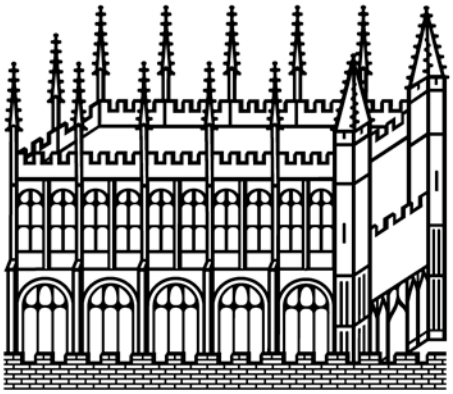


WEST'S GALLERY.

MOSES

Jane - Chu
184

THE

GALLERY OF PICTURES

PAINTED BY

BENJAMIN WEST ESQ.R

HISTORICAL PAINTER,

TO

HIS MAJESTY,

AND

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ENGRAVED IN OUTLINE

BY

HENRY MOSES.

Joseph Thomas 1. Finch Lane. Cornhill London.

BENJAMIN WEST

Was the tenth child of John West, and Sarah Pearson, and was born at Springfield, in the State of Pennsylvania, North America, on the 10th. of October, 1738. His maternal great-grandfather was Thomas Pearson, the friend and companion of William Penn, the founder of the province in which the parents of the painter had settled. The family were members of the Society of Friends, and were alike remarkable for piety and active benevolence. It was from the example of John West, in liberating a negro, whom he had received as portion of his wife's dowry, and through his persuasion, that the Quakers established it as a principle, that no person could continue a member of their community who held a human being in slavery.

The love of Art seems to have been an instinctive passion with West; for at seven years old, although he had never seen a picture of any description, he was enabled to draw a portrait, in ink, which was at once recognised as a likeness of the infant child of his eldest sister. The encouragement which he received upon this occasion gave a fortunate direction to the young artist's mind. He made drawings of the various natural objects in the surrounding neighbourhood: and the wandering Indians, in their summer visits to Springfield, were not only pleased with the lad and his sketches, but taught him to prepare the red and yellow colours with which they stained their weapons, and induced his mother to supply him with blue;—thus placing him in possession of the three primary colours.

His fame now began to extend itself; and Mr. Pennington, a relative of his father, presented him with a box of paints and pencils, some prepared canvas, and six of Grevling's engravings. With these he obtained an additional impetus to study; and in a short time he produced a picture, which, although composed from two of the engravings, told a new and original story.

As his celebrity increased, he acquired more efficient patronage than that of his family and immediate connexions; and before he was fifteen he had become a personage of considerable note throughout the province. About this time his friends deemed it prudent that Benjamin should be settled in some profession; and his father thought it best to consult the Society of which he was a member, as to the youth's future destination. A special meeting was therefore held to deliberate on the subject, when it was decided that West should be permitted to pursue his chosen avocation; upon which the whole community rose,—the women kissed the young artist, and the men, one by one, laid their hands upon his head, solemnly conjuring him to employ the talents with which he had been endowed in worthy and holy services.

At eighteen years of age he quitted home, and established himself as a portrait painter, in Philadelphia; where his youth, and extraordinary talent, secured him a great portion of public favour. His prices were very low; but he laboured hard, and lived frugally, and was thus enabled to put by something, for the cherished purpose of visiting Europe. From Philadelphia he went to New York; where an opportunity soon occurred for his going to Italy. Mr. Allen, who had the charge of a consignment of corn and flour, intended for Leghorn, offered West a passage; and, being furnished with introductory letters, and some pecuniary assistance, he embarked for the Old World, in the twenty-second year of his age.

On the 10th. of July, 1760, West entered Rome, and, from this period, his course was one of unvaried prosperity. Mr. Robinson, afterwards Lord Grantham, sat for his portrait, which, when exhibited, was pronounced to be second only to the painting of Mengs, the most celebrated painter then in that "City of the Arts." His lordship introduced him to other patrons, and his fame spread far and rapidly. Mr. Allen, of Philadelphia, hearing of the success of his protegé, and justly considering him an honour to America, forwarded to his agents, in Italy, a letter, authorising them, in his own, and Governor Hamilton's name, to give the artist unlimited credit: an act of munificence which was never surpassed, even by the princely Court of the Medici.

Having seen all that was worthy in Rome, he went to Florence, Bologna, and Venice; the two former of which cities conferred upon him the honour of electing him a member of their Academies, as did also Parma, which he visited on his way towards England.

He arrived in London on the 20th of June, 1763, and was cordially welcomed by his early friends, Allen, Hamilton, and Smith, who happened to be there. Shortly afterwards were exhibited his pictures of Angelica and Medora, Cimon and Iphigenia, and a portrait of General Monckton, which procured West new friends and additional reputation. Among others, he acquired the patronage and intimacy of Dr. Drummond, Archbishop of York, for whom he painted Agrippina, landing with the ashes of Germanicus; a performance which, being introduced to his Majesty, led to the presentation of the artist at Court, and procured him the lasting regard and support of the Monarch.

In 1765, West married a young American lady, Elizabeth Shewell, on whom he had fixed his affections before quitting his native land, and who had been brought to England, by his friends, for the purpose of being united to him. Blessed with an honourable fame, with competence, and domestic comfort; surrounded by friends, and cheered with the countenance of his Sovereign, the circumstances of the Artist were now enviable; but they had no effect in altering the meek and unassuming tenor of his life. The good Quaker continued to conduct himself with the mild dignity, probity and candour, which distinguish his sect.

To West's intimacy with George the Third we are indebted for the existence of the present Royal Academy, which was established upon the occurrence of a schism in the Society of Incorporated Artists; and to him we also owe the revolution in Art, which restored to it the predominance of the principles of nature and propriety. It had hitherto been the practice of painters to give their heroes the costume of ancient Greece and Rome; but West had early seen the absurdity of this, and, when he commenced the death of Wolfe, resolved to try whether the requisite effect could not be produced by truth and correctness, instead of by pedantry and falsehood. It is needless to say the experiment succeeded to his expectations.

Upon the death of Reynolds, in 1792, West was elected President of the Royal Academy, upon which the King expressed a wish to confer upon him the honour of Knighthood; a distinction which, however, was modestly declined. His time, from this period, up to the date of his Majesty's last illness, was chiefly occupied with the splendid works with which he adorned the Castle and Chapel of Windsor. In 1802, he commenced his series of Scriptural pictures; the first of which was "Christ healing the sick," a copy of which he presented to an Hospital, erected in Philadelphia. The profits arising from the exhibition of this magnificent painting, enabled the Committee of the Hospital to enlarge the building, and receive thirty additional patients.

The time had now arrived when his home endearments, of upwards of half a century's standing, were to be broken up. His faithful and amiable wife, after a painful illness, died on the 6th. December, 1817, and West felt that this was a bereavement he should not long survive. He began gradually to droop, and, though he still continued his labours, the decay of his powers was visible. He died March 11th 1820, in the eighty-second year of his age; and was buried beside Reynolds, Opie, and Barry, in St. Paul's Cathedral.

His character as a man may be summed up in a few words: he was kind, affectionate, sincere and pious. Of his genius as an Artist, the reader can judge from the beautiful specimens before him. His chief characteristics are repose and intense thought: if he has little passion, his judgment is always clear; and in his delineations, he is unsurpassed for unity of design and precision of execution. His colouring was rich and glowing, and although in the following sketches this charm is withdrawn, the publisher trusts that, in other respects, there is no abatement of beauty.

G. M. B.

Painted by B. West, P.R.A. *Drawn & Engraved by H. Moses.*

THETIS BRINGING THE ARMOUR TO ACHILLES.

From the Original Picture in the possession of Thomas Hope Esq.

London, Joseph Thomas, 1, Finch Lane.

WEST'S

GALLERY OF PAINTINGS.

THETIS BRINGING THE ARMOUR TO ACHILLES.

"Th' immortal arms the goddess-mother bears
Swift to her son: her son she finds in tears,
Stretch'd o'er Patroclus' corse, while all the rest
Their sovereign's sorrows in their own express'd.
A ray divine her heavenly presence shed,
And thus, his hand soft touching, Thetis said:
Suppress (my son) this rage of grief, and know
It was not man, but heaven, that gave the blow;
Behold what arms by Vulcan is bestowed,
Arms worthy thee, or fit to grace a god.
Then drops the radiant burden on the ground;
Clang the strong arms, and ring the shores around:
Back shrink the Myrmidons with dread surprise
And from the broad effulgence turn their eyes.
Unmoved, the hero kindles at the show,
And feels with rage divine his bosom glow;
From his fierce eye-balls living flames expire,
And flash incessant like a stream of fire:
He turns the radiant gift; and feeds his mind
On all th' immortal artist had design'd.
Goddess (he cried) these glorious arms that shine
With matchless art, confess the hand divine."—*Homer's Iliad, Book* 19.

THE great Poets having described their heroes with the utmost force and grace of language, and endowed them with the highest qualities of mind and body, the mere mention of their names excites sentiments and feelings of admiration.

