



Benj^m West

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BENJAMIN WEST'S FAMILY.

The American President of the Royal Academy of Arts
Not a Quaker.

BY CHARLES HENRY HART.

With letters of West in the Collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Transcribed by Miss J. C. Wylie, Assistant Librarian in charge of Manuscripts.

So very little is known of the family of Benjamin West, the Pennsylvanian President of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, that every little counts, and mayhap by exploiting that little it will act as the magnet and draw more ample data to itself. John Galt, who was the official biographer of West, was a romance writer and not a historian; consequently he coined many pretty fictions that have taken root and spread by being served up by all subsequent writers, so that now it is almost impossible to lop them off and eradicate them, although mere romances. What seems strange, too, is they appear to have received the sanction of West himself, who, however, was noted for his vanity, which they helped to flatter. Ashmead, in his *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (p. 726), says: "His biographer, Galt,

has succeeded in gathering about the narrative of West's life more mythical incidents than any book purporting to be historical published during the nineteenth century."¹

In the instance of the West family the usual traditional three brothers did come to America. William, Thomas and John West, sons of Thomas and Rachel² (Gilpin) West, emigrated from England to Pennsylvania, soon after its settlement, and located in Chester County. They were birthright members of the Society of Friends, but John, the father of Benjamin, the brother in whom we are interested, came to this country *without a certificate of transfer*, which shows that he was not in good standing with Friends when he left England.

William West married Deborah Coppock and died, in 1720, without issue.

Thomas West married Mary Dean and had eight children, with whom he removed, in 1736, to what is now Wilmington, in the State of Delaware, where he died, in 1743, leaving many descendants.

John West, born in 1690, arrived in Pennsylvania *circa* 1715, leaving a wife in England, who soon after gave birth to a son,—named for his grandfather, Thomas,—and died in childbed. As we have noted, John West was not a Quaker when he settled in Pennsylvania,³ as he is represented to have been by Galt and his followers, and he did not become a member of that sect until late in life. He married, in Chester County, Sarah, daughter of Thomas Pearson who came from England with William Penn. She, too, was a birthright member of the Society of Friends, but for some indiscretions, prejudicial to the well-being of Friends, was “disowned,” or read out of meeting, so

¹ Buell's *Paul Jones* will doubtless hold in the present century the unique position that Galt's *West* held in the last century.

² In all printed accounts her name is given as “Ann”; but Mr. Albert Cook Myers, who has made special investigations into the Gilpin family, says this is an error; that her name was *Rachel*.

³ Smith's *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania*, p. 512.

that "this marriage was not accomplished according to the good order of the Society of Friends"¹ and the children of John and Sarah West, credited to number ten, were therefore *not Quakers*. This is the reason we do not know their names; otherwise they would be upon the records of meeting.

It is both important and interesting to know that *Benjamin West the painter was not a Quaker*, either by birth or by adoption, after all these years and with the many stories that have been told of his struggles with Friends, in and out of meeting, to follow his bent for art. This fact alone shows the multitudinous errors of Galt, as he hangs so much upon West's being a Quaker.

Sarah West, the mother, died in 1756, aged fifty-nine, and it was not until three years later that John West, the father, who had kept, for many years, a public house of entertainment, in Chester County, joined meeting.

We are ignorant of the names of West's brothers and sisters, but he is credited with being the youngest child. We know that he had a brother William, for there are several interesting letters from the former to the latter in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, printed supplemental hereto. In one of July 2, 1780, Benjamin writes: "Our brother at Reading [Thomas] and his family are well. . . . I mention the death of our Father to have been on the fifth of October 1776." In another, February 14, 1789, he says: "It is with great pleasure I can assure you that our nephew Mr. J. L. Clarkson has every appearance of a deserving sensible young man; and it has afforded me great satisfaction in having had the happiness of seeing him." Unfortunately, a better acquaintance with this young scion changed his uncle's opinion, as on February 13, 1793, he writes to his brother: "John L Clarkson is in London, but I do not see him often." He then speaks of his having come to plunder him "under the mask of relationship." According to the *Memoirs of Matthew Clarkson of Philadelphia*,

¹ Smith's *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania*, p. 512.

(p. 23), "John Clarkson of the New York branch married a Rachel West." These were doubtless the parents of "John L. Clarkson," which would make his mother "Rachel" a sister of Benjamin West. And in West's letter of February 23, 1772, *infra*, he speaks of his sister Rachel and her unhappy marriage, doubtless the same. Galt (pt. 1, p. 68) also mentions that West was living in Philadelphia, in 1758, with "Mr. Clarkson, his brother-in-law, a gentleman who had been educated at Leyden." The author of the Clarkson memoir states that "a Joseph West married an Elizabeth Hazard who died in Philadelphia July 14, 1758." He then naively says that his object in introducing these West items "is to claim, however remotely, some kindred with the American painter Benjamin West."

William West died December 6, 1808, at the age of eighty-four. He was a noted agriculturist¹ and for five years a member of the legislature of Pennsylvania. He was not received into membership with Friends until 1752, which shows that he was not a Quaker by birth. John Trumbull painted a miniature cabinet portrait of him which the artist took to England in 1794 and presented to Benjamin.² According to Cope and Ashmead,³ William West had four children, Passmore, Sally, Samuel, and Hannah. But in the *McFarland and Stern Families* (p. 167) mention is made of "Joseph West a son of Benjamin's brother William," whose daughter's family lives near Alexandria, Virginia, and owns (1885) West's self miniature painted when he was eighteen, a reproduction of which is there given.⁴

¹ *Vide* Eulogium on William West. By James Mease. February 13, 1810. *Memoirs of Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture*, vol. 2, p. 147.

² Letter from B. West to William West, July 27, 1794, *infra*.

³ *Historic Homes and Institutions of Chester and Delaware Counties, Pennsylvania*, vol. 2, p. 10.

⁴ "It was sold with the effects of the lady to whom he gave it and purchased by Joseph West, a son of Benjamin's brother William, for \$147, and is yet in his daughter's family near Alexandria, Va."

A diligent search for this miniature, extending over many years, has failed to discover its whereabouts, but its history is most interesting. Its earliest appearance in recorded history was when it was exhibited, in 1817, at the Sixth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and it occupies considerable more space than usual in the printed Catalogue. The entry is as follows :

“ 87. Miniature of Mr West, painted by himself in the 18th year of his age. This picture, the property of C . . . Esq of Philadelphia, was shown to Mr. West in January 1816. The dialogue between himself and his visitors on the occasion is characteristic of the painter, and of sufficient interest to deserve insertion.

