TO LADY MINTO 1

(2-1) DEAR LADY MINTO,-Mr. Constable will send your Ladyship tomorrow two copies of Marmion properly packed up-One splendid which I hope the Governor General will do me the honor to accept & one of a subordinate description for my brother-in-law Carpenter. (2-1)I also inclose a few lines to Lord Minto with my little offering of grateful remembrance.

(2-1) As your Ladyship flattered me by expressing a wish for an early perusal I send my own copy the only one yet finished. I have promised to shew some part of it [to] a friend tomorrow evening but if your Ladyship wishes to have it returned to finish the perusal on the fast day when it will be like "stolen waters" or "bread eaten in secret" (2-1)I will have the honor to return it on Thursday morning if you will be so good as spare it me tomorrow about 6 o'clock. Believe me with great respect Your Ladyship's most Obedient Very humble Servt

(2-1) WALTER SCOTT

(2-1) EDINR. Tuesday [1808]

[Owen D. Young]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

(2-1) [Jan.] A.D. 1808

(2-1) DEAR SHARPE,-Lady Louisa Stuart is with us tonight if you will look in any time after seven. I am anxious to
LETTERS OF 1808

(2-2) congratulate you upon your safe delivery. The first literary child always gives most trouble & anxiety. Believe me Yours always W. SCOTT

(2-2) CASTLE STREET Thursday.

(2-2) Charles K. Sharpe Esq. 5 Charlotte Square [Hornel]

TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, JUNR.

(2-2) [1808]
(2-2) DEAR SIR, - I have your note for £200, and I think it will be very right to bring all these sums together when I have been able to complete my advance. I rather think it will be impossible for me to do so to the proposed extent till next Summer. What I should wish would be to see the Concern which is in so flourishing a state proceed from blossom to fruit or without a metaphor I would like to advance as much as may secure us (in general at least) from the necessity of temporary expedients and admit of my drawing my proportion of the profits which at present must necessarily go to discharge these burthens. The payment of the Copy Money of Marmion will put this in my power even to a larger extent than you desired. But till this is received I see little chance of my being able to contribute above an odd hundred or two which I expect from India. I am therefore anxious about the progress of this work and wish it to be set up with speed. Constable informs me that the paper is daily expected and that you may set up a sheet or two in the mean time. I therefore send the Introduction to Canto I and will send the Canto itself on Monday. I am with regard Yours truly
TO J. W. ADAM

SIR, - I have the honour to acknowledge your polite letter and to return you my best thanks for the flattering opinion which you have been pleased to express of my literary efforts.

My time has been lately employed upon the poem to which you allude; but as it does not give any historical account of the unfortunate Battle of Flodden, being in truth merely a poetical romance terminated by that memorable event, I have not felt myself called upon to make any minute researches into the circumstances of the defeat: nor do I at present remember any thing corresponding to the circumstance which you enquire about.

If I should happen to light upon any thing likely to be useful to you in establishing your right to the arms and chieftainship of your family I will have great pleasure in communicating it and I am with great respect Sir your obliged and obedt. Servant WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 12 Jany. 1808.

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

EDINBURGH, 19th January 1808

I AM much flattered. Dear Lady Louisa, by your kind and encouraging remembrance. Marmion is, at this instant, gasping upon Flodden field, and there I have
been obliged to leave him for these few days in the death
pangs. I hope I shall find time enough this morning to
knock him on the head with two or three thumping
stanzas. I thought I should have seen Lady Douglas
while she was at Dalkeith, but all the Clerks of Session
(excepting myself, who have at present no salary) are
subject to the gout, and one of them was unluckily visited
with a fit on the day I should have been at the Duke's, so
I had his duty and my own to discharge. - Pray, Lady

Louisa, don't look for Marmion in Hawthornden or
anywhere else, excepting in the too thick quarto which
bears his name. As to the fair De Lally, I beg her
pardon with all my heart and spirit; but I rather think
that the habit of writing novels or romances, whether
in prose or verse, is unfavourable to rapid credulity; at
least these sort of folks know that they can easily make
fine stories themselves, and will be therefore as curious
in examining those of other folks as a cunning vintner
in detecting the sophistication of his neighbour's claret
by the help of his own experience. Talking of fair ladies
and fables reminds me of Mr. Sharpe's ballads, which
I suppose Lady Douglas carried with her to Bothwell.
They exhibit, I think, a very considerable portion of
imagination, and occasionally, though not uniformly,
great flow of versification. There is one verse, or rather
the whole description of a musical ghost-lady sitting
among the ruins of her father's tower, that pleased me
very much. But his language is too flowery and even
tawdry, and I quarrelled with a lady in the first poem
who yielded up her affection upon her lover showing his
white teeth. White teeth ought to be taken great care
of and set great store by; but I cannot allow them to be
an object of passionate admiration - it is too like subduing
a lady's heart by grinning. Grieved am I for Lady
Douglas's indisposition, which I hope will be short, and
I am sure will be tolerable with such stores of amusement
around her. Last night I saw all the Dalkeith family
presiding in that happy scene of mixed company and
Babylonian confusion, the Queen's Assembly. I also

saw Mr. Alison there. I hope your ladyship has not
renounced your intention of coming to Edinburgh for a
day or two, and that I shall have the honour to see you.
We have here a very diverting lion and sundry wild
beasts; but the most meritorious is Miss Lydia White, who is what Oxonians call a lioness of the first order,
with stockings nineteen-times-nine dyed blue, very lively,
very good-humoured, and extremely absurd. It is very
diverting to see the sober Scotch ladies staring at this
phenomenon. I am, with great respect, your ladyship's
honoured and obliged WALTER SCOTT

[Lockhart]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,-The volumes of Swift (besides the first)
which are wanting in the copy sent me are the 7th, 8th,
and 18th. I should be glad to have them as soon as
possible & also the Examiner which is become most
essential. I cannot find it in the Advocates Liby. Yours
truly W. S.

Mr. Constable
TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 22d January 1808

DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS, - I have at length got a copy of Burns’s Love-Letters to Clarinda, the little publication which I mentioned to your Ladyship at Dumfries. It is rather too heavy for an ordinary frank. I have therefore addressed it under cover to Lord Gastlereagh, who will I presume take care of it for your Ladyship. I mentioned the circumstances which attended this publication but as they are rather curious, I venture to remind you that Clarinda was in the work-day world a Mrs. Meiklehose (in English Mrs. Great-stockings). Her husband was in the West Indies when she became acquainted with Burns in the dawn of his celebrity. The progress and extent of their acquaintance may perhaps be guessed from the letters, which form the most extraordinary mixture of sense and nonsense and of love human and divine, that was ever exposed to the eye of the world not excepting the celebrated familiar epistles of Mr. Robert Ferguson to Lady Elgin.1 As Mrs. Meiklehose advanced in years her vanity became rather too strong for her discretion and confiding in the charity other confidants and in her own character as a sort of Devote she thought fit to show this correspondence to particular friends and at length to a faithless young divine who sat up all night to make copies, put himself into the Glasgow Mail coach with peep of day and sold all the amatory effusions of Sylvander and Clarinda to a Glasgow Bookseller for the moderate sum of ten guineas. To the great horror of poor Clarinda
and the absolute confusion of all the Godly in Edinburgh
forth came a sixpenny pamphlet containing all these
precious productions. The Heroine of the piece being
respectably connected the book was suppressed partly by
threatening and partly by bribing the Bookseller; and
now although they have put a Belfast tide upon the
work it is very hard to procure a copy as your Ladyship
may easily believe since it is so long since I could find you
a copy. I shall grieve if this miscarries because it might
be difficult to replace it; but I hope it will be more

1808      SIR WALTER SCOTT      7

fortunate than the sheets sent to you when in Ireland.
But as Ld. G. will receive the parcel at the same time you
have this note there can be no chance of a second mishap
of the kind.

I am asking myself if you are at the Priory or in St.
James' Square. In one or other place I think it not
unlikely that you may see the Minstrel in the course of a
few weeks as Lord Advocate seems disposed to insist that
I shall take a corner of his post-chaise to London which
removes a certain weighty objection to the journey. I
have finished Marmion and your Ladyship will do me the
honour I hope to accept a copy very soon. In the sixth
and last Canto I have succeeded better than I had
ventured to hope, for I had a battle to fight, and I dread
hard blows almost as much in poetry as in common life.
I am ever, with great respect and attachment, your
Ladyship's most obedient, very faithful         W. S.

[27th January, 1808]
DEAR CHARLES,-The Bearer is a poor man who claims to represent through the female line the last Kerr of Fawdonside. I have explained to him that this gives him no pretensions whatever to the great stake 1; but if the evidence of his being the representative of Sir Walter Ker of Fawdonside depends in any degree upon the oral testimony of witnesses now alive & chiefly aged persons it is pity it should perish. If he could be served 8 LETTERS OF 1808 heir without much expense it would perhaps give him some chance of provision as a relation by the person who may eventually be Duke of Roxburghe. I confess I pity this poor fellow as his grandmother only wanted a pair of ba's to have put him in a better situation than Genl. Kerr. Perhaps something of a judicial examination might take place without the expense of a formal service - Yet who knows but this estate may one day go to heirs whatsoever?

I will soon return the submission with my ultimatum. I declare I tremble to think of that case as I think the chance of doing gross injustice is almost inevitable.

Clarkson promised to get for me old Brydone's broad-sword but has not kept his word-I am foolishly anxious about it-pray see what he is about & don't let it stick for a guinea or two-I don't want a bargain of it. Be my Cashier on the occasion & oblige yours truly

W. SCOTT [Curle]

TO DAVIES GILBERT 1
EDINBURGH, 29th Jan. 1808

SIR, - In availing myself of your kind offices to transmit the inclosed to Mr. Polwhele, I should be very ungrateful did I omit to make my best acknowledgments to you for the favourable opinion which you have been pleased to express of my literary attempts. I have been labouring (at least working) upon another legend connected with the Battle of Flodden: I have only to wish that it may experience half the kindness with which its predecessor was received, and will be particularly happy should it be the case in your instance. I am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1832]

TO [JAMES BALLANTYNE]

DEAR SIR,-I return the two sheets. There shd. be a full stop after L Envoy 1 - God grant the thing may do. If you will send a boy this evening; he will get abundant copy both for the Life of Dryden & the Appendix Vol XVII to follow the letters. I have rummaged up some trashy materials to swell out that vol to 400 pages or so.

I should like much to have a copy clean or foul of the two last sheets of Marmion this eveng. if possible. Yours truly

W. S.

[Undated, no address.] [Signet Library]

TO LADY ABERCORN
5th February 1808

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I cannot express my sense of your active & zealous exertions in my behalf, & I have no doubt that Lord Melville is perfectly sincere in the Interest which he expresses in my fortunes. A circumstance has just happened within the common order of things which I believe will enable his Lordship to carry his good wishes in some degree into effect. We Clerks of Session were Clerks of the Scottish Parliament and as such our predecessors always claimed a right that the Secretary or Clerk to any Commission of Parliament which might sit in Scotland should be named out of their number. It is probably not unknown to your Ladyship that Lord Eldon has brought in a bill for making great alterations in our forms of jurisprudence and that a Commission consisting of all our high Law Officers and several of those of England are to be named to carry this into effect. This Commission must have a Secretary well acquainted with our law and law forms and my brethren at the Clerks' table without solicitation or the slightest hint on my part have to my great surprize made an application to Lord Melville stating their claim to have this officer named out of their number and recommending unanimously that I should be the person so appointed. I immediately wrote a few lines to Lord M. for the place though temporary is highly respectable & if I discharge the duty properly may or rather must pave the way to my getting forward in some shape or other. For as all the old forms are to be altered it is obvious that he who has the first & most intimate acquaintance with the new establishments has a chance of being considered as a useful man which as the most respectable is generally the surest road to preferment.
The Chief Baron & Lord Advocate are warmly cordial & I cannot but think that the thing is in a fair train as every circumstance point [sic] out the request as regular & as it is preferred by those who cannot but know how far I am; or am not qualified to discharge the duties of the situation—the Chancellor will receive a Memorial on the subject & I have also a friend who applies to Duke of Montrose (Lord Justice Genl.). I wrote to Lord Frederick Gampbell (Lord Clerk Register) by this post; & I have some thoughts of writing to Sir William Scott I who called on me when in town although I had never seen him. If any channel occurs to your Ladyship in which the matter could be privately stated to the Chancellor it would probably greatly aid our public claim. You see my dear friend how little I fear wearing your kindness in my behalf—& I am sure it will give you pleasure to think that my prospects are opening fairly & that those who have best opportunity to see me as a man of business do not find that my poetical excursions disqualify me for the serious pursuits of Life—Lord Marmion will visit St. James' Square before he becomes quite public as I shall send one copy by the Mail Coach to Blackheath & another to your Ladyship so soon as they can be stitched & boarded. I will at the same time return Lord M's kind letter—believe me its contents are sacred—Do you think we have not heard of Lord Hamilton's renown? even in the mutilated state in which a newspaper gives us the public debates it was easy to distinguish the spirit & elegance of his speech & I need not tell you how sincerely I rejoiced in the general approbation which my noble young friends talents called forth. I am glad Lord Claud is gone to the Brasils; he will see a most interesting and curious experiment in
politics the transplantation of a whole royal family to a foreign colony and we will have a chance of hearing some distinct account of the success of this most extraordinary migration. If we lived in any other age what should we have said written and thought of the emigration of the House of Braganza; but we are turned as callous to Wonders as Macbeth to horrors. This Commission affair (if it succeeds) will bring me to town very soon indeed. Meanwhile I am, with great regard and a deep sense of your kindness, your very grateful and obliged W. S.

P.S. Lord Advocate has just looked in & says he will write to the Chancellor—so I hope will Lord Melville—

Pierpont Morgan

TO LADY ABERCORN

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,—I have a most kind satisfactory answer from Lord Melville on the subject of the Clerkship to the parliamentary commission & he says he is to write to your Ladyship & his son upon the subject. As he makes it his own affair I fancy your Ladyship will think it best not to trouble any other friends on the subject especially as all the high Law officers are unanimous in my favour except our Presidt. I who has returned no answer to my application. I believe I may say with Falstaffe on a similar occasion "Good faith this cold-blooded Man loves me not"—yet I know
(2-12)he neither dare nor will be an active adversary for it is
(2-12)not in his nature either to be a good friend or a bold
(2-12)enemy—Every other person seemed happy to shew me
(2-12)kindness the Justice Clerk sent me his answer in two lines

(2-12)Tho' all mankind thy rivals be
(2-12)Thou Marmion art the Clerk for me.

(2-12)I send a copy of the said Marmion by the mail so soon as
(2-12)complete I think of enclosing in [sic for it] notwithstanding
(2-12)the size to Ld Castlereagh or Geo. Canning-Ballantyne
(2-12)my ingenious printer tells me he hopes to let me have a
(2-12)copy on Saturday. I hope the Marquis & you will like
(2-12)this poem to which your approbation has given so great
(2-12)and additional energy. I really thought I should have
(2-12)sat down & never written a line more if it had not been
(2-12)for both your kindness at Longtown—My motions
(2-12)towards town will of course depend on this new employment

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(2-13)If I discharge it well I will be worthy of further
(2-13)trust—if not. I do not desire it & would not wish a friend
(2-13)to ask it for me. To prevent accidents I reenclose Lord
(2-13)Melville's Letter to your Ladyship—My kind Respects
(2-13)to your noble family & believe as respectfully as sincerely
(2-13)Your most faith- & grateful W. S.
(2-13)EDINR. 8th febry [1808]

(2-13)I also enclose Lord Melville's letter to me that you may
(2-13)see how that matter stands—you will observe how much
(2-13)I owe to your Ladyship's kind offices.

[Pierpont Morgan]

TO CHARLES CARPENTER
MY DEAR BROTHER,—Referring you to a fuller letter, which I have written along with a copy of a new book Marmion which I hope Mrs. Carpenter will accept as kindly as she did my last, I send this by a young cousin just setting sail as a Cadet for Madras. He is a brother of that Russell whom I formerly recommended to you (but I think you never met), and is a very good boy; if it fall in your way to shew him any kindness or attention I am sure you will do so; his mother was my Aunt, and we have always been good friends.

I am truly happy that Mrs. Carpenter’s health has not compelled that separation which your last letter threatened. I hope and trust she will be able to remain with you till circumstances enable you to leave India for good. Believe me, I often think of you and all your kindness to Charlotte. It will give you pleasure to learn that we are going on very well. My last step was to become one of the Clerks of Session; in doing so I renounced my practice at the Bar, and what is worse, as I entered by the resignation of an old and worthy predecessor, he retains his salary during his life. This bargain was made when I saw the administration going to pieces after poor Pitt’s death, and knew how little I had to expect from those who came into power after that calamitous event.

To be sure I could not expect the change of Ministry which took place immediately afterwards, nor though I arrived in London the very day it happened could I easily
believe my eyes and ears. As I had (contrary to many who held the same political opinions in sunshine) held fast my integrity during the Foxites' interval of power, I found myself of course very well with the present administration. The present President of the Board of Control in particular is my early and intimate friend since we carried our satchels together to the High School of Edinburgh. Think, my dear Carpenter, if this can be of any use to you. I am sure Robt. Dundas would like to serve my brother. I am also very well acquainted with your present Governor-General Lord Minto, though I believe he was angry with me for not ratting (as the phrase is) with others, after Pitt's death. Yet I think I have some influence with him; at least I am sure I deserve it, for when he set his son in opposition to the Duke of Buccleuch, my chieftain and friend, in Roxburghshire, I could have done him more harm than I did. If you see him and choose to mention our close friendship and connections, I am sure you will not be the worse received. There is just now proposed a high Commission of Parliament for the reformation of some points of our Scotch law, and I have been pointed out by my friends to be Secretary to it—a post of considerable difficulty as well as distinction, but which if well discharged will pave the way to good appointments.

The public has been also very favourable to me so that I have profited both in pecuniary respects & in general esteem by the literary reputation I have acquired. All this good fortune has not been without some alloy: my younger brothers affairs became involved & though I am not so great a loser as I at first expected yet the necessity of giving him some assistance join'd to the actual loss of
(2-15)a few hundreds have a little stinted my growth in
(2-15)prosperity. But I have had the satisfaction to extricate
(2-15)him & hope he will be fortunate in future. Remember
(2-15)me most kindly to Mrs. Carpenter: she will receive a
(2-15)copy of my new poem by these ships I have been pressing
(2-15)daily the printer to prepare one for her. Charlotte wrote
(2-15)two days ago: I write again with the book which I shall
(2-15)send to the care of our friends Smith & Jenyns, both to
(2-15)Mrs. Carpenter & you. Adieu dear Carpenter; think
(2-15)if the little Sunshine I have ever can be of use to you
(2-15)though not essentially yet in any trifling degree.-I am
(2-15)sure we have always shared in yours- My little infantry
(2-15)now four (two of each kind) are all well-your Godson
(2-15)Charles a stout cherry cheeked animal of two years old.
(2-15)Believe me Ever yours affectionately

WALTER SCOTT
[Abbotsford Copies and Familiar Letters]

(2-15)TO FRANCIS DOUCE,1 F.S.A.

(2-15)EDINBURGH, 9 Feb. l808

(2-15)DEAR SIR,-I have deferred from day to day returning
(2-15)you my best thanks for the kind and most acceptable
(2-15)token of your remembrance, which I received about a
(2-15)fortnight since, and which, notwithstanding an unusual
(2-15)press of business, of various kinds, has been my companion
(2-15)for an hour or two every afternoon since. Every admirer
(2-15)of Shakespeare, and I hope that comprehends all that
(2-15)can read or hear reading, must be necessarily delighted
(2-15)with the profusion of curious and interesting illustration
(2-15)which your remarks contain.
I meant to have offered the few remarks that occurred to me while I was going through your volumes, which would at least have shown the attention I had paid in the perusal; but I have never had a moment’s time to accomplish my purpose. In particular, concerning the Fools of Shakespeare, a subject of so much curiosity, and which you have so much elucidated, it might be interesting to you to know, that fifty years ago there was hardly a great house in Scotland where there was not an all-licensed fool-half crazy and half knavish-many of whose bon mots axe still recited and preserved. The late Duke of Argyle had a jester of this description, who stood at the sideboard among the servants, and was a great favourite, until he got into disgrace by rising up in the kirk before sermon, and proclaiming the bans of marriage between himself and my friend Lady Charlotte Campbell. So you see it is not so very long, at least in this country, since led captains, pimps, and players have superseded the roguish clowns of Shakespeare. But all this, with any other scantlings of information which have occurred to me, I must now reserve till I have the pleasure of returning my thanks in person, which will probably be in the course of a few weeks, as I have some prospect of being called to London this spring.

In this hope, I am, dear Sir, your much obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1832]
how the Marquis likes him whom but that I think he is a little partial to my attempts I consider [as] among the

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1808

first judges in England. The book is under cover to Lord Castlereagh although as big as a family bible. I send this card separate that you may enquire for it so soon as your Ladyship thinks fit. My southward motions depend upon the springs with which you are acquainted. All here I find kindly anxious to serve me except the president who wishes to have a tool of his own a little more passive than he does me the honour to think me but he is no formidable antagonist. Believe me in great haste ever Your most faithful & most grateful

W. S.

CASTLE STREET 16 feb. [1808]
[Pierpont Morgan]

TO CHARLES CARPENTER

EDINBURGH Feby. 16. 1808

MY DEAR BROTHER,-This accompanies a copy of my new poem for Mrs. Carpenters kind acceptance I hope it will amuse her as much as she is so good as to say my former ditties did: there are very few hard words in it. I also hope it will reach you safe as Lady Minto is so good as to take charge of sending it with the Governor Generals baggage. Lord Minto & I used to be very great friends & if you should happen to see him I am sure his Lordship will remember me & perhaps you may experience some civility on my account which would give me very great pleasure indeed. I wrote to him with a copy of this same
(2-17) poem & will take the liberty to mention your name as
(2-17) indeed I have done before: it is very probable all this is
(2-17) of no consequence to you, yet it can do no harm & I only
(2-17) hope you will not think me officious. The present
(2-17) President of the Board of Control is also my old &
(2-17) intimate friend & schoolfellow, so if you can devise any
(2-17) thing for your comfort or convenience or advantage I

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(2-18) would try my interest in your behalf which would give
(2-18) me the greatest pleasure possible if successful. I sincerely
(2-18) hope this will find Mrs. Carpenters health amended which
(2-18) I judge to be the case since she has alter'd her plan of
(2-18) coming to England before you. Most heartily do I hope
(2-18) that you will look this way together and soon. Your
(2-18) kindness will make you anxious about our present situation
(2-18) which is in every respect comfortable & promises
(2-18) daily to become more so. My literary attempts have
(2-18) been very useful in point of profit as well as for the degree
(2-18) of general regard which I may without vanity say that
(2-18) they have procured me. My present situation is that of
(2-18) one of the principal Clerks to our Court of Session, the
(2-18) income of which runs from £800 to £1000 a year. The
(2-18) worst is that the gentleman who retired to make way for
(2-18) me retains the appointments while I do the duty. But it
(2-18) gives me leisure for my literary pursuits by which by my
(2-18) sheriffdom & by my private fortune I can maintain my
(2-18) rank in society & even make money en attendant the death
(2-18) of the old life renter: this was rather a hard bargain
(2-18) but it was made when the administration was dissolved
(2-18) upon Pitt's death: all was going to pieces & I was glad
(2-18) to swim ashore on a plank of the wreck or in a word to
(2-18) be provided any how ere the new people came in.
(2-18) Nobody to be sure could have foreseen that in a years
(2-18) time my friends were all to be in again: there is just
now to be appointed a High Commission of Parliament
to revise some of the structure & forms of our Scottish
courts of Jurisprudence & I believe I am to be named
Secretary to the Commissioners : this I suppose will be
well paid but I am principally pleased with it as being a
very respectable appointment conferr'd on me by our
principal law Lords & Kings Council & consequently an
honourable professional distinction^ The employment
will be but temporary but may have consequences of
importance to my future lot in life if I give satisfaction in
the discharge of it. I wrote to you the other day by a

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little Cadet by name Alexander Russel a cousin German
of mine who goes to Madras by these ships. Should
chance throw him in your way I would be much obliged
to you to shew him kindness. I suppose you think by
this time that my cadet cousins grow up like crops of
pease & beans but I assure you this is the last you are
likely to hear of for I hope you will be home long before
an aftercrop comes up of younger exportation commodities.
I am sure you are obliged to us & we to you for
I fancy our frozen climate raises a great number of the
soldiers merchants & sailors that are transplanted to
yours. My little nursery now two of each sex are
thriving & hearty : your little namesake a merry cherry
cheeked fellow with an unrestrain'd stock of health &
spirits. I sincerely hope this will find you in health,
Mrs. Carpenter quite recovered & your land in quiet:
since Russia has quarrelled with us we are looking rather
anxiously towards you from a general idea that Bonaparte
has a scheme of marching an army through Persia
against our India dominions. I am no believer in
the possibility of executing such a plan though I think
it not improbable he may attempt it as his success
hitherto gives him a right to calculate on anything: he seems tired of the threat of invasion especially since the seizure of the Danish fleet which might have had their sails bent at this moment ready to sail north about to Ireland with 20000 Frenchmen had it not been for the precautionary measure of seizing their ships & stores. The emigration of the Royal family of Portugal to the Brazils is another of those wonderful events which our time has been destined to witness: its effect on the spirits of the Merchants has been that of a cordial. Once more dear Carpenter remember me kindly to your lady & thank her in my name for her affectionate letter to which I am sending a handsome reply by the ships. Charlotte also writes by the ships & besides this by the little cousin Cadet. I must have worse than usual ill luck if none of these letters come to hand. Believe me Your affectionate brother WALTER SCOTT

TO ROBERT SURTEES

DEAR SIR,-I have been shockingly ungrateful; but I have been moreover very busy, which I hope will be some apology for what the Scriptures state to be greatly worse than the sin of witchcraft. In evidence of my diligence, I have to request your acceptance of a thumping quarto entitled " Marmion," in which you will find I have availed myself with suitable acknowledgments of your tale of Sir Ralph Bulmer, and the ballad of the feud between the Ridley and Featherstonehaugh family. I have your acc[ou]nt of the Fugitives in salva custodia. The
(2-20) necessity of diligently comparing each sheet of Sadler's Letters with the original (though, thank God, that labour I have no concern with), and the press of business at my friend Ballantyne the printer's, has occasioned some delay in that work. I am not yet arrived so far as to profit by your kind annotations. The book with the MSS. concerning the Rebellion shall be taken care of and returned; and I shall be happy indeed if the time and manner of a visit to London, which I believe I must make this season, will allow me to pay my personal compliments to you upon the occasion.

(2-20) When you cast your eye over "Marmion," remember mercy in your judgment. I had idly come under an obligation to produce that preux chevalier by a certain time, sufficient indeed to have done him ample justice in the way of arming and equipment, but some very unpleasant family affairs left me neither head nor heart to work that kind of work for six months; and at last I had nothing for it but dispatch, which was so rapid, that of the last four Cantos no part was written twice over; and it was printed sheet by sheet, as fast as composed. This prepares you for all its faults. Its merits, for some I must hope it has, will speak for themselves.

(2-20) I am in great haste; but with best compliments to your lady. Ever your truly obliged,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 20 Feb. 1808.

[Sir Walter Scott]
TO GEORGE ELLIS

(2-21) EDINBURGH, February 23, 1808

(2-21) Sleepest thou, wakest thou, George Ellis?

(2-21) BE it known that this letter is little better than a fehde brief., to the meaning of which is it not written in Wachter's Thesaurus and the Lexicon of Adelung (I) ? To expound more vernacularly, I wrote you, I know not how long ago, a swinging epistle of and concerning German Romances, with some discoveries not of my own discovering, and other matter not furiously to the present purpose. And this I caused to be conveyed to you by a gentle knitz, Sir William Forbes, knizt, who assures me he left it as directed, at Sir Peter Parkers.2 " Since," to vary my style to that of the ledger, " none of yours." To avenge myself of this unusual silence, which is a manifest usurpation of my privileges (being the worst correspondent in the world, Heber excepted), I have indited to you an epistle in verse, and that I may be sure of its reaching your hands, I have caused to be thrown off 2000 copies thereof, that you may not plead ignorance.

This is oracular, but will be explained by perusing the Introduction to the 5th canto of a certain dumpy quarto, entitled Marmion, a Tale of Flodden-field, of which I have to beg your acceptance of a copy. " So wonder on till time makes all things plain." One thing I am sure you will admit, and that is, that-" the hobby-horse is not forgot;" nay, you will see I have paraded in my
Introductions a plurality of hobby-horses—a whole stud, on each of which I have, in my day, been accustomed to take an airing. This circumstance will also gratify our friend Douce, whose lucubrations have been my study for some days. They will, I fear, be caviare to the multitude, and even to the soi-disant connoisseurs, who have never found by experience what length of time, of reading, and of reflection, is necessary to collect the archaeological knowledge of which he has displayed such profusion. The style would also, in our Scotch phrase, thole amends, i.e. admit of improvement. But his extensive and curious researches place him at the head of the class of black-letter antiquaries; and his knowledge is communicated without the manifest irritation, which his contemporaries have too often displayed in matters of controversy—without ostentation, and without self-sufficiency. I hope the success of his work will encourage this modest and learned antiquary to give us more collectanea. There are few things I read with more pleasure. Charlotte joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Ellis. I have some hopes of being in town this spring, but I fear you will be at Bath. When you have run over Marmion, I hope you will remember how impatient I shall be to hear your opinion sans phrase. I am sensible I run some risk of being thought to fall below my former level, but those that will play for the gammon must take their chance of this. I am also anxious to have particular news of your health. Ever yours faithfully,

W. S.

[Lockhart]
EDINBURGH 26th Febry., 1808

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,- I have your letter & must be satisfied with the mode of publishing the Round Table as our fathers in the Row are pleased to appoint. There is indeed a propriety in its being of the same size with your other Romances; although I think it a work of a very different description. I was I believe to have had the use of a very ancient copy of the Morte Arthur said to be in possession of Mr. Dent the member of Parliament commonly & alliteratively termed Dog-Dent. If you can get at him I presume he will not be so much of the Dog in the Manger as to refuse you the same favour. I would offer my assistance but the ladder by which I hoped to scale the top-gallants of his favour was rather too long & will not bear to have another round added to it. But this will perhaps find you in London & with Heber before whom in all Libraries

- open locks
- whoever knocks

You can be at no loss to get at least a sight of this curiosity. Concluding that you will be soon in London I have requested John Murray Bookseller Fleet Street to send to Longman's care for you a copy of my new poem Marmion a goodly volume in point of size but I had not time to write the poem shorter. Looking over Madoc the other day I found I had committed a piracy unconsciously upon an idea of yours. I have said in a description of a distant view of a battle I have mentioned the

- Plumed crests of chieftains brave
- Floating like foam upon the wave
which although my mind was upon Henry IVths white plume is exactly similar to that of Madoc floating like foam on the wave tempest." If my powers were equal to my sense of honesty as I would to heaven they were I would offer you the fourfold requital of the Levitical law, but that would be no easy matter. I have been very much interested lately with the Remains of H. K. White which however left a very melancholy impression on my mind. Was there no patron for such a man but Simeon and Wilberforce who with the best intentions in the world seem to have encouraged his killing himself by religious enthusiasm. I am afraid that sort of people do not recollect that enthusiasm like other potent draughts should be tempered to the strength of the patient. A dram which hardly warms the veins of a rough-nerved Scotchman will drive to frenzy a more sensitive system. I wish Simeon & Levi would confine their operations to hard headed cantabs and make no excursions to Nottingham for cramping young poets-

I have some very curious letters from a spy sent into Scotland at the time of the great Northern Rebellion in which there is a good deal mention made of the Nortons I have written to Wordsworth to offer him copies or extracts but adding that I suppose his siege is finished as Vertot said when he received some original materials from Malta. You make me very curious to see his poem: he is a great master of the passions.

I have some hopes we may meet in London. God speed your magnum opus. I venture to prophesy it will be generally interesting. It will give me great pleasure to
learn that my preux Chevalier Marmion has afforded you any pleasure. He is popular here but we are you know national in our taste so I wait my doom from London and shall abide it sans pew et sans reproche, taking that phrase a little differently than as it applies to Bayard.

Believe me with great regard Dear Southey Yours truly WALTER SCOTT

Should this find you at Keswick do not fail to remember me to your fireside. I give you joy of the fortunate addition to it-

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO LADY ABERCORN

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-I am both shocked and surprized at the second Miscarriage of Marmion. I saw the copy duly addressed but I suspect the brute of a bookseller has confounded it with some others that were going by sea. I learned two days ago that the Princesses 1 copy had come safe & yours ought to have reached you the day after. If you go to Blackheath her Royal Highness will perhaps shew you her copy for which James Skene made some pretty drawings of the scenery described in the poem. I hasten to remedy the error of the bookseller by sending another copy addressed to Lord Gastlereagh which must be in his office at the moment this reaches your Ladyship's hands unless as Othello says theres magic in the web on't."-When the stray copy arrives (for it will arrive sooner or later) Lady Maria will I hope do me the honour to accept it-I am impatient for the Marquis's opinion of the last canto, which I am better
pleased with than with any of the former; but that is no good criterion after all.

I shall be much pleased if the proposed appointment takes place in my favour not merely for the emolument but because it will give me an early opportunity of making myself thoroughly master of the new forms of judicial procedure which may qualify me for promotion should I continue to merit the favour of my friends-I am on the eve of concluding a bargain with a bookseller to edit Swift's work for which he offers me 1500 guineas it will occupy me occasionally for two years but labour is to me really pleasure & the profit is not to be despised. In the meantime I will collect ideas for my Highland poem which I intend to begin two years hence if I have life health & spirits.

I quite agree with your Ladyship that Lord M. having taken so kind an interest in my appointment will manage it in his own way with the Chancellor-My motions are of course at present unsettled. I would rather know what is likely to be settled about the Scotch bill before I come up. Our Lord Advocate has promised me timely notice-

Believe me unfeignedly your faithful & obliged

EDINR. 28th Febry 1808                       W. S.

I send this letter with Marmion by my own servant to the general post office so there can be no second mistake unless among Lord C's clerks-This being Sunday I have adjourned scolding the bookseller till tomorrow-

meanwhile I am

Gathering my brows like gathering storm
Nursing my wrath to keep it warm.
TO MRS. PRINGLE OF WHITEBANK 1

(2-27)MY DEAR MRS. PRINGLE,-I am truly flattered & affected by your applause. A great French critic says rien n'est beau quele vrai and were the counterpart true, and that which is vrai always beau, my verses respecting my little sporting friends 2 would have some tide to public favour, since nothing is more sincere than my feelings towards them. We will talk over them one day soon. Meanwhile believe me, dear Madam Your much obliged and faithful

(2-27)W. SCOTT

(2-27)CASTLE STREET, Thursday [Feb.-March 1808]

[Our Forefathers]

To LADY LOUISA STUART

(2-27)DEAR LADY LOUISA,-Day after day I hoped to have had it in my power to have taken a ride as far as Newbattle or Dalkeith before your Ladyship left the vicinity of Dun Edin and day after day the pressure of official business increased by the indisposition of one of my colleagues rendered my excursion impossible. So as I learn from Mr. Alison 3 that this will find you at Tyningham I must take this mode of wishing your Ladyship a good journey and all health and happiness- I have thought
on your reading about the death of Constance and with all
the respect which (sans phrase) I entertain for every thing
you honour me with I have not made up my mind to the
alteration and here are my reasons- Clara has no wish
to embitter Marmions last moments and is only induced
to mention the death of Constance because she observes
that the wounded mans anxiety for her deliverance
prevents his attending to his own spiritual affairs. It
seems natural however that knowing by the Abbess or
however you please the share which Marmion had in the
fate of Constance she should pronounce the line assigned
to her in such a manner as perfectly conveyed to his
conscience the whole truth although her gentleness
avoided conveying it in direct terms. We are to consider
too that Marmion had from various workings of his own
mind been led to suspect the fate of Constance-so that
the train being ready laid the slightest hint of her fate
communicated the whole tale of terror to his conviction-
Were I to read the passage I would hesitate a little like one
endeavouring to seek a soft mode of conveying painful
intelligence

In vain for Constance is your zeal
She-died at Holy Isle

Perhaps after all this is too fine spun and requires more
from my gentle readers to fill up my sketch than I am
entitled to exact. But, I would rather put in an explanatory
couplet describing Constance's manner of speaking
the words than make her communication more full or
specific. Mrs. Scott has quite recovered her health and
feels no inconvenience unless from her regret at being so
awkwardly deprived of the honour of your Ladyships
company. We have Miss Baillie here as a visitor at
present. I hope she will make some little stay in
Edinburgh.

I have been much distressed by the late bad account of dear little Lord Scotts health. God grant he may recover - out of my own family there is no loss I would so deeply deprecate. Believe me ever dear Lady Louisa

Your obliged and faithful

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR. 3rd March 1808

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO MISS SMITH

MY DEAR Miss SMITH,-My late engagements have made me seem very ungrateful when I would most wish to seem otherwise but I throw myself upon your goodness to admit an apology founded upon various avocations literary and poetical not to mention the daily discharge of official duty. As a sort of peace offering I have to beg you to accept what I hope is already in your hands a copy of my new poem called by the hard name of "Marmion." I shall be much flattered indeed if you like it half as well as my little folks did the Panorama your kind gift which they have studied and quoted every day since to the great edification of Papa who daily learns something he did not know before.

We have Mrs. Siddons here - I believe to take her farewell of the Edinburgh audience. I observe you have been performing along with her in town and was most happy to hear (for I did not fail to enquire) that you
sustained the comparison as triumphantly as your warmest friends could wish. I wish London had been within 100 miles. I would certainly have come to see you both on the same stage. We have Miss Baillie 2 here at present who is certainly the best dramatic writer whom Britain has produced since the days of Shakespeare and Massinger. I hope you have had time to look into her tragedies (the comedies you may [pass] over without any loss) for I am sure you will find much to delight you and I venture to prophecy you will one day have [an] opportunity to distinguish yourself in some of her characters. I mean if the real taste for the Drama independant of shew and scenery should ever happen to revive, of which I think your being permitted to remain upon the shelf as you call it is no very promising symptom. We have an actor here of considerable merit called Young1; he is a well-educated and gentlemanlike man and an enthusiast in his profession. I sometimes have the pleasure of seeing him in private and like him very much.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest and best remembrances and the children desire a thousand thanks which they hope will not be less acceptable for my laziness- John Murray Bookseller Fleetstreet has directions to send you Marmion. I flatter myself you will make inquiry after it in case it has not reached you before this letter. I have some hopes to be in town this spring when I will seek an early opportunity to express personally how much I am your faithful and affectionate friend.

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN. 4th March. 1808
EDINBURGH, 13th March 1808

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I see with pleasure that both the Marmions have been at last received—what should have delayed the delivery of the first I cannot guess. As to the Holland House copy assuredly I know nothing of it not holding any correspondence with that mansion. The bookseller here satisfied me by showing his invoices that he sent off none so early as that to the Princess and your Ladyship's. I suspect strongly that Miller1 who has a share in the Book had fallen on some means to get a copy privately being anxious I presume to gratify the Hollands since he became purchaser of Fox's work. All the Whigs here are in arms against Marmion—if I had satirised Fox they could have borne it but a secondary place for the god of their idolatry puts them beyond the slender degree of patience which displaced patriots usually possess. I make them welcome to cry till they are hoarse against both the book and author as they are not in the habit of having majorities upon their side. I suppose the crossed critics of Holland House will take the same tone in your Metropolis.

You ask me why I do not rather think of original production than editing the works of others and I will frankly tell your Ladyship the reason. In the first place no one acquires a certain degree of popularity without exciting an equal degree of malevolence among those who either from rivalship or the mere wish to pull down what...
others have set up are always ready to catch the first occasion to lower the favour'd individual to what they call his real standard. Of this I have enough of experience and my political interferences however useless to my friends have not failed to make me more than the usual number of enemies. I am therefore bound in justice to myself and to those whose good opinion has hitherto protected me not to peril myself too frequently. The naturalists tell us that if you destroy the web which the spider has just made the insect must spend many days in inactivity till he has assembled within his person the materials necessary to weave another. Now after writing a work of imagination one feels [in] nearly the same exhausted state with the spider. I believe no man now alive writes more rapidly than I do (no great recommendation), but I never think of making verses till I have a sufficient stock of poetical ideas to supply them. I would as soon join the Israelites in Egypt in their heavy task of making bricks without clay. Besides I know as a small farmer that good husbandry consists in not taking the same crop too frequently from the same soil and as turnips come after wheat according to the best rules of agriculture I take it that an edition of Swift will do well after such a scourging crop as Marmion. Meantime I have by no means relinquished my thoughts of a Highland poem but am gradually collecting the ideas and information necessary for that task—Perhaps I shall visit Green Erin to collect what I can learn of Swift; if so I hope you will be at Barons Court when I undertake my pilgrimage to your native Land of Saints—My journey to London is unsettled, for Robert Dundas or rather his Lady seem to think there is no immediate occasion for it—As Ld Melville will be in town shortly after this reaches your Ladyship
I fancy his presence will quicken the passing of the Scotch Bill and when that has passed parlt. my motions will be decided by the order of the Commission appointed under—that is—if I am successful in being named their Secretary.

Duchess of Gordon is here very gay and very angry with me—I believe I have been a little negligent in my attentions upon her but she should consider how little my time is at my own disposal and pity instead of abusing me. We are however very civil when we meet.

My poor dear Lord Scott will never leave my memory. I had a sort of feudal attachment to the boy who was all the friends of his family could wish—Dalkeith and his Lady are gone to Bothwell as I learn by a letter from Ld Montagu—I hardly know how the arrow of fate could have hit a more vulnerable point—But great and small we are alike but. One thing alone is out of her power—[the] unalterable and sincere regard with which I am dear Lady Abercorn your much obliged and very faithful W. S.

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1808 33

P.S. You will be pleased to hear that the Princess 1 honoured me so far as to send me an elegant silver cup in acknowledgement of the compliment pd. in Marmion to the D. of Brunswick's Memory—

[PIERPONT MORGAN]

TO MRS. DUNDAS 2

MY DEAR MRS. DUNDAS,—I was honourd by your letter & truly sorry for the state of Mr. Dundas' health—I hope
he is now better and that he will not let his friendly zeal for Lord Wellesley or Lord any body else interfere with the necessary care of himself. Marmion has by this time reach’d their hands—the Whigs here are furious at the inferior rank in which I have placed the God of their Idolatry & my own conscience is on the other hand a little twinged at having done him fully more than justice. But he was a great man & is gone—& that must be the justification to myself as for the others Marmion has been amid to little purpose if he cannot keep his ground in a good cause. I am led just now to trouble you with these few lines on account of the situation of a very deserving young man a Cousin German of mine educated in the Company’s service & who has made several voyages as first & second Mate & bears a most excellent character. I believe he commanded an extra ship one voyage. His father Walter Scott of Reaburn is a Scotch Laird of the old stamp who loves a hunter & a fox chase better than any son he has in the world. As however he is of an old branch of the Buccleuch family & a voter in Roxburghshire I would upon any other occasion have endeavour’d to interest them in behalf of this young man his third son but the melancholy state of Dalkeith House precludes all thought of this. I am unfeignedly reluctant to intrude on Mr. Dundas’s freind-ship yet in the present case I am sure you will excuse my preferring a petition whatever success it may have.

This said youth "Hugh Scott" by name writes me after two months unsuccessful solicitation that he thinks if backd with Mr. D.’s countenance he might obtain the Command of a ship in David Scott’s house & if not perhaps a nomination for a Bombay or China Voyage for
next season or that following. This is the object as to
the practicability or propriety of the request I am no
judge: but if it be what Mr D. can do without interfering
with other engagements or departing from his usual rules
he will serve an excellent seaman & a very worthy tho'
unprotected young man. The death of a near relation
who had considerable India influence has in a manner
rendered him friendless in his line of profession. I beg
my best Compliments to Mr. Dundas and with every
apology for this intrusion I am with great respect Dear
Madam Your most obedient & obliged humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR. 13 March 1808.
Honble Mrs. Dundas.

TO LADY ABERCORN

CASTLE STREET, 3d April 1808

DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,- Accept with your usual
goodness a copy of the Life of Dryden of which Mr. Miller
has thrown off a few separate from the works. We have
often heard of a rivulet of text meandering through a
meadow of margin. But these books (saving that the
shape is square) rather look like St. James's Square with
the pool of water in the midst of it. My Southern motions
remain uncertain till I learn whether the Commission of
Parliament meets in London or in Edinr.

The Morning Chronicle of the 29th March has made a
pretty story of the cancel of page l0th of Marmion, which
your Ladyship cannot but recollect was reprinted for the
sole purpose of inserting the lines suggested so kindly by
the Marquis

"For talents mourn untimely lost
When best employed and wanted most"

I suppose from the carelessness of those who arranged
the book for binding this sheet may not in a copy or two
have been right placed, and the worthy Editor affirms
kindly that this was done that I might have copies to send
to Mr. Pitt's friends in which these lines do not occur. I !!
My publishers here who forwarded the books have written
in great wrath to contradict the story and were surprised
to find I had more inclination to laugh at it. This is a
punishment for appropriating my neighbour's goods. I
suppose it would surprise Mr. Morning Chronicle considerably
to know that the couplet in question was written
by so distinguished a friend of Mr. Pitt as Lord Abercorn.1

The Princess of Wales sent me a most elegant silver cup
and cover with a compliment upon Marmion, particularly
on the part respecting the Duke of Brunswick which was
very flattering.

When your Ladyship can find an opportunity to let
me know that you like the Life of Dryden that you are

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well and that I live in your remembrance I need not say
how agreeable it will be to your most respectful and truly
grateful

W. SCOTT

[Pierrpont Morgan]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE 1
DEAR SHARPE,-I return you "Spanish Vengeance," wt. best thank for the pleasure the perusal has afforded. It contains much fine poetry and many striking situations, but rather belongs to the second school of the English drama-to that of Congreve and Rowe-than to that of Shakespeare and Massinger. Whether it would succeed on the stage I cannot tell, but I am sure many many far inferior have been received with good approbation. Should you ever think of this, a few harshnesses in the language might be smoothed away with advantage. I have marked one or two things for consideration in pencil.-Believe me, yours truly,

W. S.

Friday.

[Sharpe's Letters]

TO ROBERT SURTEES

MY DEAR SIR,-My best thanks attend you for the curious and valuable additions which your letter of 29th February enables me to make to the letters in Sadler's collection, relating to the Grand Northern Rebellion. Heartily do I wish it were possible to have the Bishop of Durham's letter transcribed. Mr. Ellis of the Museum, at the request of Mr. Rose, was so good as to promise me his assistance to this effect; but having been frequently on the point of coming to London, I have always delayed writing till I should see him. I would not, by
any means, burden you with a task so odious and fatiguing as transcription, but perhaps there may be some one about the Museum capable of that labour and willing to accept of a recompense for his pains; should such a person be to be had, I would without scruple request you, supposing the Lansdowne papers now arranged, to take the trouble of pointing out such passages or letters as may tend to throw new light on the state of the North in Queen Elizabeth's reign. After all, that part of Sadler's Letters will owe to you all that is curious in the illustrations. I heartily wish the whole had been under your management, as I am certain you would have done them much more justice than is in my power. As for Prince Charles, "He, that wandering knight so fair," we will talk about him when we meet. I have always thought of a Highland poem before hanging my harp on the willows; and perhaps it would be no bad setting for such a tale to suppose it related for her amusement, in the course of his wanderings after the fatal field of Culloden. Flora Macdonald, Kingburgh, Lochiel, the Kennedies, and many other characters of dramatic interest might be introduced; and the time is now past away when the theme would have had both danger and offence in it. When you have read over Marmion, which has more individuality of character than the Lay, although it wants a sort of tenderness which the personage of the old Minstrel gave to my first-born romance, you will be a better judge, whether I should undertake a work which will depend less on incident and description than on the power of distinguishing and marking the dramatis personae. But all this is in embryo, the creation of your letter, and may never go further. When you look into the notes of the aforesaid Marmion, you will see how valuable a correspondent you have been to me.

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe is here at present; he is,
I find, an old college friend and correspondent of yours. He is a very ingenious as well as agreeable young man, and, I think, will be an excellent poet, when the luxuriance of his fancy is a little repressed by severer taste. I never saw so excellent a drawer of comic figures, for I will not debase his sketches by calling them caricatures. He is making some extracts from our MSS. in the Advocates' Library: I heartily wish you would one day find it absolutely necessary to do the same.

I must not finish my letter without saying, that if you can make a contract with an amanuensis for me, I will request Mr. Miller, bookseller, of Albemarle-street, to pay him the amount of his labours.

I do not know if you are so much attached to chivalrous poetry as to admire the ancient metrical romances. If so, you will be interested in a plan which I have greatly at heart, namely, to have these venerable poems carefully published. For this purpose I have found a patient, and at the same time an enthusiastic editor in the person of Henry Weber, an Anglo-German. He has made transcripts to the amount of many thousand lines. I think I could get some of my friends in London to add some notes, and would what I could myself. My present idea is to get so many names as will ensure the bookseller against loss (for such a book will be "caviare for the multitude," and give some little recompense for the editor. I think, if I can get 100 names at 5l. 5s. I can afford them three quarto volumes of romantic poetry.
TO LADY LOUISA STUART

EDINBURGH, 7th April, 1808

MY DEAR LADY LOUISA, - I was honoured with your Ladyships letter this morning. Unless the report in question be an express punishment from heaven for your hiding your talent in a napkin or that "there's magic in the web on't," I cannot offer any satisfactory solution. I never I am positive mentioned your Ladyships name1 to the high personage in question or in writing to Miss Hayman the only Lady of her household with whom I have any correspondence. Skene as your Ladyship may readily believe knows nothing of the intended publication and was never so happy as to see any of the editors verses. I think the artist who made the little sketch at the beginning of Ugly Meg would hardly presume to mention it as I cautioned him on the subject. The poem was never given out of my own hand nor mentioned as your Ladyships although I must plead guilty to having shown it to one or two literary friends as a piracy which I had committed upon a Lady of my acquaintance. If it is possible that the little drawing has been thus converted into a set of embellishments by Skene, the six pages of

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 4th April, 1808.

[Abbotsford Copies]
Manuscript into fifteen copies of a printed book wire
wove hot-pressed and with a suitable margin I shall
deeply regret being the cause however innocently of
having done any thing that could contribute to so
wonderful a transformation. Yet I can hardly think it
as I am certain I never showed the poem to more than
three persons. I cannot find in my heart to condemn
Ugly Meg to the flames as a witch being convinced she
had so very little to do with the mysterious report in
question but in future she shall be condemn'd to as
severe seclusion as if she was the fairest Circassian in the
seven Towers. Depend upon it my dear Lady Louisa
that if any enquiry is made at me by her Royal Highness
upon this subject I will attend most heedfully and
pointedly to your injunctions. I must just say if I am
pointedly charged with the existence of Ugly Meg that
she had been reclaimed by your Ladyship in consequence
of some reports which had gone abroad other being about
to be given to the world and that I had forgotten every
line of her. By the way I forgot to mention that I never
showed Ugly Meg to any one since your Ladyship made
my plunder lawful; so that I have been in all respects
a thief of honour.-I think it by no means unlikely that
a jumble may have been made by that long tongued
Gossip Fame between the sermon which was printed the
poem which was not printed, the drawings which Mr.
Skene did make for the princess, the drawings which he
did not make for Ugly Meg and out of this hedge podge
with a considerable mixture of unadulterated lye the cup
has been brewed which your Ladyship regards with so
much terror. I am less surprised at any thing of the

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1808

kind as by a process equally well founded and oracular
I had the inexpressible happiness to see myself but the
other day pronounced by the Morning Chronicle guilty of garbling my own poem and giving one sort of book to Mr. Pitt's friends and another to the public yet I believe that your Ladyship is more teazed with a report the nature of which is not only innocent but would if true do your talents honour than I am with one that would argue me guilty of equal meanness and folly. But the feelings of a professed author and such I must be while my family continues to require my exertions get very callous to this species of scandal. I have adopted your Ladyships kind suggestion about the speech of Constance but after much consideration have placed only one hyphen or dash to express her confusion. The death of poor dear Lord Scott was such a stunning blow to me, that I really felt for some time totally indifferent to the labours of literary correction. I had very great hopes from that boy, who was of an age to form, on the principles of his father and grandfather, his feelings towards the numerous families who depend on them. But God's will be done. I intended to have omitted the lines referring to him in Marmion in the second edition; for as to adding any, I could as soon write the Iliad. But I am now glad I altered my intention, as Lady Dalkeith has sent for the book, and dwells with melancholy pleasure on whatever recalls the memory of the poor boy. She has borne her distress like an angel, as she is, and always has been; but God only can cure the wounds he inflicts.

Marmion in consequence of an unexampled demand has been hurried through the press & the second edition is on the eve of publication. Millar in Albemarle street will have a copy of which I have to intreat your kind acceptance. A copy of the life of Dryden will also kiss.
your hands in a day or two. I either did write or intended
to write a few lines along with the last mentioned book
but I was in such a hurry at dispatching matters with my
printer who was to carry the books to London that I have
absolutely forgotten which. Adieu dear Lady Louisa.
I regret I am not the Knight for whom it is reserved to
break the charm which has converted a high born and
distressful Lady into a professed authoress. I have no
doubt it will soon disclose of itself

For never spell by fairy laid
With strong enchantment bound a glade
Beyond the bounds of night

Ever your obliged                  WALTER SCOTT 1

TO [JAMES] BALLANTYNE

[April 1808]

DEAR BALLANTYNE,—As you are going to town before
me I wish you to be possessd of the outlines of a little
adventure which I think might be conducted with great
success if under the management of our friend in Albemarle
Street. Constables projected Swift will find me
serious work for two years but I do not anticipate that
it will be half so difficult as Dryden all the sources of
information lying within reach; & you know that while
labouring at Dryden I found time not only to make two
trips to England but to write Marmion. I therefore
wish to provide for occupation of my idle time as I
intend to write no more poetry for two years & I have
turnd my thoughts to making a classical collection of our

1808          SIR WALTER SCOTT        43
English tales and Romances of wonder with notes &
critical prefaces. I understand something of the kind
has been lately attempted but I have no doubt of being
able in a department which I understand but too well to
bear down all competition. I have several translations
by myself & others from the German and other languages
with which such a collection might be enrichd. The best
eastern tales ought of course to be included as the persian,
arabian & so forth with notes on the manners & some
enquiry into the authenticity of each collection. The
work should be publishd on the plan of the well known
Cabinet des fees. I should like very much to know
Millars opinion on such a speculation perhaps to publish
six volumes yearly with a good engraving to each if he
liked it. On the subject of editorship I am inclined to
be moderate as I do not mean to give my name to the
titlepage. If it should be found necesary to add any
original matter of length that of course would be a
separate consideration. If Mr. Millar dislikes it he will
of course observe profound secrecy & you will then
proceed as I shall further direct you by letter for I am
by no means inclined lightly to relinquish my plan being
possessd of considerable materials for giving it effect.

This letter will serve you for a memorandum of one or
two other trifles.

Inclosed is an order from Mr. Polwhele for some poems
from Messrs. Cadell & Davies. Mr. Millar will be so kind
as to receive them & they may be sent down with my
Dodsley. In requital of Mr. P's civility I wish to send him
a[n] 8vo Marmion & Lay which Mr. Millar or Murray will
readily give you packd up for Revd. Mr. Polwhele
Kenwyn, Truro care of Messrs. Cadell & Davies.
(2-44) Item see if you can find me a few 4to. volumes of old plays about the age of Charles II. They sell for about 5 or 7/ a volume & are to be found chiefly in old Book shops. Pick up also if you meet with such any wonderful tales as the History of Peter Wilkins I & the like. You can hardly go wrong if you do not give too much money. I beg you will write to me when you get to town & am with regard yours very truly

(W SCOTT)

CASTLE STREET Sunday-

(2-44) Will you ask Mr. Millar what he is doing with Thomson ?
(2-44) I wish it to be going on immediatly.

(Undated.)

[Signet Library]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

(2-44) DEAR BALLANTYNE,- As it may be of consequence to you to have early information of the politics of the Trade here I have to inform you (for your private ear) that Constables principal errand to Londn. is to establish an agency office or shop there for the sale of his own books; to be managed by Park & young Hunter. This I think he may repent unless he keeps a very tight hand over them, & so I hinted to him.

Among the copies of Marmion orderd for friends is one intended for John Marriot which as I could give no direction has not I dare say been forwarded by Murray. You may possibly learn his address from Mr. Nott & I beg you will take the trouble to see the book is forwarded.
Miller has suggested the Republication of Somers

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1808 45

Tracts 1 which would in one point of view be a capital job (12 vols in quarto). I have made my terms therefore as low as he can well expect my name vizt. 105., a volume which is cheaper than Dryden almost.

John is going on very well. Yet I shall be anxious for your return—pray let me hear from you on affairs in general—I am now anxious to know how Dryden will strike the public taste. Don’t omit to pick up all the 410. volumes of plays you can find. I have various projects about them—also all marvellous tales. Believe me Yours truly

W SCOTT

CASTLE STREET 11th April 1808

Mr. James Ballantyne Care of Mr. Miller Bookseller

[Signet Library]

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR—I never allow any person to forget a promise in my favour especially one of my high and mighty allies of the Trade. Do you remember you was so good as to say you would get me a copy of the cancelled print to Hopners 3 tales. I think the anecdote so diverting that I beg if you can conveniently do so you would
oblige me by sending it in your next parcel to Constable
and tell me at the same time what Campbell is about.
I have heard nothing of him since I left town. If the
Magazine goes on you will send it me and I will do what
I can for it here. I should be glad to see you if you come
to Scotland and am Your obedt. Servt.

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 16 April [1808]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

ASHESTIEL 22nd April [1808]

DEAR BALLANTYNE, - I begin to be impatient to hear
from you concerning your success in London. But this
letter principally respects your friend & mine Mrs. Siddons. I wrote her a long letter from Arnistoun & at
the Chief Barons request on the subject of the Edinburgh Theatre to which I have been anxiously expecting a
reply & fear my cause has already sufferd by delay.

1808 SIR WALTER SCOTT 47

The letter was addressd Covent-Garden Theatre;
pray enquire its fate. The substance (for you may be
safely trusted with all that concerns Mrs. Siddons) was
that the patent of the Edr. theatre which expires this year
was to be vested in a set of gentlemen for the public
advantage. Rock is moving heaven & earth with the
Town Council & others to get a lease & I found the
Provost at Arnistoun come on purpose to solicit the Chief
Baron with a positive assurance on Rocks part that
Mrs. S. had not the most distant thoughts of the matter.
I begd leave to doubt this assertion extremely and accordingly the C.B. commissioned me to write to Mrs. S. with the assurance that if she had any view for herself or Mr. H. Siddons he would do all in his power to forward it. I think I can also answer for Dalkeith House being favourable if spoke to in time. All that I wish is that Mrs. Siddons would let me know whether she has any thoughts of the management or not. In the former event she need bind herself to nothing till we see what sort of terms can be offered. But by simply stating her wishes she will enable me to put an effectual stop to the present system of intrigue and cabal which may otherwise foreclose their being complied with. And if (which I should think a great disappointment) Mrs. S. has no thought on the subject Mr. Henry MacKenzie & I think of looking out for some other candidate. Our friend Young would do well if joined by any person of capital. One thing you will understand better than I can express namely how completely Mrs. Siddons' plan may be foiled if it shall appear to come through the hands of a certain bustling political party For with however little reason, you know as well as I, that the Magistrates would take the alarm as if the theatre was to be thrown into the hands of these persons—it would be asking a favour of De Monfort in the name of Rezenvelt. I fear [Miss] D's active kindness in this matter & if possible would have Mrs. Siddons stand upon her own high ground without the most distant shadow of party bustle. I hinted this in my letter to Mrs. S. which I shewd the Chief before sealing it & I am most anxious to hear her determination. It is the last calling of the Bans. The instant those are spoke to who must be secured I will take it upon me to mention the matter to Miss Dallas but sooner I think it
could do no good & might be of prejudice. I believe
Mr. Mackenzies name & perhaps Wm. Erskines & mine
will be in the patent. Will you get to the bottom of this
business & write to me about it.

I left John very busy but only 10 presses mand ; for
want of pressmen-while the Compositors were
likely to desert because the presses were over-burdened.
Surely we suffer by want of hands. Beneath I write an
order on Messrs. Longman & company to settle with you a
few pounds which they owe me. I owe Messrs. Wood &
Green Newsmen No 9 Holywell Street Strand the sum
of $4, 7., for the Courier newspaper on my account. I
will write to them to send the receipt to Mr. Millars, who
can pay it & settle with you. We are here up to the
knees in snow. No other news stirring except that
Jeffrey has written a very sharp review of Marmion in
which however he gives Canto VI most extravagant
praise. Do you know who writes " The Crusaders or
Minstrels of Acre " lately publishd by Cadell & Davies 1-
It has some spirited Stanzas and is much above the every
day tone of poetry-Will you be so good as to write as
soon as you can & let me know how Dryden is selling
etc etc. Direct to Ashestiel Selkirk N.B. as I shall be here
for a fortnight at least. Believe me Yours truly

Mr. James Ballantyne                     WALTER SCOTT
Care of Mr. Miller Bookseller

Albemarle Street London
 [Signet Library]

SIR WALTER SCOTT  1808

TO MISS SEWARD
CATHEDRAL CLOSE, LICHFIELD [23rd April l808]
MY DEAR Miss SEWARD,—It is long since I have been honoured with your kind letter containing so favourable and partial an analysis of Marmion. It is now lying before me and the contents are enough to warm the blood to the finger ends although our coals are all expended, the snow lying two feet deep and the roads impassable while the almanack impudently pretends to my very face that to-day is the twenty-third of April. We expect a visit from Miss White in the course of next week; certainly if the weather permits her to accomplish her journey at all, she will deem herself in Siberia or Nova Zembla. I submit to most of your strictures1 those excepted where I differ on principle—a word which I respect however as much when I think it really ranks against me as when it combats on my side: and I hope withal I have equal spirit to contemn the assistance of party partiality and the enmity of party prejudice when they assume its respectable disguise and enlist themselves in either party. The word butchery has been noted by several of my friends as well as by you so I think it must be wrong—Yet to me the dragging of a victim to death sounds butchery as well as the actual use of the knife or mallet. I am not familiar with the Poetical Register. I see I must get it to make myself acquainted with such beautiful verses as those you quote from the fifth volume. They are uncommonly striking. I wrote you a pretty long letter on the subject of collecting and publishing a few of your original poems on which I will not now [say anything] further than to express my sincere hope that in some shape or other you will gratify us so far.

My reason for transporting Marmion from Lichfield was
to make good the minstrel prophecy of Constance's song.

Why I should ever have taken him there I cannot very well say. Attachment to the place, its locality with respect to Tamworth, the ancient seat of the Marmions, partly perhaps the whim of taking a slap at Lord Brooke en passant, joined in suggesting the idea which I had not time to bring out or finish as the concluding canto of Marmion was written in four days and sent piece-meal to the press as the ink dried on the paper without copying or revisal. I plead guilty of trifling with my theme in concluding, but in God's name what could I do—all interest died with Marmion but my subordinate characters remained on my hand to be "wooed and married and a' " as our old song says. I should have been torn to pieces if I had not given some account of them but to make interesting was impossible. I therefore treated them as the author in the Critic treats the confidante of Tilburina.

I am quite glad you have seen Southey. Delighted with him you must be, yet in conversation (great as he is) he is inferior to Wordsworth, perhaps because he is a deeper and more elaborate scholar. Southey rarely allows you any of those reposes of conversation when you are at liberty to speak, as the phrase is, "whatever comes uppermost." But in return, if an idle fellow like me is sometimes a little gene, he is at least informed, and may be the wiser or better for all he hears. What I admire in both is an upright undeviating morality connecting itself with all they think and say and write. Southey is now I believe in London studying for the Cid, and the Portuguese History. I am impatient for both.
Nothing new of the literary kind amongst us except that Jeffrey has written a very sharp review of Marmion for the next Edinburgh Review. Being an utter stranger to the pangs of an Author's anxiety, and not very susceptible of pleasure arising from poetical reputation it would be very hard if I were subjected to the distress arising from wretched feelings on critical attacks. We dined together and went over the subject of his criticism with mutual good humour. I cannot say I am sorry for the circumstance as I firmly believe if ever I write again I shall do better without one half of my popularity (I suppose I must call it) and furthermore, it will exhibit the impartiality of the critic which has been considerably assailed.

Mrs. Jackson leaves Edinburgh in a short time to be Governess to Mr. Arbuthnot's children (late our Resident at Constantinople). I hope it will answer but I fear she will find the task of teaching "the young idea how to shoot" one fully more laborious than that of planting cabbages. Her sons are prospering in the West Indies—that is a better hope—they owe her I have been told, much. I hope they will have both the means and the desire to repay her amply. The said Mrs. Jackson wrote me a letter just as I left Edinburgh, about a Mr. Whalley who is, God bless the mark, ambitious of becoming LL.D. and can find no better road to it than through a Scotch University. I believe Edinburgh and Glasgow have long declined dealing in this sort of literary Simony, though St. Andrews and Aberdeen still as Johnson said get rich by degrees. But as Mr. Whalley is stated to be a friend of yours I will endeavour to assist him if he comes.
MY DEAR SURTEES,—I have been a little way out of town, and only yesterday received your kind letter.

Upon maturely considering your obliging offer, I have determined to be contented with copies of the Bishop's two letters, which you are kind enough to offer me.

There would be no end of publishing every thing relative to the period, nor is it perhaps desirable, where so much depends on minute accuracy, that state papers should be printed where the proof-sheets cannot be collated with the originals before their being thrown off. I do grudge a little the necessity of relinquishing the more complete illustrations which might be derived from the Lansdowne...
papers; but, I believe, I must e’en confine myself to my own materials. Among the Cotton MSS. are four letters respecting Sir Ralph Sadler’s earlier life. They occur upon pages, 343, 370, 375, 378; and No. 102, 118, 121, 112, on the respective pages of the Catalogue. (By the way, is there not a new Catalogue?) May I give you the trouble of looking into them to see what they contain, and whether they throw any light on the rise of his fortunes. There is also on page 344, No. 161, a letter from Sir Ralph, about some commotions in the Northern counties: this, I presume, may be interesting, at least to you and me. You see how I presume on your goodness; but as you have taught me how to beg, you will not, I hope, teach me how a beggar should be answered.

My own motions townward are absolutely uncertain. I would have been there before now; but as I have a prospect of being called up on business, I rather chose to postpone my journey till it became necessary than to run the risk of having my stay protracted beyond what would be pleasant or convenient. At any rate, I hope to see you either in town, or by the road. When you write to John Marriot, will you say, with my kind compliments, that a copy of Sir Marmion intended for him is at Murray's, the bookseller, in Fleet-street, not being enough of a knight errant to venture into the wilds of Cornwall without a direction. The truth is, I should have written to him long ago, but an event deeply afflicting to him, and the thoughts of which still make me sick—I mean the loss of his former pupil. Lord Scott—took from me all heart to write to him. I am truly happy to hear of his giving so effectual proof of convalescence as to enter into the holy bonds of matrimony, and should like much to know where he is to establish himself and all about it.
I am very glad you like Marmion, it has need of some friends; for Jeffery shewed me yesterday a very sharp review of it; I think as tight a one as he has written since Southey's Madoc. As I don't believe the world ever furnished a critic and an author who were more absolute poco curantes about their craft, we dined together, and had a hearty laugh at the revisal of the flagellation. Ever yours, &c.

EDINBURGH, April, 1808.

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SIR,-I do not delay to write to thank you for the transcripts received to-day in your own excellent & most distinct hand. I am quite ashamed of the trouble you have had. In requital annuntio vobis gaudium magnum. The old pedigree was quite right; and Norton the father certainly escaped abroad, in spite of all ballads and traditions whatever. Here is the proof:-In the eighth volume of the Harleian Miscellany you will find, about page 584, a letter to a friend concerning Doctor Story, the famous persecutor, who was taken and executed in Queen Elizabeth's time; in which the said Story is said to have confessed that, in 1570, he held many conferences and much intercourse with the English exiles in Flanders, amongst whom old Norton is distinctly and repeatedly mentioned. It is needless to say that this evidence is decisive, whether Story, made any such confession or not; because if Norton had been hanged at York the year before, it would have been absurd in a partizan of Queen
(2-55) Elizabeth to represent Story as conversing and
(2-55) corresponding with him in Flanders in 1570. So that's a
(2-55) difficulty solved. I like the crazy old Bishop's nolo
(2-55) episcopari on the subject of his York preferment. As for
(2-55) Lady Margaret Gray, I would fain hope that her spiritual
(2-55) backslidings have been made the foundation of charging
(2-55) her with carnal inaccuracies. The fury of the times
(2-55) against the Papists amounted to persecution, especially
(2-55) when they fell into fanatical hands. There is a good
(2-55) deal in Lodge's Illustrations about the proceedings against
(2-55) a Lady Constance Foljambe in Derbyshire, whom her own
(2-55) grandson apprehended (by the assistance of God! as he
(2-55) said), and despoiled grievously.

(2-55) About Marmion, I can safely say, though it sounds very
(2-55) like affectation, that my anxiety was past, after it received
(2-55) in a considerable degree the suffrages of a few of my
(2-55) friends. I hardly know how or why it is, but I really
(2-55) lose all concern for my labours after they get before the
(2-55) public; and the fate of those that sunk and those that
(2-55) swam, and I have had a good many of both, made an
(2-55) equally indifferent impression upon their unfeeling parent.
(2-55) As to the special objections you mention, they fall within
(2-55) my plan, which has always been rather to exhibit ancient
(2-55) costume, diction, and manners, than to display my own

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(2-56) ingenuity in making an ideal world, or in dealing in
(2-56) general description, which may be as correct among the
(2-56) Iroquois as when the scene is laid in feudal Europe. No
(2-56) doubt this may easily be carried too far, and one may be
(2-56) induced to dwell on minute particulars, because they are
(2-56) ancient, which would not be worth mentioning were the
(2-56) costumes modern. But as the Venetian General told his
(2-56)(2-56) soldiers, when fighting against the Pope, that they were
Venetians before they were Christians; even so, I, having been an antiquary many years before I thought of being a poet, may be permitted to sacrifice to my original studies, while pursuing those of later date. Adieu, my good friend, and believe I will think myself happy if an opportunity should ever occur to me of repaying in part your manifold kindesses. I intend to write to Marriot, and will address the letter to your care, not knowing his proper direction.

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, 26th April, 1808.

[Abbotsford Copies and Surtees Memoir]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

DEAR Miss BAILLIE, - I quite forgot yesterday to mention to you what Constable said about Mr. Struthers poem. He thinks the price should not be below 5 Shillings printed by Ballantyne and if a subscription goes forward he will take 250 copies at Booksellers price which will be about 2/10. If 250 more can be disposed of to the Booksellers it will discharge all the expense of printing and paper, so that the Subscription money when recovered will go all into the Authors pocket, deducing a trifle for boarding &c. If however Mr. Struthers would prefer a sum certain Mr. Constable will give him L30., for an edition of 1000 copies. The deuce is that it is much more easy to get names to a subscription paper than to get the money afterwards and I think in general not less than 20 or 25 per cent is lost. I should therefore incline to
believe that if in addition to the £30., Constable will allow Mr. S. to dispose of 30 or 40 copies for his own benefit which might be easily disposed of at 7/ a piece, your protege will make more money with less trouble than even by a large subscription. Besides it is to be considered that it will in the latter case be the interest of the Bookseller to push the work off and that a new edition will have the better chance to be called for. You will be so good as consider which of these modes you think will do best. Constable seems to think it absolutely necessary it should be printed by Ballantyne as he very knowingly says that a small lady-looking book must always be done in the best style. I think I could get off ten or twelve copies and be answerable for the money but though I could get many more names I would not like to be responsible for people whom I could not dun [sic].

Finding Erskine is still out of Town I send you the scroll copy of the Tragedy of Tragedies, if any part of it should be totally illegible it will be no great loss but I regret it should cost you more trouble than could be helped. In your judgement pray remember mercy especially since the case is that of your sincere admirer and most respectful and much obliged W SCOTT

CASTLE STREET Saturday-1
[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO LADY ABERCORN

26th April [1808]

MY DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,-I cannot you see permit
your conscience to be long at ease without putting you anew into my debt for though I think I would hardly even to your Ladyship yield the palm of being the laziest correspondent on earth yet the chance of being forgotten by our friends is still more intolerable than the chance of annoying them by too frequently refreshing their memory. If a wish could transport me to the Priory I should not be long in paying my personal respects-Your heavenly weather makes me envy you could I envy any advantage that is so well bestowed. We are here among hills white with snow and rivers red with rain, the atmosphere being an ambigu between the one and the other, the land looking like Nova Zembla though I am not conscious of having left Scotland and the climate feeling like Christmas though the Almanack maintains to my very face that it is the 26th of April. Very sad all this-and what is worse the groom says he cannot get forage for the horses, and the dairy maid protests that there is no food for the cows and the lambs are dying by scores as fast as they are yeaned,-and the pigs-and the poultry-and the dogs-and lastly the children are are [sic] all in some danger of being actually starved. Seriously I believe that if the weather does not mend speedily we shall have a terrible year in our South Highlands and still worse in the North. To call up a less lamentable subject-I hope your Ladyship has received an odd sort of copy of the Life of Dryden printed in quarto. It was entrusted to the care of Ballantyne the great Edinburgh printer who is now in London. If it has not reached your hands if your Ladyship will cause any one send a note to Miller the Bookseller he will see what Ballantyne has made of it. I desired it should be sent to St. James Square.
I have looked out in vain for a copy of the Elgin Epistles. There was no occasion for printing them here nor do I think any got abroad except what [some words omitted here]. Truly it is a pity such edifying communications of love & devotion should be lost to the public. I believe they rival any productions of the kind (Ld. Blandford's [?] not excepted) since the days of the D. of Gloucester who wrote Billets Doux " without anyone by [?] him except himself alone at sea." Yet Robert Fergusson was held a young man of some promise until this terrible fit of Love turned his brain with the seamy side outwards. He was always to be sure a sort of Celadon for I remember his almost dying for Miss Berry many years ago. You fair ladies have much to answer for the ravages you make in our upper stories.

My motions southwards depend entirely on the Scotch Judicature Bill. If I am to be Clerk to the Commissioners named under that Act of Parliament. I rather think [their] meeting must take place in London for the first arrangements at least in which case I must attend them there. I am much obliged as I have always been to Lord Melville for his kind exertions on my behalf.

The Whiggs here and in London are furious and yet I think with very little reason. If I did not rather dislike satire from principle than feel myself altogether disqualified from it by nature I have the means of very severe retaliation in my power particularly with respect to Holland house which has busied itself much more in my matters than I approve of. Is it not astonishing that people will begin to throw stones with so many glass windows
in their own heads? Nobody cares what these great folks can say of me but should I take the humour of returning their abuse I suspect I would find auditors enough.

Sotheby told me he wrote his last poem to discharge his conscience of a religious duty and without any reference to temporal popularity. I am concerned to observe from your Ladyship's letter that he is again suffering worldly ambition to creep in upon him. I am much flattered with Lawrence's approbation of Marmion—he is truly a man of genius, his own art cannot be practised without constant exercise of the imagination and therefore his vote is worth that of hundreds.

Have you heard by the bye that little Mrs. Riddell of Hampton Court (Burns's Mrs. Riddell) has married a young officer of Dragoons. My friend Mathias (the author of the pursuits of literature) will in all probability break his heart upon this melancholy occasion. I am obliged to break off abruptly for I see the carriage of a crazy Welsh woman of our acquaintance who is come (Lord help hur) to see our romantic scenery when it is ankle deep in snow—Have you ever seen hur? She is a certain Miss Lydia White, nineteen times dyed blue, lively and clever and absurd to the uttermost degree but exceedingly good-natured. I think I must let her run some risque in fording the Tweed that we may show to more advantage from her joy at finding herself on dry land. But as this joke must not be carried too far Good-bye, my dear friend.

[Perpont Morgan]
TO ROBERT SURTEES.

(2-61)MY DEAR SIR,-I do not delay acknowledging your kind (2-61)letter, and begging you will give yourself no further (2-61)trouble on my account than you mean to take on your (2-61)own concerning Sadler's letter from Darlington. I would (2-61)not publish it entire, and should only be glad to glean (2-61)from it any particulars which might serve to throw light (2-61)on Sadler's situation & private history. If you will trust (2-61)me with the perusal of your own memorandum, I will (2-61)return it safe, and save you the trouble of obtaining or (2-61)making a transcript. My motions are still very (2-61)undetermined: whether I shall remain at Edinburgh during (2-61)the next summer session, or move southwards, I am very (2-61)uncertain.

(2-61)The letter from Sir Ralph's father argues that he was a (2-61)man of inferior rank; probably only a steward or auditor (2-61)to the proprietor of Cilney, whom I trust to discover (2-61)when I go to Edinburgh. I think it would seem he (2-61)expected his wife to return by the Great Hadham carts (2-61)or waggons.

(2-61)I have been favoured with a letter from Mr. Lowes,1

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(2-62)of Ridley Hall, stating that it is a different place from (2-62)Willimoteswick, which is situated two miles higher up the (2-62)river, was embattled, and still exhibits an oblong tower (2-62)in tolerable preservation. What is more afflicting, by (2-62)confounding these two mansions, I have conferred, (2-62)according to Mr. Lowes, Ridley Hall, the immemorial (2-62)possession of his ancestors, upon the Ridleys of (2-62)Willimoteswick. I don't know how all this gear cottons with (2-62)the matter of fact, but you will of course be able to tell me
exactly. I think Wallis or Camden led me into the
blunder; yet, as I had your letter on the subject before
my nose, I hardly know how I could make so gross an
error. Believe me, my dear Sir, Ever yours truly,

ASHESTIEL, 2nd May, [1808]. WALTER SCOTT
Written in haste, as appeareth.

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,-I was favourd two days ago with the
account of your proposed day of weighing anchor &
suppose this will find you at moorings in London. I
have no commissions to trouble you with except of &
concerning the Swift. A set of Gibbers lives would be very
desireable-also a Granger 1-also any original editions
you may be able to pick up. I have heard something
of collections for a Life of Swift in Dublin but I own I do
not fear an Irish editor. It was also intimated to me
that some of these materials might perchance be purchased
but unless they were of more consequence than I apprehend
them to be this wd. not be worth while. Miller

1808 SIR WALTER SCOTT 63

declined to buy Wartons notes on Dryden in the same
circumstances which were probably more valuable.

I wrote to Mr. Smythe 1 of Cambridge under cover to Mr.
Weber which I suppose he would find at the post Office
there. But I doubt greatly the professor himself may
have been absent. I presume that if you found that from
this or any other circumstance his access to the Library
was impeded you would bring him on to London where
the Museum is an unfailing resource.
I will not tax your civility with writing to me from London knowing how busy you must needs be. But I expect much literary news on your return. The Fox for example must be started while you are in London. You will also learn how the Dryden about which Miller is so anxious is likely to repay him.

If you can pick me up any 4to. plays at a reasonable rate I should be glad to have them - not however at connoisseur prices. I am glad the new Marmion is at length out. Ever yours very truly    WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 3d. May. 1808

Miss Whyte & her niece are here with us and enjoying delightful weather. I have made them expect moss troopers.

Mr. Archibald Constable
Care of Mr. Murray, 33 Fleet Street London

[Stevenson]

64       LETTERS OF             1808

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE, - Your letter found me in this quiet corner and while it always gives me pride and pleasure to hear from you I am truly concerned at Constable's unaccountable [delays]. I suppose that in the hurry of his departure for London, his promise to write to Mr. Struthers had escaped; as for any desire to quit his bargain it is quite out of the question. If Mr. Struthers will send to my house in Castle Street the copy
of his Book and the Manuscripts designed for the press I
will get him a short bill for the copy money the moment
Constable returns or perhaps before he comes down.
He may rely on the bargain being definitively settled and
the printing will I suppose be begun immediately on
the Great Bibliopolist's return on which occasion I shall
have according to good old phrase " a crow to pluck
with him and a pock to put the feathers in."

I heartily wish we could have had the honour to see
Miss Baillie and you at our little farm which is now in its
glory, all the twiggs bursting into leaf and all the lambs
skipping on the hills. I have been fishing almost from
morning till night, and Mrs. Scott and two ladies our
guests are wandering about on the banks in the most
Arcadian fashion in the world. We are just on the point
of setting out on a pilgrimage to the " bonny bush aboon
Traquair," which I believe will occupy us all the
morning. Adieu my dear Miss Baillie nothing will give
me more pleasure than to hear that you have found the
northern breezes fraught with inspiration. You are notentitled to spare yourself and none is so deeply interested
in your labours as your truly respectful friend and Admirer

ASHESTIEL SELKIRKSHIRE      WALTER SCOTT
7th May 1808

P.S. - We quit our quiet pastures to return to [Edinr.]
on the 10th. So Mr. Struthers' parcel will find me there
if he is pleased to intrust me with the care of it. Mrs.

SIR WALTER SCOTT       65

Scott joins in kindest compliments to Miss Baillie. Happy
shall we think ourselves when we can see you again.
TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR CHARLES,-I have looked out the old Ballads. One I think very pretty

There lived a wife in the Wilds of Kent.

I have seen a copy or rather another version of the same riddle me ree beginning

The Elphin Knight sate on a hill

Ba, ba, lile ba.

The tale of the Doune Shepherdess is curious & I believe true. The tale of (Piren) Reed I intend for the Border Minstrelsy, but if you like to print it in the meantime you shall have all the illustrations I can give. It is a tale of Redesdale & still well remembered. Yours ever

WALTER SCOTT
Saturday CASTLE STREET [1808]

I would like to have back the copy of the Wife in the Wilds of Kent as I want Anne to learn a few of the verses: the line is very pretty-Child Horn you will recognise as a version of the old Romance. Please send back the music at your own good time.

A thousand thanks for Dame Tweedale.

Charles Sharp Esq. Princes Street.

[Rosebery]
TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

(2-65)MY DEAR CHARLES,-I have a ballad or two for you-
(2-65)will you dine here on Wednesday at 6 o'clock to meet
(2-65)Chauntry the celebrated sculptor, who is a real good
(2-65)cut of John Bull. Yours ever        WALTER SCOTT

(2-65)CASTLE STREET Sunday 15 May [1808]
[Rosebery]

66       1808       LETTERS OF

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

[1808]

(2-66)MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,-I was honourd with your letter
(2-66)and will carefully attend to your instructions respecting
(2-66)Schetky's prints. I cannot leam that they are yet
(2-66)finishd although it is long since he wrote to me that they
(2-66)would be out of the engravers hands in a fortnight. But
(2-66)printers & engravers are a very perfidious set of persons.
(2-66)I do not believe that the printed descriptions of the views
(2-66)to which I added a few border anecdotes are yet quite
(2-66)printed off-

(2-66)Mr. Scott cheated us of a visit the last time he was in
(2-66)town and as we afterwards learnd had by just retribution
(2-66)almost been cheated of his dinner at Newbottle-

(2-66)I have been just dismissing to press a new edition of
(2-66)Marmion which the booksellers say is wanted instantly so
(2-66)the Review has not spoiled the sale. Indeed Jeffery's
(2-66)flagellation is of a kind not calculated to do much harm
(2-66)and has much more the appearance than the essence of
(2-66)severity. The specimens are carefully selected from the
best passages of the poem and the criticisms on the plan
are so general that they involve the credit of Ariosto and
Tasso as much as mine. I can have no objection to be
tried on such an issue—I suspect Jeffery made an odd sort
of compounding between his own character & mine on
the occasion and was willing rather to amuse the public
with cracking his whip than to annoy the culprit with
laying on the lash.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind Compliments to Mr. Scott we
hope to see you at Ashiestiel in July while the days are long
and the hills pleasant. Believe me very truly Dear Madam
Your obliged & respectful humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR: 25 May [no year date]

TO CHARLES ERSKINE

DEAR CHARLES,—I sent the processes yesterday but
foolishly left out a note I had made upon that of Murray
whose litigations seem to be endless. It was merely
directing you to employ neutral persons to survey the
houses & report what it would cost to put them in
sufficient repair in terms of the Tack.

The Chief Baron has issued a precept from Excheqr.
respecting the gold ring found in Carterhaugh now in
possession of the worthy Advocate Gurrie. You will see
the propriety of taking his examination yourself about it
& making the proper return to Excheqr. I was much
surprized to hear it but find it has been lately done in
TO MRS. HUGHES

MY DEAR MADAM,-I was honourd with your letter some time ago and immediatly wrote to Mr. Atwood to express my thanks for the honour he has done my Lullaby in wedding it to his music.-I have inclosed the notes of the original Gaelic air procured after much enquiry and some difficulty for the character of the Highland music is so wild and irregular that it is I am informed extremely difficult to reduce it to notes. I fear it would puzzle any one except Mrs. Hughes herself to unite the words and music-they do sing however and I hope though I fear after more trouble than either words or tune are worth you will at length be able to find out how. This Ditty should have been sent in search of you long ago but I really thought I must have waited till the Highlanders came down to get in the harvest which they do as the Irish with you come over to the Hay-making. Should you like the air I will endeavour to find you more Gaelic music, for they have a tune and a song to almost everything that they set about.

Marmion is much flattered by your approbation-he has been very successful with the public 5000 copies being already disposed of. The critics (I mean the professional critics) have not I understand been so favourable as to
the Lay but with this I laid my account for many causes.

It would give me great pleasure could I hope to see
Miss Hayman and you this summer but the chance which
there was of this taking place seems daily more uncertain.
I believe now that my autumn will be spent in Ettricke
forest. I wish you could come there and make our hills
cvocal with your melody. I Mrs. Scott would be delighted
to see you & so should I to receive Dr. Hughes at my
farm. Make my kindest compliments to him and believe
me Dear Madam Your obliged humble servant

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR 1st June [1808]

I hear with regret that Miss Hayman has been much
afflicted by the loss of a relation.

