

with a microscope. And is it for this, and to this, that nature and art exist?—that Homer and Shakspeare and Phidias and Raphael and all the great and glorious have worked and appealed. When an artist aims to render visible circumstances around which cluster vague and awful and majestic associations—which is true of all the striking events of Scripture history—he should well consider the shadowy critics for whom he paints; he should be anxious and fearful lest he destroy the grandeur of the impression by stripping away its illuminated clouds. Nothing less than Macbeth would have sufficed for the wild Scottish legend; nothing less than Romeo and Juliet for the airy Italian story. Therein the Masters showed themselves Masters that they seized these weird and winning traditions, for which the mind instinctively demands twilight and an infinite horizon, and so magnificently moulded them into new and imperial forms, that the stories themselves withered away and were forgotten. This is the scope of the task, and this the test of every work which seeks to treat subjects of a certain character and magnitude. Is the fierce vision of the Hebrew Prophet made more palpable—is the wrath of Jehovah impressed more deeply—is the lesson of the event more sternly urged by this picture than it has been before? If not, it fills no place. However skillful, it is then only a story told by talent, not a poem glowing with inspiration.

There is one other point in which this picture seems to us to fail, in view of the highest requirements of Art. The choice of subject in a picture should always be such that the sympathy of the spectator must coincide with the intent of the work. If it is impossible, in the nature of the case, to secure that sympathy, then the subject should be passed by the artist, as not the subject for his talent. This must be obviously so, or there is a mental conflict in the spectator which is destructive to the unity of effect in the work. To illustrate this, we will again refer to Kaubach's Destruction of Jerusalem. In that picture sympathy is necessarily excited for the Jews who have been overtaken by a tragical fate, which will scatter them forever—for the despair and misery of the inoffensive victims and for the shattered pride of the leaders. Moreover, that sympathy is deepened by the reflection that it was not justice for the Roman invasion—that it was the fight of men upon their own ground for their own institutions and homes—indeed the whole weight of sympathy would seem to have been cast in favor of the victims. Now had this been the whole, were there nothing to balance the instinctive sympathy for the sufferers, the picture would be a failure, because its aim is to represent the Destruction of Jerusalem as an event developing the progress of human destiny, and if the spectator was mainly grieved for the fall of the old order, his feeling would not be enlisted for the new. But so masterly is the management of this picture that it avoids that effect, and thereby magnifies its triumph. The holy peace that leads away the Christian family on the right, lends Hops also, into a happy future, and leaves the mind content. So, too, above the Christian group—as if the spirit underlay the substance and material means—"Tus and his lieters enter upon the scene, stern and terrible Fates, purifying storms—whom modern Civilization and "the long result of Time," follow. Thus the unity of the work is maintained, and its triumph made more triumphant.

This unity is wanting in the picture under consideration. The sympathy of the spectator is on the wrong side. It is not with the Prophet who commands all the brute force upon the earth and the sharp lightning in the air to accomplish a vengeance, but it is with the miserable host cornered in the mountain defile by supernatural foes. The feeling is this: if a power at war with another power, and having at its command all the forces and forces of nature, consents to use those forces against that other power, then human instinct directly sides with the weaker party. This it does constantly in the old Jewish history. The Jehovah, as he appears in the records, and as he always appears to the mind of a free people, is an omnipotent autocrat, a human ruler with all his pride and passions magnified into a divine King. Consequently, and owing to this mistaken idea, the rebels against this authority, being men, men, fighting with swords and staves, instantly appeal to our compassion when this ruler waxes wrath and opens the terrible arsenals of nature to gratify his vengeance. The whole matter is reduced to the lion and the mouse. The greater has no right to be annoyed by the lesser, and if he is, not to meet him in fair fight, but with every odds against him, is to lose all dignity and sympathy. This is the fatal defect of these misconceptions. They outrage the human heart. The mind recoils from acknowledging fellow-humanity with that figure upon the rock imprecating this terrific curse of nature upon the miserable Gog and his host. A man who would use such power as an instrument of achieving wretched vengeance is a monster. In paroxysms of insane rage men do sometimes invoke an awful fate upon the object of their hate, but if they knew that such a fate could by any possibility overtake that foe, would not the words fall upon the lips and those lips waken? If this is true of an ordinary man in moments when he is less than man, what shall be said of a Prophet of God, in the full solemnity of self-possession, not only invoking that fate, but superintending its accomplishment?

The reader must remember that the historical facts have nothing to do with the point. A work of Art is something more than a presentation of facts. It is the treatment of facts with their significance made manifest. The Artist must not conclude because his subject is mentioned in the Bible, that it therefore implies true artistic material; he should consider what is there, in this circumstance, of universal significance—what is there which, properly treated, will be sure to command universal sympathy. If he does not do this he may paint a picture which may be technically true, but which will not be a great work. If, for example, an Indian's idea of the Great Spirit is true, and the Great Spirit requires victims to be sacrificed, a picture representing the sacrifice with wonderful fidelity, could not be a great picture, unless there was something implied in the work itself sweeter and truer than anything in the subject. The more presentment of a victim suffering the tortures inflicted by superstition, would be disgusting in the degree that it was perfect. What have we really more than this in the present picture? Wild beasts and lightning are destroying an armed host. It is the most awful of battle-fields. Is it the wrath of God? But his Son said, "Little children, love each other." It is not the divine Father of Christianity, but it is the implacable idol of crude and cruel superstition whose work is here represented. If you say that this is true, but that the very aim of the picture is to represent the action of the Jewish God—we reply that our quarrel is not with the Jewish conception of the Deity, which was natural to the time, but with the moral influence of the tale may be true, or that it is told in the Bible.—If the picture has any aim it is to inspire greater reverence for God by revealing the terrors of his vengeance. But what child would derive from

contemplating it a purer or sweeter faith, a more trustful reliance? Would it inspire him with love or fear? The picture preaches the law of an eye for an eye, and that is its failure. There is a newer, nobler law. The age, the conviction of men, history, and hope, all preach the gospel of peace.

