

IMAGES OF SLAVERY: George Fuller's Depictions of the Antebellum South

Sarah Burns



Fig. 1. George Fuller. NEGROS WAITING AT THE DEPOT. Late December, 1857. Pencil on paper. This drawing and all others in this article, which are being illustrated here for the first time, are from a sketchbook measuring 5½ by 10¾ inches, in a private collection.

THREE TIMES IN THE 1850s, George Fuller (1822–1884) visited the Deep South, in each case remaining there for several months. His primary motive was to seek fresh opportunities for portrait commissions in areas where the competition might reasonably be supposed less fierce than in New York, Fuller's adopted city during the decade.¹

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Fuller was no stranger to the life of the itinerant portrait artist. During the 1840s this native of Deerfield, Massachusetts, was almost constantly on the move, painting faces in various parts of New England and western New York State. It was simply necessary business, for the most part routine and often dull. The Southern states, however, opened up surprising new avenues of experience to the Yankee painter. He recorded those experiences in memoranda, in letters to family and friends in the North, and in a fascinating sketchbook containing his impressions of slave life.

Fuller used this sketchbook in Montgomery, Alabama, during the winter of 1857–1858. The cardboard-

bound pad, measuring 5½ by 10¾ inches, contains seventy-eight drawings, sixty-three in pencil and the rest in pen and ink or ink wash. About thirty depict slaves and plantation scenes; the rest are landscapes, studies of plant life, and the like. A few of the slave scenes are little more than thumbnail scribbles, crudely set down. The selection presented here represents the best of Fuller's black genre drawings, in both the artistic and the documentary sense. The drawings later provided motifs for several of Fuller's black genre paintings (see Figs. 24, 25 and 27–31). The material in the Alabama sketchbook, which remains in the Fuller family, has never until now been published.

The purposes of this article are to examine the Fuller letters and sketches, which together comprise a unique illustrated diary created during a most critical period of American history, and to discuss more briefly the subsequent paintings and their significance. In order to amplify and corroborate Fuller's own observations, other personal accounts of the Southern experience and slave conditions will be cited where appropriate.

Fuller's first two trips produced no sketches of importance, but his diary jottings and letters are worth citing, since they incorporate prose vignettes of the painter's daily life in strange, new places. In late November, 1849, Fuller boarded a steamer bound from New York to Charleston, South Carolina. He carried with him a letter of recommendation to a Charlestonian, Elisius Mowry, from his friend, the landscape painter, Sanford Gifford (1823–1880).² It is not clear whether Fuller initially planned to establish himself in Charleston or to move on shortly. The prospects for business in Charleston may not have been encouraging. Whatever the situation, Fuller did proceed almost immediately to Augusta, Georgia, where he remained from early December, 1849, until August 1, 1850. During these months Fuller was quite active both in making and in teaching art.

His terse journal entries provide an outline of his typical daily routines. On one February day "Mrs. Dodge sat. Improved crayon of child. Made an outline for her from brother's picture. In the evening called on Miss Wilde." A fortnight later, Fuller "Painted on picture of child. Gave lesson in drawing. In the evening called on Mrs. Gould."³

With one notable exception, Fuller's entries on aspects of slave life were equally terse and neutral. Twice he witnessed mass baptisms. In mid-February he recorded: "Clear weather. Walked on the river bank. Saw Negroes baptizing on the opposite shore. Their songs came agreeably across the water." Again, in April, "Attended a baptism of Negroes. About



Fig. 2. Fuller. OUR PAGE HARRY. February 22, 1858. Pencil on paper.

1000 . . . amongst those baptized was one so white I could not detect the dark shade." Later that month Fuller called at a plantation in the countryside near Augusta and "Saw Negroes at work in the fields for the first time, men and women, ploughing and planting."⁴

However, a slave auction did produce a hot burst of indignant sentiment. In a letter home Fuller related his reactions to the sale of a lovely young quadroon:

Who is this girl with eyes large and black? The blood of the white and dark races is at enmity in her veins — the former predominated. About ¾ white says one dealer. Three fourths blessed, a fraction accursed. She is under thy feet, white man. . . . Is she not your sister? . . . She impresses me with sadness! The pensive expression of her finely formed mouth and her drooping eyes seemed to ask for sympathy. . . . Now she looks up, now her eyes fall before the rude gaze of those who are but calculating her charms or serviceable qualities. . . . Oh, is beauty so cheap!⁵

Thirty years later Fuller, looking back to this distant memory, painted *The Quadroon* (see Fig. 28), which will be considered later in this article.

Six years passed before Fuller again set out for the South. He had been moderately successful in New York. Indeed, in February, 1856, he wrote that he had as much business painting portraits as he could handle and was raising his price from fifty to seventy-five dollars.⁶ Now, however, he was in debt to his friend William Ames, a New York merchant from whom Fuller had borrowed money in order to send his tubercular brother Elijah out West, where the dry climate might improve his condition. Fuller believed that if he set up a portrait studio in Montgomery, Alabama, he could, with hard work, clear one hundred dollars a week and would soon pay off his debt to Ames.⁷ His choice of Alabama was almost certainly influenced by a painter friend, Edwin Billings (1823–1893), whom he had known since the 1840s, when Billings lived near Deerfield. Billings, also a portrait painter, customarily wintered in Alabama, and he must have assured Fuller that the demand for portraits in the provinces was sufficiently high to justify the venture.

Fuller and Billings began their journey on December 17, 1856. They took a train from New York to Baltimore, a steamboat to Petersburg, Virginia, and then continued the trip overland, again by train. By Christmas they were settled in Montgomery. Fuller lingered there only until January 15, when he left Billings and headed downriver to Mobile, thinking perhaps to reap greater rewards in that more cosmopolitan, cultured, and hedonistic city on the Gulf of Mexico.

Three days before his departure, Fuller had attended a slave auction which, while it did not arouse the emotion fueled by the 1850 sale in Georgia, did impress him as a most melancholy sight:

I saw a scene today, Negroes sold at auction! together with horses and *other cattle*. It was full of suggestions which I will not pursue now. The poor children, men, women, and little ones looked sad. What a fate is theirs! No one to raise a voice for them and God above us all.⁸

On the steamboat that carried him down the Alabama River, Fuller found diversion in observing the cotton-loading which took place during numerous stops at riverbank towns:

It was interesting to see the negroes load cotton — It was rolled down the steep high bluffs of the river in the most reckless manner, but, the fellows were so accustomed to the thing that they managed to save *most* of it from going into the river — At some places there were slides or race ways of three hundred feet down which it would come like lightning and rebound ten or twelve feet from concussion — finally we had on board near two thousand bales.⁹



Fig. 3. Fuller. ELLIS. January, 1858. Pencil on paper.

A similar sight had also amazed another Northerner, the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903), who had voyaged down the Alabama River on the steamboat *Fashion* in 1852. “There was something truly Western,” he wrote, “in the direct, reckless way in which the boat was loaded,” the cotton bales coming down the almost “perpendicular bank” with a “fearful velocity.”¹⁰

In Mobile, Fuller stayed at a boarding house where there were fifty lodgers and “nearly half as many negro servants.” Homesick for simple, familiar pleasures, Fuller wrote to his brother, “I wish I was with you [in the] North with a bitter wind in my teeth, enjoying a sleigh ride and a cheerful fire and pleasant friends in the evening.” Mobile’s ambience seemed dangerously glamorous: “Much money is made here, and the people seem very *fast*.”¹¹ He did not, however, allow himself



Fig. 4. Fuller. MARIAH. December, 1857–January, 1858. Pencil and ink wash on paper.

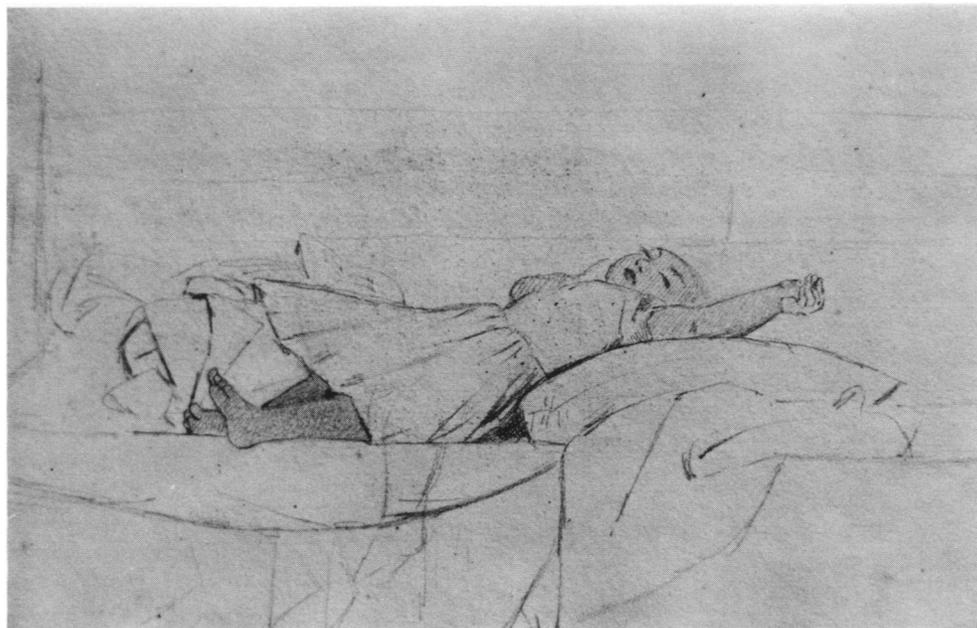
to be distracted by regattas, horseraces, cockfights, or balls. In April he told his brother Elijah, “I feel as if I had sold myself to Mammon . . . [but] I sent Ames \$300.” At the end of his time in Mobile he informed his brother, “I have been here just five months . . . during

this time I have not lost *one hour* but worked constantly (Sundays and all I am sorry to say).”¹² Fuller left Mobile to journey north in the middle of June, 1857. He spent the summer, according to his custom, in Deerfield.

