

1810

# The Spy.

NO. 1

Saturday, September 1.

*Hail, Land o' Cakes! an' brother Scots  
Frae Maiden Kirk to John o' Groat's;  
If there's a hole in a' your coats,*

*I rede you tent it,*

*A chiel's among you takin' notes,*

*An' faith he'll prent it.*

BURNS.

IT will without doubt be expected of me, and the expectation is perfectly reasonable, that before I make any observations on the characters of others, I should give some account of my own: therefore to this necessary purpose, established by invariable custom, and that of giving some general outlines of the plan I mean to pursue in the course of this publication, I dedicate this day's Paper. Yet though this is a task incumbent on me, it has some fortunate circumstances attending it; for though there is scarcely a single individual in Edinburgh who has not seen me, as have great numbers in the country besides, yet not one of a thousand amongst them know who I am, or what I am about: so that though I am bound to tell the truth, I am not bound to tell the whole truth; and the omissions which I chuse to make have very little chance of being discovered.—I do intend in the course of this work to laugh at a great deal of my fellow-subjects, and to make other people laugh at them likewise; but if I were to give a true and literal detail of all my adventures and misadventures, and the blunders of various kinds which I have committed, they might well laugh at me in their turn. I do not like this entirely; it does not altogether suit my taste to be laughed at; and he who would reclaim others, should reserve a certain degree of consequence to himself. There is one leading feature in my character, which, if fully investigated, will give you a sufficient idea of it at once. I am wholly intent on the behaviour of other people, and regardless of my own. This abominable propensity seems to have been engrained in my nature; to have commenced with my existence, but to have grown proportionally with the powers of my mind, and strengthened with its strength: and it is this only that can account for a thousand untoward circumstances which have attended me in almost every undertaking. I am a bachelor, about sixty years of age; have spent the most of my days in the country, where I have been engaged in innumerable projects, which have all miscarried: but nothing in the world disturbs or perplexes me. My mind is so buoyant, and my thoughts

so vague, that if I can get a few of my fellow-creatures, placed before my eyes, that I may contemplate their various manners and looks, it is sufficient for me: I can laugh at their follies, weep over their misfortunes, and feel as deeply for all their concerns as they can possibly do themselves. You will be very apt to suspect that a simple old man, who has only left the mountains a few years ago, can have no great stock of ideas wherewith to entertain the enlightened and polite circles: but, on my own behalf, let me remind you, that everything here being quite new to me, any incongruity of taste or character will be much more ready to strike me, than such as have been used to witness the same scenes all their days. Besides, I am constantly upon the look-out for singularities, and flatter myself that I have discovered great abundance of them: certain it is, I have seen many things that have amused me, both among the books, the men, and the women; but to country manners I am still most attached, as my readers will soon discover; and my friends and correspondents living there, we will be often hearing from them; and as I have spent such a long life in doing nothing else but making observations, it would be mortifying to reflect that none had been the better of them but myself. But I must try to be a little more circumstantial.

When I was a little trifling boy, although the school-house was not above three hundred yards distant from my father's door, there were so many wonderful things to engage my attention by the way, (and the longer I contemplated them they appeared still the more wonderful,) that I often reached the school much about the time the rest came out of it in the middle of the day. Our teacher was a man of peculiar manners, and I could not help regarding him often so earnestly, that I fell insensibly into a habit of imitating him in all his singular attitudes and distortions of feature. I had the same ridiculous loud ha, ha, of a laugh; the same shake in my walk, with my arms set a-kinbo, and my hat a little on one side; and even the same way of spitting, and adjusting my neckcloth; so that the pedant having conceived the idea that I mimicked him for sport, for this and my other mistakes I was often belaboured most severely. On my quitting this school, my parents had a consultation, which lasted nearly a month, on the most proper calling for me; and at length, my contemplative mood swaying them in a high degree, I was destined to be a Seceder minister. I went to the college when very young, and soon finishing my classes, was sent finally to a country town in the south of Scotland to attend the professor of divinity over that sect; and had hopes of soon being called to some capital benefice, but fell into a most humiliating blunder on my very first attempt at

pulpit eloquence in public. I certainly had composed as good a sermon, or at least as good a discourse, for the occasion as any novice was capable of: it was divided into three heads and an improvement, and each of these was branched out again, into first, second, and third places; and though I say it myself, I do not believe that the boldest, and most new modelled bible-thumper amongst the clergy of the present day, could have confounded and puzzled a piece of scripture better than I had contrived to do; no, not even though a maintainer of our angelic purity by nature. However it went all for nothing. In short, I lost the thread of my sermon, and with it my whole powers of recollection, and made a solemn vow that might never to try another, which I have kept.

