

THE WORKS
OF
WILLIAM BLAKE

Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical

EDITED WITH LITHOGRAPHS OF THE ILLUSTRATED
"PROPHETIC BOOKS," AND A MEMOIR
AND INTERPRETATION

BY

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"Bring me to the test
And I the matter will re-veal, which madness
Would gambol from"

Imulet

IN THREE VOLS.

VOL. I

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Co

WILLIAM LINNELL

THIS

WORK IS INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE reader must not expect to find in this account of Blake's myth, or this explanation of his symbolic writings, a substitute for Blake's own works. A paraphrase is given of most of the more difficult poems, but no single thread of interpretation can fully guide the explorer through the intricate paths of a symbolism where most of the figures of speech have a two-fold meaning, and some are employed systematically in a three-fold, or even a four-fold sense. "Allegory addressed to the intellectual powers while it is altogether hidden from the corporeal understanding is my definition," writes Blake, "of the most sublime poetry." *Letter to Butts from Felpham, July 6th, 1803.*

Such allegory fills the "Prophetic Books," yet it is not so hidden from the corporeal understanding as its author supposed. An explanation, continuous throughout, if not complete for side issues, may be obtained from the enigma itself by the aid of ordinary industry. Such an explanation forms, not perhaps the whole, but certainly the greater part, of the present volumes. Every line, whether written for the

“understanding” or the “intellect,” is based on a line of Blake’s own.

Two principal causes have hitherto kept the critics,—among whom must be included Mr. Swinburne himself, though he reigns as the one-eyed man of the proverb among the blind,—from attaining a knowledge of what Blake meant.

The first is the solidity of the myth, and its wonderful coherence. The second is the variety of terms in which the sections of it are named.

The foundation of Blake’s symbolic system of speech is his conception of the Four-fold in Man, and the covering that concealed this system was a peculiar use of synonyms. The four portions of Humanity are divided under the names of the Four Zoas in the myth, and the reader who does not understand the relation of the Four Zoas to each other, and to each living man, has not made even the first step towards understanding the Symbolic System which is the signature of Blake’s genius, and the guarantee of his sanity. Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Gilchrist, and the brothers, Dante and William Rossetti, deserve well of literature for having brought Blake into the light of day and made his name known throughout the length and breadth of England. But though whatever is accessible to us now was accessible to them when they wrote, including the then unpublished “Vala,” not one chapter, not one clear paragraph about the myth of Four Zoas, is to be found in all that they have published.

With regard to the use of synonyms, which must be understood before the Four Zoas can be traced through their different disguises, the earliest idea of this, as a mere guess,

occurred to the editor whose name stands first on the present title-page, in the year 1870. The suggestion arose through a remark in the first edition of Gilchrist's "Life of Blake," where the poem "To the Jews," from "Jerusalem," was printed with a challenge at the beginning, calling on those who could do so, to offer an interpretation.

In the later edition this challenge was withdrawn, probably under the impression that it had not been accepted. The glove, however, had been quietly taken up. "What if Blake should turn out to use the quarters of London to indicate the points of the compass, as he uses these to group certain qualities of mind associated with certain of the senses and the elements?" This was the idea that presented itself, and eventually led us to shape the master-key that unlocked all the closed doors of the poet's house.

It happened, however, that the idea was fated to be laid aside almost unused for many years. The maker of the lucky guess had only given a week or two of study, and barely succeeded in assuring himself that he was on the right track, when the course of destiny took him to Italy and kept him there, with only brief and busy visits to England and other countries, until a few years ago. In the meantime the other editor had grown up, and become a student of mysticism. He came one day and asked to have Blake explained. Very little could be given him to satisfy so large a demand, but with his eye for symbolic systems, he needed no more to enable him to perceive that here was a myth as well worth study as any that has been offered to the world, since first men learned that myths were briefer and more beautiful than exposition as

well as deeper and more companionable. He saw, too, that it was no mere freak of an eccentric mind, but an eddy of that flood-tide of symbolism which attained its tide-mark in the magic of the Middle Ages.

From that moment the collaboration which has produced the present work was begun, and it has gone on, notwithstanding some unforeseen and serious interruptions, for four years. The fellow labourers have not worked hand in hand, but rather have been like sportsmen who pursue the game on different tracks and in the evening divide their spoils. Each has learned in this way that the other was indispensable. The result is not two different views of Blake, so much as one view, reached by two opposite methods of study, worked out in order to satisfy two different forms of mental enjoyment.

Except in connection with the Memoir, very little assistance was to be had from outside. The biographical matter has been added to considerably, the greater part of the space being given to hitherto unpublished facts, while some twenty or thirty pages are condensations of the story as told in the accounts of Blake's life which have already been given to the world. A satisfactory and complete narrative has yet to be written, if all that is now known be set forth at its natural length. But this may well wait. Fresh material comes in from time to time, and now that readers are relieved of their discouraging inability to prove that they are not studying the life or works of a madman, it is probable that much will be done in the near future. A "Blake Society" would find plenty of occupation. It would probably be able, not only to gather together new facts for the biography, but it might

even find some of the lost books by Blake, printed and in manuscript. The Society could also take up the task of interpretation, and work out details, for which space has not been found in this book, large as it is.

Blake's was a complex message—more adapted than any former mystical utterance to a highly complex age. Yet it claims to be but a personal statement of universal truths, "a system to deliver men from systems."

The only other European mystics worthy to stand by his side, Swedenborg and Boehmen, were to a large extent sectaries, talking the language of the Churches, and delivering a message intended, before all else, for an age of dogma. They brought the Kingdom of the soul nearer to innumerable men; but now their work is nearly done, and they must soon be put away, reverently, and become, as Blake says, "the linen clothes folded up." As the language of spiritual utterance ceases to be theological and becomes literary and poetical, the great truths have to be spoken afresh; and Blake came into the world to speak them, and to announce the new epoch in which poets and poetic thinkers should be once more, as they were in the days of the Hebrew Prophets, the Spiritual leaders of the race. Such leadership was to be of a kind entirely distinct from the "temporal power" claimed to this day elsewhere. The false idea that a talent or even a genius for verse tends to give a man a right to make laws for the social conduct of other men is nowhere supported in Blake's works. The world in which he would have the poet, *acting as a poet*, seek leadership is the poetic world. That of ordinary conduct should be put

on a lower level. It belongs to Time, not to Eternity. It is only so far as conduct affects imagination that it has any importance, or, to use Blake's term, "existence."

The whole of Blake's teaching,—and he was a teacher before all things,—may be summed up in a few words.

Nature, he tells (or rather he reminds) us, is merely a name for one form of mental existence. Art is another and a higher form. But that art may rise to its true place, it must be set free from memory that binds it to Nature.

Nature,—or creation,—is a result of the shrinkage of consciousness,—originally clairvoyant,—under the rule of the five senses, and of argument and law. Such consciousness is the result of the divided portions of Universal Mind obtaining perception of one another.

The divisions of mind began to produce matter (as one of its divided moods is called), as soon as it produced contraction (Adam), and opacity (Satan), but its fatal tendency to division had further effects. Contraction, or divided into male and female,—mental and emotional egotism. This was the "fall." Perpetual war is the result. Morality wars on Passion, Reason on Hope, Memory on Inspiration, Matter on Love.

In Imagination only we find a Human Faculty that touches nature at one side, and spirit on the other. Imagination may be described as that which is sent bringing spirit to nature, entering into nature, and seemingly losing its spirit, that nature being revealed as symbol may lose the power to delude.

Imagination is thus the philosophic name of the Saviour,

whose symbolic name is Christ, just as Nature is the philosophic name of Satan and Adam. In saying that Christ redeems Adam (and Eve) from becoming Satan, we say that Imagination redeems Reason (and Passion) from becoming Delusion,—or Nature.

The prophets and apostles, priests and missionaries, prophets and apostles of this Redemption are,—or should be,—artists and poets. Art and poetry, by constantly using symbolism, continually remind us that nature itself is a symbol. To remember this, is to be redeemed from nature's death and destruction.

This is Blake's message. He uttered it with the zeal of a man, who saw with spiritual eyes the eternal importance of that which he proclaimed. For this he looked forward to the return of the Golden Age, when "all that was not inspiration should be cast off from poetry." Then, whenever the metaphors and the rhythms of the poet were heard, while the voices of the sects had fallen dumb, should be the new Sinai, from which God should speak in "Thunder of Thought and flames of fierce desire."

EDWIN J. ELLIS.

WILLIAM B. YEATS.

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MEMOIR.

I.—1757 to 1782.—STUDENT YEARS.

In the year 1757, according to Emanuel Swedenborg, a new age of the world began. The divine description of the kingdom of heaven as "within you" was to become more true than before by reason of a greater influx of spiritual light. The Christian Church as known and constituted externally was to begin to pass away. A new church was to take its place, and at last the exclamation of Moses, "Would that all the Lord's children were prophets!" was to become a prayer fulfilled. Swedenborg's prediction has undoubtedly received, and is still receiving, something of actuality from the general growth of that influence of mind over personality and conduct which is characteristic of the present century. The proscriptions of the old dogmas and the oppressions of the old law are fast giving place in practice to the more gentle, yet more exacting, requirements of a high mental ideal, supplemented by an unquestioning and general feeling of merely human brotherhood. Even the unity and solidity of the old church, material in its social nature and resting on discipline, is being superseded by the spiritual comradeship which grows up almost unconsciously between all men and women as their common property in the universal mental life widens its boundaries. It is the fashion of to-day to attribute this to education. But behind education lies the great force

of that flood of illumination foreseen by Swedenborg, and destined, as he declared, to break over and submerge the formalism of science and the materialism of the churches. Like a voice crying in the wilderness of half-awakened imagination, Swedenborg foretold the influence in exalting the standard of inner and of outer conduct which would be exercised by the visionary life, when a higher scholarship should have prepared the way. We can already see a beginning of this around us now. Society half recognises the utility of its dreamers. Mysticism, ceasing to be misunderstood, is ceasing to be disobeyed.

William Blake, born in the year 1757, and brought up under the influence of Swedenborgian ideas, looked on himself as before all things the poet of the age that was to begin in that year. He saw in himself the chosen teacher of the Rule of the Free Imagination. "A new heaven is begun," he writes in 1790, "and it is now thirty-three years since its advent."

It was a long time to spend almost exclusively in preparation, but these thirty-three years of Blake's life contain very little of active teaching.

Even from the first, however, his story is full of incident which has value in assisting the interpretation of his mystical writings. The tale has been told more than once, but the present memoir, slight as it is, contains here and there matter not hitherto published, and the whole narrative is arranged and considered for the first time with an interpretative as well as a biographical intention.

The house where Blake was born, No. 28, Broad Street, Golden Square, still stands. It is now somewhat shabby in appearance. A butcher's shop occupies the ground floor, and the entire street is as depressing as any in its woebegone neighbourhood. In Blake's time this was a fairly well-to-do district, in the near neighbourhood of fashionable life. James Blake, or, as he was called in childhood, James O'Neil, the father of the poet, was of Irish extraction. A certain

John O'Neil, James's father, had got into debt and difficulties in his own country. He married Ellen Blake, keeper of a *shebeen* house, at Rathmines, Dublin, and took her name. His young son, James, whose mother is unknown, but who was not the fruit of this union, began at the same time to use the name of Blake. But if the old O'Neil origin was hidden, the wild O'Neil blood showed itself strongly in the next generation. William Blake, as we call him, was, before all things, an O'Neil. His descent from a stock who had seldom lacked their attendant banshee, even when hard destiny had brought low their once high estate, and hidden it under the smoke-blackened rafters of some poor cabin, may well have had much to do with his visionary gift. The rebellious political enthusiasm of his grandfather came out in the young poet also. It was a dangerous freak then to wear a red Phrygian cap in the streets of London, but he did this openly to show his republican sympathies in the days before the Reign of Terror had belied the early promise of the French Revolution. The constant and reckless generosity in money matters, and the intense shrinking from being paid, which were noticed in Blake, who would even "turn pale when money was offered to him," strongly recall poor John O'Neil, who was reduced by worldly imprudence to the shift of concealing his good name under that of a woman who, however honest and prosperous, was socially inferior to him. Later on, one of the highest places is assigned to Erin when, in writing the symbolic poem "Jerusalem," Blake laid the names of every country in the world under contribution to build up a system of metaphysical and spiritual "correspondences" or "signatures," such as Swedenborg, Boehmen, the Gnostics, the Kabalists, and even some of the Fathers, find in the Scriptures. The very manner of Blake's writing has an Irish flavour, a lofty extravagance of invention and epithet, recalling the *Tain Bo Cuilane* and other old Irish epics, and his mythology brings often to mind the tumultuous vastness of the ancient tales of god and demon that have

come to us from the dawn of mystic tradition in what may fairly be called his fatherland.

But the genius as well as the vivid personality of William Blake seems to have been, as it were, a heaping up of mental wealth for which the other members of his family were impoverished. His own father, who left Ireland and became a hosier in London, does not appear to have had more imaginative power or personal peculiarity than his neighbouring tradesmen. One thing only stands out as indicating that he owned some capacity of dreaming awake above the humdrum, pence-counting level to which in other respects he appears to have belonged. He permitted, if not encouraged, Swedenborgian doctrines to be studied in his family from a time when a knowledge of the "New Church" was by no means a matter of ordinary education. It can hardly be said to have become such even in our day. Nothing is more surprising among William Blake's reviewers and biographers than their systematic avoidance of the use of the most obvious Swedenborgian indications in the attempts they make to interpret the symbolic poems. Many passages considered difficult or incomprehensible are only so to readers unfamiliar with Swedenborg's method.

One other indication tends to show that James was not of a narrow or prejudiced mind. It will be seen later how his sympathetic temperament enabled him to understand that one among his sons, the genius of the family, must not be sent to school. In how many hosiers, conscious of a cloud over their own birth, and keenly alive to the value of respectability and conventionality, could such indulgence be found?

There were four other children—James, called after the father, who seems to have been of a mild disposition. The only reproach ever levelled at his undistinguished name is found in the manuscript of Tatham, whose view was evidently derived in later years from William himself. Tatham speaks of James having "pestered his brother with timid sentences of bread and cheese advice." Robert was William's favourite.

With Robert's spirit after death he believed himself to have held personal intercourse. John was the bad boy of the family. But he was the parents' pet. When William resented this favouritism he was told that one day he would beg his bread at John's door. The contrary of this is what actually occurred. John was apprenticed to a candle maker at a handsome premium, but broke his articles, ran away, and came seeking help from William in very evil plight. The genius did not refuse to aid the scapegrace; and eventually John enlisted in the army, but soon after died, it is believed, from the effects of wild living. Here is the ancestral turbulence showing itself again, with no redeeming quality of mind or heart to make it picturesque or acceptable. William did not in the least disguise from himself that there was no excuse for John. He speaks of "My brother John, the evil one, in a black cloud making his moan"; but the notion that even he was to be damned for his sins was more than could be endured. William's rejection of the creed "that God will torment man in eternity for following his energies," may have had its origin at this time from the double root of brotherly disapproval and brotherly tenderness such as he undoubtedly felt for John. The quaint statement in the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," that angels are always found, on account of their "conceit," to speak of themselves as "the only wise," is probably due, on the other hand, to reminiscence of the respectable James of the "bread and cheese advice."

William Blake, as has been said, grew up with no regular schooling. He had early begun fulfilling his own aphorisms, "The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction," and living and thinking according to the imaginative impulse. His father saw this, and fearing the inevitable contest between the boy's temperament and the severity of eighteenth-century pedagoguery, and noticing to what great anger he was moved by a blow, decided, says Tatham, to leave schooling alone. The plan was quite the best possible that could have been adopted. Young Blake did not neglect his own education.

He read everything he could reach—Swedenborg certainly, and possibly Boehmen, then coming out in folio translation under the editorship of W. Law. Long country walks were now, as in later life, his great amusement; nor had he far to go to be free of London clamour, for in those days just north of Oxford Street were “the fields of cows by Welling’s farm,” and just south of Westminster Bridge, St. George’s Fields and open country. One day, having strayed south as far as Peckham Rye (by Dulwich Hill), he had a vision. He passed a tree full of angels, their bright wings shining among the leaves.

It is a curious coincidence, so far as a sequel can be a coincidence, that a century having endeavoured in vain to heap the dust of oblivion over Blake’s visions, the present series of reproductions, the first systematically given to the public, of his visionary books should be printed at Peckham Rye. Gilchrist calls the Peckham “angels” Blake’s first vision, but contradicts this by publishing a conversation in which Mr. Blake reminded Blake how he once saw “God put his forehead to the window,” which as the little visionary was but four years old at the time, naturally “set him screaming.”

Tatham also mentions that not many years later, when Blake was “little more than a child,” his mother beat him for saying that he saw Ezekiel. The vision appeared to him, sitting under a green bough. The story is not likely to be an invention. All that Tatham did not learn from Blake himself he received from Mrs. Blake, who must have had straight from her husband whatever she did not relate as coming under her own observation. The Ezekiel story is interesting as showing Blake’s home atmosphere at the time. He must have been very early and very deeply impressed by the name and personality of Ezekiel. The impression never died away, but grew fruitful as time went on. In the great works of his mystical period a whole system of poetic philosophy turns on the story of four “living creatures,” which he

tells us were "the same that Ezekiel saw by Chebar's flood." It is so probable as to almost amount to certainty, that he had, even in childhood, heard the name used by his father and his Swedenborgian brother James in a mystical sense, meaning "a state" and not "an individual"; for this is not an unusual manner of using biblical names in ordinary conversation among Swedenborgians. Blake's father is merely said by Gilchrist to have been "a dissenter"; but in his day, ordinary dissent was more closely allied to mysticism in its manner of dealing with the Scriptures than in our own. The early vision of Ezekiel may be considered as the first of the "memorable fancies" of which we read the story in Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," written when his thirty-three years of mystical apprenticeship were over.

At ten Blake was sent to a drawing school in the Strand, kept by a Mr. Parr. Now, too, he began loitering about among sale-rooms, on the look out for cheap prints after Raphael, Michael Angelo, Albert Durer, etc. The auctioneer is said to have called him his "little connoisseur," but his connoisseurship was very different from a blind acceptance of the chalk-barren, pseudo-classic ideal of the eighteenth century. It was the irregular and expressive quality, the personal feeling and not the renaissance latinism in Michael Angelo, as in Durer, that attracted him. "Gothic form," he would always say, is "living form," and he refused the classic ideal in almost everything, beginning with the very source which classic art claimed for its inspiration, the Muses considered as Daughters of Memory. He would have art dictated by "Daughters of Inspiration" only. It is easy to say now that he did not understand how much there really was in classic art that had kinship with his own ideals, but he can hardly be blamed for rejecting the simulacrum of classicity that was the idol of his day, whose worshippers went so far as to propose to rebuild Oxford in Palladian orders with stucco.

In 1771, Blake was apprenticed, being now nearly fourteen,

to the engraver Basire. His father had intended to make a painter of him, but when the boy learned how high a premium must be paid for his apprenticeship, he said that it would be unfair to his brothers and sisters, and asked to be set to engraving instead. Basire, though ultimately his master, was not at first chosen for him. An attempt was made to apprentice him to Rylands, Court engraver of the day, but Blake himself raised a difficulty. "Father, I do not like the man's look," and on being asked his reason said, "He looks as if he would live to be hanged." Rylands was then in great prosperity, and winning the good will of all who met him. Twelve years later he committed forgery, and the prophecy came true. Basire's house was No. 31, Great Queen Street, just opposite the "Freemason's Tavern."

After two years' work under the eye of his master, Blake was sent to make drawings in Westminster Abbey. Gilchrist here follows Malkin, who, in writing the life of his son, an infant prodigy, gave a sketch of Blake, who engraved the frontispiece. He considers that Blake was separated from the other apprentices, and sent to work in Westminster Abbey, on account of some dispute between Basire and his pupils in which Blake had got mixed up, because he "declined to take part with his master against his fellow-apprentices," Basire's comment being that "he was too simple, and they too cunning." Tatham, on the other hand, attributes Blake's provisional exile to "matters of intellectual argument" between himself and the youths among whom he was learning to handle his tools, and rejoices that he was sent out of their way to draw the Westminster Monuments, for "had things gone otherwise he might never have been more than a mere engraver." Setting aside this "might have been," we may readily believe that both kinds of disputation influenced the decision of Basire, for whom Blake had ever the highest respect and most friendly memory.

During this work in the Abbey, Blake was for a time greatly annoyed by the Westminster students. Perched high

upon a scaffolding, wholly absorbed in copying some high monument or soaring tracery, he seemed to them providentially appointed to be their victim. Boys, being purely instinctive, are like birds in hating any one who is unusual. If you tie a red ribbon to a sea gull's leg, it is said that the others will peck it to death. Blake, like Shelley, was persecuted as a boy by his fellows, who were made uneasy by the abstracted gaze and strange manner of one who was marked out for their enmity by the burning ribbon of genius. Shelley once plunged a knife through the hand of a persecutor, and Blake reached out from his scaffolding and flung a boy from a cornice, where he had climbed to tease him the better. The boy fell with a crash upon the ground; there Blake left him, and went off and laid a formal complaint before the Dean. The result was that the Westminster students were excluded from the Abbey, and to this day have never recovered their right to stray about within its walls at their pleasure. Blake's wrathful impulses, which served him in good stead more than once in his life, were yielded to with more self-knowledge than one would think. He once grew so angry with an engraving at which he was working unsuccessfully, that he flung the metal plate across the room. "Did you not injure it?" asked someone afterwards. "I took good care of that," was the reply. A good deal in his fiery disposition reminds one of that potent Elizabethan, Shawn O'Neil, who was wont, when he felt some furious emotion getting the better of him, to have himself buried by his followers up to his neck in the sand, with a discretion to which some of them owed their lives, and he his freedom from many a long night of remorse.

A mighty slayer of his enemies Shawn was; but Blake, when he grew up, said that wrath should be reserved for "intellectual battle," and condemned the anger that is aimed against individuals rather than "states" or words. Yet even this he held to be living and creative in its degree. The destructive spirit, he said, was cold, reasoning, logical,

virtuous, blameless, except with the blame that lies in a deadly and barren alienation from all that is praiseworthy. Wrath, on the other hand, is always spoken of in the poems as akin to inspiration, and as belonging to the poetic or creative genius.

During the five remaining years of his apprenticeship as an engraver Blake was occupied in drawing the Westminster Monuments. He is said to have been the first to find traces of colour upon their faded stone, and this probably affected his future style. He delighted to prepare his drawing-paper so as to give his tinted designs an appearance of having been painted on stone. Year after year he worked on in the Abbey surrounded by visions. The symbolic forms of Christ and His twelve apostles came to him one red-letter day. Here, in all likelihood, did his mystic system, the great creation of his maturer life, first move before him in visible symbols amid the silence of the alcoves and chapels. The spires and towers of Westminster stand as a glyph of inspiration in more than one of his later drawings. An engraving made by him in 1773, his sixteenth year, from a drawing, probably one of those picked up in the sale-rooms, which he ascribed—perhaps wrongly—to Michael Angelo, has the curious title, "Joseph of Arimathea among the rocks of Albion." It also bears an inscription, which has been supposed to be of later date: "One of the Gothic artists who built the cathedrals in what we call the dark ages wandering about in sheepskin and goatskin, of whom the world was not worthy." If these words and the title were of the same date as the artistic part of the engraving, they would imply that the main structure of Blake's system was tolerably complete at a very early time. They were possibly added, however, when he was writing "Vala," in which work we hear for the first time in his poetry of Joseph of Arimathea, and find him identified with "Los." Los, in the great myth, forms systems of religion and philosophy, of art and poetry like shelters beneath which the thoughts and

souls of men may "dwell within their own energy." The Gothic roofs and pillars of Westminster gave just such a refuge to the religious feelings and mystical meditations of Blake, and wrapped them round that they might grow definite and conscious, without interference from the clamorous chaos of London.

And definite and conscious did his system grow in these five years, but not as grow the merely dialectical philosophies, by slow change and laborious modifications. It waxed in subtlety and complexity from now to the last day of his life as trees and flowers do, expanding from its own central necessity, increasing from fuller perception, not from second thought, from ever clearer comprehension of its vitality, not from studious alteration of its defects. All systems whose birth and growth have been of vision tend to fulfil this law.

When Blake was twenty his apprenticeship with Basire closed, and a short term of study at the Antique School of the Royal Academy began. Now, too, he started on his own account, engraving prints after Stothard and others for "The Ladies' Magazine." He commenced water-colour also, with "The Penance of Jane Shore." His original symbolic pictures did not, however, begin until 1784, when "War Unchained by an Angel—Fire, Pestilence, and Famine following"—one of the quaternaries so common in his system—was exhibited at the Academy, then a new birth of the day. He now made the acquaintance of his life-long friend, Flaxman, and met Stothard, with whom he was destined to quarrel some two decades after. Fuseli was soon added to the group.

Now, too, he began courting one Polly or Clara Woods. Authorities somewhat vary as to her name. She is said to have been "a lovely little girl," with whom he took walks here and there, until it became clear that she would have none of him. This discovery, according to Tatham, made him ill, and he was dispatched off to Richmond to a nursery gardener, named Boucher, for change of air.

II.—THE WIFE.

THIS nursery gardener had a pretty "bright-eyed" daughter named Catherine, who, when her mother asked her whom she would like to marry, was wont to reply: "I have not yet seen the man." On the night of Blake's arrival she came into the room where he was sitting with her family, and grew on the moment faint, as the tale says, from the sudden intuition that she saw her destined husband. She had to leave the room to recover, and on her return sat down by Blake, and heard the story of his love for Polly Wood, and of her refusal of him, and his sorrow. "I pity you from my heart," she said. "Do you pity me?" he answered, "then I love you for that."

Unlike some other stories told of Blake, this one of his courtship is supported by many allusions found in his poems. In a passage in the "Book of Urizen," which is a mystic repetition of the story of the creation of Eve, we learn that the "first female form" is called "Pity." Each of Blake's poems has several different meanings, one within the other. This "Pity" is identical with a mythical personage, "Enitharmon." She is in one sense an abstract idea—Space. She is also the "vegetative, mortal wife of Los; his emanation, yet his wife, till the sleep of death is passed." But Los, though in the myth he stands for Time, and other abstractions, is Blake, the author, considered in respect of his poetic inspiration, as is explained in the poem called "Milton." So by steps and degrees Mrs. Blake is seen as always the incarnation of Pity, for such to the end she seemed in her husband's eyes, not less

than when she was yet Catherine Boucher, the "bright-eyed young woman" who sat by his side when he was a lad, and sympathised with his early romantic sorrow.

Blake's moral fibre was not softened by this sympathy. He was no sentimental stripling. He separated from Catherine and returned to his work for a year, resolved not to see her again until he had put by something substantial with which their modest housekeeping might be begun.

This year of probation and preparation being over, the young couple were married, August 18, 1782. They began their life together at No. 51, Leicester Fields, now Leicester Square. One of Blake's first cares was the education of his wife. At the time of the marriage she could not even sign her name in the register. Under his tuition she learned not only to read and write, but to assist him in his art work, the colouring of many of the illuminated books which were issued from his private press being by her hand. To the last she always looked on him as her master in all things, calling him invariably "Mr. Blake" with a formality which seems quaint and cold in our day, but which never checked the true warmth of the life-long affection which subsisted between them. It is even said that under his tuition she acquired the faculty of seeing "visions." Towards this she seems to have had some native tendency, as is shown by the emotion she experienced when overcome with presentiment of the future on first seeing Blake.

The whole story of her married life stands clearly out before us from hints in the poetic works, aided by various reminiscences left by friends, acquaintances, and casual visitors. It begins as a romance. It goes on as a domestic drama in which every incident is almost ideal in its simplicity and beauty. It ends in a tragic solitude of sorrow and dignity. Catherine lived for the life of her husband, and died of loneliness and grief when he was taken from her. Nothing is wanting to the tale. It moves through its simple changes with a quiet dignity of its own, beyond which

conjecture reveals the background of distant dangers which make that dignity a lovable thing. Catherine Boucher seems to have been sent into the world to justify with her presence the artistic tendency of old romance to bring together in the women it invents whatever a story may need of harmonious notes of character, to balance the sounds of action that belong to the hero. We require almost an effort to realise that Catherine's ignorance was not attributed to her that her teachableness after marriage might stand forth with increased value beside her energy in household labour. Nor was her glowing warmth of complexion, the tempting charm of a "pretty brunette," the attractive suggestion that lurks like an unspoken promise in brown eyes, a mere device of the romance-maker to heighten the value of her stainless name. She cannot have wanted opportunity for a false step, and can hardly have failed to know it. A tempting woman, even now, is always tempted, and in the latter part of the eighteenth century there is no reason to suppose that when Catherine's brown eyes looked out on the world about her they met no answering glance. The men whom Blake knew through Johnson the bookseller included the father of Mary Shelley. They may have been a philosophical group, but they can hardly have been puritanical.

Catherine's personal charm did not go unnoticed, or we should never have heard of it, but it went unreproached. It would, but for her husband's genius, have gone unpraised. The peculiar value of that genius was far away from the sweet and tender importance which belongs to a talent that can make things quiet and domestic show their weight and power. Blake's poetry taught the significance of facts through the beauty of inventions. But the gold coin of fame on which he stamped his own image and superscription still shows another side, and there is seen the figure of his wife, perfectly contrasted in all things, and teaching by her silence the beauty of the facts of her life, made permanent for us by the significance of his inventions.

These mental creations were not elaborated from a fashionable fancy by deliberate cultivation. They came as God's answer came to Job, out of a whirlwind.

The mere companionship of the husband Catherine had chosen was in itself a life of adventure and incident, though lived between four walls. And she lived it thoroughly. When the fury of his imagination roused him in the night to labour for hours, trembling with the fever of his mind, and pouring forth, line after line, of the great myth that is even now just beginning to yield up its secret and prove its worth, she rose with him at his bidding and sat silent and still by his side, holding her hand on his. Yet the room in which his visions came to him was that which her industry made pleasant. The table at which he wrote she had dusted yesterday, and would dust again to-morrow. But to-night, when her passive presence and the service that belongs to the vital quietude of a full heart were needed, she gave of these also, and was content.

It required not merely docility, but great physical strength, to play her part throughout. She was not virtuous, any more than Blake was poetic, in cold blood. When her purity is remembered, her bodily vigour must not be forgotten, or only half the tribute is paid. Her powers were not merely exercised in the house, but were called on to stand a test under which even the most active home-workers would often break down.

Blake, as he reached the prime of manhood, attained to herculean temperament, and required some mechanical outlet for his exuberance which his daily labours with engravers' tools on metal plates did not supply. Tatham tells of long pilgrimages on foot, lasting all a summer's day, and far into the night. For twenty or five and twenty miles, on and on, would Blake go, for he never bore the sad heart that quickly tires. He went merrily and well. "I hate scarce smiles; I love laughing," he said; yet the rarest thing in all his work, if it be not entirely absent, is a joke. He laughed as children laugh when they run, from mere overflow of the happy

courage of life. On these long trampings Catherine kept step and time with her husband. Together they set forth, together they rested and dined at some way side inn, and together they returned under the companionable stars. Forty miles in a day was no rare journey so made, and fifty not unknown.

Blake, who never seems to have felt fatigue, and who even in illness, when asked what he did, answered, "Oh, I work on all the same," bore at this time in his outward appearance the evidence of his constitutional vigour. His frame, compact and well formed, was the admiration of the artists who knew him. His face gave out light that was as much the fiery evidence of personal strength as of the visionary gift this power enclosed. The forehead, large and protruding about the eyes, while rising beyond with a full curving height, had the energetic look which makes the skull seem almost a muscle of the mind. The right ornament of youth was not wanting. Blake had the mane of a lion, as well as the strength. His "yellow-brown hair stood up like curling flame," so that, at a distance, people who saw him declared the "locks looked like radiations."

Besides the pencil-drawing here reproduced, the illustrations to the poem of "Jerusalem" contain more than one portrait. There can be no doubt that these were intended by the artist for himself. The most recognisable is in the drawing of Los, sitting at his forge (page 6), while his spectre hovers over him. In this the features are unmistakable, and the hair also. Albion arising from his long sleep (page 95) is almost as easily identified as the poet himself. We have no authoritative study of more than the mere head which can decide with certainty whether or not the limbs and form of Los and Albion are also Blake's, but that they were so to a considerable extent is probable. The description given already from Tatham supports the idea, and Blake's own definition of the type of a strong man, as a figure whose power is seen in the centre while the extremities are tapering, is undoubtedly drawn, consciously or not, from

his own appearance, and his experience proved to him that he had good reason for his opinion. The limbs in *Los*, and in *Job*, and wherever strength is to be represented, have a recognisable similarity, a sort of family likeness. Blake had wonderful solidity in his treatment of anatomy, and must have often seen the muscular form he could reproduce, as in the *Book of Job*, at the end of his life, without "models," making errors here and there, but never drawing with feebleness or flatness. The hands are large in the palm, muscular, flexible, yet with delicate fingers, whose tips turn slightly backward when extended to the full. Among the best are those in the design of *Job's* terrible dream, especially the hand pointing downwards that belongs to the floating figure of Satan, disguised in the form of the Almighty. Such *must* have been Blake's own hands. The flexibility of wrist in the same picture, which is given, as a matter of course, to *Job* himself, contrasting as it does with the fulness of the development of the arms, also hints that the artist borrowed his form rather from himself than from the stiff-jointed models of the school. Mrs. Blake has one testimony only with regard to her husband's hands. Except when he was reading or sleeping, she never saw them idle.

III.—CLERICAL FRIENDS.

THE first published work of Blake's, a little volume bearing the title "Poetic Sketches," appeared in 1783. It has now practically disappeared; but Mr. Quaritch's facsimile of it is still obtainable, and is, for all literary purposes, identical with the original. Every word, every letter, every error, every beauty, is exactly reproduced. The verses have been reprinted in the Aldine edition without much altering, and most of them appear in the second volume of Gilchrist's life, with M. Dante Rossetti's editorial improvements. The Preface, or "Advertisement," as it was called, has a biographical value, that has not yet been pointed out. It says:—

"The following sketches were the production of untutored youth, commenced in his twelfth and occasionally resumed by the author till his twentieth year; since which time, his talents having been wholly directed to the attainment of excellence in his profession, he has been deprived of the leisure requisite to such revisal of these sheets as might have rendered them less unfit to meet the public eye. Conscious of the irregularities and defects to be found in almost every page, his friends have still believed that they possessed a poetical originality which merited some respite from oblivion. These, their opinions, remain, however, to be roproved or confirmed by a less partial public."

The interest of this manifesto does not lie, as might be supposed, in the charming suggestion that because Blake had defects, therefore his friends concluded that they, and not he, possessed poetic originality, though the final sen-

tences are worth keeping, if only as an example of the literary style of his patrons. The date of the book was 1783. Blake was twenty in 1777. The collection contains seventy pages only. It would appear, therefore, that he spent from seven to eight years in writing the few fragments and lyrics here printed, and about six years in not finding time to correct them. The latter statement is evidently absurd. Six hours would have been enough to make almost all the principal changes for which the slipshod and rambling lines cry aloud. Most of the faults lie on the surface, and can be removed without any effort.

The only credible explanation of the matter is, that Blake's friends tried to induce him to put his MS. into order, and only succeeded in making him angry. It was the source of much of his strength, that he was almost entirely incapable of receiving useful correction from any one. His originality was protected by this fault as by a guardian angel. Nothing was easier than to get an idea from Blake. It was not impossible even to give him one; but to supply him with a correction or an explanation, to make him see the value of a reason or a method which he happened not to have hit upon himself, or to show him when and where and how he had spoiled his own methods, and ill-expressed his own ideas, while misunderstanding those of other people, was totally hopeless. Conviction of error and improvement in style do not spring from docility, but from mental sympathy, and Blake was essentially unsympathetic in mental matters. If he did not grasp a thought spontaneously, he came no nearer to holding it because he was told how someone else had obtained it. Notwithstanding a courteous and patient manner, he was a bad listener. In this quality of character, and in the protection which it afforded to his impulsive originality, he resembled one man of his day, also an innovator in thought and in literary style, also derided at first and ultimately accepted as a genius, and also the husband of a woman who came to him endowed with

household good sense and almost complete lack of education. Contrasted with him in almost every other quality of character, Jean Jacques Rousseau, like Blake, who only knew his name to use it as a term of opprobrium, was among the unteachables. He *could* only look at things in his own way. If he tried to adopt the methods of others through docility, he would, as he himself has related, simply become stupid. Constitutional mental inaccessibility, it need not be said, does not account for the originality of either of these men, any more than the hard rind of a seed-pod accounts for the flower-producing power of the seed inside. But the survival of their originality was secured by their unteachableness, which may be almost considered as a gift in itself. "Improvement makes straight roads, but the crooked roads without improvement are the roads of genius," we find Blake saying in one place; and in another, "I must invent a system of my own, or be enslaved by another man's"; and again, "The errors of a wise man make your rule, rather than the perfections of a fool." He did not always believe even in the power of his own statements to instruct. "When I tell a truth, it is not to convince those who do not know it, but to protect those who do." He never so far understood himself as to appreciate his own capacity for holding aloof from the influence of others. He seems to have constantly dreaded the power of his sympathetic tendency. "What we look on, we become," he tells us. If this is true at all times, then the danger of adopting the nature of a fool along with his "perfections" is too great to be risked. Blake warns us against his own peculiar peril, as though it were universal. Personal sympathy, amounting to what he called "mingling" of personalities, was as natural an impulse to his generous temperament as its mental equivalent, usually called appreciativeness, was difficult. It is probable that he could have been taught almost anything by friendship, but argument requires a spiritual abnegation in the listener that the enthusiast cannot understand. Blake

was always an enthusiast first, and an artist afterwards. A mild suggestion that he might make his drawing better, offered by Sir Joshua Reynolds, led to a life-long ebullition of resentment. On the other hand, Captain Butts, who bought many designs, and neither gave directions beforehand or comments after, is praised for "leaving him his just rights as an artist and a man."

To the end of his life Blake had a nervous horror of being corrected or interfered with in any way. It was a violation of the "inviolable will." Even when good intentions excuse the act, it is useless. "The will," we read in "Jerusalem," p. 44, "must not be bended save in the day of Divine power."

There was something of the tenacity with which we cling to that on which we feel our very safety depends, in the obstinacy with which Blake refused to undergo correction. The parable that bids the tares be left to grow with the wheat, describes what he feared would happen to him if his work were weeded under the direction of others. "Lest ye root up the wheat also." This was his dread. Self-doubt, the terrible destroyer that would "put out the sun and moon" if they yielded to it, was the one thing of which he was afraid. This fear was the *single* weakness of his strong genius, and while it must bear the blame of his errors, it has our gratitude also in saving for us his originality, and making an epoch in the history of art.

When we read, therefore, that though he had six years in which to do it, Blake did not correct his first manuscripts before they went to press because he was busy with his profession, we must refuse to look on the statement as anything but a made-up apology, kindly meant by those who put it forward, but entirely untrustworthy as an account of fact.

Another six years passed before the publication of his next volume—"The Songs of Innocence and Experience." The verse here contained is not enough to account for so long a period, notwithstanding that daily labour which he was forced to adopt that he might live. At this, indeed, he was always

industrious, indefatigable, even enthusiastic. But he never considered it of lasting importance. He looked on imaginative art and poetry his first duty. This was "laying up treasures in heaven," and nothing could stand higher with him as a duty. What, then, are we to think of these almost unproductive years? In the poem called the "Everlasting Gospel" he asks, with regard to the period of Christ's life between the finding in the Temple and the baptism—

"What was He doing all this time
From ten years old to manly prime?
Was he then idle, or the less
About His Father's business?"

Blake would have been the first to understand the justifiability of such a question when asked about his own life.

He was busy indeed, and with thought. "Thought *is* act," he said once. It may be taken as the very central doctrine of his whole philosophy.

He was probably already engaged with the "Songs of Innocence and Experience" even before the publication of the "Poetic Sketches." Some among these may well have been the "songs" to which he sang that music of his own which won the admiration of musicians.

He was also thinking out his symbolic system, and considering how to make it the chief matter of his art. The "Songs of Innocence and Experience" contain more than one indication that the great mystical building was already planned. His studies and meditations must have not only filled his working-time, but checked for a period the fluency of his compositions. He was going through a period of mental change, ceasing to be a poet who enjoyed mysticism, and becoming a mystic who employed poetry. Times of transition are seldom fruitful in creative impulse. Wonder, delight, perception of new beauty, take up all the mind. The will waits for direction, and the artistic harvest is prepared for another season. The reaper does not come till long after the sower has gone.

In the next book produced after the "Songs of Innocence

and Experience," Blake refers to Swedenborg, Boehmen, Paracelsus, Milton, Dante, and Shakespeare. It must have been at this time that he was forming the thoughts on which his judgment was based. Milton is criticised severely. Swedenborg is almost railed at. But Boehmen and Paracelsus are held up as, before all things, fructifiers of the mind. With merely "mechanical" talents a man might make ten thousand books from their writings as good as Swedenborg's, and a hundred thousand from those of Dante and Shakespeare. In a word, Blake was angry with explanation, of which Swedenborg is full. Swedenborg is lucidity itself, but is depressing through a lack of anything stimulative or suggestive in his style. Blake adopted with but slight change many of his interpretations of scripture, and one of his sub-titles to chapters, "Memorable Fancy," is evidently based on Swedenborg's "Memorable Relation"; but in mystics who thought less interpretatively and poets who wrote more figuratively Blake found better food for the imagination.

At a later period of his life he spoke more appreciatively of his first master in symbolism. In the Book of "Milton," Milton is called the Awakener, but Swedenborg "strongest of men," while of Boehmen and Paracelsus we no longer hear, though we can trace their influence.

It requires but little reading between the lines to see how strongly, in his early years of development, Blake, girding himself for his great race, and looking forward down the course that he was to run, felt that the words that he needed most were those that should brace him to a mighty effort, not those that would entangle him in a long meditation. Meanwhile he produced but little, yet that little contains so suggestive a hint here and there of all that was to follow, that the twelve years between the writing of the last of the "Poetic Sketches" and the printing of the first of the "Songs of Innocence" must not be considered as the idlest, because the least productive, but rather as the busiest of his busy life.

Now, too, we must believe, some of that heat and fury of

enthusiasm for imaginative liberty, other than Swedenborgian, was engendered, which broke out so soon in the fiery and splendid petulance of the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," a work that may be looked on as a sort of revolutionary manifesto against a thralldom he had cast off by the help of Paracelsus and Boehmen. Paracelsus he could hardly have known, however, except at second hand through Boehmen, whose method of expression shows his influence strongly. Friends who had studied the German books might have explained them to him. He perhaps merely coupled the name of Paracelsus with that of Boehmen, considering them as equally representing a mystical school that he admired. There is reason to believe that he acquired at this time some knowledge of the Kabala, and that he was not unacquainted with certain doctrines of the Rosicrucians. It is possible that he received initiation into an order of Christian Kabalists then established in London, and known as "The Hermetic Students of the G. D." Of course this conjecture is not susceptible of proof. He would have said nothing about such initiation even if he had received it. The "students" in question do not name themselves, or each other, and the subject of their study is nothing less than universal magic. Without being a magician, however, Blake was naturally liable to some of the experiences of trance, and may, if we accept the mystical position, have obtained thereby a knowledge of certain intricate details of symbolism which one of the most distinguished Kabalists of our time believes to be absent from all published books of his day, and to exclusively belong to the "unwritten Kabala." Vision, or waking dream, with its almost illimitable extent of mental territory, on which the unspoken thought of persons expert in the use of trance enables them to meet each other on purely mental territory, like merchants at a great exchange or mart, may, according to this theory, have supplied all that Blake knew. He himself claimed such a faculty. Other and more ordinary sources of mystical information were open to him. It is not known

whether he was able to avail himself of them, but it is certain that his contemporary, the miniature painter, Cosway, kept a house for the study and practice of magic, and left behind him at his death a considerable bundle of magical formulæ. Several terms of the writings of the Gnostics are to be found in Blake's books, and there are indications that seem to show acquaintance with Cornelius Agrippa, a translation of whose works was not uncommonly to be met with in his day. Dr. Adam Clark, when a boy, got a copy from a travelling tinker. It may, indeed, be said that Blake obtained somehow a very considerable learning in the doctrine of the great mystics. It must have been at this time that he acquired what he knew of Hebrew. Several of the names in the very earliest of his mythic books are direct adaptations from that tongue. He also used Hebrew characters on some of his designs, which show that he had learned the unfamiliar way of writing them, known to some occult students as the "Celestial alphabet."

But the people of whom we authoritatively hear as being connected with Blake at this period of his life were very different from Brothers of the Rose. These were the "friends" mentioned in the preface to the "Poetic Sketches" as having undertaken this publication. They met at No. 28, Rathbone Place, home of the Rev. Mr. Mathews and his wife, now a chair and umbrella mender's shop, then a somewhat fashionable abode on the outskirts of London, on the way to the *Jew's Harp House* and the *Green Man*.

Among the group who met there was Flaxman, who, himself a Swedenborgian and a reader of the mystics, most probably supplied Blake at this time with books. He is much more likely to have been the means of introducing him to Boehmen and Paracelsus than any other of the friends of this period known to us now. He came forward generously in the matter of the publication of the "Poetic Sketches." He offered to have the volume printed entirely at his own expense. In the end he bore half the cost, the rest being subscribed by the good people of Rathbone Place, and the whole edition was

presented to Blake. Mr. Mathews is said to have written the preface; but this, and the tradition that he took the service in his church admirably, being the best of readers, with the most musical of voices, is all that has hitherto been published about him. His voice was probably an attraction to Blake, and Blake's original method of singing his poetry to music of his own, cannot have passed unappreciated by him. We would give much now for a single note of those melodies. It is said that musicians were present who actually took down the airs; but, valuable as the merest scrap of such records would be to-day, they must be considered as hopelessly lost. One result remains at least. The reader of Blake's mystic poems is able to believe that when he finds music spoken of, it was not alluded to for mere literary effect. Blake was really, what too many poets are called by mere courtesy and conventionality, a bard. He himself claimed the title. The talent never left him. It was his last source of happiness on his death bed.

There is more than one allusion in the symbolic writings to music. In the comment on the "Vision of the Last Judgment," Blake says that the three sons of Noah who survived the flood, by which he means the deluge of rationalism, were Poetry, Painting, and Music. "Three powers in man of conversing with Paradise." Music, therefore, was, in his opinion, a spiritual experience and not merely sensuous.

In the curious passage at the close of page 24, in "Milton" music is referred to again. This time a fourfold view is given of man's methods of "conversing with Paradise." Music, shut out from Time and Space, though dwelling in Eternity, is "made apparent" to us by the profession of Law, while Religion makes poetry apparent, and Surgery, painting. Elsewhere in the books, every instrument has its symbolic correspondence and use. The harps belong to harvest, or the gathering of experience into imagination. The trumpet corresponds to battle, or the "spiritual hate"

which produces in another sphere of manifestation "sexual love," so that war becomes the spiritual symbol for fertilization, and the sound of the trumpet for desire.

Song he uses always as symbolic of creative or destructive influence. It tends to call up a body. It is to idea what incarnation is to the god-like spirit. The Song of Space is deadly—Time nearly dies of it. The Song of Time is nothing less than the gradual inspiration of the world's imagination through the forms of successive superstitions, philosophies and religions.

When Blake came to improvise tune for his verse at Rathbone Place, he was not merely exercising a talent that would have annoyed him by stirring in its grave had he tried to bury it in his heart. He was discovering a symbol, and thus entering the endless region of imagination and life by yet one gate more.

Until the short period during which he was a member of the literary circle that Mrs. Mathews liked to see in her drawing-room, Blake had never been in a drawing-room at all. Of how he bore himself there we have very little record. We know that in later years everyone found a particular attraction in his manner, which would be named differently by different people. It was variously described as gentleness, dignity, pleasantness. There is a hint that it was something more than these. In his closing years the life of enthusiastic work and mystic depth of thought had left a special stamp on him. One witness testifies that to be with Blake was "like being with the prophet Isaiah." An illiterate woman who saw him die, said she had seen the death, "not of a man, but of an angel."

This is not the personality that will ever show ill in a drawing-room, even in its inexperienced youth. But Blake had some slight advantage besides that which belonged to his temperament. His father must have remembered the old O'Neil days, and the O'Neil tradition of good manners. The tradition cannot have been otherwise than good, since it was

old. To impulse and manner belong the contrast of water and wine. Wine will ripen. Water should be drunk from the spring. Impulse is individual; manner, traditional. "The best water," said Blake, "is the newest; the best wine the oldest."

If, therefore, we find that his life, on the whole, was passed in the work-room, we have no reason to infer from this that he was out of place among people of leisure. The demands of his genius upon his time grew more and more exacting as years went on. This was the reason of the simplicity of his life. It had much to do with its irreproachable fidelity. "We are told to abstain from fleshly desires," he says in the address to the Christians in "Jerusalem," "that we may lose no time from the work of the Lord." This work to him was, before all things, poetry. "I have innocence to defend and ignorance to instruct," he says elsewhere; "I have no time for seeming, or the petty arts of compliment."

Everything that required the use of imagination he called an "art." Sympathy was an art. Tyranny was an art. Christ and the Apostles were "artists." The word is not used with regard to "compliment" in order to hint a charge of hypocrisy against it.

But if the art of drawing-room life be petty, it is kindly, and Blake was happy enough in its exercise for a while. In 1783 he was already a valued friend among those who gathered in Rathbone Place, or they would not have subscribed to print his early poems, even when he could not be induced to correct them for the press. The magnanimity thus shown by his patrons deserves our praise and excites our wonder to this day. Patronage is seldom indulgent while putting its hand in its pocket. In 1784 the volume so printed had already failed to reach the public at large, and the kind souls who had paid for it must have entirely lost all illusions on the subject, if they had ever expected immediate fame for their protégé. Yet we still find Blake as well received as ever, and singing his own songs to his own music just as

much as if those who heard him had still a right to hope that their connoisseurship would be applauded by the literary world. This is hardly less astonishing than their actual sacrifice of pounds, shillings, and pence, and says much for the depth of the impression that Blake's personality must have made.

It is not till after 1784, although "soon after," that the story of this pleasant episode in a great life comes to a close. One of the circle from whom Blake then began to withdraw is quoted by Gilchrist, and his words, though few, give a pregnant hint with regard to the cause of the estrangement. Mr. J. T. Smith, rather cruelly nick-named "gossiping John Thomas" in the biography, writes: "It happened, unfortunately, soon after this period, that in consequence of his (Blake's) unbending deportment, or what his adherents are pleased to call his manly firmness of opinion, which certainly was not at all times considered pleasing by everyone, his visits were not so frequent." Something in the tone of this suggests that Mr. Smith was hardly the person whom Blake would have done well to approach with any "deportment" other than "unbending," or any opinions lacking in "manly firmness." We can hardly avoid the conjecture that Mr. Smith made himself unpleasant to Blake, and at the same time determined to out-stay him in Mrs. Mathews's house. If this were the case, Blake only showed that he knew the right thing to do, in first entering his protest, without "bending," and then quietly avoiding an undignified struggle for preference, and "making his visits less frequent." In doing this gradually, he also gave Mrs. Mathews as much opportunity as even her friendliness had deserved, for choosing whether he or Mr. Smith should be the favoured guest. That Mr. Smith should have been selected seems strange at first, but slight as the indication is in the very few words here quoted, which are our whole and sole source of authentic information, a glimpse may be caught of a division of parties in Rathbone Place. One group contained

Blake's "adherents." The other could hardly have consisted of Mr. Smith and Mr. Smith only. Mrs. Mathews was a clergyman's wife, and there is some reason to suppose that, on one subject at least, that of capital punishment, Blake must have put forth views that were likely to seem over-enthusiastic to the Rev. Mr. Mathews, even if he did not look on them as wicked and dangerous.

The execution of Rylands, in 1783, cannot have passed entirely without comment in Blake's circle. Not only was it an event likely to be canvassed by all groups of literary people, for an eminent artist, with an appointment at Court, is not hanged for forgery every day, but Blake's presence must have brought it home. It was Rylands to whom he had refused to be apprenticed as a boy, because "the man looked as though he would come to be hanged." The strange prediction that impresses us uncomfortably even now, must have seemed "prophecy" indeed while the event was fresh.

But Blake was no longer a boy. He had begun to see something more in the abhorrent shade of the gallows than a reason for avoiding those whose faces were stained by the forecasting of it. In "Jerusalem," written about twenty years later than the time of the death of Rylands, Tyburn is always spoken of as the place where, in symbolic sense, the tree of the fatal knowledge of good and evil sprang, and this tree is figured as the gibbet. Yet Rylands was the last man hanged at Tyburn. It is impossible to suppose that an incident which made an impression on Blake's mind, whose permanence is thus proved, could be talked of in his presence without exciting some comment from himself. Throughout his life he was, in all his considered and well-weighed utterances, entirely against any other treatment of sin than that of unconditional forgiveness. It is the final conviction that comes to men who are spiritual in mind and combative by blood. To be angry with evil, and to desire to conquer it, are two conditions of a single mood, and only one sort of

"conquest" is real, however much it may be, at times, beyond our human power. As Blake reminds us ("Jerusalem," page 52), "The glory of Christianity is to conquer by forgiveness."

To apply sentiments like this to the execution of a forger can scarcely have been palatable to Mr. Mathews. He was a respectable man, and he lived in a hanging century. Blake was in advance of his time in the matter-of-fact way in which he proposed to apply the Christian doctrines. It is to be feared that he was in advance of ours also. Such matter-of-factness, or rather such directness, in proposing to apply first principles straight to any and every case in practice, is the peculiar sign of the really imaginative temperament.

In other moods Blake would defend wrath and blows, and say of a double-faced man, "A dog! Get a stick to him!" But in whom are the impulses always the twin brothers of the convictions? Blake must now have been attending services in the church of Mr. Mathews, for in the "Vision of the Last Judgment," the furies themselves are typified as "Cruel laws,"—or "clergymen *in the pulpit* scourging sins instead of forgiving them." There was no other clergyman with whom he was intimate long enough to make it probable that he should break the habits he had acquired as the son of a dissenter and a mystic sufficiently to go and hear what he had to say "in the pulpit."

The "Song of Experience," beginning "Dear mother, dear mother, the church is cold," belongs to the very next volume that Blake published. It is the only other place in his writings where the word "church" is used in the sense of a mere building used by a congregation. Apart from these hints we have no evidence that he ever went to church at all. The "Song of Experience" shows clearly a mood that must have led to friction, however mildly it may have been allowed to display itself in a clerical drawing-room. There is no need for wonder that in about a year from the date of the execution of Rylands, Blake began to make his visits to Mr. and Mrs. Mathews "less frequent."

In 1784 other experiences came to Blake that could not have failed to withdraw him, to a certain extent, from his friends. This was the year of his father's death. How far he was affected by the loss no record remains to tell us; but one incident speaks for itself, and shows that he had warm and true family feeling. He immediately took a house next door to his elder brother James, who had succeeded to their father's business. Here, having set up a print-seller's shop in partnership with a former fellow-apprentice named Parker, he received his younger brother, Robert, as an apprentice. Blake's relations with Rathbone Place were still friendly, for Mr. Mathews countenanced, and, it is conjectured by Gilchrist, even assisted this venture. The partnership lasted for two years and a half only.

Gilchrist relates an incident of Blake's domestic life during this short period which must be repeated here, not for its picturesqueness, but for the hint it gives of how Blake came to assign to woman the position which she occupies in the poems. Robert and Catherine had quarrelled. Blake considered his brother in the right and his wife in the wrong. In a sudden outburst of wrath he ordered her to kneel down and beg Robert's pardon, saying that if she did not do so, he would never see her face again. Even he, it appears, had his "cruel law," though it was not one of mere barren vengeance. "Thou shalt *ask* for forgiveness," was his rule. In using the Lord's Prayer we all go further every day, and admit that we must also earn it.

Mrs. Blake obeyed the order. "I beg your pardon, Robert," she said; "I was in the wrong."

"You lie, young woman; *I* was in the wrong," Robert answered, with oddly worded but real generosity.

This is the only speech of his that is left to us. He made a few drawings, but they were not said by those who saw them to be more than weaker imitations of his brother's, who, however, preserved them affectionately to the last. If he wrote anything it has not come down to our day; but in these

few spoken words we see a living man and a lovable man. We understand why, for his brother, the poet, he was the chosen one of the family—a very Benjamin in affection as well as in years.

One thing more is clearly indicated in that little scene of family trouble. Blake was not in love with his wife, though he loved her. Mrs. Blake was in love with her husband.

A year or two later, in 1787, Robert fell ill, and died. Blake did not leave the nursing to his wife during the last few weeks. He went through the hard and sorrowful task himself. When the end came he received his reward. He saw the soul of his brother separate from the body and spring upwards clapping its hands for joy.

And then Blake, the man of inexhaustible strength, who never ceased to work whether he was ill or well, and to whom a walk of fifty miles was a relaxation, went to bed and slept for three days and nights.

IV.—THE TRUE CAREER BEGUN.

AFTER Robert's death Blake removed to 28, Poland Street, from the too-near neighbourhood of his brother James, probably to escape from an influence that was restricting the activity of his genius more than for any other reason. The shop was given up. It had not succeeded. A new work was beginning.

It had now become impossible for Blake to look to the kindness of his friends for the means of publication. He invented a method of printing for himself. The conception came to him in a dream. Robert appeared to him and dictated the process of printing from copper-plates, by which he published and so preserved all his writings from 1787 onwards, except the burnt books, those fragments since printed under Mr. Rossetti's care, and the great poem "Vala," given in MS. to Mr. Linnell at Blake's death, and now put into type for the first time.

In all the many histories of bread cast on the waters that have been told, seldom has the return been so quick or of so high a value as in the case of Blake and his brother Robert, for to the actual gift of Robert himself, though he was dead, Blake always attributed the idea that made his poetic career possible to him.

So long after as the year 1800, a letter to Hayley, whose son had just died, shows how vivid was the impression produced by Robert's death and the vision. "I know," writes Blake, "that our deceased friends are more really with us than when they were apparent to our mortal past. Thirteen years ago I lost a brother, and with his spirit I converse daily

and hourly in the spirit, and see him in remembrance, in the regions of my imagination. I hear his advice, and even now write from his dictata. Forgive me for expressing to you my enthusiasm, which I wish all to partake of since it is to me a source of immortal joy even in this world. May you continue to be so more and more, and to be more and more persuaded that every mortal loss is an immortal gain. The ruins of Time build mansions in Eternity."

Here is the kernel of Blake's religion. Imagination is a *thing*, or rather a region, in which real things exist, and of whose life they are made living. Not being of perishable material its inhabitants must needs be immortal. Whatever drives us to exercise this faculty, such as bereavement, which changes friendship and intercourse into dream and conjecture, actually tends to increase and nourish the indestructible soul.

If we do not look closely into its real meaning, we are surprised, after a page or two of the "prophetic books," when comparing their style with that of this letter, to see how sane, how devotional, how almost conventional is its tender aspiration. Mr. Mathews might have read it with approval, but the days of the Rathbone Place friendship were long over.

The process which the vision of Robert suggested to Blake was simple and practical. The poems and designs to be printed were drawn and written upon metal plates with a varnish chiefly composed of pitch and turpentine which would resist acid. Then the plate was placed in the corrosive bath, and all the rest of the metal was deeply bitten away until the letters and designs stood up so high that a roller with printing ink could be passed over them, and the plate used to print from, as the casts of type and wood-blocks are used now. It was etching reversed. All the excellent printing which characterizes the books of "Jerusalem," and those which preceded it, was laboriously executed backwards with a brush by Blake's own hand upon

the copper-plate. In considering the many hours that he spent in this way it is impossible to doubt that he was convinced of the importance of every word that he printed. At the same time, the scrappy nature of some of the poems, the repetition of lines and even of paragraphs, and the occasional abolition, without any connecting link being supplied, of whole pages, becomes a literary problem that must be considered later on.

It is noted in Mr. Linnell's diary that the press in which Blake now began to print his poems cost him £40. This further seems to show the importance he attached to his task. In 1788, the year of Blake's removal, the use of his new process began, and in 1789 the "Songs of Innocence" were published. The book of two pages, called the "Ghost of Abel," which may be described as the real introduction to his prophetic and mythic series, was written now, though not published till 1827. In 1789 comes the "Book of Hell," and in 1790 the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," after which it is not surprising to learn that a coolness sprang up between Blake and his Swedenborgian brother, and that all intercourse between them soon ceased.

In 1791, Blake's "French Revolution" was published at a shilling by Johnson. It is not in the British Museum, and has been lost.

In Poland Street, Blake's back windows looked out on to the premises of no less a personage than Astley, the actual original proprietor of the circus which has not changed its name for a century. Here a characteristic incident occurred which is unfortunately not given by Gilchrist. Tatham relates it, probably from Mrs. Blake's account.

One day, looking out into Astley's yard, Blake saw a boy limping up and down, dragging painfully at every step a heavy block to which he was chained by the foot. Calling to his wife to come and see, Blake asked what she thought could be the meaning of it. Her practical mind suggested the answer at once. The block was a hobble, probably used when

one of Astley's horses was turned loose to graze so that it might not stray beyond recall, now applied to the boy as a degrading punishment. At this idea Blake took fire at once, and in a minute was out of his house and among the circus company giving them his ideas on liberty with the utmost eloquence, appealing, cleverly, to their sentiment of patriotism and asking if this was treatment which an English boy ought to suffer when it would be humiliating even to a slave. He carried his point and the boy was let loose, with the result that when Mr. Astley, who was out at the time, arrived at home and learned what had occurred in his absence, he came at once to return Blake's visit and pay him back in his own coin, indignation for indignation, sermon for sermon, but this time with the hatefulness of interfering in another man's affairs for text. The interview was rather heated at first, and poor Mrs. Blake, who expected it to come to blows, trembled with fright. But the ready mind of Blake could not have forgotten that his ultimate purpose, the protection of the helpless boy, was not to be served in this way, and he set himself to appeal to the better feelings of the ring-master with complete success in the end. The two men parted with mutual respect, and Astley went back to his circus completely won over to Blake's views, and as tame as one of his own trained animals. After this, the "Song of Liberty" at the end of the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" is a title for that tirade which takes a vivid personal as well as mystical meaning, and the two little horses prancing that decorate it, may reveal not only a Swedenborgian suggestion of free understanding, but a private reminiscence of a beneficent triumph.

The hateful sight of the chain had indeed burned itself deeply into Blake's memory, and from this time it reappears as the symbol of jealousy and oppression, and restraint in all his philosophic mystic books.

In 1792 Blake's mother died; but of her, as of his father, his friends in later years could gather little from him. Living or dead, Brother Robert was the one member of the family close to his heart.

At this time Blake became one of the enthusiasts for liberty who saw in the French Revolution an opening of the great prison of superstition and subservience from which all men were to walk forth not merely free, but born again. Tyranny and priestcraft were to go, while goodness and philosophy were to come all at once.

Blake was anything but a disciple of the philosophy of the men among whom he now found himself, but he readily caught their enthusiasm. He did more, for he lent it his own sagacity on one memorable occasion. Tom Paine, the much-abused author of the "Rights of Man," a book that deserved immortality for its title, even if the contents had been absolutely worthless, was one of the circle. He had been telling his friends in the evening, of a speech he had made during the day. To him it was the delightful recollection of an oratorical triumph. Blake's criticism was highly, but justly, complimentary. He put his hand on the enthusiast's shoulder and said, "You must not go home to-night, or you are a dead man," and bundled him off to France while the police waited for him in vain at his lodgings.

And yet, although for the sake of "Liberty" Blake was hand in glove with the young revolutionary dreamers, he was so much opposed to the rationalism that went along with their rebellious philosophy that he may almost be considered as the incarnation of its contrary.

The very dome of St. Paul's, which could be seen from the windows of the house of Johnson the bookseller, at whose dinner-table he met the new school of thinkers, became in his designs the type of intellectual error, as Gothic architecture like that of Westminster never ceased to represent inspiration.

In 1793 Blake moved again. It was now that he took the house in Hercules Buildings, Lambeth, of which Tatham writes pleasant things, and saw his one short period of prosperity. There he sat under that vine in the back garden which he never would allow to be trimmed, and whose grapes were consequently numerous and uneatable, while the foliage was luxuriant. There he found pupils of high rank, to whose

houses he would go and with whom, when the lesson was over, he would be pressed to stay hour after hour, enlivening the day with his poetic talk. There he was offered the post of drawing-master to the Royal Family, and from that moment he might have been a man of fashion and fortune. But he saw the danger to his art, which would not flourish in Court hot-houses, and refused the offer, giving up all his pupils at the same time that his refusal might not appear an insolent personality directed at the Crown. But he was well off, as many indications hint, and in the best of health. This was the only time when Mrs. Blake kept a servant; but being too good a housewife herself to endure the untidy ways of her hireling, dismissed the girl and once more took the work into her own hands. The long country walks were in full swing. One of them cost the little household rather dear. It was after the dismissal of the servant. Thieves entered the house, which they probably knew would be left empty now from morning till night, and a serious robbery was effected. Tatham says that sixty pounds' worth of plate, and clothes to the value of forty were stolen. His authority must be looked on as practically that of Mrs. Blake, as she had little else to do after Blake's death, and before he wrote his manuscript account, than to gossip on the past, recalling especially the more prosperous times. Allowing for a little exaggeration common to all who have "seen better days," this story of the robbery shows in the detail about the clothes anything but a poverty-stricken life. But *plate* is most probably an error of Tatham's. *Plates*, engraved or for engraving, were probably what Mrs. Blake said were stolen. At this period also Blake lent, or rather gave, a lump sum of forty pounds to an unfortunate young fellow who had fallen into poverty and discredit through writing a book containing views of the free-thinking kind that did not become a fashionable literary diversion till a hundred years later. With even more generosity than can be expressed in pounds shillings and pence, Mrs. Blake appears to have kept the name of this

obscure philosopher to herself. Tatham gives no hint of it. Yet she can scarcely have forgotten, for one incident occurred after the loan which was just of the kind to make everything connected with it memorable to a woman for life. The young Freethinker had a pretty and showy little wife, who at once took advantage of the assistance given to her husband to purchase a handsome dress, and having decked herself in this, she had the strange frankness to come and call on Mrs. Blake for the purpose of exhibiting herself in her fine feathers. As a piece of *naïveté* this passes human belief, unless she were really ignorant as to where the money had come from. The only reasonable conclusion is that the giver's name was as well and as generously kept secret at the time as that of the receiver has been ever since.

The sarcastic passage on charity of the Pharisee type in "Vala," Night VII, line 115, is seen to be as something more than the mere ebullition of a talent for trenchant rhetoric from when we consider how its author did his own almsgiving. An incident like that just recalled is not of a kind that is usually found to stand alone in any man's life. If it be true that no one of a sudden becomes most base, as the proverb tells us, surely the faculty of generous and secret munificence is equally unlikely to be picked up at a moment's notice. Tatham only tells of one other charitable work of the Blakes, for both husband and wife had their share in this as in all which could by any possibility be made to belong to a union of lives. A sickly youth with a pale face and a portfolio under his arm used to be seen every day passing the house. Like the sight of the boy chained to the log, this was a living picture peculiarly of a kind to appeal to Blake. He soon contrived to make the stranger's acquaintance, having the advantage of doing so as a fellow-artist. It turned out that the lad, poor and sick, was a student, in earnest about his art, trying hard to learn, though poor, and with an inevitable early death staring him in the face. Here was a new *brother Robert*. Blake took him at once as though it were a family duty to

keep him. The young fellow was taught for nothing, and nursed to the last hour of his life, frequently visited, but whether on account of his own pride or the wise discretion of his new friends, not domiciled in Hercules Buildings. We feel perfectly certain that he was not allowed to want; but no droll detail, like the aggravating incident of the new dress, gave colour to a mention of this portion of the subject, and the silence of Tatham as to how the youth was fed is only natural, and implies the silence of Mrs. Blake. To this period belongs the issue of the "Gates of Paradise" and the making of a pencil memorandum, intended only for his private eye, which has been resuscitated in the second volume of Gilchrist's life. Here are the words. "I say I shan't live five years, and if I live one it will be a wonder. June, 1793."

So it seems at first sight that the visionary could make a mistake sometimes. But was this his own utterance? Did he take down words that had impressed him though they were spoken by someone else, to see if they would come true? Was the pale-faced youth of the portfolio the real speaker? Was it his end and not Blake's which was meant?

There is no answer. We are left to guesswork. The only clue is to be found in the placing by Blake long afterwards of another memorandum on the same page. "Tuesday, Jan. 20, 1807. Between two and seven in the evening. Despair." Blake lived twenty years after the second entry. Perhaps he wrote it against the other to show himself that he must not trust the impressions of the mood of black melancholy that used to come over him at times like an eclipse. It grew to be part of an illness. The moments of "deathly feeling," with a depression "that could not be named," were of short duration, but became more frequent and were accompanied by shivering fits and weakness till the end.

Two stories are told of Blake in Lambeth which have gained currency, though they are not such as recommend themselves to serious belief. Both require, and both entirely lack, the support of corroborative evidence. Both are a little bit

scandalous and of somewhat imperfect decency. Being narratives of just the kind which, if true, would be almost certainly borne out by some hint in Blake's writings, they come to us half discredited, notwithstanding that Gilchrist gives publicity to them.

The first anecdote informs us that Capt. Butts came to see Blake at Hercules Buildings and found him and his wife in a state of nature, reciting passages from Milton's "Paradise Lost" in character, in a summer-house, and that they welcomed him thus without hesitation.

Against this must be set the fact that Blake was never heard to recite Milton at any other time, and that he was just now strongly opposed to the theology, as he understood it, of "Paradise Lost." As for his ever doing any recitation "in character," the idea is so foreign to his own character that it cannot be entertained. There remains the statement that, under whatever colour or pretext, Blake admitted Mr. Butts to an inspection of himself and his wife naked. So extraordinary an incident would have left a mark on their intercourse for life. But in all the letters Blake wrote to Mr. Butts in later years, though many allusions to Mrs. Blake exist, and many messages are sent from her, the tone is always one that implies respect on both sides. There is a mixture of affection and formality, and never the slightest hint that for Captain Butts and Mrs. Butts to receive a message from Mrs. Blake could be anything but a compliment. Of the innuendo, the familiarity, the carelessness, the cynicism, which should belong to the consciousness of a ludicrous and indecent secret shared, there is not a trace in all the correspondence. Whatever may have been the origin of the after-dinner story so rashly caught up and printed by Gilchrist, the form in which he presents it cannot but be considered as inaccurate and misleading.

The second tale is more plausible. It is said that Blake wished to add a concubine to his establishment in the Old Testament manner, but gave up the project because it made Mrs. Blake cry. The element of fable lies in the implication

that the woman who was to have wrecked this household had a bodily existence. There is no trace of her in any of Blake's writings. But he had a way of looking on both human life and Biblical story as alike symbolic, and intended only to nourish the imagination or soul. Extremes meet, and though the "literal" interpretation of Scripture was always the essence of all that is deadly, and Druids, who, as the "Descriptive Catalogue" tells us, "mistook imaginative significance for corporeal command, whereby human sacrifice would have depopulated the earth," are always the aversion of Blake's mind, yet there is a possibility that he entertained mentally some polygamous project, and justified it on some patriarchal theory. A project and a theory are one thing, however, and a woman is another; and though there is abundant suggestion of the project and theory, there is no evidence at all of the woman. It is difficult to escape from the conjecture that she never actually existed. On the other hand, in support of the patriarchal theory we read in Blake's poems that tears are a net, that pity seeks for dominion, that jealousy is feminine, and morality selfish. Such support, however, is of a kind not to be relied upon as though the words, however suggestive, were used either in their ordinary literal sense, or in their ordinary figurative sense. They were technical terms, and their value is only to be estimated by the reader who carries the key to the symbolic system of cypher-writing in his mind. This will be explained in its place. But Blake undoubtedly used ordinary events occasionally for symbolic purpose, and here lies the only ground of probability in favour of the concubine story.

Finally, the subject is paradoxically summed up by Blake himself in a passage which contains a most practical kind of morality, and a dictum on the subject of liberty, which he is more likely to have learned from Mrs. Blake than from all the philosophers that could have dined at Mr. Johnson's table were it as large as King Arthur's. "You cannot have liberty in this world without what you call moral virtue, and you

cannot have moral virtue without the subjection of that half of the human race who hate what you call moral virtue." "Vision of the Last Judgment," Gilchrist, *Life*, vol. ii., p. 198, edition 1880. To this it must be added that "Jerusalem," the impersonated type of spiritual affection, "is named Liberty among the sons of Albion." See "Jerusalem," p. 26.

Yet Blake in the habitual Biblicality of his imagery must be chiefly blamed for the errors of his biographers and the gossip of contemporaries. But for the fact that a few close friends knew and loved him like a brother, and that his wife was seldom further off than his own right hand, he would not by this time have a morsel of good name left. There are passages in his published work enough, if read without their symbolic key, to have destroyed the reputation of any man of looser life. Later on we shall see how even the critical acumen of Mr. Michael Rossetti was at fault in the reading of an unpublished epigram, and found in it matter either for the Divorce Court or, since this was too incredible, for the lunatic asylum.

V.—THE EARLY PROPHETIC BOOKS.

HERCULES BUILDINGS, Lambeth, was not only the place where the central act, as it may be called, of the drama of his married life was played. It was the scene of most of his best imaginative experience and labour.

Remembering, as we must, that "ideas" are, in his mystic cypher, the "divine members," just as "imagination" is the "divine body" of the Lamb, as distinguished from "reason"—that "ratio of the five senses" which, by distracting a man's attention with mutable and mortal things, is constantly building a "body of death round the Lamb"—we can readily see that the place of all others where inspiration came to him first with exuberance, would become surrounded by association with a sacredness such as clings to the vaulted aisle of a cathedral.

Lambeth had, to Blake's ear, in its very sound, a suggestion. He personifies the place in his "Jerusalem." It is the "Bride of the Lamb." Its situation in the South of London was appropriate. London is used by him as a type of humanity. The South, among the mystic "four points," is the quarter of vision. Unless he absolutely changed his system of speech, he could hardly do less than call the place where his mind was most luminously opened the bride, or "space," of that inspired portion of infinity, the imagination in man, called the Lamb. It is only before familiarity with Blake's work makes us feel how valuable was his use of reverentially familiar names, that we can find anything absurd or wrong in this mode of utterance.

In Lambeth, 1793, Blake printed his "Visions of the Daughters of Albion," "America," "Europe," "Urizen," "Gates of Paradise;" and in 1795, the "Song of Los," and "Ahania." Probably at this time he also wrote a book whose loss is irreparable, "Oothoon." Except that it had twelve plates we know absolutely nothing of its contents, and can only guess by the name the nature of the story, which should have been either the foundation and commencement, or the somewhat needed continuation of "The Visions of the Daughters of Albion," to which it has probably supplied some pages, as "Vala" did to "Jerusalem" and "Milton." Here, also, in 1797, "Vala" itself, Blake's literary masterpiece, was begun. An engraving of "The Accusers of Theft, Adultery and Murder," now in the possession of Mr. Hooper, an American collector, has the inscription, "When the senses are shaken and the soul is driven to madness, page 53," and the further notification, "Publish'd June 5, 1793, by W. Blake, Lambeth." The line will be recognized as printed in a fragment among the pieces collected in the Aldine edition. It here is given as part of a prologue intended for a dramatic piece called King Edward the Fourth. Why p. 53? Was so much written and lost? A drawing also exists with the words, "The Bible of Hell, in Nocturnal Visions collected. Vol. I, Lambeth," written on the back in title-page form. This lost book is mentioned in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," where Blake says, "I have also the Bible of Hell which the world shall have whether they will or not." A title-page marked "The Gates of Hell—for children," tells, too, of some projected or lost companion to "The Gates of Paradise—for children."

Here, too, we catch sight of the visions once more—we learn that the symbolic figure, Urizen, as the Ancient of Days, setting a compass to the earth, hovered once over his head at the top of the staircase. In after life he frequently said that this vision made a more powerful im-

pression on his mind than all he had ever been visited by. To the "powerful impression" it made we possibly owe the book of "Urizen" and the magnificence of the symbol in "Vala." The idea of Urizen, however, was plain to him long before this vision—witness the "Song of Liberty" in "The Marriage." It is, indeed, so fundamental to the philosophy—being one of the four root-powers or spirits of the cardinal points—that it must have first formed itself before Blake's inner eyesight in very early times, rising from we know not what shadowy darkness of Westminster or muffling greenery of Surrey coppice.

On this same stairway he saw once "a ghost"—the only one—ghosts and visions having between them no narrow march-land. "When talking on the subject of ghosts," writes Gilchrist, "he was wont to say they did not appear much to imaginative men, but only to common minds, who did not see the finer spirits. A ghost was a thing seen by the gross bodily eye, a vision by the mental. 'Did you ever see a ghost?' asked a friend. 'Never but once,' was the reply. And it befel thus. Standing one evening at his garden-door in Lambeth and chancing to look up he saw a horrible grim figure, 'scaly-speckled, very awful,' stalking down stairs towards him. More frightened than ever before or after, he took to his heels and ran out of the house."

A fundamental difference between the character and, so to speak, the substance of those apparitions which present themselves to the bodily eye, and those which are perceived in mental vision, is asserted by all mystics and occult students. The apparently material forms, usually considered supernatural, yet evidently seen by the bodily eye, are said to be "drawn down to our regions." Their visibility is considered to be due to their using our vital forces as they descend, and so building up a material shape for themselves. It is thus a portion of our own visible quality that we see, and the spiritual influences that are beheld in this way are rightly feared, bringing us, as they do, to madness and decay. In the other case, when an influence affects us so as to be mentally

seen, as in dreams, while we wake, we rise by abstraction to the world to which the higher visionary state exists.

This theory can only be roughly described by such figures of speech as "ascending" and "drawing down." At best it leaves much quite untouched and unexplained. Such as it is, Blake, with other mystics, probably accepted this or a similar view. He would have been the first to say that only by raising ourselves to their level may the finer powers be perceived, for they—the "mothers," as Goethe called them, to whose abode Faust went seeking Helena—will not descend to us. This, also, is what Blake intended when he spoke of seeing with the mental eye, and not, as some of his critics have tried to prove, that all his claim of vision was merely a foolish and grandiloquent way of describing ordinary fancy. The final secret of the long processions of the figures in true "vision" remains with the visionary beings themselves—those universal powers the hem of whose garments man may touch and cling to for a moment in deepest trance. Blake, Swedenborg and Boehmen are but men who have overheard and recorded a few words spoken by the spiritual forms among themselves for their own delight.

During his stay at Lambeth, now drawing to a close with the century, Blake made a number of important symbolic water-colour drawings and engravings—notably "Nebuchadnezzar," a large picture of the crawling figure in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell;" "The Lazar House," from Milton, now in the British Museum; and "The Elohim creating Adam," called by Gilchrist the finest of his works. He also made in 1797 his well-known designs to "The Night Thoughts." Only a selected few were engraved out of the five hundred or thereabouts designed. The work is said to have taken a year, and is about the most wonderful year's work ever done. The sketches are slight and large, the colouring faint but pleasant, the drawing often much in need both of correction and consideration. The mannerism is marked with the eighteenth century theatrical stiffness and

glara. As a set, they do not approach in power or completeness the Dante series afterwards done for Mr. Linnell. Mr. Bain, of the Haymarket, possesses the entire set of the "Night Thoughts," and courteously shows them to all who are interested in Blake. Mr. Bain keeps them only because no customer has yet bought them; his price, though not excessive, being too serious for the average collector. A little calculation will show anyone that the value of a set of five hundred, at the rate of a very few pounds per drawing, is considerable.

VI.—NEW EXPERIENCE AND NEW VISION.

IN 1800 Blake left London for the first time. Flaxman had introduced him to a country squire and dilettante poet named Hayley, author of a then famous poem called "The Triumph of Temper," and Hayley decided that Blake should go down to Felpham, near Bognor, and set up house not far from his own turreted cottage, and there make drawings and engravings for "A Life of Cowper" he was busy upon. Blake and Mrs. Blake were delighted, and for a time all went well. The cottage was beautiful with thatch of "rusted gold," and Blake wrote to Flaxman, "Now begins a new life, because another covering of earth is shaken off." He seems to have enjoyed for a time a new and ampler illumination. He was brought down to the sea border, he afterwards thought, to receive and write his two longest published books of mysticism, "Jerusalem" and "Milton," and along the sea border now was he wont to muse and have visions. It was not more than three or four minutes' walk from his cottage, and at low tide displayed immense reaches of sand—fit *pleasaunce* for the shadowy multitudes. Here were revealed to him the symbolic shapes of Moses and the Prophets, and of Homer and Dante and Milton, "All," he said, "majestic shadows, grey but luminous, and superior to the common height of men." But other visions came to the cottage door. Allan Cunningham has the following: "Did you ever see a fairy's funeral?" said Blake to a lady who happened to sit next him at some gathering at Hayley's or elsewhere. "Never, sir," was the answer. "I have," said Blake; "but not before last

night. I was writing alone in my garden; there was great stillness among the branches and flowers, and more than common sweetness in the air; I heard a low and pleasant sound, and I knew not whence it came. At last I saw the broad leaf of a flower move, and underneath I saw a procession of creatures of the size and colour of green and grey grasshoppers, bearing a body laid out on a rose leaf, which they buried with songs, and then disappeared. It was a fairy funeral." In this fashion has Blake lent the weight of his name to the sad conclusion of the old Irish poet, that "death is even among the fairies." In the philosophic or mystic system, Blake places fairies as the guardian powers or rather the visionary appearances or manifestations of the gentle and refined emotions of vegetative or instinctive life. This vision, like all the rest, was symbolic.

