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JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET:
HIS AMERICAN STUDENTS AND INFLUENCES
Volume I

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Laura Lee Meixner, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1979

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Advisor
Department of the History of Art
To my father and mother
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Foremost among those whom I wish to acknowledge is my dissertation director and advisor Mathew Herban, III, who has taught me to enhance archival research with creative thinking throughout the course of my graduate studies. I also wish to thank the members of my committee, Professors Francis L. Richardson and Barbara S. Groseclose, for their scholarly insights and editorial expertise. I have benefited greatly from the bibliographic skills of Professor Jacqueline Sisson, Head, Fine Arts Library, The Ohio State University, and Miss Eleanor Devlin, Research Consultant, The Ohio State University Library. I would like to thank Dr. Lois Fink, Curator of Research, National Collection of Fine Arts, for her interested assistance, and the Smithsonian Institution for the Short Term Travel Grant which funded my research in Washington, D.C. In New York, I am particularly indebted to Mr. Jim Hobin, Albany Institute of History and Art, and Ms. Vivien Shea, Research Librarian, Bronxville Public Library. I would also like to acknowledge Professor Barbara Weinberg, City University
of New York, for her gracious assistance and free giving of her time. In Canada, I am indebted to Mr. Charles Hill, Curator of Post-Confederation Art, National Gallery of Canada, Monsieur Laurier LaCroix, and Ms. Juanita Toupin, Musée de Montreal, and Ms. Helen Hogarth, Research Officer, Art Gallery of Ontario. I offer my most sincere thanks to Professor Martha Hoppin, University of Massachusetts for her continued support and assistance and to Mr. Robert C. Vose, Jr., Vose Galleries, for his unfailing assistance; I would also like to acknowledge the curatorial staffs of the Departments of Painting and Prints and Drawings, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, who permitted me to view their files. There are a number of private collectors without whom this dissertation would not have the substance it possesses, both in number of art works and primary sources. They alone could, and graciously did, make this material available with the request of anonymity; my gratitude extends beyond this to the warmth with which I was received by them. Finally, a special note of gratitude and my sincerest thanks belong to Mrs. Jeanne Dotter, Columbus, Ohio.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1893 William Dean Howells remarked of the main character in his novel, The Coast of Bohemia:

Ludlow believed that if the right fellow ever came to work he could get as much pathos out of our farm folks as Millet got out of his Barbizon peasants. But the fact was that he was not the fellow; he wanted to paint beauty not pathos; and he thought, so far as he thought ethically about it, that Americans needed to be shown the festive and joyous aspect of their common life. To discover and represent these was his pleasure as an artist and his duty as a citizen.

By the time that Howells wrote The Coast of Bohemia, the French painter Jean-François Millet (1814-1875) had become a pervasive presence in nineteenth century American culture. His influence was by no means limited to artistic circles in this country but spread outward from that center to reach the literary, religious, pedagogical, political, and socio-economic foundations of our society. Accordingly, the purpose of my dissertation is to study for the first time his reputation in nineteenth century America as it existed in its totality. As Millet and his works won recognition from diverse sectors within our society, his reputation was built upon the reciprocal or combined support of these interest groups; his influences on art and religion, for example, can hardly be separated from his influence on literature, and neither can these
be divorced from his pedagogical influences. In order to provide an accurate and complete portrayal of the role Millet played in nineteenth century American culture, then, I will elucidate his reception at the various levels of society ranging from the formal circles of artists and professional critics to the broader spectrum of the popular audience.

Millet's reputation in America is directly attributable to the efforts of his five American pupils: William Perkins Babcock (1826-1899), William Morris Hunt (1824-1876), Edward Wheelwright (1824-1900), Wyatt Eaton (1849-1896) and Will Hicok Low (1853-1932). Through their roles as artists, writers, teachers, and collectors, and their consequent ability to influence both formal and popular criticism of Millet, these men became the chief agents of his popularity in America. Their careers, therefore, are the nucleus of my discussion of Millet's influence in this country. My treatment of this quintet introduces heretofore unpublished correspondence, memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, and lecture notes written by the artists, documents accompanied by numerous works reproduced for the first time in my dissertation through the gracious permission of private collectors.

In elucidating the pupils' relationships to Millet, two purposes jointly guide my discussion: one is to amplify our knowledge of these men as genre painters who
reflect Millet's influence in their works, and the other is to extend our awareness of their activities as artists to include their achievements as writers who popularized Millet in the United States through their publications. The first is accomplished through the introduction of the primary material mentioned above and the analysis of their paintings, and the second is served through the examination of their published memoirs and criticism of Millet, literature which must be viewed in conjunction with their genre paintings as an equally important indicator of their perception of Millet. Because each of these pupils quickly established and vigorously maintained a particular image of Millet for the American public, I will not treat their writings as an isolated body of literature but within the context of the American criticism of Millet which they in turn engendered.

In order to preserve the sequence of events as they occurred, that is, the points of contact between Millet and his American pupils, their activities after their return to America, and the subsequent development of American criticism of Millet, I have given my dissertation the form of a chronological narrative. My organization will allow readers to weigh Millet's continuous development as an artist against those aspects of his oeuvre which his American pupils perceived and understood during their intermittent visits to Barbizon and consequently
carried back to the United States. The chronological framework emphasizes not only the significantly different qualities Hunt and Wheelwright observed in Millet's art because of the timing of their visits but even more pointedly demonstrates the disparity between what these men, as the first generation of Millet's pupils, gathered from his art and what Eaton and Low, representing the second generation, culled from Millet's late oeuvre. The chronological arrangement likewise allows readers to measure the development of the literature, as it builds from an initially small body of writing in the late 1860's to its full complement in the late 1870's, 1880's, and 1890's, against the development of Millet's American pupils. In addition to the increasing volume of published material, readers will also discern the propagation and growth of certain ideational trends within the literature as the criticism advanced in sophistication. Also emphasized by this structure is the significant time lag that existed between Millet's actual activities throughout the nineteenth century and the contemporary American understanding of his oeuvre.

The first chapter of my dissertation traces Millet's life and career during his proto-Barbizon years (1814-1849). The biographical summary serves two purposes: Saving the reader the necessity of turning to outside sources on Millet's life, it enables my dissertation to read as a self-contained unit. Also, it provides an
objective characterization of Millet's grandmother and
great-uncle, who became sentimental cult heroes in America
after the serial translation of Sensier's biography of
Millet in 1880 and the subsequent publication of the mono-
graph in 1881, and of Millet's peasant heritage, an aspect
of his life which became the object of nostalgic adulation
in this country in this same period. Accompanying the
biographical information, a summary of Millet's activities
as an artist traces his development from a provincial
artisan in his native Gruchy and nearby Cherbourg into a
master painter of rococo inspired genre paintings and the
female nude in Paris. The bibliographic sources cited in
this chapter include the standard major works on Millet:
Alfred Sensier, La Vie et l'Oeuvre de Jean-François Millet,
1881; Julia Cartwright Ady, Jean-François Millet: His Life
and Letters, 1896; Etienne Moreau-Nélaton's Millet Raconte
par Lui-Même, 3 vols., 1921; and Robert Herbert's exhibition
catalogue Jean-François Millet, Hayward Gallery, 1976. This
modern work, an exemplary text which brings nineteenth
century French criticism of Millet to light, provides the
reader with valuable insight into the multi-faceted character
of Millet's oeuvre. I have also introduced the contributions
made by Millet's American pupils to the traditional litera-
ture on the artist. Foremost among these are: William
Morris Hunt, William Morris Hunt's Talks on Art, compiled
by Helen Knowlton, 1875, 1883; Edward Wheelwright, "Personal
Recollections of Jean-François Millet," The Atlantic Monthly, 1876; and Will Hicok Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, 1907. Other "American" literature seldom cited in the basic sources include Pierre Millet "The Story of Millet's Early Life," The Century Magazine, 1893. Unless otherwise accredited, the interpretations and analyses of Millet's paintings in this chapter and thereafter are original.

Chapter II opens with Millet's arrival at Barbizon and the introduction of his first American pupil, William Perkins Babcock. Unlike his mentor, Babcock can claim no published bibliographic sources which either yield specific biographical information or elucidate the critical reception of his works during his lifetime. A shadowy figure traditionally described as "eccentric" or "reclusive," he is cited in standard dictionaries including George Groce and David Wallace, The New York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America 1564-1860, 1957, but the references are cursory ones limited to Babcock's vital statistics and the dates of his participation in exhibitions. His presence at Barbizon and specifically his friendship with Millet are cited, however, in Peter Bermingham's useful modern survey of American artists at Barbizon, American Art in the Barbizon Mood, 1975.

My discussion of Babcock, derived from previously undiscovered documents, introduces new biographical information concerning his life in Boston prior to his departure
for France and illuminates the American critical opinion of the works he sent home for exhibition while living abroad. The first unified treatment of his biography and critical reception, this portion of my dissertation offers a new and more complete view of Babcock's activities in Boston and Barbizon. The subsequent discussion of Babcock's Barbizon oeuvre, paintings inspired by Millet's pseudo-rococo style, serves not only to analyze the American's work but to emphasize Millet's continuation of his rococo-derived style, the manière fleurie, during his early Barbizon years.

Millet soon abandoned his manière fleurie, however, and Chapter II continues by portraying the new directions in Millet's work, both iconographically and stylistically, as he gradually turned to rural genre painting. It was during this metamorphosis that Millet's second American pupil, William Morris Hunt, arrived at Barbizon. Contrary to the bibliographic circumstances surrounding Babcock, nineteenth century publications on Hunt offer documentation of his entire life. His energetic and successful efforts to popularize Millet in America were recorded by his pupil Helen Knowlton in her compilation of Hunt's studio notes cited earlier, William Morris Hunt's Talks on Art, 1875, and her biographical account, The Art-Life of William Morris Hunt, 1899. Hunt has also been the subject of three Ph.D. dissertations including Gibson Danes' "A Biographical and Critical Study of William Morris Hunt 1824-1875," Yale
University, 1949, and Roger Welchans' "The Art Theories of Washington Allston and William Morris Hunt," Case-Western Reserve University, 1970. The most recent of these works is Martha Hoppin's "William Morris Hunt: Some Aspects of His Work," Harvard University, 1974. Hoppin's dissertation, an admirable stylistic study of Hunt's oeuvre, enhances modern scholarship on the artist with a complete view of the development of his oeuvre as he came under the influences of various artists and ultimately formed a personal style.

My study of Hunt narrows the focus of its predecessors by dealing exclusively with his development as a genre painter. My discussion of the works he completed at Barbizon during a period of growing intimacy with Millet offers the first iconographic reading of Hunt's paintings which identifies the European traditions that Millet introduced to his American colleague. Through comparative analyses of Hunt's works and Millet's, I also offer an alternative to Birmingham's assessment of Hunt's initial efforts at Barbizon as "tame and awkward." (See p. 97)

As Chapter II closes with Hunt's return to America in 1855, I propose in conjunction with my interpretations of his genre paintings, an analysis of Hunt's memoirs concerning his meeting and subsequent friendship with Millet. The coupling of Hunt's images and statements with the American response to both makes clear the extent to which Hunt was responsible for the creation of a distinctly sentimental
image of Millet, an image that other pupils would sustain upon their homecomings from Barbizon.

As Chapter III opens, Millet's career is traced from the time of Hunt's departure from Barbizon in 1855 through the Salon exhibition of Man with the Hoe in 1863. It was during the preparation for this work in mid-1855 that Millet's third American pupil, the final member of the first generation of students, Edward Wheelwright, arrived at Barbizon. Wheelwright, even more than Babcock has remained inaccessible to art historians because unlike his colleague, he did not participate regularly in public art exhibitions, and documentation on his life and career has, until this point, been limited to the information contained in his article cited earlier, "Personal Recollections of Jean-François Millet," The Atlantic Monthly, 1876. I have introduced new biographical information concerning Wheelwright's formal education and social status in Boston, documentation uncovered in contemporary memoirs written by Wheelwright's Harvard classmates and also unpublished manuscript material. The discussion of Wheelwright's Barbizon experience which follows is based on an analysis of his article. The work of a judicious historian, Wheelwright's account is remarkably complete and offers rare insight into the intellectual, literary, and artistic aspects of Millet's genre paintings.
With Wheelwright's return to the United States in 1856, the scene shifts to America. The latter portion of Chapter III deals with Wheelwright's reunion with his friend Hunt at Newport, Rhode Island, where Hunt has attracted a coterie of artists and writers who, like Wheelwright were Americans who had recently returned from sojourns abroad. Hunt's contributions to Millet's popularity in America are taken up once more as he voices his admiration for the artist to the students of his informal Newport studio: the painter, John LaFarge, the writer, Henry James, and his brother, the philosopher and psychologist, William James. From their beginnings at Newport, Hunt's activities in America are followed to Boston where, in 1864, he opens a larger studio in a cosmopolitan atmosphere which enables him to make greater strides toward the popularization of Millet's *oeuvre* in this country. While discussing his activities in this regard, I also analyze the genre paintings Hunt completed during his Newport and Boston periods. Chapter III then closes with the year 1866 and the exhibition of two of Millet's works, *Harvesters Resting*, 1853, and *The Sower*, 1850, at the Allston Club in Boston.

Chapter IV begins with an explication of Millet's activities at Barbizon from late 1863 until the last years of his life in 1874-1875. These include his triumph at the *Exposition Universelle*, his growing preoccupation with landscape, and finally the public decorative commission that
marked the end of his career. The Exposition Universelle is a turning point within the chapter because it is hence that Hunt, following his brief reunion with Millet, returns to Boston to resume his popularization of the artist's works with renewed energy. The results of Hunt's meeting with Millet show themselves in Chapter IV through a discussion of the teaching methods he employed at his Boston studio school upon his return. The quotations from his lectures which form the core of my discussion illustrate his close adherence to, and promulgation of, Millet's artistic tenets.

At this juncture, the combined influences of Babcock, Hunt, and Wheelwright upon artistic circles in America begin to emerge in the literary discussion of Millet. Accordingly, the latter portion of Chapter IV introduces the initial phase of American criticism of the artist. The material is prefaced by a discussion of the personal relationships that existed between Millet's American pupils and certain of the major authors of this period, particularly Ednah D. Cheney; this assists the reader in coming to an understanding of the pupils' direct influences upon the course of the literature. Parenthetically, the body of literature discussed in my dissertation represents new findings that are quite distinct from the material contained in John P. Simoni's three volume annotated bibliography, Writings on Art and Art Criticism in Nineteenth Century America, 1952. His study is a compilation of a wide variety of bibliographic
references concerning the fine arts in nineteenth century America; my investigation is an analysis of the major currents of thought that existed and developed within a particular body of criticism on Millet specifically which I discovered independently of Simoni's admirable, yet of necessity, more general research.

Chapter V introduces the second generation of Millet's American pupils, Wyatt Eaton and Will Hicok Low. I trace their early careers in New York and then follow them to Europe where they spend their first seasons at Barbizon together during the summers of 1873 and 1874. Their contact with Millet ends with the artist's death in 1875, an event which closes the chapter. To my mind, this segment of my dissertation is of particular importance because the biographical information offered within it is culled almost exclusively from primary sources including Eaton's diary and correspondence, interviews with members of the artists' families, and an unpublished autobiography written by Low. In addition to representing the first exposition of the early careers of these men and their development as genre painters, this chapter is illustrated with numerous photographs of their works, the majority of which have never been reproduced before. These include Eaton's early genre drawings, his academic studies done under the supervision of Jean-Leon Gérôme, and Low's Barbizon sketchbooks.
Chapter VI, focusing on the reaction to Millet's death in America, is devoted exclusively to the development of Millet criticism in this country from the mid-1870's until the end of the decade. Because of the pervasive sentimental sympathetic reaction to his death, critics quickly come to read Millet's works as adjuncts to his biography. Soon religious meanings and Biblical quotations are appended to many of Millet's genre paintings. A limited amount of social commentary concerning Millet's art develops at this time, but the current remains a minor trend within the totality of the criticism. I will demonstrate that the period is mainly characterized by a marked expansion in the discussion of Millet's art, and as social and sentimental critics clash over their respective interpretations of Millet's subject matter in the popular literature, a second debate develops concerning Millet's style which is initially confined to the circle of formal art criticism. The controversy, sparked by an exhibition of Millet's works at the Boston Athenaeum, sets American proponents of the British Pre-Raphaelite school against their countrymen, led by Hunt, who championed French exemplars. The supporters of the Pre-Raphaelites, attempting to link style with ethical value, are outnumbered by those who hold that moral content is the province of subject matter rather than style.

Chapter VII opens with a resumption of the activities of Eaton and Low in France following the death of Millet.
The altered character of the Barbizon environment is reflected in Low's genre paintings as he returns to the illustrational-anecdotal style which characterized his art prior to his contact with Millet. Eaton, meanwhile, striving for a balance between his academic training and his Barbizon experience, completes *Harvesters at Rest*, his contribution to the Salon of 1876. After noting criticism of Eaton's Salon painting in which American correspondents compare it to various aspects of Millet's style, Chapter VII follows Eaton back to New York where he becomes what we may identify as the New York counterpart of William Morris Hunt. Like Hunt before him in Boston, Eaton becomes friends with influential literary figures in New York, particularly Richard Watson Gilder, the editor of *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, and begins a teaching career at the Cooper Union School. Eaton presents lectures on Millet's life and works maintaining the biographical-narrative bias that has become the mainstay of American criticism of Millet. (We may note here that this narrative approach was by no means exclusive to Millet's works, but represented the typical nineteenth century American viewpoint on art. Millet's popularity in this country can be attributed largely to the fact that both his biography and imagery lent themselves well to such an approach.) Yet a third parallel between the Boston and the New York artist then appears as both men, following the pattern of Millet's late career,
journey on rural retreats to their native regions where they return to landscape painting. New criticism of Hunt's achievements as a genre-landscape painter is brought forth at this point as Chapter VII proceeds with a discussion of Wheelwright's assessments of Hunt's works and his call for a native-born and native-trained American genre painter from the ranks of the working class.

Changing the scene briefly to France, the chapter follows Low to the end of his Barbizon experience. After returning to New York, Low resumes his friendship with Eaton but nonetheless experiences a difficult period of re-acclimation as a genre painter in America. Chapter VII draws to a close with Eaton and Low returning to Barbizon in the mid-1880's. The results of their second journey abroad, Eaton's desire to attain greater academicism and Low's wish to become a mural painter, comprise the closing material of the chapter.

Chapter VII contains new material derived from an interesting variety of primary documents. Eaton's Cooper Union lectures, for example, are elucidated through the handwritten notes contained in the artist's scrapbooks while his 1877-1878 correspondence with Gilder from Canada illuminates his summer activities in Montreal and Philipsburg. New information on the history of Low's major genre painting *Skipper Ireson's Ride*, 1880-1881, has been garnered from the manuscript of his autobiography,
while private collectors have generously shared other
genre paintings by Low which give a fuller picture of his
activities on his return to the United States. In the
latter section of the chapter discussing the return of the
two artists to Barbizon, the reader will discover new docu-
mentation of Babcock's late career, material discovered in
the correspondence of American artists who visited Eaton
during his second sojourn there.

Chapters VIII and IX, the remaining text of my dis-
sertation, deal with the development of Millet criticism
in this country during the last two decades of the nine-
teenth century. Chapter VIII opens as the criticism
receives new impetus from the English translation of
Sensier's monograph, *La Vie et L'Oeuvre de Jean-François
Millet* in 1880. My recent discovery that this work actually
appeared in *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* before it came to
print in France demonstrates the significance that the text
held for Americans already proud of their pioneering patron-
age of Millet as represented for them by Hunt. As I dis-
cuss the criticism written during the 1880's, it will
become clear that the religious-sentimental interpretation
of Millet's works fostered by Hunt and enhanced by
Wheelwright and Eaton, was fast becoming the predominant
strain in the literature. The biographical approach to
Millet's *oeuvre* encouraged by these men was cemented by
the widespread popularity of Sensier's text. The criticism
of this decade is distinguished by the participation of Walt Whitman who, viewing Millet's paintings in Boston, composed an essay entitled "Millet's Pictures—Last Items," 1882, in which he accepted the sympathetic, universal appeal of Millet's works but interpreted that quality as representative of democracy rather than of moral or religious virtues. Interestingly, the call for a native-trained American genre painter and indigenous subject matter put forth by Wheelwright the previous decade is taken up during the mid-1880's by an opponent of Millet's popularity, Anna Bowman Dodd. She writes of the need for Americans to distinguish themselves by celebrating their own culture, but her attempts to temper the popular response to Millet are arrested by the American acquisition of _The Angelus_ in 1889.

For the remainder of the decade and the opening years of the 1890's, _The Angelus_ forms the focal point of the American perception of Millet's oeuvre. The phenomenal response to _The Angelus_ on the part of the general public is shown to be dominantly moral rather than artistic, and it is the former value which ultimately controls American commentary on his works. The promulgation of this viewpoint in the popular literature is demonstrated in Chapter VIII by the introduction of sermons, pedagogical tracts, editorials, and poems inspired by Millet's works. The text of Chapter VIII is derived from newly discovered
articles in various journals and from newspaper accounts of the American purchase of *The Angelus* and popular responses to the work upon its exhibition in this country.

My dissertation closes with Chapter IX and a discussion of Millert criticism as it continued through the 1890's. Attempts are made by various writers to turn the criticism in the direction of social commentary by relating American socio-economic issues such as rural poverty to Millet's depictions of the French peasantry. This trend is countered, however, by Low's article on Millet which, upon its appearance in *McClure's Magazine* in 1896, is taken up by religious leaders as recommended reading for their congregations. The major advocate of social interpretations of Millet's works, Edwin Markham, closes the decade with his controversial poem, "The Man with the Hoe," 1899. Under a storm of protest, however, even Markham retreats from a social reading of rural ills in Millet's works; and henceforward, he confines himself to the identification of urban injustice, specifically child labor, in the unsettling portrayal of the worker depicted by Millet in *The Man with the Hoe*, 1863. In the final resolution, then, Millet's American pupils and their sympathetic interpretation of their master's works, dominates the nineteenth century criticism of the artist. This was an attitude carried into the early twentieth century by both religious literature and pedagogical studies which encouraged the use of Millet's art to reflect and instill moral values in American society.
When I began my research I set out to re-examine afresh the traditional literature and identify new material and works of art necessary for a complete understanding of Millet's art and his influence on American culture, as typified by his five students, during the nineteenth century. I allowed the materials to guide me as much as possible without the control of previous literature or the limitations of general or traditional interpretations of Millet's art and that of his students. What I found was the rich experience Millet's students drew from their association with him; a fine set of their works, many of which were previously unknown; a large body of primary documents including diaries, correspondence, lectures, and manuscript autobiographies. Most significantly of all, I discovered five vigorous and imaginative champions of Millet and what they perceived him to be as a man and as an artist.
CHAPTER I
MILLET'S PROTO-BARBIZON YEARS, 1814-1849

Jean-François Millet was born in Gruchy, a seacoast hamlet dependent upon the village of Gréville and near Cherbourg, on October 4, 1814, the fete day of St. Francis of Assisi. His parents, Jean-Louis Millet and Aimée-Henriette-Adélaïde Henry, were prosperous and educated Norman peasants who provided him with an ambience possessing the blend of intellectualism and morality which would later appear in his genre paintings.\(^1\) As a literate man educated by his uncle, a priest who lived with the family, the elder Millet was not limited to rural occupations; talents as a musician and calligrapher allowed him to both direct the parish choir and provide its music by copying medieval chants in decorative script. An artisan himself whose clay models, woodcarvings, and botanical drawings won him local renown, Millet's father quickly recognized his son's skill and consistently supported his early ambition to become a painter. Little of his mother's biography is known, yet she was a descendant of a respected family from St. Croix-Hague, one of the largest boroughs in the Norman region. In an article
written for the American periodical, *The Century Magazine*, 1892, Millet's brother Pierre characterized their mother as a woman of refined taste who, despite an instinctive appreciation for the arts, preferred to see her children engaged in more lucrative occupations. Her concern for their professional status was matched by a distinct class consciousness which she demonstrated through her repeated admonishments to Millet to dress as a Parisian when he returned from the city to visit his family in Gruchy.²

In accordance with Norman peasant custom, the responsibility for raising Millet fell largely to his paternal grandmother Louise Jumelin. An intensely religious woman, she was praised during her lifetime in stories describing her charity and piety that attained the status of local folklore through their regular and affectionate repetition. As her constant companion, Millet was profoundly influenced by her strength of character, devotion to the Bible, and religious ardor. Madame Jumelin's brothers, Millet's great-uncles, represented a remarkable diversity of religious, scientific, and intellectual minds. One was a monk, another a pharmacist, and a third a local miller whose leisure moments were occupied reading Pascal, Montaigne, and the Jansenists of Port Royal; yet another was an adventurer who sought his fortune in Guadeloupe. When Jumelin later inherited her brother's library, she
introduced Millet to literature, passing on to him the intellectual tradition of her family. Although she encouraged Millet to read diverse classical and modern works, her main contribution to his early education was her own pre-occupation with the Bible; Millet's early immersion in the Bible under her direction would provide him with an iconographic foundation for many of his genre paintings as well as enable him to discern Biblical allusion in the scenes he observed from nature.

In 1835 Millet produced a vivid portrait of his grandmother possessing an imposing severity and iconic austerity, inspired as much by her authoritative character as his provincial roots (Pl. 1). The portrait, a stark portrayal of Jumelin, is disconcerting to the viewer because of its unvarnished realism and bold immediacy. The harsh light accentuates her stern features with a strong illumination that contributes to the imposing effect of the work. The insistent symmetry reveals a novice portraitist who is unsure of figural placement, while the angularity of the figure and unsparingly precise delineation of her features also betray an untutored hand.

A second prominent figure who contributed to Millet's early education was his great-uncle Charles Millet, a laborer who later changed his vocation to the priesthood. Prior to the Revolution he held a curacy at Avranches but subsequently lost it upon his refusal to swear the Oath
of the Constitution. Fearing for his life, he escaped imminent political prosecution by fleeing to his brother's home where he resumed the role of farm laborer. During the Reign of Terror, however, he secretly conducted mass in provinces, a covert activity that obliged him to insure his personal safety through an underground hiding place reached through a trapdoor concealed by his bed. After the Revolution, he became the official parish vicar and, remaining in the Millet household, alternated the roles of country curate and field laborer. Through his dual occupations he established close ties with the Gruchy peasantry that were strengthened when he instituted an elementary course of Latin instruction for their children. His intention to educate the peasantry incited the anger of his fellow priests who, in turn, complained of him to the Bishop of Coutancès; however, numerous written appeals defending his own activities persuaded the Bishop to allow Charles Millet to continue his instruction of the village children who included his grand-nephew among their number. Millet's great-uncle died when the artist was seven years old, yet already the groundwork was laid for the sophisticated command of Biblical and classical literature he would come to possess; posthumously, Charles Millet assured the continuance of his great-nephew's education by bequeathing his theological library to him.
Five years later, at the age of twelve, Millet was sent to the nearby church of Gréville to begin the formal religious instruction prefatory to his first communion. Impressed by his thoughtful nature, Millet's teacher, Abbé Herpent, invited him to take up daily Latin lessons and, gradually, he became proficient in the translation of works such as the *Selecte e Profanis* and *Epitome Historiae Sacrae*. While studying in Gréville, Millet was introduced to Virgil, a literary preference which remained with him throughout his life, matched in importance only by the Bible. Under Herpent, Millet mastered the *Bucolics* and *Georgics* in both Latin and the old French version of Desfontaines and also the Vulgate. Later, as an accomplished Latinist, he astonished his American pupils William Morris Hunt and Edward Wheelwright by reciting passages from these works from memory. When Herpent was called away to serve the village parish of Heauville, Millet's father, reluctant to interrupt his son's education, allowed him to accompany the abbé. Home-sick for Gruchy, Millet returned five months later and resumed his studies under the new vicar Jean Lebrisseux. Perceptively, Lebrisseux recognized his new pupil as an indefatigable reader capable of advancing his study of Virgil while expanding his literary awarenesses with authors as diverse as Horace, Racine, and Boileau. Working
with the sympathetic priest who quickly became his con-
fidant as well as teacher, Millet's ability for the
rapid memorization and precocious analysis of Biblical
narratives and psalms became apparent. However, the
responsibilities of farm life began to intrude upon
Millet's education, demanding that he devote more time to
the maintenance of his father's land; although his formal
lessons became increasingly sporadic, they were supple-
mented by the hours he spent in his great uncles' libraries where he discovered the following works and authors: Lives of the Saints, Confessions of St. Augustine, Letters of St. Jerome, Bossuet, Fenelon, Pascal, Charron, Montaigne, Arnault, Nicole, and LaFontaine.

Millet's active participation in farm labor allowed him to comprehend certain realities of rural life which, heretofore, had been interpreted for him by the Bible and Virgil. As he watched the peasantry struggling to cultivate the barren rocky headlands of Gruchy, and failing that, supplementing their income through the sale of seaweed raked up from the beaches after recurrent violent storms, he began to form definite attitudes concerning man's place in nature. These were intensified by vivid encounters with the natural disasters that plagued the region, particularly a devastating All Saint's Day storm during which Millet first witnessed a grim shipwreck and
then discovered a mound of sailors' corpses under a tarpaulin on the beach. The adversities of rural existence were somewhat diminished, however, by the appeal of the Norman folklore which Millet learned as a youth. In the legends, ballads, and tales handed down verbally when the villagers gathered for their winter evenings' occupations, Millet discerned the potential romance of peasant life. Later, he recalled a childhood "cradled with tales of ghosts and weird stories which impressed [him] profoundly." "Even today," he wrote, "I take an interest in all these kinds of subjects. Do I believe in them or not? I hardly know."^d

During his concurrent labor and study in Gruchy, Millet took the first tentative steps toward becoming an artist; accordingly, his juvenile efforts represent a mixture of acute observation and literary inspiration. Already possessing a sharp eye and exceptional memory, he quickly found a number of genre scenes in his surroundings. One of the first works that won him early recognition was later described by Millet's brother Pierre:

About this time a man called Benville, of the neighboring county, in the company of his sons, passed through Greville every Saturday on his way to the market at Beaumont, which was about a league farther, in order to show some donkeys. These three men had large figures and to see them mounted on their donkeys, which they had ornamented with false ears, appealed to the imagination of François. He began one day to
represent this grotesque cavalcade, and did it successfully. A short time after he had finished it, the blacksmith of the neighboring village who had seen the drawing asked, and was allowed, to take it for a few days, and he put it in a conspicuous place in his shop....

As a young and untutored artist, Millet's search for subject matter led him back to the same literary source that dominated his academic endeavors—the Bible. He first made direct copies after the engraved illustrations in his family Bible and then composed pastiches based upon them, including *The Ten Wise and Foolish Virgins* and *Charity According to St. Luke*. The latter work, dating from 1832 (Pl. 2), represents a man standing in the doorway of his house offering three loaves of bread to a neighbor who has come to him by night in need of food. Inspired by Luke 11:5-10, the drawing illustrates the following lesson in charity taught by Christ to his disciples:

Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves';
For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him;
And he from within shall say, 'Trouble me not: The door is now shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

Millet, anxious that the genre scene retain its literal Biblical narrative and its moral, and perhaps wishing to demonstrate his own calligraphic skills to his father, inscribed the Vulgate version of the conclusion of the lesson beneath the drawing:
Etsi non dabit illi surgons eo quod amicus ejus sit, propti improbitatem tamen ejus surget, et dabit illi quot—quot habet necessaries,

It reads in English:

Though he will not rise and give him because he is a friend yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

The text of the lesson ends with the famous passage:

Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Aside from its obvious derivation in Millet's religious instruction, the drawing may refer to another autobiographical experience. Millet may have chosen to illustrate this particular passage as hommage to the celebrated acts of charity performed by his grandmother. Furthermore, his selection of a lesson taught by Christ provided him with a scene that alluded not only to his grandmother's personal generosity but also her instruction of her grandsons in the practice of charity. In its fusion of genre and Biblical proverb the drawing is an early example of a method Millet would employ regularly as a mature artist.

In 1833, growing admiration for Millet's talent prompted his father to take him to Cherbourg to begin training as a professional artist. Following the suggestion
of a neighbor, they approached Bon duMouchel (1807-1846) a local portraitist who, impressed with two examples of Millet's works, Charity According to St. Luke and an unidentified pastoral, accepted him as a pupil. Eccentric and provincial, duMouchel could offer Millet little more than supervision and encouragement; consequently, after a two-month period spent copying engravings and plaster casts, Millet's formal training under him was terminated. The following period of independent study in Cherbourg proved to be a more significant and congenial apprenticeship. As evidenced by duMouchel's painting La Grand'rue à Cherbourg, ca. 1840 (Pl. 3), the town was a prosperous one, and in a show of appreciation for the arts in 1835, its citizens supported the establishment of a public museum. Here Millet was introduced to a number of French and Netherlandish works that he began to copy: Phillipe de Champagne's Assumption, 1628, Von Mol's Entombment, 1643, and Van der Weyden's Magdalen, 1450-1464.7

Millet's work was interrupted when he was called back to Gruchy later that year by news of his father's imminent death, an event which left him with the double responsibility of caring for his large family and managing the farm. At the invitation of town officials, however, he returned to Cherbourg in 1836 to resume his studies, this time in the atelier of Langlois de Chèvreville (1805-1845).
Langlois, slightly more cosmopolitan than duMoucel, was a former pupil of Jean-Antoine Gros and had settled in Cherbourg after some years of travel in Italy and Greece. At Cherbourg, he was primarily occupied as the professor of drawing at the local college but also painted altar-pieces for various churches in Rouen and two for the Church of the Trinity in Cherbourg, a commission with which Millet assisted. Like duMoucel, Langlois found that aside from directing Millet to study his drawings after Gros and reproductions of works in the Louvre, there was actually little he could do to advance his training and advised him to return to the museum and continue his activities as a copyist. A partial list of the copies, completed near the end of Millet's second apprenticeship, offers a good indication of what his mature artistic preferences would be: Poussin's *Pyramus and Thisbe*, 1651, and *Pieta*, 1646, LeSueur's *Justice*, 1678 (today attributed to Subleyras), Vouet's *Ceres*, 1638, Murillo's *Christ on Calvary*, 1660-1670, Jordaens' *Adoration of the Magi*, 1612-1625, and Weenix's *Landscape*, 1655. Months later, he turned once more to these artists for instruction while studying their works in the Louvre.

As he would throughout his life, Millet occupied his leisure moments in Cherbourg supplementing his artistic education with literary pursuits. Earlier, he had met and
befriended Félix-Bienaimé Feuardent, a native of Gruchy who was the Cherbourg town librarian. Through his office, Millet gained access to collections including Strasbourg's Almanach Boiteux and works by Homer, Shakespeare, Paul de Koch, Lord Byron, and Walter Scott. Chateaubriand and Hugo became his favorite French authors because he found in one the nostalgic sense of the past and in the other a literary parallel to the primeval force he perceived in nature. Later he frequently stated that Hugo's poems should be made mandatory reading among French schoolchildren. Goethe's Faust, Schiller's ballads, and Béranger's songs were all introduced to Millet, but it was Milton's Paradise Lost, read in French translation that appealed to him with especial force. Millet's numerous crayon drawings and pastel representations of landscapes at dusk recall his particular fondness of Milton's description of twilight, a similarity later remarked upon by his American pupils.9

Langlois, witnessing Millet's artistic and intellectual progress, soon realized that the limited resources of Cherbourg could no longer meet his needs, and on October 19, 1836, he sent the following petition and an example of Millet's work to the town council:

Gentlemen:
During the last six months his progresss has been constant and rapid. In a few more days there will be nothing that I can tell him or show him. My pupil deserves a wider sphere than
our town and better schools and models than we can give him. In short, he requires the advantages of Paris if he is to learn historical painting to which high vocation he is doubtless called among the number of pauci electi. But alas! Young Millet has no resources excepting his religious tone of art, high character, and excellent education, together with the esteem in which his family is held. Young Millet would require a sum of at least five or six hundred francs to begin his studies in Paris. But gentlemen, you may be very sure, however little you may be able to do for him, your efforts will not fail to bear fruit and the success of your protege will eventually prove his claim to the protection of the government.

Langlois' request is a significant summarization of Millet's early training and his teacher's academic aspirations for him. Acting upon Langlois' petition, the town council granted Millet an annual scholarship of 600 francs to facilitate his study in Paris but in fact the stipend was paid in full only once and ultimately withdrawn altogether.

Millet's arrival in Paris in January, 1837, found him ill-suited to the rigors of urban life and an account of the impecunious existence he led there contains many elements reminiscent of a pathetic narrative: a scheming landlady, garret accommodations, frugal meals, and a near fatal illness that was overcome only by a retreat to the country. These difficulties were compounded by a provincial awkwardness that, despite his erudition, betrayed him as a peasant encountering the city for the first time.
Millet described his reticence in an account of his early days in Paris:

During the first days after my arrival in Paris, my fixed idea was to find out the gallery of the old masters. I started early one morning with this intention, but as I did not dare ask the way for fear of being laughed at, I wandered at random through the streets, hoping, I suppose, that the Musee would come to meet me! I lost myself several days running in this fruitless search; I saw no one. I did not speak to a soul, and I hardly dared ask a question of anyone so great was my fear of ridicule.¹¹

Millet, reluctant to act upon Langlois' recommendation to join the atelier of Paul Delaroche, turned instead to a diligent course of independent study and spent his first two months in Paris at the Louvre. There he analyzed but, with the exception of Giorgione's Fête Champêtre, 1508, did not attempt to copy the works of the classical sculptors or the French, Italian, and Spanish painters who remained major influences throughout his career. In an exceptionally complete account of his artistic preferences, Millet recorded his admiration for the classical Achilles, Venus de Milo, and especially Diana of the Hunt, a work he preferred over Boucher's Diana, 1754. The latter, he wrote, was the work of a "mere seducer," and he held Watteau's "marionettes condemned to smile" in equal disregard.¹² Revealing a consistent predilection for the classical sources that would inspire his own monumental compositions, his chosen models among the French were
Eustace LeSueur, Charles Lebrun, and François Jouvenet. The artist he admired most among his countrymen was his own Norman compatriot, Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) of whom he wrote:

Poussin is its [the French school] prophet, sage and philosopher, and at the same time the most eloquent exponent. I could spend my life before Poussin's works without ever getting tired of him.13

It was Michelangelo, however, who "haunted him with power during his whole life."14 In him, Millet found an artist who "was able in a single figure to represent all the good and evil of humanity."15 Besides Michelangelo, the Italian Primitives, particularly Fra Angelico, became his primary models for the stylistic monumentality that characterized his Barbizon compositions. Other Italian artists who were not represented in the Louvre became known to him at the library of Ste. Géneviève where he read their biographies as recorded by Vasari. With the exception of Rembrandt, whose works "blinded him," Northern painters are rarely mentioned in Millet's memoirs; his French contemporaries received equally cursory treatment, and only Delacroix, whose works he saw in the Luxembourg Gallery, won his admiration.16

Already fearing the imposed restrictions of atelier study, Millet was further dismayed by the prospect after his first encounter with Delaroche's work at the Luxembourg
Gallery; *Elizabeth and the Children of Edward*, 1824, he wrote, was "cheap illustration on a large scale."\(^\text{17}\)

Recognizing the necessity for academic training and approval, Millet nonetheless became a pupil of Delaroche in March, 1837. Predictably, he found atelier life disagreeable, but with an eye to the Prix de Rome, he scrupulously applied himself to the work at hand. Quickly, he won the admiration of Couture, the director of life drawing, and Delaroche himself, who recognized both originality and accuracy in his sketch after a statue of *Germanicus*. Later that year, when Millet was no longer able to meet Delaroche's fee, he moved to the Académie Suisse where he enjoyed the double benefits of lower fees and the freedom to work from the antique or live models without the restrictions of pre-assigned themes. He returned to Delaroche's atelier, however, when his former master waived his tuition and offered his support in the Prix de Rome competition. In reality, Delaroche had already promised his sponsorship to another pupil and intended to support Millet the following year upon the condition that he remain in the atelier until then. Disgusted by this intrigue, Millet refused and permanently terminated his association with the École des Beaux-Arts. Suddenly he found himself with neither an atelier nor financial support when his municipal stipend, already
reduced to 400 francs, was withdrawn completely. Afterwards, Millet wrote a disdainful summary of his early years in Paris and his training:

I came to Paris with my ideas upon art already formed and I found nothing there to make me change my mind. I have never altered my idea of the fundamental principles of art as I learned them first in my old home without teachers or models. 18

Regardless of his aversion to the politics of the École des Beaux-Arts, Millet's two years of instruction there were of undeniable importance. Surviving sketches from the live model or after mythological episodes including Prometheus Chained to a Rock, 1837, demonstrate that he did not remain an untutored provincial artisan but became, as an aspiring history painter, an artist firmly grounded in the academic principles and methods of figure drawing and pictorial interpretations of literary scenes. Consequently, he arrived at Barbizon steeped in both artistic and literary classical traditions. The value he placed on his training in later years was evidenced by advice he gave his own American pupils Wyatt Eaton and Will Hicok Low. When presented with their plan to abandon Jean-Léon Gérôme's atelier for Barbizon, he firmly admonished them to remain in Paris where they could learn the "grammar" of art, a prerequisite, in his eyes, to success as a genre painter. 19
When Millet broke with Delaroche's atelier, he did so in the company of a fellow student, Louis Alexandre Marolle (dates unknown). A Parisian by birth, Marolle was the son of a prosperous manufacturer whose affluence allowed him to lead a convivial bohemian existence while pursuing his studies. His gregarious personality was a natural foil to Millet's reserve, and despite opposite socio-economic backgrounds they became close friends. Free from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts regimen, Millet and Marolle attended evening sessions at the Academies Suisse and Boudin while continuing their studies of the history of art at the Ste. Genevieve library, where they obtained books illustrating works by Poussin, Jean Cousin, Leonardo, and Durer. Charity, 1839 (Pl. 4), marks the beginning of Millet's independent work in Paris and the initiation of a dominant trend in his oeuvre - the frequent re-interpretation of a particular theme. The practice of charity, formerly depicted as a Biblical episode, is re-cast in this composition as a classical emblem. Iconographically, Millet refers directly to the traditional depiction of the Virtue as a woman feeding children at her breasts that appears in Cesare Ripa's Iconologia, 1593 (Pl. 5). The Renaissance derivations of the solid triangular composition are made clear by the woman and children who, seated in a landscape setting, call to mind depictions of the Madonna,
Christ Child, and St. John by Leonardo, Michelangelo, or Raphael. Garbed as a nun, Millet's figure may represent a member of the religious order, the Sisters of Charity.

Economic necessity prevailed over Millet's personal preferences for classicism when, after unsuccessful attempts to sell his academic paintings, he agreed to follow Marolle's suggestion to draw upon more popular and frivolous iconographic sources. The resultant genre scenes were largely inspired by the eighteenth century French poetry of Gresset whose works "Ver-Vert," the adventures of a parrot in a convent, and "Lutrin Vivant," the story of a priest afflicted with a wasp in his vestments, prompted two paintings by the same titles. Other compositions, such as The Old Man's Calendar, were derived from the fables of LaFontaine; meanwhile, Millet's enterprising friend Marolle appended alluring titles to Millet's original compositions, including A Music Lesson, A Soldier Making Love to a Nurserymaid, and A Day at the Trianon. Despite his compliance with popular taste and the assistance of Marolle's witty persuasion, Millet was seldom able to sell his genre paintings and patrons willing to pay for the portraits he painted concurrently were equally rare.

In 1840 Millet entered two works in the Salon competition, Portrait of M. M. (Marolle) and Portrait of M. L.F. (LeFranc). The latter accepted, he returned to Cherbourg.
at the end of the year a local celebrity. Resuming the role of a provincial artist, Millet first painted private portraits of his friends and then received an official commission to paint a commemorative portrait of the late mayor, Colonel Javain (Pl. 6). From the outset, the ill-fated commission presented Millet with a variety of problems. Foremost among these was the fact that Millet, who had never seen the mayor, was given only a miniature depicting Javain as a young man to be used as a model. Searching for an inexpensive model among the living, Millet inadvertently incurred the wrath of Javain's family when he hired a local thief to pose for the hands in the portrait. To complicate matters further, he was forced to work in the vestibule of the Cherbourg Museum where curious visitors gathered to interrupt his work with idle criticism and distracting chatter. Working under these adverse conditions, Millet produced a portrait that was unsatisfactory to himself as well as to his patrons. When they met in March, 1841, the town council, already united in violent opposition to the work, refused to accept or pay for it. They objected to the inevitable results--the portrait bore only a vague resemblance to Javain. Millet, who had since returned to Paris, answered their criticism in a letter protesting that he had forewarned the mayor that because he had never seen Javain personally he
believed that the successful completion of the commission was highly doubtful. Javain's son-in-law, he wrote, did not approve of the preparatory sketch executed directly from the miniature, objecting that Millet's source was an inaccurate likeness. The following month, the council refused for a second time to pay for the portrait; but after a contentious debate, they ultimately relented, accepting the work and sending Millet a token sum for it.

The mood of resentment that prevailed throughout the conflict over the Javain portrait had not yet abated when Millet returned to Cherbourg the following year. Faced with almost total censure and the loss of Langlois' support, he could find work only among local tradesmen for whom he painted a variety of shop signboards. Temporarily returning to his artisan-craftsman origins, Millet painted panels, now lost, depicting a horse, a sailor, and a scene from the Battle of Isly, respectively, ordered by a veterinarian, a sailmaker, and the manager of a traveling circus. Inspired by the activities of the Cherbourg fishermen, he also painted a series of genre scenes depicting them mending their nets or casting out to sea. While working among the town craftsmen and laborers, he met and married the daughter of a Cherbourg tailor, Pauline-Virginie Ono.
After his marriage, Millet and his wife returned to Paris where he renewed his friendship with Marolle and resumed his career as a portraitist. The following months of unrewarding labor ended in spring, 1842, with the rejection of both of Millet's Salon entries, Maria Robusti and Portrait of Monsieur A. M. (Marolle). Millet, whose style had developed as a studious mixture of provincial linearity and Delaroche's academicism, recognized in his failure the necessity to cultivate a new formal technique. During a period of transition, he replaced his palette, heretofore based on values, with a range of colors enlivened by the influences of Correggio and Watteau. Responding to his new palette, he began to apply paint with a lighter, delicate touch that diminished the severity of his decisive linear outlines and allowed a freer play of his heightened colors across the canvas. Millet's new style prompted an accompanying change in iconography as he looked to his rococo predecessors in search of seductive themes that would attract the Parisian art public; the sensuous style he consequently developed was christened by Alfred Sensier as manière fleurie. The Young Shepherdess, 1842 (pi. 7), belongs to the early phase of Millet's artistic development. Alluring and coy, the attractive young girl is an aristocratic ancestor of the Barbizon peasant shepherdesses who appear in Millet's œuvre during
the following decade. In a capitulation to popular taste, Millet presents the elegant shepherdess garbed in picturesque country dress and seated among a flock of sheep in a bucolic woodland glade. Precious and artificial, it calls to mind countless eighteenth century scenes of courtiers playing at rustic life in the manner of Marie Antoinette at the Petit Trianon.

In 1844, after a two-year absence from the Salon, Millet exhibited The Milkmaid and The Riding Lesson, two pastoral genre scenes representing his manière fleurie. His stylistic references to the eighteenth century were observed approvingly by the critic Théophile Gautier who described The Milkmaid as "a sketch in the style of Boucher" and the artist Narcisse Diaz de la Peña who discerned The Riding Lesson as a tribute to his own rococo revivalist tendencies. The Riding Lesson (Pl. 8), now lost, was an idyllic-mythological scene representing a nude putto happily astride another child who are joined in their game by a charming young girl. The gaiety and elegance of the fanciful group were undoubtedly enhanced by Millet's use of pastel, a technique normally associated with heightened colorism and spontaneous rendering. Aside from initiating his friendship with Diaz, the work introduced Millet to the public as a promising maître du nu. With its elegant technique and provocative imagery, Millet's
mythological characters. As a former portraitist, Millet has typically granted the musician's head and hands firm definition and accurate modelling while the remainder of the composition is brushed in with a diffuse blending of feathered yet vigorous strokes. His lingering dependence upon identifiable eighteenth century sources is witnessed in the lutenist typology as well as her specific pose. Highly reminiscent of Watteau's Mezzentin, 1719 (Pl. 10), she calls to mind the melancholy courtiers and theatrical balladeers of the rococo period.

With the money gained from a sale of these and other works held at the LeHavre town hall at the end of the year, Millet and Leymarie departed for Paris in December, 1845. Before leaving LeHavre, Millet was approached by his former adversaries, the members of the Cherbourg town council, who offered him a position as professor of drawing at the local college. Moreau-Nélaton has interpreted Millet's refusal as an effort to keep his relationship with Leymarie hidden from his mother and grandmother; it may also be attributed simply to understandable reluctance to form a second alliance with patrons who had deceived him and an unwillingness to remain in the provinces where his career could not progress. Correspondence from this period reveals that Millet's refusal to remain near Gruchy incurred the displeasure of his family. His grandmother, vexed by his
preference for cosmopolitan life, wrote in a latter dated January 10, 1846:

We cannot understand why you refused the post at the College of Cherbourg. Do you really see greater advantages in life at Paris than here in the midst of your friends and relations? You tell us that you are about to paint a picture of St. Jerome groaning over the dangers to which he found himself exposed in his youth. Ah my dear child! Follow his example. Make the same reflections to your eternal profit! Whatever happens, do not allow yourself to do bad works. Above all, never lose sight of the presence of God.26

Ironically, while Louise Jumelin was counselling her grandson to follow the example of St. Jerome, he was becoming a noted maître du nu. The mythological pretexts of the figures, however, along with the loose brushwork of his earlier works, were gradually abandoned. Millet's later figure studies for the most part were devoid of obvious literary associations and characterized by firm modelling and a robust solidity of form. Nude Study, 1846 (Pl. 11), for example, recalls academic exercises in figure drawing in both pose and modelling. A nude seated with her back to the viewer rests her head against partially upraised arms forming an S-curve with her silhouette. Millet developed distinct and forceful modelling patterns to define the hollows of her shoulders and lower torso as well as grant the figure an emphatic sculptural solidity. The physical weight of the nude is heightened through contrast by its placement in a rapidly brushed landscape.
setting. In a contemporary work, Magdalen (Pl. 12), a partially draped nude seated at her toilette in a landscape setting, the literary associations are made clear only through the title. Divested of rococo trappings and overt literary content, these nudes allow a clearer assessment of Millet's prowess as a figure painter.

During the mid-1840's Millet's growing fame led to permanent friendships with Diaz and the landscape-genre painter Constant Troyon through whom he met Alfred Sensier, his future biographer. A government employee of the Louvre, Sensier became an active patron of Millet from the outset of his acquaintance with his work. His biography of the artist, La Vie et l'Oeuvre de Jean-François Millet, was written in 1881 and translated into English by Helena deKay as Jean-François Millet: Peasant and Painter the same year.

As the decade pushed forward toward 1848, Millet continued to respond to the popular demand for his manière fleurie; yet the escalating political turmoil in France soon caused hedonistic and frivolous iconography to appear conspicuously inappropriate. A work dating from 1848, Cupid Asleep (Pl. 13), reflects Millet's perception of the changing atmosphere and heralds the corresponding shift that took place in his art. The dormant god of love, abandoned in an empty landscape, is a fitting harbinger of
the end of the dominance of rococo influences in his oeuvre. Although he retained a rococo aspect in his oeuvre, it soon became the secondary, rather than primary, current of his style.

Millet's two entries in the Salon of 1848 evidenced his ability to perceive in both literary narrative and rural genre a mood reflective of that year. The first, inspired by the Bible, was entitled The Captivity of the Jews in Babylon. The composition, known today only through a written description, was later destroyed by Millet when he painted another scene over it. According to contemporary accounts, it depicted a group of Assyrian soldiers presenting lyres to three women bedecked in black veils. A young and beautiful member of the trio refused their offer with a sorrowful gesture, intimating that it was impossible for her to sing the joyous songs of Zion while a prisoner of foreign captors.24 The analysis of the themes of political captivity or fugitive escape in Millet's oeuvre could form the foundation for an intriguing iconographic study in itself. However, a brief explication of the scene suffices to demonstrate the contemporary relevance it must have held for the French public in 1848. In 922 B.C. the stable and prosperous monarchy Israel enjoyed under the successive reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon fell and the government was divided into two opposing kingdoms, the north, or Israel,
and the south, called Judea. The north, unable to sustain a hereditary monarchy because of political intrigue and treacherous betrayal, was ruled by a number of various leaders while the south was under the jurisdiction of the House of David. In 722 B.C. the northern kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians and shortly thereafter, in 587 B.C., the southern kingdom also fell. In the story of a once strong and united nation weakened and ultimately destroyed by civil wars, Millet must have perceived an ominous parallel applicable to the contemporary political situation in France.

The second work he exhibited in 1848 was *The Winnower* (Pl. 14); purchased in 1854 by the American artist and friend of Hunt, Robert Loftin Newman, it was rediscovered in an American private collection in 1972. A single monumental figure, *The Winnower* is the stylistic harbinger of Millet's Barbizon genre oeuvre as typified by *The Sower*. The anonymous peasant, silently absorbed in his task, takes on a significance as a representation of rural labor that allowed his inclusion in history painting. Millet's contemporaries, however, did not perceive the work as a statement concerning the political role of the French peasant, and instead confined their criticism to stylistic issues. These writers, as represented by Gautier and Clement de Ris, were divided into two opposing camps, one
who approved of Millet's energetic impasto technique and the other who found his forceful style excessive and lacking in control.29

Although Millet's precise role in the Revolution of 1848 is undetermined, it is known that he accrued benefits from the political situation through the influence of his ardent Republican friends, particularly the artist Charles Jacque. In April, 1848, Jacque approached Jeanron, who had been appointed head of the Louvre by Ledru-Rollin, the Minister of Interior, and informed him of Millet's penury. Ledru-Rollin himself responded by purchasing *The Winnowers* for 500 francs, a considerable sum at that point in Millet's career. Weeks later, Sensier, named the Director of Museums by the new administration, presented Millet with additional funds in the form of a grant from the Administration of Fine Arts. That summer, Millet was rescued financially by Ledru-Rollin for the second time through a government commission for the sum of 1,800 francs. With the subject matter left to Millet's discretion, he chose to illustrate a scene from the Biblical narrative of *Hagar and Ishmael* (Pl. 15). The work represents Abraham's maid-servant Hagar and their illegitimate son Ishmael after they have been driven from their home by Abraham's jealous wife Sarah. Millet portrayed the nomadic mother and son sprawled across the dunes of a barren desert landscape about
to die of thirst and exposure. Although their demise was ultimately prevented by divine intervention, Millet depicted them without hope of rescue. The work is a powerful one that once more reaffirms Millet's mastery of the human anatomy. Bespeaking his academic training, the figures are clearly delineated and defined with strong linear silhouettes and forceful modelling patterns. Iconographically, the work can be related to a major theme appearing in Millet's oeuvre during 1848-1849, the homeless or indigent mother and child. Incorporating it on this occasion as a Biblical episode, Millet also treated the theme as genre in a drawing, Woman Begging, and a painting, Mother and Child, dating from the same year. Both the drawing and the painting depict displaced mothers with their children either begging for charity at a street corner or wandering aimlessly in search of a home. Although Hagar and Ishmael was inspired by a literary source, it too, along with the drawing and painting, could by extension communicate the plight of the French peasants who flocked to Paris in 1848 in search of employment and a home only to find the city vastly overcrowded and themselves without sanctuary. Millet did not complete Hagar and Ishmael, however, but abandoned it to begin a new theme, Haymakers Resting. An improbable explanation for Millet's rejection of his original project was recorded by Sensier who wrote that
while engaged with the painting, Millet was appalled to accidently overhear himself identified as a "painter of naked women" and thereupon vowed never to paint another nude. In April, 1849, he sent the alternate work to Ledru-Rollin along with a letter requesting that the painting be entered in the forthcoming Salon competition; Millet, however, was represented in the Salon of 1849 only by a small figure piece, *Seated Peasant Woman*, that was virtually ignored by the critics.

In May, after receiving the balance of the commission, Millet began to seriously consider leaving Paris. Aside from the political unrest that endangered the safety of his family, an advancing cholera epidemic threatened the health of his three small children. He voiced his concern to Jacque who suggested that they journey together to a small village near the edge of the Fontainebleau forest whose name, he recalled, ended with the syllable "zon." Funded by Millet's government commission, they left Paris in June in search of Barbizon. Returning to his theme of displacement and flight, Millet recorded their entrance into the village in a crayon drawing, *Arrival at Barbizon*, 1849 (Pl. 16). Entering Barbizon during a storm, Catherine Leymarie, with a domestic servant at her side, carries their five-month-old son in her arms while protecting him with the skirts she has thrown over her head; in
front of her, Millet leads the way carrying his two older daughters on his back. The urgency of the procession of figures seeking shelter is communicated and punctuated by a rapid vibrating linear network that is an evocative graphic equivalent of the pelting rain. In their combination of urgency and dignity, the familial group bears certain psychological affinities to scenes of the Flight into Egypt. Shortly after Millet's arrival, Sensier received a letter from him dated June 28, 1849, in which he announced his intention to remain at Barbizon for an extended period of time. Although his decision was predicated chiefly upon economic necessity--the cost of living at Barbizon being appreciably lower than Paris--he also expressed his happiness at his return to a rural environment and described the works he hoped Barbizon to inspire.  

Once established in his new home, Millet practiced a daily routine comprised of both agricultural and artistic pursuits. Occupied with the cultivation of his garden, his mornings were rustic preludes to days devoted entirely to work in his makeshift atelier. Although Millet found Barbizon far more agreeable than Paris, he soon discovered that poverty was not a problem exclusive to the city dweller; at the end of autumn when the government subsidy was depleted, he was forced to write to Sensier requesting assistance that duly arrived in the form of a
government grant for 150 francs. The rapid exhaustion of funds prompted a second appeal to his friend who responded by holding a lottery sale of one of Millet's works that earned the artist 500 francs.  

In the latter half of 1848, bouyed by the first of many issuances of supplementary funds and art supplies he received from Sensier, Millet entered with set purpose into the development of a new aspect of his œuvre--genre painting that was, unlike its lyrical and bucolic predecessors, a direct, authoritative statement of rural life.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1 According to Millet's biographer, Sensier, the artist maintained his identification as a peasant consistently throughout his life. Edward Wheelwright, however, specified Millet's socio-economic class as that of yeoman:

The allied families, the Millets and the Jumelins, though classed as peasants, were rather what we should call independent yeomen, cultivating their own lands, that had descended from father to son through a long line of ancestors, from whom they also inherited what they far more highly prize—an untarnished name, a grand reputation for honesty and industry, integrity, and piety.


6 Pierre Millet recorded that on the frequent occasions when beggars approached their door with the cry, "Charité, s'il vous plait, pour l'amour du bon Dieu," Madame Jumelin gave his brother and him large wicker baskets of bread to give out to the needy, thereby teaching them lessons in charity. Ibid., p. 380.

p. 20. For further information, see also J. M. Craudillot, Cherbourg au Temps de Millet (Cherbourg, 1964).

8 Ibid., p. 22.


10 Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 36.

11 Ibid., p. 48.

12 Ibid., p. 51.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 53.

15 Ibid., p. 49.

16 Ibid., p. 51.

17 Ibid., p. 50.

18 Ibid., p. 58.


20 Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 61.


22 Ibid., p. 35.

23 Ibid., p. 47.

24 Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 73.

25 Moreau-Nélaton, Millet Raconté par Lui-Même, p. 52.
26 Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 76.

27 Ibid., p. 83.


29 See Théophile Gautier, Clement de Ris, and F. de Lagenevais as quoted by Herbert. Ibid.

30 Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 89.

31 Ibid., p. 95.

32 Moreau-Nélaton, Millet Raconté par Lui-Même, p. 84.
CHAPTER II
BARBIZON TO THE EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE,
1849-1855

Millet's first year at Barbizon can best be characterized as a period of gradual transition rather than immediate change. The nudes which Sensier claimed to have been renounced by Millet in 1849, for example, appear steadily in his oeuvre through 1851. His apocryphal story, however, serves to indicate the prominence Millet attained in this genre. It is hardly surprising that Millet lingered over his manière fleurie; the rococo idiom had served him well in Paris and as Herbert rightly concludes; "had Millet died before The Sower of 1850, he would be remembered...particularly for his mastery of the female nude."¹ Before his departure from Paris, Millet's talents in this direction attracted his first American devotee, William Perkins Babcock, who, dazzled by Millet's hedonistic imagery and sensuous technique, saw lessons to be learned in his art far more daring than the academic principles acquired at Parisian ateliers. Accordingly, when Babcock followed Millet to Barbizon in 1849, he did so in pursuit of a rococo revivalist rather than a contemporary
genre painter. Arriving there before Millet's transition to rural genre was effected, he was not disappointed.

