

# The Great Reviser; or the Unknown Scott

G. A. M. WOOD

TO CELEBRATE the completion of Abbotsford in late 1824, Scott held a large and festive house party there at the end of that year. One of his guests was Basil Hall, naval captain, travel author and a man of a curious and inquiring mind. During the period from 29 December 1824 to 10 January 1825, Hall kept a Journal of his visit, in which he not only recorded many informative details concerning the Abbotsford festivities, but also gave vent to curiosity about his host. He wondered how such a public figure and genial host could contrive, if rumour were correct, to find time for the composition of such an infinity of words. Hall attempted to discover the answer by writing his own Journal, unknown to the rest of the company, and only in private hours, during the night or before breakfast. To his satisfaction, Hall proved that his suspicions were right, and that, at the same rate of daily composition, he could have produced manuscript to the length of a *Waverley* novel within three months.

I really have no difficulty in supposing that a couple of hours every day before breakfast may be quite sufficient for all the MS. of *Waverley* novels produced in the busiest year since the commencement of the series.<sup>1</sup>

Only two assumptions were necessary:

It is well known, or at least generally, and I have reason to believe truly admitted, that Sir Walter composes his works just as fast as he can write — that the manual labour is all that it costs him, for his thoughts flow spontaneously. He never corrects the press, or if he does so at all, it is very slightly — and in general his works come before the public just as they are written.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 1837, v, 413.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Lockhart, *op. cit.*, v, 413.

This passage is of especial interest. It records the view, if not of one of Scott's few intimates, at least of one of his friends, that Scott wrote quickly and completely. The passage seems to have the authority of contemporary opinion behind it, and it has rightly been cited by later biographers. Examination of Scott's manuscripts and proof sheets show that Hall under-estimated his author's extraordinary industry. Scott indeed wrote quickly, but he revised copiously and habitually added to the last stages of proof in a way which would have been unthinkable, but for the unique relationship between the author and his printer.

As a demonstration of Scott's almost obsessive revision, there can be few better examples than the three *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther on the Currency*. These pseudonymous tracts of 1826 were directed against a government proposal to curtail the freedom of Scottish banks to issue notes in denominations smaller than five pounds. Scott demonstrated that such action would bring about economic ruin, Scottish public opinion was aroused and the government backed down. Malachi Malagrowther's *Letters* first appeared in three consecutive issues of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, an influential periodical owned, since March 1817, by a partnership of the Ballantynes and Scott himself. As the *Letters* were an immediate sensation, they were reprinted almost at once in pamphlet form, by James Ballantyne and Company for William Blackwood of Edinburgh. The first edition of the pamphlet *First Letter* sold out within two days, and further editions of each pamphlet were advertised within days of the first being published.

Scott's private life, at this time, was more than usually hectic, for he had just become spectacularly bankrupt. Nevertheless, a collation of the available texts of the *Letters* shows that Scott found time to revise with an almost incredible care. Limits of space prevent a full listing of variants in this article, so I will confine discussion to the first of the three *Letters* and will attempt to point the similarity between Scott's re-writings in it and the procedure he adopted in revising his novels.

The *First Letter* was written on 18 and 19 February, and was printed in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, 22 February 1826, pp. 60-2. Its first pamphlet edition was advertised as being published on 1 March, with the second a week later; a fourth

pamphlet edition had been published by 5 April 1826. Scott records in his Journal for 24 February that he 'went down to printing office after the Court, and corrected *Malachi* . . . I have certainly bestowed enough of revision and correction'.<sup>1</sup> Some corrections of fact were required, but the pamphlet version represents a very substantial re-writing, with a close and steady improvement of phrasing, and the addition of numerous long passages which have no equivalent in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* text. The entire short story about the *Leetle Anderson*, based on Scott's acquaintance, Williamson of Cardrona in Peeblesshire, made its appearance in the first pamphlet edition (I, 29-31), as did the persuasive section commemorating the former power of the Scottish peers and Members of Parliament. (I, 45-9.)

