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THE PRINCIPLE OF ART

AND ITS SOCIAL DESTINATION

BY P.-J. PROUDHON

FROM THE "NEW EDITION" OF 1875

CORVUS EDITIONS — 2024

A partial working translation by Shawn P. Wilbur,
last revised December 24, 2024

NOTICE TO THE READER

Two days before his death, in the presence of his wife, Proudhon dictated to his eldest daughter a document by which, after having designated a certain number of friends to watch, as much over the interests as his family as the publication of his works, he charged us specially and collectively of this last care.

The first time that we have been able to gather the six, we have recognized, for those of us whose position keeps us far from Paris, the impossibility of working actively at the ordering of the manuscripts left by Proudhon. Thus their assistance will most often be limited to a simple statement of authenticity.

Accountable to the great memory of our friend, we will never fail, in making one of his posthumous works appear, to tell which parts have been finished by the author, and what others have been only prepared by him.

The book that we publish today is divided into twenty-five chapters, fifteen of which have been completely written by Proudhon; these are those which carry the numbers I, II, III, IV, V, VI, — VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, — XVII. The other, chapters VII, — XVI, — XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV et XXV were put together by us, and ordered according to the guidelines left by Proudhon.

In acquainting ourselves with the numerous manuscripts of this great worker, we have found the following note, written in his own hand, at a time when he had still not delivered to the editor the manuscript on the *Political Capacity of the Working Classes*.

WORKS BEGUN OR DRAWN UP, TO BE FINISHED:

1. The Working Classes.
2. Of Art (about Courbet).
3. Theory of Property.
4. Political Geography and Nationality.
5. France and the Rhine (refutation of Amédée Thierry).
6. Theory of the Constitutional Movement in Europe, or, What, finally, is the Republic?
7. History of Jehovah.
8. Conclusions on the Gospels and the Life of Jesus.
9. History of Poland.
10. Parallels between Napoleon I and Wellington (refutation of Thiers).
11. Of the Pornocracy, or the Women.
12. The Normaliens.
13. Condensed History of Napoleon, according to Thiers.
14. Literary Critique (Review) : V. Hugo, Renan, Lamartine, etc.
15. Course of Political Economy.

16. Continuation of The Stock-Exchange Speculator, New Manual.
17. Miscellanies, articles on various subjects.

The study (no. 16) indicated under the title: *Continuation of the Stock-Exchange Speculator*, should be made, like the *Manual* itself, in collaboration with G. Duchêne, to whom Proudhon turned over, page by page, all the data for this work. The materials consist of: 1) a plan the division by chapters has been made, and the summaries written by Proudhon; 2° a booklet of 214 pages, entirely by him, remained completely unpublished, although it had been pulled in proofs (Bruxelles, 1859); 3) some letters and explanatory notes addressed by the author to G. Duchêne, from 1858 to 1864; 4) all the notes collected on this subject for seven years.

The work is composed of five studies, gathered under the general title indicated by Proudhon: *Industrial Feudalism.* The sub-titles, sufficiently indicative of the subject and its divisions, are:

1st. study: Founders and Shareholders.
2nd. — The Large Companies and the Public.
3rd. — Finance and the Salariat.
4th. — The Haute Banque and the State.
5th. — Theory of Collective Force: Conclusions from the four previous studies.

The work, completed by Duchêne, without Proudhon being able to review it, will appear, because of that circumstance, with this note: Composed, from the plan and notes of P. J. PROUDHON, by Georges DUCHÊNE.

The materials prepared for the *History of Jehovah* and the *Life of Jesus* being almost entirely marginal notes on a Latin Bible, printed by Proudhon himself, we have thought that the biblical text in French (and, if needed, the Latin text), compared with the notes, would be sufficient to give an understanding to all readers. Instead of a *History of Jehovah* and a *Life of Jesus,* we will publish, as soon as we can, in several parts or volumes, la *Bible Annotated by* Proudhon.

We will show all possible diligence in the publication of the manuscripts left by Proudhon. You can be sure that we will not fail in the task imposed on us by the memory of the great writer, the great and honest man, who have invested his confidence in us after having honored us with his friendship.

J. A. Langlois. A. A. Rolland.
G. Duchêne. F. G. Bergmann.
G. Chaudey. F. Delhasse.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ART AND OF ITS SOCIAL DESTINATION

FIRST CHAPTER

General question raised by the essays of M. Courbet. — Contradiction of schools: Necessity of a solution.

GUSTAVE COURBET, the artist of violent paradoxes, has just produced a work whose scandal would have erased all those of which he has been guilty for fifteen years, if the government had not taken care to put it in order by purely and simply excluding from the exhibition (1863) this reckless painting. By superior order, the *Return of the conference* did not appear at the Palais de l'Industrie either among those admitted or among those excluded. On this occasion, the author's adversaries did not fail to exclaim that this little persecution was precisely what he was looking for. — "Courbet, they say, is at his last *string*. After having annoyed the public with his sought-after ugliness, he now resorts to the impropriety of the subjects. Through his cynicism, he could not fail to provoke a *coup d'état:* the only way left for him to make people talk about him once again. Now, that the foreigners to whom he is going to peddle his masterpiece show him their indiscreet curiosity in florins, guineas and dollars, that is all that he asks. Let them only know that this so-called master painter, equivocal founder of a school without students, who never knew how to formulate his principle, this insulter of art, is on trial; he has nothing more to show to onlookers; he is exhausted of surprises and charlatanism." And the public — who hear nothing of these artists' disputes — opened their eyes wide, mediocre lovers of painting, but very fond of scandal.

Let us imagine, on a highway, at the foot of a blessed oak, in front of a holy image, under the sardonic gaze of the modern peasant, a scene of drunkards all belonging to the most respectable class of the society, to the priesthood: there, sacrilege joining with drunkenness, blasphemy falling on sacrilege; the seven deadly sins, hypocrisy at the head, parading in ecclesiastical costume; a libidinous vapor circulating through the groups; finally, by a vigorous contrast, this little orgy of clerical life taking place in the heart of a landscape both charming and grandiose, as if man, in his highest dignity, existed only to stain his indelible corruption of innocent nature: this, in a few lines, is what Courbet decided to represent. Even if he had been content, to express his verve, with a few square feet of canvas! But no, he built an immense machine, a vast composition, as if it were Christ on Calvary, Alexander the Great on his entry into Babylon, or the Oath of the Tennis Court.

So, when this pictorial joy appeared before the jury, there was a clamor of *haro;* the authority decided on the exclusion. But Courbet recriminates: more than ever he accuses his colleagues, *en masse*, of ignoring the intimate thought and the high mission of art, of depraving it, of prostituting it with their *idealism;* and it must be admitted that the decadence today reported by all amateurs and critics has not done a bit to give the outlaw at least an appearance of reason. Who is wrong,

the so-called *realist* Courbet, or his detractors, champions of the ideal? Who will judge this trial, where art itself, with everything that constitutes it and depends on it, is called into question?

I in no way intend to make myself the advocate or guarantor of M. Courbet's fantasies here. That it is valued at its fair value, in accordance with the principles and rules of art, is all I wish for this artist, and this I happily leave to the public. But we still need to understand him, especially since his antagonists understand themselves. What is this ART, which everyone cultivates with more or less brilliance? What is its principle, what is its end, and what are its rules? Strangely enough, there is no one, either at the Academy or elsewhere, who is perhaps in a position to say this. Art is something indefinable, something mystical, poetry, fantasy, whatever you want, which escapes analysis, exists only for itself, and knows no rules. Collect the speeches, collect the writings, analyze the criticisms: I am very much mistaken if you get anything more. Which does not prevent artists from arguing, — no more nor less than theologians and lawyers, who, at least, recognize principles and rules, — and from condemning each other, as if it were no agreed-upon thing that they can mean.

Do not ask what is the *utility* of art and what purpose artists serve in society. There are professors who would answer you that the essential character of art, that its glory is precisely to be freed from all utilitarian, servile conditions. Art is free, they say; he does what he pleases, works for his pleasure, and no one has the right to say to him: Let's see your product. What! Plato expelled poets and artists from the republic; Rousseau accused them of the corruption of morals and the decadence of States. Are we to believe, according to these illustrious philosophers, great writers themselves, great artists, that art, being reverie, caprice and laziness, cannot generate anything good? I admit that I am loath to admit such a consequence, and, willingly or unwillingly, since art is obviously a faculty of the human mind, I wonder what is the function or functioning of this faculty, therefore, what is its purpose, domestic and social.

Let M. Courbet put priests on the loose in his paintings, or let M. Flandrin represent them at mass; let us see peasants, soldiers, horses, trees in painting, when it is up to us to observe them in nature; let us be shown, what is much stronger, in all kinds of poses, the supposed effigies sometimes of the ancient characters about whom we know almost nothing, sometimes of the heroes of novels, of fairies, of angels, of gods, a product of fantasy and superstition, how can all this seriously interest us? What does it matter to our economy, to our government, to our mores? What does this add to our well-being, to our improvement? Is it appropriate for serious minds to worry about these costly trifles? Do we have time and money left?... This is, certainly, what we people of practice and common sense, who are not initiated into the mysteries of art, have the right to ask of artists, not to contradict them, but in order to be edified about what they think of themselves and what they expect from us. Now this is precisely what, since these gentlemen quarreled, *genus irritabile*, no one seems to have clearly answered.

Every two years, formerly it was every year, the government treats the public to a major exhibition of painting, statuary, drawing, etc. Industry has never had such frequent exhibitions, and it has enjoyed them for much less time. In fact, it is a fair of artists, putting their products on sale, and anxiously waiting for customers. For these exceptional solemnities, the government

appoints a jury responsible for verifying the works sent to it, and designating the best. On the report of this jury, the government awards gold and silver medals, decorations, honorable mentions, monetary rewards, pensions; there are places for distinguished artists, according to recognized talent and age, in Rome, at the Academy, in the Senate. All these costs are paid by us laymen, like those of the army and the local roads: which establishes one more analogy between industrialists and artists. However, no one, neither on the jury, nor at the Academy, nor in the Senate, nor in Rome, would perhaps be in a position to justify this article of the budget by an intelligible definition of art and its function, either in families, or in the city and in the power. Why not leave the artists to their own business and deal with them no more than the jugglers and rope dancers? Perhaps this would be the best way to know exactly what they are and what they are worth.

The more we reflect on this question of art and artists, the more we encounter subjects of astonishment. M. INGRES — a master painter like M. Courbet — became, through the sale of his works, rich and famous. It is clear that this one at least did not work for anything other than fantasy. Very recently he was admitted to the Senate as one of the country's great notables; at the signal given by the government, the citizens of Montauban, compatriots of M. Ingres, awarded him a golden crown. So here is painting put on a par with war, religion, science and industry. But why was M. Ingres, currently a senator, deemed the first among equals? If you consult special men, men of letters, artists and critics, on the artistic value of M. Ingres, most, if not all, will naively answer you that M. Ingres, a skilled draftsman, is the much-discussed leader of a school that has fallen into disrepute for more than thirty years, the *classical* school; that this school was succeeded by another which, in turn, became fashionable, the romantic school, the head of which, M. Eugène DELACROIX, has just died; that the latter itself has succumbed, and that it is partly replaced by the *realist* school, which has not been able to define itself better than its predecessors, and whose main representative is M. COURBET. So that, on the glory of M. Ingres, venerable leader of classicism, two younger schools, two new generations of artists, have superimposed themselves, just as on the animals contemporary with the last flood two and even three layers of terrain have superimposed themselves. Now notice that in the ordinary course of human affairs, it is not antiquities that we seek; it is novelties. This is the great law of civilization, progress. Why did the government choose M. Ingres, an antediluvian, rather than M. Delacroix, rather than Courbet? Note that considering only the talent of execution or the difference of tastes, which it is a precept not to dispute, the three are equal, or very close to it. How then, once again, does the government prefer, in matters of art, decrepitude to youth, antiquities to new inventions? Is art an element of civilization or decadence? Is it measured, like the value of certain paintings, by the accumulation of years? Is this a matter of archaeology? Or would it be like politics, which has always had a horror of new ideas, and whose march goes against history? In this way, the last comers in painting would be the worst. What then is the point of encouragement and rewards? Let things go, or rather follow the advice of Plato and Rousseau, and ostracize this so-called world of art, a rabble of parasites and corrupt people.

And, in fact, if innovators in art, as well as in religion and politics, must be condemned, it is not only Courbet who must be proscribed; it is everyone. One thing is certain, since art became a profession, a kind of industry, a specialty in society, either instinct or imitation of what was happening around it, it has constantly turned its back on its tradition. The Dutch school breaks with the Italian; this repudiated the Middle Ages, which, for its part, had energetically protested against paganism. Among the Greeks and Romans themselves, the school that produced the *Laocoon* and the *Gladiator* is no longer the same as that which made *Hercules at rest* or *Apollo conqueror of the serpent*. Between these two schools, there is the same distance as between M. Ingres and M. Delacroix. M. Courbet has been much criticized for not having known how to formulate his system; but what is the school of art that ever knew what it did, what it thought, by virtue of what principle it advanced, it acted? This ignorance of oneself and one's destiny is even, according to the most profound critics, what essentially distinguishes the genius of the arts; so that by becoming a thinker, one ceases, according to them, to be an artist, and that, if one wants to form a theoretical idea of art, to determine its function, to judge its works and bring it back itself to common sense, we will approach the truth all the more if our imagination is less troubled by the illusions of art. This is also my opinion; and if you take the trouble to read what follows, dear reader, I dare to hope, without presuming too much on you or causing you injury, that you will join me in this sentiment.

It is therefore up to us laymen, people of servile labor and dry analysis, to take stock of art and settle the position of artists: it is necessary, since art constantly throws them beyond practical reason, since, despite the richness of their imagination and the luxury of their wit, despite their colossal vanity, they are unable to answer for themselves and justify their works.

I know nothing, through study or apprenticeship, about painting, any more than I do about sculpture and music. I have always loved its productions, as every barbarian loves what seems beautiful to him, what shines, which flatters his imagination, his heart and his senses, just as children love prints. I love them more since I decided, not long ago, to think about them. We can already see that artists have nothing to fear, for their personal consideration and for the interest that their works deserve, from the conclusions that I can draw.

But, you will tell me, this general benevolence cannot justify your presumption. It is possible that someone who is only an artist is completely unskilled in explaining the things he is supposed to know best; but someone could add to the practice of art the habits of the philosophical mind: it is up to them to speak. As for you, you are already breaking the first rule of common sense, which prohibits talking about what you don't know. A stranger to the arts, having not even read what Winckelmann, Lessing, Goethe have written about them, you are without title, incompetent.

I admit that the appearance is unfavorable to me. However, I insist, and I protest, both in my name and in that of the immense majority of the public, who resemble me, against this refusal, for two reasons.

I am, it is true, of that innumerable multitude who know nothing of art, as to its execution, and of its secrets; who, far from swearing by a school, is incapable of appreciating the skill of the hand, the difficulty overcome, the science of means and processes; but whose vote is ultimately the

only one that artists aspire to; for whom only art is ingenious and creates. This multitude has the right to declare what it rejects or prefers, to express its tastes, to impose its will on artists, without anyone, head of state or expert, being able to speak for it and act as its interpreter. It is prone to make mistakes, even about what it seeks and likes best; its taste, such as it is, often needs to be awakened and exercised: all in all, it is a judge and pronounces sovereignly. It can say, and no one can reply to it: I command; it's up to you, artists, to obey. Because if your art rejects my inspiration; if it claims to impose itself on my fancy, instead of following it; if it dares to challenge my judgments; in a word, if it is not made for me, I despise it with all its wonders; I deny it.

Then I have noticed that as far as we are concerned, nature has made us, as far as ideas and feelings are concerned, almost equally artists; that as much as the progress of knowledge among us is slow, requiring study and effort, aesthetic education is rapid; that there everything is done by reflection, here by spontaneity; that, similar in the intellectual faculty, we are only original, we only attest our liberty and our personality by our faculty for art; that authority in such a matter is therefore inadmissible; and for the rest, that all the arts falling under the same principle, having the same destination, being governed by the same rules; these rules themselves being as simple as they are few in number, it was enough for each of us to consult ourselves to be able, after a short information, to express a judgment on any work of art. This is how I became an art critic; and I vehemently urge all my readers, in the interest of art itself, to follow my example.

I judge works of art by man's natural taste for beautiful things, and above all by what I have learned in literature. Following the example of MM. Thiers, Guizot and others, who are, I imagine, hardly more artists than myself, I believed that I could allow myself to expose my way of seeing and feeling, not to be authoritative, but so that artists know their audience and then act accordingly. I don't have aesthetic intuition; I lack that primal feeling of taste that makes one judge immediately whether a thing is beautiful or not; and it is always only through reflection and analysis that I arrive at an appreciation of beauty. But it seems to me that the faculties of taste and those of the understanding are not so distinct that they cannot supplement each other: in this respect, we will perhaps see with some interest the efforts that I did so to become aware of the masterpieces of art, and consequently make rules for myself.

My status as a judge established, I do not hesitate to produce the documents. As far as Courbet is concerned, I say that those who have cast contempt on the more or less eccentric works of this artist, and those who have tried to apologize for them, admirers and detractors, have demonstrated poor justice. They did not know how to analyze their man and classify him; they have not understood that in painting, neither more nor less than in literature and in everything, the thought is the main thing, the dominant thing; that the question of substance always takes precedence over that of form, and that in any creation of art, before judging the matter of taste, we must settle the debate on the idea. Now, what is Courbet's idea, not only in one of his paintings, but in his entire work? This is what needed to be explained first. Instead of responding, we hastened to display a flag on which we wrote, without knowing what we were doing, REALISM; criticism has beaten the campaign, and here Courbet, thanks to this metaphysical nickname, has become a sort of sphinx, to which for ten years the progress of French art seems to be attached.

I may in turn be mistaken: that is what the reader will judge; but it seems to me that nothing was easier, after having examined half a dozen paintings by the famous innovator, the most significant of them, than to identify the fundamental thought; this done, to judge the scope of the innovation, to assign it its rank in the series of schools; to specify the rules according to which Courbet and all artists must be judged, and to give them all what still seems to be lacking, the full, complete and philosophical awareness of their mission. No, Courbet is not a sphinx, and his paintings are not monsters. I fear reducing to a question of person a subject that interests the whole of art; but I will believe that I have deserved well from the public and from artists, and served progress, if, in the case of one man, I manage to lay the foundations of a rational and serious art criticism.

There are, in painting as in the fine arts, general rules, superior principles that arise from reason, and which neither artist nor philosopher can evade. If one can lack taste while being right, there is no taste against reason. Now it is these general principles of criticism that I propose to establish, with the help of which we will be able to judge and classify, not only the painter Courbet, but all artists whoever they may be, and mark the way. I want to give the rules for judgment: the public will judge.

CHAPTER II

Of the principle of art, or of the aesthetic faculty of man.

The first who, apart from his physical attractions and his material needs, was able to perceive in nature a pleasant, interesting, singular, magnificent or terrible object; who became attached to it, made it an amusement, an adornment, a souvenir; who, communicating to his host, his brother, his mistress, his admiration, made them accept the object as a precious testimony of esteem, friendship or love, this was the first artist. The little girl who makes herself a crown of cornflowers, the woman who makes a necklace of shells, stones or pearls, the warrior who, to make himself more terrible, adorns himself with a bear or lion skin, are artists.

This faculty is specific to our species; the animal, like the philosopher Horace, admires nothing, shows no *taste* in anything, does not distinguish between the *beautiful* and the *ugly*, any more than between the just and the unjust. It is without self-esteem and without delicacy, without baseness or pride, insensitive to all that we call the beauties and harmonies of nature. It feels good as it is, does not aspire to glory, does not think of enhancing its appearance with a borrowed ornament, of festooning its lodging; it lives without ceremony and without embarrassment, sheltered from envy and ridicule. It keeps the memory of those it loves, hates or fears; deprived of its little one, of its companion, we will see it die of regret; but it will not make a relic of their remains, and of their memory a sort of cult. Free, it consumes its provisions in kind; we have never seen it cook them in the sun, macerate them in salt and spices, or combine them in such a way as to multiply its enjoyments. In terms of culinary art, it can match the wisdom of Pythagoras.

I therefore call *aesthetic* the faculty that man has in his own right to perceive or discover the beautiful and the ugly, the pleasant and the unsightly, the sublime and the trivial, in his person and in things, and to make himself from this perception a new means of enjoyment, a refinement of pleasure.

Thus determined in its principle and in its object, art is made from an entire instrument or material, from the simplest geometric figure to the most splendid flowers, from the acanthus leaf sculpted on the Corinthian capital, to the human person carved in marble, cast in bronze and erected as a divinity. All of life will be enveloped in art: birth, marriage, funerals, harvest, grape harvest, combats, departure, absence, return, nothing will happen, nothing will be done without ceremony, poetry, dance or music. The lover paints a portrait of his mistress; the husband covers his wife with jewelry and precious fabrics; the hunter is not content with eating his game; he surrounds himself with images of horses, dogs, birds and wild animals; the clan chief raises his roof on columns like the pines and oaks that support the dark canopy of the forests; the table on which he takes his meal has the feet of a ram or a goat; the vase that contains his drink represents a bird whose neck serves as a spout and its beak as an orifice. Constantly busy raising himself in his own eyes and in the eyes of others, he takes care of his approach, his clothing and his language, chanting his speeches, making comparisons and parables, inventing a refrain, a verse, a lament,

formulating his sentences and speaking in aphorisms. To abstain from crude manners, shocking gestures, and ominous words is the first duty of a well-educated man. Urbanity or politeness is the first and so far the most positive and most valuable effect of art. Everything becomes an occasion or pretext for that well-educated man: a fugitive dove, a dead sparrow, a crushed fly inspire him to create a masterpiece. Once launched, the imagination no longer stops: the raging ocean, the deep desert reveal unparalleled beauties; the most disgusting objects are transformed into monuments of luxury and pride: our peasants know what a well-dressed dunghill in front of a farm indicates of coquetry and bravery among the young ladies of the house. This is the fact in its nudity; it is a question of knowing what is in it. Let's try to analyze it.

I find in this faculty of art, in this continual care that man has to enhance his person and everything related to it with ornaments sometimes borrowed from nature, sometimes made by his hands, three things. The first is a certain *sentiment*, a vibration or resonance of the soul, at the appearance of certain things or rather of certain appearances deemed by it to be beautiful or horrible, sublime or ignoble. This is what the word *aesthetic* indicates, from the Greek *aïsthêsis*, feminine, which means sensitivity or sentient. The faculty of *sensing* therefore (meaning beauty or ugliness, the sublime or the low, happiness or misfortune), of grasping a thought, a feeling in a form, of being joyful or sad without a real cause, at the simple sight of an image, this is what is in us the principle or first cause of art. In this consists what I will call the power of invention of the artist; his talent (of execution) will consist of conveying the feeling he experiences into the souls of others.

This first, fundamental cause of art gives rise to a second, from which art will draw all its development. Endowed with this aesthetic faculty. man applies it to himself: he wants to be beautiful, to make himself beautiful, noble, glorious, sublime, and to become more and more so. To deny him this merit, to combat this pretension, is to *insult* him. If art has its principle in the aesthetic faculty, poetic sense, or whatever one wishes to call it, it receives the impulse from self-esteem or self-love. The first of these two faculties gives the germ; the second is the driving force, which produces the increase. Finally, from the combined action of these two causes, the aesthetic faculty and self-love, a third faculty is born, called to play a great role in the year, but which however is not absolutely indispensable, and in all cases remain secondary, the faculty of *imitation*. To reproduce, in fact, through painting, statuary, or in any other way, an object that pleases us is to enjoy it again, it is to make up for its absence and its loss, it is very often to further embellish it. Poetry, singing, music, dancing, pomp or processions, all have the same goal.

Let us therefore remember this, contrary to what some authors have claimed, who saw in the faculty of imitation the principle of art, that it is not at all, however eminent we suppose it to be, any more than self-esteem, what constitutes the artist. Just as one can be a skillful versifier without being a poet, so one can find in an individual a great aptitude for reproduction or imitation, without this individual being able to call himself an artist. Where soul and sensitivity are lacking, there is no art; there is only craft. On this point. the public and the critics, even the most clear-sighted, are exposed to making mistakes, taking, on the faith of their own ideal, the illusions of drawing, of modeling, which are in them, for signs of genius in others. In an era of

charlatanism like ours, this species abounds: it is not rare to see it usurp the honors and reputation due to true artists.

All this and what follows has been said by others, I suppose, and I ask the reader's pardon for dragging him through these commonplaces. But perhaps the same things were not expressed as I express them, nor in the order in which I express them; in any case, as we cannot reason about contemporary art without going back to ancient art, nor talk about ancient art without referring to the principles, it was necessary for me to rehash these elements a little. I hate poorly followed ideas; I only understand what is clearly expressed by speech, formulated by logic and fixed by writing.

