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THE BRITISH ARMY IN 1891.

Early in March the Council of the Royal United Service Institution invited me to deliver a lecture on Friday, 8th May, at 3 p.m., before the members and their friends on “Our Military Administration.” I felt honoured by the request and I at once consented. A little later, I was written to as to the choice of chairman, and a day was named on which the paper was to be sent in. Later again I was asked to change the title to “The British Army in 1891,” and consented. When, however, the Council read the paper they pronounced it “too political.” To prevent any misconception, let me add that nothing could have been more perfect than the courtesy with which I met with from the Chairman of the Council, General Sir F. Stephenson, on whom fell the duty of stating the objections to the paper which the Council entertained. I now print the paper with all its imperfections.

CHARLES W. Dilke.

THE BRITISH ARMY IN 1891.

An apology is needed from a civilian who ventures to lecture on any subject at the Royal United Service Institution. When he appears there to read a paper on such a topic as “The British Army in 1891,” or “Our Military Administration,” he is expected to use the title first suggested by the Council, apology is doubly due. When he is not only a civilian but a politician, of opinions unpopular among soldiers and naval men, he cannot but feel that possibly he has been invited in order that he may be devoured. At the same time there is ground for civilians, and even for Radical civilians, beginning to interest themselves in the question. I have no claim even to the experience of a volunteer. I was once an inefficient lance-corporal in a badly-drilled battalion, and once a still more inefficient private in a better one; if I have seen as a spectator a great deal of modern war, it is not as a...
these leaders of progress that a stranger will experience the freest
and pleasantest hospitality, a mixture of the desert welcome of the
Bedouin with the comfort and refinement of Europe. The pity is
that there are so few of them. The majority of the population of
Belgrade appear to pass their lives in the innumerable cafes which
line the streets, going from one to the other at stated times, and with
such regularity that it is much surer to seek an individual at his
favourite haunt than at his office or his home. As a logical conse-
quence it may be imagined that the vice of drunkenness is very rife.
In Bulgaria no one is allowed to intoxicate himself till entering upon
old age, and any young man who should transgress this tradition
would be seriously disgraced. As a matter of fact it is only once a
week, after market, that one may find a few old peasants incapable
on the high roads, whereas the streets of Belgrade resound with
shouts and brawling every evening up till midnight; and as long as
the offenders are Serbs, and not foreigners, the police are extrem-
ely indulgent. For the latter, however, no pity is shown if he is in the
wrong, and scant sympathy if he has cause of complaint. Indeed,
it is scarcely advisable for him to go abroad alone at night, or to
resort to any place of public amusement except in company of
friends. Should he attempt it, the exuberant patriotism of the
Serbs would be tolerably sure to find vent in insulting epithets, if
not in more active aggression.
Time, however, and a little more friction with the rest of the
world will smooth down many of the angularities of these young
nations which are apt to strike a visitor with unpleasant and, per-
haps, undue force. On the whole, if the reader never carries away
more disagreeable recollections from the places of his sojourn than
doed the writer from the Balkans, he may be congratulated on his
good fortune.

A. HULME-BEAMAN.

BAUDELAIRE; THE MAN.

"... None trahissent trés amours lui connais, hermites
Et yield sous le ciel carre des solitude
On Fontaine les, il des amours, papier bais des études..."

This sang Baudelaire in his earliest piece. His college days,
evidently, were no "happy seed-time" for the author of the 
Fleurs du Mal.

Next came those six months which Baudelaire spent in the East,
and which coloured so profoundly and for all the rest of his life his
thought, feeling, and consequently verse. None of Baudelaire's later
associates could ever learn the exact truth concerning this mys-
terious voyage; for Baudelaire was essentially one of those who "em-
broider..."

Other people, of the kind who couldn't embroider if they would, are
eager to denounce such embroiderers as liars. Liars they are not—
but, it may be, persons who dislike the bare simplicity of the litter.

