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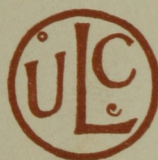
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D20.N48

Vol 3

(1895)

TWO ❁ ❁ ❁
BARBIZON
PAINTERS



1895

Gift New York (City) Union League Club
 Catalogues
 020. N48
 Lm 3
 (1895)

FROM CONSTANT TROYON
 AND
 CHARLES FRANCOIS DAUBIGNY
 at
 THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB
 November Exhibition, 1895



CONTRIBUTORS

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. A. J. Antelo | Mr. Joseph Jefferson |
| " Geo. F. Baker | " David H. King, Jr. |
| " Frederic Bonner | " Roland Knoedler |
| " T. J. Blakeslee | " John T. Martin |
| " Wm. Buchanan | " Julius Oehme |
| " Carl H. De Silver | " Geo. C. Thomas |
| " W. H. Fuller | " Cornelius Van- |
| " Jas. A. Garland | derbilt |
| " Jos. C. Hoagland | " Geo. D. Widener |
| " John G. Johnson | " Henry S. Wilson |

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CONSTANT TROYON

TWO BARBIZON PAINTERS

AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

BY W. H. FULLER

TO France belongs the honor of having produced a little group of painters, during the first half of the present century, whose works not only revolutionized the landscape art of their own country, but have ever since exercised a profound and lasting influence upon the landscape art of the world. Although a few years only have elapsed since these artists passed away, their works have already become classic, and are worthily ranked with the best achievements, in the same field, of the great masters of any country or of any time. In point of numbers they could be counted on the fingers of your hands; in point of age they began with Corot (1796); included Diaz (1808); Troyon (1810); Rousseau (1812); Dupré (1812); Millet (1814); and ended with Charles François Daubigny (1817). Unlike the early Dutch and Flemish painters, they belonged to no guild, with its traditions and famous masters, nor did they inherit much of permanent

value from the then-existing schools. But what was far better, they became in a large and vital sense their own instructors; pursued their own careers; and when they died, they left behind them few heirs of royal blood to question the sovereignty of their fame.

In popular designation they have long been known as the "Barbizon School," although with three exceptions, Rousseau, Diaz and Millet, none of them lived in the little rambling village on the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau, which gave its name to the group. Nevertheless, Corot, painting the early morning at Ville d'Avray; Dupré, lover of plains and shaded pools and the changeful open sea; Troyon, portraying the beauties of the hills at Sèvres, the coast of Normandy, or the outstretching meadows of Holland; Daubigny, living in his boat and painting the banks of the Oise, the Marne and the Seine, were all of them in closest kinship with these Barbizon men. Together they composed that splendid phalanx in art, now often called "The Men of 1830"—the immortal landscape painters of France.

It will be recalled that in the past various examples of these artists' pictures have, from time to time, been seen upon our walls. But unfortunately, it is now beyond the reach of possibility to procure for a single exhibition even ordinary works of all of these men. The Art Commit-

tee has therefore concluded that it would not only be most enjoyable, but most instructive as well, to present at this November meeting some selected paintings by only two representatives of this school—Constant Troyon and Charles François Daubigny. And when it is further remembered that during the last ten years most of the finest specimens of these French painters have found homes in the museums, public galleries and private collections of Europe and America, it is a matter of no little congratulation to us all, that the owners of the pictures in this exhibition, especially those gentlemen who are not members here, should have shown such marked liberality and cordial coöperation in placing their treasures—some of them famous in two continents—at the disposal of the Club.

To all of them the thanks of the Union League Club are due for affording an opportunity of seeing under one roof and in one family group these varied examples of two gifted members of that great brotherhood of painters, whose achievements are the triumph and the glory of Nineteenth Century Art.

Constant Troyon

CONSTANT TROYON was born at Sèvres in 1810. His father was connected with the Government Manufactory of porcelain at that place. Under his instruction the son began his artistic career as a decorator of china ware. By a happy coincidence for him, two unknown young men, named Narcisse Diaz and Jules Dupré, were also employed at Sèvres in the same kind of work. Acquaintance soon followed, and shortly afterward Theodore Rousseau came into the party.

