

so nettled by the remarks on themselves, that they, in October 1818, both sent challenges to the anonymous author, through the publisher of the pamphlet. This most injudicious step only increased their discomfiture, as the unknown writer not only refused to proclaim his identity, but published and circulated the challenges, together with a further attack on Lockhart and Wilson.

This foolish disclosure caused bitter vexation to Murray, who wrote :—

*John Murray to Mr. Blackwood.*

Oct. 27th, 1818.

MY DEAR BLACKWOOD,

I really can recollect no parallel to the palpable absurdity of your two friends. If they had planned the most complete triumph to their adversaries, nothing could have been so successfully effective. They have actually given up their names, as the authors of the offences charged upon them, by implication only, in the pamphlet. How they could possibly conceive that the writer of the pamphlet would be such an idiot as to quit his stronghold of concealment, and allow his head to be chopped off by exposure, I am at a loss to conceive. Their only course was to have affected, and indeed to have felt, the most perfect indifference, and to have laughed at the rage which dictated so much scurrility ; slyly watching to discover the author, whom, without appearing to know as such, they should have annoyed in every possible way. Their exposure now is complete, and they must be prepared for attacks themselves in every shape. Their adversaries are acting with the most judicious effect in sending their letters to every person they know. I received one by post. The means thus put into the hands of Hunt, Hazlitt, &c., are enormous, and they will now turn the tables upon them.

I declare to God that had I known what I had so incautiously engaged in, I would not have undertaken what I have done, or have suffered what I have in my feelings and character—which no man had hitherto the slightest cause for assailing—I would not have done so for any sum. But, being in, I am determined to go through

with you, and if our friends will only act with redoubled discretion, we may get the better of this check, and yet gain a victory. They should by a masterly effort pluck the thing out of their minds: it is done; but how in the name of wonder they could act with such an utter disregard of all and almost daily experience, I am too much vexed and disappointed to conceive. The only course to be taken now is to redouble every effort for the improvement of the magazine. Let us take public estimation by assault; by the irresistible effect of talent employed on subjects that are interesting; and above all, I say, to collect information on passing events. Our editors are totally mistaken in thinking that this consists in laborious essays. These are very good as accessories, but the flesh and blood and bones is information. That will make the public *eager* to get us at the end of the month; and, by the way, the tone of every article should be gentlemanly; . . . and, I repeat, if you wish to be universally read, the magazine should be conciliatory, so as to make it open for all mankind to read and to contribute. For such a mammoth of a work every month you will find must consume all the means that you can collect from all quarters.

What you must suffer from this must be inconceivably annoying; but, seeing how THEY feel under the first touch of *personality*, you will be the better able to conceive the sensations of others, and resolve never to insert anything of the kind again. Even the article on Thomas Moore was unnecessary and unkind, and, as Mr. C[roker] told me, cannot fail of giving him pain and making yourselves more enemies. In the name of God, why do you seem to think it *indispensable* that each number must give pain to some one or other. Why not think of giving pleasure to all? This should be the real object of a magazine. Pray let me hear from you instantly as to the effect of this injudicious matter, and tell me if they propose to take any further step. The answer to W[ilson] and L[ockhart] is obviously written by talent much superior to that displayed in the pamphlet, and it is written with triumph, not with irritation. I am so vexed at this business that I cannot write about any other matters until to-morrow.

Yours ever,

J. M.

Many more letters passed between the proprietors of the magazine on the subject. Blackwood agreed with Murray as to his view of the question. "Wilson," he said, "felt sore and enraged, for he could not endure the least breath of anything ungentlemanly." Lockhart laughed at the whole business. Blackwood desired to dismiss it from his mind, to treat the matter with silence, and to do all that was possible to increase the popularity of the magazine. The next number, he said, would be excellent and unexceptionable; and it proved to be so. "Out of evil," he wrote (30th Oct.), "cometh good; and I have no doubt but that this vile business will both animate their exertions and make them much more cautious for the future. . . . Another number or two will put us in smooth water. Much as we have been vexed already, we will yet be amply repaid for all our troubles."