In the delineation, therefore, of these high and immortalized beings, the energies and beauties of the pencil must correspond with those traced by the pen of the poet: the utmost truth and vigour of drawing must be united to the highest conception of character, and a poetic spirit must inform

and exalt the piece to such an adequate representation, that the eyes may seem to behold what the imagination has so often fancied with enthusiasm. Such is the impression here made by the graceful form of Thetis, as she bends with sympathetic respect and maternal tenderness over her son; and such is the effect produced by the energetic graces of Achilles, by his deep dejection at the death of his friend, his inflexible resentment, the pathetic prostration of Patroclus, and by the pervading truth, beauty, and animation of the entire piece.

From the inevitable nature of everything human, the greatest talents are allied to imperfection, and they exhibit them perhaps most conspicuously while in the display of their greatest excellencies. Thus, with respect to one of the greatest painters of Italy, it is impossible not to observe that the daring sublimity of Michael Angelo often degenerates into caricature. It is therefore a distinguished excellence of Mr. West, that in those subjects in which he exhibits some of his highest powers, and in which there is above all others the greatest danger of losing a chaste tone of expression, his judgment never suffers the ardour of his genius to carry his pencil beyond the boundaries of truth and propriety, but "he begets a temperance in the very torrent and tempest of passion." Thus, in this impassioned production, the animated form and stern countenance of Achilles display his ferocity and sullenness, without deviating into any of that intemperate expression which such glowing subjects so naturally induce. Some objections have been made to the proportion of the feet of Achilles; but Mr. West has designated him agreeably to Homer's epithet of the swift-footed Achilles; his swiftness of foot arises from his strength; therefore, the swell of the thigh and calf of the leg, where motion and strength are seated, are comparatively larger in proportion to the feet, than in the common standard of men.

The classic truth of the armour, and the minute but suitable attention to the ornamental parts of the picture, are a full refutation of those, who, having no resolution to study, or no genius for proper combination, would insinuate, that studious correctness in small things is incompatible with a noble genius in great. Genius is indeed the soul of art, but study and science are the bodily powers, without which the hand in vain attempts what the mind would dictate.

R. H.

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

London. Joseph Thomas, 1, Finch Lane.

CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

"But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them."—*Mark* x. 13—16.

PERSPICUITY, or that quality which conveys ideas to the mind with entire clearness and precision, is one of the highest excellencies in the communication of thought, either through the medium of art, literature, or discourse. This quality was possest in perfection by the august person who forms the central object in this picture. The perfect morality he taught, the practice of which confers the highest attainable excellence and happiness on human nature, was conveyed to the head and heart by language and images the most intelligible and impressive. To the unlettered and ignorant it was equally comprehensive, instructive, and delightful.

Thus, nothing could be more beautiful, and at the same time more impressive, than the symbol which enforces the moral inculcated in this picture, that of purity of heart and conduct. Mr. West has here told the incident and moral of the piece with all the corresponding perspicuity the pencil is capable of, so that a spectator, who had even never read the description of it, would recognize the great teacher impressing on his auditory some important truth drawn from the early age of innocence. In accomplishing this object, the painter has exhibited one of the best tests of a great and commanding talent; he has carried the subject impressively to the mind, though it is a subject unaided by the explanatory appearance of passionate emotion; an amenity that soothes the mind to an agreeable complacency, and a calm dignity that elevates it, are its presiding attributes. The secondary objects are in unison with the chief in producing these effects, which belong to the gracefully simple and dignified forms of a column, and the noble diagonal line of all the figures, except three on the left hand, which obviate the formality it would otherwise present; the drapery too, in an eminent degree, is characteristically accordant with the subject. That of the male figures has a graceful involution and dignified amplitude of fold suitable to the gravity of the wearer. Those of the female and children are as appropriately light and elegant. As the action and expression of all the other figures should carry the attention of the spectator with more impressive force to the main personage, the significant countenances, action and expression of the figures in this piece, are all subordinate to this purpose. Their attention, admiration, or earnest conversation induced by the divine discourse of the Saviour, are so many beautiful luminous rays, converging to the more luminous focus of the picture's expression.

This admirable picture was the joint purchase of four of the Governors of the Foundling Hospital, who gratuitously presented it as an appropriate Altar-piece for the Chapel of that charitable establishment, where it is now deposited.

R. H.

THE CAPTIVE.

"It is thou, thrice sweet and gracious Goddess, addressing myself to LIBERTY, whom all in public or in private worship, whose taste is grateful, and ever will be so, till Nature herself shall change —— no *tint* of words can spot thy snowy mantle, or chymic power turn thy sceptre into iron —— with thee to smile upon him as he eats his crust, the swain is happier than his monarch, from whose court thou art exiled ——— Gracious Heaven! cried I, kneeling down upon the last step but one in my ascent—grant me but health, thou great Bestower of it, and give me but this fair Goddess as my companion—and shower down thy mitres, if it seems good unto thy divine providence, upon those heads which are aching for them.——

—"I took a single captive, and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then looked through the twilight of his grated door, to take his picture.

"I beheld his body half-wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer, I saw him pale and feverish: in thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood —— he had seen no sun, no moon in all that time—nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice:——his children———

"But here my heart began to bleed—and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait.

"He was sitting upon the ground upon a little straw, in the farthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed: a little calender of small sticks were laid at the head, notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there —— he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door, then cast it down —— shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle —— He gave a deep sigh—I saw the iron enter into his soul —— I burst into tears —— I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn.——"—*Sterne's Sentimental Journey.*

A SUBJECT of this mournful nature, is perhaps more difficult of expression than most which employ the pencil of the historic painter, as it requires a deviation from those forms of grace and dignity, which are the constant objects of his study, into novel, broken, and, if I may allowed the phrase, decrepid forms, yet so as not only to avoid presenting what is offensive, but to stamp on the mind a powerful impression of the pathetic. These difficulties are here overcome, and the impression effected, by the delineation of forms involved and angular. The drapery is as judiciously divested of broad masses; for the elegant simplicity of such masses would detract from the due delineation of the haggard, neglected, care-worn wretch, whose spirit and whose frame are sunk down by years of hopelessness, the wreck of all that is mentally happy and corporeally vigorous in human nature. "The iron that appears to enter his soul," inflicts a sympathetic pang of sorrow and pity in our own; and the dejection of our feelings confers an eulogy on the Painter, more honourable to his talent than any that could arise from the critical eloquence of a Wincklemann or a Reynolds.

What particularly strikes the feelings, while it tells in the most complete manner the story of the prisoner's former condition and present misery, is the size of the bones, contrasted with the shrinking and, as it were, daily waste of the muscles: the living flesh seems departing, and the skeleton already anticipating its grave.

R. H.

Painted by B. West P.R.A. Drawn by H. Corbould. Engraved by H. Moses.

THE CAPTIVE.

London, Joseph Thomas, 1, Finch Lane.

B. West
1808

THE DESPAIR OF VENUS OVER THE DEAD BODY OF ADONIS.

——————"Franticly she doteth;
She thinks he could not die, he is not dead.
Her voice is stopp'd, her joints forget to bow,
Her eyes are mad that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so stedfastly,
That her sight dazzling, makes the wound seem three;
And then she reprehends her mangling eye,
That makes more gashes where no breach should be:
His face seems twain, each several limb is doubled,
For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled.

'My tongue cannot express my grief for one;
And yet,' quoth she, 'behold the two Adons dead!
My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone,
Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead:
Heavy heart's lead melt at mine eyes as fire,
So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

Alas! poor World, what treasure hast thou lost!
What face remains alive that's worth the viewing?
Whose tongue is music now? what canst thou boast
Of things long since, or any thing ensuing?
The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim,
But true sweet Beauty liv'd, and dy'd in him.'"—*Shakspeare.*

THE story of Venus and Adonis, of the coyness of the youth, his passion for the chase, and his death in the obstinate pursuit of it, is well known, and has been as often painted as poetized. Mr. West has chosen the point of time when the goddess first discovers her loss, and bursts out into a despairing lamentation at the sight.—The eye follows with delight the elegantly flowing lines of all the figures in their continuity, contrast, and delicate variation. The leading expression of grief is de-delineated with a most natural and pathetic gradation. The whole retinue of Venus partake in her affliction. Even the doves and swans are sympathetically attracted by the tragic event. One of the dogs lies close to his master in mute concern, and two others, in the back ground, are assailing the flying boar, the author of the mischief, who, with a significant and sidelong turn of his eye—a touch worthy of Theocritus—is making off with all possible expedition. Two of the Graces—the waiting maids of Venus—are endeavouring to soothe their distracted Queen; while the third, who has just approached the calamitous scene, exhibits a mixed feeling of grief and surprise. The next in degree of sorrow is the little progeny of Love, who express their unhappiness with a tenderness appropriate to infancy. One looks regretfully at the beauteous corse; a second lifts up his arm, as

if to be satisfied whether Adonis is really dead, and then looks at Venus in sympathetic conviction of the mournful fact; while others, alarmed, are shrinking from the appalling spectacle. Cupid himself, more deeply affected in proportion to his sense of the loss, averts himself from it as from a sight too shocking to contemplate; and distressfully leaning his head on one arm, lifts up the other with on expression of acute and impatient feeling. The agony of Venus finishes the climax. It is characterized with an energy that absorbs every other thought, but without deteriorating in the slightest degree that winding elegance and native sweetness of air which are the inseparable charms of the Queen of Beauty and of Love. The picture is indeed altogether a lovely one—busy without confusion, and impassioned without affectation.

