ARE WE TO HAVE no fuller biography of my old friend Dyce than
the sketch which Mr. John Forster prefixed to the catalogue of
his library, now in the South Kensington Museum?” So queried
James Crossley in 1877, two years after the sketch had appeared and
eight years after his friend’s death. Crossley found that biographies by
Forster, then recently deceased, failed in general to tell “the whole truth”
about their subjects. The charge was seconded shortly thereafter by
another of Alexander Dyce’s friends, John Bulloch. Indeed, Forster
has not given a full portrait in what remains the only substantial biogra­
phy of Dyce. Even though he drew largely from the manuscript
edited below, he makes several factual errors and is especially deficien­
in recounting Dyce’s numerous friendships. The biography points up
Dyce’s great achievements in scholarship and serves as a testament of
Forster’s affection, but, lacking so much of Dyce’s social and other
extrascholarly activity, it fails to convey properly his genuine stature.
What follows is but partial amends, for I have relied almost exclusively
upon material in print, in order to supplement briefly what we learn in
the “Reminiscences” themselves.
Major Alexander Dyce of the East India Company's service was wed to Miss Frederick Meredith Mary Campbell on 3 May 1797. Their eldest son, Alexander, was born on 30 June 1798 in George Street, Edinburgh. Of the Major's other children, I find notices of John Neil Dyce, graduate of Trinity College, member of the Faculty of Advocates, and Sheriff-Substitute of Lanark; and of Archibald, with whom Alexander fils resided after the end of his academic and religious careers ("Sketch," xi, xvi). He was a cousin of William Dyce, the Pre-Raphaelite painter, but the records give no indication of a close friendship between them.

Dyce's parents sailed for India in 1799, and from then until he entered the Edinburgh High School, he was left in the charge of two paternal aunts at Rosebank, a mansion in Aberdeen near the Bridge of Dee ("Sketch," ix). From these years we have his recollections of the local celebrities: Mercer, Beattie, Monboddo, and Gardenstone. When he moved back to Edinburgh, he was placed under the care of "Mrs. Smollett" while attending the High School ("Sketch," x). Dyce has much to say about her in the "Reminiscences," especially regarding her great attachment to the theater. From then on, that institution was to remain a large part of her ward's life.

His appearance during the High School years, as judged by Forster from a miniature, was "animated, intelligent, and handsome" ("Sketch," xi). His academic performance is less easy to gauge. Writes Forster: "The Gazetteer which Dyce kept to the last among his grander books . . . , with the inscription, 'Alex'. Dyce received this book as a premium at the High School, August, 1811,' tells us all we know of him in the famous academy; and it may be feared that his scholastic achievements in Edinburgh were somewhat eclipsed by his opportunity of indulgence in dramatic tastes and enjoyments" ("Sketch," x). But he did receive another such gift, a prize book inscribed "Puero Ingenuo Alexandro Dyce" and signed by James Pillans, the rector, in 1811. He was not awarded a major honor at the High School, nor was he thought distinguished enough, even in 1849, to be listed by the academy's historian among "A Few of the Persons of Eminence and Rank Educated at the High School." As Forster suggests, he may have spent more time than his classmates in the theaters of Edinburgh, but his "indulgence" seems
not to have impaired his over-all education; and it probably engendered in him the enthusiasm that marks his later connections with the stage and with the editing of plays.

Dyce entered Exeter College, Oxford, on 27 February 1816 and took his B.A. in 1819.\textsuperscript{11} Again, he appears not to have particularly distinguished himself in his studies, and he has left little information concerning his university career. The only contemporary he ever spoke of to Forster was Lord Yarmouth, afterwards Lord Hertford, “and very strange were the stories of him” (“Sketch,” xiv). To others, however, he recounted Hartley Coleridge’s oratorical displays at Oxford wine parties.\textsuperscript{12} Forster writes of Dyce’s curriculum: “He took up with much zeal the study of the classics, and was assiduous at lecture; but his earliest and strongest tastes remained” (“Sketch,” xi). They led Dyce to make his first acquaintance with a famous family: he wrote to John Kemble asking which night was to be the great actor’s last appearance. The reply, which Dyce includes in his essay on Kemble, “had the gravity and stateliness as of the utterance of a bishop, and was to the effect that he didn’t know himself” (“Sketch,” xii). It was to be in Coriolanus, 23 June 1817, and Dyce, among the hundreds of other aficionados who witnessed it, was fortunate enough to have a seat next to the orchestra. In June 1819 Dyce saw Mrs. Siddons’s last performance, his account of which was borrowed by Thomas Campbell, and he always spoke of it “as a thing quite apart in his memory” (“Sketch,” xii). His “Reminiscences” suggest that later he was to miss none of the major theatrical events of his time, and but few of the minor ones.

Upon graduating, Dyce was faced with a family crisis. His father, now a general in the Madras army, was anxious to see “Alick” advance himself in a similar manner (“Sketch,” xi). This impulse no doubt derived from the notable military connections of both sides of the family. Dyce’s uncle, General Sir Neil Campbell, was the British Commissioner with Napoleon at Elba and later the Governor of Sierra Leone; and his paternal grandmother, “Miss Ochterlony of Tillifrisky,” was the guardian of young Sir David Ochterlony, who distinguished himself by military and diplomatic successes in India and for whom a column was erected at Calcutta.\textsuperscript{18} Archibald Dyce became a general (“Sketch,” xvi), and John served in the Madras Cavalry.\textsuperscript{14} Their father offered Alexan-
nder the Church as an alternative, and he took orders after graduation ("Sketch," xi).

