

THE LITERARY SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITICAL REPUTATION OF
WILLIAM BELL SCOTT'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

by

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ABSTRACT

As a background figure in the Pre-Raphaelite movement, William Bell Scott suffers from an unattractive reputation largely because of attitudes expressed in his Autobiographical Notes. Chapter One of this thesis examines his life and work, but although a chronological approach is used, it is Scott's wide range of activities and friends which is given prominence.

In Chapter Two, Scott's Autobiographical Notes is considered. Scott's lifelong interest in journal writing is traced as much as is possible, using manuscript material in the Penkill Papers at the University of British Columbia. The chapter then covers the actual editing of the Notes by William Minto, making the point that even before his book was published Scott's potential readers were prejudging the work. Manuscripts in the Penkill Collection provide the Material for these disclosures.

The three parts of the third Chapter are concerned with the shaping of Scott's reputation through prejudice and hearsay. The "Rossetti Legend," as it existed while Scott was writing his Notes and until the time of their publication, occupies the first part of the chapter. Next, the controversy which developed after his book met public view is examined. Finally, Scott's reputation is traced over the eighty years since the publication of his autobiography.

The final chapter opens with a survey of Scott's relationship with Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Most of the attacks made on Scott's Notes were prompted by his treatment of Rossetti. The survey suggests that Scott was both as friendly and as useful to Rossetti as he claims to have been. The second and longer part of the chapter deals with charges made against Scott by William Michael Rossetti in the Memoir volume of his Family Letters.

Information in the Penkill Papers proves on one hand that Scott did not fabricate anecdotes, and that he kept back much information which would have been of interest. On the other hand, this material makes it obvious that William Michael Rossetti, the authority of whose book rests on his filial relationship, did not tell the entire truth about his brother. Scott's Autobiographical Notes, then, should be seriously re-examined as a reference work on Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites.

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INTRODUCTION

It is something of a novelty to present a project concerning a secondary work by a minor figure as a literary thesis. The autobiography of William Bell Scott, however, forms a vital link between what actually took place in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and what history has shaped into our understanding of this group of energetic and imaginative painters and poets.

Several factors influenced the undertaking of this project. A long standing curiosity about the Pre-Raphaelites was first stimulated by editorial work that I did in English 501 on some of their letters. The most important circumstance, however, was that in 1963 the U.B.C. Library acquired an extensive collection of manuscript letters and journals found at Penkill Castle in Ayrshire, Scotland. These had been roughly catalogued, but they had not been carefully read, and on the suggestion of Professor Fredeman I began working on letters between William Bell Scott and Alice Boyd, which includes about 620 letters written between 1859 and 1884.

In concurrence with the work on manuscripts, I began to read Scott's published work, concentrating on the Autobiographical Notes, and I began to examine other writing by and about the Pre-Raphaelites and their associates. As more material was covered, it became obvious that there are contradictions in Scott's present-day reputation. Although Scott was known in his own time as both a painter and a poet, to contemporary literary critics he is a figure of scorn, and only the art critics seem to have made any attempt to evaluate his contribution to the progress of English culture. Jeremy Maas, in his Victorian Painters, puts Scott in a reasonable perspective as an influence on the Pre-Raphaelite group.

Also contributing to their fervor were the close social and creative relationships formed with leading literary figures, in which William Bell Scott (1811-1890) formed an introductory bridge, reflecting the idea of universality in the arts, which was central to their creed, the 'exquisite, patient, virtuous manipulation' of their work, the early divergence of their aims, in fact the sheer muddle of the thing (p. 125).

Among writers on Victorian literature, however, opinion is definitely biased against Scott. From passing reference in a survey work that Scott is "hardly deserving of study", negative comments about Scott range to Lona Packer's book-length thesis that his immoral behaviour led to Christina Rossetti's frustration in life. In each case, whether a writer merely accepts a traditional view of Scott or tries to see him in a new light, the criticism seems to derive from the reputation of his Autobiographical Notes. From my point of view, the books contained nothing offensive. Yet Scott's contemporaries took such a dislike to the book that writers still, after 80 years, hold the volumes in contempt.

Two specific discoveries in this new material are important if a radical shift in Scott's reputation is to be effected. First, there is nothing in Scott's unpublished letters to support charges that Scott was mean or petty, or that he possessed, eventually, an envious disposition. Alice Boyd was Scott's closest confidante and his comments to her about his London friends are frank, precise, and often humorous. Certainly he criticized his acquaintances on occasion, but his critical observations in this private correspondence are seldom cruel or malicious; nor are they hastily made. Scott's letters to Alice prove that his intimacy with the men he discusses in his Autobiographical Notes was not fabricated; moreover, the disclosures he makes in the Notes comprise only a part of his actual, and often vivid, experience with such men as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as unpublished material reveals.

The second discovery of importance to Scott's reputation is related to William Michael Rossetti's Memoir of Dante Gabriel, written in 1895. Because Theodore Watts, although claiming the right to be Rossetti's official biographer, had not produced a major work on his subject even twelve years after Rossetti's death, William Rossetti, in 1895, himself produced what must be called an official biography. An exploration of the dubious veracity of the Memoir, even though written by the chief authority on Rossetti's life, is a major link in proving that Scott's Notes are a valuable source-book for the period.

In simplest terms, one can say that the Memoir seems almost to have been written as a reply to Scott's Autobiographical Notes. In this sense it is not truly an unbiased account of D.G. Rossetti's life; the filial involvement of William, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's brother, constitutes a negative, rather than a positive, influence on the historical picture of both Rossetti and Scott. Certainly W.B. Scott was not a major, or even an important, figure in the development of English literature. D.G. Rossetti was, however, and the distortion of his image which his brother's Memoir achieves, gives additional weight to the need for reinterpreting Scott's autobiography in an unprejudiced light.

Scott's autobiography was published in 1892, two years after he died. Because of Scott's realistic treatment of Rossetti, and his lack of deference to A.C. Swinburne, the book received very harsh reviews, which in turn prompted a controversy carried on in the public press (the subject of Chapter 3). At the time, William Rossetti took a minor part in the argument, making only a few objections to details of time, place, or interpretation. The Memoir, written three years later shows, however, that he had been deeply affected by Scott's Notes. Early in the Memoir, William disclaims both Scott's authority, and his own sensitivity to Scott's

point of view. As the book progresses, William returns more and more to passages in Scott's book, correcting details, criticizing attitudes, and finally quarrelling outright with some of Scott's interpretations of events. In several instances, William questions in such a way as to insinuate that Scott is lying. It is not surprising that Scott's Notes have a reputation as an unreliable source.

If anyone was directly responsible for creating false impressions about Dante Rossetti, it was his brother William, and not William Bell Scott. Information about Rossetti's paranoia, his delusions, and his chloral habit, is explicit in Scott's letters. Yet one does not even need access to these manuscripts to see that William's picture of his brother was seriously distorted on several matters. What is most significant is that the Memoir was shaped by William's compulsion to block Scott's exposure of Dante Gabriel, and that because of filial authority, William's book has gained a following while Scott's Notes have been consigned to the realms of half-truth. In the past, scholars have been content to accept William Rossetti's version as authoritative. The new material on which this thesis is based proves that such assumptions are ill-founded. The Autobiographical Notes of William Bell Scott deserve to be revalued as a Pre-Raphaelite source-book.

CHAPTER ONE

William Bell Scott's Life and Work

The reader who encounters Scott where he is usually found, in the footnotes or appendices to works on the greater artists of the Victorian period, is generally content to leave him there. As presented in the usual "thumbnail" sketch of a minor figure, Scott appears merely as a series of dates and publications summarized by the traditional note about the nastiness he displays in the Autobiographical Notes.¹ Here is Scott in miniature -- the Scott seen, for example, by the editors of the recently published Rossetti letters:

William Bell Scott (1811-90) artist, art critic, and poet; younger brother to the painter David Scott (1806-49); taught at the Government School of Design in Newcastle on Tyne, 1844-64; became a friend of D.G.R. in 1848; contributed to The Germ; lived near D.G.R. in Chelsea, 1864-82; his posthumous Autobiographical Notes, published in 1882, gave great offence to D.G.R.'s surviving relatives and friends.²

Yet the fact that Scott lived long enough to feel that his life was worth an autobiography, specifying in his will instructions for its publication, suggests that a closer look at his life would prove interesting and valuable.

While the half dozen lines of a biographical note are an absurd way to mark a man's achievements, Scott's own story of his life is in many ways an unsatisfactory source of information about him. His refusal to pay close attention to chronological details accounts for much of the book's weakness as autobiography. His decision to let inaccuracies pass was deliberate: "Exact chronology is of little consequence in these notes of mine. The particular powers of memory I do not possess that command dates" (Notes, I, 527). In preparing the manuscript for publication, Scott's editor, aware that the book had historical importance, tried to correct the obvious inaccuracies. However

he was not totally successful, and mistakes in dating made the book vulnerable to harsh attack soon after its publication.

The biographical usefulness of the volume is further impaired by Scott's shift in attitudes towards autobiography at various times in life. In 1854, Scott completed his first "Autobiographical Journal", consisting of four hundred folio pages.³ It was probably begun about 1845, when he took his position at Newcastle, a time when his future was "first visibly settled by profession and marriage." At the age of forty-three, he decided that his preoccupation with journal writing was foolish, and wrote no more until 1877. In the Preface to the Notes, he explains his intentions in this early attempt at autobiography:

I have thought to understand myself better by their means. But it has not been so, the difficulty is too great. It is not impossible to do, but if we could "see ourselves as others see us" the poetical interest at least is gone, the record is worthless. (Notes I,2).

The dominant impression Scott gained from re-reading his early book was that "I must have had a double: a creature personating me, whose writing these documents were ..." When he decided in 1877 to rewrite his reminiscences, he nevertheless intended to incorporate some of his early passages into the text. He restates his new purpose as "All I propose, then, in these pages is to describe with some degree of accuracy some of the scenery of my life, and of the lives of my dear and intimate friends" (Notes, I, 5). Scott says he will burn the first journal. There are a few pages extant, however, which suggest that the early journal was indeed very different from the published Notes. Lona Packer, who had access to some of the remaining journal pages, wrote: "we know from what fragments still remain of the old journal that he had in places confided to its pages emotional experiences of an intimate nature, and these confidences concerned a woman."⁴ Professor Packer's thesis

that Scott was Christina Rossetti's secret love leads her to suggest that the journal was destroyed because of comments such as Scott's description of love: "a giddy dance of nature round the terminal idol, a rabies of mad incantations and gymnastic lunacy round and round the voracious idol." (p.63)

The last chapter in the Notes was written in 1882, the year of Rossetti's death. Scott says "My work has not been Art for Art's sake, but truth for truth's sake ... I shall miss the little task I have always fallen back upon as an occupation in the absence of any other more urgent in this pleasant retirement I enjoy" (Notes II, 318). However, Scott did not really abandon his involvement with autobiography. In the concluding chapter Alice Boyd recounts that for his last, invalid years, he was often busy re-writing and interpolating passages in his manuscript. Scott's critics, from 1892 until the present, like to characterize him as a bitter and envious old man, writing his book as a chance to make spiteful observations about former friends, especially Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Certainly there is evidence that Scott was extremely dissatisfied with the tendency to glorify Rossetti in the years after his death. But it is also a fact that Scott's Autobiographical Notes were a lifelong interest, and that the main work was done much before Rossetti's death. That the book went through various stages does cause difficulty in knowing Scott through his book. The writer may be the young man of energy in Newcastle and London or his chronological counterpart, "the somnambule." He may be the older man, less ambitious, but wiser and mellowed at his retreat in Scotland, or he may be the invalid heart-attack patient working busily from his bed to change once more the statement of former years.

II

Scott was born September 12, 1811, in Edinburgh, Scotland, the seventh of eight children. The first four children all died in the year when Scott's older brother David was born. A strong recollection for Scott was being called by the name of Lockhart, one of the boys of the earlier family. Scott's father, the best Scottish engraver of his time, had an engraving and printing office near Parliament Square which seemed to the young boy his major interest besides "religion and the state of his pulse." Scott felt himself the favorite of his mother in spite of her more obvious affection for the children who died before Scott was born, but he is blunt about his father's attitude to him: "He never expressed to me anything but indifference; always ill in health, he never took any notice of me, a fact begetting a repellent feeling on my part" (Notes, I, 29).

Scott says very little about his brother Robert or sister Helen, but for David Scott, born in 1806 and the only other member of the family who gained recognition in the arts, he expresses both love and admiration. Scott's Memoir of his older brother was a sign of his honour for David, and was perhaps meant to be read as a companion piece to his own autobiography.⁵

David began his career as an engraver, with the production of a series of designs for Thomson's "Scottish Melodies." He then took up painting, and by 1830 he had become an Associate of the Scottish Academy. Having achieved "reputation and respectability," he spent two years working in his chosen field, preparing his Monogram of Man for publication in 1831. In 1832, he went to Italy where he travelled, painted, and wrote, presumably familiarizing himself with the classical works which his brother sees as having so much influence on his painting. William says of David's taste: "The abstract and the heroic were necessary, and [his] delight in any picture, poem or speculation rose in proportion to its distance from the scenes and motives of

the present" (Notes I, 17). On his return to England, David Scott was further honoured by his contemporaries with his election to the Scottish Academy.

In 1842, David entered unsuccessfully the government competition for mural decorations to Westminster Hall. William Bell Scott defends his brother's sketches for his subject, which in style repudiated the "careful, bold academic, German practice" but which reflected careful study in the medium of fresco. At the next contest held in 1844, David was nearly the only artist to submit work in the fresco medium. However, his work gained little praise, though its unfinished treatment provided a source of amusement (Notes I, 168-9). This second failure was extremely discouraging to the artist and seemed, in his brother's view, to intensify his alienation from "the amenities of the picture-loving public" (Notes I, 216). David then committed his artistic life to accomplishing what he felt to be important, not what was deemed important by the outside observer.

David's early death in 1849 was preceded, in William's estimation, by his death as an artist. While his personality was impressive and powerful, and his critical sense acute, he was blind to the "modern" position of art: "What he was critically weak in, in relation to art, was in the professional question, the common sense and prudential conduct of his peculiar abilities" (Notes I, 263). He compares his own long life and less spectacular career to David's:

Frangas non flictas was his unacknowledged law. I ... whose nature in many ways is exactly the opposite to all that, live on still--thirty years after he ceased to require the advice he never took -- with something like my old ambition of self-culture, in which, alas, he, as an example to be avoided, painfully assisted (Notes I, 263).

William Bell Scott's life until 1850, the date of publication of the Memoir, is marked by a growing output of artistic and literary works and

an increasing reputation as a person of artistic authority. Until 1837, when he moved to London, Scott remained in Edinburgh, where he reluctantly assumed responsibility for the family business. However, he spent some time at study in the Antique Class at The Trustees Gallery. His early poetic endeavours were mainly didactic poems in blank verse, and his "boyish ambitions" were such that he arranged an introduction to Sir Walter Scott, "the greatest Scottish poet of the day." The encounter was disappointing for William Scott, then aged about 17, for the older poet's conversation was "like the gabble of a Philistine" (Notes I, 74). After the age of 20, Scott exhibited his first picture, a dark forest with a hermit praying, as illustration to some lines from Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner. He gives the date as 1833-34 and one may assume that the set of etchings of Loch Katrine and the Trossacks, mentioned in the Notes (I, 76), was also published at this time. Another aspect of Scott's early twenties in Edinburgh was a painter's group, the St. Luke's Club. The chairman of the club, Professor John Wilson, was a friend of Scott's uncle, and became William's "poetical advisor." Wilson kept one of Scott's poems, "The Burgher of Limoges," with the assertion that he would try to publish it in Blackwood's Magazine, where he wrote as "Christopher North". The poem never appeared, but a long "octo-syllabic story" called "Anthony" written at this time did, when remodelled, find its way into print (Fortnightly Review, July 1868). Scott notes writing also at this period a "sort of dithyrambic laudation" on Shelley. This was published in Tait's Monthly Magazine in 1831.⁶

The St. Luke's Club had given Scott a close friend in William Shand, and these two, with several other friends of similar occupation, decided to publish a literary annual. The Edinburgh University Souvenir was published in October 1834; it contained contributions mainly by Scott and Shand, with a literary sketch by David Scott, then in Rome. During this period Scott was

incubating his poem The Year of the World. It was around this time too that he met Rosabell Bonally, the subject of one of his better poems (discussion follows, p. 13).

It has been suggested that with Scott's move to London in 1837, his creative activity underwent a change, with his artistic work becoming more important than his literary.⁷ In order to support himself in London, Scott etched a series of illustrations for a volume of poetry identified only as Landscape Lyrics. The process of etching could, Scott felt, supplant the currently popular, but rather slow and expensive method of illustration by engraving. While his "painter's etchings" gained attention, they brought him little money. His second attempt, a Christmas carol, found a publisher, but brought meager returns, while his third, a series of pictures of the Civil War, was never accepted for publication. These failures with etching prompted Scott to take up painting more seriously.

At this time in London, landscape painting was losing in popularity to "a new and interesting school of historical and, loosely speaking, inventive and illustrative painters" (Notes I, 107). Scott mentions a new habit of study which this "school" of painters was acquiring, especially in the fields of architecture and costume, and which he saw manifested in the work of his brother David. Applying himself to the principle of study, Scott produced a picture titled "The Old English Ballad Singer," which he was able to sell to a Mr. Paternoster for a moderate price, thus being able to sustain his existence, if but modestly. Scott learned that impecuniosity was the affliction of nearly everyone connected with the arts in London in the 1830's.

Another problem of the London artist, especially of a younger, arriving man, was the difficulty of getting his works on view. There was at the time one main exhibition gallery for water-colours and oil paintings, the Academy, and the policy of "keeping-him-down" until a painter became a member

caused much uneasiness among developing artists, as well as serious anxiety for the unknown. Another smaller gallery, the British Institute in Pall Mall, was supported by subscribers, but it was controlled by the keeper and, rumor had it, his frame-maker son. It was here that Scott's "Old English Ballad Singer" was exhibited.

Just as Scott had in Edinburgh made acquaintance with a group of young men of literary ambition, so in London he became part of a group of young men of artistic enthusiasm, among them Richard Dadd, William Powell Frith, and Augustus Leopold Egg. He found his fellows in London less than exhilarating in several ways. One disappointment was their adherence to illustrating the popular subjects of the previous two decades rather than exploring the historical subjects for which they professed excitement. To Scott's way of thinking, these men were, in addition, too reticent about sharing their professional knowledge or problems. On this latter characteristic Scott elaborates: "It was a society of rivals; there were too many for the chances of success, too many for the small amount of fame and fortune to be divided among them" (Notes I, 110). It is significant that Scott uses the word "them" rather than "us". Yet their contact with one another had at its core a common need: the necessity of exhibiting their pictures and of undermining the overwhelming power of the Academy. In 1841, Scott was invited to a meeting, chaired by Richard Dadd, which he describes as an example of many such attempts to establish exhibitions or exhibiting societies. The Westminster Hall Competition of 1842 and 1844 did make exhibition by non-Academy men easier, by bringing before the public many capable but unheard-of painters. Scott assesses his early London friendships objectively, suggesting that among these men he never felt strong bonds that had existed with his Edinburgh colleagues, for when it came time for him to leave London he did not

find it hard to abandon the relationships in this circle. However, he illuminates his "alienation" further by remembering "At the same time it is possible my undefined character as poet, etcher, and even critic might with some of them have stood in the way of freedom of intercourse" (Notes I, 113).

