

The Late Francis Davis Millet



MAIL COACH ON THE PLAINS
THE CLEVELAND POST-OFFICE

BY FRANCIS D. MILLET

THE LATE FRANCIS DAVIS MILLET—NOTES ON THE DECORATIVE PANELS IN THE CLEVELAND POST OFFICE BY C. MATLACK PRICE

It is difficult to write of the art of the late Francis D. Millet in terms disassociated from his personality, for great as was his art, those who knew him—and there are many—speak first of the man. And perhaps it is the greater tribute.

It has recently become the vogue to decry and discount the utterance of laudatory remarks upon recently deceased celebrities. "*De mortui nihil nisi bonum*" seems to find little favor with latter-day critics, but in the present case, either in Millet's public or in his private life, any detractor must stand self-convicted of stupidity, or ignorance, or both. For Millet's life was one of noble actions and high ideals, and his heroic death, among the victims of the ill-fated *S. S. Titanic*, was a closing chapter as fit as it was untimely.

Of New England birth, in the year 1846, Millet completed a brilliant career at Harvard, graduating with the class of 1869. At this period it seemed a question whether the brush or the pencil would claim his ultimate activities, for he attained a skillful finish in the writing of fiction. As a linguist he distinguished himself by writing a translation of Tolstoi's *Sebastapol*. In 1877 he acted as a war correspondent in the Russo-Turkish War of that year, when the Czar had occasion to decorate him for signal bravery on the battlefield, and some years later Millet was again heard from at the front as a war correspond-

ent to the London *Times* in the Philippines. His more pacific activities and interests were legion, for he became generally known as everyone's friend—an active and sympathetic counselor, and a man who never shirked any obligation, real or fancied, public or private. His interest, sympathy and insight endeared him to everyone with whom he had occasion to work, and he was never weighed and found wanting. On the art committee of New York, and on that of Washington, he was an active member, and felt it his duty never to miss a meeting if he could possibly attend it. Among other similar activities we find him to have been a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the incorporator and secretary of the American Academy of Art in Rome, and the organizer of the National Federation of Art for the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Nor did he consider any of these offices nominal. He made his personality and ambitions one with the work which he entered upon, and was not only an officer or member of these and many other organizations, but an active worker in their interests.

Apart from these activities, which might be classed as associated with his work, we find that he even had time to take a very keen and practical interest in a tubercular hospital founded by his brother.

An interesting incident is told which illustrates his ever-ready interest in attending to matters of any kind which had long escaped attention because they were "nobody's business."

Mr. Arnold W. Brunner, the architect, Mr. Millet and a United States senator were lunching to-