England, as different examples of the same principle—as rules of action or conduct imposed by a superior power on its subjects. He propounds in terms a fallacy which is perhaps not yet quite expelled from courts of law, viz., that municipal or positive laws derive their validity from their conformity to the so-called law of nature or law of God. "No human laws," he says, "are of any validity if contrary to this." His distinction between rights of persons and rights of things, implying, as it would appear, that things as well as persons have rights, is attributable to a misunderstanding of the technical terms of the Roman law. In distinguishing between private and public wrongs (civil injuries and crimes) he fails to seize the true principle of the division. Austin, who accused him of following slavishly the method of Hale's *Analysis of the Law*, declares that he "blindly adopts the mistakes of his rude and compendious model; missing invariably, with a nice and surprising infelicity, the pregnant but obscure suggestions which it proffered to his attention, and which would have guided a discerning and inventive writer to an arrangement comparatively just." By the want of precise and closely-defined terms, and his tendency to substitute loose literary phrases, he falls occasionally into irreconcilable contradictions. Even in discussing a subject of such immense importance as equity, he hardly takes pains to discriminate between the legal and popular senses of the word, and, from the small place which equity jurisprudence occupies in his arrangement, he would scarcely seem to have realized its true position in the law of England. Subject, however, to these strictures the completeness of the treatise, its serviceable if not scientific order, and the power of lucid exposition possessed by the author demand emphatic recognition. Blackstone's defects as a jurist are more conspicuous in his treatment of the underlying principles and fundamental divisions of the law than in his account of its substantive principles.

Blackstone by no means confines himself to the work of a legal commentator It is his business, especially when he touches on the framework of society, to find a basis in history and reason for all our most characteristic institutions. There is not much either of philosopny or fairness in this part of his work. Whether through the natural conservatism of a lawyer, or through his own timidity and subserviency as a man and a politician, he is always found to be a specious defender of the existing order of things. Bentham accuses him of being the enemy of all reform, and the unscrupulous champion of every form of professional chicanery. Austin says that he truckled to the sinister interests and mischievous prejudices of power, and that he flattered the overweening conceit of the English in their own institutions. He displays much ingenuity in giving a plausible form to common prejudices and fallacies; but it is by no means clear that he was not imposed upon himself. More undeniable than the political fairness of the treatise is its merit as a work of literature. It is written in a most graceful and attractive style, and although no opportunity of embellishment has been lost, the language is always simple and clear. Whether it is owing to its literary graces, or to its success in flattering the prejudices of the public to which it was addressed, the influence of the book in England has been extraordinary. Not lawyers only, and lawyers perhaps even less than others, accepted it as an authoritative revelation of the law. It performed for educated society in England much the same service as was rendered to the people of Rome by the publication of their previously unknown laws. It is more correct to regard it as a handbook of the law for laymen than as a legal treatise; and as the first and only book of the kind in England it has been received with somewhat indiscriminating reverence. It is certain that a vast amount of the constitutional sentiment of the country has been inspired by its pages. To this day Blackstone's criticism of the English constitution would probably express the most profound political convictions of the majority of the English people. Long after it has ceased to be of much practical value as an authority in the courts, it remains the arbiter of all public discussions on the law or the constitution. On such occasions the *Commentaries* are apt to be construed as strictly as if they were a code. It is amusing to observe how much importance is attached to the *ipsissima verba* of a writer who aimed more at presenting a picture intelligible to laymen than at recording the principles of the law with technical accuracy of detail. (E. R.)

BLAINVILLE, Henri-Marie Ducrotay de, a distinguished naturalist, was born at Arques, near Dieppe, Sept. 12, 1777. About the year 1795 he entered the school of design at Rouen, but after a very short time he went to Paris, where he became a pupil of Vincent the painter. Attracted by the lectures of Cuvier and other eminent professors in the College of France, he commenced the study of anatomy, and in 1808 he took the degree of M.D. He now devoted himself to the study of natural history, particularly the department of myology, and he soon attracted the attention of Cuvier, who engaged him to draw some figures for one of his works, and to carry out some of the practical work of anatomy. He was also chosen by that illustrious professor to supply his place on occasions at the College of France and at the Athenæum, and in 1812 he obtained the vacant chair of anatomy and zoology in the Faculty of Sciences at Paris. His somewhat irascible disposition was probably one cause of the subsequent estrangement between him and Cuvier, which ended in an open and irreconcilable enmity. In 1825 Blainville was admitted a member of the Academy of Sciences; and in 1830 he was appointed to succeed Lamarck in the chair of natural history at the museum. This he resigned in 1832, being appointed on the death of Cuvier to the chair of comparative anatomy, which he continued to occupy for the space of eighteen years, and in the conduct of which he proved himself no unworthy successor to his great teacher. Blainville was found dead in a railway carriage while travelling between Rouen and Caen, May 1, 1850.