“ Mr. C. opened the object of our visit by saying, that some years ago he had waited on Mr. W. with the picture of a great man, an American,¹ and now had the pleasure of showing him the picture of another great man, also an American ; at the same time presenting the miniature. He looked at it earnestly. ‘ This is a curiosity ! Where did this picture come from, Sir ? ’ I replied from Philadelphia. ‘ This is indeed a very great curiosity ! This, Sir, was done for me and by me ! Who does it belong to ? ’ I said to myself. ‘ You gave it, Sir, to a Miss Steele, who married a Mr. W. and was the mother of my wife. ’ ‘ Yes, Sir, and well I remember it ; ’tis now sixty years ago ! And there is something more about it that, may be, you don’t know. We were very much in love with one another, Sir, and the old lady, her mother, whose memory I honor, didn’t like my intended profession, and she knew too there was such a place as the Swedes Church where people sometimes got married. ’ ‘ There, ’ again looking earnestly at the picture, ‘ this I did and gave her previous to my going to New York, whither I was sent for to paint some portraits. Now this is not a bad picture for one who had never seen a miniature ! ’ He returned the miniature, particularly requesting that I would have engraved on the back of it that it was painted in 1756, by himself. ”

Another account, in manuscript, says that Miss Steele married John Cook, who took the miniature to London and showed it to West, and Cook would stand for “ C . . . Esq ” in the above extract. It would be interesting if the name of “ Mr. W. ” could be supplied.

¹ General Washington.

The next appearance of the miniature in history, that I know, is an advertisement that appeared in a London newspaper of August, 1857, which was copied into the *Historical Magazine* for November, 1857 (vol. 1, p. 340).

“MINIATURE OF BENJAMIN WEST P. R. A. FOR SALE.

Painted by himself, in Philadelphia, U. S. in the year 1756, at the age of 18. First miniature ever painted by the great artist and his earliest likeness extant. Framed in an appropriate Walnut frame. Price 150 Guineas. Address C. L. West, care of T. Brettell, 25 Rupert Street, Hay Market; or H. Mogford Esq, Fine Art Gallery, Crystal Palace, where the miniature may be seen.”

“C. L. West” was doubtless Clement L. West, a son of Joseph, whose brother Preston West was, in 1853, in the U. S. Coast Survey, at Washington. This would bring the family of Joseph West “near Alexandria, Va.,” and if they owned the miniature, in 1885, when the *McFarland and Stern Families* was published, the London advertisement could not have met with success. It would be very gratifying if this account of the earliest self portrait of Benjamin West should be the means of discovering it.

Mrs. Rachel Pusey West Leys, of Chester, Pennsylvania, a great-granddaughter of William West, thinks that her great-grandfather had a sister Mary and a brother Samuel; also a brother John who removed to Virginia and had a large family. She always has understood that her ancestor was the eldest and Benjamin the youngest child of their parents.

Mrs. Harriet Morris Livingston, of Pasadena, California, affirms that her grandmother was *Elizabeth Morris, a sister of Benjamin West.*¹ But the voluminous *Morris Family History* by Doctor Moon makes no mention of such a marriage. Smith, in his *History of Delaware County*, says (p. 513): “The only early paintings of Benjamin West that the author has been able to discover are the likenesses of two children, now [1862] in possession of Mrs. Phoebe Worthington, of

¹ Mrs. Morris was the daughter of the Fina

and to be descended from Robert Morris, a resolution, which she was not.

West Chester. They were the children of John and Elizabeth Morris, the maternal grandparents of Mrs. Worthington. These children were respectively Jane and Robert Morris." These paintings were exhibited in the Pennsylvania building at the Jamestown Exposition, and this Robert Morris may be the ancestor of Mrs. Livingston; but if Elizabeth, wife of John Morris, was a sister of Benjamin West, it surely would be known. We know that West was on familiar terms with the Morris family, as it was Doctor Jonathan Morris who early helped him in his artistic efforts and their friendship lasted until the end.¹

Benjamin West was born near Springfield, Chester (now Delaware) County, Pennsylvania, October 10, 1738. In his twenty-second year he went abroad, arriving in Rome July 10, 1760. There he remained nearly three years, reaching London, June 20, 1763, where his studio was for years the Mecca for all would-be American painters. He was chosen President of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, March 24, 1792, and died March 10, 1820, and on the 29th was interred, with great pomp, in St. Paul's Cathedral. Soon after his arrival in England he visited his half-brother Thomas West, at Reading, who was born after his father left England, so that father and son had never met; but when their father went over to London, the next year, with Elizabeth Shewell to be married to Benjamin West, he went to Reading and lived with Thomas and never returned to America. Their portraits are in West's picture of *The West Family*, made familiar by the stipple engraving by the brothers Facius; and as if to emphasize that they were Friends and he was not, West has represented them wearing their broad brim hats, with straight hair and in the plain garb of the Quaker, while he wears a curled wig and queue, and a loose robe. Further, in not one of the many portraits that West painted of himself has he ever depicted himself wearing his hat or in Friend's habiliments.

¹ PENNA. MAG. OF HIST. AND BIOG. Vol. xviii, p. 221.

It is opportune here to discuss the date of West's marriage. Galt gives it (pt. 2, p. 10) as "2nd of September 1765, in the Church of St. Martin's in the Field." Whether this was a typographical error or an actual blunder, of course cannot be known or does it signify, for however it may be, it has been followed and perpetuated by all subsequent writers and it is wrong by one year. Benjamin West was married to Elizabeth Shewell on September 2nd, 1764. That this date is correct is shown by several incontrovertible authorities. In Matthew Pratt's *Autobiographical Notes*¹ he sets down :

"1764. June the 24th. I took my departure from Philadelphia in company with Miss Betsy Shewell and Mr John West, father to the famous Benjamin West, bound to London, where we arrived in a passage of 28 days. In a few weeks after our arrival I had the pleasure of officiating as a father in the marriage ceremony at St Martin's Church in the Strand, in joining Miss Shewell to Mr Benjr. West as wife. They having been engaged to each other in Phia. three years before our leaving it:—*To the entire satisfaction of all their friends and relatives.*"

These words which I have italicized were plainly introduced by Pratt, when he wrote up his autobiography, to negative the romantic story which has been told and retold until it is threadbare, of Betsy Shewell's escape by a rope ladder, with the aid of Franklin, Bishop White, and Francis Hopkinson, to journey to her marriage with West. What originated the story I do not know but I do know that authentic history is silent on the subject and it can be relegated to the same place as holds the story of the golden-haired boy giving the signal to his grandfather to ring the bell and proclaim liberty throughout the land on July 4th, 1776, and its kind.