[ Gabriel Wells ]

TO WILLIAM LAIDLAW

DEAR WILLIAM,-Mrs. Scott joins her thanks to mine
for the superb pikes : being scientifically stew'd with rich
sauce they make a most excellent dish. I am quite
astonished at George's dexterity, and as much obliged by
his generosity. This accompanies a copy of Marmion,
which I will see put up with my own eyes. Constable
is greatly too busy to be uniformly accurate. I have
promised Lord Somerville that he shall hear from you,
and I think your plan, being a little talked of as yours
among the English Agriculturalists, may recommend an
experiment to my friend Lord Dalkeith. But he would
certainly hardly hold me a competent judge upon such a
TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 9th June, 1808

MY DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,—I was some time ago honoured with your letter & deeply regret the loss of the lovely little boy whom I saw at Dumfries. I hardly ever saw a prettier cherub-like head & can easily understand what the Marquis was likely to suffer upon so severe an infliction of providence. No one is so sensible as I am of what deficiencies occur in my poetry from the want of judicious criticism and correction, above all from the extreme hurry in which it has hitherto been composed. The worst is that I take the pet at the things myself after they are finished and I fear I shall never be able to muster up the courage necessary to revise Marmion as he should be revised. But if I ever write another poem, I am determined to make every single couplet of it as perfect as my uttermost care and attention can possibly effect. In order to ensure the accomplishment of these good resolutions I will consider the whole story in humble prose, and endeavour to make it as interesting as I can.
before I begin to write it out in verse and thus I shall have
at least the satisfaction to know where I am going my
narrative having been hitherto much upon the plan of
blind man's buff. 2ndly Having made my story, I will
write my poem with all deliberation and when finished
lay it aside for a year at least, during which quarantine I

would be most happy if it were suffered to remain in
your escritoire or in that of the Marquis who has the best
ear for English versification of any person whom in a
pretty extensive acquaintance with literary characters I
have ever had the fortune to meet with nor is his taste
at all inferior to his power of appreciating the harmony
of verse. 1 In this way I hope I shall be able to gain the
great advantage of his Lordship's revision and consideration
provided he should find it in any respect worthy his
attention. You see what good resolutions I am forming
whether they will be better kept than good resolutions
usually are time which brings all things to light will shew
your Ladyship.

As for her Grace of Gordon 2 she is certainly the most
ungracious of Graces if she says I read over Marmion to
her. The only time she saw Marmion (excepting however
the first Introduction, which your Ladyship remembers
was printed separately) was at the Priory when I read
some part of it one evening and whether the Duchess was
then so good as to point out any of its numerous errors
I really cannot recollect. I certainly neither had her
Grace's particular amusement nor the least intention of
consulting her critically, in my head at the time. Our
real quarrel is some supposed neglect in my not attending
her parties last winter in Edinburgh. I have had a very
handsome compliment from the booksellers who published
Marmion-no less than a hogshead of excellent Claret, which is equally flattering as a pretty sure mark that the book has succeeded with [the] public and agreeable to a poor bard whose cellars are not quite so well replenished with wine as his head with whimsies. I am endeavouring to get a copy of the Elgin Letters by my interest with Jeffrey the Reviewer who was the fair Lady's counsel in the case but I doubt greatly being able to succeed in that quarter for since I gave up assisting him in the Review when their politics became so warm my credit with him is a little at ebb.

I have been threatening for some days past to go to Dunira 1 for a day or two and pay my respects to the good old statesman. I wish the Marquis and your Ladyship would come down this summer-I should delight to go a little way into the Highlands with you as I am certain you would be enchanted.

I am truly glad you like the Dryden-I would have sent your Ladyship a whole set of the works if I had had a handsome one at my disposal I am still turning my eyes towards Swift-my situation will not permit me to be idle even if my inclination would leave me at rest. I beg my most respectful thanks to the Marquis and I hope your Ladyship will tell him how much I intend to profit by his kind admonitions which I account a very great favour among the many various kinds which I have received at his hands. When this Scottish Judicature Bill gets through parliament I shall learn if I am likely to be wanted in London and if so I need not say how soon I will be an Intruder at the Priory.-Believe me with very great respect Ever your Ladyship's truly obliged and
very faithful

W. S.
[Pierpont Morgan]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

EDINBURGH, 16th June 1808

MY DEAR LADY LOUISA,—Nothing will give us more
pleasure than to have the honour of showing every

attention in our power to Mr. and Mrs. Morritt, and I am
particularly happy in a circumstance that at once promises
me a great deal of pleasure in the acquaintance of your
Ladyship's friends, and affords me the satisfaction of
hearing from you again. If Mr. and Mrs. Morritt
should make a long delay in Yorkshire, perhaps we may
be at my little farm of Ashestiel, where we have plenty
of pigeon-holes to put such friends into as can be contented
with goat's whey, narrow quarters, and Selkirkshire
mutton. But we shall remain at Edinburgh till the
12th July, when the Courts of Law rise and set their
subjects at liberty. Pray don't triumph over me too
much in the case of Lydia. I stood a very respectable
siege; but she caressed my wife, coaxed my children,
and made, by dint of cake and pudding, some impression
even upon the affections of my favourite dog: so, when
all the outworks were carried, the main fortress had no
choice but to surrender on honourable terms. To the
best of my thinking, notwithstanding the cerulean hue of
her stockings, and a most plentiful stock of eccentric
affectation, she is really at bottom a good-natured woman,
with much liveliness and some talent. She is now set
out to the Highlands, where she is likely to encounter many adventures. Mrs Scott and I went as far as Loch Catrine with her, from which jaunt I have just returned.

We had most heavenly weather, which was peculiarly favourable to my fair companions’ zeal for sketching every object that fell in their way, from a castle to a pigeon-house. Did your ladyship ever travel with a drawing companion? Mine drew like cart-horses, as well in laborious zeal as in effect; for, after all, I could not help hinting that the cataracts delineated bore a singular resemblance to haycocks, and the rocks much correspondence to large old-fashioned cabinets with their folding doors open. So much for Lydia, whom I left on her journey through the Highlands, but by what route she had not resolved. I gave her three plans, and think it likely she will adopt none of them: moreover, when the executive government of postilions, landlords, and Highland boatmen devolves upon her English servant instead of me, I am afraid the distresses of the errant damsels will fall a little beneath the dignity of romances. All this nonsense is entre nous, for Miss White has been actively zealous in getting me some Irish correspondence about Swift, and otherwise very obliging.

It is not with my inclination that I fag for the book-sellers; but what can I do? My poverty and not my will consents. The income of my office is only reversionary, and my private fortune much limited. My poetical success fairly destroyed my prospects of professional success, and obliged me to retire from the Bar; for though I had a competent share of information and industry, who would trust their cause to the author of the Lay of the Last Minstrel? Now, although I do
allow that an author should take care of his literary character, yet I think the least thing that his literary character can do in return is to take some care of the author, who is unfortunately, like Jeremy in Love for Love, furnished with a set of tastes and appetites which would do honour to the income of a Duke if he had it. Besides, I go to work with Swift con amore; for, like Dryden, he is an early favourite of mine: I shall do very little for Thompson, except publishing a few letters of no great consequence which have fallen into my hands.

Thompson, except publishing a few letters of no great consequence which have fallen into my hands. Pray now, dear Lady Louisa, get all you can collect about Swift. I believe I shall go to Ireland to see what can be done there, and I hope to have a long conversation with your Ladyship on that difficult chapter of "Cadenus and Vanessa." There is certainly some strange confusion in the arrangement of that piece, but I think it possible to retrieve it in some measure, if not wholly. Perhaps there are lines omitted. I find the gentleman to whom Dryden's Life was committed left it at home. I will send it up, however, to Longman & Co. with some books that are going to them by sea. The Marmion is nearly out, and I have made one or two alterations on the third edition, with which the press is now groaning. So soon as it is, it will make the number of copies published within the space of six months amount to eight thousand,—an immense number surely, and enough to comfort the author's wounded feelings, had the claws of the reviewers been able to reach him through the steel jack of true Border indifference.

Mrs. Scott offers her respectful compliments. Pray let me have the honour of hearing from your Ladyship at an
idle hour. The copy of Marmion will wait on you so
soon as the said third edition is published. Meanwhile,
believe me, with great respect, your Ladyship's much
obliged and faithful servant, WALTER SCOTT

Ashestiel is only 30 miles from Edinburgh, near Melrose,
Newark, etc., all which I will be happy to shew Mr. and
Mrs. Morritt in great style.

TO THOMAS SCOTT

[20th June 1808]

MY DEAR TOM,-I take this opportunity ... to offer
you my best and warmest congratulations upon your
approaching military preferment. I have no doubt you
will now not only find yourself extremely comfortable,
but also in: a situation to save money, which like other
things wants but a beginning. . . .

Let me exhort you most heartily to give your mind to
an edition of Shadwell, which I think I could dispose of
for something handsome for you. I have almost all the
original editions, and could take care that the press was
properly corrected, and would also revise your notes, as
you are diffident in point of language. I am perfectly
sure you will find great pleasure in this work if you would
but set about it; and also that your habitual acquaintance
with the old dramatists would enable you to make very
entertaining notes and illustrations. I do not mention
this merely as an easy way of picking up 100 guineas or
so, but because I know by experience that one is apt to
tire even of reading, unless we read with some special and
determined object,-an employment which will fill up
pleasantly many hours which might otherwise hang very
heavy ; at least you may believe it, I find it so myself,
as I am just now seriously engaged in two mighty works,
Lord Somers' Tracts and Swift's Works, which will keep me
working for two or three years to come. . . .

Charlotte is just returned from Ashestiel, and joins me
in warmest joy to Mrs. Scott on your promotion.-Believe
me, dear Tom, yours,

W. S.

Excellent news to-day from Spain-yet I wish the
patriots had a leader of genius and influence. I fear the
Castilian, nobility are more sunk than the common
people, and that it will be easier to find armies than
generals. A Wallace, Dundee, or Montrose, would be the
man for Spain at this moment. It is, however, a consolation,
that though the grandees of the earth, when the
post of honour becomes the post of danger, may be less
ambitious of occupying it, there may be some hidalgo
among the mountains of Asturias with all the spirit of

the Cid Ruy Diaz, or Don Pelayo, or Don Quixote if you
will, whose gallantry was only impeachable from the
objects on which he exercised it. It strikes me as very
singular to have all the places mentioned in Don Quixote
and Gil Bias now the scenes of real and important events.
Gazettes dated from Oviedo, and gorges fortified in the
Sierra Morena, sounds like history in the land of romance.

James Hogg has driven his pigs to a bad market. I am
endeavouring as a pis aller to have him made an Excise
(2-76) officer that station being with respect to Scottish geniuses
(2-76) the grave of all the Capulets. Witness Adam Smith,
(2-76) Burns, etc.

[Familiar Letters and Lockhart]

TO RIGHT HONBLE. ROBERT DUNDAS, ETC., ETC., ETC.,
(2-76) DOWNING STREET, LONDON 1

(2-76) MY DEAR COLONEL, - I am against my will again an
(2-76) intruder upon you concerning the theatre. Upon considering
(2-76) the matter it occurs there might be some difficulty
(2-76) in getting the patent granted to a set of new names
(2-76) whereas there can be none to renewing it in that of Lord
(2-76) Mellville and adding the Duke of Buccleuchs name instead
(2-76) of Duke of Hamiltons. The said noble peers may then if
(2-76) they are so disposed convey the patent to trustees for the
(2-76) public as the Chief Baron proposed. We are all a little
(2-76) anxious to have it settled for which there are to use the

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1808 77

(2-77) words of quack advertisements more reasons than good
(2-77) men would think. A certain party have been making
(2-77) themselves busy in this as in all other matters.

(2-77) Should this arrangement meet your own ideas will you
(2-77) have the goodness to signify to Campbell that an application
(2-77) in terms of the inclosed note of which Lord Advocate
(2-77) has a copy has your countenance and approbation-
(2-77) I have written a few lines on the subject to the Duke of
(2-77) Buccleuch & am with great regard Your obliged &
(2-77) faithful

(2-77) WALTER SCOTT
(2-77)EDINR.24 June, 1808

[ Nat. Lib. Scot. ]

TO LORD SOMERS

(2-77)MY LORD,-I was honoured with your Lordship's letter this morning and beg to assure you that nothing was further from my intention than to be guilty of the least disrespect to your Lordship in the intended republication of the Tracts collected under the name of your great ancestor. I was indeed seeking by means of some of my friends in town a proper channel of requesting your Lordship's countenance to the undertaking when the booksellers found themselves obliged to announce it prematurely to the public from an apprehension of their design being anticipated by others and executed perhaps in a manner less creditable than it is their desire that the present undertaking should be conducted. I have to regret that the opportunity of personal communication on the subject of which I was so desirous should have commenced with the necessity of an apology on my own part which however I trust may be admitted as the fault was altogether involuntary. The plan of the undertaking of which I hope in ten days to send your Lordship (with your permission) an accurate detail is generally as follows. The 16 volumes of Lord Somers' Tracts are to be compressed in twelve quarto volumes. The arrangement is to be methodized in the following manner. All the tracts are to be in the first place divided according to the reigns in which they were published. Then if each reign will admit of sub-division, into four classes, historical, political, polemical and miscellaneous. In
each of these sub-divisions the treatises will be arranged with reference to their respective subject, placing those together which refer to the same point of controversy and observing in other respects a chronological order. It is my desire to give upon the introduction of every new subject such a concise view of the point at issue as may save an ordinary reader the trouble of referring to other works for the information necessary to understand the Tract he is about to enter upon. And I have made a considerable collection of other notes of miscellaneous nature, some for the sake of criticism, others with a view to elucidation. With respect to the memoir of Lord Somers’ Life it was my intention to prefix it to two volumes of additional Tracts and in the meantime to employ myself in recovering such information with respect to that great man as my best exertion should procure me access to. And I must own that as I hoped to procure access to the Representative of the Lord Chancellor and as my name is not altogether unknown to the literary world I ventured to promise myself some countenance in that quarter. The time for composing this Memoir will be ample as the Booksellers intend publishing the Tracts at the rate of four volumes in a year which will afford three years before the life need go to press.

I should be extremely glad to know whether this plan is honoured with Lord Somers’ approbation in the outline and shall be extremely happy if his Lordship will afford me an opportunity of showing my respect for his judgment and person by complying with any criticism or correction he may be pleased to suggest. I have the honour to be With all due respect. My Lord, Your most obedient humble servant,
TO CONSTABLE AND CO.

GENTLEMEN,—Being about to compile and edit a complete Edition of Swift's Works in nineteen or twenty Volumes 8vo with a life of the Author and notes critical and illustrative of his writings upon the same plan with my late Edition of Dryden I hereby offer you the said work in property so far as the same may belong to me by Statute or Common Law for the sum of fifteen hundred pounds Sterling, five hundred pounds of which to be payable during the currency of the work as I may require and the remaining thousand pounds to be settled by bills at six twelve and eighteen months date in equal sums to be dated and granted on the day of publication.

And in case of my death before the compleating of this work I agree in that case that it shall be referred to Francis Jeffrey Esquire what proportion or whether any part of the said Copy money shall be payable to my representatives to be judged according to the progress of the work and the equity of the Case. And the work so far as depends upon me shall be ready for publication about Christmas 1810. I am Gentlemen Your very obedient Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 25 July, 1808

[Nat. Lib. Scot.]
The present edition of this incomparable English Classic is offered to the public on a plan different from that adopted by former Editors. In the Life of the Author it is proposed to collate and combine the various information which has been given by Mr. Sheridan Lord Orrery Dr. Delany Mr. Pilkington Dr. Johnson and others into one distinct & comprehensive narrative which it is hoped may prove neither a libel or apology for Swift nor a collection from the pleadings of those who have written upon either side but a plain impartial and connected biographical narrative. By the favour of some friends in Ireland the Editor hopes to obtain considerable light upon some passages in the Dean's Life which have hitherto perplexed his biographers. In preparing the text & notes no labour or expense has been spared to procure original information. The Tale of a Tub for example is illustrated with marginal notes of the learned Bentley transcribed from manuscript jottings on his own copy. Although neither long or numerous they offer some curious elucidations of the author & are a singular instance of the equanimity with which the satire even of Swift was born by the venerable scholar against whom it was so unadvisedly levelled. Some preliminary critical observations are offered on the various literary productions of the Dean of St. Patrick's and historical explanations and anecdotes accompany his political treatises. All those pieces which though hitherto admitted into Swift's works are positively
ascertain'd not to be of his composition are placed in the Appendix or altogether retrenched. On the other hand the Editor is encouraged to believe that by accurate research some gleanings may yet be recoverd which have escaped even the laudable and undeniable industry of Swift's last Editor. So that upon the whole he hopes the present Edition will be fully more complete though less voluminous than those of late years. The work will appear in the course of 1810.

[Stevenson]

TO THE LORD ADVOCATE

[ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL-COLQUHOUN]

MY DEAR LORD,-I send you the theatrical petition which I hope may now be carried through without delay. As Lord Mellville and the Duke are to transfer their patent to Committee they will I hope have no farther trouble in the business than to sign first the petition & then the Conveyance.

I am uncertain whether the form is quite accurate but it may be easily corrected. Mr. Campbell the Solicitor so soon as the petition is signed will give the necessary attendance to get it through the publick offices. Believe me ever My dear Lord Your obliged & faithful

EDIN. Saturday [July, 1808] WALTER SCOTT

[Nat. Lib. Scot.]

TO REV. R. POLWHELE

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK, 21 July, 1808
DEAR SIR,

Owing to my residence in London for these some months past, I did not receive your letter till my return to Edinburgh about a fortnight ago, since which time I have been overwhelmed with the professional duty that had been accumulating during my absence.

I consider it as no slight favour that you are willing to entrust me the task of reviewing my early and great favourite the beautiful poem on Local Attachment, and I will write to Mr. Gifford, our chief commander, offering my services. The only objection I can foresee is the poem having been for some time printed; but it has been customary of late years to get over this. I will at the same time mention to Mr. G. your obliging offer of assistance, which I do not doubt he will consider as highly valuable.

It may be necessary to say, however, that I myself have no voice in the management of the Quarterly Review, and am only a sincere well-wisher and occasional contributor to the work. The management is in much better hands; but I am sure Mr. Gifford will be as sensible of the value of your co-operation as I should be in his situation.

Believe me, dear Sir, your much obliged truly faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

[Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1832]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

DEAR BALLANTYNE,

I have received your long and interesting letter and although it is very long since I have been a principal or even a confidant in a love affair yet eleven years of matrimony and quiet domestic duties &
pleasures have not proved a greater sedative in my case
than old age in that of Father Dryden

The power of beauty I remember yet
Which once inflamed my soul and now inspires my wit.

You cannot suppose that a subject always interesting in
itself should in my eyes be less so as applicable to you &
involving your happiness. After the uninterrupted
friendship of so many years in which our reputation &
prosperity has been [so] intimately connected as to go
hand in hand it would be very strange if I did not feel
the deepest interest in the most important step of your
life. And now as the French say Au fait.

Your éclaircissement with the parents of Miss --1 is
in every respect highly satisfactory shews great good

sense on their part & convinces me that you will not lose
their interest from the foolish vanity of wishing to confer
their daughter upon a gayer or more fashionable suitor.
Mr. --" I should suppose has learnt from his own success
in life the value of commercial industry in a situation like
yours and must be well aware that with application to
your extensive business and some addition to your
pecuniary means of conducting it, wealth is within your
power to as great extent as any sober-minded parent
could wish his child to enjoy. One thing I miss in this
letter of yours you make no mention of having spoken in
particular to the Mother who I doubt not is warmly on
your side and who has both opportunities and authority
to remove the young Lady's scruples and abridge your
time of probation which even the father himself does not
possess. I should like to know what she said on the
And now for the principal party concerned who I really think has behaved as well and as prudently in the case as it was possible for a young woman to do. And while I naturally sympathize with your impatience I cannot but think that her frank declaration of affection ought to console you under the delay which she requests from motives which are highly honourable to her sense and feelings. It is no doubt a possible thing that in the course of a twelvemonth she may change her mind but. I by no means think that her own apprehension of such an event renders it more probable. On the contrary a young Lady who at an age of vowing eternal constancy can fairly dread the possibility of changing her mind shows I think a reflecting character & that she is conscious of the rapid change and expansion of ideas which have taken place in her mind during the last few years and arguing upon that is diffident where it may stop. I remember asking my old friend Invernahyle one of the bravest Highlanders who ever wore filibeg a very childish question " what he thought when he first went into battle ? " He told me with great naivete that he would have given any man a thousand marks to answer that he would not run awa'. This was the feeling of a brave man & depend upon it Miss S-- thinks like a sensible girl and will be rather more on her guard against first impressions & all the preliminaries of inconstancy than if she professed absolute confidence in the immutable steadiness of her own affections.

At the same time I trust and believe means may be
fallen upon to shorten this period of anxious probation.
The uncle for example may be applied to if the Father &
Mother have no objections. One season in town would
be quite enough to give the young Lady a fair opportunity
of seeing other faces and hearing other tongues & to
show her

-- all she has to know
Is powder pocket-glass and beau.

I do not at all dread the result of this experiment
fortified as you are by your interest in her own feelings
and by the esteem and good wishes of her parents which
whatever novels may say to the contrary always have
due weight with an affectionate and grateful disposition.
I am only afraid of your injuring yourself by the anxiety
of your own temper & that your undue degree of humility
will lead you to be cast down or jealous about trifles
which has sometimes consequences that the excess of
affection cannot excuse. I have known several Faulklands
in real life but I never saw a Julia. Consider you
have every advantage over your rivals and it will be your
own fault if you are not so warp'd in with all Miss --'s
schemes for futurity that she shall sooner form a plan of
happiness without the blessing of sight than without your
being concern'd in it. I consider your distance as a
fortunate circumstance since you will undoubtedly
correspond regularly & your meetings may be sufficiently
frequent to maintain constancy on both sides & rare

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1808 85

enough to be the object of hope and expectation.-I think
you told me Miss -- had a taste for literature-cultivate
that as anxiously as you can ; it is an excellent flyflap for
coxcombs & teaches a woman how soon their conversation
must become tiresome.

Once more keep up a good heart in so fair a cause.
You must not suffer your spirits to be overcome 1st because you will become tiresome to the young Lady 2ndly because you will lose ground with Mr. & Mrs. -- Lastly because you will convert my proof sheets into love letters. By the way if your letter had contained less joyful intelligence I should have thought you had mixed your ink with tears for it was so pale as hardly to be legible.

I fear our circuit which occurs about the beginning of September will prevent my accompanying you to Glasgow till about the 12th Sept. when if you think my presence can be useful I will be at your service. I will think be in town on that day to attend a meeting on business & we can go next day to Glasgow together. You will probably wish to stay a day or two there & I will take the opportunity to pay two visits in the neighbourhood when if you please we will return by the falls 1 -perhaps you may prevail on the fair Lady & her pa & ma to go so far as Hamilton or even Lanark-It is a fine country to make love in. Believe me ever yours very truly

ASHESTIEL 19th August [1808]

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SIR,-My absence from this place for these ten days prevented my sooner acknowledging the receipt of Sadler's papers, with the very valuable commentary with which you have favoured me. It is real encouragement to persevere in researches of this kind, when one
experiences such friendly readiness in those whose skill
and information render them so well qualified to afford
it. You are pleased to undervalue the kind assistance you
have given, but I can only wish to Heaven that I had
such an auxiliary in illustrating the other parts of the work.

I will take the greatest care of Ritson's Ballads, and
return them in the way you direct, as well as the
Anecdotes of the Selby family. One of these brought to my
mind, like the recollection of a dream, the story of the
wounded man, who brought up from his stomach the
piece of scarlet cloth which the ball had carried in: but
my edition has this whimsical circumstance, that one of
the Scottish captives who was in very evil apparel, having
been plundered when taken at Preston, seeing his
companion in calamity make this singular evacuation, begged,
as a particular favour, that he would continue his exertions,
and if possible bring up cloth enough to make him
a pair of breeches. I heard my grandfather tell this story
when I was a mere infant; perhaps he had it from his
father, who was a staunch Jacobite, and out, as it was
called, in the year 1715.

The Shepherd Bard, about whom you so kindly interest
yourself, is well, and I hope in the way of doing well.
He has got a good farm at the head of Nithsdale, and at
a moderate rent; but is as yet rather short of cash to
stock it; a deficiency which he has supplied very
judiciously by grazing a few scores of sheep for other farmers.
Times, I think, are likely to mend with him shortly,
provided he is prudent, of which I see at present no doubt.
The situation of a man, with certain claims on public
attention, and whose talents have procured him a considerable
degree of attention, is always a painful one,
if his circumstances require close and precise economy.
But Hogg has hitherto shewed no indisposition to the
necessary toil and privation of his state, although he is by
no means without his own share of vanity. The Sheep-
book was sold to Constable of Edinburgh, whom I have
desired to send you one copy only, as the emolument did
not go directly into the author's pocket. It is reckoned
by good judges a clever thing.

Mrs. Scott and I, on our return to this place, by Lanark
and Peebles, found ourselves on Sunday in a most
unpleasing predicament. We had been to see the falls of
Clyde, but our journey put me in mind of the voyage a St.
Cloud par terre et retour par mer. For behold, we were
overwhelmed by an absolute deluge, in which every rill
became a brook, every brook a river, and every river a
sea. As we were in the midst of the waste hills of Tweedsmuir,
there was no possibility of stopping: indeed, of
the wretched cottages which we passed, most were
deserted by the terrified owners. Bridges had in many
instances entirely disappeared, and in others stood very
uselessly in the midst of the rivers which they ought
regularly to have traversed. We fought our way through
without much difficulty, fatigue, and danger, which
fortunately has not affected Mrs. Scott's health; for, as
for me, I am never in danger of taking cold.

That knave Constable, who was employed to trepan
Westmorland, was certainly the person you mention.
His being knighted is mentioned, I think, by Stowe.
What a pity it was that the father's fate had not descended
on a son who so richly deserved it! I should like very
much to see the book you mention. If sent by the mail-
(coach, to the charge of Messrs. Ballantyne, printers,
Edinburgh, they will forward it to me with due care. I
Have never seen it.

With best thanks for so many favours, and sincere wishes
for a personal opportunity of thanking you for them,
I am ever Your much obliged, WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 10th Sept. 1808.

As you mention Hoddam, you probably know my
friend Charles Sharpe.

TO MISS SMITH

MY DEAR Miss SMITH,- You are very kind to remember
so worthless and lazy a correspondent as I am by letting
me hear of, what is always pleasing to me, your success
and welfare. I had not indeed failed to make inquiry
and had been much pleased by hearing that the Dublin
audience exhibited their own good taste in the warmth
of their applause. I reinclose Mrs. Sterndale's very
interesting letter upon which it is difficult to express my
sentiments further than by saying that I understand the
value of her approbation and that with such enthusiastic
feeling of poetry and indulgence for its faults I heartily
hope she will meet with works which will give her more
ample scope for the exercise of the first and call less upon
the last good quality of a gentle reader than either the
Lay or Marmion. I regret that being niched in this
solitude it is difficult for me to procure a frank. As I wish
the packet to find you at Limerick I am afraid I must allow it to travel without privilege.

We are as you supposed snug in our summer retreat and would be heartily glad could we flatter ourselves that we should see you for a week or two; a short repose from your theatrical labours and the quiet of a country retirement would I believe be of great service to your health. Perhaps you may be in a situation to manage such an indulgence next season without interfering with engagements. Your proposed trip in the winter (though I heartily hope you will make it good) promises more delight to the public than gratification to your private friends unless as a part of it. I am glad you have become acquainted with Young—he is a well-behaved gentleman-like man and quite an enthusiast in his profession. Edinburgh has a great number of theatrical visitants of eminence this summer, Elliston, Bannister Cooke and several others enough to disgust us with our usual fare which is God knows sorry enough. I think as the new patent is about to be issued there is some chance of putting the theatre on a more respectable footing and more worthy of the honour you do it occasionally. With the best intentions in the world of finishing and despatching this letter I have let it lie by me for ten days in consequence of my time being put into requisition by some English visitors who engaged me in my historical office of exhibiting the ruins of Melrose Abbey and some of the other wonders of our wilds, seasoned with many a tale of feuds and of legendary wonder.

You wish me to dramatize my dear Miss Smith and it
is an idea that has often occurred to me. But success in that line is of so very difficult attainment and depends on such a variety of requisites with which I am totally unacquainted that I doubt if ever I shall have the courage to risque losing upon the boards of a theatre any poetical reputation that I have acquired. In the days of my youth I wrote a tragedy and believe I have it still lying by me. When you come to Edinburgh you shall see it.-It is upon the vile German plan which was then the rage and is in its present state unfit for any other purpose than to afford you a guess how far you could encourage me to a more serious trial of skill.-I must needs say in justice to myself that my taste is much sobered and mended since this desperate attempt and that I see at least the faults of a bombast and turgid stile though I may be unable to attain a true tone of passion and feeling. Believe me it would give me great pleasure indeed should it ever be my lot to see you in a character of my writing and it would give me some confidence to a dramatic attempt did I think it would be so strongly supported. I question much if a tragedy on the ancient solemn plan would suit the taste of the modern public though something of a dramatic romance or Melo-Drama as it is affectedly stiled might perhaps succeed.

Once more my sweet friend accept my kindest wishes

in which Mrs. S. sincerely joins and believe me your truly faithful W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 17 Sept. 1808

I should be very ungrateful if I omitted noticing the very pretty verses of your fair correspondent well pleased should I be to think that my poem deserved her praise
as much as the reciter to whom she has committed them—
Perhaps I should not understand your request about the seal quite literally; but not thinking arms though crowded with suns moons & stars quite a propos I have used the appropriate emblem of an owl.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE 1

ASHES TIEL SELKIRK 18 Septr. [1808]

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE-The law you know makes the husband answerable for the debts of his wife and therefore gives him a right to approach her creditor with an offer of payment; so that after witnessing many fruitless and broken resolutions of my Charlotte I am determined rather than She and I shall appear longer insensible of your goodness to intrude a few lines on you in answer to the letter you honourd her with some time ago. The secret reason of her procrastination is I believe, some terrors at writing English which you know is not her native language to one who is as much distinguishd by her command of it as by the purposes she adapts it to. I wish we had the command of what my old friend Pitscottie calls " a blink of the Sun or a whip of a whirlwind " to transport you to this solitude before the frost has stript it of its leaves. It is not indeed (even I must confess) equal in picturesque beauty to the Banks of Clyde and Evan but it is so sequestered so simple and so solitary that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants without a single attraction for any visitors except those who come for its
inhabitants' sake. And in good sooth whenever I was
tempted to envy the splendid scenery of the Lakes of
Westmoreland I always endeavoured to cure my fit of
spleen by recollecting that they attract as many idle
insipid and indolent gazers as any celebrated beauty in
the land [sic] and that our scene of pastoral hills and pure
streams is like Touchwoods mistress a " poor thing, but
mine own." I regret however that these celebrated
beauties should have frowned wept or pouted upon
you when you honoured them by your visit in summer.
Did Miss Baillie and you meet with any of the poedcal
inhabitants of that district Wordsworth Southey or
Coleridge? The two former would I am sure have
been happy in paying their respects to you—with the
habits and taste of the latter I am less acquainted.

Time has lingered with me from day to day in expectation
of my being called southward I now begin to think
my journey will hardly take place till winter or early in
Spring. One of the most pleasant circumstances attending
it will be the opportunity to pay my homage to you and
to claim withal a certain promise concerning a certain
play of which you were so kind as to promise me a
reading. I hope you do not permit indolence to lay the
paring of her little finger upon you we cannot afford
the interruption to your labours which even that might
occasion. And what are you doing ? your politeness
will perhaps lead you to say in answer Why I am
very like a certain King of the Thurn distinguishd in the
Edda who when Lok paid him a visit

Was twisting of collars his dogs to hold
And combing the mane of his courser bold.
If this idle man's employment required any apology we must seek it in the necessity of seeking food to make savoury messes for our English guests for we are eight miles from market, and must call in all the country sports to aid the larder. We had here two days ago a very pleasant English family the Morritts of Rockby Park [sic] in Yorkshire. The gentleman wanderd over all Greece and visited the Troad to aid in confuting the hypothesis of old Bryant who contended that Troy town was not taken by the Greeks. His erudition is however not of an overbearing kind, which was lucky for me who am but a slender classical scholar. Charlotte's kindest and best wishes attend Miss Baillie in which I heartily and respectfully join. To you She offers her best apology for not writing and hopes for your kind forgiveness. I ought perhaps to make one for taking the task off her hands but we are both at your mercy and I am ever your most faithful obedient and admiring servant.

WALTER SCOTT

P.S. - I had a visit from the Author of the Poor Mans Sabbath whose affairs with Constable are I hope settled to his satisfaction. I got him a few books more than were originally stipulated and have endeavoured to interest Lord Leven and through him Mr. Wilberforce and through them both the Saints in general in the success of this modest and apparently worthy man. Lord Leven has promised his exertions and the interest of the party if exerted would save a work tenfold inferior in real merit. I address this scrawl to Dr. Baillie's care as the surest way of reaching you. What think you of
Spain? The days of William Wallace and of the Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar seem to be reviving there.

[Lockhart and Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

[October 8, 1808]

MY giving my name to Weber's Romances is out of the question, as assuredly I have not time to do anything that can entitle it to stand in his title-page; but I will do all I can for him in the business. By the by, I wish he would be either more chary in his communications on the subject of my employments, or more accurate. I often employ his assistance in making extracts, &c., and I may say to him as Lord Ogilby does to Canton, I that he never sees me badiner a little with a subject, but he suspects mischief—towit, an edition. In the mean time, suffice it to say, that I have done with poetry for some time—it is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop; of turnips or peas, extremely useful for those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow. Swift is my grande opus at present, though I am under engagements, of old standing, to write a Life of Thomson from some original materials. I have completed an edition of some State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler, which I believe you will find curious. I have, moreover, arranged for republication the more early volumes of Somers's Tracts; but these are neither toilsome nor exhausting labours. Swift, in fact, is my only task of great importance. My present official employment leaves my time very much my own, even while the courts are sitting—and entirely so in the vacation. My health is strong, and my mind active; I will therefore do as much as I can with justice to the tasks I
TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, 14th October 1808

I WOULD not have been so long silent my dear Lady Abercorn if I had either had anything interesting to communicate or could have assured myself that in telling my no-story I was not intruding upon time which your Ladyship knows so well how to employ much better. The summer has slid away without anything remarkable except that I have been arranging for republication the large collection of Tracts published from Lord Somers’ library. This occupation is little more than amusement, yet will be worth 400 a year to me for three or four years. I know your Ladyship will scold me for fagging in this way but it is a sort of relaxation after Marmion and Dryden-requires little exertion and is precisely the sort of thing I would wish to do for my own amusement, while it materially assists my family arrangements. As to the rest I have been shooting a little and coursing a great deal and have had the pleasure of some very agreeable visitors from England; particularly a Mr. Morritt and his lady-he is a great friend of Mr. Payne Knight deep in Grecian lore of course which led him some years ago to visit the very ground where Troy-town stood. They had been on a visit to Ld. and Lady Aberdeen 1 and were delighted with their kindness—they staid about a week with us and I shewed them all the remarkables in our
neighbourhood and told them a story for every cairn.

I am still making collections towards an edition of Swift and promise myself great advantage in this task.

But we will talk of all this when I have the pleasure of being at the Priory, which I am apt to think will be in the course of a few weeks probably in the beginning of next month. The Commission to which by your Ladyship's kind intercessions I am to act as Secretary is expected (according to Lord Advocate's information) to meet in the beginning of November when my presence will be necessary. As I shall only be wanted for a short time in town I have thoughts of bringing up Mrs. Scott with me who has not been in London for some years.

I should be much honoured by permission to inscribe my magnificent Swift to Lord Abercorn; but your Ladyship remembers what the Marquis said about Sotheby's Orestes. I should not like to lay his Lordship under the dilemma of accepting what he might perhaps justly regard as no great compliment. Any new original work of my own is a very distant consideration. Could I arrange my motions exactly according to my wishes I should like greatly to spend this winter in Spain. I am positive that in a nation so strangely agitated I might observe something both of the operation of human passions under the strongest possible impulse and of the external pomp and circumstance attending military events which could be turned to account in poetry. I do not mean that I would precisely write a poem on the Spanish events but that I would endeavour to collect from what I might witness there so just an idea of the
feelings and sentiments of a people in a state of patriotic
enthusiasm, as might hereafter be useful in any poetical
work I might undertake. The poets of the present day
seem always to be copying from the ancients and from
each other, I would fain if possible have a peep at the
great Book of nature. All this is of course an airy vision
yet I cannot banish the wish from my mind though without
any hope of gratifying it.

Should this letter be a little dull your Ladyship's

charity must impute it to this deplorable day which after
all borders however more on the terrific than the stupifying.
It has snowed rained hailed and blown without a
moment's cessation, for 36 hours. The river Tweed has
come down " three yards abreast " as my hind expresses
it-a grand spectacle ; the magnificence of which is all
I am likely to enjoy for a field of potatoes which it is in
the very act of destroying.

I beg my respectful compliments to Lady Maria the
Marquis and Lord Hamilton and Mrs. Scott offers hers
to your Ladyship. Adieu my dear Lady Abercorn I am
ever your Ladyship's much obliged most devoted

W. SCOTT

TO [J. B. S.] MORRITT, 1 ROKEBY PARK, GRETA BRIDGE.

MY DEAR SIR,-I was quite happy to learn that Mrs.
Morritt had not received any great inconvenience from
my injudicious anxiety to shew her as much of the
wonders of Yarrow as our time would permit. I was
really angry at myself for not recollecting how bad the roads must have been after so much rain. I can only hope I will have a more propitious season the next time I have the pleasure of shewing Mrs. Morritt and you the beauties of Ettrick.

The ornaments on Bishop Bells tomb which I have this morning received your obliging Draught of are very curious and certainly have some resemblance to those in Strathmore. But there is this essential difference that in the Bishops case they seem to have been merely an arabesque border on which the Artist doubtless exercised his own fancy. Whereas upon the stones they stand in place of all sort of inscription or sepulchral notice whatever and are therefore 1 in the latter case the principal whereas to speak logical upon the tomb of the Bishop I conceive them only to be accessories. The disposition of the Gothic artists of every kind bordered on the grotesque they carved every coin buttress and point of vantage over and over with the wildest forms their imagination could suggest. Still however these were only subordinate ornaments which the spectator sometimes hardly perceived without minute and curious inspection. Whereas the standing stones bear little or nothing else than these pieces of imagery which one would therefore suppose intended in some way or other to bear reference to the events of which these stones are obviously monuments. Besides I think it very unlikely that any person so remarkable as to have a labourd and expensive monument erected over him should have been interred at Glamis or Meigle so late as the fifteenth Century without Record or Tradition telling us something of the matter. We know the burial places of the Lindsays.
Ogilvies Ruthvens Grays Oliphants & other families of rank in Angusshire who lie decently interd under just such monuments as you usually see in a cathedral i.e. when they have had any monument at all erected to them- And I will venture to say that there are few such structures to which tradition does not hold up her lamp to aid us more or less clearly to read the decayd inscription. But the only tradition of these tombs carries us back to the days of romance plainly shewing therefore that no later or better grounded history could be attachd to them. It is very improbable that they could have acquired the name of Vanores 2 tomb etc unless when the history of King Arthur was current in Scotland- supposing that to carry us back about 200 years and I can hardly allow less is it probable that in a land of tradition like Scotland the romantic name and history derived from these legends should have in 1600 attachd itself to the tomb of a Scottish chief who had then been only dead one or two hundred years. The fame of a Lindesay or a Lyon would not have been so easily dispossessed and his name would have clung to his monument spite of King Arthur and all his chivalry and of Queen Ganora and all her iniquities. Let me add also that these stones agree exactly in appearance with that at Forres and those at Aberlemno to which history enables us with some precision to ascribe a date namely during the Danish invasions. Yet one word on Bishop Bells monument though not quite to the present purpose. I have been much puzzled with certain antique brass plates used chiefly to collect the offerings at the door of Scottish Churches. Besides something like a scripture [piece in] the centre I have seen more than one of [them] have characters inscribed around the verg[e ea]ch word interchanged
with such an emblematic or fanciful monster as occurs in your inscription. This matter interested me so much that I had one inscription carefully copied and shewed it to Mr. Douce who informd me that in the 16th and 17th centuries the principal manufacture of such vessels was in the north of Germany and that they were comparatively of modern date. I think it very likely that the brass ring for Bells tomb may have been imported in like manner & from the same country. This does not bear indeed on the question of the stones which you see I am determined shall be just the younger brothers of those of Deucalion and Pyrrha. I am impatient to see the history of the " felon Sow." I

After much torture of my memory I have discoverd at length that what I callld the "Raid of Rokeby" is in truth the "Raid of Rookhope" a place in the Bishopric at the head of Weardale. As however you are threatend in the course of a few weeks with a raid from me in person I will bring the ballad along with me. I have been informd I may expect to be callld to London about the beginning of next month and rather think Mrs. Scott seems disposed to accompany me and we reflect with great pleasure on the opportunity it will give us to visit Rokeby park on our way southward and cultivate an acquaintance which, does us so much pleasure and honour.

Heber has made us one of his flying visits—although he came all the way from Rippon on purpose we could not get him to stay longer than three days with us—perhaps you have seen him at Rokeby as he is rather an erratic than a fixd star. Mrs. Scott joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Morritt and I am always my dear Sir your most obliged and faithful Servant

WALTER SCOTT
TO THE EARL OF DALKEITH

MY DEAR LORD,- Had I seen you at length on Saturday I intended to have shewn you the enclosed distressful epistle from the Gentle Shepherd of Ettrick. He is totally destitute & seems to point at the Excise which seems to be the domus ultima of Scottish genius, the "grave of all the Capulets" Burns Adam Smith Harry Mackenzie all ended in sitting at the Receipt of Custom so that it seems to be the most natural refuge for poor Hogg who has certainly driven his pigs to a bad market.

I heard he neglected his sheep & forgot his sheephook a little too literally in his last situation upon which subject I deemed it meet to give him a word of advice to which he alludes in the beginning of his letter. He has I presume no very accurate information on the mode of application necessary to get this appointment but I suppose it ought to be made directly to the Board or through some friendly commissioner. They are I believe put upon trial for some time. If I can relieve your Lordship of any of the trouble you will command me.

I have been plagued to death with theatrical applications under the idea of the Sub-commission taking place under the Duke of Buccleuch & Lord Mellville; but I hear Rock the present manager gives it out that the Duke has promised him to be continued in his situation. If I knew this to be true I would dismiss all my Sylvester
Daggerwoods at once as there would be no occasion for any sub commission. I own however I hope for the sake of the public this is not true as entre nous Rock is privately an infamous fellow-Mrs. Siddons is extremely anxious to have the concern-

I beg my most respectful Compliments to Lady Dalkeith & am ever your Lordships faithful & obliged humble Servant WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 25 October 1808

TO MR. GIFFORD 1

[25th October 1808]

SIR,-By a letter from the Lord Advocate of Scotland in consequence of a communication between his Lordship and Mr. Canning on the subject of a new Review to be attempted in London I have the pleasure to understand that you have consented to become the editor a point which in my opinion goes no small way to insure success to the undertaking. In offering a few observations on the details of such a plan I only obey the commands of our distinguished friends without having the vanity to hope I can point out any thing of consequence which must not have readily occurrd to a person of Mr. Giffords literary experience & eminence. The task having been so imposed on me I beg permission to offer my sentiments
in the miscellaneous way in which they occur to me.

The extensive reputation and circulation of the Edinburgh Review is chiefly owing to two circumstances. First that it is entirely uninfluenced by the Booksellers who have contrived to make most of the other reviews mere vehicles for advertising & puffing off their own publications or running down those of their rivals. Secondly the very handsome recompence which the Editor not only holds forth to his regular assistants but actually forces upon those whose rank and fortune make it a matter of indifference to them. The Editor to my knowledge acts on the principle that even Czar Peter working in the trenches must accept the pay of a common soldier. This general rule removes all scruple of delicacy & fixes in his service a number of contributors who might otherwise have felt reluctance to accept of compensation for their labours even the more because that compensation was a matter of convenience to them. There are many young men of talent & enterprize who are extremely glad of a handsome apology to work for fifteen or twenty guineas, upon whose gratuitous contributions no reliance could be placed & who nevertheless would not degrade themselves by being paid labourers in a work where others wrote for honour alone. From this I deduce two points of doctrine first that the projected work must be considered as independant of all bookselling influence secondly that the contributors must be handsomely recompenced & that it be a rule that each shall accept of the price of his labour. Mr. John Murray of Fleetstreet a young bookseller of capital and enterprize & who has more good sense and propriety of sentiment than fall to the share of most of his brethren paid me a visit some time
ago at Ashestiel and as I found he had held some communication
with Mr. Canning (altho indirectly) I did not hesitate to give him my sentiments on these points of the plan & I found his ideas most liberal & satisfactory.

The office of Editor supposing all preliminaries arranged is of such consequence that had you not been pleased to undertake it I fear the project might have fallen wholly to the ground. He must be invested with the unlimited power of control for the purpose of selecting curtailing and correcting the contributions; and as the person immediately responsible to the Public & to the Bookseller

that each Number shall be published in its due time it will be the Editors duty to consider & settle the articles of which it shall consist & to take early measures for procuring them from the persons best qualified to write upon the several subjects of criticism. And this you will find so difficult if entirely entrusted to auxiliaries that I foresee with pleasure you will be soon compelled to appear yourself (occasionally at least) in the field. At the same time if you think my services worth acceptance as a sort of Jackal or Lions provider I will do all in my power to assist in this troublesome department of Editorial duty. But there is another point of consequence besides the task of providing & arranging materials for each number. One very successful expedient of the Edinr. Editor & on which his popularity has in some measure risen is the art of giving life & interest even to the duller articles of the Review. He receives for example a criticism upon a work of deep research from a person who has studied the book and understands the subject & if it happens to be written which may often be the case in a tone of stupifying mediocrity he renders it palatable
by a few lively paragraphs or entertaining illustrations of his own or perhaps by generalising & systematising the knowledge which it contains. By this sort of finessing he converts without loss of time or hindrance of business an unmarketable commodity into one which from its general effect & spirit is not likely to disgrace those among which it is placed. Such exertions on the part of an Editor are indispensible to a well conducted review for those who possess the knowledge necessary to review books of research or of abstract disquisition are sometimes unable to put those criticisms however just into a readable far less a pleasant or captivating shape & as their science cannot be obtained " for the nonce " by one capable of writing well the only remedy is that a man of talent for composition should revise their lucubrations. And I should hope many friends & wellwishers to the undertaking would be disposed to assist in this part of the task & altho they might not have leisure to write themselves might yet revise & correct such articles. Permit me to add that you Sir possess in a peculiar degree a facility of the greatest consequence to the undertaking in having access to the best sources of political information. It would not certainly be advisable that the work should at its outset assume exclusively a political character. On the contrary the articles upon science & miscellaneous literature ought to be such as may challenge comparison with the best of contemporary reviews. But as the real reason of instituting the publication is the disgusting & deleterious doctrine with which the most popular of these periodical works disgraces its pages it is essential to consider how opposite & sounder principles can be most advantageously brought forward.
On this ground I hope it is not too much to expect from those who have the power of befriending us in this respect that they should upon topics of national interest furnish the Reviewer confidentially & through the medium of the Editor with accurate views of points of fact so far as they are fit to be made public. This is the most delicate yet most essential part of our scheme. On the one hand it is certainly not to be understood that we are to be tied down to advocate upon all occasions & as a matter of course the cause of administration. Such indiscriminate support & dereliction of independance would prejudice both ourselves & our cause in the eye of the public. On the other hand the work will obtain a decided ascendance over all competition so soon as the public shall learn (not from any vaunt of the conductors but from their own observation) that upon political subjects the new critics are possessd of early & of accurate information. The opposition have regularly furnishd the Edinburgh review with this command of facts so far as they themselves possessed them. And surely you my dear Sir enjoying the confidence of Mr. Canning & other persons in power and in defence of whose principles we are buckling our armour may safely expect to be intrusted with the political information necessary to give credit to the work & with the task of communicating it to those whom you may chuse to employ in laying it before the public.

Concerning the mode & time of publishing the Review perhaps you will judge a quarterly publication most advisable. It is difficult to support one of more frequent recurrence both on account of the want of important books & the time necessary to collect valuable materials.

The name is of some consequence at least in Mr. Murrays
estimation, for myself I think any one who has little
pretension might serve the turn. The English Review
for example once conducted by Gilbert Stewart might
be revived under your auspices. The search after regular
correspondents whose contributions can be relied upon
tought to be begun but should not stop the publication of
the first number. I am not afraid of finding many such
when the reputation of the work has been decidedly
established by three or four numbers of the very first
order. Besides hunting about for these persons would
make the design public which should if possible be confined
to persons worthy of trust for it will have a double effect
if the first No. comes on the public by surprize without
being prejudiced either by the unreasonable expectation
of friends or the artifices & misrepresentations of the
enemy. The first No. should be out in January if
possible & might contain the following political articles
Foxes History Grattans Speeches and any book or
pamphlet which could give occasion for a distinct and
enlightened view of Spanish affairs. This last alone
would establish the character of the work. The Lucubrations
of the Edinburgh Review on that topic have
done the work great injury with the public & I think the
sale of the publication might be reduced at least one half
by the appearance of a trial review which with pretensions
to the same height of literary talent & independance of
character should speak a political language more familiar
to the British ear than that of subjugation to France.
After all the matter is become very serious. From eight
to nine thousand copies of that review are quarterly
dispersed & with all deference to the information & high
talents of the Editor (which nobody can think of more
highly than I do) much of this popularity is owing to its
being the only respectable and independant publication
of the kind. In Edinburgh or I may say in Scotland
there is not one out of twenty who reads the work that
agrees in political opinion with the Editor, but it is ably
conducted & how long the generality of readers will
continue to dislike the strain of politics so artfully mingled
with topics of information & amusement is worthy of
deep consideration. But I am convinced it is not too
late to stand in the breach. The first No. of our proposed
Review if it can be compiled without the plan taking
wind & if executed with the talent which may reasonably
be expected will burst among the Whigs (as they call
themselves) like a bomb. From the little observation I
have made I think they suffer peculiarly under cool
sarcastic ridicule accompanied by dispassionate argument.
Having long had a sort of exclusive occupation of the
press owing to the negligence of all literary assistance on
the part of those who thought their good cause should
fight its own battle they seem to feel with great acuteness
any appeal to the reading public like champions who
having been long accustomed to push have lost the
art of parrying. Now suppose that upon a foe of this
humour our projected work steals out only drawing the
attention of the public by the accuracy of its facts & the
stile of its execution without giving them the satisfaction
of bidding a public defiance I conceive that their indignation
expressed probably through the Edinr. Review will
soon give us an opportunity of coming to close quarters
with that publication should it be thought advisable &
that with a much better grace than were we to announce

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a previous determination of hostility. In the mean while
I am for gliding into a state of hostility without a formal
declaration of war & if our forces for one or two numbers
be composed of volunteers & amateurs we will find it easy when our arms have acquired reputation to hire troops of condottieri & to raise & discipline regular forces of the line. You are a much better judge than I can be who are fit to be put into the van of the battle-You have the Ellis's the Roses (cum plurimis aliis) we have lost a host in Mr. Frere & can only hope he is serving the common cause more effectually in another capacity. You can never want scholars while Oxford stands where it did. Richard Heber was with me during Murrays visit & knowing his zeal for the good cause I availd myself of his advice: his brother Reginald would be a most excellent coadjutor & I doubt not to get his assistance.
I believe I can command some respectable assistance here but I rely much on that of Mr. William Erskine the Advocates brother in law & my most intimate friend. I think we can get you both some scientific articles & some Scotch metaphysics which you know are fashionable however deservedly or otherwise. My own studies have been rather limited but I understand in some sort literary antiquities & history & have been reckoned a respectable tirailleur in the quizzing department of the Edinr. Review in which I wrote occasionally untill these last two years when its tone of politics became so violent; I only mention this lest you should either estimate my talents by my zeal (which would occasion great disappointment) or think me like many good folks more ready to offer advice than assistance. Mr. Murray seems to count upon Malthus for the department of political oeconomy & if you approve I could when I come to town sound Malthus whose study of foreign classics has been proceeding extensively. It (is certain some) push must be made at first for if we fail we shall disgrace ourselves & do great injury to our cause.
I would not willingly be like my namesake, Walter the penniless, at the head of a crusade consisting of a disordered rabble & I judge of your feelings by my own. But "screw your courage to the sticking place & we'll not fail." Supposing the work conducted with spirit the only ground from which it can be assailed with a prospect of success would be a charge of its being conducted intirely under ministerial influence. But this may be parried first by labouring the literary articles with as much pains as the political & so giving to the review a decided character independant of the latter department further the respect of the public may be maintained by the impartiality of our criticism.

[The letter breaks off in this place.]
[John Murray]

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

[Autumn 1808]

I WISH you would see how far the copy of Queenhoo-Hall, I sent last night, extends, that I may not write more nonsense than enough.

[Lockhart]

TO LADY ABERCORN

[Ashestiel, 27th October 1808]

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-When I last wrote to you I little thought I should have had such truly melancholy occasion to address your Ladyship again. I was quite shocked though hardly surprised to see announced
in the papers the heavy loss which the Marquis has
sustained in poor Lord Claud. I would be greatly
obliged to you my dear Madam when you have a
moment's time to let me know how Lord Abercorn

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supports this deep and severe dispensation of providence.
I dare not indulge myself with the hope that there is any
uncertainty in the report as I heard such precarious
accounts of his health from Madeira. It seems as if an
evil fate had attended of late the families for whose
prosperity and preservation I was bound equally by
gratitude and inclination to be most anxiously interested.
I saw Lady Dalkeith two days ago for the first time after
the loss of poor dear Scott and never passed a more
painful interview in my life—She knew my attachment
to the poor boy and wept most bitterly indeed. Thus
providence chequers the brightest prospects and alloys
the most exalted lot by misfortunes which are common
to the lowest—but on such subjects consolation is in
vain the patient must minister it to himself or await it
from the hand of time. Do be so good as to let me know
how the Marquis is. I know he will feel this blow most
acutely and believe me ever Your very faithful and
respectful

W. Scott

I HAD written thus far when I was honoured with your
Ladyship's letter—God comfort you all for he only can.
Our poor departed friend was the delight of all who
knew him. Several of his fellow students were in Edinr.
last winter & used to talk of him in terms which then gave
me the highest pleasure & which I now recollect with
fruitless sorrow.

I really thought of asking Lord Abercorn to suffer
Marmion to be inscribed to him and was only deterred by hearing him express his general dislike to dedications which I thought might be a little hint for my conduct. Truth is that unless the Marquis and the Buccleuch family to whom I am naturally much attached there are none among the great whom I am at all likely to intrude upon in this way for as it is all I ever can do to shew my respect and attachment I would not willingly render it cheap by offering it to persons for whom I felt an inferior regard. Had Lord Melville continued out of power I should have liked to have inscribed my edition of Dryden to him but there are many and insuperable objections to dedicating to any person in office or next door to it. The next tale of Chivalry shall certainly be Lord Abercorn's, that is it shall be ours my dear friend and you shall dispose of it as you please. But when it will be written is a question of difficult decision. My Spanish scheme is a mere romance yet had I time next summer I would try to realize it as I learn languages easily and can without inconvenience suffer a little hardship as to food and lodging.

My London journey is still uncertain. I shall perhaps learn something of it to-day for Robert Dundas (Lord Melville's son) and his lady are to spend two days with us upon a pilgrimage to the ruins of Melrose. And Charlotte is calling to me to get out to look after hares and partridges for them, for in the desert we may sometimes say with Robin Hood:

The meat we are to dine upon
It runneth yet on foot.
TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[Oct. 1808]

MY DEAR SIR,—I did not receive your letter till I came back to this place so that I had not an opportunity to speak to any of the Minto family upon the subject it contains. My connection with the Minto family is scarcely of a nature which would entitle me to intrude such a request upon them by letter but Thomson or Murray can do it more easily than I can.

I hope to see you in the course of a few days as I must be in town before the 20th when the Judges are to arrange every thing for our winter campaign. I have had a visit this season from Lord Albemarle also from J. Murray so that you are the only proprietor of Marmion 1 whom I have not seen at Ashiestiel.

I have learnt that Beaumont & Fletcher are still without an Editor which makes me sincerely regret my hands being so full as it is a task I should have liked excessively. Believe me my dear Sir Yours very truly

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL Tuesday

Have you ever got me a copy of the Examiner.2 I am in great want of it.
TO WILLIAM MILLER

DEAR SIR,- On the opposite side you will find all that I think it necessary to say by way of advertisement concerning Somers' Tracts. I must beg the favour of the parties concerned to exert themselves to procure me the use of rare pamphlets &c not contained in the original edition or in the Harleian Miscellany. They shall be faithfully restored & if of great rarity may be set from under a transparent horn case so that not even a compositor's thumb shall sully them. I wish also to pillage the Phoenix Britannicus & the Antiquarian Repertory with as many original curious tracts as I can get hold of. I think I will be able to enlarge those of the civil wars very greatly but I do not care to make specific promises to the public till I see what progress I can make in fulfilling them. The advertisement of the second and third volume can be altered & enlarged as also that of the first when the work is out. But I think it best to keep in generals at present. I have been in Edinburgh since I saw you & I believe I must soon be in London for a week or two upon some business respecting the Scotch Judicature bill.

Thomson will be a load off my mind & my hands. I understand the Edinr. Review treats of Dryden next No: but in what stile I know not.

Ballantyne tells [me] you are to stop the ancient plays at two volumes in which case I think you should announce
your intention to publish a third for which there are
more than ample materials, nay even for a fourth or
fifth - But a 3d. volume will be necessary to complete
the work. You can feel the public pulse with the two
now ready. I thought of taking in the rarer plays of
Otway & others of Charles ind's age as Don Carlos &c-

I beg my Compliments to Mrs. Millar & am Dear Sir
Yours very truly

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 30th October 1808

Mr. Robert Dundas & his Lady have been with me for
these few days past which prevented my writing sooner.

[British Museum]

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TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,-Since I had the pleasure of seeing you I have
the satisfaction to find that Mr. Gifford has accepted the
task of editing the intended Review. This was communicated
to me by the Lord Advocate who at the same time
requested me to write Mr. Gifford on the subject. I have
done so at great length pointing out whatever occurred to me
on the facilities or difficulties of the work in general as well
as in the editorial department offering at the same time all
the assistance in my power to set matters upon a good
footing & to keep them so. I presume he will have my
letter by the time this reaches you & that he will communicate
with you fully upon the details. I am as certain as of
my existence that the plan will answer provided sufficient
(2-114)attention is used in procuring & selecting articles of merit.

(2-114)I have been also turning over in my mind the plan of
(2-114)the Novels & Romances. In my opinion they should be
(2-114)set about without loss of time beginning with the Novels
(2-114)of Richardson. Fielding & Smollet will lead the van with
(2-114)a very short memoir of each of their lives & a prefatory
(2-114)Essay on the peculiarities of their stile. These will be
(2-114)followd by a good selection of novels of less name. Those
(2-114)of late date may however be property but I presume that
(2-114)the proprietors for example of Miss Burneys or Mrs.
(2-114)Ratcliffes may be easily induced to consent to their
(2-114)insertion. I want very much an old catalogue of a large
(2-114)circulating Library (suppose Hookhams or Lanes) to
(2-114)assist my memory in pointing out the works which should
(2-114)be inserted. I have the utmost confidence in this plan
(2-114)succeeding to an extent almost immense & will gladly
(2-114)make you a present of my own time & labour should the
(2-114)work not prove profitable. Dispatch is however the surest
(2-114)fore runner of success. I am endeavouring to get Richardsons
(2-114)Novels-pray send me his Letters lately publishd.1

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(2-115)As the criticism will be of a different text and paging, the
(2-115)Novels which in double columns may I think be comprized
(2-115)in two or at most three volumes being either 10 or
(2-115)seven 8vo volumes to one of the new Edition.

(2-115)Pray dont omit to pick up old romances & novels & tales
(2-115)’ above all keep your plan secret. If you send me any
(2-115)packages before the i2th of next month direct them to
(2-115)Ballantynes care. On that day I must be in Edinburgh
(2-115)as our courts sit down-The time of my London journey
(2-115)is still uncertain but must take place before Xmas.
(2-115) I showed Mr. Robert Dundas (presidt of the Board of
Controul) our plan of a review & told him I should call
on him for a good account of Indian affairs as opportunity
shall offer. He approves highly as does Mr. Canning
I am Dear Sir your faithful humble servant

(2-115) WALTER SCOTT
(2-115) ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 30th October [1808]

(2-115) Mr. John Murray Bookseller Fleet Street London
[John Murray]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

(2-115) ASHESTIEL 31st October [1808]

(2-115) MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE-" From the chase on the
mountain as I was returning " our little estaffette brought
me your very very kind letter. Believe me I am fully sensible
of the value of your friendly solicitude and I wish I were
as able as desirous to merit its continuance. I may say
this with confidence because it is the simple truth that
there breathes not the person whose opinion I hold in
equal reverence and therefore I leave you to judge how
proud I am of the rank you have given me in it. I
hasten to tell you that I never entertained for a second a
notion so very strange as to dedicate any poem to my
friend Jeffrey nor can I conceive how so absurd and
causeless a rumour should have arisen. There is a

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(2-116) foundation for the other part of the story though no
larger than a midges wing. I had been making a little
excursion to Stirling with Mrs. Scott chiefly to show her
that interesting part of Scotland and on viewing the field
of Bannocburn I certainly said that one day or other
before I died I hoped to make the earth yawn and devour
the English archery and knighthood as it did on that
celebrated day of Scottish glory. This occasioned a little
laughing at the time and afterwards and was sufficient
according to the regular progression of rumour to grow
into a written or perhaps a printed form before it reached
the city of London. But independent of indolence I am
greatly too cautious to venture upon any new poetical
essay for this long time to come: and as you are kind
enough to permit me such ready access to you I shall
hope for your opinion on any future attempt long before
I have thought of a dedication. As to Mr. Jeffrey I have
great personal regard for him and high estimation of his
talents I have seldom known a man with equal readiness
of ideas or power of expressing them. But I had no
reason to be so very much gratified by his review of
Marmion as to propitiate him by a dedication of any work
of mine. I have no fault to find with his expressing his
sentiments frankly and freely upon the poem yet I think
he might without derogation to his impartiality have
couched them in language rather more civil to a personal
friend and I believe he would have thought twice before
he had given himself that air of superiority in a case where
I had any chance of defending myself. Besides I really
have often told him that I think he wants the taste for
poetry which is essentially necessary to enjoy and of
course to criticize it with justice. He is learnt with the
most learnt in its canons and laws skilled in its modulation
and an excellent judge of the justice of the sentiments
which it conveys but he wants that enthusiastic feeling
which like sun-shine upon a landscape lights up every
beauty and palliates if it cannot hide every defect.
To offer a poem of imagination to a man whose whole life and study has been to acquire a stoical indifference towards enthusiasm of every kind would be the last as it would surely be the silliest action of my life. This is really my opinion of Jeffrey not formed yesterday nor upon any coldness between us for there has been none. He has been possessed of it these several years and it certainly never made the least difference between us; but I neither owe him nor have the least inclination to offer him such a mark of regard as the dedication of any work past present or to come.

I have no thoughts of dipping my desperate quill into Castalian streams for this long and many a day. If I were not actually tethered here by necessity I would take this opportunity of enlarging my stock of poetical ideas by a visit to Spain where there must be noble scope for observation but this is unfortunately out of the question, though I should like it of all things in the world. If I had the influence you flatter me with, nothing would give me more pleasure as I am sure nothing would do me so much credit as to employ it on behalf of our worthy and modest friend James Grahame. But although the Society of the higher ranks is open to me as to any literary persons whose habits and manners do not disgrace their parties, or in other words who being lions are contented to roar you as an it were any nightingale, I know too well how far that sort of selfish attention goes to expect to do any good by it. But I will aggravate my voice if there should occur any opportunity in which I can serve him. The deuce is that his politics will be against him with those whom I am most likely to have any weight with. [By] the way Mr. Struther expressed himself with much more sense of obligation than any service I could render him merited. I had a very civil
letter from Lord Leven about his poems and he promised to hand the copy to Wilberforce.

I am very busy just now in endeavouring to get the Edinburgh Theatre put on a good footing. The patent is expired and it is proposed to renew it in a set of Commissioners to be trustees for the public and to lease it from time to time to a fitting Manager. I was to be one of these trustees, got fond of the plan and really hoped that the play-house might be put upon a most classical footing. But our bark has been almost aground and I am like Robinson Crusoe on his raft straining every nerve to prevent the whole cargo slipping into that ancient and Serbonian whirlpool called Job. If I succeed my great ambition will be to get up some of your dramas and shew the people what plays ought to be. But all this depends entirely on our getting a sensible and gentleman-like Manager.

I cannot believe people would be brutes enough to prefer the garbage of melo-drama and pantomime to the high tragic feast which upon a stage of a moderate size and with actors of but tolerable capacity the Plays on the Passions would afford them. I have set my heart on the trial being fairly made and you shall see what you shall see.

I am still quite uncertain about my London journey but have been desired to hold myself in readiness to come up on short notice. Mrs. Scott proposes to be with me and you need not doubt that Hampstead will be among our very earliest visits. I will talk over my whole theatrical plan with you for I have the vanity to think of
some considerable improvements upon the common mode
of representation. Above all I will have the satisfaction
of hearing the numbers that are to produce fear and
sorrow long long after we are both no more. Charlotte
joins in every sort of kind wish to Miss Agnes Baillie and
to you. Believe me ever your most faithful and sincerely
respectful friend

W. SCOTT

P.S. I am glad Marmion gains ground—every parent
likes the youngest child best. The Cid is delightful. I

hope you like Freres translations from the poetical
romance[s]. They are in the Appendix.

[Familiar Letters and Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO JOHN MURRAY

ASHESTIEL, NOV. 2nd, 1808

MY DEAR SIR,—I wrote you a few days ago, since which
I was favoured with your letter of the 26th, containing the
lists of the Novels, &c., which were very acceptable. I
agree with you that the shape of the Drama is inconvenient,
but I really fear there is no other in which our
matter will endure the necessary compression. This size
is also most convenient for a shooting-seat or other place
of temporary residence, as it contains a great deal in little
space, and is very easily transported. It has also the
convenience of not being "borrowed" with facility, and
although the book be heavy, the subject is light—were it
a volume of Sermons, indeed, a fair lady might endanger
her toes by falling asleep with it in her hand. To give
the selection some appearance of arrangement, it will be
necessary to separate the Translations from the original Novels, to place those of each author together—which I observe is neglected in Harrison's series—and to keep the Novels, properly so-called, separate from Romances and Tales. I have little doubt that 20 volumes of 700 pages will hold all the Novels, &c., that are worth reprinting, but I will be a much better judge when I see the catalogues. Should we find on strict selection that a volume or two more will be necessary, we can throw the Tales into a separate division. As I am quite uncertain about my journey to town, I think you had better send me the catalogues by the mail coach. The name of work should be fixed. I have thought of two, which I submit to you: "The Cabinet of Novels, being a collection, &c.," or "The English Novelist." I like the first best because it might be varied into "The Cabinet of Tales and Romances;" but perhaps you can hit upon some one better than either. We must have as many of Charlotte Smith's novels as we can compass—the "Old Manor House" in particular. Pray look out for "Chao Kiou Ghoau; or, The Pleasing Chinese History"; it is a work of equal rarity and curiosity. I agree entirely with you about Baron Trenck; but as to Marmontel, don't you think a good selection of memoirs might one day be a more fit receptacle for him than our Cabinet?

Your faithful servant, WALTER SCOTT

[Smiles]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

November 2nd, 1808
DEAR ELLIS,- We had, equally to our joy and surprise,
a flying visit from Heber about three weeks ago. He staid
but three days, but, between old stories and new, we
made them very merry in their passage. During his
stay, John Murray, the bookseller in Fleet Street, who
has more real knowledge of what concerns his business
than any of his brethren—at least, than any of them that
I know—came to canvass a most important plan, of which
I am now, in "dern privacie," to give you the outline.
I had most strongly recommended to our Lord Advocate
(the Right Hon. J. G. Colquhoun) to think of some
counter measures against the Edinburgh Review, which,
politically speaking, is doing incalculable damage. I do
not mean this in a party way; the present ministry are
not all I could wish them, for (Canning excepted) I doubt
there is among them too much self-seeking. . . . But their
political principles are sound English principles, and,
compared to the greedy and inefficient horde which
preceded them, they are angels of light and purity. It is
obvious, however, that they want defenders, both in and
out of doors. Pitt's

"Love and fear glued many friends to him;
And now he's fallen, those tough co-mixtures melt."1

Were this only to effect a change of hands I should expect
it with more indifference; but I fear a change of principles
is designed. The Edinburgh Review tells you coolly, "We
foresee a speedy revolution in this country as well as Mr.
Cobbett;" and, to say the truth, by degrading the
person of the Sovereign, exalting the power of the French
armies and the wisdom of their counsels, holding forth
that peace (which they allow can only be purchased by
the humiliating prostration of our honour) is indispensable
to the very existence of our country, I think that for these
two years past they have done their utmost to hasten the
accomplishment of their own prophecy. Of this work
9000 copies are printed quarterly, and no genteel family
can pretend to be without it, because, independent of its
politics, it gives the only valuable literary criticism which
can be met with. Consider, of the numbers who read
this work, how many are there likely to separate the
literature from the politics? - how many youths are there
upon whose minds the flashy and bold character of the
work is likely to make an indelible impression? - and
think what the consequence is likely to be.

Now, I think there is balm in Gilead for all this, and
that the cure lies in instituting such a Review in London
as should be conducted totally independent of bookselling
influence, on a plan as liberal as that of the Edinburgh, its
literature as well supported, and its principles English
and constitutional. Accordingly, I have been given to
understand that Mr. William Gifford is willing to become
the conductor of such a work, and I have written to him,
at the Lord Advocate's desire, a very voluminous letter
on the subject. Now, should this plan succeed, you must
hang your birding-piece on its hook, take down your old
Anti-Jacobin armour, and "remember your swashing
blow." It is not that I think this projected Review ought
to be exclusively or principally political; this would, in
my opinion, absolutely counteract its purpose, which I
think should be to offer to those who love their country,
and to those whom we would wish to love it, a periodical
work of criticism conducted with equal talent, but upon
sounder principles. Is not this possible? In point of
learning, you Englishmen have ten times our scholarship; and, as for talent and genius, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than any of the rivers in Israel?" Have we not yourself and your cousin, the Roses, Malthus, Matthais, Gifford, Heber, and his brother? Can I not procure you a score of blue-caps who would rather write for us than for the Edinburgh Review if they got as much as pay by it? "A good plot, good friends, and full of expectation-an excellent plot, very good friends!"1

Heber's fear was lest we should fail in procuring regular steady contributors; but I know so much of the interior discipline of reviewing as to have no apprehension of that. Provided we are once set a-going by a few dashing numbers, there would be no fear of enlisting regular contributors; but the amateurs must bestir themselves in the first instance. From the Government we should be entitled to expect confidential communications as to points of fact (so far as fit to be made public) in our political disquisitions. With this advantage, our good cause and St. George to boot, we may at least divide the field with our formidable competitors, who, after all, are much better at cutting than parrying, and whose uninterrupted triumph has as much unfitted them for resisting a serious attack as it has done Buonaparte for the Spanish war. Jeffrey is, to be sure, a man of the most uncommon versatility of talent, but what then?

"General Howe is a gallant commander,
There are others as gallant as he."

Think of all this, and let me hear from you very soon on
the subject. Canning is, I have good reason to know,
very anxious about the plan. I mentioned it to Robert
Dundas, who was here with his lady for a few days on a
pilgrimage to Melrose, and he highly approved of it.
Though no literary man, he is judicious, clairvoyant, and
uncommonly sound-headed, like his father. Lord Melville.
With the exceptions I have mentioned, the thing continues
a secret... Ever yours

WALTER SCOTT

[Smiles]

TO JOHN MURRAY

November 2nd, 1808

I TRANSMITTED my letter to Mr. Gifford through the
Lord Advocate, and left it open that Mr. Canning might
read it if he thought it worth while. I have a letter from
the Advocate highly approving my views, so I suppose you
will very soon hear from Mr. Gifford specifically on the
subject. It is a matter of immense consequence that
something shall be set about, and that without delay.
I am truly surprised at the inexhaustible activity of Mr.
Cumberland's spirit. His proposed Review cannot be
very long-lived-I hope ours 1 stands a better chance of

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longevity. I am truly vexed at being kept in my present
state of uncertainty concerning my motions southwards.

The points on which I chiefly insisted with Mr. Gifford
were that the Review should be independent both as to
bookselling and ministerial influences-meaning that
we were not to be advocates of party through thick and
thin, but to maintain constitutional principles. Moreover,
I stated as essential that the literary part of the work should be as sedulously attended to as the political, because it is by means of that alone that the work can acquire any firm and extended reputation.

Moreover yet, I submitted that each contributor should draw money for his article, be his rank what it may. This general rule has been of great use to the Edinburgh Review. Of terms I said nothing, except that your views on the subject seemed to me highly liberal. I do not add further particulars because I dare say Mr. Gifford will show you the letter, which is a very long one.-Believe me, my dear Sir, with sincere regard. Your faithful, humble Servant,

[Smiles] WALTER SCOTT

TO JOHN MURRAY

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 Judicature Bill to whom I am to act as Clerk have resolved that their first 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 going. I wish he would with your assistance & that of his other friends make up a list of the works which the first No: is to contain & 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. sequestrating him from the world & rendering him less capable of active exertion & in the kindest & most polite manner he expresses his hope that he should receive very extensive assistance & 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 alarmd at this prospect. I am willing & 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 Edinr 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 & Swift. I Constable had lately very nearly relinquished the latter work & 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 & Fletcher much better. It would not have required half the research & would have occupied much less time. I plainly see that according to Mr. Giffords view I should almost have all the trouble of a co-editor both in collecting & 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 No; so pray send me a list of books & perhaps you may send a few on a venture. You know the department I had in the Edinburgh Review. I will sound Southey agreeable to Mr. Giffords wishes on the Spanish affairs. The last No: of the Edinr. Review has given disgust beyond measure owing to the tone of the article on Gevallos’ Report subscribers are falling off
like withered leaves. I retired my name among others after explaining the reasons both to Mr. Jeffrey & to 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 No: 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 subject of the Romances. Believe me Dear Sir yours very truly WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 15 November 1808

Gifford is much pleased with you personally.

Mr. John Murray Bookseller Fleet Street London

[John Murray]
TO GEORGE ELLIS

18th November 1808

SUPPOSING you to have read said scroll, you must know further, that it has been received in a most favourable manner by Mr. Gifford, who approves of its contents in all respects, and that Mr. Canning has looked it over, and promised such aid as is therein required. I therefore wish you to be apprised fully of what could hardly be made the subject of writing, unless in all the confidence of friendship. Let me touch a string of much delicacy - the political character of the Review. It appears to me that this should be of a liberal and enlarged nature, resting upon principles - indulgent and conciliatory as far as possible upon mere party questions - but stern in detecting and exposing all attempts to sap our constitutional fabric. Religion is another slippery station; here also I would endeavour to be as impartial as the subject will admit of. This character of impartiality, as well as the maintenance of a high reputation in literature, is of as great consequence to such of our friends as are in the Ministry, as our more direct efforts in their favour; for these will only be successful in proportion to the influence we shall acquire by an extensive circulation; to procure which, the former qualities will be essentially necessary. Now, entre nous, will not our editor be occasionally a little warm and pepperish? - essential qualities in themselves, but which should not quite constitute the leading character of such a publication. This is worthy of a memento.

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
burthen of the globe, while he writes us a review? I know
what an audacious request this is; but suppose he should,
as great statesmen sometimes do, take a political fit of the
gout, and absent himself from a large ministerial dinner,
which might give it him in good earnest, - dine at three
on a chicken and pint of wine, - and lay the foundation
at least of one good article? Let us but once get afloat,
and our labour is not worth talking of; but, till then, all
hands must work hard.

Is it necessary to say that I agree entirely with you in
the mode of treating even delinquents? The truth is,
there is policy, as well as morality, in keeping our swords
clear as well as sharp, and not forgetting the gentlemen
in the critics. The public appetite is soon gorged with
any particular style. The common Reviews, before the
appearance of the Edinburgh, had become extremely
mawkish; and, unless when prompted by the malice of
the bookseller or reviewer, gave a dawdling, maudlin sort
of applause to everything that reached even mediocrity.
The Edinburgh folks squeezed into their sauce plenty of
acid, and were popular from novelty as well as from merit.
The minor Reviews and other periodical publications,
have wired the matter still farther, and given us all abuse,
and no talent. But by the time the language of vituperative
criticism becomes general—(which is now pretty
nearly the case)—it affects the tympanum of the public
ear no more than rogue or rascal from the cage of a parrot,
or blood-and-wounds from a horse-barrack. This, therefore,
we have to trust to, that decent, lively, and reflecting
criticism, teaching men not to abuse books only, but to
read and to judge them, will have the effect of novelty

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upon a public wearied with universal efforts at blackguard
and indiscriminating satire. I have a long and very sensible letter from John Murray the bookseller, in which he touches upon this point very neatly. By the by, little Weber may be very useful upon antiquarian subjects, in the way of collecting information and making remarks; only, you or I must re-write his lucubrations. I use him often as a pair of eyes in consulting books and collating, and as a pair of hands in making extracts. Constable, the great Edinburgh editor, has offended me excessively by tyrannizing over this poor Teutcher, and being rather rude when I interfered. It is a chance but I may teach him that he should not kick down the scaffolding before his house is quite built. Another bomb is about to break on him besides the Review. This is an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted under the auspices of James Ballantyne, who is himself no despicable composer, and has secured excellent assistance. I cannot help him, of course, very far, but I will certainly lend him a lift as an adviser. I want all my friends to befriend this work, and will send you a prospectus when it is published. It will be valde anti-Foxite. This is a secret for the present.

For heaven's sake, do not fail to hold a meeting as soon as you can. Gifford will be admirable at service, but will require, or I mistake him much, both a spur and a bridle, a spur on account of habits of literary indolence induced by weak health-and a bridle, because, having renounced in some degree general society, he cannot be supposed to have the habitual and instinctive feeling enabling him to judge at once and decidedly on the mode of letting his shafts fly down the breeze of popular opinion. But he has worth, wit, learning, and extensive information; is the friend of our friends in power, and can easily correspond with them; is in no danger of having private quarrels fixed on him for public criticism; nor very likely to be embarrassed by being thrown into action in
public life alongside of the very people he has reviewed,

and probably offended. All this is of the last importance to the discharge of his arduous duty. It would be cruel to add a word to this merciless epistle, excepting love to Mrs. Ellis and all friends.-Leyden, by the by, is triumphant at Calcutta-a Judge, of all things!-and making money! He has flourished like a green bay tree under the auspices of Lord Minto, his countryman. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT

[Lockhart]

TO THOMAS SCOTT, DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN

DEAR TOM,-Owing to certain pressing business, I have not yet had time to complete my collection of Shadwell for you, though it is now nearly ready. I wish you to have all the originals to collate with the edition in 8vo. But I have a more pressing employment for your pen, and to which I think it particularly suited. You are to be informed, but under the seal of the strictest secrecy, that a plot has been long hatching by the gentlemen who were active in the Anti-Jacobin paper, to countermine the Edinburgh Review, by establishing one which should display similar talent and independence, with a better strain of politics. The management of this work was much pressed upon me; but though great prospects of emolument were held out, I declined so arduous a task, and it has devolved upon Mr. Gifford, author of the Baviad, with whose wit and learning you are well acquainted. He made it a stipulation, however, that I
should give all the assistance - in my power, especially at

the commencement; to which I am, for many reasons,

nothing loth. Now, as I know no one who possesses more

power of humour or perception of the ridiculous than

yourself, I think your leisure hours might be most

pleasantly passed in this way. Novels, light poetry, and

quizzical books of all kinds, might be sent you by the

packet; you glide back your Reviews in the same way,

and touch, upon the publication of the number (quarterly)
ten guineas per printed sheet of sixteen pages. If you

are shy of communicating directly with Gifford, you

may, for some time at least, send your communications

through me, and I will revise them. We want the matter

to be a profound secret till the first number is out. If you

agree to try your skill I will send you a novel or two.

You must understand, as Gadshill tells the Chamberlain,

That you are to be leagued with "Trojans that thou
dreamest not of, the which for sport sake are content
to do the profession some grace "1; and thus far I assure
you, that if by paying attention to your style and subject
you can distinguish yourself creditably, it may prove a
means of finding you powerful friends were anything
opening in your island.-Constable, or rather that Bear
his partner, has behaved to me of late not very civilly, and
I owe Jeffrey a flap with a fox-tail on account of his review
of Marmion, and thus doth " the whirligig of time bring
about my revenges." The late articles on Spain have
given general disgust, and many have given up the
Edinburgh Review on account of them.

My mother holds out very well, and talks of writing by
this packet. Her cask of herrings, as well as ours, red and
white, have arrived safe, and prove most excellent. We
have been both dining and supping upon them with great
gusto, and are much obliged by your kindness in remembering
us. Yours affectionately,
W. S.

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TO LADY ABERCORN

I OUGHT long ago to have told you my dear friend that
my appointment has taken place but I expected to have
communicated the news at the Priory in person. After
some consideration however among the Commissioners
who are partly English & partly Scotch they have at
length altered their original plan of meeting immediately
in London & resolved to hold their first meetings here &
to meet in London early in Spring: of course all chance
of my visiting town till March at soonest is now over, a
little to my own disappointment and not a little to that
of Mrs. Scott. Our little family has now assembled in
Edinburgh for the winter & resumed of course our town
habits. We have the Duchess of Gordon to enliven us
but I shall go very little to her parties for which I have
but little time or inclination. She has a good looking
Granddaughter (Lady Jane Montagu [?] as I think) just
coming out. I suppose she intends to go a fishing for a
husband for her having provided for all her daughters.
Pray take care of Lord Hamilton though I would give
something to see him pleasantly settled yet I would not
have her Graces activity exerted in his behalf. We have
Sir Samuel Hood1 here with all his Baltic laurels.
His lady is a great friend of ours a daughter of Seaforths
and an enthusiastic Highlander of course. Your Ladyship
asks me who spoke highly of our poor last Lord Claud
& I can only answer all who knew or had heard of him
at Oxford. We had some very pleasant young men from that university at Edinburgh last winter particularly. Lord Desart [?] (of your own kingdom) Mr Fazackerly

Sir Thomas Dykes Ackland (who has returned here) Mr. Price & several other young men of good family & great expectation. I saw most of them frequently & used to receive them pretty often when the discourse often turned upon their college acquaintances and your Ladyship may believe my enquiries often turned upon young men in whom I took so great an interest as our departed friend & his brother. And they were the oftener questioned on that subject as there was only one voice & one mind among them to say & to dictate all that an enquiring friend could wish to hear of both brothers.

I entered upon my office yesterday as Clerk to those same Commissioners who held their first meeting upon St. Andrews day as an omen of their good intentions towards poor old Scotland. I hope their deliberations may seriously be of some advantage to our law-yet clergymen are not more jealous of new heresies than lawyers of legal innovations. Our principle object is to introduce trial by Jury in civil cases (in criminal we have always enjoyed its benefits) but I have grave doubts how far it will be found to answer. As far as I have observed no two nations in Europe resemble each other less than the English & Scotch I mean the middle classes for those of the highest ranks by travel & company soon rub off all marks of Nationality. The Englishman is very apt to partake of the feelings of those around him & nowhere is a popular impulse so universally acknowledged. Now my Countrymen are shy restive & contradictory in
their dispositions & I sincerely believe that utter starvation will hardly bring twelve of them to unite in one verdict unless their national pride is concerned in the question which cause an hundred will have but one voice-This is sorry stuff to send to a Marchioness but I think my next will convey something more diverting. The whole world are [sic] in arms here about the Edinburgh Review for the opinions they have uttered about the Spanish affairs. There is they say some prospect of an opposing work when we shall have "fight dog, fight bear."

Should I hear anything about this likely to amuse your Ladyship Believe me Dear Lady Abercorn Your truly faithful & much obliged W. SCOTT

EDINR. 31 [sic] November 1808

TO GEORGE ELLIS

Now let me call your earnest attention to another literary undertaking, which is, in fact, a subsidiary branch of the same grand plan. I transmit the prospectus of an Edinburgh Annual Register. I have many reasons for favouring this work as much as I possibly can. In the first place, there is nothing even barely tolerable of this nature, though so obviously necessary to future history. Secondly, Constable was on the point of arranging one on the footing of the Edinburgh Review, and subsidiary thereunto, a plan which has been totally disconcerted by our occupying the vantage-ground. Thirdly, this work will be very well managed. The two Mackenzies,
William Erskine, cum plurimis aliis, are engaged in the literary department, and that of science is conducted by Professor Leslie, a great philosopher, and as abominable an animal as I ever saw. He writes, however, with great eloquence, and is an enthusiast in mathematical, chemical,
some evil demon has been permitted, in the shape of this


tyrannical monster whom God has sent on the nations

visited in his anger. I am confident he is proof against

lead and steel, and have only hopes that he may be shot

with a silver bullet, or drowned in the torrents of blood

which he delights to shed. Oh for True Thomas and

Lord Soulis's cauldron! Adieu, my dear Ellis. God

blessest thou! I have been these three days writing this by

snatches.

W. S.

[Lockhart]

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR, I am glad to see you are all activity. I

will soon forward you reviews of Burns fifth volume & of

the Cid & hope they will not disgrace my coadjutors.

Bruces Life is undertaken by Josiah Walker who I think

may do it well as he knew the Abyssinian personally.

