measures out of office had established a double cabinet; but once Pitt had resumed office he was himself portrayed as the victim of a court faction, though there was no explanation as to why he should change from an eminence grise to a mere nominal minister.³ Nor was it very convincing to ascribe Fox's prescription to secret advisers, while admitting Eldon to be a leading

1.) MC 11, 15 May 1804.

2.) MC 8 June 1804; Lord Archibald Hamilton, Thoughts on the formation of the late and present Administrations. (1804).

3.) MC 16 Nov. 1801, 11 May, 9 June 1802, 22, 23 May, 5 Oct. 1804, 2, 24 Jan. 1805. During Pitt's second ministry, it was said that the dismissal of Lord Amherst as a Lord of the Bedchamber and the refusal of a garter to the Marquis of Stafford were "a smart warning to Courtiers and Placemen to look to the secret advisers of the Crown for orders, instead of the ostensible Minister." (Ibid.)

influence in the matter, for as Lord Chancellor he was the traditional intermediary in ministerial negotiations and keeper of the King's conscience, and could in no way be portrayed as a sinister influence.¹ It is most unlikely that Perry wholly believed what he said, but saw it as useful propaganda which could have a particular appeal to the older generation of whigs. There was perhaps a note of disbelief in the assertion in 1805 that although the King did have objections to emancipation, if any restrictions were imposed on its discussion in parliament "it is the sound theory and wholesome practice of this country to impute them to evil counsellors".² The hollow appeal to "sound theory and wholesome practice" may indicate that Perry was well aware that the real obstacle to Fox's inclusion in the cabinet and to

1.) MC 4 June, 13 July 1804. It was said Eldon "finding himself unequal to the custody of two consciences at once,... most charitably abandons the care of his own."

2.) MC 16 Mar. 1805. It was claimed in 1801 that the King could, constitutionally speaking, have no opinion on emancipation, and that he was betrayed by Pitt's resignation, which made him appear an obstacle to the cause. (MC 14 Feb., 12 Mar. 1801). A series of articles by "A consistent whig," on the prerogative of choosing ministers, mocked the view that the prerogative was absolute, without explaining who held this view other than certain unidentified courtiers. (MC 10, 17, 21 July, 27, 30 Aug., 14, 20 Sept. 1804.).

catholic emancipation was not a court faction, but the personal opinions of George III.

The extent of whig activity in influencing the press in the decade after 1795, and more particularly the attention paid to the Chronicle, does not appear to have been proportionate to the whigs' declarations of intent. There is evidence to show that they were very conscious of the need to use the press for propaganda, and regretted that they were dependent on the efforts of only one paper in their cause; but lack of funds and the failure of the party's writers to exert themselves meant, with two exceptions in 1804 and '5, that most activity was spasmodic and ineffective. In March 1798 Holland had suggested that an opposition paper should counteract the "great mischief" perpetrated by the Anti-Jacobin, a biting and witty weekly paper conducted under the aegis of Canning. But Fox's lame response was "I wish as much as you do that some paper were set up against the Antijacobin but do not know whom to spirit up to it", and it does not appear that any action was taken.¹ Within a few months the whigs had despaired of achieving anything through the press: Fox thought the conviction of the publisher of Gilbert Wakefield's reply to the address of the Bishop of Llandaff was

1.) Holland to Fox, n.d., Fox to Holland, 4 Mar. 1798, Add. MSS. 47, 573 ff. 26, 21.

"decisive against the liberty of the press; and indeed after it, one can hardly conceive how any prudent tradesman can venture to publish any thing that can in any way be disagreeable to ministers".¹

An evening paper, the Albion, was established in 1799, which Cartwright described in 1801 as worthy of support since it was "the only Paper that will publish constitutional truth attended with any hazard of offending the Abuses of Power". It was however much too radical for the whigs; Charles Lamb described its editor John Fenwick as an "infatuated Democrat", and admitted that "Perry, in common with the great body of the whigs, thinks 'the Albion' very low". It never

1.) Frances Cartwright ed., Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright (2 vols. 1826) i. 248-9; Fox to O'Bryen, 28 July 1798, Add. MSS. 47, 566 f.19. Wakefield had argued the poor would lose nothing by a French invasion, and was himself imprisoned for two years in 1799. For other comments on the end of the liberty of the press in 1799, see Wyvill, Political Papers vi. 43-8, and part ii. 29, 41.

appears to have been successful, and collapsed in August 1801 when Lord Stanhope withdrew his patronage because he objected to an attack on Mackintosh for apostasy.¹ With the revival of whig activity early in 1802 there was some revival of concern about the press. Fox had recognised in 1801 that "It must be from movements out of doors and not in parliament that opposition can ever gain any strength", and in 1802 he wrote to his man of business, Dennis O'Bryen "I suppose I am right about Perry's being the only friendly paper, if so would it be worth while to try to get possession of any other?" O'Bryen's answer does not survive, but he would probably have agreed with Whitbread's statement of the problem: "we are miserably deficient in the Press, but without Funds what can be done in that or any other Way, and where are we to find the Funds?"² The fact was

1.) Ibid. vi. 255; Lucas, Letters of Charles Lamb i. 263-6, 273. Lamb thought it had 22 readers at the end, which included its printer, four pressmen, and a devil. Fenwick set up another paper, the Plough, apparently with the support of the Duke of Northumberland, but it rapidly failed, and the remainder of his life was one of drunkenness and debt. (Lucas, op.cit. i. 289, 291, 332, 353-4, 417; A.F. Wedd, The Fate of the Fenwicks (1927) x, 80; Paul, William Gedwin; his Friends and Contemporaries ii. 62).

2.) Archibald Foord, His Majesty's Opposition 1714-1830 (Oxford 1964) p. 408; Fox to O'Bryen, 24 Dec. 1802, Add. MSS. 47, 566 f. 134; Whitbread to Grey, 31 Mar. 1802, Grey MSS. A ministerial informant wrote [1802-3] "The Funds of the Whig club are low; but hope, tho' long deferred, still retains several of its literary adherents." (History of the Times i. 453).

that without an organizer such as the party had had in William Adam in the 1780s, there was no one to raise money or to co-ordinate propaganda, and the party was dependent on the half-hearted initiatives of its leading members. Fox's interest in procuring another paper appears to have been prompted, not by any plan for influencing public opinion on major issues, but by the fear that he was going to be the object of a personal attack in the press, and the chief counter-measure which he suggested was a large meeting to celebrate his birthday. Indeed it seems unlikely that Fox was ever much interested, except on rare occasions, either in reading or in influencing newspapers, for he could pick up political information from his friends, and his forte was making speeches, not writing articles. While still in retirement in 1801 he had remarked "the Paper I take is the English Chronicle.... which I get on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays which is quite often enough for me", and in 1803 and '5 he admitted that he was but "a careless Reader" of newspapers and that he saw "no newspapers that speak of Politicks".¹

1.) Fox to O'Bryen, 7 Jan. 1801, 17 July 1805, Add. MSS. 47, 566 ff. 65, 216; Fox to Holland, 16 Oct. 1803, Add. MSS. 47, 575 f. 71. In 1794 his aunt Lady Sarah Napier said Fox "litterally knows nothing at St. Anne's Hill;...he has but one newspaper which tells nothing but about the war." (Lady Ilchester and Lord Stavordale ed., Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox 1745-1826 (2 vols. 1901) ii.116). In 1797 Fox said the Chronicle was the only paper he had seen "& which indeed I have not read very attentively." (Russell, Memorials and Correspondence iii. 274). But in 1800 W.G. Adam said Fox read the newspaper aloud at breakfast "all through except the debates". (R.H.M.B. Atkinson and G.A. Jackson ed., Brougham and his Early Friends (3 vols. 1908) i. 130.)

The whigs showed no more vigour with regard to the press in 1803 than they had in 1802, despite the need to counter the belligerent tone of the majority of papers on the question of the renewal of war. Holland wrote from Madrid that all the newspapers seemed to be as aggressive as Cobbett, and he complained that "Had the friends of peace attended a little more to the press during the short interval of peace I think this cursed renewal of war would never have taken place". Although this was an exaggeration, it was true that Perry was the only editor who took Fox's line on the resumption of hostilities, for the whigs had failed to enlist the support of another paper. Nor was Holland satisfied with the whigs' attention to domestic issues for he complained to Fox "As to home politics I can not help thinking that your friends are very negligent in not supplying Mr. Perry with better articles".¹ The only evidence of activity by Fox in the press in this year concerns his wish to have the Prince of Wales "a little puffed, and if in the M[ornin]g. Chronicle, all the better", with a view to increasing support for his claims to military rank.² It was not however until nearly a month after Fox's

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- 1.) Holland to Fox, n.d. [July 1803], 21 July 1803, Add. MSS. 47, 575 ff. 62-3, 59. Robert Adair was writing "dull discourses" in the Chronicle at this time. (Horner to J.A.Murray, 11 June 1803, Horner MSS. vol.ii.f.25.)
- 2.) Fox to O'Bryen, 8 July, 14 Aug. 1803, Add. MSS. 47, 566 ff. 145, 151.

first instructions to O'Bryen on this matter that some paragraphs appeared in the Chronicle praising the Prince for his offer of military service and his many "exalted virtues". At the end of the year Perry also published some correspondence between the Prince, the King, the Duke of York and Addington concerning the Prince's claims, which Perry said had come into his hands "by chance", but which appears to have been given to several editors for publication. It is not clear what effect this publicity had, but Grey for one expressed considerable surprise and feared that it would not meet with general approval.¹

It was not until 1804, when the recurrence of the King's illness raised the possibility of a regency, and the return of Pitt saw the formation of a ministry with a vulnerable parliamentary majority, that the whigs made some concerted attempt to disseminate propaganda through the press. Fox had discovered to his cost early in 1804 that the party still had no influence over any papers other than the Chronicle. A controversy had arisen over the Irish rebellion of 1803 with respect to the conduct of Fox's brother Henry, who had been commander-in-chief, and of Hardwicke, the Lord-Lieutenant. Fox had cited in parliament a note from Hardwicke to his brother which showed that Hardwicke had underestimated the danger of rebellion, but the authenticity of the note had been disputed. Fox was therefore delighted when Perry

1.) MC 5, 6, 13, 25-27 Aug., 7 Dec. 1803; Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 282; Grey to Thomas Bigge, end. 11 Dec. 1803, Grey MSS.

published a letter from an anonymous Irish peer which quoted Hardwicke's note, and he instructed O'Bryen to have the letter inserted in other papers. It is clear, however, that O'Bryen was unable to do this, and Fox was forced to conclude "Let the press be never so corrupt, I think the letter may be reprinted in the M[orning] C[hronicle] and that will do".¹ With the King's relapse a few weeks later, in February 1804, Fox stressed the need for the party to gain the support of at least one evening paper, and thought it would be possible to obtain an office for organizing propaganda in the press at the bookshop of Thomas Becket, where the whigs had had a room in the 1780s.²

1.) The letter appeared in MC 31 Dec. 1803, and the substance of it was reprinted in MC 2 Feb. 1804; see also MC 22 Dec. 1803. Fox to O'Bryen, 13, 19, 24, 29 Jan. 1804, Add. MSS. 47, 566 ff.174-5, 180, 182; the original letter is in Ibid.f.170.

2.) "I wish to have some talk with you about Newspapers. I hear the Herald's off, there should be one Evening Paper at least either daily or 3 times a week. I believe we shall get an establishment at Becket's again or something of the sort." (Fox to O'Bryen, n.d. [Feb. 1804], Add. MSS. 47, 566 f. 204.) The reference to the Herald suggests that the whigs had attempted to gain its support. An attempt may have been made to regain the support of the evening Star. "I take in the Star but do not observe as yet that we have any hold there." (Fox to R. Adair, p.m. 4 July 1804, Add. MSS. 47, 565 f. 250).

It does not appear that either of these suggestions were implemented, and nor does it seem that Fox was successful in drawing any more attention to the King's illness in the press than would have been given in the normal course of affairs. Fox told O'Bryen that "there should be every day in some of the papers some mention of, or allusion to the K[ing]'s madness", phrased with appropriate discretion. Perry did not fail to take a suitably respectful but pessimistic line on the King's illness; he mentioned some of the symptoms, doubted if there were much hope of a perfect recovery, and stressed that should the illness be prolonged "it will be absolutely necessary for the public safety to supply the temporary suspension of the Executive power. It is not now as in the year 1788, when we were at peace with all the world".¹ But Perry did not exploit the situation with a battery of leading articles, and although the King was recovering by the middle of March, Grey thought that there was still scope for making political capital out of his illness and the weakness of Addington's government. He told Fox that it would be useful to raise the subject in the press, whether or not it ultimately became a question in parliament, and wrote to Whitbread in a similar vein: there should he said, be "a good deal of discussion in the public Prints. This is always too much neglected by us, and I am sure I don't know who would undertake the management of this department; but it is nonsense

1.) Fox to O'Bryen, n.d. [Feb. 1804], Add. MSS. 47, 566 f. 204;

MC 15-18 Feb. 1804.

to think of a regular and systematic opposition without it". Fox promised that he would endeavour to implement Grey's suggestion, and agreed with Grey that Philip Francis would be the most suitable man for the task.¹ But there is no evidence that any action was taken, and it is unlikely that Francis contributed anything to the press at this time in the light of his remark to Lord Thanet on 17 May that "the Newspapers tell you Lies enough without my Interference". There was no intensification of discussion in the Chronicle, and it was not until a fortnight after Grey's suggestion that a leader appeared raising the question of the King's health.²

A couple of months later, in June, the whigs had more success in organizing some contributions to the Chronicle. Encouraged no doubt by Pitt's difficulties in getting his Additional Force Bill through parliament, several of the large whig circle of lawyers and wits met at Fitzwilliam's town house to discuss the possibility of forming a club to write pamphlets and contribute articles to the press. Francis Horner doubted if the idea would have much success,

1.) Grey to Fox, 23 Mar. 1804, Grey MSS: Grey to Whitbread, 26 Mar. [1804], Whitbread MSS.; Fox to Grey, 28 Mar. 1804, Grey MSS.

2.) Francis and Keary, Francis Letters ii. 570-1; MC 9 April 1804. Attention was distracted from domestic politics by the kidnapping of the Duke of Enghien- "Nothing which has occurred for a long time past has excited so much sensation." (MC 3, 4, April 1804).

and thought that of the several potential contributors - himself, Joseph Jekyll, Lord John Townshend, and Richard Fitzpatrick - only Jekyll actually wrote anything.¹ But it seems probable, judging from the flood of squibs, epigrams, and satirical articles in the Chronicle between the end of June and the middle of July, that several whigs contributed, and there is some confirmation of this in Caroline Fox's comment that "A club of wits have set up their standard at Bude in Pall Mall from whence they have begun to annoy the Enemy with squibs and crackers, in aid of the Dinners at Carlton House."² The campaign had some effect, for after only a couple of days the ministerial True Briton carried a warning to the editors of the Chronicle that they risked prosecution if they continued to publish such libels. But Perry and Spankie were not intimidated, and there was a steady flow of anti-ministerial satire in the Chronicle until towards the end of July when interest became focused on Burdett's campaign in the Middlesex election. The prose contributions which were sometimes nearly two columns long were particularly effective. Jekyll wrote three articles making fun of a subscription for a statue of Pitt, which Caroline Fox thought were good, and he

1.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 283; but Horner told Jeffrey that Fitzpatrick had written an epigram on Lord Amherst. (2 July 1804, Horner MSS. vol.ii.f.127).

2.) Caroline Fox to Holland, 23 July 1804, Add. MSS. 51, 737 f. 71.

may also have been the author of an amusing article which purported to defend Pitt's resumption of power, but damned him by ironic praise.¹ This satirical campaign was successful enough for it to be revived in April in the following year when Melville's activities as treasurer of the navy were exposed in parliament. The whigs raised over £300 at Brookes's to finance a press campaign against the man whom they thought epitomised all that was worst about the Pitt system, and there was a series of articles in the Chronicle which gloated with merciless relish over Melville's impending political decease, under such headings as "Melville's Last Moments!" by Jekyll, "Lord Melville's Will" by John Campbell and "Coroner's Inquest".² There were also some squibs which Caroline Fox thought "very good"; and though she said she could not identify the best wit, she mentioned that some Scotch ballads were by Lord John Townshend, and that Jekyll was the author of a verse lamenting a possible tax on oil and vinegar, called "The Tears of the Crewets". Cobbett thought this latter verse worthy of quotation in

1.) Daily Advertiser, Oracle and True Briton 30 June 1804; "The Feast of the Statue" in MC 27 June, 6, 12 July 1804; "The Colonel and the Doctor" in MC 19 July 1804.

2.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 284; MC 13, 17 April, 21 May 1805; Caroline Fox to Holland, 24 April [1805], Add. MSS. 51, 737 f. 183; Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell, i.169.

his Register, and it seems certain that Campbell was not being unduly partisan in claiming that such efforts gained the Chronicle "much credit".¹

Although the years 1804 and '5 were good ones for Perry in that they saw real attempts by the whigs to exploit the improvement in the political situation by using the Chronicle as a medium of satirical propaganda, they also marked a relative deterioration in his position as the most influential whig journalist. After the agreement between Fox and Grenville, early in 1804 Cobbett's Register, which had hitherto been Grenvillite, came to be regarded by the whigs as the most effective opposition journal. The wealth of testimonies from Fox, Holland and others to the power and influence of Cobbett's writing show that for a couple of years, until Cobbett turned against the Talents ministry early in 1806, the Register dominated the field of political journalism. This was in part due to the fact that as editor of a weekly paper Cobbett had the time and space to develop detailed arguments on the questions of the day, whereas the Chronicle was of necessity primarily a vehicle of news rather than comment. Perry had admitted this after the suspension of cash payments in 1797 when he said "It would not be possible for us, in the small space which we can allot to any one article in the miscellany of a newspaper, to analyze the series of chicane that has led to the present dreadful shock of National Credit".

1.) Scotch ballads in MC 13, 24 April 1805; "The Tears of the Crewets" in MC 6 April 1805; Political Register 13 April 1805 col. 576; and later reviewed in Notes and Queries, 1st series, x/26 Aug. 1854 p. 172; Hardcastle, op.cit. i. 169.

Even when Perry gave a whole page to an article, such as on Melville in 1805, readers were referred for a deeper analysis to "Cobbett's excellent Register" which "contained a most complete and masterly review of the Tenth Report".¹ But the main cause of Cobbett's impact was the remarkable vigour and incisiveness of his writing. Philip Francis, an authoritative judge on such matters, thought "Cobbett's stile, for effect is a Model. It is the true Cut and Thrust, and no Flourishes".² As early as 1802, when the Register was a belligerent Grenvillite organ, Caroline Fox had praised some of its articles in the highest terms, and in 1803 she exhorted her brother Holland who was abroad to ensure that he read it.³ By the

1.) MC 15 April 1797, 22 April 1805; Political Register 13,20 April, 1805.

2.) Francis to Windham, 26 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS. 37,882 f. 219.

3.) Cobbett's letters to Lord Hawkesbury in late 1802 were "very good indeed," as were his articles on the taxes in mid-1803. His attacks on Sheridan for supporting Addington were "very good and very unanswerable indeed;" the letters of Juverna on Ireland, in which she detected Windham's influence, were "excessively entertaining as well as interesting from the facts they contain," and she told Holland, "pray do not miss a word he says about Ireland" for "he grows more and more worth reading every week." (Caroline Fox to Lady Holland, 1 Nov. [1802], Add. MSS. 51, 745 f.63; same to Holland 11 July, 10 Oct., 7, 14 Nov. 1803, 1 Jan. 1804, Add. MSS. 51, 736 ff. 203, 253, 267, 273, 308). But she thought he could also be malignant, factious and tiresome (Ibid.)

end of 1803 the Register's sale had increased from less than 300 to more than 4,000, and it had, as Lord King said "now become an important limb of opposition".¹ After the formation of Pitt's second ministry, the whigs spoke of Cobbett's writings with an admiration and enthusiasm which was never to be accorded to Perry. Holland, who had not hitherto admired Cobbett as much as his sister did, could say in October 1804 that "Cobbett as a man of wit and talents cannot but excite one's wonder, and where one agrees with him he gratifies all one's party feelings the bad ones certainly as largely as the good ones. As to his consistency I do not see that one is bound to examine that too closely... After all for his station of life or rather for his profession a newspaper writer he is almost as remarkable for his courage and independence as for his abilities and activity". Although Holland disliked Cobbett's intolerance and coarseness - "He is to be sure an illiberal dog" - he admired his "noble hatred of all canting" and freedom from hypocrisy.² Fox also came to recognise Cobbett's exertions in the opposition's cause.

1.) Cobbett's Annual Register 31 Dec. 1803 cols. 929-30; King to Holland, n.d. [late 1803], Add. MSS. 51, 572 f.21.

2.) Holland to Caroline Fox, 14 Oct. 1804, Add. MSS. 51, 737 f. 102.

Also Caroline Fox to Holland, 8, 13 Sept., 19 Nov. 1804, Ibid. ff. 92,94,121.

Early in 1804 he said he saw little of the Register, but by the end of that year he thought Cobbett was "certainly an extraordinary Man and, if any good is ever to be done, may be most powerfully instrumental in bringing it about".¹ After Pitt's position had been weakened by Sidmouth's resignation in July 1805, Fox frequently commended Cobbett's articles, and even gave him hints on editorial policy. Fox was so impressed by Cobbett's "very good and judicious line" on Sidmouth's resignation - which Cobbett had welcomed as a protest against Pitt's screening of Melville without conceding The Times's claim that Sidmouth should be the rallying point against corruption - that he commented on it on three consecutive days.² In August Fox expressed disapproval of Cobbett's increasingly hostile attitude to Sidmouth, who was said to have resigned partly because he wanted mere power and not just because of corruption, and about Cobbett's opposition to any coalition between the whigs and Pitt or Sidmouth. But such reservations were soon displaced by admiration for Cobbett's articles on foreign affairs, particularly one which argued that Pitt's climb down over Ochakov showed that his governing motive was to retain office; an interpretation which Fox thought "touched on the

1.) Russell, Memorials and Correspondence iii.233, 9 Jan. 1804; Fox to Windham, 24 Nov. [1804], Add. MSS. 37, 843 f. 231. An anonymous writer c.1818 recalled that during Pitt's second ministry "Cobbett was in the zenith of his influence." (Aspinall, Letters of King George iv 1812-1830 (3 vols. Cambridge 1938) iii. 469).

2.) Fox to Windham, 15 July [1805], Add. MSS. 37, 843 f. 249; Fox to Grey, 16 July 1805, Grey MSS.; Russell, Memorials and Correspondence iv. 101; Political Register 13 July 1805 cols. 61-64.

true string in regard to Pitt". Fox even asked O'Bryen if it might be worth hinting to Cobbett that Pitt was going to sacrifice Prussia to Napoleon, but it does not appear that Cobbett took up the suggestion.¹ Fox's enthusiasm for Cobbett may have made him more impatient of the Chronicle, for his only references to it at this time are of a critical nature. In October he thought it "abominable" that the insertion of an unspecified paragraph in the Chronicle should have been delayed so long, and threatened to send it to the Herald or Times instead; in November he criticised a misunderstanding in an article on foreign affairs; and in December he mocked the view expressed in the Chronicle that France could turn against England now that Austria was defeated: "As to the French coming to London I have no fear of it.... What a foolish figure the M[orning] C[hronicle] with all his speculations about Bonaparte's danger makes!"² Such was Cobbett's ascendancy at this time that

1.) Fox to O'Bryen, 7, 21, 25 Aug., 3, 6 Nov. 1805, Add. MSS. 47,566 ff. 219, 221, 223, 238, 240; Political Register 3, 17 Aug. 1805, cols. 161-180, 241-254.

2.) Fox to O'Bryen, 2 Oct., 19 Nov., 2 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS. 47,566 ff. 230, 242, 246; MC 19 Nov., 2 Dec. 1805. In 1804 Fox had complained of a "very unpleasant paragraph" in the Chronicle about Livingstone, the American minister to France, which said there were thousands of country attorneys of superior ability, and he had had a contradiction inserted. (Fox to Adair, 6, 10 July 1804, Add. MSS. 47,565 ff. 252-4; MC 4, 9 July 1804

Creevey remarked "what immense mischief Cobbett is doing Pitt, more than all the opposition put together, he is a most powerful devil".¹ Fox did not wholly neglect the daily press in 1805, but what attention he gave it was not specifically directed towards the Chronicle. In June he had a paragraph inserted in several newspapers denying an assertion in the Morning Post that he would be willing for the whigs to act in concert with the ministry without him.² With the beginning of the parliamentary recess in July he thought the press should concentrate on Pitt's weakness after Sidmouth's resignation, and should "treat with contempt the notion of Pitt's being able either to carry on the Govt. as he is, or to gain any accession of Strength". In August he added that an attack should be made on the government's supposed intention of dissolving parliament, so that public opinion would be suitably aroused should it take place. Whether O'Bryen communicated these hints to Perry is not clear; if he did the response was poor, for there were only two leaders in the Chronicle on domestic politics during the six weeks following Fox's first suggestion.³

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- 1.) Creevey to Dr. Currie, 28 July 1805, Creevey MSS. (Microfilm).
 - 2.) Reid, Charles James Fox pp. 405-6.
 - 3.) Russell, Memorials and Correspondence iv. 102, 17 July 1805; Fox to O'Bryen, 21 Aug. 1805, Add. MSS. 47,566 f. 221; MC 18 July, 29 Aug. 1805.

At the end of 1805 Perry's position was exposed to a further challenge when a daily paper, the Morning Star, was established to support the Grenville wing of the opposition. However it proved as conspicuous a failure as Cobbett had been a success. Although Thomas Grenville had complained in 1804 of "our present penury of printed papers",¹ it is clear that the Grenvilles did not take the initiative in establishing the new paper. It was founded in November 1805 by one Thomas Lyttleton Holt who solicited Windham's patronage, and asked for hints and communications. The initial response was favourable: Windham thought Holt had respectable connexions; Benjamin West, the President of the Royal Academy, considered him "a very ingenious writer"; and Thomas Grenville advised his younger brother to take the paper, particularly as it had a good coverage of foreign news.² Cobbett promised to do all he could to help the new

1.) H.M.C. Dropmore vii. 243.

2.) Holt to Windham, 21 Nov. 1805, Add. MSS. 37,882 f. 205; H.M.C. Dropmore vii. 317-18; Farington Diary iii. 128; Duke of Buckingham and Chandos ed., Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George the Third (4 vols. 1853-5) iii. 454. Holt's name is wrongly given as Hunt in Dropmore loc.cit., which misled Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 284. Only two copies of the Morning Star survive at Colindale: nos. 47 and 58, of 10 and 23 Jan. 1806. Hence it would have been started on Monday 18 Nov. 1805.

paper, as "It will be a good thing as a check upon the M[orning] C[hronicle]". More ominous for Perry was the Foxites' willingness to countenance the paper. Fox remarked at the end of November that "I continue to think the Morning Star should be encouraged", and Philip Francis, who had not been forthcoming in 1804, said he would give the "new auxiliary" all the aid he could, for "We want the Assistance of the Press, and certainly the best way to have the effect of it would be by the great circulation of a well supported Newspaper".¹ Fortunately for Perry, both the Grenvilles and Foxites were rapidly disillusioned by the conduct of the Morning Star. Holt appears to have claimed, in order to procure credit, that Windham and Lord Grenville were joint proprietors of the paper, and that they had appointed a Pall Mall banker to finance it; this naturally prompted Windham completely to disassociate himself from the concern. By the end of December Fox said he had an "unfavourable opinion" of Holt's talents, and disliked his "vulgar abuse" of Bonaparte, whilst Cobbett thought Holt had surpassed the lies of the ministerial press, and was either mad or totally unprincipled.² Any sympathy that might have

1.) Melville, Life and Letters of William Cobbett i. 289-90; Fox to O'Bryan, 29 Nov. 1805, Add. MSS. 47,566 f. 244; Francis to Windham, 26 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS. 37,882 f. 219.

2.) J.W. Harrison to Windham, 15 Dec. 1805, Windham to Harrison 16 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS. 37,882 ff. 207-8, 210; Fox to Windham, 25 Dec. 1805, Add. MSS. 37,843 f. 235; Melville, op.cit. i. 302.

remained for the Morning Star was dispelled by a paragraph that appeared in it early in January 1806, apparently attempting to divide Foxites and Grenvilles, which aroused the fury of several whigs, including Fox himself. After this episode there was no further mention of the paper, and it probably collapsed by the end of the month.¹

Although the failure of the Morning Star enabled Perry to maintain the Chronicle's position as the leading opposition daily paper, Perry had more to worry about than being overshadowed by the weekly batteries of Cobbett. The chief function of a daily paper in the eyes of the leading whigs was to give a full and accurate report of their speeches in parliament, so that their opinions would, by being copied from the Chronicle into the evening and provincial press, be disseminated throughout the country. The whigs were, however, far from satisfied with the reports of their speeches in the Chronicle. It would have been to the Chronicle that Caroline Fox

1.) The paragraph was in the second edition of the Morning Star 11 Jan. 1806. R. Adair to Windham, Lord Albermarle to Windham, Windham to Holt, Holt to Windham, 11 Jan. 1806, Add. MSS. 37,883 ff. 1, 3, 5, 6; Fox to O'Bryen, 12 Jan. 1806, Add. MSS. 47,566 f. 264; Holt was later described as "the proprietor of an infamous paper called the Crisis." (J.W. Gordon to Grey, 31 Aug. 1808, Grey MSS.)

was referring when she complained in 1795 that the newspapers "have been more than usually inaccurate all this year in their report of the debates", and she cited a speech of Lauderdale's which had "been cruelly garbled and misrepresented".¹ With the revival in the whigs' activity after 1802 there was an increase in their concern for the way their speeches were presented. It was Caroline Fox again who observed, with regard to Fox's celebrated speech on the resumption of war in 1803, that "The Morning Chronicle does not give a very good report, and omits most of the illustrations and quotations", and a few days later, Lord Minto complained that not one word of his widely acclaimed speech supporting Fitzwilliam's motion of censure on the government had been given in the Chronicle.² In April 1804 Francis Horner admitted he had not read the Chronicle's report of the debate on the defence of the nation, but warned his father that "if it is no better than they have been of late, you will receive but a feeble impression of the debate". Two months later it is surprising to find that Perry was not ensuring a thorough coverage of the debates

1.) Caroline Fox to Holland, 12 May [1795], Add. MSS. 51,732 f. 230; Holland was sorry to hear that a debate "was given so ill in the Morning Chronicle." (Holland to Caroline Fox, 28 May [1795], Ibid. f. 242).

2.) Caroline Fox to Holland, 31 May 1803, Add. MSS. 51,736 f. 185; Minto, Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot iii. 290, 7 June 1803. Minto was not mentioned in the MC's report of 3 June, but was given 70 lines on 7 June 1803.

involving the Scottish Lord Advocate, even though he was assisting Whitbread in collecting evidence for the attack. Caroline Fox thought Lord Archibald Hamilton had effectively criticised the law officers for dictating to the Commons, and regretted that "The Morning Chronicle does not give this part of his speech and has omitted very provokingly the vulgar parts of the L[or]d. Adv[ocate]'s. answer to Whitbread".¹ In 1805 it was thought that there had been a definite deterioration in the Chronicle's standard of reporting. In April of that year Caroline Fox told her brother that Fox had drawn "a delightful parallel between himself, Petty and Pitt, of which the Morning Chronicle gives no account at all. Indeed, that paper has been very deficient all this year, and very inferior to what it used to be in giving the debates, unluckily for those who are absent". A few months later Fox himself wrote in a similar vein. Discussing the possibility of helping a man called Reid, he said "If he was the Reporter in the M[orning] C[hronicle] last session it is rather against him, for from those who read Reports I understand they were the very worst that ever appeared.

1.) Horner, Memoirs and Correspondence i. 248; Caroline Fox to Holland, 25 June [1804], Add. MSS. 51,737 f. 59.

Some carried their suspicions so far as to suppose the speeches on our side were purposely mangled, and said Pitt's were better done".¹ This was a strong criticism indeed of a party paper, and it is not surprising that the whigs were sympathetic to attempts to establish a new party organ. The causes of such inadequate reporting must remain a matter of conjecture. The dissipations of Finnerty and Supple cannot be held entirely responsible, for if they had been that unreliable Perry would not have retained them for long. It seems more probable that as Campbell gave up parliamentary reporting in 1802 and Spankie would have been more preoccupied with editing the paper than reporting, that Perry had to employ temporary staff such as Reid who were less than competent. It can be said in Perry's defence that unless he had actually attended the debate it was impossible for him to judge the merits of a report, but he must have become aware that the whigs were dissatisfied, particularly as there were numerous errors in the Chronicle's reports in addition to those on which the whigs expressed their disapproval. Occasionally an egregious blunder was made. During Perry's absence at the Commons for the debates on the peace of Amiens the Chronicle's printer, Lambert,

1.) Lord Ilchester, The Home of the Hollands 1605-1820 (1937) p. 194; Fox to O'Bryan, 10 Oct. 1805, Add. MSS. 47,566 f. 231. Creevey complained that a motion he had made was "erroneously stated by the Chronicle to have been made by Gascoigne." (Creevey to Dr. Currie, end. 21 June 1804, Creevey MSS. (microfilm)).

accidentally inserted a part of Windham's speech as Hawkesbury's amended address, which gave the impression that ministers were condemning their own policy. A couple of months later an apology was made for a report of a meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern which gave Fox as admitting to a compromise with the ministerial candidate Hood in the Westminster election of 1790 against the radical Horne Tooke.¹ Apart from such notable errors, there were over fifteen other occasions in the decade after 1795 on which Perry had to apologise for inaccuracies and omissions in the reports of debates and meetings, though such mistakes were probably common to most papers.²

The inadequacies of the Chronicle's reports should, in justice to Perry, be seen in the context of the general standard of reporting in the press, and of the very considerable difficulties which reporters encountered in their task. It would appear that most

1.) MC 15, 17 May 1802; the mistake was particularly bad since a correct version of Hawkesbury's address had already been published the day before, on 14 May, in two morning papers, though Perry was able to use this fact to show that no deception had been intended; MC 16, 17 July 1802 .

2.) MC 3 Nov., 9, 10, 29 Dec. 1796; 23 Sept. 1797; 5 April, 23 Nov. 1798; 9 May 1799; 1 Mar. 1802; 9 Mar., 4, 8, 9 June, 12 Dec. 1803; 29 Feb., 22 June 1804.

politicians were aware that the debates could not always be faithfully reported. Lord Moira remarked in 1800 that "there are few people in London who are not perfectly aware of the gross incorrectness with which speeches are reported in the newspapers", and Pitt took a similarly realistic view when he wrote in 1802 "I know how little newspapers can be trusted for the exactness of their reports; and I therefore do not allow their statement to make its full impression, but wait for more correct information." Lady Bessborough carried her scepticism to the point of assuming, in 1801, that even though the reports of Lord Granville Leveson Gower's speech showed it to be a good one, the reports themselves were bad.¹ Inadequate reporting might

1.) Aspinall, Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales iv.144; Hon. George Pellow, Life and Correspondence of...Sidmouth (3 vols. 1847) i.489; Castalia Countess Granville ed., Lord Granville Leveson Gower. Private Correspondence 1781-1821 (2 vols. 1916) i.308. Canning in 1802 wrote down parts of an important speech immediately after he had delivered it "as there is no knowin how newspapers, still less how correspondents, will represent them." (3rd Earl of Malmesbury ed., Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris, First Earl of Malmesbury (4 vols. 1844) iv.144.) There were numerous criticisms of reports in papers other than the Chronicle. e.g. Fox in 1799 thought the Courier's account of Holland's speech "very defective or at least very much en abrege," and in 1802 Lord Minto complained that a report in the Post was "as usual perfectly unlike from beginning to end. He (the reporter) has caught a word here and there, and made declamations upon them himself." (Fox to Holland, 14 June 1799, Add.MSS. 47,573 f.224; Minto, Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot iii. 248-9).

indeed be regarded as the norm, rather than the exception, and this is not very surprising in the light of the crowded conditions in the gallery, the difficulty of hearing or understanding a bad speaker amidst the general noise of a debate, and the problems of summarising speeches at great speed, and finding room for them in the limited space available in a daily paper.¹ Perry did not fail to make these points in reply to the periodical attacks by members of parliament on the standard of reporting. He was particularly struck by the fact that there were more misrepresentations of speeches by other members than there were by the press: "when we consider", he said "how much of every debate in both Houses, is occupied by the Speakers on both sides, in correcting the misconceptions of one another, it is not surprising that a Reporter should occasionally fail in catching the precise meaning of a Gentleman".² Given the limited space in a newspaper, it was impossible to report a speech in full detail, and perhaps this was just as well, for as Perry once remarked, verbatim reports would be so boring that nobody would read them.³ Members of parliament naturally had a rather higher opinion of their speeches than those who read them; Caroline Fox was possibly not alone in thinking in the summer of 1803 "The Debates are grown so dull and so full of clap traps about the spirit of the country

1.) Aspinall, in Pares and Taylor ed., Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier, passim.

2.) MC 15 Feb. 1808; also 31 Dec. 1798.

3.) MC 21 Dec. 1798.

the dangers of the Enemy etc etc, that I have seldom patience to get through them". There was also another side to the members' complaints that reporters did not do justice to their speeches; as John Campbell put it in 1801, a speech by Grey was not good enough to enable him to do justice to his powers as a reporter.¹ It should also be mentioned that not all the comments on the Chronicle's reports were unfavourable. In 1803 Mackintosh was said to be pleased with "a very correct summary" in the Chronicle of his important defence of the journalist Peltier, and in 1805, when a deterioration in the standard of reporting was noted, Lady Jerningham could still say that "The Morning Chronicle is supposed to give a good account of the Debates".² Moreover, it would appear that Perry's claim to be impartial in his reports was not wholly

1.) Caroline Fox to Holland, 11 July 1803, Add. MSS. 51,736 f. 203; Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i. 65-6. It is possible that a speech was sometimes wrongly thought to have been misrepresented by those who had not heard it. Tierney and Grey thought a speech by Fox at the Shakespeare Tavern had been badly reported, but Tierney admitted "on enquiry amongst those who were present...I find no reason to doubt the general accuracy of the Reporters." (Tierney to Grey, 22 Oct. 1801, Grey MSS.)

2.) Caroline Fox to Holland, 22 Feb. [1803], Add. MSS. 51,736 f. 124; Egerton Castle ed., Jerningham Letters (2 vols. 1896) i. 269.

without foundation. Although Wilberforce complained in 1798 that his speeches were subjected to the "most gross and scandalous misrepresentations" in the Chronicle, and Fox in 1800 suspected that the speeches of the whigs had been "tolerably taken", but those of Windham and Dundas "very ill", there are some indications that ministerial speeches were given a fair coverage.¹ The junior office-holder Lord Glenbervie said in 1801 that one of his speeches "was very tolerably stated in the Morning Chronicle and very ill in all the other papers"; Robert Ward thought that the best report of his maiden speech in 1802 was in the Chronicle; and late in 1803 the debates on Ireland were said by one correspondent of the Lord-Lieutenant to have been given more correctly in the Chronicle than in any other paper.² It is clear therefore that although several of the leading whigs and some ministerialists were very dissatisfied with

1.) "Mr. PITT'S best friends own that for the most genuine Report of his Speeches in Parliament, they must look to the MORNING CHRONICLE." (MC 13 Nov. 1797); R. and S. Wilberforce, Life of William Wilberforce ii. 323-4; Russell, Memorials and Correspondence iii. 314. Charles Abbot thought in 1795 that "party editors" were "possibly misrepresenting or curtailing the speeches adverse to the interests which they are engaged to maintain." (Colchester, Diary and Correspondence i. 24).

2.) Francis Bickley ed., Diaries of Sylvester Douglas (2 vols. 1928) i. 292; Ward, Memoirs i.110; A. Marsden to Hardwicke, 8 Dec. 1803, Add. MSS. 35,724 f.48, cited by Aspinall in Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier p. 241 n.1.

Perry's coverage of debates, there were others who thought the reports accurate and fair.

In spite of Cobbett's ascendancy as a whig opposition journalist in 1804 and '5, and the serious criticisms of the Chronicle's coverage of debates, Perry nevertheless enjoyed a distinguished position both in the world of journalism and in whig political and literary circles. The Chronicle had an unrivalled reputation for the integrity and ability with which it was conducted. It had been abused by ministerialists in the 1790s as jacobinical and blasphemous, but Perry had fulfilled his promise not to give room to personal abuse and indecency. John Allen described the Chronicle in 1800 as "by far the most respectable of the daily papers", and John Campbell affirmed in the following year that "there is no other print in London so much respected, or that I would rather be connected with".¹ This reputation was founded not only on

1.) Allen to Brougham, 19 May 1800, Brougham MSS.; Hardcastle, op.cit.i.67. Gifford gave four pages of quotations from the Chronicle to show that it "had praised, without discrimination, and without measure, the successive rulers of the regicide republic... and sought to render the most sacred maxims of religion and morality the objects of derision and scorn." His examples however were fairly mild e.g. "The esteem in which Mr. Wilberforce holds the cross of Christ, and the Treasury Bench, cannot be expressed in terms of sufficient admiration." (MC 8 Jan. 1798). The Austrian ambassador Count Starhemberg complained of a joke about the Emperor in MC 27 Sept. 1800, but this was little more than the "insolent wit" of which Col. McMahon protested on 21 Mar. 1798. (Gifford, A History of the political life of... Pitt iii. 153, 795-8; H.M.C. Dropmore vi. 334; Aspinall, Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales iii. 416).

Perry's disdain for scandal, and his avoidance of corrupt practices, but also on his refusal to stoop to the violence and invective that was common to political journalists. For example Cobbett, who was not immune to criticisms on this score, noted in 1803 that the Chronicle was the only one of about thirty papers in which the murder of French prisoners of war had not been advocated.¹ The quality of the writing in the Chronicle was another feature which attracted the attention of contemporaries. The leading articles might sometimes be vague and rhetorical, but they were more often, as Lord Malmesbury observed of an editorial attacking Addington, "strong and well-written", or as Fox remarked of an article mocking the ministerial bulletins after Austerlitz "well planned and well executed".² Cobbett sometimes commented, both in his Register and in his correspondence, on the ability displayed in the Chronicle's articles on relatively minor topics; one article discussing the capture of an enemy standard he described as "a most excellent one, in every point of view", and he thought there were "some very good things

1.) Cobbett's Annual Register 19 Nov. 1803, col. 709.

2.) Malmesbury, Diaries and Correspondence iv. 234; Fox to O'Bryen n.d. end. Jan. 1806, Add. MSS. 47,566 f. 263; MC 14 Mar. 1803, 2 Jan 1806.

in the Chronicle "concerning a new project for the rapid transport of troops including a "delicious letter".¹ There was no series of correspondence in the Chronicle at this time comparable to that of the 'Calm Observer' in 1792, but there were eight long and ably-written articles in 1800, perhaps from a contributor, discussing the economic situation and defending free trade, and a dozen pseudonymous letters critical of the East India Company in 1802.² Horner thought a letter from the Nabob of the Carnatic in the Chronicle of that year, was, whether genuine or not, "a pleasing production.... skilful throughout, and in some passages even eloquent".³ There were also some letters during 1803 aimed at keeping the question of the Prince of Wales's

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- 1.) Melville, Life and Letters of William Cobbett i. 176-7, 217; Cobbett's Annual Register 12 Feb. 1803 cols. 169-70. Political Register 14 Dec. 1805 col. 911; MC 11 Feb. 1803, 29 Aug. 1804.
- 2.) MC 30 Sept., 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 22 Oct., 3 Nov. 1800; letters on the East India trade from "An Englishman" in MC 11, 18, 22, 25, 28 Jan., 1, 4, 8, 15, 22 Feb., 1, 8 Mar. 1802, supplemented by documents on 15 Mar., 5 April 1802.
- 3.) Horner to James Loch, 25 June 1802, Horner MSS. vol.i.ff. 176-7.

claims to military rank alive during the recess, one of which McMahon thought "was extraordinary well done" and "had an extreme good effect".¹ Perry would have also gained credit from the original contributions of Thomas Campbell in 1801, and the satirical pieces of the whig wits in 1804 and '5, and it is reasonable to suppose that most readers shared the opinion expressed by the Pall Mall bookseller Gardiner in 1804, that "the Morning Chronicle has always had good writing in it".² From a political point of view, Perry had consolidated his position as conductor of the leading opposition daily newspaper. Other opposition papers of the 1790s had either disappeared, like the Telegraph, Gazetteer and Albion, or they had swung round to the ministerial side, like the Courier and Morning Post, while the new Morning Star lasted for little more than two months. Perry on the other hand had, despite his reservations about whig inactivity in the late 1790s, both remained faithful to the Foxites, and secured the Chronicle a place amongst the most widely circulated daily papers. His loyalty to Fox during the Pittite reaction was to stand him in good stead in later years when the divisions among the whigs made his position as the party journalist an unenviable one. As Erskine remarked to Holland in 1814 "One thing

1.) Letters from "Llewellyn" on the Prince in MC 25 Aug., 23 Sept., 3, 26 Nov. 1803; Aspinall, Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales iv. 407.

2.) Farington Diary ii. 250.

even [sic] commended Perry with me - He adored your Uncle, and adores his memory. He did more to serve him in a long up-hill fight against many scoundrels than many who know now that it is a high title to call themselves his friends, but who never did anything at all". Perry himself supplied a modest epitaph to his conduct of the Chronicle up to 1805, when he wrote in that year to Samuel Parr "I have never deviated from the principles of whiggism and never outraged the decorums of private life".¹

1.) Erskine to Holland, n.d. 1814, Add. MSS. 51,533 f.44; John Johnstone ed., Works of Samuel Parr (8 vols. 1828) viii. 120, quoted in Christie, Myth and Reality p. 343.

CHAPTER THREE1806-1812

(1) The Ministry of The Talents, and the press campaign of 1807.

The formation of the Fox-Grenville ministry in January 1806 marked the end for Perry of over twenty years of opposition journalism. For the first time since 1783 he found himself in the position of supporting ministers, and he might reasonably have anticipated that the Chronicle would benefit from a privileged access to foreign intelligence, and from its new role as the chief source of information about ministerial policy. There is no documentary evidence, however, that the whigs in office did anything to help the Chronicle, and Perry's brief experience as a ministerial journalist was to prove a far from happy one. His defense of the alliance between Fox and Grenville, and of the ministry's failure to implement more reforms, made him the chief target of abuse in the radical press headed by Cobbett, and his acceptance of a place made him vulnerable to the same criticisms of servility and corruption which he had directed against the followers of Pitt. Conditioned by a lifetime of opposition to attacking abuses and blunders, Perry could ill adapt to his new role of presenting constructive alternatives, and defending the failures of statesmen coping with the realities of power. The Chronicle consequently lost much of its original character, and declined both in its quality and circulation.

Perry never expressed any hint of dissatisfaction with the coalition between Grenville, Fox and Sidmouth, and it is clear that he regarded some sacrifice of principle on questions of reform as well worth the formation of a strong government which could negotiate peace. The ministry's record, and the subsequent co-operation between Grey and Grenville in opposition, was to prove an enduring source of resentment to the left-wing parliamentary whigs under Whitbread, as well as to the more radical Burdettites, but Perry always countenanced co-operation with the Grenville wing of the party, even when he moved to the left of Grey on parliamentary and economical reform in 1809 and '10. Perry welcomed the formation of the Talents as marking the end of the principle of exclusion, and as being based on the criterion of ability, not of former opinions. He countered the criticism that Sidmouth was opposed to catholic emancipation by claiming that Fox had not made it a party question, or a sine qua non of taking office, and by assuring readers that the ministry would acknowledge catholic claims in the fullness of time.¹ Perry later enlarged on this explanation in 1812 when he had to defend the whigs' refusal to coalesce with Perceval on account of his opposition to emancipation; he argued that in 1806 "the Irish Catholics were at that time content to postpone, to a future period, the consideration of their claims", and that Sidmouth had been

1.) ME 27 Jan., 1 Feb., 12 Mar. 1806.

sympathetic to peace, which was initially thought to have been attainable.¹ This was a plausible defence, but to more committed reformers it seems incongruous coming from an editor who had reprobated Pitt and the new opposition during the Addington ministry for not pressing catholic claims. When Perry defended the Talents' record after their fall, he cited the fate of the catholic relief bill as evidence that had they attempted to do more, they would have accomplished even less, and he dismissed the ministry's critics as no more than a "bastard breed of disappointed Tories and visionary speculatists".² On some of the most controversial questions concerning the Talents, Perry observed a diplomatic silence. He confined his comment on the inclusion of Lord Ellenborough in the cabinet while lord chief justice to a simple denial that it was unconstitutional, and said nothing about Grenville's retention of the sinecure of the auditorship of the exchequer while first lord of the treasury.³ It is possible that

1.) MC 11 Mar. 1812.

2.) MC 8 June 1807.

3.) MC 5 Mar. 1806. When the question of Grenville's sinecure was raised by the Courier in 1807 Perry simply said that he had received less money as first lord than Pitt had, and when it was raised again by J.W. Ward ten years later, Perry said it was "now not worth discussing." (MC 11 June 1807, 21 June 1816).

the criterion by which Perry judged Fox's consistency was that of Fox's chief interest, foreign policy, for he defended the coalition with North on the grounds that differences on the American war were no longer relevant, and he remarked in 1812 that the coalition with Grenville had been made when the chief point of disagreement, the French revolutionary war, was no longer operative.¹ In 1806 Perry would not even acknowledge that the alliance with Grenville was a coalition, for he must have been referring to the coalition with North when he remarked in his obituary of Fox "It was not the one coalition which Mr. Fox was prevailed upon to make that should be the subject of national regret, but the want of more coalitions".²

While Perry preferred to avoid, as far as possible, discussion of the merits of the Talents, he was vigorous and outspoken in his attacks on the growing radical challenge to the whigs, reflected chiefly in Burdett's campaigns in the Middlesex election of 1806 and the Westminster election of 1807. Spankie undoubtedly shared Perry's hostility to Burdett, for he had in 1803 suggested to Stuart of the Morning Post that they suppress a report of Burdett's radical speech in which it had been claimed that one hundred mercenaries in the Commons were more dangerous than an army of half

1.) MC 17 July 1793, 11 Mar. 1812.