I cannot give a distinct account in what manner my thoughts were drawn away so completely from my subject; but my misfortune originated in contemplating the manner and looks of a very old man too minutely during the time that the congregation was singing a psalm; for when the professor arose and called to order, there was a speech from Shakespeare, appropriated to the old man's character, flowing spontaneously from my lips. I awoke as from a dream. My flesh crept; my face grew as warm as fire, and all my theological arguments were gone and for ever. The only effort I was capable of making was that of taking down my hat, and hastening out of the church, into which I have never again entered with a design to preach. I then commenced farmer, and was the foremost in all the country for plausible theory, and new improvements: but as I attended still more to other people's business than my own, my crops, notwithstanding all my expences, never turned well out. There was another thing I never can account for; when I had any of my farm produce to dispose of, if there was a villain in all the market I was sure to meet with him. I blamed the soil of my farm.—Gave it up,—took another.—That was still worse.—I went all to the Devil, as the saying is. I next turned poet; but that was the worst business I ever tried; I wrote epigrams, odes, and pastorals without number, and as every body declared that they possessed a high degree of excellence, I went and offered them to sundry booksellers, but the blockheads declared they would have nothing to do with them. They were without doubt sufficiently punished in the loss they sustained by their unpromising refusal, and I consoled myself as well as I could by endeavouring to mimic them, and laugh at their various manners.

It was then I commenced a Spy upon the manners, customs, and particular characters of all ranks of people, and all ranks of authors in particular, as far as my comprehension served me, which seems

to have been the business for which Nature designed me; and this pleasing, but unprofitable employment, I have now continued to pursue with increasing avidity, for the space of twenty years.

I have travelled over the greatest part of Britain in various characters, and often got into scrapes extremely embarrassing and ludicrous, some of which I may probably relate by and by.

I am now become an observer so accurate, that by contemplating a person's features minutely, modelling my own after the same manner as nearly as possible, and putting my body into the same posture which seems most familiar to them, I can ascertain the compass of their minds and thoughts, to a few items, either on the one side or the other;—not precisely what they are thinking of at the time, but the way that they would think about any thing. This study has been the source of much pleasure to me, and hath likewise led me into many blunders. For an instance; I was walking one day very lately, by the side of a mill-pond near the Water of Leith, while three beautiful young ladies were walking the same way on the other side.—They were vastly interesting—I fell to studying them with great seriousness.—If I remember aright, I was endeavouring to ascertain the exact degree of value which each of them set upon herself, and how each of them would receive the same proposal or address. For this purpose I was obliged to strain the organs of my vision to the most precise point, that certain smiles and gestures might not be misconstrued; and just when I had very nearly gained my point, I happened to forget that my own steps might so readily go astray, and setting my foot upon nothing, like the Highlander who fell over a stair in the dark, I fell headlong into the pool. It was above my depth, and the shore being a perpendicular wall, I had certainly perished if it had not been for the ladies, the innocent causers of my misfortune. At first they screamed aloud, but seeing no other help appear, they hastened round to the place where I was plunging; and one of them giving me a hold of her silk mantle, saved the poor Spy from a watery grave. The first question they asked me was, how it happened; I said it happened by looking at them. "O fie," said one of them, "what a shame for an old grey-headed rogue, like you, to be looking so intently at young girls; upon my word you have got nothing that you did not richly deserve." They went away convulsed with laughter, while I was standing shaking my ears, and spitting incessantly; and as long as they were in view, they looked back now and then, and broke jests upon me; one telling me that "this would learn me when to look at ladies in future;" and another, that "it would have been as becoming in me to have been looking to my

own feet, or thinking upon my grave rather than upon them." I understand this story has made considerable noise, and my misfortune has been attributed to causes widely differing from the truth. It may easily be conceived, that as an observer of oddities, I never can miss employment in such a place as Edinburgh; and I take so much delight in it, that I always endeavour to make the most of my time: I attend all the places of worship by rotation, and the theatre every night when it is open; Leith and Portobello races; S. Belzoni and the Highland pipers; and in short every public place where I can possibly thrust in my head. Even a station in Prince's street for an hour before dinner is a treat to me, and would still be more agreeable if the people would walk a little slower; but there is such a rapid succession of busy, careless, and beautiful faces, that I am obliged to be very quick and decisive in my remarks.

