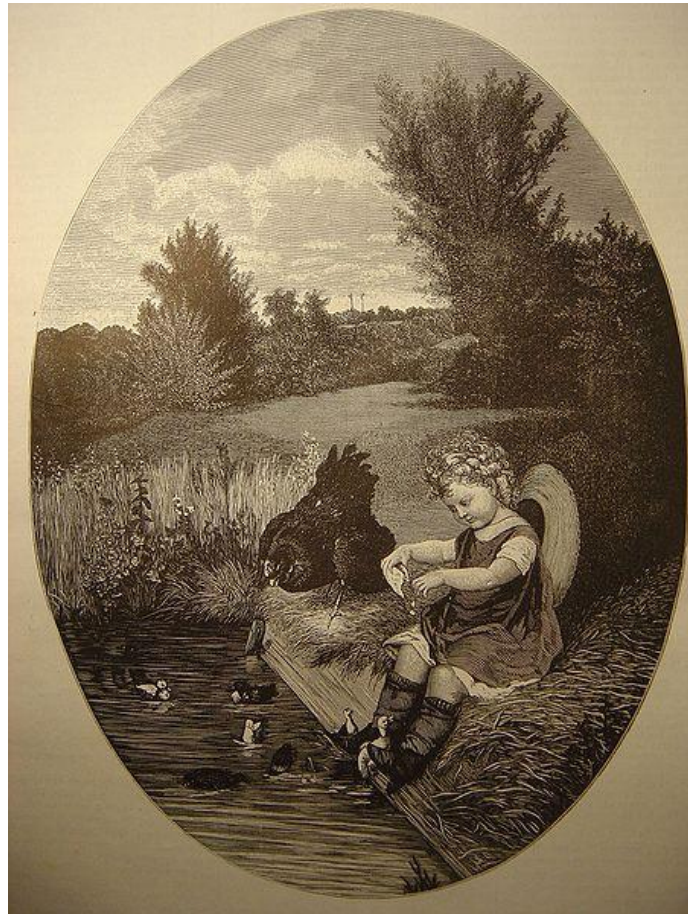


**GIRL FEEDING CHICKS - Anton Dieffenbach (1831-1914)**



A girl sitting by a pond is giving bread crumbs to chicks and ducklings.

Anton Dieffenbach divided his time between France and Germany. Born in Wiesbaden, he studied in Strasbourg and Paris, then Düsseldorf, before coming again to Paris just when the Franco-Prussian war broke out in 1870. After a time of exile in Switzerland he returned to Germany and spent the last years of his life in the Vosges region, a German territory after the French defeat.

From the oval-shaped engraving reproduced here it is not possible to state if the two figures of the girl's 'parents' belong to the original painting or if they are a later addition. Since the study of the 'Watteau Fan' [See #22] it has come to light that Lauronce sometimes alters the original designs more than technical requirements would justify. Suppressing backgrounds and reducing the number of figures on a fan leaf is one thing; adding elements or transforming them is another matter.



I can't help feeling that the fan leaf as it is looks awkward : the proportions between the child and the adult figures is just not right. Other paintings by Dieffenbach do not show this distortion.



Anton Dieffenbach: The Birth Day (Musée de Strasbourg)

Moreover the basket of white flowers that the lady is holding in her left hand is quite irrelevant here: it would better suit a fiancée or a bride.



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