Here then were these four young men, all about of the same age, all fond of the same pursuits, each more or less helpful to the other, starting life side by side, all buoyant and hopeful for the future, but never dreaming that they would all attain a celebrity so even, so unprecedented and so enduring, as to found a new school of painting and mark an era in the history of landscape art. As we recall the works of these different painters, one of them, mainly because of the character of his subjects, stands out clear and distinct from all the rest, namely, Constant Troyon.

To most of us at the present day Troyon is

chiefly known as a great animal painter, especially of cattle and sheep. But it must not be forgotten that long before he began to paint animals he had won distinction as a landscape painter. His career in this field of art was marked by success almost from the start. His first picture was exhibited in the Salon in 1832, when he was twenty-two years of age; three years later he received his first honor—a Medal of the Third Class; in 1839 the Museum at Amiens purchased his Salon picture; in 1840 he obtained a Medal of the Second Class; in 1846 a Medal of the First Class, besides having a picture bought for the Museum at Lille; finally, in 1849, he received his greatest public preferment—the Cross of the Legion of Honor. All these honors, be it remembered, were awarded him before he had painted a single picture of animal life, and were bestowed upon him for his excellence as a landscape painter alone.

The year 1848 was the turning point in Troyon's career, for in that year he visited Holland, and it is said found there his true field of painting. It certainly was not Paul Potter's "Young Bull" which determined him to become an animal painter, for he was not much impressed with that over-estimated picture. On the contrary, with his originality and temperament, one can easily fancy that it was far more likely to have been the sight of the large, fine cattle feeding

in herds or lying in groups upon the low, outstretched Holland meadows, their massive forms outlined against the gray northern sky. He had not been without personal solicitation to combine landscape and animal painting. Indeed, long before this Holland visit his old friend, M. Louis Robert, an employé of the manufactory at Sèvres, had urged him to introduce animals into his pictures. So also another friend, M. Ad. Charropin, had given him, time and again, the same advice. Writing on this subject to M. Ph. Burty, the former says: "Year after year I went with Troyon to Barbizon. On rainy days, when we were unable to sketch in the forest, we visited the farms where the watchers of cattle and the tenders of geese posed as our models; more often still to the stables, where we painted the animals. Here Troyon executed the most charming things in the world; and from 1846 to 1848 I constantly implored him to introduce them into his landscapes."

But while this visit to Holland does not mark the precise year when he began his career as an animal painter, it was significant and valuable in another way, for it brought him a fuller knowledge of the charming works of Aelbert Cuyp, and a more perfect realization of the tremendous powers of Rembrandt than he had ever had before. Rembrandt's paintings were his greatest delight. Of all the pictures of this master the one which

apparently impressed him most (he made a copy of it) was "The Night Watch."

Troyon's exhibit in the the Salon of 1849 did not disclose any important animal painting, as might have been expected upon his return from Holland, but it did contain a landscape which clearly revealed the influence of the great Dutch master in the magical rendering of light and shade. It was the famous "Windmill," of which Théophile Gautier wrote:

"It is the early morning. The sun struggles dimly amid the enveloping mist; the wind rises; then the huge old frame, with worm eaten planks, begins to creak with regular throbs, like the beatings of the heart, as the great membranous wings stretch themselves in silhouette against the pale splendor of the dawn." It was this picture which marked the culmination of his success thus far in landscape art, and made Troyon Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

Concerning the bestowal of the decoration, M. Charles Blanc, at that time Director of the Beaux-Arts, relates this interesting incident. The exhibition of that year, by the way, took place at the Tuileries and not, as was the former custom, at the Louvre:

"One morning," said he, "about seven o'clock, some two or three days before the opening of the Salon, the Honorable M. Dufaure, Minister of the Interior, notified me through a mounted orderly

