The Dean of Morocco = George Cumberland?

Göran Malmqvist

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 13, Issue 2, Fall 1979, p. 109
To be a child is to live in a world where everything is new and exciting and beckoning us toward delight--William Blake

This somewhat flabby statement does not sound like Blake to me, and certainly Blake did not use either "exciting" or "beckoning" at all in his writings, according to the Concordance. Perhaps some hard-pressed copy-writer thought Blake ought to have written it--or was companioned by Blake and was told it by him.

Clearly the name of William Blake is an almost irresistible lure to authors of some auction catalogues, New Yorker advertisements, and Blake Records.

THE DEAN OF MOROCCO?

GEORGE CUMBERLAND

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In note 34 to his interesting paper "Mr. Jacko 'knows what riding is' in 1785: dating Blake's Island in the Moon" (Blake, 48 (xii, 4):250) R. J. Shroyer refers to Erdman's statement that it is "hard to think who" Cumberland might be in An Island (Prophet, p. 100, fn. 22) and himself suggests that "it would seem logical to identify Cumberland with Quid on the evidence Erdman presents." I tentatively suggest that Cumberland, who was a professional "morocco man," may be identified as the Dean of Morocco. Stung by the poisonous honey-bee, Quid may well resent that an aim-at-your printer has had the nerve to invent a printing method which a cunning-sure like himself has been unable to develop. In the passage "Then," said he, "I would have all the writing Engraved instead of Printed, & at every other leaf a high finish'd print--all in three Volumes folio--& sell them a hundred pounds apiece. They would print off two thousand." Quid may well give good-humoured vent to his resentment, while at the same time indulging in self-irony.

In a recent annotated translation of An Island into Swedish I daringly suggest--well aware of the fact that the suggested anagrammatical transformation yields a residue of N--that Nannicantipot is an anagram for Cannot paint, a suitable epithet for Catherine who is said to have been able to neither read nor write at the time when she married William Blake. My suggestion that Sicknaker stands for Kick'n aren't is highly tentative.