2.) MC 15 Sept. 1806.

a million Frenchmen. Unfortunately Stuart had not co-operated, and Spankie had simply toned down his report of the speech.¹ The chief medium of attack on the Burdettites in the Chronicle was through correspondence, rather than editorials, perhaps because it was thought that letters had a greater authority as representing opinions other than merely those of the editors. James Paull, the Burdettite candidate in Westminster in 1806, was the object of much witty ridicule and personal abuse, and he felt so misrepresented by the Chronicle that he addressed a letter to Spankie, which was published in Cobbett's Register, complaining of the garbled evidence published in the Chronicle on the question of his behaviour towards Wellesley.² Burdett's opinions on the corrupt, borough-mongering nature of the chief political parties, and his belief in the efficacy of reform as a means of greatly decreasing taxation, were anathema to Perry, who rejected them as anarchical and indiscriminate.³ When in May 1807 Burdett and Cochrane were leading Sheridan in the poll at Westminster, Perry attacked them with such vigour that Holland

1.) This was revealed in the Courier 8 Nov. 1806; it was not denied, but criticised as a violation of privacy, in MC 10 Nov. 1806.

2.) MC 6 Nov., 18, 19, 24 Dec. 1806; Political Register 22 Nov. 1806, cols. 825-6; Paull's vindication of his conduct was published in MC 17 Nov. 1806.

3.) MC 31 Oct., 8, 11, 15 Nov. 1806.

asked him to tone down his hostility, probably lest it discourage Burdett's supporters from giving their second votes to Sheridan.¹ Perry acquiesced, but returned to the attack once the election was over, claiming that even Horne Tooke would have been nauseated by Burdett's comparison of a party politician's notion of honour with "the notion of chastity entertained by the prostitute who boldly challenged any one to say, that she ever went out of the regiment".²

Perry's animosity towards the Burdettites was the result, not only of his real disapprobation of their opinions, but of the fact that he had himself become the object of abuse in the weekly radical press. As he explained to Holland "I cannot tamely submit to the charges of venality, with which all the walls of Westminster are covered, while my heart tells me that I have been at least disinterested in the humble profession which I have zealously, but not very wisely, persevered in so long".³ Perry had long been accustomed to abuse from the ministerial press and indeed had come to regard it as a sure sign that he held the right opinions. But the attacks from the radical press were more wounding, for they impugned Perry's personal integrity and consistency, and were, at least in their criticisms of his party spirit, not without a grain of truth.

1.) MC 2, 13, 16, 18 May 1807; Perry to Holland, 19 May 1807, Add. MSS. 51,824 f.85.

2.) MC 30 May 1807.

3.) Perry to Holland, 19 May 1807, loc.cit..

Perry's acceptance of a place under the Talents made him vulnerable to the criticism that he had sacrificed his independence of mind for the sake of office, and Cobbett exploited this theme with relish in several issues of his Register.¹ This line of attack was unfair, for Perry would have supported the Talents regardless of pecuniary reward, but it was an interpretation which received some support from other journalists. John Morton of the Sunday Review complained of the "criminal suppressions" of the "apostate chronicle"; "no Paper", he said "was more ready to disguise the truth, or practice more wilful misrepresentations, where it suited the undeviating views of its mercenary Proprietor".² Henry White of the Independent Whig wrote in similar terms of the Chronicle as "that mongrel journal,

1.) Political Register 18 Oct., 15 Nov. 1806, cols. 591-2, 759-60; 17 Jan., 25 April, 25 July 1807, cols. 73, 652-4, 128-9. Cobbett used the venomous technique of suggestion by denial: "I never said, that the clerks of the Treasury knew his step upon the stairs and in the dark passages...I never said, that the porters at Mr. Fox's office took him, at last, for a piece of the wainscot, and were actually going to hang their hats upon his nose." (Political Register 25 July 1807, cols. 128-9.).

2.) Sunday Review 5 April 1807, Add. MSS. 27,838 f.90.

neither of the one breed or the other, - this half Courtier and half Whig.... Mr. James Perry, has too long been deluding our judgements with his idle bombast and the artifices of his assistant hirelings, through the medium of his once-respectable but since infamously prostituted Paper".¹ This line of attack was maintained against Perry for some years after the fall of the Talents. Benjamin Flower complained in his monthly Political Review in 1809 that "the Morning Chronicle was a paper long distinguished by its constitutional principles, and the apparent zeal of the editor in the cause of reform; but a new administration, including the party to which he had devoted himself, introducing him to a place, every act of that administration was formally defended".² More damaging to Perry than the abuse of him as a place-hunter were the occasional illustrations of the way in which his partisan support of the whigs led him into a position inconsistent with his previous views. Cobbett claimed in 1810 that where the Chronicle went wrong "its conduct can be traced to party.... the

1.) Independent Whig 3 May 1807, Ibid.f.107.

2.) Political Review Sept. 1809 vol. vi. p. liii. Flower added that Perry had returned to the support of reform after the fall of the Talents, but anticipating the return of the whigs to office after Portland's death "returns like a dog to his vomit". White was still attacking Perry in 1810. (Independent Whig 11 Nov. 1810, p.1,636.).

Gentleman, under whose controul it is, has a great deal of knowledge and of talent. But, the trammels of faction bind him sometimes, and sometimes draw him aside."¹ Of course, the same could be said with more truth of Cobbett himself, but there is at least one instance of Perry modifying his views on an important question during the Talents ministry. As a correspondent in the Register pointed out, Perry's argument in 1806 that poverty was inseparable from a highly industrious community, and that to attribute it to the war was to speak the language of ignorance or faction, was in direct contradiction of his argument during the 1790s that poverty was greatly aggravated by war.² Perry's usual response to the attacks from the left-wing press was to ignore them, on the grounds that disputes between journalists were "very tiresome to the general class of our readers", and he consoled himself with the reflection that just as during the early 1790s he had been abused by both ministerialists and radicals for his via media on the French revolution, so now he was being abused by both the ministerial and radical press for taking "the direct middle path of true constitutional

1.) Political Register 13 Oct. 1810, col. 616. White thought the Chronicle "appears to struggle between party interests and public duty." (Independent Whig 29 May 1808, p. 590).

2.) Letter entitled "The Place Hunter's Philosophy" in Political Register 17 Jan. 1807, cols. 83-8; MC 16 Dec. 1806. For Perry's earlier views, see MC 24 Jan., 1 Feb. 1797, 11 Nov. 1800.- "Those who deny that the scarcity is greatly aggravated by the war, must be either very uncandid or very incapable men."

duty to the public."¹

However, it does appear that the development of radical opposition to the whigs would have contributed towards making the period of the Talents ministry an unhappy one for Perry. Daniel Stuart, proprietor of the ministerial Courier, reported to his brother-in-law Mackintosh that "The Chronicle fell greatly by its dullness while a Ministerial Paper and it is still equally dull.... Spankie wants to sell out of the Chronicle and to be called to the Bar. He was on the point of accomplishing this last winter; both he and Perry seem heartily sick of the Paper. Perry is much mortified by Cobbett's attacks and nothing galls Spankie so much as to mention his name as a Newspaper writer which Cobbett has been doing all the winter. Perry and Spankie don't agree and neither of them do much for the Paper".² Stuart cannot of course be regarded as a wholly reliable authority, but he appears to have been substantially correct. The dullness of the Chronicle was manifested in the 50% fall in the number of leading articles of half a column or more during 1806. Whereas there were over 60 leaders in 1801 and '2, and well over 100 in the years after 1807, in 1806 there were only 31. It is little wonder that John Campbell exclaimed in May of that year "How dull the 'Chronicle' has become!"³

1.) MC 16 Oct. 1810, 23 Nov. 1792, 9 Oct., 21 Nov. 1809.

2.) Daniel Stuart to Mackintosh, 30 May 1807, Add.MSS. 52,451 f.179.

3.) Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i.183.

Francis Horner was yet more severe; he complained that "Even the Morn.[ing] Chron.[icle] is become intolerably foolish since its friends got into power," though he did not explain in what way.¹

The suggestion that Perry was disillusioned with journalism at this time receives some support from the tone of his letter to Holland, quoted above, in which he appears to doubt the wisdom of having persevered in his career so long. Moreover it is surprising that Perry should have wanted to take a place under the Talents. The whigs had attempted to honour his services by proposing him, along with Dennis O'Bryen, for a baronetcy, but the suggestion was peremptorily rejected.² As a consolation they felt obliged to give Perry the place for which he appears to have asked. Perry seems to have been willing to relinquish the conduct of the Chronicle, for the prospective Governor-General of India, Lord Lauderdale, remarked early in 1806 that while "it will be impossible for me to take Mr. Perry in any Official situation, I cannot so distinctly answer with relation to the possibility of his going out with me".³ In the event Lauderdale did not go to India, and Perry accepted a place as secretary to the board of commissioners for investigating ^{the} barrack accounts, which

1.) Horner to Mrs. Dugald Stewart, 19 May 1806, Horner MSS. vol.iii.f.57.

2.) Farington Diary, 4 Dec. 1806, iv. 55.

3.) Lauderdale to Holland, 28 Mar. 1806, Add. MSS. 51,691 f.44.

required from six to seven hours daily attendance, and yielded an income of from six to eight hundred pounds.¹ According to Stuart, Perry took the place because his financial affairs were "much deranged", but Stuart himself thought this curious in view of Perry's income of over £4,000 from his two-thirds share of the Chronicle. But the fact that Perry was prepared to take such a time-consuming position, coupled with Stuart's and Cobbett's allegation that he "begged hard and servilely at the Door of every great man for a Place", until Grenville finally accommodated him,² suggests that Perry either needed the money or was fed up with conducting the Chronicle. To what extent Perry's difficulties were exacerbated by the disagreements with

1.) MC 20 July 1807, when Perry eventually replied to Cobbett's attack on him as a place-hunter. Farington thought the post required only 5 hours daily attendance, and yielded £600; Timperley is obviously wrong in thinking it was worth £4,000; Stuart thought it yielded £800. (Farington Diary iv.104; Encyclopaedia of Literary and Typographical Anecdote p.884 n.; Stuart to Mackintosh, 30 May 1807, Add. MSS. 52,451 f. 179).

2.) Ibid.; Political Register 18 Oct. 1806, cols. 591-2. Stuart thought Perry had given up his place at Merton, but this must be incorrect for Lady Hamilton dined with him there in Oct. 1807. (Winifred Gérin, Horatia Nelson (1970) p. 146).

Spankie which Stuart mentioned must remain a matter of conjecture, but it is possible that, as one historian of the press recalled, Perry thought that Spankie "mistook the principle on which a Newspaper ought to be conducted - that of a Miscellany".¹ Spankie's intellectual vigour might well have made him impatient of the light, miscellaneous items which Perry thought necessary to maintain a wide readership, and after ten years of working on the Chronicle he was anxious to start his career at the bar. In the autumn of 1807 he left the paper, for Perry remarked in September that "I am myself coming back to the sole management of the MC. as Mr. Spankie withdraws", and it is clear that by mid-November he had departed.²

Although Spankie's departure might be seen as the culmination of a bleak two years for Perry, some revival in the Chronicle's fortunes had taken place after the fall of the Talents in March 1807, and Perry would have been in a better position at the end of that year to

1.) Knight Hunt, The Fourth Estate ii.104.

2.) Perry to Adam, 5 Sept. 1807, Blair-Adam MSS.; B. Tucker told T. Grenville that he feared the Chronicle "will fall off, for Mr. Spankie who formerly conducted it, has, I am told, given up the concern," and Brougham told Allen "I am half convinced that Spankie has of late written little or nothing." (16 Nov. 1807, Add. MSS. 41,857 f.67; 17 Nov. 1807, Add. MSS. 52,178 f.39). An advertisement with Spankie's name written on it on the office copies shows that his house off the Strand was for sale (MC 11 Sept. 1807).

overcome the loss of his able editor than he would have been in 1806. The general election which followed the formation of the Portland ministry marked the most striking period of whig activity in the press that occurred during Perry's career. Professor Aspinall has shown in detail how, between April and June 1807, Brougham, assisted by Holland and Allen, inserted a battery of articles in six newspapers; the Chronicle and the British Press, and four evening papers the Globe, Traveller, Pilot and Statesman.¹ The result of Brougham's activity was that the Chronicle was filled with pungent and incisive articles, usually by Brougham or Spankie, for nearly two months. Perry's own line of attack on the new ministry was to expose what he considered to be its unconstitutional nature. In a series of leaders at the end of March he argued that the Portland ministry had countenanced the demand of an unconstitutional pledge from the whigs, whereby they had been asked not to raise the question of catholic relief, contrary to their duty as ministers to tender what advice they thought fit. At the end of April Perry argued further that the new ministry had dissolved parliament prematurely, and was abusing the process of

1.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 284-91. Aspinall says it is not clear whether the Statesman was used in 1807, but Brougham referred to articles being sent to it on at least seven occasions. (Brougham to Allen, n.d. [23, 25, 27, 29 May, 13, 14, 16 June 1807] Add. MSS. 52,177 ff. 114, 119, 127, 134; Add. MSS. 52,178 ff.18,20,27).

election by raising the cry of 'no popery' and exercising undue influence. Perry even suggested that ministers had dissolved in order to avoid the exposure of financial abuses, and he compared them to a gang of pickpockets raising a false cry (no popery) to enable an accomplice to escape (from the committee of inquiry).¹ According to Holland's recollection, the chief purpose of the press campaign had been to mollify dissenters who might have been alienated from the whigs by their attempt to secure a measure of catholic relief.² Perry made some attempt to take the wind out of the ministerial 'no popery' cry by arguing that the ministers' claim to be Pittites meant they could not also be bulwarks of the protestant establishment, for Pitt had supported a stronger measure in 1801 than the whigs had attempted in 1807. Perry also published in the Chronicle John Allen's celebrated Letters of Scaevola, which vindicated the whigs' conduct on the Catholic question and were later published as a pamphlet.³

1.) MC 20, 23, 28, 30 Mar., 4, 27-9 April, 26 June 1807.

2.) Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party (2 vols. 1852) ii. 229.

3.) MC 7 April 1807; Letters in MC 8, 9, 13 April, 1, 6, 12, 14, 29 May, 12 June 1807. However, the effect of Scaevola may have been slight; Mackintosh thought the letters too like a dissertation for popular effect; Allen admitted they were "getting threadbare" towards the end; and Holland thought they were published too long after the whigs' fall for them fully to arouse public sympathy. (Mackintosh to Holland, 27 Feb. 1808, Add. MSS. 51,653 f.28; Allen to Brougham, n.d. [May 1807,] Brougham MSS.; Holland to Grey, 15 June 1807, Add. MSS. 51,544 f. 135 (copy)).

But under Brougham's influence, most of the articles in the Chronicle during the election concentrated on the issues which were less fundamental than the constitutional ones, but perhaps more potent in arousing public hostility to the new ministry. Brougham had been particularly interested in the foreign office since his diplomatic mission to the Peninsula under the Talents, and he concentrated on exposing the 'jobs' of Lord Mulgrave, the new first lord of the admiralty, who had been foreign secretary in Pitt's second ministry, and of Canning, the new foreign secretary. In June there were several articles in the Chronicle attacking Mulgrave for having given his brother-in-law Robert Ward a large pension for less than a year's service, and attacking Canning for his foreign office appointments, particularly that of his old friend and fellow Anti-Jacobin wit, John Hookham Frere, who replaced Lord Hutchinson as emissary to the allied armies "with a subsidy in one hand and a song in the other".¹ Brougham was particularly savage towards Canning for he thought he was on bad terms with his colleagues, and hoped that a personal assault might precipitate his dismissal,² but his most powerful articles were those

1.) Mulgrave in MC 3, 5, 15 June 1807; Canning in MC 2, 15, 17, 23 June 1807.

2.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. [28, 29 May 1807] Add. MSS. 52,177 ff. 131-2.

directed against the ministerial backbencher Sir Henry Mildmay, who was accused of having been compensated twice over for military works constructed on his land, having taken rent from the barrack department after receipt of the original compensation. Perry was no doubt particularly interested in this question after his work for the commissioners investigating the barrack accounts, and there were eight leaders in the Chronicle in June and July condemning Mildmay.¹ Brougham enthused to Allen "You cannot conceive how the topic of this job takes - Sir H[enry] I learn is exceedingly enraged", and Perry noted with satisfaction that the long silence of the ministerial press indicated that the case was indefensible.² The effectiveness of Brougham's attacks is indicated by the fact that a prosecution of the Chronicle was rumoured. Brougham reported early in July "The M[orning] C[hronicle] people are in some alarm.... Spankie has written me two letters stating that he has strong reason to expect a prosecution, which he views as synonymous with a conviction, but he very properly admits that the best, as well as the safest line of conduct, is to keep up the same tone as at first, and for this purpose a strong answer to Sir H[enry] M[ildmay]'s

1.) MC 9, 16, 20, 26 June, 3, 4, 6, 10 July 1807.

2.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Sun. [14 June 1807] Add. MSS. 52,178

f.20; MC 26 June 1807.

Memorial is absolutely necessary".¹ Another serious risk involved in Brougham's policy of exposing abuses was that it might provoke similar retaliation from the ministerial press. Spankie had some reservations on this point, for in the only letter of his which survives for this period, he told Brougham "I am afraid Lord Grenville will be roughly handled, and unless you have reason to think that he is indifferent to that consequence, I fear more harm will be done... than good obtained by exposing the case of Ward". Spankie feared that the appointment of General George Walpole as an under-secretary at the foreign office in 1806 was susceptible to criticism, but he added "these prudential considerations apart I am glad to see abuses arraigned and bad appointments censured", and his caution was not so strong as to prevent the continued attack on ministerial 'jobs'.² Less risky material was also contributed by Brougham in the form of articles on the slave trade and foreign policy, arguing in the one that Perceval and Canning professed to be abolitionists whilst countenancing the return of pro-slavery candidates, and in the other that the government was unlikely to be able to prevent its allies from making a separate peace with France. Holland also contributed an article discussing

1.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Sat. [4 July 1807] Add. MSS. 52,177 f.104; Mildmay's defence had been published that day in the Chronicle.

2.) Spankie to Brougham, 5 June [1807], Brougham MSS.

the unfavourable reaction of foreign courts to the change of ministry, but it appears that most of his efforts were confined to making suggestions.¹ When Brougham was not writing articles himself, he was sending hints to the editors of the Chronicle on what to say; he said that Spankie's remarks on Howick's withdrawal from a contest in Northumberland "were by express instruction and intreaty from me", and when it was suggested that the whig Samuel Thornton, who had defeated Lord William Russell in Surrey, was countenancing the slave trade, Brougham said "I shall write to Spankie how to refute the statement of Thornton's friend".² Despite Brougham's industry in helping Perry and Spankie fill the Chronicle, and despite the co-operation of four evening papers which copied the Chronicle's articles for circulation in the country, the press campaign did not prevent the Portland ministry from consolidating its parliamentary strength. Nevertheless it did have some value from Perry's point of view in that it heightened whig interest in the columns of the Chronicle, and strengthened Perry's links with Holland and Brougham. The latter was not wholly satisfied with Perry's endeavours in the campaign.

1.) Brougham in MC 26 May, 3 June 1807; Holland in MC 26 May 1807; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Mon. [25 May 1807], Tues. [2 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 f.119; Add. MSS. 52,178 f.3.

2.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Sat. [23 May 1807], Wed. [27 May 1807] Add. MSS. 52,177 ff. 114,128.

He complained on at least four occasions that Perry had failed to insert articles and verses sent to him, and expressed himself "very provoked" in one instance at such delay.¹ He also thought Perry took quite the wrong line on the question of the British defeat by the Turks at Rosetta, in Egypt. Perry criticised the British officers for imprudently entering the town, but Brougham thought the emphasis should be laid on acquitting the Talents of responsibility, and he wrote an article to this effect which was inserted in the Chronicle.² Although Perry swung round to Brougham's view, Brougham still found cause for complaint in the fact that what he sent for a leading article was turned into a paragraph, and he justly reprobated a "very silly" statement in the Chronicle that "Rather than compromise the honour of the country, let the inhabitants of Alexandria be driven out to eat grass with oxen, or to furnish food for the crocodiles of the Nile".³ But in spite of such lapses, the general performance of the Chronicle's editors was impressive. Brougham thought Spankie's remarks on Howick's withdrawal from Northumberland were "very well"

1.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Frid. [22 May 1807], Sat. [30 May 1807], Tues. [2 June 1807], Sat. [6 June 1807], Ibid. ff.112,137; Add.MSS. 52,178 ff.3,16.

2.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Frid. [12 June 1807], Ibid. ff.16-17; MC 12, 13 June 1807.

3.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Tues. [16 June 1807], Thurs. [18 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,178 ff. 27,28; MC 15-18 June 1807.

done, and he praised an attack on 'the Saints' in similar terms, though he thought it unfair to Wilberforce.¹ Allen thought that "Spankie's remarks on Thornton's conduct in Surrey are very good because they are very moderately and temperately expressed"; which in the event was just as well, for it emerged that Thornton had not in fact implicitly supported the ministerial candidate or the slave trade.² Other whigs were so impressed by articles in the Chronicle that they sent copies to their friends. Horner sent one to John Murray, "for the sake of an excellent song, and a still more excellent constitutional dissertation", and Fremantle offered to send a copy to Buckingham which gave "a very clear and distinct statement" of the election returns.³ Even Cobbett, while vilifying Perry as a place-hunter, said he was going to write up "an excellent article" from the Chronicle, admitted that the paper was "conducted with

1.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Sat. [23 May 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 f.114; MC 23 May 1807; Aspinall, Politics and the Press p.288; MC 8 June 1807.

Brougham said he could not tell if this article were written by Perry or Spankie.

2.) Allen to Brougham, 21 May 1807, Brougham MSS.; MC 20, 27 May, 10 June 1807.

3.) Horner, Memoirs and Correspondence i. 400, 8 April 1807; Buckingham, Court and Cabinets iv. 187-8, 22 June 1807.

unequaled ability", and said that it was making "bold strides in tracing its late venal steps".¹

The assistance which Perry received from Brougham was continued during the autumn of 1807. In September Brougham was concerned to show, after the failure of General Whitelocke's attack on Buenos Ayres in July, that the Talents had never countenanced Sir Home Popham's attack on that city in 1806, and that they could not be implicated in the government's strategy. He told Grey that he had sent "a long paper of hints and instructions on this as well as other topics of the day, to the M[orning] Chronicle", and there followed several leaders in the Chronicle reflecting his wishes, and attacking ministers for promoting Popham after he had been reprimanded by a court martial for his action in 1806.² In November and December Brougham again sent suggestions and articles to the Chronicle on the subject of Portugal. He sent "several letters of hints and instructions for the M[orning] C[hronicle] through Whishaw", and hoped that Allen would also "take the trouble of speaking or writing to Perry".

1.) Cobbett to J. Wright, 16 June 1807, Add. MSS. 22,906 f.288; Political Register 25 July, 20 June 1807, cols. 128-9, 1096.

2.) Brougham to Grey, 13 Sept. 1807, Brougham MSS.; MC 14, 15, 19 Sept., 13, 21, 28 Oct. 1807. Brougham's activity in late 1807 is briefly mentioned by Aspinall, op.cit. p. 290.

Whishaw accurately transmitted Brougham's suggestions to Perry, and there were three leaders drawing attention to the fact that forty-five empty transports had passed Lisbon, when they could have been used to help the Portugese royal family escape to South America or assist the withdrawal of English people with their property.¹

In December Brougham made perhaps his most forceful contributions to the Chronicle on the question of Lord Strangford's role in facilitating the escape of the Portugese Court to Brazil.

Strangford, the British minister at Lisbon, was initially praised by Perry for his skill in helping the escape, but Brougham thought this line quite wrong, and a couple of days later wrote a long article in the Chronicle showing that the Court's flight had nothing to do with Strangford's diplomacy, but was simply the result of Bonaparte's intention to remove the House of Braganza from the throne.² This was followed by seven more articles denying that ministers deserved any credit for their blockade of the Tagus, and attacking Strangford's appointment as minister to Brazil as an

1.) Brougham to Allen, 17, 21 Nov. 1807, Add. MSS. 52,178 ff.39,42; MC 17, 27, 28 Nov. 1807.

2.) Atkinson and Jackson, Brougham and his Early Friends, ii. 347-8; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Tues. [22 Dec. 1807,] Add. MSS. 52,178 ff. 48-9; MC 21, 23 Dec. 1807.

attempt to make the Portuguese episode appear a ministerial triumph.¹ Although Holland thought these repeated attacks became tiresome, they constituted an impressive assault on the government, which was much needed after its success at Copenhagen. Brougham claimed that the articles "meet the opinions of all our Friends", and Lauderdale noted that one of Brougham's pieces was "very good".² In addition to his articles on Buenos Ayres and Portugal, Brougham also wrote a squib for the Chronicle on Charles Hope, the Scottish lord justice clerk, and was probably the author of an article on the opposition's parliamentary performance in January 1808.³

With regard to the chief political issue of late 1807, the government's seizure of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, there is no evidence that Brougham actually wrote articles in the Chronicle, but he appears to have been in contact with Perry, for he remarked in November that the abuse of the expedition "which the opposition papers have very properly indulged in, and of which the 'Morning Chronicle' has set the example ever since it received the hint, is producing some daily impression".⁴ In fact Perry had consistently opposed the

1.) MC 24-6, 28, 31 Dec. 1807, 5, 11 Jan. 1808. Brougham probably wrote those on 31 Dec. and 5 Jan.

2.) Aspinall, op.cit., p. 291 n.8; Brougham, Life and Times i. 395-6; Lauderdale to Grey, 26 Dec. 1807, Grey MSS.

3.) Brougham to Lady Holland, n.d. [Oct. 1807,] Add. MSS. 51,565 f.10; MC 15 Oct. 1807; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Frid. [22 Jan. 1808,] Add. MSS. 52,178 f. 58; MC 23 Jan. 1808.

4.) Brougham, Life and Times i. 387.

expedition from its beginning. He warned in July that it would have calamitous results, and reprobated the seizure of the Danish fleet as both immoral and unnecessary, even claiming that had Bonaparte managed to seize it, British naval power could in no way have been threatened, and denying, wrongly, that France had reached a secret agreement with Russia before the expedition.¹ The hint from Brougham may have been to push the argument that it would have been better to help Portugal, as the whigs had done in 1806, than to raid Copenhagen, for this theme was developed in the Chronicle in November.² It provoked an immediate and angry response from Thomas Grenville, the only whig who was prepared to admit that the whigs would have taken the same line as ministers over Copenhagen, and would not have been able to reveal to parliament their grounds for thinking Denmark hostile.

1.) MC 29 July, 24 Aug., 7, 12 Sept., 6, 23, 24 Oct., 4 Dec. 1807.

2.) MC 13, 23, 26 Nov. 1807.

He wrote to Lords Grenville, Spencer and Lauderdale complaining of the Chronicle's attitude and of the fact that Windham and Erskine were "loud in Norfolk in holding the language of the Morning Chronicle".¹ Benjamin Tucker, who had worked at the admiralty under Lord St. Vincent, agreed: "the conduct of the Morning Chronicle" he said "in attacking the principle on which the Copenhagen expedition stands, and at the same time defending Lord St. Vincent's expedition to Lisbon, is altogether inexplicable, indeed I fear Mr. Perry is not always consistent."² Perry of course represented the great body of the whigs in defending the Talents and attacking the government, but the Copenhagen episode was an illustration of how, to some critics, his party spirit got the better of his judgement. It also adumbrated the sort of problem which Perry was to encounter during the remainder of his career: whatever line he took on a particular issue after Fox's death, the divisions among the whigs were such that he was sure to alienate some of them.

1.) H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 144-5; T. Grenville to Spencer, 15 Nov. 1807, Spencer MSS. Box 67; Lauderdale to Grey, n.d. [Nov. 1807,] Grey MSS., quoting a letter he had received from T. Grenville. The latter had complained in July that it was "quite abominable" of the Chronicle to attack Sir John Duckworth, whom Perry blamed for lack of judgement in the Dardanelles expedition early in 1807. (T. Grenville to Howick, 15 July 1807, Grey MSS; MC 4, 15 July 1807).

2.) B. Tucker to T. Grenville, 16 Nov. 1807, Add. MSS. 41,857 f.67.

ii. Reform, Radicalism and the War 1808-12.

The five years after 1808 marked the most concentrated period of political excitement that occurred during Perry's editorship of the Chronicle. On the domestic front, the scandal over the Duke of York, the growth of the movement for parliamentary and economical reform, the commitment of Burdett, and the agitation of the Catholic question, gave Perry ample material with which to attack the government. Perry's tergiversations during these years can be understood in the light of two basic factors: he was a reformer to the left of the centre body of the whigs under Grey, just as he had been to the left of Fox in 1792; but he was also a loyal party journalist, resolutely opposed to the radical challenge to the whigs, and prepared to moderate his opinions, however reluctantly, in response to whig pressure and in the face of the prospect of office. The agitation for parliamentary reform in 1809 was precipitated by the House of Commons' acquittal of the Duke of York on charges of corruption, which confirmed the belief of the Whitbread whigs and Burdett that the Commons was unrepresentative of public opinion. A pamphlet published in October 1808, Major Hogan's Appeal, which had started the rumours about the sale of commissions in the army, had been partly written by one of

Perry's reporters, Peter Finnerty, but it does not appear that Perry believed any information that he might have received from Finnerty on this subject.¹ Earlier in 1808, Perry had, in response to a request from Grenville and Fremantle, denied the allegation of a pamphlet, A Plain Statement, that there had been any inquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York.² When Wardle brought his charges against the Duke in January 1809 Perry was incredulous, and trusted that they would be proved false, for he thought the condition of the army had been greatly improved under York's command, and regretted that the question should arise as a distraction from the government's misconduct of the Spanish war and the Convention of Cintra.³ Perry was careful not to express a premature opinion on the proceedings, and concentrated on giving a full report of the inquiry, commenting in a tone of annoyance that "A Newspaper that should devote its columns to any other matter would be discarded from every breakfast table".⁴

1.) Finnerty had an information filed against him for libel, but subsequent proceedings prevented a prosecution. His authorship is mentioned in J.W. Gordon to Grey, 19 Nov. 1808, Grey MSS., and Finnerty to Holland, 17 Feb. 1811, published in MC 20 Feb. 1811.

2.) Grenville to W.H. Fremantle, 27 Aug. 1808, Fremantle MSS. Box 51b, enclosing paragraphs for communication to Perry; MC 2 Sept. 1808.

3.) MC 28, 31 Jan. 1809.

4.) MC 7, 16 Feb. 1809.

The attitude of whigs such as Grey, Ponsonby and Tierney towards the proceedings was one of distaste, and Perry's initial caution reflected this view. But by late February he came out openly in support of Wardle's charges, warned readers that it was their own fault if they did not "reform the parliament by the election of such men" as Wardle, hoped that York would be prosecuted by the attorney-general, and demanded a call of the house so that the charges would not be brushed off through a thin attendance.¹ When 125 members supported Wardle's resolution against York in mid-March, Perry enthusiastically welcomed the vote as inaugurating a new era in the history of parliament, and striking "a death-blow to the system of corruption". Important as Cintra had been, he thought it much more important to express gratitude for the detection of abuses, and anticipated that many resolutions of thanks to Wardle would also call for a general inquiry into all departments of state.²

1.) MC 20, 24, 25 Feb., 3 Mar. 1809. The attitudes of the whigs to this, and other issues, are discussed in Roberts, The Whig Party 1807-12, and John Dinwiddy, Parliamentary Reform as an Issue in English Politics, 1800-1810 University of London Ph.D. Thesis (1971).

2.) MC 17, 20, 22, 23 Mar., 3 April 1809. Perry noted, without comment, that not one of the Talents ministry supported Wardle's resolution.

In supporting Wardle so explicitly, Perry showed he was prepared to countenance co-operation with radicals with whom he disagreed in order to weaken the government's parliamentary position, just as during the early 1790s he had shown some sympathy for the Corresponding and Constitutional Societies, to strengthen out-of-doors opposition to Pitt. The cry of 'corruption' was a useful antidote to the ministerial cry of 'no popery', and it was clearly good tactics (and beneficial to the Chronicle's circulation) to exploit the feeling in the country against abuses, which was heightened by the case of Castlereagh and the East India writership. But in supporting the demand for parliamentary reform which followed in April and May, Perry was not simply jumping on the bandwagon for tactical reasons. It is significant that he remarked, in December 1808, several months before the demand for reform was pressed in parliament, that "a complete change, not only of men, but of system too, must take place." The present system of corruption, intrigue, and counteraction, is enough to paralyze the greatest talents.... and, till it is radically and entirely reformed, it is a matter of merely secondary moment who is at the head of affairs".¹ Perry enlarged on this in three substantial leaders in April and May. He made it clear that he opposed annual parliaments and universal suffrage, had no time for "violent innovation" or "theoretical experiments", and wished only to restore the tripartite balance of the constitution. He also loyally remarked

1.) MC 20 Dec. 1808.

that "when Lord Grey declares himself a friend to temperate, intelligible, and definite reform, he, in fact, says all we want him to say". But Perry was clearly impatient with Grey's vagueness; he said he wished Grey had specifically supported the reform proposals of 1793, and whilst agreeing with him that it was absurd to say, as the radicals did, that a change of ministers would make no difference, he nevertheless stressed that the nature of the system was of greater importance than the character of those who administered it. Perry cited the experience of the Talents as evidence that parliamentary reform was the pre-requisite of other reforms, since the whigs could only maintain themselves in office against the court if they had the support of public opinion. He even went so far as to echo, without acknowledgement, Burdett's opinion that "One corrupt Member of the House of Commons is to the people of these islands a far more dangerous foe than any Marshall of Bonaparte".¹ Thus Perry supported reform in a far more urgent tone than the whig leaders, who were anxious to maintain the Grenville alliance, feared that too great an exposure of abuses might discredit parliament and play into the hands of the radicals, and preferred the less contentious question of catholic emancipation as the basic party creed. Perry was equally strong in his support of economical reform. He thought a general

1.) MC 17, 27 April, 17 May 1809. Roberts is misleading in saying that Perry advocated the delegate theory in 1809. (The Whig Party 1807-12 p. 277).

inquiry into all government offices was the only way of revealing "the deep-rooted and extensive system of corruption which taints and paralyzes all the departments of state", and when Folkestone's motion for such an inquiry was not supported by the moderate whigs, and received only 30 votes, Perry thought this confirmed that the Commons did not reflect the sense of its constituents, and saw it as proof of the need for parliamentary as well as economical reform.¹ It is not known what the Grey whigs thought of their party organ supporting the minority Whitbread group on reform, but they evidently felt the need of some support in the press, for Lauderdale suggested the publication of the Friends of the People's declaration terminating intercourse with the Constitutional Society, in an attempt to show that they had not relinquished their early opinions.² It did not, however, appear in the Chronicle.

In the autumn of 1809 Lauderdale had only limited success in persuading Perry to publish his letters attacking Wardle, thereby discrediting the evidence against the Duke of York and the cause of reform in general. In July Wardle had been embarrassed by Mrs. Clarke's revelation in court that he had bribed her to give evidence against the Duke. Perry, while acknowledging that Wardle's character had been discredited, and reprobating his attacks on all public men and

1.) MC 14, 20 April 1809. He did not comment on the whigs' attitude.

2.) Lauderdale to Grey, dated 6, but in fact 7 May 1809, Grey MSS.

party connexion, nevertheless maintained that he had done good work in instigating the parliamentary inquiry, and did not think there was any reason to believe the Duke innocent.¹ Lauderdale, who was anxious to see York restored as commander-in-chief, wrote an article casting aspersions on Wardle's character, which was published after some delay as a letter in the Chronicle under the pseudonym of 'A Friend to Justice'.² Lauderdale urged Grey to make a contribution, but he was himself probably the author of a further letter, signed 'A Lover of Truth', which threw doubt on the validity of Mrs. Clarke's evidence in the inquiry, since she had not been under oath as she had been in the case when she exposed Wardle's bribery.³ The appearance of this letter in early September, when the Portland ministry was crumbling, confirmed Cobbett's opinion of Perry as a place-hunter; "the villainous Perry" he wrote "is at work against Wardle with all his might. He, and his damned faction, wish, at this time, to pay their court to the king and the royal family, in the hope of again getting into place".⁴ It is true that Perry was hopeful that the whigs

1.) MC 6 July 1809.

2.) Lauderdale to Grey, 5, 21 Aug. 1809, Grey MSS.; MC 19 Aug. 1809.

3.) Lauderdale to Grey, 26, 28 Aug. 1809, Grey MSS.; MC 8 Sept. 1809.

4.) Cobbett to J. Wright, 11 Sept. 1809, Add. MSS. 22,907 f. 199.

would regain office in September, and he moderated his tone on the question of reform, attacking "the impertinent squad of knaves and hypocrites, who are daily preaching up the doctrine, that one set of ministers is just as good as the other", and trusting that a whig ministry would "set all questions of domestic policy at rest."¹

But it appears that Perry was genuinely reluctant to discredit Wardle to the point of acquitting the Duke of York. Lauderdale twice complained that Perry was "cursedly negligent" in not inserting the articles sent him, and it is significant that, as Creevey noted, Perry presented his wife to Wardle at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in November.² Moreover, Lauderdale could not understand Perry's pretext for delaying his letters. Perry claimed he did not wish to discuss the matter pending the trial of Mrs. Clarke and the Wrights for conspiracy in December, but Lauderdale thought the question of the validity of Mrs. Clarke's evidence against the Duke had no bearing on this case. "To a person who understands the arguments" Lauderdale complained "it is apparent that this letter he objects to printing can have no effect on the Trial that is coming forward - at the same time he has shown such a decided aversion to printing it that I do not know what to do".³ Lauderdale attempted to enlist Grey's authority to

1.) MC 4, 26 Sept. 1809.

2.) Lauderdale to Grey, 14 Sept., 13 Oct. 1809, Grey MSS.; Creevey's Journal 10 Nov. 1809, Creevey MSS. (Microfilm); Creevey to Whitbread, 15 Nov. 1809, Whitbread MSS.

3.) Lauderdale to Grey, 18 Nov. 1809, Grey MSS.

persuade Perry, but Perry remained firm, and Lauderdale's further attack on Wardle was not inserted until the end of December, nearly three weeks after the case of Mrs. Clarke and the Wrights.¹ A few days later Perry printed a pseudonymous letter replying to Lauderdale's attack, arguing that Wardle's embarrassments in no way undermined the case against the Duke, and although Lauderdale appears to have written a further letter to Perry early in 1810, it was not published in the Chronicle.² Thus although Perry did, under pressure, give publicity to anti-Wardle propaganda, it is clear that he did not take the same pleasure in the exposure of Wardle as did such whigs as Grey, Horner and Lauderdale.

During 1810 Perry continued to maintain a position on reform to the left of the centre whigs. On the question of the commitment of Burdett for a breach of the privileges of the House of Commons Perry showed he could take a line quite independent of the orthodox whig view. Perry's opposition to Burdett's commitment may have been partly influenced by his own experience in 1798 when he had been imprisoned for a libel by the Lords, and partly by his sensitivity to the drift

1.) "A Friend to Justice" in MC 30 Dec. 1809.

2.) "A Commoner" in MC 4 Jan. 1810; Lauderdale to Grey, 12 Jan. 1810, Grey MSS. Roberts states, without reference, that Baldwin could not get the Chronicle to publish a defence of Wardle. (The Whig Party 1807-12 p. 199 n.3.).

of public opinion, which would have made him well aware of the unpopularity of the whigs' attitude. Perry argued cogently, in several editorials, that while parliament had the general right to commit, it should not exercise this right in cases of libel which were cognizable in the ordinary courts, and which, because they constituted a misdemeanour and not an obstruction, did not warrant summary proceedings.¹ This interpretation was supported by several learned letters in the Chronicle from Capel Lofft, distinguishing between breaches of privilege which disturbed the House's proceedings, and those like libels which only tended towards such a disturbance.² When a ministerial paper pointed out that Fox had supported the commitment of the printer of the Oracle in 1805, Perry frankly admitted that Fox had acted on a principle - that the judges in the ordinary courts were dependent on the crown - which was no longer operative.³ Perry was notably more willing than whigs like Grey to respond to opinion out-of-doors, and he affirmed that the Commons should respect "that Tribunal which was the judge of all Courts, high and low, and to whom every power must ultimately look for support - public opinion". It was such language that led a commentator on the press in 1811 to

1.) MC 2, 3, 5, 9, 12, 16, 20, 24 April 1810.

2.) MC 24 April, 21 June, 10 Aug. 1810.

3.) MC 4 May 1810.

remark that Perry had deserted the aristocratic whigs, and was echoing the opinions of the radical Statesman.¹

Perhaps because of his divergence from the whigs on Burdett's commitment, Perry was less outspoken on reform in the spring of 1810 than he had been in 1809, though he was still more enthusiastic than the whig leaders. When challenged by Cobbett in late 1809 to declare the whigs' opinions on reform, Perry had replied in the vaguest possible terms, and had given no hint of discontent with the whigs' indifference.² Although the government's majorities in the Walcheren divisions, and the commitment of Burdett, gave further grounds for believing that the Commons was not representative of public opinion, it was not until the end of April 1810, after the whigs had been criticised at a Middlesex reform meeting, that Perry raised the question of reform, and then in the most moderate terms. "We wish Reform and not Revolution;" he said "the repair and cleansing of what we have already; we want nothing new, either in mode or substance;.... We want no Corresponding Societies - no surrounding the Parliament House, or filling the fields with mobs - the Constitution in this, as in every thing else, has given sufficient for itself; it has given the right of Popular Petition, the Freedom of the Press,

1.) MC 25 May 1810; Savage, An Account of the London Newspapers, pp. 15, 20

2.) MC 21 Nov. 1809.

and every mode of temperate and sober discussion".¹ Perry was also at pains to dissociate himself from the Burdettites, particularly as he had risked being identified with them through his line on Burdett's commitment. In a preface to a pamphlet on his own trial Perry had said "I think the very abstinence of the whigs from all communion with the violent innovators of the day, is a proof that they are steady to the faith of their ancestors".² In May he defended the whigs against the radical criticisms of their indifference on reform, and deprecated those "who, in their just complaints of the corruption that has crept into our system, would drive the people to despair by asserting that all public men are alike, and that no reform is to be expected from any of them".³ Perry accused the radicals of retarding the cause of reform by undermining public confidence in party politicians, and he convicted them of hypocrisy when Wardle and others failed to attend an economical reform division.⁴

1.) MC 30 April 1810, partly quoted in Roberts, op.cit., p. 271 n.2, where the date is given as 20 April. Also MC 28 April 1810. The Septennial Act had been criticised in MC 5 Jan. 1810.

2.) J. Perry ed., Trial of the information ex-officio The King versus J. Lambert and another on a charge of libel. (1810).

3.) MC 8 May 1810.

4.) MC 19, 25 May 1810.

In taking this moderate stance, it does not appear that Perry was alarmed by the violence of the Burdett riots in April, for he affirmed that throughout the disorders "there was not the least symptom manifested, not a solitary cry heard among the crowd that could be construed into disaffection to the State".¹ It seems probable that he had realised what had not been so evident in 1809, namely, that the growth of the radical movement, while conducive to the agitation of reform, could undermine the whig leaders' public reputation, exacerbate divisions within the party, strengthen the hands of ministers by its extremism, and delay the implementation of moderate measures. Nevertheless, Perry remained more explicit in his support of reform than did Grey. He specifically declared for triennial parliaments, in order to make members more accountable to their constituents; he expressed the hope, after the defeat of Brand's motion, that the public would petition the Commons for reform; and before Grey's speech on reform in June, he affirmed that it was important to ascertain what measures "are regarded by the Leaders of the Opposition as necessary" for "it is material to know how far those Leaders propose to go".² This marked one of Perry's rare attempts to put pressure on the party leaders through his newspaper, and Grey's failure to propose specific measures was greeted by a significant silence in the Chronicle.

1.) MC 12 April 1810.

2.) MC 3, 23 May, 13 June 1810.

With the establishment of the restricted Regency in February 1811 Perry's enthusiasm for reform waned. His attitude partly reflected a general diminution of interest in reform in the country, but it is most probable that Perry, like Whitbread, was encouraged by the prospect of office to tone down his interest in reform lest it undermine the whigs' acceptability to the Regent. Perry still represented the whig party as committed to reform, and claimed that "whatever diversity of opinion there may be as to the extent of the proposed Reform, there can be none in the mind of any genuine whig as to the necessity of it to a certain degree".¹ The House of Commons was still criticised for not paying due respect to public opinion, as when it approved the restoration of the Duke of York as commander-in-chief, and triennial parliaments were still advocated as a remedy, for "it is a monstrous source of corrupt influence in the hands of the Minister, that he can dissolve the Parliament in seven months or weeks, if the House of Commons is refractory and lengthen their duration to seven years, if they are obedient".² But Perry was more concerned to explain why reform should be limited to the measure of triennial parliaments. He denied

1.) MC 10 June 1811. Yet a few days earlier he had admitted that Lord Milton opposed reform, though he was "of one of the most distinguished Whig families in England." (MC 28 May 1811).

2.) MC 8, 10 June 1811.

at a reform meeting at the Freemason's Tavern in June that the whigs had changed their opinions since 1792, but virtually admitted they had when he replied to the challenge of the radical press a couple of days later: "Why" says The Statesman, "should the extension of the influence of the Crown be an argument for not going the length in Reform that the Whigs were disposed to go before?"... the reason we think is obvious.... we are come to that state in which the influence of the Crown, by an inordinate revenue, and still more by the vexatious means resorted to in its collection - by the effects of a protracted war - by the enlargement of our army and navy - by the increase of our colonial acquisitions, and by various other causes, would overwhelm all opposition, if it were not that the great landed proprietors have an interest in the soil and in the constitution superior to any gifts, titles or stars that the Government can bestow - and therefore we think that the democratic part of the community must look to the aristocracy as an ally in the purification of the legislature, or the whole will end in a military despotism, with its necessary companion, a national bankruptcy".¹ Perry added that supporters of the Marquis of Tavistock's proposal for triennial parliaments should promise to resist all advances beyond it, and he even acknowledged that this reform was open to objection whilst

1.) MC 10-12 June 1811; see also Roberts, op.cit. pp. 289-90.

corruption at elections was unrestrained, and therefore thought it better first to diminish the expense of elections.¹ Thus whereas in 1809 Perry had argued that corruption made a substantial reform of parliament essential, he was prepared to argue in 1811, with the prospect of a whig ministry in sight, that corruption made any fundamental reform inadvisable. It is not surprising that the editor of the Statesman should remark "we hardly believe that Mr. Perry consulted his own understanding, when he ventured to advance so gross a proposition".²

When in 1812 it became clear, first in February when the Regent's restrictions ended, and again after Perceval's assassination, that the whigs were not going to take office, Perry resumed a rather stronger line on reform, but he did not revive his zeal of 1809 since there was less support from public opinion. In some respects he appeared very moderate; he wrote no editorials on reform in May, although it was discussed in parliament on several days before Perceval's death, and implied during the general election later that

1.) MC 13 June 1811.

2.) Statesman 12 June 1811, in Add. MSS. 27,839 f. 196. Perry also briefly moderated his opposition to the war when it looked as if the whigs might take office in January; he suggested it might be as dangerous to abandon the war as to continue it. (MC 22 Jan. 1811.).

year that it was by the return of independent members that he hoped "to see a happy reform in the representation of the people quickly accomplished".¹ But he was still earnest enough for reform to be virtually the only whig who joined the Hampden Club as one of its founder-members in April 1812, thereby adding respectability to the popular cause.² In May, he privately urged Cartwright to publish as a pamphlet his Six Letters to the Marquis of Tavistock, which appealed to the whig leaders to unite with the popular reformers, and later in the year he published two long letters on reform, one from the metropolitan reformer Walter Fawkes criticising Lord Milton, and one from Cartwright himself discussing the activities of the Union for Parliamentary Reform, which was more radical than the Hampden Club.³ In 1813 Perry cited the number of petitions collected by Cartwright as proof of the need for reform, and published two pseudonymous letters which attracted Cartwright's favourable comment, but he did not urge reform in any editorials, for he probably thought that the progress of the Peninsular War had undermined its popularity.⁴

1.) MC 19 Sept., 26 Oct. 1812.

2.) Perry was not mentioned as one of the members in MC 21 April 1812, after the club's first meeting, but he is listed in Cartwright, Life and Correspondence ii. 24-6, 380-3.

3.) Ibid. ii.33; MC 13 Nov., 28 Dec. 1812.

4.) MC 26 May 1813; "Philo-Selden" in MC 5 Aug., 30 Sept. 1813; also "Philo-Britannia" in MC 7 Aug. 1813; Cartwright, op.cit. ii. 69.

Although there is no evidence apart from Lauderdale's intervention in 1809, that the Grenville and Grey whigs were disconcerted by Perry's opinions on parliamentary reform, it would be surprising if they had read the Chronicle's editorials on this subject with complete equanimity. There was less scope for Perry to cause offence on the other chief 'reform' question of the day, catholic emancipation, for it constituted the unifying bond of the party. Perry was never very forward in agitating this question, for as the whigs' dismissal and the subsequent election in 1807 had shown, it did not help the whigs' popularity either in parliament or in the country. As Perry remarked on one occasion: "what supported the Walcheren ministers against the consequences of their fatal and almost incredible blunders, but the known opinions of their opponents on the Catholic Question, combined with the general disinclination of the country to have that question brought forward by Government, contrary to the private wishes and scruples of the KING?"¹ Nevertheless, emancipation was to be the subject of the most important series of letters in the Chronicle, apart from Ricardo's, since 1792. After Wellesley-Pole's circular letter of February 1811, followed by his proclamation in July, prohibiting the election of delegates to a catholic committee, eleven letters were published in the Chronicle by John Joseph Dillon, under the pseudonym of 'Hibern-Anglus', attacking the government's policy

1.) MC 7 Feb. 1812.

and supporting emancipation. Dillon also wrote three letters signed 'A Scotsman', claiming to be a tolerant presbyterian who greatly admired 'Hibern-Anglus'' letters.¹ The letters were intended to reconcile all groups of opinion sympathetic to the catholic cause, and to vindicate Grenville's line on the veto. Grey expressed his admiration of them, and they would have served as a powerful counterblast to the seven letters of 'Marcus' in the Morning Post defending ministerial policy.² Perry accompanied the publication of the letters with an increase in editorial comment on emancipation, partly intended to appease English fears about Irish republicanism, and partly to discredit ministers by arguing that they could not claim to be Pittites and support Perceval's attitude towards the catholics.³ Perry continued the attack early

1.) "Hibern-Anglus" in 13 instalments in MC 26, 27, 31 Aug., 3, 5, 7, 23, 28 Sept., 3, 5, 10, 16 Oct., 9 Nov. 1811; "A Scotsman" in MC 13, 27 Sept., 2 Oct. 1811; there was a further letter from "Hibern-Anglus" in MC 27 Nov. 1812; J.J. Dillon to Grey, 3, 12 Oct. 1811, Grey MSS.

