THE storm of controversy that broke over the publication of William Bell Scott’s *Autobiographical Notes* centred mainly on the *Academy* and the *Fortnightly Review* and involved as its principals William Sharp, Professor Minto, and the poet Swinburne. The book received the fullest possible coverage in the literary press of the day and opinion was sharply divided on its total veracity. Many critics decried Scott’s want of taste in leaving behind such unguarded memories of his contemporaries, and Minto’s want of discretion and editorial irresponsibility in refusing to edit out all the poet-painter’s excesses. However, although critics such as Andrew Lang in the *Illustrated London News* lamented the “poetic temperament” that gave rise to the idiosyncratic value judgements contained in the volumes, most were agreed about the book’s importance as a contribution to knowledge of the Pre-Raphaelites and about its permanent value as a piece of autobiographical writing. Indeed, many reviewers predicted—rightly as it has turned out—that Scott would be better and longer remembered for the *Notes* than for his work as either a painter or poet.

In the end, it was the intemperate view, the invidious personal attack on Scott as an ungrateful friend, that survived, and Scott’s reputation today is still clouded by those aspersions cast by Sharp, Swinburne, Watts-Dunton, and others on his integrity and by their charges that he was a perfidious, disappointed, and disgruntled old nonentity whose very remembrance was owing to his having been a life-long parasite clinging to his betters. Sharp attacked Scott (and by indirection Minto) on grounds of factual

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1 The first part of this article appeared in the preceding number of the *Bulletin*.

2 This section has been greatly facilitated by a clipping book of reviews of *AN* prepared by AB; now among the Penkill Papers.
inaccuracy; he protested against what he called "a malversa-
tion so unfortunate, sometimes so deplorable, occasionally so
inexcusable" that he felt "bound to discredit in some degree the
testimony of this posthumous record". He berated Scott for
his dislike of Ruskin (and for the unfavourable light in which
Ruskin is cast in the Notes); and he attributed the sometimes
unflattering portrait of Rossetti in the book to the "chronic
grudge" which Scott always bore his friend and superior poet.
More devastatingly, he chose to read several innocuous comments
in the book as a veiled attack on Rossetti's wife, Elizabeth Siddal,
a view that even Swinburne, for all his indignant vituperation,
refused to credit.

Swinburne's reaction to the autobiography was so excessive,
and on the surface so petty, that it tended to alienate even those
allies who might have joined ranks with him against the book,
such as William Michael Rossetti, whose reserved and careful
comment appeared side by side with Swinburne's letter in the
Academy for 24 December 1892. Juxtaposed, the two letters
reveal interesting differences in the temperaments of the two
men. "I loved and honoured Mr. Scott from the time when
first I knew him, towards 1848, up to his death in 1890 ", William
Rossetti writes,

yet I cannot ignore the fact that, whatever the reason on his part, some of his state-
ments affecting my brother are, according to my view of them, unkind, unhands-
me, inaccurate, and practically incorrect and misleading. The sanctity or the
superstition of an olden friendship withholds me from saying a word of harshness
regarding Mr. Scott.

The devoted brother, then, in a gentle and gentlemanly fashion,
made the defence which he felt obliged to record.

Swinburne, answering Minto's reply to Sharp's animad-
versions in his review, resorted to the same sort of name-calling
and disparagement that had characterized his Fortnightly Review
article, "The New Terror". There he had said of Scott:

... here... is a man whose name would never have been heard, whose verse
would never have been read, whose daubs would never have been seen, outside

\footnote{Academy, xlii, No. 1074 (3 December 1892), 499.}
\footnote{Ibid. No. 1077 (24 December 1892), p. 591.}
\footnote{Vol. lviii, n.s. lii (December 1892), 830-3.
some aesthetic Lilliput of the North, but for his casual and parasitical association with the Trevelyans, the Rossettis, and myself.1

In the Academy, spurred on by Minto's reply, "which halts between inadequate apology and tremulous defiance", his main complaint is that his name has been "taken in vain by the hypocrite whose true nature it was left for [Minto] to reveal". Scott is labelled as a "liar" and a "viperish backbiter" whose "reptile rancour" and "omnivorous malignity" motivated these "two repulsive and amusing volumes" in which his "posthumous calumnies absolutely seeth and reek with equal and impartial impertinence towards the dead superiors who had preceded and the living superiors who survive him".2 Gratuitously, Swinburne even provides the executors of the "sinister old satellite" with an epitaph:

Here lies no envious man! restrain surprise;
For in this grave incarnate Envy lies.

How different this is from Swinburne's "Memorial Verses on the Death of William Bell Scott", published in the Athenaeum shortly after Scott's demise3 and, ironically, reprinted as the concluding testimony to Scott's merit in the Autobiographical Notes—

2 xlii, No. 1077 (24 December 1892), 591.
3 No. 3305 (28 February 1891), p. 281. AB wrote to thank Swinburne and received from him the following reply, dated 3 March from the Pines:

Mr Dear Miss Boyd,

Just as I was about to send you my lines in the Athenaeum (which I should of course have sent you on the day of publication if I had had a copy to send) your most kind letter has arrived. I thank you most cordially both for it & for the very noble & lifelike photograph which accompanies it. I trust I need not assure you how deeply I value both.

I am sorry to say I cannot remember any verse of our dear & honoured friend's that would be suitable as an inscription for his tomb, not even in the noble little poem on "Death".

I am very glad to hear that he made an etching from the "Rending of the Veil", & shall look forward eagerly to the chance of receiving a copy. As my verses may show, I always thought it the most sublime & nobly imaginative of all his designs known to me.

Ever gratefully yours,

A. C. Swinburne

4 ii. 334.
A life more bright than the sun’s face, bowed
Through stress of season and coil of cloud,
Sets: and the sorrow that cast out fear
Scarce deems him dead in his chill still shroud,

Deaf on the breast of the dying year,
Poet and painter and friend, thrice dear . . .

and reprinted, on Minto’s evidence, at Swinburne’s behest, as
“‘public evidence’” of “‘his deep and cordial regard for his
dear old friend’”—“the dear old friend”, Minto adds, “whom
he now belabours with such outrageously absurd epithets as
‘parasite’ and ‘sinister old satellite’”.

Alice Boyd was obviously much distressed by the controversy
provoked by the book, but Minto, despite his protestations about
hating literary squabbles, was clearly enjoying himself (as his
letters to her reveal) while at the same time trying to give her
assurance that the press notices would lead readers to the book
where the truth could be found. On 4 December he writes:
“The infatuated Sharp has delivered both himself and Swin-
burn into my hands in a providential manner that I could not have
hoped for”; and, anticipating Swinburne’s reply in the Academy,
about which he had been warned by Cotton, one of the editors, he
tells her, “so that we shall have some fun after all. . . . In view
of the just estimate of the Bard’s ravings, it may be our best
policy to take no further notice of him. But the chances are
that he will give some opening too good to be missed.”

On the day Swinburne’s letter appeared (24 December), Minto is sure
of his ground:

. . . I hope the irate Bard’s silly overcharged foul-mouthed abuse will not disturb
your Christmas day. It is merely laughable. He apparently goes on the prin-
ciple of throwing dirt enough on the chance that some will stick. But he can

1 Academy, xlii, No. 1078 (31 December 1892), 608. Swinburne wrote to
Minto on 11 October 1891 (see Cecil Y. Lang, The Swinburne Letters, Vol. vi,
Letter 1579A, p. 294) declining permission to quote from his letters to WBS and
adding: “My deep and cordial regard for my dear old friend would otherwise
have made any connection or association of my name with his agreeable to me:
but of that regard I venture to think that I have given sufficiently public evidence
both before and since his death. The verses in which I have done so are wholly
at your disposal. . . .”

2 Ibid. No. 1075 (10 December 1892), p. 541.

3 Minto’s correspondence with AB regarding the AN is among the Penkill
Papers at U.B.C.

4 Minto to AB, 18 December 1892.
only make himself ridiculous by such vulgar stuff. I will answer him at my leisure, in time, probably for next *Academy*, but I will wait a day or two to see whether any comment is made on his rhodomontade, and in what tone. It is difficult to keep one's temper, but he is so absurd that I think it may be possible.¹

As a matter of fact, Minto proved himself a more formidable opponent that the opposition had been expecting. Sharp never entered the lists after his initial review; and Theodore Watts [-Dunton] postponed his *Athenaeum* review (which finally appeared unsigned) until 28 January 1893. Minto was waiting for him. "I am in excellent trim for a scrimmage", he writes Alice Boyd on 30 December, "if only Theodore would come out of his hole. He is at bottom of the whole thing, if he could only be drawn, and one has compunctions about fighting W. M. R. or even Stockdolloger Swinburne whom he is pushing to the front."² But Watts's review forestalled a response: "I do hope you are not distressing yourself about that most malignant & venomous article of Watts. The animus is too apparent & is so purely assertory of opinion that he has overdone himself. He has with considerable cunning left me no technical ground for a reply, his article not being signed, and keeping studiously clear of direct assertion of fact."³ Minto's reply to Swinburne's letter in the

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¹ Minto's reply appeared on 31 December.
² Swinburne himself had first introduced the Stockdolloger metaphor in his *Academy* letter of 24 December. The allusion is to Brother Zephaniah Stockdolloger, the hero of "Colonel Quagg's Conversion", a story in *Household Words*, x (1855), 459-65. For details see C. Y. Lang, *The Swinburne Letters*, i. 64.
³ Anticipating Watt's review, Minto writes to AB on 18 December, "I am rather glad that Sharp backs out of it, though he has behaved so stupidly. I wonder why the great Theodore delays his attack. It is sure to be pretty venomous when it comes. But really with all his cunning I don't see how he can attack the book without sending readers to it, and if the book is read, we need have no fear as to the verdict." In his anonymous *Athenaeum* review (No. 3405, pp. 113-15), Watts resorted to *argumentum ad hominem* almost exclusively: WBS was "not himself at any time an important or even a noticeable figure either in art or poetry" (p. 113); "having been created by nature in a grudging mood without a sense of humour... Scott figures here as a bitterly disappointed artist and writer, whose blood is cancerated by envy" (pp. 113-14). After eight columns, all in the same vein, he concludes: "It is a pity that Rossetti did not live to read this. His sense of humour was so deep that it would have done more to cure him in his illness at Birchington than all Dr. Marshall's remedies" (p. 115). Watts's proprietary claims on Rossetti's life, centering on the long-promised "authorised" biography that he was never to write, deluded him into thinking that he alone
Academy provoked no reply from the poet. Minto clung to his belief that "... Mr. Scott's reminiscences of him [Swinburne] still seem to me, as they did at first, to be conceived in an affectionate and admiring spirit, and to have nothing 'insolent, impertinent, presumptuous, or malicious' about them". To Swinburne's protestation of resentment "against having anything said about him at all, true or untrue, complimentary or uncomplimentary, in a kindly vein of reminiscence or a malignant", Minto replies:

That is quite an intelligible position; and if Mr. Swinburne had confined himself to it, I should have been bound to accept my share of his rebuke with becoming respect, only claiming to be judged, in my discharge of a difficult and delicate editorial trust, by literary custom and precedent. But Mr. Swinburne has not confined himself to this position. He has chosen instead to revenge himself by a gleeful exhibition of his powers as a literary slogger. Apparently, he thinks my apology, "half-hearted," and my defiance "tremulous," because I do not slog him in return. I am sorry that I cannot oblige him. I shall always continue to admire Algernon Charles Swinburne the poet; but I must sorrowfully admit that the comic freaks of Algernon Charles Stockdolgger do not provoke me either to admiration or to imitation.¹

Minto was firm but devastating in his two forays in defence of the Autobiographical Notes, and though he could write to Alice Boyd that he was "rather pleased with my performance having managed to keep my temper throughout", and take some satisfaction in administering the coup de grâce to Sharp—"Don't be afraid," he says to Alice, "I treat him very politely. Oh, so politely!"²—he managed throughout to retain his self-composure and dignity, as Swinburne did not. He was concerned not to offend William Rossetti—"I want, however, to treat W. as tenderly as possible. The revelations must be trying for him."³—but, while he expressed his ready willingness to correct errors of fact, he defended Scott against those charges of hypocrisy and perfidy which had been stirred by the "outcry of injudicious friends" rather than by the autobiography itself.

