

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE

VOL. LVI.

OCTOBER, 1898.

No. 6.



ÉDOUARD DETAILLE, PAINTER OF SOLDIERS.

WITH UNPUBLISHED SKETCHES BY DETAILLE.

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DETAILLE is tall, slender, elegant. His eyes are of a limpid blue, at once frank and observing, and "seem to be forever at work storing up impressions for the use of their master." Despite his fifty years,—he was born in Paris, October 5, 1847,—he has a youthful look. His hair is scarcely turning gray, his complexion is fresh and bright, and that fatal stoutness which comes with fifty years has generously spared him. His lip, which is almost always turned in a smile, bears a delicate *moustache à la mousquetaire*. In fine, his entire physiognomy, his external bearing, correct in spite of his elegance, and perhaps even a little conscious, express a condition of mind in which one can fancy an intimate delight in living, made up of happy memories and smiling dreams, of successes won and of hopes assured.

Detaille's grandfather was a sutler in the armies of the First Republic. The father of the painter was a lover of the arts, and, indeed, a talented draftsman, and a constant visitor in the famous studio of Horace Vernet, where the most illustrious survivors of the Grand Army were wont to meet. Thus the early youth of Detaille was passed entirely in an atmosphere fitted for the special development of the talent which to-day has blossomed out with such splendor.

From his earliest youth his eyes met with pictures of battles, his ears heard stories of combats and victories. Talking to M. Marius Vachon, who has published a noteworthy book on his art work, he expressed himself thus:

"When I was a child I fairly reveled in the albums of drawings by Raffet and Charlet. Before I could read I guessed the titles of battles, the names of famous generals, the weapons of officers and soldiers, from the pictures I had admired in military books. I remember well the visit of the Queen of England to France, and the return of the French troops from the Crimea. Besides, as a child who gave little trouble, because he was absorbed by the spectacle which unrolled itself before his eyes, I was taken everywhere. Through the kindness of my elder brother, who was chief quartermaster in the Guides of the Imperial Guard, I never missed a review, and during my holidays it was my delight to be present at the manœuvres of regiments, and to go to listen to the trumpets sounding in the forest of St. Germain.

"In 1865," he continued, "during the grand manœuvres at the camp of Châlons, which were directed by the Emperor, I had the honor—and I was not a little proud of it, when talking to my comrades—of sleeping in the same tent with Colonel Corot of the Second Cuirassiers, whose full-length portrait I afterward made. So it was that I dreamed of nothing but the epaulets, sword, and plumed cap of the military cadets of St.-Cyr."

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TWO FRIENDS.

After such an introduction to a military life, it is easy to understand Detaille's calling as a painter of soldiers. His natural disposition for designing showed itself at the Lycée Bonaparte by means of numberless sketches scrawled on the margins of his note-books, which were sought for with avidity by professors and pupils.

Almost as soon as he left the lycée he en-

tered the studio of Meissonier. That master declined to take pupils, but the inclination to art shown by young Detaille seemed to him so remarkable that he did not hesitate to interest himself in his welfare and to direct his first efforts. Combating the extraordinary facility of his pupil for improvising designs, Meissonier forced Detaille to study closely from nature, using the living model, and piti-



A GOOD PIPE.

lessly suppressed every outburst of imagination, every attempt at originality.

In 1867, with the consent of his formidable master, Detaille showed his first picture at the Salon. The young artist was nineteen at the time, and the picture he exhibited was entitled "Interior of Meissonier's Studio." It was a work full of clever observation, executed in a fine, compact style. In it the adroit application of the master's doctrine

was visible. The public noted this canvas, and was pleased. One year later Detaille appeared again at the Salon, with a larger work, bearing a more personal stamp, "Halt of the Drum Corps," which obtained a resounding success, and at the same time placed the name of the young painter in the most favorable light. One may say that at the age of twenty-one Detaille was already famous.



A PRUSSIAN GENERAL.