R. H.

MOSES VIEWING THE PROMISED LAND.

"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that *is* over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

"And all Napthali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,

"And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

"And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

"So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

"And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

"And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

"And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended."—*Deuteronomy* xxxiv. 1—8.

No ordinary elevation of thought is required to form a suitable conception of a great character, but to be able to communicate to others an adequate impression of it, demands a luminous genius, and a mastery of the art by which the impression is made, whether it be verbal or graphical. Of such an enlarged ability we have a prominent instance in the impression made on our imaginations by this delineation. The importance of the main figure is indicated no less by the train of celestials engaged with him, than by the usually introduced radiance round his head, but still more expressively by his own personal dignity, and especially by the venerable aspect of his head. There is an agreeable novelty in his attitude, and his form throughout is admirably accordant to the scriptural account of his extraordinary vigour at the advanced age of a hundred and twenty,—"his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." This venerable and vigorous character, so beautifully contrasted by the delicate aspects of the angels, their earnestness in shewing the long desired land to the prophet, his expression of admiration on beholding it, the scientific display of drawing, and the tasteful simplicity of the composition, especially in the linear arrangement of the objects, render this one of the most unexceptionable productions of genius.

R. H.

Painted by B.West P.R.A.

Engraved by H.Moses.

PRIAM PETITIONING ACHILLES FOR THE BODY OF HECTOR.

Unseen by these, the king his entry made;
And prostrate now before Achilles laid,
Sudden (a venerable sight!) appears;
Embraced his knees, and bathed his hand in tears;
Those direful hands his kisses press'd, imbrued
E'en with the best, the dearest of his blood!
As when a wretch (who, conscious of his crime,
Pursued for murder, flies his native clime)
Just gains some frontier, breathless, pale! amazed!
All gaze, all wonder: thus Achilles gazed:
Thus stood th' attendants stupid with surprise:
All mute, yet seem'd to question with their eyes:
Each look'd on other, none the silence broke,
Till thus at last the kingly suppliant spoke:
Ah think, thou favour'd of the powers divine!
Think of thy father's age, and pity mine!
In me, that father's reverend image trace,
Those silver hairs, that venerable face;
His trembling limbs, his helpless person, see!
In all my equal, but in misery!
Yet now, perhaps, some turn of human fate
Expels him helpless from his peaceful state;
Think, from some powerful foe thou see'st him fly,
And beg protection with a feeble cry.
Yet still one comfort in his soul may rise;
He hears his son still lives to glad his eyes;
And hearing still may hope, a better day
May send him thee, to chase that foe away.
No comfort to my griefs, no hopes remain,
The best, the bravest of my sons are slain!
Yet what a race! ere Greece to Ilion came,
The pledge of many a loved and loving dame!
Nineteen one mother bore—Dead, all are dead!
How oft, alas! has wretched Priam bled!
Still one was left, their loss to recompense;
His father's hope, his country's last defence.
Him too thy rage has slain! beneath thy steel,
Unhappy, in his country's cause he fell!
For him, through hostile camps I bent my way,
For him thus prostrate at thy feet I lay;
Large gifts, proportioned to thy wrath, I bear:
Oh hear the wretched, and the gods revere!
Think of thy father, and this face behold!
See him in me, as helpless and as old;
Though not so wretched: there he yields to me,
The first of men in sovereign misery.
Thus forced to kneel, thus grovelling to embrace
The scourge and ruin of my realm and race:
Suppliant my children's murderer to implore,
And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore!—*Homer's Iliad, Book* 24.

In this picture Mr. West has fully verified the remark of Mr. Pope, that "this interview between Priam and Achilles would furnish an admirable subject for a Painter." It is indeed one of the most affecting of the many pathetic incidents of the Iliad, and is one of those master-keys of Homer's enchanting poetry with which he unlocks the tenderest emotions of the heart. Priam had entered the inner tent of Achilles unseen by the attendants, and prostrating himself before the hero, embraced his knees, kissed his hands, and commenced a petition which softened the vindictive soul of Achilles into pity for the miseries of the aged monarch, who was reduced thus lowly to sue his enemy, and to kiss "those terrible, murderous hands that had robbed him of so many sons,—that had slain his subjects, and ruined his family and kingdom." One of the finest touches of Shakspeare's genius is where he makes Lady Macbeth recoil from her intention of murdering Duncan, in consequence of the feelings of parental love and reverence which flashed on her flinty heart, from recognizing in Duncan a likeness to her father:

——————— Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had don't.

So Homer, like a keen investigator of the human character, makes Priam effectually touch on this tender chord of the heart in commencing and concluding his address to Achilles, by reminding him of his father.

The Painter has expressed, to the extent that the pencil is competent to pourtray, this humiliating and pathetic imploring of an aged father for a favour from his greatest enemy. To indicate the object of this petition, Mr. West has made Priam point to his slain son, who is not, however, introduced by the poet in this scene. In the poem it would have been at least superfluous; but as a Picture cannot, like Poetry, explain its subject by a detail of circumstances, but does it by the silent language of forms, and a glance or two of the eye, the Painter has judiciously indulged the license of introducing a new object, as materially assisting to the elucidation of his subject. The surprise that Achilles so forcibly expresses, in common with his attendants, at the sudden and venerable appearance of the Trojan Prince, is admirably associated with his peculiar characteristic of fierceness, a characteristic so strong, that even when he relented into compassion at the mournful suit of Priam, he could not avoid a sally of anger at the latter's slightly extending his petition beyond the circumstance of the restoration of his son's body. This momentary anger of Achilles, at such a time, evinces the exquisite judgment of Homer in sustaining uniformity of character even in the midst of circumstances most adverse to its continuance.

R. H.

ALEXANDER'S CONFIDENCE IN THE INTEGRITY OF HIS PHYSICIAN.

THERE is nothing more curious or inscrutible in the phenomena of the human mind than its frequent display of inconsistent and opposite qualities in the same possessor. This was strikingly exemplified in the disposition of Alexander, who, if he was deservedly called the Great, for his extraordinary and successful talents as a general, and for his occasional practice of exemplary virtue, equally deserved the ephithet of Base, for becoming at other times a slave to the most mean and criminal passions, and at last falling a victim to a grovelling appetite. His friendship was succeeded by murderous ingratitude; his compassion by cruelty; his affability by rudeness; his sincerity by treachery; his temperance by luxury: and his magnanimity by suspicion. Thus he murdered Calisthenes, Clitus, and Parmenio, three of his ever faithful veterans; he shed tears over the fallen Darius, after ordering his soldiers to give no quarter on entering Asia; he put to death an Indian garrison to which he had just granted honourable terms of capitulation; he died of a fever produced by excessive indulgence in wine, after "resisting the dainties of Asia, and seasoning his simple repasts with exercise and sobriety;" and he who had conquered nations as much by courage as his talents, suffered his mind to be agitated by foolish fears and distrust. This last feature is no where more conspicuously contrasted than in the noble confidence that forms the subject of the annexed engraving, taken from part of Plutarch's relation of the sickness and cure of Alexander. "Parmenio sent Alexander a letter from the camp, advising him to beware of Philip, whom, he said, Darius had persuaded, by presents of infinite value, and the promise of his daughter in marriage, to take him off by poison. As soon as Alexander had read the letter, he put it under his pillow without showing it to any of his friends. The time appointed being come, Philip, with the king's friends, entered the chamber, having the cup with medicine in his hand. The king received it freely, without betraying the least symptom of suspicion, and at the same time gave him the letter. It was a striking situation, and more interesting than any scene in a tragedy; the one reading while the other was drinking. They looked on each other, but with a different air. The king, with an open and unembarrassed countenance, expressed his regard for Philip, and the confidence which he had in his honour; Philip's look exhibited his indignation at the calumny. One, while he lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, protesting his fidelity; another, while he threw himself by the bed-side, entreating his sovereign to be of good courage, and to rely upon his care." The settled poise of Alexander's body, as well as his equally settled countenance, which is no otherwise disturbed than by sickness, exhibit a fine portrait of that generous reliance on his friend and physician, which does him more honour than all his conquests, inasmuch as one moral excellence is infinitely superior in genuine worth and dignity to all the talents which enabled him to conquer. The just indignation of the physician, exemplified in his forward start, uplifted hand, and altered look, is also told in the most masterly language of Art; as is the silent admiration of Hephestion, whom the painter has judiciously marked as the elegant and intimate friend of Alexander, by his leaning with graceful familiarity on the king's couch. The intermixture of large with

lesser and more complicated folds, the elegant flow of line in the drapery, and the beautiful proportions of all the forms, assist in perfecting a picture that is in every respect worthy of the hand that designed it, and of the celebrated biographer from whose description it is taken.

R. H.

CHRIST CONVERSING WITH THE DOCTORS.

"And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

"And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*.

"But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

"And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

"And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

"And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

"And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them."—*St. Luke*, ii. 42—50.