that the President of the Republic would visit the exhibition that day at eight o'clock. Inasmuch as he did not have leisure to see all the pictures, he requested that only the best works should be pointed out. Troyon's pictures held a place of honor. As we stood before one of them I cried, 'Behold, a virile painter, strong, self-contained and worthy of comparison with the greatest masters of the Holland School——' I stopped short, seeing that the outburst of enthusiasm had produced no success. The President replied coldly, but politely, that the painting made upon him the impression of a piece of tapestry, but beyond that he could see nothing in it worthy of admiration. As I could not accord with this view, which, indeed, was not without some reason, owing to the broad manner of painting, the President pleasantly turned to his staff, and notably to an officer of ordnance, for confirmation of his opinion. This gentleman, naturally, endorsed the sentiment of his chief, and read the Director of the Beaux-Arts a lesson on art. My best course was silence. We informed Troyon that in all likelihood he would not be decorated. However, when the time came to distribute the prizes, the Minister of the Interior left the name of Troyon on the list of those who were to receive the Cross of the Legion of Honor, which, curiously enough, contained the name of his old friend, and fellow decorator at Sèvres, Jules Dupré. On

his first glance at the list, the President of the Republic smiled a little grimly, and said to M. Dufaure: 'It appears decidedly that I know nothing about painting;' and then, with charming grace, signed the decree."

If Troyon cared for academic rewards, he certainly had received his full share. In the short space of seventeen years he had won every medal of the Salon save one, and to these distinctions had been added, as we have seen, the Cross of the Legion of Honor; and yet, notwithstanding all this, and although he was forty years old, he had not publicly begun his real career. When in fact he entered upon it, splendidly equipped as he was, there nevertheless remained to him before his death the too brief space of only fifteen years in which to create the manifold wonders of his brush—only fifteen years in which to live a new life in art and establish his true place in the ranks of fame.

Always an earnest worker, Troyon found that the painting of animals added a new and delightful zest to his occupation. He was discovering and conquering new worlds in his last domain of art. With what inward delight, therefore, he must have painted when he felt that he had found at last his true vocation, and realized that at a single bound he had reached an altogether unexpected and triumphant success! To obtain absolute mastery of his subject, he spent no less

than eight consecutive summers at the country place of a friend, making beautiful studies of running dogs, which he subsequently employed in his picture, "The Return from the Chase." In like manner he made superb studies of sheep and cattle. A friend of his relates how Troyon, after his return in 1855 from a sketching tour in Touraine, showed him what seemed an almost endless panorama of great, splendid studies of cattle, most of which were, indeed, finished pictures; and when he expressed astonishment at their number and beauty, Troyon quietly remarked: "I have made as many as eighteen in a month."

Assuming that the rank which Troyon holds among modern painters is substantially just, what is the true basis of his fame? Certainly it was not because of exceptional skill as a draftsman, for in draftsmanship he was not supreme; not as a colorist, for in this respect he was surpassed by Gainsborough, and at times by Delacroix. Was it not rather because he was endowed with a fine artistic nature and possessed a largeness of feeling which enabled him to see and to express objects in a noble way? But more than all, was it not because he alone of all modern men possessed a consummate knowledge of landscape art, together with a profound insight into animal life and combined both in one harmonious picture?

While Troyon excelled in painting a variety of animals, as dogs, sheep, and even barnyard

fowls, still it was as a painter of cattle that he reached his greatest height. Nor was it merely their outward forms that he portrayed. He had a realizing sense of their character, their habits, their life, as the willing servants of man. To us, those heavy-yoked oxen, with bent necks and measured tread, dragging the plow along the furrows, are living, breathing creatures; and those great awkward cows lazily resting their heavy bodies on the ground, and contentedly chewing their cud, are absolutely so alive and real, that an expert could tell at a glance how much they weigh; and the spectator almost fears that a near approach might bring them slowly to their feet, and they would walk out of the canvas. In a word, "His cattle have the heavy step, the philosophical indolence, the calm resignation, the vagueness of look, which are the characteristics of their race."

And yet Troyon never painted animals merely for their own sake. It was always a pictorial quality which he sought; and his chickens, dogs, sheep or cows were only component and necessary parts of a completed whole. Indeed, in his own personality there were combined two distinct, contending forces—the landscape painter and the animal painter, each eagerly claiming the honor of his preference, but both so evenly balanced that their rivalry always ended in a harmonious union of the two, to the incomparable beauty of his work and the added triumph of his fame.