During the middle of the day I saunter from one bookseller's shop to another; and though I sometimes hear the clerks complaining, that they are eternally plagued with that long, lean, hungry-looking d—l, I am obliged to put up with it; and as I seldom lift a newspaper, but only pore over the reviews, magazines, and new productions (with all of which I mean to have a bout by and by,) so I think I do the people very little injury. But I believe ere long, they will either be much more civil to me, or else expel me altogether: I have seen, I have seen the transgressions of these people, and am fully persuaded if it were not for some of the lean, hungry-looking d—ls as they call them, they would not in general be so fat. Yes, my dear readers; would you believe it, there is a numerous race of beings in this world who feed themselves upon the brains of their own species.

Such then is the man who hath set himself up as a Spy upon the taste and genius of his countrymen. He is a being of the utmost simplicity; and subject to many weaknesses, foibles, and wayward fancies; not to give any of them a worse name: and the only suitable qualifications which he has, or pretends to have, fitting him for the employment he has assumed, are, the possession of some little powers of discernment betwixt right and wrong, sense and nonsense; an anxious desire to give merit its due, in whatever rank or station it appears. And he recommends it earnestly to all the curious throughout the nation, to keep a scrutinizing eye upon our literary, rural, and national economy; and to pick up whatever is excellent on the one hand, or reprehensible on the other, for the purpose of communicating it to the public, by the means, and under the sanction of the *Spy*. There is certainly at least some probability, that by their united

efforts I may contribute somewhat to the laudable intention of bringing light out of darkness, and order out of confusion.—I think the above sketch, which is fair and impartial, is sufficient to give a perfect idea of my character, and the nature and extent of the entertainment my genius is calculated to furnish. Neither can I relate any more circumstances of my life without breaking in upon some excellent stories, which I have laid up in store, on purpose to supply future deficiencies of matter. As to my plan of conducting this publication, it must of course be ruled considerably by concurring circumstances. The subjects must be varied; and it will not be possible at all times to command an essay or tale, the length of which is exactly calculated to make up a complete Number. But as none who purchase for the sake of reading will probably approve of white paper for that end, consequently the remainder of the sheet will always be filled closely up with elegant, or comparative extracts, illustrative of the preceding subject.

I am very fond of comparing one author, or one public character, with another; as I look upon that to be the surest way of ascertaining their several degrees of excellency; consequently in the course of this publication, I intend to compare all the Scottish poets, reviewers, &c. with each other, and to cite their several ways of defining the same or similar subjects.

This is a very curious study; but it is even still more curious to remark the singular changes which take place in the taste and opinions of the same person. Whether this be occasioned by the influence which the different seasons of the year have upon great and capacious minds or by the impressions and prejudices left upon them by former studies, is not so easily determined; though it appears more than probable, that the former is in part the cause, for a winter review by *certain people*, is generally severe and capricious in the extreme, and worse to suffer by a great deal than either their spring or summer ones. But to whatever changes in climate or constitution this may be ascribed, there is nothing more certain than that it frequently happens: and as I have dwelt too long on vague and unprofitable subjects, I shall cite an uncommon instance of it in a celebrated literary character of this town. In No 31. of the Edinburgh Review, we are presented with a criticism on Grahame's British Georgics, which is certainly a most excellent one, and gives as fair and candid an estimate, not only of the poem in question, but of Grahame's poetry in general as it is possible for an unbiassed mind to conceive. Nevertheless I think it will scarcely ever be disputed, whether the Sabbath or the Georgics be the most complete, or excellent poem:

nor yet, which of them displays the most evident marks of genius. Let us observe and wonder how differently they affect an ingenious and decisive critic. In his review of the Sabbath, after charging the author with diffusion, want of originality, and of borrowing his ideas from an indefinite number of poets both English and Scotch, he gives the following general view of the poem, and the talents of its author—

“The greater part of it is written in a heavy and inelegant manner. The diction throughout is tainted with vulgarity, and there is no selection of words, images, or sentiments, to conciliate the favour of the fastidious reader. The author has evidently some talents for poetical composition, and is never absolutely absurd, tedious or silly; but he has no delicacy of taste or imagination: he does not seem to feel the force of the sanction against poetical mediocrity, and his ear appears to have no perception of the finer harmony of versification. If he be a young man, we think there are considerable hopes of him; but if this be the production of maturer talents, we cannot in our conscience exhort him to continue in the service of the muses.

