

Few men are gifted with the capacity of seeing; there are fewer still who possess the power of expression. So now, at a time when others are asleep, Monsieur G. is bending over his table, darting on to a sheet of paper the same glance that a moment ago he was directing towards external things, skirmishing with his pencil, his pen, his brush, splashing his glass of water up to the ceiling, wiping his pen on his shirt, in a ferment of violent activity, as though afraid that the image might escape him, cantankerous though alone, elbowing himself on. And the external world is reborn upon his paper, natural and more than natural, beautiful and more than beautiful, strange and endowed with an impulsive life like the soul of its creator. The phantasmagoria has been distilled from nature. All the raw materials with which the memory has loaded itself are put in order, ranged and harmonized, and undergo that forced idealization which is the result of a childlike perceptiveness—that is to say, a perceptiveness acute and magical by reason of its innocence!

IV. MODERNITY

AND so away he goes, hurrying, searching. But searching for what? Be very sure that this man, such as I have depicted him—this solitary, gifted with an active imagination, ceaselessly journeying across the great human desert—has an aim loftier than that of a mere *flâneur*, an aim more general, something other than the fugitive pleasure of circumstance. He is looking for that quality which you must allow me to call 'modernity'; for I know of no better word to express the idea I have in mind. He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distil the eternal from the transitory. Casting an eye over our exhibitions of modern pictures, we are struck by a general tendency among artists to dress all their subjects in the garments of the past. Almost all of them make use of the costumes and furnishings of the Renaissance, just as David employed the costumes and furnishings of Rome. There is however this difference, that David, by choosing subjects which were specifically Greek or Roman, had no alternative but to dress them in antique garb, whereas the painters of today, though choosing subjects of a general nature and applicable to all ages, nevertheless persist in rigging them out in the

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costumes of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance or the Orient.¹ This is clearly symptomatic of a great degree of laziness; for it is much easier to decide outright that everything about the garb of an age is absolutely ugly than to devote oneself to the task of distilling from it the mysterious element of beauty that it may contain, however slight or minimal that element may be. By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable. Every old master has had his own modernity; the great majority of fine portraits that have come down to us from former generations are clothed in the costume of their own period. They are perfectly harmonious, because everything—from costume and coiffure down to gesture, glance and smile (for each age has a deportment, a glance and a smile of its own)—everything, I say, combines to form a completely viable whole. This transitory, fugitive element, whose metamorphoses are so rapid, must on no account be despised or dispensed with. By neglecting it, you cannot fail to tumble into the abyss of an abstract and indeterminate beauty, like that of the first woman before the fall of man. If for the necessary and inevitable costume of the age you substitute another, you will be guilty of a mistranslation only to be excused in the case of a masquerade prescribed by fashion. (Thus, the goddesses, nymphs and sultanas of the eighteenth century are still convincing portraits, *morally* speaking.)

It is doubtless an excellent thing to study the old masters in order to learn how to paint; but it can be no more than a waste of labour if your aim is to understand the special nature of present-day beauty. The draperies of Rubens or Veronese will in no way teach you how to depict *moire antique*, *satin à la reine* or any other fabric of modern manufacture, which we see supported and hung over crinoline or starched muslin petticoat. In texture and weave these are quite different from the fabrics of ancient Venice or those worn at the court of Catherine. Furthermore the cut of skirt and bodice is by no means similar; the pleats are arranged according to a new system. Finally the gesture and the bearing of the woman of today give to her dress a life and a special character which are not those of the woman of the past. In short, for any 'modernity' to be worthy of one day taking its place as 'antiquity', it is necessary for the mysterious beauty which human life accidentally puts into it to be

¹ These ideas are developed in the sixth section of the *Salon* of 1859.

distilled from it. And it is to this task that Monsieur G. particularly addresses himself.

I have remarked that every age had its own gait, glance and gesture. The easiest way to verify this proposition would be to betake oneself to some vast portrait-gallery, such as the one at Versailles. But it has an even wider application. Within that unity which we call a Nation, the various professions and classes and the passing centuries all introduce variety, not only in manners and gesture, but even in the actual form of the face. Certain types of nose, mouth and brow will be found to dominate the scene for a period whose extent I have no intention of attempting to determine here, but which could certainly be subjected to a form of calculation. Considerations of this kind are not sufficiently familiar to our portrait-painters; the great failing of M. Ingres, in particular, is that he seeks to impose upon every type of sitter a more or less complete, by which I mean a more or less despotic, form of perfection, borrowed from the repertory of classical ideas.