"L'antiquité prospère," is, according to one critic, the chief moral
characteristic of Charles Baudelaire—as of quicksands. It should,
however, be remembered that none found Baudelaire more "unstable,
more untrustworthy, than did Baudelaire himself, who suffered con-
siderably in consequence. A certain charlatan fondness for singu-
larly in dress, speech and manner has also been made a subject of
approach to this poet. No doubt a dash of charlatanism was a
necessary ingredient of Baudelaire's temperament, without which,
perhaps, we should not now have Baudelaire's art.

"Untrustworthy" Baudelaire may have been, but charming, sed-
suctive, interesting he certainly was in an extraordinary degree.
And never more so than on his first coming to Paris, as a returned
Oriental traveller, a critic, a poet, a dandy, and a capitalist, just
turned twenty-one. Baudelaire was of a good height and had a
little feline figure. His high white brow, searching luminous brown
eyes, nose of noticeable size and shape (nez de prison), he called it,
with the open pulsating nostril, sure mark of pride and of power,
illegal snout at once and sensitive, chin short, somewhat rounded,
and stamped with the central cleft denoting unyielding skin to weakness,
and jaw—a feline jaw—strong, square, and large; all these were
features composing a countenance more than handsome, singular.

Baudelaire's principles of attire were Baudelaire's, for just so long
as Baudelaire could afford fine raiment. In garments of sober hue
and anxious rectitude of cut, with snow-white linen and glittering
lacquered boots, he was often to be seen in the old brooding
torpid streets within sound of the bells of Notre-Dame half-a-
century ago. In his hotel-rooms in the Latin Quarter at first he
caused the lower panes of his windows to be ground, so that he might be relieved from the view of adjacent roads and upper storeys. Soon, however, no aspect of the life of towns was unwelcome to the spirit of the author of the "Flers du Midi." Having in an age when all is artificial, amid a state of society which from top to bottom is artificial, recalling nothing so much as those agglomerations of tables and chairs maintained in equilibrium by Japanese jugglers upon the extreme tip of their nose ("le monde marche que par le malentendu... C'est par le malentendu universel que tout le monde s'accorde," wrote Baudelaire), it was but natural that Baudelaire should be artificial. Through the force of exterior circumstances, a sentence was passed on him of artificiality for life. He could not have helped being artificial, had he ever so much desired it. And thus it is that we find him falling under the apparently puérile spell of "dandyism;" thus, that we see him experimenting upon some of the most recondite varieties of sensation; thus, that we perceive him seeking and finding the deep poetic interest which underlies existence in great cities, as distinguished from the idyllic charm of fields and hills; and thus, finally, that we find him elaborating some of the most bizarrely beautiful and most singularly, strangely significant verse and "poetic prose."

Baudelaire, personally, had all the peculiar charm of the artificial. The account in Gautier's famous sketch of Baudelaire's careful, measured diction, in conversation scarcely less chastened than in writing, with the secret suggestive emphasis laid upon particular syllables and words, is interesting as characteristic of the man. The subtle magic encased in words, viewed merely as combinations of letters, must early have been disclosed to a sense of such acuity and a taste of such exceeding delicacy as were Baudelaire's. Then the peculiar mode of enunciation, whereby each piece becomes in a manner assimilated to a musical composition: that would have been invented by Baudelaire, had he not found it in the atmosphere of his time, and on the lips of men like Gautier and Hugo. Baudelaire's own verse is not melodious,—it is harmonic; as much finer and rarer than mere verbal music, as harmony is more powerful and profound than melody. In excerpts such as these, chosen haphazard from among five scores, how intense is the harmony:

"O douleur! ô douleur! le Temps mange la vie,
Et l'âme émue qui nous mange le cœur
Mais que nous sommes creux et sa tortille!"

And again:

"Pourrons-nous toujours le voir, le long Rhéna,
Qui vit, naquit et est mort,
Et qui nous fait de nous comme le ver des morts,
C'est du chêne la chênaïlle?
Pourrons-nous toujours l'impitoyable Rhéna?"