¹ Academy, xlii, No. 1078 (31 December 1892), 608-9.
² Minto to AB, 4 December 1892.
³ Minto to AB, 24 December 1892.
The reductio ad absurdum of the whole controversy appeared early, in the *Pall Mall Gazette* for 6 December. All the subsequent furore is epitomized in this clever parody of Swinburne's acrimonious attack in the *Fortnightly*, compared with which all the reviews and notices of the *Notes*, however virulent, pale:

TANTAENE ANIMUS CAELESTIBUS IRAE?¹

Hearken, gods and little fishes! Here’s a terrible to-do,
Very wroth is poet Swinburne, and articulately too!
Halting lips will fashion verses when just anger overflows,
But a righteous indignation drives our poet into prose.
For it seems there lived a Scotchman—whom we used to meet at times,
Condescending to his grey hairs, nay, coquetted with in rhymes,
One whose daubs and drivelling doggerel long were dead on dusty shelves
But for parasite acquaintance with such great ones as ourselves;
Would you know the crime that damns him, this most desperate of Scots,
Whose malevolence of slander the de mortuis outblots?
He, forsooth,—but language falters at the senile insolence,
At the vitriol and the venom of his posthumous offence—
He, on whose obscure horizon we first dawned an undergrad,
Dared to mount us on a pony, write us down a schoolboy lad!
Dared inanely—but in pity, not in anger, be it spoke—
Very Scot of very Scotchmen, to misunderstand our joke!
Dared, and daring dared record it, to his evermore disgrace,
Dared to criticise our Turner to our very Ruskin’s face!
Therefore, though we hymned his friendship while he lived a man with men,
Being dead, we know his stature and we take that back again;
Therefore on our old acquaintance, on the "giver kingly-souled,"
Be the floods of just invective hyperbolically rolled!
Lest a morbid taste should pasture on such slanderous untruth,
Deem our Pegasus a pony and misread our wondrous youth.
Perish Scott as perished Whitman! We were young who sang their praise,
But we branded Walt with "muck-rake" in our wiser elder days.—
Thus the wrath of poet Swinburne, beating winds and smiting sands,
While the old man sleeps in silence, and the Muses wring their hands.

¹ The parody is prefaced by the following comment: "Mr. Swinburne waxes vehemently indignant in this month's *Fortnightly* over certain personal allusions to himself contained in the "Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott". The nimety of his expression is surely somewhat out of proportion to the crime which he exposes, and what shall we say of this Censor of taste who covers with unseemly ridicule the memory of a man whom he greeted of old as 'a life more bright than the sun's face', in verses which will outlive this most unnecessary prose?" (*Pall Mall Gazette*, iv. No. 8646 (6 December 1892), 2.)
It is against this background of parry and thrust that Hughes's last two letters of 1892 are set. The history of the controversy has been detailed for other reasons, however, than simply to introduce two shortish letters. The publication of the *Auto­biographical Notes*, reaching beyond Scott's life and his thirty-year relationship with Alice Boyd, may be taken as the culmination of Scott's entire career. In a sense they put him into a final perspective in which Alice Boyd and all Scott's friends, including Hughes, have a role. Many of Scott's contemporaries, who had the advantage of an "inside" view of the era which he chronicles in the *Notes*, had their day in court; Hughes did not, and his comments on the two volumes offer an interesting and important supplementary commentary on the significance and the relevance of Scott's memoirs. "You were quite within the mark", Hughes writes on 7 December, "when you said you 'knew the book would be full of deep interest' for me" (41):

It is indeed inwoven with the strongest threads of my life. I am so glad of it, and grateful to him for it; it is just a confirmation of himself; and as one fell in love with him at first, long ago, knowing blindly, it was so, and could not be otherwise with one's self, and that all further acquaintance only repeated the sensation, so, this seems to sum it all up in his own words at last, and the character is concrete, and one's own affection confirmed. For now, no alteration can be.

I do not wish a word less in the book. I think it is a most truth loving history, so far as human work can be so. I know I feel its value, and feel that it might have been equally truthful, so to speak, and rather seriously unpleasant with less reticence.

I should like someday to read it, with you near by—altho' I say it is complete, a little more sometimes would be welcome, if it could be had. And the good Hunt's letters too—how good they are.

I feel I want to thank Mr Minto for that epilogue.¹

I last night met in the Pall Mall Gazette²—the cutting I enclose—an answer to some foolishness of Swinburne lately. . . .

Hughes's view of the controversy, and especially of Swinburne's "foolishness", is summed up in almost his final comment in the letters on 14 December (42):

I have just had the courage to write a line or two to Mr. Minto, having seen the very perfect answer of his in the Academy to all that wicked stupidity that called it forth!

¹ The final chapter in *AN*, supplied by the editor with assistance from AB.
² The parody quoted above.
I only yesterday saw the Fortnightly. What a farrago of wickedness!—But oh! what a diseased mind it represents: of wounded vanity, disturbed to such incomprehensible dimensions, by seemingly quite the smallest of causes. Such unbalanced language only defeats its object, and paints the user ridiculous. The squandering of all adjectives in the dictionary is surely very poor misuse of literary faculty too?

I cannot help contrasting and thinking of dear W.B.'s reflections after taking his early ambitious poem to Walter Scott. He sums up: "He was not the literary man by profession, but a gentleman."

How cleverly and quietly Mr. Minto turns Mr. Sharp inside out, passage after passage.

Alice Boyd must have been pleased to see the back of 1892, a year during which so much slander and ignominy had been heaped upon Scott's memory. Many of Scott's friends, including Hughes, had stood by him to be sure; but Alice's fears that Scott's ultimate reputation could only suffer after such adverse publicity were not ill founded. The dour and jealous Scott surveying Rossetti's back garden at Cheyne Walk, "wondering what it is those fellows seem to see in Gabriel", which Max Beerbohm depicted with such accurate acidity in Rossetti and His Circle,1 is a long remove from the "Dearest Pudge"2 that Alice Boyd knew so intimately.

1893

The entry for 1 January 1893 in Alice Boyd's day-diary reads, like so many entries subsequent to Scott's death, "Quiet day all alone. Will be ever alone!" Indeed Penkill became increasingly a lonely place for Alice. Though she entertained local friends and distant family frequently, her niece, Margaret, was away much of the time. During 1892 Alice spent much of her time at Seafield. Her sense of isolation and loneliness was certainly heightened during the period in which the Autobiographical Notes became the target for vehement attack. Alice only received Minto's second letter to the Academy on 2 January, and Watts's review in the Athenaeum did not appear until the end of the month. In the meantime she was carrying on an extensive correspondence about the volumes. Early in January, perhaps

1 London, 1921.
2 AB's affectionate salutation in many of her later letters to WBS; he frequently signs his letters to her simply "Pudge."
as a result of her visit to Oxford in 1891, Alice consulted Hughes about selling three of Scott's pictures—his portrait of Swinburne and the two little oils depicting the graves of Keats and Shelley in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome (now in the Ashmolean). She also sent him a list of the pictures in the studio for evaluation, and she commissioned from him a small copy of *The Knight of the Sun*. Hughes's first letter of the year is dated 13 January (43):

You will think I am away or never going to answer your last very kind note, but neither is true. I was very delighted to learn how you wished to refill the Poet's empty niche. Said Poet also will I think be in congenial shelter in the new one. The little picture represents him I suppose about the time just after leaving Oxford, and before the decline and fall—having done the "Atalanta". Pity he could not leave us that early impression!

I have been rummaging my old sketches, and very very good intentions for the paving of a certain warm receptacle for lost articles, if tales are true! and find the old "Knight of the Sun" can reappear on his last journey: size about 16-10 sight. It will be a great delight to retouch the old favourite of mine as well as yours, and I have also the piece of the first canvas I began him upon, and cast aside, containing the study of the sky reflecting river seen thro'a wild cherry tree autumn turned, that gave me the idea first for the subject. Dear me, Art is very difficult. I am having agonies the last twelve days or more over the position and action only of the lady of "La Belle Dame sans Merci," and each day I think I have got it now, only to find I haven't the next! The rest of it has come pretty satisfactorily on canvas merely in outline as yet tho' and I can only feel (with Holman Hunt) that the fiend is in it somehow! Well, perhaps it is all good for pavement; but if that is the object, I consider it decidedly mean.

In a former note you hoped some appreciator had discovered the merits of "Viola D'Amore", alas, no. I am hoping he may turn up at Leeds perhaps, where she is about being exhibited before returning I fear to her unnatural parent.

We were very sorry to learn of your severe cold. How, with so warm a heart, it claims you, is one of the inexplicable things in this life. I daresay you have obtained it by nursing or looking after others. I hope you have no invalids about you now! But we have had a pretty severe visitation of winter. The other day I and Godfrey took train to West Drayton, walking then by the frozen canal to

1 Following the acrimonious controversy over *AN*, AB disposed of WBS' portrait of ACS, done in 1860. In 1916 the portrait, acquired at the sale of T. W. Jackson by R. W. Raper (1842-1915), the Trinity College (Oxford) classical scholar, was presented to Balliol College, ACS' alma mater. I am grateful to John Bryson, Emeritus Fellow of Balliol College, for this information.

2 Instead of a copy, AH evidently turned out the original smaller version, which he retouched and sent to AB; the picture still remains at Penkill.

3 Sent to the Royal Academy in 1894, but declined. An oil version of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* (60" X 48"), dated 1863, is now in the National Gallery of Victoria. See *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 16.25.

4 See Letters 37 and 38.
Southall, and train home, to see the frozen up long narrow barges, highly colored with chimney smoking and population enjoying enforced holidays. The brick making folk at one part—evidently well off—girls with such blazing complexions, unsubdued by most violent red plaid shawls and startling hats; and the young man, with stiff heavy bran[d] new buff gt. coat, fit to drive four in hand in; all over large pearl buttons, and devoured, like a prince, by all the eyes under the hats.

The men bargees, half dozen together, one old gun among them looking for birds, on either bank, sometimes tree fringed; others met—carrying loads of wood on their heads, collected about. Two miserable artists, father and son, trying to make one sketch between them, on tinted paper with colored chalks their fingers could not hold—except for a very short time alternately!