“This volume, however, at all events, has nothing but its poetical merit to stand upon. It contains indeed a good deal of doctrine and argumentation both in the text and in the notes, but nothing that is not either very trite, or very shallow and extravagant. The author talks very big about the inhumanity and injustice of imprisonment for debt, and about the cruel monopoly by which the Highland shepherds are driven from their mountains. He dogmatizes in the same presumptuous stile on the character of Bonaparte, and on the most advisable plan for recruiting the British army; and seems as perfectly persuaded of his own infallibility on all these subjects, as his readers, we apprehend, must be of his insufficiency. In a poem with such a title, it was certainly natural to expect some consistency in the ecclesiastical tenets of the author; but we have been completely baffled in our attempts to discover to what persuasion he belongs. He seems in many passages to be desperately enamoured of the old Covenanters, Cameronians, and Independents, and gives some obscure hints of his intention to immortalize the names of their chief pastors in another poem; but by and by we find him talking with great enthusiasm of the funeral service of the Church of England, and of the lofty pealing of the organ, both of which would have been regarded as antichristian abominations either by the old Covenanters or by the modern Presbyterians of Scotland.”

But, speaking of the Georgics he says,

"In thus putting the whole year into blank verse, it was evidently next to impossible to avoid clashing with the author of the Seasons;—and those, accordingly, who are jealous of Thomson's original invention, will find frequent occasion to complain of the author before us. At the same time, there are many points in which we think his merits must be admitted by all lovers of poetry, and his originality confessed by the warmest admirers of Thomson. The singular fidelity and clearness of his descriptions, prove him to have studied all his pictures for himself, in nature;—a certain simplicity of thought, and softness of heart, give a peculiar character to his manner, that excludes all idea of imitation; and his fine and discriminating pictures of the Scottish landscape, and the Scottish peasantry, are as new in their subject, as they are excellent in their execution.

"Mr Grahame's descriptions appear to us to be remarkable for their great fidelity, minuteness and brevity,—for the singular simplicity and directness with which they are brought out,—and for a kind of artless earnestness in the manner of their execution, which shows the author to have been entirely occupied with the care of rendering faithfully and exactly what was present to his eye or his memory. There is no ambition to be fine or striking,—and no great concern, apparently, about the distant effect or ideal perfection of his landscape,—but an honest determination and endeavour to give his readers precisely what was before him,—and to communicate faithfully to them what had actually made an impression on himself. In this way, he seldom thinks it necessary to call in the aid of exaggeration, or to invent any picturesque or extraordinary circumstances, to bespeak an interest for his delineations; but presents his scenes successively in all their native plainness and simplicity;—noting down all the features that really occur in them, without concerning himself whether other poets have represented them or not,—and stopping when these are exhausted, however abrupt or imperfect the composition may consequently appear. The effect of this plan of writing is, that his descriptions are almost always strong and impressive, and present the most distinct and vivid images to the fancy; although they are not often heightened by any great glow of genius or animation, and are frequently broken and irregular, or deficient in that keeping which may be found in the works of those who write more from the love of the art than of the subject.

"The great charm, however, of Mr Grahame's poetry, appears to us to consist in its moral character,—in that natural expression of kindness and tenderness of heart, which gives such a peculiar air of paternal goodness and patriarchal simplicity to his writings;—and