What we have just said, that art rests on a triple basis, knowledge, aesthetic faculty or poetic sense, worship of the self or self-love, and power of imitation, provides material for some reflections that it is essential to record here as briefly as possible.

a) in the first place, from the fact that our soul has the faculty of feeling, at first sight and before any reflection, independently of any interest, beautiful things, it follows, contrary to what great philosophers teach, that the idea of beauty is not in us a pure conception of the mind, but that it has its own objectivity; in other words, this beauty which attracts us is not something imaginary, but real. So that art is not simply the expression of our *esthésie*,[1] please forgive me this neologism; it corresponds to a positive quality of things. I will not elaborate on this at length. It would be inconceivable that the idea of beauty was a creation of the human mind from scratch, without reality in nature. What then is the mind, if not nature being conscious of itself? What constitutes beauty is not order, symmetry, proportion, harmony of tones, colors, movements, richness, brilliance, purity, all things that can be measured using a compass, calculating by numbers, appearing or disappearing by a simple addition or subtraction of matter? In the horse, the conditions of beauty are confused with vigor, solidity, speed, frame, essentially physiological, positive qualities. The veterinarian and the cavalry officer know as much about this as the most accomplished artist. When the first man, stretching out his arms to Eve, proclaimed her the most beautiful of creatures, he did not embrace a ghost, but beauty in flesh and blood. What the metaphysicians were rambling about here is having taken a faculty of apperception for a faculty of creation: from the fact that we have, by privilege, the faculty of perceiving beauty in ourselves and in the nature, they concluded that beauty only existed in our minds; which amounts to saying that light, not existing for the blind, is a conception of the clear-sighted.

b) Undoubtedly beauty does not exist for those who are incapable of seeing it; moreover, the same objects, whatever their intrinsic beauty, do not excite in all men the same vivacity of feeling. This is a fact that I do not deny and that it is important to note. What follows from it? That in the work of art, the artist puts of his self as much as he borrows from nature; consequently, that art, without ever being able to completely strip itself of all objectivity, nevertheless remains personal, free, mobile: finally, that as much as the artist shows spontaneity and originality in his work, so much the spectator retains independence in his respect: hence the well-known precept: De

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[1] An-*esthésie*, insensitivity, a medical term, is only used in the physiological sense.

gustibus et coloribus non disputandum. Certainly, there are things on the beauty of which everyone agrees; but there are a much greater number regarding which feelings are divided, without their beauty having to be considered doubtful. This divergence comes from our aesthetic faculty as well as our memory, our intelligence, our senses: it does not have the same power, the same penetration in everyone; not to mention that the same objects or the same aspects do not offer us all equal interest. Often the taste is slow to form; we love at one time what we reject at another; *we correct ourselves*. Often the person we should love is the one who begins by displeasing; we have seen passionate lovers take a dislike to each other and declare their complete incompatibility. Alceste, imagining that he loves Célimène, and persisting in loving her again after he has recognized her coquetry, is a man who ignores himself: what he needed was neither the slight Célimène, nor her Éliante; she was a composite of both, a cheerful, witty, attractive person, seemingly light-hearted, at heart reasonable: such was Orgon's wife, Elmire.

There is not a man who has not loved at least one pretty woman in his life, which supposes that all women are beautiful; and I agree with this feeling. But, of all these charming creatures, there is usually only one who pleases you: which means that the habits of our life, our education, our acquired ideas, our temperament, modify our aesthetic clairvoyance, and reduce the world of beauty to narrow limits for each of us.

c) Here is what is even sadder: whatever the initial liveliness of the feeling, it cannot be sustained. The impression is fleeting; with practice, admiration weakens; the adored object becomes vulgar, tasteless, unpleasant. The manifestations of art are like fireworks, which we admire for the duration of a shooting star, but which we would not go to see three days in a row, and which many people are content to have attended once. From there cooling of the blade, inconstancy of the heart and versatility. From there, after having exalted human dignity through the image of beauty, it is necessary to fortify it against defection and the aberrations of the ideal. The man in whom the aesthetic faculty is disordered, obliged to constantly seek a new idol, changes tastes, fashions, friends, mistresses, without ever being able to settle down. This is the type of don Juan. Detestable fault, which makes labor, study, family, law and duty disgusting, which produces the most hideous vices and great villains.

d) Last observation: the beauty of an object can generally be considered as the testimony of the excellence of this object, its power and its good constitution. Beauty is the resplendence of truth, said Plato. But it in no way follows that the artist's aesthetic sensitivity testifies to the depth of his knowledge or the penetration of his mind; far from it, we can say that it is in inverse proportion to the philosophical spirit. It is only under this condition that an artist reaches the heights of his profession. Art undoubtedly does not reject science; it is even forbidden, on pain of ridicule, to put itself in contradiction with it; it is condemned to refer to it as it occurs. But it doesn't wait for it; it prevents it in its emergence, surpasses it in its progress, prejudges it by its inspirations, and even goes, in centuries of ignorance and among the multitude of weak minds, so far as to supplement it. It is the same with right and morality: the aesthetic power of a poet, of an artist destined to celebrate great men, is far from being a guarantee of the firmness of his conscience and a certificate of his morality. I could cite examples of severe virtue among our most eminent artists:

despite this, it is only too true that the pursuers of the ideal, artists or not by profession, are the most fragile of humans. Certainly art, by its nature, is not repugnant to justice, any more than to philosophy; it is even forbidden, on pain of forfeiture, to put itself in opposition to the right and morals. But art, in its fiery impulse, does not wait for right and law any more than it waits for knowledge; its evolution is much more rapid: it takes the lead, and often, even in advanced societies, it is art whose mystical and vague cult replaces, in admiring and loving souls, the severe, precise and imperative law of morality.

From these general considerations on the principle and organic conditions of art, it follows that, if the aesthetic faculty, just like the philosophical faculty. has its basis both in the mind and in things, I would even say in observation, since we are dealing here with a certain species of appearances; if, just like philosophy, it has before it the infinity of nature and humanity, it nevertheless does not walk as its equal, it does not hold the high rank, any more in opinion than in history. Its role is that of an auxiliary; it is a faculty more feminine than virile, predestined to obedience, and whose development must in the final analysis be regulated by the legal and scientific development of the species. The progress of art, if there is progress, will not have its cause in itself: it will receive its increase from outside. Abandoned to its own strength, art, fanciful by nature, can only turn on itself: it is condemned to immobility.

CHAPTER III

Of the ideal. — Purpose and definition of art.

We have recognized the principle of art; we have observed in what circumstances and in what manner this faculty manifests itself in us, the play of which must hold such an important place in our life and in civilization as a whole. We finally know what specifically distinguishes the artist from other men, and what we can expect from him. Now what is this invisible element, this *je ne sais quoi* that pleases us in things, that touches us, that inspires us with joy, tenderness, melancholy, sometimes horror or disgust, and of which the artist, through his reproductions, is called upon to further increase the effect? Can we realize it, name it, define it? Facts have shown us that there is positively a particular faculty within us. different from sensitive perception, memory, judgment, imagination, consciousness and logic, which we have called the aesthetic faculty or power of art. Now a faculty cannot be conceived without an object: what then is the proper object of it, the object of art consequently? It is important to study it in itself, to analyze it, to define it, if possible.

This object of art, still so little understood, is what everyone calls the *ideal*.

Realism, *idealism*, terms poorly explained, which have become almost unintelligible, even to artists. I will surprise more than one by asserting that art is, like nature itself, both realistic and idealistic: that Courbet and his imitators are in no way an exception to the rule; that it is also impossible for a painter, a sculptor, a poet, to eliminate from his work either the real or the ideal, and that, if he tried, he would thereby cease to be an artist.

Let us first prove the inseparability of the two terms.

Take from the neighborhood butcher a quarter of a killed animal, ox, pig or sheep; place it in front of a telescope, so as to receive the image reversed behind the telescope, in a dark room, on a plate of iodine metal: this image traced by the light is obviously, as an image and at the point of view of art, everything you can imagine as realistic. It is a dead body, dismembered, a shapeless block of meat; as for the image obtained, it is the work of a natural agent, which the photographer was able to bring into play, but in whose action he himself has nothing to do. What can awaken the aesthetic feeling here? Where is the ideal?

Yet it is certain that this realism is not devoid of any ideal, nor powerless to awaken in us the slightest aesthetic spark: because, without counting the butcher and the cook, who know very well how to say, this is *fine* or *dreadful* meat, and who know something about it; without counting the gastronome, who is not insensitive to the thing either, there is here the very fact of the photographic work, one of the most marvelous phenomena that we are given to observe in the universe. Say, if you like, that the aesthetic feeling aroused by this representation of a quarter of beef is the lowest degree that we can observe of the ideal, that which is immediately above zero; but do not say that the ideal is absolutely lacking here: you would be contradicted by universal sentiment.

Instead of a leg of beef, a leg of mutton or a ham placed in a stall, put an orange tree in its crate, a wreath of flowers in a porcelain vase, a child playing on a sofa: all these images, a kind of tracing created by an artist without conscience, absolutely insensitive to beauty and ugliness, but with a perfection of detail which no living artist could approach, will be realistic images, if you like, in the sense that the author, namely the light, put nothing of its own into it and did not concern itself with you; but, as little as you pay attention to it, these same images will nonetheless cause you a sensation of pleasure; they will even seem all the more pleasant to you, hence less realistic, more ideal, as the objects represented move away from pure materiality in themselves, as they participate in your life, your soul, your intelligence.[2]

The separation of the real and the ideal is therefore impossible, first of all in nature, which gives us one and at least suggests the other; even more so in art, even if this art is reduced to a simple photograph. This separation is impossible, I say, firstly because beauty, more or less hidden, is everywhere in the universe, *opera Dei perfecta;* then because we have eyes and a heart that know how to discover it; Plato affirms this separation when he says that the *Ideas*, that is to say the eternal types of all created things, existed before creation in the mind of God. But who today admits this theosophy of Plato? The ideas of things are inherent in the things that express them, and all together, indissolubly united, constitute life and intelligence, the beauty and reality of nature.

What is true is that the ideal is more or less apparent; that it interests us more or less; that the artist can be more or less skilled in making it felt; I say more, there are cases where art can only make the ideal disappear, by trying to imitate it; according to this, the question of art, its object and its end no longer leaves any uncertainty. Is the aim of the artist to simply reproduce objects, without worrying about anything else, to think only of visible reality, and to leave the ideal to the will of the spectator? In other words, is the tendency of art towards the development of the ideal or towards a purely material imitation, of which photography would be the last effort? It is enough to pose the question in this way for everyone to resolve it: art is nothing except through the ideal, is only valid through the ideal; if the artist limits himself to a simple imitation, copy or counterfeit of nature, he would do better to abstain; he would only display his own insignificance, by dishonoring the very objects he imitated. The greatest artist will therefore be the greatest idealizer; to maintain the opposite would be to overthrow all notions, to lie to our nature, deny beauty, and return civilization to savagery.

A Greek, Lysander, I think, was asked to come and listen to a man who was imitating, to a fault, the song of the nightingale. “Thank you very much,” he said; I have often heard the nightingale itself. This Greek really had an aesthetic sense. Notice that he was not slandering the nightingale; on the contrary, it was the touching, delicious memory that he had kept of the singer

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[2] Man seeks himself in all his works of art; his goal is always his self, his personality. He is found both in the landscape and in his own effigy. The feeling for nature is weak in the beginnings where the towns are small; it becomes more vivid within the great capitals: see Virgil who mourns his countrysides in the midst of Rome.

of the nights, which made him refuse to hear an imitation of him. What did he care about a wanderer, counterfeiting, for a few drachmas, and spoiling one of the most vivid harmonies of nature? I have seen some of these whistlers of blackbirds and nightingales, and I can say that never a feat or a throat seemed more unpleasant to me. The renewal of life in spring, the beauty of the nights, universal love, I don't know what sweet melancholy, insinuating itself into the soul at the sight of all these things, and of which Philomèle's solo is made entirely suddenly the interpreter; this is what makes the accents of the nightingale so poetic. This is the ideal; the unfortunate beggar who, without any feeling for art or nature, counterfeits this divine song, is a terrible realist.

We have just named the ideal: let us now analyze this notion.

Idéal, *idealis*, adjective derived from *idée*, idea, is that which conforms to the idea or which is related to it. But what is the idea itself? The idea, according to the Greek etymology of the word, is the typical, specific, generic notion that the mind forms of a thing, regardless of any materiality. Ideal is therefore said, etymologically, of an object considered in the purity and generality of its essence, outside of any empirical realization, variety and accident.

An ideal Frenchman, for example, as well as a Frenchman in general, is nothing other than the purely intelligible notion or type of the French man; it is neither Pierre, nor Paul, nor Jacques, born in Provence, Gascony or Brittany; he is a fictitious being, bringing together in his person, to the most eminent degree, all the good and bad qualities of the French subject, as he presents himself throughout the entire territory of France. It will be the same with an ideal ox; which will be neither Durham, nor Norman, nor Swiss; of an animal, a tree or any other ideal thing: these are conceptions of the bovine species, of the animal or vegetable kingdom, according to their general characteristics raised to their highest power, but which do not exist nowhere. Ideal, in a word, indicates a generalization, not a reality, the opposite of the observable individual, consequently an antithesis of reality.

From this first meaning of the word ideal follows this other: since the idea is the pure, exact, immutable type of things, it is their perfection, the absolute. An ideal thing, conforming to its idea, to its archetype, is a perfect thing of its kind, like a sphere of which all the radii are perfectly equal. But such a sphere does not exist in nature, and it is no less impossible for industry to produce it, nothing that is realized in matter being able to be adequate to its idea; which does not prevent the geometer from assuming a similar sphere and reducing his applications to it as much as possible. We would be doing bad geometry, bad mechanics, bad industry if, in these kinds of affairs, we neglected to get as close as possible to our ideal.

According to this deduction, both logical and etymological, the word ideal is therefore used for any object bringing together to the highest degree all the perfections, more beautiful than all the models offered by nature: *ideal beauty, ideal figure.* We have made a noun of it, the IDEAL, that is to say the perfect form which reveals itself to us in every object, and of which this object is only a more or less approximate realization;

From this explanation it emerges that the ideal, not existing, cannot be represented and painted: such a representation is contradictory. A figure cannot bring together all the varieties of

the Frenchman, be at the same time the portrait of the Lyonnais, the Alsatian, the Béarnais; Willy-nilly, it has to be one or the other, unless it is no one. Likewise, art will not make an ideal animal, at once quadruped, bird, fish, reptile; of this kind, it can only produce monsters. It is the same with ideal beauty: a woman, a goddess cannot be both blonde and brunette, tall and small, strong and delicate. Whatever the artist does, the beauty he represents will always be more or less a portrait, a particular creation.

There is even one thing here which profoundly distinguishes art from industry: it is that, as we will show later, while the industrialist is forced to scrupulously obey the laws of geometry, mechanics and calculation, that is to say absolutely, on pain of constituting a loss, the artist, according to the goal he proposes to achieve and the effect he wants to produce, can deviate more or less from his archetype: it is this optional deviation that produces variety and life in art. But let us return to our analysis.

Since the ideal is a pure conception of the mind, it cannot be expressed physically, except in an approximate manner, nor consequently can it be depicted; and yet it is the vision and the impression of the ideal that is the whole object of art, we wonder what, in art, is the use of this ideal, in what way it can be conceived, to what extent manifested by the artist. This is the capital question, and, it seems, the as of yet unresolved question, of aesthetics. And this is what I want to try to explain, at least as much as I have been able to acquire the right, through my own *esthésie*, through reasoning, and a little also, in my capacity as a writer, through practice, to talk about these things.

By virtue of the ideal that objects reveal to us, without it being possible for us to ever reproduce it; we have the ability to straighten, correct, embellish, enlarge things; to diminish, reduce, distort them; to change its proportions; in a word, to do everything that nature does, which, while creating according to the types or ideals that are in it, nevertheless only gives particular realizations, more or less inaccurate and imperfect. It is therefore the work of nature that the artist CONTINUES, by producing in turn images according to certain ideas of his own, which he wishes to communicate to us. These figures of the artist are more or less beautiful, significant, expressive, depending on the thought that animates him: I am ignoring the execution here. To this end, we can say that the artist has an infinite scale of tones, of figures, going from the ideal to the point where the type ceases to be recognizable.

By making himself thus, for that which competes with him, the continuator of nature, the artist is in the full flow of human activity, whose development in all respects, by science, by industry, by economy, by politics, can be defined as a continuation of creative work.

If we had no ideas other than those with which nature endows us through the spectacle of its creations; if all our knowledge was inscribed in advance in things and in their relationships, we would have no use for art and artists. The contemplation of the universe would be enough for our soul; our language, conforming to it, could indefinitely increase its dictionary; but, as for its constitution, its forms, its poetry, it would stand still; our idealism would not be distinguished from our philosophy, and our art would be limited to photographic reproductions.

But nature hasn't told us everything; it has not thought everything, it does not know everything; it knows nothing about our social life, which is in itself a new world, a second nature; it can teach us nothing about our relationships, our feelings, the movement of our souls, the changing influence it exercises on us, the new aspects in which we see it, the changes we make it undergo. All this constantly suggests to us new ideas, new idealities, for which we need new expressions, a new language, a language not only philosophical, but aesthetic. Let us try to make this clear.

For the philosopher or scholar, the expression, formulated by words or signs, although naturally imperfect, must be, as much as possible, adequate to the idea, precise, rigorous. The language of right, that of mathematics, logic are examples. There, as in industry and mechanics, it is not permitted to voluntarily deviate from the type, to add or subtract from it, to say more or less than what is.

Artistic expression, on the contrary, which aims to excite a certain sensitivity in us, is augmentative or diminutive, laudatory or depreciative; it is never, it cannot be an adequate expression, a tracing, which would be the very death of art. So that the enslavement to the pure idea, which characterizes philosophy, science, industry, is precisely what destroys the aesthetic impression, the feeling of the ideal; while artistic license is on the contrary what gives birth to it. What we call figures, in poetry and eloquence, are an example: these figures, intended to enhance thought, to give it more strength, depth, interest, are what I would call *idealisms*.

Let it therefore be understood that the object of art is not only to make us admire things that are beautiful in form, first by reproducing them, then, by virtue of the ideal, by still adding to their beauty, or, which amounts to the same thing, by opposing to them the contrast of ugliness: all this is only the beginning of the artist's career. Our moral life is made up of much other than this superficial and sterile contemplation: there is the immense variety of human actions and passions, prejudices and beliefs, conditions and castes, family, religion, the city; the domestic comedy, the tragedy of the forum, the national epic; there are revolutions. All this is a matter of art as well as of philosophy, and wants to be expressed not only according to the rules of scientific observation, but also according to those of the *ideal*.

Thus art, even more than science and industry itself, is essentially concrete, particularistic and determinative like nature; and it is by means of this particularism, this determination, these concrete forms, that it inculcates more deeply the feeling of the beautiful and the sublime, the love of perfection, the ideal. The fables of La Fontaine, the parables of the Gospel, as well as the masterpieces of painting and statuary, make this understood.[3]

"The ideal," said Eugène Delacroix, "is everything that fits our idea, imitated or invented. So what is it that comes with the idea and strikes the soul? It is that *je ne sais quoi*, inspiration." (*Les Artistes français*, by TH. SYLVESTRE, 1861.)

This definition, taken in itself, does not make any sense. The *inspiration*, the *je ne sais quoi*, that which *comes with the idea* and which *strikes the sou*l, are words written in black characters

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[3] [in body of text]

on blue clouds. After the somewhat long analysis into which we have entered, we see what Eugène Delacroix felt, without being able to express it: it is that there exists in us a distinct faculty that art is called to serve; that this faculty consists in the perception of pure ideas, archetypes of things, — as a result of the beautiful and the sublime, or the ideal, — that the mission of the artist is not to show us, but to make us *sense*, by means of words or signs, and by using *figures*, what we have called idealisms.

We can now give the definition of art.

We observed previously (Chap. II) that the aesthetic faculty was a second-order faculty in us; that where it became predominant, there was a lowering of the subject, and that the role of the artist, aiming to excite in us moral sensitivity, feelings of dignity and delicacy, through the vision of the ideal, was an auxiliary role. It is through this, we added in this chapter, that the artist is called to contribute to the creation of the social world, a continuation of the natural world. Let us add that the beautiful and the sublime or the ideal are not only seen in the external form of being; it also exists in the mind and morals. Everywhere being is identical to itself and adequate.

I therefore define art: *An idealistic representation of nature and ourselves, with a view to the physical and moral improvement of our species*.

The review that we are going to make of the main manifestations of art will demonstrate the accuracy of this definition, given by the theory.

Note 3: Taken substantively, the *ideal* is distinguished from the IDEA, in that the latter remains abstract as a type, while it is the more or less pleasant, magnificent or expressive covering of imagination, that poetry or sentiment give it. Examples:

IDEA: It is safer to live in a humble condition than in an elevated position. — *Ideal*: Fable of the Oak and the Reed; Battle of Rats and Weasels, where the princes of the army of rats, with their egrets, unable to enter the holes, are all massacred.

IDEA: An artist is commissioned to create a statue of Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French. — *Ideal*: Will he be in a general's costume, like a Roman emperor or in a gray frock coat?

IDEA: Maternal tenderness. — *Ideal*: A hen and her chicks, the pelican, the opossom; a woman breastfeeding a child; the lion of Florence.

IDEA: A cow is a cow; it is hardly susceptible to the ideal. — *Ideal:* If, however, you paint on the mountain a herd of cows, the bell cow at the head, the calves leaping around her, a chalet in the background, you will have a more or less poetic whole in which the cow will be idealized.

IDEA: We ask for a portrait of Christ. — *Ideal:* Christ suffering, Christ triumphant; the most beautiful of the children of men, or the most desolate of prophets.

This explanation given, you will understand what I mean by *idealism*.

Taken in a general sense, like materialism, sensualism, communism, idealism is the system of the ideal, the system where the ideal is the principle and end of everything.

Taken in a particular sense, like archaism, sophism, solecism, theologism, idealism is a trait, a figure, a gesture, a scene, conceived outside of reality, but not of nature, and serving to express or

arouse a feeling in others. Idealism adds nothing to the idea, and only serves to define and reinforce its expression.

Thus, Greek beauty, deemed absolute, or geometric, or canonical, is an idealism; the figures of Satyrs, Fauns, Priapii, Furies, are others. The figure of Saint Michael and that given to Satan; that of Jesus Christ in the *Transfiguration* of Raphael, the *Last Supper* of Leonardo da Vinci; that of the Virgin, are idealisms. Ask a painter to paint you Harpagon, M. Jourdain or Tartuffe, he will give you idealisms. For the same reason, the snake biting its tail, symbolizing eternity, is idealism: every allegorical or emblematic figure comes from the ideal. It is the same in poetry and eloquence: measure, rhyme, consonances, figures, descriptions, oratory movements, are idealisms: means employed by our aesthetic faculty to idealize objects and render our impressions more vividly. In a portrait, you like to encounter first the resemblance, then the character, the habitual thought and passion of the subject: something that art will give you better and more surely than the daguerreotype, which can only capture a figure instantly, consequently with the least possible ideality. There is hardly a painter, artist, poet, novelist, or orator who does not have recourse to the ideal at every moment: THE IDEAL IS THE WHOLE OF ART.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION. — EGYPT: Typical, symbolic, allegorical art; freedom and collective strength in art.

It follows from the above that art does not have its higher reason or its end in itself, any more than industry does; that it is not in us a dominant faculty, but a subordinate faculty, the dominant faculty being justice and truth. *Justice* and *truth*, *conscience* and *science*, *right* and *knowledge*, complementary, correlative and adequate terms, which express the two great functions of human life, to the service of which I repeat that art and industry are subject, *ex aequo*.

But if art is subordinate to justice and science, how can it be said to be free, the highest expression of liberty? I am very afraid of raising here the protest of artists, accustomed to the idea of a complete independence of art, and practicing it to the best of their ability, let it be said without offending them, in their lives as in their works. Art is free, they say; therefore the artist is free to do what he wants, to choose his subjects, to treat them as he sees fit; too bad for him if he is not appreciated, and too bad for the others. — What is art for? you ask. For nothing: it has no need to serve any purpose; it is fantasy: but fantasy excludes the idea of service, as well as of principle, logic and rules. — Where is art going? Wherever it wants: everywhere and nowhere. Where does the butterfly go, where does the breeze go, where does the cloud go, tossed around, like a flake of wool, by the winds? — The goal, the object of art? Whatever you like, *quodlibet*. Cry, laugh, have fun, move around and then sleep, if you want: that is the whole of art. Beyond that, it is mechanics, manufacturing, profession, worse than that, pedantry and grotesque...

