The two "oddities" in the first article were both judges. The amazing James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714–99), always sat beneath the bench with the clerks. His *Origin and Progress of Language* (1773–92) claims that the speechlessness of orangutans was accidental (they being members of the human species). Though more charitable to this proto-Darwin on other occasions, Dr. Johnson once remarked, apropos of Rousseau, "Why, Sir, a man who talks nonsense so well, must know that he is talking nonsense. But I am afraid, (chuckling and laughing,) Monboddo does not know that he is talking nonsense" (30 Sept. 1769). For a very different estimate of Monboddo see Hans Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England, 1780–1860* (Princeton, N. J., 1967), pp. 36–41. The other justice, Francis Garden, Lord Gardenstone (1721–93), was remembered in Dyce's time for his *Travelling Memorandums* of Europe (1791–95) and for his attachment to the pigs that roamed his house.

James Beattie (1735–1803) counted this singular pair and Thomas Gray among his literary friends. Dyce's reserved praise for *The Minstrel* (1771–74) has been seconded by the majority of critics since, and his notice of Beattie's prose works is equally just. The most ambitious of them, the *Essay on Truth* (1770), was a popular and unsuccessful
attempt to explode Hume. The "earlier-deceased brother" of Montagu was James Hay Beattie (1768-90), the successor to his father in the chair of moral philosophy and logic at Marischal College, Aberdeen. The unfortunate Montagu died in 1796.

James Mercer (1734-1804), another friend of Beattie, achieved modest distinction for the *Lyric Poems* from which Dyce selected the "specimens" I have omitted. His biography in the *DNB* ends with the eerie fact that, having nearly suffocated in a chest as a boy, he directed that his heart be pierced with a gold pin before he was buried.

The fragmentary article on Mary Ann Paton (1802-64) relates an incident of about 1810, for she began her public appearances at eight by singing, playing the harp and pianoforte, and reciting Collins's "Ode to the Passions" as well as the poem that so pleased the young Dyce. She went on to enjoy considerable success as a singer.

Regrettably, the letter by Sir David Ochterlony (1758-1825) makes no mention of the campaign beginning at the time of its writing: Sir David was soon to leave Ludhiana and become "The Conqueror of Nepal." One of England's most distinguished soldiers, he served nearly fifty years in India. His "celebrity" indeed justifies the inclusion of a statement contrasting so much with the portrait that the reader is likely to get elsewhere.

For an understanding of the author, the article on Mrs. Smollett is the most significant in this chapter. We find in it the source of the enthusiasm that was to shape Dyce's career. Dyce tells us that her sister (Mrs. Sharp) was the "Miss Renton" of *Humphry Clinker*; yet, according to received opinion, Tobias Smollett had in mind Cecilia Renton, the wife of Alexander Telfer-Smollett. "Miss Renton," then, would be Dyce's "Mrs. Smollett." See *The Letters of Tobias Smollett, M.D.*, ed. Edward S. Noyes (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), p. 228.

Like the encounter with Walter Scott in "Mrs. Smollett," the anecdotes in "Strawberry-Hill" give evidence for Dyce's lifelong knack of crossing paths with luminaries of varying stature, sometimes not by design. After a hundred years, one cannot easily judge the degree of finesse with which he drops names, or the impact of some of those names on the intended audience. However, the occasionally incisive gossip and such rhetoric as the long parenthesis on Twickenham prevent Dyce's
chatter from being purely idle. He is entitled, I think, to exemption from the category likewise denied the sensitive Bishop Percy by Dr. Johnson: “A mere antiquarian is a rugged being” (23 April 1778).

The final article, “Cumnor Place,” contributes new folklore to an old libel. Lady Amy Dudley died on 8 September 1560. According to the anonymous *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (1584)—a source of *Kenilworth*—she was pushed down a staircase by Anthony Forster and Sir Richard Verney, thereby clearing the way for the hopeful Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, to marry Elizabeth. That Forster “drove a nail into Lady Dudley’s head” is an attractive embellishment, even if apocryphal. The curious will find this motif also in *Judges IV, 21, The Canterbury Tales* (I, 2007; III, 769–70), and *The Tempest* (III, ii).