The bulk of the few letters written by Blake that have come down to us belong to this time. To Butts, a lately acquired and now most constant buyer, he writes: "Time flies faster (as seems to me here) than in London. I labour incessantly. I accomplish not one-half of what I intend, because my abstract folly hurries me often away while I am at work, carrying me over mountains and valleys, which are not real, into a land of abstraction where spectres of the dead wander. This I endeavour to prevent; I with my whole might chain my feet to the world of duty and reality. But in vain! the faster I bind the better is the ballast; for I, so far from being bound down, take the world with me in my flights, and often it seems lighter than a ball of wool rolled by the wind. . . . Alas! wretched, happy, ineffectual labourer of Time's moments that I am; who shall deliver me from this spirit of abstraction and improvidence?" Abstract speculation and reverie such as he here speaks of must not be confounded with vision. It is only useful to clear the way for supersensual perceptions of primoval spiritual states from whence all things have come.

During the latter part of Blake's Felpham life, his expe-

riences were not so pleasant as in the early days when he felt nearer to heaven than ever, another covering of earth seeming to be gone. Trouble came with Hayley, who tried to confine Blake to mere servile hack work, making thereby "the visions angry."

Space forbids that we should reprint in full here the letters given by Gilchrist in the "Life" which belong to this period. His account of it is excellent, and the correspondence is well placed in the text of the edition of 1880. Here, it must be repeated, the present Memoir having mainly an interpretative object, aims at something quite different from that which the first biographer attempted to reach. It was the business of Gilchrist to interest people in Blake, as a man, so that they might less hastily turn away from the difficulties of Blake as a poet or "prophet," that is to say, teacher. In this, with all its critical shortcomings the first biography succeeded. It remains indispensable. The day for attempting to supersede it has not yet come.

Of the Felpham period the main incidents were these :

Blake arrived, full of enthusiasm, and was welcomed by Hayley in a cordial spirit. Hayley behaved "like a prince," and with "brotherly kindness." It was an understood thing that Blake had come as a man of genius obeying the call of a man of taste. He looked on his position as resembling that of Lionardo da Vinci at the court of Ludovico Sforza, or that of Raphael at the Vatican. He and Hayley tried to be of use to one another. Hayley taught him Greek and gave him work as an engraver and designer. He returned this service by writing out passages for the "Life of Cowper," on which Hayley was engaged.

But whatever else Hayley's intellect contained there was one faculty in which he was absolutely deficient. He did not know what a type or a symbol meant in the poetical literature of systematic mysticism. He judged Blake's poetry by what he could understand of it—the pleasant lyrical sweetness of the shorter verse. But in this Blake

himself took less and less interest. His mind was more and more occupied with the enthusiasm of mysticism, that language of languages whose happy speakers are never weary. To Hayley this was merely a nuisance.

So Blake bored Hayley, and Hayley exasperated Blake. The two men were obliged to draw apart a little. Esteem and affection remained to them, but some soreness was felt, especially on Blake's side. Hayley's revenge, which appeared to himself to be kindness, though Blake knew too well it concealed an intention half-vindictive, if half-benevolent, was to keep his poetic protégé to mechanical engraving, so as to stop his designing. It was not difficult for Hayley to tell himself that such a course was kindness, in the truest sense, to a poor, foolish, undisciplined mind, hovering between religious mania and blatant absurdity. Blake more and more saw in it an act of spiritual enmity, of spiritual villainy, a cowardly attack on the vitality of his soul through the needs of his body by a man who knew perfectly well for what base purpose he was using the "arts of poverty." At the present day, we look down comfortably on Hayley's reputation, which, but for the altitude of Blake's, would be invisible. A little of Hayley's dust, not yet shaken from Blake's shoe, is all that is left of him. But this is sufficient to enable us to see that the plea of kindness, even mistaken kindness, cannot quite wash him clean. He knew enough to have known more, had his self-love not shrunk from the discipline required.

But if Hayley's enmity against Blake's imagination is dead, his critical opinion of Blake is still to be met with among men of to-day. It belonged to a class of error which no individual can monopolize. In the absence of an essay on Blake from Hayley's own pen, a sufficiently clear conception of his views may be obtained from a statement of opinion written quite recently, and without any conscious reference to Hayley of any sort.

The editor of the Aldine edition of Blake's works, says :

“For my own part—with the deepest reverence for Blake, and the keenest reverence for a great deal of his work, and an inclination to accept the rest of it as in some way or other justifiable to the author’s intellect, and responsive to, and representative of his large conceptions and deep meanings—I must nevertheless avow that I think there was something in his mind not exactly sane.

“I apprehend that there are many passages in the Prophetic Books which show the author to have been possessed by ideas which he could not regulate or control; indeed, he himself proclaimed as much when he asserted that he wrote under immediate dictation, and without the exercise of any option of his own; and what is far more symptomatic in the same direction, I think he every now and then ‘boiled over’ (if the expression may be allowed) into words which have no definable relevancy to anything that deserves to be called a thought or an idea. I cannot pretend to furnish—what has baffled many persons incomparably more qualified than myself for such a task—a fair definition of the term ‘madness’; but when I find a man pouring forth conceptions and images for which he professes himself not responsible, and which are in themselves in the highest degree remote, nebulous, and intangible, and putting some of these, moreover, into words wherein congruent sequence and significance of expression, or of analogy, are not to be traced, then I cannot resist a strong presumption that that man was in some true sense of the word mad. . . . But if, on the other hand, through timorous respect and consideration for his genius we flinch from this conclusion, we are then compelled to say that Blake, in the full possession of his rationality, could write much that was fatuous and nonsensical—‘balderdash,’ to use a plain word—as well as much that was noble and admirable; and this leaves an uneasy sense of insecurity in his reader, and casts a slur over the whole body of the author’s work.”

Such is the straightforward and honest opinion of a man of

exceptional ability and high literary standing, who happens not to be in sympathy with Blake's method of writing.

Such must have been Hayley's view when he "pastered" Blake with "polite disapprobation," and was "as much averse" to a page of his poetry "as to a chapter in the Bible."

But an incident occurred which caused Blake to feel a sudden and renewed affection for Hayley. It has been told often enough, but must be touched on once more, however lightly.

One fine morning Blake found the soldier in his garden, and, not knowing that he had been put there to dig by a gardener in his own employment, asked him, as politely as possible, to go. The man refused with threats of violence, and Blake, growing angry, caught him by the elbows and, despite his attempts to spar, forced him out into the road and down it some fifty yards to the village tavern, where the man was quartered. The soldier revenged himself by swearing that Blake cursed the king, and vowed that he would help Bonaparte should he come over. Blake was arrested. Hayley came forward and offered bail, and at the trial, though suffering at the time from the effects of an accident, gave evidence in his favour as to character. The case was heard at the Chichester Quarter Sessions on the 11th of June, 1804, the verdict of "Not Guilty" being received with tumultuous applause in court.

VII.—A CORRECTION.

BUT although the period of Blake's intercourse with Hayley at Felpham ended happily and cordially, the cloud that darkened their friendship at one time was very much heavier than a reader of Gilchrist's biography would be inclined to believe. The introductory memoir to the Aldine collection has set before the public a few lines gathered from Blake's private note-book, which contain what Mr. Rossetti rightly describes as "distinct and grave charges" against Hayley that cannot be passed over by any critic of Blake's life or character.

Here are the lines :—

ON H—Y'S FRIENDSHIP.

When H—y finds out what you cannot do,
That is the very thing he'll set you to.
If you break not your neck, 'tis not his fault,
But pecks of poison are not pecks of salt,
And when he could not act upon my wife,
Hired a villain to bereave my life.

"The last couplet," so runs Mr. Rossetti's comment, "conveys two distinct and most grave charges against poor Hayley; charges to which one can hardly suppose Blake himself to have lent any real credence. He seems rather to have been writing in a spirit of wilful and wanton perversity: the more monstrous and obviously untenable the accusation the more pat it comes under a pen guided by mere testiness. It is exactly the spirit of a 'naughty little boy.' The phrase, 'When he could not act upon my wife,' has a somewhat indeterminate though manifestly virulent meaning. The other statement, that Hayley 'hired a villain to bereave my life,' can only (it would seem) refer to the affair of the soldier, Scholfield, who accused Blake of using seditious words, and thereby subjected him to a trial on a criminal (not in

reality a capital) charge. Now, the fact is that Hayley, so far from hiring the villain to bereave Blake's life, had, as we have already seen, come forward immediately as his bail, and afterwards as a witness on his behalf. Blake, if he believed that Hayley had plotted against his life, can hardly have been quite sane; and if he disbelieved it, and yet wrote it, our conclusion as to his state of mind at that particular moment need only differ in detail. I may here point out that the line,

‘Hired a villain to bereave my life,’

is repeated in this epigram from the poem, ‘Fair Eleanor,’ in the ‘Poetic Sketches;’ the other line also,

‘And when he could not act upon my wife.’

seems to have some affinity to the course of the story of Fair Eleanor, more affinity at any rate to that effort of the Macphersonian romancing faculty in verse than to aught that we can suppose to have taken place in real life between Mr. Hayley and Mr. Blake.”

This criticism has a general air of sound common sense and impartial consideration, which must necessarily give it weight with any reader who has no independent acquaintance with the subject. A nearer examination, however, changes this impression. To begin with, no one can fail to notice that the lines criticized are so few, and so hasty, that they might have been written by Blake with perfect conviction the moment he returned to his house after the struggle with the soldier, and before he even discovered that his own gardener had engaged the man as a temporary assistant. Scholfield was certainly obstinate in refusing to go when first asked to do so, “as politely as possible,” and his obstinacy, accompanied, as it was, with clenched fists and threats of knocking out eyes, naturally caused Blake—“Gentle visionary Blake,” as Hayley called him at the time—to fire up and show his O’Neil blood. The gardener’s explanation of Scholfield’s intrusion was culpably tardy. We know that it came too late, but how late we do not know. Is Mr. Rossetti sure that Blake did not

walk straight back after forcibly conducting the fellow to the neighbouring inn, and then and there scratch down the furious lines he quotes? It must be remembered that they are taken from a note-book that is said to have lain always open at Blake's elbow on his work-table. How do any of us know? Might there not have been some passages of old-world gallantry between Hayley and the pretty brunette, the wife, as he considered her, of his protégé and hanger-on, when the Blake household first came to Felpham? Blake himself at a later period wrote to Capt. Butts that if he could have returned to town a month after his arrival at Felpham, he should have done so. Of course, in such a case, Mrs. Blake would have been proof against the attack, and Blake might have pook-pooed it at the time; but might not the memory rush on his imagination in a moment of fury, and be rashly recorded before calmer judgment showed the absurdity of the idea? Since such might have been the case in very ordinary probability, what right has an editor to suggest that Blake "lent no credence" to his "distinct and grave charges"? Hayley, the Hermit of Eartham, as he was called, was no saint. He lived in a dissolute age, and publicly acknowledged a son whom he never dreamed of describing as legitimate.

In this view, although doubtless there is no truth, there is nothing beyond the bounds of reasonable conjecture. No biographer, free from prejudice on the subject of Blake's sanity, could have overlooked it. But Mr. Rossetti, by his own admission, was by no means free from a very strong prepossession in favour of the view that Blake was far from sane. This prepossession, however, is a very insufficient apology for an unpardonable imputation. The suggestion that Blake wrote what he did not himself believe, and left it after, with other matter, to the possible social and moral injury of the man about whom he was writing, is just one of those accusations of which it may be said, in Mr. Rossetti's own words, that "the more monstrous and obviously untenable" they are, "the more pat" they "come under a pen guided"—

not by mere testiness, but by the more fatal error of that patronizing spirit of superiority in which the literary critic too often approaches a man of genius who is said to be mad.

In the absence of any corroborative evidence to support the palpably erroneous common-sense theory that they were a piece of hasty but sincere expression, which has just been put forward with regard to these strange but serious lines, as a make-weight against the obviously mistaken interpretation of Mr. Rossetti, it may now be left side by side with his view to stand, or rather to fall, by its very slender merits.

Of much more interest and importance is a totally different reading of the offensive phrase, a reading equally overlooked by the editor of the Aldine edition, though supported by many hints and coincidences of expression, both in Blake's poetic writings and his letters, and marginal notes.

When the true meaning is understood, there will be found a charge grave enough and of a very distinct kind against Hayley. But the accusation is not a common scandal, or the suggestion that of an ordinary crime. It will seem to most people the merest trifle. As already said, Hayley did not like Blake's mystic writings and designs, and tried to occupy his time in a way that would keep him from continuing them. It seems very wicked to call this "bereaving his life," but then such was Blake's own honest view of the case. He had two lives to consider, the temporal and the eternal. His conviction was that eternal life was in "the bosom of God, the human imagination," and that nothing was more important to this than the pursuit of those intellectual efforts that were beyond the scope of the "corporeal understanding."

In January, 1802, four months after his arrival at Felpham, he writes to Captain Butts on the subject of Hayley:—"My unhappiness has arisen from a source which, if explored too narrowly, might hurt my pecuniary circumstances, as my dependence is on engraving, and particularly on the engraving I have in hand for Mr. H., and I find on all hands great objection to my doing anything but the mere drudgery of the business, and intimations that if I do not confine

myself to this *I shall not live*. This has always pursued me. This from Johnson Fuseli brought me down here, and this from Mr. H. will bring me back again. For that *I cannot live* without doing my duty to lay up treasures in Heaven is certain and determined, and to this I have long made up my mind. And why this should be made an objection to me while drunkenness, lewdness, gluttony, and even idleness itself are not to other men, let *Satan himself* determine. The thing I have most at heart, *more than life* or all that seems to make life comfortable without, is the interest of true religion and science. And whenever anything appears to affect that interest, especially if I myself omit any duty to my station as a soldier of Christ, it gives me the greatest of torments."

The italics here and elsewhere, if not otherwise described, are ours. They are introduced merely for the convenience of comparison between one italicised phrase and another, not for emphasis. When the quotations are complete, the inference which they tend to support with the increasing force of accumulating evidence will be readily drawn by a comparison of the portions printed in italics, and scattered, necessarily, over several pages.

With regard to the particular meaning of the allusion to Christian duty in the letter from which the above is taken, a few words from the prose passage in "Jerusalem," p. 77, may be taken. It will appear at first sight a great deal more mad than the lines on Hayley. This is not the place for its interpretation. Its meaning will be clear enough as a piece of philosophic utterance later on. At present it is only instanced as tending to support the connection between art, imagination, and eternal salvation, which was an essential element of Blake's view of Christian truth. The book, it must be remembered, was written at the Felpham period in part, and mainly in reference to Felpham visions and experiences.

"All the tortures of repentance are the tortures of self-reproach on account of our leaving the Divine harvest to the

enemy, the struggles of inminglement with incoherent roots. I know of no other Christianity and no other Gospel than the liberty both of body and mind to exercise the Divine arts of imagination—imagination, the real and eternal world of which the vegetable universe is a faint shadow, and in which we shall live in our eternal or imaginative bodies when these vegetable mortal bodies are no more. The Apostles knew of no other Gospel. What were all their spiritual gifts? What is the Divine Spirit? Is the Holy Ghost any other than an intellectual fountain? What is the harvest of the Gospel and its labours? What is that talent which it is a curse to hide? What are the treasures of Heaven which we are to lay up for ourselves? Are they any other than mental studies and performances? What are all the gifts of the Gospel? Are they not all mental gifts? Is God a Spirit who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and are not the gifts of the Spirit everything to man? Oh ye religious, discountenance everyone among you who shall pretend to despise Art and Science. I call upon you in the name of Jesus. What is the *Life of Man* but Art and Science?"

The passage goes further, but enough is given here to show that whatever else Blake considered Art to be, and whatever he meant by Art, it was in his opinion *Life*. Nor did he consider that the painting of a few miniatures, and the illustrating of a few ballads with eagles and lions that were not symbolic, was "Art," though it might be, in its time and place, a good exercise leading to Art.

Whether or not this was mere madness will better be decided by the student whose mind can familiarly handle and use for himself as instruments of thought the symbolic system unrolled in the interpretative portion of the present work, than by the general reader, who only knows that Blake held queer views and used odd names.

A little later in the same letter quoted before the paragraph from "Jerusalem," Blake says: "Temptations are on the right hand and on the left. Behind, the sea of time and space roars

and follows swiftly. He who keeps not right onwards *is lost*, and if our footsteps *slide in clay* how can we do otherwise than fear and tremble?"

In "Milton" we hear of a long strife between the poetic and free, and the logical, hard, moral, industrious task-ordering spirits of human conduct, told under the mask of a struggle between Milton's spirit and Urizen, a mystic personage. During this strife, in which his object was simply to impede the advance of Milton's spirit, Urizen

"darkened his brows, freezing dark rocks between
The footsteps, infixing deep the feet in marble beds,
That Milton laboured with his journey, and his feet bled sore
Upon the clay now changed to marble."

—"Milton," page 17, lines 1 to 4.

In an "extra page" following the copy reproduced in this work, and equally authentic, we are told that

"Urizen was *Satan* . . . drawn down . . . into generation."

The above, and more, to be presently quoted in the same connection, all belongs to the Felpham period of Blake's life, and refers, so far as it has a personal reference, to the Felpham experiences.

A few words from a letter, November 22nd, 1802—that previously quoted was dated January, the same year—show that Blake's mental troubles were not the passing mood of a moment. During the interim, he says, he has been too unhappy to trouble any of his real friends with his griefs, and though he has written many letters they have all been burned and none posted.

"And now let me finish with assuring you that though I have been very unhappy I am so no longer. I am again emerged into the light of day. I still, and shall to eternity, embrace Christianity and adore Him who is the express image of God; but I have travelled through darkness *and peril*, not unlike a champion. I have conquered and shall go on conquering."

This, taken alone, has quite a deceptively conventional ring. The artist-fanatic, the enthusiast whose thought used all the glyphs of an enormous mystic system as its habitual alphabet,

and their endless combinations as its accustomed language, seems to have given place to a half-hearted evangelical believer recently recovered from a cold fit of sceptical vacillation. But the next words reveal that this is only an accidental resemblance of which the writer himself was entirely unconscious. He goes on:—

“Nothing can withstand the fury of my course *among the stars of God*, and in the abysses of *the accuser*. My enthusiasm is still what it was, only enlarged and confirmed.”

A coincidence of expression, that must be merely noted at the moment as a further indication how intimately the poems written at Felpham are bound up with the writer's inner life, occurs in the following phrase:—

“Satan, in pride of heart,
Drove the fierce harrow among the constellations of Jehovah.”

—“Milton,” p. 10, lines 24, 25.

But, returning to Blake's troubles and perils, another passage from a letter written to Captain Butts in April, 1803, gives further details. It is written just after the resolution was formed to return to London. Mr. Hayley had consented to the plan, and had even given it his approbation.

“But, alas! now I may say to you—what, perhaps, I should not dare to say to anyone else—that I can alone carry on my visionary studies in London unannoyed, and that I may converse with my friends in eternity, see visions, dream dreams, and prophecy and speak parables unobserved, and at liberty from the doubts of other mortals—perhaps doubts proceeding from kindness; but doubts are always pernicious, especially *when we doubt our friends*.”

This also recalls—

“If the Sun and Moon should doubt,
They'd immediately go out,”

which has been already cited. The present letter continues:—

“Christ is very decided on this point—‘He who is not with Me is against Me.’ There is no medium or middle state, and if a man is the enemy of my spiritual life while he pretends

to be the *friend of my corporeal*, he is a *real enemy*; but the man may be the friend of my spiritual life while he seems the enemy of my corporeal, but not *vice versâ*.

In July of the same year, when about to leave Felpham, he writes:—

“Thus I hope that all our three years’ trouble ends in good luck at last, and shall be forgot by my affections and only remembered by my understanding to speak to future generations by a sublime allegory which is now perfectly completed into a grand poem.”

The use of the words “affection” and “understanding” here is a pure piece of Swedenborgian phraseology, and tends to indicate that the poem referred to was “Milton,” because in “Milton” Swedenborg is spoken of with some appreciativeness, and in a tone very different from that which Blake adopted towards him twelve years earlier when writing the “Marriage of Heaven and Hell.”

This, however, must not be taken as conclusive. The editor of Gilchrist’s “Life” considers “Jerusalem” to have been the poem, but portions, at least, of that work were, by its own statement, written later in London.

In accepting this view a difficulty arises in reconciling some dates. In another allusion to the poem concerning his Felpham work Blake says that he “will soon publish” it. This expression occurs in the “Public Address,” supposed to be intended to accompany the engraving of the “Canterbury Pilgrims,” which belongs to the year 1808, whereas “Jerusalem” bears date 1804 in Blake’s own title-page.

There are many examples of a habit of Blake’s which explains this. He would write a paragraph at one time and not use it until long after. “Vala” is full of passages employed much later in “Jerusalem.” Probably this portion of the “Public Address” was written, if not before 1804, at least before enough of the copies so dated had left Blake’s hands for him to look on the work of that year as “published.” The “Address” was not copied out as a complete document at

any time by Blake, but was pieced together for printing from fragments.

To return to the patron and the accusation. We see that Hayley, while "pretending" to be Blake's corporeal friend, was looked on by him as a "real" enemy, *reality* being in Blake's language only predicable of spiritual matters.

How he showed his enmity is seen from a further extract.

After a few more words on the nature of the poem and of his intentions regarding its publication, Blake continues:—"But of this work I take care to say little to Mr. H., since he is as much averse to my poetry as to a chapter in the Bible. . . . But Mr. H. approves of my designs as little as he does of my poems, and I have been forced to insist on his leaving me in both to my own self-will, for I am determined to be no longer pestered by his genteel ignorance and politic disapprobation. . . . But his imbecile attempts to depress me only deserve laughter. I say this much to you knowing that you will not make a bad use of it. But it is a fact too true, that if I had only depended upon mortal things both *myself and my wife* must have been lost. I shall leave everyone in this country astonished at my patience and forbearance of injuries upon injuries; and I do assure you that if I could have returned to London a month after my arrival here, I should have done so. But I was commanded by my spiritual friends to bear all and be silent, and to go through all without murmuring; and, in fine, hope till my three years should be almost accomplished, at which time I was set at liberty to remonstrate against former conduct and to demand *justice* and truth, which I have done in so effectual a manner that my antagonist is silenced completely, and I have compelled, what should have been of freedom, my *just rights as an artist* and a man. And if any attempts be made to refuse me this, I am inflexible, and will relinquish any engagement of designing at all, unless left to my own judgment, as you, my dear friend, have always left me, for which I shall never cease to honour and respect you.

“When we meet I will perfectly describe to you my conduct, and the conduct of others towards me, and you will see that I have laboured hard indeed, and have been borne on angels’ wings. ‘Till we meet I beg of God our Saviour to be with you and me, *and yours and mine.*”

This letter sheds a little light backwards on Blake’s state of mind as long ago as the days of Mr. Mathews and the publication of the “Poetic Sketches.”

There is a very distinct reference to Mrs. Blake in it, and the inclusion of Mrs. Butt with his friend, and his own wife with himself, in the prayer at the end shows a mind painfully agitated with anxiety that pointed in this direction. Equally obvious is it that there is not the least idea in Blake’s mind indicating, however remotely, anything “virulent,” as Mr. Rossetti describes a charge of immoral attempts or advances. Certainly, to such an accusation, by whomsoever made, Blake “lent no credence.”

The letter next in date, August, 1803, contains the long, temperate, lucid and interesting account of “the Scholfield affair,” of which Mr. Rossetti has quoted the greater part in the very memoir containing his suggestion that the “villain” hired by Mr. Hayley to “bereave” Blake’s “life” was Scholfield.

That such a suggestion could be made by any editor with the very letter before him from which he derives all his own information, and made to imply either madness or badness in the writer of it, cannot be spoken of except in terms of strong indignation and well-deserved reproof.

This letter not only relates the whole adventure in a manly, straightforward, and dignified manner, speaking with ready gratitude of Mr. Hayley’s kindness in coming forward to offer bail when it was clear that Scholfield’s false accusation would lead to a trial, but also contains a passage about Scholfield, not quoted by Mr. Rossetti, asking Captain Butts if he can find out anything about Scholfield, and apologizing for the trouble. The fact that the man had been a disgraced sergeant

having evidently suggested to Blake the bare possibility that Captain Butts, as a military man himself, might be able to hear something that might be of use. No suggestion that this "villain" was hired by Hayley is to be found, but every indication that Blake simply was at a loss to get any sort of knowledge about him.

The closing portion of the letter, in which Blake returns to the narrative of his mental experience, has far more importance for our present purpose.

"Dear Sir, this perhaps was suffered to clear up some doubts and to give opportunity to those whom I doubted to clear themselves of all imputation. If a man offends me ignorantly and not designedly, surely I ought to consider him with favour and affection. Perhaps the simplicity of myself is the origin of all offences committed against me. If I have found this I shall have found a most valuable thing, well worth three years' perseverance. I *have* found it" (*have* in italics by Blake's own underlining). "It is certain that a too passive manner, inconsistent with my active physiognomy, has done me much mischief. I must now express to you my conviction that all this is come from the spiritual world for good and not for evil.

"Give me your advice in my perilous adventure. Burn what I have pceevishly written about any friend. I have been very much degraded and injuriously treated, but if it all arises from my own fault I ought to blame myself.

"O why was I born with a different face?
 Why was I not born like the rest of my race?
 If I look, each one starts, when I speak I offend,
 Then I'm silent and passive, and lose every friend.

"Then my verse I dishonour, my pictures despise,
 My person degraded, and my temper chastise;
 And the pen is my terror, the pencil my shame,
 All my talents I bury, and dead is my fame.
 I am either too low or too highly prized:
 When estate I am envied, when meek, I'm despised.

This is but too just a picture of my present state. I pray God

to keep you and all men from it, and to deliver me in His own good time."

These extracts, if long, have at least one advantage for any reader who has not time to consult other memoirs than that which he is now holding in his hand. They contain all that Blake had to say in the nature of complaint or accusation against Hayley in his letters written from Felpham. They have but one voice, and that is the voice of a man of enthusiastic, temperate, and poetic genius, suffering keenly from the darkening of his inner light, which he feels to be burning low in a miasmatic atmosphere of depreciation, doubt, kindly meant contempt, and irksome hindrance. He feels that sympathy is being withheld from him to a degree that, by absolutely injuring his own best faculties, does him a bitter wrong, and inflicts in the most sensitive region of life and of conscience itself, an irreparable injury.

Such was his feeling about Hayley. From this to a justification of the phrase about the hired villain we have yet some steps to make. But at the outset it is clear enough that Blake felt in the truest sense of the word *his life* had been attacked, diminished, brought low, impoverished by the very man to whom he had looked at first for brotherly assistance, along with the princely generosity that met him at the gate.

No man who has any sense of power in him can look quietly on another man who cramps, or lames, or weakens that power. Even a mere man of business, who has only the most moderate esteem either for his own faculties or his career, well knowing both to belong to the region of the necessary and humdrum at best, would consider as his greatest enemy anyone who interrupted his work, muddled his head till he could no longer balance the figure columns of his account books, and hustled and worried him till he lost the nerve and judgment necessary to enable him to embark on fresh speculations, or to carry forward the enterprises in which he was already engaged. We may go lower still, and point to the animosity of an ardent whist player against anyone whose conduct, however harmless

otherwise, deprives him of his capacity to play his cards to the best purpose, and win the petty applause and altogether unspiritual advantages of a successful player.

It is worth while to keep such examples before us in making such attempt as we may to conceive Blake's bitterness of heart against Hayley when he got the measure of the man, and knew that he was his "real" enemy. Yet he was not mad, but sane; and not bad, but just, and to the last, as from the first, he made the best of Hayley that could be made, and never stinted him of such affection as he deserved for such goodness as he showed, or of the thanks that his mild services deserved. As for a thought of revenge, or spite, or any foolish idea that he had a right to be spiteful or revengeful against a man who injured him "unknowingly," that at no time seems to have had any place in Blake's mind.

Before coming to the "hired villain," a few more hints about the "bereaving of life" may be gathered from the poem called "Milton," written about the Felpham days.

In one of the letters there is a curious allusion to Satan. Why the desire to do mystical, or, as he called it, imaginative work should be made a crime to him, while gluttony, lewdness, and even idleness itself, are not to other men, "let Satan," exclaims Blake, "himself explain." "Satan" is not the Devil of orthodox Christians, but one of the characters in the poem called "Milton," as well as in other works which Blake was writing at the time. Although he says in the same poem that this same Satan is a portion of his own character, working for evil against the better sides of his own personality, yet in the myth of Satan and Los Palamabron, so much admired, so entirely unexplained as yet, there are characteristic touches which suggest Hayley at once. He makes:—

"with incomparable mildness

His primitive tyrannical attempts on Los with most endearing love,"

—"Milton," page 5, line 6.

He even

"Embraced, soft with a brother's tears, Palamabron who also wept."

—*Ib.* line 16.

And yet Palamabron says later :—

“You know Satan's mildness and his self-imposition. Seeming a brother, being a tyrant, even thinking himself a brother, while he is *murdering the just.*”

—*Ib.*, line 22, &c.

This not only recalls the phrase about bereaving of life, but also the expression with regard to “just rights as an artist and a man.” The “just man” is always in Blake, the imaginative or inspired man; it is a favourite expression of his.

It requires little acumen to see from the above sources—all of which, by the way, were published before Mr. Rossetti wrote—that Hayley's murder was spiritual, and that his action on Blake's wife as well as on himself was of the same character. Mrs. Blake had been taught a little writing and some drawing. It is even said that she was acquiring the faculty to see visions. It is certain that she believed in them. What other action could be expected of Hayley with his views than a well-meant attempt to cure her of such nonsense? Had she been cured Blake would have considered her as “lost.”

Grave indeed the charge is, and distinct, now that we see it distinctly, but not incredible; still less made without sincerity. The “virulence,” however, never existed outside one editor's mind. The charge was not even made public. There was no malicious cackling. “I do not speak of these matters”—spiritual matters—“unless questioned,” Blake wrote to Butts at the beginning of the correspondence.

The hired villain may now be unmasked with ease. He was Leigh Hunt.

The first piece of evidence as to his identity is to be found in the “Public Address,” which was in Mr. Rossetti's hands both in print and in manuscript (Gilchrist's “Life,” Vol. II.):—

“The manner in which my character has been blasted these thirty years *as an artist and a man*” (this expression only occurs here and in the Felpham letter) “may be seen particularly in a Sunday paper called the *Examiner*, published in Beaufort Buildings (we all know that editors of news-

papers trouble their heads very little about art and science, and that they are *always paid* for what they put in on these ungracious subjects); and the manner in which I have rooted out the nest of *villains* will be seen in a poem concerning my three years' Herculean labours at Felpham, which I shall soon publish. Secret calumny and *open professions of friendship* are common enough all the world over, but have never been so good an occasion of poetic imagery."

The *villain* and the *hiring* are clearly indicated here by the coincidence of phrase. A more recent letter, written to the *Monthly Review* in 1806, explains not only these expressions, but the enigmatical allusion to "pecks of poison" in the lines that have caused such strange mistakes.

The immediate object of the letter was to support Fuseli against some of his critics. These sentences are all that need be cited for the present purpose:—

"Under the pretence of fair criticism and candour the most wretched taste ever produced has been upheld for many, very many years, but now I say its end has come. Such an artist as Fuseli is invulnerable; he needs not my defence; but I should be ashamed not to set my hand, and shoulder, and whole strength against these wretches, who, under pretence of criticism, use the dagger *and the poison*."

This they did when writing on subjects about which they never troubled their heads unless paid. So the line—

"But pecks of poison are not pecks of salt,"

should read in plain terms—

Unfair criticism is not criticism, not even pungent criticism.

The same word occurs in the same sense on the margin of Blake's copy of "Reynolds's Discourses." He remarks there that "His" (Reynolds') "praise of Raphael is like the hysteric smile of revenge; his softness and candour the hidden trap and the *poisoned* feast."

How closely Hayley's "genteel ignorance and polite disapprobation" of imaginative art in conversation with Blake

foreshadowed the phraseology of articles afterwards printed in Hunt's paper, we can only guess. A very trifling hint would have been enough to have roused a suspicion of this sort in Blake's mind, for the idea of people "hired," usually by courts and kings, to do evil to imaginative inspiration was one of his most frequent fancies. The expression occurs both in prose and rhyme, and even in the marginal notes to Reynolds it is not absent. He says that he looks on Reynolds himself as being one of such artists as are "hired by Satan for the depression of art." The *Satan* is here the same as the enemy of "Palamabron" in "Milton," already referred to.

No authoritative statement exists to decide the question which of Blake's poems he himself alluded to as concerning his three years' Herculean labours at Felpham and as being also an unmasking of the *villains* connected with the attacks on his character by the *Examiner*. "Milton" contains some matter which can be so described, and its title-page shows it to have been designed to contain twelve books of which only two were printed, the whole subject being hastily wound up in the second. "Jerusalem" is considered by Gilchrist to be the poem in question, partly because it is long and partly because it contains the name of Schofield, and a name resembling Hunt. Both these poems are dated by their author 1804. The *Examiner*, as Gilchrist does not take the trouble to remind us, came in 1808. The Felpham labours were over four years previously.

"Vala" covers part of the same ground, and "Barry, a Poem," mentioned in the MS. book but not alluded to by the previous biographers, here and there has touched on the obscure subject. These three poems contain identical passages and, as it were, repeat or quote one another.

In any case what Blake's words show was that he had a way of connecting in his mind things and visions of different dates, when one typified the other, and they belonged to the same class of symbol.

But the "bereavement of life," which Blake had to fear at

the *Examiner* time, was not merely want of time for visionary life, but want of means to resist bodily starvation. Cromek says in May, 1807, that shortly before that date he had found Blake and Mrs. Blake "reduced so low as to be obliged to live on half a guinea a week." (Gilchrist, Vol. I., p. 253.) There is no reason to doubt the substantial truthfulness of the letter in which this occurs. The MS. book comes forward in corroboration with a single line,—one of the few entries that are dated:—

"Tuesday, Jan. 7, 1807. Between two and seven in the evening. Despair."

About this time Blake suddenly discovered that Flaxman and Hayley, whom he had supposed to be his best friends and supporters, were arranging matters behind his back so that he might lose employment. One thing that made this peculiarly hard to bear was that so recently as 1805 Blake had presented a fine copy of the "Songs of Innocence and Experience" to Flaxman, with which he and Mrs. Flaxman were delighted. Yet even before this, in 1804 (June 18th), Flaxman had recommended Hayley to employ Cromek as an engraver, evidently with work such as would otherwise have been given to Blake, and in 1805 (August 12th) he writes recommending Stothard to Hayley as a designer, in the same letter that mentions the gift of the "Songs," which he thought "a beautiful work." What made this worse was that a few months before Flaxman's recommendation of Cromek to Hayley, while Flaxman was still out of town, Hayley had written a letter to Blake, a "kind letter," saying,—“Do not fear you can want employment.” (Gilchrist, Vol. I., p. 195.)

In February, 1806, a book was published containing a design by Blake on the title-page which he had himself engraved for publication. The plate was cancelled and re-engraved by Cromek. The book is "A Father's Memoirs of his Son," by Dr. Malchin. So Cromek must have got this piece of work very soon after his recommendation by Flaxman to Hayley, and probably through Flaxman's influence,

since we shall see later that Blake playfully calls Dr. Malchin "Daddy, Jack Hemp's Parson", "Jack Hemp" being a nickname for Flaxman.

In 1808 Flaxman was busy working to prevent Blake engraving some outlines of his to Milton, Rainbach had first been spoken to about the commission but thought that Blake would be the better man to execute it. Flaxman by a letter, May, 1808, did actually prevent Blake getting the work. In the same letter, which is written to Hayley, Flaxman says,— "At present I have no intercourse with Mr. Blake." Not a word of explanation is added to this. The old friendship is over. Whether from prudence or from magnanimity Flaxman does not say what caused the rupture. A month or two earlier, in March of the same year, he has been writing apparently to prevent Blake receiving more than five guineas for some engraving (what the plate was we do not know) by pointing out that he, and Palmer, and others, who engraved the designs to Homer, received five guineas apiece, "a price with which these artists were highly contented." It is worth noting that, as a letter given by Gilchrist shows (Vol. I., p. 210, in May, 1804), Blake himself had written to Hayley that he had received five guineas for engraving the outlines to Homer, adding that Mr. Flaxman agreed with him that for the work then about to be taken in hand something more than outline would be necessary. The Flaxman letters here quoted offer no further information about Blake, but the cause of the quarrel between the friends is evident enough. The letters are unpublished, and we are indebted to Mr. Fairfax Murray for the permission to make use of them.

Flaxman, as well as Cromek, who commissioned Stothard to paint the Canterbury Pilgrims after seeing Blake's first design, and purposely left each artist under the impression that the other had stolen his subject, and even the form of the picture treating it, must have been therefore in Blake's mind when he wrote,— "All those with whom I have con-

tended in art have striven, not to excel, but to starve me out by calumny and the arts of trading competition."

The word "starve" here is hardly an exaggeration, and all who were concerned in "laying a plot" against Blake's price, — a phrase we shall meet with soon, must be massed together as the "nest of villains" referred to in the "Public Address." But only with regard to the *Examiner* does the same page speak of "hiring." It is indeed difficult to account on the ordinary principles of journalistic criticism for such violent attacks as were made on Blake in 1808, — three years after the date of the last letter by Blake written to Hayley under the belief that he was writing to a friend, not an enemy.

The first of the *Examiner's* articles is dated August, 1808.

In this Blake and Fuseli are contemptuously paired as a visionary and a fanatic. The designs are ridiculed. The "Soul exploring the recesses of the grave" suggests "no other idea but simply of a human being with a candle"; while in the "Reunion of the soul and body" the critic pretends to imagine that the upper figure is trying to dive into the mouth of the lower. In the "Last Judgment," the critic assumes a more serious tone and accuses the artist of indecency, "before the throne of God himself." With odd inconsistency he praises the "Death of the Strong wicked man" for being "simply natural." Words which, to Blake, would have seemed more offensive than all the rest, —

"Can there be anything more base,
More malice in disguise,
Than praise a man for doing what
That man does most despise,"

as he says, elsewhere, — *apropos* of some praise given by Sir Joshua to Michel Angelo.

On September 17th, 1809, a new attack was made by the *Examiner*. The article is avowedly written for the purpose of driving Blake out of all artistic favour. Blake's little exhibition in his brother's house, which the article professes to criticise, had been opened since May, and was, after long

neglect, most probably closed, and its chief picture taken down to engrave (Gilchrist, Vol. I., 279) by the time the attack was made. That it was not an honest piece of art-criticism in the public interest is, therefore, almost certain. The article calls Blake,—“an unfortunate lunatic whose personal inoffensiveness secures him from confinement,” and who would have also escaped criticism had not “persons of position” praised him, and thus, “in feeding his vanity, stimulated him to publish his madness more largely.” The Descriptive Catalogue is called,—“a farrago of nonsense, unintelligibleness, and egregious vanity, the wild effusion of a distempered brain.” We are told, “that men of taste in their sober senses should mistake its unmeaning and distorted conceptions for the flashes of genius is indeed a phenomenon.” This phenomenon has proved more permanent than the *Examiner's* rebuke, unearthed now, for the sake of the interest it gains by containing the name of the “in-offensive lunatic” whose only crime was that “persons of taste” admired him.

The year after this attack,—that is to say in 1810, Schiavonetti died. “It was,” said the *Examiner*,—to his “tasteful hand” that Blake had owed his success in attempting “by bad drawings to represent immateriality.” Schiavonetti had bestowed an “exterior charm” on this “deformity and nonsense.”

The following lines,—childish as verse,—valuable as biography and even as art-criticism,—show that Blake kept his sanity and his good nature too. He writes in his own notebook for his own amusement, and the relief of his feelings:—

Having given great offence by writing prose
 I'll write in verse as soft as Bartoloze.
 Some blush at what others can see no crime in,
 But nobody sees any harm in rhyming.
 Dryden, in rhyme, cries;—“Milton only plann'd.”
 Every fool shook his bells throughout the land.
 Tom Cooke out Hogarth down with his clean graving;
 Thousands of connoisseurs with joy ran raving.

Thus, Hayley, on his toilette seeing the soap,
 Cries, "Homer is very much improved by Pope."
 Some say I've given provision to my foes,
 And now I lead my false friends by the nose.
 Flaxman, and Stothard, smelling a sweet savour,
 Cry,—"Blake's drawing spoils painter and engraver."
 While I, looking up to my umbrella,
 Resolved to be a very contrary fellow,
 Cry, looking quite from circumference to centre,—
 "No one can finish so high as the original inventor."
 Then poor Schiavonetti died of the Cromek,—
 A thing that's tied about the *Examiner's* neck.
 This is my sweet apology to my friends,
 That I may put them in mind of their latter ends.

The single "latter end" already known at this time was that of Schiavonetti. But it seems to have come to Blake as a sort of presentiment that Schiavonetti would not be the only one of the group to die. The "second sight" that foresaw the hanging of Ryland's many years previously was not quite extinct. As a matter of fact, the next to go, in 1812, was Cromek, who is here the "thing tied about the *Examiner's* neck," and is thus the connecting link between Hayley and Hunt, as Flaxman is between Cromek and Hayley.

The MS. book supplies a wild piece of hasty doggerel, more in the schoolboy spirit than any other of these strange scraps, and more totally unworthy, but for its biographical value, of publication. It is a mere fragment, and dramatically pretends to be written by Stothard, whose name is misspelled in a derisive and indecorous manner. It is here restored. The other persons are,—

Bob Screwmuch	Robert Cromek.
Death	Blake.
Felpham Billy	William Hayley.
Quibble	unknown (perhaps Billy's Lawyer).
Billy's Dragoon	perhaps Schofield.
Yorkshire Jack (or Jack Hemp)	John Flaxman.
Cur (Stothard's Lawyer)	name unknown.
Dady (Jack Hemp's Parson)	Dr. Malchin.
The Souls of Stothard and Blake	Their Works of Art.

The "man of men" in the first line is Cromek, whose publications were pushed in the north. He was a Yorkshire-

man, and was much in Yorkshire during the year preceding his death. (Gilchrist, Vol. I., p. 289.) It is not impossible that Blake attributed his death to the Yorkshire journeys, and these to an over anxiety to make money out of the cheaply bought designs, so that Blake's soul was indeed "death in a disguise" to Cromek, who had thought to treat it as a cat does a mouso.

(*Stothard luy.*) "———And his legs covered it like a long fork,
 Reached all the way from Chichester to York—
 From York all across Scotland to the sea ;
 That was a man of men, as seems to me.
 Not only in his mouth his own soul lay,
 But my soul also would he bear away.
 Like as a pedlar bears his weary pack
 He would bear my soul buckled to his back.
 But once, alas ! committing a mistake,
 He bore the wretched soul of William Blake,
 That he might turn it into eggs and gold,
 But neither back nor mouth those eggs could hold.
 His under jaw dropped as those eggs he laid,
 And all my eggs are addled and decay'd.
 O that I never had seen William Blake,
 Or could from Death Assasinetta (*sic*) wake !
 We thought,—alas that such a thought could be !—
 That Blake would etch for him and draw for me.
 For 'twas a kind of bargain Screwmuch made
 That Blake's design should be by us display'd,
 Because he makes designs so very cheap.
 Then Screwmuch at Blake's soul took a long leap.
 'Twas not a mouse. 'Twas Death in a disguise.
 And I, alas ! live to weep out my eyes.
 And death sits laughing on their monuments,
 On which he's written, *Received the contents.*
 But I have writ, so sorrowful my thought is,
 His epitaph, for my tears are aquafortis.
Come Artists, knock your head against this stone
For sorrow that our friend Bob Screwmuch's gone.
 And now the Muses in me smile and laugh,
 I'll also write my own dear epitaph ;
 And I'll be buried near a dyke,
 That my friends may weep as much as they like—
Here lies Stothard, the Friend of All Mankind
Who has not left one enemy behind."

The fragment ends with the words—

" Here lies Stothard, the Friend of All," &c.

But a later page of the notebook completes the epitaph, changing the name to John Trot, extracting the couplet as a witticism and adding the lines—

“ Friends were quite hard to find, old Authors say;
But now they stand in everybody's way.”

In a still more mischievous, *miching malecho* mood, Blake wrote sideways on the margin and over the top of this long rhymed monologue,—

“ The *Examiner*, whose very name is Hunt,
Called ‘Death’ a madman; trembling for the affront,
Like trembling hare, sits on his weekly paper,
On which he used to dance and shout and caper,
And Yorkshire Jack Hemp and Quibble blushing saw,
Clapp'd Death into the corner of his jaw.
And Felpham Billy rode out every morn,
Horseback with death, over the fields of corn,
Who with iron hand cuff'd in the afternoon
The ears of Billy's lawyer and dragoon.
And Cur, my lawyer, and Daddy, Jack Hemp's parson,
Both went to law with Death to keep our ears on.
For now to starve Death we had laid a plot
Against his price, but Death was in the pot.
He made them pay his price, alackaday!
He knew both law and gospel better than they.”

“Law” and “Gospel” are used symbolically. They mean Reason and Imagination. The poem called “The Everlasting Gospel” is referred to. Unfortunately this strange fragment breaks off here. It may be further explained by futuro biographers of Blake. They will notice that Hunt, with his articles, elsewhere called “hired” is in a plot to starve “Death.” This name, as given playfully to Blake, means no more than that he made his reputation by the “Grave.” But “Death” is not always here equivalent to “Blake.” The word is sometimes used in its natural sense, sometimes with a sort of punning suggestiveness in both. Screwmuch indicates Cromek well enough without the “Bob,” and Daddy, a nickname suggested by Dr. Malchin's book, “A Father's Memoirs of his Son,” and “Jack Hemp,” of Yorkshire, Flaxman's county, are obvious. Whether or not Hunt ever

trembled for the articles he had written must remain doubtful. At any rate they were discontinued. Billy's Dragoon may have been the owner from whom he bought the cavalry horse on which he used to ride "horseback with death, over the fields of corn," which does not mean that he rode with Blake, but with danger, for the horse had thrown him once. In the friendly old days Blake had written most earnestly begging him not to ride it again. Jan. 14, 1804—Gilchrist, Vol. I., 1, 199.

It is barely possible—let us make a present to Mr. Rossetti of the suggestion—that when, after 1808, Blake began more and more to look on Hayley as a man who had been in every sense a false friend, and a real enemy of his career and his sustenance, as well as of his soul and his art, he may also have doubted whether the defending testimony, bail, and help that Hayley gave during the trial for treason were anything but additional hypocrisy and treachery. The secret enmity of Flaxman, and his joining Cromek and dragging Hayley in, must have so utterly astonished him that nothing else can have seemed incredible after that. But the theory is untenable. It has absolutely no support beyond the mere words "Billy's Dragoon." When the nature of what it implies is considered this is insufficient. Blake would no more have massed a hired villain of this sort with the enmity shown him by those who were in a "plot to starve" him and keep him from "his price" as well as from the exercise of his art than he would have massed an attack on his wife's corporeal fidelity with an attempt to "act on her," or influence her in the direction of the same plot, such as Flaxman made when he acted on Hayley, Hayley on Cromek, Cromek on Hunt. The passage about how "Death" cuffed ears with iron hand is obscure. Iron signifies the world of experience,—so also ears,—both "northern" symbols. What was the incident? How is it connected with the "going to law to keep on the ears"?—More biographical knowledge than can be now obtained is needed to clear up this. At least there is no allusion by symbol

or nickname to the Felpham trial for treason. The lawyers, Our and Quibble, are obscure also. Were they Boydel and Bowyer? Another scrap of doggerel from the same notebook and of about the same date contains these names; they never occur again.

" Was I angry with Hayley who used me so ill,
Or can I be angry with Felpham's old mill?
Or angry with Flaxman, or Cromek, or Stothard,
Or Poor Schiavonatti whom they to death bothered,
Or angry with Malchin or Boydel or Bowyer
Because they did not say—' O what a beau ye are' ?
At a friend's errors anger show,—
Mirth at the errors of a foe."

This again, however dark otherwise, shows that romantic intrigue is not the real sin of Hayley. The most helpless seeker after a rhyme would hardly have compared such a wrong as Mr. Rossetti supposes Blake to attribute to Hayley with the deeds of Felpham's old mill. The mill has a special significance through Blake's writings, but it means argument in philosophy and unintelligent finish in art. One more scrap sheds a vague light on the "nest of villains." It is earlier than the rest.

" Cosway, Frazer and Baldwin, of Egypt's Lake,
Fear to associate with Blake.
This life is a warfare against evils,
They heal the sick : he casts out devils.
Hayley, Flaxman and Stothard are also in doubt
Lest their friendship should be put to the rout."

Was this Cosway the same as the magician of whom mention has been made in the third chapter? Was Blake at this time a singer of simplicity cast out by the singer of insipidity, a designer of genius by the sculptor of talent, an original mystic by a formalist of mysticism, as well as an engraver refused by the print-seller? If so, his rejection was fourfold, and must have hurt him indeed to despair; for if Hayley, Flaxman, Cosway and Cromek would not recognise him, what could he expect of the public? But specialists die in their errors, and the great universalist, the world, grows in spite of them.

One thing more belongs to the mill as a symbol. It is that of unforgiving law. It is the reverse of forgiving Christianity. The contrast is figured in the design to "Jerusalem," p. 22. Unforgiveness to the sin of having an imagination was Hayley's great wrong.

Now it only remains to point out one more quality in the lines Mr. Rossetti has exhumed, and which have required such close examination. The last two do not belong to the first four. They are part of another quatrain written at a different time and in a different ink. They are at the bottom of a right-hand page as the book lies open before us. The two lines that precede them rightly are at the bottom of the left-hand page. It is not the only instance in the book which presents an example of lines written beside instead of above each other as space ran short. Restored to proper order the second quatrain runs thus:—

"To forgive enemies Hayley does pretend,
Who never in his life forgave a friend.
And when he could not act upon my wife,
Hired a villain to bereave my life."

The ink, pen, and handwriting, as well as the place in the book, show that this was written some years later than the quatrain about the "pecks of poison and salt." In fact, between the two had come the *Examiner* incidents. The latter lines allude to this, the first were an obullition of irritation against Hayley for keeping Blake at drudgery and in penury.

On Milton (extra page 32) an allusion unites and explains all that has now been worked out in detail—

"The idiot reasoner laughs at the Man of Imagination,
And from laughter proceeds to murder by undervaluing calumny."

The prose essay on the "Vision of the last Judgment" contains the same symbolic use of the word "murder," and Blake who, in the MS. Book calls himself once, "a very onvious man," accused himself of "many murders" in conversation with Mr. Crabb Robinson.

The phraso will be seen to be the same as that used in "Jerusalem" (p. 91, line 11), and the word "murder" occurs in the same sense in the same page (line 25). It must be read in connection with the view that every truth, as well as every error, "is a man." Therefore, all that can happen to a man can happen to such truth or error as he, at the time, incarnates, and by the same symbol, what happens to his truths happens to him. They are his "littlo ones." "Inasmuch as yo did it to the loast of these, yo did it to Me," is the Biblical expression on which Blake probably founded his view. (Compare extract at the end of the chapter on the MS. Book.)

The whole of the lines on which Mr. Rossetti founded so hateful and degrading a view of Blake's mind and character, are now no longer mysterious. They do not contain matter either involving a social or a criminal charge such as he supposed. Least of all is there the smallest doubt of their sincerity.

In a letter dated May, 1804, Blake tells Hayley,—“in London every calumny and falsehood uttered against another of the same trade is thought fair play. Engravers, Painters, Statuaries, Printers, Poets, we are not in a field of battle but in a City of Assassinations.”

The material from which the interpretation here offered is gathered, with the exception of the letter just quoted,—those belong to Mr. Murray's collection and, perhaps the "extra page" of Milton,—was all in Mr. Rossetti's hands, or within his reach, at the time when he cast his handful of mud at Blake's name. This seems almost incredible, but a greater surprise remains.

Five years after the Memoir prefixed to the Aldine collection was published, a new edition of Gilchrist's "Life of Blake" appeared. In this the whole of the Felpham period was carefully re-considered. Many letters not in the first edition were printed, and others, arranged for the first time in their proper places, were made to serve as a portion of the narrative. Several lively little bits of hasty doggerel on

Hayley are given, and yet, by the most deliberate suppression, the seeming accusation that would brand Hayley as a would-be adulterer and assassin is simply omitted.

Such an omission amounts in itself almost to an adoption of Mr. Rossetti's opinion. But as if on purpose to preclude any other interpretation of this timorous piece of hushing-up, the following words occur in a special supplementary chapter at the end of the first volume:—

“Considering the interval of seventeen years which has now elapsed since the first publication of this ‘Life,’ it may be well to refer briefly to such studies of Blake as have since appeared.” Then, after the mention of Mr. Swinburne's essay, Mr. Smetham's article, and Mr. Scott's catalogue, comes this reference:—“Last, but not least, the richly condensed and representative essay prefixed by Mr. W. M. Rossetti to his edition (in the Aldine series) of Blake's ‘Poetical Works,’ demands from all sides—as its writer has from all sides discerned and declared Blake—the highest commendation we can here briefly offer.”

The same volume also contains opinions on Blake's sanity quite opposed to Mr. Rossetti's, and the chapter on the Felpham period concludes with the following words, which, if Mr. Rossetti is right, would be altogether unjustifiable:—

“Not without some sense of relief, probably, will the reader turn the last leaf of the story of Blake's connection with Hayley, *honourable though it were to each*; especially to Hayley, considering how little nature had fitted him to enter into the spiritual meaning of Blake's art.” (Gilchrist's “Life of Blake,” Vol. I., p. 223.)

This, indeed, when Hayley had shown the true kindness of his character at Felpham during the time of the trial for treason, was exactly the view that Blake took of their intercourse. Then all imputations were withdrawn, and the man who had “offended” him “ignorantly” was “considered with favour and affection.”

Then, in recollection, even the days of doubt and trouble

put on a rose-coloured glow, and nothing was remembered of them but what was kind and pleasant.

In December, 1804, Blake writes to Hayley :—

“My wife joins me in wishing you a Merry Christmas. Remembering our happy Christmas at lovely Felpham, our spirits seem still to hover round our sweet cottage and round the beautiful Turret. I have said *seem*, but am persuaded that the distance is nothing but a phantasy. We are often sitting by our cottage fire, and often we think we hear your voice calling at the gate. Surely these things are real and eternal in the mind and can never pass away.”

In fact, it was not until the troubles of the year 1808 to 1812 that Blake came to see that Hayley was really among those who were against him. Then what had seemed “eternal in the mind” was seen as an error,—generous perhaps, but none the less to be “cast out.” Then Hayley relegated to his place among the “nest of villains,” and was finally compelled to share contemptuous unrevengeful memory with Felpham’s old mill.

VIII.—MENTAL POSITION.

It has been seen that abundant evidence exists to show that Blake had no insane delusions about Hayley, neither did he write scandalous imputations to which he did not "lend credence" in a note-book which he forgot to burn. We may therefore abandon the shallow theories of madness or badness as alternative explanations of the enigmatical little rhyme over which we have now been so long occupied. At the same time a new question confronts us as to the peculiar characteristics of Blake's mind.

That he belonged to the order of those "great wits" who "to madness nearly are allied" is undoubted. Equally certain is it that he was not mad. Before yielding our minds to the study of his work or our hearts to the fascination of his character, it is natural and right to do what can be done at this late day to make sure how he stood with regard to his fellows, and in what ways, if any, he had an organism apart, and a temperament not common to all.

Although the extracts given in the last chapter may be admitted to serve their purpose in establishing the meaning of the lines which they are assembled here to interpret, they must necessarily produce an impression not altogether satisfactory. We can with difficulty foresee that we shall come to treat with sincere respect a man so prone to high-pitched notes of exaggerated figurative speech that even a scanty collection of his phrases is enough to show that he called mere discouragement "poison," and considered an influenced editor as a "hired villain," while a commonplace conversation with

his wife appeared as an attempt so to "act" on her that she might have been "lost." A still more emphatic phrase, "Mark well my words, they are your eternal salvation," and a most violent nick-name, "Satan," applied with lavish hand to himself, his friend, and even to Lord Bacon, must be fairly looked at and weighed if Blake himself is to be seen and valued at his right worth. Lastly there is Blake's own claim that his work was inspired and its "authors" in "Eternity."

All this is so closely akin to the phraseology of persons who are not at all great wits allied to madness, but simply religious maniacs, that any one who has had the misfortune to have the very slightest acquaintance with their ways of speech would need no further evidence to justify the classing of Blake among these unfortunates.

In defence of his sanity it has long since been urged by Gilchrist that when a description of one of his visions had been mistaken for what is called a "matter of fact," Blake said "here," touching his forehead, when asked *where* he had seen the strange sight that he had been describing. Again, with a similar hope of refuting the cry of "mad genius," Mr. Swinburne quotes the lines at the opening of the book of "Milton" in which the "daughters of Beulah" are invited to "inspire the poet's song" by "descending down the nerves of the right arms from out the portals of the brain." We are then told to "observe here the answer made by anticipation to the old foolish charge of madness and belief in mere material visions."

Such defences when they stand alone are little better than attacks. If Blake was a cool-headed spinner of literary extravagances, he is an even less attractive personality than he appears as an ecstatic, a visionary, or a madman.

Nine-tenths of the apparent insanity in Blake's prophetic books, and the complete and unstinted whole of their apparent incoherence, will be found disposed of in the explanatory chapters which form the bulk of the present work. But they deal with the matter of Blake's utterances, not with their

manner, least of all with Blake's character as indicated by this manner.

Blake said that his verse was "dictated" to him; that visions, and even people, "appeared" to him, that he had lived in the age of Socrates, and *had been* Socrates, or "a sort of brother"; that the time during which he wrote his best poems was "non-existent"; that thought was place, and that to think of Felpham was to be there, even though he said so in London; that his brother Robert, after death, taught him to print; and that another man, totally non-existent in the flesh, of whom he nevertheless made a sketch, taught him to paint; and much else quite inconceivable as mere figure of speech. He freely showered terms of opprobrium on all who disagreed with him. To differ in opinion from him was to come under moral reprobation.

There is even a tendency among the supporters of Blake whose enjoyment and admiration of him were only marred and not destroyed by his "erratic utterances" to take a sort of pride in condoning this verbal venial sin, and to scorn as narrow-minded anyone unable to *go with him*—to use the phrase of the first biography.

A favourite plea urged in his favour is that Blake took a pardonable pleasure in provoking with enigmatic and seemingly wild and wicked speeches, those about him who had irritated him by attempting to draw out his peculiarities in order to make a show of him.

There were, in fact, three natural and inevitable causes at work which were certain to make Blake appear more or less extravagant if not mad. They have been pointed out already, but their full utility is not to be felt unless they are brought together and made into a little bunch of three keys, with which to unlock his meanings.

The first was his habit of thinking in language, which was symbolic without being metaphorical, in such language as, said Swedenborg, the Scriptures were written that they might have an inner as well as an outer meaning.

The second was his philosophic point of view. He regarded truth as a matter to be tested by personal impression, and not personal impression as a factor certain to produce an average of error in all ascertainments of truth. This will be spoken of at more length when "Ulro" or "error" is referred to. For the moment it is enough to mention such a philosophic test to perceive that though it be identical with the foundation of all received truth, it is equally indistinguishable from the *ipse dixit* of dogmatic madness.

The third was the trance-like absorption of his whole nature that accompanied his finest writing, a mood from which he returned to the ordinary conversation of life as a man from another land. Feeling this keenly, he could not but attribute the authorship of his life's work to influences which his ordinary *self* did not contain. A careful study of his character and his work will probably lead others to exactly the same opinion. Socrates would have found in Blake a more conclusive argument for the existence of "the gods," than the wildest rhapsodist of his day could present to him.

Not without apology to the reader who has been wearied or irritated by the writers who have yielded to the temptation to make picturesque literature out of Blake, when they had not taken the trouble to read his work sufficiently to master its system, an example or two of Blake's enigmatic style may be given here.

Of the symbolic manner no better instance could be wished than the story of the sheep: its denouement has already been referred to. The following is the whole narrative.

A lady whose children had just come home from a boarding school for the holidays, heard Blake say, in his usual quiet way—"The other evening, taking a walk, I came to a meadow, and at the farther corner of it I saw a fold of lambs. Coming nearer, the ground blushed with flowers, and the wattled cote, and its woolly tenants, were of an exquisite pastoral beauty. But I looked again, and it proved to be no living flock, but beautiful sculpture."

This may be taken as approximately authentic, notwithstanding that there is something about the phrase describing "the wattled cote, and its woolly tenants" with their "exquisite pastoral beauty," which belongs to a style suggestive of pen, ink, and memory, not of conversation.

The lady, thinking this a capital holiday show for her children, eagerly interposed—"I beg your pardon, Mr. Blake, but may I ask where you saw this?" "*Here, Madam,*" answered Blake, touching his forehead.

Gilchrist, who gives the story, leaves us to conclude that Blake was an atrocious mystifier who delighted in disappointing the expectations of people whose only fault was that they were foolish enough to listen to his egotistic rambling. Nothing in the narrative hints that the lady had provoked Blake to this treatment by "drawing him out." This may possibly have been the case. But it is not necessary to suppose so. The contrary is equally probable, namely, that the mother of the school-children had said something that had warmed Blake's heart towards her. He was an enthusiastic lover of children himself. It is not unlikely that with a momentary hope that her heart might explain to her the *arcana* of his parable he slipped, almost unawares, into relating to her a "Memorable Fancy." The key to its meaning is not wanting. In Jerusalem we hear of the "bright sculptures of Los's hall" and those that decorate the "gates" of the Four Points. Blake's little myth might be written out into dull explanatory language in this way:—

"The other evening, taking a walk, I came to a meadow, and there, at some distance, fancied I really saw with my mortal and perishable eyesight a flock of lambs. At the first moment I was deceived by what was actually a symbolic vision sent to remind me of the divine love that is given even to uninspired natures, especially to the fresh, young, and innocent. But as I drew near a second symbol appeared before me, in flowers that are types of light and beauty, springing from earth, the type of darkness and ugliness.

They are also the twin figure whose brother-symbol is shown when the dark blood of the heavy mortal body becomes the love-bearing sign, the blush upon the cheek. And when quite close to my visionary lambs they changed their character and showed themselves to be sculpture which I know to be symbolic of the unchanging nature of imaginative types, made, as they are of ideas, the least perishable of mental substance as sculpture is of artistic material. Remember, madam, that your children will grow up, but that the beauty you see in them now is eternal. This is a parable !”

This interpretation is at least Blakean, and suggests a line of inference which may be followed further in considering the true acceptation of many of Blake's spoken and written words, supposed in the first biography to have been uttered in a wantonly mystifying mood.

Of enigmatical utterances which belong to the class whose key is supplied by Blake's mental standpoint, the most obvious is his statements that he touched the sky with his stick, and that the earth was flat, both recorded in the closing chapters of *Gilchrist*.

A passage in *Milton* sufficiently indicates how to take apparent wildnesses of this description—see page 28, line 5 and following.

The difference between Blake in his visionary mood and Blake in his ordinary life is that between a man to whom it was a point of duty to yield to no one, and a man who, with old Irish politeness, wished to contradict no one. The poetic mood so far left traces of itself even when it was in abeyance that any excitement brought on its imperious and exalted spirit of prophetic dogmatism. This accounts for the discrepancy between his violent language of disapproval when writing and his polite manner to those about him, a manner which he only laid down once because “forced to insist” when dealing with Hayley, as one of the letters given by *Gilchrist* relates.

These are the words, some of which have been already quoted. They occur in the letter to Captain Butts dated

July 6th, 1803. "Mr. H. approves of my designs as little as he does of my Poems and I have been forced to insist on his leaving me, in both, to my own self-will; for I am determined to be no longer pestered with his genteel ignorance and polite disapprobation. I know myself, both poet and painter, and it is not his affected contempt that can move to anything but a more assiduous pursuit of both arts. Indeed by my late firmness I have brought down his affected loftiness, and he begins to think I have some genius, as if genius and assurance were the same thing."

The last words, being as much Blake's own as all the rest, do more to answer for his *moral* sanity than all the criticism that can be bestowed on his work, and are in themselves almost a guarantee that such criticism will not be wasted labour. They show that if Blake spoke often in terms of wrath and couched his rebukes in language of invective, he did so as an artistic and poetic duty, not from what Mr. Rossetti calls "mere testiness." That he believed in the righteousness of anger is shown in the "extra page" given at the end of Milton where he says that it is not "wise" to dissemble wrath.

"Wisdom" meant goodness to Blake, as the following words from the paper on the "Last Judgment" show. "All life consists of these two; throwing off error and knaves from our company continually, and receiving truth or wise men into our company continually. . . . Men are admitted into heaven. . . . because they have cultivated their understandings." (Gilchrist's "Life," Vol. II., pp. 195-197.)

The reader of the "Life" is somewhat in need of re-assurance when he compares the customary tone of Blake's written criticisms with the elaborately compiled testimony from many witnesses speaking to the gentleness of his manners. The first impression is that Blake himself deserved the "stick" for which he calls in a marginal note written in his copy of "Lavater's Aphorisms" quoted in Vol. I., p. 64. "Avoid like a serpent," says Lavater, "him who speaks politely yet

writes impertinently." "A dog!" exclaims Blake, "get a stick to him!" His own firm belief in his position as a man provided with genius by eternal influence, forbade him to consider any of his flashes of contempt or hostility, even when bestowed on famous names, as "impertinence."

With regard to his action in mounting the high horse when Hayley politely disapproved of his poems and designs no apology is needed at this day. He could not have done his work by merely cultivating the pleasant tendencies of chatty leisure, and he could not endure to have it criticised in this region of daily life, as though it had anything in common with the average social world. Conscience often checked his compliance with all persuasions, however friendly, in any matter, either of conduct or art. "I must be shut up in myself," he writes, in one letter, "or be reduced to nothing." To reserve a portion of his days for being so shut up was his duty to that gift of "translucence," and "expansion" to which he at one time believed there was "no limit."

After all, the most important thing to remember in dealing with any utterance of Blake whatsoever, is that he did not speak at random, and did not use wild and whirling words. His deliberate and intellectual judgments were coherent and true so far as his wide imagination and narrow education permitted. His symbolic, or as he has it "inspired" sayings, were true, wider, more closely knit. If they have come to us in a broken form that is the fault of accident, not their own.

With regard to the importance, as a matter affecting salvation, which Blake attached to his own writings, his claim is not an isolated piece of insane egotism, but logically follows from his belief in a *world of imagination* into which we could all enter, and from which it was damnation to be excluded. This world was heaven, from which those "who had not cultivated their understandings" were excluded. Work, such as his own visionary work, there "laid up treasures." Yet he did not insist on forcing his own myth upon everyone

as being the exact religion needed by each. He urged everyone to see for himself. Of his most important, imaginative idea, that of the "Last Judgment," he says—"I have represented it as I saw it. To different people it appears differently, as everything else does."

The essential thing was that each should enter the world of vision in some way. This act, he held, could be assisted "by the advice of a friend." Milton he says was an "awakener" and of himself he declares—

"I rest not from my great task
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
Of Man inwards into the worlds of Thought, into Eternity,
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination."

To this, of course, the unimaginative person answers with indignation that though it may not be madness, it is wickedness and folly. "Am I," he says, "to be damned for not having imagination?" His sensation is somewhat that of Falstaff's hostess who refused to part with her hopes of heaven merely because he owed her money. The unfairness of such a condemnation condemns it.

Religion, however, does not base itself on fairness. The Christian faith itself never, since the day when the tower of Siloam fell, made any such claim.

Blake does not profess to please the opposer. "To be an error and to be cast out is part of God's plan" (Gilchrist's "Life," Vol. II., p. 195), he says as distinctly as any upholder of the faith to which "many are called" and by which "few are chosen."

Without urging that his religious belief must be tested by its capacity to include all—without even dwelling on its central tenet of the Forgiveness of sins, and its much needed reminder that what is "a sin in the sight of cruel man is not so in the sight of our kind God" ("Jerusalem," p. 77), the question of interest from a personal point of view is how Blake came by his belief in "imagination."

Those of us who have very vivid dreams seldom know

when we are dreaming, that we are not awake. Our daylight life is more convincing in the long run simply because its conditions are more permanent. We know to what we shall open our eyes to-morrow morning. We cannot predict what we shall dream of to-night.

But Blake's visions, coming to him at uncertain intervals during a long life, appearing now by night and now by day—always, so far as we know, while he was awake,—suggested a vast symbolic myth to him, containing a whole language of names and personages, and telling by fits and starts a narrative whose apparent incoherence veils a unity of significance that becomes more astonishing and fascinating the more closely it is studied. It would have been practically impossible, and it is at any rate practically incredible that this should have been the result of deliberate contrivance. We have many scraps of Blake's writings and many of his books overlap each other in their exposition of the great story, but of building up by ingenuity, of elaborating from a plot, or expanding from a sketch, there is no sign. The fragments of which the whole is formed are often ill-joined and sometimes not joined at all, but such as they are, they bear every sign of having come straight to the mind in large segments at a time. Most of "Vala" appears to have been written at speed, in divisions frequently containing over a hundred lines. The myths thus produced were sometimes reasoned over, and as their intention was made manifest, the un-visionary or purely intellectual part of Blake's mind seems to have caught the idea of the language which the visionary portion was talking, and talks it too. But the upshot of the whole thing, viewed as an experience, was that it was "dictated," and, however this may be accounted for, the very appearance of Blake's manuscripts supports the assertion as fully as the matter of the work.

It will be said of Blake, as it has been said of other visionaries, that his right brain was dictating to his left, or *vice versa*. It may be that this was true, and yet it may also be true that outside the man was an atmosphere of visionary

matter always ready to permeate him, to which from time to time he was more or less open. One brain in the same shell may have been more porous to its influence than the other. All these are matters of what may be called occult physiology. But the plainest of physiologic problems are so mysterious that only metaphor will state them. When we say that the brain works, we are already employing a term invented for the labour of the hands, and applying it where it ceases to be a description, and becomes an allegory. When Blake says that spirits manage our digestion for us, he does no more.

Occultists who have made vision their especial study are inclined to believe that we are still in the infancy of those experiences which will show the majority of us some day how firm a land is the land of dreams. While this work is going through the press some curious experiments have been commenced with persons who, on receiving a symbol, have the power of seeing and conversing with visionary forms raised by that symbol. Some of these seers have beheld personages that are recognizably identical with those of Blake's myth, though differing a little, as Blake himself said visions differ with the eye of the visionary. Orc, for instance, was viewed by one seer as black, instead of glowing, and by another as a wolf in armour. Urthona and Los, and Ololon have also been seen, and independently described in terms almost identical with Blake's. These experiments have been few and recent, and none were made until the interpretation of the Prophetic Books was written. Some suggestion arises that the Blake-like character of the vision thus aroused was due to "thought-transference," one of the editors of the present collection having been in the room at the time. But "thought-transference" is no less a mystery than the "dictation" from which Blake wrote, and it has yet to be ascertained whence, ultimately, all these thoughts were transferred. In none of the recent exhibitions of Blake's mythic characters, have any persons been concerned who are believed to have been either mad, dreaming, or in any way unhealthy. There is less and

less reason to suppose that Blake's inspiration had its source outside the limits of sanity. There is more and more cause to believe that mysticism and not madness, still less mistiness, must be interrogated for the ultimate answer to the riddle which Blake himself left, like the tale of Cambuscan, "half-told."

IX.—1804.—A MEMORABLE YEAR.

IN 1804 Blake returned to London, escaping from miniature painting and other unsuitable occupations which Hayley's patronage obtained for him. At 17, South Molton Street, Blake now settled, and here he engraved and published "Jerusalem" and "Milton," the poems written at Felpham. He describes the composition of "Jerusalem" in a letter to Butts, April 25th, 1803:—"I have written this poem from immediate dictation, twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation, and even against my will. The time it has taken in writing was thus rendered non-existent, and an immense poem exists which seems to be the labour of a long life, all produced without labour or study. I mention this to show you what I consider the grand reason of my being brought down here."

It is certainly the reason why his Felpham days are remembered now. It may be taken as most probable, almost as certain, that the "Grand Poem" was "Jerusalem," as Gilchrist considers. The only doubt ever shed on the subject being due to a phrase in the "Public Address" in which Blake describes himself as still about to publish the poem. "Jerusalem" is dated 1804 on the title-page, and the "Public Address" refers to an exhibition that did not take place till 1809. But the dates approach if the address was written when the chief picture there shown was begun, not when it was finished, and if we consider that the title-date of "Jerusalem" was marked before, and not after, the hundred pages that follow were printed and painted.

The year 1804 is also marked as the date of the book of

“Milton.” It was one of a series of years which may be called the awakening period of Blake’s mature life. “Milton” he calls the “Awakener,” and from the time of Blake’s arrival at Felpham, when “another covering of earth” seemed to have been “removed” from him, to this year, he was, as his letters show, constantly experiencing shocks of surprise and delight, as freshly and ever more freshly the dawn of visionary light widened before his eyes.

The highest point of this awakening, the meeting-place where it joined hands with art and consciousness, appears to have been reached at this time as never before. Often Blake had seemed to himself to have arrived at the union of his working mind and his dreaming mind. But from now they promised to act harmoniously, and not as before, when the worker laboriously sought to record what the dreamer had happily experienced. This union came to him in a flash of delight while studying a collection of pictures by the Old Masters.

In October, 1804, he writes to Hayley, with whom he was now thoroughly united in cordial affection, to describe what he had gained from a visit to the Turchsessan Gallery. The series of letters of which this is one are to be found only in the second edition of Gilchrist’s “Life,” and would be enough, without other cause, to make the book in which they are printed a valuable possession.

The first part of this letter is on business and domestic matters, relating among other things that an obstinate rheumatism which Mrs. Blake brought from the damp cottage at Felpham, was at last cured, together with stiffness and swelling of the knees that had accompanied it, by electric treatment. Many of the letters refer to money. Blake seems to have been earning good sums, but to be constantly in need. The few words about his wife’s cure contain no hint about its cost, but we easily infer that Blake’s resources were being used wisely and unselfishly to bring about this result. He had known of the Turchsessan Gallery, as the

correspondence shows, for some months before the date of this letter,—October, 1804,—but had not visited it. There is a significance in his first outing and his wife's cure being timed together. Like most of the details to the credit of Blake's personal character, this is not made the subject of a direct statement, however modest. We are left to infer it.

Suddenly the letter breaks out into enthusiasm in words that are worth examination.

“For now! O Glory! O Delight! I have entirely reduced that spectrous Fiend to his station whose annoyance has been the ruin of my labours for the last passed twenty years of my life. He is the enemy of conjugal love, and is the Jupiter of the Greeks, an iron-hearted tyrant, the ruiner of ancient Greece. I speak with perfect confidence and certainty of the fact which has passed upon me. Nebuchadnezzar had seven times passed over him, I have had twenty; thank God I was not altogether a boast as he was, but I was a slave bound in a mill among beasts and devils; these beasts and these devils are now, together with myself, become children of light and liberty, and my feet and my wife's feet are become free from fotters. O lovely Felpham, parent of Immortal Friendship, to thee I am indebted for my three years' rest from perturbation, and the strength I now enjoy. Suddenly, on the day after visiting the Turchessan Gallery of Pictures I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth, and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me as by a door and window-shutters. Consequently I can with confidence promise you ocular demonstration of my altered state on the plates I am now engraving after Romney, whose spiritual aid has not a little conduced to my restoration to the light of Art. O the distress I have undergone, and my poor wife with me! Incessantly labouring and incessantly spoiling what I had done well. Every one of my friends was astonished at my faults and could not assign a reason; they knew my industry and abstinence from every pleasure for the sake of study, and yet.—and yet,—and yet there wanted the proofs of industry

in my works. I thank God with entire confidence that it shall be so no longer:—he is become my servant who domineered over me, he is even as a brother who was my enemy. Dear Sir, excuse my enthusiasm, or rather madness, for I am really drunk with intellectual vision whenever I take a pencil or graver into my hand, even as I used to be in my youth, but as I have not been for twenty dark but very profitable years. I thank God that I courageously pursued my course through darkness. In a short time I shall make my assertion good that I am become as I was at first by producing the *Head of Romney*, and the *Shipwreck*, quite another thing from what you ever expected them to be. In short I am now satisfied and proud of my work, which I have not been for the above long period.”

Here Blake is writing not from “dictation,” but narrating the events of his life from ordinary memory. The letter is full of slips and oversights but alive with an artistic truth. It lacks the consistency which enabled him in visionary mood to pile up the gigantic symbolic myth of the four Zoas and their descendants out of fragmentary glimpses received in visionary hours. His “inspired” pen never forgets and never tries to remember. His letter-writing quill is no more unvarying in its assertions about himself than that of any other artist who, through the extreme variety of his moods, sometimes forgets.

There were moments during the twenty dark years when Blake, contemplating his own work too long and with too little opportunity of comparing it with anything except that which was repugnant to his tastes, had grown very “proud” and very “satisfied.” His letters to Captain Butts show this in more than one *naïve* page of self-exaltation in self-criticism.

But even then, there was a tone as though he were laboriously working himself up into a state of self-belief, lest the demon of doubt, which could put out the sun and moon, should extinguish in him that light of exhilaration without which no artist can do imaginative work. It must never be forgotten in

common fairness to the man, that however natural to him was the personal modesty and characteristic gentle unobtrusiveness for which all his friends praise him with one voice, Blake looked on artistic self-confidence,—which the unsympathetic call vanity and conceit,—as a duty. Without a share of it his talent would have not merely lain wrapped in a napkin, but muffled like Lazarus in graveclothes that, even after a miracle, would still need to be loosened.

The letter from Felpham dated November 22nd, 1802, is a curious example of Blake's efforts to be vain. He introduces a long quotation from Sir Joshua Reynolds, usually his pet aversion, in support of his view that length of line and simplicity of tint were essentially necessary to grandeur in art,—not knowing as we do now that nothing is necessary to grandeur, except grandeur,—and then he adds as a sort of deduction that his own work is equal to that of "Raphael and Caracci." Yet a little later he adds that it has faults; but so have "Raphael and Caracci." He even adds Correggio to the two strangely assorted names, whose very coupling shows how limited was his knowledge of the Old Masters. How could it be otherwise? Suddenly his faculty of insight comes to his aid, and he uncouples the names he has grouped, adding that he knows that these men were not like each other in style, and that if none were to be encouraged till he painted like the others, each would die neglected. His own style (by implication, unlike their's) he thinks the best, and that further labour could not improve his work because it was done in the heat of the spirit.

But further labour was just what he too often gave, and as it was labour without fresh reference to the source, as he himself calls it, of the language of art,—Nature,—he, as he now says, was incessantly spoiling what was well begun.

An artist will need little help in harmonizing the apparent contradictions on the surface of these letters, and will laugh at the idea that an apology needs to be made for Blake if in writing one sentence he forgot another and apparently denied

and refuted it. No one without experience of the tricks which our nerves play us when under the artistic strain, will adequately grasp the revelation of character in either letter, however wearisomely expounded.

In the excitement that followed now, after study of the Turchessan collection,—the ray of light which Blake speaks of, was what one may call executive light. Execution, the “chariot of genius,” had suddenly appeared before him. It was the chariot of fire. The earthly trouble of his prophetic career, the struggle of spirit with flesh, was now to end. Like Elijah, he had only to enter the chariot and ride. Had other men, he asked himself, so shaped their imaginations, and could not he? Was it so difficult? He returned to the mood of his student days. “*Anch’io pittore!*” And with an outburst of joy he poured forth his exhilaration in a letter. What artist does not know how his first conception becomes obliterated and lost under dusty fatigue, and changed to a sort of ugly brother of itself, while he is doubtfully fumbling after some suitable quality of execution which constantly eludes him. In a moment something in another man’s work, applied to a different purpose, succeeding, or perhaps even failing for that use, reveals to him just what he should have done himself to body forth his own idea. The joy and delight are inexpressible.

It is quite different from the joy first expressed by Blake when this awakening period began as at Felpham. It was for visionary advantage, for improvement in imagination, that he then rejoiced. As he walked by the shore he saw as he had never seen, and again as he strolled in his garden. But puzzled care and anxious brooding attended the production in art of things so beheld. Now it is *whenever he takes a pencil or graver in hand* that the inventions, each armed with its executive suggestion, render him drunk and mad with delight. Then, when he was at work, as the letter of September 11th, 1801, says—he was often hurried away by the mood of abstraction into the visionary world. Now he is helped by it

into the artistic world. The great paradox of moods, the faculty of being awake and asleep *at the same time*, is now given to him without effort in a burst of sympathetic admiration for the great of olden days. His own personality, never so alert and useful to himself, is never so well held in hand,—his “spectre” or “selfhood” is subdued, and from an enemy has become a brother.

The expression about the “mill” where he has been labouring at Felpham explains the use of the word in the myth of Palamabron in “Milton.” As for the devils and beasts among whom he worked, they were the “Venetian and Flemish Demons,” coupled together after Sir Joshua Reynolds, who classes the two schools under one head in the passage quoted with approval by Blake to Butts from Felpham. Sir Joshua there speaks of the Venetian and Flemish influences as tending towards the picturesque, and away from the grand in art.

Writing of one of his own works in the Descriptive Catalogue to his own exhibition, a picture evidently dating from Felpham days, Blake says that it was made the subject of experiment, over-laboured till only the greatest trouble brought it back to anything like its first state, and this was due to the effect on him of the Venetian and Flemish Demons,—the spirit of Titian constantly suggesting the blocking of art with brown shadows, and raising doubts which made it “easy for him to snatch away the vision time after time,” so that “when the artist took his pencil to execute his ideas” (instead of being drunk with intellectual vision as when the light of youth re-shone on him), “his power of imagination weakened so much and darkened that memory of nature and of pictures of the various schools possessed his mind instead of appropriate execution.”