The accuracy of the date we have given for West's marriage is confirmed by an obituary notice of Mrs. West in the *Analectic Magazine* for June, 1815, (p. 524), where her birth date is given as November 1st, 1741, and her marriage "the

¹ PENNA. MAG. OF HIST. AND BIOG. Vol. xix, p. 462.



Eliza Hest

2nd of September 1764.”¹ This would seem conclusive, but in case any one should quibble over the value of these two pieces of direct evidence, we have circumstantial evidence as to the year that is unimpeachable. Among the Franklin manuscripts in the American Philosophical Society there are two letters from Doctor Franklin to his wife written from London, on respectively the 9th and 14th of February, 1765, in the first of which he says: “I went to see Mrs West. She was then unwell and I did not see her, and have since been too busy, but shall wait on her again very soon.” And in the second, “I have seen Mrs West. She desired to be remembered to you.” As she was “Mrs. West” in February of 1765, she could not have been married the September following, as Galt has it, and thus is confirmed, beyond peradventure or cavil, the correctness of the year 1764 as set down by Matthew Pratt. I published the correction of this error of date first in my *A Limner of Colonial Days*,² and several times since when opportunity offered, yet, so much easier is it to perpetuate an error than to correct it, that every one, even as late as Isham, in his *History of American Painting* (1905, p. 49), sticks to the wrong date. It may not be without interest to add that I attempted to verify the date of the marriage by the records of St. Martin’s church. Galt says, “St. Martin’s in the Field.” Pratt says, “St. Martin’s in the Strand.” There is no church in London called “St. Martin’s in the Strand” and there was not in 1764, but St. Martin’s in the Field being in Charing Cross, just at the end of the Strand, the slip is quite pardonable in a stranger. But the records of Saint Martin’s in the Field fail, upon examination, to show the marriage of Benjamin West, so that we have to rely upon the other data that we have.

Benjamin and Elizabeth West had two children, Raphael Lamar West, who, when West wrote to Franklin, on April

¹ Mrs. West died December 6th, 1814. But Galt, with his usual inaccuracy, puts it three years later, 1817 (pt. 2, p. 201).

² *Harper's Weekly* of July 4, 1896.

28, 1782,¹ was in his sixteenth year, and Benjamin West, who was in his tenth year. As to the latter, Franklin writing to Mrs. Franklin, August 22, 1772,² says: "Mrs West has another son to whom I am God father. That Family is well. They always desire to be remembered to you." Raphael Lamar West was married September 19, 1798, to Maria Siltso and brought her to this country, whither he came to look after some lands of his father in the Genessee country. They remained here about a year. The only child of this marriage who reached adult age was a daughter, Maria, who December 12, 1829, married Thomas George Margary, and their second child and eldest son, H. W. O. Margary, who was born April 14, 1833, was, in 1898, living at Eustis, Lake County, Florida. In the fall of that year he came to Philadelphia to see me and he was the last lineal descendant of the American President of the Royal Academy. Benjamin West Junior also married and had a son, Benjamin 3d, who followed his grandfather to the grave but did not live to attain his majority or to leave issue.

Galt mentions Benjamin West's "eldest sister Sally" in his story of West's first drawing, when seven years old, of the child in the cradle, but her surname has not come down to us; so that the only children of John and Sarah West, whose names have been preserved, are William, Rachel, and Benjamin, with possibly Sarah, Mary, Samuel, John, Joseph, and Elizabeth.

Benjamin West is one of those unfortunate characters in history whose poise has been shaken, if not entirely lost, when regarded through the perspective of time. This is especially wrong in his case and is due largely to the false plane of the view-point. We must not consider West's work as though he were one of us, painting in our midst to-day; but we must look upon him, and it, in the period and atmosphere and environment when he did paint. At that

¹ Franklin MSS. Amer. Phil. Soc. (vol. xxv, No. 49).

² *Ibid.*

time he was entitled to his preëminence, as easily first among history painters, his work being, as Sir Thomas Lawrence said, "superior to any former production of English art"; and if he seems too highly rated in his own day, he has certainly been too much depreciated in ours. For one achievement alone he is entitled to and should receive the highest consideration both for his conception of it and for his grit in carrying it out. I mean, of course, the revolution he wrought, by the stroke of his brush, in his painting of *The Death of Wolfe*,—the abandonment of classic costume in the treatment of contemporary heroic subjects. This may seem like a small matter, but it required a strong and determined character to carry it out. When his project was whispered abroad he received almost a royal command to desist, and when the work was completed the King refused to accept it, but it was quickly purchased by Lord Grosvenor, whose descendant now owns it. Its exhibition won every one over to West's view and George III, acknowledging his mistake, at once ordered a replica, which now hangs in Hampton Court Palace, London.

It may not be known that West contemplated painting a series of works illustrating events in American history connected with the Revolutionary War. The earnestness of his intention is shown by the following important letter to his early pupil, Peale, dated August 4, 1783:

"I wrote you by Mr Vaughan my intention of composing a set of pictures containing the great events which have affected the revolution of America; for the better enabling me to do this, I desired you to send what ever you thought would give me the most exact knowledge of the costume of the American armys, portraits in small, either painting or drawing, of the conspicuous characters necessary to be introduced into such a work. I now embrace by my friend Capt. Falconer the opportunity to make the same request and that you would on his return to this country send me (on consulting some able friend) what you might have in readiness with his plan for such an undertaking. I mean the arrangement of the subject most expressive and most painted as for instance—The cause of the quarel; the commencement of it; the carrying it on; the Battles; alliences etc. to form one work to be given in

ellegant engravings call'd The American Revolution. This work I mean to do, at my own expense and to employ the first engravers in Europe to carry them into execution not having the least doubt as the subject has engaged all the powers of Europe, all will be interested in seeing the event so portraid. I have made Capt Falconer a confident in such things who will have a pleasure in conphering with you."