When, in 1870, the war broke out, Detaille, who was destined to be one of the most precise and thorough of its historians, was already in full possession of the means to express himself. His illustrious master Meissonier had passed on to him his almost excessive anxiety for perfection in work, his sleepless preoccupation in seeking out individual character in the countenance, in the attitude, and in the costume, as well as his penetrating exactness of design.

Thus prepared, Detaille departed for the frontier, attached to the staff of General Pajol; and although exempt from military service because he was the elder son of a

widow, having, besides, a brother under arms, he did not hesitate to throw himself into the terrible struggle, and was thus able to be present, death in his soul, at our first reverses, and in the terrible disorder which so wretchedly marked the beginnings of the campaign. Whirled away by the land-slide, separated from his general, he returned to Paris and entered the army. He fought at Châtillon and at Villejuif, only dropping his gun to seize his pencil and jot down on the paper with which his knapsack was crammed the most characteristic episodes of the terrible drama. These leaflets, covered with quick sketches, were the beginnings of



A MILITARY SKETCH.

famous canvases such as "Champigny," "The Mitrailleuse Fire," "The Conquerors," "A Reconnaissance," "A Salute for the Wounded," "Attack on a Convoy," and the panoramas of Champigny and Rezonville, and of many other canvases whereon are inscribed with precise and vivid lines glorious deeds or heartbreaking scenes of war. Having an exemplary conscientiousness, Detaille put into practice the rule enunciated by Charlet: "The true military painter ought to sketch everything under

fire." In November, 1870, General Appert, whose masterly portrait he was to make in 1891, added him to his staff. Welcoming the young soldier, he said with the greatest kindness: "I leave you every liberty of observing and studying. But of all things, don't permit yourself to be killed. Live on, in order to immortalize with your brush, so exact and sincere, the heroism of our beloved soldiers."

Detaille took part in the battle of Champigny, and he never speaks of that bloody

day without emotion. It was there he saw the heroic leader of the Parisian skirmishers, Commandant Franchetti, at the very moment when the latter had his thigh broken by the explosion of a shell. As the officer lay at full length, mortally wounded, in a pool of blood on a little crooked pathway, the young painter ran toward him with outstretched arms. But Franchetti, as pale as death, said to him smilingly: "It's nothing, Detaille! But make a little memento of me; no one knows what may happen."

When the Commune broke loose, Detaille departed for a foreignland, in order not to be a witness of the horrors of a civil war. At the close of the insurrection he returned to Paris. German soldiers still occupied French territory. Despite the cruel grief which their presence occasioned his patriotic heart, he yet found among them a number of comical and grotesque subjects for interpretation, which his natural good humor, not without a spice of malice and irony, made use of in the most successful way. The satirical paintings which he executed at that period make one think involuntarily of those by Carle Vernet in 1815, who cleverly got rid of his bile with his biting pencil and brush, hitting off the characteristics of the Prussian, Cossack, and English officers encamped beneath the trees of the Champs Élysées, who filled Paris with their noisy and triumphant insolence. Indeed, Detaille's art took on so intensely satirical a color that by order of the French government two of his pictures were refused at the Salon of 1872, in order to avoid a diplomatic protest on the part of Germany.

Detaille's method of composition is thus stated by him in Vachon's biography:

"I compose my pictures in my head, as a musician composes without the piano. A fine picture requires whole months of internal reflection; there are others which have germinated for years in my brain. It is only when I have completely conceived it that I throw my vision on paper; after that I seldom modify it. So it is that I compose in my thoughts; and that is true even of the most complicated things, which it is necessary to see in large masses. Then I begin the labor of putting my thought out clearly, a labor which I do not leave to chance, because I always make the first quick indications direct from nature. *I detest those smudges in which the largest rôle is played by chance!* If I make a big painting, my sketch is very definite and very much matured, without being, for that reason, what one calls executed. I find it very difficult to paint from studies. While I am copying myself I lose all my steam; it is always direct from nature that I execute each detail. That may not always prove convenient, but execution is more fresh and living when there is direct contact with nature."