2.) Grey to Dillon, 6 Oct. 1811 (copy), Grey MSS.; Morning Post 17, 20, 22, 24, 28, 31 Aug., 20 Sept. 1811.

3.) MC 29 Aug., 26 Sept., 28 Nov., 14 Dec. 1811.

in 1812 with a persuasive article showing how recent ex-lord-lieutenants had, with the exception of Westmoreland, returned from Ireland sympathetic to emancipation. But when the issue became an open question in the cabinet in February it was no longer so valuable to Perry as a stick with which to beat the government, and criticism became focused on Perceval's personal opinions and the cabinet's divisions.¹ While emancipation was, compared to parliamentary reform, an easy issue for Perry to handle, he had to take into account the differences among the whigs on the question of the veto of the appointment of Irish catholic bishops, which was supported by Grenville, Ponsonby and Tierney, but opposed by Holland, Whitbread, Fitzwilliam and others. Perry initially supported the veto in 1808, arguing that it "does away every plausible objection that there was" to emancipation, and criticising the Irish catholic bishops for being unconciliatory in opposing it.² But in October he showed himself more sensitive to differences within the party by publishing several letters critical of the veto, including a curious letter from Dr. John Milner, who was known to support the veto, implying that he opposed it.³ This letter

1.) MC 6, 24, 26 Feb., 2 Mar., 3 July 1812.

2.) MC 27 May, 15 Oct. 1808.

3.) Milner's letter in MC 17 Oct., 1808, taken from the Dublin Evening Herald 6 July 1808; other letters in MC 19, 20, 22, 24 Oct. 1808.

had originally appeared in an Irish paper, apparently without Milner's consent, and its appearance in the Chronicle infuriated the Grenvilles, but its effect was countered by a further long letter in November from Milner supporting the veto.¹ Thereafter, Perry did not express an opinion on the veto. In 1810 the Marquis of Buckingham suggested to Grenville that his Letter to Lord Fingall, regretting the catholics' refusal to concede the veto, should be published in the Chronicle, but it did not appear, and Perry simply noted its existence without venturing an opinion.² Whatever his own views on the matter, Perry seems to have been willing to withhold them rather than exacerbate whig differences.³

Perry's constant problem of having to take account of the differences among the whigs also confronted him on the question of the Peninsular War, but it did not prevent him from taking a decided line. His initial response, like that of most whigs, was one of enthusiasm. In July 1808 he welcomed the government's decision to send an expedition to Portugal to capitalise on the Spanish struggle for independence, and described it as an essentially whig policy since

1.) H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 241, 243, 367-8; MC 19 Nov. 1808.

2.) H.M.C. Dropmore x. 7-8; MC 26 Jan. 1810.

3.) He puffed Thomas Moore's pamphlet supporting the veto, but thought most Irish protestants would support emancipation without insisting on it. (MC 16 May, 5 June 1810).

it was intended to support the cause of liberty and aid the oppressed. He promised that "it shall be our study and aim, during the recess of Parliament, to keep alive the flame that is so universally kindled", and the Chronicle had several leaders and anti-Napoleonic squibs supporting the cause.¹ Although Perry was in the unusual position of supporting ministerial policy, he was still able to make some political capital out of it. He attacked the government for the "dilatatory, jobbing and caballing spirit" which delayed the expedition, gave prominence to Sir Arthur Wellesley's complaint of the lack of cavalry after the battle of Vimeiro, and strongly criticised both ministers and officers for the Convention of Cintra.² This position of supporting the war in principle and criticising the government's misconduct of it was an advantageous one for an opposition journalist, for it enabled him to appear patriotic, which was an important consideration in maintaining a paper's circulation, while at the same time keeping up a flow of anti-ministerial propaganda. But early in 1809, Perry changed his position and came out against the very principle of the war. His reason for doing so was probably a genuine change of opinion as to the chances of the war's success, though most whigs at this time still supported it, particularly the Holland House

1.) MC 2, 5, 7, 9, 14, 25, 28 July 1808.

2.) MC 28 July, 1 Aug., 5, 15, 17, 19, 27-9 Sept., 13, 18 Oct. 1808.

group with whom Perry was in close contact. He may also have been tempted to exploit the government's embarrassment over the Duke of York, and to assume a totally anti-ministerial position. It is even possible that he received a hint from the Grenvilles, who were opposed to the idea of continental expeditions. Thomas Grenville said in late 1808 "I have this day forbid the Morning Chronicle for it's [sic] incorrigible obstinacy in supporting the government folly of all this Spanish Mania", and his disapproval may have been passed on to Perry.¹

Perry's change of opinion on the war was, in both political and journalistic terms, a misfortune. It caused him to make a series of pessimistic predictions as to the war's progress which were invariably contradicted by events, and which must have strengthened the popular impression, exploited by the ministerial press, that both he and the whigs were unpatriotic; - an impression which cannot have benefited the Chronicle's circulation. Perry took the Grenvillite view that the British army could never succeed against Bonaparte's superior

1.) T. Grenville to Spencer, 30 Dec. 1808, Spencer MSS. Box 73; Spencer thought it "rather hard upon the poor Morning Chronicle that you should discard it for no other fault than what is equally to be found as far as I can see in all its Contemporaries." (Spencer to T. Grenville, 3 Jan. 1809, Add. MSS. 41,854 f. 233.).

numbers, and that the best policy was to keep an expeditionary force floating off the coast for occasional raids. More, he claimed, could be achieved by Cochrane and 5,000 men, than by Wellesley and a large army.¹ In language very different from that of 1808, when it had been affirmed that Britain's love of liberty was such that any aid, however expensive, would be given to Spain, Perry claimed that "legitimate interest, not moral feeling, is the only standard by which to judge of the policy of states", and he suggested that it would be better to try to correct Spain's administrative abuses than to give military aid.² Perry attempted to mitigate the unpopularity of his opposition to the war by acknowledging the merits of Wellington's efforts; "it is not to the conduct of the campaign, much less to the gallantry of our troops" he affirmed "that we have objected, as the ministerial papers slanderously insinuate; but to the whole plan and system of the expedition".³ Perry did not repeat the mistake of criticising the officers' competence as he had done after the Convention of Cintra; he welcomed the victory of Talavera with rapture, whereas some whigs like Grey and Whitbread used it as an occasion for an attack upon Wellington; the victory of Busaco was described as "an achievement of no ordinary magnitude"; the retreat to Torres Vedras was said

1.) MC 14 Jan., 23 Feb., 21 June 1809.

2.) MC 15 June 1808, 30 Jan., 11 Aug. 1809.

3.) MC 18 Dec. 1810.

to be conducted with "masterly wisdom"; and when Massena withdrew from the lines in 1811, Perry claimed "none of the most sanguine of our political opponents can enjoy the success of our arms with more heartfelt joy than we do."¹ But such patriotic effusions did little to offset the impression created by Perry's consistently pessimistic predictions which he maintained even in the face of Wellington's victories. Shortly after Talavera he urged that Britain recover from its dream of rescuing Spain, and after Austria's defeat at Wagram, called for Wellington's withdrawal, claiming "that the whole Peninsula must now be subjugated by France, no rational being can entertain a doubt".² Although there were occasional moments of optimism in 1810, in view of the victory of Busaco, and the natural advantages of the lines of Torres Vedras, and it was even hoped that reinforcements could be sent, readers were assured by the end of the year that such a protracted and expensive war was "inconsistent with our means, and our character as a maritime nation", and that the country was "driving head-long to national ruin".³

1.) MC 28 Nov. 1808, 15 Aug. 1809, 15, 26 Oct. 1810, 25 Mar., 13, 25 April 1811. Wellington was criticised in a leader in MC 21 Oct. 1811, but his abilities, such as in the management of the commissariat, were also acknowledged.

2.) MC 30 Aug., 28 Oct. 1809.

3.) MC 18 July, 17 Aug., 20 Oct., 19, 29 Nov., 17 Dec. 1810.

When the news of Massena's retreat arrived in April 1811 Perry candidly admitted that "we certainly were among the number who distrusted the efficacy of our expedition; and thought that it was totally inconsistent with sound policy"; but he denied that the ministers deserved any credit, and even tried to play down the war's importance by urging the public to direct their attention to "concerns really momentous" such as the depreciated currency, America and Ireland.¹ Despite the embarrassment of Massena's withdrawal, Perry continued to prophesy doom; he thought that Wellington should be given more authority, but maintained that there was no hope of delivering Spain, for a land war was "against the dispensation of Providence as to the character of our country".² The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz early in 1812 tempered Perry's pessimism, but his sense of awkwardness in the face of the government's success led him into inconsistencies. In March he criticised ministers for not fully exploiting Napoleon's distraction by the projected invasion of Russia, but in July he supported Whitbread's proposal for a negotiated withdrawal of French troops from the Peninsula, even though it would give Napoleon a free hand against Russia.³ After Salamanca he warned that the benefits of the

1.) MC 13, 25, 27 April 1811.

2.) MC 21 June, 5, 23 July, 28 Aug., 17 Sept., 17-19 Oct., 19 Dec. 1811.

3.) MC 24 Mar., 23 July 1812.

victory should not be exaggerated, but three months later attacked ministers for not fully exploiting an opportunity unprecedented in the history of war.¹ Perry maintained his despondency in 1813, and urged only four days before the news of Vittoria that the French retreat was merely a defensive measure, designed to protract the war until British resources were exhausted and Bonaparte could spare reinforcements. It was only this victory that forced Perry to admit that the progress of the war was glorious, and affirm that even if Wellington retreated to the Tagus, he would still be supported by the Chronicle.²

To a certain extent, Perry's misjudgements on the war can be attributed to the injudicious accounts which the whigs received from professed military experts such as Sir Robert Wilson and John Willoughby Gordon,³ and which were probably communicated to the Chronicle.

1.) MC 24 Aug., 18 Nov. 1812.

2.) MC 1, 5 July, 21 Aug. 1813. When Perry suggested that Austria might come to terms with France, Coleridge complained of the Chronicle's "usual comfortable Anti-patriotism," probably meaning that while Perry opposed Napoleon, he liked to put the worst construction on events. (Griggs, Letters of ... Coleridge iii. 441; MC 25 Sept. 1813.).

3.) Roberts, op.cit. pp. 150, 153-4.

But Perry was himself too willing to give credence to pessimistic and ill-informed accounts, and the glee which the ministerial press displayed at the fate of his predictions was not without some justification. When after Massena's withdrawal from Torres Vedras Perry speculated on what might have happened had he received reinforcements, Coleridge replied in the Courier "Oh! it amuses us to see the gloomy hints, the long and formal predictions of the Opposition, softened down into monosyllable ifs and buts. Driven from probabilities, they now take their stand in the still wider region of possibility, thus affording a strange proof how difficult it is for some men to range themselves on the side of their country." It was not very convincing to dismiss such pertinent criticism as mere "impotent ribaldry, which unites the coarseness of a fish woman to the spite of an eunuch".¹ Lord Granville Leveson Gower, who was sympathetic to some whig causes, complained that with regard to the war, "I am out of all patience with the Morning Chronicle; it grows more pitifully malignant and presumptuous than ever", and Lady Bessborough agreed that it was provoking

1.) MC 20, 22 April 1811; Courier 20 April 1811. Perry usually disdained to reply (MC 19 Aug. 1809, 24 May 1811). William Jerdan, who edited the Sun in 1813, recalled forty years later how the ministerial press had been able to crow at the Chronicle's embarrassments on the war. (Jerdan, Autobiography i. 160).

"beyond all measure", and said she was "very angry" at its exaggeration of the allied numbers taken in battle.¹ But while Perry appeared perverse to supporters of the war, he was not pessimistic enough for the Grenvilles; Auckland complained of the Chronicle's foolishness in exulting over Massena's withdrawal in 1811, and Grenville complained after Vittoria that the Chronicle was echoing the ministerial Morning Post.²

The one benefit which Perry derived from the Peninsular War was the occasional assistance of the whigs in supplying editorials and information. During his initial enthusiasm for the war in mid-1808 Perry received some aid from Holland House. Lady Holland wrote to Grey "I refer you to the Morning Chronicle of today about the Spanish Proclamations &c, the whole of the leading article is written here, & the translations are also done by our inmates".³ Brougham also considered making a contribution; he thought the whigs could gain much popularity by supporting the Spaniards and said he might "draw

1.) Grenville, Lord Granville Leveson Gower. Private Correspondence.

ii. 408-10; Perry had predicted another retreat to Torres Vedras (MC 17-19 Oct. 1811).

2.) H.M.C. Dropmore x. 129; Roberts, op.cit. p. 161.

3.) 3 July 1808, Add. MSS. 51,549 f.80; despite the date of her letter, she was clearly referring to MC 4 July 1808.

up a few remarks... and send them to Perry", but it is not clear whether he did so.¹ In December 1808 Allen sent Perry a letter from Corunna giving news of Sir John Moore's retreat,² and the Holland House group continued to give assistance even after Perry had swung round against the war. It is possible that the Hollands were writing to Perry from Spain early in 1809, for Perry claimed that it was through his private correspondence from Seville that he was able to give the most accurate account of the war, for as he later remarked "the information contained in the Spanish papers.... is in general so scanty and incorrect that little is communicated, and upon that little no dependence can be placed".³ In mid-1809 Holland sent Horner a few paragraphs for insertion in the Chronicle, and in the following year Robert Adair brought back from Cadiz a report of

1.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. [1808], Add. MSS. 52,178 f.75; Aspinall says Brougham was writing for the Chronicle throughout 1808 and 1809 (Politics and the Press p. 291), but in 1809 or '10 Brougham said "I have not written a single line in that [the Chronicle] or any other place (the E[dinburgh] Rev[iew] excepted) since the Xmas holidays 1807/8 two years ago." (Brougham to Allen, n.d., Add. MSS. 52,178 f.89.).

2.) Brougham, Life and Times i. 424.

3.) MC 11 Aug. 1809; letters in MC 28-9 Mar., 26 May 1809.

the Cortes' debate on the liberty of the press, which was sent to Perry who gave it a whole page in his paper.¹ Perry also received information from officers in Wellington's army, and he sometimes drew attention to the fact to substantiate the authenticity of his news.² On one occasion in 1812 some information based on Wellington's despatches, which had been communicated by the Quartermaster-General Colonel Willoughby Gordon to either Grey or Whitbread, was published in the Chronicle before the despatches had arrived in England. The information included such awkward facts as that the army's pay was three months in arrears, and there was only £10,000 in the military chest. Although Perry claimed that "it requires no access to State

1.) MC 11 Dec. 1810; Holland to Horner, n.d.; Horner to Holland, 16 July 1809; Allen to Horner, n.d. Wed. [21 Nov. 1810], Horner MSS. vol. iv. ff. 89, 96, 325; Allen to Horner, n.d. [1810], Ibid. vol. v. f.143.

The report was also given to Blanco White, editor of the Spanish periodical, the Espanol. There was much information sent to the whigs which was not communicated to Perry; one of Holland's regular informants mentioned in his letter "Take care that it does not get into a newspaper as I shall be suspected of having sent it to the Editor." (C.R. Vaughan to Holland, 10 Nov. 1810, Add. MSS. 51,616 f.87).

2.) MC 3 Aug., 14 Nov. 1810, 1 Jan. 1811.

papers to come at these facts", Wellington realised who was the source of the disclosure, and Gordon was recalled.¹ It does not appear that Gordon had ever been in regular or direct communication with Perry, for he said in 1810 that he was writing about Portugal in an evening paper, the Pilot, which he had used to defend the Duke of York in 1809.² The assistance of the whigs in supplying foreign news would have been of considerable value to Perry in helping to offset the advantages which The Times had in this field. There is no evidence bearing upon Perry's own arrangements for collecting information, though in one instance his parliamentary reporter, Peter Finnerty, acted as a foreign correspondent during the Walcheren expedition. Finnerty was able to gain a place on the expedition through the good offices of Sir Home Popham, to whom he had acted as shorthand writer during his court martial in 1806, and he sent over a dozen letters to the Chronicle giving details of the campaign.³

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- 1.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 282; Roberts, op.cit., pp. 165-6; Duke of Wellington ed., Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of ...Wellington (12 vols. 1858-65) vii. 427-8, 456-7; MC 24, 28 Aug. 1812.
 - 2.) J.W. Gordon to Grey, 12, 18 Oct. 1810, Grey, MSS.; Aspinall, Letters of King George iv i. 224.
 - 3.) Ward, Memoirs i. 397-8; MC 14, 18, 28-30 Aug., 1, 5, 6, 13, 15, 18, 27 Sept., 6 Oct. 1809. Popham wanted Finnerty to keep Chatham's name out of the press.

The failure of the Walcheren expedition gave the whigs their best chance of defeating the ministry during this period, but Perry's line of attack on this issue was not so forceful as it might have been. Perry's initial response to the idea of the expedition was mildly optimistic. He thought at first that it might succeed in diverting France from Austria, and though he withdrew this opinion, he conceded that it could be valuable in preventing France from using the Scheldt as a base for attacking Britain, and he reserved his judgement on the policy of the plan.¹ When it emerged that the expedition had failed, Perry, consistent with his guarded approval of its strategy, put the blame on the commanding officers, and called for Chatham's court martial.² This line of attack, however, played into the hands of the ministerial press, which as Auckland observed in early September had started attacking Chatham in order to divert responsibility from ministers. As Lord Rosslyn told Brougham, it was much better to attack the ministers than the commanders, since any comment on the "misconduct or neglect in the Execution of an Enterprise is protanto a justification or excuse for the original Plan. And upon that principle the ministerial papers have always acted".³ Brougham, who accepted the opinion of

1.) MC 26, 28 June, 15, 19 July 1809.

2.) MC 22, 24 Aug., 7 Sept. 1809.

3.) H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 315; Rosslyn to Brougham, end. 25 Nov. 1815, but written in 1809, Brougham MSS.

generals such as Rosslyn and Sir John Hope that the plan was misconceived, was highly critical of Perry's attitude. He told Allen "It strikes me that something should be said to Perry to make him abstain from these constant attacks on Lord Chatham & the execution of the Scheldt plan in general.....I talked to Perry myself t'other day about it, but found him quite prepossessed by accounts which he had received from "some respectable young officers", whom he knows, & from C. Sturt who I find is his "gentleman just arrived from Paris", and a most notable authority certainly - He talked great nonsense on this foundation, such as that the generals all got frightened by the fever....viewing it as a party question, I cannot help thinking that the strongest ground on which to attack the government, is to abstain from attacking the army, and that such statements as Perry is always giving of the felicity and certainty with which Antwerp as well as Flushing might have been taken are the best defence of the ministers that could possibly be devised".¹ Brougham hoped that Holland would persuade Perry to change his opinions, and it appears that Holland intervened, for by the end of September Perry had reversed his position, claiming that the expedition's failure lay "in the ignorance and confusion of the plan, more than in the execution", and praising Chatham for "his manly determination to look the Ministers in the face" and for his refusal to attempt to take Antwerp.²

1.) n.d. [1809], Add. MSS. 52,178 ff.116-18.

2.) MC 25 Sept. 1809.

Although the question of reform and the war took up much of Perry's attention in this period, he also found time to agitate constitutional questions concerning the influence and the prerogatives of the crown. He still continued to use the conspiratorial theory of secret advisers to account for certain events, particularly during the disappointment of the whigs' exclusion from office in 1812. The dismissal of the Talents was attributed on one occasion to unknown courtiers, and it was claimed that nothing comparable had happened since the time of Queen Anne and Abigail Masham. Although this interpretation was not developed, Perry quoted Hume's defence of party to show that a systematic opposition was essential to prevent the crown's secret advisers from dominating policy.¹ In 1808 it was claimed that both the defeat of Bankes's bill to prevent the grant of offices in reversion, and the appointment of the ardent protestant Dr. Duigenan as an Irish privy councillor, were the product of unconstitutional influence.² When in 1810 Chatham gave the King a memorandum justifying his conduct of the Walcheren

1.) MC 23 Mar., 25 June 1807.

2.) MC 2 April, 12 May 1808. Perry claimed, contrary to what he had said in 1804, that Pitt "would have indignantly spurned at the base subserviency to a concealed power, under which the present Ministers are permitted to hold the baubles of office." (MC 8 June 1808).

expedition without consulting the cabinet, Perry saw this as a confirmation of that secret influence behind the throne of which Chatham's father had complained. He even suggested that the delay in Chatham's resignation showed that "the secret adviser has more influence than all the other Members of the Cabinet, and that unless they retain him, they cannot retain their places".¹ The spectre of secret advisers was used in late 1810 to justify a parliamentary inquiry into the fact of the King's incapacity, for though Perry admitted it might aggravate the King's health, it was essential to guard against the imprisonment of the King "by any artful faction, that had closed all the ordinary and constitutional avenues to the Throne".² Perry's fear that ministers' control of policy, and therefore their responsibility to parliament, might be undermined by the machinations of the "king's friends" may appear unrealistic, but it was shared by many whigs, at least for purposes of propaganda. Lauderdale could still talk in Burkeian terms in 1809 of "that little circle around the Throne, who... by fomenting the animosities of public men,... seek to give effect to that principle of division in which the policy of the present Reign has uniformly regarded the secret of governing to consist"; and Brougham in 1811 unsuccessfully tried to persuade Allen to write for the Edinburgh Review "a constitutional

1.) MC 3, 7, 8 Mar. 1810.

2.) MC 4 Dec. 1810.

article upon "secret advisers" i.e. Kings governing by themselves, with reflexions on the past reign".¹ In 1812 Perry explained the proscription of the whigs as he had that of Fox in 1804, not by acknowledging that their opinions on the war and on emancipation made them unacceptable to the Regent and to parliament, but by representing them as martyrs in the long struggle against unconstitutional influence. The Regent was portrayed as surrounded by the successors of that same cabal which had caused the American and French wars, and which had throughout the reign governed through a nominal and pliable minister. Perry's interpretation received some support from Lord Darnley, who claimed in March that Perceval's retention of office was owing to "persons not officially known to the House", and whose speech was quoted with approval in the Chronicle.² Perry reiterated this theme throughout the protracted negotiations which followed Perceval's assassination.³ When the whigs refused to take office on the pretext that they could not control the appointments to the royal household, Perry defended their decision since the household officers could be used "for the purpose of setting up a court influence in contradistinction to the

1.) Lauderdale in a letter signed "An Englishman" in MC 14 Nov. 1809; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Frid. [19 July], 14 Aug. 1811, Add. MSS. 52,178 ff. 143, 147.

2.) MC 19, 21 Mar. 1812.

3.) MC 14, 20, 22 May, 2, 4 June 1812.

influence of the responsible advisers of the Crown". Courtiers like Lord Yarmouth, and his father the Marquis of Hertford, "constituted that very description of Power against which Lords GREY and GRENVILLE were contending, against which Lord CHATHAM, the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM, Mr. BURKE, and Mr. FOX had contended before them.... namely a Power within the Government, separate from the responsible advisers of the Crown".¹ By placing the whigs' exclusion in the context of a fifty-year tradition of struggle against secret influence Perry could gratify the convictions he had imbibed during his youth, and avoid confronting the fact that the whigs did not enjoy the confidence of the country. This was the last occasion on which he seriously explained political events in these terms, for although there were a few further allusions to the influence of favourites and flatterers,² there was no similar disappointment to necessitate a revival of the theory.

The disappointments of 1812 also elicited a response from Perry on a more personal level, in that he could not refrain from holding the Regent partly responsible. Throughout the restricted Regency Perry had remained loyal to the Prince in the expectation that he would dispense with Perceval once the restrictions were lifted. He praised the Prince's endearing filial piety in retaining Perceval lest a change impede the King's recovery, and acquitted him of any involvement in the government's

1.) MC 8, 12, 15 June 1812. Also 21, 22 July 1812.

2.) e.g. MC 6 May 1813, 15 Feb. 1814, 15 Jan. 1816.

repressive Irish policy.¹ When the Regent continued to retain Perceval in February 1812, Perry initially refrained from attacking him, and blamed the situation on either Perceval or some "reptile" lurking behind the throne, perhaps in the hope that the Regent might yet change his mind. But early in March a discreet but venomous allusion was made in the Chronicle to the Prince's private life, referring to "the predilections in which he still indulges", and claiming that "we have alluded to no subjects which it would be desirable to see veiled in obscurity, that are not as public as noon-day".² Perry's main line of attack was of course that the Regent had abandoned his old principles, but there was some further veiled personal abuse later in the year, including a long article referring obliquely to the Regent and Lady Hertford, which McMahon thought so "diabolical" that he took steps to counter it in the Morning Herald.³

It would have been remarkable if Perry had not given expression to his bitter resentment against the Prince by some personal innuendo, but such devices were uncharacteristic of the tone of the Chronicle.

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- 1.) MC 6, 11, 19 Feb., 7, 13, 15 Aug. 1811. Only once did Perry intrude a note of criticism. (MC 8 July 1811).
 - 2.) MC 21, 25 Feb., 7, 11 Mar. 1812. The ministerialist R. Ward exaggerated when he complained of a "long and violent invective" against the Prince. (Ward, Memoirs i. 453-4).
 - 3.) MC 12 Sept. 1812; Aspinall, Letters of King George iv i. 137-8.

More typical of Perry's interests were his comments on the constitutional position of the crown, apart from its embroilment in the thralldom of secret advisers. Perry continued to reiterate the stock whig phrases about the dangers of the increase of the influence of the crown; he affirmed that "the smoothness of influence had done more for the executive power than it ever hoped to attain by the violence of prerogative", and argued that it was only this influence which enabled the Perceval ministry to retain office after the Walcheren expedition.¹ Of more interest as illustrations of partisan journalism are the attempts Perry made to defend and question the crown's prerogatives when it suited the interests of the whigs. When the question of the extent of the Regent's powers arose in 1810-11, Perry came forward as an opportunistic champion of the prerogative, and opposed the imposition of restrictions on the Regent. He proclaimed the need to "preserve untarnished the lustre of the Kingly Office" protested that "the most inveterate Republican" could not have introduced a Regency bill more hostile to monarchy, and quoted from Fox's History that the prerogatives were "in substance and effect the rights of the people".² The awkward fact that Grenville supported

1.) MC 27 Nov., 26 June 1810.

2.) MC 23 Nov., 28 Dec. 1810, 4, 8, 25 Jan. 1811.

the restrictions was glossed over by a reference to his integrity in maintaining his principles of 1789.¹ This staunch defence of the crown's rights makes a notable contrast to Perry's assaults on them under different circumstances. On several occasions he challenged the King's right to choose his own ministers. He had claimed in 1801, alluding to Addington, that the King had "no right to chuse weak or wicked Ministers", but the King certainly had this right if the minister enjoyed the confidence of the Commons as Addington did.² In 1807 Perry in effect denied the King's right to act of his own volition by arguing that the Portland ministry, in accepting office, took responsibility for events leading to the change; and in 1809 he went so far as to suggest that the King should, on Portland's death, have asked Grey and Grenville to form a government.³ Perry also challenged the prerogative of dissolution. There was some justification in his claims that this prerogative was open to abuse, since it could be used at will to curb a hostile Commons.⁴ But it was unconvincing to attack the dissolution of April 1807 as a breach of the Septennial Act, when the whigs had themselves dissolved prematurely in 1806, and it was

1.) MC 11 Jan. 1811.

2.) MC 6 July 1801.

3.) MC 26 June 1807, 20 Oct. 1809.

4.) MC 22 Jan. 1810, quoted in Roberts, op.cit. p.228.

less than candid to extenuate Pitt's dissolution of 1784 on the grounds that he had "great genius... wonderful maturity, and promises of talents" unlike the present "despicable drivellers".¹ To exalt Pitt's posthumous reputation was a useful way of discrediting his successors by contrast, but it was a disingenuous device for an editor with Perry's record.

Perry's party spirit might mislead him into making opportunistic and inconsistent claims, but he was careful not to allow the Chronicle to become a mere vehicle of party propaganda. He maintained a high standard in the miscellaneous features, and his contributors included such celebrated figures as Thomas Moore, Byron, Hazlitt and Ricardo. A serious obstacle to publishing a steady flow of literary and artistic articles was the pressure on space. Priority had to be given to regular items such as political news, debates and advertisements, and with the growing demand for reports of sporting events, police news and coroners' inquests, there was often little room for literary features. As Perry explained to one contributor during the parliamentary session in 1814 "At present the shorter and more pithy the better". "I am embarrassed only as to what to keep out, not as to what I shall insert. And all that I require is somewhat [sic] light and epigrammatic to relieve the tedium of political debate. -

1.) MC 30 Mar. 1807.

"Jests to make merrie" - are in this character".¹ A contributor who admirably fulfilled this need of providing brief and witty pieces as a contrast from heavy political matter was Thomas Moore, who had begun writing for the Chronicle by March 1812, and was to continue to do so intermittently for the next thirty years. Perry stressed that he wanted not Moore's serious poetry, but only "the fruits of idleness, the alteratives from severer thought". It has not been possible to identify Moore's contributions, since they were pseudonymous, but they were clearly successful, for in December Perry engaged him on a regular basis at a salary of £200 a year.² Another distinguished, but very occasional, contributor to the Chronicle was Byron. He appears to have taken the initiative in having his poems published in the Chronicle, which was the only daily paper they ever appeared in, for in March 1812 he wrote to Perry requesting the insertion of his verses opposing severer penalties for frame-breaking so that their appearance would coincide with the discussion of the question in the House of Lords.³

1.) Perry to Rev. Philip Bliss, 18, 31 May 1814, Add.MSS. 34,567 ff.441, 44

2.) Wilfred S. Dowden ed., Letters of Thomas Moore (2 vols. Oxford 1964) i. 182-3; Russell, Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore viii. 127.

3.) Rowland E. Prothero ed., Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals (6 vols. 1898-1901) ii. 97; MC 2 Mar. 1812.

A further five pieces by Byron appeared in the Chronicle during the next four years.¹ Perry cannot have had very close contact with Byron, for he criticised his Address on the opening of Drury Lane; but Byron was not deterred from making further contributions, for he told Holland "My friend Perry has, indeed, et tu, Brute—d me rather scurvily, for which I will send him, for the Morning Chronicle, the next epigram I scribble, as a token of my full forgiveness". Perry too was conciliatory, for within a few days he published a pseudonymous letter by Whitbread defending Byron's composition.² Another minor disagreement occurred in 1814 when Perry incorrectly denied Byron's forthcoming marriage, but he quickly atoned by inserting a handsome apology and by publishing Byron's elegy on the death of his cousin, Sir Peter Parker.³ Other literary contributors to the Chronicle at about this time included the lawyer and journalist Edward Dubois, who conducted the Monthly Mirror 1810-11. Coleridge described him as the author

1.) MC 7 Mar., 12, 23 Oct. 1812, 7 Oct. 1814, 15 Mar. 1816;

New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature vol. iii. (1969) cols. 293-4.

2.) MC 12 Oct. 1812; Prothero, op.cit. ii. 173; Whitbread to Holland, 16 Oct. 1812, Add. MSS. 51,576 f.73; "Verax" in MC 19 Oct. 1812.

3.) Thomas L. Ashton, "Peter Parker in Perry's Paper : Two Unpublished Byron Letters" Keats-Shelley Journal (New York) xviii. 1969. pp.49-59; MC 5-7 Oct. 1814.

of "a notable share of the theatrical Puffs & Slanders of the periodical Press", but more sympathetic colleagues remembered him as the writer of epigrams and satirical verses.¹ Another lawyer, Harry Clifford, who was active as a defence counsel for prosecuted journalists, was also said to be a "great contributor" to the Chronicle.² After 1810 there were several poems in the Chronicle by Perry's close friend, Mary Russell Mitford, and in 1814 Perry received some squibs and epigrams from a fellow bibliophile, the Rev. Philip Bliss, who was to become keeper of the archives at Oxford for over thirty years.³ Perry particularly

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- 1.) Griggs, Letters of...Coleridge v.12; J. Parkes and H. Merrivale ed., Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis (2 vols. 1867) ii. 383 n.1.
 - 2.) Fraser's Magazine lxxv. May 1862. p. 609. He advised Finnerty in his action against the Satirist in 1809. (MC 20 Feb. 1809).
 - 3.) Mitford in MC 24 Mar., 4 April 1810, 23 April, 16 May 1811, 10 June, 22 Nov. 1813, 19 Feb., 25 Mar. 1814; Perry to Bliss, 18, 31 May, 10 Aug. 1814, Add. MSS. 34,567 ff.441, 443, 448. Perry was sent a long parody by the old Chronicle contributor Charles Morris, but it was not published. (Morris to Perry, 24 Sept. 1811, Houghton Library, Harvard University).

welcomed his efforts, since they were "erudite as well as jocose". There were also occasional verses by whig wits and politicians, including Fitzpatrick, Lord Carlisle, Sheridan, Samuel Rogers, the Duke of Devonshire and George Lamb.¹ Perry himself gave vent to his muse with a monody on Nelson's death, but it was not very expressive, and was fortified by the use of nine exclamation marks.²

In addition to his various contributors of poems and epigrams, Perry also engaged the services of one who was to emerge as the most distinguished dramatic critic of his time. William Hazlitt was employed by Perry as a parliamentary reporter in October 1812 at the salary of 4 guineas a week,³ and after a year's work in this capacity, he started to contribute articles on drama, the arts and politics. Between October 1813 and May 1814 Hazlitt wrote over forty articles for the Chronicle; there were fifteen on the theatre; nine on the arts; six on politics, including a powerful attack on The Times and Courier; six very long miscellaneous articles on literary subjects; and five essays in reply to the Letters of Vetus

1.) Respectively in MC 31 Oct. 1807, 14 Jan., 16 April 1808, 17 April, 30 Nov. 1811, 9 Mar. 1812. Lamb's contribution is identified in Aspinall, Letters of King George iv i. 28. n.1.

2.) Signed "J.P." in MC 9 Jan. 1806.

3.) Edith J. Morley, Henry Crabb Robinson on books and their writers (3 vols. 1938) i. 110, 116.

in The Times, which had supported the Peninsular war.¹ These articles probably gained the Chronicle great credit. According to Crabb Robinson, Perry himself was "vastly pleased" with them, thought they "had done more for the paper than all the other writings", and had advanced Hazlitt £100 in recognition of the fact.² A friend of Leigh Hunt's inquired at this time "Pray who writes the Theatrical Article in the Chronicle? It is done by a masterly hand", and Hazlitt himself recalled some years later that his best articles were those he had written in the Chronicle on Kean.³

1.) The articles are identified in P.P. Howe ed., Complete Works of William Hazlitt (21 vols. 1931-33) v. 179-196; vii. 39-72; xviii. 5-24, 191-6; xix. 5, 115-128; xx. 1-36. Those on drama were in MC 18, 23, 30 Oct., 16 Nov., 8 Dec. 1813, 27 Jan., 2, 15, 21, 24 Feb., 14 Mar., 6, 9, 26, 27 May 1814; on arts in MC 11, 15 Jan., 5, 10 Feb., 3-5, 7, 18 May 1814; on politics in MC 20 Sept., 1 Dec. 1813, 11, 21 Jan., 26 Feb., 24 Mar. 1814; on miscellaneous subjects in MC 15 Oct., 13 Nov. 1813, 3, 17 Feb., 3 Mar., 8 April 1814; on Vetus in MC 2, 10, 16, 18 Dec. 1813, 3, 5 Jan. 1814.

2.) Morley, op.cit. i. 153.

3.) T. Mitchell to Hunt, n.d. p.m. 20 Nov. 1813, Add. MSS. 38,108 f.88; Howe, op.cit. v. 174. Philip Francis wrote privately to Perry complimenting him on an article on modern comedy in MC 15 Oct. 1813, but it is not clear if this was by Hazlitt. (Parkes and Merrivale, Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis ii. 374).

But despite the obvious merit of his contributions, Hazlitt was dismissed by Perry before the end of 1814. It is unlikely that Perry dispensed with his most brilliant writer merely because, as Mitford thought, of a difference of opinion on the merits of Perry's friend, Sir Thomas Lawrence. It is possible that Perry felt that Hazlitt's pungent critiques were alienating too many people, for Hazlitt later recalled "Poor Perry! What bitter complaints he used to make, that by running-a-muck at lords and Scotchmen I should not leave him a place to dine out".¹ Hazlitt's bitterness at his dismissal, however, makes him an unreliable authority, and it seems more likely that Perry dismissed him partly because his long articles, nearly all of which appeared during the parliamentary session, were taking up so much space as to deprive the Chronicle of advertising revenue, and partly because he disliked his misanthropic personality.² There is little evidence of other critics employed by Perry at this time, apart from Lawrence, who was asked for some comments on an exhibition in 1811, and William Mudford, who worked as a theatre

1.) L'Estrange, Life of Mary Russell Mitford ii. 47-8; Howe, op.cit. viii. 292.

2.) Hazlitt said he was dismissed "much against his inclination." (Howe, op.cit. xx. 143). Crabb Robinson thought Perry may have objected to Hazlitt writing in other papers. (Morley, op.cit. i. 153-4).

critic on the Chronicle in about 1812, and later became editor of the ministerial Courier.¹

Other contributors to the Chronicle were of a more political character. The most eminent of them was David Ricardo, who wrote three articles in the Chronicle in the autumn of 1809 discussing the depreciation of the value of bank notes. Perry was one of the few friends to whom Ricardo showed his original manuscripts, and he managed to gain Ricardo's reluctant assent to their publication in the Chronicle.² These letters were of great importance in starting the bullion controversy, and their principles were largely adopted by the report of the Bullion Committee in 1810 which recommended the resumption of cash payments. They prompted a considerable correspondence in the Chronicle, including two pseudonymous replies from Ricardo's friend Hutches Trower, and after the report of the Committee, Perry published three further letters from Ricardo defending its conclusions.³ There were also

1.) Farington Diary vi. 264; Howe, op.cit. viii. 293 & n.1. According to Lawrence's biographer, Finnerty reviewed the arts for Perry, but this seems improbable. (D.E. Williams, Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence (2 vols. 1831) i. 288-9).

2.) MC 29 Aug., 20 Sept., 23 Nov. 1809; Piero Sraffa ed., with the collaboration of M.H. Dobb, The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo (10 vols. Cambridge 1951-65) iii. 3-4, 15-33, 131-153; x.7.

3.) MC 14 Sept., 30 Oct. 1809; 6, 18, 24 Sept. 1810; Sraffa, op.cit. iii. 8-9.

several series of important pseudonymous articles in the Chronicle. These included the six letters of 'A.B.' in 1807 discussing Anglo-American relations in the light of the orders in council; there were so many inquiries for back-numbers of the Chronicle containing these letters that Perry had them published as a pamphlet.¹ In January 1808 there were ten letters from 'An Englishman' surveying the general political situation which were also published as a pamphlet, and in 1810 there were three letters from 'Conciliator' on South American affairs, which attracted the favourable notice of the Spanish journalist, Blanco White.² Occasionally well-known figures wrote letters under their real names: Philip Francis supported Perry's arguments against the restricted Regency, Lauderdale wrote on the currency question, and Capel Lofft, in addition to his letters on Burdett's commitment, also wrote on the Regency and the war.³

1.) J. Perry ed., The six letters of A.B.... (1807); MC 6, 19, 28 Nov., 3, 9, 14 Dec. 1807. Perry denied that the author was Alexander Baring over a year later. (MC. 31 Jan. 1809).

2.) MC 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 18-21, 28 Jan. 1808; 10, 14, 19 Sept., 1810; B. White to Holland, 19 Sept. 1810 (wrongly dated 1811), Add. MSS. 52, 194 f.8.

3.) Respectively MC 24 Dec. 1810; 10 Nov. 1812; and 21 Jan. 1811, 2, 3, 10 Aug. 1815. Lofft argued in a letter after Waterloo, which Lamb thought "the genius of absurdity," that Bonaparte was entitled to habeas corpus. (Lucas, Letters of Charles Lamb ii. 169). He also wrote a letter on comets (MC 10 Sept. 1811).

The problem of holding a balance in the Chronicle between political and miscellaneous matter could never be resolved to the satisfaction of all readers, but it is evident that Perry attempted with some success to provide relief from what he described as the "tedium of political debate". Another problem which became particularly acute after 1808 was that of avoiding prosecution. Between 1808 and 1810 the attorney-general Sir Vicary Gibbs reacted to the growth of the radical and opposition press by filing forty-two ex officio informations, compared to only fourteen filed in the previous seven years.¹ Perry, as conductor of the leading opposition journal, was naturally the prime target for prosecution, and proceedings against the Chronicle were contemplated at least six times between 1808 and 1812; but on only one occasion was Perry brought to court, and on that he secured a triumphant acquittal. After the Convention of Cintra in 1808 Perry had enlarged his attack on the government into a general attack on the Wellesley family; Sir Arthur Wellesley was blamed not only for his part in the Convention, but also for mistakes at the battle of Assaye in 1803, while the Marquis Wellesley's mistreatment of the Indian nabobs as governor-general was compared to Bonaparte's mistreatment of the Spanish royal family. The Wellesleys considered bringing a

1.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 41.

prosecution against the Chronicle, but were advised by the future attorney-general, William Garrow, that it was unlikely to succeed.¹ In 1809 an information was filed against the Chronicle for the publication of a letter stating that the Sicilians wished to free themselves from the oppression of the Neapolitan court, but no prosecution was brought, for Perry published an admission that it was an abuse of the liberty of the press to criticise the internal affairs of an independent state friendly to Britain.² The attorney-general would have been well aware of the difficulty of securing a conviction against Perry in view of his reputation and social standing, and would have remembered that Perry had been acquitted during the more alarmist times of 1793. Nevertheless, in February 1810 Perry was brought before the Court of King's Bench on the charge of having copied from the Examiner a libel against the King.³ It is

1.) MC 14 Oct. 1808; memorandum by Garrow, 5 Nov. 1808, Add. MSS. 37,309 ff. 259-62.

2.) MC 29 June 1809; Treasury Solicitor's MSS. 11/91 file 291.

3.) Ibid.; the paragraph was in MC 2 Oct. 1809: "What a crowd of blessings rush upon one's mind, that might be bestowed upon the country, in the event of a total change of system! of all Monarchs, indeed, since the Revolution, the Successor of George the Third will have the finest opportunity of becoming nobly popular."

curious that Perry should have been prosecuted before the editors of the Examiner; it is possible, as Leigh Hunt thought, that Perry's declared intention of conducting his own defence encouraged Gibbs to expect an easy case,¹ and no doubt Gibbs was more anxious to curb the Chronicle than a weekly paper like the Examiner. He argued that the offending paragraph was a seditious libel because it attempted to alienate the people's affection for the King by implying that he withheld certain blessings from them. But if Gibbs expected his professional experience to give him the advantage of the argument, he was far wide of the mark. Perry had cultivated his debating powers at several clubs as a young man, and was even thought by one contemporary to be a better speaker than writer.² In an eloquent speech, he began by presenting himself as a disinterested professional man, stressed his inability to do justice to his own defence in a manner which Gibbs rightly thought was well calculated to arouse the jury's sympathy, and even managed to introduce an allusion to his friendship with Nelson. He boldly admitted that far from being ignorant of the publication of the paragraph, he had directed its insertion himself, and argued that whilst it was in itself inoffensive,

1.) George D. Stout, The Political History of Leigh Hunt's Examiner (St. Louis 1949) p. 14.

2.) Christie, Myth and Reality p. 337. Sydney Smith thought Perry an "Eloquent and accurate" speaker. (Nowell C. Smith, Letters of Sydney Smith (2 vols. Oxford 1953) i. 214).

it should also be judged in the context of the paper as a whole, as Erskine had claimed in 1793. Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough summed up in Perry's favour, arguing that it was not libellous to impute error to the King in not changing the political system unless malice could be proved. The jury agreed and acquitted Perry after only two minutes of consultation.¹ Perry's acquittal was welcomed by some of his contemporaries as an event of great importance: Creevey thought it meant "the Press is safe; at least as yet", and the hostile Cobbett thought Perry had "done more good than any man of his time", and drunk his health with his whole family.² It is possible that in the long term the case did help the cause of the liberty of the press, for a member of parliament suggested ten years later that Perry's acquittal had inhibited the prosecution of libels.³ But in the immediate context of 1810 Perry stands out as a special case: in the following two years Cobbett, Drakard of the Stamford News, Lovell of the Statesman, Roche of the Day and the Hunts of the Examiner, were all to suffer imprisonment for libel. Perry was too

1.) The report of the trial, in MC 26 Feb. 1810, was later published as a pamphlet.

2.) Maxwell, Creevey Papers i. 132; Melville, Life and Letters of William Cobbett ii. 41-2. Perry was of course toasted at the whig club. (MC 4 April 1810).

3.) Dr. Lushington, in MC 26 July 1820; Parl. Debs. 25 July 1820, col.603.

respectable and moderate for his fate to be regarded as a good augury for his more radical colleagues. It did not, indeed, safeguard himself from the possibility of a further prosecution. Later in 1810 another information was filed against the Chronicle for the publication of a libel on the Bishop of Derry, copied from a provincial newspaper, the Cambrian, but it was not pursued, and the prosecution was directed against the originator of the libel.¹ In March 1812 Perry's resentment against the Regent almost got him into trouble, for Gibbs considered prosecuting the Chronicle for a veiled allusion to the influence of the Regent's mistress, Lady Hertford, but no charges were actually made.² Perry was the only important opposition journalist not to be imprisoned in this period, and this is a reflection not only of his comparative moderation, but of the propriety and good taste with which he usually conducted the Chronicle.

1.) MC 7 Nov. 1810. An M.P., Mansell Phillips, was prosecuted for sending the libel to the Cambrian, a Swansea paper (MC 1 Feb., 14 May 1811). Perry had only copied the libel after it had appeared in several papers, and he immediately contradicted it on finding it false. Proceedings against the Chronicle were also contemplated after a libel on the committee of the Privy Council for trade (Treasury Solicitor's MSS. 11/1071 file 5074).

2.) Aspinall, Letters of King George iv i. 41; MC 9 Mar. 1812. The attorney-general in 1814, Garrow, also decided not to prosecute the Chronicle, for fear that the action would fail. (Treasury Solicitor's MSS. 11/156 file 513).

During the years after 1806 there is increasing evidence of Perry's involvement in political activity not directly connected with his work as a journalist. It would be an exaggeration to describe him, as one contemporary did, as "one of the leaders... of the Whig party", but he did approximate to the role of what Lord Glenbervie described as "a sort of sous-ministre".¹ Perry's political contacts were strengthened by an active social life. He was, according to his friend Mitford, "the most charming talker at his own table" even in the company of such as Romilly, Tierney and Erskine,² and the combination of his personal qualities, his lavish hospitality, and his political importance, made him a welcome guest at the parties of the most distinguished public figures. As John Campbell observed in 1818 "He has one of the finest houses, and gives the best dinners, of any man in London. For this reason he is invited by all ranks, up to Royal Dukes".³ After Holland's return from Spain in 1805 Holland House became the leading whig social centre in London, apart from Brookes's, and Perry dined there on at

1.) Collier, An Old Man's Diary i.pt.ii.42; Christie, op.cit. p. 354.

2.) Ibid. p. 342.

3.) Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i. 351. Cobbett commented on Perry's "bustle of giving dinners to cabinet and other ministers." (Political Register, 4 April 1807, col. 533).

least eleven occasions, meeting over fifteen of the most prominent whigs.¹ In addition to his social contacts, Perry's involvement with the whigs may also have been strengthened by his family connexions. During the election of 1806 Grenville used Perry as an intermediary to mobilise the jeweller, John Dingwall, who was Perry's uncle, and who had parliamentary influence in Perry's native county of Aberdeen.² During this election Perry was active in supporting Sheridan at Westminster against the radical challenge; he spoke up at a couple of dinners against James Paull and made proposals concerning the conduct of the campaign.³ On at least two occasions Perry

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- 1.) Add. MSS. 51,950 f. 114; 51,951 ff.17, 84, 152; 51,952 ff. 1, 24, 65, 75, 93, 119, 138; between 15 Dec. 1805 and 19 July 1818. Creevey thought Holland House "the Depot of all real political information." (Creevey to Whitbread, 8 Nov. 1809, Whitbread MSS). Hobhouse met Perry at the houses of Douglas Kinnaid and Edward Ellice in 1815, and Lawrence noted that there were "several distinguished Members of the Parliamentary Opposition present" at Perry's in 1817. (Broughton, Recollections of a Long Life i. 200, 323-4; Farington Diary viii. 118).
- 2.) Buckingham, Court and Cabinets iv. 88-9, 98.
- 3.) MC 4, 8 Nov. 1806.

attended reform meetings to exert a moderating influence on behalf of the whigs. In 1808 he was present, with about twenty members of the whig club, at a Hackney meeting of Middlesex freeholders in support of the Spanish cause, where Cartwright threatened unanimity by attempting to introduce motions on parliamentary reform. Perry reported to Holland that "I acted on Your Lordship's ideas...the Foxites voted with the Major's party, but abstained from voting at all in the questions that might have been misinterpreted, and by this means we got rid of the offensive resolutions and carried the adjournment".¹ In 1811 Perry showed some courage in coming forward at a predominantly hostile reform meeting to defend the whigs' moderation and consistency against radical attacks.² Perry was also active in attempting to preserve the whig club from the encroachments of the left-wing whigs. Although he was enthusiastic for parliamentary reform in 1809, he was in April of that year preparing, with the club's secretary Romain Clarkson, resolutions which were intended, according to Creevey, to put "upon their legs again, if it be possible the shabby leaders of the Whig interest". Late in 1810, when the Club was nearly £800 in debt, and on the point of collapse, Perry was one of the few members who urged that it could, by the regular attendance of Foxites, still "be rescued from the factions which have more or less prevailed in it since Mr. Fox's death, and be

1.) Perry to Holland, 30 Aug. 1808, Add. MSS. 51,824 ff. 242-3;

MC 31 Aug. 1808.

2.) Roberts, The Whig Party 1807-12 pp. 288-90.

brought back to its original principles".¹ But Perry had little success in these efforts; the radical sympathies of the club were a source of concern to moderate whigs after early 1809, and the club ceased to meet after mid-1811.² Perry's usefulness to the whigs is also evident from occasional references to his other activities. In 1808 he warned the Prince's secretary that the proceedings concerning the Princess of Wales were about to be published in a Sunday paper, and action was taken in time to prevent the revelations.³ During Sir Vicary Gibbs's spate of prosecutions of the press, it was with Perry that Brougham wished to discuss the best means of resistance; and in 1812 Perry was handling applications for candidates in the election.⁴ These allusions, though fragmentary, show that Perry's co-operation with the whigs continued to extend well beyond his mere duties as a journalist.

