Traditional family in the novels of Paul Bourget, Rene Bazin, Maurice Barres, and Henry Bordeaux

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THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY IN THE NOVELS OF
PAUL BOURGET, RENE BAZIN, MAURICE BARRÉS,
AND HENRY BORDEAUX

By

Sister Margaret of Providence Turmell

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts.

Montana State University

1941

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Part I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is threefold: (1) to review the works of the traditional novelists, Paul Bourget, René Bazin, Maurice Barrès, and Henry Bordeaux; (2) to show how each author treated the development of the traditional family; and (3) to show how their works were a protest against the realistic methods of French fiction, and the modernistic ideas that had arisen after the French Revolution, and which were to affect the traditional family.

The survey of the traditional family is too vast a subject to complete. Not all the novels of the four novelists have been reviewed but only those that were available on the subject. Among some of the most important of each author reviewed, and from which I have quoted the most frequently, are: *L'Etape*, *Drame De Famille*, and *Le Roman Des Quatres*, by Bourget; *La Terre Qui Meurt*, *Les Noellet*, *Les Oberlé*, *Les Nouveaux Oberlé*, and *La Barrière*, by Bazin; *La Peur De Vivre*, *Les Roquevillard*, *Ames Modernes*, *La Maison*, *Les Pierres Du Foyer*, and *La Croisée Des Chemins*, by H. Bordeaux; *Les Déracinés*, and *Au Service de l'Allemagne*, by Maurice Barrès.

Each novel has been reviewed with the aim of showing how each author treated the development of the traditional

*In collaboration with Gérard d'Houville, Henri Duvernois, René Benoit.*
family, and especially the particular phase in which each one was most interested.

An attempt was also made to discover how the traditional authors reacted against the modernistic ideas that were affecting French Society after the French Revolution, and that were being spread to the rural districts. In the following chapters it will be seen how the authors praised and uplifted the modes of living found in the traditional families, since these families formed the most stable people of France.

Finally, the conclusion deals with some general characteristics of the traditional family, and an attempt to show the viewpoint of each author.
Part II
A BRIEF HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

Until the French Revolution, France placed her strength and glory in her old form of society, her provincial families, who were the fruit of the experiences of the ages. The country of France was divided into Provinces, practically all agricultural, and have been since the early centuries. Among some of the provincial districts which have played an important part as the background of our study, may be named: Savoie, Anjou, Alsace Lorraine, Provence, the Basque country, and Bretagne. France had a right to glory in her dense population, supplied largely by the rural districts. These people were the descendants of hardy and sturdy races that had cultivated and inherited the same land for centuries. The families formed a long line of successive generations, strong and persevering, true to the traditions of their ancestors, which they were careful to transmit to their successors.

Speaking of the ancestors of his country, Bazin wrote the following words to the children of France:

"Dans le même paysage où vous vivez, enfants, presque toujours vos parents ont vécu, non seulement ceux que vous avez pu connaître, mais ceux qui respiraient, parlaient, et songeaient aux dix-huitième siècle, au quinzième, au treizième, et plus loin encore dans les âges écoules."

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1 René Bazin, Le Douce France, p. 4.
The provincial families were divided into two classes, the bourgeois, and the peasant. The bourgeoisie were the more influential peasants, who had risen through generations from poor peasantry. By toil and hard work, or tradition, they had acquired industries, or professional and administrative positions.

It was not uncommon to see lawyers and doctors among this class, who exercised their profession in their home town, at the same time managing their traditional domain. Many had risen to a more aristocratic bourgeoisie, and they lived in the larger cities of France, where they took an important part in politics, or in various professions. The bourgeoisie were useful citizens, thrifty, industrious, honest, and possessed a great respect for authority.

The peasant's lot was harder. He was often poor and miserable. Often, through inheritance he became the possessor of a small piece of land. Sometimes he was too poor to exist without help, so he depended on charity. Charity was not wanting, as it formed an outstanding characteristic of the man of the soil. Patiently, and perseveringly, the peasant cultivated his land and in a short time, he became independent and happy. Through thrifty habits, it was possible for him to subsist on a small farm, and by saving a few "écus" he was soon able to purchase more land. The majority of France's population were peasants: they were the controlling
factors in the political life of the country, and the backbone of France.

For the traditional families, religion played an important role in their lives. They practiced the traditional religion of their forefathers, Catholicism. True and loyal to these practices, in the least detail, they made religion part of their lives, and often called upon Divine Providence to alleviate the hardships life inflicted upon them. On its part, the Catholic Church was unrivalled as a charitable agency. Its power in the works of education was great. Its hospitals cared for the sick, and the religious orders offered a refuge to the weary and sorrowful. No one could speak, but with respect of the peasant priests, whose humble duty was to succor and help those in need. In the poorer districts, the village priests often suffered from poverty and hardships, although they were happy that their lot was to serve the poor. Poverty was regarded as a blessing from God. Among the wealthier class the priest possessed his land and lived a more comfortable life.

Before 1789, education was entirely under the control of the clergy. The state controlled only a few schools, for instance, the Royal College (or the Collège de France). In the villages, the curé taught the boys who were promising. Usually the elementary schools for boys were conducted by the friars, and the girls attended the convent schools. The
Jesuit schools were opened to the richer bourgeoisie, and to the aristocrats. Latin and mathematics were the essential subjects of the upper classes. Many scholarship and charitable institutions existed at that time, which gave an opportunity to many of the poorer class to receive higher instruction. All in all, the education was not as inefficient before the Revolution as many believed it to be.

The bond of unity that existed between parents and children was the strongest tie in the French family. Having received it as heritage from the preceding generation, the family settled in the old traditional home, "la maison." With the inheritance, it had become the guardian of the old traditional customs, that bind the members from generation to generation. The members of the family were numerous. They included not only the living, but the dead, as well as the unborn. The father was the first authority in the home, and he exercised his authority according to tradition. The children lived under obedience as long as they remained at home. The family formed a little society, and its members all worked towards its permanent establishment, and continuation. Duty towards the family claimed first place, and that of the individual was only secondary. It was apparent that the family, with its traditions must continue, and unless it had been followed with persistent fidelity, the society could not exist in the form, which it had inherited from the past, and was to transmit to the future.
The Revolution had ruined the ancient order by laying violent hands on the traditions and institutions of the past. France was to face a period of progress, socially and economically. The expansion of industry through scientific development led to the growth of commerce, increase of wealth, and the rise of cities. These economic activities gave France wonderful financial stability. The industrial class, composed of the bourgeoisie, acquired wealth and gained more political power. On the other hand, the peasant laborers had a chance to increase their land and become rich.

Not only was progress taking place in the economic world, but in the intellectual world as well. We saw that, before the Revolution, education was entirely under the control of the clergy, except for a few institutions. After the Revolution the universities ceased to exist, and the entire school system was under reconstruction. The convents had been dispersed, and the priests were banished, and hence there existed a dearth of competent teachers.

Shortly after the Revolution, according to Albert L. Guérard, only two law schools and three medical schools were left for the whole of France. Elementary education, and the lycées, which were nothing but the old colleges, existed. They emphasized rhetoric and Latin. The boarding school system was restored with all its previous rigor. The lycées were supposed to supply general knowledge needed for life.
Any superior education was entrusted to technical schools. Here degrees were granted for professions, which marked the end of superior education. Later the Normal School and Polytechnical School were created. In the Normal School, the entrance examination was so severe that only a few attended. The Polytechnical School, also, had a select few.

Other schools were created at this period, but the most noted one was the Imperial University, created in 1806 by the First Consul. It granted every type of degree. It did not last long, however, and by 1850 the university was closed.

Thus, later, primary and elementary schools were opened in all the small villages of the provinces, and the Church schools were restored. Boarding schools, both State and Church, existed again. Jesuit Colleges and lycées for girls were reopened. We shall see later that many of our traditional families sent their sons and daughters to these boarding schools and colleges. Education was constantly improving, which presented many pedagogical problems.

As we have seen, many schools had been split and reorganized, and education had suffered much. At this period, i.e. after the Revolution, also, many new philosophies found their way into the universities, which filled the minds of the young students contrary to all previous theories learned. This encouraged many students who, at that period, were prejudiced to clericalism and who were looking for lay morality.
It, likewise, plunged many others into a disordered state of mind and produced ill effect on society.

