1974 Blake Seminar

E. B. Murray

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QUERY

Gates of Paradise and Quarles' Emblems
By Detlef Dorrbecker

While I was doing some research for an article on For Children: The Gates of Paradise, I examined the numerous editions of Francis Quarles' Emblemes (first published 1635). I also came across the last "regular" reprint of Quarles' epigrams, a book produced in 1839 and furnished with totally new emblem-icons, the woodcuts done by Charles H. Bennett and W. Harry Rogers. Blake drew massively on the original illustrations in Quarles' collection of emblems when making his designs for GP in the Notebook, and in turn the latter artists, it appears to me, must have known and used Blake's inventions when engraving their designs. Does anybody have some information on Bennett and Rogers, or some idea where they might have seen works of Blake (especially GP), etc?

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DISCUSSION

1974 Blake Seminar
By E. B. Murray

I am pleased the December 1974 MLA Blake Seminar ("Perspectives on Jerusalem") approved of the general tendency of my "Jerusalem Reversed" paper (see Newsletter 32, Spring 1975, p. 105), though I'd suspect it took a smug dealer in unconscionable paradox to confuse my Vala-Vahlu, Luvah-Lava syllabic reversals and consequent correspondences with the wholesale importing of extraneous readings into Blake's text that I was (gently) questioning. Another case of the saw posing as a razor's edge to hack up minute particulars—in lieu of an armed vision to see through them. The reversals are closer to their nominal sources in the text than much Blakean word-play of these and other days (e.g., earth-owner, horizon, lethe—and "lover" [come back to me?]), perhaps even as close as that famous back-formation, Enitharmon. When this generation's Blakean establishment has been laid to waste, they'll come glimmering through as well as these. (I shall not promise so much for "nada-nada" as Udan Adan without evidence that a bit of simple Spanish had some currency to Blake.)

It was too bad I could not be at the meeting. I accept the wrist-slapping of its reporter with understanding. But sometimes things close in. Someone should suggest to those running Blake meetings in the future that they really should give an appropriate by-line to the people actually contributing papers. While my reasons for not showing were more substantial than this, I couldn't tell from any listing in the MLA program that I was really aboard—and so it came to pass. Also—the general carping tone of reported commentary, though in keeping with the spectral self-righteousness of Blakean commentary everywhere evident these days (perhaps contagious—see ece sagram), suggests that, with only two of the paper-contributors in absentia, the group had one too many warm bodies to pick at.

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MINUTE PARTICULARS

"Fields from Islington to Marybone"
By John Adlard

Blake's conviction that "The fields from Islington to Marybone, / To Primrose Hill and Saint John's Wood" were once "built over" with Jerusalem's pillars may have something to do with the fact that the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (whose Priory Gate still stands in Clerkenwell, adorned with a lamb) once owned much of this area. St. John's Wood itself is named after them (there was also a Little St. John's Wood in Islington) and Pieter Zwart, in his Islington (London 1973), p. 118, notes that "the fields to the west" belonged to them.

London

Blake's Appearance in a Textbook on Insanity
By Raymond Lister

From the viewpoint of the unprofessional reader, one of the most fascinating books on insanity is Mad Humanity its Forms Apparent and Obscure by L. Forbes Winslow, which was published in London by C. A. Pearson Ltd. in 1898.