In a matter of this kind it would be easy, and indeed legitimate, to argue *a priori*. The perpetual correlation between what is called the 'soul' and what is called the 'body' explains quite clearly how everything that is 'material', or in other words an emanation of the 'spiritual', mirrors, and will always mirror, the spiritual reality from which it derives. If a painstaking, scrupulous, but feebly imaginative artist has to paint a courtesan of today and takes his 'inspiration' (that is the accepted word) from a courtesan by Titian or Raphael, it is only too likely that he will produce a work which is false, ambiguous and obscure. From the study of a masterpiece of that time and type he will learn nothing of the bearing, the glance, the smile or the living 'style' of one of those creatures whom the dictionary of fashion has successively classified under the coarse or playful titles of 'doxies', 'kept women', *lorettes*, or *biches*.

The same criticism may be strictly applied to the study of the military man and the dandy, and even to that of animals, whether horses or dogs; in short, of everything that goes to make up the external life of this age. Woe to him who studies the antique for anything else but pure art, logic and general method! By steeping himself too thoroughly in it, he will lose all memory of the present; he will renounce the rights and privileges offered by circumstance—for almost all our originality comes from the seal which Time imprints on our sensations. I need hardly tell you that I could easily support my assertions with reference to many objects

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other than women. What would you say, for example, of a marine-painter (I am deliberately going to extremes) who, having to depict the sober and elegant beauty of a modern vessel, were to tire out his eyes by studying the overcharged, involved forms and the monumental poop of a galleon, or the complicated rigging of the sixteenth century? Again, what would you think if you had commissioned an artist to paint the portrait of a thoroughbred, famed in the annals of the turf, and he then proceeded to confine his researches to the Museums and contented himself with a study of the horse in the galleries of the past, in Van Dyck, Borgognone or Van der Meulen?

Under the direction of nature and the tyranny of circumstance, Monsieur G. has pursued an altogether different path. He began by being an observer of life, and only later set himself the task of acquiring the means of expressing it. This has resulted in a thrilling originality in which any remaining vestiges of barbarousness or *naïveté* appear only as new proofs of his faithfulness to the impression received, or as a flattering compliment paid to truth. For most of us, and particularly for men of affairs, for whom nature has no existence save by reference to utility, the fantastic reality of life has become singularly diluted. Monsieur G. never ceases to drink it in; his eyes and his memory are full of it.

V. MNEMONIC ART

THE word 'barbarousness', which may seem to have slipped rather too often from my pen, might perhaps lead some few people to suppose that we are here concerned with defective drawings, only to be transformed into perfect things with the aid of the spectator's imagination. This would be to misunderstand me. What I mean is an inevitable, synthetic, childlike barbarousness, which is often still to be discerned in a perfected art, such as that of Mexico, Egypt or Nineveh, and which comes from a need to see things broadly and to consider them above all in their total effect. It is by no means out of place here to remind my readers that all those painters whose vision is synthesizing and abbreviative have been accused of barbarousness—M. Corot, for example, whose initial concern is always to trace the principal lines of a landscape—its bony structure, its physiognomy, so to speak. Likewise Monsieur

G. brings an instinctive emphasis to his marking of the salient or luminous points of an object (which may be salient or luminous from the *dramatic* point of view) or of its principal characteristics, sometimes even with a degree of exaggeration which aids the human memory; and thus, under the spur of so forceful a prompting, the spectator's imagination receives a clear-cut image of the impression produced by the external world upon the mind of Monsieur G. The spectator becomes the translator, so to speak, of a translation which is always clear and thrilling.

There is one circumstance which adds much to the living force of this *legendary* translation of external life. I refer to Monsieur G's method of draughtsmanship. He draws from memory and not from the model, except in those cases—the Crimean War is one of them—when it may be urgently necessary to take immediate, hasty notes, and to fix the principal lines of a subject. As a matter of fact, all good and true draughtsmen draw from the image imprinted on their brains, and not from nature. To the objection that there are admirable sketches of the latter type by Raphael, Watteau and many others, I would reply that these are notes—very scrupulous notes, to be sure, but mere notes, none the less. When a true artist has come to the point of the final execution of his work, the model would be more of an embarrassment than a help to him. It even happens that men such as Daumier and Monsieur G., for long accustomed to exercising their memory and storing it with images, find that the physical presence of the model and its multiplicity of details disconcerts and as it were paralyses their principal faculty.