Finally, war, as well as social and industrial progress, awakened the peasant from his quiet and peaceful life, and attracted the younger generation of the country, to leave the countryside for the more prosperous life of the city. Consequently, racial customs were broken and traditionalism began to disappear, which lead to the decline of the strong and sturdy races of France. M. Robert de la Sizeranne describes the movement in the following words:

"Cependant le paysan évoluait. Sous la triple influence de progrès industriel, de la concurrence économique, et de l'instruction primaire, il perdait peu à peu son pittoresque, ses traditions et sa passivité. Les vestes bretonnes laissaient tomber leurs boutons de corne et les paludières leurs cuirasses d'or; les Arlésiennes dénouaient la coiffe noire, les pêcheurs méditerranéensjetaient le bonnet rouge, les Pyrénéens le béret blanc. Le paysan voyait peu à peu la terre s'appauvrir entre ses mains, un mal inconnu flétrir sa vigne, une influence néfaste, venue d'au-delà de l'Atlantique, avilir son blé. Il entendait un éclat de rire sorti des villes pour-suivre son curé, ses Rogations, toutes les croyances et tous les symboles qui avaient jusque-là ou endormi sa plainte, ou facilité sa résignation. Il a entendu les docteurs, les savants de ce monde lui murmurer le mot d'orde des cosmopolites, que trop de richesse ou trop de misère déracine: ubi bene, ibi patria. Il a tourné les yeux vers les grandes cités, curieux de leur mouvement, ambitieux de leurs plaisirs. Il a pris le train qui passait devant sa porte, ayant noué son mouchoir sur toute sa fortune, et il est allé vers le trou béant et noir des grandes gares de la capitale, voir ce qu'était ce monde puissant, savant et beau qui l'avait jusque-là méprisé..."²

However, France was not devoid of its moral writers, who were tired of the old theme of Parisian society. Up to this time, the life of Paris with its wealth, its glamour, and its pleasure seemed to be the only source from which writers drew their inspirations, but now that the opportunity presented itself, they were alert to take up the new theme afforded them by the provincial family.

No one was more prepared for this work than the traditional writers, Bourget, Barrès, Basin, and Bordeaux, who lived and wrote between the years 1852 until the present day, and whose works have been reviewed for the study. They were born in provincial districts and, with the exception of Bourget, were all shaped by their environment. All four belonged to the Traditional Group of writers, which writers protested against the realistic methods of French fiction, and the new philosophies that had arisen previous and after the French Revolution. Therefore the traditional writers shunned the Parisian novel theme and pictured the wholesomeness of the family instead. They found that the strength of the French nation resided in that part of France where the families had long been stationary, laborious, obscure, and devout.
PART III

SOME NOTES ON THE LIFE AND WORKS
OF THE TRADITIONAL AUTHORS

Paul Bourget (1852-1935), started his career in the 1870s, at the time of the Parnassian and realist circles. He was a witness of the moral anxiety that existed at the end of the nineteenth century. He is presented to us first as a critic, a psychologist, and later a moralist or traditionalist.

He was born in 1852 at Amiens, of the bourgeois class. His father was a professor, and a state functionary. Bourget traveled with his parents. He said of himself:

"Baptisé à Amiens, j'ai commencé d'apprendre à lire à Strasbourg, pour faire mes premières études à Clermont en Auvergne et les achever à Paris."  

He attended the Collège Saint Barbe in Paris, and later the Lycée Louis le Grand. He was a great reader and buried himself in the books of Taine and Renan, of Stendhal, Flaubert, and Leconte de Lisle, also Balzac, Musset, and Baudelaire, which shaped his mind more than any other outside influence.

Unwilling to follow his father's profession, his allowance was stopped, and for sometime he struggled in poverty. He earned a living by tutoring, attended lectures, and at the same time he wrote verses, which appeared in smaller magazines. He undertook a study of his favorite authors,

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1Paul Bourget, Lettres Autobiographiques, p. 4.
Taine and Renan, Baudelaire, the Goncourt brothers, and Leconte de Lisle, and showed his mastery in the "Essai sur la psychologie contemporaine" (1885), which summed up their literary ideals. In the discussion of their ideals, Bourget presented a tableau of the influences which formed the intellectual young Frenchman of that period. The essays were the first work in which he showed his spirit of analysis. Jules Lemaitre said of him:

"...l'instrument dont s'est servi M. Bourget lui-même, pour approfondir les sentiments les plus distingués de sa génération ou pour les faire naître en lui: l'analyse."\(^2\)

The analytical characteristic with which Bourget treated the essays determined the three types of novels which he was to produce in his writing career: psychological, social, and conservative.

Bourget's first novels showed him as a psychologist with modern love, in the higher class and the aristocracy, as his center of interest. He chose this theme because, he said to Henry James:

"Cet art est le plus moderne de tous, le plus souple, le plus capable de s'accommoder aux nécessités variées de chaque nature humaine."\(^3\)

Among this type of novels he wrote Cruelle Enigme (1885), Crime d'Amour (1886), and André Cornelis (1887). In them,

\(^2\)Jules Lemaitre, Les Contemporains, p. 349.

\(^3\)René Lalou, Littérature Française Contemporaine, p. 105.
Bourget treated problems of conscience, of scruples, of remorse, always attempting to moralise by showing that there could be no happiness where there were no morals, and no morals where there was no social or religious order. Jules Lemaitre criticized Bourget as overdoing his works on passionate psychology, and he said:

"Les tragédies de l'amour occupent-elles donc toute la vie? Qu'il applique à l'analyse d'autres passions que celle de l'amour."4

But in 1889, Bourget changed from his realistic novels to those of the sociological type, in which he treated of the problems that affected the people of his own country. He wrote *Le Disciple* (1889), in which he undertook to defend the moral responsibility of the writer. Touched by such problems, he sought a solution in political and moral traditions and began a series of problem novels and short stories, in which he advocated a return to Catholicism; and urged stability of the traditional family; no divorce; no division of property; the privilege of the eldest son to be restored; and the slow evolution from a lower to an upper class.

*L'Etape* (1902), was Bourget's greatest work in traditionalism, followed by *Un Divorce* (1904), *Le Démon de Midi* (1914), *L'Emigre* (1907), *La Barricade* (1910), *Le Roman des Quatre* (1925-1926), *Le Tribun* (1911), and the short stories,

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*In collaboration with G. d'Houville, H. Duvernois, René Benoit.*
Drames de Famille (1900), and Les Deux Soeurs (1912). In l'Etape, Bourget presented the problems that resulted from the numerous breaks in tradition. He endeavored to correct them by emphasizing the necessity of religious education and gradual, traditional development. L'Etape is valuable as a study of the intellectual life in France at that period. Here, as in many of his other books, he has long pages of psychological analysis; otherwise, the book is interesting and the plot is artistically constructed. Un Divorce condemned divorce and upheld the Catholic doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage, and proved the hardship brought upon children of divorced parents. In Le Drames de Famille, Bourget is concerned with marriage of unlike origin. He attributed the cause of the decadence of the French race to such marriages. In Le Roman des Quatre, he insisted on the solid foundation of the family as the means of stability.

Although the French critic Albert Guérard did not like Bourget's works, because he was not convinced of his sincerity, he described them as:

"...the most skilful technician; the structure of his best novels is wellnigh faultless; and his worst enemies recognize that his psychology, albeit ponderous, obtrusive, often convincing, not seldom profound."

No one ever wrote so contrary to the ideas of the time and yet survived, as did René Bazin (1853-1932). His novels

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5Albert Léon Guérard, Five Masters of French Romance, p. 176.
were a protest against the Naturalistic and Realistic methods, and his purpose was far from the fiction of that period. He advocated the country instead of the city, and the family as opposed to disorder. He did not endeavor to follow Bourget, by using modern society for his theme, but rather, he portrayed the sweetness, purity, and beautiful life of the French family.

Bazin possessed the finest virtues of the Catholic bourgeoisie, piety, social-mindedness, and purity of vision, and he was inspired by high religious ideals.

He was born in the province of Anjou. On account of his delicate health, he was brought up in the country where he learned the life of the artisan and the peasant. He took up law and practiced for a while. For many years he taught criminal law, but he finally gave up teaching to devote his time to writing.

No one was more qualified to write of provincial France than Bazin. He has written more on the customs of his own province, because it was closest to his heart; nevertheless, he was acquainted with other provinces, as well, and many of his novels have their settings in the other provinces. He made his main theme, the love of the peasant for his native soil, touching at times on some of the problems of the hour. In his theme he advocated a return to the soil, and the welfare of the working man, and encouraged Christian resignation, charity, and self-sacrifice as the means to happiness.
Brunetièrè, on the occasion of Bazin's reception in the French Academy in 1888, recalled the words of La Bruyère:

"Celui qui se jette dans le peuple ou dans la province, y fait bientôt, s'il a des yeux, d'étranges découvertes."  

According to Brunetièrè, his works have been divided into two groups, separated by a period of travel. His first novels, Stéphanette (1884), Ma Tante Giron (1886), Une Tache d'Encre (1888), Les Noellet (1891), A l'Aventure (1891), La Sarcelle Bleue (1892), lack force and color but are filled with sweetness and charm. Brunetièrè characterized the above works, when he said:

"There are not enough wolves in your sheep-cotes, and the few who do succeed in breaking through are speedily transformed into something like lambs."  