Of particular interest to the literary critic are those revisions which show Scott the novelist improving the efforts of Scott the writer of economic tracts, by the addition of memorable detail or a focussing phrase. An example of this occurs in the anecdote of the Earl of Strathmore, whose factor at Glamis was obsessed with the principle of correspondence in landscape design, so that, on one occasion, when a thief was installed in the baronial pillory on one side of the main gateway, the Earl returned to find that another person had been paid by his factor to stand on the other side of the gateway, 'for uniformity's sake'. In the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* version the narration is brisk and to the point '... both sides of the gateway accommodated each with a prisoner. He asked the gardener, ...' The pamphlet edition transforms the pace of narration with the addition of a few words: '... both sides of the gateway accommodated each with a prisoner, like a pair of heraldic supporters *chained and collared proper*. He asked the gardener ...'

The revisions provide some of the best passages in the pamphlet and sentences become memorable by the addition of some sardonic observation. Such an example occurs when 'Now, this is not fair construction in our friends, whose intentions on our behalf, we allow, are excellent, but who certainly are scarcely entitled to beg the question at issue without inquiry or discussion'

<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, edited J. G. Tait, Edinburgh, 1950, p. 113.

has added to it in the pamphlet 'or to treat us as the Spaniards treated the Indians, whom they massacred for worshipping the image of the Sun, while they themselves bowed down to that of the Virgin Mary'.

Not content even with this re-writing, Scott further corrected the pamphlet a few days later in preparation for its second edition.<sup>1</sup> Scott must have revised this text during the same days in which he was engaged in preparing the *Second Letter* for pamphlet form and in drafting the *Third Letter* for the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*. He was therefore able to think of the *Letters of Malachi Malagrowth* as a whole, and to make further changes in the interests of accuracy, or of validating his argument. This process paralleled in miniature Scott's way of proofreading a novel, when he frequently made up his mind over minor matters, such as the spelling of a character's name, in the later stages of composition, or where additions were made to later chapters to compensate for unrecoverable omissions earlier on. Indeed, in the three texts of the *First Letter*, we can discover sequential improvements to the same passage, similar to the way in various passages in the novels were reworded over the interval of weeks or years.

Such an example occurs in the *First Letter* when Scott argues that the English prejudice in favour of their own systems and rules seems not to admit of their neighbours having similar patriotic feelings. The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* text reads: 'I only find fault with it because they, like the friars in the Duenna, will not allow a share of such an honourable prejudice to their lay-brethren of the north.' In the first pamphlet edition, the simile is made clearer: 'I only find fault with it, because, like the Friars in the Duenna, these English Monks will not tolerate in their lay-brethren of the North the slightest pretence to a similar feeling,' and in the second pamphlet edition the simile has begun to take on an imaginative life of its own with the addition, to 'Friars in the Duenna', of the phrase 'monopolizing the bottle.'

As we have seen, Captain Basil Hall was confident that Scott never needed to revise his fictional manuscripts. Scott's son-in-law and biographer, John Gibson Lockhart, was of the same opinion:

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the first edition, with additions in Scott's hand, has survived as MS 4867, Blackwood Collection, National Library of Scotland.

It is, I suppose, superfluous to add, that in no instance did Scott re-write his prose before sending it to the press. Whatever may have been the case with his poetry, the world uniformly received the *prima cura* of the novelist.<sup>1</sup>

Consideration of Scott's methods of composition will show that Lockhart understated the complexities of the case, and his bland confidences give no hint of the strange encounters of the text between manuscript and printed volume. Relatively little has been written about the transmission of Scott's text, apart from a superb article by Mary Lascelles on 'Wandering Willie's Tale', the short story from *Redgauntlet*.<sup>2</sup> The rest of this article will be devoted to the textual history, during Scott's lifetime, of *Redgauntlet* as a whole. Virtually all the papers relative to this novel are still extant, and it was written sufficiently late in Scott's career to represent his typical mode of operation. An examination will reveal the many ways in which the printed texts were different from Scott's original manuscript, and hint at the complexities and choices facing any textual editor of that novel.

*Redgauntlet*, conceived of as the *Witch*, and begun under the title of *Herries*, was written in the spring and summer of 1824. The manuscript, complete but for two leaves, is now in the National Library of Scotland (Adv. MS. 19.2.29). The novel was composed in Scott's normal way, on large quarto paper, with two leaves open side by side, the right hand page for the main draft and the facing left hand page, which was the verso of the previous right hand page, for corrections and additions. Lockhart's insistence that 'in no instance did Scott re-write his prose before sending it to the press', can only be taken seriously if he implied that Scott did not have false starts or crossings out, and that his text was suitable for the compositor as it stood. However, the orderly appearance of the manuscript is delusive. Although the right hand leaf text looks clean and complete at first sight,

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Lockhart, *op. cit.*, iv, 341.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Lascelles, 'Scott and the Art of Revision', in *Imagined Worlds*, edited by M. Mack and I. Gregor, 1968.