Babcock, like most of Millet's earliest American followers, was a native Bostonian. He was born January 16, 1826, one of four sons of Margaret Perkins and Alpheus Babcock. Both parents died when their children were still young, but Babcock and one of his brothers were provided with cosmopolitan educations through private patronage. Alpheus Babcock, who had been an employee of the Chickering Piano Company, invented the first iron piano frame, a device that launched the fortunes of that business; in a show of gratitude following his death, the Chickering family sent one of his sons abroad and financed his study of music there. In 1847, after working two years in George Lombard's Commission House, Babcock was also sent to Europe by affluent friends of the family to begin his career as an artist.²

Specific information documenting Babcock's movements throughout Europe prior to his establishment at Barbizon is scarce but as a young American artist following contemporary fashion, he chose Paris as his base of study, lured by the popular atelier of Thomas Couture (1815-1879).³ Babcock, however, quickly grew restless with the atelier regimen and curriculum, and left the studio after a short time. While searching for an alternative
course of art study in Paris, he could have seen Millet's paintings at the galleries of Deforge or Durand-Ruel. Although the exact circumstances surrounding their introduction have not come to light, it is generally held that Babcock met Millet while the artist was still in Paris, thereupon initiating a lifelong friendship that grew from his admiration for Millet's manière fleurie.

Babcock's artistic relationship to Millet is far more tenuous than his personal one and, therefore, more difficult to define. Despite the first-hand knowledge of Millet's major genre paintings that Babcock would some to possess, he confined his emulation of Millet's style to his manière fleurie and accentuated its rococo characteristics throughout his career. His contact with Diaz, whose works perpetuated the pastoral tradition at Barbizon, undoubtedly reinforced the eighteenth century current in his style and provided him with additional resources to draw upon in the development of his technique. Babcock's Classical Scene, n.d. (Pl. 17), relies heavily upon eighteenth century iconography in its depiction of a cupid who playfully taunts a nymph crouching behind a swag of drapery they hold aloft between them. In its Sylvan setting and mythological cast of characters, the work can be related to several early Barbizon paintings of similar themes by Millet dating from 1850: Nymph in the Reeds (Pl. 18),
Nymph Carried Away by Cupids (Pl. 19), or Nymphs in the Woods (Pl. 20). These pastorals, which Millet supposedly repudiated in 1848, remained his major source of income throughout his first years at Barbizon. Nymph Among the Reeds and Nymph Carried Away by Cupids, for example, were sold in rapid succession by Sensier who realized that Parisian connoisseurs found these elegant subjects vastly more appealing than genre. An often unrecognized pastoral-genre duality not only existed in Millet's early Barbizon oeuvre, but was encouraged by his business-minded friend's successful efforts to market his works in Paris. The recognition of the continuation of Millet's manière fleurie through 1850 is an important link to understanding why Babcock developed the iconographic vocabulary of nymphs, nudes, and Cupids that dominated his oeuvre. Babcock's glowing, yet undisciplined, palette and his attention to the nude figure indicate that he developed his style vis à vis Millet's manière fleurie in order to achieve those sensuous qualities, particularly coloristic freedom, he had admired in Millet's early works. Unlike Millet, Babcock attempted to assimilate the style without the benefit of a strong native rococo tradition or years of study of eighteenth century masters. Instead, he approached the style through the medium of Millet's paintings and, as a result, Millet's careful synthesis of influences,
disciplined by his own compositional structure, became in Babcock's works an unruly melange of elements that retained a pastiche quality. His eclecticism was noted, though never derided, in contemporary American criticism that habitually identified a number of sources in his works and referred to him as an artist who "painted mythological subjects like a disciple of Correggio with a strong infusion of Jean-François Millet and Narcisse Diaz."^5

Babcock's rococo sensibilities led him to the portrayal of courtly mortals as well as mythological characters; and while scenes of Cupid and Venus dominate his oeuvre, he occasionally painted variations of a second major eighteenth century theme, the fête galante. A comparison of his Landscape with Figures (n.d.) (Pl. 21) and Millet's works provided Babcock with an immediate precedent for his elegant group enjoying leisure activity in a lush landscape. Millet's festive courtiers, replete with rich and noble dress, are clearly derived from the study of Watteau and Boucher he undertook during his final months in Paris. Through his mastery of their style, he successfully conveys the same ethereal qualities and theatrical ambience created in comparable scenes by his precursors. The fête galante tradition was also kept alive at Barbizon by Diaz whose Elegant Company in a Park (n.d.) must have
appealed to Babcock's love of rococo iconographic and stylistic characteristics. Babcock's painting is a less direct descendent of the French fête galante tradition than the works by Millet and Diaz. In a landscape, two little girls and a woman in aristocratic dress rest beneath a tree. Approaching the elegant trio, a barefoot youth in tatters offers one of the girls a white bird alighted at the end of his outstretched arm. In its stylistic facility and idyllic theme, the painting is well within the purview of eighteenth century tradition. The female group, however, has a familial quality about it, reminiscent of the British conversation piece. The product of a number of influences including Millet, Diaz, and perhaps Gainsborough, Babcock's composition once again remains a conflation and betrays an artist attempting a difficult assimilation of several sources.

Babcock's work provides an intriguing example of an American artist's attempt to absorb foreign influences into his oeuvre. As a member of Boston's upper class, he was unable to relate to Millet's genre imagery on a social basis, and his personal decorative sensibilities precluded the development of a realist style. Unable or unwilling to respond to Millet's developing realism, he borrowed instead from the subordinate current of rococo influences in his style. Nineteenth century American critics derived
a certain amount of pride from Babcock's pioneering move to Barbizon and whole-hearted embracing of French art. The majority of his criticism was favorable, and during his lifetime his "little pictures of Cupids and Venuses were sold in Boston for higher prices than were commanded by Corots and Troyons." One of Babcock's major supporters, James Jackson Jarvis, attributed his popularity to the coloristic hedonism that was markedly contrary to American tradition:

Though of Puritan stock, not one element of it is perceptible in William Babcock's art. Paris has taken him to herself. He is color drunk. For him there are no cold tints in nature, no clear hard skies, sharply defined outlines, highlights, dull browns, chalky whites, chilling greys, or leaden hues, none of the atmospheric gloom and other common characteristics of the American eye in painting.

In his effusive poetic critique of Babcock, Jarvis provided his own literary parallel to the artist's stylistic excesses:

It [his color] is a madness, a wild passion, a splendid frenzy. He revels in his own mighty sensuousness, as indifferent to the opinions of common mortals as Jupiter at an Olympian banquet. Rich toned ultramarines, purples, oranges, crimsons, and violets blaze in his skies...and glow upon his figures with the consuming fervor of an Oriental's dream of voluptuous languor or his visions of a flesh entranced Paradise. By his magic wealth of brush, he transmutes the common air and world into a new earth and heavens. The first glimpse of the spectacle is so captivating to the sensitive eye that
I t...stirs the heart to wild beats like the strains of Beethoven.8

The preceding passage gives evidence of the remarkable reputation Babcock earned as a colorist during his lifetime.9 He was unable to develop comparable skills as a draftsman, however, and consequently failed to imbue his coloristic forms with substance. His uneasiness with human anatomy is particularly apparent in the disjointed body of the putto in Classical Scene and the doll-like quality of girls in Figures in a Landscape. His weakness did not pass unnoticed by Jarves, who wrote:

He will not heed design when the fury of color is upon him. Evidently, his idealism is exhausted on pigments, and he is gifted with no grace of design, though showing no little taste and spirit in composition. Unless the chaotic feeling and force he displays be reduced to artistic order, nothing absolutely great and good shall arise out of them, but as with Poe, we shall have to mourn over the quenched fire of a real poet.10

Babcock's use of Barbizon influences was highly selective, dictated as much by his artistic shortcomings as his sensibilities. Culling only from the decorative styles of Diaz, Corot, and a particular aspect of Millet's oeuvre, he chose from those sources which embodied the renewal of the French colorist tradition that had culminated earlier in the century with Delacroix. Although Babcock's assimilation of Millet's style was restricted to the manière fleurie, their friendship
remained constant. His reclusive life at Barbizon assumed legendary qualities for the second generation of American students who came to France in the 1870's both curious and awed to meet a compatriot on intimate terms with Millet. From contemporary accounts, Babcock was a taciturn, often unapproachable man described by Ednah D. Cheney as "wayward and moody, living without home or family." Yet with those in whom he sensed a sincere admiration of Millet, he was gregarious and ebullient, eager to share his insights concerning the artist. He amazed visitors with his vast encyclopedic collection of photographs and engravings after Millet's works, and more importantly, his unstinting efforts to acquaint them personally with Millet and his family. A future permanent resident at Barbizon, he was to become the primary intermediary for subsequent American visitors, both artists and writers, who arrived eager to meet Millet. In this capacity, he came to make his most significant and lasting contribution to Millet's popularity in the United States.

Although both Babcock and Millet became virtual lifelong residents at Barbizon, their rural environment elicited radically opposite responses from the two artists that were reflected by iconographic divergences. The seductive insularity of Barbizon and the Fontainebleau
Forest turned Babcock's artistic vision increasingly inward as he painted scenes from a private world inhabited by mythological creatures and impossibly aristocratic mortals. Retreating personally into a reclusive lifestyle and professionally into a past era of the history of art, Babcock sequestered himself at Barbizon creating imaginative, highly romantic and personal paintings based stylistically upon Millet's early works. Arresting his emulation of Millet's style at the manière fleurie, Babcock felt neither the need nor the desire to explore the genre imagery available to him at Barbizon. Barbizon, however, evoked a different response from Millet who reveled in his newly acquired rural environment as a medium through which to regain contact with his own past in Gruchy. Alive to his rural surroundings, he recognized in the peasant labor at Barbizon scenes from his own childhood while also realizing that the cyclical nature of French peasant existence had run its course unchanged and uninterrupted since that earlier time. He responded to Barbizon as an artist, turning his attention increasingly to genre scenes that brought forth both autobiographical memories and literary associations.

Millet's early Barbizon period is most frequently identified with and summarized by The Sower (Salon, 1850) (Pl. 23), a single figure composition whose format and
monumentality were presaged in 1848 by *The Winower* (Pl. 14). Three extant versions of the work are known today: the original composition, presently in Wales, 1846, and two subsequent versions, both dating 1850, which figure prominently in American collections, one adopted as the symbol for the Provident National Bank in Philadelphia and the other forming the focal point of the Quincy Adams Shaw Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From its inception, Millet's sower was a complex genre image embracing multiple levels of meaning. Preparatory drawings dating from 1848-1850 demonstrate that Millet was considering the motif prior to his removal to Barbizon; the early date of the study implies that the composition was initially inspired by his childhood memories of Gruchy where he watched peasants sow the first seeds of the season in the sign of the cross. Herbert supports this theory by citing the hilly landscape background as a topographical reference to Gruchy that contrasts distinctly with the flat plains of Barbizon. A slightly later sketch entitled *The Devil Sowing*, 1849-1850 (Pl. 24), proved that the sower image grew not only from Millet's early observation of his surroundings but also from his study of the Bible. The sketch illustrates the following parable from St. Matthew 13:3-9:
Behold the sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside and the birds came and ate them up. And other seeds fell upon rocky ground where they had not much earth; and they sprang up at once because they had no depth of earth; but when the sun rose they were scorched and because they had no root they withered away. And other seeds fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them. And other seeds fell upon good ground and yielded fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Complementing its Biblical role, the sower also played a role in French secular allegory where it represented the labor identified with the month of October, the sowing of winter wheat. An early example of this tradition dating from the medieval period is contained in the Limbourg Brothers' royal manuscript, Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry (Pl. 25). The same figure also appeared in a more common and accessible annual record—the popular agrarian calendar. The anonymous artist who illustrated the Kalendrier des Bergiers (first published, 1493) included a woodcut representation of a sower as his personation of the month of October (Pl. 26).

In the highly charged political atmosphere of 1850, however, The Sower was interpreted within a social context rather than an artistic-literary nexus. Conservative critics were repelled by the pessimism they perceived in the figure and subsequently interpreted the work as Millet's
call for social reform. Other writers, including Sabatier-Ungher, associated the laborer with an eternal task and life-giving power, attributes he related stylistically to Renaissance traditions:

>Va, sème, pauvre labourer, jette à pleines mains le froment à la terre! La terre est féconde, elle produira, mais l'année prochaine, comme celle-ci, tu seras pauvre et tu travailleras à la sueur de ton front, car les hommes ont si bien fait que le travail est une malédiction, le travail qui sera le seul véritable plaisir des êtres intelligents dans la société régénérée. Le geste a une énergie toute michelangesque... c'est une construction florentine... C'est le Démos moderne... 14

Millet, however, maintained a noncommittal attitude toward political implications when he wrote to Sensier:

>But to tell the truth, peasant subjects suit my nature best, for I must confess, at the risk of your taking me to be a Socialist, that the human side is what touches me most, and that if I could only do what I like, or at least attempt to do it, I would paint nothing that was not the direct result of an impression directly received from nature, whether in landscape or figures. 15

In letters written to Sensier following the Salon of 1850, Millet revealed that his return to the country evoked definite literary associations, an admission that demonstrates that many of Millet's major genre paintings, although grounded in the observation of reality, are based upon literary sources. This aspect of Millet's artistic process and iconography is of particular importance to a study of American criticism of his works. Unable
to find parallel political situations in this country as an interpretive base for Millet's iconography, American critics supplanted French social criticism of Millet's imagery with literary readings. In doing so, they naturally turned most often to the single literary source commonly predominant in both cultures, the Bible. Because of the religious and literary bias of American criticism, statements such as the one contained in the following passage became interpretative keys to Millet's imagery in this country:

In cultivated land sometimes—as in places where the ground is barren—you see figures digging and hoeing. From time to time one raises himself and straightens his back, as they call it, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand—'Thou shalt eat thy bread by the sweat of thy brow.'

In July, 1851, Millet briefly turned his attention to American literature when he was offered an unusual commission to be completed in collaboration with the Swiss artist, Karl Bodmer. In the midst of the European vogue for depictions of the American Indian, a fashion stimulated by George Catlin's traveling exhibition of Indians and their artifacts that toured France in 1845, the publishing firm of Goupil requested Bodmer to make a series of lithographs illustrating specific incidents in the folklore-history of the American West; these were to be marketed by the firm in both Paris and New York.
Bodmer, aware of Millet's financial straits, approached him with the suggestion that a collaborative effort might be mutually beneficial given the large number of works that already required his attention. At Millet's consent, Bodmer supplied him with portfolios and notebooks documenting his own tour of the West with sketches of Indians on horseback, bison, tepees, and exotic costumes. Although a project of this nature may at first appear alien to Millet's artistic-cultural heritage, his interest in it becomes understandable when viewed within the context of the French Romantic tradition.

Considering his preference for Chateaubriand, the numerous depictions of *Atala and René* by earlier French artists including Girodet could not have gone unnoticed by him. Most significantly, he perceived in James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*, a novel he read in Cherbourg, a tradition parallel to Chateaubriand's works.

A comparison of Horace Vernet's *Mazeppa*, 1826 (Pl. 27) and Millet's *Simon Butler: The American Mazeppa*, 1851 (Pl. 28), demonstrates that he brought both European literary and artistic traditions to bear upon the commision. Both works share the identical central motif of a figure strapped to a galloping horse; the literary associations evidenced by Millet's adaptation of the Mazeppa figure
are made explicit through the bilingual explanation appended to Millet's work:

    During the Revolutionary War, Simon Butler, one of the first settlers of Kentucky, was made prisoner by the Indians. They placed him on an unbridled and unbroken horse and turned the animal loose, driving it off at its utmost speed. The horse, unable to shake off this new and strange incumbrance, made for the thickest covert of woods with the speed of the winds, and when worn down, exhausted by its fruitless effort to shake off its burden, brought Butler back, amidst the exulting yells of the savages, to the camp. Butler was fortunate enough to escape a short time afterwards.

Along with Simon Butler, Millet completed drawings entitled The Rescue of the Daughters of Boone and Callaway, The Leap of General McColloch, and The Fortress, all intended to be used as preparatory sketches for lithographs illustrating a volume entitled The History of the American Pioneer. Goupil, however, did not accept Millet's drawings and despite Bodmer's support the commission was terminated.

    Following his brief excursion into American literary illustration, Millet returned to his native iconographic traditions in preparation for the Salon of 1853 where he was awarded a second class medal for Harvesters Resting (Pl. 29). The final work evolved over a particularly lengthy period of time beginning with preparatory sketches in 1851 that grew to number thirty-nine. His preoccupation with Harvesters Resting prevented his participation
in the Salon of 1852, but the following year he had completed the work along with two additional Salon entries, The Sheepshearer and Shepherd, Evening. Harvesters Resting, which Millet originally entitled Ruth and Boaz, represents harvesters gathered in a circular group taking their midday meal. Their communal repast is interrupted by a man who leads a young female gleaner toward the assembly with a gesture beckoning her to join them. Although Millet secularized the title of the work at the last moment before its public exhibition, the painting clearly states the Biblical qualities he perceived in rural life. Like the motif of the sower, the harvester carries an allegorical meaning secondary to its Biblical identity; the laborer is the traditional representative of the month of July. Later in his career, Millet placed the harvester within an allegorical context when he painted a series of the seasons in which The Buckwheat Harvest, 1863-1874, represented summer. For the moment, however, Millet maintained strong literary associations and stylistic affinities with ancient sources that were recognized by his critics. Paul St. Victor, sensing a lengthy tradition behind the imagery, likened the scene to a Homeric idyll while drawing favorable parallels between Millet's figure style and ancient sources including Egyptian sculpture. Gautier seconded him by lauding the quotations from Michelangelo's sculpture he identified within the composition.
Parallel to his monumental works, Millet painted a series of smaller scenes of rural life that have greater relevance, in most cases, to the stylistic and iconographic development of the American artists who sought his advice at Barbizon. Instinctively realizing that they commanded neither the technique nor the traditions that conferred iconic significance upon Millet's larger scenes, they turned instead to works which were more approachable both by virtue of their size and slightly anecdotal quality. In American eyes, works from the early 1850's, including *Knitting Lesson*, 1853, and *The Spinner*, 1850-1855, came to represent domestic virtues and consequently were viewed as the sentimental counterparts to the Biblical lessons they perceived in the larger paintings.

Late in 1853, Sensier began to market successfully many of Millet's smaller genre paintings and his group of patrons extended from France to Holland. Although his financial situation was somewhat relieved by the increased patronage, Millet could not totally overcome his debts; but, with his financial affairs stabilized by late spring, 1854, he left Barbizon for the summer and returned to Normandy for a temporary reunion with his family.

Refreshed by his summer vacation and renewed contact with his family, Millet returned to Barbizon in
autumn and began preparations for the *Exposition Universelle* of 1855. His hopes to exhibit two works were destroyed by chronic migraine headaches, but when the exhibition opened he was represented by a single painting that won him unanimous acclaim, *Peasant Grafting a Tree* (Pl. 30). Simple and direct in its presentation, the scene depicts a peasant grafting a tree while his wife, holding their infant in her arms, intently watches as he carefully performs the task. As *Harvesters Resting* was a pictorialization of Millet's study of the Bible, *Peasant Grafting a Tree* is a representation of his command of Virgil. Sensier identified the specific passage that inspired the work as, "*Insere Daphnis, piros; carpent tua poma nepotes,*" or "Graft thy pear tree Daphnes, and posterity shall pluck thy fruit." In classical terms, iconographically and stylistically, the painting bespeaks Millet's faith in the continuity and survival of the peasant class. Repeating the trend established with *Harvesters Resting*, critics cited Millet's references to classical stylistic sources, particularly Raphael and Andrea del Sarto, while saluting him for the harmony and elegance he brought to representations of rural life. During the exhibition, Theodore Rousseau approached Millet with a tale of a wealthy American who wished him to act as an agent in his purchase of the work for 4,000 francs. Overcome with surprise and
delight at the large sum, Millet agreed to the sale only upon the condition that he learn the identity of his mysterious benefactor. Rousseau, however, steadfastly maintained the anonymity of the purchaser, and it was only Sensier who later learned that Rousseau, in a famous act of friendship, purchased the painting himself.  

Millet's success at the Exposition Universelle is a fitting close to his first five years at Barbizon, a period marked by his gradual progression toward an overtly classical style. Between 1850 and 1855 his iconographic development proceeded logically from the Biblical and allegorical references of The Sower and Harvesters Resting to a genre iconography inspired by classical literature in Peasant Grafting a Tree. Documented by three major exhibitions, the works of this period established Millet as a painter of monumental genre; yet the introduction of domestic genre scenes during this period revealed that his oeuvre also held a less imposing interpretation of rural life, a minor key accompaniment to the major chord struck by The Sower. The two qualities evident in Millet's genre oeuvre, romantic-classicism and realism, attracted his second American follower William Morris Hunt, who witnessed the Salon exhibitions of 1850 and 1853. Unlike his countryman Babcock, Hunt was to seek out Millet at Barbizon because he was a genre painter rather than a
noted maître du nu. Fascinated by Millet's rural iconography, Hunt would respond primarily to it in his own works, developing his Barbizon oeuvre along totally different lines than those followed by Babcock.

Hunt and Babcock were not strangers when they met at Barbizon but had already become friends while fellow pupils at Couture's studio where Hunt, having enrolled in 1846, preceded Babcock by one year. Hunt's incisive sketch of Babcock (1850) (Pl. 31), the only known portrait of the artist, is a unique record of their friendship. Although a rapid and energetic drawing, the profile portrait sensitively conveys Babcock's contemplative character in a moment of thoughtful introspection.

The biographies of the two men contain a number of noteworthy parallels: both were Bostonians--Babcock by birth and Hunt by preference--who moved in elite social-intellectual circles; both enthusiastically embraced Millet's art after a search for artistic exemplars that culminated with a period of study at Couture's atelier; both were attracted to Millet for spiritual or psychological reasons related to his strength of moral character and seriousness of artistic purpose; and both, attempting to emulate Millet's repudiation of cosmopolitan life, moved from Paris to Barbizon, where they assumed the outward aspects of peasant life.
Hunt's apprenticeship at Couture's studio marked the conclusion of a grand tour of Europe begun with his family in autumn of 1843. The trip, ostensibly prompted by his physician's advice to travel "south" for his health, also followed close upon Hunt's second suspension from Harvard. Although never a serious academician, Hunt possessed from the start a lively, if somewhat capricious, interest in the arts, fostered by his mother, an erudite woman with artistic aspirations of her own. Wheelwright, his friend and classmate, recalled:

While in college, he gave evidence of the artistic taste and aptitude for which he was afterward so distinguished. He carved delicate miniature portraits in cameos and decorated his college textbooks with portraits of professors and fellow students.

His casual interest in carving led to a brief period of instruction with John Crookshanks King (1806-1882), a sculptor working in Boston, from whom he learned the rudiments of plaster modeling while still enrolled at Harvard.

Once established abroad, Hunt advanced his studies in Rome with the American neo-classical sculptor, Henry Kirke Brown (1814-1886). Hunt, who had been schooled in the classics at Harvard, was capable of responding to both the literary and artistic manifestations of ancient civilization. His contact with Brown, who had worked in Florence prior to settling in Rome, enabled him to build a vocabulary of antique sources, both stylistic and
iconographic, and to attain a certain level of expertise as a copyist after Hellenistic models. The allure of travel, however, drew him from supervised study in 1845 when, accompanied by his family and the Boston art patron and essayist, Thomas Gold Appleton (1812-1884), he departed Rome to tour the Near East. While traveling, he continued his exploration of antique art on an informal basis. Their itinerary, including visits to Corfu, Corinth, and Athens, allowed Hunt a first-hand examination of major classical works, particularly those of Phidias, which he and Appleton sketched at leisure. By this point in his travels, Hunt's cheerful dilettantism had given way to a serious desire to become a professional artist. Upon his return to Rome, he discussed his aspirations with Emanuel Leutze, who persuaded him to join the Düsseldorf Academy and begin formal training as a sculptor there. With characteristic enthusiasm and curiosity Hunt arrived in Dusseldorf in autumn of 1845 prepared to embark upon yet another new course of instruction. He remained only nine months, however, predictably discovering that he was temperamentally ill-suited to the rigorous demands of a tightly structured academic curriculum; he found it impossible to tolerate a system of education predicated upon personal discipline and "the principle that the education of art-genius, of a mechanic, and of a student of science,
were one and the same thing—a grinding methodical process for the accumulation of a required skill. Later, as a teacher of his own art class in Newport, he alluded to his distaste for the academic system in the following statement:

You cannot draw an eye until you know how some great master has drawn it. That's why, in Europe, they would make you draw three years from the antique before they would allow you to touch a brush. But I want you to get more fun out of your work, so I let you go ahead first studying the 'masses'.

Although Hunt abandoned the Düsseldorf Academy, he did not relinquish his ambition to become a sculptor. He returned to Paris, his original point of debarkation in 1843, with the intention of joining the atelier of James-Jacques Pradier (1790-1855) in autumn of 1846. According to a famous anecdote, however, he accidentally discovered Couture's painting The Falconer (1845) in the window of DeForge's art shop, whereupon he exclaimed, "If that is painting, then I am a painter." Impulsively, he changed his plans once more, selecting Couture as his master and painting as his vocation.

Hunt arrived at Couture's studio on the eve of his teacher's triumph at the Salon of 1847 where he exhibited his unanimously acclaimed work The Romans of the Decadence. Fashionable and permissive, Couture's atelier provided him with a genial antidote to the rigid demands and inflexible
curriculum of the Düsseldorf Academy. The atelier system, Hunt happily discovered, accommodated his independent nature; in place of a prescribed, regimented course of study, he was permitted to work independently from the live model, monitored only by the casual supervision of the atelier assistant. Couture himself appeared only twice each week, offering spontaneous critiques of his students' works and progress. The growing reputation and popularity of the atelier, however, was predicated more upon an innovative painting method than a self-paced curriculum. A point of pride with its deviser Couture, the system emphasized the establishment of form through light and dark masses rather than linear definition. Beginning with a charcoal sketch of the subject on canvas, Couture applied a sepia turpentine wash, first re-tracing his original outline and then establishing broad areas of shadow. After the canvas dried, he set in the highlights with a thin layer of wash and wet the shadows once more. With rapid, decisive strokes, he applied his pigments, maintaining a smooth surface in the shadowed areas while building up the highlights with heavy layers of impasto. His energetic technique naturally led to the elimination of color mixing. Wishing to preserve and emphasize the vibrancy of individual hues, he placed color on the canvas in a series of triplet juxtapositions or, as he
advised his students, "as you would twist three different colored threads, so that they [the individual colors] could be distinguished."^29

The significance of Couture's innovative method was to be seen largely in the rich and varied surfaces of his canvases. A balance of spontaneity and elegance, his style attests to his technical audacity and assurance. Because Couture was a consummate technician, he was able to devise a logical procedure, one easily taught and learned, by which even his most inexperienced students could attain a certain level of stylistic expertise. Codified into a system, the method could be mastered quickly through formulae repetition. It was, in short, a procedure ideally suited to a young artist possessing Hunt's impatient desire to become a painter. Responding accordingly, Hunt pursued his craft enthusiastically in Couture's atelier where he soon became a favorite pupil fondly addressed as "Monsieur Maurice," a title derived from the French transliteration of his middle name, Morris.\(^30\) Under Couture's tutelage, Hunt was exposed to a doctrine expounding the primacy of style or the premise that artistic inspiration was derived from and delimited by technical considerations. The enduring effect of his five-year tenure at the atelier, therefore, was largely a matter of stylistic finesse.
According to Hunt's biographer and pupil, Helen Knowlton, The Sower was the first of Millet's works to be seen by Hunt, who subsequently purchased the original version in 1853. In Talks on Art she recorded Hunt's reminiscence of his first contact with Millet's art:

> When I first saw his pictures in Paris, I was walking through the exhibition with one of my friends, and we were delighted with them. They were called "des tristes affaires." I was in Couture's studio at that time. He cared nothing for them.31

Hunt remained in Paris for at least two years following his introduction to Millet's works, frequenting Couture's atelier while maintaining his own studio. In addition to his activities in Paris, he spent part of 1851 touring Italy and Holland. Sometime after his return Hunt went to Barbizon where he met Millet, presumably through the offices of Babcock, who was already living there. Early in 1853, prior to the opening of the Salon, Hunt gave up his studio in Paris and moved entirely to Barbizon where he remained until his return to the United States in the summer of 1855.

From the outset, Hunt occupied a singular position among the American artists who admired Millet. A patron before a pupil, his initial response to Millet's work was to purchase with unreserved enthusiasm all that he could afford. When his own funds were depleted, he sought buyers among his friends, affluent Bostonians on grand
tours, who usually found it difficult to resist Hunt's eloquent testimonials or the low prices of Millet's paintings. Hunt's description of the circumstances surrounding his first major purchase, those works shown in the Salon of 1853, is contained in the following passages:

I found him [Millet] in a cellar, three feet underground, his pictures mildewing with dampness as there was no floor. That stuck in my crop, I tell you! I bought as much of his work as I could; and after a while...the people there [in Paris] were alarmed and began to come down and get what they could from him. It will give you some idea of the low prices at which his works were sold to know that for The Sheep-shearers, the most expensive of his pictures that I bought, I gave $90.00. He never touched any of the money either. The man from whom he bought his colors had written him that he must either send him some money or a picture. I paid the color man the $90.00 and took the receipt for the bill.

He [Millet] had so little money in his life that he had never owned a $100.00 bill until I gave him the money for one of his pictures [Harvesters Resting]. It was at the exhibition; I was sure Mr. Brimmer would want it so I carried it off in its big frame to my friend Hearn's studio—I had none in Paris then and took Brimmer there to look at it. When Brimmer heard the price, he said, 'That's little enough for it," and took it. When I handed the money to him [Millet] he did not say much. He told me the next day that I might like to know that he never had had a $100.00 bill before.32

These passages are important because they contain facts that supplied the basis for a certain American attitude toward Millet that contributed to his phenomenal popularity here during the nineteenth century: he was an artist neglected by his own country, who had been rescued
from obscurity and poverty by American foresight and money, living proof, so to speak, of our discerning artistic judgment. Hunt's somewhat bald synopsis of his introduction to Millet as, "When I found him, he was desperately poor," and his ensuing description of conditions at the Barbizon studio awakened popular interest in Millet through sympathy. In the face of his penury, American patronage became a moral issue rather than a simple matter of artistic connoisseurship. Sympathy later turned to national pride as Americans came to recognize the significance of Hunt's pioneering patronage. As one author stated:

From 1848 to 1875 Millet lived at Barbizon with his wife and family--nine children--robbed by dealers and false friends who kept him poor while they acquired his works on which they became rich. It is pleasant to know that in his extremity, it was some Americans who stepped forward and bought some of his works, raised money for him, and helped him with sympathy and encouragement.33

The role American beneficence played in Millet's success received a more pointed social emphasis and self-congratulatory tone in the hands of another writer:

Buying numbers of pictures from the despised painter, going about Paris with him, dressed in a peasant costume, so that his friend might not feel any difference in their worldly station, Hunt soon came to be called the "mad American." His friendship did not fail to bless Millet; he was the first to appreciate and buy his pictures, and what his generous enthusiasm meant to the lonely, hungry French
genius would be difficult to express. His full purse and generous spirit was of direct benefit to Millet's career.\textsuperscript{34}

In a desire to emphasize the initial American contribution to Millet's career, writers repeated Hunt's straightforward account of events frequently and freely, heightening certain details without reservation. His presentation of the $100.00 bill to Millet, for example, became a particularly favored narrative that was included in journal articles with such frequency it assumed a symbolic character. As a result of creative license exercised by more than one writer, the popular conception was not, as Hunt originally stated, that Millet accepted the money with silent gratitude but that he "burst into tears" at the sight of it.\textsuperscript{35}

Hunt alluded to the anxiety his enthusiastic patronage caused among the French with his reference to the speculative purchasing of Millet's works he triggered in Paris. His early establishment of a French-American patronage rivalry is further attested to by Theodore Rousseau's famous masquerade as a wealthy American collector and his reported triumphant exclamation, "Cela ne va pas en Amerique," when he purchased Millet's Peasant Grafting a Tree. Rousseau's ploy, occurring in 1855, was undoubtedly a veiled reference to Hunt himself, who left Barbizon the same year to return to the United States.\textsuperscript{36} The chauvinistic war of patronage touched off by Hunt and his companions during
the first years of Millet's fame reached its climax in the battle for *The Angelus* at the Secretan auction in 1889; there the two countries met in an antagonistic confrontation, ostensibly cultural, yet deeply political. With patriotic determination, France sought to retain a painting that had become a symbol of its national artistic tradition while America aggressively set out to purchase a cultural heritage it did not possess as a birthright.

Hunt's zealous activities as a patron were of natural consequence to his development as a painter. In 1853 he began to draw tentatively from Millet's art, assimilating its more readily accessible aspects; in its initial phase, therefore, his emulation of Millet's work was exclusively stylistic. Cited in both nineteenth century and modern scholarship, Hunt's double version of his painting, *La Marguerite* (1852, 1853), Pl. 32, 33) has become the archetypical example of his transition from the method taught by Couture to one inspired by Millet. Iconographically, the paintings are identical: each portrays a young woman depicted in profile, standing in a half-mown field where she contemplatively examines a daisy she holds in her hands. The first version, now lost, was exhibited in the Salon of 1852, where it won the admiration of Louis Napoleon, who made unsuccessful attempts to purchase it. The second, in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, was shown in the National Academy of Design exhibition in 1856. *Marguerite I* bears evidence of the technical facility Hunt achieved under Couture through its striking elegance, apparent even in a photographic reproduction of the lost work. The silhouette of the female figure accentuated against two broad horizontal bands of field and sky is formed by a delicate curvilinear movement that builds with subtle intricacy from the broad sweep of her skirt to the delicate, sensuous contour of her back and neck, culminating with a cluster of smaller curves in her coiffed hair. Hunt's obvious delight in decorative qualities is demonstrated in his development of interior patterns of folds in the blouse and skirt that echo the flowing movement of the exterior silhouette.

In *Marguerite II* Hunt's rustic subject matter, now divested of its decorative aspects, is stated with greater directness. The figure is granted mass and substance, a result of Millet's influence and, I believe, the consequent reawakening of Hunt's interest in sculpture. The delicate treatment of detail in the drapery has given way to a broader handling that contributes to the overall effect of increased solidity. As Martha Hoppin correctly observed, the application of pigment is markedly contrary to Couture's methodology. Hunt covered the surface rigorously with a loaded brush, producing a heavy,
even layer of paint. The resultant pronounced, unvaried texture is a departure from the dynamic interchange of impasto and smooth surface areas produced by Couture's layered application and glazing. Because of his broader handling Hunt's second figure possesses greater organic unity than the first and is no longer read as the sum of easily discernible decorative parts. The compositional arrangement of both versions resembles Millet's *The Sower* in its juxtaposition of a single figure against a simplified, expensive landscape setting, a similarity that is more pronounced in *Marguerite II* because of Hunt's firm brushwork. This format, emphasizing the expressive value of the silhouette, was successfully implemented by Hunt in his later Barbizon genre paintings, most notably *The Little Gleaner* and *The Belated Kid*. In the following remarks Hunt, voicing his dissatisfaction with Couture's method, alluded to the appeal of Millet's technique that prompted his own stylistic transition:

> If you stop to think of patching in transparent shadows here and there, you will lose the feeling for your subject. That is the principal objection I have to Couture's method. In putting on your paint in that pre-arranged manner, you are not in love with Nature; you are in love with art, and it should be the other way.39

To Hunt, Millet's work represented the antithesis of Couture's artifice or, as he termed it, "solid painting, simple, full, and round."40
Hunt's examination of Millet's works held significance beyond the limits of stylistic experimentation; it was a crucial phase of his search for meaningful iconography that denoted his passage from student to professional artist. Having outgrown the necessity for Couture's formulaic instruction and methodology, Hunt was no longer satisfied with the noncommittal iconography fostered at the atelier where the subject was considered merely a vehicle for the mastery style. His selection of Millet as an alternative exemplar to Couture not only signalled a new sobriety in his professional intent, but accorded well with the entire pattern of his art education, which was a series of opposite choices: the discipline and tradition of the Düsseldorf Academy vs. the freedom and modernity of the Parisian atelier; the commitment to sculpture vs. a transition to painting; and the fashionable elegance of Couture's method vs. the unvarnished realism of Millet's style. Of the three Americans associated with Millet at Barbizon during the 1850's, only Hunt consistently painted genre scenes. Although he shared Babcock's admiration for Millet's nudes, once deeming them "as good as the best of the old masters, as good as Correggio," his own Barbizon oeuvre bears none of the impress of Millet's manière fleurie. His interest in genre, however, pre-dates his contact with Millet, as evidenced by his request
of Couture that the atelier members be permitted to travel throughout the provinces and sketch portraits of the peasantry for "purposes of education and amusement." Couture, who vetoed Hunt's suggestion, was deeply vexed by his student's wish to study with a painter whom he believed "too poor to give his peasants wrinkles in their breeches," and made his sentiments on rural genre known through his satirical painting The Realist (1869). The derisive work represents an artist seated on a plaster head of Jupiter, studiously copying a hog's head.

Hunt pointedly assessed the results of the disparate attitudes toward iconography held by Millet and Couture as, "Millet's pictures have infinity beyond them. Couture's have a limit." Obviously sensitive to the universal or eternal significance of Millet's themes, Hunt attempted to imbue his own genre paintings with meaning of similar consequence. It is not surprising, therefore, that his first effort in this regard was a direct adaptation of an entire composition by Millet.

Hunt's painting Sheepshearing at Barbizon, 1852 (Pl. 35) recorded as a copy after Millet, is a deliberate analysis of his genre painting, both stylistically and iconographically. A conscious tribute to Millet's technique, it demonstrates Hunt's talent for stylistic assimilation and imitation. From Millet's example, Hunt
derived a new perception of style as an integral contributor to meaning rather than an end in itself, an awareness essential to his development as a genre painter. As a stylistic exercise, Hunt's copy is a studious compendium of compositional principles he derived from Millet that were purposefully employed to enhance the monumentality of subject matter. The setting of the composition, a barn interior, is reduced to two contrasting rectangular forms, one wide and broad, designating the wall, and the other narrow and vertical, representing the door; the vertical space of the door is bisected further into two smaller rectangles of equal size by the horizon line of a distant landscape. The measured geometry of the background confers stability and order upon the composition while providing sturdy enframement for the activities of the laborers. Composed of solid planar areas, the essentialized background contains no details that distract attention from the figures. The genuine theme of the painting, the solemnity of labor, is embodied directly in the ponderous, deliberate movements of the figures at the left side of the composition; they bend over their work in parenthetical or reciprocal poses, a device Millet used to limit action to a contained unit within the composition and give classical balance to the entire work. Their identities obscured from the viewer, the peasants perform
their task with an unselfconscious anonymity that broadens their symbolic implications. Hunt's brush technique also contributes significantly to the meaning of the composition. Vigorous and summary, the application of pigment is an appropriate stylistic accompaniment to the physical energy expended by the workers he depicts. Individual strokes allowed to remain visible simultaneously imbue the canvas surface and subject matter with a robust immediacy that effectively unifies style and iconography.

Hunt's facility as a copyist alone could not secure his successful emulation of Millet's genre paintings. Although Millet's technique was available to him through close study, the force of personal conviction determining the character of his imagery was not. In his early Barbizon period, Hunt's indeterminate approach to genre imagery was revealed by its hesitant compositional treatment. His painting On the Edge of the Forest, 1852 (Pl. 36), depicts a Barbizon arbor where a peasant woman stands absorbed in her knitting while her cow grazes behind her. The probable source of Hunt's central motif is Millet's drawing Woman Knitting by Her Cow, 1852 (Pl. 37), the composition upon which he based his controversial painting Woman Pasturing Her Cow, 1858. Although Millet's drawing represents his initial notation of the theme, it nonetheless presages the iconic aspects of his final composition.
Placed emphatically against a reductive background, the massive human and animal, granted equal compositional presence, state their elemental co-existence and mutual dependency as rural entities. The ominous quality perceived in the final painting by French critics is tempered here with a quietude derived from the contemplative spirit of the peasant and her complacent animal.

Hunt's painting lacks the compositional strength and energy of its antecedent. His peasant retains the self-absorbed anonymity of Millet's figures, yet the diminished stature of the group undercuts its iconographic potential as an authoritative statement of rural life. His failure to implement Millet's monumentality, however, does not signal the failure of the work as a genre painting in its own right. In keeping with his own artistic sensibility, Hunt maintains the stillness of Millet's composition but replaces his direct strength with tentative delicacy. The compositional format, allowing the viewer free visual entry from an empty foreground, betrays him as a novice landscapist. From the foreground, the viewer moves to the middleground along a path clearly demarked by a sparse group of trees leading to the dense forest background which closes the composition. Aside from their function of designating the middleground and leading the viewer's eye, the thin vertical trees, repeating the
posture of the figure, provide her at once with a natural protective frame and necessary compositional support. His palette and brushwork are in full accord with the graceful tenor of the work. The woman's red cap and white blouse are the only coloristic highlights in an otherwise subtly monochromatic composition, while the thin application of pigment, exposing the canvas grain, does not overpower his imagery.

To my mind, Hunt's selection of this motif suggests his awareness of a particular tradition alive at Barbizon during his stay there—of the animaliers. Hunt's admiration for this group of French animal painters and sculptors is well attested to by his friendship and patronage of Antoine Barye (1795-1875). His own previous aspirations as a sculptor, furthermore, made him naturally responsive to their achievements. One of their foremost representatives was Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899), who exhibited her animal sculptures in Paris as early as 1842, when she was represented at the Salon that year by a terra cotta group *Shorn Sheep*. Although she did not move from Paris to Barbizon until 1860, five years after Hunt's departure, her works were certainly recognized by Millet and his companions while Hunt was there. Her painting *Pasturage*, 1846 (Pl. 38), in its depiction of a woman who, leaning against a tree, holds a distaff as she pastures a cow, provides an earlier precedent for Hunt's subject
matter than Millet's drawing. Rosa Bonheur's brother, Isidore, also worked in Paris and shared her penchant for the representation of rural animals. During the late 1850's he attained a reputation as a noted sculptor of cattle, and his bronze group Milkmaid Grazing Her Cow (Pl. 39), provides an intriguing sculptural counterpart to Hunt's paintings. Viewed frontally, Bonheur's group is a closer compositional precedent for Hunt's motif than the arrangement of Millet's drawing. 47

Dating from the same period, Hunt's French Peasant Woman with Pig, 1853-1855 (Pl. 40), is related compositionally to On the Edge of the Forest. It shares with its predecessor the motif of a single female figure and animal, once again characterized by diminutive size and enhanced by compositional support of the slender vertical accents in the forest setting. Compared to Millet's epic style typified by The Sower, French Peasant Woman with Pig is, as Peter Bermingham states, "tame and awkward," demonstrative of his difficulties in "translating the commonplace into a monumental art of dignity and presence." 48 In this case, however, I do not believe Hunt was striving for a monumentality comparable to Millet; and a comparison of his work to Millet's Shepherd, Evening (1853 (Pl. 41), which he purchased, may present Hunt's painting in a more favorable light. Millet's work, as Moreau-Nelaton aptly states, is
"a painting of small size, yet great poetry emanates from its simplicity." It depicts a shepherd who is returning homeward with his flock at sunset. Immediately noticeable is the small stature of the shepherd and the towering vertical framework of slender treetrunks which dwarf him further. A comparison of the two works reveals Millet's compositional expertise: regardless of size, the shepherd remains a forceful presence in the composition because Millet has accentuated his form by throwing his silhouette up against an empty lighted background. Turned from us in profil perdu, he is an evocative figure, inaccessible to the viewer. The ribbons of light and dark formed by the tree trunks and background interstices is a skillfully controlled pattern, creating an abstract complement to the human figure while alluding to his stature in the face of nature.

Hunt is drawing upon the compositional format of Shepherd, Evening, yet his painting is less successful than its predecessor because he is unable to grant the figure the compositional presence it possesses in Millet's work. There is an illustrative quality here not present in Millet's evocative painting, partly because of the diminished importance of the figure. Although Hunt has not attained Millet's mixture of simplicity and poetry cited by Moreau-Nélaton, the comparison demonstrates that French
Peasant Woman with Pig should be read as a viable response to a specific aspect of Millet's style rather than evidence of artistic shortcoming. His personal artistic sensibility and foreign perception of the French genre tradition mitigated against his development of a monumental style, yet he could respond to the poetic nuances and undercurrents in Millet's art, particularly when they were made available to him on a small scale. Lacking the intimidating monumentality of his major works, Millet's drawings, such as Woman Knitting by Her Cow, and his minor key genre paintings and pastels provided him with ideal entrée to Millet's art.

Clearly Hunt was uncomfortable depicting expansive outdoor genre scenes demanding an expressive monumental style. He found greater success with another theme derived from Millet's oeuvre, the intimate interior, in which he established an equipoise between his delicate style and the subtle poetry of domestic activity. In 1853 Hunt completed Girl Spinning and Girl Reading (Pls. 42, 43), two examples of a temporary reconciliation of his style and Millet's iconography. Girl Spinning depicts a lovely young woman, holding a distaff in her hands, seated in silent concentration at a wooden spinning wheel. Her head bent over her spinning, she is absorbed in her work and, unaware of the viewer's presence, evokes the quietude of
Millet's genre scenes. The spinner, a major figure in Millet's œuvre, appeared as early as 1850-1855 when, upon his move to Barbizon, nostalgic memories of the spinners and weavers who gathered in his childhood home at Gruchy to work and exchange tales were reawakened. His wistful longing for that time prompted him to depict women with the simple tools belonging to a past era, rather than the mechanized aids belonging to the mid-nineteenth century. From the suite of sewing women Millet completed during the 1850-1855 period, a drawing, The Seamstress, 1853 (Pl. 44), is the closest compositional prototype for Hunt's painting. In both works the figure, surrounded by the implements of her trade, is seated centrally in an undefined interior poised over the work in her hands. The anonymity and introspection of the figures recall the role of analogous figures in Northern genre painting as traditional emblematic representations of domestic virtue.

Although Hunt maintained the compositional format of Girl Spinning, he introduced significant stylistic changes into its pendant Girl Reading. Her figure slimmer and her features accentuated, the reader possesses an elegance that differentiates her from her rural counterpart. Accentuating the reader's graceful posture, Hunt places her right hand in a contrived pose as she traces the words on the page she reads. With a characteristically fluid
brush, he enhances the delicacy of the figure by creating an intricate surface pattern of folds in the garment, a facile approach that contrasts distinctly with the broad rendering of the simple clothing in Girl Spinning. Divested of its rural trappings, Girl Reading is an overt studio piece, yet a successful instance of Hunt's decorative style held in check by Millet's influence. The synthetic nature of the work and Hunt's divergence from Millet's style were noted by a contemporary American critic in the following passage:

Girl Reading suggests as much the influence of Millet as any of Hunt's works do and yet any resemblance that may exist is purely superficial. The young peasant, if peasant she is, is of a delicate neurotic type. Everything shivers with nervousness. There is nothing of Millet's fine stodgy sculpturesque quality. It is afire with a certain American delicacy which was characteristic of Hunt.51

Examined as pendants, Girl Spinning and Girl Reading can be interpreted as representatives of vita activa and vita contemplativa. One of the most prominent examples of the tradition in French art is located on the north porch of Chartres Cathedral, where twelve figures symbolizing the twofold nature of human activity embellish the arch upon which the Virtues are represented. The first order includes a female figure engaged in the six occupations of the active life (Pl. 45). Her sequential labors correspond
with the activity of virtuous women as prescribed in Proverbs 31:12-19:

She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff.

In her six representations the figure respectively washes wool, cards it, strips flax, then cards, spins, and winds it. The contemplative life is represented by a complementary series in which she holds a closed book, opens the book, meditates upon the closed book, meditates with the book held in one hand, and gazes toward heaven with clasped hands (Pl. 46). Each series culminated with a single large statute, respectively, a sewing figure and a reading figure, who summarized the active and contemplative pursuits. 52

Hunt most likely became acquainted with the sculptural programme of Chartres Cathedral while studying with Millet at Barbizon; during that time he and his mentor made frequent excursions together to Paris where they examined and discussed the wide variety of works available to them. 53 As an artist who once aspired to become a sculptor, Hunt must have been interested in the decorations of the great French Gothic cathedrals, an interest that was undoubtedly sustained at Barbizon through his access to Millet's personal collection of Gothic figures carved in wood. 54 Viewing both sculptural programmes and
individual figures together, Millet surely must have informed his friend of their symbolic meanings. Thus Hunt's artistic insights matured at Barbizon because, as illustrated by his Girl Spinning and Girl Reading, he came to possess a clear grasp of Millet's imagery and its supports.

As Hunt developed a more sophisticated perception of the literary and artistic factors motivating Millet's imagery, his approach to it grew bolder. Impressed by Millet's implementation of Biblical sources, he wrote:

> It was splendid to hear him read from the Bible! "Now the famine was great throughout the land." What a description that is! He would say, "What a breadth there is in it! It could be expressed in no other way, and yet people say that the Bible cannot be translated into French. To hear him read from the Book of Ruth! He saw it all from a painter's standpoint. He is the only man since the Bible was written who expressed things in a Biblical way."

This passage alludes to Millet's painting, Harvesters Resting (Salon, 1853), originally entitled Ruth and Boaz, which Martin Brimmer purchased through Hunt's intermediacy. Hunt's painting, The Little Gleaner, 1854 (Pl. 47), represents his response to the work, stylistic and iconographic, through which he attempted to assimilate something of the grandeur of Millet's composition and meaning. Hoppin draws a more direct parallel between the works, suggesting the figure of Ruth as the source for Hunt's gleaner. Avoiding the multi-figure format of Harvesters
Resting, Hunt instead focuses upon a single figure. In this regard, as well as the essentialized background, he also draws upon the example of *The Sower*. Stylistically, *The Little Gleaner* is an experiment in the classical composition principles that Hunt abstracted from Millet's works. The composition, bisected horizontally by the landscape and vertically by the central placement of the figure, is divided into four equal quadrants. The child's silhouette cuts clearly into the setting with an uninterrupted linear outline that emphasizes the static containment of the figure. She is animated only by the diagonal flow of the sheaf of grain she carries, and even her upraised right foot does not offer a genuine suggestion of mobility. Despite her stability and centrality, she retains a doll-like quality because of an absence of anatomical definition. The final effect of *The Little Gleaner* is unsatisfying because, through Hunt's reduction of Millet's style to formulae, he has undercut its expressive power. This, together with its depiction of a child who stares innocently at the viewer, causes the work to become an uneasy compromise between monumentality and sentimentality. The failure of the work to transcend the category of a demonstration piece is due to Hunt's inability to imbue his work with heroic value; this, in turn, relates to his perception of rural French life which, as spectator, he came to view intellectually and sentimentally.
Hunt's noncommittal attitude was noted early by contemporary critics, among them Ednah D. Cheney, who wrote in 1867 that he "gave the grace and picturesqueness of humble life, with often a touch of sweet feeling, but [did] not move our hearts deeply." In 1902, she restated her objection to his work in more overtly social terms, emphasizing the divergent attitudes apparent in the art of Hunt and Millet:

They [Hunt's paintings] never had the earnest love of humanity which makes everything of Millet's great and tender. Even his peasants have a highbred air unlike Millet's genuine creations.

Hunt's superficial understanding of peasant life is implicit in Cheney's criticism. The same element of artifice is perceptible in Hunt's temporary assumption of peasant dress and lifestyle at Barbizon "so he might feel more in sympathy with his new master." This did not suffice to imbue him with the insights and sensitivity Millet acquired as part of his peasant heritage. The class distinctions that held the artists and, consequently, their work apart were consistently emphasized in contemporary American criticism of Hunt's genre paintings. Philip Hale stated them in direct terms while also alluding to the loss of Millet's literary references in Hunt's work:
Millet's art was noble, but not aristocratic. Hunt's work was instinctively aristocratic. There was a certain nobility in it but it was made up of delicate preferences, subtle aversions. It had nothing of the Biblical grandioseness of Millet.60

Hunt's partial assimilation of Millet's style and iconography raises questions regarding the reasons for his tentative success as a genre painter and challenges the significance of his Barbizon period. A work such as Sheepshearing at Barbizon proves that he could implement Millet's technique comfortably; yet lacking a sustained commitment to the imagery, Millet's monumental style became unfeasible. The core of the problem, then, was not his stylistic expertise, but his perception and use of rural subject matter. An analysis of the following statement by Hunt offers insight into the significance of Millet's genre imagery held for him:

I took broader ideas of humanity, of the world, of life when I came to know Millet and his works. His subjects were real people who had work to do. If he painted a haystack, it had life, animal as well as vegetable, and the life of man. His fields were fields in which man and animal worked, where both laid down their lives, where the bones of animals were ground up to nourish the soil, and the endless turning of the wheel of existence went on.61

The use of the term "wheel of existence," drawn from medieval thought, demonstrates that Hunt recognized the cyclical nature of agrarian life as an important factor in Millet's work responsible for its monumental character. As
an American and an educated man, he could respond to Millet's images as a spectator and intellectually, but what he found to be new in Millet's genre was that the people were not just icons dating from the Middle Ages, representing the labors of the months and seasons, but "real people who had work to do." When Hunt began to copy Sheepshearing at Barbizon, for example, it is highly likely that he knew its general significance as the traditional occupation identifying the month of June when, according to the ancient French agrarian calendar, "the sheep is turned out of its coat."62

While it is unlikely that these artists, as close friends and followers of Millet, left Barbizon without an awareness of his references to earlier symbolisms, the conferring of comparable significance upon their own imagery often proved to be an elusive task. As Americans lacking a native tradition of genre symbolism, they could neither perceive nor translate onto canvas the particular meaning of a rural motif. Perceiving and presenting imagery as more purely genre, they divested it of its traditional context iconographically and, therefore, were less committed to giving it European iconic stature and permanence stylistically.

If Hunt's American heritage precluded any response to the symbolic value of labor in Millet's paintings, it
intensified his reverence for its ethical value. The inherent work ethic he possessed greatly facilitated his response to French realist imagery, particularly that stated with Millet's decisive monumentality. "Millet," he wrote, "always subordinates the people in his pictures to the things they are doing. Their hands are made to work, their feet to tramp about." The moral lesson of labor found in Millet's iconography was perceptively identified by Charles Caffin in 1898 as the major reason for Hunt's excursive period as a genre painter. He believed Millet's paintings appealed to Hunt because they embodied "the idealization of human nature as it is, in the fulfillment of the daily routine of duty. It was a motif at once artistic and moral." Long before Caffin's statement, the nineteenth century American mentality equating virtue and rural labor would show itself in the literary descriptions and criticism of Millet's genre paintings. His mention of the morality achieved through the "daily routine of duty," however, brings forth a related subject appearing throughout Hunt's memoirs as an obvious extension of his admiration for the ethical content of Millet's paintings--Millet's lifestyle.

Through Hunt's comments the full dimension of Millet's role as his artistic and moral exemplar becomes apparent, revealing one fact with outstanding clarity: Millet's
appeal as an artist was inseparable from his heritage as a peasant laborer. "He was the greatest man in Europe," wrote Hunt; yet his identification of Millet with Abraham Lincoln demonstrated that the greatness was in part derived from the fact that he had risen to it from the ranks of the common man, thereby typifying a basic American democratic ideal. Millet's background as a rural laborer, coupled with his years spent as a provincial limner and sign painter, offered Hunt an exemplar who virtually embodied the prototype of the original American artist. After sporadic, unsatisfying periods of study in prestigious foreign ateliers and academies, Hunt regained contact with the artist-artisan tradition of his own country through his association with Millet. His desire to assume the persona he perceived in Millet, the artist-worker, is clearly stated in his own memoirs:

One day we hurried up to the railway station at Fontanebleau after a long walk in blouses and sabots like workmen; for he was a workman and I was proud to call myself one.60

Through the combined strength of Millet's personality and art, the work ethic Hunt embraced at Barbizon was translated into a new seriousness of artistic purpose. Millet's exhortation, "Hunt! You ought to work! was later recalled by his hapless student who ingenuously remarked, "I thought I was working hard, but he considered me a loafer."67
Millet's repudiation of Parisian life in favor of a return to his rural origins elicited a personal response from Hunt. His own life had been divested gradually of any contact with the American land by his mother's ardent pursuit of a cosmopolitan education for him, leading from his native Brattleboro, Vermont, to New Haven, Boston, and finally Europe. The unique combination of artist-rural worker present in Millet was duly noted by Hunt who, equally impressed with his skills in both regards, wrote of a particularly memorable experience:

Crossing the field one day, he came upon some men who were cutting grain. One called out, "Ah Monsieur Millet, this is very different from your work! I would like to see you take a sickle." Millet replied, "I'll take a sickle and reap faster than you and all your family," and he did. He knew the form of every tool used by the farmer.  

Millet's example as a man whose life and art were compatible with the Puritan work ethic would be summoned forth later in Hunt's life when, after returning home, he deserted Boston for a less cosmopolitan milieu. A description by a contemporary witness of his life at Readville, near Boston, bears a striking parallel to the incident related by Hunt above and suggests his attempted recreation of his Barbizon ambience:
My mother and I went out one hot July day to visit the Hunts. As we drew near the barn, a wagon laden with new mown hay creaked down the lane, drawn by two milk white oxen and drew up beside the stable. High up at the open door of the loft we saw Hunt standing pitchfork in hand. He quickly threw off his wide-brimmed hat and studio blouse, stepped up to the top of the load, and began to work vigorously at putting up the hay.

In early autumn, 1855, Hunt returned home eager to share his discovery of Millet and his works with the American public. The task he set for himself, the introduction and popularization of Millet's works, proved a formidable one complicated by the small number of Millet's paintings available for study and the dearth of literature on the artist in this country. At this early stage in the development of Millet's popularity here, Americans held only a vague notion of his genre oeuvre predicated upon the Boston Athenaeum Exhibition of Harvester Resting in 1854 and Interior, presumably a domestic genre scene, in 1855. Attracting slight critical attention, Interior was dismissed in The Crayon as "an earnest though affectedly feeble peasant group." Further, the American understanding of Millet as a genre painter was confused by the fact that Babcock began his exhibition of The Distressed Mother at the Boston Athenaeum first in 1853, and then shown annually through 1856.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 Herbert, Jean-François Millet, p. 45.


4 The similarities between the art of Babcock and Diaz did not go unnoticed by nineteenth and early twentieth century American critics. Noted one anonymous observer at an auction of Babcock's works:

There are certain studies in oil color here which might have been signed by Millet. The Shepherdess and Her Flock (#61) is almost monochromatic and has the studied simplicity of forms, the characteristic disposition of line, and mass, and the expressional intensity of the great peasant painter's typical work. However, Babcock, living so long at Barbizon, was not always under the influence of Millet. His mythological subjects look more like the works of Diaz and again they have the aspect of small versions of old Italian painter's works.


5 "The Sale of the Chace and Babcock Collections at Leonard's," Boston Transcript, April 25, 1903.

6 Ibid.

Babcock's reputation as a colorist was carried into early twentieth century criticism by Will Hicok Low who wrote:

His work was of an intensely personal character, narrowly missing greatness. He might be termed color mad, so jewel-like and carried to its last intensity was every hue of his palette. Monticelli was in some respects a prototype, but Babcock's works, though perhaps never attaining the full compelling force of the Marseillais painter, had at times almost a Raphaelesque beauty of form.


Conservative critics believed that the pessimistic attitude they perceived in The Sower was indicative of Millet's desire for social reform. Auguste Desplaces, a critic for L'Union, wrote that the sowing ceremony did not, in actuality, possess the somber and desolate aspect he saw in Millet's depiction of it. Quoted by Herbert, the passage reads:

Il n'est rien là de violent et de lugubre, rien qui attriste le regard, rien qui assombrisse la pensée, et je regrette que M. Millet nous ait ainsi calunié le semeur.

Ibid., p. 78.
17 Herbert, Jean-Francois Millet, p. 114.


19 *Kalendrier des Bergiers* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1908), no pagination.


21 Ibid., p. 113.


23 Ibid., p. 20.

24 Although Rousseau's gesture was originally a sur-reptitious one, the act was recorded in Millet literature before the end of the nineteenth century. See Ady, Jean-Francois Millet, p. 139, and Moreau-Nélaton, *Millet Raconté par Lui-Même*, v. II, p. 21.


Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 8.

Ibid., p. 89.


Hoppin, Ibid.

Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 30.

Ibid.


Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 64.

Ibid., p. 87.

Wheelwright provides evidence that the popular artistic motif was a part of the daily reality of Barbizon:

...commonly...a rope was attached by one end to the cow's horns while the other was held by a young girl, or sometimes an old women, who, while retaining and guiding her four-footed companion, managed to knit and sew. I have often seen a young woman leading in this way two cows, a halter being thrown over each arm, while both hands were busily employed in the knitting.


For information on symbolic Dutch genre painting, see Lawrence Gowing, Vermeer (London: Faber and Faber, 1952) and Jakob Rosenberg, Seymour Slive, and E. H. Terkuiile, Dutch Art and Architecture 1600-1800 (Harmansworth: Pelican Company, 1966).


Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 90.

55. Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 87.


61. Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 87.


63. Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 90.


65. Hunt, Talks on Art, series 2, p. 87.

66. Ibid., p. 90.

67. Ibid., p. 92.

68. Ibid., p. 94.


CHAPTER III

EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE TO MILLET'S MATURE WORKS AT BARBIZON, 1855-1867

During the period extending from the end of the 1850's through the beginning of the following decade, Millet completed the works for which he is best known today: The Gleaners, 1857, The Angelus, 1857-1859, and Man with the Hoe, 1863. As the era unfolded, the social content of his paintings became increasingly apparent; although couched in imagery possessing artistic and literary antecedents, contemporary political messages rivaled traditional concerns. The Gleaners, for example, like its predecessor Harvester's Resting, immediately evokes the Biblical narrative of Ruth and Boaz while alluding to rural poverty in contemporary France (Pl. 49). Herbert has proven through his complete examination of the preparatory sketches that the motif of the gleaners was drawn from a variety of literary and allegorical traditions. When Millet first represented it in a drawing from 1852, it symbolized the month of August; the following year he returned to the motif and recast the gleaners as personifications of Summer. Adjusting his composition over a period of time, Millet gradually separated the three main figures.
from the party of harvesters to whom they had been conjoined until they, or more pointedly their poverty, became the focus of the composition. When The Gleaners was exhibited at the Salon of 1857, the criticism it drew recognized both its traditional and political contexts. Castagnary, defending the work against political attack, compared The Gleaners to antique precursors:

Cette toile, qui rappelle d'effroyables misères, n'est point, comme quelques-uns des tableaux de Courbet, une harangue politique on une thèse sociale; c'est une oeuvre d'art très belle et très simple, franche de toute déclamation. Le motif est poignant à la vérité; ...et un-produit...un de ces pages de la nature vraies et grandes, comme en trouvaient Homère et Virgile.²

Representing the opposing viewpoint, Paul St. Victor, provoked by the monumental presentation of the scene, derided the work as artistically and politically pretentious:

Ses trois glaneuses ont des prétentions gigantesques; elles posent comme les trois Parques du paupérisme. Ces pauvresses ne me touchant point. Elles ont trop d'orgueil; elles trahissent trop visiblement le pretention de descendre des Sibylles de Michel-Ange et de porter plus superbement leurs guenilles que les moissonneurs du Poussin ne portent leurs draperies.³

Two years after the exhibition of The Gleaners, Millet entered a second work combining literary narrative and political overtones in the Salon competition; Death and the Woodcutter, however, was rejected by the jury (Pl. 50). The
painting was inspired by LaFontaine's fable of the same title that related the tale of a woodcutter who summoned death to release him from his incessant toil. Confronted by the apparition, the peasant revoked his plea and instead begged for assistance with his labor and additional time on earth. In 1855, while reading a copy of George Sand's *Mare au Diable*, Millet discovered a source for his composition. The first chapter of the novel contained a description of an engraving by Holbein, part of the *Dance of Death* series, representing an aged peasant plowing a field while death stalked his frightened horses and urged them on with a whip.\(^4\) Aside from literary and artistic traditions, the theme of the pathetic laborer overcome by fatigue was current among Millet's contemporary artists. Henry Wallis' *Death and the Stonebreaker*, 1857, a British genre painting depicting a worker who has expired from exhaustion, is a prominent example.\(^5\) Unlike Wallis, Millet couched his scene in a folklore vernacular but nevertheless perceived in the fable a direct parallel to Barbizon life. In the following passage he explained the way in which one evoked the other:

You are sitting under a tree, enjoying all the comfort and quiet which it is possible to find in this life, when suddenly you see a poor old creature loaded with a heavy faggot coming up a narrow path opposite. The unexpected and always striking way in which this figure appears before
your eyes reminds you instantly of the sad fate of humanity--weariness. The impression is similar to that which LaFontaine expresses in his fable of The Woodcutter, 'Quel plaisir a-t-il eu depuis qu'il est au monde? En est-il un plus pauvre en la machine ronde?'

During the late 1850's, Millet turned from literary-social themes to religious subject matter when he completed a work that became synonymous with his name in nineteenth century America, The Angelus, 1857-1859 (pl. 51). Its celebrity was due in part to the fact that it was one of only a small number of religious paintings in Millet's oeuvre. Americans, constantly searching for didactic messages in his genre paintings, were particularly drawn to The Angelus because it was a direct representation of contemporary religious practice rather than a veiled allusion to a Biblical narrative. In 1865, some years after The Angelus was completed, Millet wrote to his friend Simeon Luce and explained the source for his depiction of two peasants who have temporarily halted their field labor to bow their heads in prayer at the sounding of the Angelus du soir:

L'Angelus est un tableau qui j'ai fait en pensant comment, entravant autrefois dans les champs, ma grand'mère ne manquait pas, en entendant sonner la cloche, de nous faire arrêter notre besogne pour dire l'Angelus pour ces pauvres morts, bien pieusement et le chapeau à la main.

The Angelus was originally commissioned by Thomas Gold Appleton, the American connoisseur and friend of Babcock
and Hunt. In summer, 1857, Millet wrote to Babcock regarding the commission:

Obliguez-moi de dire au Monsieur américain qui est venu il y a quelque mois, et qui m'a demandé de terminer pour lui un tableau représentant l'Angelus, que mon tableau va être terminé un de ces jours et sera, par conséquent à sa disposition aussitôt que cela lui conviendra.8

Appleton, however, never returned to claim the painting and consequently Millet prolonged its completion until December, 1859.

While Millet was engaged with The Angelus, Rousseau, who shared his patrons with Millet whenever it was possible, obtained a commission for him from his own client Paul Tesse. At Tesse's request Millet returned to the theme of charity, painting the first in a series of related works that appear in his oeuvre between 1859 and 1861. The theme of charity, already depicted as a Biblical parable and a classical symbol, was recast by Millet in 1859 as rural genre (Pl. 52). In this version, Millet depicted the practice of charity through an interior scene in which a young peasant mother instructs her daughter in the virtue by giving her a loaf of bread which she in turn will give to a beggar who waits at their open door. The beggar, whose penury is accentuated by the meager compositional space compressing his body, is modelled after the beneficent neighbor in Millet's composition Charity According to St. Luke. As in that earlier instance, the depiction
of the donation of bread recalls Pierre Millet's description of Louise Jumelin's method of instructing her grandsons in the practice of charity.

The following year Millet completed Feeding the Children: La Becquée (Pl. 53), a genre painting that I perceive as the thematic and compositional descendant of his classical Charity inspired by Ripa's Iconologia (Pl. 5). Millet places the scene within a rural courtyard wherein a peasant mother seated on a stool feeds broth to three children who, crowded in a doorway, patiently await their meal. In its depiction of nourishment Millet maintains ties to his classical treatment of the virtue, and an intermediary composition dating from 1846, also entitled Charity (Pl. 54), makes clear the relationship between the compositions of 1839 and 1860. The intervening work, both referring to its predecessor and predicting its descendant, depicts a woman in classical drapery who feeds three nude children as they all sit within a broadly defined doorframe. Surely Millet intended that these traditional associations be brought to his genre painting, although he now re-cast them in a different vernacular inspired by his Barbizon environment.

In 1861 Millet returned to the theme once more in his Salon entry Woman Feeding Her Child: La Bouillie (Pl. 55), the first of his works to be purchased by a public museum.
Iconographically, the work maintains the maternal nourishment established in *Feeding the Children: La Becquée*, yet stylistically, significant alterations have been introduced. The intimate and potentially sentimental quality of the previous composition is replaced by an imposing monumentality. Millet reduces the figures to a mother and a single infant cradled in her lap whom she prepares to feed by cooling a spoon of hot broth. Pushed forward to the front of the picture plane, the figure of the mother is cut directly below the knees creating a massive triangular form. The infant lolling expectantly in her lap is firmly cradled by his mother's parted knees and the folds of her skirts dropping between them echo the contour of his body. The centered axial composition and mother and child iconography evoke associations with Renaissance depictions of the Madonna and Child. The traditional iconographic identification of the Madonna or mother as a figure of charity is also maintained as evidenced by a comparison of this work and another by Millet entitled *Charity*, 1840-1841 (Pl. 56). Both works depend upon the female charity typology as codified by Ripa. Viewed as an ensemble, this group of works demonstrate Millet's ability to begin with a traditional image and advance it to a personal motif while maintaining the essential symbolic meaning accorded it throughout the history of art.
The socio-political undercurrent in Millet's works during this period that had been submerged temporarily by his involvement with the mother and child theme surfaced with surprising intensity in 1863. That year Count Alfred-Emilien de Nieuwerkerke, Director of the Department of Fine Arts, instituted a reform abolishing the official Salon jury. In its place, he established a jury made up of a three-fourths majority of former Salon medal winners. More importantly, he instituted a rule stating that former medal winners were exempt from juried assessment. The new policy enabled Millet, who had won a second class medal in 1853, to exhibit Woman Carding Wool, Return of the Flock Evening, and another work that attracted his most bitter political criticism to date, Man with the Hoe (Pl. 57).

Against a landscape of earth and sky that divides the canvas background into two level horizontal bands, Millet placed a peasant who looms against the landscape as he sways forward in near collapse supporting his weight by leaning on his hoe. There was nothing in Millet's previous oeuvre to prepare the art public for the brutal image of the dehumanizing effects of rural, manual labor. Millet, anticipating the reception the work would receive, prepared himself for the criticism before the opening of the Salon. In January, 1862, he wrote to Sensier:

My Man with the Hoe will get me into trouble with the people who do not like to be
disturbed by thoughts of any other world than their own. But I have taken up my position and mean to take a stand.

Millet's prediction proved correct, and when the Salon opened, Paul St. Victor, who had been disturbed by *The Gleaners*, was incensed by *Man with the Hoe*:

> Pour M. Millet, l'art se borne à copier servilement d'ignobles modèles. Il allume sa lanterne et cherche un crétin; il a dû chercher longtemps avant de trouver son *Paysan se Reposant sur sa Houe*. Vient-il de travailler ou d'assassiner? Pioche-t-il la terre ou creuse-t-il une tombe? Étrange façon d'honorer le peuple, pour un peintre voué aux choses plébéiennes, que de le représenter sous les masques dégradés de l'abrutissement! Comme si le travail aux champs frappait le laboureur de la stupidité de son boeuf!

During the critical attack that identified *Man with the Hoe* as a blatant statement against a governmental system that denied upward mobility to the peasant class and castigated Millet as a Socialist agitator, the artist maintained both his objectivity and his customary regard for literacy tradition:

> They call me a Socialist but really I might reply with the poor commissionaire from Auvergne, 'They call me a Saint Simonist. That is not true. I do not even know what it means.' Is it then impossible imply to accept the ideas that come into one's mind at the sight of a man who 'eats bread by the sweat of his brow'? There are people who say I see no charms in the country. I see more than charms there—infinite splendors. I see, as well as they do, the little flowers of which Christ said: 'I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But, nonetheless, I see down there in
the plain the steaming horses leading the plow, and in a rocky corner a man quite worn out who tries to straighten himself and take a breath for a moment. The drama is surrounded with splendor.12

As in the case of Death and the Woodcutter, Millet did not relate Man with the Hoe to the contemporary political situation in France as the critics had but to French literary tradition. When he authorized the publication of a photograph edition of the work he also approved of the following passage from Montaigne that appeared as the textual accompaniment:

Regardons à terre les pauvres gens que nous y voyons espandus la tête penchant après leur besogne, qui ne savent ny Aristotle ny Catone, ny précepte; de ceux-la tire nature tous les jours des effets constance et de patience plus purs et plus roides que ceux que nous estudions si curieusement en l'eschole: Combien qui désirent la mort, ou qui la passent sans alarme et sans affliction. Celui-là qui fuit mon jardin, il a ce matin enterré son père ou son fils. Les noms mêmes de quoi ils appellent les maladies en adoucissant et amollissant l'aspreté: la phtisie, c'est la doux pour eux, la dysentérie, de voyement d'estomach; une pleursie, c'est un morfondement et selon qu'ils les nomment doulcement, ils les supportent aussi; 'elles sont bien griefves quand elles rompent leur travail. Ils ne s'allicolent que pour mourir.13

The body of French criticism and literature surrounding Man with the Hoe was matched by the notice the work received in the United States. Later in the decade Ednah Chenry wrote the first American social interpretation of the painting thereby beginning a trend of political readings of
the work that culminated in 1899 with Edwin Markham's famous poem, "The Man with the Hoe." With the exception of The Angelus, this work generated more American criticism than any other painting by Millet; amid the heavy religious-literary bias that colored most of his criticism in this country, Man with the Hoe received an exclusively political treatment from the outset.

The works dating from this period cover an unusually wide emotional spectrum that moves logically from the religious sentiment of The Angelus to the domestic sentimentality of Feeding the Children: La Bequée, only to end in the unexpected outburst of pessimism embodied in Man with the Hoe. When Millet's third American follower, Edward Wheelwright, arrived at Barbizon in mid-1855 on the heels of Hunt's return home, he must have been surprised at the strident imagery and overt political intent building within Millet's oeuvre. Hunt, departing Barbizon before this change took place, could not have prepared his friend for the imminent shift in Millet's work. Although Wheelwright's stay at Barbizon coincided chronologically with Millet's preparatory work for The Gleaners and The Angelus, his memoirs are filled with references to Death and the Woodcutter and contain vivid descriptions of the pathetic lot of the field laborer, the bêcheur, which surely must have inspired by conversations with Millet concerning his
forthcoming Man with the Hoe. Arriving at Barbizon when Millet was introducing an imposing stylistic power and threatening, or at least disquieting, imagery into his genre paintings, it is not surprising that Wheelwright chose to interpret rather than emulate Millet's paintings. The role of interpreter or critic was a fitting one for Wheelwright; the only scholar among the American quintet who worked with Millet at Barbizon, he shared with his mentor an impressive knowledge of literature that enabled him to gain deeper insights into his iconography. As the art editor of The Atlantic Monthly, he shared these with the American public upon his return from Barbizon.

Like Babcock, Wheelwright was a native Bostonian, born March 10, 1824. The eldest son of Lot and Sarah Blanchard Wheelwright, he was a member of a wealthy family, possessing a long and distinguished genealogical history. His maternal great-great-grandfather was Joshua Blanchard, one of the builders of the Old South Church, and his paternal great-grandfather, John Wheelwright, served at the siege of Louisbourg in 1745 under the Seventh Massachusetts Regiment. Hunt's Portrait of Wheelwright, 1857 (Pl. 58), bespeaks his aristocratic demeanor and thoughtful nature. An erudite and inquisitive man, he is presented here with dignity and reserve.
As a youth, Wheelwright received an excellent education, attending two prestigious preparatory schools in advance of his studies at Harvard. Enrolling at Harvard in 1840, he counted among his friends and classmates Benjamin Apthrop Gould, George S. Hale, Francis Parkman, Edmund Dwight, and William Morris Hunt. He met Hunt during his third year at college when they boarded at the same rooming house. Recalling Hunt's mischievous character, he later confided to a friend that had he "not spent so much time with William and helping him with his various devices, he could have taken even a better rank than the respectable one he took in college." Already displaying his talents for archival research and writing as a student, Wheelwright was elected class secretary during his senior year at Harvard.

After graduation, in November, 1844, he sailed from Boston for Valparaiso, Chile, leisurely touring South America for one year, visiting Santiago, Lima, and other major ports between Valparaiso and Callao. Returning to Boston in November, 1845, he enrolled in Harvard Law School for one year, followed by a term of legal apprenticeship at the office of Sohier and Welch. Although admitted to the Bar of Suffolk County on April 17, 1849, he never practiced law.
Independently wealthy, Wheelwright was free to pursue his interests at his own discretion. In autumn, 1849, a few months after completing the bar examinations, he set sail for Europe. In Paris, he studied painting at the atelier of the landscapist, Eugene Ciceri (1813-1890) for three years, interspersing his work there with trips to Spain, Switzerland, and Italy. In 1851 he continued on to England to see the World's Fair, returning to Paris shortly thereafter. He then returned home, taking a four-year hiatus from travel ending in mid-October, 1855 when, equipped with a letter of introduction from Hunt, he departed for Barbizon. He attributed his new aspiration to become Millet's pupil directly to Hunt's influence:

"I had caught from Mr. Hunt something of his own enthusiasm for the talent and character of his friend, and was anxious to put myself, if possible, under the instruction of one whom he esteemed so highly."

Wheelwright's proposal, however, was greeted by Millet's resistance. He told Wheelwright simply that he would find it impossible to work in the daily company of a student sharing his studio and suggested Paris as a more advantageous locale of study. Wheelwright, although discouraged, persevered until Millet finally accepted him as a pupil but not before defining the arrangement as a course of independent study. He agreed to visit Wheelwright in his Barbizon lodgings periodically where he would offer
criticism and assistance privately in exchange for a monthly fee of $20.00. Concerning Millet's fee levy, Wheelwright concluded:

...he said he was obliged to charge me a very high price, as his time was valuable. He said this, I half suspected, as a last attempt to deter me from the scheme; and when he...found I was not in the least staggered by it, he looked, I thought, a little disappointed.20

With this agreement Wheelwright became the only American artist with whom Millet entered into a formal though verbal contract stating the terms of his instruction and remuneration. Ironically, Wheelwright was also the only member of the American quintet who did not actively pursue a career as a painter. He participated in the Boston Athenaeum twice in his lifetime: once in 1853, lending Ciceri's Forest of Fontainebleau, and again in 1858, exhibiting two of his own works, Landscape in Pastel and Study from Nature, and lending Millet's Shepherdess (1855).21 An anonymous contemporary assessed his lack of professional ambition in the following way:

Had he had what Dr. Johnson called the healthy stimulus of prospective want, he would have become a painter of reputation, but he worked only in a dilettante way. His pastels were beautiful, but his real talent was for literature.22

Wheelwright, like Babcock, was to make his contribution to Millet's American following not as a painter, but through other channels as a writer, collector, and active fund raiser for the public purchase of Millet's works in Boston.
Wheelwright and Babcock shared another distinguishing trait: unlike Hunt, neither man celebrated the rural life style at Barbizon, Wheelwright remaining a Boston Brahmin and Babcock becoming an eccentric recluse. Contrasting distinctly with Hunt's ready acceptance of peasant life, Wheelwright's gradual adaptation to his new surroundings was difficult and, at times, embarrassing. Recalling a painful episode surrounding an afternoon meal at Père Ganne's Inn, he revealed a class consciousness existing at Barbizon that prevented his easy assimilation into the community:

...thinking I had been overlooked by the inn-keeper's daughter...I stopped her as she passed my seat, and pointed to my plate, intimating my wish to be furnished with another [portion of food]...a shout of derision arose from the whole fable. "Ha, l'aristocrate!" they cried, 'il veut changer d'assiette." I had been guilty of a breach of good manners; I had insulted the great democracy of art. I...apologized as well as I could, pleading my foreign birth and education as an excuse for my ignorance; while as for the charge of being an aristocrat, I assured the company that as I happened to have been born and bred a citizen of the great democratic republic, such a thing was impossible.23

Wheelwright's social position, and more importantly his education, determined the nature of his relationship with Millet. Polite deference replaced the personal intimacy Hunt had known and, although their encounters were always cordial, he was sensitive to Millet's "grand dignity that check [ed] familiarity and gently held [him] at a
The formality of their relationship, predicated on the mutual respect between two erudite men, led to Wheelwright's identification and appreciation of Millet as an intellectual:

It was not among the peasants, his neighbors, that he found his friends and associates. These came to him from the world outside. They were people of taste and culture, artists, and men of letters.

I soon discovered...that Millet was a great reader, often sitting up past midnight...devouring some volume....He had read the lives of all the great painters, knew a good deal about Shakespeare and Milton, and had even read translations of passages from [William Ellery] Channing and [Ralph Waldo] Emerson. 29

Hunt, who had responded mainly to the rural artisan-laborer he perceived in Millet, possessed a more limited understanding of his intellectual range and consequently, his imagery. Although cognizant of Millet's close reading of the Bible, he dismissed his command of other literary works in a cursory fashion: "He read only such things as would help him...He knew Shakespeare and Homer by heart. He loved Hamlet. He...car[ed] only for a few books." 26

Wheelwright, responding to Millet as a scholar, was able to attain greater insight into his work because he understood Millet's method as a synthesis of observable fact and literary inspiration. He perceived this dichotomy in Death and the Woodcutter, 1858, a work Millet was beginning to develop during his stay at Barbizon. As one of the oldest rural
skills, the occupation of woodcutter and its lengthy tradition were noted by Wheelwright:

Almost every able-bodied male inhabitant of Barbizon worked occasionally at this occupation in the employ of the government, and many of them...have acquired a remarkable skill in the use of the ax, or...inherited it, for the traditions of the craft have been handed down from father to son through a hundred generations.27

Significantly, he was one of few Americans at Barbizon also capable of responding to the French literary allusions in Millet's paintings complementing his realism. Millet, recognizing Wheelwright's erudition, shared his literary insights regarding the theme of death and the peasant laborer. Although his primary source for the painting was LaFontaine's fable Death and the Woodcutter, he discussed George Sand's novel Mare au Diable with him in conjunction with the work. During a visit he read the first chapter from Wheelwright's copy of the novel, containing a description of an engraving after Holbein representing an aged peasant plowing a field while Death, in the guise of a skeleton, taunts his horses with a whip. Accompanying the engraving, a French verse read:

A la sueur de ton visage
Tu gagnerais ta pauvre vie;
Après long travail et usaige
Voicy la mort qui te convie.28

Their discussion of the specific motif led to another conversation concerning Sand's attitude toward the general
purpose of art. Millet found himself in basic agreement with her concepts, and told Wheelwright like her, he believed

...in showing us the sorrows of the poor, it ought not to stir up enmity against the rich, least of all to use the poor man...as a means of terrifying the more favored classes into being just and compassionate.29

He took issue, however, with her literary style, objecting to her "error of making her peasants plus beaux que nature, casting around them the glamour of a poetry of her own invention."30 Exchanges such as these, growing from literary considerations, enabled Wheelwright to draw conclusions concerning the political implications of Millet's imagery:

...nor do I think he ever proposed to himself the task of benefiting the laboring classes, least of all by means of any arbitrary changes in their outward condition. In exhibiting the poverty-striken and toil-worn peasant with a truthfulness he intended no protest against the unequal distribution of the world's goods...31

Wheelwright knew Millet not only as a scholar but also as a teacher, a relationship that granted him immediate access to his artistic sources. The contents of his studio, Wheelwright discovered, paralleled the careful balance of classicism and realism in his works. He found casts of the Parthenon friezes and the Column of Trajan, busts, and various plaster figures arranged "like maps and encyclopedias in a library for constant reference."32 Alongside
these traditional models Millet displayed what he referred to as his "museum," described by Wheelwright:

Upon some shelves was...a collection of rags and bits of cloth...faded and weather stained, fragments of head handkerchiefs, blouses, petticoats, etc., affording shades of color more exquisite than any dyer could produce. The almost innumerable shades of blue, from the dark indigo of the new blouse or apron that had never been washed to the delicate tints of the timeworn garments that had been bleached almost to whiteness were his especial delight.33

The program of instruction Millet devised for Wheelwright was modeled after his own academic training at the atelier of Delaroche. Following that curriculum, he assigned Wheelwright to copy classical sculpture in the Louvre, including Venus de Milo, Silenus and the Infant Bacchus, Achilles, and Germanicus. Delaroche, Wheelwright learned, required Millet to copy Germanicus once every two weeks and, he concluded, "as he remained five years with Delaroche, ...he knew the figure by heart."34 Gradually, as Millet criticized his sketches, Wheelwright began to realize that his teacher had committed an encyclopedic vocabulary of antique sources to memory. Consistently, Millet emphasized the importance of drawing both classical works and the live model from memory, a process through which he achieved the elimination of unnecessary detail. He believed, accordingly, that the merits of a work could be judged best at twilight when the dim light, obscuring
details, revealed only the harmony of the entire composition; as stated in his axiom, "La fin du jour, c'est l'épreuve d'un tableau." Perceptively, Wheelwright noted that Millet's favorite passage from Milton's *Paradise Lost* provided a literary parallel to this particular aspect of his style:

Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad.36

Millet asserted definite opinions concerning the contribution of color to the total stylistic harmony of a composition. Again revealing his academic training and sensibilities, he told Wheelwright that "harmony of color consists more in a just balance of light and dark than in the juxtaposition of certain colors." Perceiving color in terms of value, he held that "The most important part of color can be expressed in black and white, and can best be studied so."38

Wheelwright observed the subordination of color to line as an essential principle of Millet's artistic process and style. Studying his methodology during visits to his studio, he watched Millet's painting *Two Men Digging* progress from its initial stages toward completion. The first time he saw the work, he noted that its effect was "something like a large etching," because Millet had established the figures only through heavy black ink outlines drawn firmly onto the canvas. Later he found Millet had defined broad areas of color with a thin layer of pigment
scumbled rapidly onto the canvas; this method allowed him to establish color areas without losing contact with the linear definitions of his figures which remained visible beneath the painted surface.

As Millet's student and a Barbizon resident Wheelwright had double insight into the origins of Millet's style. He realized that the monumentality and permanence of his figures was derived as much from actual fact as from classical artistic sources. Millet's ponderous style was a direct result of the scenes of peasant labor he witnessed at Barbizon, as noted by Wheelwright:

There is something fascinating in the monotonous rise and fall of the heavy hoe...especially since the laborers usually worked in pairs. Millet must have been attracted too by the unconscious grace or...the natural fitness of the attitudes and movements of the laborer. By long practice the bêcheur [digger] learns to place himself instinctively in the position best adapted for the effect he was to make.... Force well ordered, well directed, calm, without bustle or excitement, not to be diverted from its aim; that was what Millet liked.40

In Millet's works Wheelwright identified his "thoroughness of drawing" as the primary expressive factor because as a draftsman he dealt with the "vital and essential qualities of things rather than with a multiplicity of detail."41 His ability to portray the essence of a theme, he believed, was not derived from "technical manipulation" but from his "power of concentrating his attention on the subject," a
skill Millet attempted to develop in Wheelwright through his criticism.\textsuperscript{42} Often he told Wheelwright to take "more deliberation and greater pains" in his drawings so that [he] might be sure to "know what [he] meant to do before [he] drew a line or made a mark on [his] paper."\textsuperscript{42} Millet corrected his drawings freely and frequently, explaining his amendments:

He often took up the crayon and showed me what he meant by saying that every line, every touch, should have a meaning, a purpose: the great thing, he said, was to learn to see things as they are. "To see is to draw." This was a favorite axiom of Millet.\textsuperscript{43}

Wheelwright's self-effacing assessment of his apprenticeship with Millet as, "I must have been dull indeed not to have learned something from his criticisms and corrections," was belied by his perceptive analyses of Millet's art.\textsuperscript{44} Although he did not implement Millet's style as a painter, he interpreted it as the art critic for The Atlantic Monthly, bringing a badly needed objectivity to bear upon Millet's works in American popular literature. Returning home, he evaluated Millet's art and life with a directness that countered popular sentimental readings of his genre paintings and peasant heritage. His perception of Millet was to remain distinctly intellectual and, therefore, dispassionate. Viewing Millet's works from a deferential distance, he recognized them as products of observable fact and classical
literary and artistic traditions. Before leaving France Wheelwright, like Hunt, also became Millet's patron, purchasing *Seated Shepherdess*, a painting he later bequeathed to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts upon his death in 1900. As a prominent figure in elite social and intellectual circles, he employed his wealth and literary expertise to further Millet's popularity in this country. He began his endeavors on Millet's behalf shortly after June 23, 1856 when, after a nine month stay at Barbizon, he returned to the United States.  

As a summation of Wheelwright's Barbizon period then, it is worth noting that although he returned to America in 1856, when Millet was only beginning a new phase in his career and hence did not experience works such as *Man with the Hoe*, he nonetheless seems to have been aware of the developments to come. Cognizant of the direction Millet's art was to take in the 1860's, Wheelwright undoubtedly carried something of his new insights to Hunt upon their reunion in the United States.

Although Wheelwright returned directly to Boston, he did not remain there long. Upon his homecoming, he discovered that Hunt, who had been working in Boston during his absence, had moved with his wife and infant son to Newport, Rhode Island. Wheelwright followed suit, and soon after his arrival four other artists and writers appeared in
rapid succession: John LaFarge (1835-1910), Thomas Gold Appleton, and Henry and William James (1843-1916), (1842-1910). Like Wheelwright, these men had recently returned from Europe and sought out Hunt at Newport directly.  

Hunt himself had been attracted to the Newport milieu because as a mixture of the luxurious and the rustic, the fashionably casual atmosphere allowed him to transfer his Barbizon experience, in its idyllic aspects, to American soil. As insular societies, Newport and Barbizon held analogous relationships to Boston and Paris; and in his description of Hunt's studio, Henry James emphasizes a self-containment that was common to both sites:

It became indeed on the spot a rounded satisfying world, the place did, enclosed within the grounds of the master's house and representing a more direct exclusion of vulgar sounds, false notes, and harsh reminders than I have ever known.  

By 1858, the New England artists and literati who had been attracted by the Newport ambience formed a coterie around Hunt who "had a truly fertilizing effect upon their common lives." Psychologically alienated in their own countries after tours abroad, they were, as James stated, "insidiously and fatally disconnected," a colony of "the despoiled and the disillusioned, the mildly and reminiscently desperate." For this reason, Newport emerged as the logical point of re-acclimation to their country:

Newport imposed itself at that period to so remarkable a degree as the one right residence,
in all our great unity, for the tainted, under whatever attenuation, with the quality of effect of detachment. The detachment was in fact the experience of Europe.49

The great need that Newport met was that of a basis of reconciliator to "America." It would be hard to say of what subtle or secret magic that place possessed toward this end and by a common instinct, I think, we did not attempt to formulate it--we let it alone.50

Meeting together at Newport, these men shared a tranquil interlude that was enhanced by Hunt's affable hospitality. Wheelwright and Hunt, now both patrons of Millet, renewed their friendship; and although Wheelwright resided at Miss Anthony's, a local boarding house, "he spent all his leisure time with the Hunts, who considered him one of the family."51 With characteristic informality, Hunt led art classes in his studio, yet, as James recalled, "Pupils at that time did not flock to his gates as they were to do so (sic) in Boston; I remember no thorough-going élèves save John LaFarge and my brother."52

LaFarge arrived in Newport in spring 1859 after a period of study in Europe that included a brief encounter at Couture's atelier in 1856. Like Hunt, he had been drawn to the popular studio by its wide reputation and intended to gain "a practical knowledge of painting" while working there.53 He remained, however, for only two weeks, quickly becoming annoyed by Couture's "constant
running down of other artists greater than himself."  

His personal disdain for Couture notwithstanding, LaFarge went to Newport, on the advice of Hunt's brother Richard for the express purpose of continuing "practical instruction" in painting based upon the artist's method. To his disappointment, he discovered that Hunt, no longer subscribing solely to Couture's technique, was formulating a style derived from the joint influences of Couture and Millet. The resultant technique, LaFarge wrote, was "interesting to me [but] not what I had come to get." Regardless of differing ideologies, LaFarge became a close friend of Hunt, whom he credited with his introduction to the works of Millet. The following statement by LaFarge bespeaks Millet's pervasive presence at the Newport studio:

He [Hunt] introduced me to the knowledge of the works of Millet, of which he had many, including the famous Sower, and very many drawings, and more especially to the teachings, the sayings, and the curious spiritual life which a great artist like Millet opens to his devotees. Every day some remark of Millet's was quoted, some way of his was noticed, some part of his life was told; he was in this way, in those studios, a patron saint.

LaFarge himself, however, resisted the implementation of Millet's style:

...though I even copied a Millet or two, I was firmly resolved against following him either with or without Hunt, in the methods
which were especially developed by the great Frenchman. My aim was the study and the acquaintanceship with methods of work that would generally connect with the past, not with new formulae which were abridgements.58

Despite his divergent interests LaFarge was imbued with Hunt's contagious enthusiasm for Millet, a proclivity absent in his work yet evidenced by his art criticism. As a legacy of his Newport experience he, like Wheelwright, became an eloquent spokesman for Millet's works, contributing to their understanding through his lectures and critical essays. He directed his analyses of Millet's imagery and its position in art historical tradition to the scholarly community rather than the general audience, thereby countering many of the myths that were perpetuated in popular literature. His two most prominent contributions were his series of lectures delivered at the Metropolitan Museum in 1893, subsequently published as Considerations on Painting in 1901, and the Scammon Lectures read at the University of Chicago in 1903, published the same year as The Higher Life in Art.

While initiating and renewing interest in Millet among his peers at Newport, Hunt completed a work begun under Millet's supervision at Barbizon, The Belated Kid, ca 1854-1857 (Pl. 58). A single-figure genre painting, it depicts a peasant child carrying a kid in her arms as she crosses an open field with the mother goat at her
side. The work takes up a theme that appears frequently throughout Millet's œuvre—the newborn animal. Millet's earliest treatment of the theme is **Newborn**, 1846 (Pl. 59), dating from his manière fleurie period. A nymph, cradling a lamb in her arms, emerges from a woodland glade accompanied by two putti who carry her shepherdess' staff and gently guide the protective ewe along their path. The mythological trio steps lightly across the canvas in a work bespeaking Millet's prowess as a painter of the nude and his inherent sensibility for French rococo gaiety and elegance. In 1860, Millet completed his second version of the theme, a pastel which differed significantly from the original composition (Pl. 60). Replacing the three mythological characters with a single Barbizon shepherdess, he reduced the composition and recast the theme as rustic genre. Treated within a rural context, the genre scene assumes greater solemnity and purpose. The rococo vestiges now removed, the procession led by the young shepherdess carrying the newest of her flock possesses overtones of the rituals of spring and the rebirth and renewal association with that season. Although the work was completed after his return to the United States, Hunt must have seen Millet's preparatory sketch, which should thus be counted among the compositional sources for **The Belated Kid** (Pl. 61). Millet's sketch and Hunt's
painting share an identical presentation of a single female figure carrying a newborn farm animal while its mother follows attentively at her side. Only the posture of Hunt's figure differs stylistically, suggesting that his painting is a conflation of more than one source drawn from Millet's works. In her curvilinear silhouette and forward stance, his figure is reminiscent of Ruth in Harv esters Resting who, like Hunt's shepherdess, bends with the weight of the burden she carries. The theme of the newborn animal, as depicted by both Millet and Hunt, however, finds a source in a tradition extending from Ripa's emblem of Spring (Pl. 62). The Belated Kid supports the notion that Hunt turned frequently to Millet's drawings and pastels for source material because he found these smaller works better suited to his artistic proclivities for stylistic delicacy and elegance. The rococo underpinnings of the Newborn series undoubtedly struck a responsive chord in him which was observed by American critics:

Hunt's [paintings] despite the peasant subject, were always graceful delicate little Watteaux in sabots. Something of Couture's technique persisted in his work, making it different from the solid manner of Millet.59

Earlier, Millet noted the same stylistic disparity between his work and Hunt's paintings when, referring to The Belated Kid, he asked, "How did you get that delicate
facile way of putting in little things? Nobody about here could do that." Thematical and stylistically, the Newborn paintings, particularly the earlier versions, provided Hunt easy access to rural genre. Possessing neither the imposing iconographic tradition nor epic style of Millet's major paintings, it satisfied Hunt's desire to become a genre painter after Millet's example yet allowed him to retain aspects of his personal style. Potentially sentimental rather than monumental, the theme lent itself readily to Hunt's tendency to compromise Millet's compositions. As in The Belated Kid and The Little Gleaner, he did this most frequently by replacing Millet's young peasants with ingenuous children.

The Newport interlude ended in spring, 1861, when Hunt moved to a farm in Milton, Massachusetts, and took a new studio first at the Highland Building at Roxbury and then at the Studio Building in Boston. In spring, 1864, when he moved once more to a larger studio in the Mercantile Building, he marked the occasion with the first of a number of festive receptions which Knowlton described as engaging social events:

Early in spring he gave his first reception in Boston and it...was as brilliant as it was original. The walls of the great room were covered with paintings by him and by Jean-Francois Millet. Other receptions followed in which were introduced tableaux
and impromptu acting in which the host took part to the delight of all whom he had assembled around him.61

Maintaining his dual role of Barbizon spokesman and genre painter in Boston, Hunt completed a trio of works during 1864-1865 which draw upon three separate currents in Millet's style as he perceived them: sentimental romanticism, classicism, and realism. Out in the Cold, 1864 (Pl. 63), is derived from Millet's faggot gatherer typology, but, in a characteristic transmutation of imagery, Hunt replaces Millet's somber peasant with a pathetic child. The well-scrubbed waif, dressed in picturesque, immaculate clothing, emerges from a forest of barren trees dragging a bundle of branches behind him as he crosses a bleak landscape. Potentially narrative and overtly sentimental, the work allowed American viewers to approach Millet's iconography through the elicitation of pity and sympathy. Through this painting and its spiritual pendant The Little Gleaner, Hunt created a wider audience for Millet's works; they fostered a sentimental perception of Millet's subject matter which, although a narrow viewpoint, was also at the heart of his popular appeal in the United States.

In 1865, Hunt completed The Gleaner (Pl. 64), a painting clearly developed from classical aspects of Millet's style. Indicative of Hunt's growing role as a
portraitist; the work is a one-quarter length view of a female balancing a sheaf of wheat on her head. Her facial features, generalized and idealized, bespeak his early study of antique sculpture and the classical references he perceived in Millet's genre figures. In her compositional presence and statuesque immobility Hunt's gleaner approaches the essential monumentality of Millet's figure style. His depiction of a peasant carrying a sheaf of wheat aloft calls forth immediate associations with Jules Breton's famous composition The Gleaners, 1859 (Pl. 65), in which the central figure mounts her burden on her shoulder; yet a more direct parallel can be drawn between Hunt's painting and a pastel drawing from the same year by Millet also entitled The Gleaner (Pl. 66), which presents a figure balancing a bundle of grain on her head while supporting it with upraised arms. The classical overtones of this pose are demonstrated in Chassériaud's allegory Peace, 1854 (Pl. 67), which includes a similar figure at the far left of the composition, who functions as a symbol of agricultural bounty. The citation of this figure typology in the Œuvres of Chassériaud and Millet is particularly relevant since Millet returned to an overtly classical style in 1865. After treating the gleaner as rural genre in his drawing, he re-cast her that year in the role of the mythological goddess Ceres, who
functioned as the personification of **Summer** in the Thomas Season Cycle. Ultimately, the classical iconographic tradition for the figure as it appears in the *oeuvres* of Hunt, Chasseriau, and Millet can be traced to Cesare Ripa's emblematic representation of *Agriculture*, a female figure who wears a crown of wheat (Pl. 68).

Demonstrating his stylistic versatility, Hunt painted *Man in a Wheatfield* (Pl. 69) the same year that he completed *The Gleaner*. In the small panel painting of a man bent forward over the laborious task of harvesting wheat, Hunt reveals his capacity for a vigorous handling of pigment rarely seen in his *oeuvre*. The thick individual strokes of pure color laid onto the millboard produce a crude physical texture that is in accord with the realist iconography portrayed. His energetic application of paint becomes a stylistic analogue for the expenditure of physical energy by the laborer, thereby uniting the composition in a common realism of technique and subject matter. *Man in a Wheatfield* is a study in the elemental: stylistically, Hunt limits the work to pure hues of yellow and blue, which retain an undisguised tactility while the iconographic presentation is reduced to a single figure who performs his task with a simple hand scythe rather than the modern machinery available to the American farmer. In its essentialized format Hunt's painting is a
descendant of the realist tradition in Millet's work as exemplified by The Sower. Ostensibly realistic genre, Man in the Wheatfield raises the intriguing question of whether it, like The Sower, can also claim a valid position in the French tradition of the symbolic genre. As in the case of the vita activa and vita contemplativa tradition, it is possible that, through Millet, Hunt became aware of the French association of the harvest scene with the months of July and August. Returning to Chartres Cathedral as an example, the west facade embellished with a single figure who, engaged in the task of reaping a field of grain with a scythe, functions as a representative of the month of July (Pl. 70). Complementing the sculptural tradition, the harvester also figured prominently in medieval graphic art. An integral member of a woodcut series of genre figures depicting the labors of the months, the harvester symbolizes August in the illustrated French agrarian calendar, Kalendier des Bergers (Pl. 71). The compositional arrangement of the woodcut, particularly in the diagonal recession of the wheat field, bears a striking similarity to Hunt's painting.

Hunt's indefatigable efforts to advance Barbizon painting, particularly Millet's work, in Boston led him to participate in the founding of the Allston Club in 1866.
The organization, dedicated to the promotion of modern art, was chaired by the following roster of officers: President, William Morris Hunt; Vice-Presidents, E. C. Cabot and Winkworth Alan Gay; Corresponding Secretary, George Snell; Recording Secretary, E. Adams Doll; and Treasurer Abion Bicknell. The short-lived society survived only two years, filing bankruptcy in 1867 after the ambitious purchase of Courbet's *La Curee*, 1858, for the sum of $5,000.00. Before disbanding, however, the club sponsored two exhibitions in 1866 and 1867 which featured a variety of works by Corot, Rousseau, and Millet. Keeping Millet's paintings before the public eye, the exhibitions included *Harvesters Resting* and *The Sower* in 1866 and a second showing of *The Sower* in 1867.

Since his return to America then, Hunt's life had been one characterized by constant activity as an artist, teacher, and finally the guiding force of the Allston Club. Recruiting followers of Millet among his friends, particularly Wheelwright, and introducing Millet's works to the Boston art public, he had taken the first steps toward popularizing Millet's oeuvre as he had known it at Barbizon, in this country. Now preparing to journey abroad once more to view the Exposition Universelle of 1867, he was about to discover the new developments in Millet's art that had taken place since his departure from Barbizon.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1Herbert, Jean-François Millet, p. 84.
2Ibid.
5Henry Wallis (1830-1916) was born near London where he attended his first art classes at Cary Academy. He then enrolled at the atelier of Charles Gleyre in Paris but while abroad continued to exhibit at the Royal Academy between 1854 and 1877. A great admirer of Millet's works, he met the artist at Barbizon in autumn, 1874. Later he paid tribute to Millet in an obituary which, upon appearing in the London Times, was reprinted in the New York Times, February 21, 1875, and the Boston Daily Advertiser, February 23, 1875.
6Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 108.
8Ibid.
9In 1869 Woman Feeding Her Child: La Bouillie was purchased by the Musée de Marseilles.
10Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 218.
12Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 240.
This passage is taken from Montaigne's essay "Of Physiognomy" (1585-1588). In English it reads:
Let us look on the earth at the poor people we see scattered there, heads bowed over their toil, who know neither Aristotle nor Cato, neither example nor precept. From them Nature everyday draws deeds of constancy and endurance purer and harder than those that we study with such care in school. How many of them I see all the time who ignore poverty! How many who desire death, or who meet it without alarm and without affliction! This man who is digging up my garden, this morning buried his father and his son. The very names by which they call diseases relieve and soften their harshness: phthisis is the cough to them; dysentery, looseness of the bowels; pleurisy, a cold; and according as they name them mildly, so also they endure them. A disease must be very grave to interrupt their ordinary work; they take to their beds only to die.


Many of Wheelwright's classmates proved to be distinguished men during their lifetimes. Benjamin Apthorp Gould (1824-1896), for example, was a noted astronomer who directed the longitude department of the U.S. Coast Survey from 1852-1867. From 1855-1859 he was also the director of the Dudley Observatory in Albany, New York. His publications can be found in Memoirs of the National Academy of the Sciences, v. I, 1866. Francis Parkman (1823-1893) was a historian whose writing first appeared in 1845 when he recounted his travels abroad in the Knickerbocker and New York Monthly Magazine. On April 28, 1846, he began his most famous journey, a trip along the Oregon Trail. This he recorded in serial form in the Knickerbocker beginning in February, 1847, and later published as a book, The California and Oregon Trail, 1849. Edmund Dwight (1824-1900) was a prominent businessman and treasurer of the Stark Mills of Manchester, New Hampshire. Later in life he became the president of the board of trustees of the
Massachusetts General Hospital. For further information concerning these men, see appropriate volumes of The Dictionary of American Biography, American Council of Learned Societies (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1973).


19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 258.

21 Wheelwright's Study from Nature and Landscape are presently unlocated; however he bequested both Ciceri's Forest at Fontainebleau and Millet's Shepherdess to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, upon his death in 1900. Information found in files of the Painting Department, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

22 Untitled typewritten manuscript, n.d., Edward Wheelwright Papers.


24 Ibid., p. 267.

25 Ibid., p. 268.


28 Ibid., p. 263.
Henry James (1843-1916), the American novelist, began his writing career in the 1860's with reviews and short stories written in Boston after a tour abroad. He recounted his early life in *A Small Boy and Others* (1913) and *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914). Other of his well-known works are *The Bostonians* (1885), *The Awkward Age*
(1898), and The Ambassadors (1903). His brother William James (1842-1910) took up chemistry and medicine at Harvard after his brief study of art. In 1872 he became an instructor in physiology at Harvard and in 1885 became a professor of philosophy. His works include Principles of Psychology (2 vols., 1890) and Varieties of Religious Experience (1902). John LaFarge (1835-1910), the James' companion at Newport, was born in New York and traveled abroad in 1856. First a noted still life and landscape painter, he turned to mural painting and the decorative arts (stained glass) in 1876. See sources cited directly below for further information.

47 Henry James, Notes of a Son and Brother (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 82.

48 Ibid., p. 67.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., p. 72.

51 Untitled typewritten manuscript, n.d., Edward Wheelwright Papers.

52 James, Notes of a Son and Brother, p. 80.


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., p. 110.

56 Ibid., p. 111.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid., p. 112.

Edward Clarke Cabot (1818-1901), like his colleague George Snell, was a Boston architect whose major works include the Boston Theatre (1852-1853) and Johns Hopkins University Hospital (completed 1889). In 1888 Cabot retired from his activities as an architect to become a painter; until the end of his life he exhibited watercolors in Boston. Winkworth Alan Gay (1821-1910) was also a Bostonian who studied with Troyon in 1847 before going on to Italy, Switzerland and Holland. In 1850 he returned to the United States and settled in Boston where he, like Hunt, worked to popularize the Barbizon school. Abion Bicknell (1837-1915) was a portraitist, landscape and still life painter and also a history painter. In 1850 he journeyed to Europe and upon his return in 1857 settled in Boston. Between 1857 and 1860, he exhibited his works at the Boston Athenaeum. His fellow officer in the Allston Club, E. Adams Doll was a Boston art dealer who showed, along with the works of other artists, flower paintings by Babcock during the 1850's.

Landgren, The Late Landscapes of William Morris Hunt, p. 66.
CHAPTER IV

EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE TO MILLET'S DEATH,
1867-1875

Three periods in the development of Millet's art remained essentially unknown at first-hand to his American students and, therefore, to the American public, during the time that they were actually in progress. The first occurred after Hunt's return to the United States in 1855 and Wheelwright's homecoming in 1856. Unavailable to these students and their compatriots was a direct experience of Millet's works from this period ending with the Salon of 1863 and his exhibition of The Man with the Hoe. The second set of developments occurred after 1863, developments which constituted another significant change in the character of Millet's art. It was only in 1867, when Hunt returned to France, that he would obtain a first-hand knowledge of these changes and then return home to elucidate them to his own pupils. The third and final development in Millet's art was to take place after Hunt's return to America. Immediate insight into this last phase was to be gained neither by Hunt nor Wheelwright, but by Millet's second generation American students, Wyatt Eaton (1849-1896) and Will Hicok Low (1853-1932).
Because the moments of iconographic and stylistic understanding were determined for Millet's American students by the timing of their meetings with him, their assimilation of his influence was intermittent in nature. Millet's American critics were to follow this same pattern of comprehension but without, in most cases, the immediacy of contact with Millet himself. These critics were dependent upon the transferral of ideas about Millet and his art through, first, Hunt and Wheelwright and later, Eaton and Low. Their writings on Millet, therefore, were determined by a knowledge of the artist that was likely to be several years out of date and formed under the limitations of a second-hand experience. We will begin, then, with a review of Millet's activities from 1863-1864 until his death in 1875, his reunions with Hunt and Wheelwright, occurring in 1867 and 1870, respectively, and the subsequent, although delayed, repercussions of these events upon Millet criticism as it developed in the United States.

The classical undercurrent that ran throughout Millet's mature style as it developed at Barbizon between 1849 and 1863 became increasingly apparent when traditional sources that had been previously transmuted surfaced as undisguised, direct references in his late oeuvre. His major genre works essentially completed, he
spent the last two decades of his career primarily occupied with decorative commissions that firmly estab-
lished his position within the most venerated tradition of French painting; yet even prior to these commissions,
young, erudite French authors who were attracted by the classical literary bias of Millet's works began to form a coterie around him.

One of the earliest of Millet's literary devotees was Simeon Luce who had characterized the artist as the French painter of the *Georgics* in 1862. The following year Luce was seconded by Michel Chassaign who initiated a steady correspondence with Millet during the height of the heated controversy surrounding *Man with the Hoe*. Chassaign, well versed in classical and modern literature, sent Millet copies of works by Theocritus and Robert Burns hoping that one of the authors might provide iconographic inspiration for a series of paintings. Responding to Chassaign's gift, Millet wrote a revealing reply that demonstrated his consistent ability to draw forth literary allusions from both his career and peasant heritage:

He [Burns] has his own special flavor; he smacks of the soil. I am working hard and the reading of Theocritus shows me every day more and more that we are never so truly Greek as when we are simply painting our own impressions, no matter where we have received them; and Burns teaches me the
same. They make me wish more ardently than ever to express certain things that belong to my own home, the old home where I used to live.2

In November, 1863, their correspondence ultimately led to Chassaing's proposal that he and his friend Rollin sponsor a projected series of engraved illustrations of Theocritus to be completed by Millet.3 Describing his preparatory work for the series, Millet wrote to Sensier:

I am already drawing compositions for the first idyll: Thyrsis and a goatherd sitting by a cave of Pan, Thrysis playing the syrinx while the other listens. Then there is a vase with sculptured subjects which I shall reproduce in a realistic fashion: a beautiful woman, a divine form over whom two men are quarreling; an aged man fishing with a net in the sea from the top of a rock; a child seated on a wall to keep watch over a vineyard but who is so intent on making a snare of straws to catch grasshoppers that he does not see two foxes, one of whom eats his breakfast while the other devours the finest grapes in the vineyard. Such are the three subjects of the vase. There remains the death of Daphne, the subject which Thrysis sings to the music of his flute and at whose death Hermes, Venus, Priapus, the goatherds, and the shepherds are all present. Five subjects in all, and none of the five can well be left out.4

This passage, however, contains the only mention of the project which was abandoned in its early stages when Sensier deemed it unmarketable and, therefore, impractical.5

The following year Millet received a second opportunity to depict classical literary sources when he obtained his first decorative commission. In January,
Alfred Feydeau, a prominent architect who was also Millet's friend and patron, wrote to the artist describing the Hôtel Thomas, a private residence he had recently constructed in Paris on the Boulevard Haussmann. At Feydeau's suggestion, his client agreed to commission Millet to decorate his dining room with a series of panels representing the four seasons. As his first decorative project, the panels required extensive preparation and although they were begun in April, 1864, they were not completed and installed until the end of the following year. When they were placed in situ, the panels representing Spring (Pl. 72) and Summer (Pl. 73) decorated two walls, Autumn (Pl. 74) was placed in an octagonal space in the center of the ceiling, and Winter (Pl. 75) was set into a recess above the mantelpiece.

Preparatory sketches for Spring demonstrate that Millet originally had planned to represent the season with a slightly erotic scene of nymphs worshipping at the altar of Pan. In the final version, he retained only the floral bedecked herm of the mythological god and replaced the nymphs with Daphnis and Chloe, two semi-draped youths seated in a woodland glade. Between them, they tenderly hold a nest of baby birds which they are about to feed. Millet heightened the tone of his panels from the bucolic to the monumental when he personified Summer as the classical
goddess Ceres. Adorned with a crown of wheat and holding implements of her seasonal labor, a scythe and a basket, she stands directly in the center of a harvest field. Her statuesque proportions and contrappostal stance, as well as her idealized features, suggest general stylistic associations with antique sculpture. Directly behind Ceres, a group of weary laborers enjoy the peaceful repose of their noonday rest while farther in the distance their fellow workers continue the harvest. The theme of the laborer in repose, already treated within a Biblical context in Harvesters Resting (Pl. 29), is repeated in this composition as a secular allegory. Completing the series, Millet's representation of Autumn was inspired by the mythological tradition of the Bacchanal while his study of Anacreon determined his depiction of Winter as Cupid rescued from the cold by a young woman who offers him shelter.  

Millet's command of classical literature greatly facilitated his selection of an iconographic programme for the Hôtel Thomas panels. The process of decorative painting, however, presented him with a set of stylistic problems he had not encountered previously, and letters dating from 1864 provide an informative record identifying those artists whom he perceived as exemplary technical models. In December, Millet wrote to Sensier expressing
his desire to meet Andrieu, a pupil of Delacroix in order to consult with him on the issue of his palette and obtain "useful hints on the subject of large decorative work." "I should like, if possible," he wrote, "to see the Chamber of Deputies where Delacroix has done some great things." Millet's admiration of Delacroix, which dated from 1837 and his first contact with his work at the Luxembourg Gallery, was renewed in 1864 by a major exhibition and sale of Delacroix's paintings. Anxious to acquire some of Delacroix's sketches, Millet wrote to Sensier:

Shall I, like Lazarus, be able to pick up some of the crumbs which fall from your table at the Delacroix sale? I am very glad to hear that you got the Lara, which is a very fine thing. I remember the drawing of Ovid Among the Sythians which hung on a screen in the middle of the hall between the Socrates and the Spartan Woman. When I come to Paris I must see your purchases. But try and buy me a sketch.

In January, 1865, Millet enhanced his study of modern decorative works with an examination of traditional models. Through the assistance of Sensier, he obtained permission to visit the Fontainebleau Palace where he analyzed Martin Fréminet's paintings decorating the palace chapel and the works embellishing the Salle Henri II. After his introduction to Rosso and Primaticcio there, he described his impressions to his friend:
I have seen Rosso and Primaticcio...at Fontainebleau. There is a strange power about them. They belong to the decadence, it is true. The accoutrements of their figures are often ridiculous, their taste is doubtful, but what vigor of conception! How forcibly this boisterous mirth recalls early ages. Their art contains at once reminiscences of Lancelot and Amadis, together with the germ of Ariosto, of Tasso, and Perrault. I could spend hours before these kindly giants.10

In 1875, the year of Millet's death, the Hôtel Thomas was dismantled and the season cycle was sold at a public auction; the disbanded cycle, however, retains major historical importance within a study of Millet's career because it added a new dimension to his oeuvre. As a genre painter, he had dealt often with imagery culled from classical literary sources or allegorical traditions, yet these motifs had been translated consistently into a nineteenth century vernacular inspired by his Barbizon environment. The Thomas commission allowed Millet to carry his interest in classical literature to its logical conclusion because an overtly literary thematic programme was appropriate to the decorative idiom. Stylistically, the project provided Millet with an opportunity to expand his awareness of his own artistic heritage through the study of French mural painting as represented by Delacroix as well as to analyze the way in which the tradition was introduced into France by foreign artists at Fontainebleau. Finally, the private commission provided a prelude to the
government project Millet would begin ten years later when, one year before his death, he was appointed to decorate the Panthéon with a series of murals.

After Millet completed the Thomas project, he returned to small genre compositions at the request of his new patron Emile Gavet who, like Feydeau, was a Parisian architect. In 1865, Gavet engaged Millet to begin a series of genre and landscape pastels and drawings that eventually grew to number ninety-five works. Throughout his correspondence with Gavet concerning the suite of drawings, Millet made frequent reference to the forest vistas he observed at Fontainebleau and, gradually, he came to perceive landscape as autonomous subject matter rather than a background for genre scenes.

The attraction to landscape initiated by the Gavet commission received added impetus in June, 1866, when Millet and Catherine Leymarie summered at Vichy. The first of three consecutive summer sojourns to the region, it was also their longest because they took an additional excursion to the Auvergne and Mont-Dore. Before their return home that autumn, Millet had begun one hundred sketches which he completed later at Barbizon. Vichy inspired an unusually large number of works not only because of its topographical beauty, but because, as Millet wrote to Gavet, the region reminded him of his childhood
home in Normandy with its "green meadows enclosed by hedges." Millet traveled throughout Vichy in a rented carriage stopping frequently to sketch directly before his chosen site. Drawings, including Country Road Near Vichy, 1866 (Pl. 76), evidence Millet's ability as a superior draftsman to evoke the vital forces of nature through rapid, energetic linear notation. In his vigorous draftsmanship, Millet has been compared by Herbert to the German artist Wolf Hüber (1490-1553). Moving to a different time and place, seventeenth century Holland, I support Herbert's association of Millet with northern precursors and suggest a comparison of Millet's Cottage at Dyane, 1865 (Pl. 77), and Rembrandt's A Farmhouse Among Trees, 1650-1651 (Pl. 78).

Millet's continued interest in landscape led him to submit Winter: Landscape with Crows (Pl. 79) to the Salon of 1867. The bleak vista represents a flat field of dormant earth where crude implements of labor lay abandoned. Devoid of organic growth, the field is animated only by crows, scavengers searching to divest the land of any remaining life; more birds form an ominous black funnel in the distance as they also descend from the sky to prey upon the field. Although the work appears to be a transcription of a site observed in nature, its symbolic implications of death, both terrestrial and human, are clear.
In Millet's evocative use of landscape, he can be identified as a predecessor of Vincent VanGogh whose *Crows in a Wheatfield*, 1890, painted shortly before his suicide, carries the same symbolic suggestion.

Both Millet's landscape and the Salon of 1867 itself were overshadowed in April by the opening of the *Exposition Universelle*. This show, a major international art exhibition, brought Millet and his friend Rousseau the unanimous recognition and unqualified triumph that had eluded them throughout their careers. Millet, thoroughly represented in the exhibition, was granted a virtual retrospective of his major works: *The Gleaners*, 1857, *The Angelus*, 1855-1857, *Return of the Flock: Sunset*, 1857-1860, *Death and the Woodcutter*, 1858, and *Planting Potatoes*, 1861-1862. Establishing him as a master within both avant garde and traditional circles, the exhibition won Millet new support from Théophile Silvestre, an influential critic who remained his faithful proponent until the end of the artist's life. Now nearing the end of his life, Rousseau was awarded the Medal of Honor and named President of the Jury of the *Exposition Universelle*.

Directly after the *Exposition Universelle*, Millet, along with Catherine Leymarie, returned to Vichy. Only three weeks in length, their trip did not prove to be a
productive one for Millet who was prevented from working outdoors by the intense heat. Returning to Barbizon, Millet was confronted by the gravity of Rousseau's illness and the realization that death was imminent. During the final stages of Rousseau's illness, Millet, who had scrupulously avoided any involvement in Barbizon socio-political affairs, took part in a struggle to preserve Bas Breau, a portion of the Fontainebleau forest designated for destruction by the Administration. At Millet's request, Silvestre drew up a petition addressed to the Empress Eugenie that called for the conservation of the forest area. Although it was signed by Millet and a number of his friends as well as Parisian officials including the chief of police, the appeal proved ineffective and, in December, 1867, the winter of Rousseau's death, Millet wrote to a friend:

Yes, my poor Berger, they are cutting down part of the forest in the Bas Breau. The Administration insists, and must be obeyed. For some distance around nothing is to be heard but the blow of the ax and the noise of the falling trees.

The combined events of Rousseau's death and the encroachment of government projects upon the Fontainebleau forest directed Millet's attention to landscape during the final years of his career; and in March, 1868, he received a commission that served his new interest well.
Frédéric Hartmann, formerly the principal patron of Rousseau, first engaged Millet to complete those paintings left unfinished at the artist's death, and then commissioned him to paint a series representing the four seasons. The second project subsequently became the major preoccupation of Millet's final years and remained unfinished at his death.

