WHILE 1872 was a crisis year for William Bell Scott only insofar as it involved him intimately in the psychological and physical break-down of his closest friend, 1873 was a decided turning point in his life. In this year Scott launched a new career as art inspector and examiner with the South Kensington Museum, exhibited his last picture in London, and redirected his creative energies towards both his "ready writing" and his poetry. Over the next decade he published two volumes of poems, three Christmas art books, an important monograph, with etchings, on Blake and another in the Holbein Society series on Albrecht Altdorfer, and edited, perhaps inspired by the success of W. M. Rossetti’s Popular Poets series, the poetical works of L. E. L., Keats, Byron, Shelley, and Coleridge. Though these might be construed as the "bread and butter" years of Scott’s retirement, they were also, because of his indefatigable devotion to work, among his most productive and most active. Besides the literary occupations already catalogued, Scott continued in these years his artistic pursuits—he even submitted, albeit unsuccessfully, to the Royal Academy in 1877. In 1883, at the age of 72, he demonstrated his persistent artistic versatility by designing and supervising the building of the Great Hall at Penkill, an addition which not only enhanced the little castle but which also provided, during his final retreat there in the last five

1 The first part of this article appeared in the preceding number of the Bulletin.
2 Between 1873 and 1879, WBS was an Occasional Inspector at South Kensington; between 1880 and 1885 he was an Examiner.
3 Graves gives 1873 as the last date WBS exhibited in London; the specific picture is unidentified, as is the Nativity picture mentioned below.
4 The most complete bibliography of WBS is in Vera Walker’s unpublished Durham dissertation, “A Biographical and Critical Study of WBS” (1952); see also, W. E. Fredeman’s Bibliocritical Study (Section 56).
5 The picture was The Death of the Sea King.
years of his life, a comfortable living area on the ground floor suitable to house his and Alice's many pictures. In addition, he maintained during this time an active social life, widening the circle of his friends and acquaintances with younger poets and artists who were attracted to the Bellevue coterie. Scott's energy precluded his ever becoming "an old man, in a dry climate, waiting for rain"; to the contrary, he seems in old age to have discovered dimensions that, because of his particular personality, were inaccessible to him in youth.

1873

Scott's first two letters of this year were written to Alice at Leamington, where she had gone to be with her sisters, Emma and Catherine, following the death of her stepfather Henry Courtney on 18 February. As soon as Scott's South Kensington duties were completed, he, William Rossetti, Letitia, Alice and Lucy Madox Brown embarked on a continental tour. They spent most of the six weeks (26 May–6 July) in Italy, where, in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome, Scott painted the parallel pictures of the graves of Keats and Shelley that Alice presented to the Ashmolean Museum in 1893. The day after Alice's departure for Penkill on 10 July, Scott sent her a "grand piece of news" pertaining to their trip which had come "through Christina round about by way of Kelmscott":

She writes to thank Letitia for the buttons and adds "You know the great news Mamma and I are full of this morning? News full of hope and happiness for two dear persons." This has thrown Letitia into a state of rile of the most violent sort. She says she shall write that she can't imagine who the two dear persons can be, etc. but I suppose she will cool down by tomorrow morning. You see how my anticipations and surmises about old Brown's intentions in sending Lucy with us have been exactly fulfilled. The investment has been a good one. The old fox is really an able diplomat. The last ruse of going out of town and so leaving Lucy almost alone on returning home completed the trick.  

1 For WBS' influence on the younger literary men, see Ernest Rhys, Everyman Remembers (New York, 1931), pp. 10–14.

2 WMR's marriage to Lucy Brown was an embarrassment, for, while WBS seems generally to have liked and admired Brown, as he told Alice (18 June 1872): "I can't go among Brown's womankind." After the marriage, he confessed that William "somehow seems to me to have lost caste by his connection with the Brown Stock" (20 May 1874). WBS clearly thought that without
Scott stayed on in London until the 24th, Alice's birthday, to finish the etching of his Nativity picture. On the 18th he reported an amusing letter G. P. Boyce, who "came in and stayed till near 11 o'clock", had received from Kitty Howell "in consequence of having declined to go there":

It seems Tebbs bought a drawing from Howell as a production of Jones', which turns out to be by little Murray, and T. was so riled he left it at Howell's door with his compliments. The consequence has been that Boyce on hearing this and on being invited by Howell, wrote to the latter that he declined to visit him; Mrs. Howell's letter is a reply exceedingly satirical and all in praise of her husband.¹

Both Edmund Gosse, for whose On Viol and Flute Scott was designing the cover and title-page illustration, and Henry Wallis, whose portrait Scott painted in September, were week-long being aware of it WMR had been trapped by FMB, though, of course, the father was vehement in his denial:

I found old Brown take a very high ground about Lucy being added to our party. He had no idea of William assuming the position of a Lover, of course not. However I did not let him carry away the notion that I was so green as to believe that. Emma could not take any toddy-drinks, nothing but wine and water. (18 July 1873)

To Leathart, WBS sent "a lovely poem I took down from recitation the other night. It is tremendously like WMR":

Monody
I can no more defer it,
Conclusions I must tell,—
She's not devoid of merit,
And I love her pretty well.

My name begins with W,
And hers begins with L,—
With details I'll not trouble you,
But I love her pretty well.

Perhaps to wait were better,
A thought I would repel.
Indeed it makes no matter,
And I love her pretty well.

¹ Mrs. Angeli, in Pre-Raphaelite Twilight (London, 1954) says, "It is difficult to understand what a 'Burne-Jones Murray' can have been"; she then suggests accurately, as WBS's letter signifies, that it "could appropriately indicate a copy of a Burne-Jones by Mr. Murray, or a painting by Murray in the style of Burne-Jones" (p. 70). See Janet Camp Troxell, "A Burne-Jones Murray", TLS, 18 June 1954, p. 393, on a similar letter from WBS to DGR.
guests at Penkill over the summer. By 10 October, Scott was back in London, busily engaged on a variety of projects: the examination for Routledge of an unpublished novel, *Parisanias*, from the literary remains of Lord Lytton\(^1\); seeing to the publication details of Alice's illustrated children's book, *Robin's Yule Song*\(^2\); preparing his poetical editions for the Christmas trade; reading for his *Athenaeum* review the latest novel of Mrs. Hunt\(^3\); fitting to their screens the last of his South Kensington cartoons; completing the introduction to his collected poems "for publication some day"; and, in anticipation of Alice's return to Bellevue, "trying to add to the snugness of the snuggery".

**1874**

Bellevue House in 1874 was a hive of social activity. Among those entertained during the season while Alice was still in town were Allingham, Appleton, the editor of the *Athenaeum*, Beavington-Atkinson, Barbara Bodichon, Boyce, Browning, Buxton Forman, Gosse, George Hake—who came to ask Scott to call on Rossetti who had returned to Cheyne Walk—Arthur Hughes, W. J. Linton, over from America, Morris, the newest "Pre-Raphaelite singing birds"—O'Shaughnessy, Marzials, and Payne—D. G. Rossetti, G. A. Simcox, Tom Taylor, and Henry Wallis, the painter of *The Death of Chatterton*. In turn, the Bellevue group were fêted by the Beavington-Atkinsons, Boyce, the Burne-Joneses, Marzials, and the Alma-Tademas, with whom Scott had become extremely close and whom he and Alice entertained at Penkill, for almost the whole of the month of September. The major social events of the year, however, were the marriage of W. M. Rossetti and Lucy Madox Brown on 30 March and the opening of the Embankment on 9 May.

Scott began his duties as examiner at South Kensington on

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1 In his letters WBS refers to the title as *Pausanias*, but both the posthumous and fragmentary nature of the work suggest that it is *Parisanias the Spartan*, edited by the novelist's son in 1876.

2 An early title; published in 1874 as *Robin's Christmas Story*.

20 April and would have finished on 15 May had he not been given a regular appointment as Occasional Inspector:

In the first place I must tell you it is settled that my work at S. K. is to continue till the end of the inspection. Tomorrow (Friday) you remember was to have been my last day, but yesterday, when I informed the office people they were surprised the end of my available time had come so soon, and when I told Hart and Barwell they determined that they would protest, and immediately those gentlemen rushed up to the Secretary’s office, and it was determined that Messrs. Redgrave and McLeod armed with a protest from Hart and Redgrave, should today go to the Treasury and urge the necessity of my continuance. This was accordingly done, and the suspense finished up about 3 o’clock by Redgrave coming in upon us in a state of excitement and telling us the Department had gained the day, whereupon Hart led the cheering with his hat in his hand. This will of course delay my advent at Penkill, but can’t be helped, everyone acted in so friendly a way, and it was evident “the Office” wished to persevere in the course they had adopted, although just lately they seemed inclined to succumb.

(14 May)

Besides this employment, Scott was kept fully occupied reviewing, revising for Ellen Epps her manuscript biography of her husband as well as his own *Half-Hour Lectures*, engraving the plates for Longman’s illustrated Bible, and writing an introduction for Routledge’s edition of Shakespeare.

As already noted, Alma-Tadema and his wife spent three weeks at Penkill in September, during which Scott undertook to instruct the painter in the art of engraving. When they departed, Scott and Alice accompanied them to Edinburgh and saw them on their way to Newcastle where they were to visit the Leatharts. While they were in Newcastle, a dynamite barge exploded on the Regent’s Canal opposite Townsend house, shattering the edifice that, as Helen Zimmern said, Tadema had transformed into a work of art.1 Tadema’s letter to “My Dear Bubble-You-D” (AN, ii. 207–8) is reported to Alice as being like a man with his brain turned upside down, and really it is a frightful spectacle — that presented by his home. You see the daylight above you in the upper bedrooms and every door, many of them were mahogany, was split [or] torn entirely off the hinges and door post and thrown against the wall opposite. (10 Oct.)

On 18 October Scott saw Rossetti at Cheyne Walk:

About Gabriel. I found him sitting by the fire (ever since two days after I arrived the weather has been almost always bright and so warm I have had no

1 “Alma Tadema’s Home and Studio”, in *Fifty Years of Art* (London, 1900), pp. 261–3; reprinted from *Art Annual* 1886.
fire—sometimes too warm without one) with Fanny, George Hake and Dunn. He seemed to have little to say and to be in rather low spirits. Said he would not come to visit me—that he had only once gone to see his mother because she was ill, and that he had never once been anywhere else, even to Brown, since coming up to London. He had no objection to see friends if they came to him, but that none had come. However after a while we talked in a little more lively key. He has got 4 or 5 finished pictures collected to show, so that he must expect some people to come. But about ½ past 10 the servant came in, I thought to bring the toddy glasses, but it was to say the cab was at the door, whereon she gave him his boots. I looked at him and he said "I must go out, Scott, I go out every night at this time and we walk till 12." So I got up and clapped on my hat, "remember I can't come to see you" he said again—when Fanny hollowed out "Yes, he shall, though," and off I came. He asked all about Penkill and you, and the poems and Tadema, but altogether there was no remuneration in going. He will not read even the paper, but paints very constantly. I will look in again and report to you. Possibly William will have something to say about him, if he answers the invitation Letitia has sent to him and Lucy to dine here on Tuesday week.

Owing to the prolonged and increasingly apparent seriousness of Oliver Madox Brown's illness, William came alone to dinner at Bellevue on the 21st, present at which were also Gosse and the new editor of the Examiner, William Minto, the eventual editor of Scott's memoirs. William, Scott informed Alice, "had no light to throw on Gabriel's present state—had not seen him indeed for two months—so absorbed is he by the Brownian theory" (21 Oct.), a reference probably to Brown's penchant for mystery and intrigue and for "oracle working" to which Scott alludes frequently in his letters.

In most of his letters, Scott urges Alice to write regularly even if she has no more than domestic trivia to communicate; in fact, he is far less assiduous as a correspondent—he wrote only 17 to her 30 letters in 1874—but his letters are filled with gobbets of news and gossip to tempt her back to London earlier than planned. He writes, for example, of the publication of her Robin's Christmas Story, three copies of which he picked up from Routledge; of Billy Waggles' uxorious dedication of his Poems by Blake to Lucy; of Longman's acceptance on his own terms of his illustrated poems, "though a book of poems by a poet who has no fame, only a private reputation . . . is a very difficult matter to get a publisher to risk in"; of a near disaster at Bellevue when one of the hanging lamps in the back library melted through its bracket
and was luckily discovered, "flaring away, the funnel gone and the paraffin gradually leaking out", by a servant; and, ever affectionate, of new cupid decorations purchased for the snuggery, "which is no snuggery till you come" (31 Oct.).

Recurring in the letters of the autumn are amusing anecdotes describing Gosse's courtship of Nellie Epps and of his rivalry with Thornycroft,¹ the "red haired sculptor", for her hand. "He is really a fool in this matter and is expecting it can be done like a matter of business", Scott wrote when Gosse refused his admonitions to exercise patience and restraint (5 Nov.). Nellie appears to have kept Gosse on tenterhooks for several weeks, but in the end, though it was rumoured that she "wants to keep aloof in case Tissot may be to be had" (26 Nov.), "that young person succumbed, and all is pleasant as a marriage bell" (2 Dec.).

