

RECOLLECTIONS OF JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS DRAWINGS FOR HIS CHILDREN
AND GRANDCHILDREN.

I.



WAS at work under Gérôme at the École des Beaux-Arts in the winter of 1872-73. On the Rue Buonaparte, near the school, was an old print-shop, and in the windows were engravings ancient and modern. Among them I noted most frequently some woodcuts after Millet's drawings—one series, "Morning," "Noon," "Evening," and "Night"; the other, eight or ten drawings of figures at work, "Reaping," "Mowing," "Chopping," "Spinning," etc. I was never tired looking at these, and never got by the shop without stopping to see at least the man mowing—the naturalness of the swing of his body, his foot so firmly planted upon the earth. This was my first acquaintance with Millet, although in America I had seen a lithograph of his "Women Sewing," which seemed like Frère to me, but larger and more robust. Some Americans of the Latin Quarter went down to Barbizon in the winter for a few days of recreation. When they came back they told me that Barbizon was on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, that Millet lived there near the hotel, and that his studio window looked out on to the street.

On hearing this I was very sorry that I had not gone down with the party, but resolved that in the spring I would see Barbizon, the forest, and at least the outside of Millet's house.

I saw one or two landscapes by Millet at Durand-Rouel's, which did not impress me strongly at the time; but I became familiar with the works of Delacroix, Corot, Rousseau, Diaz, and Jules Dupré, and my sympathies at once became concentrated upon these masters. Later in the spring, at an exhibition at the Hôtel Drouot, where all of these men and other strong ones were represented in force (I remember how thin and pale a Meissonier looked), I saw a painting by Millet—a mother sewing by an oil lamp, her baby asleep beside her. The reality of this scene, the naturalness of movement, the perfection of expression, the charm, separated it from all other pictures, and from that moment Millet was to me the greatest of modern painters.

I went down to Barbizon in the early summer. I found the hotel jolly, the forest grand, and Millet's large studio window always in view.

The village was so small, with but one narrow street, that I felt the chances strongly in favor of my meeting Millet, and possibly of making his acquaintance. So, with one or two sketches in the forest, I went back to Paris to make one more study in the class, and to pack my traps and lay in a stock of material for the summer.

I worked hard and saw a great deal of Millet's house and studio from the street and the field behind, where a road ran through going into the forest. There was never an evening that I did not go out for a walk, and whichever direction I took I always found that my road was by Millet's house in going and that I came back by the same way. Millet's studio was a detached building, separated from the house by a yard; the house, like the studio, was built on the line of the wall on the side of the road. The dining-room window opened into the street, and I sometimes got a glimpse of the family as they sat at their evening meal—a cheerful, noisy lot of young people; and at the table, later in the evening, I once saw Millet's face distinctly in profile: the nose seemed very long, and I thought he looked like the portrait of Titian. No one at that time could have persuaded me that I should ever sit in that cheerful home and talk with Millet. I found that very little was seen of him in the village. I met a number of artists who had lived for a long time at Barbizon, but none of them seemed to know him. "Siron's," the inn, was the general resort for the artist inhabitants of the place, and they, together with the boarders, made a noisy crowd in the billiard and dining rooms in the evening or on a rainy afternoon; but Millet never came round to drink a glass of beer or to play a game of billiards. So the artists called him a bear, and had doubts of his ability to paint; but the peasant people found in him a good neighbor nevertheless, and if any one was in trouble Madame Millet was the first person thought of in the way of aid.

By good fortune I became acquainted with Mr. William Babcock of Boston, who had lived abroad for many years, and at that time had become fixed at Barbizon. His house was filled with engravings, photographs, or casts of nearly all the finest things that had been produced in art, and in him I found a man responding in every thought to the beauties of the treasures of art and nature about him. He

had taken some lessons from Millet many years before in Paris, and always had seen a good deal of him, and his enthusiasm for Millet and Millet's work was without bounds. He had bought from Millet at different times a number of drawings and sketches, some of them of great beauty and rare finish. He also had hanging about his studio several studies in oil and some finished paintings by Millet, also several by Delacroix and Diaz. All these he had bought for small sums, saved from a limited income, while studying in the schools of Paris. Thus while in the country painting from nature I was able to increase my knowledge of ancient art and of the best modern masters. Babcock had carefully preserved photographs of everything of Millet's that had been reproduced. With these, the drawings, and Babcock's descriptions I became acquainted more fully with Millet's art and its history. I found to be true what I had felt from the first, that Millet was one man in a century; that his love and sympathy for nature were unbounded. I had suffered much pain in finding — I imagined it so at least — that but few artists really loved nature. They seemed to care only for that which it suited them to paint; but in Millet I had found a man who adored the stars, the moon, and the sun, the earth, the air, and everything that the sun shone upon. And through this love everything that he touched, frequently the least things of the earth, became monuments. I felt it a privilege to live so near this man.

Thus I passed the summer with much hard and pleasant work and with many plans and schemes for a visit to Millet, but always abandoning them as soon as made. Finally the nearness for the time of my return for the reopening of the schools in Paris gave me a new courage. So one Sunday, judging carefully the probable hour that the Millet family would have finished their noonday meal, I tapped at the door and asked for François, the eldest son, with whom I had made a bowing acquaintance through occasional meetings in the fields or the woods. I asked him for his father's permission to visit his studio; also the privilege of calling upon him at his own studio. The last request he at once granted, and going to his father brought word that he would see me in half an hour. This time I spent in trembling and happy expectancy, returning at the time fixed. Millet gave me a friendly shake of the hand and showed me through the door of his sacred workroom.