I very much regret not being able to reason with the lightness of these friends of art: perhaps I would be more successful in making myself understood. — Logic has a heavy hand, and justice is not always merry. Let us try though.

I suppose and I hold as a principle that art does not ask to be freer than liberty itself is. Now, we see, it is everyday experience, the least equivocal sign of progress, that liberty, of which we are rightly proud, does not consist of freeing us from the laws of truth and justice; on the contrary, it grows as we approach more and more the just and the true; it declines, on the other hand, as we move away from them; so that the fullness of liberty coincides with the fullness of right and knowledge, and the deepest servitude with extreme ignorance and corruption. How could it be otherwise with art, which I too see as the proper and specific expression of liberty? How would it sustain itself, how would it develop, if, possessing within itself neither its matter nor its reason, it did not rely on these two supports of all liberty, the just and the true? *Art for art's sake*, as it has been called, not having its legitimacy in itself, not being based on anything, is nothing. It is debauchery of heart and dissolution of mind. Separated from right and duty, cultivated and sought as the highest thought of the soul and the supreme manifestation of humanity, art or ideal, stripped of the best part of itself, reduced to to being nothing more than an excitation of the fancy and the senses, is the principle of sin, the origin of all servitude, the poisonous spring from which flow, according to the Bible, all the fornications and abominations of the earth. It is from this point of

view that the cult of letters and the arts has been pointed out so many times by historians and moralists as the cause of the corruption of morals and the decadence of States; it is for the same reason that certain religions, magism, Judaism, Protestantism, have banned it from their temples. Art for art's sake, I say, verse for verse's sake, style for style's sake, form for form's sake, fantasy for fantasy's sake, all these vanities that gnaw away, like a pedicular disease, at our time, it is vice in all its refinement, evil in its quintessence. Transported into religion and morality, this is also called mysticism, idealism, quietism and romanticism: a contemplative disposition where the subtlest pride is united with the deepest impurity, and which true practitioners of morality fought with all their energy, Voltaire as much as Bossuet.

I have said in what the liberty of art, or, to put it better, artistic personality consists: let us repeat it once again for the instruction of those who, having made art their profession, could, to their detriment and at the risk of their consideration, be misunderstood. The artist is the man gifted to an eminent degree with the faculty of feeling the ideal and of communicating to others, by signs, gestures, figures, descriptions, melodies, his impression. However, as much as the transmission of thought through ordinary language can be said to be impersonal, the means used by the artist are imbued with his personality. The collection of the *Moniteur* has an impersonal, official style; the *History of the Revolution* by Michelet, here is personality, ideal, art. Through his personality, the artist therefore acts directly on our own; he has power over us, like the magnetizer over the magnetized; and this power is all the greater as it is exercised with a more energetic idealism, I mean, by referring to my previous observations, in a more original style, with the help of more striking figures or forms; which supposes in the artist a greater faculty of creation, a greater liberty. Young writer, young painter, young sculptor, do you feel this power? Then you have artistic freedom; beyond that, remember, you are only a libertine and an impotent person.

The facts, moreover, will perhaps convince those over whom reasoning has no influence. The history of art is parallel to that of religion: it is born with it, it shares its destiny; it rises with it, lowers, is reborn and transformed; as soon as it becomes generalized, as it is formulated into dogmas, as it constitutes itself as a priesthood, as it rises from monuments, art is called upon to serve as its minister. Now, what is religion? The symbolism of morality, the first form of right, the idealistic manifestation of conscience. Man, in thinking of God, dreams of himself: the figures under which he represents the Divinity are, fundamentally, only testimonies that he gives to himself; and the more piety he has, in other words the more moral sense, the more he pays homage to the object of his worship with his best feelings, the more he surrounds it with poetry and art. Too often even, the *esthesia*, whose characteristic is to extend over everything that touches human life, to envelop it as in a mantle of glory, is absorbed, so to speak. in superstition; the believer remains miserable; art is monopolized by the priest.

In ancient Egypt, man was immersed in nature; he is barely distinguishable, as a genus, from the animality that surrounds him; it is not certain that his ancestors were not animals; in any case, he has no doubt that the gods who protect him reveal themselves to him in bestial forms. His religion is both zoomorphic and anthropomorphic: his art will come from the same inspiration. His language, very young, formed by analogy, essentially figurative; his writing, imagined

according to his language, partly ideographic and partly alphabetical, like our *rebuses*, will finish imprinting their character on this art.

We find everything in Egyptian painting and statuary: religious ceremonies, battles, triumphs, agricultural and industrial labor, hunting, fishing, navigation, torture, scenes of domestic life, funerals, and even caricatures, mockeries of the enemy. I don't know if they made portraits; it does not appear that they were concerned with landscapes. The history and life of Egypt, its customs, its thoughts, are represented in its temples. Nothing is forgotten about what art can undertake to serve as a monument and glorification to a society: it is both a historical observation spanning a span of six thousand years and an apotheosis. In substance and in purpose, Egyptian art was faithful to its high mission and remained inferior to no other. But did it comment on its ideal? This is what interests us.

Egyptian art is essentially metaphorical, like hieroglyphics, emblematic, allegorical and symbolic, so much for the ideas; it is above all typical, in love with symmetry, method, certain conventions, that is it for the figures. All the faces of the kings, queens, priests, warriors, simple individuals, which we are at first tempted to take for portraits, as far as I have been able to judge from simple engravings, look alike: Darius, Cambyses, the Ptolemies, Tiberius himself, represented in Egyptian costume and attitude, do not appear to differ from Amenhotep and Sesostris. They are always the same poses, the same physiognomy, the same conventional expression. It would seem that Egyptian artists believed they were doing honor to their foreign masters by giving them the features of the indigenous race, considered by them as the race par excellence, the noblest sample of humanity. It was a kind of title of nationalization that they issued to them.

If the Egyptians perfectly rendered their own type, they expressed with no less fidelity and accuracy the types of the nations known to them through war and victory: at first glance one recognizes in their paintings murals, not only the Negro with his varieties, but the Jew, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek or Ionian, the Scythian, German or Gaulish, singular thing, all these figures, so well characterized, resemble each other, on the one hand, by the exaggeration of the shoulders, the thinning of the waist and the somewhat slender and long appearance of the limbs; — was this a beauty in ancient Egypt? — on the other, by the arrangement of the heads, generally represented in profile, with the eyes seen from the front: and when the figure is seen from the front, the feet kept in profile: which, despite the finesse of certain details, reflects obviously inexperience in art. Now, as the same dispositions are found in monuments subsequent to the Christian era and in those whose date is more than two thousand years before Jesus Christ, is there not reason to believe that this strangeness was preserved on purpose, out of respect for tradition, and that this should be seen not as proof of powerlessness, but as a voluntary sign of immobility?

Add to this an extreme search for symmetry, method, certain conventional rules of pose and gesture that we find even in the scenes that suppose the most agitation, battles, gymnastic exercises, even fantasies; finally, reality and symbolism, history and mythology jumbled together: and you will have a general idea of Egyptian art and idealism.

From these general observations I draw two conclusions of the greatest importance for the development of art. The first is that no sooner did art manifest itself in a somewhat regular agglomeration of men, than it received a social, political and religious mission: in Egypt, it is no less than writing, history, chronology, dogma, metaphysics, morality, expressed by more or less poetic representations and artistically executed: elementary and higher education, excitement of patriotism, attestation of the gods, all that is best in society is within its purview. The second consequence, much less noticed than the first, is that art, becoming a means of civilization, an instrument both political and religious, directed by the priesthood, ultimately forming a school, gradually acquires, through community of thoughts and the constancy of traditions, a collective force that carries it far above the individual level. There is no doubt, for example, that it is thanks to this force of collectivity that Egyptian art, despite the narrow limits within which it appears to have voluntarily retained itself, as to its ideal, its execution and its its means, acquired an originality and a vigor of style that aesthetic anarchy would never have been able to produce. What! We know what efforts produce, through the grouping of forces and the competition of ideas, science, industry, war and politics, and we do not seem to suspect that the same could be true of the ideal!...

The efflorescence of Egyptian art was long; it lasted as long as the institutions, as long as the collective thought that inspired it. Young Champollion signaled its decadence around the time of the Ptolemies; this decadence was inevitable. The contact of the Greeks, the Persians, and soon the Romans and the Jews, was to bring about a revolution of ideas, which would not have failed to result in a renovation of Egyptian art, if Egypt had continued to live. But the State dislocated, the priesthood become philosophical, hence hypocritical, while the multitude languished in the most abject superstition, national autonomy lost, the aesthetic genius of old Egypt had to be extinguished: this sad end will not be the only one that we will have to observe in the history of art.

CHAPTER V

GREECE: Cult of form, idolatrous idealism. Corruption of society by art; iconoclastic reaction.

Egypt, by attaching itself especially to types, to generalizations, lacked one of the essential conditions of art, which is concrete truth; it further distanced itself from it by pursuing a vain ideal of symmetry, of uniformity, of convention figures and, finally, of fictions. It was not its fault: at the beginning of civilization, man, thinking by comparison, analogies and images, could not raise his ideal higher. He had not yet thought of observing himself; he had not made his gods in his own image; immersed in a kind of organic pantheism, he did not feel nature in unison with his soul. Let us cross the Mediterranean and enter continental Greece, barely emerging from the cradle, while Egypt, the grandmother of the human race, counts its age by more than fifty centuries: we will take one more step.

Here we find a decidedly anthropomorphic religion. The gods are localized, individualized; all the dynasties, now extinct, are descending. These immortal gods, freed from misery and pain, are of perfect beauty: they are called the *Blessed*. But no one had seen them; how do they represent their faces? Where can we find models for these divine effigies? Here we are going to see art alter its ideal, rise to a degree, without being truer for this than we had seen in Egypt for a few thousand years.

It is always on the human figure that art as a whole pivots. In Egypt, where the type seems to have been, in its individualities, roughly uniform, as seen among the negroes, the figure was supposed to be beautiful as soon as the type was reached. For the Greeks, a more involved race apparently, this generality of physiognomy was insufficient. The gods did not resemble each other; however, all must have been of perfect beauty. How could it be, if the type of the human figure, therefore of that of the gods, is an absolute, invariable? A certain sign of the superiority of this race, as much moral as physical, which conceives diversity in perfection. Jupiter will not be the same as Neptune, his brother, or Hercules or Apollo, his children. Similarly, Minerva will have nothing in common with Venus, nor they with Diane or Juno. A multiple beauty, always different from itself, and this without a model: this is the problem posed by the Greek artist.

We know how this singular problem was solved. Like the Egyptian artists, the Greeks resorted to generalization. Only, instead of sticking to a generic type, embracing the whole race, they observed the subjects according to their categories: men and women first; children, young men and old men; plebeians and nobles; peasants, fishermen, hunters, athletes, warriors and shepherds, the most beautiful, the best facts that could be found; and from these observations, related not only to the ethnic type, but to individual qualities, to the characters of classes, to all that is more difficult to grasp in the countenance, the gods were made. These gods were only imaginary combinations of traits borrowed from several subjects; creations just as impossible as the Egyptian types: no matter, they became types of beauty, the rule of proportion, or *canon* for the artists. Thus each god and goddess had, with their face, their own and authentic beauty, which, once fixed, no longer will vary. Everything was modeled on the gods: architecture, music, etc., and Greek art was created. As in Egypt, under the influence of national religion, liberty and its institutions, it formed a

common ideal, a general aesthetic, a tradition, a power of community, which, for seven or eight centuries, filled the Greco-Roman world with masterpieces. This was the origin of *idolatry* or the cult of idols, that is to say, of the ideal beauty.

In short, as Egypt had served art in the expression of the idea, Greece, going one better with this fact, made it serve the expression of beauty. Egyptian art is more dogmatic, more metaphysical; Greek art is more idealistic. It is indisputable that, in passing from one to the other, the influence of the ideal increases at the expense of the notion itself, and consequently of the truth, or at least of what is known the truth. A formidable trend, which had earned Greece the epithet of a liar, *Græcia mendax*, and which, after having raised it to the highest degree of glory, had to plunge it into the abyss of all corruptions. But against beauty, any protest of philosophical or realistic thinking is futile; the most sensible criticism remains fruitless. Dialectics has not taken precedence over the ideal; and neither the heart, nor the imagination, nor the senses can falsely stand against beauty. Whatever reservations are imposed on us by reason and morals, beauty attracts us, it possesses us; we can, out of ferocity of virtue, deny it our homage; we remain sighing after it. And when duty and honor snatch us away from its seductions, how bitter the sacrifice is to us... The ideal has received from the Greek genius an expression that we will never surpass. All the artists who came later have been inspired by its works; they draw inspiration from it every day; and whenever our humanity, eternally progressive, will want to get an approximate idea of the absolute beautiful, it will ask Greece.

What characterizes Greek art and what cannot be praised enough, after the ideal of form, is the measurement, sobriety, simplicity of means. There are no overloads, never of a forced or ambitious attitude; no exaggeration, no superfluous ornaments; it is the only form that, in the purity of its drawing, the elegance of its line, is used by itself as an ornament. The same rule that governs Greek morality: *nothing too much*, no research, no pose, governs art; the slightest vessel is conceived in the same feeling as the statues and temples of the gods. Greek architecture is based on two elements: two poles surmounted by a cross-member, this is the colonnade, the porticos, the pediment; this is the temple. The Roman will add to it the semicircular arch, the German the vault; they will build both immense circuses and prodigious cathedrals: they will not erase the simple beauty, the essential beauty of the Greek monuments.

But everything has been said about Greek art; the formulas of admiration are exhausted; it is a question of judging it in itself, of appreciating its effects and of marking its disaster.

Above all, there was this truth in Greek art, despite its idealism: it was because it was quite in line with its time, and that it met a need of the race, that it bore witness to excellence. Until the time of Alexander, which was the philosophical epoch, the Greek nation was eminently religious, and perhaps even more in love with liberty. As much as it showed piety and fear of the gods, it sought what could honor man. Respect for the Divinity and that of human dignity are continually balanced in the manifestations of this small people. Hence the cult of form that sums up its whole moral being. The statuary served this provision wonderfully. The Greeks themselves said that the statue of Jupiter of Phidias had added to the religion of mortals; thus it was with the statues of all the gods and goddesses: art gave a new impetus to religion, which soon became a veritable idolatry.

With the philosophical mind awakened, the ancient faith began to falter: what means of speaking without laughing at the adventures of the Immortals? A thing that proves how independent religious sentiment is from dogma: until the sophists arrive, the Greeks do not seem to suspect the absurdity of their fables, supported by the sincerity of their conscience. Belief shattered, art remained; the ancient modesty gave way to ostentation; heroic as it had been, the nation became entirely artistic and *dilettante*. Then began the idealistic corruption, followed soon by irreparable decadence. Greek art had given birth to its wonders in religion and justice; it reduced itself to powerlessness as soon as it had forgotten them.

One final observation: the Greeks, who have sought so much the beauty of form, did not entirely ignore the use of the ugly. Mythology had given them its monsters: cyclops, harpies, gorgones, mermaids, satyrs, etc. The theater had its masks; the countryside was populated by hideous Priapes. In poetry, Homer, the first, introduced ignoble and burlesque characters; later there was comedy and the incomparable Aristophanes. *Irony* is essentially Greek. However, it does not seem that the Greeks developed the plastic arts in this direction; they would, it seems, fear to be ashamed of themselves, of offending art and blaspheming the gods. It was an inconsequence on their part, but one that made them known to us. We who cannot have the same scruples today, we will know, while neglecting this idolatrous idealism, how to take immense advantage of trivial forms and vulgar subjects. Aristotle, contemporaneous of Aristophanes, said that the purpose of drama was to *purge the passions*. Others, taking up the same thought of Aristotle, say that comedy chastises us with ridicule, *castigat ridendo mores*. Let us generalize this double definition, and let us say that art, — in its universality, poetry, statuary, painting, music, novel, history, eloquence, as well as comedy and tragedy, — has the mission of bringing us to right and to lift us from vice, sometimes by punishing, sometimes by encouraging our self-esteem by faithful and expressive representations of ourselves, *castigat pingendo mores, but erigit*. The scale of the ideal goes from heaven to hell; and all the imagination encounters there is in the artist's domain.

Greek art ends with polytheism, with idolatry. That could not fail to happen. Civilization had been brought by it to a previously unknown degree; the moral sense had weakened, it found in the same art the main agent of its dissolution. The end of the persecutions against the Gospel was the signal of its decay: the catastrophe occurred four centuries later. In 726, during the reign of Constantine Copronyme, a council of more than three hundred bishops was assembled in Constantinople, in which the cult of images was absolutely condemned. Thus, not content with breaking the ancient idols, art was broken, forbidding the very images of Christ, angels, virgins and saints. The hatred of idolatry reached painting and statuary; the people who had been the most fervent worshippers of beauty were also those who, under the influence of Christian regeneration, proved to be the most relentless destroyers of images. The iconoclastic heresy is from above: it goes up by the Jews to Cambyss, Cyrus and Zoroaster. But it was fervently espoused by the Greeks, who always saw in Christ the man of sorrows, laden with the sins of the world, never the Word triumphing and transfigured. The Latin Church, less susceptible, rejected this rigorism, to which, however, countless sectarians, Petrobrusians, Albigensois, Vaudois, Wycliffites, Hussites, Zwinglians and Calvinists rallied. It was to come very late to throw the stone at the idols; but such

was the hatred that the nascent Christianity had for the prince of the century, for his pomp and his works. Nor more than the moralists and statesmen, must the artist lose his memory. Victor Hugo once said in the *Évènement:* "Do you know what the socialists would do if they were the masters?" "They would destroy Notre-Dame, and would make *gros sous* of the Vendôme column." They would have done worse than that: they would have thrown all the romantic literature into the fire. Parties and passions will always be the same: those who have suffered from the outbursts of idealism will strike it wherever they can reach it, and in every form: it is the law of war and revolutions. What were the Venus of Praxiteles, the Jupiter and Pallas of Phidias, the Apollo and Mercury for the Christians of the third century? Insignia of exploitation and destitution. Once the auxiliary of liberty and mores, now the instrument of tyranny and debauchery, Greek art had deserved its condemnation: its works were to perish with him. What were, for the Socialists in 1848, Notre-Dame, the Column, and Chateaubriand and Lamartine? Monuments and poets of the counter-revolution. So let us seek truth and justice in art as well as in politics; let us accept the law of the ideal and capital, but subordinate it to the law of labor, and we shall no longer see iconoclasts or vandals.

CHAPTER VI

The Middle Ages: Ascetic Idealism.

I said earlier that the Latin Church, admitting a certain tolerance, saved art, on condition that it would be devout. Is she proof of a true intelligence of Christianity? This is one point that I leave to be decided by others; all I can say, and what it suffices here that I recall, is that the idolatrous idealism of the Greeks was succeeded by the spiritualistic and ascetic idealism of the Christians, which gave rise to Gothic art. Plato, with his theories of ideas and the ideal, had been, so to speak, the theologian of Greek art; St. Paul, with his distinction of animal man and spiritual man, and his theory of original sin, of mortification and grace, was the true inspiration of the Gothic.

Let's take up the thread of this whole genealogy.

In Egypt, art proceeded from a typical, emblematic and zoomorphic ideal; this art was true for the environment in which it occurred and for all the time that the institutions of which it had become the auxiliary should last; it received, as a result of the general thought that demanded it, a vigorous impulse. But, limited to ethnographic and metaphysical, abstract and disciplinary rather than aesthetic generalities, it was susceptible, despite its long bloom, only of a limited development. It was, I repeat, of a country, a race, at a time; it could not become universal, perpetual. By its inflexible uniformity and its immobilist tradition, it was condemned to die.

The mission of Greek art was to represent the gods, no longer only by types intelligible to the mind, but in person, under visible and true features: that is, the Greeks aspired to represent the absolute supernatural beauty. The Greek type is said to be the most regular, noblest, most ideal form of the human face. One should say the divine type; for if there were in Greece, perhaps more than elsewhere, handsome men and beautiful women, for sure they were as far, *en masse*, from resembling their gods, as the Egyptians were, *en masse*, from resembling the type represented by their artists. What Greek statuary contained with truth therefore came much less from fidelity to the ethnic type than from a certain need of souls, tormented by the ideal, who from this life wanted to contemplate the gods as they were, face to face, *sicuti erant, facie ad faciem*. This divine type, once revealed by the comparison of the most beautiful models, by the scrupulous elimination of all that the human figure can preserve of the animal physiognomy, by the reinforcement of all the features that one considered as expressing the intelligence, the character, the nobility, the will, the majesty, the justice, the work was accomplished; all that was left was to draw copies of it: the immortal gods should reign forever over the human race. The ideal, by nature, is as immobilist as dogma; its immortality is not life, progress; Greek art, so weakly supported by its doctrine, must disappear more quickly than Egyptian art had done.

I judge Christian, spiritualistic and ascetic art by the cathedrals and other monuments of Gothic architecture, by the statues that once inhabited them, a part of which has been preserved; by a few pious paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; by hymns and plain vocal music.

At first glance, it is easy to convince oneself that it has been with Gothic art as with Egyptian art and Greek art: it has not been, as imagine the vulgar, who only can see individual actions, even in a battle, the fact of a few gifted individuals who, when asked by cities, pontiffs and princes, have have improvised from whole cloth these marvels, previously unknown. The Gothic was born, like

the Hellenic, of a need of souls; it was the product of a force of social collectivity. When, then, will we return to this absurd opinion that, in some artists, poets and writers of antiquity, makes us see prodigious geniuses that the exhausted nature is today powerless to produce, and whose works are for us inimitable? Genius is not isolated, it is not a man, it is a legion; its has its precedents, its tradition, its ideas made and slowly accumulated, its faculties enlarged and made more energetic by the intense faith of the generations; it has its networks of comrades, its currents of opinion; it does not think alone, in a solitary selfishness; it is a multiple soul, purified and refined. Certainly, we will not make the works of the Greek chisel, not even those of the Gothic and Egyptian scissors; we can only give copies or counterfeits, and why? Because the Greek soul is dead, as much as the Egyptian soul; because we no longer share its thought and feeling; because we are animated by a completely different spirit, which is only just born and has not yet manifested itself, from an aesthetic point of view, in its community. We hardly know our principles, the principles of the Revolution; as for art, we are nothing but *chauvinists*.

The man of the banks of the Nile was keen, in his figures, to express the type; he was more concrete, more realistic, and, in this respect, more true; the man of the islands (Greece) sought better than the type: he wanted pure, perfect, absolute beauty; he was therefore more idealistic, less concrete, and, in this respect, less true. The Christian artist cares very little about beauty, as it belongs only to the outer form, to the body; what he wants is the beauty of the soul, such, at least, as the Christian understands it. This idealism is more refined than the previous one: there is progress in all three periods. Here we go up to the tenth heaven: this is what these immense cathedrals clearly indicate with their sharp arrows, their tapered columns and their mysterious vaults. Everything has been said in this regard, and I will abstain from longer developments.

Faith, the spirit of compunction and charity, the detachment of earthly vanities (beauties); the meditation on eternity, the practice of theological and ascetic virtues, more made to build than to charm, is what the art of the Middle Ages strives to express in its figures, little curious, moreover, about the ideality of form. The nude is abandoned, with the exception, however, of the image of the Crucified, in which faith discovers, not man, but the Easter lamb, a host. As soon as the ideal of the figure is abandoned to follow only that of the mind, it is natural that the most holy characters should become mere types, or even portraits again: what does the face matter whose eyes are on form and is occupied only with the feeling of religion? This is how I found, in the streets of Bruges, the originals who served Memling for his famous mystical marriage of Saint Catherine. The painters of that time did not bother to find their heads of saints; they applied themselves to make the invisible by means of visible features, and all was good for them for that. They copied the model that posed in front of them, in an attitude of virgin and martyr, adding only to their invention, correcting and correcting what could be defective, from the point of view of a living piety, in the world of the model. In a sense, Christian art, at the same time as it attached itself to the quintessential ideal of its faith, was a return to the concrete and positive truth, forgotten since the Greeks. Rubens, taking his models in the beauties of Antwerp and Campine, was, in this respect, a true realist.

To those who deny Christian art, we can only cite the *Dies irae*. Each stanza consists of three lines of eight syllables on a single rhyme. The stanzas are coupled for singing as follows: the first two are alternately spoken by singers and the choir, on one melody; the next two on a second melody; the next two again on a third. Then, after these six stanzas, the same melodies start again

in the same order up to three times. This variety in the monotony of rhymes and singing produces the most frightening melody, the most painful one has ever imagined. So, in the *Dies irae*, the music must not be separated from words'. The last two stanzas are cut short: they each have only two verses, two rhymes, instead of three; then, after these two stanzas, a last cry in three words, without rhyme, a broken measure. The last accents of the cantors and the singers and the last sounds of the organ stop together, in a dark note directed on the thought of eternity; I really know nothing, neither in the psalms, nor in the Latins, nor in the Greeks, nor in the French, which is of this force: the description of the judgment is frightening; the prayer of the deceased, with its repetitions in hebraic mode, still more gloomy; at the third stanza, we imagine that we hear the resounding of the final trumpet *through the sepulchers of the regions* (without inhabitants); this verse: P*er sepulcra regionum*, is the sublime of desolation and death.