I have a young friend who I think will do Holmes

America well but I cannot find the book in Edinburgh &

must trouble you to get a copy forwarded. My friend

W. Erskine talks of reviewing Currans Speeches &

McNeills new poem which hath just come forth from the

shop of Mr. Constable. I have sent to my brother Lewis's

romances & the American tale by Mrs. Grant. Any of

these contributions which may be unnecessary for the

first number may be laid aside till wanted. Our friend

Ballantyne has been requested by a number of literary

gentlemen here to edite an annual register. The

Mackenzies father & son Lord Meadowbank William

Erskine I myself (quoth the wren) and several other

persons of good literary reputation are concernd. We
mean for certain reasons to keep a considerable number of shares ourselves but Ballantyne has been empowered to offer some to the London Trade. As the thing promises extremely well I shall be glad to find that you engage in it for I assure you every nerve will be strained to render it worthy of public acceptation. Ballantyne's own share in this concern is not very great but I think it will lead to his acting as Scottish publisher in other instances. Indeed Mr. Constable's favour being a good deal withdrawn from him and a very large proportion both of the literary & political world being desirous to have an Edinr: publisher of activity & judgement as well as constitutional principles. I have no doubt of his succeeding in an eminent degree & being of the greatest service to his friends in London as they may be to him reciprocally. This however is as yet barely in prospect & therefore I beg you will take no notice to Ballantyne that I hinted at such a matter as I know whenever his resolution is fixd you will be the first to whom he will communicate it. From what I have learnt he will neither want funds nor friends & Constable's migration of a part of his stock to London seems favorable to the success of such an undertaking. I will certainly give it all the aid in my power having the greatest reason to complain of Mr. Hunter's behaviour towards me although I retain great good will to Constable as an individual.

I beg my compliments to Mr. Gifford & believe me My dear Sir your faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 14 Decr 1808
TO GEORGE ELLIS

15th December 1808

I CANNOT help writing a few lines to congratulate you on the royal declaration. I suspect by this time the author is at Claremont, for, if I mistake not egregiously, this spirited composition, as we say in Scotland, fathers itself in the manliness of its style. It has appeared, too, at a most fortunate time, when neither friend nor foe can impute it to temporary motives. Tell Mr. Canning that the old women of Scotland will defend the country with their distaffs, I rather than that troops enough be not sent to make good so noble a pledge. Were the thousands that have mouldered away in petty conquests or Lilliputian expeditions united to those we now have in that country, what a band would Moore have under him!... Jeffrey has offered terms of pacification, engaging that no party politics should again appear in his Review. I told him I thought it was now too late, and reminded him that I had often pointed out to him the consequences of letting his work become a party tool. He said "he did not care for the consequences-there were but four men he feared as opponents." "Who were these?" "Yourself for one." "Certainly you pay me a great compliment; depend upon it I will endeavour to deserve it." "Why, you would not join against me?" "Yes I would, if I saw a proper opportunity: not against you personally, but against your politics." "You are privileged
(2-138)to be violent." - "I don't ask any privilege for undue violence. But who are your other foemen?" - "George Ellis and Southey." The fourth he did not name. All this was in great good-humour; and next day I had a very affecting note from him, in answer to an invitation to dinner. He has no suspicion of the Review whatever; but I thought I could not handsomely suffer him to infer that I would be influenced by those private feelings respecting him, which, on more than one occasion, he has laid aside when I was personally concerned.

[Lockhart]

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TO GEORGE ELLIS

(2-139)DEAR ELLIS, - Having nothing better to do but to vent my groans I cannot help thanking you for your last with as rueful gratitude as a sickman pays to his physician. In truth notwithstanding your cordial I cannot but feel exceedinglow. I distrust what we call thorough bred soldiers terribly when any thing like an exertion of talent, the formation of extensive plans of the daring and critical nature which seem necessary for the emancipation of Spain are required from them. Our army is a poor school for genius, for the qualities which naturally and deservedly attract the applause of our Generals are necessarily exercised upon a limited scale. I would to God Wellesley were now at the head of the English in Spain. The last examination shows his acute and decisive talents for command; and although I believe in my conscience, that when he found himself superseded, he suffered the pigs to run through the business, when he might in some measure have prevented them-

(2-139)Yet give the haughty devil his due,
Though bold his quarterings, they were true.

Such a man, with an army of 40,000 or 50,000 British, with the remains of the Gallician army, and the additional forces whom every village would furnish in case of success, might possess himself of Burgos, open a communication with Arragon, and even Navarre, and place Buonaparte in the precarious situation of a general with 1,000,000 enemies between him and his supplies; for I presume neither Castanos nor Palafox are so broken as to be altogether disembodied. But a general who is always looking over his shoulder, and more intent on saving his own army than on doing the service on which he is sent, will, I fear, hardly be found capable of forming or executing a plan which its very daring character might render successful. What would we think of an admiral who should bring back his fleet and tell us old Keppel's story of a lee-shore, and the risk of his Majesty's vessels? Our sailors have learned that his Majesty's ships were built to be stranded, or burnt, or sunk, or at least to encounter the risk of these contingencies, when his service requires it. And I heartily wish our generals would learn to play for the gammon, and not to sit down contented with a mere saving game. What, however, can we say of Moore, or how judge of his actions, since the Supreme Junta have shown themselves so miserably incapable of the arduous exertions expected from them? Yet, like Pistol, they spoke bold words at the bridge too, and I admired their firmness in declaring O'Farrel and the rest of the Frenchified Spaniards traitors even when approaching Madrid with a victorious army. But they may have Roman pride, and want Roman talent to support it; and in short, unless God Almighty should
raise among them one of those extraordinary geniuses who seem to be created for the emergencies of an oppressed people, I confess I still incline to despondence. If Canning could send a portion of his own spirit with the generals he sends forth, my hope would be high indeed. The proclamation was truly gallant.

As to the Annual Register, I do agree that the Prospectus is in too stately a tone - yet I question if a purer piece of composition would have attracted the necessary attention. We must sound a trumpet before we open a show. You will say we have added a tambourine; but the mob will more readily stop and gaze; nor would their ears be so much struck by a sonata from Viotti. I hope the inside of our booth will be furnished in a more chasté stile. Our measures were much hurried by the necessity of anticipating a work upon contrary principles. We were forced to keep the field open for observe we do not absolutely promise to fill up the whole place chalked out but only in as far as our communications and exertions may enable us to do so respectably. Thus I would hold it no departure from our plan if any particular branch should be omitted one year and filled up the next as we may think meet. Besides to say truth if you depend on my corps de reserve I must have some interim employment to keep them together which this Register seems to promise. As to the Review I will very soon remit two articles of my own and endeavour to bring forward others. I am cruelly sorry to say as you will be to hear that my brother's exertions on which I had counted a little have been prevented by family distress. The whole family have had a dangerous fever with a sore throat from the effects of which they are but scarcely recovering.
A female servant whom they carried from this country has died of this contagious disorder.

The thing in which I fear your Southern friend will fail in your reviewing campaign will be in writing too well for the public whose present state of taste is God knows coarse enough. And perhaps your efforts may reform it.

Do you know the Review begins to get wind here? An Edinr. Bookseller asked me to recommend him for the sale here and said he heard it confidentially from London. Mrs. Scott joins in love to Mrs. Ellis and I am ever yours most truly

W. SCOTT

EDINR. 23 December 1808.

[Owen D. Young]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

EDINBURGH, 30th December 1808

MY DEAR SHARPE,—The inimitable virago1 came safe, and was welcomed by the inextinguishable laughter of all who looked upon her caprioles. I was unfortunately out of town for a few days, which prevented me from acknowledging instantly what gave me so much pleasure, both on account of its intrinsic value, and as a mark of your kind remembrance. You have, I assure you, been upmost in my thoughts for some time past, as I have a serious design on your literary talents, which I am very
anxious to engage in one or both of the two following schemes. Imprimis, it has been long the decided resolution of Mr. Canning and some of his literary friends, particularly Geo. Ellis, Malthus, Frere, W. Rose, &c., that something of an independent Review ought to be started in London. This plan is now on the point of being executed, after much consultation. I have strongly advised that politics be avoided, unless in cases of great national import, and that their tone be then moderate and manly; but the general tone of the publication is to be literary. William Gifford is editor, and I have promised to endeavour to recruit for him a few spirited young men able and willing to assist in such an undertaking.

I confess you were chiefly in my thoughts when I made this promise; but it is a subject which for a thousand reasons I would rather have talked over than written about—among others more prominent, I may reckon my great abhorrence of pen and ink, for writing has been so long a matter of duty with me, that it is become as utterly abominable to me as matters of duty usually are. Let me entreat you, therefore, to lay hold of Macneill, or any other new book you like, and give us a good hacking review of it. I retain so much the old habit of a barrister, that I cannot help adding, the fee is ten guineas a-sheet, which may serve to buy an odd book now and then—as good play for nothing, you know, as work for nothing; but besides this, your exertions in this cause, if you shall choose to make any, will make you more intimately acquainted with a very pleasant literary coterie than introductions of a more formal kind; and if you happen to know George Ellis already, you must, I am sure, be pleased to take any trouble likely to produce an intimacy between you. The Hebers are also engaged,

1808 143 SIR WALTER SCOTT
Rogers, Southey, Moore (Anacreon), and others
whose reputations Jeffrey has murdered, and who are
rising to cry upon him, like the ghosts in King
Richard; for your acute and perspicacious judgment
must this have led you to suspect that this same new
review, which by the way is to be called "The Quarterly,"
is Intended as a rival to the Edinburgh; and if it contains
criticism not very inferior in point of talent, with the same
Independence on booksellers' influence (which has ruined
all the English Reviews), I do not see why it should not
divide with it the public favour. Observe carefully, this
plan is altogether distinct from one which has been
proposed by the veteran Cumberland, to which is annexed
the extraordinary proposal that each contributor shall
place his name before his article, a stipulation which must
prove fatal to the undertaking. If I did not think this
likely to be a very well managed business, I would not
recommend it to your consideration; but you see I am
engaged with "no foot-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny
strikers, but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters,
and great oneyers" and so forth.

The other plan refers to the enclosed prospectus, and has
long been a favourite scheme of mine, of William Erskine's,
and some of my other cronies here. Mr. Ballantyne, the
editor, only undertakes for the inferior departments of the
work, and for keeping the whole matter in train. We are
most anxious to have respectable contributors, and the
smallest donation in any department, poetry, antiquities,
&c., &c., will be most thankfully accepted and registered.
But the historical department is that in which I would
chiefly wish to see you engaged. A lively luminous
picture of the events of the last momentous year, is a task
for the pen of a man of genius; as for materials, I could
procure you access to many of a valuable kind. The
appointments of our historian are $300 \text{ a-year-no deaf}
\text{nuts. Another person has been proposed, and written}
to, but I cannot any longer delay submitting the thing to
your consideration. Of course, you are to rely on every
assistance that can be afforded by your humble command,
as Swift says. I hope the great man will give us
his answer shortly—and if his be negative, pray let yours
be positive. Our politics we would wish to be constitutional,
but not party. You see, my good friend, what
it is to show your good parts before unquestionable
judges.

I am forced to conclude abruptly. Thine entirely,

W. SCOTT
[Sharpe's Letters]

To [CONSTABLE & CO.]

GENTLEMEN,—When I saw Mr. Constable last I
mentioned to him that it would be difficult to draw out a
complete advertisement of Swift until we should see what
was contained in Nicols edition now coming out. So
soon as that can be procured I will furnish you with a
full advertisement. I have already procured Mr. Barnets
part of that Editn. which is not very important. Something
may perhaps be gained by compressing our Edition
within a smaller number of volumes than we at first
intended & so making it cheaper than the other.

If you continue anxious to advertize in the mean time
I should think it enough to say
In the press & Speedily will be publishd Swifts works
A complete collection with notes historical critical & illustrative & a Life of the Author by Walter Scott Esq.
This edition is in the form & upon the plan of Mr. Scotts Dryden.

As this work, from the very unpleasant circumstances accompanying its commencement & progress, is likely to terminate my long & friendly intercourse with your house, I have only to add that if it is likely to prove so dubious a speculation as it seems Mr. Hunter apprehends I am very willing so far as I am concerned to renounce the bargain. But if it is to go on I hope I shall hear of no more complaints untill I have the misfortune to do something to deserve them. I am Gentlemen Your obedt. Servant WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET 2 January [1809]

4th January 1809

TO JOHN MURRAY

MY DEAR SIR,-I trouble you with a few lines to say that I will have my articles ready to send off to Mr. Gifford early next week. They have been strangely interrupted first by my duty as Clerk to a Commission now sitting for reform of our courts & since by a very bad cold. Mrs. Scott sends you her kindest thanks for the Marmion pocket Book.
Ballantyne who takes charge of this note sets off today to meet you. We talked over a great number of plans or hints of plans together & I am positively certain enough may be done in various ways to make him hold up his character with any Edinr. Publisher. Constable & I are quite broken owing to Mr. Hunter's extreme incivility to which I will certainly never subject myself more. It seems uncertain whether even the Swift proceeds but this I will soon bring to a point.

I shall be most anxious to see the Review. It is now publicly talked of here though by some confounded with Cumberlands attempt. Constable mentioned the report to me & asked me if it was to be an Edinburgh publication. I told him report said no.

I have ordered two or three books out of Broster's of Chesters catalogue & desired him to send the bill to you and I must beg you to receive my review cash when due in order to settle with them.

I fear this snow will render your journey rather unpleasant but I hope Ballantyne will get through notwithstanding. Believe me dear Sir yours truly

WALTER SCOTT
CASTLE STREET Wednesday

I will review the Addenda to Swift as all the materials are fresh in my head.

[John Murray]

1809     SIR WALTER SCOTT     147
TO DR. CLARICE WHITFIELD

EDINBURGH, January 10, 1809

MY DEAR SIR,-Permit me to offer my best thanks for the honour you have done my verses, in setting them to music, and me in sending the beautiful productions which I yesterday received. Although I am no musician myself, I begin to have some opportunity of hearing it in my domestic hours, as my oldest girl, though very young, begins to practise a little. I have as yet only heard "Lochinvar" which I think very fine, and have no doubt that the rest will support (they can hardly increase) the high reputation of the composer.

I should have liked wonderfully to have been at Cambridge when your music was performed in full glory. I have a wretched ear myself yet have great pleasure in some passages. This circumstance is the more provoking, as I believe no man in Britain had more songs of all kinds by heart than I could have mustered. It is a great comfort however, that though I am not capable of whistling a tune myself, I have been in so many instances the, means of calling forth your delightful strains. I request you will believe me very proud of this circumstance.

I am, dear sir, yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT

[The Annual Biography]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

DEAR SHARPE,-Your letter was everything that I could wish, and I have little doubt that we will make
out the history very well between us. For if you are
willing to undertake the toilsome duty of arranging and
methodizing and collecting the materials, I thank God
I can write ill enough for the present taste, and will undertake
to throw as much pepper into the pottage as will
make them of the right leaven for the taste of this generation.
Observe, I altogether disclaim, deny, upgive,
overgive, and deliver any claim, right, or title to share
in the □ 300. As I have a small interest in the work, I
shall be well paid by its success, in which I think it cannot
fail. The letters you mention will be most acceptable.
As our book will require some dispatch, it would be
highly desirable, so soon as weather and your health
permit, that we were to have some chat together over this
and other projects. If you will favour us so far when
you come to town, I have a chamber in the wall in which
I could lodge you tolerably well. It is very small,
indeed, but the Cabbin is convenient, and may suit you,
in case the Miss Campbells are not in town, better than
an empty house. As for the Review,2 perge, perge !-fear
nothing ; you have yet to learn the magic virtue of calling
yourself we. I never knew the emphatic force of that
pronoun till I became a reviewer, and then I no longer
wondered at its being a royal attribute. Seriously, I will
be most happy to transmit an article written with your
usual fun to Anti-Jacobin Gifford, and will be bail for
its being kindly received. I think also if you were here,
my friend Thomson, 3 the Lord Register's Deputy, might
be able to give you material lights for your family history,

SIR WALTER SCOTT     1809     149

as his acquaintance with our records is very complete.
Your choice of a mottoe is daring for a border family :
for my part, I never look into the Justiciary records for the
sixteenth and preceding centuries without finding some
I wish you would review Crabbe. He has, I think, great vigour and force of painting; but his choice of subjects is so low, so coarse, and so disgusting, that he reminds me of the dexterity of Pallet, who painted that which is as good for a sow as a pancake, in such a lively manner as to set a whole pigstye in an uproar.

Your opinion quite coincides with mine about Mr Moore. He is not at all deeply concerned in the Review; the bookseller only mentioned his name to me en passant.

Do think of this historical affair. Be you the brisk lightning, the bold thunder I'll give them flash for. Your access to military men of skill employed in Spain will enable us to form some judgment of that (I fear) ill-fated business. I will have an excellent opportunity of getting at the diplomatic secrets. Let me hear from you soon, and believe me ever, my dear Sharpe, yours faithfully, WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 13th January 1809

[Sharpe's Letters]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINBURGH, 14th January 1809

DEAR SOUTHEY,-I have been some time from home in the course of the holidays, but immediately on my return set about procuring the books you wished to see.
(2-150) There are only three of them in our library, namely-

(2-150) Dobrizhoffer de Abiponibus, 3 vols. 1
(2-150) A French translation of Gomella's History of Oronoquo.
(2-150) Ramuzio Navigazioni, &c. &c.

(2-150) Of these I can only lay my hands immediately on Dobrizhoffer, which I have sent off by the Carlisle coach, addressed to the care of Jollie the bookseller, for you. I do this at my own risk, because we never grant licence to send the books out of Scotland, and should I be found to have done so I may be censured, and perhaps my use of the library suspended. At the same time, I think it hard you should take a journey in this deadly cold weather, and trust you will make early inquiry after the book. Keep it out of sight while you use it, and return it as soon as you have finished. I suppose these same Abipones were a nation to my own heart's content, being, as the title-page informs me, bellicosi et equestres, like our old Border lads. Should you think of coming hither, which perhaps might be the means of procuring you more information than I can make you aware of, I bespeak you for my guest. I can give you a little chamber in the wall, and you shall go out and in as quietly and freely as your heart can desire, without a human creature saying " why doest thou so? " Thalaba is in parturition too, and you should in decent curiosity give an eye after him. Yet I will endeavour to recover the other books (now lent out), unless you recommend another conveyance. But I expect this generosity on my part will rather stir your gallantry to make us a visit when this abominable storm
has passed away. My present occupation is highly unpoetical—clouting, in short, and cobbling our old Scottish system of jurisprudence, with a view to reform. I am clerk to a commission under the authority of Parliament for this purpose, which keeps me more than busy enough.

I have had a high quarrel with Constable and Co. The Edinburgh Review has driven them quite crazy, and its success led them to undervalue those who have been of most use to them—but they shall dearly abye it. The worst is, that being out of a publishing house, I have not interest to be of any service to Coleridge's intended paper. Ballantyne, the printer, intends to open shop here on the part of his brother, and I am sure will do all he can to favour the work. Does it positively go on?

I have read Wordsworth's lucubrations in the Courier, and much agree with him. Alas! we want everything but courage and virtue in this desperate contest. Skill, knowledge of mankind, ineffable unhesitating villany, combination of movement and combination of means, are with our adversary. We can only fight like mastiffs, boldly, blindly, and faithfully. I am almost driven to the pass of the Covenanters, when they told the Almighty in their prayers, he should no longer be their God; and I really believe a few Gazettes more will make me turn Turk or Infidel. Believe me, in great grief of spirit, Dear Southey, ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT

Mrs. Scott begs kind remembrance to Mrs. Southey.
The bed in the said chamber in the wall is a double one.

[Lockhart]

TO J. B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR SIR,-I am truly grieved and ashamed of the ungrateful appearance my long silence must have made in your eyes. For a long while I thought my summons to London would have been immediate and that I should have had the pleasure to wait upon [you] at Rokeby park in my way to town. But after due consideration the Commissioners on our Scottish Reform of Judicial proceedings resolved to begin their sittings at Edinburgh and have been in full activity ever since last St. Andrews day. You are not ignorant that in business of this nature very much of the detail and of preparing the materials for the various meetings necessarily devolves upon the Clerk and I cannot say but that my time has been fully occupied.

Meanwhile however I have been concocting at the instigation of various loyal and well-disposed persons a grand scheme of opposition to the too proud critics of Edinburgh. It is now matured in all its branches and consists of the following divisions. A new Review in London to be call'd the Quarterly, William Gifford to be the Editor Geo: Ellis, Rose, Mr. Canning if possible, Frere and all the ancient Anti Jacobins to be concernd. The first No : is now in hand and the Allies I hope and trust securely united to each other. I have promised to get them such assistance as I can and most happy should I be to prevail upon you to put your hand to the Ark. You can so easily run off an article either of learning or of fun that it would be inexcusable not to afford us
(2-153) your assistance. Then Sir to turn the flank of Messrs. Constable and Co/ and to avenge myself of certain impertinences which in the vehemence of their Whiggery they have dared to indulge in towards me I have prepared to start against them at Whitsunday 1st the celebrated printer Ballantyne (who had the honour of meeting you at Ashiestiel) in the shape of an Edinburgh publisher with a long purse and a sound political creed not to mention an alliance offensive and defensive with young John Murray of Fleet Street the most enlightend and active of the London trade. By this means I hope to counterbalance the predominating influence of Constable and Co/ who at present have it in their power and inclination to forward or suppress any book as they approve or dislike its political tendency. Lastly I have caused the said Ballantyne adventure upon an Edinburgh Annual Register of which I send you a prospectus. I intend to help him myself as far as time will admit and hope, to procure him other respectable co-adjutors. I have been obliged [to send] a long detail of these matters to your freind Mr. Wharton at the instigation of our Lord Advocate.

(2-153) My own motions Southwards remain undetermined but I conceive I may get to town about the beginning of March when I expect to find you enfamille in Portland Place. Our Heber will then likely be in town and altogether I am much better pleased that the journey is put off till the lively season of gaiety.

(2-153) I believe I told you that I had been mistaken in my recollection about the old ballad which I thought referd to your domain of Rokeby proves to be the harrowing of a place calld Rookhope in Weardale in the Bishopric.
The thieves were encountered and defeated by the Weardale men whose prowess is the theme of the song but as it possesses no local interest for you and has God wot as little poetry as may be I do not think it worth while to make a transcript.

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I am busy with my edition of Swift and treasure your kind hints for my directions as I advance. In summer I think of going to Ireland to pick up anything that may be yet recoverable of the Dean of St Patrick's.

Mrs. Scott joins me in kindest and best respects to Mrs. Morritt and Mr. Stanly when you write to him. I am with great regard Dear Sir your faithful humble Servt WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 14 January [1809]

[Law]

TO CONSTABLE & CO.

GENTLEMEN.—After inspection of the New Edition of Swift by Nichols I conceive some advantage may be gained in the public opinion by holding out an intention of consolidating the mass of information which they have prefixed to their edition into a distinct narrative & also explaining the further pains we propose to take to give superior value to our Edition. I would be glad to know if it meets your ideas. I inclose the scroll of an advertisement.

To resume for the last time the disagreeable subject of our difference, I must remind you of what I
told Mr. Constable personally that no single unguarded expression much less the misrepresentation of any person whatsoever would have influenced me to quarrel with any of my friends. But if Mr. Hunter will take the trouble to recollect the general opinion he has expressed of my undertakings & of my ability to execute them upon many occasions during the last five months & his whole conduct in the bargain about Swift I think he ought to be the last to wish his interest in future compromised on my account. I am only happy the breach has taken place before there was any real loss to complain of, for although I have had my share of popularity I cannot expect it to be more lasting than in that of those who have lost it after deserving it much better.

In the present circumstances I have only a parting favour to request of your house which is that the portrait for which I sat to Raeburn shall be considerd as done at my debit & for myself. It shall be of course forthcoming for the fullfillment of any engagement you may have made about engraving if such exists. Sadler will now be soon out when we will have a settlement of our accompts. I have employd Mr. Weber to make some transcripts from the Charters etc. of which no copies were furnishd to me. I am Gentlemen your obedt.

Servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 22 January 1809

Messrs. Constable & Co.

[Stevenson]
TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

(2-156)MY DEAR SHARPE,- You grieve my praecordia by (2-156)declining to lend me the heavy lift I had promised myself (2-156)but I still claim all the subordinate assistance you are so (2-156)good as to offer me & which I shall deem invaluable. I (2-156)I have received your letters of David Hume which are (2-156)quite delightful & will be a valuable addition to our first (2-156)Register. Pray hasten your Review-Do you remember (2-156)what Cadwallader says to a person whom he wishes to (2-156)entertain his wife " Say anything to Beck no matter (2-156)what nonsense. She is a damnd fool & will not know (2-156)the difference." The same say I unto thee with respect (2-156)to the public-it is inconceivable how coarse & voracious (2-156)their appetite is for anything that contains spunk & dash ; (2-156)still they never mind nor are they solicitous about justice (2-156)-make them laugh (& who can do that better than you) (2-156)make them but laugh and you have them sure. Dont (2-156)delay in this business. Bis dat qui cito dat. William (2-156)Gifford is " casting many a Northward look" and I (2-156)would bring as many blue bonnets to his assistance as (2-156)I can. I have already three or four very clever articles. (2-156)Mend your pen therefore, put gall in your ink, we want a (2-156)light lively satire on any subject you like. The legend (2-156)of Jok & the Bean stalk being very popular in my family (2-156)I appreciate the full force of the application but you need (2-156)have no fear that Gifford will cry Mother Mother lend me (2-156)the cutty axe. I write in great haste but just to thank you (2-156)as the Advertisements say for favours past & give a gentle (2-156)hint of my thirst for future Ever yours W. SCOTT

(2-156)26 January 1809.

[Hornel],

W. SCOTT
(2-157)DEAR SIR,- I return the proof sheet which by the way
(2-157)was horribly incorrect being I suppose a first proof. But
(2-157)I have retaliated upon the printer by making large
(2-157)additions to the article ; which was written under
(2-157)considerable depression both of body & mind. I am now
(2-157)however quite alive again. I hope Mr. Gifford will look
(2-157)over the sheet very carefully as it will require accurate
(2-157)revising the corrections being so numerous. Tomorrow
(2-157)I send him a whisky-frisky article on Sir John & will
(2-157)return the letters &c in a separate inclosure to you. I will
(2-157)also send a bill for 7 which I owe to Browster of Chester
(2-157)& which he says may be settled with Longman & Co.
(2-157)I will give you the trouble to do this for me & account out
(2-157)of the reviewing money. I am glad you have arranged
(2-157)so well with Ballantyne who is going on swimmingly. I
(2-157)will do everything that he can reasonably expect to
(2-157)support his new undertaking which has not been started
(2-157)here before it was most peremptorily necessary.
(2-157)Tomorrow I hope to retain a very useful hand for the
(2-157)Review. I expect McNeil &c without delay & will
(2-157)finish the Cid & I think Swift also this week. It has
(2-157)happened most unluckily that the business of the Commission
(2-157)of parliment. leaves me little time to write excepting
(2-157)after supper. I hope to be in town early in March when
(2-157)we will rally & review our forces. I have got a good
(2-157)light horse reviewer whom you must know if he comes to
(2-157)town a Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe. We shall want I fear
(2-157)light articles. Yours in haste

(2-157)W. S.
(2-157)28 January [1809]

[John Murray]
TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,-Referring to a few lines which I wrote yesterday I take the advantage of forwarding Sir John’s Review to send you back his letters under the same cover. He is an incomparable goose but as he is innocent & goodnatured I would not like it to be publicly known that the flagellation comes from my hand. Secrecy therefore will oblige me.

Mr. Wharton Member for Durham has written to me about a pamphlet which he is anxious should be distributed here. I refered him to you as likely to find out a channel not to be obstructed by the influence of Constable which he dreaded. He desires me to apply to you for a copy.

I send Browsters bill which be so good as to settle & place to my debit. I reckon on being at least three sheets in this No: which considering my very peremptory avocations is a great exertion. Yours truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 30th Jan. (1809)

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINBURGH, 31st January 1809

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,-Yesterday I received your letter, and to-day I despatched Gomella and the third volume of
Ramuzio. The other two volumes can also be sent, if you should find it necessary to consult them. The parcel is addressed to the paternal charge of your Keswick carrier. There is no hurry in returning these volumes.

The news from Spain gave me such a mingled feeling, that I never suffered so much in my whole life from the disorder of spirits occasioned by affecting intelligence. My mind has naturally a strong military bent, though my path in life has been so very different. I love a drum and a soldier as heartily as ever Uncle Toby did, and between the pride arising from our gallant bearing, and the deep regret that so much bravery should run to waste, I spent a most disordered and agitated night, never closing my eyes but what I was harassed with visions of broken ranks, bleeding soldiers, dying horses—" and all the currents of a heady fight." I agree with you that we want energy in our cabinet—or rather their opinions are so different, that they come to wretched compositions between them, which are worse than the worst course decidedly followed out. Canning is most anxious to support the Spaniards, and would have had a second army at Corunna, but for the positive demand of poor General Moore that empty transports should be sent thither. So the reinforcements were disembarked. I fear it will be found that Moore was rather an excellent officer than a general of those comprehensive and daring views necessary in his dangerous situation. Had Wellesley
been there, the battle of Corunna would have been fought and won at Somosierra, and the ranks of the victors? would have been reinforced by the population of Madrid. Would to God we had yet 100,000 men in Spain. I fear not Buonaparte's tactics. The art of fence may do a great deal, but "a la stoccata," as Mercutio says, cannot carry it away from national valour and personal strength. The Opposition have sold or bartered every feeling of patriotism for the most greedy and selfish egoisme.

Ballantyne's brother is setting up here as a bookseller, chiefly for publishing. I will recommend Coleridge's paper to him as strongly as I can. I hope by the time it is commenced he will be enabled to send him a handsome order. From my great regard for his brother, I shall give this young publisher what assistance I can. He is understood to start against Constable and the Reviewers, and publishes the Quarterly. Indeed he is in strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with John Murray of Fleet Street. I have also been labouring a little for the said Quarterly, which I believe you will detect. I hear very high things from Gifford of your article. About your visit to Edinburgh, I hope it will be a month later than you now propose, because my present prospects lead me to think I must be in London the whole month of April. Early in May I must return, and will willingly take the lakes in my way in hopes you will accompany me to Edinburgh, which you positively must not think of visiting in my absence.

Lord Advocate, who is sitting behind me, says the Ministers have resolved not to abandon the Spaniards coute qui coute. It is a spirited determination—but they
must find a general who has, as the Turks say, le Diable au corps, and who, instead of standing staring to see what they mean to do, will teach them to dread those surprises and desperate enterprises by which they have been so often successful. Believe me, dear Southey, yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT

Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Southey. I hope she will have a happy hour. Pray, write me word when the books come safe. What is Wordsworth doing, and where the devil is his Doe? I am not sure if he will thank me for proving that all the Nortons escaped to Flanders, one excepted. I never knew a popular tradition so totally groundless as that respecting their execution at York.

TO JOHN MURRAY

2 Feb. 1809

DEAR SIR,-I inclose the promised Swift & am now I think personally out of your debt though I will endeavour to stop up gaps if I do not receive the contributions I expect from others—were I in the neighbourhood of your shop in London I could soon run up half a sheet of trifling articles with a page or two to each but that is impossible here for lack of materials.

When the Ballantynes open shop you must take care to
have them supplied with food for such a stop-gap sort of criticism. I think we will never again feel the pressure we have had for this No: the harvest has literally been great & the labourers few Yours truly

W.S.

[John Murray]

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

Feb. 5th 1809 EDINBURGH

THE air, my dear Mrs. Clephane, which you did me the honour to request, I have now the pleasure to send you. It is not, I am told, quite perfect, but it is going where any of its defects, (the nature of which I don't understand) will be easily corrected, and its beauties, if it has any, improved- It is really a Highland air, and sung by the reapers, so I daresay it is no stranger to you, to whom all lays are known that were ever sung or harped in Celtic bower or hall. I need not say how much I was obliged by your kind remembrance of my request about the Borderers lament.1

Mrs. Scott is not so fortunate as to play much herself, but our eldest girl begins to sing and to practise a little on the piano-forte with some hopes of success. She is indulged with a copy of the ballad, for the beautiful original is reserved to be inserted in a precious volume of mine in which I keep what I value most.
I have not heard from Miss Seward this long time, and I grieve at your account of her health. She has a warm enthusiastic feeling of poetry, and an excellent heart, which is a better thing.

I have some thoughts of being in London in a few weeks, when I hope to see you as I have a world of questions to ask about Highland song and poetry, which no one but you can answer. One day or other, I hope to attempt a Highland poem, as I am warmly attached both to the country and the character of its inhabitants. My father had many visitors from Argyleshire when I was a boy, chiefly old men who had been out in 1745, and I used to hang upon their tales with the utmost delight.

Once more, dear Madam, receive my thanks and believe me. Your truly obliged and humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

You mention an air to Lochinvar, but I believe mean the enclosed. The said Lochinvar has been lately well set by Dr. Clark of Cambridge. I had no tune particularly in my view when the ballad was written but for Eleu Loro I thought of the enclosed.

[Northampton]

TO JOHN MURRAY

MY DEAR SIR, Be so kind as to forward the inclosed for my brother Major Scott now not far distant from you: as he has not many acquaintances in town I venture to request you to shew him any little attention which lie in your way. You will find him a gentlemanlike civil man.
The Edinburgh has at length come forth—& with a
good deal of spirit—but we will be better prepared for
them the next time & at least divide the public with them.
I hope soon to hear all my contributions have come to
hand. Not a line yet from Sharpe or Douglas. This is

the true curse of Gentlemen writers with a pox to them.
Before I come to London I hope to have at least three
veterans retain'd in constant pay—I mean that will keep
their engagements for an article each. I am most
anxious to know how you get on—I hope also to bring
my list of novels under protest as we say in Scotland to
Add & Eke. Ever yours truly        W. SCOTT

EDINR. 10th Feby. [1809]

Mr. Murray
[John Murray]

TO PATRICK MURRAY

Our friend Adam Fergusson has persuaded me that you would be glad to know from good
authority some of the politics of literature which like all
other politics have raged pretty violently of late. You
will therefore please to be informed that it has, tho'
rather too late, been resolved upon, to attempt to divide
the public with the Edinburgh Reviewers, & try if it be
not possible by a little learning 1 & fun upon the other side
of the question to balance the extensive & extending
influence which that periodical publication has acquired.
William Gifford, renowned as the Author of the Baviad &
Maeviad, & as the Editor of the Anti-jacobin newspaper
is the Manager of this new work which is to be called
the "Quarterly Review." I have some reasons for not
being very sanguine in my hopes of success. The energy
of folks in a right cause is always greatly inferior to that
of their adversaries. They trust good souls to the
intrinsic merit of their cause & let it stick like Aesops
Waggon in the slough while they address prayers to
Hercules instead of flogging the horses, & putting shoulder
to the wheel. Yet the aggregate of talent from which
assistance is expected is very formidable, & if Gifford can
spur on his Go-adjutors I rather think we will make a
handsome skirmish.

Now the corollary to this proposal is one which is in
some degree mine own device : namely an Annual
Register in Edinburgh, to prevent the opposite faction
from establishing such a work. For this purpose I have
encouraged the faithful Ballantyne in his resolution to
extend his business from the printing into the publishing
line, and he hath compounded the enclosed which tho'
rather in too ambitious a stile has drawn a great deal of
public attention. The younger brother John is to manage
the Bookselling & Co. If you order any of the above
works (which you will doubtless do) I wish you would
take it from this new shop. They have also a share of
the Quarterly Review and start in direct opposition to
those misproud stationers Constable & Hunter.1-

Now my dear friend you must give us a little assistance
in this matter of the Register. You have I know many
curious letters from the learned of the last generation, &
I think you might find one or two among them which
could without impropriety, & to the great advantage of
the public be printed in such a deposit. I am very
anxious to get any scraps that can make the first volume
as respectable as possible. I intend to revise & overlook
the historical part, & as I am going to London I have
little doubt I shall get access to materials of the most
important kind. Indeed Mr. Canning has promised
me all assistance upon this head.

Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Murray
& I am with great regard Yours faithfully

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 15 Feby. [1809]

Adam is gone to Tweedale for a few days, but I expect
his return daily.

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR SHARPE,- Your critique came safe two days
ago, and I instantly forwarded it for London, after
glancing it over and laughing heartily. I cut off the
upper part of your letter, that Gifford (though unnecessary)
may see how very modest you are, and avail himself,
should he think that proper, of the privilege you allow
him. When you have been as often and as bitterly
reviewed as I have been, you will acquire all the indifference
of eels that are used to be flea'd, as the cook-wench
says. In the meantime, the injury you have yourself
experienced ought in all reason and morality to sharpen
your quill against others, according to the simile of the
valorous Tom Thumb-
(2-166)" So when two dogs are quarrelling on the street,
(2-166)With one of them another dog doth meet,
(2-166)With angry tooth he bites him. to the bone,
(2-166)And this dog smarts for what that dog has done." I

(2-166)I would willingly embrace your offer of curry-combing
(2-166)Miss Owenson, who, judging from her " Wild Irish Girl,"
(2-166)seems to deserve such discipline very heartily. But I
(2-166)believe Gifford has taken the handling of her new novel
(2-166)into his own hand.

(2-166)The good folks in Dumfriesshire do me too much
(2-166)honour to suppose that I am the manager of the

SIR WALTER SCOTT       167       1809

(2-167)" Quarterly Review." I am a sincere well-wisher and
(2-167)humble contributor to the work; but the whole control
(2-167)is in Mr. Gifford, and eke the responsibility. I heartily
(2-167)wish I had some part of the influence ascribed to me, as I
(2-167)would most certainly have pushed the work much faster
(2-167)forward. But as to being the conductor of a Review-
(2-167)upon many accounts it would be the last literary duty I
(2-167)should chuse to undertake.

(2-167)I will write to you the instant I hear from Gifford 1-
(2-167)which, however, may be long enough—but, meo arbitrio,
(2-167)your article will be deemed a capital one even under the
(2-167)caustic regard of the Satirist of the Baviad.-Ever, dear
(2-167)Sharpe, I am, yours truly,

(2-167)WALTER SCOTT

(2-167)EDIN., 17th Feby. 1809.

[Sharpe's Letters]
TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,-I see with pleasure that you will be out on the 1st Yet I wish I could have seen my articles in proof for I seldom read over my things in manuscript & always find infinite room for improvement at the printers expense. I hope our hurry will not be such another time as to deprive me of the chance of doing the best I can which depends greatly on my seeing the proofs. Pray have the goodness to attend to this.

I have made for the Ballantynes a little selection of poetry to be entitled English Minstrelsy. I also intend to arrange for them a first volume of English Memoirs to be intitled

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Secret History of the Court of James I
To consist of

Osbornes traditional Memoirs
Sir Anthony Weldon's Court & character of James I
Heylins Aulicus Coquinariae

I will add a few explanatory notes to these curious memoirs & hope to continue the collection as (thanks to my constant labour on Somers) it costs me no expence & shall cost the proprietors none. You may advertise the publications & Ballantyne equally agreeably to his own wish & mine will let you chuse your own share in them.

I have a commission for you in the way of art. I have publishd many unauthenticated books as you know &
may probably bring forward many more. Now I wish
to have it in my power to place in a few copies of each a
decisive mark of appropriation. I have chosen for this
purpose a device borne by a Champion of my name in a
tournament at Stirling. It was a gate & portcullis with
the mottoe CLAUSUS TUTUS ERO. I have it engraved on a
seal as you may remark on the enclosure but it is done
in a most blackguard stile - Now what I want is to have
this same gate-way & this same portcullis & this same
mottoe of Clausus Tutus Era which is an anagram of

1809  SIR WALTER SCOTT  169

Walterus Scotus (taking two single U’s for the W) cut upon
wood in the most elegant manner so as to make a small
vignette capable of being applied to a few copies of every
work which I either write or publish. This fancy of
making portcullis copies I have much at heart & trust
to you to get it accomplish’d for me in the most elegant
manner. Dont mind the expence & perhaps Mr. Westall
might be disposed to make a sketch for me.

I am most anxious to see the Review God grant we may
lose no ground I tremble while I think of my own articles
of which too I have but an indefinite recollection.

What would you think of an edition of the Old English
Froissart say 500 in the small antique quarto a beautiful
size of book ; the spelling must be brought to an
uniformity - the work copied (as I could not permit my
beautiful copy to go to press) notes added & illustrations
& inaccuracies corrected - I think Johnes would be
driven into most deserved disgrace & I can get the use
of a most curious MS of the French Froissart in the
Newbattle Library 1 probably the finest in existence after
that of Berlin - I am an enthusiast about Berners Froissart
though I could not undertake the drudgery of preparing the whole for the press yet Weber would do it under my eye upon the most reasonable terms & I would revise every part relating to English history.

Be pleased to forward the inclosd to Mr. Miller.

I have several other literary schemes but defer mentioning them till I come to London which I sincerely hope will be in the course of a month or six weeks. I hear Mr. Canning is anxious about our Review-Constable says it is a Scotch job. I could not help quizzing Mr.

Robt. Miller who asked me in an odd sort of way as I thought why it was not out ? I said very indifferently I knew nothing about it but had heard a vague report that the edition was to be much enlarged on account of the expected demand which had necessarily occasioned some delay. I also enclose a few lines to my brother & am Dear Sir very truly yours W. SCOTT

EDINR. 25 Feby. 1809

It is universally agreed here that Cumberland is five hundred degrees beneath contempt.

Mr. John Murray
[John Murray]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINR. 1st March 1809

DEAR SOUTHEY,-By the Carlisle Stage you will
receive the 1st volume of Somers Tracts a new edition
which I have superintended. I hope you will find something
in it entertaining altho' I own I don't consider the
selection as very much calculated for amusement especially
the first tome. I think you will approve of my including a
strange rhyming thing called the Image of Ireland. I
While I am on the subject of selection I must tell you
that to oblige the Ballantynes who are now engaging in
the publishing business I have promised them the
assistance of my exquisite judgement in making a little
pocket collection of fugitive poetry 2 which I shall reckon

very incomplete without a specimen or two from your
poems & those of Wordsworth- As a good and beautiful
example of Wordsworths peculiar vein of poetry I intend
with his approbation to lay my clutches upon the little
ballad called " We are seven " and another short copy
of-verses called Glen Almain. I would be glad to have
your judgement both on my choice & also what specimen
I should take from your poetry or whether you have any
fugitive little sonnet with which you would chuse to
redeem your contribution. The little collection will be
most elegantly printed and I hope you will find yourself
in tolerable company-both ancient & modern-1

I agree entirely with [you] that Wordsworth lives too
much for the lyre ; the study of poetry however delightful
in itself is so warped & woven in with the desire of fame
that it engages the student too far in pursuit of that most
capricious of all fantasms.

Public matters begin to clear up in the Spanish
Hemisphere and I suspect Bonaparte has more flax on his
spindle than he will be able to spin off in a hurry. I
judge chiefly from his return to Paris which I think would never have taken place if he had seen any rational or speedy prospect of trampling out the patriotic flame. He would never have halted until he reached Cadiz if the road had been practicable. The placing himself at the head of an undertaking almost uniformly infers his having provided all the means to insure a tolerable certainty of success and on the other hand he has never hitherto relinquished an enterprize half finished excepting when obstacles intervened which seemed to infer a probability of miscarriage. If the Austrian throws his whole weight into the scale at this moment & places his armies under the uncontrouled command of the Arch Duke the Spaniards will probably soon clear their own peninsula. At least one may reasonably hope that adversity has taught them union and that their next successes will be followed up by more respect and uniform exertion than those which preceded them.

I am as sick as ever dog was of our late parliamentary proceedings-What a melancholy picture of public morals & of depravity not only of feeling but even of taste- My kind Compliments attend Mrs. Southey and I always am truly yours

WALTER SCOTT
[Abbotsford Copies]

TO CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE

MY DEAR SHARPE,-I write in answer to yours in great haste and some tribulation. The tribulation is occasioned by the unexpected decease of my old four-footed friend
Camp, who, after near twelve years' faithful service,
"life to the last enjoy'd," stretched himself out in his
basket and died after a very short illness. The poor old
fellow began the world (as they say) along with my wife
and I at our marriage, and since that time has almost
never been from the side of one or other of us, so that his
death awakens a number of former recollections, and
gives us a pointed hint how fast we are jogging on in the
same tract. So much for effusions, as some coxcomb
calls them, of friendship and sensibility. I wish to
heaven I had had a sketch of poor Camp from your pencil.

I have a letter from Gifford on the subject of your
review, in which, speaking of it very handsomely, he
regrets his number was printed off before he could avail
himself of it. He intended to shorten it and insert it by
cancelling the last page, but the hurry of the bookseller
prevented his having an opportunity to do so. Your
critique will therefore appear in the next number, to
which, I am sure, it will give additional value: for mine
own part I am particularly glad that it has escaped the
manager's scissors, for the only fault I had to it was its
being already too short. The Review reached me
yesterday morning. I will send it by the Ecclefechan
carrier, unless you can point out a speedier method. I
am a little disconcerted with the appearance of one or
two of my own articles, which I have had no opportunity
to revise in proof. Of the sentences I can only say they
reminded me of the " Mantle made Amiss "-

"One while it was too long,
Another while too short,
And wrinkled on her shoulders
In most unseemly sort."

I shall say nothing of the handsome compliment you make me at the expense of a very ingenious though somewhat caustic poet—because to disclaim it would be to invite you to shew cause why it should be so—so I shall pocket it quietly, and place to account of your friendship any balance which it may cause to be deduced from your taste. As to the Review in general, I have hardly had time to glance it over. But the article on "Spain," which heads the work, is capitally written, both in manner and spirit. The whole bears marks of precipitate and hurried composition, but I think enables us to say, like the old Duke of Argyle after the battle of Sheriffmoor—"If it be na weel bobbit we'll bob it again."

Believe me, dear Sharpe, yours very faithfully,

W. SCOTT

Private

EDINR. 3d March 1809.

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

MY DEAR SIR,-Your very kind letter1 reached me a few days ago, and in ample time to make use of the curious

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1809 175
letter which it inclosed, and which now makes a part of
the Appendix to Sir Ralph Sadler. I hope the worthy
Knight's Correspondence will be soon before the public,
and I will take care that you have an early copy. In the
meanwhile, will you have the goodness to accept a copy
of the first volume of "Somers's Tracts," with which I
have been bothering the public. I have directed it to be
left at Rushyford, so your servant will probably find it
at the inn.

Your curious investigations will throw material light
on the history of the English Borders. I envy your
patience & your leisure; for my own time is occupied at
present by a thousand little teasing occupations, which
destroy both the habit and inclination to sober research.
Pray, may not the romance of Sir Tristraym, so simply
coupled with the Gospels in the will of Maude Lady
Bowes, be the French Book? The metrical legend by
itself would, I think, have made rather a slender volume.

It is very remarkable how frequently the Catholic
Clergy acquired ex mentis doubtless the appellation of
Stone Priests. You cannot but remember Sir John of
Waltham the Stone priest of the Merry Devil of
Edmonton- The luminous notices of the foundation of the
church of Chillingham serve to correct many errors
vulgarly entertained concerning ancient history. I wish
it had been more particular in the murder of Mark
Anthony, which has been shockingly misrepresented by
contemporary historians.

I have considerable hopes of a personal opportunity of
thanking you for all your kindness to me, and returning
the books and manuscripts of yours which I have in my
possession, in the course of next month. I am going to
London, and, if perfectly convenient for you and Mrs.
Surtees, I am desirous to pass a day at Mainsforth upon our road. I say our, because I believe Mrs. Scott will be my fellow-traveller. This plan is not quite arranged because my journey is in the capacity of Clerk to a commission appointed to reform some parts of our judicial proceedings, and consequently my motions depend upon the instructions I receive from the Commissioners.

I have not time at this moment to add more than that I ever am, my dear Sir, Your obliged and faithful,

EDINBURGH, 4th March, 1809. W. SCOTT

TO JOHN MURRAY

EDINBURGH, March 7th, 1809

DEAR SIR, - I safely received your letters for Erskine and myself covering the very handsome recompense of our labours, and also the new poem, and "John de Lancastre." You need not fear my being courteous with such a veteran as Cumberland, though he has given me some provocation to use him harshly. General Report here is favourable to us, so far as it has reached my ear; and if the next number be what I anticipate with pleasure, there is no fear of us. I hope to get at least three capital articles here besides smaller things, and my own lucubrations. The copies sent to Hanover Street have made a
very speedy retreat. I am anxiously expecting a summons to London because I hope to be of some use there, and we will talk over all our other plans. I am, dear Sir, Yours truly, WALTER SCOTT

TO WILLIAM MILLER OR JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR, - I find since receiving your last letter that I am likely to remain here for a week or two longer than expected. Mrs. dark furnishing so much [employment] to your great folks that they have no leisure to look after the Judicature of Scotland. I should therefore be sorry to leave your old plays imperfect & will cheerfully chalk out the 3d. Vol: before my departure should you on the whole think the addition adviseable. I inclose another of Derricks plates that no time may be lost. All of them have verses beneath them which should be engraved on the plate or rather block. Those under the print formerly sent may be supplied from the Somers-Or I will cause Mr. Weber [to] transcribe them. I remain your obedt. Servant w SCOTT

EDINR. 9th March [1809 ?]

You have never told me whether Somers is likely to do well nor have I heard from Mr. Evans. I have bought some very curious tracts from Blackwoods catalogue & Patons sale to enrich the work. I particularly wish every thing concerning the years 1715 & 1745 to be picked up. The originals shall be taken care of.

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[Nat. Lib. Scot.]
TO JOHN MURRAY

(2-178)DEAR SIR,-An idea of great consequence has occurred to me which if you can follow out with success it will be of immense use to the Review. But it is of the most delicate nature. You cannot but have heard of that very unfortunate man Dr. Greenshields1 [sic] who for a dishonourable or rather infamous cause was obliged to leave Edinburgh where he was long beloved and admired by every human being. He is I believe in London writing for bread and certainly would be [from a] literary point of view a most important addition to our strength. His principles as to politics are with us and he would in fact be the best or only match whom we could bring against Playfair on articles of general philosophy. But could his assistance be obtained it would be of the last importance to conceal it. Even Mr. Gifford I think need know nothing about it nor in fact any one but yourself. You might give his communications as those of a correspondent who wishd his name to be concealed. I will endeavour to get some clue to him unless you know where he is. I conceive he passes by the name of Rutherford.1 All this I recommend to your prudence. The utility of the alliance may perhaps be overborne by the Unpleasant and disgraceful circumstances attached to the individual. Of course you will easily see the difficulty and delicacy of such a negotiation.

(2-179)I trouble you with a line to Mr. Miller also to Mr. Gifford and to Heber who lives hard by Elliot's Great Brewery Westminster and not far from James Street of course. Yours truly
EDINR., 13 March [1809]

TO LADY ABERCORN

DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-I hope to have the honour of seeing you so soon that a very few lines may serve to express the pleasure I feel in your so kindly accepting the verses I sent you. I bring you Mrs. Scott's transcript of which she desires me to request your Ladyship's acceptance saying at the same time all that is pretty & becoming. It will give me very great pleasure to profit by your Ladyship's introduction to Lord Malmesbury & I promise my self infinite satisfaction in looking at the Dorset papers. On Sunday I leave this place for town and before the end of the week I hope to pay my respects to the Marquis which I will take a very early opportunity of doing after I come to town. We have been; tearing each other's throats out like our own highland terriers about the Scottish Judicature Bill as the Ministers are pleased to call it. I was astonished to see to-day in the Courier that some officious friend had given a (clumsy enough) report of what I tried to say for my poor old mother the Law of Scotland. The circumstance will not tend to recommend me to those with whom I have unfortunately some official matters to arrange and it was hardly fair to put me into the front of the battle-

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however I care very little about it I never was gifted with the prudence either of suppressing my feelings or eating my words and I am only sorry they were not more neatly taken down, - Believe me dear Lady Abercorn

Your honoured, humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

TO ANNA SEWARD

MY DEAR Miss SEWARD, - I have just received your melancholy and alarming letter. I had heard you were far from well, particularly by Mrs. Clephane who had seen you, and in truth I ascribed the intermission of our correspondence to the lassitude arising from indifferent health, and purposed surprizing you by a visit in summer. This I hope and trust is far from being yet impossible, and I will believe that your disorder is of a nature too acute not to have been fatal, if you had not by God's blessing passed the crisis. The very exhaustion which remains after the remedies necessary in such a disease feels like the approach of fate. You must riot, my dear friend, give way to these apprehensions, which are often more mortal than the causes which occasion them. Think how much pleasure you have given your friends, and how much more your admirable talents and conversation may afford them. Take heart, therefore, and do not let us lose you, because the shattered state of your nerves after so dreadful a disorder and such severe remedies disposes you to despondency. I have lost so many friends and have so few left, that I cannot and will not spare one whom I value so highly. I am so little accustomed
to make protestations of regard, and in fact so seldom feel much occasion for the regard which should call them forth, that I beg you will excuse every awkwardness of expression, and believe that I shall be really unhappy till I hear that you are better. Believe me, were the poem of Needwood a pig of lead, as it is one of the most beautiful things I ever read, and were the carriage to cost its weight in gold, it would be welcome, if it brought news of your welfare and returning health and spirits.1 But to ease your anxiety on this score, pray cause it to be inclosed to me under cover to George Hammond Esq. Under Secretary of State, and I will receive it safely by post under the office frank which carries any weight. I need not say how valuable any token of your regard will be to me.

Constable, like many other folks who learn to undervalue the means by which they have risen, has behaved, or rather has suffered his partner to behave, very uncivilly towards me. But they may both live to know that they should not have kicked down their ladder till they were sure of their footing. The very last time I spoke to him on business was about your poems, which he promised faithfully to write about. I understood him to decline your terms, in which I think he acted wrong; but I had neither influence to change his opinion, nor inclination to interfere with his resolution. He is a very enterprising, and, I believe, a thoroughly honest man, but his vanity in some cases overpowers his discretion.

Once more, dear Miss Seward, let me hope that you will be, when this reaches you, easier in body as well as in
better spirits, than when yours was despatched. Let Mr. White or your female friend write me two lines to say how you are, but do not I charge you put pen to paper, and believe me yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT

EDIN. 19 March 1809.

Miss Seward,
The Bishop's Palace, Lichfield.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO JOHN MURRAY

MY DEAR SIR,—I have your long & interesting letter—To me who am well acquainted with bookselling phrase it is needless to say that a steady & respectable sale is just better than no sale at all. Here we have been more fortunate.—Ballantyne has only about 30 left of the last 200 received by sea & thinks he could easily have sold double the number forwarded—many announce themselves as steady customers & I have no doubt you may sell 1000 in Scotland quarterly.—B. has never had his parcel two days on his hands.

I have written a long & most pressing letter to Mr. Gifford which I hope may have some effect. I see the faults you point out but hardly know how to prevent them at this distance. I think you had better call on Lord Advocate as from yourself & state the necessity of my coming to town. I mention this because it is in his power,

SIR WALTER SCOTT 183 1809
to hasten my journey thither on some public business which may otherwise lie over for months-this however you need not hint to him but barely state your request that I have written to you dubiously on the subject of coming up & the advantage my doing so would be to the Review. To me it is quite the same thing whither I come up now or later in the summer but to you it may be very different for I see matters are between the winning & losing. And to say truth it would be an inconvenient crusade in me to come up this month on my own expense when I am sure to be called up the next on that of the public.

I have found means to get at Mr. G. & have procured a letter to be written to him, which may possibly produce one to you signed Rutherford or Richardson or some such name & dated from the North of England: or if he does not write to you enquiry is to be made whither he would choose you should address him. The secrecy to be observed in this business must be most profound even to Ballantyne & all the world-if you get articles from him (which will & must draw attention) you must throw out a false scent for enquirers-I believe this unfortunate man will soon be in London.

It is very ill-proposed to give Sydney Smith's sermons 1 to Ireland & the thing must not be. I intend to write to Mr. Gifford by post-begging them for Mr. Erskine. He and I know the man and surely will manage the affair best.

Ballantyne gets possession of his shop in a few days-I mean he gets the workmen out of it & enters business with the fairest auspices-prudence & firmness on his part cannot fail to establish him in the first rate in this place. His making a stand is most essential to the Review
(2-183)& all our other plans for every other bookseller here has
(2-183)sunk under the predominating influence of Constables

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(2-184)house & they literally dare not call their souls their
(2-184)own
[The last three lines and the signature are cut away.]

(2-184)EDINR. 19 March 1809
(2-184)Just setting out for orders of my sup . . . .
[John Murray]

(2-184)[Private]

TO MR. JOHN MURRAY, BOOKSELLER, FLEET STREET,
LONDON

(2-184)Postmark : Mar 24 1809

(2-184)DEAR SIR,-From the Inclosed2 you will see our treaty
(2-184)is likely to succeed. I believe Mr. -- will soon be in
(2-184)town. Remember his name is Richardson. Perhaps you
(2-184)had better write a line to him. Privacy is most essentially
(2-184)necessary to this matter and I think you can devise some
(2-184)false scent which may disguise the contributions beyond
(2-184)the possibility of discovery. Dont mention my name as
(2-184)privy to the transaction, and I believe it will give him
(2-184)particular pain. I am ever Yours truly

(2-184)W. SCOTT
[Sir Alfred J. Law]

TO JOHN MURRAY

(2-184)[25th March 1809]
DEAR SIR, - I inclose you another letter from Mr. Richardson - puisque Richardson il y a - which will quite prepare you for a meeting with him. His help will be invaluable but discovery the very devil. Mind this - they have no hand in the Edinburgh superior to him in philosophy and Belles lettres - no not a single one.

I think a firm and stable sale will be settled here to the extent of 1000 or 1500 even for the next No. Js: Ballantyne has hardly a copy of his last remittance. Eke I have a letter from Gifford in good spirits.

When do the novels go on? W. S.

Contrive to be seen as little with Richardson as possible. He is terribly Kenspeckle. I observe he will talk bye and bye about terms, and I take the opportunity of begging that your kind intentions towards me (of which Ballantyne informed me) may not interfere with this or any other arrangement. I am quite pleased with my ten guineas a sheet for my labour in writing and for additional exertions I will consider them as overpaid by success in the cause especially while that success is doubtful.

I think Mr. Gifford must be put in the secret about Richardson and shall write to him.

Sir Alfred J. Law

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR, - I have only time to give a very short
answer to your letter. Some very important business detains me here till Monday or Tuesday on the last of which days at farthest I will set off for town & will be with you of course on the end of the week. As to my travelling expenses if Government pay me, good & well, if they do not depend on it I will never take a farthing from you. You have my good friend enough of expence to incur in forwarding this great & dubious undertaking & God forbid I should add so unreasonable a charge as your liberality points at. I am very frank in money matters & always take my price when I think I can give money’s worth for money but this is quite extravagant & you must think no more of it. Should I want money for any purpose I will readily make you my banker & give you value in reviews. John Ballantyne’s last remittance continues to go off briskly—the devils in you in London—you don’t know good writing when you get it. All depends on our cutting in before the next Edinr. when instead of our following their lead they shall follow ours. Mrs. Scott is my fellow traveller in virtue of an old promise. [Signature cut away.]

EDINR. 27th March [1809]

4th April at night

I have been detain’d a day later than I intended but set off tomorrow at midday—I believe I shall get Frank’d so will have my generosity for nothing. I hope to be in London on Monday.

Mr. John Murray
[John Murray]
MY DEAR FRIEND, - I sit down with the deepest sympathy to condole with you on the inexpressible loss which we have both sustained in our late excellent and lamented friend. I was in some degree prepared for the blow by a very affecting letter which I had received from her, in which even the handwriting as well as the style and expressions marked the approach of fate. Yet I struggled, and as it were stilled myself against the idea that her dissolution was so near. She had, I thought, such indifferent health, and the remedies applied had been necessarily attended with such a depressing effect upon an exhausted frame, that I would fain have persuaded myself of the possibility of her recovery. But how vain are human hopes. I had promised myself so much pleasure from visiting Lichfield this spring, had hoped to find her well, had wished she should have learned to know Mrs. Scott, in short had built a little scheme of two days happiness, in which you, my dear Sir, came in for no small share, so that her sudden death, for such I regard it, comes over me like a dream. I cannot read her last letter, and recollect that her elegant pen and warm feelings were to the last employed in expressing her regard for me, without being most deeply affected.

By a posthumous letter received yesterday, I have a further and most affecting proof of her confidence, as she acquaints me that she has done me the honor to name me her literary executor, and bequeaths me all her works with directions for the mode of publication. I shall be most anxious to have your advice and assistance in managing a trust so sacred and so delicate, and if I
possibly can take Lichfield in my way from London, I will
do so in order to have the advantage of personal
communication on the subject. The visit will be very
different from what I had promised. I leave this place
for London in the beginning of next week; if you will
have the goodness to address to me under cover to George
Hammond Esq, Whitehall, London, I will get your letter
safe. Adieu, my dear Sir, you have sustained an
inexpressible loss in your accomplished and high-minded
friend, but you have that comfort which religion and
philosophy hold out to their votaries.

Believe me in sorrow or joy yours ever truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 31st March, 1809.

I have written to Mr. Simpson Miss Seward's Executor,
and requested that no one may see the Manuscripts
bequeathed to me unless you should wish to look over
them. As I intend to send Mr. Simpson a copy of Miss

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Seward's posthumous letter, I cannot send off my letter
till I get a frank.-

The Revd. Henry White,
Close, Lichfield.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO MISS MILLAR

NO 6 HALF MOON STREET
DEAR Miss MILLAR,- Your kind favour and that of your little friends came safe and gave us great pleasure. We arrived here safe on Monday last after a rapid and fatiguing journey but found so much to do before we could settle ourselves in a comfortable way that neither Mrs. S. nor I had time to write- I hope you all continue well and that the little folks continue to give you satisfaction which I consider as the best news I can receive and therefore beg you will have the goodness to write without minding the irregularity of my answers- Mrs. S. joins in best love to you and your little charge also to my mother and the Miss Rutherfords. The Major sets out for Edinr. on Monday first- Believe me very sincerely Your obliged humble Servant WALTER SCOTT

Any letters may be sent as formerly under cover to Mr Hammond but if you have no inclosures to send single letters may be addressed to my lodgings here.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,- You cannot I think possibly dispense with seeing Mr. Richardson which as he is a perfect stranger to you may be done without the least awkwardness. You will of course apprize him of your intention to meet him. Frequent meetings might give rise to suspicion, therefore be as explicit and full in communication as to make them
Ld. Advocate has promised to speak to Mr. Croker about the D. of G's article; but if he is unsuccessful I would sound Mr. R. who will do it as well as it can be done; you will of course explain to him, the tone to be used, in case he is willing to attempt it.

I will be very glad to see you tomorrow morning. Rose and Heber are to be with me. Yours truly

W. S.

6 HALFMOON STREET Friday

I cannot add to your list and it would be a pity to retrench as the more Mr. R. has to chuse upon the better. Be cautious of saying much about the Review to our friends the Thomsons who are not quite with us.

I remember my Monday's engagement of course.

[Sir Alfred J. Law]

TO MRS CLEPHANE (1809)

HALF MOON STREET [April or May 1809]

ON my return home before dinner, finding I had half an hour good, I employed it in an attempt to versify the Macleans' song. No English Rythm would suit the structure of the original, so I fear singing the lines at last to its own tune, is out of the question. However though the verses have this fault, besides being but indifferent otherwise, I hope, my dear Madam, the young ladies and you, will accept my attempt, as a trifling expression of my respect for the Clan, and my gratitude for the high
pleasure I have received in your society particularly.

W. S.

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WAR-SONG OF THE MACLEANS
IMITATED FROM THE GAELIC.

I
A weary month has wandered o'er
Since last we parted on the shore;
Heaven! that I saw thee, Love, once more,
Safe on that shore again.
'Twas bold Sir Lachlan gave the word,
Lachlan of many a galley Lord
He called his kindred bands on board
And launch'd them on the main.

II
Clan Gillian is to battle gone,
Clan Gillian fierce in foray known,
Rejoicing in the glory won
In many a former broil.
Full far is heard the thundering fray
The rout, the ruin, the dismay
When from the twilight glens away
Clan Gillian drives the spoil.

III
Woe to the hills that shall rebound,
The bannerted bag-pipes maddening sound,
Clangillan's onset roaring round,
Shall shake their inmost cell.
And woe to him who stops to gaze
Where Lachlan's silken streamer plays;
(2-190) The fool might brave the lightening blaze
(2-190) As wisely and as well.

[Northampton]

191 1809 SIR WALTER SCOTT

TO MRS. HUGHES

(2-191) MY DEAR MRS. HUGHES,- Ten thousand thanks for
(2-191) Mr. Atwood's Glee1 and the kind expressions which make
(2-191) your attention more valuable. I do now perfectly
(2-191) remember that either one or two copies reached me
(2-191) through Mr. Longman's house but as they reached us
(2-191) at our farm we had no means of ascertaining their merit
(2-191) which I understand stands high among all judges. They
(2-191) were borrowed of me by a musical friend and never
(2-191) returned. Will you be so good as to make my best
(2-191) compliments to Mr. Atwood & at once thank him for
(2-191) the personal attention of sending me the copies and for
(2-191) thinking the poetry at all worthy of his beautiful music.

(2-191) Believe me my dear Madam that the first time I return
(2-191) to London it will give me the greatest pleasure to avail
(2-191) myself of your permission to visit Amen Corner and tire
(2-191) your goodness with my demands on your musical powers.
(2-191) I am with great respect and regard Your very faithful
(2-191) humble servant                         WALTER SCOTT

(2-191) BURY STREET 4th May [1809]

[Gabriel Wells]

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

(2-191) 6 HALF MOON STREET 1809
MY DEAR MRS. CLEPHANE,-I have been longing for your return to shew you a M.S. play of Miss Baillie on the tale of Lady's Rock--Yet I should hardly venture, did I not hope that English air might mitigate some of your clannish feeling, for assuredly the Maclean's play the second part in the Drama.

I am so tired of being a tetotum, or turnstile, in fine rooms, turned round by fine people, that upon much slighter temptation I would like of all things to come to my tea in Clarges Street, tomorrow (Friday) evening at seven, and shew you this drama, which may (with music between the acts) occupy us till past ten. I have promised to do my possible to bring it out at Edinburgh, and have no doubt of its success, but I wish to consult you about a "commodity of good names " for the chieftain introduced, for Miss Baillie has not been fortunate in that particular. Charlotte will come with me, if possible, but she has some duty to perform in the way of visiting, from which I shall claim exemption.

I don't wonder at your liking Lady Hood, any more than at her being delighted with you, for when I say you are formed to please each other, I make no slight compliment, though a true one to both.

With my best love, (surely I am old enough to send it) to the young ladies.

I am ever yours most truly and respectfully

W. S.
To MISS WHITE

(2-192)[1809]

(2-192)MY DEAR Miss WHITE,-I am half out of charity with you for supposing I had an unpleasant evening at your house-for first it was your house and besides the company was without a single exception that which I would have selected at my own as highly agreeable. You surely do not think me goose enough to be vexed at Jeffrey's review. If I were conscious of having a single fibre that would vibrate on such a subject I would never write a line in my reviews. But I can amuse myself with blowing my soap bubble like a great boy as I am & be totally indifferent whether it is puffed about or burst after I have launched it. As I by no means delight either in talking of my verses or even in hearing them praised censure especially friendly censure gives me no uneasiness whatever nor would I forfeit the regard of a learrd and ingenious friend for all the poems & criticisms in the world.

Will you make my grateful respects acceptable to the Bishop & thank him for his hospitable & cordial invitation which I hope one day to profit by, but not this season. Be so kind also as to assure the fair Advocate for Lord Spencer's fame that he has not in England a more sincere Admirer than I am on account of his character both as a statesman & a politician nor do I doubt in the least his great share in our splendid naval successes. I had also particular marks of his Lordship's personal civility upon
rather an important occasion so that I should be
inexcusable had I willingly omitted any marks of respect
due to him. But the Prime Minister like the Commander
in Chief is naturally entitled to the praise of what is
achieved by those with whom he acts—Besides Lord
Spencer is alive & Mr. Pitt is dead—very good reasons for
rendering tribute to the one & perhaps also for suspending
what is due to the other. I hope Earl Spencer will render
his country many an important service ere the strain of
praise shall be raised with equal propriety in his behalf.
I am dear Miss White with best thanks for all your
kindness Yours most respectfully

W. S.
[Mrs. Williams]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

[1809]

MY DEAR LADY LOUISA,—I am truly sorry I have not
seen your Ladyship before my departure northward
which I expect and trust will take place on Tuesday or
Wednesday at farthest. I quite agree with your observation
on the play which I intend to state to Miss Baillie
with all your Ladyships arguments and what force I can
add to it. The character of Maclean also is rather feebly
drawn. It occurs to me that a touch or two might be
thrown in to exasperate his jealousy of Argyle from
Lornes private visit to Mull—That suspicion of his wife's
affection to De Grey might be also insinuated. Lastly
that his tempters might work upon the pride peculiar to
weak minds, their jealousy of being supposed to be
directed by the domestic influence of a more able partner
-Miss Baillie answered generally to these objections that
we did not see upon the stage the whole process of
Macleans perversion. But this is obviously no argument
because the audience will never suppose circumstances
and conversations which are not presented to them or even
rehearsed historically by any person in the Drama.

I hope she will be prevailed upon to finish this brilliant
sketch which will probably be the most successful play
of modern times if she will but bestow a little pains on it-

My kind respects attend Lord Montagu and his Lady-
I will be greatly obliged to his Lordship for the loan of the
Miscellanies of which I will take great care and return
them in safety-I hope dear Lady Louisa that when you
come to Scotland you will let us know your motions.
Nothing would give us more pride and pleasure than to
display any thing that is to be seen in our land of
heath and mountain. I ever am your Ladyships Very
faithful

HALF MOON STREET Sunday

I will not forget your remembrance at Rokeby.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

LONDON, 4th May [1809]

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,-Though I have been silent since
I heard from you I have as the philosophical parrot said
"thought not the less." A pressure of business chiefly professional has sent me up to this town where I found the bearer of this letter the younger Ballantyne of Edinburgh. I am not so well acquainted with him as with his brother but enough to introduce him to you as an active and intelligent young man very likely to make as great figure in the publishing trade as his brother does in the printing. He has been highly countenanced by all the booksellers of credit here especially by your friends in the Row. His chief purpose of calling upon you is to talk over the plan at which you hinted of a "British Librarian" to be published periodically. The Censura is immediately to be given up and Longman & Co. are to have some concern in this new work which is however to be managed in Edinburgh. I think with you there is ample room for such a work and that if conducted by you it would have great interest and suit both readers, booksellers and editors. Indeed I think smaller tracts which have an interest independent of their scarcity or antiquity ought to be reprinted at length so that the miscellany might in some respects be a continuation of the Harleian, on a better plan. Should this plan be adopted a quarto size will be preferable to 8vo because it holds more. One vol. or even two might be published yearly. I will in this or any undertaking in which I am at all qualified to assist hold your back-hand with great pleasure, and I am sure that in points of the lucre of Mammon the Ballantynes are disposed to be highly liberal. The title of such a work would be matter of serious consideration but as I trust we shall speedily meet we might beat our brains about that at leisure.

I hope to leave this place in about ten days so pray let me know whether I shall find you disposed to come on with us to Edinh. There is nobody with me but Mrs.
Scott. If you are unshaken in your resolution I will take my homeward route by Keswick and we will take our northward flight together; as my stay here has been long I fear even the lake must not tempt me to stay above one night in its vicinity - So that I doubt I shall not even see Wordsworth whom I would go some few miles to see at any time.

Everybody is delighted with your Missionary review.1

The Quarterly has taken root and will thrive.

Ever dear Southey yours most truly

WALTER SCOTT

4th May [1809]

NO. 6. HALF MOON STREET, PICCADILLY, LONDON.

Pray write by return of post and dont disappoint me in my hopes of carrying you to Edinburgh.

[Brotherton]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

[P.M. 13 June 1809]

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE, - I cannot resist transmitting you the enclosed both because I think the general applause of my friend Lady Louisa Stuart is very valuable and because I think the criticism it contains is at least plausible. 2 We think of setting off on Wednesday and so soon as I shall reach Edinburgh I will have a confab:
with H. Siddons. I have got from Mrs. Maclean a

drawing of the ancient dress of an Highland Lady also
the colours of the tartans worn by the Macleans and
Campbells which contrast strongly and mark the different
parties on the stage. Mrs. S. sends her best love and I
am with unfeigned respect truly yours

W. S.

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY 1

LONDON, 14th June 1809

MY unaccountable silence must have surprised you
but my motions depending on other people I have been
kept till this day under a state of total uncertainty when
I should be permitted to leave London. To-day I have
at length received permission to shake the dust from my
feet against this precious city and to-morrow I hope to
set forward. Sunday and Monday I intend to spend at
Rokeby park near Greta Bridge with my friend Morritt
and on Tuesday I resume my journey.

Now if I thought there was hope of carrying you on
with us to Edinburgh I would be at Keswick on Tuesday
night for certain, and as there is no one but Mrs. Scott
and I we could have the pleasure of your company in
the snuggest way possible. But if this confounded
visitor of yours (I beg his pardon) has really arrived so
mal a propos as to interrupt all prospect of what I have
so much at heart I fear I must proceed by Penrith to Carlisle without leaving the great road; for as I could only stay a night at Keswick, my presence in Edinr. being more than needful, it would hardly be worth while to make a detour for so very short a visit. Pray write to me by return of post, addressd care of John Bacon Morritt Esqre. Rokehy park Greta Bridge which will decide my motions.

If, as I would fain flatter myself we are destined to meet I have much to say to you about the Quarterly Review, Rhadamanthus, etc. etc. I do not apprehend there is any great risque of our politics differing where there are so many strings in unison, but it may doubtless happen. Meanwhile every one is grateful for your curious and invaluable articles. And this leads to a subject which I would rather have spoken than written upon, but the doubt of seeing you obliges me to touch on it. George Ellis and I have both seen a strong desire in Mr. Canning to be of service to you in any way within his power that could be pointed out, and this without any reference to political opinions. An official situation in his own department was vacant, and I believe is still so. This he meant to offer you, but it occurred to Geo. Ellis and me that the salary, £300, was inadequate for an office occupying much time and inferring constant attendance. But there are professors chairs both in England and Scotland frequently vacant, and there is hardly one, unless such as are absolutely professional, for which you are not either fitted already, or capable of making yourself so, on short notice. There are, besides, diplomatic and other situations, should you prefer them to the groves of Academe. In short, I think you will be unjust to yourself and your family if you neglect to avail yourself of an opportunity of becoming a little more independent of the Row, which has been rarely so handsomely presented to any literary character. Mr.
Canning's opportunities to serve you will soon be numerous or they will be gone altogether for he is of a different mould from some of his colleagues and a decided foe to these half measures which I know you detest as much as I do. It is not his fault that the cause of Spain is not at this moment triumphant; this I know, and there will come a time when the world will know it too. Meanwhile all this is strictly confidential. Think over the thing in your own mind, and let [it] if possible determine you on your northern journey. What would I not give to secure you a chair in our Northern Metropolis. We will talk the matter over together and I will regulate anything I should write to Geo. Ellis upon your wishes as he enjoys Mr. Canning's entire confidence. I ought in conscience to have made ten thousand pretty detours about all this and paid some glowing compliments both to the Minister and the Bard. But they may be all summed up by saying in one sober word that Mr. G. could not have entertained a thought more honourable to himself and knowing him as I do I must add more honourable and flattering to your genius and learning.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest compliments to Mrs. Southey. Remember me kindly to Wordsworth if within reach and believe me ever yours truly WALTER SCOTT

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO, THE REV. E. BERWICK, ESCHOR, LEIXLIP, IRELAND
extraordinary liberty I am about to make use of did I not

hope that the cause in which I am engaged as well as
the land intercession of my friend Miss White has prepared
you for so great an intrusion- She assures me however
that you will be best pleased to pardon an unceremonious
display of my wants and of my ignorance, so like a true
beggar I will bluntly prefer them as the best apology for
interrupting your Leisure.

I need hardly say that my request refers to my proposed
edition of Swift on which I have bestowed a good deal of
time and pains yet find myself very, very far from attaining
the perfect and intimate acquaintance with the history
of that eminent and delightful classic which is necessary
to the elucidation of his Works particularly those which
are satirical. In those pieces which are connected with
Oxords administration I am tolerably perfect, as I have
taken pains to make myself intimate both with the
general and minute history of that interesting period.
I have dipd deep even into the dirty stream of scurrility
by which Swift and his friend Pope were assailed during
their lives and recovered at the expense of some research
and trouble a good many of the precious tomes of the
egregious Mr. Curl and his associates. Yet the knowledge
I have procured only shews me how far I am from the
goal of my enterprize. Now I am informed that Mr.
Berwick has bestowed that attention upon Swifts works
with which a man of genius delights to illustrate the
labours of a favourite author and that he is not unwilling
to extend his hand to guide me through the labyrinth
in which I am involved.

The life of Swift although the facts have never I think
been placed in a regular point of view does not afford much matter for controversy yet the following queries have amongst others occurred to me. Are there any better reasons than Dr. Burrell has alleged for fixing on Swift the oration of the Terrae filius 1 for which the orator

SIR WALTER SCOTT        201        1809

was expelled? If not I think the internal evidence very feeble and the external by no means preponderating. Tisdal the continuator of Rapin says that on the death of Queen Anne and the succession of George 1st a letter was intercepted directed to Swift containing treasonable correspondence with Ormond in consequence of which Swift for a time absconded. Now we know that Swift retired to the Country six weeks before the Queen's death to avoid witnessing the discord of Oxford & Bolingbroke and went to take possession of his Deanery. Has Tisdals story any better foundation than this temporary retirement. I have two little pieces called Dr. Swift's diary not without humour & obviously written by one minutely acquainted with his private habits that were hawked about the street at this time. They are written with all the malignity of party zeal. The causes of Swift's ambiguous conduct towards Stella is a terrible stumbling block. Dr. Delany as I learn from his daughter was persuaded that it arose from a suspicion if not a discovery of their consanguinity. Yet his authority though so highly respectable is not conclusive. What is Mr. Berwicks opinion? many other queries crowd to my pen but I would gladly be assured of your counsel and support before further engrossing your time.

The writings of Swift as well as his life afford passages to embroil a commentator. The arrangement for example of the different parts of Cadenus & Vanessa has
been often altered and I think always for the worse.
The Legion Club and those smaller pieces which are
devoted to Irish politics would require many elucidations
which I can only hope to procure by mendicating
assistance among those of the Irish literati who may
think my attempt deserving of it. I do not intend to
confine myself to epistolary solicitation but if it please
God to give me life and health next year I hope to profit
by personal solicitation. But I have already encroached
too far for an utter stranger. My bluntness will at least

It may be necessary to assure you that my task is
undertaken in the spirit of zealous admiration of Swift
both as a writer and as a man. I know there is a modern
fashion in virtue of which an Editor and Biographer
endeavours to raise himself by depreciating the subject
of his labours. But far from desiring to climb upon the
shoulders of the Dean I am reverentially ambitious of
supporting his train.

Post Mark July 1809
[Abbotsford Copies]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY
MY DEAR SOUTHEY,-I have your two letters 1 and feel the value of the confidence you repose in me. I have written fully and anxiously to Ellis upon the subjects contain'd but I own I have no hopes as to the Historiographers situation. The charge of the creation of new offices has been so often bandied from one party to the other that the present Ministers and Mr. Percival in particular would hardly upon any account however justifiable (and yours is highly so) expose themselves to reflections of this nature. But I think it highly probable that something may be done in the Derwentwater business. If the appointment is thought to be too good" as you call it I dare say some mode of cutting a good slice out of it can easily be devised. Ellis will I know do all that man can do and I am confident that Canning will not be wanting. I wish to God they would make you Lord of the Lake and the Cairn. You could not do a kinder or more acceptable service to all Freres friends than by undertaking the article you allude to. The Methodists will also I think do excellently. Public affairs do indeed begin to look up. The sulky retinue of the Bulletins particularly of late gives me very considerable hopes. But before a decisive blow can be struck there must be a strong force in the rear of Bonaparte to cut off his communication between France and Holland. Such a force being cover'd on the right by the Tyrolese insurrection would seal hermetically the passage against his reinforcements. I would to God our expedition was off and begin to fear that English men as well as Scotch are wise behind the hand. I think it is clear the Arch Duke John has drubbed Eugene and crossed the Danube triumphantly at Comon so that all the

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Austrian force may concentrate itself upon the North Bank of the Danube. I have requested Ballantyne to send to Carlisle the 2d. vol of Somers—what a curious work might have been made of the Harleian and Somers collections blended with you and I as editors. The 2d. vol of Somers has suffered somewhat by my absence in London. Ballantyne will be duly gratified for the Eclogue and so shall I as his protector. Are you not delighted with the spirit displayed by the Spaniards in their petite guerre which becomes every day more wasting and more fatal to the invaders. I am informed that the French Generals in that country have quarrel'd among themselves. From a letter from a young officer of cavalry who was for[e]most in the pursuit of Soult I learn that the disasters of his retreat have in part attoned for that upon Corunna. At one defile where they had to pass in the night a bridge without ledge or parapet the chasm beneath was filled with the bodies of men and horses jostled over in the hurry of passing.

Is there no hope of our meeting soon? and before I conclude have you any interest or access to interest with the present Lord Lonsdale. I should think he is likely to be listened to in the appointment upon the Derwentwater estate at any rate his countenance would be of great consequence. I hope to see Lord Melville and might contrive to assail Lord Lonsdale from that quarter or by means of Lady Louisa Stuart. But I will wait to hear whether Canning approves. Ever yours most truly

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 8th July 1809
TO GEORGE ELLIS

EDINBURGH, July 8, 1809

MY DEAR ELLIS,-We reached home about a fortnight ago, having lingered a little while at Rokeby Park, the seat of our friend Morritt, and one of the most enviable places I have ever seen, as it unites the richness and luxuriance of English vegetation with the romantic variety of glen, torrent, and copse, which dignifies our northern scenery. The Greta and Tees, two most beautiful and rapid rivers, join their currents in the demesne. The banks of the Tees resemble, from the height of the rocks, the glen of Roslin, so much and justly admired. The Greta is the scene of a comic romance,1 of which I think I remember giving you the outline. It concerns the history of a "Felon Sowe,"-

"Which won'd in Rokeby wood,
Ran endlong Greta side,"

bestowed by Ralph of Rokeby on the freres of Richmond-and the misadventures of the holy fathers in their awkward attempts to catch this intractable animal. We had the pleasure to find all our little folks well, and are now on the point of shifting quarters to Ashestiel. I have supplied the vacancy occasioned by the death of poor old Camp with a terrier puppy of the old shaggy Celtic breed. He is of high pedigree, and was procured with great difficulty by the kindness of Miss Dunlop of Dunlop; so I have christened him Wallace, as the donor is a descendant of the Guardian of Scotland. Having given

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TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—I am just favoured with yours. I have not and indeed cannot have heard from London on the most important part of your letter. But I hope to hear daily. I am anxious your application to Lord Lonsdale should not be forstall'd by some more active solicitor and submit to you how far you ought not to occupy that quarter as soon as possible. A late application might appear disrespectful and your grounds of preferring a request are so open and so honourable to yourself you should have no hesitation to state them. Lord Mellville has been very unwell otherwise I should ere this have been with him in the Highlands upon some other business and would have felt my way upon yours. Sir George Beaumont would be an excellent channel. The M. of Bute differs from Lord Lonsdale in politics in other respects they are I believe friends. I am delighted to hear you are making any progress to complete Kehama. It may be of some consequence to you to know that if you finally determine to print on your own account the Ballantynes in gratitude for your numerous favours will esteem themselves happy to take payment for the printing in copies of the work. They may perhaps be induced to do so for the paper also in which case you will have no expence but that of advertizing and will
get your addition quite clear of any advance or risque.

This is out of the way of ordinary trade and as they are particularly desirous to avoid even the appearance of interfering with Longman & Co I don't suppose you will correspond with them on the subject till your views are quite decided and your plan fixed.

I saw a letter from a friend with Sir Arthur Wellesley yesterday. They expect to be at Madrid in a month. I long for Giffords answer to your proposal, he is the laziest of editors. Your Alderman is delightful. I am surprized with your turn for dialogue that you never tried the Drama. We have or are about to have a very nice Theatre at Edinr. about which as a trustee for the public (a thankless task) I have been lately busying myself. Should you ever produce a Drama I think we will by and bye be able to do more than those immense London stages fit only for pantomime and raree show. As for Q,. Oraca I grieve for her being printed for half my fame

1809 SIR WALTER SCOTT 207

as a minstrel reciter depends upon her and the other half on a very clever ballad of Lady Louisa Stuart.

But I cannot set my private renown in competition with the public advantage. I think it will be an invaluable acquisition for the Minstrelsy. Believe me dear Southey Yours in truth & sincerity

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 16th July 1809

[Abbotsford Copies]
TO MESSRS. JAMES AND JOHN BALLANTYNE

GENTLEMEN,-I hereby acknowledge the receipt of two
Deeds of Copartnery dated the 19th July current the one
respecting the Printing Business & the other the Book-
selling concern carried on by you. And as it is agreed
that for certain reasons these deeds shall remain in my
possession I hereby bind myself to make them forthcoming
to you whenever you require them. I am very truly
Gentlemen Your most Obedient Servant

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET 20 July 1809

Messrs. James Ballantyne Printer

John Ballantyne Bookseller Edinr.

TO ELIZABETH, MARCHIONESS OF STAFFORD I

MADAM,-I have too long delay'd sending your ladyship
Mr. Webers most respectful acknowledgements for the
token of liberality with which I presented him upon
your part. It was equally unexpected and acceptable,
and I have no doubt will stimulate him to every possible
exertion in behalf of the work. I have at length got safe
in to this little corner, and begin to look back upon all
the gaiety of the spring as a sort of dazzling and confused
dream. But what I shall always remember as a pleasing
reality is your ladyship's kind and flattering attention to
Charlotte and myself, for which all we can offer is our grateful thanks and constant recollection. I have been daily with Colin Mackenzie since my return, and am happy to say I never saw him looking so well, not, at least, for many years. I have just written a long letter to Lady Hood, whom I suppose Sir Samuel's departure will determine northwards, in which case I hope we may have the honour to see her at these goat-whey quarters as she passes.  

Mrs. Scott joins in offering her most respectful compliments to your ladyship and the marquis, and I am ever, dear lady marchioness, your much obliged and truly respectful humble servant, WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, 21 July 1809.

The most noble Lady Stafford.