Besides a great variety of separate memoirs, he was the author of *Prodrome d'une Nouvelle Distribution Méthodique du Règne Animal*, 1816; *Ostéographie ou Description Iconographique Comparée du Squelette*, &c.; *Faune Française*, 1821-1830; *Cours de Physiologie Générale et Comparée*, 1833; *Manuel de Malacologie et de Conchyliologie*, 1825-1827; *Histoire des Sciences Naturelles au Moyen Age*, 1845.

BLAIR, or Port-Blair, the chief place in the convict settlement of the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean, is situated on the south-east shore of the South Andaman Island, in 11° 42′ N. lat. and 93° E. long. In 1789 it was selected as a convict settlement, under orders of the Indian Government, by Lieutenant Blair, R.N., whose name the port bears. It possesses one of the best harbours in Asia, while its central position in the Bay of Bengal gives it immense advantage as a place of naval rendezvous for military operations in this part of the world. For further particulars see Andaman Islands.

BLAIR, Dr Hugh, was born April, 7, 1718, at Edinburgh, where his father was a merchant. He entered Edinburgh University in 1730 and won the favourable notice of Professor Stevenson by an essay on the Beautiful, written for the logic class in his sixteenth year. On taking the degree of M.A. in 1739, he printed a thesis *De Fundamentis et Obligatione Legis Naturæ*, which contains an outline of the moral principles afterwards unfolded in his sermons. He was licensed to preach in 1741, and in a few months the earl of Leven, hearing of his eloquence,

presented him to the parish of Collessie in Fife. In 1743 he was elected to the second charge of the Canongate Church, Edinburgh, where he performed the pastoral duties with great success, until removed to Lady Yester's, one of the city churches, in 1754. He married his cousin, Katherine Bannatyne, in 1748, and by her had a son, who died in infancy, and a daughter who lived to her twenty-first year. In 1757 the University of St Andrews conferred on him the degree of D.D., and in the following year he was promoted to the High Church, Edinburgh, the most important charge in Scotland. In 1759 he commenced, under the patronage of Lord Kames, to deliver a course of lectures on composition, the success of which led to the foundation of a chair of rhetoric and belles lettres in the Edinburgh University. To this chair he was appointed in 1762, with a salary of £70 a year. Having long taken interest in the Celtic poetry of the Highlands, he published in 1763 a laudatory *Dissertation* on Macpherson's *Ossian*, of which he maintained the authenticity. This critique, after being greatly overrated at the time, has now fallen into neglect. In 1777 the first volume of his *Sermons* appeared. It was succeeded by other four volumes, all of which met with the greatest success. Dr Samuel Johnson praised them warmly. "I love Blair's *Sermons*," Johnson said, "his doctrine is the best limited, the best expressed; there is the most warmth without fanaticism, the most rational transport." The *Sermons* were translated into almost every language of Europe, and in 1780, to signify the royal approbation, George III. conferred upon him a pension of £200 a year. In 1783 he retired from his professorship and published his *Lectures on Rhetoric* which he had carefully revised, and which have been frequently reprinted. He died, after a brief illness, on the 27th December 1801. In the church Blair belonged to the "moderate" or latitudinarian party, and his *Sermons* have been objected to as deficient in doctrinal definiteness. His once brilliant reputation is now becoming forgotten. His works display little originality, but are written in a flowing and elaborate style; and his *Rhetoric*, although inferior to Campbell's, and wanting in research and depth of thought, is unworthy of the neglect it has met with.

BLAIR, Robert, author of the well-known poem entitled *The Grave*, was the eldest son of the Rev. Robert Blair, of Edinburgh. He was probably born at Edinburgh about the year 1700, and at the university of that city he received the elements of a classical education. He afterwards spent some time on the Continent. Upon his return he took orders, and in 1731 was ordained minister of Athelstaneford, in East Lothian, where he spent the remainder of his life. He died of fever, February 4, 1746, and was succeeded in his living by John Home, the author of *Douglas*. His fourth son became lord-president of the Court of Session. Blair wrote several other pieces besides *The Grave*; but that poem alone constitutes his title to rank as a poet. It consists of a succession of descriptions and reflections, which have no other connection except what they may derive from their relation to a common subject, but these are interspersed with striking allusions, picturesque imagery, touches of a rude though effective pathos, and a vein of sentiment at once natural and just. The rhythm is often harsh, and the versification frequently devoid of correctness, harmony, and grace; but it has nevertheless a masculine vigour and freshness about it, which more than atone for the defects in the finishing; while, in certain moods of the mind, the air of deep and almost misanthropical melancholy diffused over the whole proves highly touching and impressive. Campbell, in the *Pleasures of Hope*, has borrowed, with a slight variation, a line from this poem—

> "Its visits,
> Like those of angels, short and far between."