Unlike the Thomas cycle, the Hartmann seasons do not follow a literary iconographic programme but comprise both landscape and genre scenes. Two of the works, Spring (Pl. 80) and Autumn (Pl. 81), are landscapes almost entirely devoid of human presence. The renewal of Spring is embodied directly in a rainbow sweeping across the sky as a cosmic symbol of regeneration while the trees twist upward in a terrestrial echo of burgeoning life and growth. Within his panoramic display of nature's dynamism, Millet placed a single figure beneath a tree. His diminutive size serves to amplify the organic vitality of natural growth forces and the overpowering effect they can have upon the stature of man. Autumn heightens the implication of nature as a threatening presence with which man must contend in its depiction of a shepherd guarding a flock that grazes in a field beneath a stormy sky. The shepherd, barely discernible, takes shelter from the coming storm beneath a looming haystack that diminishes him
further. As in Spring, the stature of man is noticeably reduced, once more suggesting his insignificance in the face of nature.

Turning to genre, Millet depicted Summer (Pl. 82) and Winter (Pl. 83) as scenes of seasonal labors set within landscapes. In his final treatment of the harvest theme, Millet represented Summer with the July harvest of buckwheat. In the foreground of the composition, women bind wheat and deposit it in a wheelbarrow with slow ponderous movements denoting the laborious nature of their field duties. Behind them, Millet demarcated the middleground with two women who walk slowly and painfully across the field, stooped beneath the weight of the enormous bundles of wheat they carry on their backs. The slow cadence of the activity in the foreground and middleground shifts to a furious tempo in the background where a group of men fiercely beat the grain with disjointed movements as they thresh it. Winter repeats the motif of peasant women burdened with a laborious task in its depiction of three faggot gatherers. The unfinished work is one of remarkable expressive power emanating largely from Millet's draftsmanship. With a thick heavy outline Millet created an expressive contour that encases the peasant's body and exaggerates her misshapen form that was brought about by her ponderous labor. Her back is bent and her
shoulders stooped from her encumbrance while her feet are enlarged, deliberately magnified in order that they might support the combined weight of her body and her burden.

The Hartmann series was repeatedly set aside during the next three years as Millet divided his attention between the commission and a variety of other works. One of these, The Pig Killers, ca. 1870 (Pl. 84), continues the iconographic pattern of the season cycle by representing a rural occupation traditionally associated with a particular month of the year, November or December. In a courtyard setting an enormous pig sits heavily upon its hind legs stubbornly resisting the efforts of two peasants to pull it by a rope tied around its snout to a chopping block. Their faces twisted in grimaces at the physical effort, they pull the heavy rope in unison bracing their weight against each other. Standing at their side, a woman attempts to coax the animal forward with a bucket of food while a third man vainly tries to push the pig onto its feet. In the background two peasant children stand transfixed in horror and curiosity at the gruesome scene and even the cat at the top of the courtyard wall reacts with an arched back and bristling fur.
Within European tradition, the activity represents the month of November or December when, following the first frost, pigs are slaughtered in preparation for the holiday feastdays. Examples of the scene are available in both French graphic and sculptural traditions as evidenced by two works, one from the Kalendrier des Bergiers (Pl. 85) and the other from Chartres Cathedral (Pl. 86). Again Millet, as Hunt and Wheelwright had understood him earlier, saw the continuity of iconographic tradition in his present-day choice of subjects. Such continuity was implicit in the heroic nature of his figures and their activities.

Millet's progress on The Pig Killers was interrupted in August, 1870, when he and his family fled Barbizon and returned to Normandy at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. Settling at Cherbourg, Millet returned to landscape painting but quickly discovered that he could not elude the war by his retreat to his native home. In September, 1870, he wrote to Sensier:

Here the Prussians are daily expected to invade us. It is absolutely impossible for me to draw a simple pencil line out of doors. I should be strangled or shot on the spot. One day I was arrested, dragged before a military tribunal, and only released after application had been made for information about me, and then not without a caution never to hold, or even pretend to hold, a pencil in the future.
Despite political harassment, Millet continued sketching out of doors, and between August, 1870, and November, 1871, he produced a significant group of nature studies including a large number of seascapes. The emergence of the seascape at this point in his oeuvre was prompted by his return to Cherbourg and his recollection of the shipwrecks and storms he had witnessed there as a young man. The constant struggle with the sea that characterized life at Cherbourg and Gruchy is translated into his compositions through the depiction of the ocean as a vast, uninviting, and indomitable force. Human presence is minimal in these works, and when man is included he is either overpowered by his confrontation with the sea or contemplating his insignificance in the face of its strength; he is not, however, depicted in harmonious interaction with his environment. In Cliffs at Gruchy, 1871 (Pl. 87), for example, diminutive figures sit along a rocky coastline as they face the sea in silent awe of the vista before them. Stylistically, the work can be taken as representative of a compositional formula Millet developed within this particular group of works. Millet divides the composition into three areas of land, sea, and sky; maintaining the flat surface of the canvas, he develops the composition simultaneously as a seascape and as an interlocking pattern of surface design.
Against the even horizontal registers of the sea and sky, he plays an angular diagonal in the rocky precipice that juts across the foreground in a jagged rhythm. In the elemental quality of the composition, Millet's friend Silvestre perceived the strength of lengthy traditions in the history of art:

...voilà les points de rappel de la vie dans l'immensité nue de ce paysage d'ossian, où l'âme a besoin d'être seule, excédée qu'elle est, aujourd'hui surtout, par les plus cruelles et les plus stériles agitations. Ce tableau, senti, exprimé comme un psaume, n'est pas une composition. Quoique le travail de l'art y soit consommé, c'est une 'effusion.' Il est tout espace, tout lumière, tout âme, ce cantique peint, d'une originalité si puissante, si calme; originalité achevée et non pas altérée par l'étude, ne relevant que d'elle-même, quoique profondément soumise à la nature et liée par une parenté spirituelle à tout ce qui est beau, à la Bible, à Homère, à Dante, à Michel-Ange, à Ostade, à Ruysdaël et à Claude. Ce tableau de Millet devrait s'appeler 'Terre, ciel, et mer.'

In November, 1871, Millet returned to Barbizon where he worked intermittently on the Hartmann series of the seasons while completing many of the works begun in Cherbourg the previous summer. His health was failing, however, and many more of these works, including his last decorative commission, were to remain unfinished. In March, 1874, Millet received final official sanction as a French artist when Alfred Chennevières, the Director of Fine Arts, commissioned him to decorate the Panthéon with a
series of eight subjects to be placed in the Chapel of Ste. Geneviève. Throughout the summer, Millet traveled between Barbizon and Paris as he began the preparatory sketches for the murals. Two of these have been recorded as *The Miracle of the Ardents* and *The Procession to the Shrine of Ste. Geneviève.* Millet, however, would be unable to complete the remaining six works. Thus, as his life neared its end, his oeuvre, consistently admirable in its richness and diversity, retained its multifarious character as he divided his remaining months between highly personal landscape studies and a public decorative series.

The final developments in Millet's oeuvre remained, for the moment, unknown to his former American pupils Hunt and Wheelwright; Hunt, however, was to learn of the changes that had taken place between 1855 and 1866, particularly Millet's new emphasis on landscape painting, when he journeyed abroad once more in 1866. Traveling to France in late May, Hunt arrived in Paris in time to witness his friend's triumph at the *Exposition Universelle.*

Hunt did not journey directly from Boston to Paris and Barbizon, but first spent the summer in Dinan, Brittany, in the company of his friends and fellow artists, Elihu Vedder (1836-1923) and Charles Coleman (1840-1928),
who shared Hunt's rustic studio and lifestyle. Described by Vedder, the Dinan excursion was Hunt's attempt to re-establish another Barbizon milieu:

We found, or made, a large studio on the ground floor of an old house. It was literally the ground floor, for the floor was the ground and Hunt delighted in it. You could make holes and pour in your dirty turpentine and fill them up again, and generally throw things on the floor, and Hunt used to clean his brushes by rubbing them in the dirt and dust. I remember his once saying, "Wouldn't you like to take that mud in the road and make a picture with it?" The simplicity of Millet was strong upon him in those days, and indeed affected his art and the rest of his life. Painted with mud! Why not?

Vedder's wistful concluding assessment of the Dinan period as a time when "We all worked hard and...accomplished little" implies that the rural retreat itself held greater significance than any works produced within its duration. At Dinan, Hunt and his friends became active participators in Brittany's culture, learning its folk customs, legends, and local songs while visiting its rustic cabarets. Hunt's Dinan period illustrates well his habit of periodic enthusiastic immersions in rural life which began with his first stay at Barbizon. Taken as a group, these excursions began to assume a character of ritualistic renewal whereby Hunt re-established contact with nature through a simple lifestyle; as such, his stay at Dinan was an appropriate prelude to his return to Barbizon that winter.
Hunt's reunion with Millet during the Exposition Universelle was comparatively brief, occurring while his family was temporarily quartered in Paris. In a letter to Sensier dated January 7, 1867, Millet mentions that he and Hunt spent approximately five days together at Barbizon in the company of an unidentified American companion of Hunt who, although a prospective patron, "did not know a word of French." The consequences of their second meeting did not show themselves through any immediate discernible change in Hunt's oeuvre; instead, they became apparent later when, after the close of the exhibition, Hunt returned to Boston and, opening his studio to pupils, resumed the role of artist-teacher he held previously at Newport.

Hunt's paintings may have contained many divergences from Millet's example, but his teachings adhered to his mentor's artistic tenets. In its casual supervision, the general structure of his school was, as one observer noted, "nearest to the foreign ateliers of anything we [had] in this country." Yet, the same writer perceived a basic fallacy in Hunt's permissive curriculum when he wrote, "[Hunt] was unconscious that he was teaching Americans who had, perhaps, never drawn a stroke before in their lives, and not Frenchmen who had passed all the
Typically spontaneous in his instruction, Hunt, as a mercurial presence in his own studio, fostered independent study and experimentation among his students. His lectures, or more properly, rambling conversations, recorded by his student, Helen Knowlton, were granted continuity by his direct references and broad allusions to Millet. To ensure the emphasis of a particular tenet, Hunt used paintings by Millet from his collection as illustrative teaching tools.

Discussing the merits of working from memory, Hunt expressed sentiments similar to those voiced by Millet to Wheelwright in 1855. Referring to the training of the memory as "one of the most essential parts of the training of an artist," Millet had stated,

One may may paint a picture from a careful drawing made on the spot and the other may paint the same scene from memory...and the last may succeed better in giving the character, the physiognomy of the place, though all the details be inexact.28

After Millet's example Hunt conveyed to his students the importance of working from memory as a process through which to achieve the imitation of unnecessary compositional details:

Keep yourself in the habit of drawing from memory. The value of memory sketches lies in the fact that so much is forgotten. In time we must learn to leave out in our finished pictures these things which we now leave out through ignorance or forgetfulness. We must learn what to sacrifice.29
You soften the fiber of your memory by fastening yourself too closely to your work and your model. Some of the most vivid renderings of nature have been done after nature has passed.30

The role of memory in the artistic process was only one of several principles culled from conversations with Millet which Hunt passed on to his students. While discussing color, for example, the distinctly academic bias that dominated Millet's advice to Wheelwright began to appear in Hunt's admonitions to his class. Instructing them to approach color in terms of value rather than hue he stated:

Give up the idea of color for a while. Consider values only. At first sacrifice the beauty of your drawing to getting values. Go to work as they did in the Bible! Separate the light from the dark!31

Earlier, Millet had expressed the same opinion concerning color when he said:

Harmony of color consists more in a just balance of light and dark than in a juxtaposition of certain colors. There must be équilibre. The great colorists—très simple.32

In keeping with academic concepts, Hunt taught his students that color was a stylistic element subordinate to line. To demonstrate the importance of linear definition of form, Hunt used Millet's painting, The Sheepshearers as a case in point, stating:
You would say that the line around the arm was too strong. But it was needed. Without it the drawing would have been vapory. See the firmness of the neck and shoulder and how you feel the flatness of the back and the roundness of the arm!33

Clearly evoking the classical sources he identified in Millet's figure style, he assessed the composition: "What a wonder! As fine a thing in that as in Michelangelo!"34

As a teacher Hunt introduced Bostonians to Millet's oeuvre, and significantly the stylistic processes, tenets, and sources that determined its character. His classes did not yield serious emulators of Millet but sincere devotees who advanced his popularity as writers. In addition to her compilation of Hunt's lectures, Talks on Art, Helen Knowlton published numerous journal articles elucidating Hunt's relationship with Millet. She was seconded in this by her studio colleague, Helen Bigelow Merriman, whose articles, published in newspapers such as The Worcester Spy, reached a smaller and less cosmopolitan audience of art amateurs.35

While Hunt was establishing his Boston studio, Wheelwright was settling comfortably into Boston society. After returning from Newport, he married the New York heiress Isaphene Moore Luyster on December 23, 1869. A descendant of the wealthy Luyster-Knickerbocker families, her social stature complemented Wheelwright's eminent
position in Boston. A highly literary and enthusiastic Francophile like her husband, she published her own translation of *Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame Recamier* in 1867. Their mutual interest in France made that country a logical choice for a honeymoon excursion that ended in June, 1870, with a journey to Barbizon. Wheelwright, seeking to introduce his wife to Millet, found him in the process of painting *The Pig Killers*.

"On an easel," he recalled, "stood a picture upon which he had been working when interrupted by our visit. The whole picture had a somber tone in keeping with the tragic nature of the subject. My companion spoke of its pathos. 'Madame,' replied Millet, 'c'est un drame.'"

Wheelwright would not publish his first article on Millet until 1876, six years after his reunion with the artist, but other Americans, some visitors to Barbizon, began recording their observations on Millet's art during the late 1860's and early 1870's; at this initial stage in the development of Millet criticism in America, however, articles and essays remained few in number. From the first generation of American critics of Millet, Ednah D. Cheney (1824-1904) emerges as an outstanding exemplar. Cheney was a Bostonian who, in the company of her husband, the artist Seth Cheney (1810-1856), journeyed to Barbizon in 1855. In her book, *Gleanings in the Field of Art*
(1881), Cheney recalled that their visit to Barbizon took place after "having had [their] attention drawn to him [Millet] by some pictures brought to Boston by an amateur two years before"; the "amateur" must have been Martin Brimmer who, at the urging of Hunt, had purchased Millet's Harvester's Resting in 1853. Cheney further recorded that upon their arrival at Barbizon, they were greeted by Babcock who "attracted [them] by his hearty admiration of his great master Millet." Babcock, acting in his usual role of intermediary, introduced the Cheneys to Millet. Cheney's record of the journey did not appear immediately upon their return to Boston, but was published in 1867 as "Jean-François Millet" in The Radical: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Religion. The frequent references to the Allston Club exhibition contained in the text make clear the association between the appearance of the publication that year and Hunt's activities in Boston.

A less direct link between Hunt and early criticism of Millet can be found in the writing of Eugene Benson (1839-1908). Benson, a New York portraitist and figure painter, frequently supplemented his income as an artist with contributions to the New York Evening Post submitted under the pseudonym "Proteus." During the 1860's, while
he lived and worked in New Haven, Connecticut, he must have become directly acquainted with Hunt and his efforts to popularize Millet's works.45 The appearance of Benson's major article on Millet, "The Peasant-Painter: Jean-François Millet," in Appleton's Journal (1872) further strengthens his ties to Hunt and the literary figures, particularly Thomas Gold Appleton, who surrounded him.46

Generally, Cheney, Benson, and other of their less distinguished contemporaries, presented the American reader with an emphatically sentimental and religious interpretation of Millet's biography and subject matter. This was an image established through highly emotional readings of his works that were often heavily couched in Biblical allusion. Yet, from this broadly sentimental base, two distinct trends of criticism emerged rapidly, one nostalgic and the other political. Respectively, these two viewpoints held that Millet's genre imagery offered the American viewer a final backward glance at America's rapidly vanishing rural innocence or, on the other hand, a timely and pointed condemnation of slavery.

In this country, the pervasive sentimental bias of the Millet criticism became the primary means for distinguishing him as a prominent figure among contemporary French artists. A column entitled, "Gérôme," published in Appleton's Journal (1869) defined Millet's popularity on
this basis through an explicit comparison with the noted academic master:

His [Gérôme's] is the example of a scientific mind; he lacks the tenderness of a poet. He fails to command the tribute of tears which only the masters of our hearts can summon at will. Gérôme is the master of the intellect, but not of the human heart. Millet, the peasant painter, reigns over the last.47

Later, in 1872, Eugene Benson maintained the comparison, and the polarization of the intellectual and poetic in art:

You can go to Gérôme's pictures and see how much historical knowledge an artist may illustrate; but you will go to Millet if you have sympathy and intelligence for the unworldly and witness the sadness of labor, and feel the profound and depressing significance of a life of soil, which is unilluminated by knowledge. Of the five most illustrious living French painters he [Millet] alone is broad and tender enough to be called the poet.48

The "poetic" strain of criticism developed by certain authors removed any negative socio-political connotations from Millet's genre paintings. Viewed through a filter of nostalgia, the French peasantry became, in their eyes, enviable members of a pre-industrial culture in which man and nature received the mutual benefits of harmonious coexistence. This concept was particularly evident in early treatments of The Gleaners. Barely noting the theme of rural toil, The Crayon (1857) offered
its readers an evocative description of the painting more readily applicable to a summer idyll than a scene of field labor:

There is a repose and sunny effect in this picture such as one feels on a sultry day in August; the sentiment pervading this homely scene is truly touching and beautiful.\footnote{49}

The theme of *The Gleaners*, identified as "the peacefulness of peasant life and its harmony with nature," was explicated in elegiac descriptions that were often directed toward the landscape elements, thereby reenforcing the concept of man's unity with nature:

The rain and breezes, the fresh dews and the light gather around the peasants as their cheery companions. The placid sky bends over them, the horizon bears no further than comfortable little farm houses and stacks of wheat. These are their palaces, their pyramids, their Orient and Occident. Travel through the world, they will not find anything more beautiful than the azure above; the teeming fruit trees will yield to no Hesperides. Those poor noisy blase people of Paris, how little of the sweetness of this wheat will they get with their care and spiced entrees.\footnote{50}

This passage contains a concept fundamental to the poetic current of Millet criticism: the superior morality of rural life. Rustic existence, as viewed through Millet's paintings, conferred innocence upon man and an ethical sanction upon his labor. "With Millet," wrote one author, "art appears redeeming the laborer from the curse
Their nostalgic longing for peaceful co-existence with nature and for the ennobling effects of such co-existence caused these authors to perceive an unobtainable Edenic civilization in Millet's genre paintings. In 1871, this attitude called forth the following contrast of rural and urban life inspired by *The Gleaners*:

> The envious artist has good reason to shun the boulevards and come out hither to celebrate, if he cannot partake the simple life which gladly lets the deluded world go by while it still dwells in the dear old days when Adam delved and Eve span.52

Biblical inference became a persuasive tool in the hands of skillful American writers who recognized it as an infallible means to elicit an emotional response from their readers. At times, the response was calculated to be purely sentimental; but sentiment and religion were jointly put to the service of social consciousness as in the writing of Ednah D. Cheney. In her article, "Jean-Francois Millet," cited earlier, she gave an abolitionist reading to Millet's genre paintings. Broaching the social significance of his work through the channel of religious morality, she identified him as an artist motivated by his "religious reverence for humanity," whose art, which she equated with his religion, represented the "revelation of God in Humanity."53 His mission, she believed, was a holy one which he had been called to
perform by the words of the Gospel, "Let him that is greatest among you be your minister." 54

Cheney developed social criticism of Millet's subject matter, the French peasant, by viewing it as representative of a contemporary political situation rather than the product of lengthy artistic symbolic and stylistic traditions. From the socio-political inertia of the French peasant, she drew a parallel to the plight of the American slave, and preceding Edwin Markham by more than three decades, she offered the first American political analysis of The Man with the Hoe:

The man leaned upon his spade. He had paused to wipe the sweat from his brow. In that moment of repose every muscle in his frame had fallen from its stringent strain of work into relaxed weary inactivity. It was not the classic repose of the 'Genie du Repose Eternal'; it was not the grand strength of Michelangelo's Slave. No, it was the patient, hopeless weariness of the overtaxed workman. As we looked all the significant history of the past, all the deep problems of the present opened before us. We saw the Gates of Paradise closed upon primeval man, and the blessings taken from labor since it was no longer in the presence and service of God, but for mere material needs. We saw the unpaid slave of our country, the pauper workmen of France and England.55

Recognizing the incendiary quality of The Man with the Hoe, Cheney made a telling comment on the effect she believed the work would have had in the highly charged emotional atmosphere of antebellum South:
It stirs the soul with every great problem of life and thought. We would as soon have trusted Garrison or Wendell Phillips to lecture in Charleston before the war as have placed his picture of The Laborer [The Man with the Hoe] at the mercy of slaveholders.56

The major distinction of Cheney's criticism is that unlike the majority of her contemporaries, who identified with Millet's works on a nostalgic level, she found his merit as a genre painter in his lack of sentimentality. His direct vision of the French peasant conferred a dignity and universality upon the rural laborer which she identified as "the true American ideal... common people at their labors shown with earnestness of feeling and depth of reverence."57

Cheney opposed sentimental genre because it inspired naive reverie instead of aggressive reform. In thinly disguised criticism of Eastman Johnson's work, which she characterized as "possessing the grace and picturesqueness of humble life with a touch of sweet feelings," she berated self-conscious depictions of the lower class:

They have something of the old feudal feeling which thinks that common people do well enough if they are well fed and merry. The slaveholder, if a tolerably decent man, loved to stand in his veranda and watch the dancing of his slaves, and with self-satisfied complacency felt the warm southern sun upon them all, and flattered himself on the feeling of the Patriarchal relation.58
In Millet's paintings labor was not held at a comfortable distance nor was it cushioned by picturesque portrayals that bordered on the insipid; therefore, his œuvre offered to writers such as Cheney who recognized art as a potential tool of active social reform, a vital alternative. His genre paintings were lessons in the nobility of work, an attitude Cheney saw as a necessary prelude to the recognition and reform of working conditions of the lower class:

Every work needful for the service of man can become dignified and instructive if there is a heart and brain behind it. So with Millet. There is no stupid content, no light merriment in his figures. "Life is real, life is earnest," is written in all their faces.59

Through a somewhat peculiar agricultural metaphor, she identified the common purpose of Millet's genre paintings as the acknowledgment of the contributing socio-political force of the lower class:

A fine lady refused one of Millet's pictures because by the side of the gardener pruning his vines, stood a little basket of manure. Did she know that the great economical question of the age is that same basket of manure? To utilize the refuse, so that instead of spreading miasma and producing fever it shall become food for the millions and beauty for all is the great significant problem of the farmer. So with society. Carlyle may scorn the rabble, but it is only when every human being is recognized as an infinitely precious part of the body politic that society can be peaceful and happy.60
As the century progressed and American criticism of Millet grew in sophistication, it became apparent that social attitudes toward rural labor and the laborer were important pre-determinant factors in the interpretation of his works. As perceived by Eugene Benson, these viewpoints fell into two general categories:

- Whether you look at the peasant with the eye of a poet, and think of him as being unvisited by anything between birth and death but the influences of Nature and the ceremonials of an august religion, or you look at him simply as an ignorant and superstitious man, useful only because he is docile, of no more spiritual interest to or relation with you than an animal--this...will much affect your sympathy for Jean-François Millet and his works.⁶¹

Maintaining Cheney's specific comparison of the peasant and slave, he continued, "The peasant of France, according to the spirit that contemplated him, is a careless and unambitious being, much like the Negro of our southern plantations; or he is heavy and patient, struck with the sadness of the soil, his back rounded, his eyes always upon the earth, from which he wrings a scanty subsistence."⁶²

Regardless of their sympathetic or reprobatory perspectives, writers seeking to develop social criticism of Millet's genre paintings quickly found their task to be a difficult one. Divergences separating the socio-economic systems of France and the United States soon became far more apparent than the similarities uniting them as
authors discovered the parallels between the French peasant and American laborer to be a superficial matter of a common rural environment. Benson, for example, identified the insularity of peasant existence as the major difference between the two lifestyles:

In France, the peasant is shut off from all the general influences that form modern man. He is ignorant of the great fluctuations of the political world, ignorant of the "improvements of industry"; he can hardly be said to think; he neither reads nor writes; the horizon of his fields is the only one known to him, for he never travels...he seems like the primitive man of the fields, a type rarely seen here; the patient and dumb look of men and women have no part in the great march of improvement and emancipation to which people are called; the heavy and lonely and ancient aspect of life so detached from what we understand as life of our century, is pathetic and strange...63

American technology, or Yankee ingenuity, on the contrary, opened broader vistas to the rural laborer in this country, preventing a similar regional isolation. Benson explained that, "Here the newspapers and railways connect the most remote and rural districts with the great centers of civic life and more or less press upon the tiller of the soil influences which destroy the simplicity of his character."84 Benson's emphasis on technical progress and his allusion to the recent emancipation of the slaves foretold the direction that later social criticism of Millet's paintings would follow. Industrialization and the Civil War made it impossible for writers to
maintain steadily idyllic associations between French rural tradition and American agricultural heritage; and although nostalgia remained at the center of the sentimental current of Millet criticism, the post-bellum era ushered in other attitudes. Wistful longing for a return to agrarian origins was displaced by smug pride in technical advancements that later turned to blatant chauvinism when the pride in modernity, tentatively voiced by Benson, caused the peasants depicted by Millet to become the objects of pity and disdain.

Thus the first phase of America's perception and understanding of Millet's art and life came to a close with intimations of what is to come. That perception during this period was largely dependent upon Babcock, Hunt, Wheelwright, and their friends. The second phase was to be based in the experience of the next generation of American students, Eaton and Low, and was to have even wider cultural ramifications.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV


3 Ibid., p. 249.

4 Ibid., p. 250.

5 Ibid., p. 251.


7 Ibid., p. 156.


9 Ibid., p. 258.

10 Ibid., p. 282.


13 Herbert, *Jean-François Millet*, p. 185.


15 Ibid., p. 15.

Herbert, Jean-François Millet, p. 199.

Ady, Jean-François Millet, p. 321.


Hunt, Talks on Art, series 1, p. 28.

Ibid., p. 307.

Ibid., p. 295.

Ibid., p. 61.


33 Hunt, *Talks on Art*, series 1, p. 60.

34 *Ibid*.


39 Seth Cheney was a draftsman and an engraver who was trained in the graphic arts by his brother John (1848-1922). In addition to his graphic work, he also painted portraits in Boston during the 1840's. Information on the entire Cheney family can be found in appropriate volumes of the *Dictionary of American Biography*.


42 Cheney's personal friendship with Babcock did not prevent her from leveling the following criticism of his art:

...He never thoroughly acquired the first principles of drawing. His love of color and his exquisite appreciation of it could not wholly make up for the defect and his pictures give only the feeling which color best expresses without the intellectual meaning which form best reveals. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
See pages 669-670 of Cheney's text "Jean-François Millet," The Radical: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Religion (October, 1867) for her references to the Allston Club exhibition. In 1902, Cheney characterized Hunt himself as "one of the few American artists who cannot complain of a defective education. He had every opportunity which money and the interest of friends could procure. Most of all he had the friendship and companionship of Jean-François Millet the greatest painter of modern times." Ibid., p. 138.


Ibid.


"Foreign Correspondence, Items," The Crayon 4 (October, 1857), p. 311.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., p. 671.
Cheney is most likely referring to Eastman Johnson's painting, *The Old Kentucky Home: Life in the South* (1859), a sentimental depiction of the life of the slave which put forth a harmonious relationship between slave and master.

If the first generation of Millet's American pupils had arrived at the outset of his career as a genre painter, the second came to Barbizon at its conclusion. When Wyatt Eaton (1849-1896) and Will Hicok Low (1853-1932) met Millet, his genre oeuvre was essentially completed and he had entered a renaissance of overt classicism prompted by the great decorative commission of his career, the Sainte Généviève murals. Aside from his preoccupation with the project, an additional obstacle preventing a close working relationship with Millet presented itself to the young artists: Appearing at Barbizon in the summer of 1873, they arrived less than two years before Millet's death. With his failing health already encroaching upon his remaining time for the mural preparations, he was cordial and communicative, yet could offer the two artists little directed instruction.

The age discrepancy separating Millet and his second generation followers is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that Wyatt Eaton was born May 6, 1849, only months...
before Millet's move to Barbizon. A native of Philipsburg, Quebec, Canada, he was raised in a rural village along the shores of the Missisquoi Bay of Lake Champlain. Although rustic, Philipsburg was the first stop on the stagecoach route from Albany, New York, to Canada and, therefore, the scene of constant activity and lively exchanges of news from the United States. Aside from his duties as mayor of Philipsburg and president of the Missisquoi and Rouville Fire Insurance Company, Eaton's father Jonathan Wyatt Eaton owned a lucrative carriage factory and an equally prosperous lumber company. As a young boy Eaton was trained in the factory as an apprentice craftsman, decorating the carriages with stitched leather designs. From his artisan beginnings he developed an interest in drawing and painting which led him to sketch informally a small number of available plaster casts, landscapes, and portraits. Encouraged by local observers, he took his drawings to Montreal, where he consulted with Lewis Fraser, a partner in the Canadian art firm of Scott and Fraser and later the art editor of Century Magazine, who urged him to go to New York and enroll at the National Academy of Design. Despite initial parental opposition Eaton, accompanied by Fraser, arrived in New York on October 17, 1867, to begin formal academic instruction.
In accordance with the usual Academy admission procedures, Eaton submitted a drawing of a cast of a foot to the entrance committee for their approval. Discouraged by their negative reaction, he planned to enroll at the Cooper institute of Art but, returning to the Academy the following week, discovered to his surprise that he had been accepted as a pupil in the beginning antique drawing class. His class met under the rotating supervision of four instructors: Emanuel Leutze (1816-1868), Edwin White (1817-1877), Henry Peters Gray (1819-1877), and George A. Baker (1821-1880). Recalling the team teaching system he stated, "Every teacher contradicted every other teacher--a decided advantage to the pupil because it made them think for themselves and threw them upon their own resources."  

Eaton spent the next four months drawing casts of antique appendages which, as an aspiring academician, he enthusiastically enumerated in his diary along with a running account of his progress as a draftsman:

Drew the outline of a foot of Venice de Medici [sic] from a cast. I drew the outline of a food of Hercules...finished by foot this A.M. and commenced a hand this P.M. The students gave the foot a good deal of praise and the boys say that I am getting along very well with my shading.  

While copying antique statuary, Eaton like so many other academically trained artists before him, including Millet,
committed a number of classical figures and compositions to memory, including Germanicus and The Fighting Gladiator. Following a typical academic curriculum, Eaton was promoted to the life drawing classes in December, 1867, along with his friend Walter Launt Palmer (1854-1932), the son of the neoclassical sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer (1817-1904). Simultaneously, he began painting classes at the studio of Joseph Orion Eaton (1829-1875), which he continued until his return to Canada in the summer of 1868.

Reminiscent of Millet's reception in Cherbourg following his Salon debut in 1840, Eaton was hailed as a celebrity upon his return to Philipsburg. Having completed a course of art study in New York, the local citizenry regarded him as a cosmopolite, one who conferred a cultural status upon their village; accordingly, prominent members of the community commissioned him to paint portraits of themselves and their families; and in another instance parallel to Millet's early career, Eaton entered a short-lived period as a provincial portraitist.

Working in a studio constructed behind his parents' home, he also resumed his studies from nature. In 1870, he completed Farmer's Boy, a genre scene representing his combined interests in landscape and figure painting. Within the context of Eaton's oeuvre, the work demonstrates that his interest in genre pre-dated his contact with Millet and was inspired by his own rural
environment. The painting, presently unlocated, is known today only through a preparatory drawing (Pl. 88). A single figure composition, it depicts a child in an open field standing astride a log fence as he whistles through the fingers of one hand and holds a hickory switch behind his back with the other. Despite its rural iconography the drawing is clearly the result of thorough academic training. The boy, partially turned from the viewer, stands solidly in the center of the composition, his silhouette sharply defined against the landscape background. Offsetting his figure, his head is enframed against the sky by a wide brimmed straw hat. Stylistically, the drawing is a sensitive exercise in the study of line and value. With line used to generate the other elements of style, Eaton's careful draftsmanship creates form while subtly evoking the individual textures of wood, clothing, and straw. Color is called forth through a wide range of value nuances that move from the dark areas of the fence to the highlights on the child's skin created by the exposed white paper.

It was not Eaton's early expertise as a genre painter but his official role as town portraitist that won him the wealthy patrons who eventually financed his travel abroad. Most notable among these was John Carpenter Baker (ca. 1820-1881), a businessman who co-directed a private
bank in the neighboring town of Stanbridge. In 1872, after painting numerous portraits of Baker and his family, Eaton was sent first to England and then to France through the banker's benefaction.8

Eaton's visit to London, a brief prelude to his stay in France, had no permanent effect upon his development as an artist. He remained there only long enough to meet James A. M. Whistler (1834-1903) and the animal sculptor John Swan (1847-1910) while becoming acquainted with the works of Joseph W. M. Turner (1775-1851) and the Pre-Raphaelites. He moved quickly on to Paris, where he entered Gérôme's atelier by winter of 1872.9

Like Hunt, Eaton chose his teacher after studying an example of his work in a Parisian art shop window. Upon discovering Gérôme's painting The Eastern Butcher, Eaton entered his atelier because he had perceived in the work an "absolute reality in the drawing of the human body [that he] could find in no other master."10 As a young artist Eaton sought primarily instruction in technique from Gérôme just as Hunt had hoped to gain similar expertise from Couture. Later, Eaton's wife was to recall that his apprenticeship was strictly a matter of stylistic training. "He entered Gérôme's atelier," she stated, "not from sympathy with his master's art, but from the wish
to become acquainted with the best methods, and Gérôme he regarded as one of the greatest living masters of technique. ¹¹

In a letter written to the editor of *Century Magazine* in 1889, Eaton himself recalled the cold intellectualism of Gérôme's instruction:

> Without love for Gérôme's art I have always esteemed it highly. I found him...as direct and exact in his criticisms as the click of a gun. With me he generally made suggestions which would add to the picturesqueness of my compositions, his criticisms always coming from his intellect rather than his heart.¹²

Such instruction was the antithesis of what Eaton was to find and appreciate in the words and works of Millet.

It was while attending Gérôme's class at the École des Beaux-Arts that Eaton discovered Millet's works in a print shop on the Rue Bonaparte. Although he had seen a reproduction of Millet's *Woman Sewing* in New York, he had not been afforded a previous opportunity for a first-hand study of his compositions. In the shop he saw a group of single-figure, genre drawings depicting field laborers reaping, mowing, and chopping wood as well as interior scenes of women spinning. Displayed with the drawings was Millet's series *Hours of the Day* (1867), also single figures performing various occupations, which had been reproduced as woodcuts by the engraver, Adrien Lavieille.
Having been introduced to Millet's graphic work, Eaton was to have the opportunity of viewing Millet's paintings for the first time at an exhibition at the Hôtel Drouot, in the spring of 1873. Impressed by an intimate genre scene Woman Sewing by Lamplight, 1872 (Pl. 89), Eaton resolved to spend the following summer at Barbizon. Recalling his decision, he wrote:

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.13

Before leaving Paris for Barbizon, Eaton, inspired by Millet's painting, re-introduced genre into his oeuvre. Basing A Peasant Scene (1873-1874) upon Millet's intimate interior, he adapted the mother and child theme to represent three generations of a peasant family. His composition, depicting an old woman seated next to a young mother who cradles her infant in her arms, is also related iconographically to Daumier's Third Class Carriage (1865).14 Like Daumier, Eaton pictorialized the continuity and survival of the peasant class while also introducing the central theme of his Barbizon genre paintings—the mother and child. The painting, now lost, is known only through two preparatory drawings, one a study of a single pose (Pl. 90) and the other a sketch of
the entire composition (Pl. 91). As an academic figure painter, Eaton would retain the habit of completing numerous preparatory drawings in advance of his genre paintings throughout his entire career.

Shortly after his arrival at Barbizon, Eaton was joined by his friend and fellow pupil from Gerôme's atelier, Will Hicok Low, with whom he shared his hotel lodgings throughout the summer. The biographies and early careers of the two artists contain several parallels, most notably common rural origins and artisan-craftsman beginnings. Low was born on May 31, 1853, in Albany, New York, the son of Elvira Steele, a teacher, and Addison Low, an iron foundryman; although Low was a child during the Civil War, his older brother served in the Union army and his father commanded a steamship used as a transport for northern troops. Until the age of seventeen, he attended the Albany Boys' Academy with his childhood friend Walter Launt Palmer, later Eaton's classmate at the National Academy of Design. While still in school, Low became interested in a career as an artist and began to work with local craftsmen in a railroad car factory in an Albany suburb. These artists taught Low to paint headings, the decorative panel paintings which were first covered with landscapes or flower pieces and then fixed into place on the ceilings of the cars. In addition to decorative
painting, Low also practiced commercial illustration, and in 1870 he sold his first drawing Coasting by Moonlight to a monthly journal The Independent. Financed by the money he received from the sale of his drawing, $50.00, Low departed for New York City to begin a career as a professional artist.

In New York, Low turned to a variety of occupations as means of self-support, including the designing of circus posters and handbills advertising theatrical melodramas. To supplement his income further, he became the New York City correspondent for The Albany Times drafting a weekly newsletter under the alternating pseudonyms "Ned Sketchly" and "Neutral Tint." His most reliable source of income, however, remained his journal illustrations. His drawings were purchased by several popular magazines: Harper's Weekly, Hearth and Home, and most frequently, Appleton's Journal. At times he was asked to complete a series of drawings, such as one depicting manor houses along the Hudson River; but more often his works were commissioned as illustrations for poems and short stories, a purpose which imbued Low with a narrative perception of genre scenes. This insight is evident in two sketches he completed during the summer of 1870. They represent farm boys and are reminiscent of Eaton's early genre-figure style dating from the same year (Pis. 92, 93).
Low's drawings, by comparison with Eaton's work, are rendered with a sharp angular linearity that creates hard forms. His style is in part a function of the requisite transferral of his compositions onto boxwood for printers who in turn reproduced them in the journals as woodcuts.

Low's drawing **Coming Home**, 1871 (Pl. 94) clearly demonstrates both his graphic technique and narrative perception of genre. Because his works were translated into woodcuts, he developed a style that was not only incisively linear but also lacking in valuistic nuances. Sharp contrasts of light and dark replace the subtle value range of Eaton's composition. **Coming Home** maintains Low's early theme of the rural farm boy at work and leisure, but appearing in *Appleton's Journal* in August, 1871, it took on a specifically narrative purpose, as an accompanying illustration of the following poem:

> Leisurely cropping the lush meadow grasses,  
> Under the leaves where the cool shadows fall;  
> Up from the swamp and the woodland he passes,  
> Following at the farmer-boy's call:  
> 'Come, come,  
> We're almost home!  
> Follow your leader, we're almost here!'²⁰

This illustrational-narrative bias Low formulated toward genre during his early career as a commercial artist was later carried over into his Barbizon genre drawings and paintings.
In 1872 Low successfully moved from commercial illustration to fine arts when *Unreconciled*, his portrait of a young woman in Quaker dress, was shown at the National Academy of Design. His work attracted the attention of Erastus Dow Palmer who, planning a trip abroad with his family, invited Low to join him. Happily, Palmer found Low a patron to finance his journey and art study, a grocer and importer who invested $500.00 in Low's training at the École des Beaux-Arts.21

Leaving Palmer in London, Low continued on to Paris, where he met Eaton, whom he had known previously only by reputation. Even though the two artists had shared their National Academy of Design debuts in 1872, Low recalled:

> Our maiden works were placed near to each other upon the topmost line of overcrowded pictures and, with the zeal of the very young, we were availing ourselves the privilege of varnishing day...we did not speak and I only learned his name after he had descended from his stepladder and had gone away, reading the signature on his picture.22

Enlisting the aid of Meredith Read, a fellow native of Albany and the American Consul General in Paris, Low secured a place in Gérôme's atelier. When he arrived there, accompanied by his friends and fellow pupils, Eaton and J. Alden Weir (1852-1919), he quickly found that atelier life was a strange admixture of respectful formality and notorious hazing:23
The Master, having finished his morning task of criticism and correction, was drawing on his gloves before making his departure. Two of the more advanced pupils stood beside him holding, one his hat, the other his cane. Behind him the whole number of the class, fifty or sixty strong, had risen and stood respectfully. The whole scene was formal and, to a young barbarian, habituated to the free and easy manners of his own country, unspeakably impressive.24

Yet as Gérôme stood with his back to the class reading Low's letter of introduction,

the whole class, unseen by him suddenly and automatically changed from respectful students to silent but wild beasts. I understood at once that I was the nouveau, the object of this fiendish pantomime: gleefully, they were gouging out my eyes, throttling me, tearing out my hair, and worse.25

Unlike Eaton, Low did not enter the French atelier with the benefit of previous academic training in his own country; consequently, he was initially placed in the antique drawing class while Eaton worked in the life drawing class. By the time the atelier closed for the summer season Low had advanced his studies considerably, gaining several weeks of experience in the life drawing classes prior to his holiday journey to Barbizon.

Low's enthusiastic desire to immerse himself in French culture originally led him to avoid Barbizon, which already possessed a reputation as a summer gathering place for American art students and tourists eager to catch a glimpse of Millet. He traveled instead to the nearby
village of Recloses which, after a one week's stay, he discovered to be too rustic to suit his tastes; ruefully, he described his only companions there as "peasants whose only relaxation from toil was poaching in the neighboring forest." When Low arrived at Barbizon, he immediately regarded the village as a familiar oasis in a foreign country, evoking his own American rural environment. "By noon," he recalled, "I was seated at the Hotel Siron in Barbizon, shamelessly glad to express myself freely in my native tongue and from that time forth for many years Barbizon was to be the spot where I felt most at home." Low, as Eaton, did not arrive at Barbizon unaware of Millet. While employed as an illustrator in New York City, he had been introduced to the artist and his works through Eugene Benson's article printed in Appleton's Journal (1872). In Paris he had already seen numerous works by Millet at the Durand-Ruel Gallery and, like Babcock, had found himself attracted to his manière fleurie nymphs and nude studies. Low and Eaton, simultaneously anxious and hesitant to meet Millet, found a valuable intercessor in Babcock, whom Eaton aptly described as "a fixture at Barbizon." By the time they met Babcock, he had become an eccentric recluse and an avowed hypochondriac, yet he was eager to share his insights concerning Millet with the young artists. Low, who maintained a
steady friendship with him throughout his life, recalled Babcock's eccentric working habits:

I have known him at the times of my sojourns to France, five or six years often elapsing between them, to place a small panel on his easel with the remark, 'I think I have done something to this since you saw it last.' The criticism related to Allston, that he, 'dreamed so industriously that he forgot the necessity of industry,' can also be applied to Babcock.

Regardless of his shortcomings as an artist, Babcock's expertise as a collector provided Eaton and Low with a small gallery at Barbizon that they consulted freely. Impressed by the scope of the collection, Eaton wrote:

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 most fully acquainted with Millet's art and its history.

Bolstered by his conversations with Babcock and newly acquired perception of Millet's work, Eaton introduced himself to the artist shortly before his summer sojourn ended. Entering Millet's studio, he found that the collection of casts which had impressed Wheelwright approximately eighteen years earlier included sections of the Trajan Column, an arm of Michelangelo's Slave, heads by Donatello and Luca della Robbia and antique torsos; interspersed with these were Gothic figures carved
in wood. He also noted that the equipment in Millet's studio included a mirror that he used when, working alone, he studied himself as a model. Like Wheelwright, Eaton learned a great deal about Millet's working method by visiting his studio. On viewing *Two Spaders*, for example, he discerned the importance of the preliminary linear drawing out of the form in Millet's rapid establishment of heavy outlines with a thick reed pen. Eaton tried to achieve the same essential character of form in his sketches but, to Millet's critical eye, was only marginally successful:

He found in my work a lack of simplicity, too much unnecessary detail, the planes were not well felt, a smallness in 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 Gérôme had given me.33

Aside from Millet's academic practice, Eaton also perceived his sensitivity as a colorist observing that his still life *Three Pears* (1871) contained "all the tones of a landscape" as well as possessing the essential character of organic life:

In the twisted stems, I seemed to see the weather-worn tree and the modelling of the fruit was studied and rounded with the same interest that he would have given to a hill or a mountain or a human body. At the same time it was nonetheless a most faithful presentation of pears.34
Many of their early conversations focused on the problems of landscape painting and, while at Barbizon Eaton adopted Millet's habit of carrying a sketchbook (2 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches) in which he recorded rapid studies after nature (Pl. 95). Studying Millet's preparatory sketches for the wheat ricks depicted in Winter (1867), Eaton noted that "every line was vital, the sinking and bulging of the ricks showing the effects of the storm and weather."35 He learned that although every line in Millet's landscapes carried a specific descriptive and expressive meaning, his purpose in landscape painting was not to render a particular topographical site but, as he advised Eaton, to carry the dynamism of nature beyond the limits of the canvas and encompass the viewer in the scene.

When Low met Millet at his studio that summer, it was a landscape Spring, 1868-1873 (Pl. 80) which impressed him more deeply than the genre paintings. He recalled Millet's careful calculation and manipulation of light falling upon the canvas as he was shown the work:

Millet asked me to step back, placing me behind a curtain hung to a rod which projected at right angles to the window so that to a person standing there the window was entirely hidden. Then he removed the drapery allowing the light from the window to fall directly on the picture....36

Neither Eaton nor Low adopted a particular landscape technique derived from Millet's example; but recalling
Hunt's declaration that upon meeting Millet he took a "broader view" of things, Low wrote that Millet's art made him acutely aware of the difference between an illustration and an evocation of a scene:

It [Spring] had little of the photographic realism with which many painters have endowed their work. Nor was my feeling exactly that of looking on a real scene as much as being lifted out of myself and made to realize the poignant sensation of the reawakening of nature in spring. I was so moved, so shaken in my entire being that I made at the time no effort to describe my feelings to the painter as I was barely able to contain my emotions.37

Low spent the remainder of the summer attempting to divest his work of its anecdotal and illustrational character by studying Millet's method of genre painting. The transition from his early style formed in New York to a new attitude developed under Millet's influence is demonstrated by two sketches dating from this period, La Mère Charlotte (Pl. 96) and The Faggot Gatherer (Pl. 97). Stylistically, La Mère Charlotte is related to his sketches of farm boys dating from 1870 in its hard linearity and angular treatment of form. In her awkward pose and lack of anatomical definition, the figure bespeaks Low's novice life drawing skills. A pencil drawing, it does not possess the organic flow and continuity characteristic of Low's later charcoal sketches. Observing that Millet's rapid charcoal sketches captured the essential aspects of figurial pose and movement, Low began a sketchbook filled with
similar exercises. Changing his medium after Millet's example, he sketched *The Faggot Gatherer*, one of his most successful early Barbizon studies. He captured the bent posture and labored movement of the woman under the weight of her burden with spontaneous decisive lines. Gaining greater freedom from the use of charcoal, he depicted the motion of the figure rapidly and generally, while suggesting her interaction with her environment by the upward swing of her apron blown in the wind.

In discussing the role life sketches played in the completion of his genre paintings, Millet told Low that he viewed them not as preparatory sketches in the academic sense but as brief visual notations designed to function as memory aids. When he admitted that he did not enjoy painting from a posed model, Low agreed that he also preferred working from memory, a skill he had developed as a journal illustrator; but Millet's candid reply made him aware of the academic knowledge of anatomy that was at the foundation of Millet's rapid sketches and habit of drawing from memory:

> If you have this facility it is fortunate and is one that you should cultivate; but perhaps it is best for you at present not to depend too much upon it; you tell me that you are in the Atelier Gérôme; there, or wherever you work, think only of rendering the model as truthfully as you can; it is by such practice that you will familiarize your eye to see and your mind to retain construction and proportion
in the human figure, and later on, you will be able, through such knowledge, to be the master and not the slave of the individual model...and give to your work the typical rather than the accidental character of nature.38

Low's first Barbizon summer season was marked by the completion of Maternal Care (Pl. 98), his first painting since his arrival in France. An intimate interior, it depicts a young mother sewing as she sits quietly beside her infant asleep in a cradle. The composition is clearly derived from Millet's The Sleeping Infant, 1856 (Pl. 99), as both works share in the same iconography and placement of figures as well as common details such as the tile floor and the open window which provides the light source for the composition. Maternal Care, to my mind, is the most successful of Low's Barbizon genre paintings; his subsequent works, completed near or after Millet's death, denote a return to his former illustrational technique. In this instance, however, he captures the monumentality and presence of Millet's figures, achieving the difficult task he had set for himself that summer.

Low was not the first American artist at Barbizon who was captivated by certain of Millet's paintings. Earlier, Wheelwright had been greatly affected by the intimacy and quietude of The Sleeping Infant and after his return to the United States, provided an explanation of
the emotional attraction the work held for Americans:

...[Y]ou could positively feel the absolute quiet and repose, the solemn silence, that pervaded the picture. All those at least felt it who saw the picture upon that Sunday morning. A sudden hush fell upon the noisy and merry party. At last Diaz said in a low voice husky with emotion, "Eh bien, ca c'est Biblique." It is not impossible that, in painting it, Millet was thinking of that holy child who long ago in Judea was born of a peasant mother and slept in a peasant's cradle...and the picture may have been intended to have a Biblical character in a more literal sense than occurred to me at the time. The picture was, however, chiefly suggestive to me of that "Sabbath stillness" so dear to the descendants of the Puritans.39

As an American Low experienced a similar emotional response toward the work; as an aspiring genre painter, however, it also offered him entree into the seventeenth century Dutch tradition of the intimate interior, enabling him to enhance his knowledge of the historical development of genre through the vehicle of Millet's oeuvre.

Although Maternal Care was inspired directly by Millet's The Sleeping Infant, Low painted his composition before a live model. He employed Madame Richard, a local peasant, whom he described as "a bovine creature, yet amply proportional, fully six feet in height" to pose for him.40 Low, perceiving the maternal qualities of his model, depicted her in a domestic genre scene, but Eaton attracted by her striking physical features, particularly her "large placid eyes set under finely arched brows," painted her portrait (Pl. 100).41
Low chose Madame Richard, or the "Barbizon cave dweller," as he called her, to pose for Maternal Care because she was a "good woman who might stand for a type of mother earth." As he moved among the Barbizon peasantry, Low came to view them with a certain degree of respect, perceiving that the "lowly kine were not without a certain dignity." Like Eugene Benson before him, he quickly realized that the drawing of parallels between the French peasant and American rural laborer was a fruitless task:

The peasant lacks the superficial refinement and quasi-education with which our common schools have veneered our masses; in this land of plenty we have as yet no conditions that parallel those that confront the rural populations of France; but in this environment the peasant has wrested comparative comfort, self support, and cheerful contentment under conditions that we must respect.

Unfortunately, Low could not always convey to his American patrons a similar appreciation for his models; and in a telling incident, the original owner of Maternal Care, upon learning the character of the French peasant life, sold the painting rather than "own a picture of such a brute."

Maternal Care attracted the attention of Mihály Munkácsy (1844-1909), a Hungarian painter who was living at Barbizon that summer. He told Low that his work evidenced so great a talent that he should not return to
Gerôme's atelier for further study but establish his own studio and work independently there. Low, somewhat surprised by Munkácsy's effusive praise, placed the proposition before Millet. Vehemently opposed, Millet once more voiced an academic bias:

What would you think of a poet who was arrested in his composition by a point of grammar? The school affords the easiest way of continually studying from nature. The casts from antique statues stand still for you to learn the structure of the human figure; the models, trained as they are, are almost equally in the same manner at the disposition of the student who must laboriously acquire this knowledge. Look at the antique, study the masters of the Louvre to see what they have done with the knowledge which they have gained by their study—the elements of style, the suppression of detail which is detrimental to the typical character which you must endeavor always to bear in mind when you are trying to make a picture; but when you are making a study in school, copy slavishly all that is individual, even that which you may think ugly and from the accumulation of such information as you gain of the varieties of the human form, you will learn what will best serve you when you wish to express your own individual view of nature.

This passage precisely states Millet's consistent academic-realist dichotomy that was the core of his style and method. His American followers soon became fully aware of it. Repeatedly, he urged them to remain in Paris and complete courses of academic study before attempting independent careers as genre painters.

Low and Eaton, responding to Millet's admonishment, returned to Paris in the autumn of 1873 and resumed their
studies at Gérôme's atelier. Eaton, however, returned to Barbizon alone in the winter when, during the quiet season marked by an absence of students and tourists, he was able to build a personal rapport with Millet and a close friendship with his son, François. He assumed, in Low's words, "the position of son of the house and was accepted in like fashion." At times, Eaton's dual allegiance to Millet and Gérôme incurred his atelier master's anger particularly when he applied Millet's methods in his life painting exercises as Low recalled:

The model for the week was an Italian with a bushy head of lustrous hair, olive skin, and marked features. Eaton had made his drawings on the canvas, had fixed it in charcoal by spraying it with shellac and alcohol, and then had given way to an exaggeration of Millet's methods by washing in colors transparently in the richest hues. The man's hair had become a deep purple, his tawny skin glowed with warm tones, when Gérôme stepped quietly behind Eaton. 'Do you see the color of the model like that?' 'No, I am simply preparing it in this way to paint over it solidly.' 'Prepare nothing! Paint.'

Eaton's Study of a Black Man, 1874 (Pl. 101), is similar to his study of an Italian described by Low. The figure, set down with a spontaneous application of pigment, is unusually colored in that it glows with a broad range of violets. Despite Gérôme's displeasure Eaton did not perceive his academic training and Millet's art as antithetical influences; his studies at the National Academy
of Design and the École des Beaux-Arts, on the contrary, heightened his awareness of the classical current in Millet's *oeuvre*.

Shortly after his return to Paris, Low left Eaton at Gérôme's *atelier* and enrolled at the studio of Émile Carolus-Duran (1837-1917), a school "good enough for Americans and other heathens." While continuing his studies there, he met two fellow American pupils, John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) and Theodore Robinson (1852-1896); more significantly, a closer intimacy developed between Low and the Scottish artist-art critic, Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson (1847-1900), who along with his cousin Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), would become his closest friends and future Barbizon companions. Working in the Parisian ateliers in 1874, Eaton and Low were able to maintain contact with Millet, who visited the city regularly to confer with Chennèvieres, the Minister of Fine Arts, concerning his commission to decorate the Panthéon.

When they returned to Barbizon in the summer of 1874, the two artists found Millet busy with the preparatory sketches for his mural project. Throughout his career Millet had made no clear distinction between history and genre painting; accordingly, he perceived the decorative commission as a task calling for the most direct presentation of the subject matter possible. On several occasions
Eaton witnessed Millet's preoccupation with this task.

I would call after dinner...and find Millet 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 complete sketch; in talking of the decorations, Millet referred to the difficulties of the composition. He thought it the work of the historical painter to make the work so plain and complete that it would be told by the paintings without previous knowledge or the aid of books.52

That summer, the last before Millet's death, Eaton spent long evenings with the artist discussing their perceptions of diverse artistic sources and the specific problems of genre painting. Millet did not share Eaton's admiration for Japanese prints, judging them "far from the beauty of Fra Angelico."53 Early Renaissance sources, he explained, better suited the genre painter's purpose, that being the unification of beauty and grandeur in the human figure. Supporting his point, he showed Eaton his large collection of photographs illustrating frescoes by Giotto.

Millet's emphasis on the typical or the natural appearance of the subject in genre led him to demonstrate his contention with a comparison of an engraving after Titian's Nativity and another after an unidentified Poussin, both works from his collection. Analyzing
Titian's scene as genre, he criticized the composition on
the following basis, "...the accessories lacked the
character of a stable; the figures wanted ruggedness of
the peasant type; and above all the unnaturalness of
having the child naked rather than warmly wrapped in woolen
clothes." The figure types in Poussin's work, adhering
to what he considered a more classical mode of expression,
were to Millet's mind far superior in representing human
"age, toil, and suffering." 55

Discussing his approach to representing human toil,
Millet commented that it was more desirable to depict a
figure in momentary repose than one in the action of
labor. He believed that repose expressed more than
action because it carried the implication of labor al­
ready completed and new tasks about to be commenced. He
showed Eaton his drawing of a man leaning on a spade,
explaining that the figure had worked, was fatigued,
and would work again, thereby representing a sequence of
activity in a single pose. Thus Millet felt he obtained
the classical unities of time: past, present, and
future. In choosing figure types, he advised Eaton to
depict the mature man rather than the very young or old
because he represented the "effect of toil, his limbs
crooked and his body bent, and the years of labor still
ahead of him." 56 A successful genre painting, he stated,
represented the typical rather than the exceptional; to this end, advised, the artist must choose his figure types carefully. He stated, "The type of laborer must show that he was born to labor, that labor is his fit occupation, that his father and his father's father were tillers of the soil, and that his children and his children's children shall continue the work their fathers have done before them." 57

Millet's final lessons as a teacher were well taken by Eaton when he began preparations for his first major genre painting, Harvesters at Rest, 1874-1876 (Pl. 102), that summer. He had been toying with the theme from the time of his first visit to Barbizon the previous year. Initially he had visioned it as an interior scene as his first preparatory drawings indicate. They were completed in Paris in the autumn, 1873, and depicted a field laborer entering his cottage at the end of the day where his wife, holding their infant in her arms, waited to greet him. 58 Following his discussions with Millet, Eaton focused upon the theme of repose, changing his composition to an outdoor scene depicting a family of peasants taking their mid-day rest in a grain field. He spent the remainder of the summer searching the Barbizon peasantry for the most suitable models for his figures
while completing numerous preparatory studies of the landscape background and still life accessories.

Since their first encounter with Millet, Eaton and Low had become enthusiastic Francophiles, or more specifically, devoted Barbizonians. Filled with youthful exuberance, at the outset of the summer they decided to follow Babcock's example and become permanent Barbizon residents. Submitting their proposal to Millet, Low argued, "Art is non-existent with us. There are too few artists to make themselves considered. If they are not despised they are simply a source of wonder to the practical people of our country."^59

Tactfully, Millet pointed out that the correction of these lamentable circumstances depended upon the presence of diligent artists such as themselves and advised them to return to the United States at the end of their studies. Low later recalled that Millet's counsel was wisely accepted but for Eaton and himself Barbizon, "as the scene of such dreams," retained "a glamour like that of a first love."^60

Before leaving Paris, they spread their infectious admiration for Millet among their atelier companions; consequently, they were joined at Barbizon during the summer by Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson. Cynical and opinionated, Stevenson, heretofore unimpressed by modern
French art, arrived to challenge Low's assessment of Millet's oeuvre. Low wrote that his introduction of Stevenson to Millet resulted in the only victory he ever scored in their continuous yet friendly arguments concerning French art. Later he recalled,

Fluent and even flippant as Bob could be, here he was neither one nor the other, but visibly moved. The few words which he spoke to the master were tinged with emotion. With droll surrender, Bob said later, 'Do you consider it fair play in a conversation between gentlemen concerning minor poets to spring Shakespeare upon your opponent?'

Stevenson was the first of a number of authors Low introduced to Millet's works and Barbizon during the mid-1870's. As an art critic for Magazine of Art, the Scottish writer would later advance the understanding of Millet's works in both England and the United States.

Stevenson, a landscape painter, worked outdoors at Barbizon, while Low began studies for Woman Baking Bread (Pl. 103), a painting he finished in Paris in 1875. The progression of the work is documented by four drawings from his sketchbook. The first is a cursory notation of the figure (Pl. 104); the second and third, reflect his atelier training in that they are carefully posed studies determining the posture of the woman's body levered against the weight of the bread pan she holds (Pls. 105, 106), and the fourth is a rapid sketch of the entire scene (Pl. 107). Repeating the direct correspondence between Millet's
The Sleeping Infant and Low's Maternal Care, Millet's Woman Baking Bread, 1853-1854 (Pl. 108), is the source for Low's final composition. In Millet's prototype a domestic setting is transformed into an evocative interior through a dramatic lighting arrangement. The figure, standing before an open brick oven, is cast in a glowing light that defines and accentuates her silhouette against the darkened interior. The striking contrasts of light and dark focus attention immediately upon the figure while subordinating still life accessories and architectural details which emerge gradually from the background. Reversing Millet's composition, Low turns the figure toward the viewer divesting her of Millet's characteristic anonymity. Unlike her counterpart she labors within an evenly illuminated interior where accessory furnishings previously obscured are clearly visible. Rendered in strong daylight with precision and individual definition, the numerous kitchen utensils and loaves of bread are granted compositional importance equal to the figures; in its careful inclusion of rural kitchen furnishings, Low's work, compared to its source, suggests the appearance of an accurate sociological illustration of a particular foreign lifestyle, custom, and cuisine. Compositionally, the crockery, pots and pans, and rounds of bread translate into a pattern of
repeating parabolas, ovals, and circles that rhythmically unite the composition and enframe the figure. The circular motifs are played against the rigid diagonal of the bread pan handle that bisects the composition, a form echoed on a monor scale by the twigs and branches scattered at the peasant's feet.

