These memoirs of Dyce’s scholarly and clerical brethren contain some of his best writing. I have given the place of honor to Thomas Taylor the Platonist (1758–1835). Unlike the others, he has exerted direct influence even in this century, and some of his work has recently enjoyed a splendid reissue in *Thomas Taylor the Platonist: Selected Writings*, ed. Kathleen Raine and George M. Harper (Princeton, N. J., 1969). This volume provides the “basic” Taylor and an exhaustive bibliography; also, in two prefatory essays it illustrates his importance to English Romantics from Coleridge to Yeats and his influence as well on the American idealists. The three early biographical essays that it reprints duplicate very little of Dyce’s article. One of these (pp. 105–21) is autobiographical and was apparently unknown to Dyce, though he repeats the anecdote of Mary Wollstonecraft’s affectation about wine and teacups (p. 113). Dyce’s vignette of Taylor and “Blake the artist,” the man with whom the Platonist is most often associated, is unique, and it rings true for both eccentrics. Indeed, it is the first solid bit of evidence that the two men knew each other personally. Especially vital for an understanding of Taylor’s stature are Frank B. Evans III, “Thomas Taylor, Platonist of the Romantic Period,” *PMLA* LV (1940), 1060–79; and George M. Harper, *The Neo-
The platonism of William Blake (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1961), passim. Dyce's article sheds much new light on the last years of a man whom Harper calls "the most important disseminator of ancient philosophy in the history of English and American literature" (p. [v]).

The remaining articles appear in their manuscript order. All of the principals have been enrolled in the *DNB*, with the exception of Dr. John Shaw, who has no claim to be there. Dyce has told us virtually all that will be of interest today, and I will not greatly expand his accounts here. Fortunately, he has chosen to point up the "freaks and vagaries" of men like Edmund H. Barker (1788–1839), George Burges (1786?–1864), and Dr. Samuel Parr (1747–1825), a pedagogue and controversialist termed "the whig Johnson." Among the many original stories is that of George Steevens (1736–1800) and Dr. Johnson; it is not in Boswell, though it resembles a remark Johnson made to Beauclerk on 13 April 1778. (Dyce's source, "J. Nicol," is no doubt John Nichols. I do not find the story in the latter's *Literary Anecdotes* or *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century.*) The "unknown tongues" exploited by Edward Irving (1792–1834), the renowned preacher, began to wag in 1830.

Happily, Victorian biographies of scholars are generally not so infested with hackwork as are the stage reminiscences of the time. Still, the former genre shares with the latter the disadvantage of being largely derivative. The better accounts give us an idea of the scholarly occupations, critical wars, and learned jests that interested the audience Dyce had in mind, and a fair specimen of this kind of writing is Henry J. Nicoll's *Great Scholars* (Edinburgh, 1880). Like Dyce he writes on Bentley, Porson, Parr, Sir William Jones, and Bishop Blomfield. His report of Blomfield's skirmishes with Barker (pp. 242–45) is worth summarizing, since it is one of the longest-lived anecdotes outlined by Dyce. The trouble began with the rivalry between the *Museum Criticum*, a periodical started by Blomfield, and the *Classical Journal* of Barker's printer friend Abraham Valpy. (In the *Journal*, incidentally, Barker at times criticized his own work and then replied to this criticism with triumphant refutations—all done anonymously, of course.) When Barker and Valpy began editing Stephens's *Greek Thesaurus* in 1816, they had 1,100 subscribers, a number that understandably diminished
after Blomfield’s article in the *Quarterly Review*. By Blomfield’s reckoning, Barker had added so much verbiage that page 688 of his edition corresponded to page 53 of the original. It must, he concluded, reach fifty folio volumes in about seventy years, forming a periodical that the subscribers might bequeath to their heirs. Barker’s reply in *Aristarchus Anti-Blomfieldianus* is incoherent with rage; but he and Valpy did at last hold the *Thesaurus* down to ten volumes. A “Memoir” is prefixed to the first volume of Barker’s *Literary Anecdotes and Contemporary Reminiscences* (London, 1852).

Most such bellicosity in the age of Bentley, an era that his disciple Richard Porson (1759–1808) had extended into the nineteenth century, was involved with verbal criticism. Textual scholarship became a discipline and emendation an art; not until the more modern forms of “the higher criticism” was much attention paid to interpretation. Dyce’s prophecy that Thomas Tyrwhitt’s reputation would outlive Porson’s has come true, but both men have been superseded by giants like Skeat. Nonetheless, the scholarly continuum that begins in the late seventeenth century is intimately bound to the more purely “literary” tradition that produced both Pope and Wordsworth. One can marvel at Dyce’s seeming acquaintance with everyone south of the Tweed, yet it is not surprising that he moved so easily in so many circles: in this he was not exceptional. As this chapter shows, men of letters in Dyce’s time seldom confined themselves to one specialized aspect of their literary culture.