

238 Putnam Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
June 24, 2001

Ms. Shani Toledano
Painting Department
William Doyle Galleries
175 East 87th Street
New York, N. Y. 10128

Dear Ms. Toledano:

Re: Eastman Johnson, Feeding the Lamb, oil on board, 10 3/4 x 10 inches sight. Inscribed verso: "Feeding the Lamb/ By Eastman Johnson."

I examined this painting on March 15, 2001, at the William Doyle Galleries. Although I relayed my opinion that the painting was painted by the nineteenth-century American genre and portrait painter Eastman Johnson (1824-1906), I apologize for the lateness in sending you this letter.

It is a charming work and obviously a study for the much larger painting Girl in a Pasture, 1875, oil on canvas, 23 3/8 x 24 3/4 inches, private collection (formerly owned by Spanierman Gallery). Girl in a Pasture is reproduced on p. 40, in Patricia Hills, "Eastman Johnson on Nantucket," in Michael A. Jehle, ed., Picturing Nantucket: An Art History of the Island with Paintings from the Collection of the Nantucket Historical Association: Works by Artists Born before 1900 (Nantucket, MA: Nantucket Historical Association, 2000).

Quoting from myself on p. 38: "Sheep and lambs were a special feature of Nantucket, and Johnson included them in pictures, such as The Pet Lamb, 1873 [Munson Williams Proctor Institute, Utica] and Girl in Pasture, 1875 (figure 39). In the early nineteenth century thousands of sheep roamed unattended over the island's treeless moors; in fact the division of property among the earliest Anglo-American settlers made provisions for land to be held in common for the express purpose of sheep grazing. In time the sheep herds dwindled but they were still noteworthy in 1847 when Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) visited the island. The poet wrote to his daughter about walking out of the town where he came to "a wide bare common stretching as far as you can see on every side, with nothing upon it but here & there a few nibbling sheep."

Although Feeding the Lamb is a sketch, Johnson shows his characteristic skill in handling the girl's form, the lamb close

to her, those in the distance, and the moors, sea and sky. Her face has a sweet expression as she looks down at the lamb to feed it. The freely brushed brush strokes in the sky, with some of the underpainting showing through, are characteristic of his style. Another characteristic is the slight graphite outlining of the form of the figure--noticeable along her legs.

As you know, I examined the painting with a portable ultra-violet light. The surface seems to have been only slightly touched by a restorer, and in general it looks good.

I realize that the sale has already taken place. Perhaps you could forward this letter to the owner. I do intend to include this painting in my catalogue raisonné.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Hills
co-author, Eastman Johnson:
Painting America and
Professor of Art History
Boston University