The autumn was upset by more than marriage bells, however, for on 5 November Oliver Madox Brown also succumbed, but to the black poisoning that had infected his body. Scott, who had been sceptical of the seriousness of Nolly's illness, repented his callousness when he informed her of the young Brown's death:

I write you just a few lines to tell you the sad, and to me quite unexpected, ending of poor Nolly's illness. He died on Thursday night or Friday morning. Now I confess I feel a little contrite for not having believed in his illness so much as to stop my making a joke of old Brown's cardboard bulletin. Lucy wrote a little note of intimation, and I at once sent old Madox a letter of sympathy. (8 Nov.)²

Swinburne, who figures prominently in the letters, makes only two appearances in 1874, once "reading long pieces of an essay about everything and everybody... praising Browning to the skies! [and] venting sundry furious tirades against Robert Buchanan" (8 Nov.). But Scott's most interesting letter concerns P. P. Marshall and his role in the dissolution of the Firm:

I must tell you a funny history of P. P. Marshall. The other morning I was up rather soon, and was called down at ½ past 8 to a gentleman. This was P.P.—Pierre le Maréchal indeed, who was astounded at the house and its belongings,

¹ Probably Hamo Thornycroft (1850-1925), whose friendship with Gosse is remarked in DNB.
breakfasted with us and took a few cups of tea, a quantity of bacon and two eggs with no bread and walked off, telling me he was staying with Rossetti. He said he had taken a grand place in the city in connection with "the firm", and would sell my Eve—in fact wanted to take it at once. All this was a little mysterious to me, and Gabriel explained the mystery by telling me P.P. has lost his appointment at Tottenham and is always drunk. He came to the door in a cab with a tremendous ring when they had just returned at 12 o'clock at night, and in a frightful state of drink. Gabriel got him to bed, and in the morning he had come out to me, but returned to Cheyne Walk drunk, saying I had given him a glass! Is it not sad? He has started without consulting Morris as an agent or city branch of "the Shop", so now Morris has to dissolve the whole affair and start again on his own basis. It seems there was a division in the camp, Jones, Webb, and D.G.R. and Faulkner, who is a tutor at Oxford, are all partners, and all give up their shares to Morris, but Ford Madox B. and P.P.M. stand out as partners, and the plant, etc., will have to be sold or estimated and divided. I fear all this indicates difficulties to that amiable pig Morris, his fortune being in mines and having been declining for some time back.¹ (31 Oct.)

1875

Scott's Poems: Ballads, Studies from Nature, Sonnets, Etc. was issued on the first of May, and many of the letters of this year concern the reception of that volume. To Alice on 8 June he summarized the early reviews:

There have been some reviews of the book but none of any intrinsic importance; they are all shallow and outside performances, which you can sustain your life without seeing, and which, when you do so, will not enrich it much, nor change your opinion of the book. Our review reads very prettily and is really a right expression of the writer's feeling, it must have been done by an able critic, although the portion dealing with the poetry is only a few lines at the end!²

The notice that most interested him was William Michael's article that he was writing for Macmillan's.³ In a pair of letters written from Penkill in September, Scott raised questions about the review:

¹ WMR took a different position regarding the break-up of the Firm. In his unpublished diary for 20 October 1877, noting the fire at the works, he says: "Have almost lost sight of M. since late in 1874, when he and Brown had a serious difference (M, in my opinion, being essentially in the wrong) about the affairs of the Firm, ending in the retirement of B with a certain sum of money to close accounts" (AP).

² The review appeared in the Art Journal in June 1878, p. 192; WBS' emphasis on "our review" is not clear.

Is there any news too about your article for the Mag. wherein I am to figure? Knight wrote me he had sent to a new thing called "Concordia" a paper on my poetry and that of Dobell. I thanked him very warmly, but asked him why he had bracketted me with the least sane poet that ever lived perhaps, remarking that the *Spectator* had done so with the intention of insult, as the article was headed "A Couple of Minor Poets", and as he in a friendly spirit was doing the same, I feared that after all my self-congratulation on being the most sane and even Catholic thinker in verse, there must be something in my poetry upside down in some sense, being thus joined with a writer who seemed always to stand on his head when he took the pen in hand.¹ (4 Sept.)

To William Rossetti’s response that he was to be the focus of an article treating modern British poetry, Scott replied on 21 September:

Many thanks for your note and for its intelligence about the article. It will, no doubt, be a most interesting paper. I have often thought over the subject, and have found it grow under one’s consideration. There is one writer who played a most important part for a number of years, Elliott the Corn Law poet. I hope you have not missed him out. I remember Chautauquirand publishing a series of lectures on the English Literature of the day and saying we had only one influential poet, and he was a working smith who wrote radical songs about cheap bread, or something to that effect. Could you not include the article in your projected volume of Biographical notices of the poets of the great time? It [would] be an appropriate conclusion, would it not? Doing so would introduce me into your book, which would be very agreeable.²

On 3 June, Scott sent Alice news of Rossetti’s inhospitality to Gosse, who, "in his wide awake way, making the most of his opportunities, proposed to go along to D.G.R. and try if he would show Nellie his pictures". Rossetti refused to see them without an appointment, even though Scott had given the couple a letter of introduction. "Gosse describes the interview [with George Hake] as very offensive—the result was they tumbled in to me again humbled and repentent". On the 24th, he described his own visit the previous day, when he "found [him] entirely alone in the house; he had sent all the servants (cook and 2 maids) off in a tiff, and now he has a char-woman who leaves at night. He seems himself as usual perfectly well. I am glad I went to see him before leaving".

¹ Besides the reviews in *Macmillans* and the *Spectator*, notices also appeared in the *Athenaeum*, the *London Quarterly Review*, and *Tinsley’s*.

² The reference is to WMR’s collective biographies for the Moxon Popular Poets, *Lives of Famous Poets* (London, 1876), in which it would have been totally inappropriate to print a notice of WBS.
Scott’s letter of [17] June, detailing a single day’s events gives a fair indication both of the range of his interests and the enormity of his energies:

Today I had a holiday at S.K. and polished off an immense number of things. L. and I started by the bus, and went 1st to Deschamps’ Exhibition and saw the large number of pictures by Millet, also Laura’s *Avant la Banquet* which is a really splendid mass of still life, glasses ranged in rows, fruit, flowers and bronze candle stick, etc., piled up to top edge, and Nellie’s *Le Cahier Bleu*, a young woman lying on a sofa reading. 2. Then over to the Burlington. You remember my Girtin drawing the Chelsea Reach—called the *White House at Chelsea*. Well another exactly the same appeared there, so I took mine in. Today I called to see how they compared together and found the other had been carried off by its proprietor! 3. Then to buy a marriage gift for Nellie, we at last determined on a tea set, pot, sugar basin and cream jug, a very pretty set which cost £20, then parted from Letitia. 4. Then to McLean’s Gallery in the Haymarket at the request of young Lawson to see his picture now exhibiting there. 5. To the private entrance, National Gallery, with a note from Burton to see a new picture he had bought in Italy—a portrait, early Lomberg, very good. 6. Then lunched in shop in Strand. 7. Then walked (calling at Fawcett’s) to B.M. and there saw the new acquisitions, and made drawings of the corners of the Marc Antonio print you remember me cobbling up. Then by bus down to Charing X and home by steamer.

Shortly after his return to London, Scott visited Franz Hueffer¹ for whom he seems to have had a genuine affection:

I made out my visit to Hüiffer yesterday, although it drizzled, because I had written two days before. I went by the omnibus that passes here at 1/2 past 12, and they had a lunch like a dinner. Katey, who is well on in the family way and “Emma” being the party. Hüffer was very glad and pleased by my coming and tried to make everything Colour de Roze, but the single glass of sherry I took was a warning and I then asked for a nip of brandy, because “I had done that at Penkill” Brown—or rather Foord, Emma confided to me at parting is busy “with an etching”—a portrait you know—for the book you know—by which I understood a portrait of Nolly for the forth coming “Posthumous Works of Oliver Madox-Brown”. As we went along Hüffer explained that Brown was making a *good* portrait out of a photograph which was a very poor one, unsatisfactory to them all. So we shall have Brown making an ideal Nolly on steel, a work I expect to occupy him for a month. I heard at same time that Gabriel has declared Lucy’s baby to be like Shakspeare—and it is whispered that W.M.R. is going to get the Academy to put in a paragraph, to say that the infant granddaughter of Ford Madox Brown has been said by D.G.R. to be so and so! I hear also this of D.G. He has made Morris pay him out of the business the same as Brown and P. P. Marshall, and has settled the money on Janey!!! What to say to this both on his account and on Morris’ I don’t know. He left Cheyne Walk 8 days ago for the sea-side, where he remains a month and perhaps 2, but as it is a

¹ Franz Hueffer married Cathy, the youngest daughter of FMB.
furnished house to wh. the people return after that time he can't stop longer. (28 Oct.)

A week later he describes seeing Solomon Hart at Ford Madox Brown's:

My visit to Fitzroy Sqre was to see old Hart, who has been very ill, as Madox-B. informed me the other evening when he and Hueffer came. I found Solomon really sadly pulled down, and the old fellow in a great duffell wrapper and a tasselled turban on his head looked like a venerable rabbi. What is truly the matter I dared not enquire and he did not say, but gave an interesting account of his attack wh. began in the country. "I went to the country", he said, "not because I wished to go, but because every body officiously always says to me—'ah, you never go out of town'—Well, I did not wish to go out of town, but I went, and there I was laid up at my friend's house for a month." He sent his most kind remembrances to you. (5 Nov.)

Over the autumn, Scott reworked the pictures done at Penkill in the summer, including the two "Pudge" portraits of Alice and himself—the "sentimental old Humbug"—and he reported to her that all "have been much admired, but especially The Moonlight". Gosse's On Viol and Flute was going into a second edition, and the title-page vignette was cut in brass for gold stamping on the cover; Gosse, he wrote, "wants me to make him a present of a design for his 'Eric', which [Chatto and Windus] are going to publish. In November, while he was engaged on this engraving and on his Altdorfer manuscript, Scott was finally confirmed in his South Kensington position:

Perhaps you will be sorry, and rather would have liked that I was not to go out again to that spring work, but if I am well, as I hope to be next spring, not as I was last year, I rather enjoy seeing the schools pass in review before me, and work, as you know, does me no harm. (23 Nov.)

Perhaps because he was so totally absorbed in work, social news is sparse in these autumn letters. He recounts the visit from Ellen Clayton—"the most singular little chatterbox I ever met"—who came to see Alice's pictures, Scott having written her when he heard of the forthcoming English Female Artists that "the great lady artist is AB". Miss Clayton proved "delighted with everything, and if I will only write what I think should be

1 "Pudge" and "Mrs. Pudge" are pet names WBS and AB used for each other.

2 Gosse's verse tragedy, King Erik, appeared in 1876 with a design by WBS.
said about you and your art she will be the better pleased the longer it is” (30 Nov.).

An “At Home” for sixty people was planned for 16 December, and this impending gathering may also partially account for the paucity of socializing at Bellevue this year. On 28 November, Scott informed Alice that Mrs. Allingham had given birth to a son. Another birth, totally unexpected, threatened to jeopardize the “At Home”, for which the engraved invitations had already been made out. In the midst of his letter of 30 November, Scott was called away and have just returned after an hour of the most astounding excitement. Eliza has been delivered of a baby in that time on the floor of the little room by the kitchen, and Lucy knowing it 10 minutes before ran off for the sister of Eliza, and Letitia then went down to sit with the sick creature, and by and by heard the scream of an infant from the bundle on the floor—and I pulled on my boots, on with my hat, & ran for the doctor—I was indeed by that time watching on the stair to make out what the agitation was about. Fortunately Dr. Crisp, in Beaufort St was at home, and came with me. He has attended to Eliza and the baby and Lucy with the sister came back with a cab to carry Eliza off, but too late. Of course she can’t now be moved, even up to the bedroom, and the sister must go home having 3 young children—Another interruption—the doctor before going away, has been with me, he is a teetotaler so has not joined my toddy drinking, and my tumbler having just been made before the rush out for the doctor, was cold enough when I came back.

This affair has driven everything fairly out of my head. You may imagine Letitia’s powerless state of excitement, and Lucy professing she can’t undertake nursing and doing everything else, even for a night. The sister will be back tomorrow morning, and we will see how things are to be managed.

The following morning Scott was able to round out the episode and assure Alice that the arrangements for the party would not be affected:

I wrote you a disjointed letter last evening, but I have not much to add to it. We have had the doctor this morning who reports that Eliza is going on wonderfully well. She is still lying in the little room by the kitchen but on a mattress and bed. No one can tell who is the father, but he seems not to be counted on even by Eliza herself. She will be here still when the sisters come I suppose. But we have Mrs. Watts and by that time we may have got another housemaid. Is it not inexplicable that the girl served at dinner, and ran about just as usual, and although I thought frequently what a queer figure the creature is getting I never guessed what was really the case. (1 Dec.)