In the word “appropriate” lies the key to this, and to the letter after the Turchsessan Gallery had been seen. Its opposite “inappropriate” should be *read in* before the words “nature,” and “pictures of various schools,” in the present quotation.

The sentence does not stop at "execution," but goes on,—
"resulting from the inventions; like walking in another man's style or speaking or looking in another man's style or manner unappropriate and repugnant to your own individual character, tormenting the true artist till he leaves the Florentine and adopts the Venetian practice, or does as Mr. B. has done—has the courage to suffer poverty and disgrace till he ultimately conquers." The letter on the Turchessan Gallery also shows the sympathetic docility of Blake's character, so often lost sight of under his impetuous onslaughts upon those who disagreed with him, and equally impetuous indignation against those who criticised. He was always opposed to verbal rebuke and verbal admonition, but always eager to learn through the silent results of other men's successful work. But it chanced that of "Venetian and Flemish" imagination he never had sufficient knowledge to enjoy,—and, with Blake, not to enjoy was not to understand.

In one of the letters to Hayley written just after the return to London from Felpham, that of May 4th, 1804, Blake thanks him for an illustrated book ("Falconer's Poems," with prints by Fettle), and says—"Whether you intended or not they (the prints) have given me some excellent hints in engraving. His manner of working is what I shall endeavour to adopt in many points." In the very last years of his life, when he was about to engrave the series of designs to "Job," Blake's whole style went through a change due to some engravings by Marc Antonio, which were shown to him by W. Linnell. The delight he felt in learning from example was not less genuine than his wild rebellion against precept. "The most sublime act," he says, "is to set another before you."

The "spectrous fiend," at whose reduction he was so happy, was the Satan of the book of "Milton" in particular, especially of the latter part. He is the "selfhood," and in having discovered him to "the enemy of conjugal love."

The great temptation with which the Venetian and Flemish

demons had tormented Blake during his dark years was the suggestion that he could not execute without a living person as "model" in the position of his picture, set up before him. Titian in particular suggested this doubt and so could "snatch away the vision, time after time."

Blake held that by laborious and "slavish" copy of "nature," as well as of ancient works of the masters, the "language of art" could be learned. Once learned the artist's next duty was to "cultivate imagination till it became vision" and draw from that.

To return to study of models in the midst of visionary drawing would have, he said, the worst effect. It was even sinful to contemplate it. Titian, whose work shows the model in every picture, and yet whose grandeur shows the Genius, was like a Demon in Blake's view, constantly whispering in his ear. He bid the visionary artist to take nature again, and try to develop his vision by contemplating something unlike it. The works of the great Venetian himself could not have been done under any other conditions."

But Blake's vision held another language. It said,—so we can read, not in Blake's words, but in his works—"If you think to make your art better by filling your eye *now* with the qualities of form belonging to any individual body, you will obliterate from your inner sight the grand typical qualities of ideal form, which you have perceived, not by hitting an average among mortal variations, but by exalted communion with the Imaginative mind of the Great Image Maker, God. In drawing from vision you have as your model the very origin of the human form. At your peril you will desert this for the fallen and darkened individual representative of that great pattern and type."

The vision, like Titian, was right in its way. Artists should be able to use models without being mastered by them, but if an artist be in such a state of mind as that of Blake he is on the horns of a dilemma. Either he must blunder on, as in this Turchessan letter Blake, for once, confesses was his faulty habit, in hope of better light, and thus make a hundred

little errors, or he must go to the individual body with its oppressively exact exposition of the individual's limitations and personality, and must risk being persuaded by the vivid impression they produce to commit the great fault of putting these in place of visionary and typical qualities.

"I copy perfectly from Imagination," said Blake, contrasting himself with those who copied imperfectly from nature. But of all men in the world the imaginative man is least able to know when he copies perfectly and when he does not. His conception with its life-like beauty and its persuasive attractiveness fills the air, as it were, and hovers between his eye and his pencil. He is like a giant whose head is above the mountain clouds, while his hand is drawing in the valleys below. Such a giant *might* correctly delineate the sun, moon and stars, but he would need to shrink again to human dimensions, or bring up his chart to the hill top to be sure that he had done so. Every amateur knows this. If Blake did not know it he was the more perfect giant, and the fact that in his works he was so greatly right and so slightly wrong, in matters of execution, is the more perfect wonder.

His claims to have actually achieved what he tried to do must be read also in the light of his own belief in the Divine Origin of Imagination. The sense of loyalty to a religious idea urged him to commendation of his work the more emphatic the less he looked on it as commendation of himself,—“I may praise them: they are not my own.” . . . “The authors are in eternity”—such expressions belonged to his daily thought.

Thus both the “Satan” of selfhood with its “terrific pride,” and the “Angel of the Divine presence,” or Intellect of Imagination, spoke with one voice though from different and opposite regions. But Blake is seen at his best and wisest in a letter to Captain Butts, April 25th, 1808: “If you have faith in me, your weak brother and fellow disciple,” he writes, “how great must be your faith in our Divine Master.” You are to me a lesson in humility while you exalt me by such distinguishing commendations. I know you see certain

merits in me which by God's grace shall be made fully apparent and perfect in Eternity. In the meantime I must not bury the talents in the earth, but do my endeavour to live to the glory of our Lord and Saviour; and I am also grateful to the kind hand that endeavours to lift me out of despondency even if it lifts me too high."

The Turchessan gallery contained, says Gilchrist, works by Michel Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Correggio, Poussin, Claude, and others. These works were lost to our national collection, he adds, when they might have been purchased at no great price, through the supineness of those in authority.

X.—1805. BLAIR'S "GRAVE."

THE first artistic result of importance which shows Blake's exhilarated mood of renewed and youthful enthusiasm, is seen in the qualities of the illustrations to Blair's "Grave," which he did for Cromek, at the price of twenty guineas for twelve, on the understanding that the engraving of them was to be entrusted to no hand but his own. Cromek, however, a "rascally picker of other men's brains," as Scott calls him, in a letter only recently made public, broke the understanding and employed Schiavonetti.

Some of the platos are given in Gilchrist's "Life." Others among the more interesting of the remainder are reproduced here. They have little of the melancholy that marks the style of the massive figures that illustrate "Jerusalem," produced just before. On the contrary, a serenity and buoyancy of mood seems to have accompanied their conception, and even the most terrible, the "Death of the Strong Wicked Man," shows the designer's conscious pleasure in strength.

What Blake would have done had he been always among artists of the first energy, had he lived in the period of the renaissance, or in our own day, we can dimly guess from these works; and placing them beside the "Job" series, we need no further evidence to show that if the world has seen artists who produced more faultless work or more abundant, they were few, and none exceeded Blake in genius.

The design called the "Death of the Good Old Man," suggests and even perhaps, in a sense, represents an incident which occurred at Felpham. We have an account of it from Hayley. He writes to Johnson:—"I have

been a great scribbler of epitaphs in the last month, and as you are so kindly partial to my monumental verses, I will transcribe for you even in the bustle of this morning a recent epitaph on your humble old friend my good William, who closed his height of choerful and affectionate existence (near eighty) this day fortnight, in the great house at Eartham, where Blake and I had the mournful gratification of attending him by accident during the last few hours of his life." The coincidence of the name "William" was not likely to have been lost on Blake or to have made the scene less impressive to his imagination.

These designs to Blair's "Grave" show Blake's art in three different methods. As conceptions, the pictures do not belong to a single imaginative sphere. Blake seems to have deliberately used this opportunity to bring forward the diverse manner in which the visionary eye beholds truth. "I found them blind," he says of the men of his day,— "I taught them how to see."

The best known of the designs is that called "Death's Door." The engraving is not printed here as the reproduction in Gilchrist's "Life," edition 1880, page 269, is admirable. The design itself is practically a combination of the figures on page 6 of "America," and page 12 of the same poem. It shows a rocky mausoleum. The heavy door is open, and an old man on crutches totters in, as though seeking his own tomb. Just above the little mortuary hermitage, on the unhewn rocky roof of the sepulchre, a naked youth is rising up already as though the light that surrounds his body were the dawn of the last day. He is recognized as the soul of the Old Man, and the two parts of the design are not considered as belonging to the action of one moment, but the upper portion, as showing a later chapter of the story pictured in the lower.

This is the view of the soul which perceives it as identical with what St. Paul calls the spiritual body.

A very different conception belongs to the pictures, here

reproduced, of the deaths of the Good Old Man, and the Strong Wickod Man. It is at first puzzling that the Good Old Man is not renovated by death and turned into a glorious youth as his limping brother was, who went on crutches to die alone in his own burying place. Yet the seeming contradiction would not have any effect on us if used in figure of speech. We speak of the identity of the personality surviving mortal decay. But how is that to be represented in design, if not a feature be retained? We look forward to being relieved of mortal infirmities. But can the language of art record this aspiration if all the attributes of mutable existence be invariably repeated in the picture of the soul? Yet the contradiction must not occur in one design. It may occur in the contrast between two, each of which in its own beauty tells the eye a portion of the mind's belief.

There is a third statement without which neither of these is complete. To the body belongs the fire of passion and energy, the stern outline of the mask that both encloses and characterises the individual. To the soul, that sweet outflowing element or vehicle of love and beauty, belongs the gracious attractiveness which needs the heavier form of corporeal life to make it a fact as well as a dream. So in the further designs the soul is seen as a maiden while the body is shown as a youth. In one she parts from her lover sadly and regretfully, floating away while the body lies in marble stillness. In another she fearlessly explores the earthy tomb on which he looks down with horror. In the last she descends from heaven like a bird darting downwards and seizes him with delight as he rises from the final fire that burns away the final frost.

Only by such freedom of symbol can art become a language. In such a tongue, and in none more restricted to outward consistency or more deprived of inner suggestiveness, may we "converse in visionary forms dramatic" as the last pages of "Jerusalem" tell us we shall in Eternity.

All three forms are symbolic in their way, for all are typic, and the type is half-brother of the symbol. Regeneration,

Identity, Completion, are the three words of the three enigmas.

The designs are, in fact, illustrations rather to Blake's own work than to Blair's. The repetition of one of the drawings in "America" indicates this unmistakably. The subject of this one is then seen to be the regeneration of Albion, the Fallen Man. On page 97 of "Jerusalem" is found the same subject, slightly varied. The youthful figure is disentangling himself from the mask and garment of old age which are left on the ground as he rises.

The engraving which shows the "Soul exploring the recesses of the grave," is an illustration to the latter part of the "Book of Thel." Here the female figure is a type of the simple life-consciousness of the male, going into the earth which is used symbolically, to mean the region below his own heart, to the consternation and horror of his intellect, which is pictorially indicated by the attitude and expression of the male figure. She bears a lamp, suggestive of her character as the Wise Virgin, and indicative of her, as symbolic of the sight of the inner eye. She is called "Thel" in the book of that name, reproduced here in its place, and the voice which Thel hears at the end of the poem is the cry of the mind in horror at the limitations of matter, and belongs to the male figure in the design, so imperfectly understood, if taken only in reference to Blair's "Grave."

Thus the three designs that show the Soul as a female figure, give really the "counterpart." In mysticism the "female principle" is of the body, and is to the male a mother under Divine fruition, not otherwise than in the symbolic story of the Virgin Mary. The Incarnation itself was none the less a symbol to Blake because he also held it as an event,—as *the* event,—of the world's history. But just as the male principle has two forms, one of which requires to be cast off, so has the female principle. "Jerusalem" is as feminine as "Babylon," and under the physical form of

woman the bright soul and the dark blood come alternately before us in Blake's art.

The "Death of the Good Old Man," and that of the "Strong Wicked Man," show Blake's belief that the change from the corporeal deeds of to-day to their mental consequences of to-morrow was not, though in pictorial *symbol* he might seem to say that it was, a change of individual identity. On this he is very emphatic in writing. He laughingly tells the devil himself, in one poem, that he cannot "change Kate into Nan," though the pure Kate may become an impure Kate. In "Vala," Night IX., line 244, and following, he is almost grotesquely elaborate in his assertion of the perpetuity of those individual attributes which appear to us now under the mask of bodily lineaments, though the body be a mere perishable indication of the reality within.

XI.—1805 to 1809.—BLAKE'S EXHIBITION.

THE period in Blake's life which began with the designs to Blair, and finished with the picture of Canterbury Pilgrims, was busy and fruitful. A further composition on the subject of the "Last Judgment," to be repeated later with a long and valuable explanation in the form of a sort of descriptive essay, was made for Mr. Humphrey, the miniature painter, and a short letter on the subject shows that Blake's mental language was unchanged. Now, as ever, Figures were his speech. Persons represented the states of mind which they typified, and thus served for adjectives and substantives at the same time, while their actions replaced verbs, and their grouping prepositions. His freedom in dealing with them, as a man deals with utterance in a tongue to which he is born, strikes the eye as artistic and imaginative. But it is the exact equivalent of the spoken and written words that seemed, rightly seemed when no complete key was offered to unlock the occultism, insane. Yet the letter to Mr. Humphrey shows, what many a chance line and passing phrase in the poems also prove, that Blake was perfectly ready to *explain himself*, indeed the whole interpretation put forth in the present edition is Blake's own, either derived by direct influence or actually pieced together from his acknowledged and undisputed words. The explanation is only incomplete where the loss of his manuscripts, or other causes, have left gaps in the completeness of his symbolism.

At this period Blake's best, and most popular, works, which must be understood as meaning those least symbolic in subject, were collected and exhibited by him to the public in a room set aside for that purpose in the house of his brother James. This was almost the last occasion on which the two

acted together in a friendly manner. The exhibition was a failure commercially, and James became more and more estranged till at last the brothers ceased to be on speaking terms. This, however, seems not to have caused Blake any particular surprise or anger. Frequent as are his caustic remarks on any and every failure of friendship encountered elsewhere, no rhyme, myth, or letter on brotherly estrangement is known to have resulted. Other indignations of an artistic origin had left no room for wrath over a family frigidity which must have been long forseen.

The exhibition was intended as a hostile movement of a commercial as well as a professional kind, intended to out-manceuvre the now declared enmity of Cromek, the publisher, who had first commissioned Blake to do an important picture for him and then transferred the order to Stothard.

This picture, representing Chaucer's "Canterbury Pilgrimage," was executed in spite of disappointment and in answer to treachery. It is bad but valuable, though covered all over with childish faults, in matters of structure, anatomy, and proportion, particularly in the horses. It is full to the brim of fine artistic as well as fine suggestive and imaginative quality. It has the supreme merit of being thoroughly mediæval and appropriate in character. As we glance over it the errors are, as it were, merely of spelling, or at most of prosody. The value is of poetry, and of music,—of mind, and of mood.

The composition is, in shape, almost like the top panel of a chimney-piece, measuring a little over three feet in length, by only one in height. To place figures well in a long strip of this kind is a severe test of that sensitiveness to processional cadence in grouping which is one of the rarest qualities in an artist. Stothard, whose talent lay in arrangement and grace—he was, in a manner, the Walter Crane of his day—has succeeded admirably in this, though there is nothing Chaucerian in the character of his work. Yet Stothard's grace is over facile, just as Blake's dignified scheme of figures

is over formal. Stothard's work comforts the eye if it does not satisfy a reader or admirer of Chaucer. Blake's neither comforts nor satisfies anybody, but it compels respect and admiration, and gives a high enjoyment and a trifling disquietude at the same time. As we look at it the mixed feelings aroused are somewhat like those that the auditor of a beautiful old march might experience, if he heard the music played on a fine organ while {compelled to listen seated on a hard and angular carved oaken chair.

The small reproduction in outline, given in Gilchrist's second volume, contains all that the composition, as composition, can offer. Under it are a few copied heads, in full size, whose blotchy eyes suggest that they were done from the retouched plate which Blake himself is said to have spoiled in trying to improve. The eyes, blotchy as they are, have one curious quality in common. They are all visionary. In fact, Blake, working unconsciously from his own organism, has made each of his Canterbury Pilgrims an artist, though in every other respect they are firmly and faithfully worked out as contrasted characters. In this criticism he himself would probably have found something rather to enjoy than refute. He held that Chaucer intended his personages for types, and subordinated in them the individual to the individuality. To be an artist,—potentially, if not professionally,—was just what Blake would have claimed as a necessary portion of a great or typical character.

The grouping might be rendered into march music just as it is. Anyone could put up the little outline of it given in Gilchrist, on a piano, and, yielding himself unreservedly to the impression produced by the picture, play it all through, beginning at the right and working backwards, from head to head, looking only at the heads, timing his notes by their intervals, forcing the sound by their emphasis, and raising or lowering it with the variations of firmness and of fulness in their character. The only discordant or harsh effect would be found when he came to the three citizens and the merchant. Contiguous keys would then be struck together, and Wagner

or Berlioz be needed to make rightness of sound out of the wrong. Only to imagine such an experiment with the drawing in hand, as the eye passes along the groups, is to be free at once of the superficial checks to enjoyment which the picture contains. By this postern gate many can enter the mind of an artist to whom the front door is closed. The exact quality of Blake's arrangement can be further felt in all its decorative sustainment of mood by testing Stothard's picture,—it is in our National Gallery,—in the same way. The value of the test as a decorative exponent could be shown on any picture, especially any long picture, such as Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," or any thirty or forty of Mantegna's figures in the masterpiece which fills the last picture-room of Hampton Court Palace.

When Blake's little exhibition was opened, hardly anyone went to it. Crabb Robinson found himself alone there, and Seymour Kirkup,—the discoverer of Giotto's portrait of Dante in Florence,—literally amazed James Blake by purchasing four copies of the Descriptive Catalogue which Blake prepared for his own pictures. For rescuing this pamphlet from obscurity, and reprinting it entire, Gilchrist will always be remembered with gratitude; though he prints a preface to it which is not Blake's, suppressing, without a word to indicate that he does so, the preface belonging to the pamphlet. This will be found in the British Museum copy. It is a peppery page of dogmatic criticism, repeating the condemnation of Titian and praise of Michel Angelo to be found in the "Public Address" and in the Catalogue itself.

The description of the Canterbury Pilgrims contains what Charles Lamb considered the finest essay on Chaucer that he had ever read. The opinion was a bold one to deliver then, but it would need a greater boldness to differ from it now. The tone of stately panegyric, the measured fall of phrase after phrase in well-considered, full-toned, massive praise, leaves upon the ear a reverberation that enfolds and enforces the pleasant cadences of the old-time poet. For all who have

read Blake, Chaucer is something more than the sweet spinner of rhyming gossip that he seems to most. For the easiness of his metre is but too apt to hide from us the power of his conception.

Itself a comment and needing none, this literary essay of Blake's cannot be reprinted here. The present work is a supplement to Gilchrist, made necessary by the deficiencies in his volumes, but Gilchrist is none the less necessary to this supplement.

In the whole exhibition there were but sixteen pictures. That numbered second in the Catalogue, and called "The Spiritual form of Pitt guiding Behemoth" is now in our National Gallery. It is much to be desired, and even to be hoped, that the rest may find their way to the same place as time goes on. But Blake's day of fame is still dawning, and national collections cannot be much in advance of national knowledge.

Next in interest, for the sake of the little essay, or manifesto, which accompanied it in the Descriptive Catalogue, is No. V., "The Ancient Britons," a work not historic in the ordinary sense but as entirely "prophetic" as any of the "Prophetic Books." Like them it uses history for symbolism, and at the same time shows by symbolism a mental treasure not otherwise to be extracted from the ore of history. As a warning to those who hastily take their opinions of Blake's artistic merit at second hand, it is worth remembering that Allan Cunningham called this "one of Blake's worst pictures, which is saying much," while Mr. Seymour Kirkup considered it his finest work.

Several of the pictures are merely described by Blake as "experiments." They represent a portion of his labours "in the mill." The rest take for their subject either a scriptural scene or a piece of imagery from one of the poets. Not one illustrates any scene from Blake's own mystical writings.

XII.—1810 to 1817.

GILCHRIST calls the period between the time when Blake was fifty-three and sixty, his "years of deepening neglect." It needed all his courage and faith and all his wife's constancy and docility to enable him to pass through them unembittered. Yet he knew himself too well to be long angry, even with misappreciation, or to allow indignation to freeze into disgust. Gilchrist recalls in a later chapter (Vol. I., p. 352) a phrase that reveals the source of his secret support and his outward cheerfulness. "They pity me," Blake would say of Sir Thomas Lawrence and other successful artists of his kind, "but 'tis they are the just objects of pity. I possess my visions, and peace. They have bartered their birthright for a mess of pottage." The obstinate optimism which caused him to look on Sir Thomas and his like as having any intellectual birthright of a visionary character to barter at all shows Blake at his best, yet it was the origin of his severest speeches. He believed that all men could be his equals in regard to essentials, because all the Lord's children could be prophets, and so he poured out indignation and invective on those who fell short. At rare moments he admitted in others an incapacity equivalent to that which the Catholic Church calls "invincible ignorance." Some are born with the shapes of men who are both ass and horse, he says in the description of the picture of the last Judgment (Gilchrist, Vol. II., p. 186), but more commonly he assumes the contrary. In the same

paper he says: "If the spectator could enter into these images in his imagination, approaching them on the fiery chariot of his contemplative thought; if he could enter into Noah's rainbow, could make a friend and companion of one of these images of wonder, which always entreat him to leave mortal things (as he must know), then would he arise from the grave, then would he meet the Lord in the air, and then he would be happy." (Gilchrist, Vol. II., p. 193.)

Such happiness we may assume was Blake's now. He was gradually approaching to the sense of solitude and desertion which breathes in the few really sad lines that ever came from his pen—

"The Angel who presided at my birth
Said, 'Little creature, formed for joy and mirth,
Go, love without the help of anything on earth.'"

In 1809 died Johnson, the publisher, whose dinner table had been open to Blake in early years. In 1810 Ozias Humphrey, for whom the first design of the "Last Judgment" was executed, also died. Mr. Butts began to find that he had bought almost as many pictures by Blake as he could find room for. An attempt was made unsuccessfully to interest George III. in Blake's designs. Blake might once, if he had chosen, have been the King's drawing master. But the King now would not even glance at his designs.

Flaxman still found task-work for Blake from a publisher—the very thing that Blake had fled from when he first went to Felpham—and now and then a purchaser would apply for a coloured copy of the "Songs of Innocence." So Blake lived on, but in drudgery for the most part.

He executed a drawing of the classic group, Laocoon and his two sons, to illustrate an article on sculpture in Rees' Cyclopaedia, published in 1820. The illustration is not identical with the engraving reproduced here. It is hardly larger than the present reproduction, and seems to have been done by some workman of the Bartolozzi school from an outline by Blake in pencil. The grey tone of the original drawing is

indicated by lines that are composed of dots. Nothing would have annoyed Blake more. It is probable that he executed the engraving given here to vindicate his power as an engraver, working in a transport of rage at the slight which had been put upon him professionally.

It is, of course, possible that the engraving as well as the drawing made for Rees is Blake's own work, he being forced to use a method hateful to him and then repeating the subject in his own style to recover his self-respect.

A loose copy of Rees's plate is to be seen in the Print Room of the British Museum. A pencil note by Tatham written on the corner, merely says that Blake made a drawing from which the engraving is a print, and adds that his meeting with Fuseli at the Academy when he went to execute this drawing was "characteristic."

It is related by Gilchrist (Vol. I., p. 297): "What, you heer *Meesther* Blake?" said Fuseli,—“ We ought to come and learn of you, not you of us.”

The plates, both that done for Rees, and Blake's own, are pulpy, and wanting in accuracy as copies of the antique. They do not give either the academic formality, or the nervous neatness of the original. Fuseli's remark was merely a bit of Italian politeness.

XIII.—AFTER 1818.—THE LORD'S PRAYER.

IN June, 1818, Mr. Cumberland introduced John Linnell, the landscape painter, to Blake. Gilchrist gives the date as "about 1818." Mr. Linnell was then living in Rathbone Place, not five minutes' walk from South Molton Street. The meeting was important, both for the men who met and for those still living or yet to come, who will profit by the work that would perhaps never have been executed had not this introduction taken place. For in Mr. Linnell Blake found his last, and one might also say his best, patron and friend. From the first Mr. Linnell understood Blake's value, and during the nine years that remained of Blake's life he was never neglected.

Mr. Linnell's diary notes that on June 24th, within a few days after the first visit, he had already begun to employ Blake. He also brought to him a new and faithful friend, John Varley, one of the water colorists whose work was the foundation of that school which, carried further by John Linnell and his sons, and a large group of workers in harmony with one another, made landscape, especially in water-colour, the national art of England during the central decades of this century. John Varley was an enthusiastic astrologer, many of his predictions having been fulfilled with startling accuracy; he was just the man to accept the more personal and, as we say now, subjective mysticism of Blake. Blake was not deprived of mental touch with the astrologists, as an

allusion or two in his symbolic books show, but he could never have become a practical astrologer. He liked a little in their language, and used it for his own symbolic purposes, but a hatred of calculation saved him from wasting his time, not too long for art and poetry, in the casting of nativities.

For John Varley he made a series of drawings known as "visionary heads." He would take a pencil, look up, see his vision to order, and make his portrait. The whole thing was personal. He did not always see the same historic character with the same physiognomy. He would not have dogmatically denied the possibility that they might as authentically reveal themselves to other seers and yet appear quite differently. Yet he believed they were as he drew them. From "the Man who built the Pyramids," to the "Man who instructed Mr. Blake in painting in his dreams," all are pictorial expressions of personality, pictorial opinions, drawn, as Blake believed, from influences set going by the character of the men, and permanently affecting the atmosphere, finer than air or ether, into which his imagination looked for their lineaments. This atmosphere is the "hall of Los." Possibly their features only appeared so for visionary purposes. The physical mask overlies and does not necessarily coincide with the personal. Accident and chance have rule on perishing clay, that is only partly moulded by the formative spirit, yet without that spirit the clay would have been left formless altogether.

The first biography has a pleasant chapter on these visionary heads, though written from the outside or non-mystic standpoint, and the reproductions given are faithful representations of the originals.

In 1820, Gilchrist says that Blake was employed by Doctor Thornton to illustrate Virgil's pastorals. Facsimiles of three of these illustrations are given in the "Life." Dr. Thornton published seven years later a pamphlet on the "Lord's Prayer," which Blake also illustrated, but in a very different manner. He covered the wide margin of the paper with pencilled comments, intended for his own eye. Though

belonging to the last year of Blake's life, they may be given here, as Dr. Thornton will not be mentioned again. Their value chiefly consists in showing Blake's enthusiastic aversion for any mode of reading scriptural passages that ignores the mystic interpretation, and dwells on the outward and literal meaning. He begins by describing Dr. Thornton's attempts at scholarly investigation thus:—"This is saying the Lord's Prayer backwards, which, they say, raises the devil."

He then gives the following paraphrase, in which there is no irreverence whatever, but the most scathing indignation, a very ecstasy of *odium theologicum*. He calls it, "Doctor Thornton's Tory translation, translated out of its disguise in the classical or Scotch language into the vulgar English."

So translated, this is how the prayer read to Blake, when literally conceived. It is one of the most emphatic attempts ever made to protest against any violation of the command to render unto Cæsar (and by implication not unto God) that which is Cæsar's:—

"Our Father, August Cæsar, who art in these thy substantial, astronomical, telescopic heavens, holiness to thy name or title, and reverence to thy shadow.

"Thy kingship come upon earth; then in heaven.

"Give us day by day our real, substantial, money-bought, taxed bread. Deliver us from the Holy Ghost and everything that cannot be taxed. Forgive us all debts and taxes between Cæsar and us, and one another, and deliver us from poverty in Jesus.

"Lead us not to read the Bible, but let our Bible be Virgil and Shakespeare.

"For thine is the kingship, or allegoric godship, and the power, or war, and the glory, or law, ages after ages in thy descendants, for God is only an allegory of kings and nothing else. Amen."

In the view, sarcastically indicated here by its contrary, that the Lord's Prayer is a petition for spiritual blessings,

and that to consider even the daily bread as intended in a literal sense, is to repeat the error of the woman of Samaria, Blake is upheld by an authority of whose support he was probably ignorant. Nicholas Brakespeare, the only Englishman ever made Pope, composed a versified translation of the Lord's Prayer, in which he taught the faithful to pray—

"That holy bread that lasteth ay,
Thou send it ous this ilke day."

On the title-page Blake writes without sarcasm his opinion of the work. "I look on this as the most malignant and artful attack upon the kingdom of Jesus by the classical learned, through the instrumentality of Dr. Thornton. The Greek and Roman classics is the Antichrist. I say *is* and not *are*, as most expressive, and correct too."

When the Classics are personified and symbolised, there can evidently be no impropriety in speaking of that impersonification in the singular, but Blake's defence of the peculiarity shows the combative frame of mind that Dr. Thornton had aroused in him.

Even the very obvious remark on the part of the Doctor that the Bible is a difficult book and not understood by the unlearned, is not allowed to pass without marginal comment:—"Christ and His Apostles were illiterate men. Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod were learned."

Later on comes another note. "If morality was Christianity, Socrates was the Saviour."

This is repeated on the Laocoon plate. It forms a good companion sentence to the *dictum* quoted by Gilchrist from the marginal notes to Bacon. "Thought is act. Christ's acts were nothing to Cæsar's if this is not so."

Then, Dr. Johnson's name having been mentioned by Dr. Thornton, Blake comments,—"The beauty of the Bible is that the most ignorant and simple minds understand it best. Was Johnson hired to pretend to religious terrors while he was an infidel, or how was it?"

Does not this recall Hayley's "hired villain"?

A speech of "the Devil," in the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," on Christ's "suicide," seems to be found hidden behind the following recommendation: "The only thing for Newtonian and Baconian philosophers to consider is this, whether Jesus did not suffer Himself to be mocked by Cæsar's soldiers willingly? To consider this to all eternity will be comment enough."

There are a few more fragments repeating the sarcasm about taxed bread, and on the "Heaven seen through a lawful telescope"—and an attribution to Dr. Thornton of the opinion that "The Holy Ghost, and whatever cannot be taxed, is unlawful and witchcraft,"—an inference which he could hardly be supposed to consider justified by his words. With antique heaviness there is even a play on the word "spirit," the suggestion being that one kind, at least, could pay duty, and achieve the respectability of lawfulness. When Dr. Thornton remarks that, "Men from their childhood have been accustomed to mouth the Lord's prayer," Blake cannot refrain from hitting him again:—"It is the learned that mouth," he notes, "not the vulgar."

One note, a paraphrase, seems to admit the literal as a secondary sense rightly belonging to the prayer, and makes it a petition for what we would call socialism now,—a socialism with Christ as Dictator, however. "Give us the bread that is our due by taking away money, or a price, or a tax, upon what is common to all in thy kingdom."

There are comments on the "which," in the Lord's Prayer, and the sensible remark that *who*, *that*, and *which* are equally right, the choice depending on the fashion of the age. "Basileia," which he takes the trouble to re-write in Greek characters, "is not kingdom," says Blake, "but kingship."

Then he gives a valuable indication of what he considered "Natural Religion" meant, though not so called here. "I, Nature, Hermaphroditic, Priest and King, live in the real, substantial, natural Born Men, and (assert?) that spirit is the ghost of matter and Nature, and God is the ghost of Priest

and King, who exist wherever God exists, not except from the effluvia."

The virtue of this will be felt later when the Hermaphroditic symbol is considered.

The following broken note lacks a word to be comprehensible:—"Here is . . . and two names which are too holy to be written. Thus we see that" (according to what may logically be inferred from literal scholarship) "the real God is the Goddess Nature, and that God creates nothing but what can be touched and weighed and taxed and measured. All else is heresy and rebellion against Cæsar, Virgil's only God. For all this we thank Dr. Thornton."

There remains one more note, valuable as showing how the phraseology as well as the convictions that belonged to Blake in his trance-mood of poetic exaltation continued with him at all times. "Dim at best," says Dr. Thornton, "are the conceptions we have of a Supreme Being who, as it were, keeps the human race in suspense, neither discovering nor hiding himself." Against this Blake has simply written "A Female God."

The symbolic use of "Female" as synonymous for concealment and deceit is habitual with Blake. Nor did he intend thereby to show his wit by mocking the weakness for secrecy which proverbs tell us is especially characteristic of women. The female element in Blake's view of the universe is dark as the inner workings of the body are dark, and as what we call now the sub-conscious in mind. Its will is unimaginative and purely organic. "In heaven," he says, that is to say in light, in full consciousness, in free imagination and vision, "there is no female will," that is to say, no organic or corporeal opposition or separate action. The male and female were thus in each man and each woman, and they are only seen separately when the body is contemplated, the "stems of generation" on which Man was "slain." Pre-natal Man knew nothing of sex, as heaven, in the Bible, has no marriage. Thus in one epithet he points to Dr. Thornton's error in conceiving concealment

as God-like, unless by the feminine portion inherent in all completeness. There are some fine lines not printed by Gilchrist, which Mr. Swinburne has reproduced, though he was innocent of any knowledge of Blake's meaning;—

“ Why art thou silent and invisible,
 Father of Jealousy?
 Why dost thou hide thyself in clouds
 From every passing eye?
 Why darkness and obscurity
 In all thy words and laws,
 That none can eat the fruit
 But from the wily serpent's jaws?
 Or is it because Jealousy
 Gains Females' loud applause?”

Except for an incomplete and partly illegible sentence intended to commence a fresh paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer itself, these are all Blake's notes. They cannot be fully appreciated except by the reader who knows the Blake language and the Blake system, but already it can easily be seen that they were no mockery or flippancy, but weighty matter put with the broken emphasis of anger.

Dr. Thornton's pamphlet thus commented is in the hands of the Linnell brothers, who have shown their Blake collection to all who have desired to see it for literary purposes. Perhaps wisely, these scraps have not hitherto been published. Apart from a proof that their writer was a sane man, and a mystic Christian, they would only have given needless offence. But the time to take care of Blake, as a weak person is taken care of, has passed. Whatever else may be of value to his reputation, concealment at least should now be dispensed with.

XIV.—THE DESIGNS TO THE BOOK OF JOB.

IN March—21st and 27th—Mr. Linnell took Blake to the Drury Lane Theatre, but the visits do not seem to have had sufficient interest. They were not repeated. In the same year he introduced Sir Thomas Lawrence, Mr. Vines, Mr. Woburn, and other buyers to Blake. In September—still 1821—as Mr. John Linnell, junior (in correction of Gilchrist) finds in his father's diary, Blake began to make replicas for Mr. Linnell of some drawings designed to illustrate the book of Job, which he had previously executed for Captain Butts. This series still is to be seen on the walls of Mr. John Linnell's house at Redhill. In 1823 they were copied by Blake, not exactly in slavish facsimile, on copper. These engravings are re-produced on a reduced scale, but with great clearness and fidelity, in Gilchrist. As a series they may be said to touch the highest point both of imaginative and delineative art. To find any other group of designs which will bear to be considered in the same mood of mind which is aroused by the artistic contemplation of this set, we must go to the Sistine Chapel in Rome, or to the Raphael Room at South Kensington. As a series they are fairly to be compared with Michel Angelo's frescoes, and his only. The consummate skill of arrangement that, in both Blake's work and that of the Florentine master, underlies their power, only reveals itself when either the frescoed or the engraved set are looked on from the literary point of view as chapters in a pictorial narrative, or as cantos in an epic. The roof of the Sistine Chapel has nine panels. The first four show acts of creation, that of the firmament,

leading, as it were logically, to that of the sun, the personification of the firmament and its ruler. Then the gift of life to the waters follows, requiring for climax or personality the next subject, the gift of Adam to the earth. The central panel contains the keystone of the arch, the knot whose untying is the *dénouement* of the world's history. Woman comes half crouching in propitiative prayer from the side of the sleeping manhood, and meets a warning glance and gesture from the Creator. From now, God the Father is absent from Michel Angelo's series, which show, in two sets of companion designs, vain punishment and persistent sin. The first, of the second group, gives in one panel the temptation and expulsion; the next, the idolatrous sacrifice not averted by the chastisement. Then the Deluge is seen, and last of all the drunken and shameless Lot mocked by his more degraded daughters. With this tragic note the great sad music closes.

But just as Michel Angelo was a man whose mind stood by its own force and remained dignified and firm in an atmosphere of melancholy emotions and under the benumbing of ceaseless and restless industry, to which that melancholy, as much as the power of his genius, for ever goaded him, so in contrast was Blake above all things the type of sunny labour, strong with fanatic faith, worshipping joy as holy in its own right.

His Job series is in twenty-one pictures.

In the first, Job and his family kneel in evening prayer under a tree on which hang musical instruments. Their flocks are around them.

In the second, they are reading the Scriptures together and commenting, all with an equality of inspired freedom, when two angels with scrolls come to join the group. Over their heads the heavens are opened. The Ancient of Days sits pensively, also with book on knee. His family of angels, like Job's children, come with rhythmic movement from right and left like solemn dancers, and each lays his page of the great volume before the throne. But Satan, who "came also," charges madly into the centre of the group, holding up hands

in evil petition, not bringing any inspired page; and about him as he strides is a clinging flame entangling his feet and masking his body, and in the flame, woven to its texture, the faces of Job and of Job's wife are seen, revealing his thought. But as yet the family on earth see nothing of this.

In the third scene Satan is let loose to do his will, and perches with horrible glee on the falling masonry of a house that is crushing one of the sons of Job with his wife and children. Fire fills every crevice of the picture, pouring from the hands of Satan and darting in zigzag lightning from his head and wings.

In the fourth, Job and his wife sit alone, while messengers come one after the other, running to tell of ruin after ruin. The nearest already speaks as he runs. The furthest is scarcely seen on the distant hill.

In the fifth, Satan is once more before the throne, on which the angel of the Divine Presence writhes in massive agony of pity, while the angels shrink away to right and left, and Satan pours his collected fires on Job, who sits alone with his wife on a desolate land, dividing his last bread with a lonely cripple, the only man poorer and more solitary than himself. Two lesser angels float near and adore the act as they look on from right and left.

In the sixth, Job lies on a heap of straw, the long patriarchal robe that he has worn till now has gone. A piece of coarse matting is across his loins. Satan stands on him, on his fallen body, dealing fiery arrows with one hand and fiery poison with the other. His wife hiding her face crouches on the ground at his feet.

In the seventh, Job sits on a heap of straw, turning away his face from his friends in the sadness of absolutely helpless misery,—but still so far strong as to retain patience. The friends fling up their hands, and his wife from behind him repeats their gesture and completes his loneliness.

In the eighth, Job flings into the air, higher than they did, his despairing hands. Heavy tears roll down to his beard from

his eyes, now open upon his desolation, and he utters the great mystic curse, the sentence of Sorrow upon Time: "Let the day perish wherein I was born." To his right the wife, to his left the friends, bend their faces upon their knees and blind themselves with their hair.

In the ninth, after seven days of this appalled silence, Eliphaz speaks and tells his vision. As he does so all look up from the ground where they kneel, and the heavy clouds rolling over their heads part in the middle, and they also see what Eliphaz saw. They even see him on his couch, while the "Spirit passed before his face, and the hair of his flesh stood up." He only is not now gazing at the vision, but recollecting it as he speaks. He looks straight before him as a man telling a story. The listeners experience as he relates.

In the tenth, Job is mocked, "laughed to scorn." The three friends on one side and the wife on the other all join. Job kneels upright, opening his breast to the contempt as if it could strike him as bullets or arrows and make an end at last. His face is lifted as if waiting for some sign of release.

The central place of the series of pictures is now coming. Job has been seen peacefully happy at first, then in succeeding torments of bereavement, ruin, plague, and despair. Last of all in the torture of scorn that despair itself cannot ward off. But the last affliction—if affliction be a name for unspeakable horror—is now to come.

In the eleventh picture we see that God Himself, in the disguise of Satan, floats over the couch of the first man of sorrows, and points with one hand to the Tables of the Law, with the other to a lake of flames full of grasping and chain-bearing devils that rises round the bed. These are the "dreams" with which Job was at last "affrighted." He lies with head turned away as the face of his perverted vision of God stoops close to look into his eyes, and, with only a movement of the hand that still prays for mercy, he expects the completion of torment.

Suddenly a change comes. The words of Job are ended,

and his three friends can find no answer. He is still "righteous in his own eyes" under whatever affliction, and his patience is a cloak whose inner lining is his pride. Elihu, the fourth voice of the outer world, he who had not spoken because he was young, and they very old, rises in anger to take from Job his last secret source of endurance.

In the twelfth design, Elihu stands uttering his great reproof. The three elders listen, seated, ill-satisfied to find that the words of a youth should prevail while their's have been spoken in vain. Job's wife clasps her hands and once more hides her face. Job folds his arms and listens, for the first time with meekness. The sacred whisper of compunction is speaking to him from within, as he who spoke "in God's stead," though "also formed of clay," poured on his stream of wise, worshipping rhapsody. The clouds roll away from the sky, and the great few stars come nearer.

But if Elihu be wise as against Job and his friends, there is a Voice that finds him but foolish.

In the thirteenth design, God, clothed in a visible whirlwind, comes with outspread arms, repeating in reversed direction the gesture in the Satanic vision, and with face half gentle and half stern, replies to Job. This is the voice of true inspiration in man, for it is the whirlwind *of the South* (Job xxxvii. 9), the region symbolic of mind in light. Job and his wife look up together, and raise hands of reverence, not despair, and the silenced friends bend their faces to the very ground.

In the fourteenth is the vision of creation, and of the song of the morning stars, that Job sees, as the sacred whirlwind speaks of the world's birth.

In the fifteenth, another double picture includes the narrator, the listener, and the vision. In the upper part, God points down, as He speaks from a cloud: and Job, his wife, and his friends, peering into the dust, see below the surface a vision of the round world, with its two forces, the earth-force and the water-force, in the forms of Behemoth and Leviathan, enclosed within the visionary globe.

The sixteenth, is an interpolated vision, not in the book of Job itself. It represents what takes place in Job's bosom when in perfect humility he suddenly re-unites with God. Satan is seen falling from heaven head downwards in a flame. The divided earth opens to its nethermost heart of fire to receive him. Sin and Death, as two female figures, fall with him. To one side Job and his wife, to the other his friends, see all this in vision; while above, in a joyous heaven, the Ancient of Days, with book on knee, once more appears with a kindly face, and the angels around the throne—for the first time—appear as winged figures.

The seventeenth, shows Job seeing God with his eye, Who, in the light of a radiant wheel of influence, stands blessing him and his wife as they kneel. The affrighted friends shrink away and cover in Job's shadow.

In the eighteenth, Job prays for them at an altar, standing as a priest who prays, while they and his wife kneel around. A space of light, a circle of rays among the clouds, opens us the pointed flame of the altar burns high.

In the nineteenth, worldly riches return to Job. He sits with his wife beneath a tree, and everyone who comes to him brings him a piece of money. Something in the bent head of Job, and the self-controlling hand laid on the heavy beard, suggests that, in Blake's estimation, this was the last trial of the patient man.

The twentieth picture shows Job alone with three daughters, born since his troubles, to whom, in an octagon chamber frescoed with pictures of his by-gone life, he tells his story.

In the last, with newly arisen sons and daughters about him, he stands beneath the tree, the musical instruments no longer hanging in the branches, but now in full orchestral use, singing where once he prayed, and rejoicing where once he suffered.

So ends the series. Each picture is a panel set in a wide framework of scattered sentences from the text, and alive with symbolic surroundings woven into suitable decorative forms.

The backgrounds are also symbolic; the Gothic cathedral in the first, the morsel of Stonehenge in the fifth, and other signs showing that Blake read the whole book as though its language had been his own and its story a portion of his myths. All the surrounding accessories were added on the copper itself as Blake sat working, after the central picture had been engraved and proved, without previous cartoon or forethought.

The style of engraving is new to English art. It is, as Blake himself says, "drawing on copper and nothing else." The last touch of professional conventionalism learned in old apprenticeship from Basire has vanished. The spontaneous and artistic system that began with Marc Antonio has suddenly found a pupil who surpasses the master. The freedom of pen-and-ink is here, with the stability and technical resource of the trained hand, to which the graver has been for forty years, or over, as a living adjunct to the palm. These drawings are modern still, and alone among Blake's engravings, or the engravings of his time, will be modern for ever.

John Linnell bought the plates and copyright in March, 1823, from Blake, thus becoming both patron and publisher. He paid for the plates £100, and agreeing to pay £100 more out of the profits of publication as they came to hand. As a matter of fact, subscribers were so few that only £50 more were paid to Blake between 1826—the actual date of publication—and 1827, the year of his death. A few proofs were printed in 1825, the first plate in one of these being dated by a curious slip of the graver, 1828—the year after the untiring hand that produced them began its first and last period of rest. From one of these proof sets the reproductions given by Gilchrist were made. The date can be read distinctly even in the reduction on the first plate. Altogether, but few copies have been printed. The last are as fresh as the first. The plates—old copper deeply cut, and almost as hard as steel—are even now in perfect condition. The brothers Linnell, of Redhill, Surrey, sons of John Linnell, still own the plates, still are the publishers, and still sell copies of what

many suppose to be a book out of print. By some curious oversight, this fact escaped the first biographer, and applicants for copies are almost as rare now as during Blake's life-time. Second-hand examples are sought for daily at sales, and snapped up the moment they reach the market.

There is a good copy in the Art Library of the South Kensington Museum. A portfolio in the Print Room of the British Museum contains a fine proof impression of each plate.

XV.—DANTE.

WHILE the engraving of the Job series was in hand, Blake did not confine himself wholly to the use of the graver. Not only were many fine drawings illustrative of "Paradise Lost" produced now (1822), but in 1825, the date when the first complete proof of the Job was made, payments began to pass for a series of coloured drawings done for Mr. Linnell, which, for boldness and startling emphasis and novelty, overtop all that Blake ever executed. These drawings were made in a large blank-paper book given to Blake to be filled thus, as he felt inclined from time to time. They were paid for by instalments, about £52 being given altogether, so far, at least, as record remains. The book in which the designs were done had pages measuring about fourteen inches one way and eighteen the other. But every leaf now looks gigantic from the massive and complex nature of the designs which cover them. It is hard work to look them through, even hastily, in two hours, and the spectator retires giddy and weary, but exalted and half entranced, from the strain of attention and the excitement of imagination. A thousand pounds would probably be an under estimate of their present market value.

Of these only a few were engraved by Blake; the plates, as in the Job series, being still in the hands of the Linnell brothers, and copies on sale, but seldom sold. Hitherto no other re-productions of them have been made.

But while Blake approached the imagery of Dante in a

purely sympathetic and artistic spirit, and even took the trouble to learn Italian in order to appreciate the true quality of his poetry, he came to a consideration of the mysticism of the Divine Comedy from the independent point of view of an equal and a brother-visionary.

The slighter sketches and schemes of work are here and there scrawled over with little pencil notes. These were morsels of soliloquy uttered by the hand, not the voice, and while some have the finality of an imaginative utterance on an imagination, others are speculative.

One scheme gives a diagram of Dante's Circles, No. 1 being at the bottom. They are piled one over the other with the following note: "This is upside down, but right when viewed from Purgatory after they had passed the centre." The expression recalls many cases of reversed order in Blake's own regions, where the triad Head, Heart, Loins in the Human series often read "Loins, Heart, Head," according to the position taken for symbolic sight. It also tallies with the description in the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," of the descent with the angel until "What was under soon seemed above."

"In equivocal worlds," Blake also notes to Dante, "all is equivocal."

Another scheme gives Purgatory, in the centre, and concentric circles indicated beyond like rings of a target and labelled, as read from within outwards, Terrestrial Paradise—with the note: "It is a limbo,"—then Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Starry Heavens, vacuum—the latter the external. Blake, as the systematic mystic, is seen here revelling in system for its own sake.

Blake, as believer in forgiveness of sins, and in dual creatorship, meditates in the following note: "It seems as if Dante supposes God was something superior to the Father of Jesus, or if he gives rain to the evil and good, and his sun to the just and unjust, he can never have builded Dante's Hell, nor the Hell of the Bible as our parsons explain it. It must have

originally been framed by the dark Spirit itself, and so I understand it."

Then, as the thought grew on him, he lays it down dogmatically: "Whatever task is for vengeance for sin, and whatever is against forgiveness of sin, is not of the Father, but of Satan the accuser, and father of hell."

Once he places Homer, crowned with laurels and armed with sword in the centre, another indication of his *dictum*, that the classics had done incalculable harm to the world's poetry and vision through their "stolen and perverted" writings. A commencement of circles outside him is sketched, the first labelled "Swedenborg," the next illegible. The connection of ideas is detected in the following note: "Everything in Dante's Paradise shows that, for tyrannical purposes, he has made this world the foundation of all, and the goddess Nature, Memory, not the Holy Ghost . . . in her empires . . . as poor Cha— Bell said: 'Nature, thou art my goddess. . . .' Round Purgatory is Paradise, and round Paradise is Vacuum, or Limbo. Homer is the centre of all, I mean the poetry of the heathen, stolen and perverted from the Bible, not by chance, but by design, by the kings of Persia, their generals, the Greek heroes, and lastly, the Romans. Swedenborg does the same in saying that the world is the ultimate of heaven. This is the most damnable falsehood of Satan and the Antichrist."

Thus we have at last the nature of one of the "old falsehoods" rebuked in Swedenborg more than thirty years previously, when the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" was published.

Perhaps one day more notes on Dante and others may be found in books read by Blake. There is a vast scattered wealth of Blake-writing and Blake-drawing, which could be brought together if the value of every hint were generally known. Such statements as that of Gilchrist, Vol. I., p. 383, that, perhaps, the attempt to methodise Blake's many seemingly contradictory utterances into a system is so much labour

lost, and the absurd idea of Gilchrist that "the key to the wild and strange rhapsodies Blake would utter can be supplied by love, but not by intellect," have done great harm in discouraging a serious treatment of his mystic system. Much that would help to complete it has been irreparably lost, but it is not too late to save more from the wreck than has come to hand in time for use in the present volumes. A Blake Society is an urgent literary need, and when the contribution to Blake interpretation here offered (it does not pretend to absolute completeness) shall have been sufficiently studied to protect the members of such a society from the ridicule attaching to those who take a madman's ravings for profundity, the society will form itself. There are plenty of men who would be able, if qualified, to do good work in it. The final rescue of Blake from misconception, and his establishment as the first modern poetic mystic is nothing less than a national duty, as its neglect has long been a national disgrace.

XVI.—TWO WITNESSES.

WE have a glimpse of Blake as he was in the year 1820 when he was met by Lady Charlotte Bury at the house of Lady Caroline Lambe. In her once well-known "Diary illustrative of the Times of George the Fourth," edited by John Galt Colburn, 1838-39, to which Mr. William Rossetti has lately drawn attention in the *Athenæum*, Lady Charlotte Bury, after mentioning Sir Thomas Lawrence among the guests; writes:—

"Then there was another eccentric little artist, by name Blake; not a regular professional painter, but one of those persons who follow the art for its own sweet sake, and derive their happiness from its pursuit. He appeared to me full of beautiful imaginations and genius: but how far the execution of his designs is equal to the conceptions of his mental vision I know not, never having seen them. *Main-d'œuvre* is frequently wanting where the mind is most powerful. Mr. Blake appears unlearned in all that concerns this world, and from what he said I should fear he was one of those whose feelings are far superior to his situation in life. He looks careworn and subdued; but his countenance radiated as he spoke of his favourite pursuit, and he appeared gratified by talking to a person who comprehended his feelings. I can easily imagine that he seldom meets with any one who enters into his views—for they are peculiar, and exalted above the common level of received opinions. I could not help contrasting this humble artist with the great and powerful Sir Thomas Lawrence, and thinking that the one was fully, if not more, worthy of the distinction and the fame to which the other has attained, but from which *he* is far removed. Mr. Blake, however, though he may have as much right, from talent and merit, to the advantages of which Sir Thomas is possessed, evidently lacks that worldly wisdom and that grace of manner which make a man gain an eminence in his profession, and succeed in society. Every word he uttered spoke the perfect simplicity of his mind, and his total ignorance of all worldly matters. He told me that Lady C—— L—— had been very kind to him. 'Ah!' said he, 'there is a deal of kindness in that lady.'"

Blake's two manners—which he himself, in the verses already quoted, has called his "meek" and "elate" moods—seem always

to have been more or less characteristic of him. It is among the traits that recall his Irish descent. As old age came on the contrast was more marked. Mr. Crabb Robinson, who knew him in his last years, noticed the same thing.

In 1821, Blake removed to No. 3, Fountain Court, Strand, where Mr. Robinson used to visit him. These visits are recorded in a diary, on which Mr. Robinson was founding a book of reminiscences of the great and the interesting men whom he had known, when it was quoted at some length in Gilchrist's "Life." But selections were made. A few words, omitted here and there are more valuable now; and the entire reference to Blake as finally published in the "Reminiscences," shortly after Gilchrist's first edition was printed, is as follows:—

"December 10th, 1825. Dined with Aders The party at dinner, Blake, the painter, and Linnell, also a painter

"Shall I call Blake artist, genius, mystic, or madman? Probably he is all. He has a most interesting appearance. He is now old—sixty-eight—pale, with a Socratic countenance, and an expression of great sweetness, though with something of langour about it, except when animated, and then he has about him an air of inspiration.

"The conversation turned on art, poetry, and religion. He brought with him an engraving of his 'Canterbury Pilgrims.' One of the figures in it is like an engraving belonging to Mr. Aders. 'They say I stole it from this picture,' said Blake, 'but I did it twenty years before I knew of this picture. However, in my youth I was always studying paintings of that kind. No wonder there is a resemblance?' In this he seemed to explain *humanly* what he had done. But at another time he spoke of his paintings as being what he had seen in his visions. And when he said, 'my visions,' it was in the ordinary unemphatic tone in which we speak of everyday matters. In the same tone he said repeatedly—'The Spirit told me.' I took occasion to say, 'You express yourself as Socrates used to do. What resemblance do you suppose there is between your spirit and his?' 'The same as between our countenances.' He paused, and added,—'I was Socrates,' and then, as if correcting himself,—'a sort of brother. I must have had conversations with him. So I had with Jesus Christ. I have an obscure recollection of having been with both of them.' I suggested on philosophical grounds the impossibility of supposing an immortal being created *à parte post* without an *à parte ante*. His eye brightened at this, and he fully concurred with me. 'To be sure, it is impossible. We are all co-existent with God, members of the Divine body. We are all partakers of the Divine nature.'

"In this, by-the-by, Blake has but adopted an ancient Greek idea. I will mention here, though it formed part of our talk as we were walking homeward, that, on my asking in what light he viewed the great question of the duty of Jesus, he said, 'He is the only God. But then,' he added, 'and so am I,

and so are you?' He had, just before (and that occasioned my question), been speaking of the errors of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ should not have allowed himself to be crucified and should not have attacked the Government. On my inquiring how this view could be reconciled with the sanctity and Divine qualities of Jesus, Blake said, 'He had not then become the Father.' Connecting, as well as one can, those fragmentary sentiments, it would be hard to fix Blake's station between Christianity, Platonism, and Spinozism. Yet he professes to be very hostile to Plato, and reproaches Wordsworth with being, not a Christian but a Platonist.

"It is one of the subtle remarks of Hume on certain religious speculations that the tendency of them is to make man indifferent to whatever takes place by destroying all ideas of good and evil. I took occasion to apply this remark to something Blake had said. 'If so,' I said, 'there is no use in discipline or education—no difference between good and evil.' He hastily broke in upon me, 'There is no use in education. I hold it to be wrong. It is the great sin. It is eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was the fault of Plato. He knew nothing but the virtues and vices, the good and evil. There is nothing in all that. Everything is good in God's eyes.' On my putting the obvious question—'Is there nothing absolutely evil in what men do?' 'I am no judge of that—perhaps not in God's eyes.'

"He sometimes spoke as if he denied altogether the existence of evil, and as if we had nothing to do with right and wrong, it being sufficient to commend all things alike as the work of God. Yet at other times he spoke of there being error in heaven. I asked about the moral character of Dante in writing his Vision. 'Was he pure?' 'Pure,' said Blake, 'do you think there is any purity in God's eyes? The angels in heaven are no more so than we. "He chargeth His angels with folly."' He afterwards represented the Supreme Being as liable to error. 'Did he not repent Him that He had made Nineveh?' It is easier to repeat the personal remarks of Blake than these metaphysical speculations so closely allied to opposite systems of philosophy. Of himself, he said he acted by command. The Spirit said to him, 'Blake, be an artist and nothing else.' In this there is felicity. His eye glistened while he spoke of the joy of devoting himself solely to divine art. Art is inspiration. When Michael Angelo, or Raphael, or Mr. Flaxman does any of his fine things he does them in the spirit. Blake said, 'I should be sorry if I had any earthly fame, for whatever natural glory a man has is so much taken from his spiritual glory. I wish to do nothing for profit. I wish to live for art. I want nothing whatever. I am quite happy.'

"Among the unintelligible things he expressed was his distinction between the natural world and the spiritual. The natural world must be consumed. Incidentally Swedenborg was referred to. Blake said, 'He was a divine teacher. He has done much good, and will do much. He has corrected many errors of Popery, and also of Luther and Calvin. Yet Swedenborg was wrong in endeavouring to explain to the rational faculty what reason cannot comprehend. He should have left that.' Blake, as I have said, thinks Wordsworth no Christian, but a Platonist. He asked me whether Wordsworth believed in the Scriptures. On my replying in the affirmative he said he had been much pained by reading the introduction to 'The Excursion.' It brought on a fit of illness. The passage was produced and read:—

“‘Jehovah, with His thunder and the choir
Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones—
pass them unalarmed.’

“This *pass them unalarmed* greatly offended Blake. ‘Does Mr. Wordsworth think his mind can surpass Jehovah?’ I tried to explain this passage in a sense in harmony with Blake’s own theories, but failed, and Wordsworth was finally set down as a Pagan, but still with high praise, as the greatest poet of the age.

“Jacob Boehmen was spoken of as a divinely inspired man. Blake praised, too, the figures in Law’s translation as being very beautiful. Michael Angelo could not have done better.

“Though he spoke of his happiness, he also alluded to his past sufferings, and to suffering as necessary. ‘There is suffering in heaven, for where there is the capacity of enjoyment there is also the capacity of pain,’—

“I have been interrupted by a call from Talfourd, and cannot now recollect any further remarks . . .

“A few detached thoughts occur to me. ‘Bacon, Newton, and Locke are the three great teachers of Atheism, or Satan’s doctrine!’

“‘Everything is Atheism which assumes the reality of the natural and unspiritual world.’

“‘Irving is a highly gifted man. He is a *sent* man. But they who are sent go further sometimes than they ought.’

“‘Dante saw devils where I see none. I see good only. I saw nothing but good in Calvin’s house. Better than in Luther’s—in the latter were harlots.’

“‘Parts of Swedenborg’s scheme are dangerous. His sexual religion is so.’

“‘I do not believe the world is round. I believe it is quite flat.’

“‘I have conversed with the Spiritual Sun. I saw him on Primrose Hill. He said, “Do you take me for the Greek Apollo?” “No,” I said, “that” (pointing to the sky) “is the Greek Apollo. He is Satan.”’

“‘I know what is true by internal conviction. A doctrine is told me. My heart says: “It must be true.”’ I corroborated this by remarking on the impossibility of the unlearned man judging of what are called the *external* evidences of religion, in which he heartily concurred.

“I regret that I have been unable to do more than put down these few things. The tone and manner are incommunicable. There are a natural sweetness and gentility about Blake which are delightful. His friend Linnell seems a great admirer.

“Perhaps the best thing he said was his comparison of moral with natural evil. ‘Who shall say that God thinks evil? That is a wise tale of the Mahometans of the angel of the Lord that murdered the infant (alluding to the “Hermit” of Parnell, I suppose). Is not every infant that dies of disease murdered by an angel?’

“December 17th (still 1825). A short call this morning on Blake. He dwells in Fountain Court, in the Strand. I found him in a small room, which seems to be both a working room and a bedroom. Nothing could exceed the squalid air of both the apartment and his dress, yet there is diffused over him an air of natural gentility. His wife has a good expression of countenance.

“I found him at work on Dante. The book (Cary) and his sketches before him. He showed me his designs, of which I have nothing to say but that they

evince a power, I should not have anticipated, of grouping and of throwing grace and interest over conceptions monstrous and horrible.

"Our conversation began about Dante. 'He was an Atheist—a mere politician, busied about this world, as Milton was, till, in his old age, he returned to God whom he had had in his childhood.'

"I tried to ascertain from Blake whether this charge of Atheism was to be understood in a different sense from that which would be given to it according to the popular use of the word. But he would not admit this. Yet, when he in like manner charged Locke with Atheism, and I remarked that Locke wrote on the evidences of Christianity and lived a virtuous life, Blake had nothing to say in reply. Nor did he make the charge of wilful deception. I admitted that Locke's doctrine leads to Atheism, and with this view Blake seemed to be satisfied.

"From this subject we passed over to that of good and evil, on which he repeated his former assertions more decidedly. He allowed, indeed, that there are errors, mistakes, &c., and if these be evil, then there is evil. But these are only negations. Nor would he admit that any education should be attempted except the cultivation of imagination and the fine arts. 'What are called the vices in the natural world are the highest sublimities in the spiritual world.' When I asked whether, if he were a father, he would not have grieved if his child had become vicious or a great criminal, he answered, 'When I am endeavouring to think rightly, I must not regard my own any more than other people's weaknesses.' And when I again remarked that this doctrine puts an end to all exertion, or even wish, to change anything, he made no reply.

"We spoke of the devil, and I observed that, when a child, I thought the Manichean doctrine, or that of two principles, a rational one. He assented to this, and, in confirmation, asserted that he did not believe in the omnipotence of God. The language of the Bible on that subject is only poetical or allegorical. Yet soon afterwards he denied that the natural world is anything. 'It is all nothing, and Satan's empire is the empire of nothing.'

"He reverted soon to his favourite expression, 'my visions.' 'I saw Milton, and he told me to beware of being misled by his "Paradise Lost," In particular, he wished me to show the falsehood of the doctrine that carnal pleasures arose from the Fall. The Fall could not produce any pleasure.' As he spoke of Milton's appearing to him, I asked if he resembled the prints of him. He answered, 'All.' 'What age did he appear to be?' 'Various ages. Sometimes a very old man.' He spoke of Milton as being at one time a sort of classical Atheist, and of Dante as being now with God. His faculty of vision, he says, he has had from early infancy. He thinks all men partake of it, but it is lost from want of cultivation. He eagerly assented to a remark I made that all men have all faculties in a greater or less degree. I am to continue my visits, and to read to him Wordsworth, of whom he seems to entertain a high idea. . . .

"December 24th. A call on Blake; my third interview. I read to him Wordsworth's incomparable Ode, which he heartily enjoyed.—('Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.') But he repeated, 'I fear Wordsworth loves nature, and nature is the work of the devil. The devil is in us as far as we are nature.' On my inquiring whether the devil, as having less power, could not be destroyed by God, he denied that God has any power, and asserted that the devil is eternally created, not by God, but by God's

permission. And when I objected that permission implies power to prevent, he did not seem to understand me. The parts of Wordsworth's ode which Blake most enjoyed were the most obscure—at all events, those which I least like and comprehend.

“1826. January 6th. A call on Blake. His conversation was very much a repetition of what he had said on a former occasion. He was very cordial. I had procured him two subscriptions for his ‘Job’ from George Procter and Basil Montague. I paid £1 for each. This seemed to put him in spirits. He spoke of being richer than ever in having become acquainted with me; and he told Mrs. A—— (? Mrs. Aders) that he and I were nearly of the same opinions. Yet I have practised no deception intentionally, unless silence be so. The oddest thing he said was that he had been commanded to do a certain thing—that is, to write about Milton—and that he was applauded for refusing. He struggled with the angels, and was victor. His wife took part in our conversation.

“February 18th. Called on Blake. An amusing chat with him. He gave me, in his own handwriting, a copy of Wordsworth's Preface to ‘The Excursion.’ At the end there is this note:—

“‘Solomon, when he married Pharoë's daughter, and became a convert to heathen mythology, talked exactly in this way of Jehovah, as a very inferior object of man's contemplation. He also passed Him by “unalarmed,” and was permitted. Jehovah dropped a tear, and followed him by His Spirit into the abstract void. It is called the Divine mercy. Satan dwells in it, but mercy does not dwell in him.’

“Of Wordsworth, Blake talked as before. Some of his writings proceeded from the Holy Spirit, but others were the work of the devil. However, on this subject, I found Blake's language more in accordance with orthodox Christianity than before. He talked of being under the direction of self.—Reason, as the creature of man, is opposed to God's grace. He warmly declared that all he knew is in the Bible. But he understands the Bible in its spiritual sense. As to the natural sense—‘Voltaire was commissioned by God to expose that. I have had much intercourse with Voltaire, and he said to me, “I blasphemed the Son of Man, and it shall be forgiven me, but they (the enemies of Voltaire) blasphemed the Holy Ghost in me, and it shall not be forgiven them.”’ I asked in what language Voltaire spoke. ‘To my sensations it was English. It was like the touch of a musical key. He touched it, probably, in French, but to my ear it became English.’ I spoke again of the *form* of the persons who appear to him, and asked why he did not draw them. ‘It is not worth while. There are so many, the labour would be too great. Besides, these would be no use. As to Shakespeare, he is exactly like the *old* engraving which is called a bad one. I think it very good.’

“I inquired of Blake about his writings. ‘I have written more than Voltaire or Rousseau. Six or seven epic poems as long as Homer, and twenty tragedies as long as Macbeth.’ He showed me his version (for so it may be called) of Genesis, ‘as understood by a Christian visionary. He read a passage at random. It was striking. He will not print any more. ‘I write,’ he says, ‘when commanded by the Spirits, and the moment I have written, I see the words fly about the room in all directions. It is then published, and the Spirits can read. My MS. is of no further use. I have been tempted to burn my MSS., but my wife won't let me.’ ‘She is right,’ I said, ‘you have written these, not from yourself,

but by order of higher beings. The MSS. are theirs, not yours.' He liked this, and said he would not destroy them. He repeated his philosophy. Everything is the work of God or the devil. There is a constant falling off from God, angels becoming devils. Every man has a devil in him, and the conflict is eternal between a man's self and God, &c. He told me my copy of his songs would be five guineas, and was pleased by my manner of accepting this information. He spoke of his horror of money—of his having turned pale when money was offered him."

The next reference is not from the diary but from portion of a letter to Miss Wordsworth, bearing no date, but post-marked February, printed in the "Reminiscences," and written within ten days of the preceding. The "above" mention of Blake is not printed by Mr. Robinson in his own Reminiscences, and therefore cannot be quoted here. The second begins as follows:—

"I have above mentioned Blake. I forget whether I have referred before to this very interesting man with whom I have now become acquainted. Were the 'Memorials' at my hand, I should quote a passage in the Sonnet on Cologne Cathedral as applicable to the contemplation of this singular being." (The quotation indicated is supposed to be the following:—

"O for the help of Angels to complete
This temple—Angels governed by a plan
Thus far pursued (how gloriously!) by man."

Not a very felicitous reference whether the temple stand for Blake, or for Mr. Robinson's description of him.)

"I gave your brother some poems in MS. by him, and they interested him, as well they might; for there is an affinity between them, as there is between the regulated imagination of a wise poet, and the incoherent outpourings of a dreamer. Blake is an engraver by trade, a painter and poet also, whose works have been a subject of derision to men in general; but he has a few admirers, and some of eminence have eulogized his designs. He has lived in obscurity and poverty to which the constant hallucinations in which he lives have doomed him. I do not mean to give you a detailed account of him. A few words will suffice to inform you of what class he is. He is not so much a disciple of Jacob Böhme and Swedenborg as a fellow-visionary. He lives, as they did, in a world of his own, enjoying constant intercourse with the world of spirits. He receives visits from Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Voltaire, &c., and has given me repeatedly their very words in their conversations. A man so favoured, of course, has sources of wisdom and truth peculiar to himself. I will not presume to give you an account of his religious and philosophical opinions; they are a strange compound of Christianity, Spinozism, and Platonism. I must confine myself to what he has said about your brother's work, and I fear this may lead me far enough to fatigue you in following me. After what I have said, Mr. Wordsworth will not be flattered by knowing that Blake deems him the *only poet* of the age, nor much alarmed by hearing that Blake thinks that he is often, in his works, an *Atheist*. Now, according to Blake, Atheism consists in worshipping the natural world, which same natural world, properly speaking, is nothing real, but a mere illusion produced by Satan. Milton was, for a great part of his life, an

Atheist, and therefore has fatal errors in his 'Paradise Lost,' which he has often begged Blake to confute. Dante (though now with God) lived and died an Atheist. He was the slave of the world and Time. But Dante and Wordsworth, in spite of their Atheism, were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, all real poetry is the work of the Holy Ghost, and Wordsworth's poems (a large proportion, at least) are the work of Divine Inspiration. Unhappily, he is left by God to his own illusions, and then the Atheism is apparent. I had the pleasure of reading to Blake, in my best style (and you know I am vain on that point, and think I read Wordsworth's poems particularly well), the Ode on Immortality. I never witnessed greater delight in any listener; and in general Blake loves the poems. What appears to have disturbed his mind, on the other hand, is the Preface to 'The Excursion.' He told me six months ago that it caused him a stomach complaint that nearly killed him. When I first saw Blake at Mr. Aders, he very earnestly asked me, 'Is Mr. Wordsworth a sincere real Christian?' In reply to my answer, he said, 'If so, what does he mean by "the worlds to which the heaven of heavens is but a veil," and who is he that shall "pass Jehovah unalarmed?"' It is since then that I have lent Blake all the works that he imperfectly knew. I doubt whether, what I have written, will excite your and Mr. Wordsworth's curiosity; but there is something so delightful about the man—though in great poverty, he is so perfect a gentleman, with such genuine dignity and independence, scorning presents, and of such native delicacy in words, &c.—that I have not scrupled in promising to bring him and Mr. Wordsworth together. He expressed his thanks strongly, saying, 'You do me honour, Mr. Wordsworth is a great man. Besides, he may convince me I am wrong about him. I have been wrong before now,' &c. Coleridge has visited Blake, and, am told, talks finely about him.

"*July 15th.*—Called on Blake. He was as wild as ever with no great novelty. He talked as usual of the Spirits, asserted that he had committed many murders, that reason is the only evil, or sin, and that careless people are better than those who, &c.

"*December 7th* I then went to Blake's. He received the intelligence of Flaxman's death) much as I expected. He had himself been very ill during the summer, and his first observation was, with a smile, 'I thought I should have gone first.' He then said, 'I cannot consider death anything but going from one room to another.' By degrees he fell into his wild, rambling way of talk. 'Men are born with a devil and an angel,' but this he himself interpreted, body and soul. Of the Old Testament he seemed to think not favourably. 'Christ,' he said, 'took much after his mother, the Law.' On my asking for an explanation, he referred to the turning the money-changers out of the temple. He then declaimed against those who sit in judgment on others. 'I have never known a very bad man who had not something very good about him.' He spoke of the Atonement, and said, 'It is a horrible doctrine! If another man pay your debt, I do not forgive it.' He produced 'Sintram,' by Fouquet, and said, 'This is better than my things.'

"1827. February 2nd. Götzenberger, the young painter from Germany, called, and I accompanied him to Blake. We looked over Blake's 'Dante.' Götzenberger was highly gratified by the designs. I was interpreter between them. Blake seemed gratified by the visit, but said nothing remarkable."

(Götzenberger was a pupil of Cornelius, and had assisted him in painting the

emblematical frescoes in the Aula of the University of Bonn. He afterwards declared that he had only seen three men of genius in England. Blake was one.)

Reminiscence (written in 1852). "It was on this occasion that I saw Blake for the last time. He died on the 12th August. His genius as an artist was praised by Flaxman and Fuseli, and his poems excited great interest in Wordsworth. His Theosophic dreams bore a close resemblance to those of Swedenborg. . . . I will now gather together a few stray recollections. When, in 1810, I gave Lamb a copy of the paintings exhibited in Carnaby Street, he was delighted, especially with a description of a painting, afterwards engraved, and connected with which there is a circumstance which, unexplained, might reflect discredit on an excellent and amiable man. It was after the friends of Blake had circulated a subscription paper for an engraving of his 'Canterbury Pilgrims' that Stothard was made a party to an engraving of a painting of the same subject by himself. But Flaxman considered this as done wilfully. Stothard's work is well known; Blake's is known by very few. Lamb preferred the latter greatly, and declared that Blake's description was the finest criticism he had ever read of Chaucer's poem. In the catalogue Blake writes of himself with the utmost freedom. He says, 'This artist defies all competition in colouring;' that none can beat him, for none can beat the Holy Ghost; that he and Michael Angelo and Raphael were under divine influence, while Corregio and Titian worshipped a lascivious and, therefore, cruel Deity, and Rubens a proud Devil, &c. Speaking of colour, he declared the men of Titian to be leather and his women of chalk, and ascribed his own perfection in colouring to the advantage he enjoyed of seeing daily the primitive men walking in their native nakedness in the mountains of Wales. There were about thirty oil paintings—the colouring excessively dark and high, and the veins black. The hue of his primitive men was very like that of the red Indians. Many of his designs were unconscious imitations. He illustrated Blair's 'Grave,' the 'Book of Job,' and four books of Young's 'Night Thoughts.' The last I have showed to William Hazlitt. In the designs he saw no merit; but when I read him some of Blake's poems he was much struck, and expressed himself with his usual strength and singularity. 'They are beautiful,' he said, 'and only too deep for the vulgar. As to God, a worm is as worthy as any other object—all alike to Him, being indifferent; so to Blake the chimney-sweeper,' &c. 'He is ruined by vain struggles to get rid of what presses on his brain; he attempts impossibilities.' I added, 'He is like a man who lifts a burthen too heavy for him. He bears it an instant, and then it falls and crushes him.'

"I lent Blake the octavo edition, two vols., of Wordsworth's poems, which he had at the time of his death. They were sent me then. I did not at first recognise the pencil notes as his, and was on the point of rubbing them out when I made the discovery. On the fly-leaf of Volume I., under the words *Poems referring to the Period of Childhood*, the following is written:—'I see in Wordsworth the natural man rising up against the spiritual man continually; and then he is no poet, but a heathen philosopher at enmity with all true poetry and inspiration.' On the lines—

"And I could wish my days to be
Bound oach to each by natural piety,'

he wrote: 'There is no such thing as natural piety, because the natural man

is at enmity with God.' On the verses to H. C., six years old (p. 43), the comment is, 'This is all in the highest degree imaginative, and equal to any poet—but not superior. I cannot think that real poets have any competition. "None are greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." It is so in poetry.' At the bottom of page 44, 'On the Influence of Natural Objects,' is written, 'Natural objects always did and now do weaken, deaden, and obliterate imagination in me. Wordsworth must know that what he writes valuable is not to be found in nature. Read Michael Angelo's Sonnet, Volume II., page 179'—that is, the one beginning:—

" 'No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the lucid light of thine.'

It is remarkable that Blake, whose judgments in most points were so very singular, should nevertheless on one subject, closely connected with Wordsworth's poetical reputation, have taken a very commonplace view. Over the head of the Essay, supplementary to the Preface, at the end of the volume he wrote: 'I do not know who wrote these prefaces. They are very mischievous, and directly contrary to Wordsworth's own practice. This Preface is not the defence of his own style in opposition to what is called *poetic diction*, but a sort of historic vindication of unpopular poets.' On Macpherson, Wordsworth wrote with the severity with which all great writers have written of him. Blake's comment was, 'I believe both Macpherson and Chatterton, that what they say is ancient, is so.' And at the end of the essay he wrote: 'It appears to me that the last paragraph beginning "It is the right of the whole," &c. was written by another hand and mind from the rest of these prefaces. They give the opinions of a (word effaced) landscape painter. Imagination is the divine vision, not of the world, nor of man, nor from man, as he is a natural man; but only as he is a spiritual man. Imagination has nothing to do with memory.'

This, and the reference to Mrs. Blake having reminded Blake, *apropos* of his visions, of the time when, he being four years old, saw God put his head to the window, and so fell to screaming, is all Crabb Robinson has to tell from personal observation of Blake.

The account by Mr. Crabb Robinson has been given entire, not only because it contains the best and most vivid portrait of him that has been left to us from his own day, but because it was written by a man who thought him mad before he saw him, and never altogether got rid of the idea. It is true that the first crude and conventional conception of Blake as a mere "mad poet" was considerably modified. Mr. Robinson had a slight acquaintance with the general drift, at least, of some of the more imaginative philosophies, and therefore was able to classify in his own mind many peculiarities of Blake's dogmatic utterances. Of what remained unaccounted for, the

worst he found to say at last, was that they were "incoherent out-pourings of a dreamer."

In the fragmentary notes which he made from memory, Mr. Crabb Robinson cannot have avoided exaggerating the incoherence, and as he seems only to have written down such scraps as struck him most, on account of their oddness or wildness, the impression left after reading his notes is by no means favourable to Blake's sanity, unless a knowledge of Blake's own work enables the reader to interpret the fragments, while at the same time guessing at their connection with the general conversation.

The first point noticeable is Mr. Robinson's surprise at hearing Blake explain the mannerism of some of his work, and even the attitude of a figure, by an allusion to his early familiarity with art of the same description. It seems to contradict the idea that he drew from vision. This is an error. In the "Vision of the last Judgment" (Gilchrist, Vol. II., p. 185), Blake speaks of his vision of Time himself as so far infected by the general conception that he sees him as a man no longer young, while convinced that a pure vision would reveal him as an eternal youth. In the designs to Young's "Night Thoughts," Time is also represented in the customary manner. Besides there are visions and visions, just as there is imagination and fancy.

The next point is that Blake spoke coolly of his visions, and of the "Spirit" telling him things. This of course; he saw visions, and the "Spirit" or the "Poetic Genius" certainly told him much.

His brotherhood or identity with Socrates and life in his time and the time of Jesus is understood when we remember that the spiritual man, not the natural, being eternal, makes all of us contemporaries. The "worm of sixty summers" is, Blake admits, under "the rule of the numbers."

True identity being in the spiritual and not the bodily man, Blake could have been all that he said, unless, as a matter of fact, there be no "spiritual man." But this is not a question

that can be used as a shiboleth to divide the mad from the sane. With regard to the "So am I, and so are you," uttered with the profession of faith, "He is the only God," it follows naturally that in the brotherhood of man, spiritually understood, the brotherhood with Christ is included, and brotherhood implies an identical element in two personalities; thus an identical element between man and God through Christ. This accepted doctrine of Christianity is so noted from Blake's conversation that it has almost an air of blasphemy. Gilchrist omits the passage, not recognising, perhaps, its orthodoxy.

Christ's crucifixion, which Blake, according to Crabb Robinson, blames, as an error of Christ, his "suicide" (see *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*), has a symbolic meaning explained in a later chapter. The idea that Jesus "should not have attacked the government" comes oddly from a man who wore a red cap in London during the French Revolution, and, as in a letter to Mr. Cumberland, printed later on, upheld even "Republican Art." On this, compare the "*Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." Jesus "became the Father" in a full sense only after the Resurrection. Another of the sayings, "Christ took much after his mother, the Law," is deprived of all meaning by Gilchrist, who simply omits the words "the Law" and puts dots in their place. The "Old Testament" spoken of as an "evil element" is equally puzzling, unless the pairs of mystic contraries be kept in view: Christ—Nature; Prophets or New Testament—Law or Old Testament. Of course the Old Testament was not spoken of in the mass as "evil," only the Satanic portions, that is the unprophetic.

The destruction of all ideas of good and evil, instanced by Mr. Robinson as the mental danger of certain modes of thought, was eagerly seized on by Blake as an advantage—it was nothing less than a return to a state of innocence. But it must be done in the mind, in the region of ultimates, not in the half-way house of experience. The soul he always held should never have fallen into "deadly dreams of good and

evil" so as to "leave paradise" or philosophic imaginativeness, "following the serpent" or Nature. ("Vision of the Last Judgment," Gilchrist, Volume II., p. 198.) Education, except that of the arts and imagination, tends to this error, because it is neither imaginative nor philosophic, and causes men to forget to disbelieve in matter. Hence Blake calls it "sin," and then disbelieves the existence of "evil," speaking once more on the ultimate plane only. Neither the just nor the wicked are in a "supreme state." (*Ibid.*) On the immediate plane all individuals—angels, poets, visionaries—commit sin and folly. God himself, entering into the immediate plane from the ultimate, has cause to "repent" what he does there,—for example, the making of Nineveh.

Blake even desired, when his eyes were fixed on the ultimate, that his efforts and art might receive no reward on the immediate plane. It is the language of the saints.

Blake was now old. He had ceased to be angry and impatient of neglect. He was nearing the one perfectly joyful day of his life—the last.

How mentally ill-fitted Mr. Robinson was to report Blake, notwithstanding his moral qualifications of honesty and patience, may be measured once for all by his note that Blake in referring to the difference between the natural and spiritual worlds, said "one of his unintelligible things." If so, the rest of his words must have been dark indeed, for this difference is the root of the whole matter. As for the consuming of the natural world his happy phrase on things that "are burnt up when we cease to behold them," should have been said to Mr. Robinson there and then.

