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NOTES

The Earl of Buchan's Kick: A Footnote to the History of the *Edinburgh Review*

IT seems that David Stewart Erskine, eleventh Earl of Buchan (1742-1829), kicked himself into a kind of immortality¹ when, in November of 1808, he booted the twenty-fifth number of the *Edinburgh Review* from his Edinburgh house into the street, 'to be trodden under foot by man and beast.'² This number contained the famous review entitled 'Don Pedro Cevallos on the French Usurpation of Spain' which mingled praise of the Spanish patriots who had risen against Napoleon with bitter criticism of the upper classes, English as well as Spanish, and a demand for reform of the British constitution. The exact apportionment of the authorship of this article still remains in dispute, though it is clear that it was a collaborative effort by Jeffrey and Brougham.³ But there has never been any question

¹ Cf. *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, XII, 149.

² Alexander Fergusson, *The Honourable Henry Erskine . . . with Notices of Certain of His Kinsfolk and of His Time* (Edinburgh, 1882), p. 489, records the incident in greatest detail. For contemporary reports see Henry Thomas Lord Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey* (Edinburgh, 1852), I, 190, and Jeffrey's letter to Francis Horner, 6 December 1808, in *Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner*, ed. Leonard Horner (London, 1843), I, 438.

³ For a summary of the latest evidence see Elisabeth Schneider, Irwin Griggs, and John D. Kern, 'Brougham's Early Contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*: A New List,' *Modern Philology*, XLII (1945), 170-171.

of the effect created by its appearance. It gave final impetus to the plans for the rival Tory *Quarterly*, called forth numerous angry pamphlets against the *Edinburgh*, and shocked respectable readers everywhere. Sydney Smith, who shared the contemporary view that Brougham was the sole author of the article, wrote to Lady Holland from London:

You have no idea of the consternation which Brougham's attack upon the titled orders has produced: the Review not only discontinued by many, but returned to the bookseller from the very first volume: the library shelves fumigated, etc.!⁴

Thus the Earl's reaction was certainly far from unique, though he expressed it in a somewhat unorthodox manner, quite in accord with the reputation for eccentricity which he had achieved among his Edinburgh contemporaries.⁵ What makes the often told anecdote represent more than what it is always used to illustrate —

⁴ Smith to Lady Holland, 10 January 1809, in Saba Lady Holland, *A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith* (London, 1855), II, 35.

⁵ This reputation did not prevent such critical minds as Scott and Brougham from expressing their high opinion of the Earl's native abilities; see Scott's *Journal*, ed. J. G. Tait and W. M. Parker (Edinburgh, 1939-46), III, 55-56, and *The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham Written by Himself* (Edinburgh, 1871), I, 55.

the response of an old and eccentric nobleman to what was then considered to be Jacobin doctrine—is the Earl of Buchan's own political background of radical Whiggism.

He himself assigned a rather small place to his political activities, for, according to his own statement, 'he withdrew from public life at a very early period after his succession to the title [1767], and dedicated himself to the duties of a private station, the advancement of science and literature, and the improvement of his native country by the arts of peace.'⁶ He fancied himself most as patron of the arts, biographer, and antiquary. And his life presents an amazing record of tangential contact with the great.⁷

He was the oldest and least eminent of three sons. While one of his younger brothers, Thomas Erskine, went on to become Lord Chancellor of England, and the other, Henry Erskine, Lord Advocate of Scotland, the closest he himself ever came to a public career was his refusal, in 1766, to accept the post of secretary to the British Ambassador to Spain, on the ground that the Ambassador was of inferior rank. This course lost him his chance for a diplomatic career, but won him the approbation of Dr Johnson.⁸

The year following this incident his father, a convert to Methodism,

⁶ Sir Robert Douglas, *The Peerage of Scotland*, 2nd ed., revised and corrected by John P. Wood (Edinburgh, 1813), I, 280.