Fig. 5. Fuller. GRACE. Late December, 1857. Pencil on paper. Detail of sketchbook page.



Fig. 6. Fuller. SLEEPING CHILD. Early February, 1858. Pencil on paper.



Encouraged by his toilsome but profitable winter in Mobile, Fuller decided to return with Billings to Alabama for the winter of 1857–1858. After a short stop in New York City, the two painters left for the South on the steamboat *Florida* in the first week of

December, 1857. Rather than move on to Mobile, as he had originally intended, Fuller now elected to stay in Montgomery with Billings. Unfortunately, the season proved so much less lucrative than the previous year's that Fuller saw no point in remaining as long as he had



Fig. 7. Fuller. BRIGGINS PLANTATION. Early February, 1858. Pencil on paper.

at first planned. He left the South in mid-April, 1858, and after brief visits to Alexandria and Philadelphia, he once more settled down for the summer with his family in Deerfield. "I have not had a very profitable winter," he wrote to his half brother Augustus. "The 'hard times' have made people in Alabama afraid to expend much money in pictures."¹³ All was not lost, however: that winter Fuller had made plans for a series of genre paintings focusing on the lives of the Southern blacks.

Thus far in his career, the greater part of Fuller's work had consisted of portraiture. He had attempted a couple of narrative scenes in the late 1840s and had dabbled in landscape painting and sketching. His sudden and zealous interest in genre arose from an increasing appreciation of humble, everyday sentiment in art. In mid-November, 1857, shortly before leaving New York for his second trip to Alabama, Fuller saw the exhibition of the Belmont Collection of French paintings at the National Academy of Design. Here for the first time he encountered the work of Edouard Frère (1819–1886), who specialized in peasant genre of considerable popular appeal.¹⁴ Fuller wrote to his family a glowing letter on his conversion to the commonplace:

In the small pictures by Frère I find so much of my own feeling expressed that I feel as if I could hardly wait to put

myself in the same class of subjects. These works are the expressions of what we call lowly or everyday life such as *Children Shelling Peas* or *Girls Washing* . . . but so fine in color, so quiet and natural that everybody is attracted by them. How much we pass by every day which only needs the interest and the hand to express to prove pure gold.¹⁵

Inspired thus by Frère's example, and no doubt mindful of the flourishing popularity of American genre painting, Fuller upon arrival in Montgomery actively began to pursue picturesque subjects among the slaves and their surroundings. From the first, he was deliberately storing up impressions for future paintings; he made his intentions clear in letters home. "Billings and I," he wrote to his brother, "[are] working leisurely at present but making the most of our time, when not painting portraits we are making sketches securing something for future reference." On his way home from Alabama in April, 1858, Fuller wrote, "I have made subjects for several pictures which I intend painting this summer if I can find some quiet place in the country where I can *work undisturbed*."¹⁶ These projected paintings, grounded in scrupulously reported "Southern facts," would represent a "new way . . . in Art" for Fuller (see Figs. 21 and 22).¹⁷

Although business soon became slack, the beginning of 1858 in Montgomery was promising. Fuller and

Fig. 8. Fuller. COTTON PRESS AND GIN. February 2, 1858. Pencil on paper.

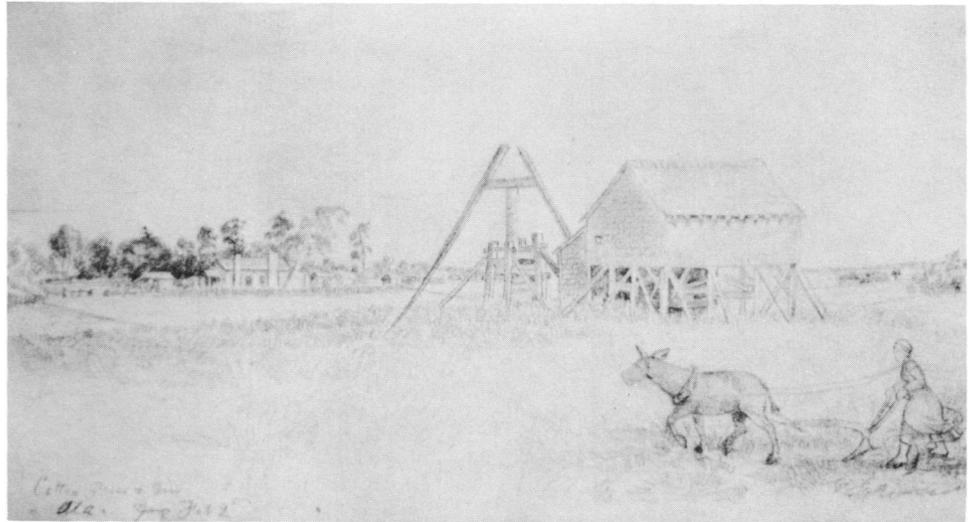
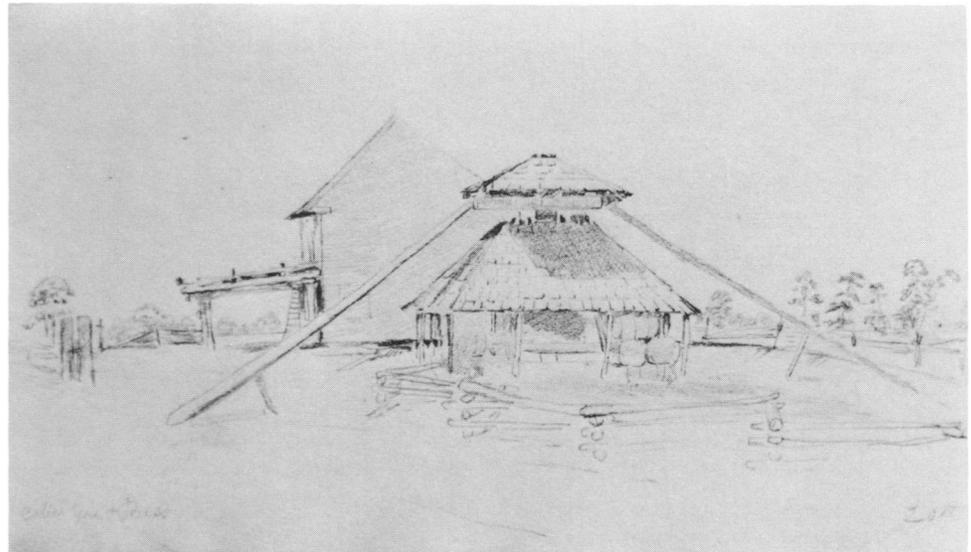


Fig. 9. Fuller. COTTON GIN AND PRESS. February 20, 1858. Pencil on paper.



Billings found a brisk business painting portraits of members of the legislature, then in session at the Alabama State Capitol. However, observing the blacks proved far more interesting than documenting the features of white congressmen. Fuller wrote to his fiancée, Agnes Higginson:

We find here a fine field for studying negro character and his relations . . . and we have already secured a number of sketches. There is with them always such a free motion and unstudied attitude and their costume is so appropriate as to make them real prizes in an artistic way.¹⁸

Montgomery and its environs afforded abundant opportunities for the artist eager to study what Fuller

called “negro character and his relations.” In 1858 Montgomery (having wrested the distinction from Tuscaloosa) had been the capital of Alabama for little more than a decade. Centrally located in the richest cotton-growing region of the state, Montgomery was the core of a land-owning, slave-holding economy. In Montgomery County there were two black slaves for every free white, though in the town itself the whites had a slight edge. In addition to plantation owners, the white population included wealthy merchants and lawyers who maintained elegant urban establishments.¹⁹

While he sought out his rich field of subjects in and around Montgomery, Fuller quite sensibly was circum-