THE main objects of painting are, to satisfy the judgment by displaying a clear, natural, and forcible conception of incident, and to delight the imagination by the beauty or sublimity of the medium through which that incident is conveyed. The ability to effect these objects constitutes the chief test by which the painter's genius, in common with that of the poet, must be estimated, and by which the artist, whose works are here outlined, is placed on so high an altitude of fame. Much of this lucid developement of the incident before us arises from the judicious employment of the hands in their expressive co-operation with the faces. As expositors of the mental and corporeal intent of the painter, they rank immediately after the faces, and are always aptly employed by the President. Indeed we may justly say of his figures that "they think from head to foot." Astonishment, profound attention and debate are depicted with an emphasis demanded by the subject, while the heavenly graces of mind and superior endowments of intellect that equally surprised and instructed, are beautifully blended in the face and form of Jesus, without in the least diminishing the suitable youthfulness of his appearance. The dresses are cast with Mr. West's usual grace and grandeur. They are tastefully subdivided in their folds, without destroying the requisite breadth.

R. H.

B West 1000

Painted by B. West P. R. A.

Drawn by H. Corbould.

Engraved by H. Moser.

THE CAVE OF DESPAIRE.

" Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,
Far underneath a craggy clift ypight,
Dark, doleful, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carion carcasses doth crave:
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly owl,
Shrieking his baneful note, which ever drave
Far from that haunt all other cheerful fowl:
And all about it wand'ring ghosts did wail and howl.

And, all about, old stocks and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leaf was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged been,
Whose carcasses were scatter'd on the green,
And thrown about the clifts. Arrived there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and doleful teen,
Would fain have fled, ne durst approachen near:
But th' other forc'd him stay, and comforted in fear.

The darksome cave they enter, where they find
That cursed man, now sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind;
His greasy locks, long growing and unbound,
Disordered hung about his shoulders round,
And hid his face: thro' which his hollow eyne
Look'd deadly dull, and stared astound;
His raw-bone cheeks, through penury and pine,
Were shrunk into his jaws, as he did never dine.

His garment nought but many ragged clouts,
With thorns together pinn'd and patched was,
The which his naked sides he wrapp'd abouts:
And him beside there lay upon the grass
A dreary corse, whose life away did pass,
All wallow'd in his own yet lukewarm blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas!
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood.

* * * * * *

———————" When the miscreant
Perceived him to waver weak and frail,
With trembling horror did his conscience dant,
And hellish anguish did his soul assail:
To drive him to despair, and quite to quail,
He shew'd him painted in a table plain,
The damned ghosts, that do in torments wail,
And thousand fiends that do them endless pain
With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remain.

The sight whereof so throughly him dismay'd,
That nought but death before his eyes he saw,
And ever-burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th' Almighty's law:
Then 'gan the villain him to over-craw,
And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw;
And bade him choose what death he would desire:
For death was due to him that had provok'd God's ire.

But when as none of them he saw him take,
He to him raught a dagger sharp and keen,
And gave it in his hand; his hand did quake,
And tremble like a leaf of aspin green,
And troubled blood thro' his pale face was seen
To come and go; with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been:
At last resolv'd to work his final smart,
He lifted up his hand, that back again did start.

Which when as Una saw, through every vein
The crudled cold ran to her well of life,
As in a swoon: but soon reliev'd again,
Out of his hand she snatch'd the cursed knife,
And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,
And to him said: 'Fie, fie, saint-hearted knight!
What meanest thou by this reproachful strife?
Is this the battle which thou vaunt'st to fight
With that fire-mouthed dragon, horrible and bright?'"

In Spenser's admirable poem of the Faërie Queene, in which the nature and progress of the virtues that lead human nature to its highest excellence are represented under beautiful, though, in some respects, dry and tedious allegories, there is no description more masterly than that of the Cave of Despaire. The Poet exhibits an inexhaustible fertility of invention, and a justness and an animation in describing what he invents, that none but a truly great genius could be capable of. A deprivation of all hope, a horror and loathing of existence, bows the "man of hell" to the ground, and leads him to

——————"Swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw."

Nothing is wanting to complete the picture of Despaire in its most direful effects. The boding and "ghastly owl," the "wailing and wandering ghosts,"

————"The dreary corse
Wallowing in his own yet lukewarm blood,"

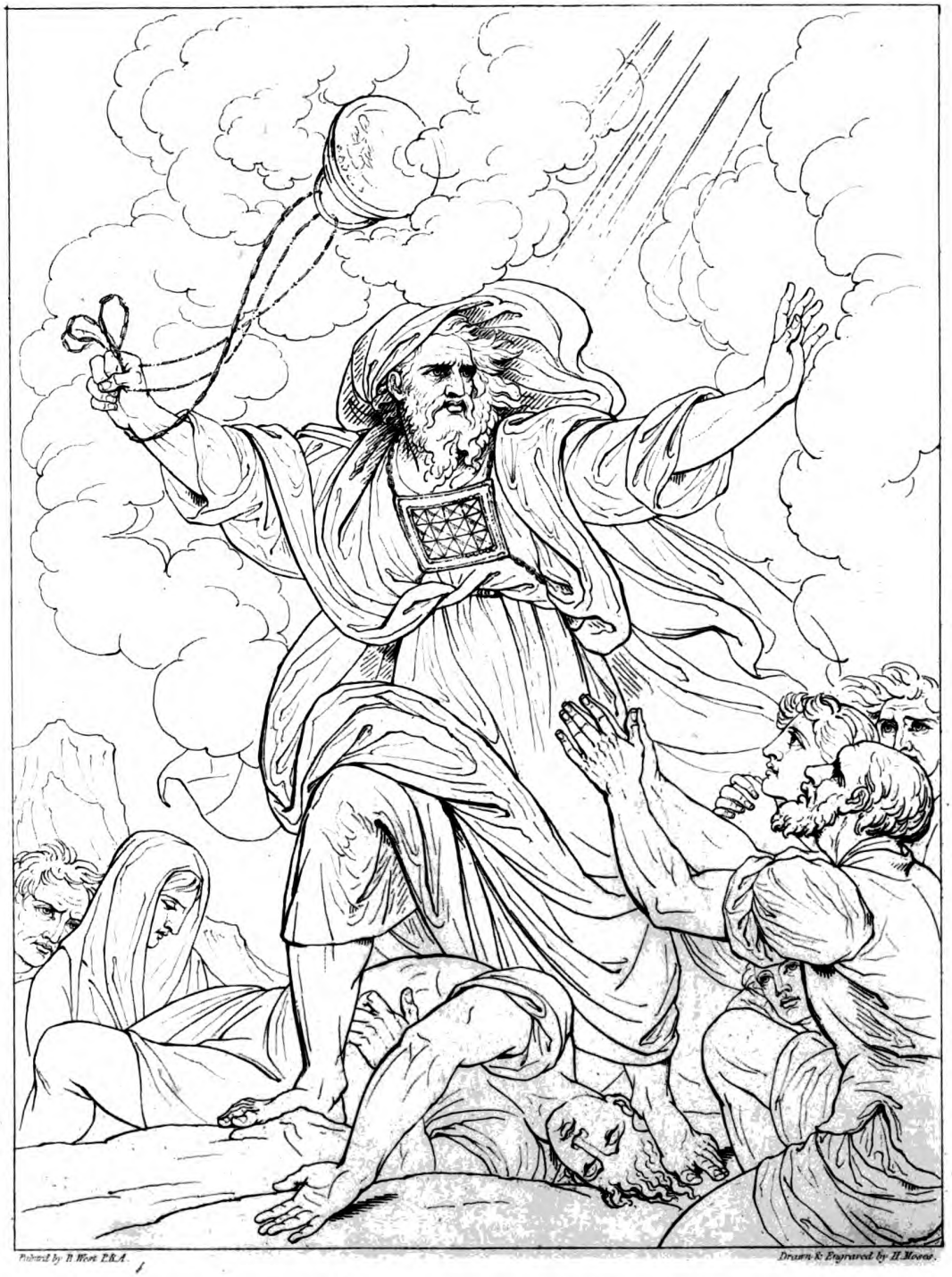
the "old stocks and stubs of trees" that "hang upon the ragged rock," and the self-murdered wretches that are suspended from it, exhibit, in the Cave of Despaire, such a region of dismay and death, that, together with the delusive arguments of Despaire exciting to self-murder, and the awful painting he displays of

——"Damned ghosts that doe in torment waile,
And thousand fiends that doe them endlesse pain,"

work so deadly an effect on even Holiness itself, personified by the Red Crosse Knight, as to urge him to lift up his hand against his own life; which fatal purpose is prevented by Una, or Truth. All this rueful spectacle, so sublimely imagined and described by the Poet, the Painter has delineated with an energy that Spenser himself, we might venture to say, would have pourtrayed, had he wielded the pencil as well as the pen.

Mr. West has exhibited the terror of "the bare head Knight," who had before been nearly tempted by Despaire to destroy himself, with an expression the most natural and lively, while he shrinks behind his companion and his shield to screen himself from the view and audience of the death-seducing and "grisly terror." The shield of the Red Crosse Knight—The shield of Faith—is as judiciously represented fallen from his arm; and the heads of the animals that carry Una and the Knight, crouched, as if even beasts partook of the terror of the scene. The terror consequent on Despaire is thus carried to the highest possible extent of the Painter's as well as Poet's delineation.

