

pretty way of throwing away money! but it is necessary *sometimes* to be extravagant. To be sure, my living with Maule costs me nothing; no man in London lives so well and so cheap as I do! It is thought by many this present Ministry cannot hold it. The Bishop of Lincoln has given his proxy to Lord Grenville! They think most of Pitt's friends are with them. Thursday, 9th April, will be a decisive kind of day, when Parliament again meets—a trial of strength in both Houses, and probably the *dernier ressort* a dissolution. *Kittle* times, and our side very violent.”

MR. A. G. HUNTER to MR. CONSTABLE.

“LONDON, 28th March 1807.

“. . . I have agreed to allow our name to go to a pamphlet about India, which is to appear immediately, by Spankie of the Morning Chronicle—that clever fellow I formerly mentioned; but it must be kept a profound secret that he is the author. He is a most gentlemanlike man, and if I mistake not would make an excellent troop for the Review, of which I gave him a hint. I had met him at a party at Mr. Gordon's. He is a friend of all Maule's friends, and is immediately to pass as barrister. . . .

“Dressed and went along with the clan Murray to dine at Mr. Disraeli's, where we had a most sumptuous *banquet* and a very large party in honour of the new-married folks. We really had a most capital grub—new potatoes, asparagus, wet and dry dessert, etc. etc. There was a very beautiful woman there, Mrs. Turner, wife of Sharon Turner, the Anglo-Saxon historian, who,

I am told, was one of the *Godwin school* ! If they be all as beautiful, accomplished, and agreeable as this lady, they must be a deuced dangerous set indeed, and I should not choose to trust myself amongst them. The whole company, except ourselves I believe, were Jews and Jewesses ! The astonishing fact of the separate and uniform appearance of this wandering people over all the nations of the earth is one of the most extraordinary events recorded, or rather foretold, in Scripture, and is surely one of the most puzzling facts an unbeliever can meet with. *There is no answering it* ; and yet it never has been sufficiently urged by the divines.

“Our male part of the company consisted mostly of literary men—Cumberland, Turner, Disraeli, Basevi, Prince Hoare, and Mr. Cervetto, the truly celebrated violoncello player. Cervetto, though not an old man, has not played in public for many years, being in independent circumstances. I regretted I never heard him. He is an agreeable, well-behaved, pleasant man. Within these few years I missed an opportunity of hearing him and Crossdill play duets together in Edinburgh, in private, a treat not to be had above once in any man's lifetime—even in London or Paris. They were on a jaunt through Scotland together, and carried their violoncellos along with them in their chaise. Of course our whole conversation was of a literary cast, in which I was very much surprised and happy to find that I could keep my own with them ; and perhaps I rather *shone a few*. If this be not vanity it says the less for the talents of the party, as indeed I mean to do. Those literary men whom I have been able to

see in these two last journeys to London, are of a very inferior caste indeed to ours of Edinburgh; and I am now pretty certain that this remark may be applied generally, and will be found to be correct—at present at least. We have got many of eminence. They have now no Bacons, Lockes, Newtons, or Shakespeares, etc., nor even any Johnsons or Gibbons, etc. Turner was the most able and agreeable of the whole by far; Cumberland the most talkative and eccentric perhaps,—has a good sprinkling of learning and humour in his conversation and anecdote, from having lived so long amongst the eminent men of his day, Johnson, Foote, Garrick, etc. His whole conversation is sadly disgusting, from irony and detraction, conveyed in a cunning sort of way, and directed constantly against the Edinburgh Review, Walter Scott (who is a poor ignorant boy, and *no poet*, and never wrote a five-foot line in his life), and such other d—d stuff.”

“NEW STREET, 31st March 1807.

“ . . . We had a famous dinner here yesterday, and *very wet weather*; news had come of Mrs. Maule’s having got another son, and doing well. We had the ex-Solicitor, Lords Maitland and Newton, Barclay of Urie, General Hay, etc. etc. We had a small *Fox’s* head, and other suitable accompaniments.

“ As to public news, matters are going on famously, and much better than you in Scotland can have any conception of. The following most important news you may rely on as authentic, and promulgate everywhere in my name, if you like. On Thursday the 9th a motion is to be made