A brief, and not wholly accurate description of the *Redgauntlet* Manuscript was given by George Gordon, 'Redgauntlet', *Scott Centenary Articles*, 1932.

Andrew Lang, in his introduction to the Border Edition *Redgauntlet*, 1894, gives a short account of the proof sheets. A fuller description can be found in an article by D. MacRitchie, in *Longman's Magazine*, March 1900.

particularly when one does not attempt to decipher Scott's close, neat, illegible hand, much is in fact wanting. The left hand leaf was habitually used for additions to the text, ranging from single words to substantial paragraphs. These second thoughts were made either during, or at the end, of the same stint of composition, and they represent augmentations and improvements to the text, rather than corrections or crossings out.

Many of the finer details of the novel came in via the left hand page. For example, in the scene where Darsie Latimer, kept captive in Cumberland, has his interview with Justice Foxley and his clerk interrupted by the crazed litigant, Peter Peebles, this dialogue is one of Scott's second thoughts:

'The fellow must be drunk' said the Clerk.  
 'Black — fasting from all but sin' replied the supplicant 'I have na had mair than a mouthful of cauld water since I passed the border and deil a ane of ye is like to say to me 'Dog will ye drink'. The Justice seemed moved with this appeal'. (Adv. MS. 19.2.29 f 53)

This passage reminds the reader of Peebles' earlier failings, but it also helps to add a further perspective to the novel's consideration of law, justice and charity.

At the end of each stint of writing, Scott's habit was to send his day's work off to the printer, either directly to Ballantyne's works if at Edinburgh, or else by mail, if from Abbotsford. The text was despatched as it had been written, with the additional material still facing the main page. But neither page was ready for the press, as the marks of Scott's hasty composition were evident. With important words left out, punctuation and the capitalisation at best random, and paragraphing minimal, no compositor could have been expected to set up the text which arrived at the printing house. The copy text, however, was in a different shape, and a different hand, from when it left the author.

Scott's authorship of the *Waverley* novels was kept a secret — though a poorly kept secret, — till February 1827. The novels were issued as either 'by the Author of *Waverley*', or else under pseudonyms which gratified Scott's facetious sense of humour, such as the series of *Tales of My Landlord* 'Collected and Arranged by Jedediah Cleishbotham, Schoolmaster and Parish Clerk of Gandercleugh.' Scott's reasons for this anonymity were social and

professional: 'In truth, I am not sure it would be considered quite decorous for me, as a Clerk of Session, to write novels.'<sup>1</sup> It was for this reason that Scott's friends referred to him as 'the Great Unknown.'

In order to help to preserve the secret of authorship, it was considered inadvisable that the text of the novels, in Scott's well known handwriting, should be visible in Ballantyne's much frequented printing house. Consequently the manuscript of each novel up to 1827 was copied out, section by section as it became available. The text was set in type, not from the original manuscript, but from a copy with very different characteristics.

Lockhart tells us that up to about 1820 John Ballantyne the publisher had transcribed the Waverley MSS for the press. With the decline in John Ballantyne's health, George Huntly Gordon, a Presbyterian minister, unplaced because of his deafness, took over as copyist 'in which capacity he displayed every quality that could endear an amanuensis to an author.'<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately there is evidence that Lockhart was incorrect. Letters of 1820 and 1823 (now in the Osborn Collection, Yale University Library) from both John and James Ballantyne to G. H. Gordon, concerned with Gordon's pleas for more pay for his services, refer to 'the person who copied *Ivanhoe*', and 'the lad who copied *Peveiril*.' It is therefore clear that several hands might be discerned between the author and the various first editions of the Waverley novels. Although Lockhart assures us that George Huntly Gordon spent 'the autumn of 1824 [at Abbotsford] daily copying the MS. of *Redgauntlet*, and working at leisure hours on the Catalogue of the Library',<sup>3</sup> his evidence, as we have seen, is not wholly trustworthy. His chronology, in particular, is suspect, for the last batch of manuscript went to the printing office on 2 June.

