

**QUINCY ADAMS SHAW
COLLECTION. ITALIAN
RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE;
PAINTINGS AND PASTELS,
EXHIBITION OPENING APRIL 18, 1918**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649685752

Quincy Adams Shaw Collection. Italian Renaissance Sculpture; Paintings and Pastels,
Exhibition Opening April 18, 1918 by Jean François Millet

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET

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ITALIAN RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE
PAINTINGS AND PASTELS
BY JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET

Exhibition Opening April 18, 1918



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
BOSTON
MCMXVIII

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MILLET IN HIS GARDEN

INTRODUCTION

QUINCY ADAMS SHAW, the son of Robert Gould Shaw and Elizabeth Willard Parkman, was born in Boston, February 8, 1825, in a fine old mansion in Bowdoin Square facing the Revere House, belonging to the Parkman Estate, which was standing until a few years ago; he died at his home in Jamaica Plain, June 12, 1908.

Graduating at Harvard College in the Class of 1845, he went to the West the following spring with his friend and relative, the late historian, Francis Parkman. They "left St. Louis on the 28th day of April, 1846, on a tour of curiosity and amusement to the Rocky Mountains." The story of this journey is told in that fascinating book, "The Oregon Trail," dedicated by Mr. Parkman "To the Comrade of a Summer and the Friend of a Life Time, Quincy Adams Shaw." The winter of 1849-1850 he spent in Egypt and in Palestine, with George William Curtis, who afterwards married his niece, Anna Shaw.

Returning from the East, Mr. Shaw went to Paris, where his sister, Mrs. William Batchelder Greene (Anna Shaw), was living, and remained for seven or eight years. Through the friendship of Mrs. Greene with the famous Madame Julius Mohl Mr. Shaw was thrown in the midst of the literary, scientific and artistic society of the Paris of that day. Madame Mohl was one of the last great ladies to have a salon in the accepted sense of the word. William Morris Hunt, an intimate friend of Mr. Shaw's, was an art student in Paris, and through him Mr. Shaw was also thrown with the artistic world.

The Barbizon School was then just beginning to be heard of. It was through the patronage of Americans that the now famous men of this school were first appreciated. The French found it

Shaw
7

hard to break loose from the classical traditions of the past. Americans purchased the pictures of the new school, and undoubtedly no man did more than Mr. Hunt to bring Millet forward. "The Sower" had been skyed at the Salon of 1850, received little praise—on the contrary was thought to be a symbol of socialism, revolution and class prejudice. In the early fifties, Mr. Martin Brimmer, of Boston, had bought Millets through William Morris Hunt, all of which pictures now hang on the walls of the Museum. The largest price paid Millet at that time by Mr. Brimmer for one of these pictures was five hundred francs, which Mr. Hunt handed him, and which caused Millet great joy.

On November 30, 1860, Mr. Shaw was married to Pauline Agassiz, daughter of the scientist, Louis Agassiz, and Cécile Braun. Immediately after their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Shaw went to Paris to see Mrs. Greene. The journalist and artist, William James Stillman, was living in Paris and was a great friend of both Mr. and Mrs. Shaw. It was through William Morris Hunt that they heard of Millet, but it was through Mr. Stillman that they met him.

Mr. and Mrs. Shaw remained in Paris until the summer of 1861, which was passed at Nahant. The following winter they had a house at No. 26 Mt. Vernon Street, and in 1862 the house was built on Jamaica Pond, where Mr. Shaw and his family lived until the time of his death. He had five children, Louis Agassiz, Pauline, Marian, Quincy Adams and Robert Gould, 2d.

During this visit to Paris Mr. Shaw acquired a certain number of pictures of the French School, although it was not until he went to Europe in the early seventies that he purchased a few Millets; and it was in 1874 that he bought from William Morris Hunt five important Millets saved from destruction at the time of the Boston Fire from the fact that they were in Mr. Hunt's residence and not in his studio. During the next twenty years, Mr. Shaw added oil paintings, pastels and drawings,

which today constitute the largest collection of Millets in one place, and which must now and in years to come make the Boston Museum of Fine Arts a place of pilgrimage for those who want to study Millet as one of the greatest masters of the Naturalistic School.

In a letter from Millet to Sensier, dated January 8, 1872, appears the following: "An American gentleman and lady, M. and Madame Shaw, of Boston, came a little while ago to ask me for a picture which I have promised to paint for them. They chose 'The Priory of Vauville' as the subject from among the drawings they saw here."

Bode, the famous Director of the Imperial Museum in Berlin, visited this collection many years before the death of Mr. Shaw. "It was in his modest home in Jamaica Plain, surrounded by beautiful scenery, that I first learnt to appreciate fully what the 'paysage intime' in France can produce; of Jean François Millet, Mr. Shaw possessed such an abundance of oil paintings, pastels and finished drawings as can hardly be found in all the Museums and private collections in France. These show the master's art on so many sides and on so high a level, that here I first became fully conscious of the commanding superiority of this master over all the painters of our modern times."

Mr. Shaw was seldom, if ever, influenced by others in his artistic perceptions, except by his wife, in whose artistic judgment and taste he had great confidence. He was extraordinarily independent in all questions relating to art. While living in Paris in the early seventies, he had "The Angelus" in his apartment for some time with the idea that he might purchase it, but he returned the picture, deciding not to do so.

To show how intense was his love of all that was beautiful in Art, a friend once said to him, "How do you dare to have these pictures in your house, and why don't you build a picture gallery?" His reply was: "Why should I build a picture gallery?"

I sit quietly in my rooms and enjoy looking at the walls upon which the pictures and sculptures are hung."

Undoubtedly Mr. Shaw was a great idealist. His idealism led him to keep as a single collection in the Museum of his native city for all time the oil paintings, pastels and etchings by Millet, and the Renaissance sculpture acquired by him in Italy, "which any Museum might envy him" (Bode).

Twenty-six oil paintings, twenty-seven pastels, two etchings and one etching washed in water colour, by Jean François Millet, together with nineteen pieces of Renaissance sculpture, were given by him during his lifetime to his children, Quincy Adams Shaw and Marian Shaw Haughton, to be delivered to the Museum under the following conditions:

"To transfer and deliver to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts, all the oil paintings, pastels and etchings by the artist Jean François Millet, and the marbles and terra cottas, upon the following terms and conditions: that the said Museum of Fine Arts shall furnish one room for the oil paintings, marbles and terra cottas, the said marbles and terra cottas to be hung or placed against one wall; and furnish one room for the pastels and etchings; and no other works of art by Jean François Millet or other artists to be in these rooms."

At a meeting of the Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts, held on March 29, 1917, this gift was formally accepted by the Trustees with "their great gratitude for this gift and their very deep appreciation of its importance and its generosity."

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE
SCULPTURE

*The Museum gratefully acknowledges its debt to
Professor Allan Marquand for the attributions assigned to the
Italian terra-cottas and marbles*