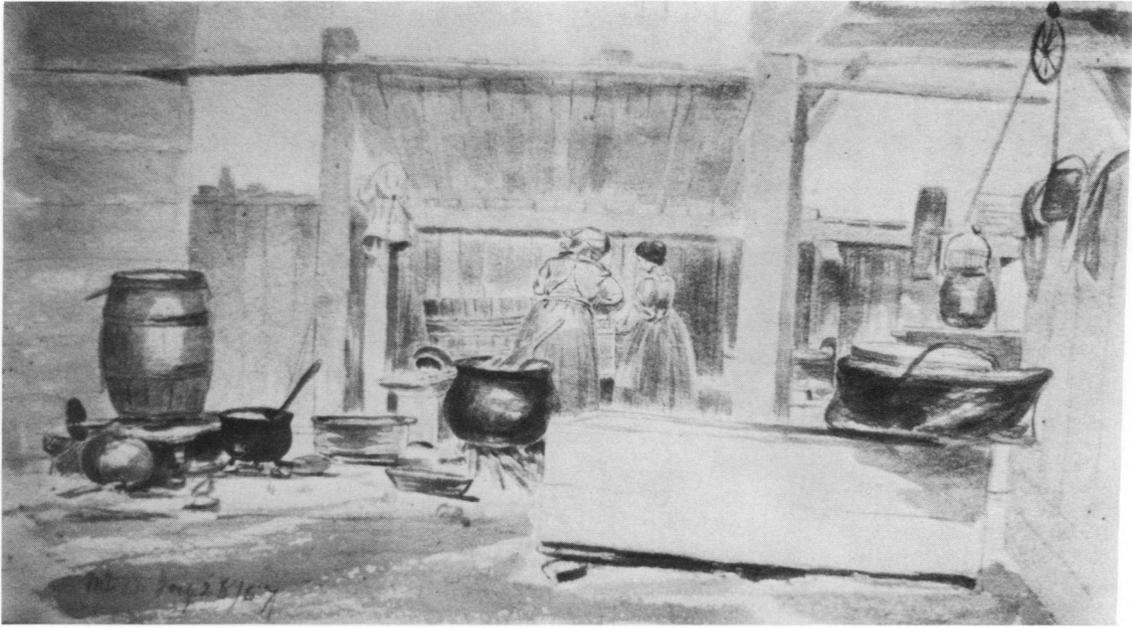


Fig. 10. Fuller. LAUNDRY YARD WITH TWO LAUNDRESSES. January 28, 1858. Pencil and ink wash on paper.



Fig. 11. Fuller. LAUNDRY YARD WITH LAUNDRESS AND CHILD. January 27, 1858. Pencil and ink wash on paper.

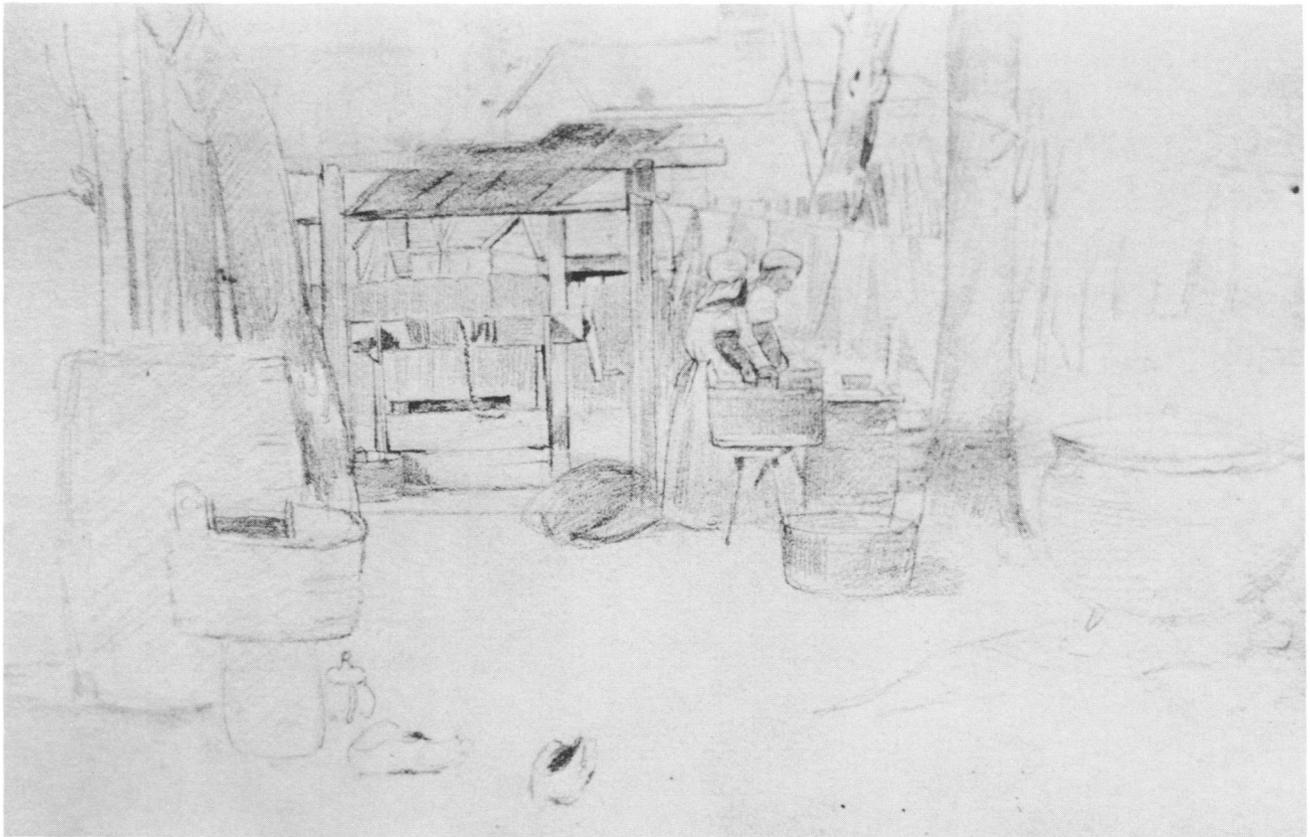


Fig. 12. Fuller. LAUNDRY YARD WITH WELL AND TWO LAUNDRESSES. Late February, 1858. Pencil on paper.

spect concerning his own views on slavery, which he privately deemed “a very bad cause.” He was surprised to find Boston’s *Atlantic Monthly* in the local bookstores. Since this new journal had already taken a vigorous stand against slavery, Fuller assumed that “it cannot be generally read — People here are very sensitive on home questions.”²⁰ His own sketches made no moral comment; in art the picturesque, not politics, was his concern.

Fuller’s studies of slave life fall into several categories: simple portraits, scenes of slaves at work, and slaves at home. Unfortunately, in his letters Fuller said very little about how he approached his models or gained entrance to their quarters. If he engaged these slaves in conversation, he made no note of what was said. Some of the letters describe sights that Fuller did not sketch. Therefore, the letters and sketches are more often in counterpoint than synchronization.²¹

Approaching Montgomery by train, Fuller had

already observed a number of sights that would be important in his pictorial record of the South:

Negroes were busy gathering the last picking of cotton, and a solitary Gin and press with a few bales laying about made almost the only variety for the eye. I saw many fine subjects for study in the Negroes, men and women sitting on horses or engaged in work about the depots as we passed along. Women ploughing with a single mule (this seems to be women’s work) and men chopping and burning.²²

The drawing *Negroes waiting at the Depot* (Fig. 1) may have been made during or soon after Fuller’s railroad journey. This compactly huddled group, consisting of women and children, plus one black man, perhaps represents slaves hired out by their owners and here awaiting transportation to a distant plantation or town. Such shunting of human property from one city or even state to the next was a common practice in the South, particularly in the winter, between the end of the harvest and the start of the next growing season.²³



Fig. 13. Fuller. SLAVE WOMEN DIGGING IN MONTGOMERY. February 21, 1858. Pencil on paper.

Once in Montgomery, Billings and Fuller settled into a comfortable routine. “Billings and myself,” Fuller reported, “have taken a room away from the Hotel where we take our meals, where we keep bachelors hall and have a cheerful fireside of our own. A good looking yellow boy takes care of it for us.”²⁴

This “good looking yellow boy” is presumably the subject of the drawing inscribed with the chivalric title, *Our Page Harry* (Fig. 2). Harry was probably a slave either owned by or hired out to the landlord of the building where Fuller and Billings rented their room. This drawing is one of the most appealing of Fuller’s portraits, showing the very young, handsome, and solemn boy standing next to the hearth that he tended for the two painters. Fuller obviously took great pains with this drawing, using a finely sharpened pencil to record every detail of Harry’s costume, along with the umbrella and kindling heaped in the angle between the fireplace and the wall, and the small shovel propped ready for use near the fire.

There are four other studies of individuals. The other male portrait depicts an older black, of whom nothing is known but his name, *Ellis* (Fig. 3). Like Harry, Ellis is represented as an attractive, dignified, and serious figure. Both boy and man wear the coarse

suits that were issued to adult male slaves; both wear the so-called Negro brogans and have slouchy hats, probably of felt.

The two named women in Fuller’s little gallery are *Mariah* (Fig. 4) and *Grace* (Fig. 5). The image of Grace is particularly striking, showing a beautiful, strong-boned face framed by a bonnet, the “Virginia poke” which, along with the ubiquitous scarf, was the usual headdress of the female slave. That Grace wears a small, circular ornament on her bosom suggests that this portrait may have been made during the Christmas holidays, when the blacks, allowed time off for celebrating, put on their finest clothes. It is also possible that Grace was a house slave. That rank would entitle her to finer costume than that of the field hands and other outdoor laborers.²⁵ The last of the portraits is the *Sleeping Child* (Fig. 6), a straightforward, unassuming sketch of a black baby.