As the copy text for the first edition of *Redgauntlet* has not survived, we must deduce its characteristics from a comparison of the manuscript with the proof sheets. Both expected and unexpected changes were made. Scott's spelling, which in words such as 'burthen' and 'freindship' was erratic or traditional, tended

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Scott to J. B. S. Morritt, July 1814. Quoted in J. G. Lockhart, op. cit., III, 132.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Lockhart, op. cit., VII, 100.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. Lockhart, op. cit., VII, 101.

to be modernized. Capitalization was normalized, and the copyist paragraphed and punctuated the manuscript, often in an excessive manner. Quite a lot of the original was misread, or was simply not read at all, and the incapacity of the copyist, on an admittedly unenviable task, led to further complications over the correction of proof.

A complete set of the first stage of *Redgauntlet* proof sheets has been preserved, and it is now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The proof, as was customary at that time, was page rather than galley proof, and Ballantyne's compositors were accustomed to extensive re-setting and re-arrangement of type, for few pages as numbered in the proofs of the *Waverley* novels correspond to the page or even volume numbers of the novels as issued.

The proof was sent to the author in gatherings of eight leaves or sixteen pages. Scott welcomed the opportunity to correct and re-write in proof, and he often expected to do a great deal of tidying up in this way. He noted in his *Journal* for 3 March 1826 'Could not get the last sheets of *Malachi*, Second Epistle, last night, so they must go out to the world uncorrected — a great loss, for the last touches are always most effectual; and I expect misprints in the additional matter.'<sup>1</sup> Examination of *Malachi Malagrowther's* Second *Letter* makes it clear that Scott was not recording that there had been no revision, but was merely lamenting the lack of opportunity to re-read, and perhaps further augment, additions he had already made to the first stage of proof.<sup>2</sup>

Each gathering of *Redgauntlet*, as returned to Scott, bore James Ballantyne's invitation 'Please to read this', and was already heavily annotated. James Ballantyne was Scott's titular printer, though Scott himself had become a major partner in the firm from 1805. Ballantyne neglected both the mechanical and business aspects of the printing enterprise, a neglect which was to be of major consequence in the firm's 1826 financial collapse. The chief and devoted occupation of Ballantyne's hours was the correction and revisal of Scott's proof sheets.

<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, edited J. G. Tait, Edinburgh, 1950, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> This point is considered at greater length in the Introduction, by D. Simpson and G. A. M. Wood, to the forthcoming Irish Universities Press reprint of *Malachi Malagrowther's Letters on the Currency*.



It is most true, that Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of the printer; and it is equally so, that it would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James [Ballantyne].<sup>1</sup>

Some of Ballantyne's notes were designed to guide Scott to errors. A large X was inserted in the margin where a misreading seemed obvious, or where the failure of the copyist to read the original resulted in a blank space being left in the proof. Ballantyne further tidied up the punctuation and strove to ease Scott's labour in various ways.

As the proofs remained private between printer and author, James Ballantyne grew into the habit of entering into correspondence with Scott on the margins. This record of query and answer makes fascinating reading, for Ballantyne did not restrain himself to questions of fact, but voiced opinions as to the merit of various passages, the credibility of the characters, or the ways the novel might be written.

Much of Ballantyne's work was helpful, for Scott was notoriously careless over small details. He forgot how the names of various characters should be spelt, or even what they were, and Ballantyne's notes prompted him to make up his mind. The name of Nanty Ewart, for example, is variously spelled as Ewart and Ewald. Ballantyne notes on the proof 'I fancy the name is Ewald, as it began with that?' Scott's reply reads 'Ewart is finally adopted.'<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Ballantyne prompted Scott to be consistent with his terminology, as to whether characters address each other as 'thou' or 'you', and to remember what had already transpired in the story. An example of this latter occurs in the final pages of the novel, where, as footnote to 'Half way betwixt the house and the beach, they saw the bodies of Nanty Ewart and Cristal Nixon blackening in the sun.' Ballantyne remembered that, on an earlier page, the bodies were said to have been discovered by stragglers and carried to the house. His note prompted Scott to delete the earlier detail, so that the discovery could take place, out of doors,