Scott found his most comfortable companions in this first London period among the literary set. He asserts that in the period of his going to London there was little interest in popular poetry or minor poets, possibly because the public simply did not consider much contemporary poetry worth mentioning. The great men, Browning and Tennyson, were read and respected, but for poetry of less than epic intent there was little interest. Scott says nothing of the poet-laureate Southey or of William Wordsworth who succeeded him in 1843, yet perhaps this suggests no more than a young man's lack of enthusiasm for an old man's poetry. Scott's most valued and respected literary acquaintance was Leigh Hunt, at this time a man of about 53 years, living frugally but contentedly, and still concerned with literary pursuits as publisher of The Monthly Repository. Through Hunt's friendship, Scott published his poem "Rosabell" in this magazine in 1838.⁷ This work, one of the poetry manuscripts he brought with him from Edinburgh, is a dramatic poem in fifteen parts employing varied verse forms. It describes and comments on the corruption of a country girl by wicked city life; following her through her life as a man's mistress, as a prostitute after her abandonment by him, and to her death in a charity hospital. The poem underwent several revisions during Scott's lifetime; the major one was a change of the title and heroine's name to "Mary Anne." This was suggested by Rossetti on the grounds that the second name was more appropriate and "true to life" for a girl of this situation.

Another friend of literary rather than artistic inclination was G.H. Lewes, who became editor of the Fortnightly Review (1865-66), and later the "husband" of novelist George Eliot. Lewes was a young man of twenty-one

when Scott met him in London, and the older man could see little potential in the younger: "I could not make him out or get a true glimpse of his acquirements, holding by high and pure ways of life and habits of body, which he ignored" (Notes I, 130).

Scott, who was nick-named "Duns Scotus" by Lewes, was working on a series of designs in outline which illustrated the progress through life of a self-seeking man. Lewes was very enthusiastic about the first design Scott showed him, and proposed to write an accompanying piece. Scott, fearing that his designs would become mere illustrations, declined Lewes' offer. When the designs were published in 1851, as The Journey of Prince Legion, Lewes was writing opera criticism in the Leader. Scott was amazed by Lewes' suggestion that he, and not the "melancholy" Scott had conceived of the central idea for the now-published designs, and had expressed it in a poem which he found "detestable" in retrospect.⁸

Another writer with whom Scott had contact at this time was Carlyle, although this was a much less intimate or amiable relationship than those with Lewes and Leigh Hunt. Scott records that in 1838 he published in an obscure magazine an article entitled "More Letters of Oliver Cromwell." He describes the article as a satire on Cromwell's style, and an imitation, done in admiration of Carlyle's writing. Hearing that the article had angered Carlyle, and wishing to propitiate, Scott sent him a lately published volume entitled Hades or the Transit; and the Progress of the Mind. Carlyle, Scott admits, acknowledged the book graciously, but framed it in what Scott took as an "arrogant formula" which exposed him as a man who took pleasure in informing people he was better and wiser than they. Dr. Samuel Brown, a close friend of David Scott and Carlyle, also was among William's acquaintances of this period, and many times he helped Scott make valuable contacts in the artistic world.

Scott's reminiscences about the later years of his first sojourn in London eventually focus on one important event; the Cartoon Competition for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. He writes of two close friends, Ralph Wornum and Thomas Sibson, with whom he took weekly sketching expeditions. Sibson, who was not formally trained as an artist but who could draw very accurately by instinct, did not "presume" to enter the contest, but went to Munich to study and do illustrations. As a member of the sculptor Patric Park's "circle", Scott met Benjamin R. Haydon, an artist he considers the most "self-sufficient" man he ever encountered. Scott elaborates that Haydon was an egoist in the extreme, having a kind of "vanity, intellectual and personal, which made it impossible for him to regard any other man as the same species with himself ..." (Notes I, 117). Scott's impression is based on Haydon's assumption that he would be successful in the "coming event of the art world." At a dinner party where Haydon was expounding his theories, Scott objected and was made a source of ridicule. He "revenged" himself, however, in a sonnet on Haydon published in Poems by a Painter, a revenge which in the Notes he recants.¹⁰

The Cartoon Competitions of 1842 and 1843, which awakened the public to the many unrecognized artists at work in London, marked an important step in the artistic life of London. They also marked a change in William Bell Scott's way of life. The failure of his designs in the second competition demonstrated to him the weakness of his position as a professional artist. Other misfortunes, such as the rejection of two pictures by the Royal Academy and the British Institution, and the failure of the publisher of the Illustrated Book of Ballads, impelled Scott to accept a post offered him by the Board of Trade, and in 1844 he left London for Newcastle, to take up a mastership there in the government School of Design. Later in the Notes he advances as another reason for his departure his disappointment in the art and poetry of that time

(Notes I, 251). His personal reaction to the artistic projects considered important had become indifferent to a degree that it was not worth "working his brain" in such a struggle for popularity. In the opinion of the critic John Gere, it was probably his acceptance of a teaching job that kept Scott in the lower ranks of painters.¹¹ In a sense, then, this decision to leave London could have been the fatal blow for Scott's career as a painter, although even in retrospect Scott does not seem aware of this possibility. Another change in his life was his marriage in 1838 to Letitia Margery Norquay.

The move to Newcastle was a change of location and position which anticipated an eventful social and artistic period in Scott's life. His occupation at the School was at first confusing, due to contradictions in intent and policy, and to the influence of manufacturers on their workers, the intended students. Faced with such rules as no drawing of the human figure, no geometry, perspective or mechanical drawing, and no teaching of anyone intending to enter the Fine Arts professionally, Scott in many cases chose to ignore outright the statements of policy. His connection with the School of Design was satisfying to him, for he saw the school and its usefulness develop over the years, and was aware of the influence of such programs on the artistic taste of his nation. In 1877, he could say, "the progress of forty years has made so large a difference, we may be said to be becoming practically a nation of artists, and as able in general design for decorative trades as any people in the world" (Notes I, 179).

As he had done in Edinburgh and London before, Scott made friends in Newcastle with men of literary and artistic ability. While his new friends were of lesser importance to the artistic world than his London acquaintances had been, he found their hospitality warm and he was encouraged by their interest to resume his work. His position had given him both

domestic stability and connections in the art world, and his creative work flourished in these conditions. In his early years in Newcastle, Scott attended an anatomy class and, considerably refreshed by his new location, he again took interest in landscape painting. His new surroundings, Scott found, had a fascinating history and he began his Antiquarian Gleanings in the North of England at this time.¹² The book contains drawn and etched examples of furniture, plate, and church decoration with descriptions by Scott. Publication of Antiquarian Gleanings in 1851 brought praise for the artist in his "fidelity to the original" and a note of recognition to the School which employed him.¹³

Scott's most important literary work of his early years in Newcastle was his long poem The Year of the World¹⁴; "It was my first and last important act of literary enthusiasm, and quite an honest one" (Notes, I, 235). Scott's youthful enthusiasm for setting the world right by his art is reflected in this poem of 1846, but at the time of writing the Notes he felt the same impulses still present in him: "an antagonism to any form of art or any dogma that in no way aids advancement -- social, scientific, artistic or religious" (Notes, I, 233). In retrospect, Scott sees his interest in re-writing and publishing as somewhat obsessive, for he published the poem quickly without reading it to anyone else. However, his preface to the work does not betray any frenzy but states that "the publication of the poem possesses to the Author something of the interest attaching to the promulgation of a creed as well as that of a work of art."¹⁵

The publication of this poem and its reception by the few who read it foreshadowed for Scott the limited success he was to have as a poet. He sees the period as a difficult one for poetic success, calling it a "time when no sane poetry could meet with attention, when Tennyson scarcely paid, and Browning became unintelligible" (Notes, I, 254). In an attempt to deal with

this lack of interest in poetry, Scott sent copies of his work to his friends, and to prominent literary figures such as Carlyle and Samuel Brown, hoping for their responses.¹⁶ Many recipients simply failed to acknowledge the book, presumably agreeing with the opinions of critics who conceded that although Scott apparently had some important purpose of mission, the poem was not likely to attract many prospects. November of 1847 brought Scott a letter from the young Gabriel Rossetti, and its immediate message to the older poet was that, "I was, it seemed, not destined to be wholly unknown at a sufficient distance" (Notes, I, 244).

The letter proved to have a lasting importance to Scott, for his reply to it brought a bundle of manuscripts, containing "Songs of the Art - Catholic." If somewhat puzzled by the intent of the title, Scott was extremely impressed by the quality of the poetry, and in Christmas of 1847 he made his first personal acquaintance with Rossetti, his family and his friends.¹⁷ Seeing their work and understanding their enthusiasm caused Scott to regret his leaving London for the more placid intellectual climate of Newcastle, for he calls his first meeting "the beginning of a new interest of life to me: from them sprang a knowledge of many men and many fields" (Notes, I, 251).

Scott sees his life at this point entering a new phase of growth, the former one ending with the death of his brother David in 1849 and of his mother in 1850. His mother's death left him with no obligations to the city of his birth and young manhood, and he determined never to return to Edinburgh. At first his status as the only living member of his family filled him with a sense of old age. This, however, gave way to a feeling of renewal: "I was dead and re-born into a more self-centered and freer existence" (Notes, I, 275). It is likely that the success of his Memoir of David Scott R.S.A., and the publishing of his brother's artistic designs, gave him the confidence which effected this revitalization.

The period of "new life" began with the publication in 1850 of the Memoir, followed by the Chorea Sante Viti; or Steps in the Journey of Prince Legion and Antiquarian Gleanings in the North of England, in 1851. A difficulty in determining Scott's work in these years results from Scott's selectivity of material in writing the record of his life. He apparently exhibited about twenty pictures between 1838 and 1869, but he mentions few particulars in his Notes.¹⁸ Likewise, he fails to mention his contribution to The Germ, the "official organ" of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and his comments on this publication would lead most readers to assume that although he was asked repeatedly for contributions he refused to contribute. In fact, he published two sonnets in The Germ, one in the issue of March, 1850, entitled "Early Aspirations", and another, "Morning Sleep" in the issue of February, 1850. The concluding lines of the former poem are especially relevant to Scott's view of his life as entering a new phase:

No More in Pride to other ears he sings
 But with a dying charm himself unto:
 For a sad season; then, to active life he springs.¹⁹

The year 1854 brought another publication, a volume of verse entitled Poems, but more commonly known as Poems by a Painter. Rossetti had offered to prepare an etching as a frontispiece, but never completed the promised picture. As he had done before with Hades and The Year of the World Scott sent copies of the volume to friends and prominent literary figures. This time, Carlyle did not ignore the book, but sent a note advising the poet to stop rhyming and start acting. Scott replied in a suitably perturbed manner, and received in return an apology from Carlyle who has misread the frontispiece as "Poems by a Printer" and had advised the printer accordingly.

If Carlyle's response to the book brought disillusionment, other readers were more appreciative. Through his friendship with Samuel Brown,

Scott became acquainted with Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan. The review of Scott's Memoir of his brother which appeared in the Scotsman newspaper was written by Lady Trevelyan, and as interest in him had been shown, Scott sent a copy of Poems (1854) to their home, Wallington Hall. This led to a friendship of many years, which included the commissioning of Scott to decorate a newly-formed courtyard at Wallington. The project, which was arranged and begun by 1856, is a series of eight pictures large enough to contain life-size figures, illustrating the history of Northumberland and the border. These pictures were exhibited in the rooms of the Literary Society of Newcastle, in order of their completion.

Scott's Wallington commission brought him many new acquaintances and Scott did his part by introducing former acquaintances to the Trevelyans. John Ruskin was introduced to Scott at this time (about 1856) but no friendship developed for their natures, Scott found, were "antipathetic" (Notes, II, 8). Around 1857, Scott met A.C. Swinburne, then a "schoolboy" of twenty years. Although the two men had an amiable, if respectfully distanced relationship while Scott was alive, it was his report of the first meeting with Swinburne which precipitated the outcry against his Notes and the subsequent blackening of Scott's name.

Scott gave several other men the chance to share in the Trevelyans' patronage. Thomas Woolner, the P.R.B. member whose expedition to Australia was a romantic disappointment, received a much needed commission to sculpt a marble group which would occupy the center of the hall. Although Scott says that the sculpture was intended to express or typify all the history that he was painting, the finished piece was titled "Mother and Child". Dante Rossetti received a commission for a water-colour picture, "Mary in the House of John", which was done in 1858. Arthur Hughes was another who benefited

professionally by Scott's introduction to Wallington Hall.

The most important friendship in Scott's personal life was begun through his connections with Wallington Hall and the Trevelyans. In March, 1859, he met Alice Boyd, a lady of about thirty years who wished to find some new interest in art. Impressed by her "interesting face and voice", Scott says that, "I devoted myself to answering this desire of hers, and from day to day the interest on either side increased" (Notes, II, 57). Alice Boyd's brother was the laird of Penkill Castle in Ayrshire in Scotland, and Scott was the guest of Alice and her brother Spencer in the summer of 1860. This was the first of many long visits and an eventual permanent residency by Scott. The friendship became such that Alice spent the winter months with Scott and his wife in London, while the Scotts, or often just William, passed the summer months at Penkill with Miss Boyd. Although Scott is never specific in his Notes about the success or failure of his marriage, it is clear that he considered Alice Boyd, rather than Letitia, his wife, the loving companion in his life. Scott's visits and correspondence with Alice were not, at any rate, interfered with by his marital status. Some of the most interesting and informative letters in the Penkill Papers are part of the extensive correspondence between Scott and Alice. In Scott's letters especially, their close friendships with the Pre-Raphaelite members are disclosed, and all the letters between Scott and Alice are especially valuable for their honesty and plainness of expression on personal matters.

Before his return to London in 1864, Scott had published some art criticism. As a master in the Government School, he had begun, in 1859, to lecture to his classes of senior students. These lectures, collected under the title of Half-Hour Lectures on the History and Principles of the Arts, were published in 1861. That this was Scott's first publication in art criticism is unlikely, for the first letter from Rossetti mentions a paper on Art in the Monthly Repository (Notes, I, 243).

In 1864, Scott moved from Newcastle back to London. With changes in the structure of the Government School imminent, he had resigned his position, a move that he later decided was a mistake. Public meetings and testimonials held in honour of Scott's work in Newcastle give evidence that he had won the general respect of the community. More important to his career, however, are the two commissions for paintings which he received. Sir Walter Trevelyan, apparently pleased by the results of the large paintings, commissioned a series of pictures for the upper spandrels of Wallington Hall. The subject was the ballad of Chevy Chase, "from Earl Percy's going out to the bringing home of the dead".²⁰ These were placed in 1870. The second commission was made through subscriptions by friends and colleagues, who wished to commemorate Scott's service to the people of Newcastle. Approximately £200 was given Scott on his departure for London, and he fulfilled his commission in 1865 with a picture entitled "The Building of the New Castle; The Origin of the Town."

On establishing himself in London, Scott began to form around him a circle of friends, contacting many acquaintances of his previous life in London. Of his former circle of artists, Frith and Egg had become Academy members and Scott found their company generally uninteresting. As a result, the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers and their "satellites" became Scott's most valued friends. Following his initial contact with Rossetti and Hunt in 1847 or 1848, Scott had come to know Woolner, Munro, William Michael Rossetti, Arthur Hughes, Millais, Morris, and Burne-Jones. In London again he was well equipped with friends who could stimulate both his artistic and literary impulses.

His next twenty years were his most productive, especially in the field of art history and criticism. The Half-Hour Lectures of the Newcastle period were revised in 1867 and again in 1874. His poem "Anthony" was

published in 1868, in the Fortnightly Review. During the first years after his return to London, Scott was working on a book about Albert Durer, collecting prints by this artist and doing etchings of his own to act as illustrations. The book, published in 1869, was intended to provide for the British public an authentic account of Durer's life and works. In his Preface to the volume, Scott comments that considering Durer's popularity in England, it is quite remarkable that "no English book about Albert Durer, no complete translation of his Journal, Letters, and other pieces, no catalogue or critical account of his works, should have yet appeared."²¹ By 1882, however, Scott considered his book "antiquated by the rapidly-developing Durer literature in Germany" (Notes, II, 193).

The year 1870 began a decade of intensive publishing, commencing with an article in the Fortnightly Review on "Ornamental Art in England." Scott's position in this article is that "a higher appreciation and feeling for the beautiful, and for the moral uses of taste, will simplify all our application of ornament."²² His article explains how the Government Schools of Design especially have attempted to do this. In March of this year, he contributed a note on Ebenezer Jones to Notes and Queries. The following year, 1871, brought two more minor publications, one a report on "Miscellaneous Art" in an official report on the London International Exhibition of this year. The second was a review in Fraser's Magazine titled "The Art Season of 1871," in which Scott discussed the possible harm to English art resulting from the influx of French artists into England. Scott's major publication in this year was his book, Gems of French Art, which he described as a picture-book, "a Gallery of Pictures done in small." He attempts to illustrate, by sixteen prints and his comments on them, the state of contemporary French historical and "genre" art which he considers inferior to English art of the same period. A criticism of English artists comes through, however, in his discussion of the French

artists' capacity for unity of sentiment and colour. He says of the new English painters "the terrible, the tragic, or the pathetic seem all impossible in presence of the trumpery seductions of bright colours or 'charming bits' of colour by way of relieving the sadness of the monotony."²³

The next year, 1872, Scott published three books on art: The British School of Sculpture with twenty engravings and fifty woodcuts; Our British Landscape Painters with sixteen engravings, and a book on modern Belgian art similar to the previous volume on French art.²⁴ In 1873 he brought out Murillo and the Spanish School of Painting, with fifteen engravings and nineteen woodcuts, and a volume on modern German art. This year also brought the first of several editions of poetry with a memoir and illustrations by Scott. The editions of Keats, and of Letitia Elizabeth Landon in this year, were followed in 1874 by editions of Byron, Shelley and Coleridge. In this general period, although the dates are uncertain, are two books of pictures with notices of the subject and painter, one on The Venetian Painters and one on The Italian Masters-Lesser and Greater.

Scott's own artistic talent came into the public view again in 1875 with Poems, illustrated by himself and Alma Tadema. The book was apparently near publication in 1873, but Scott's decision to make it an illustrated book delayed publication until 1875 and perhaps also affected the number of buyers. A letter from Rossetti, which Scott dates as 1873, encourages him to publish, saying "such a moment is the very one for such a piece of work as doing justice to your poetical chances once for all" (Notes, II, 202). Scott acknowledges his gratitude to Rossetti's interest, and to the encouragement of Swinburne and Morris, in his dedicatory sonnet. Many critics, Scott reports ruefully, saw both the dedication and Tadema's etchings, as attempts of the poet to "bolster up [his] now inadequate powers of pleasing" (Notes, II, 204). However, a later assessment, by the writer of the D.N.B. article

suggests that this volume "marks Scott's highest point of achievement in Poetry"²⁵ because many of the sonnets had been anthologized. Scott also published an edition of Shakespeare, and in The Examiner published a review of Letters on Landscape Art.

While this period of intensive publishing suggests to an objective observer that Scott had finally found his place in the literary world, it was a discouraging situation to the producer of all these works. He had been writing, in his art books, analyses of other men's success, instead of gaining renown for himself. His work on editions of poetry had set him writing memoirs of poets who had gained recognition, while he remained a "pictor ignotus." His own volume when presented to the world brought the admiration of a few loyal friends, but the scornful words of critics who accused him of attempting to gain glory through association with men of proven ability. Scott dates an assessment of his literary work as taking place before the summer of 1872, but as the books he mentions were published either in this year or later, it is likely the self-criticism took place later. Looking back at the books written in the previous years, he says they were "better than they deserved to be, and only made me feel that I was throwing my time away, and was in danger of looking like a literary hack; so I did no more" (Notes, II, 170).

