

1810

The Spy.

NO. 7

Saturday, October 13.

Le Silence est le parti le plus sûr de celui, qui se défie de soi même. LA BRUYÈRE.

TO THE SPY.

SIR,
As you are no doubt on the watch for grievances and mistakes of every kind, private as well as public, I wish you would be so kind as make some observations upon one which takes place at our house three times in four out of all the nights in the year that we have company; and of which I have seen innumerable instances elsewhere.

There are certainly many people in this town, who have a clearer head than my husband, but there are very few who have a better heart; of which, our long acquaintance has only tended still more and more to confirm my opinion. His intimate friends, not inappropriately, characterize him as *a good, honest, blundering fellow*; and indeed, Mr Spy, I think his greatest foible is an enthusiastic admiration of men of genius. He holds no communication with any other class, nor invites any other to our table; and from this circumstance proceeds my greatest grievance, and consequent appeal to you. Previous to any of these literary parties, my husband takes care to impress upon the mind of each individual invited a deep sense of the great perfections with which those that he is to associate with are endowed, and how highly he will be entertained and edified by their enlightened conversation.

I dare say, Sir, you can very easily explain the cause, why the purpose for which these parties are assembled is ever completely defeated, unless in some very few instances, and I really wish you would do it. In general, of all the parties I ever saw, those that assemble avowedly for the purpose of conversation are the most insipid and dull, every individual appearing as if under some restraint. What can ail them, Mr Spy? Do they think more is expected of them than they can easily or conveniently advance; or do they all wish to listen to others rather than speak themselves? I know from experience that this cannot be the case; but whatever it be, I have heard more good sense, more wit and humour, pass in one hour between my husband and myself than among fourteen whom he had picked out as the brightest luminaries of the age during a whole evening: A discussion on the state of the weather, the news of the day, or any general subject, is commonly all that can be wrung out

of them as long as I remain in their company, and even this is not gained without an effort.

I hate disputations yet would often be glad to obviate the restraint, which so evidently pervades our parties, at the expense of a little controversy; and though I sometimes advance things which I know to be ridiculous, for the sake of being opposed, yet the polite concession of my guests defeats this also, and leaves me often in a situation particularly disagreeable. Last night I said, I thought Milton the most absurd and stupid author with whom I was acquainted,—expecting to hear his beauties pointed out, which would have delighted me. I was disappointed—A reverend divine who sat over against me fixed his eyes on me, lifted his hand slowly from his knee, as if conceiving some weighty argument against my hypothesis, but he let it fall as slowly back—opened his mouth, and said just—nothing; but shook his head! Oh how I was vexed! After a long pause Dr. Jellaberry remarked that “he never thought him such a genius as he was reported to be, for though he could bear with such a mass of notorious lies, he could have wished they had borne some distant resemblance to truth.” This vexed me more; so after another speech from the doctor on the difference betwixt truth and fiction, the subject was dropped: and Milton and I both passed for blockheads. Last night was just like many other nights; my husband grew impatient, looked sometimes at one, and sometimes at another, in hopes they would break out in all the splendour of genius, adorned with eloquence; but in vain. As a stimulus, the bottle circulates with increasing rapidity, and before all is done their tongues commonly get before their wits, and you may often have the chance of seeing them behave more like a parcel of mountebanks than the leaders of taste, in an age of literary excellence.

Now, pray, Mr Spy, do tell the people, if they wish to enjoy *a good crack*, as we term it, never to let any of the party know that such a thing is expected, else it is all over: But let them rather be made to believe that they are met by chance, or to have a complete drinking bout. This last often has the effect of making every one fill his glass and drink with great caution, for fear he should be the first to get tipsy; the conversation will then be unrestrained, and the wit, if there be any, will flow in torrents. Or else, if they *will* meet for the purpose of gaining information, (the best purpose for which they can meet,) let the subjects be previously fixed upon, and every individual made acquainted with them, that they may have their sentiments ready collected, and enter on the subject at once. This naturally leads to the utility of literary societies, institutions of which I

highly approve: but even in a family capacity I think this might be of service; and, if my husband will let me, I will invite our next party by cards thus: "Sir, a few friends are to dine with us on Friday, when we intend to discuss the merits of the mad poem of Glenochel, or the last new publication worth reading, whatever it may be."