He served curacies at Llanteglos, near Fowey in Cornwall, and at Nayland in Suffolk, but the length of his ministry at each is a matter of dispute. Joseph Foster dates the first as 1821–25 and the second as 1825–27; Forster, however, appears correct in claiming that both of Dyce's curacies were held between 1822 and 1825, when he began his literary life ("Sketch," xiv). While at Suffolk, Dyce collected anecdotes about the scholar and divine "Jones of Nayland" but engaged in no other scholarly tasks ("Sketch," xiv). As for religious inquiry, the Handbook notes that his library "not only shows that he had studied the usual theological books which young clergymen are supposed to read, but he possessed also good editions of the most important works of the Latin and Greek fathers" (14). He seems not to have been interested in the religious (or political) controversies of his lifetime—there are few books in his library that would indicate such interest—and he involved himself chiefly in such disputes as those over Richard Bentley and John Payne Collier. Twenty years after Dyce abandoned his curacies Samuel Sharpe wrote, "Dyce and [John] Mitford are very little of clergymen, [William] Harness more so," and not much else is recorded of Dyce's religious life. During his London years he held no official position in the Church.

Forster is alone in claiming 1825 for the year of Dyce's first residence in London ("Sketch," xiv); other sources are virtually unanimous for 1827, though without documentation. Dyce probably resided at 72 Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, at some time before October 1829, but Forster makes no mention of it. The most prominent address of this period is 9 Gray's Inn Square, where Dyce resided until his mother's death in 1859 ("Sketch," xvi).

Dyce undertook his editorial career at once, and, perhaps on the strength of his early performance, he soon acquired the friendship of a generous patron of intellectual activity. Samuel Rogers was noted for his kindness to the most distant of his acquaintances. Such persons frequently attended his celebrated breakfasts, and there had arisen as well the "Rogers Circle," a group that comprised the leading men of letters during Rogers's long life. Among these was Dyce, who joined the
circle possibly as early as 1829, by which time Edward Moxon, the printer, was a member and thus came to know him. By 1844, judging from the account of Charles Mackay, a poet and journalist, Dyce was quite familiar with Rogers ("'Perhaps you won't go down to posterity at all,' said Mr. Dyce, good-naturedly"). This breakfast took place a few days after Dyce and Mackay had attended the funeral of the poet Thomas Campbell, whom Rogers had succored, and the topics ranged from Campbell's penury to Shakespeare. Dyce, incidentally, must have known Campbell by 1834, when he contributed to the poet's Mrs. Siddons.

Henry Crabb Robinson recorded other breakfasts and acquaintances from 1846 to 1853. Among those mentioned with Dyce at Rogers's are his "venerable friend" William Maltby, the bibliographer who succeeded Richard Porson as principal librarian at the London Institution and who contributed the "Porsoniana" to Dyce's Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers; Dr. Alexander Henderson, a physician and student of literature; Rogers's nephew Samuel Sharpe, an Egyptologist and translator of the Bible; Dr. William Beattie, a poet; Rev. John Mitford, the editor of Gray and of the Gentleman's Magazine; and Henry Luttrell, a wit and poet who was one of Rogers's closest friends.

In a manuscript note in Sharpe's Some Particulars of the Life of Samuel Rogers, Dyce wrote, "Yes; such was undoubtedly the effect of intercourse with Mr. Rogers, it was indeed improving." Most contemporary accounts say as much. William Jerdan, however, after attacking Dyce's recent and anonymous Table-Talk, writes, "I have used the word friend, but it did not appear that the nonogenarian (whatever he might have enjoyed half a century before) had any friends. I never saw about him any but acquaintances or toadies." But in the "Addenda" included with the essay in a book ten years later, Jerdan states: "Upon the reperusal of this Character, and a knowledge of other circumstances communicated to me, I feel bound to acknowledge that I appear to have pressed rather severely upon Mr. Rogers. He was very irritable and not very amiable, but it may be too much to say that he had not 'any friends.' I am inclined to believe that he had at least one, and an independent one, in the Rev. Alexander Dyce, our pre-eminent Critic and Commentator . . ." (378). He goes on to praise further
the elderly Dyce's scholarship, thus mitigating somewhat the condescending tone of his apology. And there is little reason to doubt Dyce's sincerity, let alone his appraisal of Rogers's character: "Of his many acts of kindness and charity to the wholly obscure there is no memorial—at least on earth."  

Simultaneously, Dyce belonged to another literary circle, that of the novelist William Harrison Ainsworth. Among those who visited Ainsworth frequently at Kensal Lodge were Bulwer-Lytton, Forster, Disraeli, Dickens, Thackeray, and Maclise. "The scholarly Dyce" is first recorded there about 1837. Again the coterie was of a varied sort, and it included Samuel L. Blanchard, a writer and close friend of Ainsworth; William Jerdan, the aforementioned critic; Sir Theodore Martin, man of letters; George Cruikshank, the artist and caricaturist who illustrated Dickens; and Francis S. Mahony, the Cork satirist and ex-Jesuit most noted for Fr. Prout's Reliques. Dyce apparently joined the circle in the early thirties, and he retained an acquaintance with most of these men for the rest of his life.

Forster's only remark on the extent of Dyce's friendships is that he "was a social man, had many friends, was welcome everywhere for the pleasure of his quiet talk, so full of varied knowledge made doubly delightful by old-world breeding and courtesy" ("Sketch," xvi). Dyce's obituary in Notes & Queries reports that "his intimate acquaintance with Sir Harris Nicolas, the Rev. John Mitford, the Kembles, and most of our living men of letters, must have made him the depository of much of the literary history of the present age." But one must look elsewhere to learn of these associations; even his library catalogues are more helpful, in that they list scores of gifts and presentation copies from people now thoroughly forgotten.

Dyce's first close literary acquaintance appears to have been Euphrosia Fanny Haworth, a friend of the Brownings. He edited her anonymous The Pine Tree Dell, and Other Tales (London, 1827) and noted in his copy: "These tales were written by my dear friend Miss Haworth, when she was quite a girl. I saw them through the press, and prefixed the 'Advertisement.' " Another young lady, Fanny Kemble, also knew him at about this time. She notes in one of her autobiographies that the "arrangement of Massinger for the family library by my friend the
Reverend Alexander Dyce, the learned Shakespearian editor and commentator, was my first introduction to that mine of dramatic wealth which enriched the literature of [Renaissance] England. . . . This took place around 1830, and in a letter forty-four years later she states proudly that, having known Dyce, Collier, and other scholars, she cannot abide talk that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare.