The last five years of the 1870's nevertheless brought more publications, if at a slower rate. Scott wrote the introduction to a reprint of Albert Altdorfe's The Fall of Man, published by the Holbein Society in 1876. In the next year he published an edition of Sir Walter Scott's Works, followed by William Blake: Etchings from his Works, in 1878. In 1879, he wrote an article in Fraser's Magazine entitled "A Portfolio of Ancient Engravings," in which Scott leads the reader into the delights of a judiciously assembled collection of engravings. The Little Masters appeared

also in 1879, as one volume in a "Series of Illustrated Biographies of the Great Artists." This last book was republished in 1880. Scott's last publication of the art history he had apparently come to scorn was a descriptive catalogue designed to illustrate The Art of Engraving on Copper and Wood from the Florentine Niello Workers of the Fifteenth Century to that of William Blake.

The publications in the next decade are sparse: a volume of poetry, in 1882, titled A Poet's Harvest Home, and a book of etchings illustrating the Kingis Quair paintings on the staircase at Penkill, published in 1887. If Scott had given up his role as art historian and reviewer, he was still busy on literary projects. Before his death he had prepared for the press a final volume of twenty poems called Aftermath, but the anxiety of publishing became too great, and Alice Boyd decided against publication at this time. A second edition of A Poet's Harvest Home was published posthumously in 1893, and in this edition the Aftermath appeared. The last decade of Scott's life was also that of the final rewriting of the Autobiographical Notes. While 1882 is the date given by Scott as the last year he worked on the Notes, editor William Minto discloses that even during his years of invalidism at Penkill, Miss Boyd would find Scott re-writing and revising until late at night.

For the three summer months in the year 1865 to 1868, Scott was painting the staircase at Penkill castle with illustrations of the King's Quair, the poem written by James the First of Scotland while in exile. During the winter months of the same years, 1865 to 1868, Scott had a different project, the decoration of the windows of the South Kensington Ceramic Gallery. His purpose was to depict the history of the ceramic arts on the windows. Difficulties in regulating the intensity of light coming

through the windows caused Scott to experiment in several media, and he found a satisfactory solution in doing the designs in "graffito" on a burnt umber ground. In 1869 Scott received a commission for the staircases and doors of the South Kensington Lecture Theatre, but although he prepared drawings for this work, it was never carried out. His association with South Kensington brought him, in 1873, a position as an assistant examiner, which occupied him for a month or longer each summer until 1885. Little else of Scott's work in the later years of his life is known. Miss Boyd, in the concluding chapter to the Notes, says that Scott painted a little when well enough. As late as September, 1887, he began a picture of Iona, which was unfinished at the time of his death.

Exactly how many pictures Scott painted is hard to ascertain from published sources. The Dictionary of National Biography asserts that Scott exhibited twenty pictures in London between 1838 and 1869, but many cannot be identified for Scott himself says little of them. Algernon Graves, in his Dictionary of Artists from 1700 to 1893 lists thirty-one pictures exhibited between 1840 and 1873. Seven were shown at the Royal Academy, nine at the British Institute, four at the Society of British Artists, and eleven in various exhibitions such as the Portland Gallery and the Institute of Oil Painters. Whatever the details, and they remain difficult to determine, Scott did place his work before the public.

Because of the difficulty of determining exactly when, where and what Scott exhibited, it is nearly impossible to gain an understanding of how his contemporaries viewed his art. Bryan's Dictionary asserts that in Scott's art "the exuberance of his fancy" is most striking, and goes on to say that, "this, combined with his fine sense of style and his instinct for the picturesque, compensates largely for his somewhat faulty draughtsmanship and his occasional failings as a colorist."²⁶ Noting that Scott took

much care in studying details and accessories, the writer of the article adds that in decorative ornament Scott is at his best, for "here his faculty of invention and his fine taste give him high rank." The conclusion drawn by the biographical writers is an unfortunate one for a "pictor ignotus," as both Bryan's Dictionary and the D.N.B. suggest that Scotts' reputation will ultimately rest on his poetry, not his paintings.

Scott never gained popular acclaim for either his artistic or poetic undertaking, but from the people who came to know him, he gained respect, for, and interest in, his work. His contemporaries bought, recommended, and enjoyed his work.

The value of a survey of Scott's work is not in the tracing of a developing genius. It lies rather in an understanding of the scope of his interests, especially in the knowledge that he was not merely one who discussed and criticized, but one who acted. He was sympathetic, through experience, with the despair of the artist and he knew the poet's fear to expose his work to those who are waiting to tear at it, instead of hoping to enjoy it. Scott's skills, we have seen, were many. He was an engraver and etcher, a teacher of art, a painter in oil and water-colours, and a designer of decoration. He was adept at fresco, and could devise an artistic technique where one was needed. His poetry was a life-long involvement, and he took seriously the criticisms and encouragement of other poets, such as Rossetti. As a literary historian he was concerned with giving information about subjects he knew were not well known.

From boyhood (as his visit to Sir Walter Scott indicates) Scott strove to go beyond himself and his own capacities for enrichment, knowledge, amusement, and new interests. During his long life, he had a wide retinue of acquaintances and friends, people whom he cultivated because they could

offer him something which he did not then have, or who came to him because of what he could offer them. Scott lived an active life and his contribution to the lives of others who were, like Scott, the creators, the builders, the thinkers of his time, is an important aspect of his reputation. He was involved in many professions and in each new role he expanded his knowledge of men. It was characteristic of Scott to share his fortune with his acquaintances, and he consistently recommended work he liked to those in a position to advance his artist or poet friends. His Autobiographical Notes show that Scott, through his own actions and his friendships, was a man intensely aware of and involved in the changes taking place in his century.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

¹William Bell Scott, Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott, ed. William Minto, 2 Vols. (London: Osgood, 1892). Hereafter cited as Notes.

²Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ed. Oswald Doughty and J.R. Wahl (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), I, 33.

³The Penkill Papers at U.B.C. possesses one of the notebooks Scott used in writing this journal. On the fly leaf he has written "William Bell Scott Newcastle-on-Tyne March 1847". Much of the book is mutilated through pages being ripped in half, but in most cases the subject can be followed, even if the exact meaning is not clear.

⁴Lona Mosk Packer, Christina Rossetti (Berkeley: University of California, 1963), p. 63.

⁵William Bell Scott, Memoir of David Scott R.S.A. (Edinburgh: Black, 1850). The first autobiographical journal written by Scott was completed in 1854, it was therefore probably begun or in progress about the time of his Memoir of David. Many details of family are given in the Memoir which are not included in the Notes.

⁶William Bell Scott, in the Notes, wrongly gives the year as 1832.

⁷Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (London: G. Bell, 1921), V. p. 58.

⁸The title of this poem varies in spelling. In the Notes Scott spells it "Rosabell," while in the Monthly Repository it is spelled "Rosabelle." In Poems by a Painter (1854), the poem was titled "Maryanne," and there Scott refers to the original title as "Rosabel."

⁹William Bell Scott tells this story in Notes, I, 133. The original article by Lewes is not available for reference.

¹⁰William Bell Scott, Poems (London: Smith Elder, 1854), 171. The sonnet is titled, "On reading Haydon's Autobiography."

¹¹John Gere and Robin Ironside, eds. The Pre-Raphaelite Painters (London: Phaidon, 1948), p. 22.

²²William Bell Scott, "Ornamental Art in England," Fortnightly Review, Oct. 1, 1870.

²³William Bell Scott, Gems of French Art (London: Routledge, 1871), p. 13.

²⁴This information is from the D.N.B. article cited in note 18. However, a letter from Rossetti of August 1871 (Notes, II, 149), mentions the "Belgian book," suggesting 1871 was the year of publication. References to Leys and Tadema in the Rossetti letter exclude the "Belgian book" as another title for Gems of French Art.

²⁵D.N.B., XVII, 1052. The article is signed R[onald] B[ayne].

²⁶Bryan's Dictionary, V, 59.

CHAPTER TWO

Editing of the Notes

Two years after William Bell Scott's death, his Autobiographical Notes were published. They represent a lifelong concern with recording his own activities and with commenting on the lives of other men whose lives touched him. As a young man of sensitive and artistically ambitious nature, Scott probably began in his late teens to record the events in his life which impressed him. The details of his life in Edinburgh, as preserved in his Notes, suggest that Scott employed some form of diary or journal, if only something of the order of an appointment or occasion book. It seems likely from Scott's later recording tendencies that the move to London in 1837, a long awaited gift of freedom, would provide certain stimulus to keep at least a log book or day-diary of special occurrences, and perhaps even a more artistically self-conscious journal of his new life and friends. Scott states in his Notes that in May 1854 he completed his first Autobiographical Journal consisting of 400 folio pages, and he suggests that then, at the age of 43, he decided that such a preoccupation was foolish (Notes, I, 2).

If the remarks in the Prologue to his Notes do refer primarily to this work, the Journal should have satisfied several purposes. On the objective level it recorded Scott's experiences, especially those of childhood, and contained notes on the activities of other men he had known. Some structuring is implied by Scott's comment that he tried, in this journal, to make a connected history of the externals of his own career. However, it was the subjective purpose of the book which was most important to Scott. His hopes for the journal's self-educational value were defeated when he realized that he could learn very little about himself from the record he had kept. Scott's exact meaning is difficult to pinpoint, but his sense of

frustration, almost to the point of self-disgust, comes out most clearly. The journal fails in its educational role, Scott says, because of the difficulty of taking an objective point of view about oneself. Scott may have meant that objectivity is obtainable, but when the state is reached further problems arise which entrap one more, and make this quest for self-knowledge all the more difficult. In abandoning the journal, he says "It is no more a true picture of what we saw, felt, enjoyed, suffered, but of mistakes and reasons -- the dead elements of the scene" (Notes, I, 2).¹ These words, placed at the beginning of his final book, disclose that Scott meant his readers to understand clearly the retrospective nature of his comments on his life and his contact with other men.

Scott destroyed his first journal in 1877, when he decided to rewrite his reminiscences. He insists that his younger self was "unable to see what was fit and what was unfit for possible preservation." But who was this "younger self" responsible for such unsuitable jottings? Although Scott may have started his journal as early as his days in Edinburgh, there is no concrete suggestion of this in the Notes. In his discussion of the book's inception, Scott points to a certain time of life when a man is likely to begin an assessment of his past: "when our course is first visibly settled by profession and marriage." For Scott this time occurred about 1844, when he was given a post at Newcastle. The Journal was ended in 1854, and if one assumes a short period between Scott's decisions for marriage and a profession, and his beginning of his life's record, it is possible that he wrote the 400 folio pages over a ten year span. The part of his early journal preserved in the Penkill Papers is dated 1847, but reference in the first, mutilated page of the notebook suggests that the account was begun in 1845.

Circumstances of Scott's life in the few years following 1850,

may illuminate somewhat his reasons for writing and discontinuing his recollections. His contact with the Pre-Raphaelite group he described in retrospect as "the beginning of a new interest in life." The record of his life verifies that at this time Scott did begin to work with a new vigor, producing the Memoir of his brother David in 1850, and Prince Legion and Antiquarian Gleanings in 1851. The deaths in 1849 and 1852 respectively of his brother and mother meant a concrete release from family responsibility, and if Scott's assertion that he felt a sense of re-birth seems over-dramatic, the basic situation can be imagined as conducive to change.² Scott's abandonment of this journal in 1854 is most easily explained by the observation that he extended his activities and friendships significantly at this time. Poems by a Painter appeared in 1854, and brought with it a series of connections important to his career and personal life. The Wallington murals, the Trevelyans, and Alice Boyd all became major influences on Scott's life in the late eighteen fifties. Scott probably left off writing his early journal, not through any immediate sense of self-disgust, but primarily because of the pressure of other work.

A far more self-conscious attitude to his recollections is evident in Scott's resumption, in 1877, of his role as journal-writer. Not only from his feelings about his inadequate younger self, but especially from his attitudes to humanity in general does a picture of the writer of the Notes come through. The man who edited out the spontaneous impressions of an earlier age is a man who could declare that "We live surrounded by so many social conventions, we go about with so many deceptive coverings, that a sincere attempt at self-portraiture in writing is like walking into the street naked ..." He implies a strong awareness of the potential evil in his fellow men, in that he speaks of "the devil" as a bond between all men: "the touch of nature

that makes the whole world kin" (Notes, I, 5). His task in his new autobiography will be to present realities, not appearances.

Generally these explanatory remarks suggest few possibilities about the little understood character of William Bell Scott, who began at age sixty-six to re-write the story of his life, and who continued work on his autobiography as long as he was able. Alice Boyd's comments in the concluding chapter indicate that he was never wholly satisfied with all that he had put on paper. This self-consciousness, a concern for the opinion of those who would survive him, is reflected also in two autobiographical sketches Scott wrote. Both are among the Penkill Papers.

In the earliest, probably written about 1880, he describes himself as "foredoomed to follow painting as a profession, though his poetry and the books he has published ... make it a question, whether the divided interests, and somewhat opposite claims on his attention, evinced by his carrying on writing and painting almost simultaneously, have been in his favour." He describes the Wallington murals as his principal work in painting, and states that The Year of the World was an "exceedingly erudite and allegorical production which the world at large took little notice of."

A second, and probably later, memoir in Scott's hand has notations until 1889 when he was granted an L.L.D. by Aberdeen University. In this version, The Year of the World is described as "abstruce" while the Wallington paintings are still his most important work in painting. Paintings and books which he feels are superior are listed, and the memoir takes on a more personal tone as he describes his architectural work, the addition to Penkill: "Of this latest work Mr. Scott is perhaps more proud than of anything else he has done in the various application of his abilities."

Scott's will, also among the Penkill Papers, is the final document

he left which gives an indication of his attitudes to his autobiographical work. Dated July 2nd 1890, the will requests in section 10 that Professor W. Minto of Aberdeen University "shall undertake the office of my Literary Executor of revising and preserving the MS entitled the Autobiography of, or some Records of the Life of William Bell Scott left by me, ensuring the Publication of the same, when the proper time arrives." He further specifies that when Minto begins the task, he should be sent Scott's proposed etchings for the book, the original letters quoted in the manuscript, and a legacy of three hundred pounds. Scott finally suggests that perhaps Minto might republish his Poet's Harvest Home with an "Aftermath." Scott's instructions to Minto make it clear that he intends his manuscript to be published. In anticipation of his death, Scott committed the result of his life-long occupation to the jurisdiction of another man, a man he must have trusted completely on such matters.

II

Who was William Minto and what was his special knowledge that prompted Scott to choose him as a literary executor? In a letter of October 28, 1874, Scott describes to Alice a "new man" who attended a dinner party given by his wife Letitia. William Minto, he says, is Editor of the Examiner, and has asked Scott if he would write in that journal. Scott describes him as a "very agreeable and well educated literary man" but goes on to specify that this means "without individual peculiarity and the force of genius." Minto had moved to London from Aberdeen in 1873, and by 1874 had written for both the Daily News and the Pall Mall Gazette.³ It was as a journalist, then, that Minto first was known to Scott. If Scott was unimpressed by his new acquaintance's genius, he certainly recognized his

value as a "contact" with the literary world in which he strove to make his mark. Letters in the Penkill Papers affirm that in the mid-eighties Minto was in regular contact with Scott. The summer of 1885 brought Minto an invitation to visit Penkill, but circumstances did not allow it. A year later Minto wrote Scott of a dinner party at which he saw Edmund Gosse (fat and flourishing) as well as Swinburne and Theodore Watts (both in good form). A letter of July 22, 1886, asks Scott for some biographical information to be given the editor of an Aberdeen newspaper. Minto says that he knows all Scott's poetry, and his Germ contributions, but knows little about his "official career." The tone of this request is somewhat coy, and could be an attempt at flattery. Minto does know that Scott is writing busily, and hopes part of his writing time will be spent composing verse. Manuscript pages in Alice Boyd's hand (PP) disclose that Minto paid long visits to Scott in his last three years, and that these visits included many nights when the two men closeted themselves away to work. Early in 1890, Minto decided to publish Scott's latest collection of poems, an Aftermath, on Scott's direction that he should not see it until published. Minto arranged the details, but the project was abandoned when Alice Boyd feared that Scott was becoming upset by the activity.

The task which Minto undertook in seeing Scott's book through the press is documented in his 87 letters to Alice Boyd written between October 1890 and October 1892 in the Penkill Collection (hereafter cited as P.P. for Penkill Papers). On December 21, 1890, Minto wrote to Alice about the terms of Scott's will. Minto was to insure publication of the Notes "when the proper time arrives," and he requests clarification of this statement. He wonders if Scott ever specified an interval which should elapse before publication because "some of his remarks about Ruskin, for instance, he could

hardly have contemplated being published during the lifetime of that individual." Minto feels that a long interval would be impossible because of "an abundance of valuable historical matter that might be published and would interest tomorrow."

Not until June of 1891 did Minto report work on the manuscript. The letters from this point disclose three areas of information about the editing of the Notes. First is the easily anticipated information about omissions, repressions, and Minto's editorial policies. Second is the disclosure that Minto became unusually subjective about his editorial problems, and maintained a point of view which could be considered damaging to his presentation of Scott's original material. Third is the fact that other men than Minto also became personally involved with the manuscript (although they had not even seen it) and were, as a result, prepared to attack the book even before it reached the public view.

As Minto becomes more involved in the practical work of editing, he is influenced more and more by personal friction with men who for various reasons wished to thwart the publication of Scott's Notes. Initially, the problems he encounters are easily handled by an exercise of his own discretion, and his solutions are approved through consultation with Alice Boyd. In the earliest letters, of June 1891, Minto suggests to Alice the correction of a mis-dated Rossetti letter, and they agree on the omission of an episode concerning Mathilde Blind and Joaquin Miller. Later, on June 26, he asks advice from Alice on some letters by Rossetti and by Swinburne which Scott has incorporated into his manuscript. Minto finds that "the dear Autobiographer" has made complications by repeated revisions and interpolations in these letters. Minto already expresses worried anticipation at having to get permission to use such documents. Repressions, however, will apparently

be few, for in 200 pages of manuscript Minto has found little of importance which will have to be kept out. His policy will be to keep back only what might give legitimate offence.

The question of libel was first raised in August 1891, when a friend asked Minto who was to pay the libel costs after the book was published (P.P. Aug. 1, 1891). Minto subsequently learned that it was "public opinion" that the book would be libelous, and in refuting the accusers, he began his more subjective involvement. In the spring of 1892, libel charges again became a possibility after an American reader of the proofs found them dangerous. Minto had Mr. Morse, Scott's literary executor, read the proofs for libelous material and as a result several passages were repressed. Objection was made to a passage about Ruskin and Turner, and Minto questions Alice: "But if W.B. thought the story important, I could hardly find it consistent with my editorial duty to omit it?" (P.P., June 22, 1892). Apparently Alice replied (as she was doubtless supposed to) that Minto could not endanger himself or the book by courting libel charges. In July, after another lawyer, representing the publisher McIlvaine, had read the manuscript, Minto announced that "The only really important concession I have made are the Swinburne novel-reading incident at Wallington and the private sketch book of Turner" (P.P., July 9, 1892). Among other changes made or allowed by Minto are the elimination of a passage on Scott's marriage and his wife Letitia, and revisions to references about Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal, which Scott had apparently taken out of context. Swinburne refused to allow a letter of his to be published, and Minto chose not to publish a letter by Hake about Rossetti. These last two examples are concerned with the next area of information about Minto's editorial procedures, for they involve his personal identification with his old friend's writing.

