John Hawes, â??On Seeing an Infant Boy Seven Years of Age learning to writeâ?•

Description

JOHN HAWES

â??On Seeing an Infant Boy of Seven Years of Age learning to writeâ?•

HIS Infant Fingers, scarce could grasp the Quill
And yet with Ardour, he pursuâ??d his Skill;
Attention fixâ??d his Mind, and fillâ??d his Brain,
His Copy in Perfection to explain;
His Eye pursuâ??d each Stroke so superfine,
And strove to improve, each Character and Line;
So far before the common Time of Youth.
Did Art appear in Innocence, and Truth;
He forcâ??d these Lines, to vindicate his Praise,
And in my Mind did these Ideas raise.

But when I found *Apollo* firâ??d his Soul,
To Musickâ??s Charms, and saw his Fingers roll,
I found his Frame with Heavenly Gifts endowâ??d,
â??Bove vulgar Mortals, blest by mighty *Jove*.
He joins the sounding Lyre with Infant Voice,
â??By Inclination led, and fixâ??d by Choice;â?•
Points full Perfection, in his Time to come,
If Manhood crowns Him, in Timeâ??s fickle Womb.

Thus when *Pygmalion* strove to carve his Maid,
Each stroke with curious View, his Mind surveyâ??d;
He still pursuâ??d the chissel, and improvâ??d
Each Touch Divine, to gain the Art he lovâ??d.
In Innocence, by his own Skill betrayâ??d,
The Goddess *Venus*, bless him in his Maid;
Gave Life to Ivory, for his matchless Strife,
Made his own Genius to become his Wife.

NOTES:

1 *Quill* A pen made from the hollow shaft of a birdâ??s feather (*OED).*

2 *Ardour* Burning with ferocity and intensity (*OED).*

6 *Character* The letters of the alphabet (*OED).*

9 *vindicate* â??To clear from censure, criticism, suspicion, or doubt, by means of demonstration; to justify or uphold by evidence or argumentâ?• (*OED).*

11 *Apollo* A Greek God of music and poetry, among many things, and known for his youthfulness (*OED).*

11 *firâ??d* An archaic contraction of the word â??firedâ?•; to ignite (*OED).*

14 *Jove* Refers to Jupiter, the Roman equivalent of Zeus (*OED).*

15 *sounding Lyre* The instrument of Apollo, Greek God of Music (*OED).*

16 *â??By Inclination led, and fixâ??d by Choiceâ?•* Quoted From William Congreveâ??s â??Epistle to the Right Honourable Charles Lord Halifaxâ?• (Line 4).

19 *Pygmalion* A sculptor from Cyprus who fell in love with the sculpture that he carved (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book X, ll. 243-297).

24 *Venus* The Roman goddess of love, beauty, and desire grants Pygmalion his wish for his sculpture to come to life (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book X, ll. 243-297).

SOURCE: *Poems, Moral and Divine* (Norwich, 1754), pp. 21-22. [Google Books]

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