⁷ For Buchan's life see *DNB*; Fergusson, *Henry Erskine*, pp. 477-512, and passim; John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1817-58), VI, 489-521; and John Buchan, *Some Eighteenth Century Byways* (Edinburgh, 1908), pp. 201-225.

⁸ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1887), II, 177.

died at Bath, where he had settled as a disciple of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. After five days of obsequies conducted by Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon and the bereaved widow turned their attention to the new Earl and were successful in persuading him to make public profession of his faith. They appointed no less than four personal chaplains for the pious young man, including John Wesley, who expressed his gratitude for the honor done him.⁹

How long Buchan remained in the fold we do not know. Perhaps the memory of his religious experience lent some force to the famous kick, since the *Edinburgh Review*, in the person of Sydney Smith, took great pleasure in ridiculing the Methodists. We do know that, apart from his writings, the sole formal activity of Buchan's life was his founding and direction of a Scottish Society of Antiquaries.¹⁰ This is not to say that he lacked energy. On the contrary, he was totally unable to sit quietly in his chair for any length of time, and

⁹ Fergusson, *Henry Erskine*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁰ On this aspect of Buchan's life see *Archaeologia Scotica: or Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, I (1792), passim; *Account of the Institution and Progress of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland, Part Second* (Edinburgh, 1784); Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Laing Manuscripts, Preserved in the University of Edinburgh* (London, 1914-25), II, passim; and correspondence with Horace Walpole in *The Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. Mrs Paget Toynbee (Oxford, 1905), Vols. X-XII, passim, or *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. Wilmarth S. Lewis, etc. (New Haven, Conn., 1937-), Vol. XV, passim; letter of Andrew Dalziel to Robert Liston, 30 November 1782, in Andrew Dalziel, *History of the University of Edinburgh from Its Foundation* (Edinburgh, 1862), I, 39-40.

spent eighteen hours of each day in activity.¹¹ He liked to be considered 'the director-general of all eminent men in whatever departments of talent,' and did not hesitate to visit his 'élèves' (as he called them) at any hour of the day, preferably in the early morning.¹² He had no children by his wife and would often observe, quoting Bacon, that 'great men have no continuance,' citing Frederick the Great, George Washington, and himself as proof.¹³ The quotation did not really apply to him since he had one natural son. Nevertheless, he sought additional consolation in regarding all men whose first name happened to be David as his sons, especially when they had achieved some degree of prominence. Those to whom he thought himself remotely related he called 'grandfather' (Sir Thomas Browne) or 'cousin' (George Washington and George III).

His most famous 'élève' was probably Robert Burns, whom he advised, early in 1787, 'to keep his eye upon Parnassus and drink deep of the fountains of Helicon,' but to beware of 'the jolly god of wine.'¹⁴ For this piece of paternal advice Burns thanked him in the most flattering terms,¹⁵ although he filed his answer with the comment: 'Copy of a letter to Lord Buchan in

¹¹ Robert P. Gillies, *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran* (London, 1851), I, 338.

¹² 'Humours of the North, No. III; Recollections of the Earl of B.,' *Fraser's Magazine*, XV (1837), 355-361.

¹³ John Lord Campbell, *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal of England*, 4th ed. (London, 1856-57), IX, 100.

¹⁴ Quoted in Catherine Carswell, *The Life of Robert Burns* (London, 1930), p. 248.

¹⁵ Burns to Buchan, 7 February 1787, in *The Letters of Robert Burns*, ed. John De Lanczy Ferguson (Oxford, 1931), I, 72-74.

answer to a bombast epistle he sent me when I went first to Edinburgh.'¹⁶ In 1791 Buchan invited Burns to come to the first of a series of annual festivals in honor of the poet James Thomson.¹⁷ This was to be held in the grounds of Dryburgh Abbey, which the Earl had purchased five years earlier.¹⁸ Burns wrote that he was too busy with the harvest, but sent an 'Address to the Shade of the Bard.'¹⁹ And in 1794 he sent Buchan a copy of 'Bannockburn,' as a 'small tribute of gratitude of that acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honor me.'²⁰

