Poetry

CRITICISM

VOLUME 12

Poetry Criticism

Excerpts from Criticism of the Works of the Most Significant and Widely Studied Poets of World Literature

VOLUME 12

Jane Kelly Kosek
Editor

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 91-118494
ISBN 0-8103-9273-9
ISSN 1052-4851

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

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Poetry Criticism

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Preface

A Comprehensive Information Source on World Poetry

Poetry Criticism (PC) provides substantial critical excerpts and biographical information on poets throughout the world who are most frequently studied in high school and undergraduate college courses. Each ***PC*** entry is supplemented by biographical and bibliographical material to help guide the user to a fuller understanding of the genre and its creators. Although major poets and literary movements are covered in such Gale Literary Criticism Series as *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC), Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC), Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism (NCLC), Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800 (LC),* and *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism (CMLC),* ***PC*** offers more focused attention on poetry than is possible in the broader, survey-oriented entries on writers in these Gale series. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the generous excerpts and supplementary material provided by ***PC*** supply them with vital information needed to write a term paper on poetic technique, examine a poet's most prominent themes, or lead a poetry discussion group.

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In order to reflect the influence of tradition as well as innovation, poets of various nationalities, eras, and movements are represented in every volume of ***PC***. Each author entry presents a historical survey of the critical response to that author's work; the length of an entry reflects the amount of critical attention that the author has received from critics writing in English and from foreign critics in translation. Since many poets have inspired a prodigious amount of critical explication, ***PC*** is necessarily selective, and the editors have chosen the most significant published criticism to aid readers and students in their research. In order to provide these important critical pieces, the editors will sometimes reprint essays that have appeared in previous volumes of Gale's Literary Criticism Series. Such duplication, however, never exceeds fifteen percent of a ***PC*** volume.

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Each ***PC*** author entry consists of the following components:

- **Author Heading:** the name under which the author wrote appears at the beginning of the entry, followed by birth and death dates. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and his or her legal name given in parentheses in the lines immediately preceding the Introduction. Uncertainty as to birth or death dates is indicated by question marks.

- **Introduction:** a biographical and critical essay introduces readers to the author and the critical discussions surrounding his or her work.

- **Author Portrait:** a photograph or illustration of the author is included when available. Most entries also feature illustrations of people and places pertinent to an author's career, as well as holographs of manuscript pages and dust jackets.

- **Principal Works:** the author's most important works are identified in a list ordered

chronologically by first publication dates. The first section comprises poetry collections and book-length poems. The second section gives information on other major works by the author. For foreign authors, original foreign-language publication information is provided, as well as the best and most complete English-language editions of their works.

- **Criticism:** critical excerpts chronologically arranged in each author entry provide perspective on changes in critical evaluation over the years. All individual titles of poems and poetry collections by the author featured in the entry are printed in boldface type to enable a reader to ascertain without difficulty the works under discussion. For purposes of easy identification, the critic's name and the publication date of the essay are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the journal in which it originally appeared. Publication information (such as publisher names and book prices) and parenthetical numerical references (such as footnotes or page and line references to specific editions of a work) have been deleted at the editor's discretion to enable smoother reading of the text.

- **Explanatory Notes:** introductory comments preface each critical excerpt, providing several types of useful information, including: the reputation of a critic, the importance of a work of criticism, and the specific type of criticism (biographical, psychoanalytic, historical, etc.).

- **Author Commentary:** insightful comments from the authors themselves and excerpts from author interviews are included when available.

- **Bibliographical Citations:** information preceding each piece of criticism guides the interested reader to the original essay or book.

- **Further Reading:** bibliographic references accompanied by descriptive notes at the end of each entry suggest additional materials for study of the author. Boxed material following the Further Reading provides references to other biographical and critical series published by Gale.

Citing *Poetry Criticism*

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume in the Literary Criticism Series may use the following general formats to footnote reprinted criticism. The first example pertains to material

drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

[1]David Daiches, "W. H. Auden: The Search for a Public," *Poetry* LIV (June 1939), 148-56; excerpted and reprinted in *Poetry Criticism*, Vol. 1, ed. Robyn V. Young (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), pp. 7-9.

[2]Pamela J. Annas, *A Disturbance in Mirrors: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath* (Greenwood Press, 1988); excerpted and reprinted in *Poetry Criticism*, Vol. 1, ed. Robyn V. Young (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), pp. 410-14.

Comments Are Welcome

Readers who wish to suggest authors to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editors.