The vigorous, though occasionally rather forced, poetic conceptions of the author of *The Grave*, were finely illustrated in Cromek's edition, published in 1808, by the grandly wild designs of William Blake, engraved by the delicate burin of Schiavonetti. *The Grave* was first printed at London in 1743.

BLAKE, Robert, the famous English admiral of the Commonwealth, was born at Bridgwater in Somersetshire, in August 1598. His birth thus falls in the year before that of Cromwell; their lives ran parallel in the service of their country; their characters present many points of likeness; and they died within a few months of each other. Blake was the eldest son of a well-to-do merchant, and received his early education at the grammar school of Bridgwater. At the age of sixteen he was sent to Oxford, entering at first St Alban's Hall, but removing afterwards to Wadham College, then recently founded by his father's friend, Nicholas Wadham. He remained at the university till 1623, and though certainly not wanting in ability or in diligence, he missed, for some reason not clearly ascertained, such college preferment as he naturally aimed at. From Oxford, after taking his degree of M.A., he returned to his father's house, where, through the memorable and troubled years which followed, he led a quiet and retired life. His thorough honesty, his public spirit and disinterestedness, his courageous utterance of what he thought of the court and the church, of shipmoney and the High Commission Court and the licence of the times, made him a man of mark among his neighbours. And when, after eleven years of kingship without parliaments, a parliament was summoned to meet in April 1640, Blake was elected by the Presbyterian party to represent his native borough. This parliament, named "the Short," was dissolved in three weeks, and the career of Blake as a politician was suspended. Two years later the inevitable conflict began. Blake declared for the Parliament; and thinking, says Johnson, a bare declaration for right not all the duty of a good man, he raised a troop of horse in his county, and rendered such efficient service, that in 1643 he was entrusted with the command of one of the forts of Bristol. This he stoutly held during the siege of the town by Prince Rupert, and was near being hung for continuing his resistance after the governor had capitulated. In the following year Colonel Blake took Taunton by surprise, and notwithstanding its imperfect defences and inadequate supplies, held the town for the Parliament against two sieges by the Royalists, until July 1645, when it was relieved by Fairfax. Blake did not approve of the trial and execution of Charles I.; but he adhered to the Parliamentary party after the king's death, and within a month (February 1649) was appointed, with Colonels Dean and Popham, to the command of the fleet, under the title of General of the Sea. In April he was sent in pursuit of Prince Rupert, who with the Royalist fleet had entered the harbour of Kinsale in Ireland. There he blockaded the Prince for six months; and when the latter, in want of provisions, and hopeless of relief, succeeded in making his escape with the fleet and in reaching the Tagus, Blake followed him thither, and again blockaded him for some months. The king of Portugal refusing permission for Blake to attack his enemy, the latter made reprisals by falling on the Portuguese fleet, richly laden, returning from Brazil. He captured seventeen ships and burnt three, bringing his prizes home without molestation. After revictualling his fleet, he sailed again, captured a French man-of-war, and then pursued Prince Rupert once more to the harbour of Carthagena. The Spanish governor would not allow him to violate the peace of a neutral port, and he therefore withdrew. In January 1651 he at last attacked the Royalist fleet in Malaga harbour, and destroyed the whole