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

As I find you are now at Rokeby1 on your way to Bothwell will your Ladyship permit me to remind you that whether you seek Clydesdale by Peebles or by Edinburgh you must necessarily pass within a mile of this small farm which will without pretending to any great matters rather furnish a better gite than any of the Inns on the road; and the reckoning shall be that your Ladyship puts up with your hard quarters for a day or two; and honour some of our wonders with a visit. I feel myself so assured that you will honour us so far that I will give you the carte du pais.
If your Ladyship leaves Rokeby without making any visit in Cumberland two days' easy travelling will bring your post-chaise to Ashestiel on the second evening. It is seven miles from Selkirk and just so far on the road either to Edinburgh or to Bothwell. Elibank Castle has a claim on your Ladyship for the honour you have already done to the tale of Walter of Harden's wedding. Newark and the braes of Yarrow are also worth seeing even if the last were not classical ground in Scottish song. There is very little or rather no chance of our being from home but to make assurance double sure a note addressed Ashestiel by Selkirk will apprise us when your Ladyship can grant our request. I need not, I am sure, say that Charlotte joins her respectful solicitations to mine as well as in best love to Mr. and Mrs. Morritt. Believe me with the greatest respect dear Lady Louisa, Your Ladyship's much obliged most faithful humble servant WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, BY SELKIRK 22d July 1809.

[Abbotsford Copies]
I do at this moment. I need not say how warmly
Charlotte and I recollect all the hospitality of Portland
place and Rokeby. It is a cruel thing that there is more
than a days journey between us for that would be easily
dashd through. Yet the distance cannot be immense
for we dind here at three o'clock the day after we left
Rokeby so that assuredly it ought to be no unsurmountable
bar to our meeting again.

I am much surprized at the rejection of your excellent
article on Warburton but a good deal happend when I was
in London to shew me that Gifford wants much of that
tact which is necessary to conduct with spirit the work he
has undertaken. It was with some difficulty that Ellis
and I prevaild for the admission of the Austrian article I
that saved the last number. There is a lame [tame ?] and
cowardly caution which prepares all the world for the
defeat of the combatant who exhibits such a suspicious
symptom. When the sword was once drawn I would
have hurld the scabbard into Thames. But I was not
held worthy to advise at least not listend to upon that

1809 SIR WALTER SCOTT 211

topic. I will I think write once more and very fully to
Gifford but it shall be for the last time. Not that I will
withdraw my own feeble assistance while a limb of the
thing sticks together but I will not subject myself to give
my friends the trouble of labouring in vain. All Gifford's
elegant talent and no less excellent principle will do
little to save the Review unless he will adopt a more
decisive tone [turn ?] of warfare and greater energy in
his mode of conducting it. I It is a thousand pities and
I could gnaw my nails off to see so excellent a design
miscarry but what can be done. I have not had a line
either from Gifford or the Bookseller since I came down
and as it is vulgarly said that profferd service is of an evil savour sure am I that profferd advice is still less to be endured by human nostrils. After all I believe the best way will be to advise with George Ellis whose judgement and knowlege of mankind may find a remedy where perhaps I should only aggravate the evil.

Would to heaven that you were here or I were at Rokeby on this numerical summers day. Ashestiel never lookd so enchanting-the ground is quite enameld with wild flowers and all living things in such high spirits as to withdraw one involuntarily from thinking of all warfare and foemen even from Bonaparte down to the Edinburgh Reviewers. I suppose it is now pretty distinctly understood that our expedition at least the greater part of it is intended for Flushing. The secret has however been pretty well kept no usual thing in our expeditions.

And now dear Morritt let me claim from you your promise that I should have the Highland tale 2 for my next edition of the Minstrelsy. It is going to press in a few days but as of course you will be placed among the imitations you may take your own time for transcription and correction. I wish you would also give me a sonnet for a certain pocket selection or Minstrelsy which I pickd out for my friend Ballantyne. I think you will like the choice of the ancient things and I wanted to add a few modern pieces hactenus inedita. I intend to give him two or three trifles of my own and to exercise all the interest I possess among my poetical friends. The work will make two beautifully printed pocket volumes.

I have written a few lines to Lady Louisa to beg she will
look in upon Ashestiel in her journey to Bothwell. Do pray
say the best you can for us—we lie alike in the way.

Charlotte joins in kindest & best love to Mrs. and Miss
Morritt. I have not forgotten my promise about the
pirates ditty though I have not yet had time enough
to write it out. I hope Lady Hood if she goes north will
come by Ashestiel. Believe me dear Morritt ever yours
in faith and sincerity while

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL SELKIRK 22 July [1809]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Sunday 7th Augt. [1809]

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—The contents of your letter gave
me great pleasure. No person can or ought to have
greater influence with the present government than
Lord Lonsdale both from his high character extensive
influence & uniform attachment. I have therefore great

SIR WALTER SCOTT 213

hope that an application from him or favoured by him
concerning a thing lying at his door cannot possibly be
overlooked. I have written to Ellis by this post to
acquaint him with this reinforcement & to beg him to
put out every oar he can think of. I think also of writing
to William Rose a brother of the black letter & who I
know would be extremely happy to lend his aid. The
father is at present Treasurer of the Navy & may have
something to say in the appointment, but I delay
applying till I hear from Ellis whether it will be of service
for a multiplication of unnecessary applications very
often prejudices the cause they are intended to serve.
Should you be destined Knight of the Quest you will
owe your success entirely to your own high character &
if I have acted as a flapper to induce you successfully to
avail yourself of it I shall think the better of my own
meddling disposition as long as I live. I must in the
multiplicity of Canning's engagements trust to Ellis to
choose the tempora fundi but I have written besides to
which however I have not desired & don't expect an
immediate reply.

I believe the Ballantynes have written to you about
undertaking a portion of the historical part of their
Register, embracing the war in Spain and I most sincerely
hope you will find it convenient to comply with their
request. You are ready primed and loaded & it would
give me particular delight were you to turn your ordinance
into this direction about which I am for various reasons
very solicitous. I think I heard that Ellis was doing
something about Spanish affairs for the Review.

By the way is your ancient Seneschal whose decease is
to open our Quest thinking of a better world. I only ask
because about three years ago I accepted the office I
hold in the court of Session the revenue being to accrue
to me only upon decease of the old Incumbent. . . .
But my friend has since taken out a new lease of life,
and unless I get some Border lad to cut his throat, may,
possess of my reversionary income, I would, like you, 

bid farewell to the drudgery of literature, and do nothing 

but what I pleased, which might be another phrase for doing 

every little. I was always an admirer of the modest wish of 

a retainer in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays- 

"I would not be a serving man 

To carry the cloak-bag still, 

Nor would I be a falconer, 

The greedy hawks to fill; 

But I would be in a good house, 

And have a good master too, 

But I would eat and drink of the best, 

And no work would I do."

In the meantime, it is funny enough to see a whelp of a young Lord Byron abusing me, of whose circumstances he knows nothing, for endeavouring to scratch out a living with my pen. God help the bear, if, having little else to eat, he must not even suck his own paws. I can assure the noble imp of fame it is not my fault that I was not born to a park and 5000 a-year, as it is not his lordship's merit, although it may be his great good fortune, that he was not born to live by his literary talents or success. Adieu, my dear friend. I shall be impatient to hear how your matters fadge, and will let you know the instant that I get any information which can be of the least importance. Ever yours truly 

WALTER SCOTT

I809 SIR WALTER SCOTT 215

I am impatient to see Kehama-Soon may you be at liberty Vacare musis.
TO LADY ABERCORN
(2-215) ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, 8th August 1809

I DO not know my dear Lady Abercorn how you are justified in your cruel treatment of me. It is now a very long time since I have heard from you and I have written you two long epistles filled with all the news good bad and indifferent which I thought likely to interest you. I directed as usual under cover to the Marquis so I think my letters cannot have miscarried unless his Lordship has intercepted them for literary curiosities to be bound with his history of Reynard the Fox. Seriously I hope my letter from town has reached you for it was written by special command of Lady Maria whom I had the pleasure to see several times during three months abode in London. I was quite mortified that the Priory was untenanted for I had a thousand things to tell your Ladyship besides the delight of exchanging a lodging in Half Moon Street Piccadilly for the groves and glades of the Priory. We (for I was in the plural number my wife and myself) saw enough of London gaiety to make us very glad to regain our own fireside regretting nothing so much as not having had it in our power to make our devoirs to Lord and Lady Abercorn.

I was several times at Kingston where her R. H. made several inquiries concerning your Ladyship and was surprized that I could not satisfy them so this plucked
Another plume from my vanity. I also saw Lady Charlotte Lindsay repeatedly.

We spent some days at Tunbridge with Sir Samuel and Lady Hood. Her Ladyship is my countrywoman an enthusiastic Highlander and deep in all manner of northern tradition. On my return I visited Knowles and saw a gallery which I admired more than all the fine collections I have seen in London. Your Ladyship is probably no stranger to it. It contains an amazing collection of original portraits of eminent historical characters from the reign of Henry VII. downwards.

Since your Ladyship has made so long stay in Ireland I hope you don't propose to return before next summer because I have very serious thoughts of visiting green Erin next year with a view to make my edition of Swift as perfect and as much worthy of the permission of inscribing it to Lord A. as I possibly can. I have been tolerably successful in some of my researches and still hope I may add something to illustrate the works of so celebrated a classic.

I hope this will find Lord Hamilton's health quite established. I was very uneasy when in town at hearing he was complaining & pleased in proportion when I learned he had got better. I beg my most respectful compliments to the Marquis & Lord Hamilton. I hope Mr. Wright continues to give his Lordship satisfaction in the management of his affairs in Scotland. The Marquis once thought to taking Edinburgh in his way returning to England. I hope your Ladyship won't be
so false hearted as to make such a detour without letting me know as I shall break my heart if I have not the pleasure of showing you [the lions?] of our Northern Metropolis.

Adieu, my dear Lady Abercorn, and pray write to me soon, were it only to say you have not quite forgot your very faithful and most respectful WALTER SCOTT

Lord Melville has been very unwell with his former bilious complaint. I fear he is imprudent at table. He was recovering when I last heard & I hope is now quite well.

TO JOANNA BAILLIE 1

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE,- I have delayd writing to you from day to day in hope of being able to report progress about the delightful Legend more fully than I am even yet supplied with the means of doing. For indeed all I can say is that our Manager young Siddons is delighted with the piece and determined to bring it out with as much force as he can possibly muster. But his wife and he went to perform at Manchester and I left town before their return (if it has yet taken place) so that I really have not had opportunity to procure those practical remarks which I expect his experience may enable him to suggest. I am concerned at this because of course the sooner You are possessed of them the more time you will have to consider any of them that may merit your attention. I
have shewn the play to Erskine whose best pretension to such distinction though he has many is his early and decided preference of your dramatic works to all others of every age and country Shakespeare himself hardly excepted. But neither from him have I got more than general and unqualified expressions of satisfaction and pleasure. As I did not get your letter till I was safely landed I did not consult Mr. Mackenzie. Indeed I was willing to have young [Siddons’]s remarks which may be really of consequence before those of any other person and for that purpose entrusted him with the Manuscript. Mr. Mackenzie is however a most excellent critic on dramatic composition and shall be the first person to whom I shew it so soon as I go to town.

There is a point of some little consequence which has not occurred to your recollection, namely how I am to arrange with Siddons about the profits of the piece, which if the play succeeds (as it cannot chuse but succeed splendidly) must necessarily be an object of considerable importance. He expressed himself willing to pay a sum of money which I declined for the present referring myself to your future instructions. I believe it will be better to abide by the author's rights which supposing the piece to run nine nights and so forth cannot be less than about £300 or £400. This is what I should prefer in my own case because I should then in any event neither have to reproach myself with making a foolish bargain for myself or with taking the Manager in by vain expectations.

There is a circumstance rather favourable to the effect upon the stage arising from the contrast between the tartan worn by the Macleans which has a red glaring effect and that of the Campbells which is dark green.
Thus the followers of the Chieftains will be at once distinguished from each other.

I think your answer to Lady Louisa's criticism upon Herbert's departure from the Castle is quite convincing. But as the objection staggered me a good deal and may occur to others perhaps you will think of adding a line or two stating as an additional reason for his departure that his friends had no occasion for his aid in prosecuting their revenge. He is a delightful character the most interesting stage lover I have the honour to be acquainted with so we must leave no blot in his scutcheon, nor even the appearance of one.

I fear all this while you have been thinking me little better than the "faus Sir John" whom you previously entrusted with the legend; but I hope soon to send you all the remarks which can possibly occur as essential. Ballantyne the printer whom I think you may have seen at my house came here on Sunday last. Siddons had shewn him some parts of the Manuscript as they are on most intimate habits and expressed himself even more warmly than to me on this subject. Now I like this excessively. For there is no saying how far a real and warm interest in a part may warm even a very middling performer. He has a bad way of planting his legs in attitudes which make me wish them broken on the wheel. However he is a good worthy young man and much of a gentleman. The theatre will I think be quite a bijou we supd in it as [Carrs] rooms on the night of the memorable Oxo[nian ball]. It is intended to be only
temporary but I wish the Trustees would buy it outright

and fit it up as a permanent theatre for I doubt our being
able to raise 20,000 to build a new one and between our
pride and our poverty the scheme may be left in the same
state as the New College. I could tell you a long and piteous
tale of our time being occupied with discharging the arrears
of my duty literary and professional since I came down:
but I must needs say my conscience hints at some very
idle days spent in shooting and fishing.

Dr. & Mrs. Baillie talkd of being in Scotland this season
and gave us hopes of seeing them at Ashestiel. Nothing
would give us more pleasure than an opportunity of returning
their kind hospitality. There are a good many things in
this pastoral country worth seeing and we would have pride
and pleasure in displaying them to the best advantage.

Charlotte joins in best & kindest compliments to Miss
Baillie. What a pity that the art of Prince Houssein's
tapestry is lost and that folks who love each other can only
converse by the assistance of their fore finger & thumb.

You will oblige me very much by the permission to
insert any little stray copy of verses which you may
entrust me with in a little selection of poetical specimens
titled "English Minstrelsy" now printing by Ballantyne
for his Brother who has open'd trade in Edinr. as a
bookseller and publisher. The selection contains some
very pretty things both ancient and modern. Believe me
honoured in permission to subscribe myself your affectionate
& unworthy brother in the Muse. WALTER SCOTT

SIR WALTER SCOTT 221 1809

... this scrawl to Dr Baillie's care as the surest way of
reaching you. What think you of Spain? the days of
William Wallace & of the Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar seem to be reviving there.]

[Royal College of Surgeons, London, and Abbotsford Copies]

TO REV. MR. BERWICK

DEAR SIR,—I was duly honoured with your liberal kind and most interesting letter. It has been my fate so very often to form by epistolary correspondence some of the most valuable literary connections and private friendships which I can boast that it is no new thing for me to have all the regard of intimacy for a correspondent to whom I am personally an utter stranger. Your acquaintance with my respected friend Lady Charlotte Rawdon 1 gives me another tie upon your favour of which I am proud and happy to avail myself. During Lord Moira's command in Scotland I had the pleasure to see her Ladyship often and to be honoured with her esteem. I have also several valuable letters from the late Lady Moira containing a great deal of very curious information which I have reason to suppose could have been derived from no other source. I regretted much not seeing Lady Charlotte when I was last in London though she did Mrs. Scott the honour of calling. But retournons a nos moutons. I have a world of questions about the Dean which your kindness encourages to put without order and just in the miscellaneous way in which they occur to me.

The correspondence between Swift and Vanessa must be of the utmost curiosity and I am both surprised and delighted at hearing of its being in existence. It is impossible to justify Swift in his conduct to Stella and
Vanessa, yet we must make great allowance for the frailty of a mind seduced by finding himself the exclusive object of love and admiration of two such fascinating women. Unquestionably Swift had [a] vain idea of maintaining a platonic love with both and as sex did not enter into his views of the connexion he possibly thought there was no risque in giving either a rival. How vain and how weak the attempt of maintaining with two different ladies a connection which had all the intenseness of affection though not of desire the event well shewed.1

The Legion Club has been almost unintelligible in former editions for want of those illustrations with which your goodness proposes to supply me. Richard Tighe so frequently the object of Swift's satire was I presume the Dick Fitz Baker of that performance. I am particularly desirous to learn something of this person's history and of that of Joshua Lord Alien satirized by the Dean under the name of Traulus. L. C. Justice Whitsted and Judge Beal claim also some attention sufficient at least to make intelligible the particular sarcasms which Swift has launched against them.

I have the first collection of the Drapiers Letters published by Faulkner in 1725 under the title Fraud Detected or the Hibernian Patriot. They are stated to have been collected and published by the order of the Drapiers Club at Mr. Taplins in Truck Street. The collection contains several songs of the said patriotic club in honour of the Drapier (very sorry poetry). It also contains Some Considerations on the attempt to pass Woods money &c " By a Lover of his country " and Some Reasons Shewing the necessity the people of Ireland are
under to refuse this coinage by the same Author. These tracts are well written and I suspect by the Dean himself.1 Faulkner closes in the preface with the poem of Prometheus (which we know to be Swift's) and says that no pen but the Drapier could have written like his. Pray my dear Sir what do you think of these pieces. Ought they to be received into the Works cum nota. Faulkner doubtless speaks of them as written by a Gentleman distinct from the Drapier but this may only mean that they were not written by Swift under the same assumed character which he had taken in the beginning of the contest and the same distinction is made as to Prometheus the authorship of which is indisputable.

In a letter of Lord Orrery to Dean Swift he mentions a strange and shocking story of an assault made upon the person of the Dean in the unfortunate declension of his faculties by Mr. Wilson a Clergyman. What followed upon this atrocious matter? I should have thought the "jolly boys of St. Patrick the Cauvan Demons" would have torn the miscreant limb from limb.

Among the various reasons alleged for the Dean's strange conduct towards Stella and Vanessa personal imperfections have been currently resorted to and I own plausibly. A late author connecting the supposed frigidity with Swift's deafness and fits of giddiness is hardy enough to assign a cause for the imperfection—see Dr. Beddoes' Hygeia (2) Vol. III p. 186. But it is a cause too disgraceful to be adopted on the ipse dixit of a theorist or even to be alluded to. Swift himself always imputes his giddiness to indigestion in consequence of a surfeit in fruit.
Excuse my dear Sir this desultory letter and when you consider its length and its character dont be too apprehensive of the trouble of my correspondence, which you shall check guide and manage in the way most easy for you. I cannot hope to visit Ireland before next Spring. Should your goodness at any time lead you to extend your correspondence beyond the bounds of an ordinary epistle my friend Mr. Robert Dundas now your Secretary of State will transmit anything through me that you may choose to send under his all franking cover. Believe me my dear Sir Ever your much obliged very humble Servant WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 17 August l809

[Owen D. Young]

TO JOHN BACON MORRITT

I SHOULD be very ungrateful my dear Morritt did I not early acknowledge your interesting packet. I like the feudal tale1 upon reading it several times over even better than I did when I heard it in Portland place yet that is saying a great deal. It has occasional roughness in the measure yet no more than the usual license of the antique ballad readily admits so I will not urge you upon any further sacrifice of sense or spirit to mere sound. I intend to couple it with Glenfinlas in the third volume of the Border Ballads. They have neither of them much to do there but we must trust their contents will be their best apology.

I have a letter from Gifford the first time I have heard from him since I left London. I really tremble for the fate of the Quarterly. G. is able and good humourd
and most heartily zealous and yet I fear he will not succeed in making a cake of the right leaven for the present generation. I will not take to the boat however while the ship holds together and so I will open on your friend Mrs. Montagues letters 1 which are well worthy to be pelted out of the field. Why are we not within ten miles that we might converse grievances together at least weekly. This drubbing of the French at Talavera makes amends for much political martyrdom. Not contented with spelling over the gazette rather longer than Charlottes patience endured, like the Upholsterer in the farce I beat up my Neighbour Laidlaw (the splendour of whose kirn you cannot have forgotten) to make him happy too. That honest gentleman as well as I myself was however a little staggered at the inactivity of Cuesta's 30,000 Spaniards. I suppose Sir Arthur did not care to trust them out of leading strings otherwise I should have deemed the Spaniard too much of a Fidalgo [sic] to suffer his allies to engross both buffets and glory. I trust they will be able to play Old Gooseberry with Sebastian! after having had the benefit of such an example. Why have not these dishes of skim milk upon the Continent a little of that dogged English courage which sets off by saying you may overpower me but you shall not rout me.

I snap at your offer of the translations from Metastasio like a dog at a buttered crust. The version of Ti Soverrai di mi is exquisitely beautiful but as beggars must not be chusers I refer myself to the ladies to chuse which they think will do the miscellany most honour. Here is a trifle s I intend to send-a pitiful sonnet wrote in former days to my mistresses eye-brow or rather eyelid after it had wept itself dry.
The violet in her summer bower
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle
May boast herself the fairest flower
In glen or copse or forest dingle.

Though sweet its gem of azure hue
Beneath the dew drops weight reclining
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue
More sweet through watery lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry
Ere yet the day be past its morrow
Nor longer in my false loves eye
Remaind the tear of part[ing]g sorrow.

[A mad world] my masters as friar John says.
I have no news to send you from the banks of Tweed
excepting that we may safely and truly adopt Touchstones
chorus " The rain it raineth every day."

My kind respects attend Mrs. and Miss Morritt and
Charlotte offers her love to all at Rokeby. I ever am
Yours most sincerely
W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 17 Augt. 1809

TO MISS CLEPHANE

YOUR kind letter my dear Miss Clephane with all its
obliging and interesting inclosures I has been upbraiding
me with ingratitude for these few days past. My time
has recently been occupied by the unexpected arrival of two stranger Southerns a governor and a pupil who in attempting to penetrate through the hills from Yarrow to the vale of Tweed lost their way, their hats, their horses, their servants, each other, their wits, and well nigh (for the night approached) their lives. I was obliged to raise the hue and cry among the Shepherds before the younger could be recoverd and brought in safety to our farm. They left me this morning and as they came through peril by field they are returning by flood for it has pourd ever since their departure. A pretty recollection they will retain of Ettricke forest. But to the purpose—I have transcribed Sir Ralph the Rover 1 from memory very imperfectly and inaccurately. I do believe it seems to me that the arrangements of the stanza into four lines does not uniformly throw the pauses with spirit and effect. But you may perhaps be able to find out a better plan of dividing the lines. I find I have left the book containing Ave Maria Stella in Edinburgh an error which I will remedy the first time I go there. As a slight indemnification you will find some lack-a-daysical lines on a violet which I divind for the nonce in the non-age of my Muse. Perhaps you may find a tune for them, the only circumstance which can give them any value. Although I am so much your debtor on the accompt of obligation I venture to prefer a request, to have the air of Montroses lines, the words are familiar to me. It is for my little girl that I request this favour. She begins to sing occasionally and though I am uncertain whether she will ever come to any proficiency worth mentioning it is always interesting to Papa and Mama. Did I tell you that I had selected (as a
favour to the little Ballantyne just commencing the bookselling trade) a small collection of ancient and modern pieces called English Minstrelsy, when it is published I will send you a copy as it will contain Queen Oracca and some other little things not hitherto published.

I am glad you like Spenser who in defiance of the tedium of a long continued allegory is a prime favourite of mine.

Old Dr. Blacklock a blind bard who may have been known to Mrs. Clephane put him into my hands when I was at the High School and I connect many pleasant ideas with the first perusal. If you read with attention the history of Queen Elizabeths time you may perceive that besides his moral allegory Spenser had a political allegory couchd under his tissue of romantic fiction. Thus Prince Arthur represents in one sense Magnanimity a Heroic Virtue, in another the Earl of Leicester the unworthy favourite of Elizabeth and patron of Spenser. Duessa is Falsehood in general but she is also poor Queen Mary. The adventures of Timias are well known to be an allegorical account of the life of Raleigh. You have his desperate engagement at the ford which he really defended against a large party of Irish rebels, his disgrace wt. Belphoebe (Q. Elizabeth) for an intrigue with Miss Throgmorton &c. &c. I have often thought that the difficulty and even danger of carrying on this part of the allegorical mystery was a principal reason of the poets leaving the poem imperfect. The key which he proposed to make had too many and too complicated wards so he left it unfinished in despair.

Some traces of political allegory may be discovered in the Orlando Furioso but they are in detached portions
of the poem which generally speaking is a bona fide romance.

Just after receiving your letter I received a long one from Lord Glenbervie who is about to edit Gawain

Douglas's works. It contained many long queries concerning the history of the Douglases for the preface is to give some account of the most distinguished heroes of the family. On some of these I was able to give his lordship a little information but the following I submit to your consideration as chiefly interested in the questions not without hopes that by Mrs. Clephanes kind assistance you may contribute to clear his doubts. In recompense I have enquired at Lord Glenbervie if he knows as a great genealogist anything of the descent of the mother of the Knight of Acre. You know how much I admire Sir Sidney and cannot doubt I will be delighted could I hope to assist in appropriating his descent to the Doughty Douglasses. Lord Glenbervies queries are-

What authority is there for saying that the Lady whose arm was broken at the murder of James I she having thrust it into the Staple to supply the bar, was of the family of Morton.

The Douglas that perished at Chatham when the Dutch burned the Fleet of Charles II's reign because he would not leave his blazing ship without orders of what family was he?

Who was the Douglas who is mentioned in Carletons Memoirs as having sacrificed his life to return the standard of his regiment at the battle of Steenkirk I
believe ? -

Now to a Douglas like you " here's room for meditation "
as for me whose moss trooping veins have only
such a tincture of Douglas blood as a drop of Ottar of
roses would be in a barrell of whisky it cannot be expected
that I should be at all au fait of such deep subjects of
enquiry.

I am delighted with your highland tales and with
Mrs Clephanes goodness in dictating them. I shall
certainly one day turn them to excellent account but it
must be after I have visited you in the Hebrides, and that
I fear is a remote prospect.

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Charlotte joins kindest and best remembrances to Mrs.
Clephane and Miss Anne to whom I beg my most respectful
and kind compliments and am very truly your most
obliged and faithful humble servant,

W. SCOTT

230 ASHESTIEL, 17 August 1809.

P - S. - I am sorry you have had any subject of disagreement
with Lady H. but I can more readily pardon
her appropriating your verses than your underrating
them. I

The Coronach of Maclean is one of the most beautiful
specimens of Celtic poetry I have ever seen. I would
attempt to gratify you by putting it into English Metre,
but I distrust my own powers of combining the same
degree of strength and simplicity.
TO SAMUEL ROGERS

(2-230)My DEAR ROGERS,-I am about to ask a great boon of you which I shall hold an especial courtesy if you can find in your heart to comply with. I have hampered myself by a promise to a young bookseller whom I am for various reasons desirous to befriend that I would look over and make additions to a little miscellany of poetry which he has entitled English Minstrelsy and on which his Brother James Ballantyne the Scottish Bodoni intends to exert the utmost extent of his typographical skill. The selection is chiefly from the smaller pieces of dead authors but it would be very imperfect without a few specimens from the present masters of the Lyre. I have never told you how high my opinion so far as it is worth any thing ranks in that honour'd class. But I am now called upon to say in my own personal vindication that no collection of the kind can be completed without a specimen from the Author of the pleasures of Memory and therefore to transfer all responsibility from myself to you I make the present application. Beggars should not be chusers-therefore I most generously abandon to you the choice of what you will give my begging box and am only importunate that you will not turn me empty from your door. I would not willingly exert my influence with you in vain nor leave my miscellany so imperfect as it will be without something of yours.1 Why won't you think of coming to see our lands of mist and snow. Not that I have the hardness of heart to wish you and George Ellis here at this moment for it would be truly the meeting of
the Weird Sisters in thunder lightening & in rain. The lightening splintered an oak tree before my door last week with such a concussion that I thought all was gone to wrack. I have pretty good nerves for one of the irritable and sensitive race we belong to but I question whether even the poet laureate would have confided composedly in the sic evitabile fulmen annexed to his wreath of bays. Believe me dear Rogers Ever Yours most Sincerely WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 18th August [1809].

[Abbotsford Copies]

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TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. LADY CHARLOTTE RAWDON

I SHOULD be very ungrateful my dear Lady Charlotte did I permit your Ladyships letter with which I am this moment honoured to remain unanswered even a single post. I was obliged to leave town for a few days when your Ladyship honoured Mrs. Scott with a visit in Half Moon Street and on my return had the misfortune to find Lady Charlotte was gone to Brighton if I rightly recollect the answers of the Porter in St. James's Palace.

Mr. Berwick has behaved towards me in the kindest way possible and what was still more flattering has taught me to ascribe a great part of his civility to the interest your Ladyship bestows on my undertakings. Every person to whom I have applied joins in representing him as the most deeply skilled in all that relates to the interesting object of my recent researches. In short " Go to Berwick " has not been more frequently called for in a ball room than it was returned in answer to all my
enquiries about Swift. So I went to Berwick accordingly
and have every hope of profiting by my journey. I am
only afraid of wearying his kindness by the multiplicity
of my demands but I must trust to your Ladyships
Interest with him to plead my apology.

Your Ladyships letter forcibly recalled the agreeable
evening society at poor dear Lady Charlottes. I I can
never think on her without deep emotion, with talents,
rank, beauty, accomplishments, above all with the best
of human hearts how much she has had to suffer in her
passage through this valley of Sorrow. Petty paltry
calumny, pecuniary embarassment, the long lingering
and cruel illness of poor Jack Campbell whom her
attentions alone could soothe and gratify at last his death
for whom I may say she had lived almost exclusively and

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1809 233

all this distress accumulated on a mind peculiarly sensitive
makes up a bitter cup indeed.

It is about three years since I was in the romantic
country where your Ladyship is now enjoying I hope
better weather than we can boast among these mountains.
I was then particularly interested in the ruind towers of
Ashby de la Zouche built if I mistake not by your
Ladyships ancestor the celebrated Lord Hastings, beheaded
by Richard of Gloucester. I thought a good deal
about Lord Moira your Ladyship and your honoured
Mother (whose letters I preserve as reliques) at the time
visited these splendid remains of feudal magnificence.

Tomorrow I believe Lady Dalkeith will arrive at
Bowhill a shooting seat of Lord Ds. not far from this place.
The happy birth of another boy has in some degree
dispelled the gloom which the untimely death of my
lamented young Chief spread over her and I trust time
which converts the deepest wounds to scars will at length
restore her usual Cheerfulness.

Mrs. Scott begs to offer her most respectful & affectionate
compliments to your Ladyship. I wish we could
transport you to this wilderness where to make up for
narrow Lodgings & sorry Cheer you should have old
ballads family legends of feud & battles and tales of
Ghosts and fairies without measure or limit.

I have serious thoughts of visiting Ireland next Spring
for I feel bound in honour to make my Editn. of the Dean
of St. Patricks in some degree worthy of the interest your
Ladyship honours it with.

I have the honour to remain with great respect your
Ladyships most obedient & faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL NEAR SELKIRK 20th August [1809]

TO MRS. SCOTT

MY DEAR MOTHER,-I received your note and have
made all necessary enquiries after the little boy.1 His
mother and her husband are now settled in Selkirk &
living in a very decent and orderly manner. The
boy as I learn from all the neighbours is very much
attended to & both are greatly attachd to him.
I therefore doubt whether he could be placed in any family where he would be so well attended to or in any town where I could know so exactly how he comes on. He is said to be of a quiet bookish disposition so that I have put him (being now nine years old) to the grammar school at Selkirk which is fortunately a very excellent one. I shall look after his education and if he shews any aptitude for learning he may make his choice between the Law and the Kirk as in either profession if I live and he himself behave well I can probably assist him materially.

The Mother & her husband shew the utmost reluctance to part with him and unless I was sure that it was to be very materially to his advantage I should think it harsh to take him from them to place him anywhere, where possibly he might be less attended to. He is always very neatly dressd & is really a very pretty boy. I hope you will come to Ashestiel this summer and you shall see him here.

Charlotte and I are quite well and much obliged for your attention to the little bodies. Love to the Major.

Ever affectionately & dutiful son WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL Sunday [1809]

Pray take care of yourself this damp weather. I shall be responsible for any extra expence attending Daniels education. The idea of his being a clergyman seems to flatter his mother very much and she promises the strictest attention to his morals.

1809 SIR WALTER SCOTT 235
TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

(2-235) SINCE I heard last from you I have been enjoying
(2-235) myself al fresco on the banks of Loch Lomond, which (no
(2-235) offence) could put Derwentwater into its waistcoatpocket.
(2-235) Moreover, I met with an old follower of Rob Roy, who
(2-235) had been at many a spreagh (foray) with that redoubted
(2-235) free-booter, and shewed me all his holds. On my return
(2-235) I found the enclosed from Ellis, which I think is worth the
(2-235) double postage which, failing a frank it is like to cost you.
(2-235) He is an excellent and warm-hearted friend and I long to
(2-235) make you acquainted side by side, as I believe three folks,
(2-235) even the three graces, cannot be said to meet face to face.
(2-235) When I see Geo: Canning and Geo: Ellis most anxious
(2-235) about the prosperity of Ro: Southey, and remember
(2-235) former days it reminds me of

(2-235) via salutis,
(2-235) Quod minime reris, Graia pandetur ab urbe.1

(2-235) I am convinced that what Swift said of Whig and Tory
(2-235) is true of most civil dissensions and that the really honest
(2-235) only require to know each others sentiments to agree
(2-235) while knaves and fools invent catch-words and shibboleths
(2-235) and war-cries to keep them from coming to a just
(2-235) understanding.

(2-235) I thought it by far the best way in a negotiation
(2-235) of some delicacy, that Ellis and Canning should know
(2-235) your own precise statement of your views and politics
(2-235) which strain through another medium than that of
(2-235) your own manly and independent expressions might
(2-235) have suffered in strength, spirit and precision. I intend
(2-235) to answer Ellis, pressing the augmentation of the pension
(2-235) as a mode of cutting short dependance. It may be
resigned when the Historiographers place (for which you are so peculiarly fitted) shall open to you, or any preferment suitable to your wishes in emolument and in the nature of its duty.

You will see that Ellis agrees with you and me in Spanish matters—alas! alas! an evil fate seems to arm the enemy with weapons not his own and disconcert every effort in that glorious cause. God for his own wise ends has sent confusion into all counsels that are formed against the destined scourge of his wrath "appalld the guilty and made mad the free." How it is to end heaven knows; I who am by nature and feeling no croaker hardly dare venture to conjecture.

Don't tease yourself or Pater noster about the Morte Arthur but take your own time. My idea was entirely different from yours, to reprint namely the whole from the only original Caxton which is extant with all the superstition and harlotrie which the castrator in the reign of Edward VI chose to omit. A Classic of Henry VIIths time is so valuable that I still think once you have been afloat for a year or two I will give a very limited edition of Sir Thomas Mallory in his native dress. But this is a distant vision.

I like your Missionary article exceedingly and I think you will join with me in admiring the beautiful conclusion of the last Review on Spanish affairs—But we must have a little fun in our next, for which purpose I intend to play football with Mrs. Montagues Letters. I think Lord
Valentia is rather inferior to Bruce. I know that surly Patagonian, and though he may have romanced in matters where his own prowess was concerned yet I think no one could ever have described the battles of Serbraxes and the strange dispersion which afterwards took place, without having seen it. Genl. Murray saw two Abyssinians in Upper Egypt at the time of the Indian army's being there, the elder of whom remembered Bruce as the commander of the Koccob horse and he remarked that although they did not always immediately recollect circumstances mentioned by the traveller, yet such frequently recur to their recollection with all their particulars, a day or two afterwards. I therefore think the negative evidence as to his warlike and princely character good for little. Even with our newspapers and gazettes who pretends to remember all who have been made peers and knighted and as for fighting, a prince who left Bruce at home if he could have brought him out neglected the most able-bodied associate you ever saw. Qendragon was a joke to him in size and muscle.

By the way Ellis fixes on me an article about Miss Edgeworths Tales which I never saw. I have nothing in the last Revw., Yours ever, WALTER SCOTT

TO LADY ABERCORN

YOUR valued token of remembrance my dear Lady Marchioness found me a traveller in the skirts of our Highlands and consequently did not receive quite so early
an acknowledgment as if I had been quiet at home. I had promised to meet the Judge of Admiralty Sir William Scott near Loch Lomond but behold he received an express announcing his lady's sudden decease. I never in my life saw such a frightful person as the deceased so I cannot suppose the survivors grief will be quite overpowering. Indeed had the lady been my property I would have been tempted to reverse the unfeeling speech of a border chief who having lost one of his sons & got a grant of the murderers lands, declared them well worth a dead son. So I think the riddance of such an extraordinary encumbrance (for she bailed description) was well worth a peep at Loch Lomond.

I have taken my wife who is fond of flowers into my counsels about the flower-roots & she is to make a proper selection which she trusts your Ladyship will accept as a small token of her respect. You need not be afraid that any of them will cost quite so much as the tulip root for which the Dutchman gave his country house & garden in exchange. They are all ordinary things. The worst is that they cannot be safely sent till a week or two hence for some reasons which I dont understand but Mr. Wright is to take care that they are safely forwarded by the Mail coach.

I can easily conceive the cruel scene [?] which Lord Hamilton's illness must have exhibited & how the Marquis must have felt all his former griefs & hopes revived in anticipating so overwhelming a dispensation. Thank God he is better & I trust likely to continue so. But the
life of a bachelor however well regulated is in many
respects so unfavourable to a youth of delicate health
that nothing would give me more sincere pleasure than
to hear that Lord Hamilton 1 was happily settled in
life & that the lines of the family were extending to
another generation. But the Great cannot make these
arrangements so easily as the middle classes so the Heir
of Abercorn must in the first place get quite confirmed in
strength and then look about him.

The sight of our beautiful Mountains and lakes (though
not new to me), and your Ladyship's kind exhortations
have sett me to threading verses together with what
success I am yet uncertain. But if I am not able to
please myself at all it is but a step to the fireside and the
poem will go into smoke like half the projects of this
world. Then says caution you hazard any little credit
you shave acquired and may disgrace the good opinion
of your friends by venturing again on the public arena.
To which resolution replies in the words of the great
Marquis of Montrose

He either fears his fate too much
Or his deserts are small
Who dares not put it to the touch
To win or lose it all.

The worst is I am not very good or patient in slow and
careful composition and sometimes remind myself of a
drunken man who could run along enough after he could
not walk. I must however invoke the assistance of my
friendly critics and particularly of the Marquis when my
manuscript is in such forwardness as to admit of its being
presented for his inspection. Your Ladyship will recollect
that he is to have an interest in it as patron in case it
succeeds so it will be for his Lordship's credit that as few
to errors remain in it as possible.

I cannot think what has become of my two letters. I
have a notion that the first may have found its way to
Stanmore & is still lying there. That which I wrote
from London was intrusted with some others to a rascally
valet-de-place whom I was forced to employ in consequence
of my own servant meeting with an accident.
So I should not be surprized if that is never heard of.

I saw the Princess several times when in London.
She was in the highest possible spirits and very witty and
entertaining. Lewis was of all her parties, an acquaintance
which her Royal Highness had acquired when I
was in London. Of course I was only a second-rate
conjuror but did my best to amuse her. The P-- did
me the honour to speak of me in terms of considerable
bitterness before I came up to town--so I have no chance
of being the poet laureate of the next reign.1 It is curious
how every word of such a personage is caught up and
repeated to those whom it concerns; a circumstance
that ought to make them peculiarly cautious for although
few people can do them real service the meanest have it
often in their power to do them essential injury. But
I can never wish his father's son and the heir of the
Crown otherwise than well and am as safe in my obscurity
from the effects of his prejudice as a worm beneath a stone
from the foot of Goliath of Gath.

The Duchess of Gordon is at Kinrara her highland
farm where I have heard she shows to greater advantage
than anywhere being more sedate and less overpowering.
I dare say she cares very little about the issue of her Caro sposo's affair. I saw him in Edinr. in summer and it seemed to sit very light on his spirits. Huntly is I suppose by this time in Britain—we shall have the deuce to do about that unlucky expedition & between it & our Spanish misfortunes there seems to be a grave doubt of the Ministry keeping their ground next Session of parliament—I spent two days at the Duke of Montrose's seat near Loch Lomond very pleasantly the more so as Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart (Lord Bute's sister) both my special cronies were in the house. We went daily on the lake in a very nice boat with ten highland rowers "all plaided and plumed in their tartan array" and visited every island that was interesting.

I will endeavour if possible to come to Ireland before your Ladyship leaves it. The business of the Judicature Commission may indeed stop me, or perhaps the whole before that time may have passed into other hands and I shall be a gentleman at large.

Charlotte offers her respectful compliments & I beg to be most respectfully remembered to Lord Abercorn and am Dear Lady Abercorn Your much obliged very faithful humble servant WALTER SCOTT

TO THE REV. MR. BERWICK

IT would be highly ungrateful in me my dear Sir to postpone acknowledging your most valued and curious communication which I will not fail to adapt to the particular passages in the freeholder and to use with due acknowledgement. I am not acquainted with Lord [Pierpont Morgan]
Forbes I whom I remember as a studious and interesting young Man when Lord Moira had command in Scotland. Should you at any time be disposed to favour me with a packet beyond the common size of a letter it may be safely addressed under cover to "George Hammond Esq War Office London" who will forward it as those official franks carry every weight.

I have fag'd very hard at Swifts Journal in which I agree with you he displays more of his true Character & history than can be collected from any other source. As this is a letter of thanks and acknowledgement I will restrain my inquisitive temper upon the present occasion and limit myself to an anxious wish that I could do anything for you or any of your friends that could shew in the slightest degree my sense of your kindness. I have heard nothing of Miss White for an age. I hope she has not suffered her enthusiastic taste for the romantic to carry her under the waters of the Lake of Killarney in search of the fairy castle of King Donoghoe. I have received since I had the pleasure of hearing from you a very kind letter from Lady Charlotte Rawdon who expresses herself [gratified] that Mr. Berwick, the only man whose aid was absolutely indispensable to my project should have agreed to afford me his countenance- You see my dear Sir I omit no opportunity to strengthen my influence-with you being deeply conscious how much it exceeds the desert of Dear Sir your most faithful and obliged

ASHESTIEL 16 Sept. 1809. W. SCOTT

[Abbotsford Copies]
TO THE HONBLE. WM. SPENCER

(2-243) MY DEAR SPENCER,- Your letter with its kind and elegant contents reached me two days ago. Your two pieces are so equally beautiful that I will not permit the Bookseller to make choice between them but will make my own option on booksellers principles by chusing the longest, as I know no better way of deciding upon their several merits.1 If you do not chuse to write us long poems to be sure we must be contented with what you call vers de societe, on the old principle that beggars must not be chusers, but it is no difficult task to guess what you could do een if you would. It was Campbell who put, me on the trace of the exquisite morceau " Too late I staid "-he repeated it to me and admired it excessively.

(2-243) The verses to Miss Beckford are truly beautiful. I am ashamed to have nothing to send you in exchange for so much exquisite amusement except a sort of nothing

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(2-244) written before I had laid aside violets and lilies for nightshade and mistletoe. I found it among some old scraps, and now destined to the Miscellany where it will be, many thanks to you and other good friends, in much better company than it deserves.

(2-244) The violet in her greenwood bower
(2-244) Where bracken boughs with hazels mingle
(2-244) May boast herself the fairest flower
(2-244) In glen or copse or forest dingle.

(2-244) Though sweet its gem of azure hue
(2-244) Beneath the dew-drops weight reclining
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue
More sweet through watery lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew will dry
Ere yet the day be past its morrow
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow.

The pretty epigram you give in French is I suspect untranslatable. We cannot contrast the complections without borrowing their word brunette. Our English poets have (I don't know why) been so partial to fair belles that we have no one poetical word expressing darker beauty.

I wish you would come down among us to Edinburgh when you publish your book. We would be delighted to see you, from the lion Jeffrey down to your much obliged. You have seen Sackersen I loose and taken him by the chain so I need not tell you his literary severity covers an excellent and friendly heart. I will also tell you all I am doing and intending to do. Meanwhile I long to see the book. Adieu-remember me to all who enquire after me, and believe me most sincerely Your obliged and affectionate WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 16 Sept [1809]

Sir Alfred J. Law

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1809 245

TO ROBERT SURTEES.

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 17 Septr. 1809

MY DEAR SURTEES,-Your obliging favour reached me I fear too late to be of any use to Sadler, although it
leaves me now no doubt that the abode of his father was that same Tiltey Abbey,1 which your industry has detected in the neighbourhood of Hadham in Essex. But I fear this little spark of light must remain entre nous, and the world continue in darkness, for Sadler is at length out of the printer's hands.2 I have been meditating a letter to you this some time on the subject of two little tracts which I have my eye upon, and which I think may be interesting to you. One is Norton's Address to the misguided People of her Majestie's Dominions, especially the Northern Parts. This I take to be that Norton of Percy's ballad, who says,-

Father, you are an aged man, Your hair is white, your beard is grey ; It were a shame, at these your years, For you to rise in such a fray ; Yet, father, I will wend with you : Unarmed & naked will I be ; For he that strikes against the Crown, Ever an ill-death may he die.

The other is a Letter from Bishop Tunstall to Cardinal Pole, if I recollect right, upon the subject of the Supremacy. Let me know if you have, or would wish to have either of these, or both. I rejoice in the progress of your demoniacal collection ; we will have a meeting one day upon the Border, and compile a system of Daemonology, with the choicest examples which out-of-the-way reading and hoary-headed tradition can supply. I can give you the very freshest tidings of the Bar-Guest, having seen the man who saw him at York, a day or two after the execution of that horrid wretch Mary Bateman, the witch and poisoner.
Her history (more that of a fiend incarnate than a woman) had set all the old superstitions afloat; and this fellow, the footman of Miss Morritt, sister of my friend Morritt, of Rokeby near Greta-bridge, was favoured with a vision of the Bar-Guest, in the shape of a black pig. By the way, what can be the derivation of this uncommon provincial epithet? Bahr-geist, in German, would signify the bier-spectre ; but this conveys no good sense in the present case.

I should like very much to hear about the Brown Man of the North of England; for I am now reprinting the Minstrelsy, and should be glad to add a note to "John Leyden's Cout of Keeldar." And, a-propos of this undertaking, I have either returned to you by mistake, or most irretrievably mislaid, poor Ritson's "Raid of Rookhope." If you will favour me with the loan of your copy, inclosed by post, I will copy it out, and return it instantly. I should be the more loth to omit the ballad, as I have carefully preserved the ample notices with which you favoured me on the subject, although I have In some inconceivable way put the ballad aside, where I cannot find it. There is no hurry about the matter, for the printing is but just begun.

I have been spending some time on the banks of Lochlomond lately, where I have heard so many stories of raids, feuds, and creaghs, that they have almost unchained the devil of rhyme in my poor noddle. I saw an old man, who had assisted the chief of the MacGregors, called Them Dhu, or Black-knee, in one of the last forays. He came down to levy black-mail at the church of Kilmaronnock, on the verge of the Low-lands, where all the
neighbouring farmers were summoned to pay tribute. One man dared to absent himself: his cattle were all driven off the next morning.

I will let you know when I form any poetical plan. I have not got my copies of Somers yet, but I have one of the second volume for you when they arrive—I suppose to be left at Rushyford, as before.

Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Surtees, and in a warm recollection of the hospitality of Mainsforth. Believe me ever, dear Sir, your obliged and faithful, WALTER SCOTT

TO GEORGE ELLIS

MY DEAR ELLIS,—Your letter gave me great pleasure, especially the outside, for Canning's frank assured me that his wound was at least not materially serious. So, for once, the envelope of your letter was even more welcome than the contents. That hairbrained Irishman's letter carries absurdity upon the face of it, for surely he would have had much more reason for personal animosity had Canning made the matter public, against the wishes of his uncle, and every other person concerned, than for his consenting, at their request, that it should remain a secret, and leaving it to them to make such communication to Lord C. as they should think proper, and when they should think proper. I am ill situated here for the explanations I would wish to give, but I have forwarded copies of the letters to Lord Dalkeith, a high-spirited and
independent young nobleman, in whose opinion Mr. Canning would, I think, wish to stand well. I have also taken some measures to prevent the good folks of Edinburgh from running after any straw that may be thrown into the wind. I wrote a very hurried note to Mr. G. Ellis the instant I saw the accident in the papers, not knowing exactly where you might be, and trusting he would excuse my extreme anxiety and solicitude upon the occasion.

I see, among other reports, that my friend, Robert Dundas, is mentioned as Secretary at War. I confess I shall be both vexed and disappointed if he, of whose talents and opinions I think very highly, should be prevailed on to embark in so patched and crazy a vessel as can now be lashed together, and that upon a sea which promises to be sufficiently boisterous. My own hopes of every kind are as low as the heels of my boots, and methinks I would say to any friend of mine as Tybalt says to Benvolio - "What! art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?" 2 I suppose the Doctor will be move the first, and then the Whigs will come in like a land-flood, and lay the country at the feet of Buonaparte for peace. This, if his devil does not fail, he will readily patch up, and send a few hundred thousands among our coach-driving Noblesse, and perhaps among our Princes of the Blood. With the influence acquired by such gages d'amitie, and by ostentatious hospitality at his court to all those idiots who will forget the rat-trap of the detenus, and crowd there for novelty, there will be, in the course of five or six years, what we have never yet seen, a real French party in this country. To this you are to add all the Burdettites, men who, rather than want combustibles,
(2-249)will fetch brimstone from hell. It is not these whom I
(2-249)fear, however—it is the vile and degrading spirit of
(2-249)egoism so prevalent among the higher ranks, especially
(2-249)among the highest. God forgive me if I do them
(2-249)injustice, but I think champagne duty free would go a
(2-249)great way to seduce some of them; and is it not a strong
(2-249)symptom when people, knowing and feeling their own
(2-249)weakness, will, from mere selfishness and pride, suffer the
(2-249)vessel to drive on the shelves, rather than she should be
(2-249)saved by the only pilot capable of the task? I will be
(2-249)much obliged to you to let me know what is likely to
(2-249)be done—whether any fight can yet be made, or if all is
(2-249)over. Lord Melville had been furious for some time
(2-249)against this Administration—I think he will hardly lend
(2-249)a hand to clear the wreck. I should think, if Marquis
(2-249)Wellesley returns, he might form a steady Administration;
(2-249)but God wot, he must condemn most of the present
(2-249)rotten planks before he can lay down the new vessel.
(2-249)Above all, let me know how Canning’s recovery goes on.
(2-249)We must think what is to be done about the Review.
(2-249)Ever yours truly.

(2-249)W. S.
[Lockhart]

TO JAMES MOORE 1

(2-249)SIR,—I am just honoured with your letter and have
(2-249)the disadvantage of not being qualified to enter into

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(2-250)the subject to which it relates having perused none
(2-250)of the publications concerning the late ill fated affair in
(2-250)the North of Spain. This has not arisen from any
(2-250)indifference upon the topic but rather to the very painful
interest which I must feel in a discussion on which after all I am not very competent to form an opinion.

I am neither responsible for the article in the Qy. Review which you complain of, nor have I means of exercising any control over that publication with which I am not otherwise connected than as an occasional and rare contributor. My personal acquaintance with the Editor and one or two of the Gentlemen concerned frees them from deserving the injurious epithet which your warmth has hastily bestowed upon them and I might have enlarged upon its injustice did not the cause of your irritation claim sympathy and allowance. Had your description been in any degree applicable I should not have waited for the admonition of a gentleman to whom I have not the honour to be known to break off all connection with them not merely as reviewers a very slender bond of union but as private friends. As I should feel this no slight sacrifice whether their talents or the length of our intimacy be considered I am happy to say the present circumstances do not appear to me to demand it. With thanks for your expressions of personal consideration I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient Servant.

WALTER SCOTT
ASHESTIEL 3d October 1809

ACCEPT my best thanks, my dear Rogers, for your letter with the beautiful enclosure, a delightful though a
melancholy tribute to the fate of poor Mrs. Duff, with whom I had the pleasure of being acquainted. I dined in company with her during the time that the hidden infection was in her veins, and have often since reflected upon her manner and conversation during the course of that day. She mentioned the story of the dog repeatedly (indeed it seemed to hang on her spirits) but never dropped the slightest hint of his having bitten or rather razed the skin other face. It is a melancholy recollection and your pathetic verses have awakened it very strongly. Many thanks to you however for the gratification they have afforded me though chastened by these sad reflections.

I rejoice to hear that you are coming forth soon, I hope your little jewel the Columbiad is at length to be drawn out of the portfolio and given to the press. I also hope to meet with another old and admired acquaintance the copy of verses addressed to Miss Crewe when she lost two notes of her voice in our rude climate. Pray do not linger too long over your proof sheets but let us soon see what we have long longed to see. I have been deeply concerned for Mr. Canning's wound: he is one of the few, very few statesmen who unite an ardent spirit of patriotism to the talents necessary to render that living spirit efficient & I don't see how the present ministry can stand without him; these however would be the least of my regrets were I certain that his health was restored.

The weather here has been dreary, indeed, seldom two good days in continuance and though never much afraid of rain in any moderate quantity, I have been almost obliged like Hamlet to forego a custom of my exercise and amuse myself within doors the best way I can. In the course of which seclusion I have of course
TO THE REV. E. BERWICK

MY DEAR SIR,-I must not long delay to acknowledge the receipt of your most interesting and curious packet-containing notes on the Legion Club throwing a most brilliant light upon that most obscure satire. I should not despair to render my edition truly valuable could I but secure a few glimpses of such illumination. I think but am very far from being certain that the Earl of Dorsets adventure with Miss Dupasse is alluded to in the Essay on satire in some such couplet as this-

So Dorset purring like a thoughtful cat
Married-but wiser Puss ne'er thought of that.

The poem was you know written by Mulgrave afterwards John Sheffield Duke of Buckinghamshire and corrected by Dryden who was way laid and Beaten by three hired ruffians for his supposed share in it. I will not fail to consult the book whenever I reach Edinburgh whither I intend to return for the winter in the course of a fortnight. If you come to London as you seem to intend pray let me know by a line how I shall address you there. I am plagued with the arrival of Company & have just time to say I am with sentiments of sincere obligation your obliged and grateful W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 11th October 1809
[Abbotsford Copies]
TO JOANNA BAILLIE

(2-253) SINCE I had the honour to write to you my dear Miss
(2-253) Baillie I have had some further discussion with Mr.
(2-253) Siddons our manager upon the subject of the family
(2-253) Legend with which I am more delighted upon every
(2-253) perusal. I have the enclosed letter from him on the
(2-253) subject of the unrighteous mammon but I have given him
(2-253) plainly to understand that although in the event of the
(2-253) success of the piece being (from a stupidity of which I
(2-253) cannot suppose an audience capable) such as barely to
(2-253) recompense his outlay with some little profit, I do not
(2-253) think you would wish to diminish it, yet that if as I hoped
(2-253) and expected the run should be such as the piece deserved
(2-253) I would by no means depart from your just title to a share
(2-253) at least of the advantage such run might secure him. In
(2-253) this I have no doubt of his acquiescing although from the
(2-253) theatre which is temporary being of a very small size
(2-253) I fear the utmost will fall greatly under what I formerly
(2-253) supposed. I find that £300 is all that they give for a
(2-253) new piece at Drury or Covent Garden so that the players
(2-253) are even worse than the booksellers to the unhappy
(2-253) authors.

(2-253) To go to what you will be more interested in-After
(2-253) great consultation and the best means of enquiry being
(2-253) resorted to, W. Erskine and I have definitively come to be
(2-253) of opinion that the actual name MacLean must be
(2-253) drop'd. The highland prejudices are still glowing
(2-253) though in embers and we really find it would be most
(2-253) unsafe to venture upon what a numerous and hot-headed
(2-253) clan might though most unjustly take in Dudgeon. We
(2-253) submit therfore that the Chief may be called Duart
(2-253) (actually the name of his property) & the Clan either Clan
Gillian or isles-men or Mull-men or any other substitute.
The reality might be in this manner preserved while at the same time it was so thrown into shade as to give no offence to modern Macleans. From the want of tolerable actors one or two subordinate parts must be thrown together but this as a matter of temporary necessity we may be able to arrange.

It strikes me that Alien of Dara whose recall from banishment so strikingly marks Macleans character ought to be one of the vassals who leave Ellen on the Rock. I have some fear also that the scene in the cavern is rather long chiefly because the same arguments of superstitious potency which are used to seduce the vassals are necessarily repeated to the Chief—perhaps they might be abridged in the first instance. For a different reason there will be difficulty in introducing the shrieks of the seer and the piper at Argyles chamber door though both incidents are highly in character and read most admirably. But when a ludicrous effect may easily be produced by the stupidity of a low actor or by his willful buffoonery it is dangerous to lead him into temptation. The dying scream of Polonius and the crowing of the cock in Hamlet never fail to be greeted by the laughter of the audience.

I do not make any apology my dear and admired friend for these observations which are dictated by my most anxious wish that the action may be as successful as possible. If being able to repeat the play were sufficient qualification I could act any character in it myself. And the oftener I have read it over the more I admire it.
read it last week to a plain sensible worthy couple who make no pretence either to literature or sentiment but rather consider such things as a bore and they were both in tears at many passages and obviously much interested and delighted with the whole.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind compliments to Miss Baillie and I ever am My dear Madam your honoured and obliged

W. SCOTT
ASHESTIEL 13 October [1809]

TO THE REV. MR. BERWICK

My DEAR SIR,-Your invaluable notes on the Legion Club1 came safely here but owing to my absence on a tour of visits, I did not receive them till a few days ago when I immediately wrote to Ireland a letter which I doubt not you will receive in due time containing the warmest expressions of grateful thanks as so great a favour really deserved. I understand from Mr. Walker that you are about to favour the public with a translation of the life of Appollonius of Tyanea 2 which has set me upon the pinnacle of expectation, for you know I am a great admirer of wizards, second sighted seers and all the gifted class of soothsayers to which I believe your hero is sometimes referred-when am I to hope for gratification?

Since you are in Great Britain might you not as well return to green Erin by the Caledonian Desert of Hills. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to have a personal opportunity to express my gratitude to you and
if at Edinburgh you can be contented with a Chamber in the Wall (for my family has nearly outgrown my house) we would try whether a very warm welcome would extend its dimensions in fancy at least. We have Manuscripts &c in the Advocates Library worth your inspection and of living Lions you should see authors and reviewers without end—you shall see even Jefferies himself as Slender says of Sackerson—loose and take him by the chain. I shall still be here for a week or two but I suppose you will not at all events leave London soon enough to find me on the banks of the Tweed— I had a letter some days ago from Miss White safe on the Banks of Killarney— Pray think of my petition and believe me very truly your obliged and grateful W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 14th October 1809

The notes on the Legion Club are invaluable and clear up some points which I thought impenetrably wrapt in obscurity.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO JAMES MOORE

SIR,-I am honoured with your letter & am sorry I should in any respect have misunderstood the purport of your former favour. My answer was founded on the idea (however erroneous) of your having supposed that I had in any degree connected myself with such a publication as the Qy. Revw. without knowing that it was to be supported by persons whose character might be a warrant for its general tendency. At the same time it
can hardly be supposed that I should guarantee the opinions & statements which each article may happen to contain for which the respective authors as well as the editor (respectable as you know him to be) are individually & exclusively responsible.

I cannot conclude this correspondence without assuring you that no man in Scotland connected by relation or friendship could regret the fate of General Moore more deeply & truly than Sir

[unsigned] [WALTER SCOTT]

ASHESTIEL 17 Octr. [1809]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE,—On receiving your long kind and most welcome letter yesterday I sought out Siddons who was equally surprized and delighted at your liberal arrangement about the Lady of the Rock. I caused him send me the three first acts which he had got transcribed after his own fancy using the pruning knife or rather the tomahawk a little more than I think he needed to have done. He is quite docile however to any thing you wish, and when you have given the sheets your final correction you can return them to me by sending them under cover to Mr. Freling of the General post office who through the interference of our kind Mr. Coxe is good enough to enclose a packet for me now and then. I understand the scope of Siddons alterations and transpositions respects the conspirators, for having only two
persons whom he can trust to in that department he says
he is forced from mere necessity to reduce Glenfaddon to
a walking gentleman of little more importance than Elliot
or Durand in Venice preserved. How he has accomplishd
his transpositions I have not leisure to examine
minutely as I am anxious the sheets should reach you as
soon as possible. I understand he proposes no alteration
in the IV and V acts excepting in one place where he
transposes a few words to prevent an inaccuracy in the
action. It is where Argyle retires after receiving his
daughter. It is where Argyle retires after receiving his
to compose his spirits and immediately afterwards
re-appears in the garden which Siddons thinks and
justly would have a bad effect on the stage and be rather
too markd a transgression of the unity of time. A similar
fault occurs in the third Act where De Grey takes leave
of the fisherman upon the second island and a moment
afterwards appears on the mainland but I fear there is no
help for this. I will put all the names to rights and retain
enough of locality and personality to please the Antiquary

without the least risque of bringing Clan Gillian about
our ears.

I went through the theatre which is the most complete
little thing I ever saw of the kind elegantly fitted up and
sufficiently large for every purpose. I trust with you
that our Scotch poverty may in this as in other cases be
counter-balance to our Scotch pride and that we shall
not need in my time a larger or more expensive building.I
Siddons himself observes that even for the purposes of
show (so paramount nowadays) a moderate stage is
better fitted than a large one because the machinery is
pliable and manageable in proportion to its size. With
regard to the equipment of the Family Legend I have
been much diverted with a discovery which I have made. I had occasion to visit our Lord Provost (by profession a stocking weaver) and was surprized to find the worthy Magistrate filld with a new-born zeal for the drama. He spoke of Mr. Siddons merits with enthusiasm and of Miss Baillies powers almost with tears of rapture. Being a curious investigator of cause and effect I never rested untill I found out that this theatric rage which had seized his Lordship of a sudden was owing to a large order for hose, pantaloons and plaids for equipping the rival clans of Campbell and Maclean, and which Siddons was sensible enough to send to the warehouse of our excellent provost.

I am happy to find that your summer has been so well employd. I have heard much of Devonshire and hope one day to see a country which could afford you so much pleasure.

You will do me the greatest pleasure possible by your kind intercession with Mrs. Hunter in favour of the miscellany in which I am a good deal interested, and I am delighted with your promise of the kitten which I shall expect with impatience. There is a beautiful copy of verses of yours to a Welch tune in Thomsons collection. Do you feel them so much at your disposal as to permit us to insert them. We could mention where the music is to be found and I think it would rather assist Thomsons work than otherwise. Pray remember me kindly to Mrs. Hunter when you forward my request. As a Sandiknow bairn I hope she will allow me some influence with her. Miss A. Baillie is I hope quite well and has gathered as
many historical anecdotes as you must have found poetic ideals in the dales of Devonshire. Charlotte joins in kindest remembrances to her and to Dr. and Mrs. Baillie whom we were grieved not to see. We had much kindness to acknowledge and only can hope for some future opportunity of shewing our sincere sense of it. I had the pleasure to see Miss Graham when I was at Killermont to bring home the Laird. He is just gone to the High School and it is with inexpressible feeling that I hear him trying to babble the first words of Latin; the signal of commencing serious study for his acquirements hitherto have been under the mild dominion of a governess. I felt very like Leontes

Looking on the lines Of my boy's face, methought I did recoil
Thirty good years- 2

And 0 my dear Miss Baillie what a tale thirty years can tell even in an uniform and unhazardous course of

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life. How much I have reapd that I have never sown and sown that I have never reapd. Always I shall think it one of the proudest and happiest circumstances of my life that enables me to subscribe myself your faithful and affectionate friend

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR. 27 October.

P.S.- We think the Family Legend should come on the stage in January when the town is full and before the dancing parties commence. I would willingly attempt a prologue did I not fear that it is a kind of thing in which I
may fall short. What shall we do for an epilogue. The
Speech of Argyle which is rather too long if addressed to
the persons of the drama might if spoken to the audience
answer the purpose of an epilogue.

[1809] in Joanna Baillie's hand.
[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

Oct. 27 1809. EDINBURGH

IT is neither Ingratitude nor Forgetfulness, my dear
Mrs Clephane, which has kept me so long silent, but that
foul fiend Procrastination, which has some times the
aspect of the first, and always the laziness of the other ;
without, I hope the more odious qualities of either-
Why we should wish to put off till tomorrow that which
most we wish to do would be something difficult to
conjecture, were there not riddles in our nature more
worth solving, and as difficult to answer-I will flatter
myself however, that you and my dear young friends
sometimes think of me, and without more anger than
may justly be bestowed upon a very lazy fellow, who is
daily thinking of your fireside, without having resolution
to embody his enquiries and kind wishes in a piece of

square folded paper. I have little to plead from serious
occupation, for my autumn has been idly enough spent,
heaven knows. I wandered however as far as Loch
Lomond, and with difficulty checked myself from
wandering farther and farther. I think the main dragchain
was that I could not hope to find you in Mull, and
consequently must forego all hopes of learning Gaelic,
and acquiring the traditional information with which I
should otherwise expect to be delighted. I have besides
still my Highland Epic in view—i have indeed begun to
skirmish a little upon the frontiers of Perthshire and
Lennox, into which I was led by the romantic scenery,
the number of strange stories connected with it, and
above all, by the inveterate [habit] of coupling the lines
together by jingling rhymes, as I used to couple spaniels
in sporting days—But I reserve my grand effort till
I should know a little more of the language, and above all,
till I can have the honour of visiting you in your lovely
isle. The Douglases enter a good deal into my present
sketches which I have some thoughts of working into a
romance, or romantic poem, to be called the Lady of the
Lake. It will, should I find time to continue my plan,
contain a good many lyrical pieces. As to the rest, I have
been idle as comfortably as a man can be, when there
is no sun on the brae, and no fire in the chimney, one or
other of which I hold to be indispensable to the pleasures
of indolence. Among other attempts to supply the want
of their exhilarating influence one of the happiest has
been to let my little Sophia crune over Montrose's Lines
and hope I might one day introduce her to the young
songstresses who introduced them to me in their musical
dress. My little boy is just entered at the High School
and my imagination like that of Leontes in the Winter's
Tale is running thirty years back and recollecting when
I first crept swinging my satchel through George's
Square with Robert Dundas to learn tasks to which I
could annex neither idea nor utility. I don't [know]
(2-262)days to the exclusion of others- This is a Papa's tale,
(2-262)but you are a mamma, and therefore a safe confidante in
(2-262)so important a matter.

(2-262)You cannot seriously suppose that I am anything less
(2-262)than delighted with Miss Margaret's remembering and
(2-262)writing to me-I am not greatly apprehensive of what is
(2-262)usually called spoiling even children, much more young
(2-262)people of her excellent talents and disposition. Undue
(2-262)indulgence in pursuits or habits of a tendency to weaken
(2-262)the judgement or dissipate reflection or blunt the
(2-262)feelings is a high imprudence, or rather crime in the
(2-262)Guardians of youth. But Youth is the season of frank and
(2-262)confidential intercourse and of a thirst after information
(2-262)which cannot be acquired without it. If this is interdicted
(2-262)by the parent or friend how many instances do
(2-262)we see of its seeking a more dangerous channel, and
(2-262)where at all events can it find one so fit and natural.
(2-262)In permitting Miss Clephane to indulge [me] with her
(2-262)correspondence, you pay me the highest compliment, as
(2-262)well as do me the greatest pleasure. I enclose a few
(2-262)lines to thank her for all her kind communications.

(2-262)I had a letter today from Lady Hood enquiring if I
(2-262)were dead or alive, and have just given her an unmerciful
(2-262)proof of my being alive and, contrary to the proverb not
(2-262)merry, in a letter as long and as dull as this. Sir Samuel
(2-262)I find is just going to the Mediterranean.

(2-262)Mrs. Scott tells me she met Lady Clerk, who is going
(2-262)soon on a visit to you-Charlotte sends her kind compliments
(2-262)to you and the young ladies, and I am ever dear
(2-262)Mrs. Clephane, Your faithful and obliged humble servant

(2-262)W. SCOTT
[Northampton]
TO MISS CLEPHANE

(2-263) YOUR kind letter my dear Miss Clephane has been
(2-263) greatly too long a heavy burden on my conscience but
(2-263) I should be truly unfortunate if those whose esteem I
(2-263) value should judge of my regard by the regularity of
(2-263) my correspondence. I have been spelling the traditions
(2-263) and my little Sophia has been spelling the tune of
(2-263) Montroses lines and now sings them pretty well for a
(2-263) little marmoset whose voice is not yet quite in tune.
(2-263) Your lines from Coeur de Lions lament are very well
(2-263) turned indeed and with this great mark of excellent
(2-263) taste that you have brought forward in your version
(2-263) the most striking and affecting touches of the original.
(2-263) I wish you would favour me with a copy of the beautiful
(2-263) lines which you composed in your rocky pulpit overhanging
(2-263) the Ocean in Mull. I thought them extremely
(2-263) beautiful and they shall not go further than the private
(2-263) drawer of my writing desk. To bribe you to compliance
(2-263) I send you Queen Oracca which is printed in a little
(2-263) selection of poetry now in the press which will contain
(2-263) some pretty and unpublished poetry. I dont know how
(2-263) it is but I cant fancy it so much in printing as I did in
(2-263) recitation. The anonymous hunting song which accompanies
(2-263) Queen Oracca is by your friend; perhaps you
(2-263) may be able to find a tune for it. Nothing will give me
(2-263) more pleasure than an opportunity to visit Torloisk and
(2-263) if Mrs. Clephane make it her residence next Summer I
(2-263) have strong hopes of putting myself to school to you in
(2-263) the Gaelic though I fear I should but disgrace my
(2-263) teacher. I have not the facility of acquiring languages
(2-263) which I once possessed but I will promise to make up in
(2-263) docility what I want in acuteness. I was bred up in
great veneration for the Highlands in which my father
had many friends though I believe no relations. One of
our most constant visitors while I was a boy was old
Stuart of Invernahyle Brother in law to the last Appin

Our Highland Legend is to be playd here in January.
We have disguised names etc. so as without altogether
destroying the locality of the places we shall not I hope
affront the ardent spirit of the Macleans. We have got
a beautiful little theatre late Corrie's rooms where I hope
the insulted genius of the Drama will retire from the
disgusting and riotous scenes which have disgraced her
temple in the Metropolis.

I must not forget to say I know Col. Douglas of
Strathendrie a little yet well enough to verify your
interesting portrait. His son David Douglas was my old
school and college companion and we still remain
friends though meeting less frequently owing to those
circumstances of connexion and cash which sometimes
cool early intimacy in the course of life. I have been
amusing myself with trying to scratch out a Douglas tale
but this is only for your own ear and family as I have not formed any serious intention of combining or systematizing the parts I have written.

The song which Campbell gave you is I think in Ritsons Ancient Songs. I have lent the book and it is scarce as most of his numerous collections have now become. But I will recall it and you shall have the ditty apparelled as Sir Philip Sidney says in the dust and cobwebs of antiquity so soon as I write again. How does the Italian advance? and what is the harp saying in reply to your fingers and

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1809

your sisters. Mrs. Scott joins me in best Compliments to you all and I ever am dear Miss Clephane your very respectful and faithful friend and servant

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR. 27 October 1809

[Northampton]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

30 October 1809

SIR,-I am favourd with your letter & have heard from Mr. John Ballantyne the handsome manner in which you received the communication which he made you with my knowlege & concurrence. As you were about to reprint Marmion (a work for which you had in every way paid liberally) & in doing so with Mr. Ballantyne were sacrificing perhaps your own feelings to my understood wishes I could not but take your conduct handsomely & it occurred to me as the only means of acknowledge
which circumstances have left me, that you might wish
to regulate your edition upon my view of coming again
before the public as an original author. There are only
four persons in Edinr. who did or could know any thing
of my intention before yourself, the reports which have
been floating from time to time being totally without
authority or foundation.

I have no doubt Mr. Jo: Ballantyne will avail himself
with gratitude of any hint your professional knowledge &
experience may afford him.

I assure you that I think with more regret than resentment
(though certainly with cause for both) on the mode
in which our connection was necessarily ended & remain
with every wish for that success which your skill &
industry will unquestionably insure Sir Your very obedt.

Servant I WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET Monday Eveng

I leave town tomorrow so must send this by the penny
post.

Mr. Archibald Constable Bookseller Edinr.

[Stevenson]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[End of October 1809]

MR. SCOTTS Compliments to Mr. Constable & in answer
to his enquiry begs leave to inform him that the following
gentlemen unsolicited by Mr. Scott furnishd curious &
valuable information on the subject of Sadler which
perhaps the proprietors may think ought to be acknowleded
by the present of a copy.

Mr. Surtees of Mainsforth by Rushieford Durham
Mr. Vernon Sadler of Southampton
Mr. Henry White of Lichfield
Mr. Sadler of Seabank near Swords Ireland

Since the book was printed off, some curious particulars have occur'd respecting Sir Ralph Sadler, which if Mess. Constable & Co think proper may be yet printed in an additional leaf to the Life which is numberd in a different series of paging from the State papers - But this cannot be done before the 11th. instant when Mr. Scott will be in Castle Street & will expect to hear by a card whether Mr. Constable thinks this will be adviseable -

ASHESTIEL Monday

Mr. Archibald Constable, Bookseller Edinburgh

TO GEORGE ELLIS

ASHESTIEL, Nov. 3, 1809

MY DEAR ELLIS,-I had your letter some time ago, which gave me less comfort in the present public emergency than your letters usually do. Frankly, I see great doubts, not to say an impossibility, of Canning's attaining that rank among the Opposition which will enable him to command the use of their shoulders to place him where
(2-267)-you cannot be more convinced than I am-he is
(2-267)entitled to stand. The condottieri of the Grenvilles,-for
(2-267)they have no political principles, and therefore no political
(2-267)party, detached from their immense influence over
(2-267)individuals,-will hardly be seduced from their standard
(2-267)to that of Canning, by an eloquence which has been
(2-267)exerted upon them in vain, even when they might have
(2-267)hoped to be gainers by listening to it. The soi-disant
(2-267)Whigs stick together like burs. The ragged regiment of
(2-267)Burdett and Folkstone is under yet stricter discipline, for
(2-267)you may have observed that no lover was ever so jealous
(2-267)of his mistress as Sir Francis is of his mob popularity-
(2-267)witness the fate of Paull, Tierney, even Wardle; in short,
(2-267)of whomsoever presumed to rival the brazen image whom
(2-267)the mob of Westminster has set up. That either, or both
(2-267)of these parties, will be delighted with the accession of
(2-267)our friend's wisdom and eloquence, cannot for a moment
(2-267)be disputed. That the Grenvilles, in particular, did he
(2-267)only propose to himself a slice of the great pudding, would
(2-267)allow him to help himself where the plums lie thickest,
(2-267)cannot be doubted. But I think it is very doubtful

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(2-268)whether they, closely banded and confident of triumph
(2-268)as they at present are, will accept of a colleague upon
(2-268)terms which would make him a master; and unless
(2-268)Canning has these, it appears to me that we (the Republic)
(2-268)should be no better than if he had retained his office in
(2-268)the present, or rather late. Administration. But how far,
(2-268)in throwing himself altogether into the arms of Opposition
(2-268)at this crisis. Canning will injure himself with the large
(2-268)and sound party who profess Pittism, is, I really think,
(2-268)worthy of consideration. The influence of his name is
(2-268)at present as great as you or I could wish it; but those
(2-268)who wish to undermine it want but, according to our
Scottish proverb, "a hair to make a tether of." I admit
his hand is very difficult to play, and much as I love and
admire him, I am most interested because it is the
decided interest of his country, that he should pique,
repique, and capot his antagonists. But you know much
of the delicacy of the game lies in discarding—so I hope he
will be in no hurry on throwing out his cards.

I am the more anxious on this score, because I feel an
internal conviction that neither Marquis Wellesley nor
Lord Melville will lend their names to bolster out this
rump of an Administration. Symptoms of this are said
to have transpired in Scotland, but in this retirement I
cannot learn upon what authority. Should this prove so,
I confess my best wishes would be realized, because I
cannot see how Percival could avoid surrendering at
discretion, and taking, perhaps, a peerage. We should
then have an Administration d la Pitt, which is a much
better thing than an Opposition, howsoever conducted
or headed, which, like a wave of the sea, forms indeed but
a single body when it is rolling towards the shore, but
dashes into foam and dispersion the instant it reaches its
object. Should Canning and the above-named noble
peers come to understand each other, joined to all among
the present Ministry whom their native good sense, and an
attachment to good warm places, will lead to hear reason,

It does seem to me that we might form a deeper front to
the enemy than we have presented since the death of
Pitt, or rather since the dissolution of his first Administration.
But if this be a dream, as it may very probably be,
I still hope Canning will take his own ground in Parliament,
and hoist his own standard. Sooner or later it must
be successful. So much for politics—about which, after
all, my neighbours the blackcocks know about as much as I do.

I have a great deal to write you about a new poem which I have on the anvil—also, upon the melancholy death of a favourite greyhound bitch—rest her body, since I dare not say soul! She was of high blood and excellent promise. Should any of your sporting friends have a whelp to spare, of a good kind, and of the female sex, I would be grateful beyond measure, especially if she has had the distemper. As I have quite laid aside the gun, coursing is my only and constant amusement, and my valued pair of four-legged champions, Douglas and Percy, wax old and unfeary. Ever yours truly,

W. S.
[Lockhart]

TO LADY LOUISA STUART

DEAR LADY LOUISA,—I was still lingering here like the withered leaves till the last blasts of autumn shall blow us to town when I was honoured with your remembrance. Depend upon it Charlotte and I will be most happy and honoured in knowing any one whom your Ladyship values and will take an early opportunity to avail ourselves of your kind introduction to Mrs. Waddington so soon as we get to Edinr. which will be next week—The business of the Parliamentary Commission has made it necessary I should remain within call all this season and consequently broke off all hopes of visiting Bothwell which I had much at heart— I have not been quite idle though I dont know if your Ladyship will think I have
been employed to good purpose when I tell you I have
made great progress in the romance I showed you at
Buchanan - It is against all my vows to write poetry
again but I hope the perjuries of bards are as venial
as those of Lovers are said to be. After all how can I
employ my time - My family have some claims on my
talent or half talent or whatever it is for it laid me on the
shelf as a professional man when I had as good prospects
as my neighbours. And here I have a reversionary
office Saddled with the life-rent of an old gentleman who
has learned Compte de Grammonts art d'eterniser sa vie-
And though I admit with my cautious friends that an
author should take care of his reputation yet I cannot
help thinking with honest Bon Acres that the least
reputation can do in return is to take some care of the
author. So upon the whole I will go on with my Lady of
the Lake and tell my prudence she is no better than
Indolence in disguise.

Charlotte begs to be most respectfully remembered to
your Ladyship and I beg all kind compliments at Bothwell.
I have little chance of seeing any of the family

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unless perchance at Dalkeith in winter. I saw Lady
Dalkeith the other day in good spirits and looking as
beautiful as I ever saw her which is two bars at least
beyond any body I ever saw besides. Ever dear Lady
Louisa your obliged and most respectful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHIESTIEL, 7th November [1809]

[Abbotsford Copies]
TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

MR. SCOTTS Compliments to Mr. Constable will be much obliged to him for a copy of Marmion to be revised before going to press. Mr. Scott will be also obliged by Mr. Constable sending him the two small Sadlers which he proposes to place at his disposal properly packd for forwarding if not sent already. Mr. Scott wishes to know if Mr. G. would like to engrave for Swift Stella's head if Mr. Scott can get permission to have a sketch done from the original Drawing-Mr. S. has at length procured Faulknners original Edition but is still in great want of Delany's defence of Swift in Remarks upon Lord Orrerys publication.

Mr. Archibald Constable

[Postmark, November, 15 1809]
[Stevenson]

TO GEORGE THOMSON

CASTLE STREET, November 16, 1809

I WILL readily try the melodies, although the guerdon is far beyond the value of anything I can hope to produce. Mrs. Scott having once set eyes upon it, I am afraid I have no choice left but to do the best I can. As that best may be indifferent I make you welcome with the Ballantynes' consent, which I dare say you can obtain, to use in your publication a hunting song and some verses called "The Violet," which I gave them for a little miscellany which J. Ballantyne is now printing.
TO MRS. THOMAS SCOTT

(2-272) Dec. 27, 1809

THE death of poor Miss Hume has shocked my mother less than I anticipated; old age is fortunate, if not in decay of sensibility, at least in the increase of patience under these afflictions, and Miss Hume's, notwithstanding her great age, was so long, lingering, and painful, that we all regarded her death as a release. I take the liberty to enclose a bill for a small sum which I hope you will consider as a Christmas gift to little Walter, to whom pray make my compliments.

The Christmas parties go on as usual, and "commerce" takes its nightly round without mercy. I would to heaven Bonaparte would include that most stupid game in his anti-commercial edicts. I am glad to hear my little nephew takes so kindly to the church. What do you think to make an English parson of him? it is a line in which if I live I might do him good service, and he might come to be Bishop of Sodor and Man. If I do not go to London in spring I shall be tempted to go to Ireland, taking your Islet in my way, and will borrow Walter's pony to see your wonders. My Walter is at the High School, and I condescend to hear him his lessons every day. Poor old Dr. Adam died last week after a very short illness, which first affected him in school. He was light-headed, and continued to speak as in the class until

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the very last, when, having been silent for many hours,
he said, "That Horace was very well said; you did not
do it so well," then added faintly, "But it grows dark,
very dark, the boys may dismiss," and with these striking
words he expired. He is to be buried on Friday, the
classes attending under their masters. It will be very
difficult to fill up his situation... 

[Familiar Letters]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[Undated] 1

MR. SCOTT returns Mr. Constable twelve Volumes of
Miss Seward's correspondence with many thanks. Mr.
Constable will observe that Mr. S. has marked with
pencil a few passages in letters addressed to himself
from Miss Seward. There are several reasons why Mr.
Scott would not wish these passages to be printed—some
of them reflect severely upon living characters & others
have reference to opinions expressed by Mr. Scott in the
confidence of friendly correspondence & which he would
be unwilling should come before the public as it were by
informer through Miss Seward's reply.

Thursday 2 CASTLE STREET

[Stevenson]

TO LADY ABERCORN

I ASSURE you my dear Lady Abercorn it has been no
idle fit that prevented me from long ere now making
you my best congratulations on the joyful event your
last letter so kindly announced to me. I sincerely hope
Lord Hamilton will find in his new state all that can
render him as happy as his good & gentle disposition well merits. I do not know the young lady though she is of a Scotch family. I believe they have resided pretty much in England; but I cannot doubt Lord Hamilton's taste & trust that the union will be a blessing to you all. I Lord Aberdeen has just passed through Edinr. He promised to dine with me today conditionally if he staid in town but I grieve to say he has disappointed, and passes onwards. And now as to my own occupation which for this month passed has been incessant. The Commissioners under the King's warrant for reporting upon alterations in the Scottish Judicature have like every other body that I know left all their work to be done just at the time they were called upon to make their report so now we have to work very hard and the poor Secretary has hardly a moment to call his own from nine in the morning till the same hour at night. But I expect it will be all over in the course of a few weeks and that I shall have time to renew my literary labours.

I have made considerable progress in a new poem which I intend to call The Lady of the Lake; the scene is laid in the Perthshire highlands which after all present the finest part of our mountain prospects. I have taken considerable pains on what I have written and shall be anxious to solicit Lord Abercorn's opinion upon it because, should it be honoured with his approbation I hope he will permit me to inscribe it to him. Pray does your Ladyship know Lord Clarendon? I ask this question because he has volunteered a correspondence with me in a manner very flattering to my vanity so that I am a little curious with respect to him. I don't think I ever heard of him about town and I have an idea that he is
in his domestic habits extremely retired. But all this
perhaps your Ladyship can tell me.

What do you think of this new sort of amusement that
the public have found for themselves at Covent Garden 2

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I hate mobs of all kinds but I fear disciplined mobs especially
with such leaders as Clifford, who has just knowledge
enough to keep him within the verge of Law,
talent enough to do mischief and no capacity whatever
to do the least good. I pity poor John Kemble and
his little wife whom I met at the Priory. Yet they
played their cards ill in attempting to bully the audience.
I am not a believer in the continuance of the truce-the
love of frolic will revive on the slightest provocation and
there are so many people who can sound horns and dance
upon benches that such provocation will be taken
whether it be given or no.

Perhaps I am a little too gloomy upon so foolish a topic
but I think the whole scene is a public and general disgrace
to the country. Neither am I greatly delighted with the
present prospect into the interior of the cabinet which
reminds me of that which presented itself to a wise man
of Gotham who carrying half a dozen game-cocks to the
place where a main was to be fought shut them up in
the same coop and was surprised to find that they had
fought and killed each other because he thought they
should have known that they were all on the same side.
Canning is I fear lost irrecoverably to government and
it will be difficult to keep ground in the House of Commons
without him. He sometimes writes to me and you
would laugh to see how frankly I offer my advice to him
in return stoutly exhorting adherence to his old friends.
The Duchess of Gordon stayed here a day or two on her road to Ireland and gave a grand party to all the world, which Charlotte and I attended. I rather wonder that your Viceroy has not contrived to parry this visitation from La chere maman. She is not begging her Grace's pardon altogether that conciliatory sort of person that is best calculated to endure and to restrain and to mitigate all the little heart-burnings which must arise in every court whether regal or vice-regal.

So you did not keep my friend Robt. Dundas with you which I cannot but say I rejoice at. His effectual interest must be in Scotland and no one can carry Scotland that has not the command of the Board of Control, which is in a manner the key of the corn-chest; for your Ladyship knows all our live articles of exportation are our black-cattle and our children and though England furnishes a demand for our quadrupeds we are forced to send our bipeds as far as Bengal.

I have just your Ladyships obliging note of the as I was about to close my letter. I wonder Wright sent the flowers to London as I should have thought Portpatrick the nearer route but conceived he would manage the matter better than the gardner, as I was out of town. Charlotte will be delighted to find that they succeed in Green Erin-

Your friendly interest in whatever concerns me will be my apology for telling you that the Commissioners have fixed the value of my office of Clerk of Session at 1100" a year. We have an idea of making a larger
claim in parliament but it is no bad thing to look forwards to when the appointment shall open to me-

I beg to be kindly & respectfully remembered to the Marquis & to the Ladies & ever am Dear Lady Marchioness

Your very respectful & much obliged

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 31st Dec. 1809.

All the good wishes of the season attend you dear Lady Abercorn & all whom you love & who love you. Pray do not omit to send me the verses. I shall be a severe critic if they are not worthy of the subject.

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

DEAR SIR, - I have three pages ready to be copied.
You may send for them in about one hour. The rest of my flax is on my spindle but not yet twisted into proper yarn. I am glad you like the Battle of Beil an Daine. It is rather too long but that was unavoidable. I hope you will push on the Notes.

