Contributions to the Edinburgh review

Jeffrey Francis Jeffrey
CONTRIBUTIONS

TO THE

EDINBURGH REVIEW.

BY

FRANCIS JEFFREY,

NOW ONE OF THE JUDGES OF THE COURT OF SESSION IN SCOTLAND

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY CAREY AND HART.
1849.
TO

THE REVEREND SYDNEY SMITH,

THE ORIGINAL PROJECTOR OF THE EDINBURGH REVIEW,

LONG ITS BRIGHTEST ORNAMENT,

AND ALWAYS MY TRUE AND INDULGENT FRIEND,

I now DEDICATE THIS REPUBLICATION;

FROM LOVE OF OLD RECOLLECTIONS,

AND IN TOKEN

OF UNCHANGED AFFECTION AND ESTEEM.

F. JEFFREY.
FROM THE NEW YORK EVENING MESSENGER.

"The true Jeffrey whom we meet with in these volumes, presents a character somewhat of this sort:—

"He was formed undoubtedly to be the first critic of the age: and of poetry, he was probably the best judge that ever lived. An intellect of the highest capacity and of a very rare order of completeness, adorned by a perfect acquaintance with the best systems of metaphysical philosophy,—to be, in him, pervaded and informed by those moral perceptions which indeed flow so inseparably on adjacent of the highest kind of great understandings, that they might perhaps be regarded as nearly the highest sort of mental qualities. His perceptions of truth is almost an instinct, and his love of it truly conscientious. His objects, in taking up any work or subject, are so adequate and to judge; his searching and sensitive intelligence makes him sure of the former, and the soundness of his views fits him for the other. His temper is admirable. He seems to have no predilections—to be free from all vanity and jealousy—to possess a tone of impartiality and generous candour, almost enervated in his leanness. He has not a particle of cant, none of the formality or pretension of professional style; but on the contrary, writes truly like a gentleman, and with the air of perfect breeding. He inspires you with entire confidence and a cordial liking. All his own displays are in the truest good taste—simple, easy, natural, without affectation or effort. He has the powers, the morals, and the manners of the best style of writing. There are, however, but two persons who stand so prominently before the world, that they deserve to be set for comparison with Jeffrey: they, of course are Carlyle and Macaulay. We should distinguish them by saying that Macaulay is a good reviewer, but a sorry critic; Carlyle an admirable critic, but a miserable reviewer; while we look on Jeffrey as being at once the best critic and the best reviewer of the age.

"We must content ourselves with this brief note tending to prophesy the regard of the reader, in advance, for the Lord Jeffrey; for our limits forbid extracts. Else, we could show a specimen of the most exquisite beauty in composition, and of the noblest eloquence, that the literature of any age can furnish. But the strength of Jeffrey does not lie in a paragraph, and sentences; but in the vigour, soundness and candour of the whole criticism."