The Earl had other satisfactions. There was the time he invited nine young Edinburgh ladies of rank to breakfast, in order to have himself painted with them as 'Apollo and the Muses.' All went well until Cupid made his appearance, in the shape of a young man properly armed with bow and arrows, but improperly clad in nothing at all. The 'Muses' ran shrieking from the room, but Buchan is reported to have been happy.²¹ His own favorite Muse seems to have been 'Urania' (Lady Anne Hamilton),

¹⁶ Entry in Commonplace Book for 16 June 1788, as printed in Charles Rogers, *The Book of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh, 1889-91), III, 332.

¹⁷ On these festivals see Léon Morel, *James Thomson, sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1895), pp. 189-191. They were celebrated until 1819.

¹⁸ For an account by Buchan himself of his life at Dryburgh Abbey see 'Albanicus to Hortus,' *See*, IV (11 August 1791), 160-166. 'Albanicus' was Buchan's pseudonym.

¹⁹ Burns to Buchan, 29 August 1791; *Letters*, II, 85.

²⁰ Burns to Buchan, 12 January 1794; *Letters*, II, 230-231. The original of this letter, with 'Scots Wha Hae' in Burns's own hand, is in the Harvard College Library.

²¹ Fergusson, *Henry Erskine*, pp. 485-486.

whose first visit to Dryburgh is thus evoked in his journal:

I arrive at Dryburgh Abbey at half past five in the afternoon at the same time of the day when Urania paid her first visit to it. I see the bright rays of the Sun of our Apollo shining thro' *the radiated window* of the Abbey. I press my lips to the first footstep of my Muse on the threshold of my home . . .²²

It is hard to say just how much more than an embodiment of the Earl's life-long interest in astronomy 'Urania' represented. The following passage from a letter may help to illustrate the relationship, as well as Buchan's style:

My dear Urania! Remember all that I have said to you heretofore and look again and again at my gratefull [sic] life in your hands and so think and conduct yourself that we may meet at last in the regions of tranquillity and immortal Bliss. Farewell.²³

It was for 'Urania' that Buchan, in 1802, broke his vow never to be present again at an election of the Peers of Scotland who were to sit in the House of Lords. She had asked him to use his influence on behalf of one of the candidates, pleading friendship, reason, and virtue. These three being 'the darlings of my soul by which it has ever been adorned and guided,' Buchan acceded to her request.²⁴ He had made

²² Buchan's journal, in manuscript, 5 April 1802. Portions of the journal and of the Earl's correspondence with 'Urania' are in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City. Quotations from these portions are made with the permission of the Director of the Morgan Library.

²³ Buchan to Lady Hamilton, undated; Morgan Library MSS, MA 666.

²⁴ Buchan to Lady Hamilton, 13 August 1802; Morgan Library MSS, MA 666. He had actually broken his vow at least once before by attending an election of peers in

the vow in 1782, after conducting a sort of one-man campaign on behalf of the independence of the Scottish nobility. Ever since the Act of Union of 1707 the sixteen Scottish Peers who represented Scotland in the House of Lords had been selected from London by means of the 'Treasury List' which was openly circulated to all the Peers of Scotland by whatever administration was in power at the time of an election. The Peers habitually voted for the sixteen of their number thus designated. Buchan had fought against this system since 1768. In 1780 he published a *Speech . . . Intended to Have Been Delivered at the Meeting of the Peers of Scotland, for the General Election of Their Representatives . . .*, and two years later he tried to oppose the Earl of Lauderdale in a free election. He was almost successful on that occasion — Lauderdale was returned by the close margin of thirteen to eleven — because Rockingham died just before the election and Shelburne, his successor, was thought to favor Buchan. But the result still meant defeat for the Earl, who took leave of his fellow Peers in this fashion:

My independence is unexterminable. I can live on the food, the simple food, of my ancestors. I can prepare it, if it is necessary, in a helmet, and stir it about with my sword, the name, the origin, the emblem, and the charter of my family.²⁵

1787; *Caledonian Mercury*, 26 and 29 March 1787, quoted in Henry William Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution* (Glasgow, 1912), p. 13.