Acknowledgments

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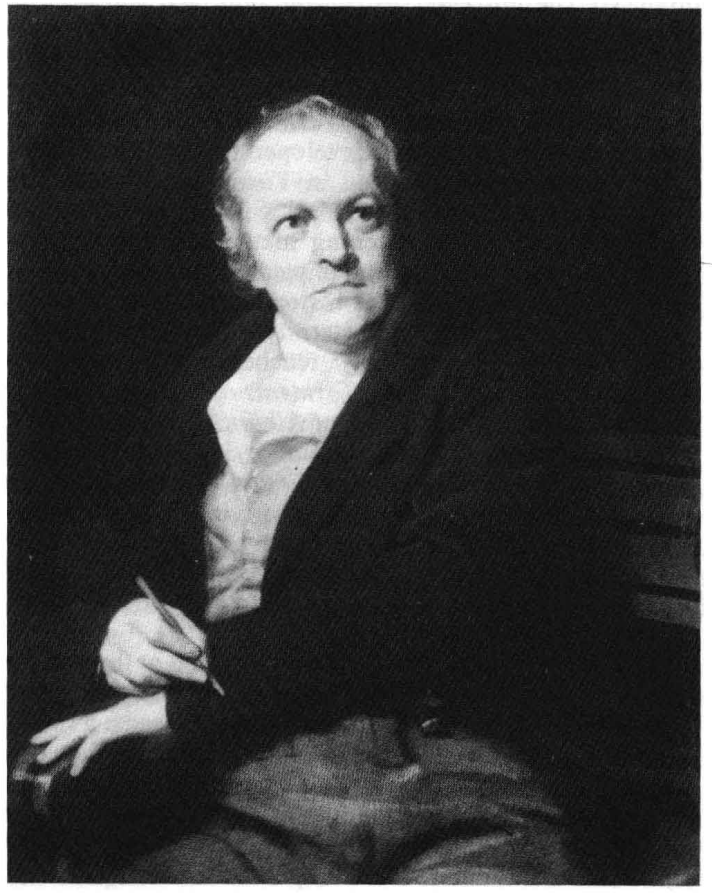
William Blake
1757–1827

English poet and artist.

INTRODUCTION

A visionary poet and artist, Blake was often ridiculed during his lifetime but has since been recognized as one of the major poets of English literature. His work is distinguished by the creation and illustration of a complex mythological system, in which imagination is of paramount importance, serving as the vehicle of humanity's communion with the spiritual essence of reality. By bringing his unconventional perspective to bear on such subjects as religion, morality, art, and politics, Blake has become recognized as both a social rebel and as a "hero of the imagination" who played a key role in advancing the Romantic revolt against rationalism. These thematic concerns inform the lyrics in Blake's best-known publication, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul.*



Biographical Information

Blake was the second of five children born to London hosier James Blake and his wife Catherine. He exhibited visionary tendencies as a child, claiming to see God at his window and a tree adorned with angels, and was artistically precocious as well. Following several years' study at Henry Pars's Drawing School, he was apprenticed in 1772 to the master engraver James Basire. Blake took up studies at The Royal Academy of Arts in 1779, but he openly disagreed with his instructors' artistic theories and soon focused his energies on engraving. This work brought him into contact with the radical bookseller Joseph Johnson and with such fellow artists as Thomas Stothard, John Flaxman, and Henry Fuseli. It was through Flaxman's efforts in particular that Blake obtained many of the engraving and drawing commissions that were the principal source of his meager income. In 1782 Blake married Catherine Boucher, who was devoted to him. Under Blake's instruction she learned to read, write, and help illuminate his books.

Blake first attracted literary notice in the salon of the Reverend and Mrs. A. S. Mathew, where he read his poems and occasionally sang them to his original musical compositions. In 1783 Flaxman and the Reverend Mathew funded the printing of *Poetical Sketches*, Blake's first collection of verse. Blake suffered the loss of his younger brother Robert in 1787, and later claimed to communicate with his spirit in the "regions of . . . Imagination." At about the same time, Blake developed his technique of illuminated printing. He first employed this method in about 1788 while producing two treatises entitled *There Is No Natural Religion* and *All Religions Are One*, which urge the claims of imagination over rationalist philosophy. Two more illuminated works, *Songs of Innocence* and *The Book of Thel*, were printed in 1789. Inasmuch as Blake painstakingly engraved the plates for his illuminated works, printed them personally, and colored each copy by hand, his books are as rare as they are beautiful. This restricted circulation limited Blake's income and prevented his reputation and works from spreading beyond a fairly closed society of friends and connoisseurs.