with the exception of two ships. In consequence of the Portuguese protest against his proceedings, a formal investigation was instituted in England, which resulted in the approval of the home authorities. The thanks of Parliament were voted to Blake, and he was appointed warden of the Cinque Ports. He was continued in his office of admiral and general of the sea; and in May following he took, in conjunction with Ayscue, the Scilly Islands. For this service the thanks of Parliament were again awarded him, and he was soon after made a member of the Council of State. In 1652 war broke out with the Dutch, who had made great preparations for the conflict. In March the command of the fleet was given to Blake for nine months; and in the middle of May the Dutch fleet of forty-five ships, led by their great admiral Van Tromp, appeared in the Downs. Blake, who had only twenty ships, sailed to meet them, and the battle took place off Dover on May 19. The Dutch were defeated in an engagement of four or five hours, lost two ships, and withdrew under cover of darkness. Attempts at accommodation were made by the States, but they failed. Early in July war was formally declared, and in the same month Blake captured a large part of the Dutch fishery-fleet and the twelve men-of-war that formed their convoy. On September 28, Blake and Penn again encountered the Dutch fleet, now commanded by De Ruyter and De Witt, in the Downs, defeated it, and chased it for two days. The Dutch took refuge in Goree. A third battle was fought near the end of November. By this time the ships under Blake's command had been reduced in number to forty, and nearly the half of these were useless for want of seamen. Van Tromp, who had been reinstated in command, appeared in the Downs, with a fleet of eighty ships besides ten fire-ships. Blake, nevertheless, risked a battle, but was defeated, and withdrew into the Thames. It was in his first elation at this victory that Van Tromp carried the broom at his mast-head in his passage through the Channel, as a pledge of his determination to sweep the English off the seas. His bravado was speedily avenged. The English fleet having been refitted, put to sea again in February 1653; and on the 18th, Blake, at the head of eighty ships, encountered Van Tromp in the Channel. The Dutch force, according to Clarendon, numbered 100 ships of war, but according to the official reports of the Dutch, only seventy. The battle was severe, and continued through three days, the Dutch however retreating, and taking refuge in the shallow waters off the French coast. In this action Blake was severely wounded. In the change of Government introduced by the dismissal of the Long Parliament by Cromwell (April 1653) Blake did not interfere. "It is not," he said, "the business of a seaman to mind state affairs, but to hinder foreigners from fooling us." The three English admirals put to sea again in May; and on June 3d and 4th another battle was fought near the North Foreland. On the first day Dean and Monk were repulsed by Van Tromp; but on the second day the scales were turned by the arrival of Blake, and the Dutch retreated to the Texel. Ill health now compelled Blake to retire from the service for a time, and he did not appear again on the seas for about eighteen months; meanwhile he sat as a member of the Little Parliament (Barebones's). In November 1654 he was selected by Cromwell to conduct a fleet to the Mediterranean to exact compensation from the Duke of Tuscany, the knights of Malta, and the piratical states of North Africa, for wrongs done to English merchants. This mission he executed with his accustomed spirit and with complete success. Tunis alone dared to resist his demands, and Tunis paid the penalty of the destruction of its two fortresses by English guns. In the winter of 1655-56, war being declared against Spain, Blake was sent to cruise off Cadiz and the neighbouring coasts, to intercept the Spanish shipping. One of his captains captured a part of the Plate fleet in September 1656. In April 1657 Blake, then in very ill health, suffering from dropsy and scurvy, and anxious to have assistance in his arduous duties, heard that the Plate fleet lay at anchor in the bay of Santa Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe. The position was a very strong one, defended by a castle and several forts with guns. Under the shelter of these lay a fleet of sixteen ships drawn up in crescent order. Captain Stayner was ordered to enter the bay and fall on the fleet. This he did. Blake followed him. Broadsides were poured into the castle and the forts at the same time; and soon nothing was left but ruined walls and charred fragments of burnt ships. The wind was blowing hard into the bay; but suddenly, and fortunately for the heroic Blake, it shifted, and carried him safely out to sea. "The whole action," says Clarendon, "was so incredible that all men who knew the place wondered that any sober man, with what courage soever endowed, would ever have undertaken it; and they could hardly persuade themselves to believe what they had done; while the Spaniards comforted themselves with the belief that they were devils and not men who had destroyed them in such a manner." The English lost one ship and 200 men killed and wounded. The thanks of Parliament were voted to officers and men; and a very costly jewel (diamond ring) was presented to Blake, "as a testimony," says Cromwell in his letter of June 10th, "of our own and the Parliament's good acceptance of your carriage in this action." "This was the last action of the brave Blake." After again cruising for a time off Cadiz, his health failing more and more, he was compelled to make homewards before the summer was over. He died at sea, but within sight of Plymouth, August 17, 1657. His body was brought to London and embalmed, and after lying in state at Greenwich House was interred with great pomp and solemnity in Westminster Abbey. In 1661 Charles II. disgraced himself by ordering the exhumation of Blake's body, with those of the mother and daughter of Cromwell and several others. They were cast out of the abbey, and were reburied in the churchyard of St Margaret's. "But that regard," says Johnson, "which was denied his body has been paid to his better remains, his name and his memory. Nor has any writer dared to deny him the praise of intrepidity, honesty, contempt of wealth, and love of his country." Clarendon bears the following testimony to his excellence as a commander:—"He was the first man that declined the old track, and made it apparent that the science might be attained in less time than was imagined. He was the first man that brought ships to contemn castles on the shore, which had ever been thought very formidable, but were discovered by him to make a noise only, and to fright those who could be rarely hurt by them." A life of Blake is included in the work entitled *Lives, English and Foreign*. Dr Johnson wrote a short life of him, and in 1852 appeared Mr Hepworth Dixon's fuller narrative, *Robert Blake, Admiral and General at Sea*. (W. L. R. C.)