that earnest and intimate sympathy with the objects of his compassion, which assures us at once that he is not making a theatrical display of sensibility, but merely giving vent to the familiar sentiments of his bosom. We can trace here, in short, and with the same pleasing effects, that entire absence of all art, effort and affectation, which we have already noticed as the most remarkable distinction of his attempts in description. Almost all the other poets with whom we are acquainted, appear but too obviously to put their feelings and affections, as well as their fancies and phrases, into a sort of studied dress, before they venture to present them to the crowded assembly of the public: and though the stile and fashion of this dress varies according to the taste and ability of the inventors, still it serves almost equally to hide their native proportions, and to prove that they were a little ashamed or afraid to exhibit them, as they really were. The greater part of those who have aimed at producing a pathetic effect, have attempted to raise and exalt both the characters of their personages and the language in which they are spoken of; and thus to seek an excuse as it were for their sensibility in the illusions of vulgar admiration: others have aggravated their distresses with strange and incredible complications,—that it might appear that they did not disturb themselves on light and ordinary grounds: and some few have dressed out both themselves and heroes in such a tissue of whimsical and capricious affectations, that they are still less in danger than their neighbours of being suspected of indulging in the vulgar sympathies of our nature. Now, Mr Grahame, we think, has got over this general nervousness and shyness about showing the natural and simple feelings with which the contemplation of human emotion should affect us—or rather, has been too seriously occupied, and too constantly engrossed with the feelings themselves, to think how the confession of them might be taken by the generality of his readers, to concern himself about the contempt of the fastidious, or the derision of the unfeeling. In his poetry, therefore, we meet neither with the Musidoras and Damons of Thomson, nor the gypsy women and Ellen Orfords of Crabbe; and still less with the Matthew Schoolmasters, Alice Fells, or Martha Raes of Mr Wordsworth;—but we meet with the ordinary peasants of Scotland in their ordinary situations, and with a touching and simple expression of concern for their sufferings, and of generous indulgence for their faults. He is not ashamed for his kindness and condescension, on the one hand; nor is he ostentatious or vain of it, on the other;—but gives expression in the most plain and unaffected manner to sentiments that are neither counterfeited nor disguised. We do not

know any poetry, indeed, that lets us in so directly to the heart of the writer, and produces so full and pleasing a conviction that it is dictated by the genuine feelings which it aims at communicating to the reader. If there be less fire and elevation than in the strains of some of his contemporaries, there is more truth and tenderness than is commonly found along with those qualities, and less getting up, either of language or of sentiment, than we recollect to have met with in any modern composition."

It is impossible for a literary Spy to pass over a change of taste so palpable as this: and though it is but one instance of many which I have observed, it may tend to show how little dependence ought to be placed upon the discriminating and appreciating powers of any one mind. It will be impossible ever to persuade me, that this popular editor always sets the real merits of every book he reviews in their proper lights; yet there is no man whom I would less suspect of saying what he does not think. There is no other way, then, of accounting for many of his reviews, than by attributing the violent remarks contained in them to the temperature of the weather, his own frame and disposition at the time of reading the works, or the nature of the books which he has been reading immediately before them. Nothing is more evident, than that a book or essay which will at one time please a man, will at another time appear quite intolerable, and this perversion of taste commonly originates in one or other of the above-mentioned causes.

For an instance,—we shall suppose this notable reviewer, on a cold day in December, sitting at his desk; the window perhaps facing to the north—his feet smarting with cold, and his hand scarcely able to hold the pen wherewith he marks the delible (take care and do not read damnable) passages; his eagle eye brushing impatiently over the pages—

"Then woe to the author, and woe to his cause,  
When *J—y* his weapon indignantly draws."

Again, with respect to the case of which we are speaking; if it should so have happened, that he had just been perusing *the Lay of the last Minstrel* before he took up *the Sabbath* for inspection, and *Brown's Philémon* before he began the *Georgics*, neither of which is unlikely, the effects produced by these contrasts could scarcely have been otherwise upon any mind than exactly such as are here displayed. But there is nothing critics should be more cautious of, than perusing a book of which they mean to give an impartial review, for the first time, while they are in any bad humour, either with themselves

or others. First impressions are always most permanent. This, the inherent principle of self-esteem will ever secure to us: for when once we have formed an opinion of any thing in our own minds, we have too high a sense of our own judgments again to retract, without the utmost reluctance; even though reason should remonstrate, both from our own breasts and the mouths of other men.

Many authors, especially the poets, value their existence as men of genius, more than as natural men; consequently it becomes to them a matter of little less importance than that of life and death: surely then it manifests a most cruel and malicious mind, to take a pleasure in *cutting them up*.

Those tender buds of genius, whose appearance give the smallest hopes of one day opening in full and beauteous blossom, even though venturing up their timid heads in the barren waste, or amongst ranking and noxious weeds, should rather be fostered by a careful hand, and sheltered from the chilling blasts of scorn, than unfeelingly crushed in the dust with the rest of the garbage with which they are surrounded.

