

**CATALOGUE OF BOOKS,  
ENGRAVINGS, WATER-  
COLORS & SKETCHES**

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Catalogue of Books, Engravings, Water-Colors & Sketches by William Blake

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**WILLIAM BLAKE**

**CATALOGUE OF BOOKS,  
ENGRAVINGS, WATER-  
COLORS & SKETCHES**



WILLIAM BLAKE

1757-1827

CATALOGUE OF  
BOOKS, ENGRAVINGS  
WATER-COLORS & SKETCHES  
BY WILLIAM BLAKE



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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE first exhibition in America of works by William Blake was held at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1880. It was occasioned by the temporary deposit there of a number of pictures owned by Mrs. Alexander Gilchrist, the wife of Blake's biographer, who was then living in this country. The collection included water-color drawings, pencil sketches, and a large number of books to which Blake contributed engravings. Except for a copy of the *Book of Thel*, there were none of Blake's own books in the exhibition. A second exhibition was held in the Boston Museum in 1891. This, the "Introductory Note" to its catalogue tells us, was made possible by a rich gift to the Museum of some of Blake's best water-colors, including "Seven Designs from Shakespeare" (Gilchrist, II: 251, No. 242), "Nine Designs from 'Paradise Lost,' 1808" (Gilchrist, II: 219, No. 90), and "Eight Designs from Milton's 'Comus'" (Gilchrist, II: 245), together with

the fact that the number of Blake's works belonging to a private collector of Boston had, in the meantime, been largely increased.

This latter exhibition was rich in original designs in water-color, pencil, sepia, etc., but, again, not in Blake's printed works, only nine out of fifteen being shown. This fact is not surprising when it is remembered that up to this time few of Blake's books had come to this country; indeed, few had left the hands of their original purchasers.

Blake died in 1827. He had been almost entirely neglected at the time of his death, and his name remained in obscurity until 1863, when the biography, begun by Alexander Gilchrist, and finished by his widow, with the help of Dante Gabriel and William Michael Rossetti, was published in London. Called "Pictor Ignotus" on the title-page of the book, the expression described the poet-painter at the time, but thanks to the interest excited by the *Life*, this remarkable man became well known. Not only did he become a subject of appreciative regard, but this feeling spread into a mania, which resulted chiefly in the production of costly facsimiles of his works. J. C. Hotten issued a facsimile of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in 1868; Professor C.