In this way a struggle is launched between the will to see all and forget nothing and the faculty of memory, which has formed the habit of a lively absorption of general colour and of silhouette, the arabesque of contour. An artist with a perfect sense of form but one accustomed to relying above all on his memory and his imagination will find himself at the mercy of a riot of details all clamouring for justice with the fury of a mob in love with absolute equality. All justice is trampled under foot; all harmony sacrificed and destroyed; many a trifle assumes vast proportions; many a triviality usurps the attention. The more our artist turns an impartial eye on detail, the greater is the state of anarchy. Whether he be long-sighted or short-sighted, all hierarchy and all subordination vanishes. This is an accident often conspicuous in the works of one of our most fashionable painters¹—a painter, by the way,

¹ Certainly Meissonier is intended.

whose faults are so well attuned to the faults of the masses that they have singularly assisted his popularity. The same analogy may be observed in the art of the actor, that art so mysterious and so profound, which today has fallen into such a slough of decadence. M. Frédérick Lemaître¹ builds up a role with the breadth and fullness of genius. However studded with luminous details may be his playing of a part, it always remains synthetic and sculptural. M. Bouffé on the other hand creates his roles with the minute precision of a myopic and a bureaucrat. With him everything flashes forth but nothing tells, nothing demands a lodging in the memory.

Thus two elements are to be discerned in Monsieur G.'s execution: the first, an intense effort of memory that evokes and calls back to life—a memory that says to everything, 'Arise, Lazarus'; the second, a fire, an intoxication of the pencil or the brush, amounting almost to a frenzy. It is the fear of not going fast enough, of letting the phantom escape before the synthesis has been extracted and pinned down; it is that terrible fear which takes possession of all great artists and gives them such a passionate desire to become masters of every means of expression so that the orders of the brain may never be perverted by the hesitations of the hand and that finally execution, ideal execution, may become as unconscious and spontaneous as is digestion for a healthy man after dinner. Monsieur G. starts with a few slight indications in pencil, which hardly do more than mark the position which objects are to occupy in space. The principal planes are then sketched in tinted wash, vaguely and lightly coloured masses to start with, but taken up again later and successively charged with a greater intensity of colour. At the last minute the contour of the objects is once and for all outlined in ink. Without having seen them, it would be impossible to imagine the astonishing effects he can obtain by this method which is so simple that it is almost elementary. It possesses one outstanding virtue, which is that, at no matter what stage in its execution, each drawing has a sufficiently 'finished' look; call it a 'study' if you will, but you will have to admit that it is a perfect study. The values are all entirely harmonious, and if the artist should decide to take them further, they will continue to march in step towards the desired degree of completion. He works

¹ Baudelaire had already put on record his admiration for Frédérick Lemaître (1800-76), one of the great French actors of the Romantic generation, in the *Salon of 1846*. H.-D.-M. Bouffé (1800-88) was a well-known comic actor.

in this way on twenty drawings at a time, with an impatience and a delight that are a joy to watch—and amusing even for him. The sketches pile up, one on top of the other—in their tens, hundreds, thousands. Every now and then he will run through them and examine them, and then select a few in order to carry them a stage further, to intensify the shadows and gradually to heighten the lights.

He attaches an enormous importance to his backgrounds, which, whether slight or vigorous, are always appropriate in nature and quality to the figures. Tonal scale and general harmony are all strictly observed, with a genius which springs from instinct rather than from study. For Monsieur G. possesses by nature the colourist's mysterious talent, a true gift that may be developed by study, but which study by itself is, I think, incapable of creating. To put the whole thing in a nutshell, this extraordinary artist is able to express at once the attitude and the gesture of living beings, whether solemn or grotesque, and their luminous *explosion* in space.