Moreover, all the main dogmas of Christianity are summed up in this unique ode, and that is what makes it extraordinary:

The end of the world,

The final judgement,

Hell and eternal beatitude,

The resurrection,

Free salvation,

The terror of sorrows,

Infinite mercy,

Salvation through Christ, his life, his passion, his death,

The necessity of repentance and its effectiveness before God.

Cicero, Virgil, returning to the earth, would not understand these words, these strange rhymes; they would say: *Voces quidem latinæ, sermo autem barbarus, ignotus*.

For me, I confess, placing myself successively in all points of view, I find as much art in the *Dies irae*, the *Lauda Sion*, as in the most beautiful odes of Horace; in the statuary of the Middle Ages as in the Greek.

The same causes that, after exalting art in Egypt and Greece, determined its irrevocable fall, had to precipitate it among Christians. Humanity would soon have to tire of this regime of penance, which would not have lasted a man's age, if at the ecclesiastical teaching had not come in addition to the feudal constitution; if, while the multitude were witnessing the *mysteries*, the nobility had not cultivated in its castles the *gay science;* if, at the slightest movement, the cities were to emancipate themselves, the barons and clerics had not raced, armed with the holy inquisition, to repress them. Beauty was captive; it could not fail at the end of knights to deliver it. Christian art ended in the Renaissance. A singular thing: the papacy, by maintaining against the heresy of Constantinople the cult of images, had, so to speak, given it the baptism; the papacy, by making itself the patroness of the new movement, celebrated its funeral.

CHAPTER VII

THE RENAISSANCE: Rehabilitation of Beauty; Ambiguous Idealism. New corruption.

What is the Renaissance? What does this new transformation of art mean? What is its origin, its filiation, its legitimacy? Should we not see, as many critics have claimed, that an exhumation of antiquity, a pastiche of the Greeks, an imitation and, to put it mildly, a *retrogradation?*

The artistic evolution at which we have arrived is explained as completely as its elders; it appears in the first place, as we have just said, as a reaction against the asceticism of the Middle Ages, secondly as the development of the Catholic dogma itself.

Indeed, after the ailing and militant Church, conceived by the Middle Ages and its artists, had to come the triumphant Church, given by the sovereign papacy, given by the Gothic cathedrals themselves. The epoch of this development, the country in which it was to flourish, are indicated by its very explanation: it is in Italy, in Rome, when the triumph of the papacy is complete.

The affirmation of the triumphant Church is the originality of the Renaissance. As for its means, it borrowed from Greek antiquity. It had to. Paganism has infiltrated Christianity; all religions have a common background, the same spirit, the same goal; in short, there is only one religion. What is reproached within Italian Catholicism has happened more or less everywhere; each people have retained as much as they can, by embracing the new religion, of their old superstitions, their mythology, their traditions, and their gods. This is recognized in the transformations, which are often limited to changes of name. Rome, for example, has dedicated its pagan temples to the saints of the new religion; its churches, palaces, monuments, columns, triumphal arches are pure Greek style; Gothic architecture and sculpture have not penetrated the best part of Italy, which has remained more pagan than the other countries of Europe. While the church of the Middle Ages has weeped, groaned and done penitence in its sad and angular figures of saints, reprobates, gargoyles, denials, macabre dances, asceticism is barely revealed in southern Italy by a few paintings.

The artists of the Renaissance, from the moment they returned, by a fatal reaction against the previous era, to the cult of form and beauty, could not escape this influence. Does this mean that they were only pagan, mere imitators of the Greeks? This seems to me to be too absolute. Are the angels of those artists the reproduction of Mercury, Bacchus or Faunes, Apollo or Adonis, Bellerophon or Perseus?

I have put myself in the presence of the Virgins of the Renaissance painters, of whom I know only a few; and, in spite of everything which has been said, I did not find that the Virgin of the betrothal, the one in the chair, the one to the Holy Family, Saint Cécile, Saint Marguerite, so beautiful, had nothing in common with the Venus. They are not goddesses playing a Christian comedy, as in the *Guerre des dieux* of Parny; goddesses, if one will, by beauty, but even more by virtue and heroism; goddesses transformed into virgins and martyrs. — These beautiful saints, with their Christian expression, seem to me certainly more beautiful than the impassioned goddesses of the Greeks... I am in love with the saints of Raphael, all holy, virgins, martyrs and clothed as they are; I am the same with the virgin Mary until her marriage. Yes, I am in love with this beautiful great girl, imitated by the hunter's Diane, and given to a predestined old man in the

role of guardian angel; I am not with the ancient goddesses, though naked, neither with Diana, nor Pallas, nor Venus herself. The Madonna escapes my love only by the child she carries in her arms: it is respect for motherhood that saves her.

It is a Christian dogma that the bodies of the blessed take back in heaven clarity, beauty, agility and subtlety. — This is the ideal in which Renaissance artists are carried by the imagination. They seek another expression for saints and angels, figures who are certainly not of this world. Nor could Phidias give a goddess the face of a real and living woman, however beautiful as she was, Raphael could not to give his virgins, his martyrs, to the Madonna, pthe hysionomies of natural people, as Memling did. — Connoisseurs admire the masterpieces of the latter; I doubt that they are so much attached to his Brugeois contemporaries, who found their knowledge in his most pious paintings. — The people, even today, feel that. He says of some of the faces of perfectly pure young girls: This is a virgin face; he means an ideal virgin, as they must be in heaven and imagined by Renaissance artists.

I have just explained the Renaissance in its historical and religious evolution, in its means; I acknowledge that it has marked in the transformations of art a place whose importance cannot be disputed. But how much has its value been overstated?... It is not possible to refuse an originality to Raphael, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Corrége. No time has produced more powerful individualities, nor raised science higher, to *make* it the trade. What a difference from the obscure artists, most of them anonymous, from the Middle Ages. Yet the Renaissance lacks the stamp of great epochs, the power of collectivity. In the previous period, there is really only one school in Europe; in Italy, in the sixteenth century, as many schools as there are cities.

Whatever one thinks of ascetic art, of an art hostile to the cult of form, of an antithesis of art, if I dare put it that way, this art is no less positive and specific; it has its reason, its character, its idea, its end; it has produced its monuments, just as marked on the side of genius as those of the Greeks. Sunken and crying in its figures, lame in its architecture (look at these buttresses, these trumps of the bows, these gigantic piles serving as crutches with faltering vaults), it asserted itself with as much power and more sublimity than its predecessors. The Renaissance, as geniality, originality, artistic idea, remains inferior: it is because, in its rise, in the vast majority of its productions, it was intended to combine the two most incompatible things, the spirituality of Christian feeling and the ideality of the Greek figures. This mixture of paganism and Christianity, in addition to being given as a fatal reaction against Catholic asceticism, has had its usefulness, I admit, if only to remind us of antiquity, to renew the chain of the times, to form the artistic communion of the human race, and to prepare ourselves for the Revolution. But it is no less a secondary task.

What characterizes the art and the era of the Renaissance era is the lack of principles, or, if one likes it better, a tolerance incompatible with the ardor of any conviction. The triumphant Church has entered its rest and glory; it seems that the purifying era of suffering must no longer be repeated for it. Quietism or indifference, it surrounds the same protection with frankly pagan works and mystical conceptions. It was not upset by the licences of Arétin, nor the grivoiseries of Bocaccio, nor the more serious impieties of Rabelais. Dominant, it looks and admires itself in all that is beautiful, serene, joyful and happy.

The Renaissance, as a purpose and end of art, manifests itself from day one as a general dissolution. It seems that Christian art was, by nature, as was the body of Christ, free from

corruption, and that Greek art did not come out in the fifteenth century of his tomb except to take revenge on its rival and lead it with it.

Imagine, if possible, Epicurus voluptuousness or Fenelon's quietism served by the figures of the Middle Ages. The beliefs were shaken, Jean Huss and Luther proved it to the rest; art still held: this time it could not have been accused of corrupting morals. To put an end to it, no less was required than this exhumation of antiquity, a vampire art that has fallen on Europe at the same time as syphilis, and which will only disappear with it.

The artists of the Renaissance, as prodigiously talented as one might wish, but no longer serving a principle or an institution, obeying only the fantasy, or rather, the hypocrisy of a society without religion or morality, having become simple counterfeiters, hasten to remake an empyrean that no longer saddens the puny and the grumpy of the Middle Ages. A mixture of paganism and spirituality, their art ends, like that of the Greeks, in the idolatrous cult of form. Raphael's Virgins, if they are not daughters of Venus, are even less daughters of compunction; the air of spirituality that reigns on their faces clashes with their beauty, with their proportions, their hands, their arms and their nymphal throats. Less divine, more human than the goddesses of Olympus, they inspire a feeling less pure than that which one feels at the sight of a Greek statue. The Venus de Milo, completely naked, is more chaste than the most respectable of Madonnas dressed up to the chin and holding the infant Jesus in her arms. There is not even the figure of Christ, the man of all sadness and all bitterness, whose body, created for suffering, deformed by torture, seemed like an earthworm, according to the words of Isaiah; there is not, I say, even that sublime figure of the Crucified that the two great artists of the Renaissance, Michelangelo and Raphael, did not profane, by giving him a renewed ideal of Jupiter and Hercules. And this Christ has become typical: popes and Jesuits have adopted him. Ask women if they are not all in love with this Christ, the most beautiful of the children of men, as we are with Saint Margaret, Saint Catherine, Saint Cecilia and all the Madonnas. This, to say it in passing, demonstrates one thing: that the artists of the Renaissance would have been capable of redoing the work of the Greeks, so great was the weariness of asceticism at the end of the Middle Ages; so great were hearts sighing in unison for beauty; so great was the need to seize it again, angel or demon, or at least to create another ideal. Unfortunately their work has remained useless for us: this fanciful Christ, so late imagined, no more than the Ecce homo of the Middle Ages, can be of no use to us. We are no longer devout, and we cannot be Epicurus' pigs. What can this ambiguous god do to us, we men of the nineteenth century, socialist democrats, men of labor, science and progress? The right of man was promulgated in place of the decrees of Trent and Nicaea; The Christ we need is not a mystical Christ, in the manner of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael or Michelangelo, and even less of M. Renan; he is a Christ of justice, of the calibre of Danton and Mirabeau, a revolutionary Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REFORMATION: Art is humanized; a prelude to aesthetic renovation.

Raphael claimed that the duty and rule of the painter was to represent things, not as nature makes them, but as it should make them: *di fare cose non como le f la natura la natura, ma como ella du dovrebbe fare*. I read this precept of Raphael a long time ago, I no longer know where; these words have remained in my memory. It is an idealistic profession of faith, in the sense of Plato and the Greeks, the clearest that can be made.

The precept was followed: art became idolatrous again, which is easy to judge at the mere enumeration of the works of artists, among which are, in roughly equal quantity, on the one hand the Christs, the Madonnas, the virgins and the monks; on the other, the Venuses, the Bacchuses, all the joyous deities of the air and the earth. It is impossible to recognize oneself in this mixture of Catholicism and mythology. As all these paintings are of the same date, with the same hand, let them be supposed to express the same social thought, respond to the same need; let all the figures, because of their very ideality, resemble one another, we no longer truly know, when we look at a mythological painting, if it is the Blessed of the New Testament who celebrates the varnival, nor, when we set our eyes on a painting of holiness, if it is the gods of Fable who do penitence. The corruption that followed the Renaissance was because of this idealism, and Rome, that is to say the Church, became again for the outraged nations what it had been in the first century, the great prostitute.

The Renaissance had defeated the Gothic; the Reformation, in turn, defeated the new idolatry. What is the Reformation? In religion, it is liberty of interpretation and belief, worship in spirit and truth, starting the death of all supernaturalist and symbolic painting and sculpture; in fact, the negation of the priesthood, the episcopate, the papacy, *no popery!* in politics, the equality of all before the law, the abolition of castes, the mores of the female citizens, the preeminence of the federative principle of the dynastic principle. After such a debacle, what remained for art? The very inevitability of elimination, the logic of things indicates it: there remained the roture, what then? secular, vulgar life and its trivial occupations. No more symbols, no more idols, no more nobility, no more monks; in their place, industrious, learned, positive humanity: this is the new field of art, over which the ideal will have to be exercised. To be sure, this is a little more difficult than all the art of the Egyptians, Greeks, Christians, and the Renaissance together: art, which takes as its subject, matter and medium the train of ordinary life is more difficult than that which feeds on allegories, ideal forms and beatific thoughts. But that is the law: there is no going to be a step backwards. What we need is an art that is, so to speak, practical, which follows us in all our fortunes; which, relying both on the fact and on the idea, can no longer be overwhelmed and broken by opinion; but which progresses like reason, like humanity. It is up to this art to show us at last in its dignity, for too long unknown, the man, the citizen, the learned, the producer; it is up to it not to work for the physical and moral perfection of the species, no longer by hieroglyphic obscures, erotic figures or useless spiritualities; but by intelligent and vivid representations of ourselves; presenting the mirror of our consciousness. Infinite in its elements, infinite in its development, such an art will be free from any spontaneous corruption: it cannot fail or perish.

Nothing new in art, any more than in morality. The old Egyptians, despite their love of symbolism, represented themselves in all the conditions of their domestic and social activity; Raphael, the idealist par excellence, had a vision of art that would set him and all his contemporaries apart when he painted his famous painting of the *École d'Athènes*. But why, instead of Athens, did he not take up Rome, Florence, Paris, Bay or Amsterdam? Instead of Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Zeno, etc., Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Giordano Bruno? Raphael would have retreated from these actualities, which he might have despaired of making ideal. It was precisely the difficulty that art had to overcome, and it was for having defeated it that Rembrandt's glory exceeded Raphael's by a hundred cubits.

Rembrandt, the Luther of painting, was, in the seventeenth century, the reformer of art. While France, Catholic and royalist, was reshaping its spirit — alas! — in the association of the Greeks and Latins, reformed Holland, republican, inaugurated a new aesthetic. In the painting improperly called the *Ronde de nuit*, Rembrandt paints, after nature and on original figures, a scene of municipal life, and in one blow, in this masterpiece, he eclipsed all the papal ostentation, the crownings of princes, the nobility tournaments, the apotheosis of the ideal. In the *Leçon d'anatomie*, another masterpiece, where he represents Science in the guise of Professor Tulp, the scalpel in hand, the eye fixed on a corpse, he finishes with the allegories, the emblems, the personifications and incarnations, and reconciles forever the ideal and the reality. Put before one other the *École d'Athènes* of Raphael, and Rembrandt's *Leçon d'anatomie*; consult, in the silence of your reflection, your feelings, and say what has awakened in you the most powerful ideal, the symbolic and idealistic Italian or of the positive and realistic Dutch. So the most concrete, seemingly realistic painting can arouse a more powerful aesthetic feeling, suggest a higher ideal, than the most idealistic painting, made by the greatest of masters: a good half-word hearer. After the *Ronde de nuit* and the *Leçon d'anatomie* of Rembrandt, we can cite the B*anquet des arquebusiers*, by Van der Helst, and one will have a sufficient idea of what I will call the Dutch revelation.

"Life, *living life*," says one of our most skillful art critics, "man, his mores, his occupations, his joys, his whims, is the character of the Dutch school as a whole;" — I add, without fear of being denied by the author, of the humanitarian, rational, progressive and definitive school. — "Some have taken the citizen in action for the commonwealth, whether he is engaged in the exercise of arms or the deliberation of business; others have taken the families at home or in their external disband; these the distinguished classes, the working classes or the eccentric classes. Others have represented the environment where the common life, the seas and the beaches are agitated, with the episodes of maritime existence, so dear to the country; agrestic scenes and hunting scenes; canals and streams, with mills, boats, fishermen; cities, squares and streets where the population circulates with all its variety. Everywhere animation, present life, which is also eternal life, the history of the people and the country...

"Ah, it is no longer the mystical art, enveloping itself with old superstitions, the mythological art resurrecting old symbols, the princely, aristocratic, therefore exceptional art, devoted solely to the glorification of the dominators of the human species. It is no longer the art of popes and kings, gods and heroes...

"Among Latin nations, art has remained suspended in the air, at the double peak of the Church and the court, far above the *faithful* and the *subjects*. In Italy, especially, and even in France, the

country of clear, significant, independent literature, only mystagogical, theological, mythological and allegorical painting, or ceremonial painting, according to the word of Émeric David, has almost never been done. The dogmas and ceremonies of religion, bacchanals and sacrifices, the high deeds of the sovereigns, the joust and entertainments of the lords, the images of the gods and the greats, to the exclusion of the entire nation: this is the setting freed by southern artists. In France, we have never painted the French, I say not only the working classes, but the groups of all ranks that constitute this varied whole which is called France." (*Musées de la Hollande*, by W. BÜRGER (THORÉ), Paris, J. Renouard, 1858.)

Thus, as the Reformation was a reaction against Roman Catholicism, so the Dutch school was a reaction against Catholic art, both that of the Renaissance and that of the Middle Ages. However, the Reformation, by its origins and most of its sects, was iconoclastic. That was precisely what determined the revolution. Art cannot perish: expelled from the temple, it had to resurrect itself in the town hall and the domestic home; condemned in its old idealism, it would be reborn in its positive and rational humanity. It was this radical *impiety* that first *anathematized Dutch originality*, as says W. Borger, in Catholic countries, and "on the pretext, sometimes of ignorance and disorder, sometimes of lowness and immorality, sometimes of fantasy and sometimes of gross materialism, here in the name of Apollo, there in the name of Christ," delayed a necessary revolution by more than two centuries.

I associated the name of Rembrandt with Luther's; you have to place next to them W. Shakespeare. Shakespeare is the drama art, it is the literature that is made contemporary, popular, from the Greek and Latin, Homeric, Biblical and Academic that it had, and that, more than ever, we Frenchmen were going to give it. This was our unhappy destiny: by pushing back the Reformation, we broke with our national literature; all we had to do was to eat away at the Greeks, the Latins, the Hebrews, too happy that this reading, which failed, by dint of pedantry, to drive us mad, could at last serve, thanks to the efforts of the likes of Boileau, Racine, Molière, Voltaire, etc.

Shakespeare surpassed the Dutch with all the superiority of poetry and drama over painting. He, too, was able to stage, alongside the guilty, unhappy and poor princes, the lower classes of society. It is there that he will seek his deepest words; it is through these *ignoble* mouths that he conveys the thought and morality of his dramas. For us, Panurge, Gil Blas and the immortal Martin of *Candide* are of this family. We can judge, by the works of a Rabelais, a Montaigne, a La Fontaine, a Le Sage, by what Molière and Voltaire have given us more personally, what our country would have been if, as early as the sixteenth century, we had accepted the Reformation. And that is the reason for saying again: the art that, in a gravedigger, in a rag-maker, knows how to find an aesthetic way and to bring out an ideal, is ten times more powerful than that which needs Olympian heads.

It must be admitted, however, that there is a doubt about the Dutch school. Religious antagonism was not the only cause that retarded aesthetic development; and one wonders, — if Rembrandt and his successors had entered the real way, — how their action has slowed down, how it has been so little understood in their own country. The Dutch school appears today as it ended in its period; it seems that it gave all its content: what should we think of this? Is artistic production prone to an intermittent character? Would national sentiment be exhausted? Or if Protestantism, a simple negation, could not communicate to the aesthetic that it should, to produce a virtuality of

development that it did not possess? That is the question to which, in the case of the honor of principles and for the justification of the very school we are talking about, I think I have to give a word of answer.

Artists hardly argue; philosophy, even that of art, is not their business, and the first word about aesthetics would be yet to be written, if art had had no other performers, from the point of view of theories, than its own masters. The thought that directed the Dutch school itself would not have been in a position to explain it: it did not know. As a Republican and rationalist, having neither the gods nor the great, neither the pontiffs nor the monks, forced to retreat to secular life, it modestly painted modest characters, mere mortals, as they showed themselves at home, in an offhand way, at the brewery or in the public square: that is all. It can be said that this was a necessity virtue. Who would have suspected that this ridiculous idea, to represent good people in their daily and mundane occupations, to lay them down on the canvas, in beautiful, glazed paint, in the place of angels and saints, was the greatest idea that ever entered an artist's brain? For all the more reason we did not think of making this idea a principle of social pedagogy. The Dutch genius, bourgeois and curator, loving the down-to-earth, was not equal to such a conception. Concentrated in himself, he did not seek to know what was happening beyond his horizon. And if any painting, escaped from the marshes of Holland, fell before the eyes of an orthodox enthusiast, this one, thinking that this canvas was the work of a heretic, could not fail to find in the trivial nature of the figures the seal of the reprobation of such an art. Then, as events still advanced without the thought of the artists being able to follow them, the school soon found itself overtaken by history; it in turn became a tradition, less than that, a monument, more difficult to explain for the critics than any other.

Thus this renovating art was unknown to the present day; the kind of repulsion that so many people are experiencing today for the paintings of Courbet is only the consequence of that which first attached itself to the Dutch, his predecessors and his masters. — “History," continues the writer I quoted earlier, “biography, criticism, mainly the noble aesthetics, are in agreement, in all French books, to characterize with a sovereign contempt this school foreign to Italian rules, which has had the insolence to interpret nature with a particular feeling. M. Fourtoul above all (the former minister of Napoleon III) has wonderfully formulated this mystagogic antipathy against the very human *naturalism* of the Dutch school.”

So let us not be too surprised at what has happened. As the Dutch were neither understood nor followed, the art, in its last, fruitful and incorruptible manifestation, could not be universalized; it remained, in this manifestation, a local thing, like federation and liberty. In the meantime, the Jesuits have given us, with their morality, their architecture; we have had the mysticism of Saint Therese and St. Francis de Sales, vivid followers of the too-famous *Imitation of Jesus Christ* of Gerson, the quietism of Molinos, the amorous *Torrents* of Madame Guyon and the *Maximes* of

Fénelon,[4] marching alongside the gallantries of Ninon and the poisonings of Brinvilliers; the statuary of Louis XIV, to the fleshy and gifted type, imitated by Madame de Montespan; the Louis XV painting, personified in Madame de Pompadour; the literature Crébillon, Parny and company; finally all the degradations of a borrowed idealism, which was excused neither the original spontaneity nor any of the qualities of the indigenat.

[4] Of all the writers and artists of the century of Louis XIV, Fénelon is without a doubt the one who best testifies to the confusion of ideas and the depravity of taste at that time. Pagan in literature; Jesuit, feudalist and retrograde in politics; quietist in religion and morality; uniting in the same thought Greek idealism and the spirituality of the Middle Ages, Fénelon is neither of his time, nor of his Church, nor of his country; he has none of the secret aspirations of his time, no intuition of the future. He served the language and good studies by contributing more than anyone to transporting into our literature the beauties and grace of Greek genius; but this work of the humanist is not enough to constitute, in the eyes of a high critic, a writer of the first order, and to assign him a place among the originals.

[~36,000 words to be translated]

CHAPTER XVI

On prostitution in art. — Severity of the critical school. *Venus and Psyche*.

The artist has, like nature, the faculty of infinitely varying the forms he produces. Instead of seeking the perfection of the human figure, he can use all figures; he must do so, as soon as they help him to realize the higher goal of art: the education of the human race. In other words, his principle must be: *Substitution of the idealism of the idea for the idealism of the form*.

At first glance one grasps the importance of this transformation, which Rembrandt had glimpsed when he said: When I stop thinking, I stop painting. The absence of ideas, the weakness of the moral principle in the artist make him completely lose the understanding of his subjects. Solely concerned with form, provided that his figures are beautiful, he worries little that his work is contrary to the truth or the morality of the theme from which he draws inspiration.

I have seen, for example, many *Seductions of Joseph*, many *Susannas in the Bath;* however, I have not come across a single one of these paintings that corresponds to the subject.

If Madame Potiphar is pretty, we say to ourselves, in spite of ourselves, that Joseph is a fool; and the moral lesson drawn from Holy Scripture becomes a provocation to adultery, by the very irritation it causes. Where does this perpetual failure come from? From the fact that artists have never known anything but one thing: to arouse concupiscence with the eyes, without knowing the first word of what it would take to command, by the same means, restraint. When one is a mediocre artist, one does not risk such difficulties. The painter said to himself, on the contrary: The more beautiful my wife is, the more by that very fact will Joseph's virtue emerge. — But this virtue needs support, motives, protection from above, that is to say, from the conscience, and you do not show us this. It is necessary that to a lascivious image there is another added, which opposes it and decides the young man.