Viewing Barbizon genre scenes through the eyes of one trained as an illustrator, Low could have been attracted to Millet's paintings as singularly representative of French rural custom, but he was not. Millet raised his subjects above such a specific reference, giving them, through literary and historical analogy, a more universal appeal and Low responded to that. Therefore, Low, like Ednah D. Cheney before him, found Millet's Woman Baking Bread particularly appealing. After returning home from Barbizon, she wrote of the work's sentimental appeal from her American point of view, one which, however, captured the sense Millet intended. "The glow of the firelight on her arm, and the little shrinking of the flesh from the heat recall many a Thanksgiving scene in the good old days of brick ovens." 62 Cheney's association of Millet's painting with Thanksgiving is not inappropriate to its French and wider European meaning because baking is the occupation traditionally associated with the holiday months. Typifying this tradition, a
medieval woodcut representing December from the Kalandrier des Bergiers, 1493 (Pl. 109) illustrates industrious bakers preparing for Christmas feastdays. Millet could have introduced both Cheney and Low to the festal associations of the scene, thereby enabling the Americans to respond to the work on both realistic and associational levels.

The close adherence to Millet's example that Low maintained in his early genre paintings is equally apparent in his sketchbooks dating from 1873-1874. Sketches after Millet's works greatly outnumber original life studies, indicating that Low's initial years as a genre painter at Barbizon are to be characterized by a search for subject matter and style in which he found Millet's example indispensable. Three sketches dating from the summer, 1874, are preparatory drawings for copies after Millet that Low planned to complete the following year. Respectively, they are drawings after Millet's Feeding the Children: La Becquéé, 1860 (Pl. 110), The Goosegirl, 1863 (Pl. 111), and a mother and child figure group inspired by The First Steps, 1859 (Pl. 112). Then, briefly turning his attention outdoors, Low executed rapid charcoal sketches of a faggot gatherer (Pl. 113) and a hayrick (Pl. 114). An incisive pencil sketch of a handplow, dated October 13, 1874 (Pl. 115),
evidences the interest in pre-industrial tools of the peasantry that Low shared with many American visitors to rural France. In this case, it might also be a study of Millet's landscape, Winter, Plain of Chailly (1862-1863) which depicts an identical plow abandoned in a vast field.

In mid-October Low and Eaton left Barbizon, returning to Paris with the newest member of their coterie, Laure Constance Papelard, a French peasant who married Eaton on September 24, 1874. Low, confronted with mounting financial difficulties, did not return immediately to Carolus-Duran's atelier but attempted to resume his career as a journal illustrator. He approached his friend Moller a professional engraver who, on the strength of his early series representing homes along the Hudson River, recommended his services for a similar project. The Société Archéologique de Caen was planning to publish a history of the city which they wished to be illustrated with architectural renderings of local monuments. The publisher Lenoir-Furdel, upon examining Low's portfolio, commissioned him to begin the drawings but the project proved abortive when society members, unimpressed with Low's work, overruled their publisher and dismissed him. Low, nevertheless, remained in Caen for several weeks, gaining valuable insight into the individual character of French regional history and customs. As he
became acquainted with the French rustic lifestyle first at Barbizon and later at Caen, he grew increasingly aware of the vast economic and cultural differences separating the French and American rural laborer. He later recalled a chance occurrence in Caen which amplified these discrepancies with particular force. He recalled, "I saw some tools displayed in a shop window. The first object that caught my eye was nothing less than a red mowing machine of American manufacture, so prominent in its gaudy brilliance as to blind me from the rest."\textsuperscript{65}

The shopkeeper, proud of his expert command of modern technology, explained the operation of the machine in enthusiastic detail. Low, however, strongly felt such a machine to be a disquieting intrusion of American agricultural technology into French agricultural life; like many of his compatriots, he had been instilled with a new regard for the past, particularly his own rural heritage, by his Barbizon experience. Now he realized what a jarring displacement of tradition would come about by this new technology, an industrial advancement that had been so natural a development in America: "Remembering the harvest of golden grain on the plain at Barbizon, I could not help hoping that France would be slow to adopt the machinery of this country."\textsuperscript{66}
Before returning to Paris Low expanded his study of regional art by making side trips to Bayeux from Caen where he observed both the famous architecture and Bayeux Tapestry. Personally as well as professionally rewarding, his interlude in Normandy ended with his marriage to the Caen shopkeeper's daughter, Berthe Eugenie-Marie Julienne.

The final months of 1874 and early weeks of 1875 were colored for Eaton and Low by the illness and imminent death of Millet. During the winter, Eaton joined Millet's family and Babcock at Barbizon to assist with the funeral preparations and sealing of the studio. Described by Eaton, the funeral ceremony, in keeping with Millet's wishes, adhered to rural tradition:

He wished 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.67

Thus came to a close the era of immediate contact with the man who had inspired and fostered first Babcock's and Hunt's genre painting then Wheelwright's, renewed Hunt's, and finally inspired Eaton's and Low's. For these Americans and for the American critical assessment of Millet, the scene shifts back to the United States.
NOTES TO CHAPTER V


5 Eaton, "Diary," November 7, 1867.

6 "Wyatt Eaton," A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography, p. 135. Erastus Dow Palmer was born near Syracuse, New York. He began his career as a craftsman, working for a time as a carpenter and then a carver of cameos. In 1849 he won his first success as a sculptor with an idealized bust, The Infant Ceres, which was exhibited at the National Academy of Design. Devoting the remainder of his career to neoclassical sculpture, he produced White Captive (1859) and Indian Girl: The Dawn of Christianity (1853-1856), two of his most famous works. His son, Walter Launt Palmer, was not a sculptor, but a genre and landscape painter who, like Low, later studied at the atelier of Carolus-Duran in Paris. For further information on the Palmers, see Low, A Chronicle of Friendships and Whitney Museum of Art, 200 Years of American Sculpture. Boston: David Godine, 1976.

7 Sheldon, American Painters, p. 169.

8 Personal interview with private collector, November, 1978.


The similarities between the works of Daumier and Eaton may not have been entirely coincidental given the close friendship that existed between Millet and Daumier. For an example of the cordial exchanges between the two artists and a description of their relationship, see Moreau-Nélaton, *Millet Raconte par Lui-Même*, v. 2, pp. 31-32.


Ibid., p. 50.


Ibid., p. 8.


J. Alden Weir, first trained as an artist by his father Robert Weir, also studied at the National Academy of Design in New York before entering Gérôme's atelier in Paris in 1873. During the mid-1870's and 1880's he made frequent trips abroad where he studied examples of modern European art including Manet. In 1890 he began to work in an impressionist technique and in 1898 became a...
member of the American Impressionist society, "The Ten."


25 Ibid.

26 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 32.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., p. 77.


30 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 108.


32 Ibid., p. 182.

33 Ibid., p. 182.

34 Ibid., p. 184.


36 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 87.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., p. 86.


40 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 100.
Low's optimistic attitude toward the rural population of the United States was not reflective of the situation as it actually existed. In his assessment of rural well-being in this country, he ignored, for example, the plight of the southern farmer struggling to re-establish himself after the demise of the plantation system and the problems of the black farmer who had recently come to own his own land. For information concerning the difficulties confronting America's rural poor, see Arthur F. Raper, Preface to Peasantry. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936, and Joseph Schafer, The Social History of American Agriculture. New York: Macmillan Company, 1936.

John Singer Sargent, born in Florence, studied art first at the Accademia in that city. At age eighteen he enrolled at the atelier of Carolus-Duran in Paris; and in 1879-1880, he continued his education by studying the art of Velasquez and Hals in Spain and Holland. Sargent's fluent and elegant portrait style made him a favorite
painter of Bostonian social leaders. Among his more famous works are *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit* (1882) and *Madame X* (1884). Theodore Robinson first studied art at the National Academy of Design in 1874 before arriving in Paris where he frequented the ateliers of Carolus-Duran and Gérôme. While abroad he participated in the Salons of 1877 and 1879, and in 1881 returned home to assist John La Farge with mural projects. In 1884 he returned to France, working at Barbizon and then Giverny. Meeting Monet at Giverny in 1888, Robinson became a devotee of French impressionism and worked to popularize the style in America after his return home in 1892. Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson, although a landscape painter, is better known today as an art critic. In 1898 he published his study of Velasquez and the same year produced a second work, *Peter Paul Rubens*. Turning to French art, he published "French and Dutch Pictures in Edinburgh," in the Magazine of Art, 1886, which discussed works by Millet and Rousseau, and "Art in France," which appeared in the same journal in 1884. Stevenson's cousin, Robert Louis Stevenson, was an essayist, novelist, and poet who had been educated at the Edinburgh Academy during the mid-1870's. In 1874 he began contributing essays to Macmillan's Magazine and *The Cornhill*, and published his first major work in 1878, *An Inland Voyage*, which recounted his tour of France and Belgium. In 1882 he published one of his most famous novels, *Treasure Island*, followed by *A Child's Garden of Verses* in 1885 and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in 1886. For his collected works, see Sidney Colvin, *Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, 28 vols., 1894-1898.

52 Eaton, "Recollections of Jean-François Millet," p. 93.


Although many of the preparatory sketches depicting interior scenes are lost today, they are described in Shelson, *American Painters*, p. 170.


Ibid., p. 142.


Ibid., p. 94.

Ibid., p. 96.

Through the mourning of Millet's death in the United States, a resurgence of popular sympathy toward the artist occurred which led to a desire for more of his biographical details and the ascendancy of the sentimental conception of his works. In America, published descriptions of the funeral aroused both sympathy for Millet and indignation against his countrymen. The American public, lacking Eaton's knowledge of French rural custom, interpreted the unpretentious ceremony as further evidence of the shameful neglect Millet suffered at the hands of his compatriots. When the following eyewitness account appeared in the *New York Times*, it elicited pity from the readers:

The poor straggling funeral procession carried the body through the silent forest of Barbizon and so across the great plains of Chailly to the little village church. As the little procession fell into rank on the road, two peasants plowing in the field stayed their work, drove the plowshare into the ground, and waited to see the coffin pass. They too were indifferent as the rest. They knew not that in the simple bier lay the remains of the great poet of their toils and their sorrows.... Some dirty choiristers,
their stiff surplices hastily thrust over dirty working clothes, their heads enveloped in rusty scarves, half-hidden by immense umbrellas, snuffed out the funeral service in a shocking drawl. The priests, still more odious in their indifference, made no attempt to conceal their eagerness to get through the storm-beaten ceremony (Millet had requested a third class burial). It is impossible to describe the despair and chilling effect of the scene. No one spoke a word of commemoration over the dead.

Obituaries penned by American authors led the way in strengthening the sentimental perception of Millet's life and art by characterizing him as involved in a constant struggle for survival and recognition. Heightening Millet's popular appeal through the elicitation of sympathy, an anonymous writer offered the following synopsis of his life in the Boston periodical Old and New:

The Sower may be said to typify Millet's own life. In the sad sorrowful grandeur of that massive figure on the hillside, sowing grain as he walks with giant strides, we see the life of Millet himself, sowing seeds for all eternity. He was a man of strong convictions; and for years he trod alone the winepress of a sad and solitary life never swerving from his great work, never hesitating even in the direst poverty to be true to his mission.

Through the exaggeration of biographical fact, these authors maintained the identification of Millet as an object of sentimental response that had been established by critics during the 1860's, e.g., Eugene Benson. In the New York Times, for example, Millet was referred to
as "Père Millet" or "Father Millet," a benevolent artist-teacher and naive peasant-bumpkin:

He loved to talk about his art and was never happier than when he had an audience of fledgling painters. He went about in sabots and wearing a knit jacket that had seen good service and was venerable with years. His pantaloons were too short at the bottom, too bulging at the knees, and too low by several inches at the top, leaving a ring of shirt visible below his tricot, or jacket. Half the artists in New York will hear with regret the death of Father Millet....

The emotional fervor aroused by Millet's death created the climate for the intensification and particularization of his paternal role. Following the example of their predecessors, notably Ednah D. Cheney, writers turned to religious references to evoke personal responses from their readers; and, by directing these allusions to Millet's biography, they established his popular identification as a Biblical patriarch. In the New York Tribune the "name of Millet" became "almost a sacred one," while Thomas Gold Appleton characterized him as a "Biblical Frenchman who holds his belief with a depth and tenacity in sharp contrast to his lighter brethren." It was Appleton's friend Wheelwright, however, who created the most enduring image of his teacher for the American public when he published his memoirs in The Atlantic Monthly:

There was much of Millet himself suggestive of the Bible and of the old patriarchs, especially to those who saw him in the privacy
of his own home. I could not help fancy myself not in a house in France and in the nineteenth century, but far away and in some remote age and country, under the tent, perhaps, of Abraham the shepherd. Millet himself, in fact, looks as though he were taken bodily out of the Bible.5

Such sentimental literature published in the aftermath of Millet's death dominated popular criticism of his works during the late 1870's;6 however, the perception of Millet's images as politically relevant that had also emerged during the previous decade, as in the writing of Cheney, was soon to re-appear and continue as a parallel to the sentimental readings, dividing the critics into two opposed camps. These viewpoints remained fixed, the first supporting religious and biographical readings of Millet's iconography and the second offering social and political interpretations of the same imagery. Yet after Millet's death, a significant interpretative shift occurred among a number of the second generation "sentimental" critics. Previously, certain authors had presented an almost wholly romantic view of the French peasant as a rustic innocent whose labor granted him an idyllic co-existence with nature and God. Reflecting the changing attitudes toward rural life in this country and directed by what they perceived as Millet's mistreatment at the hands of his French contemporaries, the new generation of authors began to take their critical point of departure from Millet's later works, those done after 1855. Millet's
peasants, once enviable in their communion with the land, now became pitiable in their crude toil because a lifestyle once identified as idyllic began to be viewed as primitive. Thus, certain sentimental interpreters took up the social aspects of the opposing critical trend. As one author now described it, peasant existence was "a life which possessed in itself little charm and something to repel...." To certain writers, Millet's genre paintings still evidenced "the heavenly glory that crowns all faithful humble work," but others perceived a severity about them that prompted one author to identify the Biblical injunction, "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread," as the ultimate source of his imagery.

Thomas Gold Appleton, voicing a similar opinion, directly associated rural labor with the natural consequences of original sin:

He [Millet] considered the peasant a being doomed to expiate some mysterious cause, nailed to the soil, his horizon bounded by incessant and daily labor, with little cheer from learning or luxury and so he rendered him.  

Thus, the adulation of peasant life that had previously characterized Millet literature was supplanted by sympathy:

His men have no relief from labor. Even at their noonday meal, they seem to exchange no jests; no cheer enlivens their long day of work. The women are the faithful wives of the men. They are oppressed with much serving; but they have great motherly hearts
and their shoulders seem fitted to bear their burdens. And yet amid all this burden of a toilsome life, every form betrays the soul within, and all belong to the great human family and claim our sympathy and love.

Millet, accordingly, was put forth as an artist whose genre paintings were motivated by his humanitarian ideals:

He conveyed...a sense of brotherly love.... This feeling was called up by the deep compassion of his nature, by his fervent sympathies, and his devout faith. Labor and patience, that was what Millet saw before him. The sentiment of his works is not within the reach of all. The idea, philosophic, elevated as it is, demands a certain devout contemplation to be understood.

The exhortation to study Millet's works extended to American readers in this passage implies the presence of a missionary purpose both sets of writers consistently identified in his genre paintings. Regardless of whether the French peasant inspired nostalgia or sympathy, for the majority of American eyes he remained the repository of a pantheon of Christian virtues succinctly enumerated by Wheelwright:

Seriousness, earnestness, freedom from passion and excitement, order, sobriety, industry, contentment with one's lot, a modest self-respect, the love of parents and children, of husband and wife, good will toward men and piety toward God--these are the virtues Millet saw practiced in the home of his childhood and which he celebrated in the songs, or rather hymns, he has written upon canvas.
As sentimental criticism developed in sophistication, the religious interpretations of Millet's iconography were enhanced by complementary analyses of his style. An anonymous author writing for the Boston periodical *Old and New* offered the following summary of Millet's technique:

To sum up the characteristics of his style in a single phrase, we might say that it was Biblical. It had all the majesty and simplicity of the sacred chronicles, combined with all the tenderness and beauty of the book of Ruth.13

Supporting this assessment, Wheelwright justified and, more importantly, objectified Biblical readings of Millet's art by identifying its source in the direct observation of reality at Barbizon. In the following seminal passage, he explicated Millet's *oeuvre* as an even admixture of literature and reality:

The Biblical character of Millet's pictures has often been remarked. A faithful representation of many of the scenes I saw in and around Barbizon could hardly have any other character, especially to the unfamiliar eye of a stranger from the New World. Many of the images that illustrate so profusely the sacred writings, and which to us are mere figures of speech, are in the old countries of Europe...actual facts. When you see the sower go forth to sow in the unclosed fields, you understand how some of the seed might easily fall by the wayside; and when you see women and children weeding the green grain, a new light is cast upon the parable of the tares that choked the wheat. On the plain of Barbizon, as Palestine, the shepherd still leads his
sheep....The shepherds still abide in the fields at night watching over their flocks. The gleaners still follow the reapers amid the wheat, and in Millet’s pictures of Ruth and Boaz the story is told, with no violation of probability, as happening in a French harvest field.14

"Millet," Wheelwright stated simply, "painted what he saw about him."15

Wheelwright's pointed mention of "the unfamiliar eye of a stranger from the New World" underscores the cultural rift separating nineteenth century France and America that obviated a thorough understanding of Millet's imagery in this country. The difficulties writers experienced in drawing parallels between the French peasant and American farmer in an effort to domesticate Millet's iconography demonstrated that the problem was as much a matter of different social systems as of divergent artistic and cultural traditions. As modern industry divested the American land of its untainted quality and as education divested the farmer of his naivete, The Crayon's earlier identification of Barbizon as an insular rural Eden became implausible; this association was replaced to a certain extent during the late 1870's by another--the equation of Barbizon experience with that of the American pioneer settlement. Carrying forward this viewpoint, periodicals such as Appleton's Journal printed excerpts from Taine's Notes of Paris which
compared Barbizon to the American frontier:

The rooms and habit of the house are primitive here, like enough to those of log cabins of Arkansas and Illinois....

An anonymous American landscape painter re-stated the analogy in the same journal after his return home from Barbizon:

My bedchamber was cold and cheerless as it was below stairs; a brick floor, without a rag of a carpet, one chair and a table; a cold, coarse, sometimes dampish linen sheet to my bed; no woolen blankets; and the bedstead so short that I was obliged to lie diagonally and dream transversely....But for the lack of water, you could fancy yourself in the backwoods of America.

The pioneer identification, however, also proved only partially satisfying because writers remained incapable of plausibly extending the geographic analogy between the American West and Barbizon to include their respective residents; as Millet had discovered earlier when he unsuccessfully attempted to illustrate Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* by transforming peasant models into pioneers and Indians, there simply was no cultural basis of comparison upon which to build. Similarly, when the anonymous artist quoted above turned his attention from his locale to its inhabitants, he could relate the French peasantry to no American social class but instead described by the means of animal imagery:

The peasants for the most part seem rough and uncultivated as their surroundings—
ignorant, superstitious, coarse, loud-tongued, and unmusical. When they converse, they scream at each other like geese, the talk of the men is like the barking of dogs—and such lungs!18

The socio-political current of Millet criticism, however, rested upon the American inability to identify with the peasant class. The traditional character of the foreign lifestyle, once perceived as poetic, became unsettling and threatening to Americans becoming conscious of their recent industrial advances and burgeoning prosperity. Even the most objective sentimental writers, including Wheelwright, were both fascinated and repelled by the hardships imposed upon the peasantry by their lack of modern farm implements:

The plows, each drawn by two horses, were to a Yankee eye, exceedingly heavy and clumsy, although on that account all the more picturesque. The small cultivators, instead of plowing, dug their fields over with a spade (béche). Preparatory to this...the fields were cleared of stubble...by a houe, a sort of hoe, but resembling a carpenter's adze, though much larger and heavier, and the blade being as broad as that of a shovel. It seems a clumsy tool, and it is fatiguing to use. None of the tasks which falls to the lot of the French peasant has a more pathetic significance than that of the bécheur; none speaks more plainly of the poverty, the hardship, the helplessness of his lot.19

The disturbing dissonance of Millet's representations of field labor came to be noticed by more writers. A correspondent for the periodical Nation described his peasants
ominously as "delvers of the soil" possessing "the most
dramatic appearance of belonging to the earth, like
gnomes...." while a reporter for the *New York Tribune*
provided the following reasons for their disturbing
effect upon the American public:

> Something in their strength which was overpowering in its gaunt and grim revelations jarred on the luxurious love of softness that prevails in America and added to the strangeness of the life he depicted—a life little seen by tourists and unknown to the dweller in the American quarter of Paris—made him alien to our tastes.21

Opposing their counterparts, the sentimental critics, these authors perceived Millet as a political reformer and not merely as a sympathetic humanitarian. Appleton, for instance, supported Cheney's perception of Millet's paintings as instruments of social reform. As a case in point, he offered the notion that *The Gleaners*, a painting whose theme was previously identified as "the peacefulness of peasant life and its harmony with nature," had a different relevance:

> He meant it to be too accusative of the difference between the rich and poor to be endured by the easy going dilettanti. He meant that the appeal of the gleaners, contrasting with the farmer's insolent prosperity, would be held as dangerous by the judges as stimulating Communism.22

Wheelwright, recognizing in this type of criticism the need to educate the American public concerning Barbizon
life, answered his friend Appleton's analysis with a
detailed sociological explanation of the village designed
to "give a fuller appreciation of Millet's genius." Focusing on Har­vesters Resting, thematically related to The Gleaners, he explained that Millet's seemingly political juxtapositioning of wealth and poverty, like his Biblical allusions, was based in the observation of reality:

The western portion of the village was occupied chiefly by the poorer class of in­habitants; but quite at the western extrem­ity was a notable exception. Here, disposed in a hollow square and surrounded by high walls, was a cluster of buildings belonging to a large farm while outside, on the Plain, stood a picturesque group of gigantic hay­stacks and grain ricks. The proprietor, said to be the richest man in the place, one of the class of peasant farmers represented by the Boaz of Millet's pictures, Ruth and Boaz and Harvesters Resting, had between 200 and 300 acres of land under cultivation and employed a large number of hands, both men and women. The farm was one of the lions of the place; and...it afforded the artist ample material for study.

In a passage pivotal to American criticism of Millet, Wheelwright argued against the presence of deliberate political intent in Millet's œuvre and particularly against his desire to change the traditional peasant socio-economic structure. Simultaneously, he cautioned against an overly sentimental interpretation of his works based on the misconception that Millet sought to elicit pity for the peasant:
...he never, so far as I remembered, touched upon political questions; nor do I think he ever proposed to himself of set purpose, the task of benefiting the laboring class. Barbizon was, in fact, a prosperous place; there was no real poverty there. His peasants...are always of the orderly and industrious class, never the vauriens, the n'er-do-wells. They may be poor, but they do not therefore complain; there is in them no trace of repining or discontent. They do not consider themselves objects of charity, nor are they conscious of exciting our pity. They are not beggars, and never wear the beggar's livery. He was not the undiscriminating panegyrist of the poor and ignorant. He did not believe there was no other virtue possible except to those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. He spoke to me of the utter want of appreciation of the charms of nature shown by the peasant population of Barbizon, of their discontented and repining spirit, their low aims, their sordid views, their petty jealousies. He knew that there...was a peasant life free from these degrading faults. Such a life he had known in his own peasant home in Normandy, and in the traditions and memories of that early home he found the ideal peasant life he had drawn in his pictures—an ideal which was in fact a reality.25

While interpretations of Millet's imagery were pronounced in the popular literature we have been discussing, his stylistic technique precipitated a heated debate among professional art critics. The controversy, actually triggered by an exhibition of Millet's works at the Boston Athenaeum in the spring of 1875, was foreshadowed by the critical reaction to a showing of Hunt's landscapes at the Studio Building the previous winter.
Direct studies from nature, Hunt's works were characterized by the rapid draftsmanship and spontaneous brushwork he had consistently recommended to his students at Newport and Boston. Repelled by his bravura technique, critics were unable to accept his works as completed paintings and referred to them as "magnified sketches" possessing a lack of finish inappropriate for public presentation. His energetic charcoal drawings and broadly brushed oil paintings, owing something to the fluid style of Corot and contemporary Barbizon landscapists, touched off an angry conflict. Ostensibly focused on the academic requisite "finish," the argument implicitly encompassed the larger issue of the predominance of French influence upon American painting. In their "recklessness of drawing," for example, Hunt's works were cited as "caricatures of the French methods." Criticism offered in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, March 19, 1875, by an author identified only by the symbol of three asterisks called Hunt the "Greatest American Lightning Painter" and voiced the following typical complaint:

It is clever, very clever to cover a canvas in five minutes with the scrapings of one's palette, and when one has genius as Mr. Hunt has, there will be streaks of it daubed with the "mud"... But to make this hit or miss style the habitual practice of one's
art is unworthy of such powers. Art is nothing if not a religion to which its votaries, be they high priests or acolytes, must bring the practice of great virtues—the self-sacrifice of unremitting toilsome study and on each occasion of earnest self-restraining, absolute fidelity for truth.  

This critic was joined by another, "C.H.M., Cambridge," who shared his disdain for Hunt's undisciplined working methods and hasty draftsmanship, faults that he would later find in Millet's works also. "C.H.M.," Hunt's major antagonist, proved to be Charles Henry Moore (1840-1930), an artist, teacher, and critic. As an American Pre-Raphaelite, Moore was a strong proponent of the theories of John Ruskin, his friend and teacher. During the 1860's, Moore joined the Society for the Advancement of Truth in Art, an American Pre-Raphaelite organization, and began to contribute to The New Path, its art journal. In addition to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, he was also a member of the mystical philosophic movement, Swedenborgianism. Thus, he found the linearism and more controlled proportions of Pre-Raphaelitism appropriate to conveying religious iconography. During the 1870's, Moore passed these teachings on to his students when he became an instructor in the principles of design, painting, sculpture, and architecture at Harvard.
As a loyal disciple of Ruskin and an art teacher, Moore was understandably provoked not only by the spontaneous style of Hunt's works but the unstructured curriculum of his school; and, the publication of Hunt's *Art Talks* in the midst of the debate on the Studio Building fired his indignation further. The explications of Hunt's casual teaching methods that it contained excited the anger of art critics who equated the modern French school with slovenly stylistic techniques. The disturbing effect the book had upon American adherents of the Pre-Raphaelites in particular is cited in the following review:

Mr. Hunt freely disputes himself, and is at all moments almost aggressive in his enunciations of principles. He quarrels with Ruskin, saying that his "receipts make a book but never a painter....But surely, Mr. Hunt's own "receipts" will never make a painter; the most essential characteristic of this collection of sayings being that it is one to which the student and painter will be able to have useful recourse only at certain moments and at particular crises of artistic experience. If read for systematic instruction, by an inexperienced person, it must produce, we should think, a hopeless and disasterous irritation. He has, however, a wonderfully lively and delightful spite against the Boston and Cambridge litterateurs....

The quarrel between Hunt and Moore begun by the Studio Building exhibition and compounded by the publication of *Art Talks* was only the prelude for their major
confrontation provoked by the Millet exhibition in May, 1875. The emotional ardor aroused by Millet's death had not yet subsided when the Boston Athenaeum exhibited the Quincy Adams Shaw Collection which then included seven works by Millet: The Sower, The Cooper, The Laborer, The Sheepshearers, Sunset, Seacoast: Normandy, and an unidentified sketch. Initially, reviews were limited to prosaic descriptions of his works in which The Sheepshearers was likened to a "poem in color, so rich, full, and deliciously sweet and harmonious in its tone," and The Sower became "more grand and majestic than ever before"; on June 2, 1875, however, the appearance of a letter to the editor of the Boston Daily Advertiser written by Moore opened the lengthy argument with Hunt concerning Millet's style. During the following weeks Hunt and Moore, two strong personalities, both persuasive teachers and influential critics met in rivalry over the issue in a struggle to promulgate the viewpoints of their respective schools, and more importantly, maintain their prominence as art critics.

Moore, openly accusing the French school of careless technique, derided Millet's style by judging it according to certain Renaissance standards. Comparing the styles of Millet and Veronese, the latter being represented in the collection by The Marriage of St. Catherine, he wrote
a detailed description of the Italian painting that con-
cluded with the following passage:

Let one's eyes get filled with this work
and then turn toward the loose sketching
of modern French pictures that hang in
the same room. Let the jewel on the breast
of St. Catherine be compared with any
detail--if one can be found--in these
French pictures. Such men as Millet and
Corot succeed frequently in conveying more
or less the true and pleasant sentiment
but does this make them exemplary masters in
execution? The vague and inaccurate draw-
ing indicates shallow grasp of subject. The
men of deep and comprehensive insight per-
ceive the necessity of complete character-
zation of every visible form. The loose
and meaningless dashes of paint in the work
of the Frenchman indicate that he is not a
master. The looseness cannot be excused on
the ground that breadth and largeness are
thereby gained; for we find those two quali-
ties in Veronese united with perfect accuracy
of detail.32

Moore's criticism evidences a desire for stylistic
clarity of detail and precise delineation of all composi-
tional elements; this quality, common to the American
tradition from the time of the limner and to British
and American Pre-Raphaelitism undoubtedly contributed to
the popularity of the English movement in this country.
Many of Moore's readers, however, did not share his
opinion and protested his assessment of Millet's style
in letters to the editor. None of these was to compare
to the impassioned defense written by Hunt who, sensing
the challenge to his effectiveness as a Barbizon spokesman,
answered Moore's charges the following week with a reply based more within emotion than logic:

The standard of art education is indeed carried to a dizzy height in Harvard University when such men as Jean-Francois Millet are ranked as triflers. A public exhibition of the art work of the gentlemen educated in this advanced school...would make the university notion of art more clear to the world and be of service to those of us whose early advantages in art study were necessarily limited by the incapacity of such teachers as Millet and other well-known names of his nationality—a nationality which has always held a high rank in art but which, like the red man must disappear before the strides of our mighty western chromo-civilization. The soil and schools of France within thirty years have shown the world the honored works of Gericault, Delacroix, Ingres, Rousseau, Troyon, Decamps, Meissonier, Regnault, Michel, and Gérôme, Corot, Courbet, Couture, Millet, and Diaz, Dupré, Baudry, Daubingy, and a hundred others whose earnest work the world can never forget—while those who profess to teach art in our university, with the whisk of a quill, undertake to sweep it all into oblivion. The unpardonable conceit of such stuff makes one's blood tingle for shame. Which one among the painters named above was not more familiar with Veronese's best work than are our children with the Catechism? It is not worthwhile to be alarmed about the influence of French art. It would hardly be mortifying if a Millet or a Delacroix should be developed in Boston. It is not our fault that we inherit ignorance in art, but we are not obliged to advertise it.33

Two days after Hunt's letter was published, another signed with three asterisks appeared that tempered Hunt's fervent tone but basically agreed with his viewpoint.
Veronese as that of "an overzealous Ruskinian," the author nonetheless contested his prejudicial criticism of Millet. He linked Millet's style and iconography to his regard for diligent labor, appealing to the American public through allusions to the work ethic:

Can he [Moore] show more "precision in every particular" in Veronese than The Sheep-shearers? Does there really seem to him anything that indicates "a shallow grasp of subject" in The Sower? Mr. Moore writes to inculcate faithfulness in work; it is odd that he should find his opportunity in disparaging the painter who, of all others, appreciating the beauty of honest toil, has made it in his pictures so noble. The grand swing of the sower as he goes down the hillside shows his whole soul was in his work....

Another response, penned by Henry James in The Nation, chided Hunt for his "intemperate note" yet also argued Moore's charge that Millet failed to achieve "a complete characterization of every visible form." Like the anonymous writer quoted above, James also shifted the focus of his argument to Millet's imagery:

Mr. Moore affirms that...the most he [Millet] does is to "convey more or less of true and pleasant sentiment." If we were obliged to define Millet's power in a single word, we would say the power of characterizing. Mr. Moore perhaps uses the word in some peculiar sense; we use it in that of representing objects so that the vision immediately recognizes their nature and use, and goes to meet them sympathetically, imaginatively....Millet represents toil-work peasants--their attitudes, their gestures, their clothes, their furniture, their implements, the soil in which they work, and (so
far as he can as a painter) their temperament, their feelings. It is a perfectly definite class of objects, and we have always regarded the painter's representation of it as quite a triumph of solid, complete, persuasive characterization.37

The Atlantic Monthly offered similar editorial comment which, like James' article, opened with criticism of Hunt's response as "somewhat too headlong to plant any effective blow" but developed to partially support his contention.38

The author upheld Millet's ability as a draftsman, stating:

Characterization Millet certainly possesses, of a massive and peculiar kind. He steeped himself with his subject, and powerfully stamped its leading traits on his canvas. There is abundant proof in these pictures of Millet's force in drawing. We have seen etchings by this master which in precision and power recall Dürer and Holbein, though distinctly individual.39

Yet the Boston critic's praise of Millet as a draftsman did not extend to his ability as a painter, and ultimately he could not sanction an equation of the technical skills of Veronese and Millet:

...his management of the paint seems to be blind and confusing...his color swallows up many of his merits. It is easy to understand a preference for Veronese's solid, intelligent, and above all thoroughly healthy painting....Indeed, it is difficult to suppose that Mr. Hunt and the anonymous upholders of Millet really intended to place the French master on the same plane with Veronese. Millet has not that supreme command of resources, nor that simple, large, contented, and somewhat unintellectual outlook that marks Veronese, but neither
had Veronese the spiritual keenness, the weird imagination of the Frenchman.40

His real contribution was not his stylistic argument, however, but his definite identification of the larger issue as the heart of the controversy:

...we suppose few persons will sympathize in strictures so general as to intimate that "French art is wholly without merits worthy of emulation." But it is evident that each party to the discussion has had more than one aim. In Mr. Moore's generalization we detect a dread of the predominating influence of French painting in this country, and especially in Massachusetts.41

The numerous salvos directed against Moore by the opposing camp compelled him to defend himself by publicly re-stating his argument. In a letter to the Boston Daily Advertiser, he proved the Atlantic Monthly critic correct when he clearly voiced his fear of French influence and the debilitating effect he believed it would have upon the standards of American art:

...the exemplary qualities of execution in the Venetian work...in my judgment are precisely those which our students of art need to apprehend more clearly in order to correct some wrong habits of thoughts and practice into which they have fallen by too implicit confidence in modern French methods.42

As in past instances in the popular arena, it was Wheelwright rather than Hunt who emerged as an objective voice in the dispute. Basing his response upon his memories of Millet as a teacher, he answered Moore's persistent
charge of careless technique against the artist:

I wish some of our Boston critics who have condemned Millet's drawings as careless, sketchy, loose, and slovenly, could have heard some of his lectures... to me; they might have learned that there is a thoroughness of drawing of which they seem to have no comprehension in which something more is required than a neat outline and delicate shading; which concerns itself more about the vital and essential qualities of things than with multiplicity of detail; which regards the whole as greater than the parts, the man as more important than his clothing, the woman as of more value than the jewel of her breast. Of all the faults in drawing, carelessness seemed most to excite Millet's ire... 43

The moral underpinnings of Moore's charge against Millet, that is the association of his technique with slovenly craftsmanship and his works with an unsalutary effect upon American art students, had been argued in stylistic terms by professional critics. When the debate reached the American public as a moral issue, it became clear that for them virtuous didacticism in art was a matter of iconography rather than style; artistic exemplars, accordingly, were determined by the lessons to be learned from their imagery not their technique. In no quarter did this attitude emerge with greater directness than in American public elementary education where, in the wake of the controversy, Millet's imagery, holding lessons of the dignity of labor, was introduced into the kindergarten classroom. Forming the bases of musical
games and rhythmic exercises, various occupations of
the peasant were enacted by the children. "The Cooper," a figure represented by Millet in the Boston
Athenaeum exhibition, was personated in the following
way:

The children who form the barrels of hogshead,
stand back to front in a circle, each taking
hold of the waist of the one before him. The
coopers walk around outside in time, at every
third step pounding on the shoulder of the
child nearest him in the barrel. When the
word "around" comes, the barrel must begin
to turn, and the coopers stand still, pounding
on the shoulders of each child as he passes.44

In a related exercise, "The Sawyer," the children
pantomimed the process of sawing wood in pairs; but the
"prettiest of all the plays," "The Peasant," was an
ensemble of sequential tasks performed by the sower,
harvester, thresher, winnower, which concluded with the
laborer in repose:

All join hands and sing, going round in time
with the music; in the first verse they make
believe to hold up the apron with one hand
and throw seed with the other. In the
second verse they kneel on one knee and make
believe hold the corn with one hand and cut
with the other. In the third verse they put
doubled fists at the left shoulder and make
the motion of thrashing. In the fourth,
they make the motion of holding and shaking
a sieve. In the fifth they kneel on one
knee and rest the head in the hand; in the
sixth they jump straight up and down, turning
to each point on the compass, till the chorus
begins, when each takes his next neighbor
for a partner and they skip around the room.45
These games, described by nineteenth century educators as "much more than bodily exercises," were obviously designed to acquaint children with the particular roles of the rural laborer and instill in them a sense of the morality of honest work:

The conversations before beginning and in the pauses for rest call the children's attention to the facts and processes of nature and art symbolized by the plays. There is also a great opportunity...to...appeal to sympathy and conscience, which is the pre-sentiment of reason and forefeeling of moral order.... The object lessons involved in the plays are those which especially belong to the Kindergarten because their aim is not so much to open intellect to science as to give moral training; the latter is to be kept ever in advance of the former; for it is the tree of life, whose fruits will render harmless and salutary those of the tree of knowledge.46

The debate over the Boston Athenaeum exhibition, crystallizing a major nineteenth century aesthetic issue in America, held wide-reaching ramifications for artistic and pedagogical communities as well as audiences having broader interests. Erupting amid the literature following Millet's death, it is indicative of the significant critical issues raised in this country by Millet's influence here. The unresolved controversy quickly spilled over into popular literature introducing rudimentary stylistic analyses into criticism that had been, heretofore, exclusively concerned with subject matter.
Popular authors, writing for a different and wider audience than Hunt and Moore, did not deal with the larger controversy of sketch versus finish but with the specific charge of "shallow grasp of subject" levied against Millet. This shift enabled them to maintain their traditional iconographic emphasis while adjusting an academic argument to suit the popular reader. Focusing their comments on the most familiar painting exhibited, The Sower, these writers argued the point strongly in favor of Hunt's position. *Appleton's Journal*, for example, printed:

The recent death of the French artist Jean-François Millet has given added interest to his pictures, so that the exhibition of The Sower in the Loan Collection in Boston has been made the subject of much comment in art circles. As a composition, the swing and action of the figure of The Sower are free and simple, and the expression of melancholy and strength entirely exempted it from anything conventional or melodramatic. His joints are as big as those of a cart horse and the peasant coarseness of the paintings by Courbet is mingled with the proud and thoughtful composition of his form. He has coarse lips, nose, and jaw, resolute and sad, over which the daylight is playing with an active power in a life whose spirit is delineated by the artist as in an eclipse analogous to that which conceals his eyes and forehead. Behind him, and corresponding to the lower qualities of his nature stamped in the lines of his heavy mouth and jaw, "the fowls of the air" stoop to devour the ill-planted grain. If the career of Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* be fateful and hopeless, this picture of The Sower might be a fitting likeness of that strange character struggling against a nature whose good impulses seem
predestined to defeat; or to show in paint a man as entangled in the meshes of human inherited proclivities as the figure in the spider's web in that most melancholy portrait of life in Hugo's *Notre Dame.*

The manual labor portrayed in *The Sower* became the pictorial analogue of Millet's work as an artist when writers identified the dignity of work as the inspiration of his monumental style. Supporting this contention, *Appleton's Journal* excerpted a portion of an article that had appeared in *The Contemporary Review* earlier in the year:

We may take this picture of *The Sower* as representative of the noblest qualities of Millet's art. Looking at the plan of the picture, the sloping line of the dark hillside, the space of waning light, and the stress and energy of the sower, we note that the peasant has become a grand figure in a grand design. The movement of his outstretched arm, the almost fierce energy of his progress across the barren landscape, seem to take a new significance. All sense of the individual laborer, all thought of his occupation, are lost in the contemplation of a splendid and majestic picture in which these things serve only as material. We perceive how out of this simple physical duty, performed again and again, he has drawn new discoveries of the dignity of human form. The very monotony of the employment helps the impressiveness of the picture; the figure of the sower, that of the painter's art is kept forever in this one attitude of grace, seems to present in grand epic fashion an abstract of all human labor.

The Hunt-Moore debate clearly generated a more thoughtful and complete analysis of Millet's art among the popular writers; and as they began to examine his works
with more critical and sophisticated eyes, they drew parallels to his paintings from contemporary literature. Earlier, their literary analyses of Millet's oeuvre had been limited to Biblical interpretations of his iconography, but as the decade came to a close they expanded their criticism to include a variety of secular works. In the passage quoted above Millet's art was compared to the work of Hugo while other articles written the same year associated it with the novels of Balzac, Sand, Eliot, and even the Russian realist Turgenev. The American public, instinctively seeking a literary identification closer to home, was accommodated by Earl Shinn who described Millet as "the painter of peasant groups, so racy of the soil, so grimy, so similar to a chapter of Thoreau." As a natural consequence of this type of criticism, American writers advanced from establishing literary parallels to creating their own prose and poetry accompaniments for Millet's art. In 1875 Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909), poet and art editor of Scribner's Monthly Magazine, set the example for his contemporaries and later writers when he published a poem that, not surprisingly, was inspired by The Sower:

A sower went forth to sow;  
His eyes were dark with woe;  
He crushed the flowers beneath his feet,  
Nor smelt the perfume warm and sweet,  
That prayed for pity everywhere.
He came to a field that was harried
By iron and to heaven laid bare;
He shook the seed that he carried
O'er that brown and bladeless place.
He shook it as God shakes hail
Over a doomed land,
When lightnings interlace
The sky and the earth, and his wand
Of love is a thunder-flail.
Thus did that Sower sow;
His seed was human blood,
And tears of women and men.
And I, who near him stood,
Said: When the crop comes, then
There will be sobbing and sighing,
Weeping, wailing, and crying,
Flame, and ashes, and woe.

II

It was an autumn day
When next I went that way,
And what, think you, did I see,
What was it that I heard,
The song of a sweet-voice bird?
Nay--but the songs of many,
Thrilled through with praise and prayer.
Of all those voices not any
Were sad of memory;
But a sea of sunlight flowed,
A golden harvest glowed,
And I said: Thou only art wise,
God of the earth and skies!
And I praise thee, again and again,
For the Sower whose name is Pain.51

As nineteenth century American criticism of Millet evolved and progressed, literary interpretations of his art became more prevalent, a trend that would culminate in 1899 with Edwin Markham's famous poem "Man with the Hoe." The numerous poems and short stories inspired by Millet's genre paintings, of which Gilder's is the first, both sprang from his popularity and also served as a contributing
factor to the acceptance of Millet's works here. In their prosaic explanations and poetic elucidations of Millet's imagery, they answered a need for a large sector of the American public—insight into Millet's subject matter, the French peasantry, which had remained a foreign enigma for them.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VI


2"A Great Artist Gone," Old and New, 2 (April, 1875) p. 495.


5Wheelwright, "Personal Recollections of Jean-François Millet," p. 266.

6The body of popular criticism on Millet during this period mainly took the form of obituaries and tributes to the artist as well as memoirs of Americans who had visited Barbizon during Millet's lifetime. Most of these appeared in daily newspapers or popular journals such as Harper's Weekly or Appleton's Journal. The discussion of this material contained in Chapter VI constitutes the total of what I have discovered of this literature at the present moment.


10"A Great Artist Gone," p. 497.
13"A Great Artist Gone," p. 496.
15Ibid.
18Ibid.
24Ibid., p. 261.
25Ibid., p. 275.
27 Ibid.


29 For further information concerning Moore, see David Dickason, The Daring Young Men, The Story of the American Pre-Raphaelites, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1953.


33 William Morris Hunt, Boston Daily Advertiser, June 9, 1875.

34 "French Art," Boston Daily Advertiser, June 11, 1875.

35 Ibid.


37 It is interesting to note that James held a far less favorable view of the "characterization" of American genre imagery as presented in the oeuvre of Winslow Homer (1836-1910). In a passage also dating from 1875 he wrote of the American painter and his subject matter:

"He is a genuine painter; that is to see, and to reproduce what he sees, is his only care; to think, to imagine, to select, to refine, to compose, to drop into any of the intellectual tricks with which other people sometimes try to eke out the dull pictorial vision--all this Mr. Homer triumphantly avoids. He not only has no imagination, but he contrives to elevate this rather blighting negative into a blooming and honorable positive. He is almost barbarously simple, and to our eye, he is horribly ugly; but there is nevertheless something one likes about him. What is it? For ourselves, it is not his
subjects—his barren plank fences, his glaring, bald, blue skies, his big, dreary, vacant lots of meadows, his freckled, straight-haired Yankee urchins, his flat-breasted maidens, suggestive of a dish of rural doughnuts and pie. . . . He has chosen the least pictorial features of the least pictorial range of scenery and civilization; he has resolutely treated them as if they were pictorial, as if they were every inch as good as Capri or Tangiers; and to award his audacity, he has incontestably succeeded.


39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., p. 375.

41 Ibid.


46 Ibid.


CHAPTER VII

It was during the spring and summer of 1875, while the Boston Athenaeum controversy filled American newspapers and journals, that Eaton and Low returned to Barbizon in the company of a new contingent, a contingent that had grown steadily around them since their first sojourn in 1873. Along with Theodore Robinson (a fellow Easterner), John Tracy (a Californian) and Wilbur Woodward (a native of Cincinnati) represented the American artists from Carolus-Duran's Parisian studio who followed them to Barbizon that summer. Simultaneously, another group of artists, mainly British and Irish painters from the same atelier, gathered around Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson as he introduced Henry Enfield, Frank O'Mara, and others to Barbizon. Robert Louis Stevenson, making his first journey there from Edinburgh, also arrived to spend the summer holidays with his cousin. During the following years, Low and the author shared an intimate friendship that is reflected in the literary works of both men. Aside from his short stories and novels containing references to Low, Stevenson published two essays, one popular literature and
the other art criticism, that were both inspired by their Barbizon experience. Respectively, these works are: "Forest Notes," The Cornhill (1876) and "Fontainebleau: Village Community of Painters," Magazine of Art (1884).^3

Low's major autobiographical publication A Chronicle of Friendships (1907), reciprocally, is largely a history of their relationship. Low also commemorated their friendship in a painting completed during the summer of 1875, Robert Louis Stevenson and the Muse (Pl. 116). One of Low's first figure studies set out-of-doors, the work depicts his wife Berthe and Stevenson seated beneath a tree. Berthe, seen reading Stevenson's work over his shoulder, later translated Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886) along with a number of his short stories into French.^4

Working outdoors, Low painted the scene directly from his models in a single afternoon. In its spontaneous technique, scattered distribution of light, and landscape setting, it foreshadows Low's future attraction to impressionism.

Although Low turned his attention to outdoor scenes in 1875, he did not stray from the example of Millet's domestic interiors but recast certain of them to include landscape backgrounds. Girl Sweeping (Pl. 117), for example, depicts Clarisse, a young relative of Madame Siron the Barbizon innkeeper, sweeping the walkway before
Robinson's lodgings; yet, the work is closely related to Millet's basic pose in his figure but her size, diminutive by comparison to the young mother in Maternal Care, denotes a partial return of his illustrational style. The anecdotal or narrative approach to genre he developed in New York also reappears here in the girl's playful teasing of a kitten with her broom. Low's resumption of an illustrational genre style, coincidental with Millet's death, was prompted not only by the loss of his exemplar's directives but by economic necessity. In order to support his new wife, he returned to his most reliable source of income, popular genre:

> Alive to my responsibilities, I now set to work in good earnest to paint a series of small 'saleable' pictures, and my bride graciously consented to serve as my model, combining housework with art. There were pictures of the lady shelling peas, knitting, or sewing, and consulting her trusty cook-book....

When Low returned to Carlus-Duran's studio, the altered character of his genre style did not escape his master's comment. To his inquiry, "Why do you paint such small things?" Low replied simply, "Because they sell."

While Low returned to popular genre, Eaton continued preparations for Harvesters at Rest (Pl. 102), his Salon entry of 1876. Because Eaton's training consisted of the same mixture of provincial experience and academic instruction that characterized Millet's education, he
perceived the realist and academic currents in Millet's genre style more fully than Low. As Low commented, "The perplexities of a dual view...never troubled him." Eaton, following Millet's example, prefaced his painting with two years of careful preparatory studies, a process that mystified Low:

I found my patience taxed to see my comrade Eaton painstakingly make a drawing of a pair of sabots which he wished to introduce into the foreground of a picture that he was engaged on. As the sabots were there on the studio floor it appeared to me so much simpler to paint them directly onto the canvas, but no; Millet painted from drawings and more royalist than the king, my friend insisted on the process of first making a drawing and then copying it to introduce an accessory object into the picture.

During their final conversations in 1874, however, Eaton had learned that Millet's careful process was not only a reflection of his academic sensibility but a desire to render his subject with the greatest possible accuracy. He later recalled Millet's judicious observation of details:

For a detail or a special quality he would at times take the greatest pains. Madame Millet had told me of having worn the roughest of peasant dresses about the house and garden for weeks so that when it pleased him her husband might call upon her to pose for some part of a picture...and of Millet compelling her to wear the same shirt for an uncomfortably long time, not to paint the dirt...but so 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 expressing, as he said, even more than the nude, the larger and simple forms of nature.
As he prepared to paint *Harvesters at Rest* Eaton recorded details with equal care while also dealing with the larger problem of figure studies. Two painted sketches of 1876, both of the mother and child, one in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Pl. 119) and the other in a private collection (Pl. 120), attest to Eaton's concern for both accurate anatomical structure and natural pose. In the Boston version, distinct linear outlines of the figures remain visible, recalling Millet's method of initially establishing form with a reed pen outline and then preserving the silhouette to guide his application of paint. Its combination of wiry linearity and scumbled color also recalls the spontaneous painting style of Daumier, an influence on his art mentioned earlier. In their greater finish and firmer definition, the figures in the second version possess a robustness of form that accords well with the iconography. Through the mother and child group, Eaton communicated the natural character of peasant existence and its associations with elements that are life giving in the world. The continuity of the peasant race, a theme he depicted earlier with three individual figures in *Three Generations*, is now embodied simply in the union of mother and child and underscored subtly by the baby's fingers touching his mother's hand.
In the final work, Eaton directly associates human nurture with the seasonal giving forth of food from the earth by placing his figures in a harvest scene. His equation of earth-mother and mother-earth recalls Low's perception of the same quality in Barbizon peasant women, particularly his model for Maternal Care, "a good woman who might stand for...a type of mother earth."\(^{10}\) The family group amplifies the cyclical nature of peasant life and custom, bespeaking its endurance and unchanging continuity. The implication that the infant will assume the role of laborer presently held by his father is in keeping with Millet's injunction to Eaton to paint the typical, a laborer whose "father and...father's father were tillers of the soil..."\(^{11}\) Representing the peasants at rest, Eaton also adhered to Millet's teaching that the depiction of repose, implying past and future labor, is preferable to the rendering of activity. Generally, Eaton's group can be related to the repose theme as it exists in Millet's oeuvre in three different mediums: Repose (oil), Pl. 121, (1848-1850), Noon (charcoal), Pl. 122 (1858), and Noonday Rest (pastel), Pl. 123 (1866). All three works represent a man and woman, tired at mid-day, sleeping against sheaves of grain or haystacks in a field. Noon, a preparatory sketch for his series Hours of the Day, further reveals that Millet was aware of one of the
allegorical roles of the sleeping laborer. In 1865 Millet had also included the exhausted workers in his representation of Summer (Pl. 73) in the Hotel Thomas mural series depicting the four seasons. Millet was certainly familiar with this iconographic tradition in past European genre paintings, such as Pieter Bruegel's August, 1565, which he knew through reproductive engravings; preceding Millet's mural, Bruegel's representation of Summer depicted laborers asleep in a harvest field.  

In addition to the general theme of harvesters resting, Eaton also borrowed specific details from Millet's works for his composition. The foreground placement of the discarded sabots beside the figures is derived from Millet's Noonday Rest (Pl. 123) and Noon (Pl. 122) while the distant village and haywagon in the background find their source in The Gleaners (Pl. 48). Stylistically, Harvesters at Rest is an academic artist's tentative excursus into genre painting set outdoors. Attempting to reconcile his atelier and Barbizon experiences, Eaton carefully maintained two distinct techniques of paint application: a figure style that is smooth and finished, allowing for the definition of veins, joints, and anatomical detail, and a landscape technique that is spontaneous and textured by individual strokes of paint, attempting to depict the fluidity of outdoor light. Admirable in its
craftsmanship, the painting nonetheless possesses an additive quality that ultimately betrays it as a studio piece derived from a number of individual studies.

When *Harvesters at Rest* was exhibited at the Salon of 1876, it attracted the notice from an American correspondent in Paris writing for *Appleton's Journal*. In an overly somber reading of the work, Lucy Hooper cited Millet's influence upon Eaton's painting:

The harvesters—a man and a wife—repose under the shade of piled up sheaves, weary and worn out, sad with the unutterable sadness of unceasing and exhausting labor. It is a powerful and melancholy work and evidently owes its inspiration to the somber talent of Millet.13

After the Salon closed, Eaton and his wife returned to Philipsburg where he briefly resumed the role of portraitist; but in January, 1877, they moved once again to New York after he received an offer to join the faculty of the Cooper Union School. During a five-year tenure frequently interrupted by sporadic periods of ill health and fatigue, Eaton taught three traditional courses to female art students: "free hand drawing" (portraiture), life drawing, and drawing after the antique.14 By the end of his first term, he had won the admiration of his pupils and the respect of the principal, Susan Carter, who acknowledged him in her annual report:

Through the instruction of Mr. Wyatt Eaton—whose works exhibited in the "Salon" at Paris
have given him a good reputation--our pupils have been led to understand more clearly the higher elements of form, and their works have, in my judgment, shown more excellence both in accuracy of light and shade, than any former year.  

His teaching methods, approvingly described by a contemporary observer, evidenced his Parisian atelier experience in an insistence upon precision that was tempered by an accommodation of individuality:

Whatever else he may have accomplished or failed in, he has contrived to leave these students their individuality. He has stimulated it--released it from some of the shackles that sluggishness of mind has riveted with some firmness. Any idealization of the model Mr. Eaton would consider aesthetic sacrilege. With very little else than accuracy does he occupy himself; he is in effect an artist who inspires enthusiasm at the same time as a teacher of drawing he is insisting in fidelity (sic).  

Other writers, such as George Sheldon who came to know Eaton personally in New York, recognized a sensitivity to subject matter in his personal style and classroom instruction that superceded his interest in technical accuracy. Perceptively, Sheldon associated this quality in Eaton with the same characteristic in Millet:

Wyatt Eaton's chief distinction as a teacher is that while conversant with the present French way of laying on paint, he believes that art is much more than a mere matter of paint laying; that it is a vehicle for the transmission of ideas; that in art, as Millet wrote, "There must be a governing thought expressed eloquently. We must have it in ourselves and stamp it upon others, just as a medal is stamped."
Sheldon's association of Millet's philosophy and Eaton's teachings was borne out by the art historical lectures Eaton added to his studio curriculum in 1877. Through these lectures, which were designed for his students but open to the public, Eaton elucidated Millet's style and iconography by relating them to the traditional Renaissance and Baroque sources Millet had discussed with him at Barbizon. He carefully established Millet as a traditionalist rather than an innovator, emphasizing the role academic training played in the formation of his style. Yet, perhaps as a concession to popular interest, or his own autobiographical identification with Millet as a rural artist, Eaton simultaneously presented the other side of the coin, Millet as a self-taught provincial. Consistently relating Millet's iconography to his own life, Eaton satisfied the curiosity of his students and the public for whom Millet's peasant heritage held equal, if not greater, fascination than his art:

A few moments in the study of the associations which gave him the artistic impulses and the distinguishing quality of his art may not be without interest and instruction. I feel the deepest interest in this early period of Millet's life for the last and most complete series of productions—as well as the many artistic qualities for which he was distinguished—were souvenirs of his boyhood and the following after of impressions received from this soft and severe, harmonious and primitive nature. Half a century ago, in this sequestered spot, little was felt of the excited marvelous world without; the rural
habits and customs seemed to satisfy the people; their wants were few and with industry were gathered from the woods and pastures. Millet endured and enjoyed the rude labor of the farm until the age of twenty or twenty-one. Ever ready with his hands, he knew well how to swing a scythe or bind wheat into bundles equal to the most experienced worker. Removed from all intercourse with the makers of pictures, he still had a good example of what had been done in pictorial art in the well-illustrated family Bible.18

Eaton's lectures, maintaining Millet's dual identification as painter and peasant, became a highly popular and successful series. In 1882, the year following the publication and English translation of Alfred Sensier's biography of Millet, Jean-Francois Millet: Peasant and Painter, Sheldon would draw the following comparison favoring Eaton's presentation of Millet's biography:

To hear Wyatt Eaton discourse of Barbizon and Millet is like reading one of Sensier's best paragraphs on that painter, and some of Eaton's recollections would constitute an unrivaled chapter by themselves coming from a man who is an artist by nature and profession and whose intelligence was quickly responsive to the sobriety and quietude of Millet's largest schemes. Eaton understands as do few other admirers of the great Frenchman the force and range of that master's expression of human thought and emotion by attitude rather than facial feature and he can read as can few other young Americans the spiritual significance of Millet's lines in a drawing such as The Sower.19

In spring, 1877, American critics were afforded their first opportunity to assess Eaton's practical application of Millet's influence when Harvesters at Rest was exhibited at the National Academy of Design. Attracting considerable
attention, the large painting drew frequent mention in exhibition reviews, but critical opinion concerning its merits was divided. Generally, the work was praised for its judicious technique and cited for its "directness, clearness, simplicity, and dignity." Its "solidity, reality of drawing, and seriousness of purpose," wrote a Scribner's Monthly correspondent, "made it a picture and not a mere bit of decoration." Interestingly, this writer concluded, "It is utterly unlike Millet in spirit and method," while his colleague at the New York Commercial Advertiser described Eaton's technique as "almost a perfect copy of the style of the great French painter Jean-Francois Millet." The careful style lauded by some writers was reproved by others who dismissed it as "unimaginative." One such critic found Eaton's meticulous style tedious in its precision:

The art is the real photographic art which copies the harsh and rugged facts of Nature without a thought as to any significance or meaning they may possess. Undeniably, the figures here are painted with force; the composition is simple and strong. The perspective is not perfect--but the picture as a whole looks like an exact vivid transcript from an actual scene--and what then? Art to satisfy us must be something more than a bald chronicling of the facts; unless it reveals something, awakens some feeling, touches some sensibility, charms us by some grace or beauty, it scarcely has an excuse for being.
The New York Times critic, however, disagreed with this writer when he described Harvesters at Rest as possessing "restraint, dignity, and grace," qualities the writer quoted above believed to be absent in the work. Shifting the criticism from stylistic to iconographic analysis, he reversed Lucy Hooper's earlier assessment of the work as "melancholy" and the figures as "sad with the unutterable sadness of unceasing...labor," characteristics she had attributed to Millet's influence. He stated:

Wyatt Eaton had been subjected to the influence of the French painter Millet but has not lost his own individuality. Where Millet would have made this weary reaper and his wife who suckles his baby the veriest drudges glad to get a moment of heavy sleep between grinding work, Mr. Eaton has given them hope while at the same time expressing finely weariness. The husbandman, tired as he is, seems to be still capable of admiring his wife and child. It is a picture which ought to have an alcove to itself.