BLAKE, WILLIAM, poet and painter, was born in London, on 28th November 1757. His father, James Blake, kept a hosier's shop in Broad Street, Golden Square; and from the scanty education which the young artist received, it may be judged that the circumstances of the family were not very prosperous. For the facts of William Blake's early life the world is indebted to a little book, called *A Father's Memoirs on a Child*, written by Dr Malkin, and published in 1806. Here we learn that young Blake quickly developed a taste for design, which his father appears to have had sufficient intelligence to recognize and assist by every means in his power. At the age of ten the boy was sent to a drawing school kept by Mr Pars

in the Strand, and at the same time he was already cultivating his own taste by constant attendance at the different art sale rooms, where he was known as the "little connoisseur." Here he began to collect prints after Michel Angelo, and Raphael, Durer, and Hemskerk, while at the school in the Strand he had the opportunity of drawing from the antique. After four years of this preliminary instruction Blake entered upon another branch of art study. In 1777 he was apprenticed to James Basire, an engraver of repute, and with him he remained seven years. His apprenticeship had an important bearing on Blake's artistic education, and marks the department of art in which he was made technically proficient. In 1778, at the end of his apprenticeship, he proceeded to the school of the Royal Academy, where he continued his early study from the antique, and had for the first time an opportunity of drawing from the living model.

This is in brief all that is known of Blake's artistic education. That he ever, at the academy or elsewhere, systematically studied painting we do not know; but that he had already begun the practice of water colour for himself is ascertained. So far, however, the course of his training in art schools, and under Basire, was calculated to render him proficient only as a draughtsman and an engraver. He had learned how to draw, and he had mastered besides the practical difficulties of engraving, and with these qualifications he entered upon his career. In 1780 he exhibited a picture in the Royal Academy Exhibition, conjectured to have been executed in water colours, and he continued to contribute to the annual exhibitions up to the year 1808. In 1782 he married Catherine Boucher, the daughter of a market-gardener at Battersea, with whom he lived always on affectionate terms, and the young couple after their marriage established themselves in Green Street, Leicester Fields. Blake had already become acquainted with some of the rising artists of his time, amongst them Stothard, Flaxman, and Fuseli, and he now began to see something of literary society. At the house of the Rev. Henry Mathew, in Rathbone Place, he used to recite and sometimes to sing poems of his own composition, and it was through the influence of this gentleman, combined with that of Flaxman, that Blake's first volume of poetry was printed and published in 1783. From this time forward the artist came before the world in a double capacity. By education as well as native talent, he was pledged to the life of a painter, and these *Poetical Sketches*, though they are often no more than the utterances of a boy, are no less decisive in marking Blake as a future poet.

For a while the two gifts are exhibited in association. To the close of his life Blake continued to print and publish, after a manner of his own, the inventions of his verse illustrated by original designs, but there is a certain period in his career when the union of the two gifts is peculiarly close, and when their service to one another is unquestionable. In 1784 Blake, moving from Green Street, set up in company with a fellow-pupil, Parker, as print-seller and engraver next to his father's house in Broad Street, Golden Square, but in 1787 this partnership was severed, and he established an independent business in Poland Street. It was from this house, and in 1787, that the *Songs of Innocence* were published, a work that must always be remarkable for beauty both of verse and of design, as well as for the singular method by which the two were combined and expressed by the artist. Blake became in fact his own printer and publisher. He engraved upon copper, by a process devised by himself, both the text of his poems and the surrounding decorative design, and to the pages printed from the copper plates an appropriate colouring was afterwards added by hand. The poetic genius already discernible in the first volume of *Poetical Sketches* is here more decisively expressed, and some of the songs in this volume deserve to take rank with the best things of their kind in our literature. In an age of enfeebled poetic style, when Wordsworth, with more weighty apparatus, had as yet scarcely begun his reform of English versification, Blake, unaided by any contemporary influence, produced a work of fresh and living beauty; and if the *Songs of Innocence* established Blake's claim to the title of poet, the setting in which they were given to the world proved that he was also something more. For the full development of his artistic powers we have to wait till a later date, but here at least he exhibits a just and original understanding of the sources of decorative beauty. Each page of these poems is a study of design, full of invention, and often wrought with the utmost delicacy of workmanship. The artist retained to the end this feeling for decorative effect; but as time went on, he considerably enlarged the imaginative scope of his work, and decoration then became the condition rather than the aim of his labour.