THE SPY will continue to be published, and delivered to Subscribers in *Edinburgh* and *Leith* every Saturday, Price FOUR PENCE if called for.—A copy of this Number is sent to such literary Gentlemen as are known to the Proprietors; and to those who chuse to retain it when asked for, the succeeding Numbers will be sent till further orders.

## Notes

In the Notes which follow, page references include a letter enclosed in brackets; (a) indicates that the passage concerned is to be found in the first quarter of the page, while (b) refers to the second quarter, (c) to the third quarter, and (d) to the fourth quarter. Each article in each weekly issue of *The Spy* is attributed as far as possible to its author, and this has been achieved by examination of three surviving copies of *The Spy* in which Hogg himself marked the authors' names: one copy (NLS) is in the National Library of Scotland, Ry.II.b.6; one copy (St Andrews) is in St Andrews University Library, Lib. AP.4.S8; and one copy (Guelph) is in the Scottish Studies Collection, Special and Archival Collections, McLaughlin Library, University of Guelph. The evidence of the marked copies has been tested wherever possible by other evidence, such as subsequent republication. The Bible is referred to in the Authorised King James version that would have been familiar to Hogg and his contemporaries. For references to plays by Shakespeare the edition used has been *The Complete Works: Compact Edition*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). The Notes are greatly indebted to the following standard works: *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Concise Scots Dictionary*, *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*. Other works extensively used in the Notes are referred to by the following abbreviations:

**Memoir:** James Hogg, *Memoir of the Author's Life and Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972)

**Anecdotes:** James Hogg, *Anecdotes of Scott*, ed. by Jill Rubenstein with Douglas S. Mack (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)

**Garden:** Mrs. Garden, *Memorials of James Hogg, the Ethrick Shepherd* (Paisley and London, [n.d.])

## THE SPY, No. 1 (Saturday, 1 September 1810)

*The Spy's Account of Himself*

Author: James Hogg—NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies. Motto Robert Burns, 'On the Late Captain Grose's Peregrinations thro' Scotland, collecting the Antiquities of that Kingdom', ll. 1-6.

**1(b) established by invariable custom** a reference to the essay periodical tradition, in which the first paper establishes the editorial persona for the work. See in particular the first *Spectator* paper, where Mr. Spectator remarks, 'I have given the Reader just so much of my History and Character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the Business I have undertaken'—see the *Spectator*, ed. by Donald F. Bond, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 1, 5.

**1(d) about sixty years of age** Hogg and Mr. Spy are clearly distinguished throughout

this paper, though they have common experiences. At this date Hogg would probably be thirty-nine years old.

**2(b) we will be often hearing from them** an early hint that *The Spy* was intended from the beginning to contain rural tales. A subsequent critic denied that Hogg intended to write in the essay-periodical tradition at all: 'It was, besides, not even the aim of the editor to imitate those standard works, much less to enter into any rivalry with them, but rather to give sketches of country life and manners, and to write tales into which they should be introduced'—see 'Y', *Life and Writings of James Hogg*, *Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (January, February, and March 1818), 35-40, 122-28, 215-23 (p. 126).

**2(d) a Seceder minister** the Seceders had withdrawn from the established Church of Scotland in 1733, declaring its faults in a 'Judicial Testimony'. They formed their own organisation and appointed their own professor of divinity. In 1747 the Seceders were divided into the Associate Synod (Burghers) and the General Associate Synod (Anti-Burghers) over the question of whether or not a Seceder might take a burgh oath. It is not clear to which of these groups Mr. Spy belonged, but Hogg's account reflects the fact that Seceder congregations 'were found largely in the rural areas and county towns in the Lowlands', while their evangelical principles are echoed in Mr. Spy's sneer against the maintainers of man's natural purity of nature—see J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960; reprinted 1973), pp. 280-82, 323-24.

**3(c) I then commenced farmer** the remainder of this paragraph partly reflects Hogg's own experiences farming in Dumfriesshire and turning author in Edinburgh—see *Memoir*, pp. 18-19.

**5(a) the theatre** see also No. 13 of *The Spy* for 24 November 1810. The New Theatre Royal, Leith Walk, was opened under a new patent on Tuesday, 14 November 1809 under the management of Henry Siddons, the son of the famous actress—see James C. Dibdin, *The Annals of the Edinburgh Stage* (Edinburgh, 1888), pp. 258-59. Scott was one of the proprietors or trustees of the theatre, and Hogg, a little after this period if not before, was also acquainted with Siddons, who he says, 'was always kind and friendly to me, and made me free to the theatre from year to year'—see *Memoir*, p. 24.

