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N E W S

Miscellaneous News

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Professor Damon's personal library, is the only known copy of this book in which Blake colored his own plates); and The Trianon Press facsimile volumes of Visions of the Daughters of Albion (1959), Jerusalem (1963), America (1963), Songs of Innocence and Experience (1967), and Milton (1967).

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The "Birthday Garland," edited by Mr. Rosenfeld and Barton Levi St. Armand, is a beautiful booklet of poems, prose, and illustrations. Among the contributors are Edwin Honig, Lincoln Kirstein, Marianne Moore, Winfield Townley Scott, Hyatt Howe Waggoner, and Colin Wilson.

FOSTER DAMON himself writes to say that his Blake Dictionary has been re-issued in what is in effect a second edition, with a number of alterations and some new short articles.

Malcolm Cowley's article, "The Self-Obliterated Author: S. Foster Damon," appears in the January '68 Southern Review.

#### Miscellaneous News

Mr. Arnold Fawcus, publisher to the William Blake Trust, was in San Francisco recently and kindly showed us proof pages for two forthcoming Trianon Press publications. One is The Gates of Paradise, in two volumes: For Children and For the Sexes, each including some examples of different states of individual plates. The other is the next color facsimile to be issued for the Blake Trust -- Europe. Two copies of the original (belonging to Mrs. Landon Thorne and to Lord Cunliffe) were used, in order to produce the best facsimile possible. The result is, we think, an exceptionally beautiful piece of facsimile reproduction. Both The Gates and Europe will have commentaries by Sir Geoffrey Keynes; the former is scheduled for fall publication, price to be about twenty dollars; the latter will appear in late '68 or early '69, price: about 45 guineas. The address of the Trianon Press is 125 avenue du maine, Paris.

Mr. Robert P. Kolker sends the following sad note from London:

A number of months ago the following item appeared in the papers: "A London house in which the poet and artist William Blake lived for about 17 years in the early 19th century will not become a betting shop. The South Westminster Division's betting licensing committee, sitting at Caxton Hall, decided yesterday that it was not suitable for licensed betting premises. It rejected an application by Mr. Andrew Gordon, of South Molton Street, Mayfair, for a betting licence for part of the Blake House, No. 17, South Molton Street.... Mr. David Fairbairn, who appeared for 25 objectors to the application, said one of the questions to be considered was whether the only surviving house in which Blake had lived should become a betting shop." But, alas, Satan won out and on both BBC radio and television news it was announced that the original decision

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was overthrown, and No. 17, South Molton Street will be given over to a turf accountant. He, however, promises to keep up the original appearance of the house. On the outside, at least.

We've previously mentioned the Preston Blake Library in London. The following description of it is excerpted from a Westminster City Libraries leaflet:

#### THE PRESTON BLAKE LIBRARY

The Preston Blake Library came into the possession of the Westminster City Libraries in March, 1967 through the generosity of its owner and creator Mr. Kerrison Preston, himself a Blake scholar. It represents fifty years of assiduous acquisition of books.

The collection is housed in the Fine Arts Library of the Westminster Central Reference Library, St. Martin's Street (off Leicester Square) an appropriate home for a library devoted to a renowned Westminster citizen, for William Blake was born and spent most of his life in the city.

There are approximately 600 volumes in the collection at the present time, including items in French, German, Italian and Japanese. New books and pamphlets about Blake will be added to the collection as they are published.

Many of the books acquired by Mr. Kerrison Preston in the early days of his collecting have become scarce and valuable, although they are not unique. There are two outstanding items given to him by his friend Graham Robertson (1866-1948) whose collection of Blake paintings, now largely in the Tate Gallery, was justly famous. The first of these is a complete series of original autographed letters written by William Blake to his acquaintance, Thomas Butts of Great Marlborough Street in Westminster. The second item is a printed copy of Blake's Poetical Sketches, 1783, with the author's own corrections.

The colour facsimiles by the William Blake Trust of books in Illuminated Printing are noteworthy. There are also exhibition and sale catalogues of books and pictures. The Library also includes a few old books known to have influenced Blake in his work; these include Agrippa 1651, Hervey 1746, Behmen 1763 and Ossian 1799.

The Preston Blake Library is available for consultation by all who are interested in William Blake and his work. A card catalogue has been provided to assist readers. It is open from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. (Monday - Saturday) in the Fine Arts Library, Central Reference Library, St. Martin's Street, W.C.2. (Tel. 01-930 3274; Telex 261845).

Several short items on Blake-&-Milton scholarship have appeared in the Milton Newsletter (1, 11, 58, 59, 61). This handsome and interesting quarterly is edited by Roy C. Flannagan (Dept. of English, Ohio University, Athens, O. 45701). Subscriptions are \$2.00 per year in the US, \$2.50 outside (for invoiced subscriptions, add \$1.00 per year).

Through Miss Désirée Hirst, we learn that "A 'Study of William Blake' course was held in January at Madingley Hall, near Cambridge, by the Extra-Mural Board. Five days of solid work on text and paintings by thirty people of varied nationalities. Miss Kathleen Raine gave one lecture, Professor Nikolaus Pevsner on the art, T. Henn also, and I gave one too. Then Professor D. W. Harding and Stanley Gardner. The rest by Jack Herbert, who is on the Extra-Mural staff and did an M. Litt. on Blake, and Dr. John Beer of Peterhouse, Cambridge."

Scheduled for publication on March 8: Blake's Humanism by John Beer. (Manchester University Press, with 50 illustrations, price 55s.). According to the publisher's description,

The author believes that Blake's thinking, though neither as simple as some of his supporters claim nor as massively extensive as some of the commentaries suggest is nevertheless subtle, coherent and distinctive. It is organized by certain large and comprehensive ideas, the pattern of which must be grasped before the details are understood. In the present book, which concentrates on political and social themes, the author shows how Blake's concern with his contemporary world drove him constantly to elaborate these ideas in order to account for the nature of the human beings that composed it. He traces Blake's progression from the time when he expected an imminent political revolution to the period when he decided that there was only one true form of revolution, the revolution in the human imagination which is brought about by the compelling vision of the artist. This is seen reflected also in Blake's lifelong engagement with John Milton, culminating in the poem which bears his name.

The works which are treated in detail include the Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Visions of the Daughters of Albion, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, America, Europe, The Song of Los and Milton. Blake's exploration of similar themes in both his literary and visual art is discussed throughout, notably in connection with the 'illuminated books'; a separate section is reserved for discussion of the specifically visual works. A further section is devoted to the puzzling group of small engravings entitled The Gates of Paradise, which are interpreted as emblems making up an intricately organized statement about the limitations and possibilities involved in being human.

Dr. Beer informs us that this book will be followed, in about a year's time, by Blake's Visionary Universe, in which he concentrates more "on the works which strike me as 'purer' mythmaking."

Blake courses: the latest addition to our list is Karl Kiralis' graduate seminar on Blake, given at the University of Houston (Texas) in Fall '67.