Now, Sir, I do not desire you to put this long dull letter into your paper, but I have no particular objections to it neither. I think, however, your best plan will be to make some observations on it yourself, and point out a remedy; for a more disagreeable situation can scarcely be conceived than that in which our literary parties are so frequently placed. If you make any reasonable use of this, I intend to send you a literal copy of an evening's conversation, which I can never read without laughing, as well as blushing for all those concerned. I am, Sir, with the utmost respect,

Your very humble Servant,

ALICE BRAND.

TO THE SPY.

I AM very ill used, Mr Spy; I appeal to yourself if I am not very ill used, Sir: and it is not I alone, but I fear a great many young ladies are in the same predicament; so you must either lend us your aid, and endeavour to set all things again as they should be, or else I fear we shall all soon be for no manner of use whatever; we'll grow sulky and ill-natured, lose our fine colours, and finally break our hearts without in the least answering the end of our creation. But I'll tell you all about it, Sir.

I am an eldest daughter, 22 years of age—fresh as the rose in June—with the form and air of a Diana—I can speak about all things whatsoever, and sing like a nightingale. Yet what signifies all these graces and qualifications, if it be not to please myself, and my parents, or younger sisters? for though I know perfectly well that I was made intentionally to please the gentlemen, yet for all I can do, I never get a chance either to please or displease them. It is true, that when I walk the streets with my mother, the gentlemen give all a squint look into my face as they pass, and I sometimes think I hear them saying, "Who is that lovely creature?" But this does not at all satisfy me: I want to let them see how prettily I can smile; and what looks of approbation or dislike I am mistress of; to let them hear how sweetly I can sing; what shrewd and quick remarks I can make; and in short I wish to be very friendly with them: for though you will

hardly believe it, Mr Spy, yet, if I remember aright, I have liked them better than the women ever since I was five years of age, and how long before I have quite forgot: Aye, Sir, and I liked always the pretty fellows better than the gruff ill-looking ones too. Now, though a great many fine fellows visit at our house, I can scarcely ever get a word exchanged with one of them, and I am sure it is not my fault. We come in to our dinner—make a silent curtsy to every one in the room—sit very stiff and upright in our chairs—thank this for one thing—trouble that for another—beg pardon of a third; and this is all that passes. After drinking the second or third glass, my mother sets a hand upon each arm of her chair—rises up, and sails away, with the utmost grace, out of the room—This is the unfeeling signal! Off we must all go after her, like a string of wild geese. How often do I wish that she were tied to her seat for an hour or two! I am really often so much vexed that I can hardly keep it from appearing in my face. And I am even much more sorry for some of the young gentlemen than I am for myself, who are sometimes so much grieved, at my departure in particular, that they can scarcely refrain from crying outright. We now see no more of them; or if we do, I would rather for my part that we did not; for sometimes one or two of them, having drunk till they feel themselves dazzled, out of the greatest respect for the ladies, come dashing into the tea-room about eight or nine o'clock, with their glazed goggle eyes, and their red noses; but all that we can get out of them then is a silly jest, or a loud unmeaning laugh.

Now, pray Sir, inform me when this custom was at first established, and why any discourse should ever pass current at a gentleman's table, in which his wife and daughters may not partake? There is a disgusting indelicacy in the very idea, that ever such a thing should take place, yet who can resist it?—But it is not from vague ideas alone that my suspicions arise: for I am like you, Sir, a kind of Spy; and the inherent principle of curiosity, so natural to our sex, is always stirred to exertion by every appearance of concealment. If I see any of our family or neighbours anxious to hide a thing from me, I never fail to become mistress of it; and, believe me, I have again and again heard all that was passing in the company at my father's table, when they did not think I heard it; and indeed, Sir, if the toasts I have heard them give, and the songs I have heard them singing, have not a bad meaning, they have no meaning at all that I can discover. Therefore, Sir, you may assuredly inform your readers, that if they will persist in the unnatural practice of shutting us out from their convivial parties, let them take care, however, never

either to sing, or say any thing which they would not wish us to hear; make them to believe that if there are ladies in the house, they can never be sure of them; and that it is ten to one we shall find a plan whereby to hear those very things which perhaps they would most willingly keep from us; and tell them that it is the most dangerous way for our unpractised minds, to be thus made acquainted with the folly of that sex, which we are taught to regard as our superiors in knowledge, and every rational attainment.

