

Those lithe figures that dance through his summer landscapes, are the wood and river, goddesses of ancient art transformed into the moods of Nature in color, form, posture and everything. Aligny, who was regarded as an authority in landscape, after seeing one of Corot's landscapes, painted at Rome, told his comrades that Corot could well become the master of them all. This opened the gates of hope to Corot, and he never forgot Aligny's kind recognition. Long years after, when Corot was seventy-eight years old, he stood shivering, one cold winter's day in the falling snow, by the open grave of Aligny, refusing to go away till the last rites were paid to his friend. "It is a duty," he said, "a sacred debt." Few have been loved as Corot was. His generosity was in harmony with the rest of his great glad nature, he would never accept any money from his pupils, and gave away generously, even when he had nothing but his annuity. In 1855, he inherited an estate yielding an annual income of 25,000 francs. Success in art came about the same time. He placed the income out of his reach, allowing it to accumulate for his nephews and nieces. His habits were simple, and he used the surplus of his income to help others. He gave away many annuities. An artist friend became blind, and his landlord was going to dispossess him. Corot purchased the place and sent the title-deed to the artist with the message, "Now they can't put you out." He was so thoughtful. One year at Arros he painted a little peasant girl. On his return the following year, he learned that the child had been drowned. He carried the picture to the parents and said, "Here is your little girl come back to you," and was repaid by the great joy and gratitude of the parents. He was loved as a comrade and respected as a master among the landscapists twenty years his juniors. Dumesnil says that in his younger days he was the gayest of the gay in the dances at the Academy of Design. Every spring he fled to the country. He said, "I have a rendezvous with Nature, with the new foliage and the birds." He painted, smiling of singing or talking with the birds and trees. When evening came he would say, "Well I must stop, my Heavenly Father has put out my lamp."

Corot's "Paysage," in the Louvre, seems the actual expression of the life and spirit of its maker. It is a picture of a lake resting in the silver haze of a summer morning. The eye pierces through the mist to the far away shore where the rising sun seems to be falling in drops of light on the glassy surface. The wooded shore is half revealed, half

shrouded in mystery—fit home for elusive, mysterious people of Nature.

In "Le Matin" Corot has painted these elusive, lithe beings—not mortal, not divine, not heroic, but wonderfully blending with the tones of the landscape. Who has not felt in the solitudes of nature that only a thin veil hides from us a life that is all about us?

Corot never thought he painted grand things. Before a painting of Delacroix's he exclaimed, "He is an eagle; I am only a skylark. I send forth little songs in my grey clouds."

Dumesnil thought that Corot's religious paintings gave evidence of capacity for grand art as represented by Titian, Rembrandt and such. Nature shimmers through Corot's landscapes—dream-landscapes whose quiet beauty grows on one as they are studied. He did not labor over his pictures. He feared to tarnish in an after hour the fresh grace of what Nature had revealed to him in the hour of her presence. This fresh, unlabored quality is the distinctive charm of his canvases.

The grand medal of honor was not given to Corot after the exposition of 1874. His friends were disappointed. They thought it would have been fittingly conferred as a final and full recognition of the master's work. Consequently a movement was started among his admirers and friends, and a gold medal was prepared. Three or four hundred artists and friends met at the Grand Hotel to welcome the dear old master with great enthusiasm and affection. Amid the enthusiasm of the presentation of the medal, Corot whispered to the presiding officer, "One is very happy to feel one's self loved like this."

A short time before the presentation of the medal, Corot's sister, who had shared his home, died. His health rapidly declined after her death. He still went to his studio, but could not paint. A few days before his death he said, "I have had health during seventy-eight years; I have had good friends; I am thankful." On his deathbed he heard of Millet's death. His death was kept from Barye, then dying of heart disease. In his last moments Corot's right hand moved along the wall; his fingers seemed to be holding a brush; then he paused and said, "Look how beautiful it is! I have never seen such landscapes before." On Tuesday, the 23rd of February, 1875, the great, glad heart of this generous, much loved child of Nature ceased to beat and his spirit went out through the silver mists to meet the God of Nature, waiting in the dawning of a glorious morning on the other side.