R. H.



AARON STAYING THE PLAGUE.

London, Joseph Thomas, 1, Finch Lane.

AARON STAYING THE PLAGUE.

"And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

"And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.

"And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

"Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

"And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed."

Numbers xvi. 46—50.

THIS is a subject of so lofty a nature as to require the most vigorous powers of conception and execution. Nothing below excellence could be tolerated in a scene so animated, pathetic, and sublime. A people dead and dying of the most dreadful malady, the living eagerly looking for relief, an aged, revered, and sacred character as eagerly rushing to save them from destruction by a sudden and miraculous intervention, are objects of true sublimity, as they impress such strong and varied ideas of terror, pathos, and supernatural agency. In this picture, no critical skill is necessary to point out to any one of the least sensibility or taste, the admirable and faithful exposition to the eye, of the forcible description in the verses above; for dead to every noble impression must he be, who does not at a glance feel the sublimity of the scene flash into his bosom. All is animated action and energetic expression. The pious confidence of the uninfected, the sadness of the diseased, and the prostration of the dead, carry the mind with most impressive feeling of awe to the central figure of the High Priest, whose flowing drapery, extended arms, impetuous and sacred aspect, emphatically designate his paternal anxiety, and the divine power with which he is invested. He appears, indeed, like a heaven-commissioned being, while, with the holy incense he dissipates the noxious disease, and with uplifted arm prevents the further advance of the King of Terrors.

The vigour and beauty of the drawing, the noble breadth of the drapery, and the judicious compactness and form of the group, are in perfect unison with the elevated expression of the subject It is a scene full of the most masterly contrast; energy opposed to languor, mind to body, life to death, and triumph to despair.

R. H.

THE ALARM OF NESTOR AT THE LIGHTNING WHICH PRECEDES HECTOR.

Thus said the chief; and Nestor, skill'd in war,
Approves his council, and ascends the car:
The steeds he left, their trusty servants hold;
Eurymedon, and Sthenelus the bold.
The reverend charioteer directs the course,
And strains his aged arm to lash the horse.
Hector they face; unknowing how to fear,
Fierce he drove on: Tydides whirl'd his spear.
The spear with erring haste mistook its way,
But plunged in Eniopeus' bosom lay.
His opening hand in death forsakes the rein;
The steeds fly back: he falls, and spurns the plain.
Great Hector sorrows for his servant kill'd,
Yet unrevenged permits to press the field;
Till to supply his place and rule the car,
Rose Archeptolemus, the fierce in war.
And now had death and horror cover'd all!
Like timorous flocks the Trojans in their wall
Enclosed had bled: but Jove with awful sound
Roll'd the big thunder o'er the vast profound:
Full in Tydides' face the lightning flew;
The ground before him flamed with sulphur blue;
The quivering steeds fell prostrate at the sight;
And Nestor's trembling hand confess'd his fright:
He dropp'd the reins; and shook with sacred dread,
Thus, turned, warn'd th' intrepid Diomed:
O chief! too daring in thy friend's defence,
Retire advised, and urge the chariot hence.
This day, averse, the sovereign of the skies
Assist great Hector, and our palm denies.
Some other sun may see the happier hour,
When Greece shall conquer by his heavenly power.
'Tis not in man his fix'd decree to move:
The great will glory to submit to Jove.

Homer's Illiad, Book viii.

B. West. 1793

As it is impossible for a writer to give a just translation of a great poem unless he is not only master of the language in which he writes, but is also warmed by the glowing spirit of his original, so a painter would in vain attempt to embody a poetical story unless to his skill in embodying it with form, colour, light, and shade, he adds the diviner power of giving it the poetic soul. With such enthusiasm in the true sympathy of his art, has the Painter translated from Homer the description of this solemn incident.—Leaving the plebeian war in the back-ground, the chieftains, Diomede and Hector, are advancing towards each other in the consciousness of being able to settle the day's combat without wasting their strength on inferior objects:

"Let thou and I the battle try;"

It was, however, one of the days of Hector's glory, and Diomede was destined to advance in vain, though a great compliment is paid him by the very cause of his approaching flight; for the only thing which deters him from meeting Hector, and, as the Poet insinuates, from defeating him, is nothing less than a supernatural fire from Heaven repeatedly visiting his progress. This is the moment of the picture; and by the selection of such a moment, as well as by his prominent part in the fore-ground, Diomede is evidently made the hero of the piece, as he well might be on such an occasion, notwithstanding his ill success: so artful is Homer in maintaining the general glory of his countrymen without diminishing that importance in Hector, which is so necessary to the superior glory of his final vanquisher Achilles. The situation is desperate and the Painter has so described it, without making his hero partake of the despair.—It is thundering and lightning: the horses are rearing at the flames that dart in their faces: old Nestor, whom at the approach of Hector, Diomede had taken into his chariot, and who had undertaken to manage the reins, finds the task impossible, and is seized with a "sacred dread;" and in fine, Hector, by these awful signs, is coming up to sweep every thing before him, yet Diomede, for the moment, still remains unappalled, and lifting his shield over his head, as if to meet all the terrors that might assail him, grasps his javelin with a double energy for the combat. This elevation of the shield is a fine touch, not to be found in the original; and nothing can be contrasted more nobly than the two different modes in which the valour of the opponents manifests itself on account of the difference of situation—Diomede having all his faculties on the stretch of undaunted resolution, yet from the surprise of the moment, not absolutely bent up: while Hector drawn by his steeds in good order, and holding out his javelin with a cooler preparation, is coming on with a kind of regal confidence, sure of his glory, and already proud of his triumph.

L. H. ☞

PYLADES AND ORESTES.

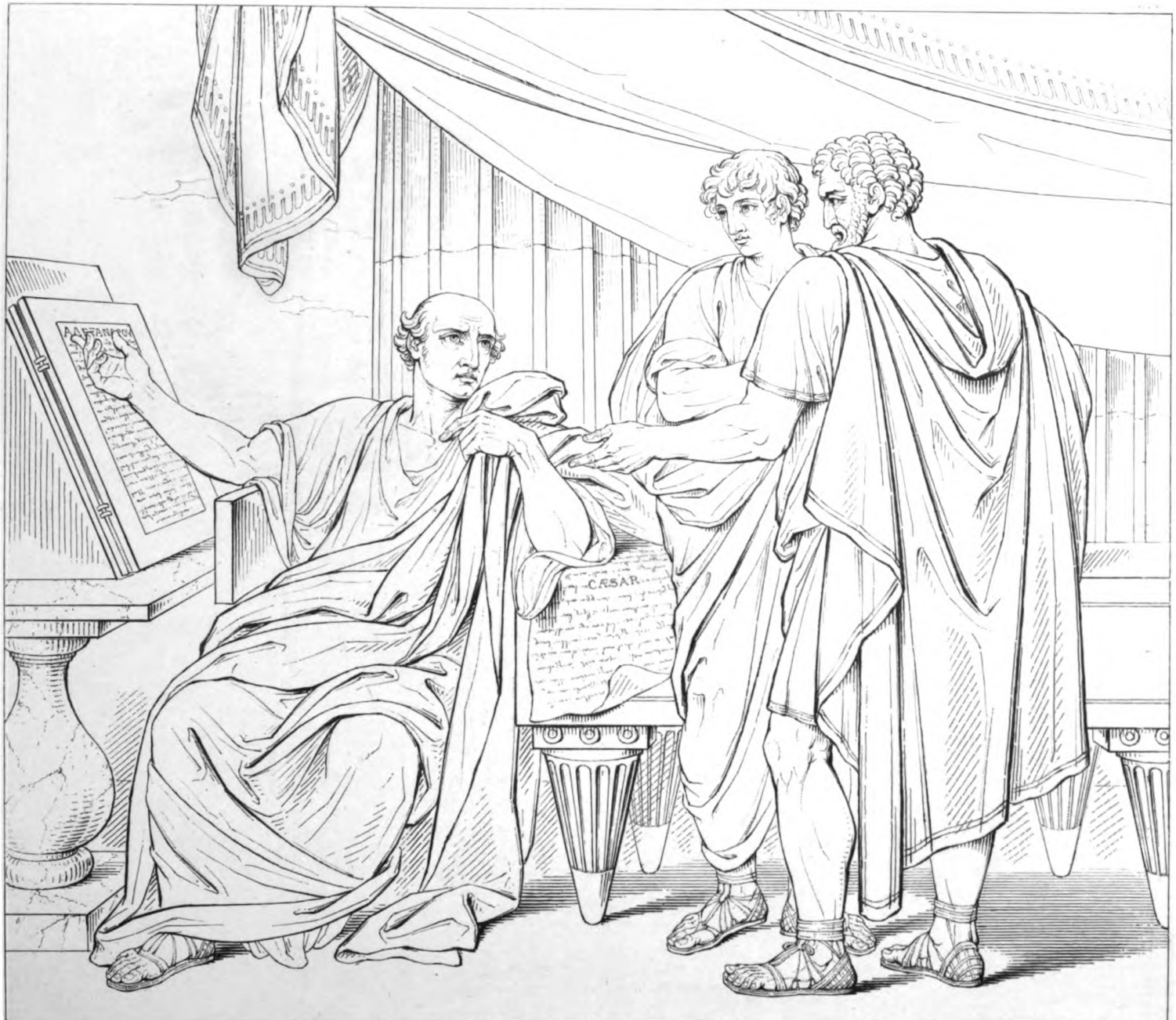
To time well spent and talent well directed, this and the other numerous works of Mr. WEST bear ample and exemplary testimony. Extraordinary excellence in the Arts is mostly, if not always, the result of a wise and virtuous appropriation of the precious season of youth. By such honourable means was the Painter made competent to produce the beautiful original of this engraved outline at an early age, it being the first historical painting executed by Mr. WEST after his arrival in England from his youthful studies in Italy, many years before Republican France carried of the choicest remains of antique sculpture and the best works of the old masters. Exclusively of the original's uncommonly clear and powerful chiaro scuro and colour, this outline is sufficient, in the costume, and in the forms, actions, and composition of the figures, to show how richly his young mind was imbued with a classical knowledge of those renowned works.