Being farm-raised himself, Fuller was naturally curious about aspects of Southern agriculture. The drawing *Briggins Plantation* (Fig. 7) gives a distant, general view of a planter’s house shaded by a grove of mature trees and dominating a cluster of outbuildings to the rear. Depending on the size of the farming operation, the latter buildings may be either slave quarters or

storage and work sheds. On the larger plantations the slaves usually lived in a separate "village" under the overseer's eye.²⁶

Of particular interest to Fuller was the agricultural technology that underpinned the cotton-growing economy of the South. Figures 8 and 9 are very careful renderings of the standard cotton-processing equipment: the gin, housed in the barn-like structures, and the cotton press or screw press. When the latter was in operation, horse or mule power would turn the massive screw, which squeezed the ginned cotton into uniform bales, ready for shipping. Both drawings were made in February, 1858. At this season the cotton harvest was over; consequently, the gins and screws were idle. Figure 8 also represents that surprising sight Fuller had earlier seen from the train: a female slave driving a mule-drawn plow. As Fuller had correctly supposed, this was a task frequently assigned to women field hands.

On the large plantations there was usually an open-air laundry, where the family washing was done by female domestic, or house, slaves. The laundry yard was part of a complex including the kitchen and the dairy. It was convenient to the spring or well and was equipped with a great array of pots and tubs.²⁷ Fuller, fascinated by this kind of domestic labor, produced three elaborate studies of slave laundresses at work

(Figs. 10, 11, and 12). Figure 12 is perhaps the most successful and informative drawing of this group. Delicately and precisely drawn, it represents in detail the equipment of the washing operation: the sheltered well with its crankshaft, the wooden tubs and colossal cauldrons, and the ranks of linens hung up to dry. In the foreground lies a pair of clumsy brogans, temporarily put off, perhaps, by one of the washerwomen.

On both documentary and historical counts, Fuller's group of female diggers (Fig. 13) is a remarkable drawing. Here several, brawny, black women, with a mule-drawn wagon, are busy with shovels and a pickaxe. They seem to be engaged in some sort of road work or grounds maintenance. In the background over the trees rises the dome of the State Capitol. With reference to the women, it is interesting to read Frederick Law Olmsted's account of a similar scene in South Carolina six years earlier:

We stopped . . . on this plantation, near where some thirty men and women were at work, repairing the road. The women were in the majority, and were engaged at exactly the same labor as the men. . . . They were dressed in coarse gray gowns . . . which, for greater convenience of working in the mud, were reefed up with a cord drawn tightly around the body, a little above the hips. . . . On their legs were loose leggings . . . and they wore very heavy shoes.²⁸

Fig. 14. Fuller. ALABAMA INTERIOR. January 28, 1858. Pencil on paper.



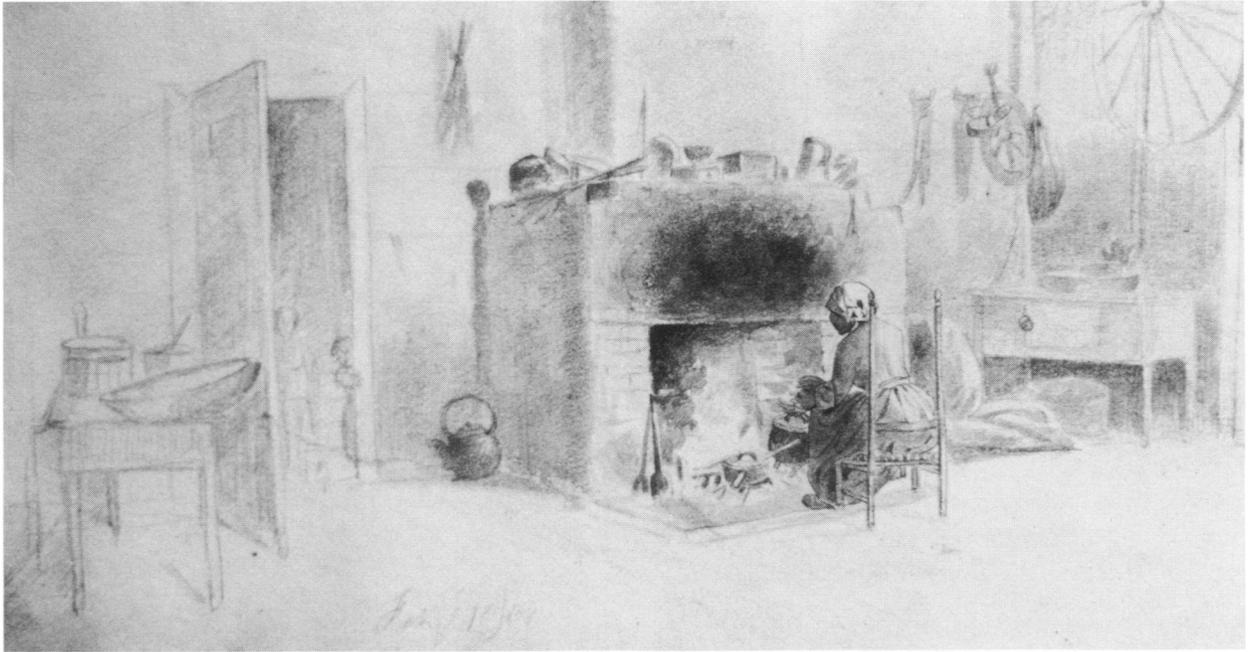


Fig. 15. Fuller. ALABAMA INTERIOR. February 1, 1858. Pencil, pen and ink on paper.

Fig. 16. Fuller. ALABAMA INTERIOR. March, 1858. Pencil on paper.



Fig. 17. Fuller. APRIL IN ALABAMA. Early April, 1858. Pencil, pen and ink on paper.



These black bondswomen were a world apart from the genteel, sheltered sphere of nineteenth-century white Southern femininity.

Whether Fuller intended it or not, the Capitol in the distance looms as a symbol of authority, in whose shadow the women toil. This building had been standing less than a decade when Fuller sketched its outline. Designed by Stephen D. Button (1803–1897), an architect from Philadelphia, the Capitol exhibits the familiar format of the monumental, classicizing Baroque. Here, almost exactly two years from the time Fuller made this drawing, Jefferson Davis stood on the portico to be sworn in as the first President of the Confederacy.

Fuller's three depictions of blacks in their quarters (Figs. 14, 15, and 16) afford glimpses into a relatively private sphere of slave life. Eagerly pursuing his "Southern facts," Fuller incorporated considerable detail into these interior scenes. In all three drawings the crude, smoke-darkened fireplace is the most important feature of the room. The earliest sketch (Fig. 14) shows the occupants of the cabin somewhat artificially posed at the far side of the hearth. The barefoot black mother, in shawl and headscarf, is seated sideways upon a plain ladderback chair with her three children crouched on the floor behind her. Around the figures are their meager necessities: iron cooking pots, a jacket and sunbonnet slung from pegs on the wall, a rudely carpentered table supporting a flat iron and sheltering a basket and a stray

chicken. Beyond the family there is a large drape covering the far wall and looped back to reveal a wide aperture looking out into the yard. The floor is bare, and the walls are unplastered.

Contemporary prose descriptions suggest that such an interior was quite typical of slave housing. During her tour of the South in 1850, the Swedish traveler Frederika Bremer visited a slave village on a plantation near Charleston, South Carolina. "In the room," she reported, "one sees, nearly always, a couple of logs burning on the hearth, and the household furniture and little provision stores resemble those which are to be found in the homes of our poorest people."²⁹ Olmsted, who had an acutely journalistic eye, methodically described slave quarters on several large plantations. The basic type of accommodation did not vary significantly from one region to another. On one large South Carolina plantation, Olmsted found the slave cabins fronting a street two hundred feet long. The houses were low frame structures, divided into two apartments, each having a common room and two cubicles for sleeping. Inside,

There was a brick fireplace in the middle of the long side of each living room. . . . Each tenement is occupied, on the average, by five persons. There were in them closets, with locks and keys, and a varying quantity of rude furniture. . . . Internally the cabins appeared dirty and disordered, which was a rather pleasant indication that their home-life was not interfered with.³⁰

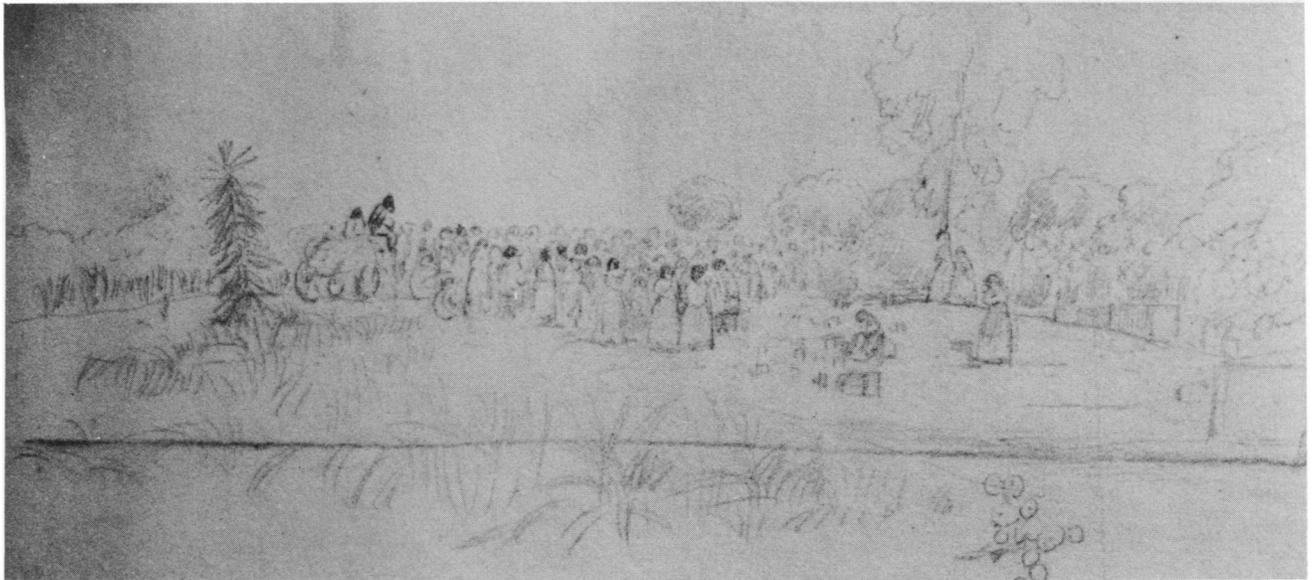


Fig. 18. Fuller. NEGRO FUNERAL. March, 1858. Pencil on paper.