In concluding this brief sketch of this master, I can do no better than to quote the opinion of a well-known writer on art, Mr. William Ernest Henley, who sums up his estimate of Troyon in these appreciative and convincing words :

“ He had the true pictorial sense, and if his lines are often insignificant and ill-balanced, his masses are perfectly proportioned, his values are admirably graded, his tonality is faultless, his effect is absolute in completeness. His method is the large, serene and liberal expression of great craftsmanship; and with the interest and the grace of art his color unites the charm of individuality, the richness and the potency of a natural force. His training in landscape was varied and severe ; and when he came to his right work he applied its results with almost inevitable assurance and tact. He does not sentimentalize his animals, nor concern himself with the drama of their character and gesture. He takes them as components in a general scheme ; and he paints them as he has seen them in Nature—enveloped in atmosphere and light, and in an environment of grass and streams and living leafage. His work is not to take the portraits of trees, or animals, or sites, but as echoes of Virgilian music to suggest and typify the country, with its tranquil meadows, its luminous skies, its quiet waters, and that abundance of flocks and herds, at once the symbol and the source of its prosperity.”



CHARLES FRANÇOIS DAUBIGNY

Charles François Daubigny

CHARLES FRANÇOIS DAUBIGNY, the youngest of the Barbizon group was born in Paris in 1817. His father was a teacher of drawing, and his uncle and aunt were miniature painters of enough importance to have their work exhibited at the Salon. With strong inherited artistic tastes, pencils and paint naturally became the playthings of his youth, and long before he had reached his majority they were the means of his daily livelihood. His first work consisted in ornamenting articles of household use. Later on he learned the art of engraving and etching, and became an illustrator of books. In painting he was a pupil of Paul Delaroche. His first appearance at the Salon took place in 1836, when nineteen years of age, and in the double capacity of etcher and landscape painter.

Defeated as a candidate for the Prix de Rome, not by competition, but because, ignorant of the rules, he was absent on the day when the preparations began, he resolutely determined to save every sou he could spare from his daily needs, in order that he might, as soon as possible, pay his own ex-

Daubigny, perhaps more than any other man of the Barbizon School, was simply a delightful, lovable painter. He had not the dreamy, poetic charm of Corot, at whose wand the nymphs danced upon the dew-laden grass at dawn; not the variety, the picturesqueness, the intensity, the creative power of Rousseau; not the pathos of Millet, whose gentle peasants touch our hearts with their unconscious dignity and their accepted lot of never-ending toil; but he was a frank, enthusiastic lover of nature in her most delightful moods, whose pictures need no prophet to interpret, nor skillful critic to enjoy. He had a singular appreciation not only of what was lovely in itself, but what was pictorially beautiful as well. Ugliness had no place in his domain of art, least of all as a theme for technical display.

His early impressions of the country clung to him through life. His biographer, M. Henriet, says: "It was among the apple-blossoms, in the pure air of the country, that he passed his earlier years and imbibed that love of the fields which became the passion of his life." And so in 1857 when he exhibited at the Salon of that year the picture which won for him the Cross of the Legion of Honor, it is interesting to note that the subject he had chosen was "Springtime," and represents a peasant girl riding through a field of tender, upright grain, while on either side of her—the prominent features of the landscape—

are groups of young Apple Trees, whose branches are laden with blossoms. The picture was bought by the Government, and is now in the Louvre. It is a charming work, executed with great delicacy and painstaking care, but wanting somewhat in that vigor of handling and richness of color which he attained in his later and ripper works.

But although Daubigny loved the orchards, the vineyards and the fields, it was the beauties of the Oise and the Marne and the Seine which finally furnished him the subjects of so many lovely pictures, during the later and best period of his life. His preparations for sketching were original and complete. He built a large boat which he called "le Bottin," and it became at once his floating studio and his summer home. And what a charming studio it was! Albert Wolff says: "The boat used by Daubigny was arranged for long voyages; the cooking was done on board; there was a good wine cellar; you drank deep and you worked hard. The sketches accumulated, and when winter was come, Daubigny returned to Paris provisioned with the booty of art and nature, the landscapes which, toward the close of his life, collectors and dealers battled for."

For him then, no more the weary tramp of miles to greet the fragrant, misty morn; no longer now the scorching heat of noon to interrupt his work; no fear of sudden shower to

hurry him to shelter ; but delightfully protected in his boat, with every appliance and needed comfort at his hand, he could paint at will the same scene, at morning, noon or evening hour, until the gathering twilight closed the labors of the day. And so with his son Karl, and sometimes his daughter, for companions, he went up and down the rivers of France, mooring his house-boat to the bank or anchoring it in midstream wherever a lovely spot invited him to linger ; and thus equipped and environed he painted that series of beautiful pictures of the Oise, the Marne and the Seine which have delighted lovers of art and contributed so much to the establishment of his fame. If this is not open-air painting in the best sense and in its worthiest manifestations, then I know not where else it can be found.