The National Academy of Design exhibition marked the close of Eaton's first year of activity in Canada and the United States since his return from Barbizon as well as the end of his first term as an art instructor at the Cooper Union School. Despite his success as a teacher and recognition by the Academy, he had found readjustment to life in this country difficult. His teaching career, prompted by economic necessity rather than personal preference, imposed new and unexpected demands upon his time that he had previously devoted to the advancement of his own
oeuvre. Describing his exacting schedule, Eaton wrote to his friend and fellow artist, J. Alden Weir, at the conclusion of the 1877 academic term:

I give three days per week to teaching--it is dreadfully fatiguing and I am not able to accomplish much at painting--I should not give so much time to school if it were not for repaying the money, and the interest on the money, which supported me while abroad--once that debt is paid, goodbye to teaching! However, I do not dislike teaching, I believe that it is instructive to the teacher--and much more agreeable than painting portraits to order.27

Although Eaton's classroom responsibilities precluded the completion of any major works in 1877, his position on the faculty of the Cooper Union School afforded him new opportunities to enhance his career. Through his activities as a lecturer, for example, he met the leaders of the New York art community, most notably Richard Watson Gilder who had been promoted from his status as art editor to editor-in-chief of *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*. As Eaton and Gilder exchanged their opinions concerning academic art education in the United States, they formed a permanent friendship that grew from their common viewpoints. With new insights gained from his experience as a teacher that year, Eaton had come to perceive the National Academy of Design as holding a potentially dangerous role as the sole arbitrator determining the future success of young artists. The prejudice that he and Gilder shared against
the Academy was aggravated further by a recent decision granting its members an enlarged amount of reserved exhibition space in the annual Academy shows. The discontentment that the ruling precipitated among the younger artists led Eaton and Gilder to begin plans to formulate an independent organization that would provide art students with alternative opportunities to exhibit their works. Before their ideas were fully outlined, however, Eaton left New York for the summer to return to Philipsburg and, in keeping with his practice, resume portrait painting.

Eaton's removal to Canada did not lessen his concern for the course of art education in the United States and on June 21, 1877, he wrote to Gilder:

From this distant point of view I feel more than ever the necessity of a new art organization or movement. I see the Academy as a great obstacle to art culture, growth, and education. It must be completely turned over (which I do not believe possible) or it must die. The interest of artists and students are common—accepting this, no other evidence is necessary to prove the deformity and dwarf-like character of the Academy—I feel deeply thankful for the prospect we now have of something better. I hope for something more than merely an exhibition of our own works (although this necessarily must be the commencement). I shall do all that is possible this summer by letters and this autumn will give myself unreservedly to this work. We can depend upon men who have recently been to Europe who have breathed the larger artistic spirit, and have tasted the many advantages of the study of art abroad.
Aside from recruiting artists to join their prospective organization, Eaton spent the summer occupied with the portrait commissions that provided a large percentage of his income. Although his skill in this regard had earned him a wide reputation in Canada and growing fame in the United States, he considered portraiture a distasteful obligation. In his frequent letters to Gilder, he wrote often of his aversion for the occupation:

I have been much depressed in seeing the necessity of giving my whole summer to portraits. The beautiful and familiar things about me are torturing... It [portraiture] has been a cause of continual suffering with me ever since I commenced to paint and I now hope that teaching may relieve me from the necessity of enduring it any longer.30

If Eaton was distressed by his duties as a portraitist, he was comforted by his native Philipsburg. In letters written to Gilder throughout the summer of 1877, he voiced his delight at his return to Montreal and its outlying rural villages. The rustic surroundings were equally appealing to his wife Laure and, foretelling their imminent return to Barbizon, Eaton wrote to Gilder in September, 1877, of their desire "to be buried in a little world of their own on the corner of some remote farm where they will have no visitors but the cows who drink at the spring."31
In an intriguing parallel development, Hunt also retreated to his regional and agrarian origins almost simultaneously with Eaton's return to Philipsburg. Now nearing the end of his career, Hunt sought relief from the fashionable portraiture that had earned him a considerable reputation which he, like Eaton, had nonetheless come to regard as "drudgery" and, he found it in country genre-landscape scenes. In the spring, 1875, he supervised the construction of a mobile studio, a large horsedrawn cart containing "drawers for pots, kettles, and painting utensils," to transport him to rural sites where he chose his subject matter. During the summer of 1876, Hunt's tour of rural Massachusetts took him to South Deerfield where he met George Fuller (1822-1884), an artist-farmer who painted landscape and genre scenes while cultivating his own land; from there Hunt and a small group of his students also journeyed to Kettle Cove near Gloucester. The works that Hunt completed during his excursions were exhibited throughout the following year and subsequently reviewed by Wheelwright who was now the editor of Atlantic Monthly Magazine.

In an article written at the end of 1877, Wheelwright offered a thoughtful analysis of Hunt's attempt to reconcile foreign influence and American imagery. He directed his comments to an unlocated work that he first described in detail:
The scene represented sunset or early twilight, the afterglow of a November day. Just beyond the crest of a hill we see...an ox cart and two men at work gathering in corn stalks from the pyramidal heaps in which they have been left to dry after the corn itself was harvested. A few stocks only are standing, rising dark above the line of the hilltop against the evening sky....One of the men on the top of the load, already piled high, stoops to arrange in due order the bundles of stalks while (sic) the other lifts to him on the point with his fork.36

Continuing a particular trend established earlier in the American criticism of Millet, Wheelwright analyzed Hunt's painting in literary terms, referring to his style as "pictorial poetry" and his iconography as "the poetry of incident."37 In a final rebuff of Moore's argument, he lauded Hunt's landscape technique:

It is no mere imitation of nature we have before us, no photographic, no Pre-Raphaelite rendering of sticks and stones. It is not a portrait of the field as it actually was but as it appeared to the quick sense of the poet painter.38

Examining the subject matter of the painting twenty-two years after his first contact with Millet, Wheelwright found a dignity and strength in American rural life that he had found earlier in Millet's depiction of French, qualities he did not believe to have been sensitively depicted heretofore, in regard to the American rural laborer:

Though his picture is by no means wanting in strict pictorial poetry...nor in the poetry of suggestiveness, these are both subordinate to the poetry of incident, the story proper
which the artist had chiefly in mind to tell; that sad, pathetic story of the hard, laborious, joyless life of the small farmer in New England—a life of which, for the most part, we have had in painting at least only caricatures, but which contain, when rightly seen, as many elements of poetry as that of the French peasant whom Millet has made immortal.39

Although Wheelwright's pan-cultural vision enabled him to identify common qualities in the lives of the New England farmer and Barbizon peasant, he did not believe that Hunt or any other contemporary American artist could depict those qualities accurately due to their social and cultural class. Instead, he called for a native-trained artist from the ranks of the working class:

...admirably, on the whole, as the story is told...Mr. Hunt has not quite succeeded in giving it, in the genuine Yankee dialect, with a strong flavor of the soil about it, as Burns and Millet would have done had they been born in New England. Neither the men, nor the oxen, nor even the apple tree, are of the pure Yankee type, and the whole picture has something of a foreign air. There is a want of perfection of local coloring which we can never hope to see fully realized in the portraiture of the rural life of New England until some youth, 'native here and to the manner born,' shall, as Millet did, quit the plow handle and the scythe for the palette and brush—profiting by the means of art education now beginning to be so abundantly offered—qualify himself to render a tardy justice to the race from which he sprang.40

Concluding his criticism, Wheelwright maintained that the origins of the artist were crucial to his success as a genre painter, as they had been for Millet:
One ought not, however, to insist too strongly upon this defect in Mr. Hunt's picture. Burns and Millet have drawn the farm laborer as seen from within. Tennyson and Mr. Hunt must, of necessity, paint him as seen from without....41

Another of Hunt's late works, Plowing, 1876 (Pl. 124), may be used to assess the accuracy of Wheelwright's criticism of Hunt as a rural genre painter. Completed three years before Hunt's death, the scene marks his final return to his agrarian and regional interests. The landscape, reflecting the teachings of Millet, is a vast panorama extending beyond the limits of the canvas. Set within the plain, Hunt placed two farmers cultivating their field with a rude manual plow drawn by a team of horses and oxen; the machinery identified with farming in this country is conspicuously absent. The figures retain the diminutive stature typical of Hunt's genre style, yet the self-absorption and harmonious cadence with which they stride across the field accords them a certain dignity. The affected poses and self-conscious activity of his earlier figures have given way here to a natural communion with the task at hand. Working comfortably with a romantic rather than contemporary portrayal, Hunt was able to transfer those qualities that Millet perceived in the French peasant to the American farmer of an earlier time; but, he was not capturing the essence, as
Wheelwright so accurately observed, of the living, present-day American farmer.

While Hunt re-created or re-discovered his Barbizon experience in rural New England, Low, whom Hunt would soon meet in New York, was concluding his abroad. After Eaton's departure for New York, Low had remained in Paris and accompanied by his wife and the Stevensons, he spent the summers of 1876 and 1877 at Barbizon and the adjoining villages of Grez and Montigny. By the mid-1870's, however, Millet's legend had extended far beyond the circle of Low's atelier companions. "It was about this time," he recalled, "that the growing invasion of foreign artists... began to take place." The obtrusive presence of these "invaders," and particularly their affronts to local custom, were lamented by Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson:

So far as the men are concerned, they generally adopt an airy bathing costume... and scarcely take the trouble to change for meals served in the garden. At almost any time you see on the village street, headed toward the tobacco shop, weird gentlemen in swimming trunks, slippers, and straw hats otherwise as nude as Adam. The peasants may be rude and simple but at least are clothed....

The majority of these newly arrived artists were Americans whose presence attested to Millet's growing popularity in the United States. One of these, May Alcott (1840-1879), journeyed to Grez in 1877 from Hunt's studio-school in Boston. A successful still life painter, she exhibited *Fruit and Bottles* in the Salon of 1877; yet, as a pupil
of Hunt, she possessed a great regard for Millet's genre paintings. Her sister, the author Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888), did not share her opinions of Millet's oeuvre, as evidenced by a letter from May Alcott to their father:

I roared over the charmingly assured tone of Lu's saying, 'Don't paint in Millet's later style'; as if I could ever paint in any style like his, and if the Shaw Collection is still at the Boston Athenaeum, be sure to see his Sower which Mr. Emerson calls the great picture of the world. Millet is dead you know, and among the other great names are Corot, Fromentin, and Diaz, who have died lately and left no one capable of filling their place.45

The works Low completed during his final excursions to the French countryside bespeak the loss of the major Barbizon exemplars referred to in Alcott's letter. He turned his attention from genre to landscape painting, a concern that did not dominate his early years at Barbizon. Barbizon Courtyard, 1875 (Pl. 125), for example, depicts an enclosure animated only by the presence of hens and roosters searching for food. In this instance Low uses his brush to build form with solid masonry-like strokes, achieving an unusually architectonic result. This pronounced structural concern is enhanced by his reductive treatment of the rural cottages. Unrelieved in its geometric severity, the architecture cuts into the background at hard angles. In both its solid technique and firm definition of form, Low's composition is comparable to more sophisticated works by
Corot. River at Montigny-sur-Loing (Pl. 126), dating from the same period, further typifies the marked change in Low's genre painting that occurred after Millet's death and the resultant loss of his guiding presence. The diminution of the figure begun in Girl Sweeping is now complete as he subordinates the human element in his composition to the landscape setting. Dwarfed by slender trees rising beyond the upper limits of the canvas, a single peasant woman kneels on a riverbank where she washes clothes. Iconographically, the work can be related to the laundress theme in Millet's oeuvre but in its subordinating treatment of the figure to the overall composition it bears a closer similarity to Hunt's Landscape, 1850-1855 (Pl. 127), a Barbizon work from Hunt's first encounter with Millet depicting a group of peasants laundering clothes at the side of a river.

The altered format of Low's late Barbizon works reveals his growing disenchantment with genre painting that he experienced at the end of his tenure in France. Unable to earn a living as a genre painter and bored with his assignments as a commercial illustrator, he was receptive to a new option that presented itself shortly before his return to the United States. In 1877, a friend of Erastus Dow Palmer commissioned Low to paint a series of works illustrating several interiors at the Place of Fontainebleau.
Working there, he became acquainted with the art of Prima­ticcio and Il Rosso, exemplars Millet had previously recommended for study.⁴⁷ Through this experience, Low regained contact with decorative art, a genre he had been involved with earlier only within the provincial context of embellishing railway cars in Albany. Inspired by what he saw at Fontainebleau as well as the modern examples in Millet's oeuvre, he returned to the United States in the autumn of 1877 planning to expand his concerns to include moral painting as well as continue to paint genre scenes.

Upon their arrival in New York City, Low and his wife immediately renewed their friendship with the Eatons before continuing on to Albany where they settled temporarily. As they refreshed their former relationship, Eaton introduced Low to new acquaintances including both Gilder and his successor as the art editor of Scribner's Monthly Magazine, A. W. Drake. Through Eaton's influence, Low received several commissions from Drake to illustrate journal articles and, despite his aspirations, he soon discovered that the two most feasible ways of earning a living as an artist in New York City were not genre and mural painting but portraiture and illustration. Later, he recalled that the same popular journals that had disseminated his works prior to his departure for Barbizon remained its major means of circulation after his return home:
The two magazines, Harper's and Scribner's, constituted the main active art market of the city, the picture dealers were few and given over to the sale of foreign art. It was an economic condition that American art was obliged to face, a condition that caused many a painter to turn illustrator in spite of himself.48

While securing projects for Low, Eaton also obtained commissions for himself from Gilder and Drake. During the winter of 1877-1878, Gilder appointed Eaton to paint a series of portraits of American authors which he then commissioned the graphic artist Timothy Cole (1818-1882) to reproduce as engravings which appeared in successive journal issues. In its entirety, the series was composed of portraits of the following authors: William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894), and James Russell Lowell (1819-1891).49 The commission proved to be of especial importance to Eaton because aside from initiating a personal friendship with Cole and securing his fame as a portraitist in the United States, if afforded him the opportunity to meet the major literary figures of his era, some of whom soon became his friends because of a mutual admiration for Gilder.

Leaving New York City briefly in 1878, Low continued his lucrative assignments for Scribner's Monthly Magazine in
Albany, but his interest in mural painting was also kept alive there by the presence of William Morris Hunt. Hunt, who had been commissioned in 1875 to decorate the Assembly Chamber of the State Capitol Building, was completing two murals, The Discoverer and The Flight of Night, when he was introduced to Low. The younger artist, who held Hunt in high regard, recalled his legendary status at Barbizon and the circumstances of their meeting:

Of Hunt I had heard much in my sojourn at Barbizon. His name was a household word in the Millet family where his talent was esteemed and where his service to the master, in proclaiming the merit of his work when few would listen and fewer still would join in his generous propaganda of Millet's fame, was keenly remembered. Babcock had also a fund of memories of his comrade and, with something of the wonder of a recluse, described Hunt's life in France. I knew and admired many of Hunt's pictures and was familiar with his career as a pupil of Couture, his later association with Millet, and his activity as a teacher-artist in Boston. Soon after my arrival in Albany, a young architect who knew him offered to take me to see his work at the Assembly Chamber.50

During their single conversation, Hunt and Low shared reminiscences of their experiences at Barbizon and past associations with Millet and Babcock. They did not have an opportunity to meet again, however, because Hunt died the following year on September 10, 1879. Shortly thereafter, Low, commemorating Hunt's skill as a muralist, wrote that his decorative paintings offered "the most
hopeful indication that my country and especially my
native city were making ready to march into the ranks of
the cultivated cities of the world."  

Following his encounter with Hunt, Low, accompanied by
his wife, moved back to New York City in order to facil­
itate his career. During this period, the combined effects
of his return to the United States and his increased
activity as a journal illustrator became apparent in his
genre painting. The Wedding Dress, 1878 (Pl. 128), for
example, is an intimate interior scene depicting Berthe
seated in a rocking chair as she sews a bridal gown.
Translating Millet's theme of the French peasant seamstress
into an American idiom, Low maintains the inherent quietude
of the domestic scene but presents it with a new delicacy
and elegance. In keeping with his illustrational style,
the figure of Berthe is diminutive in size yet accentuated
and supported by a fully defined setting. The refined
tenor of the scene is underscored by Low's heightened
palette which he uses to create a brilliant sunlit interior;
in the clear daylight, he carefully and meticulously de­
fines a variety of still life accessories that contribute
to the comfortable ambience of the scene. As an intimate
record of the domestic equanimity of Low's home, the work
was never meant for public exhibition but remained a
private work throughout his lifetime.
Low's return to New York City enabled him to join with Eaton in the circle of artists and authors who gathered regularly at Gilder's home. Attending one of these salons in 1878, they met Walt Whitman who was enjoying Gilder's hospitality while delivering a series of public lectures in the city. Although little information regarding their conversations is recorded, in his memoirs, Low describes an argument with Whitman concerning the political future of France which was prompted by the author's statement that he had little faith in the present French Republic. It is not known whether Millet's name figured in their conversations, but four years later Whitman became the first major American author to write an essay inspired by Millet's works which discussed their relevance to French political history.

Entree into Gilder's social circle accrued to Low the double benefits of further meeting with prominent American literary figures and gaining membership in a newly-founded art organization, the Society of American Artists. Representing the joint efforts of Eaton and Gilder to promote artistic activity independent of the National Academy of Design, the society was established in mid-1877 at the editor's home. In addition to the two founders, the other original members included Gilder's wife, the art critic Helena deKay Gilder; the sculptor, Augustus St. Gaudens
Low described the causal organization as "sincerely eclectic" and wistfully recalled its minimal effectiveness:

The melancholy fact remains that the enthusiastic effort of the young Society of American Artists never excited the least public interest and when, after twenty-seven years of gallant struggle, it was finally merged with the older National Academy of Design, the current of cultivated American life was not disturbed by the slightest ripple! 56

Despite the limited consequence of the society, the annual group exhibitions it sponsored provided Low with receptive arenas in which to present his Barbizon paintings. In March, 1878, he was represented in the first annual exhibition by _Le Jour des Morts_, 1878. Known only through a brief written description, the large work, in the tradition of _The Angelus_, depicted a rural French religious custom: "the procession of peasants of Barbizon on the day following All Saints Day (the Day of the Dead) when they cross the plain to Chailly there to celebrate the repose of the dead." 57

Both Low and Eaton were represented in the exhibition by portraits, but unlike his friend, Eaton, who had shown _Harvesters at Rest_ in New York the previous year at the National Academy of Design, did not contribute any additional genre paintings. A few months after the Society of American Artists exhibition, however, he sent _Harvesters at
to Paris where it was displayed with a group of American
genre paintings in the *Exposition Universelle*. In spite
of the favorable reviews the work was given in the *New York
Times* in 1876, the same paper carried a disdainful assess-
ment of it written by their correspondent in Paris who
briefly dismissed *Harvesters at Rest* as "dreadfully still
and bad in color." Parisian critics treated the work
with greater deference as Paul Lefort, writing in the
*Gazette des Beaux-Arts* identified in it "quelque choses de
Millet et Breton," and Charles Tardieu, Lefort's counter-
part at the journal *L'Art*, praised Eaton for his personal
adaptation of French influences:59

La peinture de cet artiste n'est pas d'une
facilité extraordinaire, mais elle annonce
une rare volonté, une consciencieuse étude de
la nature, et l'ambition de ne pas s'en tenir
tant qu'un seul genre de succès. Le *Repos des
Moissoneurs* sont un de ces motifs ruraux qui
doivent leurs lettres de naturalisation artisti-
tique au génie poétique de Jean-Francois
Millet, à l'émotion naïve et profonde avec
laquelle il a penetré les beautés intimes de
nos campagnes en y associant, dans toute la
franchise de leur rusticité, les paysans qui
les cultivent. Le talent de M. Wyatt Eaton
n'a pas la robuste grandeur de ce maître in-
comparable; il n'a pas non plus l'elegance
apprentie du peintre habile qui, arrondissant
les angles des conceptions de Millet, a réussi
to les mettre à la portée de tout le monde--
ous avons nommé Jules Breton. Mais son inter-
pretation, un peu fruste et non sans lourdeur,
est loyale et personnelle. Ses moissonneurs
sont ressemblants et s'il y a quelque intention
de sentimentalité dans la petite scène de famille
qui se joue à l'ombre d'une meule entre la
mère allaitant son poupon et le père vaguement
attendre, du moins se concilie-t-elle avec verité. Ce n'est pas encore tres souple, mais cela ne manque pas de vigueur.60

While Eaton won critical notice in France for *Harvesters at Rest*, during the spring of 1878, Low received his first major genre commission from a prominent art patron in Albany, John Boyd Thatcher. Thatcher, who offered Low $500.00 for a genre painting, placed only one stipulation upon the agreement: "The subject," he said, "must be absolutely American!"61 Attempting to dissuade Thatcher from this restriction, Low argued against indigenous subject matter as lacking pictorial interest. He contended that: "In modern costume our country people are all dressed like city folks, everybody's clothes come from almost the same ready-to-wear shops." Hopking to convince him to accept a painting inspired by one of his Barbizon sketches, Low continued his argument, "Abroad the peasants are picturesque as are all their implements of labor, but here everything is machine-made and has no character."62 Supporting his point, Low showed Thatcher a group of his sketches executed the previous year at Barbizon and Grez. Thatcher, however, remained steadfast in his demands and, after closely examining one of the sketches, he replied to Low, "That's rather pretty, but you can see that the people are foreign, peasants aren't they? Can't you find something like that here, that we can
recognize? It would make a nice picture, I agree, but it would not look American. I am sure that I am doing you a service in insisting on having it American!"^\textsuperscript{63}

In accordance with the wishes of his unwavering patron, Low selected a subject that was current in American folksong and literature—Skipper Ireson's Ride (Pl. 129). The skipper's famous "ride" took place in Marblehead in 1837 when, falsely accused of allowing local sailors to drown at sea, Floyd Ireson was tarred and feathered by the women of the village community. Only later did the citizenry discover that Ireson actually had attempted to assist the sailors on the distressed ship but, betrayed by his own crew, who subsequently lied about the incident upon their return to Marblehead, he was unable to rescue them.^\textsuperscript{64} Choosing this theme, Low was able to incorporate into his painting elements of an American folktale, ballad, and poetry. The direct source upon which he based his composition was John Greenleaf Whittier's poem, "Skipper Ireson's Ride," first published in 1856. Low chose to illustrate the final stanza:

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him!—why should we?"
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
"Cut the rogue's teather and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and his sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
By the women of Marblehead!

Although Thatcher was pleased with Low's selection, the artist himself found the subject distasteful and described it as "positively as American as the attractive custom of tarring and feathering." 65

Securing Thatcher's approval of the theme, Low and his wife left New York City in May, 1878, to journey to Marblehead where he began preparations for the painting. They traveled there, he wrote, "in voluntary exile" to "pursue an evasive Americanism" and "regain the birthright [his] friends had almost convinced [him] [he] had lost through [his] sojourn in France." 66 They remained in Marblehead, however, only long enough for Low to paint landscape studies of the coastline which he later incorporated into the background of his final composition (Pl. 130).

Lured by the presence of his fellow genre painter, Eastman Johnson (1824-1906), Low journeyed on to Nantucket where he and his wife settled for the summer. 67 After the example of Millet at Barbizon and Hunt at Milton Farms, Low retreated to an area of his country possessing a strong regional identity and established a rustic studio there. Working in a barn, he began the preparatory sketches for the figures in his composition but quickly discovered that the local residents were unanimously
unwilling to pose as his models; moreover, they resented
Whittier for drawing national attention to the unfortunate
incident with his poem. Some villagers had no wish to be
reminded of the unjust punishment Ireson received at the
hands of the mob while others, still maintaining his guilt,
refused to be associated with a painting commemorating
him. Low was comforted, however, by his new friendship with
Eastman Johnson who remarked good-naturedly of the problem-
atic painting and its unappealing subject matter, "you are
lucky that it's a commission. It is, truly enough, as
American as can be, for tarring and featering is about as
national a habit as we have. But honestly, I don't believe
such a painting will sell on the open market, so to speak,
no matter how well it is painted. We Americans don't like
painful things!"68 With Johnson's friendly assistance
and advice, Low was finally able to cajole local residents
into acting as his models and, bolstered further by the
arrival of Eaton and his wife in Nantucket, he continued
to work on the painting throughout the summer.

Low continued to summer in Nantucket until Skipper
Ireson's Ride was completed in 1881, spending the
majority of the following two years in New York City where
he participated regularly in the Society of American Artists
exhibitions. In March, 1880, he was represented in their
third annual show with a rural genre painting entitled
Calling the Cows Home, n.d. (Pl. 131). The painting depicts a country boy dressed in picturesque costume who, seated on a stile, blows a horn signalling the return of the herd. The work is almost identical in subject matter to a pastel by Millet, Calling the Cows, 1856 (Pl. 132), which Low easily could have seen while at Barbizon. Both works employ a silhouette view of the figure as well as share in common details such as the caps worn by the cowherds and the type of horn they hold to their lips. Whereas Millet obscures the identity of his figure, rendering him only as an evocative silhouette, Low clearly illuminated his young boy as an idealized country innocent, calling forth sentimental associations of the virtues of an idyllic, rustic life. More than an adaptation of a work by Millet, Low's painting can be seen as a recasting of the same theme he depicted in 1871 when he drew Coming Home (Pl. 94) to illustrate a poem printed in Appleton's Journal. Low's two works, both portrayals of country children, one European and the other American, demonstrate the associations his Barbizon experience enabled him to make between rural life in the two countries. Critics, receptive to the bucolic image, praised the work for its "simplicity, truth to nature, and technical skill." Eaton did not fare as well with critics when he exhibited a peasant scene the same year. Following his
exhibition of two landscapes with the Society of American Artists, he submitted one of his preparatory studies for *Harvesters at Rest, Peasant Mother and Child* (Pl. 20) to the Boston Art Club show. A writer for the *American Art Review*, offended at the sight of a mother nursing her child, commented:

> Mr. Wyatt Eaton's study of a Peasant Mother and Child is careful and true, but utterly charmless. The painter shows us exactly what we do not wish to see, instead of elevating a plain animal episode into the region of the pleasing.70

Eaton, attempting to profit from Thatcher's advice to Low that the formulae for success as a genre painter in this country was the depiction of American subject matter, spent the summer of 1880 sequestered in Rockland, Maine, while his friend returned to Nantucket. From Maine, he wrote to Gilder of his search for a new regional type to portray in his works:

> I have never before felt in the same way that so many quite distinct types belong to the United States. The people who seem to belong here are more purely what I understand to be New England types than I have ever seen before. I have seen today several models for my picture of the typical American; he is a raw fellow with a head and face like an eagle—Emerson is this type—but the young fellow I want to paint has helped his father improve his farm, married a neighbor's daughter, and gone West to cut a clearing in a new forest to make himself a home of his own. It is easy to realize that the West is made from this stock, that is, such a man as
you see here. I hope I shall see more of these men. It gives me a new realization that I belong to a race who belong to the soil.71

Although no paintings by Eaton depicting the young man he described in this letter have come to light, he did paint at least one portrait of a distinctively American figure—*The Newsboy*, n.d. (Pl. 133). Selecting an urban rather than a rural type, Eaton depicts a canny young vendor who holds copies of the *New York Times* under his arm. Far from the naivete of Low's cowherd, Eaton's newsboy is shrewd and clever, able not only to survive in the city but to advance himself as well. As a master portraitist, Eaton conveys these qualities in the direct glance of the child who, portrayed in a half-length format, confronts the viewer with bold immediacy.72

In the spring of 1881, Low returned to New York from Nantucket to exhibit *Skipper Ireson's Ride*, which he completed while Eaton worked in Rockland. The painting, shown at the fourth annual exhibition of the Society of American Artists, depicts Ireson gazing upward toward the heavens with the look of a martyr as he stands alone in a dirt road. Behind him are gathered his persecutors, a throng of women and children who strike a variety of academic poses indicating a wide range of emotions including fear, wrath, and horror. True to Thatcher's prophecy that he was doing Low a service by insisting upon American subject
matter, the critics reacted well to the work. S. W. Benjamin, for instance, wrote:

We look in vain for sensationalism or any artistic slovenliness whatever in this fine work. It is carefully enough drawn and executed to hang on the walls of the Academy! But irony aside, it is cause for gratification to see such a clever and elaborate work produced by an American artist in New York from a purely American subject.73

Thatcher, delighted at the reception accorded the painting, wrote to Low during the exhibition, "expressing no little pride in the part he himself had played in the creation of a truly American work of art as well as in the re-making of an American citizen."74

Despite the praise drawn by Skipper Ireson's Ride from both art critics and its owner, Low always harbored bitter feelings toward the commission. He perceived his self-imposed isolation at Nantucket and the American subject he was forced to depict as two great sacrifices for which critical acceptance was inadequate recompense. Regarding his stay at Nantucket he recalled:

I had found the isolation of my life in Nantucket extremely hard to one like myself, who had been accustomed to live surrounded by comrades intent upon the same occupation as my own, profiting as much as I had by the helpful criticism or encouragement which such conditions imply. When I returned to New York, moreover, after this long absence, I found, as was but natural, that in the interval what notice had been taken of me...was quite forgotten. The place that I might have made for myself during that time had been secured by
others, for the period was one that saw the return of many young painters from Europe.75

With this attitude, Low assessed the critical reception of his painting as far less cordial than it actually was and maintained that the work, "for which no one including to some degree the painter, cared," was meaningless to his career:

The exhibition of my picture excited little interest insofar as its subject was concerned, for changes come so quickly in the convictions of the public that the number of works either sent home from our artists abroad or brought back by our returning painters had apparently quite reconciled the former critics to the choice of themes of a foreign character. Some little praise was given my effort for certain qualities of the painting, but no great patriotic emotions seemed to be stirred by it—somewhat to my relief, to tell the truth....76

Low may have viewed Skipper Ireson's Ride as retardataire, an unnecessary step backward to the American imagery he had abandoned at Barbizon, but the work helped him to establish a certain reputation in New York City; and, following its exhibition, he was appointed to the faculty of the Cooper Union School.77 Like Eaton, he viewed teaching primarily as an economic necessity and consequently derived little pleasure from it. Even less appealing were the illustrations he was forced to do just as Eaton was compelled to paint commissioned portraits in order to live. He had no wish to attain fame either as a teacher or an illustrator, and the growing disillusionment
he experienced as his previous aspirations faded is clearly reflected in his letters to Robert Louis Stevenson. Writing from New York City in June, 1883, he voiced his regret at his return to America and the consequences it held for his career:

I am a hack of hacks in comparison with what the work I had laid out for myself might have been. I am doing illustration and am perhaps at this point where I can somewhat choose my work and do what is least disagreeable when the best is bad enough. Once in a while I paint a little nothing very serious, nothing that anyone but the few good friends who still believe in me care for--for the first two or three years I stood bravely enough buoyed up by the pleasant fiction that I could put by something to make a profound salutation to the American public--and get away to gather up the scattered threads of my existence in a more congenial atmosphere.78

The following winter his situation was unchanged and, again to Stevenson, he wrote:

My hours are full this winter with teaching at the Cooper Institute sixty young ladies. Other than that I am trying some etching for an edition du luxe of George Eliot and, heaven forgive me, illustrating a portion of "Lallia (sic) Rookh." Will the time ever come when it will pay? I am hoping before spring to paint something although that will not pay.79

Aside from lamenting his present situation in New York, Low wrote frequently to Stevenson of the past experiences they had shared in France. Their steady correspondence provided Low with the link to his Barbizon period that he strove to maintain after his return home. Exchanging ideas
concerning Millet with an author, Low became more aware of the literary affinities in Millet's art as demonstrated by the following passage from a letter to Stevenson dated June, 1883:

What you say of Victor Hugo's use of the elements, of man's surroundings, and his subordination of the purely human interest is equally true I think of Millet and, perhaps like Hugo, one of the great reasons for his greatness. Before Millet the landscape surrounding was carefully kept down that man might not suffer. With Millet man took his natural and often unimportant relationship to the entourage and the result is great art. The more I see and reflect on Millet and his work, the more I congratulate myself that when I saw him in the flesh my intuition made me troubled, numbed my American birthright... and said to me, this is a great man.

Low's frequent mention of Millet and Barbizon to Stevenson during 1883 and 1884 was prompted not only by his own desire to return to France but also by the fact that Eaton had recently done just that. In January, 1884, Low wrote to Stevenson of Eaton's arrival at Barbizon which, as Eaton had communicated to Low, "he still loved, but found sadly changed." Although Millet was dead and the former coterie of his foreign students long since dispersed, Eaton resumed his intimate friendship with Millet's family as well as his acquaintance with Babcock. Aside from his old friends, Eaton spent his time at Barbizon in the company of his New York associate Timothy Cole who, touring Europe on an assignment from Gilder, was making
reproductive engravings of art treasures in various museums. Writing to Gilder's business associate and Eaton's former patron, Lewis Fraser, Cole provided valuable and rare insight into Babcock's work at Barbizon:

I met an interesting old gentleman, a Mr. Babcock, whom Eaton thinks is one of the best authorities on art matters in Europe. His house is a museum of art. The way he imitates ivory in some of those old Roman heads in bas-relief is simply marvelous. He soaks them in common black soap they use here, letting them absorb as much as possible, then rubbing them dry they take on a fine polish adding a little pink coloring at the same time.82

In another letter from the same period to Drake, Cole continued his description of Babcock's activities:

I spent some pleasant evenings...particularly at Barbizon with Mr. Eaton and Mr. Babcock who is certainly an admirable gentleman. He spent eighteen months of incessant labor in his laboratory in developing a process of his own invention by which he turns copper into gold, and his bronze Trajan heads which he has affected in this manner are among the most astonishing gems of art in existence. It would be impossible to describe their beauty, the richness of their lustre, and the variety of their uses. It is worth a visit to Barbizon alone to see them. Mr. Babcock gave me a dozen casts from medal which are remarkable in this respect. He gave many to Mr. Eaton also who says they have infused new vigor in him and he will go back to portrait painting with much enthusiasm. He says there is a charm and distinction about the portraits of that age which are lacking in the works of the best painters of other nations.83

Two works by Eaton dating from 1884-1886, Head of a Woman (Pl. 134), and Barbizon Peasant (Pl. 135) demonstrate
Eaton's return to genre portraiture. Head of a Woman, a charcoal sketch, is reminiscent of his earlier portrait, Madame Richard (Pl. 100) in its introspective and sympathetic portrayal of a rustic peasant woman. Barbizon Peasant, an oil sketch of a field laborer, on the other hand, is a generalized portrait, curiously distant and lacking in insight. In keeping with Cole's statement, it has the air of being inspired by another work of art rather than a human presence.

In March, 1884, Cole wrote a letter to Fraser containing the first mention of Eaton's major project of his second sojourn abroad, The Harvest Field, 1884-1885 (Pl. 136):

I spent a day and a night at Eaton's. He has been working all summer on a very fine thing, a woman seated in a field of cut wheat with a baby asleep in her lap, and a man cutting wheat in the background in the strong sunshine. His table was piled high with studies of it.84

The conception and theme of The Harvest Field are derived generally from Eaton's earlier painting, Harvesters at Rest (Pl. 102). The intimacy of the original composition, however, is lost in its sequel by the separation of the family group and the static portrayal of the female figure. Now simply holding, rather than nursing, her offspring, contact between the mother and child is lessened and natural activity gives way to artificial pose. The harvest
field that formerly provided a natural complement to the mother's function now becomes a compositional stage setting against which Eaton plays the strong and solidly sculptur-esque figure of the woman. On the whole, *The Harvest Field* appears as a codification of elements which Eaton imbued with greater vitality in his earlier composition; here, reverie replaces activity as Eaton tempers his observation of nature with academic discipline. Although the composition possesses an obvious precursor in Eaton's own *oeuvre*, it is possible that *The Harvest Field* was inspired by an undated drawing by Millet, *Peasant Reposing* (Pl. 137), which depicts a female figure seated in the same position, although reversed, as a man labors in a field behind her.

Eaton remained at Barbizon until 1886 when, after a brief trip to Italy, he returned to New York City. Departing France, he narrowly missed the arrival of Low who, along with Robert Louis Stevenson and Theodore Robinson, appeared at Barbizon in autumn of that year. Like Eaton, Low found the village somewhat unfamiliar after his long absence but for the presence of Babcock. Calling on the recluse, Low realized the full extent of the insular world he had created for himself at Barbizon. Identifying the few people remaining at Barbizon whom he knew, Low wrote:
One of these last was my old friend Babcock who, due to his inability to realize the passage of time, called from his studio in the upper story in response to my knock at the door of his house, naming myself at the same time as had been my custom eight years before. 'Oh, it's you, Mr. Low, come right up to the studio.' The studio showed no mark of the passage of time. I saw Babcock often during my stay in Barbizon and endeavored to excite his interest in home affairs, but the only recollection that he had of his native land went back to 1847 and that he refused to dialate (sic) upon save to evince a certain measure of sympathy for my unhappy lot in dwelling there.85

One of the few known works by Low dating from this period resulted from his reunion with the Millet family. Millet's son Francois approached Low and asked him if he recalled a particular canvas that had always stood turned toward the wall in a corner of his father's studio. The image on the canvas had been obliterated by Millet himself, Francois said, as a capricious warning against "undue ambition";86 however, Millet's brother Charles had successfully restored the canvas which proved to be Hagar and Ishmael (Pl. 15). After viewing the work, Low wrote that it had "a suggestive charm that can so often be felt in Italy before half-faded frescoes, works which have been hidden from sight by an obliterating wash of color and recovered in a similar manner."87 Wishing to remember the composition, Low made a rapid sketch of the work (Pl. 138).
Material documenting Eaton's and Low's return to Barbizon is scarce, yet from the surviving letters and notes, as well as the artists' works, it is clear that a change had occurred. The enthusiasm for rural subject matter that characterized their 1873-1875 Barbizon period was tempered upon their return to France as several factors indicate: Eaton's study of antique medallions, Low's identification of references to Italian frescoes in Millet's Hagar and Ishmael, the introduction of a new monumentality in Eaton's painting, The Harvest Field, and above all, the fact that both artists had visited Italy. All these pointed their art in the direction of greater classical concerns. Thus I perceive their renewed experience of Barbizon as a delayed response to the strong classicism that characterized Millet's late works, a current they themselves had witnessed and one which they were now fully equipped to discern. For Eaton, these influences were crystallized in a single work, The Stalwart Gleaner, also known as The Gleaner, 1888 (Pl. 139). This work, like Hunt's Gleaner, 1865 (Pl. 64), is the result of the combined influences of Millet's classicism and Jules Breton's comparable monumentality; Eaton's motif of a single figure who stands in a field holding a bundle of grain on her head can be related to both Millet's The Gleaners, 1865 (Pl. 66), and Breton's Gleaners, 1859 (Pl. 65). Statuesque and
august, Eaton's figure rises with authority against a landscape vista. The quietude and stillness that characterized his earlier harvest scenes is heightened to a frozen immobility as his figure assumes an iconic permanence that relates it ultimately to Millet's depiction of the harvest goddess Ceres whom he chose to represent *Summer* in the Thomas season series, 1865 (Pl. 73). Unlike Eaton, Low's experience would not be encapsulated in a particular work but rather in the direction his career would take after his return to New York where he successfully entered into a career as a decorative muralist, an ambition that had eluded him previously.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1 Low, "The Primrose Way," p. 109. Although Low mentions Tracy more than once in his memoirs, the artist is not cited in the basic source books or dictionaries of American artists. Nor is there mention of Wilbur Woodward in these dictionaries. Benezit, however, notes a Joseph Woodwell (1843-1911) from Pittsburg who was a landscape painter who spent a portion of his career at Barbizon.

2 Ibid., p. 113. Little information is available on either Enfield or O'Mera. Enfield, according to basic sources, was a landscapist who exhibited at the Royal Academy in London between 1872 and 1893, while O'Mera (1853-1888), an Irish artist, painted landscape and genre scenes at Barbizon and Grez-sur-Loing.

3 In addition to these two essays, Robert Louis Stevenson's novel The Wrecker (1896), the story of the art student Loudon Dodd, contains numerous biographical references to Low. Low himself identifies and explains these in his own essay, "An Epilogue to an Epilogue," Modern Essays, ed. Christopher Morley (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1924), pp. 403-419. Further, Stevenson and Low shared their views on art in a pair of letters that appeared together in Scribner's Monthly Magazine, 4 (September, 1888). Stevenson's letter was entitled "A Letter to a Young Gentleman Who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art," while Low's reply was called, "A Letter to the Same Young Gentleman."

4 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 432.


6 Ibid., p. 124.

7 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 110.

8 Ibid., p. 113.
Millet's influence, as well as that of other European genre sources and traditions, upon Eaton's depiction of the laborer at rest is underscored by contrasting Eaton's work to its American predecessor, William Sidney Mount's *Farmers Nooning*, 1836. Mount's ostensibly comic scene depicts a young prankster who tickles the nose of a sleeping black man whose companions read or sleep peacefully. For an illustration of the work and information on Mount, see Alfred Frankenstein, *William Sidney Mount*, 1975.


Sheldon, *Hours with Artists*, p. 165.


George Fuller began his career in 1841 working as an itinerant portraitist in New York City. Later that year he began to study in Albany with the sculptor Henry Kirke Brown. In 1842, he took up classes at the National Academy of Design and then, in 1860, he toured Europe where he copied old masters and familiarized himself with the works of Barbizon artists. The genre and landscape paintings he completed after his return evidence his study of this latter group of painters, particularly Corot. For information on
Fuller, see Josiah B. Millet, George Fuller: His Life and Works, Boston: Houghton and Mifflin Co., 1886.

35 Landgren, The Late Landscapes of William Morris Hunt, p. 72.


37 Ibid., p. 710.

38 Ibid., p. 712.

39 Ibid., p. 711.

40 Ibid., p. 712.

41 Ibid.


43 Ibid., p. 129.

44 Ibid., p. 130.

45 Caroline Ticknor, May Alcott: A Memoir (Boston: Osgood Company, 1928), p. 188.


48 Ibid., p. 171

49 For a full account of the commission, see Wyatt Eaton, "Recollections of American Poets," The Century Magazine, n.s., 42 (September, 1902), pp. 842-850. The article, appearing after Eaton's death, was published by his wife, Charlotte Eaton.

50 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 255.

Information graciously provided by the owner.


Whitman's essay, "Last Items--Millet's Paintings," was published in 1882. For a discussion of it, see Chapter VIII of my dissertation.

Although Eaton frequently refers to Helena deKay Gilder as a painter of portraits and still lifes in his memoirs, she is not cited in the usual source books concerning nineteenth-twentieth century artists. For her activities as a writer and art critic, see Chapter VIII of my dissertation. Augustus St. Gaudens began his career as a cameo cutter before studying at the Cooper Union School and the National Academy of Design. In 1867 he enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the style he learned there under his master Jouffrey won him lasting fame. Among his more noted works are the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial, Boston (1884-1896), and the Adams Memorial, Washington, D.C. (1886-1891). Walter Shrilaw was born in Paisley, Scotland, and settled in New York City in 1861 where he studied at the National Academy of Design. Aside from his activities as a genre painter, muralist and engraver, he also participated in the founding of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1870. His most noted work is Sheepshearing on the Bavarian Highlands, a painting he exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1877.


The legend of Skipper Ireson was a popular one during the nineteenth century and consequently accounts of the tale appeared frequently in newspapers of the period. Two of these, the sources for the material contained in my text, are "The Listener," Boston Evening Transcript, September 21, 1889, and "The Listener," Boston Evening Transcript, October 3, 1889.

Eastman Johnson, a native of Maine, was a major American genre painter who began his career as a lithographer in Boston. After a period of study in Düsseldorf, he returned to the United States and settled in New York City in 1858. More closely associated with Nantucket, Johnson's major works are depictions of rural life in that region. His more prominent genre scenes are depictions of rural life in that region. His more prominent genre scenes include In the Fields, 1875-1880, Corn Husking, 1876, and The Cranberry Pickers, 1875-1880. For a nineteenth century comparative analysis of Millet and Johnson as genre painters, see Ednah D. Cheney, "Jean-Francois Millet," The Radical, 1867, quoted in Chapter V of my dissertation; for a modern scholar's opinion on the same point, see Patricia Hills, Eastman Johnson (New York: Clarkson Potter, Inc., 1972), p. 92.


Low, A Painter's Progress, p. 232.

Ibid., p. 234.


Unpublished correspondence from Low to Stevenson, June 24, 1883, Stevenson Collection, Beinicle Rare Book Room, Yale University.

Unpublished correspondence from Low to Stevenson, January 9, 1884, Stevenson Collection.

Unpublished correspondence from Low to Stevenson, June 1883, Stevenson Collection.

Ibid.

Unpublished correspondence from Cole to Fraser, March 10, 1884, Timothy Cole Papers, Archives of American Art.

Unpublished correspondence from Cole to Drake, April 17, 1886, Timothy Cole Papers.

Unpublished correspondence from Cole to Fraser, March 10, 1886, Timothy Cole Papers.

Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 346.

Ibid., p. 347.

Ibid., p. 349.
CHAPTER VIII

The mid-1870's and early 1880's had proven to be years of transition and hoped-for redirection for Eaton and Low who, after having arrived home in the 1870's, experienced the same sense of cultural displacement that their earlier counterparts Hunt and Wheelwright had in returning to this country twenty years earlier. Like the Boston artists, Eaton and Low found their cultural reassimilation greatly facilitated by their entrance into literary society; just as Hunt and Wheelwright had formed close associations with writers including Thomas Gold Appleton and Henry James, Eaton and Low found ready acceptance within the circle of Richard Watson Gilder and his colleagues. Continuing the parallel, both pairs of artists, maintaining steady contact with influential publishers, were able to introduce literature concerning Millet to the public in their respective cities. In Boston, Hunt and Wheelwright had accomplished this through their influence at The Atlantic Monthly while in New York Eaton and Low followed suit through their comparable prominence at Scribner's Monthly Magazine and its successor The Century Magazine.

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Considering the close ties uniting Eaton and Low to Gilder's journalistic circle in New York, it is not surprising that when Alfred Sensier's monograph, *La Vie et L'Oeuvre de Jean-François Millet* was published in 1881, it was Helena deKay Gilder who translated it into English. Interestingly, the work was published in the United States before it came to print in France. Traveling to France in 1879, "seeking details with respect to the life and works of Millet," the Gilders, through the assistance of Millet's son François, obtained the advance sheets of Sensier's manuscript from its French publisher Quantin.\(^1\) With no small amount of pride, Americans realized that in addition to amassing rapidly the largest collections of Millet's paintings in the world, they were also granted access to "the hitherto sealed book of Millet's life even before it [had] been read in France."\(^2\) Under Helena deKay's new title, *Jean-François Millet: Peasant and Painter*, the work was available to Americans in both book and serial form. Appearing in five consecutive installments in *Scribner's Monthly Magazine* between September and December of 1880, Sensier's record of Millet's life and career became the single most widely read source on the artist in the United States during the nineteenth century.\(^3\) While generating renewed interest in the history of his life, the book affected the tone of Millet criticism for
the remainder of the 1880's as one of pervasive sentimentality.

The growing American fascination with Millet's peasant heritage, pointedly emphasized by Helena deKay's alteration of Sensier's original title, was intensified by Sensier's depiction of rural life as one in which virtue and poverty reigned hand in hand. Despite the economic prosperity that industrial advancements had brought them, many Americans clung nostalgically to traditional concepts concerning the moral superiority of rural life over urban existence. For these Americans, who associated uncorrupt qualities with a life of the land, Millet and his family came to represent the ideal rural inhabitants. Quick to appreciate the religious characters of the artist and his relatives, as portrayed by Sensier, Americans found proof of the morality of rural life in the following passages that first describe Millet's grandmother Louise Jumelin and then discuss her relationship with him:

Humility was one of her virtues. All her strength was concentrated in the love of God, doing her duty, and love of her family. Full of religious fire, harsh toward herself, gentle and charitable toward others, she passed her days in good deeds, with no less an ideal than that of a saint.4

Millet's grandmother was his godmother. She called him Jean, after his father, and François, because he was a saint whom she loved
and whose protection she constantly invoked. St. Francis of Assisi, the faithful observer, in his contemplations of the things of nature, was a happy choice of a saint for the man who later was to be the passionate lover of the works of God. While he was still a little child, she would come to his bedside in the morning and say gently, 'Wake up my little François; you don't know how long the birds have already been singing in the glory of God!'

Even more compelling than these sentimental characterizations, however, were Sensier's exaggerated accounts of Millet's financial difficulties. Woven throughout the narrative biography, graphic descriptions of the indignities he suffered at the hands of his creditors awakened widespread popular response toward Millet:

Millet had around him a group of tradesmen anxious and almost fierce, whom he had to appease. A baker, the only one in the place, threatened with oaths to withdraw the daily bread. A grocer had become his bailiff. A country tailor, the antipode of the patient Parisian tradesmen, sent the sheriff's office to sell the furniture in the studio, and he would not allow the artist a day's, or even a hair's, grace. Such scenes were repeated over and over during many years.

Taking "such scenes" as the literal facts of Millet's biography, Americans came to perceive his life as one of unrelieved suffering and the artist himself as a martyr bravely resigned to his abject poverty. This was exactly the response Sensier had hoped to call forth from his readers, as evidenced by the following passages:
I have pages written under the impression of his Millet's love of his family and his home, and of the sufferings of his life in Cherbourg and Paris; but the time has not come to say all---so of these sketches written by Millet himself, I will only publish as much as propriety allows. When a whole generation of the present day has passed away, we shall know a corner of Millet's heart which we may not now unveil---his resignation, his knowledge of men, and how much their ignorance of what is good and generous made him suffer.  

Perhaps it may seem that I unveil too much of this secret corner of Millet's life of poverty. But of such a man everything is of value, and to see him always dignified and serene amid the storms of life, meeting his fate by work, calm love of his art, and such persistent self-abnegation, it will be admitted that his poverty ought to raise him in our esteem.

Clearly, the sentimental tone of Sensier's monograph, along with the pathetic anecdotes it contained, promulgated the myth of Millet as a destitute artist whose talents were ignored by his own countrymen. However, as evidenced by the American title of the biography, readers in this country consistently reacted to Millet first as a pitiable French peasant and secondly as a struggling French painter. More than indignation at the neglect Millet suffered as an artist, Americans experienced pity for the plight of the entire social class he represented to them--the French peasantry. One result of this understanding was that subtly, political consciousness began to intermingle with artistic patronage as Americans came to view their artistic preferences and especially purchases...
as ethical acts, and in the case of Millet a means for correcting moral wrongs. This attitude, building throughout the decade, would come to an incisive climax in 1889 with the American acquisition of The Angelus. Another result was a growing social consciousness on the part of Americans concerning the peasant. None of this separated easily from the sympathetic view of Millet and the religious sentiment of the response to his art, in fact, such reactions fostered it.

The appearance of Sensier's monograph in the United States naturally inspired immediate comment from both literary and artistic quarters. It is helpful in understanding the attitudes discussed above to examine this criticism. Of the many reviews written of the biography, one of the most intriguing and insightful was penned by Thomas Gold Appleton. Appleton, who had visited Hunt and Millet at Barbizon during the mid-1850's, while he himself resided in Paris, offered a comparative analysis of French rural and urban life based upon his personal knowledge. Sensitive to ostensible rural morality and innocence, and perceiving these virtues in Millet, he wrote:

Paris takes a man, and from an ingenuous boy who devoutly prayed at his mother's side, shapes the article in Paris, whose glittering insincerity and godless charm are forthwith shipped throughout the world. How Millet
escaped this, Sensier tells us. We can see him recoil, the mother's voice still lingering in his ears, the sweet country life still nestling near his heart, from the tinsel of Vanity Fair, as did Christian in the tale of Bunyan. Men of culture, men of the city, have patronized the peasant. They have combed the dust from his locks and daintily dished him up for courtiers and kings. But in the blood of Millet there was a solemnity inherited from ancestral toil which could not trifle with life, and least of all the life to which it belongs. Therefore his pictures were sermons as well as songs.9

Although an eloquent spokesman for rural life, Appleton only witnessed and did not share in this life. As an educated cosmopolite, he was fully capable of presenting both sides of French agrarian society as he perceived them, that is, its innocence and its pathos. Millet's paintings, he believed, represented the latter:

There was something of both Carlyle and Burns in him, for he celebrated the mystery of woe which attaches a man to the earth and rewards with a crust the endless toil which has no hope from anything that earth can give. Hence the something beyond implied in every picture and the many endurance which does not complain, which have a truer pathos than human nature wrecked in the city.10

In a remarkable argument, Appleton pinpointed the pathetic quality he recognized in Millet's genre imagery as the reason for its sweeping popularity in this country. Analyzing Millet's oeuvre through the condescending biases of class consciousness and national pride, Appleton clearly stated America's role as emancipator of the French peasant:
He [Millet] hoped it [his oeuvre] might quicken the conscience of luxury to the cry of want—that cry which, when it calls itself Socialism, proclaims anarchy as God's solution of the inequality of human conditions. The future of Europe is in these pictures of Millet for that solution is apparently impossible. Nor is it without meaning that from the clear sunshine of America we look at these sad bands of peasants so near the mental level of their fellow workers, the cattle, with an amazed pity; for we are the core of the solution. We know no peasantry. Nature touches with the aristocracy of ownership the poor emigrant as he struggles to our shores. We receive the overplus of the dangerous swarms of Europe, landless and foodless, and make them into men and feed those that are left at home from our overflowing stores. Therefore, America loves these pathetic figures of Millet, these types of a life so foreign to our own, this poetry of poverty, which seems to us quite as sweet as the poetry of affluence and splendor. We love his art, but most of all we love the man for... he is one who teaches while he pleases and in his way a missionary to humanity holding in one bond the prince and the serf who toils on his estate.11

Appleton's identification of Millet as a "missionary to humanity" became the central unifying concept in American criticism of the artist and his works during the first half of the decade. This notion gained particular currency among those artists and writers who had either traveled to France themselves or studied with one of Millet's American pupils in the United States. The American landscape painter, George Inness (1825-1894), for example, had journeyed to Paris in 1854-1855 while Millet was painting Peasant Grafting a Tree;12 it is not known whether
the two artists met, but in 1881 Inness wrote a poetic analysis of Millet's paintings which shared Appleton's thoughts yet replaced that author's political slant with his own personal spiritual sensibility. Referring to Millet as an "artistic angel," he wrote:

His aim was to represent pure and holy sentiments—sentiments which speak of home, of love, of labor, of sorrow, and so on. He is the very first in that class of painters who reproduce such sentiments in their paintings and in his paintings do we find the highest of these sentiments.13

The same heightened language used by Inness can be found in Ednah D. Cheney's memoirs of the same year in which she described her reaction upon meeting Millet at Barbizon. "He was...so grand in his presence that I was reminded of the Greek's answer to the question, 'How did you know that he was a god?' 'Because I was content the moment my eyes fell on him!'"14

The quasi-religious descriptions of Millet and his works disseminated by these writers and artists in 1881 were continued by Helen Bigelow Merriman the following year. A former pupil of Hunt, Merriman delivered art lectures to smaller communities in Massachusetts while Appleton and Cheney wrote for a wider audience in Boston. Speaking before the Worcester Art Society in February, 1882, Merriman presented a lecture clearly inspired by the recent publication of Sensier's monograph. Maintaining
his biographical emphasis, the usual approach to an audience interested in Millet, Merriman began her lecture by stating that there was "singular satisfaction [to be gained] in studying the life and letters of Millet because...his life was pure...." Like Sensier, she sympathetically portrayed Millet's virtuous character by describing his grandmother, now a highly popular figure among those who had read the biography, as "a soul full of passionate devotion [who] was a Catholic Puritan." "The heroic grandmother," Merriman said, "would rather see Millet dead than a renegade to his God among the corruptions of Paris." Maintaining the moralizing tone of her biographical preface throughout the text of her lecture, Merriman offered her audience an analysis of Millet's works which concluded with an urban-rural contrast similar to that put forth the previous year by Appleton:

His art was religious in the best sense. Nor arresting our thought on some single individual like the old pictures of saints and martyrs, but showing us, under the simplest forms, the universal movement of life in the breast of nature. The charm of his pictures lies in the fervent sweetness with which his figures perform the simplest actions, thereby giving them sacramental dignity. No wonder the French public did not understand them. The gulf between them was as wide as between the sacred joys of the fireside and the glare of the boulevard--between the Bible and Gil Blas.

As these authors amplified the religious implications of Millet's "missionary" purpose, other writers began to
to explore its broader ramifications both politically and socially at first in the French context and then by comparison to the American. American writers thus began to perceive Millet's genre paintings as inspiring a new "democratic" sensitivity in art which they believed could hasten humanitarian understandings between foreign countries, particularly France and the United States. An editorial printed in Appleton's Journal while Sensier's monograph was appearing in Scribner's Monthly Magazine placed Millet's genre paintings in the following social context:

Democratic theories and principles are no new things, but genuine democratic sympathies are a development almost of our time; France once politically deified the people, but that was a spasm of demagogism rather than any genuine sympathy with the lower classes; but today there are evidences of a new spirit there. The painter Millet, a peasant himself, has revealed the character, the sorrows, and the struggles of the peasant world; he has challenged its critical attention and awakened everywhere its sympathies. We have long been familiar with the ideal peasant of the ballet, and the romantic peasant of the poets; and we have sometimes caught glimpses in history of ignorant, brutal, and starved masses; but the real peasant, just as he is, lowly but human, bent under many burdens but not without aspirations, has been effectively made known by the pencil of Millet. It is...the latest evidence of the general widening of the human horizon, of the broadening of sympathies, of the coming of the true democracy that shall make the human family all one brotherhood.18
The genuine humanitarian understanding this author believed to be available through a study of Millet's paintings was not as widespread in this country as he may have hoped; for the most part, Americans continued to view the peasant class with either sentimentality or condescension. The task of drawing even the most artificial parallels between French and American rural life had proven nearly impossible for American writers during the 1860's and 1870's, and the formulation of broader, yet more meaningful, comparisons now was equally difficult for them. It was a task that required a special sympathy for, and consciousness of, humanity—sensitivities possessed by singular men, most notably Walt Whitman (1819-1892).¹⁹

In 1882, two years after the editorial quoted above was published, Whitman viewed Millet's paintings for the first time while visiting the home of Quincy Adams Shaw in the company of the sculptor and critic, Truman Bartlett (1835-1923) and the poet and publisher John Boyle O'Reilly (1844-1890).²⁰ Shaw, Whitman later remembered, "had a wonderful collection of curios, gathered in the East, Syria, and Spain; the walls were everywhere covered with paintings; there were swords there too...the most interesting and unusual cutlery;...silks, rich silks, kept in rolls as they keep wallpaper."²¹ As Whitman made his way through Shaw's exotic treasures to another room reserved for his
collection of Millet's paintings, the author said candidly to his companions, "Here you fellows, I want you all to go out and leave me alone. I want to be alone here. They went and so I got an hour or two to myself--the sweetest, fullest, peaceablest; then I saw Millet."\(^{22}\)

The result of Whitman's encounter with Millet appeared in print later that year--the short essay, "Millet's Pictures--Last Items," contained in a collection of works entitled Specimen Days. In the essay Whitman shares his study of The Sower through which he came to understand a political system he had previously held to be indefensible during his argument with Low at Gilder's home in 1878:

I stood long and long before The Sower. Beside this masterpiece, there were many others, all inimitable, all perfect as pictures, works of mere art; and then it seemed to me, with that last impalpable ethic purpose from the artist (most likely unconscious to himself) which I am always looking for. To me all of them told the full story of what went before and necessitated the great French revolution--the long precedent crushing of the masses of a heroic people into the earth, in abject poverty, hunger--every fight denied, humanity attempted to be put back for generations--yet Nature's force, titanic here, the stronger and hardier for that repression--waiting terribly to break forth, revengeful--the pressure on the dykes, and the bursting at the last--the storming of the Bastille--the execution of the king and queen--the tempest of massacres and blood. Yet who can wonder?