**5(a) Leith and Portobello races** the Edinburgh races were an annual event held at the end of July on the Sands of Leith, while those at Portobello seem to have been a smaller event held in August. In 1810 the Edinburgh race week ran from Monday, 30 July to Saturday, 4 August, with purses of £50 or 100 guineas for the chief race run on each day—see advertisement in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* for 2 July 1810. The issue for 28 July contains an advertisement for three races to be held on Tuesday, 7 August on Portobello Sands, with prizes from two to ten guineas. Hogg gives a vivid description of the Leith horse races and the crowds attending them in 'A Journey through the Highlands of Scotland, in the months of July and August 1802 [...] Letter II', *Scots Magazine*, 64 (December 1802), 956-63 (pp. 961-63).

**5(a) S. Belzoni** another attraction of the Edinburgh race week, advertised in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of 26 July 1810. Signor Belzoni would give his 'elegant exhibition of HYDRAULICS and HYDROSTATIC'S', with a Miss Norron dancing between the acts, at the Theatre Royal in Shakespeare Square on Saturday, 28 July and every evening during the races at eight o'clock, tickets varying in price from four shillings for a box to one shilling for the second gallery. For further information about Belzoni and his entertainments, see Valentina Bold, 'The Magic Lantern: Hogg and Science', *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 7 (1996), 5-17 (pp. 9-11).

**5(a) the Highland pipers** another entertainment of the Edinburgh race week, held

in 1810 on the morning of Tuesday, 31 July at the old theatre in Shakespeare Square immediately after the races, the admission prices ranging from four shillings for a box to one shilling for the second gallery. It was an annual competition of pipers for five prizes, including an ornamented prize pipe, given by the Highland Society of London, and judged by a committee appointed by the Royal Highland Society of Scotland. There was a band, and dancing of Highland reels to enliven the proceedings—see an advertisement in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of 28 July 1810. In the issue of 2 August the names of the winners were recorded as well as an address given by Sir John Sinclair in awarding the prizes, and it was noted that the judges 'from the amount of the receipts at the theatre [...] were enabled to make a handsome division among the unsuccessful candidates, to encourage them to farther exertions and improvement in this ancient, warlike, and national music, and likewise among the dancers of Highland reels.

5(c) **they would not [...] be so far** Hogg indicates in the St Andrews and Guelph marked copies that this is a reference to Archibald Constable, the publisher of his own *The Mountain Bard* (1807) and *The Forest Minstrel* (1810).

6(b) **compare all the Scottish poets** see Nos. 2, 5, and 10 of *The Spy*.

6(d) **a celebrated literary character** Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850), the famous editor and reviewer of the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, published by Constable.

7(a) **review of the Sabbath** James Grahame (1765–1811) published the first edition of his anonymous poem in 1804. See also the note on him to No. 5 of *The Spy*. Jeffrey's review is in *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 5 no. 10 (January 1805), 437–42 (Hogg quotes from pp. 441–42). His summary and quotation of it are both reasonably accurate, though not exact; several small alterations in punctuation and spelling were presumably introduced inadvertently in copying the passage for the press.

7(d) **speaking of the Georgics** Jeffrey's review of *British Georgics* is in *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 16 no. 31 (April 1810), 213–23 (Hogg quotes from pp. 214–16). His quotation probably suggests a higher opinion of the poem than Jeffrey expresses overall. Jeffrey begins his review by openly criticising the work as didactic poetry and speaking of the temptation to skip the 'agricultural learning of the volume' (p. 213), while his conclusion repeats this charge and complains of the long prose notes and high price of the volume. In this quotation Hogg omits a qualifying paragraph between the first and second he gives.

10(c) **"Then woe to the author [...]** draws?" this quotation has not been identified.

10(d) **the Lay of the Last Minstrel** Scott's poem, published in January 1805, was reviewed by Jeffrey in *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 6 no. 11 (April 1805), 1–20.

10(d) **Brown's Philemon** William Lawrence Brown, *Philemon; or the Progress of Virtue* (Edinburgh, 1809). Hogg has another gbe at this poem in No. 5 of *The Spy*.

