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BY DAVID GROVES

The Sheffield Iris was a weekly eight-page newspaper, founded in 1794 by the poet and reformer James Montgomery (1771-1854). Its enlightened political views gave the Iris an influence far beyond the English manufacturing city of Sheffield. Although Montgomery's role as editor ended in 1825, he continued to take an interest in the paper, and to contribute occasional pieces to it.¹

When the second volume of Allan Cunningham's Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects appeared in 1830, it was reviewed in the Iris, with special attention to Cunningham's chapter on Blake. The anonymous review has never been reprinted or mentioned in print, until now:

The only substantiv[e] change is the spell-[...]


². Anon., Sheffield Iris 9 February 1830: 4. The opening words, "NUMBER X. of this interesting work," refer to the "Family Library" series, of which number ten was the second of Cunningham's six-volume Lives. "Albemarle-street" was the location of Cunningham's London publisher, John Murray, "Swedenberg" was of course the mystic Emanuel Swedenborg.

³. The second edition of Cunningham's life of Blake is reprinted in Bentley 476-507.