The subject is as follows:—

Orestes slew Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, in the temple of Apollo, in revenge for his marrying Hermoine, who had been affianced to Orestes by her grandfather. For this sacrilege, Apollo ordered furies to haunt him, and compelled him to proceed to expiate the crime at the altar of Diana. His friend Pylades accompanying him to the altar, there presented himself to Thoas, King of Taurica, to be sacrificed, alledging that he was Orestes. At the awful instant when Orestes was to be sacrificed, Iphigenia, priestess of Diana, discovered him to be her brother, on which Thoas himself was sacrificed for his cruelties.

R. H.

Painted by B. West P.R.A. *Engraved by H.Moses.*


CÆSAR

THE REGRET OF CÆSAR, WHEN READING THE HISTORY OF ALEXANDERS' EXPLOITS, AT NOT HAVING SIGNALIZED HIMSELF.

THOUGH this subject is necessarily devoid of the lively interest produced by those actions of the human figure and those emotions of the mind which call forth the peculiar graces and energies of each, it solicits regard as a pictorial record of the rising ambition of one of the most celebrated characters of antiquity. It exhibits the dawning of that eager desire of celebrity, which, obtaining its object at a profuse expense of human blood and happiness, is execrable to every justly reflecting mind, and forms an odious contrast to the laudable ambition which delights in conferring benefits on the human race, and consequently in obtaining the only truly valuable applause---the praise of the wise and good. That Julius Cæsar's love of distinction should have taken a direction so destructive of the rights and happiness of mankind is natural, when it is considered that in his youth he was "abandoned to every species of voluptuousness and libertinism, and on these accounts became the proverb of the day, and that Alexander had already by his achievements earned immortality at an age at which Cæsar was still wallowing in the grossest sensuality." Such a sensual abandonment naturally tends to destroy those truly liberal and humane feelings which counteract ambitious propensity in the consideration of the evils it brings on humanity; and therefore, as Cæsar was grossly sensual in his youth, so he was cruel and viciously ambitious at a maturer age. His intemperate devotion to the myrtle and the vine was exchanged for an equally ardent but more injurious attachment to the laurel. This emblem of Victory he wore on a prematurely bald head, probably made so, as it often is in many, by licentious excesses. "Vice and passion," says Plutarch, in speaking of the deaths of Alexander and Cæsar, "may be more or less tardy in their operations, but they never forego their claims on their votaries." Intemperance dispatched the one, and ambition the other; that ambition which, after making Cicero, Cato, and all the other good men of Rome his enemies; after having been associated with such an extreme of treachery and cruelty as to prompt him "to put to death many eminent officers whom he had taken at the battle of Thapsus; and violating a recent peace with the Germans, massacred in one bloody day, three hundred thousand men;" and, in fine, after having sacrificed above a million of his fellow creatures, consigned him over to the daggers of his countrymen, and, notwithstanding his great talents, to an infamous immortality.

R.

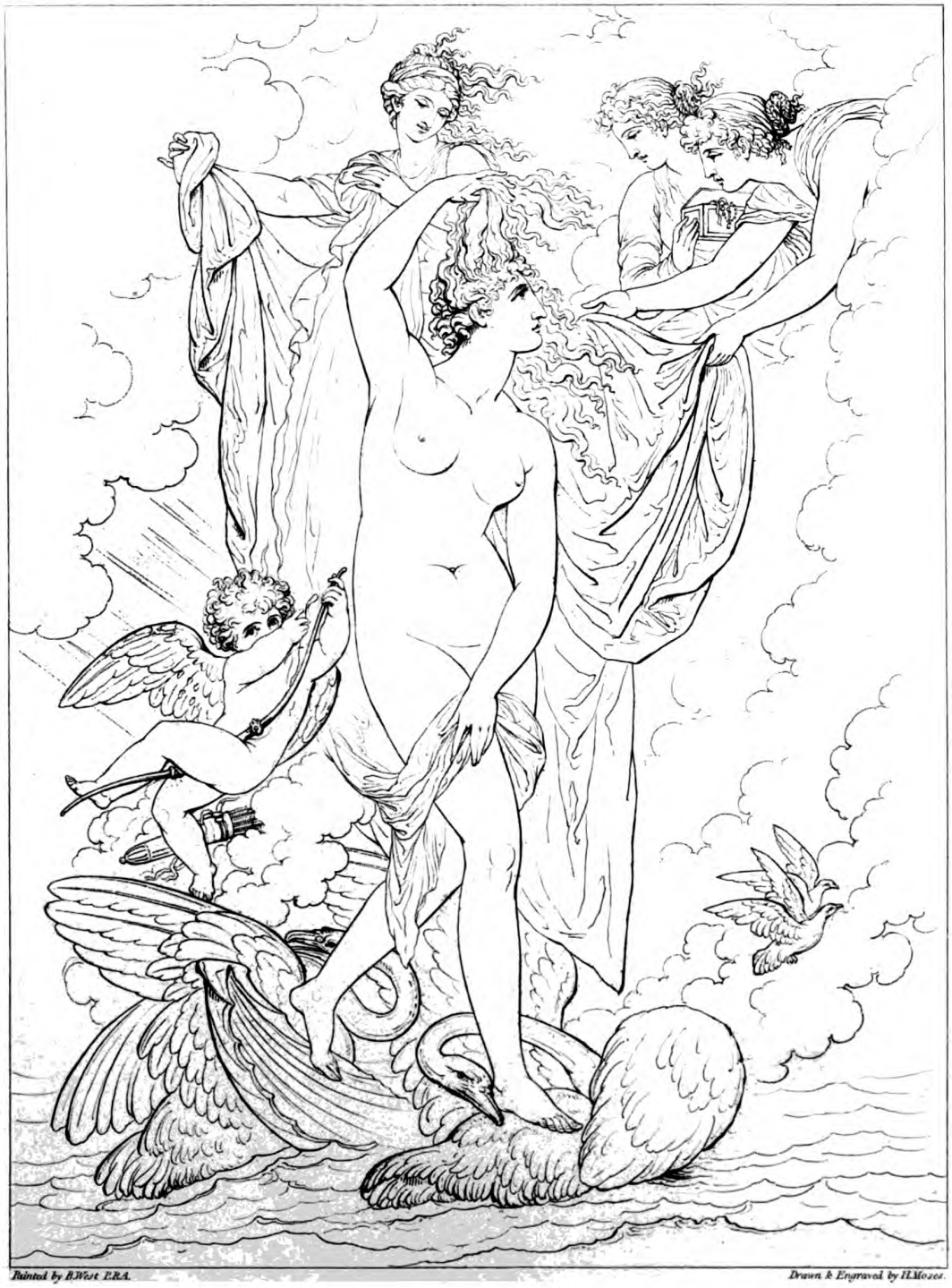
VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA.

In relation alone to form, this is one of the most difficult subjects in the whole range of pictorical execution; for it not only exhibits the entire female figure, but displays the very essence and concentration of female loveliness, the presiding deity of Beauty itself. Every thing, therefore, short of perfection in so comprehensive a subject, disappoints the high expectation of the spectator, and daring is the hand that ventures on so arduous and perilous an undertaking. It must be the accomplished hand of a great master only, that here succeeds in gratifying a cultivated and tasteful imagination.

In other subjects, various causes conduce to conceal or palliate defect in form, especially where there is much drapery, and vehemence in action or passion. Here the action must be gentle, for it must be eminently graceful; and grace cannot eminently consist with violent action, with sudden and angular turns of the limbs. Ever varying, but gentle undulations of form, with nicest proportion in the whole and separate parts, are the elements of this grace. It is equally distant from monotony and strong contrast. "So stands the statue that enchants the world,"—the Medicean Venus, and such is the Venus, here depicted, "in flower of youth and beauty's pride." It may be conceived, perhaps, that a little too much of the latter predominates in the countenance; but the hour is that of triumph; and the Goddess is in her greatest and most royal character, the representative of creative and all-powerful impulse.

