

Art Notes — VII.

BY HUNTER BOYD, WAWEIG, N. B.

Feeding Her Birds.

The picture, which Jean Francois Millet painted in 1860 and exhibited in the Salon in Paris in 1861, whilst peculiarly appropriate for Primary Departments will repay the attention of older scholars.

The name given by the artist was *Becquée* which may be roughly termed *beakful*, and readily suggests the small portion of food which a mother bird holds in her beak for her young family. Considered poetically it is easy to recognize other points of resemblance to a cozy nest and the tender care with which the nestlings are watched by parent birds. We say birds, for although it is the mother who is feeding the little ones, the father is seen in the orchard just beyond the house, busily engaged for his family, and thus it appears a beautiful scene of healthy, peaceful home-life. The little girls wear caps not unlike the one on their mother's head, but their younger brother has on a kind of tam-o-shanter. They are evidently fond of him, and the wee fellow enjoys the first taste from the steaming bowl. In other instances we have found that Millet's subjects were absorbed in their respective occupations and possibly so small a matter as the tilting of the stool on which the mother is seated helps to indicate the intensity of her act. Just as the thick bare walls of the house are clothed with a beautiful vine, so these peasant folk in their coarse durable clothes, and clumsy-looking sabots, yield a vintage of human affection to the quiet-eye, and we are not surprised to learn that Millet, who was so fond of his faithful wife and their nine children, and also spent much of his time in digging, regarded this as his favorite picture.

Teachers are urged not to attempt to *describe* the picture. Seek however, to encourage conversation in the class on all the details, especially as to the relationship of the children to each other, and then to their mother, and ere long it will appear to some of them that the point of the spoon which is thrust forward is not greatly unlike the beak of a bird, and they will enter into the *eagerness* with which the little birds are fed who have become hungry at their play. But let Millet first make his own appeal, and after that the scholars may receive further light from the teacher's observation, or from these notes. Remember art is intended to supply good grounds for evoking the higher emotions. We wish to share those of Millet as he glanced in that dooryard.

Replies to Queries.

NORA. It is a brother of the famous Jean Francois Millet who has just died. His name was Jean Baptiste Millet. He excelled as engraver. J. F. Millet's son is also an artist, and I believe that some of his work may be seen in the Art Academy at Sackville, N. B. There is also an artist named Francis Davis Millet, who painted "Between Two Fires."

R. S. L. Encourage your scholars to observe the movements of any experienced sower in your own locality. A man will not pass over a field very rapidly, but if he be as fully engrossed in his sowing as Millet's peasant, his action will tend to become as rhythmic.

BEGINNER. It would be a good plan to arrange a series of scenes, commencing with ploughing, harrowing, seeding, reaping and so on. Gleaning is little known in this country, partly because there are few persons to do it, and also because most farmers would say "what's the odds of a few oats or a little wheat anyway." But the custom still has beautiful associations of thrift and generosity.

EVELYN. See preceding answer. You can also arrange a series according to time of day, e. g., there are several pictures of men and women going to work, also the noon-day rest, and returning from labor. Invite your scholars to bring a cent and purchase a set of the Perry Pictures illustrating a day's work at various seasons.

The following anecdote, says Harper's Weekly, is told of a prominent Baptist minister, celebrated for his caustic wit: He was speaking once at a dinner given to commemorate an important event in the history of New England, his text being "The Pilgrim Fathers." "I have always," he said, "felt the deepest sympathy for the Pilgrim fathers, who suffered such extraordinary hardships in establishing a foothold in this country. But, sorry as I have felt for the Pilgrim fathers, I have felt still sorrier for the Pilgrim mothers; for not only were they obliged to endure the same hardships, but they had also endured the Pilgrim Fathers."

H. B.

Your paper is of the greatest value to me, as I think it surely is to any teacher. I wish you many successful years in your splendid work of helping the teacher.

Northumberland Co.

M. G. M.