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Lockhart, op. cit., VI, 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, II, 315.

and before the more important characters of the novel's final scene.<sup>1</sup>

At times, Ballantyne betrays an endearing curiosity, as when Darsie Latimer's wanderings through Cumberland with his uncle, prompt him to enquire into the geography of the area. To Redgauntlet's 'Look eastward — do you see a monument standing on yonder plain, near a hamlet?' Ballantyne pleaded, 'Is there (for I do not know, and am curious,) is there such a monument?' Scott answered 'Yes, at Brough upon Sands', and was then prompted to consider his readers' curiosity, for the next paragraph of text has been altered to begin 'The hamlet is Burgh-upon-Sands . . .'<sup>2</sup>

Scott's willingness to respond to Ballantyne's promptings becomes less praiseworthy when Ballantyne expressed anxiety over issues which are not usually the concern of a corrector of proof.

Various sections were deleted in proof, because Ballantyne objected to them. Darsie Latimer's description of the Quaker Geddes' house was deprived of a passage, because Ballantyne thought it too reminiscent of a piece from the Introduction to *Quentin Durward*.<sup>3</sup> Ballantyne objected to a conversation between Darsie Latimer and the Quakers' wife, over the cruelty of killing domestic fowl, and this, too, was excised in proof.

Ballantyne prided himself on being something of a man of taste, but his notes demonstrate that he was much less of a literary than a literal critic. Nanty Ewart's compelling autobiography relates how, when he returned to Edinburgh to learn of the evils he had done, he ' . . . ran downstairs, expecting, or fearing, to meet Jess at every turning.' The printer's prim note reminded the author 'But Jess had been transported.' Scott retorted that Ewart's expectation was in his mind 'Yes he did not expect her in reality.' Even so, Ballantyne's obtuseness was taken as a hint for textual revision, this time against the clarity and conciseness of the original manuscript, so that the printed version finally reads ' . . . ran down stairs, in such confusion of mind, that notwithstanding what I had heard, I expected to meet Jess at every turning.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, III, 307 and 320.

<sup>2</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, III, 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, I, 155.

<sup>4</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, I, 14, and *Redgauntlet*, Edinburgh, 1824, I, 14.

Virtually all of Ballantyne's hints were noted. Passages were expanded at his directive, motivations became clearer, and large chunks of expository narrative were added to command. But there were limits beyond which even Scott could not be pushed, and he refused to accept his printer's attempts at a moral censorship. An example of this occurs in the scene where, after Alan Fairford has unexpectedly rushed from Court, followed by his father, the comment is made 'What's the matter with the auld b—— next?' said an acute metaphysical judge, aside to his brethren.' 'b——' was too strong for Ballantyne, who pleaded 'b—— looks equivocal, though, used by you, it cannot be thought to be so. But such odious words occur in police-reports now-a-days, that I think delicacy itself requires b—— h.' Scott was less concerned with delicacy than with effect; in the printed text there is no doubt what the 'acute metaphysical judge' intended, for the word is printed in full as 'bitch'.<sup>1</sup>

Two other examples are worth recording, for they show Scott finally losing patience with his worthy printer. During the conversation between Nanty Ewart and Alan Fairford, Ewart demonstrates his learning by reading from Sallust. The few lines of Latin threw Ballantyne into a frenzy of dismay. 'I entreat particular attention to this Latin, which, being almost illegible in the MS., and printed by an ignorant compositor, can hardly fail to be incorrect.' Scott's reply was unforgiving 'And why has not such an establishment a corrector who can read a few lines of Latin —'.<sup>2</sup>

A last exchange must suffice. This one, from *The Talisman* demonstrates Scott's skill with words when compared with the well meaning doubts of James Ballantyne. The passage of text in question reads 'Each [warrior] seemed familiar with an employment, which at that time was a part of necessary, and, indeed, of indispensable duty.' Ballantyne objected 'What is necessary *must* be indispensable', but Scott squashed him with 'Some things are necessary that are not indispensable. Two pairs of breeches are necessary — one is indispensable.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, II, 29 and *Redgauntlet*, 1824, II, 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, II, 323.

<sup>3</sup> *The Talisman*, page proof, II, 46.