Again:

"Ma douleur, donne-moi la main; vois par toi
Le ton ; vois se pencher les défunte blanches
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes turquoises;
Sur le doux funèbre des eaux le Jézéret conjurent;
Le soleil monte s'endormir sous une arche,
Et comme un long veilleux traînant l'horizon,
Et tendre, non même nous tendre la douce nuit qui marche."

And, to my taste, finer still:

"J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal
Qui allumait l'orchestre sombre,
Un feu à qui n'était que lumière, et qui gaze,
Tournant l'éternel Satan ;
Mais non ceci que jamais ne visite l'extase,
Est un théâtre où l'on attend,
Toujours, toujours en vain l'Étre aux ailes de gaz."

Is there not, herein, a resonance as of bronze smitten and vibrating, together with the density of substance, definiteness of contour, smoothness of surface, brilliancy of polish, and sombre richness of hue which distinguish some admirable antique? Rigid perfection of form, thrilling significance of tone, are the twin qualities of all Charles Baudelaire's best art.

One can see him and hear him intoning a piece like his "Mendiant Rousse" for the benefit of a circle of youthful poets like his friends Prarond, Levassaur and others in a room at that celebrated Hotel Pimodan, where Gautier afterwards dwelt. They eyed Baudelaire a little ashame, did these worthy young littérateurs, whose names now never occur save in connection with his. They deemed him "singular"—as probably he was, seeing what the proportion is of men of undoubted genius amongst the mass of human-kind.

So much has been said and written concerning Baudelaire's bad traits—supposed or real—that something ought in fairness to be said concerning his undoubtedly good qualities. He was an ardent admirer and a most devoted friend. From the first he was a worshipper of Hugo, Gautier, Balzac, Banville, Flaubert, Stendhal and Leconte de Lisle. To Delacroix:

"Delaclaire, lue de sang hanté des marais anges."

he was loyal with discrimination throughout the painter's life, and always after his death. Wagner fairly discovered; speaking with regard to Paris, where at that time the German Titan was being simply laughed and whistled off the stage. Baudelaire placed
Sainte-Beuve upon a pedestal, whereas Sainte-Beuve, the smaller man of the two, viewed Baudelaire always rather doubtfully, according to his constant tendency in all things and regarding all people. Gautier could truly write of Baudelaire: "Ce poète a l'amour et l'admiration au plus haut degré."

In behalf of how many writers, poets, painters, draughtsmen of his day, did Baudelaire willingly and warmly manifest the virility of his sympathies and the acuteness of his appreciation? Pétrus Borel, Paul Dupont, Barbier, Mürger, Marcelline Desbordes-Valmore, Daumier, Corot, Manet, and a score of others (to say nothing of Edgar Poe, whom Baudelaire, according to his early promise, succeeded in rendering "un grand homme pour la France"): all these he brought into light and notice through the medium of perhaps the most admirable literary criticism that has ever yet been known.

It should be noted, moreover, that Baudelaire was not attracted only towards what is fine, grand and distinguished. That which is too delicate, too rare, too tender and slight to stand much chance of winning the material prizes of success, appealed no less forcibly to his spirit: "le poète se sent irrésistiblement entraîné vers tout ce qui est faible, ruiné, contrarié, orphelin." Only the censured mediocrity, the complacently vulgar, did Baudelaire violently denounce and vehemently denounce. In this doubtless he was wrong. Even mediocrity, even vulgarity, even Philistinism, we should school ourselves to endure: for are not these, too, human?