Everything was plain and gray. An old green curtain hung across the lower part of the window, which is not unusual in a studio, but two features seemed to me to belong distinctively to this. The window was at the left on entering the room; at the farther end, beyond

the easel, was a large mirror, which I imagined was used by Millet to study a movement which he would give himself, or a detail of folds from his own clothing. I am warranted in this from his having used this mirror in calling my attention to certain facts of form and detail upon his own body while criticizing, upon another day, some drawings that I had brought him.

The other object which struck me was a curtain suspended from the nearer side of the window and hanging at right angles with it. Behind this Millet would retire to look at his work or to show it to visitors, the curtain intercepting the light, and making the picture seen with greater ease.

The walls were of plaster, darkened by time; heavy rafters crossed the ceiling; a few plaster casts hung about the walls—reliefs from the Trajan Column, heads by Donatello and Luca della Robbia, the arm of Michael Angelo's "Slave," some small Gothic figures and antique torsos, besides some Gothic figures carved in wood, of which Millet was very fond. All the studio accessories or decorations were so unobtrusive that I did not see any of them on my first visit. No pictures were in sight. A large frame hanging over the already mentioned mirror, which I afterwards found to contain a rather highly colored seventeenth-century master, was covered with a quiet drapery, but the end and right-hand side walls were closely stacked with canvases and with frames for temporary use containing canvases, all standing on the floor, their faces turned to the wall. Immediately upon entering the studio Millet took one of these, and, placing it upon the easel in the middle of the room, signaled me to stand with him behind the curtain, which placed us at a considerable distance from the picture. He put before me in this way ten or a dozen pictures, generally in frames, and in an advanced state of completion, always returning the picture to its place in its stack against the wall. As I have said, up to this time I had seen but few of Millet's completed paintings: therefore the full force of his power and greatness was revealed to me then, and in his presence words were certainly of little value in expressing my feelings. But the master was evidently satisfied and pleased with my rapt wonder and admiration, and seemed to approve of my difficultly worded comments. He insisted that the pictures should be seen at a considerable distance, say at four or five times their greatest width or height, but called me near sometimes that I might see the simplicity of execution or the few touches required in producing multiplicity and infinity in effect.

A comment by Millet which impressed me strongly was this: he wished in a landscape to give the feeling that you are looking at a piece

of nature—that the mind shall be carried on and outside its limits to that which is lying to the right and left of the picture, beyond the horizon, and to bring the foreground still nearer, surrounding the spectator with the vegetation or growth belonging to that place. He showed me a canvas with the “Two Spaders” in heavy ink outline. In reply to some remarks, I think, he showed me the large reed pen with which he had drawn it. Several of the pictures showed this same ink outline underneath, notably “The Cowherd,” which, although complete in its effectiveness as a picture, was painted very thinly in transparent colors—opaque tones being used only in the sky and in one or two of the cows in the foreground. This was undoubtedly the work of a single day, or of a few hours, after the picture had been drawn in outline.

Another picture in an early stage was the “Women returning with Fagots.” This was more simply painted, the whole picture having been put in with three or four tones; the effect was nevertheless very complete and impressive—much more so than the pastel of the same subject. The climax of Millet’s power which was revealed to me that day was a still-life study—three pears lying on a plate or table. I felt that I was looking at a picture of no less interest than his larger and more complicated compositions. In the pears I found all the tones of a landscape, in the twisted stems I seemed to see the weather-worn tree, and the modeling of the fruit was studied and rendered with the same interest that he would have given to a hill or a mountain or to the human body. At the same time it was none the less a most faithful presentation of three pears. Millet seemed well pleased in my declaring this to be equal in interest to his other pictures. I now more fully understood his aims in art, and this little still-life was certainly one of his triumphs. Did he not write, “One must be able to make use of the trivial for the expression of the sublime”? And on his death-bed, while looking out into his garden and at his closed studio door, longing like a young man for more opportunities for work, he described to his son, not colossal canvases and multitudes of figures, but a quiet nook in his native Normandy—the side of a hill, a road, and a few trees. Could he but live he had so much that he would still say; he would show what could be done with this simple material.

Millet testified a rare friendliness in talking to me without reserve of himself, of his loneliness and isolation. This conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a friend who was spending the day at the house. I then asked Millet some questions relating to my studies of art—was anatomy necessary or worth while?

Yes, all study was useful; but the larger constructions, the planes and surfaces, must ever be kept in mind. I questioned him about “values,” and of thin and solid painting. He treated the subject of values in a way so much larger and more general than we, students of the school of the day, understood, that he was soon beyond my reach. In regard to heavy painting I told him of a picture of his which I had recently seen in Paris, “*Œdipus being taken from the Tree*,” in which the child’s face was actually modeled in relief with the pigments. He laughed heartily, and replied that he was “very young when he painted it.” Millet was always impatient of detail or particularity in methods. He once said that much must be learned and forgotten before the painter could really be at the command of his own powers.