Still another lady writer became Dyce’s lifelong friend in the years soon after his moving to London, and his method of ingratiation may provide a clue to the manner in which he came to know other such figures. Mary Russell Mitford met Dyce through the Reverend William Harness, the liberal clergyman who was a friend of the Kembles, Kean, Byron, Dickens, Rogers, and Wordsworth, an influential reviewer of plays, and an editor of Shakespeare. Dyce at once began corresponding with Miss Mitford. She was “highly honored” by his approval of her Rienzi, which was conveyed in a letter of 20 October 1828 wherein Dyce mentions the forwarding of his Specimens of British Poetesses (London, 1825) and the first volume of George Peele’s Works: Now First Collected (London, 1828). About the former he rather coyly asserts, “You will not, I trust, be very angry with me when you find that it contains some of your own verses. . . .” Campbell, Browning, Wordsworth, and Washington Irving were frequent callers at Miss Mitford’s, and Dyce and Harness are recorded there as late as 1850.

Dyce’s introduction to William Wordsworth was likewise brought about by a friend and a letter. John Mitford told Dyce that Wordsworth disagreed with the text of a poem in his edition of William Collins’s Poetical Works (London, 1827), and on 13 October 1828 Dyce wrote to ask for the poet’s reasons. Wordsworth replied on 29 October to thank him for the book, and, as de Selincourt observes, this event “marks the beginning of a long and fruitful literary friendship.” Dyce informed Wordsworth on 9 January 1829 that he thought him correct in his evaluation of the faulty text, and he was to receive at least sixteen letters from the poet between that date and 5 January 1844. They record Wordsworth’s extremely high regard for Dyce’s scholarship and some minor criticisms of the many editions that Dyce sent him over the years. He also expresses concern in the early thirties for Dyce’s health, though the illnesses are not described.
Dyce provided some explanatory notes for Christopher Wordsworth’s *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (London, 1851), and among them is a brief insight into his active clerical days: “I had mentioned to Mr. W. that, when I had a curacy in Cornwall, I used frequently to carry ‘The Excursion’ down to the sea-shore, and read it there” (II, 226). What is recorded of Dyce’s side of the correspondence reveals little else about him, apart from his dislike for Horace Walpole and an interesting comment on Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges: his mind “dwells on the ‘minora sidera’ of literature, . . . little twinkles of the last century, who were scarcely visible even in their own dark times: he writes me whole pages about the excellencies of Sneyd Davies, Bagshaw Stevens, and Capel Loft etc etc, and thinks they should enjoy places in the next Edition of the British Poets.”

Another letter brought him to the attention of Sir Walter Scott. On 4 March 1831 he sent Scott a copy of his edition of Robert Greene’s *Dramatic Works, to Which are Added his Poems* (London, 1831), dedicated to Sir Walter, along with a note that dealt with such matters as a “shamefully careless” edition of Marlowe. Scott sent his thanks and a book in return, and on 31 March informed Dyce that he planned to use his edition for an article on Greene, Peele, and Webster in the *Quarterly Review*. Lockhart notes of Scott’s response to receiving the Greene, “It is proper to observe that he [Scott] had never met their editor, though two or three letters had formerly passed between them.”

Dyce appears to have been surprised at his success: he wrote Scott on 5 April, “[I] had assuredly no hidden motives; of a critique on them [the plays] in the Quarterly Review I never for a moment dreamed”; and he goes on to discuss ghost stories, in which Scott was interested. Dyce’s stature was such in 1839 that Lockhart asked him to provide scholarly notes for the second edition of the biography of Scott. And in 1861 Dyce was not too shy to advertise his correspondence with Scott and his appearance in the original *Memoirs*.

When he was first coming to know the greater names in English letters, Dyce must also have met John Forster, though the biographer has left no record of their first encounter. Forster was achieving a reputation at the same time as Dyce, having written for magazines in Newcastle and London by 1830. He was also by that year a friend of
Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb, and with them contributed to Moxon’s *The Reflector* in 1832. He appeared in the *Athenæum* and other such journals from 1833 on. Like Dyce he became a lover of plays at an early age; the biography of his friend dwells upon theatrical anecdotes and often digresses from the facts of Dyce’s life to relate barely relevant incidents of the stage. Renton observes that “no two men were ever more intellectually alike” than these two and that they were “close friends during the greater part of their lives.”

But of much greater importance for Dyce’s early career was John Mitford, who, as stated above, was a fellow member of the Rogers circle and helped bring about Dyce’s acquaintance with Wordsworth in 1828. When the gifted publisher William Pickering began his Aldine Series in 1830, he called upon both Mitford and Dyce, and Dyce mentions the aid of Mitford in his 1831 edition of Greene (vi). The two ministers were familiar enough by 1832 that Mitford could preface his Aldine edition of Parnell with a dedicatory “Epistle to the Rev. Alexander Dyce, A. B.”—more than 750 lines in heroic couplets, filled with echoes of Pope and Gray, which provide the first mention of Dyce’s proficiency in verse. He compares Parnell’s friendship with Pope to his with Dyce and writes:

Oh, friend! as oft I hail thy taste refin’d,
Thy gentle manners, thy congenial mind;
Those studious hours that leave no page unknown,
Of all that Rome or Athens call’d their own;
Thine the fair flowers on Tiber’s banks that smile,
And thine a wreath from each Ægean isle,
With many a violet mix’d from Britain’s gothic pile;
Secure of fame, thy future path I see,
And mark another Parnell rise in thee.