That, possessing such unrivalled critical powers, Baudelaire should not have secured for himself the past, the profits and prestige of a preserved and professional critic—that he should act, for example, have rivalled and surpassed herein his lukewarm friend Sainte-Beuve—appears at first sight unaccountable. Baudelaire's Art Romantique, that collection of the most searching and suggestive, most brilliant and profound studies in the very best literature of his day; his Salle and other articles on painting (as far superior to Diderot's Salon as diamonds to cut glass) these writings, which form hardly the matter of a volume, place beyond doubt the fact that Baudelaire was the keenest critic of the century in France. But the explanation of Baudelaire's comparative inefficacy in the more ordinary spheres of criticism must be sought for in his devotion to the pure poetic principle. Baudelaire's verse was exacting, in proportion to its perfection. He early felt and believed that the highest, the sole condition of all lasting art is intensity; whence all other necessary conditions must naturally and of themselves proceed. But how difficult, how trying, how exhaustive and all-absorbing, the effort to clothe the intensity of one's feeling with corresponding intensity of expression! Disregarding all considerations of expediency, popularity, profit and personal case, and in the midst of pecuniary circumstances growing yearly more distressing, Baudelaire still adhered to the single-minded, steadfast artistic purpose, which alone could render possible such artistic effects as his art to him, to every great and true artist, was more than all the rest of the world. The result, all who run may read. The Fleurs du Mal, one small volume, comprises the sum total of Baudelaire's verse. But those few hundreds of lines represent perhaps a greater poetic output than all Byron and Lamartine rolled into one. Consequently the few hundreds of lines shall live, when many scores of thousands of others have passed for ever from the memory of men. Where other poets were content, with so much less trouble and toil, to present a mere dilution, Baudelaire by dint of ceaseless effort and endeavours produced a powerful quintessence, one drop of which will still pervade the mind, whilst a river of the other species of verse may refresh, indeed, and flatter the sense as it flows, but will dry up to leave no trace behind. What other letter-day poet, English or French, has such a number of lines that haunt the memory? Nothing more curious to observe, than the power of expansion in all work of the type of Les Fleurs du Mal. . . . With the years, it grows, it quickens instead of fading—"Les Fleurs du Mal, livre ombilc ! Cet est trop bête. . . . On les demande toujours. On commenceurait peut-être à les comprendre dans quelques années." So wrote Baudelaire, most justly, in response to the remark of some "friend" who (doubtless by way of encouraging the admirable poet in his struggle against the unappreciative stupidity of mankind) had informed him that Les Fleurs du Mal were beginning to be forgotten.

To all who themselves possess a fondness for art, Asselineau's account of the covert pride and joy with which Baudelaire, shortly after 1848, showed his future biographer the entire MS. of the Fleurs beautifully copied out and stitched into a neat binding, is not without its pathes. So much, these verses were to the poet, and so little—then—in the estimation of any one else! . . . They might, indeed, these hopeless "flowers," have never appeared in book form at all had it not been for the happy and unusual chance of a man of literary taste, the memorable Poutet-Malassis, setting up as a publisher and at once bringing out works by Gautier, Baudelaire, and Leconte de Lisle. Needless to say that eventually the greatly diminishing Malassis became a bankrupt. Proper punishment for a man who had actually tried to foist on the public productions of the highest literary art, instead of novels by Alexandre Dumas père, Théophile Gautier, or Eugène Sue!

In connection with 1848, it may be remarked in passing that persons who delight in incredible reports concerning men of letters—whether false or true makes little matter—have read with pleasure in the biography of Baudelaire by M. E. Orme, published not long since in Paris, how the poet played a not
Baudelaire; the Man.

very admirable part amidst the general agitation of the revolutionary period. Was it rationally to be expected, that a man, a writer, a poet, who for years previously, through the strain of his art, no less than the circumstances of his life, had taxed to the utmost a nervous system naturally delicate and irritable, would upon an occasion of sudden, unforeseen excitement display all the soldier-like calm of a Wellington on the field of battle? Had Wellington been placed abruptly in the position of having to write half a dozen pieces of the *Fleurs du Mal* or a series of *Petits Poèmes en Prose*, it is probable that he, too, would have cut out a somewhat sorry figure. But of course, to exact grapes from thorns and figs from oak-trees will, one supposes, remain a favourite amusement of humanity in the future as it always has been in the past.