1.) Creevey to Whitbread, 8 April 1809, Whitbread MSS.; R. Adair to Holland, 23 Dec. 1810, Add. MSS. 51,609 f.70.

2.) e.g. Bedford to Grey, 14 April 1809, Rosslyn to Grey, 2, 3 May 1809, Grey MSS.; there was no comment in the Chronicle on the club after June 1811.

3.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 407-8.

4.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Sun. Add. MSS. 52,178 f.176; Austin Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition 1815-30 (Oxford 1967) p. 48 n.3.

iii. The Whigs and the Morning Chronicle.

It has already been noted, in examining Perry's political opinions, that the whigs occasionally intervened to influence the content of the Chronicle. Holland and Brougham did so with regard to Burdett and Portugal in 1807, and Lauderdale and Brougham did so with regard to Wardle and the Walcheren expedition in 1809. Such intervention was the result of disapproval of Perry's attitudes, and there is further evidence that the whigs were far from satisfied, particularly in 1809 and 1812, with the conduct of the Chronicle as a party organ. In October 1809 Auckland was highly critical of the party press, which he thought paid too much attention to fashionable frivolities. Without specifically referring to the Chronicle, he told Grenville that "Even the papers which wish well to you and to your friends contrive from time to time to do all possible mischief" and he claimed that Napoleon was the best writer in the interest of the whigs in the light of the French press's attacks on the Spanish war and Walcheren.¹ In the same month the whigs were very annoyed at the sympathy which Perry showed for Canning in his quarrel with Castlereagh. Perry had argued that while it was absurd that Canning should be a minister after practising such duplicity, he was nevertheless right in considering Castlereagh unfit for the war office, and early in October Canning's statement defending his conduct was published in the Chronicle.² According to Holland,

1.) H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 336-7

2.) MC. 25 Sept., 13 Oct. 1809.

Sheridan had been influencing Perry's attitude, but according to Brougham, Perry claimed that he thought Holland did not want Canning to be attacked. The most likely explanation, however, is that, as George Rose noted, Perry believed that "Canning was fixed with the Opposition".¹ Grey thought that Perry might be attempting to enlist Canning as an ally of the whigs, but condemned such an attempt as both bad in policy and indefensible in principle. By the end of the month, Brougham had enlightened Perry as to the whigs' opinions on the subject, and the leaders in the Chronicle became hostile to Canning.² Lauderdale, who thought that Canning's "nose ought to be rubbed a little in the Morning Chronicle", strengthened the attack by publishing in the Chronicle two long letters, under the pseudonym of "An Englishman", convicting Canning of deceit, and refuting his attempt to blame Lord Camden for the concealment of his attitude towards Castlereagh. In December Lauderdale expressed dissatisfaction with Perry's editorials, one of

1.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 295; Brougham to Holland, n.d. Thurs. [26 Oct. 1809], Add. MSS. 51,561 f.63; Brougham to Grey, 26 Oct. 1809, Brougham MSS.; Harcourt, Diaries and Correspondence of . . . George Rose ii. 402, 410, 4 Oct. 1809.

2.) Brougham, Life and Times i. 465-6; Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 295, 305; MC 11 Nov., 1 Dec. 1809.

which he thought "execrably bad", and was prompted to write a further two letters against Canning's behaviour.¹ Perry also incurred the displeasure of the whigs in his attempts to support Grenville for the Chancellorship of Oxford University. In November 1809 Perry published half a dozen letters in the Chronicle supporting Grenville's candidature, but by the middle of the month Grenville asked Holland to have the correspondence discontinued, for "Newspaper discussion is not popular at Oxford nor indeed are the topics I see today very judiciously chosen tho' kindly meant".² However, early in December the publication of letters concerning the election was resumed, and both Grenville and Parr asked Holland to have it stopped, but without success; Grenville understandably complained that he was "indignant

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- 1.) Lauderdale to Grey, 13 Oct., 13 Nov., 6, 19 Dec. 1809, Grey MSS.; Lauderdale to Lady Holland, n.d. [Oct. 1809], Add. MSS. 51,696 ff. 143; MC 28 Oct., 14 Nov., 18, 22 Dec. 1809. There was some confusion over the authorship of the letters; Lady Holland thought they were by Brougham, and Sydney Smith appears to have thought the first one was by Allen. (Lauderdale to Grey, 17 Nov. 1809, Grey, MSS.; Smith, Letters of Sydney Smith i. 170).
- 2.) MC 3, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16 Nov. 1809; Grenville to Holland, 16 Nov. 1809, Add. MSS. 51,530 ff. 155-6. Grenville objected to the statement that the Duke of Beaufort had great ecclesiastical patronage, though the tenor of the letters was strongly pro-Grenville.

at the manner in which I am treated by these professedly friendly newspapers".¹ One of the letters in the Chronicle incorrectly stated that the President of Magdalen supported Grenville when in fact he supported the Duke of Beaufort, and the Grenvilles reluctantly had to insert a contradiction with the stricture that they did not want the election to become a subject of controversy.² Grenville does not appear to have objected to three letters in the Chronicle which defended him from allegations in the Courier that he would revive the catholic question, but at the end of December he was annoyed by some frivolous verses and an article on his impending investiture and 'no popery'; he complained of "the ribaldry of the Morning Chronicle", and lamented that "it has been my fate, all through life, to be more injured by the press in my favour, than by that which has

1.) Grenville to T. Grenville, 4 Dec. 1809, Add. MSS. 41,853 ff. 132-3; MC 29 Nov., 1, 2 Dec. 1809. Grenville thought newspaper controversy was "injurious to the honour and decorum of the University". (H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 397).

2.) T. Grenville to Holland, n.d. Sun. [3 Dec. 1809], Add. MSS. 51,534 ff. 5-6; H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 395, 401; MC 5 Dec. 1809. The Grenvilles also had to contradict a letter in The Times claiming that Grenville was going to introduce a catholic petition. (Grenville to T. Grenville, 6 Dec. 1809, Add. MSS. 41,853 ff. 138-41; The Times 5, 7 Dec. 1809).

been pretty unsparingly employed against me".¹ It is not clear why Perry persisted in commenting on the election against the Grenvilles' wishes, for he was usually amenable to hints from the party, particularly if they came from Holland. He probably thought the Grenvilles were too fastidious in their attitude towards publicity, and that more could be gained than lost by canvassing a cause which could indirectly be of such benefit to the catholics' claims.

Whereas in the Oxford election Perry annoyed the Grenvilles by saying too much, on several occasions in 1812 he aroused critical comment from both Grenville and Grey for saying too little. Grenville was probably referring to the Chronicle when he complained in February that what had appeared on the ministerial negotiations was "miserably washy and defensive", but he suggested no remedy other than the publication of the whigs' correspondence with the Duke of York.² In August Grey was critical of Perry for not replying strongly enough to a letter published by Lord Yarmouth in the Courier revealing secret instructions he had received from Fox during the negotiations for peace in 1806. Since parliament was in recess, the whigs' were dependent on the press to defend them from Yarmouth's animadversions

1.) Courier 2, 4 Dec. 1809; MC 5, 8, 11 Dec. 1809; Buckingham, Court and Cabinets iv. 409; MC 25, 26 Dec. 1809.

2.) Grenville to Grey, 19, 20 Feb. 1812, Grey MSS.; the correspondence appeared in MC 20 Feb. 1812, a day after it had been published in The Times and Post.

and as Grey was reluctant to enter into a controversy on the subject, he was particularly annoyed that Perry had failed to make an effective reply. "Indeed", he complained "if the editors of the papers who profess to support us had been good for anything" some appropriate observations "would have been done without any suggestion from us".¹ Thomas Grenville thought that ridicule would have been the best answer to Yarmouth, and lamented that "there seems to be no wit or pleasantry left to the periodical papers". Lord Temple wrote an article mocking Yarmouth in this vein, and sent it to Fremantle for forwarding to Perry, but it was not inserted in the Chronicle.² During the election in October Grey was dissatisfied with Perry's efforts: "It is really provoking" he said "to see the trash in the Morning Chronicle at this moment when so much might and ought to be done".³ A couple of months later Grenville asked Holland to encourage Perry to counter the ministerial cry of 'no popery', which he feared was being revived, and complained

1.) H.M.C. Dropmore x. 292, 294; Aspinall, op.cit. p. 295; Grey told Holland he wanted a reply made, but later changed his mind. (19, 29 Aug. 1812, Add. MSS. 51,551 ff. 186, 192). Perry had one editorial on the subject in MC 22 Aug. 1812; Courier 14 Aug. 1812.

2.) H.M.C. Dropmore x. 294-5; Temple to W.H. Fremantle, 4 Sept. 1812, Fremantle MSS. Box 55(d).

3.) Grey to Brougham, 4 Oct. 1812, Grey MSS.

that the opposition press was paying more attention to the theatre than to major political issues.¹

During 1812 Perry was also severely criticised by the left-wing of the party, particularly by Brougham and Creevey. In July 1812 Brougham told Whitbread that he had a scheme for "getting a really good and independent paper set up next session, for us of the mountain. We have not fair play at present. Perry you see dares never do his duty... He ratted intirely on the orders in Co[uncil], merely because Tierney and G. Ponsonby had nothing to do with it, & so in 1000 other things".² Brougham was of course exaggerating,

1.) Grenville to Holland, 11 Dec. 1812, Add. MSS. 51,530 ff.200-1; there was nothing in MC on "no popery" until 24 Dec. 1812. At about this time Lord John Russell complained to Holland that constitutional questions were more important "than any that the M[ornin]g Chronicle bothers its readers with." (n.d. Add. MSS. 51,677 f.19).

2.) n.d. Mon. [July 1812], Whitbread MSS. Brougham was advised by the Hunts that the paper would cost £1,000 initially, and a further £1,500 within the first year. He wanted Scott, conductor of Drakard's Stamford News, to be the editor and part-proprietor. (see also Brougham to Creevey, n.d. [July 1812], enclosing J. Hunt to Brougham, 16 July [1812], Creevey MSS. (microfilm)).

for early in 1812 Perry had drawn attention to Brougham's exertions on behalf of an inquiry into the size of the fund of the Droits of Admiralty,¹ but there was some substance in his criticism about the Orders in Council. Perry had had only one half-column leader, and a couple of paragraphs, calling for their repeal, and only six days before they were dropped he had prophesied that "little hope can reasonably be indulged of the revocation of those measures".²

Although Brougham tried to mobilise "ten right thinking men" such as Lords Thanet and King, Thomas Coke and Whitbread, to subscribe capital for the new paper, there is no evidence that the project ever materialised. While negotiations for the new paper were proceeding, Brougham's friends were very critical of Perry's treatment of a quarrel between Brougham and Robert McKerrell, in which McKerrell claimed that Brougham was deliberately misrepresenting what he (McKerrell) had said in his evidence, which had later been erased, to the Commons on the Orders in Council. After McKerrell had attacked Brougham in a letter to The Times, one of Brougham's friends sent a counter-paragraph to the Chronicle, but complained

1.) MC 20, 22 Jan., 27 Feb. 1812.

2.) MC 18 April, 11, 23 May, 13 June 1812.

that "for some reason or other Mr. Perry saw fit not only to mutilate but greatly to curtail [it]".¹ John Whishaw then intervened on Brougham's behalf, and reported that Perry was willing to print anything he wanted, but a fortnight later Whishaw complained that he was "much mortified" to find that Perry had published the expunged evidence of McKerrell, but had omitted important extracts of Brougham's speech. "You know as well as me" Whishaw remarked "what a difficult person he is to deal with".² In October Brougham was again annoyed with Perry for not giving due support to him and Creevey in the Liverpool election. He complained that whereas the ministerial press was filled with reports of Canning's speeches "there seems a resolution in all the opposition papers except the Statesman which no one reads, not to publish ours", and he detected "a studied silence on the part of the party newspapers", with the exception of the Statesman and Examiner. Two years later he was still remarking on Perry's "shabby ratting" over Liverpool. Creevey also had nothing but

1.) Abraham Mann to Brougham, 25 July 1812, Brougham MSS.; The Times 20 July 1812; MC 21, 24 July 1812.

2.) Whishaw to Brougham, 28, 31 July, 15 Aug. 1812, Brougham MSS.; MC 15 Aug. 1812.

3.) Brougham to W. Roscoe, end. 21 Oct. 1812, n.d. [1812], Roscoe MSS. nos. 498-9; Brougham to Creevey, n.d. Sun. [1812], Creevey MSS. (microfilm); Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 296.

criticism for Perry at this time; he twice described him as a pompous old fool, and complained that he was making the whigs appear more moderate on economical reform than they really were.¹ While there is little evidence of the left-wing whigs' discontent with Perry before 1812, it is doubtful if they had ever regarded the Chronicle as representative of their interests, for Creevey had described the radical Statesman as his newspaper in 1809, although Perry had been enthusiastic for reform in that year.² Perry might, in the interests of party unity, have attempted to serve Brougham better in 1812, but his failure to do so cannot be regarded as a serious indictment of his effectiveness as a party journalist. The campaign for the repeal of the Orders in Council was more a personal tour de force of Brougham's than a party issue, and Perry could not reasonably have been expected to canvass Brougham's interests at Liverpool, for the pressure on space in the Chronicle was always most acute during a general election, when room had to be made for the great volume of political advertising and reports of meetings in the metropolitan constituencies.

1.) Creevey to his wife, end. 3 June 1812, n.d. Tues. [27 Oct. 1812], Creevey MSS. (microfilm); Perry said the whigs wanted "the introduction of a just economy in our expenditure, but not the violent breach of existing grants and patents." (MC. 26 Oct. 1812.).

2.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 285 n.4.

Moreover, Brougham's interests appear to have been well served in the provincial press, for his friends were inserting paragraphs and letters in the Liverpool Mercury and Midland Chronicle concerning his quarrel with Mckerrell and the Liverpool election.¹ It would also be understandable if, as Brougham suspected, Perry's efforts were diminished by his resentment at the attempt to set up a new paper.²

More difficult to defend is Perry's failure to satisfy the Grey and Grenville whigs in 1812. In addition to this failure, he also attracted the criticism of the whigs on a variety of other points.

1.) Thomas Attwood to Brougham, 10 Aug. 1812; Thomas Thornely to Brougham, 14 Aug. [1812]; Thomas Noble to Brougham, 20 Oct. 1812; Roscoe to Brougham, 22 Oct. 1812, Brougham MSS. Brougham asked Thornely to insert a letter in the Liverpool Mercury about the Orders in Council on 9 Mar. 1812, (Ibid.), and he asked Roscoe to send an unspecified copy of the Liverpool Mercury to the whig leaders, and also to Perry and John Douglas of the Glasgow Chronicle. (n.d. Thurs. [1812], Roscoe MSS. no. 477). John Mayne asked Brougham to further the circulation of the Star in Liverpool "as a proper Vehicle for promoting, most widely, your Election Interests." (7 Oct. 1812, Brougham MSS).

2.) Brougham to Creevey, n.d. Thurs. [1812], Creevey MSS. (microfilm).

One surprising aspect of this criticism is the occasional complaints of indiscretion and scurrility. Lauderdale was annoyed that Perry had "most unjustifiably" revealed to Holland that he was the author of the letters signed 'An Englishman' on Canning, and Dennis O'Bryen complained, with less reason, that there was "a stupid mischievous paragraph" in the Chronicle announcing his appointment to a place under the Talents which had made it necessary for him to see all his creditors.¹ In October 1810 Perry published some facetious remarks on the Scottish divorce laws and Lord Paget, which aroused Lauderdale's fury. "I am very angry with Perry" he said "The Man is a meddling fool, for he must know that his own Sister's Case who was afterwards married to Porson is ten thousand times more objectionable than that against which he chuses to throw out his Squibs".² A couple of months later Lady Holland expressed annoyance at a "scurrilous attack" in the Chronicle on the commander-in-chief, Sir David Dundas.³

1.) Lauderdale to Grey, 29 Nov. 1809, O'Bryen to Grey, 29 Aug. 1806, Grey MSS.; MC 29 Aug. 1806. O'Bryen was on bad terms with Perry at this time, and the paragraph was itself inoffensive.

2.) Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 25 Oct. 1810, Add. MSS. 51,697 ff.55-6; MC 15, 19, 20 Oct. 1810. Perry's sister had been divorced by Scottish law, and had remarried.

3.) Lady Holland to Grey, 24 Dec. 1810, Add. MSS. 51,549 f. 116 (copy); MC 18 Dec. 1810.

Even allowing for a difference of opinion on what constituted bad taste, and for the fact that Perry could not read everything that appeared in the Chronicle, these criticisms do indicate that he was not immune from occasional lapses. Another line of criticism was that Perry was frequently slow to insert articles, and that his standard of typography was poor. Lauderdale and Dillon both complained of "a long arrear" in the insertion of their letters on Canning and the catholic question, and Brougham twice remarked in 1807 that articles in the Chronicle were "printed most negligently as usual".¹ With regard to Perry's coverage of foreign news, both Lord John Russell and Blanco White expressed dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of the reports in the Chronicle of the proceedings of the Cortes.² Lord Rosslyn appears to have had a low opinion of Perry's reliability as a source of foreign information, for he remarked on one occasion that he had received an account from Perry of the situation in the Peninsula, but had "heard no particulars from any Authority that I can trust".³ He was also critical of Perry's

1.) Lauderdale to Grey, 28 Aug., 19 Dec. 1809; Dillon to Grey, 12 Oct. 1811, Grey MSS.; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Sat. [6 June 1807], Mon. [15 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,178 ff. 10,23.

2.) Russell to Lady Holland, 25 Dec. 1810, Add. MSS. 51,678 f. 32; White to Holland, n.d. Add. MSS. 51,645 f.9.

3.) Rosslyn to Grey, end. 15 Dec. 1810, Grey MSS.

willingness to give credence to good news concerning Napoleon's invasion of Russia, and noted caustically that "he finds internal evidence of falsehood in the 18th Bulletin, & takes Ld. Cathcart [']s Letters for Gospel; when within an Hour the 19th Bulletin & the capture of Moscow arrive to serve as a Comment on his political foresight".¹ Perry had ten days earlier suggested that Napoleon had probably taken Moscow,² and his willingness to believe Cathcart was an example of how, as with the Peninsular war, he believed what he wanted to hear. He was indeed wrong throughout in his predictions on the Franco-Russian war; in August he maintained that Napoleon would not advance beyond Poland: in September he reprobated the Russian retreat as ridiculous and expected the Czar to make peace; and in October he thought that Napoleon would now settle in Moscow for the winter. Not until December did he admit that "the destruction of Moscow, which we, among others, received as a most inhuman and use-less sacrifice" had reversed the whole aspect of the war.³

1.) Rosslyn to Brougham, 9 Oct. 1812, Brougham MSS.; MC 8, 9 Oct. 1812. Lord Cathcart had claimed the Russians had won the battle before Moscow, while the 18th bulletin had said the French retained the field of battle.

2.) MC 28 Sept., 5 Oct. 1812.

3.) MC 12, 25, 28 Aug., 28-9 Sept., 9 Oct., 8 Dec. 1812.

Perry was also criticised, particularly in 1812, for failing to give an adequate coverage to whig speeches in parliament. In 1806 Horner said there were "some blunders in the Morning Chronicle Report" of a speech by Grenville; in 1808 Mackintosh complained that he had read only "a shadow" of Sharp's speech in the Chronicle, but had been "long accustomed to measuring great elevations by such shadows"; and in 1811 Auckland remarked of a speech by Creevey that "The Morning Chronicle reported it wretchedly".¹ During 1812 when Perry was criticised by Grenville and Grey for lack of exertion, the whigs' dissatisfaction became more evident. Brougham thought that the Chronicle's account of a debate on the Orders in Council was "tolerably accurate, but makes some blunders and omits some material things", and Holland complained later in the year that his speech on the Russian grant was not given in any detail in the Chronicle.² In the report of the debate on the address, the speeches of Wellesley and Canning combined were given over eight columns,

1.) Horner to J.A. Murray, 19 June 1806, Horner MSS. vol.iii.f.67; Mackintosh to R. Sharp, 5 Oct. 1808, Add. MSS. 52,451 f. 233; H.M.C. Dropmore x. 122.

2.) Brougham, Life and Times ii.12; Holland to Grey, 19 Dec. 1812, Add. MSS. 51,545 f.57 (copy). Brougham's speech had over 6 columns in MC 4 Mar. 1812, but Holland's only $\frac{1}{3}$ of a column in MC 19 Dec. 1812.

but Grenville's only one, and Ponsonby's none at all. Grey commented that "it is not a little provoking that even the Editors who profess to be friendly to us, should entirely devote their Papers to Wellesley & Canning & give no account either of Grenville's or Ponsonby's Speeches which would sufficiently explain their views to the Public".¹ Apart from being insufficient in detail, the Chronicle's reports were also sometimes inaccurate: on one memorable occasion W.H. Lyttleton was reported as saying that he would rather vote money to a Nelson or Wellington than to a 'gamester' or 'spend-thrift', when in fact he had alluded to Edward II's favourites, Gaveston and Despenser.²

But as during the earlier period of Perry's career, it is not difficult to defend the standard of reporting in the Chronicle. The general level of reporting in the press as a whole was still widely criticised. Whitbread, who was less prejudiced against the press

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- 1.) Grey to Holland, 13 Dec. 1812, Add. MSS. 51,551 f. 249; MC 1 Dec. 1812.
 - 2.) Aspinall, Letters of King George iv i. 73; MC 5 May 1812. Canning said in 1806 that the Chronicle did not give an admirable speech by the Master of the Rolls, and Wilberforce complained in 1812 that a division list was "much misrepresented". (Aspinall, Later Correspondence of George iii 1783-1810 (5 vols. Cambridge 1962-7) iv. 449. n.4; R. and S. Wilberforce, Life of William Wilberforce iv.6; MC 3 June 1806, 14 Feb. 1812.).

than most politicians, thought in 1809 that "the newspapers very commonly misrepresent what falls from members of Parliament, and that it is impossible to answer for what is put in by the reporters", while a reporter on the Statesman, W. Willett, admitted that "the Reports are remarkably incorrect", and conjectured that "there are not extant more than, perhaps, twenty correct copies of speeches, within as many years".¹ The whigs were not very well served by reports in other papers sympathetic to their cause; the British Press was the subject of a couple of complimentary remarks, but the Globe was said by Grey to have given a tolerable report to only one speech in a debate on the catholic question, and both Grey and

1.) Maxwell, Creevey Papers i. 103-4; W. Willett to Whitbread, 19 Aug. 1809, Whitbread MSS. But Burdett thought "the reports in general given with remarkable accuracy, and even with considerable ability." (Parl.Debs. xv. 6 Feb. 1810, col. 339).

Holland described the Star's reports as "very imperfect", with parts that were "complete misrepresentations".¹ It was indeed impossible to report the debates satisfactorily. Perry confided to his friend Adam in 1809 that the task had become more difficult in recent years, because of the "incessant cavilling" which now prevailed in parliament: "without a constant attendance on my own part from the beginning to the end, and without having Reporters all of equal ability, perfectly impartial, and constantly vigilant, it is impossible to render justice to a debate - and in the present state of the House of Commons, both above and below, I despair of ever doing it".² As in previous years, Perry put up a robust defence for the standard of reporting. He had no illusions about the quality

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- 1.) Brougham to Lady Holland, n.d. [1807], Add. MSS. 51,565 f.10; A. Piggott to Grey, 20 Jan. 1809, Grey to Whitbread, 29 May 1808, Grey MSS.; Holland to Grey, 20 May 1809, Add. MSS. 51,544 f.179; Grey to Holland, 13 June 1809, Add. MSS. 51,551 ff.10-12. Byron complained in 1812 that his speech was given "very incorrectly" in the Herald, Day and British Press, and Folkestone, Jeffrey and Grenville also commented on bad reporting in unspecified papers. (Prothero, Works of Lord Byron ii.106; Cobbett to Wright, 13 Mar. 1808, Add. MSS. 22,906 f.364; Jeffrey to Brougham, 19 Mar. 1810, Brougham MSS.; Grenville to T. Grenville, 22 April [1812], Add. MSS. 41,853 f.240).
- 2.) 16 June 1809, Blair-Adam MSS.

of most parliamentary speeches, which he thought his reporters "never make long enough for those who make them, nor short enough to satisfy those who have to read them", and he boldly asserted that in general "we are certainly more culpable for extending discussions beyond their merited length than for curtailing them".¹ He pointed out that reporting was the most uncomfortable work possible for a well-educated person, and that if politicians were dissatisfied with the coverage of their speeches, they were welcome to enforce the standing order excluding strangers, which would save newspaper proprietors from having to sacrifice their advertising revenue, and "from an enormous expence, and... the performance of a most laborious and ungrateful duty".² Inadequacies in a report were invariably the product, not of the reporter's negligence, but of the fact, which the whigs do not appear fully to have appreciated, that it was impossible to report in detail a speech delivered in the early hours of the morning if the paper were to be published in time for breakfast.³ There was also the human factor to be taken into account; as Perry explained, reporters might become so fatigued after several successive nights of long debates, or become so hot in the crowded gallery, that it was

1.) MC 3 Feb. 1810, 18 Mar. 1811.

2.) MC 21 Feb., 22 Mar. 1809.

3.) MC 27 April 1812.

impossible for them to do justice to the speeches.¹ Brougham at least was aware of such considerations, for he said of a report in the Chronicle of a speech by Grey on the state of the nation in 1810: "Every thing considered it is the most accurate report I ever saw, certainly if the difficulties of reporting in the Lords be considered, a very wonderful report".²

Perry's reporting staff during this period appear to have been well up to the required standard. Chief among them was John Black, a fellow-Scotsman like all of Perry's leading assistants, who joined the Chronicle in 1810 as a reporter and translator of foreign news, and graduated to the role of acting editor in 1817. Born in 1783, the son of a Berwickshire farm labourer, Black had lost both his parents by the age of twelve, but had soon obtained a job as a clerk to an accountant in Edinburgh where he had been able to develop his precocious intellectual interests by attending classes at the University. Before moving to London in 1810 he had gained some experience in journalism by contributing literary

1.) MC 4 Jan. 1811, 20 Mar. 1812.

2.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Wed. [20 June 1810], Add. MSS. 52,178 f. 126; MC 14 June 1810. Brougham did not specifically refer to the Chronicle, but he mentioned a "Mr. P." Byron said one of his speeches in 1813 was given "nearly verbatim" in the Chronicle. (Prothero, op.cit. ii. 211).

articles to the Universal Magazine, edited by his friend William Mudford.¹ As a reporter Black was renowned for the speed with which he travelled from the Commons to the Chronicle office, and he was notably more conscientious than Perry's Irish assistants. On one occasion in 1811, when both his colleagues were ill, and the gallery had been locked at an unusually early hour, he had endeavoured to gain access to the Commons by breaking into the smoking room; as he explained in a note of apology to the Speaker, "The paper to which I belong is considered one of the leading papers of the day, &...It is of the utmost importance to the interests of such a paper that every debate of consequence should appear in it".² Another reporter whom Perry engaged to help fill the gap left by the death of Supple and the departure of Spankie in 1807 was John Dyer Collier, who joined the Chronicle in 1808 after several years of law reporting for The Times.³ His son, John Payne Collier, who later became a celebrated Shakespearian critic, also worked on the Chronicle in some capacity. According to Crabb Robinson, the younger Collier

1.) DNB.

2.) Black to Charles Abbot, 22 Jan. 1811, Colchester MSS. I owe this reference to Mr. Michael Collinge.

3.) History of the Times i. 135-6.

left the Chronicle for The Times in 1815, and Perry, out of resentment, then dismissed his father.¹ Perry was also served around 1810 by a reporter named David Power, who by 1814 had left the Chronicle to become the collector of customs at St. Denis.² It is unlikely that Perry received much assistance from Finnerty at this time, for he was absent on the Walcheren expedition for part of 1809; in November 1810 he was in Dublin campaigning for catholic emancipation; and in February 1811 he was sentenced to eighteen months in Lincoln jail for libelling Castlereagh.³

1.) Crabb Robinson's Diary (typescript) 7 July, 12 Dec. 1815, pp. 191, 330; C. Robinson to Thomas Robinson, 8 Nov. 1815, Crabb Robinson MSS. f. 125. J.P. Collier returned to the Chronicle in 1821 (History of The Times i. 137).

2.) Power to Windham, defending the honesty of reporters, 7 Feb. 1810, Add. MSS. 37,889 ff. 5-6; W. Langford to Holland, describing Power as "a late Writer in the Morning Chronicle, and active in the Westminster Election", 14 Feb. 1814, Add. MSS. 51,827 ff. 77-8.

3.) MC 8 Nov. 1810, 8 Feb. 1811. Burdett and Roscoe organised a subscription for Finnerty in London and Liverpool, Whitbread presented a petition to parliament complaining of conditions in his prison, and Shelley published a work to assist him. (MC 21 Feb., 1, 9, 21 Mar., 22, 25 April, 22 June 1811; Jones, Letters of Shelley i. 42.n.4).

In 1812 Perry, as has been mentioned, added Hazlitt to his reporting staff. Like Black, Hazlitt preferred to report in longhand, and he is said to have made speeches appear better than they really were, though his great ability did not prevent him on one occasion from being so lost in admiration of a speech as to forget to report it.¹ Perry also enjoyed the services of Walter Henry Watts, the distinguished miniature-painter, who was remembered in an obituary as a first-class reporter, and had already had experience in this capacity on the Morning Post. It is not clear when he joined the Chronicle - it may have been as late as 1817 - but he was clearly very competent for he remained on the paper until 1840, with a brief interlude when he assisted in editing the Courier.² The number of people associated with the Chronicle suggests that the reporting staff may soon have increased in strength from three in 1811³ to perhaps four or five by 1813, when Black, Collier, Hazlitt and Finnerty, and perhaps also Power and Watts, would have been covering the debates.

1.) Macdonagh, The Reporters' Gallery pp. 342-3; Crabb Robinson reported one of Coleridge's lectures in 1811 for the Chronicle, but held no regular engagement. (Morley, Henry Crabb Robinson on books and their writers i.54).

2.) Christie, Myth and Reality p. 356; obituary in MC 8 Jan. 1842 said he joined the Chronicle in 1817.

3.) Christie, op.cit. pp. 322-23.

Although the whigs were at times very critical of Perry, they never succeeded in enlisting the regular support of another paper in this period, and the Chronicle retained its position as the established whig organ. Throughout Perry's career the whigs felt the need for an evening paper which would have a wide circulation in the country. During the Talents ministry Moira had attempted to remedy this deficiency by entering into an agreement with Daniel Lovell, a proprietor of a daily evening paper established in February 1806 called the Statesman, whereby the whigs would ensure the insertion of government advertisements in the paper, and give it a free circulation of some four to six hundred copies daily. According to Daniel Stuart, "Moira while on an official trip round the Kentish coast had parcels of this Paper sent to him, gave copies of it with his own hand to the Innkeepers & recommended them to take it in". The arrangement, however, did not last for more than about six months. The bill for distributing free copies was estimated at between £1,800 and £2,300, but the whigs only paid £550 of it and the circulation of the paper fell to about 700 in 1807.¹ In mid-1808 Lovell attempted to revive the link with the whigs by requesting Grenville's assistance, and he claimed he had offers of support

1.) Stuart to Mackintosh, 30 May 1807, Add. MSS. 52,451 f.177; Lovell to Whitbread, 28 Mar. 1808, Whitbread MSS.; Hunt, Correspondence of Leigh Hunt i.17. There are no surviving copies of the Statesman before 30 June 1807.

from Whitbread and Petty, but it is probable that the whigs regarded the paper as too radical to merit financial aid.¹ In later years several whigs, including Grey, Whitbread, Bedford, Roscoe and Perry himself, subscribed to a fund for Lovell after he had served four and a half years in prison for libel, but this gesture was a reflection of their general concern for the liberty of the press, rather than of an interest in the Statesman itself.² The whigs also had some connexion in about 1806 with a morning paper, the Oracle, owned by Peter Stuart. The younger Walter complained that the Oracle, as well as the Chronicle, was being favoured by the Talents at the expense of The Times; and according to Daniel Stuart, Dardes, the editor of the Oracle, was a distant relation of the Marchioness of Buckingham, and "the confident [sic] of the Grenvilles, and brings Peter both their money and influence".³

1.) Grenville to W.H. Fremantle, 23 June 1808, Fremantle MSS. Box 51 (b). Lovell asked Hardwicke to subscribe to the paper in 1809 (23 Feb. 1809, Add. MSS. 35,648 f.17).

2.) Lovell to Whitbread, 11, 19 Oct., 22, 26 Nov. 1814, Whitbread MSS.; Lovell to Grey, 26 Oct. 1814, 24 June 1815, Grey MSS.; MC 31 Aug. 1815. Lovell had been sentenced to 3½ years in prison, but served a further year through his inability to pay the fines and find sureties. (MC 23, 26, 29 Nov. 1811, 21 April, 20 Nov. 1812.)

3.) History of The Times i. 102; Stuart to Mackintosh, 30 May 1807, Add. MSS. 52,451 f. 179.

But Peter Stuart was an idle journalist, not interested in cultivating a systematic connexion with the whigs, and there is no evidence in the whigs' correspondence that they were interested in the Oracle. It appears that, with the exception of their brief attempt to support the Statesman, the whigs were relatively unconcerned about mobilising the press while in office. Fox refused to aid the circulation and distribution of a French paper printed in London, the Gazette de la Grande Bretagne, the editors of which were prepared to support the government in return for such assistance.¹ The younger whigs were sharply critical of such aloofness: Horner remarked early in 1806 that "it is one of my complaints against the present ministry..... that they neglect the press a great deal too much"; both Brougham and Sharp made frequent representations to the government to pay more attention to the matter; and Holland admitted after the fall of the Talents that "We have long & especially during this last

1.) T.F. Swinton to Fox, 6 May 1806, Add. MSS. 51,469 f. 156. The paper had formerly been known as the Courier de Londres, and had been supported by the second Pitt ministry, which had subscribed to 225 copies and had assisted its circulation abroad, in return for the right of appointing its editor. (Messrs. Swinton, Cox, L. Cox and Baylis to R. Ward, 15 April [1805?], Ward to same n.d. (copies) Ibid. ff. 157-9). General Walpole commented on Fox's neglect in 1814 (Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 166). The episode is incorrectly ascribed to 1782 in L.G. Mitchell, Charles James Fox and the Disintegration of the Whig Party 1782-94 p. 250.

year neglected the press too much".¹

After the fall of the Talents, there is no indication that the whigs attempted to form a connexion with any paper until the autumn of 1809. The death of Portland, the failure of the Walcheren expedition, and the quarrel between Canning and Castlereagh, made the whigs particularly conscious of the need to exploit the government's difficulties by arousing public opinion through the press. After the refusal of Grey and Grenville to join a coalition in late September, both Auckland and Petty thought more attention should be paid to the newspapers in vindicating their conduct; while Grenville, his brother Thomas, and Holland all expressed concern in October about the state of the party press, and the need for better replies to the Courier and Cobbett.² Although the whigs were dissatisfied at this time with Perry's attitude towards Canning, they were more interested in acquiring an evening paper to supplement the Chronicle, than in buying a morning paper to

1.) Horner to Mrs. Dugald Stewart, 19 May 1806, Horner MSS. vol.iii. f.57; Brougham to Sharp, n.d. [May 1807], U.L. Library, A.L.170/1. I owe this reference to Dr. Paul Kelly. Holland to Roscoe, 24 May 1807, Roscoe MSS. no. 2092.

2.) Auckland to Grey, 10 Oct. 1809, Grey MSS.; Petty to Holland, 6 Oct. 1809, Add. MSS. 51,686 f.52; Smith, Letters of Sydney Smith i.169; T Grenville to Grey, 10 Oct. 1809, Grey MSS.; H.M.C. Dropmore ix.341.

supplant it. Thus while it was suggested that the British Press might be acquired, the main emphasis was on purchasing the Globe, to be run under Perry's direction.¹ The Globe was a moderate opposition evening paper, which had been used by the whigs in the press campaign of 1807, in which year its circulation had risen to about 1,300. It was quite widely read by the whigs, and was the only newspaper regularly taken by Grey in 1809.² However, the whigs' plans come to nothing; as Holland explained, "I rather despair of an evening paper. It is entirely a matter of chance and out of our control; for, unless Perry can buy one without its being known that he buys it, the establishment of one would be a greater expense than we can manage".³ It is unlikely that Perry would have been very interested in acquiring and running another newspaper, and there was no need for him, in his well-established position, to serve the whigs by forming an arrangement with an evening paper, as he had at the outset of his career on the Chronicle with the Star. While there is no evidence of any formal

1.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 298.

2.) Stuart to Mackintosh, 30 May 1807, Add. MSS. 52,451 f.179; Grey to Tierney, 24 July 1809, Tierney MSS.; T. Grenville and Tierney were reading ^{it} in 1809 and 1811. (Buckingham, Court and Cabinets iv.369; Memoirs of the... Regency i. 140).

3.) H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 345. 21 Oct. 1809.

connexion between the whigs and the Globe, the paper was consistent in its support of the opposition. The Duke of Northumberland thought in 1812 that it "was not only devoted to the interest but under the controul of the Lords G. & G. and their party", and Lord Glenbervie described it in 1813 as one of "the two favourite opposition papers".¹ After their failure to purchase the Globe, the whigs made no further attempt to acquire an evening paper until 1817. Apart from the deterrent of the expense, a reason for this may lie in the growth of whig and reforming sympathies in the provincial press,² which made the support of evening papers circulating in the country less important. Perry remarked in 1812 that "In every part of the kingdom independent Journals are now established... spreading the light of

1.) Aspinall, Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales viii. 352;

W. Sichel ed., The Glenbervie Journals (1910) p. 215.

2.) Dinwiddy, Parliamentary Reform as an Issue in English Politics 1800-10 p. 246.

constitutional knowledge over the mass of the people", and he cited eight examples of the fact.¹ Another consideration was that during this period the whigs were supported by a majority of the London daily papers; according to Morpeth, the Courier was the only significant right-wing paper to oppose the Talents, and in 1811 a stamp-office survey estimated that eight daily papers were sympathetic to the opposition, whereas only five supported the government.²

1.) MC 9 Mar. 1812. They were the Leeds Mercury, Stamford News, Nottingham Review, Liverpool Mercury, Leicester Chronicle, Manchester Exchange Herald, Aberdeen Chronicle, and the Rockingham (Hull). Also MC 29 Aug. 1810, 28 Feb., 28 Mar. 1811. In about 1812 the Glasgow Chronicle was established with £10,000 raised by a joint-stock company, to rival the ministerial press under the influence of "Principal Taylor of our university first toadeater to the Duke of Montrose." (unsigned, undated letter in Brougham MSS. [John Douglas to Brougham]).

2.) Morpeth to Holland, 24 Nov. 1806, Add. MSS. 51,577 f.115; Christie, Myth and Reality p. 328. The survey excluded The Times, and probably the Morning Advertiser and Public Ledger, for there were 16 daily papers, in 1810. (Advertisement in MC 31 Dec. 1810). Some of these papers such as the Statesman and Alfred, were too radical to be regarded as whig papers.

It appears that the same spirit of independence which led to this growth in the number of opposition papers also made it less necessary, but more difficult, for the whigs to purchase or secure the control of a newspaper. A further factor which may have diminished the whigs' concern with the daily press was that their interests were powerfully supported by the quarterly Edinburgh Review. With Jeffrey's attack on Cobbett in July 1807 the Review developed a strongly political character, and became, as Aspinall has suggested "of far greater importance" than the Chronicle to the whigs.¹ Horner thought in 1809 that since the Review was read by fifty thousand people within a month after it was printed, it could be a more effective forum than parliament, where one's opinions were subject to "a blundering report in a morning paper".² It was to the Review, not the Chronicle, that the best whig writer, Brougham, devoted his energies after 1808, for although it did not have the immediate tactical advantages of a daily paper, it was a better medium for discussing questions in depth. Brougham had feared in 1807 that the Review would lose its "literary and speculative character" if it descended to "degrading controversy", as in attacking Cobbett, but he came to use it as the medium for preparing public opinion for the whigs' parliamentary campaigns.³ Some whigs, such as Holland,

1.) J.L. Clive, Scotch Reviewers: the Edinburgh Review 1802-15 (1957) p.67; Aspinall, Brougham and the Whig Party (1927) pp. 46-7.

2.) Horner, Memoirs and Correspondence ii. 11-12.

3.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Wed. [1807], n.d. Frid. [19 July 1811], Add. MSS. 52,178 ff. 36, 143. "My project is to devote myself after the circuit is over... to preparing thro' the Edin[burgh] Review, for a constitutional opposition next session."

Tierney and Horner, thought that the Review did more good for the party when it was independent and judicial in tone, rather than partisan,¹ but there is no doubt that it exercised a great influence on behalf of the whigs in this period.

The opposition sympathies of the majority of London daily papers, the growth of independence in the provincial press, and the influence of the Edinburgh Review, may all be contributory factors in accounting for the lack of whig activity in the press. The fact remains, however, that the whigs wanted to mobilise the press, but usually failed to do so. After the press campaign of 1807, there were no substantial contributions by the whigs to the Chronicle apart from Lauderdale's letters on Wardle and Canning in 1809. There were several occasions on which the whigs criticised Perry for taking the wrong line, or for not making enough play of an issue, but attempts to put him right took the form of hints, not of actual contributions. Those whigs who were most vocal in complaining about the state of the party press were often those who were too fastidious to do anything about it. Horner, who had criticised the whigs' neglect of the press in 1806, again in 1808 mocked "the scrupulous, indolent leaders" of the party for their feebleness in this respect.² But Horner made no effort to remedy the situation: "As for Horner" said Brougham in 1807 "he has never even sent us a line for a newspaper.... he don't

1.) Clive, op.cit. pp. 117-8.

2.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 290-1.

like any thing which may chance to bring his name into a newspaper paragraph or pamphlet... he has some strange squeamishness.... on such subjects, but quite incorrigible".¹ Thomas Grenville was similarly disposed; he wrote in October 1809 that the state of the party press was a "great evil" calling for correction, and that it was "most singularly perverse" that "we should quietly sit down & suffer ourselves to be worried to death by the weekly declamations of the Courier & of Cobbett". But only two months later he could admit that when it came to controversy in the press "I am the worst possible channel, as my aversion to all editors is such that I never had nor ever will have any communication with them".² Lord Grenville, too, disliked any involvement with newspapers. He sketched a few ideas on the government's instability in 1809, but left it to Holland to write them up; when he wished to vindicate his position on the Duke of York's restoration in 1811 he admitted that any attempt "must be in the way of newspaper paragraphs which

1.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Frid. [29 May 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 f.132.

Horner wrote anonymously, with H.G. Bennet, a pamphlet A Short Account of a Late Short Administration.

2.) T. Grenville to Grey, 18 Oct. 1809, Grey MSS.; H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 401. 4 Dec. 1809.

I certainly do not love"; and in 1812 he and Grey refused to enter into newspaper controversy on the question of Lord Yarmouth's letter.¹

The refusal of the whigs to involve themselves with the press was by no means confined to fastidious aristocrats like Grenville and Grey. One of the most striking features of the press campaign in 1807 is the way in which the burden of writing articles fell almost entirely on Brougham, assisted by Holland and Allen. Of the seventeen other whigs mentioned as possible contributors, it appears that only seven actually gave any assistance; the defaulters included such prominent political and literary figures as Petty,

1.) Grenville to Holland, n.d. [1809], Add. MSS. 51,530 f.1; Grenville to T. Grenville, 9 June 1811, Add. MSS. 41,853 ff. 228-30; Grenville to Grey, 23 Aug. 1812, Grey MSS.; Grey to Holland, 19 Aug. 1812, Add. MSS. 51,551 f. 186; H.M.C. Dropmore x. 292. Brougham subscribed to "the general rule of avoiding ever mixing oneself directly in newspaper controversy, "but this did not preclude writing anonymous articles. (Brougham to Wilson, 13 Sept. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,108 ff. 337-8).

Erskine, Lauderdale, Horner, Francis, Lord John Townshend, Sharp, George Lamb, Parr and Porson.¹ Brougham was driven to asking his colleagues on the Edinburgh Review "as a personal favour in the most earnest and mendicant manner possible, that they will send something... for I begin to give over hoping any thing from London", but he reported ten days later that there were "No contributors, not a line from Edin[burgh]".² Holland was greatly impressed by Brougham's labours "considering how very ill he has been seconded"; Brougham not only had to write original articles, but had to copy them out with slight variations so that they could be inserted in papers other

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- 1.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 286; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Wed.-Frid. [27-29 May 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 ff. 127-130, 132; contributors were Lord Kinnaird, Jekyll, Sydney Smith, J.C. Hippisley, Whishaw, Roscoe, and Sir Francis Vincent. (Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 285-6; Brougham to Allen, n.d. [28, 30 May 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 ff. 130, 137; n.d. Tues. [16 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,178 ff. 26-7; Roscoe to Holland, 3 June 1807, Add. MSS. 51,650 f.100).
- 2.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Sat. [25 May 1807], Wed. [3 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 ff. 114-15; 52,178 f.6.

than the Chronicle. "It is incredible" Brougham complained "how much we lose by having no one to do this, as we are cut out of many of our papers".¹ The inevitable similarity of the articles in the different papers led to embarrassing comments in the ministerial press on the fact that it was the whigs, and not the editors of the papers, who were writing the leaders; this prompted Brougham to shut up the campaign headquarters, which had been, as he said, a "castle of Indolence".² One explanation for the whigs' lack of assistance is that during the election most of them were out of town; but this factor does not account for the paucity of contributors to the campaign fund. It appears that only eight whigs subscribed to a fund totalling £550; they were Grenville, Spencer, Holland, Howick,

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- 1.) Holland to Howick, 24 May 1807, Add. MSS. 51,544 ff. 129-30 (copy); Brougham to Allen, n.d. Mon. [25 May 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 ff. 120-1. Brougham had difficulty in getting evening papers, particularly the Globe, to accept material similar to that already published in morning papers. (Brougham to Allen, n.d. [12 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,178 f.16).
- 2.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 289; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Frid. [5 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,178 f.8. Sheridan's contribution to the campaign was to insert a paragraph in the Morning Post when drunk announcing a letter defending the Prince of Wales's treatment of the Princess, which he forgot to write. (Lauderdale to Howick, dated 5, but in fact 4 May 1807, Grey MSS.).

Petty, Lauderdale, Fremantle and Lord Kinnaird. Holland suggested that a list of subscribers be placed in the campaign headquarters to encourage donations, but Sir Francis Vincent did not help the matter by disappearing from town with both the list and the money.¹ In the years after 1807 the whigs remained almost wholly dependent on Brougham and Holland for contributions to the press. In 1809 Holland was driven to ask Grenville for some paragraphs, for with Brougham out of town he thought there was no one else who would write them; and during the election of 1812, Brougham, who was busy at Liverpool, admitted that it would be difficult to implement his plan of opening a room at Ridgeway's for a press campaign, unless Holland co-operated. As Grey aptly commented, it was highly expedient to show "some active attention to the Press. But we are sadly off for Workmen in that line".² The result was that the Chronicle had only a couple of leaders on political issues in the election, in contrast to the

1.) Holland to Howick, 24 May 1807, Add. MSS. 51,544 f.132; Aspinall, op.cit. p.287; Brougham to Allen, n.d. Wed. [27 May 1807], Add. MSS. 52,177 f. 128. Holland later recalled that £600 was raised. (Aspinall, op.cit. p. 290).

2.) H.M.C. Dropmore ix. 345. 21 Oct. 1809; Brougham to Grey, 25, 29 Sept. 1812, Brougham MSS.; Grey to Brougham, 1 Oct. 1812, Grey MSS. It is doubtful that James Abercromby was writing in the Chronicle in 1810. (Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 293-4).

battery of articles it had carried in 1807.¹ One other minor aspect of the whigs' neglect of the press lies in the fact that several of them do not appear to have subscribed regularly to the Chronicle. When in the country they preferred an evening paper which would contain later news; Grey, as has been mentioned, took the Globe in 1809, and Lauderdale, though he was writing in the Chronicle in that year, said that he did not take the paper. Not until 1814 did he order it regularly on Grey's advice.² Blanco White, though a journalist and inmate of Holland House, did not take the Chronicle in 1810, and Caroline Fox said in 1814 that when out of London she stopped receiving the Chronicle in the interests of economy.³

1.) MC 23, 29 Sept. 1812. Most space was given to reports of meetings and foreign news.

2.) Lauderdale to Grey, 2 Dec. 1809, 9 Jan. 1814, Grey MSS.

3.) White to Allen, 19 Sept. 1810 (misdated 1811), Add. MSS. 52,194 f.8; Caroline Fox to Holland, 8 Dec. 1814, Add. MSS. 51,740 f.46.

There is some evidence of neglect of the Chronicle in earlier years: in the late 1790s it was not taken at Amptill or Bowood, the seats of Holland and Lansdowne, (Caroline Fox to Holland, 12 Jan. [1798], Add. MSS. 51,735 f.3; Caroline Fox to Lady Holland, n.d. Wed. [24 Dec. 1800], Add. MSS. 51,744 f.177).

Perry's success as a journalist in this period can be assessed in terms of his conduct of the Chronicle as a general newspaper and as a party organ. During these years the Chronicle became firmly established as one of the two best-selling morning newspapers; whereas in 1801 it had had only the fifth highest sale of the morning papers at 1,700, by 1811 its circulation had doubled to 3,500, and was second only to that of The Times. This increase reflected in part a general rise in the sale of papers, but it is clear that Perry had improved his position in relation to his rivals; the ministerial Morning Post, with a sale of 3,000 was the only other serious competitor.¹ Perry's recipe for success was to combine serious political news and comment with a steady flow of miscellaneous and lighter matter. The most telling tributes to the Chronicle at this time came not from the whigs, but from rival journalists. Crabb Robinson, a reporter on The Times, thought his

1.) Gray, Spencer Perceval p. 132; the figures of 5,000 for The Times and Evening Mail, and 3,000 for the British Press and Globe represent their combined circulation. (Haig, "Circulation of some London Newspapers 1806-11: two documents", Studies in Bibliography vii. 1955. p. 193 n.8). The Peninsular war was important in increasing papers' sales; it gave T. Grenville "a daily craving after the newspaper infinitely more eager than could have been occasioned by any possible event in domestick politicks." (T. Grenville to Spencer, 23 July 1808, Spencer MSS. Box 73).

paper was both more respectable and honest than the Chronicle, but added that "what the Chronicle wants in honesty, it makes up in wit".¹ Coleridge, when writing for the Courier in 1811, said he was "vexed at the manifest superiority" of the Chronicle over his paper; and Edward Sterling, who wrote the Letters of Vetus in The Times, acknowledged in 1812 "the great ability wh[ic]h often displayed itself in the Morning Chronicle"² where Perry failed was in providing a foreign news service comparable to that of The Times. John Walter II's decision in 1806 to concentrate on providing the best news service, instead of supporting a political party, was to prove a lucrative one in view of subsequent developments in the Peninsula. The circulation of The Times rose steadily from 4,500 in 1808 to 6,000 in 1812; and Mackintosh could

1.) C. Robinson to Thomas Robinson, 12 Feb. 1808, Crabb Robinson MSS. f.119.