VI. THE ANNALS OF WAR

BULGARIA, Turkey, the Crimea, and Spain have all in turn ministered lavishly to the eye of Monsieur G.—or rather to the eye of that imaginary artist whom we have agreed so to call, for every now and then I am reminded that, to give continued reassurance to his modesty, I have promised to pretend that he does not exist. I have studied his archives of the Eastern War—battlefields littered with the débris of death, baggage-trains, shipments of cattle and horses; they are *tableaux vivants* of an astonishing vitality, traced from life itself, uniquely picturesque fragments which many a renowned painter would in the same circumstances have stupidly overlooked. (I would, however, hasten to make an exception of M. Horace Vernet, a military historian rather than essentially a painter, with whom Monsieur G., albeit a subtler artist, has manifest affinities if you are only considering him as an archivist of life.) I am ready to declare that no newspaper, no written account, no book has unfolded so well, in all its painful detail and melancholy scope, the great epic poem of the Crimea. The eye wanders from the banks of the Danube to the shores of the Bosphorus, from Cape Kerson to the

plains of Balaclava, from the plains of Inkermann to the encampments of the English, French, Turks and Piedmontese, from the streets of Constantinople to hospital wards and all the splendour of religious and military ceremonial.

One of these drawings most vividly imprinted on my mind represents the *Consecration of the Burial-ground at Scutari by the Bishop of Gibraltar*.¹ The picturesque essence of the scene, which lies in the contrast between its Eastern setting and the Western uniforms and attitudes of those taking part, is realized in an arresting manner, pregnant with dreams and evocations. The officers and men have that ineradicable air of being gentlemen—a mixture of boldness and reserve—which they carry with them to the ends of the earth, as far as the garrisons of the Cape Colony and the cantonments of India; and the English clergymen give one a vague impression of being beadles or money-changers who have put on caps and gowns.

And now we are at Schumla, enjoying the hospitality of Omer Pasha²—Turkish hospitality, pipes and coffee; the guests are all disposed on divans, holding to their lips pipes long as speaking-tubes whose bowls lie on the ground at their feet. And here are the Kurds at Scutari,³ weird-looking troops whose appearance puts one in mind of some barbarian invasion; or if you prefer, the Bashi-Bazouks, no less extraordinary, with their Hungarian or Polish officers whose dandified faces make a peculiar contrast with the baroquely Oriental character of their men.

I remember a magnificent drawing, which shows a single figure standing, a large, sturdy man, looking at once thoughtful, unconcerned and bold; he wears top-boots which extend to above his knees; his uniform is concealed beneath an enormous, heavy, tightly-buttoned greatcoat; he is gazing through the smoke of his cigar at the threatening misty horizon; a wounded arm is carried in a sling. At the bottom of the drawing is the following scribbled inscription: *Canrobert on the battlefield of Inkermann. Taken on the spot.*

Who is this white-moustached cavalry-officer, with so vividly-drawn an expression, who, with lifted head, seems to be savouring all the dreadful poetry of a battlefield, while his horse, sniffing the ground, is picking its way among the corpses heaped up with feet in air, shrunk

¹ I.L.N. 9 June 1855.

² I.L.N. 4 March 1854.

³ I.L.N. 24 June 1854.

faces, in weird attitudes? In a corner, at the bottom, can be made out these words: *Myself at Inkermann.*

And then there is M. Baraguay d'Hilliers, with the Seraskier, inspecting the artillery at Bechichtash. I have seldom seen more lifelike a military portrait, traced by a bolder or a more spirited pen.

And now a name that has achieved a sinister repute since the disasters in Syria: *Achmet Pasha, General in Chief to the Kalifat, standing with his staff in front of his hut, receiving two European officers.*¹ For all the amplitude of his vast Turkish paunch, Achmet Pasha possesses, both in face and bearing, that indefinably aristocratic air which commonly characterizes the ruling races.

The Battle of Balaclava recurs several times, and in different aspects, in this extraordinary collection. Among the most striking examples we find that historic cavalry-charge celebrated by the heroic trumpet-blasts of Alfred Tennyson, poet laureate: we see a horde of cavalry galloping away at a prodigious speed towards the horizon, between the heavy smoke-clouds of the artillery. The landscape background is closed by a grassy line of hills.