In the early stages of editing, when Minto was first approaching Scott's correspondents about using their letters, he was surprised by the reluctance he encountered, and wrote to Alice: "really there is nothing given by the Hermit, in the case of his friends at least, to which there could be any rational objection." He added, "It is really out of friendliness that dear old W.B. wished to preserve some memorials of them in his life" (P.O., July 15, 1891). But less than a month later, Minto had adopted a different point of view on the issue of Scott's public personality, for he wrote Alice, "Really it would seem as if the dear Hermit's sarcasm, which never struck me as being in the least ill-natured has impressed his friends with the idea that he was a most terrible person" (P.P., Aug. 1, 1891). Minto encountered this view of Scott in the course of his attempts to gain permission to publish letters which Scott had incorporated in his manuscript. Minto's initial policy was that he would show the proofs to the people involved before publication, and if he could not use the letters he would just omit them and rewrite the adjoining passages. The letters of William Holman Hunt, he found, were really the only ones of vital importance to the continuity of the Notes.

Experience, and knowledge of the dislike of Scott harboured by some men, caused Minto to change his policy about the letters. An interview with Edmund Gosse, reported to Alice just two days after Minto had said that Scott's friends "at least" could not be reluctant about the book, was one of Minto's enlightening experiences. Gosse, described as "inclined to be nasty," apparently had heard that the book was to consist mainly of letters. Minto said that Gosse "almost made my blood boil to the point of indiscretion by speaking of the old man as having been very severe in his judgment latterly." Although he set Gosse straight as to "the friendly and genial tone of the

reminiscences" he ~~was~~ still suspicious that Gosse "means mischief." These encounters caused Minto to resort to a less straightforward editorial policy. He informed Alice (P.P., Sept. 13, 1891) that where consent to publish was difficult to obtain, and the letter important, he would put the passages in the first person, as if Scott were quoting from memory.²⁶

Theodore Watts, then the companion of Swinburne, was trying, Minto felt, to have a "finger in the pie." Swinburne had written to Minto in July 1891, expressing pleasure that he had been named editor, and allowing some suggested changes in a letter written by him (Swinburne Letters, ed. Lang, V. 6, p. 9). As a result Watts and Minto had an interview which was described to Alice as "amusing." By October 11, Minto's relationship with the Swinburne household had deteriorated. Swinburne wrote a very stern letter refusing Minto permission to publish his letters, saying that he saw nothing worthy of preservation in those letters Minto had sent (Swinburne Letters, V. 6, p. 294). The letter suggests that Swinburne is reacting to the rumours about the book for he specifies that in spite of his "deep and cordial regard" for Scott, he does not want his letters in the forthcoming book. Minto responds that Swinburne can "be d----d" and adds that they are well rid of his "early effusions." Other evidence that all was not really "cordial" is Minto's refusal to print a letter by Hake on Rossetti because of some "opportunity" it would give Theodore Watts. The subtleties of this decision are not explained, but they are perhaps related to Watts' position as a reviewer for the Athenaeum.

While constantly defending Scott's motives, Minto is nevertheless amused by the wavering between solicitousness and indignation shown by those men who fear exposure in the Notes. He clearly enjoys the role of relative omniscience for he expresses to Alice "a certain fun" in having to handle

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such "touchy personalities" as Gosse and Watts. The omniscient role also comes through Minto's assertion that he will show William Rossetti the complimentary remarks made about him, in order to reassure him about the book, but he adds, "On the other hand I fancy we are not called upon to show W.M.R. before-hand the remarks on his Germ sonnet." The encounters with Watts and Swinburne lead Minto to consider "as a lark" including an epilogue containing replies to requests to publish, for he is amused that "a great deal of character" comes out in the answers.

The publication date of the book was set for November 15, and much earlier in the month Minto was nervously anticipating an unwelcome reception. A letter to Alice on the 2nd, meant to prepare her for the expected blow, also exposes Minto's involvement and suspicious anxiety. Theodore Watts, who was likely to review the book for the Athenaeum, is one villain, "a wretched little pettyfogging creature."

If he is not on his good behaviour in the Athenaeum notice of the Autobiography when it comes out, I must have a little go at him. If only he would sign his name to a deprecatory notice! Then would there would be some ink shed ere set of sun. "Smite them down, Theodore, smite them down." Do you remember his great poem on the Armada? ... Remember we must be prepared for any number of ill-natured people trying to plant their little stings. What does it matter? Nobody whose opinion is worth having can read these notes without feeling the charm of a great and lovable personality. (P.P., Nov. 2, 1892).

By mid-November Minto had received encouragement from Richard le Gallienne, who planned to review the Notes. But he still felt it necessary to warn Alice about the "biting and snapping":

He had too strong an individuality not to offend some. But ... I have too much faith in the general sense of the British public, even of the average critic not to feel certain that the reception of the work will be warm and sympathetic. (P.P., Nov. 14, 1892).

Even in his anticipation of a quarrel Minto is sure of victory. He writes that "Those critics primed to regard the Notes as ill-natured "will defeat themselves. Criticism will excite readers to look at the books for themselves, and they will then see the absurdity of the charges: "Thus are the malicious caught in their own snare." (P.P., Nov. 17, 1892).

Two subjects of importance emerge from the letters from Minto to Alice during the period of his editorship.⁵ The first is that Minto's role as editor was both active and personal. His concluding chapter on Scott is certainly valuable for the chronicling of the last and quite active years of Scott's life. However, his strongest influence on the public conception of Scott as a man definitely shows through his editing of Scott's original words. For historical accuracy, this influence is a positive one, because of his concern with correct dating and accurate transcription of letters. The Penkill letters do indicate, however, that Minto's involvement with the material, especially that referring to individuals still alive, interfered with his editorial objectivity about inclusions and omissions. In several instances, Minto's admittedly well-intentioned interest has shaped Scott's manuscript into a document for which Scott could not, technically, be held responsible. These changes are not drastic, and Alice Boyd's acquiescence to them could mean they did not express sentiments unfamiliar to Scott. Yet alterations were made, and often for personal reasons rather than for editorial correctness.

The second point of interest is that the controversy over the Notes was anticipated much before the date of publication. Minto was aware that the books would bring forth various objections, but as editor he considered the historical value more important than the wounding of a few egos. It is also clear that certain men were waiting for the appearance of

the Notes as a chance to vent long-repressed hostility against Scott.

Swinburne's published letters, for example, show that Minto was not imagining hostility in Swinburne's refusal to have his letters printed. The poet meant the refusal as a warning that anything objectionable in the Notes would be challenged. (Swinburne Letters, Vol, 294) The presence, weeks before the books were published, of two committed and opposing sides may help to explain the intensity, the frequent triviality, and the damaging nature of the resulting controversy over Scott's autobiography.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

¹The Autobiographical Journal of 1847, now in the Penkill Papers begins with doubtful sentiments about the usefulness of journal writing. Unfortunately these pages are mutilated enough to make transcription highly conjectural.

²Reference to the mutilated journals verifies that Scott's experience of death with David and his mother was intensely felt. He also comments on the gratifying success of his Memoir of David.

³See William Knight's essay on Minto in Some Nineteenth Century Scotsmen, 1903.

⁴William Michael Rossetti caught Minto's use of this technique, but he blamed it on Scott: "Mr. Scott ... proceeds to quote some words of mine, which (as he puts it) I 'said' but I fancy that in fact I wrote them, in the year 1872." (Memoir I 278).

⁵The many specific references to changes or suppressions in the Notes, which appear in Minto's letters to Alice Boyd, verify the importance of these Penkill Papers to the study of Pre-Raphaelite and Victorian figures. A catalogue of the references will supplement the previous discussion of Minto's influence on the Notes.

1890		
Dec.	31	Ruskin
1891		
June	6	Rossetti; Swinburne
July	13	M[athilde] Blind and Joaquin [Miller] R[ossetti]
July	15	Morris; Holman Hunt; Rossetti
July	21	Swinburne
Sept.	2	Rossetti
Sept.	3	William M. Rossetti
Sept.	13	Rossetti; Dr. Hake; Hueffer; Marzials; Tadema; William Rossetti
Oct.	15	Swinburne
Oct.	16	Woolner
Oct.	26	repressions in general; Rossetti and Mr. L[eyland]
Oct.	30	Holman Hunt
Nov.	5	Scott's edition of Burns
Dec.	15	sketches of Rossetti and Swinburne

1892

Jan.	6	planning the last chapter
Jan.	13	Scott's marriage
Feb.	3	Rossetti; Swinburne; Munro; Elizabeth Siddal
Feb.	26	omission concerning Alice Boyd
March	1	Holman Hunt
March	6	details of publishing
March	13	Rossetti
May	16	Ruskin
May	18	Ruskin and Millais; Rossetti
June	22	Mrs. Scott; Ruskin
July	9	agent at Wallington; Mr. L[eyland]? (at Rossetti's); Swinburne; Turner
July	30	Leyland incident

CHAPTER THREE

Controversy

Public interest in a forthcoming work is usually a welcome sign of a book's potential success. In the instance of Scott's Notes, however, curiosity took the form of rumor and speculation, controlled by a few, definitely prejudiced men whose strength lay in their literary professions and contacts. To some degree, their fear of exposure or ridicule by the author, a man who knew most of them, was assuaged by taking defensive preparation against the expected attack. Discussion of the book's possibilities caused such tension that when the book did appear it was apparently read by many for its negative attitudes. Had those men with defensive feelings been painters or sculptors, their complaints would have circulated among a small group of sympathizers. Unfortunately for Scott, the men who imagined themselves his victims were highly vocal, with a ready-made forum in the journals of their day. Scott's reputation as a man, an artist, and an authority on artistic and literary subjects has been so molded and blackened by the controversy which developed, that writers today accept the posthumous picture of him without question. Rarely does a modern writer attempt to discover how Scott was spoken of when alive, or how much public adoption of the "Rossetti legend" counted in the reception of his Notes.

Oswald Doughty, a modern biographer and editor of Rossetti, has described the posthumous treatment of Rossetti in terms of an "absurdly Romantic Rossetti legend." In his preface to the recent edition of Rossetti Letters, Doughty accuses Theodore Watts and Thomas Hall Caine of being "acolytes" in the declining years of Dante Rossetti's life.¹ Their biographies presented Rossetti as a "darkly brooding, mysterious, mystical poet-recluse, a Byronic hero who was also a Vates Sacer, a Poet-Seer." Elsewhere Doughty

describes the "scramble" for biographical priority which resulted in the work of Caine and Sharp (A Victorian Romantic, pp. 5-6). Caine, who was first in print, "exploited Rossetti as sensational 'news'," while Sharp "buried him under a mass of verbose adulation." Joseph Knight's study of 1887 was dismissed as unsatisfactory by Rossetti's friends and, Doughty says, William Bell Scott was one of Knight's severest critics. Scott's Notes of 1892 are cited, finally, as another approach to Rossetti which was found unsatisfactory by his contemporaries because of "bitter comments on Rossetti."

Because Doughty, unfortunately, does not give the sources of his conclusions, it is impossible to verify his suggestion that Scott was one of Knight's harshest critics. Yet there are other sources which support the deduction that Scott made his revisions because of current literature on Rossetti. A brief survey of writing on Rossetti between 1882 and 1890 will give insight into three aspects of this situation: the influence on Scott while writing his revisions, the powerful response met by Scott's Notes, and the resulting effect on his reputation.

Thomas Hall Caine, who knew Rossetti only in the last three years of his life, was the first to present a book-length work on him.² There is little in the text to suggest that Caine considered Rossetti "sensational" material, but perhaps Doughty's statement refers to the public attitude, rather than to the intent of the writer. Caine prefaces his book with the declaration that this is not a biographical work, as he would not dare to trespass on Watts' prerogative as an official biographer.³ Caine initially stresses that his intention in writing the book is to give letters between himself and Rossetti, but later he restates his aim as: "My primary purpose is now ... to afford the best view at my command of Rossetti as a man" (p. 267). With this statement of intent it is much easier to align

many of Caine's remarks, especially those which seem the stuff of "legends." Caine quotes Canon Dixon's estimation that Rossetti had "an artistic temperament as exquisite as was ever bestowed on man" (p. 38). His personal qualities were fearlessness, kindliness, concentration and self-reliance. It was "impossible to have been more free from captiousness, jealousy, envy, or any other form of pettiness than this truly noble man" (p. 39). Rossetti was "the greatest inventor of abstract beauty, both in form and colour, that this age, perhaps that the world, has seen" (p. 38).

Caine's book is a vital link in understanding not only the Rossetti legend, but especially W.B. Scott's attitudes toward it. In the controversy over Scott's Notes, an interesting and relevant article appeared in The Daily Chronicle in January, 1893. The writer (signed J.A.N.) owned Scott's copy of Caine's Recollections, and the article is woven around the marginal comments written in by Scott. The comments are described as satirical and objugatory, with Scott's "contemptuous dislike" of Hall Caine most evident. To Caine's assertion that Rossetti's bodily sensations "were as naught unless they were sanctified by the concurrence of the soul," Scott responded "nonsense." Assertions about the ethical quality of Rossetti's poetry are marked "preposterous." When Caine is most eulogistic, the writer says, Scott is most scornful. Specific details, such as Scott's assertion that "Jenny" was written "after reading my 'Rosabell'," leave little question that Scott was antagonistic to Hall Caine's approach, and that his reading was prompting him to some retaliatory action.

The other important biography of 1882 was written by William Sharp, and although the focus was a study of Rossetti's work, Sharp also became over-effusive about Rossetti. Because Watts adopted Scott as a supporter soon after Rossetti's death, Scott knew of Sharp's book while the

writing was under way.³ While Scott considered Caine's writing about Rossetti a pretentious act after such a short acquaintance, he became quite indignant at the subject chosen by William Sharp: "The Character of DGR's Art and Poetry and its influence on English Art and Literature." In Scott's opinion "Gabriel's effect on art was nil" because only his close friends had seen his paintings. The great public interest in Gabriel is due, Scott feels, to curiosity about his secretiveness and to a desire to know what has been hidden. Scott hopes that this revelation won't "break up the charm" (P.P., June 12, 1882).

These sentiments of early June were revised by early July, after Scott had been visited by Sharp. Sharp had convinced a reluctant Scott that he was not an "imposter like Caine" and he was "in society as much as I am." Scott apparently had arranged a visit with Sharp in order to make him understand Rossetti's intention in printing privately, and the "due importance [of] the Penkill period of incubation." Scott showed him the volume of proofs from Penkill, and Sharp diplomatically enquired about the writing of "The Stream's Secret." Also, a visit to Penkill by Sharp was tentatively arranged (P.P., July 3, 1882). While it appeared to Scott in 1882 that Sharp had adopted his point of view, the published book was to show that Sharp was as eager as Caine to present a glorified picture of Rossetti. In his book, he praises Rossetti for his greatness in "both the great arts of Poetry and Painting." The stature he attained will appear "more remarkable as it will gain more recognition in days to come." Like Caine, Sharp becomes extravagant about Rossetti's virtues: "A lofty spirit, a subtle and beautiful intellect, a poet and artist such as the world does not often see, a generous critic, and a helpful friend ..." (p. 3).

In addition to the books of Sharp and Caine, William E. Fredeman lists a third book by W.E. Tirebuck published in 1882. The book, about

Rossetti's work and influence, elicited these comments from Scott on July 10th: "Eloquent in its own way, and good, yet wholly in the dark about the real character of D.G. However it is only about his painting, very little about his poetry."

The periodical articles for the two years after Rossetti's death are another rich source of the Rossetti legend. Perhaps Theodore Watts' articles are most important, as his claim to be official biographer was upheld by William Michael Rossetti. On June 12, 1882, Scott wrote Alice that Watts had visited "in a state of simmer ... boiling over, about Sharp and Caine having prepared themselves as rival acrobats to write books about

D.G.R. ... He says Gabriel on his deathbed begged him to let no one else write a life -- to write it himself if it was necessary." Watts reportedly bewailed, 'Rossetti has fallen among Philistines ... and I can't help him!'

Watts' short article of 1882, "Mr. D.G. Rossetti,"⁴² carries one of the dominant themes of the legend: "wonderful as was Rossetti as an artist and poet, he was still more wonderful, I think, as a man." Identifying chloral as the cause of Rossetti's reclusiveness, Watts proceeds to justify his disclosure by lavish praise: "No man ever lived ... who was so generous as he in sympathizing with other men's work, save only when the cruel fumes of chloral turned him against everything." Frederic Stephens, a former Pre-Raphaelite brother and art critic for the Athenaeum, appends his own comments to Watts' article. Rossetti's dual artistic abilities will cause him "to stand alone, a genius unique and unparalleled." Edmund Gosse, another young man who visited Rossetti, wrote an article on Rossetti for the Century Magazine⁵³ which indulges the romantic tendencies of the imaginative reader. To Gosse, Rossetti had a striking magnetism: "He was essentially a point of fire ... not a person of wide circumference ... but a nucleus of pure imagination that never stirred or shifted, but scintillated in all

directions." In this passage, by one who was "within the pale," the idealization of Rossetti as a kind of artist-priest is obvious. The function of Gabriel Rossetti, or at least his most obvious function, was "to sit in isolation, and to have vaguely glimmering spirits presented to him for complete illumination."

The most significant of the Rossetti articles published in 1883 is Theodore Watts' twelve-page article "The Truth about Rossetti."⁶ Watts opens in reaction against the effects of public curiosity on a man's image and proposes to correct the misconceptions about the meaning of Rossetti's art, his personal character and his influence as a man. Watts first indulges in some personal Rossetti legend-making. His "brotherly intimacy" with his subject makes it difficult to describe Rossetti, who was a "character so fascinating, so original, and yet so contradictory." To Watts and other friends of Rossetti, his name was like "a word of music." Never, he asserts, could these friends lose their affection for him: "so irresistible was he, so winsome and affectionate, so open of heart ... so generous in his appreciation of other men's work, so free from all rivalries and jealousies and vulgar greed for fame." Even the flaw in his ideal picture, the grip of the "terrible and unmaning drug," does not disillusion Watts. He describes spell-bound evenings spent in Rossetti's studio where through the power of Rossetti, Michelangelo and Dante Alighieri were felt by those privileged to be present.

Watts did contribute to the excessiveness of the Rossetti legend, but consideration must be given to the tone of comparative reason he employs in his discussions. He does control his impulse to make eulogistic extremes while presenting the realities of Rossetti's life. In company with Caine and Sharp, Watts does, however, make statements that Scott could not easily

accept. Even a cursory reading of Scott's Notes gives evidence that his treatment of Rossetti is based on a point of view drastically critical of that taken by Caine, Sharp, and Watts.

It has been suggested that Scott was specifically annoyed by Joseph Knight's biography of Rossetti.⁷ It is most probably in the area of personality evaluation that Scott and Knight would disagree. Knight praises Rossetti as being sustained and resolute when action was forced upon him, and declares that cowardice and selfishness were not among his defects. Scott knew Rossetti well enough to prevent him seeing such a perfect picture. In a letter to Alice of October 1880, he made a perceptive comment about other people's failure to admit Rossetti's selfishness. Watts had been telling people that Rossetti had treated Dunn, his servant, very poorly, by letting him go for months without pay. A mutual friend had asked Scott to interfere but he refused, observing, "The idea of D.G. being selfish or tyrannical when he is generous of what he does not value -- money, is what he can't comprehend." Knight writes with conviction about Rossetti's fascination, influence and power over his friends, but where Knight saw a following, Scott saw "a dangerous position to the man whose temperament takes advantage of it" (Notes, I, 289). Knight's treatment of Rossetti's "Found," the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and Elizabeth Siddal would certainly have been unsatisfactory to Scott. The catalogue of differences could be continued, but without documented proof that Scott did object to Knight's book, one can only suppose the extent of Scott's disagreement.

Of the several works on Dante Gabriel Rossetti published by his brother previous to W.B. Scott's death in 1890, a series of articles in the Art Journal were most likely to have influenced revisions in the Notes. The 1884 articles in the Art Journal attempt to clarify conjectures about

Rossetti. A straightforward, blunt style is used by William, perhaps as an attempt to underplay the "legend" quality of writing about his brother. Necessary facts are told, but without elaboration or excessive rationalization. William describes the beginning of the relationship between Rossetti and Scott.