As we have seen, Scott made many changes in the novel at the suggestion of his printer. Even the title was altered, because Ballantyne thought that *Redgauntlet* was more colourful than *Herries*. The majority of additions, however, were spontaneous, and show that, for Scott, proof reading was a creative process. He read proof, not against the manuscript, but from memory, and so allowed his mind to embellish, rather than to collate. Many passages were added in the most convenient places, at the ends of paragraphs or in between dialogue, as when, after Alan Fairford's brilliant legal début, old friends shake his father's hand, 'trembling as it was with anxiety, and finally with delight.' This is the end of the sentence in proof, but Scott has given it a fresh conclusion 'his voice faltering, as he replied, "Ay, ay, I kend Alan was the lad to make a spoon or spoil a horn."' <sup>1</sup>

Because Scott read proof from memory, it sometimes happened that he unwittingly made changes away from his original intentions, so that the manuscript and the first edition present rival readings, each sanctioned by the author. An example of this occurs at the opening of the novel. The manuscript has Darsie Latimer writing to Alan Fairford, wishing that his friend were with him 'in the same comfortable Greyhound Inn.' The transcriber obviously botched this passage, for the proof has a despairing 'in the same comfortable greyhound sun', the blank indicating an obvious misreading before the conjectured 'sun.' The sense of the passage was direct enough, 'Inn' was the obvious word, but Scott had forgotten his original name for the hostelry, and in the first and all subsequent editions, Darsie Latimer resides 'in the same comfortable George — Inn'.<sup>2</sup>

After Scott had finished with each section of proof, it was returned to Ballantyne, who copied out the changes to be made in the text onto another set of proof, which then went to the compositor.<sup>3</sup> If there was time, a second stage of proof, called a revise, would be annotated by Ballantyne and further corrected by Scott. The few revise sheets which have survived, such as

<sup>1</sup> *Redgauntlet*, 1824, II, 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Redgauntlet*, page proof, I, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Gillian Dyson, *The Manuscripts and Proof Sheets of Scott's Waverley Novels*, Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions, IV, Part I, 34, records a second set of proof sheets, 'corrected by Ballantyne alone', which has not been traced subsequent to 1945.

those of *The Talisman*, show that Ballantyne was prone to fundamental doubts about characters and incidents at this late hour. No revise sheets are extant for *Redgauntlet*; they have either been lost, or never existed, in which case Ballantyne would have had final responsibility for the 'correctness' of the printed book. *Redgauntlet* was issued, in three volumes, octavo, in June 1824.

After the bankruptcy of 1826, Scott availed himself of every publishing expedient to make money with which to wipe out the outstanding debt. He turned his pen to popular History and his *Life of Napoleon* together with the series of narratives for juveniles, under the title of *Tales of a Grandfather*, were a notable commercial success. The most lucrative project of all, however, was not a new work, but a reprint of old ones, tricked out with some additional material.

The Collected Edition of the Waverley Novels, referred to by Scott as his *Magnum Opus*, was projected in early 1828 as 'an uniform reprint of the Novels, each to be introduced by an account of the hints on which it had been founded, and illustrated throughout by historical and antiquarian annotations'.<sup>1</sup>

There are numerous references in Scott's *Journal* to his working on the notes, or reading the proof of the *Magnum Opus*, and the first volume was published in June 1829. Additional volumes which followed at monthly intervals achieved a monthly sale as high as thirty-five thousand copies. Scott was at work on *Redgauntlet* during February 1831 and the novel was published as Volumes 35 and 36 of the *Magnum Opus* Collected Edition in April and May 1832.

The additional material seems to be conspicuous and separate. Scott contributed a relatively brief historical Introduction to the novel and wrote occasional footnotes, mostly of an autobiographical nature, together with some informative material of an antiquarian kind, printed at the end of certain chapters. Consequently, the 1832 text of *Redgauntlet* has served as the copy text for all reprints up to 1871, when it was superseded by the Centenary Edition, published by A. & C. Black of Edinburgh. This edition was based on Scott's interleaved copy which he used for the *Magnum Opus*, and from it the editors obtained 'several

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Lockhart, *op. cit.*, vii, 97.

annotations of considerable interest, never before published.<sup>1</sup> The Centenary Edition restores one or two lines inadvertently omitted in 1832.