Ought Swedenborg to have explained the Arcana in terms of ordinary reason? Blake said, "No." But, it is not possible to explain prophecy any more than digestion in terms of ordinary reason. They protect themselves from the process. They would be unnecessary if not occult. Even the present work goes no further in the one direction than a physiological treatise in the other. Such a work of prepara-

tion on the outskirts of the Biblical mystery Swedenborg attempted. Such on the edge of the Blake-myth we do here and now. Some readers need neither of us, but there will always be centurions who obtain their freedom at a great price, as well as citizens of Tarsus, born free. Later, in the chapter on Blake's Contraries, will be found the sorting into order of the apparently chaotic utterances on Satan and Nature that Mr. Robinson gives so carefully. It may be said in his praise that, though he understood Blake little, he reported him sincerely, though scrappily. No real student can feel doubt of the general accuracy of his version of the sayings. The impression of incoherence and self-contradiction that they give at first, vanishes on a closer inspection. The words about Milton, Dante, and Bacon, all follow as a matter of course when Blake's books have been read, the misfortune is with those who have not read them. It is not worth the labour of investigating further the reasons why the different sayings that seemed so hard to Mr. Robinson are really so simple. It is enough now to thank him for what he has done, and pass on. It is difficult to do so without a smile at his innocent belief, so evident throughout, that he was a man of more cogent reasoning, more common sense, more sanity and mental daylight than Blake. Blake seemed to him a charming curiosity with whom to divert his leisure and amuse his friends. But the "whirligig of time" has "brought in its revenges." If Mr. Robinson always thought Blake a little mad, we cannot but respect his manhood for this, though it shows that he had not mastered the meaning of what was said to him. Similarly among living critics—who do not know the language of Blake, and therefore can neither read nor criticise him; we respect the manly sincerity of Mr. Michael Rossetti, who "pledges his connoisseurship," as Cromek's phrase has it, to the same error. As also showing how very little to be blamed, they are, however, much to be disagreed with, Blake himself shall be cited to take their side—in appearance at least. A fragment of paper, seemingly torn off

to make a hasty memorandum of the incident, is preserved by the Linnell brothers among the sheets of the Vala MS. It is in Blake's handwriting, and bears no sign of having been of the nature of a letter. It was addressed to himself, if to any one, and is free from suspicion, however remote, that there was anything of theatrical pretence about it.

It is a note made while reading Spurzheim, in a copy where marginal pencillings were either not permitted, or insufficient. The words are as follows:—"Methodism, &c. 154. Cowper came to me and said, 'Oh! that I were insane, always. I will never rest. Cannot you make me truly insane? I will never rest till I am so. Oh! that in the bosom of God I was hid. You retain health and yet are mad as any of us all—over us all—mad as a refuge from unbelief—from Bacon, Newton, and Locke.'" And to a previous page, 106, he has, on the same piece of paper, "Corporal disease, to which I readily agree. Diseases of the mind: I pity him. Denies mental health and perfection. Stick to this, all is right. But see page 152."

We must add to this the lines from those poems called "Ideas of good and evil," Gilchrist's "Life," Volume II., p. 104, where a "little boy" says:—

"Father, O Father, what do we here
In this land of unbelief and fear?
The land of dreams is better far
Beyond the light of the morning star."

Then we see that Blake's "madness"—if the word be used to mean anti-materialistic philosophy, and not drivelling, or raving, or folly—was his mental ideal, and that he aimed at it and sought to cultivate it from conviction.

It was part of his belief that all created things whatsoever are only imagined, just as all dreams are. Modern science reminds us that in the nerve-centres and their excitement we have the half-way house, where all sensations, as well as all hallucinations, show their passports, and are authorized to enter the mind. So that our firmest experience is, physiologically, as well as philosophically, only one hallucination more.

This was Blake's theory. Had he known that materialists would come to hold it, he would have considered this fact exactly described by the scriptural metaphor, "Satan, divided against himself."

It may be an original, but it is not an insane development of this theory, to consider Imagination as the Creator. He is of duplex character, and has created a beneficent world through acting on our imaginations, which are not only like Him but are Himself and His Temple, while a similar power, acting through the five senses, creates this world, and a different personage, called Satan, has made this kingdom his by causing us to believe in its substantial reality. Such belief is, therefore, "Atheism." All this may be true, and a "vision" of Milton may be of the same certitude as a sight of Mr. Crabb Robinson seen by a contemporary. Such vision may even lead to accuracy in portraits painted from such sight. But if fleeting nature be moulded upon forms conceived by Eternal Imagination, there can be no more Atheism in loving it for its form's sake, than in clasping with pleasure a friend's hand, even when gloved. But Blake always suspected that those who caressed the glove meant to deny the hand. At the worst, the materialist says—"I have never seen the hand with the glove off." "I have," replies the visionary. "Then, you, of all people, should know," returns the materialist, "how real is the form of the glove."

There is one proof of the "all-creative" power of the imagination more cogent and more simple than philosophic argument. The imagination may conceive a solid object as absent. This reverses the creative process, which is revealed by being thus reversed.

The most modern as well as the most ancient source of scientific inquiry, that most subtle and dangerous form of vivisection known as Hypnotism, provides the proof. An experiment often made, but not yet classified properly, may be easily repeated and can be ordered beforehand, as we order a prescription to be made up by a chemist. It is true that the

chemist must first have the proper ingredients at hand ; and it is also true that the virtue by which ordinary medicine acts upon us is as much a mystery as the agency of the hypnotic experiment. Those who say, with Blake, that our digestion is carried on by spirits, only remind us in figurative language that the problems of hypnotism and medicine are the same, and that the intellectual conceptions which would enable us to idealise nerve-action enough to understand either would explain both.

The experiment is as follows. Let a person gifted with the expelling-power of nerve influence called the "mesmeric" faculty, induce sleep in the usual manner in one who has the gift of receptivity. Let him tell this living subject during the sleep that some person in the room has gone, or that some opaque object,—it may be of solid metal,—has been taken away. Then let the "subject," as the hypnotised person is called, be awakened. He joins the company, but does not see the missing member, or object, though these are visible to everyone else. But he is not blind. He sees every other thing in the room. He is awake, and converses as usual, unconscious that there is anything abnormal in his condition. The question *how* the invisible object has become invisible is easily tested. The fact is that it has become transparent, and that whatever is behind or beneath is seen through the opaque body as through the air. Numbers can be read, scraps of torn paper counted, &c., when concealed from everyone else, by the one eye now capable of seeing through opacity.

Presently the subject may be put to sleep again and told that the onco transparent thing, or person, has returned to the room. He is to be awakened now, and it will be found that he sees as we all do, and that the temporary transparency of opacity is over.

This experiment, seemingly miraculous, has been repeated, without and with witnesses, by the present writers, and by others, though sometimes imperfectly (see *Pall Mall Budget*, April 16th, 1891),—and there exists absolutely no theory to

account for it except that of Blake:—namely, that opacity is itself a delusion, though practically universal. “Hyperæsthesia” merely names, and names badly, without explaining the seer’s condition. Thus opacity is seen to result from perverted attention, transparency from diverted attention. This world is, indeed, “burnt up when we cease to behold it,” and the kingdom of Satan proved to be “all nothing.”

The majority of religious persons tend to look on the undoubted fact that hypnotic researches are dangerous as accounted for by such wonders being diabolic and against the Divine Order of Nature. Let it go most emphatically upon record, that one man who never spoke of, probably never heard of these experiments; a man who contained their most startling results in his own normal functions, and as a part of the healthy and average action of his nervous system; announced on religious grounds the contrary doctrine. The order of Nature is not Divine, said Blake, but Satanic. Yet he claims as Divine the word which tells us that the Prince of this world is Satan. Satan is pain, sin, delusion. He is the “limit of opacity,” but prophecy and poetry, and the philosophy that claims what we call *clairvoyance* as a matter of course, are mental rights of humanity and of the healthful life. Here is to be found the “enlargement of the senses” through which the enlargement of the mind is to come, when we shall all awake from “single vision and Newton’s sleep.” Here will then be the common land where we shall live without competition, possess without war, occupy busily without trade, learn without education, and lead one another to God without the gallows.

Meanwhile we live in “a world of unbelief and fear,” and it requires “all our might” to “believe vision.”

XVII.—CLOSING YEARS.

BLAKE had no children. The living descendants of the name have sprung from sons of John O'Neil, born after and not before his marriage with Ellen Blake in Ireland.

Perhaps never so much as in his old age did Blake's childlessness weigh on him. Never was his love of children so keen, or his kindness to the little ones so ready. One child who sat upon his knee was given his name as a sign of friendship by its father. This was William Linnell, the youngest of the children of the great landscape painter. To him this work is dedicated, not for the name's sake only, but in recollection of much patience and kindness on his part, and trouble taken to enable the editors to get at and use the loose leaves on which the book of "Vala" was written. This family possession of the Linnell brothers, preserved so long and so faithfully, though neither read, understood, nor even put in consecutive order, was so highly and justly valued by the elders that they would never permit it to pass from under the roof of one of the family. For bringing it to town, and enabling it to be studied for weeks, copied, and printed (the sorting of the pages by the present editors was the work of several days), Blake has to thank the man who, as a child, was the last whom he played with and loved on this earth before his release.

It had been the intention of John Linnell for some years to name one of his children after Blake. The son nearest in years to William was to have been so called. Blake himself

interfered and opposed the project. His letter is printed by Gilchrist. It concludes as follows:—

“The name of the child ought to be Thomas, after Mr. Linnell’s father. It will be brutal, not to say worse, in my opinion, and on my part. Pray consider it, if it is not too late. It very much troubles me, as a crime in which I shall be the principal. Pray excuse this hearty expostulation.”

The child was eventually called James, and is the still living and well-known landscape painter, whose works have, with those of his younger brother William, so well continued and upheld the reputation for the family name first won by their father.

Blake’s feeling seems to have been that in allowing a child to be deprived of a baptismal name already current in the family he was wronging its ancestors, taking away, as it were, a portion of that life which they could still live, on earth, though by proxy, through the magic of the name, and so killing them twice by depriving their descendants of a continual charm by which they could be summoned back into the region of love and memory. There is a touch of mysticism even here. It shows the supreme importance in which he held even the symbol of family affection, and emphasises by contrast the silent despair with which he bore the estrangement of his own surviving brother. Blake most truly says of himself:—

“That which to you a trifle appears
Fills me full of smiles and tears.”

This was the man of “many murders,” who so bewildered Mr. Crabb Robinson, and even Mr. Rossetti, by the importance he gave to “trifles.”

Yet Blake in his attempt to “think rightly,” that is to say on the ultimate, or God-plane, strove to disregard his own “weakness,” and to believe that had he a son he could *mentally* look on unmoved even if that son became a great criminal, as at another time he claimed that he would refrain from the folly of anger even were his wife unfaithful.

In his prophetic poetry he denounces parental love as of the nature of "storguous appetite, craving." It leads to—

"Cruel patriarchal pride;
Planting thy family alone,
Condemning all the world beside,"

and is a piece of the worship of Satan. But his heart and his mental convictions did not speak with the same voice.

Once, it is related, Blake was reading aloud the parable of the Prodigal Son. At the words "while he was yet a great way off his father saw him," the reading suddenly stopped. The listener, looking up, saw that Blake was in tears.

It was this man, when in his lonely old age he felt his own childlessness most keenly, who warmly protested against having his name given to a child to the neglect of a family claim.

There is a marked contrast between the mystical tone of the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," and the conversations recorded by Mr. Crabb Robinson. In the first the energy of sensation and the sensation of energy are loudly extolled, though admittedly of the "Satanic" nature. In the last the more subtle energy and the whiter delight of pure contemplation are alone alluded to with a wish to increase and sustain them.

The death of Flaxman, so prettily alluded to in the conversations, is spoken of almost in the same words in a letter that has only recently come to light:—

"Flaxman is gone, and we must soon follow, every one to his own eternal house, leaving the delusions of Goddess Nature and her laws to get into Freedom from all the laws of the Numbers—into the Mind, in which everyone is king and priest in his own house. God grant it on earth, as it is in heaven."

This recalls the "Female God" with whose worship Blake reproached Dr. Thornton, and the "Christ's Mother, the Law," of the conversations. In a marginal note made on the copy of Cennini's book on frescoe painting, which John Linnell lent to Blake, we read:—"The Pope supposes Nature

and the Virgin Mary to be the same allegorical personage, but the Protestant considers Nature as incapable of bearing a child."

Thus from every side is seen the coherence of the general foundation of Blake's symbolic mode of thought, and it becomes less surprising, though still a wonder that increases the more it is thought about, that he should have built on it the beautiful myths of his "prophetic" and symbolic poems.

In another letter written at this time to John Linnell he says:—"Perhaps, and I verily believe it, every death is an improvement in the state of the departed."

Between the "perhaps" and the "verily believe," one sees here another effort to "think rightly," without "weakness."

The letter in which he speaks of the death of Flaxman was written to Mr. Cumberland, one of his last appreciators and buyers. It bears date April 12th, 1827, and has not been printed by Gilchrist:—

"I have been very near the gates of death, and have returned very weak, and an old man, feeble and tottering, but not in spirit and life, not in the real man, the imagination, which liveth for ever. In that I am stronger and stronger as this foolish body decays. I thank you for the pains you have taken with poor Job. I know too well that the great majority of Englishmen are fond of the indefinite, which they measure by Newton's doctrine of the fluxions of atoms, a thing which does not exist. These are politicians, and think that Republican art is inimical to their atom, for a line or lineament is not formed by chance. A line is a line in its minutest subdivisions, straight or crooked. It is itself, not intermeasurable by anything else. Such is Job. But since the French Revolution Englishmen are all intermeasurable by one another, certainly a happy state of agreement in which I for one do not agree. God keep you and me from the divinity of yes, and no too,—the yea, nay, creeping Jesus,—from supposing up and down to be the same thing, as all experimentalists must suppose.

“ You are desirous, I know, to dispose of some of my works, but having none remaining of all I have printed, I cannot print more except at a great loss. I am now painting a set of the “ Songs of Innocence and Experience ” for a friend, at ten guineas. The last work I produced is a poem entitled ‘ Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion, ’ but find that to print it will cost my time to the amount of twenty guineas. One I have finished, but it is not likely I shall find a customer for it.

“ As you wish me to send you a list with the prices, they are as follows :—

America	£6 6 0
Europe	6 6 0
Visions, &c.	5 5 0
Thel	3 3 0
Songs of Innocence and Experience	10 10 0
Urizen	6 6 0

The little card I will do as soon as possible.” A facsimile of the card is given by Gilchrist, Vol. I., p. 339.

Then follows the allusion to Flaxman’s death.

In this letter, as everywhere else, the mystic suggestion and the symbol or fact are alternately referred to, as though the mental transition were quite customary, and to be expected from the average reader. The little piece of art-criticism on his own style of engraving the Job thus contrasts it with the stippling, the dots and lozenges, of conventional engravers, and compares these with the “ atoms,” the “ things that do not exist,” whose aggregate could never be life. The inference is that they can never be art either. Of course, the whole thing is a mere beating of the air, from the scientific point of view, but as a personal reminiscence it shows Blake in his character as a believer in the importance of every part of mental life, and of the activity of thoughts on each other so close and continuous, that nothing in life can be alien to an artist, and nothing in philosophy so out of his way of thought

as to fail to afford him matter for partisanship. This letter was written just a hundred years after Newton's death. But Blake, who probably did not know that Newton was, like himself, a labourer, a man who earned his living, a man who was misunderstood, whose discoveries were imputed to others, who was supposed at one time to be an alchemist and at another time to be mad, never ceased to see in him simply and solely an enemy of imagination. It was, so to speak, a brothers' quarrel, and never healed.

The "yea, nay, creeping Jesus," will be understood by reference to the poem called "The Everlasting Gospel," and "up and down" are here used symbolically for *toward imagination*, the place of brotherhood and eternity, contrasted with *toward experience*, place of personality, separateness, and death. The "Laws of the Numbers" refer not only to Newton, but to the Numbers of darkness, 6, manifestation, 7, separated personality, 9, &c., which are illustrated in the stanzas of "Los," "Urizen," the Nights of "Vala," &c. Such things must all pass away. A well-known occultist of our own time said recently: "Even the Akasa" (Ideal Space, the world of pure ideas) "will pass away, and then there will be nothing but God,—chaos,—that which every man is seeking in his heart."

The passage in this letter to Mr. Cumberland referring to "Jerusalem," tends to support Gilchrist's theory, that "Jerusalem" was the poem referred to in 1808 as the great work Blake was about to print, notwithstanding the date of 1804 on its title-page.

Four months after writing to Mr. Cumberland, Blake was dead. Mr. Tatham, one of his last friends, finally received from Mrs. Blake complete control over all the work left in her hands at his death. It is therefore probable that the one finished copy of "Jerusalem," of which Blake tells Mr. Cumberland that he did not expect to find a purchaser, was that in which Mr. Tatham wrote a brief memoir, on fly-leaves bound up with it. To this memoir we owe several details now

published for the first time, and the portrait standing as frontispiece to this book. The copy of "Jerusalem" is now in possession of Mr. Quaritch. It ought to be in the print-room of the British Museum. There is no such example of Blake's work. The Museum "Jerusalem" is uncoloured, and even the numbering of the pages is different.

It is remarkable that Blake omits the book of "Ahania" from his list. It is extremely scarce;—only one copy is known, that of Lord Houghton, who kindly permits the facsimile given here, to be taken from its pages.

Blake died on August 12th, 1827.

The closing period of his life could not be better described than in the words of the first biography.

The record is of good friends, willing pupils, quiet hours, kindly atmosphere. But a strange complaint, a shivering and sickness and sinking that would come from time to time, told that the end was near.

"On the day of his death," writes a friend, who had his account from the widow, "he composed and uttered songs to his Maker, so sweetly to the ear of his Catherine, that, when she stood to hear him, he, looking upon her most affectionately, said, 'My beloved! they are *not mine*—*no!* they are *not mine.*' He told her they would not be parted; he should always be about her to take care of her." Another account says—"He said he was going to that country he had all his life wished to see, and expressed himself happy, hoping for salvation through Jesus Christ. Just before he died, his countenance became fair, his eyes brightened, and he burst out into singing of the things he saw in Heaven."

The last work of the hands that his wife had "never seen idle," was a sketch of her, made with the brief dedication—"Kate, you have been an angel to me." Then, throwing down his pencil, he began improvising his new sort of service for the dying, one of delight and exultant joy at the nearness of the great change. These hymns were not devotional exercises gone through in pious hope of helping his trembling

soul. They were lyric shouts of joy. "He made the rafters ring," says Tatham. "The death of a saint!" said one woman who was present. But, after all, unless pain had broken him, or accident had hurried him silent through the gates, unawares, how else should Blake have died?

XVIII.—THE WIDOW.

WHEN Blake wrote, in his "Marriage of Heaven und Hell," that he had always found Angels to consider themselves, through their conceit, as the only wise, he made a remark which was one day to have a disastrous illustration in the fortunes of his own work. At his death an enormous pile of manuscript was left. Allan Cunningham speaks of two hundred books ready for the press. Among them must have been the paraphrase of the Bible according to the views of a Christian mystic, from which passages had been read to Mr. Crabb Robinson, who found them "striking," but has noted nothing worthy of disapproval. These were, probably, the long poems and massive dramas of which Blake had told him in conversation, and perhaps the lost book "Oothoon," of which only the title and the number of the plates is chronicled by Gilchrist.

All this mass of wealth was placed by Mrs. Blake in the hands of Mr. Frederick Tatham, an "Angel," Mr. Linnell says of the Irvingite Church. The books were at his mercy.

We are told that he burned them. His "wisdom" discovered that they had evil tendencies, and this last horrible and irreparable crime against a mind that he could not measure was committed by him for the satisfaction of his conscience.

Perhaps love and admiration of his dead friend had a share in this act. The officious hands that would defend Blake against himself have been many, and have all belonged to

men who admitted and bowed down to his genius. Tatham's essay, written on the fly-leaves of his copy of the "Jerusalem," is one long admiring cry, one continuous plea that others should find beauty and nobility where he had found them. He even delighted in his friend's lesser merits, speaking with enthusiasm of Blake's ability in picking up Latin, Greek, French, and Italian, and noted with pride that of all the printed books that were put into his hands by the widow, those in foreign languages bore the most evident marks of frequent reading.

But the "net of Religion" which bound him was a new tissue of cord fresh from the twister's hands, and nothing that seemed heretical to this strange heretic was allowed to pass through its meshes.

How the MS. of "Vala" escaped and found safe keeping with Mr. John Linnell is not now known by his own family. It is believed to have been given by Blake himself on his death-bed as a recognition that he owed more to his last patron than the short hours that were left to him would let him accomplish.

Perhaps the unfinished task which most dwelt on his mind was not the engraving of the very numerous designs to Dante, but the completely copied and illuminated Bible which he had begun to produce in old English character, beautifully executed, like a monkish manuscript of the Middle Ages. The first page contains a faintly lined but recognizable design of the four Zoas, under their forms of dragon-man, eagle, lion, and ox. The first title which was written to "Vala," and afterwards struck out, was "The Four Zoas."

Of the Bible manuscript, not quite so much as the first four chapters of Genesis were completed. The titles to these indicate Blake's belief that his own great myth was a sister-story to the inspired Book itself. They go far not only to explain its consistency, but to throw light on Blake's own verbal statement to Mr. Robinson, that he had learned from the Bible all that he knew.

These are the chapter-headings :—

GENESIS.

Chap. I. The creation of the Natural Man.

Chap. II. The Natural Man divided into male and female, and of the tree of Life and the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Chap. III. Of the Sexual Nature, and its fall into Generation and Death.

Chap. IV. How Generation and Death took possession of the Natural Man. Of the Forgiveness of Sins written on the Murderer's forehead.

Here the morsel ends. But there is no difficulty in seeing that were whole chapters paraphrased in the same mystical treatment, pious Tatham would find much which it would seem to him, in his character of "the only wise," a duty to destroy. It is a task almost beyond *our* wisdom to forgive *his*. Yet Blake's own words remind us that we have no authority to write on any forehead a judgment withheld from Cain.

For four years after Blake's death his wife lived on, the captive of her mercilessly vigorous health. She never forgot that her husband had looked on death as merely "going to another room." Often she would call out to him as though he were only a few yards away and would hear. Perhaps she knew best. Both Frederick Tatham and John Linnell did what they could for her. She was not allowed to want, and even sent back a gift of money that had been procured from the Royal munificence, saying that others needed it more. She continued to work as when Blake had still been in the same room, colouring and selling his designs.

At last she became unable to eat and drink. She fretted, though uncomplainingly, at the closed door that kept her from being at his side, and presently the door softly opened, and she passed gently and gladly where she was weary of waiting to go.

POSTSCRIPT.

AND now, at last, the man who wrote of himself in his own life-time, "I am hid," stands clearly before us. He believed in himself and in his position as the Prophet of the Poetic Genius, and made no lesser claim when men would belittle his talent and pass by his power. He was right. We know him now as the one true mystic whose writings are not ponderous prose, but have wings wide enough to lift their weight. He found in the world a symbol, and in mind the place where the symbol might grow and live and give life. In his ideas of how the symbol should be dealt with he was the wildest Utopian. In his actual dealings with the facts of his own life, the masterful force of his own strong meekness subdued into a lovable blamelessness the fury of a temperament more passionate, and a vitality more exuberant, than is given to most men. In his dreams none left the world further behind, but instead of bringing back madness from the far countries of imagination to confuse the narrow rules of daily life, he was able by his grasp of the mystical spell to carry sanity into dreamland. We stand in astonishment at the danger of his utterances and at the scrupulous perfection of his life. We see him an anarchist and socialist, yet never with a thought of taking that which belonged to others, and even accepting as an evil to be endured the payment he earned by ceaseless labour. We find him believing in free thought and free love, yet as full of faithfulness as of faith. A seeming egotist in mind, constantly looking inwards and bidding all men do the same, he was never slow in small acts of courtesy;

and great efforts both of abnegation and of active generosity came to him as a matter of course. He would have seen no cause for surprise at all this, and would have wondered only at our wonder. What were the things of mortality that we should make a fuss about a little virtue? Sin itself was of no great consequence, and how should goodness be worth refusal if it made others happy? The best of us were not mentally perfect, and until we were so, it was as vain to lament over sin, as it was wicked to weaken each other's minds with constantly holding up the moral law and bidding people dwell on that, when they might be living in the realms of eternity, the imagination, the common mental ground between man and man, and between man and God. He admitted human imperfection, saying frankly, that every man was born naturally evil, and required to be continually changed into his direct contrary. Yet he was a confirmed and fanatic optimist—a profound believer in Man. If anyone had told him that his views of life were dangerous because most men had no imaginations to speak of, and little goodness, except what came to them by habit, when restraint had lain so long on them that their natural evil had withered under it, as grass withers under the shade of a cedar-tree, he would have been indignant. Imagination was the gift of God, and restraint of Satan, he held—even more; dreams *were* God, in us: reprobation and oppression and accusation *were* Satan. But to complete his picture we must turn to the greatest paradox of all. During his whole life he was surrounded by men who were shocked by his words and who disagreed with his doctrine almost exactly in proportion as they knew of its existence; he never disguised himself to any, or agreed with any hypocritically, yet all respected and all loved him, and chiefly those who were with him most and knew him longest.

The following letter, of whose existence we learned too late for its insertion where it should have been printed in the Memoir, is valuable as showing what may be called the high-water mark of Blake's friendship with Hayley. It is here published by the kind permission of Mr. Daniell, of Goodge Street, who possesses the original. Nothing could more emphatically divide the "pecks of salt" lines,—then forgotten and repented of along with other "poovish writing"—from the "hired villian" epigram, recording as it does a suspicion that sprang up three years later when the *Examiner* incident had occurred:—

To William Hayley Esq
Felpham near Chichester
Sussex.

Dear Sir

I cannot omit to Return you my Sincere & Grateful Acknowledgements for the kind Reception you have given my New Projected Work. It bids fair to set me above the difficulties I have hitherto encountered. But my Fate has been so uncommon that I expect Nothing. I was alive and in health and with the same Talents I now have all the time of *Boydella*, *Machlins Bowyers* & other Great Works. I was known to them and was look'd upon by them as Incapable of Employment in those Works it may turn out so again notwithstanding appearances I am prepared for it, but at the same time sincerely Grateful to Those whose Kindness & Good opinion has supported me thro' all hitherto. You Dear Sir are one who has my Particular Gratitude, having conducted me thro' Three that would have been the Darkest Years that ever Mortal Suffer'd, which were render'd thro your means a Mild and Pleasant Slumber. I speak of Spiritual Things. Not of Natural. Of Things known only to Myself and to Spirits Good and Evil but Not known to Men on Earth. It is the passage thro these Three Years that has brought me into my Present State and I know that if I had not been with You I must have Perish'd. Those Dangers are now passed and I can see them beneath my feet. It will not be long before I shall be able to present the full history of my Spiritual Sufferings to the dwellers upon Earth and of the Spiritual Victories obtained for me by my Friends. Excuse this Effusion of the Spirit from One who cares little for this World which passes away, whose happiness is Secure in Jesus our Lord, and who looks for suffering till the time of complete deliverance. In the meanwhile I am kept Happy as I used to be because I throw Myself and all that I have on our Saviours Divine Providence. O what Wonders are the Children of Men! Would to God that they would consider it,—that they would consider their Spiritual Life regardless of that faint Shadow called Natural Life and that they would Promote Each other's Spiritual Labours, Each according to its Rank, & that they would know that Receiving a Phophet as a Prophet is a Duty which If omitted is more Severely Avenged than Every Sin and Wickedness beside. It is the Greatest of Crimes to Depress True Art and Science. I know that those who are dead from the Earth & who mocked and Despised the Mockness of True Art (and such I find have been the situation of our Beautiful Affectionate Ballads), I know that such Mockers are Most Severely Punished in Eternity. I know it for I see it & dare not help. The Mockers of Art is the Mockers of Jesus. Let us go on Dear Sir following his Cross let us take it up daily, Persisting in Spiritual Labours & the Use of that Talent which is Death to Bury and of that Spirit to which we are called.

Pray Present My Sincerest Thanks to our Good Paulina whose kindness to Me shall receive recompense in the Presence of Jesus. Present also my Thanks to the generous Seagrave In whose debt I have been too long but perceive that I shall be able to settle with him soon what is between us. I have delivered to Mr. Sanders the 8 works of *Romney* as Mrs. Lambert to me you wished to have them a very few touches will finish the Shipwreck those few I have added upon a Proof before I parted with the Picture. It is a Print that I feel proud of on a New inspection. Wishing you and all All Friends in Sussex a Merry & Happy Christmas

I remain Ever Your
Affectionate
Will. Blake and
his Wife Catherine Blake

5th Moulton Street
December. 11 1805.

LITERARY PERIOD.

THE POETICAL SKETCHES.

THE Preface to the Poetical Sketches has already been alluded to in the Memoir, and the fiction contained in its well-meant phrases exposed. This exposure is sustained and even proved to demonstration by the manuscript containing the story of the Islanders in the Moon. This was evidently written after the Poetic Sketches and before the "Songs of Innocence." Its tone implies a contemptuous tolerance of the Matthews company mixed with over-tried patience—a tone such as could not have sprung up all at once, from the very first introduction. It does not contain any of the verses in the volume of "Poetic Sketches," and its last songs are among the first of those included in the collection next published, as "Songs of Innocence." It therefore belongs to the period during which the preface will have us believe that Blake's ardent professional duties as an engraver left him no time to correct his verses, a theory which, viewed as a joke, is equal to anything said about the Islanders.

Some of the Poetic Sketches—or "Poetical Sketches" as they were called—are printed in Gilchrist's second volume, the text being touched here and there by Mr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Mr. William Michael Rossetti, his brother, editor of the Aldine Edition, professes to print them in the exact words of the original, and does so. But he omits "The Couch of Death" and "Contemplation," and, following Mr. Pickering, has altered the order of the pieces taken as a collection. The

original is now very scarce, and even Mr. Quaritch's interesting facsimile of it is far from plentiful. From this facsimile the following table of contents is compiled, not copied, for the little volume has no list of its own materials:—

To Spring.

To Summer.

To Autumn.

To Winter.

To the Evening Star.

To Morning.

Fair Eleanor.

Song (How sweet I roamed).

Song (My silks and fine array).

Song (Love and harmony combine).

Song (I love the jocund dance).

Song (Memory hither come).

Mad Song (The wild winds weep).

Song (Fresh from the dewy hill).

Song (When early morn walks forth).

To the Muses.

Gwin, King of Norway.

An Imitation of Spencer.

Blind Man's Buff.

King Edward the Third.

Prologue (intended for a dramatic piece of King Edward the Fourth).

Prologue to King John.

A War Song to Englishmen.

The Couch of Death.

Contemplation.

Samson.

The last three pieces and the prologue to King John were printed by Blake's friends as prose. In this they probably followed his own manuscript. Yet of this, in the absence of the MS., no positive statement can be made. It is clear that the sound and swing of good English blank verse was in

Blake's ears when he wrote, and it is not impossible that he yielded to it and wrote straight on without caring to mark where the lines began and ended. He was far enough even to the last from "marshalling" the forces of a poetic line "in array for intellectual battle," as he claims to have done in the "Vala."

Mr. Rossetti has taken the trouble to so far depart from the original as to print the Prologue to King John and the Samson as blank verse, giving the words of the original and leaving such lines as are too long and such as are too short to take care of themselves. As no one has yet corrected the very obvious errors, and the lines are good enough to be worth the operation of removing their unsightly and discordant blemishes, the following is offered to those of Blake's readers who wish to enjoy his poetry without being made unnecessarily uncomfortable. Those who wish to compare it with the original have the Aldino Edition to enable them to do so.

PROLOGUE TO KING JOHN.

Justice hath heaved, to plunge in Albion's breast
 A sword, for Albion's sins are crimson-dyed,
 And the red scourge follows her desolate sons.
 Then patriots rose: full oft do patriots rise
 When tyranny hath stained fair Albion's breast
 With her own children's gore. Deep thunders roll
 Round her majestic feet. Each knee grows weak;
 Each heart does tremble, and the stars of heaven
 Do tremble, and the roaring voice of war,—
 The trumpet,—calls to battle. Brothers must bathe
 In brother's blood,—rivers of death. O land,
 From silver fountains weep,—from gentle rivers!
 The angels of the island weep to see
 Thy widowed virgins weep beneath thy shade.
 Thy aged fathers gird themselves for war.
 The sucking infant lives,—to die in battle.
 The weeping mother feeds him for the slaughter.
 The husbandman doth leave his bending harvest.
 Blood cries afar! the land doth sow itself.
 The glittering youth of courts must gleam in arms;
 The senators their ancient swords resume;

The trembling sinews of old age must work
 The work of death against their progeny.
 For Tyranny hath stretched his purple arm,
 And, "Blood!" he cries. The chariots, and the horses,
 The shouts are heard: the battle thunders far!
 Beware, oh Proud! Thou shalt be humbled,
 Thy cruel brow,—thy iron heart is smitten,
 Though lingering Fate is slow. Oh, yet may Albion
 Smile once again and stretch her peaceful arms
 And raise her golden head exultingly!
 Her citizens shall throng about her gates,
 Her mariners shall sing upon the sea,
 And myriads shall to her temples crowd!
 Her sons shall joy as in the morning hour;
 Her daughters sing, as to the rising year.

In this version only a few words are omitted that trip up the verse, and break the movement of the cadence. A few, also, are added, namely "to see" at the end of the thirteenth line, "once" in the thirtieth, and "hour" at the end of the last but one. These additions are made in each case to lines not otherwise touched. The excisions are elsewhere, as are the few and trifling re-arrangements. It may be safely said that if the present version had been read aloud to Blake within twenty-four hours of the composition of his own piece, he would not have known that he had not written what is here printed. That he thought he was doing so, if a man in a dream thinks, is more than probable. But if the best of originators, he was the poorest of correctors, most of all in cases where his lines may really be said to correct themselves. Blake habitually does the exact reverse of the paltering of Macbeth's witches. He keeps the word of promise to the hope, and breaks it to the ear.

"Samson," a piece of blank verse as fine, and also as faulty, as anything in English, demands equally to be allowed to correct itself. Those who compare the text now given with that of the Aldine edition, will see that slips of the pen, left unrevised by the poet through inattention or pre-occupation, have been removed by tens and twenties, but that in no case has fresh characterization, fresh poetry, fresh

cadence, or any intrusion of qualities other than Blake's own, been attempted.

SAMSON.

Samson, the strongest of the sons of men,
 I sing; how he was foiled by woman's art;
 By a false wife brought to the gates of death.
 O Truth that shinest with propitious beams
 Turning our earthly night to heavenly day,
 From presence of the Almighty Father, thou
 Visitest our darkling world with blessed feet,
 Bringing good news of Sin and Death destroyed.
 O white-robed Angel, guide my timorous hand
 To write as on a rock with iron pen
 The words of truth, that all who pass may read.

Now Night, the noontide of the damnéd spirits
 O'er silent earth spreads her pavilion,
 While in dark counsel sat Philistea's lords;
 And where strength failed, black thoughts in ambush lay.
 There, holmed youth and aged warriors
 In dust together lie, and Desolation
 Spreads his wings o'er the land of Palestine:
 From side to side she groans, her prowess lost,
 And the land seeks to hide her bruised head
 Under the mists of night, breeding dark plots.
 For Dalila's fair arts were tried in vain;
 In vain she wept in many a treacherous tear.
 Go on, fair traitress, do thy guileful work!
 For know, ere once again the changing moon
 Her circuit hath performed, thou shalt o'ercome
 And conquer him, by force unconquerable,
 And wrest his secrets from him. Call thine arts,—
 Alluring arts, and honest-seeming brow—
 Love's holy kiss, and the transparent tear.
 Put linen on, that with the lily vies,
 Purple and silver, and neglect thine hair
 To seem more lovely in thy loose attire.
 Put on thy countries pride, false eyes of love,
 Decked in mild sorrow, and sell thy lord for gold.

* * * *

For now upon her sumptuous couch reclined
 In gorgeous pride she still entreats, and still
 She grasps his vigorous knees with her fair arms.
 "Thou lovest me not! Thou art War, thou art not Love!
 O foolish Dalila! O thou weak woman!
 It is Death, clothéd in the flesh thou lovest,
 And thou hast been encircled in his arms

Alas, my God, what am I calling thee?
 Thou art my God! To thee I pour my tears,
 For sacrifice I, morn and evening, pour.
 My days are veiled with sorrow, shut up, darkened,
 And I in the night season am deceived!
 Who says that thou was born of mortal kind?
 Destruction was thy father; a lioness
 Suckled thee; thy young hands tore human limbs
 And thy young throat was gorged with human flesh!
 Come hither, Death. Art thou not Samson's slave?
 'Tis Dalila that calls,—thy master's wife.
 No, stay; and let thy master do the deed.
 One blow of that strong arm would ease my pain;
 Then should I lie at quiet, and have rest.
 Pity forsook thee at thy birth! O Dagon
 Furious, and all ye gods of Palestine,
 Withdraw your hand! I am but a weak woman.
 Alas, I am wedded to your enemy!
 I will go mad and tear my crisped hair!
 I'll run about and pierce the ears o' the gods!
 O Samson, hold me not: thou lovest me not!
 Look not upon me with those deathful eyes;
 Thou would'st at my death, and death approaches fast."

Thus in false tears she wept and bathed his feet,
 And thus she day by day oppressed his soul.
 He seemed a mountain: on his brow the clouds:
 She seemed a silver stream, his feet embracing.
 Dark thoughts rolled to and fro within his mind
 Like thunderclouds troubling the sultry sky.
 His visage was troubled, and his soul distressed.
 "Though I tell all my heart, what need I fear?
 Though I should tell this secret of my birth,
 The utmost may be warded off, as now."
 She saw him moved, and thus resumed her wiles.
 "Samson, I am thine; do with me what thou wilt;
 My friends are enemies; my life is death;
 I am traitor to my nation and despised;
 My joy is given into the hands of him
 Who hates me, and his bosom's wife deceives.
 Thrice hast thou mocked me, and grieved my soul.
 Didst thou not tell me with green withes to bind
 Thy nervous arms, and even after that,
 When I had found thy falsehood, with new ropes
 To bind thee fast? I knew thou didst but mock.
 Alas, when in thy sleep I bound thee thus,
 To try thy truth I cried, 'The Philistines
 Be on thee, Samson!' By suspicion woke,
 How didst thou rend away the feeble ties?
 Thou fearest nought! What hast thou need to fear

Thy bones are made of brass—thy sinews iron.
 Ten thousand spears are like the summer grass ;
 An army of mighty men flocks in the valleys.
 What canst thou fear ? I drink my tears like water :
 I live on sorrow. O worse than wolves and tigers,
 What givest thou me, such trifles being denied ?
 But oh ! at last thou mockest me, to shame
 My over-fond inquiries, telling me
 To weave thee to the beam by thy strong hair.
 I did even that to try thy truth, but when
 I cried, 'The Philistines be on thee!' then
 I did bemoan that Samson loved me not."

He heard her voice : he sat and inward grieved :
 He saw and loved the beauteous supplicant,
 Nor could conceal aught that might her appease.
 Then leaning on her bosom, thus he spoke :
 "O Dalila, doubt no more Samson's love.
 For that fair breast was made the ivory palace
 Of this my inmost heart where it shall rest,
 For sorrow is the lot of all men born.
 For care was I brought forth, labour is my lot,
 Nor matchless might, wisdom, nor gifts enjoyed
 Can from the heart of man his sorrow hide.
 Twice was my birth foretold from heaven, and twice
 A sacred vow enjoined me I should drink
 No wine, nor eat of any unclean thing.
 For holy unto Israel's God I am,
 A Nazarite, even from my mother's womb :
 'Twice was it told, that it might not be broken.
 'Grant me a son, kind Heaven,' Manoah cried :
 But Heaven refused. Childless he mourned, but thought
 His God knew best. Lonely, though not obscure,
 In Israel he lived, till age came on :
 His flocks increased, and plenty crowned his board ;
 Beloved, revered. But God had other joys
 In store. Was burdened Israel his grief ?
 The son of his old age should set her free.
 The venerable sweetener of his life
 Received the promise first from heaven. She saw
 The maidens play and blessed their innocent mirth.
 She blessed each new-joined pair ; but now from her
 The long-desired deliverer shall spring.
 Pensive, alone, she sat within the house,
 When busy day was fading, and calm evening,
 The time for quiet contemplation, rose
 From the forsaken east, and drew heaven's veil.
 Pensive she sat, and thought on Israel's grief.
 And, silent, prayed to Israel's God ; when lo !

An angel from the fields of light come down
 Entered the house. His form was manhood's prime
 And from his brow terrors shot through the shade.
 But mild he hailed her : ' Hail, O highly favoured !'
 Said he ; ' thou shalt conceive and bear a son.
 And Israel's strength shall be upon his shoulders.
 He shall be called Israel's deliverer.
 Now drink no wine, nor eat of unclean things,
 For he shall be a Nazarite to God.'
 Then, as a neighbour when his tale is told,
 Departs, his blessing leaving, so went he.
 She wondered with exceeding joy, nor knew
 He was an angel. Manoa left his fields
 To sit at home for evening's rest from labour,
 The sweetest time that unto mortal man
 God doth allot. He sat and heard with joy
 And praised God who Israel doth keep.
 The time rolled on, Israel groaned, oppressed.
 The sword was bright, the ploughshare rusted till
 Hope had grown feeble, ready to give place
 To doubting. Then Manoa prayed : ' O Lord,
 Upon the hills the wolf doth tear thy sheep,
 Oppression lays his rod upon our land :
 Our country is ploughed with swords and reaped in blood.
 Echoes of slaughter reach from hill to hill.
 Instead of peaceful pipe, the shepherd bears
 A sword. The good is turned into a spear.
 O when shall our Deliverer come ? Behold,
 The Philistine riots upon our flocks ;
 Our vintage is for bands of enemies ;—
 Stretch forth thy hand and save !' Thus prayed Manoa.
 The good woman walked into the field,
 And lo ! the angel came again, now clad
 As a traveller, fresh risen on his journey.
 She called her husband, who thus talked with him
 ' O man of God,' said he, ' thou com'st from far !
 Let us detain thee ; we prepare a kid
 That thou mayst eat, and tell thy name and way,
 That we may honour thee, thy words being true.'
 The angel said, ' My name is Wonderful.
 Inquire no more : it is a secret thing ;
 But if thou wilt, make offering to the Lord.' "

This is the whole of the passage about Samson, and in the great rarity of any blank verse in English which contains cadence—that first and last of poetic virtues, within whose realm is ample room for all the rest to sleep, sing, or march,

or dance, or weep—its value to literature cannot be disputed. The duty to clear its jagged ends and place it before the public is therefore a duty to literature rather than to Blake. It may be somewhat out of place to do it here, but it has been too long neglected, and with every year poetry tends to fall more and more into the clutches of the merely scholarly editors who prize the exact reproduction of an error above the enjoyment of ten beautiful songs. The errors are all safely recorded in this case, and have been for years in the hands of the public. It was more than time that, by putting it in order, a chance should be given to readers in general to enjoy the long-disordered beauty of the sound.

The Couch of Death, and the Contemplation, the only pieces not given in the Aldino collection. They shall be quoted here in the exact words of the original, and printed in their natural form as prosa.

COUCH OF DEATH.

The veiled evening walks solitary down the western hills, and silence reposed in the valley. The birds of day were heard in their nests, rustling in breaks and thickets, and the owl and bat flew round the darkening trees. All is silent when nature takes her repose.

In former times, on such an evening, when the cold clay breathed with life, and our ancestors who now sleep in their graves walked on the steadfast globe, the remains of a family of the tribes of Earth, a mother and a sister, were gathered to the sick-bed of a youth. Sorrow linked them together, leaning on one another's necks alternately, like lilies; dropping tears in each other's bosom they stood by the bed like reeds bending over a lake when the evening drops trickle down.

His voice was low, as the whisperings of the woods when the wind is asleep, and the visions of Heaven unfold their visitation.

"Parting is hard, and death is terrible. I seem to walk through a deep valley, far from the light of day, alone and comfortless. The damps of death fall thick upon me. Horrors stare me in the face. I look behind: there is no returning. Death follows after me. I walk in regions of death where no tree is, without a lantern to direct my steps, without a staff to support me."

Thus he laments through the still evening, till the curtains of darkness were drawn.

Like the sound of a broken pipe the aged woman raised her voice:—"O my son! my son! I know but little of the path thou goest! But lo! there is a God that made the world. Stretch out thy hand to Him."

The youth replied, like a voice heard from a sepulchre,—“My hand is feeble; how should I stretch it out? My ways are sinful; how should I raise mine eyes? My voice hath used deceit; how should I call on Him who is Truth?

My breath is loathsome ; how should He not be offended ? If I lay my face in the dust, the grave opens its mouth for me. If I lift up my head, sin covers me as a cloak. O my dear friends ! pray ye for me. Stretch forth your hands that my helper may come. Through the void space I walk between the sinful world and eternity. Beneath me burns eternal fire. O for a hand to pluck me forth !”

As the voice of an omen heard in the silent valley when the few inhabitants cling trembling together, as the voice of the Angel of Death, when the thin beams of the moon give a faint light, such was this young man’s voice to his friends.

Like the bubbling waters of the brook in the dead of night the aged woman raised her cry and said :—“ O voice that dwellest in my breast, can I not cry and lift my eyes to Heaven ? Thinking of this my spirit is turned within me into confusion. O my child ! my child ! is thy breath infected ? So is mine. As the deer, wounded, by the brooks of water, so the arrows of sin stick in my flesh, the poison hath entered into my marrow.”

Like rolling waves upon a desert shore, sighs succeed sighs. They covered their faces and wept.

The youth lay silent, his mother’s arm under his head. He was like a cloud tossed by the winds, till the sun shine, and the drops of rain glisten, the yellow harvest breathes, and the thankful eyes of villagers are turned up in smiles ; the traveller that hath taken shelter under an oak, eyes the distant country with joy. Such smiles were seen upon the face of the youth. A visionary hand wiped away his tears, and a ray of light beamed around his head. All was still. The moon hung not out her nap, and the stars faintly glimmered in the summer sky. The breath of night slept among the leaves of the forest. The bosom of the lofty hill drank in the silent dew, while on his majestic brow the voice of angels is heard, and stringed sounds ride on the wings of night.

The sorrowful pair lift up their heads. Hovering angels are around them. Voices of comfort are heard over the couch of death, and the youth breathes out his soul with joy into eternity.

In this piece as in the last, not only is there much of the true Blake struggling with the eighteenth-century mannerism, his genius rearing its head from the earth, and like “ the tawny lion ” of Milton, “ pawing to get free its hinder parts ; ” but the serious mood of imaginative exaltation has spontaneously lod here and there to a slight touch in which not only the visionary convictions but even the great symbolic language in which the prophetic books were to be written, is indicated.

The following is the remaining “ poetical sketch,” not generally known :—

CONTEMPLATION.

Who is this that with unerring step dares to tempt the wilds where only Nature's step hath trod? 'Tis Contemplation, daughter of the grey Morning. Majestical she steppeth, and with pure quill on every flower, writeth Wisdom's name. Now, lowly bending, whispers in mine ear:—"O man! how great, how little thou! O man! slave of each moment, Lord of Eternity, seest thou where Mirth sits on the painted cheek? Doth it not seem ashamed of such a place and grow immoderate to brave it out? O what an humble garb true joy puts on! Those who want Happiness must stoop to find it. It is a flower that grows in every vale. Vain, foolish man that roams on lofty rocks, where 'cause his garments are swollen with wind he fancies he is grown into a giant! Lo, then Humility. Take it, and wear it in thine heart. Lord of thyself, then thou art lord of all. Clamour brawls along the streets and destruction hovers in the city's smoke, but on these plains and in these silent woods true joy descend. Hero build they nest; here fix they staff. Delights blossom around. Numberless beauties blow. The green grass spring, in joy, and the nimble air kisses the leaves. The brook stretches its arms along the silent meadow; its silver inhabitants sport and play. The youthful sun joys like a hunter roused to the chase. He rushes up the dry and lays hold of the immortal coursers of the day: the sky glitters with the jingling trappings. Like a triumph, season follows season, while the airy music fills the world with joyful sounds."

I answered, "Heavenly goddess! I am wrapped in mortality. My flesh is a prison; my bones the bars of death. Misery builds over our cottage roofs, and Discontent runs like a brook. Even in childhood sorrow slept with me in my cradle. He followed me up and down in the house when I grew up. He was my schoolfellow. Thus he was in my steps and in my play till he became to me as a brother. I walked through dreary places with him, and in churchyards, and I oft found myself sitting by sorrow on a tombstone."

THE ISLAND IN THE MOON.

BLAKE did not begin his poetic career by devoting himself entirely to the utterance of original mysticism. His first writings are not messages and prophecies. They contain a hint now and then of what was coming, but they were, for the most part, mere literature. The style of the Poetic Sketches is only different from that of any other young poet in right of its freshness, vigour, its lightness, and clumsiness combined. The movements of his verse are like the gambollings of some very powerful animal, still in its fluffy-footed and tottering babyhood. He already outgrows more mature minds, but he remains young not the less for being a young giant. He makes only the mistakes that are most easy to avoid, and unconsciously plunges and almost blunders into the successes which others of his time seek after, often in vain, and almost always with toil.

A manuscript belonging to the early or literary period of his life has just come to light. It is the best exponent of the Rathbone Place period, before the date of the production of most of the Songs of Innocence and Experience. The handwriting is undoubtedly Blake's, and bears a resemblance to that in which he wrote the more hastily penned pages in the book of Vala, produced nearly half a century later, which shows the constitutional unchangeableness of Blake's temperament—a quality that accounts for much in his life.

The MS. belongs to Mr. Fairfax Murray, the painter,

whose kindness places it at the disposal of the present editors, with the sole proviso that however largely it be quoted, and however fully described, it is not to be printed entire.

The proviso will not much injure its utility here. Belonging as it does to the pre-mystic stage of Blake's work, its words have not the importance which would belong to a later production, if part of the great myth. It is interesting as a specimen of style, and a few extracts will be sufficient to show this sufficiently to satisfy, even the more serious students of Blake.

The story is told in playful prose that oddly combines some of the tone of *Tristram Shandy*, with a suggestion of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and as we read, we find it impossible not to suspect that we are being taken behind the scenes at many of the literary evenings in Mr. Matthews's drawing-room.

"'In the Moon,' begins the young satyrist, 'is a certain island near by a mighty continent, which small island seems to have some affinity to England, and, what is more extraordinary, the people are so much alike, and their language so much the same, that you would think you was among your friends.'"

This recalls a verse of Shelley's "Peter Bell," about the

" — city much like London,
A populous, and a smoky city."

Blake's "Island in the Moon"—to give the tale a title, though its own has been lost with the only missing leaf—may be considered as taking a place among his collected work, not unlike that occupied by "Peter Bell the Third" among Shelley's. The story continues [the text is given unaltered in these quotations, the missing punctuation only being introduced] :—

"In the island dwells three philosophers, Suction, the Epicurean, Quid, the Cynic, and Lipsop, the Pythagorean. I call them by the names of those sects, though the sects are not ever mentioned there, as being much out of date. However, the things remain, and the vanities are the same. The three philosophers sat together thinking of nothing.

"In comes Etruscan Column, the Antiquarian, and after an abundance of inquiries to no purpose, sat himself down and described something that nobody listened to.

"So they were employed when Mrs. Gimblets came in. The corners of her

mouth seemed—I don't know how, but very odd, as if she hoped you had not an ill opinion of her; to be sure, we are all poor creatures! Well, she seated, and seemed to listen with great attention, while the Antiquarian seemed to be talking of virtuous oats; but it was not so. She was thinking of the shape of her eyes and mouth, and he was thinking of his eternal fame. The three philosophers, at this time, were each endeavouring to conceal his laughter, (not at them, but) at his own imagination. This was the situation of this improving company when, in a great hurry, Mr. Inflammable Gas, the Wind Finder, entered. They seemed to rise, and salute each other.

“Etruscan Column and Inflammable Gas fixed their eyes upon each other. Their tongues went in question and answer, but their thoughts were otherwise employed.

“‘I don't like his eyes,’ said Etruscan Column.

“‘He is a foolish puppy,’ said Inflammable Gas, smiling on him.

“The three philosophers,—the Cynic smiling, the Epicurean seeming studying the flame of the candle, and the Pythagorean playing with the cat, listened with open mouth to the edifying discourse.”

A long conversation follows. Some works—we are not told whose—are in question. The Antiquarian has seen them, and says they are wretched, paltry, flimsy stuff. Inflammable Gas is at him immediately. They almost quarrel. The Antiquarian calls the author of the works under discussion a blockhead, and by way of illustrating what he means, tells how, in the street, while a vast number of swallows were passing overhead,—not a common sight in Rathbone Place now, unfortunately,—a “little *outré* fellow” pulled him by the sleeve, and wanted to know to whom the swallows belonged!

That was his—the Antiquarian's—idea of a fool. Inflammable Gas will not admit even this. The man was not a fool, but an inquirer into the works of nature. The Pythagorean laughed. Etruscan Column got ready to deliver himself of a speech when—

“Obtuse Angle entering the room, having made a gentle bow, proceeded to empty his pockets of a vast number of papers, turned about, sat down, wiped his face with his pocket handkerchief, and shutting his eyes, began to scratch his head.

“‘Well, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘What is the cause of strife?’”

Every one explains. The Cynic says they were quarrelling about Voltaire;—having fun, adds the Epicurean, trying to incorporate their souls with their bodies, says the Pythagorean. Obtuse Angle will have Voltaire to be a fool because he did not

understand mathematics. Inflammable Gas contradicts as usual, and says he could put philosophical questions. They all get warm on the subject, the Antiquarian winding up with the statement that Voltaire was "immersed in matter," not seeing what was before his eyes, but "like the animal on the Pythagorean's lap, always playing with his own tail."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" said Inflammable Gas. 'He was the glory of France. I have got a bottle of air that would spread a plague.'

"Here the Antiquarian shrugged up his shoulders and was silent, while Inflammable Gas talked for half an hour.

"When Steolyard the Lawgiver, coming in stalking with an Act of Parliament in his hand, said that it was a shameful thing that Acts of Parliament should be in a free state. It had so engrossed his mind that he did not salute the company.

"Mrs. Gimblet drew her mouth downwards."

So ends the first chapter of this perfectly plotless narrative.

The next chapter contains but a few lines, and these are a string of names that in their oddity show a childish beginning of the genius that baptized Enitharmon and all her sons. In the third chapter, after a few words of playful indecency—for indecency and playfulness seem to have been inseparably connected in the lighter conversation of the eighteenth century—the Cynic offers to sing a song, and begins:—

"Little Phœbus came strutting in
With his fat belly and his round chin.
What is it you would please to have?
Ho! Ho!
I won't let it go at only so so!"

And at this "Mrs. Gimblet looked as though they meant her." After this touch of Shandeyism, followed by laughter from the company, an inquiry arises as to who was Phœbus,—“the gentleman that the song was about.” Do we find here a specimen of the questions that already arose about the personages in Blake's own songs? Obtuse Angle replies at length, making Phœbus master of all the —ologies, to the astonishment of those who had only known him from the verse. Further, he is explained as one of the gods of the heathen to whom sacrifices were made in olden days,—a heathen habit

mentioned in the Bible. At this, catching hold of a chance to appear to know something, one of the company observes, "Ah, I thought I had read of Phœbus in the Bible!"

It is impossible to doubt that we have here a second specimen of the great art of Blake-criticism in its earliest stages.

However, it turns out that Pharaoh, not Phœbus, was the Biblical personage, and, amidst laughter, the argument falls. "Hang Pharaoh and all his hosts!" says the Pythagorean, and the Cynic is told to go on with his interrupted song, which he does thus:—

"Honour and Genius is all I ask,
And I ask the Gods no more,—
No more. No more. } *The three Philosophers*
No more. No more." } *bear chorus.*

At this Mrs. Gimblet makes no observation. Palpably there was nothing here that could "mean her." She had pierced too deep in her first guess.

But the speaker—(a Dean of Morocco, by the way)—who had "read of Phœbus in the Bible," smacked his lower lip.

So ends the chapter.

The fourth chapter is like a bit from a scene in one of George Eliot's early writings. It is an interchange of remarks alternately crude to a fault, and conventional to a fault, on religion. The first question argued is whether it be profane or wicked to exclaim, "Hang Pharaoh and all his hosts!"

One lady takes the negative side. But, at this, another reminds her that she is not a church-goer. She, however, thinks a person may be as good at home. Inflammable Gas reveals a connection with the clerical profession by saying that if he had not a place of profit that obliged him to go to church, he would see the parsons all hanged. In the outcry that follows a lady says:—

"If it was not for church or chapel I don't think I should have lived so long. There was I, up at four in the morning when I was a girl. I would run like the dickins (*sic*) till I was all in a heat. I would stand till I was ready to sink into the earth."

How this contributed to longevity is not clear to the mind

of man, but Blake seems to have learned at a very early age that a logic other than man's is to be met with in this world.

The lady continues her reminiscence :—

" Ah, Mr. Huffcap would kick the bottom of the pulpit out with passion,— would tear off the sleeve of his gown and set his wig on fire, and throw it at the people, and cry, and stamp, and kick, and sweat, and all for the good of their souls."

But the propriety of this course in a preacher raises another question among the ladies, and warm words are exchanged. When these at last grow to include the suggestion of knocking down a minister, and boxing a lady's ears, some one observes— " I am sure this is not religion." After this comes the following, which is interesting, not for its own sake, but for Blake's :—

" Then Mr. Inflammable Gas ran and shoved his head into the fire, and set his hair all in a flame, and ran about the room. No, no; he did not. I was only making a fool of you."

And so the chapter suddenly ends.

Read in connection with the phrases at the beginning relating how, as the company first assembled, they " seemed " to rise, salute each other, and speak,—and of the vivid but fragmentary nature of the reports of how they got into the room, what they said aloud and thought to themselves, one critical inference may fairly be drawn.

These people of the moon, though often speaking words caught up from people of the world, when the author was " among his own friends " yet presented themselves to his literary faculty as types, not individuals. They assembled before his mind's eye in a waking dream of slowly increasing clearness and completeness. Blake watched them, as he watched later his mystic visions, for the sake of the interest that belonged to them as types, and for their visionary attractiveness, which is like that of a theatrical performance, to anyone who possesses the visionary faculty. But he never put himself unreservedly in their hands, and when one of the dream personages began to over-do his visionary antics, then

the improvising side of Blake's mind was checked by its judicial side, and compelled to confess that it had been trying to make a fool of him. Probably he had felt that Mr. Inflammable Gas might come to be identified by some with his good friend Mr. Matthews, and this not only checked the extravagance of his dream, but helped (along with the forthcoming change of his mental bent from mere literature to mysticism) in the final suppression of the manuscript.

The fifth chapter, returning to justifiable sarcasm, begins with a long debate on the merits of Chatterton, on his mathematical attainments in particular, and on the nature of thought in general. In this discussion the company continue to speak with the incomparable solemnity of imbecility, so amusing when read, so provoking when met with in real life. In the midst of this is a touch of the true visionary style of writing. "The three philosophers entered, and lowering darkness hovered over the assembly." Very soon the Epicurean can stand it no longer, and calls for rum and water, and the Dean of Morocco hastens to admit that Chatterton knew as much of the "—ologies" as Phœbus himself. It is true that he gives the list a little incorrectly, and includes sciences not known to the university; but with a brief conclusion that Chatterton ended by getting consumption, taking physic "or something," and so dying, he winds up the subject.

The sixth chapter begins with a discussion on Pindar and Giotto (whom the good people call "Ghiotto"), and this endures till the Epicurean's patience being again exhausted he calls for a song. This frequent demand sheds light on what would otherwise be puzzling, namely, how it happened that Blake ever had an opportunity to introduce his own songs among the blue-stockings of Rathbone Place, and actually sing them there to his own tunes.

The song now given shows the tendency of Blake's mind in coming years to personify—to speak of things under human forms, and suggests the origin of that peculiar hatred of "experiment" which characterized him through life. For

this, and for the genuine pity which lends the song a solemnity of its own, it shall be printed in all its unacceptable breadth of unrefined language. The virtue in it is deep; the error, superficial. Blake's shoulders are broad enough, and his heart warm enough, to bear heavier blames than the very few verbal indiscretions which belonged as much to his date as to himself, since no worse charges can be brought against his memory.

1.

When old corruption first begun,
Adorned in yellow vest,
He committed on flesh a whoredom—
O, what a wicked beast!

2.

From there a callow babe did spring,
And old corruption smiled
To think his race should never end,
For now he had a child.

3.

He called him Surgery, and fed
The babe with his own milk.
For flesh and he could ne'er agree:
She would not let him suck.

4.

And this he always kept on mind,
And formed a crooked knife,
And ran about with bloody hands,
To seek his mother's life.

5.

And as he ran to seek his mother
He met with a dead woman.
He fell in love and married her:
A deed that is not common.

6.

She soon grew pregnant, and brought forth
Scurvy and spotted fever.
The father grinn'd and skipt about,
And said,—“ I'm made for ever!

7.

"For now I have procured these impa
I'll try experiments."
With that he tied poor scurvy down,
And stopt up all its vents.

8.

And when the child began to swell,
He shouted out aloud,—
"I've found the dropsy out, and soon
Shall do the world more good."

9.

He took up fever by the neck,
And cut out all its spots;
And thro' the holes which he had made
He first discovered guts.

Such is the entire song. It may be called Blake's first true symbolic book.

A surgeon in the company who has heard the song of Old Corruption's child, and of course has not in the least understood its philosophic teaching, makes a remark at the end, purely personal to himself. 'This also is the sort of trial to his critical and artistic patience that must have befallen Blake very often while his voice was first lifted up to cry in the Rathbone Place wilderness.

After this :—

"You think we are all rascals," says the Surgeon, "and we think you are a rascal. I do as I chose; and what is it to anybody what I do? I am always unhappy too. When I think of surgery,—I don't know. I do it because I like it. My father does what he likes, and so do I. I think, somehow, I'll leave it off. There was a woman having her cancer cut off, and she shrieked so I was quite sick."

So ends the sixth chapter.

In the seventh, which is short, the discussion among the idiots touches on Homer, who is said to be "bombast," Shakespeare who is "too wild," Milton who has "no feelings and could easily be out-done," and Chatterton who "never writ" his own poems.

The eighth begins with the quintessence of literary boredom.

Different persons in the company read aloud, with comment, from Herve's "Meditations among the Tombs," Young's "Night Thoughts," and Locke "On the Human Understanding."

This drives one of the young ladies beyond the bounds of her patience, and she breaks out:—

"I never saw such company in my life. You are always talking of your books. I like to be where we talk. You had better take a walk that we may have some pleasure. I am sure I never see any pleasure. There's Double-*Elephant's* girls; they have their own way. And there's Miss *Filligree-work*; she goes out in her coaches and her footman, and her maids, and *Stormonts* and *Balloon* hats, and a pair of gloves every day, and the *Sorrows of Werther*, and *Robinsons*, and the *Queen of France's Puss* (? *Puce*) colour, and my cousin *Gibbe-gabble* says that I am like nobody else. I might as well be in a nunnery. There they go in post-chaises and stages to *Ranelagh* and I hardly know what a coach is, except when I go to Mr. *Jacko's*. He knows what riding is, and his wife is a most agreeable woman; you hardly know she has a tongue in her head. And he is the funniest fellow. I do believe he'll go in partnership with his master. And they have black servants lodge at their house. I never saw such a place in my life. He says he has six-and-twenty rooms in his house, and I believe it. He is not such a bear as *Quid* thinks he is."

Quid was the Cynic. From this lively tirade, which might have been written by Dickens, we learn among other things that the tradesman's habit of calling articles of attire by absurdly unsuitable names is not a modern offence. The following up of the "*Sorrows of Werther*" by the "*Queen of France's Puss* colour," shows that Goethe had been laid under contribution to christen either a fabric or a tint. "*Mr. Jacko*" is of course the young assistant of Mr. "*Double-*Elephant**," although the author does not pause to tell us so.

The *Lawgiver*, Mr. *Steelyard*, who seems to have been the father of the young lady who so naturally desired the pleasures which were not denied to her equals and companions, bade her be silent. She replied by launching out into provocation and doing all she could to make him lose his temper. However, he bore it like a saint, and then said solemnly to the general company:—

"They call women the weaker vessel, but I think they are the strongest. A girl has always more tongue than a boy. I've seen a little crab no higher than a nettle, and she had as much tongue as a city clerk. But a boy would be such

a fool not to have anything to say, and if anybody asked him a question he would put his head into a hole and hide it."

In which we see the nucleus of the witty little song about Cupid which has surprised some readers of the "gentle, visionary Blake." It seems to have belonged to the period of second thoughts. This MS. goes on with Mr. Steelyard's rebuke to the girl, and his claim that his professional life affords him no more pleasure than her domestic habits.

After a few more remarks, the young lady suddenly asks the Surgeon if he knows the song of Phœbe and Jellicoe, and while her irritated father walks up and down the room she "repeats"—it is not said that she sings—these verses:—

" Phœbe dressed like beauty's queen,
Jellicoe in faint pea-green,
Sitting all beneath a grot,
Where the little lambkins trot.

" Maidens dancing ;—lovers sporting ;
All the country folks a-courting,
Susan, Johnny, Bob and Joe,
Lightly tripping on a row

" Happy people, who can be
In happiness compared to ye ?
The pilgrim, with his crook and hat,
Sees your happiness complete."

After which the company receive a summons for a merry-making at the Philosopher's house.

The ninth chapter reports their merry-making. Everyone seems to be a little drunk. Blake's pen goes flying along his closely-filled pages in sympathy with his subject. The chapter's opening lines are as well written as any other portion of the manuscript, but as the songs grow incoherent and the rough laughter, the Ho ! Ho ! Hoo ! grows louder, the handwriting sways to and fro, and becomes larger and more irregular.

The "merry-making" commenced with a song, whose first verse has an interest apart from its prosody:—

" Lo the Bat with leathern wing
Winking and blinking,
Winking and blinking,
Winking and blinking,
Like Doctor Johnson."

This little bit of personality is not contradicted by the portrait in our National Gallery of the Doctor himself, and we make a present of it to his biographers with Mr. Fairfax Murray's permission. Blake's own eye, large, often lighting up, always impressive, has been remarked by everyone who saw him. It was a physical advantage that he had, probably, along with his Irish blood. Gilchrist mentions that he questioned an old man who had been present at Blake's trial for treason, and who remembered nothing at all of the proceedings, yet had not forgotten the "flashing eye" of the prisoner.

The poem goes on with two verses of dialogue between Dr. Johnson and Scipio Africanus. It is a mere schoolboy jest. There is no excuse whatever for the mention of Scipio Africanus except that his name rhymes with the Latin word for a portion of the human frame associated with the most contemptuous form of corporal punishment. This indignity is offered by the Doctor to the General and rejected in terms of contumely.

The most terrific and prolonged laughter follows, and after some incoherent snatches of song amidst which the Surgeon keeps trying to get in edgeways the chorus:—

"And I ask the Gods no more"

—from the song of Phœbus, the young lady who wished to live in a grot where lambskins trot, but who has been taken to this party as a more innocent substitute, is asked for a song and gives:—

"A Frog he would a wooing ride,
Kitty alone—Kitty alone, &c."

And a more jovial member of the company who cries "Hang your serious songs!" breaks out:—

"Fa ra so bo ro
Fa ra bo ra
Fa ba ra za ba rara roro"

—and much more to the same effect, for which an English patriot, who lacks the culture of Mrs. Plornish, rebukes him, desiring "no more Italian songs."

'Then follows a long ditty beginning :—

“ Hail Matrimony ”

—and out-topping Thackeray's bold generalization of a later date, when he says that “ any woman without an absolute hump may marry whom she chooses.”

Blake rates their power much higher. He calls them

“ Finger-footed, lovely creatures,
The females of our human natures ”

—thus introducing what became later his usual way of considering the feminine as a portion, and presently says :—

“ — If a Damsel's blind or lame,
Or Nature's hand has crooked her frame,
Or if she's deaf, or is wall-eyed,
Yet if her heart is well inclined,
Some (? friend) or lover she shall find
That panteth for a bride.”

The sentiment is none the worse because the word *friend* is illegible, and may be *hind*, or *tent*.

The song ends with :—

“ Then come ye maids, and come ye swains,
Come and be cured of all your pains
In Matrimony's golden cage.”

—which explains the “ golden cage ” in the verses beginning

“ How sweet I roamed from field to field,”

published by Gilchrist.

Obtuse Angle sings a long rigmarole in quaint unrhymed verse to the effect that he had rather build an almshouse and do good than be a philosopher, even though he could become Sir Isaac Newton.

The Lawgiver was delighted, and made him sing it several times, till the company insisted that it was now his turn. He sings as follows :—

“ This City and this country has brought forth many Mayors
To sit in state and give forth Laws out of their old oak chairs,
With face as brown as any nut with drinking of strong ale—
Old English hospitality, O then it did not fail.

“ With scarlet gowns and broad gold lace, would make a yeoman sweat
 With stockings rolled above their knees, and shoes as black as jet ;
 With eating beef and drinking beer, O they were stout and hale—
 Old English hospitality, O then it did not fail.

“ Thus sitting at the table wido the Mayor and Aldermon
 Were fit to give laws to the city: each eat as much as ten.
 The hungry poor entered the hall to eat good beef and ale—
 Good English hospitality, O then it did not fail.”

Is a second banquet given to the poor at the same table on the remains of a civic feast an historical fact? That Blake must have heard of such a thing is obvious. He does not actually claim to have seen it. The subject would deserve treatment by a character painter in search of eighteenth-century manners, though Blake's Lawgiver sang of this as a custom of a bygone day.

The tenth chapter introduces scientific experiments with the bottle of sewer-vapour which Mr. Inflammable Gas had boasted he possessed. He had also a magic-lantern and other attractions, but in the end his bottle broke and his audience fled for their lives. “ A plague was spread all through the Island.”

There is some reason to suppose that here we touch Symbol again, and that the plague was a materialistic habit of thought produced by scientific investigation unaccompanied by imagination.

In the eleventh chapter another party is described. The kind-hearted Mr. Obtuse Angle sings the song afterwards published under the name “ Holy Thursday,” among the “ Songs of Innocence.” It seems to have been written less hastily than the rest, the fourth line of the second verse has been written twice, the first form of it beginning—“ And all is order — ” being so carefully erased as to be illegible. The whole of the third verse was similarly erased and re-written, the few words still decipherable being only enough to show that the general intention of the lines was the same, and the alterations mere re-arrangement.

The next song begins:—

“ When the tongues of children are heard on the green,
 And laughing is heard on the hill.”

It is the same as that published as "The Nurse's Song," and contains hardly an alteration.

It is followed by "Father, O Father, Where are you Going?" also published as the "Little Boy Lost," among the "Songs of Innocence."

After this, no one could sing any longer, but a silly member of the company "plucked up a spirit" and sang presently a few foolish lines about a child who complains that another has knocked its ball into a place where it has become offensively dirty, and wiped it with a handkerchief that did not belong to him without saying a word.

After a laugh, the young lady of the grot, where the lambs did trot and all were happy, sang

"Leave, O leave me to my sorrow,
Here I'll sit and fade away
Till I'm nothing but a spirit,
And I love this form of clay.

"Then if chance along this forest
Any walk in pathless ways,
Through the gloom he'll see my shadow,
Hear my voice upon the breeze."

Pretty as this is notwithstanding its imperfect rhymes, Blake rejected it, along with almost all the others, on second thoughts. A reason in this case suggests itself. The "shadow" is used invariably through the whole of his symbolic writings to indicate body, not spirit. This was probably among the very last lines of his first, or merely literary period.

The Surgeon then is forced to sing against his wishes, and with some propitiative laughter gives a mixture of nursery rhymes and doggerel hardly removed from gibborish, in which Blake can hardly have had any other intention than to satirize the amateur compositions of his literary friends of Rathbone Place.

After this, and a few lines sung by another member of the company in praise of William the Conqueror, a break occurs in the MS.

The foregoing was written on a five-leaf folio, apparently, just as the stationer sold it. There was probably a title-page. The outer leaf must have been lost. There are only four. The

present beginning is at the top of the paper, without any title. There are, therefore, two pages probably missing, written on the leaf whose first two pages formed the title, and a blank before commencement. It is not probable that more is lost. The next folio begins in the middle of a sentence. The discussion is on the subject of bringing out just such books as Blake afterwards produced, but is exaggerated for fun. The page begins :—

“ — thus Illuminating the Manuscript.”

“ Aye,” said she, “ that would be excellent.”

“ Then,” said he, “ I would have all the lines engraved instead of printed, and at every other leaf a high-finished print, all in three volumes folio, and sell them a hundred pounds apiece.”

“ They would print off two thousand,” said she; “ whoever will not have them will be ignorant fools, and will not deserve to live.”

“ Don't you think I have something of the goat's face ? ” said he.

“ Very like a goat's face,” she answered.

“ I think your face,” said he, “ is like that noble beast, the tiger. Oh, I was at Mr. Snicksnacker's, and I was speaking of my abilities. But their nasty hearts, poor devils, are eaten up with envy. They envy me my abilities, and all the women envy your abilities. My dear, they hate people who are of higher abilities than their nasty filthy selves. But do you outface them, and then strangers will see you have an opinion. Now I think we should do as much good as we can when we are at Mrs. Femality's. Do you snap and take me up : I will fall into such a passion. I'll hollow and stamp and frighten all the people there, and show them what truth is.”

At this instant Obtuse Angle came in.

“ Oh, I am glad to see you,” said Quid.

From which it is seen that this delightful conspiracy is between Quid, the Cynic, and his wife.

The rest of the paper, except the last pages on which are some sketches of horses' heads, is blank. The MS. came to an unexpected termination.

An inference that can reasonably be drawn is that the discussion thus satirized was a conversation which actually led to the publication of Blake's first volume at the expense of his friends, urged on by Flaxman, and that then gratitude stopped Blake's fun. This, if a true surmise, dates the MS. It belongs to the year 1782 or 1783.

THE MS. BOOK.

READERS of Blake have constantly heard of "The MS. Book." Many of the best of the shorter pieces in Gilchrist's second volume, and in the Aldine edition are taken from it,—notably the "Everlasting Gospel."

The same source supplies the long chapters in prose called the "Public Address" and the "Vision of the Last Judgment," both manifestoes being wilfully disarranged and the order of their sentences unnecessarily altered by their editor.

The MS. Book, a little volume of about a hundred pages, each measuring six and a half inches wide by eight inches high, began life as a sketch-book. It had for title "Ideas of Good and Evil." Each page contains a little drawing in the middle, not more, as a rule, than two and a half inches wide and three inches high. Some of these designs were afterwards engraved as the "Gates of Paradise." Others illustrate Prophetic Books and a few have quotations from various poets attached to them. Some show early forms of one or two designs to "Job," made about twenty years before the series was completed and engraved for Mr. Linnell. Here and there a whole page is covered with writing, in different inks, added at different periods, but, for the most part, a little rough pencil sketch in the middle with a wide margin of MS. all round is what appears when the book is opened. Few of these slight pencillings are worth preserving. Most are not merely hasty but childish, and scribbled in a style that had meaning for its author but has no artistic charm of any sort. Examining the book, it is easy to see how as time went on the margins became more and more crowded with written matter. At first

this generally took the form of an epigram above the sketch and an epigram below. These are generally on artistic subjects, and contain hits at Hayley, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Stothard, Cromok, and all Blake's pet aversions.

Presently space becomes scarce and arrangement is sacrificed to economy of paper. In the troubled years of Blake's war with the *Examiner*, and with the general art opinions of his day, the epigrams grew in length, and were written in less deliberately fixed positions. Some are on side margins. Some crammed in anywhere. A few cross and obliterate the pencil sketch. As their position loses its regularity the handwriting changes, and the style, place, and subject indicate the moment of writing clearly enough without the attachment of a date to the lines.

Then prose began to fill every corner of the pages. The law was laid down on the whole range of artistic controversy. The "Public Address" was composed. Still, gaps were left here and there and filled in with morsels of the "Everlasting Gospel," with extracts belonging to "Barry, a Poem," which has not come down to us, and of "The Book of Moonlight," of which all we now know is that its fifth page was about Titian. The title seems to have been intended as a counterpart to that of the book called "Daylight," mentioned by Gilchrist, Vol. I., p. 340—a version of Kant's form of Berkeleyan and Blakean doctrine. Here and there in the MS. book a paragraph from a newspaper is quoted,—or a poem not Blake's own is copied. Biographical fragments occur. A mood is recorded and even dated, and the publication or intended publication of works mentioned.

Then the long essay on the picture called "A Vision of the last Judgment," is written, and in a less fragmentary and more determined manner than the earlier notes. The MS. fills whole pages, goes boldly over the pencil and is seldom interrupted by verse. At the very end the book has been turned upside down and begun again. This use of it at first was for a mere piece of copying, from rough draughts of

short compositions, and seems to be as early in date as anything in these pages, if not earlier. "Songs of Innocence and Experience," and other scraps, were written in from the loose paper where they were first noted. They are much crowded and very neatly copied. The later ones contain corrections that show them to have been composed or re-cast while written.

The principal characteristic of the book is that it continues to a much later date than any other MS. Blake's literary period, or rather mood, for its entries cover and even overlap the period of his mystic mood. Except in the form of explanation, as in the "Vision of the Last Judgment," there is scarcely any mystic writing from cover to cover. There is symbolism here and there in verses copied from other places merely for convenient reference, and in the very last contribution, the "Everlasting Gospel," but, on the whole, the book seems to have been purposely kept by Blake with the intention of setting it aside for every day matters. The weakness of the epigrams, epitaphs, and all scraps of personal verse serves a purpose which the author did not intend. It points out and forcibly demonstrates how superior Blake the mystic was to Blake the penman. It accounts for his own belief that all his higher poetry was "dictated" to him. It shows us what the visionary gift cultivated with mystical methods and convictions could do for a man who, without its aid, had much literary independence and originality, great freshness of invention, but small power of literary growth. He exhausted in his springtime the sweeter notes of his merely natural voice and in his maturer years is found occupied with a childish imitation of the cooing of the literary doves who rhymed their monotonous epigrams and epitaphs around him.

But the reader of Blake will rightly demand that not merely a general description but a true table of contents of this strange and richly veined little literary estate shall be given him. He will want, above all, to know that nothing is concealed, and that we have no cards up our sleeve, no secret

editorial suppressions and hushings up, "without one word said."

Turning first to the end of the book and holding it upside down, we find the following poems carefully copied. Most have no titles, and these must be indicated by their first lines. The reader will recognise them as they have been already printed elsewhere :—

A flower was offered to me.
 Never seek to tell thy love.
 Love seeketh not itself to please.
 I laid me down upon a bank.
 I when to the garden of love.
 I saw a chapel all of gold.
 I asked a thief to steel me a peach.
 I heard an angel singing.
 Sleep I sleep I beauty bright.
 Christian Forbearance—I was angry with my friend.
 I feared the fury of my word.
 Why should I care for the men of the Thames.
 Infant sorrow—My mother groaned, my father wept.
 O Lapwing, that fliest around the heath.
 Thou hast a lapful of seed.
 The Earth's answer—Earth raised up her head.
 London, I wander through each dirty street.
 I slept in the dark.
 To Nobodaddy—Why art thou silent and invisible ?
 The modest rose puts forth a thorn.
 When the voices of children are heard on the green.
 Are not the joys of morning sweeter.
 The Tiger—Tiger, tiger, burning bright.
 The Human Image—Pity could be no more.
 Love to faults is always blind.
 The Wild Flowers song—As I wandered in the forest.
 The Sick Rose—O Rose thou art sick.
 Merlin's prophecy—The harvest shall flourish in windy weather.
 Day—The day arises in the East.
 The Marriage Ring (The Fairy)—Come hither my sparrows.
 If you trap the moment before its ripe.
 Eternity—He who bends to himself a joy.
 The Kid—Thou little kid didst play ; &c. (fragment).
 The Little Vagabond—Dear Mother, dear Mother, the church is cold.
 The Question answered.
 Because I was happy upon the heath (part of Chimney Sweeper).
 Lacedemonian instruction—Come hither, my boy, what seest thou there ?
 Riches—The countless gold of a merry heart.

An answer to the Parson—Why of the sheep do you not learn peace?

Holy Thursday—Is this a holy thing to see.

I dreamed a dream, what can it mean?

The look of love alarms.

Little fly.

Motto for "Songs of Innocence and Experience"—The good are attracted by men's preceptions.

Her whole life is an epigram : smack, smooth and neatly ponn'd.

An old maid early, e'er I knew.

Questions answered (again).

Fayette beside King Louis stood.

At this point we encounter a portion of the "Everlasting Gospel" written the other way up, and must needs turn the book and begin at its natural beginning.

Before doing so, the few verses not printed in Gilchrist or in the Aldine edition may be looked at for a moment, for the sake of completeness. Of "The Kid" there is only one line, the rest indicated by "&c." The other pieces are as follows:—

"O Lapwing, that fliest around the heath,
Nor seest the net that is spread beneath;
Why dost thou not fly among the corn-fields?
They cannot spread nets where a harvest yields."

"Love to faults is always blind,
Always is to joy inclined,
Lawless, winged, unconfined,
And breaks all chains from every mind.
The souls of men are bought and sold
In milk-fed infancy for gold,
And youths to slaughter-houses led,
And beauty, for a bit of bread."

"THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

"What is it men in women do require?
The lineaments of gratified desire.
What is it women do in men require?
The lineaments of gratified desire."

"An old maid early, e'er I knew
Ought but the love that on me grew,
And now I am covered o'er and o'er,
And wish that I had been a whore.
O, I cannot, cannot find
The undaunted courage of a virgin mind;
For early I in love was crost,
Before my flower of love was lost."

"LACEDEMONIAN INSTRUCTION.

"Come hither, my boy : what see you there ?
A fool caught in a religious snare."

"MERLIN'S PROPHECY.

"The harvest shall flourish in wintry weather,
When two virginities meet together.
The king and priest must be tied in a tether,
Before two virgins can meet together."

The lines, "The souls of men are bought and sold," &c., are given in a footnote by Mr. Swinburne ("Critical Essay," p. 127). He restores the earlier reading of the last line. Blake has struck out "maidens," and substituted "beauty." Some contain various readings of pieces already printed. These will be found in the chapter dealing with the "Songs of Innocence and Experience."

