

ISRAELS, JOSEPH:

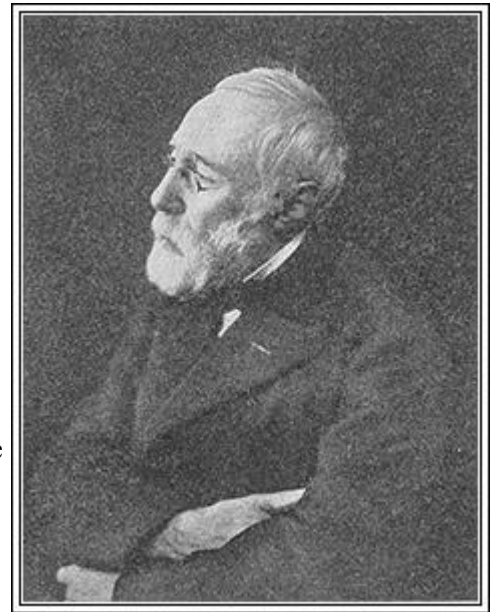
By: [Isidore Singer](#), [Charles H. Israels](#)

Dutch genre painter; born at Groningen, Holland, June 27, 1824. It was his mother's desire that he should enter the rabbinate, but other influences prevailed, and at an early age he adopted a commercial career, which his father, a banker, had mapped out for him in his own counting-room. This career, however, he soon abandoned, but not until the elder Israels had become fully convinced of the bent of his son's mind, mainly through his insistent desire to make sketches upon the borders of the huge ledgers which it was his duty to keep in order. At last permission was given him to take up art as a profession.

Joseph Israels.

Upon leaving his office-desk Israels immediately began his studies in art at Groningen under local masters. At the age of twenty-two, having in a measure exhausted the opportunities offered by his native town, he went to Amsterdam. There he entered the studio of Cornelis Kruseman, and quickly responded to the classical influences then predominating, not only at the Amsterdam Academy of Fine Arts, over which his master presided, but to an even greater extent in Paris, where Israels ultimately went. While in Paris he studied under Picot, Horace Vernet, and Paul Delaroche, living meanwhile economically upon a small allowance made him by his father. While in Paris he felt to the full the positive influence of the romantic school, of which his masters were the foremost exponents and from which he became one of the first seceders.

In 1848 Millet exhibited for the first time in Paris, and, judging from Israels' later work, there is little doubt that he was one of the first painters to appreciate the significance of Millet's revolt against the ultra-classical tendencies of the period. From Paris Israels returned to Amsterdam, and there commenced painting historic scenes, of which the first was "William the Silent of Orange Bidding Defiance to King Philip II. of Spain" (1855). Meeting with little success in this field, he turned for subjects to the peasantry that flocked into the city on market-days from the surrounding country, and began to paint the homely scenes which have since made him famous. Later he drew for material upon the life of the fisherfolk of the seaside villages near Amsterdam. Those of his pictures that interpret the life of the Dutch fishermen, the arduous and frequently tragic element of which Israels portrayed with deep feeling and with a masterly application of chiaroscuro, soon became popular. In developing his tendencies he finally attained the extreme of realism and depicted the sober side of life—its toils, its sorrows, and its sacrifices.



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Several medals have been conferred upon Israels in recognition of the merit of his work. He received a medal (third class) at the Paris Exposition of 1867, and another (first class) at the Exposition of 1878. He was decorated with the cross of the Legion of Honor in 1867, and created an officer of that order in 1878. The Order of Leopold has also been conferred upon him by the king of the Belgians. In 1883 the Munich International Exposition awarded him a gold medal (second class), and he received a gold medal (first class) from the Paris Exposition of 1889. At the Paris Exposition of 1900 he exhibited two paintings: "The Merchant of Bric-à-brac" and "Returning from the Fields."

