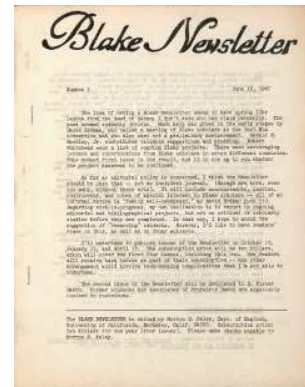


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BLAKE

N E W S

Blake-Varley sketchbook, edition of Tiriel

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 1, Issue 1, June 15, 1967, p. 2



NEWS

TLS for April 7, 1967 announced the discovery of a Blake sketchbook at Penkill Castle, Ayrshire, by Mr. M. D. E. Clayton-Stamm. The sketchbook is described as "containing a series of 'visionary heads' . . . interspersed with drawings by his friend John Varley" and as dated 1819. Six heads are reproduced in the article: Harold killed at the Battle of Hastings, Helen of Troy, Job, Richard Coeur de Lion, "the original drawing for the 'Ghost of a Flea'" (which TLS finds reminiscent of Jiminy Cricket!) and a head "believed to be Socrates." (However, the figure is shown wearing armor and the face has neither the snub nose nor the wide forehead which led Blake to identify Socrates' physiognomy with his own). Other drawings mentioned in the article are "the bedchamber of the Empress Maud," Milton's first wife, and Solomon. Two "spiritual communications" made to Blake are quoted.

Mr. Martin Butlin writes that the sketchbook was once owned by William Bell Scott, who described it in The Portfolio in 1871 but erred in the size of the leaves, which are approximately 6 1/8 x 8 inches. 20 of the original 66 leaves have been removed; so far Mr. Butlin has traced 5 or 6 of these. The sketchbook also includes some landscape drawings by Varley. It is now at the Tate Gallery, where it will be cleaned and then reproduced in facsimile with notes by Mr. Butlin. The facsimile will be published by William Heineman, Ltd., 15-16 Queen Street, London W.1.

Professor G. E. Bentley, Jr. writes that his edition of Tiriell is about to be published by the Clarendon Press. It includes "all the designs I could locate (about three are still missing), some of which do not appear to have been reproduced previously; a facsimile of the MS; a transcript of the MS; and an introductory essay with all the relevant facts I could locate and a few speculations. It will be the first time the illustrations have been printed with the poem, perhaps the first time it has been read with the illustrations since Blake's death, the first commentary systematically taking the designs into account, I believe, and the last of Blake's illuminated works to be reproduced publicly as Blake evidently originally intended it to appear."

Recent Blake publications:

1966

1. Adams, Hazard
 Review of Alicia Ostriker's Vision and Verse in William Blake, Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, xxv (Fall, 1966), 107-108.