To save time I shall send the copy when ready to John's Shop.

TO JAMES DUSAUTOY
SIR, I am honoured with your letter, which, in terms far too flattering for the proverbial vanity of an author, invites me to a task which in general I have made it a positive rule to decline, being repeated in so many shapes that, besides the risk of giving pain, it became a real encroachment upon the time which I must necessarily devote to very unpoetical labours. In your case, however, sir, a blunt refusal to give an opinion asked in so polite a manner, and with so many unnecessary apologies, would be rude and unhandsome. I have only to caution you against relying very much upon it. The friends who know me best, and to whose judgment I am myself in the constant habit of trusting, reckon me a very capricious and uncertain judge of poetry, and I have had repeated occasion to observe that I have often failed in anticipating the reception of poetry from the public. Above all, sir, I must warn you against suffering yourself to suppose that the power of enjoying natural beauty, and poetical description, is necessarily connected with that of producing poetry. The former is really a gift of Heaven, which conduces inestimably to the happiness of those who enjoy it; the second has much more of knack in it than the pride of poets is always willing to admit, but at any rate is only valuable when combined with the first. These are considerations which may serve to reconcile you, sir, to any failure which you may have experienced in your attempt to imitate verses that pleased you, or to celebrate scenes by which you have been delighted. I would also caution you against an enthusiasm which, while it argues an excellent disposition and a feeling heart, requires to be watched and restrained, tho' not repressed. It is apt, if too much indulged, to engender a fastidious contempt for the ordinary business of the world, and gradually to
unfit us for the exercise of the useful and domestic virtues, which depend greatly on our not exalting our feelings above the temper of well-ordered and well-educated society. No good man can ever be happy when he is unfit for the career of simple and commonplace duty, and I need not add how many melancholy instances there are of extravagance and profligacy being resorted to, under the pretence of contempt for the common rules of life. Cultivate then, sir, your taste for poetry and the belles-lettres, as an elegant and most interesting amusement, but combine it with studies of a more serious and solid cast, such as are most intimately connected with your prospects in future life, whatever those may be. In the words of Solomon, "My son, get knowledge, and with all thy getting, get understanding." The stock of ideas, which you will thus acquire, you will find very useful in your poetical exercises. But should you never carry these to the perfection you very laudably aim at, the knowledge you will thus acquire cannot fail to render you a useful and amiable member of society. With respect to the idylls of which you have favoured me with copies, they seem to me to have all the merits, and most of the faults, of juvenile compositions. They are fanciful, tender, and elegant, and exhibit both command of language and luxuriance of imagination.

On the other hand, they are a little too wordy, and there is too much the air, to make the most of every thing: too many epithets, and too laboured an attempt to describe minute circumstances. There is a perspective in poetry, as well as in painting, by which I mean the art of keeping your landscape, with its attributes, in harmony with your principal figures, and reserving your
force of detailed expression for what you mean shall be
the most prominent in your picture. This I think you
sin a little against. Upon the whole, I think your
specimen augurs very favourably of your talents, and
that you have not any cause for the apprehensive dejection
you have experienced, and which I confess I do not think
the worst symptom of your powers: since it is a frequent
attribute of genius to distrust its own powers. But I do
not greatly admire your model. Gesner's 'Arcadia' is
too ideal for my taste and sympathy, or perhaps I am too
old to relish it. Besides, I dislike the measured prose,
which has all the stiffness and pedantry of blank verse,
without its rhythm and harmony. I think you have a
greater chance of making more progress by choosing a
more severe and classical model. But, above all, be in no
hurry to publish. A name in poetry is soon lost, but it is
very difficult to regain it.

I hope you will receive the length of this letter as a
proof how sincere I am in my desire of being useful to you.
If it is less romantic than you may have expected, impute
it to my being past the meridian of life, while you are
probably in its dawn. I shall be happy if any part of it
can be useful to you. I remain, sir. Your sincere well-

WALTER SCOTT

[Edgecumbe's Lady Shelley's Diary] 1

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

[1810]

MR. SCOTT'S accompt with Messrs. Constable and
Compy. enclosed contains a charge for the tracts, etc., which Mr. Scott considered as his own property, and long ago cut up. If the original edition of "Lithgow" and the "Gushing Tears of Godly Sorrow" can be of any use, they are at Messrs. Constable and Compy.'s service for any time they choose, only not to be printed from and to be returned.

Mr. S. will be obliged to Messrs. G. and Co. to return the accompt.

[Rosebery]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

Thursday [1810]

MR. SCOTT'S compliments and makes Mr. Constable very welcome to the use of the engraving which he hopes the engraver will take care of. Mr. S. has the pleasure to acquaint Mr. Constable that he is in hopes of making some curious additions to Swift's Works hitherto unpublished.

Mr. S. does not wish "Marmion" to be sent to press without letting him know.

[Rosebery]

SIR WALTER SCOTT 281 1810

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

[Probably 1810 ?]

DEAR BALLANTYNE,-I am glad you like O'Connors Child. I It did not strike me much there is a flogging up
of the stile which I think is more in Wordsworth's way than Campbells & which always occasions obscurity.

Look at a fragment of Wordsworth call'd the Mountain-Boy. I never saw O'Connors child nor had the least idea of the subject till a week ago. I don't think it very like Blanche. They are both mad to be sure but one in the way of the Sybils and the other a la mode of a Bess of Bedlam. All the notes are ready & I can add or keep out a sheet as is most convenient. I therefore trust you will make a calculation so as to inform me when you call this evening what will be adviseable in that respect. 

W. S.

Mr. James Ballantyne
[Stevenson]

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH

MADAM,-I never apologise for intruding upon your Grace when I can recommend to you an act of kindness or of charity for I am always sure that the cause would advocate itself even if introduced by a stranger and I think your Grace would scold me if I did not think that in such a case as the enclosed I have as the only Minstrel of the Clan a sort of privilege to be a beggar. I believe there is now no remnant of the Household poet except the Laureat & the Highland pipers. Of the rights of the former I know nothing but if I may regulate myself on those of the Piper who is always the most important as well as the most noisy attendant of the Chieftain I will be quite warranted in begging a guinea from your Grace and another from the Duke to save a brother Minstrel from very short Commons. I do not warrant that the
(2-282) poetry will be good as the poor man has not been lately
(2-282) in a way to improve his talents which were originally
(2-282) far from despicable. But what your Grace may miss in
(2-282) amusement you will I am sure account more than
(2-282) compensated in bounty to a poor man who I fear needs
(2-282) it much. If Lord Montagu has not forgot me he will give
(2-282) me a guinea also.

(2-282) I hope the Duke & Lord Winchester the gallant Lord
(2-282) John and all the young ladies are well especially my little
(2-282) goddaughter. I have got a little keepsake for her but
(2-282) I will claim a dinner at Dalkeith or Bowhill on her
(2-282) birthday before I produce it. It is a very ancient & very
(2-282) simple broach which I think may have one day fixd the
(2-282) mantle of a British princess.

(2-282) Your Grace will always believe me your most respectful
(2-282) & very faithful humble Servant

(2-282) WALTER SCOTT

(2-282) EDINR. 22d March [1810]
[Buccleuch]

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

(2-282) [1810]

(2-282) I READ the history of the Register with great pleasure.
(2-282) Some points we differ on but they are daily becoming
(2-282) less important. The tone of candour and impartiality
(2-282) struck every one :-it must I think make its way & the
(2-282) Ballantynes deserve it for they are men of candour &

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liberality themselves. I know not where they have
picked up their poetical critic who is a dashing fellow but
lets I think his tongue run a little before his wits; a
common fault in his trade. I expect Kehama will rival
Thalaba which will place it very high in my opinion.
Two very accomplished girls (Hebrideans by the way or
Hebredeans if you like that better) have been delighting
every evening for this week past by singing passages
from Thalaba & Madoc which they had set to very wild
& sweet music of their own composition. There is
something very odd brewing in France at present-if
Bonaparte cannot contrive to strike some very magnificent
stroke his power will be in danger for I am well assured
the discontents are universal. The war with Spain as
wretchedly impolitic as it was detestably unprincipled is
the subject of deep though secret execration, & for some
reason or other his finances seem to flag. I hope our
merchants will not be such owls as to let him increase
them at their expence. Yet I have little doubt they will.
I agree with you our exertions in Spain are by no means
equal to the magnificence of the object. Why not have
a squadron of frigates with 8000 or 10,000 men upon the
northern coast and a similar squadron in the Mediterranean.
Thy soul is in that quarrel so completely that
I cannot endure the apathy with which it is generally
treated. Lord Wellington’s army is I presume kept up
to the numbers fit for the country to maintain but there
might be an equal number at a reasonable distance in
his rear. He has hitherto managed admirably well and

I am told his portuguese army is daily increasing in
numbers and discipline.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind compliments to Mrs. Southey
TO LADY ABERCORN

My DEAR LADY AND FRIEND,—I was honoured two days ago with your kind token of remembrance enclosing Miss Owenson's very pretty verses to which I pay the highest compliment in admitting them to be worthy of the subject. I beg you will let Miss Owenson know with my respectful compliments that I did not write and have scarcely even read, the review of Ida of Athens. My time has been indeed so very much occupied that though a great admirer of novels I have not perused one for many months, but I am sure that the authoress of the Irish Girl can produce nothing deserving of severe criticism and still more certain that no motive would have prevailed on me to give pain to female genius for the sake of showing my own supposed wit. The few essays I have made in the craft of reviewing are either of a grave cast or refer to books which I could conscientiously praise. There are I think in the Quarterly Review only two exceptions. In the one case I was provoked by the insufferable petulance of the author and in the other by the extreme want of candour of a certain author who, having loaded me in private with undesired and undesirable flattery chose to abuse me without temptation or provocation in his next book. The worst of being supposed to review at all is that you get the reputation of writing a great number of articles which you have never even read—much less written.
Lord Melville left this country about the beginning of last month in high health and spirits—indeed I have not seen him looking better for a long time: and as he practises the abstinence recommended I hope he will enjoy a confirmed state of health for many years. I suspect he will go against the Ministry at least not with them in the stormy debates which are just approaching. I grieve for it and wish our friends on all sides would recollect the fable of the bundle of arrows which were so easily broken singly.

Perhaps we would [not] quite agree on the subject of George Canning, with whom I have been for years a good deal at. But I think there would be no great difference between us. The want of Pitt's commanding genius is feelingly displayed by this wretched and impolitic squabbling among his friends.

You bid me my dear friend write verses for you and on friendship. Alas I am scarcely at this moment fit to write verses for the Bellman's Christmas box—above "Good morrow my Masters all, and a merry Christmas to you," I am sure I could not soar. The pressure of the Commission business has been so constant, the meetings generally sitting from twelve till five and the rest of my time spent in making up Minutes Reports and other official duty that I have never had a moment to put on my cap and bells. The enclosed jangling verses are the only effort I have made in rhyme since I came to Edinburgh for the winter. They were written within this hour and are to be spoken to a beautiful tragedy of Joanna Baillie (authoress of the plays on the passions) founded.
upon a Highland story of the Old time. I am much interested in its success, as she intrusted the MS. with me. The principal female part is very prettily rehearsed by Mrs. Henry Siddons our Manager's better half. Harry Mackenzie author of The Man of Feeling writes an epilogue so the piece being entirely of Scotch manufacture has, independent of its own merit every chance of succeeding before a national audience. The day of trial is to-morrow - I want to send your Ladyship two little trumpery volumes of Miscellanies containing some scraps of my own, with others better worthy of your perusal which I begged and borrowed from some friends to help off a selection of pieces made by some booksellers here whom I wish to encourage.

It is true my new ditty is sold but the price is two thousand guineas not pounds. When I was fond of horses I learned from the jockey to sell by guineas and buy by pounds. It is a comfortable reflection that should the Whigs come in to-morrow, their gall and bitterness will be of little consequence to me. I have nothing fortunately which they can take away and am able by the liberality of the public to wait calmly until I come to possession of my official income which I believe will amount to 1100 a year.

I am very anxious the said poem should be such as Lord Abercorn can stand godfather to with credit. The tale cannot be very well sent without the verses being no great matter in itself. But I will soon send you a specimen if not a whole canto. I have tried, according to promise, to make "a knight of love who never broke a vow."- But well-a-day though I have succeeded tolerably with the damsel my lover spite of my best exertions is like to turn out what the players call a walking gentleman. It is incredible the pains it has cost me to give him a little
dignity. Notwithstanding this I have had in my time
melancholy cause to paint from experience for I gained
no advantage from three years constancy except the
said experience and some advantage to my conversation
and manners. Mrs. Scott's match and mine was of our
own making and proceeded from the most sincere
affection on both sides which has rather increased than
diminished during twelve years' marriage. But it was
something short of love in all its fervour which I suspect
people only feel once in their lives. Folks who have been
nearly drowned in bathing rarely venturing a second time
out of their depth. Excuse this long and tedious prattle
and believe me with respectful compliments to the
Marquis, Dear Lady Abercorn your obliged and faithful
humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 21 Jan. 1810

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

IT would be a sin and a shame my dear Miss Baillie
to delay writing any longer. I hoped all might be and
would be concerning the Family Legend would have
ended this evening which was fixd for representation
but Mrs. Henry Siddons has been seized with a cruel
inflammation and swelling in the eyes which casts off the
coming forth till next week, so I must still write in the
future tense. We delayd announcing the alteration till
this morning in hopes there might be some change but
alas! to no purpose. All the boxes were taken twice over
and the public expectation was greatly excited so far as we can judge every person will come disposed to be pleased so all manoeuvre will be perfectly unnecessary.

In case of any blunder in the performance however we have taken care to have an hundred of your admirers (for their name here is Legion) in the way of highland friends ; that is through good report and bad report. I have written the prologue-sad stuff enough to be sure but I wanted to get out of the common strain of Whilome and Of Yore as for example

Of yore the hardy warriors of the north
Each in his filabeg came boldly forth

or

Whilome beneath their chieftains high command
The plaided Gael left his mountain strand
And much in love with lowland sheep and cattle
By night descended to the hungry battle.

I dont know if after all I have got into a much better strain. But I endeavoured to secure your dignity which does not admit of your suing for applause in forma pauperis and eke to give something of a national cast to the feelings of the Audience.

About the casting of the piece we have done as well as circumstances would admit. The players are generally speaking tolerable and perfect in their parts. Benlora I like least but he is a good looking stout fellow and the part will bear a little ranting if he will not quite out Herod Herod.
Maclean (or Duart) is played by a very docile and anxious performer. I flattered him by telling him your opinion of that part which had fallen to his lot, and he is to labour to secure some sympathy for his weakness of character. Indeed as they all seem to like their parts very well and to study hard I think the piece has a chance of being performed greatly short to be sure of my feeling of its merits but yet very creditably. Mrs. Siddons plays her part very sweetly indeed. She has increased her ophthalmia by crying for the disappointment. Erskine and I were constant at Rehearsal.

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This letter accompanies two volumes of the Miscellany which you so kindly honoured at my request. You will find your beautiful Tab in all her glory. Thomson and the Ballantynes being musical friends, have made some treaty by which he gives them the use of his words for their collection and they give him the use of some lines of the said collection for his music. In which way they have the advantage of inserting your beautiful Heath-Cock. I have another copy of the poems for Mrs. Hunter when I can find an opportunity to send them free of expense.

My little folks have all had such colds as well beseech this bitter weather but they have proved only colds whereat we rejoice for they have been generally attended by fever.

Dont think of answering this hasty scrawl- You shall hear from me fully on Tuesday- Mrs. Scott joins in kind love to Miss Agnes Baillie and I am ever yours sincerely and respectfully
22 January, 1810
[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO HENRY MACKENZIE

MY DEAR SIR,-With best thanks I return the very excellent Epilogue a which makes me very doubtful how far I shall come off with tolerable credit. I am only glad the Prologue will come before and not after the well-graced Epilogue, yours ever truly W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET Wednesday [January 29, 1810]
[W. Forbes Gray]

30th January 1810

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE,-You have only to imagine all that you could wish to give complete success to a play and your conception will still fall short of the complete and decided triumph of the Family Legend. The house was crowded to a most exceeding degree, many people had come from your native capital of the West. Every thing that pretended to distinction whether from rank or literature was in the boxes and the pit such an aggregate mass of humanity as I have seldom if ever witnessed in the same space. It was quite obvious from the beginning that the cause was to be very fairly tried before the public and that if anything went wrong no effort even of your numerous and zealous friends could have had much influence in guiding or restraining the
general feeling. Some goodnatured persons had been
land enough to propagate reports of a strong opposition
which although I considered them as totally groundless
did not by any means lessen the extreme anxiety with
which I waited the rise of the curtain. But in a short
time I saw there was no ground whatever for apprehension
and yet I sat the whole time shaking for fear a
sceneshifter or a carpenter or some of the subaltern
actors should make some blunder and interrupt the
feeling of deep and general interest which soon seized
on the whole pit box and Gallery as Mr. Bayes has it.
The scene on the rock struck the utmost possible effect
into the audience and you heard nothing but sobs on all
sides. The banquet-scene was equally impressive and
so was the combat. Of the greater scenes that between
Lorn and Helen in the castle of Maclean, that between
Helen and her Lover and the examination of Maclean
himself in Argyles castle, were applauded to the very
echo. Siddons announced the play for the rest of the
week which was received not only with a thunder of
applause but with cheering and throwing up hats and
handkerchiefs. Mrs. Siddons supported her part
incomparably although just recovered from the indisposition
mentiond in my last. Siddons himself playd Lorn
very well indeed and moved and lookd with great
spirit. A Mr. Terry who promises to be a fine performer
went through the part of the Old Earl with great taste
and effect. 1 For the rest I cannot say much excepting
that from highest to lowest they were most accurately
perfect in their parts and did their very best. Malcolm
de Grey was tolerable but stickish; Maclean came off
decently. But the conspirators were sad hounds. You
are my dear Miss Baillie too much of a democrat in your
You allow life, soul, and spirit to those inferior creatures of the drama and expect they will be the better of it. Now it was obvious to me that the poor monsters, whose mouths are only of use to spout the vapid blank verse which your modern playwright puts into the part of the confidant and subaltern villain of his piece, did not know what to make of the energetic and poetical diction which even their subordinate departments abound with in the Legend. As the play greatly exceeded the usual length (lasting till half-past ten) we intend when it is repeated to-night, to omit some of the passages where the weight necessarily fell on the weakest of our host, although we may thereby injure the detail of the plot. For the same reason and from the fellows' awkwardness I doubt Benlora must e'en go to the Keep with his friends instead of dying on the stage. While I mention these circumstances I must repeat that none of them hurt the reception of the piece in the slightest degree last night nor was there the slightest token of dissatisfaction except from a discarded Box keeper (as it proved) who was like to have found a speedier way out of the two shilling gallery than that by which he got into it. The scenery was very good and the rock without appearance of pantomime was so contrived as to place Mrs. Siddons in a very precarious situation to all appearance. The dresses were more tawdry than I would have judged proper but expensive and showy. I got my brother's highland recruiting party to reinforce the garrison of Inverary and as they appeared beneath the porch of the castle and seemed to fill the courtyard behind the combat scene had really an appearance of reality.

Siddons has been most attentive, anxious, assiduous.
(2-292)and docile and had drilled his troops so well, that
(2-292)the prompter's aid was unnecessary and I do not
(2-292)believe he gave a single hint the whole night-nor were
(2-292)there any false or ridiculous accents or gestures even
(2-292)among the underlings although God knows they fell often
(2-292)far short of the true spirit. Mrs. Siddons spoke the
(2-292)Epilogue extremely well. The prologue, which I will send
(2-292)you in its revised state, was also very well received. Mrs.
(2-292)Scott has her kindest compliments of congratulation.
(2-292)She had a party of thirty friends in one small box which
(2-292)she was obliged to watch like a clocking hen till she had
(2-292)gathered her whole flock for the crowd was insufferable.
(2-292)I am going to see the Legend to-night when I shall enjoy
(2-292)it quietly for last night I was so much interested in its
(2-292)reception that I cannot say I was at leisure to attend
(2-292)to the feelings arising from the representation itself.
(2-292)People are dying to read it. If you think of suffering a
(2-292)single edition to be publishd to gratify their curiosity I
(2-292)will take care of it. But I do not advise this because untill
(2-292)printed no other theatres can have it before you give
(2-292)leave. My kind respects attend Miss Agnes Baillie, and
(2-292)believe me ever your obliged and faithful humble Servant,
(2-292)
(2-292)WALTER SCOTT

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

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TO JOANNA BAILLIE

(2-293)MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE-Having opportunity of a
(2-293)cover I take the benefit of it to add a few words to my
(2-293)long epistle of yesterday. Last night I was again at the
(2-293)theatre when the Legend went off with equal brilliancy.
(2-293)The shortening some of the scenes between the saving
Helen from the rock and the arrival of Maclean at Inverara had the effect of tearing ornaments from a balloon. The piece was less elegant or rather in my opinion defaced but it rose more lightly. Our critics here speak highly of the tragedy. Jeffery was with us the first night and distinguished by the animation of his applause. He was I believe anxious to confute a dirty and unfounded report that he had been mustering a party against the piece. Our Lord president as good a judge of the Belles Lettres as of the Law over which he presides calld me up to the bench this moment to express his delight at having witnessed and aided the triumph of a tragedy which may rival the best in our language. David Hume (nephew of the historian) and a great admirer of the Drama says Helen is the finest model of female virtue firmness and feeling which any stage has exhibited. In short all your friends are amply gratified with your renown except myself - and I am only dissatisfied because I cannot get Garricks and Siddonses to play the very humblest parts in the piece. I believe the superintending rehearsals is very like cooking a dinner and absolutely destroys the pleasure you have in seeing your labours brought upon the board however keenly they are enjoyed by others.

Last night the house was full but not so excessively crowded as the first. The boxes were all taken and well filld although it was the 30th January and many as great Tories and cavaliers as myself straind a point of political principle to give attendance. Tonight a great house is expected, and on Saturday it will be as full as the first evening. The Legend is to be acted on Monday and then intermitted for a few nights to give new zest to the
public appetite. I have promised my little people that
they shall attend on that evening as a brilliant reward
for my little boy's attention. He is flourishing in arts
and arms having gained 40 places within the last fortnight
and won two pitched battles. I was of course obliged to
look grave on these military successes but I am not sorry
that he can make his hand keep his head as we border folks
say-and in a public school it is an indispensable
requisite.

A friend of mine writes dramatic criticism now and
then. I have begged him to send me a copy of the Edinr.
paper in which he inserts his lucubration and I will
transmit it to you. He is a play-going man and more in
the habit of expressing himself on such subjects than most
people.

Our little theatre is unfortunately ill calculated for
hearing a circumstance of the least possible importance
in most new plays but which has been found seriously
inconvenient on this occasion.

I am writing in the court so if any nonsense has slipd
into this hasty letter I request you to believe that it is good
Scotch Law. I beg best compliments to Miss A. Baillie
and am ever Dear Madam Yours most sincerely and
respectfully 1

WALTER SCOTT

31 January 1810

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]
TO JOANNA BAILLIE

(2-295)MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE,-I write these few lines to
(2-295)inform you that your laurels flourish in all their original
(2-295)verdure. Through this whole week the theatre has been
(2-295)fully attended and by all the fashionable people in town.
(2-295)On Saturday in particular the house was as full as on
(2-295)Monday-fuller was impossible and the most enthusiastic
(2-295)approbation was expressd in every quarter. All this while
(2-295)the Legend has been the only subject of towntalk where
(2-295)praise and censure were of course mingled. The weight of
(2-295)criticism falls on the head of Duart and I observ e that the
(2-295)fair critics in general thinks [sic] that he gives up the lady
(2-295)too easily. I begin heartily to wish that the play was
(2-295)printed unless you think of bringing it out in London 1 and
(2-295)printed as you wrote it. If you think of this you should
(2-295)only part with the property of a single edition that you
(2-295)may afterwards include it in your works. My reasons are
(2-295)that the characters of Benlora and especially Lochtarish
(2-295)are so defaced by bad action that it is impossible to suppose
(2-295)their having the necessary influence upon Macleans mind.
(2-295)Suppose we had never read Othello in our closet and saw
(2-295)Iago represented by a very bad actor, I suspect the same
(2-295)criticism would precisely apply.

(2-295)Yesterday I went with all my little folks who were
(2-295)delighted, and cried like little pigs over Helens distresses.
(2-295)All the boxes were full and the pit crowded. The same is
(2-295)expected to night when upon mature consideration we
(2-295)have determined that the public shall rise with an appetite
(2-295)though it is the common custom to let the run continue
(2-295)as far as it will go.

(2-295)In case you have not seen a playbill I inclose one which
I got last night because I think in my own case I would like to see one.

They continued to make a good deal of effect by the confused rush of the different parties out of the castle gate previous to the combat but last night (all the soldiers being out of town owing to an election) the Campbells were not sufficiently and overpoweringly numerous.

We are all of opinion that you are born to restore the age of tragedy but that you must come down and assist at the next play you bring forward—the amputations of a player have a very raw and unpleasant effect admitting them to be necessary on the whole. Did I tell you that Argyle made a formal complaint of the flatness as he supposed of his exit on one occasion and that I was obliged to indulge him by putting a cracker to the end of his squib that he might go off upon the grand pas. He plays the character very well indeed. Mrs. Scott begs her kindest remembrances to Miss Agnes Baillie Dr. and Mrs. Baillie in which I sincerely join and I alway am Dear Madam yours most faithfully and respectfully,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 6 feby. [1810] 1

The newspaper critique was not worth sending; [Mrs. President Blair has requested the Legend for next Saturday; a large house is expected. I don't know what to say about alterations; I should like to see it printed from the original draught.]

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]
TO JOHN MURRAY

February 10th, 1810

THE Edinburgh has at length come forth and with a good deal of spirit; but we will be better prepared for them the next time, and at least divide the public with them. I hope soon to hear all my contributions have come to hand. Not a line yet from Sharpe or Douglas. This is the true curse of gentlemen writers. Before I come to London I hope to have at least three veterans in constant pay. I mean men that will keep their engagements for an article each.

[Smiles]

[TO SOPHIA BAILLIE] 1

DEAR MRS. BAILLIE,—You honour me by your kind intentions in my favour and I anxiously wait to tell you that I have received what I shall highly value as a token of your regard. I could only have wished that you could have prevailed on Miss J. Baillie to send her pen along with your kind present as my own is likely to be worn to the stumps [sic] in the service of the public. While a stump is, left however it shall express as it has always done my genuine feelings and particularly my sincere sense of my friends kindness and that I may appear to merit them I willingly take credit for every wish to serve them when it is in my power. But the truth is Miss Baillies piece required no assistance and nothing that I could have done would have advanced or retarded its success more than I could have detained Garnerins (2) balloon with my hand or helped it to mount with the application of my shoulder.—De Montfort last night was acted with
deep and powerful effect to a crowded [sic] audience.

Even the critical Aristarch Jeffrey was melted into tears.

So you see our friend is in as full sail on the stage as ever

I beg kindest and best Compliments to Dr. Baillie in

which Charlotte most cordially joins. We were greatly

disappointment [sic] by the cross accidents which

prevented our having the pleasure to see you when in

Scotland last Summer and I ever am Dear Madam Your

honourd and obliged WALTER SCOTT

EDINR 20th feby [1810]
[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO ROBERT SURTEES 2

[early in 1810]

MY DEAR SURTEES,-I am deep in arrear with you ;

but I hope you have heard from me, though not directly.

I mean, I hope you have received a copy of Sir Ralph

Sadler's State Papers, so much indebted to your labours,

and a second volume of " Somers Tracts." The first

was forwarded, or at least the Bookseller promised to

forward it, from London ; the second went from

Edinburgh, to be left at Rushyford. If any miscarriage has

happened, pray let me know, that the matter may be

remedied. I am now questioned by Mr. Clifford, who is

questioned by a Sir somebody Lawson, who is desirous

to know what was the nature of those misfortunes said in
the Notes in the Letters relative to the great Northern Rebellion, to have befallen certain namesakes of the said knight; to wit, the Lawsons of Newcastle, who had shared deeply in the spoils of the Church. To this of course I could give as little information as Clifford; so we both come to you, on the strength of the old proverb, "I whip the top, and my mother whips me."

Your "Brown Man of the Muirs" is a noble fellow. He has been brooding in my brain this many a day, and I think, the genuine descendant of the ancient Duergar. I hope soon to shew you something of him in romantic poetry. Barthram, which is the most beautiful fragment I have seen this many a day, is to figure in the new edition of the Border Minstrelsy, of which I expected to have sent you a copy ere now; but cannot get it out of the hands of the printer. The story of Barthram put me in mind of a little incident I met with many years ago, riding out of Liddesdale into Tiviotdale. There were then no roads of any kind in that direction; so to avoid the bogs we kept upon the banks of a little brook which acted as a drain to the springy morasses, and now and then offered a little recess in which its waters wimpled under the birches and alders, and its banks formed a narrow and retired glen. In one of these we found a small stone cross lying among the grass and heather. It was thrown down from its pedestal, but not broken, and bore a broad-sword and a pair of wool-shears, the shape being nearly that of the ugly hieroglyphic below.

On the opposite side two initial letters, and two others lower down. The monument was obviously sepulchral. It was so small, that, with the united strength of a friend, and of my servant, I easily set it on end, where it may stand, for aught I know, to this moment. We could hear no tradition about the place; probably because we did
not light upon those who could have answered our inquiries. As the spot is not two miles distant from the Chapel of Hermitage Castle, it seems probable that the place of sepulture was chosen for some reason similar to that which occurs in the ballad of Barthram. Barthram is not a name of our Border, though I know it is distinguished in Northumberland.

The prints in the second volume of Somers belong to Volume I. "Derrick's State of Ireland." They are taken from the original plates, in the only copy in which they are known to exist, and are extremely curious, approaching, I think, very nearly to the dress of our modern Highlanders. I think they will be interesting to you.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

[Febry 20th (2) 1810]

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE,-I am delighted to find by your two kind favours that the Family Legend has answered all your wishes. The last time it was acted the House was almost as full as any of the preceding nights, and the reception equally enthusiastic. Notwithstanding all this how shall I find words to tell that I have to-night, for I am just returned from the theatre seen a play for the first time which has made at least an equal impression upon me. What do you think of De Montfort presented to a tossing (toping) audience filld with dread horror and consternation. Siddons acted ten thousand times better than I ever saw him and a Mrs. Young playd the
Lady Jane very well indeed. Having had none of the
cookery upon this occasion I really enjoyd the feast just
so much the better. You must know that my eyes have
seldom flowd excepting like the rocks in the desert at the

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touch of the rod. But I really felt like Sir Hugh Evans Mercy
upon me I have creat tispositions to cry. I met Jeffrey
coming out and we walked home together marveling how
you could combine so much fine and interesting feeling
with the predominance of such a horrid passion.

I need not I am sure say how much we were all gratified
by your friendly and affectionate reception of our efforts
which could have been of very little service had your own
been less than effectual. We might well answer you like
Rob Roy the summons which Mar sent him to charge at
the battle of Sheriffmuir " If you could not do it without
us you could not do it with us." You and I are above
the forms of civility necessary in talking over these matters
as the Saints in Cromwells time got beyond religious
ordinances, so I claim full credit and belief when I say
that your successful business gave me more pleasure than
if it had been my own, because I had that confidence in
its justice which I durst not in my own case have entertained
and never did entertain even in those instances
in which I have been most popular.

Miss Holford has a right to consider me as having
got above the ordinances of civility with her too, for I
certainly did receive some time (years I believe) ago, a
copy of very beautiful verses addressed to my own honour
and glory. 1 But it is equally certain that I had no clue

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given me to find out the ingenious authoress to whose name
and residence I was a perfect stranger and could find
no one here who had heard of either. And I will
frankly own I was not altogether displeased as a circumstance
which seemed to excuse me from what is to me
always embarrassing writing a letter about myself and
my poetry with all the commonplaces of gratitude and
modesty which whether real or assumed are always trite
flat and unprofitable and all this to a lady I had never
seen. I must find some opportunity of scouring my
scutcheon, from this stain of uncourteous ingratitude and
will consider how it can be done. Her Wallace is really
ever fine—it will not please Scotch folks because Wallace
is one of those historical characters that get beyond the
reach of poetry, which when applied to them is apt to
fail in a certain degree for the reasons which Johnson
applies to sacred poems. But in England it ought to be
and I am sure will be eminently successful and if you have
any opportunity of sending to the poetess my anxious
ernest wishes for her attaining her deserved rank
among the authors of the day and think it will please her
to know them you will oblige me greatly by conveying
them to her. She has escaped the chance of drawing the
claymore in good sad earnest, by the circumstance of its
not appertaining to her sex, for Sir William Cuming
in right serious rage was in search of the Author of
Wallace swearing that no man that wore a head should
libel the memory of the Red Cuming his ancestor.

I have applied to my booksellers who are anxious to
do the utmost for the family whom you protect. I They are

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1810 303

willing to give seventy guineas-50 payable in a bill at
6 months, and 20 upon the second edition going to press.

This will leave them little profit on the two first editions of 1000 each and is a bargain which I should hold a good one in my own case. But as the success of the sale will depend much upon its coming out at this very time when everybody is mad about it I think if it is to be printed separately it had better be done speedily. Should the Booksellers bargain prove too good a one! will engage my own credit that they shall do farther by your protegees whatever in your judgement shall be thought equitable.

I forwarded your letter to Siddons—his little wife received it with the deepest gratitude and I cannot doubt for one moment that your slightest wish will be their rule. But we shall have pirated copies to a certainty if we do not print soon for though the Managers may keep faith yet even an underling player has often been known to pick up from memory a copy of a popular piece though how mutilated heaven knows, and the means of getting a few guineas do not so often occur as to make them very scrupulous about the choice.

Little Charles did not cry at the Family Legend not because he was such a pebble hearted cur as Lancelot's dog Crab which did not shed a tear when the whole house was drowned in sorrow but simply because he was not there. We thought him rather too young to see [a] theatrical exhibition—it is like eating peas in the bloom to hurry our enjoyments before we can fully relish them.

I inclose a few lines to dear Mrs. Baillie who has contrived to make me most impatient for the arrival of the waggon by telling me it contains a token of her kind remembrance. I trust she does not hope that I shall
(2-304)accept it however elegant in exchange for the hug you
(2-304)promised me on her part.

(2-304)You talk of my writing tragedy but I am too cunning
(2-304)for that. I will give you no apology for trespassing upon
(2-304)my warren and composing poetical romances. I have
(2-304)been very busy of late cobbling one for the public. Would
(2-304)to heaven I were so near you as to read it over to you
(2-304)bit by bit at tea time—My best compliments attend Miss
(2-304)Agnes, and the Doctor without whom there is neither
(2-304)living nor dying in which Charlotte cordially joins. Ever
(2-304)yours faithfully,

(2-304)WALTER SCOTT

(2-304)Begun at the drowsy of 11 at night and finished in the
(2-304)no less drowzy court of Session feby. 20th.

[Scott-Baillie Letters]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

(2-304)[1810]

(2-304)DEAR SIR,—I send Mr. Jollie of Carlisles MS. so long
(2-304)amissing & also a Caledonia 2 to be exchanged for a
(2-304)large paper copy my first Volume being of that size—
(2-304)I dont think the 2d. Vol contains altogether such curious
(2-304)information as the first I am yours truly W. SCOTT

(2-304)Mr. Constable Bookseller
[Stevenson]

TO J. B. S. MORRITT, 24 PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON
My DEAR MORRITT,- You are very good to remember such a false knave as I am who have omitted so long to thank you for a letter bringing me the assurances of your health and remembrance which I do not value the less deeply and sincerely for my seeming neglect. Truth is I do not eat the bread of idleness. My literary reputation whether well or ill acquired deprived me of my profession as a lawyer in which I was thriving as well as my neighbours and it is bound in justice to make me the best amends it can. Indeed when folks bid me take heed to my reputation I am always tempted to answer like Davy to Bob Acres that the least my reputation can do in return is to take some heed to me. But I was born a Scotchman and a bare one and was therefore born to fight my way with my left hand where my right faild me and with my teeth if they were both cut off. This is but a bad apology for not answering your kindness yet not so bad when you consider that it was only admitted as a cause of procrastination and that I have been-let me see- I have been Secretary to the Judicature Commission which sat daily during all the Xmas Vacation.

I have been editing Swift and correcting the press at the rate of 6 sheets a week. I have been editing Somers at the rate of four D••.D••. I have written reviews-I have written songs-I have made selections-I have superintended Rehearsals-and all this independant of visiting and of my official duty which occupies me four hours every working day except mondays-and independent of a new poem with which I am threatening the world. This last employment is not the most prudent but I really cannot well help myself. My office though a very good one for Scotland, is only held in reversion nor do I at present derive a shilling from it. I must expect that a
fresh favourite of the public will supersede me and my philosophy being very great on the point of poetical fame I would fain at the risque of hastening my own downfall avail myself of the favourable moment to make some further provision for my little people. I cannot otherwise honestly indulge myself in some of the luxuries which when long gratified become a sort of pseudo-necessaries. As for the terrible parodies which have come forth I can only say with Benedict "A college of such wit mongers cannot flout me out of my humour." Had I been conscious of one place about my temper were it even, metaphorically speaking, the tip of my heel vulnerable to this sort of aggression I have that respect for mine own ease that I would have shund being a candidate for public applause as I would avoid snatching a honey-comb from among a hive of live bees.

My present attempt is a poem partly highland-the scene Loch Katrine tempore Jacobi quinti. If I fail as Lady Macbeth gallantly says-I fail and there is only a story murderd to no purpose-and if I succeed why then as the song says

Up with the bonnie blue bonnet
The Durk and the feather and a'.

I hope to shew this ditty to you soon in Portland Place for it seems determined I must go to London though the time is not fixd. The pleasure of meeting you and half a dozen other freinds reconciles me to this change of plan for had I answerd your letter the day I received it I would have said nothing was less likely
than my going to town in Spring. I hope it will be so late as to afford me an opportunity of visiting Rokeby and Greta side in my return. The feloun sow herself could not think of them with more affection than I do and though I love Portland place dearly yet I would fain enjoy both. But this must be as the fates and destinies and sisters three determine. Charlotte hopes to accompany me and is particularly gratified by the expectation of meeting Mrs. Morritt. We think of our sunny days at Rokeby with equal delight.

Miss Baillie's play went off capitally here notwithstanding her fond and over credulous belief in a Creator of the world. In fact [it] is so generally believed that it is Man who makes the deity that I am surprized it has never been maintaind as a corollary that the knife and fork make the fingers. We wept till our hearts were sore and applauded till our hands were blisterd-what could we more? And all this to crouded theatres.

I send a copy of the poetical collectanea1 not for you my good friend because you would not pay your literary subscription but for Miss Morritt. I though[t] of leaving it as I came through Yorkshire but as I can get as yet an office frank it will be safer in your charge. By a parity of reasoning you will receive a copy of the new Edition of the Minstrelsy just finishd and about to be ship'd, enrichd with your Curse of Moy which is very much admired by all to whom I have shewn it. This Longman & Co/ will send. If they fail as is highly probable-be so good as to send to Paternoster Row or call there on your next pilgrimage to the patagonian priest of Egypt whom we saw in Ironmongers lane enshrind in an old packing

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1. collectanea: collection.
box. I find I am disappointed in my office frank but
will find some way of sending the poetical miscellany safe.
I am sorry that dear Lady Hood is so far from you. There
is something about her that makes me think of her with
a mixture of affection and so anxiety-such a pure and
excellent heart joint to such native and fascinating
manners cannot pass unprotected through your fashionable
scenes without much hazard of a twinge at least if

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not a stab. I remember we talkd over this subject once
while riding on the banks of Tees and some how (I cannot
tell why) it falls like a death-bell on my ear. I would to
God she were with us in Scotland. She [is] too artless
for the people that she has to live amongst. This is all
vile croaking so I will end it by begging ten times love and
compliments to Mrs. Morritt in which Charlotte heartily
joins. Believe me ever dear Morritt Yours most faithfully

EDINR. 2d. March 1810 WALTER SCOTT [Law]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

CASTLE STREET 12 March 1810

DEAR SIR,- As I am more moved by consideration of
former kindness than of recent neglect I cannot upon
reflection prevail upon myself to change the Editors in
the intended third edition of Sir Tristrem since you have
requested as a personal favour to yourself that I would
lay aside thoughts of doing so. At the same time as I
am unconscious of having parted with the property of
the work & I am sure never intended to do so I beg you
to understand that I retain my right to future editions in
case I shall think proper to exercise it. I think you had
better communicate this letter to your partners because
they may decline holding the work in question as a favour
from me in which case I shall not be afraid of any charge
of want of liberality for not making a gratuitous present
to an opulent house of more than two editions of a valuable
copy-right. If however which I should like much better
you are disposed to consider my compliance with your
request as an act of personal kindness I will be glad to
waive further discussion of all disagreeable recollections
& proceed immediately to adjust the new Edition. I
remain Dear Sir your obedient Servant

WALTER SCOTT

1810      SIR WALTER SCOTT       309

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR, I am much obliged by your frank acceptance
of Sir Tristrem on the footing on which my letter
placed it. I shall be very desirous to have the 2d. Vol
of Caledonia as soon as possible as it may contain
something on the subject of Thomas the Rhymer. I will
call & speak about this & I am sure if Mr. Hunter is
really sorry for the occasion of my long absence from
your shop I will be happy to forget all disagreeable
circumstances & visit it often as a customer & amateur. I
think if necessary to add (before departing from this
subject & I hope for ever) that it is not in my power to
restore our relative situation as author & publishers
because upon the breach between us a large capital was
diverted by the Ballantynes from another object &
invested in their present Bookselling concern under an
express assurance from me of such support as my future
publications could give them which is a pledge not to be withdrawn without grounds which I cannot anticipate.

But this is not a consideration which need prevent our being friends & well wishers.

I am much obliged by the fine print & have also received Sir Tristrem whom I shall make Mr. Weber compare with the MS to rectifie any errors that may have crept into the text. I remain Dear Sir Your faithful Servant

W. SCOTT

2 CASTLE STREET 13 March [1810]

The Notes are quite the same as cash. I inclose a rect [Stevenson]

310 LETTERS OF 1810

TO SOPHIA BAILLIE

MY DEAR MADAM,—Three days ago your beautiful and most acceptable token of remembrance arrived safe without the least damage from its long journey. It has been the universal admiration of our little household and is certainly the most elegant inhabitant of a glass-soever since the time of Christalline la curieuse. But its beauty is its least recommendation to me when I consider the very flattering manner in which such a classical bijou has come into my possession I shall never look upon it without thinking of your goodness and endeavouring to persuade myself that so far as goodwill was concern’d it has not been altogether misplaced. As for Charlotte she has been standing opposite to it these two days on its
little marble slab from which (to my inexpressible joy it has displaced certain Chinese pagods) [sic] and making curtseers [sic {apparently}] in the fulness other delight like a young miss to her first doll. In the exercise of this devotion she has got a little of the Influenza which I endeavour to persuade her is a judgement for her Idolatry. But she is positive that she can derive nothing but good directly or indirectly from what comes from such kind friends.

My little housekeeper joins in kindest love and thanks to you to Dr. Baillie to our dear friends at Hampstead and we have some comfort in an apprehended journey to London which in every other respect we would wish to avoid that we may meet you all. Believe me Dear Madam Your very faithful much obliged humble serv

WALTER SCOTT
13 March 1810

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

SIR WALTER SCOTT 311 1810

TO LADY ABERCORN

NOTHING my dear Lady Abercorn would have kept me so long silent under your commands but the impossibility of immediately complying with them. Certain little domestic exigencies to which the middling [?] class of society are sometimes subjected obliged me to send the Lady of the Lake to the press just after I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship & I have only waited untill such a reasonable portion of it was printed as might give you some idea of the whole to dispatch it to Barons court. It will reach you under an official cover for I
have sent it to London for that purpose as parcels often
miscarry by the Mail. Croker Secretary to the
Admiralty & Member for one of your Ulster Counties
takes care of it for you & I hope it will reach your
Ladyship about the same time with this letter. It contains
the two first cantos & I am truly anxious to know how you
& Lord Abercorn like them. If you think them really
worthy of his patronage & should find his Lordship of the
same opinion he will honour me greatly by taking them
under his protection & I will only want your Ladyship's
answer to request with proper respect that he will do so.
But there is nothing of which I have so much fear as
intrusion of this kind especially upon a person to whom
I have been in too many instances inexpressibly troublesome.
I must therefore be indebted to your ever kind &
friendly hint upon this subject. For if the Marquis likes the
sample there is no man on earth to whom I would have
such pleasure in giving the poem, & if he [does] not there
is no man on earth to whom I ought to feel & do feel I

have less right to give trouble considering how unfortunate
I have been already though very unwillingly. Let me
add how desirous I am your Ladyship should think well
of these Minstrel stanzas. The deuce take my lover
I can make nothing of him; he is a perfect automaton.
It is very odd that the Border blood seems to rise in my
veins whenever I begin to try couplets however torpid
on other occasions. I am in my own person as Hamlet
says indifferent honest and a robber or Captain of Banditti
never comes across me but he becomes my hero. I
believe had I been to write Gil Bias Captain Rolando
would have been the principal personage from beginning
to end. But we are all as heaven made us and if I come
to see you in Ireland I will endeavour to avoid temptation
and not to become a leader of robbers in the Wicklow
mountains which I have a notion must be one of the
[most] diverting preferments in the world. You will see
what has led to this rhapsody if the verses have reached
[you] for Black Sir Roderick the leader of a predatory
clan of highlanders is in danger despite all my resolutions
to the contrary of becoming the very chief of the story.

You did not tell me if you exculpated me to your wild
Irish girl. Surely my apology was satisfactory.

Politics are going to the very extremity of evil. The
Pitt party who had so many reasons for sticking together
are yielding up to personal animosity and internal feuds
that the force of the enemy never could have wrenched
from them. I am not sorry for the individuals much as
I respect many of them who are ruining their own credit
& interest. But I am deeply grieved that the country is
likely to be delivered up to the mercy [illegible] who
grown wise by experience will hardly be silly enough to
break their heads on another Catholic question.

I hope the flowers have arrived safe. I will endeavour
to get you an office frank for the miscellany as really it
is not worth carriage to Ireland. I am waiting the
Chancellors commands which are seldom hastily issued

whether I am to go to town or not this season. For once
in my life I am particularly anxious to stay at home
principally on account of my poem. And it will be no
little disappointment to me to find the Priory again
uninhabited. If I am called up I hope it will be late in
the season & that I shall find you returned to old England.
I beg my most respectful compliments to the Marquis
EDIN. 14 March 1810.

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

NOTHING my dear Miss Baillie can loiter in my hands when you are commanding officer. I have put the play in progress through the press and I find my publishers the Ballantynes had previously determined to make Mr. Longman the proprietor of your other works, the offer of a share in this. All that can be made of it in such a cause certainly shall, and the booksellers shall be content with as little profit as can in reason be expected. I understand the trade well and will take care of this. Indeed I believe the honour weighs more with the booksellers here than the profit of a single play. So much for business.

You are quite right in the risque I run of failure in a third poem. Yet I think I understand the British public well enough to set every sail towards the popular breeze. One set of folks pique themselves upon sailing in the wind's eye - another class drive right before it - Now I would neither do one nor 'tother but endeavour to go as the sailors express it upon a wind i.e. make use of it to carry me my own way instead of going precisely in its direction - or to speak in a dialect with which I am more familiar I would endeavour to make my horse carry me instead of attempting to carry my horse - I have a vainglorious presentiment of success upon this occasion which may very well deceive me but which I would hardly confess
to any body but you nor perhaps to you neither unless I knew you would find it out whether I told it you or no.

You are a sharp observer and you look

Quite through the eyes of men-

I plead guilty to the cause of my ill-breeding to Miss H. The despair which I used to feel on receiving poor Miss Seward's letters whom I really liked gave me a most unsentimental horror for sentimental letters. The Grossest thing I ever did in my life was to poor dear Miss Seward she wrote me in an evil hour (I had never seen her mark that!) a long and most passionate epistle upon the death of a dear friend whom I had never seen neither, concluding with a charge not to attempt to answer the said letter for she was dead to the world &c &c &c. Never were commands more literally obeyd. I remained as silent as the grave till the Lady made so many inquiries after me that I was afraid of my death being prematurely announced by a sonnet or elegy. When I did see her however she interested me very much and I am now doing penance for my ill-breeding by submitting to edit her posthumous poetry most of which is absolutely execrable. This, however is the least of my evils for when she proposed this bequest to me which I could not in decency refuse she combined it with a request that I would publish her whole literary correspondence. This I declined on principle having a particular aversion at perpetuating that sort of gossip. But what availed it-Lo ! to insure the publication she left it to an Edinburgh Bookseller and I anticipate the horror of seeing myself advertized for a live poet like a wild beast on a painted streamer
for I understand all her friends are depicted therein at full length in body mind and manners. So much for the risks of sentimental correspondence.

Siddons' play was truly flat but not unprofitable. He contrived to get it well propd in the acting and though it was such a thing as if you or I had written it (supposing that is what in your case and I think even in my own is impossible) would have been damned seventyfold yet it went through and with applause. Such is the humour of the multitude. They will quarrel with venison for being dressed a day sooner than fashion requires, and batten on a neck of mutton because on the whole it is rather better than they expected. However Siddons is a good lad and deserves success through whatever channel it comes-His mother is here just now-I was quite shocked to see her, for the two last years have made a dreadful inroad both on voice and person. She has however a very bad cold. I hope she will be able to act Jane de Montfort, which we have long pland.

Mrs. Baillies kind token of remembrance arrived safe this week to our infinite delight and astonishment being certainly the prettiest ornament ever seen on this side of the Tweed.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest love to Miss Agnes Baillie

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to the Doctor and his Lady and I ever am My dear Miss Baillie very truly yours WALTER SCOTT

EDINR 18 March 1810
[Royal College of Surgeons, London]
TO ROBERT SURTEES

(2-316)EDINR. 23 March [1810]

(2-316)DEAR SURTEES, - I have postponed with great & gross
(2-316)ingratitude acknowledging your various favours, & I have
(2-316)mislayd a letter half written to you on the subject of your
(2-316)communications, until I should be able to accompany
(2-316)it with a copy of the new Edition of the Minstrelsy, which
(2-316)owes you so much. I hope you got the Sadler tho' you
(2-316)don't mention it. Constable assures me it was forwarded.
(2-316)A Sir Somebody Lawson Yorkshire is urgent to know the
(2-316)history of the Lawsons of Newcastle who J after you say
(2-316)might furnish a supplement to Spellman on sacrilege.
(2-316)Within two or three days you will receive " the minstrelsy"
(2-316)& I write particularly not on that account but because
(2-316)I will put up along with it Ritson's half-printed song also
(2-316)his copy of Molinet's Remembrances & my translation. I
(2-316)The last is worth nothing, but is heartily at Mr. Frank's
(2-316)service, if it can illustrate his uncle's intention. I loved
(2-316)poor Ritson with all his singularities & he was always
(2-316)kind & indulgent to me. He had an honesty of principle
(2-316)about him, which if it went to ridiculous extremities was
(2-316)still respectable from the soundness of the foundation.
(2-316)I don't believe the world would have made Ritson say
(2-316)the thing he did. I wish we had his like at present.

(2-316)I am busied with a poem at present for the good of the

SIR WALTER SCOTT     1810      317

(2-317)world & of my children. Your Northumbrian Duerguar
(2-317)comes in capital time to buckler by example a sort of
(2-317)episodical fairy tale which occurs in it. The truth is, &
(2-317)I know you will excuse my silence on account of it, I
have been working harder than is quite good for me,
always apprehensive of a sudden call to London &
desirous to have my job out of hand before I go. I now
hope to send you a copy in the beginning of May of the
Lady of the Lake, a grand romance ambling on all four
like the paltry of Queen Guenever. I must not mislead
you however. It is a highland tale & rests a good deal
on highland chivalry, not Ossianic though—observe
that!

I cannot find the Gentleman's Mag; or supplement.1
Oblige me by letting me know what you mean, & how I
can help your protege. If it is a subscription put me
down for a five guinea touch, if I am to get a book—so '.
if not, still put me down. I owe you much—much more
than ever I can pay in such a dribletting kind of patronage.
So I would like to know your precise views in
favour of the decayed Aristocrat & I may get a friend or
two to give a little more strength to any thing I can do.
I cannot count on much in this for I am daily growing
more & more a hermit & envy you the pleasure of
walking out in your garden, chiefly because you can do
so sans hat sans coat if you have a mind.

The story of the Lambton worm is not unlike that of
the Laidley worm of Spindlestonhaugh or rather that of
the serpent slain by our first Scottish Somerville, who
made him bolt a burning peat. I cannot help thinking
there is some strange truth disguised under all this
fiction. Who knows to what size the reptile race may
have attained, when the borders still so very wild were
comparatively uninhabited covered with wood & abounding
with those wild animals, on which creatures of prey
subsisted. As their enemy man increased in numbers
the game disappeared before him, & they were at once
straightened in provisions, & became the object of active
& skilful hostility, underwent in short a sort of blockade &
storm at the same time. Many animals have disappeared
from the earth & many from the island—the wolf, the
wild bull or bison, the elk, & as to the lowlands the
red-deer. Are of that last number to which may be added the
Capper Cailzie or cock of the wood in the air, & the
Beaver in the Lake. If I could for a moment credit the
universal tradition respecting almost every Scottish loch
highland or lowland, I would say positively that their
water-cow always supposed to dwell there was the
Hippopotamus. Nor should I be at all surprized considering
the uniformity of the tradition both as to the
nature & appearance of the animal, if upon drawing
some of those lochs, which the rage for improvement will
one day bring about, we should pop upon a skeleton of
this Egyptian Behemoth. Holding this belief I must be
particularly gratified in contributing to aid the descendant
of a preux chevalier, who rid the world of one
example of a creature rather more curious as a specimen
than pleasant as a neighbour. Mrs. Scott begs kind
compliments to Mrs. Surtees, & believe me Ever yours

WALTER SCOTT
[Abbotsford Copies]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE—Believe me I have never in my
life been so much pleased as with your kind and
unmerited goodness in the matter of the Family Legend.
There is a free masonry among kindred spirits (and I am
your adopted brother) that always leads them to understand
each other at little expence of words. I shall hold myself highly honourd indeed in what will I am certain make me live long after I should be otherwise forgotten for no one can both eat his cake and have his cake and I have enjoyd too extensive popularity in this generation to be entitled to draw long dated bills upon the applause of the next. In the course of a train of life so fortunate as may make a prudent person fearful of the future I have met with nothing that has given me so much real pleasure and I verily hope to use your own phrase that what I feel is not mere vanity but something better.

The play is now groaning in the press. I send the proofs but this will not insure their being altogether correct for in despite of great practice Ballantyne insists I have a bad eye. I will gain one advantage by this that I will obtain possession of the original Manuscript which I will preserve among my other literary valuables. Your introduction is delightful flattering to us as Scotsmen and doubly pleasing as friends. Erskine is two inches higher upon the kind mention made of him. I have I understand missd the very finest performance ever seen in Edinburgh Mrs. Siddons (the elder) in Jane de Montfort. Every body agrees that she was never more herself than in that character, playing with her son and upon his theatre was doubtless one great cause not merely of exertion but of real enthusiasm. She fairly cried herself sick at her own part so you may believe there was fine work in the front as they call the audience part of the house. Never was there such a night for those industrious females the laundresses. And how came you to be absent Mr. Scott? Why truly I was dreeing penance for some undiscovered sin at a family party of
about a month's invitation so flight was as much out of
the question as it was to support my disappointment
with patience for I expected enough although my
expectations appear to have fallen short of the truth.

The young Siddonians are delighted with the distinguished
and flattering applause you have given to their
efforts.

I wish I was like you in every thing but politics in
this free country make an early part of our education and
become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. There
is no difference except in words and personal predilections
between the candid and well informed of both parties.
In principle there is and can be none. No Whig will allow
that it is his intention to break down the royal part of
the constitution and no Pittite will call himself an enemy
to legitimate freedom. The debateable ground between
the parties is very narrow indeed so far as real principle
is concerned. But it is in words and in partialities that
we differ and while we continue mortal words and
partialities will be principal motives to human action.
So we will e'en leave the parties to pull cap themselves
and hope that if we do happen to be weights in the one
scale or other at least we are not leaden ones.

Did I not tell you that my own poem has nothing to
do with the valiant Sir Lancelot? It is a highland tale of
which the scene is laid on the verge of Loch Katrine. I
am pressing the printers to despatch and hope soon to
send you a copy. I will take care that the Bookseller's
cash is forthcoming as soon as our bargain permits. You
can put it in your scrutoir and dispose it as you please.
As for the prologue and epilogue I believe it is the rule
of the Stage not to resume them after the first run of the 
play is over that is so soon as the performance of another 
piece has intervened. But do not hope you will escape 
them in the printed copy. If I was as tedious as an 
Emperor I could find in my heart to bestow it all upon 
your Ladyship and I am too fond of sounding my trumpet 
before you to be ashamed of its being a little out of tune.

SIR WALTER SCOTT  321  1810

You are quite right as to my private opinion of Westalls 
illustrations—they are barely [? basely] devised like almost 
every thing of the kind I ever saw—but what would have 
it availd to have said so to the artist or to poor Longman 
the deed was done. By the way I understand there 
are two rival sets of illustrations in preparation for the 
Lady of the Lake even before she makes her appearance. 
Both will probably be execrable for if Westall who is 
really a man of talent faild in figures of chivalry where he 
had so many paintings to guide him what in the Devils 
name will he make of highland figures. I expect to see 
my chieftain Sir Roderick Dhu (for whom let me bespeak 
your favour) in the guize of a recruiting serjaint of the 
Black Watch and his Bard the very model of Auld Robin 
Gray upon a japand tea-tray.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest and best love to Miss A. 
Baillie the Dr. Mrs. Baillie and family I am ever Your 
truly obliged and faithful 

EDINR 30th March [1810]

I shall send this by the Advocates cover so it may be a 
day after post.

1810  322  LETTERS OF
By the way we have stuck to the original name Maclean in the printed play. So I have so far altered the introduction as to say he was called Duart in the representation. The verse answers best with Maclean which there is no pronouncing unrythmically whereas the ordinary pronunciation of Duart would puzzle Scotch folks.

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO THE REV. MR. BERWICK, ESCLOR, LEIXLIP

MY DEAR SIR,-An uncommon pressure of business and latterly great distress in my family by an inflammatory fever which confined three of my four Children at once gave me the appearance of ingratitude which is very far from my heart. My bookseller has tantalized me with the hopes of Appolonius these two months and I have partly delayed writing on that account not that my verdict on Classical matters is worth six pence but because if the book had been written in Arabic and by so kind a friend I should have been anxious at least to say I had seen it. My education was of a very desultory nature not from want of the kindest paternal care but partly from bad health in early youth partly from the interruptions of exclusions and indulgences I was too much permitted to study what I liked and when I liked which was very little and very seldom. To mend the matter I stuffed my brains with all such reading as was never read and in the department of my memory where should be a Roman Patera lo! there is a witches cauldron. I am
more apt to pray to Thor or Woden than Jupiter think
of the fairies oftener than the Dryads and of Bannockburn
and Flodden more than Marathon and Pharsalia.

I took the liberty of sending under Miss Whites protection
an Illustrated copy of the Lay of the last Minstrel. I
I wished to add Marmion but could not procure the 4to.
I trust soon to send you my new Adventure the Lady of
the Lake which I hope will serve to while away an idle
day and when I can procure a Marmion the set will be
complete.

My poem has not interfered with Swift though my
progress has been slackened by other circumstances. In
the political tracts respecting Ireland I observe one or
two relating to the intended establishment of a Dublin
Bank and the subscriptions handed about for that purpose
which Swift treats with great ridicule. The commentator
just glances at such a scheme which he says was thrown
out in Parliament. I should like to know a little more
of the matter and if any one can assist me you can. The
Deans ridicule is generally so peculiarly applicable that
the reader loses much by not being made acquainted
precisely with the subject in hand. Are there for
example any of these subscription papers or copies of
them to be had. I have twenty more questions to put
but my eyes have been worn out with watching of late
and I scarce can write intelligibly. I am truly sorry for
Mr. Cooper Walkers illness; he is a kind generous and
obliging man. I have not heard of dear Lady Charlotte
Rawdon this long and many a day.

My Children are thank God all recovering though two
still keep their beds.

Miss White mentions some letters of Swifts in the hands
of Lady Castlereagh addressed it seems to Mrs. Howard who was her Ladyships ancestress. I have taken some measures to enquire about [them] but am afraid they may be only the originals of those already published. Believe me Dear Sir Always yours truly obliged

WALTER SCOTT

10th April [1810]

This should have gone with the book but was forgot in the confusion occasioned by the Young peoples illness.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 14th April 1810

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-I would long since have written to your Ladyship to thank you for all your kindness in my behalf and to express how much I am pleased that Lord Abercorn to whom I am about to write a few lines likes his literary protege. I am about to enclose the 3d and 4th cantos of the poem to Croker for a frank the 5th is going through the press and so soon as the 6th is achieved you shall have it all. It is I think in point of interest of story the best of my efforts and I hope will meet its share of public favour. I like the 4th canto myself and hope your Ladyship will like it for my sake. We have been in a terrible state for this fortnight past three of my children at once ill of a dangerous and inflammatory fever brought on by the inauspicious
(2-325)weather with which we have been visited this spring.
(2-325)My eldest boy struggled for life & it was by bleeding
(2-325)blistering & strong drastic medecines that he has been
(2-325)restored to us. The younger brother & sister were not
(2-325)so severely affected & we were more early aware of the
(2-325)danger. Still they were very ill & though I know you
(2-325)can feel what our anxiety must have been yet you can
(2-325)hardly know how much a small house & moderate
(2-325)establishment renders difficult that attention which we
(2-325)wish to be universal & yet hardly know how to give to
(2-325)one without withdrawing from another. But even our
(2-325)servants rather exposed themselves to great & constant
(2-325)watching & fatigue than call in the assistance of strangers
(2-325)& health thank God seems about to visit us again. My
(2-325)eldest son whom I offered you for a page is the merest
(2-325)skeleton I ever saw & would disgrace any decent mummy.
(2-325)His brother & he still keep their beds & must for some
(2-325)days. My eldest girl assisted her mother as a little nurse
(2-325)& has quite escaped the disorder. It has been dreadfully
(2-325)prevalent here & in many instances fatal.

(2-325)I must have expressed myself very ill to lead your
(2-325)Ladyship to think I had any complaint to make of Lord
(2-325)Melville. He has always been my kind generous and
(2-325)ready friend nor doubt I in the least that I shall always
(2-325)find him so as I have never remarked abatement in his
(2-325)kindness and I am sure have never done anything to
(2-325)deserve it. I think while they were making so many
(2-325)alterations in the court 1 here they might have invalidated

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LETTERS OF 1810

(2-326)my Senior and cash-drawer and the Chief Baron Lord
(2-326)Melville's nephew as well as the late Presidt. and several
others of our Scotch Commission were desirous that it should have been done: by granting a man of seventy-five a pension for having discharged an important trust for forty years they would have been guilty of no public robbery and I who actually discharge the duty would have been admitted at least to some recompence for my labour. But I think the Advocate my soi-disant friend set his face against it & I make [indecipherable here] myself happy that the kindness of the public sets me above depending upon his favour. It was never mentioned to Lord M. that I know of nor did the plan come from me. It was proposed by Sir Hay Campbell as a necessary step to maintain the respectability of the situation & warmly listened to, but departed from I don't well know how nor why. So much for grumbling. But I am much more angry for our friends at their internal disunion than for neglecting such an individual as myself. If the present or any un-whiggish administration will but keep their ground I will make hay before the light or sunshine of my little reputation sets and I have always my official emoluments to look to one day for the deuce is in it if a man twice my age outlive me after all. But I detest the Whigs with a cordial detestation and the bilious fits which I should experience under their domination, would I am convinced get the better of me.

Now here comes a great request. Your friend Lady Castlereagh has I am told a numerous collection of original letters of Swift written to her Ancestress Mrs. Howard the favourite of Queen Caroline. Now this may not be true but it bears a very probable face-I am informed Lord Leitrim has seen them-there are letters (it [is] said) to Queen Caroline (I presume while Princess of Wales) to Mrs. Howard and to Pope-Now do you think Lady Castlereagh's countenance will so much belie the goodnature which with beauty is its distinguishing
characteristic as to refuse me copies of these letters? I will take such care of them as has never been taken of anything in this world and you need not tell Lady C. that I am an old friend of Canning since I am sure I am [a] sincere well-wisher to Lord Castlereagh whose conduct since that unfortunate quarrel has been so manly generous and patriotic. Do dear Lady write and let me know what I can expect about these same letters—not that there is any hurry only that I am impatient to know if the whole be not one grand blunder or quizz. I fear there is now no chance of my being soon in England and indeed in the present state of my family it is altogether undesirable.

I am sorry for the miscarriage of the flower roots which unless the gardner [sic] at the Priory has set them . . . must be good for nothing. You say nothing of the fair Novelist Miss Owenson. Surely she is not inexorable [MS. sewn in here].—Believe me, my dear Lady Abercorn, your Ladyship's truly obliged and faithful,

WALTER SCOTT

I am hopeless of profiting by the pamphlets on the Fiorin Grass, being a wretched & most unwilling farmer. But if your Ladyship sends them to me they will give me consequence with all the Agriculturists in Selkirkshire. So pray do—if not extremely big either Croker or Francis Freling Genl. Post Office will forward them for me if sent under their cover.

[Pierpont Morgan]
TO CHARLES ERSKINE

(2-327)MY DEAR CHARLES,-I am very sorry to say you must
(2-327)take belt & sword after all (2) -Anne is still very unwell, my

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(2-328)wife uneasy & Sophia we think about to take the same
(2-328)complaint-the rest are recovering very slowly-Lord
(2-328)Meadowbank I has kindly sent to say he will be satisfied
(2-328)with your attendance & will make it as light as possible.
(2-328)This will also be convenient to enable me to get out my
(2-328)new poem which we are printing very hard and as Lord
(2-328)Meadowbank volunteerd to excuse me I hope you will
(2-328)excuse me also. Believe me very kindly Yours
(2-328)EDINR. 22d. April 1810 WALTER SCOTT

[Home & Lyell]2

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

(2-328)[April-May 1810]

(2-328)DEAR JAMES,-I send the grand finale, and so exit the
(2-328)Lady of the Lake from the head she has tormented for six
(2-328)months. In canto VI. stanza 21,-stern and still, read
(2-328)grim and still; sternly occurs four lines higher. For a
(2-328)similar reason, stanza 24-dun deer, read fleet-deer. I
(2-328)will probably call this morning. Yours truly,

(2-328)W. S.

[Abbotsford Copies and Note at the close of
The Lady of the Lake]

TO JOHN WILSON CROKER
MY DEAR SIR, - A thousand thanks for your kind billet.
To avail ourselves of your invaluable support in the
House it is necessary to mention to you the present state
of the business. The Advocate finding I believe that
the opposition of filling up the amount of our compensation
for our dues of office in the inadequate manner
recommended by the report of the commission was likely
to meet with opposition which he would find it difficult

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to overcome has proposed in lieu thereof a reference of
our claims to the court of Exchequer in Scotland. 1 Now
to this our objection is twofold. 1st That if the remit
be thus made generally the Court of Exchequer would
not hesitate to adopt the report of the Commission
sanctioned by such high authority & possessing the
concurrence of two of the six judges of that Court who
being Commissioners are prejudicated by that very
report. If the clause instead of being general were so
worded as to measure the compensation by the amount
of our fees of Office as now by law exigible much of our
objection would be removed because the unjust principle
of measuring our claim by the receipts of distant years
under a most inadequate system of collection would be
departed from. But we hope and trust the House with
the evidence before them which is full and complete and
within ten lines; ready also to be verified on oath at
their bar will decide themselves upon the amount of what
is due to us. Or if we are to go to a Scottish Court why
not to the Court of Session of which we are officers and
where the extent of our dues is well known and recognised.
In fact the Excheqr. in Scotland has been most
unfavourable in such cases. I know not from what spirit
of public parsimony but their proceedings have given rise
to the most clamorous complaints both from Quaternary
meetings and Sheriffs. As one instance out of many,
there was a woman sent to be hung in Fife. The Sheriff
had not only the disagreeable duty of seeing the ceremony
performed but the pleasure of paying for a handsome new
patent Gallows out of his own pocket for which he was
not allowed one penny in his crown-accompts, the Barons
saying he might have hung her on a tree. The Advocate
used to be loud enough upon such subjects when Sheriff
of Perthshire. I myself had occasion to bring some
witnesses from England to hang a horse-stealer. The people
would not come for the usual sum allowed them for
expenses on the road and as they were not liable to be
compelled I had no alternative but to give them a little
more to induce them to appear on the trial. They came
and convicted the man but I was obliged to pay the
difference myself as Sheriff of Selkirkshire.

Excuse me troubling you with all these details especially
as Colin Mackenzie who lies leiger for us in town will be
able and anxious to give you more full information. On
Friday I shall [send] a copy of the Lady of the Lake for
you and I will avail myself of your cover to send one to
Canning. Believe me. Very truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 1st May, 1810.

[Brotherton]

TO LADY DALKEITH
MY DEAR LADY DALKEITH,—Accept with my best respects & with your Ladyships usual indulgence a copy of the Lady of [the] Lake a Lady of whom I am as heartily tired as ever I was of indifferent company & who nevertheless trusting more to your goodness than to her desert I hope may find some grace in your Ladyships eyes.

There are two copies in the same parcel one for Lady Douglas, one for your Ladyships neighbour Mrs. Robert Dundas. I hope the distance being short you will permit one of the green merry men to deliver it in Downing Street.

The weather here has been very severe especially among children. All mine have been deplorably ill but are now

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1810 331

thank God recovering. I hope your Ladyships nursery escaped the disorder which was something like an influenza.

I beg my most respectfully [sic] compliments to the Lord of Tyndale & thanks for his kind attention to my request by which he will befriend me in a most essential particular. Believe me with deep respect & regard Ever your Ladyships most obedient & obliged humble Servant

EDINR. 7 May [1810] WALTER SCOTT
[Buccleuch]

TO LADY ALVANLEY

MY DEAR LADY ALVANLEY,—As a very slight tribute of gratitude for the uncommonly kind & flattering attention with which your Ladyship was pleased to honor Mrs. Scott & me when in town last spring I have used the freedom to send for your Ladyship's acceptance a poetical romance which I have just intruded upon the public. It
TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE,—Our design of going to town has been broken by various accidents and latterly by the illness of our whole nursery. A kind of feverish complaint has run through all my children except the eldest girl and assumed at one period a threatening aspect being accompanied with pain in the side and other inflammatory symptoms which gave way however to bleeding and blisters. We are now all upon foot again but the shadows of what we were and the chin-cough has succeeded to the cold and fever. I cannot say I am very sorry as the season is favourable and this is one of the toll-bars which they must pass in their entrance to life and the sooner it is over the better. I have no prospect now of being in London soon but the next time I come I am much tempted by your kind offer of a harbour for Sophia to bring her with me. She is a clever and tractable child very capable of improving by what she sees.
and hears and I would think a week or two of your
society a most important advantage indeed. Early
travelling in some respects is of advantage, it opens the
ideas of children and if their companions will have
patience to hear and answer their questions it is perhaps
the highest possible enjoyment you can give them.

To quit the actual nursery and come to our literary
offspring. You must know that my young babe is born
in the shape of a comely quarto. Two or three days
since I addressed a copy for you to be left at Dr Baillies.
In case it has not appeared you will be kind enough to
cause enquiry to be made at Mr Miller Bookseller in
Albemarle Street to whose care it was addressed. I shall
be impatient to hear if it has given you any amusement
& if it has been so fortunate—a fico for the critics—This
accompanies a copy of the Family Legend which I learn
with surprise has not been forwarded to you. It is
positively more delightful in reading than in representation.
Lord Meadowbank came in here yesterday with
his eyes streaming from the perusal and fetching tears
from an old metaphysical lawyer and a Scotchman
beside is something like the miracle of Moses's rod in the
wilderness. The sale has been very much to the book-sellers

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satisfaction—four fifths of the quantity retain'd in
Scotland are already sold & the rest daily going off.

James Grahame has returned to Scotland. His wife
is at present in town making interest to get him appointed
preacher to the Chapel in Queen Street and I am moving
heaven and earth to help her. But I fear he has been
too late of starting since I find many of the most sweet
voices are already engaged in behalf of other [sic] He
is a worthy modest and most ingenious man-ill calculated
I fear to beat up against wind and tide which on
this occasion seem to set in against him, but still I dont
renounce hope of success. I have not heard why he
left the living in England but suppose he did not quite
find the climate agree with him.

I must break off having a great deal to do. Our
Session is about to set down my own duty as some thing
in arrear, one of my colleagues is absent in London and
another detaind by family distress so I have more than

enough upon my hands. Charlotte joins in kind love
to Miss A. Baillie to the Doctor and his Lady and I ever
am My dear Miss Baillie most faithfully yours

WALTER SCOTT
EDINBURGH 7 May [1810]

I inclose a few lines for Mr Coxe.
[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

MADAM,-I have the honour to send by the coach a
volume which in point of printing & paper at least may
claim a place in your valuable collection and I have
been anxious to select a copy which in these respects
may not disgrace your shelves though they hold some of
the most beautiful & curious books in England. But for
the matter of the volume I must invoke all your Ladyships
partialities & prejudices in my favour, as a Highland
Chieftainess, a Scottish Countess & if you will permit me
so much honour, as a friend of the rhymer and I fear that
with all these to aid it may be weighd in the balance &
found wanting-not in point of weight Heaven knows
but in point of merit. Such as my Lady of the Lake is

to you & to your honour I commit her l
And with her this-

Meaning thereby this letter which perhaps requires an
apology although it is meant to contain one.

I have [been] disappointed by various circumstances
from paying my respects at Cleveland House this season
which I once thought would have been in my power.
But my family have been very ill, & besides my Lord

SIR WALTER SCOTT      1810         335

Advocate who has certain points to carry against my
brethren & myself has intrigued a little to detain me where
I am-at least I cannot help suspecting so much.

I have taken the liberty to address a few lines to your
Ladyship to beg a ticket of admission to the gallery for a
female artist a Miss Auchterlonay a respectable & amiable
woman who has been reduced by the extravagance other
father & brothers to cultivate a talent for painting for
her subsistence which she once made an amusement.
She comes to London on purpose to look at pictures & I
do not know any Collection she can see with so much
pleasure & advantage. I dont think a very great deal
of her genius which is of that unfortunate kind at least at
present which hovers between talent & accomplishment
& would therefore have graced the situation she was born
to, but I am afraid will hardly give her distinction as
I hope Lady Hood is well & I beg to be respectfully remembered to the Marquis. I am with the greatest respect Madam Your Ladyships obliged & respectful humble Servt. WALTER SCOTT

EDINR May [1810?]
[Edin. Univ. Lib.]

TO THOMAS SCOTT

[Extract]

13th May 1810

... I AM truly sorry for the reduction of the Militia, yet it is but an idle man's employment, and though the immediate loss be severe, I would fain hope you may, with your talents, find a more lucrative and active sphere of exertion. I have not been quite idle myself, for my situation makes it necessary that I should labour. My last effort has been a new poem, of which I expect to have a copy for you in a week or two. ...

There is no news here worth telling. Your old friend Bailie Coulter died in his glorious year of Provostry, and was buried as doubtless he would have wished to be, only that Messrs. Young and Trotter, his opponents in the Council, were intrusted with the charge of solemnising his rites of sepulture.

Matters look serious in London, and I fear infinite pains has been taken to infect the Foot Guards with democratic principles. I hope they will have the prudence
to send them in an army to Portugal, and replace
them with regular marching regiments, less-subject
from their constitution and discipline to popular
contagion. I wish they may have no occasion to regret
disbanding Militia and Volunteers. Yet the sense of the
generality of the people is so sound that I cannot bring
myself to have serious apprehensions. We are beginning
to kindle here in a little degree. All reminds me of an
exclamation of the French as recorded in their old
history, "Tanneguy du Chatel, ou es-tu?" What is
become of William Pitt? It is astonishing how the loss
of one man has deranged the wisdom and disorganised
the force of this mighty people. You and I, with wives
and children, and seventeen years added to our lives,
will hardly scramble so well as we might have done in
1793-4 when the same game was playing.

I was much obliged to you for your curious notices
about the remnant of old customs in the Isle of Man. I
am surprised their song of triumph over the wren 1 is in

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English. I remember to have heard verses of it, and if I
mistake not, the whole is in Johnson's collection of Scotch
songs and music. Burns, who assisted Johnson, may have
picked it up in Dumfriesshire. As your residence in so
curious a place must have furnished you with many
miscellaneous remarks, I wish you would throw them
into the shape of a little Essay and send it to me for the
Register, of which I am a proprietor. . . .-I ever am,
yours affectionately.

W. S.
[Familial Letters]
TO MISS CLEPHANE

(2-337)MY DEAR Miss GLEPHANE,- You must with your friendly goodness excuse the laziness of my fingers in consideration of the hard duty to which they have been lately subjected in their editorial authorical and official capacity. At times the quantity of ink which I am obliged to shed weighs upon my conscience like Lady Macbeth's sea of blood and the spot on the upper side of my middle finger seems as indelible and as worthy of execration as the stains of Duncan's gore. But I am never insensible to your kindness and always happy to hear of you from you and about you. Besides when you have time to read over the Lady of the Lake notes inclosed you will see how much I have been obliged to your Gaelic erudition so that if I willfully neglected or undervalued your correspondence there would not only be unkindness in it but infinite folly. I shall have a copy of the aforesaid Lady for you I hope very shortly of a size fit for the chaise pocket.

(2-337)Shall I say I am sorry you have met some little disappointments among your fashionable friends? I think I cannot because you know the use which may be made of experience even when bought at the expence of high-raised expectation or of injured feeling. Yet you have such an excellent and affectionate adviser in Mrs. Clephane that I hope you will have no more of that knowledge of mankind (aye or womankind either) which is bought with pain to yourself. The modern fashionables are a bad race. Selfish feeling and self-indulgence is uppermost in their minds assist them in their parties give them the eclat of talent and the superiority derived from
the exercise of any accomplishment and you shall be the little deity of the hour; but never look for your worshippers the next morning—they are chasing some new butterfly with equal ardour and equal sincerity. After all one must submit to all this—it is the order of things and I dare say has been so since courts and cities first arose.

On debruit, on enleve, on s'intrigue, on projette, I have often thought it very fortunate that I was not thrown among these gay folks even for the occasional space of a visit to London until I was of an age not to be much biased by the opinions of the day nor greatly elated by the temporary attentions which I have sometimes received from those whom somebody terms "Those dangerous persons called our betters."

Yet I have known many whose hearts have retained their natural and noble feeling under the highest varnish of polished manners. Enough of morality and of that melancholy, most melancholy of sciences called the knowledge of the world.

I am very glad you like the little selection of poetry—it contains much that I don't precisely admire but such a collection should be miscellaneous and have something for every taste.

I have been strongly tempted to go to the Hebrides this season but I think I shall decline it chiefly because I shall not find you at Mull or the Seaforth family at Castle Brahan. Yet this is uncertain for Staffa tempts me with the offer of a stout sloop and right men to carry me to the out isles, which he has provided for the more profitable
I understand however his sister Flora is in a very dangerous way which will perhaps make him stay in England longer than he expected and so I think my jaunt to the Hebrides is like to blow up.

I hope when you return to Scotland you will take our farm of Ashiestiel in your way where I will be particularly happy to show you all the wonders of our land which if you except Melrose Abbey are very few. Our country is pastoral but not romantic—our house is a good large farm house capable of accommodating our friends but too small to admit mere visitors. Mrs. Scott joins anxiously in this request and in kind Compliments to Mrs. and Miss Clephane. As a penance for doubting the pleasure I would have in hearing from you I wish you would write me your opinion of the Lady of the Lake—The notes were printed when I was out of town so they have mangled some Gaelic words—Ever your faithful and respectful WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 19 May 1810

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 19 May 1810

[Northampton]

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TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

EDINBURGH, May 20, 1810

MY DEAR SOUTHEY,—I am very sensible of the value of your kind approbation of my efforts, I and trust I shall, under such good auspices, keep my ground with the public. I have studied their taste as much as a thing so variable can be calculated upon, and I hope I have again
What you say of the songs is very just, and also of the measure. But, on the one hand, I wish to make a difference between my former poems and this new attempt, in the general tenor of versification, and on the other, having an eye to the benefits derivable from the change of stanza, I omitted no opportunity which could be given or taken, of converting my dog-trot into a hop-step-and-jump. I am impatient to see Kehama; James Ballantyne, who has a good deal of tact, speaks very highly of the poetical fire and beauty which pervades it; and, considering the success of Sir William Jones, I should think the Hindu mythology would not revolt the common readers, for in that lies your only danger. As for Don Pelayo, it should be exquisite under your management: the subject is noble, the parties finely contrasted in manners, dress, religion, and all that the poet desires to bring into action; and your complete knowledge of every historian who has touched upon the period, promises the reader at once delight and instruction.

Twenty times twenty thanks for the History of Brazil, which has been my amusement, and solace, and spring of instruction for this month past. I have always made it my reading-book after dinner, between the removal of the cloth and our early tea-time. There is only one defect I can point out, and that applies to the publishers—I mean the want of a good map. For, to tell you the truth, with my imperfect atlas of South America, I can hardly trace these same Tups of yours (which in our Border dialect signifies rams), with all their divisions and subdivisions, through so many ramifications, without a
carte de pays. The history itself is most singularly entertaining, and throws new light upon a subject which we have hitherto understood very imperfectly. Your labour must have been immense, to judge from the number of curious facts quoted, and unheard-of authorities which you have collected. I have traced the achievements of the Portuguese adventurers with greater interest than I remember to have felt since, when a school-boy, I first perused the duodecimo collection of Voyages and Discoveries called the World Displayed—a sensation which I thought had been long dead within me; for, to say the truth, the philanthropic and cautious conduct of modern discoverers, though far more amiable, is less entertaining than that of the old Buccaneers, and Spaniards, and Portuguese, who went to conquer and achieve adventures, and met with strange chances of fate in consequence, which could never have befallen a well-armed boat's crew, not trusting themselves beyond their watering-place, or trading with the natives on the principles of mercantile good faith.

I have some thoughts of a journey and voyage to the Hebrides this year, but if I don't make that out, I think I shall make a foray into your northern counties, go to see my friend Morritt at Greta Bridge, and certainly cast myself Keswick-ways either going or coming. I have some literary projects to talk over with you, for the re-editing some of our ancient classical romances and poetry, and so forth. I have great command of our friends the Ballantynes, and I think, so far as the filthy lucre of gain is concerned, I could make a very advantageous bargain for the time which must necessarily be bestowed in such a labour, besides doing an agreeable thing for ourselves, and a useful service to literature.
What is become of Coleridge's Friend? I hope he had a letter from me, enclosing my trifling subscription. How does our friend, Wordsworth? I won't write to him, because he hates letter-writing as much as I do; but I often think on him, and always with affection. If you make any stay at Durham let me know, as I wish you to know my friend Surtees of Mainsforth. He is an excellent antiquary, some of the rust of which study has clung to his manners; but he is good-hearted, and you would make the summer eve (for so by the courtesy of the kalendar we must call these abominable easterly blighting afternoons) short between you. I presume you are with my friend Dr Southey, who, I hope, has not quite forgotten me, in which faith I beg kind compliments to him, and am ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT

[Lockhart]

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1810 343

TO J. B. S. MORRITT

[P.M. 23 May 1810]

MY DEAR MORRITT,—I need not say how acceptable your approbation of the Lady of the Lake is to me because you will readily give me credit for feeling both as a friend and as a poet upon the occasion.

Your criticism is quite just as to the Son of the dry Bone, Brian. Truth is I had intended the battle should have been more detaild and that some of the persons mentiond in the third canto and Brian in particular should have been commemorated. I intended he should have been shot like a corbie on a craig as he was
excommunicating and anathematizing the Saxons from some
of the predominant peaks in the Trosachs. But I found
the battle in itself too much misplaced to admit of being
prolonged by any Details which could be spared. For it
was in the first place episodical and then all the principal
characters had been disposed of before it came on and
were absent at the time of action and nothing hinged
upon the issue of consequence to the fable. So I e'en
left it to the judgement of my readers whether Brian was
worried in the Trosachs or escaped to take earth in his
old retreat in Benharrow near Ardkinlas.

My principal reason of writing immediady is to beg
you will have the goodness to address your pamphlet to
Mr. Freling General Post Office
who gives me the privilege of his unlimited frank in
favour of literature. Any moderate packet will always
reach me in that way. The Ballantynes I am sure will
be desirous to have some.-I have a little commission for
you if you will be kind enough to accept of it. You
know I fell in love with your Library table and now that
the Lady has put crowns into my purse I would willingly
treat myself unto the like-only I think I have not much
occasion for the space which holds accompt books in
other respect[s] it is quite a model: and in that respect I
don't quarrell with it; for why should I not be a rich
man one day and have accompt Books. Now were I to
send to your Upholsterer (not to mention I have forgot his
local habitation and his name) he would probably send
me what he best pleased and therefore I intrude so far on
your time as to request you when you are taking a walk to
order me such a table as yours; the terms to be ready money
on the things arriving here. I should like it to come before
I leave town for Ashestiel which will be 12 July.

I sometimes have thought of a jaunt to the Hebrides this summer. But if this highland trip should misgive I would not have you be too secure from an invasion at Rokeby for I have been persuading myself that the Carlisle stage would set me down at Greta Bridge in no time at all and I sleep most delectably in a mail-coach. But all this is at present as much a dream [as] honest John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

So your London citizens are taking the alarm. As Dryden says I would it should be so - tis a good horror First let them fear for rapes and plunderd houses Cold Burghers must be struck and struck like flints Ere their hid fire will sparkle-

It is disgraceful to see the legislature of this mighty Kingdom representatives of all the power wisdom and property of Great Britain insulted by the very scum of the earth for such must the mob of Westminster [be] and very little better do I hold the factious demagogues of the Livery.

I am vexd about Lady Hood & wish her here with all my heart & soul. I have not interested myself in anybodys happiness so much this long while & I feel very jealous for her unprotected state.

