

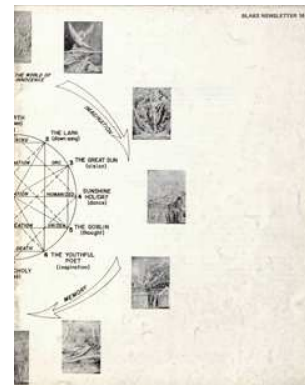
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M I N U T E
P A R T I C U L A R

The Garden of Love

John Adlard

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head in Blake's figures, he will have begun to understand the nature of the language that I am trying to use in my books, and will have been rescued from the net of abstraction that always lurks in any attempt to seize Blake through interpretative commentary.

MINUTE PARTICULARS

LOUIS MIDDLEMAN: CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY

"Bring out number, weight & measure in a year of dearth"

William Blake's use of the Bible is copiously documented, but it has as yet gone unnoticed that one of the Proverbs of Hell, "Bring out number, weight & measure in a year of dearth," is built on a close translation of the Aramaic writing on the wall (Daniel 5.25-28), "mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," or "numbered, numbered, weighed, divided."

Blake announces in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* the advent of a new heaven consequent upon the destruction of a rationalistic epistemology based on a reductive materialism. The writing on the wall appeared at the feast of Belshazzar, last king of Babylon, prophesying the fall of his kingdom, the biblical analogue of Blake's prophecies against the Babylon of Newton, Bacon, Locke, and other despicable "Angels."

JOHN ADLARD: HIGHBRIDGE, SOMERSET

"The Garden of Love"

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

Most writers on Blake appear to find the stanza too simple to need much comment, but R. B. Kennedy, editing for Collins' Annotated Student Texts, remarks: "The joys and desires seem almost personified as children."

This suggests that few, if any, readers know that binding with briars was to be seen in graveyards in Blake's day and up till Victorian times. A writer in *Notes and*

Queries, 20 August 1932, mentioned "the binding of briars round and over the turfs (or turves) of graves to keep them in position" He had noticed them on Charles Lamb's grave. On August 6 of that year another correspondent had quoted Chatterton's "Song from AElla":

With my hands I'll dent the briars
Round his holy corse to gre.

Thus the buried "joys and desires" were *literally* bound with briars. Indeed, at the foot of the plate a grave is shown briar-bound, but this seems to have been taken as purely symbolical.

MICHAEL PHILLIPS: UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

"Blake's Corrections in *POETICAL SKETCHES*": A Forthcoming Supplement and the Britwell Court Library Copy

In the "Prolegomenon" appended to my recent article on Blake's corrections in *Poetical Sketches* (*Blake Newsletter*, 4 [Fall 1970], 46), I drew attention to the fact that the present locations of several original copies remained unknown, at least to me. The response to my request for assistance in locating these copies was immediate and generous (though still incomplete), and the information supplied in particular by Professor G. E. Bentley, Jr., has been especially helpful. Arrangements are now being made to inspect these copies for Blake's corrections and a supplement to my article will be published in a forthcoming number of the *Blake Newsletter*.

Immediately following publication of my article an hitherto unrecorded copy of *Poetical Sketches* appeared in auction at Sotheby's on 29 March 1971 in the sale of the Britwell Court Library. The Britwell Court Library copy was described as follows in the *Sotheby Catalogue*:

34 BLAKE (WILLIAM) POETICAL SKETCHES. By W. B., First Edition, with the final blank, olive straight-grained morocco gilt, t.e.g., uncut, By Frances Bedford [Hayward 192; Rothschild 413; Keynes 26], A Fine Copy 8vo 1783

*** This copy is not recorded by Lowery, *A census of copies of William Blake's "Poetical Sketches"* (The Library, December 1936, p. 354 et seq.), where 22 or possibly 23 copies are listed.

The earliest of Blake's poetical works, and, except for the first book of *The French Revolution*, the only one printed in ordinary type.

A photographic facsimile of the titlepage is given in the *Catalogue* facing the description.

The Britwell Court Library copy was purchased by John Fleming of New York (lot 34 @ £3,800) on behalf of The Pierpont Morgan Library. The following description of the copy was supplied to me by Douglas C. Ewing of that Library in a letter of 17 May 1971:

This copy bears no manuscript corrections, and there is no indication of ownership before the Britwell Court Library; it is bound in olive morocco in a style typical