#### THE SPY, No. 2 (Saturday, 8 September 1810)

*Mr. Shuffleton's Allegorical Survey of the Scottish Poets of the present day*

Author: James Hogg—NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies. Hogg claims the paper as his in No. 52 of *The Spy* (p. 517).

Motto Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, II. 3. 128–29.

12(a) **Mr. Giles Shuffleton** the Shuffleton papers in Nos. 2, 5, and 10 of *The Spy* had their origin in a projected poem by Hogg mentioned in 'Scottish Literary Intelligence', *Scotts Magazine*, 72 (April 1810), 286–'A poem, entitled, The Scottish Muses in their own Colours; or, The Poets brought to Judgment, will speedily be published by Giles J. H. Shuffleton, Esq.' Hogg also used his own initials as part of the pseudonym J. H. Craig of Douglas Esq. for *The Hunting of Badknee* (1814).

12(c) **large mirror** Hogg's device is in the tradition of the dream-vision of a picture periodical. For example, in No. 83 of the *Spectator* there is a dream of a picture gallery with the works of living painters on one side and dead ones on the other;

Time retouches the work of the dead painters, and Vanity and Stupidity those of the living. The device and anticipated audience reaction may also allude to the fashionable magic lantern shows of contemporary Edinburgh, described by Valentin Bold in 'The Magic Lantern: Hogg and Science', *Studies in Hogg and his World*, 7 (1996), 5–17.

12(d) **the appearance of a fine, stout young lady** according to the contents pages (printed when the separate numbers of *The Spy* were gathered into a volume) the first muse to be represented is that of Walter Scott.

13(c) **not all her own productions** referring to Scott's two-volume collection of traditional ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802), followed the succeeding year by a third volume of modern imitations by Scott and his literary friends. Hogg may also refer to Scott's work as the editor of Dryden.

14(a) **wore by the Scottish ladies two hundred years ago** Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) centres around the figure of a Scottish minstrel surviving into the second half of the seventeenth century to relate his tale of the disorderly Borders of the sixteenth century to the ladies of Newark Castle. *Marmion* (1808) dinosaurs around the battle of Flodden in 1513.

14(a) **judicious solid people** Francis Jeffrey, for example, in his review of *Marmion* in the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 12 no. 23 (April 1808), 1–35, disapproved of Scott's making chivalry fashionable through his romances.

14(c) **amongst the Trossacks** the setting of *The Lady of the Lake*, published in June 1810.

14(c) **the most glorious personage** the contents pages give the second muse as that of Thomas Campbell (1777–1844).

14(d) **in full bloom at the very first** Campbell sprang into fame with the appearance of his first poem *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799): the lady's subsequent enlightenment reflects the fact that Campbell's literary career was always overshadowed by the success of this poem.

15(a) **a voyage to America** a reference to Campbell's long poem *Gortale of Wyoming* of 1809.

15(a) **her favourite airs** among Campbell's popular songs were the patriotic 'Hohenlinden' and 'Ye Mariners of England'.

15(c) **A country-looking girl** though the identity of this muse is not given in the contents pages, she clearly belongs to Hogg himself.

15(d) **a mantle, somewhat resembling the dress of the first lady** a reference to *The Mountain Bard* (1807), inspired by the ballad imitations of Scott and his friends, although Hogg's first appearance before the public was in fact with his *Scottish Pastorals* of 1801.

15(d) **the dress of a native shepherdess** a reference to *The Forest Minstrel* (1810), which Hogg described as containing 'the songs of my youth' (*Memoir*, p. 19) together with those of other authors: these were divided into four classes of Patriotic Songs, Love Songs, Humorous Songs, and National Songs.

16(a) **an old faithful colley** perhaps an allusion to his 'A Shepherd's Address to his auld Dog Hector', which was first published in the *Scotts Magazine*, 67 (December 1805), 943–44, and then reprinted in *The Mountain Bard*.

16(b) **A self-willed imp** the passage reflects Hogg's assertion of his own natural genius, independence of critical advice, and hurt at friendly censure more seriously asserted in many places of his *Memoir* and *Lay Sermons*.

16(d) **a lively slender lady** the contents pages give this muse as that of Leyden. A brief note on John Leyden is included in the Notes on Contributions.

16(d) **girth, resembling that of the first lady** probably referring to Leyden's assistance with *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802), and also perhaps to his 'The Eff King', contributed to Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (1801).