

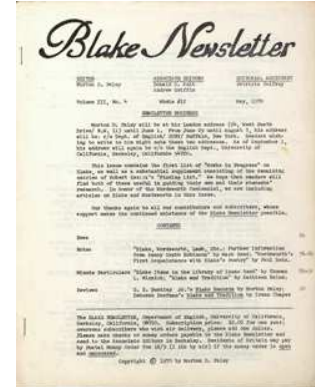
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

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

Blake Items in the Library of Isaac Reed

Thomas L. Minnick

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¹² The only evidence for this proposed collection is Mary Lamb's comment, in a letter written to Mrs. Clarkson on December 25, 1806, that "my brother sometimes threatens to pass his holidays in town hunting over old plays at the Museum to extract passages for a work (a collection of poetry) Mr. Wordsworth intends to publish." The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb, II, ed. E. V. Lucas (London, 1935), p. 33.

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MINUTE PARTICULARS

1. BLAKE ITEMS IN THE LIBRARY OF ISAAC REED

A glance through Bibliotheca Reediana (London, 1807), the sale catalogue of the library of Isaac Reed, reveals that gentleman as a bookbuyer with interests far outside his own profession of theater history. He was in fact a kind of bookstall omnivore. It is therefore not surprising that, as a friend of William Hayley and George Romney, Reed left two works by William Blake among the possessions to be auctioned after his death.

In their Blake Bibliography, Professors Bentley and Nurmi list one of these, but inaccurately (see item 431). "Blake's Poetical Sketches--1783" appears in the auction catalogue but as lot 6577 and on page 302, not as the bibliographers note. According to the priced catalogue in the Harvard College Library, the Poetical Sketches sold for six shillings sixpence, a respectable price for the sale, on the thirtieth day of the auction, December 5, 1807.

A second Blake item, not listed in Bentley and Nurmi, was sold nine days later among the prints and manuscripts. Lot 8936 (on page 404 of the catalogue) contained an unspecified number of prints including "Designs to a Series of Ballads, by Hayley, engraved by Blake, 2 No. 1802"--clearly Bentley and Nurmi number 375. This reference is the fifth known type-printed allusion to Blake during 1807 (see A Blake Bibliography, p. xvii). The entire lot, with the now very rare "Designs," brought eleven shillings sixpence.

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2. "Blake and Tradition"

I read with great interest the review of Blake and Tradition in your issue of December 15th by Professor Daniel Hughes. In this review Professor Hughes states that Keynes does not agree with my interpreta-