But supposing that we miss hearing of them, I wonder, Sir, they do not consider that there is another who both hears and sees them; I am certain I have overheard many things said, which would never have been hinted at, if either I, or any of my younger sisters had been present. Now, what kind of a spirit does this show in a man? Is it not mean and silly in one respect, and daring in another, to be scared from uttering a sentence by the face of a poor weak girl, subject to similar passions with himself, and yet broadly to say it in the face of an almighty and omniscient God, to whom we must account for every word and action, and who can lay his presumptuous heart in the dust in a moment! It is really awful, Sir! but it is not the less true.

Let me entreat you then, that, for the prevention of many bad consequences, you will do what you can to open the peoples' eyes to the propriety of mixed companies. Depend upon it, Sir, we are made for each other in every respect, and our keeping constant company one with another, serves greatly to polish both parties. Whenever I begin either to speak, or write, I always tell what I think, for which I have often gotten a great deal of ill-will; and I must acknowledge, that when a number of we females have retired into a room by ourselves, we are considerably addicted to the low vice of slandering others, especially such characters as are rather above us. If we are all young flippant creatures, we are too apt to run on about dresses without intermission; and if part, or all are matrons, we are commonly entertained with long dissertations on the plans which each of them have had of nursing their children, or histories of circumstances which I do not care for writing much about. The making of gooseberry-wine never misses to be discussed at full length; but saving this, though it is with much regret I think of it, as far as I remember, I have heard but very few conversations amongst us, while we were by ourselves, from which we could gather any information, unless it were about affairs which the less we know of the better. And when you gentlemen are left by yourselves over a bottle, you must know much better than I can tell you what kind of

conversation you are most apt to fall into; but there is little doubt that it would in general be more refined if the ladies remained still in the company; and of this I am certain, that ours would be much more guarded in your presence, than it is when we are left by ourselves. I never can say a good thing amongst those of my own sex, because I see it only raises their spleen, and acts as a watchword to put them all upon the alert, to catch every opportunity of mortifying, and keeping me under, as they call it. But the case is sweetly reversed among the gentlemen! What marks of admiration (I had almost said adoration,) have I seen beaming from their eyes on my having made some smart repartee, good-natured, or moral reflection. I have even seen my father shake my hand, and say, "My Fanny is a good girl if she were not a little romantic." One evening some of our company happened to be very severe upon the character of a lady: I did not like ill to hear them, for she was a great toast; but I fortunately held my peace, till one referred the most grievous accusation to me—I sighed—laid my head upon one shoulder, and said "O! poor woman, you wrong her: we have all our faults, God knows." My father put his arm round me and kissed me! He too had been silent. "Very true," said he, "my dear Fanny; peace be to thy benevolent heart." I blushed, but the pleasure I felt at that time has made me more studious of deserving his praise ever since. You cannot be insensible, Sir, to the good effects of a virtuous emulation in a youthful mind, but particularly when it is raised in the mind of a young female, to please those whom she esteems.

We often visit at our parson's house, who is a most worthy and engaging gentleman, and conducts his parties exactly to my mind. The ladies and gentlemen never separate, except that the latter retire to walk in the garden, or look at his library until the tea is got ready; for as the piano forte is in the parlour, we dine and drink tea in the same room. You cannot imagine how happy and social we generally are, for I have commonly observed that though in mixed companies, the conversation often remains for some time rather stiff and formal, yet, when it takes an enlivening turn, it is the most pleasant of all. We have all glasses standing before us, with less or more in them; but you know our modesty will scarcely suffer us to taste of the wine, though we could do it with all our hearts; but I think this a very good custom, for we have commonly a sufficient flow of animal spirits without it. If at any time the conversation begins to flag, which it is sometimes suffered to do intentionally, a song from one of us, accompanied by the music, is the result: and as the pleasure of pleasing is the greatest of all pleasures, so you can have no idea