Alice arrived in London on 4 December, missing Scott at the station. After the hectic ordeal of so large an entertainment, the
remainder of the season was quiet, and the couple together, as Alice writes in her diary, "sat the old year out".

1876

The pattern of Scott's and Alice's lives was firmly established after his regular appointment at South Kensington. The couple were apart for no more than two to three months of any given year, and all of Scott's letters fall between 15 May and 26 July and 28 September and 24 November, except for 1883 and 1884, when Alice accompanied him to London at the end of his summer visit to Penkill.

Scott's letters of 1876 are substantive in their discussions of poetry and art. On 21 May he discusses his newly formed acquaintanceships with Leicester Warren and Austin Dobson. Warren "is a man to make a friend of really" and "Dobson is . . . almost as nice a man as Warren":

They have both given me their poems, and these with other things have occupied me in the evenings . . . Warren's is much more questionable but there are great excellencies, with passion and splendour of execution. The whole is however overlaid with soliloquising and endless matter leading to nowhere.

On 2 June, Scott writes of his contribution to the Whitman subscription:

Walt Whitman has sent me a sumptuously bound copy of his two volumes, as an acknowledgment of my subscription for his benefit. I came out strong and subscribed £5—the poet of democracy being so ill and hard up, and I find W.M.R. and Leicester Warren are both down for the same. Whitman writes in huge letters like text "W. B. Scott from his friend, the Author", in the front of the books quite in a patronizing manner. His new writing is certainly very interesting and characteristic, but in his new poetry—about the Centenary, etc., there is a want of the impulse and richness of the best parts of the "Leaves of Grass." His irregular verse without spontaneity and the vigor of health and inspiration fails entirely, it appears to me, to interest one or carry one with it. The verse of the "Leaves of Grass" was like a mighty stream, into which one could not plunge even the hand without feeling swept along wherever it would. His new poetry lacks not only the impetus of the scene, but the greatness of the motive that vitalized the "Leaves of Grass."

With Rossetti in semi-seclusion and William and Franz Hueffer both saddled with family responsibilities, Scott felt the need to extend the range of his associations, and new and younger
acquaintances enter the correspondence with increasing frequency from this point, including Warren, Gosse, Buxton Forman, Boyce, Wallis, and Arthur Hughes, the latter of whom Scott recommended to illustrate Simcox's dramatic poem on the Nativity.\(^1\) He had also found congenial companions among the South Kensington examiners. Scott's friendships are almost without exception artistic or literary, a strong professional bond being seemingly the *sine qua non*.

During June, Scott's spare time was devoted to etching a number of his "Backhome" sketches, visiting the R. A. Exhibition, painting on his picture, *The Norns*,\(^2\) and projecting, for composing at Penkill, a drama, which he appears never to have written. Of the Academy, Scott wrote Alice:

> Yesterday (Friday) my first free day, I went to see the Academy again, and also Simpson's Exhibition. I found Simpson himself who was waiting for Louis Hague who had promised to come. His drawings are full of interest, very descriptive and exceedingly clever. The work of the Academy did not stand a second visit so well as they should. Even Leighton's and Poynter's I began to circumscribe—one found they were not endless but rather quickly touched the cul-de-sac. Even Tadema's one saw to be a not very *veritable* (in the absence of poetical) interpretation of history—but then even a block of cheesy marble painted so well as he can do it, is quite satisfactory. On the whole, one comes to the conclusion that there are two classes of paintings truly worth doing and only two, one is splendid execution, fully reproducing the impression of nature as in Millais' work, whether landscape or figure; the other the highest, the poetic, wh. must also be perfectly well done, "according to the idea", that is the execution must cover and yet enhance the conception, so that the whole is a unity. This Leighton tries but I fear fails in doing in the present picture.

\(^1\) WBS recommended Hughes to illustrate a dramatic poem on the nativity by the "clerical brother" of "our Simcox", who might be G.A. if the "our Simcox" is Edith. No volume matching this description is listed in the catalogue of the British Library, and no such illustration by Hughes is listed in White, Reid, or Fredeman; neither is one mentioned in Laurence Housman's "Arthur Hughes as Illustrator", *Bibliophile*, i (July 1908), 231-7. A picture on this theme, entitled "Adoration of Kings and Shepherds" (1902) was exhibited in the 1971 Hughes Exhibition at Leighton House (item 37), which Leslie Cowan identifies as containing reminiscences of two works of 1858 in the City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, entitled "The Nativity" and "The Annunciation". An original pencil drawing of the 1902 picture was recently offered for sale by Ian Hodgkins (Catalogue 5, 1975, item 424, illus.).

\(^2\) This picture, for which H. T. Dunn was decorating the frame, is discussed in several letters quoted here; its present location is unknown. WBS' poem on the picture appears in *A Poet's Harvest Home*. 

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The South Kensington work finished on the 15th and Scott sent Alice news of a major shakeup under Poynter:

Today the excitement of our breaking up was intensified by the news that the old set of National Competition Examiners was entirely rearranged by Poynter—no Horsley, R.A., no Weekes, R.A., no Digby Wyatt, no Redgrave. Instead come in Top, Val Princep, Boehm. Poor Hart was sadly cut up—"Ah, well! Redgrave kept it in the hands of members of the Academy, but the director seems to go the other way!" he said confidentially to me. But the fact is, that the old Committee was entirely incapable. Last year I drew attention to one or two awards they had made, manifestly bad, in fact we three thought they had intentionally departed from our lead, and done absurdly. I spoke to Poynter privately, and he quite agreed that Horsley was not the man, I said Weekes was not either, and he has it seems come to the same conclusion. It is just possible Top will swear they are all imitating him, but I fancy he will be a little surprised at the excellence of some of the work. I am sorry I shall be away while the works are exhibited to the public, and so will possibly never know to which the gold and silver medals, etc., have been awarded till I have forgotten the works.

While Scott was at Penkill, Buchanan brought his famous libel suit against P. A. Taylor, the editor of the Examiner, which reopened the old "fleshly" wound and threatened to involve not only Swinburne, who was subpoenaed despite his attempts to elude the bailiff, but also Rossetti, about whom Scott wrote to William:

The suggestion you make as to Gabriel being by any possibility subpoenaed to appear at the Examiner trial makes me write you. Fortunately, D.G. never printed anything whatever, as far as I know, about Buchanan, so the possibility is very faint indeed. But faint as it is, some measure should be taken to make sure of his never receiving the summons. Neglect in such a matter is by no means a very serious offence in English law I believe—not like a witness in a criminal case. You could get Dunn or rather George Hake to intercept the messenger, perhaps. You remember AB saw a good deal of D.G. and asked him to come here after I had been with him at Stobhall. If Gabriel does get a summons, and must leave London to avoid the trial this place is as likely as any to induce him to select it, and she tells me to say to you that he need have no ceremony in doing exactly as he likes in coming at a day's notice or without notice at all. Gosse who had written a review in the Examiner of a book by Buchanan has had his notice to attend at the court long ago, so possibly have all the men who are supposed to have any evidence to give!

As a matter of fact, the trial had ended the day before Scott's letter was written, with damages of £50 going to Buchanan. So far as is known Rossetti was not called upon to testify.¹

¹ For a summary of the trial and aftermath, see John A. Cassidy, "Robert Buchanan and the Fleshly Controversy", PMLA, lxxii (March 1952), 65-93.
Back in London, Scott wrote Alice of his work on the “Backhome” series and of a commission for an etching of Beatrice Cenci for Buxton Forman. In the same letter he informed her of Nellie Gosse's miscarriage:

Today Amy Pratt appeared by appointment to look at the mass of old John Epps’ literary works in the bathroom which she must remove. And among other things discussed she told us of Nellie’s getting over her misfortune. She has had a miscarriage. Of this Gosse informed me by letter—a very boyish letter it was. He says his “parents will be very vexed”, which is more than I think he is himself, although he pretends to demand sympathy. I immediately wrote him a sympathetic letter, at same time saying that I for myself used to dislike infants, which brought forth a genuine confession that he feared their possible existence in his household. This one had it attained maturity, was, it seems, to have been named after me! (9 Oct.)

On 18 October, he went with Warren to meet Kirby, the book collector:

I call him the great—collector of first editions and rare books, and every kind of literary curiosity. We had an introductory letter and certainly the number of rarities he turned out to show us was surprising. All the various early things of all the poets. I said I could give him my “Poems by a Painter”, when he answered “Oh I have both your volumes—“Poems by a Painter”—which excited my curiosity, when he produced both my own volume and Noel Paton's! I explained to him that this last was not mine but an appropriation of the title, when he exclaimed that he had already presented the book twice to friends in exchange for other things as mine! Warren is at present quite mad about first editions, and was much pleased with the expedition.

A week later a new man came on the scene:

Today I have had a new acquaintance, a Reverend W. H. Middleton, who has come to live in London on account of his wife's bad health, and who is entirely absorbed in studying Rembrandt. He is an enthusiast and was much interested, we had a good deal of talk. Had I been quite up to the mark it would have been pleasant, but yesterday I had a kind of bilious attack, and though it is gone today, it has left a little lassitude. Middleton is a friend of Colvin, who is now keeper of the Fitz William Museum at Cambridge, and has found—a great bore to me who has just had the Holbein Society book on Altdorfer issued—a great collection of the etchings of that old worthy—with many new ones. In fact since Colvin came in, there have been discovered quantities of treasures, no less than about 1200 etchings by Rembrandt!

Scott had virtually no contact with Rossetti in 1876, though on 31 October George Hake asked him to “call on Gab, who is, he says, better than he has ever been in his experience”. Alice records a visit to No. 16 on 2 December, but this meeting was
almost certainly occasioned by Scott’s complaint to William (20 Nov.):

How is Gabriel? Is he at Cheyne Walk? AB wrote him the other morning asked what time she might call and see him, as she had just come to town, but he gave her no answer. Until now he has been markedly polite to her.

Rossetti’s apparent snub may have been in consequence of Maria’s worsening health—she died on 24 November and was buried on the 29th; however, Scott was unlikely, for any reason, to tolerate any discourtesy towards Alice Boyd.

1877

Continuing what he labelled his “diary system of writing” to Alice Boyd, Scott in 1877 kept her abreast both of his own comings and goings and of the latest news of their friends and acquaintances. By and large his letters of this year are more interesting than usual. His descriptions of social gatherings tend always to be amusing, and in two letters of this year he writes of parties at William Rossetti’s, the first in June, a week after Alice had left for Penkill:

Last night we went to Lucy and William’s evening. There were about . . . 30 all or nearly all known to us and to each other which made it rather easy and agreeable. Gosse and Nellie made their appearance and I found it necessary to break the absurd reserve of “Edmund” so as to make a little of a scene. He had, as I thought, supposed your note was prompted by me, and taken silence for a final cut. However the result has been the enclosed, which is so gushing and complete an expression of desire to be my friend, I really don’t know what to make of it, seeing he is not an emotional creature. I must receive it of course and perhaps I judge him hardly. I sometimes think [I] judge many so, but time shows my severest judgement not so far wrong, at least on some occasions. . . .

Lucy was doing the amiable hostess last night with the everlasting fan in hand, and an old lace front to her very light dress, quite charming. There is now added to Gabriel’s absurdly fattened portrait hanging in the drawing room another by “Ford”, “Lucy and baby boy”, even if possible less like—in short like any model young mother, except Lucy.1 William told us of an accident to Olivia and the maid and the perambulator that has just happened that might have been fatal, a Venetian blind fell upon the party and smashed them all flat. The girl insensible and baby tolerably pounded were brought home in a cab. William’s way of describing the affair was “Poor Olive was nearly done for altogether, but was soon recovered”—while old F.M.B. had of course his way of describing it

1 DGR’s portrait (Surtees 454) was done in 1874; WBS’ description is uncharitable but may reflect his bias toward Brown’s women.
somewhat differently. "It is very singular I must say, but it is singular, so many things happen to Lucy,—without any fault of hers, you know, there was Olive the other day"—etc. (1 June)

The second party (on 7 Nov.) was recapitulated for Alice the following morning:

I got your note last night on returning home about 12 o'clock from dining at W.M.R.'s Euston Square. A rum lot it was, and a very scrimp entertainment in the way of dinner at 7. There were the blind youth Marsden, and his sister who is really the towseyest blotched little creature I ever saw with a gushing Irish accent, poor thing and stories of their landlady stealing the tea pot, and besides, who do you think? Caley, who is more shabby and more unintelligible than ever. As Letitia said it was like a collection of incurables.¹

In the same letter, which illustrates admirably Scott's "diary system", he tells Alice of his seeing the ruins of the fire in glazier's shop at the Morris works, in which the greatest loss was Jones' designs for glass, and of a succession of visits from George Howard, Barwell, Gosse, and Cosmo Monkhouse, a "semi-literary" man who later dedicated a slim volume of mediocre poems entitled *Corn and Poppies* to Scott. "Now", he concludes, "with few exceptions all my visitors have I think had a turn, except Mrs. Heaton who is to come tomorrow, and if this rain goes off will no doubt turn in with usual virulence". The editor of Cunningham's *Lives* duly arrived the following day, "in her usual state, hove up under the waist, two visitors instead of one". A few days later, Scott's callers included Charles Fairbridge, Tom Taylor, and W. J. Linton, and he expressed to Alice his apprehension that "all my visitors will have been before you come, and then you will have no variety, no entertainment" (15 Nov.).