²⁵ Quoted in William Law Mathieson, *The Awakening of Scotland; a History from 1747 to 1797* (Glasgow, 1910), p. 73. Fergusson, *Henry Erskine*, p. 194, claims that Buchan's efforts played a large part in the eventual defeat of the old system of elec-

Perhaps it was this rather discouraging personal experience with the workings of the British constitution that led Buchan, only a few months after his valedictory to the Scottish Peers, to become an enthusiastic supporter of the Reverend Christopher Wyvill and his Yorkshire Association for parliamentary reform. In answer to a circular letter from the Association he assured Wyvill that 'my most strenuous efforts shall not be wanting in Scotland, to meet the virtuous wishes of the Constitutional Friends of Liberty.'²⁶ A report on his efforts followed ten days later.²⁷ The Yorkshire Association was in no sense a democratic or a radical movement. It had arisen among the freeholders of Yorkshire who concerned themselves with 'economical reform' (of corruption and wasteful spending) and with demands for increased county representation in Parliament.²⁸ Buchan was still in good company: both Burke and Pitt supported the aims of the Association. But the time was not far distant

tions. But Meikle, *Scotland*, p. 13, sees no evidence that the Treasury List was abolished at this time. It was simply circulated more discreetly. Reform had to wait till 1832.

²⁶ Buchan to Wyvill, 2 December 1782, in *Political Papers, Chiefly Respecting the Attempt of the County of York and Other Considerable Districts . . . to Effect a Reformation of the Parliament of Great Britain*, ed. Christopher Wyvill (York, 1794-1802), IV, 523.

²⁷ Buchan to Wyvill, 2 December 1782; *Political Papers*, IV, 524-526.

²⁸ Cynics may note that only a few months before Buchan joined this 'economical reform' association he had asked Lord George Germain's 'interest' to secure him the reversion of the office of Vice-Admiral of Scotland; Buchan to Germain, 21 March 1781, *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of Mrs. Stopford-Sackville* (London, 1904-10), I, 76.

when he was to refer ironically to Burke as 'a modern pensioner of writing memory, and sublime abilities,'²⁹ while praising 'philanthropic Paine.'³⁰

His brother, Thomas Erskine, who brilliantly defended Paine in 1792 and who played a prominent part in the Society of the Friends of the People — the Foxite Whig organization for parliamentary reform founded in the course of the same year by Charles (later Lord) Grey — may have had something to do with Buchan's 'radical' period. But the Friends of the People explicitly repudiated Paine — it was one thing to defend a democrat and quite another to praise him. Buchan was no doubt carried away by his enthusiasm for the French Revolution and the reforms instituted under its banner, an enthusiasm quite apparent in his writings during the year 1792.³¹ What makes the pamphlet against a standing army (which followed the next year) especially interesting is that in spite of all his praise of France and of Paine, his skepticism about the achievements of the 'Glorious Revolu-

²⁹ 'Albanicus,' *Letters on the Impolicy of a Standing Army, in Time of Peace* (London, 1793), p. 25. A copy of this pamphlet is in the Harvard College Library.

³⁰ 'Albanicus,' *Letters on the Impolicy*, p. 54.