how highly we are delighted at having it in our power to please, and entertain a respectable company of our friends and relations. The younger ladies of both families, who cannot join in the table talk, have commonly a busy whispering committee at one of the windows, over some flowers, trinkets, or the *three hundred animals*; and at a late hour we part, as far as I can judge, highly pleased both with ourselves and each other. If I were minister of a parish, which unluckily I am not, as I would make an excellent lecturer, this should be the first moral duty I would inculcate, that the ladies and gentlemen should never part company in the afternoon. This would, in a great measure, prevent drunkenness, that worst of vices, as it is an inlet to every other vice, and likewise all kind of vulgarity, or coarseness of behaviour; as well as too much familiarity, which seldom ends well. I would not baptize a daughter in the parish, until the parent swore, *never to banish his child from his presence, nor to say or do any thing while she was there, which he would not wish her to imitate*. Example goes a great way further than precept, and the example of a parent is the polar star towards which the tender mind intuitively points, and by which its course is directed through the rough billows and dangerous shoals in the unstable ocean of life. There is certainly no trust in the world equal in importance to that of rearing properly a family of blooming daughters; nor any other that is so frequently ill discharged. Ah! Sir, what have many parents to answer for? The female mind has been well compared to wax, but it is wax of the most delicate texture, which, when softened by the fire of youth, receives impressions with the utmost ease, but when age has cooled it, these remain fixed and immovable, whether they be good or evil. Nay, the smallest and most minute of these early impressions, time itself can hardly wear away. With how much caution, then, should any of them be ventured upon, when the happiness of a human being, and the welfare of an immortal soul, so much depend on them. Did even the happiness or misery of one creature only depend upon it, it is still a great deal: but it is ten to one, that the fate of hundreds are deeply affected by the training up of every individual: for, laying aside the effects which their virtues or vices may produce upon the behaviour of their contemporaries, when they that are children now become parents, are not the minds of their offspring formed in a great measure upon the model of theirs, and the children of those again, forward in endless gradation? Again, when there is a numerous family in one house, they commonly have all the same opportunities of improvement, or nearly so; yet nothing appears more evident to me, than that the treatment requisite to form

the manners of one young person, will completely spoil another. The capacity and feelings, then, of each individual, should be carefully studied, and treated accordingly. I know all this only by consulting my own feelings, but I think it must be true.

Now, Sir, I would very fain see this long letter of mine, which I really think is a good sensible one for a girl like me to have written, printed in your paper. It has cost me a good deal of thinking, and writing, and blotting; and if you print it, it will cost you some more of the latter: and you must likewise mark it with commas and semicolons; for my governess, plague on her, has not taught me one of these curiosities. I meant it only at first as a hint for you to say something about this subject, which has so often vexed me, and I am sure many others like me; so, as it was young ladies who so lately saved you from drowning, I think you owe them this good office in return. My letter is surely too good for nobody to see it save you and I: if you will therefore publish it in your next number, I give you my promise, that the next time I see you in a pool, I will lend a hand to pull you out myself. I heard my mother saying she was going to be a subscriber for your paper; and though I know she will be like to go mad when she sees this letter, I do not care although she should see it, for all that. It will let her and others see, that lasses often think more than they dare say, and that their thoughts are adders in the path, which they can neither easily avoid nor overcome.

Your's, &c.

FANNY LIVELY.

I can scarcely believe that the gentlemen are in general so very bad, as my ingenious correspondent seems to suspect, even when left to themselves over a bottle. I am rather inclined to believe that the whole is a stratagem of her own, on purpose that she may be suffered to remain beside the young gentlemen, which she thinks they will all insist upon, that she may see how wildly she is mistaken, with regard to the tenor of their conversation: and indeed I can see no reason why custom should persist in shutting up the most lovely and graceful part of the company in a room by themselves, excluded from that mirth and hilarity, to their share of which they are so well entitled, and likewise so lively's arguments answer for themselves, and conclude this day's paper with the following scree, but perhaps too just, letter; for which the writer has my cordial thanks, and assured word, that I will avow myself of his advice.

SIR,
As a well-wisher to your undertaking, which I thought, if conducted with spirit and promptitude, had a chance to succeed as a paper for the breakfast-table; suffer me to offer a few remarks on your numbers already published.