All the progress that we know he made in this scheme was to sketch in the *Signing of the Preliminary Treaty of Peace*, which unfinished canvas is owned by Lord Belper of Kingston, Derby, England, and to depict the *Reception of the American Loyalists by Great Britain in 1783*, which was engraved in outline by Henry Moses,¹ but the most persistent and earnest seeking has failed to locate the original or even a copy of the print. The latter is not in the British Museum or in the Library of Congress or in the Public Library of New York, three of the most extensive collections of historical prints in the world.

I hope these memoranda, rich in inquiries, will encourage others who may have data, no matter how slight, to contribute their mite to this interesting subject, for surely who were of Benjamin West's family, the non-quaker President of the Royal Academy, is of more than the ordinary genealogical interest.

The portraits of Mr. and Mrs. West accompanying this article are of too much importance to be allowed to pass unnoted. They were painted by Matthew Pratt, of Philadelphia, who accompanied Miss Shewell to London to become the wife of West, and were painted in that city shortly after the marriage. They were unknown until discovered by the writer in the possession of a great-granddaughter of the painter, Mrs. Rosalie V. Tiers Jackson, when he was seeking portraits for the first exhibition of historical portraits ever held in this country, that he arranged at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1887-88. The two

¹ Sabine's *American Loyalists*, 1847, p. 527; Wilson's *Memorial History of New York*, vol. ii, p. 574.

portraits were exhibited in that collection and afterward, at the earnest solicitation of the writer, were presented to the Academy by Mrs. Jackson.

LETTERS FROM BENJAMIN WEST.¹

(To Peter Thomson of Philadelphia.)

LONDON, PANTON SQUARE

Feb^r 23rd 1772

DEAR COUSIN²

Your kind letter I have received with the enclos^d from my Brother W^m to Father, which I immediately sent him and have since heard from him, he is in good health considering his advanc'd age, aunt is in health also.—My Dear Betsey and her little Boy are in health. She promises to present me with an other little Increase to my Family in a few months,—I should have wrote you this by Capⁿ Falconer but his sudding departure from London prevented me the pleasure. I hope you will not take my omission in writing to any slight, but what it realy is, and which is the truth that I dont like writeing—its as deficult to me as painting would be to you—every man in his way, I could as soon paint you a description of things on this side the water as write—I belive I should have made a Figure in South America in the time of that conquest when we find the natives of that country communicated with each other by Painting the Images of their amaginations and not in writing characters to discribe them—now as writeing is your profession³ it will make me happy in now and then receiving a specimen of your great abilities in that way and I promis you for the feuture I will endeavour to answer them aither in Painting or Scrawling.—

¹ Letters of West have appeared in the PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY, vols. xiii and xviii.

² To be West's own cousin Thomson's mother would have had to be a West or a Pearson, which I have been unable to verify.

³ Peter Thomson, conveyancer, died in Philadelphia of yellow fever in August, 1798.

Betsey desiers to be kindly remembered to you and Cousin Hanna—to whome please to present my love—I am sorry to hear from you of your distress in regard to your daughters marriage—and permit me to thank you for your attention to my sister Rachel in her unhappy marriage, her life is a continuation of misfortune and unhappiness seems probable to over spread the remainder of her days, I am afraid she may have been imprudent but the more virtue in those that aid her or any one in those circumstances.—

I beg you to remember me to Brother W^m and his family, I should have wrote him but have nothing perticular at preasant to communicate to him—his letter gave me great pleasure concerning his Farme. I should have Infinite pleasure in seeing you all on that side of the water—Till then I can do no more while at this distance than show how much I am

Your affectionate Cousin
BENJ^N WEST

[Addressed] To PETER THOMSON
per favor of } of
Mr. Clifford } Philadelphia

(To William West.)¹

July 12, 1775

DEAR BROTHER

I could not neglect so favorable an Opertunity as this by Cap^t Falconer to send you the print of W^m Penn's Treaty with the Indians when he founded the Province of Pennsylvania—I have taken the liberty to introduce the likeness of our Father—and Brother of Reading, into the picture in the group of Friends that accompeny W^m Penn, that is the likeness of our Brother that stands imediately behind Penn, resting on his cane—I need not point out the figure of our Father, I believe you will find some likeness of him in the

¹ In the possession of the City of Philadelphia, accompanying West's painting of Penn's Treaty in the State House.

print, tho [torn] have all lost something of that when compared with the Original picture—I have the pleasure to acquaint you our Father is in as perfect health as I ever remember to have seen him, he has been in London with me on a visit for this month, and left me but yesterday on his return to Oxfordshire—all our relations hear are well—my youngest Boy who is turned of three years old is just recovered from anocolation—who has had it in a fine manner, it is a happy circumstance, and has removed a load of anxiety from me and his Mamma—

My Father acquainted me when in town—that your Mother-in-Law's sister was dead and that she was left her Heir—that he believed no one had wrote to her concerning it—if so I think some Body should see into the situation of things as I understand there is something of consequence left—if your Mother should not have been informed, please to communicate the subject of this to her—and if I can be of any use in aiding her in the Buisness on this Side the water she may command me.

My Betsey desires her love may be given with mine to you and sister and Family—

I am Dear Brother
Your Affectionate
BENJ^N WEST

When you for the fewture write to me, direct to Newman Street, Oxford Street.

[Addressed] To WILLIAM WEST—Upper Darby
to the care of Joseph Shewell—
Philadelphia.

(To William West.)

No 14, NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET LONDON
July 2nd 1780

DEAR BROTHER,

I could not omit so favorable an oportunity by my Friend Mr Lloyd who is returning to his native Country, to just acquaint you I am well with all my family. I have wrote

you several letters in the course of the last three years, but weather you have received one of them is unceartan knowing the many hands they are to pass through before they can reach yous. I am anxiety to know how you have been during the great commosions of war in our native land, and what is become of all my relations. I think the time at no great distance when tranquility will take place; and mankind better understand each other. We have had great commosions in this City,¹ at present they are over—but with to loss of many hundred lives, as the Military ware obliged to act; the rioters in their fury distroyed the houses of Magistrates, Roman Catholic Chaples, Prisons, privit dwelling houses &c. &c. to the amount of many hundred thousand pounds value, there still remains a Tragical sean to be preformed,—which is, the bringing to justice the leaders of these horrid depredations. Judges are siting every day and many of the Rioters condemed and many more to be tryed, and I hope time will discover what all this means and justice fall on its movers

Our Brother at Reading and his family are well, as also our Aunt in the country, in all my former letters I mention the death of our Father to have been on the fifth of Oct^r 1776. I should be made happy, if you could send by some convenient opertunity those writings or coppys of them, our Father deposited in the hands of William Fell by Spring Field meeting house Chester County—my love to all Relations and Friends—and believe me to be

Dear Brother

with great affection

BENJ^N WEST.