The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 found Blake in the company of Joseph Johnson's radical coterie, which included such prominent activists as Joseph Priestley, Thomas Paine, and Mary Wollstonecraft. In their society he evidently discussed the democratic revolutions in America and France and the political and social turmoil they engendered at home, topics that also became major focuses of his poetry: *The French Revolution*, for example, covers events in France during May to mid-July, 1789, emphasizing the oppressive authoritarianism of the old regime, while *America: A Prophecy* predicts the spread of the American experiment to Europe. Blake's sympathy with political and civil liberties put him at odds with the noto-

riously repressive government of William Pitt, and thus some critics have speculated that Blake obscured his ideas behind the veil of mysticism to circumvent government censure.

In 1790 Blake and his wife moved to Lambeth, where he produced *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and a series of minor symbolic books including, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion: The Eye Sees More than the Heart Knows*; *America*; *The First Book of Urizen*; *Europe: A Prophecy*; *The Song of Los*; *The Book of Ahania*; and *The Book of Los*; In these works Blake developed the symbolic mythology that he had introduced in *Tiriel* and *The Book of Thel*, setting in motion what Mark Schorer has described as "a system of ever-widening metaphorical amplification" through which Blake attempted "to explain his story, the story of his England, the history of the world, prehistory, and the nature of all eternity." Scholars generally agree that Blake's mythology reaches its fullest expression in *The Four Zoas: The Torments of Love & Jealousy in the Death and Judgement of Albion the Ancient Man*, which he probably began to compose during the Lambeth years, and in *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, a prophetic work of later origin. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, regarded by many critics as the lyrical counterpart of the symbolic books, is also a product of the Lambeth period.

From 1800 to 1803 Blake and his wife lived at the seaside village of Felpham under the patronage of the minor poet William Hayley, whose mundaneness soon became a source of vexation to the visionary Blake. Scholars speculate that during his unhappy stay at Felpham Blake revised *The Four Zoas* and began to draft *Milton*, a reworking of *Paradise Lost*. Both poems have been interpreted in light of his statement that he had "fought thro' a Hell of terrors & horror . . . in a Divided Existence" during these years. The Blakes returned to London in 1803, but their homecoming was marred by accusations that William had uttered seditious sentiments while expelling a soldier named Scofield from his garden at Felpham. He was tried for sedition and acquitted in 1804. Blake's next significant publication, his series of illustrations for an 1808 edition of Robert Blair's *The Grave*, attracted more notice than all of his poetical works combined. However, reviewers castigated his corporeal representation of spiritual phenomena as a piece of imaginative and theological impertinence. Blake's frustrations came to the fore in 1809, when he mounted a private exhibition of his paintings which he hoped would publicize his work and help to vindicate his visionary aesthetic, but which was poorly attended. Moreover, the descriptive catalogue he wrote to accompany the exhibition largely inspired ridicule among its few readers. Blake's later years were distinguished by his completion of *Jerusalem*, his last and longest prophetic book, and by his creation of a series of engraved illustrations for the *Book of Job* that is now widely regarded as his greatest artistic achievement. The latter work was commissioned in the early 1820s by John Linnell, one of a group of young artists known as the "Ancients" who gathered around Blake and helped support him in his old age.

Major Works

Blake once defended his art by remarking, "What is Grand is necessarily obscure to Weak men. That which can be made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care." He thus characterized his work as a combination of grandness and obscurity that he was not particularly eager to elucidate. Fortunately, his aesthetic philosophy emerges in his writings, forming a firm basis for critical insight into his perplexing oeuvre. Blake held the radical view that "Nature is Imagination itself"; by extension, he also maintained that exercise of the imagination leads to wisdom and insight (synonymous with vision) and, according to Jerome J. McGann, that poetry, painting, and other imaginative pursuits serve as "vehicles for vision." Given this perception, the world of imagination took precedence for Blake over the world of matter, and rational philosophical systems, based as they are in the material world, gave way to the "Divine Arts of Imagination." Moreover, Blake considered it his personal mission both to express and embody this philosophy in his art, thus giving a prophetic quality to his work.