Dismissing the reversed fragment, and turning the book right way up, to work forward through its pages from what may be called its true beginning—in so far as so heterogeneous a mass of matter may be said to have a beginning—we find on the first page a note by Dante Gabriel Rossetti:—

"I purchased this original MS. of Palmer, an attendant at the antique gallery of the British Museum on the 30th April, 1849. Palmer knew Blake personally, and it was from the artist's wife that he had the present MS., which he sold me for 10s. Among the sketches are one or two profiles of Blake himself.
D. G. C. R."

Lower down, on the left, occurs the name of Dodd, Mead, & Co., who bought the book in London a few years ago, and sold it to the present owner, Mr. W. A. White, of Brooklyn, who notes the transaction on the same page, dating it January 26th, 1887, and giving the price, apparently from memory, as eight hundred (or, perhaps, eight hundred and twenty-five) dollars.

Through Mr. White's kindness, in sending the book to England, and lending it unreservedly to Mr. Quaritch for use in these pages, we are indebted for the matter here taken from it.

Then comes the ballad called "Broken Love," written all round a sketch of Daphne (reproduced here), and then what was Blake's title-page, with the words, "Ideas of Good and Evil"; and at a later date the graceful little sketch of Mrs. Blake dressing herself (or perhaps undressing), which is also reproduced for the elegance of its line and the entire freedom from vulgarity, either prudish or the reverse, of its treatment. The sketch is later than the title, and has nothing to do with them. It is an accident of a moment. Lower, and still later in date, in pen and ink, these droll and *risqué* lines occur:—

" When a man marries a wife,
He finds out whether
Her elbows and knees are only
Glued together."

Over-page, in pencil, so obliterated as to be practically illegible, are the wild and schoolboy-like lines, written by Blake when Hayley had bored him more with Klopstock than he could endure. They begin:—

" When Klopstock England defied
Uprose William Blake in his pride;
For old Nobodaddy
* * * *

Then swore a great oath that would make heaven quake,
And called aloud to English Blake.
Blake was away. His body was free
At Lambeth, beneath the poplar-tree.
From Lambeth then shouted he,
And * * * * three times three
The moon at that blushed quite red,
The stars threw down their spears and fled.
* * * *

Astonished felt the intrippled turn,
And all his bowells began to churn.
His bowells turned round three times three,
And locked in his soul with a ninefold key,
That from his body it never could be
Till the last judgment

Then again old Nobodaddy swore
He never had seen such a thing before

Since Noah was shut in the ark,
 Since Eve first her hell-found spark,
 Since 'twas the fashion to go naked,
 Since the old was created—
 * * * * "

In the first place, where stars are given here, some words which are not decent may be discovered. The rest of the breaks simply mean that the lines, written in pencil, always faint, are now illegible. With regard to the indecent words here noted, and not printed, the suppression is a true following of Blake, for they are found in another stanza in the book, and are there struck out by Blake's own hand. We must take Mr. Swinburne's word ("Critical Essay," p. 32) that "only in choice Attic or archaic French could the rest be endured by ears polite." The remainder is a formless smudge now. But the interest of the lines does not lie in their extravagance, but in the phrases, "bowolls locked in the soul" and the "ninefold key," with their symbolic intention of rebuke to Klopstock for doing what Blake thought bad art in his mingling of nature and imagination. The touch about Blake being "away" and his body "free" at Lambeth is curious, if the lines were written, as Mr. Swinburne seems to think, at Felpham. The probability is that they are of an earlier date, and that Hayley was not the first to bring Klopstock to Blake's notice. The wild patriotism which made "Jerusalem" unreadable, with a superfluous attempt to catalogue the "States" of the human mind under a symbolic list of the counties of England, and that christianed created and fallen humanity "Albion," is here seen in an early stage of awakening. "Nobodaddy," as a sarcastic name for the conception of Jehovah, when Satan is mistakenly worshipped under that name, was only a temporary freak. The lines at the other end of the book—

" Why art thou silent and invisible,
 Father of Jealously ?"

which are given in the Aldine edition and by Mr. Swinburne are quoted in the present work from their version, which is

Blake's own last text, but the M.S. book shows an earlier reading of the final line that might with great advantage be restored in future reprints :—

“ Gains feminine applause,”

is so evidently better than

“ Gains females' loud applause,”

that it is hardly possible to refrain from conjecturing that the latter form was a result of some foolish idea, probably suggested by a friend—that applause could not be divided into masculine and feminine, though males and females could give it. Perhaps in a depressed and prosaic mood Blake spoiled his line.

On the next page is an epigram to Johanna Southcott, a strange victim of religious mania, who seems to have died of suspension of her physical feminine functions, stating her belief that her condition was that of a woman about to bear a child ; and that, since she had no reason to suppose herself other than a pure maiden, this child must be of heavenly parentage. In fact, she made a surprisingly large number of people believe that the coming again of Christ was about to take place in a manner similar to that of the Incarnation. She herself, the second Virgin Mary, was to be the cloud in which He came. The symbol of the cloud was always used in a feminine sense by Blake as connected with his own widely different and entirely philosophic and mystic use of the word “feminine” and his poetic version of the same prophecy. He seems, therefore, to have been peculiarly fitted for a refuter of Johanna's extravagances. Yet he does nothing but pass her by with a smile and this little bit of badinage :

“ ON THE VIRGINITY OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND JOHANNA SOUTHCOTT.

“ What e'er is done to her she cannot know ;
 And if you ask her she will swear it so.
 Whether 'tis good or evil, none's to blame ;
 No one can take the pride and none the shame.”

Johanna Southcott's name, forgotten for two or three

generations, has of late been made once more a subject of the day, through the account of her strange heresy in Fitzgerald Molloy's "Faiths of the People."

A sketch or two—slight and feeble, and matter already printed—occupy the next pages; then comes the "Monk of Charlemagne," analyzed elsewhere, and the little lyric called "Morning"—which begins: "To find the Western path, right through the gates of wrath," and is one of the earliest allusions to the mystic use of the four cardinal points.

The "Crystal Cabinet"—no title—beginning "Three virgins at the break of day," follows—originally composed on this page—and "The Birds"—apparently copied. Then come the sketches of the spiritual form of Leigh Hunt or Cromek, with Blake's soul in the month reproduced here.

Then a very late note—about 1812—with scratchy-pen style:—"I wonder who can speak so ill of the dead where it is asserted in the Bible that the name of the wicked shall rot. It is deistical virtue, I suppose, but as I have none of this I will pour aqua fortis on the Name of the Wicked and turn it into an Ornament and an Example to be Avoided by some and Imitated by others as they Please."

Below, the following allusion reveals that this has to do with the quarrel with Cromek about Schiavonetti, whose etchings were said to have "improved" Blake's designs.

"Columbus discovered America, but Americus Vesputius finished and smoothed it over, like an English engraver, or Correggio or Titian."

Here Correggio and Titian are thrown in quite unhistorically—they are mere names for any artists who have more of the painter than the designer in their natures.

On the next page is an earlier entry of uncertain date, written in amongst some paragraphs of the "Public Address," printed in Gilchrist's second volume:—

"Princes appear to me to be fools. Houses of Commons and Houses of Lords appear to me to be fools. They seem to be something else besides human life.

"I am really sorry to see my countrymen trouble themselves about politics. If men were wise, princes, the most arbitrary, could not hurt them. If they are not wise, the freest government is compelled to be a tyranny."

Some pages of the "Public Address" follow; then the lines beginning, "No real style of colouring now appears," given in the Aldine edition among the epigrams, and the longer piece (written side-ways), "You don't believe; I won't attempt to make you,"—called "Reason," and printed among the "Couplets and Fragments."

The bottom of the page, after the words "I go on, and nothing can hinder my course," which will be recognized as concluding a paragraph of the "Public Address," are the lines, a continuation of the sentence seemingly:—

" And in melodious accents, I
Will sit me down and cry, I, I."

Which sound curiously like Walt Whitman's

" I publish myself."

After this, the lines already printed about Screwmuch and Stothard, with, opposite, more of the "Public Address" written over and later than the lines, "Was I angry with Hayley who used me so ill?" Squeezed in last of all is the quatrain, "Anger and wrath my bosom rends," printed among the "Couplets and Fragments," with the lines

" At a friend's errors anger show,
Mirth at the errors of a foe,"

prefixed.

Then begin the set of epigrams, written above or below the sketches, all belonging to about 1808. The first says:—

" The Sussex men are noted fools,
And weak in their brain pan.
I wonder if H—— the painter
Is not a Sussex man."

Haynes the painter, actually a Sussex man, was an engraver when the life of Romney was published, for which Blake partly engraved—perhaps finished—a head of the subject of the biography which was not used. Haynes was employed

with others (whose engravings *were* used) on the same book ("Gilchrist," Vol. I., pp. 213, 214).

Then—

"Madman, I have been called. Fool, they call thee.
I wonder which they envy, thee or me?"

And—

"To H——.

"You think Fuseli's not a great painter. I'm glad.
This is one of the best compliments he ever had."

Probably both the above scraps are also for Mr. Haynes. Then, "To F——" (Flaxman), "I mock thee not," &c. (Aldine edition). Then, not addressed:—

"Can there be anything more mean,
More malice in disguise;
Than praise a man for doing what
That man does most despise?
Reynolds lectures exactly so
When he praises Michel Angelo."

Then, something for Stothard:—

"S——, in childhood, upon the nursery floor,
Was extreme old and most extremely poor.
He has grown old, and rich, and what he will.
He is extreme old, and extreme poor still."

Then, for Mrs. Flaxman:—

"To NANCY F——.

"How can I help thy husband's copying me?
Should that make difference 'twixt thee and me?"

This suggests a cause for the coldness between Blake and Flaxman. To this, and to an attempt to hide it, Blake probably attributed the action of Flaxman in discrediting him behind his back after so many years of friendship. That Flaxman was simply acting impartially, without regard to ideas of friendship or enmity, never would have entered Blake's mind. He made a partisan matter of everything.

Then, in another ink, written much later, comes the couplet—

"Of H——'s birth there was the happy lot;
His mother or his father him begot."

It probably belongs to the "hired villain" period—1810-12.

Then, over page, "Sir Joshua praises Michel Angelo," &c.—from epigrams, Aldine edition—and under a little pencil

sketch, that now begins the "Book of Thel," the epigram, "He's a blockhead who wants a proof," &c.

Then, "Cr—— (Cromek) loves artists as he loves his meal," &c., and "A petty sneaking knave," &c.

"Sir Joshua praises Rubens with a smile,
By calling his the ornamental style.
And yet his praise of Flaxman was the smartest
When he called him the ornamental artist.
But sure such ornaments we well may spare,
As crooked limbs and lousy heads of hair."

The word "ornament" was a religious term to Blake, he used it to mean art intended for eternity and worthy of a place there as being, even when natural, nature used for symbol. During his friendly days with Flaxman he used to hope and believe that Flaxman was an "ornamental artist." That Rubens deserved this term he never admitted.

The same page has an inexplicable scrap,

"He's a cock would
And would be a cock if he could."

More of this might have helped to explain the figure at the beginning of Chapter IV. of "Jerusalem." The date of the writing is later than the epigrams—about 1810-12. An epigram addressed to I——d (who was I——d?) follows. It first comes out simply as:

"He has observed the golden rule
Till he has become the golden fool."

Then, thus:

"You all your life observed the golden rule
Till you're at last become the golden fool.
I sport with fortune, merry, blythe and gay,
Like to the lion sporting with his prey.
You have the hide and horns which you may wear;
Mine is the flesh—the bones may be your share."

Blake's life justified this. From him it has meaning and weight. From him, too, we may bear without irritation even the looser scraps that follow it:

"MR. STOTHARD TO MR. CROMEK.
"For Fortune's favours you your riches bring,
But Fortune says she gave you no such thing."

Why should you be unfaithful to your friends?
Sneaking and backbiting, and odds and ends."

Or again :—

" MR. CROMER TO MR. STOTHARD.

" Fortune favours the brave, old proverbs say ;
But not with money : that is not the way.
Turn back, turn back ! you travel all in vain ;
Turn through the iron gate, down sneaking lane."

The iron gate, North, Earth, experience. This is contrasted with the true favours of fortune, obtained in the opposite direction. The above two epigrams date all that are of the same writing and position in the book, as belonging to the year 1808.

The following, on the same page, is later, perhaps 1810, when friends and foes were the great subject of Blake's contemplation :—

" I am no Homer's hero, you all know
I profess not generosity to a foe.
My generosity is to my friends,
That for their friendship"

Here it breaks off and is continued still later—

" I may make amends.
The generous to enemies promotes their ends,
And becomes the enemy and betrayer of his friends."

This is evidently an unpruned quatrain. Only the first and last couplets were to stand. After this bit of partisanship worthy of the historic days of O'Neil warfare, comes the truly Blakean fragment printed by Gilchrist—

" The Angel that presided o'er my birth
Said, ' Little creature formed for joy and mirth,
Go ! love without the help of anything on earth.' "

Its date cannot be guessed. Returning to the epigrams, the next occurs lower on the same page—

" FLORENTINE INGRATITUDE.

" Sir Joshua sent his own portrait to
The birth-place of Michael Angelo,
And in the hand of the simpering fool
He put a dirty paper scroll,
And on the paper, to be polite,
Did ' Sketches by Michael Angelo ' write.

(The Florentines said, 'Tis a Dutch-English bore ;
 Michael Angelo's name writ on Rembrandt's door ') (*rejected*).
 The Florentines call it an English fetch ;
 Michael Angelo never did sketch.
 Every line of his has meaning,
 And needs neither suckling nor weaning.
 ('Tis the trading English Venetian cant,
 To speak Michael Angelo and act Rembrandt) (*rejected*).
 Nor of the city clock's idle futilities
 Which sprang of Sir Isaac Newton's great abilities.
 It will set his Dutch friends all in a roar
 To write 'Michael Angelo' on Rembrandt's door.
 But you must not bring in your hand a lie
 If you mean the Florentines should buy."

This bears a comment, written later, in the following words:—

"These verses were written by a very onivous man
 Who, whatever likeness he may have to Michael Angelo,
 Never can have any to Sir Jehoshuan."

The following alludes to the termination of Sir Joshua's
 "Discourses," whose peroration consists in an exclamation
 that he should wish the last word he uttered from the chair at
 the Royal Academy to be—Michael Angelo !

" A PITIFUL CASE.

"The villain at the gallows tree
 When he is doomed to die,
 To assuage his bitter misery
 In virtue's praise does cry.

So Reynolds, when he came to die,
 To assuage his bitter woe,
 Thus aloud did howl and cry :

'Michael Angelo ! Michael Angelo !'"

The next is on a similar theme—

" TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

"A strange eratum in all the editions
 Of Sir Joshua Reynolds' lectures,
 Should be corrected by the young gentlemen
 And the Royal Academy Directors.

Instead of *Michael Angelo*

Read *Rembrandt*, for it is fit
 To make mere common honesty
 Of all that he has writ."

This, and all the rest of the same kind, in the "Descriptive
 Catalogue," and wherever Flemish and Venetian painters are
 vituperated, and Florentine and Roman praised, must be read

by the light of a by-gone sentiment of personal acrimony of which artistic criticism has only lately divested itself. The struggles of the French classic and romantic schools of literature have done much to lessen the absurdity of Blake's one-sidedness by enabling us to compare it with their greater extravagance. His want of impartiality is a sin of his day to which he had no exclusive claim.

As an artistic fact the schools that Blake hated do, admittedly, belong, even at their best, to a lower poetic level than those he praised, and he approached the comparison of them from this point of view and no other. Sir Joshua expressed the same opinions. Blake often allows this and approves of it in his marginal notes to the volume of the "Discourses" now in the British Museum.

The same page contains the prefatory lines or address, given here at the head of the "Everlasting Gospel," and the four stanzas called "Idolatry," beginning with—

"If it is true what the prophets write,"

given in the Aldine edition. The title is the editor's. These are of later date, and may belong to 1812.

The next is called :

"ON F—— AND I——.

"I found them blind, I taught them how to see,
And now they know neither themselves nor me.
'Tis excellent to turn a thorn to a pin,
A fool to a bolt, a knave to a glass of gin."

The next (no address) :

"P—— loved me not as he loved his friends,
For he loved them for gain to serve his ends.
He loved me for no gain at all
But to rejoice and triumph at my fall."

Who was P—— ? Phillips?

Then the page finishes with the first two lines of the quatrain—

"To forgive enemies H—— does pretend
Who never in his life forgave a friend,
And when he could not act upon my wife,
Hired a villain to bereave my life."

The last two lines are at the bottom of the opposite page. The

whole is about 1810 or 1812. Returning the close of 1808 we read—

“To F——

“You call me mad, 'tis folly to do so,
To seek to turn a madman to a foe.
If you think as you speak, you are an ass,
If you do not, you are but as you was.”

And—

“When H——y finds out what you cannot do,
That is the very thing he'll set you to.
If you break not your back 'tis not his fault,
But pecks of poison are not pecks of salt.”

Then—

“Some men created for destruction come
Into the world, to make the world their home.
For they are vile and base as e'er they can,
They'll still be called, The World's Honest Man.”

And—

“ON S——

“You say reserve and modesty he has,
Whose heart is iron, his head wood, and his face brass.
The fox, the owl, the beetle, and the bat,
By sweet reserve and modesty get fat.”

In 1809 Blake prints the last couplet of this in his “Descriptive Catalogue,” with the remark that it makes “a good epigram enough.” This fixes the date once more of the previous series since by 1809 he had had time to fall out of love with this, and could quote a fragment of it carelessly with cold approval.

To the same date belong the following :—

“IMITATION OF POPE AND COMPLIMENT TO THE LADIES.

“Wondrous the gods, more wondrous are the men,
More wondrous, wondrous still the cock and hen.
More wondrous still the table, stool and chair,
But ah ! more wondrous still the charming fair.”

And—

“To H——.

“Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache :
Do be my enemy for friendship's sake,”

while of the later date, and in its characteristic handwriting, are the lines beginning—

“Cosway, Frazer, and Baldwin of Egypt's lake,”

which are given here in the Memoir. Perhaps the following couplet, written at the edge, was meant to terminate them:—

“One grins, other spits, and in corners hides,
And all the virtuous have shaved their backsides.”

It appears almost as though Cosway, Fraser, &c., were seen in vision like the monkeys in the “Memorable Fancy.” The last word seems too coarse for publication, but as it is to be found in every one of the countless editions of Milton’s “Paradise Lost,” perhaps it may be left here for what it is worth. At the same time we must remember that Milton inserted it for printing, while it is put in type now without Blake’s knowledge, and against his intentions. No man, it will be seen, escapes altogether the infection of his century. *Their* sins were in authorship led astray by excitement of the present. *Ours* are in publication, impelled by conscientious historical feeling for the past.

Next, written sideways, three epitaphs are thrust in, extracted from the Screwmuch lines of 1812, and re-set with fresh names.

“Come, knock your heads against this stone,
For sorrow that poor John Thompson’s gone.”

And—

“I was buried near this dyke,” &c.

And—

“Here lies John Trot,” &c.,

given in the Aldine edition, also as in the same, on next page—

“My title as a genius thus is proved,
Not praised by Hayley or by Flaxman loved.”

And, as ironically, while more incoherently—

“Rubens was a statesman and a saint.
Deceptions? And so I’ll learn to paint.”

Followed by—

“To ENGLISH CONNOISSEURS.

“You must agree that Rubens was a fool,” &c.,

from the Aldine edition. The last two lines are written on the same level,—not one under the other, as are also the

couplets of the quatrain: "To forgive enemies H— does pretend," &c.

Followed by the prose critical dictum—

"There is the same science in Lebrun, or Rubens, or even Vanloo that there is in Raphael or Michael Angelo, but not the same genius. Science is soon got; the other never.

All of which proves that we are now approaching the date of the "Descriptive Catalogue"—1809,—even if we have not arrived there. Rhyme follows of similar mood—

"Swelled limbs with no outline that you can descry,
That stink in the nose of a passer by.
For all the pulp-washed, finished with labour,
Of a hundred journeymen . . . how-dye do Neighbour?"

the last two lines written besides the first.

Next comes what Blake calls, in a title that is itself a sort of couplet:—

"A PRETTY EPIGRAM FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE GREAT SUMS IN THE VENETIAN AND FLEMISH Ooze.

"Nature and art in this together suit,
What is most grand is always most minute.
Rubens thinks tables, chairs, and stools are grand,
But Raphael thinks a head, a foot, a hand,"

which is published in the Aldine edition with its climax spoiled by being tacked on to another quatrain (which is not even the next in the MS.), good enough *as* a quatrain, but none the better for being massed with the other because the same names were in it—

"Raphael, sublime, majestic, graceful, wise,
His executive powers must I despise?
Rubens, low, vulgar, stupid, ignorant,
His powers of execution I must grant."

Nothing is more fascinatingly full of artistic warning for every writer than to note in all these fragments how a fine mood leads to fine literature, and a flustered, angry, contemptuous, or harassed mood, to doggerel and scribble, however hard the author labours to be witty.

Once more,—hitting at the "generalising touch," and "grand style" of that corrupt following of Raphael's

cartoons, which led to what has been called, since Blake's time, the "blanket school," and whose reaction produced the "Pre-Raphaelite Brothers."

"These are Idiots' chiefest arts,
To blend and not define the parts.
To make out the parts is the wise man's aim,
But to loose them the fool makes his foolish aim.
The swallow sings in courts of kings,
That fools have their high finishings,
And this the Prince's golden rule,
The laborious stumble of a fool."

But for his own refusal, we must remember, Blake himself would have been singing his art-rules to the king's family.

The last quatrain was at first begun—

"Let it be-known in courts of kings."

The swallow was substituted for the sake of the sweet jingle. It is one of the very few merely literary, non-mystical corrections left by Blake.

The quatrain's value now is chiefly that it also happens to be written in two columns,—that is to say, the first couplet stands to the left of the second, not over it, as was the case,—to the earlier editor's confusion,—in the stanza on Hayley, beginning,—"To forgive enemies."

Next, after "Raphael sublime," &c., comes the playful little quatrain—

"If e'en I grow to man's estate," &c.,

given in the Aldine, and

"Go and send your children to the ^globbering school,
Learn the laborious stumble (of a fool),"

added these to lines which it fits badly. The MS. gives the second line first. The same idea is worked out further in the following, also on artistic execution—

"The cripple every step snudges and labours
And says: "Come learn to walk of me, good Neighbours."
Sir Joshua in astonishment cries out
See what great labour! pain in modest doubt!
(His pains are more than others, there's no doubt,

He walks and stumbles as if he crep[t]
 And how high finished is every step !
 Newton and Bacon ! being badly nursed
 He is all experiment from last to first."

It will be remembered that Blake has labelled many of the things in his own exhibition, of whose execution he finally disapproved,—“experiment pictures.”

Pages of would-be epigram follow, all on the great artistic quarrel of the schools. We are now in 1809, the *Examiner* period. Its first article has probably been written. The second will soon be published.

“ON THE GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN BY THE ENGLISH NOBILITY TO CORRIGGIO, RUBENS, REYNOLDS, GAINSBOROUGH, CATELANS, DUCROW, AND DILBURY DOODLE.

“As the ignorant savage will sell his own wife
 For a button, a buckle, a bead, or a knife,
 So the wise, savage Englishman spends his whole fortune
 For a smear or a squall that is not picture or tune.”

This is the first text. Blake has made a few attempts to correct it, but has done it no good. Again—

“Give Pensions to the learned pig,
 Or the hare playing on a Tabor ;
 Bunglers can never see perfection
 But in the journeyman's labour.”

And more furiously—

“And I call upon Colonel Warble
 To give these rascals a dose of candle.”

A totally incomprehensible commencement about the currency follows, then more seriously,—

“All pictures that's painted with sense and with thought
 Are painted by madmen as sure as a goat.
 For the greater the fool is the pencil more blest,
 As when they are drunk they always paint best,
 They never can Raphael it, Fuseli it, or Blake it,
 If they can't see an outline, pray how can they make it ?
 When men will draw outlines begin you to jaw them ;
 Madmen see outlines and therefore they draw them.”

This is later than the rest, and is partly in answer to the *Examiner* ; the following fragment, though succeeding it on the page, is a full year previous in time, if it be not even earlier—

" ON H——, THE PICK THANK.

" I write the rascal thanks till he and I
With thanks and compliments are quite drawn dry."

" CROMEK SPEAKS—

" I always take my judgments from a fool
Because his judgments are so very cool.
Not prejudiced by feelings great or small :
Amiable state: he cannot feel at all."

The last two lines of this are written on the same level in the original,—not over each other. The case of the "hired villain" quatrain is thus seen to be one of many in which the MS. Book shows this arrangement.

A few wild lines on the same page, written at a later date, have the breeze of the Schiavonetti controversy in them. Perhaps the good Italian spoke broken English.

" When you look at a picture you always can see
If a man of sense has painted he.
Then, never flinch, but keep up a jaw
About freedom, and Jenny sink awa' !
As when it smells of the lamp, all can
Say all was owing to the skilful man.
For the smell of water is but small :
So e'en let ignorance do it all."

Here also, on works of art designed by one hand, executed by another—

" ENGLISH ENCOURAGERS OF ART.

" (Cromek's opinion put into rhyme.)

" If you mean to please everybody you will
Set to work both ignorance and skill.
For a great multitude are ignorant,
And skill to them seems raving and rant.
Like putting oil and water into a lamp,
'Twill make a great splutter with smoke and damp.
For there is no use as it seems to me
For lighting a lamp, when you don't wish to see."

This has no title,—but is of the same date—

" You say their pictures well painted be,
And yet they are blockheads, you all agree,
Thank heaven I never was sent to school
To be flogged into following the style of a fool."

And this,—of the same time,—

" The errors of a wise man make your rule
Rather than the perfections of a fool,"

Somewhat later in date is the next fragment, in which may be seen the feeble germ of what became the fine verse about the snow that played and melted, and the winter that thought this a crime—

“THE WASHERWOMAN’S SONG.

“I washed them out and washed them in,
And they told me it was a great sin.”

Then follows—

“When I see Rembrandt or Correggio,
I think of crippled Harry,” &c.,

as in the Aldine, and—

“Great things are done when men and mountains meet,
These are not done by jostling in the street,”

also published before. The prose of the “Public Address” and of the “Vision of the Last Judgment”—now begins to be closely mixed with the rhymes, filling almost every margin and fragment of a page. These will be considered presently. A few chance verses must be gathered first. This fragment for example—

“Delicate hands and heads will never appear
While Titian” &c.,

as in the “Book of Moonlight.”

What has become of the “Book of Moonlight?”—Shall we ever find it? Was it burned by Tatham?

On this page we have (upside down) the lines from Jerusalem—

“I give you the end of a golden string :
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven’s gate
Built in Jerusalem’s wall.”

And this, next, recalling the—

“If on earth you do forgive,
You shall not find where to live.”

From the same book—

“If you play a game of chance
Know before you begin,
If you are benevolent
You will never win.”

It should be “Know e’er you begin” perhaps.

Turning the page, we come on a column or two of the "Everlasting Gospel" and welcome it with joy. The dreary disease of epigram and epitaph, originally caught from Hayley, has now nearly run its course. A last symptom or two remains to be noticed.

"The only man I ever knew
Who did not almost make me spew
Was Fuseli; (he was) both Turk and Jew
And so dear Christian (friends) how do you do?"

The words in parenthesis are not so marked in the original, but form, by oversight, part of the stumbling but vivacious version left uncorrected. Next come the stanzas given among the fragments in the Aldine edition, called "Blake's Friends." Then more prose, and more "Everlasting Gospel," and a bit along the margin, noticed and quoted, but not fully given by Mr. Swinburne,—

"I will tell you what Joseph of Arimathea
Said to my Fairy: was it not queer?
Priestly—Bacon? What, are you here?
Come before Joseph of Arimathea,
Listen patient, when Joseph is done
I'll make a fool laugh at a Fairy's fun."

This must belong to some other book; perhaps that of "Moonlight." Joseph of Arimathea is a phase or division of Los, roofed in Albion's cliffs. Of this personage we shall hear more later.

Then, after more prose, the pretty song—

"Why was Cupid a boy,
And why a boy was he?"

The fifth stanza was written, as its ink and touch betray, at a later date than the four hitherto published in the collections of Blake's poems. It may as well be omitted if we only seek literary enjoyment. Mr. Swinburne has printed the lines, and for their value in helping to interpret the word "Greek" as used by Blake in "Jerusalem," they are reproduced here:—

"CUPID.—STANZA V.
"Twas the Greek's love of war
Turned Cupid into a boy,
And woman into a statue of stone,
And away flew every joy."

Then come the lines about "My dear Friend Orator Prig," and then, in obvious allusion to the first article on art (not on Blake's own exhibition) in the *Examiner* comes the little hit on the address to "Dear Mother Outline," both given in the Aldine edition. This bears a note after it that it was intended "to come in *Barry*, a poem."

Perhaps also the next fragment was for the same collection of artistic scraps.

It begins "That God is colouring, Newton does show,"—and is in the Aldine under the title (Blake's own this time): "To Venetian Artists."

Strangely, yet naturally when we think of the bent of Blake's mind, comes this amidst his fragments:—

"FROM CRATELOS.

"Me time has crooked; no good workman,—
Is he; infirm is all he does."

Then follows the fragment beginning—

"Having given great offence by writing prose
I'll write in verse as soft as Bartoloze."

already printed in the Memoir here.

And this, on form and colour,—

"Call that the public voice which is their error,
Like to a monkey peeping in a mirror,
Admires all his colours brown and warm,
And never once perceives his ugly form."

The next shows that theology and magic were receiving together a share of contemplation unusually penetrating even for Blake.

"To God.

"If you have formed a circle to go into,
Go into it yourself and see what you would do."

And—

"Since all the Riches of this world
May be gifts from the Devil," &c.,

as in the Aldine, only that the stanzas are widely separated, And "To Chloe's breast, young Cupid," &c. This follows, it was written, we must remember, a few years before the Battle of Waterloo. It is only a fragment, and its truth,

imperceptible at the time, is, though daily growing, also but a fragment still :—

“ ‘ Now Art has lost its mental charms,
 France shall subdue the world in arms.’
 So spoke an Angel at my birth,
 Then said— ‘ Descend thou on the earth.
 Renew the Arts on Britain’s shore
 And France shall fall down and adore.
 With works of art her armies meet,
 And war shall sink beneath thy feet.
 But if thy nation arts refuse
 And if they scorn the immortal muse
 France shall the arts of peace restore
 And save thee from the ungrateful shore.’ ”

Blake’s muse has not been refused long enough to bring it to this pass. But the lines, dignified and simple in quality, were not an idle boast. Of all the men who have contributed to international brotherhood, Blake was the one who most emphatically and uncompromisingly preached the cultivation of imagination and vision and poetry as the right means of making the leisure of peace valuable, the opportunities of friendship enjoyable, and the objects, as well as the means of war and conquest, abominable.

He began a new stanza—

“ Spirit who lovest Britannia’s shore
 Round which the Fiends of Commerce roar,”

and stopped,—called away perhaps, after correcting a word and hesitating. But we can see that he knew before it had become a matter of cynically recognized doctrine in ordinary literature, that trade is as much a slaughterer by character as tyranny, and that if the king was the typical butcher once, the shopman holds the knife now.

Later than this, as one turns the leaves, earlier as would be surmised by the handwriting and position of the pages, earlier certainly as the subject enables us to know, we come to the dedication for a picture of the “ Last Judgment.” The date seems undoubtedly to be just before the writing of the “ Everlasting Gospel.” It is given in the Aldine edition, and shows the “ great Atlantic mountains ” as being a symbolic

place in the mental atmospheres where imaginative creatures elude the washing of the sea of time and space, and the flood of the five senses equally with the winds of the Eastern and the waters of the Western regions. (See the "Four Points.")

The next verses—"I rose up at the dawn of day"—are also printed in the Aldine edition; but with the strange perversity characteristic of that work, the lines are put in an order which, however good it may be, is not Blake. The title, "Mammon," is an addition. Blake gives no title. Here are the lines—

"I rose up at the dawn of day.
'Get thee away! get thee away!
Pray'at thou for riches? Away! away!
This is the throne of Mammon grey.'

I said, 'This sure is very odd,
I took it to be the throne of God.
Everything else besides I have,
It's only riches I can crave.

'I have mental joys and mental health,
Mental friends and mental wealth.
I've a wife that I love and that loves me,
I've all but riches bodily.

'I am in God's presence night and day,
He never turns His face away.
The Accuser of Sins by my side does stand,
And he holds my money-bags in his hand.

'For my worldly things God makes him pay,
And he'd pay for more if to him I would pray.
And you may do the worst you can do;
Be assured, Mr. Devil, I wont pray to you.

'Then if for riches I must not pray,
God knows its little prayers I need say.
So, as a church is known by its steeple,
If I pray, it must be for other people.

'He says, if I don't worship him for a god,
I shall eat coarser food and go worse shod;
But as I don't value such things us these,
You must do, Mr. Devil, just as God please.' "

The sketch was written at first without its fourth and fifth stanza, which were added as an after-thought, the climax

having apparently been forgotten, so that now it falls somewhat flat. The padding-line about the church and steeple has been suppressed, along with one of the repetitions. It is tasteful editing to do this, but it loses the droll bit of logic in which Blake—as though the act required some excuse—justifies himself for praying unselfishly. The lines are of very late date, seemingly about 1812.

We now, after a little more of the “Everlasting Gospel” and some prose, find ourselves at the end of the book among the poems copied upside down, with which this notice began.

Much of little value has been given here that may well be spared in future editions, but the serious reader of Blake has long been annoyed by the patronizing, mistifying manner in which “the MS. Book” is constantly referred to, and he has had no reason to have any confidence that the earlier editions had dealt conscientiously with it. A surprising thing it would have been indeed had they done so, as not having the least idea what Blake really meant by his whole system of writing, the editors were simply groping for beauties or oddities in a mass of confusion of which they knew neither the mystic nor the biographic value.

Its mystic value is chiefly, as has been said, the lesson to be learned as to the effect of mysticism in raising Blake above the literary weaknesses which continually infected him from the poetry of the day, when the worries of life had softened the strings of the new and pretty harp which he began by handling so sweetly. Its biographical value was not to be attained without a careful comparison of the order in which the unsorted fragments had been composed. This order even Mr. Rossetti did not “think it requisite” to ascertain.

It will be noticed that many of the shorter pieces given in the previous editions are not here. Of these the most important are the “Crystal Cabinet” and the “Mental Traveller.” It is much to be regretted that they are absent. It is to be hoped that they are printed as written. Gilchrist says (Vol. II., p. 85), that they were taken from “another small

autograph collection, somewhat more fairly copied." Where is that collection now?

The Monk of Charlemagne has been explained in its place in "Jerusalem." This poem and "Broken Love" and the "Everlasting Gospel" are the only three pieces left in the MS. Book not given in this chapter. The last two are important enough to be considered in their proper places as portions of Blake's mystic writings.

The prose must not be passed over in silence. The "Public Address" and the description of the "Vision of the Last Judgment" taken from these leaves are so scattered, and great care would be needed to put them into consecutive order as Blake intended them to be read. Instead of bestowing this care, the editor of Gilchrist, in the patronizing spirit which used to be considered justifiable in all dealings with Blake, has cut up paragraphs, massed subjects, inverted the order of entire pages, and, in fact, treated the whole of his matter as though the notes had been unsorted fragments of his own, which he decided to set in order for printing as an after-thought. These fragments range over so wide a space of time,—from the period of the second attack by the *Examiner* in 1809, to after Schiavonetti's death in June, 1810, that not much is lost by this treatment. Here and there, something is even gained. Occasionally a word or two is suppressed for no intelligible reason. For example (Gilchrist, p. 186):—

"'The Last Judgment' (writes Blake), 'is one of those stupendous visions. I have represented it as I saw it. To different people it appears differently, as everything else does, for though on earth things seem permanent, they are less permanent than a shadow, as we all know too well.'"

What justified the editor in putting a full stop after *everything else does*, and omitting the rest of the sentence, must remain a deeper mystery than any which Blake's own symbolic writings contain. The suppressed words though merely a truism are a reminder much needed if we are to fully feel the logic of the mystic position.

On p. 192 at the end of the first paragraph Gilchrist places a full stop where the original has none, and omits the last

sentence. After the reference, Exodus XIV. c., 19 v., we should read "and other places. The Angel is frequently called by the name of Jehovah Elohim: the I AM of the oaks of Albion." This allusion to Albion, and that on p. 191, are insertions of later date. Blake's substitution of "Albion" for the "Fallen Man" in "Jerusalem" and "Vala," may be assumed to belong to some time between 1810 and 1812. The word "artists" on page 196 of Gilchrist's second volume, printed with a (?) after it, is "painters" in the original, and is perfectly legible. The allusion to sculptors was added, and the word not corrected in the original. On page 200, after—"I assert for myself that I do not behold the outward creation, and that to me it is hindrance, and not action," we read "It is as the dirt upon my feet: no part of me." Blake evidently views himself here in the abstract as walking naked and bare foot on the muddy mould, his feet sliding in the clay, as Milton is drawn and described in the book of that name. It helps to explain the other figure in which the world is bound on as a sandal. *Fest*, we must not forget, stand for the lower parts of the imagination, symbolically. Outward creation has no existence except as an effect on this lower part. *Matter is not*. The editor evidently shrunk from the words, unaware of their significance, and associating them with imperfectly performed toilet. "Action," in the same phrase, is mental or artistic action,—compare the "hired villain," quatrain again.

With these exceptions the prose of the MS. Book is printed complete. The phrase written after "Satan's gratification," about the Creator of this world being a very cruel being, quoted later here in connection with the "Everlasting Gospel," can hardly be considered part of the essay, though it is on the same page as this portion.

Some day, should the whole be reprinted, it ought to be put in correct order; but space lacks here, and the need is not so pressing as in poetic passages.

Some paragraphs have been struck out by Blake himself. These have not been restored, though one of them has so high

a value in helping us to realize why he used the names of persons, historic or mythic, for qualities, moods, and ideas, that it shall be given here. The mere fact that Blake drew his pen through it all must not be taken as implying that he withdrew his assent entirely to the whole of the matter.

"The combats of Good and Evil is eating of the Tree of Knowledge. The combats of Truth and Error is eating of the Tree of Life. These are universal and particular. Each are personified. There is not an error but has a man for its agent; that is, it is a man. There is not a truth but it has also a man. Good and evil are qualities in every man, whether a good or evil man. These are enemies and destroy one another by every means in their power, whether of deceit or open violence. The Deist and the Christian are but the results of these opposing Natures. Many are Deists who under certain circumstances would have been Christians in outward appearance, Voltaire was one of this number. He was as intolerant as an inquisitor. Manners make the man, not habits. It is the same in art. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' The knave who is converted to Deism and the knave who is converted to Christianity is still a knave. But he himself will not know it, though everybody else does. Christ comes, as he came at first, to deliver those who are bound under the knave, not to deliver the knave. He comes to deliver Man the Accused, not Satan the Accuser. We do not find anywhere that Satan is accused of sin. He is only accused of unbelief, and thereby of drawing man into sin that he may accuse him. Such is the last Judgment; a deliverance from Satan's accusation. Satan thinks that sin is displeasing to God. He ought to know that nothing is displeasing to God but unbelief, and eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

What else is in the MS. Book that has not been printed? nothing but an undated announcement that "an advertisement to Blake's the 'Canterbury Pilgrims from Chaucer,' containing anecdotes of artists," price 6*d*, was published "this day" (where is it now?). Only quoted scraps remain that are not Blake's, a list of subjects for design from various authors, which may or may not have been drawn, but have no value as interpretation or literature, or biography.

THE SYMBOLIC SYSTEM.

I.—THE NECESSITY OF SYMBOLISM.

THE Hindu, in the sculptured caverns of Elephanta; the gipsy, in the markings of the sea shell he carries to bring him good fortune; the Rosicrucian student, in the geometric symbols of medieval magic, the true reader of Blake in the entangled histories of Urizen and his children, alike discover a profound answer to the riddle of the world. Do they find anything in their obscure oracles that cannot be known from the much more intelligible dialectics and experiments of modern science and modern philosophy? To answer this question it is necessary to analyze the method whereby the mystic seeks for truth, and to inquire what the truth is he seeks for. Blake has discussed the first portion of this problem in many places, but particularly in two tractates called "There is no Natural Religion." By Natural Religion he understood attempts to build up a religious or spiritual life from any adjustment or "ratio" of the impressions derived from the five senses. These impressions may, indeed, be used in poetry and prophesy as a key to unlock religious truths, but "correspondence," as Swedenborg called the symbolic relation of outer to inner, is itself no product of nature or natural reason, beginning as it does with a perception of a something different from natural things with which they are to be compared. "Natural Religion" was two-fold to Blake. It was a solution of problems and a restraint of conduct: when only a restraint it was deadening, when only a solution it was

dead. All such solutions, according to him, arise from the belief that natural and spiritual things do not differ in kind; for if they do so differ, no mere analysis of nature as it exists outside our minds can solve the problems of mental life. This absolute difference may be described as the first postulate of all mystics. Swedenborg, whose writings were familiar to Blake, has carefully explained it in his doctrine of "discrete" degrees. "Degrees are of two kinds," he writes, "there being continuous degrees and degrees not continuous. Continuous degrees are like the degrees of light, decreasing as it recedes from flame, which is its source, till it is lost in obscurity; or like the degrees of visual clearness, decreasing as the light passes from the objects in the light to those in the shade; or like the degrees of the purity of the atmosphere from its base to its summit; these degrees being determined by the respective distances. But degrees that are not continuous but discrete, differ from each other like that which is prior and what is posterior, like cause and effect, and like that which produces and that which is produced. Whoever investigates this subject will find, that in all the objects of creation, both general and particular, there are such degrees of production and composition, and that from one thing proceeds another and from that a third, and so on. He that has not acquired a clear apprehension of these degrees cannot be acquainted with the difference between . . . the exterior and interior faculties of man; nor can he be acquainted with the difference between the spiritual world and the natural, nor between the spirit of man and his body" ("Heaven and Hell," page 38).

The materialistic thinker sees "continuous" where he should see "discrete degrees," and thinks of the mind not merely as companioning but as actually one with the physical organism. The mistake has brought into the world many curious dogmas, such as that of the scientific German who has pronounced the soul "a volatile liquid capable of solution in glycerine," and thereby shown a confusion of mind as great as if he had asked, with the religious man in Professor

Clifford's story, "How many foot-pounds are there to the top of St. Paul's?" The scientific German has, however, a great advantage over the mystic, in the perfect intelligibility of his statement. He has not been forced by the essential obscurity of truth to wrap his utterance about with symbol and mystery, and to expound the nature of mind and body by "correspondence," or "signature," as Boehmen called it. For discrete degrees are related to each other by "correspondence" and by that alone, for all other methods imply identity. This relation is set forth by Blake in an MS. note on the margin of a copy of Swedenborg's "Divine Love and Wisdom," now in the British Museum. The words "science" and "demonstration" he here applies to investigations of external nature, and "intellect" to the world of man's thoughts existing in and for themselves. "Is it not evident," he writes, "that one degree will not open the other." He is combatting a statement of Swedenborg's that a child is born in the merely "natural degree," and that he passes from that to the others. As readers of the "Songs of Innocence" know, childhood was to him a divine and no mere animal or natural state. "And that science," he goes on, "will not open intellect, but that they are discrete and not continuous; so as to explain each other only by correspondence, which has nothing to do with demonstration, for you cannot demonstrate one degree by the other, for how can science be brought to demonstrate intellect without making them continuous and not discrete." The materialist, and not the child, exists in the natural degree he is contending; for no increase of natural observations, and sensations could of itself awake into being or "open" the intellectual faculties. They must accompany the action of the observations and sensations from the first, and are indeed the primary condition of their existence. The sensations and observations are merely the symbols or correspondence whereby the intellectual nature realizes or grows conscious of itself in detail. Thus Blake met a number of materialistic thinkers at the bookseller Johnston's, and recog-

nised in them an expression, external to himself, of certain elements he knew in his own mind, and created from this double perception the gigantic "spectre" of denial and soulless reason called Hand, in "Jerusalem." Had he never gone to the house in St. Paul's Churchyard he might never have become conscious of this "spectrous" reason, but it would have existed in his mind all the same. In this way study of external events, not merely the elaborate and laborious study we call mysticism, but the emotional and flying observation that embodies itself in the metaphors of poetry, explains to us the nature of the mind. Whoever has understood the correspondence asserted by Blake between (say) sight, hearing, taste and smell, and certain mental qualities, feels at once that much in his own intellect is plainer to him, and when Shakespeare compares the mind of the mad Lear to the "vexed sea," we are told at once something more laden with meaning than many pages of psychology. A "correspondence," for the very reason that it is implicit rather than explicit, says far more than a syllogism or a scientific observation. The chief difference between the metaphors of poetry and the symbols of mysticism is that the latter are woven together into a complete system. The "vexed sea" would not be merely a detached comparison, but, with the fish it contains, would be related to the land and air, the winds and shadowing clouds, and all in their totality compared to the mind in its totality. This relation of sea to land and of thought to thought, is by continuous and not discrete degrees. Water changes into land, and air into vapour, and thought melts into thought, not as "prior" into "posterior," "cause" into "effect," "spirit" into "nature," but by a transformation that lifts them into no new world. These changes are, however, symbols of the "discrete degrees," and we will hear much in "The Mystical Writings" of flood, air, and fire, as representing the difference between natural, intellectual, and emotional things. In Swedenborg and Blake the difference between the two kinds of degrees is symbolized by perpendi-

cular and longitudinal motion. We pass upward into higher discrete degrees and merely outward into the continuous ones.

As natural things correspond to intellectual, so intellectual things correspond to emotional. In the second of the two tractates on "Natural Religion" Blake goes further and asserts that "the poetic genius," as he calls the emotional life, "is the true man, and that the body or outward form of man is derived from the poetic genius. Likewise, that the forms of all things are derived from their genius, which by the ancients was called an Angel and Spirit and Demon." The growing genius of the child forms about it by affinity a complex series of thoughts, and these in their turn have much to do in moulding unconsciously the no less complex symbol, or series of symbols, known as the physical body. In the same way the oak-tree shows that it differs in essence or genius from the beech by the different nature of its symbol, and the man of mere common-place activities gathers about him a body nowise resembling the refined body of the man of culture. To hear a man talking, or to watch his gestures, is to study symbolism, and when we restate our impressions in what are thought to be straightforward and scientific sentences, we are in reality giving a more limited, and therefore more graspable, symbolic statement of this impalpable reality. Mysticism, poetry and all creative arts, for the very reason that they explain but seldom, are more profound than the explanatory sciences. Sometimes the mystical student, bewildered by the different systems, forgets for a moment that the history of moods is the history of the universe, and asks where is the final statement—the complete doctrine. The universe is itself that doctrine and statement. All others are partial, for it alone is the symbol of the infinite thought which is in turn symbolic of the universal mood we name God.

As natural things and intellectual differ by discrete degrees, so do intellectual things differ by discrete degrees from emotional. We have thus three great degrees the first of which is external: the first two possessing form, physical and

mental respectively, and the third having neither form nor substance—dwelling not in space but in time only. We shall presently hear of the great emotional or inspired principle, named Los, as God of Time. The absolute separation of these degrees was a thought that pleased Blake, "Study science till you are blind, study intellectuals till you are cold," he writes in the before quoted notes to "Divine Love and Wisdom," "yet science cannot teach intellect much less can intellect teach affection." Emotion or affection is defined in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" as what the religious call evil, its tendency being to burst bounds, as it were, and shatter forms. The idea is that of a saying, used recently in conversation by a Brahmin, who was denying the possibility of a science of conduct. "The ethical impulse," he said, "always breaks the ethical law." Blake's peculiar use of the word "evil" often causes obscurity, for he does not always take the trouble to say when he restricts his meaning to what "the religious" so call. The emotional Degree is associated with will by Swedenborg, hence Blake wrote on the fly-leaf of "Divine Love and Wisdom," "There is no good will. Will is always evil." The rest is illegible, having been rubbed out, probably, by heresy-hating Tatham, in whose possession the book was originally. The second Degree, with its definite forms, is, on the other hand, associated with what the religious call good. "The passive that obeys reason." Reason in its turn being "the outward bound or circumference of energy." Good is, in fact, the passive symbol, and good and evil are "the contraries, without which there is no progression."

These two degrees are the most important, and much of Blake's system is but the history of their opposing lives differing from and yet completing one another, as love does wisdom—will, understanding—substance, form. The systems of philosophy and the dogmas of religion are to the mystic of the Blakean school merely symbolic expressions of racial moods or emotions—the essences of truth—seeking to express themselves in terms of racial memory and experience—the

highest degree cloaking itself, as it were, in the second. The German produces transcendental metaphysics, the Englishman positive science, not because either one has discovered the true method of research, but because they express their racial moods or affections. The most perfect truth is simply the dramatic expression of the most complete man. "No man can think, write, or speak," says Blake in the second "Natural Religion" booklet, "from his heart but he must intend truth. Thus all sects of philosophy are from the poetic genius adapted to the weaknesses of every individual." And again, "The religions of all nations are derived from each nation's different reception of the poetic genius which is everywhere called the Spirit of Prophecy." This poetic genius or central mood in all things is that which creates all by affinity—worlds no less than religions and philosophies. First, a bodiless mood, and then a surging thought, and last a thing. This triad is universal in mysticism, and corresponds to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Swedenborg it is divided under the names celestial, spiritual and natural degrees; in the Kabala as Neschamah, Ruach and Nesphesch, or universal, particular and concrete life. In Theosophical mysticism we hear of the triple logos—the unmanifest eternal, the manifest eternal, and the manifest temporal; and in Blake we will discover it under many names, and trace the histories of the many symbolic rulers who govern its various subdivisions. As mood differs from mood, and emotion from emotion, not by discrete but continuous degrees, it will be seen that there is something common to them all—a mood that goes through all the moods. This is what Blake means when he speaks of "the poetic genius," as he sometimes does, as if there were but one genius for all men. "As all men are alike in outward form," he writes, "so (and with the same infinite variety) all are alike in the poetic genius"; and again, "as all men are alike (though infinitely various), so all religions, as all similars, have one source. The true man is the source, he being the poetic genius." This true or universal man he sometimes calls Christ,

the centre of the universe, the truth self-existing in its own essence. He is infinite, all-pervading, but yet we are compelled to describe him to ourselves as a man, not merely because that is the least limited symbol to remember the unlimited by, but because our "genius," or central mood, is a direct, and our intellectual and physical natures an indirect, derivation from him. "Man can have no idea of anything greater than a man," writes Blake in the MS. notes to "Divine Love and Wisdom," "as a cup cannot contain more than its capaciousness. But God is a man not because He is so perceived but because He is the creator of man." It is important to us to love this universal life that we may test ourselves and all else by it, and therefore we must be careful of the symbol we use, and not employ some merely intellectual abstraction or material correspondence. Swedenborg complains that many Christians have no other idea of a spirit "than as a particle of cloud," and Blake comments—"Think of a white cloud as holy! you cannot love it; but think of a holy man within the cloud, love springs up in your thought, for to think of holiness distinct from man is impossible to the affections. Thought makes monsters, but the affections cannot." The man he speaks of is the inner and not the outer being—the spiritual not the physical—the highest ideal, "the human form divine," as he calls it, and not the extrinsic body.

The mind or imagination or consciousness of man may be said to have two poles, the personal and impersonal, or, as Blake preferred to call them, the limit of contraction and the unlimited expansion. When we act from the personal we tend to bind our consciousness down as to a fiery centre. When, on the other hand, we allow our imagination to expand away from this egoistic mood, we become vehicles for the universal thought and merge in the universal mood. Thus a reaction of God against man and man against God—which is described by Swedenborg as good and evil, and by Blake as really two forms of good (MS. notes to Swedenborg)—goes on continually. The "genius" within us is impatient and

law-breaking, and only becomes peaceful and free when it grows one with "the poetic genius"—the universal mood. It does so not by surrender of its own nature, but by expanding until it contains that which is the essence of all. Blake refuses to consider the personal as in itself evil for by it we obtain experience. It is continually feeding the universal life, as it were, with fuel of individual emotion. It becomes evil in the true sense of the word only when man invents a philosophy from reasoning upon it, asserts that its limited life is alone real, and that there is nothing but what is perceived by the five senses of individual man. "The outward bound or circumference of energy" then becomes an iron band closing in the man. Having denied the existence of that for which his bodily life exists, man begins an unceasing preoccupation with his own bodily life, neglecting to regard it as a symbol. Hence Blake's denunciation of "demonstration" which is "only by the bodily senses," and of "the most holy reasoning power in which is the abomination of desolation." It is this and not the personal energies, "the little devils which fight for themselves," that he denounces. When this reason has obtained power "the limit of contraction" becomes "the limit of the opaque." The creative mystic and the man of genius, on the other hand, live unenslaved by any "reason" and pass at will into the universal life. All our highest feelings come in this way. "He who loves," say the notes on Swedenborg, "feels love descend into him, and if he has wisdom, may perceive it is from the Poetic Genius which is the Lord." No man can see or think of anything that has not affinity with his mood or "state," as Blake preferred to call it. The materialist sees only what belongs to his contracted consciousness. The creative visionary or man of genius has all the thoughts, symbols, and experiences that enter within his larger circle. If he has developed his perception of mental sound it will give him music; if his perception of thought, philosophic generalizations; and if his

sense of mental sight, visions, strong or faint, according to his power of concentration upon them. The mood of the seer, no longer bound in by the particular experiences of his body, spreads out and enters into the particular experiences of an ever-widening circle of other lives and beings, for it will more and more grow one with that portion of the mood essence which is common to all that lives. The circle of individuality will widen out until other individualities are contained within it, and their thoughts, and the persistent thought-symbols which are their spiritual or mental bodies, will grow visible to it. He who has thus passed into the impersonal portion of his own mind perceives that it is not a mind but all minds. Hence Blake's statement that "Albion," or man, once contained all "the starry heavens," and his description of their flight from him as he materialized. When once a man has re-entered into this, his ancient state, he perceives all things as with the eyes of God. The thoughts of nature grow visible independent of their physical symbols. He sees when the body dies the soul still persisting and ascending, perhaps as Blake saw his brother Robert's, clapping its hands with joy. He discovers by "his enlarged and numerous senses" the "spiritual causes" that are behind "natural events." It was in this way that Blake perceived those spiritual forms with which, as Tatham tells us, he talked and argued as with old friends. But most men can only see the thoughts of nature through their physical effects. Inattention has robbed them of the universe and they have shrunk up into the "worm of sixty winters." When we do not listen to the voice of one who is talking, it first becomes an unintelligent hum, and then ceases for us altogether and leaves us alone in the circle of our minds. It is going on, however, and others may hear and even begin to move about in obedience to its commands, and jostle us while doing so. It is thus with ordinary men, they dwell wrapped up in their own narrow circles, like the creatures with whom Urizen talks in the book

of "Vala," and finds "cursed beyond his curse." For them the natural degree, the world of effects, is alone visible when they turn their eyes outward. For them, and they include well nigh all of us, no spirit passes by with placid tread. How then should it be strange that the grave seems the end of all, and life a mere lichen growing upon the cliff side?

II.—THE THREE PERSONS AND THE MIRROR.

BLAKE at the beginning of his longest poem bids the muses sing man's "fall into Division and his resurrection into Unity," and Jacob Boehmen would have echoed the words. The universe, according to both seers, arose from the divine unity, and by a process of division and subdivision almost identical in both systems, so far as its earlier stages are concerned and having many analogies throughout. Boehmen, however, continually returns to cast his plummet into the dark fountain of things, whereas Blake follows the river of mystical truth down into the meadow lands of human love and human hope. The abstraction so dear to Boehmen did not supply the palpable images and moving affections needed for poetry. Hence, although the name of God occurs continually in the symbolic books of Blake, there is little philosophic exposition of His nature. The general character, however, of the Blakean system, its resemblances to, and divergences from that of Boehmen, and a few explicit statements here and there leave little doubt as to Blake's view of the first cause.

Like Boehmen and the occultists generally, he postulates besides the Trinity a fourth principle, a universal matrix or heaven or abode, from which, and in which all have life. It is that represented by the circle containing the triangle of the ancient mystics, and may be described as the imagination of God, without which neither Father, Son, nor Spirit could be made manifest in life and action. In one of the aphorisms written in the Laocoon plate, it is called "The Divine Body," and men are valued according as it enters into them, for we are told that "The unproductive man is not a Christian." To this emanation, to give it the Blakean term,

of the Father, is applied constantly by Boehmen the word "looking-glass," and Blake, when he uses the same expression in connection with a corresponding though minor being of his mystical mythology, and writes of "Enitharmon's looking-glass," as also when he speaks in the essay on "The Last Judgment" of "the vegetable glass of Nature," adopts the term as his own. God looking into this mirror, ceases to be mere will, beholds Himself as the Son, His love for His own unity, His self-consciousness, and enters on that eternal meditation about Himself which is called the Holy Spirit. "Council" it is sometimes called in Boehmen, a term which is lengthened into "The Council of God" in the "Mystical Writings." This Holy Spirit, or "Council," is the energy which wakes into being the numberless thought-forms of the great mirror, the immortal or typical shapes of all things, the "ideas" of Plato. It and the mirror make up together divine manifestation. At first the thought-forms subsist and move in this universal "imagination which liveth for ever" without being manifest to themselves and each other as separate individualities, not being lives but thoughts of the universal life. Then comes the contrary of the universal life, "the reaction of man against God," the longing of the shapes and thought-forms for a vivid sensation of their own existence. Desire is its name, and to it Boehmen traces the fall into physical life. Blake will have none of this doctrine, for desire is to him essentially sacred, because essentially vital, for "all that lives is holy." "Contraries are not negations," he tells us in "Milton," and it is to the negation of God that we owe the physical body and its troubles. It was only when limited to its own narrow experience and divorced from imagination by what Blake calls reason, "its outward bound," that desire brought corporeality to impede life in its action. This reason is the eternal "no" warring on the eternal "yes" of God, and the creator of the opaque, the non-imaginative, the egoistic. He means by reason something quite different from what he calls intellect.

It means with him the faculty that entices us to claim exclusive reality for our own sensations, and build up selfhoods, dwelling in memories of their own experiences—the great “chaos”—to promulgate “laws of prudence” for their protection, and “call them the laws of God.” It is what we call materialism, and has caused all evil and all misery, for once we believe that our selfhoods, or spectres as Blake names them, alone exist, we seek to feed them and preserve them at whatever sorrow and toil to others. Hence this reason is the maker of every war and the door of all rapine. For it, “on the land, children are sold to trades of dire necessity, still labouring day and night,” and for it “slaves in myriads, in shiploads, burden the sounding deep.” It closed up the forms and thoughts and lives within the narrow circle of their separate existence, whereas before they had “expanded and contracted” at will, hiding them from the light and life of God, and from the freedom of the “imagination which liveth for ever.” The mirror was changed under its influence to that hard stepmother we call Nature. Desire, before reason came to set bounds to it, was merely joy seeking its own infinity, but restriction changed it to a devouring flame. “Thought,” says Blake in “Europe,” “changed the infinite to a serpent,” that is, to a self-torturing and desirous selfhood or spectre. As soon as reason had set bounds to life, “the laws of the numbers” began, and multiplicity endeavoured to take the place of unity, continually struggling with that from whence it came. In the struggle the indignation of unity is called “the wrath of God,” and is the cause of our unending dissatisfaction with ourselves and all things. Boehmen appears to make this wrath arise from desire itself, but Blake more correctly considers it an essentially different principle.

The personal desires shrink further and further from the impersonal wrath. Hence God, as Will, became wrapped in darkness, and man would never again have known the divine freedom he had fallen from, did not God as Love descend perpetually within the forms and lives. The unity contends

with the multiplicity, and seeks to conquer it in the will, but descends into it to redeem and succour in the love, for "One must be all, and contain within Himself all things both small and great." Hence the beauty and harmony of Nature. "God," writes Blake in the notes on *Lavator*, "is in the lowest effects as well as in the highest causes. He is become a worm that he may nourish the weak. For let it be remembered that creation is God descending according to the weakness of man; our Lord is the word of God, and everything on earth is the word of God, and in its essence is God." It is the perpetual aim of the love to persuade all lives "to unite as one man," and all thoughts and feelings to put off their separate egoism and become "the divine members."

In the last chapter the "first degree" is compared to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third or "natural degree" to the Holy Spirit. The "natural degree" is something more than a correspondence for the Holy Spirit, for in it also is the fallen substance of the mirror. The two between them making up the seeking and alluring, masculine and feminine, repulsive and attractive, of corporeal life; for when the lives become spectres or selfhoods, the mirror, in its turn, grows spectrous, and is changed into a "vortex," seeking to draw down and allure. It ceases to be a passive maternal power and becomes destroying. This double being of corrupted spirit and mirror is the serpent-woman of the first night of "Vula" and the *virgo-scorpio* of the ancient occultists. It is "the delusive goddess Nature."

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENCES.

DIVINE. MACROCOSM.	Father— Divine Will.	Son— Divine Love.	Mirror— Divine Imag- ination.	Holy Spirit— Divine Energy.
HUMAN. MICROCOSM.	First Degree— Mood. Genius. Universal.	Second Degree— Thought. Symbol. Particular.	Third Degree— Manifestation. Body. Concrete.	

The mood or genius, which is the centre of human life, is the impression upon man of the divine quaternary, and is variously identified with both Father, Son, and Spirit and imagination, according to the particular function it fulfils for the time being, for all things are fourfold, and repeat in miniature the great fourfold of the universe. In the Swedenborg notes, for instance, it is identified with the Lord, whereas in the Crabb Robinson notes the genius of Voltaire is described as the Holy Spirit, and in the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" the poetic genius and the Father are spoken of as one.

III.—THE FOUR ZOAS.

THE process we have just described is going on, eternally, in regions of thought and life far above the perceptions of corporeal mind. We can do no more than figure it to ourselves in terms of the world about us and tell of "wrath," "reason," "desire," and so forth. The reality is mental but not after the fashion of our embodied minds. Blake, as we have seen, appears to have felt the incongruity of setting forth the earlier and more spiritual phases of it, at any rate, in images and figures so vivid and definite as those of poetry. Hence his system is mainly busy with the lesser powers through which the Deity manifests in our created world, for "God only acts or is in existing beings or men." The unity is mysteriously united to the diversity and finds therein its body and its opportunity for life and motion, by that union of incompatibles which is the supreme paradox. The "beings" in the sentence quoted from "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" are the spirits or mental states. The present chapter has to do with their classification into four great divisions corresponding to the division of the Divine Nature into Father, Son, Spirit and, what we have called with Boehmen, "mirror." These four kinds of mental states and their corresponding physical symbols are called the four Zoas, or "Lifes," from the Greek word *zōa*, life. They are identical with the wheels of Ezekiel and with the four beasts of the Apocalypse, and resemble closely Raphael, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, the Kabalistic regents of the cardinal points, and like them preside over psychic and bodily affairs. They are the mighty beings, Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, Urthona, whose deeds and words fill page after page of "The Mystical Writings."

When life falls into division the First Person of the Trinity gives place to Urizen, "creator of men, mistaken demon of Heaven," and "god of this world." He is Reason, the enemy of inspiration and imagination. Urizen before he sought dominion as Reason was wholly subordinate and enwrapped in the divine fire and as such was a principle of spiritual or imaginative order, but separating himself from the Divine, as the cold light of the mind, he became a selfhood, a life living from and for itself, and not from and for the source of all lives, and was transformed into the cause of the formalism and deadness of unimaginative thought and of the rigidity and opaqueness of iron and stone. Before, he had been the tendency of things to group themselves by a natural affinity into shapes of beauty and joy, and now he turned into the tendency of things to contract about their own centres, and to subordinate all to themselves. From being the creative will of the divine he became the creative will of the body and corporeal mind. He is described as falling into the chaos, which is memory, because memory is the record of the merely egoistic experience, thus differing from inspiration, which is direct knowledge. It is he who creates those "laws of prudence" to preserve the selfhoods, or spectres, and calls them "laws of God." He is Blake's greatest dramatization and wanders hither and thither, a melancholy tyrant, now expanding into the builder of earth and sky, proclaiming himself "God from Eternity to Eternity," and bidding all know that "the spectre is the man; the rest . . . delusion and fancy," and now contracting to the egoism of human passion. His name is a modification of Uriel, the archangel of the sun in "Paradise Lost," and he is god both of intellectual and material light. The separation of the cold light beam from the warm flame is a symbol of his descent into matter; a symbolism found also in Swedenborg, who compares the fallen Reason to light separated from heat, "for then all things become torpid and lie dead" ("Heaven and Hell," page 13). When one with the fire of inspiration he is the angel of the Divine Presence, but when fallen becomes "a cold

leper," a maker of corporeal laws, in whose sight the heavens are impure (see "Everlasting Gospel," lines 89 to 96). He resembles in some ways what Boehmen calls the "astrigent" or "saltish" quality.

When the fall of spirit from unity causes the Father to give place to Urizen, the Son gives place to a power called Luvah, from the Hebrew *Luv*, heart or love, and *ah*, a feminine termination. He is love in its less imaginative aspect and is associated with the blood, and serves one good purpose. Divine love descends into the world "in Luvah's robes of blood"—a correspondence for the Incarnation itself. When separated from Divine Love he is uninspired feeling in every aspect but that of desire, for desire implies a certain amount of imagination and thought because it implies an object. Reason is contractive and desire active, but the fallen Luvah dissolves all into vague emotion, at once feeding and lulling life into a deathly sleep. He is frequently associated with pity, for he promises rest to warring and thinking man, but it is the pity "which seeks for dominion," subordinating everything to itself, and may be described as emotion without thought as Urizen is thought without emotion. Urizen and Luvah are the opposing principles of the fallen mind of man, and seek, the one to contract it into hard egoism, the other to expand it into soft weakness. The one would make the personal life mad with pride and the other would dissolve it away into hypocritic humility; the one has produced the battles, the other the peace preaching and dominion seeking churches of Christendom; the one has been the false Jehovah and the other the false Christ of the nations.

The matrix, "mirror" or feminine principle, gives place to Tharmas—probably the biblical Thamuz in a modified form—the power of growing or, as Blake calls it, vegetative life. Action being essentially masculine, when impersonated imaginatively, while passivity is feminine,—even Tharmas is seen to be masculine under the influence of the dominion of reason, for as a result of this tyranny the matrix ceases to be merely

passive. The forms, thoughts, and desires, contracted under the influence of Urizen, stand out as it were from the diffusion and passivity of the matrix, compel it to seek perpetually to reabsorb them, for they have become denials of its peculiar life, and so to reply to their repulsion with attraction. Much of Blake's poetry will be found to deal with this contest of the male and female, active and passive tendencies, or, as he preferred to call it, of spectre and emanation. Tharmas is, therefore, nature and the five senses generally, and is perpetually at war with the reason who launches against him all manner of abstractions and asceticisms.

As the primordial division continues the Holy Spirit is succeeded by a Zoa, called Urthona—the “regent,” to use the Kabalistic word—of “dark fire” or of the fierce impersonal energy—or wrath of God—striving against the restrictions and divisions of Urizen. Active or male desire itself is a son or subdivision of the dark fire god—it being essentially a struggle for more ample life. The flames under the earth in “The soul exploring the recesses of the grave,” and elsewhere, when they are not the bright and beautiful fire of inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are these dark flames of material energy, which are the only things that still defy the power of Urizen. The fourth Zoa alone is described as living. Tharmas and Urthona were slain or made captive by Urizen, who himself sleeps in the death of matter.

TABLE.

Father—	Son—	Mirror—	Spirit—
Urizen	Luvah	Tharmas	Urthona
Reason.	Emotion.	Sensation.	Energy.

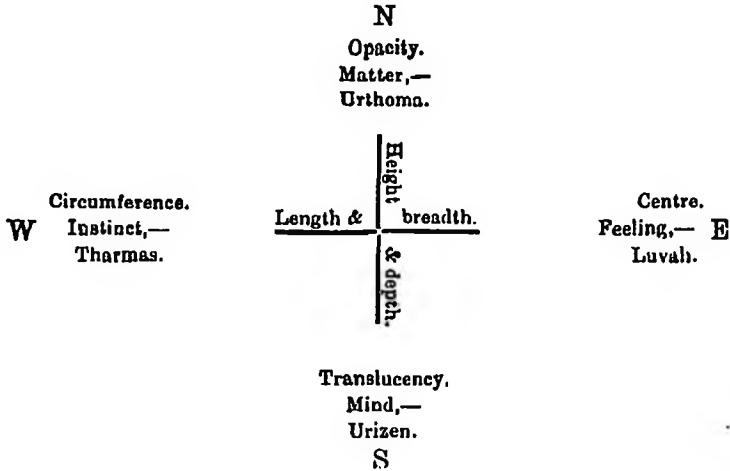
IV.—THE SYMBOLS OF THE FOUR ZOAS:

THE Zoas are sometimes to be considered as mental states in which men may dwell for a time, and whence they may pass on, and sometimes as external necessities appearing to men in the laws of nature, or of society. They have innumerable sub-divisions, for the fourfold analysis of things and thoughts need never come to an end. To the sub-divisions Blake applies names, each portion being a personage in its way, and justifying a separate myth. The Zoas themselves are symbolically associated with certain regions, directions, magnitudes, &c. Much of this symbolism is identical with the Kabalistic symbols of the angels of the four points. Blake writes, for instance, of the relation of zenith, nadir, centre, and circumference, and uses these terms in the manner of the medieval Kabalists and occultists.

The zenith is the unlimited translucence of free spirit or imagination. The nadir is the limit of opaque matter in the outer, and of unimaginativeness in the inner world. The centre is the gathering point of physical existence. The circumference is the outward or expansive tendency of vitalizing instinct. The Zoas have their positions in these regions or states, they have first their rightful stations when the world is spiritual and unfallen, and then certain other stations when it is unspiritual and fallen. The regent of the centre is Luvah, for although he dissolves and "divides the soul," he can yet gather under his dominion, as round a centre, all conscious but unimaginative life. He is egoistic feeling, as Urizen after his fall is egoistic thought. It is not, however,

until he becomes proud and seeks to usurp the place of inspiration that he becomes evil, for all the powers of nature have their purpose and their place, and man's personal feeling when it is a passive vehicle for the creative fire within, makes itself a mere mask for the divine fire. Opposite to Luvah's eastern station is Tharmas in the West and in the circumference. He being not feeling, not conscious personal emotion, but instinct and sensation, or what Blake unites with Boehmen in calling vegetative life. As some unimagined feeling is the centre of corporeal life, or the seat of its consciousness, at all times when it is not sunk in dead reason, so the life of the senses is its circumference or outer limit, its matrix, and the mirror in which it reflects itself. Between these two worlds—the worlds of Tharmas and Luvah—corporeal life fluctuates, as if upon one level, incapable of rising towards the zenith, the spiritual; and dying utterly if it falls towards the unvital matter of the opaque nadir. It is neither spiritual and imaginative like the one, or dead and destructive like the other, but moves, trembling and fluctuating in its mid region, its twilight of the senses and the feelings. When all is in the eternal imagination, Urizen as yet unfallen, dwells in the zenith wrapped as we have described in inspiration, and Urthona the wrathful outer necessity in the nadir with ever shifting matter. It is not until the fall has come that reason binds itself to the wheel of outer necessity, and change and darkness rise into the soul of man. When all is in imagination, the mind dwelling in the symbolic zenith surveys the transformations of the Opaque below, without sharing in the uncertainty or stooping to take upon itself the darkness of that blinded world, to eat, as Blake phrased it, the fruit of mystery.

It will be seen that these positions of the Zcas can be represented by two intersecting lines passing through height and depth, and length and breadth.



The Zoas are also associated with the four elements. Urizen is "The Prince of Light." In his good aspect of thought, not yet withdrawn from Divine Love and inspiration, he would be the warm and light-giving beams of fire; but as we have him most constantly in Blake, he is its cold light, its beam long separated from the source. Luvah is the regent of air and of the breath, whereby the physical body gets the least material, because least opaque of its corporeal ingredients,—the symbol of its wayward feeling, and the vehicle whereby it sighs its sorrows. This correspondence of the emotional life with air is a part of the occult system of Cornelius Agrippa. The "Humours," he writes, "partake of the elements, for yellow choller is instead of fire, *blood instead of air*, flegme instead of water, and black choller or melancholy instead of earth." Again, air is the symbol of the feelings, because it has no inherent tendency upwards like fire, or downwards like water and earth, but moves hither and thither under the stress of heat and cold as our feelings do, when summoned by instinct on the one hand, or imagination on the other. As the Son is the centre of the Divine Triad, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so Luvah stands between unfallen Urizen and Tharmas, and air between fire and water. The air has two

great properties, it transmits fire as light and warmth, and sustains water as cloud, and so Luvah changes thought on the one hand, and vegetative instinct on the other into active life, for all activity springs from feeling. Tharmas is described as "the rough demon of the waters," for water is, according to the occultists, the universal fructifier. "There is so great a necessity of water," wrote Cornelius Agrippa, "that without it no living thing can live. No herb nor plant whatsoever without the moistening of water can branch forth. In it is the seminary virtue of all things." Tharmas is also associated with water, because it is his mission to destroy and scatter. Christ, the Imagination, is described in "Milton" as becoming the "prey" of Tharmas, who is there understood as the sense of Touch, not as water only. Water is clear, allowing the light beam to pass through it. Tharmas is so far permeated by spirit as to be living, for all life is from the spirit or imagination. Most occultists find significance in the reflecting property of water. It is symbolic of the mirror or matrix of life. Urthona is earth, but earth to Blake is the limit downward of his vision—behind it God and fire begin anew. What we lay in the earth we give into the hands of the unknown god, who labours in darkness and takes care of the dead and the unborn. It is the dark fire which, unlike the gentle inner flame, transforms and renews and fills the soul with fear. It is the heat under the crucible, and the wrath of the Deity. It is the created fire spoken of in the aphorism of the Rosicrucian Eugenius Philolethes, "simple fire existed uncreated (that is to say, purely mental) and beneath the waters (that is when externalized or made physical by passing through the world of Tharmas), clothed itself with a garment of the multiplied created fire."

It will be seen thus that the abodes or "atmospheres," to use a term common both to Blake and Swedenborg, to which the Zoas belong, represent the four rungs of the great ladder whose upper end is in spirit its lower in matter. These "atmospheres" are named by Blake Beulah, Alla,

Al-ulro, and Or-ulro respectively—Beulah being ascribed to the zenith. By looking at the chart facing page 280, it will be seen that there is a plane called Jerusalem, the kingdom of the daughters of inspiration, who are above Beulah—the “atmosphere” of the daughters of pleasant images. So beyond the zenith is the eternal life of God, whose Angel of the Presence is Urizen. There are thus five atmospheres, of which the highest is above the power of the Zoas. They correspond to the imaginative sight or direct vision of the mind, and to the four senses, for Blake considers taste and touch to be subdivisions of one sense, the servant of the vegetative impulse—Tharmas.

In a copy of “Europe,” in possession of Mr. Linnell, are some introductory lines absent in other copies. They begin :—

“Five windows light the caverned man, thro’ one he breathes the air,
Thro’ one hears music of the spheres, thro’ one the eternal vine
Flourishes, that he may receive the grapes ; thro’ one can look,
And see small portions of the eternal world that ever groweth ;
Thro’ one himself pass out what time he pleases, but he will not ;
For stolen joys are sweet, and bread eaten in secret pleasant.”

Here the “atmospheres” are enumerated one by one, the nadir corresponds to hearing, the centre to the nostrils and to the sense of smell and the power of breathing, the circumference to taste and touch, symbolized by the vine, the zenith to the eyes, and the fifth atmosphere, as we have said, to the direct apprehension of truth and beauty inherent to the mind, to the power that is of seeing, “not with but through the eye.” Fallen man, however, will have none of the last, for he prefers the stolen delights of the four senses and the “mystery” of the world. Beulah, or the zenith, corresponds to the eyes, because in the symbolic zenith is the first beginning of external life, and in the eyes is the first union of subject and object, thought and nature, spirit and matter. Beulah—Bunyan’s place of pleasant rest—is interpreted in the Concordance to mean “marriage.” In Blake it is a place of repose, ante-chamber of Inspiration, and dwelling of Muses, not like

those of the Greeks. Its evil aspect is that "we become what we behold," and from it pass to a lower plane—Alla—and are enslaved by the egoistic emotion of the false centre, for love in all its phases is ever in Blake, as in Shakespeare, "engendered in the eyes." The nostrils are associated with the centre, because by them we breathe the air which is the symbol of Luvah and the centre. Taste and touch are associated with Al-ulro, because in the world of Tharmas the structure of the body is completed and mind sleeps in bodily vitality. Or-ulro has for symbol the ear, because the creative word moves in the darkness of those "multiplied fires" which mould life in regions of force that is not yet personal, and shape it, as a child is shaped in the womb, or as the soul and character of men in the furnace of affliction. Or-ulro is said to be a void, which when entered into becomes a womb. Beulah, Alla, and Al-ulro are symbolical of the triad of personal life—head, heart, loins, or of thinking, emotional, and instinctive existence. Or-ulro and Jerusalem are respectively below and above the limited life of the personality. They are God's external and internal influences upon the world, the creation from the darkness, the influx from the light.

The five atmospheres and their symbols and correspondences may be thus tabulated:—

Jerusalem			Divine Fire			
Beulah	Eyes	Urizen	Light	Head	S.	Translucence or Zenith
Alla	Nostrils	Luvah	Air	Heart	E.	Centre
Al-ulro	Tongue	Tharmas	Water	Loins	W.	Circumference
			(Earth			
Or-ulro	Ears	Urthona	Darkness	Stomach and	N.	Opaque or
			Dark fire	womb		Nadir

It must always be remembered that the Zoas exist in everything. Blake held the doctrine of the macrocosm, and microcosm, and would gladly have assented to the saying of Paracelsus: "He who tastes a crust of bread tastes all the stars and all the heavens." There is no grass blade of the field, no pebble

of the brook, in which he could not have found the Zoas and some of their correspondences.

Taking the four higher atmospheres apart by themselves, we have an almost exact reproduction of the four worlds of the Kabala, Atziloth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah, and the one Arupa (or formless), and three Rupa (or form-possessing) plains of Theosophical mysticism. The five "atmospheres" have also close resemblances to the five tatwas of Hindu occultism, and with them, as with the tatwas, the lower four correspond to the four elements.

V.—THE FALL OF THE SOUL.

THE correspondence of the four states of humanity—Beulah, Alla, Al-ulro, and Or-ulro—to head, heart, loins, and womb, is a phase of the correspondence of macrocosm and microcosm. When man is in harmony with the Divine scheme they are continuous with each other and differ alone in that the one series is universal and the other particular. Man may, however, be out of harmony with the Divine scheme and then the soul may plunge head downwards in the opaque, or in some other way alter the true positions of the states and regions. In the symbolic books are many drawings of such souls; some fall headlong, others lie upon their sides or float obliquely on the air, and all express divers conditions of the life of man. The soul whose head is plunged in the opaque and his loins in the luminous world, is in that state symbolized by the inverted pentagram of the occultists; and, if we follow the interpretation of certain mystics, the inverted crucifixion of St. Peter. Blake's interpretation only differs from that of other mystics in its greater detail and in its finding the cause of evil not in the ascension of the merely instinctive loins but in the fall of the active and reasoning head. Imagination, in the Blakean symbol, having been deserted by its Angel of the Presence, Reason, works alone through the still vital instincts, and Reason having rejected spiritual life drags the man further and further into the barren world of external sensation. Meanwhile the emotional nature that was once united to the great emotions of the universe is narrowed down to the mere

instincts of the Al-ulro, or to charge the symbol, the heart is full of water, the head is in the earth, and the loins are in the air and light. When the Reason has rejected all but the external world it begins to war on the emotions and instincts, to give them dead laws like those it has found in the opaque—to hide “wisdom in a silver rod and love in a golden bowl”—it makes dogmas to confine religion, and marriage to confine love, and from these dogmas and laws we have to seek freedom by rising into pure imagination and standing erect once more. When the human form is described or drawn as lying upon its side it is then in one region only, generally that immediately above the earth, the region of instinctive or vegetative feeling. When it falls or lies obliquely it is half falling, half resting. As soon as the fall of Los in the second chapter of the book of Los becomes oblique contemplative life begins. A being on the other hand may have head and heart both above Alla, while his loins create merely in the world of emotion, leaving to the feet alone—to mere physical movement from place to place—the whole instinctive region, Or-ulro being entirely out of the range of the personality. Such a being may be said to be in the four states of Humanity in action, for the term seems needed to balance “the four states of Humanity in Repose,” described in Milton. It must be remembered that there is both fire and light—God and His Angel of the Presence—and the light is in the zenith and fire beyond it. A being, such as we are describing, therefore, would have this head in the Divine ecstasy and seek by his emotions—his heart—the bodying forth of ecstasy, and by the loins or creative faculty its expression in objective shapes of art or speech. There is a symbolic figure of this nature described in “America,” page 8, lines 16 and 17, the four regions being expressed by gold, silver, brass, and iron, a method of symbolism taken with its correspondence from the image in Daniel or from that occult tradition, from which the biblical writers in all probability drew the image itself.

When a man has completed his headlong plunge into the

opaque—the hell of dark fire—he falls under the periodicity of external nature and its iron law and sees “The heavens a mighty circle turning; God a tyrant crowned.” This revolution of the symbolic heavens is the next part of the system needing exposition.

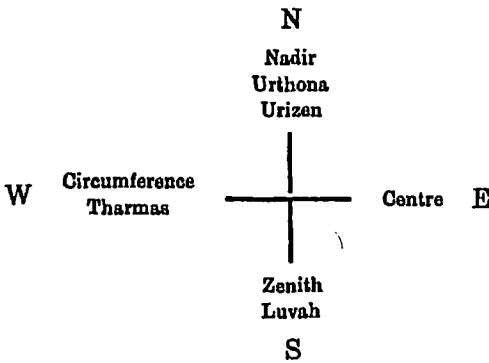
VI.—THE ROTATION OF LUVAH AND URIZEN.