[Note by Jno. F. Watson.—This original letter of Benj. West was given to John F. Watson in March, 1852, by Jesse J. Maris of Chester, Pa. (Pres't of the Delaware Co. Bank), who is a descendant of Benj.

¹ Lord George Gordon riots, June 8, 1780.

West's.¹ This letter was addressed to W^m West of Upper Darby, a celebrated agriculturist and a brother of Benj. At the same time Mr. Maris showed me a letter of Benj. West to the same brother William, dated London July 12, 1775, saying he then sends him an engraved print of W^m. Penn's treaty,—“wherein I have taken the liberty to introduce the likeness of our Father and brother Thomas of Reading.” [England?] “That is the likeness of our brother which stands immediately behind Penn, resting on his cane. I need not point out the picture of our Father, as I believe you will find it in the print from memory.”

Mr. Maris explained it to me, as being the person who stands a little back, with side face visible, & showing only a part of his person. At the same time Mr. Maris told me, that in the picture of Christ healing the sick, by West, in the Penn^a Hospital, the paralytic woman is a likeness done from the face of Benj^a West's wife—She is, if the woman in the foreground, a very good resemblance of the late Deborah Logan—noticed by me at first seeing that distinguished painting.

J. F. W.]

(To Monsieur Pierre, Peintre du Roy a Paris.)

A LONDRES le 7^e de dec^{bre} 1781

MONSIEUR

Quoique Je n'ay pas lhonneur d'etre connu personelment de vous, J'ose me flatter que mon nom et character ne vous est pas inconnu, et me confiant a la reputation generale de vos genereux sentiments, Je prens la liberte de vous recom-mander le S^r Joseph Wrigth² [sic] un Jeune Americain de ma ville de Philadelphie qui a Envie d'aller etudier a Paris, et ensuite a Rome, vous m'obligeres sensiblement de lui rendre les petits Services quil vous fera possible dans L'Academie, que Je compteray comme pour moy meme. Ce Jeune homme a etudie quelquetons a notre Academie, et a remporté un prix, Sa mere est protegée par la Duchesse

¹ Mr. Maris was not a descendant of Benjamin West. His wife was Mary West, a grand niece of Benjamin West, and this note is a fair sample of Mr. Watson's general inaccuracy of statement in his well-known *Annals of Philadelphia*.

² Son of Patience Wright, the modeller. He painted the portrait of Washington in the Hopkinson Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society. Joseph Wright died of the yellow fever in Philadelphia, November, 1793.

de Chartres, J'espère que votre bon Cour excusera cette liberté, et me rendra la Justice de croire que Je Serai charmé de vous rendre le reciproque, et trouver l'occasion de vous prouver que J'ay L'honneur d'être avec la plus parfaite estime

Monsieur
 Votre très humble et tres
 obeissant Serviteur
 BENJ^N WEST

(To William West.)¹

LONDON, July 25th, 1787.

DEAR BROTHER

I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that your Draft on me for one hundred Pounds arrived safe—and is answered by payment agreeable to your advice. The Timber on the estate at Banghurst my Brother Thos. and self have sold and I have the satisfaction to tell you, we have got the better of all claments, who when they heard the Timber was to be sold, and that at a good price put in their clames in four diferent parties; but fortunate for us, Our friend John Butler of Shillingford in Oxfordshire being alive and in the posesion of papers which proved your right—he is an honest man, and had he been otherway, neither you or any of your wifes relations would ever possessed one shilling of that property, it having layed so many years neglected. When debts on the estate, expense of Laws, and other matters are settled I judge you will then be in the receipt of about £500 Sterling. This part of the estate I am in hopes will be compleatly settled by Christmas. The Land we have not disposed of tho several people have applyed, but it is the advice of our friends, not to sell that, till the ground is entirely cleared of the Timber, as they are shure it will then rise in its value, this advise we have taken wishing to act for you in the best manner possible.

¹ In possession of Mr. Alfred E. Maris, Philadelphia.

The property in the hands of Sarah Rakestraw, I am afraid will not prove so productive as that at Banghurst, there appears but little disposition in that quarter to come to a just settlement, and the accompt of money which I understand from some friends is considerable lays entirely in Sarah's hands. All we have therefor to go by is her honor and honesty and from a state of the property she has given me, I have little opinion of either—. I have mentioned in several of my letters to you, that the power of Attorney you sent me and our Brother Thos. is not authority for us to settle that business with her—; I hope therefore you will loose no time in transmitting us such a power, for should John Butler die befor that is terminated I am afraid you will loose the whole of that property. I mention him as I believe there is no other person living that has a knowledge of that business but himself and he as well as others are of opinion, that it must be a business settled by Friends and not by law—The power of Attorney must be to settle with Sarah Rakestraw, of High Wickham in the County of Buckinghamshire—were as the power of Attorney we are now in possession of, only Authorises us to settle that business at Banghurst.—I send out to Capt. Falconer by the ship Harmony Capt. Willitt a fresh power of Attorney in which I have taken the liberty to insert your name with his, to act separately or jointly, in case of eithers demise against Stephen Shewell respecting all property laying in his hands now and to come, as may happen. What money may be received from Stephen Shewell take into your hands and transmit me an account of the same by the very first oppertunity as it may ballance that property of yours which will shortly come into my hands, and by this mode put you in possession of money sooner than any other method of convaying it possible can. I hope Stephen Shewell will act with dispatch and honor in terminating the accompt between him and his Sister, respecting that property she left in her Mothers hands, which from motives of Delicasey I never drew. This conduct of mine united to the assistance I have given his Daughter and

Grandchildren in this Country (which amounts to much more than the original property left in his hands) I was in hopes would have been felt by him as a mark of esteem of mine that connection which on my part has been ever honorable and friendly, and I must say, merits other returns than those which I have received.

I hope this will find you and your family in health, as through marcey mine are. My love to your Wife and all friends.—

I am

Dear Brother

Your Affectionately etc.

BENJ. WEST.

Mrs. West with my sons desires to be Affectionately remembered to you all.

(To William West.)