Many of Scott's letters of 1877 concern the fortunes of his literary friends: of Forman's unearthing, "as he calls it, a series of exquisite letters from Keats to Fanny Brawne, unheard of till now, which he is going to publish" (11 Oct.); of Austin Dobson's burgeoning family—six or seven "in the same number of years, enough to make him a little serious" (8 Nov.); of the impending birth of Gosse's baby; and of the total absence of reviews of Allingham's new volume of poems, about which he

¹ Marsden is Philip Bourke Marston (1850-87); C. B. Cayley was a classical scholar, once engaged to CGR.
observed, "This is very hard, I would not have liked it" (1 June). Even Buchanan, the victim of a "ferocious onslaught... by the editor of the World", stirred his sympathy, and Scott sent the notice to Alice,

in case you may like to read something of the amenities of literature, the quarrel being at present one of the subjects of talk. The description of Buchanan's first appearance is really frightful, but scrofula has no more to do with the itch than it has with smallpox, and Keating's insect powder is for kitchen beetles, not a medicine against cutaneous parasites! The writer is so savage he can't be either witty or truthful.1

Unlike 1876, the letters of this year contain long and frequent references to Rossetti, beginning with one concerning his operation for hydrocele:

I first went along to Rossetti's not to see him but Dunn to understand whether he had got the verses on the label done. There I heard from both Watts and Dunn that Gabriel was in bed and had been for a week, at which time he had had to undergo the long and dreadful operation for matrisele.2 You have heard from time to time of the evil that attacks him by a collecting of water in a certain part of the body. It appears this time it was a collecting of blood, and an immediate operation was necessary so that the veins that were evidently ruptured might be tied up. Watts tells me he administered the chloroform, and kept him under it more than half an hour, and was astonished at the strength of body that enabled D.G. to come out of it perfectly unshaken.

After hearing this dreadful news I went to Warren and took leave of him. Then home and had a little painting again on my picture, when first Marzials and then Dunn came, the latter having been sent by D.G. to ask me to come along in the evening and sit with him. This I accordingly did, and found him very quiet and gentle, the bed curtains screening the candle, and the windows tightly curtained, the temperature being tremendous, with a kind of Sirocco, or hot east-wind blowing. I had not been half an hour when Brown was announced, and came up and by and by Gabriel had to get us out of the room.

This is a sad parting with him in one point of view, but the whole account of his conduct in this most serious matter, and the tone of mind I found him in, gives me the greatest hopes he is now really better than he has been for years, I mean mentally. (19 June)

Rossetti did not recover so rapidly as Scott's letters suggest, and in mid-August he went to Mr. Sand's at Hunter Forestall near Herne Bay, where he remained until mid-November. Rossetti's use of chloral exacerbated the recurring condition from

1 Attack on Buchanan in World 1877.
2 WBS obviously confused two disorders and conflated hydrocele, a genital problem from which DGR suffered, with metrocele, a uterine hernia.
which he suffered, and Scott agreed that if he could be totally deprived of chloral he might improve in mind and body. Scott described for Alice the debilitating effects that the drug was wreaking on its victim:

Yesterday Dunn came in by way of seeing the Norns' frame now the label is on it, but I fancy to tell me about D.G. and have a good grumble, as the money is now not to be had almost even for the servants' board wages. He says the chloral has been very nearly the death of Gabriel, and that he was so bad on one time he forgot his name, and they were some hours trying to make him sign his name! Perhaps you remember a desk with drawers once stood in his studio in a recess on one side of the fireplace, and that it was removed. It seems poor G. has actually had false wooden walls placed against the real ones in the recesses on either side of the fireplace, filled with sawdust between, to prevent the Lawsons peering through and listening! I observed Dunn liked to relate those sad stories—pretended he thought I knew about the double walls—but this must be true, because they will have to be taken down before leaving. (17 Oct.)

A humorous episode, indirectly involving Rossetti, was reported on 23 October:

You say you was amused by the review of Forman's *Shelley* by W.M.R. By far the most amusing thing I have heard for a long time was told me about that review. William and Forman were not on speaking terms till lately when the quarrel has been made up, and William in a magnanimous spirit spent an evening with Forman, just as his article appeared. At the end of the article you may remember W. says the "binding is decked out in azure grey with some gilded designs—sunflower, skylark, stars, rose, and whatnot—rather tastelessly showy and meagrely symbolic". Well, Forman had at last found out that this design, which was found lying at the printers unappropriated, was Gabriel's! It had been done for his friend Dallas—Miss Glynn's husband you know who is gone to pot long ago, and now used for *Shelley*, is criticised in the dark by William as "tastelessly showy and meagrely symbolic"! In the course of conversation, in the innocence of his heart W. said to Forman, "Do you know who did that thing you have adopted on your book?" but at once from Forman's face he smelt a rat, and shrinking into a mere shrimp, said faintly "You don't mean to say it's Gabriel's!" Is not this truly characteristic of Billy's criticism, especially of his own relatives and surroundings?

As usual, many of the letters treat Scott's own enterprises, the most important of which in 1877 were two etchings of Keats and David Scott dead, the first for Forman, and his edition of Blake's engravings, which he defended against the strictures of F. G. Stephens in the *Athenaeum*, who said that the world "did not want 'Scott-Blake', but Blake pure and simple by means of photography". Scott, however, felt "quite certain [that] the
art work of Blake needs editing and interpreting as much as his literary work and just for the same reasons" (8 Nov.). That Scott perceived his own limitations is demonstrated in his letter explaining his decision not to submit his pictures to the newly opened Grosvenor Gallery:

After my business was done, I went to the Grosvenor to have another look at it, and do not feel safe in offering to send, somehow. All the works there except Watts' are of one sentiment and in one tone, it may be that mine is really like the work of a man of the last generation, or it may be that it is so distinct and independent that it will not assort or be admired without authority, so that no one, critic or artist may be found to be sympathetic with it. I don't know that I make myself understood, but take as a parallel instance Armitage who is about my age. There is no question of the artistic power and ability in his picture of the Saxon Thane in the Academy but it belongs to a past generation, and I have not been able to get a single word of praise for it from any one—artists especially, who might be expected to be the freest of prejudice. So with David's pictures, even artists only wonder at them; they don't belong to their world at all. Besides, I must say I failed today to see the greatest qualities in even Jones' works: they are elaborated out of his sweat as it were. (16 June)

Scott's temptation to show his works at the Grosvenor was based, at least in part, on the failure of his The Death of the Sea King and Alice's The Minuet to find a place in the Academy exhibition in 1877. The year before, he had begun at Penkill a scathing attack on the Academy. He intended the paper to be published as a pamphlet, but Chatto informed him that "no pamphlet pays its expenses or gets read" and proposed publishing it in Belgravia (3 Nov. 1886). The paper went unpublished until the summer of 1877, when, on the appearance of Comyns Carr's article on the same subject in the June issue of the Gentleman's Magazine, Scott submitted his to that journal, where it appeared anonymously in the August number. Considering the bother that the fear of exposure caused Scott four years later, it is worth summarizing the contents of his attack.

Scott's paper, entitled "The Royal Academy and the Exhibition", is almost a prose equivalent of John H. Soden's A Rap at the R.A.: A Satire (1875), beginning:

Begot by roguery, and born a cheat,
Cradled in craft, and suckled in deceit...
His avowed purpose is to expose the total inability of the Academy to represent in any adequate sense the artists of England in the seventh decade of the nineteenth century. Its restrictive membership (40 R.A.'s and 20 Associates) limits arbitrarily and invidiously the recognition that competent British artists have every right to expect, and he accuses the Academy of being no more than a "trade monopoly", committed to the perpetuation of "modest mediocrity". On the level of general criticism, he indicts the "back-stairs influence" which precludes from exhibition pictures by "undesirable" artists and corrupts the whole process whereby new members and associates are elected. He also denies that in any sense the Academy has been a constructive force in the education and training of English artists.

Both the virulence of the tone and the anonymity of the article would have been sufficient to provoke officialdom to castigate the author, but Scott was not content to restrict his criticisms to generalizations; and in the particularization of his argument he laid himself open to charges of libel, especially in the retailing of anecdotes designed to reveal the ignorance of the President, Sir Francis Grant, and the collusion of R.A.'s in the selection of members to their ranks. To protect his anonymity, Scott included himself in a long catalogue of prominent artists "who either did not send, or at least did not appear" in the exhibition at Burlington House in 1876. In 1881, when he was threatened with exposure, Scott was fearful that he would be hounded out of England, and even proposed to Alice living in Italy during the winter and at Penkill in the summer, abandoning London altogether. But in 1877, when his righteous indignation was, perhaps justifiably, in full flower, this consideration did not figure. Scott's attack on the Academy was only one in a long

1 Among the anecdotes WBS recounts in the article—after first reminding the reader that "we do not guarantee the precise truth of the details"—is one in which Grant declined before the Academy an offer of a picture by Sanzio for an exhibition of old masters with the comment: "Well gentlemen...we want the pictures of great masters, you know; as for Sanzio, I never heard of him". He also accuses the sculptor members, "who did not want so superior a competitor as Alfred Stevens, of purposely advancing for election the name of the minor artist, E. B. Stephens": WBS adds that "the stupidity of the body proved itself equal to the injustice for the sculptors succeeded in "defraud[ing] the most able man in the country of his election" (pp. 187 and 180).
series, from Ruskin on, challenging the patronage system that until the eighties exerted a stranglehold on English art.

1878–1881

The years 1878–81 were not particularly eventful, or even productive, for Scott, with little special to break the routine of Bellevue, Penkill, and South Kensington. Besides his etchings for Blake—published in time for the Christmas season in 1877, but dated 1878—his only other major publication, apart from his journalistic writings and reviews, was his book *The Little Masters* (1880). These years saw the deaths of two of Scott's oldest friends, G. H. Lewes in 1878 and Thomas Dixon of Sunderland in 1880, as well as of his Chelsea neighbour, George Eliot, in 1880, and of his more recent poetic acquaintance, O'Shaughnessy, in 1881. Scott's age and the monotonous sameness of his life perhaps encouraged him to seek at this time a new channel for his energies, and for two months in 1879, he seriously considered standing for the Slade Professorship of Art at Edinburgh, arguing against Alice's objections:

The truth is I am never at rest without any work or occupation to in the first place employ me, and in the second to look forward to as in the publication of a book, and at present I feel that this writing and delivering a systematic series of historical and critical lectures on the Arts would not overtax me and would, as Littledale, who lunched with us yesterday, said, suit me better and not be so wearing as the South Kensington work. (11 Nov.)

Scott's doctor friend, Jenner, also dissuaded him from becoming a candidate for the chair, but in the end it was the inconvenience to his patterned life with Alice that determined him against formally applying:

Yesterday evening I spent with D.G. He told me he had written you, informing you I had given up the intention of trying for Edinburgh, which is not quite but nearly the case. I would scarcely be able to get to Penkill at all if I went there to fill the Chair. Summer would be spent in London where books abound writing my 100 lectures and winter in Edinburgh delivering them. (20 Nov.)

Scott's most formidable competitor for the chair, in his eyes, was P. G. Hamerton, the editor of the *Portfolio*; however, from

1 Sir William Jenner (1815–98).
Alice’s cousin, Forbes Robertson, he learned a year later, that the competition, though advertised, was not exactly open:

[He] told me all about the Edinburgh professorship. It seems Hamerton had no chance, it lay between Robertson and Baldwin Brown, and the last got it by one vote! Sir Alexander Grant who belongs to the same college at Oxford as B.B. gave way to that feeling and voted for that unknown gentleman. The Strand is full of noted luncheon bars, and your cousin pulled me into one to have a glass of ale—I pulled the other way saying I could not drink ale—stout then, was proposed, and in an unguarded moment I said I can drink nothing but Scotch whiskey. Alas, by and bye he pulled me into another noted for Scotch whiskey and I had to take some. After which I was good for nothing but to go home. (16 Oct. 1880.)

The letters of these years contain social, literary, and artistic references similar to those of earlier years, but their most singular anecdotes pertain to Rossetti, whom Scott, from 1879, saw on a more regular basis than he had since the artist’s breakdown in 1872; and these passages provide the most convenient entree into this phase of the correspondence.

Among the early letters of 1878 are one to Alice Boyd sending her a bookseller’s catalogue with an item described as having been gathered “by the late WBS”—a slip that amused Scott enormously—and one to William Rossetti concerning a controversy with Gosse, the particulars of which are unclear. In his castigation of Gosse, however, Scott draws an interesting comparison between himself and William:

Yes, I confess Gosse has riled me in several ways—the last being his calling on Saturday night and trying to find out what I had to say about the article on the so-called “Latter Day Lyrics” in the *Athenaeum* pretending complete ignorance of its authorship, the rot being his own writing. This apparently wholly unnecessary style of clowning (?) riles me. You are indifferent, smiling blandly on a man who insults you and being sharp as green olives to another who holds you dear. You are much more amiable than I am but I fancy I can give a better reason for being angry.¹ (4 Apr.)