When the ancients painted Hercules between Virtue and Voluptuousness, they understood the difficulty: if Virtue were absent or manifested by a logogriph, by a beautiful maxim, Hercules would succumb. But what did they do? They personified Virtue itself, they showed it to the hero in its heroic beauty. From then on, everything is said: Hercules prefers Virtue: it is quite simple, she is more beautiful than Venus herself, and we would do as much as he did. The artist then would be very unfortunate, very clumsy, if his Virtue were less beautiful than its rival.

The same principle must be followed for the story of Joseph. Here, no allegory: Potiphar's wife is a real person, and she is alone. What was to be opposed to her? The image of her husband represented in the apartment, Joseph invoking the *friendship* with which he is honored, shrinking from a *betrayal*, praying with a dismayed face the poor woman to return to herself, — showing her his protector, to whom he owes everything. — Instead of that, nothing: a beautiful woman almost naked, panting with love, her throat in the wind, soliciting with her voice, her gaze, her hand, a handsome young man who refuses, we do not know, we do not see, we do not guess why; doubtless because he had taken a vow of virginity! And to make the situation even more impossible, the artist does not fail to capture the moment when there is a struggle between the two characters, the

woman trying to hold back the inflexible man by force, who does not fear to do violence to her to free himself. All this is absurd.

In *Susanna in the Bath*, the impossibility is of another kind. I am not considering whether we should rely on the biblical story, which states that Susanna, a woman of the highest rank, a model of marital fidelity and modesty, undressed completely naked in the open air, alone in a garden, to bathe. I cannot, myself, imagine Susanna, any more than Lucrezia or any honest woman of our time, putting herself in such a state: they all veil themselves, hide from their own gaze. But Turkish and Arab women do so, even when they bathe in company. I pass on. This is where my criticism begins.

This is a sacred story and a fact cited as an example to youth, to all women. Susanna, in a word, is a heroine of chastity, a saint. If this is so and the artist has understood his subject, Susanna completely naked must inspire respect, and not arouse any more immodest thoughts than the Venus de Milo in her supernatural nudity.[5] Then we no longer understand how the two senators who observe her, restrained by each other, struck in their conscience, dare to make their proposal: it is impossible, it is outside the human heart, there is a contradiction. This rape by two on the person of Susanna becomes incredible, and I do not believe it. — But we are far from it. In oriental customs, in those over-praised delights of the harem, the woman who shows herself being supposed to make the advances, one is tempted to applaud the two corrupters, whose only fault in this instance is perhaps to show themselves as a pair, while only one could have succeeded. It is the brutality of the two men that makes Susanna's virtue here; I would believe it more if there were only a *tête-à-tête*.

Why have artists never even suspected these difficulties? Why so many paintings representing Susanna in the bath, a Susanna who, instead of inspiring respect, provokes desire? It is because artists, less and less moralistic or philosophical, no longer seek in subjects anything but an opportunity to paint the nude, to show women in a more or less provocative attitude.

The cult of form was a temptation to which humanity was to succumb more than once; it has always tended to substitute itself for the higher aim of art. It is with it as with a general who, after having commanded his fellow-citizens in war against the foreigner, asks them for the crown, and, instead of consecrating their independence, makes them his subjects; the aim of the war, however, was not to produce royalty or to reward the general, but to secure liberty. The adoration of form reached its highest degree of intensity among the Greeks, who identified it with their religion. It was against this idolatry that Saint Paul reacted by opposing his spiritualism. Christianity elevates

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[5] My compatriot, the sculptor Huguenin, felt the truth of this observation. His Susanna, rushing indignantly out of the bath as soon as she thinks she is seen, is not the soft woman who abandons herself to Providence. Her forms, slightly square, are of a very firm, very beautiful and very rare type, a type which gives to all the idea of the strong and virtuous woman. One feels that she will not be silent in the face of slander, that she will know how to accuse and make her accusers tremble. She seems to say: *The Cowards!* — Or wants to look away when seeing her, so imposing is her dignity. A beauty thus conceived immediately commands respect: one feels that the will, the prudence, the conscience, the energy, everything is there. This is not the type of most Susannas.

religion far above art. As for the synthesis attempted by the artists of the Renaissance, it could not be sustained for long; the Christian idea declining day by day, among Protestants as well as Catholics, the cult of form resumed its absolutism and still reigns today.

The critical school, by subordinating the *form* to the IDEA, cannot fall into the misunderstandings for which we reproach artists who have no principles. Without in any way denying the merit of beauty, which it can give itself the pleasure of seeking and painting, the critical school makes it more variable, more significant, and it takes art out of that narrow and puerile goal, which consisted of making figures without ideas, bodies without souls. Having reached this height, art can no longer descend: willingly or unwillingly, in the future, it must think. The idealism of form, much more tenacious than polytheism, is definitively vanquished; this could only be done by the idea.

Beauty will neither be debased nor disdained. Only, it must be recognized, it no longer reigns alone; it shares with the idea, and its prerogative is not even the greatest. The idea can subsist by itself and without beauty; it will never tire. Beauty alone is nothing. This is how in our society, idealistic no doubt, but much more *rational*, positive, critical and practical than it seems, a virtuous, intelligent, active, clean woman, but without beauty, finds twenty husbands for one, while a beautiful person, if she has only her figure, finds nothing. — Let us no longer separate the two sisters, I want it; let us try to make the idea beautiful and the beauty intelligent: by this we will be safe from all disappointment as from all regret. But the most important result of criticism or of the substitution of the idealism of the idea for the idealism of the form, is the liberation of art from all the attacks of prostitution.

A vast subject that would require a book, and which I will limit myself to dealing with briefly.

There is an intimate relationship between the *ideal* and *pleasure;* one can even say that the latter is the daughter of the former: it is the pleasure tasted as an artist, idealized. The ideal excites possession. He who dreams of beauty wants to have it; as soon as he enjoys it, his idealism becomes pleasure. Art, insofar as it has as its object to awaken the ideal, especially that of form, is therefore an excitation to pleasure. If the passion it excites is love, it is a *pornocratic agent*, the most dangerous of all.

We also see that except in the Middle Ages, where art, reacting against idolatry, became the interpreter of Christian spirituality, it was everywhere an agent of corruption. It is as much so today as ever. — The multiplied cult of Astarte, Aphrodite or Venus; the orgiastic, Dionysian or bacchanalian festivals; the lamentations over the death of Adonis, the floral games, the sacred prostitutions, the universal priapism, the erotic poetry, the vulgar, omnigamous love, are the monuments of it. Let us add also the theaters, the dances, the wine, the good food. — Thus everything is connected: the refinement of the arts brings corruption.

The truth of this relation is so true that the same effect is produced among the refined of devotion and among the refined of art. From the origin of Christianity, *idolatrous idealism*, abolished as to dogma among the neophytes or converted pagans, immediately took a new form,

even more licentious, in mysticism.[6] The innumerable sects of Gnostics, the Carpocratians, the Adamites, a host of others, did little more than continue, under the banner of Christ, the mysteries of love. They have remained in horror in history. The flagellants, the quietists or Molinists are known. All this is indeed the result of idealism. Modern art always does only that; it is all the more corrupting because it does not have the excuse of religion, tradition, public indifference and because it is in formal opposition to the modesty of morals and the moral tendencies of the time.

What reason to give us Ariadnes, Hebes, Heroes, Sapphos, nymphs? Why even Susannas, Eves, Potiphars?

At the exhibition of 1863, which I only went through once at a very rapid pace, there was in the great hall, in the place of honor, a figure of a nude woman, reclining and seen from behind, which I supposed to be a Venus Callipyge. While exhibiting her shoulders, her supple waist, her rich rump, this Venus, by an effort of good will, turned her head towards the spectator: blue and mischievous eyes like those of Cupid, provocative face, voluptuous smile; she seemed to say, like the trotters on the boulevard: Do you want to come and see me?

This *Callipyge* is *realism*, after all, — I do not examine whether it is well done; — and Courbet could not deny it if art had no other principle than to reproduce what pleases it, without consideration of the social *end*. But how is it that the police, who refuse Courbet's paintings, have admitted this immorality?

Every voluptuous painting, it is said, every representation of vice can have, in the last analysis, its moral utility. Why not admit this Callipyge in the same way as the *Demoiselles de la Seine?* … — Why? Because, in this last painting, the moral intention is not doubtful; because alongside the idealized vice the painter has put the corrective in this desperate languor, which eats away at the unfortunate woman and which gives a glimpse of her misfortunes. Whereas here there is no *protection:* it is the vulgar Venus in her triumph. How to make such a painting moral? There would have been only one way: it was to put a canker in her anus. Syphilis and debauchery are sisters among us; come, young people, and see! That is what there was to say. But here the disgusting and the horrible would have made the heart rise and cry anathema. It was impossible.

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[6] We all know two loves.

One, ideal, ethereal, divine, platonic, Uranian, celestial; we have all experienced it: that which is most heroic, most divine, most ideal. It is that which reason and justice seek preferably, the first to whom altars are due. Betrothals are delicious, divine. The marriage of the nun with the celestial spouse is a spiritual wedding after which the soul would have to be raptured from the earth.

However, there is another love without which the first would be sterile; earthly love, fiery, passionate, reproductive of life, preserver of divine love itself; by which conjugal love is formed, and from which maternal love is born. — In marriage, indeed, both loves exist. It must be admitted, we aspire to both as to the sovereign good. Voluptuousness charms us, carries us away with great force; it has its legitimacy, its right; — it is the devil without doubt, while the other love is the angel: both in struggle, in antagonism; but woe to him who excites the human heart to the worship of one or the other: he spoils them both. We must keep quiet, speak of it only in passing, and show ourselves prudent and sober as much in the ideal as in passion.

If the jury did its duty when such things are sent to it, it would send them back in pieces. What is a jury that does not even have a sense of modesty, that must be taught that art is nothing outside of morality? Is not the Academy of Fine Arts, like that of Letters, sister to the Academy of Moral Sciences? ... — But what am I thinking?... The doctrine of Malthus is taught at the Academy of Moral Sciences, which the Academy of Fine Arts displays in effigy. Malthus is the courtesans of Pradier and Clésinger.

If the public understood the insult that is being done to it, it would set fire to the exhibition. The artists would call them Vandals; they would send them to Cayenne. But the offended public has lost all initiative. As for the youth, who pride themselves on having one, they are really accomplices. They, who give a hullabaloo to M. About, do nothing against the fornicators, nothing against these lasciviousnesses that dishonor not only our artists, but our society and our country; nothing against this trade in licentious paintings, engravings and obscene photographs that make Paris the *great prostitute* of nations, the poisoner of the universe.

All exhibitions abound with sculptures and paintings of this kind, which, I am assured, sell very well. Demand determines production, economists say. But what is the clientele of the artists looking for most? Licentious subjects.

A rich and gallant woman asked an artist to decorate a boudoir for her in which she would see her nude image reproduced in as many situations as he could imagine. A lot of money to be made; but what a failure, what an insult to the artist's talent![7]

A painter told me that one day a high-ranking personage, who protected him, said to him, after having paid him the tribute of praise that one of his figures deserved: All this is very pretty, but not cheerful enough; do you hear me?... — Very well!...

Intelligent artists are dismayed by this shame, and do not know what to do about it. — A sculptor whom I asked, on my return from Belgium, what he was doing, answered me in a dark voice: I make *c...s!* — He unjustly associated himself with the mob of prostitutes, ministers of public lust. I have never heard anything more terrible. One must be Cambronne or a talented artist at bay, to find these expressions which the truth cannot conceal, but which the most consummate talent does not dare to repeat.

...One day, in the painting of *Venus and Psyche*, rejected in 1864, Courbet undertook to do through painting what the moralists Ezekiel and Juvenal did through poetry: the satire of the abominations of his time. But the means of the painter are not those of the writer. He would not dare to paint the phalluses of the Assyrians and the Egyptians; he would not dare to show Ooliba in the posture described by the prophet: *Denudavit quoque fornicationes suas, et discooperuit ignominiam suam;* he could not make us see Messalina at her twenty-fifth coupling; nor that other bellowing like a doe in heat at the sight of an artist; nor this one pissing, in the moonlight, against the statue of Modesty; nor that one of whom it is said:

Ipsa medullinae frictum crissantis adorat.

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[7] If I had been the painter, I would have answered her: Do your housework yourself, madam; do it every day; have children; and you will see your image more beautiful than I could paint it for you.

These things are impossible for painting. The painter was therefore forced to take on a disguise. Not the slightest indecent gesture, not the slightest lewd attitude, not even complete nudity. A sleeping blonde, whom a young girl would naturally take for a Psyche waiting for Love; a brunette arriving in the night, stealthily, and looking at her with an eye that could express jealousy as well as anything else. The inhabitants of Ornans must have seen two women there who, during the heatwave, took off their shirts to be more comfortable and not suffocate. Other people have taken them for bathers.

You have to be aware of things to understand the artist. You have to have read George Sand (*Lélia*), Théophile Gautier (*Mademoiselle de Maupin*): you have to know the hypocrisy of impudicity of our time; you have to remember that Courbet was reproached for not knowing how to paint the nude, and that his critics reproach him for valuing in the nude only the image of voluptuousness. You have to know that Pradier has been called the sculptor of the Breda district; that artists of the first merit, who seek noble, heroic beauty, are asked for *pretty things*, *delectable* figures; that the dying Lucretias tires. You have to have seen the exhibitions of recent years; you have to know that M. de Nieuwerkerke had the emperor buy a *Leda* holding a swan between her thighs...

It is to all these people that Courbet says through his painting: You are a bunch of ruffians and hypocrites; I know you, I know what you want and what your pimps ask of you. It is not painting the nude that you are concerned with; it is not beautiful nature that you are hungry for; it is dirt. Look, this is how one paints the nude, and I defy you to do the same. And this is what you are all looking for, race of pederasts and tribades . . . . . .

. . . . . .

Freed from the absolutist cult of form, directed by the idea, transformed by criticism, purified by morality, art today returns to its natural mission. It is in France, in the country of *right*, that it was to find its balance... But we will let slip again this glory which is offered to us.

Art, once adored, is destined in our days, if it pursues its legitimate path, to experience persecution. It has already begun. Truthful artists will be reviled as enemies of form, and perhaps punished as offending public morality, exciting hatred among citizens against one another.

[~6000 words to be translated]

CHAPTER XIX

The schools: conservation and progress.

Today the so-called realistic school exists. This school, which I call *critical*, that is to say human, philosophical, analytical, synthetic, democratic, progressive, is dominant; but it is not yet fully aware of itself. It does not know itself; it lacks theory; it has not been able to define itself, to lay down its principles and its laws. Already the false elements and the abuse are slipping in; the most insignificant productions are being displayed: they call themselves realistic, and that is enough.

To take, in the street or across the fields, a group, a shack, household utensils and to make a painting of them, that may be realism, I do not say no, but it is nothing. And if it could have served as an *exercise* for the artist, it is, as a work of art, nothing: I prefer a photograph: it costs me fifty centimes and has no pretension. We must not imagine that it is enough to paint or model the first comer, worker, peasant, bourgeois or other, to be an artist of the new school.

Here is the GREAT ERROR, the error of errors, which would promptly cause art to fall, and, through banality, through disgust, would drive us back towards mythology. We must think and make others think; the painting must have a scope, a goal; without that I disdain it. As a fantasy, as an ideal or poetic expression, I do not want it: I prefer Raphael, David, Ingres.

There is not, there cannot be, a purely realistic art, consequently no *realistic genre or school;* realism, being only the material basis on which art works, is in itself below and outside art.

Art is essentially idealistic; therefore idealism, in its most general sense, cannot serve to distinguish a school, a genre or an epoch. But idealism occurs in various forms: it is here that it becomes possible to distinguish various genres.

The study that we have made of the evolution of art has given us its *moments*, corresponding to as many *genres*, and which can be used to qualify as many *schools* .

We have, then, as the first degree of art, the *typical* school, whose genre consists in reproducing human types, types of race, caste or others, as the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians did. Disdained today, — we now only make portraits of individuals, — the typical school would have to make the portrait of the race: an immense work and very useful for ethnography. I have traveled little, and I was able to note that in France, the *Franc-Comtois*, the *Lyonnais*, the *Burgundian*, the *Auvergnat* do not resemble each other. What would it be like if, outside of France, we studied the types of Europe and the whole world? The English, the German, the Jew present many differences. The Muscovite and the Pole, whom I persist in considering both as Slavs, present no less. I say nothing of the Chinese. — How does it happen then that artists make no distinction in their paintings of all these types? Art for them has only one figure: which is absurd. — All races must be preserved, represented in their type, in their physique, in the expression of their temperaments and aptitudes. The only school, since the Egyptians, that has respected this rule is the Dutch-Flemish school; it has familiarized us so well with the type of its race, that a Parisian who knows of the Netherlands only the paintings in the Louvre, once arrived in Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Amsterdam, believes himself in familiar territory.

The second school, indicative of the second degree of art or idealism, is the *allegorical*, symbolic, mythographic, hieroglyphic school. Born with religion, with symbols, it has

accomplished its work; it has nothing to do. Its imitated monuments are used to decorate palaces, gardens, books, etc.

The third school seeks pure beauty, beauty characterized by proportion and harmony. I call this school *idolatrous*, because its idealism results in the worship of form for form's sake. It is through the work of the sculptors that the polytheistic religion was formed; it is the worship of visible beauty that made the gods worshiped. Since Christianity, this worship and the school of art that represented it had disappeared. But the school was resurrected in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and, the gods aside, it seized attention and favor.

The fourth school is the Christian, *spiritualist* or religious school. Here the artist seeks to make appear, no longer the ideal of form, but that of religious feeling: He gives expression to his figures, but a mystical, supernatural expression. External beauty is neglected, erased, to let appear the internal beauty, which is that of the soul. Now, as long as there are religions or religious feelings on earth, there will be a spiritual painting, testifying to the feeling of veneration, adoration, elevation of the soul towards the Divinity, of internal purity, of mortification, of submission. *Idolatry* and *spirituality* are correlative and are counterparts.

Fifth School. — Let us count, if we wish, as a school the movement from the Renaissance to our days, which, without speaking of idolatrous, mythological, symbolic imitations, is distinguished by two things: 1. the union of beauty with spirituality (Virgins, Christs, etc.); 2. the arbitrary application of the rules of beauty and expression to human, historical or hypothetical characters. As for the division of the classics and the romantics into two schools, I do not accept it; the only thing that distinguishes them is the greater or lesser importance given, by the former to the beauty of form, by the latter to the expression of feeling. Both are *fantasists* who, uniting everything, mixing everything, create outside of observation, belief and morality. It is always at bottom the same adoration of the ideal, the same pretension of painting to exist by itself and for itself, the same absurdity of art for art's sake.

The sixth and last school, that which indicates the highest degree of idealism, is the *critical* school. Reasoning art, thinking art, reflective art: it has understood that there must be a harmony between nature and thought; — art of observation: it studies, in the expression of features, thoughts and characters; — essentially moralizing and revolutionary art: it makes, by the means which are proper to it, the criticism of morals.

Having reached this level of elevation, art is no longer venal or prostituted; it cannot become so: prostitution is its opposite.

Since all these schools and the genres they represent are so many different moments or epochs in the great evolution of art; since each one comes to resolve itself in the last, it follows that none can entirely vanish and disappear. Art, in developing, must retain everything; it is not forbidden to return to itself sometimes, to obey the inspiration of its childhood and youth, and to prove that, as it is progressive, it is universal and eternal. Our civilization, moreover, is so comprehensive, so vast, that it admits all works; that it opens an outlet to everything that is good, beautiful, useful.

So, whether we place in our gardens, our parks, our flowerbeds, our monuments, mythological or allegorical statues, Youth, Abundance, Ceres, Bacchus, fauns, nymphs, Venuses, Apollos, it is our right. And why not? Why renounce these memories? Why proscribe our early years, blush at our youth? Are Pallas, Mnemosyne and the Muses so badly placed at the Academy? The statue of Nature, *alma parens rerum Natura*, at the museum of natural history? Melpomene, Erato,

Terpsichore at the theater? Themis at the courthouse? Sphinxes on our stoves and fireplaces? griffins on our armchairs?...

Why should I forbid the illustration of La Fontaine's fables, Perrault's tales, and, even more so, the history of Herodotus, of Titus Livius? A writer tried to restore the historical character of Jesus; doubtless he could only do a conjectural work: why should not painting try to restore, according to historians, the figures of great men? For the same reason, I do not forbid Christs, nor Virgins, nor martyrs.

The wrong, the error, is to confuse all this in the same esteem; to grant to things so diverse in ideas the same artistic importance; to judge everything according to the same criticism, and to forget that what can be tolerable, worthy of praise even, as conventional art, memory of an era which is no more, it is absurd to cite it as testimony of contemporary art, and to oppose it to ancient works.

Thus, while for the academic world, so-called historical painting, serving to represent events and characters from a distant era, is the first of all genres, for me it is only a secondary genre. It is not true, of a positive truth; it is all hypothesis, and can only serve indirectly, by way of fiction, the great goal of art: it is illustration, decoration, archaeology. It can have its pleasure, its educational utility, but it remains far below the true destiny of art.

Far below are the romantic illustrations of Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare and a whole fantastic Middle Ages: Velléda, Françoise de Rimini, Faust, Marguerite, Mephistopheles: representations of fabulous characters, created in the image of the artists, in poses, attitudes more or less forced or interesting.

On so-called historical novels, on that of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, for example, a similar observation. What proves how much one must be wary of these kinds of books is that, even by confining oneself to current events, the novelist is liable to fail, and does not always grasp the characters exactly; he falsifies and distorts the truth that he has before his eyes and makes characters in his own image.

A novel whose fable is placed in the Middle Ages, — even further back, in the time of the Romans and the Carthaginians, — loses more and more of its plausibility and its seriousness, to become a work of curiosity. Conjectural works must be presented as conjectures. The stories of Martin, of Monteil, of Michelet, can bring us the monuments of the morals of our fathers and

sometimes try to represent it vividly;[8] it is impossible to make a true novel out of it, any more than it is possible to speak Latin or Greek like the contemporaries of Cicero or Demosthenes.

The translation of the first song of the Iliad by M. Littré is a tour de force for which much talent and science were required, a prodigy of philology; I would not dare see it as a literary work.

Humanity, in gaining centuries, cannot forget itself. But its customs and tastes change; and our arts, insofar as they concern us directly, can no longer be what the arts of our fathers were. Therein lies the great conciliation of the ages and the true genius of artists. To the students, therefore, all the decorative part; to the *masters* the paintings of the present time. — No longer confuse the ranks!

Art will always produce things of a more or less profound idealism, according to the need we have for them. Thus we will have to remake typical painting; we will never renounce allegory or beauty; we will make religion and fantasy; but everything, in the last analysis, will have to be explained, completed by critical painting; everything will have to pivot on this supreme genre, critical art.

The ideal must be subordinated to truth and justice, because these constantly push us to action, to research; while the ideal keeps us in inertia and softens us. The idealist is satisfied; he admires himself, he disdains, he is a stranger to everything. The *justicier* is more modest: nothing of what his brothers think and of what happens to them finds him indifferent.

Idealism must always be brought back to science and *conscience*, to *truth* and *right*, which are its ends, subordinated to the judgment of which it is only the preparer and auxiliary. God, the ideal of justice, is separated from justice: he becomes for us a principle of iniquity.

In the time of the Greeks and the Renaissance, beauty being taken for the resplendence of truth, according to Plato's words, one had the right to conclude that one could not stray from the path of the ideal: the ideal and the idea, like the beautiful, the true and the just, being identical. But we have noticed and we persist in saying that beauty sought alone, without consideration of truth and right, without a sufficient awareness of justice and without a parallel philosophy, is only an incomplete given, a corrupting mirage.

The increasingly close identity of these three elements, *beauty, science and justice*, is also the goal towards which we are going, by virtue of progress.

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[8] We do not lack studies or historical materials. Do we really have a history?

We have providentialist history (BOSSUET, ANCILLON, CANTO);

So-called philosophical history (GIBBON, Raynal);

Classical history (VERTOT);

Chauvinistic history (Victoires et Conquêtes, VAULABKLLE);

Apologetic and talkative history (TIHERS: History of the Consulate and the Empire);

Doctrinaire history (THIERS: History of the Revolution);

Epic history (MICHELET); History-novel (LAMARTINE);

Jacobinic and declamatory history (Louis BLANC); History-journal (DuCHEZ);

Finally, history textbooks, history lessons, history summaries: simple teachers' notebooks intended for young people preparing for the baccalaureate.

We have no history, because we have not become ourselves.

CHAPTER XX

Divine beauty and human beauty.

The critical school, like those that preceded it, is in its turn only a moment in the historical evolution of art; it is the preparation for a new phase, which we can already sense, and which will have as its aim to combine, — in an ideal unknown today, moral beauty with physical beauty, to create what I will call HUMAN BEAUTY; for we still know only *divine beauty*, the highest expression of which was given to us by Greek art.