Of all the private and public expressions of support for Scott's autobiography, that of F. W. Burton (the Director of the National Gallery) must have given Alice Boyd the greatest cause for satisfaction. In a letter written to her on 15 January 1893 he praises the autobiography highly as a "true record of a true life. The tale of a man of high aspiration, of pure mind, of deep sympathies, of warm affections, of poetic nature, and, what is not too common, of innate honesty in purpose & in act." He expresses his regret that Minto had been put on his defence by the critics, but adds:

...this defence was hardly needed. The critics of the Autobiography & of its editor had already put themselves out of court—Mr Sharp, by his wilful misinterpretation of passages which to any candid mind are free from reproach—Swinburne, by the wild and intertemperate nature of his elaborate yet vulgar vituperation, in which he utterly lays bare the plain fact that where he was exactly stung was in that petty vanity which seems to be quite consistent with the possession of transcendent powers, & even of genius. When a man has anything really great in him, he may afford to bear a laugh at the more innocent follies of his youth—and even to join in it—he cannot be unconscious that they existed.¹

Burton's letter consists of more than the perfunctory phrases that characterize so many letters acknowledging complimentary volumes; and his close reveals a sensitivity to Miss Boyd's position that is rare in the outsider and casual acquaintance:

I am grieved, dear Miss Boyd, but hardly surprised to hear that you still feel so keenly your great loss. Knowing your nature, & what that loss is, I can sympathize with you to the utmost. Even the cessation of a bare long-acustomed duty leaves a weary sense of privation. But when that duty has been inspired & fed by the purest & warmest of the heart's feelings, when it has been a willing sacrifice coming from the soul—how fathomlessly deep & infinitely wide is the

¹ In Penkill Papers, U.B.C.
void left by its ending!—All this we know—& know too well that to offer words of comfort is but a mockery so long as the wound remains fresh. Nor shall I essay that trite & not always too sincere mode of administering consolation... 

On 28 January, answering a letter of Alice Boyd's written after receiving Burton's letter, Hughes says (44):

... How delightful of dear Sir F. Burton! and how like himself are his choice and beautiful words. How it makes up for all the wretched little band of professional scribblers, and much more than makes up. Now, at any rate, if not before, tho' it is almost insulting to doubt—you can at least look with a pitying calm on those small detractors, tho' I hope you will not even favour them with that, but forget it all... 

After recounting in detail Godfrey's cold following the outing in the icy weather which he had described in his last letter, Hughes continues:

... The wife is away staying with Amy, who lately had a second little boy arrive, making four—two of each kind—and the eldest girl has just begun to write to the grandad! So poor Emily and myself are keeping lonesome house, and we have made a resolution in our misery to go to the play somewhere tonight. The worm will turn at last! And then about that La Belle Dame you'll rejoice I know to learn that I feel over that desperate trouble I was in; both Knight & Dame promise to express what I wish, but they only made up their minds very recently—in fact, it was after reading Burton's quotation in red ink! I had had a whole month of the misery at their weak indecision of character....

Minto had taken ill early in the new year; in his last letter to Alice Boyd among the Penkill Papers he writes that he has returned to lecturing but that his general physical weakness and shortness of breath continues. The cause of his debility was not organic, and his doctor advised him to stop work and to go away, which Minto, recognizing it as "safe advice", refused to do. His own diagnosis tended to be offhand: "I keep well as a rule, eat moderately well, and intellectually am as lively or dull as ever. I take it to be due chiefly to lying down for such an unprecedented time, after having walked always 4 miles & taken other exercise for months before." "I must simply fight it out", he concludes: "if I am beaten I am beaten, but I am far from admitting it yet." Minto died on 1 March. Writing of him in his next letter to Alice Boyd (16 April), Hughes says (45):

1 Apparently AB copied out portions of Burton's letter to send to AH.
2 Minto to AB, 10 February 1893.
... I remember you telling me before of his being so unwell, and having to lecture when he ought to have been in bed. I suppose he was one of those men who habitually do more than their proportion of work, but without the corresponding amount of physique. And, how more and more disgusting, by that sorrowful illness & death, appears all those doings of the wretched Swinburne set!

Now, you must let me try and excuse myself a little, and partly that very kind commission you gave me, I thought was always just going away, with a letter of course. But as you know I think I was working at two pictures—the "Door of Mercy" & "La Belle Dame sans Merci"!—and a dear and very old brother of mine, who lives away out of town, became seriously ill, and I had occasionally to run out and visit him—his health is failing but a little better again now I think. Well, these two pictures going side by side (but frequently not) as well as little things for the New Gallery; and one that fell Dame sans Merci! Of course no good could come out of her! and just three weeks before sending in time, the wife came with me into the painting room one morning and said "would it be well to put LBDSM to the wall for a week, and work only at the 'Door of Mercy?'" and I saw at once the suggestion had considerable merit and carried it out by working and very hard for me getting up at 6 every morning, till the end of the Door of Mercy only and just managed to do it—and it went in, and is hung!

I have just got a delightful letter from Leslie, one of the hangers, which I think I may quote to you: He hopes I will pardon him for writing to tell me how pleased he is with the picture, in his opinion worthy of a much better place than the one he has given it, but that, "it was a most difficult picture to range with the others, so bright and pure in colour it was as though I had an open window to hang on the walls. It is full of infinite grace and tenderness and contrasts strangely as heaven should, with the very earthly character of the great bulk of the other pictures in the Exhibition."

There now! Then he goes on to say Poynter & he have one criticism to make, agreed in by Calderon and Dicksee, that the blackboard (of the recording Angel) is too black and should be a little greyer, and recommends me to come early on varnishing day and grey it, that I can reach it quite well, as it is hung on the Dado, and again apologizes for the suggestion and for not giving it a better place "which if I had only my own feelings to consider I most certainly should have done".

Isn't it awfully nice of him? to put one [out] of the uncertainty so pleasantly. I suppose it is in one of the less good rooms and in a corner perhaps, but "upon the Dado" can at least be seen for what it may be worth; and they are quite right about the board and if I had only had another hour or two, it would have been done before going.

I have two little tiny ones taken at the New Gallery where Arty and Godfrey are also represented. The examinations at S.K. begin again on Thursday,
before which I hope certainly to send off the "Knight of the Sun". I want to try to photograph it first, for I think it expresses the idea better than the old picture did somehow. It is a little less crammed up together I think.

"The Knight of the Sun" was sent off to Penkill on 25 April "owing principally", Hughes advises, "to our very amateurish photography which has next to nothing to show for it also" (46):

Yesterday was the R.A. varnishing, and I found the "Door of Mercy" beautifully hung on the line—facing Crowe's "Peg of Limevady" on the opposite wall. I met Calderon and he said my picture was like a lovely "Fra Angelico"....

Hughes's picture and eight copies of *A Poet's Harvest Home, with an Aftermath* (Scott's last volume of verse, published in April 1893) arrived at Penkill on the same day (27 April). Alice immediately sent copies to Hughes, Burton, and Linton. On 1 May she posted Hughes a cheque for £25 commission for the picture. On 2 May he acknowledged both (47):

It was very wicked of me not writing directly I got the dear last book of poems, but I thought each post would bring news of the picture too! I was indeed glad to get the "Aftermath" from you. Do you remember giving me the "Harvest Home"?

The "Aftermath" seems to come like a voice from over the edge of the world, to us here in the twilight, and reminds me of a day in Cumberland last Autumn when I went to the coast and so gloomy a fog prevailed there. I did not think I could be at the edge of the sea—no breakers—but the stillest of still water at my feet and presently I could hear faint distant voices coming out of the fog in front of me, and then after a while, it all blew away, and the voices belonged to two men shrimping so far away over the shallows like specks almost. Are not the closing lines most beautiful? and the cloud fancies, how like him and no one else. And, for criticism at the moment! Well indeed may you say What does it matter? There is more life's blood in one half page of Scotus than will be in all the forced and manufactured mechanical performance of the "Viper" if he lives for a thousand years. I think the book is beautifully brought out—dainty and modest—I fear Minto did not see it...

And now let me thank you for your too appreciative expressions on my poor old Knight & his friends and as for the cheque you have sent, I must even scold you for a mad memory! Your not "Shabby"! but very noble commission was for 20 pounds, the market value of the portrait of a misguided being—and that commission included frame and all—and I am sure the value was short on my side.

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1 For Crowe see Letter 6, n.
2 See introduction to section i of the Letters, AH to WBS.
3 AH's resentment is creditable, his critical acumen less so. Thus personal loyalty subdues critical discernment, as it does in AH's appraisal of Cosmo Monkhouse's poems dedicated to WBS in Letter 18.
and not yours. So please Miss Boyd I enclose the change, and am very grateful for the commission and your very kind reception of the work.... Alice Boyd refused to accept the £5 returned on the commission and her generosity occasioned Hughes’s next letter (48):

I ought to have thanked you sooner for your last very kind letter, in which you returned my change—and so increased what I already thought a very generous payment—and very delightful it was to learn that you think the Knight of the Sun in harmony with his surroundings at Penkill. I think I ought to have found a way perhaps to have added on the frame—or at any rate stuck on the back—the quotation I used for the larger picture—from Geo. MacDonald—

"Better a death when work is done
Than Earth’s most noble birth—
Better a child in God’s High House
Than King of all the Earth."

and that again seems to me to be in harmony with the associations of Penkill Hall, does it not?...

Thanks many for wishing something might bring me to the North after S.K. work. I shall hope so too. I shall certainly try to pay both Cumberland and Ayrshire a visit if I may—sometime in Autumn....

On the subject of Cumberland I must quote you a little poem Agnes found in her room on returning from a walk the other day, when Mr Rawnsley the Vicar of Keswick¹ had called while she was away. He is related to Tennyson, and you may remembe... as the friend who accompanied the remains of the Bard on his last journey—from Blackdown to the Abbey at night.

"Dear Mrs White, when cowslips come
I cannot hope to find at home
The gatherer of the flowers,
There’s not a thrush but seems to shout
‘Come to the fields, come out, come out,
And leave your pretty bowers’.
For now the wheat is seen in lines
Of emerald, the pansy shines,
And ee’n the laggard Ash inclines
To greet Spring’s jocund powers,
Only one heart is sad today
The heart that found you both away."

The flowers were about the room and the thin lines of wheat in the field opposite her windows and I think that is a pretty little bit of verse and so I will let it finish my letter....

In late July, after the completion of the South Kensington exams, Hughes was still unable to commit himself firmly to a date for visiting Penkill, but in his long letter he has news of his

¹ The Rev. H. D. Rawnsley, a cousin of Tennyson, author of Memories of the Tennysons (Glasgow, 1900).
family and of Mrs. Scott, Ford Madox Brown, William Rossetti, and William Morris (49):

... for the matter of Godfrey giving up painting first, you I think have never seen any work by him. Those water colour sketches I showed you and dear W B were by Arthur Foord Hughes my eldest boy; and he has no intention of giving it up, but Godfrey altho' he makes charming little landscapes and now & then a good chalk portrait has found so little encouragement that when he had the offer of going into the Gresham Life Assurance Soc' lately, proposed to him by a friend of ours who is a very important member of it, it seemed quite worth while to listen to it. And there he is now, at bottom of the ladder but with fair prospects, and suiting his work very well apparently; and with such bad reports of Art all round I feel somewhat relieved of considerable anxiety.

I found Mrs Scott quite recovered from some previous illness, and looking most wonderfully well, talking of a great day to come off soon when she expected a host of friends, & after that of seeking retirement for a while at some retreat in the South about Edenbridge I think, where some kind of religious establishment takes such very erring ones to its peaceful breast for a time, and shuts out the wicked world entirely. Only, she informed me that she believed it was on the way to Brighton, and she rather thought of combining the two!...