But after his travels, Bazin's knowledge of humanity had widened, and he was able to impart more strength, vitality, and individuality to his works.

By 1892, he had produced his masterpieces, which included descriptions of country scenes and peasant life in various parts of France: La Terre qui Meurt (1898), Les Oberlé (1901), Donatienne (1902), and Le Blé qui Lève (1907).

In La Terre qui Meurt, Bazin painted with skill the Marais de Vendée. In the story, the writer was concerned

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7Winifred Stephens, French Novels of Today, p. 232.
with the ruin that resulted to the country from emigration to the city. He treated of the problem of the "déracinés" and blamed the children for leaving the parents and the farm. In *Les Oberlé*, the setting was laid in Alsace Lorraine, in the Vosges, amid the peasants in the valley. The story showed a well established Alsatian family divided among itself, due to the two rival civilizations in Eastern France. The innate love of country was deeply rooted in the young man.

*Donatienne* is the story of a Breton peasant and his wife. Poverty was their lot and Donatienne, like many other Bretons, abandoned her home and babies to hire herself in a wealthy home in Paris. The problem is the result of a "déracinée," Donatienne, in Parisian society, and the broken home of the poor peasant. Bazin's landscapes are colorful and picturesque, and nowhere is peasant character so forcibly revealed.

Of the story, Monsieur Brunetière related the following praise:

"I do not think," he said, "that the instinctive, unconscious yet divine philosophy of repentance and pardon has ever been better expressed, or in terms simpler and stronger in any tale by Dickens, or Maupassant."

In *Le Blé qui Lève*, set in central France in the forests of La Nièvre, Bazin showed us the tyranny of trade unions of France among the woodcutters.

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Among other novels dealing with traditions may be mentioned *La Barrière* (1910), which presented a traditional family who had neglected the religion of their forefathers, and the result, the lack of religion had on such a home. *Les Noéllet* (1891), is the story of a peasant boy who abandoned his parents and the farm to enter the priesthood. The boy chose his vocation of his own will and failed miserably.

Bazin wrote in all about forty novels. Among some of his later works which treat of religious subjects and which have been highly praised are *Père de Foucauld*, *Pie X*, and *Saints du Sahara*. Doumic, in paying tribute editorially to the life and work of Bazin, said: "...one of which is worthy of the other, and the perfect harmony existing between which is a beautiful and moving example."9

A fellow-novelist, Paul Bourget, said of Maurice Barrès, (1862-1923):

"Of the young men who since 1880 have entered the French literary world, M. Barrès is certainly the most famous."10

As Bourget was called the moralist of the Traditional Group, Barrès may be called the poet, being one of the most original French writers, and a master of style, with something classical about his writing. He started in the early 1890's,

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as a disciple of Renan, imbied with his deterministc
psychology.

M. Barrès was a native of Lorraine, born in 1862, at
Charmes-sur-Moselle. His early impressions of public life
were the days when the Prussians and Germans invaded his
country, and when some members of his family were taken in
hostage by the Prussians. So, from his early infancy, he
had imbied the spirit of Nationalism, which he possessed
all his life and gave vent to in his works.

When only fourteen years of age, Barrès attended the
lycée of Nancy, where he hoped to hear mingled with Parisian
culture something of his beloved land, but he was entrusted
to the brilliant philosopher, Burdeau, whose ideas were alto-
gether contrary from his own. Burdeau believed in detachment
from traditions, from the discipline of the forefathers, and
offered in their stead, Kant, Hugo, and Taine's philosophies,
the French thought of the nineteenth century, which over-
threw all theories previously learned.

So great was the change, that Barrès was plunged in such
a disorder of mind that it became difficult for him to read-
just himself. For sometime his thought was turned on himself,
and he developed "Le Culte du Moi" which was a development
of his own mind, within himself, with no communication from
the exterior. At this period he wrote his first books on
the ego-worship, in which he tested personally, the literary
and philosophical ideals of his great masters. The books were Sous l'Oeil des Barbares (1888), l'Homme Libre (1889), and Le Jardin de Bérénice (1891).

Barrès had mingled in politics at an early age, at the time when the political life of France was filled with controversies, the Dreyfus, Panama, and Boulanger Affairs, in which he played an active part. At this period, he wrote his trilogy of novels, Le Roman de l'Energie Nationale, which he devoted to the defense of his belief. Barrès was a dilettante and was always searching for something different to thrill. The controversies of France furnished him with ample food. Les Déracinés (1897), the first of the series, and probably his masterpiece, was a plea against the French educational system of his day. The thought is regionalistic. He declared that it was dangerous to uproot men from their province and to estrange them from the culture of their race, by such ideals as were taught. The background of the story is laid in the lycée of Nancy, at the time that Barrès attended. In l'Appel au Soldat (1900), the sequel of Les Déracinés, the same characters appear in the midst of the Boulangist revolution. In this book Barrès shows the effect that the ancient teachers had on the young students of Lorraine, who attended the lycée de Nancy. He said:

"Cet ancien professeur de lycée de Nancy, qui jadis aurait dû élever les petits provinciaux à la conscience française, et en même temps, les considérer comme des
faits lorrains et tenir compte de leurs particularités, le voilà député de Nancy. Le voilà une voix de la France et de la Lorraine dans une assemblée qui devrait être la conscience nationale agissante et parlante.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{Leurs Figures} (1902), narrated the crisis of the early nineties of the Panama affair.

So far, the development of Barrès' works have been from egotism to regionalism, and then to nationalism, and in his next trilogy, he claimed his evolution complete, \textit{Les Bas-tions de l'Est}, which include \textit{Colette Bandoche} (1909), \textit{Au Service de l'Allemagne} (1905), and \textit{Les Amitiés Françaises} (1903). The books are simple and profoundly human, almost colorless, and rather religious. In them, he treated of the problems of the two annexed provinces. Among the most crucial trials for the Alsatians and Lorrainers, was the renunciation of their traditional past.

The spirit of nationalism and regionalism has been highly criticized in Barrès. Albert L. Guérard said of him:

"Barrès has sought to narrow down the ideal of France from the service of mankind to the cult of an incomplete and local tradition..."\textsuperscript{12}

Barrès' last book, \textit{La Colline Inspirée} (1913), is more of a narration than a novel, in which the writer seems to be troubled with faith, mysteries, and heresies. The restoration of Alsace Lorraine justified his lifetime doctrines.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Maurice Barrès, L'Appel au Soldat}, p.45.
\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Albert Guérard, Five Masters of French Romance}, p.247.
On December 4, 1923, Maurice Barrès died at the age of sixty.

Like the three preceding novelists, Henry Bordeaux (1870- ) was a staunch adherer to traditionalism. He was the descendant of a long line of magistrates and public officials. His father was a great upholder of piety and discipline. He inculcated in his children a great respect for tradition, for the family, and for France, especially rural France. The picturesque landscapes of his own beloved province, Savoy, inspired his best works: Les Roquevillard (1906), La Peur de Vivre (1903), La Maison (1912), Le Barrage (1925), Les Pierres du Foyer (1916), and others.

Bordeaux was educated at the College of Thonon and at the Sorbonne. Between 1890 and 1900, he practiced law. During the war, from 1914 to 1918, he fought for his country as captain and then as colonel, and in 1919 he was elected a member of the French Academy. In 1920, William H. Scheifley wrote of his election:

"The election of Bordeaux to the French Academy will meet with the approval at home and abroad. He is not only the most popular novelist of France: he is also a patriot, whose war record as captain and major has been crowned by literary service in writing the glowing pages of La Vie Héroïque de Guynemer, and La Chanson de Verdun."13

As a writer Bordeaux was a critic, a novelist, and a recorder of war events. In criticism he was a pupil of Paul

Bourget and of M. Taine. His chief work of criticism was
*Ames Modernes* (1894), which consisted of an inquiry on the
main authors he had read, namely: Henrik Ibsen, Pierre
Loti, Jules Lemaitre, Anatole France, José-Maria de Heredia,
Paul Bourget, Le Vicomte É. de Vogué, and Edouard Rod.

Bourget said of him at this period:

"Il paraît oublier la vie, et il vit à cette minute même, d'une vie plus intense que s'il cueillait les
fleurs parfumées, que s'il regardait le mélancolique
Occident, que s'il serrait les fragiles doigts d'une
jeune fille."\(^{14}\)

In the analysis, *Ames Modernes*, he learned his great lesson
of tradition, which determined his literary direction. He
said:

"J'ai gardé le goût de longues promenades, mais je
sais que je rentreraï chez moi. Les génies étrangers
ne me posséderont plus, et je ne saurais m'intéresser
aux idées qui obscurcissent la vue et empêchent
d'apercevoir les humbles réalités, ni aux sentiments
anarchiques qui détruisent les pays et les races."\(^{15}\)

He joined the group of Traditionalists, Bourget, Barrès, and
Bazin, and like them, he chose to depict provincial life and
local scenes.