In a later and more candid missive, to Edward Jesse, Mitford says of Dyce: “He has all the spite of a school-girl who means to tell her governess that Miss Tottileplan in going upstairs, took two steps at once, for which there is a heavy punishment at Kensington Gore and the Hammersmith seminaries.” But this was written in good humor, and he goes on to praise Dyce’s erudition.
With William Harness he had “a long and uninterrupted friendship.” But Harness’s biographer tells us little more than that “during this period [from the 1850s on], no one was a more frequent visitor in Mr. Harness’s study than the well-known Shakespearian critic, Mr. Dyce. He was a tall thin man, with keen eyes and a strong Scotch accent. They had been literary friends through life. . . .” Some of the other scholars he knew have left a record of Dyce, among them William Carew Hazlitt:

The Rev. Alexander Dyce was invariably willing to afford any information to me on literary or bibliographical subjects. When my father was first acquainted with him he lived in Gray’s Inn. He was a bachelor. I recollect that in a letter to my father or to myself he spoke of being engaged on a new English edition of Athenæus—a real want—but I never heard any more about it. I met him one day at Russell-Smith’s, in Soho Square: a singularly huge, shambling, awkward, ungainly figure. He had come about an eighteenpenny book he required for use. There was some negotiation as to an abatement of the price, and ultimately he left the shop, book in hand. In a few moments he returned, and asked Smith if, when he had done with it, he would take the volume back at a reasonable reduction. On another occasion when I met Dyce, it was the Mitford sale in 1860, and he spoke of Mitford’s handwriting as a curious mixture of neatness and illegibility—in fact, that the writer had come to him before then to ask him to assist in deciphering it. Dyce himself, although he wrote a fairly legible hand, was an interminable reviser of his own copy, and I heard that he almost threw his publishers and printers into despair. He was at one time intending to leave his library to one of the universities—the Bodleian, I believe, but he changed his plan.

Samuel Sharpe writes that Dyce and Mitford “are simple, unaffected men, learned, full of conversation and literature.” There were many more: Dyce often acknowledges the aid of the bibliomaniac Richard Heber; he corresponded with David Laing and others of the trade. The list goes on, and it includes the splendid eccentrics on whom he has lavished so many words in the “Reminiscences.”

John Payne Collier was among his most spectacular friends, no less
gifted than the others despite his propensity for forgery. Though E. K. Chambers condemns him as a “slovenly and dishonest antiquary,” Collier was capable of sound scholarship when not inclined to vice. He too had extensive literary friendships. (He helped Dickens get his job on the Morning Chronicle and remained friends with him for life.) Crabb Robinson provides the first record of Dyce in the company of Collier:

April 6th [1833]. A Dinner at J. P. Collier’s, where I met for the first time Dyce, whom I then thought agreeable. He is more than that, but by no means good-natured. He is a critic and too apt, as critics often are, to treat bad taste as bad morals. Woe be to the literary world if Pope’s lie be true that

Every bad author is as bad a friend.

Robinson had no such reservations when he made the original diary entry, but when revising it for his reminiscences in light of the controversy over the integrity of his good friend Collier, he treated Dyce in the manner of several of Collier’s sympathizers.

Before this conflict erupted in the fifties, Dyce was on good terms with Collier. To him he dedicated his Works (London, 1840) of Thomas Middleton, and in the preface to the Skelton (1843) he thanks Collier for assistance (I, viii). In 1846, after the first tremors had been felt, Dyce could still write to him familiarly:

I have sent you the 11th vol. of B[eaumont]. & F[letcher]. together with the Memoir. The latter (which I myself consider as a wretched thing) I do not expect you to read through; I presume that you will only “trifle o’er it with the paper cutter,” as Pope’s young lady, when in the country, “trifles o’er her coffee with the spoon.” . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Why do you persist in trying to render my old age unhappy by threatening to borrow my books for that [Shakespeare] Society (which you will make me hate)?

But Dyce was less cordial in private: “Mr. Milman tells me Mr. Dyce is about to publish a volume on Shakespeare in which he proposes to ‘knock Collier’s head & Knights [sic] together, & shew that both are brainless.’”
Before chronicling more fully Dyce's scholarly life, including his subsequent break with Collier, I shall provide some of the details recorded about Dyce's relations with the greater literary artists, apart from Wordsworth, known by him in middle life. He was familiar with several of these persons during his early years with Ainsworth, but none of their conversations at Kensal Lodge are in print. The best evidence of his intimacy with certain of them is a famous 1844 Maclise sketch of Dickens reading *The Chimes* from galley proofs to a gathering of his friends, among whom are Forster, Carlyle, Dyce, and Harness.69 Aside from Forster, none of those pictured has left much in the way of an impression of Dyce. Dickens's sole published mention of him is in a diary entry for a dinner at Harness's, 5 February 1839: "Only three—Wordsworth—Dyce—Kenyon. Wordsworth (fils) decidedly lumpish. Copyrights need be hereditary, for genius isn't."70 In the available letters Carlyle writes only once of being with Dyce, and that, much later. At Forster's on 4 December 1865 were Browning "and one Dyce (an Aberdeen Ex-Shovelhat, huge grey man, very good natured) who lives upon Shakespear; no other except ourselves,—poor Jane says she always sleeps better after such a thing!"71

Dyce was acquainted with dozens of other literary men, and he knew Tennyson (or Tennyson's publisher) well enough to have seen *The Princess* in advance of publication (1847).72 He has left a memorandum of a conversation with Landor on 6 May 1850.73 And Thackeray, toward the end of his life, notes in his diary a visit to Dyce (20 January 1863) and a gathering at which Dyce was present (24 September).74

To maintain such diverse friendships over a period of forty years required of Dyce more than judicious letters and the advice of intimates, not that these means are disreputable. By nearly all accounts, Dyce the man was worthy of this company. Moreover, while impressing them with his personality, he was also developing a genuinely brilliant record of scholarship that was likewise worthy of his eminent readers. In a career of nearly half a century, he published an imposing number of editions and, according to the *Times*, "numerous other works which appeared without his name."75