THE rotation of the Four Regents in medieval occultism has perfect regularity. They move round the heavens as on a pivot, following the apparent motion of the Zodiac, or, to pass from the symbol to the symbolized, the four forms of life as existing within the four regions are awakened into successive activity. The matter is much less simple in Blake. Tharmas, as is also the case with the water-god in a certain Hindu system of occult mythology, never travels from the West. The reason is that the force driving all towards the Circumference goes "outward every way," and so acts equally in North, South, East and West, when once the mind has passed within its influence, though with exclusive power only in the symbolic West. The reason given for the immovability of the Hindu water-god is that the water principle is in all things. The mirror is necessary to every manifestation whatsoever. Nor is there any evidence that Urthona changes his point of the compass. Tharmas drives all things towards the encompassing impersonality of the opaque, whether it be the blue of heaven or the clay under our feet, and the opaque is upon all sides of us, though ruling with exclusive dominion in the nadir. It is a kind of covering or garment created by the shrinking of the personal desires from the impersonal wrath, so destructive to their limited being. They covered themselves with the veil of nature and the "wing-like tent of the universe" to hide them from Infinity. (Compare Urizen covering himself with the globe of the earth in "the Book of Urizen," chapter 2.)

general current of life and illumination for Europe was thought to go from East to West, as from centre to circumference. There is an old Rosicrucian aphorism that says, "Intelligence comes from the South, Force from the North, but Initiation goes from the East to the West."

When the Zoas are in their first position all is well. Urizen is mingled with imagination, and is still the Angel of the Divine Presence, still light mingled with heat, and Luvah is confined to the centre, where he concentrates upon human life, like a burning glass, the combined influences of Urizen and Spirit, turning thought and inspiration into deeds by emotional activity. Nor do the Zoas war upon each other as later on. Luvah and Tharmas, "The Prince of Love" and "Vegetative" Desire, are but those contraries that give life. They mingle as water with air. Urthona, and Urizen, too, as long as Urizen is in the zenith, are but opposing forms of inspiration, the impersonal and personal, the dark and the shining. Urizen, however, grows proud like his Biblical equivalent Lucifer, or to put it in a more Blake-like form enters the state pride or Satan, and rejects imagination, and resolves to govern his own life and be no more merely Angel of the Presence. He will have naught but pure reason. He becomes "unprolific, self-enclosed, all repelling," and falls into the North or nadir. He enters the impersonal, outside man, under his feet as it were, and grows into the comparing, generalizing power. He becomes light without heat, reason without love. In outer nature, he is the maker of all that is hard, limiting, inexorable, and gives rise to those laws of nature which destroy imaginative freedom, those impersonal necessities which confine and crush the personal impulses, for "the same law for the lion and the ox, is oppression." He becomes, in a word, universal reason plunged into impersonality, and destroys all by generalizing all, life being essentially in "minute particulars." In falling he enters the darkness, as well as the deadness of the opaque, and clothes his workings in secrecy and mystery, creating thereby "the painful riddle of the world." The descent northward, for the States and Powers is always a clothing and

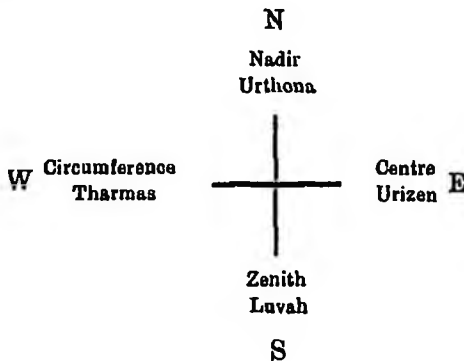
hiding of life and meaning, whereas "True Art," true mysticism that is, for Blake adopted the alchemical use of the word Art, can only be by "naked beauty displayed," by the internal life where meaning and symbol are united, and imaginative significance one with its expression. Inspiration being now left without its "Angel of the Presence," Luvah rises to fill the place of Urizen. Thought having renounced its true functions the merely feminine or emotional side of life gains dominion. Light having fallen from the heavens—diffused light that is, for at this stage of the story the symbolic sun has not yet come to be, but is described as sleeping like the bird within the egg—light having fallen, cloudy darkness rises to take its place. We see this change happening in a religion when the meanings of its symbols are forgotten and the mind of man is devoted, on the one hand, to the making of restrictive laws and moral codes, and, on the other, to worshipping ignorantly and blindly the mere forms and types of what was once a living mysticism. The Zoas are now thus:—



When Luvah usurps the zenith, mere feeling is substituted for inspired intellect. It is always the tendency of love or feeling without thought to take on for a time the semblance, and thereby some shadow of the reality also of inspiration, as it is the nature of thought without feeling, to clothe itself in the impersonal and opaque. We see the same tendencies in light and cloud, light and darkness; the one falls from heaven,

the other rises from earth. When Urizen was in the zenith his power permeated Luvah, who inhabited the next stage below him. but now Luvah, lacking thought, becomes a "disorganized" and all-pervading influence—disorganized or abstract because no longer confined to the energetic and definite purposes of the centre. Life is always losing its lineaments between the abstraction of feeling and the generalizing tendency of reason, between that which rose through pride and that which fell through pride.

As soon as Luvah has risen into the zenith, the centre becomes passive, contemplating him who now appears as a "Watery Vision," the egoistic energies die out through their dissipation into abstract feeling, and Urizen rises into the now empty East. Then the dry bones of reason are moulded into personal shape once more, upon the centre as upon an anvil by Los, whose principal office is to weld together, as a blacksmith welds metal, all in Urizen that was separated by his fall. Memory and individual experience are now possible, and Urizen emerges once more from the impersonal nadir. Los has not only given him personality, but plunged within his breast a portion of the sentient nature of Luvah, whose Eastern place he has taken. This sentient portion is typified as a globe of blood—the heart—and again as the sun, which is especially (see "Book of Los," chapter 4, and elsewhere), the symbol of Los and Urizen. All has "shrunk up from eternity." The Zoas are now placed thus:—



Reason, Pity, Wrath, Desire, are opposed to each other, as in the drawing in "Jerusalem" (page 54), in which Humanity is represented as a rocky fragment falling through space. This labour of Los supplies many of Blake's most impressive passages. The action of the "Eternal mind," as Los is called in one place, in moulding Urizen into personality, is identical with the first day of creation, and with the *esto lux*. Compare the following from "the Book of Los."

" Then light first began . . .
 . . . Los beheld
 Forthwith, writhing upon the dark void,
 The backbone of Urizen appear,
 Hurling upon the wind,
 Like a serpent, like an iron chain,
 Whirling about the deep."

The process is also described in the fourth book of "Vala" and elsewhere. The Zoas, without altering their relative positions, now fall towards the centre, as if drawn there by Urizen. They become warring personalities, for the now personal Reason takes possession of, and fills with its own egoism, both Love and Desire, Luvah and Tharmas, and when the threefold man is thus compacted into self-seeking life, the fourth Zoa, the great Urthona, the impersonal activity of the outer, becomes his enemy, the Wrath striving to destroy his narrow life. The day-time is essentially a period of war, and Urizen rises as the sun into the zenith, personal, thinking, destructive; contending, first, with his opposite vegetative instinct, or Tharmas, and then, at symbolic noon, having driven before him the emotional clouds of Luvah, becoming a power of active, struggling, un-inspired life, Adam, the natural man; receiving the influx of the zenith-fire merely as so much more power wherewith to war with the blind Northern forces of Urthona; and having now grown weary and feeble, through too great success in his contest with those desires and emotions, which are at once his enemies and that upon which he builds all his activity, for without emotion there is no activity, not even the activity of

Reason, he sinks westward down into the half-animal life of old age and of sickness, and as he falls curses his new opposite, always youthful Los, who for ever beats upon his anvil in the East, with his back to the West, forming new suns, new lives. This curse is "the old man's reasons," which are directed against every personal energy. Urizen sinks under the water, the clouds of Luvah rise once more and cover the world, and the day of war is succeeded by the night of religion and of the grave; for when Urizen sinks through the West, Luvah, having passed through the nadir of death and darkness, rises through the East to the vacant zenith once more, and the feminine powers gain dominion over man.

Urizen's ascent into the zenith, a perpetually recurring ascent, might be described, in the words of Boehmen, as a continual struggle to seize the heart of God, for a reference to pages 259-260 will show that, as the East is "the human heart," or the heart of Humanity in repose, so the zenith is the heart of God, or of Divine or inspired man—Humanity in action. The head of the Divine man is ever beyond the four elements and the four points and the four Zoas, in the "quintessence" or "fifth element" of ancient occultists—not in the Light like the head of "Humanity in Repose," but in the Fire of God. When however the time of clouds, "the night of religion" comes, all that Blake sums up in the curious expressive "creeping Jesus"—the Antichrist—grows dominant, and the mind of man does not rise beyond the four elements. The source of inspiration in the zenith is obscured by emotional mythologies and religions. Urizen, to adopt Blake's meteoric symbolism, emerges in the cold light, and therefore purely passive and abstract influence of the stars, gives his laws to men, and leaves all rule and dominion to the feminine and emotional power, "leading his starry hosts through the waste wilderness; he promulgates his ten commands, glancing his beamy eyelids over the deep in dark dismay." He is eternally melancholy, because he surveys all things but acts not, and because mind enclosed in matter must ever fear the future for "accident and

chance" dwell in corporeal life. Hypocrisy is born for the "feminine," religions are essentially external, and demand only the appearance of virtue. Inspiration, because it is essentially active and law-breaking, has died out, and "thou shalt not" is said to be written over the chimneys of its house. Rules of life, born of Luvah, Pity, that is pity for the troubles of the mere vegetative body, spread everywhere, and the soul sleeps in a passive materialism. The "Prophecy" of "Europe" describes the night-time with much detail. Urizen now passes through the North, and the process is repeated over and over again; his rise in the East ever scattering the clouds of Luvah. As the body of Christ was put off upon the cross, so the material and dogmatic form of religion, is put off by the Eastern dawn of Urizen. The dawn is ever succeeded by the symbolic garden of Eden—a time when the revolving life or thought may, if it so please, think of its creator in the days of its youth, and return once more into imagination and the abnegation of the self. It then ascends into the zenith, but not as a warring selfhood, and is absorbed in deity. When this has happened to all the thoughts, lives and desires, the world of manifestation is over.

This continual journey is a hieroglyphic for human life, as much as for the life of creeds and societies. We die into the grave—in the West, or at evening, and passing through the womb of the North are born once more at dawn in the East. In the case of the individual mind, the reason of Urizen's Westward descent takes the form of a favourite Blakean doctrine. The Reason, "the labourer of ages," as it thinks and perceives, clothes itself with memory and experience, and so more and more loses spontaneity and inspiration; the "chaos" of memory being always the contrary of imagination. Hence Blake's wrath against the Greek Myth for saying that the Muses were the daughters of Memory. The Reason as it materializes and sinks into the old age of West and evening, is described as clothing itself with a long white mantle. "We clothe ourselves to descend, and uncliothe ourselves to ascend,"

says the occult aphorism. Day by day the merely substantial and feminine power of Tharmas, the great matrix, dissolves away the personal life, and the man descends into the grave feeble and tottering, as in the drawing of the old man entering the door of death and being born again above the door with radiance of dawning sunlight about him.

In the case of particular feelings, desires and thoughts, the dawn is their first coming to be, noon their time of greatest strength, and evening their death into mere bodily activity; a death that is followed by their birth as an accomplished result. Thus, for instance, the red dawn is the first flutter of sexual desire, the red sunset conception, and night the darkness of the womb from which the child comes forth at morning. All things before they can create are compelled to die in Western twilight, for life exists merely through the willing and joyous or unwilling and mournful sacrifice of life. The "Book of Thel" deals with the lamentation of a feeling that mourns its own inevitable death into fulfillment; as romance into family life. All nature tries to comfort it by telling of the universal sacrifice of individual life that goes on perpetually. The sadness of all love and romance full with foreknowledge of doom seems to be sung in the little poem. It is only when man accepts imagination that he ceases to circle about the wheel of birth. Imagination is eternal—it knows not of death—it has no Western twilight and Northern darkness. We must cast our life, thought after thought, desire after desire, into its world of freedom, and so escape from the warring egotisms of elements and years. We must receive the unity and cast off the multiplicity. This final absorption into absolute imagination is not, however, a sudden process. The soul, world, mental state, or thought in its innumerable incarnations, preserves its continuity. It is but slowly that "the souls are threshed and the stars threshed from their husks." Each new life is conditioned by the preceding one, for Urizen carries with him books of iron, gold, and brass, on which he is

compelled to write continually. They alone survive the grave and may be described as the sub-conscious memory. "Nor can the man who goes the journey, obstinate, refuse to write time after time."

There is a long and extremely magnificent account of Urizen's journey round the heavens in the sixth night of "Vala," and another of Luvah's descent into the West and North in the ninth and last night. "Jerusalem" is full also of information on the same matter, and there is hardly a poem that does not throw some light, however wavering, upon the revolutions of these Zoas. "America" and "Africa" have to do with "the night of clouds." Blake's doctrine of reincarnation contained in this luminous symbol, divides his teaching from that of Swedenborg and Boehmen, and unites it with that of the Eastern mystics and the medieval kabalists.

VII.—SPECTRES AND EMANATIONS.—STATES AND SPACES.

THE Reader may have been puzzled by the way in which the zenith, centre, circumference and nadir possess certain of the characteristics of the Zoas without being identified with them. The difference is that between a state and a space, or between a masculine or feminine influence; the cardinal points, regions, &c., are spaces and the Zoas are states. The two types of being are divided from each other as active from passive, spirit from substance, and God from his mirror. At first the space is a radiation or garment of the state, surrounding and flowing from it and containing it as the emotional nature contains the soul. The separation of one from the other and their final reunion is an aspect of the history of the fall and restoration of man. A state separate from its space becomes a devouring hunger, an insatiate desire. It is then named a spectre. This separated space in its turn becomes "a melancholy shadow." A name often applied to the space is "emanation," it having emanated from the state as the light from the flame, to use a simile of Blake's. The spectre either accompanies it as a guard, or as a pursuer seeking to destroy its emanation, now become by separation its opposite, as thought separated from feeling wars upon feeling, the one depending for its life upon contraction the other upon diffusion. The states and spaces are not inexorably fixed as such—they may change function and nature according to the standpoint from which they are considered, as is the case with the Sepheroth of the Kabala, which appear as masculine when spoken of in reference to those below them, but as feminine when those that are above and full of a higher activity are compared with them. Thus Beulah and Rahab, for instance, are now states and now spaces throughout the poems.

If one analyzes the four Zoas themselves, one finds that they

fall into a couple of duads or pairs, consisting each of a state and a space. Reason should be united with Desire according to Blakean doctrine; for Desire gives it "ideas to build on" ("Marriage of Heaven and Hell," page 6) and Wrath should be one with Pity and so end the limitations of both. Of the Duads themselves, the first is essentially "natural" and the second essentially divine. The first, therefore, emanated from the second and was to it originally as space to state. The primal union of all things is declared in the universal doctrine of the mystics and occultists. The tendency of "the delusive Goddess Nature" is to perpetually divide and divide, setting spectres to pursue emanations all the world over, and so keeping alive, alike in beast and bird and flower no less than in the mind of man, the insatiable hunger of created things, the uncreated imagination being alone free. By the imagination Blake means, among other things, the sympathetic will or love that makes us travel from mental state to mental state and surround ourselves with their personified images, for all imaginative perceptions are personifications of the impalpable expressed in terms of previous, no less personified feelings. We perceive the world through countless little reflections of our own image.

Everything has alike spectre and emanation, but that previous state or space which gave rise to them does not pass away. We will apply to it a name used by the Gnostics constantly, and by Blake once or twice, and call it an *Æon* or *Eon*. This *Æon* is always itself an emanation of some higher state, and so the endless chain of life goes on, linking highest imagination with lowest matter; each state emitting from itself an emanating space, in its turn to become a state bringing forth another space, until a cause of discord arise. The states and spaces of this chain, though having separate individuality, are yet united as the various degrees of light are, to one another and to the flame that produced them. When, however, Urizen, having fallen as far as the limit of the opaque will permits him, is rescued from its abstraction by the

labour of Los, and formed into a compact personality on the centre as on an anvil, he wars upon and rejects his own emanation, refusing in his new-born self-esteem to give it any of his life. It is now the more material power that is the most active. Accordingly the relation of state to space is changed, and we hear of his emanation as his "parted soul," for now the higher is the feminine and the lower the masculine, as in the drawing of the union of body and soul and the drawing of the soul hovering over the body in the designs to Blair. The spectre having parted from its emanation is said to have none, but it may steal and clothe itself with the emanation of another, for such an emanation cannot dissolve its all-repelling selfhood, not being of its nature. It is sometimes drawn as a child in serpent form, seeking to violate its own mother.

Sometimes the term "vortex" is applied to the emanation separate from its spectre, because in its turn it seeks to overcome him. This it does by meeting his repulsive power with its attractive and absorptive power. Thus Urizen when he sinks Westward is conquered by the Zoa that originally must have emanated from himself, as the sun in sinking into the sea is conquered. As the spectres seek the emanations of others, so the separated emanations or "shadows" seek to be united to states other than those from which they were radiated. Hence Blake applies to them the term harlots, and even snatches of verse like—

" The harlot's cry from street to street
Shall weave old England's winding sheet "

—refer far more to them than to their embodied types. The children they bring forth are spectral desires to desolate the world. The union of the reason with opaque nature to produce philosophic and moral materialism is of such a kind. The true emanation of the reason is desire, or the energy which draws it on towards joyous action and expression.

The states are sometimes called "times" (the name *Æon* is used by the gnostics in this sense also), because one mental state is divided from and united to another and measured in

its duration by days and moments. Time only exists for us as a chain of states passing from cradle to grave. The longer a state lasts in physical life the further is it removed by incarnation from the imaginative source of all. The states of inspiration are but flying seconds.

"Every time less than a pulsation of the artery
Is equal in its period and value to six thousand years,
For in this period the poet's work is done, and all the great
Events of time start forth and are conceived in such a period
Within a moment, a pulsation of the artery."

The six thousand years referred to are those of the Mosaic Creation, a thousand years being with God as one day.

The same rule applies to the spaces. The more widely they extend in a physical sense the more completely are they cut off from imagination and life and the more perfectly are they disguised from each other. The rivers, stones, herbs and trees and all else are but "men seen afar," or in other words mental states and spaces hidden from each other by extended space. The vast expanses of interplanetary ether so impressive to most minds had no attraction for Blake. He declared paradoxically to one man who had grown eloquent on the subject, that he himself at the end of a dark lane had touched the heavens with his stick. The natural limits of the imagination were the true world for him; beyond that you but peered further and further into the abstract and impersonal Ulro. What a man can see from his garden that is his universe he declares in Milton, the rest is an illusion of reason. Within these narrow limits even there is a graduated imaginativeness.

"For every space larger than a red globule of man's blood
Is visionary and is created by the Hammer of Los,
And every space smaller than a red globule of man's blood opens
Into Eternity, of which this vegetable Earth is but a shadow."

Los is the formative Deity who moulds Urizen in personality, and he is the state less in duration than a pulse-beat; the space smaller than a blood-drop is his feminine side or matrix, Enitharmon.

VIII.—CLASSIFICATION OF THE SYMBOLIC BEINGS.

OVERLEAF there is a chart explaining, as far as possible, the relation to each other of Blake's personages. It has no claim to be considered complete. Blake had dealings, he tells us, with thousands of symbolic beings, while we have full record of only a few of the more important, with stray mention of others. A complete chart would probably take the form of an unbroken web of states and spaces extending from God to man. Nor can the arrangement and classification adopted be described as certainly that which was present in the mind of Blake. It is part of the true classification, but the true classification, if we could but find it, is probably much more complex, resembling, perhaps, the enormously intricate cosmogeny of the Kabala, with its numberless spirits and worlds—its "true" and "false seas," its "earths" and "palaces," and the countless abodes of the Kippoth. In some such labyrinth the Zoas and their sons and daughters may well have wandered and laboured before the spiritual eyes of Blake, for the cosmogenies of vision are not less mighty than the system of the world itself.

The chart is divided into five sections, corresponding to the five planes or atmospheres. In the first are the four rays, as it were, which emerge from the Divine Unity and interact upon each other, as we have described in Chapter II. The Zoas succeed to them in Beulah and life is divided into sexes, each Zoa having his emanation or wife. Every state and space that follows is under the influence of one or other Zoa according to the function it fulfils. The Zoas are the fathers

of all, and are described under pastoral symbols when their first unfallen condition is treated of, as befits the first dwellers in the first golden age of the world. Urthona is a blacksmith, like Los, and is compelled to labour at the furnace and the anvil. Tharmas is a shepherd, who, before the fall, minds the flocks of innocence, from which Luvah, the weaver, makes "peace, the human dress," to hide us from the too constant fires of the sun of inspiration and from the too biting cold of the reason. He is sung of in the lines beginning, "How happy the shepherd's sweet lot." Urizen, when all goes well, is a ploughman, who furrows the earth with the plough made upon the anvil of Urthona, and a sower, who scatters in the furrow human souls and human moods—the true office of reason being to prepare the way for life and feeling.

" Howling and wailing fly the souls from Urizen's strong hands ;
For, from the hand of Urizen the myriads fall, like stars,
Into their appointed places."

The plough he drives through the opaque is, among other things, "a scheme of conduct," or an individualized rule of life, made from the "indefinite law," which is the same "for the lion and the ox." Two of the Zoas, it will be seen, have other forms and other names under altered conditions. Thus, Urthona has a "vehicular form," Los. This will be best understood by remembering that Los is time or motion, and that Urthona is external matter, which can only act through the vehicle of motion. Luvah, "the prince of love," becomes Orc, or passion, when "generate," that is, when fallen into the corporeal. The Zoas have each a wife or emanation. Their names, and the names of the other emanations, are printed in italics on the chart for the sake of clearness. Ahania is the emanation and mirror and matrix of reason, that power without which it is wholly barren. She has been taken from Urizen by his fall, and now seeks him in vain. Vala is the emotional radiation of Luvah. She is the sexual and material fascination in relation to the heart, and is, after the fall, perpetually seeking dominion by her attractive

power, and striving to draw souls into her "vortex." Her nature in particular, and that of the emanations in general, may be summed up in a phrase of Coleridge's—"The desire of the man is for the woman, but the desire of the woman is for the desire of the man." The universal feminine influence being in *Ahania*, a mere intellectual and incipient fervour, becomes a dominant passion in *Vala*, and ebbs out and is diffused in the mere maternal passivity of *Enion*. It is taken up into the soul and made spiritual once more in *Enitharmon*, the bride of *Los*. *Enion* is the emanation or "hope" of *Tharmas*, or vegetative desire. He, since the fall, is perpetually seeking her through the world, where she is wandering "blind and age-bent" for lack of his directing power—dying away for lack of that masculine energy which is "eternal delight." *Enitharmon* is, in one of her aspects, abstract space, and in another, the blood globule; she is described as a red globe forming under the breast of *Los*. She is Divine maternity, the feminine side of consciousness struggling in the net of the body; and it is her office to give "solid"—namely, mental or organized—form to what would otherwise be no more than formless desires—portions of the "indefinite lust." *Los* and *Enitharmon* are the moulders of the personality—he of the active and reasoning, she of the passive or feeling portions of its nature. Their relation to *Urthona*, the regent of matter, will be seen when we remember that when a tendency is materialized it is made definite and concrete, though in a different way from the definiteness of mental life. When this definiteness and concreteness is carried so far that it interferes with imaginative freedom by setting up barriers to its action; when, in fact, it ceases to be the servant of imagination and is changed into an active potency, it grows spectral. Hence the phrase in "A Vision of the Last Judgment"—"Space is a woman, and her masculine portion is death." Her mission must not be confused with that of the great mirror itself. The mission of *Los* and *Enitharmon* is to give an outline and form to everything

reflected in the mirror of the all-containing waters. She is the intellectual mirror, the mirror of Los; but Tharmas rules over the mirror of universal nature.

These various personages are not to be considered as individuals in any sense. They can unite into one or divide into many. They may be taken as names for classes of human souls. The world, as we know it, began when these souls asserted their separate life in an antagonism to the life of the class or imaginative tendency they belonged to. Thus Blake says of the Pagan deities in the notes on Chaucer in the "Descriptive Catalogue": "These gods are visions of the eternal attributes or divine names, which, when erected into gods, become destructive to humanity. They ought to be the servants and not the masters of man or of society. They ought to be made to sacrifice to man and not man compelled to sacrifice to them; for when separated from man or humanity—who is Jesus the Saviour, the vine of eternity—they are thieves and rebels, they are destroyers." We shall see the different parts and attributes of the Zoas first attain definiteness of form and clearness of identity under the influence of Los and Enitharmon, and then passing on to spectrous self-assertion and egotistic self-aggrandisement under the influence of Satan until they are identified with "the gods of the heathen." The first beginning of definiteness and individual life came when Har and Heva, Kabalistic names for Adam and Eve, were born of Mnetha, the world of the Zoas in its aspect of mother of all individuals. The state Alla then begins. Its inhabitants are the sixteen sons of the Zoas, their sixteen emanations and their countless children. They are sometimes called children of Los, because from Los and Enitharmon comes their definiteness of outline, and at other times named from the Zoa to which they especially belong. Thus Tiriël, the second of the four personages who repeat the nature of the four Zoas within the Zoa Urizen, is spoken of as a son of Urizen in the book of "Urizen," and as a son of Los in "Vala."

The close relation between the labours of Los and Enitharmon and the mirror in which all forms are reflected, is shown by the fact that Rintrah, Palamabron, Theotormon and Bromion—the four personages who are seldom spoken of in any other way than as sons of Los—are associated so constantly with the West that we have felt justified in charting them under Tharmas. They are not sons of Tharmas, only Theotormon even partaking of his nature to any great extent, but they have taken possession of his kingdom as by usurpation. They stand round Los and assist him in his labours at the anvil, and Los stands towards the West and “bends his fury” against the East. The world of Tharmas is outward every way, and it is without that we see the beautiful forms that make up the world of art, although those forms are reflected from within where Enitharmon has her dwelling. The forms of art and poetry surround us on every side that we may not fall into *nonentity*. The very natural forms themselves are perversions of mental forms. They are made by the sons of Los and by Los himself upon the anvil where all his labour is done. The world of Tharmas taken by itself is barren and childless. These four sons and their emanations, as also the four sons of Urizen, can be placed in consecutive order without difficulty, for Blake has again and again enumerated them. Their position in the world of Tharmas is, however, a matter of inference to some extent. The other personages, Ozooth, Antamon, Ariston, Ohana, Thullah and Sotha and their emanations, can only be arranged in order, and placed under this or that Zoa with the greatest uncertainty. The difficulty is increased by the fact that their common descent from Mnetha makes each one of them be descended from all the Zoas. Sometimes almost the entire number will be claimed by one or other of the Zoas; thus Blake speaks of Urizen’s sons as four in the book of “Urizen,” and then for a special purpose, a special act of creation in which Urizen rules over all, attributes twelve to him in the second book of “Vala.” In mystical systems, like this of

Blake's, numbers are always of the greatest significance. In the case of the personages ranged under Luvah and Urthona, there is little to go upon except an enumeration of some of them in a significant order in the eighth night of "Vala," and their often very slightly described characteristics. The discovery of one of the lost books might modify their position in the chart at any time. There are always several stations requiring states and spaces closely alike. It is difficult to know whether we are to class a person who partakes both of the nature of (say) Luvah and Urthona as the fourth or most Urthona-like of the four sons of Luvah, or as the second, or most Luvah-like, of the four sons of Urthona. Both lines of myth could be followed as good allegory and true vision. There is room in Blake for alternate views about most of his personages. according to whether one or other of the almost equally balanced attributes is considered to be more important. In a chart one line of connection has to be selected as a guide. Besides the tabulated names, others are mentioned only once, and without any sufficient clue as to their descent from this or that Zoa. They are Mydon, Ellayol, Natha, Gon, Hurlath, Ochim. There are also the brothers of Tiriel, Heuxos, Zazel, Ijim, and Huva, and his many daughters. These are probably all subdivisions and derivations from more important states. As already stated, the true number of the personages was infinite. When we remember that every state and space is itself divided into four divisions, there is no difficulty in realizing where Blake got the countless spirits that visited him. Even if he could have exhausted the subdivisions or children of the states and spaces, he had still the combination of these states and spaces to fall back upon. Thus all the emanations arranged under Urizen, Luvah and Tharmas combine together in the three great daughters of Urizen—Ona, Eleth, and Uvith.

It was not until Ulro began, that the restrictions of law, and the violences of personal egotism, became all-powerful, yet there is in Alla both law and the contest of spectres. We

read of the laws of Har and Heva, and the mystical writings are full of the contests of the various personages. This law and this contest is, however, different from the laws and the contests of Ulro, for the mind still passes on from natural to supernatural things, from corporeal to imaginative. The merely natural world has not yet come to exist separate from mind. This, when it takes place, is called the closing of the western gates, and will be better understood by the reader when he has read the chapters on the Covering Cherub. It is at present only necessary to touch lightly upon it. Blake says in "Jerusalem," page 72, "Albion, in Eternity, has sixteen gates among his pillars, but the four towards the West were walled up, and the twelve that front the four other points were turned four square by Los for Jerusalem's sake, because twelve sons of Jerusalem fled successive through the gates; but the four sons of Jerusalem that fled not, but remained, are Rintrah and Palamabron and Theotormon and Bromion; the four that remain with Los to guard the western wall, and these four remain to guard the four walls of Jerusalem." Here the sons of the Zoas are considered in their highest aspect as purely imaginative powers, and spoken of accordingly as children of Jerusalem, the Divine mirror. The universe is symbolized as a temple with four gates opening to each of the four points; and humanity is called Albion, that being its name throughout the works. The sixteen gates correspond to the sixteen sons, and, when the Western gate is closed, twelve of these sixteen materialize or fly from mental life into corporeal. The four sons of Los remain, however, within the creative mind to build mental forms. The four sons of each of the other Zoas then became the representatives of the fourfold life, and are ranged under the four points by Los, the maker of form and system. Three fours became four threes. The powers of reason, emotion, and material force are uncreative, and so can be created or made corporeal. The historical equivalent for this was the making of the Jewish religion, a religion of types, symbols, laws, and cere-

monies, which were blindly obeyed. Material things were made to take the image of mental while remaining still material. A fourfold material world, a fourfold material man, a fourfold material religion is thus made. It does not contain the mirror in its purity, though it is contained by it, for if it contained the fruitful mirror it could multiply its opacity. It contains instead the most mirror-like portions of the beings and powers classed under Urizen, Luvah and Urthona, and these mirror-like portions are so organized by Los, the supreme artist, that they become a substitute for it, and control the opaque world without the fallen man, and substitute for Tharmas, the gentle shepherd of the flocks of innocence, Tharmas, the "false tongue." Yet even these mirror-like portions are alive after a fashion. They seek to reduce the warring spectral life into mere vital perceptions. The mirror is always living, the spectres are always dead.

Below the Ulro of the twelve tribes there is a deeper Ulro—the Ulro of the Pagan gods; the attributes of man which are in entire revolt and no longer serve even as types of the universal existence. They are the divinities of the nations with whom the Jews contended and of the influences within our own minds which draw us away from imagination. Blake being more concerned with this latter aspect calls them usually Sons of Albion. We see how their nature differs from that of the tribes by comparing Rheuben, who does ill by weakness, with Hand, who does it by conviction. These twelve emanations combine into Rahab, Milchah, and Tirzah, but by a process too complicated to tabulate on the chart.

The ultimate evil is death and nonentity, and this finds its complete expression in absolute obedience to those laws which Blake has declared no man can obey and live. Life depends upon individualized energy, and law exists by making all manifestations generalize into uniformity. At one end of the scale of being is God, absolute freedom, and at the other Satan, absolute law. We enter God by passing into our own minds "where every man is king or priest in his own house,"

and we enter Satan by passing into the outer world where the "same law 'exists' for the lion and the ox." Evil, it cannot too often be repeated, is the acceptance of this outer law, and good is its rejection. All that leads us into the power of law is evil. Egotism is a most potent element to lead us thither, for when men have thoughts and desires which tend to destroy other egos, or thoughts and desires which tend to destroy each other, law has to be created, and the one enslaved by the many. Reason leads us thither, for it leads us away from the only thing which is free—imagination. All the passions lead us thither, for their satisfaction comes from things which are themselves under the dominion of law, but the passions are neither as dangerous as egotism or reason, for they awaken imagination in many over whom art and poetry have no control.

It must always be remembered that when Blake speaks of any of these personages he does not mean merely this or that particular attribute, but all the attributes in various degrees according to the point of view from which we choose to take the story. A perfect mystical symbol or fable can be read in any region of nature and thought—mineral, meteoric, religious, philosophical—it is all one. Things we have to give in *succession* in our explanatory prose are set forth *simultaneously* in Blake's verse. From this arises the greater part of the obscurity of the symbolic books. The surface is perpetually, as it were, giving way before one, and revealing another surface below it, and that again dissolves when we try to study it. The making of religions melts into the making of the earth, and that fades away into some allegory of the rising and the setting of the sun. It is all like a great cloud full of stars and shapes through which the eye seeks a boundary in vain. When we seemed to have explored the remotest division some new spirit floats by muttering wisdom.

IX.—THE COVERING CHERUB.

THE writers of this book may say with the famous Eliphas Levi Zahed: "I have evoked and I have seen," and in the visions produced by the evocations of symbolic magic they have learnt, what Blake knew so well, that the phantoms often appear in forms not inherent to themselves, but borrowed from the personality of the seer as a clothing for their impalpable essence. These palpable forms would have been classed by Blake as a portion of the "Covering Cherub" or mask of created form in which the uncreated spirit makes itself visible. The term is taken from Ezekiel xxviii. 14, and is used by Blake in a perfectly correct sense, cherubs being always powers of bodily creation. He praises or denounces this Covering Cherub according to whether he considers it as a means whereby things, too far above us to be seen as they are, can be made visible in symbol and representative form, or as a satanic hindrance keeping our eager wills away from the freedom and truth of the Divine world. It has both aspects for every man. Thus the subdivisions of the Cherub are said in "Jerusalem," page 75, lines 5 and 6, to be created by Los. They "now hid and now revealed appear in strong delusive light of time and space drawn out in shadowy pomp by the eternal prophet ever more;" while at page 89, line 10, they are said to be "the Antichrist accurst," and in Milton in the supplementary page 17, line 4, they are described as the creation of the void, the shadowy (corporeal) female. In "Jerusalem" the cherub is said to be the body of Christ which He puts off upon the Cross, and again to be the serpent

which devours the body—see page 89, lines 10, and 13, and compare “The Everlasting Gospel,” lines 225 and 230. It is in fact the self-devouring serpent, Nature—at once the garment of God and his negation. It is that which Christ “put on in the virgin’s womb” and which man receives upon entering the world. It is the whole bulk of outer things when taken in its widest significance, and upon it Blake pours out his most vehement hatred and his most tender love. “God is in the lowest effects as well as in the highest causes,” he writes in the notes to Lavater. “He is become a worm that He may nourish the weak. For let it be remembered that creation is God descending according to the weakness of man: our Lord is the Word of God, and everything on earth is the Word of God, and in its essence is God;” while in Milton he sees it from its other aspect of a hindrance and obscurity between man and God, will and freedom, and makes the void its mother, and on the before-quoted page 17 makes her sing over it, and mourn over it—her child and her garment—in words of gloomy magnificence:—

“ My garment shall be woven of sighs and heartbroken lamentations,
The misery of unhappy families shall be drawn out to its border,
Wrought with the needle with dire sufferings, poverty, pain and woe.”

It is in the Everlasting Gospel identified with the Virgin herself, whom Blake has described in an MS. note as Nature, and also said, by one of those bringings-together of apparently different things, which makes so much of his obscurity, to have been put off upon the Cross “to be worshipped by the Church of Rome.” The Cherub is in all created things in some form or other. In love, for instance, it is the lower part, the mask and cloak of the higher. It is called a “heaven,” because with Nature and bodily things generally Blake associates passivity, and heaven is the passive, surrounding and restricting “Evil” and “Hell,” which in his system are commonly made one with the fiery personal energies. The cloudy heavens hiding away the heat and

light are a constant symbol of the Covering Cherub, while the dark subterranean fires—the fires of generation—are the Hells. The clouds rise into the zenith, the fires burn in the nadir. Hence we read of “Heaven above Hell.”

The story of the Bible is, according to the Mystics, not merely a history of historic men and women, but of states of human life and stages of man’s pilgrimage. Therefore the Bible and the history of religion are themselves types of nature, and of its relation to man upon the one hand and to God upon the other. The Cherub is divided into twenty-seven heavens or churches, that is to say, into twenty-seven passive states through which man travels, and these heavens or churches are typified by twenty-seven great personages from Adam to Luther; by the initiation, progress, and close of a religious era; and after Luther, who preached “private judgment,” Adam, its symbol, is said to begin again “in endless circle,” one era closes, another commences. In these twenty-seven great personages, and in their lives as set forth in sacred and profane history, Blake found, wrapped up in obscure symbolism, the whole story of man’s life, and of the life of moods, religions, ideas, and nations.

“The sexual,” or natural, “is said to be threefold,” hence the significance of the number twenty-seven, which consists of three nines, or of three sets of Head, Heart, and Loins. The heavens may be arranged thus:—

Hemaphrodite	Adam	Head
	Seth	
	Enos	
	Cainan	
	Mahalaleel	
	Jared	
	Enoch	
	Methuseleph	
	Lamech	

Male within a female	Noah	Heart
	Shem	
	Arphaxad	
	Cainan the 2nd	
	Salah	
	Heber	
	Peleg	
	Reu	
	Serug	
Female within a male	Nahor	Loins
	Terah	
	Abraham	
	Moses	
	Solomon	
	Paul	
Constantine		
Charlemagne		
	Luther	

They are the key to Blake's interpretation of the biblical symbolism. It will be seen that there is another numerical division beside the ninefold. The brackets to the left hand side divide them into three divisions of nine, eleven, and seven Churches each. The reason of this will be made clearer by an explanation of the relation of the three divisions to the three Churches of Swedenborg. In the first Church, called by Swedenborg "the most Ancient Church," symbol, or as he preferred to say correspondence, meaning body or letter, and spirit, were one and the same. When a man beheld a natural object the spiritual thing it expressed came at once into his mind. In the second, called by Swedenborg "the Ancient Church," the man saw the object and remembered but did not see the spiritual meaning—symbol and meaning, body and spirit had begun to separate. In the third Church, which both Swedenborg and Blake describe as beginning with Abraham, the man saw and knew the symbol only. The spirit had gone and left the body to itself. This last Church was wholly given over to blind dogma and dead-letter interpretation. A Church not of the law and the prophets but of

the law only, it possessed and possesses nothing but ritual and legalities. It is, according to Blake, the state not only of the man of orthodox belief but of the soul which cannot see beyond external nature, for a symbol is to be read in all the worlds and planes of life.

The first Church was destroyed by "the flood of the five senses," after which man forgot "that all gods reside in the human breast," and made by the mouth of Noah a covenant between himself and an external god, and thereby began "the second Church," in which the internal spiritual meaning was divided from the outer natural symbol. The third Church, which began with Abraham and was carried on by the twelve tribes, did not take its final form until the law—more external necessity no longer united to any inner meaning—was given to Moses on Sinai or, in the symbolism of "Ahanias," until the slaying of Fuzon with the rock hurled by Urizon. It is the feminine or material Church, and is more than once identified with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from which Adam is for ever eating the apple and on which Christ is for ever being crucified, identified with, in fact, the most "delusive" or least imaginative and spiritual portion of "the delusive goddess nature." The body that is put off upon the Cross had once a passionate human vitality, but the cross lived alone with the dim life of vegetative instinct. Being feminine, the third Church contains but seven of the last nine subdivisions, for the first two are mainly masculine and imaginative, the wholly feminine and instinctive powers beginning only when head and heart are succeeded by loins.

It is said in "Jerusalem" and "Milton" that the first Church is hermaphroditic, the second a male hid within a female, and the third a female hid within a male. The hermaphrodite is either of good or evil significance, according to whether it be a post-creative or pre-creative symbol. If it be pre-creative, its significance is good, for it refers to the days before the division of the sexes, when intellect and emotion, action and receptivity, had not yet been divided in

“the flood of time and space,” but dwelt within the same soul as symbol with meaning, meaning with symbol. But when hermaphrodite is used to describe a condition of corporeal or merely natural understanding it is called the “dark hermaphrodite,” and is described as “doubt which is self-contradiction.” Mind and matter, meaning and symbol, significance and system, have to be separated, that man may know the difference between them and choose the highest. The difference between the good and evil hermaphroditic symbol is precisely the same as that between the two aspects of the Covering Cherub itself. The second Church is said to be a male hid within a female because in it a mental thing is surrounded by a material correspondence and partly obscured by it. The third is a female within a male because, when man believes only in mere matter or mere dogma, he makes his mind encircle it about, as it were, and, as its servant and soldier, war upon inspiration and imagination, this last Church is therefore “a dragon red and hidden harlot”—“religion hid in war.” War and religion—“the power and the glory”—king and priest—being the two most obvious aspects of that male and female which make up the cherub. When at last matter or dogma, according to whether we are dealing with nature or its type, religion, becomes wholly unimaginative it is a tendency fulfilled and is “cut off.” Then “Adam begins again in endless circle,” and the first Church comes once more in some new form. This is purely Blakean. With the finality of the sectary and reformer Swedenborg believed that his new revelation was to last for ever and not to be merely a new turn of the old wheel. Blake’s mind was infinitely more subtle. Not only did it widen the whole doctrine of the three Churches by tracing its relation to nature and all bodily and mental growth, but it deepened it by making it part of the inevitable rotation of all things. Blake dared to see that the serpent must always keep its tail in its mouth, and creed follow creed, no matter how bitter be our longing for finality. Into this ever-

revolving circle Christ only can descend and draw man upward out of nature into supernature, out of "the wheel of birth" into the eternity of the uncreated.

This resurrection of humanity is typified by the raising of Lazarus ("Milton," page 23), and after it is once accomplished in any individual man or race, the Covering Cherub persists only as something recognized as wholly apart from life and imagination, awaiting the day when it can be cast out as no longer needed for a resting-place for the soul. It is then divided into four Churches or Heavens, corresponding to the four Zoas, and named Paul, Constantine, Charlemagne and Luther. It is, at once, the body of Christ put off upon the Cross and the tomb where that body rests. Paul, Constantine, Charlemagne—head, heart, loins—correspond to the three days of His repose in the tomb, and Luther to the day of His resurrection from the dead. They are eternal states occurring to individual races and tendencies. The immense range of the whole symbolism of the Cherub will be at once seen when we say its three great divisions or Churches are also the three degrees explained in the chapter called "The necessity of symbolism," the first Church corresponding to what Swedenborg called the celestial degree, Blake "the genius," and so on.

In the Cherub, spectre and emanation are both contained, as we have seen, though not united into one, for when united they make up the Divine humanity. It is the serpent-woman of "Vala," book 1, and the *Virgo scorpio* of ancient occultism. Considered in relation to the mental principle within our minds it is, however, all emanative or feminine, and an emanation divided from its spectre becomes a "shadow." "Shadows" are the bodies of men and women among much else (see "To Mrs. Butts," lines 40 to 45). Hence the Cherub is the body of every man. In this aspect it is divided not only into the twenty-seven Heavens, but into nine symbolic "months of gestation," three Heavens making one month. They may be thus tabulated (see also chart on p. 301):

Adam to Lamech.			Noah to Serug.			Nabor to Luther.		
Head.	Heart.	Loins.	Head.	Heart.	Loins.	Head.	Heart.	Loins.
Lucifer.			Moloch.			Elohim.		
Shadhai.			Pahad.			Jehovah.		
Jesus.								
Seven Eyes of God.								

The first three correspond to the three dark creations of Jacob Boehmen—hence, perhaps, Blake's application of the word dark to one aspect of the Hermaphrodite—and to the time when the world was formless and void. The seven eyes of God corresponding to the seven days of the Mosaic creation, the seven fountain spirits of Boehmen, and the seven Olympian spirits of mediæval magic, then descend to give man "still perceptions of his sleeping body," whereby he may learn it and cast it out. By them, the senses and organs and races of men and beasts are moulded, in order that chaos may become order, and the reign of Christ begin at last. The seventh, Christ, always presiding over the day of manifestation, is the freedom of outer things, or the higher freedom of inner imagination, according to the world into which we carry the symbol. Lucifer is the first of the seven, because the archangel of falling light corresponds naturally to the first day when the spirit of life moves on the face of the deep, and light is born. The next step towards the corporeal is from light to material fire, for fire implies a substance to burn, a division of matter and spirit, fuel and flame. Children are said to have been sent through the fire for Moloch, hence Blake adopted Moloch for the name of the second "eye." In the fifth night of "Vala," Orc is born, and the fifth stage of all things comes under the dominion of the second "eye." After Head and Heart come the creative Loins, and by the third "eye," the Elohim, is Adam created. Blake speaks "of the winds of Elohim," and refers thereby to the breath of

God breathed into Adam, also to his breathing upon the face of the waters. Blake speaks of the triple Elohim, because the Elohim could not have created Adam unless they had within themselves the triune nature they were to endow him with. This triple nature corresponds to the three sinkings of Los into the waters in the third chapter of the book of Los. Shadhai, Pahad, Jehovah are the names of the fourth, fifth, and sixth eyes, because they are said in the Bible to have been the gods of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who brought on the power of the third Church. Blake speaks of Jehovah as "leprous," alluding thus to the white light of external nature, to the colour of the light beam when cold like thought without affection, and to the dead flesh upon a living man, which is leprosy. He speaks also of the clouds of Jehovah, alluding thereby to the obscurity and secrecy of the god of jealousy—the regent of outer nature. The seventh "eye" is Jesus, because by Him we obtain deliverance from the body, and the bodily life, completed with their weight of law and mystery under the proceeding "eye." He presides over the new Adam, and rises from the tomb when the reign of law has been "cast out" by Luther. He alone can the "fallen light renew," and bring back to the right hand of God that Spirit whose descent and sojourn in matter is His own incarnation. We thus see that the labour of the eyes is chronicled twice over, first in the Mosaic history of creation, and then in the story of mankind, from Eden to Blake's own day, and to the imaginative revival he announced. The first three eyes seem to have been named more particularly in relation to the first account, and the three following in relation to the second story. The correspondence of the eyes to the Mosaic creation will be made more plain by the following table:—

Darkness and chaos.	
Creation of light.	Lucifer.
The firmament is created to divide the waters above from the waters below.	Moloch.
The water divided from the dry land and green things created.	Elohim.
Creation of the sun and moon.	Shadhai.
Creation of birds and fish.	Pahad.
Creation of animals and man.	Jehovah.
God rests.	Jesus.

On the first day light or intellect descends, upon the second the outer and inner are divided from each other, upon the third the waters of instinct—the waters below the firmament—are made to give place to fixity so that life may be delivered from chaos, and in this fixed or law-regulated part the first beginning of organized life, Adam—"the natural man"—is vivified by the breath of the Elohim; on the fourth day the male and female principles—the sun and moon—are organized by Shadhai. On the fifth day the vitalizing of chaos is carried further, and individualized feelings or spectres, the "vegetative" vitalities, the fish, and the emotions, the birds, are made by Pahad, whose name is Hebrew for fear. Fear and spectral life are always associated in Blake, the newly born child being continually called "a terror," for the spectre fears everything, for everything is the enemy of the egotistic energy. On the sixth day the animals or the fiercer and more imaginative energies are born, and finally

“man” or the imagination comes to be, and is, placed in the Garden of Eden to ascend with Christ or fall again with Lucifer. This story is to be found in every one of the mystical books and was applied by Blake to all mental growth without exception. The complete exposition must be sought in the books themselves and in the line-to-line comment. It is told over and over again and from numberless points of view.

When man ascends wholly out of “the wheel of birth” into “the imagination that liveth for ever,” a last judgment is said to pass over him. He is done with the opacity of corporeal existence and has attained that state which Blake announced or rather summoned in “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell” with the words “The Cherub with his flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at the tree of life, and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite and corrupt.” The interpretation of the flaming sword in this passage is the same as that in the Jewish Kabala. When the Last Judgment has passed over a man he enters that community of saints who “are no longer talking of what is good and evil, or of what is right and wrong, and puzzling themselves in Satan’s labyrinth; but are conversing with eternal realities, as they exist in the human imagination”; for “men are admitted into heaven not because they have curbed and governed their passions, or have no passions, but because they have cultivated their understandings. The treasures of heaven are not negations of passion, but realities of intellect, from which all passions emanate, uncurbed in their eternal glory. The fool shall not enter into heaven, let him be ever so holy: holiness is not the price of entrance into heaven. Those who are cast out are all those who, having no passions of their own, because no intellect, have spent their lives in curbing and governing other people’s by the various arts of poverty and cruelty of all kinds.” In these passages from the prose essay called “A. Vision of the Last Judgment,” heaven

is used in the Christian sense, and not in the exclusively Blakean sense of a passive and restricting influence. The heaven takes the same relation to the state within it, as the "mirror" does to the forms it reflects. After the fall into reason it is restrictive, before the fall it is an abode of peace. Those described in the passage as curbing and governing other people's passions are the dwellers in the twenty-seven churches of the Cherub, and are cast off with it at the Last Judgment. These twenty-seven Churches are sometimes called "the three Churches of Beulah," and are contrasted with a fourth or Christian Church, sometimes called "the Church," which contains those who have recognized that the "eternal body of man is the imagination, that it is God Himself—the Divine Body—Jesus," and that "we are His members," and that "the unproductive man is not a Christian." These four Churches—the Church before the flood—the Church from Noah to Abraham, the Church from Abraham to Luther, and the Christian Church—correspond to Head, Heart, Loins, and the unembodied inspiration, for man was originally "four-fold" until "he was self-divided, and his real humanity slain on the stems of generation, and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God," that is to say, the four Churches were one, until man fell into the external life, and then three fell with him, and the fourth was persecuted because it would not fall, and its master—Christ—slain upon the Cross.

X.—THE ZODIACAL SYMBOLISM OF THE CHERUB.

NEARLY all the ancient and medieval mystics have made great use of the zodiacal signs in their system of expression. It is not possible to find very numerous traces of their use in the mystical books. Blake, however, found a substitute for them by arranging the twenty-seven heavens upon the sun's path. Luther has his "crystal gate" just midway between the Eastern horizon and the zenith. Adam follows a little nearer the zenith, then Seth, and so on round Westward and down under the earth through the darkness and up into the East, and so again to Luther. The matter will be made clear from the chart on the next page.

In Luther, the new influx of spiritual power completely overcomes the darkness, and his "gate" is midway between zenith and nadir, probably because poetic inspiration has its rise between the fire of the zenith and the emotional life of the East viewed as centre. Swedenborg makes the angels see the sun ever in this position. Adam, Seth, and Enos follow, and with them "the most ancient Church" is created in the full power of the zenith itself, though not in its full heat for Divine mercy, the feminine element, was not yet separated from the fire. "These three," writes Swedenborg, whom Blake followed to a great extent in his treatment of the churches, "are what constitute the most ancient Church, which, with respect to the succeeding ones, was as the nucleus of fruits or seeds; whereas the succeeding churches respectively were like the membranous nature of the several outward coverings surrounding the nucleus." Then comes Canaan, "not" says Swedenborg, "to be reckoned among those three most perfect ones, inasmuch as

perception, which in the former churches had been distinct, begun then to be of a general kind"—a saying that recalls Blake's denunciations of "generalizing." Swedenborg defines generalizing further on as the making of "doctrines of faith" or reducing what had been a matter of free perception to

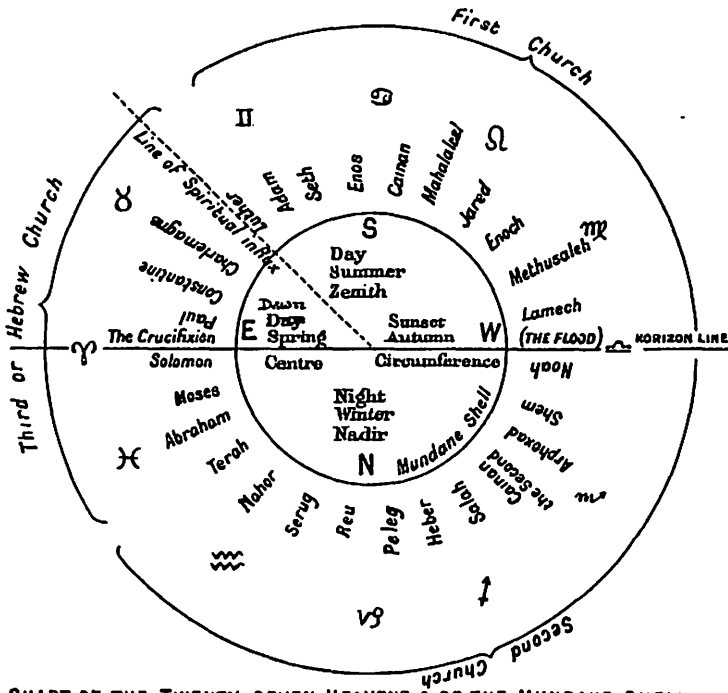


CHART OF THE TWENTY-SEVEN HEAVENS & OF THE MUNDANE SHELL.

rules for the general guidance. The fourth, in every one of the three sets of nines, will be found to have the same significance. The first three correspond to the basis on which the new world or cosmos is created, and the last six to the creative power of the first six of "the eyes of God," and to the six days;

and the seventh from Canaan is the manifestation, the basis of the new church. After Lamech we come to sunset and to the west, the region of Tharmas and of water, and come also to the destruction of all things by "the flood of the five senses," and to the sinking the Atlantic continent or Atlantis. Noah begins the new Church, the Church of the covenant made between man and God, and the fourth sub-church, "Canaan the second;" peoples Canaan—a mental space—with his eleven sons, or spectres as Blake would have called them. He, according to Swedenborg, constituted a worship by externals or reason without love. He is the first of the six who complete and set in order this kind of worship. Nahor begins the third set of nine sub-churches, and the fourth of the set, Moses, leads the children of Israel when they again return into Canaan, and constitutes a worship by externals without any memory of their inner meaning. The six from Moses to Luther complete this Church. It finishes with Luther, who causes the return of Adam or natural man by asserting the right of private judgment. Just as the circle of churches comes round to the East we reach the crucifixion of Christ, his putting off of the mortal body, corresponding to the first struggling of the dawn to pierce through the darkness of night. Day is not complete until the sun has passed the gate of Luther, at which point Christ rises finally from the dead and poetry succeeds religion, but only in its turn to enter "the wheel of birth" to be generalized by the first Canaan into that "law" which "is oppression," made into external worship that remembers its source by the second Canaan, and into a ritual that forgets its own meaning by Moses on Sinai. Men have painfully to learn the significance of the laws and rules of this third Church, for they do not of themselves awaken in the mind an interpretation of their obscurity. They have a correspondence with writing (see preface to "Jerusalem"), for like it they have no meaning until a teacher has taught the method of reading them.

The Third or Hebrew Church corresponds, also, to the

growth of the body of clay about the child in the womb. Lot was the nephew and friend of Abraham (the first of its seven sub-churches) and the changing of his wife into a pillar of salt was, according to Blake, the giving of fixity to the physical body.

Blake says in the essay on the Last Judgment that the antediluvian Church knew only spring and autumn, and that the four seasons did not come until after the flood. The meaning of this will be seen when we remember that heat is masculine, cold feminine, and that the feminine powers form the outer world by a process of freezing. At first heat and cold, masculine and feminine, dwell together in harmony, each tempering the other with itself. Then the cold resolves to live for itself and all is changed, for "there was no female will in paradise." The awakening of this female will is the generalizing of Canaan, which by giving general rules of conduct, born of reason, set up an external necessity to which the internal life must bow. This is the first repression, and is described in Jerusalem as the spectral lives "setting their cold against the warmth of Eden." The masculine fire replies by an increased fervour. These were "the wars of Eden" which Blake says divided man into sexes. These sexes did not become, however, completely antagonistic until the flood had made corporeal life, then cold became simply cold or winter, and the once gentle warmth became a fierce fire or summer raging against the external cold of feminine and maternal nature. It is the contest of the fallen spirit and the fallen "mirror," or of *scorpio* and *virgo*. There was first a mental cold, the generalizing of Canaan, then a corporeal or wintry cold, the external worship of the second Canaan; a cold that was prolonged by Moses who founded a worship which knew nothing of its meaning or, to take the symbol to another plain, formed about the human spirit a physical body to dwell in that external necessity which was mental with the first and physical with the second Canaan, a difference which Blake marks by speaking of "the Heavenly Canaan" as distin-

guished from that which was simply of the earth. When this physical body is formed the mental "vapour and heat"—passive and active, feminine and masculine—are no more. Fuzon is slain by the great stone "Sinai" shot from the bow of Urizon, and is fastened to the branches of the tree of knowledge (see "Ahania"). Then was the winter of the spectre completed that it might "be cast out." When the body was made, man's ego began to war upon all, not itself, or of itself, as did the children of Israel upon their enemies in that "cruel patriarchal pride" which plants "its family alone condemning all the world beside." "The Universal Church" has passed away and "The Hebrew Church" has taken its place, yet this exclusiveness of the bodily or of the dogmatic life has its purpose to work out, for it is the last refuge of man from the indefinite. Through the night and winter of the last two churches three methods "of conversing with paradise," the beautiful internal world, remain to man, poetry, painting and music, typified by Noah, Shem, and Japhet. By placing the signs of the Zodiac about the circle of the churches in order of the sun's passage through the year from the vernal equinox, when he enters the sign *Taurus*, through the autumnal equinox when he enters *Libra*, and so round again to spring, we find several curious coincidences of signs with particular churches and particular biblical events. *Gemini*—the twins—coincides with the creation of Adam and Eve, and *Cancer* in which the sun turns winter-wards is between Enos and Canaan, to point where the external necessity began once more. *Virgo* and *Scorpio* (originally one sign before the invention of the intervening *Libra*) enclose the flood, the most pronounced form of the serpent-woman *Virgo-Scorpio*, between their rival influences. *Scorpio*, the wolf in kabalistic magic, as well as the serpent, both in Blake images of spectral desires, is near Arphaxad, who is followed by the creation of the corporeal or opaque external. *Pisces* the fish, which is taken by several mystical astrologers to stand for personal man in the midst of the external universe,

“the flood of time and space,” coincides with Abraham the first sub-church of the Third Church, in which the body is given fixity, and “the Hebrew Church” separated from all others as “a scheme of conduct”—God’s “plough” to prepare the way for the return of the imagination which is Christ the sower. Aries, the ram, comes at the moment of the crucifixion and seems to point to the lamb of God sacrificed for men; and Tauros, the bull, is perhaps associated with the bulls of Luvah “who drag the seas out of the deep.”

The further relation of the signs to the Bible story and to the seven days and the preceding three dark creations, and to the churches, will be seen by the following spiral diagram.

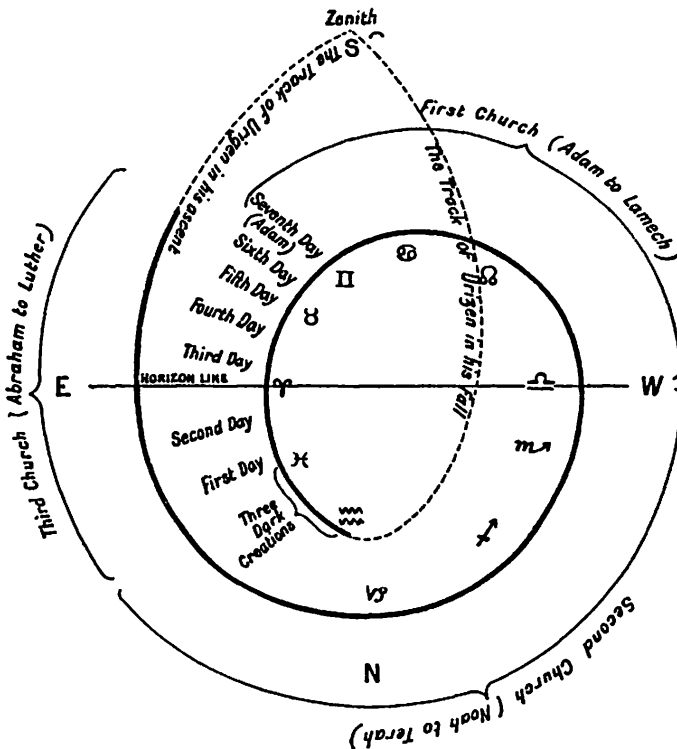


CHART OF THE DESCENDING & ASCENDING REASON

It needs but little description. Urizen falls into the nadir and is given mortal form, and his world is granted a definite organization in four stages, the mosaic creation and the three churches. He turns hither and thither seeking to make all opaque and indefinite, but the power of God forms him into a symbol of the infinite, and that which was meant to destroy the imagination for ever becomes its expression. It will be seen that his first unorganized tossings, such as those described in the first book of Urizen, progress from *Aquarius* to *Pisces*, from the deep to that which it contains, from the indefinite void to the first beginnings of the spectral ego. The first day is probably to be associated with the first brightening of the sky towards dawn, and the third day—the day when instinctive life, symbolized as green things, was created—to the emerging of the sun still hidden by the clouds of night; and the fourth day—when the sun and moon were made—to the appearance of the orb free and alone. The seventh day is associated with Adam, because although he was created on the sixth he is only free from the encumbering darkness of the womb when God has rested and the time of manifestation come. 'This whole process of concentration into personality is the work of Los, who hammers at his anvil facing towards the East. In the West and in the First Church all is again generalized into the indefinite. If we take the whole fourfold process as one story we will have in the seven days the creation of personal mind; in the First Church, the generalization of its passive or feminine portion into an external but still mental necessity or law; in the Second Church, the materialization of this necessity into opaque matter; and in the Third Church, the separation of the more vital portion of this matter as the physical body or corporeal personality, in order that the opaque may be learned and understood by the mind and then "cast out." This process of the separation of a portion of matter by "circumcizing" away the indefinite is Blake's definition of drawing. We make an outline upon paper and so give a portion of the paper a mental existence, and by

means of this mental existence we forget the paper. It is then "cast out," and a last judgment "has passed over it." For this reason Blake associates painting and surgery in Milton, for surgery cuts away the diseased or generalized portion of the body, disease being simply a return of some portion of the organism into the indefinite. All experience is obtained in the same way, and all arts, whether they be painting, poetry, music, architecture, or merely one of the arts of life, are contained within this definition.

The methods in which these four states are described in the Bible are of two kinds. The seven days, and the first and second churches, are told of in symbolic or visionary writing, dealing in such matters as the Garden of Eden, Tree of Knowledge and the Flood. The method of the accounts of the Third Church is described by Swedenborg as historic, by Blake as allegoric. Hence the denunciations of "the Allegoric Heaven." "The second style" is historic, writes Swedenborg, "occurring in the Books of Moses from the time of Abraham, and afterwards in those of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, in which the historical facts actually occurred as they are related in the letter, although all of them contain things altogether different in the internal sense." "Vision, or imagination," writes Blake, "is a representation of what actually exists, really and unchangeably. Fable, or allegory, is formed by the daughters of Memory." A vision is, that is to say, a perception of the eternal symbols, about which the world is formed, while allegory is a memory of some natural event into which we read a spiritual meaning. In vision the meaning chooses its own symbol by a kind of affinity, while in the case of allegory we choose out some corporeal accident, and build into our memory of it a little vision, for allegory, according to Blake, contains "some vision" always, and lift it up into a personification of a spiritual or natural meaning. The heathen gods were of this kind, being no more than the virtues and vices of embodied life endowed with a semblance of the life of the

mind. Their contemplation leads man not to the infinite life of the soul, but to the throne of "the delusive goddess nature," and under the yoke of her iron laws. It is the natural method of description for the Third Church, in which the outer world is finally separated from the inner, and set apart with its own laws and its own worship. The god of the orthodox is himself an allegoric god.

It must be remembered that all these complex symbols contain the others in miniature within them. All is within all, and every one of the twenty-seven churches contains the whole twenty-sevenfold symbols in miniature. Thus, too, this great circle of day and night contains also many days and nights, many winters and many summers. The succession of the churches, and of the symbolic days and nights and seasons, is going on always; we are all passing through it. "These states," Blake writes, "exist now. Man passes on, but states remain for ever: he passes through them like a traveller, who may as well suppose that the places he has passed through exist no more, as a man suppose the states he has passed through exist no more. Everything is eternal."

XI.—THE SYMBOLISM OF COLOUR.

LIKE most mystics and all occultists Blake makes copious use of the symbolism of colour. There are numerous mentions throughout the poems of colour, and there are many illustrations that reveal its use to express mystical thought. Among the most curious of these illustrations is the water-colour drawing of "The Elohim of the Heathen," as they are called in "The Death of Abel," or of "the three accusers of theft, adultery and murder," as they are inscribed in an uncoloured drawing of the same vision. The three figures stand one behind the other against a background of flame and smoke. The furthest off is clad in gold armour of classic type, the second wears black mediæval armour and a red cloak, and the third has a blue cloth about his loins and is of uncertain nationality and period. By taking these in relation to the Three Churches we shall get their meaning. The golden armed figure corresponds to the tendency of the First Church to generalize mental things into an external and general law "which is oppression." In this Church the external necessity first "steals" the things of inspiration and makes them subservient to its own needs and claims. It is still mental, but not after the fashion of the free mind, "the human imagination, the body of god." Blake held that the poetry of Rome, and even that of Greece, was of such a kind, for it stole beauty from the visionary intellect and used it to make "war, princedom and victory" alluring and pleasant. Hence his denunciation of "the stolen and perverted writing" which the classical writers had robbed from "the Bible" or from "the word," namely, from the innermost creative power of the soul, for Blake never means

“Bible” and “word” to apply merely to the Hebrew Scriptures. He considered the Hebrew Scriptures, because they were “professedly inspired” works, to be the best symbol for this inner life, that is all. Hence, too, his statement that the Laocoon, to which he gave a mystical meaning, had been copied from sculpture, or spiritual forms, in Solomon’s Temple, the religious intellect is one of its aspects, by three Rhodians—a hieroglyph for the “sexual” personality, head, heart, loins—“and applied to natural fact or history of Ilium.” All the colours have a good and bad aspect. A warm golden light, which is highest of things in one aspect, is, when considered as the falling beam descending towards the nadir, the not very obscure symbol for this theft, which is none other than the theft of Prometheus. The churches before the Flood were still mental, and their fall was into a world of the mind, which resembles closely the poetry of Virgil. They no longer saw all as a symbol of the Highest whose abode was in their own breasts, but as an external universe, having its own laws, “the female will.”

The next step away from God was to fall in love with this universe for its own sake, and to prefer it to the life of their own minds, and by so doing to render it opaque, or non-mental; for, ceasing to love imagination, they no longer saw it in all things continually before them, but only recalled it in the memory. Men had now fallen into adultery with the great harlot Nature, and only remained in the Second Church through their memory of the Divine things, the covenant made between God and Noah. All about them were the heathens who had not even this memory. The type of this sin is the man in black armour with a red cloak, for black is the colour of the opaque, and the material in all systems, and red the colour of passion, or, as Blake called it, Oro, the one form of imaginative energy that accompanies life down into the corporeal. It makes man remember the Divine splendours of the inner world even in the darkness of the opaque. He no longer sees them through his love for their beauty, but has them made

visible to him by the suggestions of external form. This accuser is clothed in complete armour, because the opaque is hard, compacted, and dead. Black does not possess in Blake any good aspect, for it is not a colour, but the symbol of negation and death. Red has, however, its double aspect of physical energy, as opposed to imagination, and of the bringer-back of beauty into the memory by outer suggestion.

The figure is mediæval, because the Middle Ages made the warrior a servant of the dogmatic churches, and made the structure of the state to be "a dragon red and hidden harlot." He is now considering the modern dogmatic churches, not in their aspect of "a scheme of conduct," but in their relation to the foregoing classic world.

The third figure is dressed in blue, and we read accordingly, in Jerusalem, of "poisonous blue." Blue is, with the exception of white, the coldest of colours. It is the symbol of power or will divorced from love. Black, the opaque, is simply death; but blue, which approaches it most nearly among the colours, is living enough to be death-dealing. In its good aspect, it is a pleasant coolness, the necessary contrary of red and fire; in its evil it is the tint of those spirits who seek to destroy the imagination, and "assassinate," as Hayley's "hired villain" sought to do, "the human imagination, the Body of God." Those who have entered the Third Church have acquired separate and material identity, and being sunk in the opaque, they war one with another, and seek to destroy the material identity of the imagination. For all that is not of their own life is the enemy of that life, and seek to absorb it. They carry on this war upon God by means of a portion of his own power or will which resides within their egoism.

The three figures stand upon rocks of confused colour, in which green predominates. The confused colours refer to the generalization, and the green is the green of vegetation, hence of vegetative life and of the world of Tharmas. In the system of colour symbolism in use in a certain order of

occultists who have made the symbolism of sun-worship their special study, and who date their teaching from ancient Peru, green is said to be the union of the Will of God ; blue, His energy or Spirit ; yellow to form the kingdom into which His love descends. As the love is personal, the will and spirit impersonal, their union is the only possible combination that could produce the impersonal "mirror," "the vegetable glass of nature."

White, the almost universal colour in poems and drawings of Urizen, is the symbol of reason without love or emotion. It is the symbol of subjective, as black of objective generalization, and hence naturally associated with the God who has been made a tyranny by the attempt "to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects."

It is the universal custom of mystics to make white in its good aspect symbolic of undivided and unbodied spirit in its present form.

Pink is the colour of flesh, hence of happy and contented existence, neither too heated with love or too chilled with reason. When the angel in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" is told some of Blake's peculiar thoughts he "became almost blue, but mastering himself he grew yellow, and at last pink and smiling." That is to say, he was first in his anger filled with a murderous will against Blake's imagination, but changing his intention passed on into the mental world of the lower poetic mind, and then entered the Eden of his own nature. Pink and white being the colours of the body, are symbolic also of the highest imagination, that being the body of God. White being undivided spirit in its good aspect as opposed to generalize reason in its evil ; and pink, simply the gentlest and quietest shade of red, the colour of flesh is seen to be a symbol of spirit existing within itself, busy with its spiritual love.

All these colours are associated with natural objects. We have already seen that pink is associated with flesh-colour, and yellow with light, and green with the colour of

vegetation. Blue is the colour of the air, or of motion without any definite tendency to travel in any particular direction, hence too it is symbolic of the breath or power of God. White is associated with the clouds, the clouds which are symbols of the body, which veils and tempers the fire of the mind, and with the cold light of day. Black corresponds to the colour of clay and darkness, red to flame and the heat of noon.

If we take the Three Churches as representing the man whirling head foremost round the wheel of birth, blue will be associated with the head, red with the heart, and yellow with the loins, a symbolism in entire accord with that of the just mentioned school of occultists; for loins, heart, and head are but another way of writing their energy, love and will, or spirit, son and father. They may, however, be written with equal truth in the reverse order for loins, heart and head; and head, heart and loins are but opposing aspects of the same thing. Any student of occultism who has a philosophic knowledge of the system of the totems as taught by Hindu occultists, will recognize the essential unity of their system with that of Blake. They should especially notice Blake's association of black with darkness, hence with the grave and the placing of the garden of Eden amidst golden light.

One of the most striking examples of the symbolic use of colour is found in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," where, page 18, Leviathan is seen with his forehead "divided into streaks of green and purple like those on a tiger's forehead." The tiger is, of course, equally understood symbolically.

In "Jerusalem," page 14, is an illustration representing a sleeper surrounded by a rainbow. This is the Mundane Shell, a seemingly solid wall of three colours,—for on earth all we see resolves itself into this. It roofs the sleeper only because Man when awake, or aroused to the use of spiritual sight, can see beyond the rainbow. The figure with wings is one of those "daughters of Beulah who follow after sleepers in their

dreams," and is Leutha herself, "Europe," l. 205, whose beauty was the cause of the danger to man of Satan, who is the male personification of the delusion which we call Nature. "Milton," p. 9, l. 28 to p. 11, l. 43. Compare also the use of colours in "Jerusalem," p. 64, l. 28.

TABLE.

PHYSICAL.		MENTAL.
Pink.	Flesh colour.	Wholesome life. Imaginative life.
Red.	Fire. Heat.	Passion. Corporeal Love.
Yellow.	Warm light.	Mind. When the yellow is of a ruddy or golden colour it is symbolic of the love.
Green.	Vegetation.	Instinctive life.
Blue.	Air when there is light.	Power without Love.
White.	Clouds. Cold light. The white of flesh.	Reason without Love.
Black.	Earth darkness. Night. The grave.	The unimaginative.

DUAL ASPECTS.

THE student of this great-artist visionary will by this time be able to see what Blake meant by making what he loved to call "the Human Form Divine," the symbol of the godhead, as he so often does. It was the chosen symbol of his peculiar illumination and meant something quite different from mere physical contour. "The Human Form Divine," or human unity in the spirit, has, indeed, for its negation that physical and mortal man—"the great Polypus"—which misrepresents the imaginative and self-existent being to our eyes. In his curious geographical symbolism he expresses this "polypus" by seven English cities, or seven aggregates of states and spaces in Ulro. The Human Form and Polypus are the Divine and physical aspects of the same power. Their dual life runs through all nature. Thus, what we, seeing into the world of the Polypus call "accident and chance," are really, when looked at with the eye of the spirit, living agencies, akin to what old tales call gnomes and fairies. They are the lower links in the chain of states and spaces. The human form and the Polypus are not, however, those contraries which give life, such as male and female, active and passive, God and the mirror; but are like yes and no, life and its negation. The emanation or matrix is the contrary of the *Æon*, but the spectre is its negation. "Contraries are positions," writes Blake in "Milton." "A negation is not a contrary. How wide the gulf and impassable between simplicity and insipidity!" Contraries produce imaginative manifestation, whereas life and its negation merely bring forth finite consciousness and physical manifestation, which are death. Blake does not seem to have admitted the

necessity that Boehmen asserted for the Eternal No. God and His matrix were enough—the eye and the mirror.

The Form and the Polypus have each a number of symbolic regions with magical names, or names written in “the language of Nature,” to use the Boehmenite term. These regions are Entuthon Benython of Urizen. See “Vala,” III., l. 179 ; V., l. 149 ; and VIII., ll. 222 and 264. “Jerusalem,” p. 5, ll. 12, 24, 55 ; p. 14, l. 35 ; p. 78, l. 17 ; p. 83, l. 74 ; and p. 88, l. 48. See also the “Symbol of the Worm.” Golgonooza, a spiritual or imaginative city outside the gates of the heart and built by Los. See “Vala,” V., ll. 76, 143, 176 ; VII., ll. 373, 428, 446 ; VIII., ll. 30, 40, 101, 104, 183, 199, 221, 364, 378, 388 ; and “Jerusalem,” p. 5, ll. 24, 29 ; p. 10, ll. 17, 63 ; p. 12, ll. 24, 46, 61 ; p. 13, ll. 30, 55, 56 ; p. 14, l. 35 ; p. 53, l. 15 ; p. 72, l. 28 ; p. 73, ll. 1, 6 ; p. 78, l. 17 ; p. 83, ll. 43, 75 ; p. 86, ll. 41, 44 ; p. 88, l. 48 ; and p. 98, l. 55 ; and “Milton,” p. 4, l. 1 ; p. 16, l. 30 ; p. 18, l. 39 ; p. 20, l. 27 ; p. 23, ll. 10, 49, 50 ; p. 24, ll. 1, 43 ; p. 25, l. 12 ; p. 26, l. 24 ; p. 28, l. 49 ; p. 31, l. 26 ; p. 35, ll. 19, 22, 50, 53, 58, 67 ; p. 36, l. 9 ; Bowlahoola, the region of digestion, mental and physical ; and Allamanda, corresponding to the nerves both of reason and reproduction. There is likewise the Lake of Udan Adan—a lake of spaces and of tears. See “Vala,” VIII., l. 221. It has a certain relation to “the flood of the five senses,” and may be described as its abstract basis. There is also an unnamed lake of fire and affliction, into which we—the Æons—must cast our spectres :—

Each man is in his spectre's power,
Until the arrival of that hour
When his humanity awake,
And cast his spectre into the lake :—

There to be transformed, like the angel who, in the “Marriage of Heaven and Hell,” “stretched out his arms, embracing the flame of fire,” and was consumed and arose as Elijah. Entuthon Benython differs from Udan Adan in being the solid as opposed to the liquid abstract—contraction, not expansion.

Entuthon Benyhton, Allamanda, Bowlahoola, and Udan Adan have to do with the powers of this world and with the Polypus; Golgonooza and the Lake of Fire are the personal and impersonal aspects of the world to come.

Golgonooza is situated on the point where the translucent becomes the opaque, and is enclosed with the egg of Los, sometimes called the mundane egg, and again the halls of Los. The egg has one apex at the nadir and the other at the zenith, and is drawn in Blake's one diagram. ("Milton," page 32.) It is the microcosmic aspect of that "circle pass not," so much talked of in Theosophical mysticism, and is identical with the egg of Bramah. Students of the occult philosophy of the Tatwas will recognize in it a certain symbol associated with Akasa. It is also closely related to the "sphere" of Swedenborg, and is the form of that many-coloured light which innumerable visionaries have seen encircling the bodies of men. Blake described it as created by Los to make men "live within their own energy," otherwise they would fall into the *non-Ens*. It is in its relation to the world in general the astral light of post-Paracelsian occultists, and Blake has reflected their teaching that the images of all things are contained within it, and may be read there, whether they be of the future or the past, by the trained seer. (See "Jerusalem," page 16 lines 61, 69, where the past, present, and future are said to be sculptured in the Halls of Los.) The sculptured lambs, which he told a friend he had first mistaken for a common sheepfold, were of this kind. They are called sculpture to mark a distinction recognized by occultists between the symbolic forms of self-existing states or beings, and the representation, as if sculpture of actions taking place in the spiritual or physical worlds. The more usual term is "pictures," but sculpture more fitly represents objects that are not merely limned on a flat surface but are the imperishable three dimensional thought-forms of all deeds and things. It was in the halls of Los that Blake saw all his visions. When we lie between

sleeping and waking at night and watch landscapes moving before us with all the vividness of nature, we are looking into these Halls, and there also are our dreams transacted.

The egg of Los has, however, an evil or Urizenic negation. This aspect is symbolized as a temple, elaborately described in the second night of the "Book of Vala," and more slightly in the third chapter of "Jerusalem." A temple or church is always a symbol of restriction and therefore of the merely natural and opaque. In this case it is nature, including in that term what the old writers called, now the lower astral light and now Satan. It is ruled over by the three daughters of Urizen, or by the forces that draw life into merely vegetative centres.

Life is a harmony of states and spaces—a Jacob's ladder ascending from man to God—but like all else has dual nature. For these two sides Blake uses the symbolism of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in which Beddoes has told us no birds sang, and of the Tree of Life. The first is said, in one place, to have its roots in the heavens, and its branches in the earth, following the analogy of the man falling headlong and the inverted pentagram. It grows from under the heel of Urizen, or from the lower and nether regions of his mind. The front is always emanative, and the back spectral. Orc climbs up it as a serpent, seeking thereby to obtain power over men and deceive them by pretending that his earth-born energy, expressing itself in religion, and in legality, and in hypocrisy, in "the self-enjoyings of the self-denying," springs from the zenith to which he mounts. Another instance of Blake's perpetual dogma that mechanical restraint and unimaginativeness and not desire in its unsophisticated form are the source of misery and materialism. On the ground Orc is frank and violent, in the tree of Good and Evil full of all deceit and cajollery. It is to climb up it that he takes the serpent form. The Tree of Life is the current of life when seeking God, and the tree of Good and Evil is the same current seeking the world. Sometimes both upward and downward branches are

united in the tree of Good and Evil. In the seventh night of Vala, for instance, it shoots upon from the earth, and then sends down branches that again enroot themselves. The upward growth in this case is the effort of vegetative life to obscure the spirit. This method of using downward growing and upward growing branches, is an ancient Arcana.

All the states and spaces are able to put on at times the shapes of animals. When some passion or desire fills them, their inner nature expresses itself in the animal shape that most closely fits this passion or desire. This doctrine came to Blake perhaps from Boehmen, who believed that there are not animals enough in the world to give men their symbolic forms, some men needing a combination of two or three beasts. Such a combination is seen in Blake's "Ghost of a Flea," in which man and insect are united into one monster. This doctrine is not confined to Boehmen. Many visionaries assert that they see men's passions surrounding them in animal and reptile shapes. The last mystics who claim that they possess this type of vision are an old Irish priest and a circle of five Bavarian peasants. The modern Theosophists also avow the continual formation of beast shapes within the *Kama* or desire principle, which change according to the passions of the moment. Spiritually as physically we are said to be the remnant and derelict of many lives, animal, insect, and vegetable; we are not one but many, for from every life we passed through, we gathered a passion and a form, and to the eye of the seer the one never awakes without the other.

THE TWO CONTRARIES OF HUMANITY.