The second interior by Fuller (Fig. 15), made about a week after the first, reveals a more cluttered room where a black woman tends to her family's meal, cooking it in iron pots set directly upon the smoldering firewood in the hearth. Again, the furnishings are rough and minimal, but there is a great deal of paraphernalia, including a spotted iron kettle, a large mixing bowl, and various other containers; and, hanging in the far corner, a couple of spoked wheels and two saws. From what seems to be an inner room or closet, two small children peer out shyly at the strange Yankee scribbler.

The last interior (Fig. 16), probably done in late March, is a scene of relative domestic comfort and peace. The woman in the rocking chair is either mending or making a shirt. Her tidy clothes, and the luxury of her seating, suggest that she may be a house slave. These servants were, as mentioned, better dressed and better kept than the field hands. Behind the seamstress is a simple bed which resembles the type called the "Alabama bedstead," a platform built onto the wall and supported by a single corner post.³¹

A fourth and last domestic scene (Fig. 17) is set outside, by the doorway to a cabin. Again, the neat, attractive figures are surely house slaves. This sketch must have interested Fuller as a promising foundation for a painting. In his memorandum book he wrote a highly pictorial description that corresponds to the drawing and even adds to it. The prose passage would later have aided him to fill in missing details, had he actually accomplished such a painting. Fuller wrote:

Negro quarters of log houses with Planters house in sight. In the foreground an old woman sitting in sun and shadow near the open door — light colored girl holds the skein of yarn for her to wind in a ball — In middle distance are Negro children at play, with white boy in paper cap and feather. In the right middle distance under the slightly sloping hill a woman washing by the spring. Moss is hanging from oak branches over the foreground. Ivy twines about the door. . . . Cherokee rose hedges in bloom — Horse-shoe nailed over the door. Little negroes have sunburned yellowish hair. Chickens look at one another.³²

A more typically picturesque idea of the South could hardly be imagined.

During his last winter in Alabama, Fuller had occasion to make observations on slave culture and ritual. Shortly after he arrived in Montgomery, the Christmas holidays began. For the blacks, this was the most festive occasion of the year, the only time when they were liberated from their duties for several days straight and allowed to visit other plantations or go into nearby towns without the usual restrictions.³³ Fuller was enthralled by the spectacle of the blacks crowding into the city:

I wished you to see them during the Christmas holidays. The streets were filled with them, come from the country for their presents and to do shopping for the year. Every plantation sends the colored part of its family for their day or two of enjoyment, and of all the creatures in the world they seem fully able in their way to make the most of their opportunity. So the old Virginia wagons, drawn by four and six mules, with mounted driver, who always feels and shows the responsibility of his office, and an important one

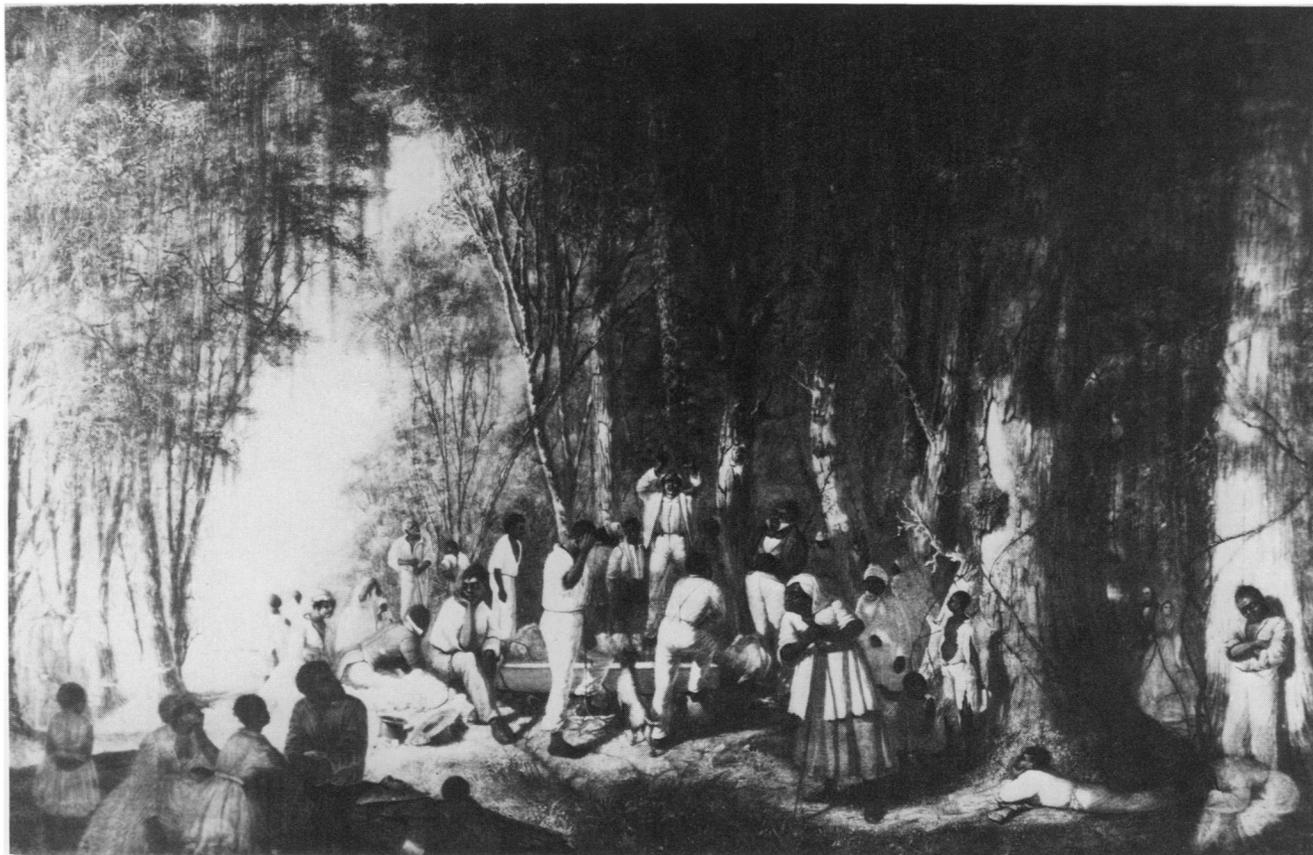


Fig. 19. John Antrobus. NEGRO BURIAL. c. 1860. Oil on canvas, 53 x 81½". The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana.

if you were to see the roads, with black freight in their gay attire becomes [sic] an object of real interest.³⁴

Making the most of their artistic opportunities, Fuller and Billings at this time somehow made the acquaintance of a black musician, whom they hired as a model:

The other day we had a real plantation Negro Banjo player — as a study for a full length — He played and sang most of the time (six hours) of his sitting, but would get sleepy at times. — We paid him two dollars for robbing him of so much of his Christmas jollity. . . . the fellow really did make some harmony, and there was no want of zeal,

Her lips is like the cherry
Cherry like the rose
The way I likes this yella gall
God Almighty knows.³⁵

Unfortunately, the drawing Fuller made that day is not with the other Southern sketches and is, as yet, unlocated. It is possible that he used a larger format for so protracted a study, and it may have been mislaid after

he used it as the aide-mémoire for his much later painting, *The Banjo Player* (see Fig. 24). The original banjo player no doubt considered himself well rewarded for his six-hour performance. Blacks very often used whatever spare time they had to earn their own money in various ways.