Shortly before his ordination, Dyce issued *Select Translations from the Greek of Quintus Smyrnaeus* (Oxford, 1821). He writes of this
continuation of the *Iliad*, "I have made use of blank verse in preference to rhyme, thinking it impossible for the latter to convey to an English reader the most distant idea of the simple tone of Grecian poetry: I expect, therefore, to be told by the admirers of Pope's Homer that my lines are intolerably prosaic" (iv–v). His anthology of poetesses appeared in 1825 and again in 1827, only the second such work by Dyce's claim (v). With his edition of Collins (1827) he began his connection with William Pickering, without whose generosity several expensive undertakings would not have been possible ("Sketch," xv). And in order that his Aldine Series "should be textually of a high standard," Pickering selected Dyce, Mitford, and Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, the antiquarian, as editors.6 For the series Dyce edited the *Poetical Works* (London, 1831) of James Beattie, who with Major Mercer had represented to the adolescent Dyce "all that was poetically conceivable of the beautiful and sublime" ("Sketch," ix); then Pope's *Poetical Works* (1831), Shakespeare's *Poems* (1832), and Mark Akenside's *Poetical Works* (1835). In the meantime he published editions of Peele (1828–39), Webster's *Works* (London, 1830–39), Fletcher's *Humourous Lieutenant* (London, 1830), and Greene (1831); completed James Shirley's *Dramatic Works and Poems* (London, 1833), begun by William Gifford; and edited *Specimens of English Sonnets* (London, 1833). The *Athenæum* praised his *Specimens*, and the *Quarterly Review* spoke of "his accustomed ability" in its notice of the Shirley.7 The *Works* of Bentley, "to whom the success of his own earliest self-discipline had been largely due," appeared in three volumes from 1836 to 1838 and introduced him to the learned printer Charles Robson ("Sketch," xvii). Ending the furious activity of this decade, Dyce published Middleton's *Works* (1840).

It was natural for Dyce to incline toward the scholarly societies forming at this time. He was one of the first members of the Camden Society (founded in 1838) and was elected to its Council on 2 May 1839.78 Dyce and others made the literary side of this group almost as important as the historical, but in a short time other organizations drained off most of their work. Dyce was a founder of the Percy Society (1840), along with James O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Thomas Wright, and Collier, and he sat on its first Council.79 He was also on the original Council of
the Shakespeare Society, which he helped to establish in 1840. He dropped from all council lists in the later forties after publishing in the Camden series William Kemp's *Nine Daies Wonder* (London, 1840); in the Percy, Henry Porter's *The Two Angry Women of Abington* (1841), Sir Henry Wotton's *Poems* (1843), and Drayton's *The Harmony of the Church* (1843); and in the Shakespeare, *Timon* (1842) and *Sir Thomas More* (1844). Dyce was elected to the Athenaeum Club in 1842 but appears to have been inactive.

This social and administrative torpor was most probably owed to Dyce's independent scholarly occupations. His Skelton came out in 1843, as did the first volumes of Beaumont and Fletcher (completed in 1846). The complex problems posed by these three writers burdened him severely. Dyce claimed that his Memoir of the two playwrights occupied as much time as anything of similar length ever had. He wrote to Forster: "It extinguished everything else for me during the time. Of what has been passing lately I am entirely ignorant. Indeed I don't believe I am fully acquainted with anything that has happened later than the 29th of August, 1625, the day of Fletcher's burial" ("Sketch," xviii). The eleven volumes of this collection were published by his friend Moxon. Pickering published for Dyce Marlowe's *Works* (London, 1850), and there remained for him only Shakespeare and Ford.

But before the Shakespeare was completed, Samuel Rogers died, and Dyce felt at liberty to put out his friend's *Table-Talk* in 1856. It is only mentioned in parentheses by Forster ("Sketch," xx–xxi) and was a disaster for Moxon comparable to his own sonnets, Lamb's *Album Verse*, and the poetry of Browning. The *Edinburgh Review* groaned that Rogers, who died on 18 December 1855, was "hardly cold in the grave" before the volume appeared (14 February 1856); "this book," it went on, "is in no one respect a creditable one," having "made Rogers use the very phraseology he notoriously disliked." But, as Bishop observes, the brief delay is more an indication that the conversations were recorded when they occurred than that the whole book was written after Rogers's death. Dyce affirms this in the preface to the third edition and claims to have terminated his memoranda at least five years before the death of Rogers (xii).

The attacks seem mostly to have been written by violent Rogers
partisans. The *Times* charged that the poet was misrepresented and said, "We pity the task of the anonymous Boswell, but we cannot on this occasion remit a particle of his doom."\(^86\) Referring to this review, Ainsworth wrote to Crossley in February: "*The Times*, you see, has come down upon poor Dyce (he must be a Dyce sombre, I think)\(^87\) for his *Table Talk*, and says that it is a case for 'the literary police,' and that the executors 'ought to look to it'"; further, on 1 March: "Poor Dyce . . . is attacked again in *The Athenæum* of to-day. He will never survive it."\(^88\) Crabb Robinson thought Dyce's treatment, especially by the *Times*, unfair, while concurring that his judgment in selection was not good.\(^89\) And Jerdan, as if ignorant in 1866 of *Table-Talk*'s editor, concludes his reappraisal of Rogers and Dyce by saying, "Should, here-after, any satisfactory memoirs of Rogers ever come to light, I might (if spared), and the public should look to the same eminent authority [Dyce] for the desirable work."\(^90\)

*Table-Talk* also provides a clue regarding the state at that time of Dyce's relationship with Collier. In the preface to the third edition Dyce refers to "my old friend Mr. J. P. Collier," who, as "a proof of his kindly feeling towards me" has sent a letter to the *Athenæum* defending the first edition (v). According to Collier, Dyce "is utterly incapable of the slightest intentional misrepresentation," despite their differences (vi). But regardless of the kind words, these differences had certainly resulted in a break by this time. Dyce first published his reservations about Collier's treatment of texts in the *Remarks* (1844). The book is justly critical of Collier but does not question his honesty. Nevertheless, the *Athenæum* wrote: "Mr. Dyce is shrewd, subtle, well read, supercilious, and confident. We agree with him that Shakespeare has suffered from the commentators; and the best apology for these 'Remarks'—three hundred pages of additional trifling—is, that they are published in a substantive volume, apart from Shakespeare's works, and may therefore be 'squeezed' by those who have leisure, and then thrown into the fire."\(^91\) As with the *Table-Talk* controversy, Dyce more often than not had to contend with those who were close friends with his subject. Crabb Robinson, certain that Dyce was correct, nonetheless could never quite forgive him because he "was not kind to Collier in his criticisms."\(^92\)
As was shown, Dyce and Collier were still outwardly friendly in 1846. In the biographical memoir of Beaumont and Fletcher his corrections of Collier’s “very valuable” data concerning Shakespeare are gentle (I, xvii, n. 0), even though some of the points he mentions had been less delicately handled by Punch. But everything was in the open by the time Dyce published A Few Notes on Shakespeare; with Occasional Remarks on the Emendations of the Manuscript-Corrector in Mr. Collier’s Copy of the Folio 1632 (London, 1853). What must have particularly irked Dyce was that he and several other scholars had previously accepted and used Collier’s fraudulent material without question. Trading upon a well-earned reputation, Collier passed along Shakespearean forgeries and went so far as to compose obscene poems and ballads which he would then “discover” (without, of course, revealing the originals). After Dyce’s death Collier wrote: “we were intimate friends for about a quarter of a century; and it was only my engagement with a publisher to prepare an edition of Shakespeare in 1842, that occasioned the first difference between Mr. Dyce and myself. . . . Our paths from that date began to diverge, and, I deeply regret to add, never reapproached.” He praises Dyce’s scholarship, deplores his judgment, and says that “he was a gentleman in every respect—in birth, education, and deportment. He was the first to sever our long intimacy.”