[They] were naturally, and almost necessarily, drawn together by a specially strong link of common endeavour and aspiration -- being both of them poets ... as well as professional painters of a poetical or inventive aim.

The word "necessarily," as used by William Michael, would have prompted Scott to discourage such assumptions about his relationship with Gabriel, and his discussion of a "cool" period about 1853 is an example of such a response. A second passage traceable to Scott's Notes is William's disclaiming the connection between his brother's picture "Found," and Scott's poem "Mary Anne" (or "Rosabell"). Although earlier "a notion had somehow got abroad" that the picture was done as an illustration to the poem, William relates that he had publicly denied the connection.⁸ Scott too had apparently underplayed the matter. However, in his Notes, he encourages the view of a "more or less direct" relationship between the two.

Perhaps the details of the Rossetti legend are not as important as the fact that the public concept of Rossetti was not like the real man whom William Bell Scott visited, worked with, listened to, and helped through the forty years of their acquaintance. Scott had a strong sense of his own importance to Rossetti on certain specific occasions, and this was being publicly undermined by an obvious authority, the dead poet's brother. Idealization of Rossetti was firmly established in Scott's potential readers, and there is evidence which shows that Scott was highly motivated against it.⁹

He meant his manuscript to be published and gave it to William Minto with the knowledge that it would startle many. What he could not anticipate was the specific antagonism which developed in 1892, and the lasting effect of such criticism on his reputation.

II

As the previous chapter has shown, the resulting quarrel was anticipated before the book came out. The Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott was published on November 15, 1892. Essentially, the controversy on Scott's Notes was waged among four parties: three on the offensive and one on the defensive. On the offensive were the poet Swinburne (supported by Watts, his secretary), the Rossetti biographer William Sharp, and William Michael Rossetti. William Minto was the chief voice raised in defence of Scott, and the emphasis of his arguments suggests that personal as well as professional pride was at stake.¹⁰

The controversy may be traced through contemporary journals from November 1892 until February, 1893. Alice Boyd kept a scrapbook of reviews of her friend's book (now in the Penkill Collection at U.B.C.), which contains approximately forty-two articles. Another four articles have been found, and probably several others exist.¹¹ In November, nine articles on Scott's book were published. About five of these were in major London journals, and none was signed by men of literary prominence. Their general tenor is appreciative of the Notes and sympathetic to Scott as a man and artist, and to his interpretation of his experiences. The Times review of November 17 criticizes Scott's strictures on T.G. Hake because Scott's poetry "was not supremely good" as to give him this critical prerogative. Most introduce Scott as a participant in the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and quite openly recommend his autobiography for details about Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

The Times reviewer, for example, says the impulse of the Pre-Raphaelite movement had wider effects which have "almost reconstructed the art and profoundly modified the literature of our time."

Again the contemporary reader is given both insight and information about the controversy from the detailed and personal letters between William Minto and Alice Boyd. These letters, also part of the Penkill Papers, chronicle Minto's part in and reaction to the public controversy, and disclose his concern with the "backstage" politics which directed various public displays of criticism. However, at this early stage, Minto was elated by The Times review, which he found a very respectable beginning, fairly appreciative, if not extravagant, and a good indication of keen interest. The local journals were also gladly received by Minto, from the Birmingham Gazette ("better than the Times review") to the Glasgow Herald ("excellent").

This last review is one of the most admiring of Scott for his own achievements and shows specific appreciation of his life and work. The reviewer does object that "the writer's veracity is somewhat ruthless" and that he sometimes tells too much, but his admiration of Scott's book is genuine and in no way foreshadows the recriminations against Scott which were to follow. Richard Le Gallienne also wrote an appreciative review of the Notes. He praises Scott's common sense about Pre-Raphaelitism, and advises the reader to consider the book as more than a collection of anecdotes about more renowned people, but to understand its unique value as a record of Scott's own life. Minto was extremely pleased with the review, and hoped that La Gallienne's view would be more representative of the general reader's verdict. Of the early reviews, that in the Sunday Sun of November 20 is the most condescending to Scott. In an article of over four pages, two paragraphs concern Scott while the rest of the article is devoted to Rossetti. Scott is described as one of the Brotherhood, and his writing

style is characterized as having "Pre-Raphaelite minuteness." The writer asserts that although Scott was not a rich or fascinating personality, he was a good companion and friend, and he had the sense to know the value of his famous acquaintances. The "tragedy of Rossetti" claims the last four pages of the review. Minto called the review a "poor advertisement" but made no guess as to the author "G" (P.P., Nov. 27, 1892).

At this point, Minto showed great interest in what the journals would bring. When Swinburne's first article was announced, Minto wrote Alice that it might be fun, for Swinburne was "such an irritable bard -- one never knows how he will take things." He suggested that perhaps allusions to the poet's size (which he, as editor, could have eliminated) have "maddened" Swinburne. Minto also told Alice that the reviewing of Hake's Memoirs in the Athenaeum, before any notice of Scott's book, was probably a deliberate slight manoeuvred by Watts. In the same letter of November 27 Minto anticipated the attack by Watts which did not come until January, for he warned Alice about "a carefully distilled venom disguised in irony or perhaps undisguised."

December 1 brought Swinburne's notorious article, "The New Terror" (Fortnightly Review, LVII, 830-33) which gave impulse and form to the barrage of attacks and defences that followed. Of the twenty-three articles on Scott's Notes published in December, over ten are directly related to Swinburne's outburst. Among the writers who are not known to have a vested interest in the results, opinion is equally divided for and against Swinburne's opinions of Scott. However, it was the well-known writers who controlled the controversy over Scott, and the articles of these men (Swinburne, Sharp, Minto and William Rossetti) brought about the now accepted maligning of Scott's reputation.

Swinburne's first attack was entitled "The New Terror" in reference to the "horror" of surviving an autobiographer such as Scott. With luxurious sarcasm, Swinburne finds it pitiful that an autobiographer who has misrepresented "beslavered or bespattered or belied" other men in his work, is ultimately the one who suffers most. Yet, as much as he dislikes putting himself before the public, it is his duty to protest and correct "posthumous falsehoods and blundering absurdities" where he is able. For his own part, he says he is willing to consider the "inventions" in the book as innocent of harmful intent and the product of a senile mind. The cases of Scott's blundering with the details of Swinburne's life are cited: Scott never saw him on a pony; Scott insinuates wrongly that Swinburne had only one success at school and lastly, Scott was absurd to believe that Swinburne actually thought the "rainbow" in Scott's sonnet referred to his hair. Thus Swinburne dispenses with "the unhappily inevitable duty of exposing and chastising such falsehoods as concern myself." The second line of attack is one of moral outrage. Minto is accused of vulgarity and impertinence for allowing the exposure of a "deceased elder's moral and spiritual nakedness." In Swinburne's opinion, Scott was never more than a parasite on more important and worthy men, and after a tirade on the impudence of "poetasters," Swinburne suggests that Scott should have been happy with the little notice he did get. Finally, he states that he never wished to believe that Scott, in life, was sometimes a less high-minded and kindly-natured man than he could have been. Minto has exposed this side by "relentless fidelity," and Swinburne can no longer ignore it. In conclusion, he defends as sincere his earlier, admiring, poem on Scott in spite of the present attack. It is worse to refuse to acknowledge an illusion, he says, than to think better of a man than he deserves.

A careful and objective analysis of Swinburne's case against Scott reveals it to be essentially trivial. Three minor details, which in the text

are quite openly coloured by Scott's own point of view (his age, position in life, and recent introduction to Swinburne) are represented as aberrations, falsehoods, and evidence of moral debility. Swinburne's petulant exaggeration takes the question of Scott's "guilt" to the point of ridiculousness, but it leaves it on the side of offensive accusation through references to Scott's morals and to his possible senility.

Two days later, William Sharp published a long review of the Notes in the Academy. The combination of Sharp's stance as an intimate of Scott's and the specific accusations he makes, results in one of the most potentially damaging pieces written about Scott at the time. Sharp establishes the credibility of his later observations by stressing his knowledge of the manuscript and Scott's hopes for it, long before Scott's death. His early biography of Rossetti gives him additional "authority" as a critic of Scott's memoir. His first blow is against Scott's artistic skill, and the references to the actual volumes under discussion give a sense of reality to his assessment. For example, the illustrations to the Notes "prove" that Scott was an artificer, and a "much less able" artist than some of his eminent friends believed. Sharp then sets up three standards for judging the Notes which "naturally" arise: interest to the reader, purity of motive in the writer, and discreet honesty in the revelations made. As he did with his more concrete observations, Sharp is again manipulating his reader through his form. He leads the reader to accept that the three questions are rightfully asked, while actually they are devised by Sharp after his argument, and make moral judgments which have no place in honest and objective criticism. It is Sharp's assumption, for example, that scrupulous freedom from guile "befits a record come to light from the shadow of the grave." He assumes, where Scott made no pretense of it, that a man must become totally fair as old age and death

become realities. Sharp charges that the misstatements made in the book were intended by the writer: "each has been critically examined, well-weighed, pondered before it has been wrought to its final shape .. has lain for years under the attentive ... continuous supervision of the artificer." Sharp's authority for this charge is based on his assertion that he had seen the manuscript when it was still in Scott's control. The article is carefully balanced and constructed to appear judicial and reasonable; but it betrays Sharp's initial bias that Scott was an "inferior" man who did not have the grace to keep to his proper place. This bias results in several misleading suggestions about Scott's attitudes, and even Sharp's cleverly constructed arguments could not guarantee that these accusations would go unchallenged.

Minto's "defence" was prepared December fourth and published in the Academy on the tenth. In the meantime the journals were taking notice of Swinburne's accusations. The Pall Mall Gazette of 6 December, published a poem in parody of Swinburne's attack. Another journal, referring to Swinburne's "silly mood," laments that an undoubtedly great genius can act like a "coal-heaver or bargee." Minto's letters to Alice seem confident. On the third, he hopes that Sharp's "foolish" article has not upset her. He calls the attacks "stupid" and suggests that they answer themselves in their extravagances. Swinburne, however, has become the "scurrilous little poet" who has overreached himself. His letter of the fourth is confident of his success against "the infatuated Sharp": "How they will swear at poor Sharp for making such an ass of himself in his blunders over Miss Siddal and the Rossetti family, accusing the dear old man of vile insinuations which exist only in his own misinterpretations." However, Minto is still wary of Watts' expected attack and wishes he would soon bring it forth.

Minto's letter to the Academy makes, through calm logic, a successful answer to the previous attacks. He defends his author by describing him not

as a saint but as a man with a keen sense of the ridiculous. As editor, he is prepared to apologize for pain inflicted by his carelessness, but he will not accept responsibility for misconceptions about what is really in the text. That Sharp's zeal on behalf of his friends has led him into serious misreadings of the actual content is the basis of Minto's defence. He goes through the points raised by Sharp systematically. About the slur on Elizabeth Siddal he is most emphatic; even had Scott written such a thing, he, Minto, would never have printed it. He also defends Scott's statements about friends and family neglecting Rossetti, by reference to other passages which affirm that the suggestion was not meant as a slur on these people. Watts and Swinburne as they figure in Sharp's article, are dismissed. Swinburne, he says, has distorted the trivial into stupendous and revolutionary offences. Minto concludes his article by matching Sharp's appeal to authority by his own assertion of intimacy with Scott. By this time, however, the idea of a controversy had taken hold, and the anonymous writers began aligning themselves with the principal contenders.

An article in the Saturday Review of 10 December, for example, is a rather uninspired review, commenting on unnecessary material, and taking the stand that the book was of most interest when about other men than Scott. At the end of the article, the writer suddenly employs the Swinburne "theme," saying of the Notes: "Their tendency, with a few exceptions, is not to dignify the persons of whom they treat, and there is no one whom they belittle more than the author himself." Minto thought the article was by Gosse: "Very funny and characteristic -- the little backbitings particularly. Nobody 'dignified' indeed! What about W. Morris and Burne-Jones?" (P.P., Dec. 15, 1892).

A review of 18 December in the Weekly Dispatch takes an opposite view to the Saturday Review article. Scott was known and respected by many, but

sometimes he throws "painful light" on their weaknesses. The writer's attitude to Swinburne is clear: "Of Mr. Swinburne he wrote kindly, but, as the latter's furious article shows, not in terms extravagant enough to satisfy the younger poet's inordinate vanity." Scott is praised for speaking frankly, while keeping free from scandal, "of which he must have known much." Although Scott criticized freely, says this writer, he was "certainly not lacking in appreciation of the work and worth of others." Both sides of the argument, then, are reflected by the general critics.

Swinburne, however, was preparing for another foray, and on December 24 his second article appeared in the Academy. Again, his style is so preposterously excessive as to detract from the seriousness of his ideas. Minto is now the living scapegoat for the crimes of a dead "parasite." Minto has neglected "the duties and decencies natural to a gentleman" in printing the heinous lies which Swinburne had previously exposed. Minto then becomes a "dullard," a "born fool" and a "drivelling idiot," for replying in the way that he had -- presumably by refusing to allow Swinburne's biased reading of the Notes to go unchallenged.

The denunciation of misconceptions about Elizabeth Siddal is the only worthwhile thing in Minto's letter. From this point Swinburne moves to Scott, and the angle of attack does not now gain Swinburne easy sympathy. The Notes are found to "seethe and reek with equal and impartial impertinence" towards superiors. Scott is both poetically and "socially" inferior to his acquaintances, especially to those three to whom he inscribed a dedicatory sonnet. Swinburne's epitaph for Scott follows: "Here lies no envious man! restrain surprise;/ For in this grave incarnate Envy lies." Deceptively softening from this attack, Swinburne ultimately hints at the senility of "a far from memorable man." The most serious question, he concludes, is that innocent men should be involved in "malignity" just because a writer chose

to include them. Minto's failure to gain permission to use each reference to the "Bard" is an offence "against honour, against courtesy, and against society." It is a public violation of privacy and a public prostitution of confidence.

William Michael reluctantly contributes his complaints to this same issue of the Academy. Basically, he objects to much written by Scott about his brother Dante which is "unkind, unhandsome, inaccurate ... and misleading," but he also suggests corrections to be made in a new edition. First, William Michael disputes the fact that Rossetti was "testing" Scott in his request for a £200 loan. Second, he questions Scott's knowledge of the Germ before publication. Third, he objects to Scott's criticism of Rossetti for pre-arranging reviews of his Poems (1870). And fourth, William Michael denies that he himself became ill as a result of Dante's 1872 nervous breakdown, and had to entrust financial matters to Ford Madox Brown. These points, among others, William would have revised, and Minto was to assert that in a new edition the changes would be made. However, available evidence shows that the fourth point, William's illness over Dante's breakdown, was not untrue. A letter in the Penkill Collection from Scott to Alice remarks on Christina and Mrs. Rossetti's relief that William was getting married, as his intense depression of 1872 had seriously alarmed them (P.P., Oct. 30, 1873). The diaries of Ford Madox Brown are another source which verifies that William's illness was serious.¹² William Michael, then, was asking that history should record events as he wished them to be known, and not as they actually took place.

Of the three reviews which mention the controversy in late December, none is swayed by Swinburne's attack on Minto. Nevertheless, Minto submitted another letter to the Academy of December 31st. Minto had been warned before

Swinburne's second letter appeared that it was "intemperate" and "uncomplimentary" and he had decided to take no notice of it, unless Swinburne had left some opening too good to be missed. At this point too, he was still anticipating a "venomous" attack from Watts (P.P., Dec. 18, 1892). Minto's immediate response to the "irate Bard's silly over-charged foul-mouthed abuse" was that it was laughable: "he can only make himself ridiculous by such vulgar stuff" (P.P., Dec. 24, 1892). However, he does feel concern for Alice's sensitivity to the accusations, and asserts his distress at "rousing the hornet" if it causes her pain. He describes William Micheal's article as "disappointing" because of the trivial nature of the errors he exposes. Minto allows for the correction about William's anxious illness over Gabriel (which was in fact true), "But the statement about the diplomatising privately I can substantiate. I lighted today upon a letter in which the expression occurs" (P.P., Dec. 24, 1892).

Minto's second reply to Swinburne in many ways repeats his previous stand. Swinburne has still not made specific charges of sufficient importance. Minto details the circumstances of his requesting Swinburne's permission to print letters, and of being permitted to use the "Memorial Verses," thus answering Swinburne's insinuation of ungentlemanly conduct in Scott's editor. In his reply to William Michael, Minto is contrite about the inaccuracies, but refuses to allow Scott's motives as hypocrisy and envy. His emphatic argument is that biographers should be able to criticize as well as glorify: "Has it come to this, that we cannot, on pain of being accused of envious spite, admire a mans' genius in arts or letters without ascribing to him every virtue and physical perfection under heaven?" Minto asserts that although Scott did criticize Rossetti, it is not the Notes which give prominence to Gabriel's faults. It is the "outcry of injudicious friends", who

will not allow this balanced view of a beloved man, which has forced these faults into the public notice.

In his last letter to Alice in 1892, Minto is awaiting the results of his latest article. The potential, unrevealed venom of Theodore Watts still haunts him" "I am in excellent trim for a scrimmage, if only Theodore would come out of his hole." Minto asserts that Watts is the real antagonist, and is only pushing Swinburne forward. He encloses favourable reviews for the Times and Morning Post and is grateful that "the Stockdollagers have not nobbled these great organs or indeed produced any impression on them" (P.P., Dec. 3, 1892). Minto became ill in early January, and his next letter to Alice is dated early in February, three weeks after Watts' article had appeared.

Previous to Watts' Athenaeum article of January 28, 1893 (No. 3405, 113-5) several other reviews of the Notes were published which illustrate the public's attitude to the controversy. The Bookman reviewer takes Scott's side, laughing at Swinburne's pomposity and decrying his lack of sense of humor. He praises both Minto's assessment of Scott's personality, and his discretion as editor. In the Black and White, the Notes are criticized for "errors" of taste, but are found valuable for their picture of nineteenth century artistic life. In a Daily Chronicle article, previously discussed, the writer admits that although Scott is extremely hostile towards Caine, he shows little malice towards Rossetti. The Critic, an American journal, accepts Scott's version at face value with no mention of Swinburne's interest. By contrast, Speed's Literary Notes, a second American publication, carries an article which deals exclusively with the conflict. This critic's sympathies are definitely not with Swinburne, and he traces the antagonism to Sharp, who made war on a dead man, and drew the "high-strung" poet Swinburne

along with him. The latter's vituperation has only confirmed for this writer the truth of Scott's anecdotes. A short notice in Figaro deals bluntly with the Rossetti "mystique" as a factor in the controversy and defends Scott for his realistic treatment. A review entitled "English Bards and Scottish Reviewings" in the Speaker has the tone of one who knew Scott. Scott's regret for never quite having succeeded is acknowledged but so is his "rare" intimacy with the more important figures of his time.

Watts' unsigned Athenaeum article is by far the most important to the controversy of those printed in January 1893. His themes were not new. Watts' individual touch is to labor the suggestion that Scott was a complete unknown, unimportant but for his famous friends. Scott's lack of a sense of humour is scorned as a particularly Scottish trait, and the Notes are represented as readable only by those with a "high sense of duty." Scott's naturally grudging mood, Watts says, led him to state "grotesque untruths" about Rossetti. The real Rossetti, full of humour and geniality, had a large and splendid nature, as his letters show. Finally Watts restates the familiar chorus that Scott is the one who suffers most from the ill-natured representation in his autobiography. It is here that the damaging controversy essentially ends. John Skelton, in Blackwoods, attempts to incriminate Scott further by his discussion of Rossetti "working the oracle," but a contemporary was quick to suggest that Skelton had proved Scott truthful by printing Rossetti's letters, and had not demonstrated Rossetti's innocence.