Late in March, Fuller witnessed a slave burial, which he recorded rapidly in the sketchbook (Fig. 18). The wagon on the left is probably the hearse; the large, subdued crowd of mourners is no doubt surrounding the grave and the chief celebrant of the funeral ritual. It is odd that Fuller did not mention in his letters so singular a spectacle. Luckily, the more verbose Olmsted did describe a very similar occasion, which he had chanced to see in Richmond, Virginia, several years before. This funeral procession consisted of a "decent hearse" and about thirty men and women who followed it into the country, halting at a "desolate place" beyond the principal cemetery of the city. The grave having been dug and the coffin lowered into it, a man

stepped forward to deliver an “exhortation”, and he was succeeded by another, who

raised a hymn, which soon became a confused chant —the leader singing a few words alone, and the company then either repeating them after him or making a response to them. . . . I could understand but very few of the words. The music was wild and barbarous, but not without a plaintive melody. A new leader took the place of the old man, when his breath gave out . . . and continued until the grave was filled, and a mound raised over it.

Finally, two small branches were placed at the head and foot of the grave. “A few sentences of prayer were then repeated in a low voice by one of the company, and all dispersed.” Olmsted found the ceremony quite moving: “I was deeply influenced . . . by the unaffected feeling, in connection with the simplicity, natural, rude truthfulness, and absence of all attempt at formal decorum in the crowd.”³⁶

When Fuller headed north in April, 1858, he was well equipped to carry out his ideas for painting truthful images of Southern black life. Had he been able to complete and exhibit those paintings as planned, his works would have numbered among the few then dealing objectively or exclusively with black life. In the last two or three years before the Civil War, there arose a small but significant current of artistic awareness of the Southern blacks, their customs and manners. Indeed, when Fuller was entering the final weeks of his time in Montgomery, his contemporary Thomas Waterman Wood (1823–1903) submitted to the National Academy of Design annual exhibition his first black genre study, *Moses, the Baltimore News Vendor* (The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco).³⁷ The English-born portrait and genre painter John Antrobus (1837–1907) worked in the South in the 1850s and painted a few scenes of plantation life, including *Negro Burial* (Fig. 19), a more fully realized counterpart to Fuller’s *Negro Funeral* drawing. It is interesting that Antrobus was active in Montgomery for some time around 1855, but it is uncertain whether either Billings or Fuller knew of his work on black subjects.³⁸ In 1859, the year after Fuller’s return from the South, Eastman Johnson (1824–1906) exhibited his exceedingly popular *Negro Life in the South*, now called *The Old Kentucky Home* (The New-York Historical Society), a realistic but stereotyped composite of picturesque black characters in a stagy, dilapidated setting.

Fuller must have hoped for a like success and recognition through his paintings of Southern subjects. Unhappily, the death of his father in 1859 obliged him to renounce his professional activity and return to



Fig. 20. Fuller. NEGRO NURSE AND CHILD. 1859. Oil on wood panel, 9 x 7". Private collection.

Deerfield to assume management of the family farm. He did not become a full-time artist again until 1876, although while farming he did produce a number of sketches and oil paintings. Of these works, only two related to Fuller’s Southern experiences: *Negro Nurse and Child* (Fig. 20) and *Interior, Negro Quarters* (present location unknown).

Before leaving Montgomery, Fuller had already painted the first work to represent his “new way” in art (Figs. 21 and 22); this was an *Alabama Interior* based on his sketches.³⁹ Late in 1859 he executed the small oval *Negro Nurse and Child*, representing one of those enduring Southern archetypes: the ample mammy attending a delicate white child. He worked on this painting shortly prior to embarking for his only tour of Europe in the winter of 1860. Fuller was pleased with his work. In a letter to his fiancée, he mentioned that

Box 6 Fuller 6

Montgomery Mar 26th 1858

Dear Sally

I have just received yours
 When you got Ely's letter you will
 hardly know where to direct to me. Mr. J.
 Combs will write me again to this place
 I may remain here a week longer
 but cannot tell to the day. At all events
 let me find a line from you with
 Cousin Lypp when I arrive there.
 I cannot help feeling anxious about John
 but hope he is truly getting over his attack
 I have felt this week some foreboding
 that he was sick - this may have
 - indeed been in consequence of what
 Ely's wrote me of his not having been
 very well for a few days - I shall however
 believe that you have given me the
 true statement of his case & not worry
 but wait till I hear from you
 again. - This week I have

Painted a composition picture of an
 "Alabama interior" which gives me
 hopes in a new way (for me) in Art
 I have painted it quickly & adhered
 closely to Southern facts. I wish to
 work on it a little more & shall
 then leave, taking it with me.
 Billie & I have had a very agreeable
 winter together - I could do very well
 by staying - but wish to make the
 most of my time & may stop a few
 weeks in Phila. with this intention
 With best remembrance to Father
 & to all I am

July 10th 1858
 George

Figs. 21 and 22. Letter from George Fuller to Harriet Fuller, Montgomery, March 26, 1858. Collection, Fuller-Higginson Papers, The Memorial Libraries, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, Deerfield, Massachusetts.

"the little negro nurse one looks well in its frame."⁴⁰

At first, Fuller supposed that farming would be but a temporary digression, from which he would soon return to his art. He underestimated the potential demands of the farm, to which were quickly added his marriage to Agnes Higginson in 1861 and the arrival of children, ultimately five. Early in 1868, Fuller realized that he had not been represented at the National Academy of Design exhibition since 1857, when he had sent in *Portrait of a Lady* (present location unknown). Now, very suddenly, Fuller concentrated on producing paintings for the 1868 show. He remembered his Alabama drawings and his erstwhile aim to make his mark as a genre painter. In a letter to his old friend and mentor, the sculptor Henry Kirke Brown (1814–1886), Fuller wrote that he was doing "Alabama (negro) interiors" from the sketches of ten years ago, and he was "pleased with [his] efforts in this way." A month later

he wrote to another old friend, the sculptor John Quincy Adams Ward (1830–1910), to announce that he intended to send five paintings to the National Academy of Design that year.⁴¹ In the end, however, Fuller sent only two studies, *Study of a Head* and *Study from Nature* (present locations unknown). The 1870 *Interior, Negro Quarters* was most likely one of those scenes mentioned in the letter to H.K. Brown. Fuller had not finished it in time for the National Academy exhibition but continued to work on it over the next two years.

The remainder of Fuller's black genre paintings date from the last decade of his life. They are: *Negro Boy with Goat* (Fig. 23), *The Banjo Player* (Fig. 24), *Turkey Pasture in Kentucky* (Fig. 25), *Negro Washing* (1878–1883; present location unknown), *Interior of Negro Quarters* (Fig. 27), *The Quadroon* (Fig. 28), *Negro Funeral, Alabama* (Fig. 29), *Hoeing Tobacco* (Fig. 30), and *Interior of a Negro Cabin* (Fig. 31). The



Fig. 23. Fuller. NEGRO BOY WITH GOAT. 1874. Oil on canvas. Dimensions unavailable. Private collection.



Fig. 24. Fuller. THE BANJO PLAYER. 1876. Oil on canvas, 17 x 21". Collection, Mrs. Emily Abercrombie.

known works, with the exception of *The Banjo Player*, display Fuller's late style, which is broad, atmospheric, low-toned, and nebulous. By this time, Fuller's intentions had changed. He wished to make evocative, moody images rather than factual studies. The example of the French Barbizon painters, especially Jean-François Millet and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, had contributed

to the formation of Fuller's late style. In his black genre paintings, Fuller also translated bucolic Barbizon sentiment into regional American terms.⁴²

The Banjo Player seems to be Fuller's attempt to achieve the rich, solid realism of an artist such as Eastman Johnson. The attempt was not entirely successful, although the painting is interesting, neverthe-



Fig. 25. Fuller. TURKEY PASTURE IN KENTUCKY. 1878. Oil on canvas, 27½ x 40½". Collection, The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.



Fig. 26. Lithograph after Constant Troyon's LA GARDEUSE DE DINDONS. 17 x 12". Private collection.



Fig. 27. Fuller. INTERIOR OF NEGRO QUARTERS. c. 1878. Oil on cradled panel, 17½ x 21½". Collection, Robert C. Vose, Jr.

less. Here the figure of the musician, surely based on Fuller's 1858 study of the "real plantation Negro Banjo player," is set into a composition derived from the 1858 drawing of the cabin interior (see Fig. 15) in which a black mother watches her cooking on the hearth. The picturesque clutter of that interior reappears here with some variations, such as the alert rooster behind the banjo player's chair and the delicately painted corn cob in the lower left corner. The color, quite dark and earthy throughout, unifies the composition to some degree, but the general effect is somewhat wooden and lifeless. It is as if Fuller were mechanically creating a pastiche too labored and literal for his mature style and taste.

Fuller exhibited *The Banjo Player* with thirty-two other paintings at Boston's Doll and Richards Gallery in March, 1876. This first one-man show, which Fuller hoped would raise money enough to reverse his farm's precarious financial situation, marked the beginning of an unexpectedly successful late career. In advancing middle age, Fuller finally gained fame, modest fortune, and critical approval. His reputation arose mainly through his images of wistful Yankee girls and his

moody landscapes; black genre was a minor part of his remaining production. However, the *Turkey Pasture in Kentucky* and *The Quadroon*, both shown in New York at the National Academy of Design (in 1878 and 1880, respectively), are among the best works of his last years.