Significantly, in 1859, Dyce had written in contradiction to Collier’s “artful misrepresentation” that “the main object of this little work [is] to expose the ungentlemanly treatment which I have received at the hands of one who seems to take a pleasure in proclaiming that he was once my friend.”

The first edition of Dyce’s The Works of William Shakespeare, published by Moxon, appeared in 1857. The Athenæum generally approved the sparse annotation and conservative text, while lamenting the equally conservative Life. The Quarterly Review called it “the best text of Shakespeare which has yet been given to the world.” The second edition (1864 [1863]–67) was dedicated to Forster and expanded the work to nine volumes, including extensive critical apparatus and a massive Glossary. Carlyle’s criticism of it is partly accurate: “Dyce’s text, etc., seem to me fairly the best: at the same time for use it is simply intolerable. A wandering through the Gardens as of Para-
With this great man, whose genius was slowly but at last fully acknowledged by the multitude, I was anxious to see his writings and see what influence they had on the more recent poetic literature of the country, I was on several occasions, the invitation I had received for his exercises being due to our acquaintance, and several letters, which at various times were addressed to me, were printed in his nephew; see vol. ii. f. p. 214, 219, 220, 225, 274, 275, 278, 281, 284, 350. (Though I visited one and was again to pay some days with him at Grasmere House, I unfortunately could not make it convenient to do so; for at that period it was my duty, and my choice, to spend a large portion of the year in the north of Scotland; but whenever Wordsworth visited London, which latterly he occasionally did, we used to meet for very frequently at my chambers in Gray's Inn and at the houses of our mutual friends.

The wife generally accompanied him to London, and sometimes their daughter Dorothy. Mrs. Wordsworth was the other example of all that is admirable in women; and moreover it has been said that she had been endowed with rare poetic genius by the fact that, while Wordsworth was composing his verses on the Derwent, "I wander'd lonely as a cloud, so, and had like a dream after the limbs,"

"Too oft upon my couch I lie In vacant or in pensively mood,"

which she said to complete the stanza — from Wordsworth filled up the lacuna thus:

"They flash upon that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude";

yet such was her modesty, that she positively forbade any mention being made, in any edition of her husband's works, that these two lines (found in the last in the poem) were supplied by her. — Dyce, the darling of his nephew.

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM.
ALEXANDER DYCE

—accompanied everywhere as with a whirlpool of barking curs, unfortunate cats, apes, and irrational unclean creatures!—”

Dyce began work on a third, but it had to be finished by Forster in 1875. His last undertakings were the completion of Jervis’s *Dictionary of the Language of Shakespeare* (London, 1868) and the revision of John Ford’s *Works*, edited by Gifford (London, 1869), the latter published the year of his death.

Attacks on Dyce’s scholarship per se were relatively infrequent. His confidence and self-satisfaction were found at times annoying, and the value of some of his work was questioned, but by and large the quality of his texts and the ultimate usefulness of his notes (Carlyle notwithstanding) still command respect. His dedication to the task of scholarship is notable; he was not, as Wordsworth put it, “a man of leisure.”

“I never hear anything, or of anything,” Dyce wrote to Forster. “If the conflagration of the universe were to take place tomorrow, I should not know that it was going on till the flames had reached Gray’s Inn gate” (”Sketch,” xvi). His reserve in approaching the text is likewise praiseworthy, especially because he worked at a time when editors too often presumed to alter the author’s word in accordance with their own tastes. He was fluent in Greek, Latin, Italian, and French and was renowned for his erudition. He was the first modern editor of Peele, Greene, Middleton, and Webster and the first to edit competently Marlowe and the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher; his Shakespeare was one of the century’s best.

Of his Skelton, which remains standard at this writing, a modern critic gives the following appraisal: “Sometimes a scholar, through a loving and complete edition, can rescue a poet from obscurity and prepare the way for a critical revival, as the Reverend Alexander Dyce did with his magnificent edition of Skelton in 1843, a book that is a monument of erudition and appreciation and has required only slight correction in the century since.”

We have Forster’s testimony that Dyce retained to the last an attractive personality and a handsome bearing, as well as his energy. Still the “gentle giant,” a nickname that his height had earned him in youth, he stooped much and no longer paid such attention to dress as he had when once visiting his brother Archibald: the General told Forster that Dyce’s luggage then consisted of “seven shirts and a ‘Sophocles’”
His interests remained constant, and despite his preoccupation with editing he never lost his fondness for versifying. Beginning about the time of his work on Fletcher he translated Athenæus for amusement. The manuscript lies unfinished and unedited in his Collection, awaiting, as Forster says, “an enthusiast for the Deipnosophists” (“Sketch,” xx–xxii). Among the samples which Forster quotes:

Befits not old man with young wife to yoke,
   For she’s a skiff which rudder cannot sway,
Nor anchor hold: but oft, her cables broke,
   At night she harbours in another bay.