Daubigny did not have to visit foreign countries in search of subjects, for he found them everywhere about him and almost at his own door. How often has it happened, when on the Seine, that we have come unexpectedly upon some exquisite scene, and exclaimed : "Ah, here's a subject for Daubigny." He knew every bend in the river, every bush upon its banks, every slender tree lifting its foliage towards the summer sky, every deep pool with their reflections mirrored in its depths ; and these he painted with such poetic fervor and such loving care, that beholding his picture we forget the master, forget our own

selves, and see only that which entranced the artist—Nature, idyllic, serene, and robed in beauty.

Daubigny, however, did not always please the critics in the manner of his execution. About 1861 Théophile Gautier, accustomed to the carefully finished style of landscape painting which prevailed at that day, complained of his method of painting in these words: "It is a pity that M. Daubigny, the landscape painter, with a sentiment so true, just and natural, contents himself with a first impression and neglects at this point the details. His pictures are no more than sketches, and sketches little advanced; it is to a system that one should attribute this careless manner which we believe dangerous for the future of the painter if he does not quickly abandon it. Each object delineates itself by an apparent or real contour, but the landscapes of M. Daubigny offer little except spots of color placed in juxtaposition. It needs, however, but a few days' labor to make excellent pictures of these insufficient preparations." And yet these so-called defects were precisely the things which gave him rapidity of execution, firmness of touch, purity and richness of color, relation of masses, vibration of light, and enabled him to reproduce with such vivid power all the essential features of a fine landscape which would have been simply ruined by adding "details" and finishing them as his critic desired.

The fact is that Daubigny, like every other true artist, varied his methods of painting according to his moods and the particular result he wished to obtain. He painted with his brain as well as with his fingers, and his brush was never tied to a formula. That he had his limitations is simply to say that he was mortal ; but among modern landscape painters, I doubt if there can be found a man whose pictures have delighted a more numerous, more various, more enthusiastic and more cultivated body of admirers than this painter of the rivers of France. Careful in his choice of subject in the first place, he knew no limitations as to the hour of the day in which to paint it. To him it was quite enough that the scene was beautiful. Indeed this dominant quality of beauty, united to truth of local color, and stamped with his own personality, is one of the most recognizable characteristics of his works. Who has suggested with greater charm the soft springiness of the greensod to the tread of our feet ? Who with greater realism the freshness of the air and the scent of the earth after a shower ? Who with greater loveliness the banks of the Seine, with its slender trees and overhanging bushes reflected in the placid waters beneath ? Who with greater solemnity the hush of the night, when the pale moon mounts the sky, and sheds over hill and stream its veiled, mysterious light ? Ah, all this may not be great painting, but it goes straight to

the heart. Against Théophile Gautier of 1861, I put Edmund About of 1864.

"The art of this illustrious master consists in choosing well a bit of country and painting it as it is, enclosing in its frame all the simple and naïve poetry which it contains. No effects of studied light, no artificial and complicated composition, nothing which allures the eyes, surprises the mind and crushes the littleness of man. No, it is the real, hospitable and familiar country, without display or disguise, in which one finds himself so well off, and in which one is wrong not to live longer when he is there, to which Daubigny transports me without jolting each time that I stop before one of his pictures."

And thus the French author puts in words what we have all felt to be absolutely true about Daubigny's works. In them we find the most lovely scenes in nature presented with the frankness and directness of a child, but with the grasp and touch of a master. Yes, M. About is right—we do love to linger over Daubigny's pictures. In addition to many other qualities, they possess this potent charm: they are restful, peaceful, refreshing; and after the fretful annoyances of the day which come to us all, their influence upon us is at once a song and a benediction.