2.) Gentleman's Magazine June 1838. p. 587; History of the Times i. 456.

say in 1810 that it was "now by far the best Paper though the habit of twenty years attaches me to the Morning Chronicle".¹

As a party journalist, Perry was faced with the insoluble problem of reconciling his own interpretation of the Foxite faith with that of the party leaders. On the questions of parliamentary reform and the commitment of Burdett in 1809 and '10, he had taken up a position clearly to the left of the moderate whigs. Perry cherished his status as an independent editor, and explained to his readers on several occasions that he was not the mere cypher of the whigs' opinions: "we have never degraded ourselves to be the instrument of any party. When we agree with Opposition, we express our approbation of their conduct; where we differ from them as on the question of privilege, we express our dissent". He even claimed sometimes that

1.) Ibid. i. 127; the circulation figures were published on affidavit by the printer in The Times 3 Oct. 1816; Mackintosh's Journal, 18 Sept. 1810, Add. MSS. 52,437 no.3 p.10. T. Grenville was reading The Times in 1810 and '11 though it was hostile. (H.M.C. Dropmore x. 80, 89, 150). The radical Waithmann said he liked The Times best of the morning papers. (to Creevey, 10 Jan. 1810, Creevey MSS. (microfilm)). D. Stuart thought priority of intelligence was far more valuable to a paper than good writing. (Gentleman's Magazine June 1838. p. 579).

he had "no pretensions to secret or to confidential intercourse", and that he did not know what the whigs' intentions were.¹ Some contemporaries may have exaggerated the extent to which Perry necessarily reflected the whigs' opinions; Cartwright for one was wrong in assuming that Perry's support for the publication of Tavistock's letters, appealing for the whig leaders to unite with the popular reformers in 1812, was "a symptom of a favourable change in the minds of the party of which his paper is the known organ".² Brougham was nearer the mark when he complained in 1807 that "In truth Perry has too much of an opinion of his own".³ Perry's assertions of his independence in 1812 and '13 may have reflected a degree of disillusionment with the party. There was a note of criticism in his letter to Grey remarking that "there appeared to be no arrangement made, nor any exertion desired" in the election of 1812, and he openly lamented in the Chronicle that the whigs "have every where shewn themselves indifferent to parliamentary service".⁴ But the chief explanation as to why the whigs were dissatisfied with the Chronicle as a party organ appears to lie

1.) MC 1 Feb. 1813, 21 Nov. 1809; also 19 June, 21 Aug. 1812.

2.) Cartwright, Life and Correspondence ii. 33.

3.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Tues. [16 June 1807], Add. MSS. 52,178 f. 27.

4.) 21 Oct. 1812, Grey MSS.; MC 26 Oct. 1812.

neither in Perry's wish to preserve his independence of mind, nor in his disappointment at the whigs' repeated exclusion from office, but in the fact that Perry had become weary of his role as a political journalist. Daniel Stuart's observation in 1807 that Perry seemed "heartily sick" of conducting the Chronicle is corroborated by Perry's confidential letter to Adam a couple of years later. After commenting on the expensive labour of reporting the debates, he added: "For some years past it has been my most anxious wish to retire from a task so thankless; or if I must continue a Journalist, to restrict the Account of the proceedings in Parliament to a mere sketch, which one writer might give, and make the leading feature of the paper literary and fashionable, which my intimacies would enable me to accomplish in a way hitherto untried. In this way one year's publication, with the same sale, would be equal to three; and with infinitely less exertion I should be free from these incessant complaints which I now incur".¹ Perry never implemented this idea, for he probably realised that without a full coverage of debates the Chronicle's sale might seriously decline, and he was too cautious to risk such a fundamental change in the character of the paper. Moreover, after a career of over thirty years, the traditions of political journalism and of loyalty to the whigs were too deeply

1.) 16 June 1809, Blair-Adam MSS.

ingrained for them to be relinquished for the sake of more leisure and the possibility of greater profits. Although Perry's zeal as a party journalist was on the decline from around the time of the Talents ministry he continued during this period to be eager to serve the whig leaders.

When in 1806 Cartwright asked him to procure signatures for an address calling for a Middlesex meeting to support parliamentary reform, Perry forwarded the request to Fox for his opinion, rather than make a move which might embarrass the whigs.¹ Perry could be extremely responsive to hints from the whigs, as is indicated by the tone of his letter to Holland in 1807: "I feel myself" he wrote "at all times obliged by your Lordship's kind suggestions; and shall certainly, from deference to your judgement, abstain from the animadversions on Sir Francis Burdett which his ungrateful outrage on Mr. Fox first provoked".² Brougham remarked in 1809 on how Perry had shown a "most laudable degree of compliance" in changing his line of attack on the Walcheren expedition, "On receiving a hint from me, he, in a single day, turned quite about and contradicted what he had been saying".³ However much the whigs might criticise

1.) Cartwright to Perry, dated 5 Jan. 1806, but post-marked 27 Jan. 1806, Add. MSS. 51,468 ff. 91-3; the letter is in Fox's papers.

2.) 19 May 1807, Add. MSS. 51,824 f. 85.

3.) Brougham to Grey, 3 Oct. 1809, Brougham MSS., quoted in Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 304-5.

Perry for taking the wrong position on a question or for his lack of exertion, they could not during this period, complain, as they did in later years, of "the uncontrollable disposition of the Editor of the Morning Chronicle".¹

1.) Wellesley to Holland, 12 April 1818, Add. MSS. 51,728 f.26.

CHAPTER FOURPerry's Advertising Policy

The period of Perry's proprietorship of the Chronicle coincides with that stage in the history of the press when newspapers became financially, and therefore politically, independent, and were thus freed to fulfil their most important roles; the impartial dissemination of news and the expression of public opinion. The key to this financial independence lay in a newspaper's income from advertising, since a daily morning paper's profits from sales were never sufficient to cover its costs of production. It has now been possible to calculate, from the office copies of the Morning Chronicle, some part of a newspaper's profits from advertising in the early nineteenth century. It will be the purpose of ~~the~~ chapter to discuss the financial importance of these profits, the way in which they grew and fluctuated, and the kinds of problems which a newspaper proprietor faced in trying to attract custom, maximise his profits, and reconcile the accommodation of advertisements with a full coverage of other news.

Throughout Perry's career it was maintained in the Chronicle that the costs of producing a newspaper could only be met if the income from sales was supplemented by profits from advertisements. Although there were other sources of income open to papers, such as political subsidies, and suppression and contradiction fees, these were of little benefit to Perry since his subsidy of £300 per year from the

whigs was almost certainly not paid after 1791 and does not appear to have covered the loss of sales and advertising revenue entailed by the connexion with the Star, while it would have been quite out of character for Perry to have extorted hush money. As early as 1792 Perry described advertisements as "the only beneficial commerce of a Newspaper,"¹ and during the Spring of 1794, when the paper duty was raised, a breakdown of expenses was published in both the Chronicle and the Oracle, with the conclusion that "it is only by advertisements that a paper can be printed."² It was estimated in both papers that the daily loss after sales was approximately equal to the cost of printing, which Perry put at £30 per week for a paper with a circulation of 1,000. Although a rise in circulation would tend to diminish this loss by increasing the income from sales, this would be partly offset by the growth in printing costs, caused by more pressmen working longer hours to produce the higher number of copies. It was estimated in the Oracle that a paper with a circulation of 1,500 made a loss of nearly £40 a week after sales, while The Times with a circulation of 2,000 was losing about £15 a week exclusive of its advertising income and government subsidy.³

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- 1.) Perry to Adam, 8 June 1792, Blair-Adam MSS.
 - 2.) MC 22 Mar. 1794. For the breakdown of costs see Appendix A.
 - 3.) History of The Times i. 39-41.

Proprietors again raised the question of their finances when the stamp duty was increased in 1797. Perry, who as conductor of the leading opposition paper was the most vocal on this issue, said that a paper "must have a sale of 3,000 per day, or have a deficiency to make up out of the profits on its Advertisements."¹ This was the nearest he ever came to saying that a paper was not dependent on its advertising revenue for meeting its costs of production, but it is unlikely that any paper was selling more than two thousand at this time, and it is known that the sale of the Chronicle was little more than 1,000. Even in 1807, when the sale of the Chronicle had risen to about 4,000, Perry was still dependent on his advertising profits. He pointed out that of the 6d. received for the sale of each copy, 3½d. went in stamp duty, nearly 1d. for the sheet of paper, and more than 1d. to the vender, which left about ½d. to cover editorial and production costs. Hence proprietors, he concluded, "have only their advertisements to depend upon... this source of gain has been alone the means of securing to the public the benefit of an independent press."²

1.) MC 28 April 1797.

2.) MC 3 Sept. 1807.

By 1809 this dependence had been increased yet further by rising costs. When statutory authority was given for an increase in newspapers' prices by $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. Perry remarked: "This relief has been afforded us after suffering for two years past a heavy loss upon our sale, by the extraordinary advance in the price of paper etc."¹ In 1815, when confronted with an increase in both stamp and advertisement duties, Perry argued "it is by advertisements only that the independence of a Journal can be maintained. A sale of 4,000 copies per day would not pay the moiety of our expence.

1.) MC 20 May 1809. Statutory authority was necessary if the newspapers were to retain the 16% discount on stamps purchased in bulk, which they had been allowed in 1797 provided they did not raise their price above 6d. Cobbett thought that if it were not for the "gain upon the advertisements, and for certain paragraphs, the insertion of which is paid for, a daily paper could never stand." (Political Register 4 Mar. 1809 col. 348).

If it were not for advertisements, the paper must be sold at one shilling instead of sixpence halfpenny."¹ This remark, when compared with the statement in 1797 that a sale of 3,000 could cover costs, shows that the expense of producing papers had risen at a much faster rate than the profits from sales, which remained at less than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per copy as in 1794, after deduction of the costs of taxation, paper, and the allowance to venders. The claim that the sale of 4,000 per day would not cover half the costs of "intelligence, writing and printing" implies that these cost over £100 per week,² but this expense could easily be covered by the profits from advertisements which averaged £200 per week for the Chronicle in 1815, leaving nearly £150 per week as Perry's personal

1.) MC 8 June 1815; Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 126. Perry said he did not have "one half penny per sheet beyond the expence of the stamp, paper, and allowance to venders, to go towards defraying the expence of intelligence, writing, and printing. The sale, therefore, would be totally insufficient to the expence, if it were not made up by the advertisements." (MC 2 June 1815). The claim that he would have to raise the price to 1/- was an exaggeration, because with a sale of only 1,500 this would yield an additional £206-5s. per week, which approximates to the average weekly profit from advertisements of £200.

2.) The sale of 4,000 copies per day, each at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. profit, would yield £50 per week.

profit. In this light it is difficult to accept the opinion of James Grant, who worked as a parliamentary reporter on the Chronicle shortly after Perry's death, that the income from sales was sufficient to cover all expenses, leaving the whole advertising income as clear profit.¹ It is likely that the costs of production decreased during the post-war depression, but although the lack of evidence makes a precise calculation impossible, it is very probable that newspapers remained dependent on their advertising revenue.

It has been possible to calculate Perry's profits from advertising for five full years and thirteen half-years in the period 1798-1821,

1.) Grant, The Newspaper Press i. 279.

and for four months in the year 1795.¹ The profits almost trebled in the nineteenth century, rising from £4,300 in 1800, to £7,200 in

1.) For the number, gross receipts and profits of advertisements, see Appendix B. The office copies of the Morning Chronicle, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, have the charge written on each advertisement. On the second, or occasionally the back page of each issue, is written the total number of advertisements and the total charge for them. It is thus possible, by multiplying the total number by the appropriate amount of duty, and deducting it from the total charge, to determine the profit. Unfortunately the series of annotated copies is not complete; some, as for 1793 and 1794, are only partially annotated, with no totals given and the prices of many advertisements omitted, while others are not annotated at all. However there is no blank period after 1798 longer than two and a half years, so it has been possible to obtain an overall impression of the growth in receipts. Advertisements with the payee's name written on them were those that were inserted on credit; this is evident from the division of the total charge on the copies in the 1790s between 'R' and 'T', which stood for 'Received' and 'Trusted'. As might be expected, regular advertisers such as booksellers and auctioneers were usually afforded credit. A surprising feature is that the clerk inserted the payee's name in full on each advertisement, even though the same advertiser might have more than forty notices; only twice, in 1799 and 1821, was 'D' short for 'ditto' temporarily used. It is possible that the printer, John Lambert, checked the charges written on the advertisements, because occasionally an advertisement has had "Error" and the initials "JL" written on it. It seems plausible that someone more senior than a 'Cheque Clerk' employed to check the Morning Post's advertisements in 1785 (amongst other clerical duties) should be required for this job. (Hindle, The Morning Post 1772-1937 p.43). There are occasional minor discrepancies of not more than a few shillings between my addition of the total receipts and that written in the margin. Where the occasional issue is missing, I have averaged the number and receipts.

1806, up to £12,400 in 1819. The remarkable rapidity of this growth does much to explain the extraordinary rise in the capital value of newspapers in this period, and the considerable appreciation in the number, talent and salaries of the reporters and literary contributors who worked for the leading newspapers.¹ The increasing prosperity of proprietors facilitated their political independence, enhanced their social respectability, and helped to make journalism, as exemplified by Perry's career, a profession which was not irreconcilable with high standards of integrity and efficiency. An examination of the fluctuations in the growth of Perry's advertising profits throws some light on the factors which affected the circulation, and thus also advertising custom, of the Chronicle. The growth in receipts was progressive, except in four instances: two of these are minor and do not reflect a decline in the Chronicle's fortunes.² One of these cases occurred in the second halves of 1807 and 1808, when the profits were lower than in the second half of 1806 on account of the general election in that year which produced a large amount of political advertising which was charged at a higher rate than most other advertisements. The other case was when the proceedings concerning

1.) Christie, Myth and Reality pp. 319-23, 330-31.

2.) Cases when the profits for the second half of a year are lower than for the first half of a preceding year do not of course reflect a decline, on account of the parliamentary session in the first half of a year, when circulation and advertising custom were at their highest.

the Duke of York occupied so much space in February and March 1809.¹ The other two cases throw more light on the Chronicle's success. The main factor which affected the volume of advertising was of course a paper's circulation; as John Hunt of the Examiner observed, "The great source of profit of a daily paper is from the advertisements, and they can be obtained only by a respectable circulation, but then they are a certain attendant on that circulation."² Circulation was important both in terms of the number of readers, and the kind of readers, and some newspapers attracted advertisements not only because of their extensive sales but because they had established a reputation as being read by people interested in certain subjects. Thus among the older papers the Public Ledger had most shipping notices, the Morning Post auctioneers' (until late 1793), and the Chronicle books. But a general newspaper could not survive on specialist advertising, and it had to maintain a wide sale to

1.) e.g. The profit in Feb. 1809 was £330, compared to profits of over £660 in April, May and June.

2.) Hunt to Brougham, 16 July [1816], Creevey MSS. (microfilm).

attract miscellaneous advertisements.¹ The main factors influencing circulation, which tended to affect all papers to some degree, were taxation, the number of rival papers, the importance of the news and the season of the year. But the factor which specifically affected the Chronicle was the political fortunes of the whigs, for while Perry could generally rely on the readership of Foxites, the sale was bound to improve in proportion to the unity and popularity of the whig party.

The first decline in the Chronicle's advertising profits occurred during the second half of the 1790s. Figures available for four months in 1795 show that the profit was slightly greater than for the corresponding period from 1798 to 1800.² This decline was shared by other newspapers, for the gross advertisement duty paid by London

1.) It was argued in the mid-nineteenth century that it was better to insert miscellaneous advertisements in class journals with a small circulation, and 'looked-for' advertisements in general papers, but the lack of class or trade papers in Perry's lifetime meant that both general and classified advertisements were inserted in papers with the largest sale. (An Advertiser: A Guide to Advertisers (1851) pp. 8-10).

2.) The profit for January, April, May and June in 1795 was £1,591-19s. For the same months in 1798 it was only £1,433-10s; in 1799 £1,502-2s; and in 1800 £1,533-5s-6d.

papers was one-ninth less in 1798 than in 1795.¹ The general nature of the decline suggests that it had financial and economic causes common to all papers; the most influential cause was probably the increase in stamp duty in 1797 which restricted the circulation of newspapers and made them less attractive advertising mediums, while the triple assessment on houses, carriages and servants would have diminished the volume of auctioneering and "wants a place" advertisements upon which proprietors relied heavily for their advertising custom. More particularly the Chronicle's circulation was undermined by the revival of the Morning Post and the Morning Herald in the late seventeen-nineties, and by the progress of the Morning Advertiser which had been established in 1794 by the Licensed Victualler's Association as a medium for their advertisements. This decline was exacerbated by the unpopularity of the Foxites in the country, and their failure to make any headway against Pitt's majority in parliament. The other main decline in the Chronicle's advertising profits was in the first half of 1821, when they were 15% less than they had been in the first half of 1820, and even lower than during the same period in 1817. This decline was again part of a general decline in the volume of press advertising which would have been largely caused by a falling off in the importance

1.) The gross duty paid in 1795 was £36,283-16s., and in 1798 £32,286-12s. (Aspinall, "Statistical Accounts of London Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century," English Historical Review lxxiii. April 1948. p. 208).

of news, and therefore of newspapers' circulations, after the excitement of Peterloo, the Six Acts and the trial of Queen Caroline had subsided.¹ More specifically it also reflected the great increase in the sale of The Times which had supported Caroline, while the fortunes of the whigs dwindled as it became clear early in 1821 that the waverers in parliament would not support the opposition if it might lead to an actual change of ministry.

Although the interaction of the several factors which affected a paper's advertising profits makes it difficult to determine which had the most influence, there are occasions when one factor appears decisive. For example the high rates charged for political notices meant that a paper's advertising profits always increased during a general election. Figures exist for four of the seven general

1.) The gross produce of advertisement duty paid by London newspapers in 1821 was £59,892-3s.-6d., whereas in 1820 it had been £61,779-11s., and in 1819 £60,097-16s. (Aspinall, "Statistical Accounts of the London Newspapers 1800-36," E.H.R. lxxv. April 1950. part i. p. 226).

elections which were held during Perry's conduct of the Chronicle, and they show that profits could increase by as much as 70%.¹

Taxation also had a demonstrable effect: the rise in advertisement duty in 1815 by 6d. to 3/6d. did not cause an actual fall in profits because Perry raised his minimum charge by 1/-; but a fall in the number of advertisements occurred, and it is reasonable to suppose that profits would have risen at a faster rate without the higher duty and charges.² The seasonal factor generally meant that the highest profits were made from March to June, and the lowest from September to November when parliament was usually in recess, and many people had retired to the country. This autumnal slump appears

1.) 1802: the average monthly profit for July-December was £442-2s-6d, but the profit in July was £746-17s. 1806: the average for January-December was £599-11s-0½d, but the profit in October was £740-14s-6d, and in November £769-10s. 1818: the average for July-December was £924-8s-8d, but the profit in July was £1,283-1s-6d. 1820: the average for January-June was £1,224-4s-1d, but the profit in March was £1,564-13s-6d. In 1807 the average proportion of the Chronicle taken up by advertisements was 53%, but in May, during the election, the proportion rose to 62%.

2.) When advertisement duty was doubled in 1757, there had been only "a slight, temporary decline in advertising." (Aspinall, E.H.R. lxiii. April 1948 p. 204).

to have had the surprising effect of leading Perry to insert free advertisements in October and November 1816, and September and October 1818.¹ There were only twenty-one of them in all, but they indicate the difficulty a proprietor might have in filling his columns when the new duties and falling-off in foreign news after 1815 were combined with the parliamentary recess. The number of rival papers, which had probably been the main factor in undermining the circulation of the Gazetteer under Perry in the 1780s² did not present any very serious challenges in the early nineteenth century. A threat to the Chronicle emerged in January 1803 when the booksellers set up a morning and an evening

1.) These advertisements had no price written on them on the office copies, nor Perry's initials as was usual if he had inserted them, nor the word 'Error' which was written on notices printed by mistake; they were left blank, or just had a line through them. The fact that they were inserted on both the days and months when profits were lowest suggests that they were printed free to fill up space. The average monthly profit for July-December 1816 was £875-8s-5d., but the profits in October and November were only £763-4s-6d., and £742-2s-6d., respectively. The average monthly profit for July-December 1818 was £924-8s-8d., but the profits in September and October were only £782 and £775-17s-6d., respectively.

2.) Haig, The Gazetteer p. 211.

paper, the British Press and the Globe, as advertising mediums for their trade. George Lane, who was the first editor of the new papers, was probably right in saying that they rivalled the Chronicle, which specialised in literary notices, rather than the Morning Post and Courier in opposition to which Daniel Stuart claimed they were originally founded.¹ Though the British Press and Globe at first had a circulation of only 200 each, they soon picked up and established a sale of about 2,500-3,000 between them.² The only other significant threats from new papers to the Chronicle under Perry were from the Day, an auctioneer's paper started in January 1809, which according to the Stamp Office was selling only 1,100 in 1811, and the New Times, which amalgamated with the Day soon after its foundation in 1817. Although the New Times had the fourth highest sale of the morning papers in 1821, at 2,700, its ultra-tory politics and its origin as a rival to the old Times makes it unlikely that it deprived the Chronicle of readers or of much advertising custom.

1.) George Lane, "Newspapers," in Gentleman's Magazine Sept. 1838. pp. 274-5.

2.) 200 is George Lane's estimate (Ibid. p. 276). In 1811 Coleridge expressed astonishment that the British Press found purchasers "so utterly dry and worthless is it," (Gentleman's Magazine June 1838 p. 587), but Stamp Office surveys showed that it shared a sale of 3,000 with the Globe in 1811, and 2,500 in 1821.

Although Perry was perhaps a less able businessman than his chief rivals, Daniel Stuart and John Walter ii, he showed a sound grasp of advertising policy in his conduct of the Chronicle. When he took over the paper in December 1790 he was faced with a fourfold problem: the Chronicle had a low circulation and therefore little advertising custom, there was a growing rivalry from other papers, advertisements had a declining news value, and the Chronicle's space for advertisements was limited by its connexion with the Star. The Chronicle's circulation had depended since its foundation in 1769 largely on William Woodfall's reputation as a parliamentary reporter, so that after his departure in 1789 the sale declined until it was so small that the paper "only just paid its expenses, and then with the utmost economy."¹ Even under Woodfall the Chronicle's advertising interest had, according to James Stephen who was a parliamentary reporter on the paper, been "greatly prejudiced" by a frequent late publication, which meant that advertisements for events of the same day would be read at too late an hour to be

1.) John Payne Collier, An Old Man's Diary (2 vols, 1871-2) vol.i. part ii. p.44. Collier gives Perry as his source for this statement. Trusler does not include the Chronicle in his list of the six morning papers with the highest circulation in 1790. (The London Adviser and Guide p. 136). Most readers probably followed Dr. Burney in preferring Woodfall's new paper the Diary; there are no copies of the Chronicle in the Burney collection from 1 April 1789 to 5 December 1790.

effective.¹ This problem was exacerbated by the increasing competition from other papers for the same readers and advertising customers. In addition to papers founded during the 'age of advertising' in the 1730s-50s such as the Daily Advertiser, Gazetteer, Public Advertiser and Public Ledger, the Chronicle was faced with competition from seven morning papers that he been founded since 1772, the Morning Post, Herald, Times, World, Argus, Diary and Oracle. That the newspaper market was oversubscribed and competition fierce is suggested by the fact that in spite of the excitement of the French revolution no new daily morning papers were started between July 1789 and the end of 1792.² While competition diminished a paper's advertising custom, the growing importance of parliamentary debates and foreign news reports that accompanied the development of the French revolution, meant that the news value of advertisements declined in relation to that of other items, and forced proprietors to sacrifice their advertisements in order to satisfy their readers. There was also a

1.) The Memoirs of James Stephen ed. Merle M. Bevington (1954) pp.293-4.

2.) Apart from the Cabinet, which lasted for a few days in January 1792. Five morning papers appeared after 1772 but expired by December 1790. They were the General Advertiser, London Courant, Aurora, Noon Gazette, and the Spurious Star which temporarily appeared as a morning paper. (Werkmeister, The London Daily Press 1772-92 passim.)

growing pressure for more miscellaneous items in newspapers, stimulated by the rivalry of "West End Sheets" like the Morning Post, Herald, World and Oracle, which provided fashionable gossip and literary features. This relative decline of the newspapers' importance as advertising mediums, which had developed with the publication of Junius' essays in 1769, and the full coverage of parliamentary debates in 1771, was reflected in the omission of the word "advertiser" from papers' sub-titles: the Chronicle under its new proprietors dropped its old sub-title of London Advertiser, and similar sub-titles were relinquished by the Herald in 1786, the World in 1787, The Times in 1788, and the Post in 1792.¹ The problem of limited space for advertisements was probably worse for Perry than for any of his rivals owing to the connexion he had formed with the Star. Perry claimed that he had to sacrifice £500 worth of advertising per year in order that he might give a full

1.) Ibid. p.5; History of The Times. i.30. The sub-title of the Gazetteer, New Daily Advertiser, was put below the main title, instead of following it, in September 1790. (Haig, The Gazetteer p. 213). It may be significant that whereas morning newspapers founded during the early and mid-eighteenth century had stressed their commercial role through their titles, newspapers started in the period of the French revolution did not; e.g. the Argus, Oracle and True Briton, though the Diary was sub-titled Woodfall's Register.

report of the debates for copying into the Star and distribution in the country, and the loss of circulation this entailed for the Chronicle, on account of the public waiting for the Star because it would give the full debates, was doubtless bad for the Chronicle's advertising custom.¹

Confronted with these problems, Perry concentrated on building up the Chronicle's circulation by establishing it as the most serious political newspaper and supplanting the Gazetteer as the leading organ of the Foxite whigs. This policy entailed the subordination of advertisements to both reports of debates and French news, and in his first address to the public Perry laid most emphasis on politics and miscellany, and made no attempt to recommend the paper as an advertising medium. The announcement merely said "To Advertisers, they [the new proprietors] have but one word to say - they will never degrade themselves by using the scandalous means of Intimidation"² which probably meant that suppression or contradiction fees would not be extorted. It is arguable that Perry's initial aloofness towards advertisements was because he was genuinely uninterested in making good profits and was concerned only the the political quality of the paper. He announced in January 1792 "It will be obvious, that having the most extensive sale of any Morning Paper in London, we

1.) Christie, Myth and Reality pp. 346-7.

2.) MC 13 Dec. 1790.

sacrifice no more room to commercial notices, than is absolutely necessary to our expence... we court no other advertisements than such as have fair claims to the public eye; and no matter interesting to the cause of Freedom, Reform, Toleration or Humanity, shall be made to give way to the objects of individuals."¹ This attitude is consistent with Perry's treatment of advertisements as editor of the Gazetteer, when he reduced the space given to them from about nine to five or six columns, probably because he thought they were relatively uninteresting to readers, rather than because of any lack of advertising custom.² It is most unlikely, though, that Perry was uninterested in profit; as joint-proprietor of the Chronicle he had a financial awareness and incentive he could not have possessed as editor of the Gazetteer, and it seems certain that he would have paid more attention to advertisements in 1791 if he had had more custom. In that year the back page was often filled with correspondence and provincial news items, which was usual with papers short of advertising. With the growth in sales in 1792 the number of advertisements increased, so that in spite of the relative indifference expressed in January of that year Perry increased the

1.) MC 30 Jan. 1792.

2.) Haig, The Gazetteer pp. 201-2, 216-17, 227.

amount of space given to advertisements from 34% in 1791, to 44% in 1792, and 47% in 1793.¹ That Perry was always anxious to accommodate advertisers is indicated by his occasional apologies in 1791 for sacrificing advertisements to debates, arguing that it was by such sacrifices that the circulation was increased, thereby benefiting advertisers in the long run.²

The fundamental advertising problem confronting Perry once the Chronicle had been successfully established, and which he never resolved to the satisfaction of the whig leaders, was how to maximise his profits without decreasing the space given to important political

1.) The percentage of the Chronicle taken up by advertisements for each month is as follows:

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1791	38	36	36	38.5	38	39.5	30.5	26	28	35	36	34
1792	38	53	45	48	50.5	46	35	33	33	45	47.5	54
1793	54	48.5	55	53	52.5	50.5	44	38	34.5	39	50	50

The sharp increase in the first half of 1792 when the connexion with the Star was still maintained shows that this connexion could have been only a very subsidiary factor in limiting the volume of advertising, compared to the Chronicle's initially low circulation.

2.) Advertisers were "ultimately benefited" and "It is by such occasional sacrifices of gain on our parts, that we have made it their permanent interest to honour us with their commands." (MC 31 Mar., 14 April 1791).

and miscellaneous matter. The only four ways in which he could do this were by publishing a supplement, by widening the paper's columns, by increasing the size of its pages, and by using smaller type. There were several difficulties in producing a supplement. It required more compositors and pressmen, it would be published later than the main paper, and it was subject to stamp-duty, so that readers either had to pay extra for it or it had to be given away free, which was uneconomical. Thus it is not surprising that Perry never produced an advertising supplement. He announced a projected supplement for debates on the Russian armament in 1792 which did not materialise because of Pitt's indisposition, and he published four-page supplements to cover Melville's impeachment in 1806, the treason trials in 1817, and Thistlewood's trial in 1820, but probably never had enough advertising custom to justify a purely commercial supplement.¹ Perry frequently widened the Chronicle's columns during the parliamentary session by one-fifth of an inch to ease the pressure on space caused by the fact that, as he himself admitted, "advertisements are only plentiful at that time of the year when the proceedings in Parliament demand space."² This expedient, combined with the omission

1.) MC 27 Feb. 1792; 13 June 1806, 16 June 1817, 28 April 1820. It was not until July 1822 that a successful free supplement composed wholly of advertisements was produced with The Times (History of the Times i. 324-5).

2.) MC 22 Mar. 1794. However it was not until 20 Jan. 1800 that Perry said he was widening the Chronicle's columns not only to include debates, but specifically "to accommodate our Advertising Friends."

of correspondence, law reports, and provincial news, usually enabled a full coverage of debates to be reconciled with a heavy volume of advertising, but it was inadequate during a period of crisis or scandal such as the Duke of York affair in 1809. This episode doubtless encouraged Perry in 1810, without any explanation, to increase the size of the Chronicle's pages by an additional column so that it had a total of twenty instead of sixteen columns.¹ In doing this, Perry was following a general trend amongst journalists who, as Huskisson had observed a year earlier "thought they should profit by the additional number of advertisements, in which the chief value of a newspaper consisted."² Had Perry followed John Walter of The Times in using steam presses in 1814 he would have been able to utilise their power of printing larger sheets for further enlargements of the Chronicle's size, but instead its size remained static after 1810, whereas the columns of The Times were lengthened in 1816 and 1822.³ The only other resource open to Perry for increasing space

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- 1.) MC 22 Jan. 1810. The volume of advertising was not sufficient to enable the Chronicle always to be published at its new size; it reverted to its old size 105 times in 1810 and 81 times in 1811, but only 3 times in 1812. The smaller issues usually occurred during the recess.
 - 2.) Parl.Debs. xiv. 27 April 1809 col. 267.
 - 3.) History of The Times i. 414. Its columns had already been lengthened in 1812, and widened in 1813.

was the use of smaller print, and whereas in 1790 this had been confined to advertisements only, by 1820 it had been extended to most items, including, on occasions, the leading articles.

Another problem for newspaper proprietors was whether it was more profitable to insert numerous short advertisements, or a smaller number of long advertisements. It would appear at first sight that long advertisements were in the interests of both advertisers and proprietors, because advertisement duty was charged at the same rate on each advertisement regardless of its length, so the longer the notices the less duty there was to pay; and since there is no evidence that Perry charged reduced rates for long advertisements,¹ the saving on advertisement duty would not have been offset by lower profits. Perry claimed in 1797, in opposition to the government's proposal for a graduated advertisement duty, that "Without the profit arising from long Advertisements it would be impossible for us to publish the paper at the present price," and "however in particular instances a long notice from a public Board or a Society, may produce to the paper one, two, or three guineas,

1.) Contrary to Trusler's view in 1790 that newspaper proprietors charged 6/- for the first 18 lines, and then only 1d for each further line. (London Adviser and Guide p. 137).

the occasions are rare, and two shillings of profit is a high average to the laborious printer."¹ But although long advertisements were claimed to be the most profitable, newspaper proprietors appear to have preferred small advertisements. This was partly because, as Daniel Stuart pointed out, numerous miscellaneous advertisements attracted more readers, and made the newspaper less dependent on a few large advertising customers who might withdraw their custom and leave the paper seriously short of revenue.² Although Perry did not follow Stuart in charging "enormously high" for long advertisements in order to exclude them, the lack of any reduction in charges according to length suggests that he did not wish to encourage them,

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- 1.) MC 28 April 1797. Proposals for a graduated advertisement duty were again successfully resisted by newspaper proprietors in 1815. in 1798 the average profit Perry was exaggerating in putting 2/- as a high average profit/on each advertisement was 3/5d. The extent to which taxation encouraged long advertisements is illustrated by an estimate in 1824 that if the duty were halved, advertisements "exceeding twenty lines, might not much increase in number; but short ones, from five to ten lines, would increase at least three times." (The Periodical Press. (1824) pp. 57-8).
- 2.) Daniel Stuart, "Anecdotes of Public Newspapers," Gentleman's Magazine July 1838. pp. 25-6; Hindle, The Morning Post 1772-1937 p.83.

and the fact that the number of advertisements in the Chronicle increased at a much faster rate than the amount of space they comprised shows that they did get notably smaller.¹ One reason for this was probably the growth in the number of advertisers which necessitated smaller advertisements if they were all to be accommodated. Although this entailed the risk of losing old customers who wanted more space, as when the booksellers withdrew their advertisements from Stuart's Morning Post, the gain in security of income and perhaps also of readers was worth it. Perhaps the main consideration though was that very small advertisements could be highly profitable because even if they were only four or five lines in length they had to pay the minimum charge of six shillings.

The rates of charges for advertisements do not appear to have fluctuated with the Chronicle's circulation, or with seasonal factors. The only increase in the basic rate under Perry was to provide for the increase in duty in 1815 when minimum charges were raised from 6/- and 4/6 for a dozen lines to 7/- and 6/- for ten lines on the front and back pages respectively. The three criteria

1.) e.g. the number of advertisements increased by nearly 50% from 1798 (22,869) to 1806 (33,428), whereas the amount of the paper filled with advertisements increased from 50% in 1798 to only 53% in 1807. John Walter senior also appears to have preferred small advertisements, for he charged "a small matter more than our contemporaries" for long ones. (History of The Times i.44).

which determined the charges were the advertisement's position, its size and its content. Advertisements on the front two pages were charged at a higher rate than on the back two pages, though there was no distinction in charge for notices near the top or bottom of the column. While charges increased with the size of the advertisement at the approximate rate of 6d per line, there was no consistent or clearly defined scale, whether measured by the number of words, letters or lines.¹ Charges to regular advertisers such as booksellers and auctioneers had to be fairly consistent else complaints would have been made, and it was in the miscellaneous or longer advertisements that prices were more arbitrary. The content of an advertisement would affect its price

1.) However Perry said that with all respectable newspapers "there is a regular charge according to the length of advertisements," (MC 8 June 1815), and it would seem that some attempts were made to base the charge on the exact number of lines, for occasionally the number is written on the margin of the office copies. It is possible that, as Sir Matthew Ridley complained, advertisements were charged more for speedy insertion, but this cannot be verified. (Parl. Debs. xxi. 7 June 1815 col. 663.). There was more consistency in the gradations by which charges rose: before 1815 charges rose by 6d up to 13/-, by 1/- up to 25/-, by sums not less than 2/- up to 42/-, and then by 10/6 or one guinea.

if it were political or personal; the opposition member Sir Matthew Ridley complained in 1815 "that it was the custom to charge twice as much for advertisements at the time of a general election," and as the profits show, this was generally the case.¹ Petitions and resolutions from counties and boroughs, and candidates' addresses soliciting votes, were subject to a minimum charge of 10/6, even if only four lines long. Newspaper proprietors probably asked more for political notices because they could get away with it, whereas with advertisements for ordinary goods they ran the risk of losing regular custom if they charged too high. The absence of reduced rates for advertisements according to their length or their frequency of insertion suggests that Perry had enough advertising custom to make the offer of concessions unnecessary. There may also have been the motive of saving on the clerical work involved in calculating the exact length and recording the frequency of insertion of each advertisement. The charges did not fluctuate with the Chronicle's circulation probably because its sales were fairly stable during the early nineteenth century; moreover, any decrease in adversity would draw attention to one's decline, whilst an increase

1.) Ibid. It is surprising that the whigs should have wondered at the cheapness of political advertising in 1809. (Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 284 n.1).

in times of success would seem unnecessary and tend to weaken one's competitive position.¹

Although several newspapers were founded in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries primarily with the purpose of advertising their proprietors' businesses, there was little scope for Perry to use the Chronicle for this purpose. It would be reasonable to suppose that the booksellers George Nicol and George Robinson had put up security for the purchase of the Chronicle in 1790 in the hope of using it as an advertising medium on favourable terms, but neither their notices nor those of booksellers closely connected with the whigs like Thomas Becket and James Ridgeway were afforded any special treatment. There were some political advertisements supporting whig causes which were inserted free, but they were very occasional, and it is clear that Perry did not allow any regular concessions to his contacts in politics and the literary world. He probably wanted to maximise his profits, and to retain his freedom to grant the occasional special favour.² Sometimes advertisements for important pamphlets,

1.) John Bell reduced charges when the circulation of the Universal Advertiser declined as a result of its liability to stamp duty, but without success. (Peter Prince, "John Bell and the Universal Advertiser", Business History x.no.2 July 1969 p. 95).

2.) Advertisements inserted by Perry always had 'P' or 'JP' written on them. They were mostly concerned with his domestic life, particularly the lease of his property, and employment or charitable assistance for acquaintances.

such as those containing Fox's speeches, were highlighted by insertion just above the sub-heading in the body of the paper, so that they would be noticed by those readers who looked straight at the political news without scanning the first page. This positioning was of some importance, for many readers probably did not bother to look at the advertisements. Henry Crabb Robinson estimated in 1807 that three-quarters of newspaper buyers read only the leading article and what was in large print, while Sir Robert Wilson remarked a decade later that half the readers of the Chronicle did not look at the advertisements.¹ Just as Perry showed little favour to whig advertisements, for reasons of profit, he also refrained from discriminating against the advertisements of his political opponents, for reasons of principle. Some proprietors, however, might refuse insertion or charge exorbitantly high for advertisements with which they disagreed. The Morning Herald was in receipt of a government subsidy of £600 in 1792 when advertisements from the Friends of the People and the Society for Constitutional Information were rejected,² and the Courier had the highest circulation of any daily

1.) History of The Times i.138; Wilson to Grey, 22 July 1817, Add. MSS. 30,121 f. 310.

2.) Morning Herald 30 April, 24 May 1792. This was not a consistent policy of ministerial papers: the Diary and Oracle, both in receipt of government subsidies, carried advertisements for the Friends of the People on 30 April 1792. (Werkmeister, A Newspaper History of England 1792-3 p. 76).

paper in 1815 when higher rates were charged for opposition advertisements.¹ Such discrimination by ministerial papers was of course to Perry's advantage since it helped ensure that opposition advertisers would concentrate on the Chronicle. One instance of this occurred in 1794 when the inhabitants of Dundee wished to advertise their gratitude to William Adam for his attempts to reform the Scottish criminal law, and told Adam that "The only paper that we know of which would allow of such a publication is the Morning Chronicle of London."² Perry's reputation for integrity and relative impartiality in his treatment of political subjects was challenged in November 1806 by Cobbett, who claimed that James Paull, the Burdettite candidate in the Westminster election, was charged eight guineas for an advertisement in the Chronicle, a charge which "must have been intended to operate as an exclusion." Perry was sufficiently sensitive to the

1.) Sir Matthew Ridley complained that his election address was charged 16 guineas by the Courier; 12 guineas by the Morning Post and Globe; and 10 guineas by the Chronicle. (Parl.Debs. xxi. 7 June 1815 col. 663). Since Perry did not generally discriminate in favour of opposition notices, except when he inserted them free, it would appear that the Courier discriminated against them.

2.) R. Small to Adam, 8 April 1794, Blair-Adam MSS.

allegation to deny it and affirm that Paull's notice was charged only one guinea, which the office copies show to be true.¹ The only evidence that Perry refused an advertisement for political reasons was when in 1801 he rejected a notice for Cobbett's pamphlet, the Trial of Republicanism, on the reasonable grounds that it misrepresented Erskine as a republican.²

While the Chronicle was the natural advertising medium for whig meetings, books and opinions, Perry did not enjoy a monopoly of such advertisements, any more than ministerial papers enjoyed a monopoly of government advertisements, since advertisers were concerned with the extent, as well as the character of a paper's readership. It was the need for maximum publicity that was the chief obstacle to a consistent government policy of excluding advertisements from hostile papers. It was obvious that contractors seeking government business, traders interested in sales at the Custom House, and other readers concerned about the administration of new taxes or the times of foreign mails could be found as well through opposition, as through ministerial papers. There was also the consideration that a paper

1.) Political Register 15, 22 Nov. 1806 cols. 768-70, 804; MC 15, 17 Nov. 1806. Perry was wrong in claiming that none of Paull's advertisements had been charged more than 3 guineas; on 29 Oct. 1806 one was charged 73/6d.

2.) Morris L. Pearl, William Cobbett. A bibliographical account of his life and times. (1953) pp. 49-50.

with an established circulation would hardly be influenced by the insertion or withdrawal of government notices, for they comprised only a negligible proportion of its total volume of advertisements. As was pointed out in the Anti-Jacobin in 1798, when the government was exhorted to withdraw advertisements from "Jacobin prints" like the Chronicle, Post and Courier, it was "far from being the case" that these papers were "wholly supported by official Advertisements.... enough will remain, even after Government have withdrawn theirs, to enable the leading paper of a party... to keep itself above water."¹ Although some newspaper proprietors in times of adversity, like those of the Gazetteer in 1796, were eager for the revenue from government advertisements, and might solicit a department for their insertion,² Perry could always well survive the withdrawal of such notices. When he received over 600 government advertisements in 1806 they comprised only about one fifty-fifth of his total advertising custom, and yielded a profit of only about £130 against the total profit of some £7,200. It is thus surprising that the government bothered to withdraw its notices from the Chronicle in 1798 and '99; it was probably thought that the move might have some effect when accompanied by the new duty of 1797, and the acts of 1798 (and 1799) and by Perry's imprisonment

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- 1.) Anti-Jacobin 14 May 1798, quoted in Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 127. Yet it expected "the humbled tone and chastised language" of the papers after advertisements had been withdrawn. (18 June 1798).
- 2.) Haig, The Gazetteer p. 315 n.21.

for libelling the House of Lords in March 1798.¹ Although the consistent exclusion of advertisements from hostile papers did not become government policy until the 1820s, discrimination against the Chronicle was again exercised during the second Pitt ministry. Under Addington, government notices had been inserted regularly in increasing numbers, so that whereas there had been less than 50 in 1800, there were nearly 400 in 1803. But after mid-1804 there was a gradual decline, which culminated in the complete withdrawal of Victualling Office advertisements in 1805, so that the total number of government notices in that year sunk to little more than 100. This discrimination was no doubt partly provoked by Perry's onslaught on Melville for corruption, though it may have occurred anyway as a return to the ministerial policy of the late 1790s. With the formation of the Talents ministry

1.) For the number of government advertisements in the Chronicle, see Appendix C. There were minor cases of government discrimination against Cobbett's Porcupine in 1801, by the Post Office, and against The Times in 1805, by the Custom House. (Aspinall, Politics and the Press. pp. 127-8). Cobbett's claim in 1801 that the secretary of the Post Office's discrimination "creates, as it ever must do, a strong temptation in every news-printer to truckle to his will" might have been true with a struggling paper like the Porcupine, but not with an established paper like the Chronicle. (Melville, Life and Letters of William Cobbett i. 128).

government advertisements were inserted in the Chronicle in unprecedented numbers, totalling over 600. Although they continued at this rate for the first year of the Portland ministry in 1807, there is evidence that the whigs discriminated in favour of their newspapers, through the rather surprising medium of Lord Moira, the master-general of the ordnance. During the Talents ministry there were 180 Ordnance Office advertisements inserted in the Chronicle, whereas not a single notice came from this office when Lord Chatham was master-general, both before and after the whigs' tenure of power. That it was Moira who was personally responsible is indicated by the claim of Daniel Lovell of the Statesman, that in February 1806 Moira had promised to support his newly founded paper by ensuring that it received government advertisements.¹ During the Portland and Perceval ministries there was no discrimination against the Chronicle on the scale that had been practised by Pitt, though the withdrawal of Victualling Office advertisements for fifteen months in 1809-10 reduced the total number of government notices in those years to little more than 350. This withdrawal coincided with the attorney-general's prosecution of Perry for libel, and as in 1798-9, it may be seen as part of a general attack on the press at a time when the government was acutely embarrassed by the quarrel between Canning and Castlereagh

1.) Daniel Lovell to Samuel Whitbread, 28 Mar. 1808, Whitbread MSS.

and the Walcheren campaign. After 1812 there was a marked decline in the number of government advertisements inserted in the Chronicle, which fell from over 700 in that year to less than 400 in 1814, but this does not appear to have been due to discrimination by any particular department. There were no Admiralty Office advertisements in the Chronicle between 1814 and '16, and the number of Transport Office advertisements declined markedly after 1815, but this was probably due to the diminution of their activity with the coming of peace. By 1820 and '21 the number of government notices had dwindled to about 250, and the number of offices advertising had fallen from seventeen in 1812, to only eleven, but there is no evidence that this was the result of positive discrimination against the Chronicle.

The content of advertisements, and the way in which they gave, as Perry said "a kind of local history of the manners of the age," has been described elsewhere,¹ and it will suffice to mention here

1.) MC 3 May 1792. Descriptions of advertisements may be found in Henry Sampson, History of Advertising from the Earliest Times (1873); two articles by Carrol Romer, "Eighteenth Century Advertisements," Nineteenth Century and After lvi. July 1929, which examines mid-eighteenth century advertising, and "Some Old Advertisements," Ibid. ci. Jan. 1927 which examines advertisements in 1820; E.S. Turner, The shocking history of Advertising! (1952); the article on advertisements in the Quarterly Review xcvi. June 1855. pp.183-225, omits late eighteenth century advertisements as too similar to the nineteenth century. This similarity is evident in the descriptions of advertisements in the 1840s in W. Weir: "Advertisements" in London ed. Charles Knight (1843), v.33-48; and in "The Advertising System," Edinburgh Review lxxvii. 1843 pp. 1-43.

the main types of advertisements, and the ways in which they were managed by Perry and presented by the advertisers. Daniel Stuart observed that Perry "aimed at making the Morning Chronicle a very literary paper" and "took pains to produce a striking display of book advertisements."¹ The purpose of this display was to impress the reader both with the extent of the advertiser's business, and with the extent of the paper's advertising custom, which would reflect favourably on its circulation, and thereby attract more advertisements. Book advertisements changed in their form of presentation by the late 1790s from long notices listing as many as fifty books, to more compact advertisements containing about six books which were invariably by the same author or on the same subject. Although this meant there was more duty to pay, it enabled greater clarity of presentation and the accommodation of more customers. Advertisements for property, headed "sales by auction," were even more numerous than those for books, and the best example of what Daniel Stuart called "cloud" or "swarm" advertising; sometimes one auctioneer might take up the whole of the back page, with more than forty notices. The two most disreputable kinds of advertisements were those for medicines and lottery offices. In the mid-eighteenth

1.) Gentleman's Magazine July 1838 pp. 25-6.

century Dr. Johnson had criticised newspaper advertisers for exaggerating, trivialising, or being irresponsible or polemical, but not for being indecent or fraudulent.¹ The growth in the number of women readers, and perhaps the evangelical movement, probably contributed to greater respectability in advertising, as in the press in general.² Medicinal advertisements were never classified under a heading in the Chronicle doubtless because Perry preferred not to draw attention to them, and during the nineteenth century notices of cures for "Diseases which solitary vice or prevalent Gaieties have unfortunately induced" were increasingly relegated to the back page. It is possible that the public became sceptical of the quack's claims, for the long list of alleged testimonials from satisfied customers was dropped from advertisements, though this was probably due primarily to pressure on space. Lottery advertisements were also sometimes fraudulent, and in May 1792 a bill had to be passed indemnifying printers who had inadvertently inserted illegal notices. Although these kinds

1.) "Art of Advertising" The Idler no. 40. 20 Jan. 1759, pp. 224-29. But in the 1760s advertisements "of an indelicate or immoral tendency" had been excluded from the Public Ledger (B.B. Elliott, History of English Advertising (1962) p. 108).

2.) A.S. Collins, "The growth of the Reading Public during the Eighteenth Century" Review of English Studies ii. Oct. 1926. pp. 430-2.

of advertisements made incongruous reading in a serious political newspaper, they were too valuable a source of income to be relinquished, from the point of view of both journalists and the government. Cobbett was told that by excluding quack advertisements from the Porcupine he would lose £500 a year,¹ while the government benefited from the tax imposed on medicines in 1783, and the income from lotteries helped ease its temporary shortages of cash. Perry showed a sense of moral purpose in his advertising policy when he warned customers "We are always desirous of recommending the use of manufactures on the consumption of which the bread of thousands may depend; but we cannot incur the expense of advertising articles of mere fashion and fancy for the use of which only a few individuals are to be benefited".² This claim looks unimpressive in the light of the number of advertisements in the Chronicle for inessential goods and services, but such notices could be justified by their considerable entertainment as well financial value. Lord Milton wrote to his father from Naples in 1818 that he was missing the portrayal of English life in the press: "we laugh at all the tittle tattle of the

1.) Melville, Life and Letters of William Cobbett i. 124.

