

mention, and more if you think it necessary. Certainly the son of a man like Murray should not be left without a liberal education."

As a model in style and spirit for editors at the present day, I cannot resist quoting here two letters from Mr. Jeffrey to Mr. Hazlitt, the first chiefly in answer to a request for advice, and the other with reference to an action at law which Mr. Hazlitt proposed to raise against the proprietor of Blackwood's Magazine. They are eminently descriptive of the generous yet wise and honest nature of the writer.¹

MR. JEFFREY TO MR. HAZLITT.

"EDINBURGH, 3d May 1818.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am sorry you ascribe so much importance to the omission of your little paper on Dr. Reid's book. I did certainly intend to have inserted it, but the monstrous length of some other articles, and your unavoidable absence from home when the No. was finally filled up, prevented me. I think I shall give it a place in the next, though there is not much interest in the subject.

"I feel that I am extremely to blame for not answer-

¹ William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, for whom, in 1818, Constable and Company published *The Round Table*, a Collection of Essays on Literature, Men, and Manners, were occasional writers in the *Edinburgh Review*, and contributors to other periodical publications of the house. They were men of great talent and of strong political sentiments, which they were not careful to conceal,—Mr. Hunt, indeed, as he expresses it in a letter to my father, having suffered imprisonment "for not thinking the Prince Regent slender and laudable," and they were both persons whom certain writers in *Blackwood's Magazine* specially delighted to dishonour.

ing a former letter of yours on a subject more personal to yourself, and assuredly I do not feel it the less for your delicacy in saying nothing about it in your last; but I can safely say that it was not owing to indifference or unwillingness to give you all the information I had, but to a feeling of great uncertainty as to the justness of any information I had, and the hazard of great error in any advice I might found on it. This made me hesitate, and resolve to reflect and inquire before I made any answer, and then came in the usual vice of procrastination and the usual excuse of other more urgent avocations, till at last it was half forgotten, and half driven willingly from my conscience when it recurred.

“Perhaps you care nothing about the subject any longer, or have received information to decide you from quarters of higher authority, but I still think myself bound to answer your questions as they were put, and therefore I say that in general I think Edinburgh the very worst place in the world for such experiments as you seemed to meditate, both from the extreme dissipation of the fashionable part of its population, and from a sort of conceit and fastidiousness in all the middling classes, which, originating at least as much in a coldness of nature as in any extraordinary degree of intelligence, makes them very ready to find fault and decry.

“Most Lectures have accordingly failed entirely in this place, and the only exhibitions of the sort which have taken have been such as pretended to reveal some wonderful secret, like Feinagle, or to give a great deal of information in a short and popular way, like some teachers of

Astronomy and Chemistry, though their success has been always very moderate.

“Estimating the merit of your Lectures as highly as I am sincerely inclined to do, I could by no means insure you against a total failure; but I think it much more likely that you might find about forty or fifty auditors—not of the first rank or condition—and be abused as a Jacobin and a raving blockhead by a great many more, if you seemed in any danger of—[*MS. torn here.*] We are quite provincial enough for that, I assure you, notwithstanding the allowance of liberality and sense that is to be found among us. If this prospect tempts you, pray come. I shall willingly do all I can for you, but I fear it will not be very much.

“In the meantime I am concerned to find your health is not so good as it should be, and that you could take more care of it if your finances were in better order. We cannot let a man of genius suffer in this way, and I hope you are in no serious danger. I take the liberty of enclosing £100, a great part of which I shall owe you in a few weeks, and the rest you shall pay me back in reviews whenever you can do so without putting yourself to any uneasiness. If you really want another £100 tell me so plainly, and it shall be heartily at your service.—Believe me always, with the greatest regard, your obliged and faithful servant,
F. JEFFREY.”

The legal action referred to is the subject of the letter which follows; but it was abandoned, the offence having been made the subject of a compromise.

“ EDINBURGH, 20th September 1818.

“ DEAR SIR,—I have just received your letter, and shall willingly hold myself retained as your counsel. It is quite impossible, however, that I should either employ or recommend a solicitor for you. It is against all professional etiquette, and would besides imply a responsibility and a personal concern in the suit, which it would be absurd for me to assume. I know you to be a man of genius, and I have no reason to doubt that you are a man of integrity and honour, and most certainly my good opinion of you is in no degree affected by the scurrilities of Mr. Blackwood’s publication, but you are aware that I have no personal acquaintance with you, and that beyond what I have now stated, I have no power to testify to your character.

“ I have scarcely read the libel to which you allude. From what you say I can scarcely doubt that it is actionable, and by our law the truth of the imputations would not absolutely justify their publication. At the same time, the question of truth or falsehood will be allowed to be gone into, as affecting the amount of damage, and the jury may give one farthing.

“ It is proper that you should be aware that by bringing such an action you put your character in issue—at least as to all the matters alluded to in the libel, and therefore it will be of the utmost consequence to prove the statements to be false. Unquestionably it is *quite false* that you have been expelled from the E. R., though, as it is against our principle to proclaim or acknowledge any name among our contributors, I cannot give you a formal warrant for saying so.

“If I can find room for Reid I shall insert him, and if you have anything brilliant or striking to say on any other subject, I shall be very thankful for it. I am told you are profound on the Fine Arts; if you could get up a dashing article on that topic I should be glad of it.

“I shall always be glad to hear from you, and to do you any service in my power.—Ever very truly yours,

“F. JEFFREY.”

In the correspondence of my father's firm many important letters from Mr. Jeffrey would probably be found; but I have given in these few pages all in my possession that I think would interest my readers.

The following sketch by my brother David was written a few days after Lord Jeffrey's death, and had been called forth by the inadequacy of a notice in one of our local journals:—

“This notice strikes me as scarcely equal to the occasion. It might easily have been more encomiastic and not a whit the less truthful as a picture or sketch of the individual. With what a different tact, and with how much more of heart-kindliness and delicacy of touch would the subject of it have put on record the leading characteristics of the man, had he been called to discharge the same duty to some departed contemporary of kindred ability and undoubted worth!

“Lord Jeffrey was no ordinary personage. His standing was high both as a public man and in the qualities which grace the more private intercourse of social life. There seemed to be a measure of his own sprightly and