Eighteen forty-eight and the years immediately following saw a somewhat different Baudelaire, physically, from the slender Brunnel-like youth with full black locks and slight half-grown black beard of 1840. Stouter, with hair cropped close, shaven cheeks, and small, somewhat snaky black moustache, the poet, sporting a white blouse and living somewhere in the outskirts of the capital, presented an appearance less poetic though perhaps more revolutionary. Baudelaire’s republicanism, however, did not long endure. The Second Empire, to which he was the sooner reconciled by reason of his clear perception of, and extreme contempt for, the democratic folly that roused in general a universal sense of pride in value, aroused in him but little of Hugo’s Jovian wrath. He had not, by-the-bye, any of the great post-politicalist’s personal motives for rage and hatred; no special reason for detesting a régime, whose initial crime in M. Hugo’s eyes was doubtless its not having set a high enough price upon the suggested if not exactly precluded the services of M. Hugo. Only in recollection of the judicial sentence passed in 1856 upon his *Fleurs du Mal*, might Baudelaire have been stimulated to launch a *Châtiments* of his own. That the six volumes condemned by the Paris Courts were of a nature actually and truly immoral, none knew better than their author. This appears from its passage in a posthumously published diary, where he speaks of “re lire autour, etc.” The great subject for regret must be that these six pieces were not “condemned” by Baudelaire himself ere they appeared in print. Artistically as well as morally, they are a blot upon the recollection of the *Fleurs du Mal*. Conceived in a totally different spirit, they—always evoking one, that one containing the famous “Pélagues”—Beethoven-like finals—are expressed in a totally different tone. Baudelaire, in the last resort, and in a very different sense from that of the Philistine “moralist,” who with characteristic thickness of thought are always con-founding the merely unpleasant with the obscene, must be necessarily bad art. In other words, any sentiment base and turbid in itself cannot possibly take on a pure and beautiful artistic expression. All which art touches, art ennables and refines; that which is not susceptible of being touched by art, is of itself ignoble, and remains so.

Every man of genius, on the scabby side of him, is a criminal—as every man of genius knows. The great thing is never to turn the scabby side to the world. It must be respectably concealed, judging from both the internal evidence of his works and the not ill-mannered testimony of friends, that Baudelaire’s scabby side was turned out all too often. Too often he played the part of Hyde to his Dr. Jekyll. And a very lamentable Hyde it is, worn and wasted at little more than forty, the shaven haggard face wrinkled, the dark eyes invariably shining, the neglected locks thin and long and grey, the general air loose and shabby (shabby, the “dandy” of early days!) that we behold—dejected, sinister figure—haunting halls such as that erstwhile odious Casino in the Rue Cadet, and there conversing in cynical ballad strain with professional habitués of the place: wishing still to produce effet de surprise as the man of genius unrecognized, and flying into a “neuroasthenic” fit of rage when a “lady” of somewhat more literary turn than the bulk of them confesses acquaintance with but one poet, and that poet—not Baudelaire, but Baudelaire’s pet abomination the elegist Alfred de Musset. Poor Musset! Poor Baudelaire! Poor “lady!” Amazing world. . .

Baudelaire shortly after 1850 begins to decline. Sainte-Beuve writes to him—“You have a naturally strong constitution, but your nervous system has been overstrained.” Leaving Paris, where his money difficulties threaten to swamp him, he goes to Brussels, expecting there to make large sums by delivering literary lectures. In this attempt he fails, yet does not return to France, but flings aimlessly on in Belgium, where the stranded vessel settles deep and deeper into the ooze. Without stimulants of some sort, alcohol or opium or hashish being unobtainable, he finds he cannot possibly keep up; solely registering meanwhile the most stupendous raves with regard to strict temperance and unflagging labour—in the future. Gradually he becomes incapable of the slightest literary exertion, save that of scribbling rubbish in his last hysterical diary, *Mon œil meur dans un*, where, amongst other deplorable features, he calls almost to the level of a Mr. Robert Buchanan by attacking in terms of the grossest abuse everybody whose methods and views happen to be at all different from his own. For Baudelaire however, there was some excuse; it is evident his brain was affected. Finally, one afternoon, the doomed man falls helpless on the flags of a Brussels church. Conveyed, a hopeless paralytic, to a hospital near Paris, he there draws out a speechless tragic twelvemonth, so...
that he tries to bow to himself when he catches sight of himself in a mirror, and expires at forty-seven with the mother who adored him literally drinking his last breath as he passes away.

