## THE BLACK DWARF.

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n 1816, William Cobbett began to produce the Political Register, a weekly publication which contained no news and was almost entirely an essay, nd so avoided the newspaper tax. It was priced cheaply, and quickly gained circulation, overtaking the 10,000 copies which had beenconsidered the norm until then. Sales grew steadily to 70,000 by 1817.

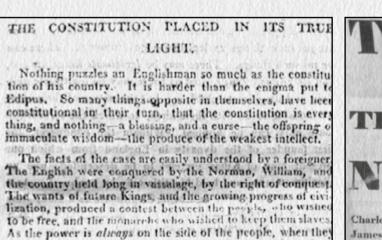
It was written in a simple direct style, in contrast to the prevailing wordy, repetitious, and allusive style with complicated sentences which had made newspapers an effort to read and difficult to derstand. Cobbett had incurred the displeasure of the government, and in 1810 had been sent to prison for two years and fined £1000 for an attack on the flogging of some militiamen at Ely. When Habeas Corpus was suspended in 1817, he fled to America.

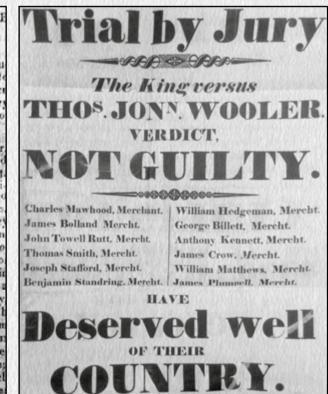
His example encouraged othere people to follow the same path. Thomas Wooler started the Black Dwarf in 1817. It called for political and social reform, and was more strident in its attacks on the government. Even though it had a life of only 7 years until 1826, it set an example of clear, radical journalism which was soon followed by other new newspapers. The Black Dwarf included parodies, satire and humour to support radical ideas, as well as reporting speeches, and questins and answers. It helped to weaken the deference of the lower classes to the political elite, and to increase their literary sophisticaltion. There was a biblical parody attacking the House of Lords in 1817 under the little "The Lord giveth, and the Lords taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lords. In 1818 the radical William Hone was tried and acquitted for publishing a parody of pasts of the Book of Common Prayer, Wooler wrote a poem to celebrate.

The Black Dwarf deliberately did not pay the Stamp Duty provided by law in January 1817. And three months later he was arreste and charged with seditious libel. He was able to convince the jury that, while he had published the article, he had not actually written it, and so was not guilty. He continued to publish the paper thoughout his trial, and distribution of it was undertaken by Richard Carlile.

When publication ceased in 1824, Wooler wrote a sad epitaph to the venture : "In ceasing his political labours, the Black Dwarf" has to admit one mistake, and that a serious one. He commenced writing under the idea that the was a PUBLIC in Britain, and that public devoutly attaché to the cause of parliamentary refore. This, it is but candid to admit, was an error.







choose to act; it followed as a matter of course, that when ever a single point was put to the test of the sword, the people were always ultimately victorious. But they wished fo freedom, without knowing its first principles. They rose in arms against any grievance which they felt; and obtained a momentary redress. They did not combat tyranny generally but the effects of tyranny; they contented themselves with paring the nails of the royal tygers, instead of chaining then in their cells. The consequence was, that the nails grew as fast as they were pared, and a constant struggle ensued be tween the people, and the monarch. Every time the king was beat, came forth a new article of the constitution, which the king observed while it suited him, and broke as soon as



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