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M I N U T E  
P A R T I C U L A R

## Blake and the Edinburgh Evening Post

David Groves

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XXXIX. The only Condition I have to impose on teaching the Mystery is, that the Produce shall be consecrated to the Use of the *New Jerusalem Church*, and not to any civil or political Purpose in any Society, where the New Revelation of the LORD is not received.

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XL. I had three Ways opened to me to make Use of this Knowledge, acquired in Alchemy, as 1st, to set to work myself in the Process, and thus bring it out; 2d, by Means of an open Publication, to communicate the same to the whole World; or 3d, by Means of a circular Letter to impart the same to the Friends of the New Church only. As to the first, I have already tried it myself for these 20 Years, but not being independent, I was always interrupted in the Pursuit. As to the second Way, I have often intended to do it, but found that, for many Reasons, this Way should not be pursued. The third Way, therefore, appears to me the most useful, and more suited for this present Time.

XLI. At length I must declare, that I have not this Knowledge of myself, but from another, who died in 1756 in Finland, and who had obtained this Science by a supernatural Way. The same had even Revelations concerning the Last Judgment, that was to take Place in 1757, and concerning the New Church of the LORD that was to be established afterwards.

XLII. The latest Author in true Alchemy, EIRENEUS PHILALETHA, an Englishman, lived 100 Years ago in America, and was an anonymous Writer. Since which Time, in the whole learned World there has not been one proper Work published in this Science; and before his Time no other Writings deserve to be read, but what he himself has recommended in his Preface to his *Ripley Revived*, and his *Metamorphosis Metallorum*.

London, May 26, 1789.

AUGUST NORDENSKJÖLD

Member of the *New Jerusalem Church* in London,  
and one of his Majesty's Superintendents of the  
Mines in Sweden

P.S. It is particularly requested, that the Contents of this Letter be not made public; and that all Answers be directed for me at MR. ROBERT HINDMARSH'S, Printer to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, No. 32, Clerkenwell-Close, London.

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## MINUTE PARTICULAR

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### Blake and the *Edinburgh Evening Post*

David Groves

The *Edinburgh Evening Post* was a weekly 8-page newspaper, with a two-page section entitled "Scottish Literary Gazette." The *Post* is mainly remembered today because Thomas De Quincey was one of its regular contributors during the late 1820s.<sup>1</sup> With "more original discussion than any [other] newspaper in Scotland, the *Post* apparently "acquired considerable reputation as a journal of talent."<sup>2</sup>

When Dr. John Abercrombie's book, *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth*, was published in Edinburgh in 1831, it received a short review in the Scottish Literary Gazette section of the *Post*. Abercrombie's speculations about ghosts and visions inspired the reviewer to include a brief comparison with William Blake. Although the remarks are not very enlightening, they at least attest to the spread of Blake's reputation in Scotland. The reviewer's allusion to Blake follows his discussion of the "visual phantasm[s]" suffered by Dr. Abercrombie's patients:

In Allan Cunningham's lives of the Painters, our author might have found another curious instance of the same thing, in Blake, the eminent artist, who had such visitors, and the appearance of them was so vivid and steady, that that writer [*i.e.*, Cunningham] tells us, that he [*i.e.*, Blake] actually painted them; and that so docile were his spiritual *sitters*, that they appeared at the wish of his friend [*i.e.*, Blake].

Sometimes, however, (he adds) the "shape which he desired to draw, was long in appearing, and he sat with his pencil and paper ready, and his eyes idly roaming in vacuity, till all at once the *vision* was upon him, and he began to work like one possessed."<sup>3</sup>

Whoever the author of these remarks may have been, his attitude towards visions was very different from Blake's. The review ends with a recommendation that readers "receive . . . the solid instruction, that those spectral appearances, which terrified our forefathers, are now ascertained to be the results of certain states of body and health, of those to whom they appear." No further mentions of Blake appear in surviving issues of the *Edinburgh Post*.

<sup>1</sup> See Stuart M. Tave, *New Essays by De Quincey; His Contributions to the Edinburgh Saturday Post and Edinburgh Evening Post 1827-1828* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> Anon., "The Edinburgh and Glasgow Newspaper Press," *Metropolitan Magazine* 7 (1833): 98.

<sup>3</sup> Anon., "Abercrombie's Inquiries," *Edinburgh Evening Post, and Scottish Literary Gazette* 7 May 1831 (150-51). The reviewer quotes from Allan Cunningham's *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 6 vols. (London: Murray, 1829-33) 2: 167.