
Francis Davis Millet: A Memoir

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FRANCIS DAVIS MILLET

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marched straight towards it, would let nothing stand in its way, that is the Millet whom we must always mourn and miss. It would be hard to say how much the School of Rome has lost in his death. It seems the irony of fate that at the very moment when the man and the place had found each other he should be taken from us. In one of his last let-

ters to me, in referring to the Villa Aurelia, recently willed to the School of Rome, he said, "We do not half realize what we have received, it is the very finest place on top of God's earth." He did not live to enter into occupation of this Promised Land, but at least he had seen it from a Mount of Vision and had prophesied to us of its future.

FRANCIS DAVIS MILLET—A MEMOIR

BY CARROLL BECKWITH

TO write worthily of a man who filled successfully so many spheres, and to address an audience, such as the readers of *ART AND PROGRESS* constitute, which knew him so intimately, and by whom he was so generally beloved, is no easy task. Yet, I gladly lift my voice in reverential love and praise of our departed friend.

Francis D. Millet was always in the front rank of endeavor for all that our profession holds most sacred in its art.

Memories flock to all our minds wherein his personality is dominant. Mine began back in '74, down by the Giardino

Publico in Venice. In the little house, ornamented by the American brass door-plate bearing the name of "Bunce," which he had rented, I first met him wrestling with a large canvas depicting fishermen and gondoliers gathered in the sunshine on the Riva. Even then his keen eyes were on the lookout for what might be happening on the Continent of Europe that would give the bread-winning pen material. It was not long after that we heard of him in the field of the Turko-Russian War. In the late seventies I saw him in Paris when he had his studio up on Montmartre, and at which time

he met the charming lady who became his wife. A few years after in New York he had his studio and apartment on Fifth Avenue opposite the Windsor Hotel, and here it was that meetings constantly took place of the various committees to carry on the warfare against the high duty on works of art, and the carrying on of the struggling life of the Society of American Artists. Every movement for the advancement of the cause in our country had his co-operation. It is in this broad sphere of helpfulness to others that Millet's life has been distinguished for nearly half a century. Had he worked more for himself, had he been less devoted to the general uplift of his profession, and devoted himself exclusively to his personal out-put, he would have left a greater number of paintings. This is evident from the period of his residence in Broadway, Worcestershire, when

he produced a succession of canvases of high excellence. But he could not resist a call for active usefulness when his clear intelligence and great energy were in demand. The confidence he inspired in his co-workers was so complete that important results were quickly attained without discussion. The last undertaking, in which he has lost his life, was particularly suited to his gifts. The adjustment of relations between our two American Academies in Rome, and to bring them together under the one roof, in the beautiful villa inherited from the late Mrs. Heyland, together with the necessary buildings to be erected, was a duty fitted for his great tact and force. His loss is one almost, if not quite, impossible to fill. We have, however, his spirit and example fresh in our memory, and we know that our world has been the better for his presence in it.

FRANCIS DAVIS MILLET — A REMINISCENCE

BY GEORGE W. MAYNARD

MY first meeting with Frank Millet was in 1871 when he came to Antwerp and entered the Royal Academy of Fine Arts—he received first medal the following spring. In the spring of 1873 he won the medal in the highest class, which in conjunction with the medal the previous year was unprecedented in the history of the Academy. His invariable good humor and his ability to adapt himself to his surroundings made him a great favorite with all.

In the spring of 1873 he was appointed Secretary of the Massachusetts Commission to the World's Fair, Vienna. He had an unusual facility for learning a language. Before he had been many months in Antwerp he could speak Flemish with such fluency as to astonish the natives; he knew all the popular songs and sang them in Antwerp dialect. While on a two weeks' trip through

Transylvania he learned enough Hungarian to deliver a short address in that language to a Unitarian Congregation. He had learned some modern Greek from a room-mate at Harvard, consequently he had no difficulty in his travels through Turkey and Greece. So, also, in Italy, the language was easily acquired, but he knew best the Venetian dialect. He was as expert with an oar as any gondolier—and could be as slangy, if occasion required. Millet could turn his hand to anything and do it as well as another; one of the first things he did after his return from Venice was to build a Sandola; it would have taken an expert to detect that it was not turned out from a Venetian boat yard. I have known him to take the drum from a Prussian drummer and beat a ruffle, or a guitar from a Spaniard and play a fandango.

While in Italy, at the request of the