This, then, is the sum of our criticism: first, that the representation of the effects of Jehovah's wrath is not a lofty subject for an artist of this time, because, in works like the one before us, Art deals only with the highest possible thought of the subject, and the conception of an avenging Deity is not the highest thought,—and, second, that as a picture of that old idea of vengeance it is inadequate. While this is our feeling it is, of course, unnecessary to consider what excellent details there are in the picture, of which none are more conscious than ourselves.

**American Artists in England.**  
We had lately occasion to notice the purchase of a picture of Mr. J. T. Peele's by Prince Albert. We have now to chronicle another triumph in a picture recently painted by Mr. J. W. Glass, and at present upon exhibition at the National Institution in London. When it is remembered with what difficulty English critics praise anything American, the following notices must be regarded as evidence of remarkable success, and the more that *The Illustrated London News* contains an engraving of the picture—a distinction awarded only to the most prominent and popular works of the year.

**The Chronicle says:**  
"We now come to Mr. Glass's 'Free Companions,' which is the best work in the exhibition. The subject is a new one, and its treatment is novel. A long line of gallant rovers, well armed and capably mounted, advances over a moor, in all the readiness of military order, to meet a long train of men, who are equally equipped to entertain any particular case as to whom they may engage, but who understand the value of 'links of mail and chains of steel' too well to neglect any ordinary precautions. The bold process is vigorously designed, and the color, without being generally bright, is here and there relieved by touches of brilliancy which accord well with the spirit and martial treatment of the subject. The most striking are the colors of the warriors' caps and of the horse's armor of the daring riders. Every face among them has its characteristic, and the whole scene is one of life and adventure told out in the simplest and readiest way. A few pictures like this and Mr. Glass's reputation will be assuredly enhanced."

**The Daily News says:**  
"A widely differing conception than either of the preceding is Mr. Glass's 'Free Companions,' yet equal to both in poetry and artistic beauty. A file of mercenary cavalry are marching over a heath near the sea, at sunrise. The effect of the early light, and the bright colors of the warriors' caps and of the horse's armor, is exquisite. 'As long for fame, we fight for life,' is the sentiment of all, through every grade of intelligence and animation in the band. The sea birds which follow the train in a long train, are not only a decorative element, but a moral responsibility that they, nor more full of that animal enjoyment which is the result of healthy strength."

**The English Exhibitions of Paintings.**  
We find in the London *Times* a long notice of the private view of the exhibition of the Royal Academy. Sir Charles Eastlake, the President, and Sir Edwin Landseer, contribute nothing this year. Stanfield has a highly-praised landscape, "The Bay of Bala," and Crewick shows three landscapes, in different styles, but all called admirable. Malreux exhibits a Pastoral picture, Roberts one of his finest architectural works, the interior of St. Stephens, at Vienna, and the improvement of Linnell is noticed. Messrs. Ley and Cooper exhibit some faint landscapes and cattle of the old style. Mr. Ward has a "Charlotte Curday on a very rising artist. But he proceeds to say that the artist has not followed the perfectly well known portrait of his subject, and has made her a victim rather than an avenging angel—which we should fancy rather a serious fault. Of Mr. Maclean we quote:

"Mr. Maclean's great picture of 'Alfred disguised as a Harpist in the Camp of Guthrum the Dane' is painted with the finish of a miniature and the brilliancy of a miniature, but we can see the more of it than that it is a masterpiece of the Pre-Raphaelite school, which else accomplishes what the Pre-Raphaelite school only attempt. Nothing can be finer than the drawing, or more careful than the details of this vast composition. The artist has not only shown the grandeur of the scene, but has also shown the grandeur of the subject, and has made her a victim rather than an avenging angel—which we should fancy rather a serious fault. Of Mr. Maclean we quote:

"The sculpture is pure, only a 'pure and unspiced' David," by Westmacott, attracts attention. The National Institution of Fine Arts exhibits a gathering from the notices, low pictures of great character or value, except one by the American artist, Glass. The two Water-Color Societies have a better display than usual. To the old Society's rooms, Lewis contributes one of his scenes of Glaston, 'The Castle, which is called as good as his 'Harem' of two years since. His brilliant color and faithful detail are noted for an army, among which Sir Watson Gordon is noticed for several fine lengths, and Mr. Boxall for a portrait of Mr. Coleridge—what Mr. Coleridge is not mentioned. There is a sentimental head of Diaboli, by Grant, and Taurin contributes beautiful miniatures.

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**JOHANNES WAGNER.**—We find the following sketch of the life of this famous singer:  
Middle Johannes Wagner is the niece of the chapel-master of Dresden, Richard Wagner, whom Liszt has recently made known to the world as being, in his opinion, the greatest composer of the present day. In this respect his parents have a strong resemblance to the theater at Wurzburg, in Bavaria, Johannes's place of residence was in that town. While here she was at times one of the representatives of the good spirit in the family, and in each of her appearances she advanced in age, she is said to have displayed extraordinary powers of no common order, and the result was that at fifteen years of age she was selected to sustain the character of *Alceste*, in "Le Verre d'Or," which was produced at the Waldtheater, in Wurzburg, in 1825. She was then sixteen years of age, and her performance was so successful, that she was engaged to sing at the Waldtheater at Wurzburg, in Bavaria, Johannes's place of residence was in that town. 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