Bordeaux has been criticized as being ridiculously
regionalist, but rather, he encouraged the mixture of diverse
elements, for he claimed that they enriched a people, so

\(^{14}\) Henry Bordeaux, *Ames Modernes*, Préface, p. VII.

\(^{15}\) Henry Bordeaux, op. cit., p. X.
long as they did not tend to alter or destroy the common feeling. He substituted in their stead a cosmopolitan education as that pictured in Les Déracinés by Barrès, and l'Étape by Bourget. He believed, in that cosmopolitanism, which rendered homage:

"...à l'effort accumulé de génération en génération sur le même coin de sol, effort qui produit les races solides et puissantes et prépare les énergies nécessaires."16

Bordeaux owes his fame chiefly to his novels of family life. In his masterpiece, La Peur de Vivre, he laid the scene at Maupas, his home estate, where the glorious days of his childhood were spent. The main theme throughout is the traditional family, treated as a social unit. In Les Roquevillard, he upheld family property, inheritance, dowry, and all that is traditional. In La Maison, Bordeaux treated the problem of the influence of the young by the foreign elements and the loss of family spirit. Les Pierres du Foyer deals with the organization of the family. Les Yeux qui s'Ouvrent (1907), treated of the evil of divorce on the children, and that children render marriages indissoluble.

Among some other books which are of lesser importance are: La Robe de Laine (1910), and La Croisée des Chemins (1909). In all these novels, Bordeaux's philosophy of life is especially well condensed in the conclusion of Les Roquevillard:

16Henry Bordeaux, Ames Modernes, Préface p. X.
"Il n'y a pas de beau destin individuel et il n'est de grandeur que dans la servitude. On sert sa famille, sa patrie, Dieu, l'art, la science, un idéal. Honte à qui ne sert que soi-même! Toi, tu trouvais ton appui en nous, mais aussi ta dépendance. L'honneur de l'homme est d'accepter sa subordination."17

Paul Bourget, in a discourse, at the opening of a series of conferences, given by Henry Bordeaux on La Famille Française, said the following words in favor of his works:

"Les faits qu'il recueille sont des phénomènes de volonté et de sensibilité; c'est l'intime de l'individu qui est son domaine propre. S'il peint les gens d'une province, il faut qu'il en connaisse la race, le climat, l'histoire, les coutumes; s'il peint les gens d'un métier, il faut qu'il étudie les détails de ce métier, ses conditions, son histoire encore. Ainsi, dans les Roquevillard, un critique un peu averti démêle une connaissance minutieuse d'un pays: la Savoie; d'une profession: celle du barreau...Quand donc il vient vous parler de la famille, il vous apporte les conclusions d'une analyse multipliée et vérifiée sur le vif qui a toute la valeur d'une de ces monographies que recommandait le sagace et profond Le Play..."18

PART IV

THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

CHAPTER I

THE MEMBERS OF THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

From the books and authors surveyed in the last chapter, the traditional family has been presented to us as an unbroken chain of successive generations that has defended its position under the pressure of political and social events, and yet, has survived after centuries in practically the same original form.

The word "la famille" does not designate exactly the same thing as the word family. To an American who is married, family means his wife and children; if single, it means his parents and his brothers and sisters. To a Frenchman, whether he is married or not, "la famille" comprises the grandparents, the parents, the wife and children, brothers and sisters, and grandchildren. "La famille" also includes first cousins, aunts and uncles. Even those ancestors who have passed away continue to form part of "la famille." Their memory and examples, as also, their counsels, were recalled when an important decision was to be made.

All the traditional writers have treated the subject of the dead ancestors as forming an important part of the traditional family; however, Bordeaux has referred to it most frequently. In Les Roquevillard, he has presented the
relation vivid and realistic. When M. Roquevillard in despair spoke to his dead of the dishonor that had befallen his race, the entire army of dead ancestors stood before his mind and answered thus:

"Que parlais-tu dans ton désespoir, de solitude et de morts? De solitude? Compte-nous et dis-nous d' où tu viens? De mort? Mais la famille est la négation de la mort. Puisque tu vis, nous sommes tous vivants. La quand tu nous rejoindras à ton tour, tu revivras, il faut que tu revives dans tes descendants. Vois: à cet instant décisif, nous sommes tous là. Soulève ta douleur comme nous avons soulevé la pierre de nos tombes. C'est toi, entend's-tu, à qui est réservé l'honneur de défendre, de sauver le dernier des Roquevillard. Tu parleras en notre nom. Après, ta tâche accomplie, tu pourras nous rejoindre dans la paix de Dieu...."1

And in the same book Bordeaux referred again to the dead as the living members of the family, when M. Roquevillard pleaded with Maurice, in the name of his ancestors who had transmitted the name to him, intact,

"On ne plaide pas avec les morts."
Mais il ajouta aussitôt:
"Avec les morts, non, mais avec les vivants. Ils sont là, tous. Pas un ne manque à l'appel. La terre s'est ouverte pour les laisser passer. Ce vallon qui nous sépare, je le franchirai. Je veux les rejoindre."2

So great was the devotion of the traditional family for its dead, that each family possessed nearby, its traditional cemetery where the ancestors reposed when their earthly task was over, and where the living members would often go, to

1 Henry Bordeaux, Les Roquevillard, p. 284.
2 Ibid., pp. 282-283.
ask counsel of them. In regard to the cemetery, Bordeaux mentions it in *La Croisée des Chemins*. M. Rouvray had just died and Mme Rouvray was anxious that her oldest son Pascal should return from Paris and continue the father's work on the domain. At first, Pascal thought of selling the domain in order to return to the city, but Mme Rouvray pleaded with him,

"Ici j'ai été heureuse. Nous y avons passé les seuls jours qui fussent entièrement à nous. Le cimetière et l'église se touchent, et je les ai la tout près. Pour le reste, il me faut peu de chose."3

And finally, Bordeaux makes further mention of the constant relation existing between the living and the dead when, in *Le Barrage*, he said:

"Une population n'abandonne pas ainsi les générations précédentes, ne se sépare pas ainsi de ceux qui ont transmis le sang et l'héritage. Qu'est-ce qu'un peuple sans ses morts...."4

The constant remembrance and devotion to the dead impelled the living members of the family to uphold the traditional spirit of the ancestors, and to continue it as they did.

The Frenchman referred to the house in which the traditional family lived as "la maison." It was designated by the family name, whose ancestors had inhabited it for centuries, and which name had been transmitted from generation

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to generation. Bordeaux makes mention of the traditional name in *La Maison*. In the story François Rambert, the eldest son, explains the origin of the name:

"La maison, elle vit toujours: elle en a une longue habitude. Vous n'auriez pas de peine à la trouver: dans tout le pays on l'appelle la maison Rambert parce que notre famille l'a toujours habitée...."

"La maison" did not only shelter the family, but the traditional customs as well, which were jealously guarded between the old walls. They served as an important means to maintain the traditional spirit in the family.

"La famille" was founded on order and authority. Deference and honor were shown the grandparents on every occasion, and their counsels were listened to with respect. We read in *Les Oberlé*, by Bazin, that each evening the father of the family, M. Joseph Oberlé, rendered an account to the grandfather, M. Philippe Oberlé, of all that had taken place in the industry during the day. First he read the daily paper to him, then told him of the expeditions and the wood that had been felled and sold. The following words show how the grandfather held to his power of authority and direction, even though he was only a commentary:

"Bien que M. Philippe Oberlé ne fût plus que le commanditaire de l'industrie qu'il avait fondée, il avait l'illusion de conseiller encore et de diriger."  

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5 Henry Bordeaux, *La Maison*, p. 4.
6 René Bazin, *Les Oberlé*, p. 79.
In the same book Bazin points out the deference shown to the grandfather, M. Philippe Oberlé, when he entered the dining room, by the members of the family. He said.

"Quand les convives arrivaient à leur tour, M. Joseph Oberlé lui serrait la main; Lucienne lui jetait un baiser avec beaucoup de mots amoureux, dits d'une voix fraîche; madame Oberlé se penchait, et, sur le front du vieillard, appuyait ses lèvres fidèles. Il la remerçait en la regardant s'asseoir."

Everyone knows how difficult it is to have perfect peace and harmony where members of the family, other than those of the immediate one, are living in the same house. Indeed, this was a traditional problem of the French family, which the father and mother had to solve. The family was seldom alone because, as has been previously said, when the family inherited the domain, the task of caring for the grandparents, the cripple or indigent, if there were any, and sometimes an aunt or an uncle, became their lot. This peace and harmony they obtained through order and discipline.