Minto did not take up any challenge offered by the long-awaited Watts' article. His illness (which foreshadowed his death on March 1st, 1893) had left him little spirit for such combat, and this was intensified by his feeling that Watts had cunningly left him no grounds for reply by remaining anonymous and by avoiding statement of fact. Minto intended to take on Watts in an introductory chapter if there was a second edition. On February 4th, he

mentioned the Skelton article to Alice, finding the crossed purposes one of the funniest incidents in the controversy. Publisher McIlwaine had informed Minto that sale was "not brisk" in spite of all the advertising and correspondence. Apparently Minto's hope that the accusations would draw readers to the book was not to be fulfilled.

Although the criticism of Scott's Notes did little to increase its appeal to buyers, the controversy had a distinct impact in establishing William Bell Scott's long-range reputation. The historical picture of Scott has been little affected by the statements of those friendly to him, or by the many reviews which praised his life and appreciated his book for what it contained. This controversy, with all its pettiness and hearsay, has apparently coloured permanently the judgment of William Bell Scott. Rossetti became a victim of a legend of perfection, but Scott has become a villain in a legend of malice and envy.

III

By 1895, the men who created the scandal were silent, but their noise had opened two new areas of speculation: that Rossetti had detractors as well as admirers; and that although one could reject his attitudes, William Bell Scott could not be ignored as an authority on Rossetti. It is not too strong to assert that all subsequent literature on Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites carries Scott's influence. In criticizing Scott's choice of anecdotes, William Michael Rossetti and others have only succeeded in bringing them into prominence.

Aside from William Michael's books, the literature until the 1930's allows Scott his due. While they find his scorn regrettable, such writers as Hueffer, Marillier, and Benson are interested in the new material

in Scott's Notes. Holman Hunt says nothing of the controversy, but praises Scott as "ever-pleasant" and a "good-hearted man of letters." And the Memoirs, Lives, and Letters of such acquaintances as Shields, Woolner, Caine and even Watts, hold no animosity toward Scott. Perhaps this is because William Michael was still living, and it was properly his task to correct any misconceptions about his brother. However, it is also possible that this restraint comes from being close to the subject. All these writers had lived through the controversy in full flower some ten years earlier. It is plausible that Swinburne's public reputation, and his proclivity for journalistic quarrels, could have prompted these writers to reserve their opinions of Scott's "parasitic foulness."

It could also be conjectured that William Michael had simply worn the subject out by making no startling proof of Scott's dishonesty. In his Memoir (1895) of Dante Gabriel, William initially treats Scott coolly, but becomes more impassioned as his criticism of Scott spreads from the merely factual to the level of attitudes and opinions. First, he praises Scott for his friendship and defends him as a poet, but suggests that Scott is not always correct in chronological and other details. William's technique, it seems, is that ignoring Scott's attitudes while correcting his facts will diminish him in stature and eliminate him as an authority. When matters of opinion arise, however, William shifts into the controversy theme that "Scott debases no one but himself by his criticism," a point of view which demands the higher involvement he then begins to give. As his arguments degenerate into mere quibbles about time or place, and are less crucially corrections of essential facts, William loses ground. In several cases, including the £200 incident, he claims the ability to discredit Scott's version but William Michael does not himself advance the evidence to refute William Bell Scott's

assertions.

The main motif in William's Memoir attitude to Scott's Notes is that although there occur expressions which indicate genuine friendship, there are others which seem "incompatible with anything save a resolute desire to disparage and besmirch" (p. 367). Chloral and love affairs are failings which have a saving "romantic" tinge to them. Difficulties with money and fear of criticism are failings which William would rather have kept unobtrusive. He admits that throughout his Memoir he has used Scott's book as the lowest degree of writing about Rossetti. He regrets having to stress the misstatement of a "thoughtful" man about his "dearest friends," but feels Scott should have made allowances for Gabriel. His final attack on Scott is his grandest and perhaps his most logically suspect. Scott refused to comment on "the repulsive elements" of Rossetti's last months, and William reacts powerfully to the adjective used. His anger leads him to the rather petulant suggestion that Scott should have said nothing at all about things he did not like. The coup de grace is frustratingly weak. What, he asks, are stories about Rossetti doing in an autobiography of William Bell Scott? The book should be about Scott, not Rossetti.

In the next book, Ruskin: Rossetti: Pre-Raphaelitism, published four years later, William Michael uses the editor's prerogative to make less vehement comments about Scott. He exposes him on several subjects by the letters printed. Scott, who criticized Rossetti for "working the oracle," is shown as himself worried about public reception of his poetry. Further paranoia is indicated in a letter about a slight Scott felt he had suffered from some officials. However, William Michael's approach here is more gentle than in the previous book. He quotes Brown's praise of Scott, and acknowledges his debt to Scott for his own interest in Shelley and Walt Whitman.

By 1906, When Some Reminiscences appeared, William had softened from his earliest anger with Scott and was ready to rationalize his "ill-natured" exposures of Rossetti. William reasserts his affection for Scott and his belief that Scott was both sympathetic and affectionate to Gabriel. But, again, he acknowledges that Scott conceived of some "soreness" toward Gabriel which had a reasonable foundation. He believes that Scott wrote about Gabriel "in a spirit of detraction" for two reasons. First was his desire to treat a "man of mark" with truth. He continues: "I know ... that Scott considered almost all biographies untrustworthy, as ignoring or misrepresenting matters of importance; and he aimed at compassing a contrary result" (p. 60). Second was jealousy, which arose after Rossetti's death when highly laudatory material was published about him. This image of Scott as jealous, unfulfilled, and blindly envious persists to the present.

In 1928, Scott gained a champion of sorts, when Oswald Doughty published the letters of Rossetti to his publisher, F.S. Ellis.¹³ A major charge against Scott's treatment of Rossetti was that he exaggerated his friend's sensitivity to criticism and his concern with pre-arranging reviews of forthcoming work. The material Doughty publishes proves that Gabriel did seriously obtain the support of friends before publishing Poems in 1870. Doughty also defends Scott for thinking that his admonition to Rossetti, "live for your poetry," was his contribution to Gabriel's peace of mind in 1869. Doughty allows that Scott "undoubtedly exaggerates" his part in Rossetti's poetic revival, but insists that the Penkill visit was important. Even the waterfall "suicide" incident is considered plausible by Doughty, although it was "embroidered by Scott's somewhat romantic imagination."

Evelyn Waugh's book on Rossetti contributes another damaging blow to Scott's reputation. Waugh praises Ruskin's influence on Rossetti and asserts, "It is a lasting testimony to the stupidity and bias of William

Bell Scott that he welcomed this decline as 'emancipation' from the oldmaidenly fussiness of Ruskin." Megroz' book on Rossetti (Painter Poet of Heaven on Earth) published the next year, finds Scott "sarcastic" but acknowledges that the "boldness" of Scott's ideas was a genuine stimulus to Rossetti. A positive contribution by Megroz is his notice of Scott's poem titled "The Witches Ballad" which, he suggests, outdoes any of Rossetti's poems for a "macabre and dionysian spirit of romance." Fifteen years later, another critic regrets that Scott is a poet forgotten by the moderns, and describes the same poem as a "miracle of atavism -- a vision, as eldritch as a witch's dance as there is record of in our literature" (p. 288).¹⁴ Such glimpses of Scott as more than a biographical demon are rare. T. Earle Welby, in The Victorian Romantics 1850-70 (London: Howe, 1929) represents the unimaginative writers who lack the curiosity to see Scott in depth, and are content to use him as a foil for Rossetti. He defends Scott against Swinburne's tirade, and concludes, "Strenuous, unachieving Scott, if hardly deserving of study, remains above contempt" (p. 29).

The 1930's brought several ambitious books on Rossetti which continued to develop and limit the picture of Scott. In The Wife of Rossetti (1932), Violet Hunt treats Scott in accord with her fanciful and "romantic" treatment of Rossetti. She describes him as dour and carping, an "arrant gossip" apt to "lash his erstwhile competitors in the race with a bitterness they did not relish." Scott's marriage puzzles this writer, as does his "hatred" of Fanny Cornforth. Yet, for his treatment of Rosabell Bonally, she calls him the "most cantankerous and chivalrous of men," a paradoxical state which obviously satisfies the romantic excitement necessary to her narrative. Frances Winwar in Poor Splendid Wings (1933) also treats Scott as envious: "so embittered by his failures that he was affronted by the success of his friends." Spitefulness and an unforgiving nature become Scott's main traits,

while his encouragement of Rossetti's poetry in 1869 is described as having a "gruff practicality."

A more satisfactory view of Scott is given by Ifor Evans in his discussion of poetry in the late nineteenth century (1933).¹⁵ A second edition of the book appeared in 1966, with a considerably changed approach. In the first edition Scott is classified as a minor Pre-Raphaelite, whose "sluggish" mind was inspired by Rossetti. Scott's Notes are valuable as a personal record, and for Pre-Raphaelite portraits. However, in his artistic work Scott's ambition far outweighed his achievement. Any sparks of genius in Scott's work derive from his contact with Rossetti and the others of his group. In the 1966 edition, Evans is definitely influenced by Professor Packer's treatment of Scott in her biography of Christina Rossetti. Her approach shows Scott to have been "of greater importance than previously realized." However, Evans does not suggest a new study of Scott himself on the basis of this importance.

Janet Camp Troxell's Three Rossettis (1937) is at the core of modern Rossetti literature, but her treatment of Scott goes back to the Memoir of William Michael. Such old issues as Miss Losh, the subject of "Found," and Penkill 1869 are presented as being harshly critical of Scott's personality. Mrs. Troxell asserts that from the time of Gabriel's death, Scott's letters are full of slighting references to him. The letters she publishes, however, hardly convey the intensity of feeling she suggests, and a sympathetic reader would see them as evident of honesty rather than envy. Although Mrs. Troxell allows that there must have been something "endearing" in Scott's personality, she asserts that the quality is "utterly lacking when one meets him only through his autobiography or his letters." A sympathetic reader, especially one with a knowledge of the Penkill letters, would disagree. Scott is an important figure in this book, but he is kept

within the limits of his traditional stereotype.

Both William Gaunt (1942) and Oswald Doughty (1949) accept much of Scott's Notes at face value, although they warn the reader about Scott's reputation. Doughty's book, A Victorian Romantic, is the more important, and the more generous to Scott, for the writer attempts to fill out the flat picture of an envious "pictor ignotus" by an understanding of his situation. Teaching art to ambitious Novacastrians was not adequate solace for one who "combined strong literary and artistic aspirations with no mean opinion of himself" (p. 52). On all of the usual issues (Miss Losh; £200), Doughty defends Scott, although he finds it strange that Scott should have written in a derogatory tone about Swinburne.

Until Lona Packer's book in 1963, the most thorough discussion of Scott was in Helen Rossetti Angeli's Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Friends and Enemies (1949). In Mrs. Angeli's view, Scott is an enemy disguised as a friend. Each of the old issues is presented to support the contention that Scott was spiteful and envious, and that he owed much to Rossetti for praise and help given his artistic attempts. William Michael's report is used to nullify Scott's version of events in Rossetti's life. The essential argument of the chapter on Scott is that the misunderstanding of Rossetti as morbid, selfish and ungrateful is traceable to Scott's picture of him, and was created by Scott when an aging, jealous man, obsessed by his own sense of failure. It seems that Scott's reputation in this century has indeed suffered from becoming a worn-out subject. When historical perspective seems to endow one person with common sense about the issues, the next writer invariably returns to the old, emotionally prejudiced arguments and "facts." Writers on the Pre-Raphaelites have generally made little use of unpublished material in their treatment of Scott, preferring the old anecdotes and

attitudes to new possibilities.

A biography of Christina Rossetti, published by Lona Packer in 1963, promised to correct this tendency.¹⁶ The author contends that neither James Collinson nor Charles Cayley inspired Christina Rossetti's more emotional poems. A third man must have been involved, and Mrs. Packer deduces that it was William Bell Scott. Evidence for the love affair is found in similarities between the dates of Christina's poems and the times when she saw Scott. The bond between them was strong for a time, but when Scott met Alice Boyd his interest in Christina waned. Her love for him endured until his death, but was vanquished by the publication of his Notes when Christina (although she had never read his book) realized that she had loved an "unworthy" man. William E. Fredeman, in a review of the book for Victorian Studies, discounts Lona Packer's thesis satisfactorily: "Circumstantial evidence derived primarily from the poetry makes impossible the precise documentation of a theory for which there is not a single scrap of positive and direct proof." He supports this contention with evidence from the Penkill Collection.

In spite of the discrediting of the thesis, Professor Packer's book has apparently gained a following. The theory that Scott was a "demon lover" in Christina's mythology and that he delighted in maintaining relations with two women simultaneously has found echoes in Ifor Evans' reference to "the numerous outlets his amorous nature required." A very recent book (1970), in which David Sonstroem tags Scott as "an active, warm, virile and energetic man" who "conducted his emotional affairs with a bold and truly regal disregard of conventional attitudes and mores", has begun to create a new annex to Scott's "legend."

Sonstroem's book, Rossetti and the Fair Lady, does seem to be giving Scott some of the respect other contemporary writers have denied him.

At least he credits Scott as a reliable source of information and opinion. Inevitably, the traditional treatment of Scott impinges: "Although Scott was notoriously unkind to his old friend in his evaluation of him, and very bad on dates, his recounting of simple incidents, for a spiteful and disappointed old man, was remarkably fair" (p. 216). The modern tendency to use Scott's more sensational disclosures while derogating the man for making them should, perhaps, be traced to ignorance of the real man. Much closer examination of Scott's relationship with Rossetti is necessary, and will be made possible by the documents in the Penkill Collection.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

¹Oswald Doughty and J.R. Wahl, Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965-67) I, xix.

²Thomas Hall Caine, Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (London: Stock, 1882).

³Theodore Watts claimed that Rossetti had asked him, among his acquaintances, to be his official biographer. The claim was upheld by William Rossetti (Memoir I, ix).

⁴Theodore Watts, "Mr. D.G. Rossetti," Athenaeum no. 2842 (April 15, 1882) 480-82.

⁵Edmund Gosse, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," Century Magazine XXIV (Sept. 1882) 718-725.

⁶Theodore Watts "The Truth about Rossetti," Nineteenth Century, XIII (March 1883) 404-423.

⁷Joseph Knight, Life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (London: Scott, 1887).

⁸William Rossetti, "Notes on Rossetti and His Works," Art Journal, XLVI (May-July 1884) p. 165. The "public statements" referred to by William Rossetti were made in the Athenaeum of January, 1883. On Jan. 21, William wrote "... the deeply moving ballad of 'Mary Anne', by ... Mr. Scott, does not contain any incident or 'passage' on which this scene or picture is based." On Jan. 27, W.B. Scott wrote that Rossetti, on reading "Mary Anne" (then titled "Rosabell") offered to add an illustrative etching to be included in the forthcoming book. Long after the book came out, Rossetti did do a picture on the subject, a water colour entitled "The Gate of Memory." However he and Scott did discuss the situation of the poem, and Rossetti decided to paint a picture of the "terrible meeting of the old lovers now parted for ever." Scott felt that although the situation presented in "Found" was not actually in his poem, his discussion of it with Rossetti had led to the painting.

⁹In Christina Rossetti, Lona Packer quotes a letter from Frederick George Stephens to W.M. Rossetti (p. 387-8).

I think you are invariably right about Scott's unhappy book, and I am not sure you know that his mixed concern was originally far more injurious than it is now. Scott himself, a good while before his death, told me that he intended to tell, without reserve or mercy, all he knew (or thought he

knew) about G. He was resolved, he said to let the world know the 'truth.' I remonstrated in the most stringent manner as to this, and finally left him with a remark that whatever he knew (or thought he knew) as to these matters he spoke of, had come to him in the confidence of friendship, and I denounced his purpose as strongly as I could.

¹⁰ William E. Fredeman gives a brief outline of the controversy in his monograph "A Pre-Raphaelite Gazette: The Penkill Letters of Arthur Hughes to William Bell Scott and Alice Boyd, 1886-97" (Manchester: John Rylands, 1967) p. 41-49.

¹¹ These four articles are not among those in the Scrapbook now in the Penkill Collection:

Anonymous "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" The Nation, Feb. 23, 1893.

E.G.J. "A Circle of Famous Artists and Poets" The Dial, Dec. 16, 1893.

W. Robertson Niell, "William Bell Scott", The Bookman, January, 1893.

A.C. Swinburne, "The New Terror" Fortnightly Review, Dec. 1, 1892.

¹² Ford Madox Hueffer, Ford Madox Brown (London: Longmans, 1896) p. 273.

¹³ Oswald Doughty, ed. The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to his Publisher, F.S. Ellis, (London: Scholartis, 1928).

¹⁴ Cornelius Weygandt, The Time of Tennyson (New York: Lond: Appleton-Century, 1936).

¹⁵ B. Ifor Evans, English Poetry in the Later Nineteenth Century (London: Methuen, 1933).

¹⁶ Lona Mosk Packer, Christina Rossetti (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

CHAPTER FOUR

Defense of Scott Based On New Material In Penkill Papers

After the first meeting between Scott and Rossetti in 1847, perhaps at a studio Rossetti shared with Holman Hunt, there is no definite record of any personal contact until 1853.¹ Other details suggest at least yearly meetings when Scott made his accustomed trips to London. William Michael Rossetti visited Scott at Newcastle in the summer of 1848, and at this time Scott heard the barest details about the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. A conversation about Pre-Raphaelite techniques at Millais' studio, related by Scott, also suggests his awareness of and his part in the formulation of Pre-Raphaelite principles. Scott also met the sculptor Thomas Woolner about 1850, and expressed doubt as to the success of Woolner's romantic adventure to the gold-fields of Australia. Scott says that he first knew of the Germ, the PRB periodical, in 1849 when requests for material began to come his way. The PRB Journal for January 1850 records with enthusiasm the receipt of two sonnets by Scott for the Germ.

Although William Michael had paid at least two visits to Newcastle by 1851, Gabriel's visit of 1853 was probably the first extended contact between him and Scott. At this time, Scott learned much about his younger friend which contradicted his earlier perceptions of him. About 1853, Scott probably met Rossetti's fiancée Elizabeth Siddal, but no friendship developed between them. A period of undetermined length existed in the 1850's when Scott was less affectionate toward Rossetti. During this period both men were busy with their separate careers and social activities. Rossetti was occupied not only with Elizabeth Siddal, but also with the patronage of John Ruskin. In addition, he had made several exciting new friends, which included William Morris and Burne-Jones. Scott's connections with the

Trevelyan's of Wallington Hall began in the mid-fifties, and by the end of the decade Scott had begun his deep and lasting friendship with Alice Boyd. In spite of Scott's suggestion of estrangement, (Notes, I, 317) there are several instances of contact during this time. When Deverell died in 1854, Scott was sensitive to Rossetti's loss, and records in his Notes that Rossetti expressed his affection for Deverell in trying to sell some of his paintings for the benefit of his family. On a lighter subject, Scott records Dante Gabriel's teasing over his poem Journey of Prince Legion. In 1853, Rossetti had excitedly promised an etching to illustrate Scott's forthcoming Poems by a Painter. However, he had not done the etchings by 1854 and apologized to Scott for his neglect. Rossetti also knew that a Scott picture had been rejected by "the Institution snobs" and defended his friends' "present ideas and later doings" to Thomas Woolner (Letters, I, 174-5).