Poor Madox Brown sent us cards to view a picture the other day. I am sorry to hear [it was] refused by the Manchester Corporation, the last of the series, and certainly not very successful. They were displeased I believe with later ones, and insisted on seeing this before it should be placed, and I am afraid his illnesses and great age have fought against him. It was a pain to see it, but he himself looks wonderfully well just now; but Lucy was with him, and seems very changed, so dreadfully thin and holloweyed.

William Rossetti sent me lately a most delightful letter about my picture in the Academy; it may amuse you so I'll quote it: "Yesterday for the first time I saw your picture in the R.A. and I found it so beautiful and touching a thing that I am impelled to send you a few words of acknowledgement and congratulation, at the risk of troubling you for I dare say you have heard the like from other quarters. I think the picture is in some respects your best work, and in all respects among the best. It ought to be engraved, and I am sure would furnish a balm to hundreds of gentle and wounded spirits. In fact as a sample of true Christian Art your picture has few rivals."

Wasn't it nice of him to put himself to the trouble of cheering me up like that? I met Wm Morris the other day and remarked to him upon the expensiveness of these old books he is reprinting so handsomely, and binding in vellum, and full of lovely initial letters and ornaments, and how no reasonably poor person could hope to buy one, and he said "Yes! No! look here old chap, I'll send you one!" and sure enough he sent a most noble book—"The History of Godefrey of

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1 1878-1914.
2 Brown's Manchester mural paintings are described in detail in the Manchester City Art Gallery Pre-Raphaelite exhibition catalogue, 1911 (see Pre-Raphaelitism, 16.7).
3 About The Door of Mercy; see Letter 45, n.
Boloyne and of the Conquest of Jerusalem".\(^1\) It took my breath away when I opened it....

In late October (three months after his last letter) Hughes writes from Brigham, near Cockermouth, where he was visiting Agnes (50):

... My brother died about five weeks ago, and I fear suffered a good deal just at last, more than he allowed. But just [Jack?] reached the age of 78. A little before that event, Arty got married. Then came poor Brown's death & funeral,\(^2\) and then I got a little poorly with a slight visitation of Erysipelas in the face, and after a very strong dose of lumbago—and when I got that over we started off.... Yes indeed, that "Table round" as you say was beautiful and strong then. I was very glad that I was asked to follow but it was so sad to see poor William,\(^3\) his wife abroad and I fear almost dying. She came with her two daughters one afternoon to Kew, but so fearfully ill & feeble. My wife thought she must have died, if we had been out—and when I saw her with her father about then, I felt he would outlive her. I hope she will be able to survive this shock, and get back sometime; & poor Robert\(^4\) has had to part with his old companion. We are very sorry for him, but Life seems so full of these things in the later days, and when the good old age is reached, at last, it too sometimes is a blessing if the sufferings are ended. 

Hughes had planned to spend only a week or so at Penkill following his Cumberland visit, but he extended his stay and remained at the castle with Miss Boyd just two days short of a month, from 9 November to 7 December. During this period, he journeyed about with Miss Boyd, painted in the glen, and devoted himself to copying David Scott's portrait of his brother (WBS), which still hangs at Penkill, a perfect replica of the original in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

Again this year, several letters are bunched in December. On 19 December (52) he writes to say that Agnes has been "prematurely confined of a little dead son. The event was expected about a month later, and this result is a dreadful disappointment, but thank goodness we hear the best possible reports since as to her bodily health. So we cannot grieve too much in a world like ours." His last letter of the year was written just after Christmas (53):

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1 The Kelmscott Press edition, published on 27 April 1893.
2 6 October 1893.
3 William Michael Rossetti.
4 Robert was AB's general factotum at Penkill; his wife died on 10 October.
... now Xmas has come and gone, and we have wondered if you spent it alone.¹ A few days ago Margaret called, as ill luck arranged, on a day, so rare, that the wife and Emily had gone out, and I was in the Studio at the end of the garden and knew it not. I have been hoping Miss Courtney was perhaps about starting for Penkill then.

I think Penkill and its poetry must have done me much good; since getting back to my pictures they revealed themselves anew to me, and made me feel very ill at first, but I am glad to say I have pulled them about with freshened eyes to their advantage and my comfort.

It was good news to read that Madox Brown’s "Christ Washing Peter’s Feet" was the chosen picture for the National Gallery, was it not? Shields² tells me that Mrs Wm. Rossetti is awfully ill abroad but yet writing her father’s life.

I have not yet seen the "Arnold-Holman Hunt" book³ yet [sic], but guess it should be very good. I have been reading nice "Letters of Fitzgerald".⁴ I suppose you know them too. We spent a quiet Xmas time too. Arty & his wife joined us, and we played last night our one annual game of whist as usual. You may guess we are not great players. Now, just space dear Miss Boyd to wish you a very happy New Year.

1894

Hughes’s first letter of the year (7 February) is missing from the collection. Alice had begun the New Year alone, Margaret being then in London. Her day-diary entry for 1 January reads, "Sad & wonderful to think I am still here & a new year beginning the old dreary void". Her loneliness and ennui were shortly relieved, however, by the visit of Mrs. Minto for ten days. In early March Hughes writes a long letter pertaining principally to his work (54):

... I never in all my life had a subject giving half the trouble and worry that "La Belle Dame" has—and I never worked half as hard as I have lately on it. Since the winter I have begun as soon as I could see, these last few days at work before 6, and leaving off after 6 in the evening. I should be ashamed indeed (even if I had kept count) to tell you of the number of times I have altered and shifted each important matter in it, and thus throwing all the completing of the many minor matters entirely back to the last, and at the best it was an anxious worry indeed to get it thro'—but now I think at any rate that most of the important matters are as they should be, more or less, and some less vital rather anyhow or missing, and so it went off yesterday. I had to lay by for another time "The

¹ She had; AB’s day-diary for Christmas Day 1893 reads: "Xmas Day spent alone in bed & wee sitting room."
² Frederic James Shields (1833-1911), a minor Pre-Raphaelite painter and illustrator, until 1869 a close friend of Dante Rossetti.
³ Sir Edwin Arnold’s The Light of the World, or the Great Consummation (London, 1892), with 14 reproductions from the works of Holman Hunt.
First Easter—a subject I have a long time been trying to bring to an end—but I was also doing a very small picture for the New Gallery, which I am glad to say they have accepted. It illustrates a rather pretty old verse I found quoted somewhere, and I represent a girl who has been making thread from a distaff in a window seat, and Love comes to her thro' the window bars, and this is the verse:

"You cannot barre love oute,
Father, Mother, and you alle;
For marke mee love's a crafty boy,
And his limbes are very smalle.
He's lighter than the thistle downe,
He's fleeter than the Dove,
His voice is like the Nightingale;
And so beware of Love." 1647

Arty has done a big water colour of the Girlhood of Perdita which the New Gallery has invited also...

Yes indeed the old names pass. How disappointing that Mr Gray could not carry out the thing both of you wished!

Sir Cunliffe Owen I expect has been released from much suffering. They told me once last summer he was not likely to live, from day to day, and after, that some operation did give him a little longer lease of life, but I think it could only have been a rather miserable endurance. What a genial pleasant man he was! and what a happy manner of making you, at home as it were with him. You could not help thinking he was a little of dear Lushington, with more of the man of affairs and the world to enhance, if possible, the interest he appeared to have in you, but he was I believe like that to all. Lushington came here on Sunday before last, much better I was glad to see of the gout he suffered but I saw he moved one foot very carefully and rather in an anxious twisty way as he rose from a rather low chair and, in his courtly way, he rose whoever of the family came in, as the boys did one after the other—but he looks well otherwise, and walked to the station, and first down my garden to see the pictures in the Studio, where he would see everything, and wrote to me next day to buy a little landscape, of poppied flowery field with a man mowing—for a present to Margaret for her birthday. Was that not nice of him?

You will have read of Mrs Combe's death, and the legacy of £2000 to Hunt and £1000 to Cyril, who is Tea planting in Ceylon. Lushington says Cyril at

2 Love at a Window was exhibited R.A. in 1894 (No. 377).
3 John Miller Gray (1850-94), Curator of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery; probably an allusion to AB's attempt to place David Scott's portrait of WBS in the gallery. AH copied the picture during his visit to Penkill in 1893.
4 Sir Francis Philip Cunliffe-Owen (1828-94), Director of the South Kensington Museum, 1873-93.
5 Wife of Thomas Combe (1797-1872), connected with the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Combe was an early benefactor and patron of the Pre-Raphaelite school. Most of his pictures are now in the Ashmolean Museum. See The Combe Bequest: Pictures and Drawings of the English Pre-Raphaelite and Allied Schools (Oxford, 1909).
once is to go off to some place where with a friend he is to try Tea planting as the Boss instead, on the strength of the legacy and with the possibility of "not losing it all at once" as Lushington hoped rather!

Whenever Hughes has three months or so between letters, the result is almost always felicitous. In a life which was the epitome of humdrum monotony, there was hardly enough to sustain a furious correspondence—and he is constantly apologizing to Miss Boyd for the absence of "news"; but his letters frequently make up in descriptive fullness what they do not have in narrative excitement. His next letter, written sometime in June, demonstrates his descriptive powers:

I think you must long ago have registered me (as I do myself) the most horrible and ungrateful of wretches. I had such very uninviting news however to tell of my luckless "La Belle Dame". I was evidently in the evil web—and at my time of life it seems a little despicable, doesn't it? Well, anyhow they didn't hang it at last, tho' it was not rejected, but out from want of space with "regret" as they courteously phrase it, and the New Gallery has put the little "Love at a Window" in a fairly good place, and Arty's picture of the "Girlhood of Perdita" in a splendid one where it got sold immediately, I am happy to say. So there are compensations in this sorrowful world occasionally.

I hope that with you the compensations have been plentiful all this newsless time. You spoke in yr. last of the Spring's beauty coming on, and I think it must be very delicious about you, if the season favours; and you have had Margaret with you I think to participate. We have been lucky enough to get a fortnight nearly of Agnes & Jack here from Cumberland, when Amy and her eldest little girl ran up for a couple of nights to meet them. That was very nice as you may well suppose and all very much on the side of the compensations. And old S.K. began a month ago, and dear old Crowe is exactly the same and not one day older but rather a month or two younger than ever I think, and he is rather pleased I think with his picture this year of the "Twa Brigs" an original one; and Brophy exactly the same if not more so, tho' all very much disturbed by coming changes. The constant attempt made to shorten the length of time our examinations take seems culminating now in the possible addition of three more examiners with us—and these of a lower grade of work, that is I mean they have done hitherto more preliminary kind of work, and we think we are to take them in, and help them, to ease us. Our friends are highly resentful, but it disturbs me less. The work increases, and the chiefs have to curtail us at the same time, only it appears to be coming now in a patent double action steam westinghouse break kind of manner, and sprung upon us rather at short notice. However it is vague at present, but in a day or two we shall know more, and I suppose find ourselves free a week or two earlier than usual. Poor Armstrong lost his only child quite recently, a very bright boy of about 10 or 11, and the parents idolized him I am told. I was glad that Poynter was chosen to succeed Burton. There was a

1 Sir Edward John Poynter, Director of the National Gallery, 1894-1904. See Letter 70, n.
chance of a literary man being chosen, and I think he ought to be a painter, don't you?