Bordeaux, in *Le Maison*, makes reference to a breach of order when grand-père Rambert, whose attitude toward discipline and order was irregular and indifferent, failed to be at meals on time. He obstinately declared:

"Eh! on mange quand on a faim. Cette réglementation est absurde.""8

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7 René Bazin, *Les Oberlé*, pp. 77-78.
8 Henry Bordeaux, *La Maison*, p. 23.
It was clearly seen by all that the father objected and was displeased at the grandfather's actions, and to reprimand an elder was painful to him. So with patience mingled with authority, he exclaimed:

"Il faut de l'ordre dans une maison. L'ordre, l'ordre."9

At the death of the father, or at the abdication of the grandfather, the eldest son became the inheritor of the domain. The power to command or to direct was traditionally imposed upon him, and the authority was regarded as coming directly from God, which he assumed as sacred.

It is to be remarked here that originally the domain was acquired at the death of the father by the eldest son, and later when the sons left for the army or established themselves elsewhere, the father designated another one of his sons as inheritor. They were careful not to divide the domain as the land was one of the main factors that led to the permanency of the family. Besides, the property was not regarded by the traditional family as belonging to the present one. It was more of a legacy in which the past generations and the unborn had prescriptive rights.

The family and the property were well protected in France. It is well to note here that the property belonged to the family and not to the individual, and it could not be disposed of without the permission of the family council.

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The family council was composed of six members, three on the maternal side and three on the paternal side, with the inheritor at the head of the council, since he was responsible for the patrimony. The father had the right to dispose of the patrimony only when moral obligations required him to do so, and only with the permission of the council. This was very clearly illustrated in Les Roquevillard, by Bordeaux. Maurice, the eldest son of the family, dishonored the family name and in order to save the name, M. Roquevillard found it necessary to sell the Vigie, the patrimony. In order to do this, he summoned the family council, over which he presided. He explained to them the purpose of the assembly and asked their advice:

"Personne n'a plus que moi aimé et compris la terre, écouté ses conseils, ausculté son mal dans la crise qu'elle traverse. Et c'est à moi qu'on reproche de l'oublier. Mais apprenez donc, si vous ne le savez pas, qu'il y a dans le plan des choses humaines un ordre divin qu'il faut respecter. Au dessus de l'héritage matériel, je place, moi, l'héritage moral. Ce n'est pas le patrimoine qui fait la famille. C'est la suite de générations qui crée et maintient le patrimoine. La famille dépossédée peut reconstituer le domaine. Quand elle a perdu ses traditions, sa foi, sa solidarité, son honneur, quand elle se réduit à une assemblée d'individus agités d'intérêts contraires et préférant leur destin propre à sa prospérité, elle est un corps vide de son âme, un cadavre qui sent la mort, et les plus belles propriétés ne lui rendront pas la vie. Une terre se rachète, la vertu d'une race ne se rachète pas. Et c'est pourquoi la perte de la Vigie m'affecte moins que le risque de mon fils et de mon nom. Mais parce que la Vigie est demeurée de siècle en siècle le lot des Roquevillard, je n'ai pas voulu interrompre une si longue continuité de transmission sans vous avertir, sans vous consulter...."10

Evidently, according to the following words, the inheritor, as head of the patrimony, reserved the right to sell the property, even if the opinion of the council was contrary to his.

"Je vous ai fait connaître mon avis le premier: j'ai eu tort. Donnez-moi le vôtre à tour de rôle avec sincérité. Je ne dis pas que j'en tiendrai compte, s'ils s'opposent au mien. Je suis le chef responsable. Mais une détermination qui brise d'un seul coup le travail de tant de générations est si grave qu'il me serait doux d'être approuvé par un conseil de famille."\textsuperscript{11}

Later the Code of Napoleon (1801) prescribed the compulsory division in equal shares, which abolished the privilege of the first born. This prescription tended to weaken the stability of the family, and in \textit{Au Service de l'Allemagne} Barrès refers to the effects of the code:

"En effet le génie démocratique français tend comme à un idéal à l'égalité de fait entre les citoyens. Le code napoléonien poursuit la division à l'infini des propriétés, déracine moralement et matériellement nos fils, nous limite à une œuvre vitagère et supprime les familles chefs et, si vous voulez, les influences indigènes."\textsuperscript{12}

It is no wonder that the traditional family objected to the new regulations of the Code since they tended to destroy the stability of the family. For centuries all the members had been grouped under one head, the inheritor. He, in turn, sacrificed himself for all. He maintained and improved the

\textsuperscript{11}Henry Bordeaux, \textit{Les Roquevillard}, p. 227.
\textsuperscript{12}Maurice Barrès, \textit{Au Service de l'Allemagne}, pp. 20-21.
land and took care of the aged parents without compensation. The other members worked or established themselves elsewhere. When in want, they were always free to return to the paternal home. All this as we have seen formed an attraction to rural life.

But later when the land was divided equally among each member, it was sometimes too small a piece of land to make a living; consequently, the land was sold and its members moved to the city. In Le Coeur et le Sang, Bordeaux describes this evil effect of the Code when he says:

"Avec nos bois, il n'y a plus de foyers durables. C'est l'instabilité organisée, quand la sécurité était le plus grand attrait de la vie rurale. À Chaque mort, on liquide. Quel héritage résisterait à tant d'assauts? Et pourquoi améliorer le domaine, quand on n'est plus certain de le conserver dans la famille et qu'on ne peut plus compter sur le temps? L'héritier même à qui le père laisse le quart, avec quelle ressource garderait-il les immeubles? Tandis que ses frères, travaillant au dehors, économisaient leurs salaires, il maintenait la terre, lui, et soignait les vieux sans compensation. Il s'est use pour les autres qui n'en tiennent aucun compte et qui se hâtent de réclamer leur part. La liberté du testament groupait la famille autour d'un chef indéfiniment renouvelé. Le partage forcé émitte la terre, gaspille ses meilleures années à gratter un lopin grand comme un mouchoir de poche, sa part d'héritage, jusqu'au jour où, de déception en déception, il le réalise à vil prix et gagne la ville. Ces lopins juxtaposés, c'était la continuité de la famille assurée sur le même domaine."13

From this division of the land, it became evident that the spirit and the stability of the family would be destroyed.

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As has been said previously, the father regarded his authority as coming directly from God, which he assumed as sacred. Bazin refers to the sacredness of the authority, in *Les Chênes et les Roseaux*, when he said:

"L'âge n'avait point courbé son front ni diminué son autorité paternelle qu'il tenait directement de Dieu, il saurait la faire respecter, il saurait la faire resplendir...."14

The family accepted the change in authority with good faith, having as their aim, the prosperity and continuation of the family. It occurred at times, when the domain was left without a male heir, that the married daughter became the inheritor, and consequently, with much heart breaking "la maison" had to change name. In *La Terre Qui Meurt*, Bazin gives an example of such a change and shows the jealousy that arose when the daughter took possession of the land. Mathurin, a cripple, who, by right, was the inheritor but was unable to assume charge, could not bear to have one of another name command on the domain. When he heard his father deliberating as to who was to take charge of the Fromentière, he answered:

"Je suis mieux: je vais guérir!...Quand mon tour sera venu de commander, personne que moi ne commandera à la Fromentière, tu entends."15

And later when the father asked Rousille, his daughter, to

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take over the domain with her husband, Jean Nesmy, Mathurin objected with bitter words:

"Non, je ne serai pas commandé par un homme qui n'est pas de mon nom: il faut un Lumineau pour commander ici."16

The father shared this authority with the mother, which she was bound to uphold. Even though at times the father was tyrannical, and she resented his loud voice, his arguments, his orders, and not infrequently, his jesting, his abuses, and his fits of anger, when she did not submit to him at first, yet, in spite of all she loved him, and through timidity, habit, and admiration she ceded to him and without regret. Frequently, Bazin continued in La Barrière:

"Elle n'était pas toujours convaincue, mais puisque M. Victor Limerel commandait, ne fallait-il pas obéir, maintenir la paix, au prix d'un sacrifice...."17

The children could not act without the permission of the father. He exercised full authority over them, and in this, although the mother shared the authority, she never encroached on his orders. In Il Était Quatre Petits Enfants, by Bazin, when Maximin told his mother that he planned on leaving the home, she replied:

"Et tu viens me demander ça à moi? Je ne peux dire qu'une chose: demande-le à ton père; ça lui appartient de commander."18

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16 René Bazin, La Terre Qui Meurt, p. 319.
17 René Bazin, La Barrière, p. 117.
18 René Bazin, Il Était Quatre Petits Enfants, p. 69.
His authority was exerted even more strongly when his children rejected his orders. In *La Maison*, M. Rambert gave an order to his son to accompany the grandfather. The son refused and the following words denote the father's strong command:

