

**JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET.  
TWENTY ETCHINGS AND  
WOODCUTS  
REPRODUCED IN FAC-SIMILE  
AND A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649025589

Jean-François Millet. Twenty Etchings and Woodcuts Reproduced in Fac-Simile and a Biographical Notice by William Ernest Henley

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY**

**JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET.  
TWENTY ETCHINGS AND  
WOODCUTS  
REPRODUCED IN FAC-SIMILE  
AND A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE**



JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET.



CARDING.  
(*La Cardeuse.*)

# JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET.

---

## TWENTY ETCHINGS AND WOODCUTS

REPRODUCED IN FAC-SIMILE,

AND

*A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE,*

BY

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

"And the Bible, François, have you forgotten it? and the Psalms, do you ever read them?"

"They are my breviary," said Millet, "I get from them all that I do."

*SIRISA's Millet*, p. 108.

*INDIA PROOF EDITION.*  
*Limited to 500 Copies.*

LONDON:  
THE FINE ART SOCIETY,  
LIMITED.  
NEW YORK: SCRIBNER & WELFORD.  
1881.







### MILLET: A BIOGRAPHY.

**I**T is characteristic of the French mind to be slow and stubborn in its apprehension of new ideas, and to be quick to assimilate and adopt them, once their apprehension is accomplished. Such Frenchmen, therefore, as are unlucky enough to be intellectually ahead of their epoch, are assured beforehand of a portion mainly compacted of misery and disappointment, and may be said to work not so much for their contemporaries as for their more or less immediate posterity. They produce their discovery to a generation unprepared and unresponsive; and it is considered with derision, or overlooked with indifference. Presently it becomes familiar, and so—in a certain sense—respectable. It puts off its absurdity as it ceases to be abnormal and strange; and, in course of time, it achieves due recognition, is converted into a common possession, and is utilized and wrought at with enthusiasm. Meanwhile, the man originally responsible for it has disappeared, not trailing clouds of glory, but clouds of penury and wretchedness. This has only to be known to be universally deplored. He enters into a kind of apotheosis forthwith. He was penniless and hungry while he lived; but he is famous after death, and men may wax fat and rich in praising him. The æsthetic history of modern France abounds in instances and examples. The hot and heady valour of the men of 1830 notwithstanding, it is evident that the theory and practice of Romanticism were wholly successful in not a single one of the arts. It was in literature that the

most brilliant victories of the revolutionary party were won; but neither Balzac nor Dumas were ever recognized officially for great writers, and there were scores of others as unfortunate, if not as powerful, as they. It was worse still in music. Berlioz, perhaps the most original and able master since Beethoven, could only live by writing articles, and to get a hearing for his works was obliged to produce them abroad. And in painting it was worst of all. Delacroix, in spite of his prodigious talent and his splendid strength of character, was never acclaimed as he deserved until he was well nigh at the end of his career. "Voilà trente ans que je suis livré aux bêtes," he said; and the saying was a fair description of his position. Théodore Rousseau, one of the kings of modern landscape—"le Grand Refusé," as he was called—was thrust out of the Salon ten or twelve years running. Corot, the inventor of a new principle in landscape, spent the greater part of his life in trying to persuade the dealers to buy for next to nothing canvases they afterwards thought cheap at any price he pleased to put on them. Méryon, who is just now a steady source of income to the print-sellers, had a public some ten or fifteen strong at the most, could seldom or never get a franc each for proofs of his finest etchings, and died a madman and an utter failure. With Millet, a man of incomparably greater mind and stronger character, it was almost as bad as with Méryon. The message he had to deliver was one spoken from himself; and he paid to the uttermost farthing that penalty the world is wont to exact from his kind. His story is one as fruitful of mortifying and humiliating reflections as exists in the annals of art.

## I.

IN the commune of Gréville, on the iron-bound coast of La Manche, stands the little hamlet of Gruchy. It is built at the sea's edge, on the granite cliffs of the Hogue, overlooking the stormy waters of Cherbourg Roads; but it is situate, for all that, in a fertile and

pleasant country, rich in grass and corn and wood, covered with herds and flocks, and peopled with a race of husbandmen. It was there, on the 4th of October, 1814, that Millet was born.

He came of excellent stock on both sides, and is, indeed, as admirable an expression of the nobler type of peasant as is known. A remarkable man himself, he had remarkable men and women for his kindred. His father's mother, Louise Jumelin, was a person of great depth and strength of character. Robust and energetic, profoundly religious, uncommonly intelligent, full of sentiment and decision, she came of a family of brothers and sisters who, in their way, were as exceptional as herself. One had been a chemist of repute, and had worked with Spallanzani; another had been a monk; a third, who was a miller, had been deeply versed in the logic and literature of Port-Royal. One of her husband's uncles, Charles Millet, a priest released from his vows by the Revolution, was an almost ideal type of the working country curate; he was good, sweet-tempered, thoughtful, prodigiously laborious, and gifted with enormous strength; and

"Christ's lore and His Apostles twelve,  
He taught, and first he followed it himself."

Another Millet was a man of great hardihood and endurance, to whom it was pastime to walk without stopping from Gruchy to Paris. Their nephew, the painter's father, was an excellent man; he was pure in thought, clean in life, very pious, and full of a certain cheerful seriousness of temper and of mind; and in his simple, inarticulate way he was an artist. He was passionately fond of music, and he was the precentor of Gruchy church, where he led and trained a choir that was the envy and admiration of all the country side. He would often try to model in clay, and to carve in wood with his pocket-knife; and he loved to point out to his son the beauty and charm he saw in the landscape in whose midst they dwelt, and to make him feel the wonder and the mystery in the changing seasons, in the springing of wheat, in the branching majesty of woods, in the quiet increase of grass and