The Turkey Pasture in Kentucky may have been based on Fuller's memories of the South, although no sketches of this subject survive. During the winter of 1856–1857 Fuller made a brief excursion from Mobile to Louisville, Kentucky, and at this time he could have observed such a sight, highly characteristic of the region. Kentucky's major crop was tobacco, a plant vulnerable to devastation by hornworms. Many farmers maintained flocks of turkeys to parole the tobacco fields and gorge themselves on the hornworm population.⁴³ Fuller's motif, however, is at least partially indebted to France. He owned a lithograph (see Fig. 26) after Constant Troyon's painting, *La Gardeuse de dindons*. Troyon's design is obviously different, but the spirit of rural tranquillity is the same. Fuller's *Turkey Pasture in Kentucky* therefore represents a nearly seamless meshing of Barbizon sentiment with a regional idiom

Fig. 28. Fuller. THE QUADROON. 1880. Oil on canvas, 50½ x 40½". Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of George A. Hearn, 1910.



symbolized by the young black turkey herders. Veiled by a cool green atmosphere, the work is more painterly, and less realistic, than *The Banjo Player*.⁴⁴

The origin of *The Quadroon* may be traced back to Fuller's first trip south, when he indignantly witnessed the sale of a beautiful quadroon girl at auction. Rather than construct a slavemarket narrative, Fuller created a simple image of a melancholy young woman brooding alone while her fellow slaves toil in the cotton field behind her. His intention was to suggest the hopelessness of the quadroon's lot: her one-quarter blackness outweighed the larger proportion of white blood and

therefore bound her to servitude. As with the *Turkey Pasture in Kentucky*, here again Barbizon feeling permeates a regional motif. Fuller's figure recalls the genre of the tired peasant or the thoughtful shepherdess frequently encountered in the art of Millet, Jules Breton, and other painters of French rural life.

The sentimental appeal of Fuller's *The Quadroon* has other associations as well. Although she was painted in 1880, her counterparts are to be found in the anti-slavery literature of the 1840s and 1850s. A number of abolitionist works of fiction featured as heroine an exotically beautiful quadroon or octoroon, the tainted



Fig. 29. Fuller. NEGRO FUNERAL, ALABAMA. c. 1881–1884. Oil on canvas, 17¾ x 30". Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of Anna Perkins Rogers.

but blameless victim of the Southern caste system. Whether the outcome of such tales was happy or tragic, the quadroon was invariably subjected to terrible sufferings and indignities, against which she was powerless. Because of her beauty, her helplessness, and her near-whiteness, the quadroon appeared as a highly pathetic figure, more so, perhaps, than the slave of purely African ancestry.

Fuller's own previously quoted remarks about the slave auction indicate that his reaction to the quadroon's situation paralleled that of the abolitionists. Indeed, he was quite familiar with at least one representative novel. Richard Hildreth, his uncle by marriage, published in 1838 *The Slave; or Memoirs of Archy Moore*, reissued as *The White Slave; or, Memoirs of a Fugitive* in editions of 1840 and 1852.⁴⁵ Fuller's *The Quadroon* should therefore be seen and understood not simply as a native offshoot of the French peasant but also as an image recollecting the American past and Fuller's own experience. Fuller's melancholy romanticism can best be appreciated by contrasting *The Quadroon* with Winslow Homer's *The Visit from the Old Mistress* (1876; National Museum of American Art,

Smithsonian Institution), also exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1880. Homer's painting deals starkly with postbellum Southern realities; Fuller's makes poetry of history.

The four remaining paintings of black subjects are also vague recollections of things seen sharply long ago. The broadly painted *Negro Funeral, Alabama* is quite unlike the 1858 drawing (see Fig. 18) on which it is presumably based. The sketch is a dry, little record of a slave gathering. The painting is not at all factual, but rather expresses something of that raw, spontaneous emotion that so impressed Frederick Law Olmsted as the most compelling characteristic of the black burial ritual. *Hoing Tobacco*, a freely painted impression of black field workers, conveys a sense of physical energy, rather than specific information, through the rhythmic marks of the brush. *Interior of Negro Quarters* is based on the third of the domestic interiors (see Fig. 16) in the Alabama sketchbook. In the painting the figure in the rocking chair is clearly the same, but most of the documentary detail has been omitted.⁴⁶ Similarly, in Fuller's *Interior of a Negro Cabin* the room, the figure by the hearth, and the hearth itself are de-

rived from the first of the Alabama interior drawings (see Fig. 14). The three black children have disappeared, and the center of the room is dominated by a light, girlish figure occupied with what may be a piece of knitting. A mellow brown atmosphere veils the scene and gives the figures a remote, shadowy quality. There is an utter absence of reportage. It is less a genre painting than a reverie on distant experience.

With the exception of *Turkey Pasture in Kentucky* and *The Quadroon*, Fuller's paintings of black life were little known. His trips to Georgia and Alabama were dismissed as interesting digressions by William Dean Howells, author of an important biographical sketch of the artist.⁴⁷ Several of the paintings appeared briefly in the Fuller Memorial Exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, April 24–May 13, 1884, and others were



Fig. 30. Fuller. HOEING TOBACCO. 1882–1884. Oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 18 1/8". Theodore T. and Mary G. Ellis Collection, Worcester Art Museum.

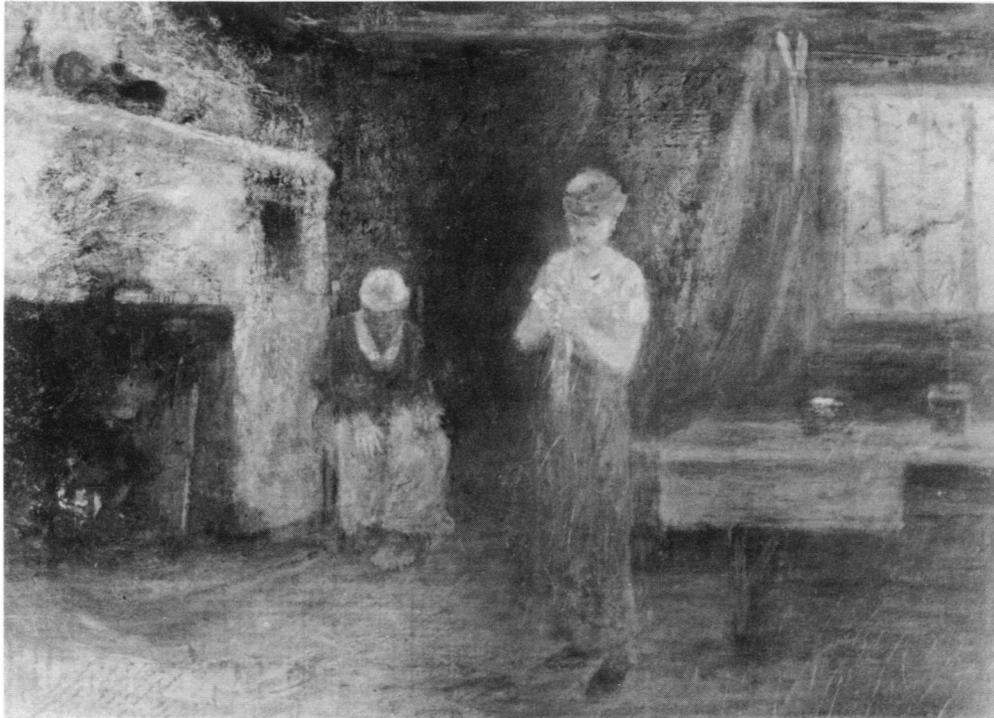


Fig. 31. Fuller. INTERIOR OF A NEGRO CABIN. 1882. Oil on canvas, 20 x 24". Photograph, The Raydon Gallery, New York.

offered at the Administrator's Sale of Fuller's paintings, held at Chickering Hall, Boston, on May 9, 1884, after the artist's death. Most critics reviewing the exhibition or attending the sale wrote nothing about the black genre pictures; they directed their comments to more famous and more typical examples of Fuller's late style.

An exception was the critic Charles De Kay, writing five years after Fuller's death. Remembering the black genre paintings at the Memorial Exhibition and the Fuller sale, De Kay commented:

. . . earlier in his career, Fuller had the democratic feeling toward labour and labourers which does not always avail to break down the barrier of colour between the races. When most people despised the negro and hated him for causing a fratricidal war to hold together the Union, he was already painting the slave . . . we may gather from these paintings that want of appreciation arrested Fuller in a

gradual but certain course toward a democratic line of effort. . . .⁴⁸

Whether Fuller's impulse sprang from democratic convictions is an open question. He was, after all, an artist in search of humble but picturesque themes. Through his images of slavery he sought neither to expose its evils nor to dramatize, sentimentalize, or stereotype its victims. His early drawings are distinctive for their simplicity, directness, and great topical interest. The paintings are uneven in value, but the best among them are aesthetically and thematically significant as well. Although the drawings remained hidden and the paintings had little impact in their time, Fuller's black genre now seems one of the most intriguing facets of his production. Most of all, the drawings afford brief but telling glimpses of the antebellum South, perceived through attentive Northern eyes.

The research for this article could not have been accomplished without the help of Mary Marsh, Catherine Arms, Jeffrey Legler, and David Proper, Librarian, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts. I gratefully acknowledge their generous assistance.