Mrs. Scott joins in kind Compliments to Mrs. Morritt. I fear she will be now longing excessively for the groves of Rokeby. Ever yours

W. SCOTT

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Pray don't be lazy [but] finish your ballad 1 with a wannion 2 to you. Ellis is at Sunninghill—well I hope & active in the good cause. I have not heard from him lately through my own fault. Pray rummage out your copy of the Minstrelsy from Longman & Co. It has been with them ages ago.

Our parliamentary affair was settled by Composition.

[Law]

TO THOMAS SCOTT, ESQ., DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN

[Extract]

EDINBURGH, 25th May 1810

MY DEAR TOM,—I write under some anxiety for your interest, though I sincerely hope it is groundless. The devil or James Gibson has put it into Lord Lauderdale's head to challenge your annuities in the House of Lords on account of Your non-residence and your holding a commision in the militia. His lordship kept his intention as secret as possible but unfortunately it reached the kind and friendly ear of Colin Mackenzie. Lord Melville takes the matter up stoutly, and I have little doubt will carry his point unless the whole bill is given up for the season, which some concurring opposition from different quarters renders not impossible. In that case you must, at the expense of a little cash and time, show face in Edinburgh for a week or two and attend your office.

But I devoutly hope all will be settled by the bill being
passed as it now stands. This is truly a most unworthy exertion of private spite and malice, but I trust it will be in vain.

[Lockhart]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

[May-June 1810]

MY DEAR ELLIS,-I have been scandalously lazy in answering your kind epistle, received I don't know how long since ; but then I had been long your creditor, and I fancy correspondents, like merchants, are often glad to plead their friends' neglect of their compt-current as an apology for their own, especially when they know that the value of the payments being adjusted, must leave a sad balance against them. I have run up an attempt on the Curse of Kehama for the Quarterly ; a strange thing it is-the Curse, I mean-and the critique is not, as the blackguards say, worth a damn ; but what I could I did, which was to throw as much weight as possible upon the beautiful passages, of which there are many, and to slur over the absurdities, of which there are not a few. It is infinite pity of Southey, with genius almost to exuberance, so much learning and real good feeling of poetry, that, with the true obstinacy of a foolish papa, he will be most attached to the defects of his poetical offspring. This said Kehama affords cruel openings for the quizzers, and I suppose will get it roundly in the Edinburgh Review. I could have made a very different hand of it indeed, had the order of the day been pour dechirer.

I told you how much I was delighted with your critique on the Lady 1 ; but, very likely moved by the same feeling for which I have just censured Southey, I
am still inclined to defend the eight-syllable stanza, which
I have somehow persuaded myself is more congenial to

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the English language—more favourable to narrative
poetry, at least—than that which has been commonly
termed heroic verse. If you will take the trouble to read
a page of Pope's Iliad, you will probably find a good many
lines out of which two syllables may be struck without
injury to the sense. The first lines of this translation
have been repeatedly noticed as capable of being cut
down from ships of the line into frigates, by striking out
the said two-syllabled words, as—

"Achilles' wrath to Greece, the direful spring
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly goddess, sing,
That wrath which sent to Pluto's gloomy reign
The souls of mighty chiefs in battle slain,
Whose bones unburied on the desert shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore."

Now, since it is true that by throwing out the epithets
underscored, we preserve the sense without diminishing the
force of the verses—and since it is also true that scarcely
one of the epithets are more than merely expletive—I do
really think that the structure of verse which requires
least of this sort of bolstering, is most likely to be forcible
and animated. The case is different in descriptive
poetry, because there epithets, if they are happily
selected, are rather to be sought after than avoided, and
admit of being varied ad infinitum. But if in narrative you
are frequently compelled to tag your substantives with
adjectives, it must frequently happen that you are forced
upon those that are merely common-places, such as
"heavenly goddess," "desert shore," and so forth; and I
need not tell you, that whenever any syllable is obviously
inserted for the completion of a couplet, the reader is
disposed to quarrel with it. Besides, the eight-syllable
stanza is capable of certain varieties denied to the heroic.
Double rhymes, for instance, are congenial to it, which
often give a sort of Gothic richness to its cadences; you
may also render it more or less rapid by retaining or
dropping an occasional syllable. Lastly, and which I
think its principal merit, it runs better into sentences
than any length of line I know, as it corresponds, upon
an average view of our punctuation, very commonly with
the proper and usual space between comma and comma.
Lastly the Second,—and which ought perhaps to have
been said first,—I think I have somehow a better knack
at this "false gallop" of verse, as Touchstone calls it,
than at your more legitimate hexameters; and so there
is the short and long of my longs and shorts. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

5 June [1810]

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I am proud that the Lady of
the Lake can divert an hour's pain or lassitude though very
sorry Lord Egremont should need her assistance for that
purpose. The line he mentions must be a very indifferent
one for I have had repeated application for a commentary.3
The best I can give is that I thought the Fox Glove a stiff
glaring sort of a flower no bad emblem of pride. As to
the Nightshade you know its deleterious qualities & it
ran in my confused head that the ancients used its juice
in poisoning state criminals. Bruised hemlock was

however employed for that purpose in the affair of Socrates
nor am I prepared to affirm that my own recollection
will prove more accurate in any other though I have
never, enquired. In transmitting this account of my
meaning to Lord Egremont be so good as to take notice
that I give it under the reservation of my privilege to
adopt any more ingenious meaning which my critics may
find out for me.

I am returning to Edinr. au plus vite & I fear I shall
find difficulty from the state of official duty to be out upon
5th June. But we will meet and be merry in summer.
Believe me dear Madam truly & respectfully Yours

MELROSE Wednesday

I have a nice little foal at Ashestiel for the little cousins.

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

MY DEAR Miss BAILLIE,-I am truly gratified by your
kind approbation of the Lady of the Lake for were I to be
asked who in Great Britain I should most wish to please by
my poetical attempts I would certainly name the person
whose works had afforded me the highest degree of
interest and pleasure and in this respect I know not any
one who comes within a bow shot of you. As I am quite
sensible of the necessity of giving the public some variety
of manner as well as of story I stretched my canvas on a much smaller scale than when I attempted the story of Flodden. Should I ever write again which is very uncertain I intend to take the Hebridean character and scenery with that of the North of Ireland for my subject—but this is truly speaking of the saddling of a foal.

I have forwarded your letter to Grahame and have done all the little in my power to assist him in his object. The only good I can do is to endeavour to remove political prejudices founded on his poem of Copenhagen, and being myself "more an ancient Roman than a Dane" I have, I think, some chance of being listened to upon such a subject. What probability of success he has is at present uncertain. The vestry in whom the Election lies are like other solemn bodies mysterious and oracular and the individuals who compose that august Sanhedrin when spoke to separately cry "hum" "go to" look wise and make the most of their temporary importance. But we will keep a sharp look out and do the best we can for the Sabbath Bard who is really a most worthy and amiable man and an excellent painter of Scottish manners and scenery.

The adventure of the Duke of Cumberland is indeed terrible. It looks as if all the curses of the poor Highlanders upon the head of his predecessor in title had been suspended in effect and had now fallen upon the inoffensive wearer of his unlucky coronet. Is it not very odd that old Duke William, after all the "Tears of Scotland," should have died quietly in his bed and that this man who is one of the most orderly of his family (I believe) should be hacked to pieces by an Italian Valet for no reason at all. By the way I have used the incident
In conversation as a confutation to those who deny that
the excess of hatred in De Montfort's character is founded
in nature. Seilis [sic] appears though in low life to have
been a remarkable person and I dare say was quite right
in his quarrels with Neale but finding his complaints
neglected and that none of the friends to whom he
mentioned them sympathized with his feelings he brooded
over them till he became capable of this desperate

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A passion which we dare not impart to others or
which when imparted attracts no sympathy is sure in minds
of a certain cast to burn with a flame more ardent because
smotherd. But to talk to you of passions is really sending
as we say saut to Dysart.

I have heard nothing from the gentleman whom you
mention as the person you wish to draw the price of the
Family Legend. The money is ready—I had I not better
send you the Bill and you can transfer it to him in your
own way. The Booksellers credit is I suppose nearly
expired—I mean the time of payment is at hand. By the
way the said family Legend was acted the other day
to an overflowing house. Many people brought the
book in their pocket and it seemed even to gain on the
public from the acquaintance they had formed with it in
the closet.

Charlotte sends you ten thousand kind thanks for your
rect. We have not had occasion to use it because this
vile cough which still hangs about our young people will
declare itself to be the hooping cough. 2 The two eldest
left Edinr. to day to go to Ashestiel with their mother
for a few days in hopes the change of air may relieve them
of this obstinate cold. They were otherwise quite
recovered of their indisposition and regaining strength and good looks apace. Charlotte would have written to tell you all this but she feels or rather thinks she feels difficulty in expressing herself on paper so accurately as she would. She sometimes takes fits of apprehension of this kind though she understands English like a native.

I enclose for Mrs. Hunter a copy of the little metrical Miscellany which has long lain at the bottom of my portmanteau when packed for London. I assure you I value her applause not a little for my sense of it is proportioned to my estimation of her acknowledged talents. I fancy Dr. Baillie and you Northern folks banished to the lands where Meadows flower and cornfield wave in the sun, like my poetical bouquet the better that it is chiefly composed of highland heather.

My kindest Compliments attend Miss Baillie the Dr. and his Lady in which my wife does not join expressly because she is thirty miles off and I am a bachelor and obliged to my bookseller if he will dine with me. But I think I can answer for her kindest wishes so I send them upon trust. Ever your truly obliged & affectionate W. SCOTT

EDINR. 10 June [1810]

TO THOMAS SCOTT
EDINBURGH, June 12th [1810]

DEAR TOM,—I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I have every reason to believe that the bill will pass this week. It has been committed, upon which occasion Lord Lauderdale stated various objections, all of which were repelled. He then adverted to your case with some sufficiently bitter observations. Lord Melville advised him to reserve his epithets till he was pleased to state his cause, as he would pledge himself to show that they were totally inapplicable to the transaction. The Duke of Montrose also intimated his intention to defend it, which I take very kind of his Grace, as he went down on purpose, and declared his resolution to attend whenever the business should be stirred. So much for

"The Lord of Graham, by every chief adored,
Who boasts his native philabeg restored." 1

TO THOMAS SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 21st June 1810

MY DEAR TOM,—The bill was read a third time in the House of Lords, on which occasion Lord Lauderdale made his attack, which Lord Melville answered. There was not much said on either side: Lord Holland

[Lockhart]
(2-353)supported Lord Lauderdale, and the bill passed without a
(2-353)division. So you have fairly doubled Cape Lauderdale.
(2-353)I believe his principal view was to insult my feelings, in
(2-353)which he has been very unsuccessful, for I thank God I
(2-353)feel nothing but the most hearty contempt both for the
(2-353)attack and the sort of paltry malice by which alone it
(2-353)could be dictated.

[Lockhart]

1810 LETTERS OF 354

TO LADY ABERCORN

(2-354)29th June 1810

(2-354)MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-I was agreeably disappointed
(2-354)by your kind letter in which you take upon
(2-354)you a fault which was really mine for I ought to have
(2-354)apprized you that the Lady of the Lake was waiting to
(2-354)pay her respects to your Ladyship and the Marquis as you
(2-354)passed through Dumfries. I am truly glad the Marquis
(2-354)thinks it worth his patronage as I certainly most sincerely
(2-354)wished it might not disgrace his Lordship's acknowledged
(2-354)taste and the kind and friendly dispositions with proofs
(2-354)of which he has honoured me upon so very many occasions.
(2-354)I like it myself as well as any of my former
(2-354)attempts, and the public seem to receive it with kindness
(2-354)which even the sanguine hopes of the Booksellers had not
(2-354)anticipated. The quarto edit. of 2000 has not lasted a
(2-354)fortnight and the smaller edition [is] now published of
(2-354)which I hope to send your Ladyship a copy to-morrow or
(2-354)next day as it contains a few corrections made since the
(2-354)1st edition. As for my lover I find with deep regret
(2-354)that however interesting lovers are to each other it is no
(2-354)easy matter to render them generally interesting. There
was however another reason for keeping Malcolm Graeme's character a little under as the painters say for it must otherwise have interfered with that of the King which I was more anxious to bring forward in splendour or something like it.

As the Session of our Courts will soon be over I intend to go for a fortnight to the Hebrides which I have never visited though I have been on the opposite mainland. I hardly know whether to expect much or not but I strongly suspect the best parts of Highland scenery are those which lie upon the main-But my friend Ronald Macdonald of Staffa promises me a good barge six rowers a piper and his own company for pilot which is a strong temptation. Had your Ladyship remained in Ireland and been adventurously disposed you might have sailed from the Irish coast and in five hours or not much more visited the famous cavern of Fingal. I will let you know on my return whether it be worth seeing or no.

I am truly happy Lord Hamilton's health is likely to be re-established and that his lady meets your maternal hopes. I hear high accounts of her from every quarter and I am sure he deserves domestic happiness which her temper and dispositions are I understand likely to secure to him.

I am grieved about Lady Castlereagh's letters which would have been of great consequence to me but I hope her Ladyship will publish them according to her present intention and I will be happy to have an opportunity of seeing them.
We expect Lord Melville here immediately and I think I may have some chance of finding him at Dunira on my return from the West Highlands. We have had a great change in my official situation our perquisites being exchanged for salaries of £1100, with a chance of getting a hundred or two more by application to Exchequer — no bad prospect when the decease of my senior shall put me in possession.

I suppose Sir Francis Burdett's extravagancies have been of considerable service to ministers as they must have the necessary effect of compelling everybody to rally about the King and the Government. Pray what is supposed to be the real motive of Sir Francis's rejecting the civic triumph which his friends had so kindly prepared for him. Was he afraid that his guards and escort might not prove so orderly as to do credit to their general or did he feel reluctance, like Sir John Falstaff to "march through Coventry" at the head of his ragged regiment?

Adieu my dear friend — if I am not drowned in the whirlpool of Corrievrekin or knocked against the basaltic columns of Staffa or carried off by some of the spectre Abbots of Iona or eaten up by the wild Macraws whose appearance struck Johnson with some apprehensions of the kind your Ladyship shall hear from me with some accounts of my wanderings. I beg to be respectfully remembered to the Marquis (by whose kind letter I was much gratified) to Lord Hamilton and the Ladies and ever am your Ladyship's very faithful and respectful humble servant, W. SCOTT

Excuse a wafer as I write from the Court where we are
allowed no lighted tapers.

[Extract]

(2-356) LORD HOLLAND has been in Edinburgh, and we met accidentally at a public party.1 He made up to me, but I remembered his part in your affair, and cut him with as little remorse as an old pen.

[Lockhart]

TO JOHN RICHARDSON 2

(2-356) EDINBURGH, 3rd July 1810

MY DEAR RICHARDSON,- I ought before now to have written you my particular thanks for your kind attention to the interest which I came so strangely and unexpectedly to have in the passing of the Judicature Bill. The only purpose which I suppose Lord Lauderdale had in view was to state charges which could neither be understood nor refuted, and to give me a little pain by dragging my brother's misfortunes into public notice. If the last was his aim, I am happy to say it has most absolutely miscarried, for I have too much contempt for the motive which dictated his Lordship's eloquence, to feel much for its thunders. My brother loses by the bill from
to 200, which no power short of an act of Parliament could have taken from him; and far from having a view to the compensation, he is a considerable loser by its being substituted for the actual receipts of his office. I assure you I am very sensible of your kind and friendly activity and zeal in my brother's behalf.

I received the Guerras safe; it is a fine copy, and I think very cheap, considering how difficult it is now to procure foreign books. I shall be delighted to have the Traite des Tournois. I propose, on the 12th, setting forth for the West Highlands, with the desperate purpose of investigating the caves of Staffa, Egg, and Skye. There was a time when this was a heroic undertaking, and when the return of Samuel Johnson from achieving it was hailed by the Edinburgh literati with "per varies casus," and other scraps of classical gratulation equally new and elegant. But the harvest of glory has been entirely reaped by the early discoverers; and in an age when every London citizen makes Loch Lomond his washpot, and throws his shoe over Ben-Nevis, a man may endure every hardship, and expose himself to every danger of the Highland seas, from sea-sickness to the jaws of the great sea-snake, without gaining a single leaf of laurel for his pains.

The best apology for bestowing all this tediousness upon you is, that John Burnet is dinning into the ears of the Court a botheration about the politics of the magnificent city of Culross. But I will release you sooner than I fear I shall escape myself, with the assurance that I am ever yours most truly, WALTER SCOTT

[Lockhart]
TO JOANNA BAILLIE

ULVA HOUSE, 1 July 19, 1810

I CANNOT, my dear Miss Baillie resist the temptation of writing to you from scenes which you have rendered classical as well as immortal. We—which in the present case means my wife, my eldest girl, and myself—are thus far in fortunate accomplishment of a pilgrimage to the Hebrides. The day before yesterday we passed the Lady's Rock in the Sound of Mull so near that I could have almost touched it. This is, you know, the rock of your Family Legend. The boat by my desire went as near as prudence permitted and I wished to have picked a relique from it were it but a cockle shell or a muscel to have sent to you but a spring-tide was running with such force and velocity as to make the thing impossible. About two miles farther we passed under the Castle of Duart the seat of Maclean consisting of one huge (indeed immense) square tower in ruins, and additional turrets and castellated buildings (the work, doubtless, of Benlora's guardianship), on which the roof still moulders. It overhands [sic] the strait channel from a lofty rock without a single tree in the vicinity and is surrounded by high and barren mountains forming altogether as wild and dreary a scene as I ever beheld. Duart is confronted by the opposite castles of Dunstaffnage, Dunally Ardtornish Blair Stalker and others all once the abodes of grim feudal chiefs who warred incessantly with each other. I think I counted seven of these fortresses in sight at once and heard seven times seven legends of war and wonder connected with them. We landed late.
wet and cold on the Island of Mull near another old
castle called Aros, separated, too, from our cloaths
which were in a large wherry which could not keep pace
with our row-boat. Mr. Macdonald of Staffa my kind
friend and guide had sent his piper (a constant attendant
mark that!) to rouse a highland gentleman's family in
the neighbourhood where we were received with a
profusion of kindness and hospitality. Why should I
appal you with a description of our difficulties and
distresses—how Charlotte lost her shoes and little Sophia
her whole collection of pebbles—how I was divorced from
my razors, and our whole party looked like a Jewish
Sanhedrim! By this time we were accumulated as
follows—Sir George Paul, the great philanthropist—Mrs.
Apreece a distant relation of mine and Hannah Mackenzie,
a daughter of our friend Henry, Mackinnon of Mackinnon
a young gentleman born and bred in England but nevertheless
a Highland chief. It seems his father had acquired
wealth and this young man who now visits the Highlands
for the first time is anxious to buy back some of the
family property which was sold long since. Some twenty
McKinnons who happened to live within hearing of our
arrival; (that is, I suppose, within ten miles of Aros) came
posting to see their young chief, who behaved with great
kindness and propriety and liberality. Next day we rode
across the isle on highland ponies attended by a numerous
retinue of Gillies and arrived at the head of the salt-water
loch called Loch-an-Gaoil where Staffa's boats awaited us
with colours flying and pipes playing. We proceeded in
state to this lonely isle where our honoured Landlord has
a very comfortable residence and were received by a
discharge of swivels and musquetry from his people.
Yesterday we visited Staffa and Iona. The former is
one of the most extraordinary places I ever beheld. It exceeded in my mind every description I had heard of, the appearance of the cavern composed entirely of basaltic pillars as high as the roof of a cathedral and running deep into the rock, eternally swept by a deep and swelling sea, and paved as it were with ruddy marble baffles all description. You can walk along the broken pillars, with some difficulty and in one place with a little danger as far as the furthest extremity.

Boats also can come in below when the sea is placid which is seldom the case. I had become a sort of favourite with the Hebridean boatmen I suppose from my anxiety about their old customs and they were much pleased to see me get over the obstacles which stop'd some of the party. So they took the whim of solemnly christening a great stone seat at the mouth of the cavern Clachan-an-Bairdh or the poet's stone. It was consecrated with a pibroch which the echoes rendered tremendous and a glass of whisky not pour'd forth in the ancient mode of libation but turn'd over the throats of the Assistants. The Head boatman whose father had been himself a bard made me a speech on the occasion but as it was in Gaelic I could only receive it as a silly beauty does a fine-spun compliment-bow and say nothing.

When this fun was over (in which, strange as it may seem, the men were quite serious) we went to Iona where there are some ancient and curious monuments. From this rude and remote island the light of Christianity shone forth on Scotland and Ireland. The ruins are of a rude architecture but curious to the Antiquary. Our return hither was less comfortable; we had to row twenty miles against an Atlantic tide and some wind besides the pleasure of seeing occasional squalls gathering to wind-
ward. The ladies were sick especially poor Hannah McKenzie and none of the gentlemen escaped except Staffa and myself. The men however cheered by the pipes and by their own interesting boat-songs which are uncommonly wild and beautiful, one man leading and the others answering in chorus, kept pulling away without apparently the least sense of fatigue and we reached Ulva at ten at night tolerably wet and well disposed for bed.

Our friend Staffa is himself an excellent specimen of Highland chieftainship; he is a cadet of Clan Ranald, and Lord of a cluster of isles on the western side of Mull and a large estate (in extent at least) on that island. By dint of minute attention to this property and particularly to the management of his kelp-shores [he] has at once trebled his income and doubled his population while emigration is going on all around him. But he is very attentive to his people who are distractedly fond of him and has them under such regulations as conduce both to his own benefit and their profit and keeps a certain sort of rude state and hospitality in which they can take much pride. I am quite satisfied that nothing under the personal attention of the landlord himself will satisfy a highland tenantry and that the substitution of factors which is now becoming general is one great cause of emigration. This mode of life has, however, its evils and I can see them in this excellent and enthusiastic young man. The habit of solitary power is dangerous even to the best regulated minds and this ardent and enthusiastic young man has not escaped the prejudices incident to his situation. He beards the Duke of Argyle the Lord Lieutenant and hates with a perfect hatred the wicked Macleans on the other side of Mull who fought with his ancestors two hundred years ago.
(2-361) But I think I have bestowed enough of my tediousness
(2-361) upon you and so to ballast my letter I put in one of

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(2-362) the hallowed green pebbles from the shore of St Columbus
(2-362) (sic) - put it into your work-basket until we meet, when
(2-362) you will give me some account of its virtues. Don't
(2-362) suppose the lapidaries can give you any information
(2-362) about it for in their profane eyes it is good for
(2-362) nothing.

(2-362) But the piper is sounding to breakfast so no more
(2-362) (excepting love to Miss Agnes, Dr. and Mrs. Baillie) from
(2-362) your truly affectionate

(2-362) WALTER SCOTT

(2-362) P.S.- I am told by the learned the pebble will wear
(2-362) its way out of the letter so I will keep it till I get to
(2-362) Edinburgh.

(2-362) I must not omit to mention, that all through these
(2-362) islands I have found every person familiarly acquainted
(2-362) with the Family Legend, and great admirers.1

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO GEORGE ELLIS

(2-362) [P.M. July 29, 1810]

(2-362) MY DEAR ELLIS,- I am just returning from a most
(2-362) delightful Highland tour in which we have scarcely
(2-362) encountered a single shower of rain. The night before
(2-362) we set forth the Lady Juliana Berners arrived in custody
of a skillful skipper (or schip-fere) who had taken the
greatest care of her during her voyage. She is a great
beauty and promises to be the envy of all our forest Lairds.
I hope to tell you next year that she has won the silver
collar which we contend for annually. If her action
answers her appearance of which I have no doubt she
will be quite invaluable to me as my present favourites
are arrived at that time when the prioress of St. Albans
says a greyhound should be

-- a stale
Gret biches to assaille.

So ten thousand thanks for having put me in the way of
not being outrun upon Cotswould.

The morning after July's arrival we set forth on our
pilgrimage, in the course of which I have wishd for you
at least a thousand times. My wife and daughter were
of the party and equally delighted. The number of
English travellers have of late years made the Highland
tours tolerable which they were not in my former
visits to the mountains-so that we have no tale of
hardships or even of privation to tell you. Our voyage
down the Sound of Mull was very grand. I counted
seven old castles, all the abodes of doughty chiefs of
ancient days in sight at the same moment. Our friend
and guide was Ranald McDonald the proprietor of
Staffa, from which he takes his petit titre, and of many a
dark isle islet creek and bay, around that celebrated
spot. With a very good education he retains much of
the Highland manners and enthusiasm, and is almost
worshipped by his followers. We landed that night at
Aros in the isle of Mull very late, and as we were augmented to a numerous party we were quartered by our leader among the hospitable inhabitants, and on the morning resumed our march on foot and poney back with such a train as might have graced a chieftain of old. None however were around except Staffa's piper who wore broadsword dirk and pistol although I could read in the eyes of some of the Southern who accompanied us that they considered his pipes as the most formidable part of his accoutrements. If you think it worthwhile to look at the map you will see that Mull is indented by a deep salt water lake running into the land from the westward. There we embarked in two gallant boats which Staffa had waiting for us and proceeded to the isle of Ulva in the mouth of the lake where he has his residence. We entered the sound of Ulva with pipes playing and banners displayed, and were received by Staffas people, who were all under arms, with a discharge of artillery. The next day we were escorted to Staffa and Iona. The cavern well deserves its renown and is in fact one of the few places of which I have heard a great deal that retains its high character after being visited. I penetrated over the broken columns to the very extremity but some of our party took fright. The Hebridean boatmen who are great admirers of poetry and music and still hold the character of the Vates in ancient respect, did me the honor to christen a stone at the mouth of the cavern by the sounding title of Clachan an Bhaird Sassenach more or the Stone of the great Saxon poet. One of them made me a long oration on the subject with much gesture and emphasis, but I was obliged to take the contents as he did my poetical talents, upon trust. Only, I learned he praised me for "burnishing
the armour of the mighty dead," and for being the
friend of the chieftain Staffa--Iona is a very singular
place--the remains of the church though not beautiful
are very curious, and nothing can be more wonderful
than to see the numbers of sculptured monuments of

priests and warriors in a place so extremely desolate and
miserable. The inhabitants are in the last state of
poverty and wretchedness. Fisheries might relieve them
but I see no other resource, for the island though fertile,
considering all things, does not produce food for the
inhabitants, and they have neither money nor commodities
to induce importation of provisions. We did not
stay so long as I could have wished, being threatened
with a gale of wind--no pleasant prospect in an open
boat on the Atlantic. Our hardy boatmen however
kept pulling against wind and tide for more than five
hours during which time they rowed twenty miles
singing all the while to their oars their old ditties of
clan-battles and gatherings--But my paper cuts me
short--God bless you, and love to Mrs. Ellis in which
Charlotte cordially joins. Ever yours

W. SCOTT
THE ROSS ON LOCH LOMOND Friday

TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

My DEAR JAMES,-I am very sorry for the state of your
health and should be still more so were I not certain that
I can prescribe for you as well as any physician in Edinburgh.
You have naturally an athletic constitution and
a heartly stomach and these agree very ill with a sedentary
life and the habits of indolence which it brings on. Your
stomach thus gets weak & from those complaints of all
others arise most certainly flatulence hypochondria & all
the train of unpleasant feelings connected with indigestion.
We all know the horrible sensation of the night-mare
arises from the same cause which gives those waking
night-mares commonly callld the blue-devils. You must
positively put yourself on a regimen as to eating not for
a month or two but for a year at least and take regular
exercise and my life for yours. I know this by myself for
if I were to eat and drink in town as I do here it would
soon finish me, and yet I am sensible I live too genially in
Edinburgh as it is.

I am glad to hear you intend to give yourself a little
respite which is the wisest thing you can do provided you
resist the hospitality of your Kelso cronies. I am desirous
to meet Terry at Melrose where I conclude you will make
a short halt on thursday. I conclude you will be there
about twelve or one o'clock if the day be favourable & I
am not otherwise detaind you will find me at Charles
Erskines or about the Abbey. Yours very truly

ASHESTIEL 7 Augt. [1810]  W. SCOTT

TO MRS. CLEPHANE

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK, Aug. 9 l810

MY DEAR MRS. CLEPHANE,-We are just returned from
Mull delighted with our excursion and with everything but the absence of the family from Torloisk, for the house was smiling so pleasantly in the sun-shine when it was pointed out to us as if [it] knew it was looking upon the friends of its inhabitants—I will not tell a word about Staffa or Iona, or the tombs of all the gallant chief[s] and pious Abbots, who are there interd, nor how Sir George Paul wished himself in the worst of the wards of his own prison at Gloucester, (internally as I guest) rather than in some of the places we visited—nor how all the McKinnons came from various quarters, to worship a young English Scotchman who is their chief and who now visited the country of his ancestors for the first time.

All these, with other more astonishing incidents are to remain in store for evening chat, when we have the honor which we anxiously expect, to see the young ladies and you at this shelling. We are very anxious to know your motions. Our own [are] at length fixed. I must

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1810 367

leave this place for Edinr. on Monday, to take my turn of official duty, which will I fear, detain me till near the end of the week following—We shall return on the 24th at farthest, and shall then be stationary for the season. If in the meantime you should go on to Edinburgh, it must be with the intention of coming out with us again. But I rather suspect the hospitality of the North of England, will detain you for a fortnight and that you will come straight here.

My kind remembrances attend the young ladies, and Mrs. Scott begs hers both to you and them. I have the honour to be Dear Madam, Your most faithful and obt. servant
Pray direct to Edinr. and let me know your motions.  
[Northampton]

TO JOHN B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR MORRITT,- Your kind letter reachd me in the very centre of the Isle of Mull from which circumstance you will perceive how vain it was for me even to attempt availing myself of your kind invitation to Rokeby which would otherwise have given us so much pleasure. We deeply regretted the absence of our kind and accomplishd friends the Clephanes yet entre nous as we were upon a visit to a family of the Capulets I do not know but we may pay our respects to them more pleasantly at another time. There subsist some aching scars of the old wounds which were in former times inflicted upon each other by the rival tribes of McLean and McDonald and my very good friends the Laird of Staffa and Mrs. McLean Clephane are both too keen highlanders to be without the characteristic prejudices of their clans which in their case divide two highly accomplishd and most estimable families living almost within sight of each other and on an island where polishd conversation cannot be supposed to abound. I was delighted upon the whole with my excursion. The weather was most excellent during the whole time of our wanderings and I need not tell you of Highland hospitality. The cavern at Staffa and indeed the island itself dont on parle en histoire is one of the few lions which completely maintain an extended reputation. I do not know whether its extreme resemblance to a work of art from the perfect regularity of the columns or the grandeur
of its dimensions far exceeding the works of human
industry joint to a certain ruggedness and magnificent
irregularity by which Nature vindicates her handywork
are most forcibly impressd upon my memory. We also
saw the far famed island of Columbus where there are
many monuments of singular curiosity forming a strange
contrast to the squalid and dejected poverty of the
present inhabitants of the isle. We accomplishd both
these objects in one day but our return though we had
no alarms to boast of was fatiguing to the ladies and the
sea not affording us quite such a smooth passage as we
had upon the Thames (that morning we heard the voice
of Lyson yelling forth the contents of the records in the
white tower) did as one may say excite a combustion
in the stomachs of some of our party. Mine being a
staunch Anti revolutionist was no otherwise troublesome
than by demanding frequent supplies of cold beef and
biscuit. Mrs. Apreece a fashionable little woman but
who travels rather to say she has seen than to see was of
our party—Also

Sir George Paul for prison-house renownd
A wandering knight on high adventures bound.

We left this celebrated philanthropist in a plight not
unlike some of the misadventures of Him of the woeful
Figure.1 The worthy Bart. was mounted on a

quadruped which the owners calld a poney with his
woeful valet on another and travelling slowly along the
coast of Mull in order to detect the point which
approached nearest to the continent protesting he
would not again put foot in a boat till he had discovered
the shortest possible trajet. Our separation reminded
me of the disastrous incident in Byrons shipwreck 1 when
they were forced to abandon two of their crew on an
unknown coast and beheld them at a distance commencing
their solitary peregrination along the cliffs.

I must not omit to tell you that Gillows table has
arrived and gives great satisfaction. Every one that sees
it likes it so much that I dare say I shall have some
commissions to send him. His Bill did not much exceed
yours being about £ 30., ready money.

We are now here for a few days but I must be in
Edinburgh next week on official duty. I trust however
to return about the 20th when we shall be here for the
season. I expect this will suit our Hebridean syrens &
their Lady Mother ; for we count upon a visit from them
& that a comfortable one as I have much to show her.
Why should you not accompany them ? It is but a step
after all as I will convince you next summer when I have
my seven leagued boots on. Charlotte joins in best and
kindest compliments to Mrs. Morritt and I ever am My
dear Morritt sincerely yours

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK 9th August [1810]

I inclose a note to Mrs. Clephane hoping it will find
her at Rokeby.

[Law]

1810 370 LETTERS OF

TO ROBERT LEYDEN
TO LADY DALKEITH 2

DEAR LADY DALKEITH,-The Ettrick Bard who compiled
the enclosed collection s which I observe is inscribed

SIR WALTER SCOTT 371 1810

But I embraced the more readily an opportunity of
intruding upon your Ladyships leisure that I might
thank you for the very kind & affecting letter with which
you honoured me some time ago. You do me justice in
believing that I was deeply concernd at the irreparable
loss you sustaind in the dear & hopeful boy to whom all
the friends of the Buc cleuch family lookd forward with
so much confidence. I can safely say that since that
inexpressible misfortune I almost felt as if the presence
of one with whom the recollection of past happiness
might in some degree be associated must have awaken
and added to your Ladyships distress from a feeling that
scenes of which we were not to speak were necessarily
uppermost in the recollection of both. But your Ladyship
knows better than I can teach that where all
common topics of consolation would be inapplicable
Heaven provides for us the best and most effectual
curative in the progress of time and in the constant
and unremitting discharge of the duties incumbent on
the station in which we are placed. Those of your
Ladyship are important in proportion to the elevation of
your rank and the promising qualities of the young
minds which I have with so much pleasure seen you
forming and instructing to be comforts I trust to yourself
& an honour to society.

Poor Lady Roslin I is gone with all the various talent
and vivacity that rendered her society so delightful.
I regret her loss the more as she died without ever
making up some unkindness she had towards me for
these foolish politics. It is another example of the great
truth that life is too short for the indulgence of
animosity.

There will I fear be no chance of your Ladyship being
at Bowhill this year though I suppose Lord Dalkeith
will be there for a short time in the course of the autumn.
I beg my kindest respects to him & Mrs. Scott offers hers
to your Ladyship. I have the honour to be with the
greatest respect Your Ladyships obliged & very humble
TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,-I am favourd with your letter and am quite satisfied that the printing of Swift will proceed most speedily and easily in the house of Messrs. Ramsay & Co. With respect to the inclosed letters they seem to lie out of my department. I will send Messrs. Ramsay vol. XIII at least a considerable part of it in the course of two days with directions about proofs &c. It will give me great pleasure if the change of printing house prove the means of expediting the work which on all acco [MS. torn here] I am anxious to get forwards. I am Dear Sir Your very obedient Servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 29 Augt. [1810]

The letters shall be returnd with the copy to save postage

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

ASHESTIEL, Thursday [Sept. 19-20, 1810]
MY DEAR SOUTHEY, - Your letter, this morning received, released me from the very painful feeling, that a man of Mr. Coleridge's high talents, which I had always been among the first to appreciate as they deserve, had thought me worthy of the sort of public attack which appeared in the Courier of the 15th. The initials are so remarkable, and the trick so very impudent, that I was likely to be fairly duped by it, for which I have to request Mr. Coleridge's forgiveness. I believe attacks of any sort sit as light upon me as they can on any one. If I have had my share of them, it is one point, at least, in which I resemble greater poets - but I should not like to have them come from the hand of contemporary genius. A man, though he does not "wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at," would not willingly be stooped upon by a falcon. I am truly obliged to your friendship for so speedily relieving me from so painful a feeling. The hoax was probably designed to set two followers of literature by the ears, and I daresay will be followed up by something equally impudent. As for the imitations, I have not the least hesitation in saying to you, that I was unconscious at the time of appropriating the goods of others, although I have not the least doubt that several of the passages must have been running in my head. Had I meant to steal, I would have been more cautious to disfigure the stolen goods. In one or two instances the resemblance seems general and casual, and in one, I think, it was impossible I could practise plagiarism, as Ethwald, one of the poems quoted, was published after the Lay of the Last Minstrel. A witty rogue, the other day, who sent me a letter subscribed Detector, proved me guilty of stealing a passage from one of Vida's Latin
poems, which I had never seen or heard of; yet there was
so strong a general resemblance, as fairly to authorize
Detector's suspicion.1

I renounced my Greta excursion in consequence of
having made instead a tour to the Highlands, particularly
to the Isles. I wished for Wordsworth and you a hundred
times. The scenery is quite different from that on the
mainland-dark, savage, and horrid, but occasionally
magnificent in the highest degree. Staffa, in particular,
merits well its far-famed reputation; it is a cathedral arch,
scooped by the hand of nature, equal in dimensions and
in regularity to the most magnificent aisle of a gothic
cathedral. The sea rolls up to the extremity in most
tremendous majesty, and with a voice like ten thousand
giants shouting at once. I visited Icolmkill also, where
there are some curious monuments, mouldering among
the poorest and most naked wretches that I ever beheld.

Affectionately yours,

W. SCOTT

[Lockhart]

TO CLARKE WHITFELD

MY DEAR SIR,-I am honoured with your valuable
packet, containing the music which you have thought it
worth your while to compose for the Lady of the Lake,
& the kind letter which accompanied it. So far as I (the
most inadequate judge of Music in the world) can form
any idea of your compositions from a single voice, for in
this remote corner we barely command that, I hope you
will lose no reputation, and I am sure the author of the words will gain a great deal. I had some idea at the time of publication of sending you the book with one or two Gaelic airs which floated through my head at
writing the songs, but a various pressure of business made me leave my poetry as the Ostrich her eggs in the sand, The original air of the Coronach for which you have found one so beautiful was M'Gregor a ruagh ruagh (pronounced O roro). It is a beautiful & pathetic Celtic melody. I wish you had been with me in a late tour through the Isles, when I heard many wild Hebridean airs sung by our boatmen to their oars, which appeared to deserve both embellishment & preservation.

I should be delighted to furnish you with an unpublished tale for your own exclusive adaptation, but-as the Neapolitan beggar said to the stranger who exhorted him to industry-" Did you but know how lazy I am." My winter months are employed in official attendance and in the present golden hours of vacation, what with coursing hares by day, and spearing salmon by night I have an extreme disinclination to anything like labour whether in prose or rhyme. When I am once set agoing, I roll like a stone down hill, but the first two or three turns are incredibly unpleasant. I am glad however you like Alice Brand, because I like it myself, and perhaps because the Critics have not given it much of their applause. I like it better than any thing of the kind I ever attempted except Lochinvar. If I can feel or flog myself into the humour of making it a tolerable companion you shall have it for Miss Whitfeld who does my minstrelsy so much honour. Indeed did I need a flapper I should be powerfully reminded of my obligations
(2-376) to you by Mrs. Scott, who desires me to make her grateful acknowledgements for the inscription to Alice Brand, of which she feels herself very proud. Lastly let me thank you for your elegant verses, which I heartily wish had a better subject, though I cannot desire they should have a different one. Believe me Dear Sir Yours truly

(2-376) W. SCOTT
[Abbotsford Copies]

TO LADY ABERCORN

(2-376) ASHESTIEL, BY SELKIRK, 30th September 1810

(2-376) I HAVE not my dear friend had much to say since I returned from my Highland excursion. The isles in many particulars more than answered my expectation. The cavern in the uninhabited island of Staffa in particular is the most wonderful place of the kind that imagination can conceive. The sides are composed of basaltic columns exactly like those of the Giant's Causeway in Ireland with which you are doubtless well acquainted. The angles of those pillars are as it were cemented to each other by a sort of yellow concretion resembling spar or marble which forms a striking and curious contrast to the sable colour of the granite columns themselves. The arch is as high as that of a cathedral and has nearly the same regularity of shape the ribbed pillars bending towards each other as if to meet at the top. They have however at the roof a sort of ceiling formed of the ends of other pillars which have been broken off in the course of the natural convulsion by which the cavern was formed. This immense and magnificent cavern opens full upon the Atlantic.
ocean whose billows roll up to the extremity of the cave
with a noise which even in the calmest day would deafen
thunder. When the weather is extremely calm you can
enter the cavern in a boat but the least swell renders the
attempt very dangerous. You can also reach the extremity
by scrambling along a line of broken pillars of
unequal height which extends along the righthand side
of the cave. We did both-The proprietor of the isle
Macdonald of Staffa a fine high-spirited young Chieftain
was our pilot and guide through the Hebrides. He is
much loved by his people whose prosperity he studies
very much. I wish I could say so of the Duke of Argyle
but his isles are in a wretched state. That of Iona in
particular where it is said Christianity was first planted
in Scotland and which still exhibits many curious and
even splendid remains of monastic grandeur, is now in a
most deplorable condition. The inhabitants are so
numerous in proportion to the size of the island that
(although it is a fertile spot comparing it with the other
isles around it) it is barely sufficient to support them in
the most wretched state possible in ordinary years-in
those of scarcity they must starve for they have nothing
to pay for imported corn-Much of this misery might
be remedied by a well regulated encouragement
to fishermen for the sea abounds with fish of every
description. But such a system to prevent peculation
and abuse must be carried on under the countenance of
an active benevolent, and at the same time a resolute
Landlord. We were surrounded on the beach by boys
and girls almost naked all begging for charity and some
offering pebbles for sale. My wife bought some which
have been since transformed into a very pretty necklace.

In the Isle of Ulva where the Laird of Staffa has his
house we were treated with something like feudal splendour.
His people received us under arms and with a
discharge of musketry and artillery. His piper was a constant attendant on our parties and wakened us in the morning with his music. The people are a wild and hardy race very fond of music and poetry which they chant perpetually to their oars. While we were at Staffa one of the Boatmen who could not speak a word of English came forward and made me a speech in which there was a great deal of compliment on account of my being "the great bard of the lowland border" and "burnishing the shields of ancient chieftains," with much more figurative eulogy of which I regretted I could not get an accurate translation. It concluded with acquainting me with their determination to name a remarkable pillar of the cavern after me to be called "Clachan an Bhaird Sassenach mohr" or the stone of the great Lowland bard. The ceremony was concluded by a solemn dram of whiskey by way of libation. So you see my dear Lady Abercorn that poetry retains its honours even where it is not understood. Perhaps it is owing to the same indulgence that your protegee the Lady of the Lake has met with even more popular favour than any of her predecessors. When the edition now in the press has issued forth it will make the number of copies published within about six months amount to seventeen thousand a success I believe unexampled in bookselling when the work was not of a political nature.

I hear the Priory is greatly enlarged. It is not likely I shall see it soon a London journey being always attended with a certain expense and I want to save my money to buy a corner among my native hills and build a cottage a mon gre. I beg my most respectful compliments to the Ladies and to the Marquis not forgetting Lord Hamilton.
(2-378)whose health I hope is confirmed. Believe me dear Lady Abercorn with great respect your much obliged and most respectful humble servant,

(2-378)WALTER SCOTT
[Pierpont Morgan]

379       SIR WALTER SCOTT       1816

TO MISS CLEPHANE

(2-379)[October 1810]

(2-379)MY DEAR Miss GLEPHANE,-We have been in town for a few days and leave it on Saturday to enjoy a few days more of this propitious weather by Tweedside. I regret to learn by report from Lady Clerk as Mrs. Scott did from personal enquiry at Porto Bello that your arm is not quite reestablished which is a matter of sincere regret to all who know the many excellent purposes to which you put it. I shall be happy to hear that you are gaining strength though slowly. When you happen to be in Edinburgh will you call at Sandersons and have a look at a harp set with Iona pebbles which he is making for Miss Baillie. You promised me a Gaelic mottoe in the old character-it should not exceed two or three words as " The Harp of Albin " or " Let me be heard again " or in short anything you please that can be twind concisely into Gaelic. If you will furnish Sanderson with a copy of the characters he will have them carefully engraved. I understand we are getting a Gaelic professor and I intend to study the language this winter if he can afford me a private hour for I am too old a boy to go to a public class.

(2-379)No late news from Ashestiel but the last despatches hear
that Charles has suddenly clapped a spoonful of hot porridge on his sister's head in imitation as he was pleased to maintain of Minnie's Bennison. So you see Mrs. Clephane's legendary lore is not forgotten but brought into practical use in my nursery.

Mrs. Scott joins in offering kindest and best respects to Mrs. Clephane and Miss Anne Jane at your Carron unknown and I am very truly dear Miss Clephane your obliged and humble servant W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET Thursday

There is not the least hurry in my commission.

[Northampton]

380 1810 LETTERS OF

TO J. B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR MORRITT, - I do not long delay answering your kind letter and assuring you of my sincere sympathy in the distressing events to which you have lately been exposed. The beautiful and feeling verses by Dr. Johnson to the memory of his humble friend Levett and which with me though a tolerably ardent Scotchman attune for a thousand of his prejudices open with a sentiment which every year's acquaintance with this Vanitas Vanitatum presses more fully on our conviction.

Condemned to Hopes delusive mine
As on we toil from day to day
By sudden blast or slow decline
Our social comforts melt away.

I am sure Mrs. Morritt must have deeply felt these
repeated strokes of misfortune. Let me hope that the
Mrs Cholmly you regret was not the mother of my
interesting and accomplishd young acquaintance who
accompanied us upon our Steeple-hunting expedition
and of the young gentleman I knew formerly in Edinr.
From the expressions you use I rather fear it was
the same and must regret your loss the more as I had the
pleasure of knowing her and her family. But what can
we say-unless by referring to the oft repeated and trite
topic of consolation-it is the lot of humanity and the
charter we live by.

We have been more than once tantalized by the
reports of freinds who were going to Rokeby or coming
from Rokeby but your late melancholy avocations have
prevented their designs. The Clephanes arrived here
from Carron Hall or some such named place in Yorkshire
but without taking you as they intended in their
progress hitherward. The eldest girl had a fall at
Melrose & came here with a disabled arm owing as she
imagined to a bad sprain but I was a little alarmd at its
totally unmanageable state and on a surgeons being sent
for it proved a bad dislocation of two days standing.
She behaved quite like a highland heroine upon the
occasion and neither shriekd nor groand nor winced
though the operation of adjusting the joint must have
been terribly painful. I hear she has since nearly
altogether recoverd the use of the limb. Next we had
Mrs. Apreece returning to England after having been
during the last winter at Edinburgh a lioness of the first
magnitude & reputation and she also proposed being at
Rokeby but was apprized of the state of your family.
I have little to complain of the Edinr. Review.1
Jeffrey sent me the sheets with a kind and for him an
apologetic letter saying he was sensible that there was
some needless asperity in his Review of Marmion etc. and
that he had studied in delivering his sincere opinion to
the public to do it in a way that should not be
unnecessarily harsh to me or my freinds. And indeed his
general tone is much more civil and respectful than is
usual for the Review when an author is neither a
philosopher nor a Foxite. But after all and among freinds
I think it would puzzle him to make a popular pudding
after the receipt which he has given as mine and I protest
to you that I have been (like the poor Lady who studied
anatomy) ignorant till this moment how many pretty
things went to the making of me.

I will take care to enter your claim for the 2d Volume
Of Clarkes travels.2 The first is reviewd in the Quarterly

LETTERS OF 1810

by our freind Geo: Ellis. He was long intimate with the
Russian court and has probably determined to screen
our freind the Bear a little. I have not seen the Review
though it is I think out & probably shall not till I get
to Edinburgh. But I have no doubt the said Bear will
prove a very filthy monster upon the whole.

The weather till these few days has been delightful
beyond what the memory of the oldest persons can retain
any trace of and fortunate it was so for the harvest was
so late that under less favourable auspices than this
astonishing track of fair weather it could never have been
put into the Barnyard.

I have very little prospect indeed of getting to London
next year. My Commission is ended and sooth to say
the expences of a London journey do not suit a poets
purse altogether so well as God willing I would desire
they did. But we must meet and Mrs. M. and you
being the more loco-motive persons will I trust take
another peep of Scotland where you have still so much
to see and I will promise if you do to see you safely back
into the West Riding. Have you read the Edinr Register?
If not do get it-the history is written by Southey and
though with some tinge of opinions which neither you
nor I approve yet there is much eloquence and a
great deal of what every body must admire. The
principles respecting france are particularly excellent
the general tone of political impartiality gives them great
weight and to my knowlege they are beginning to tell
among those who would have calld them party clamour
through any medium. I am informd by the Ballantynes
the second Volume is still better-it has not yet appeard.

(2-382)

It is needless to say how much our kindest and best
wishes attend Mrs. Morritt. Believe me ever yours truly

TO MISS SMITH

LEST I should relapse my dear Miss Smith into my
unfriendly and ungracious silence I hasten to express the
remorse I have experienced at your kind letter which I
have so little deserved. But the truth is and I wish I had
a better apology that the spirit of procrastination sometimes
quite overcomes me till an answer so long delayed
has neither grace nor good manners and I am finally
terrified from setting about it at all. I might indeed
sometimes plead and with truth the weariness of fingers
whose daily bread depends in some degree on their daily
exercise but I should be ashamed to state to you such an
apology in a stronger light than the fact admits of: for
the truth is that there are weeks and months in which
I do not only not use pen and ink but have a sort of
horror at the very sight of them. This is more especially
the case in this retreat which we are just about to leave
for the winter after having enjoyed an uninterrupted
track of the most delightful and settled good weather
which our northern and unstable climate has ever
afforded us in my remembrance. I hope you have
enjoyed the same in the beautiful scenery where you have
been conversant and that as your climate was more
genial it has been equally uniform and serene. Mrs.
Scott and I employed the early part of the vacation in a
tour to the Hebrides which I had never visited although
I was in early youth acquainted with the mainland
opposite to them. My eldest little girl accompanied us
and being quite a little doll whom we could fling to sleep
in any corner she was no inconvenience to us while I hope
she acquired some degree of taste for the beauties of
nature which as it is one of the most attainable is also
one of the most certain sources of enjoyment which life
offers us. The grandeur of the scenes which the islands
afford is a little qualified by the sombre and savage state
in which it is expressed. Few or no trees, huge barren
hills wrap'd in endless mist torn by unceasing cataracts
where the waters bear no more proportion to the excavations
and ravines which they tear out of the bosom of the
hills than human passions do to the consequences of
their indulgence—such are many of the aspects of nature
we viewed. These however do not apply to the Highland
mainland where the lochs are usually clothed with the
most beautiful birch wood. Nor are the isles without
their charms although they consist rather as far as I saw
in the eccentricities than in the ordinary productions of
nature. The caverns of Staffa struck me more than any	hing I ever looked on in my life and the ever changing
ocean with all its endless varieties affords to those who
live on its margin studies sufficient to compensate for the
want of the usual clothing of wood and verdur.

I have heard so much of the wonders of Killarney that
I hope I shall one day pay them a visit and believe me
I should be proud to profit by the hope you give me of
being made known to Lady Kingston. I am much
honoured by the good opinion of the Irish nation whose
praise must be always most valuable to a poet because they
are not only a people of infinite genius but of a warmth
of heart and feeling not perhaps generally appreciated
either by your countrymen or mine. The English
gentleman in a new poem (which we shall suppose dated
from Ashiestiel) asks something that awakes him during
the perusal from an habitual contempt of that which goes
on around him; a Scotchman likes and praises the
work of a countryman for the same reason that in London
he would walk half a mile further to purchase his ounce of
snuff where the sign of the Highlander announces a
North Briton. But an Irishman's praise is that of feeling
and though a Scotchman must always be a Scotchman
and like his own countrymen better than those of the
other allied kingdoms yet in doing justice to all three he
must allow the praise of spirit and sentiment to the Irish.
As I have been long trammel'd with an edition of Swift's works which I should be anxious to render respectable I hope to visit Ireland to endeavour to gain additional light on his history. But whether this will happen next year or no depends upon many trifling contingencies. Mrs. Scott joins me in kindest compliments. We will be both most happy when we can see you here. Miss Car. Douglas, I but that you doubtless have heard has married into her mother's Clan to Capt. Scott of the R. Navy of the family of Gala in this county. Lady Douglas was well when I heard. Yours my dear Miss Smith very sincerely & respectfully

WALTER SCOTT

I am glad you intend to play Helen in the Family Legend and I wish I was near enough to give you my instructions about the proper dress.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO THE REV. E. BERWICK

MY DEAR SIR,—Since I had the pleasure of writing to you last 2 I have been wandering among our Western Islands in a constant change of place and of course have been very ill situated for regular correspondence. I have now two of your highly valued letters to answer and I am heartily ashamed that it should be so considering how much the balance of obligation is in every respect against me- Swift has suffered somewhat from my rambling but still more from interruptions occasioned by
some change of printers. I cannot possibly do more than sketch the life until I obtain access to a very extensive and curious collection of original Letters in the hands of Lady Castlereagh containing the correspondence of Swift, Pope, Gay &c with Mrs. Howard afterwards Lady Suffolk. If this collection really contains many unpublished letters it will be the most curious source of information to which I have been as yet able to procure access. Lady Castlereagh has kindly promised that I shall see them & I believe I shall go to London on purpose in Spring next. Meanwhile I get on as well as I can with the Works themselves—As this will probably be the last work I shall engage in as Editor I am desirous it should have novelty and I feel how much it will owe to your friendship. Poor Cooper Walker1 whose kind interest in its progress was equal to your own has been snatched from his friends, and his studies, so that the burden which he supported jointly with you is now like to descend upon you alone.

I must not lose myself in my own pursuits without thanking you kindly and sincerely for the pleasure you have afforded me. Appollonius is an extremely curious and interesting book exhibiting in a strong & impressive point of view the force and the weakness of human wisdom and heathen philosophy. You have made us a most acceptable present and I am happy to think our Northern Critics are likely to be of the same opinion. At least Jeffery speaks of the work very handsomely as I am informed. I never enquire into the Secrets of their prison house though the Arch-Critic and I are great private friends but if I find an opportunity I will endeavour to spur him into carrying his good opinion into activity. I remember the passage you allude to in the conclusion of the Quarterly 2 which is to say the least both
unhandsomely said and unjust in itself and very difficult of reconcilement to the previous matter. How Gifford came to let it stand I know not; for it is different from what he promised me.

You are very good for interesting yourself so much in the Lady of the Lake. It was hastily written, more so perhaps than any of my former attempts, but has succeeded uncommonly well, the edition now in the press will make up 20,000 Copies—a pretty good number considering that only the first canto was in existence last year at this time and that it only came forth a few months ago. I should like before I hang my harp on the willows for ever to try an Irish tale mixed with something of our own Hebrides. But this is only a flitting wish which always comes across me when I think of your warm-hearted and highly endowed countrymen.

Depend on my bringing forward Appolionus in every way in my power. I wish I had seen him before I sent forth the Lady of the Lake as I could easily have made a niche. That in the life of Swift will be as graceful and appropriate as possible for the quotation you sent me in your favour of the and is very interesting. I have not seen the British Review of your work. I have a great mind to try to review it for the Annual Review despite my want of lore if I can make interest for the introduction of such a Critique as I am likely to make. Believe me Ever my dear Sir your truly obliged & very faithful humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTEBL SELKIRKSHIRE 8th October 1810
TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE, MOLESWORTH STREET, DUBLIN

SIR, - I am honoured with your flattering letter and the elegant verses I enclose and however much I may be sensible that your praises exceed my deserts, it can hardly be expected I should have the self denial to refuse my consent to their being made public in the way you have been pleased to choose. I should be extremely happy if the services of my publishers the Ballantynes of Edinburgh could be at all useful in giving celebrity and circulation to your intended publication. Any little interest I have with the Booksellers is all I have to offer in requital or rather acknowledgement of the honor you design me. I have the honor to be Your obliged humble servt

W. S.

ASHESTIEL SELKIRKSHIRE 10th Oct 1810.

TO REV. R. POLWHELE

EDINBURGH, 11 Oct. 1810

MY DEAR SIR,-This accompanies a set of poor Miss Seward's Poems, which I hope you will have the kindness to accept. Another cover will convey to you my three poems, which I regret to find have not reached you. Miss Seward left the greater part of her correspondence to Mr. Constable, of Edinburgh, who I believe taking measures to publish them. It is very extensive, occupying
many folio MSS., for she kept a copy of almost every letter which she wrote.

I will be much obliged to you to send your valued publications under cover to Mr. Freeling, or to John Wilson Croker, Esq. either of whom will forward them in safety.

1810 SIR WALTER SCOTT 389

As I know you are a great master of northern lore, and interested in all that belongs to it, I am anxious to bespeak your interest in favour of a publication intended to illustrate these studies. It is a quarto volume entitled Northern Antiquities, to be published by the Ballantynes of Edinburgh, for Messrs. Weber and Robert Jameson. May I hope that you will, either for this or the next volume, favour us with a communication? The subject (provided it be connected with antiquities) is entirely at your choice. I wished to add to the packet I transmit for your acceptance, a copy of Sir Tristrem, in whom as a hero of Cornwall you must doubtless be interested; but the edition is entirely out of print.

I am very glad indeed you like the Lady of the Lake; but, if you knew how much I admire your poem on Local Attachment, you would not have threatened me with so terrible a compliment as that of laying down your own harp. Believe me, my dear Sir, very truly, your much obliged,

WALTER SCOTT

P.S. Some time ago (several years now) I met with two very pleasant young men from Cornwall, Mr. Carlyon and Mr. Collins; to the former of whom I was indebted for the honour of being introduced to your notice. When
you favour me with a line, I should like much to know how they have fared in life, which they were then about to enter upon.

[Lettres of Sir Walter Scott, 1832]

TO LADY ABERCORN

I send a packet addressed to Mr. Arbuthnot containing a copy of the much honoured Lady to wait upon her kindest and best patroness. The quartos have long vanished nor can I even guess what is become of yours, since you did not find it at the Priory where I desired it might be sent. I add the little collection which I hope your Ladyship will approve of.

The treatises on the Fiorin are very interesting and if they are found to be grounded on practical experience cannot fail to be of the last consequence to Scotland. I observe Dr. Richardson speaks a good deal about the Duke of Buccleuch’s water-meadows. With these I am something acquainted — What they may do with Fiorin I know not, but they are not very productive in their present state. The engineer laid the blame on the quality of the water of the Yarrow which being a run from a large lake is remarkably pure and limpid very fit for poetry in which it has been often celebrated but not so well adapted it would seem for water-meadows. After abusing it a great deal the fellow closed his charges against it by comparing it to what I suppose he thought the basest liquor in the world. " It has no more heart" quoth he swearing to his assertion " than as much small-beer." A very odd simile for the classical Yarrow thought your minstrel. I daresay the Duke will try the Fiorin
which if it succeed will render his extensive system of irrigation much more valuable than it will ever be otherwise.

I would willingly make you my kind and partial friend the promise you request respecting my future literary engagements. But the Public with many other properties of spoiled children has all their eagerness after novelty

I heard of Leyden some time ago. He is doing excellently well in India, has a good office (something of a judicial situation I think) & a large income, & is acquiring knowledge & saving money. He is supposed to have exceeded the limits of Sir W. Jones's researches.
I am happy to hear Lady Hamilton is to be confined & trust your wishes will be accomplished in the sex. But should it prove a little girl it promises boys hereafter as Shakespeare tells us.

I am quite idle just now as to poetry and have no idea of writing anything serious in that way for a year or two at least. But whether I keep my resolution or not is uncertain for the Lady of the Lake was a very sudden thought and begun only twelve months ago. I will let you my dear Lady Marchioness know so soon as I engage in anything likely to interest you. Have you seen a periodical work called the Edinr. Annual Register—if not pray get it—the history is written with great spirit though in some parts I dislike its political tone & some of the detached articles that on the changes intended in Scotland by the last Administration is given to me by the public—falsely however—it is a paper of great merit. I wish the Marquis would look at it. There is a good smart review of modern poetry in which I come in for a sugar plumb [sic] & a buffet but to say truth I am grown a little insensible both to the one & the other.

Believe me dear Lady Abercorn Ever your honoured and WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 15 October 1810

TO REV. R. POLWHELE

EDINBURGH, 15 Oct. 1810

MY DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure to write to you
(2-392)yesterday under the frank of Mr. Croker of the Admiralty,
(2-392)forwarding a set of Miss Seward's works. But as I am
(2-392)uncertain whether this parcel may not reach you first,
(2-392)I trouble you with these few lines, to say that I enclose
(2-392)the Poems which you ought to have had long ago. I am
(2-392)sorry the Marmion does not rank with the others; but
(2-392)by some whim of the proprietors they have put it in the
(2-392)present shape, and I cannot find an octavo copy. The

1810  393  SIR WALTER SCOTT

(2-393)volumes you so kindly destine me, will reach me safely
(2-393)if sent under cover to J. Wilson Croker, Esq. Secretary
(2-393)to the Admiralty.

(2-393)Referring myself for other matters to my former letter,
(2-393)I am ever truly yours,                    W. SCOTT

[Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1832]

TO CHARLES SIMPSON

(2-393)EPITAPH

(2-393)To him who asks why o'er this tablet spread
(2-393)In female grace the willow droops her head?
(2-393)Why on her branches silent and unstrung
(2-393)The sculptor's hand a marble harp has hung?
(2-393)O'er what quenched lamp yon mourner seems to sigh?
(2-393)For whom yon Cherub points a brighter sky?
(2-393)What poet's flame sighs smother'd here in dust?
(2-393)What Christian hopes the rising of the Just?
(2-393)Lo! one brief line an answer sad supplies
(2-393)Honourd beloved and mournd, here Seward lies
(2-393)Her worth her warmth of heart our sorrows say
(2-393)Go seek her genius in her living lay.
MY DEAR SIR,—Though the above by no means pleases me it is simpler and better than anything which after several attempts I have been able to achieve. Having left your letter describing the design of the monument in Edinburgh I am not sure that the lines alluding to it are correct but if you think the verses tolerable in point of general effect they can easily be altered so as to make them applicable with due accuracy to the emblems of the sculptor. Trifling as the lines are I hope you will at least accept the attempt as a small mark of my anxious wish to do all I can to shew my respect for Miss Seward's memory and my regard for your wishes. I could have easily thrown more eulogy into the epitaph but it seemed better taste to leave it to be inferred from the propriety of the emblems, the regret of her friends and the value of her literary remains.

I hope the books have at length reached you. If not be kind enough to write to Longman and Company Booksellers Paternoster Row directing how they should be sent. I beg my kind compliments to Mr. White and am with best respects to your family Dear Sir Your faithful humble Servant WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL SELKIRKSHIRE 25 October l810

I dont like my first attempt well enough to send it to you although the enclosed might appear to more advantage by shewing you that a worse is possible.

[Owen D. Young]

TO LADY ABERCORN
EDINBURGH, 24th October 1810

IT would be very difficult for me to express how much I am indebted to your Ladyship for your kind interference in my behalf with the possessors of the precious letters of Dryden which is the more flattering as Malone was refused access to them when he undertook his Life of Dryden. I will be extremely happy to have the honour of being introduced to Lord Malmesbury and by his means to Lord Whitworth and I hope to be in town in spring to avail myself of their liberal and kind permission to copy these letters, as well as to return my personal thanks to my kind intercessor.

I wish from my heart I could transport myself to the priory just now for I am here on some official duty without a soul to speak to having left my whole family at my farm. The common phrase of Nobody in town is metaphorical with the Great in London, and only means there is nobody one knows; but here it is almost literal at this season—the grass grows in the streets and you would absolutely think that the place had been visited by the plague. The few natives that are left are run mad with politics and bite and scratch each other's eyes out. To complete the whole I went yesterday to visit a person who has just taken possession of a little old pigeon-house kind of a castle near this town, and entertains his guests according to the ancient Caledonian fashion with the martial music of the great war-bagpipe played by a Highlander in complete array who strutted up and down the little hall in which we dined during the whole time of dinner; so that if there were a single being left to
(2-395)speak one sentence of common sense I have not an ear
(2-395)left to listen to him my whole head being yet ringing with
(2-395)the tremendous music of yesterday. I will now proceed
(2-395)to copy some of the Ballads, lest my packet be too weighty
(2-395)for the cover. The first refers to the Massacre of the
(2-395)Monks of Bangor who about 610 marched in procession
(2-395)to Chester then besieged by the heathen king of
(2-395)Northumberland and were cut to pieces by his soldiers.

(2-395)When the heathen trumpets clang
(2-395)Round beleaguered Chester rang
(2-395)Veiled nun and friar grey
(2-395)Marched from Bangors fair Abbaye
(2-395)High their holy anthem sounds
(2-395)Cestria's vale the note rebounds
(2-395)Floating down the silvan Dee
(2-395)0 miserere Domine!

(2-395)[The burden of a Monkish hymn,
(2-395)" Have mercy, 0 Lord!"

(2-395)On the long procession goes
(2-395)Glory round their crosses glows
(2-395)And the Maiden-mother mild
(2-395)In their peaceful banners smiled
(2-395)Who might think such holy band
(2-395)Doomed to feel unhallowed hand
(2-395)Such was the divine decree
(2-395)0 miserere Domine!

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(2-396)Woe to Brocmael's feeble hand
(2-396)Woe to Olfrid's bloody brand
(2-396)Hands that censers only swung
(2-396)Bands that anthems only sung
Met the Northern bow and bill
Heard the war-cry wild and shrill
Woe to Saxon cruelty
0 miserere Domine!

Weltering amid warriors slain
Spurned by steeds with bloody main
Slaughtered down by impious blade
Bangors peaceful monks are laid
Word of parting rest unspoken
Mass unsung & bread unbroken
For their souls for charity
Sing miserere Domine!

Bangor o'er their murder wail
Long thy ruins told the tale.
Shattered tower & broken arch
Long recalled the woeful march
On thy shrine no tapers burn
Never shall thy priests return
The pilgrim sighs & sings for thee
0 miserere Domine!

I have other four little tales or singsong kind of verses
to add to this dismal ditty but I will not copy them at
present because I should disappoint my little wife, who
insists that notwithstanding the munificence of Lady
Abercorn in equipping me with eternal pens I am not the
most legible writer in the world and she therefore claims
the task of being Clerk upon the occasion were it only to
show though in so trifling a matter how much she is as
well as I ever your Ladyship's most respectful and most
faithful servant, W. S.

[Pierpont Morgan]
TO JOHN MURRAY 1

DEAR SIR,-After carefully looking over the series of novels which I reinclose I find I can make nothing of them. The canvas is in fact too narrow for so extensive a subject. I have written to Mr. Gifford wishing to review Polwhele's works or the theatrical Row. The last has never I think been attempted at least in a general point of view and might I think be made a pleasing and original article. Should Mr. G. approve you will be so good as send me such of the trashy publications concerning it as may be most current. I must have a text though the sermon will rather refer to the thing itself than the publications concerning it. I will be happy to look over the article on Crabbe should W. G. wish it, but it is always difficult (I find it so at least) to do much in the way of addition or emendation unless the general colouring and stile should agree more than is likely.

I have written a long letter to Gifford on all these matters. I am greatly obliged to you for settling with my Newspaper man which I suppose will about square accots between us for my two little articles in last number. I am Dear Sir Yours very truly

W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 26 October [1810]

[Sir Alfred J. Law]

TO MISS CLEPHANE
I SHOULD be very ungrateful my dear Miss Clephane did I omit to thank you for your kind letter and excellently appropriate mottoe. Sanderson sent home the harp the evening we were about to leave Edinburgh and I thought it as well to keep it in my own possession until I should have an opportunity of consulting with you. The limb of the trinket which must bear the inscription is not above three inches long but I conceive that as the Gaelic character like that of the Runic is somewhat angular your very pretty device can be engraved within that space. Of this you will judge better when you see the little harp. It looks pretty enough and nothing can suit it better than your Buail tend a myhean Albain na m ferrn - we can omit the two last words should there not be room which however I shall regret.

I should be delighted with an opportunity to see Steel hand which I should venerate highly. Should you ever venture to transport it to Edinburgh I will have a drawing and an accurate account drawn up of it for the Northern Antiquities a work in which I take some interest from regard to two very worthy and ingenious men for whose emolument it is published. I think of giving them my song of the Clans which I will most willingly attempt to enlarge by Saxonising those you are so good as to recommend to me. I have I believe three already Macleans Warsong and the Coronach over Sir Lachlan and the farewell to MacKenneth 1 - I have not been able to ride for this week past owing to a foolish cold so I have been busy brushing the jackets of some old Swiss ditties upon the Battles of Sempach, Morat and other encounters with the Knights of Austria and Burgundy. They were not
good as poetry but curious notwithstanding. I think I
promised your sister and you a curious collection of Swiss
music which my friend Skene knowing my predilection
for national song picked up for me at Berne. The words
are of course what I value the collection chiefly for, but
I should be delighted to find that you could select any
of the tunes as worthy of your notice.

The weather seems now breaking in sad earnest and the
wind comes down the Vale of Tweed with fury fit to
sweep forests before it, if there were any in its path. I
have rarely heard a higher tempest than is roaring round
our solitary dwelling at this moment. All these things
make us think of Castle Street with less reluctance and it
will be an inducement the more that I hope to see you
well and the arm in its wonted state of active exertion.
Pray take care of it however. An iron hand might have
suited the rough work of the old Knight of Carslogie or
Goetz of Berlichingen a famous German freebooting noble
distinguished by a similar accommodation but it would
be a wretched substitute for your own either upon the
harp or with the pencil. Adieu my dear Miss Clephane
remember Mrs. Scott and me kindly to Mrs. M. Clephane
and Miss Anne Jane. We shall be in town on the 12 Novr.
and hope soon to meet. Meanwhile I remain yours very
truly and respectfully.

W. S.

ASHESTIEL, 27 October 1810.

[Northampton]
SIR,- So soon as I was honoured with your packet I transmitted it to Messrs. Ballantyne my publishers and am sorry to find that they cannot engage in the publication at present for reasons they assign in the enclosed letter which I yesterday received. I know indeed that their hands are fully occupied considering the restraint which the present state of Credit imposes upon trade of all kinds. I assure you Sir I should have had pleasure in being useful to you on this occasion and regret that my wishes have been beyond my power. I shall keep the Manuscript safely until you are pleased to advise me how I can return it with safety. I should suppose you will find some London bookseller very willing to engage in the publication. I have the honor to be Sir Your obliged humble servt. W. S.

ASHESTIEL, 1st NOV. l8l0

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO ALEXANDER PRINGLE, OF WHITEBANK, YAIR, SELKIRK

My DEAR SIR,—I have not the least objection to pay 105 (One hundred guineas) for my present possessions at Ashestiel as I am quite satisfied that if you did not think such a rise of rent reasonable in the circumstances you would not propose it; and I agree with you that it will be better to go on from year to year than to enter into a new lease. I would only put you in mind that I wish the fishing to be entirely at my disposal as a cross-graind tenant might be troublesome upon that point. I think
also that the Landlord out of the additional rent might
spare the wood for the new gates when he cuts any that's
fit; I paying workmanship &c. But on this point I come
as they say in your will.

Mrs. Scott joins me in kind compliments to Mrs.
Pringle and I am with great regard My dear Sir Very
truly your faithful Servant WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 20 November. 1810

The water will not I think be an object to a tenant
though it is a sine qua non with me.

[Miss Mary Lockhart]

TO [NAMES OF ADDRESSEES NOT GIVEN]

GENTLEMEN,-I beg the favour of you to transmit to
Sir J. Stevenson and Mr. Cooke my best thanks for the
music which they have so obligingly transmitted to me &
have the goodness to add that I am much flatterd by
their finding so many passages in the Lady of the Lake
worthy of their attention. I am obliged to you gentlemen
likewise for the trouble you have taken in my behalf &
remain Your mo: obedient Servant

EDINR. 27 Novr. 1810 WALTER SCOTT

No address.
[Nat. Lib. Scot.]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

I SHOULD not have been so long your debtor my dear
Miss Baillie for your kind and valued letters had not the
fake knave at whose magic touch the Iona pebbles were to assume a shape in some degree appropriate to the person to whom they are destined, delayd finishing his task. I hope you will set some value upon this little trumpery brooch because it is a harp and a Scotch harp and set with Iona stones. The last circumstance is more valuable if ancient tales be true than can be ascertaind from the reports of dull modem lapidaries. These green stones blessd of St Columbus have a virtue saith old Martin to gratify each of them a single wish of the wearer. I believe that which is most frequently formd by those who gather them upon the shores of the Saint is for a fair wind to transport them from his domains. Now after this you must suppose every thing respecting this said harp mystic and hallowd. The very inscription is you will please to observe in the ancient Celtic language and character and has a very talismanic look. I hope that upon you it will have all the effect of a conjuration for the words BHUAIL TEND signify Strike the String. And thus having like the pedlars who deal in like matters of value exhausted all my eloquence upon setting forth the excellent outward qualities and mysterious virtues of my little keepsake I have only to add in homely phrase God give you joy to wear it.

I am delighted with the account of your sylvan empire in Glostershire. The planting and cultivation of trees always seemd to me the most interesting occupation of the country. I cannot enter into the spirit of common vulgar farming though I am doomd to carry on in a small extent that losing trade. It never occurd to me to be a bit more happy because my turnips were better than my neighbours and as for grieving my sharers [?] as we very
(2-402) emphatically term it in Scotland I am always too happy to get out of the way that I may hear them laughing at a distance when on the twist rigg.

(2-402) So every servant takes his course and bad at first they all grow worse.

(2-402) I mean for the purposes of agriculture for my hind shall kill a salmon and my plough-boy find a hare sitting with any man in the forest. But planting and pruning trees I could work at from morning till night and if my poetical revenues enable me to, have a few acres of my own that is one of the principal pleasures I look forward to. There is too a sort of self-congratulation a little tickling self-flattery in the idea that while you are pleasing and amusing yourself you are really seriously contributing to the future wellfare of the country and that your very acorn may send its ribs of oak [sic] to future victories like Trafalgar.

(2-403) You have now by my calculation abandoned your extensive domains and retired to your Hampstead villa which at this season of the year though the lesser will prove from your neighbourhood to good society the more comfortable habitation of the two.

(2-403) Dr. Baillies cares are transferd (I fear for some time) to a charge still more important than the poor princess. I trust in God his skill and that of his brethren may be of advantage to the poor King, for a regency from its unsettled and uncertain tenure must in every country but especially where parties run so high be a lamentable business. I wonder that the consequences which have taken place had not occurred sooner during the long and
trying state of suspense in which his mind must have been held by the protracted lingering state of a beloved child.

Your country neighbours interest me excessively. I was delighted with the man that rememberd me though he had forgot Sancho Panza I am afraid my predominance in his memory will not remain much longer than the worthy squires government at Barataria. Meanwhile the lady of the lake is likely to come to preferment in an unexpected manner for two persons of no less eminence than Messrs. Morton and Reynolds play-carpenters in ordinary to Covent Garden are employd in scrubbing carmining (?) and cutting her down into one of those new fashiond sloops calld a Melo drama to be launchd at the theatre and my friend Mr. H. Siddons emulous of such a noble design is at work on the same job here. It puts me in mind of the observation with which our parish smith accompanied his answer to an enquiry whom he had heard preach on Sunday-" Mr. such a one- O Sir he made a neat work " thinking doubtless of turning off a horse-shoe handsomely. I think my worthy artizans will make neat work too before they have done with my unlucky materials. But as Durandarte says in the cavern (?) of Montesinos " Patience cousin and shuffle [sic] the cards ".I was obliged to express my satisfaction and so forth for our friend N. Longman wrote me a civil letter and what could I say. Not but entre nous I wishd them at the bottom of Loch Katrine with all my heart.

Jeffrey was the author of the critique in the Edinburgh. He sent it to me in the sheet with an apology for some things in that of Marmion which he said containd needless asperities. And indeed whatever I may think of the
(2-404) justice of some part of his criticism I think his general
tone is much softened in my behalf.

(2-404) You say nothing about the Drama on Fear for which
you have chosen so admirable a subject and which I think
will be in your own most powerful manner. I hope
you will have an eye to its being actually represented.
Perhaps of all passions it is the most universally interesting
for although most part of an audience may have been in
love once in their lives and many engaged in the pursuits
of ambition and some perhaps have fostered deadly Hate
yet there will always be many in each case who cannot
judge of the operations of these motives from personal
experience whereas I will bet my life there is not a soul
of them but has felt the impulse of Fear were it but as the
old tale goes at snuffing a candle with his fingers. I
believe I should have been able to communicate some
personal anecdotes on the subject had I been able to
accomplish a plan I have had much at heart this summer
namely to take a peep at Lord Wellington and his merry
men in Portugal. But I found the idea gave Mrs. Scott
more distress than I was entitled to do for the mere
gratification of my own curiosity. Not that there would
have been any great danger for I could easily as a
Noncombatant have kept out of the way of the "grinning
honour of my namesake Sir Walter Blunt" and I

SIR WALTER SCOTT      1810        405

(2-405) think I should have been overpaid for a little hardship
and risk by the novelty of the scene. I could have
got very good recommendation to Lord Wellington and
I dare say I should have picked up some very curious
materials for battle scenery. A friend of mine made this
very expedition and arrived at Oporto when our army
was in retreat from the frontier. He was told of the
difficulty and danger he might encounter in crossing the
country to the Southward so as to join them on their
march nevertheless he travelled on through a country
totally deserted unless when he met bands of fugitive
peasantry flying they scarce knew whither or the yet
wilder groups of the Ordenanza or (levy en mass [sic])
who fired with revenge or desire of plunder had armed
themselves to harass the French detach'd parties. At
length in a low glen he heard with feelings that may be
easily conceived the distant sound of the Highland
bagpipe playing the Garb of old Gaul and fell into the
quarters of a Scotch regiment where he was most courteously
received by his countryman who assured "his honour he
was just come in time to see the pattle." Accordingly
being a young man of spirit and a Volunteer Sharp-
shooter he got a rifle joined the light corps and next day
witnessed the Battle of Busaco; of which he describes the
carnage as being terrible. His narrative was very simply
told and conveyed better than any I have seen the
impressions which such scenes are likely to make where
they have the effect (I had almost said the charm) of
novelty. I don't know why it is I never found a soldier
could give me an idea of a battle. I believe their mind is
too much upon the tactique to regard the picturesque;
just as we lawyers care very little for an eloquent speech
at the bar if it does not shew good doctrine. The
technical phrases of the military art too are unfavourable
to convey a description of the concomitant terror and
desolation that attends an engagement. But enough of
this bald disjointed chat.

I have slender hope of getting to London this spring
having no business there and finding the expense heavy
unless that were the case. Assuredly one of the highest
pleasures I should propose to myself would be that of visiting Hampstead frequently, and if possible spurring you on to the discharge of your bounden duty to the public.

Neither Mr. Ballantyne nor I have heard of Mr. Henderson which causes much speculation. Charlotte joins me in kindest compliments to Miss A. Baillie to the Doctor and his Lady and to Mr. Hunter when you meet. I fancy you see Dr. Baillie but seldom at present; his occupation is a truly melancholy one. I Remember me very kindly to your neighbour Mr. Coxe and believe me your dear Miss Baillie Ever your faithful and obliged friend

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 23 Novr 1810

[Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE

DEAR SIR, - I should be very ungrateful did I delay to acquaint you that your Manuscript is safe in my hands. I sent it to Edinburgh upon receiving it after a very slight glance at its contents, & it remained with the Messrs Ballantynes until I came here with my family for the winter a very short while ago. Since I have recovered it, I have gone through it more attentively, and am certainly of opinion it contains a great deal which does much honor to its author. At the same time your verses are like all others obnoxious to some criticism, a sound more appalling to an unpractised author than to a Veteran who has stood the fire of at least forty reviews-

The Vol appears to me (generally speaking) to exhibit
much feeling sensibility and power of expression and is perhaps deficient in some of the more gaudy and dashing requisites which at present attract immediate and extensive popularity. I should be particularly happy to have the pleasure of seeing you in Scotland of which your letter gives me some hopes and make it my study to shew myself in some degree grateful for the kind and flattering opinion you entertain of me. The slender judgement, or rather feeling with regard to poetical effect which I can pretend to, shall at least be at your service with a sincerity which may compensate for its want of more valuable qualities. I do really think that altho' the publication of your Manuscript should be postponed for a season, it would not be an unfavourable circumstance, for the present momentous state of public affairs is arresting the attention of every one, and I have seldom seen a more dull publishing season. Would you have any objection to the selection of a small piece for the Edinburgh Annual Register a work of uncommon merit which I take a great interest in, as I make sufficiently obvious by hazarding such a request? It is often of importance to have ones name a little known before publishing miscellaneous poetry. The first things I published went to paper bandboxes. My best thanks attend you for the trouble you have taken in behalf of Swift my Swift I mean. The corrected copy of his letter to Dean Brandreth is a great treasure. Poor Lady Betty Germain ! I am sorry she was one of the wicked as she seems to have been one of the most sensible of Swifts correspondents and always gives her opinion manfully (if that is a fair expression) when she deemed him under guidance of prejudice. I should have long since endeavoured to make my way to Mr. Theophilus Swift the respected descendant of my mighty theme but I was given to understand (perhaps incorrectly) that he
intended a publication himself upon the subject of the Deans life and I could not be so indelicate as to ask him for materials if that were the case as he will doubtless choose to reserve them for his own use. Mr. Nichols in a passage which has been deservedly exposed by Mr. Monk Berkely 1 in his literary Reliques has adopted a strange absurd tale of Swift having been obliged to leave his living at Kilroot on account of his having attempted a rape on a farmers daughter: that he was examined before a Justice Dobbs of that neighbourhood and that the descendants of the worthy Magistrate were said to be of the examinations what could possibly give rise to this strange hallucination? Rapes were not at all in the Deans way at any time of his life when it was better known and Mr. Berkely very satisfactorily Confutes the report by opposing to it Swifts noted ballad on a rape 2 said to have been attempted by the Dean of Ferns, which he would hardly have indited had he himself been under a similar stigma any assistance which you can favour me with on the part of Swift, will be acknowledged with sincere gratitude. The worthy and revd Mr. B- has been very kind and liberal in his communications, so I hope thus befriended to make somewhat of a very daring attempt. Your kind letter craved a much earlier acknowledgement but it could only have been a line to say I would secure the manuscript on getting to Edinburgh and I wished to burthen you with all my [? word dropped in copy] at once. I am dear Sir Your much obliged and humble servt

EDINBURGH 1st Dec 1810. W. S.

[Abbotsford Copies]
TO JOHN MURRAY

DEAR SIR,-I have returnd your packet with Cromeks additional sweepings In his Nithsdale &c sketches he has I think had the assistance of a Mr. Mounsey Cunningham that used to correspond with Mr. Constables Scottish Magazine under the signature T. M. C. I wish you would learn how this stands for he is a man of some genius and I would like to treat him civilly whereas Cromek is a perfect Brain-sucker living upon the labours of others-I have just got Kehama & I hope to have it ready for the Review 2 so I wish you would keep a corner. I shall be puzzled to do justice to the review in noticing its great blemishes & to the author in pointing out its numerous brilliancies but I must do the best I can. I had Webers Romances in hand but I have laid them aside for this more pressing & more interesting matter-I think I will certainly make a small article of Cromek perhaps with the assistance of a friend.-Gifford remitted me in his last letter two notes of yours which had I see from the dates lain with him some time. This led me into the mistake of drawing on you for the newspapers accompt, not that I would not have used the same freedom at any rate. But I beg you will keep my remittances till the end of the year & shall write so to Mr. Gifford. It is sometimes convenient to have credit for a few guineas in London. Believe me that as I have not had any cause whatever so I have not had the least intention to slacken our correspondence but the dullness of the literary world at least in these articles of lighter calibre in which I deal gave me but little to say. I have sent Gifford the Petrarch but with an earnest request it may not be used
without much modification. It would I find be very
disagreeable in its present shape to Lord W. I will
undertake to fill the gap in the course of this week by a
neat thing on Kehama. Pray let Mr. G. know my
change of intention for I wrote to him I understood
Kehama was not published but I have since procured
a copy. I remain Dear Sir yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR. 3 Dec. 1810

Mr. John Murray, Bookseller
Fleet Street London

To MISS SMITH

EDINBURGH, 18th December 1810
I HASTEN, my dear Miss Smith, to your inquiries
about the Lady of the Lake in its dramatised form. That
Mr. Siddons is bringing it out is very certain, but it
is equally so that I have not seen and do not intend to
see a line of it, because I would not willingly have the
public of this place suppose that I was in any degree
responsible for the success of the piece; it would be like
submitting to be twice tried for the same offence. My
utmost knowledge has been derived from chatting with
Mr. Siddons and Mrs. Young in the green-room, where
I have been an occasional lounger since our company
has been put on a respectable footing. They have got
some clever scenery, from studies taken at Loch Katrine

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by Williams, their painter, who is a very good artist and
went there on purpose. But whether the dialogue is in verse or prose I really do not know. There is a third Lady of the Lake on the tapis at Covent Garden, dramatised by no less genius than the united force of Reynolds and Morton. But though I have three theatrical grand-children as I may call them, I have seen none of them.

I shall go to the Edinburgh piece when it is rehearsed with lights and scenes, and if I see anything that I think worth your adoption I will write to you. The strength for I have no idea that the language can be rendered very dramatic. I If any person can make aught of it, I am sure you will. The mad Lowland captive if well played should I think answer. I wish I could give you an idea of the original, whom I really saw in the Pass of Glencoe many years ago. It is one of the wildest and most tremendous passes in the Highlands, winding through huge masses of rock without a pile of verdure, and between mountains that seem rent asunder by an earthquake. This poor woman had placed herself in the wildest attitude imaginable upon the very top of one of these huge fragments; she had scarce any covering but a tattered plaid, which left her arms, legs, and neck bare to the weather. Her long shaggy black hair was streaming backwards in the wind, and exposed a face rather wild and wasted than ugly, and bearing a very peculiar expression of frenzy. She had a handful of eagles' feathers in her hand. As she spoke no English, I no Gaelic, we could have no communication, but I learned at the next resting-place that she used to wander among the rocks for whole weeks during the summer, and was only driven back to society by the inclemency of the weather; of her story, which might be sad enough,
I could learn nothing. The lady who plays this part should beware of singing with too stiff regularity; even her music or rather her style of singing it, should be a little mad.