(“Sketch,” xxi)

And too, the Collection has nine drawings by Dyce, including “Three NUDE FEMALE FIGURES, supporting a lotus flower with their outstretched arms. In pencil.”

Dyce spent the last ten years of his life at 33 Oxford Terrace, Hyde Park, having been forced out of his chambers in Gray’s Inn Square by Archibald; Dyce’s books and art works, it seems, had left little dwelling space. Forster reports that it was often easier for Dyce to go to the British Museum than to unearth a book from his own scattered collection (“Sketch,” xvi–xvii). He visited Aberdeen frequently and once offended certain of the town’s Episcopalians by preaching on a text from the Apocrypha; but he was more remembered there as a “sporting” gentleman, causing a friend to wonder at his fondness for old plays while being able to fish so well with a fly (“Sketch,” ix–x). He had inherited Rosebank from his aunt and seems to have been well off all his life, to judge from his Collection and from Forster’s intimations that he took upon himself much of the expense of his early editions (“Sketch,” ix, xv).

Dyce suffered a painful illness in his final months. The last letter to Forster before his fatal attack of jaundice was in June 1868, when he reported that he was well and had been reading Atalanta in Calydon, written, as he said, by a “genuine singer” (“Sketch,” xxii). At the beginning of August he wrote to tell Forster that “he might be shown by way of contrast to our old friend the Yellow Dwarf, having become a
Yellow Giant. ‘Being free from pain, which Horace Walpole defined to be the pleasure of old age, I ought to be satisfied; but I nevertheless am ill, ill, ill . . .’ (“Sketch,” xxii). On 4 December he wrote, “I am . . . in the seventh month of my martyrdom . . . I suspect that I am very gradually dying; and if such is the case, I certainly have no reason to make any childish lamentation, for I have lived a great deal longer than most people who are born into this world, and I look back on my past existence without much disapprobation” (“Sketch,” xxii–xxiii).

Dyce was still at work on the edition of Ford and notes in the preface (I, vii), dated 15 February 1869, that he was hampered by the “languor and weakness consequent on a very long and serious illness . . .” He died on Saturday, 15 May 1869.

Forster writes that Dyce left “a great many friends to deplore a loss which they could never replace, for all the qualities that give charm to private intercourse were his in abundant measure” (“Sketch,” xxiii). Not the least of those who felt something of this loss was the “genuine singer” himself. Swinburne, who received Dyce’s edition of Marlowe when he was thirteen, wrote Halliwell-Phillipps in 1880: “I have also to thank you for the cordial gratification I have received from the kind expression of your opinion on the subject of my poems, and your equally kind communication of the late Mr. Dyce’s. Very few things could have given me more pleasure, as there are very few men of our time to whom I feel that I owe so much at once of enjoyment and of guidance as to yourself and to him.”

Friends of all degrees, from Bulloch to Wordsworth, have left the same impression of Dyce.

1. “Rev. Alexander Dyce,” N&Q Ser. 5, VIII (1877), 327. Like Dyce, Crossley was a friend of William Harrison Ainsworth, the novelist. A scholar, his library totaled more than 100,000 volumes. Biographical data on him and others are from the Dictionary of National Biography unless otherwise stated.


4. A "Reply" to Crossley's querie, N&Q Ser. 5, VIII (1877), 374. Bulloch was an Aberdonian brass-finisher and pari passu a competent Shakespearian textual scholar.

5. Register of Marriages of the City of Edinburgh 1751-1800, ed. Francis J. Grant, Scottish Record Society, LIII (Edinburgh, 1922), 223.


8. None of William Dyce's paintings are part of the Dyce Collection, but this evidence is, in itself, not conclusive, because Daniel Maclise, whom Dyce knew fairly well, is also not represented. See Dyce Collection. A Catalogue of the Paintings, Miniatures, Drawings, Engravings, Rings, and Miscellaneous Objects Bequeathed [to the South Kensington Museum] by the Reverend Alexander Dyce (London, 1874).

9. The first inscribed volume is item 3983, the second 6071, in his library's Catalogue. His rector was Byron's "paltry Pillans" (English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, 515).


12. See the letter printed in Poems by Hartley Coleridge, with a Memoir of his Life by his Brother [Derwent], 2d ed. (London, 1851), I, lxix-lxx.


14. Faculty of Advocates, p. 64.


18. See the admittedly incomplete Clergy List for 1841 (London, 1841), which excludes him, as does George Hennessy, Novum Repertorium . . . or London Diocesan Clergy Succession from the Earliest Time to the Year 1898 (London, 1898).


20. From there he addressed a letter to Mary R. Mitford on 20 October 1828. Wordsworth wrote to that address on 12 January 1829, and then to 9 Gray's Inn Square on 16 October. See notes 40 and 43, below.

21. For a partisan character of Rogers, see the review of Dyce's Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers. To Which is Added Porsoniana (London, 1856) in the Edinburgh Review CIV (1856), 73-122.


27. Quoted in P. W. Clayden, Rogers and His Contemporaries (London, 1889), II, 220.


33. Ser. 4, III (1869), 495. The writer states that "he used, we believe, to keep a diary." Dyce heads his article on Cumnor Place "from my Diary." I have been assured that, wherever it is, it is not in the Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Mr. A. P. Burton, the Assistant Keeper, has written to me (2 April 1970): "There is evidence ... that when Forster presented his collection to the Museum, a great amount of private papers and correspondence was destroyed by him or his executors, and I suspect that a similar fate may have befallen Dyce's private papers." On this subject he has directed me to K. J. Fielding, "New Letters from Charles Dickens to John Forster: How the Letters Were Found," Boston University Studies in English, II (1956), 140–49.

34. She is the "Eyebright" of Sordello III, 967.

35. Item 4523. Perhaps Dyce came to know her through the publisher of this book, John Andrews, who had printed Dyce's 1825 article on John Kemble in The Album (see the Preface to Chapter II, below). Miss Haworth presented Dyce with a copy of her St. Sylvester's Day and Other Poems twenty years later.


39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 131.


42. Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, p. 364. See also Mary Russell Mitford: Correspondence with Charles Boner & John Ruskin, ed. Elizabeth Lee (London, 1914), p. 76.

43. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1939), I, 313 n. 2; for Dyce's two addresses: 345 n. 1, 423.
44. Ibid., I, 313 n. 2.
45. Ibid., I, 345 n. 1. See also II, 952; and The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle (1808–1866), ed. Edith J. Morley (Oxford, 1927), I, 410.
46. Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, I, 491 n. 1 (17 June 1830).
49. “Sketch,” p. xv; Lockhart, Memoirs, X, 55–56. Grierson prints the letter but uses Lockhart’s text (XII, 1). Sir Walter died before writing the article.
50. Memoirs, X, 53.
51. Letters of Sir Walter Scott, XII, I n. 1.
54. Ibid., p. 55.
55. Richard Renton, John Forster and His Friendships (New York, 1913), p. 197. Forster’s works, from his adaptation of Fletcher’s The Elder Brother (London, 1840) to his edition of Dyce’s Shakespeare (London, 1875), are in the Dyce Collection.
58. Mitford, ed. C. M., pp. 225–26, 228–29; see also pp. 75–76, 80–81, 180, 209, 243. Dyce acquired over a hundred volumes from Mitford’s collection, as well as five presentation copies.
63. For Heber see W. Carew Hazlitt, The Book-Collector (London, 1904), p. 49. Dyce mentions Heber’s Skelton collection in his Poetical Works of John Skelton (London, 1843); quoted in the Boston, 1856, edition, I, vii. For Laing see Dyce’s Poetesses, p. vi; Skelton, p. viii; and item 8955. Dyce received two presentation copies from Laing. He also corresponded with Sir Anthony Panizzi (item 1223) and received presentation copies from the American scholars Francis James Child and Richard G. White. Among the glimpses of Dyce afforded by the amazing E. H. Barker (see Dyce’s article) is the report that he was forewarned of his father’s stroke in 1835 by means of a dream (Literary Anecdotes and Contemporary Reminiscences [London, 1852], I, 60).
67. A hitherto unpublished letter (May 1846?) in the Ohio State University Li-
library. Collier gave Dyce seventeen presentation copies and other gifts with publication dates of 1820 to 1856, some of which contain his spurious material.

75. 20 May 1869, n.f.
76. Keynes, Pickering, p. 22.
77. Atheneum, No. 308 (1833), 634; Quarterly Review XLIX (1833), 29. John Murray had asked Dyce to complete the Shirley, left unfinished at Gifford’s death (Roy Benjamin Clark, William Gifford: Tory Satirist, Critic, and Editor [New York, 1930], p. 159). Crabb Robinson had vainly recommended Collier for the task (Robinson on Books, I, 344).
82. He was apparently at work on Skelton as early as 1835. See Charles Lamb: His Life Recorded by His Contemporaries, ed. Edmund Blunden (London, 1934), p. 256. In the preface Dyce notes that Southey “took a kind interest in the progress of the present edition” (I, vi, n. 1). For a “jest” in connection with the Beaumont and Fletcher see W. C. Hazlitt, Jests, New and Old (London, [1887]), p. 89, no. 315.
83. Merriam, Moxon, p. 80.
84. CIV (1856), 100, 101.
86. “Rogers’s Table Talk,” 27 February 1856, 10d-e.
87. Ainsworth puns here on the name of David O. Dyce-Sombre, a notorious ec-
centric whose will caused extensive litigation from 1851 to 1856. The *Times* accounts of the legal struggles nowhere mention Dyce.

90. *Men I Have Known*, p. 378. P. W. Clayden in *The Early Life of Samuel Rogers* (London, 1887) blasts Dyce's "usual bald and half-remembered manner" (p. 162). According to Bishop, however, this work was done at the behest of Rogers's executors and attempts to deify the poet (*Recollections*, p. xii).
91. No. 865 (1844), 475.
93. VI (1844), 219; see *Robinson on Books*, II, 643.
98. No. 1577 (1858), 73.
100. The *Athenaum* was more or less appeased: No. 1889 (1864), 45.
104. For such praise see the *Athenaum*, No. 1336 (1853), 672; *Handbook*, p. 16; Mitford, ed. C. M., p. 229; *Quarterly Review* CV (1859), 46-47; and "Sketch," pp. xvi, xix-xx.
106. Item 982 in *Catalogue of the Paintings*; the others are items 974-81.
107. The Dyce Collection remains intact with that of Forster at the Victoria and Albert Museum, formerly the South Kensington Museum. The *Catalogue* of his library lists 10,881 items, more than 14,000 volumes in all; the sixty-three manuscripts are mostly transcripts. The library, though "deficient" in topography, according to the *Handbook*, "abounds in the Greek and Latin classics; in the works of the scholars and critics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries . . . ; in English poetry and the drama, from the Elizabethan era to the present time; and in Italian poems, plays, and romances" (p. 13). All of the greater ancients, Greek and Latin, are there, along with many obscure ones, and they are usually represented by several editions (p. 15). Like Forster's, the Collection contains a multitude of plays. The "moderns" are also well represented: Austen, the Brownings, W. C. Bryant, Burns, Carlyle, Dickens, Eliot, Goethe (in translation), Rogers, Scott, Smollett, Thackeray, and Wordsworth comprise 166 items. Works on or by Shakespeare total eighty-five items. The catalogue of art works lists 3,347 entries. In addition to such masters as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Rubens, many lesser-known artists are represented by nearly 150 paintings and miniatures, as well as many prints, drawings, rings, and miscellaneous objects. There are numerous portraits of the Kembles, Kean, and, of course, Shakespeare. For relevant extracts from Dyce's will, see *Catalogue of the Printed Books*, I, v-vi; and Forster, "A Word," pp. 745-46 n. 1. For a description of
some choice items in the collections see F. G. Green, “The Dyce and Forster Collection at South Kensington,” *Bookworm* III (1890), 273-76.

108. Dyce refers to Thomas F. Robson, who was quite successful some years before in the title role of Planché's *Yellow Dwarf*. See Renton, *Forster*, p. 201.