"Je commande dans ma maison avant de commander en ville, mon petit. C'est un ordre que je te donne: tu partiras demain avec ton grand-père, Louise et les deux cadets. J'ai la charge de toute la cité; nous verrons si mon fils sera le premier à me désobéir."19

It must not be concluded from what has been said, that the father was always severe and feared by his children. Indeed, he was respected and loved by them. His first duty was devoted to his wife and children which he accomplished scrupulously. He instilled into his children love of duty, order, a great devotion to the family, and fidelity in the observance of the traditional customs. In *La Maison*, François described his father in the following words:

"Ne croyez pas qu'il fût sévère avec nous. Il ne tirait sur la bride que si nous prenions une fausse direction. Seulement, je n'ai jamais rencontré chez personne une telle aptitude à commander."20

And in *La Peur de Vivre*, by Bordeaux, Mme Guibert, who was a devoted wife and mother, spoke of her husband to her son in the following words:

"Ton père, c'était la force, la confiance, le travail. Après les plus pénibles journées, il rentra joyeux..."21

The mother was not considered an inferior being in the home. She worked in harmony and union with her husband, and took part in his intellectual and professional life. Her first duty was in her home, where she occupied herself constantly. In Il Etait Quatre Petits Enfants, Bazin gives a picture of the traditional mother in her home, and at work. He said:

"Pas plus que le père, on ne la voyait inoccupée; et son domaine était la maison et la cour de la ferme, et presque tous ces devoirs l'appelaient, à des heures régulières, tantôt ici et tantôt là."22

And a little further in the same book he says,

"Dans la maison, elle était cuisinière aussi bien que lingère, ravaudeuse et femme de ménage. Tout son monde avait bon appétit...Son triomphe était la préparation des galettes dorées, par quoi elle achevait les jours où elle boulangeait, et si les enfants s'étaient montrés sages."23

And Bazin tells us, what mère Fruytier was to her children and to her husband, can well be said of all traditional mothers:

"Elle était l'admirée, l'amie respectée, la confidente, le soutien dans le chagrin, l'associée en toute joie, la gardienne devant laquelle le grand malheur, celui qui sépare, n'osait pas paraître: elle était tout."24

21Henry Bordeaux, La Peur de Vivre, p. 28.
23Ibid., p. 16.
24Ibid., p. 17.
The daily duties left the mother very little time for exterior and social works. She seldom went visiting except through charity and duty, which visit her neighbors considered an honor, because they loved her. She was sincere, discreet, compassionate, and admired by all. Bordeaux said of her in *La Peur de Vivre*,

"Courageuse devant la vie, elle demeurait timide devant le monde."25

And in the same book the mother's philosophy of life is well condensed, when Mme Guibert explained to Alice, the meaning of life. She says,

"Vous avez eu peur de la vie. Vos parents ont eu peur de la vie pour vous. La vie, Alice, ce n’est pas la distraction et le mouvement du monde. Vivre, c’est sentir son âme, toute son âme. C’est aimer, aimer de toutes ses forces, toujours, jusqu’à la fin, et jusqu’au sacrifice. Il ne faut craindre ni la peine, ni les grandes joies, ni les grandes douleurs: elles sont la révélation de notre nature humaine. Il faut prendre aux jours qui passent le bien qui ne passe pas. La jeune fille qui se marie vient partager des travaux et des périls, et non pas chercher une plus grande aisance, ou de plus frivoles plaisirs. Dans son dévouement même elle trouvera plus de charmes. Vous ne le savez pas."26

There was much in the life of the parents that was repugnant to human nature, but they found moral support in faith and sacrifice.

Religion played an important role in their lives. They practiced the traditional religion of their forefathers,

26Ibid., p. 341.
Catholicism, which stood for conservatism and authority. Frequently, we read that in time of trials and difficulties, or when an important decision was to be taken, they had recourse to prayer. They strove to inculcate the religious practices in the mind of the children, and taught them to live their faith. Every evening, the family knelt for prayer in common, and the mother, with unfaltering voice, led the prayer. Then she recited the rosary and begged God's blessing on every member of the family and especially on those who were far away. In La Peur de Vivre, we read how the mother's faith in prayer embraced all,

"Comme chaque soir elle rassembla, pour les offrir à la protection divine, ses chers morts et ses vivants épars à travers le monde, et confia plus spécialement à cette protection l'avenir incertain de Paul et le coeur tourmenté de Marcel. Un peu de surdité et ses pensées l'absorbaient et l'isolaient." 27

And in Magnificat, Jean-Guillaume Maguern's great faith in time of trial was disclosed when Bazin said:

"C'était un homme de grande foi; la douleur le faisait prier tout de suite, comme un commandement." 28

Opportunity was not lacking in the traditional family to help the poor, as they were numerous in the country as well as in the city. The family considered it an honor to help them and a disgrace to the house who rejected them.

27 Henry Bordeaux, La Peur de Vivre, p. 16.
28 René Bazin, Magnificat, p. 10.
There were charitable institutions, religious and secular, existing previous to the French Revolution as well as after, but they were not numerous enough to help everyone. Besides, traveling was difficult, and the poor travelers often stopped at a farm for food and lodging. In *Les Drames de Famille*, Bourget refers to the charitable organizations that were organized by the wealthy, in order to help those in want. Bazin described the charity exercised in the ancient "maison Fruytier" in *Il Était Quatre Petits Enfants*. He says,

"Quand une maison est connue pour être charitable, les clients ne lui font pas défaut." 29

Mère Fruytier never failed to give food and lodging to the poor. She had inherited from her ancestors a sort of respect for the bread, the food of life, which contained so much work, both of man and of God. When she handed bread to the poor, she would say:

"On n'est pas bien riche, mais c'est de bon coeur!" 30

Although Nicholas Fruytier was charitable, he was not always pleased to have his wife lodge a poor in the barn; nevertheless, when a poor came again she took him in, and when her husband said to her, a little disturbed,

"Tu verras qu'un de ces gens-là, un jour, fera un mauvais coup!" 31

30 Ibid., p. 86.
31 Ibid., p. 89.
Mère Fruytier would then plead with compassion,

"Laisse-moi recevoir encore celui-ci, qui a des souliers tout percés; nous ne pouvons pas le renvoyer, par la nuit et par la pluie qu'il fait."32

Père Fruytier would finally give his permission and then she would pass the following remark:

"...C'est le commandement qui nous dit d'avoir pitié les uns des autres...Si tu les renvoies, tu me feras plus de peine que je ne puis te le dire: Cela n'est pas digne de toi. Déjà on dit dans le pays que les Fruytier repoussent les pauvres de Dieu, et j'en ai honte. Une famille comme nous, la plus ancienne d'ici!...Eh bien! va ouvrir la porte, jette-le sur les routes: il sera mort demain matin et pa sera ta faute."33

Mère Fruytier attributed much of the prosperity and success of the family to their works of charity. She often said to her husband,

"...Mais je ne peux pas m'ôter de l'idée que si la journée a été bonne, et plus que bonne, nous le devons au pauvre que tu a laissé dormir dans la grange."34

The mother did not only practice charity herself, but she instilled it in the heart of her children. No one was more capable to teach this virtue than the one who had practiced it all her life, and in Le Pays Sans Ombre, Bordeaux shows us that the mother succeeded, while others had failed. The son said of his mother.

"Sans le savoir, sans le soupçonner, elle avait réussi là où avaient échoué le directeur de la Congrégation et

32 René Bazin, Il Etait Quatre Petits Enfants, p. 89.
33 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
34 Ibid., p. 96.
mème le confesseur extraordinaire, elle m'avait rendu le respect et l'amour des choses saintes, dont la plus sainte est la charité."35

Besides lodging and feeding the poor travelers there was another type of charity in the country, and it was that which was exercised towards the orphans and the abandoned children. Bazin tells us in *La Douce France*, that it was not uncommon to receive such an answer as the following:

"Combien avez-vous d'enfants, maîtresse Bardoul?"
"Deux, monsieur."
"J'en vois trois ici."
"Oh! monsieur, le troisième, je puis dire qu'il est à moi aussi; c'est le fils de notre voisin, vous vous rappelez, qui est mort voilà des années; ça n'était pas riche; ça ne savait pas où aller; alors j'ai pris le garçon et ma sœur a pris la fille."36

The same author in *Donatiennne*, describes the pitiful scene when Louarn was left alone with his three children. He went from house to house for help. He was comforted when a charitable old lady received them, saying:

"C'est des petits pauvres, Anna; il faut en avoir soin, autant que des nièces; tu leur feras la bouillie; tu donneras un lit pour les deux filles, et tu mettras près de toi le nourrisson, dans la barcelonnette, car c'est grand pitié, les enfants qui n'ont plus de mère."37

In the traditional family the children were numerous. Some authors mentioned the number to be seven or eight. In

36 René Bazin, *La Douce France*, p. 49.
37 René Bazin, *Donatiennne*, p. 111.
Le Pays Sans Ombre, Bordeaux tells us that the mother, Valentine, worried about the education of her children because they were so numerous and she did not feel that they could do justice to their education, but the father consoled her:

"Ne t'inquiète pas, Valentine. Huit enfants, c'est beaucoup, sans doute. C'est beaucoup, jamais trop!"