THE title of this chapter is from "Jerusalem," p. 64, l. 4. Many years earlier than the date of that page, Blake had written in the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell,"—"Without contraries is no progression." The most important thing about the dual aspects in which all divisions may be classed before division itself passes away, is their resemblance to those typical contraries, the sexes. All symbols but the final symbol—the "Human form," or "Man"—are found grouped in sexes. The "Divine Humanity is the only General and Universal Form" ("Jerusalem," p. 43, l. 20). It "knows not of sex," for the sexual begins to have its reign in Beulah, though at first happily so long as the flesh does not divide the sexes as it does in this dark world (Ibid. p. 30, l. 33), where a "little curtain," as the Body is called in the Book of Thel, is found "on the bed of our desire." What mortals consider to be the ultimate use of the male and female, is but a poor and restricted pretence viewed from the spiritual standpoint, as the High Priest entering the Holy Place behind the Veil (Ibid. p. 69, l. 44), was but an imperfect symbol of the soul joining the Fountain of Souls behind the narrow earth-bank, the Body (Ibid. p. 88, ll. 5-15).

Humanity, however, contains the sexes from the beginning, because it is Fourfold ("Jerusalem," p. 12, l. 57, and p. 15, l. 61), and the Regions tend to take upon themselves to claim supremacy in turn, and then they war with each other, produce the sexes, and prepare all the evil in the world. The coherence, the unifying power of Humanity is sympathy, and this cannot be reached after error, but by forgiveness. Thus Moral Law, enemy of Forgiveness, is therefore enemy of Humanity.

("Jerusalem," p. 4, l. 31; p. 49, ll. 29, 30; p. 61, ll. 43, 44.)

It is this quality of enmity to Divine or Spiritual Sympathy which identifies the destructive Human Reason with Moral Law, and combines them as a common enemy against Imagination, which becomes as the essence of Sympathy, identified with Forgiveness, and so with Christ, or Humanity. Law devours Forgiveness. Reason devours Imagination. Both do this during the "sleep" or bodily life of man. Albion, Man, the Fourfold, simply means the universal dwelling-place or battlefield whereon the contraries war. His sleep is danger of death at the hands of his reasonings and laws, and self-righteousness ("Jerusalem," p. 21, l. 36, and p. 50, l. 16), while his waking is re-entrance into the light of Divine Humanity. (Compare "Jerusalem," p. 5, l. 30; p. 19, l. 31; p. 49, l. 30; p. 70, ll. 9, 19; p. 78, ll. 3, 20; p. 79, l. 73; p. 90, l. 63.)

In a more restricted sense there is a Male and a Female Humanity, for unless the material were equally extensive with the mental, symbolism would stop short and the living word become a dumb despair.

The Female or Maternal Humanity, being the lower or material, personally emotional, instinctive, and when moral, restrictive side, is always ready to become evil. It is an enemy of imagination the moment it ceases to be a servant.

Therefore when Imagination enters experience to turn it into symbol and release mind from its domination, that is to say when Christ is born of Mary, he puts on, through his maternally derived portion, a body for the express purpose of putting it off ("Jerusalem," p. 12, l. 13). But until then "by his maternal birth he is that evil one," and therefore his "Maternal Humanity must be put off eternally, lest sexual generation swallow up regeneration." For this side of Humanity is "Natural Religion." ("Jerusalem," p. 9, ll. 36, 37, and 65, 66.)

Thus is "Natural Religion" identified with "Law" ("His

mother"—see "Conversations with Crabb Robinson"), and so with Rahab, Vala, the rocks of Horeb and Sinai, Amalek, Canaan, and Moab, and all the symbols that are contraries of the Lamb, until they finally unite in his typical contrary, Satan.

Thus also the "Female Will," which does not exist in Heaven, is connected with Reason, for it converses concerning weight and distance in the wilds of Newton and Locke ("Jerusalem," p. 34, l. 40). And thus again mortal love and mortal morality, Vala and her veil, are connected with Reason, for Vala is "built by the reasoning power" (Ibid. p. 44, l. 40) which thus could draw her into his bosom (p. 64, ll. 6, 25). Thus also she was the uniting in one, in an evil aspect, of the daughters of Albion (p. 64, l. 6) in the sense in which they are the cutters off with the knife of flint (reason and law) of all the expansive ideas and loves which in the aggregate are Liberty and Imagination; the Lamb's Bride and the Lamb.

Thus also the story of Albion is identified with that of the Zoas, for Vala was the bodily shape of his wife; she came or emanated from his loins, and she strove to subjugate him, not only through Luvah, but in her own person, and claimed supremacy, revealing to him that in allowing the female to separate he had created the female will ("Jerusalem," p. 31, l. 50; p. 33, l. 34 to p. 34, l. 40; and p. 56, l. 43). The phrase "elevate into the region of brotherhood" (p. 34, l. 1) must be read with p. 61, ll. 34, 35.

Of the connection between Humanity, Friendship, and Forgiveness, more explanation is given in "Jerusalem," p. 91, ll. 1 to 30.

The description in symbolic terms of the re-union of the contraries of Humanity, called the four faces, is in "Jerusalem," p. 98, l. 26, &c.

The great evil, the "separating of the masculine from the feminine, and both from man," is now understood. It is what plunged the spirit of Prophecy itself into Rationalism, when

Los was roofed in Albion's cliffs by the affections rent from the understanding.

Thus the sexual, as well as the Hermaphroditic, is distinctly miserable. The "progression" that is not without contraries is not without sorrow. The following references will serve to elucidate the subject without more comment. ("Jerusalem," p. 58, ll. 15, 19 ; p. 67, l. 14 ; p. 79, l. 71.)

The following table shows a few of the symbols habitually used by Blake in connection with the contraries viewed as sexes. They are not always understood to be at enmity. Neither is invariably seen in a good aspect. Neither is necessarily evil. Good and evil belong to positions of states, separateness, opposition, enmity, and dominion, as contrasted with unity and the mutual supplementing of each by the other.

<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>
Wrath.	Pity.
Desire.	Reason.
God.	Satan.
Christ.	Mary.
Imagination.	Experience.
Expansion.	Restriction.
The enlarged senses.	The fine senses.
Forgiveness.	Law.
Sublimity.	Pathos.
Eternity.	Nature.
Truth.	Delusion.
Light of mind-emotions.	Light of bodily emotions.
Morning.	False morning.
Day.	Night.
Lightning.	Cloud.
Nerves.	Blood.
Time.	Space.

Among the earth-symbols also, the following are used :—

Mountains.	Valleys.
Houses.	Gardens.

Rivers are on both sides ; so are palaces ; so are nations according to their quarter, because the four points, when considered two and two, are thus :

North.	East.
South.	West.

Holiness is on both sides according to the emotion belonging to it, because Joy and Sorrow are thus divided :

Joy.	Sorrow.
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and while Soul, as meaning non-mental vitality, is cloudy, vague and female, and body is cloud, because dark, yet from the body is another group—

Energy.	Indolence.
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—and because spirit is health and body illness, we have

Activity.	Idleness.
Health.	Pestilence.

And because the Satanic is female by right of delusion, though it is also spectrous and masculine, we have

The angry Satan (Albion's sons).	The weeping Rahab-Satan, Albion's daughters.
The smiting Luvah.	The mild Luvah.
The shining Urizen (south).	The weeping Urizen (north).
Self-annihilation.	Pride.
Jesus the law-breaker.	The "Yea and Nay creeping Jesus."
Jehovah the thunderer.	Jehovah the Jealous.

And in the regions we find

Allamanda.	Bowlahoola.
Spiritual cause.	Natural fact.
Art.	Commerce.

And in art we have

Visionary Art.	Imitative Art.
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And also

The Plough.	The Harrow.
The Furnace.	The Loom.

But there are various other combinations, grouped as contraries among the Zoas themselves.

Urizen,	Luvah,
Urthona,	Tharmas,

would be so placed. But Urizen combines with Luvah in the east, and becoming effeminate, falls to emerge as an aspect of Tharmas, leaving only Urthona masculine.

Urthona.	Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas.
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Which since life is spirit and male,—body, death and female,—explains the words of Los to Albion, “Three thou hast slain.” For this combination was an act of Albion. (See “Albion and the Zoas.”)

The destructive Reason is also male, as the “Ugly Man,” yet since what he destroys is Imagination and Forgiveness, and what he leaves is experience and accusation of sin and assumption of morality, we have

The Spectre, Reason,	Vala,
just as we have	
The Lamb,	Jerusalem.

The Female is thus seen to involve more paradoxical ideas and varieties of symbol than the Male.

She divides and unites. She is Vala in the aggregate except when Regeneration raises her into Jerusalem again, as in the happy days when she was both at once.

Vala divides thus :	The Daughters of Albion (“Jerusalem,” p. 67). Rahab and Tirzah, and the other daughters of Zelo- phahad,
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who especially are the weavers of the body and the controllers of our vegetative powers. Sweetness, cruelty, deceit, and sorrow, are their characteristics.

Zelophahad’s daughters, Tirzah and her sisters, are types, because they were the first Jewish women mentioned in the Old Testament who were land-owners. The red cord explains Rahab. Her English types in philosophy are Bacon, Newton,

THE NAMES.

Of all the symbols the least material are the sound symbols, for they exist not in space but in time only, and are therefore the most natural expressions of the emotional nature or "genius." Upon this symbolic value of sound is based the doctrine of incantation, as may be seen by the analysis of any of the famous medieval conjurations. The names of Blake's personages are incantations of this nature, as are also the various Hebrew names of God and of the angels according both to Boehmen, Swedenborg, and the Kabalists. The writers of this book have summoned the great symbolic beings—Ololon, Urthona, Orc, and others—into the imaginations of entranced subjects by merely pronouncing and making them pronounce the words. Even if "transference of thought," as the world has chosen to misname the visionary sight of thoughts common to two minds, came into action, it was only after the initial power of the symbol had brought the two minds into union, as may be seen by anyone who will attempt to "transfer thought" without knowing how to cause this union of mind with mind. For one success he will have many failures, whereas the occult student who has once found his subject fails but seldom. The understanding of this symbolic nature of sound as of all other things is a necessary first step towards any deep sight into mystical philosophy, and towards the experimental proof of its great postulate—the underlying unity of all minds as portions of the one great mind or imagination, "the body of God." We enter into this Divine body by the symbolism of things, as we enter into the world about us by perception of things, apart from their symbols, and by association of ideas in the memory—mystical trances come from leaving behind the last two faculties, and entering wholly into the world of symbolic

perception of universal truths. The perception of the senses apart from symbol, limits us down to the narrow circle of personal experience, while association of ideas is essentially "spectral," coming as it does, not from perception of something apart from ourselves, but from the memory of sensations which get their peculiar value from being connected with our personal and "spectral" life. By symbolism we enter the universality of God, by sensation and the memory of sensation, we enter the world of Satan, which is "all nothing."

It was therefore inevitable that Blake should give to the more lofty and spiritual "states" and "spaces" of his system, names of a symbolic nature, and reserve the historic names, such as Bacon and Locke, for the sub-division of the Satanic world. If a sound symbol was a modification of some already existing word, so much the better; and in many cases he was able to find words thus suited to his purpose, for language tends to become symbolic, and to convey its meaning in the sound of the words themselves. For this purpose he made use largely of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The word *Orc* is a good instance. The sound at once conveys its passionate and violent meaning, and yet it is but a shortening of *Orcus*, the whole word being used in the last chapter of "Tiriel." It is probable that a very large number of the names will gradually reveal their source in this way. Thus *Luvah* is, as has already been said, from the Hebrew *Luv*, heart, and *Ah*, a feminine termination; *Tharmas* probably from *Thammuz*, also a god of growing life; whilst *Ololon*, who annihilates herself for Albion, is perhaps a modification of the second pluperfect of *ἄλλυμι*, "I destroy myself." But her woes point to *ὄλολύξω*, whence the Latin *ululare*. Blake speaks of *Los* mourning with ululation upon the wind. —*Vala*, Night IV., l. 61. *Tiriel* and *Zazel* are the medieval names for the "intelligence" of Mercury and the "spirit" of Saturn respectively. *Heuxo*, only mentioned in "Tiriel," may be from *ὑψος*; height, sublimity. *Udan Adan* suggests a possibly fanciful derivation from the Hebrew word *Adon*, lord,

and might refer, perhaps, to that state wherein not all who cry, "Lord, Lord," shall be saved. Enitharmon has been derived by Mr. York Powell from *ἀναριθμος*, numberless, though she is more probably *ἐνθήριθος*,—friendly, intimate (compare "Jerusalem," 188, ll. 3, 4, 5), and Los may be from the Hebrew Luz, a flame, or, as has been suggested, Sol, read backwards. Ariston, the "True Tongue," is not simply *ἀριστον* the mid-day meal, though suited to it, as this implies the "feast spread in the south"—Vala IX., l. 613—but it is the prefix *best* as in the Anglo-Greek aristocrat.

The symbolic meaning of the words is, however, a question of greater importance. It is possible to discover in them a symbolic alphabet such as could hardly help suggesting itself to a student of Boehmen and his "language of nature," and which may be compared with the alphabet of sound symbols in use among the Kabalists at the present day.

Blake had several different ways of obtaining names. The first was the visionary or trance method. The names presented themselves to him along with their subjects. The second was the infected (as he would have called it) or influenced method, when certain well-known terms were adopted with slight alteration, on account of their containing a syllable here and there which would have belonged to their subjects in the trance method. The third was the associative style, when certain myths or histories contained personages whom he desired to use as symbols, or in whom he believed that he recognized symbols used by previous writers.

The first source produced most of the terms that stand for the mythic characters of the prophetic books. The second, those partly altered by trance from memory of books. The last include an immense number of Biblical names, and such of the modern as Voltaire, Washington, &c. In these the sound goes for nothing. The name is a mere ticket fastened to a symbolic figure.

By considering the most characteristic mythic names we partly see the significance Blake attached to sounds for their own sake. For example, if sounds suggestive of the watery

region and the earthy region, the feminine vegetative and the feminine secretive, the growing and the darkening be sought, they are to be found in the letters *l* and *th*, and *m* and *n*.

Thus, the name Enitharmon, from Enion-Tharmas, not only speaks for itself but enforces by repetition the meaning of the sounds in the parental names. Los was also a child of Enion and Tharmas; born at the same time, counterpart of Enitharmon, he contains all that she misses. Their only point in common is the letter *o* in the middle, suggesting the egg of Los, as Blake calls it. Among vowels *o* is the darkest; among consonants *s* is the lightest.

Among the maternal names is Mnetha, the mother of Har and Hova, and Eno, the aged mother, who is a part of the quality that developed progressively into Enion and Enitharmon.

Among the four unvegetated sons of Los, Theotormon is the most feminine, the most full of darkness, grief and jealousy. He is of the watery region. He develops the qualities of Tharmas, as Enitharmon those of Enion. He adds at the end of his name the sad syllable. Another son, Bronion, also belongs to darkness. He is the son of the earth-region. The most remarkable thing in the Blakean nomenclature is the syllable *on* at the end of the name Palamabron. He is the eastern son of Los, and is to Luvah what Theotormon is to Tharmas. Yet, though he is in the region of the rising sun, he owns the dark syllable. This is justified by his appearance after the Zoas had fallen, and the East was darkened. He is a labourer at the furnaces and at the harrow, and once was even persuaded to do the work of Satan at the Mills "as the easier task." Satan, or the Greek Apollo, is the Natural Sun (compare conversation with Crabb Robinson) as well as the natural earth. Palamabron is in the region of the angry, dark sun. But his effect is to cause it to animate the moon. He has another right to the *on* that terminates his name. He has other feminine attributes besides those of darkened Luvah. The harrow, already mentioned, is feminine as contrasted with the plough. Besides, the points East and West are

feminine in contrast with North and South. Palamabron's symbol is the goat with two horns. He shoots his lightnings down his back. He wields the tongs at the furnace. He is the pen of poetry with its two points as contrasted with the pencil of art. He is one of those chosen by Enitharmon in her dream to darken the love of woman by casting on it the imputation of sin. He rules the night. Thus he has many claims to the *on*. In contrast with it he contains other letters widely opposed, namely, *br*.

In *Bromion* the *br* is made evident. They belong to dark anger. Bromion is the violence of unimaginitive passion, the natural rival of unimaginitive jealousy. Bromion takes Oothoon from Theotormon. There is no more feminine name than Oothoon possible in the earthy region. In the entirely watery sphere one other is equally significant—Ololon. But in this latter name the *l* is not a letter of darkness, and it alternates with the *o* as Ololon (who contained multitudes of both sexes) alternates her moods till she manifests as a virgin at last, just as her name closes with the letter of night.

The last two syllables of Palamabron, read backwards from the end, mean feminine region (*on*) and masculine fury (*br*). Then come three times the letter *a*, a letter of light, as in Ololon came three times the letter *o*. Between the vowels are found the maternal letter *m* and the liquid *l*,—for Palamabron is doomed to sorrow, like Theotormon, but is not so dark as he. The letter *p* is rare among Blake's names, and its significance can only be guessed.

The word Moon always, by its sound, suggested to Blake exactly the qualities which he attributed to it,—those of the feminine gate of nature. If he had not found the word, he could hardly have avoided making it. In doing so he might have been tempted to enrich it with letters telling more of its story, but was fortunately content to do this in other names belonging to its region.

In contrast with the names Theotormon, Bromion, and Palamabron, the remaining unvegetated son of Los, Rintrah,

with his region the southern sun, and his symbol the lion, and his attribute bright indignant fury, stands apart. There is no suggestion in his name of any quality of earth or of water. He rules the day, as Palamabron the night, and the plough, as Palamabron the harrow. The letter *r* begins him, with its wrathful suggestion; the letter *n* is lost in his midst, just as Enitharmon's attempt to associate him with Palamabron, in telling the world that woman's love was sin, is lost in the rest of his career, and after it the *r* is renewed, and the light vowel ends all. The *t* is probably only to give a light emphasis to the *r*, as in Bromion the *B* gives a dark emphasis to it.

As the names of Blake grow familiar to the ear of the reader, and the stories of the mythic personages to his mind, he will presently be able to conjecture from any name either to what region its owner belongs, or what aspect of that region he is intended to personify. It will also become more and more evident what suggestions guided Blake in those names that he found ready to hand, and chose for their sounds' sake, as distinguished from those he used for the sake of the mythic or historical associations already belonging to them.

In "Europe" there is a long list of those whom Enitharmon calls in her dream, and a still more formidable catalogue appears in "Vala," Night VIII, l. 351, &c. But the sound-suggestions make light in the obscurity even when, as is often the case, there is hardly any mythic information about the personages.

For example, Sotha and Thiralatha speak for themselves as spirits of the eye—the organ that sees, yet weeps, and which causes the marriage of spirit to symbol by its faculty of perceiving form. *S* is a light letter, as in *Los*, whose name means From-water-by-darkness-to-light. *L*, the liquid, *o* the egg, *s* the day. It is the human story in one syllable. He is rightly Time, and the Spirit of Prophecy, since such are the qualities of his name.

It has been suggested that *Los* is simply the Latin *Sol* read backwards. Blake would have probably said that the Latin

Sol is precisely the term for the story of Los, read backwards.

Before leaving Sotha and Thiralatha, it must be noted that in the Song of Los the latter is spelt Diralada. ("Africa," l. 30.) This is probably because the name sounded more deeply to Blake's ear at that moment. This is the passage:—

"In the North, to Odin, Sotha gave a code of war,
Because of Diralada, thinking to reclaim his joy."

There is material for a whole myth in that suggestion. It may have formed the subject of a minor book perhaps lost, or burned by Thatham, or never written because there was no time to be spared from the drudgery of engraving.

The myth can easily be conjectured in its main lines because the subject of it is evident. Sotha in the North, acting against his own tendencies, as Urizen in the North, seeks, by giving a code of war, to redeem his joy, his emanation Thiralatha, now Diralada, who has lost her lightness in that evil land. In that earthy region

"Instead of morn arises a black shadow like an eye,
In the eastern cloud; instead of night a sickly charnel house.

* * * * *

And none but Bromion can hear my lamentations,"

as Oothoon, spirit of "woman's secrecy," said when she was lost, like Thiralatha, spirit of woman's happiness—and like Enion, the rebellious indolence that should have restored the male, but desired to absorb him.

The northern region, or this world of experience, is the terrible place of alternations. It is here that we find a continual building, and a continual destroying because of love and jealousy. ("Jerusalem," p. 72, *picture*.) It obliges the Spirit of Prophecy himself to be now swayed by wrath, and now absorbed by pity. ("Milton," p. 33, l. 46.) It is where the changing moon and the tossing sea are ever powerful though continually re-conquered. Here was Sotha exiled from the land of Vision, and here he gave the code of

war to Odin, just as Theotormon bound Oothoon to Bromion. Compare also the following:—

“ I must rush again to war, for the virgin has frowned and refused.
Sometimes I curse, and sometimes I bless thy fascinating beauty.

And now I hate, and now I love, and intellect is no more.

The Feminine and Masculine shadows, soft, mild, and ever varying,
Are shadows now no more, but rocks”

—*Jerusalem*, p. 68, l. 63.

Who will write for us the lost poems now? What surprises of imagery did they contain; what revelations of symbol and story? The names remain alone, like footprints in the hard earth of some bird long lost to the clear air, whose wings we live too late to see.

The four Zoas, however, are fully set before us in the prophetic books. They stand round us like familiar companions. They are within as well as without. We feel them in our breasts, while we can reach out and touch them with our hands. Tharmas of the water, Urthona of the earth, Luvah of the air, Urizon of the fire.

The name of Tharmas in its sound brings to the ear so vividly every wave that breaks on a breezy shore at night, that it needs no comment. Urthona is the word *Earth* with the personage *Ona* added—as Enitharmon is Enion-Tharmas. Ona and Eno are one typical female seen as coming or as going. In a single instance, Blake in MS. changed Ona into Eno. The name of Luvah, Prince of Love and usurper of light, tells his story by the suggestion contained in its letters without any help from a Hebrew source. Urizen, with the sound of hot iron quenched in water, needs no other excuse for the name of the sun that was blackened in the ice, the enthusiasm that was enslaved to dark regions, the intellect that wearied itself with futurity and lost hold for a while of eternity.

But a hundred suggestions crowd round every letter and every sound. They have done so from time immemorial.

Blake found vision as well as mere allegory in ancient myths. He could not have avoided finding his own alphabet of significant sounds in ancient names. Where it was possible he seems to have adopted what he found, altering it only as his own vision altered the appearances which had presented themselves to the eyes of seers before him. It must not be forgotten that he always insisted on the valuable paradox that while vision is the fountain of truth, it comes to us not in a single stream, but in a shower of drops scattered on a hundred winds, and carried in as many directions, so that each vision appears differently to each seer. Names must also differ at one time, and resemble at another, as the wind carries the falling water now in level lines and now whirling like a column or outstretched like a tassel.

Mr. Lionel Johnston has placed at our service some useful suggestions, from a purely scholarly point of view, only so far sympathetic to Blake as to admit the poet's right to mix up every and any quality of names, old and new, until he obtained the sounds he desired.

In "Urizen," Mr. Johnston agrees with Mr. Swinburne in finding qualities of the names, Urien, Uranus, and Uriel; Urien being a Celtic mythic person, a dark god, whose land is the evening and the dusk, and who is slain by Hovan, a sort of Phaeton, only without his fall. Urien has been identified with Urogen, a lost name, and Urbgennius, its Latinized form, and Urogenius, still found in inscriptions explained by Professor Rhys. Mr. Johnston, in suggesting a parentage for Urizen, here recalls Blake's own statement that poems of the highest antiquity were in his hands, and that Owen Jones, who brought out in 1801 the "Myvyrian Archæology of Wales," possessed a vast store of ancient MSS. now in the British Museum. Some of these may have been seen by Blake. His use of the word Giant, suggests that he had heard of Albiona and Bergion, or Therion, England and Ireland, two giants, sons of Neptune, according to Porsonius Mela, who were slain by Hercules.

In support of the idea that Uriel and Urizen are connected, it may be said that in Kabalistic symbolism the Archangel Uriel is in the north, the position of Urizen after his fall into coldness and darkness.

Urizen, however, is not originally a dark god, and has nothing to do with Urien, or with Uranns, any more than Ahania with Urania. In understanding Blake, the first thing to do is to read him through. No editor or reviewer ever did so up to the present time. This is proved partly by the universal want of comprehension of Blake's myth, shown by those who wrote about it, and partly by the fact that his greatest poem, "Vala," was found by the present editors as a heap of unnumbered and unsorted pages, which could not be reduced to order for many days, though their existence was known to every Blake student, and they are referred to in the catalogue in Gilchrist's "Life."

Mr. Johnston has found the name Hyle in the hymns of Taylor the Platonist, published in 1793. From the same source a name "Bromius" is to be found, suggesting Bromion. Neither can be connected satisfactorily with Blake's Hyle and Bromion. Vala, a Scandinavian prophetic, may have given her name to Albion's wife. From the point of view of Blake the name is singularly simple. The V belongs to her veil, the l to the tears with which she wetted it, the alternating a, as in Diralatha and Palamabron, to the joy at each side of the weeping—as the darkness at each side in Ololon. Vala's name keeps her character at arm's length as it were, and hardly does more than hint any part of her career except the happy days when she was one with Jerusalem in ancient times. Her innocent aspect is described in one of the most beautiful and sustained passages in the book called "Vala," Night IX., l. 459, &c.

The name Thel, Mr. Johnston suggests, may be of Greek origin. This is not improbable, as many words begin $\theta\epsilon\lambda$ and suggest charm, witchery, &c., without counting the kindred, and perhaps elder root $\theta\eta\lambda$,—feminine. Thel, Oothoon, Hela,

the three Female Eyes, with their story of desire, material marriage, mental horror, might have been made the subject of one mythic book, instead of being divided through the books of "Thel," the "Visions of the Daughters of Albion," and "Tiriël." The fourth, completing the quaternary, would have been Thiralatha. It is part of the tragedy of the "Book of Tiriël" that the name Hela, with its suggestion of light, perhaps from ἔλαη, sunlight, is that of the eye that he forced to guide him in his blindness, though he still bore the name Tiriël, which suggests him only as he was in his merry days, and was retained to show that his blindness was not the feminine or material obscurity that belongs to the womb of earth, and is associated with m, o, and n, but a deprivation of that which rightly belonged to him when Myratana, his happy wife, motherly, but joyous, was alive.

Mr. Johnston suggests that Blake adopted his use of the word "Angel" as applied to the genius of certain cities, &c., as in America, from the "Celestial Hierarchy," commonly though erroneously attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. "The most high set the borders of the nations after the number of the angels of God" . . . and the phrase, "the angels presiding over each nation," having suggested this idea. It is fair to add that Mr. Johnston, though already known in literary circles as one of the few rising poets who still delight in classical scholarship, is not as yet more familiar with Blake than the average reader, and only offers the above suggestions in courteous answer to a request preferred privately, that he would make any note on Blake's names which his outside studies suggested to him.

Everyone who has looked at Blake has been struck with possible origins for this, that, and the other story, name, symbol, or poem. Some have gone so far as to maintain that Blake was a mere foolish patchwork of spoiled morsels, gathered with an ignorant hand from the treasure houses of all the great to whom he had access. Such is the burden of the only really clever article about him ever contributed to

a magazine. It is entitled "Imperfect Genius," and is to be found in the *Contemporary Review*. But the writer's ability was wasted in an attempt to overthrow Blake, just as that of Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Gilchrist, and Mr. Rossetti has been wasted in the attempt to raise him up, and for the same reason in every case. The critics had not read their author.

It has been happily remarked by John Stuart Mill that if we wish to estimate the value of an idea we should know its pedigree. But a knowledge of the pedigrees of Blake's names—that is to say, of the sources from which he borrowed those which he adopted, is of very little real use in reading his myths. He laid hands on all that came within his reach, and used them just when he thought they fitted his ideas. But he did not owe his ideas to the names any more than the present German Emperor owes the versatility of his interests to the many uniforms that he wears when visiting different nations, regiments, and ships.

A short list of some of the derivations suggested by the *Contemporary Review* may be added, partly for what value may be found in them, partly to reassure real readers of Blake who may be tempted to think that they have been remiss in not searching for similar suggestions in the attempt to understand him.

Urizen	from	Uri (light of the Lord)
Tiriel	„	Tel (will) and Tiria (fear)
Urthona	„	Uthorno (Ossian)
Leutha	„	Lutha (do.)
Oothoon	„	Oithona (do.)
Theotormon	„	Tonthormond (do.)
Bromiou	„	Brumo (do.)
Benython	„	Brenathon (do.)
Golgonooza	„	Gelchossa (do.)

While "random readings of newspapers" and "copies or anagrams of Greek words" are offered as the sources of Hyle, Enitharmon, Los, Orc, Antamon, Ariston, Mnetha, Kox, Bowen, Quantock, &c.

When it is understood that Blake had as much importance as any writer, ancient or modern, from whom he borrowed whenever he found a sentiment, a symbol or a syllable with which his visions agreed ; when it is felt that as the one great poet of mysticism he occupies a place to which no modern writer has even attempted to climb, then the search for agreements between his names or his phrases with those of older visionaries will have its place in Blakean study. So long as these researches or criticisms aim at finding out Blake as a fraudulent or foolish retailer of other men's wares, they will be worse than waste of time, for they will only cause the critics to drift further away from that enjoyment of the poet which is the gate that leads to his meaning, and is the experience without which there is no final test of his value.

To show in a table some of the more obvious qualities of sound, the following hasty selection from Blake's great list of names may be offered. It is intended to bring out the suggestions in the following syllables and letters—

M. or *N.* or *on* ; *maternal* or at least *dark* sound.

Th. *L.* *water*, with all symbolic uses.

S. *Z.* between *water* and *fire* ;—*light*
fire.

o. *u.* dark vowels.

a, *e,* *i* light vowels.

This is not a cryptic alphabet. No system of writing is to be sought in it. The letters are only to present the *sounds*, and the significance is to be sought in these. The sound-suggestion of some of the names, such as Golgonooza, almost defeats conjecture ; but the following, a mere selection, not an exhaustive list, lend themselves to the inquiry readily—

Mnetha	}	Mothers.
Enion		
Ona		
Enitharmon.		

Ololon The weeping girl who would sacrifice herself.

Oothoon	The girl who owned (and gave up to violence) "woman's secrecy." She did so from melancholy.		
Thel	The girl of the watery valley.		
Hela	The girl who led her blind father by her own light.		
Los	Between water and fire.		
Ore	Falling fire, energy and first son of Los.		
Sons of Los	Rintrah (South)	The furious Son of Los, light and fire.	
	Palambron (East)	Light and darkness mixed: reflected light or the moon.	
	Theotormon (West)	The watery and weeping; darkness by day; sunset.	
	Bromion (North)	Dark fire; the under-world.	
Zoas.	Urizen.	Fire.	Falling mind.
	Luvah.	Air.	Foaming heart.
	Tharmas.	Water.	Loins of instinct.
	Urthona.	Earth.	Loins of matter.
Sons of Urizen.	Fuzon	Fine	Rebellious mind.
	Tiriel	Air	Tyrannous heart.
	Utha	Water	Passive instinct.
	Grodna	Earth	Labouring matter.
Lentha.	The butterfly and flower.		
Sotha and Thiralatha.	Dwellers in the cave of the eye.		
Thulloh.	Dweller in the furrow of earth.		
Ethinthus.	Queen of waters.		
Elynitria.	Archeress with silver arrows.		
Manatha Vareyon.	The female and male golden eagles.		
Antamon.	The light water, the mental-maternal,—the Prince of the pearly dew, and former of bodily outline.		
Allamanda.	Rivers of nerves,—male power in light.		
Bowlahoola.	Rivers of blood,—female power in dark.		
Entuthon Benython.	Dark land of reason.		
Udan Adan.	Dark water of instinct, lit by its watery flame.		

ENGLISH NAMES OF THE ZOAS.

THE English names of the four Zoas, are ("Jerusalem," p. 59, l. 14), Verulam, London, York, Edinburgh. These names also correspond to those of the four or unseparated on or divisions of fourfold Los ("Jerusalem," p. 74, l. 2). Therefore we have, as definite equivalents, adding the four points of the compass—

S.	E.	W.	N.
Urizen,	Luvah,	Tharmas,	Urthona,
Rintrah,	Palamabron,	Theotormon,	Bromion,
Verulam,	London,	York,	Edinburgh.

But on p. 57, l. 1, four names are given, two of which are the same :

Bath, Canterbury, York, Edinburgh,
whose voices are heard mourning. Another quaternary is given, and then human forms mourn and tremble (p. 33, l. 12) :—

Battersea, Chelsea, London, Canterbury.
And in Milton (p. 40, l. 35) :—

London, Bath, Legions, Edinburgh.
While in "Jerusalem," p. 41, l. 1, we are told that Bath is Legions.

There is apparently some confusion among the symbols. We must remember that they came to Blake as part of the conversation of visionary persons—a manner of hearing one's own thoughts not common, though by no means difficult to bring about with the aid of symbols, among ordinary people who are not asleep and dreaming. Blake himself speaks to his own visions when their incoherence annoys him, as when

he bids Schofield state explicitly whether he is Bath or Canterbury.

Remembering that every Zoa is fourfold in himself, and each contains the others, just as each contains Beulah and Eden, and looking for hints of qualities, of States called by the name of their sub-divisions, we end by seeing that Urizen and Verulam ("Golden Verulam") and Rintrah, the lion of the golden mane, all belong to the south—the eyes, mental and masculine vigour.

But though Verulam is Urizen and Rintrah, he is mentioned in "Jerusalem," p. 38, l. 45, where he is invoked along with Canterbury, just after London is mentioned. The Zoas are all referred to in a kindly spirit, but in sadness they mourn. The name occurs merely as one of the four in whom Albion's friends "appeared fourfold," on p. 46, l. 24. This name usually suggests the evil aspect of intellect—cold reasoning, enemy of imagination; for on p. 67, l. 37, we learn that the Polypus of Generation has its head in Verulam. This is the Polypus consisting of all the male spectres, or reasoning impulses, joined in one eating cancer, "a polypus of roots of reasoning, doubt, despair, and death. Going forth and returning from Albion's rocks to Canaan, devouring Jerusalem from every nation of the earth." ("Jerusalem," p. 69, ll. 1, 5.) Thus, the association of the name with Bacon and his philosophy, Blake's especial aversion, is evident.

On p. 72, l. 2, Verulam is again mentioned to be associated with Rintrah, whose symbol, the lion, is a less horrible type of the Devourer, opposite of the Prolific, and always mentioned in contrast since the time of the writing of the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell."

The next is London, who stands for Luvah. This is evident, not merely because of his place in the list of names, but by several other signs. For example, Luvah of the East, like Tharmas of the West, belong to the symbol length and breadth, and have both a feminine quality as compared to Urizen, who stands for height and depth. The feminine

means the maternal, or by the same token, the material in man. The females are the weavers. Tears and blood, darkness and deceit, are the signs of the flesh, and the web of their loom. (Compare, amongst many other passages, *Vala*, Night I., ll. 58, 99; Night VIII., l. 84; "Jerusalem," p. 5, l. 34, p. 17, ll. 9, 21, ll. 11, 12, and p. 59, ll. 25 to 55.) This loom is the symbol of Luvah. ("Jerusalem," p. 95, l. 17.) The loom is associated with London. ("Jerusalem," p. 88, ll. 75, 76.) In the general marriage of symbols it here weds the furnace, for the two combined are the symbol of Vegetation, ever building, ever destroying, the apparent growth, the actual consumption. Vegetation and the body generally impeding the clear sight (in modern technical terms, clairvoyance) of the spirit is associated, as London is, with darkness, but darkness open to vision. ("Jerusalem," p. 5, l. 36.) Luvah's dark robes of blood, or cloud, were put on by Christ, the Divine Vision. Luvah is the East: the Heart. Again, he is connected with London by the building of the spiritual fourfold London on the Thames, outside the gate of the Human Heart. ("Jerusalem," p. 53, l. 15.) Besides all this, Luvah, when he became satanic, built the Tower of London. For more about Luvah, see "Albion and the Zoas."

Luvah, through his wine-press, through blood, and the French Revolution, and his assumption of the South, has a temporary association with Paris. ("Jerusalem," p. 63, l. 7.)

His connection with France is due to his position as a Victim (p. 66, l. 15). But the changing of places of Luvah and Urizen, the work of building a temple in the likeness of the human heart undertaken by Urizen in the Satanic void ("Jerusalem," p. 58, l. 44) of the East, left vacant by Luvah's assumption of the South, causes London as well as Verulam to stand for Urizen with regard to some of his attributes and some portion of his adventures or history. The Satanic void is the wilderness and waste of Moral Law (p. 24, l. 24). But that London, though most emphatically fourfold, as are

all the four, is essentially under the cardinal point East (Luvah's world), is shown by the association of its darker aspect with Babylon, and the Thames with Euphrates. Jerusalem's maternal anguish (for both she and Vala were mothers of Albion's sons ("Jerusalem," p. 5, ll. 46, 47, 61, and 64, and p. 65, l. 70), led her East into the "false centro," when she was hid on the Thames, as a result of her going to Babylon. All this is, in symbolic language, a description of the philosophic connection between Reason, Law (or Morality), and Selfishness, and the rooting of all three in the subjection to the five senses,—a state the direct contrary of the Liberty conferred by the "enlarged and numerous senses" belonging to the gifts of Imagination, with its actually, though not nominally, moral development into Brotherhood and Forgiveness. Compare the following:—

Eastward to Babylon. ("Jerusalem," p. 82, l. 36.)

Babylon on Euphrates (p. 89, l. 38, p. 84, l. 8, p. 83, l. 84).

Babylon in London (p. 74, l. 24).

Reason and Morality (p. 74, ll. 10, 14).

Babylon, Rational Morality (p. 74, l. 32, and p. 24, l. 24).

Natural Morality and Religion, Urizen's world (p. 66, ll. 1 to 15).

Loom of Locke (p. 15, l. 15). The Veil woven there (p. 22, l. 34).

London, Jerusalem, and the Centre or East (p. 72, l. 28, p. 88, l. 52).

The summing up of all this is to be found on p. 93, ll. 18 to 25.

These considerations, along with the story of the struggle between Albion, aided by Urizen and Luvah, and the mingling of their spectres, as analyzed in the chapter on Albion and the Zoas, will be enough (though it would be easy to cite more examples) to show why London is Luvah, yet has qualities of Urizen.

London is also a name for Palamabron, the Luvah—son of Los and ruler of Night.

The further allusions to London in "Jerusalem" are the following:—P. 5, ll. 3, 36; p. 8, l. 27; p. 15, l. 21; p. 16, l. 14; p. 24, ll. 42, 43; p. 29, l. 19; p. 30, l. 23; p. 31, ll. 14, 28, 42; p. 32, l. 4; p. 33, l. 12; p. 38, ll. 29, 40, 43; p. 41, l. 9; p. 42, l. 50; p. 43, l. 70; p. 46, l. 24; p. 53, l. 19; p. 57, picture; p. 58, ll. 3, 45; p. 59, l. 14; p. 63, l. 35; p. 65, ll. 13, 33; p. 66, l. 64; p. 72, l. 28; p. 73, l. 51; p. 74, ll. 3, 16; p. 77, verse-line 45; p. 79, ll. 22, 24; p. 82, ll. 56, 76; p. 83, ll. 23, 68; p. 84, l. 11.

The different suburbs of London are used also as symbols, with meanings corresponding to their quarters, divided under North, South, East, and West.

What has been said of London as a whole applies to Canterbury, used as an Eastern symbol, and referring sometimes to the religious Urizen, when he had gone East, and sometimes to Luvah.

The references are few. "Jerusalem," p. 17, l. 59; p. 33, l. 12; p. 38, l. 45; p. 41, l. 6; p. 57, l. 1; p. 63, l. 35; p. 65, l. 39.

York is hardly spoken of. It stands under Tharmas, and appears so far connected with Canterbury as Luvah is with Tharmas, through the Incarnation and Crucifixion, which had to do with their spectres. The first page of "Milton" especially refers to the share of Tharmas. Perhaps the symbols were chosen on account of the Archbishoprics. York is also a name for Theotormon. Compare "Milton," p. 20, l. 38. See "Jerusalem," p. 16, l. 44; p. 38, l. 51; p. 46, l. 24; p. 57, picture; p. 59, l. 14; p. 66, l. 65; p. 73, l. 51; p. 74, l. 3.

Bath is a name requiring more consideration on account of the varying and paradoxical manner in which it is used.

It stands sometimes for Tharmas (in "Jerusalem," p. 17, l. 59), and sometimes for seventeen cities, and for the Generate, or crucified Luvah. Bath and Canterbury being East and West, belong in a general way to the feminine level line, the serpent.

Bath is Benevolent ("Jerusalem," p. 40, l. 61).

Bath is Legions, the best and worst, physician and poisoner. P. 41, l. 1.

Bath is invoked with Bristol (Western port). P. 43, l. 55.

Bath speaks faintly, as the dead in the house of death. P. 44, l. 44.

Bath is a healing city; wisdom in poetic fervour, in Western porch. It is the seventeenth, and the seventeen conjoin, and the other ten shine manifest in him. P. 45.

Bath.—Luvah was nailed to Albion's tree in Bath, which connects the healing springs with the "brook of Tyburn's river." P. 65, l. 5.

Bath.—Soft deluding odours, revealed presently as Vala, arise from Bath. P. 65, l. 65.

Bath.—Coban dwelt in Bath (Albion's third son). P. 71, l. 26.

In "Milton" Bath has the place of Luvah, and Legions of Bath in the quaternary, London, Bath, Legions, and Edinburgh, given as the four pillars of Albion's throne. ("Milton," p. 40, l. 35.) This is perhaps a clerical error. The list should probably have been Verulam, London, Bath (or) Legions, and Edinburgh. If the original MS. of "Milton" could be found anywhere, an inspection of the first rough draft would, not improbably, reveal an error of copying in the engraved book.

Bath is, therefore, in some respects the true Tharmas, and has a quality of Ariston, the true tongue. The idea of healing springs, struggling with the idea of the evil delusion produced by the "sense of touch" and the uncertainty characteristic of water ("Vala," Night IV., l. 135), may have produced the complex vision whose description is so confusing to the reader.

With regard to Edinburgh there is no difficulty, and very little that is interesting. It remains a mere name for Urthona, or Bromion, used for its Northern suggestion a few times, and quietly dropped. See "Jerusalem," p. 16, l. 64; p. 21, l. 39; p. 38, l. 51; p. 57, l. 1; p. 59, l. 14; p. 66, l. 64; p. 73, l. 51; p. 74, l. 8.

The reason why Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, Urthona, is the

order of the Zoas, and Rintrah, Palamabron, Theotormon, Bromion, that of the four unvegetated sons of Los, who correspond to them in Los's fourfold nature, is evident. The points of the compass to which they belong do not indicate it. They are South, East, West, North. The significance of the order is that it indicates Head, Heart, Loins. The latter region is double, and implies both water and earth,—both procreation and excretion, both vegetation and death. In Blake, however, the symbol of loins is divided into desire and fruition in the world of mortality. Eternal desire is in every region. Tharmas is the watery tongue that belongs to the sense of touch. Urthona is the receptive ear, that takes in and generates in the mind the living word. So the list of equivalents and their developments is as follows. Each is, in its way, alternately the prolific and the devourer :—

Urizen.	Luvah.	Tharmas.	Urthona.
Head.	Heart.	Loins.	Loins.
Eyes.	Nostrils.	Tongue.	Ear.
South.	East.	West.	North.
Height and depth.	Length and breadth.	Length and breadth.	Height and depth.
Fire.	Air.	Water.	Earth.
To the Zenith.	To the centre.	To the circumference.	To the Nadir.
Intellect.	Love.	Instinct.	Procreation.
Painting.	Poetry.	Music.	Architecture.
Eternal Science.	Eternal enthusiasm.	Eternal destruction.	Temporal Science.
Restriction.	Sacrifice.	Prohibition.	Liberty.
Negation of mind.	Negation of mind.	Negation of mind.	Negation of the negation of mind or prophecy.

The sequence Head, Heart, Loins deserves to be noted, as every triad has appropriate relations with it, and with its connection with the Zoas.

Creation, Redemption, Judgment,
is the great triad; but even here the last member is double, and the first two change places in this world, as Urizen and Luvah do. A few equivalents, written under each other, show the triad in various phases :—

Head.	Heart.	Loins.	Loins.
Creation.	Redemption.	Judgment.	Regeneration.
Male.	Female.	Sexual sorrow.	Sexual release.

Desire of Love.	Desire of Pride.	Desire of pleasure.	Self-annihilation.
Envy.	Revenge.	Cruelty of law.	Cruelty of indignation.
Wrath.	Pity.	Concealment.	Friendship.

All these contain female portions within them, which are sometimes separate, and are seen in this mortal world as :—

Cruel tears.	Deceitful tears.	Uncertain tears.	Loving tears or blood.
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Whereas they ought to be :—

Mid-day clouds.	Morning dew.	Evening dew.	Oblivion or Lethe.
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They become :—

Snow.	Burning lakes of Bitumen.	Waves.	Forge-water.
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Three of the four Zons having ceased to fulfil their eternal functions of :—

Ploughman, Weaver, Shepherd, and Blacksmith, become lawgivers in a bad sense—that is to say, they are that law which is the “strength of sin” in the Bible, and that Accusation which is Satan. The fourth always restores the balance, and gets the best good out of worst evil.

Joy forbidding.	Peace forbidding.	Quiet forbidding.	Forbidding of Prohibition.
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The contrary of their natural characters, as :—

Childhood.	Manhood.	Age.	Gate of Heaven.
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STORIES OF THE ZOAS.

ALL the Zoas go through similar experiences. Their story is that of man. They begin by containing a female element. This passes outside of them and is seen by them. They desire its love. But it desires dominion. A struggle occurs. The female is cast down and wounded. Then the male falls. He becomes mere selfishness and ambition, and thus exaggerates the faults of the female. Finally they are re-united. They enter eternity where there is no marriage, and therefore no contest and no destruction.

In their commencement they arise in two ways. They are grown up from eternity, but in their divided state they become children. They are also one another's parents. All this is seemingly nonsense, but as the Zoas stand for states through which man passes, and as these states do truly both exist from eternity, and generate themselves, each other, and their opposites, it is good myth-making.

Urizen.

Albion (in whose rocky shore of experience all things begin and end) melted in bliss at high noon, upon the bosom of Vala, then his wife. Their first child was Urizen (who fell when Albion fell) into being the god of the five, not the "enlarged and numerous senses." Vala, who had been simply a goddess of the region of loins, now through Albion's love for her, began to belong to the region of the heart. She appeared in a double form. Albion recoiled and called the enormity Luvah and Vala. Urizen grew up in Beulah (the south, the zenith is toward Beulah, with its symbol, eyes, vision, and its old meaning, marriage), and Albion had many sons and daughters and forgot eternity, surrounded by them.

(They became his "worst enemies," as in the ballad, stanza 21, "Jerusalem," p. 27.)

Luvah then conferred with Urizen in the night to murder Albion. The story, so far, is in "Vala," Night VII., l. 237, &c. They attempted to be more than man; they became less. Night IX., l. 704.

The struggle ended as told in Night IX., l. 359, &c., after long and curious episodes, which only partly belong to Urizen's story, and are analyzed in the chapter on Albion and the Zoas.

Urizen's symbol is the Sun. The sun sets and is made over again during the night. In the morning he is new. Urizen does not lose his identity, but Los, Time, gives him a body organized in a shape suited to endure the night, and to be cast off when he becomes new in the morning. Los made him in his furnaces, where things enter southwards and are driven out northwards. This making, or binding of the changes of Urizen, is analyzed elsewhere, and told in the "Book of Urizen," and in "Vala," Night IV., l. 198.

At the end of this period Urizen is completely organized. This, however, is not his birth or origin, in so far as he is a personage with a story, but occurs late in his biography.

Before this he married Ahania, and had for first-born son, Fuzon. There is a close relationship between his story and that of Los, and Enitharmon, and their son Orc.

Urizen, like Los, was jealous of his son. As Los bound Orc to a rock, so Urizen tried to kill Fuzon with a rock, which he fired into his bosom. Their reason was the same. Orc tried to obtain his father's wife and murder his father. Fuzon rebelled, cast a flame out to divide the cold lust of Urizen, Ahania, who upheaved as a disk. Enitharmon, Los's Pity, had appeared as a globe of blood. The Moon is seen more clearly, and, as it were pictorially, in Urizen's disk. The red moon is symbolically a drop of blood and equivalent to the red sun of sunset or dawn.

Fuzon, like Orc, is the furious passion of his father, and

tends to absorb the tender passion, the feminine, which is its mother. The mental origin of both is jealous of the influence of the furious over the tender, and conceals the tender, and binds or slays the furions.

Urizen's rock is nothing less than the Table of the Law.

The story of Fuzon and Urizen is told in the "Book of Ahania." In the end Fuzon, after his visage is darkened by the rock that enter his bosom, suffers crucifixion, and we recognize in him the Sacrifice of Sacrifices in one division of His infinite varieties.

After this Ahania goes wandering round the tree, lamenting on the margin of nonentity. In "Vala," Night III., l. 114, we find Ahania cast out by Urizen, fleeing from before his throne, where she has been relating a vision to him. In the passage that follows she is defined as his counterpart. He is (in "Jerusalem") the great Architect and taskmaster. She is (in "Vala") the "feminine indolent bliss, the indulgent self of weariness."

Here, as elsewhere, the feminine means something like what is called the "natural man." For being such she is cast out when she endeavours to dominate the better portion, "the active masculine virtue." In line 124 of this third Night, l. 13 of p. 34, "Jerusalem," will be recognized. Albion is less stern than Urizen, but his rebuke to Vala is much the same as that of Urizen to Ahania. Vala is, to Albion, the "image of his repose" (p. 34, l. 1).

But by the law "without contraries there is no progression" Urizen cannot rightly live and act alone. He fell ("Vala," Night III., l. 136). He was broken to pieces by his fall, and from his fragments (l. 161) Tharmas emerged.

This change must be passed over for the moment to trace Urizen's story. His fall is mentioned in several places, and a comparison of the passages will be found to explain the idea contained in the myth, without more comment.

In "Jerusalem" (p. 65, l. 12, as in "Vala," VII., p. 655) is a detailed account of what is called Urizen's hosts down

rushing, &c. The phrase following, beginning, "Now, now the battle rages round thy tender limbs, Oh, Vala!" gives another equivalent for Tharmas emerging from Urizen's ruins after his fall. This fall has to do with his "becoming a spectre, entering into the Reasoning power," as the other Zoas did. ("Jerusalem," p. 74, l. 8.) So long ago as when the "Song of Liberty" was written at the end of the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (pp. 15-16), some vision of Urizen's fall had been seen. In the last page of "America" it is told of again. In "Ahanian," chapter II., the rock that falls on Sinai is really Urizen. In the next chapter we simply hear that "when Urizen shrank away from Eternals he sat on a rock."

The book of "Urizen" begins with his entrance into this rock, and of the developments that took place there. Chapter VIII. of this book begins with his exploring the dens into which the early account of the Song of Liberty says he had descended. But before he could explore, Urizen was bound by Los to a form in which he could labour in the night. ("Urizen," chapter IV., and "Vala," Night IV., l. 198, &c.)

"Vala" gives, before Urizen's exploration and journey, a hint of his contest with Luvah, a phase of the struggle (which is also a part of his casting out of Ahanian), frequently referred to in "Jerusalem," when it is woven into the story of Albion. Here Albion is not mentioned. Everything is done among the "States" themselves. ("Vala," chapter V., p. 43, &c.) Of Urizen's wandering we are told in "Vala," Night VI., from the beginning, and his fall is more minutely described. In Night VII. Urizen visits Orc, and their arguments from another portion of the great fight with Luvah, for Orc is Luvah in the world of generation, and there (in Urthona's northern region) they are met. The contest is re-visioned in "America," and referred to in "Europe." A detail, or extra vision, of his contest with Orc, under widely different symbolic form, is his contest with Milton. But in this war Milton (by his poetry that exalts the Urizen-like

conception of God) gives life, while Urizen (in this conception) gives (to Milton's poetry) death.

Not till mortal things are consumed, and Mystery with them; not till all tyranny is cut off from the face of the earth, does Urizen recover from his fall. The last descent of descents had brought him down to a dragon-form. (Night VIII., p. 415.) At the end of this Night, Ahania's voice is heard again. Finally, when (as in "America") fire has passed over everything, Urizen himself—having given up age and tyranny—becomes youthful, happy, and having then shed a tear over Ahania, who has died of joy (Night IX., l. 167), he arises, meets the Lord in the flames ("Vala," IX., l. 284), and finally puts on his true form and goes to his true work with renewed energy and ardour. ("Vala," IX., l. 305, &c.) He also arose in Albion's rising and went to his furrow ("Jerusalem," p. 95, ll. 5-15.) Then Ahania presently rises from the dead and joins him in happiness. ("Vala," IX., l. 341.)

Although Urizen, happy and useful in Eternity, or in Imagination, cold and scientific when fallen, is most clearly the human Reason, or Intellect, yet in no part of the story is his symbol, the Sun, entirely lost to sight, or Blake's theory, that mind is the only reality and also the darkest deception. Urizen is essentially Light, and is God, in so far as God is Light. But his darkness is essentially Satanic, especially when it is a darkness consisting of a claim that there is no other light but that of his symbol the sun. Then he is a false God: "*that is Satan,*" said Blake briefly to Crabb Robinson, referring to the sun over their heads, and adding that it was the Greek Apollo. Crabb Robinson, who seems never to have looked below the outer appearance of Blake's utterances, meekly noted in his diary, "He was not always thus wild." But Blake could have gone on and told him that the materialists, who trace life and mind to the sun, are so far right that his eternal form, renewed to us daily, is given by the Source of all mind to excite, and produce, and build the temporary portion of our

minds, and to plant the seeds of the eternal, or imaginative portion. But it is Urizen's ambition to pass for the totality. Then, through him, Nature teaches that limited thing, Natural Philosophy and Natural Religion, the belief that God dwells in matter—"the dreary void"—not in imagination the real seat of existence, and so produces all the religious and moral ties and laws that have pestered the earth.

Luvah.

The story of Luvah is somewhat simpler than that of Urizen. He is the Genius or Prince of Love. He is first discovered by Albion as a portion of Vala, who is also the genius of love, in the feminine or material world, symbolically, Albion's loins.

After Albion has fallen into the power of Vala, Luvah attempts to gain dominion over him, and even to murder him. Murder applies to the imaginative portion. He gives Vala a knife of flint to cut round Albion's brain, that only the portion of it that is "dead," or given over to morality, the five senses and reason, may remain.

But Vala's own origin is from Luvah. She first emanated from him, and he brought her up from birth till she became a dragon, and presently, when he was cast into the furnaces of affliction and sealed, she delighted in his sufferings and fed the furnaces with fire. This is the episode corresponding to Ahania's attempt to dominate Urizen, and to the "two wills" of Los and Enitharmon. Luvah fell from Vala, far as the "cast and west," for as Orc in America he is west, as the Satanic Urizen, the mixed Guardian Prince, he is east. Vala shrunk from him. Her shrinkage and her wounds from Albion's sons, afterwards correspond with Los smiting Enitharmon, and Urizen casting down Ahania, and Albion rising and turning his back on Vala.

A curious cross-sacrifice follows. Albion's sons, who are in the aggregate his reason and his egotistic will, kill Luvah, and in doing so, kill Vala, their mother. (Jerusalem is also their

mother, but Jerusalem and Vala are one, a double female, composed of light, imagination, or Jerusalem, and shadow, experience, or Vala, both being composed of love and maternity.) Then the sacrificing, slaughtering sons mingle—such is the law—with their victim, and become Luvah. Their satanic portion mixing with him causes him to “enter the state called Satan.” As a sacrifice he was in the state called Christ. But neither of these are properly states, for one is life itself and one is death itself.

As part of the fallenness of Albion’s fallen self, he worships Luvah when in the mild portion of the satanic state, seeing in him the “Man of Sorrows.” Luvah entered this portion by mingling with Urizen in the East. He had already left the East, and it was void. But Nature is void, Satan is nature, and the satanic Luvah was still in the void, the heart, though Luvah was in the south,—the eyes and mind.

Urizen had been plotting with him to enslave man. Urizen had given him the South, and himself had gone to the North where he had become cold, deceitful, satanic. Thence in the forms of priesthood he had gone to the east and spread himself through the tree of Mystery to which Luvah had been nailed for six thousand years. Thus Urizen, as darkness, not as light, mingled his tears with Luvah’s serpent form.

It was in a serpent form that Luvah was nailed to the tree, bound round with vegetation, for he was generated, and in being generated was known under the name of Orc, who is the rage of Love, as Luvah (originally) was its sweetness.

But in the generative world the sweetness of love is poison. The cup as well as the knife are instruments of death. The sweetness of love as well as its jealousy, tends to cut man off from the free range of his imagination, in whose expansiveness alone he can find life and God.

Luvah with the cloudy Urizen in him attempted to gain dominion over Albion. It was a portion of the “assumed power” of the “primal priest.” This is told in the chapter “Albion and the Zoas.”

The satanic division of Luvah and the Palamabron division are in contest with one another,—naturalism and poetry,—in "Milton," early pages, and "Vala," VIII., 376, &c.

As Orc, Luvah tears forth from Albion's Loins, which contain the Loins of Los, and by his satanic or materialistic or Druid interpretation of Orc's fury, he spreads war everywhere, produces the French Revolution, becomes Franco, makes the American war, and ruins imagination for the time on all sides.

The story of Luvah's birth as Orc is told as part of the history of Urthona. Christ when he left the east put on Luvah's red robes that he might put them off, and so he first organized, then ended the satanic tyranny that outor nature exorcises over human imagination.

Finally, Urizen who had attempted to dominate Luvah, and Luvah who had tried to dominate all, ceased their warfare. Urizen, who had brought him to justice for slaying Tharmas,—see Story of Tharmas,—now let him, as Orc, rage till he consumed himself. Then his fury became a god-like wine served at the eternal feasts. Then Vala was reconciled to Luvah and all were happy.

The explanation of the changes is simple, but not the less cumbersome, told in any but mythic form.

Love, originally a feeder of imagination, becoming a feeder of sensation, allies itself with nature to dominate man. Man, whose mind had already sunk to the level of natural requirements, proceeded to dominate love by reason and morality. Finally man perceived that this warfare of dominion was all wrong. He let love go free. Love ceased to dominate to reason. Both became his servants, each resuming its station, Reason serving imagination, and passion serving brotherhood by becoming the self-sacrificing heart of Tenderness.

That Man's loins should be feminine (Vala) is a way of saying that they join him with nature. That Luvah is generated as Orc, a dragon, and that Christ puts on his robes

of blood, identifies Christ and Orc. But this is the mythic equivalent for the saying that Christ "by his maternal birth" is "that Evil One." Christ put on the temporal body, which is Satan, on purpose that it might be consumed, and the "spiritual body revealed." ("Vala," Night VIII., p. 262.) Poetry puts on nature that nature may be revealed as the great storehouse of symbolism, without which language is dumb.

Tharmas.

Tharmas, whose symbol is water, whose region is the west, where night begins, whose nature is that of instinctive growth and of nourishment, like all the other Zoas has two commencements to his life of adventure. At first he is seen darkening in the west, separating from his emanation, becoming a dragon, driving Enion away, and following her with tears when he has lost her.

His evil nature is that of doubt, of uncertainty. He tends to be too easily jealous and too easily miserable. He loses his sweetest joy (Enion) and then knows that he was a fool to do so. Unlike Urizen his tears are not evil in themselves, nor deceitful, for it is not his original function and duty to be a shining fire. Enion of old was his garden. He watered her. She responded in growth and beauty.

He falls into a rage because he cannot bring love into the light. But to do so,—light being mind, not instinct,—is beyond his power. Just as Luvah, whose business it is to be mild, and to serve, attempted dominion in his spectrous error, and Urizen, whose province is inspired enthusiasm, tried with demonic persistence to form man to his image by tears, so Tharmas in the time of his fallen and evil character, must needs be the reverse of himself.

His corresponding type among the four ungenerate sons of Los is Theotormon, whose life with Oothoon is a division, an offshoot, a detail of the life of Tharmas and Enion.

Like the others his union was fruitful. His first children

were Los and Enitharmon. Seen as mortals see these figures under the attribute which has to do with mortal things, we have the idea expressed that instinctive growth was the father of Time and Space. Certainly this mortal meaning is gone when the day of growth is over.

Like the other Zoas, Tharmas quarrels with his son. Both the children almost kill the mother by forcing her to nourish them. This is another and western form of the attack on Enitharmon made afterwards by Orc.

When Urizen is going to the North he passes Tharmas, freezing his waves. Enthusiasm on its way to become restrictive dogmatic, moral, and "Druid" religion goes to the house of nourishment, and checks its life, or (to change the metaphor) to the house of uncertainty, and reduces it to a dead changelessness.

Tharmas attempts to shame Urizen, but does not succeed. The spectre of Urthona, the shadow of the gate of life and death, stopped him as he fled with the food that should have nourished the mistaken spectre of inspiration.

After practically disappearing in the second Night of "Vala," Tharmas emerges in the third from the ruins of fallen Urizen, who, with false tears, had entered the place and nature of Luvah to enslave Albion. This compound, this Luvah-Urizen-Tharmas, fell as far as the east and west, and the western part of his fall broke up Tharmas, for Albion shut the gate of the instinctive entrance into his own spirit, and thereby at the same time caused Tharmas to be destroyed and turned into a mere fleshly sense, and forbidden to rejoice even in that character. He was broken on the altars of rock in Mexico when America was shut out.

Thus it is that Albion killed three of the four Zoas, as Los truly said. Why he did not kill all four will be seen in the story of Urthona.

Tharmas, as a spectre, being despair, his emanation or counterpart is hope. She is lost when Time and Space have taken her strength. She only returns to life when she ceases

to wish to live in time and space, for here is no hope. Tharmas without her, being despair, his spectre is the image of eternal death. So also is Luvah's spectre, being Satan, or nature. Mindlessness, or nature, is as much death as hopelessness, or despair. Thus the East and West are joined by the level line, the serpent on his belly.

But Vala, being the loins of Albion, in whose bosom all things begin and end, for he is the Eternal Man, is the mother of mothers. Tharmas and Enion are her children. They are born of her gentle pleasures, they are found in her garden. She is happy with them before her evil destiny leads her, like the rest, to turn into her own opposite, and become Rahab, or morality, that negative and mindless imposture which pretends to be religious, while it only has to do with the body that is food for worms, and needs no religion.

Urthona.

Urthona is the name of Los, but Los is not exactly limited to being Urthona, who is, in fact, only his shadow, when he once comes to his full power.

But he falls, as the others do, and rises again from his fall. This, as the first page of "Vala" tells us, is the subject of that entire poem.

His fall is into divisions. The fall of Albion, his friend, is into error. They rise together, and are practically identified as portions of one another.

But Los in particular is that part of Albion which wakes while the other part sleeps; just as in "Milton" we are told that the shadow of Satan woke while his spectre slept.

Los is the Spirit of Prophecy, and as such enters into Blake, and becomes one with him. Thus, a portion of the story of Los is personal to the author. A few coincidences of phrase and parallelisms of suggestion in the Truchsessan letter written just after he left Felpham, in "Milton," and in "Vala," Night VII., suggest what portion of his married experience Blake turned into an "ornament," perceiving it to have

symbolic visions. That he so treated his experiences at the hands of critics and friends we know, on his own authority. With regard to Enitharmon, the Emanation of Los, a singular phrase is used that is not employed to describe any other emanation. "Enitharmon is the vegetated mortal wife of Los,—his Emanation, yet his wife till the sleep of death is past." ("Jerusalem," p. 14, l. 13.)

The importance of this is very slight from the point of view of general interpretation. Blake's great object in writing was far above a mere desire to poetise or symbolize the struggle between the higher and lower natures in himself, or between the impulses of his temperament and the claims of his wife. The Female in his poems is always the great Mother whose shadow is Nature and whose light is Pity and Love. The Male was always the great Father, whose shadow is Division and whose light is Unity. Division means creation, redemption, judgment,—the whole world's history, reached through the Female, whose ultimate sexual symbol is division. It leads to all the Selfhoods, and to Satan, the great Self. But Unity means Regeneration, the mingling of all bodily experiences into one great mental experience which is free from the imputation of sin, and survives all mortality.

How small a part of this great Male and Female was found at home by Blake need hardly be said. Yet, when he comes to speak of every sub-division, he does so with the impartial emphasis of a mind to whom nothing small is therefore contemptible, who laid down the law that he who would do good must do it in minute particulars, and who even claimed no less for the most minute than that it always contained the most grand.

Though the story of Urthona,—or Los,—is scattered through many books, it is found with peculiar completeness in *Vala*, since the whole poem is described as taking this story for its theme.

Los, by his sympathetic relationship to Albion and to Humanity, passes with Albion through changes which cause him to become all the Zoas in succession, and each of their stories is his story.

Story of Urthona in BOOK OF VALA.

Having said, in the first lines of Vala, that he will sing the fall of Los into division, and his rise into unity, the author proceeds:—"Begin with 'Tharmas.'" Thus, Tharmas is to be understood as being, in a certain sense, a division of Los, and also as his real self when he enters into that division. In the same way the Spectre of Urthona having entered into Los's bosom, says to him, "Look on me not as another, but as thy real self." ("Vala," IX., 344.)

No sooner do we begin with 'Tharmas' than we find that he becomes the father of both Los and Enitharmon, whose infant forms appear as children of Enion, Tharmas having separated from her sufficiently to return to her as her husband. Presently Los and Enitharmon grew old enough to love, and to be jealous of each other. Then "Vala" tells us of Luvah and Vala flying up from the human heart into the brain,—or, which is the same thing, taking the horses of Urizen; or again, which is the same (though we do not reach the narrative till the third night), claiming the worship of Albion and smiting him. This is the effort of the separated "Female Will," or that of emotions arising from nature. This "will" is therefore a thing that does not exist in Eternity. It is also called Pity seeking Dominion. This dominion is sought by pity because of jealousy.

The male and female powers contended. Los smote Enitharmon on the earth, as Urizen cast down Ahania, and Tharmas flung Enion on the rocks, and Luvah, as Albion's spectrous family, victimized Vala, who had once shut him in the furnaces.

Then in "Vala," Night I., Los tells Enitharmon that their purpose is to draw the Lamb of God into a mortal form.

Then began a struggle between Los and Urizen, whom the smitten Enitharmon called to her aid. She is jealousy calling for law, desiring to name it Religion. For Urizen is in the North, the world of Urthona, and Luvah in the South.

Urizen, however, was in his furious mood. As a rage, he is

intellectual destruction of all which does not belong to the five senses, just as in his mild aspect he is the restrainer by tearful religion of all that does so belong.

The result of his arrival now was that he preached pleasure, so long as it was unprophetic, for in Los's world he is always Los's opposite.

Los instantly threw his arms round Enitharmon.

Then Mortality had its free course in all the world. Jerusalem was in ruins. Luvah and Urizen plotted to keep man more and more bound to earth, Enitharmon entered the power of Tharmas, and all the Zoas fell together to the false centre, each into his own egotism, and all into that of man.

So ends the first night of "Vala,"—continuous as a narrative if looked at as part of the story of Los, but not otherwise.

In Night II. the Urizen in Los erects the furnaces with which Los ultimately binds Urizen to his own bones. Luvah is cast into the furnaces and sealed,—that is to say, he is, as another phrase has it, "in the loins of Los a dark and furious death." Luvah is now the unborn son of Los, who will presently issue forth as Orc.

Meanwhile the mental history of Los, the constructor of systems, who would not have any man's but his own, is told under the name of Urizen. Los's loins and head are too far divided. The one is all Luvah, the other all Urizen. His heart is void, for he has fallen into selfhood, and here his mind erects an elaborate temple.

The description over, the story of Los goes on under his own name. He and Enitharmon go down to see the sorrows of Luvah and Vala, and to draw in their delights.

But (after a parenthesis continuing the description of Urizen's work) we learn that Los and Enitharmon were drawn down by their desires. A subtle interchange of personalities takes place. Since Enitharmon called for Urizen, she takes on the image of his emanation, Ahania, and then with her own voice accuses Los of embracing Ahania's image. She will then fly to Urizen; but Los, who has already felt that she had deserted

him, decides to follow her by entering Urizen's bosom through jealousy and revenge. Thus he will, as Urizen, embrace Enitharmon, while, as himself, only Ahania is in his power. Having died of this struggle,—revenge being deadly to him who takes revenge, Enitharmon, returning to her first form as Pity (for such the book of Urizen tells us she was), revives Los to life with a song.

So Los lived, and absorbed into his fires the moist or maternal nature further, whether it was seen as the airy and dewy Ahania, or the deep dark sea of Enion, so that nothing was left of them separate.

So ends the second Night of Vala.

In Night III. we return to Urizen, and, as is to be expected, learn in more detail of Ahania. She, being outcast, tells the tale of Luvah-Urizen, that is, Urizen in the loins, or North, assuming dominion over man. Urizen then casts her down, for he sees beneath her narrative her own attempt to dominate him. Then Urizen fell, and from his fall Tharmas emerged, which repeats in other symbols the separation from Enitharmon and the spectrous state of Los, followed by his return to her in amorous passion. But Tharmas misses Enion, who is absorbed by Los.

So ends the third Night. In Night IV. Los and Enitharmon, who were drawn down to the abyss by their desires, have so gathered strength there that they emerge brightly before Tharmas. He meets them, and a contest between him and Los ensues. It is what may be called the retrospective form of the enmity of which we shall soon hear, between Los and Orc. Tharmas was the father of Los, Orc his son. Both are potencies of the loins; and watery, fiery Los, as the Spectre of the living, has to struggle with both, as he stands between them,—the North between the West and East.

Los's story, as told by himself, contains his own birth under another symbol. He issued to the air, an obscure shadow, from the nostrils of Enion. This was the form of him as divided from Enitharmon. It is entirely spectrous.

Tharmas then bids Los re-build the furnaces of Urizen. Los does so, and Enitharmon suffered, for though wrapped in clouds the iron chain that bound Urizen as Los fixed his changes, (beating the links in his own renewed furnaces,) became a chain of sorrow, and lashed on her limbs.

Here a new symbol detaches itself from the story where all is symbolic, and we see Space, as Enitharmon, suffering the blows of mutability, dealt by the chain of nights and days which drags man from the indefinite and forces him through the developments of experience into the second, the post-mortal immortality.

Urizen is named as "enslaved Humanity." It is enslaved to the shape it impels imagination to put on it. Into this form or shadow of that ultimate Human Form which will deliver it from slavery, Los entered, becoming what he beheld, and so is openly identified with Urizen, and not, as hitherto, by implication.

Night V. begins with another form of the close tie that exists between Los and Enitharmon. Los is infected and mad with the spectrous slavery of Urizen. But Enitharmon clings round his knees. He is shrunken and unexpansive now,—both are concrete. She likes him better so. She knows where he is and that he cannot elude her embrace.

Then Luvah became king of rage and death: Urizen cast darkness round him. Dark Urthona wept and divided. That is to say, Orc was born.

Then Los began to fear lest he should be entirely drawn down into generation by the power of pity, reason, and wrath and desire. He therefore began to build a city called Golgo-nooza, or art.

Orc, however, that "youthful fire," began to attempt incest with his mother and murder on his father, that both might be made to enter his dominion and give up all that belongs to Eternal life.

Los therefore bound him to a rock. In doing so he brought him into communication with Urizen, whom he had bound to

a system. Orc's first lament in captivity is uttered by the being most unlike him, except as being also deprived of freedom. Urizen's woes are heard from Urthona's dens. That is to say, the mind of Los bewails the necessity that obliges man to chain up the most lovable part of himself, his desires and enthusiasms, which, while they must not die, must not drag him entire into their life, lest it should be his death.

But since, "when thought is closed in caverns, love shows roots in deepest hell," Urizen resolves to explore his dens, and Los in the intellectual side or phase of the prophetic spirit, questions the darkness of materiality.

In Night VI. of "Vala" the story continues in the person of Urizen. He wanders exploring his dens. He meets and speaks to his daughters, his soft affections. But they hide from his eyes in rocky forms,—from his spiritual eyes in concrete shapes, bodily, and formal, logical. He curses them that they may curse their instincts (Tharmas), and their poetic impulses (Los). He meets and contests with Tharmas, and decides to make a world for Los of groans, shrieks, and all sounds of pain and sorrow. (Symbolically, it will be remembered, the Ear corresponds to Urthona's northern region. Night I., l. 14.) Such is the service rendered by a purely rational view of life to the prophetic power.

Going through the fourfold regions, the four cardinal points, for Los is fourfold, Urizen sees all the inhabitants that should be beautiful and happy, in every state of mental suffering.

Finally he flings himself into the void, and falls just as Los (in the "Book of Los") is described as falling when he first broke out of the black marble, symbol of Urizen in North, or darkened intellectual Sun, which was his dwelling place.

Urizen falls into slime, from which he is re-born, and goes his weary journey again in a world of cumbrous wheels. After a second circle he comes to where he hears Orc. He is in the real "world of Los," is in the midst of these four regions that "remain chaotic." But they are none the less regions of fourfold Los. At the end of this sixth night the

amalgamation, if it may be so called, of Urizen and Los is shown by the spectre of Urthona commanding the sons of Urizen.

But the four regions cannot escape each other's influence, and the Urizen in Los next encounters Orc. Night VII. begins with their discussion. The youthful fire derides the aged snow, who answers that he is cold only because it is the unperformed duty of the fire to be so, and he is suffering frozen pain for him who ought to suffer it and would not.

And Los in Urizen learned that his son Orc was no other than the generated form of his brother Luvah, and as Urizen he permitted Orc to take the serpent form, he allowed passion to have its organic way that all imagination might be drawn down under reason and law in the end. In other words that "Messiah might fall and form a heaven from what he stole from the abyss." But he did not know the result.

And at this point, lest it should seem that in hearing of Urizen we had lost the story of Los, we learn (Night VII., l. 156) that "Los sat in showers of Urizen,—" 'That is to say, he *was* Urizen in Urizen's showers.

This portion is really an elaboration of what was told early on, in the first Night.

Urizen has deserted his own principles (of his Northern state) in allowing Orc to become a serpent, just as he asked before why a man should war against his spectre (Night I., l. 314).

The striking down of Enitharmon is not re-told. She is seen as a shadow at the roots of Urizen's tree of Mystery,—of Love and Jealousy inmingled with Reason and Prudence, poisoned with Deceit and Revenge, and mysteriously called Religion.

Los laments his solitude.

Enitharmon then tells him the old story as seen from another point. The Eternal Man, who is fourfold like Los, has similar adventures. Vala is to him as Enitharmon, and

presently mingles with Luvah just as Orc attempted to mingle with Enitharmon. Urizen is the child of Luvah and Vala, and presently the fellow conspirator with Luvah against the Eternal Man.

The Spectre of Urthona (as Los, thus divided from Enitharmon while conferring with her, is now called) goes further back and tells the origin of the female from the male in the most universal terms (Night VII., l. 277).

Then the birth of Mystery from Enitharmon's broken heart is told, for Mystery is a tree and a woman, and the shadowy female, and Rahab, and Vala, and has as many births as it has appearances and characters.

And the Spectral Los gave it charge over Orc, for it is also the Rock, on its Rahab side, being Sinai and Horeb.

The story of Los's fall is re-told, he eats the fruit of Mystery, enters the sorrowful state of Law and Repentance, and passes within the region of despair. This again re-tells with increased emphasis of symbolic detail what we heard in Night I., l. 55.

Then the right form is achieved of that whose wrong form was the chaining of Orc. Los moderates his fires and bends their iron points. Enitharmon moderates her shadowy love of Urizen's cold law, and delights in the fires.

Thus Orc revived in his brothers, Rintrah and Palamabron, as in the other sons, or fires, other parts of Los revived. And they all laboured with Los at the furnaces. This is expressed in "Jerusalem" in another form, where Los compels his spectre to divide from him and to labour with him lest it would devour Enitharmon. The satanic or generated Luvah, or Orc, is Albion's and Los's spectre.

This spectre in its furious side was now made serviceable, but it had a frigid side, that of the holy reasoning power and moral pride. This is still busy beneath the roots of the tree of Mystery in the form of Urizen.

It ordains labours and dark or prudential and unprophetic religions for all mankind, till Los arises in fury, and Enithar-

mon calls from her earthy bed that there is danger lest his light should be put out and his watchman slain.

The remainder of this night is another form of the contest between Los and his spectre. The spectre is seen in the persons of Urizen, as the Prester Serpent, or priest of marriage, through whom love becomes loveless, and youth a bondage, and Orc the flaming rebellion whose baser shape justifies the claims of his opponent. It is seen in the shadowy female, the vague substance of vegetative life, that is not really substance, but seems to be, because it is darkness; and it is seen in Tharmas separated and angry, and in Luvah, generated for six thousand years. The teeming earth is filled with procreation and mortality only,—the battle rages round Vala. Trees, ravens, sheep, all forms of thought fight for their vegetative semblances, and all is, through the Reasoning Power, (real Creator of the World of the five senses), adjoined through Enitharmon to the world of Vision—(Beulah)—as the polypus, the eating cancer of analysis, to the rock of belief in matter.

But the spirit of Prophecy is not yet dead. Los, through the daughters of Beulah names the loveless energies, however active in vegetation, and fiery with passion, Satans. They are spectres without counterparts. In the aggregate they are the great Satan himself.

So, they being manifested, as one figure, extracted from their dwelling places in a hundred potencies, the number VII, always that of manifestation, is justified, and that chapter of the Story of Los's fall into division is ended.

In Night VIII., the limit of contraction being reached, and Man having begun to awake, Los sees the Divine Vision through the broken gates of Enitharmon's heart.

But Urizen sees that his struggle with Los is one of life and death. The mere reason dwelling on sense cannot live but by the destruction of the prophetic spirit. So he fights on, striving to avert his own despair even at the cost of everything that lives, and he creates the vast mass of deceitful

systems, and gives them life and sense by his immortal power, for he is still a mental existence though darkened.

There is only one way to meet him. The Divine Vision puts on his conditions by putting on Luvah's. It assumes the robe of blood, and with it the death that is Law, and logic, and memory, things of the period of blood, and it dies into them, and Los lays it in his own tomb, for he is, in his own death, Christ, and in his own survival of that death, Joseph of Arimathea.

In "Vala," Night IX., we reach the story of Los when he was roofed in Albion's cliffs. The building of Jerusalem in Golgonooza goes on over those cliffs none the less.

The fires of Orc have also not ceased to burn, and from consuming all but his serpent form, have consumed even that, and now consume Mystery. This is another symbol for the crucifixion bringing liberty to the world,—as in the poem of Tirzah. "The death of Jesus set me free." The serpent was crucified, as in the wilderness, by Moses. The serpent is the chain, and the rock. It is the iron of attractive love and the stone of sacrificing law. From now all tyranny is cut off.

All the regions are happy. Urizen, the Head, sows and reaps the seeds of joyous eternity, not the rocks and ice-blocks.

Luvah, the Heart, gives the wine of eternity, not the blood of mortality.

Tharmas and Vala, of the loins, are happy with their sheep. They return to the state of innocence.

The three regions of Los are at peace. The "dark religions," never rightly called religious at all, are departed. Sweet science reigns: that is to say, the fruit of the tree of Life, which is the contemplation of Beauty, is eaten, and the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which was vain remorse and useless strivings of conscience is no longer needed for the guidance of man, and has no longer power over him. The last of its poison in his blood was the death of the Divine Vision, or the sinking of Art under its own Symbol, or Brotherhood under

family love. The Resurrection enables man to cast out the evil thing, which is the knowledge of evil, and so ends the chapter called the Last Judgment, Urthona, Los, and Enitharmon being no longer divided from one another.

Such is the story of Urthona, or Los, as told in the long book especially devoted to it. The "Book of Los" is an abbreviated handbill, as it were, of the same tale. It is told in *more philosophic and less dramatic style*. The "Book of Urizen" takes up and elaborates a portion. "Jerusalem," while giving more detail about the relations between Los and his Spectre, and Los and Albion, and "Milton" about Los and his sons Rintrah and Palamabron, still leave the principal narrative unchanged.

To be able to follow the changes of symbol, and to trace through them the single thread of narrative belonging to the story of Los, or Urthona, as told in "Vala," is to be able to read all Blake's Prophetic Books as records of one great Myth.

ALBION AND THE ZOAS.

IN old times, when Liberty was, Justice was, and Eternal Science was Mercy, when Covet slept with open doors, Envy sang at a feast he did not share, Wrath had a lamb for playmate, Wantonness became a true worshipper of manliness, and a father of giants, all the Zoas were in Albion's bosom. There again they are to return. Then all the troubles now known as Nature, result of division, contraction and opacity in the human organs, will be seen to be a dream, and will vanish away. But in the meantime Albion is head-downwards, and believes in the delusions of the outer world, one of the worst of which is the idea that sin and righteousness are to be attributed to individuals and not to states of those individuals, a conception that dwarfs eternity, enlarges mortality, and cuts off from us that right mental conception of ourselves which is the only means to the forgiveness of sins.

The Zoas—Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, Urthona—who should be busy, the first with vision, the second with emotion, the third with passion, the fourth with self-annihilation, are divided. Each striving for the mastery and seeking to be more than human, has become less. Albion has destroyed all but the destroyer. The last eludes his power and becomes his friend, keeper of the gates of heaven, prophet and saviour.

During their wars they strangely alter their places and uses. Tharmas is divided from his softer portion and imprisoned in his own dragon form by the closing of the Western Gate that leads to his region. Luvah, the genius of the heart, kills him, and is killed by Albion. His place, his robes of blood are put on by Christ because they are evil, that His death may put them off for ever. Luvah desires to kill

Albion. He assumes Urizen's place that the seat of vision may be at the mercy of the origin of blood, that the mind may see no more than the hot heart can desire. Then Albion would be wedded to outer nature, and made dead, as all are that are so joined, for to see is to marry, and oven more. What we see we become. Urizen desiring triumph passod over the frozen waves of the west and made himself a kingdom in the dark north, for man's once poetic mind has chained his instincts and only occupies itself with scionce, the vain questioning that does not create. From this it has taken the empty region of the once god-like hoart, and built there a system of unbearably oppressive laws, known in the aggregate as morality,—a name assumed by their upholders to give them an air of being more than what they really are, namely maxims of prudence over-extended to please the kind of love that acts with jealousy, and the kind of intellect that desires tyranny and will be god over all.

