

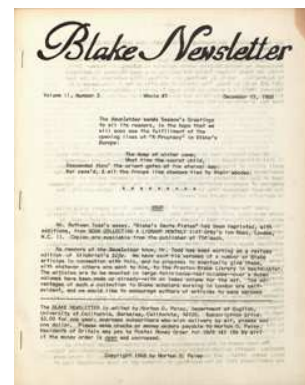
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

N O T E

Miss Groggery

John Buck

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 2, Issue 3, December 15, 1968, pp. 40-41



"Described in the Sale-catalogue as 'very fine'," ". . . 'very powerful and characteristic'," ". . . 'of grand conception and highly characteristic'," and so on. Although I have traced sales from the Butts collection at Sotheby's on the 26th March 1852, and at Foster's on the 29th June 1853 and again on 8th March 1854 (omitting sales later than 1863) none of them includes these works or these descriptions. Nor are they to be found in the Joseph Hogarth sale at Southgate's on 7th to 23rd June 1854 or the anonymous Frederick Tatham sale at Sotheby's on 29th April 1862. Any help in tracing this catalogue will be greatly appreciated.

Some Blake scholars may not know of the copy of the first, 1883 edition of *Christina's Life of William Blake* which was examined by William Rossetti. This is now in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, where I examined it in the summer of 1966. It bears William Rossetti's name on the short title-page and also the inscription "Handed over to Mrs. M. V. Rossetti, 1908," which presumably refers to his daughter Mrs. Olive Rossetti Agresti.

Most of the annotations were made to William Rossetti's own lists of Blake's works in the second volume of the edition. For instance, regarding the duplication of certain works in lists, references are inserted to pictures in the sale of George Blake, deceased, at Christie's on 7th and 9th November 1863 (which included "The Black Madonna," now in the collection of the University of California, Berkeley).

Blake could very well have seen and read about a tiger in the zoo in the Tower of London. In *An Historical Description of the Tower of London, and its Curiosities* (London, 1768) the anonymous writer refers to three tigers living in the Tower. This work was a popular guidebook published by John Newbery, the bookseller for whom the Newbery Award in children's literature is named.

One of the bookseller's most popular publications, the *Tower*, with its two companion volumes on Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, was reprinted frequently between 1753 and 1774; and the three works were sometimes bound together under one general title. During Blake's apprenticeship with the engraver James Basire, he spent some time sketching the monuments in Westminster Abbey, and he may very well have used Newbery's *Historical Description* to point out the most interesting of these monuments. It is at this time that he might have seen the *Tower*, and, either in the book or at the zoo, he may have been impressed by the tigers. The writer refers to Sir Richard, "a fine young Tyger presented to his Majesty by the Earl of Northumberland," (p. 17) and Miss Jenny, "a Bengal tygress, brought from Madrass by governor Piggot, and presented to his majesty as a great curiosity. She is a most beautiful creature, far exceeding any other in the whole collection." (p. 18) Of the three, however, the writer describes one, Miss Groggery, at considerable length, and that description may shed some light on the contrast between Blake's poem and the illustration which accompanied it:

It is an old maxim, that evil communication corrupts good manners, and as a companion to this adage, we may assert, that good company and kind treatment will tame the most savage animals. We have an instance of this, in the courteous behaviour of Miss Groggery, who is altogether as kind and familiar as her companion [Dunco, a lion], and, though a tygress, discovers no marks of ferocity ---But notwithstanding the polite and friendly behaviour of these beautiful creatures, I would not advise my friends to be too great with them; for, like other couples, they may sometimes happen to be out of temper.

The tiger is in shape not much unlike a cat, only much larger, and when wild is prodigious fierce and ravenous. It lurks in the woods, and seizes its prey by a sudden spring. Men in traversing the woods, are frequently surprized by this animal. Tygers are finely spotted; they are of a yellowish colour, and their spots black; they are very playful, and leap a prodigious height, when they are playing their gambols. (pp. 15-16)

Although the writer does describe tigers as being spotted, it is clear that he is not confusing them with leopards or jaguars, both of which he mentions later in the account of the zoo. This description of Miss Groggery includes almost precisely the contrast between the amiable, almost kittenish tiger of Blake's illustration and the ferocity of the subject of his poem.

3. A Census of Coloured Copies of Young's *Night Thoughts* (1797)

G. E. Bentley, Jr.
University of Toronto

The list by W. E. Moss* of coloured copies of Young's *Night Thoughts* (1797) [*Blake Newsletter*, 11, No. 2 (15 Sept 1968), 19-23] may be somewhat amplified, chiefly with facts of their history since his essay was written about 1942.

Mr Martin Butlin tells me that copies of Young's *Night Thoughts* seem to have been coloured in two distinct styles, the first of about 1797, and the second, similar in effect to the coloured copies of Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper* (1803, owned by Mr George Goyder) and *Ballads* (1805, owned by Professor S. Foster Damon), of about 1805. The ascriptions of colouring dates below derive from Mr Butlin.

A Bound for Milnes by J. Leighton in half red-brown morocco, sago-brown cloth sides, with Milnes' crest, "a garb or";* 42.1 x 33 cm;* lacks the "Explanation of the Engravings" leaf.*

- (1) Sold anonymously for Thomas Butts at Sotheby's, 1852 March 26, lot 59 (not described as coloured) [for £2.1s. to R.M.M.];
- (2) Sold by the son of Richard Monckton Milnes, The Earl of Crewe, at Sotheby's, 1903 March 30, lot 13 [for £170 to Edwards];
- (3) Acquired by Algernon Methuen, lent to the National Gallery exhibition (1913), no. 73, and sold posthumously at Sotheby's, 1936 Feb 19, lot 505 [for £580 to Robinson];
- (4) Acquired by A. E. Newton, lent to the Philadelphia Museum exhibition (1939), no. 90, and sold posthumously at Parke-Bernet, 1941 April 16, lot 139 [for \$1,750 to Sessler];

In the Census, an asterisk () indicates that I have not verified information by Col. Moss.

¹Not (according to the British Museum master copy) for £260, as in Moss.