A RUSSIAN GENERAL.

tion and racks crammed with weapons of all kinds. Artillery-wagons encumber the very courtyard of his house, and in the vestibule stands a stuffed horse waiting for the harnesses which are ranged in perfect order in the harness-room. It is in the midst of such "documents," classified with method, like the books of a library, that the artist conceives, arranges, and executes his work.

Following in the footsteps of the Vernets, Charlet, Raffet, Bellangé, Yvon, and Meissoniers, he aims to be likewise the inspired historian of the Napoleonic triumphs, those of the First and those of the Second Empire.

Detaille's studio on the Boulevard Malesherbes is to-day a military museum. Here are wide clothes-presses running over with uniforms of every na-

Detaille often relates the following amusing anecdote:

"One day in 1805 Napoleon was riding on horseback through the streets and quays of Boulogne, examining all the details and organization of the flotilla of invasion, when a child, eager to see him, got in his way.

"With such a memory in the family," added the painter, laughing, "it would have been very difficult for me not to have been especially interested in Napoleon."

Among the numerous paintings which the Napoleonic epoch inspired in Detaille are "Vive l'Empereur!" "Charge of the Fourth



AT THE TUILERIES. (1860.)

"In order to avoid crushing the child under his horse's hoofs, the Emperor suddenly reined in his steed. But the stoppage was so sudden that the imperial rider slipped his stirrups, and, like the least of ordinary mortals, stretched himself at full length in the mud near the child, who was too frightened to move.

"'Cursed brat!' he cried; and, quickly mounting his horse, he continued his inspection."

That brat was no other than Detaille's father.

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Hussars on the Banks of the Niemen," "The Taking of the Standard," "Staff of a Cuirassier Brigade," "Charge of the Empress's Dragoons," "Sally of the Garrison of Hüningen," "Officer of Cuirassiers Seizing a Standard," "Reconnaissance in a Wood," "First Hussars Skirmishing," etc. In these canvases Detaille causes all the types of the soldiers of the Grand Army to defile before our eyes, from those of the grumblers of Italy and Egypt, to the conscripts at Lützen, Bautzen, and the campaign of France. It is like a review of all the corps,

of all the uniforms, of all the costumes. It is an artistic and historical work, equally adapted to move and instruct the observer.