Ancient beauty is the image of balance; it is the beauty of the gods, the ideal, the perfect, the immutable consequently. According to the data of art and mythology, one wonders in what way Venus could be more beautiful than Pallas and Juno, and on what Paris could motivate his judgment. Could the Greek, worshipper of both, admit that his divinity had no defect in her person? Impossible: in all three beauty had to be divine, immortal, perfect.

This is so true, that the statues of the gods and goddesses are not distinguished from each other by any superiority of this kind, unless there is a fault of the artist. As virile forms, Jupiter, Neptune, Mars, Mercury, Apollo, Bacchus are equal. Hercules is a little below; but Hercules is only a demigod, then he is an athlete. However strong and beautiful the athlete may be, were he, like Hercules, Perseus, Castor and Pollux, descended from a god, he is a little below the divine, whose power is not manifested by muscular energy, but by divine energy. It is the same with goddesses, nymphs: beauty in all is equal. Let us leaf through the poets: we will hardly find between them, according to dignity, a difference in stature.

Another proof of the truth of this observation is that gods and goddesses are distinguished by their attributes symbolically represented: Jupiter holds the thunderbolt, Mercury his caduceus, Apollo the lyre, Neptune the trident; Bacchus is crowned with vine branches; Amphitrite is dragged on a shell; Juno has the crown, royalty and the peacock; Pallas the aegis, the head of Medusa and the owl; Venus her famous belt. — Some, it is true, claim that the latter had blond hair and black eyes, while Pallas was brunette; this is a *rumor*.

So read the story carefully, and you will see that what determined Paris was the promise that Venus made him to let him enjoy the most beautiful woman in Greece, of a beauty comparable to herself.

To this ideal, absolute, divine beauty we must from time to time refer. But there is a beauty less regular, less geometric, a beauty mobile, passionate, fiery like life, like force in action, like health in eruption: it is the beauty of the devil. Inferior to the other for correctness, precision, dignity, placidity, serenity, calm, the divine, but much more attractive, more heady, more captivating, by expression, passion, life, movement, it carries us off, carries us away, and we love it madly. The Greeks, in their fables, seem to have sensed its superiority.

Note, in fact, that generally there is little love between the gods. Juno is married to Jupiter, Amphitrite to Neptune, Proserpine to Pluto, Rhea to Saturn: sad households. The Muses, the Graces, Pallas, Artemis remain virgins. The gods prefer mortals to the inhabitants of Olympus. See Jupiter and Calisto, Io, Maia, Leda, Semele, Danae, Alcmene, Europa; Neptune and Theophanes, Tyro, Iphimedia; Apollo and Daphne, Cassandra, Coronis, Clymene. The goddesses also give themselves preferably to humans, shepherds or princes: Diana and Endymion, Cybele and

Atys. Venus lavishes herself on all, gods and mortals: Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, Bacchus, Mercury, Adonis, Anchises, Butes.

Would it not seem like a confession escaped from the poets, that the beauty of the devil is more beautiful than divine beauty? The gods and goddesses abandoning each other to run after mortal beauties: there is quite a revelation there; the divine beauty of Pallas and Juno leaving Paris cold, that of Venus ravishing him with a somewhat lascivious look, what a confession! Greek art is judged by these amorous adventures, so naively recounted in mythology.

Just as there was something left to do: in religion after the revelation of Orpheus; in morality after the instruction of Socrates; in politics after Plato and Aristotle; so, after Greek art, there remained a human art to create.

Now, after two thousand years, after all the transformations of art, we still do not know what human beauty is. For, if we have collected in our race beautiful examples of virtue and heroism, we have not yet seen the man who is at once virtuous, courageous, intelligent, learned, free and happy. It is necessary to have all these conditions, which are today, as in the past, the object of our research, in order to create virile beauty.

The Egyptians did not know human beauty, since they did not go beyond symbols and types; since the figures of their gods, in human form, are themselves typical; since they did not dare, in representing themselves, to show us, in the variety of expression and the truth of nature, their faces; since finally what we know of their institutions proves that they were neither happy nor free.

The Greeks did not know it, since they sought the pure ideal, and their democracy was never anything but tyranny, jealousy, anarchy and soon ruin. The most beautiful Greek soul was that of Socrates, the ugliest of all. Were the Greeks, so artistic, happy, free and wise?

The statuary of the time of the Roman Empire applies itself to more human subjects and overcomes greater difficulties by becoming more expressive. The *Gladiator* and the *Laocoön* are a progress from Phidias.

The Middle Ages did not know human beauty: they fled from it, they hated it; the Gospel preached penance to them. Beauty was for them the source of sin. The artists of the Renaissance were perhaps less distant from it than the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages; for their saints and their virgins belong to humanity; but they saw it only in holiness and beatification.

This human beauty, so rare, we seek it and it is up to us to produce it, since we want to realize the rational conditions of well-being, of tranquility and progress. Man will only be in the fullness of his beauty when he exists in the fullness of his intelligence, his liberty and his justice: until then our works, if they are not criticisms, fall into fantasy, counterfeiting, lies and the POSE.

Look at all our paintings of mythology, religion, history, battles, genre: not a single natural character; all are contorted, convulsed or draped as charlatans. Even in their photographs, our contemporary celebrities pose. The very attitudes have become typical. Costume aside, one would recognize by gesture, by the expression of the head, the warrior, the tribune, the priest, the magistrate, the worker. The woman, whatever condition she belongs to, has only one way of posing, one type; this type, the most considerable of our time, a type unknown to the Greeks, the

Romans, the Italians of the Renaissance, where divinized, sanctified beauty had nothing human about it, is the type of the pretty woman.[9]

Nothing is easier than to paint the portrait of a charlatan; if I dared to cite examples, they would abound under my pen. Nothing is more difficult than to portray a modest scholar, a great simple man, an honest man. There is no known type, and if we stick to individuality, it is impossible to escape one or the other of these drawbacks: either to force the expression of the subject, or to compromise the work by its very vulgarity.

Doubtless there are individual virtues, honest and excellent individuals. But these are *individuals*, incapable of providing a type, on whose physiognomy it is impossible to catch in passing this expression of virtue, of heroism, of devotion, consequently the kind of beauty that we desire.

Virtue, — Christianity itself has taught us — is modest; it does not flaunt itself, it flees the broad daylight; nothing is more difficult than to seize it in a flash of the eye or a reflection of the

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[9] The reign of the pretty woman is contemporary with that of the capitalist bankers, of the millionaire bourgeois, of mercantile and industrial feudalism, of the constitutional regime, of eclectic philosophy.

The pretty woman is something essentially nineteenth-century; she is what she is, what we all know, what it is impossible to define. She can add to that being a peasant or a bourgeois, a queen or a grisette, a banker's or a lawyer's wife, a schoolmistress or an actress, serious or dissipated, wise or frivolous, foolish or witty, worldly or devout. — She can be all of these indifferently. What we call a pretty woman can accommodate herself to anything.

Elegant and well-to-do, she founded the empire of fashion; but she has never been able to create a harmonious whole, and all her rag-picker fantasies are below the most ancient and barbarous costumes: Chinese, Indian, Turkish, Arab, Russian, Swiss, etc. She introduced, I don't know how, corsets, panniers and crinolines; she has made men ugly, arbitrarily mixing all the costumes and not knowing how to create or preserve any of them. She is promiscuous in her own way by standardizing clothing, under the pretext of embellishing it. She willingly associates devout jewelry with her outfits.

Queen of balls, waters, redoubts, shows, concerts and festivals, it is by the light of candles, chandeliers, illuminations, fireworks, that the pretty woman shines in all her beauty and ravishes the hearts of princes, soldiers and bourgeois; It is there that she conquers a husband, a prelude, very often, to so many other conquests.

What she is in the morning, I do not know: a night beauty, a flower of the salons, she gets up a little late, a little pale and tired. She has nothing in common with the fresh Dew, daughter of Twilight and Dawn, who vanishes each morning at the kisses of the rising Sun.

There is a literature of pretty women, a music of pretty women, an art of pretty women; there is even a science of pretty women. But there is neither philosophy, nor politics, nor right of pretty women, although there is a devotion of pretty women.

The pretty woman is capable of jealousy, very different from the strong woman of Solomon, who takes pity on her unfaithful man. She cannot bear criticism: then she rages, she stamps her feet, she scratches; she would play with a dagger. Fortunately her pretty woman's hand is incapable of delivering assured blows.

The pretty woman can be naughty; it is repugnant that she should be criminal: she would be a monster. She has neither the sublimity of virtue nor of genius; her triumph is in the average regions.

She is the muse of unknown poets, the genius of average minds, the angel of modest ideas, of indulgent morals, of flexible virtues, the fortune of complacent husbands, the reward of the ambitious without principles, the fairy of effaced characters, the guardian of the capitulations of conscience.

face. Ask an honest man, a worthy woman to put themselves back into the attitude they had when such and such a good action escaped them; charge one of your mercenary models to play this role. The ridiculousness of such a pretension is obvious.

Human virtue, which must replace Christian virtue or piety in our country, is not yet sufficiently developed to have shown itself typically on our faces: the most honest, the most learned, the bravest, the best, finally, very often have only vulgar faces: nothing, moreover, which characterizes them; for, as human conscience cannot always be tense; as the height of virtue, on the contrary, is to become easy, natural, common; as it does not *pose* in the manner of monks, priests, Greek heroes or Roman senators, it cannot be, at least until further notice, clearly captured and fixed by the painter; which makes its reproduction impossible, and any attempt intolerable.

The conclusion of all this is that the height of art, that summit to which artists should aspire, is still far from us; all the more so because it will take generations to create the types or models, very skilled observers to discover them, and a public to recognize and understand them.

What then to do today? Wait until society, by reforming its economic and political organization, has been able to reform its morals; until by reforming its morals, it has been able to modify, recreate faces. Then it will be possible for the painter to observe and reproduce. Until then, we can only follow the work of criticism; we have no beatifications to make; we have only condemnations to pronounce...

CHAPTER XXI

Affirmation of the critical school. — Objections. — Personal incident.

The critical school says: Art has so far only dealt with gods, heroes and saints: it is time that it dealt with mere mortals. By dint of idealizing, symbolizing, seeking models above condition and destiny, it has ended up surrounding itself with fictions; it has lost itself in the void. What did art have to do with us, miserable humans, servile, ignoble, unsightly and ugly rabble? you will ask me. — A very interesting thing, the most glorious of all: it had to improve us, to help us, to save us. To improve ourselves, we must first know ourselves; to know ourselves, we must see ourselves as we are, not in a fantastic, indirect image, which is no longer us. Thanks to critical art, man will become a mirror of himself, and it is in his own face that he will learn to contemplate his soul. Now, this exhibition of the human soul requires more penetration, study, genius, more science of execution than was necessary for Phidias and Raphael to produce their masterpieces. Let no one say, then, that the advent of the new school constitutes a decadence. Despite the multitude of daubers and daubings, we march, we disengage ourselves, we are a hundred pikes above the artists of the first Revolution and the first Empire: something that is not at all suspected at the Academy of Fine Arts.

It is to strangely misunderstand the thought of the critical school to believe that it presents the moral and physical ugliness it depicts as unparalleled beauties, and that it aspires to change the opinion of men in this. It maintains, — something incontestable, admitted at all times, — that the ugly, even the horrible, has its role in art; that it does not serve only to frighten imaginations by showing them the various degrees of moral and physical degradation, and that such lessons, necessary today, demand from the artist a depth of observation, a power of synthesis and superior ideality.

Consider that we no longer paint immortals, freed from ugliness, as from suffering and illness, superior to all external influences, whose incorruptible nature and unalterable form can never have more than one expression, nor consequently differ from themselves. These are transient, suffering, sick creatures, subject to error and vice, slaves of sin, and who must be brought back to health and reason, to lead them from there to virtue. The artist therefore has the mandate to reproduce them in all their affections, passions and degradations, as in all their perfections. This immense variety belongs to him; it is his province, and that is why, the more changeable the expression, the more art must distance itself from all arbitrariness.

If chance or clumsiness alone presided over such works, if they were caricatures or simple portraits, assuredly the execution would be of little value, since the most clumsy could succeed. But we have already observed that these compositions, serious in their idea, are no less so in form. They are not charges, hyperboles, which only require a little malice in the mind and very little art in the execution; they are typical compositions, taken from nature, from several natures, and reproduced in a rational composition where the form lets the idea be guessed, where ugliness, while showing vice, still lets the natural beauty and innate virtue be guessed at; which makes these works the most difficult of all.

One insists and says:

But what necessity is there to resort to these extreme means, and what pleasure, other than that of an enormous difficulty overcome, can the artist promise himself from his work? There are handsome boys and pretty girls among the peasant class: why not stick to these models? In the bourgeoisie, the clergy, the magistracy, the army, there are likewise noble faces, as there are great virtues and noble hearts. Why not stick to these distinguished natures? Can humanity be too beautiful, too honored? And must man occupy his talent, his poetic and imaginative faculty in lowering himself still further? Is it not better to encourage him by beautiful examples than to humiliate him by the image of vice? The Emperor Constantine said that, if he saw a priest fall into a fault, he would cover him with his imperial mantle. Constantine understood true pedagogy; he had the true feeling of art. Better excitement than depression. Better beautiful models than the faces of scoundrels and the damned! What is the use of this display of peasant vileness, bourgeois fatness and clerical epicureanism? The art you advocate is that of hell; we would prefer that of the heavenly abode. Over there Tisiphone, it is said, presents to the damned a mirror in which they recognize themselves, which makes them unbearable to themselves; send us instead a guardian angel who will make us see what we can be, and what we will be by following wisdom.

So, I will reply to these critics, you accept art only as flattery, as embellishment.perpetual, a lie, and, the word comes by itself, a SEDUCTION? What you need are Vincent de Pauls becoming galley slaves out of charity; Fenelons bandaging the wounds of the wounded; the sister or lady of charity appearing, like the angel of consolation, in an attic; it is Hippocrates, majestic, refusing the gifts of Artaxerxes; Lucrezia, more beautiful than Venus even, stabbing herself after the attempt by Sextus; Sabina between a robust Tatius and a young and superb Romulus, dropping the parricidal weapons; it is ravishing Saint Margarets; charming Saint Cecilias; mothers of sorrow like Niobe; Saint Sebastians more beautiful than Mercury, Bacchus and the fauns; and even the volunteers of 92 who arrived in clogs, combed and musky like the former! — Let the *Fileuse* be full of health, well; but let her be elegant, slender, airy as befits a woman, and let the thin thread she pulls from her fingers indicate this. — Let the bourgeois woman, at forty, be plump, if that pleases you; but let this fleshy beauty redeem what age has given her too much by the charm peculiar to the rose that is about to fade, to the fruit that is soon to fall, and which give all their flavor and perfume. This is what you ask for: makeup, false teeth, vermilion, carmine, preserves, refining, compensations, and always lies, corruption.

Is this the worker in the nineteenth century? you ask, seeing the *Casseurs des pierres*. No, not quite, certainly; it is one of the scenes of his life, one of the fatalities of his existence; the conclusion of a life of poorly paid work, poorly served by intelligence, without dignity, without elevation. To that you answer: Very well. But let M. Courbet make us at this hour, in his virile beauty and his intelligent dignity, the WORKER!

Where do you want him to take it? An ignorant man will paint you a handsome man, with an aquiline nose, a full black beard, a torso like Milo, the arms of an athlete, a forehead of genius to boot, with the flash of liberty in his eyes. He will put a hammer in his hand, and you will say: *There is the worker*.

Lie: it is a figure of fantasy, of posing. I have seen some of these workers, good devils at heart, but who already posed as types, as if their image, fixed by the brush, should have passed to posterity. And I thought while looking at them: *Pose, lie*.

As for me, I confess, I abhor lies, fiction, convention, allegory, hypocrisy, flattery, as much in painting as in politics and in style; I do not want to be the flatterer of the masses any more than that of princes; and if it is true, as everyone recognizes, that we live in an age of decadence, where civic courage is destroyed, private virtue is suffering, the race is depressed, all feelings are distorted and depraved, I say that, far from making it a subject of dissimulation, we must begin by saying and showing the thing as it is. Otherwise it is making fun of us. We must be given cod liver, and we are offered sugared water!... — Our era, rich in police but empty of principles and morals, calm on the surface, is revolutionary at heart. Art must be revolutionary too. All regeneration presupposes a prior death; all restoration a demolition. Look at Christianity: it too conceived the immortal, ideal man, living at the beginning in an earthly paradise, and destined for a supernatural felicity. However, it preaches confession, absolution, penance. Confession is the painting we need today. No quarter! Courbet has in his head soldiers, magistrates, academics, voters, candidates, bankers, speculators, professors, workers, students, nuns, women from the market, from the Saint-Germain and Breda districts, from high industry and the riffraff, just as he has priests, peasants, prostitutes and bourgeois women. Let him show us all these people; let him parade before us all these sad realities, and we will be grateful to him. Let him scalp us, anatomize us, undress us: it is his right and his duty. By executing us in this way, he serves history and posterity.

Honor then to Courbet who, the first among painters, imitating Molière and transporting the high comedy of the theater into painting, seriously undertook to warn us, to chastise us, to improve us, by painting us first as we are; who, instead of amusing us with fables, of flattering us with illuminations, had the courage to show our image, not as nature wanted it, but as our passions and our vices make it.

In vain you say to her: Awaken this pretty gossip; make an electric spark pass through this body, a little thinner; on this forehead, on these lips, put a gleam, a smile of intelligence; instead of fifteen hundred francs, your spinner will be worth fifteen thousand, and you will enter among the Immortals. Similarly, could you not have made, in the *Enterrement*, the figure of your priests more in harmony with the grandeur of the holy ministry? Have had more regard for our delicacy, in these heads of beadles, in these peasants, in these bourgeois? What would it have cost you? Would you be any less of a great artist?

Courbet replies: What you are asking me is a lie, a chimera, an allegorical creation, a coupling of things that repel each other, an impossible combination. It is the death of art, the negation of myself. You recognize some talent in me, and you do not see that truth alone sustains me; that I would soon be at the level of so many others; that my mind would be depraved, my hand without vigor, my brush *sagging*, if I listened to you. What! You want me, in order to represent a spinner, to take my model from the Boulevard des Italiens or from the Breda district? Indignity! Show me Lucretiuses, women of royal blood holding the distaff, and I will make you Lucretiuses; but I could not invent them. What I would give you as such would be fantasy, idealism, that is to say, in view of our mores, always prostitution. Consider then, I pray you, that in our days human and dignified beauty, true beauty, is found among us only in suffering and pain; that we hardly find it any more in our petty passions. That is why my women who cry at the *Enterrement* are beautiful; and it cost me little, I swear, to make them so; that is why my dying *Duelist* is beautiful; why my young people who exchange a *frank look of love* on returning from the fair are interesting; why this

Demoiselle de l'Empire, breathing Venus all over, burned with desires, and who seems to want to devour the grass, retains a reflection of beauty, the force of passion giving her a remnant of the dignity that vice has ravaged. You cite to me the Dutch and the Flemish who, in their fairs, their weddings, their assemblies, in their domestic interiors, and even in their cabarets, are joyful; they please, they amuse. Without doubt! But this proves once again what I have just said: that there is no resource for the artist except in the truth of observation. The authors of these paintings had before their eyes a gay, rich and laughing society; they were happier than we are. Today, do you know what poses before the painter? Avarice, gambling, pride, lust, greedy and idle softness, fierce parasitism, prostitution. I can only give back to the public what it lends me: it is not my fault if it recoils from its image.

Human art, critical, as it has revealed itself before our eyes, is repelled, first by public imbecility, prejudice, corruption; then by the hostility of the Academies, the Church, cliques and power. The same causes that, for seventy years, have stopped the development of liberty, stop the rise of art: popular prejudices, national ignorance, false taste, weakness of character, secret corruption, selfishness. We cherish our indignity, we adore our servitude, we bless our privileges and our profiteering, fathers of pauperism.

These causes manifest themselves in yet another form: literary decadence. All inspiration dies, because justice is dead.

Art will be reborn one day, and literature with it, and liberty likewise. I don't think it will be any time soon, especially not in France.

France, well studied, has not ceased to proclaim, for seventy years, through all the mouths of fame, its incurable impotence. It wants to be amused; it even demands, the hypocrite, that one keep certain proprieties while amusing it: nothing delights it like a subtle naughtiness, a veiled immodesty. Deep down it cares neither for literature nor art, any more than for right or morality. Everything that is trotted out in this regard in academies, colleges, newspapers, theaters, courts, is pure fiction, in which no one believes.

We should, by an effort of reason, get art out of the old rut: we will not do it; *the artist is treated like the writer*.

Who brings literature to life? New ideas, produced with vigor and youth; not academic discourses.

I can quote myself without pride, because I have suffered persecution for twenty-five years. I have contributed in my part, a small part, if you will, to the progress of language and literature. Three men, in the political economy, Say, Blanqui, Bastiat, although their writings are full of errors, their theories are essentially contradictory, and none of them has been able to understand the fundamental law of science, have enriched by their style the language in which they wrote. I dare to name myself alongside these three economists. Now, what have I gathered?

I do not complain that I have been fought: it is not a question at this moment of doctrines, but of style; of substance, but of form. Has there been a single professor of humanities to tell his students, to the public, that in the nineteenth century, since the Restoration, a new genre was manifesting itself in French literature, a very difficult genre, since among ordinary writers it inevitably falls into banality and boredom, but which, by its analogies with the legal style, nevertheless constitutes one of the domains of the language? Do we suspect in the colleges, at the

Institute, that a literature includes other genres, — in verse, than the epic, dramatic, didactic poem, the song, the ode, the fable, the tale; — in prose, than the novel, history, religious, political, academic or judicial eloquence? Can we imagine that a language as well-constructed as ours could be used for anything other than books known in advance?

What have I collected for my part? Trials, convictions, prison, exile. Why can I not obtain permission to publish a newspaper? The public, with rare exceptions, do not have time to read books and pamphlets: they want to be given detailed instruction; they willingly agree to devote half an hour a day to reading, during its lunch or dinner; they do not go beyond that. It is therefore necessary for all ideas, all questions, all opinions, all causes, to pass through the periodical press, whose sheets are distributed from five to twenty centimes.

The government, which knows it, does not want it; it makes the press a privilege granted to reliable men, without prejudice to the rigorous prosecutions exercised against books and pamphlets. And to save a dynasty, a personality, a policy, one executes the *spirit* of a people; one kills the idea with the form.

And there are writers, so-called liberals, who applaud, saying that the press is powerless!...

Art is treated like the idea, like literature, like the press. Artists are told: What are you complaining about? What is he hiding from you? Do not religion, history, fantasy, all of nature offer you a wide enough field? Make us pictures of piety, scenes from the lives of the great.men, beautiful landscapes; make us funny, you know?... and be sure that national self-esteem is too much of a friend of glory not to reward you.

They shave us, they castrate us, they handcuff us and muzzle us; they cut out our tongues, and we find that nice; and when M. de Girardin jokes about it, we say: He is still a man with ideas, this M. de Girardin!...

CHAPTER XXII

On art in its relations with conscience.

An art critic, whose curious pamphlet I have read with interest, M. Wintz, wittily mocks those who claim that one can only paint *what one has seen*. It is the opposite in fact, he says: one paints, from what one has seen, what one has not seen. But there is one point that M. Wintz must grant: one is truly an artist only by painting what one *believes*, what one *loves*, what one *hopes for* or what one *hates*. Now, who believes today in eternal life, in miracles, for example?…

The priest in the exercise of his functions no longer means anything to us; he is an actor: cover a mannequin with a cassock, it will serve you just as well. To represent the priest at the altar, or in the pulpit, or at the catechism, or at the sick bed, has been the prerogative of Christian art, which is no longer of our century. A painting of priests in the exercise of their functions would have value today only insofar as it would bring to light the secret contradiction that exists between the conscience of these men, their private life and their faith; as, for example, when the confessor, exhorting an old woman at the point of death, asks her for her fortune for the Church.

Religious paintings, it is a fact recognized by all, are today of a desperate mediocrity. Why? Because there is no longer any religious conscience, either among artists or among the masses.

Art quickly declines when it ceases to interest the conscience, when it becomes indifferent to it, when it is nothing more than an object of curiosity or luxury. In spite of the value they may have acquired as professional men, our artists will therefore always be inferior to the ancients when they wish to remake their works. Not only are they inferior to them, but they also interest us much less.

What does Egyptian art, with its pyramids and symbols, do for me? A subject of historical study, of archaeology, of the history of the soul and of art itself, it is for me an object of pure curiosity. But afterwards? Does my conscience resemble an Egyptian conscience?