Could we wish humanity different?
Could we wish the people made of wood or stone?
Or that there be no justice in destiny or time?
The true France, base of all the rest, is certainly in these pictures. I comprehend Field People Reposing, The Diggers, The Angelus in this opinion. Some folks always think of the French as a small race, five or five and one-half feet high and even frivolous and smirking. Nothing of the sort. The bulk of the personnel of France, before the revolution, was large-sized, serious, industrious as now, and simple. The Revolution and Napoleon's Wars dwarfed the standard of human size but it will come up again if nothing else. I should dwell on my brief Boston visit for opening to me the new world of Millet's pictures. Will America ever have such an artist out of her own gestation, body, and soul?23

Reminiscing on his first introduction to Millet's paintings, Whitman later re-stated his thesis privately when he told the literary historian Horace Traubel (1858-1919):

I said to myself then, I say over to myself now, that I can at last understand the French Revolution—now realize the great powers that lay back of it, explain it—its great far-stretching past. I said to myself then, I can realize now, that there can be no depth of feeling, sympathy, emotional appeal, present in a picture, a painting, anywhere, going beyond these: here is fact incarnate.24

Whitman's insights, transcending the boundaries of nationalism, evidenced the larger lessons concerning the course of civilization he knew Millet's paintings to hold. Yet many of Whitman's contemporaries, particularly art critics, deemed lessons concerning the social history and tradition of a foreign country irrelevant and inappropriate for the American art public and as an area of concern for American artists. By the mid-1880's, when the
initial reaction to Sensier's monograph had subsided slightly, critics began to examine Millet's peasant imagery with more critical eyes and question its propriety as subject matter to be adopted by his younger American admirers. Typifying this viewpoint, Anna Bowman Dodd, writing in The Art Review, 1886, cautioned American genre painters against looking to foreign shores for artistic inspiration:

Even the cleverest among these Europeanized artists fail, in the end, to sustain our interest in their work. The interest flags for two excellent reasons because, in the first place, such French subjects [peasants], unappealing to any personal or national interest, end by palling the taste, and second because the mine has been tremendously overworked. The peasant, the foundry, and factory scenes, the little villages huddled together like sheep, in a word the dealing with familiar rustic and low life subjects, all find ample justification from a French point of view as the direct outgrowth of the noble realism introduced by Breton, Millet, and Jacqu. But such subjects, having no roots in any local, representative, or national soil here, can have little or no meaning to an American public except from the purely objective picturesque standpoint.25

Intensifying her statement, Dodd presented a chauvanistic argument condemning American artists who chose to study abroad and thereby "sell their birthright":

They [American artists] do not look to the right impulses for inspiration, nor do they seek by means of patient investigation to get the true meaning out of the subjects which surround them on every side. The American is nothing if not inventive. As a nation we possess the gift of originality. If our
artists have shown a stunted development on the side of imaginativeness or originality, it is because they have willfully chosen to sell their birthright for foreign importations. They are content with painting and repainting French subjects according to French methods for an American public. And yet, here is our own landscape in all its glory and freshness, its meaning scarcely as yet guessed....The same is true of our life and of our people. The field is almost untouched. America, in relation to art, is still a Sphinx awaiting the idealist who shall read aloud her secrets.26

Responding to Dodd's criticism in the next issue of The Art Review, Helena deKaye Gilder firmly contested Dodd's dismissal of peasant imagery as irrelevant to the American public. On the contrary, deKaye argued that the very lack of a peasant class in this country was the major reason why Millet's genre paintings held telling messages concerning the social history of the United States:

To Millet the peasant is not a wretched object. He is noble in his way and a part of his native land. To us, a people without peasantry, there is something especially moving in these serious, half-conscious beings out of which Europe grew and for which our civilization has substituted machinery.27

While critics such as Appleton, Cheney, Dodd, and Gilder continued to reflect issues concerning Millet's art as they developed at home, Theodore Child, corresponding with American newspapers and journals from his vantage point in Paris, informed the public of events relating to Millet's works as they transpired abroad. In January, 1887, he sounded the opening gun of the forthcoming battle
over The Angelus in an article that appeared in The New York Sunday Sun. His column entitled "American Misses The Angelus Again," briefly related the provenance of the painting including past unsuccessful attempts made by American art collectors to purchase it. In 1881, Cornelius Vanderbilt had offered to buy The Angelus for the sum of $20,000.00 from the Parisian art dealer George Petit. The American collector, however, was bested by two other connoisseurs, Fedor Bey and the French industrialist E. Secrétan, each of whom offered to buy the painting at any price. Because of the two equal bids, Petit determined the owner of the painting through a lottery drawing which Secrétan won. The appearance of Child's article at this time was prompted by John D. Rockefeller's recent offer, cabled to Petit, to purchase the work from Secrétan for $100,000.00. Secrétan, however, replied that he would not sell The Angelus for less than double that amount. Child, bitter at Secrétan's refusal to accept Rockefeller's offer, concluded his article on a sarcastic note that foretold the tone of the imminent conflict:

Two years ago the state of M. Secrétan's financial affairs may have induced him to part with his pictures but at present why should he do so? He is well to do and he has on hand colossal army contracts which will triple his already considerable fortune. But there is another reason why he does not sell. M. Secrétan, deprived of his picture gallery, is a nobody, a simple army contractor, the possessor of a certain number of vulgar millions. M. Secrétan, owner of The Angelus, is a Parisian
celebrity. His pictures give a certain consideration in the eyes of his bourgeois commercial friends who have hitherto looked upon him as slightly crazy. "$60,000.00 for a picture two feet long! Why it is sheer madness!' But now, here comes another man, an American, and we all know how smart and practical Americans are—and this American offers $100,000.00. 'Ah! We are mistaken, perhaps,' reflect the bourgeois friends. And so M. Secrétan triumphs, and jubilates, and soars to the clouds of felicitations and lays to his soul the balm of flattery. He is the owner of The Angelus and The Angelus will, one day be worth $1,000,000 francs. Happy Secrétan!28

Throughout the remainder of 1887, Child kept news of The Angelus before the eyes of the American public. In July, the opening of a Millet exhibition, which included the work, at the École des Beaux-Arts prompted further comment from the critic. Describing the atmosphere at the exhibition in an article that appeared in The Art Amateur, Child informed his readers of the determinant effect American patronage was having upon the speculative pricing of Millet's paintings. Again discussing The Angelus in monetary terms, he wrote:

[Millet] was happy to sell for $600.00 that famous Angelus which cannot be bought for $100,000.00. Unfortunately the exhibition has provoked among the general public in Paris more talk about dollars than about art, and there is little exaggeration in saying that the great attraction of the show is not the presence there of M. Secrétan's Angelus or of M. Van Praet's Shepherdess, or of M. Bischoffsheim's Women Gleaning; it is the fact that three pictures are on exhibiton for which "les Yankess" have vainly offered six-figure prices varying between three and five hundred thousand francs; it is the fact that speculators have made enormous sums by trading these works; it
is the fact announced by the newspapers that the Americans are ready to buy by cable any day the whole lot of 250 pictures, pastels, and drawings at the insurance estimation of $800,000.00.29

Later in the same article, when Child turned from a financial analysis to a critical assessment of Millet's paintings, he renewed certain charges against Millet's technique that had sparked the Hunt-Moore debate in 1875:

Heretical as the opinion may seem, I cannot help maintaining that Millet was a very poor painter, and that the juries of former days, whose duty it was to pay attention to execution, had often good reason to refuse his works. His execution...is coarse, brutal, hesitating, and monotonous. You will observe the same woolly "facture" which makes no difference in the apparent texture of a cotton apron, a stuff dress, corduroy trousers or the wall of a house, but represents all objects with a heavy woolly surface.30

Unlike Moore's sweeping criticism, however, Child's objections to Millet's style were limited to his painting technique. In his opinion, Millet's genuine strengths as an artist rested in his talents as a draftsman:

I feel that color helped him very little in the expression of his thoughts, and that by means of black and white he was able to present completely his ideas and sentiments. What Millet has given us is the drama of rural life, with its gestures, its attitudes and its actions noted exactly, reduced to their simplest expression, and idealized in so far as the vision of the artist inclined him to see the peasants of Barbizon in the roles of ministers performing, as it were, the sacred rites of nature, and, therefore, always insist with a certain solemnity and melancholy. But all this Millet was able to express in his wonderful black and white drawings....31
Returning to The Angelus to support his viewpoint, he compared the finished painting with a preparatory sketch of the composition he had seen earlier in the W. T. Walters collection in Baltimore:

I do not find that the painted picture contains a profounder sentiment or a more powerful charm [than] the drawing of the picture in the collection of Mr. W. T. Walters. [Millet's] strength lies in his broad, symbolic, and somewhat Michelangelesque drawing of the grandiose silhouettes of the sons of the soil in whom he always sees those fallen creatures of whom the Bible speaks, and who are condemned forever to earn their bread painfully by the sweat of their brow. Millet, in short, is great as a thinker and a poet rather than as a painter in the absolute sense of the term.32

In October, Child concluded his coverage of the exhibition, and his criticism of The Angelus, in an article printed in The Atlantic Monthly. Writing from Paris, Child had remained unaffected by the sympathetic atmosphere surrounding Millet's works in The United States that had been initiated by the publication of Sensier's monograph. As a result, he did not share in his compatriots' readings of Millet's works which were brought forth by their associations of his biography with his subject matter. Millet, Child wrote, was "already an old master," and as such, his work had to be assessed on its artistic merits alone:

We are not tempted to pay much heed to anecdotes concerning his moral history. The stronger the fascination of an artist, and the more single and absolute the artistic charm of his work, the briefer need be his biography. When I think of Millet's life at Barbizon, his persistent attachment to the garb, the accent, and even the wooden
shoes of the peasant, his attitude of a patriarch in the midst of his family, his nightly Bible readings, his declared purpose to portray the dignity of agricultural life, and when I see his collected works, and when I analyze the spirit that pervades them, I cannot help but think that there was not a little affectation in the painter's manner of being, just a little theatrical arrangement, a mere suspicion of pose pour la galerie, professional martyrdom.

From this standpoint, Child offered his readers the first complete analysis of The Angelus to appear in American literature. In a telling passage, he predicted the attitude that many of his countrymen would come to share before the end of the decade, that is the rejection of works lacking a literal meaning for them as Americans:

The Angelus is a disappointment. Is this the reputed masterpiece of the great landscapist Millet, of the great painter of peasant life? What are they doing, those two peasants who bow their heads over a basket of potatoes? What time of day is it? Is that meant for an evening sky? An enthusiastic spectator, who has been reading Sensier, professes to hear the angelus bell ringing from the distant village steeple, and refers me to the description of the picture in the catalogue which I refuse absolutely to decipher, animated by a spirit of logic similar to that of the gourmet, who, when he entered a restaurant and the waiter handed him a voluminous bill of fare, replied, 'No, I have come here to eat, not to read!'

As an American, Child perceived the ritual of the Angelus du soir as a cryptic one; yet, although unable to respond to the specific custom as relevant to his own cultural heritage, he was nonetheless cognizant and appreciative of the general religious sentiment generated by the scene:
It is not the most felicitous composition which Millet ever made, and the two figures, whose attitude of prayer has contributed more than anything else to making the picture popular, really contain very little of that simple and impressive eloquence of gesture and silhouette which was the artist's strongpoint. That the work is instinct with religious sentiment is, of course, undeniable; that it appeals immediately and powerfully to the religious sentiments of the spectators is also undeniable; but this only shows that the picture possesses to a high degree qualities and means of attractive that are not primarily artistic.35

Criticizing Millet's painting technique throughout the remainder of his article, Child restated the same objections to the artist's "woolly facture" which he had voiced earlier. Unable to identify artistic merits in any of Millet's works beyond his draftsmanship, Child concluded his essay by identifying what he perceived to be the true character of Millet's 'attraction':

We come...to the conclusion that Millet's work is literary rather than properly artistic. Taking Millet's work as a whole, its chief interest is moral and literary....The qualities which predominated in the man were moral and literary rather than artistic; and it is by the intentions, subjects, preachings of his work that he has finally captivated public attention.36

Disregarding Child's advice to evaluate Millet's paintings as individual art objects, most Americans continued to assess them as extensions of the pathetic incidents they had discovered in Sensier's monograph. Child may not have been "tempted to pay much heed to anecdotes concerning Millet's moral history," but the American
public found them fascinating, and necessary, literary adjuncts to his genre paintings. Diametrically opposed to formal criticism, popular literature perpetuated and strengthened sentimental ties between Millet's biography and his genre imagery. Consequently, parallel to the articles written by Child, a plethora of highly sentimental, narrative essays appeared from the pens of various writers in 1887, the year of Child's article. The majority of these essays may be categorized as American versions, or re-statements, of Sensier's monograph. An excerpt from an article entitled, "Jean-François Millet," which appeared in The Magazine of American History, offers a good indication of the tenor of the literature as well as the type of biographical material this body of writing brought to bear upon popular interpretations of Millet's paintings. Making clear the purpose of the article, the preface to the text reads: "In connection with the masterpieces of Jean-François Millet, every reader will be interested in the following biographical sketch [which] deserves to be put alongside the paintings it describes":

An evening in an indigent peasant's cabin; the poorly clothed children, shivering with cold, returning from school; others, mere infants, cast an apprehensive look into the eating-room and ask why the table is not set. The mother regards them affectionately; her eyes seem to interrogate the husband on his entrance; and he falls despairingly into the rude wooden armchair and rests his head upon
his hands. Today there is nothing to eat in the humble home at Barbizon. The inhabitants of the home are in need of everything. 37

After continuing for some length in this fashion, the article closes: "There is no more touching story than that of this great artist who passed his life in poverty and loneliness. We may say of Millet that he died of his genius, conquered before his time, fallen to earth at the moment when age was only just foreseen, an age that would have been gentle and happy." 38

Within the popular audience, there was one group who looked upon these sentimental accounts of Millet's family life with special fascination—American children. To their delight, they discovered in Millet, who was presented to them as an appealing father figure, "a brave, gentle artist...who drew for children." 39 Appearing in the juvenile periodical St. Nicolas Magazine, 1887, a child's version of Sensier entitled "Millet and the Children," described the artist and his devotion to his family:

After the simple evening meal came the children's hour. There sat Father Millet, his soft, dark eyes shining with merriment, his brave, kindly face all smiles for the grandchildren and the others who, unreprieved, pulled his full black beard or climbed upon his knee to rumple his dark hair. Sometimes he sang jovial old French songs praising the life of the laborer among the vines. But best of all, the children liked Father Millet's pictures. 40
The author, Ripley Hitchcock, illustrated his point with reproductions of carefully chosen paintings by Millet representing the theme of caring for the young. These included the sentimental domestic scene *Feeding the Children: La Becquée* (Pl. 52) and his bucolic representation of a youthful Barbizon shepherdess who leads her flock as she tenderly holds its newest in her arms, *The Newborn* (Pl. 60). The peasants represented in these scenes, Hitchcock told his young readers, were "the happiest people in the world since they were doing God's work and living out-of-doors among beautiful scenery." Before the close of the following decade, these paintings, along with several others by Millet, would take their places among the most popular and widely used teaching tools ever implemented in the American elementary classroom. Children, already responsive to Millet himself as a benevolent personality, were equally receptive to the moral lessons their teachers identified for them in his paintings.

With the 1880's rapidly drawing toward its close and the Secrétan auction, the sentimental current of Millet literature had proven to be a far more pervasive influence determining his popularity here than the formal criticism offered by the professional opinions of Dodd and Child. To the majority of Americans, Millet remained an unsung heroic figure who had borne a life of unrelieved hardship
with dignity. As such, his life was not only re-told in prose but also commemorated in poetry. One example, composed by Graham Tomson, can be found in *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1887:

O Master of the Old and New!
We speak thy name with bated breath;
Thy waking years were all too few.

With airs that erst in Athens blew
Thy toil’s full harvest murmureth,
O Master of the Old and New!

In misty pastures, dim with dew,
Thy sad strong spirit slumbereth;
Thy waking years were all too few.

The forms thy potent pencil drew
On sunset light move strong as Death,
O Master of the Old and New!

The sowing season turns anew,
And toiling man continueth;
Thy waking years were all too few.

Dark Arcus veils thee from our view
On vast, low meadow-lands of Death,
O Master of the Old and New!

Now men their tardy laurels strew,
And Fame, remorseful, sobbing saint,
O Master of the Old and New,
Thy waking years were all too few.42

As I have demonstrated, the popular opinion of Millet and fervent response to his art, up until this point, predicated upon literature concerning the artist’s life rather than the paintings themselves. The American public, however, would soon have an opportunity to formulate further thoughts upon Millet, this time based upon a single work, when *The Angelus* reached this country in autumn, 1889.
Rumors concerning the possible auction of the Secretan collection had been circulated in American newspapers as early as 1887 when the *New York Sunday Sun* carried Child's article which mentioned the possibility that the sale might be held in New York City. When the auction did take place two years later, in Paris on July 1, 1889, Americans eagerly scanned their journals for a full account of the events. Although the Secretan collection was a considerably large one, numbering in excess of one hundred works, attention was focused exclusively upon the bidding for *The Angelus*. The major participants in the rivalry for possession of the work were Ronald Knoedler and a deputation from the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, D.C., James Sutton, representing the American Art Association of New York, and Antonin Proust who was acting on behalf of a consortium of French, Russian, and Danish collectors who wished to purchase the work for the Louvre. To this end, the private consortium had pledged Proust a sum which he hoped would be matched by the French government. Initially, the real bidding rivalry was not between American and French factions, but between the two American organizations, and the bidding of Americans against each other quickly drove up the price of the work. At one point in the auction, the zealous French auctioneer prematurely ceded the work to Proust, who insisted that the Americans be given a fair chance to continue the bidding.
Finally, Proust, triumphing over Sutton, purchased the work for 553,000 francs; his triumph was a short-lived one, however, because the French government refused to allocate the funds necessary to meet his bid, and The Angelus consequently went to Sutton for the price of $110,000.00.43

American newspapers, whose correspondents had witnessed the auction, carried accounts of the event that were far more colorful than straightforward. First describing the provenance of The Angelus as the "alternating property of the creditors of a copper baron, and that of the French government, again the spoil of a patriotic Hebrew of French residence, and at last of a firm of Yankee art dealers," a New York Times correspondent recreated the atmosphere of the auction for his readers:

Nothing can describe the frenzy, the emotional passion of the hour. Yes, perhaps one picture may--the vision of the gambling table at Monte Carlo when a lucky player bids fair to break the bank. At least half of the audience was from Yankeeland. Mr. Carnegie moved about considerably. Mr. Sutton sat quietly near Mr. Montagnac, representing the American Art Association. Mr. Knoedler was in the front side row of the elect with the Corcoran Gallery and soon it was generally known that these gentlemen had arrived by special train and that the engine was smoking in readiness to carry off The Angelus. The Fine Arts Association had an engine--also smoking--for the same purpose and the French looked at these smiling innocents with murderous frowns. And now came The Angelus. Even the man who carried it seemed touched and everyone felt like saying, 'be careful,' but it reached the swinging table safely and there was a moment of repose. Only a second, and a rush was made. Frenchmen said audibly, 'Adieu,' and every man in the room tried to get down
front. So great was the excitement that Mr. Proust came to the battlefield with his own shout of onward and upward and the bidding men looked angry and defiant. Mr. Proust['s] ...sympathetic, aristocratic features became ashy white and tremulous with emotion. Women broke their fans and men threw their hats in the air and down came the hammer....44

With the emotional pitch established by this type of fervent description, the immediate response to Sutton's acquisition of The Angelus was to view the purchase as a symbol of the combined superiority of American wealth, artistic connoisseurship, political tolerance, and, perhaps most importantly, moral rectitude. The New York Times writer, for example, wrote of Sutton's victory:

It was a moment of intense satisfaction for every American to see so young a nation as our own--besides private wealth and appreciation represented by a single bidding--come breast to breast with old Europe for the acknowledgment and purchase of a work of art. One hundred years ago, who could have dreamed of it and even fifty years since, who would have believed it? Perhaps it is best thus, and we can all see The Angelus here without envy and with delight.45

The acquisition of a coveted work by Millet not only fed the artistic self-esteem of this country, but satisfied its democratic instincts as well. Taking very special note of the French government's refusal to support Proust's purchase, a correspondent for the Boston Evening Transcript wrote:

We cannot help but feeling sorry for Mr. Proust, the French fine arts minister whose earnest and patriotic endeavors to secure for the Louvre this celebrated canvas have come to naught through
the shameful political party squabbles which are the curse of France...But if The Angelus must leave France, we are heartily glad that it is to come to the United States where Millet's genius has since the days of William Morris Hunt been truly appreciated. Thank heaven, we have no party here that would dare to oppose buying the work of a dead painter on the ground that he was a peasant or a Socialist.46

Hunt's pioneering patronage, directly mentioned above, was alluded to in other passages that reminded Americans that we recognized Millet's greatness well in advance of his countrymen and helped through our purchases to alleviate his penury while the French remained indifferent. Since we were the first to acknowledge Millet, it was, therefore, only just that his masterpiece reside in this country.

Recalling the tone of Sensier's monograph, a Boston Evening Transcript writer stated:

Poor Millet, whose life was full of hard struggle and who brought up his family with great difficulty would perhaps have wept genuine tears of joy had the French government bought The Angelus from him for one-tenth of the sum it was paid for now. The neglect with which Millet was treated by his contemporaries when contrasted with the admiration that has been lavished upon him since his death is enough to make one feel very skeptical.... The best critic is time but the artist is often left to starve while time is considering his work. Fortunately for painters, there are many people who have money which they are willing to speculate on the verdict of time. Had not Millet met some men of this kind, he would not have been able to paint The Angelus.47

Finally, echoing the skepticism of the Boston correspondent, a critic for The Brooklyn Daily Eagle observed, "Since the French government thinks so highly of Millet, it might seem
a decent act for it to relieve the poverty of his widow who has lost the little cottage at Barbizon where most of the pictures were painted and where he was soundly neglected as long as he could work." 48

The moral aspect involved in the American purchase of The Angelus had a double edge in that the high price paid for the work expiated to the American mind the past sins of neglect committed against Millet while also paying tribute to our religious sensibility. Remarked a New York Sun critic, "Everyone must rejoice that for once all the world stood still listening while an unobtrusive canvas like this was for sale and that a price was paid for this incarnation of purity, love, of humankind that is usually reserved for the dead splendor of jewels. There is a soul still in our money-getting world when so modest, so poetic a work of art can be so highly praised." 49 More pointed comments were elicited from the pens of authors associated with religious journals. One such writer, whose observations appeared in Churchman, August, 1889, praised our high Christian standards of art while castigating a libertine Parisian art public:

...What part or lot has the voluptuous Pompeian (sic) art culture of the Parisian studio and salon with that supremely devout and religious art of which The Angelus stands as an accepted type by all Christiandom? It is a typical and representative picture, side by side with William Holman Hunt's Light of the World. There would be cold cheer for
The Angelus among the miles of battle and carnage and lust that a semi-barbarous civilization has set up along the corridors and salons of the Louvre.

Religious zeal was to be a major aspect of the reception accorded The Angelus when, after a brief exhibition in Paris, it arrived in New York City in November, 1889. For the moment, however, the public found far greater fascination in the obtrusive price appended to the work than the painting itself, and even before its arrival one writer computed the cost of The Angelus per square inch to be $3,500.00. Descriptive headlines in the New York Times such as "The Costliest Modern Painting," kept readers constantly aware that the purchase of The Angelus was our final apogee in a proud history of patronage initiated by William Morris Hunt and sustained and advanced by his friend, Quincy Adams Shaw. Public opinion, however, was somewhat divided over the imposing sum. Certain factions, such as those quoted above, took it as a point of pride while others suspected it to be folly. The nagging suspicion that the American public had been duped into a sentimental reverence for Millet and his works by Sensier's apocryphal stories was voiced by a writer in the New York Commercial Advertiser when he reported:

The widow of the late Jean-François Millet, the painter, is not, it appears, living in poverty as is generally supposed. The Millet house, instead of being a dilapidated hovel, as many would have it, is one of the most
substantial in the village and has about it every appearance of comfort and cheer. The fact that Madame Millet retains in her possession a number of the drawings and sketches of the painter of The Angelus which would doubtless realize a small fortune...is sufficient proof that her needs are not very pressing.52

A more militant voice from the New York Commercial Advertiser announced:

I was recently told by a French artist who knew Millet that the stories of his extreme poverty...were more or less apocryphal. 'He was a peasant, letting his children run wild and without education, but he lived well for a man of his station of life and the money that he made by his pictures...contributed what for him was a handsome income. Moreover, he was very lazy and only painted when he felt inclined, delighted in lying on the grass with his pipe in his mouth more than shutting himself up in his studio.'53

These voices, however, were barely discernable above the blaring trumpets heralding the arrival of The Angelus in New York and the opening of its exhibition at the American Art Galleries on November 17, 1889. The Angelus was not exhibited singly, but served as the focal point of a show entitled, "The Works of Antoine-Louis Barye, His Contemporaries, and Friends," which proved to be a staggering display of French painting and sculpture brought together from American private collections; the proceeds of the exhibition were donated to the Barye Monument Fund in Paris.54 Besides Millet, who was represented by thirty-three works in addition to The Angelus, and Barye,
a pantheon of Barbizon masters such as Jacque, Troyon, Rousseau, and Diaz, were included in the exhibition. The overwhelming size of the show, one-hundred works, proved to Americans that they had conquered the European art market and were fully capable of mounting an exhibition in competition with both the Cent chefs-d'oeuvre des collections Parisiennes held in Paris in 1883 and the more recent retrospective Jean-François Millet, described for them by Child, appearing at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1887. The New York World, for example, proudly announced, "...The most notable of the works of these great painters Millet, Rousseau, Troyon, were to be obtained only in America, and so this exhibition...is the most notable of its kind ever held. It transcends in importance that of the Cent chefs-d'oeuvre held in Paris...and which created a stir in the art world. The present collection, which is quite as comprehensive...could be made nowhere else in this world." The Springfield Republican happily seconded this sentiment, stating, "It is pronounced fully equal to the Paris exhibition and is such a record of power and genius as may well attract thousands of visitors. The effect of abundant and overflowing strength...[is] produced by this whole display." "Comparisons between the two exhibitions," boasted the Boston Sunday Herald, "are profitless after all, for here is an exhibition such
as we are not likely to see again, and its quality is enough for any amateur.\textsuperscript{57}

The Springfield Republican writer was correct in his prediction that the exhibition would attract thousands of visitors, but the majority of these visitors were not as eager to see The Angelus \textit{per se} as they were curious to view a painting that cost $110,000.00. The circus atmosphere surrounding the show as throngs gathered for a glimpse of "the costliest modern painting," is reflected clearly by the advertisements for the exhibition that appeared in the \textit{New York Sun} (Pl. 140, 141). Under the heading of "Amusements," The Angelus shared billing with a county fair and "Doris' Big Eighth Avenue Dime Musem."

The claim of "one hundred masterpieces" stated amid the somewhat light-hearted advertising was a deeply serious one that removed any doubt from the minds of Americans that they had arrived as challengers to France's supremacy as an art-collecting nation and, moreover, were fully equipped financially to buy examples drawn from a lengthy art historical tradition they did not possess as a birthright.

Despite its salutary aspects as a celebration of American patronage of Barbizon art, the exhibition was deemed by some critics as overblown and, therefore, self-defeating. In October, 1889, Alfred Trumble, editor of the New York journal \textit{The Collector}, aptly described the show
as a "veritable embarrassment of riches." "It proves," he wrote, "the familiar boast that America owns more master pieces of French art than France herself. One's only complaint against the exhibition must be that there is too much of it." He continued, likening the galleries to "overstocked salesrooms where confusion is dizzying, cases, and stands of shelves groan under the burden of a multitude of objects from which the eye gladly seeks relief." Above the confusion, The Angelus reigned in comparative serenity, isolated in its own gallery. It was not, however, without its own opulent trappings. Described by a New York correspondent in the Boston Sunday Herald, November, 1887, these were indeed overwhelming:

The Angelus is here exhibited with theatrical pomp and ceremony. The upper galleries of the American Art Association are richly draped with dark red velours, but in the last gallery the draping has been carried to an extreme at the end where The Angelus is enshrined. It is the only picture at that end where it appears like a small island on a sea of red. It is enthroned as it were against a canopied background with heavy fringes and tassels above. The plush covered rope keeps the impious at a distance. A niche on one side contains a touching emblem of aestheticism--a cluster of lilies in a bronze vase. At the 'press view' two uniformed firemen were on guard beside the picture which remained for a long time covered with a white cloth. Finally the cloth was withdrawn and the representative of the association who was present called upon us to do reverence.59

Descriptions of the gaudy exhibition of The Angelus, appearing daily in American newspapers, whetted the curiosity
of readers and attracted them to the gallery in droves. Yet the bombastic claims surrounding the entire exhibition, and particularly *The Angelus* itself, also had a perverse effect upon the popular audience. After reading the descriptions printed in advance of the public opening of the exhibition, many people were disappointed by what they actually saw at the American Art Galleries. To the American public, who had naturally equated a large price with a large picture, *The Angelus* appeared, first and foremost, too small. In the tradition of great American showpieces, as a writer from the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, November, 1889, explained, "the visitors expected to see a panorama of Bunker Hill or the Battle of Gettysburg."

Verifying this writer's conclusion, one irascible citizen, irked by the suspicion that he had been cheated, stated to Minna Smith, a *Boston Evening Transcript* correspondent, "It seems to me that fifty cents is a good deal of money to pay just to see *The Angelus* and I do not feel that I am getting the good of it." Observing the reactions of the crowd, an anonymous correspondent for the same newspaper, writing on January, 1890, confirmed their disillusionment:

> They seem to begin a sort of calculation of the ratio of the price to the surface of the picture as if the value of a masterpiece was estimated by the square inch and as if a big price involved a big picture. If oil paintings were really sold by the inch, how the canvases of our painters who paint for dollars and cents would begin to grow. Pictures would presently be sold by the acre instead of by the inch.
Further, lamented another critic, Emily Selinger, in the same newspaper:

One involuntarily listens for the sound of the bell that thus calls to prayer but instead of the sound that for ages has gathered tired hearts to communion, one hears a rasping voice saying, 'Well, it beats me! I do not see the $125,000.00 in that mite of canvas.'

A larger problem compounding the American public's dissatisfaction with The Angelus, however, was their innate inability to comprehend the foreign aspects of the subject matter. Proving my contention that literary supports were integral factors in the interpretation and acceptance of Millet's works in the United States, many gallery visitors were bewildered when confronted by the painting alone. Imaginative interpretations appended to the scene by uninformed viewers ranged a search for potato bugs to two "anglers" about to dig for bait. Disgruntled critics in various newspapers reported these and other comments they overheard with both amusement and dismay. In the New York Sun, December, 1889, for example, a reporter ruefully stated:

People come to the gallery and inquire, 'Where's that angel picture? Where do you keep it?' The pronunciation of the name stumps numerous visitors. 'An-gel-lus,' 'An-gee-lus,' 'Ain-jel-lus,' while Millet's name becomes everything from 'Milly' to 'Meelett.' This sort of thing used to embarrass the attendants but they have got so that they keep a straight face through pretty nearly everything. Almost as comical are the mistakes made by the spectators as to the meaning of the picture. It would break
Millet's heart to know some of these. One apparently cultivated woman came in the other day and sat down in a chair beside a girl who sells catalogues at a table in front of The Angelus. 'That a love subject?' remarked the woman. 'Yes, and I think it so beautiful,' she continued, 'just see how modest the young woman is.'

Even in their misinterpretations, Americans were admirable in their ability to find moral lessons in Millet's paintings, as Minna Smith discovered. Recording a conversation which she overheard at the exhibition in the Boston Evening Transcript, January, 1890, she wrote:

A fat old lady in an Indian shawl, with a dutiful daughter carrying a handbag stopped before The Angelus. 'Let me go and get one of the books about The Angelus,' said the girl. 'No, the picture explains itself,' said the madam; 'it's plain to see that it's a love scene. And I want you to notice, Molly, how nice and modest the young lady act.'

The far-sighted Alfred Trumble, anticipating the needs of the American public, and learning a lesson from their fervent reception of Sensier's monograph, provided visitors to the exhibition with a literary companion to The Angelus entitled Painter of the Angelus: A Study of the Life, Labors, and Vicissitudes of Jean-François Millet. In its sentimental tone and biographical emphasis, the pamphlet took its cue from Sensier, but Trumble, mindful that he was writing specifically for an American audience, was careful to elucidate the subject matter of The Angelus in terms possessing cultural relevance for his readers. He
accomplished this by quoting examples of the Angelus theme in American literature, Washington Irving's The Alhambra (1832) and Bret Harte's "Angelus" (1868), thereby enabling his readers to make associations between the French painting and their own native literary traditions. Prefacing his quotations of The Alhambra, Trumble drew parallels between Millet and Irving as artists, stating, "One must study it [The Angelus] and return to study it again, with fixed attention, mindful of the artist's purpose and the dignity and solemnity of the rite of The Angelus— that rite which a great American painter in words, Washington Irving, describes so beautifully in The Alhambra. 67

Turning from a literary to a biographical explanation of the work, Trumble reinforced the American sentimental reverence for Millet's works through his essay, "The History of The Angelus." In part, it read:

One melancholy afternoon, in the year 1859, when rains were dripping over Barbizon and puddling its unpaved streets—those neglected lanes of a neglected French village—a depressed and gloomy man sat at his easel in a little cottage which served him as a studio, and put the finishing touches onto a picture with a faltering hand. In the sad grey light of the cheerless room, with the wild weather knocking at the door, this canvas made a golden glimmer. The eye of the painter, resting on his work, could travel in it through the walls of his narrow room, out over the plains of Barbizon...and, by one of those contradictions of fancy, convert the mournful tinkle of the rain...into the chime
of the distant belfry, sounding the call to evening prayer, and like the humble listeners of his own creation, the painter, sick of toil and sore of heart, lowered his brooding eyes and murmured the conventional response to the fairy bell call of his fancy--'Angelus Domini nuntiauit Mariae.' Out of doors the field stretched, sodden and lifeless, under the sullen sky. Here was another field, vast and serene, warmed by the mellow kiss of the departing day with the village church tower on the horizon....The man, facing the spectator, bowed his head over his rude hat, held in his hand as in centuries past...for the invocation of prayer. The woman...prayed with clasped hands. At the man's side was his fork, the emblem of his duty, planted in the ground, and pervading the whole simple composition, like the glow of sunset itself, was a profound and touching religious sentiment--the sentiment of a devotion superior to the distresses of the body--that lifted even these poor toiling souls above their lives of anguish, weariness, and incessant need. His [Millet's] life was like the lives of those he painted. He too was a potato digger to whose existence of the narrow-est necessity the bells of the Angelus alone brought a gleam of hope.68

As in the past, Americans responded readily to literary addenda to Millet's paintings; and, holding Trumble's interpretation before them as they viewed The Angelus, it was not surprising that they reacted to the work with combined pity and awe. This was, emphatically, a reaction inspired more by Trumble's words than Millet's painting; a point ably demonstrated by the comments of viewers quoted above who had not read the pamphlet. Maintaining Trumble's biographical emphasis in his own interpretation of the painting, a correspondent for the
Worcester Daily Spy wrote to his readers at home in December, 1889:

The Angelus glowed like the star in the east. The infinite pathos of this picture is enhanced by the artist's life and death at Barbizon where in the daily struggle for food and shelter, he wrought out his sublime work and sold it for a song....The sentiment and tragic interest were not alone pictured in his imagination. He painted them from life, the life he knew and shared and suffered; and, his peasants bow to The Angelus as he bowed to Fate and died.69

Establishing that he too was inspired by "the very interesting little book sold in the galleries, The Painter of the Angelus," a visitor to the exhibition wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Evening Post, December, 1889, stating:

...The Angelus is surrounded by the other beautiful pictures like a queen attended by her maids reigns supreme. To me it seems its chief charm, making it a prayer, as act of faith in the Incarnation, a carrying out of the rule, ora et labora, and all the more because the expression of any such sentiment is very unusual in any picture of the nineteenth century.70

In the light of Trumble's pamphlet, the painting that some had viewed as a search for fishing bait or a rural marriage proposal was likened to Raphael's Sistine Madonna (1513), a "painted poem," and a "sermon that a deaf man can hear."71 Extracting both pathetic and religious aspects from The Angelus, an editorial in the Chicago Sunday Interocian, January, 1890, explained the painting
as a reaffirmation of the religious faith of the French peasant, faith that was the only saving grace of his pathetic lot:

He [Millet] was of peasant origin, a peasant himself, fully in sympathy with the peasant character which sees little hope ahead except that beyond the grave. He knew perfectly the stolid indifference of the peasant to his earthly surroundings, accepting good fortune and ill with the same matter of fact indifference and the same unchanging countenance. Millet sought to picture the one incident in peasant life that drives away this indifference and lights up the features with the glow of sentiment...He has told the pathetic story most beautifully. He has found the perfect type of devotion in the woman. In the features and the attitude of the man there may be less of that complete surrender because of his more sturdy and stolid nature.

Continuing his analysis of *The Angelus* from the standpoint of an American Catholic, this writer perceived the peasant woman as representative of the combined virtues of American Motherhood and the Madonna:

We place the wife and mother on the highest point of perfection in religion. The mother is the religious teacher in the home whoever may direct the children in other knowledge. The wife is almost invariably and universally the leader in that which pertains to religious sentiment. Americans, more than any other people, exalt the woman and make her the superior in matters of faith. They have more clearly come to understand this superior quality of woman. In *The Angelus* they will find the woman the instinctive and absorbed devotee the instant the bell calls to prayer and the man following her as much inspired by her devotion and his love for her as his acknowledgment of his independence upon the supreme being. We
give to the woman the highest place in religion
as the devout Catholic gives to the Virgin Mary. 73

With the dissemination of Trumble's pamphlet and
interpretations based upon it, the crowds at the American
Art Galleries began to approach The Angelus with a rever­
ential attitude. The New York Times, December, 1889,
reported that, "...the gesture of uncovering the head comes
to you unconsciously, instinctively, just to bow the face
like that honest fellow and yonder good woman and there
to wait until that village bell far off in the horizon
shall cease to sound"; 74 a similar reaction was noted in
the New York Sun, also dating December, 1889: "Young
women, evidently servant girls, stop for a long time in
front of the picture, and before they go, reverently bow
their heads and make the sign of the cross or seem to be
telling their beads. It is not alone Catholics who
are thus influenced by the picture. There are several
Protestant clergymen who make frequent trips to the
gallery...." 75

As stated by the New York Sun correspondent, The
Angelus was hailed by both Catholic and Protestant leaders
alike as representative of their faiths. In Catholic
periodicals, Donahoe's Magazine and The Ave Marie for
example, reproductions of the work appeared accompanied by
poems and essays discussing the observance of the angelus
du soir as it was practiced in foreign countries possessing
large Catholic populations, most notably Italy and Ireland. The proselytizing effect Catholic writers hoped the work would have in America was noted by an anonymous author in The Ave Maria:

...The sound of the evening Angelus comes floating through the balmy air. So natural and lifelike is the scene that many on beholding it have exclaimed: 'Why, we can almost hear the bells!' May the subject which The Angelus portrays, and which is so happily forced upon the notice of the beholder, be the means of recalling many to the grand old Faith which their forefathers so loved and practiced, and of reminding the Christian soul of one of the most beautiful devotions of the Church!

While Millet's biography was held up to American Catholics in The Ave Maria as "an example to the young...who fancy that the glare of electric lights and the luxuries of the city are worth the sacrifices of being true to themselves," American Protestants heard the same narrative recounted from the pulpits of their churches by ministers who identified Millet as an "imperious Puritan." A prominent instance was the Reverend Wesley Reid Davis' sermon, "The Angelus: A Word Picture of the Work of Art," delivered at the Reformed Church on the Heights, Brooklyn, New York, in November, 1889. Published as a pamphlet and reprinted in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, November 18, 1889, the sermon became one of the most widely read interpretations of The Angelus offered by a religious leader in this country. Davis' opening remarks reveal that information
concerning Millet's biography was viewed as a necessary adjunct to his works in this country, addenda which almost superceded the importance of the paintings themselves: "Before we think together of the significance of this gospel in color," he told his congregation, "let us, for the sake of winning a mood of mind and a reverence of heart, forget the picture and look into the face of the artist." After describing Millet as the "apostle of the peasants, the evangelist of the fields," whose life "combined the courage of a martyr with the meditativeness of a hermit," Davis read his audience a biographical sketch of Millet. This sketch was culled largely from Wheelwright's article, "Personal Recollections of Jean-François Millet," which had appeared in The Atlantic Monthly in 1876, and its inclusion in Davis' sermon demonstrated the enduring influence Millet's American pupils had upon literary interpretations of his works in this country.

Turning from Millet to The Angelus itself, "with sympathies quickened for the man who painted it," Davis continued:

The Angelus makes...an appeal which should bring a heathen to his knees. It is a picture which silently demands the surrender of the soul because other souls are reverently drawing nigh to God. As we yield ourselves to the charm of these two simple peasants we are taught the way into the secret place of the Highest. Clothed with humility, yet full of trust, they have found their Father.
Rather than dwell upon the specific ritual portrayed, an emphasis appropriate for Catholic viewers, Davis identified a broader theme in the painting which was of greater relevance for his congregation:

The Angelus preaches prayer. The last lesson of this picture is a lesson which perhaps we may not see at first and yet is there. It is the touch of the Infinite upon the peasant which makes him rise in stature and pulls him out of his poor environment. They stand before us in the atmosphere of the Eternal; they are transformed by something unseen at first. It drifts across the horizon—It is the Infinite which has touched them.82

Concluding his sermon, Davis exhorted his congregation:

Let us put ourselves into the magnificent sweep of this power of prayer, that when for us the daylight fades, when for us the great shadows descend toward the plain; when work is over and rest is earned, we may have abundant entrance into the higher heavens. Passing the gates of sunset, under the wings of Seraphim, may we be drawn unto Him who will welcome prayer from us no more, but only praise; praise that shall go forever in the Song of the Redeemed.83

Davis' highly celebrated sermon drew quick responses from those who read it in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. Commenting on it in a letter to the editor, one anonymous reader, commending Reverend Davis for demonstrating the difference between "the art and heart critic," wrote:

The picture lives, yes lives, for to the Reverend, it is evidently...a warm, bright, living, speaking thing of beauty and joy that lifts and transports him away, above and beyond the mere mortal things of this life. Thank God for all those pictures of paint,
pencil, or of words that lift us out of our narrow selves and teach us the lesson that there is indeed one on high who listens, hears, and answers....84

The fervent piety stimulated by the religious theme of The Angelus pervaded the atmosphere surrounding its exhibition in America; yet equally formidable was the awe inspired by the amount of money expended on the purchase of the work. Even when The Angelus was interpreted as the apogee of Christian faith, the price of the work was not far from the minds of writers. One such reporter stated in the Boston Evening Transcript, October, 1890:

Really, the glamour of all these ten's of thousand's of dollars is not a favorable light through which to see the picture. To the sensitive eye easily affected by its environment, it has something of the effect of painting the lily. It is hard to clear the picture from the color of gold which is quite other than the golden color which gleams in its sky and gilds the garments of the poor peasants.85

It was the value of gold, that is the monetary, rather than artistic, worth of The Angelus which ultimately triumphed in 1890. In January of that year, following an abortive attempt on the part of a private contingency to purchase the work for the Metropolitan Museum in New York City, Sutton sold The Angelus to Alfred Chauchard, a French collector who later bequeathed the painting to the Louvre. By this time, the celebrated painting had spent itself in America, as was aptly stated by a Boston Evening Transcript correspondent:
The bore that Millet's Angelus has become with
with its infinity of reproductions illustrates
the evil of magnifying a really good thing out
of its proper proportions. It was never a
picture to be treated as it has been treated--
made a rage and Barnummed around the world as
if it were some startling thing of unparalleled
curiosity instead of a sober homey picture of
purely sentimental interest. Admiration passed
into enthusiasm; and then that calamity...took
place; the injudicious and hordes of notoriety
worshippers who begin to praise loudly what they
see the judicious praising, not because they
know but because they want it to be thought
they know--began to join the chorus. The envy
of men who want to possess great pictures just
for the sake of saying that they are theirs,
just as the blind sultan might keep adding
beauties to his harem, was inflamed. Then it
was all over with the proper function of the
homey little Angelus.86

Another writer, whose column appeared in Harper's New
Monthly Magazine at the time of the sale expressed a fear
which had been voiced intermittently since the American
purchase of The Angelus the previous year, namely, the
persistent suspicion that the American public had been
swindled in some way:

There was never so costly a picture as The
Angelus of Millet exhibited in this country.
A progression of pilgrims was constantly
ascending the stairs and...arrived at last
at the curtained shrine of Millet's most famous
work. But how many of us observed the cynic
who sat smiling....How many heard his extra-
ordinary remark that it was 'all a fad--a funny
fad?'. Could he have meant that the most eager
and pressing throng had never heard of Millet
and knew not of Angelus from Bacchus? Could
he have meant that the spectacle was not due to
love of art but to servility of fashion? Above
all, could he have intended to insinuate that
we were all victims of an advertising genius?
Was the public sense Barnumbed (sic) so that...
we must do whatever the magnetizer willed?
Perhaps the great picture was carried up in the bidding at the sale in Paris to such a price that the news was dispersed through Christendom the next morning suggested a financial enterprise. If that were so, the long procession of spectators was not that of devotees to a shrine of a crowd to a circus. The renown of the picture in that case was merely the notoriety due to ingenious advertisement. 87

Regardless of whether or not Americans believed they had been cheated at the Secretan Auction, their triumph at the sale continued to be a point of pride, and although The Angelus returned to France, its spirit remained here evidenced by the body of literature it and reproductions of it continued to inspire during the 1890's. We did not retain The Angelus, but our acquisition of it had provided Americans with a unique opportunity to see themselves simultaneously as international art patrons and charitable benefactors of the French peasantry, as represented by Millet. Holding ramifications for the religious, patriotic, and artistic sectors of our society, the purchase of The Angelus had further allowed Americans to witness the fuller cultural powers of their nation as they were brought to bear upon Millet's painting.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

1 Helena deKay, "Jean-François Millet: Peasant and Painter," Scribner's Monthly Magazine 20 (September, 1880), p. 733. The Gilders' trip abroad is mentioned in the Eaton-Gilder correspondence, Gilder Papers. On September 23, 1879, Eaton advised Gilder, "If you are in the country, don't be afraid to make the acquaintance of men and women peasants. They are always delighted to hear about America."

2 deKay, ibid.


4 Ibid., p. 733.

5 Ibid., p. 736.

6 Ibid., p. 107.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 109.


10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 George Inness was a New York artist who began to exhibit at the National Academy of Design in 1844. In 1847
he made his first journey to England and Europe, returning in 1850. In 1854 he traveled to Paris and, returning home the following year, he established a studio in Medfield, Massachusetts. Although a contemporary of the Hudson River School painters, Inness' landscapes, imbued with a personal mysticism, remained highly subjective interpretations rather than literal transcriptions of the scenes he portrayed. For further information, see Nicolai Cikovsky, George Inness. New York: Praeger, 1971, and LeRoy Ireland, The Works of George Inness: An Illustrated Catalogue Raisonne. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965.

13 George Sheldon, American Painters with One Hundred and Four Examples of Their Work (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1881), p. 34.

14 Cheney, Gleanings in the Field of Art, p. 269.


16 Ibid., p. 3.

17 Ibid., p. 8.


19 The association of Whitman and Millet occurred at least twice in nineteenth century American literature concerning the artist. In 1889, for example, Eaton stated in his article, "Jean-François Millet," The Century Magazine, that Millet reminded him of Whitman in his "large and easy manner." In 1897, Henry C. Merwin, inspired by Eaton's article, published an essay entitled "Millet and Whitman" in The Atlantic Monthly, in which he continued comparison:

Walt Whitman is the only author yet produced in this country or any other, who has perceived what democracy really means and who has appreciated the beauty and heroism in the daily lives of the common people. Millet troubled himself not about political theories or forms of government, but his whole life was devoted to the representation upon canvas of those same
qualities of everyday beauty and heroism which were the delight and the study of Walt Whitman. An appropriate line from Whitman's prose or verse could easily be found to put beneath every one of Millet's pictures. Millet had none of the egotism and conceit of Whitman, he was more religious by nature and he had an exquisite sense of form and proportion. But Whitman had a true eye for artistic effort; he had indeed the eye of a painter.

In his work with Walt Whitman at Camden, Horace Traubel recorded Whitman's own frequent observations on Millet: Yes! There's Millet—he's a whole religion in himself: the best of democracy, the best of all well-bottomed faith, is in his pictures. The man who knows Millet needs no creed. If I had stopped to ask, 'what's the use?' I never would have written the leaves [Leaves of Grass]. Who knows, Millet would not have painted picture (sic)! The leaves are only Millet in another form—they are Millet that Walt Whitman has succeeded in putting into words. Millet is my painter; he belongs to me. I have written Walt Whitman all over him. How about that? Or, is it the other way around? Millet is our man, we must make the most of him.

Comparing Millet to American artists, Whitman stated: We need a Millet in portraiture--a man who sees the spirit but does not make too much of it--one who sees the flesh but does not make a man all flesh, all of him body. Eakins almost achieves this balance--almost--not quite! Eakins errs in the direction of the flesh.

The historian Richard Bucke, a friend of Whitman, drew up the following list of parallels between the lives of the artist and the author, which Traubel also recorded:
1. Both born and brought up near the sea which exerts a profound influence on the mode of thought and feeling of each.
2. Millet's books in youth were the Bible and Virgil; Whitman's were Homer and Shakespeare.
3. Each born of country people and always stuck to these in preference to the city and polished folk.
4. Each strangely affected by a wreck at sea near his home in his childhood.
5. Millet left the country early and went to Paris. Whitman left the country early and went to New York.

7. The time that Millet, Le Grand Rustique, revealed himself for the first time in 1850 (thirty-six years old—born 1814) in The Sower, which was hailed by at least one critic as a fine and original conception; the time Whitman came out in 1855 (thirty-six years old) with the first edition of Leaves of Grass, which was hailed by Emerson as a fine and original conception.

8. Fate of both: constant neglect varied by fierce attacks, relieved by the passionate faith and friendship of a few.

For further information on Whitman's opinion of Millet or Bucke's comparisons, see Horace Traubel, With Walt Whitman at Camden (Boston: Small and Maynard, 1906), pp. 63-83.

20. Truman Bartlett was a sculptor and critic who worked in New Haven and Boston. He was also the instructor of modelling at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and in 1882 he published The Art Life of William Rimmer. In 1889 Bartlett went to Barbizon to obtain material regarding the life and career of Millet. Writing to Judge Mellen Chamberlain on March 23, 1889, he commented:

I am now copying and translating over 600 letters written by Millet to Sensier his biographer. Over one hundred are contained, in parts, in the life of Millet. Some of these, not included in the life, and in connection with other new material, I shall publish in Scribner's Magazine. All the letters written to Sensier by Millet and some others of equal importance, I mean to publish in book form. Now these 500 letters belong to the heirs of Sensier who live here and they wish to sell them. They have no price and no idea of their value as far as making a price is concerned.

On August 3, of the following year, he wrote once again to the judge:

These letters, together with the fragments of about 150 in Sensier's life of Millet, make a pretty complete life of Millet by Millet himself. I copied them all. What the owners will do now I do not know nor do I know the fair value of the letters. The Millet family and also the owners of the letters have the idea that every word...
about Millet is worth its weight in angel's tears and that Americans will give such return for even the pleasure of speaking his name.

Unpublished correspondence, Chamberlain Autograph Collection, Rare Book Room, Boston Public Library. The material which Bartlett mentions in his letters to Judge Chamberlain was published as "Barbizon and Jean-François Millet," Scribner's Magazine, 7 (May, 1890), pp. 531-555, pp. 735-755. John Boyle O'Reilly, a friend of both Whitman and Bartlett, was an Irish immigrant who rose to prominence in Boston when he purchased the Pilot, an influential Irish-Catholic newspaper. In addition to his activities as a spokesman for Irish-Catholic communities in New England, he was also a poet who wrote the following works: Songs from Southern Seas, 1873, Songs, Legends, and Ballads, 1878.

22. Ibid.
24. Whitman qualified his understanding of rural life and its political aspects when he admitted to Traubel: "On one point I am not as well understood as I would wish to be; as to the old feeling of pride in the rustic because he Millet was rustic--Burns, Millet, and Whittier. I do not share that pride myself. Whatever it may be, it is not modern--is not equilarge with the newer meanings of civilization." Traubel, With Walt Whitman in Camden, p. 89.
26. Ibid.
Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid., p. 507.

Ibid., p. 510.

Ibid., p. 515.

Ibid., p. 512.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 176.


Ibid.

The cost of The Angelus was increased further by the American tariff of 10% which was imposed during the nineteenth century upon all imported works of art, and Sutton's purchase of the painting raised the issue of whether or not the taxation should be allowed to continue. A number of writers addressed the question in many newspaper columns during the summer of 1889. For example, the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, July 28, 1889, carried the following pro-tariff comments:

Mr. Sutton...hopes to obtain an act of Congress remitting the custom duties which he will have to pay on his picture. The fifty-first Congress is composed of statesmen who will do nothing to diminish the measure of protection which the present tariff affords American artists. It is a well-known fact that we have a large supply of domestic Millets and the business of purchasing the products of foreign Millets must be discouraged. If a luxury like painting should not be taxed, nothing should be taxed.

Arguing the other side of the issue, the New York Commercial Advertiser, July 17, 1889, replied:

In other countries, the presence of noble works of art, whether painting or sculpture, are held to be a means of education and most refining and civilizing influences. They are thought to be so desirable in Italy, where they abound, that there is a penalty for taking them out of the country, not bringing them in. The most intelligent Americans have sought in every way to stimulate the production of such works here to aid the struggling genius by supplying
means of education in art, among which none are more effective and inspiring than masterpieces of great artists. It is to see and study such works that many an American student at the utmost sacrifice strives to pass a year in Europe. Returning home, he finds the exclusion of pictures by famous foreign artists is a lessening of resource and opportunity to the American which renders the production of worthy pictures and the development of American art more and more difficult. Artists and art lovers, therefore, have formed the National Free Art League, the object of which is to relieve American art, a term which includes knowledge, taste, and appreciation of art, of the immense disadvantages under which it labors by the heavy penalty of art. It is not, as they say, a protective tax, because the increase of prices of foreign works of art will not benefit domestic production.

Finally, representing the sentiments of his artist colleagues, the painter William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) wrote his comments in an article entitled "The Angelus: American Artists Think It Well Worth the Effort to Get It," which appeared in both the New York Commercial Advertiser, August 1, 1889, and the Boston Evening Transcript, August 2, 1889:

It is out of the question to say just what such a picture is worth. It commands the admiration of artists all over the world, and the painter who made it is dead. Manifestly the former pride is no criterion of its pecuniary value. Why, The Sower, for which Mr. Vanderbilt paid $25,000.00 was one of three paintings, all important, which Millet gave for a year's rent. To us, in America, at any rate, The Angelus is worth all it costs. If, as a matter of business, the price was expanded, I do not see that it differs much from other trades. At all events it is a privilege to get it. I wish the United States government would have an agent abroad instructed to take advantage of any such opportune bargains whenever they occur in Europe. No expenditure of money would contribute more to the education of the people and the elevation of popular taste. I am glad it [the purchase of The Angelus] directs our attention anew to the iniquitous customs duty on works of art. Our artists ask for no protection. We are obliged to compete with the best in the world and expect to have to do so. If the owner of the picture can get it through
the custom house without paying duty, I shall rejoice. You may safely say that the artists are pleased to have the opportunity of studying The Angelus here and value it as an important picture by an acknowledged modern master.

For further articles discussing the tariff issue in relation to the American acquisition of The Angelus, see:


54 Although Americans were eager to view The Angelus at the exhibition, they were not as anxious to see the proceeds donated to the Barye Monument Fund. Wrote one correspondent for the Boston Evening Transcript, January 15, 1890:
The appeals to the New York public to lend their financial aid to erect the Paris memorial to the sculptor were received with some patriotic retorts. Why should New Yorkers be asked to help build a monument to Barye in Paris? Would it not be more patriotic and more sensible for us to give money to the fund to build the memorial arch in Washington Square to commemorate the celebration last year? Or if we must honor some artist, is not Copley, Trumbull, Hunt, Stuart, or Fuller more deserving of our attention and of our money for a statue than Barye?


64. Ibid.; also, see "Letters to the Editor," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 20, 1889.


66. Smith, "Humors of the Barye Show."


68. Ibid., p. 8.


"Editorial," Chicago Sunday Interocian, January 26, 1890.

Ibid.


"Curious Ideas Before The Angelus."


Ibid., p. 86.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

"Timely Topics," Brooklyn Daily Eagle, November 30, 1889.

"The Listener," Boston Evening Transcript, October 22, 1890.

"The Listener," Boston Evening Transcript, January 27, 1890.

"Editor's Easy Chair," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 8 (April, 1890), p. 801.
CHAPTER IX

The interest, and curiosity, in Millet's biography and art that was sparked by the exhibition of The Angelus did not pass unnoticed by Eaton and Low; as New York residents in 1889, they too experienced the impact of the events at the American Art Galleries, as well as the related literature, with particular force. Countering the sentimental-religious criticism of Millet stimulated by the exhibition, Eaton published two of his own contributions to Millet literature in 1889. One, appearing in The Century Magazine, was entitled "Recollections of Jean-François Millet," and the other, included in a series of essays entitled Modern French Masters, was called simply, "Jean-François Millet." These works, straightforward accounts of Eaton's experiences at Barbizon and his friendship with Millet, were popular among readers because, while the essays omitted Sensier's sentimental tales of Millet's poverty, they retained the French author's narrative structure, an aspect of Millet literature Americans had come to depend upon. Recognizing the difficulties Americans experienced in attempting to relate to Millet's
peasant lifestyle, Eaton identified Millet with a famous American and cast him in the role of a more familiar typology:

He reminded me of Walt Whitman in his large and easy manner. 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 farmers or the country people of America.¹

Eaton's two memoirs, however, were to be his final contributions to the popularization of Millet and his art in this country. In 1890, with only six years of his brief life remaining, he returned to his native Montreal where he painted a final series of portraits representing distinguished Canadians.² His return to Montreal at the end of his career finds a parallel in Hunt's life because he too returned to his agrarian origins after a successful career as a portraitist; and, as Hunt's tour of rural Massachusetts had inspired Plowing, 1876 (pl. 124), Eaton's homecoming prompted his final statement as a genre painter, Plowing: Eastern Townships, 1894 (Pl. 142).

The marked similarities shared by the two compositions suggest that Eaton may have seen Hunt's work at some point, although this remains a matter of speculation. Like Hunt, Eaton presents a broad landscape vista that divides the composition into two horizontal bands of earth and sky. Eaton, as Hunt before him, sets within a
landscape anonymous farmers who methodically plow their field with horsedrawn implements. Silently, Eaton's farmers make their way across the field as they follow diagonal paths. The careful measure of their steps as they plow the field is carried into the composition through the balance of the farmer and his team in the foreground against a diminutive, identical group in the background. Maintaining the quiet harmony and stability characteristic of his genre paintings, Eaton presents man in accord, rather than competition, with nature.

The spacious landscape and the rustic subject matter of Plowing: Eastern Townships prove that Eaton had learned his lessons from Millet well, but the painting also demonstrates that Eaton, like Hunt, used only those qualities in Millet's works that suited his sensibilities. Plowing: Eastern Townships, although a scene of manual labor, seems to have been inspired by reverie rather than activity as it evokes the past life Eaton had known at Philipsburg and had remembered through Millet's Barbizon genre scenes. The reverie theme had been strong in Eaton's oeuvre, inspiring his two major genre paintings, Harvesters at Rest, 1876 (Pl. 102), and The Harvest Field, 1884-1885 (Pl. 136), and that attitude is carried into this final work. Labor is depicted, but it is depicted from a distance and as Eaton's last glance at his own agrarian
past, a heritage that had been kept alive for him through his contact with Millet, his years at Barbizon, and his periodic returns to Philipsburg.

The early 1890's was marked not only by Eaton's return to Canada but Low's departure from New York as well. In 1892, Low received his long awaited public commission when he was appointed to decorate the Reception Rooms of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. In order to fulfill the commission, a task which required studio accommodations for a canvas thirty-four feet high, Low, accompanied by his wife Berthe, traveled to Paris. There he rented quarters more spacious than those available to him in New York and, more importantly, renewed his study of the masters of decorative art at the Fontainebleau Palace, exemplars introduced to him earlier by Millet, while acquainting himself with the modern French decorative work of Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898).

Remaining in France for four years as he worked to complete the Waldorf project, Low had many opportunities to visit Barbizon. He did not return to the village during this period, however, but summered instead of Giverny where his friend Theodore Robinson was studying with Monet. Although the Barbizon experience had ended for Low, the spirit of Millet remained with him as evidenced by his documentation of the Giverny sojourns. Low did not
record these summer tours with paintings, but with photographs which, interestingly, captured peasant life with a directness he was unable to transfer onto canvas. Two examples of Low's photographs, both dating from 1892, are captioned "Mère Suzi, Our Landlady" (Pl. 143) and "The Real Man with the Hoe Caught as he was Digging Potatoes" (Pl. 144).