³¹ See 'Albanicus,' 'Novum Organum Politicum — Being an Attempt to Show that the Aera of Scientific Government Is Arrived,' *Hee*, VII (29 February 1792), 312-319; and Buchan, *Essays on the Lives and Writings of Fletcher of Saltoun and the Poet Thomson* (London, 1792), pp. xxxiii-xxxiv. The latter work was the second of a projected series of biographies of eminent Scotsmen. The first, *An Account of the Life, Writings, and Inventions of John Napier, of Merchiston* (Perth, 1787), was written by Buchan in association with Walter Minto.

tion' of 1688,³² and his demands for a speedy reform of Parliament, Buchan there draws a very clear distinction between the 'people' and the 'mob.' On the one hand, he bitterly resented — and egregiously misinterpreted — Burke's allusion to the people (among whom the Earl included himself) as a herd of swine;³³ on the other, he proposed the establishment of a militia to include 'all men of property,' powerful enough to repress vile mobs engaged in 'the democratic mischief of transferring property.'³⁴ The Earl of Buchan remained a Whig for a' that!

By 1794 the excesses of the French Revolution had caught up with him and he saw the people of France sunk 'in a depth of distress that has no parallel in the history of past ages.'³⁵ In May of that year he wrote Daniel Stuart, then Secretary of the Society of the Friends of the People, that he was unwilling to lend his name to the Society, 'when I cannot see that the remedies proposed for a political evil are equal to the cure of the political disease.'³⁶

³² He approvingly quotes Lord Molesworth's statement that 'all we pretend to by the late Revolution, bought at so great an expence, was to be as we were, and that every man should have his own again, the effecting of which may be called a piece of good luck, which is *the best that can be said of it*'; Buchan, *Letters on the Impolicy*, p. 33.

³³ *Letters on the Impolicy*, p. 25; compare Burke's prophecy in *Reflections on the French Revolution*: 'Learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.'

³⁴ *Letters on the Impolicy*, p. 81.

³⁵ 'Considerations on the Importance of Reciprocal Friendship and Connection between the Old and the New World,' *Bee*, XVIII (1 January 1794), 331.

³⁶ Buchan to Stuart, 17 May 1794; autograph letter in the possession of Mr Wilmarth S. Lewis, Farmington, Connecticut,

Disillusionment with the French Revolution was by no means an uncommon phenomenon in the seven-teen nineties. Within two years Daniel Stuart himself was to become the editor of a Tory newspaper. And, in a sense, it may seem surprising that, given his impulsive personality, Buchan did not similarly gravitate toward the right. What saved him from doing so was, in part, his long-standing admiration for the United States, in whose fortunes and statesmen he continued to take a benevolent interest.

We have already seen that he looked upon Washington as his cousin;³⁷ and Benjamin Franklin had once saved his life with medical advice.³⁸ Thus he had personal as well as political motives for his cordiality. In 1791 he sent Washington a box made of the oak that had sheltered Sir William Wallace after the battle of Falkirk, with the request that it be left, on Washington's decease, to the person in the United States most worthy to receive it in the

by whose permission it is quoted here. In the same letter Buchan states that when his brother Thomas Erskine first wanted to propose him as an honorary member of the Society he refused to give his approval. Nevertheless, in the record of the institutional meeting of the Friends of the People, 11 April 1792 (*Political Papers*, ed. Christopher Wyvill, III, 131), Buchan's name stands at the very head of the list of non-resident members. And Sir Gilbert Elliott, in a letter to Lady Elliott of 17 May 1792 (*Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliott, First Earl of Minto*, ed. Countess of Minto, London, 1874, II, 26), states that the Earl of Buchan has become a member of one of the reforming societies.

³⁷ For the validity of the claim see *Notes and Queries*, 6th Ser., VIII (21 July 1883), 52, where the relationship is called 'about as tangible as the shadow of a shade.'