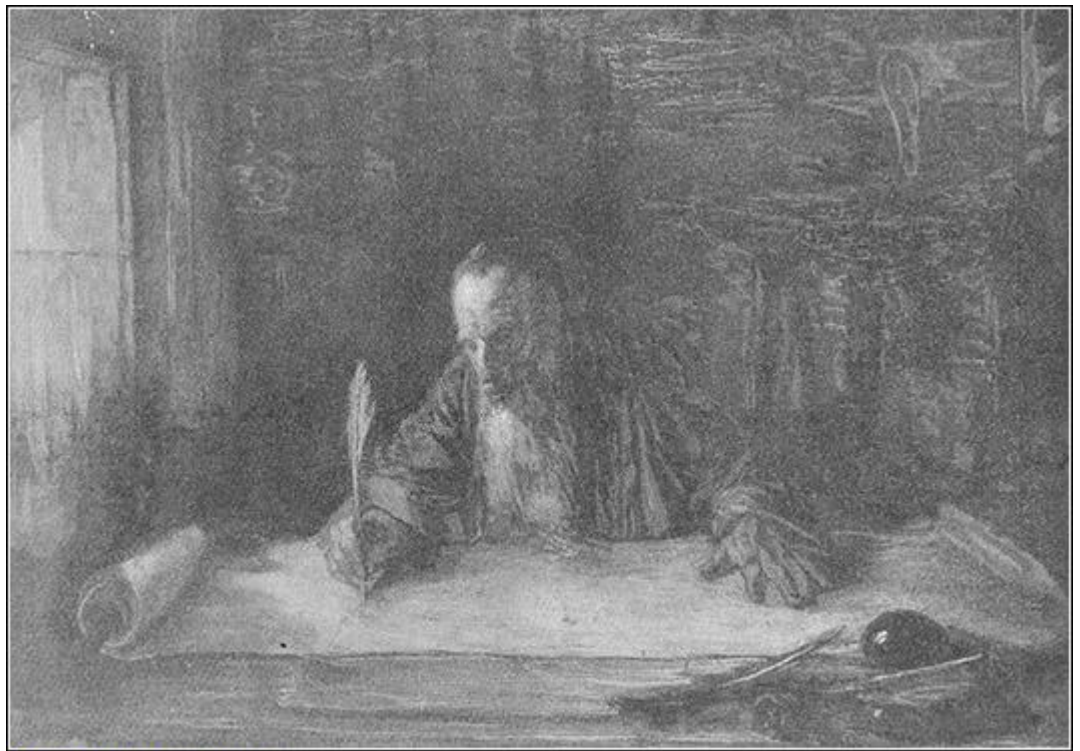
The Scribe.(From the painting by Joseph Israels.)

Of Israels' pictures, "Passing Mother's Grave" (1856) was purchased in 1861 by the Amsterdam Academy of Fine Arts, "Alone in the World" (1878) by the Amsterdam Museum. His "Frugal Meal" was bought by W. K. Vanderbilt of New York. Among his other works may be mentioned: "Village Scene," "Preparing for the Future" (1855); "Children of the Sea," "Peaceful House," "Fishermen Shipwrecked off Scheveningen" (1862); "The Sick Mother," "The Mother in Health," "The Orphan Asylum at Katwyk," "The Last Breath," "True Support," "Madonna in Hut," "Age and Infancy" (1872); "First Sail," "Village Poor" (1873);

"Expectation," "An Anxious Family"(1874); "Waiting for the Fishing-Boats" (1875); "Returning from the Fields," "Breakfast Time," "Cobblers at Dinner" (1878); "Nothing More!" "The Sewing-School at Katwyk" (1881); "A Silent Interview" (1882); "Fair Weather," "A Sleeping Child" (1883); "The Return" (1884); "When One Becomes Old"(1886); "The Little Sick Nurse," "The Sewer" (1888).

Some of his works deal with Jewish subjects, as "David Before Saul,"

"The Scribe," "A Son of the Ancient People," and "Old Jewish Sage" (etching).



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Israëls is an aquarellist and etcher of great talent. Through his efforts painting has received a new impetus in Holland, where a modern Dutch school of painting has arisen. He now resides at The Hague, and recently has become corresponding member of the Institut de France.

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