The Reverend Alexander Dyce's "Reminiscences" are contained in a generally unrevised manuscript in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington (pressmark D.26.E.9); they are here edited by permission of the Museum. Internal evidence suggests that Dyce wrote most of the essays between 1867 and his death in May 1869. A more specific description of the manuscript may be found in the section "Editorial Principles."

The "Reminiscences" (so styled on the covering leaf, not in Dyce's hand) were presented to the Museum in 1905 by Warwick Elwin, who found them among the papers of his father, the Reverend Whitwell Elwin, editor of the Quarterly Review. The manuscript probably came into the senior Elwin's possession through John Forster, who was one of Dyce's executors and who used a very small portion of the memoirs for a biographical "Sketch" of Dyce in 1875. From then until this book was in the last stages of preparation, no one seems to have taken advantage of the manuscript. Recently, however, Professor S. Schoenbaum has made reference to it in Shakespeare's Lives (Oxford, 1970) and has published some of its more striking passages in the TLS, 22 January 1971, pp. 101–2.

Regrettably, Dyce forebore discussing those of his contemporaries
still living in 1869. But these jottings of an eminent scholar nevertheless provide a close view of some of the most interesting literary and theatrical figures in his lifetime. Occasionally he is content to rehearse biographical data well known even then, but most often he focuses upon his personal encounters with his subjects. Some anecdotes have become known through other sources, but comparison will frequently show that Dyce offers something original nonetheless, and his reputation for veracity and accuracy lends credence to many an otherwise dubious tale. When he speaks from firsthand information, the result can be remarkable, as in his description of Thomas Taylor's later years. His broad survey of the stage reveals an expertise arising from considerable love for a field that also provided the chief occupation of his scholarly life. The record of his fellow scholars is extremely entertaining, chiefly because so many of his subjects stand just this side of lunacy. The last chapter deals primarily with literary artists and contains new material on authors ranging from Wordsworth to Mrs. Barbauld.

Dyce has not been altogether forgotten in the last one hundred years. Scholars still value many of his editions, and they have mined both his Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers (especially for Taylor and Wordsworth) and the manuscript notes scattered throughout his library, which remains intact at the Victoria and Albert. But no one has written an adequate biography of him. I have had to settle for a patchwork account, drawn mostly from the printed records of his contemporaries. The research for this biography involved as much hard labor as bibliographical ingenuity, for Dyce seems to have known everyone; and though most of his acquaintances mention him, they seldom do so at length. My labor has had the instructive result of showing the kinds of sources one must consult in order to piece together the activities of important ancillary figures like Dyce. But if he is ever to be included in a comprehensive study of Victorian scholars, his many unprinted letters—to Egerton Brydges and William Carew Hazlitt, for instance—and the possible allusions in the unpublished writings of Carlyle and Crabb Robinson, all must be located and considered. The Museum has eight volumes of Dyce's scrapbooks, which contain, in addition to clippings and other scholarly memorabilia, numerous letters from his
legion of acquaintances. Most of the letters seem related to questions of editing and to other literary matters, and they would be useful chiefly to someone investigating in detail his scholarly life. Such was not my intention; as a result, I have let pass, among other things, the interesting problems connected with John Payne Collier and the Shakespeare forgeries. (On this subject one should consult the wealth of new material in Professor Schoenbaum's *Shakespeare's Lives.*) My biography, though the fullest to date, is not the last word.

I am very happy to acknowledge my great debt to the two men who have watched over this project from the beginning. The advice and example of Professor Richard D. Altick have not only sustained my work but have prevented the lapses that result from warbling one's footnotes wild. However, the flaws that remain must be set down solely to my own deficiencies. I am grateful to Mr. John P. Harthan, Keeper of the Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for calling my attention to the manuscript's existence, for securing the xerographic copy on which this edition is based, for numerous points of information, and for patience. The cooperation of the Library's staff, and notably of Mr. A. P. Burton, the Assistant Keeper, was splendid.

I have also to thank my colleagues, Professors Dudley Johnson, Alan Downer (now deceased), and Joseph Donohue, for reading and commenting on various sections of the book; the Ohio State University Libraries for permission to quote from Dyce's letter to Collier; my editor, Mr. Robert S. Demorest, for his care with the typescript; and Mr. D. R. MacDonald for criticism better than he knew.

R. J. S.

*Princeton, N.J.*

*March 1971*
THE REMINISCENCES
OF ALEXANDER DYCE