The Academy nowadays seems so different a show to those of long ago, and I do not quite like the change altho' there is undoubtedly an immense advance in ability all round and a good amount of imaginative work, not of the most rare kind, perhaps, but so large and so powerful in effect & work. The costume kind are almost absent, and if there, appear so stagey and old fashioned. The nude Idyllic or Classic seems all the fashion, or the most simple naturalistic—but one always wonders why so large. One of the best I think represents some fisher folk hauling their net into the ship, having brought up a mermaid in it, only she is not fishy enough—too much woman to have lived below. There is a portion of it only given in the catalogue I sent. Arty has two water colours there also. After the sending in, he persuaded me to go for 3 or 4 days to old Winchelsea, near Hastings, and we had a delightful time in a bewitching neighbourhood. The old church, half a ruin, on its hill and old houses around it—then the marshes, as the lovely fields between it and the sea two miles off are called—smothered with ewes and lambs and the dykes everywhere and delicious old farms few & far between, and then the shore with a wreck being broken up, and the wonderful trouble they were having to tear its ribs out, with two horses and occasional blasting, and the lone little black hut on the shore, with an old widow, whose "poor dear" dropped dead last October—and whom Arty had gone partly to paint as he was a grandly picturesque old fishing man—and how we lodged at a toy & refreshment shop, and dined up in our room but breakfasted below and could not get on for wondering at the toys of every imaginary kind on shelves, and dangling around. Two sister dolls would sit on a shelf with their box like a carriage hood around behind, and three sisters would stand in theirs side by side as in a triple sentry box; and all the animal families would grow up from the baby at one end to the gigantic monster at the other, and the marvellous wonders of all useful and instructive kinds, one could buy for a penny! and sometimes even a halfpenny! and the sweets! I think there is a development in these matters quite as surprising as that in the Royal Academy, and the busy little woman who keeps it is a good soul who has adopted a delicate child, and is writing a play!!!

I don't know if you have it already, but please keep the Stephens "Rossetti" life I have sent. I think he gives a fairly good sketch of the Pre-Raphaelites, and scrappy as the illustrations are sometimes two or three are nice to have, especially the "people of importance" visiting Dante, and the portrait of Christina at the end, are they not?...

In late August Hughes was looking to the possibility of again visiting Penkill in the fall, this time with his wife. Most of his letter is taken up with news of his vacation in Cornwall and with a visit he had recently from the Holman Hunts (56):

1 Herbert J. Draper's *The Sea Maidens* (No. 370). See *Academy Notes* (1894).

2 (London, 1894), No. 5 in the Portfolio Artistic Monograph series; not strictly a biography.
... We had a visit two Sundays ago from Mr & Mrs Holman Hunt. They had walked all the way by the river as much as they could and of course it came on raining and they arrived rather wet. He seemed I thought to be showing a little more age, but not suffering at all I think from his old Eastern agues or asthma and they were meditating a month somewhere, but not decided where. He was endlessly interesting as ever, this time recounting the history of his early boyhood and city clerk experiences, and the way he came out of it at last. Myself & Arty who happened to be with us & Godfrey, all open mouthed fascinated listeners greedily devouring all the well told story, and very sorry when the inevitable train time brought it to a stop. You can imagine it all. Now, this is only a temporary stopgap sort of letter, for I hope to write again soon before starting "Norrard." . . .

Hughes had hoped to come to Penkill in the early autumn this year, but on 23 October he was no nearer to departure. First, he had been delayed by family visitations; later, by a new work he had launched into—"the foreground of a picture at Burnham Beeches". This letter contains one of the finest purple passages in the entire Hughes-Alice Boyd correspondence (57):

... [Today I was at the Exhibition of portraits at the New Gallery and there I saw William Rossetti.]

You will have seen the illness of Christina. I asked him if she was very ill, he said "Oh, yes, she is dying!" 2

Poor fellow, he looked so beautiful I thought, his crisp white beard so neatly clipped and a beautiful sort of loose black overcoat, and all black general neatness, but better dressed or more carefully than of old, he struck one as so refined and really beautiful with a refining I could not help feeling came from many sorrows, and that look of uncomplaining acceptance that was always about him more or less. I did not dare to ask after his children. A young friend was with us on Sunday who mended the little second girl's 3 arm when it was broken was saying that they were continuing in the revolutionary anarchist line stronger than ever he thought. 4 What a sad sort of latter days for poor William it seems. He has retired from his office he told me. . . .

1 Perhaps Moonrise, Burnham Beeches, No. 71 in the Walker's Galleries exhibition, 1916.
2 Christina Rossetti died on 29 December 1894; for the fullest description of her death see Lona Mosk Packer, Christina Rossetti (Berkeley, 1963).
3 Helen, now Signora Helen Rossetti Angeli, authoress of several books on the Pre-Raphaelites.
4 Olive and Helen Rossetti founded a small Anarchist periodical entitled The Torch in 1893, later taking over the printing facilities of the defunct Commonweal. Early numbers of the magazine were stereotyped. The Torch: A Revolutionary Journal of Anarchist Communism appeared between 15 June 1894 (n.s. No. 1) to 18 May 1895 (n.s. No. 12). Together, under the pseudonym Isabel Meredith, they published a novel entitled A Girl Among the Anarchists (London, 1903).
A week later Hughes had got only as far as Cumberland on his journey north. He writes about his peregrinations in the countryside where with Agnes he (58):

... visited some lovely new schools at Keswick for carving, metalwork & embroidery, etc., started by Canon Rawnsley\(^1\) there, which building I think would delight Wm. Morris—it looks like the realisation of a chapter of the "News from Nowhere"—a beautiful simple hall and rooms above and about, with a beauty about it that seems quite its own, and to crown all placed beside the river in a lovely situation, and in brass upon its door, embossed, inscribed

"O Earth as God how made it all is beauty
And knowing this is love and love is duty."

and painted above on an outside beam of timber a sort of weather board but horizontal.

"The loving eye and patient hand
Shall work with joy and bless the land."\(^2\)

and blessings on dear William Morris say I. Ruskin & Morris seem to have been the inspirers here. They make hand made linen, and all they do is without machine and all seems socialism taken hold of by the right end of the stick instead of the wrong, uplifting the individual by his own hands in first place.

No, I have not seen Morris' "Wood beyond the World" and shall be delighted to see it, for please Goodness! having got so far, and having your most kind invitation to talk those "dear old times" over it will be to me a great pleasure indeed to come on, when I get off from my present happy little visit. These young people are both so good and pleasant. I feel always how favoured my lines are, for all that as the Shakespeare quotation on the almanac for this day here says "My conscience hath a thousand several tongues, and every tongue brings in a several tale."\(^3\)

But I don't know who you mean when you speak of a "sombre old woman." One I know is just the reverse of that, making brightness constantly out of everything and even out of nothing—nursing all and encouraging and taking other's sombreness out of them, altho' I know well the excuses that I could make for her, were she to allow herself to grow so. . . .

After a brief note to announce his imminent arrival (59), Hughes came to Penkill on 15 November, where he remained a fortnight, his stay coinciding with the fourth anniversary of Scott's death. It was the last visit that he paid to the little northern castle where he had proved his friendship over a long and trying decade.

His three December letters are filled with various news. Agnes, he informs Alice Boyd on 1 December (60), after thanking

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\(^1\) See Letter 48, n.

\(^2\) The first couplet, though misquoted, is from Browning's "The Guardian-Angel. A Picture at Fano"; I am unable to locate the second.

\(^3\) Richard III, V. iii. 193.
her for his visit and relating the details of his return to London, "won't continue her class beyond the Christmas coming, finding Mrs. Rawnsley quite unmanageable". And he promises to let her know the progress he makes on *The Knight's Turning Point* and *The Heart of the Rose*—"the better part of the last I owe to you".

Three days before Christmas he writes about Ford Madox Hueffer's projected biography of his grandfather (61):

... I have been applied to by young Ford Hueffer for letters of Madox Brown, and I wonder if you have any? He is doing the "Life" which I fear will be of small interest. My letters were of no account for book making but I sent my recollection of my first sight of F. M. B. and with Rossetti and what they were about—and he seems grateful for that and asks for more! I could supply more in the episode way—but they would scarcely redound to the honor & glory required for them—tho' nothing could well be more entertaining than our recollections of dear D G R description of F M B events!

Well—but this is only to wish you all happiness possible—and you will have good share, if it is meted to you, in the same proportion you would bless others with...

Intense storms struck western Scotland in late December. They are recorded in Alice Boyd's day-diary for 29 December, together with Christina Rossetti's death. Writing to Miss Boyd on 31 December, Hughes laments the damage to the glen, where he had walked with Margaret, down "where the path ends, where Rossetti contemplated a subject..." (62):

... I think it very good of you to be able to think of what I am doing with such sorrowful news to tell.

I have been going on with the girl asleep, and have I think arranged the Knight³ pretty satisfactorily, rubbing up his sword with a stone. His action is much better than the indication you saw, and his horse behind comes larger. Everyone seems to like that little subject, and I feel I like doing it too.

There has just opened a beautiful show, of Venetian Italians chiefly, at the New Gallery, and it is such a treat. Very few of them but are new to me, it is just like a rich chapel of rose or splendid supplement to the National Gallery, and seems an awful pity they should not stay there or some other public gallery instead of going back again to their owners; poor owners! And it was only a

¹ No information is available on either of these two pictures, nor is their present location known.

² On the contrary, Ford Madox Hueffer's *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Work* (London, 1896) is an exemplary biography.

³ Either *The Knight's Turning Point* or *Rust*. 
year ago it was just as full of Early Italian pictures. One wonders with so many of the best pictures here, what there can be left in Italy, beside their public collections. . . .

And now dear Miss Boyd I can only wish the New Year may be a happier one —and in some way soon mend some of this last's wounds.

1895

Hughes's closing wish for a happier New Year was well-meaning and sincere, but even he could ill appreciate how tired of living Alice Boyd had become. "One day after another & the old year has gone", she confided to her day-diary on 1 January 1895, "& I am here with little heart to begin the old round so cheerless." Hughes's first letter of the new year was written on 4 February (63):

As usual I am owing you a letter for a long time, ever since the dear Christina died.¹ My last to you was just before that news was published, and yours to me was just before it reached you. I went to the funeral service, held by her church close to her house, and it was so very lovely with music written & set to her own words and beautifully given, and the church full of most reverent and I hope devoted admirers as ourselves, altho' mostly strange to me. The only ones I knew beyond their own family were Stephens & his wife, Shields, and Clayton.² Theodore Watts of course came with William and the family principal mourners. I did not go up to the cemetery, learning from Shields that it was rather William's wish that the friends would be contented with the first half of the service at the church.

Well! The most beautiful soul of these latter days is at rest, and we shall not see the like again, and truly we may be very grateful for the privilege we have had.

Now, I should not have been all this time writing but for a piece of work, and which I hope will compel you, to your surprise to buy a poem by HALLCAIN[e] [sic]!!! For three weeks ago that blessed Shields sent the Caine's younger brother to me; he is starting an illustrated magazine, price 3d, not very ruinous, to be called The London Home Monthly, and Hall Caine produces in the first number a Manx ballad to start it with a bang! and he wanted me to illustrate it. Now I have been a long long time off that work and pining dreadfully to get some again, for pictures are vain indeed, and very expensive to produce, and not any result follows! Alas! Alas! So it being a most picturesque ballad I agreed enthusiastically, and have done 5 really rather more than they asked for or can afford to pay for, but it seemed to me an opportunity to show I could do that sort of thing still, more or less, and so I have been very busy till just lately and both the Caines are fearfully and wonderfully appreciative of what is done—and the number is to be out

¹ See Letter 57, n.
² John R. Clayton, the artist? See comment on him in Lona Mosk Packer's Christina Rossetti (Berkeley, 1963), p. 65.
about the 15th of this month, and I am only hoping they will come out decently. . . .