Blake's passion for originality and imagination informs his creation of a private cosmology that embraces both his lyric and prophetic poetry. Stated in the most general terms, his system posits a universe whose most sweeping movements and minutest particulars reflect ever-fluctuating relationships between reason, love, poetry, energy, and other vital forces. While these forces appear most prominently in the symbolic mythology of the prophetic books, taking the guise of such titanic characters as Urizen, Luvah, Los, and Orc, critics generally maintain that they are integral to the symbolism of the lyric poems as well. Hazard Adams, for example, states that "the whole of Blake's great symbolic system" is assimilated in the symbolic structure of the lyric "The Tyger," while Joseph Wicksteed sees Blake's ideas concerning matter and the flesh reflected in such symbols as dew and grass in the "Introduction" to *Songs of Experience*. Great as this symbolic system might be, however, it has also been described as "notoriously private" and "hieroglyphic," pointing to a difficulty in interpreting Blake's symbols that led early critics to question the lucidity and even the sanity of his prophetic books.

By virtue of its versification, *Jerusalem* is considered by many as the culmination of a lifetime of experimentation befitting a poet who despised restriction in all its forms: "Poetry Fetter'd, Fetters the Human Race!" Blake declared in the preface to *Jerusalem*, proclaiming his liberation from the "monotony" and "bondage" of metered verse. As early as *Poetical Sketches*, he explored the elimination of end rhyme, substituting rhythmical devices such as word repetition that he subsequently used to great advantage in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. The poems in the latter work are also celebrated for their compression and economy; yet Blake appears to have deemphasized these qualities in selecting the lengthy septenary line (containing seven metrical feet) for *The Four Zoas*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. Even here, however, he deviated from his standard line at will, leading to Alicia Ostriker's observation that "Blake, even in his metrics, deliberately breaks every

rule he makes, refuses to impose order in art where there is no order in his visions, . . . [insisting on] keeping beauty afar until he is ready for her." Ostriker and other commentators generally agree that Blake's greatest stylistic triumph occurs in "Night IX" of *The Four Zoas*, in which the poet triumphantly orchestrates his varied measures in announcing the restoration of universal harmony at the Last Judgment.

Critical Reception

Ironically, Blake was better known among his contemporaries for his engravings and designs than for his poetry. The scarcity of his books and his reputation for madness contributed to the lack of attention from his peers, although Samuel Taylor Coleridge privately recognized Blake as a "man of Genius" and Charles Lamb conceded that he was "one of the most extraordinary persons of the age." Blake's critical fortunes did not improve until 1863 with the publication of Alexander Gilchrist's sympathetic biography, which sparked a revival of interest in the poet that was sustained by the editorial and critical commentary of such nineteenth-century luminaries as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Charles Algernon Swinburne. This impetus has continued unabated into the twentieth century as well, with Northrop Frye and other critics providing explications of Blake's symbolic system that have abetted an ever-widening array of studies.

Blake once wrote, "One Law for the Lion and the Ox is oppression." A kindred appreciation of the claims of individualism may well inform the willingness of modern scholars to elevate this most individual of writers to the front ranks of English poetry. At the same time, however, enthusiasts stress that he transcends the merely personal in his works. In the words of George Saintsbury, Blake set forth an aesthetic in which, in place of the "battered gods of the classical or neo-classical Philistia, are set up Imagination for Reason, Enthusiasm for Good Sense, the Result for the Rule; the execution for the mere conception or even the mere selection of subject; impression for calculation; the heart and the eyes and the pulses and the fancy for the stop-watch and the boxwood measure and the table of specifications." In establishing a system based on these objectives, Blake anticipated many of the dominant artistic impulses of the modern era.

*PRINCIPAL WORKS

Poetry

Poetical Sketches (poetry and drama) 1783
The Book of Thel 1789
Songs of Innocence 1789
Tiriel [MS] 1789?
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (poetry, prose, and proverbs) 1790–93?
The French Revolution 1791
America: A Prophecy 1793
Visions of the Daughters of Albion: The Eye Sees More than the Heart Knows 1793
Europe: A Prophecy 1794
The First Book of Urizen 1794
Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul 1794
The Book of Ahania 1795
The Book of Los 1795
The Song of Los 1795
The Four Zoas: The Torments of Love & Jealousy in the Death and Judgement of Albion the Ancient Man [MS] 1796–1807?; also published as *Vala* in *The Works of William Blake, Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical.* 3 vols., 1893.
Milton 1804–08?
Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion 1804–20?
The Pickering Manuscript [MS] (poetry and proverbs) 1807?
The Poetical Works of William Blake, Lyrical and Miscellaneous (poetry and drama) 1874
The Works of William Blake, Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical. 3 vols. (poetry and prose) 1893
The Complete Writings of William Blake (poetry, prose, drama, marginalia, and letters) 1957
The Poetry and Prose of William Blake (poetry, prose, drama, marginalia, and letters) 1965; also published as *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* [revised edition], 1980
The Poems of William Blake 1971
William Blake's Writings 1978
Blake's Poetry and Designs 1979