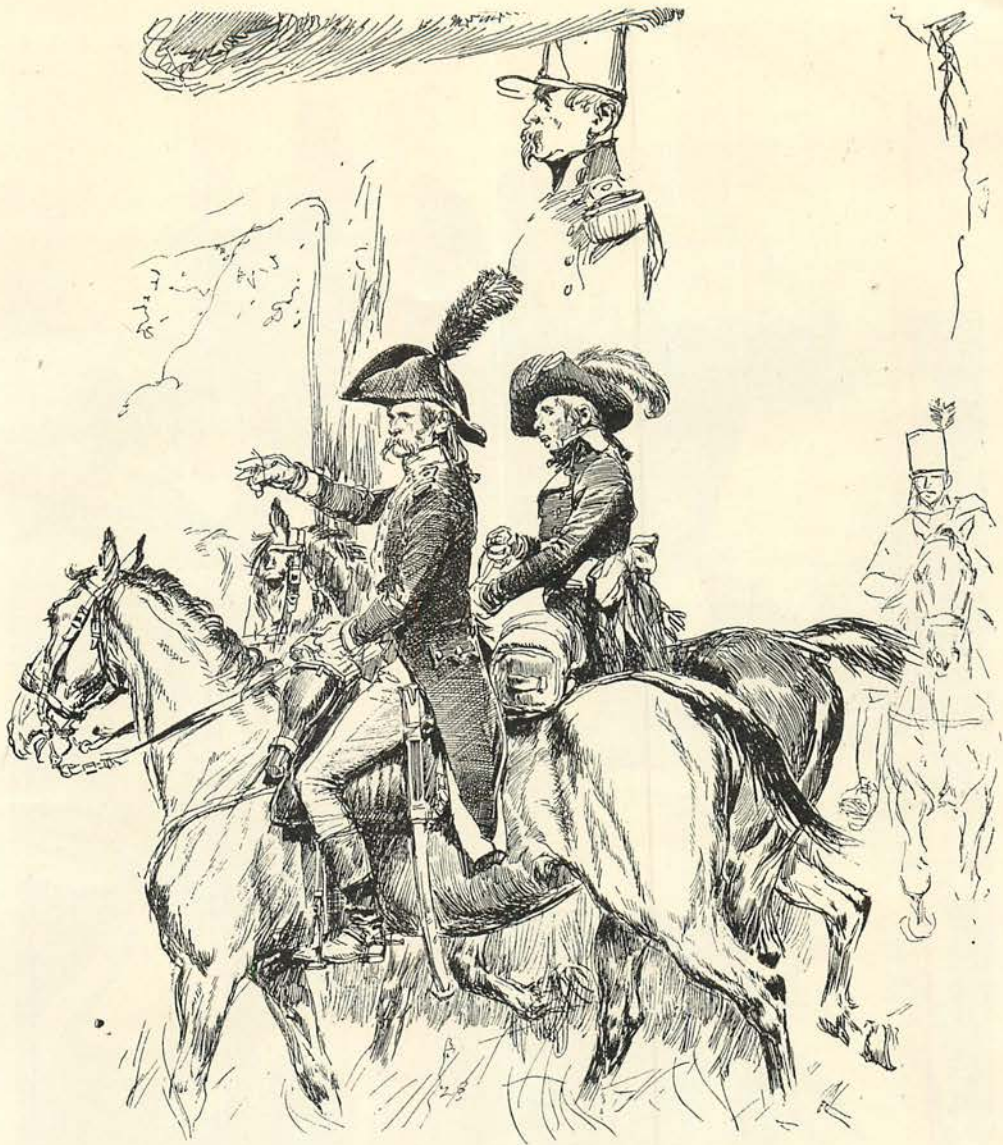
In the midst of these dazzling lines of proud paraders there often appears the countenance of Napoleon, an epic form which is always in conformity with history, and yet never shocking to the traditions of legendary lore. Detaille has always borne in mind the precise indications which his illustrious master gave him regarding the face of the Emperor, and which were communicated to Meissonnier himself by the contemporaries of Napoleon. Not content with amassing such documentary proofs, he has summed up in a clever synthesis the characteristic traits of Napoleon, gathered from the works of Gros, Boizot, and Houdon. Raffet had created the legendary outline of Napoleon; Meissonnier, with his pointed and profound brush, had in a certain sense etched the features of the face and had caused to live again therein the soul of a man who was by turns mysterious, disdainful, violent, and despotic. Evidently Detaille has seen his formidable sitter through the personal vision accorded to Meissonnier. Nevertheless, it must be allowed that he has known how to give an original aspect to his Napoleonic interpretation by a clever study of familiar attitudes, careless gestures, and expressive and sometimes smiling play of physiognomy. The Bonaparte of Raffet, borne along in the gallop of his white horse, in the midst of the smoke of the guns and the dust of the dead, has something fantastic about it, while that of Meissonnier, grave and melancholy under the little gray hat and coat, appears fatal, like destiny, even in the hours of his most glorious triumphs—as much so in 1810 as in 1814. Detaille himself shows him to us under an aspect less tragic and less Olympian. His emperor is a kind of god made man. One may say that he has made the terrible face human, without having lessened its grandeur.