In my opinion, the first and leading feature of every work of the same nature, ought to be the most unexceptionable delicacy of sentiment; and of this most necessary qualification you scarcely seem scrupulously attentive. The two *epithets on living characters*, in your second number, are too coarse for a publication, which certainly ought to aim at giving a few minutes' entertainment weekly to the literary part of the community, and improving the taste of the middle classes of both sexes. They are a specimen of poetry too rude to be approved; nor does the beautiful concluding lines of the last at all redeem them, as they only show your correspondent to be a man of genius, but of an unformed taste. Moreover, though the characters may be purely ideal, yet the meddling or malicious will be very apt to trace them to individuals, which may prove hurtful and injurious to them, wound the feelings of those connected with them, and, however detrimental, can never prove advantageous to you. Spirit and independence, with regard to works of literature, are proper and commendable; private abuse is hateful.

But this is not all. Did you ever look over the list of your subscribers? If you have, I think the honourable names I sent you myself, might have commanded more respect than you have shown to us by some pictures in your fourth number. Believe me, Sir, if I did not know you personally to be a well-meaning man, and possessed of more genius than foresight, I would not only have withdrawn my own subscription, but desired my friends to do the same. But this I suppose is not generally known to your readers, and the injury you must have done your character, as an editor, cannot be trivial. Perhaps you never read it over, or thought your correspondent as capable to judge of propriety as you were; or perhaps, you thought that a paper written so decidedly in the cause of virtue, might be allowed to paint the truth of that which was meant to be exposed as a detestable course of life. This is an error into which nine tenths of our writers of plays and novels constantly fall, by painting imprudent characters, and vicious traits of a character, in a manner calculated to excite any thing but disgust.

To conclude at present, Sir, if you value my correspondence in support of *the Spy*, adhere to politeness and purity of sentiment; for

on that condition alone, I renew my promise of it. Be as simple as you please—the simpler the better; but never let that appear in print, sanctioned by you, which may tend, in anywise, to injure the cause of morality, or add the slightest tint of the rose-leaf to the modest check. When I return, I will endeavour to further the work as far as my means extend; and my friendship for you shall ever remain unimpaired.

I am, &c. * * *

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

The flush of the landscape is o'er!
The brown leaves are shed on the way!
The dye of the lone mountain flower,
Is grown wan, and betokens decay!

The spring in our valleys is born
Like the bud that it foster'd to die;
Like the transient dews of the morn,
Or the vapour that melts in the sky.

Thus, youth, with its visions so gay,
Departs like a dream of the mind;
To pleasure and passion a prey,
It often leaves sorrow behind.

Its virtues too buoyant to grow,
Its follies too latent to die;
We shall reap of the seeds we then sow,
When the stars have dissolv'd in the sky.

Our summer now flits o'er the main,
And leaves but her mantle behind:
Short time will that mantle remain,
Expell'd by the chill winter wind!

All silent the song of the thrush!
Bewilder'd she crows in the dale;
The black-bird sits sad on the bush;
The fall of the leaf they bewail.

Thus I may sit silent and sigh,
Before me the cold lonely urn!
My youth and my prime are gone by,
And alas! they can never return.

All nature thus tends to decay,
And to drop as the leaves from the tree;
And man, just the flower of a day,
How long, long, his winter will be!

But the grain, late adorning the field,
With its soft heaving billows so pale,
More gain to its owner will yield,
Than if still waving sweet in the vale.

So the breast where firm virtue and reason,
Could every wild passion subdue,
The fall of his leaf is a season,
That man may with pleasure review.

At suffering he will not despond,
Nor at death when his sorrows shall cease,
While hope points his eye far beyond
To a mansion of virtue and peace.

Eternity's streamers unfurled,
Time's tear o'er his tottering throne,
The last rending crash of the world,
The sky with its orbs overthrown;

He will view with a soul all serene,
And will welcome the dawn of the day,
Which in glory shall open a scene
Of perfection that cannot decay.

1810

The Spy.

No. 8

Saturday, October 20.

(Continued from No. 6.)

Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret. HOR.

TO THE SPY.