Although Alice Boyd wrote twice, in April and again in May, Hughes did not reply until sometime in June. It was, as he said to Miss Boyd, a dull and uninteresting letter in the main, but it contains one amusing reference to his own painting (64):

... I am very glad you like "Rust". I too think it is a good subject and that it might have been done larger, but one gets so little encouragement. They go all about, even Tasmania & Venice, but always come back nowadays. The very reasonable Tasmanians have asked me if I could present mine to their National Collection, as they want a gallery of pictures, but are too poor to buy them—and if I cannot do that, will I lend them a further year to hang in the said gallery—to which latter I have agreed . . .

Now it was Alice Boyd's turn to be dilatory in replying, and in his next letter (28 August) Hughes chides her gently for her neglect, then continues (65):

... I have lately sold three little Cornish landscapes rather romantically I think. Long ago I used to visit dear friends the Birkbeck Hills whose children then were small, but very great friends. These are now grown into men & women doing famously in the world, and now & then they one or another, come to see me and buy a very small picture of Cornwall sketches I made a few years ago. But this last incident crowns all, for one, a Liverpool Solicitor, has such a grateful client, that the said G.C. must needs make my young friend a present, and wished it to be in the form of 60 pounds worth of Electro-Plate!! which so horrified them that by some means they made grateful one to know what they would like most of all would be landscapes by A H!!! and the 60 pounds is to come to Kew in consequence!

Was it not very sad to read of dear Leathart's death? I hear that it came from a chill just taken five days before! Poor Mrs Leathart and the young people. I cannot think how sadly they will miss the strong hand at the helm there. I expect & feel sure that up to that wretched chill, he had been as busy and actively industrious as at any time. . . .

... Do you know William Rossetti has found 300 new poems by Christina among her papers? as good as those already in print he considers. And do you know he has sold her little belongings of other kinds, calling one or two friends in to take such memorials of her as they cared for, at a price fixed by him. I did not know of it, but Stephens was one, and he bought several things, and in the most amiable manner and with a charming letter has sent a priceless treasure to me!

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1 Seven AH illustrations appear in The London Home Monthly for 1895, five for Hall Caine's "Graih My Chree. A Manx Ballad", and two for a poem by Frederick Greenwood, entitled "Good-Night".


3 See Letter 20.

4 See Letter 23, n.

Gabriel it seems designed and had made a pair of candlesticks of steel, each bearing two candles, and presented them to Christina; and these wonderful things are now owned by unworthy me! only, I think in one way I may be worthy to hold them, for I don't think anyone could have felt a much greater respect & love for her mind than I have, ever since the dear old day when the first number of the Germ came into my hands (in the Royal Academy Schools). She must have been very young then, and it the first appearance in print I should think.

Ever since Rossetti's death in 1882, books on the Pre-Raphaelites had begun to proliferate. Every year Hughes and Alice Boyd (not to mention others still alive such as W. M. Rossetti, who must have borne a far heavier burden) found themselves plagued with requests for personal documents and reminiscences. This subject forms a lengthy part of Hughes's next letter, on 4 November (66):

... Yes! it is amusing to find there are persons we know not that are most desirous to know us, because we happened to know some great ones gone. I can quite appreciate your state of mind, for it has been happening to me in a small way. I can't quite brag of so distinguish'd & sounding & resounding a literary gent as you have attached, but I have collared a small Poet! who is named Mackenzie Bell, son of Clayton & Bell's Bell, who is an invalid kind of body, and knew Miss Rossetti, who seems to have been very kind to him, & he wants to write about her, and thought I had known more of her. But he took out his disappointment in that way by admiration for me! and wanted such a lot of information

1 Joseph Knight (1829-1909), editor of *Notes & Queries*, 1883-1907, and author of a biography of D. G. Rossetti (London, 1887); Knight corresponded with AB and he visited Penkill between 12-14 January 1896.

2 Author of *Christina Rossetti: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London, 1898); the extensive papers relating to this volume are in the collection of Mrs. Janet Camp Troxell.
about myself! Then my old friend Dr Birkbeck Hill is editing Rossetti’s letters to Allingham for Mrs W. A. to appear in Atlantic Monthly or some such—and that has been a charming experience, reading the old letters of so long ago, when W. A. was at Ballyshannon or just after Lymington—one heard the very voice in the frank old terms that are everlastingly dear, and Hill wanted more comments than I could give. And only the other day I was actually asked for information about Coventry Patmore, and a brother, who I never heard of (did you), but this was more a business than a literary quest.

I would have liked to tell poor Mr Bell of the stayings of Christina with you, but I felt he was rather by way of a bore, partly mostly perhaps from his invalid state, and did not say much, but I am sure he would be glad of your description of that “blessed Damozel” leaning on her elbows, as you described to me, out of the little carved stone window overlooking the garden, conceiving I guess some of her lovely things.

Hughes’s Christmas letter of 1895 is especially good for its description of Burne-Jones’s *The Car of Love* and for his initial response to W. M. Rossetti’s edition of Rossetti’s family letters (67):

...I have been to see the Bart and the Bart was quite affable and likewise his good lady, and the last time I saw her was at Brown’s funeral, and I had not seen him for ages. He is at work at enormous pictures: one upright of 15 feet high I think—of Love driving thro’ a town might be Troy like—his car drawn by maidens—a Town that Love had ruined he said; at top Love standing—below women tugging 6 or 7 abreast at the traces! he seems rather keen about it but it is in an early stage yet. Then by it a smaller design of it on brown paper with the figures well blocked in in white chalk and brown, you know how. I expect it will make a very fine and sad thing. But what I liked more was a King Arthur, also immense—but long way—in the centre Arthur on his bier in Avalon asleep on the ground, about him the Queens watching with harps, all back to us reverently watching him—immediately over him a canopy with panels representing his life story I think, and down in front edge the waves lapping little conventional rocks—showing the island situation—then on the left hand, at his head, that is, occurs a sort of look out tower where you see dimly two watchers with great horns ready to blow a blast and awake the sleeping Arthur when the time arrives for him to take his part again in the work of the world. I could not see its ends well as it was

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1 *Atlantic Monthly*, lxxvii (May, June 1896), 577-95, 744-54; lxxviii (July, August 1896), 45-57, 242-5; published in volume form in 1898.

2 Coventry Patmore (1823-96), one of the original contributors to *The Germ*. Patmore had two brothers, George Morgan (b. 1825) and Gurney Eugene (b. 1826).

3 Like D. G. Rossetti, Christina twice visited Penkill, in 1866 and 1869. Lona Packer has presented an impassioned case for William Bell Scott as the innominate lover in Christina Rossetti’s life in her biography of the poetess.

4 In the Victoria and Albert Museum; the second picture is probably Burne-Jones’s unfinished *Arthur in Avalon* (1880), 11½ x 21½ feet.
covered up with two cloths that opened in the middle, but putting them apart I could see so much, but not make out what was at the foot end of the picture, excepting that there were some other figures. It is all there but as yet in a kind of greyish brown monochrome and I imagine the colour will grow over it very gradually—but I think it will be a noble thing. They were both very nice; he looks well, but a little older, stooping a little. She very much the same.

I have only just got the Rossetti letters, but not read much but delighted with the reproductions of the father and mother in it—how beautiful the old father looks criticizing his little poems! I fear it will [be] a mixed pleasure to read it....

1896

The four letters written by Hughes to Alice Boyd in 1896 are the most consistently fine in the whole correspondence. Filled with news of mutual friends, literary and artistic gossip, reminiscences of the old time, and containing repeated references to the deaths of several of the now fast disappearing “Round Table”—with reiterated commentaries on Morris’s death and a fine letter descriptive of his funeral—these letters require no further preparatory discussion and are reproduced in their entirety, excepting conventional closes.

(68)

Royal Oak
Pett n[ear] Hastings
[17 April 1896]

My Dear Miss Boyd

This place is where I am getting up the necessary force for carrying out those duties that begin next Monday, and that my country expects me to fulfil in a manner as worthy of itself as possible. But do not think for a moment that it is by imbibing anything in the nature of Spirits, Ale, or Stout that my chance lies, for know at once that this is a “Temperance Hotel”—now, that once upon a time was a little wayside Public of the usual kind, but has now fallen into other ownership, and has had to mend its ways, and is held by a gardener! who won’t do any business on Sunday at all! not even to Travellers will he open his front door. So Arty and his wife come whenever they can for a little spell, it being the centre of a lovely neighbourhood, utterly rural & quiet, and they persuaded me to come for this week also—and I wish you could see the lovely place, up & down, nowhere flat, with peeps of sea everywhere, and old lovely farms, and foregrounds of mother sheep and lambs—and blackthorn blossoms, Pussy cat willows, Gorse bloom, Primroses, Anemones, Violets, so that you dare hardly walk in some

places—violets as plentiful as daisies. And on the way here walking from Hastings passing Fairlight where Hunt painted his “Strayed Sheep” and lovely little sunlighted sea, staying with old Martineau in the dear long ago! Oh! what a mass of memories one gets to be with Time, and one is proud too, if a little sad, for are not these we know, Heroes. I am sure those two small paintings are Sacred work, and of highest use, and then Oh! when & where have I ever done likewise? but we cannot all be discoverer & leader, some must feebly & weakly imitate or try to imitate the good example—more or less—and alas! it is generally less!

There is another side of the Hero too—as witness the brother described by the brother—DGR. WMR—that is about where we left off, I owing you a letter, so long since. I am ashamed of myself and of the brother above mentioned also—so no more of that.2 Soon after came Leighton’s funeral, where I met Hunt and he was delightful and most characteristic: Gladys very lovely, with him—he wanted me to join him in staying to see Richmond’s paintings in the roof—looking for him in that vast crowd! Gladys privately mentioning to me that tho’ they expected to meet they had not arranged where! and after the ceremony it was directly a moving throng of ordinary crowd. So of course we didn’t meet, and Hunt was not allowed to go up without Richmond, so we went off and lunched, and the persistent Hunt would return to Paul’s to find Richmond again. We returned but could not then be admitted at all, until next service. So finally he gave up, and we walked slowly, he talking most interestingly all thro’ the city meeting crowds always pushing you out of hearing, so often the talk went into stranger[s’] ears, until we got to Sotheby’s where we went in for a spell, then on again as far as the National Gallery where we went in for another spell, then on to the Athenaeum, where we parted. Among the stories he told of meeting a son of old Westmacott the sculptor, 4 who I can just remember lecturing at the Academy. The old man was very very rich & very very fat. They knew Stothard, 5 who was very very otherwise! The son was pleased to tell of Stothard: how his father admired him so much that he actually gave him a commission for THIRTY POUNDS!!! and one pouring wet night when old Westmacott was entertaining friends at dinner, Stothard was announced, and told to come in and appeared in the dining room wet through, with a dripping & drowned umbrella, and picture that had lately been wrapped in newspapers, but was [d]rying to the wet rags together that remained. Westmacott was disconcerted and motioned him to a side table, where Stothard cleared the picture and presented it. Westmacott then told S. that the picture was all that he hoped for & fully bore out the painter’s genius and did him all credit & so on—but then felt it his duty to give him a serious lecture, on his want of respect to rich & fat patrons, and so on, carrying his

1 Robert Braithwaite Martineau (1826-69), minor Pre-Raphaelite painter (see Pre-Raphaelitism, 77.11-13).
2 AH’s reservations about William Rossetti’s edition of his brother’s letters are not clear.
3 Sir William Blake Richmond (1842-1921), R.A., best known for his mosaic work at St. Paul’s.
4 Sir Richard Westmacott (1775-1856); the son may be Richard Westmacott who died in 1872.
picture himself, coming dripping & drowned into a dining room with wet newspapers, rags and umbrella, and altogether making poor Stothard feel the wickedness of being very very poor and very very lean to his heart's core, I should think, and the story did not even end by his being invited to sit down at the table; but I hope that it was finished more cheerfully with old Port. To be continued—interrupted in haste.