It was argued in 1824 that a good reason for reducing the stamp and advertisement duties was to free newspapers from financial dependence on the notices of quacks and frauds, so that they would then be able to criticise such trickery. (The Periodical Press (1824) pp. 60-4).

2.) MC 28 Dec. 1793.

newspapers, at the advertisements for the lottery, patent blacking... dinners &c; but if the newspapers were deprived of all this nonsense & reduced to the paragraphs w[hi]ch announce great public events, they w[oul]d go a very little way towards presenting their readers with an idea of the English world, & the incessant motion & activity by which it is distinguished from others." ¹ The press was particularly useful as a medium for obtaining servants, for though it was less effective than private recommendation, it was better than register offices which according to Perry attracted the lowest sort of servants corrupted by town life. Perry emphasised that advertisements in the Chronicle would not be answered by profligate servants, because his avoidance of scandal meant that it was not one of those papers "read only in the coffee-houses, and in the first floors of Marybone," and he offered to receive servants' replies at his office, so that he could forward to the advertiser only those that were respectable.² Theatre advertisements were a constant feature in the Chronicle (except during the mourning for George iii) and during the early 1790s both their position and price reflected the old natural harmony of interests between newspapers and the stage. They were inserted at the top of the first column on the front page, and although theatres were no longer paid by newspapers for their playbills, their

1.) Milton to Fitzwilliam, 25 Dec. 1818, Fitzwilliam MSS. N.R.O. box 94.

2.) MC 18 Mar. 1791.

advertisements were charged only the duty, such was their news value, particularly when they contained cast lists. This special treatment did not however last for long. In 1794 Perry followed John Walter of The Times in printing the theatrical notices on the inner pages, at the head of the society column, so that their late hour of arrival at the printing office would not delay the outer pages' time of going to press.¹ In 1807 the theatrical announcements were without explanation relegated to a position at the end of the fashionable column, and in 1809 Perry again followed The Times in charging the full price for the advertisements instead of just the duty, thereby confirming the end of the old corrupt relationship between the press and the theatre.² Perry was not sorry to see the break-down of this old relationship, for in 1808 he told Thomas Sheridan, the new manager of the Drury Lane theatre, that the free admission of journalists to theatres "must be abolished and the intercourse put on a new footing. I for one" he added "certainly do not use the cards that were presented to me six times in a Season; and yet almost every night I have an advertisement sent me from the Theatre, not only to be inserted gratis, but which also compromises the character of the paper about every thing

1.) MC 15 Sept. 1794; History of The Times i.35. The outer forme went to press early so that there would be time to compose and print the inner forme, containing the latest news, in duplicate.

2.) The Times charged full prices in 1807 (Ibid.i. 93-4); MC 10 Nov. 1807.

that is brought out. It will be essentially better for both of us to put an end to this pitiful arrangement, and resolve in future to pay for admission to Each other's premises."¹

Announcements of births, marriages and deaths, which originated in the press in the opposite order to which they occur in life, were a lucrative form of advertising, because even though they might take up only two lines, and be inserted on the third page, they were charged at the basic rate of a front page advertisement. Perry often charged for the announcements if they were just statements of fact, with no complementary remarks on the parties concerned; this was a duty-free source of income, since the Stamp Office could not identify a mere announcement as an advertisement.²

Another opportunity for avoiding, without evading, duty arose through the insertion of puffs. Puffs were usually identified by the Stamp Office, but sometimes advertising receipts of several pounds were registered on the office copies of the Chronicle when the number of advertisements was given as nil. Although Perry is rightly remembered by historians of the press for his integrity, he followed the standards of his time in allowing the insertion of puffs which were disguised as news items or reviews. The two main methods of puffing were by inserting an article in the body of the paper,

1.) Perry to T. Sheridan, 30 April 1808, Add. MSS. 42,720 f.121.

2.) Thus the number of advertisements written on the office copies of the Chronicle, which was the number liable to duty, was sometimes less than the actual number of advertisements charged. (e.g. MC 25 Feb. 1809).

apart from the advertising columns, and by using the editorial "we" to recommend the item concerned. The assumption underlying this was of course that just as the political opinions of an editor had more authority if he were independent of political patronage, so praise for something had more influence if it were the opinion of the editor rather than of the advertiser representing a vested interest. Also a notice was more likely to catch the eye of the reader if inserted among the news items. Puffing was the nearest Perry came to corrupt practices; its justification was its profitability, for small puffs were charged about 10/6, compared to 6/- for a small front page advertisement. The development of independent theatrical criticism in the press was followed by an increasing unwillingness to accept puffs. In 1815 Perry said he was constantly offered money for the insertion of letters and paragraphs which if accepted would expose him "to the imputation of venality," and in 1821 he said "We never presume to alter any MS. except where we should be... made to recommend to the public what we know nothing about- a practice...adopted by puffing Advertisers, but which is too insidious for the Morning Chronicle to sanction."¹ Perry could afford to relinquish puffs, for like government advertisements, they comprised only a negligible proportion of the total advertising income, and might during the parliamentary session involve the sacrifice of regular customers' notices.

1.) MC 8 June 1815; 27 April 1821.

A feature of advertising that seems at first surprising in this period is the lack of development in the advertisements' design and classification. The absence of any elaborate designs, such as the woodcuts that embellished early eighteenth century advertisements, was largely the result of two factors: by the late eighteenth century the editors and proprietors of newspapers were no longer primarily printers or booksellers interested in typography, but professional journalists to whom the physical appearance of a paper was of subsidiary interest; and secondly, the growing pressure on space entailed the use of small type and close-set printing, with the minimum of capital letters and headlines. Less easily explained is the lack of classification when an ordered layout had the obvious advantages of clarity of presentation, and easy reference by the reader. Hazlitt commended "An appearance of conscious dignity" in the Chronicle, which "is kept up, even in the Advertisements, where a principle of proportion and separate grouping is observed." He thought this avoided the incongruity involved in juxtaposing an advertisement for a book and one for a servant.¹ But although advertisements for books, auctions and places were classified under a heading by the early nineteenth century, there was no attempt to

1.) Edinburgh Review xxxviii. May 1823 p. 361.

sort out the miscellaneous and trade advertisements, and it is possible that Perry thought readers enjoyed the variety of a jumbled mixture.¹ A better sense of presentation was shown by the advertisers themselves in their use of various means to attract the reader's attention. Apart from advertising en masse, a favourite device was to use a heading that had no relationship to the commodity in question, so that an advertisement which began with "England expects that every man will do his duty," would go on to explain that his most pressing duty was to buy a ticket at Bish's lottery office.² If an advertisement expressed an argument, it might be presented in the form of a letter, and there were frequent attempts to disguise advertisements as letters in order to avoid paying for them.³ Advertisers might also be unscrupulous in associating their article with a famous name, as when the Duke of Sussex was eulogised as a patron of the Macassar hair oil, but such occasions were rare.⁴

1.) John Bell, who was a printer and bookseller before he became a newspaper proprietor, had a methodical classification of advertisements ahead of his time in the Universal Advertiser (Prince, op.cit. Business History July 1969 p.99).

2.) MC 21 Jan. 1806.

3.) During the food shortage in 1795 Perry said that many of the articles he received recommending substitutes for flour were only advertisements for these substitutes (MC 15 July 1795).

4.) MC 31 Jan. 1814.

Although Perry's profits from advertisements made the Chronicle a lucrative business venture, they were gained partly at the expense of the paper's effectiveness as a whig party organ. Perry was as much ^{an} ardent Foxite as he was a businessman, and was keenly aware of the irresolvable conflict between political news and advertisements for the limited space available in the paper. Early in his career he had acknowledged that a demand for advertisements came not only from advertisers but from readers. In replying to complaints that the whole paper was devoted to debates he affirmed that "the Notices of the Spectacles for the Day- the New Publications, and other temporary Advertisements are all objects coveted by different descriptions of readers."¹ At the same time Perry regarded the Chronicle as primarily a political and literary newspaper, and when forced to raise its price in 1794 to cover the increase in the paper duty, he asserted that the alternatives "to abridge our expence in the collection of intelligence, or allot a greater space daily to advertisements" were "expedients that must have demolished the character of the Paper."² From the point of view of the leading whigs Perry was clearly obliged to give priority to reports of their speeches over the increase of his profits and the satisfaction of his advertising customers and readers. Sometimes, particularly during the

1.) MC 27 Feb. 1792.

2.) MC 18 April 1794.

1790s, Perry would mention that he had sacrificed the advertisements to the debates, but it is unlikely that this entailed much loss of income since an exceptionally large amount of space could be given to advertisements the following day, as on one occasion in 1797 when they took up over three-quarters of the paper.¹ During the latter part of Perry's career the whigs became increasingly critical of the amount of space he allotted to advertisements. As early as 1808 George Ponsonby complained that the Chronicle was "but little conducive to the Political interests of our friends. It seem'd to be wholly devoted to Advertisements."² At the beginning of 1816, when the whigs were arousing public opinion against the property tax, Grey wished there was some paper "not full only of advertizements except when articles are sent to it, and reluctantly inserted," and he exclaimed to Lady Holland "Is it not too bad in Perry upon such an occasion as this not to abstain from filling his paper with advertizements."³ With the opening of the parliamentary session in 1817 Brougham begged Perry to sacrifice his advertisements for a report of the debate on the amendment to the address, with the result that Perry, according to Lady Holland, was mortally offended.⁴

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- 1.) MC 18 May 1797, after 10 columns of debates on 16 and 17 May.
 - 2.) Ponsonby to Grey, 23 Oct. 1808, Grey MSS.
 - 3.) Grey to Lady Holland, 21, 25 Feb. 1816, Add. MSS. 51,553 ff. 35, 37.
 - 4.) Lady Holland to Francis Horner, 25 Jan. 1817, Add. MSS. 51,644 f.116.

Such pleas from the whigs were clearly ineffective for in March 1817 they attempted to establish the Guardian, in order to have, as Brougham said, a party organ "that gives the debates, especially the latter parts of them, and that won't be loaded with advertisements."¹ Nor was it only debates which Perry was inclined to sacrifice to commercial matter: Mary Russell Mitford observed how he fumed at Hazlitt's theatrical criticisms which took up so much space at the height of the advertising season.² It is difficult to explain why Perry was prepared to maximise his profits to the point of incurring the displeasure of the whigs. With an income of ten to twelve thousand pounds from his advertisements he could have well afforded to sacrifice them occasionally, and it is unlikely that a tactfully thorough coverage of debates at important moments would have upset the balance of the paper from the point of view of the general reader. The reason may partly lie in Perry's tendency to underestimate his true wealth which made him exaggerate the importance of his advertising revenue. It is also probable that he simply took a lower view of the importance of the whigs' speeches than they did themselves, as indicated by his reference to "the disgusting, though necessary, reports of parliamentary chattering."³

1.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 299.

2.) Christie, Myth and Reality p. 356.

3.) Ibid. pp. 355, 358

Perhaps the main explanation, though, is that Perry knew that he was giving no more space to advertisements in 1816-17 than he had at the beginning of the century, and that the whigs' criticisms of him were largely unjustified. The proportion of the Chronicle given to advertisements remained after 1800 at about 50%,¹ and the great increase in profits was owing not to the sacrifice of other material, but to the facts that advertisements became smaller and the size of the paper was increased by 25% in 1810. Where Perry erred was in failing to give a special priority to debates on particular occasions. It might have been some consolation to him that the status he achieved partly through his advertising profits warranted him a place in the Directory for 1817 among the nobility and gentry, whereas his most mordant critic, Brougham, and his chief rival, John Walter ii, were confined to the category of trades and professions.²

1.) The proportion given to advertisements in 1798 was 50%; in 1807 slightly higher at 53% because of the general election; in 1808, when Ponsonby criticised Perry, 50.5%; and in 1816, when criticism became general, 50%. The proportion was slightly higher during the parliamentary session, as in 1816 when it was 55%, but this was little more than the proportion during the session of 1792-3, 52.5%. (Figures calculated to nearest 0.5%).

2.) [Thomas Underhill]: Triennial Directory 1817-19.

APPENDIX ACosts of Production

The breakdown of daily costs in 1794 was as follows:

	£	s	d
Stamp duty of 2d on 1,000 sheets	8	6	8
Excise duty on same		10	6
Paper	1	10	
Printing	5		
Intelligence	3	3	
			<hr/>
	18	10	2
Sale of 1,000 papers, 26 for 7/-	13	9	3
			<hr/>
Daily loss on 1,000	5	0	11

Perry thought the estimate of Intelligence at 18 guineas a week was modest, since French papers alone had cost nearly £700 in 1793. This expense may have been inflated by the exceptional importance of the news in that year, for Cobbett thought in 1809 that foreign papers cost a daily newspaper between £200 and £300 a year. (Political Register 4 Mar. 1809 col. 348). John Bell put the cost of printing and intelligence slightly higher than Perry at 6 guineas and £5 per day respectively. (Oracle 21 April 1794). In 1797 The Times was printed at the cost of nearly £6 per day, and its intelligence and literary expenses cost over £4 per day. (History of The Times i. 39-41).

In 1809 it was estimated that costs had risen since 1797 by as much as 80% for types, 50% for paper, 35% for printing ink, and 10% for journeymen's wages. (Morning Post 20 May 1809, British Press 22 May 1809).

In 1815 it was claimed that a morning paper might cost as much as £150 per week to produce (Morning Herald 3 June 1815), compared to Perry's estimate in 1797 of about £100 (MC 13 June 1797). Debates alone cost between £40 and £60 per week. (MC 2 June 1815).

APPENDIX B

Year	Number of ads.	Gross Receipts			Duty			Jan.-June	
		£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s
1798	22,869	7,328	10	0	3,430	7	0	2,219	12
1799	23,359	7,484	19	0	3,503	17	0	2,132	0
1800	25,943	8,177	4	6	3,891	9	0	2,279	4
1801	-								
1802	13,256	4,641	3	0	1,988	8	0		
1803	-								
1804	-								
1805	15,814	5,415	8	0	2,372	2	0		
1806	33,428	12,208	16	6	5,014	4	0	3,310	1
1807	15,272	5,639	6	0	2,290	16	0		
1808	15,062	5,855	14	6	2,259	16	0		
1809	14,174	5,410	13	6	2,126	2	0	3,284	11
1810	-								
1811	17,708	7,244	17	6	2,656	4	0		
1812	-								
1813	22,107	9,048	0	0	3,316	1	0	5,731	19
1814	18,185	7,832	12	0	2,727	15	0		
1815	-								
1816	17,017	8,230	10	0	2,977	19	6		
1817	21,492	10,198	12	0	3,761	2	0	6,437	10
1818	18,329	8,754	3	6	3,207	11	6		
1819	41,047	19,605	3	0	7,183	4	6	6,826	16
1820	21,547	11,115	19	0	3,770	14	6	7,345	4
1821	20,626	9,853	17	6	3,609	11	0	6,244	6
1795	8,835	2,917	4	0	1,325	5	0	1,591	19

The average percentage increase per year 1800-1806 was 11.3% ; for 1806-1819 it was only 5.8%. This is explained by the rise in the Chronicle's circulation after its depression in the late 1790s to about 4,000 in 1807; after 1807 it stabilised at between 3-4,000.

APPENDIX CGovernment Advertisements

The number of government advertisements inserted in the Morning Chronicle for each year during a period of twenty-five years, 1797-1821, is as follows:

1797	94	1810	361
1798	79	1811	660
1799	23	1812	713
1800	45	1813	479
1801	90	1814	387
1802	134	1815	327
1803	393	1816	328
1804	419	1817	357
1805	112	1818	336
1806	609	1819	369
1807	666	1820	232
1808	535	1821	268
1809	370		

Discrimination against the Chronicle was exercised mainly through the Stamp Office May 1798-1800; and through the Victualling Office in 1805, and 14 June 1809 - 10 Sept. 1810.

Discrimination in favour of the Chronicle was exercised mainly through the Ordnance Office 18 Mar. 1806 - 23 Mar. 1807.

CHAPTER FIVE1813-1821

Much of the evidence concerning the latter years of Perry's career presents a picture of decline. As a party organ the Chronicle came to be regarded as inadequate by the three main groups of the whigs. The Grenvilles disliked Perry's opposition to the restoration of the Bourbons; the main body of the whigs resented his failure adequately to defend them from the attacks of the ministerial and radical press, and his remissness in canvassing political issues; and the more left-wing whigs were dissatisfied with the moderation of his support for the Regent's wife, both in 1813-14 and in 1820. Discontent with Perry's coverage of the debates became such that the whigs actually established a new party paper in 1817, though it rapidly failed. Under Black's editorship from 1817, the Chronicle became increasingly less useful to the party, and for a few years before Perry's death several whigs expressed a preference for other papers such as The Times or the evening Traveller. Perry's waning interest in his career as a journalist had been apparent as early as 1807, and it was reflected in 1813 in his failure to acquire steam presses for the production of the Chronicle. Nevertheless, despite these shortcomings, the Chronicle remained the second highest-selling daily paper during the decade after 1812, and Perry continued active,

in at least a presidial role, until four months before his death. His consistent advocacy of whig principles ensured that the Chronicle retained its position, in the public eye, as the leading opposition newspaper, and though there is little evidence concerning its general contributors in these years, it continued to be admired for the quality of its miscellaneous features.

On the central questions after 1815 of retrenchment, parliamentary reform, and the danger from radicalism, Perry continued to take a position which was sometimes to the left of the central body of the whigs under Grey, Ponsonby and Tierney. Before 1815, politics were dominated by the question of the war, and the government's military successes gave Perry little opportunity to canvass popular causes. He appears to have been rather dissatisfied with the whigs' lack of exertion against the government: on the meeting of parliament at the end of 1812 he remarked that the whigs had not prepared any concerted amendment to the address "as was always practised in the best times of Parliamentary discussion."¹ In mid-1813 he commented on the opposition's "long silence" on foreign policy, and though he thought this might be ascribed to popular apathy, he affirmed that "no torpor nor indifference in the constituent body can be a sufficient argument for supineness in the representative;" and in the following year he deplored the facility with which the whigs

1.) MC 30 Nov. 1812.

had yielded to an adjournment of parliament.¹ But Perry himself made some concessions to the popular support for the war. He showed a notable restraint early in 1813 in arguing, that while it was desirable that peace should be negotiated after Bonaparte's return from Russia, it was imprudent to petition for peace lest it weaken the government's bargaining position.² When the Regent announced at the opening of parliament at the end of the year that the war was being fought for the independence of nations, Perry was quick to give ministers credit for their professed intentions. He contrasted Liverpool favourably with Pitt, and looked forward to a war fought on "true Whig principles." Ministers were praised for the moderation of the allies' Frankfurt proposals, which were welcomed as embodying the policy "which the Whigs of England, the unfashionable whigs, have so strenuously recommended."³ Holland rightly observed that Perry was making the Frankfurt declaration seem more explicit than it really was, and Perry does not appear to have realised that Castlereagh disapproved of the terms until the ministerial press persisted in taking a belligerent attitude towards France.⁴ When it was clear that the allies intended to

1.) MC 5 May 1813, 4 Mar. 1814.

2.) MC 18 Jan., 3 April, 17 May 1813.

3.) MC 5, 9, 23 Nov., 18, 21 Dec. 1813.

4.) Holland to Grey, 18 Dec. 1813, Add. MSS. 51,545 f.127; MC 11, 12, Feb. 1814. The Morning Post supported peace, but other ministerial papers were war-like.

conquer France, Perry resumed a partisan opposition to the war, just as he had done during the Peninsular war. In March 1814 he said that the allies would clearly have to negotiate peace, and somewhat smugly claimed that he had been a couple of months ahead of public opinion in recognising that a complete victory could not be obtained; only a month later he had to report the "unlooked-for news" of the capitulation of Paris.¹ In June 1815 he confidently asserted that it was a delusion to think that France, fighting for her independence, could be defeated in one campaign; but a week later he had to announce the outcome of Waterloo. Even after the battle he maintained that the allies still faced an arduous task, and three days later had to admit surprise at the news of Bonaparte's abdication.² Although the Grenvilles supported the restoration of the Bourbons maintained by an army of occupation, Perry openly advocated the view of the majority of whigs that war should not have been renewed against Bonaparte after his return from Elba, and that there should be no intervention in France's form of government.³ Thomas Grenville had complained in 1814 of the "objectionable tone and language" of the

1.) MC 1, 3 Mar., 6 April 1814.

2.) MC 14, 22, 23, 26 June 1815. He surprisingly expected the French army to remain loyal to the Bourbons in March. (MC 20 Mar. 1815).

3.) MC 17 Mar., 14 April, 28 June 1815.

Chronicle on the question of the Bourbons, which he thought was being dictated to Perry by part of the opposition, but there is no reason to doubt that Perry's opinions were genuinely his own.¹

With the coming of peace, the chief issue with which the whigs identified themselves was that of retrenchment. Perry consistently supported this cause, in its various forms, with vigour and enthusiasm, and he would have appreciated that it was the best question with which to associate the whigs. Although the Grenvilles were unsympathetic to it, the party was more united on economy than on parliamentary reform; this was more likely than reform or emancipation to attract the support of independents and waverers; and it held out the prospect not only of alleviating distress and reducing taxation, but of diminishing the influence of the crown. Moreover, it would particularly have appealed to Perry as reviving the traditions of his formative experiences during the early 1780s. For propaganda purposes, Perry attributed the post-war distress not to a general economic depression but almost entirely to extravagant expenditure, for which retrenchment was the decisive solution. "For all our ills retrenchment is the panacea" he claimed "and by those retrenchments, instantaneous

1.) H.M.C. Dropmore x. 371; MC 22, 24 Jan. 1814. Perry was prepared to accept the Bourbons if the constitution were similar to that of 1791. (MC 14 April 1814).

relief would be given to the starving population." It was argued that the ministerial papers, in attributing distress to a decline in trade and bad harvests, were ascribing it to "any other cause, no matter what, rather than the true one - a want of more frugal management at home!"¹ Perry occasionally showed himself rather more forward than the whigs in supporting all forms of economy. In mid-1814, when the government's position had been strengthened by the success of the war, Perry appealed, in strong tones for a Foxite, for the public to put pressure on the Commons: "It is idle to hope any thing from the House of Commons. That House is liberal enough in its professions as long as they go to nothing more than general principles; but when it becomes necessary to give effect to those principles... the House of Commons becomes as a dead body.... The people, therefore,...must look to THEMSELVES for the remedy."² Later in the year it was urged on several occasions that nothing would prevent the continuation of the property tax "but public meetings, strong resolutions and peremptory instructions to members from every independent district."³ After 1815, when support for retrenchment became widespread, such appeals to public opinion became less necessary, but Perry occasionally attempted to prod the whigs forward. Before the beginning of

1.) MC 1, 6 Aug., 15 July 1816.

2.) MC 18 July 1814.

3.) MC 26 Oct., 17 Nov. 1814, 3 Jan. 1815.

the parliamentary session in January 1817, for example, he urged them to make a specific declaration: "The public have a right to demand of those who hold themselves out as the advocates of the people, what they will do...general professions of economy will not now avail- they must descend to particulars... if every thing is to be asked from the people and no sacrifice to be made to them, they will be compelled to look to other leaders"¹ When a grant was given to one of the royal dukes in 1821 it was remarked that "we lament to see the names of many of the Opposition members in the Majority for giving arrears to the Duke of Clarence."²

A characteristic feature of Perry's advocacy of retrenchment was the emphasis he placed on its constitutional as well as economic implications. His chief objection to the property tax was the "inquisitorial rigour" with which it was collected, which meant that "in a constitutional point of view, it is even more objectionable than as a measure of finance; for its operation in increasing the influence of the Crown may easily be conceived, where such latitude is given for favour or oppression."³ Perry also, in common with the many public meetings that were held against the property tax early in 1816, linked the tax with the old bogey of a standing army

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- 1.) MC 18 Jan.1817.
 - 2.) MC 20 June 1821.
 - 3.) MC 26 Oct.1814,3 Feb.1816.

in peace-time. "In fact" he said "they go together; for it is only by perpetuating the Income Tax, that a Military Government can be established, to the overthrow of the Constitution."¹ It appears that Perry supported retrenchment as much to preserve the constitution as to alleviate distress. In addition to supporting a reduction in taxation, public expenditure, and the size of the army, he also called for the abolition of useless sinecures and places, not because he thought this would save much money, since they were usually paid for by fees, but because they were a means of corrupting members to support the government. This was the one type of parliamentary reform to which Perry thought no man dare publicly object, and he supported it as the prerequisite of other reforms in language which, as Sir Robert Wilson noted, was very unequivocal: "the reform of Parliament, the retrenchment of public expence, the reduction of the army, and the responsibility of Ministers would all follow from the abolition of sinecures and useless places." "Take from Ministers the means of corrupting Members, by forcing upon them strict and universal economy, and you will do all that is necessary to your own relief."² Such exaggeration was of course good propaganda, but it does indicate how Perry persisted in ascribing ministerial majorities to corruption,

1.) MC 21,28 Feb.1816.

2.) Wilson to Grey, 8 Nov. 1816, Add.MSS. 30,121 f.201; MC 8 Nov.,22 Mar. 1816.

rather than to the support of public opinion, just as he had attributed the exclusion of the whigs from office to the machinations of secret advisers, rather than to the real opinions of the monarch.

When the post-war distress led to a revival of radical activity and a growing demand for parliamentary reform, Perry showed himself to be more sympathetic to reform than the moderate whigs. Early in 1817 Grey and Ponsonby were unwilling to take the lead of the moderate reformers and make it a party question, but Perry had already raised the question a year earlier when he had attempted to capitalise on the defeat of the property tax in March 1816. He thought the successful campaign against the tax had shown the power of public opinion, "Hence the people must see the value and importance of their own decision, and... the advantages that would result from the frequency of popular elections... by the re-establishment of triennial parliaments."¹ Reform was presented as the only way of achieving real retrenchment, and at the end of 1816 it was even suggested in a couple of articles that not only should parliaments be more frequent, but that the franchise should be extended, and that the Commons was in much the same condition as in 1790 when "seats for Legislation were as notoriously rented and

1.) MC 20 Mar. 1816. For the attitudes of the whigs in this period, see Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition 1815-30.

bought as standings for cattle at a fair."¹ It is unlikely that Perry himself wrote these articles, for they were not presented as editorials, and he would not have subscribed to Tooke's description of the Commons. The general tone was more moderate: the respectable tradition of Sir George Savile and Dunning was invoked as an example; triennial parliaments, the transfer of seats, the exclusion of some 40 placemen, and the extension of the franchise to householders in close corporations were the only measures advocated; and Perry refused to insert a letter from Thomas Hardy supporting reform.² Perry's chief motives in advocating reform at this time were probably to gain popularity for the whigs, and to diminish the influence of the radicals, thereby depriving the government of an excuse for implementing repressive measures. Perry made it clear that he had no sympathy for the radicals' proposals, which only tended to discredit the cause of moderate reform, and his opinion would have been fortified by the shattering of some of the windows of the Chronicle office after the Spa-Fields

1.) MC 22, 28 Oct. 1816. This was a quotation from Tooke's petition on the Westminster election of 1790.

2.) MC 12, 27 Dec. 1816; Hardy to Place, 9 Nov. 1816, Add. MSS. 37,949 f.41. The letter had been published in the Statesman on 6 Nov., but this copy does not survive. Shelley thought it worth sending a copy of his reform proposals to Perry, as well as to the editors of the Independent Whig and Statesman (Jones, Letters of Shelley i. 532-4).

meeting of November 1816. Hunt was condemned as an "extravagant maniac," fit for a strait-jacket, and universal suffrage was deplored as ruining the landed interest, and thereby the constitution; "if universal suffrage is to be established, farewell the balanced system that tends to uphold every thing in its place."¹ Although the whigs did not come forward as a party on reform, Perry affirmed that it was they "who from station, character and wealth, can alone direct the tide of public opinion within its proper bounds."²

The failure of the whigs to direct opinion did not deter Perry from continuing his support of reform in 1817. He was less alarmed than most whigs by the radical threat, as he had been in 1810, and he thought the best means of curbing it was by reform rather than repression. After the suspension of habeas corpus, the majority of whigs supported the seditious meetings bill, but Perry opposed it; and after over twenty whigs had voted against Burdett's motion for a committee on the state of the representation in May, Perry openly lamented the fact and asked if the efforts of the opposition would ever avail "while the defective state of the representation is upheld, and even regarded as sacred?"³ In the event of an election, Perry

1.) MC 16 Nov. 1816, 31 Jan., 3, 13, 17 Feb. 1817.

2.) MC 11 Feb. 1817.

3.) MC 31 Mar., 21, 22 May 1817.

urged that reform should, along with opposition to a renewal of the property tax, be made a test of every candidate.¹ The riots which alarmed many whigs were to Perry no more than "the mad projects of a few starving wretches... wandering about for employment," and it was suggested that it was sinecurists and placemen, rather than those convicted at the Derby treason trials, who "may be considered as the real traitors to the State, when we reflect upon the miseries and sufferings occasioned by the taxes."² Perry was not afraid to associate himself with the more respectable radicals when he agreed with them on a particular issue. During the winter of 1817-18 he appeared at public meetings in the company of such as Burdett, Cochrane and Waithmann to organise subscriptions for the journalist William Hone, and for the victims of the suspension of habeas corpus; and he proposed an address of thanks to Burdett for his exertions on behalf of the liberty of the press.³

After the Peterloo massacre in 1819, the editorials in the Chronicle, which were mostly written by Black but which would have reflected Perry's opinions, gave immediate support for the calling of public meetings. Whigs such as Grey and Holland were at first

1.) MC 16 April 1817. Tests were again advocated in 1818. (MC 10 June 1818).

2.) MC 14 June, 1 Aug., 21 Oct. 1817.

3.) MC 30 Dec. 1817, 4 Feb. 1818.

afraid that issues other than Peterloo might be raised at the meetings which would exacerbate the party's disunity, and it was not until over a month after the massacre that most whigs followed Fitzwilliam's example and began to organise meetings. Perry and Black, on the other hand, called for meetings only four days after the massacre, and hoped that Burdett's example in summoning a Westminster meeting "will be followed from one end of the kingdom to another." Men of property were warned that if meetings were not held "A line of perpetual separation must be drawn between the different classes of the community. It will be in vain to preach... obedience to the laws to those who look up to them without hope of protection."¹ The conductors of the Chronicle attempted to appease whig scruples by reprobating the introduction of proposals for reform at the Westminster meeting as likely to cause disunity among the critics of Peterloo,² but it appears that Perry really wished that the whigs would take up the cause of reform. Lambton reported at the beginning of 1819 that Perry had told him that people were disappointed that explicit support had not been given to triennial parliaments at the Newcastle Fox dinner, which suggests that this was Perry's own opinion.³ While Perry was anxious not to embarrass the whigs, some

1.) MC 20, 25, 30 Aug. 1819.

2.) MC 3, 4 Sept. 1819.

3.) Lambton to Grey, 14 Jan. 1819, Grey MSS. B.4. vol.i.

doubt was cast in the Chronicle on the sincerity of the moderate reformers after Peterloo, and it was said that "It is not one of the least of the misfortunes of the present day, that men of property are afraid to come forward and assist in carrying those moderate plans of Reform, which alone can avert the threatened ruin from one quarter, least they should give strength to an enemy which seems to menace it from another."¹ Such promptings became unnecessary once the whigs had declared for moderate reform at the beginning of the parliamentary session in November, and thereafter the editorials in the Chronicle took on a more subdued tone. During the passing of the six acts, the whigs were divided on the degree of coercion or conciliation required, but Perry and Black made no remarks which would have annoyed the more conservative whigs, and they concentrated mostly on opposing the measures against the press.

As in earlier years, Perry had less to say on the other chief issue with which the whigs were associated, catholic emancipation, than he did on parliamentary reform or retrenchment. It was not a question on which public opinion could be aroused against the government, and Perry's chief concern was to stress that it was better to gain a measure of partial relief, than to risk alienating moderate opinion by pressing for complete emancipation. Catholic extremists who opposed Grattan's relief bill in 1813 were attacked for playing

1.) MC 2, 21 Sept. 1819.

into the hands of ministers, and it was affirmed that damage to the cause of eventual emancipation was "most likely to originate with men who profess such ardent friendship for the Catholics, that they will accept nothing short of simple repeal."¹ Perry's general attitude towards the prospect of emancipation was one of guarded optimism. Provided the Catholics conducted themselves with moderation, it was but a matter of time until the public's prejudices gave way to reason. The danger of an anti-Catholic election campaign was still envisaged in 1817, but the narrow defeat of Grattan's motion in 1819 was welcomed as showing that the "vision of a No Popery Administration is for ever dispelled."² A more pessimistic note, perhaps the result of Black's influence, was struck in 1821 when support was given to O'Connell's view that no concessions could be gained from an unreformed parliament. This briefly changed to a more optimistic tone on the introduction of Plunkett's relief bill, but after the defeat of the bill it was affirmed that there could be no relief until there was a change of ministers.³

It is apparent from Perry's advocacy of reform in 1816-17, and 1819, that he remained broadly faithful to the reforming traditions of his days as a member of the Friends of the People. Unlike other

1.) MC 13 May 1813; 4 Mar., 11 May, 29 July 1813.

2.) MC 2 June, 10, 11 July 1817, 4, 5 May 1819.

3.) MC 13 Jan., 2, 12 Mar., 19 April 1821.

old members such as Grey and Lauderdale, he did not become more conservative with age, or more cautious in the face of radical activity during the post-war distress. Though radicals liked to deride Perry as just another borough-monger, he maintained the character of the Chronicle as a reforming whig newspaper. As a party organ, however, intended to serve the interests of the whigs, the Chronicle came to be regarded as increasingly unsatisfactory in the eyes of the whig leaders. One of Perry's chief shortcomings was his failure adequately to defend the whigs against the ministerial Courier, which as an evening paper had a wide circulation throughout the country, and consistently sold over 5,000 copies a day after 1811. Its owner Daniel Stuart thought that it averaged a sale of 8,000 from 1812-15, and it rose to a peak of 10,000 before the battle of Waterloo.¹ Most of the criticism of Perry's remissness occurred between 1817 and '19, but as early as 1813 Grey had commented on Perry's failure to notice an instigation in the Courier to assassinate Napoleon; he complained of the Chronicle's "folly and flatness," and thought it "even more disgusting than the Courier."² A few days before the beginning of the parliamentary

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- 1.) Gentleman's Magazine May 1838 p. 490, Aug. 1838 pp. 125-6;
 J. Grant thought it averaged 10,000 for a time during the war, and once sold 16,500. (The Great Metropolis ii. 86).
- 2.) Grey to Lady Holland, 3 Dec. 1813, Add. MSS. 51,552 f.73.

session, in January 1817, Grey lamented the misrepresentation and discredit the whigs would suffer throughout the country "if we are to be constantly assailed by [the] Courier on one side and Cobbett on the other, without defence or answer," and he wished that "there was as much zeal amongst our friends to maintain our cause by means of the press as there is on the other." He wondered why Perry did not "fall without mercy" on an article in the Courier claiming that the dangers to the country were even greater than they had been in 1793.¹ The whigs attempted to remedy the Chronicle's deficiency in mid-1817 through their new paper, the Guardian, which gave, as Brougham said, "the very thing we are so much in want of, and which Perry gives us none of, viz. a short and plain but forcible answer to the attacks made on us by the Treasury papers." The Guardian, however, soon collapsed, and Wilson noted that the Courier would "again be allowed to run riot."² When a few months later Perry attacked the Courier for prejudging the accused at the Derby treason trials, Grey expressed his disgust at the Chronicle's "miserable tameness," and early in 1818 he thought

1.) Grey to Lady Holland, 12 Jan. 1817, Add. MSS. 51,553 f.75;
Grey to Wilson, 19 Jan. 1817, Grey MSS.

2.) Brougham to Grey, June 1817, Brougham MSS., quoted in Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 455; Wilson to Lambton, n.d. [1817], Lambton MSS.

Perry's defence of the Bishop of Llandaff against an attack in the Courier was "tame, flat and spiritless."¹ Shortly before the meeting of parliament in 1819, the Courier carried an ironical and effective leader misrepresenting Grey's speech at the Newcastle Fox dinner. A week passed with no riposte from the Chronicle, and Lambton eventually visited Perry to remonstrate with him, and give him a reply which he had written himself, which was immediately published; but it was too late to prevent Grey bitterly complaining that the effect of his speech had been destroyed by the Courier's misrepresentations, which had circulated uncontradicted throughout the country.²

Grey was also highly critical of Perry for not giving the whigs a stronger defence against the attacks of Cobbett. The whigs were extremely sensitive to Cobbett's invective because he attacked them on the point on which they were most vulnerable: their failure to have implemented substantial reforms during the Talents ministry. Their political tactics were influenced on several occasions by fear of what Cobbett might say. In 1809, for example, Thomas Grenville had hoped that a city meeting would not demand the removal of

1.) Grey to Wilson, 24 Oct. 1817, 19 Jan. 1818, Grey MSS.; Wilson to Grey, 17 Jan. 1818, Add. MSS. 30,122 ff. 146-7; MC 18, 20 Oct. 1817, 17 Jan. 1818; Courier 17 Oct. 1817, 15, 17 Jan. 1818. Grey also criticised Perry for not defending Lord Sefton against the Courier's abuse of his support for William Hone, but Sefton was vindicated in MC 19, 22 Jan. 1818.

2.) Lambton to Grey, 13-15 Jan. 1819, Grey MSS.B.4.vol.i.; Grey to Wilson, 16 Jan. 1819, Grey MSS.; Courier 6 Jan. 1819; MC 14, 15 Jan. 1819. Grey had argued that the government was attributing distress to moral decay, instead of the real cause of extravagance and corruption.

ministers, since it "would only bring out all the Cobbett slander upon all the public men of the country," and in 1811 Lauderdale had hoped that the Duke of York would be restored as commander-in-chief before the end of the parliamentary session, lest "the means of operating on the public mind will be in a manner surrendered into the hands of Cobbett & others who know very well how to make use of it."¹ In November 1816 Cobbett's Register was published at 2d, and had a sale of some 50,000; Henry White estimated that if the republication of Cobbett's writings in other papers was taken into account, he was read by about 300,000 people.² Grey was thus naturally alarmed at a "virulent" attack in the Register on the whigs, which incorrectly accused them of having joined with the tories in voting money for Pitt's monument, and recalled that during office they had raised the income tax and initiated the

1.) H.M.C. Dropmore ix.375; Aspinall, Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales vii. 337. C. Williams Wynn told T. Grenville that he hoped the question of Wellesley Pole's breach of privilege would not be raised on the first day of the session, since it would enable Cobbett to represent the House as preferring "punctilios" to national questions. (23 Dec. 1809, Add. MSS. 41,857 f.272.)

2.) MC 2 April 1817; White to Grey, 4 Jan. 1817, Grey MSS. Place thought the Register sold 60,000 in late 1816 (Add. MSS. 27,809 f.17), but Wilson must have been exaggerating when he told Grey that half a million copies of it had been distributed (8 Nov. 1816, Add. MSS. 30,121 f.201).

Orders in Council. He recognised that to answer Cobbett was "playing the game of the Ministers by diverting the War from them," but he thought that a refutation was the only way to save the whigs from being "run down in the Country in such a way as to deprive us of all credit," and he therefore sent an article discussing Cobbett's inconsistencies for publication in the Chronicle.¹ Perry had failed to notice Cobbett's attack on the whigs, and indeed after The Times had carried a long and powerful article against Cobbett, Perry published a letter criticising the editor of The Times for attacking Cobbett's inconsistency when he was himself inconsistent. There was much justification in Grey's complaint that Perry "thinks it of great importance to maintain Cobbett's credit with the Publick at this moment, but of none to suffer us to be run down & vilified."² Under pressure from Wilson and Grey, Perry published three replies to Cobbett, one of which showed by extracts from Cobbett's own version of the debates, that the whigs had not voted for a monument to Pitt.³ Grey, however, was not satisfied with Perry's efforts: "I never read any thing" he said "with more disgust than what Perry calls his answer to Cobbett in the Chronicle... If this is to be the sort of defence made for us, all I say is God defend me from such defenders."

1.) Grey to Wilson, 15 Nov. 1816, Grey MSS.; Political Register 9 Nov. 1816, col. 470.

2.) The Times 14 Nov. 1816; MC 16 Nov. 1816; Grey to Wilson, 19 Nov. 1816, Grey MSS.

3.) MC 19, 26, 28 Nov. 1816.

Grey thought a vindication of the whigs should have been followed by a "continuous fire" against Cobbett, "but" he added "I have no hope that Perry will do it. The truth is, he is afraid of Cobbett."¹ Grey was not alone in his view that it was essential to counter Cobbett; Allen complained that "No one answers him except the ministerial scribblers in the Times and Courier," and the Duke of Bedford thought it "certainly very essential to counteract the mischievous doctrines of Cobbett, which are doing the most extensive injury to genuine Whig Principles."² But Perry remained unco-operative, and the whigs had to suffer Cobbett's assaults until the suspension of habeas corpus early in 1817 prompted him to flee to America.

Another cause of the whigs' dissatisfaction with Perry was his failure to pay enough attention to various foreign and domestic issues. After the restoration of the Bourbons Wilson was particularly concerned that the Chronicle should be a source of encouragement to liberal opinion in France, and should take a strong line on such questions as the allies' interference in French domestic affairs, the treatment of Napoleon, the trial of Ney, and the persecution of protestants in the south of France. Wilson thought that what Perry said was "universally considered abroad to express the opinions of Opposition" and that therefore "There cannot be too much attention

1.) Grey to Wilson, 29 Nov., 1, 8 Dec. 1816, Grey MSS.

2.) Allen to Horner, 5 Dec. 1816, Horner MSS. vol.vii.f.234; Bedford to Grey, dated 8 Jan. 1816, but endorsed 1817, Grey MSS.

paid to the Conduct of the Chronicle henceforth. It may be made an engine of great power for there is a general disposition to give it thought."¹ At first, in August and September, Wilson was satisfied with Perry's efforts. Perry claimed that the Chronicle's liberal opinions had increased its circulation, and Wilson hoped that this would encourage him to maintain his improved tone.² But by October Wilson was complaining from France that Perry seemed "very ignorant of the state of public feeling at Paris." In November Grey said he despaired of much being achieved through the press during the recess, though he thought a great deal could be done, and he complained, with regard to events in France, that "Even the Courier seems to be more impressed with the injustice and faithlessness of the Government than the Morning Chronicle."³ Perry did in fact pay considerable attention to French affairs in November, comparing the Bourbons' government to Robespierre's reign of terror, supporting Ney, and advocating British intercession on behalf of the French protestants.⁴ He

1.) Wilson to Grey, 12 Oct., 14 Dec. 1815, Add. MSS. 30,120 ff. 251, 305. Napoleon in exile was anxious to read the Chronicle (Wilson to Grey, 19 Aug. 1816, Add. MSS. 30,121 f. 159; Lady Holland to Allen, 22 [Aug. 1816], Add. MSS. 52,172 f.102).

2.) Wilson to Grey, 26 Aug., 9 Sept. 1815, Add. MSS. 30,121 ff. 216, 226; MC 9 Sept. 1815.

3.) Wilson to Grey, 12 Oct. 1815, Ibid. f.251; Grey to Brougham, 13 Nov. 1815, Grey MSS.; Grey to Lady Holland, 26 Nov. 1815, Add. MSS. 51,552 f.131.

4.) MC 30 Oct., 4, 9, 11, 13, 16, 22, 23, 25, 28 Nov., 1, 12, 16 Dec. 1815

did not, however, directly criticise the British government for its involvement until as late as 23 November, and during December his efforts flagged, perhaps for fear that they would become repetitive to the majority of his readers. Wilson was very dissatisfied; he complained that of five state papers sent to Perry, only one had been published, and warned that such "apparent indifference chills the Zeal of Friends" since "many forbear interesting communications from a doubt of attention to them." By the end of December Wilson reported that "Perry greatly disappoints here He is daily more feeble and his support is daily more needed," and he suggested that in view of the Chronicle's inadequacy that articles in the Edinburgh Review should be printed in a French translation.¹ Grey agreed with Wilson's criticisms of Perry: "I am not surprised" he wrote "at your complaints of the Morning Chronicle. It is incorrigible and hopeless." Even when Perry refuted the Duke of Wellington's letter claiming that the French protestants were not being persecuted, and promised that "we shall resume this subject again and again, and will meet every effort to delude the public," Grey could only remark that Perry had not attacked the letter "with half the severity that it deserves."²

1.) Wilson to Grey, 14, 21, 28 Dec. 1815, Add. MSS. 30,120 ff. 304-5, 313, 320.

2.) Grey to Wilson, 31 Dec. 1815, Add. MSS. 30,108 f.69; Grey to Lady Holland, 12 Jan. 1816, Add. MSS. 51,553 f.3; MC 9, 11, 15 Jan. 1816.

Perry was also criticised by the whigs for not paying enough attention to domestic politics in the autumn of 1817. Grey was anxious that during the long parliamentary recess important questions should be kept before the public eye by means of the press so that a correspondingly anti-ministerial tone would be encouraged at public meetings; the suspension of habeas corpus, the use of government spies, the threat of a renewal of the property tax, and economy in general, all provided useful ammunition with which to attack the government.¹ But during August and September Perry had only two leaders on domestic affairs, whereas in August alone he had published over ten articles on Russo-Spanish relations and South America; Wilson described these as a series of "mad Tirades," written by a Spaniard who worked for the Chronicle.² Grey protested "I do wish that Perry instead of... his speculations on continental Politicks, about which nobody cares, & on which the Ministerial Papers must always have a great advantage, would attend to these topicks, on which the Publick feeling is really alive." In this case there was a positive response, for Wilson reported that "Perry is sensible of the advantages to be derived from your hints and promises to attend systematically."³ As a result there were ten

1.) Grey to Wilson, 10 Oct. 1817, Grey MSS.

2.) MC 4, 12-14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 28 Aug. 1817; Wilson to Grey, 28 Aug. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,122 f.20; Grey to Wilson, 23 Aug. 1817, Grey MSS.

3.) Grey to Wilson, 10 Oct. 1817, Grey MSS.; Wilson to Grey, 13 Oct. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,122 f.67.

leaders on domestic politics in the Chronicle in the last fortnight of October, compared to nine on foreign affairs, and a similar balance was maintained during November. Perry's endeavours, however, were short-lived. During the first three weeks of 1818 there was only one leader on home affairs, and Grey resumed his querulous tone: "Considering how near we are to the meeting of Parliament," he said "& how many subjects there are calling for discussion, the insipidity & nothingness of the Morning Chronicle are quite provoking."¹

While the most damaging criticisms of the Chronicle were made by Grey and Wilson, Perry also fell foul of other members of the party. Brougham was bitter about Perry's failures to attack Canning in 1814, to defend himself at the Westmorland election in 1818, and to champion the cause of the Princess of Wales in 1813-14, and later when she became Queen. In August 1814 Brougham tried to persuade Perry to attack Canning's acceptance of the Embassy at Lisbon as a betrayal of the Princess of Wales, but Perry said nothing about the matter apart from mentioning a rumour that Canning had persuaded the Princess to withdraw to the continent in order to gain honours and places for his supporters.² Brougham's attitude to Canning was unjustified, and Perry's restraint might seem more of a virtue than a fault, particularly as a couple of months later he attacked the appointment on the more reasonable

1.) Grey to Wilson, 19 Jan. 1818, Grey MSS.

2.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 296; MC 4 Aug. 1814.

grounds that Canning's salary was exorbitant for a peace-time mission.¹ Of equally dubious validity was Brougham's resentment in 1818 against Perry for not defending himself and Lord Thanet against the attacks of the Courier. Brougham thought it was Perry's "bounden duty" to come forward on his behalf against the Lowther family, who exercised great influence in Westmorland, where he had failed to secure election. He complained that "nothing more base ever was seen than Perry taking fright, or rather being bribed by Lord Lowther's acquaintance to hold his tongue...I heard before I left town that P[erry] would now say nothing against the L[owther]s on account of his knowing Lord L[owther] but I could not believe in such rank baseness in any man pretending to act for a party."² It does appear that Perry may have been on friendly terms with some ministerialists, for he is known to have dined in 1815 as a guest of Lord Yarmouth in the company of Lowther and the editor of the Courier, T.G. Street.³ But Perry would have been too used to fraternising with the enemy in his daily social rounds for him to allow it to corrupt his whig loyalties. Some months before Brougham's contest in Westmorland, Perry had published an article by James

1.) MC 19, 22, 28 Oct., 10 Nov. 1814. Brougham of course had personal motives for attacking Canning, who was his rival in brilliance and had defeated him at the Liverpool election.

2.) Brougham to Holland, n.d. Sat. [1818], Add. MSS. 51,561 ff. 109-10; Aspinall, op.cit. p. 304, where the recipient of the letter is incorrectly given as Allen.

3.) Whishaw to Lady Holland, 25 Nov. [1815], Add. MSS. 51,658 f. 105.

Brougham in his brother's interest, and there had been several paragraphs in the Chronicle attacking the Lowther's influence as "utterly subversive of the representative principle".¹ Perry did not reply to the exultations of the Courier in July at Brougham's defeat, probably because he disliked giving publicity to whig misfortunes, but in September he defended Thanet, who had financed Brougham's campaign, from the Courier's innuendo that he had, as sheriff, been packing juries.² Brougham might not have been satisfied with Perry's efforts, but Wordsworth twice reported to the Lowthers in September that the Chronicle was "very angry," and it appears that Perry said as much as might reasonably have been expected. It is possible that Perry did not say more because not only was the question one of personal rather than national importance, but also because, as in the Liverpool election of 1812, Brougham's interests were represented by the local press.³

1.) J. Brougham to J. Atkinson, 26 Mar. 1818, Brougham MSS.; MC 29 Mar. 1818; also MC 25 Feb., 24 Mar., 2, 4 April 1818.

2.) Courier 4, 6, 7, 9 July, 19, 21, 22 Sept. 1818; MC 19, 21, 22 Sept. 1818.

3.) De Selincourt ed., Letters of... Wordsworth, 2nd.ed. revised by Moorman and Hill, iii. 485-7; James Brougham said that the Kendal paper would give a full coverage of Brougham's parliamentary speeches, so "there sh[oul]d not be any Lond[on] paper at all circulated," but he later admitted that the efforts of the paper were inadequate. (to J. Atkinson, 12, 30 Mar. 1818, Brougham MSS.).