The difficulty, however, was not yet over. While the principal editors of the *Chaldee Manuscript* had thus revealed themselves to the author of '*Hypocrisy Unveiled*,' the London publisher of *Blackwood* was, in November 1818, assailed by a biting pamphlet, entitled '*A Letter to Mr. John Murray, of Albemarle Street, occasioned by his having undertaken the publication, in London, of Blackwood's Magazine*.' "The curse of his respectability," he was told, had brought the letter upon him. "Your name stands among the very highest in the department of Literature which has fallen to your lot: the eminent persons who have confided in you, and the works you have given to the world, have conduced to your establishment in the public favour; while your liberality, your impartiality, and your private motives, bear testimony to the justice of your claims to that honourable distinction." It was alleged that his elevation put him "above the reach of mere speculators

in literature," and yet he was the avowed publisher of a magazine in which men of the highest character had been assailed and slandered. After some more similar remarks, in the course of which it was alleged that Mr. Murray had revived the power of the magazine—although then sinking beneath contempt—by placing his name upon its cover, he was requested, "in the name of an insulted public, to renounce this infamous magazine." "I conjure you," said the author, "by your reputation, by your honour, by your sense of justice: I implore you by your regard for the good opinion of men, to renounce it: I appeal to your own bosom whether you are not ashamed of your connection with it. Renounce it, renounce it!"

Many more appeals of the same kind reached Mr. Murray's ear. Moore, in his Diary (4th Nov., 1818), writes: "Received two most civil and anxious letters from the great 'Bibliopola Tryphon' Murray, expressing his regret at the article in *Blackwood*, and his resolution to give up all concern in it if it contained any more such personalities."\*

Hazlitt's action against the proprietors of *Blackwood's Magazine* was proceeded with, but Murray received a letter from Edinburgh in November 1818, saying that nothing had been done to defend the case. He was not unnaturally annoyed at this, and replied:—

*John Murray to Mr. Blackwood.*

November 27th, 1818.

MY DEAR BLACKWOOD,

Your letter has occupied my whole morning. Nothing can be worse than your inattention to so important a matter. Even at this late period you omit to send me any

\* 'Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore,' ii., 210. By Lord John Russell.

one document on which counsel can form an opinion. What is the accusation? What can you prove? How you could let it fall in this manner at your door I cannot conceive; but I have done the best I can. . . I have had a long consultation with Mr. Turner, and I have sent after, and searched myself after, the works which the fellow has written. Mr. Turner will write to-night. To neglect such a thing as this when three-fourths of the talent of the Bar are in hostility to you, and when any jury will be prejudiced against you, is very reprehensible. The magazine is very far superior to the former one, and is liked by everyone who has seen it; but at my leisure I shall write more particularly respecting it. In the meantime I am collecting some excellent articles, which shall be sent on Monday.

Most truly yours,

JOHN MURRAY.

I hope they will arrive in time, or it is ruin to us as to effect.

Three days later Murray wrote to Blackwood that he was determined to stand by the magazine, notwithstanding the aspersions made against him; but solely on condition that the writers in the magazine would abstain from all personality. "You see," he wrote (30th November), "that I am giving *essential* assistance to it, and that ought to be the best pledge of my intentions." He still insisted that the magazine should give more information as to what was going on in the world.

*John Murray to Mr. Wm. Blackwood.*

December 7th, 1818.

"At any rate, I hope the next number will be free of politics and of personality. If, for instance, you are going to attack Mr. Brougham, you must strike out my name. Mackintosh is offended, and thus a very material source is closed to me—at least, until your *literary* character is established. Mr. Turner is, I presume, in regular negotiation with Mr. Patmore (Hazlitt's friend), and in active

correspondence with you. Southey, in a letter received this day, has the following passage: 'It was said some time ago in the *Times* that Hazlitt had meditated an action against *Blackwood's Magazine*. I do not believe it. He would not run the risk of having me subpœnaed upon the trial.'

At last the Hazlitt action was settled. Blackwood, after acknowledging the receipt of a "glorious article" for the magazine on the North-West Expedition, from Murray, proceeds:—

*Mr. Blackwood to John Murray.*

Dec. 16th, 1818.