I had been discussing the question of the beautiful in nature, and before leaving Millet I asked him, although I knew well his answer, if anything in nature was not beautiful; but his reply came with a directness and force that satisfied me beyond my expectations: “The man who finds any phase or effect in nature not beautiful, the lack is in his own heart.” I had been so cordially entertained that in leaving I had no feeling of having staid too long or of having intruded upon the master’s precious time. Millet readily granted me permission to bring him my work for criticism. I then went across the field to the studio of the son, where I found upon his easel a harvest field—a mower sitting in the road and sharpening his scythe in a manner common to the laborers of that country. The painting was much in the method and spirit of the father’s art, having not a little of his opulence and charm of color. I then thought, and time has confirmed my belief, that when the same justice has been given the son that at so late an hour was accorded the father he will be hailed as the great pupil of and co-worker with Millet, and the question of whether the work was executed by father or by son will be of diminished importance.

History furnishes us with plenty of such instances. We no longer complain that Andrea had not the individuality and was not so original in his art creations as Luca della Robbia.

After a little time Millet came in, looked at the picture, and gave a few words of criticism and approval. This unexpected visit gave me a new opportunity to ply fresh questions,—Millet talked much of nature and of art,—but my mind was already filled to overflowing, and I never could recall this hour or two of invaluable words from the master.

I remember well the effect produced upon me by this rare afternoon. I needed air and motion to quiet my nerves; I seemed not to



JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET.

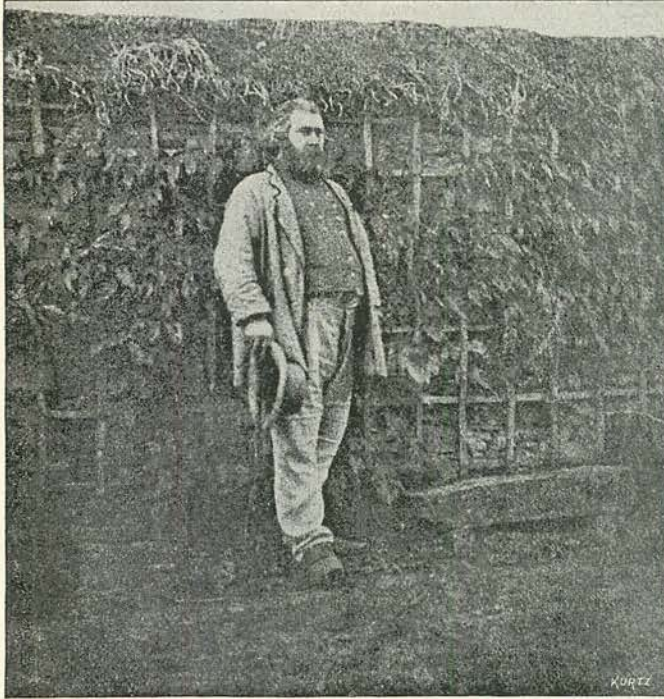
touch the ground as I walked. I could almost affirm at this distant day that the air was buoyant, and that it carried me along without effort on my part. I was in a new atmosphere, a new world; never before had I felt the plain to stretch off into such distances, such vividness and mellowness of color, such depth in the sky.

I saw Millet again before my return to Paris, and showed him a few studies and pictures. He found in my work a lack of simplicity, too much of unnecessary detail, the "planes" not well felt, and a smallness in the attachments of the limbs to the body. He made some outlines to explain his remarks that had the simplicity of the early Egyptian or Assyrian carvings. His criticisms upon the more technical points

were much the same as those of Gérôme and Munkacsy given me upon some of the same things. This served to convince me, even at this early day, that in technicality there were larger principles which govern all good art.

I returned to Barbizon again in the winter, and remained several weeks to finish a picture begun in the autumn. François Millet and I were much together, and I sometimes took coffee with the family in the evening. At these times Millet sat at the table like a patriarch, as he has so often been described, surrounded by his large and handsome family, his manner always cordial and full of hospitality.

In the spring I saw him in Paris; he had come with Madame Millet and François for



MILLET ABOUT FORTY YEARS OF AGE. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN HIS GARDEN.)

further information in regard to an order he had received from M. de Chennevières, the Minister of Fine Arts, for the decoration of one of the chapels of the Pantheon, and to see the chapel in which the paintings were to be placed. I went with François and found him with Madame Millet eating their lunch at the Duval restaurant in the Rue Montesquieu. Millet was cutting his bread with his knife like a peasant, and good-humoredly complained of having to come to Paris. He showed me the written order from the minister and granted my request to be permitted to find his address. He seemed much pleased in having been chosen for this work, and with the subject assigned him. His mood was more light and gay than I had known him to possess. We then went to the Palais Royal and took coffee out-of-doors. Millet was full of reminiscences of his early life in Paris. He told me how a dealer would come to him for a picture. Having nothing painted, he would offer the dealer a book and ask him to wait for a little while that he might add a few touches to a picture. He would then go into his studio and take a fresh canvas or a panel and in two hours bring out a little nude figure, which he had painted during that time, and for which he would receive twenty or twenty-five francs. We have in later days seen these pictures sold for as many thousands. Millet did not live to know anything of the large prices which are now familiar to us. It was only a few

years before his death that the "Angelus" exchanged hands for \$10,000. This seemed to him enormous, and he spoke of it to a friend in an apologetic tone, assuring him that he had nothing to do with the transaction.

If my memory serves me rightly, he was getting about five thousand francs for the larger and more important pictures upon which he was working during the last years of his life, and at that time he was dependent upon advances upon incompleting work. This was probably owing to the fact that as he was able to command larger prices he lingered more over his work, always striving for greater simplicity, force of expression, depth of color, for greater perfection in finish, which the small prices of earlier days would not permit.