On the question of relations between the Regent and the Princess of Wales in 1813-14, Perry followed the main body of the whig party in refusing to champion the cause of the Princess, and he had to suffer the abuse of Brougham for his orthodoxy. The Regent's secretary, McMahon, had attempted late in 1812 to prevent Perry from supporting the Princess by allowing him access to the Delicate Investigation.¹ Perry promised that he would not make use of the confidential information without McMahon's permission, unless the matter should be publicly raised by others, but it is clear that he in no way allowed himself to be dictated to by Carlton House, as Brougham thought, for he told McMahon that "The accurate perusal of the whole case serves to confirm me in the opinion I had formed from early knowledge of the particulars, that His Royal Highness has it at all times in his power to vindicate his own proceedings and to settle the public judgement forever on the point of the Princess' conduct."² Perry's attitude throughout the controversy was one of impartiality. He published the Princess's letter to the Regent in February 1813, complaining of the restrictions on her seeing the Princess Charlotte, but he refused to comment on the letter, denied that it had been printed from party motives, and refuted the Courier's claim that the whigs were acting as the Princess's advisers. Alluding by implication to

1.) Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 215-16.

2.) Aspinall, Letters of King George iv. i. 176-7.

Brougham, Perry said "It is very true that one man may combine in his pursuits both a legal and political character," but "her Royal Highness never spoke with, wrote to, or consulted any one Head or Member of the party, fairly so called, on the subject of her intentions."¹ Brougham naturally was furious; "Perry" he complained "has behaved with the greatest folly to call it by no worse name. He has not only been the first to turn upon her [the Princess] for the act to which his own paper was accessory, but has suffered all the abuse of the ministerial tools on the act of publication to go without any comment."² Brougham thought Perry had been silenced by the Tierney whigs, and he later described him as their "active man." Thanet too was annoyed: "I don't like the language of the Morning Chronicle...It is a foul and vile conspiracy if ever there was one."³ But Perry had not turned upon the Princess, and no pressure from Tierney was necessary to confirm him in his concurrence with the conclusions of the Delicate Investigation. He denied both the Courier's assertion that he was the champion of the Princess, and The Times's claim that he was her assailant, and carefully avoided, as he said, "the mixing of opinion with documents we have been called on to publish."⁴ When the Delicate Investigation was printed in

1.) MC 10-12, 15, 16, 18 Feb. 1813,

2.) Brougham to Grey n.d. Tues. [1813], Brougham MSS.

3.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 296; Brougham to Creevey, p.m. 7 Dec. 1814, Creevey MSS. (microfilm); Thanet to Holland, 18 Mar. 1813, Add. MSS. 51,571 f. 105.

4.) MC 19, 24 Feb., 13 Mar. 1813.

part in the ministerial Post and Herald, and later in full in the Chronicle, Perry announced his agreement with its conclusion that the Princess was substantially innocent, but guilty of culpable levity, and he reprobated the attempts of her advocates (such as Whitbread and Alderman Wood) to vindicate her by throwing doubt on the inquiry.¹ Throughout the episode, Perry was consistent in his judicial impartiality, and he avoided the temptation of changing his tone to support the Princess, as The Times did both in 1813 and 1820, in order to boost the Chronicle's circulation.

Perry showed more willingness to champion the cause of the Princess Charlotte, probably in the hope of regaining the whigs the support of the reversionary interest, but in this case he was both too forward for Tierney's liking, and too reticent for Brougham's. Early in 1813 Perry conducted a running battle with the Courier on the question of the Princess's relations with her father, denying that the whigs were trying to sow dissension between the two, supporting Charlotte's rights to a wider social life, and affirming, in articles which appear to have been written with Brougham's help, that Charlotte could exercise the full functions of royalty were she to succeed as a minor.² Grey noted that some of these articles were "very good," and Charlotte

1.) MC 15-17 Mar., 26 April 1813; Morning Post, Morning Herald 13 Mar. 1813.

2.) Maxwell, Creevey Papers i. 179; MC 21, 23, 25, 26, 28-30 Jan., 1 Feb. 1813

herself thought that the Chronicle, along with the more radical Examiner and Independent Whig, was defending her interests well, and she believed that Perry had refused to acquiesce to pressure from Carlton House to insert a paragraph against her.¹ In April 1814, apparently under pressure from Brougham, Perry again supported Charlotte's cause, criticising her projected marriage with the Prince of Orange, and denying that the question should not be raised by parliament out of delicacy to the Regent, since parliament had intervened over the marriage of Philip and Mary in the 16th century.² But Perry did not associate the whigs as a whole with Charlotte's interests, and while mentioning that Brougham was one of her advisers, he added "Not one of the persons, commonly understood by the name of Opposition, has at any time advised her Royal Highness in any step she has taken."³ Brougham continued to be dissatisfied with Perry's efforts. He complained that Perry refused to insert anything in Charlotte's or her mother's interests unless bribed by the hope of obtaining important information; he thought him "prostitute" for saying the Regent had been greeted with applause in public; and he doubted if Perry would take any

1.) Grey to Brougham, 7 Feb. 1813, Grey MSS.; Aspinall, Letters of the Princess Charlotte 1811-17 (1949) pp. 48, 58.

2.) Brougham told Grey "P[erry] has given positive assurances of not failing tomorrow." (19 April 1814, Brougham MSS); MC 21, 22 April, 3 May, 30 June, 16, 18 July 1814.

3.) MC 21 July, 1814.

notice of his article in the Edinburgh Review on the Princess of Wales's constitutional position.¹ But to more moderate whigs Perry's attitude was justifiable; Whishaw thought that Brougham's article in the Review was very unseasonable in the light of the Princess's behaviour in Italy; and when, probably on Brougham's prompting, a couple of articles appeared in the Chronicle supporting an increase in Princess Charlotte's establishment, Tierney commented "I am very sorry to see the columns of the Morning Chronicle filling with attacks on the Prince about P[rince]ss Charlotte... the probability is that such discussions will only have the effect of rendering her situation worse."² Perry's moderation not only failed to satisfy Tierney, but it did nothing to improve the Chronicle in the eyes of ministerial supporters. J.W. Croker, and the diarist Farington, both complained that the Chronicle was traducing and libelling the Regent in 1814; and the Regent himself dismissed it

1.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 296-7. On hearing of the capture of Perry's wife, Brougham said "I can't help wishing he himself were taken for a year or two & well bastinated." (Life and Times ii. 109). Perry claimed concerning the applause for the Regent, that all morning papers received court news from the same collector, and had no means of verifying it (MC 13 June 1814).

2.) Whishaw to Lady Holland, 12 Oct. 1814, Add. MSS. 51,658 f.99; Tierney to Grey, 7 Dec. 1814, Grey MSS.; MC 6, 7 Dec. 1814. A few days before these articles, Brougham told Grey that comments should be made in the press about Charlotte "tho' Perry is too bad." (Life and Times ii. 272).

as the "organ of a factious & Jacobinical Party," while Queen Charlotte thought that Perry displayed a "mischievous disposition" and "factious spirit."¹

Perry's adherence to the moderate centre of the whig party also exposed him to much criticism from the radicals. Perry had always maintained that while the Chronicle was an avowedly whig newspaper, it was also impartial in that space would be given to arguments from both sides. As he said in 1814, when he gave nearly six columns to extracts from a pamphlet with which he partly disagreed, "we do not wish to avail ourselves of the share of influence over the press which we possess, to give circulation to no arguments but those which exactly coincide with our own."² Such impartiality, however, had its limits when whig interests were closely involved. Francis Place wrote two articles on the sinking fund in 1813 and offered them to Perry for publication in the Chronicle, with the omission of any passages to which Perry might object; but Perry showed the articles to his whig colleagues,

1.) Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 216-17; Farington Diary vii. 274; Aspinall, Letters of King George iv ii. 130-2. The Duke of Bedford questioned the prudence of a paragraph in the Chronicle alluding to a ministerial dinner where the Regent's character was freely discussed, and McMahon in 1815 tried to silence the Chronicle on Princess Charlotte. (Bedford to Lady Holland, 25 Sept. 1813, Add. MSS. 51,665 f.111; Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 408-9; MC 21 Sept. 1813, 9 Dec. 1815).

2.) MC 1, 2, 6 Sept. 1814.

and they were never printed.¹ Place's view that the sinking fund had failed to discharge any part of the national debt was unacceptable to most whigs, and it was not until the end of 1816 when considerable controversy on the matter had been aroused, that Perry was prepared, some weeks after his original promise of insertion, to publish Place's article.² The article aroused some interest, and Lauderdale wrote a reply in the Chronicle, under the pseudonym of "Old Merchant," arguing that all leading whigs supported the fund, and that considerations of national honour alone were sufficient to warrant its continuation. But when Place offered a further article, in reply to Lauderdale, Perry refused to publish it.³ In later years Perry published a couple of pieces by Place on the sinking fund, perhaps partly because of the influence of Black, who was on close terms with Place, though Place suspected that one of the articles was published, not because Perry either liked or understood the subject, but simply because it attacked the conservative whig, Pascoe Grenfell, whom Perry disliked.⁴ Place also attempted to have an article published

1.) Place's notes on the sinking fund, May 1829, Add. MSS. 35,147 f.12.

2.) Ibid. ff. 14, 16; Place to James Mill, 8 Dec. 1816, Add. MSS. 35,152 f. 229 (copy); MC 19 Dec. 1816.

3.) Lauderdale in MC 9 Jan. 1817; Add. MSS. 35,147 ff. 17-18.

4.) Ibid. ff. 19-21; MC 5 Feb. 1818, 4 Mar. 1821.

in the Chronicle against the corn laws early in 1815, in reply to a letter from "A Whig Farmer" supporting dearer bread. Place tried to make the article more acceptable by signing it with the anagram "Le cap," instead of with his initials, but he complained that Perry would neither insert nor return the article, and that there was no daily paper that would publish anything against the corn laws, so he turned to the Sunday Review.¹

Perry was also vilified by the radicals for his support of the whig candidates, Romilly and Lamb, in the three Westminster elections between 1818 and 1820, and for his alleged misrepresentation of the radicals' speeches. In 1818 Perry was rather more moderate in his support of Romilly than he had been in his support of Sheridan in 1806 and '7. He acquitted Burdett and Douglas Kinnaird of any knowledge of the scurrilities against Romilly, and hoped that Burdett would be returned as second choice rather than the ministerial candidate.² This was too moderate for Mackintosh's taste: "I regret the Civility of the Morn[ing] Chron[icle]" he told Holland; "To treat with Civility the authors of the most scurrilous invectives against us is a policy beyond my comprehension." It is possible that Holland passed on the hint to Perry, for a couple of days later the radicals were attacked for hating the whigs more than they did the ministers.³ From the point of view of the

1.) Place to James Mill, 15 Jan., 15 Feb. 1815, Add. MSS. 35,152 ff. 128, 132 (copies).

2.) MC 13,23, June 1818.

3.) Mackintosh to Holland, 14 June 1818, Add. MSS. 51,653 f. 65; MC 16 June 1818.

radical Hobhouse, and the left-wing whig Tavistock, Perry had been unreasonably hostile towards the radicals for their opposition to Romilly, who was one of the more progressive whigs. "Nor was it to be expected" Hobhouse remarked "when Mr. Perry was attacking us every morning that we should be canvassing every night for one who...was neither more nor less than Mr. Perry's nominee."¹ After Romilly's death, Perry was quick to attack Hobhouse's credibility as the candidate of united reformers, and urged him to make a specific declaration as to whether he supported annual parliaments and universal suffrage. Mackintosh feared that Perry's hostility might almost make the whigs appear as allies of the ministers, and Hobhouse asked Holland to use his "commanding influence" to restrain Perry's "useless impetuosity" in sowing dissension among the reformers.² It is possible that Holland obliged, for there were no further attacks in the Chronicle in 1818, but once George Lamb had emerged as the official whig candidate in February 1819 Perry returned to the offensive, and denied the radicals' charges that the whigs had caused disunity among the reformers by opposing Hobhouse.³ It is not surprising that Hobhouse wished that Perry, rather than his

1.) Hobhouse to Tavistock, 12 Aug. [1818], Tavistock to Hobhouse, 18 Aug. 1818, Add. MSS. 36,457 ff. 84, 89.

2.) MC 26 Nov. 1818; Mackintosh to Allen, 3 Dec. 1818, Add. MSS. 52,182 f.78; Hobhouse to Holland, Frid. [27 Nov.] 1818, Add. MSS. 51,569 f.67.

3.) MC 11, 15, 27 Feb. 1819.

friend Byron, would go to South America, where he could "reproduce his stale puns and politics without let or hindrance."¹ Perry's effectiveness against the radicals at Westminster is reflected in Burdett's comment that "The Chronicle, the Lying Chronicle as it might justly be called, stood prominent as the corrupt tool of a corrupt faction;" —a remark which appears to have been prompted by Perry's description of the radicals as a malignant and splenetic "knot of slanderers and levellers," who had brought on their own defeat by reviling the whigs.² Burdett and Hobhouse claimed that the Chronicle's reports of their speeches were "mere inventions," which "contained no more a representation of what was passing at these hustings than what was passing at Japan."³ The accuracy of the Chronicle's reports were also questioned by Henry Hunt in 1817, and by the coroner at an inquest on a victim of Peterloo in 1819. But there seems no reason to doubt the claim of an unidentified Chronicle reporter that his accounts were never interfered with by the editor, and any misrepresentation cannot therefore be attributed to Perry.⁴ The radicals were nevertheless convinced of Perry's dishonesty, and Place would not have been alone in considering him a "pre-eminent liar."⁵

1.) Samuel Smiles, Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray (2 vols. 1891) i. 409.

2.) MC 23, 20 Feb. 1819.

3.) MC 1, 17 Mar. 1819.

4.) MC 11 Feb. 1817, 4 Oct. 1819, 23 Jan. 1817.

5.) Graham Wallas, Life of Francis Place (1898) p. 143.

During the last two years of his life Perry fell completely out of favour with the more left-wing whigs, such as Brougham, Lambton, Creevey and Wilson, who turned to The Times as a stronger and more able champion of the cause of Queen Caroline. Towards the end of 1819 Brougham had suggested that Perry should raise the approaching discussion of the divorce as one of the government's reasons for introducing the six acts, since the court hoped that the divorce could be achieved more easily if restrictions were laid on the press and public meetings.¹ Perry, however, did not respond to this hint. In common with whigs like Grey and Tierney, his attitude towards the proceedings against the Queen was one of judicial distaste; he probably had little sympathy for her behaviour, and would have had no wish to allow her to become a rallying point for radical demands. Several months before the Queen arrived in England, Brougham reported that Perry privately acknowledged that she was popular, but that he was not revealing this in the Chronicle.² After the Queen's arrival, Perry warned his readers that he was not going to treat them to scandalous details in order to boost the Chronicle's sale, and he admitted that much would be suppressed "for the sake of the morals of the country."³ He initially claimed that no observations would be

1.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. Mon. [25 Oct. 1819], Add. MSS. 52,178 f.209.

2.) Maxwell, Creevey Papers i. 298.

3.) MC 26 June, 29 Aug. 1820.

made on the subject of the Queen while any hope of reconciliation remained; towards the end of June it was briefly asserted that the Queen should be given full rights; but it was soon affirmed that "If ever there was a case in which the strictest impartiality was required in a Journalist, the present is that case." "On the guilt or innocence of the QUEEN we presume not to say a word."¹ Perry did not wholly avoid exploiting the question as anti-ministerial ammunition, for he attacked the bill of pains and penalties on procedural grounds, arguing that it gave scope for the exercise of the influence of the crown, and that the Lords should act in a judicial, not legislative, capacity.² But he resisted the temptation of capitalising on the popularity of Caroline's cause, and maintained a tone of restraint, very different from what Holland described as the "canting &... unreasonable tone" of The Times. W.H. Fremantle reported in September, after he had met Perry in Brighton, that "he does not seem himself to favour her [the Queen,] or at least he does not speak in her praise."³ It was only in mid-October, when most of the evidence had been presented on both sides, that Perry came out in the Queen's favour, and denounced

1.) MC 10, 21, 22 June, 5 July, 28 Aug. 1820.

2.) MC 21, 28 Aug. 1820.

3.) Holland to Grey, 16 Feb. 1820, Add. MSS. 51,546 f.34; Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, Memoirs of the Court of George iv 1820-30 (2 vols. 1859) 1.71-2.

the proceedings against her as a conspiracy supported by subornation and perjury.¹ Even then Perry published a further letter from "An Old Whig," who had already written in the Chronicle in August, arguing that there were ample grounds for trying the Queen, and criticising the whigs for having allowed the question to become a focal point for radical agitation.² This letter was, however, disowned in a leader, and several refutations affirming the Queen's innocence were published. Perry exploited the government's embarrassment after the withdrawal of the bill by giving publicity to support for the Queen, and in 1821 he championed her right to attend the coronation.³

The Chronicle's moderation on Queen Caroline confirmed the preference of some whigs, which was apparent before 1820, for The Times. In 1816, when The Times was still Bourbon in its sympathies, Brougham had thought that its attack on Cobbett was "the ablest Paper ever published in a newspaper."⁴ After 1817 several whigs

1.) MC 16, 17, 19, 21, 24, 27 Oct. 1820.

2.) MC 11 Aug., 27 Oct. 1820; Lord John Russell's letters opposing the proceedings had appeared in MC 7, 12 Aug. 1820.

3.) MC 30, 31 Oct., 2, 11, 14 Nov. 1820, 10-12, 14, 17 July 1821. Perry asked one of the Queen's aides in Nov. 1820 to send him a copy of the Queen's letter to Lord Liverpool for publication, but it did not appear in the Chronicle in that year. (Aspinall, Letters of King George iv ii. 396).

4.) Mackintosh's Diary, Sat. [16 Nov. 1816?], Add. MSS. 52,443 unfol.

noticed that The Times was giving good reports of their speeches, which were sometimes better than the Chronicle's. Whishaw thought that Romilly's good speech on the suspension of habeas corpus was "miserably reported in the Chronicle" but "much better given in the Times," and Lambton thought The Times's account of his speech on the indemnity bill was more accurate than the Chronicle's. Brougham noted that "the cream" of one of his speeches had been "wholly omitted" in the Chronicle, but had been given in The Times.¹ Cochrane thought that The Times's coverage of the debates on habeas corpus in 1817 were the most detailed, and Lambton went so far as to say that The Times had given "a perfect report of all the speeches" in the debate on the adjournment in mid-1820.² There can be little doubt that the superiority of The Times's reporting was due largely to the use of the steam press, which would have enabled the reporters to cover the late speeches and still have time to write up their notes

1.) Lady Elizabeth Seymour, The "Popo" of Holland House (1906) p. 172; Lambton to Grey, end. 12 Mar. 1818, Grey MSS.B.4. vol.i.; Gore, Creevey's Life and Times p. 105. Romilly had 5 lines in MC 1 Mar. 1817; Lambton 4 lines in MC 12 Mar. 1818; Brougham had 5 columns in MC 14 Mar. 1817, but this did not include his second speech.

2.) Lord Dundonald and H.R. Fox Bourne, Life of Thos., Lord Cochrane (2 vols. 1869) i. 119; Lambton to Grey, 8 June 1820, Grey MSS.B.4. vol.i. But Wilson was critical of The Times's reports, and was once "better pleased with Perry's total silence than the report of our speeches in the Times." (to Grey, end. 10 Aug. 1818, Add. MSS. 30,122 f. 232; end. 29 Jan. 1819, Add. MSS. 30,123 f.27).

for publication by breakfast time. In addition to a good coverage of debates, The Times also had very able editorials written by Edward Sterling, Peter Fraser, and Barnes himself. Perry had been quick to call for public meetings after the Peterloo massacre, but it was not to the Chronicle that Holland looked for inspiration on this subject. "The Times" he said "has been throughout this business my Gospel. I agree in every letter it has printed on the subject & wish I knew who wrote the leading paragraphs." Holland showed his approbation by sending copies of a couple of protests against the six acts to the editor.¹ On the question of Queen Caroline, Creevey reflected the opinion of her whig supporters when he said "The Times is by far the best paper on the subject of this trial & is in truth perfectly invaluable."² After 1819 Barnes became intimately acquainted with some of the whigs, particularly Brougham, and was willing to take hints from them on editorial policy.³

1.) Holland to Fitzwilliam, end. 24 Sept. 1819, Fitzwilliam MSS. N.R.O. Box 97; History of The Times i. 239-40; Wilson thought The Times was doing well on constitutional subjects in 1817, and that on Peterloo it had "fought our battle most ably." (to Grey, 24 July 1817, Add. MSS. 30,121 f. 312; to Lambton, 31 Mar. 1820, Lambton MSS.).

2.) Creevey to his wife, 25 Aug. [1820], Creevey MSS. (microfilm); John Walker thought The Times's articles on the Queen were "beautifully written" by Fraser, and "managed with more ability than in any other paper." (to Grey, 7, 13 June 1820, Grey MSS).

3.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 312-14.

Early in 1820 Holland, who was probably closer to Perry than any of the whigs, was sending a pamphlet on the Spanish constitution to Barnes, and he received in reply a request to give a "hint" whenever he thought The Times was "pursuing a wrong course."¹ Two months before Perry's death an old Chronicle reader like Tierney could say that he knew nothing of politics but what he read in The Times, and according to Adair, Grey had ceased to read the Chronicle before Perry died.² In addition to turning to The Times during Perry's last years, some whigs who had supported Caroline also cultivated a connexion with a daily evening paper, the Traveller, edited by the political economist Colonel Torrens. Lambton described the Traveller in 1820 as "our paper & very good," and when the gallery was closed during a debate on the Queen he sent Torrens an account of the proceedings.³ Brougham wrote some

1.) Editor of The Times to Holland, 15 April 1820, Add. MSS. 51,831 f. 32. Grey said early in 1821 that he had never had any communication with The Times, but that Barnes had recently handed him an item of foreign news during a debate. (to Lady Holland, n.d. Thurs., Add. MSS. 51,553 f.170). When Holland wanted to make an anonymous apology for a remark he had made in the Lords in 1821, he inserted it in The Times (Maxwell, Creevey Papers ii.15).

2.) Tierney to Grey, 3 Oct. 1821, Grey MSS.; Adair to Adam, 22 Nov. 1822, Blair-Adam MSS. I owe this last reference to Mr. Michael Collinge.

3.) Lambton to Grey, 13 May 1820, Grey MSS.B.4.vol.i.; Maxwell, Creevey Papers i. 342.

articles in the paper in 1820 which Creevey thought were "capital," and when Folkestone and James Losh wanted to counter ministerial propaganda, it was to the Traveller as well as The Times that they turned for support.¹ After Wilson had been dismissed from the army for his conduct at the Queen's funeral, the editors who were thanked by his constituents for their exertions on his behalf were those, not of the Chronicle, but of the Traveller and The Times.²

The partial eclipse of the Chronicle by The Times during Perry's last years may be largely explained by the ability of The Times's leaders, by its support of the Queen, and by the use of the steam press; but it is clear that the whigs were already disposed to look to other papers for support since the Chronicle had become so unsatisfactory as a party organ. Dissatisfaction with Perry was not confined to his failure to reply to the attacks of the Courier and Cobbett, or the inadequacy of his treatment of certain foreign and domestic issues. The coverage of debates in the Chronicle became the object of increasingly bitter criticism from the whigs, who felt that Perry preferred maximising his advertising profits to giving publicity to their speeches. Apart from Althorp's comment that one of his speeches was "very well given" in the Chronicle, the most

1.) Creevey to his wife, 17 Mar. 1820 (copy); Folkestone to Creevey, n.d. [4 Nov. 1820], Creevey MSS. (microfilm); Losh to Wilson, 26 Nov. 1821, Add. MSS. 30,109 f. 321. Place wrote in the Traveller on the sinking fund on 4 Jan., 4 June 1821 (Add. MSS. 35,147 ff.25-30).

2.) MC 6 Oct. 1821.

that was said for the debates in the last decade of Perry's life was that they were given "pretty fairly" or that an account was "tolerable" or "substantially correct."¹ Much of the criticism was scathing. Morpeth was angry in 1813 when he was misrepresented in the Chronicle as saying that he would bring forward the question of catholic relief in the next session, and Holland had to intervene on his behalf and have the error corrected.² In 1814 Grey complained that Perry had omitted much of his speech on the Princess Charlotte, and had "given an account that is quite provoking."³ Early in 1816 the whigs were anxious that the headway they were making in parliament against the property tax should be fully reported, and complained that the Chronicle's reports were giving a better account of ministerial speeches. Brougham protested "you can form no guess of the progress we have made from the d---d stupidities of Perry who does all but actually betray us & in fact has several known tories among his reporters who when on duty give it ag[ains]t us as much as they can." Rosslyn also thought that Perry had a tory reporter, and that the Chronicle's accounts did the whigs "great injustice."⁴

1.) Althorp to Spencer, 2 June 1815, Spencer MSS. vol.ii.; Mackintosh's Diary 14 Feb. [1818], 5 July 1820, Add. MSS. 52,443-4 unfol.; Brougham to Creevey, p.m. 16 July 1814, Creevey MSS. (microfilm).

2.) Morpeth to Holland, 28 July, 2 Aug. 1813, Add. MSS. 51,577 ff.167-9; MC 26, 31 July 1813.

3.) Brougham, Life and Times ii. 245; MC 26 July 1814.

4.) Brougham to Creevey, n.d. Frid. [9 Feb. 1816], Creevey MSS. (microfilm); Rosslyn to Grey, 26 Feb. 1816, Grey MSS.

Grey, who was at Howick, was dissatisfied with the whigs' efforts in the debates on the peace establishment, but thought this impression might be "owing to the wretched reports in the Morning Chronicle which are evidently so bad as to convey very little information as to ...what really passed." He complained, with some justice, that far more space had been given to a speech by Castlereagh than to those by Holland and Horner.¹ Moreover, the type with which the debates were printed was so small that both Grey and Brougham complained they could hardly read it.² In 1817 Brougham thought the Chronicle's report of his speech on the state of the nation was the worst he had ever seen; and in 1818 Mackintosh complained that a speech by Holland had been "horribly mangled" in the Chronicle, and that his own speech on forgery had been "better reported in every other [paper] than in the Morn[ing] Chron[icle]."³ A friend of Wilson's was so annoyed at the Chronicle's coverage of one of Wilson's speeches that he called on Perry to remonstrate with him, and produced a copy of the British Press as evidence of how the speech could have

1.) Grey to Lady Holland, 17, 25 Feb. 1816, Add. MSS. 51,553 ff. 32, 37; MC 20, 21 Feb. 1816.

2.) Grey to Lady Holland, 5 Feb. 1816, Add. MSS. 51,553 f.17; Brougham, Life and Times ii. 310.

3.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 303-4; Mackintosh's Diary, Wed. n.d., and 26 Feb. [1818], Add. MSS. 52,443 unfol.

been reported; he thought that Perry "seem'd exceedingly mortified" at this comparison.¹ The whigs were also critical of Perry's failure to do justice to their speeches at public meetings held during the parliamentary recess when more space was available for reports in the press. In 1818 Brougham thought the Chronicle was the only daily London paper which had not reported a meeting on popular education he had attended, and he complained that it had not covered a political speech he had delivered at the Fishmonger's Hall.² During the general election of that year, a friend of Wilson's wrote that "Mr. Perry, as usual, has been very sparing of his columns in reporting your speechifications," and he added that the little that had been given was largely nonsense. Even Perry's friend and contributor, Thomas Moore, commented on the "stinginess of room" which had been given to a report of a Dublin meeting.³ Nor did the law reports of the Chronicle escape censure. Brougham complained that in one of his cases "Perry chose to mistake my speech... unbearably, making me abandon my client & speak the reverse of what I did say;" and Romilly thought that the Chronicle contained a fictitious account of the proceedings in the court of chancery, though he added that

1.) Thomas Grady to Wilson, n.d. 9 Feb., Add. MSS. 30,108 f.384.

2.) Aspinall, op.cit. p.304.

3.) General Long to Wilson, 3 July 1818, Add.MSS. 30,108 f.405; the writer is incorrectly given as Lambton in Aspinall, op.cit. p. 296; Dowden, Letters of Thomas Moore.i. 453.

such misrepresentations were so common in the press "that it would be endless to notice them."¹ A decline in Perry's efforts to give a full account of whig speeches is indicated by the fact that he no longer bothered to defend the general standard of reporting in the press. He had admitted to Adam in 1809 that the task was a hopeless one, and his public apologies were confined to an occasional observation that a speech had been delivered at too late an hour, that a speaker was inaudible, or that the gallery had been too crowded.² The only serious error to which he confessed was when his reporters once left the House early on the mistaken assumption that business had been concluded.³

There were also a number of miscellaneous matters on which the whigs found cause to object to Perry's management of the Chronicle, which though minor themselves, help to explain the growing sense of dissatisfaction with Perry during this period. The standard of typographical accuracy in the Chronicle was sharply criticised by Wilson on several occasions. It had never been very high: Perry had complained of other papers' amusement at errors in the Chronicle in the 1790s, and in 1816 he criticised "the mean and disingenuous

1.) Brougham, Life and Times ii. 270; Romilly, Memoirs iii. 312-3.

2.) MC 27 May 1815, 19 Mar. 1816, 26 Feb. 1817, 27 Feb., 21 May 1819, 27 Oct. 1820.

3.) MC 2 June 1815.

practice of The Times" of "hunting for typographical errors in an adversary."¹ Sometimes the complete opposite of the intended meaning was given, and on one occasion the inner pages were printed upside down.² Wilson commented at least five times on serious mistakes in printing and grammar, and remarked that Perry had been "too negligent" to revise a poorly written article on French affairs which he thought was by an Italian.³ It does not follow that Perry's printer, proof-reader and compositors were necessarily worse than those of most papers, but it is probable that the staff of The Times would, thanks to the steam press, have had more leisure in which to correct errors. There was also some criticism of Perry for his careless handling of material sent to him by the whigs. Wilson said he was "quite mad with Perry" in 1814 for publishing some details he had communicated on the Congress of Vienna in an article which contained several errors of fact; and the Pole, Joseph Seriakowski, complained that Perry had published one of his letters at too early a date for it to

1.) MC 18 Aug. 1797, 5 Sept. 1816.

2.) MC 23 Jan. 1819; "voluntarily" could be given for "reluctantly", "export" for "import", and "moral" for "venal." (MC 11, 13 Aug., 9, 10 Oct. 1807, 16, 17 April 1816).

3.) Wilson to Grey, 16 Sept. 1815, Add. MSS. 30,120 ff. 231; 2 May, 8 Nov. 1816, Add. MSS. 30,121 ff. 99, 201; 10 Sept., 25 Dec. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,122 ff. 28, 132.

have been possible for it to have come, as was claimed, from Paris.¹ In 1817 Wilson was annoyed that Perry had paid no attention to the insertion of an important advertisement, which had been placed in the second column of the second page where he feared no one would notice it.²

Perry's discretion also came under fire, though it has generally, and rightly, been regarded as one of his main qualities as a journalist. Byron complained on several occasions of stupid and impudent paragraphs in the Chronicle concerning his activities, and was furious when his satire on Croker was published without his permission; he asked Murray to tell Perry "that I wonder he should permit such an abuse of my name and his paper."³ The Duke of Kent was aggrieved by a paragraph which appeared in the Chronicle after the death of Princess Charlotte expressing the hope that he would marry into the House of

1.) Wilson to Grey, 16 Dec. 1814, Add. MSS. 30,120 f. 122; MC 16 Dec. 1814; Seriakowski to Brougham, 17 Sept. 1814, Brougham MSS.; MC 8 Sept. 1814. Seriakowski had in fact written his letter from Durham.

2.) Wilson to Grey, 22 July 1817, Add. MSS. 30,121 f.310; MC 22 July 1817. The advertisement concerned a complaint by the Berkshire magistrates about Reading jail.

3.) Prothero, Works of Lord Byron iv. 69-71; MC 11 Feb. 1817; also Prothero, op.cit. iii. 118-19, v.76.

Saxe-Cobourg to ensure the succession to the throne. He complained that it had been phrased "in the broadest and... most indelicate manner," and had caused great distress to his mistress Madame St. Laurent.¹ Perry promised the Duke that he would obey his injunction of silence on the matter, but the question was soon revived in the Chronicle, and the Duke again had to intervene to prevent its recurrence.² Mackintosh was also offended by a critical reference in the Chronicle to his historical work: "I was prepared" he said "to be abused by almost every other Paper from the Times to the Examiner But for both personal & political reasons, the slight of the Morning Chronicle surprized me."³ More serious was the offence Perry gave in 1818 to Wellesley, when he was still co-operating with the whigs. Several articles in the Chronicle were critical of Wellesley's policies as Governor-General of India, and Wellesley interpreted them as inspired by the whigs, and signifying the termination of his links with the party. When Holland explained, Wellesley expostulated, "I must...ask you, how it is possible for

1.) MC 7 Nov. 1817; Shane Leslie, Life and Letters of Mrs. Fitzherbert (2 vols. 1939-40) ii. 153; Maxwell, Creevey Papers i. 270.

2.) Mollie Gillen, The Prince and His Lady (1970) pp. 220-2. The Duke had told Perry in September that he intended to marry (Wilson to Grey, 6 Nov. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,122 f.93).

3.) Mackintosh to Allen, [18], 19 Jan. 1814, Add. MSS. 52,182 ff.53, 55; MC 15 Jan. 1814.

me to abide the uncontrollable excesses of such a paper, as the Morning Chronicle."¹ Such incidents were of course inevitable in view of the fact that Perry could not supervise every thing which was inserted in the Chronicle, but they do show that Perry was, in the eyes of his contemporaries, liable to lapses of tact and vigilance. The whigs were also critical of Perry's attitude on several minor issues. When Wilson was arrested in France for having assisted the escape of General Lavalette, who had been convicted of high treason, Grey was dissatisfied with Perry's initial response to the situation. He thought "nothing can have been more ill-timed or ill-advised" than Perry's aggressive line towards the French government, and asked Lady Holland to have the emphasis in the Chronicle directed towards lauding Wilson's military exploits, and underplaying the importance of his offence.² In 1817 Wilson censured Perry for his "quite unjustifiable" support for Hastings's rule in India, and in 1818 Holland reprobated Perry's war-like response to American encroachments on the river Columbia, where there was a British fort.³ In 1820, when the Cato Street conspiracy

1.) Wellesley to Holland, 12 April 1818, Add.MSS. 51,728 ff.27-8; MC 31 Mar., 3, 6 April 1818. The articles consisted of extracts from Mill's History of India and the speeches of Philip Francis, and it was explained that they were not intended to offend Wellesley, but to put Hastings's policy in perspective.

2.) Grey to Lady Holland, 21 Jan. 1816, Add.MSS. 51,553 ff.9-10; MC 17 Jan. 1816.

3.) Wilson to Grey, 30 Oct. 1817, Add.MSS. 30,122 f.81; MC 24 Oct. 1817; Holland to Grey, 31 Jan. 1818, Add.MSS. 51,545 f.180; MC 30 Jan. 1818.

was deplored in the Chronicle and ministers were praised for their moderation in not demanding more powers, Wilson contemptuously described Perry as "the most dastardly alarmist that ever dared to express his fears;" though it is possible that Perry's motive in supporting the government's response was to prevent the ministerial press from equating the whigs with the radicals.¹ The whigs were also sceptical of some of Perry's reports of foreign events. In 1815 Whishaw rightly said that he did not believe the discredit thrown on Napoleon's advance to Lyons in the Chronicle; and in 1818 both Tierney and Fremantle had doubts about Perry's reports on the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle.²

Although the whigs were generally dissatisfied with Perry's conduct of the Chronicle as a party newspaper, they did not succeed in enlisting the regular support of another daily paper during Perry's lifetime, and showed little interest in forming a connexion with the weekly press. It was only the more progressive whigs such as Brougham, Creevey and Lambton who cultivated the Traveller in 1820, and while many whigs came to prefer The Times to the Chronicle, The Times did not assume the character of a party organ. In August 1814 Henry White, the editor of the Independent Whig, approached Grey and other whigs for financial aid to help him establish a new weekly paper, the Charles James Fox. Brougham warned Grey that White was

1.) Wilson to Lambton, n.d. [1820], Lambton MSS.; MC 26 Feb. 1820.

2.) Seymour, "Pope" of Holland House pp. 93-4; MC 15 Mar. 1815; Tierney to Grey, 29 Sept. 1818, Grey MSS.; Buckingham, Memoirs of the...Regency ii. 279. It was prematurely suggested that the concert of powers was breaking up. (MC 15 Oct. 1818).

little more than a common beggar and blackmailer, and that it would ruin what little credit the whigs had left among the popular papers if they supported such a character, "after being too nice and moderate to patronise the respectable ones."¹ Grey therefore refused to give White any money, and advised Thomas Coke to do likewise.² The new paper, however, gained the approval of the whigs, and they subscribed some funds to help cover its costs; Coke gave £100, Grey, after receiving nine begging letters, gave £50, and other subscribers included Fitzwilliam, Bedford, Devonshire and Albemarle.³ But there was not a wide market for a paper with such an exclusively political purpose, and the Charles James Fox collapsed after six months.⁴ White attempted to compensate for his loss by soliciting the whigs' aid for the Independent Whig, which since the foundation of the Fox had become more moderate in tone. Grey thought White replied to Cobbett's attacks in 1816 "very gallantly," in marked contrast to Perry's efforts, but most whigs seem to have agreed with Bedford that White was "a man of no character, & a bad writer," and it does not appear that White's

1.) White to Grey, 22, 31 Aug. 1814, Grey MSS.; Aspinall, Politics and the Press p.311; Brougham, Life and Times i. 265-6.

2.) Grey to White, 4 Sept. 1814, T.Coke to Grey, 26 Sept. 1814, Grey MSS.

3.) White to Grey, 31 Oct. 1814, Grey to White 18 Nov. 1814, Ibid.; White to Whitbread, 20 Nov. 1814, Whitbread MSS.

4.) It was published on Mondays and lasted from 3 Oct. 1814 to 17 April 1815. White attributed its failure solely to the declining popularity of the whigs. (to Grey, 17 Oct. 1823, Grey MSS).

frequent requests for assistance from Grey, Lambton, Fitzwilliam, Spencer, Queen Caroline and others met with much response.¹ White claimed in 1816 that the Independent Whig was read by from ten to twenty thousand people, but his later complaint that he had lost thousands of readers through his support of moderate reform was hardly likely to make the whigs feel that his paper was worth supporting. In 1820 he went bankrupt, but managed to continue as a journalist with the help of a fund organised by Alderman Wood. He relinquished his espousal of whig politics, and changed the name of his paper to the Independent Observer.² Another weekly journalist to solicit the whigs' aid was John Morton, editor of the radical-whiggish Sunday Review. He obtained some assistance from Brougham, Whitbread, Thanet and others in 1814, but it was of

1.) Grey to Wilson, 29 Nov. 1816, Bedford to Grey, 8 Jan. 1817 (wrongly dated 1816), Grey MSS.; White to Lambton, 18 Sept., 4 Oct. 1815, 17 Jan. 1819, Lambton MSS.; White to Spencer, 30 Jan. 1821, Spencer MSS. Box 128; White to Fitzwilliam, 5 Aug. 1819, Fitzwilliam MSS. (Sheffield) F127-136b; Aspinall, Letters of King George iv ii. 379, 381.

2.) White to Grey, 6 July, 20 Nov. 1816, 4 Jan., 12 Feb., 12 Oct. 1817, 14 Jan. 1819, 8 Jan., 13 April 1821, Grey MSS.

little avail, for he went bankrupt and died in the following year.¹ In 1818 Wilson reported that he was "stimulating B[rougham] to the Establish[men]t of a newspaper, at least a Weekly one," but nothing appears to have come of his efforts.² In 1821 John Ross, who had been a senior reporter on The Times, and whom Brougham thought was a "very good writer indeed," requested aid for the establishment of a weekly paper designed to give a full coverage of political questions and of the debates. Although Brougham was keen, again nothing materialised from the idea.³

The lack of any significant influence over the weekly press made it particularly important that the whigs should form a connexion with a daily paper, preferably an evening one which would circulate in the country. Wilson represented the general feeling when he said "It is quite useless to attempt the reorganisation of any Party without a newspaper devoted expressly to the Whig Interests & under Whig regulation."⁴ Early in 1816 Grey's annoyance with the Chronicle

1.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 310; Morton to Brougham, 25 Jan. 1814, Brougham MSS.; Brougham to Whitbread, end. Jan. 1814, Whitbread MSS.; advertisements for a subscription for Morton's family in MC 22, 23, 30 Nov., 14 Dec. 1815. W.J. Baldwin solicited Grey's assistance for The People, but Grey refused because it was too radical. (Baldwin to Grey, 22 July 1817, Grey to Baldwin, 31 July 1817 (copy) Grey MSS).

2.) Wilson to Lambton, n.d. [?July 1818], Lambton MSS.

3.) Ross to Brougham, 24 Oct. 1821, Brougham to Lambton, 15 Nov. 1821. Brougham MSS.

4.) Wilson to Lambton, n.d. [1817], Lambton MSS.

had led him to conclude that "It is really quite absurd to consider this a party paper, and something ought to be done, if possible, to establish one which might be conducted in a different manner." But when Henry White suggested later in that year that he might establish a whig evening paper, to act in unison with the Chronicle, he does not appear to have received any encouragement.¹ It was not until May 1817 that the whigs, on Brougham's initiative, succeeded in establishing a new daily evening paper, the Guardian. Anxious not to cause Perry any offence, the whigs offered him the chance of having some connexion with the new paper, and stressed that its chief purpose was to give a fuller coverage to the debates for which the Chronicle did not have room. Perry did not express any objection to the paper, but declined to have anything to do with it, and rightly doubted if it would succeed.² The failure of the Guardian after only a few weeks appears to have been largely the result of the whigs' failure to subscribe the funds they had promised, but it seems unlikely that it would anyway have lasted for long. The stamp duty of 1815, and the decline of interest in foreign news after the peace, meant there was little demand for a new paper, particularly if it were filled with long reports of turgid speeches. There were already eight daily evening papers, and no new ones were successfully

1.) Grey to Lady Holland, 25 Feb. 1816, Add.MSS. 51,553 f.37; White to Grey, 17 Sept., 20 Nov. 1816, Grey MSS.

2.) This episode is described in detail in Aspinall, Politics and the Press pp. 298-303. No copies of the Guardian survive, but it was advertised as shortly to appear in MC 8 May 1817, and had collapsed before the end of June.

established in the decade after 1810. As John Hunt had warned "The Undertaking is... a very doubtful one at this time, for the Press in general is sadly depressed."¹ With the collapse of the Guardian, Wilson felt that Perry abused his triumph by giving even less space to political matter, and he and Brougham expressed an interest in cultivating the Globe and British Press, but nothing appears to have come of this idea.² After the Peterloo massacre in 1819 the irrepressible Henry White attempted to raise £1,000 from the whigs to finance the establishment of a new evening paper, with the particular aim of countering the ministerial press and Cobbett, but the whigs were no more responsive to his requests than they had been in earlier years.³

The whigs not only failed to gain a party organ to supplement the Chronicle, but they continued to be, as in earlier years, half-hearted and ineffective in their attempts to superintend articles written in the press. Grey felt a sense of hopelessness about the matter; he thought in 1815 that the party had always been extremely ill-served by the press, and that it was vain to seek either a cause or remedy for the fact.⁴ Holland saw the problem as arising partly

1.) J. Hunt to L. Hunt, n.d. [1817], Add. MSS. 38,523 ff.41-2. The Alfred succeeded in April 1810, but Cobbett's Evening Post lasted only two months in 1820, and The True Briton founded in that year was incorporated in the Traveller in 1822.

2.) Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 302-3.

3.) White to Holland, 25 Dec. 1819, Add.MSS. 51,830 ff.148-9; White to Hobhouse, 2, 7 Jan. 1820, Add.MSS. 36,458 ff. 1, 16.

4.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 294.

from the whigs' neglect; early in 1817 he identified one of the main causes of the whigs' weakness as "a want of solidity and connection between the Leaders in Parliament and the Newspaper Writers and others of the same description belonging to the Party, out of Parliament."¹ Some attempts were made to remedy this defect in 1818-19. Adair suggested that a body similar to the whig club could be revived which could serve ostensibly to secure Romilly's interest in the Westminster election of 1818, but could also be used as a recruiting depot for young lawyers and others who might write for the press.² At the beginning of the parliamentary session in 1819 Lambton attempted to organise a party committee to superintend the press, and similar efforts were made at the end of the year at Grey's suggestion. They do not appear, however, to have come to anything, for Holland reported that he and Allen were unequal to the task, and he could see no disposition in the younger members of the party "to stimulate or assist the press."³

A positive side to Perry's conduct of the Chronicle in this period is that he continued to receive assistance from the whigs in the form of news, articles, and verses. The whigs had not the will,

1.) Holland to Grey, n.d. [Jan 1817], Add.MSS. 51,553 f.101. The other two causes were their lack of clear policies, and the impression that they could not form an alternative government.

2.) Adair to Holland, 25 July 1818, Add. MSS. 51,609 f.127.

3.) Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition p.52; Holland to Grey, 30 Dec. 1819, 4 Jan. 1820, Add.MSS. 51,546 ff. 27, 29.

the funds, or the organisation to concert a press campaign comparable to that of 1807, but they were able to help Perry with occasional communications. During the debates on the Princess of Wales in 1813-14, when the gallery was closed, several whig members sent Perry accounts of the proceedings. Creevey and Parnell contributed four columns in 1813, and H.G. Bennet a similar amount in 1814. These reports evidently made a great impression; Arbuthnot thought Creevey's the most accurate he had ever read, and Creevey thought Bennet's was quite invaluable, for without it Whitbread's speech on the Princess "would have been in vain."¹ Perry sometimes received an account of a speech from the member who delivered it; Wilberforce sent a sketch of one of his speeches, for the first time in more than twenty years, to the Chronicle in 1814; and Holland sent a report in 1817, though only because, according to his wife, he "was so much afraid of Perry's reporters misrepresenting what he said."² Perry might also help the whigs in return by supplying them with an account of their speeches

1.) Aspinall, in Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier ed. Pares and Taylor p. 248; Creevey to his wife, 7 Mar. 1813, Bennet to Creevey, p.m. 4 June 1814, Whitbread to Creevey, 4 June 1814, Creevey MSS. (microfilm); Creevey to Whitbread, 5 June 1814, Brougham MSS.; MC 6 Mar. 1813, 4 June 1814.

2.) R. and S. Wilberforce, Life of William Wilberforce iv. 187 n.42; Lady Holland to Horner, 7 Feb. 1817, Add.MSS. 51,644 f.120. Perry solicited an account from Mackintosh of one of his speeches. (Mackintosh to Allen, Tues., Jan. 1814, Add.MSS. 52,182 ff. 53-4).

if they wanted to publish them separately, as he did for Adam in 1810.¹ Assistance with the law reports might also be forthcoming; Brougham for example offered to correct an account of one of his cases if Perry did not mind delaying its publication for a day.² Perry probably received help from the whigs in publishing division lists, since it was extremely difficult to obtain accurate lists, and the publication of them, as John Black remarked, "keeps the thing before the public and does good." The whig whips, Sir James Macdonald and Lord Duncannon, were probably instrumental in supplying the lists, but the only concrete evidence of such aid is when Creevey, at Romilly's request, sent a division to the Chronicle in 1810.³ Some foreign news was supplied to Perry by Wilson, whose military adventures had gained him a wide range of contacts on the continent. There are nearly a dozen references in Wilson's correspondence with Grey to material which he was sending to the Chronicle between 1815 and 1820. This included some letters on disturbances in Italy in 1815 which were published to coincide with Whitbread's

1.) Perry to Adam, 8 Mar. 1810, Blair-Adam MSS.

2.) Brougham to Perry, end. 14 Nov. 1814, Brougham MSS.; Perry appears to have co-operated, MC 16 Nov. 1814.

3.) Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition p.38 n.3; Creevey to Whitbread, May 1810, Whitbread MSS.; Whitbread to Creevey, 3 May 1810, Creevey MSS. (microfilm).

speech in parliament against the Congress of Vienna's Italian policy.¹ It appears that Perry had other effective sources of information, for Wilson once exclaimed that a memorandum had been published in the Chronicle when he thought he possessed the only copy.² According to Lady Holland, the Duke of Kent was sending Perry information from the continent in 1818 and another contributor was Mrs. Godwin's son, Charles Clairmont, who wrote to the Chronicle from Spain in 1819.³

Several whig wits and politicians contributed squibs and verses to the Chronicle. In 1816 an attempt was made by Brougham, Lambton and others to capitalise on the widespread feeling against the government on the question of the property tax, which was relinquished in March, by inserting a battery of some fifty satirical verses and paragraphs in the Chronicle. The main targets, apart from the tax itself, were the Regent, Canning, Castlereagh and Croker, and the attack was sustained from February until the end of the parliamentary

1.) Wilson to Grey, 11, 28 Feb., 16 Oct. 1815, 4 Jan. 1816 (incorrectly dated 1815), 8 April, 2 May 1816, 12 Jan. 23 Dec. 1818, 5 Feb. 1819, 18 Feb. 1820, Add. MSS. 30,120 ff. 154, 174, 259; 30,121 ff. 5, 74, 99; 30,122 ff. 145, 305; 30,123 ff. 33, 135; MC 13 Feb. 1815; Wilson to Holland, 2 Oct. 1815, Add. MSS. 51,617 f. 143.

2.) Wilson to Grey, 25 Sept. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,122 f.44; MC 25 Sept. 1817. It concerned a projected Franco-Russian expedition to India.

3.) Christie, Myth and Reality p. 356; Morley, Henry Crabb Robinson on books and their writers i.229; letter signed "C.C." in MC 13 Feb. 1819. It was twice rumoured that Perry had himself gone to France, but this was denied. (MC 13 June 1815, 30 Sept. 1818).

session in early July.¹ Other contributors of satirical verses included Thomas Moore, whose celebrated "Epistle from Tom Cribb to Big Ben" was printed twice in the Chronicle by public demand; Samuel Rogers, who wrote an amusing piece entitled "George Napoleon Canning;" and Lord Darnley and Henry Luttrell.² It seems certain that other whig literati such as Jekyll and Sharp also contributed, but no evidence remains of their activities. Letters and articles were contributed to the Chronicle by a number of whigs, but like the verses, they were invariably anonymous, and the evidence of their authorship is fragmentary. As has been mentioned, Lambton wrote a leader in reply to the Courier, and Lauderdale wrote on the sinking fund in reply to Place. Wilson also wrote three short articles on the fund at the end of 1816,

1.) The whigs' authorship is apparent from a volume in the Lambton MSS. containing some squibs signed JGL and HB which appeared in the Chronicle. Lambton attacked the Regent (MC 8, 22 Feb. 1816), and Brougham Canning (MC 7, 8, 13, 18, 28 June, 2, 8, 15 July, 1 Aug. 1816). Brougham and Wilson appear to have contributed similar material in 1817 (Brougham to Lambton, n.d. Mon., Wilson to Lambton, 4 Aug. 1817, Lambton MSS.).