"I have had two letters from Mr. Patmore, informing me that Mr. Hazlitt was to drop the prosecution. His agent has since applied to mine offering to do this, if the expenses and a small sum for some charity were paid. My agent told him he would certainly advise any client of his to get out of court, but that he would never advise me to pay anything to be made a talk of, as a sum for a charity would be. He would advise me, he said, to pay the expenses, and a trifle to Hazlitt himself privately. Hazlitt's agent agreed to this."\*

The correspondence between Murray and Blackwood continued, and the London sale of the magazine was augmented by Murray's energy to 2000 copies early in 1819, but negotiations did not go on quite smoothly between the proprietors. Murray still complained of the personalities, and of the way in which the magazine was edited. "Indeed," he wrote (9th January, 1819), "as editors, they are not worth sixpence." He also objected to the "echo of the *Edinburgh Review's* abuse of Sharon Turner. It was sufficient to give pain to me, and to my most valued friend. There was another ungentlemanly and

\* I have not been able to discover what sum, if any, was paid to Hazlitt privately.

uncalled-for thrust at Thomas Moore. That just makes so many more enemies, unnecessarily; and you not only deprive me of the communications of my friends, but you positively provoke them to go over to your adversary."

Nevertheless, it appeared to be impossible to exercise any control over the editors, who inserted or rejected whatever they pleased. Murray objected to 'Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk' (by Lockhart), which was a renewal in a petty way of the personalities which had been so often reprobated.

*John Murray to Mr. Blackwood.*

Feb. 20th, 1819.

"I declare I cannot conceive how you can still suffer such articles to appear, knowing the ill-blood which they occasion. I assure you it is degrading, and I should certainly feel ashamed of publishing it. I fear you will think me very troublesome in my correspondence about the magazine, but as my character is at stake, you must not be surprised at my anxiety to lose no more of it on this account. I am very far from wishing to trouble you, and if you wish to be quit of me, you have only to pay me off, and I will retire; but such things I cannot publish."

Murray had no alternative left but to expostulate, and if his expostulations were unheeded, to retire from the magazine. The last course was that which he eventually decided to adopt, and the end of the partnership in *Blackwood's Magazine*, which had long been anticipated, at length arrived. Murray's name appeared for the last time on No. 22, for January 1819; the following number bore no London publisher's name; but on the number for March the names of T. Cadell and W. Davies were advertised as the London agents for the magazine.

The editors, being now free from the expostulations of Mr. Murray, proceeded with their reviews on the 'Cockney School of Poetry.' Indeed, No. 22, the last

number published by Murray, contained a review of the 'Revolt of Islam,' wherein Shelley was declared to be also one of the Cockney School, and "devoting his mind to the same pernicious purposes which have recoiled in vengeance upon so many of his contemporaries." "Hunt and Keats," it was said, "and some others of the school, are indeed men of considerable cleverness, but as poets they are worthy of sheer and instant contempt." Shelley, on the other hand, was praised for his poem, which was "impressed everywhere with the more noble and majestic footsteps of his genius."

On the 17th of December, 1819, £1000 were remitted to Mr. Murray in payment of the sum which he had originally advanced to purchase his share, and his connection with Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine* finally ceased. He thereupon transferred his agency for Scotland to Messrs. Oliver and Boyd, with whose firm it has ever since remained. The friendly correspondence between Murray and Blackwood nevertheless continued, as they were jointly interested in several works of importance.

In the course of the following year, "Christopher North" made the following statement in *Blackwood's Magazine* in "An Hour's Tête-à-tête with the Public:—

"The Chaldee Manuscript, which appeared in our seventh number, gave us both a lift and a shove. Nothing else was talked of for a long while; and after 10,000 copies had been sold, it became a very great rarity, quite a desideratum. . . . The sale of the *Quarterly* is about 14,000, of the *Edinburgh* upwards of 7000. . . . It is not our intention, at present, to suffer our sale to go beyond 17,000. . . . Mr. Murray, under whose auspices our *magnum opus* issued for a few months from Albemarle Street, began to suspect that we might be eclipsing the *Quarterly Review*. No such eclipse had been foretold; and Mr. Murray, being no great astronomer, was at a loss to know whether, in the darkness that was but too visible, we were eclipsing the



*Quarterly*, or the *Quarterly* eclipsing us. We accordingly took our pen, and erased his name from our title-page, and he was once more happy. Under our present publishers we carry everything before us in London."

Mr. Murray took no notice of this statement, preferring, without any more words, to be quit of his bargain.

It need scarcely be added, that when Mr. Blackwood had got his critics and contributors well in hand—when his journal had passed its frisky and juvenile life of fun and frolic—when the personalities had ceased to appear in its columns, and it had reached the years of judgment and discretion—and especially when its principal editor, Mr. John Wilson (Christopher North), had been appointed to the distinguished position of Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh—the journal took that high rank in periodical literature which it has ever since maintained.

END OF VOL. I.