LONDON Feby 14th '89

DEAR BROTHER

The three drafts on me through the Hand of *John Field* for London dated Philadelphia Nov^r 7th—88 came safe to hand, and are paid. The Business with Sarah Rakstraw of High Wyckham is not settled, there being some demur respecting the power of Attorney you transmited my Brother and me that not being sufficient to make the Purchaser title good, who may purchase the lands both at Shoplake and Banghurst, by reason of the Power lacking one of the names of the Lagettees in America—our Attorney at Reading, (Mr. Matthias Deane) wrote me ten days past, that he should be soon in London when he would take the advice of Council on the velidity of the power.

I shall be greatly obliged to you, the first oppertunity that offers to this place, you will send me the statement of

the moneys you have received of Mr. Stephen Shewell¹—and the Bills you have at verious times drawn on me in London that I may Ballance the present accompt as it stands between us before you draw any more Bills on me—for fear your business with Sarah Rakstraw and &c may not be adjusted agreeable to our expectations. It is with great pleasure I can assure you that our Nephew Mr J. L. Clarkson has every appearance of a desarving sensible young man; and it has afforded me great satisfaction in having had the happyness of seeing him—tho his great purpose of coming has been at an unfortunate moment, it not being so much in my power to render him sarvices in the money way, there being a total stop to the Prive Purse by reason of the Kings Illness and as that was my great source of supply I am under the necessity of being sircumspect with my ready Cash till I know how things will be situated at the close of the present momentious Parlimentery Business respecting the Regency —for, should the Kings demise take place or a Regency be establish, it will lay me under the necessity of contracting my present situation and depend on my own resources —If therefore at a future Period I should find myself situated to render him assensual service, I shall do it with the greatest pleasure. Our brother Tho^s at Reading during the late severe frost was nearly at the point of Death, nor do I think he will recover—which will be a great loss to his two Daughters, who were his House keepers since his Wife's death; they with two grand children of seven and eight years old, will be destitute of that support they have been accustome to recive from their father; and situated as I am in this country must of course render them a support addequate to their being my Relations.

Mrs. West and sons are well—she is with her eldest at my house in Windsor, where we have been all the Winter—my youngest son is in Switzerland, I had a letter from him two days past, he was well on the 25th of last month. I

¹ Brother of Mrs. West.

hope this will find you and your family in health, to whome please to make my love—as likewise to all relations—and be assured

I am

Dear Brother

with great friendship

Yours &c &c

BENJ^N WEST

P. S. I have ordered M^r Clarkson to Draw a Bill on me in London when he returns to Philadelphia, for fifty pounds starling, this I think proper to inform you of, that it may give him credit with some house corresponding with London.

(To William West.)

LONDON Feb^r 13th 1793

DEAR BROTHER

Our friend Mr. Gilpin¹ returning to Philadelphia, I could not omit so favorable an opportunity as that which offers by him, to send you these few lines. I have to inform you that on christmas day last, our Brother Thomas West died—he has left two daughters unmarried—the eldest in bad health—and not capable of helping herself, I have ordered her an annual allowance; the other, a woman of health and good capacity, and I hope with some small assistance, she will be able to go through to world with comfort. Mrs. West with my two sons are in health, and desires to be kindly remembred to you and your family, to whom please to give my love.

Inclosed I send you Sarah Rakestraws letter written to me respecting the land at Shiplake near Reading, the proposuals in the letter are such, that I cannot undertake to deside on them—therefore refer it to you for the desetion; but in my judgement, I should prefer that estate, as well as the other at Banghurst in Hampshire to be sold, as the

¹ Joshua Gilpin.

money arising from the sale of them may be put to use, when they two estates laying as at present, for any time, will be an encumbrance to you in case of my demise, as you will then be deprived of having an executor in this country to manage the business; but whatever may be your determination I shall execute it to the best of my judgement.

I beg to be remembered to all relations and every enquiring friend and be assured I am with great love and regard

Your affectionate Brother

BENJ^N WEST

P. S. John L. Clarkson is in London, but I do not see him often, he says he is disposing of Lands which lie in Virginia; I should have been obliged to you and my other friends had you when Clarkson first came to this country for the avowed principles to plunder me under the mask of relationship, that you had communicated to me that character of him you must then have known, and which has been sinc transmited to me—but not till the breach of honor and honasty was made by him, on my benevolance

[Addressed] Mr. W^M WEST
in Upper Darby Chester County
Pennsylvania
by favor
of Mr. Gilpin.

(To William West.)¹

LONDON, July 27th, 1794.

DEAR BROTHER

Dr. Edwards returning to his native land America, I embrace the oppertunity which by him offers to send you this letter. I have found in him many points of information respecting the prosperity of your State (Pennsylvania) in perticular concerning the purchasing of lands; on this sub-

¹ In Roberts Collection, Haverford College Library, Pennsylvania.

ject I have given him a commission, and on this he will have conversation with you. The letter I have placed in his hands conveying wishes, which letter I recommend him to shew you—when a mutual friendship in the negotiation in my favour will be highly esteemed.

Dr. Edwards¹ is a gentleman much engaged in the study of Agraculture; and the high charactor you have in that pursute makes him desirious of seeing you and your Farme. It is his intention to pay you a visit—when he will hand you this letter.

Mr. Trumbull is arrived in London with Mr. Jay, he has presented me with a small portrait of yourself; time has brought you to a great resemblance of our Father—I am verry happy with the present. Mr. Trumbull informed me he made you a visit at upper Darby, and was much pleased with the Entertainment you gave him. The like reception to my friend Dr. Edwards will be very pleasing to me, as well as affording him great delight in viewing your place.

Mrs. West and my sons are well, they joyne me in kind affections to you and family.

Pray remember me to all friends—and

I am with the greatest affection

Dear Brother—Yours &c

BENJ^N WEST

(To William West.)²

LONDON, NEWMAN STREET, Sept. 18th, 1796.

DEAR BROTHER

By the return of Dr. Edwards to Philadelphia, I embrace the oppertunity to send you this letter, and with it some of the county reports, which have been placed in my hands by Sir John Sinclair (the President of the Board of Agraculture) to be transmited to you by the first conveyence. Sir John speaks in high terms of your letter on the property of

¹ Dr. Enoch Edwards, son of Evans Edwards, and brother of Major Evans Edwards, adjutant general to Greene in his southern campaign. West painted his portrait in 1795.

² In possession of Alfred E. Maris, Philadelphia.

Gypsam which he received through the convayence of General Washington; and he has heard much of the high state of cultivation your Farm is in; Dr. Edwards and Mr. Trumbull speak of it with delight, and indeed so do all that have seen it.