SIR,

THOUGH I do not remember that I was guilty of any violent act of disobedience for several years after the period at which I was treating; when I concluded my last letter, yet it was not without great address that my father kept my temper within the bounds of moderation. He had studied my character thoroughly and often gained, by the most delicate management, what no force could have extorted. He foresaw and deeply deplored the dangers to which the violence and obstinacy of my temper and impatience of all salutary restraint would inevitably expose me. To this moment I remember every word of a conversation that passed betwixt him and my mother on this subject when they thought me asleep. It affected me so strongly at the time, that I did not close my eyes for the whole night; and even now, when I think of it, I am astonished that it did not produce a reformation upon my conduct. I believe I forgot to inform you, Sir, that I am an only son, nay, an only child, and never was child an object of more tender solicitude. My mother, whose very existence seemed to depend on my happiness, looked forward with fond anticipation to that period in which I should be the pride and support of her declining years; yet, by my misconduct, I broke the heart of that admirable woman before she had passed middle age. "I tremble to think, my dear," said my father, "of the dangers and misfortunes to which our son will be exposed in life by the obstinacy and impetuosity of his character. Though I have laboured much to cure these defects, I fear my success has been inadequate to my zeal—He sometimes, it is true, displays himself a noble being, and by his generosity, ardour, and enthusiastic ambition of excelling in all his pursuits, frequently delights me;—but I have so often known a single vice ruin a whole character, that I confess I tremble for his fate." "Fear not," said my mother, "the silent operation of matured reason will provide a remedy for these unfortunate propensities and his virtues will at last predominate." "I hope so, my dear," rejoined my father, "but his resemblance to an old school companion of mine who was very unfortunate, and whose misfortunes were too often brought on by his own vices, is so very striking as to alarm me." He

may chance to observe them' (p. 5). A Society for the Suppression of Beggars was eventually set up in 1813, with the support of the Commissioners of Police.

- 62(a) **a Cato or an Epaminondas** Marcus Porcius Cato of Utica (95–46 BC) was the subject of Addison's tragedy *Cato* (1713), and Epaminondas (c. 420–362 BC) the famous Theban military commander was the subject of one of Plutarch's *Lives*.
62(a) **Nero** was Roman emperor from AD 54–68, and subject of one section of Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars*.

Elegy on Mrs H— of D—

Author: James Gray—NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies. The contents pages (printed when the separate numbers of *The Spy* were collected into a volume) give the lady's name as Mrs Hay of Drummelzier, and this is confirmed by the St Andrews and Guelph marked copies. Janet, the widow of Robert Hay of Drummelzier in Peebleshire, was the eldest daughter of James Erskine of Cardross, and died 29 August 1808—see *The Scots Peerage*, ed. by Sir James Balfour Paul, 9 vols (Edinburgh, 1904–1919), VIII, 449, 450.

THE SPY, No. 7 (Saturday, 13 October 1810)

Letter from Alice Brand

Author: James Hogg—NLS and Guelph marked copies.

Motto this quotation, which means 'Silence is the better part of he who is unsure of himself', has not been identified.

- 66(a) **the mad poem of Glenochel** James Kennedy; *Glenochel, a descriptive Poem*, 2 vols (Glasgow, 1810). Hogg also calls the poem mad in No. 10 of *The Spy*, though the motto to No. 12 is a quotation from it.

66(b) **ALICE BRAND** is the name of a ballad sung by the Minstrel to Ellen in Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*, Canto IV, divisions xii–xv. Hogg used the name again as the signature to his 'A Letter to the Ettrick Shepherd' in *The Amulet* (London, 1836), pp. 212–25.

Fanny Linch's Letter

Author: James Hogg—NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies.

70(a) **the three hundred animals** this a natural history book for children illustrated by woodcuts, Thomas Boreman's *A Description of Three Hundred Animals viz., Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Serpents, and Insects* which was first printed in 1730 and frequently reprinted in the eighteenth century. Thomas Bewick felt that the woodcuts were of less than satisfactory quality and his attempts to improve upon them were the beginning of his *History of Quadrupeds*, published in 1790—see *A Memorial of Thomas Bewick, written by himself*, ed. by Iain Bain (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 105, 240. After the appearance of Bewick's work editions of the *Three Hundred Animals* were sometimes printed with his illustrations.