Joanna Baillie (for who ever heard of Miss Sappho) wrote to me that some of her friends had seen the Surrey piece and censured severely the following circumstance: the King led Ellen the whole length of the stage and took his place upon a throne at the bottom in the discovery scene. This she said was discourteous, and therefore out of character. If you think so too, it can be easily corrected.

I wish I could direct you about the plaid; but you had better take the prettiest according to your own taste, for the Douglases being a Lowland family had no particular colour of tartan. I rather wish I could show you how to put it on, for it is a great art, and when done prettily is very becoming. I can only describe it by negatives. It is not like a Highland serjeant's, nor is it scarf-wise like a shepherdess in an opera; but as I have no opportunity of "rowing you in your plaidie" I shall only puzzle you by an attempt to describe it. The plaid is fastened by a brooch, which should be large and showy. The chaussure should be buskins of deer-skin; this applies to the Highland men also. Douglas, the King, and other personages should be dressed in the old English fashion from which the Scottish dress differed but little. All caps or bonnets, no hats. The bonnet should not be overlaid with feathers, a single plume distinguished the Dunnie-wassell or gentleman, when I first remember the Highlands, from the peasant.

These little trumpery notices are all that occur to me. Doubtless were I with you, I would, in my anxiety that
you should shine where I am at all concerned, plague you
enough about costume. If anything should occur in
which I can be useful, pray, my dear Miss Smith, command,
and show as much of this letter to Mr. C. as you
think can be of use to him. A good Christmas and all
kinds of success to you, WALTER SCOTT

P.S.-I shall be anxious to hear how you succeed.

TO LADY ABERCORN

22nd December 1810

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-We are dying here for
political news even like shell-fish at the ebb of the tide
and you my dear friend who soar above us like an osprey
and see all the changes of the atmosphere at a distance
have not the charity to drop me a single line to make me
wiser than my fellows. I am however in the happy state
of one who has nothing either to hope or fear from the
change I apprehend unless as far as it affects my friends
or the country at large. An administration who may
dislike me can fortunately take nothing from me and my
friends who are now in power have never seemed much
disposed to befriend me effectually. I only hope I shall
not go out poorer than when I came in for my accompts
in the business of the Scottish judicature commission
have not been passed in the treasury for want of the sign
manual of the king. There is a balance of nearly 1000, due to me chiefly money out of my own pocket-however
as all my accompts have been carefully examined &
passed by the Commissioners under whom I acted I
imagine no Administration will decline a settlement
though an unfriendly one may postpone payment of the balance. I trust to Robert Dundas's tried friendship for getting me out of the scrape so soon as possible.

We have a report here that our Marquis is to be Lord Chamberlain at which I should greatly rejoice if I could hope that there was foundation for it. I am sure they will be much obliged to him if he shall be disposed to take such a troublesome office. Should this fortunately be the case I shall have a suit to his Lordship on the score of the Edinr theatre; having been foolish enough to consent to be a trustee for the public along with my Lord Chief Baron the Ld. Advocate Solicitor and some other of our first people here. A dispute has unfortunately arisen about the patent which has involved Messrs, the Trustees who had no other interest in the matter than the pleasure of serving the public in great plague and vexation. If such an appointment should take place it would be very kind in you my dear Lady to let me know early that I may solicit an audience on this troublesome business with which if I had known as much of theatrical matters two years ago as I do now I would never have troubled myself upon any account.

I am afraid you would scold me if I told you how idle I have been since writing to your Ladyship and therefore I will keep my secret. They are busy dramatizing the Lady of the Lake here and in Dublin and in Covent Garden. I carefully avoid making inquiries lest it should be expected that I should give any assistance and I would not willingly give the public a pretext for supposing that I intended introducing [intruding?] myself on them in another shape—it would be like being twice tried for
the same offence; so I content myself with instructing Mrs. Henry Siddons who is a very pleasant as well as a very amiable person how she should put on or as we may say busk her highland plaid. Her husband a very worthy and honourable man but with very little of his mother's genius is our manager here and I fear likely to be hurt with this foolish embroilment of the patent which makes me more anxious about it than I should otherwise be.

I hope you got your own copy of the Lady of the Lake safe in, perhaps like other Ladies she was so late in paying her respects that she did not deserve to have her call acknowledged.

We are going to set forward in the middle of a snow-storm I fear to keep an old hereditary engagement of eating our turkey and cheese with my friend and chief Mr. Scott of Harden on Xmas Day. Two days ago we had a dreadful accident on the coast—two frigates lost by bad pilotage. They mistook the light of a lime-kiln for the beacon of the Isle of May and ran straight ashore fortunately almost all the crews were saved.—Yours ever truly and respectfully, W. S.

All good wishes of the season attend you the M. & the Ladies. I beg to be remembered to Ld. Hamilton if with you just now.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

MERTOUN HOUSE 29th December [1810]
MY DEAR SOUTHEY, - I was favoured with your kind letter during my residence here where by an old hereditary engagement I always spend my Xmas. I have not got my own Kehama: I had not received it when I left Edinr. but I had borrowed one from Jo: Ballantyne for behoof of the Quarterly and run off a critique at full speed to overtake this No: I have not had a word from Gifford on the subject and unless that I had set my heart on out-stripping the Edinr. I should be glad to find I had another opportunity of revising my paper as I sent off the sheets by post as fast as I could write them. In some points we may disagree of course but I trust you will give me credit for the good will with which I have set myself to battle the cant which is commonly used in criticizing a poem of an uncommon and original plan. I hope Gifford will spare my quotations which are essentially necessary to vindicate the opinions I have expressed.

Much of Kehama is I think quite unequall'd since the days of Milton, nor does your Indian Hall fall at all short of his grand dungeon of fire. In some respects I think you have followed your mythology a little too closely into its more fantastic recesses, but if there be any excess in this, it is completely atoned by the numerous sublime & interesting scenes which you have derived from it. But I will say no more on this subject because I have thrown my notions together without fear or favour just as they arose in my mind under the vivid impression of a third perusal. I have written to Ballantyne to make enquiry about the missing volumes of Somers which must lay somewhere between the Coach proprietors & him. With respect to Mr. Dubois of
whom I never heard before & his Monthly Mirror which
I only know by name, why if he be capable of playing
such a dirty trick he is a dirty rascal and there let him
stick in a mire of his own making. When I resigned a
profession in which I had some chance of preferment to
adopt a life more favourable for literature I did not put
my hand to the plough without seriously examining
whether I felt strength of mind to avoid the two shoals
on which literary men have frequently wreck’d their
peace and even their character. Envy of superior talents
I thank God is unknown to my disposition and truly to
vex oneself on account of those who chuse to plant
themselves a mon regard in the scorners chair would
argue little philosophy & less common sense. I beg you
will make my thanks acceptable to Mr. Coleridge for his
very handsome & gentlemanlike conduct upon the
occasion & I shall be particularly happy when I can
proffer them in person.

Respecting the Morte Arthur I will be delighted to have
the benefit of your notes which will be of the last service
to me. The only thing which delays my motions is that
I am desirous to collate the ordinary edition Stansby
with the only Caxton known to exist and which belongs to
Lady Jersey. If I go to town in Spring it will be chiefly
with a view to get this job accomplished & to look at some
letters of Swift said to be in Lady Castlereagh’s possession.

I dread the unfortunate scuffle which this melancholy
interregnum is likely to cause among our politicians.
It is precisely of a kind to put the worst & most mischievous
effects of party spirit into motion on all sides.
Without some miserable blunder or more miserable
inactivity the flame which we have so effectually seen kindled in Portugal will extend itself far & wide. Bonaparte can no longer pay his armies with the plunder of his victims & his frantic antipathy to commerce leaves him no resources of revenue except direct taxation which is not unlikely to precipitate his downfall. I understand Lord Wellesley is fortifying the Southern Bank of the Tagus to cover Lisbon from any attempt on that hand & as he, supposing the French force divided on both sides of the river, will have the power of uniting his forces to attack either, they must I think be sure of an immense superiority before they attempt to invest him in that fashion.

James Ballantyne speaks in the highest possible terms of the history of the Register. I have promised him some trifles. I wish he could get something poetical from Mr. Coleridge's pen.

Mrs. Scott sends love to Mrs. Southey & I am ever Yours truly WALTER SCOTT

Many happy new years to you-

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

[MERTOUN, December 31st, 1810]

NOTHING my dear Miss Baillie could have given me
more pleasure than your setting some value on the
trinket which accompanied my last and not a little proud
shall I be of its occupying a place in the new gown
Charlotte puts in for her share of merit and is not a little
delighted that you should have assigned it to her. But
when will our mourning be over and our splendour shine
forth? Alas I fear not till we have mourned for our
poor old King, whose frame I should fear is gradually
giving way under this terrible malady. Yet if his
recovery should not be speedy and permanent I scarce
know how to wish it either for his own sake or that of
the country for the unsettled and feeble domination
of a Regency will not fail to have its usual effects in
setting the worst principles of faction afloat and dividing
the country between those who profess to stand up for the
father and those who adhere to the son and that at a
moment when all the united talents of our best politicians
and the continued and unanimous efforts of our whole
nation would not be more than enough to ensure the
safety of the commonwealth. I am truly happy that the
prince has behaved with decorum and moderation. Any
appearance of pressing forward into power at such a
juncture would imply a great unworthiness to possess it.
Even amid these tragic considerations it is impossible
to preserve gravity at the frisks and frolics of our northern
Mecaenas Sir John Sinclair Bart. It is actually like the
Punch of the puppets who intrudes himself into
every scene grave or tragic whether it represents King
Solomon in all his glory or the Universal Deluge. To
show you how essentially necessary this wise-acre thinks
it that he should have a finger in every man's pie, he
wrote me the other day a long letter laying down rules
for a poem to be called the Lady of the Sea and which was
to turn upon the adventures and intrigues of a Caithness Mermaid with whom he almost promised me an interview. I parried the undertaking by reminding him that he had brought the sea-nymphs so much into the province of natural History that they could no longer be considered as fictitious beings and had therefore ceased to have any title to poetic commemoration. I This wise

epistle reminded me of the tragic plan which he was kind enough to lay down for you and which, hard-hearted as you are, you failed to avail yourself of. And that celebrated projet of Darius conducted me to a much more pleasing subject, the Family Legend; so before I left town for the holidays I made John Ballantyne furnish me with the enclosed copy of a letter to Mr. Henderson which is the second he tells me he has written to him about the Copy money—it will apprise you how that matter stands and you have only to speak your wishes speak your will Swift obedience meets them still.

As for the Metamorphosis of the Lady of the Lake into Drama or rather into three Dramas for the same adventure is to be tried at Dublin London and Edinburgh I would not willingly have you believe either that I affect or possess stoicism enough to be insensible to the applauds of a crowded theatre. On the contrary I think that of all kinds of popular plaudits this is the manner in which an author has his most ample satisfactory and perhaps intoxicating draught of success. But I shall have no more honour supposing any of these attempts successful than the cook who roasted a turkey yesterday has for the capo-rota (I think house-wives call it so) which a sister
of the trade has presented us with to-day out of the relics of the feast. Besides I cannot think with much patience on such persons as Reynolds and Morton garbling my unfortunate verses and turning that into dramatic dialogue which is but well enough as it stands in minstrel verse-and therefore once more do I wish the whole affair at the bottom of Loch Katrine nor do I care if they carried the whole race of Melo-drama along with them provided the stage were left open for the tragedies of a certain fair lady who does not know her own merit or believe what her friends tell her on that point.

I certainly agree with you on the general point that there is a better chance of plays succeeding after action than after their first appearance in print. The theatrical effect has in the latter case that fair play which it cannot have in the former [sic]. But I still think your pieces must and will obtain possession of the stage while you can yet watch their progress and observe the impression they make upon the audience. The present wretched taste for dramatic composition is indeed so interwoven with the miserable monopoly granted to the two theatres that many obstacles must arise to the revival of true tragic taste. When a theatre is built on a scale large enough to hold one half of the common play-going folks it must of course be too large either for expression or action and I suppose the large boots and masques of the ancient stage must speedily be resorted to. But this is too artificial and absurd an order of things to subsist for ever and depend upon it that whenever small theatres (I mean moderate sized theatres) are again in request the taste for legitimate tragedy will revive on its proper field and I shall live to hold up your tragic pall by an Epilogue or clear the way
for you by a prologue. Meantime I shall wait with
anxiety the promised volume—perhaps I may have a
Pisgah sight of it when I come to Hampstead in spring
which in the event of my coming to London is one of the
most pleasant objects I have in view.

If there be anything incoherent in this letter pray
ascribe it to my writing in the neighbourhood of a ball,
for all the little Scotts of Harden with the greater part of
my own are dancing in the new year in ...

[Familiar Letters and Royal College of Surgeons, London]

TO REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN

MERTOUN HOUSE, 30 Dec. 1810

MY DEAR SIR,—It was very late this season before I got to Edinburgh, and consequently before I had the pleasure of receiving your valued present, on which I have been making my Christmas cheer ever since, until an ancient and hereditary engagement brought me here to spend the holidays with my chief, the Laird of Harden. I should be very ungrateful indeed, if I longer delayed the acknowledgment of the pleasure I have received from the re-perusal of the "Local Attachment," and the "Old English Gentleman;" which, I take great credit to my taste in boasting, have been long favourites of mine, as well as from reading the other curious and interesting volumes with which I had yet to form an acquaintance.

I have never had the good fortune to see topographical labours conducted at once with the accuracy of the antiquary and the elegance of the man of general literature,
until you were so kind as to send me your county histories; which, under a title not very inviting beyond the bounds of the provinces described, contain so much interesting to the general reader, and essential to the purpose of the English historian. You have furnished a folio and an octavo shelf in my little bookroom, with treasures which I shall often resort to with double pleasure, as pledges of the kindness of the ingenious author.

I wrote to Gifford about three weeks ago, mentioning my wish to take up the "Local Attachment." But he answers me that the present number is filled up; and in case he does not make room for me in the next, I must seek another comer for my critique, and I have cast my eyes upon the Edinburgh Annual Register, but I will wait to see what our Generalissimo says about his next number. I shall not be sorry if he still declines my criticism, because I think I can weave it into a tolerably independent article, for the Register aforesaid.

Our "Northern Antiquities," as we have ventured to christen a quarto undertaken by Mr. Weber and Mr. R. Jamieson, both friends of mine, are to contain a great deal of Teutonic lore. Much of the first volume is occupied by an account, rather protracted I fear, of the Heldenbuch, a series of romances, referring to the history of Attila and Theodoric, and therefore very curious. Theodoric was to the Germans what King Arthur was to the English, and Charlemagne to the French Romancers — a leading King and champion, who assembled at his court a body of chivalrous Knights, whose various adventures furnish the theme of the various
canto of this very curious work.

This is executed by Henry Weber, who is chin-deep in all that respects Teutonic poetry, and it is perfectly new to the English Antiquary. Jamieson gives some translations from the Kiempe Viser, a collection of Heroic Ballads, published in Denmark, about the end of the sixteenth century. Their curiosity consists in a great measure in the curious relation they bear to the popular ballads of England and Scotland. Then I have promised to translate some Swiss war songs and other scraps of poetry. In short our plan is entirely miscellaneous, and embraces anything curious that is allied to the study of history, or more particularly to that of poetry. This is our plan, my good friend, and if you have any thing lying by you which you would intrust to this motley caravan, we will be much honoured. But I hope soon to send you the first volume, when you will judge how far we deserve your countenance. I will take care you have it so soon as published, and perhaps you may like to review it for the Quarterly. I have little share in it, excepting my wish to promote the interest of the prime conductors, whose knowledge is rather more extensive than their financial resources.

I am very glad to hear that Drs. Collins and Carlyon are well, and settled in their native country. Though I have little chance of ever meeting them again, I cannot easily forget the agreeable hours their society afforded me at our chance meeting on the hills of Selkirkshire.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with the best wishes of this season, your obliged and grateful humble servant,
TO ROBERT SURTEES OF MAINSFORTH

MY DEAR SURTEES,—If I were not the most ungrateful creature on earth I should have jogged your memory long ago only I really had some salve for my conscience by supposing you were in my debt: but not to waste further time in trifling apologies I proceed to business methodically.

Ten thousand thanks for the beautiful invocation. Will you permit it for my honour & glory as well as your own to see the light in the Edinr. Annual Register which we are trying with good success to make a crack thing of. The verses will be very much admired here, & they speak flattery to too many of my prejudices for me (if it rested with me) to suffer them to remain entombed in MS. You must grant me this & you would grant it if you knew it is a request wh: I wd not make to many people where my own useless name was concerned. But I shd. like to be pricked on to say something about poor Charley.

My friend Weber does not publish by subscriptn. but perhaps he may have a copy of the Romances to dispose of. I will learn before this letter goes off.

I can fortunately send you a neat Edition of Godscroft 1 Ex dono. It now rarely occurs & as I have the original
There is as far as I can judge no difference except in rarity between the Editns. 1644 & 1743. I think I can pick up a Pittscottie for about 10s or at 15 shillings. It used to sell (the last Edition) for 4s or 5s. It was miserably edited from a MS in our library & cruelly modernized. When you want any nice quotation you shall have it ex fonte if you will let me know.

As to St. Cuthbert I must have a little time to look after my authorities. Ritson always insisted that Bp Thurstan was not at the battle but lying sick at York while it was fought. I will endeavour to detect his authority. The great historian of the war as you doubtless well know is Ailred de Bello Standardi. I always thought it an unkind trick of St. Cuthbert to bestir himself so lustily against his countrymen & I shall be rejoiced to find he was incapable of it. There is a rude draught of the Standard in Ailred (apud Twisden) but that you have of course consulted. After all I shall not be at all surprised to find that the passage in Marmion has been hastily expressed from some general recollection of the story connected with the place where the battle was fought.-I am delighted to hear that you are proceeding with the County history from which I expect great pleasure.

I have been giving the Register aforesaid a few words descriptive of a small MS. book of poems 2 in my possession written out very neatly " in obedience to Mrs Tomkins commands " by the Author Patr: Carey in 1651. The poems are amatory religious & political & are really far from wanting merit. Have you ever heard of such a
To interest you in my friend Patrick Carey you are to understand that he was a suffering loyalist a gallant Cavalier in short a second Colonel Lovelace. So perhaps your knowledge of heraldry can help me to a probable guess at his family. There is no colouring on the shield.

I wish we could get up a few anecdotes of poor Ritson for I saw some that were intended for publication neither creditable nor correct & a fellow called [name torn out of copy] has published an unfeeling accnt. of the last melancholy scenes of the poor antiquary's life.

I send Godscroft by this day's mail to be left at Rushyford. I hope you duly receive Somers. The IV Vol: my friend Jo: Ballantyne says was duly forwarded by the mail; but they are sometimes incorrect in delivering parcels on the road. Mrs. Scott joins in kind remembrances & all good new-year wishes to Mrs. Surtees. Do you never think of making our Northern Athens a visit during this bleak season ? We should be rejoiced to see you. Your truly obliged W. SCOTT.

I find Mr. Weber has no copy of the Romances for himself. Pray what has become of your Pensioner for whom I subscribed & how shall I pay the money ?

I never heard exactly your story of the Dean & Chapter but it somewhat resembles a feat of the late mad Earl of Roseberry who invited the presbytery of Mid Lothian to
dine with him - set down an excellent dinner wh: he told
them was an emblem of their good qualities as individuals
he then flung the contents of every dish upon the table

into a large tub & commanded them to feed out of it the
mass thus formed being he said a just emblem of them as
a collective church court.

[Abbotsford Copies and Surtees Memoir]

TO MRS. SCOTT, MERTOUN HOUSE, ST. BOSWELLS

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,-Amidst the confusion of
preparation for Twelfth night Charlotte deputes me to
answer your kind enquiries after our journey which was
very tolerable snow & sickness considerd. Anne was
sick the whole way but caught no cold and was very well
next morning The snow was a means of delay but no
serious obstacle excepting at the top of Soutra where it
was drifted for a little way. Our little people return the
warmest recollection of the hospitalities of Mertoun and
of the kindness of their young friends. We too arc
delighted to find that even a long visit (so trying in many
respects) has not been too much for the patience of our
valued friends.

We cannot find that we have left a music book &
suspect some mistake in that matter.

I have detected Sir John Sinclairs piracy and I add a
few lines of the poem in which it occurs as they contain a
benediction which may suit Mertoun as well as Mountown
for which they were written. The said Sir John gets a
most unmerciful pounding in the Quarterly 1 -the whips of
the Edinburgh Review seem to have become scorpions
in the hands of their rivals.

Charlotte joins in kindest and best remembrances to
Mr. Scott & to the little folks to whom Anne & Sophia
send as many greetings as the paper will hold. Believe
me dear Mrs. Scott your ever faithful & respectful
humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 5 January 1811

Mountown thou sweet retreat from Dublin cares
Be famous for thy apples & thy pears
For turnips carrots lettuce beans & pease
For Peggys butter & for Peggy's cheese
May clouds of pigeons round about thee fly
But condescend sometimes to make a pye
May fat geese gaggle with melodious voice
And ne'er want gooseberry or apple sauce
Ducks in thy pond & chickens in thy pens
And be thy turkeys numerous as thy hens
May thy black pigs lie warm in little stye
And have no thought to grieve them till they die
Mountown the Muses most delicious theme
O may thy codlins ever swim in cream
Thy rasp and strawberries in Bourdeaux drown
To add a redder tincture to their own
Thy white-wine, sugar, milk, together club
To marke that gentle viand syllabub
Thy tarts to tarts, cheese-cakes to cheese-cakes join
To spoil the relish of the flowing wine
But to the fading palate bring relief
By thy westphalian ham & Belgic beef
And to complete thy blessings in a word
Still be thy soil as friendly as thy lord.

The lines are from a poem in 1704 written by the witty Dr. Kingl calld the Mully of Mountown. With a few allusions to Dr. Douglas the mince pies and the black teapot I could if my conscience had been as large as Sir Johns have adapted it very neatly to our last weeks festivities.

I think My dear Mrs. Scott you should let our friend Dr. Douglas read the above lines it will give him so much pleasure by reminding him of the good cheer we all enjoyed at Mertoun.

[Polwarth]

TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINR., 11th January 1811
I MUST not my dear Lady Abercorn allow you to remain under your airy delusions as to my good faith. Assuredly your informers have been under the influence of the pneumatic system so ingeniously described by the sapient Mr. Matthews & which for aught I know is the most curious & satisfactory account of the workings of the human mind that the world has been yet favoured with by any metaphysical philosopher. The first hundred lines of the Lady of the Lake were written I think in October.
and the first canto was sent to your Ladyship in Ireland so soon as it was complete and you were the first who saw them excepting one friend and the printer Mr. Ballantyne who is a great critic as well as an excellent printer. I have been always God help me too poor and too impatient to let my poems lie by me for years or for months either: on the contrary they have hitherto been always sent to the press before they were a third part finished. This is to be sure a very reprehensible practice in many respects and I hope I shall get the better of it the next time. I assure you seriously my dear friend that I am not about any new poem and it is needless to add that nobody can have seen that which has no existence. Whenever I do begin any work you shall know it but I hope we shall meet first. When the idea of a new poem has at any time crossed my imagination I foresee great difficulty in the choice of a subject. I have sometimes thought of laying the scene during the great civil war in 1643. This would have the advantage of some novelty and the characters of the period might be rendered highly poetical. The only thing I have rhymed since The Lady of the Lake is translations from some very old Swiss battlesongs for a work called Northern Antiquities which is undertaken by two friends of mine who are very learned and very indigent and to whom therefore I am glad to give a little assistance.

I was quite delighted with Mr. Perceval's speech, and indeed with his conduct through all this most unhappy business.2 He has risen greatly in the opinion of the Country and with all who stand by the good old distressed Monarch at this crisis will have a more noble reward in his own conscience and in the applause of all good
men than any continuation of power could have bestowed.

I beg of your friendship dear Lady A to let me know
when there is any probability of a favourable change in
the King's malady-ill news will come soon enough.
The Whig interest here are solemnizing their approaching
power by giving parties, etc. somewhat indecent this-
the D. of Argyle's marriage was a nine days' wonder
and is already forgotten. I saw Lady Charlotte for an
hour one evening as she passed through Edinburgh. She
is still looking beautiful. We hear she is or was on the
eve of marrying Lord Petersham. Don't you think that
might be as well let alone ?-She has I should think left
Scotland now having passed through Edinburgh while
I was at Mertoun.

I have sometimes serious thoughts of going to Portugal
that is if the war lasts and Lord Wellington is to be
supported there. I have described so many battles that
I would compound for a moderate degree of risque to see
eone and I suppose a Non-combatant would be in no great
danger and that I could easily get letters to headquarters
But all this is is rather a vision than a scheme.

1811 433 SIR WALTER SCOTT

Mr. Knight's idea of a poem is an admirable one-
Pray have the goodness to remember me to him and
believe me, with all respectful remembrances to the
Marquis and the family your honoured and obliged,

W. S.

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-I am delighted to hear of
the addition to your family in the person of a young Lord
Strabane or whatever his title is to be. The Marquis is I take it for granted more delighted with his new dignity as a Grandfather than any that a court could confer. It is really an important event & I beg you to believe that I share most sincerely in the prolonged view which it opens to all the House of Abercorn. I had the pleasure yesterday to congratulate Miss Alice Gordon, Lord Aberdeen's sister on the happy arrival of the little stranger. She dined with us in company with Lord Chief Baron & Mr. Dundas; & from the little chat I had with her I think she has a share of her brothers good sense & talent.

Our theatrical matters have been settled by an agreement between the parties principally interested: so thank Heaven there is an end to labour & solicitation on that subject. If any one catches me in the situation of a trustee for the public or a theatrical patentee again I will give them leave to make me candle-snuffer to the play-house for life. Your Lady-ship will also be pleased to hear that the official body I belong to have been very successful in a suit in Exchequer for estimating the compensation to be paid to us. This is now fixed at allowances of 1300, a year to each which considerably increases my reversionary prospects, as the Crown lawyers wished to put us off with 1000–This comes in place of our old system of official fees which though nominally large fell very short from the difficulty of collecting them.

My prospects of getting to town in Spring grow rather more uncertain. I have no prospect of being called up on public business & the expense is serious in any other way.
Neither do I think I have much chance of getting to Ireland which I should be so delighted to visit when your Ladyship returns there. But I will endeavour to see you as you pass through Scotland if it be but for a day.

I would willingly hope the P. may have the prudence your Ladyship is disposed to give him credit for. Mais je m'en doute beaucoup. He has a set of very interested persons about him & they must needs go where the D-- drives.

A thousand thanks for your kind remembrance of me among your friends upon this joyful occasion. I assure you it is not thrown away upon me & that I am your honoured & obliged W. S.

EDINR. 2 february 1811

Just as I finished my letter I have one from my colleage in office resigning ^200 of the appointments in my favour so I am just so much the richer.

TO LORD DALKEITH

MY DEAR LORD,- I received the enclosed some days ago and have been prevented by the stormy weather from calling with it at Bowhill. It refers to a subject we formerly discussd being nothing less than the Root of all Evil moral & political. I can without any personal inconvenience remove any temporary embarassment but I fear it will be necessary that his Grace or Mr. Don take

1811 SIR WALTER SCOTT 435
some opportunity to announce their purpose and wishes upon this matter.

Upon Monday we leave this place with some regret on my part though the migration is not more violent than that of the Vicar of Wakefield & his good wife from the green bed to the brown.

I wishd much to have consulted Lady Dalkeiths taste on a very pretty plan for my cottage but that must now be for Edinburgh or Dalkeith leisure-Ever my dear Lord Your truly faithful & obliged W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL Thursday [1811]1
[Buccleuch]

TO LADY ABERCORN

My DEAR LADY ABERCORN,-A matter has occured since I wrote to you in which my future fortunes are so deeply implicated that I think you yourself would blame me did I not confide it to your friendly ear & invoke your powerful assistance. It is in short the only opportunity that my friends may ever have to shew me that they really are so; it is an object reasonable in itself

LETTERS OF 1811

& apparently dictated by the very nature of the case; it is I may venture to say pointed out by the general voice of the public here & warmly seconded by my Lord Mellville. The following is a state of the case with part of which you are already familiar from the uniform & land interest you have always taken in my affairs. In Spring 1806 when the death of Mr. Pitt dissolved the then administration he left my preferment, (which he had
generously thought of, a distinction which as I was not personally known to him I shall cherish as my proudest recollection) a sort of legacy to Lord Mellville thro’ his nephew William Dundas. The Dundas family were sufficiently disposed to oblige me from long & uninterrupted friendship which I had enjoyed upon a footing of intimacy with Lord Mellville Lord Chief Baron Robert Dundas & in short their whole family. But the administration was on the point of dissolution & as everyone was glad to swim ashore on a piece of the wreck I was fain to ally myself with Mr. George Home a Clerk of Session who then wished to retire being after thirty years service rendered incapable by Deafness of the most obdurate kind from discharging the duties of his office. Accordingly a Commission was executed to us of the office upon condition that I should do all the duty & Mr. Home draw all the salary during his life. This was in some respects a hard bargain for me but what could I do? the Whigs would have caessed me if I would apostatize from my political principles & made very flattering advances. But that was out of the question while I had a shilling to buy a crust & a sheeps head for my family. So I e’en resolved to live on expectancy in the mean time & I have laboured in many departments of literature which I confess I think rather beneath me to maintain my family in some of the comforts & elegancies of life. In this way—with the advantage of a Sheriffdom of 300 & the interest of the little fortune I have had left by my father & uncle I have fought my way living within rather than up to my income & sacrificing both my health & literary reputation to the unremitting & irksome labours of an Editor—while I have the united testimony of all my brethren in office (who would do almost anything

1811 437 SIR WALTER SCOTT
for me) that I have conducted myself with more than regular attention to the duties of my unproductive situation. But although in this way I have kept matters even, it is impossible to look forward with hope to so cheerless a prospect & really my spirits though naturally very equal are apt to sink when I look at my little people & think that with my utmost oeconomy I can add but little or nothing to the fortune they have derived from others which is very small & that I am on the hope of outliving a man who may outlive me educating them for a rank in society which I may not leave enough to maintain them in—And this while folks are in power on whose account I have incurred [sic] a hatred which will never leave me till I am where hatred & favour are equally indifferent. All this my dear Lady Abercorn I think you know already but the recapitulation is at least as necessary as that of the Clergyman from his last Sundays discourse.

Now to the application.

Yesterday Mr. Pringle the eldest of our body (exclusive of my immortal friend) was gathered to his fathers, (I had done his business by the way as well as my own for this year past). Now I really think it would be a hardship if they were to nominate anyone to the appointment over my head who have been transacting the business of the court with general & very flattering approbation from the judges for no less than five years without ever receiving a guinea. The only difficulty that occurred to me would be the difficulty of placing any person in the same situation that I am with my venerable friend who sticks to me like Sinbads old man of the Sea. Many people would be willing to take the burden off him & people too whom Lord Mellville would like to oblige. But the reversion Act may I fear stand in the way of any
new appointment in the terms of our joint commission. And though I do not care to be quite throttled by my rider yet I would not throw him off in the mire neither but rather dwell in my necessity than do anything that could be construed as shabby especially as he resigned about a fortnight ago 3^200 a year granted in Exchequer in my favour.

But surely a man who has served the state like Mr. H. for forty years may now be entitled to retire on 2/3rd of his pension as is the rule with other officers. My having acted under this unreasonable bargain for five years is no reason for continuing it upon or rather the contrary. The difference I could easily settle by private arrangement so that the old gentleman should be no loser. He is himself wealthy & when he succeeds to a maiden aunt who keeps his house will be worth at least fifteen thousand a year without a relation to leave it to. But your Ladyships knowledge of human nature will lead you to judge that this circumstance is of little consequence in the business since our wishes for riches are seldom satisfied by possessing more than we can use enjoy or bequeath. I may be mistaken in my own case but I have always taught myself to bound my worldly prospect by possession of my official emoluments which would add □ 1000., or □ 1300., a year to my income without adding □ 50 to my expenses.

Lord Mellville is I think very serious in wishing some arrangement to be made [in] my favour & has written strongly to his son on my behalf; & I am sure R. Dundas will exert himself. Still however I do not care altogether to trust a thing of this nature to those who though they love me well have many others who have claims upon them of a personal & political nature :1 to
your prudence delicacy & kindness my dear Lady Marchioness I trust any thing additional that can be done especially in the way of propitiating Mr. Percival.

Will you acquaint me if you can do anything or if you advise me to trouble the Marquis on the subject. I have not applied either to his Lordship or the D. of Buccleugh being willing to see the issue of Lord Mellvilles application.

The Duke has always been my good friend nor have I been ungrateful for I have fortunately been able to assist his candidate materially in the impending contest for the County of Roxburgh. On the Marquis I have no claims except those of an importunate solicitor who acquires by prescription the right of being troublesome. But I never before solicited for myself.

On the whole if your Ladyship expects any more harmony from me you must take my case into your kind consideration recollecting always that I am only craving to be promoted to the emoluments of situation of which I have held the rank & discharged the duty gratis for five years compleat, & which I believe no one will say is much disproportioned to my birth expectations or standing in Society. I will not mix anything poetical in this long epistle that it may have power as it were by its native weight to sink into your heart. You remember the warning of Friar Bacons brazen head " Time is " that is the case with me just now & I fear if neglected we shall have the mournful sequel "Time was" & "Time shall be no more."

Believe me Dear Lady Abercorn for once in my life your anxious But always your obliged & respectful
TO VISCOUNT MELVILLE

MY LORD,-The inclosed letter was put into my hands by Mr. Ferriar who had communicated to Mr. George Home the death of Mr. Pringle & whom I had requested to say generally to Mr. Home that whatever views of amending my situation this opening might hold out I should in pursuing them hold myself obliged in honor to attend to his interest. Your Lordship will observe that the view he takes of the subject is somewhat different from what occurred either to your Lordship or to myself. It is not for me to be my own carver but I have only to say that if the mode suggested by Mr. Home should be deemed eligible the business of the table will be easily & cheerfully discharged by my colleagues & myself. Or if any gentleman from the bar should take my situation with Mr. Home, there could be no difficulty whatever in indemnifying him for the resignation of a Sherifffdom or any other preferment of the kind. Mr. Home would probably continue to him the allowance of 200 which he lately proposed to resign to me and I would readily make up the difference.

I leave this matter to me probably the most important I shall ever have to discuss to that kind and friendly consideration with which your Lordship has always regarded my private concerns. The best part of my life is fast wasting in my present dispiriting situation and the
favour of the public which has proved occasionally an
important resource cannot be expected to be more
permanent with me than with men of greater talents
who have experienced its mutability. I am My Lord
with a deep sense of all your Lordships kindness Your
much obliged & honourd humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT
EDINR. 20 February [1811]

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P.S. - The Roxburghshire campaign advances pretty
well.

The right honble Lord Viscount Mellville
etc etc etc Mellville Castle.

TO DR. LEYDEN, CALCUTTA

MY DEAR LEYDEN,- Your letter of the 10th January
1810, reached me about ten days since, and was most
truly wellcome, as containing an assurance of that which,
however, I never doubted-the continuation of your
unabated friendship, and affectionate remembrance. I I
assure you Charlotte and I think and speak of you very
often, with all the warmth due to the recollection of our
early days, when life and hope were young with all of us.
You have, I hope, long ere now, received my third poem,
"The Lady of the Lake," which I think you will like
for auld long syne, if not for its intrinsic merit. It have [sic]
been much more successful than its predecessors, for no
less than 25,000 copies have disappeared in eight months
and the demand is so far from being abated, that another
edition of 3000 is now at press. I send you a copy of the 4to by a son of Mr. Pringle of Whitebank; and his third son, William Pringle, being now on the same voyage to your shores, I beg to introduce him. He is one of the youngers mentioned in the Introduction to Marmion as a companion of my field Sports. I take the opportunity to send you a little print which I think you will set some value upon. It has just come out in London, and is reckoned very cleverly engraved. Poor old Camp, whom you will readily recognise, died about two years ago of old age, rather prematurely accelerated by good living. His place is supplied in some sort by a very sensible Scotch terrier; but to have a dog whom I can love as much as Camp I must bring back all that were with me, and you, my dear Leyden, among the foremost, in our woodland walks by Eskes romantic shore...

I have not yet received the Chinese affair, though Helen has forwarded the letter which accompanied it. I have no other connexion with the Quarterly Review than as I am, with Ellis, Heber, and most of your old acquaintance, more partial to its politics than to those of your old friend Brougham in the Edinburgh Review. But I will recommend the work to the conductor, and if Southey will take it in hand (to whom the Missionaries have been obliged for the countenance they have hitherto received in the Quarterly), I have no doubts your friends will be satisfied with the manner in which they are treated...

You will expect news of European friends; Heber is in excellent health, and amassing books, and discussing magnnums as usual. Ellis has quite recovered, that is, he is in the state of health in which you knew him, never
a very robust one. James Ballantyne is increasing in fortune and bulk; his brother is now a bookseller here.

men auspice. You must know that repeated favours on my part had the same effect upon [Constable?] that those from a higher quarter produced on Jeshurun—he wax’d fat and kicked. But he is aware by this time that he had done better to have kept his [temper] to himself for he may place 5000 minus in his books to the breach of our connexion occasioned by his own folly and his partner’s insolence.

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I expect this boy to call every moment, so I must close my letter. Mrs. Scott joins in sending you all the wishes of affectionate friendship. Pray take care of your health, and come home to us soon. We will find an ingleside and a corner of our hearts as warm for you as ever. My children are all well; and now I hear the door-bell, vale et nos ama. WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH, 20th February 1811.1

[1871 Exhibition Catalogue]

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR LADY MARCHIONESS,—In farther explanation of my letter & the business it contains I enclose a letter from the gentleman of whose office I have the duty in possession & the income in expectancy. Mr. R. Dundas objects to his father’s proposal of the new Clerk taking a share of my burden as being contrary to the late Act of Parliament—Of course I cannot wish you press such an arrangement. But Mr. George Home points at one which would be equally advantageous to me & to which no objection can possibly apply except the wishes
of his Majesties Ministers to prefer the interests of another gentleman to mine. Mr. Home in short proposes that I shall be named to the vacancy leaving him to discharge as much of the duty of his own office as he can which all my brethren are anxious to make quite easy to him. As he has made this very handsome proposal it would be my business to take care that any burden he might have to discharge should be a very light one & I have no doubt Mr. Dundas would soon give him another associate. Lord Mellville has written transmitting this proposal to his son, but I am not sanguine in my hopes of altering his opinion.

The gentleman who will probable [sic] be preferred to me is so little anxious on the subject that he offered to resign his pretensions in my favour & actually did so. But I could not with justice to my own feelings accept of this sort of personal sacrifice or owe that to the disinterestedness of a gentleman on whom I had no claims, which I think after five years gratuitous labour in the office I have at least some claim to expect from my services backed by the Interest of those who may have the inclination & power to back them by their intercession. But from the enclosed extract of a letter from Mr. Dundas to Ld. Mellville I believe it will require very powerful weight indeed to do me any good.

At the same time I will not be wanting to myself nor leave my friends unacquainted with the circumstances in which I am placed. Mr. David Hume mentioned as the preferable candidate is unconnected with Mr. Geo: Home my colleague. He is a most worthy & respectable man & has repeatedly refused a situation of a judge. But I cannot quite admit that his merits
are of a nature very superior to mine considering the vacancy has occurred in the department where I have been labouring so long & fruitlessly.

Excuse my dear friend all this trouble for to whom can I look so readily as to you in this important conjuncture. I have the honour to be Your Ladyships Most obedient & much obliged WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 22 February [1811]
[Pierpont Morgan]

TO CHARLES ARBUTHNOT

SIR,- I am honoured by your letter & am inexpressibly obliged by the interest you have been pleased to take in my affairs at the request of my kind & never failing friend

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1811 445

the Marchioness of Abercorn. You may rely upon my observing your caution & what I am about to mention to you I will entreat your goodness to consider as equally confidential for I am well aware that the Dundas family who have been long my kind & intimate friends have the warmest wishes to serve me while at the same time they must necessarily feel themselves trammel'd with a variety of claims on their patronage & may not perhaps be the less zealous for an occasional hint from a quarter which may be friendly to me. Mr. David Hume (the gentleman whose claims were considered as preferable to mine & undoubtedly they were most weighty) is now out of the field, having finally declined to accept the offer. There are two ways in which I may be promoted to the emoluments of my situation. The one is clear explicit & but for one circumstance by far the most
eligible. It is simply that as Mr. George Home my
colleague formerly resigned his sole commission to accept
a joint nomination with me, so now he & I should resign
that joint commission & should be separately nominated
Clerks of Session I in the vice of Mr. Pringle & Mr.
Home in his own place. This arrangement would be
agreeable to Mr. George Home my colleague as well
appears from his letter to Mr. Ferrier in possession of the
Marchioness. My brethren in office are unanimous in
wishing this arrangement, there can be no legal or formal
objection to it nor shall we be at [sic] the least loss in
supplying any of Mr. Home's deficiencies arising from
his age & deafness as the duty is not heavy and we are
all at liberty to work for each other. But I fear this will
not quite meet Mr. R. Dundas's views as I can easily
conceive he would like to extend his patronage as much
as possible by obliging two persons-In the event of this
being the case or of Mr. David Hume (for the third time)
changing his mind & choosing to step between me &
the office, there will I doubt be no remedy but by way
of pension to Mr. George Home as a superannuated

officer who has been I believe forty years in office & has
become from deafness & age absolutely unfit to discharge
the duties. That such a person has a legitimate claim to
retire upon a pension has always been admitted & the
circumstance of my having born [sic] him on my shoulders
for five years can scarcely be held to enable the public to
saddle me with him for ever. The later the pension is
applied for, after age & infirmities have rendered it a
just measure, the more the public is benefited & at any
other moment than when the Pitt administration was
going to pieces & I like others was glad to get a piece of
the wreck to float me ashore I should have done myself
I have just had some intimation that Mr. David Hume is a third time hesitating—Upon my honour I think it a little hard that any man should have an office forced upon him after repeated refusals formally communicated to his friends & competitors & that in a department where another not altogether void of pretensions has been labouring for nothing for five years—I saw Lord Melville who I found very warmly disposed to second me using the strong expression that if he had any interest in Scotland he should see my claims attended to. I believe the pension business is the only chance I have of relief in this country but I am not wedded to it nor too old to seek preferment elsewhere should everything fail me.

I beg my most respectful compliments to the kind & friendly Lady who engaged such powerful assistance on my behalf. You will find my friends when the office is fairly filled up will require a flapper [?] as indeed they have more than enough to engage their attention. I am with much respect Sir Your obliged & Most humble servant WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 23 February [1811]
have always taken in my affairs I have to request your attention to the inclosed copy of a letter which I have received from Mr. Arbuthnot Secretary to the Treasury. I wrote to Mr. George Home on the subject of the arrangement to which it refers on Sunday last & have not as yet heard from him on the subject. It would be very indelicate in me to have even the appearance of hurrying Mr. Home's determination on a matter in which I am to be the party obliged. Although at the same time I have explained to him that I propose no advantage at his expense.

At the same time I should be happy that Mr. Home were acquainted with the contents of Mr. Arbuthnot's letter which seem to intimate that the affair depends upon his resolution as I am sure his knowledge of the world will point out to him that those who have to-day the power of assisting me may tomorrow have only the inclination. I do not possess the information Mr. Arbuthnot requires of me nor if I did should I wish to proceed further in the matter until I am apprised of Mr. Home's wishes & determination.

Mr. Home's kindness & liberally of which I gave your Lordship a convincing proof, even before this business came forward, encourage me to hope that sanctioned as the transaction is both by Law & Equity he will not upon light grounds refuse to accede to it. I have the honour to be ever My dear Lord Your Lordships much obliged & honord humble Servant

WALTER SCOTT

CASTLE STREET Friday Evening

Lord Viscount Melville.
MY DEAR LORD,-I inclose for your Lordships perusal a letter from Mr. Arbuthnot of the Treasury from which it would seem that there will be no difficulty made to pension off Mr. George Home provided he will apply for the Superannuation. I wrote to him on Sunday mentioning what was proposed and assuring him that I did not propose in advancing my own interest to do the least injury to his for which my friends will give him fuller assurance & security than he himself would desire. I have not heard from him in reply, but his offer of returning to the table was so handsome & my request seems so reasonable that I hope he will start no objection to the arrangement. If your Lordship should think with Mr. Arbuthnot that a few lines from yourself might have the effect to determine him in my favour I am sure I shall not weary your goodness in requesting this further assistance towards bringing to an end this matter which without your Lordship[s] kind & active patronage would never have advanced so far.

I inclose an abstract of the Superannuation Act from which it appears that an Officer serving fifteen years & being upwards of sixty may retire on two thirds of his salary and emoluments. Mr. Home is I should suppose much above sixty & as I observe from the Books of Sederunt was twenty five years in office before I was conjoined with him & five years have elapsed since our joint commission. So there can be no doubt as to his title to the pension if he chuses to apply. His salary & emoluments stand in a
(2-448) particular condition. The judicature Act fixes $1,000 as the future salary of Clerks of Session & allows each Clerk then in possession $100 a year for life as Compensation for patronage etc. The Court of Exchequer by an order on the last day of last term allowed each Clerk $200 yearly in further & full compensation but this last sum is made payable during incumbency only & not for life. It seems

1811       449       SIR WALTER SCOTT

(2-449) to me therefore that Mr. Home may retain the $100 for life even after his retirement, but as he must resign the $1,000 charged in the fee fund & the $200 payable in Exchequer during incumbency he will be entitled under the act to a pension for $800 being two thirds of the above sum, & my friends will not permit him to be a loser upon the difference between $900 & the full emoluments of his office.

(2-449) I have only to add that this arrangement will be in the highest degree satisfactory to me & will serve to relieve me in every material degree from a pressure which I cannot think Mr. Home would wish to continue a moment longer than it is necessary for his own interest & Security.

(2-449) I cannot express my sense of your Lordship's kind & persevering goodness & you must be sensible how much I calculate upon it since I intrude with so little ceremony.

(2-449) I am ever my dear Lord Your truly obliged & most respectful Servant                        W. SCOTT

CASTLE STREET, Thursday [February 1811]

[Nat. Lib. Scot.]

TO LORD MELVILLE
My DEAR LORD, - I send the copy of Mr. Arbuthnot's letter with a few lines from myself to your Lordship in case you should think it suitable to forward them also. If I have a letter from Mr. H. I will write to your Lordship tomorrow to save you as much trouble as possible. I am with Gratitude your Lordships truly obliged.

W. SCOTT

[No address. Between February and March 1811]
[Nat. Lib. Scot.]
in my very trifling yet to me most important concern.
Mr. Arbuthnots attention to it will be of the last consequence
& I am infinitely obliged by the kind readiness
with which he has undertaken it. It has been considered
proper to give Mr. David Hume the vacant Clerkship
which he has with great difficulty been prevailed with
to accept of. His ambition was to be a Baron of
Exchequer & I believe or rather suspect that it was a wish
to remove him from an object to which the L. Advocate
himself casts an eye that occasioned their forcing the
present office upon him. By way of compensation to
me for passing me over they now propose to give my
colleague Mr. Geo. Home a pension under the Act for
providing superannuated office-holders. I shall be
perfectly satisfied with this arrangement & upon reading
over the Act attentively I cannot see there can be the
least objection stated to it. Lord Mellville has assured
me in the warmest & kindest terms that if he has the least
interest left in Scotland the thing shall be done. There
has not been since my recollection a time in which
preferment has flowed in upon the bar with so full a
spring-tide. A double Judges gown, the situation of
Solicitor General, that of Judge Admiral, three Sheriffdoms,
a Clerkship of Session, a Judge Commissioners
seat, with many more minute crumbs [sic] of comfort have
fallen among us like the Manna in the wilderness at the
time the friends of this administration looked for nothing
but being turned out of what they had. All the gentlemen
promoted are either my early friends companions &
equals or very much my juniors. I own therefore I
shall feel hurt if as Jorick says while it is raining mitres
from heaven as it were, none of them should light upon
my head. Or as Cowley more practically complains
of the neglect which he experienced when he was passed over in the distribution of favours at the Restoration, 
when after fourteen years service he was disappointed of the Mastership of the Savoy which had been promised him.

As a fair morning of the blessed Spring
After a tedious stormy night
Such was the glorious entry of our king
Encircling plenty drop'd on every thing.
Plenty he sowed below & cast about him light.
But then alas! to me alone
One of old Gideon's miracles was shown
For every tree & every herb around
With pearly dew was crowned
And upon all the quickened ground
The fruitful seed of heaven did brooding lie
And nothing but the Muses fleece was dry

The Rachel for which twice seven years & more
Thou didst with faith & labour serve
And didst (if faith & labour can) deserve
Though she contracted was to thee
Given to another didst thou see
Given to another who had store
Of fairer & of richer wives before
And not a Leah left thy recompense to be.

The last lines come very near my situation for I suppose a Clerkship of Session is as like Rachel as the Mastership of the Savoy. But Mr. Arbuthnott gives me good hope of a Leah in recompense, in shape of a pension to Mr. Geo. Home: I am far from being offended at the
preference given to my friend Mr. David Hume a most excellent & highly accomplished man but of a temper so shy & reserved unless to his intimate friends that he has repeatedly said he would not accept the offer unless with the view of the assistance which I can easily will cheerfully give him. Your Ladyship will readily believe that being in such habits I cannot but rejoice in his appointment. I shall be quite satisfied with what is proposed for me provided it does not as has been hitherto my hard fortune stop short at the proposal & vanish in ineffectual expressions of regret & goodwill. I would never have my friends do anything for me which they cannot defend upon grounds both of law & justice. But I think I am entitled to expect under all the circumstances that no apprehension of frivolous or unreasonable cavil being made out to deter them from assisting me. It is very true that anything done in my favour may be subject to more malignant scrutiny than in another case; but then it ought not to be forgotten why I am more disadvantageously situated in this respect than others of my rank, nor ought the prejudices of the Foxites against me to prevent my friends from doing me right since these prejudices would not have existed but for the warmth & sincerity of my attachment to Lord Mellville. Of all this both L. M. & Mr. R. Dundas are sure fully sensible nor is there any good reason for my teasing your Ladyship with the repetition excepting that out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh. Mr. R. Dundas has thrown out a slight hint as if he would like to have my Sheriffdom. But if Mr. D. Hume retains his professorship (worth 600) I see no reason for resigning my office with only 300. Besides I have assigned such reasons as I am persuaded will prevent
Mr. Dundas from insisting on what I will not comply with, for I dont see why I should buy a favour & that very dearly too. So like my predecessor in that office the Outlaw Murray renowned in ballad I am determined to be -- Sheriff of Ettricke forest

Surely while upward grows the tree.1

Upon the whole I flatter myself that things go well- much the more do I so flatter myself because you my kind friend interest yourself in the matter & that Mr. Arbuthnott will have an eye upon it for your sake & will take care it does not slip out of memory during the hurry of so many matters as R. Dundas has to think about-

I have some poetical matters to tell you about but I will not intermingle them with this stuff of Clerkships & pensions and Sheriffdoms. Ever your truly indebted & obliged W. S.

EDN. 25 February [1811]

Pray have the goodness when you honour me with a line to say how Lady Hamilton & the little boy do- whether he is christened & by what name & what is his title.

[PIERPONT MORGAN]

TO LORD MELVILLE

MY DEAR LORD,—I send your Lordship inclosed a copy of Mr. Homes answer which is decidedly unfavourable. I suspect it will hardly be possible to remove his scruples.
It would be very easy for me to place Mr. Home in the situation he dislikes so much for were I to resign tomorrow as he could have no renewal of the joint commission he must then retire on the Superannuation Act.
The last objection I could easily remove by ensuring my life for a certain annuity payable to Mr. Home in the event of his surviving me. Perhaps your Lordships intercession may have some weight with him. I am my dear Lord very gratefully yours w. SCOTT

PARLIAMT. HOUSE Saturday [March 1811] [No address]

Enclosure

Letter from George Home, Paxton, 6th March 1811, to Viscount Melville.

I may be mistaken in the Construction I put upon the act, but it appears to me that there is no room for granting a Pension under it, when the office is filled by a Person capable to do the duties of it. The Treasury may no doubt grant the Pension, but it must be reported to Parliament that they may judge whether it has been properly granted. . . . While the Joint Commission subsists & the duties of the office [are] properly performed, I shall never prevail upon myself to run the risk of having that objection stated to my claim, or to have it said that this is a Job by which the Parties have secured to themselves a Joint Interest in the office and are now endeavouring to burden the Publick with a double sallary. I should adhere to this resolution, even altho there...
was no other remedy for Mr. Scott's relief, but he has himself suggested the remedy, which is to resign his Joint Commission. I shall then be in a situation to claim under the act, content myself with the Pension & leave to Mr. Scott the Emoluments of the office.

TO LORD MELVILLE

MY DEAR LORD,-I am honourd with your letter and willingly defer my whole interest to your Lordships opinion & that of the Lord President. I cannot be in better or kinder hands and if Mr. Home should convince you of the illegality of the measure proposed or influence

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you with doubt on the subject. God forbid I should press it or do Mr. Home the injustice to embarass him by leaving him in the lurch-I would rather work for nothing all my life-But if Mr. Home's doubts should not be so supported as to have influence on your Lordships' mind my present feelings will dictate a resignation of my commission in which case Mr. Home's interest & convenience will be deeply compromised. For I conceive he cannot serve in the office-neither can it be performed by Mr. Walker & Mr. D. Hume the latter being a novice & it will be for Mr. Geo: Home to weigh his own interest instead of weighing mine against his objections to retiring upon the superannuation act & either to make that sacrifice to himself which he may decline to make to me & solicit for the superannuation pension or resign his office without any compensation whatever. Even in the former case he will be worse off than I now wish him to be for he is satisfied that if the proposed arrangement be carried through he will not lose a penny by it, whereas if a new commission is to be granted to any one,
the person receiving it is bard under the highest penalties
which extend also to the Secretary of State from having
any understanding by which the incumbent can give the
retiring officer a guinea out [of] his pocket. The only
footing on which I could make this additional compensation
(which I am ready to do either by purchasing him a
life-annuity or paying him the purchase money) is that
in the event of Mr. Homes resigning the joint interest he
has in the commission & particularly his right to the
emoluments, I neither take any new office nor have occasion
to place myself within the danger of the Brokerage
act which only refers to offices granted long after the date
of my commission. I therefore feel myself at liberty to
offer Mr. Home what I think full justice. But it is
obvious no other person can legally make him the same
compensation.

I suspect Mr. Home's chief fear and it is a very just

at least a very natural one is that his name may be dragd
through parliament & the matter subjected to a sort of
investigation (much the taste of the present day) which
however it may end cannot but occasion a gentleman
of his age & habits great vexation and embarrassment.
And this risque must appear more formidable as the Act
respecting Superannuation declares that where the
salaries are paid out of a feefund & where the said fee-fund
is deficient the deficiency shall be made good by a vote
of parliament. But on the other hand the Judicature
Act declares that when the fee-fund of the Court of Session
is inadequate to discharge the salaries of the Clerks &
other burdens lawfully charged upon it, the Clerks
salaries shall be made good in Exchequer. Now my
brethren are kindly contented that Mr. Homes superannuation
pension shall be drawn out of the first and
readiest of the fund which will therefore be always
adequate to the payment thereof: and they will content
themselves with seeking redress in Exchequer under the
terms of the Judicature Act. Instead of sending Mr.
Home to seek it in parliament. I have a notion this assurance
will remove much of Mr. Homes real objection to the
measure. Mr. Ferrier thought it might be right to place
this circumstance under his consideration so I wrote him
a few lines to that purpose.

I send the Commission which expressly assigns the whole
profits of the office to Mr. Home. But I conceive that
does not bar him from resigning it and placing our
arrangement on the more equitable footing of the
Superannuation Act which has been made since the date
of the commission expressly to rule such cases as ours.
Nor does it I apprehend in the event of Mr. Home being
unreasonably negligent of my interest (which would be
terely contrary to all I have heard & the little I have
seen of his disposition) offer any obstacle to my resigning
in which case Mr. Home would have no other means of
getting a guinea from the office but by the very act of

which he doubts whether he be entitled to the benefit.
Now if he in such case being an existing Clerk entitled
to act & to draw the full salary of his office could retire
upon the superannuation pension in favour of any one
but me the question seems only to be whether five years
gratuitous service (which I am at liberty to discontinue
at pleasure) have renderd me unworthy of the benefit
of an arrangement which must rule every other case. I
am with much respect Your Lordships truly obliged &
grateful

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TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR FRIEND,-I am very sorry to inform you that our negotiation stands some chance of failing through the obstinacy of Mr. Home. Every objection of the nature you pointed out in your kind note was obviated to his full contentment. But hitherto to no purpose. He pretends scruples at being a pensioner on the public yet never considers he has been this five years the pensioner of an individual. Lord Melville has taken him in hand & may possibly make some impression upon him- nothing can be more warm than the interest Lord M. has taken in this matter so much so that he will hardly allow that it is increased by your most kind & affecting letter on my behalf which he shewed me. He understands Scotchmen & usually carries his point so I must e'en trust to his influence. I think however Mr. Home will perceive his own interest is more deeply implicated in the matter than he seems at present to be aware of. For if his hard-hearted conduct should oblige me to resign my share in our joint commission how would he stand ? Act he cannot, & nobody under the circumstances would act for him & therefore (as no new joint commission can be granted) he would find himself under the necessity either of soliciting the superannuation pension or resigning without any pension at all-at any rate he could not have a penny more than his pension whereas in my case facilities might be given & have been offered to make him as well as at present. This would
be too irritating [?] a string for me to touch upon but
I will contrive that Lord M. or some mutual friend shall
place it strongly before this Scotch Shylock who sticks
to his bond with all the obstinacy of his Jewish prototype.

I believe there is nothing at the bottom but sheer
pride—he thinks himself well as he is & does not choose
to submit to the least alteration that may infer either
risque or disgrace in his apprehension let the consequences
to me be what they may. Add to this he is an old bachelor
with no relative under the cope of heaven but a maiden
aunt who resides with him—they are both upwards of
seventy poor dear souls & have between them scarcely
twelve thousand pounds a year to keep house upon.

This is but cold news of our fine project my dear
Lady Abercorn & I know you will be grieved at it. It
is possible however things may take a turn especially if
my ancient rider could be prevailed upon to come to
Edinburgh where we might get the Lord President upon
him. I write Mr. Arbuthnott a few lines to thank him
for his kind & inestimably useful assistance & to inform
him where the matter hitches.

No circumstance of success or failure can increase or
diminish the gratitude with which I am Dear Lady
Abercorn Your faithful & obliged W. SCOTT

EDINR. 3 March [1811]
[Pierpont Morgan]

TO CHARLES ARBUTHNOT

[8 March 1811]
days silence I yesterday received a letter from Mr. Home

of which I sent a copy to Mr. Dundas in which with

some expressions of regret & civility he declines applying

for the Superannuation pension because as he conceives

the granting it may expose Mr. D. to censure in the House

of Commons. Mr. Dundas is the last man whom I

should wish to bring under obloquy to favour any selfish

views of mine; but I conceive he may considering his

excellent good sense & experience besides his having

access to the first law assistance be very safely trusted

with the charge & defense of his own conduct in any

matter of this kind. Mr. Home in applying for his

superannuation will only undo a previous transaction

which nothing but its date prevents from being illegal

& put our relative arrangement upon the footing prescribed

by an act expressly introduced to rule such cases.

Were I to retire tomorrow & there is nothing to prevent

my doing so Mr. Home who has been from deafness long

absolutely incapable of doing his duty would have no

alternative but to weigh his scruples of delicacy against

his own substantial interest, (when they would probably

prove lighter than when balanced with mine) & as then

[? MS. sewed in here] scale predominated he must either

claim his superannuation or retire without pension or

emolument of any kind. In either case it seems hard

that he should hesitate to do for me what he would find

himself obliged to do were I to leave him to himself since

I understand the point to be clear that no one could be

placed in the situation which I now hold with relation

to him.

Lord Melville has taken up the matter with great

warmth & jointly with the Head of our Court the Lord
President has written to Mr. George Home to come to Edinburgh to talk over the matter. If he can convince them of the reality of his difficulties I am sure I have no inclination to press any arrangement which my friends shall think even dubious— if not, & if he continues to found upon mere whims of his own a refusal to do me what is really substantial justice he will set me much at liberty from the necessity of consulting his interest in the remainder of the transaction. In this latter case supposing that I resign my situation Mr. Home will find himself obliged to resign also for his total deafness renders him incapable of acting as Clerk & the other two gentlemen now in office (one being a mere novice) could not discharge the duty of the Court which is at this moment rather burdensome. I will put Lord Melville in possession of these circumstances & I believe they will have some weight in forming Mr. Home's ultimate decision. I am very glad he is coming to town as we shall find where the business really hitches.

I beg pardon for troubling you with all the trivial detail of difficulties & private interests & can only trust to the kind interest which you have taken in my success for forgiveness. Lord Melville will probably get an answer to his letter tomorrow or next day & as the Lord President & his Lordship have more influence with Mr. Home than anyone has it is probable he will come to town in which case I shall reckon my cause half won. I will do myself the honour to apprise you of the result. Meanwhile I remain with much respect Your obliged & indebted humble Servant WALTER SCOTT [Pierpont Morgan]
TO LADY ABERCORN

(2-460)You will be rejoiced to hear my dear friend that your
(2-460)kind & friendly exertions in my behalf are at length
(2-460)likely to succeed. My ancient Colleagues opinion or
(2-460)rather the wind of his inclination after shifting to every
(2-460)point on the compass has at length come to blow fair
(2-460)for my desired harbour. In short he consents to apply
(2-460)for the Superannuation with which he declares he will be
(2-460)satisfied positively declining to accept any offer to make
(2-460)up the difference between two-thirds & full pay. I am
(2-460)totally at loss to know what motives have at length moved

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(2-461)him to this unexpected compliance only I suppose his
(2-461)natural feelings of justice have got the better of the
(2-461)wayward & testy temper of an old bachelor of seventy
(2-461)five. Lord Melliwles rhetoric was lost on him-so was
(2-461)my Lord Presidents-at least to all appearance-only
(2-461)he offered that if I would resign first then he would
(2-461)resign also ; but there were circumstances that might
(2-461)have rendered this a little hazardous. I yesterday wrote
(2-461)my doubts & wishes on that subject to Mr. Arbuthnott
(2-461)very fully & I now wish I had spared him the trouble of
(2-461)that long letter but it was impossible after Mr. Home
(2-461)had declared himself so wedded to his own opinion as to
(2-461)say " that call it folly or obstinacy or what my friends
(2-461)or his friends chose no argument should prevail on him
(2-461)to apply for the superannuation unless I resigned first."
(2-461)He was once a very different sort of man but

(2-461)In lifes last stage what various scenes surprize
(2-461)Fears of the brave and follies of the wise

(2-461)He has now (thank God) totally resigned the management
of the business to Mr. Ferrier with carte blanche-
this gentleman (a kind-hearted old Highlander) is my
warm friend as indeed all my brethren in office have
always shown themselves to be; he is now the oldest of
our number & having been long Mr. Home's friend
& colleague may be able to keep him in good humour.

Meanwhile we are hurrying everything forward for
fear of a relapse. I am just going to Lord Mellvilles to
prepare the necessary paper for Mr. Home's signature.
But as I was writing this change of circumstances for Mr.
Arbuthnott's information I must have been ungrateful
indeed not to find time to communicate what I trust will
give your Ladyship pleasure. I will write more fully
in a few days when I forward the Application for Mr.
Home desires I will see it through the Treasury. Ever
Dear Lady Marchioness Your obliged & grateful

EDINR. 10 March [1811]. W. S.
[Pierpont Morgan]

TO HIS DAUGHTER SOPHIA

BENEATH every King's reign Papa expects Sophia to
write down neatly & in good spelling the following
particulars.

Whether his reign was peaceful or warlike.
If warlike with whom he was at war & particularly
whether with his own subjects or foreign nations.
Also whether he was victorious in battle (generally) or
Whether any great alterations of government took place in his reign & what they were.

Whether he was a good man or a bad.

Whether the condition of his subjects was amended or became worse under his reign.

[Letters to Governess, 1905]

TO MRS. LEADBEATER 1

MADAM, - I am honoured by your beautiful verses and beg your acceptance of my most respectful thanks. You do me great honour in supposing me able to celebrate a nation in which I am so much interested as Ireland. Whether I shall ever strike the harp again my graver occupations render very doubtful, but should it so happen I will not fail to carefully consider the hint you have favoured me with, especially should it ever be in my power to visit Ireland. From the mode of dating your letter I conclude I am addressing a lady of a religious profession for whose simplicity of manner and purity of morals I have had from infancy the most deep respect, and which adds to the sense of obligation with which I subscribe myself your honoured and very humble servant

WALTER SCOTT

EDINBURGH 12th of March 1811.

[O'Donoghue's Tour in Ireland]
To MISS SMITH

(2-463)I HAVE been shockingly ungrateful dear Miss Smith in not sooner thanking Mrs. Smith and you for your obliging and interesting communications. I am very glad that the Manager found his advantage in the Lady of the Lake which as far as I can judge is very well adapted for the Stage; and I am delighted that you were thought a proper representative of Ellen because that is paying Ellen a very high compliment. Our attempt at the Lady of the Lake did not succeed quite so well yet it answered expectation I believe as to profit. The words of the poem were retained but as they were thrown into the arrangement of blank verse the dialogue had to those acquainted with the poem the appearance of an old friend with a new face. You always missed the expected and perhaps the remembered rhyme which had a bald effect. I think your plan infinitely preferable. In point of representation, Mrs. Young played the mad captive superbly and threw every body into tears. Mrs. H. Siddons did not perform Ellen so well as I expected-she had got somehow a little too Columbinish, and fell short in the dignity which should mingle even with the playful simplicity of a high-born maiden. But you are not to whisper this to any one for Mrs. H. Siddons is a very particular friend of mine and I know it would hurt her were it to come round. They are now going to try the London Edition of this said poem called the Knight of Snowdoun which will probably produce them a house or two. I am told Roderick recovers and marries Ellen there being no Malcolm Graeme in the case. You must know this Malcolm Graeme was a great plague to me from
the beginning—you ladies can hardly comprehend how
very stupid lovers are to everybody but mistresses—I
gave him that dip in the Lake by way of making him do
something but wet or dry I could make nothing of him.
His insignificance is the greatest defect among many
others in the poem. But the canvas was not broad
enough to include him considering I had to groupe the
King, Roderick, and Douglas. I should have told you
that a young man of uncommon talent and accomplishment
(Mr. Richard 1 Terry) played Roderick Dhu
delightfully. He is a rising actor, studies hard and is
a man of extensive reading, fine taste and amiable
manners. He often came to read Shakespeare to me
of an evening. I fear his voice will never be strong
enough for the immense concavity of a London house
but his conceptions are admirable and as he has good
sense and principle I am certain he will one day make a
figure. Your story of an immense Epic poem at a guinea
sounds a formidable contract for the poor bookseller
and is much of a piece with one which appeared in the
Sheffield papers announcing my immediate departure
for Portugal to gather poetic images; I suppose out of
the cannon mouth.2 There is this difference however
between them that had I no body to care about but myself

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I would go to Portugal but I would hardly have lent
myself to the sort of job—bargain you mention. The truth
is I neither have written nor think of writing a single
line of poetry and I should think it very injudicious after
the flattering kindness which the public has shewn me to
press upon them before I have it in my power (which may
never be the case) to offer them something decently
worth their acceptance. I beg my kind compliments to
Mrs. Smith with my best thanks for the trouble she has
taken in my behalf- I hope this will find the eyes in a
fair way of recovery. You have been exercising them I
suppose too severely upon your Irish conquests. Mrs.
Scott sends best regards and I ever am dear Miss Smith
Yours very Truly

WALTER SCOTT
EDIN. 12 March, 1811.

Many thanks for the sweet tune to which my unworthy
words have been adapted. Lady Douglas was just now
here and enquired after you.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. ROBERT DUNDAS

MY DEAR SIR,-I am honourd with your letter but
before it came to hand Mr. George Home had given his
approbation of the terms of a petition tendering his
resignation on his claim being admitted under the
Superannuation Act & as it went to him yesterday to be
subscribed & forwarded you will probably receive it
within a post or two of this letter. I am very sorry to
find Mr. Perceval entertains the doubts which on
consideration Mr. Home has seen ground to abandon. It is
with great diffidence I offer my own opinion that the Act
is intended as much for the benefit of those officers who
actually discharge the duty of the office as for those
whose age entitles them to a provision upon retirement.

It is as much the public interest that he who labours shall
be rewarded as that he who can labour no longer shall
have the means of retiring upon [a] competency. Accordingly
it is coupled as it were with the Brokerage and Reversion bills which expressly prohibit all such commissions as Mr. H. & I now hold. In accepting of Mr. Homes resignation on the Act 30. c. 117. the commissioners of the Treasury will substitute a legal arrangement upon the principle of the existing law in place of one which nothing but its priority of date prevents from being illegal. Were I dead or did I resign, Mr. Home who cannot discharge the duty would be ex concessis entitled to the benefit of the Act & the full emolument of the office would pass undiminishd to his successor. It would be hard to say that five years gratuitous service ought to place me in a worse situation with the public than a stranger would be that has never served them at all. It is very true my present situation was of my own seeking but what could I do. Mr. Pitt was just dead & you cannot have forgot the recommendation in my favour which I shall always regard as the proudest circumstance of my life. If the Act Cap. 117 had then existed there can I think be little doubt that as Mr. Home was fully entitled to the benefit of it by age & service so I under all the circumstances would probably have been his successor in an unincumberd office. But I was obliged in the moment of the dissolution of a friendly ministry to take such a bargain as I could get & the existing law would give me; just as sailors when the vessell is sinking catch at the next piece of the wreck to float ashore upon. Perhaps also I might not be altogether unreasonable in entertaining some hopes that in case my friends department they might consider my gratuitous service as affording me some claim for favourable consideration. Now as the claims of a more meritorious individual have interfered with mine & been I dare say very justly
preferd the circumstance may I think be allowd to give
some weight to any reasonable application I may now
make for relief.

In order to bring my situation as closely under the
Act as possible & to place the point of form out of the
question I inclose my own resignation which you will
make use of as your prudence may suggest. I apprehend
the circumstance of its being offerd will in itself almost
take away the objection in point of form & that
the acceptance of it may be judged unnecessary. For if
my resignation be tenderd Mr. Home is surely in
imminent danger of being calld upon to discharge the
duties of an office for which his deafness renders him
altogether incompetent & the objection that there is one
in the office able to discharge them flies off when that
persons resignation is tenderd. It will then be for the
wisdom of the Lords of the Treasury to consider whether
there is any essential difference to the country between
accepting Mr. Home's resignation as matters now stand
and having me in possession of the office or doing the
same thing rather more circuitously by accepting my
resignation also, & making a new grant to any one who
has interest enough to get it. In either case the necessity
of granting the pension seems to be [the] same and perhaps
Mr. Perceval may be inclined to wave his scruples
to the first mode of proceeding when it is considerd
that the case is absolutely singular & can never again
occur.

If it be found absolutely necessary that my resignation
accompany or precede that of Mr. Home there is nothing
to prevent the Regent issuing a new Commission. For
there never was such a thing as a Clerk of Sessions
commission unless for life-it would be contrary to
express statute & indeed so very much was this the case
that until the late judicature act the Clerks had a right
even to sell their commissions. As to the regents
boggling why I must run my chance unless Mr. Percevals
scruples should give way upon seeing that Mr. Home is
placed substantially though not altogether formally under
the pressure for which the Act offers relief. That the
measure has justice & equity to recommend it can hardly
be disputed so I really still hope it may be carried through,
as at first proposed by the Advocate & you and sanctiond
by Lord Mellville & Lord president.

Mr. Perceval is not perhaps aware that Mr. Home
besides being Seventy six and upwards is perfectly deaf
and incapable of business of any kind, & that our situation
since the division of the Courts has been a very busy
one.

As Mr. Home has intimated his anxious wish that the
matter should be brought to a decision it is no longer in
my power to postpone my application and indeed his
resignation will be in your hands or perhaps in those of
Mr. Arbuthnot almost as soon as this letter. If I had got
your letter a few days sooner I would have sufferd every
thing to lie over till our meeting but I believe the attempt
to postpone it now Mr. Homes resolution is made up
would make him very irritable indeed & that I should
never be able to bring him to any subsequent arrangement.
Had D. Humes commission been given to me all
difficulty would have been removed. Mr. Geo: Home
must then have had his pension & Mr. D. Hume would
have got my office instead of Mr. Pringles.
I accompany this letter with a copy of the Resignation
of Mr. Home which he has sanctiond with his approbation
-with my own resignation to be used at your discretion-
& with two certified Copies of Mr. Homes original
Admission in July 1781 and of the Joint Commission to
him and me in 1806. Mr. Ferriar as Senior Clerk has
attested by docquet upon Mr. Homes petition the fact
which it contains and also certified the extent of his
emoluments.

I shall send this long scrawl to Lord Mellville to be
forwarded to you after his Lordship has perused it. We
will be delighted to see you here especially as we did not
meet the last time you were here. Believe me dear Colonel
Ever truly your much obliged

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 14 [March 1811]

The Right Honble Mr. Dundas.

With : Copy of Commission to George Home & Walter
Scott.
(Petition of Walter Scott.

TO MRS. APRICE, 16 BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON

MY DEAR MRS. APRICE,2 -I have been much to blame
in not sooner acknowledging the pleasure I received
from your kind token of remembrance but probably the
dullness of my letter will be the best apology for its delay. I was indeed at the time of receiving your letter in some uncertainty whether I should not have had an opportunity of returning my thanks in person but that is now at an end for I certainly shall not see London until next Spring at soonest. We are here as nearly as possible in the same quiescent state in which we were last winter rather more secluded since we lost the temptation of your good neighbourhood going no where but to the Theatre and seeing no one but our ancient gossips who are contented to stupify [?] with us in our own way. Of Literary society I can say but little. I have not dined at our club once this winter nor been at a[n] evening party excepting one. But I understand Edinburgh has been as lively as usual though neither possessing a Thalia in the shape of my gentle and lively cousin [n]or a Melpomene in that of the weeping-ripe Mrs. W--

You flatter me excessively by telling me of the extent and regularity of my correspondence. You know (who understand conversation so well) that no praise is more tickling than that which is equally unexpected and undeserved. But I am afraid I understand your irony too well to devour a compliment I deserve so little. As for Mr. Davy I met him once among the mountains of Cumberland and liked him excessively though we can be scarcely said ever to have renewed our acquaintance. I was particularly delighted with the total absence of pedantry which has always appeared to me the test of true genius. Charlotte begs to be remembered with all the warmth which she has left to spare having just exerted a considerable portion of that ardent quality in scolding me for purchasing a pair of Highland pistols of
the antique model. They were to be sure very dear
but quite irresistible being of steel inlaid with silver and
might become the belt of Rob Roy himself. You see I
retain all my hobby horses and shall be delighted when
a visit to the Land of Cakes gives me an opportunity to
air my stud for your amusement. Our little folks are
all well and send their loves. Believe me dear Mrs.
Aprice, Your respectful and Affect cousin

EDIN 2d April 1811 WALTER SCOTT
[Abbotsford Copies]

TO MISS SMITH

MY DEAR Miss SMITH,—That nothing may be wanting
in my power to enable you to represent the Witch Dame
of Branksome in proper costume I lose no time in answering
your letter. I The Lady when engaged in her magical
intercourse with the Spirits should I think have a sort
of stole or loose upper scarf with astrological hieroglyphics
of the planets. I have seen Prospero wear such a thing
which you may remember he desires Miranda to pluck
from his shoulders. For the same reason I would have
the hair loose in the first scene and afterwards put under
such a head-dress as Queen Mary is usually represented
with. The first scene should be a good deal studied in
point of dress and scenery for I conceive the Lady's
intercourse with supernatural beings is more to be
understood from external appearances than from anything
she actually says. I quite approve of your changing
dress for the tournament—Only still be so good as
remember you are a widow and must therefore be rather
sumptuous than showy in attire. The black velvet with
old point will be quite in taste and so will the relief of
(2-471) the green and gold. If you do not like Queen Mary's coif you may choose among the prints to Birch's Lives.2
(2-471) Pray for my love drub your management out of the general blunder of dressing the Scottish borderers in Tartan- He might as well make them speak Gaelic.
(2-471) They should have the bonnet and in a very picturesque ballad by a living borderer I find a spirited description of the appearance of Wat of Harden as handed down by tradition from which some hints might be taken. I

LETTERS OF 1811-472

(2-472) should say that the poet is lineally descended from the Henchman of this famous marauder, a man selected for his very unpoetical name of Hog, the Wild Boar of Falshope and that it is from family tradition that this account of his protector's array was handed down:

(2-472) And he's away to Holy Rood / Amang the nobles a'
(2-472) Wi' bonnet like a girdle broad / O'er hair like Craighope snaw
(2-472) His coat was o' the forest green / Wi' buttons like the moon
(2-472) His trews were o' the good buck skin / Wi' a' the hair aboon
(2-472) His twa hand sword hung round his neck / And raided to his heel
(2-472) The rowels of his silver spurs / Were of the Rippon steel
(2-472) His hose were braced wi' chains of aim / And round wi' tassells hung
(2-472) At ilka hamp of Harden's heel / The royal arches rung-

(2-472) If Wat Tinlinn comes on the stage an excellent sketch of his proper costume may be seen in the frontispiece to the first or second Vol. of Grose's Military Antiquities 2 where an English archer is represented in his leathern jacket studded with iron plates. Only Wat Tinlinn should have a pike instead of the ugly mallet in the print.
If I were to write anything for the stage it would be for the delight of dressing the characters after my own fancy. But I am sure I never shall have that pleasure. The ruinous monopoly of the two theatres necessarily excludes every-thing but shew and renders the managers absolutely dependent upon that class who have least real taste for the stage as an elegant amusement. Their hours must be studied, their taste must be consulted and the hours and taste of such an audience being necessarily at variance with those of the more polite and better educated part of society why truly we may say with a little alteration of the old song-

Our ancient English tragedy is banished out of doors Our Lords & Ladies run to see Signoras & Signers.

It increases my good opinion of the Irish nation that they have not fallen into this general depravity of dramatic taste and that they do justice my dear Miss Smith to your merits. I shall be delighted when we can see you once more in the Land of Cakes as your letter seems to promise. Adieu my dear Miss Smith and pray let me know how the Lady of Buccleuch is received. Believe me with sincere regard your faithful friend and servant

W. SCOTT

EDIN. 5 April 1811.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY
MY DEAR SOUTHEY,-Leyden's direction is simply Calcutta-Bengal-I heard from him by the last ships he is flourishing like a green bay tree, strong in constitution & high in reputation. He is likely to push the researches into Indian antiquities as far as any savant we have hitherto sent out and as he totally postpones every other object I have no other apprehension than that he may hurry over too much ground to admit of his being severely accurate. He will be delighted with Kehama and I judge completely astonished at such a poem being produced by one who has never seen Indostan.

As for Leyden's silence towards me for some years (which I sincerely hope is the only objection to him you hint at) I now impute it to the misrepresentations of a dissipated and worthless blackguard his brother whom I served for Leyden's sake as long as I possibly could until he rendered himself absolutely intolerable by coming to my house intoxicated. I Poor Jack of Leyden sent me some months ago a precious gage d'amitie in the shape of a poisoned creeze the hilt as brilliant as that of Excabbar as to which you cannot but remember.

that all of Coleyne was the blade And all the hilt of precious stone.

In short it is worthy of the bowels of Bonaparte himself and I wish it were sheathed in them with my heart I pray his Majesty's mercy I should have said his guts for bowels he hath none.

I have just got the Quarterly. I scarcely know the
Article of Kehama which has been greatly alter'd especially in omitting quotations. Another time I shall wish to have the final correcting of the proof sheets of my own Articles. I dare say however the article is improved on the whole for I wrote in a most excessive hurry to get it into the last number which proved impossible the work not being then published in London. I trust the Quarterly will do well. Murray writes me that they print 6000 and are daily gaining ground. I don't augur much interference from Longman's new review unless he has been singularly fortunate in an editor.-What do you think of Roscoe's mean-spirited pamphlet on Lord Gray's opinions concerning the war? I always thought that man overrated but he seems to have grown actually silly.

Barrosa is indeed a glorious affair & gain'd too by a "Gallant Graeme." The effect of such a victory upon the morale of the French army is likely to be incalculable. But O my dear Southey for La Pena's head in a charger! I fear the Spaniards will ruin the best cause in the world & render their own valour and patriotism altogether unavailing by the false pride of which King William long since complained which will not suffer them to acknowledge those deficiencies that ruin them. All the officers I have seen lament that the courage & zeal of the Spanish common soldiers have in every conflict fail'd through the cowardice and ignorance of those who lead them. They want subaltern & non-commissioned officers dreadfully & most unfortunately the total want of education prevents them from drawing the natural supply of them by preferments from their own ranks-If while it is called today they would profit by the example of the Portuguese & put a few thousands of their levies under
British Officers & British discipline I think I would stake my life on the final issue of the contest. Portugal now exhibits a glorious confutation of Lord Grenville's croaking. I could not read yesterday's news without dinning your friar's prophecy into the ears of every one.

To Coimbra shall their reliques be brought
Such is the will divine!

I saw a letter from an officer of our flying artillery who since the retreat of Massena commenced had been with the van of the pursuers and almost constantly in sight & often engaged with the French rear. Their confusion & distress augmented on each movement: their flank had been turned at every stand which they attempted. Artillery, baggage, sick, wounded all were abandoned & hundreds of horses & mules were lying hamstrung upon the line of March. The writer is perhaps too sanguine for he anticipates the dispersion or surrender of that immense army. But that they have suffered and continue to suffer the greatest possible losses is indubitable. And all owing to the coolness & generalship of Wellington manifested not in military [matters] only but in the firm & confidential feelings with which he has inspired our allies.

For there is no doubt that the unceasing activity of the Ordonanya was the principal means of reducing Massena to his present dilemma. It is astonishing with what unspeakable incredulity the opposition folks maintained this retreat to have been a mere colour. If so I hope as Justice Shallow says it is a colour Massena will die in.

I beg my kind remem. to Mrs. Southey. I was very ungracious not to send my best thanks for Kehama. He has just returned from the Binder's in superb blue
Morocco to match Madoc, the Cid & Brazil-I have not seen Pasley but will read him on yr. recommendation.

I am ever yours

WALTER SCOTT
[Abbotsford Copies]

TO CHARLES ERSKINE, WRITER, MELROSE

[12th April, 1811]

My DEAR [CHARLES].-I had your letter and am much pleased with the prospect of having Mr. Donaldson for my travelling companion on the 21st. We shall take post-horses from Melrose so be with you about half past four.

I have nothing from Mr. Warrender about Agnes Murray or whatever her name is. As she is at liberty she may remain so but I wish you would cause the constables of Galashiels to give a little attention to her movements. I have no idea that without further evidence we shall be able to convict her but the country will expect a trial and indeed the presumptive evidence is very strong.

We will talk of Raeburn when we meet & I will show you a letter of Willies which I have not yet answerd.

I must understand him very plainly before I quite trust him.

I am much obliged to you for the lockout you keep for me about land. But Andrew Langs are greatly too near Selkirk. I must be on Tweedside if possible. It is not unlikely that the value of land will fall if the war last as last it necessarily must. There has been too much speculation in that as in other articles for the real capital
The Advocate writes me of an Act respecting a Numbering of the people passd 22 March last to be executed under authority of the Sheriff's. I never heard of it before: there will be a copy at Selkirk probably pray get it that we my may look it over together & do the needful. I hope we shall escape the judgement which attended King David on a similar occasion.

I had a letter from A. Baillies father praying her release & promising she should torment the country no more. This will not do-if she will herself petition for banishment from the county I pray you grant it without delay under certification & let the constables see her to the verge of it lest she get drunk & so find her way back again to Selkirk jail-her punishment has been a pretty light one. Yours truly

TO LADY ABERCORN

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR FRIEND,-I promised I would not write any poetry without letting you know and I make all sort of haste to tell you of my sudden determination to write a sort of a rhapsody upon the affairs of the peninsula. It is to be called the Vision of Don Roderick and is founded
upon the apparition explanatory of the future events in Spain said to be seen by the last King of the Gothick race in a vault beneath the great church of Toledo. I believe your Ladyship will find something of the story in the Comtesse D'Aunois' travels into Spain but I find it at most length in an old Spanish history of the aforesaid Don Roderick professing to be translated from the Arabic but being in truth a mere romance of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. It will serve my purpose however tout de meme. The idea of forming a short lyric piece upon this subject has often glided through my mind but I should never I fear have had the grace to turn it to practice if it were not that groping in my pockets to find some guineas for the suffering Portuguese and detecting very few to spare I thought I could only have recourse to the Apostolic benediction, " Silver and gold have I none but that which I have I will give unto you." My friends and booksellers the Ballantynes of Edinburgh have very liberally promised me a hundred guineas for this trifle which I intend to send to the fund for relieving the sufferers in Portugal. I have come out to this wilderness to write my poem and so soon as it is finished I will send you my dear Lady Marchioness a copy not that it will be worth your acceptance but merely that you may be assured I am doing nothing that I would not you knew of sooner than any one. I intend to write to the Chairman of the Committee by to-morrow's post. I would give them a hundred drops of my blood with the same pleasure would it do them service for my heart is a soldier's and always has been though my lameness rendered me unfit for the profession which old as I am I would rather follow than any other. But these are waking dreams in which I seldom indulge even
to my kindest friends.

I have not heard anything from Mr. Dundas. His father wrote him a letter of which he sent me a copy and which is worthy twenty disappointments. It is frank generous and if too warmly partial to me is very honourable to his feelings admitting his judgment to be blinded by personal regard. I have written to Mr. Dundas in hopes to bring this matter to some end or other. They must give Mr. Home a pension in the event of my resignation, and really I see no reason why they should economize for the state at the expense of my rising family. By diminishing my establishment, devoting my time to letters, selling my library and my house in town and retiring to the country for life I shall be able to make a provision for my young people without dependence on any one. My house is worth $2000 and my library which has been my most expensive hobby-horse worth a great deal more even retaining the more useful books. So that if they choose to prefer any other person to my office I shall only have to regret having spent five years in doing duty for nothing. I have realized some hundreds a year besides my Sheriffdom which is $300 more so that I shall have enough for all the useful and some of the ornamental purposes of income and have the less right to complain of any disappointment.