From time to time religious scenes afford some relief to an eye saddened by all this chaos of gunpowder and slaughter. For example, in the midst of a group of British troops, amongst whom the picturesque uniform of the kilted Scots stands out, an Anglican clergyman is conducting the Sunday Service; his lectern is a pyramid of three drums.²

But truth to tell, it is almost impossible with no more than a pen to expound so vast and so complicated a poem composed of such a multitude of sketches, or to communicate the intoxication distilled by all this exotic detail—often melancholy but never sentimental—which is accumulated on several hundred scraps of paper whose very stains and smudges tell in their own way of all the turmoil and confusion in the midst of which our artist must have set down his memories of each day. Towards evening the messenger would come to collect Monsieur G.'s notes and drawings, and often he would thus entrust to the post more than ten sketches, hastily scribbled on the thinnest of paper, which the engravers and the subscribers to the journal were eagerly awaiting in London.

Sometimes we are shown ambulances, in which the very atmosphere seems sick, sad and heavy; at another time we are in the hospital at

¹ Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs.

² *I.L.N.* 7 April 1855.

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Pera, where, in conversation with two nuns—tall, pallid and erect, like figures by Lesueur—we notice a casually-dressed visitor, identified by this curious legend: *My humble self*.¹ And now, along rough twisting pathways, strewn with some of the débris of an already past engagement, we watch beasts of burden—mules, donkeys or horses—slowly making their way with the pale and inert bodies of the wounded carried in rude chairs on their backs. Amid wastes of snow we see camels of majestic port, their heads held high, with Tartar drivers; they are transporting ammunition and provisions of all kinds. It is a whole warrior-world—alive, busy and silent; it is a world of encampments, Oriental bazaars displaying samples of every kind of supplies, like barbarian cities improvised for the occasion. Through these huts, along these stony or snowy roads, through these ravines, there move uniforms of several different nations, all more or less scarred by war or transmogrified by the addition of enormous topcoats and heavy boots.

It is to be regretted that this album, which is now scattered in several different places (some of its precious pages having been kept by the engravers whose task it was to reproduce them, others by the publishers of the *Illustrated London News*), should not have been brought to the eyes of the Emperor. I feel sure that he would have graciously perused it, and not without emotion, recognizing therein the deeds and doings of his soldiers, from the most dazzling of military actions to the most trivial occupations of everyday life, all minutely transcribed on the spot by a hand so unerring and so intelligent, the hand of a soldier-artist.

VII. POMPS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

TURKEY too has provided our beloved Monsieur G. with some admirable working-material: the festivals of the Bairam,² those gloomy, rain-soaked splendours, in the midst of which, like a pale sun, can be discerned the endless *ennui* of the late sultan; drawn up on the sovereign's left, the officers of the civil order; on his right, those of the army, of whom the leader is Said Pasha, sultan of Egypt, at that time present in Constantinople; solemn processions and cavalcades moving in order towards

¹ Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs: pl. 3. ² *I.L.N.* 29 July 1854: see pl. 6.

the little mosque near the palace, and in the crowd Turkish functionaries, real caricatures of decadence, quite overwhelming their magnificent steeds with the weight of their fantastic bulk; massive great carriages,¹ rather like coaches of the time of Louis XV, but gilded and decked out in a bizarre Oriental manner, from which every now and then there dart curiously feminine glances, peeping out from between the strict interval left by the bands of muslin stuck over the face; the frenzied dances of the tumblers of the 'third sex' (never has Balzac's comical expression been more applicable than in the present instance, for beneath this throbbing, trembling light, beneath the agitation of these ample garments, beneath the blazing rouge on these cheeks, in these hysterical, convulsive gestures, in these floating, waist-long tresses, it would be difficult, not to say impossible, to guess that virility lay hid); finally, the *femmes galantes* (if at least it is possible to speak of 'gallantry' in connection with the East), who generally consist of Hungarians, Wallachians, Jewesses, Poles, Greeks and Armenians—for under a despotic government it is the subject races, and amongst them, those in particular that have the most to endure, that provide most candidates for prostitution. Of these women, some have kept their national costume, embroidered jackets with short sleeves, flowing sashes, enormous trousers, turned-up slippers, striped or spangled muslins, and all the tinsel of their native land; others, and these the more numerous, have adopted the principal badge of civilization, which for a woman is invariably the crinoline, but in some small detail of their attire they always preserve a tiny characteristic souvenir of the East, so that they look like Parisian women who have attempted a fancy-dress.