Scott's avowal that he and Rossetti were less close for a period in the fifties should, however, not be ignored. Rossetti's increasing commitment to Ruskin probably influenced Scott's feelings. In his Notes, Scott emphasizes that he felt neither friendship nor conventional respect for Ruskin, either as man or teacher. At this early stage in Rossetti's career, Ruskin was extremely helpful, and even extended his influence to include Elizabeth Siddal. Rossetti's difficulty in expressing loyalty to two friends who were not compatible can be imagined. However, Rossetti still praised Scott to such men as Allingham, describing him as "a man something of Browning's order" (Letters, I, 248). In 1856, the meeting between Scott and Ruskin at the Working Man's College took place, and Rossetti acted as a catalyst to the opposing sides of their personalities. Scott evidently felt to some degree betrayed by Dante Gabriel's failure to support him.

In 1857, Rossetti became friends with Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris, and became involved with the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine. In March,

he sent Scott three copies of the magazine which contained poems by him, and in June asked Scott without result to send pictures to the exhibition in Fitzroy Place, held by the "set." The Oxford Union Murals were painted in 1857, and although Scott says he was eventually glad not to have been involved with the fading pictures, his Notes contain a review of the murals which gives highest praise to Rossetti. Scott showed the first of his Wallington paintings in this year and Gabriel praised it sincerely, although he found some flaws. The Hogarth Club was formed in 1858, as an attempt to weaken the power of the Royal Academy. Both Scott and Rossetti were members, and Scott laments the early dissolution of the club. Scott's role as a "friend" to the Pre-Raphaelites was strengthened in 1858, when he advised James Leathart of Newcastle to collect the work of the group. The commission for "Found" which Rossetti received from Leathart was due to Scott's influence. The next year, 1859, Scott was pleased to learn that Rossetti had abandoned the practice of stippling the flesh in his paintings. The inadequacy of the technique had been a constant theme in Scott's criticism of Rossetti's work, and Scott felt that the change was "of infinite importance" in the history of Rossetti's painting.

The year 1860 was important to both men, although their personal contact was not a necessary part of the events. Scott paid his first visit to Penkill Castle, home of Alice Boyd. This Scottish home became increasingly important to Scott's life and work, and on two occasions became a useful sanctuary for Rossetti. The marriage of Rossetti to Elizabeth Siddal was a pivotal event in the course of Gabriel's life. Although Scott was invited, he never did visit the young couple. Nevertheless he became very aware of the effects of the marriage on Rossetti, which suggests that they were in contact during the two years of Rossetti's marriage. Perhaps Scott's London exhibition of his Wallington pictures in 1861 provided the opportunity.

Although Scott says nothing in his Notes, William Michael discloses that Rossetti spent three weeks at Christmas, 1862, the year of his wife's death, with the Scotts in Newcastle. (Memoir, I, 259). While there, he painted a portrait of Mrs. Leathart, the wife of the patron Scott had introduced to him. The letter which gives this information also mentions a bill due on New Year's Day, for which Gabriel gave Scott £26, probably as repayment of a loan. (Letters, II, 464) Rossetti had moved into Tudor House, Chelsea, in mid-October 1862, and his letters indicate that his life then was chaotic. He was trying to sell some pictures "by Scott," but whether they were by William or David Scott is not specified. In his Notes, Scott says little that is specific about the seven-year period between the death of Elizabeth, and Rossetti's return to poetry in 1869. In Scott's opinion, Gabriel became a different person after his wife's death.

Scott retired from his Government post in 1864, and moved to a house in Euston Road Chelsea. Proximity to Rossetti made contact with him much easier, and much deeper. Gabriel's menagerie, his interest in spiritualism, and his reluctance to exhibit became part of Scott's knowledge of him in the years immediately after 1864. The presence of Fanny Cornforth as Gabriel's housekeeper definitely did not have Scott's approval, but neither did it keep him away from his interesting friend. He did, however, see other disturbing tendencies in Gabriel, such as the "confusion between external realities and mental impressions," which portended an unhappy future.

In 1868, Gabriel became depressed because of difficulty with his vision and, through Scott, obtained an invitation from Miss Boyd to visit Penkill Castle. During the month of July, Rossetti was often on the verge of leaving for Penkill, but did not finally go until September 21. The visit is vividly chronicled in Scott's Notes. It became, to Scott, an important

stage in their friendship because he was able to comfort and encourage his despondent friend. An elderly cousin of Alice Boyd's, Miss Losh, was also visiting Penkill while Gabriel was there. She had much sympathy for Rossetti's practical difficulties and, unknown to Scott, she persuaded Rossetti to accept a loan. He received the money after returning to London. Scott, when he discovered that Gabriel had taken a loan, was extremely angry. William Rossetti suggests that Scott never forgave Gabriel for this transaction. According to his own report of the visit, Scott was much more interested in Rossetti's artistic problems than in his money difficulties. Impressed by the power of Rossetti reading his early poems, Scott began in earnest to persuade him to again take up poetry ~~which~~ abandoned since his wife's death.² Rossetti returned to London in early November, but when Scott saw him a few weeks later, he still had not begun to work.

In early 1869, as the letters to Alice Boyd indicate, Rossetti was depressed many times when Scott visited him. He did write Alice himself, however, giving news of Scott which would please her. By mid-August, Rossetti was preparing to leave for Penkill again, having got the proofs for the "Trial books" underway. His visit was eventful, as is well known to students of Rossetti through William Michael's questioning of Scott's account. Scott considered his friend to be in a strange state of behaviour, and he was drawn into several unusual activities on his account. He also found him very self-critical, and he suggests that this was partly due to the plan for exhuming the manuscripts buried with Elizabeth.

In 1870 Scott and Gabriel continued to develop their writer-critic arrangement, and their social contact included frequent dinner-parties. When about to publish his Poems in this year, Rossetti solicited his friends as reviewers of the book. Scott was very much against this practice and said

so in his Notes. Yet he rejoiced in 1870 with Rossetti when public reception of the book was good. Also in 1870, Scott bought Bellevue House in Chelsea, close to Rossetti's own Tudor House, and their contact increased significantly. By mid-summer 1871, Rossetti had journeyed to Kelmscott Manor House, the home he rented jointly with William Morris. He stayed with Jane Morris, her children, and several servants while William Morris was in Iceland, and the period was one of poetic productivity. In the Notes, Scott prints several letters from Rossetti at Kelmscott, all very enthusiastic about the poetry Scott has sent him for criticism, and encouraging about the public success of the poems, should Scott decide to publish. Rossetti's last letter from Kelmscott, referring to the coming Contemporary Review article on himself, indicates that he was quite unprepared for the venom of the attack. On the 20th of October, Scott described the article to Alice Boyd as "The most deadly attack on the morality of the set and school that could be penned." A week later he tells that Gabriel was busily making "rhymes" against Buchanan, the author of the article. Scott also knew of the warm relationship between Jane Morris and Gabriel at this time.

In 1872, ten years after the death of Rossetti's wife, Scott saw him involved in another serious emotional situation which brought a drastic change, in Scott's mind, to Gabriel's way of life. Deep feelings of victimization had developed from the Buchanan article and pamphlet. Rossetti's imagination prevented sleep, and he turned to using chloral as an end to insomnia. The Penkill Letters suggest that his relationship with Jane Morris was also an influence.³ When Rossetti's paranoia became very severe, William Michael decided to travel with him to Roehampton, to the home of Dr. Hake. Scott, when notified, "acted in a spirit of true friendship," according to William Michael. On the evening of June 9th, Dante Gabriel went into a deep sleep which his friends first thought was a sign of returning health. Later

they discovered that it was caused by laudanum poisoning, and that Rossetti had consumed a bottle of the same drug which killed his wife. When he had recovered enough to travel, Rossetti was taken to Perthshire, Scotland, and Scott relieved Madox Brown as a companion to Rossetti at Stobhall for about four weeks until mid-July. In his published account of this time, Scott omits what he does not know from personal experience, underplays Gabriel's illness, and stresses his amazing recovery. Unpublished letters for this period disclose that he knew much which was never given to the public. Scott visited Gabriel at Kelmscott in early December 1872, finding him quite healthy and determined to remain at Kelmscott for a long while.

The last extended mention of Rossetti in Scott's Notes suggests that he, like Rossetti's brother William, saw the 1872 breakdown as "a parting of the waters" in Dante Gabriel's life. In early 1874, Rossetti wrote Scott asking for 200 pounds. Scott sent it, but the money was immediately returned. Scott, rather suspiciously, took the incident as a test of friendship, and obviously thought less of Gabriel after it. In 1874, Gabriel returned to Chelsea where, Scott declares, he did not move from his house, "never going even into the street, never seeing anyone." Nearly all his friends, Scott suggested, had ceased to see him. William Michael was later to take exception to this statement as a literal interpretation.

In 1875, Scott published his Poems, containing a dedicatory poem in praise of Swinburne, Morris, and Rossetti. Gabriel replied with a cordial letter containing detailed criticism which showed careful reading. Late in 1875, Gabriel moved to Aldwick Lodge, Sussex, where he remained until June of 1876. He wrote Scott from Sussex, and the content of the letters suggests that they had frequent contact. Rossetti was out of London for most of 1876, going to Broadlands in Hampshire soon after returning from Sussex. Little significant contact between Rossetti and Scott is evident in available

letters from 1876 until 1879. In 1877 Gabriel had an operation for hydrocele, and when Scott visited, he found him unusually peaceful. Scott knew, also, that Rossetti was having his walls soundproofed against the "belligerent" noisiness of his musical neighbours. In November, 1879, Rossetti wrote a long letter to Alice Boyd about his own ill health and Scott's relative well-being. He says that Scott's visits have been especially cheering to him. In October, Scott visited Gabriel with the purpose of getting from him a testimonial which would support Scott's application for the Edinburgh Chair of Fine Arts. Rossetti did not think the idea a good one, citing Scott's changeable health and dislike of lecturing as reasons. Later in the year, Scott found Rossetti in better health, interested again in poetry, and confident that the "spies" who preyed upon him had been foiled.

Rossetti's published letters for 1880, although containing minor references to Scott, reinforce the idea that the relationship was not especially open at the time. Rossetti is sensitive of a need to "handle" Scott with care, and he avoids potential friction between Watts and Scott. In October, Scott was visited by Samuel Haydon, alarmed because Gabriel had confided a conspiracy to him. Haydon wanted Scott to warn William Michael of the situation, but Scott was reluctant, suggesting that his interference might make matters worse.

Before Scott left for Penkill in the summer of 1881 he visited Gabriel, finding him in a depressed state about his health. Rossetti was taken to Cumberland for a month in the autumn while Scott visited Penkill, and on Scott's return he visited the ailing Rossetti in Chelsea.

Two visits of late October are described in the Penkill Papers. Caine had visited Scott to warn him that Gabriel was quite ill. Although dubious, Scott called to find Gabriel despondent and coughing badly. He returned the next day and spent part of the time reading some of his own poetry

to Dante Gabriel. Scott felt that although Gabriel was in a nervous and "shattered" state, there was, nevertheless, a "good deal of a kind of pretence about his quivering hand and continuous cough." He closed his next letter to Alice by saying that "This frightful spectacle of D.G. depresses one" (P.P., Oct. 28, 1881). Again the private letters disclose that Scott underplayed, in his public version, the real concern he felt about Gabriel's stability and mental health.

By the end of October, 1881, Scott was facing a personal crisis which was directly tied to his friendship with Rossetti. Scott became increasingly paranoid and guilt-ridden as he felt his acquaintances were turning against him. Five years earlier he had written an article which, apparently for good reason, had been published anonymously. The article (which Scott calls "the infernal article" and "the skeleton in the closet") probably contained criticism of some men connected with the Royal Academy. Scott's usually explicit letters are vague about the details, but his anxiety is most clear from the excited, self-involved, despairing tone the letters convey. His worst fear, however, is openly stated to Alice: "What am I to do if ever Gabriel when he finds out about the article, disowns my society, I don't know. You will of course be dragged down with me, alas." Scott was horrified as he anticipated the shame of discovery, and he wrote Alice that he would, if exposed, winter in Italy and spend the summer at Penkill, never coming to London alone. When Scott finally summoned the courage to confront Gabriel, he realized that his fears had been groundless, for if Gabriel knew of Scott's article he was not inclined to "disown" him.

Rossetti moved to Birchington in February 1882, and died there on April 6, 1882. Scott says in his Notes that he did not see him in the last few months, and did not attend Rossetti's funeral through "indisposition." Alice Boyd's Day Diaries (in the Penkill Collection), disclose that if he did

not see him at Birchington, Scott visited Rossetti many times in London, and saw him even on the day he left for Birchington. In his Notes for the year, Scott first describes the publication of his A Poet's Harvest Home, and then mentions Gabriel's death. This is in keeping with Scott's statement that he took less of an interest in Rossetti's declining years, and reinforces one's knowledge that Scott abhorred the scavengers who clung to Rossetti on his death-bed, in order to make their "memoirs" of him more interesting to the public. In the last eight years left him, Scott put his energy into his poetry, architecture, and the revisions of his Notes. He died at eighty-nine, but two years later he became a vital part of the literary scene, with the posthumous publication of his Autobiographical Notes.

II

The controversy over the Notes has been discussed, and the effect on Scott's reputation has been traced in the previous chapter. It is evident from the survey of Scott's reputation that most of the negative attitudes towards him are based on William Michael Rossetti's specific arguments of a last visit to Rossetti in 1881.

To me it seems Mr. Scott was at some pains to make the scene more repulsive than in fact it was. But, if he found the picture a painful one to indicate in narrative, a very obvious question arises -- Why did he indicate it? He was professing to write 'Autobiographical Notes' and the doings or misdoings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti -- apart from the aid which he most constantly and determinately lent to this friend's reputation as poet and painter, among acquaintances and with the public -- formed no part of the Autobiography of William Bell Scott. (Memoir, 388-9).

William's contention throughout his book is that Scott purposely, with intent to disparage, wrote about his brother in an unhandsome, unkind fashion. In

almost every instance where Scott writes about Rossetti, William Michael takes exception, often with extremely inconclusive results. It is therefore interesting to find in the Penkill Letters from Scott to Alice Boyd, information which proves that William Michael was concealing the truth in suggesting revisions to the Notes. In other cases, the letters, which have the value of being straightforward comments on experience to a trusted friend, demonstrate that Scott's immediate reactions to a situation were very similar to the version published in his Notes. They show that Scott's retrospective view, which has been traditionally characterized as "sour" and "bitter," was not revised from his original statements on most important issues. William Michael, for one, would have his readers believe that the Notes are unreliable because the writer's point of view was changed in his years of illness after Rossetti died.

The third point made obvious in the Penkill Letters is vital to the restoring of Scott's reputation: Scott had much more material than he used. There is no evidence that the editor found it necessary to suppress large or vital passages about Rossetti, although anecdotes about both Ruskin and Letitia Scott were eliminated. Scott obviously used his own discretion in deciding what to print about Rossetti. The Penkill Letters disclose that there was much of sensational value in Scott's experience of Rossetti. The letters also contain many anecdotes which would have supported Scott's generalizations about his friend's life, had Scott decided to use them. For the sake of discretion, or honour to Dante Gabriel, Scott decided not to include these anecdotes. For the sake of Scott's reputation, this fact should be made known.

The most blatant example of William Michael's desire to replace original events with his own version is his denial of illness resulting from Dante Gabriel's breakdown in 1872. He calls Scott's reference "highly erroneous," and disputes the idea that F.M. Brown had to take over the business affairs of

Rossetti. If Scott was wrong in saying that Gabriel did not know about the sale of his blue china, he was not wrong about William's reaction to the events of 1872. F.M. Brown's diary for the year corroborates Scott's assertion that William became ill (Hueffer, 273). In addition there is a letter to Alice from Scott in 1873 (Penkill Papers, Oct. 31), when William Rossetti's engagement to Lucy Brown was announced. Scott had been to see Christina Rossetti and her mother, and together they confided in Scott how very much alarmed they had been for William ever since Gabriel's illness, and that they were truly glad of his relationship with Lucy. They considered that William had been in a "spell": "For weeks they said he never uttered a word to any of them."

William also disputes the report of Gabriel's visits to Penkill in 1868 and 1869. Scott says that in 1868, Gabriel was "in a depression of mind from the idea that his eyes were failing," implying that the impending blindness was an "idea" which caused undue anxiety. William Michael points out that the condition was quite real, even if caused by "general overstrain and nervous upset." He ends with a statement obviously directed at those looking for other causes to Rossetti's anxiety: "To suggest that a more or less uneasy conscience was at the bottom of it all does not improve the case. This only adds a shadowy insinuation of wrongdoing to a direct imputation of fractious or pusillanimous fancies" (Memoir, I, 270). If Scott were implying other causes to Gabriel's unrest, the unpublished letters to Alice prove that he had much evidence. Certainly the conclusions are his own, but the instances which shaped his point of view undoubtedly took place.

The subject is Gabriel's affection for Jane Morris, wife of William Morris. In a letter to Alice dated Thursday the twenty-sixth, 1868, Scott describes a dinner party attended by the Morrisises and Gabriel. Janey Morris and Gabriel sat together, and in Scott's opinion Gabriel acted "like a

perfect fool if he wished to conceal his attachment." He made his affections quite obvious by attending to her constantly, and once blundered in attempting to escort her downstairs when it was not his part to do so. Morris was quite aware of the events, and Scott hopes that Gabriel and Janey will not "go further than they have gone." A letter to Alice after Rossetti's visit, in November 1868, reaffirms the complication as important to Gabriel's life. Scott relates that Gabriel has not tried painting, nor has he seen a doctor or "the sweet Lucretia Borgia." The continuing paragraphs of this letter make it clear that Lucretia Borgia is Scott's name for Jane Morris. Apparently Letitia had been to visit Jane and informed her of Gabriel's return to town. Gabriel himself has not been to see her because "they are being watched." Scott draws his conclusions about Rossetti's state of mind from these rumors and from his conversations with Gabriel: "The disturbance in his health and temper ... [is] caused by an uncontrollable desire for the possession of the said L.B." (P.P., Nov., Monday morning, 1868). If there are inferences of other causes to Gabriel's depressions in Scott's Notes, they are neither manufactured out of malice, nor without basis in fact. The extracts make it obvious that not only did Scott have reasons for implying other causes to Gabriel's depression, but also that William Michael was attempting to allow only one possibility for Gabriel's depressed state of mind.

William Michael took exception also to Scott's suggestions that on Rossetti's 1869 visit to Penkill, he was depressed and suicidal. He counters Scott's description of Rossetti's "ferocious" look by citing a friendly letter to Shields written at approximately the same time and suggests, "Look here upon this picture, and on this." The letters of Rossetti published by Doughty and Wahl for this year conclusively show that William Michael was again presenting only a part of the situation, while suggesting that it was

whole. These Doughty-Wahl letters surely indicate a more reflective and even melancholy mood than was usual with Rossetti. Certainly Gabriel's letters to his brother are full of the details of proof reading, and their serious tone could be interpreted as no more than evidence of strenuous work. However, certain phrases and topics in letters to other people do suggest that Rossetti was undergoing much self-criticism, and was assessing himself and his future with unusual thoroughness. In a short letter to Mrs. Aglaia Coronia he explains his presence at Penkill: "[I] have merely ... been shot here as rubbish quite used up" (Letters, II, 717). Several friends had recently died, or had had death in the family, and this subject is part of nearly all of Rossetti's letters at this time. He writes to Brown of this, adding: "However I am not in a very brilliant state of spirits to think about other people's ill luck" (Letters, II. p. 719). Again Rossetti's mental involvement with death comes through in a letter to his mother of the same day as that to Brown. The salutation, "My dearest Mother," is unusually serious, and the subjects discussed in the letter receive none of the usual playfulness. The letter ends on a discussion of a prospective addition to his house, with the sentiment, "Time may be no longer for one, for anything one knows." (Letters, II, 722). The following day, August 27th, he wrote to Frederic Shields and this letter also contains an unusual amount of self-analysis. Again the subject of other men's griefs is discussed, with Rossetti's comment that "the dreadful tidings ... have furnished us with some sad thoughts and talk." The article on him in Tinsley's Magazine for September elicits these comments:

I have no cause to complain, since I have all I need of an essential kind, and have taken little trouble about it -- except always in the nature of my work -- the poetry especially in which I have done no potboiling at any rate.