The only major reference to Rossetti in 1878 is in a letter of 23 October reporting a visit to “Gab who is very unwell”:

He tells me Howell has actually again sold his lease of home to the Railway and is in clover, having bought Whistler’s Japanese bed from under him! Whistler is gone to his new home, but in the last stage of impecuniosity. It is reported Morrison the oilman has lent him £300 and can’t get a penny.²

¹ The article appeared in no. 2631 (30 Mar. 1878), p. 405.
² For the Howell–Whistler relationship see *Pre-Raphaelite Twilight*, pp. 195 ff.
In Scott’s first letter of 1879, he writes amusingly of two of his own drawings, which he has unexpectedly discovered:

A long time ago when I called on Allingham about my papers in Fraser, I was set into a small place at the back end of passage to wait. This unfurnished (except for a rotten lot of waste books on a ramshackled deal of book shelves) crib, more like a W.C. with the stool taken out than anything else, was decorated to my surprise or horror by the two framed drawings I presented him on his marriage! I said nothing at the time (he was in bed I did not see him) as I wanted to get clear out of the printing of my papers, but I determined by hook or by crook to get these drawings out of the way. At first they hung in the best room in the home, but when that was converted into her studio, I suppose they did not like other works on the wall and they had got shunted into the hole where I found them. So I concocted a speech and called—they were already all in the country. On getting home I wrote him borrowing the two drawings for a month as I had never etched one of them I made that excuse, and had an answer at once, with an order to the she-dragon in charge to give me the pictures. I had a cab at the door and carried them off in triumph. The month will be a longish one and the disused W.C. will wait a long time before they are again hung up.1

On his return from Penkill, Scott began a regular series of visits to Rossetti, the first on 25 October:

Friday I can’t remember what I did, but in the evening took it into my head to go along to D.G.R. and consult him. This consultation was curious enough. He was lying on the sofa with his “stomach cough”, and Shields was snoozing by the fire. He is really quite well, (indeed Christina who called and sat with us a long time the day before, and who had been with him, said she thought he was now quite better), but still spoke of being ill, and that he would never be well without staying in some place like Penkill for a while—he had thought of writing to you some weeks ago and getting down at once, and now seeing me so well, asked if you was still there and would receive him. I replied you would no doubt, but thought it too late. Well, at first he discouraged my application [for the Edinburgh Chair], thought I would be so put about, and out of my element, I should not do it, also that I might have to live there. But in a little time Brown with Emma made their appearance—you must know D.G. has been supposed to be very seriously ill, and people are alarmed—Emma did not appear to have seen him for years. I then brought Foord into the consultation, and he at once strenuously advised me to go seriously in for it. I would be 10 years younger at once if I got it—it’s only the work that does not pay that wears one out—and sundry other really wise maxims came out with great excitement, and D.G. stirring his heavy bottom on the sofa said he thought so too—it might look like a windmill turning round, but the more he considered the matter the more he thought I should try. I came home at 11 past 11 and had my toddy as usual, taking an eke, which I mean no more to do.

Five days later, “Gabriel sent for me again”.

1 WBS’ two pictures are not identified; Helen Allingham became a well known water-colour painter.
and after dinner he entered on an explanation begging me to come in and see him and cheer him up, as he had not a friend in the world. It was very touching, especially as he went on to assure me that he could not step over his door without meeting insults that he was sure would lead him into a police court, the conspiracy being as bad as ever! This was repeated again when I left. He will not now think of going to Penkill, so I think you had better not write. What is the matter with him is dyspepsia from want of exercise, and low spirits and sleeplessness in consequence. It seems hopeless to argue with him. (30 Oct.)

And on 10 November, he writes of a later evening with Gabriel:

On Saturday I dined again with D.G.R. and spent the evening with him. I think he is getting right and that shortly the delusion he confided to me the other night will gradually disappear. He is now quite interested again in poetry, and read me an early tale of his own, wonderfully good. It is called "St. Agnes the Intercessor"—a little symptom of the period of "Poems of the Art Catholic", and puts one in mind of his design, "How they met themselves". It was to have been in the 5th. No. of the "Germ", and the etching by Millais of the painter making the portrait of the dying girl was for it.

That Scott was dining twice a week with Rossetti is confirmed in his letter of 20 November:

Is it not funny all these times I have dined there twice a week for 3 weeks we have always invariably had soles, roast fowl or duck, and mince for him, with sweet pud. One thing largely assisting in making him well, is that he has got a motherly housekeeper who roasts the fowls, etc. and a housemaid of 16, like a well bred damsel, both of whom he wholly believes in. He told me with great delight, that none of the spies and watchers now got within the door, which they have always done hitherto, all the previous servants being in league with them. He considers the old woman as reliable as his mother, and only wishes the young girl was his daughter. I believe he is getting quite right.

Rossetti appears almost as an aside when he is first introduced in 1880 in conjunction with a new volume of the "rummest lot" of Cayley's poems sent to Letitia, in which "a sonnet on Gabriel's portrait of Christina indicates the secret throbbings of Cayley's heart" (1 June). Similarly, in his letter of 13 June, it is his own rather than Rossetti's view that dominates his discourse:

Swinburne has sent me his "Songs of the Springtide". He had sent them also to Gab. who however was in the most determined opposition to the poems,

1 The title of this tale by Rossetti—a companion to Hand and Soul—is "St. Agnes of Intercession"; WBS proposed to Stock when a reprint of The Germ was first discussed that the tale be included together with Millais' illustration, of which WBS thought he had the unique impression. However, other copies do survive.

2 Cayley's Poems and Translations was published in 1880.
and to the mental condition of the man who could produce them. I can't go so far as he does. I look upon the intention of the entire performance as an attempt to reproduce in verse the splendor and vitality of the sea, the egotism at the bottom of this attempt—the absurd notion that he is the son of the sea, the Thalassius, is, alas, a little ludicrous, and I fear a little snobby. I remember how delighted the little fellow was, when some poor critic admitted he was a gentleman being the son of an admiral, which was afterwards recalled to me by a certain lady's performance on the same whistle.

Because Scott's opinion of Swinburne's poetry is so frequently clouded by moralistic considerations, his comment to William Rossetti written in the following year offers a particularly revealing contrast:

What you say of Swinburne is most interesting. Carlyle says of Lamb he had an irresistible proclivity to gin, and A.C.S. fires [?] up—somebody must say the same of him! But more than this, the sober life Swinburne is leading is his ruin. Keep away the drink, you keep down every power in his body or mind. It is merely metre-rhythm. It is impossible such splendid writing can live. (22 May 1881)

Returning to the subject of Rossetti, Scott is encomiastic about his ballad poem, "The White Ship", which is "one of the best things he has ever done. Splendid and without any finery or fiddlededee"; and he informs Alice of Rossetti's promise to send her a fair copy, which in due course he did (1 July).

Most of the letters in which Rossetti figures prominently are concerned with the vacillating state of his health. In the autumn of 1880, Scott was bombarded by letters from S. J. B. Haydon, who pressed on him wild explanations of Rossetti's mental and physical condition:

Last night, by the bye, I spent with Gabriel. I was about to forget this, though he has asked me twice this week, once sent along at 1 to 10 p.m. for me as he was in a low key, but I would not think of getting in boots and going out at that hour. Last afternoon I dined there at ½ past 7 or rather ¾ past 8 for ½ past 7, with Watts who made the evening pass more comfortably. Gabriel is quite well as far as one can see, nor do I perceive that Watts is pursuing any system of undermining or other mischief, but I still receive the most mysterious letters from Haydon who has a cold and can't get out to call here. He is coming soon however, and has he says prepared some notes on the subject to read to me!! (24 Oct.)

When Alice expressed a keener interest than usual, Scott replied:

1 (1815-91), sculptor and friend, in later years, of DGR.
I shall send you Haydon's long rigmyroll if you like. It is very curious. He does not know any of D.G.'s moral delinquencies evidently and any hints of them from Watts or Shields he looks upon as attempts at forcing lies upon him. The idea of D.G. being selfish and tyrannical when he is generous of what he does not value—money, is what he can't comprehend! He is due here some night—I don't care when. (30 Oct.)

His letter of 14 November documenting Rossetti's persistent delusions complements the letter of 20 November 1879:

I had Watts this morning, sat a long time with me. We talked of the Metropolitan Board and its action, but I did not hint at employing him. D.G.R. has sent away the neat young hand maid, one who followed her has shared the same fate, and a third, a Scotch one has also gone. Watts thinks he takes things into his head without reason about them. Haydon has never made an appearance.

Scott was willing to do anything practical or necessary to assist Rossetti, but, as he complains on 20 November, it was not easy to determine what course he should follow:

After another long M.S. from Haydon I could stand it no longer so I went out and saw him. I found he had nothing more to say than had been contained in his writing, and he acknowledged that my interference would be exceedingly difficult and might make matters worse. D.G. told him he "feared Watts, and that W. might ruin him". What could that mean? Or how could I learn what it meant, or if I had learnt, what then?

Rossetti's condition became more serious in 1881, at least in Scott's view. "In going along to D.G. at 9 o'clock":

I found him all right, and took occasion of his everlasting visits to a certain box which he makes when ladies are not present, to enquire in a sympathetic manner if there was any organic trouble driving him. Much to my relief he answered quite candidly that there was none, only an unaccountable necessity takes possession of him after dinner, just during the hours we visit him. Odd certainly, but then all his habits are so, and unaccountable!

From Scott's accounts it is clear that Rossetti had never fully recovered from the paranoia that characterized his breakdown in 1872:

Last night (Saturday) I was with D.G.R., and find he is somewhat excited by the building behind in his garden being just about to begin. He is sure he won't be able to sleep in the morning or to work in his studio, and made a proposal to come to us at 92 and live there. I told him that my studio would be at his service, but waived the question about bedroom and living. However Letitia and I have today been considering the matter and have begun to think it could be managed thus. He could have the back drawing room for his bedroom—he can't sleep in the front of the house for noise of street—and the long room for his meals. Thus he would be shut off by himself, and his housekeeper or maid coming backwards
and forwards assisting. Of course it is only on account of the feeling how important to his health is the attempt to meet his views and keep him comfortable.

He showed me a new frame Leland has got made for the Blessed Damozel, the most splendid thing of that kind I have ever seen, with brackets below supporting columns of large size, ornamented in renaissance design. These carry [a] heavy architrave which passes along the top of the picture. It is altogether from an example in S.K. Museum. (19 June)

Two consecutive meetings that Scott describes are especially distressing, and that he was willing to devote his time and emotional energy in an almost certainly futile attempt to dispel Rossetti's psychological bogies testifies to the tenacity of his friendship. The first of these meetings was on 27 October:

... on Tuesday forenoon I had a call from Caine, the new friend and caretaker of D.G.R. who had come to tell me how ill Gabriel was. He said he had been to Marshall who was coming, but he thought he should inform some of his friends, and so had called tho' he did not know I was in town. On enquiring into the kind of illness, however, I knew it was only an attack of chloral and in fact Marshall had told Caine that there was nothing to do but try to keep him from that drug. He made an arrangement with me that I was to go in tonight as Shields and Watts were both to go on the two previous evenings. Yesterday Caine sent me proofs to read of his sonnet book¹ with a note saying he was off to Liverpool, so I wrote Gabriel [to] ask how he was and if I should come in. In reply his new servant brought me back my own note with a scrawl in pencil which I literally could not read. So I dined at 2 o'clock and went along. There I found him half dressed twisted up on the sofa and attended by Fanny. At first I was horrified, he seemed emaciated, and worn out, a mere wreck, perspiring and coughing, that old cough but much worse, for five minutes at a time he went on coughing, and yet no result and no apparent cause. He protested he was dying, that such a success as he had had with both book and picture,² was the forerunner of death, I thought of the former time and feared his mind was gone again but gradually after a long talk he became very much better. Fanny left to go to look into the kitchen, and I have just returned half past 6 to my tea here and to write this. As for reading to him, it was out of the question. He can attend to nothing. I am going again tomorrow evening.

The following day Scott read Rossetti his poems, and he was overwhelmed by his reaction. "He actually cried over 'Glenkindie'"³ Scott told Alice, "which somehow prevented me from doing so. Then he is no doubt in a very nervous shattered state at the moment":

¹ Caine's book is Sonnets of Three Centuries (1882), an anthology in which Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites figure prominently.
² The book is Poems: A New Edition (1881); the picture Dante's Dream, DGR's largest picture, now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
³ Included in A Poet's Harvest Home.
Yesterday before I parted from him we spoke of the great success of the King's Tragedy and he became almost paralytic, said that the writing of that had torn his vitals out and fairly broke down. Is it not strange? This is evidently the result of anxiety and deranged sensibility about the exhibition of his picture at Liverpool, and his volume coming out at the same moment. After these I read a few other little ones, but all were received with enthusiasm, and then he declared they had done him a great deal of good and got up and walked about with a stick certainly but I don't think he needed it. Whether the effort was too much for him or not he protested he could stand no more: then Caine who was present took the M.S. and read a number to himself protesting they were all equally good and interesting. I mean to read the whole through to him, and he is coming for that purpose.

