

**A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE  
EDINBURGH REVIEW' IN REPLY TO  
AN ARTICLE ON A 'MEMOIR OF  
THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE RIGHT  
HON. J. C. HERRIES'**

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A letter to the editor of 'the Edinburgh review' in reply to an article on a 'memoir of the public life of the right hon. J. C. Herries' by Edward Herries

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**EDWARD HERRIES**

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# A LETTER

TO THE EDITOR OF

## 'THE EDINBURGH REVIEW'

IN REPLY TO AN ARTICLE ON A

'MEMOIR OF THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE  
RIGHT HON. J. C. HERRIES'

BY

EDWARD HERRIES, C.B.

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## LETTER.

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SIR,

I have read in the current number of the *Edinburgh Review* an article, containing almost as many misrepresentations as lines, on the book which, in obedience to the imperative commands of duty and honour, I have written—with my brother's concurrence—in defence of my father's reputation against insidious and calumnious attacks.

In publishing that book, which militates against many traditional opinions and established authorities, I well knew that it must be exposed to much adverse criticism. I clearly foresaw the hostility of the *Edinburgh Review*, as the representative, or trustee, of the spirit of party animosity which my father had to encounter in ancient conflicts half a century ago. But although I did not expect generosity towards an old Tory adversary, who in bygone times had been marked out by the Whig organ as a special object of attack, I thought that the vindication of his memory by his sons might be deemed entitled at least to fair consideration and bare justice. I was deceived. The article which I am now obliged to notice, departing from the usages of modern literary warfare, shows neither fairness

towards the subject of the work reviewed nor common courtesy towards its authors. On the contrary, there is apparent throughout it a fixed purpose to damage the former and to wound the latter. With the exception of one or two cursory remarks, of which, of course, I cannot complain, on style and method, no legitimate criticism is offered, and no judicial impartiality is anywhere discernible. The evidence adduced by me is not weighed in an even balance against the assertions which it is brought to rebut. My arguments, *as stated by myself*, are not directly controverted, or honestly tried by any test of soundness. But what is not refuted is disfigured. Facts and comments are either suppressed or turned awry; cases clearly set forth by me are moulded into new forms; and by adroit arrangement a deceptive view of the contents of the book is presented to the public.

It is not party feeling alone which inspires the review. Taunts and gibes needlessly introduced, with obvious intention to offend, betray in every page the personal rancour of the writers, whose desire to discredit the memoir and injure all connected with it in public estimation cannot for a moment be doubted.

I have no means of discovering who are the vindictive persons over whom the cloak of editorial impersonality is thrown. They are not likely to show themselves openly. But I think that in some places I can detect traces of a hand not unknown to me. These persons have well calculated the advantage which is afforded to them by the wide circulation of the *Edinburgh Review*. But whether they, and you, Sir, have been as



mindful of the character of the great literary journal, the influence of which has been lent for detraction, is a question deserving the consideration of those who may read the following observations.

The review of the memoir begins and ends with passages carefully selected, with a manifest desire to give offence, from Lord Ellenborough's diary, published as recklessly as many other posthumous papers never intended by their writers to be thrown out into the world. I will not seek to deprive my assailant (critic I will not call him) of the pleasure of gloating over the exhibition which this diary affords in various places of ill-will to Mr. Herries, in common with all persons mentioned in it, except the Duke of Wellington, Sir Henry Hardinge, and Lord Ellenborough's Whig friends. But I cannot help remarking that the particular phrases quoted, and some others, do no credit to the writer or to his editor. They serve only to show the insincerity of the former and the inconsiderateness of the latter. About the time when they were put on paper, Lord Ellenborough, with the strongest professions of esteem, was pressing his colleague to undertake the restoration of the finances of India, in an office to be specially created for him, with extensive powers and large emoluments. He availed himself frequently of the services freely and cordially rendered by Mr. Herries in official matters with which that colleague had no departmental concern. There is more to be said. Lord Ellenborough's injurious remarks are wholly at variance, not only with the tone of the correspondence which I have published, and with the friendly spirit of many

other letters belonging to a later period, but also with the views indicated in other passages of his own diary. How can the words gleefully reproduced by my reviewer be reconciled with Lord Ellenborough's proposal—or scheme—for a Cabinet re-arrangement in May 1828 (Diary 1. 118, 119), whereby Goulburn being transferred to the Colonies, Herries was to take his place at the Exchequer, in exact conformity with the suggestion made at the same time by the King, whom Ellenborough detested; and with this entry on June 29, 1830—'It seems Goulburn would be glad to be Speaker. That would open a proper office' (the Exchequer) 'for Herries, and his offices' (Board of Trade and Mint) 'might be divided?'

The diary is full of strange inconsistencies and errors (besides the abundant mistakes arising from editorial carelessness or ignorance), affording evidence of want of reflection, or, indeed, common attention to the matters in hand. It is not my business to enumerate them. One instance, however, of extraordinary blundering may be mentioned:—

'March 20, 1829. In the House of Commons we divided, 223 to 19, on the Franchise Bill. Palmerston, Bankes, and Herries, each with his little band of people, voted in the minority.' (11. 402.)

The authorised list, to which we have referred, of the minority on this occasion, does not contain the name of Herries, or any other name which could be misread for it. The Bill on which Mr. Herries, a member of the Cabinet, is said to have voted with a section of the Opposition, formed part of the Ministerial mea-

sure for Catholic Emancipation. After such a vote, he could not have remained for twelve hours in office under such a leader as the Duke of Wellington. Let this suffice as an illustration of the accuracy of the diary and the diligence of its editor. One more observation, and I have done with the subject of this publication. It is quite clear that, when Lord Ellenborough joined the Duke's Government, and for some time afterwards, his associations and sympathies were Whig. Next to Canning and the Canningites, he hated the pure Tories. As one of them, Mr. Herries, against whom it is not unfair to surmise that his mind may have been prejudiced by his Whig friends, was an object of his aversion. And it deserves particular notice that among the principal of those friends was Mr. Tierney, the persistent enemy of Mr. Herries (11. 177).

The writer of the article tells his readers 'at the outset,' that he must speak 'in terms of disparagement' of the book of which I am the author. Disparagement is, indeed, perceptibly the purpose of the review, and no pains have been spared for the accomplishment of the task.

Fault is found, in the first place, with the 'tone' of the book. I confess that it does not display the equanimity of a candid friend, and that in dealing with matters of history its author has shown less complaisance than regard for truth. The resentment of the unprovoked injury inflicted by Mr. Spencer Walpole, which is manifested in its pages, is, indeed, admitted to be natural. But some observations, not proved to