A sad, a dreadful scene to contemplate. . . A shocking "curtain" to the last act of one of the most painful of life-dramas. Nor can we doubt that Baudelaire ("Je cultive une histoire avec peine et terreur") did much to provoke his fate. But who shall affect to preach sermons over this erring poet's corpse? Who shall come and cast stones of rhetoric upon his grave? Enough, that he lies there: a man of such gifts, such powers, such aspirations, who came to such an end.

For Charles Baudelaire's epitaph, might not one propose his delicious

"HARMONIE DU SOIR."

"Voici venir les temps où, vibrant sur sa tige,
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
Les sons et les parfums teinturant dans l'air du soir,
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige.
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir,
Le Violon frémit comme un cœur qu'un afflige,
Valse mélancolique et douceurs vertige.
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir,
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'un afflige,
Un cœur tendre qui bat le eau venteuse et noir.
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir,
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige . . .
Un cœur tendre qui bat le eau venteuse et noir
Un pâtre lumineux recouvre tout vertige;
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige . . .
Ton souvenir en moi fait comme un sedateur . . ."

Truly, a lily among the poison-blossoms, a fleur de bleu among the fleurs de Mal.

HOWARD DELILL

A MODERN IDYLL.

"I call it real good of you, Mr. Letgood, to come and see me. Won't you be seated?"

"Thank you. It's pretty warm to-day. And as I didn't feel like reading or writing, I thought I'd come round."

"You're just too kind for anything! To come and pay me a visit when you must be tired out with yesterday's preaching! And what a sermon you gave us in the morning! I had to wink my eyes pretty hard, and pull the tears down the back way, or I should have cried right out—and Mrs. Jones watching me all the time from under that dreadful bonnet."

Mrs. Hooper said this rapidly, with a shade of nervousness in the hurried speech, while she took up a comfortable pose in the corner of the small sofa.

The Rev. John Letgood having seated himself in an armchair close to her looked at his companion intently. She was well worth looking at—this Mrs. Hooper—as she leaned back on the cushions in her cool white dress, which was so thin and soft and well-fitting that her form could be seen through it almost as clearly as through water. She seemed about eighteen years of age, and in truth was not yet twenty. At first sight one would have said of her merely "a good-looking girl"; but a practised eye on the second glance would have noticed those contrivances in her face and in her form which always bear witness to subtle complexity of nature. The features of her face were regular and well cut; the oval of it slightly round; the long brown eyes looked out at one frankly under straight, well-defined brows; but the forehead was low, and the sinuous lips of almost too vivid a red. So, too, there was a girlish lightness in her figure, while the throat seemed to pont in its soft, white fulness.

"I'm glad you liked the sermon," said the Rev. John Letgood, with clear decision in his voice, "for it is not likely that you will hear many more from me."

There was just a shade of sadness in the lower tone with which he ended the phrase. He let the old note drift in unconsciously—by dint of long practice he had become an artist in tones.

"You don't say!" exclaimed Mrs. Hooper, sitting up straight in her excitement. "You ain't goin' to leave us, I hope?"

"Why do you pretend, Bedie, to misunderstand me? You know I said three months ago that if you didn't care for me I should have to leave this place. And yesterday I told you that you must make up your mind at once, as I was daily expecting the call to Chicago.