1. For a recent biographical and critical survey of Fuller's career see Sarah Burns, "A Study of the Life and Poetic Vision of George Fuller

(1822–1884)," *The American Art Journal*, vol. XIII, no. 4 (Autumn, 1981), pp. 11–37. All of the memoranda and letters cited below are in the Fuller-Higginson Papers, in The Memorial Libraries (Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library and the Henry N. Flynt Library) in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Those portions of the Fuller-Higginson Papers cited here are: The Papers of George Fuller, The Papers of Agnes Higginson Fuller, The Papers of Elijah Fuller, and The Papers

of Harriet Fuller. After the first complete citation for material from each section of the Fuller-Higginson Papers, passages from the letters will be noted by the name of the recipient and the date of the correspondence, except in cases where such brief citations are not clear, as with Fuller's letters to friends rather than relatives.

2. Letter from Sanford Gifford to Elisius Mowry, November 21, 1849, in *The Papers of George Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*. In neither his letters nor diaries did Fuller mention the name of the steamer that took him to Charleston.

3. George Fuller, 1850 Diary, entries for Monday, February 18, 1850, and Wednesday, March 6, 1850, in *The Papers of George Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*.

4. George Fuller, 1850 Diary, entries for Sunday, February 10, Sunday, April 7, and Saturday, April 20.

5. Fragment of letter (salutation missing), January 26, 1850, in *The Papers of George Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*.

6. Letter to the artist's sister Harriet Fuller, February 15, 1856, in *The Papers of Harriet Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*.

7. Letter to the artist's brother Elijah Fuller, January 21, 1857, in *The Papers of Elijah Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*.

8. Letter to Harriet Fuller, January 12, 1857.

9. Letter to Elijah Fuller, January 21, 1857.

10. Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States* (first edition, 1861), ed. and introd. by Arthur M. Schlesinger (New York, 1953), p. 214.

11. Letters to Harriet Fuller, February 28, 1857, and to Elijah Fuller, January 21, 1857. For a concise description of the history and character of Mobile, see Virginia van der Veer Hamilton, *Alabama: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977), pp. 155–158.

12. Letters to Elijah Fuller, April 18, 1857, and June 16, 1857.

13. Letter to the artist's half brother, Augustus Fuller, May 16, 1858, in *The Papers of Augustus Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*.

14. For information on the Belmont Collection, see Peter Bermingham, *American Art in the Barbizon Mood*, catalogue to the exhibition held at the National Collection of Fine Arts (Washington, D.C., 1975), p. 45. The Hon. August Belmont, former minister to the Netherlands, also collected paintings by Ary Scheffer, Rosa Bonheur, Ernest Meissonier, Thomas Couture, and Constant Troyon. On Edouard Frère, see Gabriel P. Weisberg, *The Realist Tradition, French Painting and Drawing 1830–1900*, catalogue to the exhibition held at the Cleveland Museum of Art (1980), pp. 42, 96, 99, 106, 213, 290.

15. Letter to Harriet and Elijah Fuller, November 15, 1857, in *The Papers of Harriet Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*.

16. Letters to Elijah Fuller, January 29, 1858, and April 18, 1858.

17. Letter to Harriet Fuller, March 26, 1858.

18. Letter to the artist's fiancée, Agnes Higginson, January 24, 1858, in *The Papers of Agnes Higginson Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*. To date it is not known whether Edwin Billings's Southern sketches still exist.

19. This information is synthesized from Hamilton, *Alabama: A Bicentennial History*, pp. 119–122.

20. Letter to Agnes Higginson, January 24, 1858.

21. With a couple of exceptions, the dating of the sketchbook drawings is straightforward. While two or three of the drawings may date

from Fuller's stay in Mobile, 1856–1857, most of the sketches were certainly made in Montgomery during the winter of 1857–1858, with the concentration of production between late January and the end of February, 1858. This is assuming, of course, that Fuller used his pages in the customary sequential manner, as seems to be the case. One can thereby deduce the approximate dates of the unscribed drawings by referring to the dated ones before and after. There are two anomalies, both attributable to the common human error, early in any new year, of absentmindedly writing the number of the previous year. The first such error occurs in the end-paper inscription: "G. Fuller/ Mobile/ Ala Feby 56." Fuller should have written "Feby 57"; in February, 1856, he was indisputably in New York City. The second wrong date is inscribed on the drawing *The Laundry Yard* (see Fig. 10): "Mtg'y Jan'y 28/57." Since it is known that by January 28, 1857, Fuller had been in Mobile for nearly two weeks, it follows that *The Laundry Yard* must have been made on January 28, 1858. This supposition is reinforced by the fact that *The Laundry Yard* is part of a sequence of drawings that were definitely done in Montgomery in 1858.

22. Letter to Harriet Fuller, December 12, 1857.

23. For an account of slave hiring and transport see Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York, 1956), pp. 67–73 and 261–263.

24. Letter to Harriet Fuller, January 3, 1858.

25. On slave dress see Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, pp. 290–292, and Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, p. 82. The reference to the "Virginia poke" is in Albert Burton Moore, *History of Alabama and her People* (Chicago, 1927), vol. I, p. 188.

26. Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, p. 184; Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, p. 292.

27. Moore, *History of Alabama*, vol. I, p. 418.

28. Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, p. 161.

29. Frederika Bremer, *Homes of the New World; Impressions of America*, tr. Mary Howitt (New York, 1854), vol. I, p. 374.

30. Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 184–185.

31. On domestic slaves see Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, pp. 59, 337–339, and John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, 2nd ed., rev. (New York, 1979), pp. 250–251. The Alabama bedstead is described in Hamilton, *Alabama: A Bicentennial History*, p. 61.

32. Fuller, "April in Alabama," 1857–1858 Memorandum Book (unpaginated), in *The Papers of George Fuller, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts*.

33. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, pp. 169–170; Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, p. 107.

34. Letter to Agnes Higginson, January 24, 1858.

35. Letter to Harriet Fuller, January 3, 1858.

36. Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 34–37.

37. On Thomas Waterman Wood, see Charles Childs and William C. Lipke, *Thomas Waterman Wood, P.N.A., 1823–1903*, catalogue to the exhibition held at The Wood Art Gallery (Montpelier, Vermont, 1972).

38. For Antrobus see the entry in George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America 1564–1860* (New Haven, 1957), p. 12, and Patricia Hills, *The Painters' America: Rural and Urban Life, 1810–1910*, catalogue to the exhibition held at the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, 1974), pp. 62, 141.

39. Letter to Harriet Fuller, March 26, 1858. This painting has not been found. It is possible that Fuller painted over it, or reworked it, for one of the later Alabama interior scenes, discussed later in the article.

40. Letter to Agnes Higginson, December 18, 1859.
41. Letter to Henry Kirke Brown, February 14, 1868, and letter to John Quincy Adams Ward, March 17, 1868, in *The Papers of George Fuller*, The Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Massachusetts.
42. For a detailed discussion of Fuller's interest in French Barbizon painting, see Burns, "The Life and Poetic Vision of George Fuller," pp. 30–33.
43. Ulrich B. Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston, 1929), p. 113.
44. The lithograph after Troyon's *La Gardeuse de dindons* remains in the Fuller family, and it was found in a portfolio containing other George Fuller memorabilia. Another painting by Fuller on the same theme, *Girl with Turkeys* (1884), is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The single turkey herder here is a white woman, whose pose, with turkeys clustering at her feet, is clearly reminiscent of the figure in the Troyon lithograph.
45. For a discussion of this literary genre, see Lorenzo Dow Turner, *Anti-Slavery Sentiment in American Literature prior to 1865* (1929; rpt. New York, 1966), and Judith R. Berzon, *Neither White nor Black: The Mulatto Character in American Fiction* (New York, 1978). In addition to Richard Hildredth's novel, works concerned with the trials of the mulatto or quadroon included Lydia Maria Child's short story, "The Quadroons" (1849); William Wells Brown, *Clotel, or, The President's Daughter; A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States* (1853); Elizabeth D. Livermore, *Zoë, or The Quadroon's Triumph* (1855); Mayne Reid, *The Quadroon: or, A Lover's Adventures in Louisiana* (1856); M. Roland Markham, *Alcar, the Captive Creole* (1857); Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon* (1859), a play based on Mayne Reid's novel; and H. L. Hosmer, *Adela, the Octoroon* (1860).
- For a discussion of the genre in another context, see Vivien M. Green, "Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave*: Emblem of Freedom," *The American Art Journal*, vol. XIV, no. 4 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 31–39, especially pp. 36–37.
46. Initially it was thought that *Interior of Negro Quarters* was the unlocated 1870 painting mentioned by Fuller in his letter to H.K. Brown (see note 41). However, the style, which features blurred shapes and heavy scoring with brush and brush handle, indicates the correct date must be in the late 1870s, when Fuller began to paint much more freely and even experimentally. It is possible that *Interior of Negro Quarters* is the c. 1878 painting *Before the Fire*, so named in the "List of Fuller's Works" in Josiah B. Millet, ed., *George Fuller, His Life and Works* (Boston, 1886), p. 91. Another possibility is that this work is the 1870 painting and was heavily reworked by Fuller some time after 1878. Fuller occasionally submitted paintings to such continuing revisions.
47. William Dean Howells, "Sketch of George Fuller's Life," in *George Fuller, His Life and Works*, ed. by Josiah B. Millet (Boston, 1886) p. 25.
48. Charles De Kay, "George Fuller, Painter," *The Magazine of Art*, vol. XII (1889), p. 354.