Monsieur G. excels in treating the pageantry of official functions, national pomps and circumstances, but never coldly and didactically, like those painters who see in work of this kind no more than a piece of lucrative drudgery. He works with all the ardour of a man in love with space, with perspective, with light lying in pools or exploding in bursts, drops or diamonds of it sticking to the rough surfaces of uniforms and court toilettes. A drawing representing *Independence-day in the Cathedral at Athens*² provides an interesting example of these gifts. That multitude of little figures, of which each one keeps its place so well, only goes to deepen the space which contains them. The Cathedral itself is immense and adorned with ceremonial hangings. King Otho and his Queen

¹ See pl. 8.

² I.L.N. 20 May 1854.

standing upright on a dais, are dressed in the national garb, which they wear with a marvellous ease, as though to give evidence of the sincerity of their adoption and of the most refined Hellenic patriotism. The king's waist is belted like the most elegant of *palikars*, and his kilt spreads out with all the exaggeration prescribed by the national school of dandyism. Towards them walks the patriarch, a bent old man with a great white beard, his little eyes protected behind green spectacles, betraying in his whole being the signs of a consummate Oriental impassivity. All the figures which people this composition are portraits, one of the most curious, by reason of the unexpectedness of her physiognomy (which is just about as un-Greek as could be) being that of a German lady who is standing beside the Queen and is part of her private suite.

In the collected works of Monsieur G. one often comes across the Emperor of the French,¹ whose face he has learnt to curtail to an unerring sketch which he executes with the assurance of a personal signature, without ever damaging the likeness. Sometimes we see him reviewing his troops, on horse-back at full gallop, accompanied by officers whose features are easily recognizable, or by foreign princes—European, Asiatic or African—to whom he is, so to speak, doing the honours of Paris. Or sometimes he will be sitting motionless on a horse whose hooves are as firmly planted as the legs of a table, with, at his left, the Empress in riding-habit, and at his right the little Imperial Prince, wearing a grenadier's cap and holding himself like a soldier on a little horse as shaggy as the ponies that English artists love to send careering across their landscapes; sometimes disappearing in the midst of a whirlwind of dust and light in one of the rides of the Bois de Boulogne; at others walking slowly through the cheering crowds of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. There is one of these water-colours whose magical quality has particularly dazzled me. The scene is a theatre. At the front of a box of a massive and princely opulence is seen the Empress in a relaxed and peaceful attitude; the Emperor is leaning forward slightly, so as to get a better view of the stage; below him two personal bodyguards are standing at attention in a military, almost hieratic state of immobility, while their brilliant uniforms reflect the splash and splutter of the footlights. On the far side of the barrier of flame, in the ideal atmosphere of the stage, the actors are singing, declaiming and gesticulating in harmony; on the near side there yawns an abyss of dim

¹ See pl. 20.

light, a circular space crowded with tier upon tier of human figures; it is the great chandelier, and the audience.

The popular movements, the republican clubs and the pageantry of 1848 also provided Monsieur G. with a whole series of picturesque compositions, of which the majority were engraved for the *Illustrated London News*.¹ A few years ago, after a stay in Spain which was very fruitful for his genius, he put together an album of the same kind, of which I have seen no more than a few fragments. The carelessness with which he lends or gives away his drawings often exposes him to irreparable losses.

VIII. THE MILITARY MAN

ONCE more to attempt a definition of the kind of subjects preferred by our artist, we would say that it is the *outward show of life*, such as it is to be seen in the capitals of the civilized world; the pageantry of military life, of fashion and of love. Wherever those deep, impetuous desires, war, love, and gaming, are in full flood, like Orinocos of the human heart; wherever are celebrated the festivals and fictions which embody these great elements of happiness and adversity, our observer is always punctually on the spot. But amongst all of this he shows a very marked predilection for the military man, the soldier, and I think that this fondness may be attributed not only to the qualities and virtues which necessarily pass from the warrior's soul into his physiognomy and his bearing, but also to the outward splendour in which he is professionally clad. M. Paul de Molènes² has written a passage no less charming than to the point concerning military coquetry and the moral significance of those glittering costumes in which every government is pleased to dress its troops—a passage to which I feel sure that Monsieur G. would be happy to sign his name.

We have already spoken of the idiomatic beauty peculiar to each age, and have observed that each century has, so to speak, its own

¹ Examples are to be found in *I.L.N.* 1 April 1848.

