Walter de la Mare and Walt Whitman: A Bibliographic Note

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WALTER DE LA MARE AND WALT WHITMAN: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Scott Giantvalley, in his Walt Whitman, 1838-1939: A Reference Guide (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), cites the following essay under the year 1915: “[de la Mare, Walter.] ‘Drum-Taps.’ Times Literary Supplement (London) (1 April), 105-6” (item 31, p. 248). Giantvalley does not mention the reprinting of this essay in the Chatto & Windus edition of Drum-Taps later in 1915. Joel Myerson, in Walt Whitman: A Descriptive Bibliography (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), indicates that the Chatto & Windus Drum-Taps reprints the introductory essay from “the 1 April 1915 Times Literary Supplement [by Walter de la Mare]” (151). Giantvalley’s and Myerson’s brackets indicate that the TLS article, like its reprinting in the Chatto & Windus Drum-Taps, was unsigned. There is no indication what source Giantvalley and Myerson used to identify de la Mare as the author.

Several years ago, I acquired from a London bookseller a copy of the Chatto & Windus Drum-Taps, in which was tucked a typewritten letter written on London Times Literary Supplement stationery by Fay Hall, Editor’s Secretary, to one L. A. Wallrich, Esq., Thomastown House, Edenderry, Co. Offaly, Ireland:

16 March 1965.

Dear Mr. Wallrich,

Thank you for your letter of 8 March.

In the circumstances there is no objection to your knowing that the writer of the article on Drum-Taps was Walter de la Mare.

Yours sincerely,
Fay Hall
Editor’s Secretary

This letter provides definitive evidence that de la Mare (1873-1956) was indeed the author of the essay “Drum-Taps” and that, as late as 1965, the identity of the author was still something of a mystery.

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