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N O T E

A Bibliographical Note

Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr.

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(8) "My father" also said that Blake "never enjoyed any of his etching-painting rooms, as he had in [sic] his panelled room (his 'atelier') at Lambeth" (the "Discovery" article above). It must be remembered that "my father" was not born until ten years after Blake left Lambeth, and that Jackson is remembering conversations with his father when the President was "a very small boy". The Lambeth painting room may well have been Blake's favourite, but this evidence does not go far to prove it. More interesting, because first-hand evidence, is the statement that the room was wainscotted and on the ground floor at the back, looking out on the spacious garden, where the vine was "still to be seen nestling round the open casement". The evidence is undoubtedly first-hand, but there may be some doubt as to whether it concerns Blake. The purpose of Jackson's articles was to show that the London County Council, Gilchrist, and every one else had identified the wrong house in Lambeth as Blake's. The letters he quotes demonstrate that Jackson had not persuaded the London County Council, and as Hercules Buildings was pulled down about 1930 it is hard to check the evidence now. We may surely conclude, however, that the house of Blake or a neighbour had a wainscotted back room and a vine-wreathed window about 1913.

What is a scholar to do with such trifling yet troubling evidence? Should he compound Jackson's folly by repeating it? Or should he quietly bury it again with a wince? Perhaps he should simply raise the problem, and, having made the evidence more public, ignore it except when it seems directly relevant to his case.

4. A Bibliographical Note

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References to Blake in the first half of the nineteenth century are astonishingly few. Those listed in the Nurmi-Bentley Blake Bibliography typically portray Blake as a "madman" who excelled as an artist but faltered as a poet. A reference, hitherto unnoticed -- "The Poetry of Sacred and Legendary Art" *--anon. rev., Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXV (Feb. 1849), 183 -- at once reveals the reigning attitude of the early nineteenth century toward Blake and suggests the direction that subsequent criticism was to take. The reviewer comments, "There is greatness in the simplicity of Blake's angels: 'The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' Apparently this remark was inspired by Mrs. Jameson's statement: 'The most original, and, in truth, the only new and original version of the Scripture idea of angels which I met with, is that of William Blake, a poet painter, somewhat mad as we are told, if indeed his manners were not rather 'the telescope of truth,' a sort of poetical clairvoyance, bringing the unearthly nearer to him than to others. His adoring angels float rather than fly, and, with their half-liquid draperies, seem to dissolve into light and love: and his rejoicing angels -- behold them -- sending up their voices with the morning stars, that 'singing in their glory move'" (I, 80; the quotation is from Lycidas, l. 180).

The context in which the reviewer's remark appears is perhaps of special significance. Blake is mentioned among those artists who skillfully combine poetry with painting, using the former to enliven and

*Reviewing a book of the same title by Mrs. [Anna Brownell Murphy] Jameson (1848). Immensely popular, this book went through many editions until it was edited and enlarged by Estelle M. Hurl, Sacred and Legendary Art by Anna Jameson, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1895).

illumine the latter; among those artists who, working with the sublimest materials, prove that Christian art may rival, indeed surpass, that of the ancients. Still more important is the fact that the reviewer points to Blake in a passage discussing the emergence of a new Christian art imbued with an iconoclastic spirit.

QUERIES

In our item about the Songs facsimile last issue, one measurement was left out. The album measures 13 3/8 by 9 1/4 inches.

Ruthven Todd suggests: "The early facsimile of the Songs seems to be to be the work of one of the Linnell boys, unless, and this is pure guessing, it was made by Tatham for his own use. He is the only one of the Ancients who would fit in, and, on second thoughts, the Linnells were much more competent. Tommy Butts was out of the picture by 1821. . . . In addition, the engraving of the old man's head on the verso of the fragment of America copper-plate suggests that Tommy was just a little more competent than the description would suggest. My only other suggestion would be to look into the Wilkinson family. Did he have daughters? He was enough of an enthusiast to have set a member of his family to work. As for the date of the paper, 1821, that doesn't matter except as a date showing the work to have been done later."

Do any readers know of other contemporary or near-contemporary Blake facsimiles?

Does anyone know whether the MS of Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agne was in Hayley's possession during Blake's residence at Felpham? W.H. Bond, in the introduction to his edition of the poem, mentions that the MS came into Hayley's possession, but no dates are provided.

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(continued from p. 8)

7. Erdman, David V., ed. (with the assistance of John E. Thiesmeyer, Richard J. Wolfe et al.). Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell U.P. 2 vols. 1967. To be reviewed in Newsletter #6.
8. Gardner, Stanley. Blake. London: Evans Bros. (Literature in Perspective series.) 1968. 8/6 paper; 16s cased.
9. Holloway, John. Blake: Songs of Innocence and of Experience. (Studies in English Literature) 5s paper; 8/6 boards. (B)
10. Lister, Raymond. William Blake. "An introduction to the man and his work, illustrated." 25/- (B)
11. Raine, Kathleen. Blake and Tradition. Princeton (Bollingen Series XXXV: 11). 2 vols. with 194 ill., 11 in color. Boxed. \$22.50.