Adieu my dear friend for deuce take this poem it must be written before it can be read. I beg my kindest respects to your noble friends and am ever your truly obliged

When does your Irish journey take place. I must
TO JOHN B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR Morritt,-I have indeed been strangely negligent but far from forgetful of you. A variety of, little selfish interests arising from some alterations in the state of our body have necessarily occupied a great deal of my time & I need not tell you that calculations solicitations orations perorations & above all prorogations with all the formal classes which terminate in the same combination of the alphabet are woeful enemies to easy and friendly correspondence. The pen dreads the inkstandish and scarcely the various commodities of my new desk which by the way is the most convenient thing in the world could reconcile me to the manual operation of writing. If thinking and talking of Mrs. Morritt & you would have done the business I think you could hardly have complaind of my ungrateful neglect. But to leave apologies & to speak to business-I hope for his own sake your Captain Payne has more foundation for his military rank than his literary connections. I dont even remember being in company with one of the name but am positive I have never maintaing the least correspondence of any kind with such a person. So there is no occasion for the aristocratic dames of York thawing their frost on my account. One is a little astonishd at these things although they happen so frequently.

I rejoice with the heart of a Scotsman in the success of Lord Wellington and with all the pride of a Seer to boot.
I have for three years been proclaiming him as the only man we had to trust to. A man of genius and talent, not deterred by obstacles, not fettered by prejudices, not immured within the pedantries of his profession but playing the general and the hero where most of our military commanders would have exhibited the drill Serjeant or at best the adjutant. These campaigns will teach us what we have long needed to know that success depends not on the nice drilling of regiments but upon the grand movements and combinations of an army. We have been hitherto polishing hinges when we should have studied the mechanical union of a huge machine. And our Army begin to see that the Grand Secret as the French call it consists only in union joint exertion and concerted movement. This will enable us to meet the dogs on fair terms as to numbers and for the rest "my soul and body on the action both."

The downfall of Bonapartes military fame will be the signal of his ruin and if we may trust the reports this day brings us from Holland there is glorious mischief on foot already. I hope we shall be able to fling fuel into the flame immediatly. A country with so many dikes and ditches must be fearfully tenable when the peasants are willing to fight. I should enjoy the disconsolate visages of these Whig dogs these dwellers upon the isthmus, who have been foretelling the rout and ruin which it only required their being in power to have achieved. It is quite plain from Sir Robt. Wilsons account that, they neglected to feed the lamp of Russia and it only rested with their want of opportunity that they did not quench the smoking flax in the peninsula--a thought so profligate that those who from party or
personal interest indulged it ought to pray for mercy
and return thanks for the providential interruption which,
obstructed their purpose as they would for a meditated
but prevented parricide. But enough of the thorny,
subject of politics.

You are very kind to tell me so much of dear Lady Hood 1
in whose kindly temper and elastic play of spirits all must
delight who have the happiness to know her. I, am
delighted to learn from so good a judge of character &
circumstance that she studies the ground on which she
has to sustain a sort of perpetual skirmish for what better
is the situation of a gay & beautiful female in high, life
unprotected by her proper guardian. But I trust; all
will end well for her as her own good warm heart deserves.
As to Mrs. Apreece, she is one of those persons who aim
at literary acquaintances and the reputation of knowing
remarkable characters and seeing out of the way places
not for their own value nor for any pleasure she has at
the time but because such hearing and seeing & being
acquainted gives her a knowing air in the world. If it
fixes her in good society verily she has her reward and,
will not forfeit it by doing, any thing silly though I think
her entre nous a bit of a pretence. She takes a good
varnish however and will shew off very well in a London
literary party.

I grieve for your loss at Barosa but what more glorious
fall could a man select for himself or friend than dying
with his sword in hand and the cry of victory in his ears.

As for my own operations they are very trifling though
sufficiently miscellaneous. I have been writing a sketch
of Bonaparte's tactics for the Edinr. Register 1 and
some other trumpery of the same kind. Particularly I meditate some wild stanzas referring to the peninsula: if I can lick them into any shape I hope to get something handsome from the Booksellers for the Portugalueze sufferers " Silver and gold have I none but that which I have I will give unto them." My lyric[s] are calld the Vision of Don Roderic. You remember the story of the last Gothic King of Spain descending into an enchanted cavern to know the fate of the Moorish invasion—that is my machinery. Pray do not mention this for some one will snatch up the subject as I have been served before; and I have not written a line yet. I am going to Ashestiel for eight days to fish and rhime.

Do you ever see aught of George Ellis ? I made you acquainted and I shall be very angry if you dont cultivate each other. He is a prime support of the Quarterly which is making its way very well. I mentioned your wish to Gifford respecting Clarkes new volumes and I will remind him when I write to him. It is astonishing how closely they are beating up to the Edinburgh in popularity.

Adieu my dear Morritt. Mrs. Scott joins me in the kindest respects to your Lady. Lord Mellville is in town & I expect the honour of a call every moment so I will close my letter that it may be ready for a frank. I never saw the veteran Statesman in better health or spirits than he has shewn this winter. Ever Yours most affectionately

EDINR. 26 April 1811 WALTER SCOTT

TO GEORGE THOMSON, TRUSTEES OFFICE, ROYAL EXCHANGE, EDINBURGH
DEAR SIR,- The preceding page contains a few tawdry stanzas to one of the airs you recommended, which I indited yesterday at Bankhouse on my journey here. The words begin "There was an ancient fair," and an old newspaper which I found in the inn suggested the application of the tune to the late splendid exploit of our horse near Campo Mayor, for which the burthen is very well adapted. 1 As I intend to send you two songs besides, I think it will be unnecessary to prefix my name to this little rough effusion, which can have no effect unless when sung, and which I have studiously kept thin of poetry in hopes of giving it a martial and popular cast. Let me know if you like the lines, and if you think them quite adapted for so elegant a publication as yours. I will send you the "Bed in the barn" to-morrow or next day at furthest, and remain yours truly.

W.S.

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 30 April [1811]

[British Museum]

TO MISS CLEPHANE

[April or May 1811]

MY DEAR Miss CLEPHANE,- I did not embrace your kind offer to send the harp because we expected my friend Miss Scott who lives nearer and proposed sending hers- But both Minstrel and harp have failed us, the former in a fit of the tooth ache and the latter I suppose ringing in sympathy to her distress. Now you know I have a harp of mine own but I have it hung up by S' Fillans Spring and cannot reach it down at this moment- Now if you
can still send yours over it will be the greatest favour in
life except that of using it when it comes. The mode how
I leave entirely to you but we will take infinite care of the
instrument while with us. You wishd to hear the
Ballantynes so I asked them to look in this evening.
If you can trust the bearer he is a very steady fellow.

W. SCOTT

Tuesday three o'clock.

[Northampton]

TO GEORGE THOMSON, TRUSTEES OFFICE, ROYAL EXCHANGE, EDINBURGH

MY DEAR SIR,-I return the song. The lines cannot be better cut down than you have done it yourself, but in the pattern sent there were eight syllables, not six.

Observe-

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Her quiz - ing glass and dia - mond ring.

Right by all the rules of Cocker. I only mention this in vindication of my own accuracy, for I counted both the lines and notes. It does not make the least difference in the sense. As to giving a copy, I never had one except that which I sent to you, so that I should be sure to observe your caution. I sent you the "Bed in the Barn" the other day, thinking it was in the greatest hurry.
I like the melody of "Chirke Castle" and the stanza very well, but the name Chirke is enough to put the whole world's teeth on edge. I don't mean to observe any secret about "The Light dragoon," only it's not just the sort of thing that one solemnly puts their name to. I will send the Minstrelsy to-morrow or next day. Why was it not the minstrelsy of Kilgarvon or Conway? Yours very truly and hastily,

W. S.

[British Museum]

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE

DEAR SIR, I am distressed and ashamed at the appearance I must have been making in your eyes while you are loading [me] with your unmerited favours. A Mercantile friend undertook many weeks since to send a packet containing a few Books (my own publications) for your acceptance, and I have the mortification to find that they are still lying in his warehouse at Glasgow. Be so good as to let me know how they can be safely sent to you as I am sick of private hands and have written to desire that they may be returned to me without delay. Besides I want to add to them the Vision of Don Roderick, a short rhapsody which has been suggested by the success of your gallant countryman Lord Wellington and the very favourable state of affairs on the Peninsula.

For three months passed I have not almost had time to look at Swift except in the way of correcting the press. A Colleague in my office died and I had not only all his business to attend to, but the much more fretting and
unpleasing task of soliciting corresponding and negotiating

to procure if possible the vacant situation to which I might

be considered as having some title having done the duty

of the office for five years without a guinea of emolument.

I have not however been hitherto successful but the object

is worth some anxiety and trouble being full $\Box$ 1300 and

that joined to my own small fortune would make me

very independent indeed. I mention these things to

you in confidence because I should not have been satisfied

with trusting to the fidelity of my Glasgow friend altho

I thought myself safe in doing so, had my own avocations

been of a less peremptory and perplexing nature. I

believe I shall be the second edition of the Hare with

many friends, for you would think all the world would be

delighted to assist me just until it was in their power

to do me a real and reasonable service.

Had it not been for this sort of engagement I intended

myself the pleasure of being in Dublin, during the vacation

of our Courts when I should have esteemed myself

peculiarly happy in an opportunity of returning my

personal thanks to you my dear Sir for the extreme degree of

trouble which you have taken in my matters. Indeed it will

be entirely owing to you and the revd. Mr. Berwick if I

am able to give much that is new or curious in my Edition

of your great Patriot. I have made out a whole string of

notes upon your Swiftiana which I do not intend now to

repeat because it is in the parcel aforesaid and will reach

you along with it. To my notes I have added a few Queries

which I have to trust to your goodness to excuse. I have

been among my own hills for these three weeks past and

was quietly tuning my pipes to the aforesaid Vision of

Don Roderick when your hue & cry after me was
(2-486) forwarded by the Ballantynes— to be sure I could not have
(2-486) complained if you had advertised me as the greatest
(2-486) ingrate on the face of the earth and to say truth I had
(2-486) some momentary idea of putting into the papers as a
(2-486) melancholy accident the loss of my fingers by the bursting
(2-486) of a fowling piece as the only rational apology for my
(2-486) ungracious silence. But you will soon be troubled with
(2-486) me far oftener than may be convenient, for I am about

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(2-487) to resume Swift with my whole strength mind and might.
(2-487) I have the pleasure to know your ingenious countryman
(2-487) Mr. Croker very well having often met him in London
(2-487) and being on a very friendly footing with him. His
(2-487) Epigrammatic Pamphlet is really very clever but gives a
(2-487) sad account of your Politics: another of my occupations
(2-487) has been the Annual Register now coming out. I have
(2-487) selected out of your valued collection the adieu to the
(2-487) Prince of the Brasils because it will assort very well [with]
(2-487) my own Don Roderick who is to make his first entree
(2-487) before the Public in the same register. I am very much
(2-487) indebted indeed to Mr. Theo: Swift for his kindness
(2-487) and liberality in permitting me the use of the valuable
(2-487) materials respecting his honoured ancestor but am
(2-487) deeply ashamed of the personal trouble you have taken
(2-487) in transcribing the whole. My eccentric friend Miss
(2-487) White sent me the transcript of the Manuscript notes on
(2-487) Clarendon which are truly Swiftian. I have e'en printed
(2-487) them ad longum tho it was a curious task for a Scotchman.
(2-487) Among your other favours let me not omit to thank you
(2-487) for your kind prose invitation and poetical welcome to
(2-487) Ireland. Perhaps the day may yet come tho removed till
(2-487) Spring 1812 when I may have an opportunity of personally
(2-487) expressing how much I am dear Sir Your obliged humble
(2-487) Servt
WALTER SCOTT

If the Packet can be sent to any of your friends at the Castle whose franks carry unusual weight, I can divide it into two or three Post Parcels. Pray direct to Edinburgh as I leave this cabin very soon.

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRK. I May, l811.

[Brotherton]

488 LETTERS OF l811

TO CLARKE WHITFIELD

ASHESTIEL 7 May [1811]

DEAR SIR,—I am just favoured with your letter & write in answer to say that I have no thoughts of writing another poem, excepting a sort of thing respecting Spain & Portugal very short, & which as I intend [it] to be almost entirely in the stanza of Spencer could in no shape be adapted for Music. I know my friends & publishers the Messrs. Ballantynes had considerable offers from musical composers for the exclusive privilege of setting from that work, but they declined imposing any restrictions in that particular, as it seemed to them to be stepping out of the ordinary line of their profession, & imposing an unusual restraint upon the gentlemen of yours. If ever I should write another poem, which if I live & have my health I may do perhaps much sooner than I have the slightest idea of at present, I will take care you are early supplied with any part of the words that may seem adapted for music. But as my publishers seem to make a point of honour of not admitting any
monopoly I shall of course be unwilling to impose upon them any condition in that particular.

I am just now writing in the Country but when I return to Town which will be next week, I will subjoin McGregor a rua ruagh (pronounced O roo). My friends the Miss Maclean Clephanes will procure it me, who have the largest collection of Highland Music I ever saw written down. I regret Braham should be so capricious, but his talent is unique & that naturally

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inspires conceit. I hope this will find Miss Whitfeld continuing better, & I am ever. Dear Sir, Yours truly

[Abbotsford Copies]                             W SCOTT

TO MISS CLEPHANE

MY DEAR Miss GLEPHANE,-My friend Mr. Weber who takes the trouble of presenting this has promised to make drawings of the CarslogieI reliques for yours truly.

W. SCOTT.

It will give Mrs. Scott and me the greatest pleasure my dear Miss Clepane to wait upon you at eight tomorrow evening and I have secured the Ballantini-We will stay till eleven unless you will turn us away sooner. W. S.

[Received at 23 Georges Sq. May 1811]  
[Northampton]

TO GEORGE THOMSON, ESQ., ROYAL EXCHANGE
MY DEAR SIR,-I assure you it has been very particular
and pressing business of my own as well as the necessity
of attending the circuit, which have prevented my getting
the song ready for you. I go to Ashetiel on Monday
when I shall be quite at leisure to fulfill my engagements
and I hope to send you one song at least in the course of
the week and to the tune you wish. I have the Sketch
of a little Border tale which I think may answer. Believe
me yours very truly                           W. S.

EDINR. Saturday Evening [May 1811]
[British Museum]

TO WILLIAM ERSKINE, ADVOCATE, ALBANY STREET,
EDINBURGH

MY DEAR ERSKINE,-I write to you because I want
you to read & because if you do not like to do so you can
put the letter in your pocket since it requires no answer.
I am truly anxious about Mrs. Erskines situation. Is it
not usual in such cases either to get a nurse or to wean the
child. I should prefer the latter which for some reasons
was Walters case about the same age and you see few stouter
boys. But I should fear the perseverance in a duty so
exhausting as nursing cannot be good either for the child
or mother when the latter is under such distress of mind.

I had a line from your sister which would have brought
me to town if I could have hoped you would have complied
with her proposal which was that we should visit
Killermont together. But your letter assigns too good
reasons for remaining in Albany and I only hope you
neglect nothing that may tend to soothe or even to distract
your feelings. You have much left to care for, many
weighty and important duties to yourself your family
Society and your friends so you must compel yourself
to regular exercise and whatever else is necessary to the
support of your health.

Never puzzle yourself about my affairs till we meet.
I have written to Mr. R. Dundas & by the time I come
to town I shall be surprized if I do not hear from him. I
think they use me coldly and unworthily which I feel more
than any pecuniary disappointment for " bread we shall
eat or white or brown." I am busy with Don Rodericke &
I hope by the time it is finishd your spirits will be sufficient
to go over it with me before it goes to press which it must
not do without your imprimatur. It is all in the Spenserian
 stanza principally with the view of propitiating you.

I am almost glad you are not here. Nothing but ever-
lasting rain hail and easterly blights & no walking without
being wet to the skin and gaining a good headache for the
day from the severity of the damp and cold. Yet my retreat
has been very useful as I have finishd much which might
have been endless under the interruptions of Edinburgh.

Adieu my dear Erskine. Mrs. Scott joins in cordial
wishes to Mrs. Erskine of whose health I hope to get a
good account on Monday evening when I shall call on
you as we shall be in town at Dinner on that day. Do not
labour too hard but take care of yourself for the sake of
all whom you love & who love you including Your
affectionate friend                      WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL Wednesday May 8, 1811
[Miss Erskine]

TO GEORGE THOMSON

(2-491) Postmark May 10, 1811

(2-491) DEAR SIR,- I am not sorry Lord Langley does not
(2-491) answer, for I am certain I can make a pretty tale of it by
(2-491) taking it out of its strait jacket. I believe you will find
(2-491) few if any lines in it which exceed seven syllables, which
(2-491) was all I looked to or really understand anything about.
(2-491) It is impossible for me to attempt this tune again, not
(2-491) having any idea of what words would suit it, and being
(2-491) moreover, incompetent to anything requiring liveliness or
(2-491) jollity. I have not a particle of poetical humour in my
(2-491) composition. A military or romantic song I may get at,
(2-491) but there I stop. I will therefore far rather try the
(2-491) Highland air,1 and as I shall be in town on Monday, when

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(2-492) I can have the advantage of hearing you sing it, I will be
(2-492) in less danger of repeating my errors.

(2-492) I am very sorry for your disappointment, and willing to
(2-492) do my best to repair but you are sensible you have only
(2-492) my eyes to trust to; ears cm. fait de musique I have none.
(2-492) I remain very much yours W. SCOTT

(2-492) ASHESTIEL Wednesday

(2-492) George Thomson Esq
(2-492) A. Ballantyne's Esq Trustees Office
(2-492) Royal Exchange Edinburgh

[British Museum]
TO JAMES BALLANTYNE

(2-492) MY DEAR JAMES,-I received your letter this morning (2-492) and will attend to all that it contains : the jar shall be (2-492) discarded and the other lesser particulars reformd. I I (2-492) am not so clear about omitting the stanza you object to (2-492) though perhaps I can mend it. A great deal of the poem (2-492) is finishd at least in dead colours as the painters say for it (2-492) wants much touching. My attention has been a little (2-492) dissipated by considering a plan for my own future (2-492) comfort which I hasten to mention to you.

(2-492) My lease of Ashestiel is out and I now sit a tenant at (2-492) will under a heavy rent and at all the inconveniences of (2-492) one who is in the house of another. I have therefore (2-492) resolved to purchase a piece of ground sufficient for a (2-492) cottage & a few fields. There are two pieces either of (2-492) which would suit me but both would make a very (2-492) desireable property indeed. They stretch along the (2-492) Tweed near half way between Melrose and Selkirk on

1811 SIR WALTER SCOTT 493

(2-493) the opposite side from Lord Somerville & could be (2-493) had for between ☐ 7000,, & ☐ 8000,, or either of them (2-493) separate for about half the sum. I have serious thoughts (2-493) of purchasing one or both and I must have recourse to (2-493) my pen to make the matter easy. The worst is the (2-493) difficulty which John might find in advancing so large (2-493) a sum as the copy-right of a new poem supposing it to (2-493) be made payable in the course of a year at farthest from (2-493) the work going to press would be essential to my purpose. (2-493) Yet the Lady of the Lake came soon home. I have a (2-493) letter this morning from Mr. Dundas giving me good hope (2-493) of my treasury business being carried through ; if this
appointment take place I will buy both the little farms
which will give me a mile of the beautiful turn of Tweed
above Gala-foot, if not I will confine my purchase to
one. As my income in the event supposd will be very
considerable it will afford a sinking fund to clear off
what debt I may incur in making the purchase. It
is proper John & you should be as soon as possible
apprised of these my intentions which I believe you
will think reasonable in my situation & at my age
while I may yet hope to sit under the shade of a
tree of my own planting. I shall not I think want any
pecuniary assistance beyond what I have noticed but of
course my powers of rendering it will be considerably
limited for a time. I hope the Register will give a start
to its predecessor. I assure you I shall spare no pains.
To recur to the 4th Stanza-were you not aware that
Wales i.e. the country retaind by the British included
the South-west of Scotland as far as the firth of Clyde
untill the reign of Malcolm Camnore when the last King
of the Strath Clyde Britons became extinct. Merlin is
buried near Peebles & gives name to the parish where he
lies. Llywarch's battles were almost all fought upon the
border, & so late as the time of Froissart Jedburgh &
Carlisle are calld cities in Wales, so is Stow upon Galawater
where the celebrated Arthur is said to have founded

a church. Nay an you catch me napping on my geography
I will give you my head for the washing. But a
short note may be necessary.

John must bend his earnest attention to clearing his
hands of the Quire Stock and to taking in as little as he
can unless in the way of exchange-in short of reefing
our sails which are at present too much spread for our
(2-494)ballast. He must in future forbear ordering out of
catalogues as much as possible. It is always a poor trade
and sometimes a dangerous one.

I have his letter acquainting me with the change in
Constable's firm - No association of the kind Mr. G.
proposes will stand two years with him for its head. His
temper is too haughty to bear with the complaints and to
answer all the minute enquiries which partners of that
sort think themselves entitled to make & expect to have
answered. Their first onset will however be terrible &
John must be prepared to lie bye and not play the frog
in the fable by affecting rivalry. Give them cable and
they will bring themselves up. Campbell & Caddell are
neither of them men that will willingly lie out of interest
as Hunter was forced to do. In short as Durandarte says
"patience Cousin & shuffle the cards."

Having so very many things to talk of I wish you would
meet me at Johns on Monday between three & four
o'clock as I will stop there on my return from this place.

Yours truly                              W SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 12 May 1811

The new poem would help the presses.

Pray have the goodness to send to the Post Office that
my letters may be sent to Castle Street. This is of some
consequence.

[Glen]

SIR WALTER SCOTT        1811        495

TO LADY ABERCORN
I do not know anything of a play of mine my dear friend unless it be a sort of half-mad German tragedy which I wrote many years ago when my taste was very green and when like the rest of the world I was taken in with the bombast of Schiller. I never set the least value upon it and as I gave copies to one or two people who asked for them I am not surprized it should have risen up in judgement against me though its resurrection has been delayed so many years. I happen fortunately to have a clean copy of which I entreat your acceptance. The story of the Invisible Tribunal on which it is founded is probably familiar to your Ladyship. A very good little German romance entitled Hermann of Unna is founded upon it and was translated about the time I employed myself in this idle task. The only tolerable scene is that between the mother and son which I think would have a dramatic effect.

I long to know when your motions are fixed. My wife will accompany me to Dumfries as she is very desirous to have an opportunity however awkward to have the honour of thanking you for all your kindness. She is engaged in copying the Vision of Don Roderick as fast as I copy it out for press in order that your Ladyship may be possessed of it so soon as it is finished. It is all in the Stanza of Spenser to which I am very partial. The Booksellers intend first to publish a limited impression in Quarto & then to put it into the Edinburgh Annual Register to which I have made some other little contributions.

I am about a grand and interesting scheme at present—no less than the purchase of a small property delightfully
situated on the side of the Tweed my native river.

The worst is there are few trees and those all young. I intend to build a beautiful little cottage upon the spot which will either be my temporary or constant residence, as Mr. Arbuthnot succeeds or fails in his kind exertions on my behalf. I am sure I cannot be sufficiently grateful to him or the kind friend who interested him in my fortune. I have a letter from Mr. R. Dundas who pleads his journey to Scotland as a cause of delay and seems pretty confident of bringing matters to a favourable conclusion. Am I not a good philosopher to write verses when I have 1300 a year trembling in the scale? But how could I help myself by being anxious. I suppose Mr. Arbuthnott will continue to forward your Ladyship packets when you go to Ireland. Believe me Dear Lady Marchioness ever your truly obliged & grateful

EDINBURGH 17 May [1811] W. S. [Pierpont Morgan]

TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

[Postmarked 23rd May 1811]

MY DEAR MADAM.-We are deprvd of the prospect of waiting upon you on the Birthday by the confusion into which the business of this Court is thrown by the most unexpected and irreparable loss which it has sustaind in the death of the President. It is scarcely possible to conceive a calamity which is more universally
or will be so long felt by the country. His integrity and legal knowledge joined to a peculiar dignity of thought action and expression had begun to establish in the minds of the public at large that confidence in the regular and solemn administration of justice which is so necessary to its usefulness and respectability. My official situation as well as the private intimacy of our families makes me a sincere mourner on this melancholy occasion for I feel a severe personal deprivation besides the general share of sorrow common to all of every party or description who were in the way of witnessing his conduct. He was a rare instance of a man whose habits were every way adverse to the cultivation of popularity rising nevertheless to the highest point in the public opinion by the manly and dignified discharge of his duty. I have been really so much shock'd and out of spirits yesterday and the day preceding that I can write and think of nothing else.

I have to send you the Vision of Don Roderic so soon as we can get it out. It is a trifle I have written to eke out the subscription for the suffering Portuguese.

Mrs. Scott desires her kindest compliments to you and the young people. I suppose Mr. Scott is return'd or upon the point of returning.

Believe me my dear Mrs. Scott ever yours most truly & respectfully

WALTER SCOTT

I desired the servant at Ashestiel to bring down the filly & her mama as the Mertoun grass will be better than ours
at this season which is important for the foal. I hope the
filly will turn well out as she looks very promising at
present.

[Polwarth]

TO JOHN BALLANTYNE

[May-June 1811]

DEAR JOHN,- The Entail is in Walpoles Works & only
requires to be copied out. I forget the volume but you
will easily find it out as the poetry is not extensive.

I think I have a scheme for the Vision of Don Roderick
but reserve it till meeting. It is coming on apace thanks
to bad weather only.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO LADY ABERCORN

MY DEAR FRIEND,- The calamity which has befallen
our Courts of Justice and Scotland in general, by the
sudden death of our Lord President renders it impossible
for me to be at Dumfries on the 27th agreeably to my
intention as we are all thrown into great confusion by so
cruel a loss. I have God knows my own peculiar share
in this general misfortune for both in my official intercourse
and in private life I lived upon the best and most
intimate footing with the great judge we have lost.
There never was a more general sorrow extending over
all classes and parties of men. He was a rare instance
of a man who attained universal popularity by the
discharge of his duty although he scorned to court it by
any of the usual arts. And I do not believe that high
(2-498)and scrupulous integrity, extent of legal knowledge and
dignified demeanour so necessary to support the
credit of a Court of Justice ever met so happily in a,
person of his eminent station. He had not been at the
head of our law above two years, just long enough to

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(2-499)shew that [the conduct] we all admired was no
extraordinary exertion in consequence of his promotion but
the steady and uniform tenor of his conduct. He was
not ill above half an hour and I had parted with him the
day before in great health and spirits after much laughing
at some nonsense or other—but such is our precarious
tenure—I forget, my dear friend that you probably did
not know this excellent man but as a dear friend of mine
and an irreparable and unspeakable loss to Scotland I
am sure you will regret our loss of him.

Mrs. Scott has made a copy for your Ladyship of the
Vision of Don Roderic so far as it is corrected for the
press. There are about 20 verses more but I have not
since this shock had spirits enough to correct them.
There are probably many errors both of the pen & poet
in Mrs. Scott's copy. I put the poem up with a finely
printed Copy of the Castle of Otranto which was printed
by the Ballantynes here & to which at their request
I wrote a hasty sort of a preface, so I made them give
me a copy for your kind acceptance.

I sent under Mr. Arbuthnott's cover a copy of the play
your Ladyship enquired about although it certainly is
a very foolish performance. But I fancy you must have
set out before it could reach London. Mr. Arbuthnott
will probably forward it.
I have directed the packet with the book and poem to the care of the postmaster at Dumfries who of course will give it to your Ladyships servant.

Our poor president is to be interd on Wednesday at which last duty I must be present-

I have heard nothing from R. Dundas excepting that my matters were interrupted by his going to Scotland & that he expected to resume them with hopes of good success. I will apprise you my dear friend of the issue so soon as I learn it. My respectful Compliments attend the Marquis & family. I am ever Your Ladyships truly obliged & grateful

W. S.

EDINR. 25th May [1811]

[TO CHARLES ERSKINE]

MY DEAR CHARLES,- You will see by the enclosed that Peel has nearly made a bargain for me with Doctor Douglas for his land on Tweedside.

As the situation and terms in every respect suit me I have no hesitation in writing to Mr. Laidlaw that I shall close with the Doctor on the terms he proposes supposing the title to be correct. I beg the favour that you will consult with Peel about closing the matter directly with the Doctor by Missives. My plan is to make the present farm-house do by dint of crowding for next season & to
(2-501) set about a handsome cottage.

(2-501) My change of situation dear Charles is like to occasion you a little trouble for I am so helpless in everything respecting farming that I must trust to your goodness as I have done hitherto to Mr. Laidlaws to give a look to my matters as you ride past to Selkirk which I hope will not be very inconvenient. There is a farm immediately east of the Drs. which will be one day in the market when I hope I may compass it. The two will make as the advertisements say a very desireable property. I am quite tired of the plague of repairs rise of rent &c at Ashestiel & as I am offerd 3000 guineas for a new poem I can easily fetch myself home for additional expence.

(2-501) Yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

2 June 1811

[Curle]

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. ROBERT DUNDAS

(2-501) MY DEAR DUNDAS, - I cannot think of your leaving Edinburgh without my expressing in the way least intrusive to you and least painful to us both the deep and acute share which I take in the recent calamity which has so suddenly and under such awful circumstances deprived you of a most affectionate father me of a kind and efficient friend who honourd me with a far greater share of his regard than I deserved and our Country of a patriot whose like she will probably not see for a century to come. The inevitable law of nature, that sad reflection
humana perpassi sumus supplies the only consolation that so grievous a dispensation will admit of: unless we should add to it the reflection that our departed friend was removed in the full enjoyment of his admirable faculties & without any painful interval of bodily complaint. In common cases indeed the twilight of the understanding and decay of the frame which often precedes the close of existence may be considered as a preparation to wean the sufferer himself from the love of life & to prepare his friends for his removal from among them. But who could have wished that to save ourselves the suddenness of this most unexpected blow Lord Mellville's noble intellect should have lost the least of its brilliant acuteness or that he should have been even for the shortest space subjected to pain or even to the necessity of inactivity. It is thus I endeavour to reconcile myself to a mode of dissolution which within so short a space has deprived [me] of two friends whom I honour more than any which remain behind, since their kindness to my youth & friendship since my more advanced age render my regret for their loss almost filial.

I do not ask you to forgive this intrusion which I have purposely delayed till I understand you are about to leave Edinburgh. We shall meet in happier times and correspond upon pleasanter subjects. The world is before us both & while you in the discharge of your important duties will I am sure always remember the example of such a father it shall be my prayer to God that in my very subordinate walk I shall never be found altogether undeserving of the regard with which Lord Mellville honoured me. An affectionate adieu & God's blessing with you.

WALTER SCOTT
MY DEAR MORRAY,-I am truly grieved at the issue of --s affair- ...

We have had enough of distress lately from the loss of characters eminent by their situation and talents, & I assure you I sympathized deeply in that which by near relationship must have been so severe & unexpected a stroke to Mrs. Murray & you. The loss of the President & Lord Melville so closely following upon each other affected my spirits very much, & effectually interrupted for a time a little poetical attempt which I was making for behoof of the Portuguese sufferers. I hope however soon to send it to you, as I shall have a few separate copies for my friends. I The same reason has prevented my being sufficiently attentive to get the separate copies of our tactical essay. I will make enquiry about them today. Perhaps if they are generally approved of, the remarks may be extended into a small pamphlet: the late events seem to me to furnish much illustration of the doctrine of reserves, for it is very edifying to see how each party supported by repeated reinforcements their position in the village of Fuentes d'Onore.

I hope we are now about to reap in the Peninsula the fruits due to bravery & perseverance, and if we do not take fright, or what is worse, starve the business, I firmly believe Bonaparte will find the grave of his glory there.
There is now strong talk of raising an Anglo-Spanish army in our pay, which I suppose may be increased to almost any given numbers.

Mrs. Scott joins in kindest remembrances to Mrs. Murray & I am ever very truly yours

WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. 8 June 1811

DEAR SIR, - I have great pleasure in sending you the inclosed. I would like much to write by tomorrow's post to Mr. Earle but it will be necessary I am able to say to him which of the situations you incline to prefer as you see they are both at your option. Will you let me know any time tomorrow your choice on the subject & I will write to Mr. Earle by the Selkirk post. If you come here either at breakfast time, 1/2 past nine o'clock or at 4 o'clock you will find me at home & finish the business.

Yours &c

ASHESTIEL 1 Thursday.

TO ARCHIBALD PARK

TO LORD MELVILLE

MY DEAR LORD, - I beg your acceptance of a little
(2-504)poem for which I claim applause for the intention
(2-504)though not for the execution. If you have not time for
(2-504)such vagaries yourself pray send it to Lady Mellville with
(2-504)my kind compliments.

(2-504)In civility and considering how much your time is
(2-504)occupied I should stop here but I cannot help expressing
(2-504)some anxiety to know how Mr. Homes application in
(2-504)Treasury is likely to be disposed of not having heard
(2-504)anything upon the subject for some time. Perhaps it
(2-504)may be right to mention to Mr. Percival that the public
(2-504)cannot in any shape be burthend by the grant of
(2-504)superannuation to Mr. Home because it is in the first
(2-504)instance to be allocated upon the Fee-fund which affords
(2-504)a surplus more than sufficient to discharge it.

SIR WALTER SCOTT       1811         505

(2-505)I have bought the little Tweedside farm I wrote to your
(2-505)Lordship about whether for a temporary retreat or a
(2-505)constant place of residence the success or failure of this
(2-505)application must determine. I am therefore a little
(2-505)feverish about it. We are all in gaping expectation of the
(2-505)new appointments. I have the honour to be ever My dear
(2-505)Lord Your obliged & faithful humble Servant

(2-505)WALTER SCOTT

(2-505)EDINR. 30 June 1811.

(2-505)I inclose a poem of considerable merit in the subject
(2-505)of which your Lordship is too deeply interested. The
(2-505)author as I hear is a young Kirkman of the name of
(2-505)Buchanan tutor in Lord Wemyss family.

(2-505)The Right Honble
MY DEAR Miss CLEPHANE,-I am fortunate in being able to request your acceptance of the Orpheus Caledonius 2 now a rare book and which has some of the most original sets of our old Scotch songs. You may believe I am highly gratified by Mrs. Clephane and your approbation of Don Roderick who now with characteristic Spanish gravity and tardiness draws to a conclusion. I hope to send you a copy in the end of the week I have ordered a small set for my friends not to interfere with the purpose of the publication. But Mr. Ballantyne promises they are to be very handsome.

Pray tell Mrs. G. I know nothing of Sir W. W. Wynne the welch G- amighty. I know his brother Charles a little bit, but none of the rest of the family.

I hope you are not so desperate in your intentions "the lovely isle again to see " as you threatend when we last met. Kind compliments to Mother and Sister and believe me very faithfully and respectfully Your affectionate friend WALTER SCOTT

EDINR. Monday.

Do you know I have made a discovery of a likeness
which tormented me from a wavering uncertainty of recollection since I have the pleasure of knowing you. It is the very decided resemblance of your profile to a Greek coin of Minerva. This would be in many instances an unfortunate discovery since the outward resemblance might impose all the painful duties of prudence and talent necessary to sustain the character. But I mention it to you without fear of inconvenience as I know you can play the part without effort.

I had to reclaim Orpheus not quite from the Shades but something like it or I would have answered your kind note sooner.

[Northampton]

TO GEORGE THOMSON

EDINBURGH, July [1811]

AFTER repeated trials, I can make nothing of " Chirke Castle " that would be in the least satisfactory. The recurrence of the eternal double rhymes and the short structure of the verse renders it unfit (at least in my hands) for anything very pretty, and I am really more jealous of these little things than of long poems. I am much better pleased with " Glencoe," which I have finished in the rough. The death of the two great men who made part of the social company at Mr. Wauchope's the last time we met has broken two strings of my heart. I will send you " Glencoe " the instant I have got this damned Spaniard, whose national sloth is infectious, out of my hands. He is now almost finished.
TO JOHN B. S. MORRITT

MY DEAR MORRITT-I have this moment got your kind letter just as I was packing up Don Roderick for you-a flying copy which be [sic] the assistance of an office frank will reach you far sooner than Murrays heavy quarto. This patriotic puppet show has been finishd under wretched auspices-poor Lord Mellvilles death so quickly succeeding that of presidt. Blair one of the best and wisest judges that ever distributed justice broke my spirit sadly. My official situation placed me in daily contact with the President and his ability and candour were the source of my daily admiration. As for poor dear Lord Mellville

Tis vain to name him whom we mourn in vain.

Almost the last time I saw him he was talking of you in the highest terms of regard and expressing great hopes of again seeing you at Dunira this summer where I proposed to attend you. Hei mihi! quid hei mihi! humana perpessi sumus ! His loss will be long and severely felt here and envy is already paying her cold tribute of applause to the worth which she malignd while it walkd upon earth.

There was a very odd coincidence between the deaths of these eminent characters, and that of a very inferior person a dentist of this city named Dubuisson.1 He met the Presidt. the day before his death, who used a particular expression in speaking to him-the day before Lord Mellville died he also met Dubuisson nearly on the same spot and to the man's surprize used the Presidts. very words in saluting him. On this second death, he expressd (jocularly however) an apprehension that he
himself would be the third—was taken ill and died in an hours space. Was not this remarkable?

I am quite delighted with your account of your journey and would be most happy if I could promise myself the pleasure of seeing you in Yorkshire this season. But as the French Ambassador told the King wishing to show that he understood the vernacular idiom and familiar turn of the English language, "I have got some fish to fry." You must know that my lease of Ashestiel being expired I have bought a small farm value about \[150\] yearly with the intention of "bigging myself a bower" after my own fashion. The situation is good as it lies along the Tweed about three miles above Melrose but alas! the plantations are very young. However I think if I can get an elegant plan for a cottage it will look very well, and furnish me amusement for some time before I get every thing laid out to my mind. We stay at Ashestiel this season, but migrate the next to our new settlements. I have only fixd upon two points respecting my intended cottage one is that it shall stand in my garden or rather kail yard—the other that the little drawing room shall open into a little conservatory in which conservatory there shall be a fountain—these are articles of taste which I have long determined upon. But I hope before a stone of our paradise is begun we shall meet and collogue about it. I believe I must be obliged to my English friends for a few good acorns as I intend to sow a bank instead of planting it and we do not get them good here.

I will write to you again very soon being now busied in bundling off my presentation copies of Don Roderic. Charlotte joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Morritt our
TO MRS. SCOTT OF HARDEN

MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,- Accept Don Roderic & let charity which hides a multitude of sins throw a corner of her mantle over the poetical blunders of the doughty Spaniard. Report says that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire has actually bought that pleasant farm lately belonging to the worthy Dr. Douglas of Galashiels and that he intends to build a bower there next summer. We hear one of his principal motives in making this large purchase was to draw a little nearer his kind and beloved friends at Mertoun. I have nothing to add to this Gossip except that the House which Jack built will sink in comparison to the cottage which is to be built of all which I hope we will have an early opportunity of talking since we set out for Ashestiel on the 12 Current or next day at farthest. My best compliments to Mr. Scott & the little folks & I am ever Dear Mrs. Scott Yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

TO PATRICK MURRAY

EDINR. 2 July 1811.
MY DEAR MURRAY,-I send you a copy of my Vision-
a Rhodomontade piece of goods it is, but you know poets 
are entitled to be a little ecstatic upon good news. I am 
desirous to get a copy out to Adam Fergusson and shall 
make an effort through the War Office. Poor fellow he 
has been unlucky in being out of the way when so much 
good fighting was going, yet perhaps fortunate in escaping 
the Polish pikemen. I think it would appear all these 
butcherly villains have been cut off; why then rejoice 
therefore! My kind compliments attend Mrs. Murray 
and believe me ever truly yours W. SCOTT

SIR,-I am honoured with your hospitable invitation to 
Edgeworthstown which adds to the regret I feel in not 
having been able to achieve my intended journey to 
Ireland as nothing would give me more pleasure than an 
opportunity of returning thanks to Mr. and Miss Edgeworth 
for the peculiar pleasure which I have received 
from their very amusing and interesting publications. 
I will not affect to bandy compliments about the honours 
you offer me as a minstrel it is sufficient that you think 
me worthy of any attention in that character and I assure 
you I shall value my rhimes more highly in the hopes 
your approbation was sincere. As for the thorny wreath 
of the Reviewer I beg leave utterly to decline the painful 
honours having never adventured in that sort of composition 
above a few antiquarian articles very harmless
and very stupid I am the more anxious to mention this because Fame I have heard has done me the dishonour to attribute to me a very silly and impertinent review of Miss Edgeworth's Tales of fashionable Life which appeared in the Quarterly Review. I know only one motive I could have for venting my revenge on such a work in such a manner and that is the soreness of my sides for several days after I read the Irish journey in the inimitable tale of Ennui. Perhaps this idle rumour has never reached you but if it should I trust Miss Edgeworth did not believe it. It will give me great pride and pleasure to feel myself authorized to pay my respects at Edgeworthstown should I ever visit Ireland and I beg you will not allow any member of your family or connected with it by friendship to visit our Northern Metropolis without giving me a right to offer them any civilities in my powers.

I have been reading with infinite delight the Cottage Dialogues and the notes. But I am surprised to find most of your Iricisms (many of them at least) are familiar Scoticisms. This emboldens me to exercise my aforesaid vocation as an Antiquarian Critic and challenge the derivation of Kemp (applied to the spinning matches) as said to be derived from a Camp or tents. It is an old Saxon word for strife and gives rise to our modern champion the Kiempe 2 of Germany and the Kemperie man or Kempe of our old romance. Vide the curious ballad of King Estmere in Percys Reliques of ancient poetry.

Many of the matches in which our Scottish labourers strive against each other, particularly those which the reapers undertake are popularly called Kemping matches and the contending parties are said to kemp, although tents must be out of the question from the nature of the work.
TO MRS. SCOTT OF HAR DEN

[No date]

MY DEAR MISTRESS SCOTT,-I take the opportunity of

greeting you by the Messenger who comes to reclaim

Lady Wallace (your quadruped pensioner) whose filly

I suppose can now more than dispense with her services.

I hope James Stewart will handle the filly often & use

him to see and receive kindness from men which makes the

training of that breed of ponies the easiest thing in the

world.

I am truly glad that you like Don Roderic but I am

now dreaming of nothing but cottages upon Tweedside.

If I escape being declared crazy for my various projects

I shall be anxious to have the advantage of your taste.

I left all our lawyers about a fortnight ago agape at the

immaculate trio Sir Francis Citizen Scott & my Lady

Oxford.1 It is truly pleasant to escape to the birches &

alders after such discussions. I hope you think of

coming up Tweed while days are long and skies somewhat

clear. Charlotte & Anne will be delighted to see any of

SIR WALTER SCOTT
their kind Xmas cousins that you will admit into the
dal compleat convert to his opinion about bullion as the
Roxburghshire & Merse Lairds are to his railway. Mrs.
Scott desires her best respects & I am ever Dear Madam
Your truly honourd & faithful

W. SCOTT
ASHESTIEL Wednesday evening

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY

EDINBURGH, July 2, 1811.

MY DEAR HAYLEY, - I have not yet thanked you for
your kind and valued recollection of me in the acceptable
present of a copy of your plays, because I was then in the
very agonies of bringing forth the enclosed Drum and
Trumpet performance, which I sent to the press sheet by
sheet as fast as it was written. The death of two eminent
public characters interrupted my task not a little, and
took from me for some time all power of proceeding with
it. I was intimately acquainted with both, and in
frequent intercourse both familiarly and in the way of
public business. We shall not soon see two such men in
Scotland, to the welfare of which country they were
devotedly attached.

I am just now setting about a task in which I wish I
had some of your good taste to assist me. I mean
building myself a cottage, or, in the language of romance,
a bower upon Tweedside. The situation has a pastoral character, but it is not of a romantic or beautiful description. As the little property lies half a mile along the banks of a bold and rapid river, I hope I shall find a good place for my proposed hut. Can you direct me to any good plan for such a cottage? I know you are distinguished for good taste in rural affairs as well as in literature. Two things I have determined: one is to have my little garden (having no pretension to fruit walls) close to the house, and entering from it like some of your beautiful old rectories; the other is to have the offices adjoining to the house, for you must know I like to spend time in Twisting of collars my dogs to hold, And combing the mane of my palfrey bold.

Besides, as my boys, according to the habit of the country, will be a great deal in the stable, I wish the said stable to be under my own eye. Excuse my plaguing you with these trifles. I have a great notion you can assist me if you will think about it. Adieu. Believe me, ever dear sir. Your truly obliged and faithful,

WALTER. SCOTT

[Notes and Queries, 5th Ser. xi. 65]

TO REV. R. POLWHELE, KENWYN, TRURO

EDINBURGH, July 3, l8ll

MY DEAR SIR,-I should be very ungrateful indeed, if in distributing the few copies I have retained of the inclosed drum and trumpet thing, I should forget to request your kind acceptance of it, especially as I am
sure you will applaud the purpose, and pardon imperfections in the execution. I am so busy making up all my little parcels, that I have only a moment to add that I hope this will find you as well as I wish you. Believe me, dear Sir, your truly obliged, WALTER SCOTT

[Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1832]

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TO LADY ABERCORN

EDINBURGH, 5th July 1811

MANY thanks my dearest friend for your kind remembrance, from Dumfries I which I postponed answering from day to day because I expected continually to have had Don Roderick before the public. I sent a small private copy of which I printed a few to give away among particular friends, to Mr. Arbuthnot on Sunday last for your kind acceptance. By to-morrow's post I shall send him one of the large-paper copies which is better fitted for your weak eyes-I hope sincerely they are getting better and I beg you will not exert them too much but get some one to read to you. When very young and a hard student I injured my eyes greatly by reading very late and writing still later but I found great advantage from the constant practice then recommended to me of washing the throat and particularly the back of the neck repeatedly in the course of the day with the coldest spring water I could get; and my eyes are now tolerably recovered though I am very cautious of straining them. I also used with advantage an Eye Lotion of which I had the receipt from Lord Webb Seymour. I enclose the receipt but as disorders of that organ differ so much I beg you will not use it, without the advice of some medical
person & if anyone of that description says it will not
hurt your Ladyships complaint I will venture to hope
it may do it good. If you bath the back of the neck
with springwater putting a tea-spoonful of nitre into it
will render the cold still more intense.

We have indeed in poor Lord Mellville lost a generous-
spirited patriot, a man of the most extensive political
information and one of the kindest friends in private life
that ever adorned society. Lady Mellville is still at
Dunira in the Highlands bearing her incalculable loss as
people must bear irremediable afflictions. The fatal
disease was an ossification of the veins and fibres of the
heart which had commenced so far back as 1802 attended
with violent palpitation and fainting fits. He was quite
sensible for several years of the nature of his complaint
that it was gradually producing an interruption to the
circulation in the very seat of life and must be mortal
sooner or later. He has left a very remarkable letter
to a medical friend dated six or seven years back in
which he expresses this opinion of his disorder and
promises to be attentive to regimen at table. But as to
riding fast and speaking vehemently in public from which
the physician had also dissuaded [him] he says that he
must be left to the dictates of his own feelings both in
the exercise and in the discharge of his public duty
and that he must ride fast or slow as the feeling of the
moment prompted and that he could not think of
speaking in public as if his physician was one of his
audience. It is very remarkable that for about two years
before his death all the painful symptoms of his disorder
seemed to disappear and he never in his life as he himself
told me enjoyed better health. Yet upon opening the
body it appeared that the large ventricle which discharges
the blood through the system was contracted to nearly one third of the natural size by the progress of the ossification. He was quite well the day preceding his death he had arrived by a hasty journey from the Highlands to be present at Lord President Blair's funeral with whom he was connected by early uninterrupted and intimate friendship. During the two days he was in Edinburgh he was chiefly occupied in assisting to arrange the family affairs of the Presidt. whose family is but

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indifferently provided for. Lord Mellville wrote a most affectting letter to Mr. Perceval recommending Mrs. Blair to the protection and generosity of the public to whom her husband has rendered such eminent services. In the evening he made his visit to the disconsolate family whose house is next door to Lord Chief Baron's then his residence. Upon his return he supp'd with the C. Baron who did not remark any thing particular in his appearance. As he undressed to go to bed he directed his mournings to be prepared for next day when the funeral of the President was to take place, and at the same time said " I lie down satisfied for I have done all the painful duty which friendship exacted from me," or some expression to that effect. In the morning he did not ring at his usual hour of seven for he always rose early and his servant becoming alarmed entered his room about eight and found him dead and all remains of vital heat quite departed. It was clear that he had never waked but past away in sleep to a better world where there is neither calumny persecution nor sorrow. One arm was laid over his breast and the other stretched by his side, the attitude in which he usually slept. It is a remarkable coincidence that he died on Mr. Pitt's birthday, supposing that he departed before the morning;
to which must be added the singular circumstance that
the early friend of his youth whose funeral he came
prepared to attend on the next day was then lying dead
within a few rooms of him. Whether the quick and
animated feeling of grief did or did not hasten this strange
catastrophe can only be known to God Almighty but
many of our medical men do think that the event though
perhaps it could not have been long deferred was precipitated
by the painful emotions with which the President's
death and the sad employments which devolved
upon Lord Mellville in consequence were necessarily
attended.

I met him very often during his stay in Edinburgh

last spring being usually asked to meet him while he was
on the round of visiting his old friends. I think my wife
and I dined in company with him and Lady M. at
different houses, six or seven days together besides their
honouring us twice with their company in Castle Street.
He was in high health and spirits and very communicative
of curious information and anecdotes respecting Pitt's
administration. I took the liberty to ask him why he did
not write down some of these particulars for use of future
historians. He promised that if I came to Dunira I
should see some documents which he had preserved with
such a view but had never found leisure to arrange them.

No doubt an immense deal of valuable and curious
materials for history would have [been] [very scratched and
blotted] preserved had our dear friend pursued his resolution.
He showed me in confidence a very curious state of
the correspondence which he had with the present
ministers upon the last change in which by the way he was
but indifferently used. His loss will be severely felt by
the Pitt interest in Scotland for his long possession of
power and influence had enabled him to acquire claims
upon the gratitude of many individuals which will expire
along with him. His domestic affairs will turn out better
(or at least somewhat better) than his friends expected
but Lady Mellville will be but indifferently provided for.
Lord Mellville by assistance of Mr. Dundas Saunders [?] made some good purchases about Dunira which may be
now worth about 4000 a year. It is said [that the]
a hole in MS.] Regent has expressed a wish that something
should be done for Lady M. He caused his secretary
write to the Presidts. son in law expression of his R.H.'s
desire that a provision suitable to the services Ld. Prest.
had rendered the country should be made for that
family. This looks like laying himself out for popularity.
I avoided meeting the present Ld. Mellville when down
here lest it should have the indelicate appearance of
dunning him about my own matters in the midst of his

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family distress. Lord Dalkeith attacked him on the
subject however & he expressed himself as if it was to
be done immediately on his return to town. But I have
heard nothing on the subject since about a month since
when [he] told me that it was put into the Treasury
& Mr. Arbuthnot was to see it through the forms. But
he had not explaind this quite so distinctly to Mr. A. as to
me. I took the opportunity to write to both last Sunday
& I hope I shall learn where or how the matter hitches ;
for somewhere I think there is an obstacle. My next
letter will be on a pleasanter subject for I want to tell you
my dearest friend that I have bought a small farm about
150 a year prettily situated upon the banks of the
Tweed so now I am a Laird at your Ladyships service
and I want your advice about planting and building a
cottage and fifty things besides.-Ever, my dear friend
your truly grateful and obliged       WALTER SCOTT

[Letter to Lady Abercorn]

TO LADY ABERCORN

ASHESTIEL, 25th July 1811

As you say my letters amuse you my dearest friend
I lose no time in offering my mite to divert you during
your indisposition which I sincerely hope is now giving
way to good weather & quiet. The rheumatism is a
terrible complaint & scarcely yields to anything except
the old vulgar remedy of flannel, the easterly winds too
must have added greatly to its intensity-they seem to
be everlasting in this quarter. I am now busy in the
country ; even the attractions of Jo: Kemble I am afraid
will hardly drag me to town although I wish I had been
in the way to offer him some civility both on account of
his own merit & as a friend of the Priory. As for showing
him my play I have not a legible copy of it till I get my
own scribbled manuscript copied over. Besides I do not
feel at all inclined to face the stage nor do I think the
tragedy worthy the pains it would cost to make it tolerable.
The only good scene in it is that between the
mother & son & it occurs so early in the piece that all
the interest of it would be over before the conclusion.
The fifth Act has greatly too much mummery & too
much blood--it would need to be entirely new-written
& as the Coachman replied to Pope's usual exclamation
" Heaven mend me," it would be more easy to make
(2-520) My matters are in Statu quo. I think of putting Lord Dalkeith in mind of his promise to write to Lord M. in a way which will probably elicit an answer of one kind or other. All the Scotch appointments are left vacant which looks as if ministers had some difficulty in getting the Regents consent for filling them up. I fear the poor old king is now to be laid aside for ever when the Prince will probably make his own arrangements: if he consult his interest, character & safety he will abide by those who adhered to his father in his distress. Ten thousand thanks for your kindness dear Lady Abercorn which I can never sufficiently acknowledge although I venture to assure you it is not lost upon me.

(2-520) The action between those pure spirits Sir F. Burdett & Mr. Scott (observe he is an Englishman & not of our clan) divested of technicalities stands thus. It appears there was an intrigue between Westminsters Hope & Lady Oxford the consequence whereof was a child. As this circumstance threatened exposure, the patriotic Bart. granted a bond of £20,000 to Mr. Scott as a provision for the Lady & her child. And thus matters stood till the alarm blew over. When it appeared there was only the little innocent consequence to be provided for, it was settled that the bond for £20,000 should be cancelled on payment of £5000, as a provision for the infant—but as a counterpart of this arrangement Mr. Scott was to grant his bond for £5000 to Sir Francis to be lodged in the hands of a mutual confident until the child came of age. If it died before that period then the bond was to be delivered to Sir F. in order to [indecipherable] his recovering
the ₤ 5000, which in that event M. S. would have no
tide to retain. But it seems this mutual friend betrayed
his trust & put the bond into Sir Francis's hands who
has commenced a suit upon it in our courts. Mr. Scott's
defence is that he received indeed the ₤ 5000 but that it
was as a provision for the natural child & though he
granted a bond for it yet that bond was only to be enforced
in case of the child's death when Sir Francis would be
entitled to have back his money. Thus stands this
scandalous affair in which neither the Knight the Squire
nor the Lady are like to acquire much credit. No
decision is yet given—When the papers are printed I will
procure you a copy.

As the shortest reply to your kind inquiries about the
size and nature of my cottage I send you a sketch of the
plan marked with the accommodations which may be
necessary. There is nothing romantic in the situation
but the neighbourhood of a very noble and bold stream
of water. The place I now inhabit is much more
beautiful but then it is not my own. I intend to plant
almost the whole property excepting about twenty-four
acres above the road for arable purposes and the meadow
near the proposed cottage for pasture. Thus in time I
shall be embosom'd in a little wood tho' at present the
place is very bare. I am torturing my brains for the best
means of conquering the prim regularity of artificial
plantations which I think may be done by putting in
plants of different ages and even sowing some part of the

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ground. Wood rises very fast with us everywhere. I
shall have time enough for my plans for I do not obtain
possession till next May. A larger farm bounds my
little patch to the South which is now to be sold and I
would not hesitate to purchase it were my matters finished above stairs, but otherwise the difference between the interest of money and rent of land is too great for me to think of it. I have not heard of Lady Melville's plans but I think it likely she will remain among her relations in this country for some little time. I should rather be surprised at the event your Ladyship hints at: yet it is not impossible for Lord M. & she were not at all times entirely cordial-this is of course entre nous. Miss Wortley I believe more than once made up differences between them.

We have been christening Lady Dalkeith's little girl (would it had been a boy). She is called Margaret after the Lady in the Lay of the Last Minstrel and Charlotte and I had the honour to be sponsors (as representing our betters, cela s'entend). My name sake Walter is really a noble child. I have not seen Lady D. looking so well this many a day.

Adieu my dearest friend. I must hear your page say his lesson and it is hard to say whether the preceptor or the scholar finds the task more wearisome. But I do not chuse he should lose ground during his holydays.-Ever your faithful and obliged, W. SCOTT

Your letter of the 16th reached me on the 25 which seems a very long time for so short a distance.

To MR. MAYO

DEAR SIR,-I am much honoured by your thinking any part of my poetry worthy of the particular enquiry contained in your favour of the 26th July. The same doubt has been proposed to me from other friends and
to say the truth I have not been able to give a scholium

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upon the passage at all satisfactory either to myself or
the querists. I think I meant merely to allude to the
poisonous qualities of the nightshade and that I had in
my head the Grecian practice of dispatching criminals
by vegetable poison forgetting that hemlock not nightshade
was the ingredient they used. So much for
punishment-As for the idea of pride connected with the
Foxglove, I believe I can only plead its erect stature
and the gaudy flaunting appearance of its flowers. I
heartily wish I had a wiser answer to send to so flattering
an enquiry but I give the above under reservation of my
right to avail myself of the ingenuity of any friendly
commentator who may find out a better meaning for the
author than he can for himself. I remain, Dear Sir, Your
obliged humble servant,             WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, SELKIRKSHIRE, 3 August {c. l8ll}

Mr. Mayo, Bishop Lawton,2 Near Barnstaple, Devon.
[Brotherton]

TO JOANNA BAILLIE

HERE have I been my dear Miss Baillie basking among
gooseberries and currants like an ungrateful pig for these
three weeks past without thinking of acknowledging
your kind and comfortable letter. It does me good to
hear that you are well and that you are working; but
I am determined not to believe the unpleasant part of the
intelligence you give me namely that you intend to defer
the publication of your future plays until a period when
(should I be then in the way to peruse them) the pleasure
they must afford will be to me most painfully chequerd.
So I will only thank you for your promised Xmas treat

without admitting your threaten declaration that it is to
be your foy. We would willingly try another play on
our little stage if you would give us an opportunity and
I really think, small as it is, you will be as worthily
associated with the pieces they have tried to bring out
as with the horse-play which seems to be the fashion of
Covent Garden outdoing even Johnsons prophecy that
upon these boards "Hunt might box, or Mahomet might
dance." We have one very intelligent accomplishd
young man in our theatre Terry by name who promises
to make a great figure and is indeed by far the least
pedantic and most agreeable of his profession whom I
ever met with. A great admirer of yours, that is included
in my ideas of dramatic excellence of course. He excells
in expressing the harsher and darker shades of passion
and I will certainly make him study the tragedy of fear
(with a view to getting it up) so soon as it comes out of
the press unless you rather chuse to trust us with an
unpublishd one. By the way I must not forget to say
that I saw Mr. Henderson in town some time ago and
that he settled his matters with Mr. Ballantyne to their
mutual satisfaction. I advised him before accepting
Mr. B's offer, which he was inclined to close with at
once, to write to Longmans house as they might chuse
to give a larger premium in order to keep all your
copyrights together. But upon enquiry I understand
he found Mr. B's offer most advantageous. The Family
Legend will always be a stock play in Edinburgh. It was
acted several times last winter and always brought good
houses. I shall most anxiously expect your volume so pray
don't forget to invoke Mr. Frelings talisman to waft it
(2-524) to me. I can hardly (in my impatience) admit your
(2-524) rational apology for delaying the publication till a
(2-524) congenial period and were it possible for me to hasten
(2-524) the treat I expect, by such a composition with you, I
(2-524) would promise to read the volume at the silence of
(2-524) noonday upon the top of Minchmuir or Windlestraw-Law

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(2-525) the hour is allowd by those skillful in daemonology to
(2-525) be as full of witchery as midnight itself and I assure you
(2-525) I have felt really oppressd with a sort of fearful sense of
(2-525) loneliness when looking around the naked and towering
(2-525) ridges of desolate barreness which is all the eye takes in
(2-525) from the top of such a mountain-the patches of cultivation
(2-525) being all hidden in the little glens and vallies or
(2-525) only appearing to make one sensible how feeble and
(2-525) ineffectual the efforts of art have been to contend with
(2-525) the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the
(2-525) unknown author of a fine but unequal poem calld
(2-525) Caledonia 1 places the remarkable superstition which
(2-525) consists in hearing the noise of a chace with the baying
(2-525) of the dogs the throttling sobs of the deer the hollo' of a
(2-525) numerous train of huntsmen and the " hoofs thick
(2-525) beating on the hollow hill." I have often repeated his
(2-525) verses with some sensation of awe in such a place and I
(2-525) am sure yours would effect their purpose as compleatly.
(2-525) Nay I would bet on their effect even during the brilliancy
(2-525) of the Princes fete so little does the charm of your poetry
(2-525) depend upon mood and time. But all these considerations
(2-525) will not accelerate the flight of the printers devil so
(2-525) I must e'en have patience.

(2-525) Don Roderic has greatly exceeded my calculation as
(2-525) to popularity. It is now to be squeezed into the Edinburgh
(2-525) Annual Register which contains by the way a
tolerable account of our actors and theatricals though
most imperfect and erroneous as far as the Family
Legend is commented upon. There is an article by a
Mocking Bird (not in caricature but in serious sadness)
who gives a good imitation of Crabbe, an indifferent one
of Moor and one of me which begins very well indeed

but falls off (as I think) grievously.1 Ballantyne says if
the article is approved he expects for next year a scene in
imitation of Miss Baillie and also a ditty in the manner of
Southey. The author lies concealed as yet—Among the
striplings whose ill fate leads them to court the muses I
have lately found a young man whose genius appears to
me very uncommon considering he is but sixteen.2 He
was with me a few days ago and brought me a little
goblin tale founded on a fact which has many of the faults
attatched to that slovenly composition, the German ballad,
but I think has also merits more than sufficient to redeem
them. You know I am none of those crimps for the Muses
who enlist boys under age nor am I by any means apt to
give encouragement to versifiers in general. I made
use of the youths application to me to direct his study
towards what appears to me the most useful and improving
branches of learning assuring him he could not be
a poet without a general acquaintance with letters. It
may turn out that he shall be no poet after all his peasant
promise and the labour I have imposed on him. But in
that case he will realize the fable of the dying peasant
who told his three idle sons of a treasure concealed in his

field. They trench the ground in quest of it and found
no treasure indeed but a most excellent crop which
rewarded their labours and explained their fathers meaning. The young man is gentle amiable and unassuming. During his stay here he told me with great simplicity how much surprised he was to hear Harry Mackenzie and I talk together like sportsmen and horse jockeys at some public place. I suppose he thought we should have spoke in iambics—I tried to case-harden him a little by carrying him a walking and riding but desisted for fear of accidents after one or two sprains. I send his ballad which he has promised greatly to improve but I think it will divert you as it is. This brings me to our amiable friend Mr. Coxe whose manners and mildness of disposition I do entre nous like much better than his poetry. He has beat me in the matter of the brooch for I had imagined a dozen pretty things about naiads and mermaids and St. Columbus and the North and the South and Hampstead and the Hebrides—but some how or other nothing came of it. My dreams about my cottage go on. Of about no acres I have manfully resolved to plant from 60 to 70—As to my scale of dwelling why you shall see my plan when I have adjusted it. My present intention is to have only two spare-bedrooms, with dressingrooms each of which will on pinch have a couch bed. But I cannot relinquish my border principle of accommodating all the cousins and dunawastles who will rather sleep on chairs and on the floor and in the hayloft than be absent when folks are gathered together—and truly I used to think Ashestiel was very much like the tent of Peri Banou in the Arabian nights that suited alike all numbers of company equally well—ten people fill it at any time and I remember its lodging thirty-two without any complaints. As for the go-about folks, they generally pay their score one way or other, for you who are always in the way of seeing and commanding and selecting your society are too fastidious to understand how a dearth of news may
Dear [Name],

It is a pleasure to hear from you again. I am glad to see that you are still interested in my Scottish tour. Your report of the day is always welcome. If it is any pleasure to these stragglers to say I made them welcome as strangers, I am sure that costs me nothing, only I deprecate publication and am now the less afraid of it that I think scarce any Bookseller will be desperate enough to print a new Scottish tour. Besides one has the pleasure to tell over all the stories that have bored your friends a dozen of times with some degree of propriety to a stranger.

In short, I think like a true Scotchman that a stranger unless he is very unpleasant indeed usually brings a title to a welcome along with him and to confess the truth, I do a little envy my old friend Abou Hassan his walks on the bridge of Bagdad and evening conversations and suppers with the guests whom he was never to see again in his life. He never fell into a scrape till he met the Caliph and thank God no Caliphs frequent the Brigg of Melrose which will be my nearest Rialto at Abbotsford. I never heard of a stranger that utterly baffled all efforts to engage him in conversation excepting one whom an acquaintance of mine met in a stage-coach. My friend who piqued himself on his talents for conversation assailed this tortoise on all hands but in vain and at length descended to expostulation. "I have talkd to you my friend on all the ordinary subjects literature farming merchandise gaming and game-laws horse-races and suits at law, politics and swindling and blasphemy and philosophy—Is there any one subject you will favour me by opening upon?" The wight writhed his countenance into a grin. "Sir," said he, "can ye say onything clever about bend leather?" There I own I should have been as much non-plussed as my acquaintance but upon any less abstruse topic I think in general something may be
made of a stranger worthy of his clean sheets and beef-
steak and glass of port. You indeed my dear friend may
suffer a little for me as I should for you when such a
fortuitous acquaintance talks of the intercourse arising

from our meeting as anything beyond the effect of chance
and civility. But these braggings break no bones and are
always a compliment to the person of whom the discourse
is held though the narrator means it to himself; for no
one can suppose the affectation of intimacy can be assumed
unless from an idea that it exalts the person who brags of it.

My little folks are well and I am performing the
painful duty of hearing my little boy his latin lesson
every morning ; painful because my knowledge of the
language is more familiar than grammatical and because
little Walter has a disconsolate yawn at intervals that
is quite irresistible and has nearly cost me a dislocation
of my jaws. Charlotte is very well and joins me in the
most kind remembrances to Miss Agnes Baillie and
Mrs. Baillie. I fear (yet why should I say so in the
circumstances) that the fatal termination of the poor old
monarchs illness will soon (if it has not already) restore
Dr. Baillie to his family. I would I could augur well of
what is to follow—but alas! a public defiance of morality
is but a bad bottoming for a new reign—it is incalculable
the weight which George III derived from his domestic
conduct. But we must hope the best and none is more
willingly to hope it than I who would do my little best for
the crown of England if it hung upon a hedge-stake.

When I shall come to rummage your portfolio and eat
your pudding at Hampstead is very uncertain: if I
should walk in the morning after you receive my letter,
pray do not take me for a wraith. But it is much more likely I shall not see London for several years as I did not come up this summer when I had real and serious business to do. My most agreeable errand will be to claim the promised communication of your future plans. Adieu
God bless you. W. SCOTT

ASHESTIEL BY SELKIRK 4 August [l8ll 1]

[Abbotsford Copies and Royal College of Surgeons, London]

530 LETTERS OF 18ll

TO CHARLES ERSKINE

[8th August, 1811]

My DEAR CHARLES,—A report has reachd me that the lands of Mr. Mercer adjoining to my new purchase arc to be rouped at Melrose on Saturday. If this be true pray procure me a note of the articles of roup as the place lies very convenient for me. It will add much to the favour if you can dine with me tomorrow yourself when you will meet Lord Dalkeith & Ld Somerville. I would take your coming up very kind as I really think seriously of the land & would wish to consult with you about it. If which is very possible you are engaged for some other person you can nevertheless send me notice about the articles of roup that I may consider what I am to do yours very truly

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL Thursday evening

[Curle]
(2-530)ASHESTIEL, Aug. 8, 1811

(2-530)SIR,—I am favoured with a copy of your paper in which you have been so good as to insert an extract from a late poetical attempt of mine with a very flattering introduction. I the more readily embrace the opportunity of returning thanks for your public attention that I have been long desirous of an opportunity of expressing the pleasure I have received from your poetry and the interest I have taken in it. I assure you, Sir, that having come late as a candidate into the literary world, and being somewhat philosophical respecting the popular applause, I am doubly sensible of the value of the approbation of a man of talents, and that I am respectfully. Your obliged humble servant,

(2-531)WALTER SCOTT

(2-531)Mr. Montgomery, Sheffield.

[Life of James Montgomery]

TO JOHN RICHARDSON

(2-531)MY DEAR RICHARDSON,—I yesterday saw the announce of your change of state in the papers which gave me sincere joy. I beg you will accept my best congratulations on the subject with my hope that you will find the marriage state what I am sure it will be to a man of your sense & temper an alleviation of the necessary pains of life and more than a duplication of its pleasures. Mrs. Scott begs me to say that she claims an opportunity of
being made acquainted with Mrs. Richardson whenever your residence in Scotland will permit or our happening to visit London of which last incident there is no speedy chance. If you can visit Ashestiel before you leave Scotland you know how happy you will make us & I will shew you a bare haugh & a bleak bank by the side of the Tweed on which I design to break a lance with Mother Nature & make a paradise in spite of her. I have the Tweed for my henchman for about a mile. I should not otherwise speak so crousely. If you can prevail on your bonny bride therefore to "busk her & come to the braes of Yarrow" you shall see peradventure what you shall behold-

I am greatly obliged to you for your attention to my hobby horse & the very curious volume you have sent me as forage for it, pray keep a good look out for me & encourage me to request such a favour by letting me know at your leisure the amount of my present debt.

With best wishes & respects to Mrs. Richardson in

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which Mrs. Scott begs leave to join I am always dear Richardson most truly yours

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL, 14 August 1811

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO MRS. SCOTT, 33 GEORGE STREET EDINR.

MY DEAR MOTHER,-I found your letter on our arrival
from Mertoun where we had been for two or three days.
I had a few lines from Jack from London without any
direction how to write to him but I shall address to him
Cheltenham (not Chatham as you mistake it) and as the
post office people always are alert at these watering places
I am sure that will find him.

Two days ago I bid as far as £6000, for a farm which
lay near my little retreat but at length gave it up as far
beyond the value especially as another much more to
my purpose will be in the market in a year or two.

I might perhaps have felt bolder on this subject had I
entertained further hope of having my salary made up
but the unfavourable estate of the Kings health makes so
happy a circumstance very unlikely. I am advised to
keep myself ready to go to London at a moments
warning and have done so for this month past. But I
own I have little expectation from personal solicitation and
shall avoid the expense of a London journey if possible.
Lord and Lady Dalkeith have been staying with us for
two days—you would be delighted with them especially
with the Lady.

I grieve to observe the death of poor Mr M. Montgomery
and can easily conceive the distress so unexpected
a misfortune in the family of a kind neighbour must have
given you. He was a very good and respected young man.

I have a letter from Tom to the same purpose as yours.
Had he consented to an Indian appointment when he
went to the Isle I could easily have got it him. I hope
however times will come about yet & that I may be able
to do something for my freinds. Thank God I have kept
myself independant of all political changes so far as
comfort & a respectable income is concernd.

I had a letter from Mr. Donaldson about Fergusons
clerk upon whom as far as dilatoryness is concernd
his masters mantle has assuredly descended. I have
answerd Mr D. begging he might be brot. to a speedy
reckoning.

The bairns are all well. I labour Walter daily in
Caesar and Virgil and on Sundays in Buchanans psalms
a great exertion for my impatient temper-however
between yawning and scratching our head we get on
pretty well. Charlotte sends her kind love-in my
present unsettled state (which pray do not mention to a
human being) I cannot ask you to come here but if it
has a termination before our good weather has quite fled
I will send the carriage to meet you at Bankhouse and
you may bring Crookshanks or Jessy with you to take
care of you like a lady as you are. Believe me Dear
Mother your dutiful and affectionate Son

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 14 August [1811]

[Law]

For DOCTOR LEYDEN, CALCUTTA 1

Favoured by the Hon. Lady Hood.

MY DEAR LEYDEN,- You hardly deserve I should write
to you for I have written you two long letters since I saw
Mr. Purves and receivd from [him] your valued dagger,
which I preserve carefully till Bonaparte shall come or send for it. I might take a cruel revenge on you for your silence by declining Lady Hood's request to make you acquainted with her-in which case I assure you great would be your loss. She is quite a congenial spirit an ardent Scotswoman and devotedly attachd to those sketches of traditionary history which all the waters of the Burrampooter cannot I suspect altogether wash out of your honour's memory. This however is the least of her praises. She is generous and feeling and intelligent and has contrived to keep her heart and social affections vivid and awake amidst the chilling and benumbing atmosphere of London fashion. I ought perhaps first to have told you that Lady Hood was the honble Mary Mackenzie daughter of Lord Seaforth and wife of Sir Samuel Hood one of our most distingushd naval heroes who goes out to take the command in your seas. Lastly she is a very intimate friend of Mrs. Scott's and myself and first gaind my heart by her admiration of the Scenes of Infancy. So you see my good friend what your laziness would have cost you if listening rather to the dictates of revenge and generosity I had withheld my pen from the inkhorn. But to confess the truth I fear two such similar minds would have found each other out like good dancers at a ball room, without the assistance of a Master of ceremonies. So I may even as well play Sir Clement Cotterel with a good grace since I cannot further my vengeance by withholding my good offices. My last letter went by favour of John Pringle who carried you a copy of the Lady of the Lake a poem which I really think you will like better than Marmion on the whole though not perhaps in particular passages. Pray let me
know if it carried you back to the land of mist and
mountain?

Lady Hoods departure being sudden and your deserts
not extraordinary (speaking as a correspondt.) I have
time to write you much news. The best domestic
intelligence is that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire his lease
of Ashiestiel being out has purchased about 100 acres
extending along the banks of the Tweed just above the
confluence of the Gala and about three miles from Melrose.
There saith fame he designs to bigg himself a minstrel
bower sibi et amicis and happy will he [be] when India
shall restore you to a social meal at his cottage. The place
looks at present very like " poor Scotland's gear " ; it
consists of a bank and a haugh as poor and bare as Sir John
Falstaff's regiment but I fear, ere you come to see, the
verdant screen I am about to spread over its nakedness
will in some degree have removed this reproach. But it
has a wild solitary air and commands a splendid reach
of the Tweed for about a mile and, to sum all up in the
words of Touchstone, " it is a poor thing, but mine own."

Our little folks whom you left infants are now shooting
fast forward to youth and shew some blood as far as
aptitude to learning is concern'd. Charlotte and I are
wearing on as easily as this fasheous world will permit;
the outside of my head is waxing grizzled but I cannot
find that the snow has coold my brain or my heart.
Adieu dear Leyden pray brighten the chain of friendship
by a letter when occasion serves and believe me ever
Yours most affectionately

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 25 Augt l8ll
TO CHARLES CARPENTER

(2-535)ASHESTIEL 25 Augst. l8ll

(2-535)MY DEAR CARPENTER,-I take the opportunity of Sir
(2-535)Samuel Hoods going out to command in your Indian seas

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(2-536)to enquire after your welfare & that of Mrs. Carpenter
(2-536)& at the same time to make you known should circumstances
(2-536)permit to the very accomplish'd & pleasing
(2-536)woman who takes charge of this letter. Lady Hood is by
(2-536)birth a daughter of Lord Seaforth one of our greatest
(2-536)Highland Chiefs & a keen 1 Scotchwoman. So I hope
(2-536)Mrs. Carpenter & she will be agreeable to each other as
(2-536)country women ; although I fear there is small chance of
(2-536)your being at Madras in case the Admirals vessel touches
(2-536)there. If it should fortunately happen otherwise you
(2-536)will I am sure be glad to see a valued friend of Charlotte
(2-536)& me & Lady Hood will I know be happy in making your
(2-536)acquaintance. She has always lived in the first circles
(2-536)of society in London but deserves regard still more from
(2-536)her valuable personal qualities than from her rank &
(2-536)manners. Sir Samuel Hood is an amiable unaffected
(2-536)man & as much distinguish'd by his gentle & unassuming
(2-536)manners in society as by his professional gallantry of
(2-536)which he has given so many proofs. I have very little
(2-536)domestic news to send you : our little people are shooting
(2-536)fast up from childhood towards youth & shew promising
(2-536)disposition both for morals & learning : your namesake
(2-536)& godson little Charles seems to be the cleverest of the
(2-536)party & indeed exceeds any child at his age I have ever
(2-536)seen. As my lease of this place is out, I have bought, for
about 4000, a property in the neighbourhood, extending along the banks of the river Tweed for about half-a-mile. It is very bleak at present, having little to recommend it but the vicinity of the river; but as the ground is well adapted by nature to grow wood, and is considerably various in form and appearance, I have no doubt that by judicious plantations it may be rendered a very pleasant spot; and it is at present my great amusement to plan the various lines which may be necessary for that purpose. The farm comprehends about a hundred acres, of which I shall keep fifty in pasture and tillage, and plant all the rest, which will be a very valuable little possession in a few years, as wood bears a high price among us. I intend building a small cottage here for my summer abode, being obliged by law, as well as induced by inclination, to make this county my residence for some months every year. This is the greatest incident which has lately taken place in our domestic concerns, and I assure you we are not a little proud of being greeted as laird and lady of Abbotsford. We will give a grand gala when we take possession of it, and as we are very clannish in this comer, all the Scotts in the country, from the Duke to the peasant, shall dance on the green to the bagpipes, and drink whisky punch. Now as this happy festival is to be deferred for more than a twelve-month, during which our cottage is to be built, &c. &c., what is there to hinder brother and sister Carpenter from giving us their company upon so gratifying an occasion? Pray, do not stay broiling yourself in India for a moment longer than you have secured comfort and competence. Don't look forward to peace; it will never come either in your day or mine.
Nor do public matters at home look very consoling: the poor old King is so very ill that death will be a deliverance which may soon be expected. All parties look up to & claim an interest with the Prince whose plan seems to be to rely upon none of them, but breaking them up by a partial distribution of his favor to form an administration dependant only on the Sovereign & not upon any public man or party leader: this is all very well should such an administration prove successful & popular, but if otherwise the public resentment which in other cases is confined to the ministers may in that supposition take a higher object. God turn all to the best but at present our prospects are very unsettled. Adieu my dear Carpenter: your sister sends kindest love to Mrs. C. & you: I daily scold her for her silence & she promises to write as I naturally judge she will know better what can interest you than I: but to say truth though your sister & my wife she is the worst pen woman I ever saw. Your affectionate brother WALTER SCOTT

TO MATTHEW WELD HARTSTONGE

DEAR SIR,- Yours of the 16th owing partly to delay & partly to my absence from Ashiestiel reached me only this day and as your tour may be prolonged still leaves me hope that you will find this at Edinburgh. If so the purpose is to beseech that " being so far into the bowels of the Land " you will allow me the pleasure of shewing you the banks of the Tweed and braes of Yarrow and of thanking you personally for the many favours you have
honoured me with. This little cottage is just 30 miles from Edinburgh and seven miles short of Selkirk; if you care for that sort of conveyance the mail will set you down within a mile of my dwelling at a small hamlet called Clovenford. You have but to name the day and I will have a servant waiting for you with a chaise: if you cannot do that let the ostler shoulder your portmanteau and shew you the way to Ashestiel shout lustily for the boat over the Tweed and you will be with us in an instant. I will never forgive you unless you make this digression in my favour and make your stay withal as memorable in our wilds and set you safely upon your journey in any direction your mind gives you to. If you make any stay in Edinburgh and really cannot conveniently come here why then Mahomet must come to the Mountain. I would have shewn you the way here at any rate but am detained by the necessity of concluding some arrangements this week respecting the purchase of a small farm, which will detain me here (but not occupy my leisure) till after Thursday when I will wait upon you in Edinburgh should it not be convenient for you to come here. Pray write when this comes to hand. Our Selkirk post leaves Edinr at 2 in the afternoon, & I get the letter at 8 next morning. Yours truly in hopes of a speedy meeting.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 25th Aug. [1811]

On Thursday I must dine with the seller of my land but can easily make you welcome there where you will see the humours of some of our Yeomanry. Should you want a Cicerone in Edinburgh, Will you call on my friend
John Ballantyne who will be proud to give you his assistance in every way if you exhibit this postscript.

[Abbotsford Copies]

TO ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE

DEAR SIR,-Mr. Hartstongue, who takes the trouble of this letter, has been indefatigable in his researches for the enlargement & improvement of the edition of Swift. He tells me that Mr. Mercier, bookseller, Dublin, sent to your shop for my use in that edition "A Proposal for A Hospital for Incurables." I hope it reached you safely and that you can find it for me, as it is a scarce and valuable tract. I remain etc.

WALTER SCOTT

ASHESTIEL 4th September [1811] [Rosebery]

TO ELIZABETH, MARCHIONESS OF STAFFORD

MY best thanks, my dear lady marchioness, attend your kind grant of my boon. The acorns, with the arrival of which you flatter me, will come most safely by any Leith vessel to the care of Messrs. Ballantyne and Company, booksellers, Edinburgh. I make it a rule to get as much work out of these gentlemen as I possibly can. I hope my little grove will so flourish as to deserve being honoured by the name of the distinguished donor.

I had a letter (a melancholy one) some time ago from dear Lady Hood. She is a real loss to her friends, for
we shall hardly find such another mixture of enthusiasm with gaiety and good humour and unaffected simplicity. But it is quite right she should go out with Sir Samuel, and I think she will be better amused with her stay in India than she seems at present to anticipate. If it is not quite the money-making place it once was, our eastern empire is considerably improved in point of society, and I hope Lady Hood will find many (at least among the gentlemen, for I don't anticipate highly of Indian ladies) whose conversation will interest and amuse her. And then there is the novelty of the scene, with the change of manners and the mixture of eastern magnificence with European elegance, and the dignity of the situation which our friend will not dislike. In short, when the long and dull passage is once over, I trust she will find herself well disposed to relish her new and in some degree dreaded situation.

As for Bandello, he is such an entertaining fellow, and shews such an odd picture of life during the feudal ages in Italy, that to quarrel with him for the coarsness and polissonerie of his time would be like shunning a wild romantic walk for a few miry sloughs which may be stepd over as lightly as the passenger pleases. I beg your ladyship will not fail to read Webster's old play. If it were not treason to suppose that all that is rare and curious is to be found on the shelves at Cleveland House I would refer you to a late collection of old plays in 3 volumes, double columns, printed by Miller, Albemarle Street, in which it was inserted at my particular request. There is in it an odd and in some degree a terrific mixture of what is wild and extravagant with the simple, pathetic, and even childish turn of other places. I have not, I
believe, a very good head for criticism, for it, certainly is
not selon les regles to be more affected by this sort of
patch-work, than by regular scenes where every thing
mean and trifling is compleately excluded, and the mind
visited by nothing but what is meant to be in unison with
tragic feeling. I do not know whether it is the spirit of
contradiction, or whether the very pains taken to render
every thing uniform, which never actually occurs in
nature, but I feel terribly inclined to be hard hearted in
the latter case, whereas I often light upon passages in
these old neglected dramatists which, from the very
strange and unexpected manner in which they are introduced,
make the very blood tingle. I have the first
edition of Bandello, now a very rare book in 3 volumes
quarto and one 12mo. It has a great number of prefaces,
and I believe some tales which were abridged in the
later editions, excepting one printed at London about
1760, which is compleat. These prefaces often contain
some thing relative to the tales, and when I go to Edinburgh
I will look at that prefixd to the Duchess of
Amalphi.

I beg your ladyship will have the goodness to make
my most respectful compliments to the marquis, and am
ever, your ladyship's honour'd and obliged humble servant,

ASHISTIEL, 11 September 1811. WALTER SCOTT,
[The Sutherland Book]

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TO JOHN B. S. MORRITT

[September 1811]

MY DEAR MORRITT,-I don't delay long to thank you
for your land offer of acorns which I will accept with the
greatest pleasure provided always the forwarding them
does not cost you too much trouble. As they are in the
South riding I should think a bushel might be sent from
Hull to Leith as there is a good deal of intercourse between
these ports. I assure you I will plant them in your name
with my own hands and those of my little people and
we will promise ourselves a Morritt grove when the fit time
shall come round. Next year as I shall have properly
speaking no place of residence in the country I hope to
be a wanderer and to brighten the chain of friendship at
Rokeby. I should like very much to go into Wales if I
could get any good companion but I don't much approve
of travelling alone there are so many good things which
rot in one's gizzard as Sancho pathetically complained
during the interval when the Don imposed silence upon
him!

I am quite happy that there is to be an union between
the houses of Lindsay and Pennington. Lady Balcarras
used to be my patroness many a day ago when like
a great shy lubberly boy as I was I used to be very
proud of the shelter of her countenance at parties and a
seat in her box at the theatre where she was a constant
attendant. Lady Anne Lindsay had great taste particularly
for painting. She does not indeed place
mountains on their apex like that of Taranta in Bruce's
calls of Selkirkshire in Miss Lydia White's
drawings but what her representations lose in the
wonderful they gain in nature and beauty. It happen
by accident that a brother of Lord Balcarras dined here
when I received your letter and I made him happy by
telling him his nephew met the approbation of a friend
of Lord Muncaster and of one who was likely (as much so as any one I know) to take a lively interest in an event which affected the happiness of a friend's family.

The Edinburgh reviewers have been down on my poor Don Roderic hand to fist but truly as they are too fastidious to approve of the campaign I should be very unreasonable if I expected them to like the celebration thereof. I agree with you respecting the lumbering weight of the stanza and I shrewdly suspect it would require a very great poet indeed to prevent the tedium arising from the frequent recurrence of rhymes. Our language is unable to support the expenditure of so many for each stanza: even Spenser himself with all the licenses of using obsolete words and uncommon spelling sometimes fatigues the ear. They are also very wroth with me for omitting the merits of Sir John Moore. But as I never exactly discoverd in what these lay unless in conducting his advance and retreat upon a plan the most likely to veryfy the desponding speculations of the foresaid reviewers I must hold myself excused for not giving praise where I was unable to see that much was due.

The only literary news I have to send to you is that Lucien Bonapartes Epic in 24 Chants is about to appear. An application was made to me to translate it which I negatived of course and that roundly. I believe Tom Campbell will be next requested to do into English Charlemagne ou La Rome Delivree 2 for such is the title of this threatend publication.

Charlotte sends best love to Mrs. Morritt and I am ever Dear Morritt Yours most truly
WALTER SCOTT
[Law]