Notwithstanding the distinct and precious qualities of this volume, it attracted but slight attention, a fact perhaps not very wonderful, when the system of publication is taken into account. Blake, however, proceeded with other work of the same kind. The same year he published *The Book of Thel*, more decidedly mystic in its poetry, but scarcely less beautiful as a piece of illumination; *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* followed in 1790; and in 1793 there are added *The Gates of Paradise*, *The Vision of the Daughters of Albion*, and some other "Prophetic Books," It becomes abundantly clear on reaching this point in his career, that Blake's utterances cannot be judged by ordinary rules. The *Songs of Experience*, put forth in 1794 as a companion to the earlier *Songs of Innocence*, are for the most part intelligible and coherent, but in these intervening works of prophecy, as they were called by the author, we get the first public expression of that phase of his character and of his genius upon which a charge of insanity has been founded. The question whether Blake was or was not mad seems likely to remain in dispute, but there can be no doubt whatever that he was at different periods of his life under the influence of illusions for which there are no outward facts to account, and that much of what he wrote is so far wanting in the quality of sanity as to be without a logical coherence. On the other hand, it is equally clear that no madness imputed to Blake could equal that which would be involved in the rejection of his work on this ground. The greatness of Blake's mind is even better established than its frailty, and in considering the work that he has left we must remember that it is by the sublimity of his genius, and not by any mental defect, that he is most clearly distinguished from his fellows. With the publication of the *Songs of Experience* Blake's poetic career, so far at least as ordinary readers are concerned, may be said to close. A writer of prophecy he continued for many years, but the work by which he is best known in poetry are those earlier and simpler efforts, supplemented by a few pieces taken from various sources, some of which were of later production. The body of Blake's intelligible verse is now made accessible to the public in Mr W. Rossetti's edition of his works, published in the Aldine series, and to this volume those readers may be referred who desire to know the foundation upon which the poet's fame has been built. But although Blake the poet ceases in a general sense at this date, Blake the artist is only just entering upon his career. In the *Songs of Innocence* and *Experience*, and even in some of the earlier *Books of Prophecy*, the two gifts worked together in perfect balance and harmony; but at this point the supremacy of the artistic faculty

asserts itself, and for the remainder of his life Blake was pre-eminently a designer and engraver. The labour of poetical composition continues, but the product passes beyond the range of general comprehension; while, with apparent inconsistency, the work of the artist gains steadily in strength and coherence, and never to the last loses its hold upon the understanding. It may almost be said without exaggeration that his earliest poetic work, *The Songs of Innocence*, and nearly his latest effort in design, the illustrations to the *The Book of Job*, take rank among the sanest and most admirable products of his genius. Nor is the fact, astonishing enough at first sight, quite beyond a possible explanation. As Blake advanced in his poetic career, he was gradually hindered and finally overpowered by a tendency that was most serviceable to him in design. His inclination to substitute a symbol for a conception, to make an image do duty for an idea, became an insuperable obstacle to literary success. He endeavoured constantly to treat the intellectual material of verse as if it could be moulded into sensuous form, with the inevitable result that as the ideas to be expressed advanced in complexity and depth of meaning, his poetic gifts became gradually more inadequate to the task of interpretation. The earlier poems dealing with simpler themes, and put forward at a time when the bent of the artist's mind was not strictly determined, do not suffer from this difficulty; the symbolism then only enriches an idea of no intellectual intricacy; but when Blake began to concern himself with profounder problems the want of a more logical understanding of language made itself strikingly apparent. If his ways of thought and modes of workmanship had not been developed with an intensity almost morbid, he would probably have been able to distinguish and keep separate the double functions of art and literature. As it is, however, he remains as an extreme illustration of the ascendency of the artistic faculty. For this tendency to translate ideas into image, and to find for every thought, however simple or sublime, a precise and sensuous form, is of the essence of pure artistic invention. If this be accepted as the dominant bent of Blake's genius, it is not so wonderful that his work in art should have strengthened in proportion as his poetic powers waned; but whether the explanation satisfies all the requirements of the case or not, the fact remains, and cannot be overlooked by any student of Blake's career.

In 1796 Blake was actively employed in the work of illustration. Edwards, a bookseller of New Bond Street, projected a new edition of Young's *Night Thoughts*, and Blake was chosen to illustrate the work. It was to have been issued in parts, but for some reason not very clear the enterprise failed, and only a first part, including forty-three designs, was given to the world. These designs were engraved by Blake himself, and they are interesting not only for their own merit but for the peculiar system by which the illustration has been associated with the text. Quite recently it has been discovered that the artist had executed original designs in water colour for the whole series, and these drawings, 537 in number, form one of the most interesting records of Blake's genius. Mr Gilchrist, the painter's careful and sympathetic biographer, in commenting upon the engraved plates, regrets the absence of colour, "the use of which Blake so well understood, to relieve his simple design and give it significance," and an examination of the original water colour drawings fully supports the justice of his criticism. Soon after the publication of this work Blake was introduced by Flaxman to the poet Hayley, and in the year 1801 he accepted the suggestion of the latter, that he should take up his residence at Felpham in Sussex. The mild and amiable poet had planned to write a life of Cowper, and for the illustration of this and other works he sought Blake's help and companionship. The residence at Felpham continued for three years, partly pleasant and partly irksome to Blake, but apparently not very profitable to the progress of his art. One of the annoyances of his stay was a malicious prosecution for treason set on foot by a common soldier whom Blake had summarily ejected from his garden; but a more serious drawback was the increasing irritation which the painter seems to have experienced from association with Hayley. In 1804 Blake returned to London, to take up his residence in South Moulton Street, and as the fruit of his residence in Felpham, he published, in the manner already described, the prophetic books called the *Jerusalem, The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, and *Milton*. The first of these is a very notable performance in regard to artistic invention. Many of the designs stand out from the text in complete independence, and are now and then of the very finest quality.