³⁸ Buchan to Franklin, 18 February 1783, in *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. John Bigelow (New York, 1904), X, 82-83.

owner's opinion.³⁹ Some correspondence ensued (which Buchan was never tired of quoting at length) and in 1793 Washington suggested Buchan to Jefferson as a prospective member of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia.⁴⁰ The Earl himself inherited his box from his 'cousin,' since Washington did not feel competent to pick a recipient in the United States.⁴¹

After Washington's death, Buchan transferred his affections to Jefferson, whom he presented, in 1803, with a copy of his biography of Fletcher and Thomson in order to 'defeat, as far as my opinion could, the prejudices conceived against Mr. Jefferson on both sides of the Atlantic.'⁴² In his letter of thanks Jefferson congratulated Buchan on his courage in continuing to advocate his principles 'in the weakened condition of English Whigism [sic] at this day.'⁴³

Actually, Buchan took little active interest in politics after the turn of the century. However, he continued his annual Washington's Birthday addresses to Americans residing in Edinburgh

³⁹ Buchan to Washington, 28 June 1791; quoted in *The Earl of Buchan's Address to the Americans at Edinburgh on Washington's Birth-day, February 22d, 1811* (Edinburgh, 1811), p. 16.

⁴⁰ Washington to Jefferson, 31 December 1793, in *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, D. C., 1931-44), XXXIII, 221.

⁴¹ Washington's will, 9 July 1799; *Writings of Washington*, XXXIII, 285. At Buchan's invitation Washington had his portrait painted by Archibald Robertson, and sent it to the Earl in 1793. For the history of the portrait and its present whereabouts see *The Times*, 8 August 1951.

⁴² Buchan, *Address to the Americans*, p. 18.

⁴³ Jefferson to Buchan, 10 July 1803, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Andrew A. Lipscomb (Washington, 1905), X, 400.

at least until 1817,⁴⁴ and when he came to write his autobiographical note of 1813, he referred readers interested in the political motives which had guided him to his correspondence with the Reverend Christopher Wyvill and to that biography of Fletcher and Thomson which contained his radical sentiments of 1792.⁴⁵

Thus it was no Richard Tory who kicked the *Edinburgh Review* out of his house after 'Don Cevallos.' And this makes the survival of the anecdote peculiarly fitting. For while it is true that the most dramatic effect of the article was its impact on Tories like Sir Walter Scott, which made it, so to speak, the midwife of the *Quarterly*, its effect on the main body of the Whigs (whose cause the *Edinburgh Review* was presumed to further) was perhaps even more significant. A letter from Brougham, its chief author, throws some light on this:

In 1808, Cevallos on Spain and the war generally first made us conspicuous as Liberals, and called the *Quarterly* into existence in three months, an event sure to happen as soon as we took a bold line. But that very article, I can assure you, offended Lord Grey and Holland House as much as it did the Tories.⁴⁶

This was true in Edinburgh as well as in London:

The last review—about Cevallos—has given infinite offence here, but in

⁴⁴ For the text of his address that year see Thomas Constable, *Constable and His Literary Correspondents* (Edinburgh, 1873), I, 523-526.

⁴⁵ Douglas, *Peerage of Scotland*, I, 280.

⁴⁶ Brougham to Napier, 27 October 1839, in *Selections from the Correspondence of the Late Macvey Napier Esq.*, ed. Macvey Napier (London, 1879), pp. 308-309.

Edinburgh I learn that both friends and foes are offended.⁴⁷

Why was this so? Scott put his finger on an important part of the explanation when he wrote Murray:

The last No: of the Edinr. Review has given disgust beyond measure owing to the tone of the article on Cevallos.⁴⁸

The tone as much as the substance was bound to offend. Whigs and Tories alike rejoiced in the success of the Spanish patriots. But while the Whigs were not likely to be unduly exercised over the article's suggestion that if the Spaniards wanted a new monarch, 'a new stock' could 'be brought from Germany for a breed,'⁴⁹ they could not be expected to show similar equanimity when praise was bestowed upon the lower orders in this fashion:

The bulk, the mass of the people, — nay the very odious, many-headed beast, the multitude — the mob itself — alone, uncalled, or unaided by the higher classes, — in despite of these higher classes, and in direct opposition to them, as well as to the enemy whom they so vilely joined, — raised up the standard of insurrection, — bore it through massacre and through victory, until it chased the usurper away, and waved over his deserted courts.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Brougham to Grey, 2 December 1808, in Brougham, *Life and Times*, I, 410.