The *Magnum Opus* edition offers more than a mere annotated reprint. In some respects its text of the Waverley Novels is the fullest and most complete; in other respects it offers an inaccurate and distorted reprint, reflecting a high degree of editorial interference and the inability, some years previously, of the copyist for the first edition to make complete sense of the original manuscript.

Scott's Advertisement to his *Magnum Opus*, dated January 1829, promised that attention had been given to the text. The passage is worth reprinting in full:

But without altering, in the slightest degree, either the story or the mode of telling it, the Author has taken this opportunity to correct errors of the press and slips of the pen. That such should exist cannot be wondered at, when it is considered that the Publishers found it their interest to hurry through the press a succession of the early editions of the various Novels, and that the Author had not the usual opportunity of revision. It is hoped that the present edition will be found free from errors of that accidental kind.

The Author has also ventured to make some emendations of a different character, which, without being such apparent deviations from the original stories as to distort the reader's old associations, will, he thinks, add something to the spirit of the dialogue, narrative, or description. These consist in occasional pruning where the language is redundant, compression where the style is loose, infusion of vigour where it is languid, the exchange of less forcible for more appropriate epithets — slight alterations in short, like the last touches of an Artist, which contribute to heighten and finish the picture, though an inexperienced eye can hardly detect in what they consist.<sup>2</sup>

This is an excellent description of Scott's process of creative proof reading. I have collated the entire text of *Redgauntlet* in the first (1824) and *Magnum Opus* (1832) editions, and it is possible to conjecture how Scott might have approached his task. His eye would skip across the page, looking for some fact or reference to annotate, till it would light on an infelicitous word or phrase. A slight change might lead to a greater one, so that the whole passage would emerge substantially different and augmented.

<sup>1</sup> Advertisement to the Centenary Edition, Edinburgh, 1971, 1. The 'interleaved copy' was offered for sale in U.S.A. about 1930 and its whereabouts has since been the subject of much conjecture.

<sup>2</sup> Collected Edition, 1, ii-iii, Edinburgh, 1829.

Many pages of the Novel underwent substantial alteration between the 1824 and 1832 editions.

The commonest reason for tidying up was to avoid the repetition of words, either in the same sentence, or in the same passage of text. Other changes were made to strengthen the impact of a phrase, and some of the revisions represent major improvements. For example, in the scene where Saunders Fairford receives a letter from Provost Crosbie about the suspected danger to Darsie Latimer, the first edition account is as follows: [Mr Fairford] would certainly have set out himself, or licensed his son to go in pursuit of his friend. ¶[But the case of Poor Peter Peebles, against Plainstones was, he saw, adjourned, perhaps *sine die*, should the document reach the hands of his son'. (1824 edition, II, 35)

After the first sentence quoted, the 1832 edition has this addition. 'But, alas! he was both a father and an agent. In the one capacity, he looked on his son as dearer to him than all the world besides; in the other, the lawsuit which he conducted was to him like an infant to its nurse, and [the case of Poor Peter Peebles] . . .' Scott's revision here is skilfully carried out. He has added the passage into an already existing sentence, and the addition makes Saunders Fairford into a more sympathetic person, who, like many other characters in the Novel, has to contend with a clash of loyalties.

It is sometimes possible to trace Scott's revising hand through three phases of the text. Passages which were altered in the proof sheets of the first edition were themselves further changed for the *Magnum Opus*. Such an instance occurs in the scene where Darsie Latimer is disguised as a woman, in order to travel without detection. (1824 edition, II, 207.) His accoutrements include a mask, of the kind which might enable a lady 'to play off a little coquetry.' The manuscript continues 'From this however I expect I shall be precluded.' In the first edition the sentence is made clearer: 'From the use of the mask, however, I suspect I shall be precluded', while the *Magnum Opus* rephrases the sentence to begin, — 'From the gayer mode of employing the mask, however, I . . .'