Therefore the spirit of prophecy keeps awake through evil times the idea of liberty, love, and perfection, annihilates the desire of ascendancy in himself, and utters for ever his one law that is not moral,—“Rent from Eternal Brotherhood we die and are no more,” with its one condition,—“without forgiveness of sins, love itself is eternal death.” Such is the story of the whole of Blake's prophetic books, more particularly of “Jerusalem,” the latest of them.

Of Albion's dealings with the Zoas, his simple closing out of Tharmas from moral pride (“Jerusalem,” p. 60, l. 49) needs but little telling, and contains no paradox. (“Jerusalem,” p. 43, ll. 6, 7.) But the way in which he includes and becomes first Urizen, and then Luvah, the first because Urizen was his ally (“Jerusalem,” p. 74, l. 1) and the second because, for this reason, Albion is led into hostility against Luvah (p. 65, l. 8), with the interchango of names, states, and positious that follow, are the subject of so many allusions and visions, and form so complete a myth, that it is hardly possible to re-write it without re-writing all Blake in a new order.

One of the most difficult and typical incidents is related both in the books of "Jerusalem," p. 29, and "Vala," Night III. In following it Blake's method of causing one mystic personage to enter another may be understood. The scene is laid inside the bosom of Man. The King of Light (Urizen) on his starry throne looks on futurity. His present joy is darkened, and his "splendour" obscured. This word is the first that reveals the identity of the two stories, seen under slightly different visionary forms.

Urizen perceives a phase of the coming Christianity. This is the fall of Luvah—of which more presently—into the Loins of Los. Los is a portion of Christ,—the prophetic portion. Urizen also perceives that in Enitharmon's womb Vala shall be a worm,—a portion of which was born as Orc; afterwards, and without a hint at the rest of the story or its connection with himself, he at once goes to his own future danger, and cries out, "What will become of me?" He will be killed, as we shall see presently.

Then Ahania, the feminine portion of that Pity which was the name Urizen gave to his tears, spoke to him.

Having reproached him with being the origin of Luvah's power by giving him the steeds of light (activities of the mind) which he has fed with the intoxication of sexual coutest (wine press), and curbed with iron and brass (the fetters of love in the regions of instinct and generation) until the passions, the lions and tigers, are no longer as they were when Liberty was Justice, and Science was Mercy.

Then she tells Urizen how, while he was sleeping in Albion's organs (porches: symbol, ears, cardinal point North), Luvah triumphed over Albion.

Luvah, who, it is remembered, includes Palamabron, ruled the night by this quality of his. Therefore it is evident that his triumph ought to occur at the time when "Urizen assumes the East, Luvah assumed the South" ("Jerusalem," p. 36, l. 25, and other places), because this is Night,—the "Night of Nature," as it is called in Europe. Then the Sun, Urizen's

symbol, is in the North, and the Moon, Luvah's, is in the South. It is in right of his being "possessor of the Moon," or feminine, that is to say, mortal fleshly passion, and of Luvah's identity through his robe of blood, with this quality of man that Luvah is said by Urizen, as above quoted, to be "in the Loins of Los."

Ahania's vision given in Vala now shows the incident practically as related in "Jerusalem."

Albion,—the darkening Man,—walked on the steps of fire the consuming and fleeting life of mortality,"—before his halls, his inner imaginative dwelling place. Vala walked with him, she is the feminine of the feminine, emanation of Luvah, and delusive goddess Nature,—delusive with love, beauty, and sorrow. Albion looked up,—that is, he looked inwards, and saw Urizen saddened. The prince of light with splendour faded. He did not see all his other inner personages, such as Los and Enitharmon, for Luvah's cloud (his own blood) hid them.

Albion entered his own imagination in grief (he ascended mourning into the splendour of his palace). It was Urizen's obscured splendour. From Urizen (Man's wearied intellect) rose a shadow, who was necessarily Ahania, for she and she alone, is the ultimate visionary form of Urizen's shadow, his cloud. But absorbing more of the Man it increased its own attributes by drinking in the Man's,—as the fabled Vampiro was said to live on the vitality of its victims,—and the cloud put on the semblance of the totality of Humanity, and became consequently seen as Christ.

Then Albion worshipped it, and Natural love hid its face, fell down, and let its energy be trodden upon (Vala spread her locks on the pavement).

This is the period called the sleep of eighteen hundred years, in "Europe," during which Man was a dream. It is the rule of that christianity in which monastic observances, grief and chastity, are uphold as of the essence of the Religion.

Ahania,—herself the cloud,—perceived by her own visionary gift that Albion was worshipping a portion of himself, and not the divine Totality, or Unity.

Luvah descended from the cloud, and Albion recognized him and turned indignant from Vala, perceiving that first the delusion and then the sorrow that is of Nature, of this World,—not of Eternity,—had led to his subjection. So Albion turned from Vala, because in doing so he would turn from Luvah.

As a result of his starting upright, Albion heard a voice in his ears calling for Enion. This voice was that of Tharmas, heard through the watery element of tears, because he belongs to the water, or growing life. He was calling for Enion, his lost Emanation, whose life has been absorbed from her by her children Los and Enitharmon. She is the maternal, not the delusive only, in Nature. But Nature is in all aspects a Satanic, soft, dolorous deception. Albion in starting from his sleep—the state of mere reason—entered the state of prophetic dread which now urges him to prophesy. That is, he turned his back on Vala, and turned towards Jerusalem. Vala is egotistic love, veiled in Morality, whose ultimate is death. Jerusalem is Friendship, or Universal love, whose ultimate is Forgiveness of sins and life. “Rent from eternal brotherhood we die and are no more” is his utterance, and “we” may equally be taken to mean a Zoa or an individual, Pity seeking for dominion, or Albion seeking perfection without imagination and sympathy.

But the mood Luvah, the natural heart, not having succeeded by tears, tried to gain the advantage over Albion by doubts and fears, and dogmas, terrible smittings like boils on the body, within which Vala was enclosed. At this Albion cast out Luvah, though he was the form which Urizen (now in the East) had taken. Urizen was the Angel of the Divine presence from whom, when he became thus an opponent of Christ, or Brotherhood, Albion, when starting from his

sleep, took *his* presence, as the phrase in the "Everlasting Gospel" has it.

Ahania told Urizen this to his face. He frowned. She bade him listen still.

Albion's condemnation of Luvah is to cast him into the world of Nature, by shrinking his expansive senses; an act equivalent to creation, for by this shrinkage of the prophetic perceptions into daily sensations, the natural world gets its apparent solidity. This makes a region for Vala. "Under the shadow of wings." If Vala and Ahania beheld Eternity without this shadow they would consume by becoming what they beheld. Luvah is thus "slain," the first of the three whom Albion killed. Let Urizen beware lest he be the next.

Then in the contest, Luvah, who had changed from tears to rage, and Vala who, also going outwards into nature, changed from love to jealousy, went *down* (which means *out*) through the human heart, and Vala shrunk and Luvah fell. She became a "diminutive husk and shell," as Enion, separate from Tharmas (Night I., l. 83) and Luvah obeyed the curse on the Serpent that joined their two natures, became a prostrate thing,—Orc in his lower form,—mere length and breadth. Such was his death.

At this Albion closed his western gate, and instinctive life was declared immoral.

This is the story as told by Ahania to Urizen, but being a prophecy it is a message of Los, and being from the feminine side, it is also the word of Enitharmon. So it is to these two that Blake gave the message when in printing it in "Jerusalem" he considered the vision more closely. But it is Los in his two divisions, acting in concert, but separately. They enter the blood of Albion as Luvah and Vala do, for they also are rage and jealousy. But for the sake of their prophecy Los takes them into himself, and, accompanied by the vision of Forgiveness, follows Albion into his deathly dwelling place, his Void heart where Nature's Rocks of doubt

and law are built up by Urizen, the Architect of Systems. The lament of Los is also given in "Jerusalem," and at the first line of p. 31 the story reaches the act of closing the Western gate, and comes abreast with the "Vala" narrative at Night III., l. 104.

"Jerusalem" pursues the vision as part of the acts of Los. But "Vala" continues the simpler form of it as Ahania's narration. It was always an act of Los as an act of prophecy, and though Ahania have the telling, her utterance was a result of the division between her and Urizen, planted in her by Los and Enitharmou. ("Vala," Night II., l. 277.) The discrepancy between the "Jerusalem" and the "Vala" account thus vanishes.

The reply of Urizen to Ahania is to cast her out for having become like Vala. This happens as a portion of Albion's act when he casts out Luvah, who developed from Ahania's tears. Urizen's reason for doing so was Albion's. He will not be dominated by that which he knows to be what Jerusalem calls a "shadow from his weary intellect," and he describes here ("Vala," Night III., l. 115) as "the indolent bliss,—the indulgent self of weariness,"—a counterpart of the sorrow of weariness, and therefore "like Vala," who was emanation, or counterpart, of Luvah. Vala, when she shrinks, scorns Luvah who, being cast into outer nature is in "the furnace" or consuming fire of vegetation, which Vala fed with delight. (Night II., l. 70.)

In fact Ahania is so very like Vala that some of the words of Urizen in his rebuke to her in the earlier form of the story found their way into Albion's speech to Vala herself in the later narrative. Compare "Jerusalem," p. 34, l. 13, and "Vala," Night III., l. 124. The two stories are in reality still only one story, the different forms being merely changes in the visionary or symbolic presentation of the facts, not contradictions.

When Urizen casts out Ahania, he himself, still further "rent from Eternal Brotherhood," falls, and from his ruins

Tharmas emerges. Ho is the closed Western gate. Being closed, his organs are broken and shrunken, for he is closed into nature and into morality at the same time. He bellows for pain, and attributes his sufferings to his sorrow-bearing, tearful feminine element having triumphed over him. Ho therefore casts her out (Night III., l. 171) and once more another region or division of the story of Albion putting forth the sorrowful Luvah from his presence, is shown. But Enion cannot turn to wrath as a Zoa can. She falls into the age-producing faculty of Nature, and wanders (as a portion of "Vala,") with Abania on the margin of the non-imaginative, the physical world,—nonentity.

A similarity will be seen to what befel Jerusalem when she also became like Vala, and was sent to the Wilderness ("Jerusalem," p. 60, l. 36), but is led there by the Leader of All, who also led Tiriël when he, in his turn, became an outcast law-giver. Jerusalem's sufferings at this time are further developed in "Jerusalem," p. 78, l. 21, to p. 80, l. 31. In the latter part the similarity between Jerusalem "defaced" and Vala is so great that Vala herself continues Jerusalem's lament (p. 80, l. 28). Compare the word "defaced" in p. 80, l. 53; p. 60, l. 46.) See how reason and morality, taking hold of even the highest love, unite the natural man Reuben to Hand, the selfhood, and both to Jerusalem and Vala by the Rahab now acting through them. This is made clear by a comparison of the lines in "Jerusalem," p. 60, l. 44; p. 36, l. 53; p. 34, ll. 36-37; and p. 80, l. 51. Vala's own sufferings on the edge of Nonentity are of a violent kind and belong to the action of the smiting, not the weeping Luvah, who was not conquered by Albion a moment too soon. ("Jerusalem," p. 80, l. 19.)

Unfortunately Albion, who after starting from his sleep fell back again, took the wrong way to conquer Luvah. He set the reasoners, the destroyers, his spectre sons, to the work; swords are as bad as Vala's, or Rahab's, or Gwendolen's knife of flint, or iron spindle of destruction; that is, they are as

much enemies of that Imagination which is the basis of Brotherhood and forgiveness as mortal love, mortal blood, or mortal morality, which are the weapons of the divided emanations of these reasoning spectres. Their equality of evil is seen in their treatment of their victims, who are all, in the end, one victim, the Crucified Sacrifice. Compare "Jerusalem," p. 65, ll. 63-65; p. 84, ll. 26-27; p. 67, l. 24, &c. But by the law that a sacrificer mingles with his victim, when Albion by his sons had sacrificed Vala and killed Luvah, as told in the whole of p. 65 of "Jerusalem," and had consequently absorbed and drunk the life of Luvah ("Jerusalem," p. 90, l. 19), and had mingled his spectre with Luvah's ("Jerusalem," p. 47, l. 13), the simple result was that Reason became as much given over to the hands of mortal nature—not eternal or imaginative—as the passions of the mortal, the loins, because all equally opaque and deceitful, like the world around that seems solid and is but a dream.

In a word, Albion's sons and Luvah's spectre became one great Satan—the god of this world—"Jerusalem," p. 90, l. 44), and that is why, when viewed as a Victim, Luvah is Christ, who suffers in all who suffer, while viewed as a corporeal passion, assister of corporeal Reason in the deception it practices on Man during his mortal pilgrimage, Luvah is Satan. This is the connection between the male and female Luvahs and Satans, the fiery and the tearful, and between both and the northern or cold Urizen. It explains Luvah's assumption of the south, place of true intellect, and Urizen's cold treatment of the east, place of the true heart. The tree of mystery being that of sacrifice is thus connected with Stonehenge, and Tyburn with its gallows, and Salisbury Plain with its altars are seen to be the same place, along with Verulam whose genius, Bacon, by upholding experiment while limiting experiments to material matters accessible to the five senses, limited and so sacrificed the Human Intellect and became part of Rahab, who, like Luvah, was "hid deep within Albion" ("Jerusalem," p. 90, ll. 16-17), and needed,

like Luvah, to be brought with Albion into Life eternal ("Jerusalem," p. 75, l. 26), when the errors of the Twenty-seven Heavens and the appearance of their united symbol, the Mundane Shell should be cast out and their truths cleared by the Mercy of Time.

With regard to Luvah's satanic qualities, those belonging to his spectre, or generated part, they are the same as those belonging to Orc. The dragon, or serpent form, is that taken by all spectres that, separating from the feminine and from man, assuming life to themselves, lose the Human. Tharmas, Luvah, or Orc and Urizen, are distinctly associated with this shape, and with the symbol of the male organ of generation. Wings are added. They are symbolic of that which shadowed the Mercy-seat, and one part of the Covering Cherub's covering capacity. This serpent is itself the Image of Eternal Death, as the Human form, its opposite, is that of Eternal Life, the Divine Vision. Compare "Vala," Night I., l. 392, with the Song of Experience on the Human Abstract. The serpent is alternately destructive and restrictive. It reduces the mental powers of man, and for this purpose, destroys the higher joys. To destroy love it will enforce marriage; and its paradox, as alternately moralist and seducer, includes all that can be symbolized on this side of the relations of the divided sex whose opposition is summed up in the symbol of the cross,—the Tree of Mystery.

THE STORY OF REUBEN.

(JEHOVAH, HAND, SCHOFIELD, NIMROD, MERLIN, BLADUD AND ANTHUR, GUENDOLEN, AND OTHERS.)

THERE is perhaps none among the minor myths in Blake's complicated system of symbolic narratives so scattered and so difficult to put together as the "Story of Reuben." The reader in searching for material to build up before his mind something resembling a coherent figure, feels as if he were collecting in a wide field the fragments of a broken and scattered statue. But should he persevere he will find presently that he has obtained more than the figure of which he was in search. He picks up an arm and finds a hand, not its own, sculptured in the act of holding it. He discovers a foot, and on the same fragment of ground another foot, not its fellow, stands beside it. At last he is led on to collect, not a statue, but a group of statues whose different actions explain each other's intentions and characters.

When this work is accomplished, the student may still be angry, and will have some right to be angry, with the poet who obliged him to go through this trouble instead of doing the work first and leaving to him only the pleasure and not the labour. But a reader who considers how Blake's visions came to him, in irregular flashes, so that he himself was surprised, as we are to this day, at the continuity of myth revealed by them, will perhaps be glad that there are enough fragments to make the collection intelligible, and will not wonder that in the huge mass of visionary experiences Blake should have been content sometimes to leave the task of sorting his coloured seeds to some Psyche who should come after him.

Among the different figures symbolic of states some are more entirely personifications of bodily states than others. Some unite what we call the bodily with the mental by means of the passionate and emotional. Reuben is one of these states. He is a link between the Head and Loins. He is, like the other tribes, above the head, and in the heart, man being head downwards. Being emotional and not naturally a destructive agent he belongs to the threefold, not to the fourfold, which are the best by nature and only the worst when deceived. The fourfold alone is truly mental. Reuben is the natural emotional impulse, ready to be enslaved by the passions, but desiring to be exalted by the thoughts. His story is essentially simple. He attracts all his brethren,—all kindred feelings, to the region of the loins, and there he remains only partly destroyed and corporalized. He does not die into physical tendencies, though his partial absorption into them reduces him to a horrible dreamful slumber. The mental and physical, typified as Los and Guendolen, alternately influence him as the angels and devils fight for the soul. Guendolen thinks she has destroyed him because passion bids mind aid it in the matrimonial and fructifying change that causes a father to disappear and emerge as a son, after enduring imprisonment in the mother. But Los has perceived that natural emotion with an imaginative character has a fragment of eternity in it. It becomes conscious of its own symbolic value, and thus escapes death. In the same way the Scriptures,—since the Bible, the other Word of God, is the express image of man,—contain narratives that seem purely historical and given over to records of war and love, but by Divine analogy they achieve a purpose beyond this and thus elude the worldly pressure that, like the female dominion over the father in the unborn infant would destroy them. Such is, in brief, the whole story of Reuben.

The analysis of the symbolism through which this is presented in Blake's myth, cannot be equally brief. It is the charm of mythic narrative that it cannot tell one thing without

telling a hundred others. The symbols are an endlessly intermarrying family. They give life to what, stated in general terms, appears only a cold truism, by hinting how the apparent simplicity of the statement is due to an artificial isolation of a fragment, which, in its natural place, is connected with all the infinity of truths by living fibres.

Among the names by which Reuben is called, we find Hand.

Hand is the most analytical, unimaginative, destructive of all the personalities that make up Albion, the Fallen Man.

Hand has a story of his own, examined in its place. Here it can only be noted that he absorbed his brethren, and that Reuben did the same. Hand would have them all intellectual destroyers of imagination and brotherhood. Reuben would reduce them all to natural passions. He enroots his brethren in the narrow Canaanite (the valley of the furrow where seed is sown) ("Jerusalem," p. 15, l. 25). Thus when he becomes a mortal in a womb—a shadow in a void, to use the symbolic paraphrase—he tends straight to egotism and submission to female or materialistic will as much as any intellectual and rational mental persuasion. (We must never forget that body is mind—on a lower plane, and that reason is a function of that lower mind.) This is called enrooting himself in Bashan, and when he does this his action is, in its tendency, just that of Hand, the destroyer of brotherhood. At this moment Reuben is called Hand ("Jerusalem," p. 34, l. 36).

But he is not always so called. Hand is the Shadow of Reuben in a way of his own. He is the dark equal, the spectre on the same level. He stands between Reuben and Merlin as the Reasoning Spectre between the Natural Man and his Immortal Imagination (p. 36, ll. 23, 24).

Reuben is thus defined as the Natural Man, but when the immortal Imagination explores the three states of Ulro—or error—Creation, Redemption and Judgment, it becomes the Natural Man. Thus when Merlin does so, Merlin is Reuben (p. 36, ll. 40, 41).

Thus Reuben is identified with Urizen in the North, only

without his tyrannous qualities or his creative power. He is identified with Los in the same way, for Los, having bound the changes of Urizen just as he bent the senses of Reuben, was infected and became what he beheld, contemplating the form which enslaved humanity put on. (Compare "Stories of the Zoas.")

The enrooting of Reuben was accompanied by a bending outward of his senses toward the exterior or false centre (see "Symbol of the Centre"). This is the void which when entered into becomes a womb. It is by the exterior tendency of the motion of Reuben's regions that he goes towards Hand, for the Twelve Tribes are naturally above—or within—the twelve Sons of Albion; as the Divine in Analogy is above, or within, the material, and as the Heavenly Canaan, its symbol, is above, or within, the narrow Canaanite Valley which is (in the loins) part of Albion's land ("Jerusalem," p. 71, ll. 1 to 5).

The order in which Los bent his senses outwards is the order of the Zoas. Eyes, Nostrils, Tongue, Ear are symbols for the region of Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, Urthona. (For eyes and nostrils see p. 36, l. 2, for tongue, l. 5, for ears, l. 14.) Los (in the person of his Natural Man—or Blake) raged sixty years in the throes of unsubdued passion—the divisions of Reuben (p. 36, l. 3).

Those that saw Reuben thus changed, and fled, are those mental states that passed outward into the natural life from the inward or mental. They gnawed their tongues because as the hard teeth close on the soft tongue so do the severe laws of prudence close on the tender instincts in the world of the five senses.

It is in sympathy with this raging of Los that the four Zoas, clouded, rage, for he is fourfold and has roots in each of them (p. 36, l. 25).

But it is something more than this. We must keep constant hold of the fact that narrowed perceptions created the darkness called the solid world, which will vanish when the perceptions enlarge. We must not forget that the dark is the female, and

that passion is the knife—as delusion is the cup in the hands of Reason's puppet, moral, or bodily beauty, or Vala. Thus when Reuben, as Merlin and Hand, entered the void where existence had never come, he encountered the female will,—which consists in rationalism without even clairvoyance or double-sight (p. 34, l. 37).

But Los, in whom the spirit of prophecy is never dead, reminds himself in Reuben, the mortal man whom he scornfully sends over Jordan to the place of sexual organization, that as perceptive organs change objects change. This is what the Female forgets (p. 34, l. 58). This is what, in the worm of sixty winters, made Los angry during the time when that worm had power over him. (See the "Symbol of the Worm.")

It was Albion, the Fallen Man, who includes Reuben and from whom all things sprang, who created a Female will (p. 34, l. 32, and p. 56, l. 43) by allowing the feminine to separate from the masculine in himself, passing forth at first as a mere odorous stupefaction from gentle passions ("Vala," Night VII., l. 279), but presently assuming dominion. (See "Albion and Zoas.")

Reuben wanders. The outer world is the place of wandering. Among other things (leaving out for the moment his experience in Heshbon, the stone of Bohan, the valley of the Hittite or of destruction, &c., for all this is a paraphrase of Los's exploration of Urizen's darkened interior and Urizen's exploration of Urthona's dens) he falls under the power of Guendolen (Hand's emanation) while in search of Tirzah, the outer maternity, for Guendolen has the power of revealing (by dividing) that she contained both Rahab (the female will) and Tirzah (the female instinctive attractiveness) (p. 34, l. 52). When Reuben, through his love for Tirzah, is conquered by Guendolen he becomes an infant, and in him Hand, the cruel warrior, so changes and is so renewed.

In him Jehovah became a weeping infant (p. 81, l. 14, and p. 63, ll. 16, 17).

This is evidently an allusion to the name "rau-béonyt, of

which Blake must have read in a Biblical dictionary as a form of Reuben, with its translation "Jehovah hath seen my affliction," Reuben, *Reu-ben* meaning simply "behold ye a son." Thus by the law "what we look on we become," Jehovah became a weeping infant. Thus is given the doctrine that God could not see the sorrow of man without incarnating as that continual Christ, who is with us to the end, sick with the sick, poor with the poor, captive with the imprisoned.

But Blake never forgot to insist that the incarnation was not only an entrance into our griefs, but into our joys, and even into our cruelties, furies, and passions; its double purpose being to reveal the eternal, and to give a body to the temporary that it might be put off.

In Reuben, Jehovah stood among the Druids, who used the knife in Stonehenge, while every region of life trembled at the Spectre or destructively egotistic appearance, seeing the starry harness of the plough (compare "Milton," p. 10, l. 25), the mental cords that draw the natural man into the position of fatherhood ("Jerusalem," p. 63, ll. 1 to 4). Jehovah's type is also that of the Huntsman in the valley—the marital symbol again—named Nimrod, who is said to have been a hunter of men ("Jerusalem," p. 22, l. 3). This allusion brings in Schofield, a companion symbol to Reuben, and especially associated with physical love.

There is no greater mockery, therefore, than that the praise of Jehovah should be chanted from the lips of hunger and thirst ("Jerusalem," p. 30, l. 32). Therefore, Jehovah is, like Rintrah and Urizen, associated with the symbol of the plough (*ibid.* p. 46, l. 14). Though in truth he is in all regions (*ibid.* p. 49, l. 53), while he is not necessarily the entire Godhead, but in his self-limited incarnating capacity is the last but one of God's seven eyes ("Jerusalem," p. 55, l. 32, and "Milton," p. 11, ll. 23, 24, and "Vala," Night VIII., l. 399). The "leprosy" of Jehovah, the last stage before death or incarnation has to do with his Nimrod quality. The valley along which he hunted was from Eternity to Eternity; Jesus

was his prey. Incarnation, or the death into infancy, the result of the chase. The Elohim are within Jehovah as the seven eyes are one within the other, and may be especially chosen for vision ("Jerusalem," p. 61, ll. 1, 2). The Elohim are triple,—incarnation includes the three states—Creation, Redemption and Judgment. It is thus, that while Reuben slept the sleep of mortal fleshly life, the feminine, or especially body-weaving powers, divided Luvah; the Heart of God made blood into three bodies (*ibid.* p. 34, l. 46). These being consumed, the human, the celestial body, the true "Form of the Fourth," is revealed as the ultimate intention of Jehovah through the mutual forgiveness of sins, his covenant (*ibid.* p. 61, ll. 24, 25).

It is thus that Jehovah in the Druid contends with Himself as the ultimate pardoner, because the Druid knows morality only and not pardon. (It is thus that he is a human sacrificer) (*ibid.* p. 63, ll. 10, 27). If victims must be, they should be chosen from the animal and not the mental part of a human being (p. 63, l. 30). Until Jehovah is able to fulfil his covenant, by our own forgiveness of each other having fulfilled our part of it, he appears only as the Thunderer of Sinai to our eyes, hardened by moral but loveless law (*ibid.* p. 68, l. 39, and "Milton," p. 10, ll. 20, 24). For His voice is perverted by Satan in the cloud on the mountain, or in the flesh on the pride ("Milton," p. 7, l. 22). Nothing short of self-annihilation can prepare the way to complete mutual forgiveness ("Jerusalem," p. 98, l. 23). Nor is anything else but perfect love, perfect sympathy, perfect freedom, finally holy, for these are the Loins—heart—head, and at the same time the Head—heart—loins of Regeneration, through which Law is burned up. Such is the "Holy place" from which Jehovah speaks (*ibid.* p. 98, ll. 40, 45).

Thus Reuben has led us to a symbol above himself. The references here given, enable the reader to collect all that Blake has said about the name Jehovah in his three chief prophetic books.

The statement that Jehovah is Schofield's Nimrod, has been noted, and its place in the symbolic system made clear. But Schofield is connected with Reuben by several allusions. He is like a mandrake in the earth beneath Reuben's gate. He is bound in iron armour (experienced egotistic love). And he shoots beneath Jerusalem's walls to undermine her foundations,—necessarily, since Jerusalem is the wide and sympathetic love made of forgiveness, including the lesser and lower, but not to be included by it ("Jerusalem," p. 11, ll. 21, 23). The next words are "Vala is but thy shadow, O loveliest among women!—a shadow generated by thy tears, O mournful Jerusalem!" This allusion to Vala connects the present reference with that on p. 64, l. 32.

The mandrake, the plant that made women fruitful in old tradition, and that Reuben, in Genesis, brought to his own mother, is an ancient symbol for the vegetated or vegetative man—the man of growth and decay, bound in the iron armour that is also a symbol for the body—attractive iron being that of love-requiring flesh.

Schofield, the mandrake, is triple, as Luvah when divided into three bodies while Reuben slept. He is seen first with Kox, Kotope and Bowen (other sons of Albion) in "Jerusalem," p. 5, l. 27, before the Eastern, or Luvah's, gate. They seek to devour the sleeping humanity of Albion. In this they are Satanic, for Satan aided Jehovah to incarnate Jesus in the hope that the temptation in the wilderness would succeed, and that Jesus would be his prey. That is, the bodily forces aid the growth of Man in each man, that they may, if possible, check that growth for ever at the moment of physical, but not yet of mental, maturity; when the Self is ready, and the Self-annihilation has not come. Thus Schofield, the mandrake, who would make humanity a mandrake if he could, looked on Jehovah as his Nimrod, and said so by the mouth of Vala, his corporeal mother.

Thus Schofield is Adam ("Jerusalem," p. 7, ll. 25 and 42), the ninth of Albion's sons—nine being the number of

corporeal vegetation—and thus the father of his brethren in the shadowy, or bodily generation. Thus the law of sin was separated, or the Satanic body of scriptural vindictive doctrine that Christ assumed and put off.

Yet these brethren were mighty in their dark manner. Hand absorbed them all when they all went with him into one mood, which is that of Reason, Morality, War or Envy, Revenge, Cruelty. In fact, the unregenerate and natural mood of mortals ("Jerusalem," p. 8, l. 44, and p. 9, ll. 1 to 10).

It is the rooting of Reuben in the narrow Canaanite with all his brethren, which caused this outer rooting of Hand and Hyle by fibres of Revenge, and of all the destroyers in the region of that love which should be of the pardoner—hence the mixture of war and religion—the double enemy of peace and love ("Jerusalem," p. 15, ll. 1 and 26, &c.).

Thus it is that as Luvah is Christ-like, because Christ has put on his robes of blood; and Satanic because he in those robes tries to draw Christ down, so also Schofield appears in a form that causes him to seem like Bath, the best and worst; and Canterbury, the lightest and darkest. It is natural that the visionary should demand from him explicit words in which he should describe himself ("Jerusalem," p. 17, ll. 59, 62).

Visions, as many mystics know, often appear with vivid personality of appearance, but do not at once suggest to the mind of the visionary their symbolic value, just as a picture of such a figure may impress a spectator strongly, but not explain its own meaning. Unlike pictures, however, visionary figures not infrequently respond, either by speech, or by the exhibition of some unmistakeable symbol, to demands made on them from the seer. This curiously indirect method by which a man acquires knowledge of his own unconscious wisdom, and in some cases obtains access to the wisdom of others who are as unconscious of his existence as he was of that of a second self within reach of his will, was believed by Blake to be the great future means of binding man into brotherhood, and putting a term to war and to punishment.

But, in the meanwhile, man has not only within him a self that works for his redemption, and a means of communicating with it which will arouse him to labour more hopefully for his own perfection, but also an instinctive personality that works by aid of the unimaginative understanding to destroy the means of his final improvement.

Schofield and others enroot like a polypus ("Jerusalem," p. 15, l. 4), which is an entanglement of reasoning, doubt, despair, and death, eating his life like a cancer (*ibid.* p. 69, ll. 2, 3). They devour the emotions friendly to spiritual advance (p. 19, l. 24). They accumulate, in pride of selfhood, a world in which man is the enemy of man.

Therefore, though Schofield with the others bore Albion's body on a couch, and kept alive his mind during the period of sleep by occupying it with literal readings of Scripture and rationalistic views of life (p. 32, l. 13), yet Schofield is essentially cruel (p. 68, l. 1). All the sons of Albion appeared outside of himself when Albion fell under the power of the divisions of Reuben, under Vala and Rahab, under Schofield and the Twelve ("Jerusalem," p. 19, l. 1, and "Vala," Night IX., l. 99). Such is the meaning of their flight—they fled outwards from the internal region of brotherhood into the external of egotism (the selfish centre being always outside), and it was because the ear of Reuben, as well as his other regions, was bent outward and away from the Divine voice ("Jerusalem," p. 36, l. 13). They dare to seek to vegetate the Divine Vision itself, to use imagination for outer usefulness, not inner expansion, and to make it, as they thus make themselves, one with the Prince of this world—Satan (*ibid.* p. 90, l. 40).

It is with Schofield that the extreme outwardness begins that is not even inner as the female spirits are that superintend our nourishment. He is outside the evil of Cambel and Guendolon, for he is the completed result of their incompleteness. He is a ninth, as Jesus was (for the seven eyes of God are nine in the world where Elohim counts as three), and

is that opposite of Jesus whom he put on to put off at the same time that Reuben, the less virulent opposite was assumed, and he, therefore, became, when Jehovah did, a weeping infant instead of a cruel warrior (p. 81, l. 13).

It is thus that the distaff and spindle of Vala with the flax of human miseries turned fierce with the lives of men, as Reuben rushed into the world of generation taxing the communities of mental powers, the inner nations, and taking away their life to feed himself (*ibid.* p. 64, ll. 32, 34), as the flesh of multitudes fed Vala (*ibid.* p. 22, l. 6).

The name of Schofield has been recognized by previous readers of Blake as that of a soldier who obtained access to his garden without his authority, whom he forcibly ejected, and who attempted in consequence to have him judicially murdered by bringing against him a false accusation of treason.

It will now be seen just how far Blake was influenced by the incident in naming his symbolic figure. It will be understood how entirely the symbol overtops the little incident which gave it a name, and how curiously free Blake's visionary mind was from the egotism which is often found even in highly poetic writers. We look in vain for any expression of rancorous feeling or personal triumph over the symbolic Schofield. No mythic personage recognizable as Blake himself, wins a personal triumph over him and glories in it. Such would have been the Byronic treatment of similar material had he worked it into verse. To Blake, Schofield the soldier served another purpose by teaching him to look kindly on Hayley for a while, notwithstanding what disappointment and oppression he had suffered from the enmity of Hayley to all his best loved artistic and mystic projects. Schofield appears, therefore, as one among the opposites of Christ, who is put off as we learn to put on mutual forgiveness. The incident of the garden is merely used as a symbol and read into the scriptural story of the mandrake without a single shadow of prosaic disgrace being left on the book, such as would have

lain there had we been able to hear the notes of personal boasting or self-admiration in the multitude of voices that reach us from the mythic world. Yet it was Blake's belief that among his duties was to seek and show symbols in his experiences (as in the *Examiner* incident), and in the public history of his nation, even that portion of it which was still being enacted before his eyes.

One more touch must be noted before we leave Schofield the symbol. It differentiates him most completely from Schofield the soldier. In fact, so great is the separation, and so pure is the poet's unconsciousness of the striking testimony it offered to his literary and visionary purity of mind, that there is something in it that almost produces a smile.

Schofield and Hand are described in a state of innocence. They were given along with all other opportunities to Jerusalem, before Albion's fall into error led her to wander to Babylon—led liberty to seek its foundations in law, instead of in love and forgiveness and sympathy. They were then as Adam ("Jerusalem," p. 60, ll. 14, 15).

In the great temple built by Urizen in the Satanic void of the human heart (void of brotherhood), when Luvah's and Albion's spectres were mingled into a dark Hermaphrodite (at the moment also when the distaff turned so furiously in the hands of Vala), Schofield is found arched with Hyle over the moon. Once more he is the mandrake, for the moon is the feminine desire, as the sun is the masculine (*ibid.* p. 58, l. 30). Hyle is here the worm—symbol of helplessness, as infancy is of innocence.

Among the minor figures that help to illustrate the story of Reuben, Merlin is one. He belongs to the triad Merlin, Bladud, and Arthur (Head—Heart—Loins). He is the natural and immortal imagination, while Arthur is the natural warfare. Bladud is hardly ever mentioned. He appears with Merlin and Arthur in a list of those who stood with Bath (Schofield) on the Severn (a river of marriage) ("Jerusalem," p. 75, l. 2), and once more in another list of the names of states created

to be in time demolished (*ibid.* p. 73, l. 95). Here Merlin may possibly be meant by Belin. The name reads like a clerical error due to nervousness at the previous error of putting Bladud first instead of between the other two. But they are figures of little importance in the myth.

Merlin is appealed to in p. 84, l. 37—his appearance in the feminine nature astonishes—he has come where existence was never known, and is asked of the female will. The old tale of the enchanter shut in the oak-tree, vegetation being feminine, is thus used and read by Blake, as he read everything, in the symbolic sense.

Merlin becomes a worm when Guendolen is a clod—the one within the other (p. 56, l. 28). This is a secondary symbol of Reuben's flight outward, and of Urizen's entry into Urthona's dens. Guendolen refusing love to Merlin (p. 81, l. 2) is a paraphrase of Tharmas refusing it to Urizen. Merlin was like Rintrah among the giants of Albion (p. 93, l. 13), and is thus of the same region as Urizen, who is the Zoa immediately corresponding to Rintrah.

Merlin and Arthur are purely of this world. They are merely the masculine names of feminine, that is, of secret places, woven by Enitharmon—tabernacles for moral laws (*ibid.* p. 88, l. 18).

Arthur is the hard, cold constructive Spectre, the rational power, essentially he is a mildew and hoarfrost over Albion (*ibid.* p. 54, l. 25). He is bid to divide into the Kings of Europe. He is nature-born and nature-scorned, as warriors are. For *Nature* Blake has written *Woman* (*ibid.* p. 64, l. 15).

That Arthur is Urizen in the North, from the point of view that shows him as an old warrior, is also shown by his being identified with Arcturus, the star (compare "Descriptive Catalogue," Gilchrist, Vol. II.), for Urizen's starry hosts are always his companions.

Guendolen and her identification with Rahab and Tirzah is essentially the female. Her story, is, with little change, that

of all the females named, and of the nameless shadowy female type of all, till Jerusalem rises from where Albion's fall had dragged her down.

The geographic symbols connected with Reuben are chiefly valuable as helping to show the way in which Blake used English names as outer equivalents for the hidden meanings which Swedenborg had taught him to look for in Biblical names. Thus the Severn and the Jordan are fellow-streams, the Thames and the Euphrates. London stone is the stone of Bohan, and the terrible feminine valley from east to west is the valley of the giants of Albion, of Hittite, of Hinnom, of Rephaim, and terminates where Albion's rocks begin. It is the feminine symbol in many forms.

A GROUP OF SYMBOLS.

THE WOUND, THE FALL, THE CHAIN, SYMBOLIC MOTIONS.

THE physical symbol of the wound in its simplest form is the furrow of the field made for seed; and that other furrow, the grave, also for seed. The wound is like the work of the ploughman and the sexton, as well as that of the warrior, whose sword or spear lets in death and lets out soul. It is equally the rending away of virginity, that Veil of the Temple.

It is the wound made by the Serpent when it entered Paradise, as the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, or as the fructifier enters the fructified. So also the experience of the lower senses enters the experience, called vision or imagination, of the higher. This is the "Devil's version" that Messiah fell and formed a heaven of what he stole from the abyss. The serpent is thus added to the spear, plough, and spade, and all of them to the central symbol of the oldest mysteries.

The moving impulse that sets all these in action, is Wrath. Wrath being the head of fire, as Jealousy is the heart, and Desire the loins. Wrath cracks across the Immense, and divides virgin Eternity for fruitful purposes. Pity joins what Wrath has rent. The infant is a link, not a division. Yet Pity also divides, but not the material. It divides the mental, and separates itself from Wrath to afterwards seek dominion over it. All the stories of division are companion symbols of the wound—even when Day and Night divide from Eternity, or the Eternal divides the compasses that measure the Void.

By noting any passage of Blake's works where a particular form of symbol is repeated, we arrive at a know-

ledge of the plane, or sphere of correspondences to which we are to look for the significance of the entire passage. In this way the movements of the Zoas through the cardinal points may be used. Urizen in the north shows a different meaning to a whole page from that which it would have were Urizen in the south indicated.

The Wound itself has its various forms corresponding to the causes and the spheres of meaning. It always implies an advance from the simpler, more eternal, less conscious, to the complex, more changeable, more personal.

When Los cracks the black marble in which he is imbedded, and Urizen rends the shadow, and Orc the shadowy female; when the shadowed Urizen is torn from the side of Los, or Enitharmon from his blood; when Los wakes Enitharmon, dividing her sleep, or when Albion awakes; when the sons or daughters of Albion or Tirzah divide, or when Enitharmon bears an enormous race, and stamps with solid form a progeny of fire that they may roam abroad; when Los smites Enitharmon; when the horns of the eternal bow separate, and one is called male, one female, that the arrows of desire may fly from between them; when Reuben, Enion or Vala wanders; and God separates into the Incarnate, and the Father, or Heaven divides into God's hosts and Satan's, and the soul of man into senses and imagination, reasoning and prophecy; and when from eternity itself the moments of time fall away one by one like rings though they return as an endless chain—the Wound is always the symbol of division.

The Wound is of three kinds. It is so in Genesis. Water, divided from God, reveals its inward dust, which, divided after becoming Adam, reveals its inward Eve, who, divided first from Adam, and then from her own passivity, becomes the Virgin Mary. The wound is healed at the conception to reappear on the cross.

So Los divides from the blackness, the Zoas from God, the Points from the centre. The North and South, with their masculine qualities, from East and West, with their feminine.

The feminine itself separates into love and jealousy, into multitudes of instincts whose aggregate is Reason, and multitudes of egotisms whose aggregate is moral law, as Guendolen divides into Rahab and Tirzah. The divisions are always seeking to re-divide, only the higher vision unites them finally. "Truth has bounds: error, none."

But as the prolific wound leads to life, so the unprolific leads to death. Vala, Enion, Reuben "wandering," are in sterile separation. War, pryncedom, and victory in earth lead to nothing but the kind of glory that ends in death, and the furrow on the slave's back when the whip has cut it, is the opposite of the furrow left by the ploughman in the field, just as the false centre belonging to the outward world of the lower senses, and leading to individual pride, is the opposite of the true centre which is outward as regards eternal life, because its expansiveness enables each to include all, by leading each of us out to meet his brother, till the whole brotherhood passes inward to the bosom of God. Such is the true nature of what Blake called "imagination," and such is not what the non-mystic mistakenly considers the ultimate of imagination to be, not knowing the subtle unity of trance, but only the dreadful individualism of insanity, and erroneously finding in this the extreme of Imagination's development. Imagination, alone, is health and truth, while the lower or corporeal reason of the false centre is insanity. It is also deformity, for the symbol of the final unity is perfect and divine form, the ultimate and only Human. Insanity is the state of isolation,—health and life that of unity, because that of sympathy. So, when Reason is cast out by the division and re-division of the temporary, until the horror of division is revealed and finally put off, then will be reached the ultimate Unity, understood, as yet, only by the Author of Forgiveness, that sacrificial act through which we can offer it to one another,—that is to say, by the Lamb's Father. Then the myth of this life is over and the wound is healed.

But the great wound of all is the division of man into sexes, symbolized by the picture of the Ancient of Days leaning over the world with a pair of compasses in his hand.

The sexes—even the mortal sexes—are the gates of Paradise if we go inward through them into that infinite of our own bosoms where is the seat of identity with the bosom of God. But if we go outward through them to mere love of child, family, personal glory, and patriarchal pride, we go to the “false centre.” We reach Satan’s seat, which is Nature, whose pillars are the literal meaning of Scripture (which God sent Voltaire to expose), whose attribute is opacity, and whose function is reason. Chastity reaches this outer gate no less than patriarchality. Both are individual and “selfish.” The holiness, or life, of chastity deserves eternal death, just as the pride of family deserves eternal damnation, or companionship with the All-proud instead of with the All-mighty. The holiness of chastity is therefore cruel. So is the holiness of maternity, for, taken alone, it but propagates that “mortal part” (of the soul) called body because our five senses perceive it. Here dwells pain. But all things have their good and evil side—as the sun gives to us both day and night. There is the kind chastity that consists in abstaining from fleshly lusts that we may have more time to do the work of the Lord. There is the kind family life that loves the race with the affection learned by the fire-side, and reaches towards it with the desire for unity aroused by the growing nearer of hearts that meet in bending over the cradle.

Further, there is sin and its joys. There is not only an evil chastity, but a good immorality. This, the most perilous of all truths, was taught by Blake as unflinchingly as the rest. Its ultimate might be expressed, if put by a casuist, as a case for the guidance of conscience, thus:—“When an individual must choose between morality that is mere prudence allied to a religious belief in law, nature, reason, and the ultimate individualism, and an immorality that is, even though it be sinful, an expression of the great truth that everything

which lives is holy, and that God is joy, and His bosom the ultimate brotherhood, then let man choose immorality. Sin had already begun when such a choice arose in his soul, and to take the evil side merely continues the sin, and may lead to his receiving, by learning to offer, forgiveness; while to choose the error that is not sin is to choose ultimate destruction through holy egotism that cannot help believing itself above forgiveness, and so hardens itself in the solitude that is death eternal." It is fortunate, indeed, that no Church arose out of Blake's visions, or it would have engendered a Jesuitry more dangerous and more terribly conscientious than that which the over-courageous intellect of the Romanism once produced for the astonishment of mankind.

The Fall being, as the book of "Vala" says, a "Fall into division," is a fall into sexes and mortality viewed as part of the eternal history of the human race, that begins when it ceased to be human only, and began to be a race. This change is a fall because mortality and death, that is, breeding and decay, are of the outward and downward opaque world of Satan, whose origin is in the North, that Gate of the World of Generation. Thus generation is the symbol of division as marriage is of unity. Therefore, marriage—Beulah—is in the South, and by it is reached the upward and inward world of Unity from which division falls, and where it must return and cease.

In the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" the story of the Fall is given from the devil's, that is to say, the bodily energy's point of view—the devil being ultimately the limit of opacity on his passive evil side, of pride on his contracting or personal side—of energy on his bodily or sensuous side. His account is that "Messiah fell and formed a Heaven of what he stole from the abyss." That is to say: Imagination, divided into the intellectual and emotional, or masculine and feminine, or mountain and abyss; having thus fallen (into division), formed what is higher than the mountains from what is

lower than the valleys ; and from the emotions of desire and love taught the sublime ecstasy.

For this purpose it was ordered that "none should consummate bliss in the world of Time without becoming a vegetated mortal." That romantic passion is the poetic symbol and gate of the religious exaltation may be a "devil's" teaching in so far as it is energetic, but that "devil" only bears the name in this passage symbolically, for He is the same that "dwells in flaming fire," whose angels and ministers are flames Who burned in the bush that was not consumed, and inspired the song of Solomon that is not degraded. Milton himself, and all "true poets," were of this "devil's party."

To those for whom Blake's paradoxes are seen as moderate and not over-strained pictures of the appalling contrasts that go to make up Truth, there will be nothing but what is sympathetic in his great desire and high confidence that he could cause the three great symbols, Heaven, Earth, and Hell, to dwell in us harmoniously, when his words had wrought their appointed task.

So do the myth of the Wound and of the Fall over-lap each other. But there are three temporary states as well as the one that is eternal. The three are Creation, Redemption, and Judgment. The fourth, Regeneration, being simply the first with the addition of what is stolen from the abyss, the "crown of honour and glory," not to be had even by the Highest except on condition of being made a trifle lower than the angels.

There is another symbol contrary of division,—that of binding. It is the erroneous attempt to heal the wound by force, not by forgiveness. It is brotherhood or society founded on law, not love.

The following bindings, or enchainments, occur in the different books.

Los binds Orc to a rock, result: Urizen creates, Los binds Urizen's backbone, itself his chain, to the sun. The Rock

is thus chained in its turn to Orc, who is Luvah, who enters the mortal sun or globe of blood which is also the Female, that is, the loins of Los.

Theotormon—dark, watery son of Los—binds Oothoon (his Orc-like emanation) to Bromion,—earthy and dark, fiery son of Los—back to back; consequently Theotormon has no children of his own, and must adopt that of Bromion, conceived before the binding.

Clouds bind the loins of the Shadowy Female, black marble binds Los, the winding-worm binds Vala—the serpent the fallen man. Length and breadth bind height and depth. The horizontal binds the perpendicular. Accident and chance bind imagination and creation. East and West bind North and South. East and West are also bound,—the Western gate by its closing, and the East by Luvah, bound in the furnaces, when he assumes the South to rule there, because the furnaces extend from South to North. Result: all these bindings must be broken, as soon as used, before the freedom of eternity is gained. They are the heavy chain that closes in the ice of egotism and loveless order, the freezing bones. (Earth's Answer, "Songs of Experience.")

Motions are also symbolic in themselves. Going and returning are the typical eternal motions, they characterize the visionary forms of eternal life. They belong to *up and down*, to *in and out*.

Wandering is essentially mortal, it corresponds with error.

Reuben wanders in London. Vala and Jerusalem wander in the wilderness.

It is in Urizen's tearful state, as that shadowy one divides from him, that he wanders weeping over the world, or, more sadly still, through dens of earth. The mortal, being dark and material, is feminine by that token. Wandering is a feminine motion. When his male force is spent Tiriël wanders, and takes Hela to guide him to the vales of Har. Thel wanders there, and Oothoon in the vales of Leutha. Wandering, associated with instinctive emotion, belongs to

the wilderness; as going and returning belong to mountains that must be ascended or descended.

When the masculine combines with the feminine, revolution takes place. For height and depth then combine with length and breadth. The womb "heaves in circles" when "the Times return" upon it. The serpent coils round limbs, the horizontal round the perpendicular. The Zoas and the Sons of Albion, all of whom have Emanations, move as wheels. Los whirls as he falls into the void.

Dancing is the motion of desire in the lower or mortal world, as howling is its sound-symbol. David dancing before the ark symbolizes the masculine before the feminine, the energetic before the secretive. Urizen, when infected and mad, danced on his mountains. He ultimately forgot his own laws and embraced the shadowy female.

SYMBOL OF THE CENTRE.

THE Centre is itself the hero, as it were, of a myth. Its story is a paradox.

In "Jerusalem," p. 12, l. 56, we have the Centre as an equivalent of the East in the Four Points. On p. 48, l. 39, the Centre is next heard of: an aged female form opens an atom of Space into a Centre, into Beulah. This aged female, at once the personage composed by concentration of the emanations of Albion's friends, who are the Twenty-eight Cities and the Four Zoas,—who is, in fact, Jerusalem, and Eno (compare "Vala," Night I., l. 180), and Erin (compare "Jerusalem," p. 74, l. 50). Erin is also mentioned in "Jerusalem," p. 9, l. 34; p. 11, ll. 7, 10; p. 12, l. 22; p. 44, l. 26; p. 48, ll. 51, 53; p. 50, ll. 18, 21; p. 78, ll. 12, 27; p. 86, l. 45; p. 88, l. 33; p. 94, l. 13.

The Centre having thus been "opened out a Space into Beulah," is a sexual and marriageable creature. The Space is named Ulro ("Vala," Night I., l. 205), which accords with the description of the Centre as corresponding to the East, since the East leads toward Ulro, as the descriptions on pages 12 and 13 enable us to gather. Ulro, like Beulah, is a threefold state ("Jerusalem," p. 36, l. 41). The poem to Captain Butt from Felpham, has already told us that vision is "threefold in soft Beulah's night." Things in Ulro are sexual ("Jerusalem," p. 44, l. 22). Whatever enters is created, vegetated, and born; just as air, entering the nostrils, is changed into breath. The nostrils are the Ulro feature. ("Jerusalem," p. 12, l. 59.) The triple is the sexual. It is the two singles and the conjoined, making three states. They

have their symbol also in the human body ("Milton," p. 18, l. 2), and are associated with Beulah.

The relations of Beulah and Ulro are those of outward and inward. Ulro is beneath Beulah ("Milton," p. 19, l. 7). Yet what is above is within. Yet Ulro is within, Beulah without. Their interaction contains the story of the paradox of the Centre. They have their sad and their happy aspect. Beulah is mild and pleasant ("Vala," Night I., l. 197, and "Milton," p. 30, l. 14. The contexts of these lines supplement each other). It has its evil aspect ("Jerusalem," p. 13, ll. 31, 32, and "Milton," p. 37, l. 44). Ulro is beneath Beulah ("Milton," p. 19, l. 7). Beulah is in Ulro ("Milton," p. 24, l. 45). "What is above is within the circumference is within, outside is the selfish Centre" ("Jerusalem," p. 71, ll. 6, 7). Thus Ulro, as the selfish Centre is outside Beulah, which is the true, holy, inner circumference and camp ("Jerusalem," p. 69, l. 41). "There is an outside spread without, and an outside spread within."

The apparent contradiction disappears when looked at in the light of Blake's religious belief in the essential brotherliness of Imagination ("Jerusalem," p. 33, l. 52), and the essential egotism and isolation of Reason. The one being Christ, the other Satan; the one having for its function and result, Forgiveness; the other, Accusation. Each is endowed with a centre and a circumference. The centre of brotherhood, or its essence, is its quality of expansiveness. But this is an inner expansiveness. Each man opens his own mind inwards into the field of Vision and there, in this infinite realm, meets his brother-man. Blake believed that all could do this sooner or later. The substitute for those who could not, was to open the affections inwards to the seat of sympathy and there to find not the isolated heart, but the brotherhood of all hearts. The selfish centre which is "outside" is outside in an unexpansive sense, for nonentity is not expanse, though it be limitless as error. The selfish centre is made of the exterior reason and the five senses, It is the mortal

personality, that which death inevitably dissolves, but which it is life's business to destroy, for this is "Salvation." Hence salvation is the opposite of morality, and the centre is outside the circumference. The paradox turns out to be a symbol, not a contradiction.

The Centre, being the personality and the selfhood, is also the Satan, and it has a body that grows as the body of Urizen did, and as all systems do, true or false. ("Jerusalem," p. 17, l. 19.) This, in his case, is the Body of Generation that lasts six thousand years, and is Nature. It follows from the idea that Mind is the only existence, that what we call Nature must be an act of a portion of Mind. Obviously it is the egotistic portion, not the universal, for it divides us from each other, while Imagination re-unites us. It also follows from the idea that when turned into Nature this portion of the mind becomes mortal; that the temporary quality of Nature is in itself the source of our salvation, if only we be not wholly given over to it, and mentally absorbed and convinced by it.

This Nature is the Space, or feminine, into which the State, or masculine, descended. It is at the same time, therefore, the wife, and the tomb,—Luvah's sepulchre and Satan's covering, the Cherub that hid the Mercy-seat, the mortal body enclosing Christ,—the literal Scriptures that enclose the eternal meanings of the Bible, and all the Outsides of whatever kind that are of the selfish Centre. It is the Created Error, with its mild side ("Vala," Night I., l. 200) created by the Lamb of God, and its evil side ("Jerusalem," p. 36, l. 50) when its temporary dream becomes our conviction, a mistake which is the insanity of the Spectre, which, though it be the Rational Power ("Jerusalem," p. 33, l. 5), is insane in every man ("Vala," Night I., l. 205, and "Jerusalem," p. 37, l. 3).

Error is eternal death (one error will destroy a human soul) ("Jerusalem," p. 46, l. 11). Sometimes it takes the form of one Zoa, sometimes of another, as the region varies from

which error and egotism come. In "Vala," Night I., l. 209, the Spectre so dreaded is that of Tharmas, the West. This is the most fearful of all, because to the West lies Eden, and the destruction of Eden, or the entrance of Selfishness into the region of Love, is the worst destruction. It were better to have no region of Love. Love here is of the kind whose symbol is the loins, place of the Last Judgment. (Compare "Milton," p. 25, l. 56.)

Sometimes the Spectre,—always when alone a Satan, that is to say, a State of Death ("Jerusalem," p. 69, l. 67),—comes in the form of Urizen, as in "Jerusalem," p. 54, l. 15, where he bears the temporary name of Arthur, but is identified by his scientific coldness, into which Urizen had fallen ("Jerusalem," p. 43, l. 2), and his constructiveness ("Jerusalem," p. 58, l. 21, and p. 66, l. 4. For the equivalence of architecture and science, compare "Milton," p. 24, l. 56). Urizen in this Satanic character is identified by comparing "Jerusalem," p. 54, l. 16, with "Vala," Night I., l. 294, and "Milton," p. 39, l. 50.

Sometimes the Spectre is Urthona. But he, luckily, has his form of Los. His Spectre is not cold. Its sin is jealousy and pride. In "Vala," the fall of Urthona and the rage of Los are told (Night IV., ll. 33 and following), as in the first pages of "Jerusalem," Los's triumph over his spectre.

Luvah, also, enters into the Satanic state when he separates himself from his fellows and contends with them; for this, whether in a Zoa or an individual man, is what is meant by "falling towards the centre," and is "entering into the reasoning power, forsaking imagination" ("Jerusalem," p. 75, l. 7). It is from this that all quarrels arise (*ibid.* p. 64, l. 20).

Luvah's position in Eternity is rightly the East, the true centre,—not the false, selfish centre. He is also the "mildest" of the Zoas. Then comes the change. Pity becomes cruel, and love seeks for dominion. Luvah smites Albion with boils of which *doubt* is one of the worst. He does not resemble the Lamb of God, but the Serpent. He is Orc. He

is in generation, not in regeneration. His symbol is evidently that of an early pagan worship ("Vala," Night VIII., ll. 59, 62).

In the place in "Vala" where Eno expands an atom of space, opening its centre out into "infinite," or as "Jerusalem," p. 48, l. 39, says, "into Beulah," we have evidently a reference to the "grain of sand" in Lambeth ("Jerusalem," p. 41, l. 15) that opens into Oothoon's palace. Oothoon being the emanation of Theotormon, the western potency. The "grain of sand" is the irreducible minimum of personal life,—spectre-life,—in the prophetic spirit ("Jerusalem," p. 91, l. 47). Pyramids, the enormous natural and unreduced form of this grain, are pride, as above (l. 43). The phrase about neither Satan nor his watch-fiends finding the grain, and the repetition of the same expression with regard to the Gate of Los (p. 39, l. 1) shows a relationship between these gates. One is the gate of sleep; the other of death. One leads to passive, affectionate life, the repose of Beulah, the other to merciless jealousy, individualism, stern law, unforgiving system. Los exists to enable states to pass through this gate, and to deliver individuals from it. This is another description of salvation. It is "the only means to forgiveness" (*ibid.* p. 49, l. 15). It is a portion of the work of the Divine Hand, whose energetic action is not perceived by the gentle moods of Beulah's kindly rest ("Vala," Night I., l. 195), but which has power not only to fix the personal instinctive (Adam) and the personal intellectual (Satan) limits ("Jerusalem," p. 35, l. 1) but can even open the Centre, which is not so much as an atom, and make it into an expanse ("Jerusalem," p. 57, l. 13).

This means that Imagination, the great force that surrounds us all within and without, coming to us in the form of Inspiration, has power to perform what are miracles in comparison with our own strength, and to make of the most egotistic sensation of all in the world of Time, that of the sexual organ whose symbol is the plough, into an expansive emotion leading

to the true Centro, the great mental opening which leads to the Unlimited in the world of Eternity.

The myth of the Centro is seen, like the others, to enclose a doctrine, a precept, a moral precept, though to have so described it would have made Blake very angry, since he was the one moral reformer who believed that the destruction of morality was the first step towards reform. The precept is, in effect, this:—Avoid what tends towards egotism, namely, Reason, Morality, Hatred, Envy, Revenge, Cruelty, and Doubt. These are diseases of the soul, and delusions of Ulro. They lead to war, principedom, and victory in this world, and afterwards to nonentity. Enter into all that joins man to his fellow,—true imagination, true pity, true forgiveness. These are the Eden, and Head—Heart—Loins of the eternal Man of whom we all are members, and who is the Saviour.

Through its association with Ulro and Beulah, it is impossible to consider the myth of the centre without reference to the Triads. The grouping-symbol under which these are gathered is always Head, Heart, Loins. They correspond with Childhood, Maturity, Age, and with Creation, Redemption, Judgment. It is at first confusing to find Age and Loins together, but explanation is to be read in the association of the joys of the flesh with weakness, and ("Milton," p. 25, l. 56, and "Vala," Night II., l. 153), in the verse—

Let age and sickness silent rob
The vineyard in the night,
But those who burn with vigorous youth
Pluck fruits before the light.

In secret means *in the flesh*. *Before* means *in the face of*, not *previous to*, because the real youth and the real strength are of the spirit, while the real weakness and age are of the flesh whose seed is in the caverns of the grave ("Vala," Night I., l. 100, and VII., l. 610; and IX., l. 726), though it be admitted that "stolen joys are sweet, and fruit eaten in secret delightful."

THE THREE EYES OF MAN.

It being remembered that creation has seven divisions and mortal life three, and that eyes are the symbol of marriage, no mystery is found in the number seven as applied to the eyes of God,—for creation is marriage,—or three as appropriate to those of man, for they are evidently the three marriages of his regions and may be called the Eye of the Head, the Eye of the Heart, and Eye of the Loins.

Like the daughters of Urizen, they grow by accretion and belong to instinctive life, and are not themselves creative,—not masculine, but reflective,—feminine. They are Hela, Thel, Oothoon.

But every division of the great fourfold humanity whose portions are known by the symbols of the four points, contains not only its fourfold, but its threefold.

Urizen deserting the South and going North,—the great constructive Intellect leaving imagination for experience, had three daughters in the North. But Thel is a child of the South, a leader of sunny flocks. She is the self-sacrificing feminine,—the instinctive part of that whose mental portion is the Redeemer. She is therefore, in her way, the Form of the Fourth in the furnace. But the Form of the Fourth is in each of the Three, in Oothoon when she gives up woman's secrecy, and in Hela when her father makes a victim of her.

Thel is, in a peculiar sense, the imaginative quality of the eye,—the *sight*, as it were. Deserted and alone, still a virgin, a possibility of marriage only, she wanders and describes herself—

She is a watery bow, a parting cloud, a shadow on water, a

dream on innocence, a voice on pure instinct, and if left alone without masculine help will turn out to be mortal and fade. Without Imagination's power, the Eye of its Heart,—the air of the sun,—must pass away. But her passage is mild. In the book of "Thel" she mistakenly wanders to the three points seeking stability. The water, even by the lily, cannot give it to her, nor the air by the cloud, nor innocent earth by the infant, that is its visible mortality, nor by the grave that is its invisible mortality. At the end of the book she flies back, still unmarried, to the vales of Har.

The vales of Har reveal her correspondence, a sort of sisterhood with Hela.

To the vales Hela, the Eye of the Head, was forced to guide blind Tiriel, virginity directing impotence. But, as seen by the Head, Nature is a serpent, and Hela's hair was full of these, for she was the eye of egotism,—the north. Thel was the eye of universal brotherhood and self-sacrificing devotion,—in a word, the Eternal Aspect of Imagination was her father and she was its heart. Hela, therefore, had only pain and fury when not married, while Thel had only sweet regret.

Thel is mistress of the vales of Har. Hela frightens them, and howls dismally on the mountains. The vales of Har are the places of another impotence than that of spent intellectual egotism. They are the home of Har and Heva, forms of spent affectionate egotism.

Thel does not appear in the book of "Tiriel," where Hela is described. She was not known to those that belong to that story. That she was mistress there is known to the lily, not to her equals in other moods. Only unselfishness knows unselfishness.

Hela and Oothoon are fully described in the chapters on the books of "Tiriel," and the "Visions of the daughters of Albion."

The three names are not to be set up as each exclusively belonging to a single region, nor each immovable, but they

are of the same generation in the great pedigree of the myth, and that alone enables interpretation to bring them on one plane.

Thel is daughter of a Seraph,—of a Son of the South. Granddaughter of a Zoa. (Urizen.)

Hela is daughter of Tiriël, and thus granddaughter of the same Zoa.

Oothoon is at once emanation, descendant and wife of Theotormon, who was the son of Los, or Urthona, and thus, also, by marriage a granddaughter of a Zoa.

In the first line of the book of "Thel," Blake had begun to describe her as a daughter of Mnetha, and having written the first three letters, stopped, and left them to be mis-read as the word "the." This is the version given in the printed text, both in Gilchrist and in the Aldine edition.

But to describe Thel as a daughter of Mnetha, would have been equally right, though it would not have so emphatically given her proper place in the myth. Mnetha, the mother of Har and Heva, was necessarily the mother of the Mistress of the vales of Har. Mnetha is the unselfish motherhood, as Thel is the unselfish virginity. Both, by unselfishness, are spiritual, and are neither intellectual in the corporeal sense, nor bodily in the restrictive sense. The Seraphim are in a group, the counterparts of all that Mnetha can be. She is the type of their emanations, or feminine portions. Their daughter is hers. But they, being named, more evidently give Thel her southern place, and make her journey ending in the North—her own grave—more evidently a journey to opposites, like that of Tiriël that ended in his death, and that of Urizen which led him to become an architect and task-master, from being a sower of seed and father of joy.

But the three are "each within other." Woe, like Hela's, comes to Thel in her last shriek. Weeping, like Thel's gentler sorrow, is the lot of Oothoon before her tears are gone and she is all made of flame. All are victims of jealousy, and,

though female, not themselves jealous. That is why they are taken as three types in one mental group.

Oothoon, emanation of Theotormon, is not jealous because he is, and she must needs be his counterpart. Theotormon is jealous because he is dark, and the qualities go together. He is the male side of female water as a symbol. Thus the flame that is his counterpart is not like the counterpart of the three other "unvegetated sons of Los," Rintrah, Palamabron, and Bromion—namely Ocalythron, Elynitria, and Leutha. Ocalythron is the most jealous, because Rintrah is the least dark and watery, being of golden fire. Leutha is the least selfish, because Bromion is the most egotistic and earthy. Elynitria repels with golden arrows, because the fires of Palamabron are given for help, even to Satan. Thus opposites give the clue to kinships. Thus Thel and Hela, the virgins, find their sister in Oothoon, that third virgin who was a violated wife—for her wifehood and violation belonged to her own exterior regions, her virginity to her inward life, where she rightly makes a third to the solitary two.

THE WORM.

ETERNAL nature, in its ultimate symbolio form, is called Satan. In its sexual appearance it is the Female. In its infantile, or innocent aspect, it is the Worm.

These terms are not used for purposes of vituperation. They belong to a series of symbols which grow inevitably out of the idea of the External, as Nature's comprehensive name. Its symbols all repeat this, even while in detail they seem sometimes to contradict one another. The Worm is the dragon in embryo. It is the Devourer, of a fury so secret as to pass for helplessness. To love the Worm is to perform the most God-like act possible. He who does this cannot be other than its opposite, safe in His own impenetrable immortality. So far as we love the Worm pityingly, God is in us.

The Worm "loves to curl round the bones of Death." It endeavours to "build a palace of eternity in the mouldering churchyard." When we attempt with the external portion of our minds to do the work of the internal, and with the temporary to produce the everlasting, we are the Worm.

We are the Worm when our loves are only of the flesh, our act realism, our reading of Scripture literalism. We are the opposite of the Lamb of God. At best we contain a fragment of sensuous egotistic life, though it be no larger than the grain of sand in Lambeth, that Satan could not find. It is into such infancy that Christ entered, that he might teach it to die by teaching it to grow up. To enlarge the faculties till we see *with*, not *through* the eye, and find Nature Holy because it is the shell, though no more, of everything that lives, is to grow up. "God is within and without, He is even in the depths of Hell." The gates of Hell are the Mercy-Seat. The scales of the Serpent are the

feathers of the wings of Covering Cherubim. The veil of Vala, or the Mundane Shell, contains the Twenty-seven Heavens. The rock-tomb contains the Divine Body, and it is the error of errors to suppose that God or man has a body distinct from his soul.

So the equivalents for the Worm go on and are—

The Covering Cherub.

The Veil of Vala.

The Mundane Shell.

The Rock.

The Grave.

The Female (and in her all the females named and nameless).

The Womb.

The Void.

Nor can the following be omitted from the list—

The Hermaphrodite.

The Polypus.

The latter being descendant of the former, and both characterized by their female element, which is Rationality, and is joined to Mystery and Morality, and associated with such places as—

Babylon.

Amalek.

Canaan.

Moab.

Midian, and so forth.

To these other symbols join—

The chain.

The cup.

The knife.

The whip, and many more.

We must add the mythic name of the Valley of the Shadow of Death—Entuthon Benython—which may be classed as the contrary of Golgonooza or Art, the Spiritual City within it. And having studied all that is to be learned about it as a symbol, we come back to what is said of it doctrinally

—namely, that Nature is one of the things of which man has no right to deprive himself though it be evil. Man has no right to refrain and restrain himself from sin. An angel cannot become a prophet till he has been a devil. Restraint is self-murder. It is only in the furnace of passion that the three regions of Man—the Head, Heart and Loins—entering, find beside them the Fourth,—Humanity itself, which is far above sex. At the same time each man has a perfect right to know that he is by nature evil, and must be continually changed into his direct contrary, and that this is not restraint but self-annihilation, and is the only gate of eternal life. Such is the Blake-doctrine, and the one criticism of a social or prudential or moral kind that can be made upon it stands already in his own handwriting. “The wicked will turn it to wickedness, and the righteous to righteousness; even so. Amen.” (“Jerusalem,” p. 27.)

This aspect of the subject may now be finally dismissed. It has been recurred to more than once in the present pages because Blake cannot be understood, if we forget for a moment that he was an enthusiastic, and even fanatic moral reformer. His constant and violent attacks on *Natural Morality* are to be read with his warfare against literal interpretation of the Symbolic in Scripture, and non-visionary acceptance of the gift of sight. It was all part of the struggle of the Prolific with the Devourer, the Human with the Worm.

Hyle is especially selected from among the Sons of Albion, who in the aggregate are Satan the Great Serpent, to represent the Worm (“Jerusalem,” p. 82, l. 38, &c.), and in this he is made to serve the purpose of identifying all the worms with one another,—through Enitharmon’s bosom, where Vala has already been seen in the same form (“Vala,” Night III., l. 20, and Orc,—“Urizen,” chap. VI.). In “Vala,” Night III., l. 20, she is seen as the Emanation of Luvah,—still as a worm, though Orc was Luvah (Night VII., l. 15), and Luvah was in the Loins of Los (Night III., l. 22).

The identification of symbols, however apparently contrary as parts of the great External, is necessary before Blake’s

seeming paradoxes can be seen as sequences of inexorable symbolic logic and not as confusion.

If we go back to the consideration of Los and Enitharmon as "mortals" know them, we see them as Time and Space, with Motion as the child of their conjunction and Desire as the personal quality of motion, without which, though we may use other names for it (such as Attraction,—Gravity,—Energy,—Affinity, &c.), we cannot think of motion at all. If we realize how the emotional has crept into the abstract in our language even when we use metaphors solely to help science, we have a means of considering how Luvah took the horses of Urizen and climbed into his cloudy heavens; and in looking at "Vala," Night VIII., l. 454, and "Jerusalem," p. 21, l. 31, we find that at this point of the myth Orc and Luvah are identified. It was the Daughters—the Female or Nature element of Albion—who had taught Luvah to rise into the cloudy heavens just as Guendolen identified Hyle and Vala in the Worm.

Of course Luvah (or Satan) rising is the same as Messiah falling and forming a heaven of what he stole from the abyss, as the cruel warrior becoming an infant, and as the junction between every pair of opposites, including the sexes,—and as Christ breaking through the circle of Destiny or the Veil. All are varieties of the Incarnation. Anything that surrounds or winds round—a chain, a cup, a sepulchre, a veil, a snake, a cloud, a female—is symbolic of external nature.

Thus the devourer and the poisoner are one. The cup of delusion destroys no less than the teeth of the great dragon of lust. Jealousy, the chain, is also a portion of the poison in the cup. ("Jerusalem," p. 85, l. 31; and p. 63, l. 40.)

The chain as a lash ("Vala," Night IV., ll. 184, 186) identifies the Serpent Satan, who is the "Accuser," not only with the worm but with the whip. Without accusation (from self to self) there can be no repentance. Repentance is the whip. ("Vala," Night VI., l. 42.) Jealousy is the chain. Reason (Hand) as a Satan or accuser scourges the exterior or female instinct, as well as imagination, through the

streets of Babylon or moral law ("Jerusalem," ll. 21, 29). Theotormon scourges Oothoon ("Visions of the Daughters," p. 6, *Picture*), and faith is lashed by the mockery of Greek Philosophy, whether used by Gibbon or the ancients. (Comment on "Jerusalem." Preface to Chapter III.,—Poem "The Monk of Charlemagne.") Physically the whip rouses the senses ("Triel," last chapter) which tend to shrink together under cruelty ("Jerusalem," p. 66, l. 83) and fall into the power of Nature, or Satan. We thus return to the Serpent by the sequence of symbols. The Winding Worm also is repentant. ("Jerusalem," p. 82, l. 72.)

Jealousy, chief promoter of morality, is also a promoter of beauty. From Ocalythron ("Europe," l. 83) to Tirzah ("Jerusalem," p. 136, l. 1) the beautiful are jealous, except the Three Eyes. Thus it is that the gems of the serpent are poisonous, and beauty is part of the delusion that makes the cup and the snake deadly, and identifies the cup and the snake as two visions of one symbol.

The following references will further identify the various symbols:—

The poison of a smile (Book of "Thal").

Poisons like blushes ("Vala," Night I., l. 152).

Vala grows bright and poisonous at once (Night II., l. 87).

As "Mystery," which is another name for Vala and Rahab (Night VIII., l. 277), her poisonous fruits are of many shining colours (Night VII., l. 213).

Poisonous attractions of false beauty (Night VIII., l. 285).

The wild snake takes pestilence to adorn her with gems and gold ("Visions of Daughters," p. 8).

The blushing light of Leutha is a sweet smiling pestilence ("Europe," l. 207).

Ahania, the invisible lust of Urizen, is the mother of Pestilence ("Ahania" l., 8).

Orc (passion) having told Urizen (abstract intellect) that while he, Orc, was still Luvah (love), he had stolen Urizen's light and converted it into flaming fire ("Vala," Night VII., l. 147), takes to creeping, organizes a serpent's body (l. 152).

The Spectre of Urthona (all spectres are scaled-dragon-serpents) as a strong demon reddening began to prepare the poison of sweet love. (He is identical with the second, or creeping Orc, and thus unites the symbols, snake and cup.) "Vala," Night VII., l. 217.)

For the surrounding quality of the serpent and worm, see "folding serpent" ("Vala," Night IX., l. 34; and "winding worm" ("Jerusalem," p. 85, l. 7), the "worm" being both Hyle and Reuben, and all infants.

The females are all identified with each other through the symbols of incarnation and crucifixion, which are identical.

Satan or Luvah, or blood and passion, the egotistic or mortal part put on by Christ, is nailed to the tree of Mystery (or chained to the rock as Oro. Night VIII., l. 320), who is Rahab, for by pity and affection, arts of Urizen (Night VII., l. 20), Rahab was made as well as the Serpent from the fruit of the tree (Night VIII., l. 282), which fruit is seen as the gems of the Serpent, Oro (Night VIII., l. 73).

Who, apart from her vegetative qualities in Jerusalem, through whose gates (in the heart) Christ descends to the womb of Mystery in the loins (Night VIII., l. 255), or lower portions of Luvah (Night VIII., l. 318).

Thus all the females are one, viewed remote (Night VIII., l. 278).

Thus in a living death, the nameless shadow all things bound (Night VIII., l. 474).

The veil is of Jerusalem, and (Night VIII., l. 188) is the mantle of Luvah. The dress made by Rahab and Tirzah is of Torture, despair, compunction, indolence, and ignorance, covering all with a cold web (Night VIII., l. 217). It is Urizen's net, for in the North he became female or external, till he and the Shadowy One were, by embracing, one and the same. (Compare VIII., ll. 82 and 171.) These are put on by their victims, when Satan has stripped them, in his mills of the webs of lascivious delight, woven by Enitharmon, before they plunge into Arnon, the river of parental love (Night VIII., ll. 205-214). Thus the veil identifies the male serpent Urizen, and the female, Vala; for viewed as a worm, male is female ("Jerusalem," p. 64, l. 12).

All these weavings and integuments are received by the One Man Christ, and put off by him, while Rahab, as crucifier, undoes her own work as incarnator (Night VIII., l. 230), and as all die in Christ (Night VIII., l. 477), as Man suffers and his voice is heard in all, human, animal or vegetable, that suffers (Night VIII., ll. 553 to 585).

The Mundane Shell is, in fact, identified with Vala and the other symbols through the tears with which she is animated by Jerusalem (p. 11, l. 24).

Through the veil which shone with brightness ("Jerusalem," p. 20, l. 34), as the Serpent with gems.

It might either be woven of punishments, of wheels, or forgiveness of wings (but would still be the external, the surrounding) (p. 22, l. 34).

The Veil is the Mundane Shell which was built by Los ("Jerusalem," p. 42, ll. 78 and 81) through the bands and power of Urizen ("Vala," Night II., ll. 24 and 240). It is the land of death round Golgonooza—the blue Mundane Shell where the Twenty-seven Heavens begin ("Jerusalem," p. 13, l. 30), composed of self-righteousnesses (p. 13, l. 52) or spectres of the dead (p. 47, l. 11). It is scarlet (p. 21, l. 50 and p. 22, l. 30) woven for cruel laws (p. 23, l. 22) and it vegetates (as the chain grew to the rock) (p. 24, l. 61). It was drawn round Albion by Luvah (p. 30, l. 29). It is forbidden us by Christ, though Satan puts it between Eve and Adam, teaching them to form the serpent of precious stones and gold, jill Joseph (of the coat of many colours) is sold into Egypt (the outer world again).^a It is the fleshly tabernacle (p. 56, l. 40) and is the Veil of the Temple in the Old Testament (p. 59, l. 55). It turns beauty by secrecy into sorrow (p. 60, l. 34). It folds and unfolds through ages and generations like a veil of Cherubim (p. 64, l. 3). It is the type of the Feminine, the Priests' tabernacle (p. 65, l. 60). It is used by the masculine and feminine, separate from man, and is bloody (p. 67, and l. 16). It grows until the incarnation and crucifixion in the disobedient female. Then it

is rent and removed as a Druid law (p. 69, l. 38). Los wove the veil with the iron shuttle of war (p. 71, l. 60). As the Tree, being planted before Jerusalem, the friend of sinners is judged to death outside the Veil (p. 82, l. 33). Whereupon the incarnation is figured in the worm beneath the veil (l. 39), presently nailed hand and foot and then become the winding worm (l. 47). The Veil is an outside surface of earth superadded to the real surface, which is unchangeable (p. 83, l. 45). The Veil of Seraphim or covering of the coins is an unceasing flame (p. 86, l. 24). The Veil is described as the body of the sexes as distinguished from the body of Man (p. 90, l. 14).

Its complete identification with the Mundane Shell is on p. 59, ll. 2, 9, where it is the place of redemption where the dead were awoken. This identifies it with the Mantle of Luvah also, though the Mandane Shell is the earth seen from within, not from without (p. 72, l. 47). Within it the Twenty-seven Heavens are formed that connect the veil with the earth's summits (p. 75, l. 23). The veil-weaving daughters have the power through the senses to make the apparent earth even assimilate with art—the veil touch Golgonooza (p. 83, l. 48). Los explains the use of the snake and of the shell, and of the sexes (p. 92, 14 to 27).

The Veil, the Mantle and the Shell are identified with Entuthon Benyhton as the place where the Lamb of God stood opposite to Satan ("Vala," Night VIII., l. 263).

And where Golgonooza was built (p. 13, ll. 30 and 54; and p. 14, l. 35); *beneath* means without.

Golgonooza is the Sleeping Humanity (or incarnate Christ) of Albion, which the spectre sons of Albion, who are Satan in the Aggregate, was to destroy (p. 5, l. 80).

Golgonooza is within the Mundane Shell, and Satan's seat is without. (Art or symbolism, within. Literalism, the "letter" that "killeth," without.) ("Milton," p. 16, ll. 21, 30.)

Only the sons of Los that were not generated were left in Golgonooza ("Milton," p. 23, l. 10).

Golgonooza is named Art (p. 23, l. 50).

The Veil, seen as the Hermaphrodite, is a form of Satan, the aggregate of the spectres, and the shape of War ("Vala," Night VIII., ll. 109 and 245). He is the "Indefinite Spectre" of "Jerusalem," p. 64, l. 5, there connected with the veil, and has a double cave (l. 21). It was the drawing of Vala into his bosom that made his scales bright (l. 25).

The Female, the shadow, and the veil, are identified with the male, when as Satan he is Orc, the generate Luvah, or the generate Urizen, who has gone north and fallen to the priest-serpent ("Vala," Night VIII., ll. 82 and 171).

The final result, the furnaces of Golgonooza, or art built in Entuthon Benyhton, where is the Seat of Satan or of separateness, is that the Veil which was composed of the spectres of the dead, becomes Jerusalem herself through the action of the furnaces, as Eve in process of the generations became the Virgin Mary, the one universal Female Form ("Vala," Night VIII., ll. 180 to 187).

The Eighth Night of "Vala" unravels the tangle of symbols with great care. In the end all is clear, though all is

complicated because truth, being only known to our minds in the form of paradox, cannot be freely written, even in symbolic terms, without complexity.

We see Nature, with Reason at the top and Lust at the bottom, with Jealousy on the one hand and Morality on the other. We know that it is all a delusion, and exists nowhere but in our own minds, yet we become what we behold—we suffer—our “centres are open to pain.” All this is Satan, with Law, his wife, mortal mother of the Redeemer.

We see Nature’s opposite, symbolically Christ, immoral because forgiving, unreasonable because creative, not jealous, yet with a bride—who is liberty—and he also dwells nowhere but in us, yet in our higher regions to which he invites us to enter, forgetting contest and attaining peace and universal brotherhood. Then the “Mortal disappears in improved knowledge,” and gently “fades away” (“Vala,” Night VIII., l. 544).

These two opposites we see throughout Blake’s works, and into them we can resolve all his apparently contradictory symbols.

But if, on explanation, his myth loses its confusion, though it cannot lose its fragmentary character as a work of literature, it still fortunately retains its beauty, as does the “infant joy,” though its anatomy “horrible, ghost, and deadly” be exposed time after time.

There may remain, and do, many passages that would call for analysis beyond what is given in the following interpretations and paraphrases of the poems and Books, if the Blake commentary were to be made ideally complete. But already analysis, or Satan’s Mill, has been long served by Palamabron in “officious brotherhood,” and we may exclaim with Urizen:—

“Can I not leave this world of cumbrous wheels?”