So I am grateful to that art, and nourish against the other that base grudge which we bear those whom we have treated shabbily.

He apologizes for "all this tirade about myself." Advising his friend to find relaxation from excitement, Rossetti comments about "the matrimonial question" in which Shields was involved.⁴ And once more the subject is brought close to his own, very personal feelings: "though here I know one is far from being master of the situation according to one's pleasure." Even a cursory reading of these letters impresses one that the usually buoyant and rather carefree letter-writing of Rossetti, in autumn 1869, reflected his subdued spirits. That William Michael's interpretation is questionable seems obvious from these extracts.

Among other examples of William's attacks on Scott proving baseless, is his objection to Scott's assigning a "women and flowers" period to Rossetti's art; he especially dislikes Scott's dramatic flourish that these were "the only objects worth painting." This technique of seeming to dispute the subject while having only the power to question the wording, is used by William throughout the Memoir. Most often it serves to make much of an otherwise negligible point in Scott's book. About Rossetti's marriage, for example, William Michael raises objections to Scott's account, but concludes by agreeing with Scott. He implies that Scott was exaggerating Gabriel's suicide attempt in 1872, but only succeeds in correcting the practical details while in the main agreeing with Scott. He finds Scott guilty of betrayal for his comments on Rossetti "working the oracle," but can only really quibble over the literal meaning of "ready-made under his own eyes." In many cases where he raises objections to Scott, William Michael has been over-scrupulous in defence of his brother. By interpreting "detraction" where none was meant, he has succeeded in bringing forth as

memorable many of the less noble qualities of Rossetti's personality.

William Michael Rossetti accuses Scott of "a resolute desire to disparage and besmirch" (Memoir, 366), and this description from the authoritative pen of Rossetti's brother has convinced readers to the present of Scott's real motives. Yet in another book, William Michael admits that he feels Scott intended only to show an honest picture of a man who was being obscured through public interest (Some Reminiscences I, 60). The Penkill Letters do show that Scott's description of scenes in his Notes differed very little from the immediate description of the same scenes in his letters to Alice. But was there a "sour" and "bitter" invalid, scribbling vindictively about Gabriel from his sick bed? Minto occasionally encountered "the dreadful cynical Hermit" at work, in his editing of the Notes, but his letters to Alice betray no real shock at the writing of his friend.

William Michael suggest ulterior motives by Scott on several issues. He points out, for example, that while Scott says that Alice, Miss Losh, and he prompted Gabriel to resume poetry, Gabriel had already made efforts to publish in spring of that year. He implies, therefore, that Scott was either lying about his influence, or not as close to Rossetti as he pretended. Scott's letters to William Michael after Gabriel's return from Penkill convey Scott's sincerity about this subject, and prove that William was attributing to Scott's Notes selfish motives which he knew Scott did not, in 1868, hold. On November 30th, Scott asked William, "Don't you think Gabriel's beginning to take an interest in his poetry a very good thing?" He reports that Gabriel and he had "most serious talks about the chances of his powers of painting -- a matter on which I may write or speak to none but you. I tried by every means to make him revive his poetry, but apparently without effect. Now, however, he is really doing so. Of course one trusts

the defective sight is only temporary...." (Rossetti Papers, p. 372). About December 2nd, Scott again stressed his sincere concern for Gabriel's future: "The short ending to his ills, in the worst case, was of course often spoken of by him. But we must not think of the possibility of that, even under the dire misfortune. I could not strongly dissuade him, but I feel that it must not be thought of." He finishes his letter with a characteristic thought: "It would be a great thing to get him to be the poet again." The sincere tone of these extracts indicates that Scott was not, in retrospect, puffing his importance to Gabriel out of proportion. The letters show that in 1868, as well as after Gabriel's death, Scott was sure in his belief that poetry was Gabriel's forte.

The important conclusion to be drawn from these comparisons is that Scott's retrospective view, popularly characterized as bitter and envious, is, on all essential matters, the same as that expressed in his letters to Alice and others, at the time of the event. Several other examples are extant. For instance, in his Notes he described the Rossetti brothers' interest in spiritualism in rather scornful, or at least superior, terms. This attitude is comparable to that in a letter of October 22, 1865 to Alice, in which Scott describes a seance he had attended with Gabriel and William: "It was simply childish, and lowers my two very dear friends Wm. and D.G. immensely in my judgment." Another example of this correspondence between Scott's published and unpublished version, is his report of Gabriel's intensity over Buchanan's Contemporary Review article. In his Notes Scott says that the article "was to him like a slow poison." In the following months, Scott says he was witness to "one of the greatest geniuses of the age, visibly breaking down under the paltry infliction of 'an article'." Scott's dating in the Notes is rightly corrected by William Rossetti, but unpublished letters show that the preoccupation he saw in Gabriel was not fabricated in retrospect.

In mid-October Scott wrote excitedly to Alice about the article: "Nothing like it has ever been done in criticism of late years. Gabriel pretends to be rather amused than hurt by it, and makes rhymes without end on author and publisher. Everyone is asking who Rob Maitland is ... but now as you will hear the mystery is solved" (P.P., Oct. 20, 1871). A week later, Scott reports that this information has given Gabriel new purpose: "He is not only making rhymes against Buchanan, but is inditing a pamphlet which very possibly he will print despite the dissuasion of everybody." The discrepancy between Scott's published accounts and his description of the events to Alice, to whom he would have no reason to lie, exist only in a matter of dating, and perhaps in some extra dramatization for reader interest.

The most prominent example of Scott's retrospective view being the same as his immediate point of view was made important by William Michael's outcry against it in his Memoir. William focuses his argument against Scott writing at all of Rossetti, on Scott's description of a visit he paid Rossetti in late 1881. Scott described Gabriel as being ill, depressed and asking for absolution by a priest. William anatomizes the passage from the Notes in which Scott expresses his feeling that Gabriel tried to "wound" him. He concludes,

I leave it to the reader to judge whether the spirit shown in the foregoing extract is or is not such as might have been expected from the author with regard to his "dearest of friends" ... who was dead long before the Autobiographical Notes were put in form for publication. Curious indeed are the lurking-places and blind corners in the heart of man. (Memoir, 367).

Two letters written by Scott on October 27 and 28 probably describe the visit on which this passage was based and although no mention is made of "The Sphinx" or of Gabriel's desire for confession, the description of Rossetti's

state of mind and health is consistent. Scott, who was prompted to visit by Caine's report of Rossetti's dire illness, suspected a chloral "attack."

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 ... [with] no result and no apparent cause. He protested that he was dying, that such a success as he had had with both book and picture, was the forerunner of death -- I thought of the former time and feared his mind was gone again, but gradually after a long time he became very much better.

Scott visited again the next day and read some of his poetry to Rossetti, who wept over it: "He never before ... expressed himself so strongly about anything, I think." Rossetti's weeping was considered by Scott as symptomatic of more than appreciation, and he realizes that Rossetti is in a "very nervous, shattered state." When talk turned to Rossetti's poetry, and the success of "The King's Tragedy," Scott says that Rossetti became "almost paralytic, said that the writing of that had torn his vitals out and fairly broke down." Typically, Scott analyzes the reaction as "anxiety and deranged sensibility about the exhibition of his picture at Liverpool, and his volume coming out at the same moment." Most important, this letter proves that not only did Scott have encounters with Gabriel such as he described in the Notes, but also that his immediate reaction to the scene was consistent with his retrospective report of it. William Michael's comments on the passage by Scott suggest a "spirit of detraction" where very probably none was meant.

The main revelation in Scott's letters to Alice which proves that Scott's reputation is in need of repair, is the fact that for every disclosure Scott made about Rossetti, he kept much more back. Even the disclosures (the only really original one is the story of Miss Losh's loan), it has been shown, have been magnified out of proportion by Scott's detractors, rather than

by the writer himself. On the subject of Gabriel's women, especially Fanny, Scott could become very indignant, but in his Notes he is always moderate or silent. His dislike of the effect marriage had on Rossetti is obvious, but Scott does not, as William Sharp suggested, cast a slur on Elizabeth Siddal's name. He does say, however, that Rossetti's devotion to "women and flowers" in art had the "paradoxical conclusion" of bringing other ladies beside his original "muse" into his world. This statement of Scott's is made in connection with his assertion that for some time in the 1850's he felt a lesser affection for Rossetti. Although Scott's veiled statements identifying Fanny are flimsy evidence for assigning her a role in the cool period, his later comments about her to Alice suggest that indeed this was the case. Of course Rossetti's allegiance to Ruskin must also be allowed as an influence on their relationship at this time.

Fanny became Gabriel's housekeeper in 1863, but if Rossetti's letters for the period are a reliable indication, she did little to ease Rossetti's mind of mundane worries. Scott, in his Notes, wryly says that she "must have had some overpowering attractions for him, although I could never see what they were." Later, in a discussion of spiritualism, Scott probably alludes again to Fanny Cornforth. He describes the medium as "uncultivated and mentally unfurnished as the evil genius of D.G.R. already mentioned" (Notes, II, 81). While Scott says nothing of it in his Notes, he obviously associated Gabriel's "childish" interest in spiritualism with Fanny's encouragement. After his report of the "table-rapping" incident of 1865 (quoted above, p. 94), he adds a reference to Fanny: "It is all that three-waisted creature who makes society there intolerable."

Another reference to Fanny occurs in connection with Scott's infamous visit in 1881 to the sick Rossetti, previously discussed (above, pp. 95-96). During their conversation, Scott heard that Fanny had accompanied

Rossetti and Caine to Cumberland. Learning of William Michael's disapproval of the situation, Scott expressed his own, stimulating another attack of "shattered nerves" in Gabriel. Fanny's hotel had failed, and she was again dependent on Rossetti for support. Scott asserts that her presence is "a renewal of an infliction one can't really bargain for." Scott's treatment of Rossetti's affair with Jane Morris is likewise discreet. That he knew of their close relationship is obvious from the letters previously discussed, but his description in the Notes of Rossetti's stay at Kelmscott suggests nothing unconventional. Scott did know, however, of a more unusual over-night visit by Janey to Gabriel. On October 23rd, 1871, Scott described a dinner at Morris' which did not include Gabriel and Jane. The reason, he had heard, was that Jane was staying the night at his house. Four years later, hearing that Gabriel had quit Morris' firm, Scott exclaimed: "He had made Morris pay him out of the business the same as Brown and P.O. Marshall, and has settled the money on Janey!!!" Because of libel problems, this information Scott had could probably not have been printed. Nevertheless he had many opportunities for unambiguous suggestions about Gabriel's relationships, and, although he discerned Jane's importance to Gabriel's state of mind, Scott chose not to use his knowledge.

The most important example of Scott's restraint on a vital subject is evident in the unpublished material about Rossetti's mental breakdown in 1872. When Gabriel was taken north to Urrard in Scotland, he was accompanied by George Hake, Brown and Dunn. Just as they were to leave for Stobhall in Scotland, Brown felt it necessary to return home and Scott was asked to replace him. He joined the party in the last week of June, probably on the 25th. A packet of 72 letters written to and by William Bell Scott (in the Penkill Collection) cover a period from early June until autumn of 1872. Many

of these letters are direct reports by Scott to his trusted friend Alice, and they prove Scott's immediate involvement with Gabriel's breakdown. On June 8th Scott wrote a detailed description of Rossetti's state of mind, for his paranoia was manifested in an intense desire to leave town. Scott's opinions are specific:

At first his disease was wounded egotism and monomania about the pamphlet and its author, by and by his constant cry was that he could not fight, he had no manhood and would have to die in shame ... His next delusion, because we all saw that he was suffering under delusions, even physical delusions ... was that a conspiracy was formed to crush him. Browning's new book came with an affectionate word from Browning in the front of it, and Gabriel ... soon began to find allusions to himself in it, and then Browning was his greatest enemy .. The next step was decisive, he declared the walls to be mined and perforated by spies, and that all he did and said was known to the conspirators.

Scott notes that William Michael had known the seriousness of Gabriel's condition for some time. On the counsel of his doctors, Rossetti was taken to Roehampton, the home of Dr. Hake. Scott's final words in his letter to Alice on the matter prove that he had no intention of exposing his friend: "let us hope he will gradually become right again, and then we will all have to be very careful of the world knowing anything about it."

He wrote again Monday morning with news of Gabriel's outburst at some passersby in Roehampton. There follows a description of a deep sleep into which Gabriel had gone. Scott does not seem disturbed, or perhaps is trying not to alarm Alice, although he does say that Rossetti women were summoned by William. Perhaps his assertion that he feels "so queer and shaky" is meant as a sign to Alice of how deeply he was worried. On June 12th he writes of being the previous evening at Roehampton. Gabriel had quite recovered from "the lethargy which all the doctors thought was suffusion of the brain." However,

all is not well, for now "his delusions are more dreadful than ever."

William Michael, Scott records, was "desponding as to the result" for he had the burden of Gabriel's precarious financial situation heavy on his shoulders.

On Thursday, June 13th, Scott writes of "a break in the cloud, which I hope may be the beginning of better times." Two days before, he had visited Roehampton with Dunn, to have a most unhappy discussion with William. His account of his brother was "that of a maniac with so many and such dreadful delusions that there seemed nothing for it but to send him to an asylum." On the day when the crucial step was to be decided, Brown suggested that he take Gabriel to Cheyne Walk, as an experiment. The attempt seems to have had a good effect, for Scott, on visiting that evening, felt Rossetti's delusions were less serious. He has highest praise for Brown's independence of view, and for his determination to keep Gabriel away from an asylum. Scott, finding Gabriel improved, hopes that they have all been too much excited by "the dreadful affair." For in the next two days Scott is able to describe improvement in Gabriel, evidence of his loyal visits to Cheyne Walk.

A letter of June 17th makes certain Scott's knowledge of, involvement in, and certainty about Jane Morris' effect on Rossetti's mind. On Friday the 14th, Jane was brought to see Gabriel by "her more than amiable husband," and the visit threw Rossetti into a "miserable state for a while," as Scott assumed it would. He says, however, that Gabriel has alluded very little to "Mrs. M." during the past two weeks, but seems to "revert to the ancient Fanny" who has been a constant visitor. Scott tells of a visit he paid Jane the previous Thursday to inform her of Rossetti's illness. He found her "not discomposed by my intelligence which was very partially indicative of the state of things." This visit was to give peace of mind to Gabriel who, the next morning, took Scott aside to show him a note from Jane, which he had decided was a forgery. She had merely asked him to visit her on his

way to the country. Scott reports that Gabriel's seeming lack of concern about Jane "has subsided ... our anticipation and fears, about her rushing out to Roehampton or to Chelsea, and about his derangement being incurred by thinking of her." On the 20th of June, Gabriel, accompanied by Brown, George Hake, and the servant Allan, travelled North to Urrard House, in Perthshire, Scotland. Brown wrote Scott to relieve him, and Scott was to arrive on Tuesday, the 25th, but a letter of July 1st says that he was spending his third day there.

At this time, his view was pessimistic, and he was fearful that in the end Brown's idea might not have been best. Rossetti still suffered the delusion about a conspiracy, although he concealed it better. Scott specifies that "All the birds even on the trees are villains making catcalls." Rossetti was also becoming belligerent about the need for whiskey-induced sleep. When Scott tried to restrain him, "the scene of fury was too painful to have repeated." On the 4th Scott reports his opinion, seconded by George Hake, that Gabriel did not seem more composed. The false mental impressions are more confirmed and Gabriel seems preoccupied: "thinking on them within himself and listening to imaginary sounds." He had confided to Scott, seeking his agreement, that the walls were hollowed and contained people who heard through the holes made for curtain hooks.

Scott prepared to leave Stobhall for Penkill by mid-July, and on the 14th, George Hake wrote William that Scott had left. Having done his part, Scott was kept closely informed of Rossetti's gradual improvement, and the letters continue after the group's next move to Trowan, Crieff. There is much that is painful and even sensational in these very specific letters of 1872. But in his Notes, Scott merely says, "his delusions had a fascination, like his personality" (Notes, II, 174). Considering what he did know about

Rossetti's mental state, Scott's concentration in his Notes on the effect of Buchanan's article could be interpreted as an attempt to decoy the reader from more lurid suppositions about Rossetti's anxieties.⁵ In writing of the sad period in their lives, Scott seems purposely to underplay Rossetti's illness by emphasizing his "amazing bodily power of recovery." Furthermore he presents the Stobhall visit as interesting for the architectural information he was able to gather, totally minimizing the more sensational reason for his visit. It is important to note also that Rossetti's delusions continued into later life, and that Scott, as a visitor to 16 Cheyne Walk, saw proof that Gabriel never quite recovered from feelings of insecurity.

Certainly one cannot hope to present Scott as a totally benevolent man whose reputation, by some horrible mistake, has been ruined. He was known to be harsh and cutting to his acquaintances, and he did tend toward an ironic view of life which does not easily tolerate illusions. But in his Notes he does not mislead the reader. His point of view is clearly established, as is his disavowal of chronological accuracy. In his sections on Rossetti, Scott does not write as a man with the same intentions as his subject. He is always twenty years older than Rossetti, with that perspective on events working for him. In some passages, Scott is the survivor, writing about a man who can no longer change. But he is always writing about himself, and about his perception of Rossetti in his biographical passages. His Notes are reminiscences, not history, and are throughout informed by the consciousness of the writer. This survey has shown that much of the criticism of Scott's writing about Rossetti is baseless. For this reason, and because Scott's Notes fulfill the purpose for which they are intended, Scott deserves a place of respect among the associates of the Pre-Raphaelites.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

¹William Rossetti's challenge of Scott's chronology has been noted. It occurs in Memoir I, 19.

²William Rossetti recounts that on the day of Elizabeth's funeral Dante Gabriel "unwitnessed deposited the MS. in the coffin. He then joined his friends, and informed Madox Brown of what he had done ... Rossetti thus not only renounced any early or definite hopes of poetic fame, which had always been a ruling passion with him, but he also abandoned a project already distinctly formulated and notified." (Memoir I, 225)

Of the disinterment of the MS. on 10 October, 1869, William Rossetti says "For some while past some friends had urged Rossetti to recover the M.S. buried in his wife's coffin, and thus to obtain possession not only of copies of several poems completer than the copies ... which were already in his hands, but also of some compositions of which he retained no example whatever." (Memoir I, 247)

³W.E. Fredeman, in a recent monograph, discusses the impact of the "Fleshly School of Poetry" on Rossetti's mental health. He finds a direct relationship between the second, pamphlet publication of this piece, and the increase in Rossetti's paranoia. "Prelude to the Last Decade: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Summer of 1892." (Manchester: Bulletin of John Ryland's Library, Vol. 53, Autumn 1970) p. 75-121.

⁴In 1874, Shields married his model, Mathilda Booth, who was then aged 16. Ernestine Mills, in her Life and Letters of Frederic Shields, (London: Longmans, 1912) p. 165, suggests that Shields was influenced to marry the girl through the pressure of propriety-conscious people rather than by his own, strong desire to do so. Rossetti may have been drawing this parallel.

⁵See Fredeman's monograph noted above.

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P2-59 -- P2-84

548 letters from William Bell Scott to Alice Boyd

P3-73 -- P3-82

43 letters from Alice Boyd to William Bell Scott

P-7

19 letters from various correspondents to A. Boyd and W.B. Scott

P9-85 -- 89

6 letters from William Minto to A. Boyd and W.B. Scott

P9-90 -- 93

112 letters from W. Minto to A. Boyd

P-11

3 letters from A. Boyd to W. Minto

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