

It will be observed from this letter, that Mr. Murray was aware that, besides skilful editing, sound and practical business management was necessary to render the new Review a success. The way in which he informs Mr. Scott about Gifford's proposed review of 'Juvenal' and 'Persius,' shows that he fully comprehended the situation, and the dangers which would beset an editor like Gifford, who lived for the most part amongst his books, and was, to a large extent, secluded from the active world.

On the same day Scott was writing to Murray :—

*Mr. Scott to John Murray.*

Edinburgh, November 15th, 1808.

DEAR SIR,

I received two days ago a letter from Mr. Gifford highly approving of the particulars of the plan which I had sketched for the *Review*. But there are two points to be considered. In the first place, I cannot be in town as I proposed, for the Commissioners under the Judicial Bill, to whom I am to act as clerk, have resolved that their final sittings shall be held *here*, so that I have now no chance of being in London before spring. This is very unlucky, as Mr. Gifford proposes to wait for my arrival in town to set the great machine a-going. I shall write to him that this is impossible, and that I wish he would, with your assistance and that of his other friends, make up a list of the works which the first number is to contain, and consider what is the extent of the aid he will require from the North. The other circumstance is, that Mr. Gifford pleads the state of his health and his retired habits as sequestering him from the world, and rendering him less capable of active exertion, and in the kindest and most polite manner he expresses his hope that he should receive very extensive assistance and support from me, without which he is pleased to say he would utterly despair of success. Now between ourselves (for this is strictly confidential) I am rather alarmed at this prospect. I am willing, and anxiously so, to do all in my power to serve the work ; but, my dear sir, you know how many of our

very ablest hands are engaged in the *Edinburgh Review*, and what a dismal work it will be to wring assistance from the few whose indolence has left them neutral. I can, to be sure, work like a horse myself, but then I have two heavy works on my hands already, namely, 'Somers' and 'Swift.' Constable had lately very nearly relinquished the latter work, and I now heartily wish it had never commenced; but two volumes are nearly printed, so I conclude it will now go on. If this work had not stood in the way, I should have liked Beaumont and Fletcher much better. It would not have required half the research, and occupied much less time. I plainly see that, according to Mr. Gifford's view, I should have almost all the trouble of a co-editor, both in collecting and revising the articles which are to come from Scotland, as well as in supplying all deficiencies from my own stores.

These considerations cannot, however, operate upon the first number, so pray send me a list of books, and perhaps you may send some on a venture. You know the department I had in the *Edinburgh Review*. I will sound Southey, agreeable to Mr. Gifford's wishes, on the Spanish affairs. The last number of the *Edinburgh Review* has given disgust beyond measure, owing to the tone of the article on Cevallos' *exposé*. Subscribers are falling off like withered leaves.

I retired my name among others, after explaining the reasons both to Mr. Jeffrey and Mr. Constable, so that there never was such an opening for a new *Review*. I shall be glad to hear what you think on the subject of terms, for my Northern troops will not move without pay; but there is no hurry about fixing this point, as most of the writers in the first number will be more or less indifferent on the subject. For my own share, I care not what the conditions are, unless the labour expected from me is to occupy a considerable portion of time, in which case they might become an object. While we are on this subject, I may as well mention that as you incur so large an outlay in the case of the Novels, I would not only be happy that my remuneration should depend on the profits of the work, but I also think I could command a few hundreds to assist in carrying it on.

By the way, I see 'Notes on Don Quixote' advertised. This was a plan I had for enriching our collection, having

many references by me for the purpose. I shall be sorry if I am powerfully anticipated. Perhaps the book would make a good article in the *Review*. Can you get me 'Gaytoun's Festivous Notes on Don Quixote?'

I think our friend Ballantyne is grown an inch taller on the subjects of the 'Romances.'

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

Gifford is much pleased with you personally.

Meanwhile the breach between Scott and the *Edinburgh Review* was being widened.

*Mr. James Ballantyne to John Murray.*

November 21st, 1808.

You have no doubt heard, ere this time, of the universal indignation and disgust which the last number of the *Edinburgh Review* has given. Many people have given it up, and, if I may judge from what I hear, the general dissatisfaction is increasing. Mr. Scott was, I believe, the first who discontinued it. Constable was greatly affected by the annunciation; and I tell you in *entire confidence* that, from the aid which Mr. Scott determines to give your glorious work, and other causes, he anticipates an entire rupture with that house. He further told me, that if that event took place, *you*, if you chose it, should have the first offer of his future works. Indeed, he on every occasion expresses himself respecting you in the most flattering terms of approbation and respect.

Scott was very desirous of enlisting George Canning among the contributors to the *Quarterly*. He wrote to his friend Ellis:—

*Mr. Scott to Mr. G. Ellis.*

'As our start is of such immense consequence, don't you think Mr. Canning, though unquestionably our Atlas, might for a day find a Hercules on whom to devolve the