I knew Millet to have had very flattering offers from dealers, who wished to place unlimited sums at his disposal provided he would work for them. He refused all offers, preferring to continue his more independent existence.

I returned again to Barbizon for the summer of 1874. This was Millet's last. How far I was from knowing that I was spending with him his last well evenings! I knew that his health was not good and that he did not go for long walks as in former years, but I thought his illness some chronic disease that would not shorten his life. I never heard his illness referred to further than that he would sometimes complain of indigestion and ask for orange-flower water. Once, late in the summer, he lightly spoke of his lack of energy, and said that he would sit and dig with his brush at the dry paint on his palette rather than go to his table for fresh colors.

At this time I found Millet deeply occupied with the compositions for the "History of Saint Geneviève." In all his leisure moments he was preoccupied with this work. I would call after dinner to take coffee with François or to go with him for a walk and would find the father sitting alone at the table, first staring at the cloth, then passing his finger over the surface before him as if drawing, holding his open hands on either side of the place where he had been making indications, and looking as at a completed sketch; then perhaps he would make the

movement of obliterating it with his hand, and seeming to dismiss it from his mind he would then recommence his invisible markings. Millet explained his preoccupation, and would always ask me to excuse his silence.

This was generally in the yard or garden, between the house and the studio, where the family dined during the pleasant summer evenings. In talking of the decorations, Millet referred to the difficulties of the composition. The lighting of the chapel was so dim that he wished to make the figures tell in silhouette either in light against dark, or in dark against light. He thought it the work of the historical painter to make the story so plain and complete that it would be told by the paintings without previous knowledge or the aid of books.

The sketches for this series that Millet left were very slight. I saw several of them, only a few outlines in charcoal on small canvases, the movement of the figures indicated with long sweeping strokes. Thus was the master taken away while making preparations for that which, in a certain sense, would have been the most important work of his life.

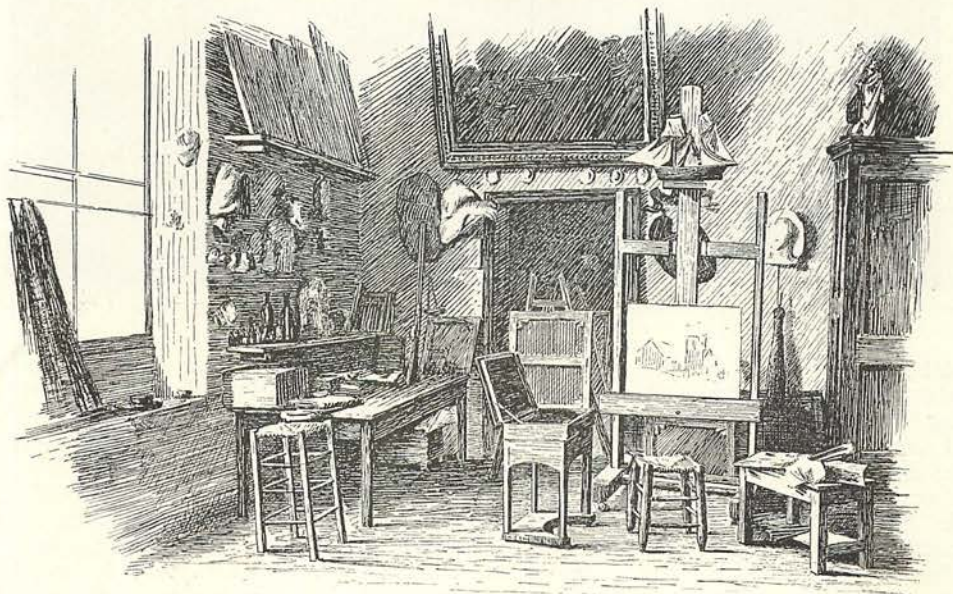
During this summer and autumn I spent many evenings with Millet in playing dominoes. He was very fond of the game, and as his eyes would not permit him to draw or read by lamp-light, this was his only means of diversion. Although I did my best, Millet was generally the winner, and he would indulge in much hilarity over my misfortunes. I have always regretted

my excessive delicacy in not asking for a sketch which he made on the tallying sheet on which I had been marked the loser in every game. It was a figure stretched upon a tomb, and labeled my effigy.

Frequently some of the family were in Paris and would be expected home by the late omnibus; on these evenings we generally kept at the game until its arrival at half-past twelve or one o'clock. I would rarely talk of art matters, unless the subject was started by Millet, and this was not often. Had I been less youthful and inexperienced how many valuable opinions might I have obtained from this great mind. On the other hand, without this youth and inexperience, Millet might have been more reserved with me.

I once ventured to ask him his opinion of Japanese pictures. He did not express that absolute admiration which I expected. I then asked him if he did not think them superior to the work of the fashionable Parisian painter. He replied, "Most decidedly; but their work is far from the beauty of Fra Angelico."

I more frequently talked to Millet of himself, and he always answered my questions very freely: in conversation, as in painting, he had practiced the art, you might say, of formulating his ideas in the most concise language,—waiting to arrange his sentences before speaking. This peculiarity was probably accentuated in conversation with me, as my knowledge of French was imperfect, and Millet was always anxious



LYELL CARR

MILLET'S STUDIO. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY KARL BODMER MADE SEVERAL YEARS AFTER MILLET'S DEATH, GIVING A PARTIAL ASPECT OF THE STUDIO AS IT WAS WHEN OCCUPIED BY MILLET.)