Your several letters I have received, and have now to inform you, that since the Death of our Brother of Reading, the Lawer in whose hands he and myself placed the Business you submitted to our care—became a Bankrupt, and I have been under difficulties to get the Deeds and other wrighting respecting the Property at Banghurst, and Sheep-lake into my hands again. I have the pleasure to inform you that I have succeeded and shall place the business in the hands of a proper person to have that business concluded with Mrs. Rakestraw of Wickham, and yourself, as soon as possible.

The lands which Dr. Edwards and yourself have procured me in Pensylvania through the friendship of Mr. Drinker etc. I highly approve of; I have had much conversation with the Dr. on the subject, and the more I know of such purchases the better I am satisfied. I have written to Mr. Drinker on the business by this oppertunity and have mentioned my satisfaction; and at the same time say, that what ever may be his or your determination respecting those Lands in future, I leve it to your better judgement, and to submit to your decision in what will be to the advantage of me, or my family.

When you see Dr. Morris, remember me kindly to him, and thank him for the friendly letter he sent me by Mr. Savery; that I was happy to hear, that he was alive, and of the prosperity of himself and family.

Your letter by Mr. Johnson he delivered in person, I found him a pleasing young man. I waited on Mr. Savery at his lodgings—he did not call on me, I found him a conversable man and of much information, he has gone for Hamberge, and with him George Dilwine; they intend to pass over much of the continent of Europe before they return.

Mrs. West and my sons are all well, they desire to be affectionately remembered to you and your family.

I beg to be in like manner remembered to them.

And I am with great affection—Dear Brother

Your much obliged—

BENJ. WEST.

(To Robert Barclay.)

LONDON NEWMAN STREET Sep^r 5th 1810,

DEAR SIR

You will have the goodness to make Mr Hamilton of Woodlands near Philadelphia when you write him next, acquainted with the following, viz. That I have received his letter of instructions for finishing the picture which contains the Portraits of himself and Niece whole lengths That I have a pride in rendering the picture as a finished work of art to the utmost of my abilities—and I am therefore re-painting it all but the Faces—that it may possess the accumulated practice which twenty years study has added to the period since the picture was first undertaken; that it may honour—as far as my humble abilities will permit the memmory of Hamilton, that of my native country—and myself as the painter of it. For the additional painting and enrichments which I am making to the picture I shall not increse the charge for it; but shall charge the same I had for whole length Portraits when the picture was began—which was sixty guineas a figure whole lengths.¹

When the picture is finished and ready to be sent to America I will then give into your hands the amount of the whole expence—which are for the picture—the case—and the duties in passing the custom in London. I shall send the picture at the same time the Historical picture

¹ This painting of William Hamilton and his niece, Mrs. Anna Hamilton Lyle, hangs in the hall of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, and was reproduced in Vol. xxix (July, 1905,) of this magazine.

goes to Philadelphia, which I am painting for the Pennsylvania Hospital—which will be not before next Spring.

I have the honour to be

My Dear Sir

[Addressed]

ROBT BARCLAY Esq^r Your much obliged
BENJⁿ WEST.

Berry Hill near Dorking

Sept. 5 }

Surrey.

(To J. Taylor.)¹

NEWMAN STREET Feb^r 12th 1811

MY DEAR SIR

I have to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your friendly letter, in which was inclosed this evening Paper the sun. In that Paper I observe you have spoke with much friendly warmth, and observations on the several productions of art now on Exhibition in the Gallery of the British Institution in Pall Mall. My sentiments are in unison with those of yours on the subject of the advance which my children of the Pencil have made this year in their several departments of painting; but how can their venerable Father in art be able to express his grateful feelings to you, for the hansom way in which you have made known to the Public, the picture he is painting for the Pennsylvania Hospital in the city of Philadelphia. Such commondations are to artists of sensibility—Like the Nightingals sweet lays, when given by those deserving prais.

With great respect, as well as that

I am, My Dear Sir

Yours with sincerity

BENJⁿ WEST

P. S. Mrs. West sends her respects
to you and we shall be pleased to see
you any evening to Tea at 7 oclock }

¹ John Taylor was the grandson of an itinerant oculist of the same name known as "The Chevalier," and himself became oculist to George III. He was editor of the *Morning Post*, *The True Briton*, and *The Sun*, and author of "Monsieur Tonson."

(To Dr. Taylor, Sec'y to the Society of Arts.)

NEWMAN STREET Feb^y 23rd 1814

SIR

In Mr. Busbys letter to me on the 17th Ins^t he says—"that the society of arts having last night, come to a resolution to improve the upper part of their great room, according to the Plan which I had the honour to submit to you a few days since—and which received your approbation."—This word approbation may carry the minds of gentlemen to a greater extent than what was my meaning. I therefore hold it a duty I owe to the confidence with which I have been honoured by the Society, in adopting my advice respecting the lighting, cleaning, and adapting the colour of the ground most advantageous to the Painting by Barry in their great room of the Society.

My complacency to Mr. Busbys design, alluded to, for bringing more light from the centre of the ceiling on the Pictures—was—that he had by the square aperture gained two or three more feet of light over the surface of the Pictures, than that which the present round aperture admitted, which is creditable to Mr. Busbys professional talents. But the Plan of lighting those Pictures from the vertical light in the centre, whether it is round or square matters not, as the principle is mathematically wrong—and what is so, cannot be made right: on this principle we must not forget—that the greater body of light which the Pictures receive on their surfaces—the more powerful are the angles of incidence, as well as the angles of reflection—and oil Paintings having a varnished surface—the angle of reflection from the vertical light falls into the spectators eye without his being able to see the Pictures thus lighted—but in parts. It is therefore my decided Opinion—that all gallery of Pictures should be so constructed in lighting them—that the reflected rays of light from their shining surface, should fall at the feet of the beholder, and not in his face. This mode of lighting Pictures I explained to several gentlemen in the great room

of the Society some weeks past. But as my Plan for lighting to advantage those Paintings by Barry—cannot be adopted without rebuilding the roof over them—the gentlemen will best judge what is proper to be done on the present occasion.

With great respect,

I am Sir

Yours with sincerity

BENJ^N WEST.

P. S. The gout demands my staying at home or I should have waited on you.

(To Joseph Wharton.)