In his paintings of the soldiers of the Grand Army it is to be noted that Detaille evokes very often the imposing image of the supreme chief, now by means of a lofty outline, now by a living portrait. On the contrary, the figure of Napoleon III appears seldom in the frame of the battalions of that glorious army, worthy of its forerunner, which had victoriously borne the tricolor banner in the Crimea, in Italy, in Mexico, in China, before heroically succumbing beneath the weight of inexorable fate at Metz and at Sedan.

The painting of the army of the Second

Empire (at least, until the final disaster) seems rather a solemn and majestic defiling of fine soldiers in glittering uniforms, haughty in bearing, and of characteristic types, but entirely different from those of 1798, of 1810, and of 1815. In Detaille's hands a rifleman or a soldier of the line belonging to the Second Empire did not resemble a volunteer of the army of Sambre-et-Meuse, any more than he looked like a grenadier from Wagram or Austerlitz. Alas! that splendid army of the Second Empire, which was soon to disappear like a shadow, how the great artist has described it forever, when, trumpets and music in the lead, blindly confiding in its destiny, it paraded before the Tuileries or on the plains of Longchamps and Châlons! Behold the Guides, with gigantic Turkish *kobaks* on their heads; the lively *voltigeurs*, with yellow brandenburgs and shakos bearing acorns; the grenadiers, with white corselets and tall furred hats. Then the handsome dragoons of the Empress, as blue as corn-flowers; the *chasseurs d'Afrique*, mounted on their lean Arab horses, the tails of which reach the ground; the lancers of the Guard, wearing on their heads a *schapska* with cocks' feathers; the artillerymen, in rich, somber uniform; the cuirassiers, in white-leather breeches and helmets with long horsehair plumes. And all these march by with jollity and pride while the drums roll and the trumpets sound in a hubbub of music and cheers. No one has expressed better than Detaille the sparkling splendor, the devil-may-care bearing, the unconscious vanity, of that superb army. And after the somber hours of defeat none was to paint with more art and poignant emotion its heroic resistance, its savage despair, its heartrending misfortune. Who does not know and admire the tragic panorama of the battles of Rezonville and Champigny, which he painted with his friend De Neuville, the "Struggle in the Crenelated Farm," the "Salute to the Wounded," the "Mitrailleuse Fire," the "Questioning the Prisoners," "In Retreat," "The Conquerors," and many another canvas suggestive of sorrow to the conquered, in their faithfulness to history—pictures which photography and engraving have made so popular?

Detaille has not contented himself with painting the French soldier. Like his great ancestors in art, Raffet and Horace Vernet, he has also wished to bear his marvelous spirit of observation beyond the frontiers of his country. He brought back from England, from Austria, from Russia, military studies



A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE ARMY. (FIRST REPUBLIC.)

of the most vivid interest, and even important canvases, which belong among the most remarkable of his paintings.

Among those most justly admired are the "Tower of London," "Scots Guards Returning from Exercise," "Life Guards at the Manœuvres," "Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught at the Camp at Aldershot," "The Cossacks of the Ataman," "Bivouac of the Sharpshooters of the Imperial Family."

He brought back from Vienna merely a number of interesting sketches. No important canvas has resulted from this campaign of studies in Austria. But they have served

the painter by furnishing him with ethnographic types for the Austrian troops who figure in the "Sally of the Garrison of Hüningen," one of the painter's most considerable works, now in a place of honor at the Luxembourg Museum.

Édouard Detaille is essentially a military painter, and one of the greatest of the century. But it would be understanding his work imperfectly, if one were to regard it exclusively as the representation of the life of the soldier. Without considering certain delightful genre pictures, vivid and clever in color, like the "Interior of Meissonier's Studio," "Reading the Newspapers," "A Café



THE CUIRASSIER IN CONSULTATION.

under the Directory," "The Funeral of Pasteur," etc., it is to be noted that Detaille has executed some very fine portraits. He has also tried several times the satirical and humorous genre, as the illustrations prove which decorate this article and reveal to readers a new Detaille.