When I went in today Fanny was there. She went away certainly immediately, but this is a renewal of an infliction one can't really bargain for. He acknowledged that he had had Fanny down to Cumberland with him! and that William had expressed himself too strongly in disapprobation of her being there. I also expressed myself strongly, which only brought on another attack of shattered nerves. The explanation of the whole matter is that the splendid tavern-hotel in Jermyn St. has collapsed, it has not succeeded and she is left to sort for herself, her reputed husband continuing in the Jermyn St. establishment, and she falling back upon Gabriel. Is it not discouraging?

Another affair I found it practicable to talk over with him was Dunn's departure. It appears he has not paid Dunn anything for years, and that he was under an engagement at £2.0 a week. Dunn now claims £300 which no doubt is the true sum and D.G. refuses to pay. He will pay by degrees! Funny! is it not, when his pictures bring such sums?

After reading this you can put it in the fire.

In late October, Scott's preoccupation with Rossetti gave way suddenly to what Alice diagnosed as paranoiac delusions of his own, when, from a report by Austin Dobson of a dinner conversation with Colonel Grant, the son of the former President of the Royal Academy, he became apprehensive that he had been spotted as the author of the 1877 attack on the Academy in the Gentleman's Magazine. He wrote to Alice on 1 November:

"I have got down to the sad state in which I was after the publication of that infernal article. I hope I shan't be really ill or break up quite as much as Gabriel is at the moment, but it is quite uncertain". Fearing that his projected poems would

1 From WMR's unpublished diary in AP (10 Nov. 1877): "F (I rejoice to hear) has taken a new start in life; being installed, thro' an advance of money from her lodger Schott, as Landlady of an old-established tavern in Jermyn St: she holds a lease for 25 years, and seems to be doing exceedingly well. I found her at Chelsea when I arrived; she received me very coldly—for no substantial cause—and left at once".
simply call attention to the other publication and that Alice would be dragged down with him and that they would be ostracized by all their friends, he lamented, "Oh that you had taken that M.S. away, as you did the copies of the printed number". Scott's inherent good sense and stability, coupled with Alice's reassurances, finally won him from his depression, and on 4 November he was able to agree that "I begin to think the truth is somewhat as you have said. I have suffered and am suffering most probably from a delusion":

This morning a number of apparently converging circumstances made me very ill, and then your most refreshing telegram arrived, and when I had answered it, I said to myself, I shall go along to Rossetti's and know the worst. He had not sent for me, Caine had not made himself heard, though I had sent him Dowden's letter and wished it returned. Watts had made no sign though I had written him that I wanted to see him and I was nearly sure he had been at 16.

Well, I found all these appearances quietly accounted for by D.G. My letter to Caine was lying on his table, he had not returned from Liverpool, etc., etc. Fortunately, though I was quivering with anxiety, I allowed no symptom of it to escape, and in fact if I had D.G. was scarcely capable to perceiving. Fanny came running before I got into the studio saying "He's very much better he's painting!! I got him to paint!" He was sitting at the easel, with a picture fixed in it and a sponge and rags streaming with wet, the floor being also streaming—"What is it" I asked—"Water or turpentine?" Turpentine, he was cleaning the picture.

Besides the letters dealing with Rossetti, which have a strong biographical appeal, there are several of 1881 that merit preservation. One such is his long letter of 19 June on the funeral of Solomon Hart:

The particular incident I meant to tell you all about when I began to write, was the funeral of dear old Hart. There was a large party, both Jews and Christians, among the latter, the President Leighton, Poynter, Tadema, Marks, Pickersgill, etc. The ceremony I thought most interesting. Two priests in curious caps and a number of boys. The prayers were in recitative, and one of the little boys recited one in which the Jews joined in certain parts. The sound of the Hebrew is soft and rhythmical, like Greek, but even finer, I thought.

Waiting for the arrival of the hearse, as I was rather soon, I read all the inscriptions on the tombstones in that populous little place, and I got a wrinkle of great interest to me. You know that the most general inscription of the graves

1 Solomon Alexander Hart, R.A. (1806-81) appears regularly in Scott's correspondence. In AN, in which WBS paraphrases the last part of his letter to AB, WBS says: "I have found a place for dear old Solomon Hart here, in spite of his continual habit of punning, even scheming to introduce a pun for half an hour, and after all our having to laugh at it for the twentieth time" (ii. 276).
in the Catacombs is "Requiescat in Pace", and even now Roman Catholics nearly always put R.I.P. at the end of their monumental inscriptions. I have for many years tried in vain to find out the meaning of this inscription, or the reason for it, and now I find it is derived from the Jews. To that ancient people we know from the Old Testament books, at least from the ancient ones, there was no Heaven or hell—therefore the Inscription I found on every one of the tombstones—"May thy soul rest in peace" is a proper enough farewell benediction. The first Christians being Jew converts continued the habit, though they believed the soul was gone to another world and either happier or more miserable than while alive. Is not this interesting?

Perhaps Scott's two best letters of these years, however, are to William Michael Rossetti. The one most revealing of his literary sensibilities is that in which he discusses the form and function of the sonnet, as a partial response to a sheet of sonnets sent him by William:

Thanks again for the sheets of Sonnets. I don't quite like to criticise them in detail, because it would be necessary to make out my case by anatomizing and making the most of the faults I could discover. If we all had our deserts, you know, who would escape. But my objections in a general way are these. A sonnet, I take it, is made up of two parts, a statement which should be more or less picturesque as well as a wise and true statement, and a conclusion which again should be emotional and comprehensive. This division is indicated and provided for by the octave and the remaining lines, not necessarily quite separated by a period but certainly separated in spirit and purpose. Now the subjects you choose are not always capable of this emotional treatment, they are subjects for criticism rather than poetry. The conclusion I have come to regarding all political questions or persons, is that they must be judged in relation to prudence, which is a virtue certainly, but the most unpoetic of all the virtues, and I fancy I saw this to be now more or less your feeling, obstructing your enthusiasm in treating your subjects. As to the two rhymes or three in the first and two or three in the second division, repeating those of the first, it is absurd to suppose that they are essential to us English, the language being a difficult one in matters of rhyme, nor do I think a sonnet essentially benefitted by the unity of rhyme, the spirit is everything, nearly, but the choice of words, not merely rhythmical and flowing, but representative and splendid as well as exact, is immensely important in determining a sonnet to be good or bad. Now your subjects making a greater demand on your critical faculty and on your sense of justice, than on your passion or sense of beauty, you drop upon words essentially prosaic and unmanageable.

You may say I am limiting the range of the sonnet by defining it as emotional reflection, but this definition is very elastic in certain directions, though not in

1 WMR's sonnets were almost certainly from his Democratic Sonnets series (not published until 1907), six of which he had printed in 1881. For full details see Leonid M. Arinshtein with William E. Fredeman, "William Michael Rossetti's 'Democratic Sonnets'", VS, xiv (Mar. 1971), 241–74. The sonnet on the Census is unknown to me.
others. It may deal with any single incident, impression, or idea, but if it deals in generals, or tackles an entire subject with various bearings it ceases to be essentially a sonnet, however accurate in construction it may be. Your sonnet the Census is a good illustration of this. You deal with the measure in relation to a child, your child, and the stodgyness, the political import, disappears. (22 May 1881)

The second, Scott’s letter on William’s lecture, “The Wives of Poets”¹, offers probably the best available insight into Scott’s own domestic arrangement and into his evaluation of the personal relationships of his friends. It also clarifies that instinctive distrust of biography which motivated, in part at least, the revelations published in the Autobiographical Notes:

About the poets and their wives, I have considered a little. Biography is not even skin deep, it is mere varnish. Do you suppose you learn from the meagre notices what the truth really was in the life of all these men you named? In future biographies, if they are ever worth writing, no doubt Gabriel, Burne-Jones, Morris, Brown, and myself, must all figure as examples of matrimonial blessed­ness. I only know of two narratives, or three, with anything as true either as confessions or reports. It is not possible that the generality of poets can be what they would call happy with the generality of women, tied to them for life. (8 Apr. 1880)

1882

The entry in Alice Boyd’s day-diary for 9 April 1882 reads simply and starkly, “DGR died this night”. Scott’s and Alice’s last view of Rossetti was on 4 February, the day he left No. 16 for Birchington with Hall Caine. Scott’s immediate sensations on Rossetti’s death are not recorded since there was no occasion to write to Alice, and any letter he may have written to William Michael appears not to have been preserved; however, in a letter of the 25th announcing the death of Sir Henry Cole, Scott says, “Besides Gabriel I have lost my one business friend in the world”.²

² In WBS’ day-diary for 1882 (PP), every entry between 5 January and 4 February treats DGR. Because of Scott’s propinquity to DGR at this crucial time, the entries are worth reproducing in full.

5 Jan. Maudslie has begun to inject a drop or two of plain water instead of morphia! He howls out for the morphia, and after receiving the water feels relieved and goes to sleep!
In the same letter, Scott expressed his “hunger to see you and talk of so many things”. William, however, remained incommunicado following Rossetti’s death, and, though he apparently wrote Scott promising him one of Brucciani’s casts of Gabriel, he did not act on Scott’s suggestion that they meet at No. 16 to select a memorial for himself and Alice Boyd. As late as 24 May, Scott had still not seen William. Scott writes that he has heard from W.M.R. about the mask, and in reply to my note about choosing a memento. He thinks that had best be delayed till the will is proved, and then he thinks all the persons named should, if possible, be got together and select their objects. Morris is not among them (I see by the list W. gives from memory) which is an omission I cannot think right. However I fancy with all the delays I shall be at Penkill when the reunion takes place. There seems no possibility of seeing W.

6-8. D.G.R. out of bed, and down in the studio some days now. Today he seriously consulted me whether he shd. go on living in the present expensive house till every penny is spent, or whether he shd. take a room in a back street and make his funds last. He does not like to go into the workhouse! He has in the bank over £1000—having since we got Fanny finally out of the house and a new lock on the door (she had a pass key!) received payment of the picture bought by the Liverpool Gallery. He still pretends his hand is powerless!

9. Caine has just told me DGR is sitting painting!

10. I go to see him. He will not own he has been painting.

12. Find him alone. Tells me all about the death of his wife. For 2 years after her death every night he saw her upon the bed as she died.

13-14. It is now near a month since he touched chloral or even whiskey in any quantity, yet he is not at all better in any respect. He is very weak and now tells me so long ago as 1868-9 when at Penkill, people constantly called him foul names. Even the little children at the toll-house on the road we walked used to do so! These children used to crowd to the door as we passed, and smile because we used to give them pennies. This was before he took chloral or any other drug as far as I know.

16. R. trying to paint but it is clear he must be prevented showing his work.

17. R. tells me he knows he is dying.

[no entries between 17 and 31]

31. J. P. Seddon came in to see us having been at Rossetti’s. He has offered him his sea-side house West Cliff Bungalow at Birchington for a month.

2 Feb. Maudslie the surgeon still with R. The nurse also. M. tells me he has seen nearly all the symptoms before attendant on chloral depression. Not the suicidal tendency, but that it is not less than 14 years old a fixed idea only his courage wd. not equal the deed.

4. D.G.R. removed today to Birchington on Sea, Seddon having given him the West Cliff Bungalow for a month.
On the 26th, Scott wrote William concerning Alice Boyd’s good offices on Rossetti’s behalf:

Thanks for your good friendly note. I quite well know that you have an affectionate feeling for AB and that you will do all that is right. There is, however, one little history I think it as well you should know involving a more important action on the part of that lady than any making of comforters or flannel petticoats, which perhaps you do know about.

You remember that her cousin old Miss Losh took a great liking for D.G. Well, he protested to me he would never accept or borrow from her, but forthwith did so over and over again. Whenever he wanted money, indeed for any purpose, perhaps the £100 he gave Howell’s Miss Corder for example. Mrs. Pennell, Miss Losh’s heir, produced acknowledgements for many loans of money to Miss Boyd, and asked her what she should do with them. AB, considering how it would trouble Gabriel, beginning to be very much discomposed about many things, advised her to put the papers in the fire.

Whether this was actually done AB does not certainly know but believes it was. I mentioned this to Gabriel afraid that it might be weighing on his mind last autumn after returning from Scotland, and his attitude afterwards to AB was painful to see. It is among the spectres of the past, I fancy it is just as well to tell you about it. He had received 5 times £100. He was painfully grateful to AB yet he did not give her a copy of his last book!