What do the monuments of Greek art itself matter to me? I can well judge, by comparison, that the Greek artists were incomparably more skillful than the Egyptians; that their works are more beautiful, denote a deeper and purer feeling of the beautiful, consequently testify to a progress of art. I will conclude that, notwithstanding the admiring texts of some old historians, the Greek conscience, in the century of Phidias, is superior to the Egyptian conscience of the time of Sesostris. All this I see, I note; I am interested in it as a man, as the son of a family is interested in the relics of his ancestors; but, once again, what do these statues of gods and goddesses, these bas-reliefs of the temples, these colonnades, these porticoes have to do with me? What does all this tell me? Absolutely nothing. What does it matter to my soul? Greek art as well as Egyptian art is finished, exhausted, and humanity endures forever.

Undoubtedly, for apprentice artists, these old monuments are of great importance: they show the origins and have become for us means, elements; we discover there the inventions of stone cutting, of the column, the applications of statics. But all this has lost its aesthetic action on us.

The Venus de Milo will seem to me, if you like, the masterpiece of statuary. Very well! What do you want me to do with it, I, a citizen of the nineteenth century, barely freed from Christianity? If I reflect that this statue was the image of a divinity, it makes me smile, and all the aesthetic charm vanishes. I will put on my mantelpiece a reproduction of this figure, as I put there a rare

shell, a piece of porcelain or a crystal vase. Again, for these latter objects, I have no need of study: while a statuette of Venus supposes in the owner that he knows mythology, that he has been to college, that he has read the authors, that he has a tincture of the history of the arts, that he has understood that the Greeks are among our ancestors. What means of communication between Greek art and me? How many middle terms?

For example, why are these Venuses naked? Who could have allowed themselves to represent them thus, when the exhibition of the naked statuette of a bourgeois woman would be punished? What connection is there between this nudity and my conscience? How can I persuade myself that the gods must be represented, that they are naked, and this precisely because they are gods? What moral excitement can I expect from these Venuses, these nymphs, these Graces, these Muses? I know that the divine beauty of Greek statues is not to arouse any dishonest feeling: this must have been true especially of the Greeks. But I, for the first quarter of an hour, will remain calm; if I prolong my contemplation, if I return to it every day, this beauty will end up suggesting impure thoughts to me: proof that it is not made for me, that its perfection is only relative and its aesthetic action temporary; outside of this environment it becomes ugly.

In a word, I want the work of art to please my imagination; I even consent to it flattering my senses, although my liberty is frightened by this flattery, as a virgin recoils at the touch of a strange man's hand; but I demand above all that it speak to my intelligence and my heart, and that, rising still higher, it arrive at my conscience. For this, it is necessary that it be the representation and the product of this conscience, that it be its mirror, its interpreter, and, consequently, its exciter.

It is by this secret relation that a work of art, mediocre in conception and execution, can excite to the highest degree the aesthetic feeling, consequently all the faculties of the conscience; whereas, if this relation is lacking, if the soul has become tough, the most beautiful work remains sterile; it is aesthetically as if it did not exist.

Men who love women for their youth, their beauty, their grace, their sweetness, find them lovely in all their attire. I do not deny that adornment adds to beauty; art is not the enemy of wealth; on the contrary, it alone can give it prestige; but it supplements it with advantage.

A simple ribbon from a beloved person will be precious, while the most beautiful wedding dress, the richest wedding basket will be of no interest to those to whom the new bride is a stranger. What have her necklaces, her bracelets, her laces to do with them?

When I was a child, the church I went to every Sunday seemed to me the most beautiful, the most grandiose of buildings. Why? Because of the intimate relationship between the uses of the monument and the religious state of my conscience. With time, reflection would have revealed its defects; I would have had other architectural conceptions; but a great aesthetic effect would nonetheless have been produced, which, purifying itself through analysis, would have created in me a power of development and progress, which would not have existed without it.

It is not the most sumptuous, the most sublime masterpieces that produce the greatest effects: they are themselves the culmination of an aesthetic progress created by much lesser works. Not that I mean that it is useless for artists to take so much trouble; I only mean that they work in vain, if they do not put themselves in direct and intimate contact with the conscience of their century; so in vain that, this essential condition neglected, art, without object, without aim,

without reason, without direction, without criterion, ends up degrading itself and no longer being art; it is trinkets.

Note with what care Leviticus describes the ornaments, at bottom so poor, of the Tabernacle, and Book III of Kings the temple of Solomon. How one feels, in reading them, that the whole soul of the people is suspended from the lips of the narrator; that his heart, his thought, his love, are in these monuments! Did the Greek theater, the Roman circus ever arouse an enthusiasm equal to that produced by the sole hope of visiting the temple, of the ascension to Jerusalem? The psalms are full of them: *Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi: in domum Dornini ibimus*. How the legislator seizes hearts through the image of the beautiful! And at the same time how, by religion and overexcited rationality, he increases the energy of the aesthetic feeling and provokes the manifestations of art! This, however, happened among a people whose religion proscribed painting and statuary.

Have our exhibitions of paintings, with their thousands of pictures, engravings, and statues, ever produced on the masses an effect comparable to that of the Corpus Christi procession and the visit to tombs on Maundy Thursday? What could be poorer, however, than the means implemented by the clergy and the parishes? But consciences were in unison: all took part in the thing. So, just as the Emperor Napoleon I admitted that he found nothing more beautiful, for his part, than an army drawn up in battle array and executing its evolutions, so, in the time of faith, no Catholic could boast of having seen anything more beautiful than the procession.

Fifty years ago, the first thing a man did, arriving for the first time in a city, in a simple village, was to visit its churches; these were, with the town halls, the only monuments of art that had any interest.

Let us not be surprised at the development that religious art has taken in all periods, without distinction of genre, Byzantine, Gothic or Greco-Roman architecture, painting, statuary, music: it is of all the arts that which, in periods of faith, seizes, interests, touches the masses most keenly.

In the Church, in religion, everything is poetry and music. There is a poem, a sort of lyrical drama, I almost said opera, for each day of the year, with an appropriate song. All the celebrations are sung: Advent, Christmas, Lent, the passion of Jesus Christ, his resurrection, his ascension, the institution of the Eucharist, the assumption of the Virgin, the commemoration of the saints. There is a melody for the prayer or *pater*, another for the profession of faith or *credo*, another for the consecration; there is an office for the dead, an office for marriage, an office for first communion.

Freemasonry has gestures, signs, batteries, formulas.

The army has bells, fanfares for all the actions of the soldier: the diane or the reveille, the recall, the assembly, the general, the ordinary step, the accelerated step, the charge, the retreat, the signal to saddle up, the curfew; the element of war finally.

All peoples have obeyed this law: there are fanfares for hunting, grazing, fishing, the work of the rowers; war dances, religious dances, wedding dances, social dances.

In 89, we made the revolution to the songs of the *Carmagnole*, the *Ça ira*, the *Marseillaise*, the *Chant du départ*, as the Spartans once did to the songs of Tyrtée, and the Franks to the songs of their bards.

During my captivity at Sainte-Pélagie, in 1849, there were as many as eighty political prisoners, a tiny number, if one thinks of the thousands of deportees of that sad period. Every evening, half an hour before the cells were closed, the prisoners gathered in the courtyard and

sang the *prayer;* it was a hymn to Liberty attributed to Armand Marrast. A single voice recited the verse, and the eighty prisoners took up the refrain, which was then repeated by the five hundred unfortunate prisoners in the other part of the prison. Later these songs were banned, and for the prisoners it was a real aggravation of punishment. It was *real* music, realistic, applied, art *in context*, like the songs in church, the fanfares on parade, and no music pleases me more.

I don't understand concert and salon music: I cannot understand why it amuses and gives pleasure. These are lessons that are repeated, and I am not a teacher. As much as I like the *Stabat* in church, on Lenten evenings, the *Dies irae* at a death mass, an oratorio in a cathedral, a hunting air in the woods, a military march on a walk, everything that is out of place displeases me. The concert is the death of music.

When, by chance, at a great ceremony or public solemnity, there is music, it is unrelated to the object of the meeting. At a prize-giving, the overture to La *Dame blanche* will be played; at the erection of a statue, a Beethoven symphony; at an agricultural show, an air from the *Favorite;* at a shareholders' meeting, nothing at all.

The Legislative Body meets: no music, except to escort the Emperor, when he comes to read his message. They have done what they could to banish eloquence, which now seems comical and in bad taste; they speak from their place, in the most common, most bourgeois way, as among our English neighbors.

Formerly, when sitting down to table, one recited the *Benedicite*, and, after the meal, the *Graces;* it was civility, art as much as devotion. When entering school, one invoked the Holy Spirit. In the courses of the Sorbonne and the Collège de France one no longer says anything: not the slightest sign that recalls the seriousness, the dignity of the thing; one enters there as if into a tavern, and one begins to listen as one begins to drink in a cabaret.

All justice was surrounded by formalities, which were also poetry: this is reduced to the simplest expression.

Many of these ancient customs cannot be reestablished; once serious and dignified, they would seem childish and ridiculous to us. But we cannot remain without compensations. Art, the product and exciter of conscience, is born with man and society. From the first day it reveals itself, not as a fantasy, but as a serious faculty, an essential manifestation of being, a condition of its life; it enters into reality, into the intimacy of existence; art envelops humanity as with a mantle of glory: it is its destiny; it is its goal. Our whole life, our words, our actions, even the most vulgar, our dwellings, everything we do, everything we are, calls for art and asks to be elevated by it. It is art that saves us from coarseness, banality, vulgarity, triviality, indignity; it civilizes us, urbanizes us, polishes us, ennobles us.

One day we will sing at harvest time, at haymaking, at grape harvest, at sowing, at school, at the workshop. Today we no longer sing, except for jokes and flat nonsense; we hate the verses, we disfigure our prose, and we dance the cancan.

We cannot live in this barbarity; we must rise from it at all costs, while retaining our scientific gravity and our industrial positivism. There are other *means* to employ, other *forms* to create, other *arrangements* to imagine. The earth must become, through cultivation, like an immense garden, and work, through its organization, a vast concert.

What contribution does art make to this enterprise of renovation? None; we have no national artistic production, not even any criteria for the appreciation of the works produced, because there

is, at the bottom of the public conscience, only doubt, skepticism, absence of principles, forgetfulness of right, a spirit of speculation, parasitism, arbitrariness; disdain for all philosophy and religion; impudicity, venality, prostitution.

The contemporary bourgeoisie, coarse and ostentatious, imagines that it can do anything with money; that it has only to offer *encouragements*, distribute prizes, crosses, pensions; make laws on literary property, to encourage writers and artists. It is always like M. Jourdain, asking that his declaration of love be put into fashionable style: "Beautiful marquise, your beautiful eyes..." How can we make these people, for whom the idea is nothing, understand that, in literature as in art, the idea is everything; that one will never be a Tacitus when one thinks like Messrs. Guizot and Thiers; that, in order to write the *Vieux Cordelier*, one had to be guillotined?...

CHAPTER XXIII

Aesthetic testimonies of national consciousness. — Monuments and modern embellishments of Paris.

Art has an intimate relationship with religion, philosophy, justice, the useful, in a word with all the FACULTIES OF CONSCIENCE, which it aims to reproduce, to manifest, to excite. As one can judge the conscience of a people according to its religion, its laws, its government, its economy, one can also judge it according to its aesthetic manifestations. And since government, religion, laws, philosophy, art, are in proportion to the energy of conscience, one can conclude from the weakness, the delay or the corruption of the first the infirmity, the decrepitude or corruption of the second.

What aesthetic testimonies will our era leave to future generations?

I will not return to the prostituted statuary and painting. I will limit myself, in this chapter, to asking their meaning in the modern monuments and embellishments of Paris.

It is the dignity of a civilized people to have museums of antiquities. This is important to history, to the feeling of our progress, to the understanding of art in its various eras, and consequently to our own, to the feeling of solidarity with our ancestors.

I approve, therefore, of the restorations of cathedrals, of palaces, when the costs are not too high; the acquisitions of statues. Put these objects in your museums, halls, courtyards and gardens; do not put them in your public squares, where only national monuments have the right to appear.

What is the Luxor obelisk doing on the Place de la Concorde?... It should have been placed in the center of the courtyard of the Louvre.

In ancient Egypt, the entrance to a temple was preceded by at least two obelisks, placed on each side, in front of the door, like two sentinels. Sometimes, between the door and the obelisks, there was a double row of gigantic figures. Now, what were these obelisks loaded with hieroglyphics? Stones bearing an inscription indicating the time of construction, the name of the founder, the occasion of the foundation and all its circumstances: a true notice of the monument, a sort of summary of its history, its destination, much like our tumulus inscriptions, or like the table placed at the beginning of a work, indicating the substance and giving the analysis.

The uses of the obelisk were therefore not only architectural or artistic; it had a mnemonic purpose, a positivist character. The shape was that of a needle, because the characters were read from top to bottom, and the elevation here offered more advantage to the writing than the horizontal dimension. The obelisks were coupled like the two leaves of the door, because symmetry required it that way.

Now, see what a strange people we are! We have gone to seek at great expense, with the permission of the Pasha of Egypt, an Arab or Turk by origin, who makes fun of antiquities, one of the obelisks of the temple of Luxor; we have erected it in the middle of the Place de la Concorde, where it makes as strange a figure as a prie-Dieu would make in the Bourse hall; and we have taken great care to put on the pedestal of this strange monument, on one side an inscription which indicates the year, the reign, under which the obelisk was brought; on the other, the figure of the machines that were used for its erection: so that we seem to have transported it to Paris solely to give ourselves the pleasure of seeing how an engineer, graduated from our Polytechnic School,

would succeed in erecting it! Certainly, I do not place French civilization below that of the Egyptians of Sesostris; but I have difficulty imagining that they would have been capable of such stupidity. What! On this revolutionary square, which has already changed its name two or three times, where so many great scenes have taken place, we have only been able to erect two mythological fountains, quite pretty by the way, and an Egyptian obelisk!...

Our arts are bric-a-brac. We make a church a pantheon of great men; we inscribe on the frontispiece of this church a usurping, lying dedication; for the church of Soufflot was dedicated to Saint Genevieve; it is the second cathedral of Paris. On the other hand, we remake of the temple of Glory, a parallelogram imitated from the Greeks, a so-called church (the Madeleine), without bells, without chapels, without clock, without Christian form. All of our monuments denote a people whose conscience is empty and whose nationality is dead. We have nothing in our conscience, neither faith, nor law, nor morality, nor philosophy, nor economic sense, nothing but ostentation, pure arbitrariness, nonsense, disguise, lies and voluptuousness.

Cross the Solferino bridge, and ask yourself what it is doing there. A simple footbridge for pedestrians would have sufficed: it would have saved them a few hundred meters when the Tuileries gardens are open. But the bridge is well built, of a beautiful shape and appears solid. It is therefore a bridge for cars. What path does it save them? None. Could it have been built solely to receive the name of a battle won by Napoleon III? What leads one to suppose this is the twelve bases that were provided there, six on each side, each able to receive a Victory and bear its name. Unfortunately, the victories that were intended to be illustrated are only six in number: Montebello, Palestro, Turbigo, Magenta, Melegnano, Solferino. How did one get out of the difficulty? By repeating each name twice on the monument. It is laughable! One could just as well have repeated them ten times: that would have made a kaleidoscope.

Why a bridge of Solferino and a bridge of Aima; a boulevard of Magenta and a boulevard of Sébastopol? Why a street of Turbigo? One can answer me. Because we already have a bridge of Austerlitz and a bridge of Iéna; a street of Castiglione and a street of Rivoli. But why, under Louis XIV, did we not have a street of Rocroi, a street of Denain? Because common sense said that, to be logical, it would have been necessary to have also a street of Bleinheim. The task of recounting the victories and the defeats was left to the annalists. Why have we not done the same? My pride as a patriot is satisfied to read on the maps of Paris the streets of Rivoli, of Castiglione, of Austerlitz and others. But, to be fair to the emperor and towards ourselves, to make the lesson effective, it would have been necessary to have also the streets of Trafalgar, of Vittoria, of Leipzig, of Waterloo.[10]

Let us transport ourselves to the Place Vendôme, and raise our eyes towards the crowning of the building.

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[10] The history of Paris was written in the ancient names of the streets and squares. These names, in themselves, were truthful, sincere, impartial; betraying neither pride nor chauvinism; not lying. If some accessory were added to them, it in no way altered the previous testimonies: it only added its own. The triumphal arch of Louis XIV took the name of *Porte-Suint-Denis*. The monument spoke enough for itself; no one thought of giving the rue Saint-Denis the name of rue Louis XIV, or of Strasbourg, or of Flanders. It would destroy history to change the names of the rue d'Enfer, de Vaugirard, Moufl'etard, Saint-Jacques, Laharpe, des Prouvaires, and so many others hitherto respected.

The statue of Napoleon, with the little hat and the gray frock coat, was beautiful, not without majesty, and of a great character, moreover popular. This statue was real; it was not wanted. It is certain that Napoleon I himself, simple, natural and sometimes great in his daily life, in these respects truly sculptural, had a love of costumes and disguises. Bad taste assuredly.

But why did Napoleon not adopt, instead of the Roman purple, the cope of Charlemagne, the restorer of the Roman Empire, the intermediary between Caesar and it: Charlemagne, with whom Napoleon, supporter of the Church, conqueror of foreign coalitions, had more connection than with Caesar, conqueror of Gaul, but party leader, conqueror of the patriciate, perpetual dictator? — It is because, in the feudal or medieval world, France is, as *a kingdom*, the antithesis of the *empire*, and that in the end Charlemagne is not Gallic; he is not of the Gallo-Roman race, of the civilization: he is Germanic.

Why then did Napoleon, if he wanted to assert Gallo-Latin prepotence against Germanism, not simply pose as the successor of Hugh Capet, Louis the Fat, Philip Augustus, Saint Louis, Charles V, Louis XI, Louis XII, Francis I, Henry IV, Richelieu and Louis XIV? Why this counterfeit of the Roman Empire, this renunciation of the succession of Charlemagne, of French royalty?

How many lies, inconsistencies, misinterpretations, nonsense accumulated to give oneself a title and a fancy costume, and to make false, anti-national, unpopular, absurd art!...

Napoleon has just been given back the costume of the Roman emperors. I understand absolutely nothing about this restoration. I looked at this incredible statue as best I could; I looked at it from the Tuileries Garden; I looked at it from the square itself; I looked at it from the right and from the left, from the front and from the back, and the scandal has only increased: nonsense, ridicule, falsehood, ugliness, everything is there.

Napoleon is represented as a Roman emperor, it is said; why not rather as the emperor of the French? What does this allusion to the Caesars mean? Is it because Napoleon III is writing the history of the first of them? Is it a prognosis? A symbol? A myth? A hope?...

This so-called Roman emperor carries the globe surmounted by the cross. Bad jokers have said that he resembles a man in a negligee, holding his candlestick in his hand, who is about to go to bed. How can this so-called Roman emperor be adorned with this insignia, which was that of Charlemagne, the Catholic emperor, and his descendants? What is this mixture of Christian, papal empire, and Caesarian, polytheistic empire? Because it is indeed for all the rest a Roman emperor that they wanted to make, like those of whom we have effigies: breastplate on the chest, skirt, bare legs. Here the rounded breastplate seems borrowed from imperial museums; the skirt, mounted too high, down to the pit of the stomach, like the hideous robes of the first empire, gives the emperor the appearance of a cook. Seen from a distance, one would take him for a Zouave, with his jacket tight on top, loose on the bottom, which blends in with the wide trousers, beneath which the legs appear; and his head fitted on a long neck, like that of a vulture on its bald neck.

The new statue of Napoleon is a sign of the times. In France, since Louis XIV, architecture, statuary, painting, have increasingly stripped away all character of nationality. What is the column of the Place Vendôme? A very servile imitation of Trajan's Column. What is the Bourse? What is the Madeleine? What is Notre-Dame de Lorette? What is Sainte-Clotilde? What are the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile and that of the Carrousel?

The best things in the embellishments of Paris are, with the central market halls, which I will speak of shortly, the *squares*, imported from England, and the benches on the boulevards, which

we also did not initiate. In 1858, there were none in Paris; at the same time, I found them everywhere in Brussels.

Here I foresee an objection.

The Greeks, I will be told, left us five orders of architecture. The Romans invented the vault; then came the Romanesque. The northern races, whose gables were very high to protect them from rainwater and snow, invented the ogive and the Gothic. From the Renaissance onwards, the Roman vault was placed on the Greek entablature, and St. Peter's in Rome, the Invalides and the Pantheon were built. This is all very well, certainly, all the better since it seemed to be the end of art. What more do you want us to invent? There are not thirty-six ways to spin and detach columns, to give them a base, a capital; to raise a dome or a cellar, to build a bridge, an aqueduct... We persist in asking architects for something new: they can only reasonably give us something old. After having made us Greek and Roman, they have made us Gothic and Renaissance. Now that we are jaded by all these imitations, they give us something oriental. Instead of the round, oval or low vault, they make us onions, tulip bulbs. The more we ask them for something new, the more, in order to satisfy us, they will fall into the irrational and the absurd, into the ridiculous and the ugly.

No doubt! But what does all this prove? That its goal once fulfilled, the *useful* once realized, art, as a search for expression, must know when to stop; that otherwise it degenerates into childishness; that, in the current regime, the encouragements, very poorly understood, even more *useless*, given to art, are a mystification.

Let us see things from a higher perspective.

What is the aim of this great development of literature, which we have been witnessing in France since the seventeenth century?

It is to teach us this: that an honest man must be able to speak and write correctly in his language, express himself clearly and precisely; and, depending on his profession, be able to write, with order and elegance, a report, a proclamation; to formulate and motivate his opinion, sustain a conversation. If he is a professor, he must rise even higher: recount the models, explain them.

This point obtained to a sufficient extent, the honest man will leave to professional writers prose and verse, novels and dramas; to professors erudition, archaeology, annals. On occasion, his natural eloquence, supported by a sound reason and a strong conscience, will know how to come to light: he will leave the art of oratory to lawyers and artists, who will never equal it.

It often happens that taste dictates that the *naked truth*, the pure idea or reality, be used for any ideal. This rule is especially true in literature, where the simple, clear, precise, correct style, devoid of figures, must, as far as possible, form the major part of the discourse. It is with this style as with the plastic art of the Greeks, which disdained ornaments and, in the smallest things, always shone with the sole beauty of form. This style, which in some way conceals itself to let only its idea be seen, is the most *ideal* of styles. It is the one that makes Voltaire superior. It is also the most difficult to attain. An idea thus expressed is like a cut diamond, which, as limpid, as transparent as air, is nevertheless easily seen in this same air; while the flame of a candle, brought into broad daylight, is extinguished.

It is true that such a style presupposes an idea to support it; without that one has only words. Thus most writers do otherwise. Either through impotence, or lack of ideas, or bad taste, — for the

simplicity of style demands more art than figures and images, — they indulge in all fancies, all unimaginable exercises.

What I say about literature, I say about the plastic arts, painting, statuary, architecture.

If the decorative value of a monument is to reveal its uses from the outside, the two architectural masterpieces of Paris are, without a doubt, the Mazas prison and the central market halls.

When one looks from the top of the Vincennes railway at the long radiating galleries of the new Force, with its unplastered walls, its twelve hundred huts, its days of suffering, its tight bars, its ten-square-meter promenades, one feels a cold in the heart, a constriction in the stomach: one guesses that everything here has been combined with science and patience, in order to make life as unbearable as it can be for the unfortunates, detained behind these bars, in a society where corporal punishment has given way to moral torture. And when we consider that the prisoners locked up in this gigantic tomb are defendants, that is to say, accused persons presumed innocent until a contradictory judgment, we wonder what punishment the law reserves for the condemned, for the criminals, and what moral idea presides over the prison regime in France. Mazas is an architectural design worthy of taking its place alongside the most philosophical works of the critical school. The sight of this monument can only hasten, by the horror it inspires, the reform of the laws and customs of our governments, in matters of prevention as well as repression. Let someone name me a monument to our glories of such striking idealism, of such profound teaching!

The central halls caused a great scandal among the academic community, students and teachers. There, in fact, no columns, no pilasters, no cornices, no attics; no capitals, no medallions, no cartouches, no statues, no bas-reliefs; stone in the foundations, iron from the ground to the roof, a roof of glass and zinc: none of this was planned by the Institute and the School. Thus the halls are a monument to barbarism; a theft from the artists for whom the works of the city and the State are property; a misappropriation of an order for the profit of the modest designers, modelers and founders of the Mazières factory.

But the public sided with the industrialists against the artists, and they were right. The ideal of a market, where readily putrescible materials are piled up, would be that it were open to the sky; the inclemency of our climate not permitting it, the best would be for the roof to be suspended in some way by a fastener at the top, like a lamp on the ceiling; the support point still lacking on this side, the columns intended to support the roof must take up as little space as possible; lots of air, lots of water, such was the utilitarian, sanitary program. The engineer of the central balls understood it: nothing too much in his monument; he sought only the simple, and he found the grandiose. Whether the academics prefer a pile of stones, more or less symmetrical, without air, without light, with typhus permanently, as in the kind of bastille or prison which still exists opposite the church of Saint-Eustache, or the other markets of Paris enclosed by walls: the public now knows what a monument of public utility can and must be, and it will no longer be fooled by the charlatans of form and ideal, without conscience and without idea.