In the years 1804–1805 Blake executed a series of designs in illustration of Blair's *Grave*, of much beauty and grandeur, though showing stronger traces of imitation of Italian art than any earlier production. These designs were purchased from the artist by an adventurous and unscrupulous publisher, Cromek, for the paltry sum of £21, and afterwards published in a series of engravings by Schiavonetti. Despite the ill treatment Blake received in the matter, and the other evils, including a quarrel with his friend Stothard as to priority of invention of a design illustrating the Canterbury Pilgrims, which his association with Cromek involved, the book gained for him a larger amount of popularity than he at any other time secured. Stothard's picture of the Canterbury Pilgrims was exhibited in 1807, and in 1809 Blake, in emulation of his rival's success, having himself painted in water colour a picture of the same subject, opened an exhibition, and drew up a *Descriptive Catalogue*, curious and interesting, and containing a very valuable criticism of Chaucer.

The remainder of the artist's life is not outwardly eventful. In 1813 he formed, through the introduction of George Cumberland of Bristol, a valuable friendship with Mr John Linnell and other rising water colour painters. Amongst the group Blake seems to have found special sympathy in the society of Varley, who, himself addicted to astrology, encouraged Blake to cultivate his gift of inspired vision; and it is probably to this influence that we are indebted for several curious drawings made from visions, especially the celebrated "ghost of a flea" and the very humorous portrait of the builder of the Pyramids. In 1821 Blake removed to Fountain Court, in the Strand, where he died 1827. The chief work of these last years was the splendid series of engraved designs in illustration of the book of Job. Here we find the highest imaginative qualities of Blake's art united to the technical means of expression which he best understood. Both the invention and the engraving are in all ways remarkable, and the series may fairly be cited in support of a very high estimate of his genius. None of his works are without the trace of that peculiar artistic instinct and power which seizes the pictorial element of ideas, simple or sublime, and translates them into the appropriate language of sense; but here the double faculty finds the happiest exercise. The grandeur of the theme is duly reflected in the simple and sublime images of the artist's design, and in the presence of these plates we are made to feel the power of the artist over the expressional resources of human form, as well as his sympathy with the imaginative significance of his subject.

A life of Blake, with selections from his works by Alexander Gilchrist, was published in 1863; in 1868 Mr Swinburne published a critical essay on his genius re-

markable for a full examination of the Prophetic Books, and still more recently Mr William Rossetti has published a memoir prefixed to an edition of the poems. (J. C. C.)

BLANC, MONT, the highest, and in other respects one of the most remarkable mountains in Europe, is situated in that division of the great Alpine system known as the Pennine Alps, in 45° 49′ 58″ N. lat. and 6° 51′ 54″ E. long. It rises almost in the shape of a pyramid to the height of 15,780 feet, and is visible at a distance of 130 miles to the west. The mass of the mountain is composed of granite, covered with strata of schists and limestones. To the N.E. lies the beautiful vale of Chamouni, and on the S.W. the Allée Blanche. Of the numerous glaciers that send their ice-streams down its sides the most remarkable is the Mer de Glace, which winds down its northern slope towards Chamouni, and gives birth to the River Arve. The ascent of Mont Blanc was first accomplished in 1786 by a guide named Jacques Balmat, who shortly afterwards led Dr Paccard, a local physician, to the summit, and thus gave him the honour of being the first person of scientific education to make known the possibility of the undertaking. De Saussure, the naturalist, ascended in the following year, and when the Italian naturalist Imperiale de Sant-Angelo made the ascent in 1840 he had been preceded by thirty-three known travellers. The whole journey to the top and back can now be accomplished in 50 or 60 hours; but in general the view can hardly be said to be worth the fatigue, the extreme height of the position, even when the outlook is unclouded, rendering the prospect indistinct. For authorities and maps, see ALPS, vol. i. pp. 635–6.

BLANE, SIR GILBERT, a distinguished physician, was born at Blanefield in Ayrshire, in 1749, and died in London in 1834. He was educated at Edinburgh University, and shortly after his removal to London became private physician to Lord Rodney, whom he accompanied to the West Indies. Through his skill and exertions the health of the seamen on board the fleet remained comparatively unaffected by the climate; and on his return home he embodied the results of his experience in a treatise *On the Diseases of Seamen*, 1783. He rose rapidly to fame, acquired an extensive practice, and in 1812 was appointed physician in ordinary to the Prince of Wales, with the rank of baronet. When at the head of the Navy Board of Health, an office he held for some years, he introduced many useful measures for securing the health of seamen during long voyages. Of his numerous works the most important is the *Elements of Medical Logic*, 1819.