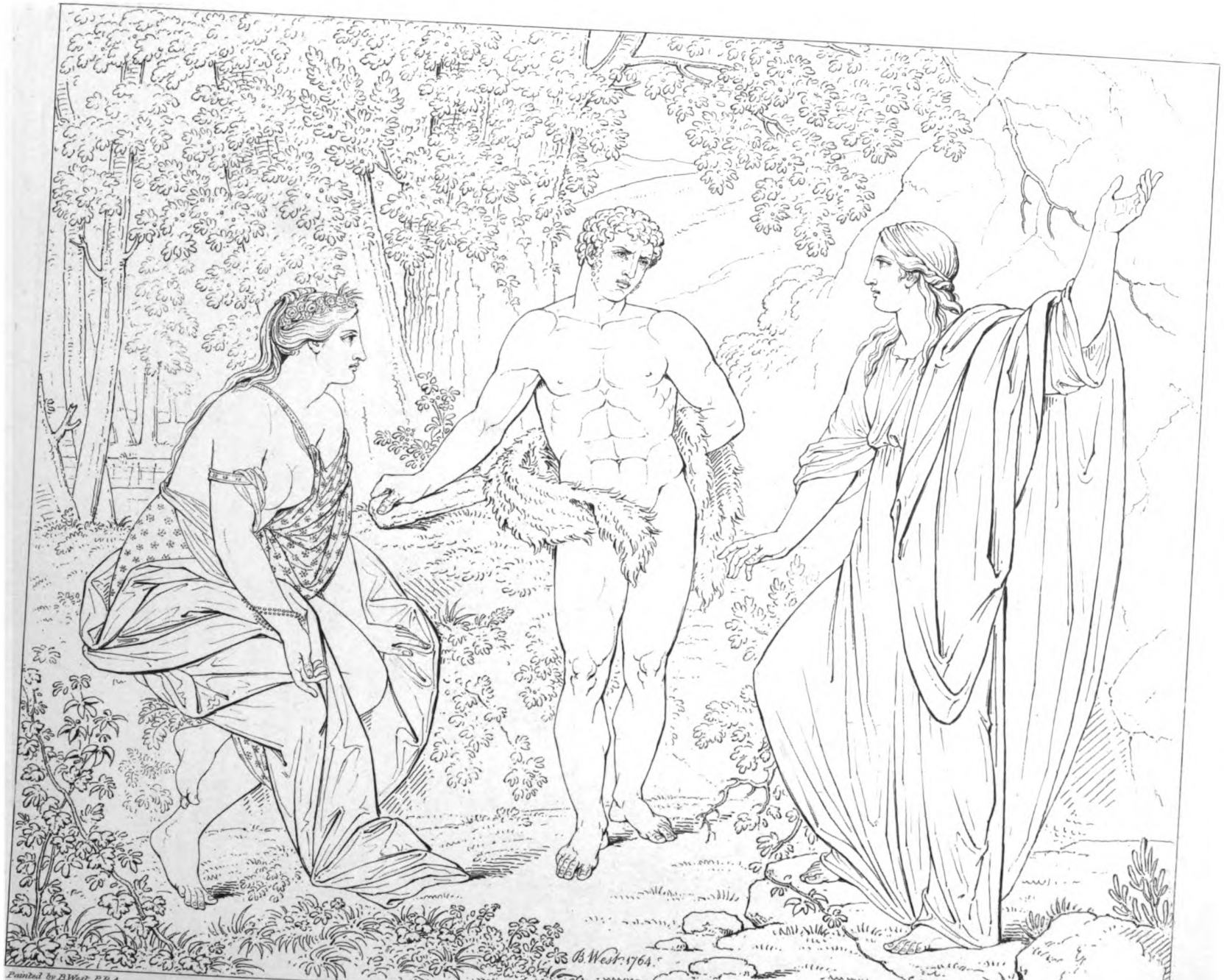
Just risen from the womb of the Sea, the Queen of Love and Beauty is attended by a pomp appropriate to her character. The Graces surround, and are actively engaged in decorating her. Her page, the little archer of the heart, is stringing and preparing a bow; doves, the emblems of innocent, ardent, and faithful love, precede her way; and a shell, her car, is drawn by swans whose stately forms shadow out the dignity inseparable from virtuous love.

R. H



VENUS RISING FROM THE SEA.

London. Joseph Thomas. 1. Finch Lane.


B. West. 1764.
Painted by B.West. P.R.A.

THE JUDGMENT OF HERCULES.

"When Hercules was in that part of his youth, in which it was natural for him to consider what course of life he ought to pursue, he one day retired into a desert, where the silence and solitude of the place very much favoured his meditations. As he was musing on his present condition, and very much perplexed in himself on the state of life he should choose, he saw two women of a larger statue than ordinary approaching towards him. One of them had a very noble air, and graceful deportment: her beauty was natural and easy, her person clean and unspotted, her eyes cast towards the ground with an agreeable reserve, her motion and beaviour full of modesty, and her raiment as white as snow. The other had a great deal of health and floridness in her countenance, which she had helped with an artificial white and red; and endeavoured to appear more graceful than ordinary in her mien, by a mixture of affectation in all her gestures. She had a wonderful confidence and assurance in her looks, and all the variety of colours, in her dress, that she thought were the most proper to show her complexion to advantage. She cast her eyes upon herself, then turned them on those that were present, to see how they liked her, and often looked on the figure she made in her shadow. Upon her nearer approach to Hercules, she stepped before the other lady, who came forward with a regular composed carriage, and running up to him, accosted him after the following manner:

"My dear Hercules, says she, I find your are very much divided in your own thoughts upon the way of life that you ought to choose: be my friend, and follow me; I will lead you into the possession of Pleasure, and out of the reach of Pain, and remove you from all the noise and disquietude of Business. The affairs of either war or peace shall have no power to disturb you. Your whole employment shall be to make your life easy. and to entertain every sense with its proper gratifications. Sumptuous tables, beds of roses, clouds of perfumes, concerts of music, crowds of beauties, are all in readiness to receive you. Come along with me into this region of delights, this world of Pleasure, and bid farewell for ever to Care, to Pain to Business."

"Hercules, hearing the lady talk after this manner, desired to know her name; to which she answered, My friends, and those who are well acquainted with me, call me Happiness; but my enemies, and those who would injure my reputation, have given me the name of Pleasure."

"By this time the other lady was come up, who addressed herself to the young hero in a very different manner."

"Hercules, says she, I offer myself to you because I know you are descended from the Gods, and give proofs of that descent by your love of virtue, and application to the studies proper for your age. This makes me hope you will gain both for yourself and me, an immortal reputation. But, before I invite you into my society and friendship, I will be open and sincere with you, and must lay down this as an established truth, that there is nothing truly valuable which can be purchased without pains and labour. The Gods have set a price upon every real and noble pleasure. If you would gain the favour of the Deity, you must be at the pains of worshipping him; if the friendship of good men, you must study to oblige them; if you would be honoured by your country, you must take care to serve it. In short, if you would be eminent in war or peace, you must become master of all the qualifications that can make you so. These are the only terms and conditions upon which I can propose happiness. The Goddess of Pleasure here broke in upon her discourse: You see, said she, Hercules by her own con-

