

but they have since been erased. The notes make sense only if the original half-sheet C (which was imposed correctly) had been misfolded to give the page sequence 11, 12, 9, 10, 15, 16, 13, 14. Presumably the error was corrected when the volume was rebound in its present form. As the fly-leaves were almost certainly added during binding, the manuscript poems on these leaves must have been later than binding and therefore quite a bit later than the gift of the volume in its unbound, but stabbed, state by Mrs Flaxman in May 1784.⁵ (The leaves B1,2; C1,2; D1,2; E1,2; F1,2; G1,2 do not show stab holes, although they are probably just concealed in the binding; the remainder do.)

The origin of the manuscript poems, and the identity of the person who wrote them on the fly-leaves of the volume, remains a problem, for nothing certain is known about the ownership of the book before 1834. The book must have been bound, in contemporary red morocco with yellow edges, some time before 1807 for at the top of the recto of the second fly-leaf appears the note 'Reed's Sale 1807'. It may have been bought then by Richard Heber, the great book collector, for a note on the verso of the first fly-leaf reads 'ex Bibliotheca Heberiana, fourth portion sold by Evans 9. Dec 1834'. The next owner is indicated by a book-plate inside the cover, which bears a shield inscribed 'J.H.A.'. Sir Geoffrey Keynes suggests that these initials may stand for J. H. Anderson. In 1868 R. H. Shepherd saw the volume, copied from it the manuscript poems 'Song 1st by a Shepherd' and 'Song 3d by an Old Shepherd', and printed them in his second edition of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* published by B. M. Pickering the same year. The volume reappeared from an anonymous source at Sotheby's sale of 22 March 1910; it was bought by Francis Edwards for £52 and subsequently sold to Alexander Turnbull.

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REFERENCES

¹ Sir Geoffrey Keynes first described the volume in his note 'William Blake's "Laughing Song": a New Version', *Notes and Queries*, 24 Sep. 1910, pp. 241-2.

² *Blake Studies* (1949), pp. 25-6. The total cost for such an edition would have been less than £6, but there is no firm evidence of the edition size.

³ They are listed in *Blake Studies*, pp. 29-33.

⁴ The long stroke of the 't' is characteristic of the hand that wrote the poems on the fly-leaves.

⁵ Sir Geoffrey Keynes remarked, however, in his note of 1910 that the volume 'presumably had the M.S. Songs already written on the fly-leaves' at this time. The paper of the fly-leaves is quite distinct from that of the volume itself and there is no sign of stab holes. I therefore assume that the fly-leaves were added during binding and the songs written in some time between the date of binding and the Reed sale of 1807.