It is quite probable that other men of the Barbizon School at times were greater artists than he; they may have possessed a livelier poetic

fancy ; they may have displayed a nobler creative genius, and wrought with a more intense dramatic power ; they may have been better craftsmen and attained greater heights in the pure domain of art ; but for close, daily companionship, year in and year out, all true lovers of the beautiful in nature must have, somewhere in their secret heart, a snug little corner of affection for this frank, sincere, lovable painter of the "Orchard," the "Riverside" and the "Borders of the Sea."

CATALOGUE

I

DAUBIGNY

Midsummer—Edge of a Pond

32 x 18

From the Albert Spencer Collection

Loaned by

Mr. Henry S. Wilson, New York

2

TROYON

Vaches a la'Abreuvoir

46½ x 32½

This picture, dated 1865, was purchased by the painter Jerome from Troyon, in execution of a commission given him by the Emperor Napoleon III. to buy for him the finest picture he could obtain in Paris, without regard to the artist.

Loaned by

Mr. James A. Garland, New York

3

DAUBIGNY

Washerwoman

Loaned by

Mr. James A. Garland, New York

4

TROYON

Landscape and Cattle

Loaned by

Mr. Frederic Bonner, New York

5

TROYON

Diudons

Loaned by

David H. King, Jr., New York

6

DAUBIGNY

Twilight on the Seine

26 x 15½

From the John Wolf Collection of 1882

Loaned by

Mr. John T. Martin, Brooklyn

7

DAUBIGNY

Landscape—With Pool and Storks

27 x 16

From the first Seney Collection
From the Robert Graves Collection

Loaned by

Mr. Joseph C. Hoagland, Brooklyn

8

TROYON

Landscape and Cattle—A Coming Storm

62 x 44

From the Probasco Collection

Loaned by

Mr. Joseph C. Hoagland, Brooklyn

9

DAUBIGNY

Village on the Oise, Sunset

26 x 15

From the Collection of M. Ch-Leroux
From the One Hundred Masterpieces, Paris

Loaned by

Mr. George F. Baker, New York

27

10

DAUBIGNY

Spring Time

20 x 15

Loaned by

Mr. William Buchanan, New York

11

TROYON

Poultry Yard

19 x 15

From the Borie Collection

Loaned by

Mr. George D. Widener, Philadelphia

12

TROYON

Sea Shore

$10\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$

Loaned by

Mr. John G. Johnson, Philadelphia

13

TROYON

Driving Geese

$8\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{2}$

Loaned by

Mr. George C. Thomas, Philadelphia

14

DAUBIGNY

Villerville

17½ x 31

Loaned by

Mr. John G. Johnson, Philadelphia

15

TROYON

Drove of Cattle and Sheep

39 x 26

From the Bounet Collection, Paris

From the Albert Spencer Collection

Loaned by

Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt, New York

16

DAUBIGNY

Village of Conflans

19 x 31

Loaned by

Mr. John G. Johnson, Philadelphia

17

DAUBIGNY

Marshes at Opteroz

39½ x 25

Loaned by

Mr. Roland Knoedler, New York

29

18

TROYON

The Approaching Storm

31 x 46

This picture was printed in 1855
From the Collection of Count Daupias, of Lisbon

Loaned by

Mr. T. J. Blakeslee, New York

19

DAUBIGNY

Spring

Loaned by

Mr. T. J. Blakeslee, New York

20

TROYON

Rue de Valmondois

20 x 26

Loaned by

Mr. Julius Oehme, New York

21

DAUBIGNY

The Cliff at Villerville

30 x 20

Loaned by

Mr. W. H. Fuller, New York

30

TROYON

Cows in the Pasture

51 x 38

From the Collection of Baron Liebermann

From the Collection Secrétan, Paris

Loaned by

Mr. W. H. Fuller, New York

23

DAUBIGNY

Apple Blossoms

33 x 23

Loaned by

Mr. W. H. Fuller, New York

24

TROYON

Forest Clearing

26 x 21

Loaned by

Mr. John G. Johnson, Philadelphia

25

DAUBIGNY

View of Dieppe

This picture was exhibited in the Salon of 1877

Loaned by

Mr. Joseph Jefferson, Buzzard's Bay

26

TROYON

Landscape and Cattle

Loaned by

Mr. A. J. Antelo, Philadelphia

27

DAUBIGNY

Moonrise

Loaned by

Mr. Carl H. De Silver, Brooklyn

THE GALLISON
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