THE SOWER.¹ ENGRAVED BY T. COLE, AFTER AN AUTOTYPE BY AD. BRAUN, FROM THE PAINTING NOW IN POSSESSION OF WILLIAM C. WHITNEY.

lest he should use a term that I would not understand. But his French always seemed as clear to me as my native tongue.

I once said to him that he must have a remarkable memory to be able to work, as was his wont, without nature before him. He replied that in that sense he had not, but that which touched his heart he retained.

In regard to working from nature Millet once said to me, "I can say I have never painted (or worked) from nature"; and gave

¹ Reprinted from the issue of this magazine for November, 1880.

as his reason, "*nature does not pose.*" I would like this to be clearly understood; Millet had well weighed his words in stating that he had never worked from nature. This was without reference to his student days, when he drew and painted like others from the model; but from the beginning of his production of pictures he seems to have recognized the fact that "*nature does not pose.*" Always looking upon her as animate,—moving, and living,—he recorded by the most simple means the stable facts observed during nature's transitions. With the exception of several painted studies

of his parental home, and of other places dear to his childhood memories, which were in fact pictures in every sense, well composed and effective in light and shade, drawn probably from nature, but painted more from memory, I have never seen any work from nature of Millet's that was not memorandum-like in character, indicating by outline and shadow the principal contour; accenting here and there a prominent or important muscle, or some particular form which he would find to be the key to the expression of the form or action which he sought. Almost all other painters have left us studies elaborately wrought out either in color or in chalk, surpassing even in detail and research the parts in the picture for which these studies were used.

Upon my first visit to Millet he took from his pocket a sketch-book about two and a half

The other qualities of the landscape were too fleeting. He had copied all that would pose for him, as with the ricks; his memory and knowledge supplied the rest. Again I have authority for stating that Millet was not indifferent to or incapable of working from nature, or of applying it to his pictures in progress. His son has frequently told me of his desire to make more studies from the living model, and his regret at not being able to do so. It seemed to be difficult for Millet to approach people that he wanted to have pose for him, and this office of asking a peasant man or woman to sit for him always fell upon his wife. But these sittings were never long nor tiresome; he wanted only the few facts of form or color which that particular model could give him. For a detail or a special quality he would at times take the greatest pains. Madame Millet has told me



WOOD-CUTTER AND HIS WIFE.

by three and a half inches in size, and showed me upon one of these little pages his study for the wheat-ricks which were the principal objects in his picture called "Winter." This sketch, like many others of the same character, was a masterpiece; every line was vital, the sinking and bulging of the ricks showing the effect of storm and weather. But the absolute modeling in light and shade, the texture of the straw, etc., was not attempted. This the artist supplied in his painting — not by more elaborate drawings or studies in color, but by his knowledge and memory, and by the observation of other wheat-ricks under similar effects as those represented in his picture.

Some of his landscape studies in outline with pen and ink were the exact record of proportion and construction, resembling rather the work of a topographical engineer.

of having worn the roughest of peasant dresses about the house and garden for weeks, that when it pleased him her husband might call upon her to pose for some part of a picture upon which he would be at work, and of Millet compelling her to wear the same shirt for an uncomfortably long time; not to paint the dirt, as the early critics of Millet would have us believe, but that the rough linen should simplify its folds and take the form of the body, that he might give a fresher and stronger accent to those qualities he so loved — the garment becoming, as it were, a part of the body, and expressing, as he has said, even more than the nude, the larger and more simple forms of nature.

A memorable evening was one spent in the discussion of the beautiful in art. Before Millet had left the dining-table, I think, I asked him to decide a point which was giving me much



THE OGRE.

village. An artist friend had advised me to take this out, as it destroyed the "beauty" of the picture. My friend's criticism was probably a good one; his meaning was that the chief attraction in the picture lay in the simplicity and expanse of the plain. The wall in the foreground, not being an object of interest, detracted from the real interest of the picture, the fields and the wide horizon. But I clung to my desire to express with the wall the entrance to a village. I began telling this to Millet, but got no further than my friend's opinion, that the wall destroyed the beauty of the picture. This worked Millet up to an extreme degree; I might say it put him into a towering rage.

The criticism he took as an expression of the prevalent idea of the beautiful, which he could not listen to with calmness. To him beauty was the fit, the appropriate, the serviceable, the character well rendered, an idea well wrought out, "with largeness and simplicity." This last Millet would put in at times, as if in parenthesis. I often thought of it as the weak point in his argument. This was his bias; he could not separate beauty from *grandeur*: but I listened and did not argue; in fact, there was no chance. Millet went from one illustration to another. Of my picture he said that if I had not composed it in a way that would express my thought, it was a failure. "The artist's first task is to find an arrangement (or composition) that will give a full and striking expression to his idea." Seeming to find words inadequate, he took the lamp and went over to his studio, bringing back photographs from the frescos of Giotto. As he showed me these treasures, each one was a fresh triumph. "Had he not told me so," his manner seemed to say; "was not character beauty? Was not that which fitted its place beautiful? Was not the naturalness of that action beautiful, although it was only one man washing the feet of another?" He then took me into his bedroom and showed me, hanging on the wall, an engraving of a "Nativity" by Titian. He criticised in this the accessories as



PULLING OFF THE OGRE'S BOOTS.