⁴⁸ Scott to Murray, 15 November 1808, in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. Sir H. J. C. Grierson (London, 1932-37), II, 75.

⁴⁹ *Edinburgh Review*, XIII (1808), 221. Buchan, however, must have regarded this phrase as a personal insult, since for many years he had carried on what was on his side a paternally benevolent correspondence with his 'cousin' George III and with other members of the Royal Family. For extracts from these letters see Fergusson, *Henry Erskine*, pp. 493-501.

⁵⁰ *Edinburgh Review*, XIII, 220.

The use of the word 'mob' in any but a pejorative sense had an unaccustomed and unwelcome sound for Whiggish ears.

It is quite apparent that these fiery phrases were the work of Brougham, who was never averse to shocking either friend or foe. They are certainly not typical of the generally moderate line hitherto taken by Jeffrey, who wrote some of the less spectacular parts of the 'Cevallos' article. These are really of more fundamental importance than the shocking phrases: Jeffrey and his friends hoped that the revolt of the Spanish patriots would finally wipe out the bad memories of the French Revolution from the minds of the English middle and upper classes.

One major theme that runs through the *Edinburgh Review* from the time of its founding, in 1802, to the time of the 'Don Cevallos' number is the attempt to convince its readers that they must not let their political views become prey to pathological fears of Jacobinism. The Spanish revolt, directed against the common enemy, and thus, unlike the French Revolution, posing no potential threat to the safety of England, was expected to serve as a cure for these fears. It was in this vein that Francis Horner, co-founder of the *Edinburgh Review* and one of the more prominent younger Whigs in Parliament, commented upon it:

What a triumph for the principles of liberty is this revolution in Spain, and its extensive influence upon the present and future fortunes of the world! It may even make those principles be felt and regarded by men of property and education in this country, and deliver them

from the suspicion and derision to which they are at present exposed.⁵¹

And this is the keynote of the famous article:

... we can once more utter the words *liberty* and *people*, without starting at the echo of our own voices, or looking round the chamber for some spy or officer of the government.⁵²

The authors go on to hope for a recurrence of 'wholesome popular feelings' and to anticipate a state of public opinion which will view 'radical improvements in our constitution' without horror. Indeed, they announce that the hour of constitutional freedom is about to strike.

Lord Grey and his supporters doubtless agreed with much of this. But more than ten years had passed since the defeat of their motion for parliamentary reform in 1797 which had led to their temporary secession from Parliament. Since then, many of them, including Grey, had grown lukewarm on the subject and were no longer in a mood for 'radical improvements in our constitution.'⁵³ It was the same

⁵¹ Horner to Murray, 27 October 1808, in *Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner*, I, 435.

⁵² *Edinburgh Review*, XIII, 222.

⁵³ For an excellent discussion of Whig attitudes to reform in this period see Michael Roberts, *The Whig Party, 1807-1812* (London, 1939), pp. 172-302.

Edinburgh Review which, having sung only fifteen months earlier the praises of a balanced constitution in the language and the spirit of the mid-eighteenth century,⁵⁴ now found itself for the first time in the position of 'radicalizer' of the Whig party.

In this process of radicalization the *Review* was to play an important, though not a consistent part. Its founders and guiding spirits, in spite of all their hesitations and inconsistencies, nevertheless represented a new type of middle-class Whiggism and inhabited a world of ideas that came to differ more and more from that which had inspired Grey and his aristocratic friends to found the Society of the Friends of the People.

Whether the Earl of Buchan engaged in long and serious reflections of this kind before delivering his famous kick may well be doubted. He was enough of an eccentric to have taken his punitive action from some whim of his own, though, as we have seen, the 'Cevallos' article certainly provided him with sufficient provocation. His kick symbolized a significant aspect of the contemporary political scene: what more can we ask from a historical anecdote?

JOHN CLIVE

⁵⁴ *Edinburgh Review*, X (1807), 386-421.

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