Other Major Works

An Island in the Moon [MS] (satire) 1784
All Religions are One (treatise) 1788?
There is No Natural Religion (treatise) 1788?
A Descriptive Catalogue (catalogue) 1809
†*The Note-Book of William Blake* (notebook) 1935
The Letters of William Blake (letters) 1968

*Dating the original publication of Blake's works is difficult, for he alternately printed and revised some of his individual writings over long periods of time and left few plates and copies of books for bibliographers to examine as evidence. The dates in this list of principal works, reflecting the speculative nature of Blake bibliography, are taken mainly from *Blake Books*, by G. E. Bentley, Jr. and from *A Blake Bibliography* by G. E. Bentley, Jr. and Martin K. Nurmi (see Further Reading Section). The designation [MS] following a title indicates that Blake left the work in manuscript form.

†Blake's notebook is also referred to as the *Rossetti Manuscript.*

CRITICISM

B. H. Malkin (essay date 1806)

SOURCE: An excerpt in *William Blake: The Critical Heritage,* edited by G. E. Bentley, Jr., Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, pp. 147–55.

[*The following excerpt appeared as the introduction to Malkin's book,* A Father's Memoirs of his Child *(1806) and is the earliest published essay on Blake. Malkin's enthusiastic discussion helped Blake's poetry gain acceptance among a wider contemporary audience.*]

Mr. Blake has long been known to the order of men among whom he ranks; and is highly esteemed by those, who can distinguish excellence under the disguise of singularity. Enthusiastic and high flown notions on the subject of religion have hitherto, as they usually do, prevented his general reception, as a son of taste and of the muses. The sceptic and the rational believer, uniting their forces against the visionary, pursue and scare a warm and brilliant imagination, with the hue and cry of madness. Not contented with bringing down the reasonings of the mystical philosopher, as they well may, to this degraded level, they apply the test of cold calculation and mathematical proof to departments of the mind, which are privileged to appeal from so narrow and rigorous a tribunal. They criticise the representations of corporeal beauty, and the allegoric emblems of mental perfections; the image of the visible world, which appeals to the senses for a testimony to its truth, or the type of futurity and the immortal soul, which identifies itself with our hopes and with our hearts, as if they were syllogisms or theorems, demonstrable propositions or consecutive corollaries. By them have the higher powers of this artist been kept from public notice, and his genius tied down, as far as possible, to the mechanical department of his profession. By them, in short, has he been stigmatised as an engraver, who might do tolerably well, if he was not mad. But men, whose names will bear them out, in what they affirm, have now taken up his cause. On occasion of Mr. Blake engaging to illustrate the poem of *The Grave*, some of the first artists in this country have stept forward, and liberally given the sanction of ardent and encomiastic applause. Mr. Fuseli, with a mind far superior to that jealousy above described, has written some introductory remarks in the Prospectus of the work. To these he has lent all the penetration of his understanding, with all the energy and descriptive power characteristic of his style. Mr. Hope and Mr. Locke have pledged their character as connoisseurs, by approving and patronising these designs. Had I been furnished with an opportunity of shewing them to you, I should, on Mr. Blake's behalf, have requested your concurring testimony, which you would not have refused me, had you viewed them in the same light.

Neither is the capacity of this untutored proficient limited to his professional occupation. He has made several irregular and unfinished attempts at poetry. He has dared to venture on the ancient simplicity; and feeling it in his own character and manners, has succeeded better than those, who have only seen it through a glass. His genius in this line assimilates more with the bold and careless freedom, peculiar to our writers at the latter end of the sixteenth, and former part of the seventeenth century, than with the polished phraseology, and just, but subdued thought of the eighteenth. As the public have hitherto had no opportunity of passing sentence on his poetical powers, I shall trespass on your patience, while I introduce a few specimens from a collection, circulated only among the author's friends, and richly embellished by his pencil.

LAUGHING SONG.

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it,

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in this merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily,
With their sweet round mouths, sing Ha, ha, he!

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live and be merry and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of Ha, ha, he!