And again, in La Maison, the same author mentions the large family when he says,

"Chez nous, le peuple était nombreux et bruyant. Si vous savez compter, vous n'ignorez déjà plus que nous étions sept...."

In Les Roquevillard, Bordeaux stressed the importance of children as a means to keep the marriage ties. Mme Frasne separated from her husband on the ground that she was not needed at home; she said:

"Au début de notre mariage vous redoutiez les enfants: il eut peut-être suffi d'une petite main tendue pour m'enchaîner tout à fait, mais notre maison est vide et personne n'a besoin de moi...."

And in La Croisée des Chemins, by Bordeaux, Dr. Rouvray defended the normal life of the family against the modern artifices of birthcontrol which he considered a leading factor to the destruction of the stability of the home,

"Il défendait avec acharnement la vie normale, la vie équilibre contre les artifices contemporains, causes de

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39 Henry Bordeaux, La Maison, p. 30.
40 Henry Bordeaux, Les Roquevillard, p. 79.
tous ces désordres qu'une civilisation meurtrière intro-
duit dans l'organisme, spécialement contre cette peur de
l'enfant qui est un des fléaux actuels et qui est parve-
nue à modifier l'existence de la femme moderne, à altérer
le caractère et la stabilité du foyer. 41

Very little has been said about the children of the
traditional family, but we know that they formed an important
part of the family. On them depended the future of the patrim-
mony and the continuation of the race. They were regarded
as the foundation stones of the new generations. We shall
see in the next chapter that the parents regarded their
obligation towards their children as sacred, and that their
main duty was to educate and prepare them for the continua-
tion of the family, and to live as good Christians and good
citizens.

41 Henry Bordeaux, La Croisée des Chemins, p. 178.
CHAPTER II

EDUCATION AND THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY

The family spirit in the traditional family was the most spontaneous of all instincts, and the strongest tie was the bond which united parents and children. The children were the foundation stones of the new generations, and on them depended the future and the stability of the race. So important did the parents consider their duty to their children, that they spared no sacrifice, however great, to educate and train them intellectually and morally, and to instill into them all that might tend to solidify the family spirit.

Duty to the family held first place and that of the individual was only secondary. It was with this end in view that the parents directed the training of their children.

The parents' first duty was to their children, and the training was never entrusted to anyone else. It was probably this strong parental duty that united the parents and children so closely. Sometimes in the home the training of the children was entrusted to an aunt, who lived with the family, but always under the close direction of the mother.

Bordeaux tells us in *La Maison*, that tante Dine saw to the direction of the seven children of the Rambert family. François, the oldest son, said that tante Dine's influence of
and devotion to the children were unsurpassed.

"Pour notre éducation et notre instruction, pour la direction morale, tante Dîne se mettait, malgré la différence d'âge, à la direction de ma mère, pour qui elle professait un attachement, une admiration sans bornes."¹

His following words stress the fact that tante Dîne laid more importance on the moral and religious education than on their studies,

"Nos études ne l'intéressaient pas. Mais elle avait cette culture de l'âme qui communique à l'esprit sa fleur de délicatesse. On en savait toujours assez si l'on était honnête et bon catholique. Et même elle estimait qu'on remplissait de trop bonne heure notre cervelle, et d'un tas de sciences inutiles. L'histoire des païens ne lui disait rien qui vaille, et pour l'arithmétique, elle n'avait jamais su compter."²

And besides, nothing was omitted by tante Dîne that might serve to their physical development. François said,

"En revanche, notre santé, notre propreté, notre gaîté étaient son affaire."³

Nothing was neglected along the educational line. When the children were of age, they attended the primary and elementary schools of the village. The girls usually attended the convent schools, and the boys attended the school conducted by the friars or the municipal school. They were usually fourteen years old when they completed the elementary classes.

¹Henry Bordeaux, La Maison, p. 31.
²Ibid., p. 31.
³Ibid., p. 32.
For the peasant class, this usually marked the extent of the child's schooling. His education was continued in the home. The mother taught the girl the art of cooking, sewing, and the management of the home, and trained her to be a good mother and wife. The boy worked on the farm with the father, who trained him in the art of farming.

If the peasant boy desired to continue school, and if he was promising, he was entrusted to the parish priest who taught him the higher studies, as there were no schools for higher learning in the peasant districts. Frequently, the boy received oppositions on the part of the parents, because their ambition was to prepare the child for the farm and keep him at the paternal home.

In Les Noellet, Bazin gives us an example of Pierre, the son of a peasant family in "la Vendée angevine," who at the age of fourteen expressed his desire to become a priest. The mother was happy at the thought of having a priest in the family, but the father refused to consider it, at first. Later, when Pierre insisted, Maître Noellet went to see the village priest:

"Il alla parler de l'affaire au curé de Villeneuve, l'abbé Heurtebise, qui fit venir l'enfant, l'interrogea, et répondit: il y a du pour, il y a du contre, mais comme il y a plus de pour que de contre, et que d'ailleurs, on ne sait jamais, envoyez-le-moi trois fois par semaine, j'en fais mon affaire: il entrera l'année prochaine au collège de Beaupréau, et pas en huitième je vous réponds!"

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4 René Bazin, Les Noellet, p. 17.
The following year Pierre entered the college. His departure affected profoundly the entire family. Bazin expresses it thus:

"L'entrée en pension d'un des leurs les troublait à des degrés et pour des motifs divers. C'était, pour cette race de laboureurs, une nouveauté grosse d'inconnu, une séparation précoc d'avec un enfant qui, sans le collège, fut resté jusqu'à vingt et un ans sous le toit; c'était encore, pour Jacques et Antoinette, la perte d'un joyeux compagnon... La famille recevait de ce départ une atteinte profonde."5

Discipline in the boarding school was austere and rigorous, and his mother had great sympathy for him. Pierre had always been under the tender care of his mother, and he found the observance of the rules difficult. The author describes it,

"La conversation n'alla pas plus loin. Un coup de cloche, une volée de moineaux très au courant de la discipline qui s'abattant sur les tilleuls, la récréation est finie. Les élèves s'alignent sur deux rangs, le bruit des voix meurt lentement sous les regards du maître, et les files silencieuses, montant l'escalier de la terrasse, disparaissaient peu à peu dans les salles d'étude."6

After five years Pierre refused to study for the priesthood. At his return Maître Noëllet hoped his son would remain on the farm. But his hopes were lost, for had not l'abbé Heurtébise said to him one day,

5René Bazin, Les Noëllet, pp. 42-43.
6Ibid., p. 49.
"Quoi qu'il arrive, considère qu'il est perdu pour la charrue. Vois-tu, mon pauvre Noellet, ceux qui ont vécu dans les livres ne vivront plus dans les métairies."

Often the peasant boys had other ambitions besides cultivating the land. Some desired to learn the trade of the artisan and establish themselves in the villages.

In *Il Etait Quatre Petits Enfants*, by Bazin, mention is made of Vincent Fruytier, who upon the completion of the elementary course, expressed the desire to learn the blacksmith trade. He was not satisfied to remain on the farm. He had never been as persevering as his brothers and besides, his interests were not in the field. The most difficult part of all was to break the news to his parents and to obtain their permission. With much courage Vincent said to his mother,

"Maman, il ne faut pas vous faire trop de peine: je voudrais m'en aller."

To whom Mère Fruytier replied with surprise:

"T'en aller, mon Vincent! Où seras-tu comme ici?"

And Vincent continued,

"Mon idée, à présent que j'ai mes quatorze ans, c'est d'entrer en apprentissage."

