

**LITTLE JOURNEYS TO THE
HOMES OF EMINENT
ARTISTS, COROT, VOL.
XI, JULY, 1902, NO. 1**

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Little journeys to the homes of eminent artists, Corot, Vol. XI, July, 1902, No. 1 by Elbert Hubbard

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ELBERT HUBBARD

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LITTLE

JOURNEYS

To the Homes of
EMINENT
ARTISTS

Corot

Written by Elbert
Hubbard and done
into a Book by the
Roycrofters at their
Shop, which is in
East Aurora, New
York, A. D. 1902

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The sun sinks more and more behind the horizon. Bam! he throws his last ray, a streak of gold and purple which fringes the flying clouds. There, now it has entirely disappeared. Bien! bien! twilight commences. Heavens, how charming it is! There is now in the sky only the soft vaporous color of pale citron—the last reflection of the sun which plunges into the dark blue of the night, going from green tones to a pale turquoise of an unheard-of fineness and a fluid delicacy quite indescribable * * * * *

The fields lose their color, the trees form but gray or brown masses * * * * * the dark waters reflect the bland tones of the sky. We are losing sight of things—but one still feels that everything is there—everything is vague, confused, and Nature grows drowsy. The fresh evening air sighs among the leaves—the birds, these voices of the flowers are saying their evening prayer.

COROT'S LETTER TO GRAHAM.

[Translated by David Cress Thompson.]



cordi

COROT



MOST young artists begin by working for microscopic effects, trying to portray every detail, to see every leaf, stem and branch and reveal them in the picture.

¶ The ability to draw carefully and finish painstakingly is very necessary, but the great artist must forget how to draw before he paints a great picture; just as every strong writer must put the grammar upon the shelf before he writes well. I once heard Mr. William Dean Howells say that any good, bright High School girl of sixteen could pass a far better examination in rhetoric than he could—and the admission did Mr. Howells no discredit.

“Would you advise me to take a course in elocution?” once asked a young man with oratorical ambitions of Henry Ward Beecher.

“Yes, by all means. Study elocution very carefully, but you will have to forget it all before you ever become an orator,” was the answer.

Corot began as a child by drawing very rude, crude, uncertain pictures, just such pictures as any schoolboy can draw. Next he began to “complete” his sketches, and work with infinite pains.

If he sketched a house he showed whether the roof was shingled or made of straw or tile; his trees revealed the texture of the bark and showed the shape of the leaf, and every flower contained its pistil and stamens, and told the man knew his botany. Two of his pictures done in Rome in his twenty-ninth year, "The Coliseum" and "The Forum," now in the Louvre, are good pictures—complete in detail, painstaking, accurate, hard and tight in technique. They are bomb-proof—beyond criticism—absolutely safe.

¶ Have a care, Corot. Keep where you are and you will become an irreproachable painter. That is to say, you will paint just like a hundred other French painters. There will be a market for your wares, the critics will approve, and at the Salon your work will never be either enskyed nor consigned to the catacombs. Society will court you, fair ladies will smile and encourage. You will be a success; your name will be safely pigeonholed among the unobjectionable ones and before your wind-combed shock of hair has turned to silver, you will be supplanted by a new crop of fashion's favorites.





It is a fact worth noting that the two greatest landscape painters of all time were city-born and city-bred. Turner was born in London, the son of a barber, and Fate held him so in leash that he never got beyond the sound of Bow Bells until he was a man grown. Corot was born in Paris,

and his first outdoor sketch, made at twenty-two, was done amidst the din and jostle of the quays of the Seine.

¶ Five strong men made up the Barbizon School, and of these, three were reared in Paris, Paris the frivolous, Paris the pleasure-loving: Corot, Rousseau and Daubigny were children of the Metropolis.

I state these facts in the interests of truth, and also to ease conscience, for I am aware that I have glorified the country boy in pages gone before, as if God were kind to him alone.

Turner made over a million dollars by the work of his hands (reinforced by head and heart); and left a discard of nineteen thousand sketches to the British Nation. Was ever such an example of concentration, energy and industry known in the history of art?

Corot, six feet one, weight two hundred, ruddy, simple, guileless, singing softly to himself as he walked, in peasant blouse, and sabot-shod, used to come up to Paris, his birthplace, two or three times a year, and the gamins would follow him on the streets, making