Shorter Notes

'THE BEAUTIES OF MAGAZINES' AND AN ENGRAVING OF WILLIAM CULLEN

The scholarly and interesting note by L. Jolley on the portraiture of William Cullen in the third number of The Bibliotheca quotes an entry in H. Breunt's typescript A Catalogue of the engraved portraits of British Medical men:


It is incorrect to assume, as Jolley does, that the publication listed here is The Beauties of the Magazines of which BUCOP records a copy in the British Museum (Vol. I. 1828). It is, in fact, a monthly publication issued by the Morisons of Perth in the years 1788 and 1789 and there is a complete run of the magazine in the local collection of the Sandeman Public Library, Perth. The magazine is not listed in BUCOP; nor, what is more surprising, is there any mention of it in M. E. Craig's The Scottish Periodical Press 1750-1789. The complete title is The Beauties of Magazines, Reviews, and other Periodical Publications and it was published, according to the imprint, by George Mudie, Bookseller, Edinburgh; James Gillies, Glasgow; Angus and Son, Aberdeen; George Miln, Dundee; R. Morison and Son, Perth; and sold by all the other booksellers throughout the Kingdom. It was printed by the Morisons at Perth. The magazine was in existence for fifteen months from January 1788 to March, 1789 and presumably had a circulation in the five towns mentioned. As its name implies, it was largely made up of selections and extracts from books and magazines already published, but there are a few original contributions sent direct to the publishers. Volume One contains 7 numbers—January to June, 1788 and a supplement; Volume Two six numbers from July to December, 1788, and Volume Three three numbers from January to March 1789. In the first two volumes each number extended to 48 pages, while in the third they extended to 64 pages. This increase in size may have been intended to offset the fact that the last volume contained no plates, whereas the first volume had had 7, and the second 6. These engraved plates were regarded as being one of the most valuable features of the publication. In a note dated Perth, April 15, 1789, the publishers say that since the plates were discontinued the subscription had so fallen off that they were obliged to cease publication. This must have been all the more disappointing as they had claimed in the number for April, 1788 that their circulation was now very considerable. They invited tradesmen to use their covers for advertisements at the same rate as the public newspapers. This would have presumably supplied a felt want in Dundee and Perth where there was no newspaper to carry local advertisements at this date. Unfortunately no covers have survived the binding of the Sandeman's run into a single volume, and we have no evidence as to whether advertisements actually appeared.

I append a list of the engraved plates which appeared in The Beauties of Magazines. They are mostly described as having been published in 1788 by the Morisons, but with two exceptions, no details of the original drawings or paintings are given nor the name of the engraver.

Plate One. Opposite title-page of Vol. I. A portrait of George Dempster, Esq. M.P. It is described as being by Burrell from a Wax Medallion by Tassie in the possession of Mr. C. Bell. I understand that this Tassie medallion is now in the hands of Mr. A. Duchar, antique-dealer, Perth. Publication date, January, 1788.


Plate Four. Opposite p. 264. June No. Portrait of His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales. Published, April, 1788.


Plate Nine. Opposite p. 49. August No. Portrait of William Cullen, M.D., Professor of Materna Medica in the University of Edinburgh. The plate
corresponds to the description in Brun's Catalogue. Engraved underneath
are the words: Published for the Beauties of Magazines &c. by R. Morison
Jnr. Perth. There is no article concerning Cullen in the August number
of the magazine. The name of the engraver is not given.
Plate Ten. Opposite p. 120. September No. A View of the River Brann in
Athole, Scotland. Publication date, September, 1788.
Queen of Great Britain. Publication date, October, 1788.
Author of the Wealth of Nations. Publication date, November, 1788.
Plate Thirteen. Opposite p. 241. December No. A View of Etrol House, the
seat of John Allan, Esqr. 'To whom it is respectfully Dedicated by his
obliged humble Servant R. Morison Jnr.' No date.

The Cullen engraving is of great interest to students of his portraits. I
have seen the Martin, Cochrane and Hunterian portraits only in book
reproductions but there is no doubt that the 1788 Beauties engraving
bears little resemblance to the first two of these. Like the Hunterian
portrait it is much less idealised and strongly stresses the protruding
underlip, the large nose and long face, almost indeed to the point of
caricature. It is of course in profile but the face has a strong resemblance
to that in the Hunterian portrait and seems to strengthen the case made
out by Jolley for the value of that portrait as a likeness. But I do not
know what relationship there is, if any, between the Hunterian portrait
and the original drawing which lies behind the engraving in The Beauties
of Magazines.

R. H. Carnie

A NOTE ON SOME OLD BOOKS FOUND
IN THE HIGH SCHOOL OF DUNDEE

The High School of Dundee received a Royal Charter which gave it
its present form and name in 1859. Its antecedents, however, go back
much further. The present building on Meadowside was opened in 1832
to house the Grammar School, the English School, and the Academy,
the whole being known, until 1859, as the Public Seminaries. Of these
three schools, the Academy with its trend towards a cultural curriculum,
was founded in 1785, the English School, which taught English, writing,
reading and arithmetic, in 1702, and the Grammar School, concentrat-
ing on Latin, Greek and mathematics, at a much earlier but unrecorded
date. The Girls High School was built with money from a Dundee