(69)

Eastside House—Kew Green
Oct 5 96

Dear Miss Boyd

I hope all this long "no news is good news" with you, but it, that is, the no news, ought to come to an end I think.

I trust that all is well with you and yours belonging, in this very sad year of deaths and disasters. You will know ere you get this of dear Morris's end—so soon and sudden.

I intended to write to tell you of my visit to him about 5 weeks ago, before I went to Pett near Winchelsea for a little sketching, where I ought to have written on many a wet day that I had, but somehow didn't. Then he told me he was so weak he could hardly walk across the room. The lungs had all gone wrong and this was much more serious than the former disease of Diabetes. He had taken a voyage to Norway at the recommendation of his doctor and friend he said and this had been most disastrous; he had evidently been so very unfit for it.

He sat in a chair with his feet upon another, and smoked his pipe cheerfully almost between whiles and looked in face very like himself but thinner. Good colour, very; but coughing and spitting sadly, occasionally vigorous in talk, and very delightful as ever, excepting on the subject of Norway and his doctor, and I can leave you to guess the nature of his language then! I sat with him the hour before the expected visit of a new one a specialist to examine him. His secretary Cockerell 1 had asked me to come then to prevent or take him away from dwelling on the subject, and afterwards I was glad to learn that I came in "just when the Doldrums were beginning."

That doctor's report was serious, "but not expecting immediate danger." I guess he made it as well as he could. It has been terribly rapid it seems to me, but to such a one perhaps all the better at the last, tho' when I saw him he was able to dictate to Cockerell his wonderful prose—all straight off perfect, never needing correction or any change. So I hope that almost to the last he may have been able to keep that wonderful brain at work with good result to himself at the sad time, as well as for others later.

I took tea after with Mrs Morris who then seemed to be keeping up wonderfully well. She said, "He says that his patience is quite gone now! poor dear! he never had any"!

It seems only the other day I saw Millais' funeral with his friend Hunt for a

1 Sir Sydney Carlyle Cockerell (1867-1962), Secretary to William Morris and the KelMSCOTT Press, later Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
Pall bearer¹ and his great palette & brushes & maul stick tied with crepe on top of the beautiful old Pall and coffin.

We are all pretty well here. Emily just back from a two months stay with Agnes, who with her little girl is also well, and good news from Amy too, whose youngest boy was just christened, and his Godfather an old person much wishing to present him with a cow!

(70)

Eastside House
Kew Green
Nov 25-96

Dear Miss Boyd,

Many thanks for your letter. I just wanted that for a fillip. I had intended to write to you again just after my last, for I wanted to tell you about the funeral of dear Morris,² which I went to, and was glad I did, but things came in the way, and lately I have been very seedy and so, as usual!! We are very sorry to hear of your being so unwell. I am sure you were bad, when you admit so much, who never were a grumbler. I think this sad low Autumn time is more depressing than it usually is. I have been wretched—with cough and plegm to an extent that frightens us. It seemed as if it must mean something much more serious. But I too, am like you, beginning to see daylight again; and am able to do a little work in just the middle of the day. My painting room is a very nice little one, but it is at the far end of my garden and while unwell it is far indeed—but I am painting a subject of Audrey again in the Forest of Arden, and I think of calling it "Audrey's Toilet"³—for she stands by a little stream, arranging her red hair, floating about her bare neck—she having cast off her shepherdess smock for a wash: her feet too are bare, her sabots & smock & crook lie beside on the grass, and heather grows about in which two very young goats are having high jinks with her straw hat, one biting its edge and dislocating the rings of plait, the other jumping over it in great appreciation of the game. Audrey with a lazy smile also enjoying it. This necessitated a young live goat, and that is how I got my cold. Did you ever keep one as a pet? They are delightful little creatures in their way, and such awful sitters that they drive one mad at first until one understands them a little. I got mine a month ago from a man at Wandsworth, and having bought him, wondered he did not arrive, so I went over there, and they said he had started with it in a sack! and the creature cried so, that everyone he met insisted that he had a child in the sack, and he had to put it down and show that it was a goat—so he at last got tired of it and went back home with it. Then I made the suggestion of a man with a donkey cart to bring it, and in a day or two—we were at lunch—and there thro' the window we saw a perfectly lovely picture—a coster's donkey barrow—the coster driving and behind him at the back, a round wicker bushel measure, and sitting in it the little kid holding its head up and looking so

¹ Sir John Everett Millais (b. 1829) died on 13 August 1896; he was buried in full pomp in St. Paul's on 20 August.
² William Morris died on 3 October 1896 and was buried at Kelmscott on the 6th.
³ Exhibited R.A. (No. 115) in 1897.
bright, and just like a fine lady in her carriage. When he led it thro' the house to the little house I had arranged for it in the garden, it had a beautiful cord of plaited straw round its neck and a couple of yards length, so gipsy like and pretty, but the little thing is so like a baby—bleats fearfully when I leave it and after a lot of that scolds with a temper that is so very human. It was the taking up this subject with a background I made long ago in Yorkshire that seemed to keep me at home this autumn—and as Agnes had been here in the summer and Emily lately stayed up with her for a couple of months we hardly felt it needful to go up to her—and so I did not get to you. I did not know you were looking for me, or it would have been harder to take up the picture.

But I must tell you about Morris: I joined the train at Paddington, and a special portion was set apart there with a guard's van with open doors on the platform side and closed doors on the other, which [had] a little window in, and on the floor lay the plain unvarnished oaken coffin, with numerous large wreaths

set on either side and at the head—the coffin foot toward us, looking in, and its head under the little window, in the closed doors on the other side—so it made exactly a miniature chapel! There filling the platform in front was a crowd of all sorts of socialist bodies, who came to take a last look and bring their wreaths, not a sign of an undertaker anywhere! Then we started and at Oxford let the main train go on, and our portion waited awhile and then away for Lechlade which seems to be on a branch. I was put with Mr. Tebbs¹ for companion, and while the rain poured in torrents outside he beguiled the time with the usual flow: Then came Lechlade station and the little Van Chapel gave up its tenant, and there was another surprise, one of the pretty hay carts of that district was waiting it: with posts erected at each corner dressed with foliage—and strings across the top hung with vine leaves. The coffin was laid on it, and all the wreaths on it and about it, making one of the prettiest sights, and like a page out of one of his own stories—the rain falling always all the time. Then I was put with Walter Crane²

¹ H. Virtue Tebbs, Pre-Raphaelite collector.
² Walter Crane (1845-1915), artist and illustrator, President of the Art Worker's Guild and Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society; associated with Morris in the Socialist League, and Principal of the Royal College of Art, South Kensington (1898).
in a carriage for the three miles to the Church and I felt myself lucky. I have a sincere respect and great liking for him. There were many following—you will have seen the list—Jones & his wife, Mrs Morris and the daughters, Richmond and his wife, Mr Ellis, & Cockerell, Morris’s secretary, and most of his people belonging to the Shop, and the Works, and the Press. Jones & Mrs Morris in chief place at church & grave and in train both families together. Mrs Morris very broken down, May bearing up well, but poor Jennie weeping piteously. Kelmscott church is very lovely, the simplest barn form with a tiny open arch belfry at one end very very rural on a flat damp land, with hills in view across the river, but we did not see the house—it lay beyond the church and only the families of Morris & Jones went there. Mr Ellis had arranged all very beautifully for us—to lunch at the Inn at Lechlade & so fill up the hours before the return train late in the afternoon. I forgot to say that T. Armstrong was there too. Mrs Morris & May have gone to Egypt with the Blunts for the winter I believe, and so ends that chapter; not that there ends the work that Morris has done, I believe. It was delightful to hear from Mr Ellis how he tried to preserve and make others preserve the old English beauties of Kelmscott, where the barns are thatched and the farms stone roofed with slabs of stone like immense tiles. Nowadays when roofs need renewing they substitute slates, & Morris grieved and begged and finally did their roofs for them, thatch or stone at his own cost! did the old church stone & lead, thus; so at last when roofs needed renewal he was looked to for them as a matter of course.

Poor Mrs Scott. I fear it is very like her to try & do without proper food taking. I hope you are more responsive to Dr Valentine’s wishes....
P.S. I hope you are glad that Poynter is the President—I am.

(71)

Eastside House
Kew Green
Dec 2-96

Dear Miss Boyd

Thanks for your letter. I quite agree to all you say of Wm Morris indeed, and so thankful to have had the privilege of knowing him. I think him quite alone in history for qualities so unique and sterling, so above all true to instincts held fast through life; and how short his life seems now. The gap he leaves will not be filled up for us—and how few there seem left to us now. Only the

1 Frederic S. Ellis (1830-1901), publisher of Rossetti, Morris, and other Pre-Raphaelites; worked closely with Morris on the Kelmscott Press publications.
2 Thomas Armstrong (1832-1911), artist and Art Director, South Kensington Museum (1881-98).
3 Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840-1922), politician and minor poet, close friend of Morris, who published Blunt’s poems, The Love Lyrics and Songs of Proteus (1892), as the third volume from the Kelmscott Press.
other day what I have heard you call the "Round Table" did seem full, and
now!!

Yes, I had been told about Mr Mackail,¹ who will have all Jones's help and
therefore, the best authority.

I believe the Kelmscott Press is to come to an end when the present list is
complete. Mr Emery Walker,² a great help and advisor, & who was a sort of
right hand in all that work to Morris, and indeed was asked by him to accept a
partnership in it—(so like Morris, the generous recognition of help!)—told me
that Morris offered it at the end to himself & Cockerell to continue if they wished,
and, emulating the noble chief, these declined.

Thanks for the pretty picture you pen-painted from your window of the gull's
visit in the sunny morning.

Now, too, you will see that Patmore has gone.³ You will remember his dear
little "Seasons" in the first No. of the Germ—

"The crocus in the shrewd March morn"

I remember him coming to Oxford while we were painting at the Union—and
Morris being prevailed upon to read his early Froissart sort of poems to him.
Two such different ones, but both genuine poets too I think. Goodbye. Kindest
remembrances to Margaret.