The Fairy Glee of Oberon, which [John Samuel] Stevens's exquisite music has familiarised to modern ears, will immediately occur to the reader of these laughing stanzas. We may also trace another less obvious resemblance to Jonson, in an ode gratulatory to the Right Honourable Hierome, Lord Weston, for his return from his embassy, in the year 1632. The accord is to be found, not in the words nor in the subject; for either would betray imitation: but in the style of thought, and, if I may so term it, the date of the expression.

Such pleasure as the teeming earth
Doth take in easy nature's birth,
When she puts forth the life of every thing:
And in a dew of sweetest rain,
She lies delivered without pain,
Of the prime beauty of the year, the spring.

The rivers in their shores do run,
The clouds rack clear before the sun,
The rudest winds obey the calmest air:
Rare plants from every bank do rise,
And every plant the sense surprise,
Because the order of the whole is fair!

The very verdure of her nest,
Wherein she sits so richly drest,
As all the wealth of season there was spread;
Doth show the graces and the hours
Have multiplied their arts and powers,
In making soft her aromatic bed.

Such joys, such sweets, doth your return
Bring all your friends, fair lord, that burn
With love, to hear your modesty relate
The bus'ness of your blooming wit,
With all the fruit shall follow it,
Both to the honour of the king and state.

The following poem of Blake is in a different character. It expresses with majesty and pathos, the feelings of a

benevolent mind, on being present at a sublime display of national munificence and charity.

HOLY THURSDAY.

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two and two, in red and blue and green;
Grey-headed beadles walked before, with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's, they, like Thames' waters, flow.

Oh! What a multitude they seemed, these flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all their own!
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs;
Thousands of little boys and girls, raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings, the seats of heaven among!
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor:
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

The book of Revelation, which may well be supposed to engross much of Mr. Blake's study, seems to have directed him, in common with Milton, to some of the foregoing images. 'And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth' [Revelation 19:6]. Milton comprises the mighty thunderings in the epithet 'loud,' and adopts the comparison of many waters, which image our poet, having in the first stanza appropriated differently, to their flow rather than to their sound, exchanges in the last for that of a mighty wind.

He ended; and the heav'nly audience loud
Sung hallelujah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung.
Paradise Lost, Book X. 641.

It may be worth a moment's consideration, whether Dr. Johnson's remarks on devotional poetry, though strictly just where he applies them, to the artificial compositions of Waller and Watts, are universally and necessarily true. Watts seldom rose above the level of a mere versifier. Waller, though entitled to the higher appellation of poet, had formed himself rather to elegance and delicacy, than to passionate emotions or a lofty and dignified deportment. The devotional pieces of the Hebrew bards are clothed in that simple language, to which Johnson with justice ascribes the character of sublimity. There is no reason therefore, why the poets of other nations should not be equally successful, if they think with the same purity, and express themselves in the same unaffected terms. He says indeed with truth, that 'Repentance trembling in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets.' But though we should exclude the severer topics from our catalogue, mercy and benevolence may be treated poetically, because they are in unison with the mild spirit of poetry. They are seldom treated successfully; but the fault is not in the subject. The mind of the poet is too often at leisure for the mechanical prettinesses of cadence and epithet, when it ought to be engrossed by higher thoughts. Words and numbers present themselves unbidden, when the soul is inspired by sentiment, elevated by enthusiasm, or ravished by devotion. I leave it to the reader to determine, whether the following stanzas have any tendency to vindicate this species of poetry; and whether their simplicity and sentiment at all make amends for their inartificial and unassuming construction.

THE DIVINE IMAGE.

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,
All pray in their distress,
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,
Is God our Father dear:
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,
Is man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart;
Pity, a human face;
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In Heathen, Turk, or Jew!
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too.

Shakspeare's *Venus and Adonis, Tarquin and Lucrece,* and his *Sonnets,* occasioned it to be said by a contemporary, that, 'As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous honey-tongued Shakspeare' [Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia,* 1598]. These poems, now little read, were favourite studies of Mr. Blake's early days. So were Jonson's *Underwoods and Miscellanies,* and he seems to me to have caught his manner, more than that of Shakspeare in his trifles. The following song is a good deal in the spirit of the "Hue and Cry after Cupid," in the Masque on Lord Haddington's marriage. It was written before the age of fourteen, in the heat of youthful fancy, unchastised by judgment. The poet, as such, takes the very strong liberty of equipping himself with wings, and thus appropriates his metaphorical costume to his corporeal fashion and seem-