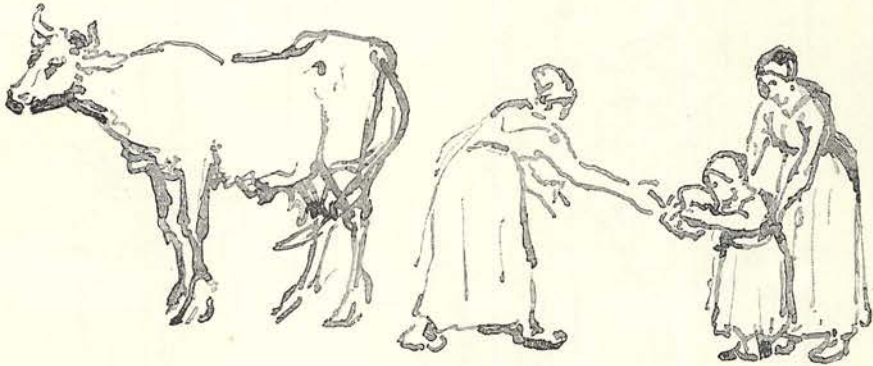
lacking the character of a stable; the figures wanting the ruggedness of the peasant type; and, above all, the unnaturalness of having the child naked. "Why was it not warmly wrapped in woolen clothes?" His answer to all this was, "This is the beginning of *la belle peinture*." Millet then turned to another engraving, after Poussin—a man upon his death-bed. "How simple and austere the interior; only that which is necessary, no more; the grief of the family, how abject; the calm movement of the physician as he lays the back of his hand upon the dying man's heart; and the dying man, the care and sorrow in his face, and his hands—perhaps your friend would not call them beautiful, but they show age, toil, and suffering: ah! these are infinitely more beautiful to me than the delicate hands of Titian's peasants."

I have often been told of the magnificent appearance of Millet as a young man—tall,

all a dark brown, the beard strong and heavy; in his last years they were of an iron gray. His voice was clear and firm, rather low in pitch, and not of that deep bass or sonorous quality one might have expected from so massive a physique.

Aside from sabots, which he always wore in the country, he in no way affected the peasant dress, as has been stated by the English, but wore a soft felt hat, and easy fitting clothes such as you might see anywhere among the farmers or country people of America. It was only on going to Paris that he would put on leather shoes, a black coat, and silk hat—his apparel on these occasions causing much discomfort. To his family he never seemed like himself when dressed for Paris.

I rarely saw Millet out-of-doors,—that is, away from his yard,—but I have vividly impressed upon my memory an evening, the fields,



A DRINK OF FRESH MILK.

proud, square, and muscular, of enormous strength. As I knew him he was broad and deep-chested, large and rather portly, always quite erect, his chest well out. Two Americans have reminded me of Millet—George Fuller in the general appearance of his figure, and Walt Whitman in his large and easy manner. His face always impressed me as long, but it was large in every way. All the features were large except the eyes, which at the same time were not small; they must have been very blue when young. The nose was finely cut, with large, dilating nostrils; the mouth firm; the forehead remarkable for its strength—not massive, but in the three-quarters view of the head, where usually the line commences to recede near the middle of the forehead, with him it continued straight to an unusual height. A daguerreotype, now unfortunately effaced, made when he was about thirty-five years of age, without a beard, showed him to have a large chin and strong lower face, expressive of great will and energy. The hair and the beard were origin-

and Millet himself striding along with a short cloak or overcoat thrown over his shoulders. It was on the open plain just back of his home. His "Spring," one of his last and finest landscapes, was almost a literal transcript of this spot. Millet, as I saw him from the distance, was as grand a figure as his "Sower" or any of his heroic types. His dress and general appearance, although not really that of a peasant,—but perhaps more his manner, his heavy tread, and his apparent absorption in all that surrounded him,—gave me the feeling that he was a part of nature, as he so well conceived the peasant as a part of the soil which he worked. I was on my way to François's studio, a little farther on at the edge of the forest. It was too dark for work, and we often walked together until the hour for dinner. Pierre, a younger brother of Millet, was spending a few weeks at Barbizon, and to give him employment for his hands Millet made a drawing on a block for him to engrave. Pierre worked on this industriously until it was finished, cutting

a very small piece each day, but that with great care. He put away his work — which he was doing in a small room adjoining François's studio — as I came in and started out for a walk. Soon after Millet himself entered, and examined with interest the engraved portion of the work. The drawing was made with the sharp point of a crayon, directly upon the block; every touch seemed intentional and full of expression. It represented a middle-aged man resting both hands and partly leaning upon the handle of his spade, his bare foot resting upon his sabot. I said to Millet that I admired the drawing exceedingly, and thought it as a picture complete. He replied that he was pleased with it himself, and that he would like to paint the composition,

was more significant of work than one in the act of spading: showing that he had worked and was fatigued, he was resting and would work again. In the same way he preferred to paint the middle-aged man rather than a young or an old one — the middle-aged man showing the effect of toil, his limbs crooked and his body bent, and years of labor still before him. And in type the laborer must show that he was born to labor, that labor is his fit occupation, that his father and father's father were tillers of the soil, and that his children and children's children shall continue the work their fathers have done before them. Millet was always severe on this point—that the artist should paint the typical, and not the exceptional.



LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD — STARTING OUT.

making the figure the size of life; and if I remember rightly he said that he intended to do so. He sat down, and, although he at first seemed but little inclined to talk, we no longer thought of our walk. François was always as eager as myself when his father talked of nature or of art. (I always heard him speak more of the former than of the latter.) It was late in September or early in October. Millet spoke of the great beauty of the season, but of its melancholy, and, as I thought, in a tone of depression. He brightened again, however, in returning to the subject of the drawing; he seemed to feel that it possessed the qualities which he insisted upon in art—*repose*, expressing more than action. The man leaning upon his spade

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If Millet's life and work were not a refutation of the charge of his being a revolutionist, the remarks he made that evening in speaking of this picture showed his attitude in regard to the question of labor and the laborer most conclusively. He spoke of the touching or sympathetic in biblical history, and of subjects he would like to or intended to paint. The theme which most appealed to him in the New Testament was where Joseph and Mary are turned away from the door of the inn before the birth of the Child, and in his description of the scene, as he had conceived it, I saw the picture painted with all the tenderness and pathos of his art.

This I think was my last talk with Millet



LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD—THE ARRIVAL AND SURPRISE.

on subjects of art. My last evenings before returning to Paris in October were spent with Millet at his favorite game of dominoes. He seemed full of contentment and in his usual spirits, and I left him without thought or knowledge of his failing health. With his work for the Pantheon and other projects on hand, his thoughts more than ever seemed to me to be for the future. Later in the autumn or the beginning of winter—I do not now remember

what errand took me to Barbizon—I was told of Millet's illness. I hastened to the house and found the family and Mr. Babcock in the dining-room, sitting silently as in the house of death. I took my place among them, asking no questions. Millet's room was adjoining. There also was silence. I took François by the hand and together we went out. His only words were, "All is over." We left each other, too much overcome for more.



LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD—DEVoured BY THE WOLF.



THE CRUEL MAN.

It was thought then that the end could only be stayed a few days, but he lingered until the 20th of January. His relatives and friends in Paris even revived their hopes of his recovery. Babcock wrote me the morning of his death, and I hastened to François. It was a bright wintry day. We went out through the garden gate to a seat against the wall where Millet so often had sat, watching the glowing or waning light upon the forest trees, the rolling plain, and the distant hills. François told me of his father's wishes to be buried as a farmer—that no printed announcements should be sent out, but that a neighbor should go from house to house through the village telling of his death and time of burial, according to the custom of the people of the country.

The day of the interment was dark and cold, with a dreary rain. Many uncovered and bowed heads followed him to where he was laid by the side of his well-loved friend Rousseau, in the little cemetery near the church whose roofs and tower have appeared in so many of his works.

II.

DURING Millet's lifetime I saw and became much interested in drawings made at different times for his children and grandchildren. Upon my return to France and Barbizon some years after, I obtained photographs of some of them, which are now reproduced, together with some account of their history and the circumstances under which they were made. Others, obtained by M. Gaston Feuardent from his brother, M. Felix Feuardent, Millet's son-in-law, give completeness to the illustration of this phase of Millet's work. François once told

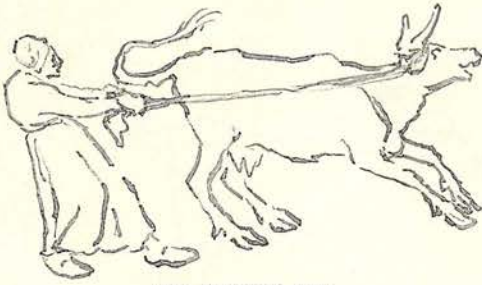
me of a drawing by his father, the wood-cutter and his wife in the story of "Le Petit Poucet." The point of the composition was to express that there was nothing in the house to eat. That rare faculty, unique I may say with Millet, of finding the expression of thought by the most simple means, served him in this instance—the man and woman are sitting dejectedly before the cold hearth, and conspicuous upon it is the *upturned* soup-pot. François recognized in the wood-cutter and his wife his own father and mother. Millet had transcribed the sad experience, that had more than once befallen them, of having no bread for the children. I did not have an opportunity to see the drawing until my return to France.

The history of its production is this: François was studying art, drawing from casts and from nature. Millet in talking with his son one evening told him that he should have more practice in composition, and asked whether, in reading, the images of things and scenes presented themselves to his imagination. François replying that they often did, the father asked him if he recalled anything that had impressed him. This was too sudden for the boy, and he could think of nothing, but asked his father if he had something to propose. Millet replied, "No; but wait, here is something quite simple. You know well 'Le Petit Poucet'; choose a subject in that. Do you want the passage, *Nous ne pouvons plus nourrir nos enfants, il faut les perdre dans la forêt?*" This subject was decided upon, Millet proposing that they should make it a *concour*. François began his drawing at once, but Millet sat thoughtfully, his head resting upon his hand, only beginning as his son was finishing. François waited impatiently, until Millet finally took up his sketch and examined it, remarking as he did so, "*Pas mal*, but it is too much everybody's interpretation of the theme; there is something more forcible [*poignant*] to be made of it. There," showing his drawing, "is my idea"; and François, seeing this, admitted that he was beaten.

How characteristic this drawing is of Millet. In this story, generally thought of as made to amuse and frighten little children, he found the most melancholy and tragic experience in



THE HORSE'S REVENGE.



