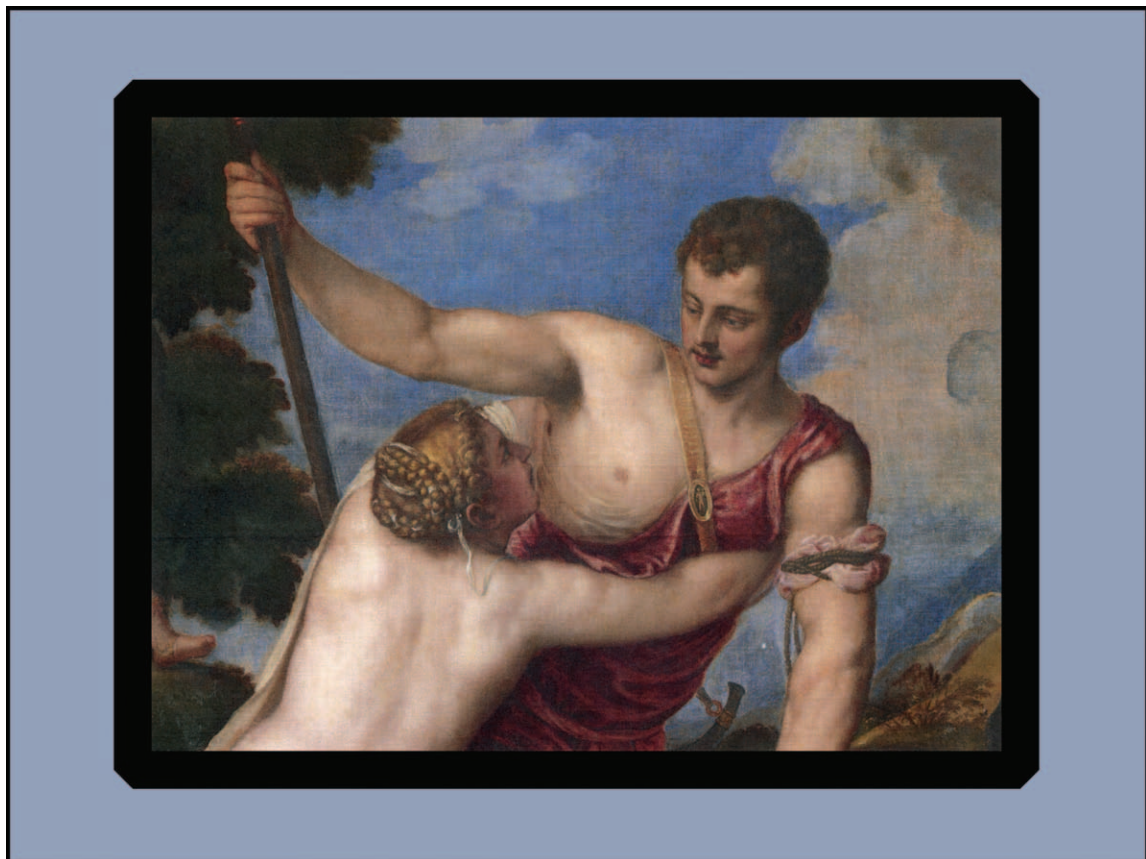


From *Venus and Adonis*: Shakespearean Inebriation and Colton Gas



As painted in 1554 by Titian, lovesick Venus (*left*) throws herself shamelessly at disdainful Adonis (*right*), her handsome foster son. In Shakespeare's narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis*, the goddess "treads the path that she untreads again" as she frets about the safety of Adonis. The Bard compares her behavior to "the proceedings of a drunken brain." The author of *Shakspeare [sic] and the Bible*, nitrous oxide pioneer G. Q. Colton (1814 to 1898) parlayed the American public's awareness of "drunken" behavior at recreational demonstrations of his "Colton gas" into public confidence in trying an apparently familiar agent, laughing gas, as an anesthetic for dental extraction. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA's Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Schaumburg, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.