Recently, while I was watching him put the last touches on his picture, "The Czar and the President of the Republic

Returning from the Review at Châlons,"¹—it was in his studio on the Boulevard Malesherbes,—the artist showed me these unpublished drawings and told me familiarly in what circumstances they were made.

"I am often in the habit," said he, "of dining with my mother tête-à-tête. That is the

¹ This picture was in the Salon of 1898, at Paris, and is destined for the military galleries in the museum of Versailles.



A DISPUTE ABOUT THE BILLETING OF A SOLDIER.

most delightful hour in my old-bachelor life. After dinner we pass to the drawing-room, and there the tender dialogue continues. Very soon drowsiness comes upon my old mother, who kisses me, and retires to her bedroom. Then I remain alone in the gentle atmosphere of the maternal drawing-room, where, while I smoke numerous cigarettes (you know that is my great vice), I let my pen and pencil run freely on white pages piled up before me. In that restful exercise I forget the great and onerous works which are ushered in by endless meditations, the final execution of which requires so much effort."

Of course I was aware that the most illustrious artists have had a taste for humorous compositions as a mere relief to their works and studies; yet up to that day I had never suspected in the tragic painter of the "Battle of Champigny" and of "The Dream" so jovial a turn for satire.

Detaille's irony is never malignant, never coarse. Gaiety, and gaiety alone, directs his pencil, that good old frank gaiety of Gaul, born of the constantly renewed spectacle of the cross-purposes and eccentricities of mankind, and of the ridiculous aspect of faces. In these amusing caricatures the soldier

is almost always the principal personage. But often the great artist brings—very irreverently—ecclesiastics on the scene, fat-paunched monks, nay, even prelates whom the fumes of wine have rendered gay. But the style in which all these little amusing scenes are described is so gleaming with good humor and frank gaiety that no one can be shocked, that all the world will be forced to laugh. Sometimes, however, without question, the artist is malicious; but he never has the intention to wound or hurt, or even to cause displeasure. It would be possible to find the prototypes of most of these characters in the personages of Rabelais and Béranger.

Never was soul of artist more completely

reflected in his work than is Detaille's. There it is to the full, with all his burning patriotism, his deep historical conscientiousness, his almost boyish enthusiasm. His soul expands into majestic and solemn grandeur in the series of beautiful paintings of the French army. It appears emotional and quivering in "The Dream" ("Le rêve"), in "The Victims of Duty," in "The Sally of the Garrison of Hüningen," in the "Retour de Châlons." It reveals itself in all its jovial kindness, its clever and gentle irony, in the humorous sketches, which may be placed in sequence with those of his famous predecessors, the Vernets, Raffet, Charlet, and so on, without fear that the comparisons would be to his disadvantage.



FORT RICHELIEU.

THE WERWOLVES.

BY H. BEAUGRAND.

WITH PICTURES BY HENRY SANDHAM.

I.

A MOTLEY and picturesque-looking crowd had gathered within the walls of Fort Richelieu to attend the annual distribution of powder and lead, to take part in the winter drills and target practice, and to join in the Christmas festivities, that would last until the fast-approaching New Year.

Coureurs des bois from the Western country, scouts, hunters, trappers, militiamen, and habitants from the surrounding settlements, Indian warriors from the neighboring tribe of friendly Abenakis, were all placed under the military instruction of the company of regular marine infantry that garrisoned the fort constructed in 1665, by M. de Saurel, at the mouth of the Richelieu River, where

it flows into the waters of the St. Lawrence, forty-five miles below Montreal.

It was on Christmas eve of the year 1706, and the dreaded Iroquois were committing depredations in the surrounding country, burning farm-houses, stealing cattle and horses, and killing every man, woman, and child whom they could not carry away to their own villages to torture at the stake.

The Richelieu River was the natural highway to the Iroquois country during the open season, but now that its waters were ice-bound, it was hard to tell whence the attacks from those terrible savages could be expected.

The distribution of arms and ammunition having been made, under the joint super-