The purpose of art is to teach us to combine the pleasant with the useful in all things of our existence; to increase for us the convenience of objects, and thereby to add to our own dignity.

The first thing that we need to take care of is *habitation*. The great matter is that the people are well housed: something all the more appropriate since they are sovereign and king.

Now, the home of the citizen, of the average man, has not yet been found. We do not have the minimum of housing, nor the *minimum* of salary. Artists ask for works, that is to say palaces, churches, museums, theaters, *monuments;* their art has not succeeded in housing us; on the contrary, the luxury of the buildings to which they push us has become an auxiliary of misery.

We must compare a city in Holland, in Switzerland, with Spanish or oriental cities: it is there that we will guess the destiny of art.

Art has done nothing with the Greeks, the Italians, the Spaniards, who remained *iconolaters*. Look at Constantinople, Rome and Naples. For art to fulfill its destiny, to reach its ultimate limit and fulfill its goal, man must have learned to value his soul and his conscience more than his body.

Look at the household of a woman in the Netherlands, and compare this household with that of a bluestocking or a courtesan. Look also at the Protestant villages of Switzerland (Vaud and Neuchâtel), and compare them with the French Catholic villages that touch them.

Liberty, personality, dignity of character, which distinguish the Swiss, the Dutch, this is ART RETURNED. Now, this art is very much neglected in France, it must be said.

I leave aside the question of cheapness, without which life is only servitude. — If the republic is not the right, an honest man told me, I laugh at the republic. — I say of art and cities: if art and public administration do not know how to house us cheaply, I laugh at architecture and public administration. But we are very far from that.

In vain we crammed into these monstrous houses more or less sumptuous and artistic furniture: carved buffets, sideboards and tables, paintings, statuettes, pianos, etc. What a wonderful compensation! It is the fiction that we take for the reality.

I would give the Louvre, the Tuileries, Notre-Dame, — and the Column into the bargain, — to be lodged at home, in a little house made to my liking, which I would occupy alone, in the center of a small enclosure of a tenth of a hectare, where I would have water, shade, lawn and silence. If I were to think of placing a statue in there, it would be neither a Jupiter nor an Apollo: I have no use for these gentlemen; nor views of London, Rome, Constantinople or Venice: God preserve me from living there! I would add what I lack: the mountain, the vineyard, the meadow, goats, cows, sheep, harvesters, shepherds.

How do we not see that this overflow of works of art, of monuments of the arts, has no other aim, by a horrible irony, than to maintain us in our poverty? If our education were done, if we exercised our rights, if we lived a free life, would we need art schools and the Prix de Rome? Would this new Paris not horrify us? We clutch our bellies, and, for want of more real consumption, we gorge ourselves on spectacles!

An agglomeration of a thousand small owners, living in their own homes, exploiting, cultivating, each making the most of their heritage, their industry and their capital, administering and judging themselves, this political masterpiece, of which all the others are only accessories, this is what we have never been able to achieve.

Artists, professors and priests, academics and philosophers, all do their duty equally badly; they have made themselves instruments of misery and depression.

The degree of debasement of the masses in a people must be measured by the exaggeration of its works of art and the importance given to its artists. This has been the secret priesthoods and despots to deceive the pauperism of the masses by the *prestige* of monuments.

Could the Egyptian complain when he saw these obelisks, these sphinxes, these pyramids, these gigantic temples rising?

When the artistic craze took hold of the Greeks, they were lost: the Romans no longer called them anything but *Græculi*, *Grécillons*, as the Belgians call us *Francequillons*.

Once the empire was established, great monuments arose in corrupt and degenerate Rome: the Pantheon, the Coliseum, etc.

Catholicism founds its cathedrals on servitude; the Rome of Leo X pays its artists with the money of indulgences. Would to God that Luther had exterminated the Raphaels, the Michelangelos and all their imitators, all these ornamenters of palaces and churches!

Artists, once the goal of art has been missed, have become the natural auxiliaries of the priesthood and despotism against the freedom of the people. Ministers of corruption, professors of voluptuousness, agents of prostitution, it is they who have taught the masses to bear their indignity and their poverty by the contemplation of their wonders.

And we commend these artists as the first of mortals! We deify them! We take them as leaders and models, we give them receipt of all the civic and human virtues! As long as they flatter us, amuse us, tickle us, as long as they make us pose, we are happy!...

With them we have found the secret of living in a superb beggarly state. We have had the republicans of form; we now have the moralists of the ideal; and we have found this secret, that the debauchery of the mind and the impudicity of the senses, is liberty.

We saturate ourselves with novels, shows, parades, exhibitions, fireworks; we seek lies and all their glories.

GLORY: this is our daily bread, the daily bread of cowardly, vain races, who, after having shone for a moment in the front rank, become the laughing stock of the nations.

CHAPTER XXIV

Artistic mores. — Simple advice.

Artists, men of letters, joined by a few devotees and philosophers, form a caste apart, an undisciplinable and servile caste, corrupt and corrupting, which, without moving much, acting slowly, has done in all times much harm and little good. They are worshipers of form, idealists in all things.

1. In religion, they disdain dogma and the practices of worship, which they leave to the vulgar, and only care for contemplation and union with God.

2. In politics, they despise principles, right, definitions, judicial forms, the balance of forces, and prefer the inspiration of the masses, fraternity; they disdain constitutions, the form of government; everything is equal to them.

3. In social economy, they follow the maxims of philanthropy and charity, rather than those of right and science.

4. In justice, they prefer equity to right: it is a pretext for arbitrariness; fraternity and community are their ideal.

5. In morality, they are for free mores: the good heart exonerates everything; in their disheveled life, they believe themselves to be the most independent: they are the most servile of men.

6. In literature, they are enemies of genres, of rules.

7. In painting, we know them.

The qualities and defects of the artists are naturally deduced from the faculty they bring into play and the passion they serve. They form a class apart, imperious by the ideal, but inferior by reason and morality. They have very high pretensions to genius, to glory. Distinguished, elegant, sensual, greedy, capricious, vain, eager for praise and rewards, they belong to whoever flatters and pays them, and are more often the auxiliaries of corruption than of regeneration. They have never known how to find their own way; it is revolutions that show it to them, as we have noticed among the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Dutch.

On the one hand, the artists do everything, because everything is indifferent to them; on the other, they specialize infinitely. Left to themselves, without a lighthouse, without a compass, obeying a law of industry poorly applied, they classify themselves into genuses and species, first according to the nature of the orders, then according to the means that distinguish them. Thus there are church painters, history painters, battle painters, genre painters, that is to say, painters of anecdotes or farces, portrait painters, landscape painters, animal painters, marine painters, Venus painters, fantasy painters. One cultivates the nude, another drapery. Then each strives to distinguish himself by one of the means that contribute to the execution. One applies himself to drawing, another to color; this one takes care of the composition, that one perspective, that other costume or local color; this one shines by sentiment, that one by the ideality or realism of his figures; that other redeems by the finish of the details the nullity of the subject. Everyone strives to have a *trick*, a *chic*, a manner, and, with the help of fashion, reputations are made and unmade. A cause of success in religious painting, for several years, has been, for example, to paint the patriarchs and the characters of the Old Testament in Arab costume: Abraham is an old Bedouin.

Literary men do not proceed otherwise. One cultivates antithesis, another comparison and metaphor; this one loves descriptions and pomp; this other seeks periphrasis and epithet; there are those who speak only by exclamations, apostrophes, prosopopeias. Finally, *Pindarism*, phraseurgy, constitute for some authors the whole art of writing. — Louis-Philippe said of M. Villemain that he began by making his sentence, and then he looked for what idea he would put in it. — With this recipe, they deal with everything, politics, philosophy, history. We have seen them for thirty years delude the public and stifle common sense under their usurped reputation.

These puerilities, these tricks, prove that artists and writers, today less than ever, do not know where they are going.

The artist lives in isolation, his thought is solitary; he receives no help; no warmth, no light comes to him from outside; he has neither faith nor principles; he is given over to the atheism of his feelings and the anarchy of his ideas. He does not know how to grasp the public; it is a melee where no one knows each other and where everyone pulls in his own direction. All solidarity is broken. How would they produce popular works, they who know nothing of the soul of the people? How would they please educated people, they who are devoid of strong studies and treat art with hatred and derision of science? See them beat their flanks, strike their foreheads, ask at the cafe, at the wakes, at all the artificial excitements for an inspiration that eludes them; succumb to boredom, to disgust, before even having set their hand to work, and rhyme in spite of Minerva!... Undertake, without faith, religious paintings; without principles, monarchical, socialist, republican subjects, not suspecting that when convictions are dead, art is dead, and that to revive it, we must again make ourselves human!...

Everything here is united: false art, bad literature, chauvinistic politics, bad mores, venal criticism, false eloquence, absurd poetry, phraseological history, quietist morality, the denial of justice.

Plato was right when he expelled artists and poets from the republic: I do not ask that they be put outside society, but outside government; for if the artist, at his best, is led and inspired by society, society, on the other hand, is lost if, in the end, it lets itself be inspired and led by him. Now this is precisely our case.

Since 89, we have adored the *fantasia;* we are delivered up to the dilettanti. Mirabeau is more admired as a virtuoso than as a politician: in which he has been made a prodigious man of whom we are not yet worthy; Robespierre is the virtuoso of the club; Napoleon I the virtuoso of battles, crushed in the end everywhere, for want of having had an idea. We no longer even have the sense of our history.

Of all the agents of our intellectual and moral dissolution, the most energetic has undoubtedly been romanticism. The school has understood neither its century nor its mission; even when it sought popularity, it went astray. It distorted the taste of the masses, corrupted them and made them in its image. Romanticism was idealism at full tilt, pastiche, mad and nameless fantasy, in the final analysis corruption. Taste, style, language, criticism, ideas and morals, everything is depraved. It is neither the empire nor Louis-Philippe who made us what we are: it is epicurean, idealistic, immoral romanticism. Under the pretext of being better than good, truer than truth, more just than right, it has doomed the conscience among us. The morality of the romantics, renewed by the Jesuits, is like pure art: it is the negation of the rules of justice, of the prescriptions of right and duty; it is charity placed above the laws; it is fraternity violating liberty and

responsibility; It is love erasing the greatest wickedness, a good movement redeeming a million crimes.

Sultan Murad (*Légende des siècles*, by V. HUGO) terrified the world with his crimes. He had his eight brothers strangled, his father's twenty wives drowned; he disemboweled twelve children alive for a stolen apple; he had twenty thousand prisoners walled up alive; he annihilated cities, exterminated provinces;

> He made such carnage with his scimitar,
> That his horse seemed to the world a panther.

Then one day, in Baghdad, he sees a lecherous pig with its throat cut, struggling against death. The mosquitoes and the midday sun torture the pig and make its agony terrible. Mourad, with his foot, pushes it back into the shade,

> And with the same gesture, enormous and superhuman,
> With which he chased away kings, Mourad chased away flies.

That same evening he was taken with a fever and died. He arrived before the sovereign judge. From all points the clamor of the tortured rose: — Justice! O living God! — But the pig cried in his turn: — Mercy! He has helped me. — And God concluded with this terrible profession of faith:

> It is enough, to save even the merciless man,
> Even the bloodiest of executioners and masters,
> The least of benefits to the last of beings.
> A single moment of love reopens the closed Eden;
> *A rescued pig weighs like an oppressed world.*

Morality of high-ranking rogues and powerful lords; morality for the use of the executioners of the human race and the great man-eaters of whom Scripture speaks! Was I wrong in saying that the first act of the social revolution should be to throw all romantic literature into the fire?

Coming out of such rot, it is not enough to purify ourselves; we have to remake ourselves entirely...

Art flourishes in times of religious institution, moral reform, political or philosophical revolution. This is easy to understand: art is itself the expression of reforms, all of which are resolved in one word: the production of justice, the creation of humanity. Thus the Renaissance and the Reformation conjured together had as their counterpart an artistic and literary explosion throughout Europe; thus the philosophical revolution of Descartes and Kant brought literary reform to France and Germany. The same conditions which make great thinkers and great writers will give us great artists again, and the school of the future, once instituted, will never weaken.

The artist, like the writer, must be of his time: it is only on this condition that his works will pass to posterity; — he must be of his country:[11] only in this way will he be humanitary; — he

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[11] A question arises from this: is it good for the artist to travel constantly? I do not believe so; he is not made to make the universal man, nor the universal landscape or Eden; he was organized to express an idea, a form, which is generally that of his country and his contemporaries. Courbet is indeed the painter of Ornans, of the landscape of Ornans, of the peasants of Flagey. This is what makes him strong. It is also through this that he is the merciless mocker of the bourgeoisie of his time and of Parisian morals.

must be of his religion (opinion), if he wishes to be truthful and admired by philosophers; — he must show himself concrete in his idea: it is only in this way that he will have an ideal.

In literature, we must return to a frank, clear, lively, simple, precise style, sober in figures, sober in colors, stripped of verbiage, useless pomp, charlatan magnificence and venal luxury; to the analytical, demonstrative and French style *par excellence*, the enemy of rhetoric, hyperbole and antitheses.

The artist, like the writer, is a synthetic creator who must treat with equal success all the parts of art; and far from abandoning himself to that in which he excels, he must constantly struggle to put himself in equilibrium, unless he works in a collective, under a single direction. In this case, the union of equally superior faculties can become a means of perfection for works of art; but it will always be to the detriment of the serving artist.

Moreover, we do not prevent each person, associating with his neighbor for a common work, from working according to his means; what we ask is that equality be respected in all parts of a work. It is making a lame representation to give superiority either to the drawing or to the color. What is important here is therefore 1. that a work is not lame: 2. that a new, common thought is formed, which maintains genius, develops, creates a tradition, and multiplies, without further declining, the masterpieces.

It is necessary that artists, if they work alone, also develop all their faculties within themselves, or complete them by associating.

It is also necessary that, through meditation on principles and rules, through their observation, through the study of subjects, through the new spirit with which they must imbue themselves, there is formed between them a thought, a genius in some way common, a tradition, a faith, a virtuality that elevates the talent of each above what it would be in solitude.

The ancient Greco-Roman world was, at one time, populated by statues. In a given city there were as many as there were citizens, and almost all of them were masterpieces. What seems extraordinary to us today resulted from the communion of artists, from the criterion that they faithfully followed.

The artist must be in communion of ideas and principles not only with his colleagues, but with all his contemporaries; he must also imbue himself with this thought, that there is no difference between artistic creation and industrial creation. The artist, in fact, produces nothing from nothing; he only grasps relationships, analyzes figures, combines features, represents them: this is what constitutes his creation. Now, just as the industrious, or the scholar, or the philosopher, — the more he observes, the more he discovers, — and the more he has discovered, the better he applies and produces; — so the artist, the better he has seen, the more he puts himself in a position to represent: inspiration is in him proportional to observation. This is why, in the true artist, as in the true writer, in the philosopher, inspiration, one can say, never weakens; it is constant, it is at command. It does not go away when he abandons study; when, through presumption or laziness, he produces nothing but the abundance of his speculations or his memories. He who has an empty

intelligence has an empty imagination too;[12] but this term of creation, common to the industrious, to the philosopher, to the writer and to the artist, acquires a much higher meaning if we consider it from the point of view of society and morality.

Humanity, such is the modern, revolutionary belief, possesses justice from its depths, and it develops this content of its conscience by its own energy. It is thus its own educator; it is it which operates its justification, or, in other words, its creation, just like Spinoza's absolute being; and by the reciprocal influence of the moral and the physical in man, we can say that this creation of ourselves, begun in conscience, ends up embracing the body. The artist is one of the principal agents of this creation; he senses it, guesses it, provokes it, anticipates it; he is all the more creative as he has better read the depths of the universal soul, and has better revealed it through his works.

Let Bohemia and the Academy be scandalized by my proposals; upright minds will understand the great idea of my book: *to reconcile art with the just and the useful.* Until now, in fact, art has remained in a mystical, transcendental sphere; artists have formed a world apart, outside of human life, outside of practical reason, business and morals. People were indignant at the mere thought of a goal, an end or any utility of art. Those who devoted themselves to it seemed to be of a different species than ordinary mortals, whose laws did not seem to be made for them; they had their own mores apart. So, while people of art and letters despised the world of the industrious, bourgeois and others, they were despised by it in turn: the quality of artist had almost become a title to disesteem, to disregard.

All this is finished now. An artist will henceforth be a citizen, a man like any other; he will follow the same rules, obey the same principles, will respect the same conventions, will speak the same language, will exercise the same rights, will fulfill the same duties. Judged by men who will not be of his profession, he will nonetheless be judged by his peers; if he no longer encounters idolatry, if excessive honors no longer come to find him, he will not know ostracism either, and will feel at home. Like the actor and the singer, the artist must above all be an honest man, all the more honest a man, the more artistic he is.

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[12] How could we fail to recognize that the art of reflection, of high expression, analytical, synthetic, critical, necessarily shows a superior freedom? How could we see in study and meditation the death of art? The artists who most honor our era, the Delacroixes, the Corots, the Huguenins, the Barye, are all men of profound observation, of long study, of patient research. Courbet, whose spontaneity is so rich, his independence so fiery, meditates for a long time on his works; he contemplates them in his imagination, and suddenly he produces them, with passion, in a few days.

CHAPTER XXV

Conclusion.

From all that precedes, from this rapid glance at the different characters of art among the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Christians of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the Dutch Reformers; finally from the examination of the works of contemporary painters and of some paintings by Courbet, there results, for us the public, a set of notions, principles and rules that we can consider as the most complete theory of art.

We have the means to compare, judge, classify; the means to explain our preferences, impose our ideas, trace a direction, indicate a goal and mark the condition of our suffrage.

Every creation of art, as of industry or politics, necessarily has a destination; it is made for a purpose. It is absurd to suppose that something happens in society, — why should we not say in the universe? — for the sole purpose of happening.

This incontestable principle having been established, there remain for art only two alternatives:

Either painting will have the effect, in all its works, the most serious as well as the lightest, the most learned and the most capricious, of expressing human life, of representing its feelings, passions, virtues and vices, its works, its prejudices, its ridicule, its enthusiasms, its grandeur and its shame, all morals good or bad, in a word its *forms*, according to their typical manifestations, individual and collective, and all with a view to the physical, intellectual and moral improvement of humanity, its justification by itself, and finally its glorification.

Or else, under the pretext of liberty, of independence of art, genius, ideal, revelation, inspiration, reverie, fantasy, it will put itself at the service either of religious idealism, illuminism, fanaticism and quietism; or of idleness, luxury and pleasures or of epicureanism: which means that, for not having wanted a highly moral, practical and positive mission, the school of art for its own sake will give itself a perfectly irrational, chimerical and immoral one.

This is inevitable, and the facts prove it.

From this primordial definition of art and its end, it follows:

1. That in every work of art one must consider first the very idea of the work, its practical aim, and secondly the execution: the EFFECTS before the *means;* the CONTENT before the *container;* the THOUGHT before its *realization*;

2. That the idea of the artist must always be logical, rational, true, and that in this respect the work falls under philosophical criticism; but that one cannot judge in the same way, with equal certainty, the covering of the idea, because *de gustibus et coloribus non disputandum;*

3. That a work of art is therefore composed of IDEA and *representation*, the first rational, the second depending on the taste and means of the artist; the former demonstrable, the latter not demonstrable;

4. But that, in any case, there is this in favor of the idea: that if everything that is reasonable is not necessarily good in representation, nothing truly beautiful can be irrational.

These are the principles of art and of the new criticism: principles that I declare common to literature, to poetry, to architecture, to music, to dance even, as well as to painting and statuary, and which govern everything here.

The painter and the sculptor having as their aim the representation of humanity with a view to improvement, the question immediately arises as to the means to be used for this representation.

Among the means, we first distinguish two things: — *imitable* and *representable reality*, a reality almost always more or less defective; — imagination, which, at will, straightens, corrects, embellishes reality, or makes it grimace, makes it ugly, deforms it.

The real and the ideal compete alternately, in variable proportions, at the whim of the artist, and according to the effect to be produced; they are part of the means, that is to say of the execution, not of the effects, not of the goal. It is thus that in painting, color and drawing compete in the work, and are part of the *means;* it is absurd to imagine a painting made entirely of color or entirely of lines; even more absurd to make a painter's specialty of his ability to color or to draw.

We complain, and we are a thousand times right, about the detestable current criticism. It is the scourge of artists, whom it discourages, murders, when it should enlighten them; a true profession of blackmail, of iniquity. Thanks to this criticism without principle, for whom the idea is nothing, the *patte*[13] and the *chic* everything, the public has come to no longer care about the compositions, which it understands all the less because the artists themselves do not understand each other. We stop at the portrait and the landscape; beyond that, nothing.

So, no one is concerned with the idea any more: in the museum, we do as in the theatre, in the Opera, where we disdain the words and the drama; to listen only to the instruments and the voices. We leave aside the EFFECTS to concern ourselves only with the *means,* on the basis which everyone who is a connoisseur decides; as for the substance, we know nothing, for the excellent reason that in the waste, there is nothing to know. We strain at one, we demand the other, and art dies in this cacophony.

The last consequence, and the most deplorable of all, of an art in labor, of a formless thought and of a blind and brutal criticism: society separates itself from art; it puts it outside of real life; it makes of it a means of pleasure and amusement, a pastime, but one that it does not care for; it is superfluous, luxury, vanity, debauchery, illusion; it is anything that one wants. It is no longer a faculty or a function, a form of life, an integral and constituent part of existence.

As for us revolutionary socialists, we say to artists and writers alike:

Our ideal is right and truth. If you do not know how to make art and style with that, step back! We have no need of you. If you are in the service of the corrupt, the luxurious, the lazy, step back! We do not want your arts. If aristocracy, pontificate and royal majesty are indispensable to you, again, back! We proscribe your art as well as your persons.

The future is bright before us.

We have to build 36,000 common houses, as many schools, meeting rooms, workshops, mills, factories, our gymnasiums, our stations, our warehouses, our stores, our halls, our libraries. We have to create 40,000 libraries of 6,000 volumes each, — 240 million volumes, — observatories, physics cabinets, chemistry laboratories, anatomy amphitheaters, museums, belvederes by the thousands.

We have to discover the models of housing for the peasant and the worker, for the city man and the country man; our towns and villages are to be rebuilt; and in the front line, M. Haussmann's Paris. We have France to transform into a vast garden mixed with groves, coppiced

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[13] Individual style. — TRANSLATOR.

woods, tall trees, springs, streams, rocks, where each landscape contributes to the general harmony.

One day the wonders predicted by Fourier will be realized.

The true monuments of the Republic, unlike those of the Empire, will be in the convenience, healthiness and cheapness of housing.

But, first of all, we have one last battle to wage against bad taste, false literature, bad mores and the politics of absorption.

We have to educate the people, to give them, with a taste for science, an understanding of history, of philosophy, the cult of justice, the true joys of labor and of society.

We have to teach right, liberty, mutuality, the theory of contracts; we have to exterminate phraseurgy, charlatanism, chauvinism, corruption.

We must re-educate women and instill in them the following truths: — Order and cleanliness in the household are worth more than a drawing room filled with paintings by the masters. — A woman who knows how to dress with taste, cleanliness, decency, without luxury, is an artist; she who knows only how to cover herself with jewels and lace, who wears her dowry on her body, is a coarse woman, devoid of the feeling for taste and art: she can do whatever she wants, but nothing will lift her up; the more well-off she appears, the more disgusting she is. — A woman is an artist; that is precisely why the functions of the household have been assigned to her. Do we imagine by chance that she will spend her time doing watercolors or pastels?

First of all, we ourselves have to reform our lives, seek labor, practice modesty and sobriety, follow Pythagorean mores. The table is ruinous: so much the better! We will still have, along with the art of eating things properly, sobriety. We must renounce our bohemian habits, study for a long time, immerse ourselves for ten or fifteen years in mechanical labors, in business, before starting to speak to the public; guarantee our reason by our labors, produce late, and only devote ourselves entirely to literature, philosophy or the arts after forty or forty-five years of age.

Under these conditions, we will see the return of the great centuries; we will in our turn be original; we will be decidedly emancipated and freed; humanity will be able to proclaim its majority; it will be free; and this long transition, marked by the Renaissance, the Reformation and the French Revolution, will be over. Regeneration will be accomplished, and we will be able to apply to the new spirit what has been said of the ancient spirit or Holy Spirit:

Et renovabis faciem terræ.[14]

END

[14] "And you will renew the face of the earth." — TRANSLATOR.