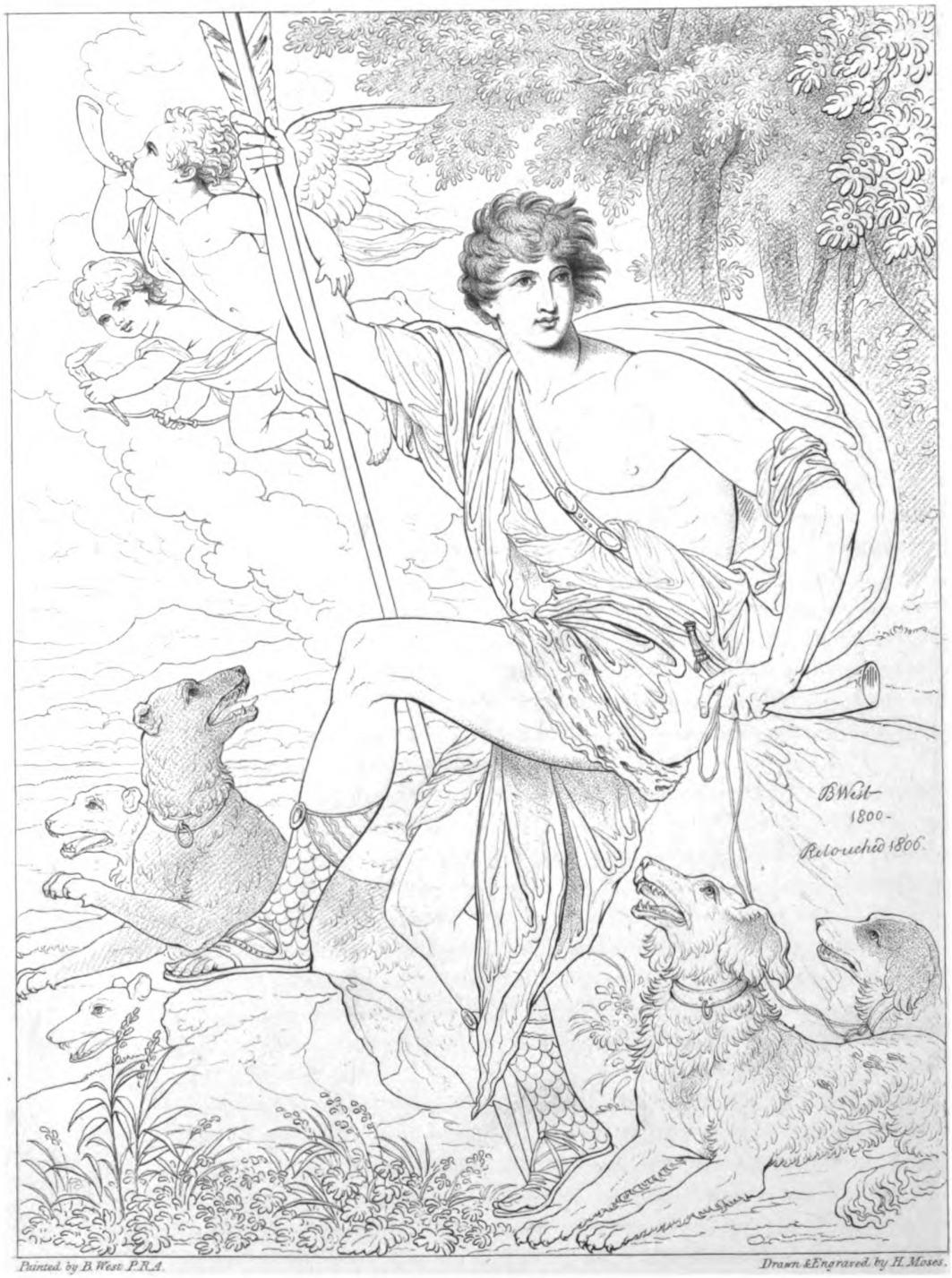
fession, the way to her pleasures is long and difficult, whereas that which I propose is short and easy. Alas! said the other lady, whose visage glowed with passion, made up of scorn and pity, what are the pleasures you propose? To eat before you are hungry, drink before you are athirst, sleep before you are tired, to gratify appetites before they are raised, and raise such appetites as nature never planted. You never heard the most delicious music which is the praise of one's self; nor saw the most beautiful object, which is the work of one's own hands. Your votaries pass away their youth in a dream of mistaken pleasures, while they are hoarding up anguish, torment, and remorse, for old age."

"As for me, I am the friend of the Gods and of good men, an agreeable companion to the artisan, an household guardian to the fathers of families, a patron and protector of servants, an associate in all true and generous friendships. The banquets of my votaries are never costly, but always delicious; for none eat or drink at them who are not invited by hunger and thirst. Their slumbers are sound, and their wakings cheerful. My young men have the pleasure of hearing themselves praised by those who are in years; and those who are in years of being honoured by those who are young. In a word, my followers are favoured by the Gods, beloved by their acquaintance, esteemed by their country, and, after the close of their labours, honoured by posterity."

"We know by the life of this memorable hero, to which of these two ladies he gave up his heart; and, I believe, every one who reads this, will do him the justice to approve his choice."—*Tatler.*

THE story of the Judgment of Hercules, so familiar to general readers, came originally from Xenophon, and was told afterwards by Proclus the Platonic philosopher. It has been painted, as well as versified, by a number of hands; but seems, upon the whole, to have shared the fate of most allegorical and didactic stories, and to have been feebly and monotonously treated, for a subject apparently so provocative of strength and variety in the noble person and air of the heroic disdainer of vicious gratification, the blandishments of Pleasure, and the gracefully elevated character of her personified rival---Virtue. There is a weak picture of it by Pietro da Cortona, which has been engraved by Sir Robert Strange, and which the President seems to have had in his eye, not much to the benefit, perhaps, of his superior genius.

☞ L.H.



Painted by B. West P.R.A. *Drawn & Engraved by H. Moses.*

ADONIS GOING TO THE CHASE.

London: Joseph Thomas, 1 Finch Lane.

ADONIS GOING TO THE CHASE.

" Even as the sun, with purple colour'd face,
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase:
Hunting he lov'd, but love he laugh'd to scorn."—*Shakspeare.*

It was of no ordinary advantage to Mr. West, as an artist, that his early years had been passed among the glades and forests of America: a circumstance to which we are, perhaps, indebted for many of the most spirited and poetical of his delineations of classic character. The red men of the wilderness were, in fact, his earliest patrons; and in his intercourse with them, he was furnished with opportunities, such as few other artists have possessed, of observing the habits and passions of men, in a state of society very nearly resembling that of the mythological ages of Greece and Rome. The lives of the aborigines of both Hemispheres were chiefly occupied in war and sylvan sports; pursuits eminently calculated to impart to their followers vigour and elasticity of limb, and gracefulness of motion, together with that noble simplicity of demeanour, and singleness of heart, which constitute the greatest charms of poetic heroism.

That his youtful acquaintance with the Indians had a powerful effect, both on the memory and imagination of the Painter, is certain. In the admirable biography of him, by Mr. Galt, we are informed, that on being taken to see the Apollo at Rome, when the case containing the statue was unclosed, West involuntarily exclaimed, " My God—a young Mohawk warrior!" adding, in explanation, that he had seen such often, " standing in the very attitude of the Apollo, and pursuing with an intense eye the arrow they had just discharged from the bow."

It would be almost superfluous to add, that we are induced to class the Adonis with those of his works which, we think, belong in a great measure to the reminiscences of the artist. It has all the freedom and earnestness of actual life, with an unstudied elegance, which it would be in vain to look for, in company with such an occupation and costume, except among those to whom both were native. At the same time, however, the picture is not deficient in those higher qualities of imagination which constitute originality.

The countenance of Adonis is of the most exquisite manly beauty: its expression being of that pensive and somewhat languid cast, which it may naturally be supposed to have imbibed, in a great degree, from the foreboding exhortations of Venus, on his quitting her for the chase. The symmetry of the figure is perfect, and the attitude as appropriate as could be conceived; displaying at once the whole of the form, yet perfectly unconstrained, and displacing nothing in the view which ought to have been exhibited.

Nor are the auxiliaries of the painting less worthy of notice and admiration. One Cupid, with his bow and torch, leads the way; another, with a hunting horn, gently urges him forward. We are

not aware of anything more beautifully imagined, or delicately executed, than these elegant figures. The dogs have also great merit, and seem to partake strongly of both the enthusiasm and intelligence of their master:—the entreating looks and impatience with which they watch for his signal, and their gasping throats and fine forms, give an animation to the scene which almost makes it real.

Adonis himself is in the act of looking back, with a mixed feeling, between pity for the hopeless passion of his deified adorer, and of presentiment respecting his own fate.

It is from such delineations, in which the skill of the artist is employed to give material embodiment to the conceptions of the poet, that we derive our best and most exalted notions of the ancients; and perhaps, also, much of our pleasure in studying the history of the periods in which such representations had "a local habitation and a name."

G. M. B.

BELISARIUS.

"Tiberius at length broke silence: 'Thou venerable man,' said he, 'how unjust and cruel has fortune been to thee!—to thee, whom the whole empire, for thirty years together, felt the author of its glory and its flourishing condition; till at length wicked malice framed a charge of treason and revolt!—Thou art that hero, whom the persecuting rage of envious men loaded with irons, and barbarously deprived of the organs of sight!—And yet, thus basely treated, you can still persevere to inculcate the principles of public spirit and disinterested love of country!'"

Mr. West, availing himself of the fabulous account of the blindness and mendicity of Belisarius, the illustrious Roman General of the sixth century, has depicted an incident which powerfully interests our feelings, in the forcible expression of persecuted and fallen greatness, and in the contrast presented by youthful and aged periods of life.

"That he was deprived of his eyes," says Gibbon, "and reduced by envy to beg his bread, is a fiction of later times, which has obtained credit, or rather favour, as a strange example of the vicissitudes of fortune." Under a false accusation of having plotted against the life of his sovereign, he was disgraced by the Emperor Justinian; but, after the lapse of seven months, his innocence was acknowledged, and his freedom and his honours were restored.

The hand of Genius here strikes with pathetic force on the chords of the heart; the arm of persecution, more than the depressing hand of time, bends and debilitates a form finely proportioned and athletic; and the arm of the intrepid warrior, once dreadfully vigorous and invincible, but now subdued by age and calamity, languidly reposes on the shoulder of a youth. The drooping warrior sits the solitary spectacle of injured worth; his health, fortune, and fame, blasted by envious power; his venerable aspect, asking nothing, but speaking everything, pleads to the heart with the mute dignity of unmerited sorrow, and is seconded by the graceful and simple eloquence of his youthful guide; his disorbed visage is not more expressive of blindness, than the averted and conscious bend of his head, and straight direction of his feet, an attitude most naturally induced by the timidity of one who creeps in darkness. The drapery is cast with Mr. West's unrivalled taste and command of line, expressive of the object it conceals: it is ample without heaviness; full without concealment of form; easy without carelessness; and graceful without the appearance of study.

R. H.

Painted by B. West P.R.A. *Drawn by H. Corbould.* *Engraved by H. Moses.*

BELISARIUS.

London. Joseph Thomas, 1, Finch Lane