This is the letter in which, William Rossetti says in the Memoir (i. 268), Scott “narrated the circumstances to me, in a tone and in terms of acrimony which startled me not a little”. His revelation of the borrowing episode in the Autobiographical Notes, even though he gave there only the skimpiest details, was taken by William Michael and other detractors as evidence of Scott’s perfidy, but, as William admits, “there may be two sides to this affair, as to most others”. Scott’s motive in writing to William was almost certainly to impress upon him the regard in which Gabriel was held by Alice Boyd; he may also, in conveying Alice’s instructions that Rossetti’s acknowledgement of the loan should be destroyed, have intended to allay any fears that William may have held about this outstanding debt, the details of which he might have been expected to discover among Dante Gabriel’s papers. William, after all, in rebutting Scott’s account in the Memoir, quotes from an entry in his diary dated 3 November 1868 a passage that unequivocally establishes the loan, so there is no question of prevarication, though the amount of £100 communicated to William was far short of the amount ultimately borrowed, based on the evidence of Rossetti’s letter to Miss Losh.
of 21 December 1868. Curiously, that portion of William’s diary entry in the *Memoir* (1895) was not reprinted in the excerpts from the diary printed in *Rossetti Papers* eight years later, and the manuscript for 1868 is no longer extant. Whether William responded at the time to Scott’s letter cannot be definitely confirmed, but there is no reference to a specific reply in any of Scott’s letters to Alice of May or June. In all likelihood, however, Scott’s revelations to William of Alice’s tangible demonstration of friendship for Rossetti when he was alive intensified his disappointment and disgust over William’s selection of mementoes for Rossetti’s closest friends.

Early in June, Scott received the casts of Rossetti’s head and hand:

At first I did not see any likeness, and the feeling as it rolled over on the carpet almost made me ill. It is not a mask but the whole cranium, and has the undescrivable feeling of death. Now I have got accustomed to it, and I see that it is exactly the man as he was in these later times. The hand is now more painful to look at than the face. It is shrunk and the underside of the fingers shrivelled and wrinkled, showing how the flesh had been absorbed, and how thin he had become.

On the 28th, he sent Alice a note from William stating that certain objects belonging to Rossetti had been put aside for Scott and Alice:

The articles I found were an old tattered book of Italian poetry worth about 1/-, a nest of little tables more or less broken, you remember them, a portfolio with photos from Holbein, etc., a scrap book, do. Italian photos—two brass vessels, the most worthless of those that used to lie on the Chimney piece, a kind of black pot with two worthless spill-pots. Not one of these lots would bring above 5/- at a sale. Beside these there was something small wrapt in a piece of newspaper, which I opened and found to consist of a plated buckle worth about 3d and a shawl pin of the same metal. "These," said Dunn, who showed me the lots, "W. means for Miss Boyd." I was in a sweat of fury but only chose for myself the two brass dishes, thinking of what you said about getting some object from the Chimney piece.

... Wm. then said, "About something for Miss Boyd," and I confess to you I gave him "a bit of my mind." Poor fellow, I regret having to do so, for he seems to be suffering under the fear of not having enough to pay the debts, but

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1 See "Rossetti and Miss Losh", Chap. 6 in Janet Camp Troxell’s *Three Rossettis* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 80-108. DGR’s letter establishing his further loan of £400 is printed on pp. 83-84 (*DW* 800).

2 WBS’ oil painting from the Brucciani mask is in the collection of W. E. Fredeman.
also he is overridden by Lucy, so I could not help it. To make the tale short, the interview ended by my taking the cast of the head of Keats, which you are to have. I shall give you the best brass vessel and bring it down with me. You can have the other one too if you like.

In a postscript, he cautioned Alice, "Don't write to W.M.R. please. I don't suppose he will write to you, but whether or not, don't write".

If Scott was incensed by what he took to be William's callousness, he was equally upset by an event that occurred at the Cheyne Walk sale:

... Tebbs came in from the sale at 16, reporting the enormous high prices things were going for. He had a melancholy tale to tell about William, who was sitting alongside of Howell all the time, Fanny hovering behind, and other members of the infernal circle. He had bought a picture by Seddon who died, and W. said to him, "Ah, you bought that!"—"Yes but I have had to pay for it!"—William's reply was, "If it had gone for a trifle, I would have bought it in and presented it to Seddon".

Can you imagine anything in worse taste or more impertinent than that, was Tebbs' commentary. You know Seddon left D.G. the house for a month. They stayed 3, and at the end (they had inhabited 6 beds) Lucy wrote Mrs Seddon asking her if it was expected the linen should be washed! I told Tebbs about the trumpery selected for us men named in the will, and also mentioned that I considered W. should have returned the Poets to you. You will be surprised and even confounded to learn Tebbs has just been with me again today after the sale to tell me he has bought the Poets (45 volumes) to present to you, with his admiration for all you have done for Gab! I have protested in vain: it is done: I must bring them down. He wanted to buy my illustrated poems with its affectionate inscription but stoppt at £3! Vernon Lushington had the book at £3.3. That is the way things have been going.

Not all of Scott's letters of 1882 deal with Rossetti, but certainly those that do are among the most interesting of the year written to Alice. In two or three not quoted he discusses the proposed biographies of Caine and Sharp and comments on Watts-Dunton's indignation as the self-appointed biographer, but these have already been cited in an earlier monograph. Many of his letters of the year treat *A Poet's Harvest Home*, published on 15 May. Apart from perfunctory reportings of reviews and notices, he sent Alice, on 7 June, Christina's

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1 Thomas Seddon, an early associate of the P.R.B., accompanied Holman Hunt on his first trip to the Holy Land (1853); he died in Cairo in 1856. His brother, J. P. Seddon, made his house in Birchington available to the dying Rossetti.

2 Alice Boyd presented this set of *The British Poets* to DGR on 4 March 1880.
acknowledgement of her copy, with "an amusingly bad specimen of her present powers of poetry":

Only a pleasant one to me as she owns to "an admiration before she was twenty." Think of that! The first visit I made to the Rossetti household I only saw the old man with a Shade over his eyes and a great snuff box, and Christina standing writing at a small high desk. She would then be 18. The lend she makes me is the lend of a paper with a review of my book which I shall send you tomorrow. It quotes the little rhyme addressed to Christina, which the writer has somehow spotted as addressed to her.¹

How important was the correspondence between Scott and Alice is apparent in several of his letters. "I wish I could write every day," he told her on 28 June,

but I have so many letters to write and so many people come in upon me, and above all I have so overpowering a desire to sit down and do nothing when I have a chance, that I can't do much more than I have accomplished. You know a paper, or any other kind of communication, is evidence that I am thinking of you, and all right myself.

He confessed, however (7 July):

I can't write cards to you because I can't be always so guardedly respectable as to suit the taste of idle servant maids and Post Office officials, and to contrive insinuations of information about one's interior economy sub rosa is too troublesome.

But if his letter writing was for him a catharsis, Alice's to him were essential to his psychological stability:

You know how subject I am to get into a low mood somehow or other—sometimes with a fixed idea like a monomaniac, sometimes without even that, and nothing is so good for me as a letter from you with cheerful news or written in cheerful spirits without news. I have no doles or dumps at present, still, living without you, every post that brings me something from Penkill rouses me up.

On his return from Penkill on 18 October, Scott visited Holman Hunt whom he found "so poor, nervous, and really dangerously worn-out, after 3 or 4 years despairing labour, beginning again!" on his Flight Into Egypt. On the 31st, as a result of having been excluded from Selections from Our Living Poets, he noted that "I am never lucky in my intercourse with business men", and resolved that "I am going to retire more and more, to keep myself out of the way, and not try for notice

¹ The poem in A Poet's Harvest Home addressed to Christina Rossetti is "Rose-Leaves".
of any kind". On 18 November, he announced that he had sold his collection of prints to F. S. Ellis for £750, thus ending a pursuit to which he had given considerable time and attention:

Curiously enough that is almost exactly what they have cost me according to the little book of entries, so, as I have had the pleasure of collecting, and the credit of it, and have written two books, *Dürer* and *Little Masters*, I am satisfied.

There is no doubt that the death of Rossetti left a hole in Scott’s life, as it had in Morris’, with whose assessment Scott, for obviously different reasons, might very well have concurred:

What can I say about Gabriel’s death, but what all his friends, or almost all, must feel? It makes a hole in the world, though I have seen so little of him lately, and might very likely never have seen him again: he was very kind to me when I was a youngster. He had some of the very greatest qualities of genius, most of them indeed; what a great man he would have been but for the arrogant misanthropy that marred his work, and killed him before his time: the grain of humility which makes a great man one of the people and no lord over them, he lacked, and with it lost the enjoyment of life which would have kept him alive, and sweetened all his work for him and us. But I say he has left a hole in the world which will not be filled up in a hurry.

1883–84

Scott’s letters of 1883 and 1884 are limited to those written between May and July, since in both years Alice accompanied

1 The book in question is *Living English Poets* (London, 1883), containing selections from thirty-five English poets alive when the book was published, including besides the giants—Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Morris, and Swinburne—Patmore, Dobson, Bridges, Lang, and Gosse—no WBS!

2 In 1891, AB sent a transcription of Morris’ original letter (dated 29 Apr. 1882; now at Princeton) to the author seeking his permission to include the letter in WBS’ *AN*. Morris agreed to the publication of the first paragraph, acknowledging receipt of *A Poet’s Harvest Home*, which was duly published (*AN*, ii. 308) but deleted the paragraph quoted here. His reasons he gave in his accompanying letter (dated 13 Oct. 1891; PP): “It contains a judgement on a friend and contemporary which I thought true at the time, but it does not follow that I think so now. But that is not so much the point; the letter was addressed to our dear friend in all privacy, and as a private utterance wears quite a different face to what it would wear as a public one. W. B. Scott doubtless understood exactly what I meant, as I knew he would when I wrote it. But the general public would most certainly misunderstand it, and 1 and several other persons would be in one way or another sufferers from that misunderstanding. . . .” This excerpt has been twice printed—in the Sotheby catalogue of the Penkill sale (1952, item 164) and in Philip Henderson’s *William Morris* (London, 1967, p. 218).
him to London after his summer at Penkill. Although Scott was into his seventies, Alice's diaries give no indication of any radical alteration in the pattern of either their social or working lives. Over the winter and spring of 1883, numerous guests were entertained at Bellevue, and Scott and Alice went on several occasions to the exhibitions of Rossetti's works at the Royal Academy and the Burlington Fine Arts Club. To Leathart, Scott sent his assessment that, while the exhibitions form an "interesting collection", the drawback is that Rossetti never had any scruples in making replicas, triplicates, quadruplicas, in fact he only attained to the command of a subject by repeating it, so in these two exhibitions one sees the same subject over and over again. (18 June)

But, "recognizing the old objections I had to some of them and indeed the want of expert technique, such as astonishes one in the Ex of Tadema's works", the more we, that is, I and all the friends I know, consider the collection and its evidence of poetic power, and all the higher qualities of art, the more Rossetti rises in comparison with all other English artists. (11 Feb.)

Over the season, Scott worked at several pictures, including *The Gloaming*,¹ for which Alice modelled the old lady, a death's head of Rossetti painted from Brucciani's cast, a small watercolour of the *Building of the Roman Wall* and several portraits. The pair spent their anniversary at Penkill, where, on 24 March, Scott laid the foundation stone of the Great Hall.

Alone in London after 25 May, Scott wrote Alice 19 letters, "taking", as he said in a letter of the following year, "time by the forelock" so that Alice would have regular news of his activities. He had his normal round of visitors, but his most interesting accounts are those of Inchbold and De Morgan:

Yesterday I was very tired and we were in the midst of dining on a very moderate steak, when an imperious knock and ring came to the door, and in spite of Dorothy saying we were at dinner in came Inchbold. We had to accept him, and feed him, and found him in a state of insane egotism and conceit. Really the creature will I fear someday go clean out of his mind. The evening before we had Philips, his nephew as Inchbold calls him, and he is another of these egotists that make one incline to cut the world at large and give general directions to say, "Not at Home". (10 June)

¹ This picture, the full title of which is *The Gloaming, Manse Garden, Berwickshire*, sold at auction in Newcastle in 1971 for £1000. See Lyall Wilkes, *Tyneside Portraits: Studies in Art and Life* (Newcastle, 1971).
De Morgan came a week later:

On Sunday came De Morgan, who is more than ever like "speldin", a dried haddock, a very poor one, halved, not exactly like a man so much as an imitation of a man, a sort of mild Frankenstein whose voice has never come right. . . . (18 June)

That same Sunday, Scott heard recounted the outrageous story of the Duke of Mantua, which he retailed for Alice:

We talked over one of the most extraordinary things that have been heard for many years. The Duke of Mantua or somebody personating such a person has had a public meeting at Exeter Hall and promulgated the grandest fable of a University Society of Mantua and Montferrat, that has been giving gold medals from the times of the middle ages and has all the letters of acknowledgement from Dante, Michelangelo, Raphael, Milton, Shakespeare, who says in very bad Latin that he will visit them if he gets enough fortune to do so, and write better plays afterwards!! Holman Hunt has received some communication about a gold medal from them!