2.) Moore in MC 31 Aug., 9 Sept. 1815; Rogers in MC 25 April 1815, identified in Caroline Fox to Holland, 26 May 1815, Add.MSS. 51,740 f.118; Darnley and Luttrell identified in Darnley to Holland, 26 Nov. 1818, Add.MSS. 51,572 f.162, and Prothero, Works of Lord Byron v. 420.

and in 1817 he defended himself in the Chronicle against the attacks of the Quarterly Review concerning his arrest.¹ Brougham, according to Place, wrote a leader on parliamentary reform early in 1817 which ridiculed the radicals' views on the subject, and praised his own opinions. Later in the year he instigated or wrote a series of leaders supporting an address to the Regent which he had moved at the end of the parliamentary session. In 1820 he had a pamphlet by Creevey, advocating parliamentary reform, puffed in the Chronicle, although the Holland House group disapproved of it.² Grey, in addition to sending Perry, through Wilson, material for an article on Cobbett, also sent an account of a ministerial job concerning the abolition of the commissary-in-chief's office.³

1.) Wilson to Grey, 26, 28 Dec. 1816, Add. MSS. 30,121 ff.248, 252; MC 27, 28, 30 Dec. 1816; Wilson to Grey, 10 Sept. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,122 f.28; MC 9, 10 Sept. 1817. Dupin, the brother of Wilson's advocate, wrote an article defending Carnot in MC 14 Dec. 1816. (Wilson to Grey, 12 Dec. 1816, Add. MSS. 30,121 f.237).

2.) 17 Feb. 1817, Add. MSS. 27,809 ff. 56-7; MC 17 Feb. 1817; (Place incorrectly said the article was on the 18th); Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 18 July 1817, Add. MSS. 51,699 f.79; MC 14, 15, 17, 18 July 1817; Gore, Creevey's Life and Times pp. 124-6, 130; MC 4 Mar., 5 May 1820. The pamphlet was A Guide to the Electors of Great Britain...

3.) Grey to Wilson, 17 Nov. 1816, Grey MSS.; MC 21 Nov. 1816.

Adair wrote a couple of articles in the Chronicle in praise of whig personalities; one eulogised the late Duke of Devonshire, and the other defended Fox from the aspersions of the Quarterly Review. Brougham thought this latter article "A very capital answer," but Whishaw considered it very indifferent.¹ Mackintosh, at Lady Holland's request, wrote a short article on Madame de Stael in the Chronicle, and he also supplied an obituary of the whig member, William Elliot.² Philip Francis was said to be the author of a series of articles in 1818 entitled "Historical Questions," which discussed the legitimacy of several royal families.³ The Duke of Kent was suspected by several whigs of instigating the paragraphs in the Chronicle after the death of Princess Charlotte, which

1.) MC 5 Aug., 29 Nov. 1811; Holland to Caroline Fox, 21 Oct. [1813], Add. MSS. 51,739 ff. 146-7; Brougham to Grey, 5 Nov. 1813, Brougham MSS.; Horner to Murray, 5 Nov. 1813, Horner MSS. vol.v.f.368; MC 25 Oct. 1813. Aspinall incorrectly states that the article was in reply to Trotter's Life of Fox. (Politics and the Press p. 305).

2.) Mackintosh to Lady Holland, 19 Sept. [1817], n.d. 1818, Add. MSS. 51,654 ff. 39, 59; MC 18 Sept. 1817, 2 Nov. 1818. There is little evidence of Mackintosh's journalistic activities, other than that he was paid £200 by a Birmingham dissenter to write on the riots of 1791 in the Morning Post, and had to pay £50 to have the articles inserted; and Place thought he was writing in the Scotsman in 1819. (Mackintosh to Sharp, 9 Dec. 1806, Add. MSS. 52,451 f. 154; Place to Hobhouse, 19 Sept. 1819, Add. MSS. 27,837 f. 192).

3.) DNB; MC 2, 3, 5-9 Jan. 1818.

suggested that the Duke of York, as heir to the throne, should resign as commander-in-chief. Perry appears to have shared Kent's views on this subject, for when Wilson suggested to him that York was an able commander, Perry "mounted the high constitutional horse," and argued that so much influence should not be engrossed by one person.¹ In 1814 Joseph Seriakowski wrote four letters in the Chronicle, under the signature of "A Pole," supporting the cause of Polish independence, and he also inserted a copy of the Czar's instructions for the formation of a new Polish constitution.² Edward Ellice may have written in the Chronicle during Perry's lifetime, for he was directing Perry in 1821 on how to attack the city interests which thrived on the government's financial policy.³ Other contributors

1.) MC 22, 27 Nov. 1817; Aspinall, op.cit. p. 282; Wilson to Grey, 24 Nov. 1817, Add. MSS. 30,122 f.108; Mackintosh's Diary, 2 Dec. 1817, Add. MSS. 52,442 f.62; Morpeth to Lady Holland, 23 Dec. 1817, Add. MSS. 51,579 f.94. Perry had, of course, for party reasons, supported the Prince of Wales's claim to military rank in 1803.

2.) Seriakowski to Brougham, 31 July, 29 Aug., 17 Sept. 1814, Brougham MSS.; Wilson to Grey, 28 Nov. 1814, Add.MSS. 30,120 f. 104; MC 2, 12 Aug., 8 Sept., 28 Dec. 1814; also 29 Nov. 1814.

3.) Ellice to Grey, end. 11 Jan. 1821, Grey MSS.; MC 12, 13 Jan. 1821. Horner's only contribution to the Chronicle appears to have been an obituary in 1809 (Memoirs and Correspondence ii.14). Someone at Lord Essex's seat, Cassiobury, wrote an article on Caanning, which was printed as a letter from Paris. (Wilson to Grey, 9 Dec. 1816, Add.MSS. 30,121 f.231; MC 9 Dec. 1816). Fitzwilliam wrote two signed letters on the role of opposition and the Derby treason trials. (MC 8 Feb. 1816, 14 Oct. 1817).

of a more miscellaneous nature included the political economist John Ramsay McCulloch, who is said to have written in the Chronicle on commercial subjects. Although there is no direct evidence of this, it seems probable, for Perry described McCulloch in 1809 as his friend, and a very able writer, and he mobilised Adam to recommend him for a job at the India House.¹ Thomas Hodgskin, who became a parliamentary reporter on the Chronicle in about 1823, wrote a series of letters criticising impressment in the navy in 1815. Place successfully intervened with Perry to have the letters more prominently displayed, and signed with the initials "T.H."² Another correspondent was Hector Campbell, who wrote several letters under his own name, and according to Place, some pseudonymous letters on the corn laws and sinking fund.³ Bentham also contributed occasional articles, including one on Spanish affairs, and Perry

1.) Grant, Newspaper Press i.229; Perry to Adam, 29 June 1809, McCulloch to Adam, 12 Sept. 1809, Blair-Adam MSS. There is no reference to McCulloch writing in the Chronicle in the discussion of his journalistic activities in D.P.O'Brien, J.R. McCulloch: A study in Classical Economics (1970)

2.) MC 26, 27 Oct., 15, 18, 22, 26 Nov., 1, 9, 12, 16, 23 Dec. 1815; Place to Hodgskin, 22 Nov. 1815, Add.MSS. 35,152 f.185; Élie Halévy, Thomas Hodgskin (1956) p. 82.

3.) MC 20, 26 Jan., 2, 11 Feb. 1814; Add.MSS. 35,152 ff. 97-9; Add.MSS. 27,836 f.38; MC 19 Oct. 1814, 8 Jan. 1817.

published a letter from him on government repression in 1819, and his correspondence with the Portuguese Cortes in 1821.¹

There is very little evidence concerning Perry's regular staff during this period. He continued to print a steady flow of poetry, but much of it had already been published elsewhere, and he does not appear to have engaged the services of any poet after Thomas Moore. The only new contributor on the arts of whom anything is known was William Ayrton, an opera manager, who was said to be writing music criticisms for the Chronicle in 1818, and who later became celebrated as editor of the musical periodical the Harmonicon.² A new recruit to the reporting staff was Walter Coulson, who was mentioned by Crabb Robinson as a Chronicle reporter at the end of 1815.³ Born in Cornwall in about 1794

1.) Christie, Myth and Reality p.356; MC 23 July 1819, 27 July, 3 Aug. 1821. A frequent pseudonymous contributor to the Chronicle on political subjects was "Mutius Scaevola," who wrote 17 letters (MC 11 July, 19, 23, 24, 28, 30 Sept., 1, 2, 6-9, 15, 20 Oct. 1818, 28 Oct. 1819, 10, 12 Aug. 1820). There were also over a dozen letters from "Antonio di Ravenna" criticising the government's foreign policy. (MC 1, 5, 8, 10, 15-17, 20, 24, 27, 30, 31 Dec. 1814, 12, 27 Jan. 1815).

2.) Richard Stoddard, Personal Reminiscences by Moore and Jerdan (N.Y.1875) p. 96. Coleridge said in 1816 he would recommend J.J. Morgan, a writer on the fine arts, to Perry, since Stuart of the Courier was not interested in publishing such material. (Griggs, Letters of...Coleridge vi. 1041-2).

3.) Crabb Robinson's Diary (typescript) 9 Dec. 1815, p.328, Crabb Robinson MSS. Robinson also mentioned that Vincent George Dowling, who worked for the Observer, had written a law report for the Chronicle in 1819, but it is not clear if there was a regular engagement, and it seems improbable in view of Dowling's work for the Home Office. (Ibid. 30 Oct. 1819 p. 289; Aspinall, Politics and the Press. pp. 84-5).

Coulson had been a pupil of Bentham's for about three years, and probably joined the Chronicle through his influence. He appears to have been particularly able, for Robinson described him as "a prodigy of knowledge;" Place considered him a "special reporter;" and Brougham had a high opinion of his talents as a writer, which were briefly exercised on the Guardian in 1817, and in an occasional paragraph in the Chronicle.¹ He later became editor of the Globe, before concentrating on a career as a barrister, in which he became parliamentary draughtsman to the Home Office. Perry's chief assistant during his last years was John Black, who, as was announced in the Chronicle after Perry's death, wrote most of the leading articles from the end of 1817, acted for the greater part of this time as editor, and was entrusted with the entire management of the paper during the last four months of Perry's life.² It is probable that Black was often directed by Perry on his leaders, and he did not have any share in the paper, as Spankie had, which would have enabled him to assert different opinions. The whigs continued to regard Perry as wholly responsible for what appeared in the Chronicle, and they do not seem to have had any direct contact with Black. The character of the paper changed little under Black's influence while Perry was alive, but a greater interest

1.) Place to Hobhouse, n.d., Add.MSS. 27,837 f.189; Aspinall, op.cit. p. 455. Place said that Coulson owned and edited the weekly Yellow Dwarf in 1818. (Add.MSS. 35,147 f.221).

2.) MC 7 Dec. 1821; Wilson only described Black as Perry's translator in 1819. (to Grey, 14 Jan. 1819, Add.MSS. 30,123 f.11).

was shown in political economy. The general ignorance of the subject was lamented in a series of leaders during the debates on agricultural distress in 1820, and there were occasionally more esoteric articles, such as one discussing the diffusion of the principles of political economy in Russia.¹ Black appears to have been influenced by Place, who described him in 1816 as an "enthusiastic convert" on the question of the sinking fund.² Place obtained Black's co-operation in publishing his proposals for a new London day school in the Chronicle, and it was probably through Black that Place could claim in 1819, with respect to the combination laws, that he had "induced the Chronicle... to set the matter on its right footing."³ Black's style as a leader writer lacked Perry's vigour and fluency, and its inferiority must have become very noticeable to the whigs when The Times opposed Peterloo in 1819. It may have been chiefly to the leaders that Brougham was referring when he said that the Chronicle could hardly have been managed worse than it was during Perry's last years; and Morpeth thought the paper had been very "ill-conducted" for some time before Perry's death.⁴ Black's lack of concern for

1.) MC 23, 24, 29, 30 May, 1 June, 31 July 1820.

2.) n.d. [Dec. 1816], Add. MSS. 35,152 f.235.

3.) Place to James Mill, 1 Sept. 1816 (copy), Ibid. f.209; MC 31 Aug. 1816; Wallas, Life of Francis Place p. 204 n.1; MC 7, 10, 12, 13 Aug. 1819

4.) Aspinall, op.cit. p. 304; Morpeth to Holland, n.d. [Dec. 1821], Add. MSS. 51,578 f.5.

the interests of the whig aristocracy did not become manifest during Perry's lifetime, but there were occasional hints of his preference for middle class interests, and it was once remarked in 1821 that "Men of rank or fortune, who have no other claim to notice, than the merit of their ancestors, or the extent of their possessions, have indeed cause to be ashamed."¹ In later years Black's ponderous style, and his interest in political economy, were important contributory factors to the Chronicle's decline as a party newspaper.

While Perry's conduct of the Chronicle during his last years was considered as generally unsatisfactory by the whigs, he remained their only reliable confidant amongst the editors of newspapers. Despite the growing contact between the whigs and The Times, Holland could still lament "poor Perry's death, as depriving us of the only channel we had for giving any turn to any part of the publick press."² The fact that Perry had not always given the turn to the Chronicle which the whigs wanted was sometimes due to reasons which they, as politicians rather than journalists, did not fully appreciate. Perry was strongly criticised for not adequately replying to the attacks of the ministerial press, but he had no wish to bore his general readers with repetitive and partisan replies to the abuse of the Courier, which was usually based on a distortion of what the whigs

1.) MC 13 July 1821.

2.) Holland to Grey, 15 Dec. 1821, Add.MSS. 51,546 f.91, quoted in Ilchester, Home of the Hollands p. 286.

or the Chronicle had said. "We are sensible" he remarked "that the daily bickerings of rival Journalists are disgusting to many readers, and that such incessant warfare ought to be avoided." Perry usually regarded the Courier as beneath contempt, and even its old contributor Coleridge could complain in 1816 of the "damnable immorality" of its principles.¹ As it was, Perry must have taken rather more notice of the ministerial press than suited the taste of some readers; in 1817, for example, 114 of the Chronicle's leaders contained some allusion to the Courier, The Times, the Sun, or the Morning Post, and nearly 90 of these were directed at the Courier. Perry would have appreciated that to reply to the Courier and Cobbett would have the effect of giving them more publicity and making them seem more important than they really were. Brougham showed some awareness of this general consideration when he was instigating Perry to attack John Gladstone, who was supporting the property tax in Liverpool in 1815. "Perry is averse" Brougham said "to any further attacks. Indeed he can hardly devote more attention to G[ladstone] without making him somewhat more important than he is."² The whigs' criticisms of Perry for not paying enough attention to various issues in his editorials had some

1.) MC 5 Sept. 1817; 8 May 1813, 25 May 1814; Griggs, Letters of... Coleridge vi. 1041.

2.) Brougham to Rev. W. Shepherd, n.d. Tues. [Jan. 1815], Brougham MSS.; MC 7, 12, 20 Jan. 1815.

justification, but in the limited space available in a newspaper, priority often had to be given to news rather than comment.

Edward Wilson had some appreciation of this point, for he told his brother, Sir Robert, "I cannot join altogether in your censure of Perry ... I am rather tired of your sentiments & strong opinions. I want facts to build my hopes upon."¹ The difficulties Perry had in satisfying all shades of opinion in the party on contentious questions such as the Princess of Wales, the restoration of the Bourbons, or parliamentary reform, inevitably made him the object of criticism from some of the whigs. Their fastidious attitude towards what was said about them in the press is reflected in the fact that when Lambton wrote an article in the Durham Chronicle defending the whigs, parts of his argument aroused the disapproval of his father-in-law Grey. Perry might well have sympathised with Lambton's disconsolate remark that "another time I will suffer the whig character to defend itself."² Typical of the sort of minor disagreements which Perry had to face was the criticism he received from Tierney in late 1816 for giving too much publicity to the

1.) 1 Jan. 1818, Add. MSS. 30,108 f. 373.

2.) Lambton to Grey, end. 28 July, 8 Aug. 1821, Grey MSS. B.4.vol.i.; the article in the Durham Chronicle 28 July 1821, quoted in MC 31 July, was in reply to an attack in The Times 23 July on the whigs for participating in the coronation.

sinking fund before the question had been raised in parliament, when at the same time Wilson was writing letters in the Chronicle on the subject. Similarly Grey was very annoyed at some verses in the Chronicle in 1818 satirising his neighbour the Duke of Northumberland, which had in fact been written by Wilson.¹ It is not surprising that Hazlitt remarked after Perry's death that "it was the torment of Perry's life (as he told me in confidence) that he could not get any two people to be of the same opinion on any one point."²

The conflict between Perry's duties as a party journalist, and his needs as a conductor of a general newspaper, was irreconcilable. It was impossible, within the confines of four pages, to maximise his advertising revenue, provide a steady flow of general news and miscellaneous features, and at the same time sustain a battery of editorials and a full coverage of whig speeches in parliament and at public meetings. Perry's conception of his role as a party journalist was less subservient than that which most of his contemporaries ascribed to him. The ministerial journalist, William Jerdan, who became a friend of Perry's thought him "merely the tool and mouth-piece of his party," and on the radical side Place thought that the Chronicle "must be supposed to speak the sense of our precious Whigs."³

1.) Tierney to Grey, 26 Dec. 1816, Grey MSS.; Wilson to Grey, 26, 28 Dec. 1816, Add.MSS. 30,121 ff. 248, 252; Grey to Wilson, 29 Aug. 1818, Grey MSS.; MC 26 Aug. 1818.

2.) Howe, Complete Works of William Hazlitt viii. 292.

3.) 29 Jan. 1817, Add. MSS. 36,627 f.6; Jerdan, Autobiography i.159-60.

As Wellesley put it, "The world believes, & I certainly imagined, that the Morning Chronicle is the recognised organ of the Opposition; & that, on all great topics, nothing is inserted without the sanction of the general wish of that Party."¹ Grey was exaggerating when he exclaimed in 1818, in a moment of irritation, "how falsely anybody would judge, who formed an opinion, from the columns of the Morning Chronicle, of the designs of opposition," but there was an element of truth in his remark.² Perry publicly affirmed in 1815 that he was "not in the secrets of Opposition," and he denied that the Chronicle was the "recognized organ" of the whig party, for "the Opposition neither affect to claim a right, nor do possess any right, to dictate to this Journal, or to influence its opinions."³ As in earlier years, Perry was of course willing to defer to whig hints, but only when they did not seriously conflict with his own judgement, and while he generally avoided exacerbating the whigs' disunity, he could occasionally be quite forward in his advocacy of retrenchment and reform.

The whigs' opinions of the Chronicle were not wholly critical, and there is enough evidence to indicate that it was still sometimes

1.) Wellesley to Holland, 12 April 1818, Add. MSS. 51,728 f.26.

2.) Grey to Wilson, 27 Nov. 1818, Add. MSS. 30,108 f.432.

3.) MC 4 Feb., 19 July 1815. In 1820 the conditions on which the whigs should accept office were laid down with the qualification that "This is our own opinion, and we state it as such, having had no consultation on the subject with any individual of consideration in that party." (MC 30 Nov. 1820).

admired for the quality of the writing which appeared in its columns. The unitarian lawyer James Losh thought that a long article by Charles Butler on catholic relief in 1813 was "the clearest and most decisive (and at the same time the most temperate)" which he had ever read.¹ Wilson, one of Perry's severest critics, could acknowledge that a pseudonymous letter in the Chronicle attacking Henry Hunt and the ministerial press was "excellent," and clearly written by "a zealous and persevering as well as able friend." Lady Holland also had a word of praise for some articles in the Chronicle on the Bourbons' repressive policies.² In October 1818, when a series of leaders appeared in the Chronicle attacking the arbitrary policies of Ferdinand vii of Spain, General Long remarked "Perry is shewing himself, again, in his full plumage, & I have forgiven him past remissness. He has admirably maintained the fire from the Ferdinand Battery, & I think his well-timed attacks will be productive of great good."³ With regard to more miscellaneous features, Perry successfully upheld the Chronicle's high standards.

1.) Edward Hughes ed., Diaries and Correspondence of James Losh (Surtees Society 2 vols. 1962) i. 21; MC 6 Feb. 1813.

2.) Wilson to Grey, 26 Dec. 1816, Add. MSS. 30,121 f. 247; letter from "Helvidius" in MC 26 Dec. 1816, and two other letters by him in MC 17, 31 Oct. 1816; Lady Holland to Grey, 27 Dec. 1817, Add.MSS. 51,549 f. 145; MC 26, 27, 29 Dec. 1817.

3.) General Long to Wilson, 11 Oct. 1818, Add. MSS. 30,108 f.415; MC 3, 5-7, 10, 14 Oct. 1818.

He was always concerned to maintain a balance between serious political news and other matter, and Hazlitt commented soon after his death on the success with which this had been achieved. The Chronicle, said Hazlitt "is full, but now crowded;... We have plenty and variety... Attention is paid to every topic, but none is overdone. There is a liberality and decorum. Every class of readers is accommodated with its favourite articles." The consequence was, Hazlitt thought, that the Chronicle was the best daily paper "both for amusement and instruction."¹ Coleridge, too, had a high opinion of the literary features in the Chronicle; he thought in 1818 that it was the only paper "which had maintained a literary tone, an attachment to men of letters and to the interests not only of Porsonian Wit and Genius but likewise even to those of sound Porsonian Learning and hard Reading."² It is probable, indeed, that during the latter half of his career Perry was as interested in the literary as in the political content of the Chronicle, as indicated by his remark to Adam in 1809 that he would have liked to concentrate on making it a literary and fashionable paper.

1.) Edinburgh Review xxxviii. May 1823. pp. 360-1.

2.) Griggs, Letters of...Coleridge iv. 829-30; Coleridge was well-disposed towards Perry for having puffed his lectures in the Chronicle.

A general consideration which helps to explain why Perry was not sometimes more vigilant in serving whigs interests is that he was extremely busy, and could not supervise in detail all that appeared in the Chronicle. Apart from managing the paper and writing editorials he had also to find time for an active social life, which was essential for the maintenance of his political and literary contacts, and for pursuing his interests as a bibliophile, theatre-goer, and family man. There is some evidence as to how these interests conflicted with his work as a journalist. In March 1810, for example, when Perry could have been writing editorials in support of the whigs' parliamentary campaign against the Walcheren expedition, he went down to his house in Brighton to join his wife who was expecting to be confined.¹ On several occasions his inability to attend at the printing house while the paper was going to press was used as an explanation for the appearance of an untoward paragraph.² Nevertheless, he had to forgo some congenial social life on account of his daily labours. As he explained to the Reverend Philip Bliss, when declining an invitation to Oxford "I have been personally much engaged... Everything that occupies the public mind for the day demands my attention; and I scarcely ever permit myself a day's holiday."³ At times Perry's attention to the Chronicle was undermined

1.) Perry to Adam, 8 Mar. 1810, Blair-Adam MSS.

2.) Christie, Myth and Reality p. 343; Wilson to Grey, 21 Nov. 1814, Add. MSS. 30,120 f.96; MC 4 Nov. 1815.

3.) 31 May 1814, Add. MSS. 34,567 f.443.

by family misfortune. The death of his eldest daughter in 1812, at the age of only thirteen, was followed by a decline in his wife's health. In September 1813 she went to Lisbon to ameliorate what was probably tuberculosis, but on her return in 1814 she was captured by pirates and taken to Algiers. She was eventually returned to Bordeaux, but the ordeal had sapped her strength, and she died there in February 1815, aged only thirty-seven. Perry admitted to being "sick with anxiety" for news of her return, and Brougham thought that perhaps he should not be too seriously criticised for his remissness in 1814 in view of his worries. Grey, too, thought Perry was badly afflicted. "I have yet seen no reform in Perry" he said. "Poor fellow, I pity his misfortune."¹ Soon after his wife's death, Perry's own health began to decline. He appears to have suffered from a painful illness which necessitated several operations. Early in 1819 he said that serious indisposition prevented him from participating in the Westminster election, and in the middle of that year Joseph Jekyll observed that he was "quite

1.) MC 2 Mar. 1815; Russell, Memoirs...of Thomas Moore viii.179; Brougham to Grey, 12 Sept. 1814, Brougham MSS.; Grey to Brougham, n.d. Sat. [1815], Grey MSS. Wilson later said, concerning the Barbary crusade, "I suppose Perry will think of nothing but the revenge of his wife." (to Grey, 14 Dec. 1815, Add. MSS. 30,120 f. 306).

broken up in health, and cannot last."¹ Some respite was gained for early in 1820 Perry resumed the daily supervision of the Chronicle. But in mid-1821 his health collapsed; he told a friend in August of that year that he had been laid on his sofa for six weeks and was still too ill to rise; and for the remaining months of his life he was confined to his house at Brighton.²

There is not much evidence concerning Perry's work for the party in his later years, though it is known that he was active as either treasurer or secretary of the Fox club. The club appears to have been founded in January 1812, a few months after the collapse of the whig club; by 1819 its meetings were being held on a monthly basis, and were attended by many of the leading whigs.³ One instance of Perry's party activity occurred in January 1818 when he attempted to rouse the whigs for the coming parliamentary session by securing signatures for a requisition for a Middlesex meeting.

1.) MC 1 Jan., 25 Feb..1819; Lambton to Grey, 13 Jan. 1819, Grey MSS. B.4.vol.i.; Hon. Algernon Bourke ed., Correspondence of Joseph Jekyll (1894) p.83.

2.) MC 2 Feb. 1820; Perry to Henry Colburn, 7 Aug. 1821, Henry E. Huntington Library; Gentleman's Magazine Dec. 1821 p. 566.

3.) Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition p.44; MC 27 Jan. 1812, 31 May 1819. Creevey thought about 100 members attended in 1821 (Maxwell, Creevey Papers p. 348). Perry was not a member of the King of Clubs, though it included many of his closest friends. (Seymour, "Pope" of Holland House pp. 333-40).

The meeting was intended to draw attention to the demise of the suspension of habeas corpus, for Perry hoped this would make it more difficult for the government to restore the suspension. The project, however, never materialised, for Bedford and Holland, who had originally approved it withdrew for fear of not gaining enough support.¹ It is clear from the whigs' correspondence, that although Perry claimed in 1815 that he was not "in the secrets of Opposition," that he remained in close contact with the party leaders until the last year of his life. He was quite often cited in the whigs' letters as their source of information, and though much of this was mere gossip, it might on occasions influence party tactics. Tierney, for example, anticipating a parliamentary session in late 1818, remarked that "as to the south american question if Mr. Perry is correct, we shall have no ground for attack as Castlereagh does not intend to lend himself to any Interference."²

Perry suffered no further prosecutions after his acquittal in 1810, though in the eyes of ministerialists the language of the Chronicle appeared sometimes libellous. Sidmouth complained in 1818 that he was being attacked vehemently and unjustifiably in the Chronicle for his appointments to a charitable commission; and in 1819 Southey was so indignant at the Chronicle's condemnation of

1.) Perry to Lambton, n.d. [Jan. 1818], 20 Jan. 1818, Lambton MSS.

2.) Tierney to Holland, 23 Sept. 1818, Add. MSS. 51,584 f.74. Parliament did not meet until Jan. 1819.

the magistrates at Peterloo that he exclaimed "Surely such language as this is within reach of the Law... and if it is not, laws should then be made to reach it."¹ The only brush with authority occurred in 1821 when a backbencher, Stuart Wortley, complained that a paragraph in the Chronicle was a gross breach of the privileges of the Commons. A minority in a division, in which a petition had been rejected without being read, had been described as voting "against Lord Castlereagh's admonition...not to trouble and take up the time of the House of Commons any more with their petitions;" - a description which Perry admitted was both incorrect and indecorous. Several members such as H.G. Bennet, Creevey and Hobhouse, did not help the Chronicle by arguing that the description was correct, or less mischievous than Wortley's motion, which made the Commons seem opposed to the liberty of the press. Such remarks strengthened Wortley's resolve to persist with his motion that the printer of the Chronicle be called to the bar of the House, but after a long debate the motion was withdrawn.² Perry's freedom from prosecution after 1810 in the ordinary courts may be attributed, not to any growth of caution on his part, but to the fact that his reputation and respectability were

1.) Pellew, Life and Correspondence of...Sidmouth iii.223; MC 22 July 1818; Curry, New Letters of Robert Southey ii.207; it was said, after the government approved the magistrates' conduct, "The Executive have thereby declared that the people of this country hold their lives and properties at the point of a bayonet." (MC 21 Sept. 1819.).

2.) MC 26 Feb., 10 Mar. 1821; Parl.Debs. iv. 9 Mar. 1821. cols. 1162-70.

such that no jury was likely to convict him.

During the last decade of Perry's life, no advance was made in the circulation of the Chronicle. This may be attributed in part to the major mistake Perry made in 1813 of refusing to invest in a steam press. He was invited, along with John Walter II of The Times, to inspect Friedrich Koenig's cylindrical steam-driven machine, but he did not even bother to watch it being demonstrated. Perry's lack of interest was typical of most newspaper proprietors, who showed little concern with improving their methods of production, and did not follow Walter's example until the 1820s. Perry may have been discouraged by the fact that Walter himself had lost money in backing a power-press some years earlier, and in this late stage of his career he may have felt that he stood to lose more than he could gain.¹ But the sum of £2,800 required to buy two machines was not very large in proportion to Perry's profits from advertising at this time which were about £10,000 per year. Moreover, he felt the lack of automated means of production. Early in 1814 he said that it was impossible to extend the Chronicle's sale except by either delaying its publication or employing double the number of printers and presses. Shortly after the introduction of the steam-press on The Times, Perry noted that it was "highly serviceable," and he was reported by the bookseller John Walker to be "somewhat mortified" about his mistake.²

1.) Christie, Myth and Reality pp. 357-8; History of The Times i.112; Howe, Newspaper Printing in the Nineteenth Century p.3.

2.) MC 9 Mar., 5 Dec. 1814; Walker to Grey, 12 Dec. 1814, Grey MSS. Perry had been offered one of Koenig's machines in 1810.

In 1816 Perry increased the number of his hand presses in order to speed up the Chronicle's production, but it was not until after his death that steam presses came to be used for the paper.¹ Perry attempted to counter The Times's advantage by occasionally claiming that the Chronicle contained better foreign news and by criticising The Times for its lack of political consistency.² But The Times's circulation continued to be well ahead of the Chronicle's. It declined from a peak of 8,000 early in 1814 to about 6,000 in 1816, but this fall was common to all newspapers, and Perry did not take up the challenge to publish his circulation figures in response to the claim of The Times that it sold more than the Chronicle and Post combined, and that the Chronicle's sale had fallen by nearly 1,000 in the year following the peace and rise in stamp duty.³ Although Perry's advertising revenue steadily increased, and he was able to claim at the Fox club in 1817 that the Chronicle was more prosperous than ever, the paper's sale remained fairly static. It was said to have risen to 4,000 in 1819, but it declined in 1820 as a result of Perry's moderate line on Queen Caroline. In 1821 its circulation of about

1.) MC 1 Feb. 1816; Howe, op.cit. p.8.

2.) MC 5 Nov. 1814, 8, 12, 27 Sept. 1815, 9, 29 Aug., 10 Oct., 3, 27, Dec. 1817.

3.) The Times 3, 5 Oct. 1816. Perry claimed the Chronicle's sale was rising steadily, but gave no figures. (MC 1 Feb., 2, 4, 7 Oct. 1816).

3,200 was slightly less than it had been in 1811, and was less than half that of The Times, at 7,000.¹

Perry's interests, apart from his newspaper, appear to have largely concerned his collection of books and the affairs of Drury Lane theatre. His valuable library was so large that it took twenty-seven days to be sold by auction after his death, and fetched over £7,400. Perry would have been greatly assisted in assembling his collection by his wide range of literary and scholarly contacts, and there is evidence that at least one of his friends, Thomas Hill, the editor of the Monthly Mirror and European Magazine, was purchasing books on his behalf. His collection included all four Shakespeare folios, and the fifteenth-century Mazarin bible which was sold for nearly £10,000 a century after his death.² As a subscriber to the fund for the rebuilding of Drury Lane, after it had been destroyed by fire in 1809, Perry exerted his influence to maintain high standards of drama which would guide the public taste. When Whitbread suggested in 1815 that the theatre should be leased to a full-time manager, instead of being run by the committee, Perry called for a special meeting to consider the proposal, since he feared it would lead to a sacrifice of quality to the pursuit of profit. "It was in

1.) Mackintosh's Diary, 24 Jan. 1817, Add.MSS. 52,442 ff.4-5; Knight Hunt, Fourth Estate ii.111; Annual Register lxiv. 1822 p. 351.

2.) J.M. Bulloch, "James Perry, our greatest bibliophile" Aberdeen University Review x. July 1923 pp. 232-5; Perry to Hill, 16 Mar. 1818, Henry E. Huntington Library.

his mind" he characteristically urged, "the duty of the Manager of a public Theatre to lead the public taste into a classical direction, not to pamper a vitiated palate with gross and improper food." Perry was quite happy to forgo a good return on his investment for the sake of upholding the quality of the drama, but in 1819 he had to admit, as the theatre fell further into debt, that he had been too optimistic in expecting it to pay its way on such public-spirited principles. He proposed as a remedy that share-holders should enter into a voluntary subscription, to which he donated £100, and he was appointed one of a committee of ten to consider proposals for the conduct of the theatre.¹ Perry was also prominent as a leading freemason; in 1818 he was president of the stewards at the anniversary festival of the Grand Lodge, and suggested that it might be to the advantage of the whig member, Sir Matthew White Ridley, to take the chair at the meeting. His activities in this field would have furthered his links with leading public figures; a foreign office official, for example, noted

1.) Reports of the Committee... p. 16, 2 Sept. 1811, Whitbread MSS.; MC 4, 11 May, 14 Oct. 1815, 7 June 1819.

in 1814 that Perry had obtained some information from the Duke of Sussex at a freemasons' meeting concerning attempts to restore the Bourbons.¹

Another aspect of Perry's activities was his role as a minor patron and friend to men of letters and political acquaintances. There are numerous testimonies to Perry's kindness and generosity. The radical Joseph Gerrald, who was transported in 1795, said he deeply appreciated "the manly dignified and very generous attention" Perry had shown to him; John Campbell recalled how liberal Perry was in advancing him money when he was a young reporter; and Thomas Campbell commented on several occasions on the warmth with which Perry had received him when he arrived in London in 1801 with only a few shillings in his pocket. Both Thomas Campbell and Mary Russell Mitford benefited greatly from Perry's hospitality, through which they met several eminent whig and literary figures.²

1.) Perry to Lambton, n.d. Sat. [Jan. 1818], Lambton MSS.; Marquis of Londonderry ed., Correspondence, Despatches and other papers of Viscount Castlereagh (12 vols. 1848-53) ix. 232. It is stated in E. Edwards, Personal Recollections of Birmingham and Birmingham men (Birmingham 1877) p. 92, that Perry of the Chronicle was experimenting with the manufacture of steel pens around 1820, but this is clearly a confusion with another James Perry. (S. Timmins ed., Resources, Products, and Industrial History of Birmingham... (1866) p. 634; J.T. Bunce, Memoir of Sir Josiah Mason (1882) pp. 60, 63-6, 71).

2.) Gerrald to Holcroft, 18 May 1795 Add.MSS. 27,809 f. 279 (copy); Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i.50, 58, 179; Beattie, Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell i. 357-60, 362; Vera Watson, Mary Russell Mitford (1949) pp. 84, 111-2, 116, 118, 123-4, 136.

Coleridge, writing to Perry in 1818, said that "I never can forget your kind attentions to me as a young Author, when I first tried my scarcely fledged wings in the Morning Chronicle." It does indeed seem, as one contemporary observed, that Perry's "kindness to all around him was almost paternal, and his liberality in pecuniary transactions was carried even to an excess."¹ The only question mark concerning Perry's conduct towards his friends and contributors arises over his treatment of Hazlitt; Mitford thought that Perry had no perception of Hazlitt's merits, and Hazlitt's dismissal led Crabb Robinson to conclude that Perry had "no delicacy or regard for the feelings of others."² The confidence which Perry's contributors might repose in his judgement and integrity is indicated by Moore entrusting him with the disposal of a poem in 1814, when he hesitated about accepting only 2,000 guineas for it from Murray's.

1.) Griggs, Letters of...Coleridge iv. 897; Williams, Life...of Sir Thomas Lawrence i. 290. The story that Perry tried to keep £600 of Porson's money after his death, and only restored it to his relatives under threat of legal proceedings, seems out of character; he may originally have lent the money to Porson. (Watson, Life of Richard Porson p. 338). Perry also helped Lady Hamilton when she was imprisoned for debt in 1813. (Gérin, Horatia Nelson pp. 183-4).

2.) L'Estrange, Life of...Mitford ii. 47-8; Morley, Henry Crabb Robinson on books and their writers i. 154.

Perry also acted as an intermediary between Moore and Longmans, advising Moore to demand 3,000 guineas for a poem without revealing its contents to the publisher.¹

Perry died on 5 December 1821, after a career in London journalism of forty-five years. His success as proprietor of the Chronicle was reflected in the value of his property, which was said to be worth from £130,000 to £190,000.² It included his 160 acre estate at Merton, the lease of Tavistock House, four freehold properties in the Strand, shares in the British Fire and Real Life Assurance Companies, as well as in Drury Lane and the Surrey and Croydon Iron Railway Corporation, and the copyright of the Chronicle, which was sold for £42,000. The bulk of his property was left to his two sons, but £7,000 was set aside for each of his four daughters, the eldest of whom had been married in 1820.³ Both his sons had successful careers in public life, for which they received knighthoods. The eldest, William, became consul-general at Venice, and Thomas Erskine was given a judgeship by Perry's old reporter, Lord Chancellor Campbell, became chief justice of Bombay, and was later elected a member of Brookes's and M.P. for Devonport.⁴ Less auspicious was

1.) Wishaw to Allen, 5 Sept. 1814, Add.MSS. 52,180 f.164; Russell, Memoirs...of Thomas Moore viii. 177-9.

2.) MC 7 Dec. 1821; Taylor, Records of My Life i.241; MSS. note, in an unidentified hand, in 1816 edition of Holcroft's Memoirs p. 300, in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

3.) Christie, Myth and Relaiity p. 358; Perry's Will, proved on 19 Dec. 1821. P.R.O. Prob.11.1651(683).

4.) DNB; F. Boase, Modern English Biography (3 vols. 1897) ii. 1473-4; Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i.179.

the fate of the Chronicle in the decade after Perry's death. Colonel Torrens of the Traveller expressed an interest in purchasing it provided that he could enjoy the whigs' confidence and retain his independence, as Perry had done.¹ Lambton thought Torrens would be a suitable replacement for Perry, but in accordance with the directions of Perry's will, his eldest son William, who had just attained his majority, took over the conduct of the paper. William attempted to run it on the same lines as his father had done, but according to Robert Adair, he could exercise no control over Black, who remained as editor, and could not stop the "tone of sacrificing the old Landed Whig aristocracy to the political economists." The Chronicle consequently ceased to be conducted in the interests of the whig party, and within a year after Perry's death, Adair could say that "the paper receives no communications from H[olland] H[ouse] nor from any quarter that may be called whig."² William Perry soon sold the paper to William Innes Clement, the proprietor of the Observer, in whose ownership the Chronicle underwent a steady decline. By 1834 its sale had fallen to between 800 and 1,000, and its value had dropped to only £16,500.³ Place attributed this decline to the bad judgement and meanness of Clement, whom he thought drove away all

1.) Lambton to Grey, 10 Dec. 1821, Grey MSS. B.4. vol.i.

2.) Adair to Adam, 22 Nov. 1822, Blair-Adam MSS. I owe this reference to Mr. Michael Collinge.

3.) Aspinall, Politics and the Press p. 240; Charles Mackay, Forty Years' Recollections (2 vols. 1877) i. 71.

important contributors, and it may have been due to Clement's influence that the Chronicle became, at least in the mid-1820s, hostile to catholic emancipation.¹ Black's uninspired editorship would also have been partly responsible for the Chronicle's decline. He was criticised by several contemporaries for his abstruseness and lack of common sense, and was described by Adair as "one of those intractable theorists whose heads are stuffed with a mixed farrago of German metaphysics and political economy, and who forget that they are living in a world which is to be governed by men and not by paper." Hazlitt thought in 1829 that Black's shortcomings were such that "In nine cases out of ten, the Morning Chronicle arguments stop the way of reform, instead of clearing it."² It was not until the Chronicle was purchased by John Easthope in 1834 that it began to regain the reputation as a whig newspaper that it had enjoyed under Perry.

1.) Add. MSS. 35,145 ff. 250-2; Aspinall, op.cit. p. 320.

2.) Adair to Adam, 22 Nov. 1822, Blair-Adam MSS.; Aspinall, op.cit. pp. 305-6; Howe, Complete Works of William Hazlitt xx. 293-4.

CONCLUSION

Perry's place in the history of British journalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries may justifiably be described as unique. The political and moral influence which he exercised as conductor of the Morning Chronicle for thirty years was unrivalled by any of his contemporaries in the daily press. By consistently supporting the whig party throughout his life, and through his known intimacy with the leading whigs, he gave the Chronicle a political significance, as the unofficial organ of the party, which made it indispensable reading for those at the centre of politics; and by conducting the Chronicle with integrity and good taste, he helped to raise both the reputation of his profession, and the standards of the press in general. As a proprietor, Perry did not show the same initiative in the presentation and production of his paper as did some of his rivals; John Bell had a keener awareness of the importance of a paper's physical appearance, and John Walter ii was quicker to grasp the significance of the steam press. Nor, as a writer, did Perry make the same impact as Robert Spinkie, his co-proprietor for several years, or the writers on The Times such as Barnes, Sterling and Fraser. But as a political journalist, Perry stands alone in his consistent and loyal support of a party. Both his most successful contemporaries, Daniel Stuart and John Walter ii, were flexible in their political opinions; Stuart conducted the Morning Post in the late 1790s as an opposition paper, but in later years he ran the Courier on strongly ministerial lines, while under Walter The Times's opinions varied with its editors.

Moreover, both Stuart and Walter became increasingly detached from the daily conduct of their papers, and eventually retired to become country gentlemen. Perry, on the other hand, remained until his death as closely involved in the Chronicle as his health would allow. Although he was said to want to sell out in 1807, and in 1809 confided that he would prefer to conduct it as a literary rather than a political paper, in order to increase his profits, he continued to manage the Chronicle in the interests of the whig party. The opinions, and no doubt to a greater extent the personality and debating powers of Fox, had, as Perry acknowledged, made an indelible impression on him as a young man; they had, he said some years after Fox's death, "fixed my principles, and... given consistency to my life," and he was thus "for or against all Politicians as they adopt or reject those maxims of Mr. Fox."¹ It was no mean achievement to remain loyal to a party which was confined to opposition for all but fifteen months, which suffered widespread unpopularity throughout the French wars, and which after Fox's death was seriously divided within itself.

Perry's conduct of the Chronicle as a party newspaper was widely criticised by the whigs, particularly during the latter half of his career. As has been mentioned, some of this criticism was the inevitable consequence of divisions withⁱⁿ the party, and some of it stemmed from Perry's refusal to give place to political matter and debates at the expense of miscellaneous features, which were

1.) MC 26 Feb. 1810, 13 June 1814.

important to the general reader. In other cases there was a real difference of opinion as to what was the best line to take, but in these instances Perry was often receptive to the whigs' criticism, and he might even reverse his attitude on their advice. It was Perry's close connexion with the whigs that gave the Chronicle its chief importance in the public eye; as Wilson said in 1816, when referring to the question of reform "Perry has entered the field very unequivocally & of course it is presumed under the Sanction of the Whigs which engages much attention to his manifestos."¹

It is difficult to determine what influence Perry exercised on public opinion, but it seems certain that he wielded considerable influence on those who were already committed to the whig cause. Brougham said, referring to the Walcheren expedition "The attacks of the M[orning] Chron[icle] are really not indifferent. I find they induce a general feeling among friends of the party, especially in the country, that that is the line to be pursued, & accordingly they make up their minds & commit themselves."² Although most country readers preferred an evening to a morning paper, it does appear that some whigs out of London were on occasions dependent on the Chronicle for the formation of their political opinions. Lord John Russell wrote from Edinburgh in 1811 that "I hear no political news but what comes through the channel of Mr. Perry," and the third Marquis of Lansdowne at Bowood admitted that "my acquaintance with party politicks is

1.) Wilson to Grey, 8 Nov. 1816, Add. MSS. 30,121 f.201.

2.) Brougham to Allen, n.d. [1809] Add. MSS. 52,178 f.117.

confined to what I collect from the M[orning] Chron[icle]."¹

Although most people probably approved of the politics of the newspaper they read, so that the majority of the Chronicle's readers would have been in general agreement with its editorials, it would be surprising if Perry did not exercise some influence in making public opinion gradually more sympathetic to such causes as the abolition of the slave trade, catholic emancipation, and parliamentary reform. The style of the Chronicle's leaders was better designed to encourage whig supporters, than to convert ministerialists, but even if Perry did little more than boost whig morale, without securing new adherents to the party, the achievement was a worthwhile one. In the long run, the principles which the whigs advocated were to be implemented, and the change in public opinion which made this possible was partly due to the efforts of the whig press. An anonymous writer on the press remarked in 1818 that "A man^{who} has been observant of the change which has taken place in the tone and character of public opinion within these last twenty years cannot but perceive how infinite a portion of this change is demonstrably chargeable upon the influence of two publications only, the Edinburgh Review and the Morning Chronicle."² Perhaps the chief effect of the press was,

1.) Russell to Lady Holland, 24 Jan. 1811, Add. MSS. 51,678 f.34; Lansdowne to Holland, 7 Nov. [?1815] Add. MSS. 51,686 f.100.

2.) Aspinall, Letters of King George iv. iii. 495.

as has been suggested by the historian of the Edinburgh Review, to make the public more conscious of the idea of public opinion, so that they were encouraged to develop and express their own views.¹ J.W. Gordon noted in 1816 that the climate of opinion in London had changed for, he said, "the fact is that the press has so circulated a loose, irregular, sort of information upon publick business, that every man fancies himself capable of judging of it, and hence arises those frequent meetings where so much ability... is displayed in their resolutions, and this will be very difficult to repress."²

Even had Perry been of little political significance, he would still have made an enduring impact upon the character of the press, by reason^a of the integrity with which he conducted the Chronicle. He was the first of the great editors to rise above the scurrility and abuse which was common in late eighteenth century newspapers, and his achievement in this respect was widely recognised by his contemporaries. As Thomas Lawrence put it, Perry "had the manners of a gentleman, and had less of that character which is common to Editors of papers than anyone that He had seen;" and Perry's old reporter John Campbell remembered him chiefly for the propriety and dignity with which he had managed the Chronicle.³

1.) Clive, Scotch Reviewers: the Edinburgh Review 1802-15 pp. 181-5.

2.) Gordon to Grey, 7 Nov. 1816, Grey MSS.

3.) Farington Diary ii. 237-8; Hardcastle, Life of John, Lord Campbell i. 179.

Even the attorney-general, Sir Vicary Gibbs, could acknowledge that Perry's "name is of such credit with a part of the public, that what he publishes is taken to be incontrovertible truth."¹ Over twenty years after Perry's death, Lady Blessington recalled with gratitude how, in 1817, he had consulted her family in order to verify a scandalous account he had received of the death of one of her relations, who had fallen from a prison window when drunk.² The most striking tribute came from Sir James Mackintosh, who when opposing the six acts in parliament in 1819, cited Perry's career as the prime example of the growth in respectability and talent amongst newspaper editors: "Writing as that gentleman generally did, in haste; writing too, under the impulse of generous feelings of party;... he had never been even subject to an accusation for private slander, and had never been convicted for a public libel."³ It was Perry's personal qualities which held the key to his political significance, for without his reputation for discretion and integrity, he would never have won the confidence of the whigs. As his obituary notice in the Chronicle, perhaps by Erskine, pointed out, Perry could be relied upon never to reveal his confidences or to use them to reproach people for their inconsistency, and he thus became "the first link in the chain" between the aristocracy on the one hand

1.) Report of the trial of J.G. Jones in MC 13 Nov. 1810.

2.) R.R. Madden, The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington (2nd.ed. 3 vols. 1855) i.40, iii. 457.

3.) Parl.Debs., 23 Dec. 1819, cols. 1540-1.

and the press and public opinion on the other.¹ Perry was the first journalist to gain general social acceptance among the upper classes; neither John Walter ii nor Daniel Stuart sought to cultivate the company of politicians, and Thomas Barnes only became intimate with leading statesmen after Perry had shown for over thirty years that a journalist need not be regarded as a mere hireling or tradesman. Perry's achievement in this respect was intangible but remarkable, for by raising the social status and respectability of his profession, he increased the potential influence of the press, and therefore of public opinion, on the governing classes.

When the Addingtons' old connexion with The Times was revealed by that paper in 1819, Perry was indignant at the indiscretion and remarked that "So sacred ought all correspondence to be held, that a journalist should be on his guard, that on the event of his decease, no papers or documents should be left to tempt any person, who might have access to them, to a mercenary publication."² Thus Perry's discretion helps to explain why the material relating to his career is of a fragmentary nature, but enough has survived to show that he was one of the most distinguished journalists of his time. The whigs belatedly showed their appreciation of his work when fifteen years after his death they subscribed £200 for the erection of a tablet in St. Mary's Church, Wimbledon, where Perry lay buried,

1.) MC 10 Dec. 1821.

2.) The Times 19 June 1819; MC 21 June 1819.

"in testimony of the zeal, courage, and ability, with which he advocated the principles of civil and religious liberty; and of the talents and integrity by which he mainly contributed to convert the daily press into a great moral instrument, always devoted by him to the support of the oppressed, and the promotion of public and private virtue."¹

1.) W.G. Adam to Holland, 17 Dec. 1835, 10 Aug, 14 Sept. 1836, Add. MSS. 51,595 ff. 180-1, 231-2, 234; A.W.H. Clarke, Monumental Inscriptions in the Church and Churchyard of St. Mary's, Wimbledon (1934) p.147.

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