² See the chapter 'Voyages et pensées militaires' in Paul de Molènes, *Histoires Sentimentales et Militaires* (1854), and also the same author's *Commentaires d'un Soldat* (L'hiver devant Sébastopol) (1860).

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personal sort of grace. The same idea is applicable to the different professions; each derives its external beauty from the moral laws to which it is subject. In some this beauty will be characterized by energy, in others it will bear the visible stamp of idleness. It is like a characteristic badge, a trade-mark of destiny. Taken as a class, the military man has his beauty, just as the dandy and the courtesan have theirs, though of an essentially different flavour. (You will note that I am deliberately passing over those professions in which an exclusive and violent training distorts the muscles and stamps the face with slavery.) Accustomed to surprises, the military man is with difficulty caught off his guard. The characteristic of his beauty will thus be a kind of martial nonchalance, a curious mixture of calmness and bravado; it is a beauty that springs from the necessity to be ready to face death at every moment. Furthermore the face of the ideal military man will need to be characterized by a great simplicity; for, living a communal life like monks or schoolboys, and accustomed to unburden themselves of the daily cares of life upon an abstract paternity, soldiers are in many things as simple as children; like children too, when their duty is done, they are easily amused and given to boisterous entertainments. I do not think that I am exaggerating when I declare that all these moral considerations spill forth naturally from the sketches and water-colours of Monsieur G. Every type of soldier is there, the essence of each being seized upon with a kind of enthusiastic joy; the old infantry officer, solemn and glum, overloading his horse with his bulk; the exquisite staff-officer, trim of figure, wriggling his shoulders and bending unabashed over ladies' chairs, who, seen from the back, puts one in mind of the slimmest and most elegant of insects; the *zouave* and the sharpshooter, whose bearing reveals an exceptional quality of independence and bravado, and as it were a livelier sense of personal responsibility; the sprightly nonchalance of the light cavalry; the oddly academic, professorial appearance of the special corps—artillery or engineers—which is often confirmed by the somewhat unwarriorlike adjunct of a pair of spectacles: not one of these models, not one of these nuances is overlooked, and each is summed up and defined with the same love and wit.

I have before me as I write one of those compositions whose general character is truly heroic. It represents the head of a column of infantry. Perhaps these men have just returned from Italy and are making a halt upon the boulevards amid the acclamations of the crowd; or perhaps

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they have just completed a long route-march along the roads of Lombardy; I cannot tell. What however is manifest and fully realized is the bold, resolute character, even in repose, of all these faces burned by the sun, the rain and the wind.

Here we can see that uniformity of expression which is created by suffering and obedience endured in common, that resigned air of courage which has been put to the test by long, wearisome fatigues. Trousers tucked into incarcerating gaiters, greatcoats besmirched with dust, stained and discoloured—in short, the entire equipment of these men has taken upon itself the special personality of beings who are returning from afar after running the gauntlet of extraordinary adventures. All these men give the appearance of being more solidly backed, more squarely set on their feet, more erect than ordinary mortals can be. If this drawing could have been shown to Charlet,¹ who was always on the lookout for this kind of beauty, and who frequently found it, he would have been singularly struck by it.

IX. THE DANDY

THE man who is rich and idle, and who, even if blasé, has no other occupation than the perpetual pursuit of happiness; the man who has been brought up amid luxury and has been accustomed from his earliest days to the obedience of others—he, in short, whose solitary profession is elegance, will always and at all times possess a distinct type of physiognomy, one entirely *sui generis*. Dandyism is a mysterious institution, no less peculiar than the duel: it is of great antiquity, Caesar, Catiline and Alcibiades providing us with dazzling examples; and very widespread, Chateaubriand² having found it in the forests and by the lakes of the New World. Dandyism, an institution beyond the laws, itself has rigorous laws which all its subjects must strictly obey, whatever their natural impetuosity and independence of character. The English more than others have cultivated the society-novel, and French writers,

¹ Baudelaire had sharply criticized Charlet in 'Some French Caricaturists' (cf. pp. 168 ff.), and had himself been criticized by Delacroix for doing so. Crépet suggests that the present passage may be a gesture of making amends.

² Cf. *Les Natchez*.

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9. GUYS: *A Turkish Woman with Parasol*. Pen and water-colour. Paris, Petit Palais.