Scott also sent Alice several literary appraisals: of Fitz-Gerald, who died only a week after sending him his Readings in Crabbe; of Swinburne's A Century of Roundels, "which is reported to be very good, and the work of a reformed character, even pious" (22 June); and of Meredith, whose Richard Feverel he found "the work of a cynic and a man of painful experiences of women I should say but of great ability" (14 June). The book, he confessed, is to me tremendously exciting and has torn me to pieces—I may say. Some day you must read it; the whole story is overdone and irritating and unpleasant, and yet fascinating to me and ending in the painfultest way. Today I had some talk with Crowe about Meredith and find the man and his book are one and the same, in history and in temperament—that is to say, the temperament of the author in writing has transferred to the characters of the book.

The next year, Scott's last as a correspondent to Alice, there was not, as he said in his final letter, "much news to give you" (18 July), though among his 25 letters there are interesting abbreviated accounts of Simeon Solomon and Count Stenbock, Edmund Gosse, Vernon Lushington, and Morris, the last "going deep into Socialism". Of Stenbock, Scott had noted in 1883 (1 July) that he was a "nervous unreasonably volatile character . . . as a poet, of the newest type, . . . although mad on certain old lines—Blake and poor Simeon; . . . of all the 'untameable house-flies', as Carlyle called certain French eccentricities, that
have ever gravitated my way this is the most erratic”. The intimacy between Stenbock and Solomon, Scott described as “most unpleasant, and is in fact on my mind”:

I had an interview with him yesterday . . . but I could make nothing of him. I must write to V.L., which I ought to do before leaving town, telling him all I think of this intimacy.

A man of 24 who declares he hated women, and has the miserable brute to spend the day with him now continuously I am afraid must be identified with the brute. I (or rather Letitia ignorant of the position of the “parties” as she is) spoke to Theo. Watts the other night about the affair. I was horrified at his way of taking it—“thereby hangs a tale.”

I can do nothing more in it. Strange to say Solomon is to take Stenbock to Burne Jones’, whom he calls his only friend. Do you believe that he can do so?

Scott’s best letter of 1884 is perhaps that to Leathart on the Royal Academy (30 May):

Your R.A. private view ticket was very welcome. I always see there a number of people that I ought to keep up some acquaintance with, not artists particularly, but connected with art. Among artists the only men I have seen lately are Arthur Hughes, Boyce, and Holman Hunt. The latter is at last getting his picture towards completion, at least Mrs. Hunt said so the other day with an expression of happiness, but Hughes on the other hand told me he was afraid to go near Hunt’s studio it was so painful. Boyce has not been doing much lately and Hughes has been badly treated at the R.A. The truth is that a host of new men, boys almost some of them, are occupying the places, and the older worthies that have not the chartered right to appear, are in danger of being left out in the cold. When you come up you will see a wonderful amount of admirable picture-making, expert technique, unknown a few years ago, while the popularities are disappearing, even Poynter, and Frith, and their contemporaries.

I sent you the other day the R.A. Notes, which has something of all the leading pictures, and some of the frightful examples of “Survivals”, to use a dreadful word now in use, applied to such men as Goodall, Cooper, etc. We have all been to the Grosvenor, where Burne-Jones has the most original and the most perfect work he has yet done—or indeed has been done by any man in England. Other works there of very great merit appear, but only a comparative few, the place being afflicted with amateurs.

In one of his last letters, Scott seems almost to have had a premonition that his correspondence with Alice was moving towards its close. “Looking over your letters in a bundle”, he wrote her on 29 June, “you can’t think what a quantity they

1 The fullest account of Stenbock appears in John Adlard’s Stenbock, Yeats and the Nineties (London, 1969).
2 Burne-Jones’ picture at the Grosvenor in 1884 was King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid.
come to. . . . I think I shall ultimately destroy them before leaving home. The best thing to do with letters nowadays". Similarly, his last letter, which introduces the "Aftermath" of the present study, seems also to convey a sense of finality. The hundreds of letters written to Alice over twenty-five years provide an intimate testimony to the closeness of their friendship and to the mutual devotion and dedication of their shared lives. Scott celebrated their silver anniversary, three months after the event, in a sonnet that he sent her "with imaginary kisses" (8 June):

Spring comes with all the firstlings of the year
Leaping around her, careless of the cold;
Soon summer's tale so charming will be told,
The last rose fall, the sun shrink as in fear;
Alas, the weeks fly faster, and more near
Yule seems to Easter, when the hair grows gray,
Sooner it seems the swallows fly away,
And wintry floes brim full the shivering weir.

What matters it, these are old ills we know
That pass us by as Chronos gives command:
But still your smile is bright as long ago,
Still can we gather shells on life's lee shore,
We still can walk like children hand in hand,
Friendship and love beside us as of yore.1

Alice's response has not, unfortunately, survived; however, she must have regarded Scott's sonnet as a suitable culmination to their long relationship, as, indeed, it is to their correspondence. "What you say of my sonnet", Scott writes on 13 June, "is very delightful to me":

I feel more and more that poetry should be true and direct speech, first of all, and so the allusion to the increasing rapidity of time, the shortness of the year as we advance in age, and direct allusion to gathering shells and so forth, vitalises the sonnet and makes a poem for all who have any perception of the sentiment desired to be conveyed. No superfine speech, no subtilizing of the poetics can stand in place of this.

**AFTERMATH**

When, on 21 July 1884, Scott wrote what he called "the last of a longish series of scribbles, which I have tried to keep up

1 In the "Aftermath" of *A Poet's Harvest Home* the poem is entitled "An Anniversary: The 31st" and "Addressed to a Dear Friend".
from day to day that you might not forget me altogether”, he had no way of knowing that this letter would be the last he would ever pen to his companion of twenty-five years. Five days later, he and Letitia went to Penkill. Over the summer, the masons completed the work on the new Great Hall of the Castle (21 Aug.), and, after Letitia’s departure on the 25th, Scott and Alice visited Edinburgh (11–13 Sept.), witnessed together an eclipse of the moon (4 Oct.), and, en route to London, made what was to be Scott’s last trip to Newcastle.

During the season, the Bellevue household engaged in the regular round of social activities. Though Alice was having trouble with her leg, she and Scott attended a performance of Percival at Albert Hall in November and the next month saw Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum. They entertained less frequently than normal, but Christina Rossetti came to tea on 26 November, and on Christmas Eve she and Scott paid a call on Holman Hunt. New Year’s Eve was spent with the Hueffers, where Ford Madox Brown, Shields, and Mathilde Blind were also present; and on New Year’s Day they dined with assembled friends and family at William Rossetti’s. On 6 January, Mr. Marshall operated on Alice’s knee, and she was confined to her room for a fortnight, getting “downstairs to the snuggery for the first time—cured I trust” on the 20th. “Dear WB”, she noted in her day-diary, “[has] been so kind all through”.

Alice’s own disorders were soon to give way to a far greater concern. By mid-February, she had improved enough to attend the private viewing of Holman Hunt’s The Triumph of the Innocents, which Scott, in a letter to Brown (12 Nov. 1888), called “a miracle of hard work”; but most of their socializing was at Bellevue, where they entertained the Boyces, the Lushingtons, H. A. Bowler, J. M. Gray, and Sir Francis Burton. She and Scott celebrated their anniversary (18 Mar.) at Penkill, returning just a week before the commencement of his South Kensington duties, which began earlier than usual on 13 April. In the early hours of the 23rd, around 2 a.m., Scott suffered the first of a series of heart seizures that would plague him throughout the remainder of his life and render him incapable of sustained work. After two days of crisis, complicated by liver ailment and
congestion of the lungs, Scott began to improve, but Alice confided to her diary that "This has been a fearful attack and I feel that I very nearly lost my dearest and best friend and one greatest interest in life". Though he had no major seizures throughout the late spring, and even recovered sufficiently to venture out in a wagonette as far afield as Kelmscott House to see William Morris, Scott and Alice recognized that his condition was serious; and the long-range prognosis convinced his two doctors, Marshall and Thompson, that the best plan would be to remove him to Scotland, away from the bustle of London and the pressure of the many friends, who, perhaps fearing his death, rallied to his side at Bellevue House.

The train journey to Girvan nearly proved Scott's undoing, as he reported to William Rossetti (1 Sept. 1885):

We came down by an "Invalid Saloon", a uselessly expensive plan recommended by the fact of its being our property for the time, and subject to no delays or stoppings between Euston and Girvan, but this length of time on the journey was too much for me, I had another paroxysm at about 2 O'Clock in the morning, and again another a night or so after, here at Penkill. We had the doctor, happily a sensible and cultivated fellow, all night for 3 nights, in fear of a return. Since that time I have been a great deal in bed trying to recover, and now drive out daily the weather being almost continuously splendid, and my walking powers being simply nil. Sad is it not. I am precluded from either mental or bodily work or exercise. I do not even read more than I can help—but am read to. The irregular action of the heart is now my master, and some time may chance to be my executioner. But I do not think of it.

Once settled at Penkill, through the good offices of Alice, whom he rightly called his "life preserver" (5 Feb. 1888), Scott began gradually to recuperate, but, though he projected excursions to Newcastle and even anticipated an eventual return to London, he was destined never again to leave the precincts of the little castle that had for so many years been his summer retreat. "I see now", he wrote Leathart (27 July 1885), "that I can never expect to be well as before this derangement of the lungs and heart, and must expect to live with great caution and reserve".

Although by his own admission Scott was a "sonambule", he was also accustomed to hard work and the society of a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. A semi-invalid at Penkill, he found the enforced retirement of his closing years severely trying and restrictive. Nevertheless, he managed to maintain a
close correspondence with his old friends, many of whom made the pilgrimage to Penkill to see him. And, though during this period he was preparing for what he called "joining the majority" by making and remaking his will, he was not, certainly, idle. Between 1885 and his death, he worked on several paintings and drawings, composed the letterpress for the engravings of *The King's Quair* as a final memento for his friends, wrote the twenty poems which formed the "Aftermath" for the posthumous reprint of *A Poet's Harvest Home* (1883), and, in 1887, completed the revisions of the *Autobiographical Notes*, which would be, ironically, because for the wrong reasons, his principal claim on immortality. The controversy following the publication of this memoir was a sad climax for Alice Boyd, but she had abundant reason to know how distorted was the portrait of Scott that Swinburne and others, in a rage of pique, had limned for posterity. Hyperbole at either extreme does scant justice to Scott as man or artist. Behind the extravagant accusations and the intemperate epithets levelled against Scott's remembrance of things past in the *Autobiographical Notes*, there is, of course, a grain of truth. He was no freer than most men from the prejudice, envy and jealousy that on occasion surface in disappointed rancour and injudicious appraisals; and he was certainly possessed of a Scottish candour and unsubtlety that alienated sensitivities more delicate than his own. However, as his letters to Alice and his other friends demonstrate, he was also a man of warm and generous attachments, who sought in friendship both fulfilment and permanence. A self-taught man, Scott was probably more erudite than talented, but there is in none of his writings, either the letters or the memoir, evidence that he resented bitterly the plaudits that came to better poets and artists. He was genuinely flattered when in his twilight years he was made an honorary member of the Royal Scottish Academy and an honorary LL.D. by Aberdeen University, but both were recognitions totally unsolicited and unexpected.

Finally, Scott, though proud and certain of his abilities, was not given to vainglory; neither was fame ever his particular spur. On the contrary, he was as realistically critical of his own limitations as he was of those of his friends, including Rossetti.
After Rossetti's death, William Michael proposed putting the *King's Quair* drawing that Scott had given to Dante Gabriel into the Cheyne Walk Sale (5–7 July 1882). Scott's response puts into perfect perspective his capacity for self-assessment and brings full circle this edition of his letters to Alice Boyd:

> What I would like you should do with the drawing you speak of, which was my first design for the King's Quair, the receipt of which was Gabriel's first acquaintance with the subject, is to keep it yourself. I believe I have the composition in pencil outline, and though AB would like to have it because of the above facts, she has so many works of mine, good and bad, in Penkill, hanging up and in portfolios, I am ashamed of myself there, and wish she might have no more. To sell it at the sale on the other hand would add little to your gains. Hunt or Millais, will bring money but I—"most justly a pictor ignotus"—as Gabriel celebrated me in his dear old days of chaff, would be distinguished by the smallness of my market. (30 June 1882)¹

¹ For various kinds of editorial, research, and stenographic assistance in the preparation of this monograph I should like to thank the following: the students in my bibliography seminar in 1973–4 who did the preliminary transcriptions and editing; my research assistants, Richard Hopkins and Tirthankar Bose, who checked and rechecked transcriptions, searched out documentation for the notes, and assisted with proofs; my secretary, Clare Warner, for translating the roughest drafts to intelligible copy; my friends, Professors Stanley Weintraub and Allan R. Life, who read the proofs of Part I and saved me from several errors; and, finally, my wife, Dr. Jane Fredeman, who scrutinized with the professional editor's eagle eye the finished product. For support of this and other research projects on which I worked between 1971 and 1973, I must acknowledge The John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, The Canada Council, and The Killam Scholarship Fund of The University of British Columbia.