- 71(b) **young Ladies [...] from drowning** a reference to No. 1 of *The Spy*, p. 4.

Letter to the Spy on his former Numbers

Author: John Ballantyne—Hogg supposes the author of this anonymous paper to be Walter Scott in the NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies, but in his letter to Scott of 28 September [1810] in NLS, MS 3879, fol. 204 he refers to it as follows: 'I have got a dreadful letter from Mr. Ballantyne every word of it I fear too just; it seems that by one or two unlucky expressions in Number 4 I have given my work that looked so well, a wound which it will be difficult to heal'. The style of this printed letter appears to be more characteristic of Ballantyne than Scott, and there seems to be no reason to doubt Hogg's statement made at the time he received it. In his *Anecdotes* Hogg said (p. 19) that the only contribution Scott made to the periodical was one letter enclosing two poems by John Leyden. Hogg valued

Ballantyne's abilities as a judge of composition, and he was also an important subscriber to *The Spy*—see the Notes on Contributors.

- 72(a) **epithets on living characters** see pp. 19–20. The inclusion of a poem on a well-known Edinburgh prostitute must have been particularly offensive.
72(b) **improving the taste of the middling classes of both sexes** one of the objects of the essay-periodical on the model of the *Spectator*.
72(c) **some pictures in your fourth number** presumably an allusion, aiming either things, to the seduction of the narrator by his housekeeper and its consequences, on pp. 32–34.

The Fall of the Leaf

Author: James Hogg—NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies. This was reprinted in Hogg's *Poetical Works*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1822), IV, 263–66.

THE SPY, No. 8 (Saturday, 20 October 1810)

Life of a Profligate Student, continued

Author: James Gray—NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies. This is a continuation of Gray's paper in No. 6 of *The Spy*.

- Motto** from Horace's *Epistles*, I, 10, 24 meaning 'Though you drive out nature with all your might, yet it will keep returning'.
76(d) **the battle of Marengo** in the autumn of 1799 Napoleon returned from Egypt and overthrew the feeble Directorate to become First Consul of France. After crossing the Alps he then reconquered Italy at the Battle of Marengo on 4 June 1800.

79(d) **the late celebrated Professor D—1** the Guelph marked copy gives the professor's name as Dalzel. Andrew Dalzel (1742–1806) was Professor of Greek at the University of Edinburgh from the end of 1772 until his resignation in 1805. Greek studies at Edinburgh had been of the lowest standard, but Dalzel's scholarship and taste attracted many students to his classes. Besides encouraging his own enthusiasm for classical literature to his students, he was evidently solicitous for their welfare. There is another warm tribute to him by Thomas Gillespie in No. 38 of *The Spy*, p. 384.

80(a) **the fend-like "strike" of Electra** from Sophocles' tragedy of *Electra*, II 1410–20. Electra onstage hears and comments on the slaying of her mother offstage by her brother Orestes.

- 80(b) **address of old Priam over the body of Hector** from Homer's *Iliad*, 22, 404–28.
81(b) **assemblies, [...] routs** the distinction made here between an assembly and a rout is not clear: *OED* defines a rout as a 'fashionable gathering or assembly, a large evening party or reception', which may imply that the distinction was that a rout was always an evening party where an assembly could be at any time of day.
82(a) **Mrs S— [...] Lady Randolph's affecting soliloquy** the actress Sarah Siddons (1755–1831) first appeared at Edinburgh on 22 May 1784 playing Belshazzar in Orway's *Kenie Prevedit*; she did play Lady Randolph in Home's *Druids* during this first Edinburgh season, however, on 1 June. Lady Randolph's soliloquy, lamenting her husband, son, and brother, opens the play.
84(a) **the great Marlborough [...] Lord Chatham** John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722) was the famous soldier whose great successes in battle were at Blenheim in 1704 and Ramillies in 1706 in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13). The Earl of Chatham is William Pitt (1708–78), the orator and statesman.

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Life of a Profligate Student, continued

Author: James Gray—NLS, St Andrews, and Guelph marked copies. The