

to; in a small one, each class, and perhaps each individual, in turn is dissatisfied that the subject he is chiefly interested in should receive so much less attention than he thinks its due. Alas! we can assure them that the feeling is not confined to themselves; that the writer, no less than the reader, is often dissatisfied with his work; with his subject; or with his power of doing justice to it; or the time and space which can be given to it; or the imperfect conclusions at which he is sometimes stopped, and beyond which he finds himself unable to proceed. One rule is, however, very clearly ascertained: Readers will tolerate anything rather than being bored; and nothing produces this effect more certainly than harping too long upon one string; insisting too pertinaciously upon one subject, however important or really good in itself. They must have change of diet; and, if need be, insist upon it, like the labourers in some parts of Scotland, who, in their arrangements for hiring, stipulated not to have salmon more than three times a-week. We are aware that these observations are of a very general nature, although we must ask our readers to take it upon trust that they have a particular application; and to believe, as Addison said in the 'Spectator', 'that whenever we are particularly dull, we have a good reason for it in the background'.⁴

Not unrelated to the above quotation is the following one in which Elliott theorises on the editorial personality needed to uphold his principles of editorial responsibility: an unbribeable man of integrity with presbyterian virtues of hard work and practical intellect.

An Editor has been defined as 'a miserable wretch who daily empties his brains that he may fill his stomach'. Whoever the happy author of this brilliant impertinence may have been, he certainly was altogether unacquainted with the matter which he took in hand. Editors have always been more or less the subjects of unthinking ridicule, and this not invariably from persons whose want of talent could but bring upon them contempt from the objects of their ill-directed satire . . .

In the first place, it should be well considered what sacrifices he has to make. All individual prejudices must be set aside; all temptations to make his journal the channel of personal attacks, either on his own part or that of his friends, must be strenuously resisted: he is the servant of the public, and no other influence must be allowed to direct or bias his pen. In the matter of correspondents' letters, his difficulties are not small. The Scylla of private resentment threatens him on one side, while on the other yawns the Charybdis of public opinion; and between these two he must guide his editorial barque. To do this, a good deal of judgment and skill, moderation and good nature, is necessary; the editorial conscience must be frequently appealed to, and the editorial verdict be carefully considered, and given in such a manner as never to wound unnecessarily the feelings of any individual, and yet not to lose sight of the final object of publicity, namely, the putting down of abuses, and furthering the public weal. This must always involve careful thought, and often much mental labour and wearying research on the part of the Editor. *His* office is no pleasant literary retreat; his duties no easy sinecure. All comfortable domestic arrangements, all delightful literary pursuits, must give way or be subordinate to the imperious requirements of the newspaper. In England, where most classes of people are greatly overworked, Editors, if the truth were known, stand out from the masses by the peculiarly onerous character of their profession; and in this country, where hard work is not the order of the day, the Editor is most certainly the hardest worked man in the community. The ordinary routine of a newspaper office is laborious enough, but it is more particularly the tension of the brain, necessary to the due consideration of public rights and wrongs, which