After his return to the United States in 1896, Low devoted the remainder of his career to mural painting. Unlike his friend Eaton, Low had found genre painting to be an unsatisfying and, at times, frustrating experience. The lessons he learned at Barbizon, reflected in works such as Maternal Care, 1874 (Pl. 98), seemed inappropriate to him upon his return to the United States where he found it temperamentally impossible to apply Millet's style to American subject matter. His disdainful attitude toward indigenous themes, as demonstrated by his appraisal of Skipper Ireson's Ride, further prevented his re-acclimation as a genre painter in this country. Although he abandoned genre painting after his return home, Low did not lose interest in Millet; and in 1896, the year of his friend's death, he was to publish the first of his contributions to Millet criticism in America. As we turn now to an examination of this criticism, Low's influence upon its development will become apparent.
Millet criticism of the 1890's had opened, naturally, with a continuation of the analyses of The Angelus begun during the previous decade. Maintaining the trend established during the 1880's, critics seldom discussed the painting from a stylistic viewpoint but focused instead upon interpretations of the subject matter. These analyses perpetuated and strengthened the American perception of Millet as a moral exemplar and continued to foster a sentimental-religious reaction toward the peasants he portrayed. Yet while the decade was still young, other voices demanded to be heard--voices which spoke of Millet's imagery neither as idyllic reflections of a past era in America nor as pathetic situations foreign to American life, but as the plight of the rural poor in this country as it existed in the 1890's.

Adhering to the American attitude that moral lessons were to be gained from subject matter rather than style, popular writers of the 1890's directed many of their initial comments to the charges Child had leveled against The Angelus in 1887. Just as the writers of 1875 had countered Moore's attack on Millet's style by illuminating the moral aspects of The Sower as a rural image, these authors argued against Child's negative assessment of The Angelus in a similar fashion. Addressing Child's point that Millet's works were of literary, rather than
artistic, value, Walter Larned, writing for *Scribner's Magazine*, commented in his article, "Millet and Recent Criticism," 1892:

The power of Millet's pictures is undoubted... but they are criticized because the power is said to be of a literary quality, and not what is properly called artistic. Looked at from the standpoint of a technical realist, it may be said that the figures in *The Angelus* have not their proper envelope of air... but the idealist would say Millet was seeking to paint prayer rather than air. Why complain of the lack of an air envelope... if the artist has successfully embodied the spirit of prayer, which is the task he set for himself? The whole canvas fairly pulsates with the emotion of supplication. Before he could have painted this picture Millet must have entered into deep communion with one of the greatest ideas which can come from human life--the eternal nobleness of humble labor brightened and made cheerful by the spirit of faithful hope.6

Supporting the identification of an apostolic purpose in Millet's art put forth earlier, Larned concluded:

If Millet had a mission, let us hope that more artists will be inspired in the same way. There are none too many prophets willing to go into the wilderness and endure hardships for truth's sake. The world needs such in art to... insist upon offering to man's love of the beautiful something... uplifting to the spirit.7

With the majority of Millet criticism still focused upon *The Angelus* during the 1890's, it is not surprising that writers for Catholic periodicals came to view Millet's biography and works as vehicles through which to inspire a resurgence of piety and religious sensibility.
in this country. Journals such as The Ave Maria had begun to carry Millet's biography during the 1880's and, following that example, Catholic World kept the narrative before the eyes of its readers in 1890. An article entitled "The Painter of Barbizon" related the now familiar story of Millet's constant battle with poverty as a desperate situation which, claimed the author Marie Sandrock, drove the artist to the brink of suicide; "He was a Christian," however, "therefore, a prayer was sufficient to dispel the possibility of so wretched a release." Her article, typifying the viewpoint held by religious periodicals, concluded with a sweeping identification of Millet's genre oeuvre, particularly The Angelus, as "representative of the autobiography of the peasant and the Christian apotheosis of labor." Religious periodicals, as well as other journals publishing sentimental criticism of Millet's paintings continued to offer their readers a reassuring image of the rural laborer as one who toiled in accordance with the Christian work ethic and whose communion with the land conferred moral value upon his tasks. Other American writers and critics, however, were awakening to the plight of the rural poor in this country, and this group of authors held a far less idealized view of these laborers. As these writers first came to an awareness of the problems
of this class and then presented them in American literature, they began for the first time to form accurate social associations between the French peasant and American farmer. In 1891, for example, Hamlin Garland (1860-1940) published his collection of short stories, Main-Travelled Roads. Graphic descriptions of life in the American West, Garland's stories contained unsparing pictures of the poor American farmer. Reviewing Garland's work in The Writer, 1891, J. E. Chamberlain opened his comments with a description of the author that evoked associations with Millet: "Coming fresh from the fields, he [Garland] brought with him the flavor of the soil and the strength of the tiller." Recalling Hunt's identification of Millet's peasants as "real people who had work to do," Chamberlain described Garland's characters in a similar fashion when he wrote, "The people we meet in his stories are real people; the scenes he paints for us are real scenes." Prefacing his quotation of a passage from Main-Travelled Roads, Chamberlain directly associated Garland and Millet:

...The bits of description, which come into his stories like accidental lights in a painting, are often times as perfect as a picture by Millet, and as full of color; this, for instance, from "Up the Coule": "A farm in the valley. Over the mountains swept jagged, gray, angry, sprawling clouds, sending a freezing and thin drizzle of rain as they passed, upon a man following a plow....The plow-
man clad in a ragged grey coat, with uncouth, muddy boots upon his feet, walked with his head inclined toward the sleet to shield his face from the cold sting of it. The soil rolled away, black and sticky, with a dull sheen upon it. Nearby, a boy with tears on his cheeks was watching cattle, a dog seated near, his back to the gale."13

The publication of Main-Travelled Roads elicited the same response from C. T. Copeland who, reviewing the work for The Atlantic Monthly, 1892, wrote the following incisive commentary:

Garland's West is not the beckoning Occident of enterprise and "push" and fortune that may be had for fighting, if not asking. His West is the other side of the shield: The right to vote and an American education cannot...raise men and women who are really no more than beasts of burden much above the level of an oppressed peasantry except that knowledge and right confers on them the dignity of a sharper unhappiness. The remembrance of Mr. Garland's people, after the book is laid aside, is strangely enough that of a class and not of individuals--of a vast company with worn stolid faces, toiling in the fields without remission. Even the angelus is denied them and if they heard it our fellow countrymen would know too much to bow their heads before a superstition. They go home from work to grim cleanliness or grim squalor as the case may be and the dreariness of the farmer is exceeded by that of his wife.14

This passage, identifying the problems of the rural poor as elucidated by Garland, raises the point that the legacy of Millet's influence in this country fell to American authors rather than painters. Confronted by Millet's paintings alone, or those of his American pupils, critics drew few
conclusions concerning social problems here; yet through the medium of Garland’s work, they were able to return to Millet’s paintings and recognize that although America had no peasantry per se, they did possess a class of rural farmers with similar problems.

Copeland’s statement, however, was countered almost immediately in religious periodicals, journals which consistently remained unwilling to recognize social ills in this country. For these writers, faith in God, as represented in The Angelus, obviated the necessity of social reform. To Copeland’s statement that the American farmer was denied the comfort of the angelus, an anonymous writer in The Ave Maria responded:

Life without the angelus! Let us stop and think what that means. It means life without that of which the angelus is a reminder; life without hope, without love, without the divine peace which passes understanding. It means men and women sullenly giving their lives, like beasts of burden, for a bit of bread and a shelter from the storms. It means toil without recompense, fruitless tears, ceaseless sighs, pain impatiently borne; death dreaded because it is terrible, yet longed for because it is the end of a weary journey.15

However, he concluded, for those laborers who had faith in God and believed in the angelus devotions, rural toil was automatically divested of its dehumanizing aspects:

The angelus bell has its own distinctive mission as a propagator of the faith. The angelus! Its jubilant tone is with the sun,
as it comes anew each day to strengthen and revivify; with the sons and daughters of God, as they pause at noon for a brief respite from labor; with the world, when toil is done and the night is getting its starry mantle ready. And when the end comes, as it must come to everyone, surely there could be no better or sweeter sound for the ears, fast growing dull, to listen to than that of the triple bell. Our Lady's Bell in honor of the Incarnation.16

Thus, while Garland and the critics supporting him illuminated the harsh realities of rural life in America, the sentimental, religious contingent remained steadfast in their interpretations of the same lifestyle. Amplifying the idyllic depictions of rural labor presented in their essays, Catholic writers also published poetry based upon The Angelus:

Across the fields of toil there fall
The notes of yonder sunset bell
To prayer its pleading accents call
The hard hands slacken at its spell
Dark faces bend in rapturous prayer
And God's own presence calms the air.

Hard was the task and long the day
Two hearts that each the other's toil
Pity, what can they do but pray
Above the black and labored soil
When like a note from heaven's own towers
The soft bells wake those evening hours?

Calm dewey eve and saffron sky
And holy notes that breathe around
Tell that the earth's repose is nigh
Some eve on Angelus shall sound
With deeper welcome in our ears
To end life's struggle, sweat, and tears.17

It is reasonable to assume that despite the strong sentimental current of Millet criticism, more Americans,
inspired by analyses of Garland's work, began to draw social statements concerning their country from Millet's art. This was not the case, however, and in 1896 when Low published his memoirs of Millet in *McClure's Magazine*, he repudiated the comparison Copeland had formulated between the peasant and farmer in 1892. Discussing Millet's heritage, Low wrote:

He was the descendent of a class which has no counterpart in England or America, and which in his native France has all but disappeared. The rude forefathers of our country may have in a degree resembled the French peasant of Millet's youth; but their Protestant belief made them more independent in thought, and the problems of a new country, and the lack of stability inherent to the colonist, robbed them of the fanatical love of the earth, which is perhaps the strongest trait of the peasant.  

Low's article, although yet another re-statement of Sensier's monograph, was surprisingly well-received, and the interest and reviews it prompted evidence the persistent inability or unwillingness on the part of most Americans to see Millet's paintings as anything other than rural idylls. For many writers a biographical, rather than socio-political, analysis of Millet's imagery remained a far more comfortable vantage point from which to view Millet's paintings. The following commentary on Low's article, appearing in *Angelus Magazine*, demonstrates this approach once more:
In the current number of McClure's Will H. Lord [sic] the artist, presents a fine study of Millet in the course of which we catch a loving glimpse of Charles Millet, a priest-grand-uncle of the famous painter who exercised great influence in shaping the career of his young relative. He it was who taught Millet to read and what a fine subject this patriarchal figure makes for a painting himself. It is small wonder that Millet painted pictures.20

Religious writers may not have agreed with Copeland's equation of Millet's peasants and Garland's farmers, but the lesson to be gained by the critic's association of the painter and the writer were not lost upon them. Just as Copeland had seen Millet as an exemplar for social realist writers, religious leaders exhorted Catholic authors to also look to Millet's works for inspiration. In 1896, for example, Charles J. O'Malley, the editor of Angelus Magazine, stated in his assessment of "Catholic Literature of the Future":

The Catholic literator...has discovered that it is his duty to put Catholic life before us and not Catholic doctrine. His art demands that he shall show us not the Church Teaching but the Church Practicing as Millet does in The Angelus. In the life portrayed in The Angelus we see the result of the church's teachings. She has taught, she has struggled against darkness, and here behold her children. Again we see that the highest truth and the deepest beauty are one. We do not need to be told that these people who bow their heads and pray when, high in the belfry, the church bell clangs at sundown, are Catholics. We know at once they are, and every Protestant who looked upon The Angelus knew at once he was looking at a Catholic work. Moreover, the
beauty, the holiness, the simplicity of the life it portrayed—a life which resulted from Catholic teaching—appealed to him and moved his soul to its depths. While looking upon it his heart becomes filled with a great yearning and he was for a moment a Catholic in spite of himself. As he [the Catholic novelist] approaches the spirit of The Angelus, he becomes a power for good, both within his own fold and without. The Angelus, too, has taught him another lesson—that is that he must seek his field among the common people. He must go out and study the lay heart—paint its joys, hopes, fears, loves, or his work will be a failure.21

In addition to religious leaders, American pedagogists active in public elementary education also discerned lessons in Millet's life and works which they carried into the primary classrooms. Millet had been a presence in the American school since the 1870's and the inception of various pantomimes and rhythm games based upon his genre scenes, activities designed to instill children with a reverence for labor. In the 1890's the lessons grew more specific as educators carefully chose certain paintings, which they calculated as appealing to young pupils, for presentation in the classroom. These paintings, naturally, were Millet's domestic genre scenes which included children. In 1897, for example, the Boston educator Sarah Arnold wrote a first grade primer entitled Stepping Stones to Literature which was illustrated by reproductions of Millet's genre scenes including Feeding the Children:
La Becquéé, 1860 (Pl. 52). Opposite the picture, the following text was printed in bold type:

The one I love most early is my mother.  
She is the dearest mother in the world.  
Her smile is like the sunshine.  
Her voice as sweet as a song.  
She is busy from morning till night.  
It is mother who makes our dresses.  
It is mother who gets our dinner.  
It is mother who tells us pretty songs.  
It is mother who loves us.  
And we love her with all our hearts.  

In an article entitled "The Home and School" which appeared in Perry Magazine, 1899, Arnold commented on her selection of Feeding the Children: La Becquéé, "The teacher has it in her power to awaken in a boy and girl the first real spark of real reverence for father and mother and a real appreciation for the blessings of the home. Millet's Feeding the Birds (its popular title in America) should be first on the list. Where else shall we find the home and mother love so pictured?"

Arnold's viewpoint was shared by many of her colleagues who, during the 1890's, put forth a variety of lesson plans based upon Millet's paintings in education journals such as Perry Magazine, American Primary Teacher, The Popular Educator, and Kindergarten Review. The moral-sentimental portrayal of Millet's art fostered by these teachers was reflected, interestingly, in the advertisements which appeared in the same magazines that carried
their articles. In 1897, *Kindergarten Review,* for example, published an advertisement for "Arnold's Steam Sterilizer," "the best and surest germ destroyer" (Pl. 145). The copy which praised the product was accompanied by an illustration of a mother and father depicted "Helping Baby"; the father, holding a sterilized baby bottle in one hand, waits with outstretched arms to receive his toddling infant who is guided along by her mother. Although now dressed in American clothing these figures are based upon the peasant father and mother whom Millet depicted teaching their child to walk in *The First Steps,* 1859 (Pl. 146).

Yet even within the predominantly sentimental framework controlling the use of Millet's paintings in the American classroom, teachers propounded lessons far more pointed than Arnold's identification of domestic virtue in *Feeding the Children: La Becquée.* In her article, "Art Lessons for Schools," appearing in *American Primary Teacher,* 1898, Anna von Rydingsvard suggested that the following comments be directed toward the students during their study of Millet's genre paintings:

Peasants earn very small sums of money for their hard work. That is why many of them like to come to our country; not because they do not love their own native land just as much as you love yours, but because they have so little so show for it, and nothing to lay up for their children or to give them an education with. Think how many things you have to be thankful for that those peasant children were not born to! Do you believe
you are thankful enough for having been born in such a glorious country as the United States, where all the best in education and art, as well as freedom of life and thought is the birthright of all her sons and daughters? If you have not begun to express your gratitude and love of country, begin today, and you will grow up better citizens and be a blessing to your country and to your fellow man.25

As arguments focusing on The Angelus continued during the 1890's it became clear that the old divisions of moral didacticism versus social criticism that had characterized the earliest American literature on Millet would persist until the close of the nineteenth century. True to the established pattern of Millet criticism in the 1870's and 1880's, authors representing the former camp exerted a far more pervasive influence over the popular reader than those associated with the latter. Old myths concerning the moral value of labor and comfortable images of the rural worker's inherent communion with God were perpetuated far into the late-1890's by sermons as well as journal articles. Henry Drummond, for example, addressed his "Lessons from The Angelus" to an audience in Chicago in 1898. A religious apologia for rural labor, the sermon focused on the work ethic as presented in The Angelus:

The Angelus may bring to us suggestions as to what constitutes a complete life. The first element...is work. Three-fourths of our time is probably spent in work. Of course the meaning of it is that our work should be just
as religious as our worship, and unless we can
work for the glory of God, three-fourths of
our life remains unsanctified. The proof
that work is religious is that most of Christ's
life was spent in work. During a large part
of the first thirty years of His life He worked
with the hammer and the plane, making plows and
yokes and household furniture; the great bulk
of His time was simply spent in doing common
everyday tasks, and ever since then work has
had a new meaning. A farm is not the place
for growing corn, it is the place for growing
character. A man's Christianity comes out as
much in his work as in his worship.26

The predominantly sentimental body of literature
that continued to dominate Millet criticism in the 1890's
received a direct challenge from one of the most controver-
sial pieces of American literature ever inspired by a
Millet painting--Edwin Markham's poem, "The Man with the
Hoe" (1899). Markham, a native Californian, spent a
large portion of his adult life as an educator and super-
intendent of schools at Oakland before turning to a
career as a poet. Discussing his early life, however, he
identified himself as one of the "Hoemanry": "During my
early manhood," he stated in an interview for The Saturday
Evening Post, "I was myself a working man under hard and
incorrigible conditions. The smack of the soil and the
whir of the forge are in my blood."27 Establishing him-
self as one who had personally experienced the hardships
of rural life in the American West, he continued:

I came to know every coign and cranny of
the farmer's life; the pruning and the
grafting of the orchard trees; the sowing
and harrowing of the field; the mending of broken fences; the heading, threshing, and sacking of wheat; I know the hard endless work in the hot sun, the leak in the roof that cannot be stopped because there is no money in the purse, the merciless clutch of hunger when the last crust has gone from the cupboard. I know what it means to fight against the despair of the heart when the mortgage is overdue and the prices of products have fallen.28

Recognizing his autobiographical experience, in part, in Millet's *The Man with the Hoe*, Markham wrote his poem "after seeing Millet's world-famous painting": before the end of the year the poem appeared repeatedly in journals and newspapers, and its opening stanza quickly became a familiar one to Americans:

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon the hoe and gazes on the ground.
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves now and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox,
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?29

Markham's poem drew mixed responses from the American public who, lulled into complacent attitudes toward rural life by *The Angelus*, were unprepared for the sudden change in focus to a less idyllic interpretation of labor within Millet's genre oeuvre. Yet the shift initiated by Markham signaled a greater willingness on the part of Millet critics to temper their idyllic perceptions of his imagery with direct examinations of rural life in their own country.
One writer, M. T. Elder, whose work appeared in the Louisiana-based periodical Donahoe's Magazine, saw the plight of people living in the rural south reflected in Markham's poem and, indirectly, in Millet's painting.

Discussing the poem, he decried America's neglect of its rural populations and called upon the church to lead the way to social reform:

Undeniably, our Lord's own example and teachings were markedly pastoral, rural, and agricultural. Did He wish that to show us that we must despise the man with the hoe? Why do we depart from--aye, diametrically contradict our Savior's precepts, and give our best, not to say, our entire efforts to the town? We are bent upon belonging wholly to the cities and getting as far away as possible from the man with the hoe. We have concentrated our best efforts upon urban interests. We have scattered but the poorest crumbs to the country. See now the appalling consequences! Among our country people are brutes, and wild beasts, not to say, diabolical fiends. Here in Louisiana as everywhere else throughout the United States, there are no definite steps toward the uplifting of the country people. Oh! It is quite comfortable to wash our hands and say, 'I am innocent of the blood of this poor man. The world's blind greed is to blame. The injustices of law, of railroads, of heartless syndicates, monopolies, etc., have reduced the farmer to his low condition!' It is not so. It is the injustice of Religious, Educational, and Charity--methods which, having left him 'naked to his enemies,' are primarily responsible for the farmer's neglected condition. Let anyone show me what recognition our schools show the farmer, the farmer's wife, or the farmer's child! And so the religious ignorance among our rural people is singly [sic] appalling. Is it wonderful that their souls are dead?30
The solution, Elder concluded, rested with the introduction of religious education into these regions; and, as evidence of the uplifting moral effects of religion upon the rural poor, he pointed to *The Angelus*:

Millet's *Angelus* shows what the men with the hoe could be if Religion alone were his friend! The Church is far indeed, and the Angelus faint, but they hear it! Their bodies are toil-worn and hardened, it is true, but their souls are akin to Seraphim! Their heads are bowed low, but their hearts are lifted high. Whereas Markham's picture shows well what the man with the hoe becomes when religion fails to stand between him and 'the world's blind greed.'

Elder's attitude was not shared, however, by the majority of his contemporaries, writers who would neither condone nor participate in the burgeoning social consciousness in America fostered by literary studies of Millet's paintings. Clinging to rapidly fading rural myths and a positive view of America, Markham's opponents denied the call for reform in rural regions because they remained unwilling to acknowledge the plight of its populations. One author, who identified Markham as "A Mischievous Pessimist," wrote in *The Catholic World*:

It does not appear that Mr. Markham's object is to help society. He discovers, through the picture, that a terrible tragedy is going on in the midst of it...namely the veiling of the light of reason in countless souls tied to the wheel of labor. But there is no such effect as this on the masses of mankind. The decree which condemns man to labor is the title-deed of his dignity. The average field life the world over is not only not degrading but it possesses, from the very nature of the
environment in which it is cast, influences that are elevating and refining. The paganism of modern American life, of which Mr. Markham is the oracle, often thinks that when one puts aside the laundered shirt and creased trousers he puts aside refinement, intelligence, and all delicacy of sentiment. Their [the rural laborer's] heart is close to the great heart of nature and is attuned to noble and lofty sentiments. When there is added to this rectitude of heart an abiding sense of religion, the peasant becomes the most perfected type of an enduring civilization. He is honest, he is respectful of his neighbor's goods and rights, is sympathetic with him in need, not grasping, nor is he avaricious, but is the embodiment of the golden rule....32

Like so many other writers, this author preferred to negate, or at least counter, the disturbing suggestions of The Man with the Hoe and the poem it inspired by returning to The Angelus:

It is only fair to Millet to interpret the phenomenon of the lowest form of French agricultural life by the picture The Angelus in which one sees, as in a kind of ecstasy, lines like rays of grace connecting the peasants in the fields with the light of a life beyond the grave, the thought which ennobles labor by making it the passport to that higher life....Consequently, we put away the soulless creature of Mr. Markham....33

Resolute in his conviction that Markham was a misguided agitator who was undermining the confidence of the nation, the author concluded:

How this production [the poem] could have aroused so much excitement is to be explained by its dishonest appeal to the discontent seething in the minds of certain sections among the working classes. Anything more mischievous than the dressing up in the stolid
face and shapeless figure of a French laborer, abnormally degraded, the needs and aspirations of American workingmen, can hardly be conceived. This is the purpose to which the picture has been put--to shroud in a shape like that portrayed in Mr. Markham's reproduction of Millet the future hopes of American fathers. This is hardly fair; it is, in plain truth, a subtle and wicked libel on skilled and unskilled workmen.34

Although widely read, Markham's poem actually did little to advance social readings of Millet's works in this country. Consistently, his statements concerning rural life which he had drawn from The Man with the Hoe were disputed by equally fervent readings of The Angelus. These religious rejoinders were not exclusive to Catholic or Protestant periodicals but appeared in popular secular literature as well. The Woman's Home Companion, for example, carried the following argument written by an author who had recently returned from Barbizon where he had interviewed "Mère Adele," Millet's model for the peasant woman in The Angelus:35

The Angelus is labor relieved of its curse when the slaves of the soil become the children of God. It affords a direct contradiction to Markham's poem. Here, the peasant is in his grandeur, living by the soil and the fruit of hard incessant work, yet infinitely above the thing he calls 'brother to an ox.' Mère Adele calls herself a child of God. She looks it in the painting and she lives it everyday in her humble cottage. In the picture and out, her type proclaims that in spite of man's oppression, in spite of the long hours of work, coarse fare, absence of culture, the toiler can be kept from being brutalized by that voice from the sky....Millet himself was a man
with the hoe during his youth, yet the heavy toil left him with a hand steady enough to wield a brush and a mind clear enough to understand and depict nature in the moods he saw her. If you think hard toil fearfully enslaving and deadening to the senses, go to beautiful Barbizon, look into the bright face of Mère Adele, see the church in which these simple people worship, and hear the ringing of the Angelus at morning, noon, and evening, and even though hope has died in your heart, it will revive and live again.\(^{36}\)

Early in 1900, the numerous attacks upon Markham's interpretation of rural labor compelled the poet to clarify his position, and in doing so, he undercut the strong statement he had made for social reform in America the previous year. Backing away from associations between the French and American rural populations, he wrote an article pointedly entitled "Labor Hopeless and Hopeful" in which he stated:

The hoeman in my poem does not mean any man with a hoe. Thoreau hoed his own field. He says that when his hoe struck against the stones the music echoed in the woods and sky, and was an accompaniment to his labor that yielded an instant but unmeasurable crop. Thoreau as a hoeman could gather this spiritual harvest because he had the upward looking and the light and the music and the dreams. I did not mean Thoreau. The hoeman in my poem does not refer to the farmer as a class. I did not say the poem was written after seeing the American farmer riding rosily on his reaper.... I believe in labor; I believe in its humanizing and regenerating power. The thing of chief importance is the spirit in which man does his work. It must be done thoroughly and in the spirit of loving service. Work of this order is a perpetual prayer. Work of this sort is sacred....\(^{37}\)
Somewhat abruptly, Markham, attempting to preserve the social currency of his poem without violating American concepts concerning rural life, altered his interpretation of Millet's painting to focus upon urban, rather than rural, working conditions:

I soon realized that Millet puts before us no chance toiler, no mere man of the fields. No, this stunned and stolid peasant is the type of industrial oppression in all lands and in all labors. He might be a man with a needle in a New York sweat shop, a man with a pick in a West Virginia coal mine.... He is the man pushed back and shrunken up by the special privileges conferred upon the few.38

Markham's repudiation of his social comment on rural life in this country marks the final triumph of the sentimental current of Millet criticism in nineteenth century America, a current which had been fostered and enriched by Millet's American pupils since 1853 when Hunt "found Millet...desperately poor." Now in 1900, the year of Wheelwright's death and the year following Babcock's, the legacy of these two men and their compatriots Hunt, Eaton, and Low, was to be carried on into the first decades of the twentieth century by religious periodicals and, particularly, by literature related to elementary education.39

It is interesting to note that the majority of the literature inspired by Millet's works which appeared during the 1900's was either focused or directed toward
the American child. Anna J. Granniss, for example, incensed by Markham's "Man with the Hoe," wrote a poetic rejoinder of her own in 1904 entitled "Boy with the Hoe."

The opening stanzas suffice to demonstrate the tone of her poem and her equation of American rural innocence with its children:

Pleased with the few bright summers of his life,  
He takes his hoe and proudly plays the man;  
The world's great hope is shining in his eyes,  
And in his heart its mighty purpose stirs--  
To his white innocence how fair the day,  
How sweet the breath of flowers, the song of birds--  
To him the dawn is still a miracle,  
And what the Lord called good, to him is good.  
Whence comes the smile that plays upon his lips?  
What means the light that breaks upon his face?  
Why does he quicken to the influence,  
Of beauty and sweet sound?

Stand back, bold workers of iniquity,  
And let this young immortal soul have play;  
Nor dare to clog the working of his brain,  
Yet farther back--stand with your heads made bare--  
To this pure spirit what have you to say?40

The frontispiece accompanying Granniss' poem, a photograph of "the boy with the hoe" subtitled "kin to the eagle, not brother to the ox" (Pl. 147), is a succinct example of the American ability to transmute Millet's imagery to become a wishful reflection of their society. The sentimental photograph inspired by Millet's The Man with the Hoe can indeed be taken as a statement concerning the self-image many Americans continued to hold of their agricultural heritage and future.
In 1906 Markham himself returned to the "man with the hoe" motif but placed it within a totally new context; he related the image to urban injustice when he published an article in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* entitled "The Hoe Man in the Making." In contrast to Granniss' poem, Markham's essay, decrying the widespread use of child labor in factories, presented a grim depiction of the plight of the American child:

Picture the long procession of them—all held from the green fields, barred from school, shut out of home, dragged from play and sleep and rest, and set tramping in the grim, forced march to the mills and mines and shops and offices in this our America—the land whose other name we have been told is Opportunity! Do we ever think of our two million children who—in free America—are pushed out as little burden bearers to share the toils and strains and dangers of the world of battling men? In the southern cotton mills where the doors shut out the odor of magnolias and shut in the reeking damp and clouds of lint and where the mocking birds outside keep obligato to the whirring wheels within, we find a gaunt goblin army of children keeping forced march on the factory floors....And these are not the children of recent immigrants, hardened by the conditions of foreign servitude. Nor are they Negro children who have shifted their shackles from field to mill. They are white children of old and pure colonial stock! Think of it! Here is a people that has outlived the bondage of England, that has seen the rise and fall of slavery—a people that must now fling their children into the clutches of capital...must see their latest born drag on in base servility that reminds us of the Saxon churl under the frown of a Norman Lord.41

By the beginning of the twentieth century, then, Millet's image, first cited by Ednah D. Cheney in 1867 as the
embodiment of the evils of slavery, came to hold a similar meaning for modern American social critics such as Markham who presented it as a cautionary statement concerning the future of the American generation presently abused by urban injustice.

The following year, Markham, responding to contemporary trends in American education, published a collaborative work with Mary E. Burt entitled The Burt-Markham Primer: The Nature Method. Turning from The Man with the Hoe to Millet's domestic genre scenes, Markham too participated in the promulgation of a didactic, sentimental response to Millet's paintings. With social criticism laid aside, Markham composed a different type of text for young readers. The following text, certainly atypical of our general conception of Markham's literature, was appended to a reproduction of Millet's The First Steps:

Father says:
'Come, come, come on!
Come little sister.
Come to father!'
She cannot walk alone.
She cannot talk.
Try, little sister, try to walk.
Try to walk alone.
Try to talk little sister,
Hear her try to talk.
She says, 'Da, Da, Da.'42

Markham's primer can be taken as a typical example of the continuance of the sentimental interpretations of Millet's works into the first decade of the twentieth century.
During this time, pedagogical journals remained filled with lessons and guidelines for American teachers who were conditioning the next generation of Americans to see in Millet's works the same homey virtues and moral teachings they had discerned throughout the previous century. Millet's paintings had served Americans well throughout the nineteenth century by allowing them to develop a self-image of wealth, beneficence, moral rectitude, political largesse, and artistic sensibility. Although attempts had been made to foster social criticism based upon Millet's works, these efforts were consistently countered by a far stronger current of sentimental criticism and by the optimistic view of rural American life it engendered. Perhaps if one image must be chosen to close my dissertation, it should be a photograph of an American schoolboy posed as The Sower (Pl. 148). The observation concerning the boy made by Estelle Hurll, who reproduced the photograph in her book How to Show Pictures to Children, 1900, accurately summarizes the nineteenth century American perception of Millet and their purposeful transmutation of his authoritative, monumental subject matter into optimistic, sentimental imagery; "We were well satisfied with [the pupil's] success, and if [he had] not quite...the solemn dignity of the Norman peasant, [he] was certainly pleasant to see."
NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

1 Eaton, "Jean-François Millet," p. 192.

2 Eaton's late portraits include Sir William Dawson, collection of McGill University, Montreal, Sir William Van Horne, Lady Van Horne, R. B. Angus, Lord Strathcona, and Lord Mount Stephen, presently in the collection of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Montreal. For illustrations of these and other of Eaton's portraits, see Eaton, "Wyatt Eaton, Painter."

3 Low, A Chronicle of Friendships, p. 423.

4 Of his admiration for Puvis, Low recorded:
   Nor despite a most intense desire for the benefits of the advice of Puvis in my decorative undertaking could I have vanquished a natural diffidence and begged this privilege had not good fortune served me here, as well as it had done in the case of Millet. I met Puvis at this time through the decorative painter Edouard Fournier with whom Puvis shared a studio. Fournier was doing the decorations for the Prefecture at Lyons. Ibid., p. 437.

5 Following the Waldorf Astoria commission of 1892, Low decorated a music room for his patron Charles T. Yerkes, New York, 1896, followed by a commission to decorate the concert hall and ball room of the Astoria Hotel with twenty panels in 1897. In 1907 he completed a decorative panel for the Essex County Court House, Newark, New Jersey, and the following year he executed the murals for the Luzerne County Court House, Wilkes-Barrie, Pennsylvania. The final portion of his life was devoted to a cycle of thirty-two mural decorations for the rotunda of the New York State Education Building, Albany, which depicted the theme "Aspirations of Men and the Result of Achievements." For further information on Low's career as a decorative painter and his mural projects, see Chicago Art Institute, Exhibition of Decorative Works by Will H. Low (Chicago, 1911), or Will H. Low, "The Story of a Painted Ceiling," Scribner's Magazine 29 (1901), pp. 509-512.

7. Ibid., p. 392.


9. Ibid., p. 802.

10. Born in Wisconsin, Garland later moved to Boston and became a friend of William Dean Howells (1837-1921) and others in the Boston literary circle. In 1887 he returned to the midwest and took up life there as the topic of his fiction. Influenced by Howells, he began to write *Main-Travelled Roads*. Other collections of Garland's stories are *Prairie Folk*, 1892, and *Wayside Courtships*, 1897. Later, these two collections appeared in a single volume, *Other Main-Travelled Roads*, 1910. Always interested in social reform, Garland also wrote novels on political corruption including *Jason Edwards*, *A Member of the Third House*, and *A Spoil of Office*, all dating from 1892. No collected edition of Hamlin Garland's works is available at present, but the following studies are recognized as major works discussing Garland's life and career: Jean Holloway, *Hamlin Garland: A Biography*, 1960; Arthur Quinn, *American Fiction*, 1936; and Clarence Godshes, *Literature of the American People*, 1951.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 208.


16. Ibid.


19 For an example of the reviews of Low's article which support the biographical rather than social approach to Millet's works, see Albert Shaw, "Leading Articles of the Month," Review of Reviews, 13 (May, 1896), pp. 607-608.


22 Sarah Arnold, Stepping Stones to Literature, A First Grade Reader (Boston: D. Appleton Company, 1897), p. 105. Arnold remained an influential and active pedagogist throughout her life. In 1899 she published Reading: How to Teach It, followed by The Reconciliation of Cross Purposes in the Education of Women in 1900 and The Birthright of American Children and Education: The Defense of the American Home, 1927. In 1908 she also published The Mother Tongue, an English composition textbook. An example of the exercises contained in the textbook reflects once again the pervasive influence of Millet in the American classroom:

- Learn all you can from books or through friends of the life and work of Millet. You may arrange carefully all that you learn and then write it out:
  1. When did he live?
  2. Where did he live?
  3. For what was he noted?
  4. What was his character?
  5. What particular work has caused us to know and remember him?
  6. What anecdotes do you know that illustrate his character?


Between 1898 and 1899 Perry Magazine carried a monthly column entitled "Picture Study in the Boston Public Schools" by James F. Hopkins. Hopkins suggested that particular works by Millet were suitable studies for particular months such as the pairing of The Gleaners with October; yet he left the content of the lesson to the teacher's discretion. Maintaining the American narrative bias toward Millet's works, he wrote in October, 1898:

Above all things we feel that the picture should tell a story; it should carry a message to the children as a groundwork for whatever individual effort the teacher would like to introduce.

Other authors suggested more structured lessons such as Jennie E. Keysor's "Some Thoughts on Picture Study" which appeared in The Popular Educator, 17 (September, 1899) p. 5:

Jean-François Millet

Artist. Biography. Note the physical and financial condition while giving to us his greatest works. What does this tell us of the character of the man? Is it worthy of imitation? What and where is the Barbizon school?

Drawing. Children pose for The Angelus, The Sower, Feeding Her Birds, and others. Drawings made from the figure posing.

Peasant Life. Conditions and Environment. What kind of people are they? How did Millet's pictures affect them at first? What is there about peasant life that appeals to us?

Songs. With The Sower songs with action about sowing. With The Angelus song of "Evening Bells."

St. Francis of Assisi. The second name of Millet was Francois. He was named for St. Francis of Assissi.


Dramatization. Incidents from the life of Millet. Pictures of Millet's. St. Francis preaching to the birds.

Collection. French flag, pictures of Napoleon and Joan of Arc, French china, pictures of the Louvre in Paris, Millet's pictures being the center of interest.


27 Edwin Markham, "How and Why I Wrote 'The Man with the Hoe,'" The Saturday Evening Post, 172 (December, 1899), p. 497.

28 Ibid.

29 For the complete text of Markham's poem see his Man with the Hoe and Other Poems, New York: Doubleday, 1916, or his Eight Songs at Eighty, 1933. This latter collection contains other poems inspired by Millet's works including "The Sower," and "The Angelus."


31 Ibid., p. 570.


33 Ibid., p. 691.

34 Ibid., p. 692.

35 Adele Marnier, Millet's model, died in 1899, an event which prompted renewed interest in her life. Articles about "Mère Adele" appearing at this time can be found in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, March 5, 1899, and The Artist, 25 (May, 1899), pp. 129-134.


37 Edwin Markham, "Labor Hopeless and Hopeful," The Independent, 52 (September, 1900), p. 353.
Babcock died at Bois d'Arcy, France, in 1899. Upon his death, he bequested the following etchings after Millet to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Oedipus, Woman with a Lamp, Harvesters Resting, Woman Spinning, The Angelus, Two Men Digging (original etching), Woman Rescued from the Indians (original etching), Judah and Tamar. He also bequested the following works by Millet's American pupils to the museum: Wyatt Eaton, Female Head Wrapped in a Scarf with Lace (original etching), and a group of original lithographs by William Morris Hunt including Girl in a Wheatfield, Flower Girl Sitting on a Chair, Boy with a Handorgan, Sty in Winter Moonlight, Boy Chasing a Goose, and Woman Filling a Pitcher at a Fountain. Information from the files of the Prints and Drawing Department, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Wheelwright died in Boston on May 9, 1900. Like Babcock, he left a number of works from his art collection to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. These included the following paintings by William Morris Hunt: Sheepshearing at Barbizon, Landscape, Sheep, On the Edge of the Forest. Information from the files of the Painting Department, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Anna J. Granniss, The Boy with the Hoe (Hartford: C. M. Gaines, 1904), no pagination.

Edwin Markham, "The Hoe-Man in the Making," Cosmopolitan Magazine, 41 (May, 1906), p. 491. Markham's concern for the problem of child labor was shared by the documentary photographer Lewis Hine (1847-1940). In 1908 Hine joined the staff of the National Child Labor Committee and produced the first of his investigative photo series, "Neglected Neighborhoods of Our National Capital." This group of photographs, as well as his other works, were direct and unsparing records of the plight of the urban worker in America and evidence of the need for social reform in this area. See Judith Gurman, Lewis W. Hine and the American Social Conscience, 1967.


During the 1900's Perry Magazine led the way for other pedagogical periodicals in the numerous presentations of lesson plans concerning Millet's paintings which appeared in the journal. A sample of these articles reveals that
Millet's paintings served a variety of purposes in the American classroom. For example, Perry Magazine, January, 1904, carried an article by Emily Curtis Fisher entitled, "The Use of Pictures in Teaching English." Like Sarah Arnold, she believed Millet's genre paintings were excellent topics for English compositions, exercises designed to teach the student thematic continuity in writing:

Let the teacher present first a series of Millet's pictures whose one theme is life in work. In Woman Churning, Watercarrier, Girl Spinning, and Shepherdess Knitting, the theme...is work, in the thought and care of the home. There are glimpses of the idealism of the home: in The First Steps the parents cease their work to bow before the little child in protection and encouragement; in The Angelus the parents interrupt the work to bow in their spirit of prayer while the angelus sounds. While in each of these pictures there are repeated seeking and finding of the same impression--the home--the child must recognize the force of the life that prompts in providing for its own living. His thought will become, perhaps, an awakening influence in the child's conscious living; with it must also come some awakening of the child's own responsibility to the home. Many other pictures could be grouped for the purpose of finding one theme. If this power could be developed until it became the habitual attitude of the child, one of the truest influences for the moulding of his life would be established and his power to understand life without and within could be awakened. An excellent means of practicing this power of expression is to use pictures: require [the pupil] to find the one thought the picture expresses to him, then write it in the correct form.

Other articles in the same journal explicated ways in which a single work by Millet could be presented to a variety of different grades ranging from kindergarten to high school, and suggested the different lessons that could be brought forth at the various levels. Emma A. Hopkins' article, "The Child in the Picture World," Perry Magazine, September 1902, discussed picture study with kindergarten children: Although the child may not discern the truth, some of these pictures are a repetition of his own little life experiences. They seem in some instances to answer all his appeals and needs for
tenderness and love. Thus when we place before [them] Feeding Her Birds...the little ones are conscious of feeling a delight in watching this dear mother giving food to other little ones; and as this is a familiar experience in the lives of the children, this picture, with its element of mother love and care, has a strong hold upon the children.

Hopkins continued, identifying lessons the picture might hold for older children:
A world's need being ministered unto by a strong and noble woman. A story of unselfishness and of patient toil speaks to us from this picture....The older children should obtain a knowledge of the painter's life of hardship and toil, of his patient encounters with a world of need. All these facts will help towards a better appreciation of this great man's genius....We may lead the children to a true appreciation of the dignity of labor....

Before the end of the decade, the use of Millet's pictures as teaching tools was carried from the public classroom to the Sunday school. The lessons, however, remained basically unchanged as evidenced by the comments of an anonymous author which appeared in the "Sunday School Department," of Perry Magazine, June, 1901. Discussing The Sower, he stated:

Here we have the relation of man to nature, the dignifying of labor, and especially that labor which ought to be a strong reminder of the debt that man owes to the Creator for his daily sustenance, and likewise the duty of man to labor, by and with the laws of God in nature. The parable of "The Sower" gains illustrative power from this picture of The Sower. Millet's spiritual mission as an artist is not overstated. And the principles here set forth...furnish much of the indirect teaching needed in day-school, Sunday school, and home.

CONCLUSION

Millet's ultimate contributions to nineteenth century art can be summarized best by those aspects of his oeuvre which his American pupils, as five distinct and separate personalities, found compelling. His early years (1814-1849), occupied with an exploration of his own heritage as a French artist, yielded his manière fleurie, a revitalization and personal interpretation of eighteenth century French rococo sources. Capturing the elegance and sensuosity synonomous with the rococo style, Millet produced a body of works including Nymphs in the Woods, 1848, and Festival in the Park, 1848, which remind us today of both his prowess as a painter of the female nude and his ability to imbue a traditional style with original insights.

Millet's recreation of a past world of rococo courtiers, aristocrats, and mythological figures, along with his continuation of the French coloristic tradition as it was handed down to him by Watteau and Delacroix, were vastly appealing to William Perkins Babcock. Babcock, introspective by nature, perceived Millet's works as conduits through which he could reach a past era of the
history of art, while his friendship with the artist simultaneously afforded him the benefits of contact with a vital contemporary artistic exemplar. The rarified atmosphere conveyed by Millet's manière fleurie genre scenes and figure paintings was made particularly attractive to Babcock by the French artist's seductive colorism; consistently noted in contemporary criticism as the most striking feature of Babcock's style, the coloristic expertise and freedom he gained from contact with Millet could not have been attained through study in America or at the atelier of Thomas Couture, Babcock's first European art instructor.

As Millet's manière fleurie oeuvre was the agent leading Babcock to rococo sources, so was Babcock himself the conductor through which other Americans made contact with Millet. More significant than his oeuvre, Babcock's role as the American intermediary at Barbizon represents his most important contribution to the artist's popularity in this country. Often, in our haste to dismiss Babcock as a recluse or an expatriat, it is forgotten that as the first of Millet's American students, he introduced Hunt, Eaton, and Low to their teacher. As I have shown through the discussion of American criticism of Millet, Babcock introduced American writers as well as painters to Millet during his lifetime at Barbizon.
Significantly, it was through Babcock that his fellow Bostonian Ednah D. Cheney, a major author among the early critics of Millet, met the French artist while touring Europe. Thus, Babcock, who never returned to America, not only enlarged Millet's circle of American pupils, but also shared in the direction of American literature concerning his mentor.

Millet's achievements during his early Barbizon period (1850-1855) rest firmly upon his development of a genre oeuvre that combined the authority of past intellectual and iconographic traditions, particularly French medieval symbolism, with a personal monumental style. Together, his subject matter and style formed unique statements of nineteenth century rural life which imbued a single motif with both historical, or literary, allusion and contemporary relevance. The Sower, 1850, Harvesters Resting, 1853, and Peasant Grafting a Tree, 1855, all demonstrate Millet's ability to cull imagery from a variety of literary sources, adjust his motifs to personal statements, and consequently imbue his subject matter with more than one level of meaning.

These were the qualities in Millet's works to which William Morris Hunt responded when, during his Barbizon period, he came to view Millet's oeuvre as a repository of European iconographic traditions, sources he attempted to
incorporate into his own genre paintings. Hunt, unlike Babcock, explored Millet's paintings of "real people who had work to do," yet although he came to possess a knowledge of the sources which inspired Millet's peasant imagery, his understanding remained that of a spectator rather than a participant. Hunt learned the meanings that certain images held for Millet as a French peasant, but he did not share them; instead, he transmuted them, and imagery which held social value for Millet took on sentimental value for Hunt.

The sentimental treatment Millet's imagery received at Hunt's hands was one of the greatest contributions the Bostonian made to advancing his teacher's popularity in this country. Through his interpretations of Millet's rural motifs, he made them even more palatable to nineteenth century Americans who found Out in the Cold, 1865, to be closer to their conception of rural life than Millet's depictions of faggot gatherers. As Hunt interpreted Millet's genre paintings to grant them greater relevance for the American audience, he not only established, but popularized the sentimental perception of Millet which became the dominant critical view of the artist during the course of the century. The sympathetic emotions stirred by Hunt's works such as The Little Gleaner, 1855, were intensified by the publication of his
studio notes, William Morris Hunt's Talks on Art, 1875, which offered the public early tales of Millet's penury as well as Hunt's famous account of their meeting when he "found Millet...desperately poor." The pervasive influence Hunt exercised over the Boston reception of Millet through his activities as an artist, writer, teacher, and connoisseur, is encapsulated by a chain of events he inspired when he persuaded Martin Brimmer to purchase Millet's Harvester's Resting in 1853; Brimmer, returning to Boston with the work that year, in turn interested Ednah D. Cheney in Millet. Traveling to Barbizon in 1855, she gathered notes on Millet for publication but she did not produce her article until 1867 when it appeared in direct response to the Allston Club exhibition organized by Hunt. In addition to Cheney, Hunt's influence with Thomas Gold Appleton, Edward Wheelwright, and Henry James, as well as his own abilities as a writer, assure him a place among those who advanced Millet's cause in America through the channels of popular criticism.

As Millet's abilities as an artist developed through 1863 and his exhibition of The Man with the Hoe, literary and intellectual content of his genre scenes became intensified, and he created more strident statements of rural life than those characterizing his initial Barbizon period. Focusing on French literary tradition,
La Fontaine and Montaigne particularly, Millet produced *Death and the Woodcutter* and *Man with the Hoe*, two works which expanded the emotional range of his *oeuvre*. These themes allowed Millet to present more pointed assessments of nineteenth century rural situations while still maintaining strong links to the past which continued to sustain his imagery stylistically as well as iconographically.

When Edward Wheelwright met Millet in late 1855-1856, he perceived in the artist a man of his own intellectual acuity and sensibility. Accordingly, many of their discussions centered on literature, and while at Barbizon Wheelwright formed a greater understanding of the heritage of French rural life and the continuity of its traditions as portrayed for him through Millet's interpretations of George Sand's novels. Yet as an American who wished to convey the literary aspects of Millet's genre paintings to his countrymen, Wheelwright was aware of the necessity of relating his teacher's imagery to a literary source which was not only familiar to the majority of his readers, but which possessed great relevance for American culture. This source, he realized was the Bible.

When Wheelwright's interpretation of Millet's genre paintings appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1876, it constituted the author's greatest contribution to Millet's
popularity in this country. While he did not offer the overtly sentimental readings of Millet's biography and works put forth by Hunt during the previous year, Wheelwright did promulgate a view of Millet's genre painting that was decidedly apolitical and non-social in its orientation thereby bolstering resistance to American social criticism of Millet. Leaning heavily upon a literary interpretation, he illustrated Millet's life and works at Barbizon through Biblical allusion; it was his description of Millet as a patriarch "lifted bodily from the Bible," that became one of the most frequently quoted and certainly the most enduring image of the artist to be put before the popular American audience during the nineteenth century. His comparison of other Barbizon inhabitants to Biblical characters including Ruth and Boaz furthered a sympathetic religious reaction to Millet's genre paintings while simultaneously sustaining a nostalgic view of rural life in France and America as well.

During the final stages of Millet's career dating approximately from 1864 until his death in 1875, his oeuvre continued to develop from his close study of literary works which rapidly became limited to classical sources as he added a new dimension to his career—decorative painting. Concomitant to projects such as the Thomas Season cycle, 1967, and the Panthéon murals, 1874,
were the problems of composition, and during these last years of Millet's life, we see him turn from the investigation of subject matter that had dominated his early career to the resolution of stylistic problems. The fact that style was his governing concern during his late career is evidenced by his visits to the Fontainebleau Palace in order to study the works of Il Rosso, his renewed interest in Delacroix's decorative paintings, and also the introduction of landscape drawings to his oeuvre. The pen and ink drawings he executed in Vichy and the Auvergne are among the most authoritative compositional statements contained in his oeuvre. The renaissance of graphic art that they signal in his works also bears evidence of his desire to attain greater form and structure in his style.

When Wyatt Eaton and Will Hicok Low came under Millet's influence in the early 1870's, the lessons they learned from the artist were, in keeping with Millet's interests at the time, largely lessons of style and composition. Eaton, possessing in his artistic education the same combination of rural training and academic experience that characterized Millet's own instruction, recognized this duality in his teacher's oeuvre and drew upon it to fulfill his desire to become a genre painter while preserving the academic methods, discipline, and structure he found are requisite for his own artistic
sensibility. Of all the American pupils, I believe that Eaton came to the most complete understanding of Millet as a genre painter, an insight that was his because of the common factors in his life and that of his teacher. Sharing in Millet's rural heritage, Eaton too grew from provincial artisan beginnings and an understanding of rural subject matter to progress with an academic curriculum in a more cosmopolitan atmosphere. Not only could he appreciate the academic underpinnings and traditional references in Millet's style, but he was capable of translating these into his own works. Eaton, however, unlike Millet, used his academicism as the controlling factor in the composition of his genre paintings and his works, therefore, retained a stylistic self-consciousness not present in Millet's genre oeuvre. This by no means signals Eaton's failure as a genre painter but, like Hunt's sentimental counterparts to Millet's scenes, is a personal variation and amplification of that aspect he had found must appealing in his master's works.

Will Low's response to Millet as a stylistic exemplar is amply borne out by the numerous copies of Millet's compositions he executed at Barbizon; also, among the American pupils' collective oeuvres, Low's affords the greatest amount of direct correspondences to particular genre paintings by Millet. The plethora of copies,
however, as well as the character of Low's original Barbizon compositions, indicate that unlike Eaton, Low never developed a sympathetic personal rapport with his subject matter, the French peasantry. He did not transcribe them as the sentimental figures of Hunt, the embodiments of Christian virtues of Wheelwright, or the dignified and monumental representatives of a lifestyle possessing a lengthy heritage and unchanging traditions of Eaton. His abilities as a genre painter of foreign imagery remained within the purview of illustration or anecdote. Low ultimately applied the lessons he learned from Millet's works to decorative painting rather than genre painting. As the aspect of his own oeuvre which Millet was exploring during Low's residence at Barbizon, decoration became the topic of many of their discussions, and through his teacher, Low learned of the tradition as it existed at the Palace of Fontainebleau, within Delacroix's oeuvre, and, indirectly, in the works of Puvis de Chauvannes. Proof that Low made associations between Millet's smaller works and the lessons he taught him concerning decorative painting is contained in Low's comparison between Millet's Hagar and Ishmael, 1848, and Italian frescoes, an association he made during his second sojourn to Barbizon.
When Eaton and Low returned to America, both men carried their knowledge of Millet to younger American art students through their activities as teachers at the Cooper Union School. Eaton's classroom lectures of 1877, later compared by George Sheldon to Sensier's monograph, prepared the way for the widespread popularity of the book by presenting similar sentimental accounts of Millet's peasant heritage. Although essentially directed toward issues of Millet's style, Eaton structured his talks along a narrative framework that strengthened the American proclivity to interpret Millet's works through the agency of his biography. Equally important to Eaton's activities as a teacher was his association with New York literary figures. It was through Eaton's influence that Sensier's monograph was translated by Helena deKay Gilder in 1880 and subsequently published by her husband in *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*. Thus, Eaton played a direct part in bringing the most influential sentimental piece of literature on Millet written during the nineteenth century before the eyes of the American public. When Eaton published his two contributions to Millet criticism in 1889, he continued the tradition of Sensier by presenting a narrative account of his experiences at Barbizon. Eaton did not, however, exaggerate Millet's penury in these articles, as Sensier had done in his
monograph, and thereby elicit sympathy for Millet from his readers. Instead he created for Americans an idyllic picture of Barbizon existence, particularly Millet's homelife. Describing the domestic equanimity of the patriarchal household, Eaton enhanced his text with illustrations of Millet's drawings for his grandchildren which, as whimsical depictions of scenes from fairy tales, heightened the American identification of Millet as a benevolent rural patriarch.

Low's contributions to Millet criticism in America, although later in date, had much the same effect of those written by Eaton. When his Barbizon memoirs appeared in McClure's Magazine, 1896, he too sustained the Sensier tradition and presented American readers with a summary of his contact with Millet that was almost exclusively biographical. More significant than his re-telling of Millet's biography, however, was the assurance Low offered the American public that our society did not possess a counterpart of the French peasant class depicted by his mentor. In this, Low contributed to the ideational mainstay of sentimental criticism of Millet in the United States--the perception of Millet's peasants as objects of either pity or nostalgia. Evidence that Low's article, written by an American who knew Millet personally, was read with special care is offered in Chapter IX of my
dissertation which cites the laudatory remarks Low's publication drew from religious leaders. The sentimental perception of Millet begun by Hunt in 1875, then was carried through the 1880's and 1890's by Eaton and Low. At the beginning of the next century, Low published his book of memoirs, A Chronicle of Friendships, 1907, which re-stated this view of Millet to yet another generation of Americans.

By briefly reviewing the opposing viewpoints which emerged in the nineteenth century criticism of Millet we can clearly identify the consistent ability of his American pupils to counter attacks on Millet's style or reverse social interpretations of his subject matter. In 1875, for example, when the American Pre-Raphaelite Charles Moore brought his charges of careless technique against Millet's oeuvre and consequently cited the painter as a poor artistic and moral exemplar for young American art students, it was Hunt who not only argued Moore's point within the circle of professional artists and critics but also swayed public opinion in Millet's favor during the debate. When Hunt's fervent reply to Moore appeared in the Boston Daily Advertiser it attracted the attention of wider audiences who, as the popular voice, resolved the conflict through the publication of numerous articles and pedagogical tracts clearly equating
Millet's moral value with his subject matter rather than his style. As the art editor of The Atlantic Monthly, Wheelwright lent his support and added credence to the viewpoint of this contingent when his memoirs amplifying the Biblical aspects of life at Barbizon re-affirmed the conclusions the American public had drawn from Millet's paintings.

When Theodore Child restated Moore's complaint in 1887, it was refuted in Eaton's articles, but an even more resounding retort was brought forth in the form of the American acquisition of The Angelus, an event which must be viewed historically as the ultimate conclusion of the American patronage of Millet begun by Hunt in 1853. This single work of art, perceived as the embodiment of rural virtue, sealed the nineteenth century American identification of Millet as a moral exemplar. Bolstering the sentimental criticism of Millet in this country, the exhibition of The Angelus brought together literature penned by religious leaders, pedagogical experts, popular commentators, and the average American himself as America's ideal concept of Millet became crystallized.

The collective strength or influences of the American pupils of Millet and their predominantly sentimental interpretation of his works was brought to bear upon Edwin Markham in 1899. His failure to maintain a new identification of Millet as an artist whose works held cautionary
social statements concerning rural America was due to the strong current of sentimental criticism that had been established during the previous two decades and had by this time spread throughout aspects of our culture far beyond the boundaries of art.

It is through the presentation and analysis of this criticism that art historians and scholars in related humanities can come to a more complete and accurate understanding of Millet's influence in this country and the role he played in American life. An assessment of Millet's influence upon American artists and prominent literary figures only, however, does not suffice because in the final analysis Millet was the hero of America's middle class more than its intelligentsia. Millet's paintings afforded Americans the opportunity to witness the celebration of works by an artist who had risen to greatness from the ranks of the lower class; ironically, the life of the French peasant artist represented the American dream, and our role in his life as his first major patrons was the way in which we played out or re-affirmed the reality of that ideal concept.

Millet gave average Americans a rare opportunity to see their ideal portraits within the totality of their culture. Demonstrating their appreciation of Millet, they became at once art connossieurs, proponents of democracy, and moral exemplars. Our pioneering patronage
of Millet and the wrestling away of *The Angelus* from France proved that as a young nation America possessed not only the artistic insights but the money necessary to compete with European countries in the purchase of works of art. Viewing Millet's paintings, the majority of nineteenth century Americans optimistically congratulated themselves for belonging to a democratic society which patronized art from the hand of a French peasant; simultaneously, they ignored their own rural poor through the denial of the existence of a counterpart to the peasant in this country who shared similar economic problems. Finally, Millet's paintings preserved the image of rural America which identified this cultural region as the stronghold of moral rectitude. The values and ideals threatened both by growing industrialization and by the painful growing awareness of rural poverty were maintained for Americans in paintings such as *The Angelus*. *The Angelus* and other genre paintings by Millet reaffirmed what Americans believed to be true. Rural America was the land of opportunity where the cultivation of the earth and faith in God raised men above the squalor of ordinary material existence. Paraphrasing the Howells' quotation that appears at the beginning of my dissertation, we may say
that Americans wanted to see beauty, not pathos, in their country, and even though some of the beautiful aspects of our life were slipping away from us in reality, they were preserved and encapsulated for us in Millet's genre paintings.
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(Present location unknown; Low, A Chronicle of Friendships).
Plate 127

Landscape
(Hunt, oil, 1850-1855)
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).
Plate 128

The Wedding Dress
(Low, oil, 1878)

(Private collection; photograph courtesy of the owner).
Plate 129

Skipper Ireson's Ride
(Low, oil, 1878)
(Albany Institute of History and Art).
Plate 130

Marblehead
(Low, oil, 1878)

(Private collection; photograph courtesy of the owner).
Plate 131

Calling the Cows Home

(Low, oil, 1881)

(Present location unknown; photo archives, Albany Institute of History and Art).
Plate 132

Calling the Cows
(Millet, pastel, 1866)
(Present location unknown; Moreau-Nélaton, Millet Raconté par Lui-Même, v. 3).
Plate 133

The Newsboy

(Eaton, oil, n.d.)

(Private collection; photograph courtesy of the owner).
Plate 134

Head of a Woman
(Eaton, charcoal drawing, 1884-1886)
(Private collection; photograph courtesy of the owner).
Plate 135

**Barbizon Peasant**

(Eaton, oil, 1884-1886)

(Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick).
Plate 136
The Harvest Field
(Eaton, oil, 1886)
(Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal).
Plate 137

Peasant Reposing (Millet, drawing, n.d.)
(Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).
Plate 138

Hagar and Ishmael
(Low, oil, 1886)
(Albany Institute of History and Art).
Plate 139

The Stalwart Gleaner
(Eaton, oil, 1888)
(Present location unknown; Loan Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Watercolor Drawings at the Art Association of Montreal).
Plate 140

Angelus

(Advertisement, November, 1889)

(The Sunday Sun, New York).
I OPEN SUNDAYS

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6 E 22nd St. (Madison Square)

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Works of Barye

"THE ILLUSTRIOUS PALACE OF 1830,"

"THE ANGELUS."

Plate 141

Angelus

(Advertisement, December, 1889)

(The Sunday Sun, New York).
Plate 142

Plowing: Eastern Townships
(Eaton, oil, 1894)
(Power Corporation of Canada, Limited, Montreal).
Plate 143

Mère Suzi

(Low, photograph, 1892)

(Albany Institute of History and Art).
Plate 144

The Real Man with the Hoe
(Low, photograph, 1892)
(Albany Institute of History and Art).
Robust health is the greatest help a mother can give her child. Nine times in ten, when the little one is weak and puny, the trouble can be traced to impure milk. Cow's milk is the best artificial food, but it is full of germs. Germs make the baby sick and peevish. Thousands of infants die every year because of them. The way to purify a cow's milk is to Sterilize it. Arnold's Steam Sterilizer is the best and surest germ destroyer.

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Plate 145

Arnold's Steam Sterilizer
(Advertisement, 1897)

(Kindergarten Review, v. 8, 1897-1898)
Plate 146

The First Steps
(Millet, black crayon and pastel drawing, 1859)
(Cleveland Museum of Art).
Plate 147

Boy with the Hoe

(Frontispiece photograph, 1904)

(Granniss, The Boy with the Hoe).
Plate 148

American Schoolboy Posing as 'The Sower'
(photograph, 1900)
(Hurll, How to Show Pictures to Children).