LONDON NEWMAN STREET March 17th 1814—

DEAR SIR

When I consider the place in the Pennsylvania Hospital in which my Picture of our Saviour in the Temple healing the Lame and Blind is to be placed, on its arrival there, that place may answer the purpose of a temporary deposit. I therefore by the return of Mr. Emlen to Philadelphia, take the liberty to sejest to the gentlemen of the Hospital, and the city—that could a place within the precincts of the Hospital be found to erect a room on, as the place of a final deposit for the Picture, it would *Dignify the Present*, as well as the Hospital.

A place thus created with a proper light for the Picture to be seen in, would not only be seen with more pleasure and conveniency than that of its being placed in any room of the Hospital as a furniture picture; and it would also relieve the appartments of the Hospital from the press of people daily crowding to see the picture. I have therefore taken the liberty to accompany this letter, with the geometrical Plan of a room, every way appropriate for seeing the Picture—as well as its safety:—was such a room to be erected for accomodating the Spectators, it would be the means in a few months to indemnify the expence of its

erection, and as a Fund from which, an encreasing revenue would arrise to the Hospital—as the inhabitance of the city, and the peopulation of America increased; this is worthy of being taken into consideration.

Having now accomplished my great Picture of our Saviour brought from the Judgement Hall by Pilate to Caiaphas the High Priest, the Elders—Scribes—and Jewish people, I shall next finish my Picture for the Hospital—that it may be ready for going to Philadelphia by the first convayence which offers for that city. But before that can take place—we must have Pece on the earth—the seas—and good will towards men; this is the doctrine of Him, which my Pictur for the Hospital is Typical.

By Mr. Emlen I send you a Print—the likeness of one who holds himself much indebted for your many friendly letters—as well as that he is Dear Sir—

Yours with sincerity

BENJ^N WEST

P. S. By the care of Mr. Paxson or Mr. Emlen, you will receive a Print of my Portrait painted by M^r Lawrence

(To Henry Fauntleroy.)¹

NEWMAN STREET Decem^r 28th 1816

MY DEAR SIR

In the letter I had the honour to write you a few days past, I mentioned that indisposition had confined me to my Bed and Room several days, was the cause of my not waiting on you during that time; and in that letter I requested you would favour me by calling any day in this week for the purpose of arranging the account between us up to the close of the year. In the letter you favoured me with yesterday you mentioned seeing me on Monday next—I shall esteem your visit on that day a favour at any hour after 12

¹ Famous London banker and forger who was executed in 1824.

oclock. You likewise mention those points which made me solicitous when I requested you would favour me with a call? It was for us to arrange those Periods which would best sute the Liquidating those Demands your House have on me, which I was most anxious to be adjusted, both honourable and safe to all concerned.

And it is with sincere respect, I have the honour to be

My Dear Sir

Your much obliged

BENJ^N WEST

(To Mrs. Sarah Robeson.)¹

LONDON—No. 14 NEWMAN STREET, OXFORD STREET,

August 5th 1817

MY DEAR MADAM

Your letter to me bearing date on the 8th of May last I received, communicating to me the demise of your highly respected, and honourd Parent: this information became a second affliction to the feelings of one who had a great attachment to him—knowing as I did his great attachment, and his sincere friendship. The first information of his death I allude to—was communicated to me by Mr. Sargent then in London; by a correspondent of his in Philadelphia not many days after the demise took place of that much lamented and sincere friend; his last letter which I was honoured with, was that by the hands of Mr. Sargent, as his intruduction to me? Which letter I shall ever hold with a most sacred regard, and with profound respect to his Memory.

By the same convayence which this letter goes to you, in Philadelphia by the ship Electra Capⁿ Williams; I send the Picture of our Saviour receiving the sick, and Blind in the

¹ Daughter of Joseph Wharton, who died December 25, 1816. Mrs. Robeson died August 27, 1847, aged 75.

Temple to Heal them, for the Pennsylvania Hospital;¹ what a real joy would this occurrence have afforded your venerable Father; it being a work in one of the branches of the Fine Arts in which he took so lively an interest; and for which I have in my Paper of Instructions to the President and Managers of the Hospital Registered his name, Nathaneal Falcknors with my own, and that of Mrs. Wests. All mutual friends and natives of Pennsylvania. These Names I always held in mind should be transmitted to subsequent ages with that Picture, for the lively interest they had for its being placed in the Pennsylvania Hospital.

It is my Dear Madam, the records given, by the Pen—the Pencil—and the Chisel, that transmits the civilized periods of men to distant ages, as having been civilized;—the fourth means have never been discovered. And as I hold one of these means professionally, I have ever devoted it to that purpose, as much as my humble abilities would permit me to do.

With this letter I enclose a Medal, of one in copper your Father did me the honour to accept—and the present one is finished in a Tasteful Stile most fit for a Lady—and which I request you will honour me by giving it a place in your possession as a Token of that great respect for the Daughter of my friend Joseph Wharton, which this Medal will stand as a lasting Pledge amongst his Relatives, for my sincerity.

And be assured My Dear Madam, that I am most truly

Your greatly obliged

BENJAMIN WEST

[Addressed] To SARAH ROBISON

The Daughter of the late Joseph Wharton in
Philadelphia

By the ship Electra
Capⁿ Williams—and to
the care of Samuel Coates
President of the Pennsylvania Hospital—

¹ The picture was received by the Pennsylvania Hospital Oct. 17, 1817, and from its exhibition to the close in 1843 yielded \$25,000 at a cost of about \$10,000, so that the Hospital made a profit of \$15,000 from West's gift.

(To the Lords of the Treasury.)

NEWMAN STREET August the 11th 1817—

MY LORDS

I avail myself of this opportunity to request the Lords commissioners of His Majestys Treasury, will accept my warmest acknowledgements for their prompt compliance in granting me the courtesy I asked ; for my Picture in its case to pass Duty Free (by their seal) on Board the ship Electra then in the London Dock, and bound for the City of Philadelphia: to which place I was sending that Picture as a gratuitous offering to the Penvsylvania Hospital? And the Picture was our Saviour in the Temple receiveing the Lame, and Blind to heal them.

And I have the honour to inform your Lordships with thanks, that your seal was honoured by the Dock officers, and placed on board the ship Free of Duty. With profound respect I have the honour to be, My Lords

Your Lordships greatly obliged
and obedient ser^t

BENJAMIN WEST.

P. S. With this letter I have the honour to lay before your Lordship three Papers containing the account of various articles belonging to artis (British subjects) which have been examined by two Inspectors of the Royal Academy, and are found to come under the priveledge of passing Duty Free: And your Lordships commands for that purpose will greatly oblige,