As with the first edition, it is clear that many of the details of the text in the *Magnum Opus* were not exclusively Scott's concern. The two editions have different conventions of accidentals; commas become semi-colons and vice versa, there is an even

heavier punctuation of narrative or description, and passages of reported dialogue, which often remained unpunctuated in the first edition, so preserving some of the characteristics of the manuscript, are uniformly fully punctuated in the *Magnum Opus*. This edition completed the task of normalizing the spelling of characters' names, so that the variants of Chrystal and Cristal Nixon, or Father Crackenthorpe or Crackenthorp are reduced to a standard. Similarly, there is tidying up of sections where the first edition reproduces the errors of the manuscript, as when, in the final scene, the phrase 'Darsie, his sister, and Redgauntlet' (1824 edition, III, 311) is corrected to 'Darsie, his sister and Fairford.' There are occasions when the two editions normalize the inconsistent spelling of the manuscript in different ways. Scott happily used both 'Stuart' and 'Stewart', the first is utilized throughout in 1824, the latter in 1832.

One kind of change seems to be inexplicable. Scott had no qualms about using the word 'scotch.' It appears throughout the *Redgauntlet* manuscript and is so printed in the first edition. In the *Magnum Opus*, however, the word is invariably modified, to 'Scottish', even when Nanty Ewart is made to decry 'that nasty Scottish stuff that . . . Turnpenny has brought into fashion', or the spirit now universally known as Scotch whisky! (1824 edition, III, 33.)

Equally strange is the variation between the two editions in the use of Scotticisms. There seems to be no coherent pattern. A lot of the Scotticisms in the manuscript are anglicized in the first edition and a number of the Scotticisms of the first edition have been anglicized in the *Magnum Opus*. Yet many Scotticisms have been restored to the *Magnum Opus*, and new ones added, some in the course of substantive revision, but some, seemingly, by chance or caprice. In the original printing of 'Wandering Willie's Tale', we are told that Laurie Lapraik 'liked an orra sound and a tune on the pipes.' (1824 edition, I, 230.) In the *Magnum Opus*, this becomes 'liked an orra sough of this world; and a tune on the pipes.' The addition reminds us of the difference between Lapraik's religious pretences and his worldly pleasures, and the spelling of the phrase, 'orra sough' (occasional sound) has been altered into keeping with the broad vernacular of Willie's narration. However, in the same story, the later edition changes 'deevil' to 'devil'



or 'wad' to 'would', at the same time as it is substituting 'semple' for 'simple' or 'saunts' for 'saints'. It seems more likely that many of these latter changes represent editorial or compositorial caprice, rather than the painstaking emendations of the author. No theory of consistency in revision can explain a further example from 'Wandering Willie's Tale', when 'his friends, for the credit of his gude name', in the 1824 edition (I, 261), is altered to the 'his freends, for the credit of his good name' of the *Magnum Opus*.

A few of Scott's changes in the *Magnum Opus* are not easy to justify, for they seem to reflect a more prudish public opinion. 'Damned' as an expletive becomes 'd . . . . d', and when Darsie Latimer, in his first letter, tells of how he was 'mocked for my English accent — salted with snow as a Southern . . . .', the phrase has none of the schoolboy ruggedness of the original, to be found in both manuscript and first edition — 'salted with snow as an English pig.' (1824 edition, I, 6.)

Indeed, some of the changes remind us that the first printed edition of *Redgauntlet* made inadequate sense of Scott's manuscript, and the 1832 revisions sometimes take us still further away from the author's original intentions.

In the passage, as printed in proof and in the first edition, dealing with Saunders Fairford's legal assistance to his son, we read 'Neither did he leave him alone to his own unassisted energies.' (1824 edition, II, 12.) This sentence is obviously tautologous, and was amended in the *Magnum Opus* to read 'Neither did he leave him to his own unassisted energies.' It is only when we refer back to the manuscript that we discover the original to be 'Neither did he he leave Alan to his own unassisted energies.' Either the repeated 'he', or confusion over 'Alan' led the transcriber into error, though not into nonsense. Subsequently the mistaken reading has been revised, by the author himself, in a direction away from his own original intentions.

The brief examination of *Redgauntlet* shows that evidence for Scott's textural revision is abundantly clear. Scott, far from abandoning his text after a first draft, made up for the initial haste of composition by extensive revision during the printing of the first edition, and was eager to further amend the text after the interval of several years. Consequently, any editor of *Redgauntlet*

has no shortage of variants, both accidental and substantive. The *Magnum Opus* of 1832 represents the most complete text available within Scott's lifetime, but it is a reprint, itself based on an inaccurate version, so that some of the changes representing the author's last intentions were made merely to cover up the inaccuracies of a first edition which never fully printed its author's original text.