THE FRACTIOUS COW.

human life. The drawings of the ogre from the same story were made much earlier, in 1856 or 1857, when François was but six or seven years of age. François teased his father unceasingly for a "portrait" of the ogre, until he finally made it for him one evening in his little copy-book, in which François, in learning to write, had drawn straight lines, "pot-hooks," etc. François has carefully preserved this book, which is nearly filled with Millet's sketches and drawings. Some of the pages are covered with sketches, ideas for pictures, or figures in movement. "The grafting" is sketched several times on one of the leaves, the whole picture covering no more than a square inch; likewise other pictures which have since become famous. The first drawing of the ogre's head was made with lead-pencil. Millet evidently began with the idea only of amusing the child; but becoming interested himself in what this suggested to him, he recommenced another head, then made a separate study of the mouth and teeth, and finally took up his crayon and drew the final "portrait." While drawing the head he did not cease to talk of the ogre, imitating his voice and expression, growling like an angry beast, showing how he would open his mouth and how he would bite and tear the flesh of little boys, keeping François in a state of intense wonder and alarm.

What has been told of the saints experiencing in their own bodies the suffering of Christ was true with Millet in his art. Working as he did almost without models, he was his own model for everything, feeling deeply, and giving the action with intensity and reality.

At this same time he made other drawings of the ogre—one standing, in full costume, another asleep, with "Le Petit Poucet" pulling off his boots. The family preserve other sketches



THE STUMBLING HORSE.

— quite slight, but showing a careful seeking after arrangement — of the wood-chopper and his wife taking the children into the forest, with compositions of the children left alone, and in one the parents stealing away leaving their little ones behind them to perish. Nothing could be sadder than the expression of the father and mother leading the children into the woods. Millet in his whole art has depended rather upon the attitude or movement of the figure for expression than upon the face. In this subject, in which so much is expressed, the figures are going away from the observer, and only a few lines indicating the backs are given.

The Red Riding-hood sketches were made between the years 1872 and 1874 for the youngest daughter, who was about the age of little Red Riding-hood at that time, and Millet evidently had his little girl in mind while making the drawings. Like the drawings of the ogre, these also were made one evening at the children's request. François was by this time a man and an artist, and as he too was looking over his father's shoulder, this perhaps will account for some of the drawings being made with less



A FALL FROM A HORSE.

direct reference to the child's understanding. Not that they are less simple, but they are not so clearly defined. The first drawing was slightly indicated with a lead-pencil and then firmly drawn with pen and ink. He wished to express, as he certainly has done, the wondering, stupid little child who had never before been so far away from home. After this drawing Millet went on more-hastily with a crayon, telling the story and talking about the little girl's conversation with the wolf, etc., making the sketches to illustrate his verbal story, rather than telling the story to explain the drawings.

The more simple drawings, like the horses and the child feeding the goat, were also the last of the drawings for children. Millet made them in great numbers for his first grandchild, little Antoine. He would take a match that had been lighted, rub off the burned part, and dip in ink the point that was thus formed, using this rather than pen or pencil, because of the



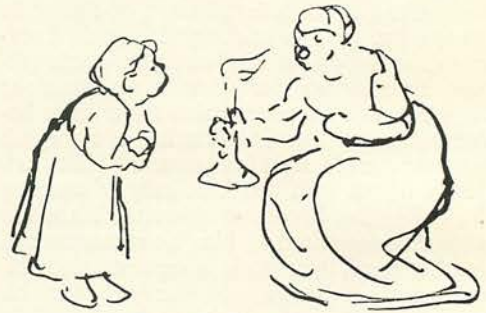
FEEDING THE GOAT.

large and decided mark it would make. Antoine was still a baby not yet able to talk, but the great Millet was great enough to reach the child, to delight and please him, and the baby would find a way without words to show that he understood.

Antoine's aunt, the little Red Riding-hood, had a goat of which Antoine was very fond (Millet, by the way, did not have to depart from his type in drawing Antoine a strong, lusty baby), and he recognized the goat at once when his grandfather showed him the drawing, and reached out his arms like the child in the drawing, imitating the cry of the goat. It was a great gratification and pleasure for Millet to be able in this way to reach the child's understanding.

One evening Millet said, "I will make one now which I don't think he will understand, but we will see"; so he drew the little Antoine, with his cheeks puffed out, blowing an enormous candle with an equally enormous flame. The baby looked intently at this for a while, and

then turned with satisfaction and blew at the candle or lamp on the table. This was a real triumph, and Millet remarked to his son the importance of this as a principle in art; that as he had exaggerated the size of the candle in order that the child could see it easily and



BLOWING OUT THE CANDLE.

would notice it, so in painting, certain forms, effects, and expressions should be accented, exaggerated, or brought into stronger relief.

Wyatt Eaton.

UNHINDERED.

FAR westward is a snow-bound train;
Eastward, a soul is saying,
"Though I have looked so long in vain
This is not love's delaying;
For I have such a certain sense
Of answer: it is prescience."

The letter, from its barriers free,
Hastes to the love that waited.
Lo! its first words: "So close are we,
That, if by snow belated,
This message you are sure to feel
The day before you break the seal."

O ye, that never dwell apart,
Though half a globe may sever,
Thus will it be, when heart to heart
Can show no sign forever!
Though death-snows loom like Himalāy,
Yet soul to soul, unbarred, will fly.

Charlotte Fiske Bates.