1897

As a correspondent Hughes became increasingly remiss with
the passing years, and Alice Boyd's letter written in late December
of 1896 went unanswered until Good Friday (16 April) of the
following year. But his single letter of 1897 (72) is second only
to that describing Morris's funeral among the collection of his
letters to her:

Royal Oak, Pett
n[r.] Hastings
Good + Friday, 97

Dear Miss Boyd—

Can you forgive so bad a correspondent once again? I have been owing you
a letter so long, and always about to write too! but have been dismal sometimes
quite unfit and then so very busy with the two pictures I got somehow more or
less fit to go to the R.A., and then so many things had to be seen to immediately
after that—and—here I am, recruiting for a very few days, to begin the S.K.
Exams on the 21st. I did partly delay lately for the better letter I could send
after attending & seeing friends at a grand dinner Hunt kindly asked me to, on his
birthday on the 2nd and then Jones to a dinner to meet the Mackails on the 9th
and to see his picture on Sunday the 11th. You will perceive I have been very
grand, and going considerably into Society! which came very pleasantly after the

¹ J. W. Mackail, son-in-law of Burne-Jones, author of the official Life of
² (1851-1933), designer and process engraver, friend of Morris.
³ Coventry Patmore died 26 November 1896.
hard work on the pictures, and now in proper order. I am taking my repose in the
country after the dissipations thereof—blasé!

Well—first I will tell you what I have been doing: "Audrey’s Toilet" a
pretty good scene—with a river, or stream rather, running through it, where she
has had a wash and is now doing up her hair, while young goats caper by, one of
them eating her straw hat; heather or ling I believe rather is growing about, and a
foxglove nods. The other I call "Curfew"* and with, for scenery, a river too,

\[ \text{Diagram:} \]

out, now I wish you could have
seen the dinner at Hunsdon!!!!!

\[ \text{Diagram:} \]

with some convent buildings the other side, and on this side a young girl in pretty
Flemish sort of dress, passing & striking the string of a lute to the note of the
Curfew bell, which may be supposed to sound from a church tower seen in the
distance over trees; a little beyond her, in front of her, as she goes, the back view
of lovers; he with cross bow at back, is just helping to cloak the lady as the
evening comes on—between these groups you see a couple of nuns pushing across
in a boat to the water gate of the convent, and a raven at corner behind the young
girl is just going out of the picture leaving the just indicated bones of a sheep
among brambles. This sounds ghastly to write but is not so in the picture. I

1 For Audrey's Toilet see Letter 70. Curfew is unknown.
have also done a rather pretty head of a girl taking off a wreath with evening sky behind and a little belfry peeping over trees—with lilies beside her, and so much for them. I have a tiny little landscape taken for the New Gallery also—and that is my list of work since last S.K.

But, how I wish you could have seen the dinner at Hunts!!!!!! You will see it was on the lines of a very stately feast—only, with all the stiffness absent—beautifully friendly, and all beautifully done. Hunt and wife so charming, and everybody so natural and quietly gay. Jones was almost Bohemian—it was lovely, when Lushington was telling me he had come up from Bath, to hear him "Bath! and did you meet Mr Pickwick there?" and the Judge looked almost hurt! Then at dinner the chairs had been borrowed all over the house I think for mine was very low, and Kitty has gone on growing since she got married, and Jones across the table said "Uge! I always thought you were rather a tall man—are you in a very low chair or is it that you are now dwarfed and shrunken with extreme old age? Then he remembered with such nice pathetic kind of pleasure the old days, and I told him how I first saw him. Morris bought "April Love", and sent BJ with a letter containing the cheque, and I was out, but returning just as he was a few doors away he stopped me, and said he "thought I must be Hughes, because Rossetti had described me as a little like Morris, so he knew me." And he said "only to think of his having a cheque entrusted to him and that it actually passed thro' his hands to its proper destination. How different it would be now!!!

It was awfully sweet to hear his pleasure in recollecting the early days and doings and Rossetti's beautiful things, and how "that was the best time of all times," and I felt more affection for him than I ever quite did before I think. And how that "that was Rossetti's nicest time when he was best and his work best too!" Sometimes I have fancied Jones a little cold, but I don't mean to anymore. I think we all improve a little at last, don't you? I seem to find most old friends come back to more naturalness & simplicity. I do wish you had been there. I never saw Hunt so loveable and simply sweet—altho' older, he seems wonderfully well; both do. After the ladies left the dining room Hunt asked all to draw up at his end so Jones & Richmond came next¹ him—and then Godfrey Lushington² with the characteristic modesty & sweetness of the family begged me "as a personal favour" to sit by Hunt on his side; so there were four painters all

¹ Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Sir William Blake Richmond.
² Son of Judge Vernon Lushington.
together at top—and the others all below! And then Hunt told nice stories, and everyone smoked, and after most delightful music & last, Susan's fiddle, so late, that I lost all last trains, and had to walk home to Kew!

(Such a wet night & morning—so goes my letter.)

It was very nice to see Margaret the other day and hear of you and all about Penkill. It will I guess be looking very lovely now and your garden a world of interest and the woods a garden world beside. Hereabout is a wonder of primroses, anemones, violets, and Blackthorn—and lambs & mothers. Lushington who knows this neighbourhood, too, calls it his idea of Paradise. So as I think we can hardly have a better authority, I suppose I ought to feel satisfied, and we could not have it, if the rain did not come too. But I very much wanted to make one or two little landscapes and I fear my chance is small. We thought Margaret looking very well and taller or straighter or something, which we attributed to the cycling. I should think it must be good for developing limbs and getting new parts into use, perfecting the skeleton so to speak. I do not mean to infer that the subject in question impresses one in that connection, only, that the frame cannot be so well described in any other way!

But I must tell you of Burne-Jones's picture, from The Romance of the Rose. It is a design he made long ago. I have seen it in pencil at the Grosvenor or New Gallery.

The pilgrim is very weary indeed, and the angel with, I think, inverted torch is pulling him out of the brambles, and a cloud of little birds are about his head—

1 Love and the Pilgrim.
and one or two sit on the little rocks at foot and one or two on bramble tops, as if to welcome pilgrim. The landscape is chiefly dead dried grass on a gentle hill top, with a faint worn path disappearing, and distant hills blue shade, bounds it all. So you see it holds a most charming meaning, and in that respect he has never done anything lovelier. It is however very large, and the drawing of the figures seems unnecessarily gothic, like an enlargement exactly from a design made without life studies almost, which makes it to me a little disappointing on so large a scale; but the landscape is quite satisfactory—the withered grass so true, and little pool of water and distant hills—and the birdies.

Mackail & wife and little boy very very nice.¹ Jones & I had to talk over old times, to saturate Mackail with, for the purpose of writing Morris' life, you see—altho' no dear old jokes are to be allowed, such as used to occur when all were working at those Oxford pictures. Dr. Acland² you know then took all under his wing and forced his kindness upon all in a most distracting way, especially by dinner parties in the evening, when dress clothes were few, and one suit of mine received honour to which it had not been born. Jones described to me Maurice³ getting my trousers on with difficulty, being too small in circumference while equally too long! Then he said, "Uge, do you remember dining at Aclands one evening when you went to sleep?" I said, No—because when I sleep I snore, and I should have been turned out—but he said "I was there". It is quite untrue I am sure. Then he said, "do you remember once when Acland bothered Morris & me dreadfully and we promised to go, and then Morris after all would not," and so Jones went and made some hastily invented excuses for M, saying he was not feeling well—forgetting Acland was a Doctor! who immediately put on his hat and left Jones to run round to the lodgings and find Morris & Charley Faulkner⁴ playing cards and as well as possible and quite innocent of what Jones had said to excuse him altogether away! And how Rossetti once went in beautiful evening dress to some other stately feast, and only late in the evening feeling for his handkerchief discovered no pocket, and looking down, many smears of paint, having his trousers & waistcoat correct enough, but in the dark had slipped again his old painting coat on, and how magnificently and like a prince, he passed it off! And how another evening they had accepted to go and dreaded it so much—that they looked out trains and at the last moment sent word that they had to go suddenly to town; and Jones & Rossetti actually went on to Paddington & slept there, only to get back by first train in the morning.

Jones says that Swinburne has been to see him lately—that he has lost his hair! and is quite deaf! That he is very sweet and reverent with old persons and young children, but does not remember or being deaf is rather wild in talk before others, does not know that he speaks aloud sometimes matter that should be

¹ Margaret, the wife of J. W. Mackail (see Letter 71, n.), was the daughter of Burne-Jones and a frequent model in his paintings.
² Sir Henry Wentworth Acland (1815-1900), physician.
³ AH is almost certainly punning on Morris's name. This incident and others in this letter were recounted in Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones (1904), i. chap. 9 passim (see especially pp. 166-7).
⁴ Charles Joseph Faulkner (1834-1924), mathematician; contributed to the Oxford & Cambridge Magazine (1856).
whispered rather! and that he does not look nice—the bald head being red & bad colour. How very different, to imagine him without that bush of hair!

What a lovely house the Grange1 is, and how full of lovely things. Jones himself seems very well indeed, but is not able he says to walk much since an illness two years ago; and he groans a little in getting up from his very low easy chair or sofa, as if the legs were weak at the knees, or somewhere; is entirely cheerful on the subject of Morris, and not at all broken up by it I should say—with the deepest sense of Morris's life's work. I hope the book will be good. You will see poor Boyce's lovely things are to be sold at Christie's this summer!2

Of ourselves we are keeping quietly well. The wife goes nowhere, but keeps well, and we expect Agnes & her girl up soon for two or three weeks I hope. And now dear Miss Boyd you must send us news of yourself, and I hope it is all well with you, as it can be, and with love from all of us believe me,

Affectly yrs,
Arthur Hughes

All was indeed as well with Miss Boyd as it could be: she died a week before Arthur Hughes's last and most charming letter was written—on 9 April 1897.

1 49 North End Road, West Kensington.
2 George Price Boyce's sale was held at Christie's, 1-3 July 1897.
APPENDIX

THE PENKILL LETTERS OF ARTHUR HUGHES: A CENSUS

1. Letters to William Bell Scott

<table>
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¹ Letters 5 and 68-72 belong to Miss E. M. Courtney-Boyd of Penkill Castle; the remainder are in the Special Collections of the Library of the University of British Columbia.

² Figures in addition to page numbers indicate the number of illustrations in a given letter. A plus mark only (+) shows a design.

³ A line of ˣ 's between letters indicates a visit by Arthur Hughes to Penkill between these dates. His six recorded visits are: 11 September-8 October 1886, 7-21 October 1887, 27 November-1 December 1890, 9 November-7 December 1891, 9 November-7 December 1893, 15-29 November 1894.
II. Letters to Alice Boyd

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¹ Bracketed dates are conjectural.
² Salutations throughout in Hughes’s letters to Scott read simply “My Dear Scotus”, except those starred, which read “Dearly Beloved Scotus”. Salutations in his letters to Alice Boyd read consistently either “Dear Miss Boyd” or “My Dear Miss Boyd”.
³ Dates of receipt of Hughes’s letters are frequently indicated in Alice Boyd’s day-diaries; when they are not recorded, a bracketed date is given, allowing two days for delivery between London and Penkill.
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¹ Received at Oxford where Alice Boyd was visiting.
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1893

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1 'A' letters, indicated by an 'M' in the Pages-column are missing from the collection; in every case their existence is verified by a receipt record in the day-diaries.

2 Written for AB by James Arlosh.
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1896

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Good Friday [16 Apr.–17 Apr.]

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¹ This letter has been published in my article "William Morris's Funeral", *Journal of the William Morris Society*, ii, No. 1 (Spring, 1966), 28-35. The block for the illustration was generously provided by the William Morris Society Honorary Secretary, Mr. R. H. C. Briggs.

² A three-page note from Mrs. Arthur Hughes was included with this letter and is extant in the collection.

³ Written more than a week after Alice Boyd's death (9 April 1897), this letter was presumably received, read, and replied to by Margaret Courtney, but there is no record of it in her day-diary for 1897.
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