BLAÑES, a city of the province of Gerona in Spain, at the mouth of the River Tordera, defended by a castle. The population, 5900 in number, are principally employed in the fisheries and navigation. Lace is manufactured by the women. Long. 2° 51′ E., lat. 41° 42′ N.

BLARNEY, a small village of Ireland, in the county of Cork, about 5 miles from that city, chiefly celebrated as giving name to a peculiar kind of eloquence, alleged to be characteristic of the natives of Ireland. The "Blarney Stone," the kissing of which is said to confer this faculty, is pointed out within the castle.

BLASPHEMY means literally defamation or evil speaking, but is more peculiarly restricted to an indignity offered to the Deity by words or writing. The common law of England treats blasphemy as an indictable offence. All blasphemies against God, as denying his being, or providence, all contumelious reproaches of Jesus Christ, all profane scoffing at the Holy Scriptures, or exposing any part thereof to contempt or ridicule, are punishable by the temporal courts with fine, imprisonment, and also infamous corporal punishment. The Act 1 Edw. VI. c. 1 (repealed 1 Mary, c. 2, and revived 1 Eliz. c. 1), enacts that persons reviling the sacrament of the Lord's supper, by contemptuous words or otherwise, shall suffer imprisonment. Persons denying the Trinity were deprived of the benefit of the Act of Toleration by 1 Will. III. c. 18. The 9 and 10 Will. III. c. 32, enacts that if any person, educated in or having made profession of the Christian religion, should by writing, preaching, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the persons of the Holy Trinity to be God, or should assert or maintain that there are more gods than one, or should deny the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures to be of divine authority, he should, upon the first offence, be rendered incapable of holding any office or place of trust, and for the second incapable of bringing any action, of being guardian or executor, or of taking a legacy or deed of gift, and should suffer three years' imprisonment without bail. It has been held that a person offending under the statute is also indictable at common law (Rex *v.* Carlisle, where Mr Justice Best remarks, 'In the age of toleration, when that statute passed, neither churchmen nor sectarians wished to protect in their infidelity those who disbelieved the Holy Scriptures.") The 53 Geo. III. c. 160, excepts from these enactments "persons denying as therein mentioned respecting the Holy Trinity," but otherwise the common and statute law on the subject remains as stated. In the case of Rex *v.* Woolston (2 Geo. II.) the court declared that they would not suffer it to be debated whether to write against Christianity in *general* was not an offence punishable in the temporal courts at common law, but they did not intend to include disputes between learned men on *particular* controverted points. The law against blasphemy has not recently been in active operation. In 1841, Moxon was found guilty of the publication of a blasphemous libel (Shelley's *Queen Mab*), the prosecution having been instituted by Hetherington, who had previously been condemned to four months' imprisonment for a similar offence, and wished to test the law under which he was punished. In the case of Cowan *v.* Milbourn, in 1867, the defendant had broken his contract to let a lecture-room to the plaintiff, on discovering that the intended lectures were to maintain that "the character of Christ is defective, and his teaching misleading, and that the Bible is no more inspired than any other book," and the Court of Exchequer held that the publication of such doctrine was blasphemy, and the contract therefore illegal. On that occasion the court reaffirmed the dictum of C. J. Hale, that Christianity is part of the laws of England. The Commissioners on Criminal Law (sixth report) remark, that "although the law forbids *all* denial of the being and providence of God or the Christian religion, it is only when irreligion assumes the form of an insult to God and man that the interference of the criminal law has taken place."

Profane cursing and swearing is made punishable by 19 Geo. II. c. 21, which directs the offender to be brought before a justice of the peace, and fined 5 shillings, 2 shillings, or 1 shilling, according as he is a gentleman, below the rank of gentleman, or a common labourer, soldier, &c.

By the law of Scotland, as it originally stood, the punishment of blasphemy was death. By an Act passed in the first parliament of Charles II., whoever, "not being distracted in his wits," should curse God or any person of the blessed Trinity was punishable with death; and by a statute of King William's reign (1695, c. 11), any person reasoning against the being of God, or any person of the Trinity, or the authority of the Holy Scriptures, or the providence of God in the government of the world, was to be imprisoned for the first offence until he should give public satisfaction in sackcloth to the congregation, to be punished more severely for the second offence, and for the third doomed to death; but by 6 Geo. IV. c. 47, amended by 7 Will. IV. and 1 Vict. c. 5, blasphemy was made punishable by fine or imprisonment or both. (E. R.)