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BLAKE

N O T E

Blake's Terrible Ease!

David V. Erdman

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since the shattering of the "obdurate gates" made Enitharmon capable of love and sympathy so that she could join Los's work (VIIa 87: 40-45, 90:6, VIII, 99:22-27). In p.100 the material of the end of VIIa and the end of VIIb - Enitharmon and the Daughters of Beulah - is mixed and intertwined. As the Night goes on into p.101 the mixture extends to include material from the whole of Nights VIIa and VIIb.

Thus I conclude that Blake had decided to keep VIIb somehow; but had not solved the problem of the quart of inspiration and the pint pot of nine Nights. The numbering of the Nights was, after all the least of his problems.

2. Blake's Terrible Ease!

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Through an accident of photographic ordering, a second infra-red print of Notebook page 5 has come from the B.M. (in connection with preparations for a new facsimile edition, still some years off); and on this page the bottom lines are surprisingly darker and more legible than had seemed possible from earlier infra and other photographs. One can, in fact, see everything, i.e. complete lines of squiggle for words; the writing is Blake at his unsteady (he was probably writing on one knee); and it is now possible to be well nigh definitive in the reading of these deathless lines. (Doubleday pp. 491-2; 781)

I can see now that the apparently random pair of scratches at the bottom of the page are intended to cancel lines 31-32, to be replaced by lines 33-34-- with what can be now read as the same rhyme words. Page 492 in a new printing will thus be emended to conclude:

From pity then he redend round
And the Spell removed unwound
If Blake could do this when he rose up from shite
What might he not do if he sat down to write

The textual notes on p. 781 will read:

29 From pity then] Then after 1st rdg del "Then" was mended to "From", "after" was canceled, "pity then" was written above the line; in a faint photograph of this very rubbed pencil page, at one time the outside page of the Notebook, the "pi" looks like a "B", and "then" combining with the ascending stroke of "he" looks like "thing" or "shing" (thus "Blushing" in my earlier (reading). In a better photograph this and the following lines are distinctly legible.

30 removed] inserted above the line

31 rose up from] sat down to 1st rdg del

31-32 written in margin to replace the following two lines, cancelled with two slanting strokes:

If thus Blake could Shite
What Klopstock did write