At those words the mother grew sad, as it was always painful to see the children leave the patrimony, and she added:

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7 René Bazin, *Les Noellet*, p. 79.
"As-tu, pensé... C'est la maison de chez nous que tu vas détruire... Tout allait bien... Qu'as-tu à vouloir t'en aller de nous?... Moi, je te répondrais non... Mais je ne suis qu'une femme... Va dire la même chose à ton père... L'entends-tu qui cassa du bois dans le bûcher?"9

In those words Mère Fruytier expressed her sorrow at seeing the home destroyed. Vincent was seized with compassion for his mother. Finally, his ambition dominated and he broke the news to Maître Fruytier. The father reprimanded his son with anger. After a few weeks Maître Fruytier declared that if Vincent still desired to become a blacksmith, he would give his consent. He said to Mère Fruytier,

"Nous pensons la même chose, ma pauvre Marie: C'est la manière qui n'est pas la même. J'ai averti le fils rudement, comme il fallait. Il ne me reprochera pas de n'avoir dit que la moitié de mon avis. Après cela, s'il ne change pas d'idée avant le mois d'avril, je le laisserai aller."10

And when the day for the departure came, sadness filled everyone: the father, because he placed the future of the patrimony in his eldest son; and the mother, because the loss of even one child caused the destruction of the home. When Pierre Fruytier said goodbye to his brother, Vincent, he felt that his brother was shirking his duty and expressed his thoughts in the following words:

"Quel sombre visage il avait! Quel chagrin en lui! Quelle stupeur aussi! Quitter la ferme où tout était..."

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10 Ibid., p. 103.
assuré pourtant; le pain, le vin, la tendresse qu'il faut pour vivre....

The same feeling of sadness occurred at the departure of each one of the children. As each one left, the parents felt the same destruction of the home, and to a certain extent the same shirking of duty. Had they not raised their children to continue the race and to keep the patrimony under the same name. Nevertheless, the children's ambition varied and although the parents objected at first, still, as in our day, they did not thwart their desire.

After some time Pierre and Maximin, the second and third sons of Nicholas and Marie Fruytier were drafted for service. Previous to the draft Maximin had enlisted for Algeria without telling his father, because he was afraid to rouse his anger. However, when the time came to leave, the mother bade him to break the news to his father. The boy was nervous because of the effect it would have on him. The mother prepared Maître Fruytier when she said,

"Dis, le père, notre Maximin a une chose à t'apprendre, ce soir...."

"Mon père, dit-il enfin, je m'en vas loin, pour le service: je m'en vas en Afrique...."

Maître Fruytier, with his commanding air, but with trembling hands, said,

\[\text{11 René Bazin, } Il \text{ Était Quatre Petits Enfants, p. 105.}\]
"Qui tu donné cette idée-la, Maximin?"
"C'est vous."

Then the boy reminded his father of the stories he had related to him of his service in Africa. When Maximin was finished, the father with pride said,

"Mon garçon, je ne peux pas te dire que ça me plaît!"

And he continued,

"Mais ça ne me déplait pas non plus. Où t'envoie-t-on? Alger sans doute;"

After those words, silence filled "la maison Fruytier." It was evening when all was quiet,

"Allons, dit Nicholas Fruytier, ce soir encore il n'y a qu'un toit pour nous tous. Il ne faut pas s'attendrir; il faut prier les uns pour les autres. À la place de la mère, qui ne pourrait droitement parler, me'st avis, c'est toi, Maximin, qui réciteras la prière."

The mother always had a list of recommendations for each one who departed. She feared for their moral and bodily welfare. The scene was always touching when she came to say goodbye.

"Ce fut enfin le tour de la mère. Il s'écartèrent un peu des autres, elle et son aîné, ils firent ensemble les premiers pas du grand voyage. Puis elle serra cette tête chérie contre sa poitrine, et dit tout bas à l'oreille de l'enfant:

Mon Maximin, n'oublie pas de prier tous les jours; garde bien ton cœur comme il est."

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13 Ibid., p. 168.
14 Ibid., p. 176.
15 Ibid., p. 181.
Moral training claimed first place in the education of children. We note that the recommendations given by the mother at each departure bears on morality. In Magnificat, Bazin tells us that when Gildas Maguern, the eldest son of Jean Maguern, left for service, the mother's parting words were:

"Puis elle embrassa Gildas, attirant la tête de l'enfant, et la serrant bien fort. Elle dit encore des mots de maman, tendres, pour lui recommander de dire la prière, sans y manquer jamais, et de ne point quitter l'habitude de ce qu'il avait vu faire, à la maison de Penmur, et d'être tant poli, avec les commandants qui mènent les soldats."16

And when père Maguern and Gildas had mounted the farm coach, the mother's last words were for his physical good,

"Relève le col de ta veste, mon petit, car il y aura grand vent sur la route de Vannes!"

"Il s'est mis à rire, et il a répondu: Maman, je n'aurai personne pour me dire ça là où je vais!"

Those last words were full of sentiment and feeling.

"Ce furent ses dernières paroles: Elle-même, elle a ri un peu, pour ne pas lui faire de la peine. Et il est parti."17

Bazin, in De Toute Son Ame, gives a clear account of what the peasant girl's schooling consisted. Uncle Mediot was caring for his orphan niece and nephew. Henriette had just completed the primary school and he desired her to

16 René Bazin, Magnificat, p. 69.
17 Ibid., p. 71.
continue four more years, until she had reached her fourteenth year. He wanted her to attend the school taught by the Dames de la Sagesse, while her brother attended l'école municipale du quartier.

After four years Henriette had completed her course,

"...Henriette avait passé, dans un abri relatif, cette période de dix à quatorze ans où l'intelligence s'ouvre, et prend possession d'un caractère déjà formé...Et ces humbles filles lui avaient appris tout ce qu'elles savaient d'arithmétique, de géographie, d'histoire, beaucoup de couture, de ravaudage, de broderie même."18

After the young girl returned from school her education and training continued in the home, with the mother as directress, until she married.

For the bourgeois boy or girl, education continued beyond the elementary classes. Their parents were staunch believers in higher education. However, moral and religious training claimed first place, as well as duty to the family and to the patrimony. But since they possessed more means and held professional and administrative positions, it was necessary that their children receive a higher education.

During their primary education the children attended the schools of the villages, and in the evening the parents supervised and directed their studies. The parents were never too busy for this task as the children were their first duty.

18 René Bazin, *De Toute Son Ame*, pp. 50-51.
In *La Maison*, by Bordeaux, François Rambert, when speaking of his father, declared that:

"Malgré sa profession absorbante, il trouvait le loisir de s'occuper de nos études, et de nos jeux, et même il les élargissait par les récits d'épopée qu'il nous faisait avec un art accompli."19

Later, when his father accepted the charge of the city as mayor, François said he knew his father would be too busy to direct his studies. François had accepted liberal ideas from his grandfather, and his father was worried about him. He said:

"...Et puis, il n'aurait plus le loisir de surveiller mes études et mes pensées, dont je voyais bien qu'il s'inquiétait le soir avec ma mère."20

In order that the children might obtain solid training, it is necessary that the family be in perfect accord with the lessons taught. In *La Barrière*, Bazin presents the famille Limerel, as hostile to religion and to religious practices in the home. Félicien, their son, had attended a college taught by ecclesiastics, where he had received religious instructions and training. When he returned home he found the practices there altogether contrary to those he had learned, and he himself became lax in the practices. Later, when Félicien desired to marry his cousin, Marie Limerel,

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19 Henry Bordeaux, *La Maison*, p. 28.
20 Ibid., p. 175.
who came from a thoroughly religious home, his lack of religious spirit frustrated his plan. Marie had made up her mind that she would never marry anyone whose religion was not in accord with hers. So when Félicien spoke to her of marriage, it gave her a chance to say:

"Quelle étude as-tu faite de ta religion? Quelle immense place a tenue, dans ton adolescence, la pensée du bacca-laureat! Le collège où tu as été d'abord demi-pensionnaire, et, pour finir, externe, donnait à l'enseignement religieux une place mesurée, suffisante si les parents prenaient soin de faire répéter la leçon, de l'expliquer, de la montrer surtout vivante en eux... Ah! quelle compensation, quelle revanche de la messe du dimanche!... On pouvait tout dire et tout sous-entendre chez toi, dans les dîners, les soirées, les visites et les thés. Ta mère désapprouvait au fond, mais par politesse elle souriait quand un des passants du monde soutenait un paradoxe, attaquait le cléricalisme en se déclarant respectueux de la foi, plaisantait les dévots... ou racontait quelque histoire grasse. Monsieur Victor Limerel ne croyait pas avancer une sottise, quand il affirmait qu'il avait assez d'honnêteté pour se passer de philosophie. Il ne songeait pas à la petite âme qui attendait tout, qui voyait vivre, et apprenait à vivre à côté du credo qu'on récite."21

Later when Marie refused to marry Félicien on account of his irreligious spirit, Félicien reproached his parents for their lack of cooperation. His mother answered him:

"...Je ne vois pas ce que tu blâmes, mon enfant, dans l'ambition de ton père...Nous avons choisi, pour toi, une maison d'éducation dirigée par des ecclésiastiques. Est-ce cela que tu nous reproches?"22

And Félicien with sorrow in his heart, at the thought that he had been denied the love of the one he admired the most,

21 René Bazin, La Barrière, pp. 150-151.
22 Ibid., pp. 242-243.
continued to blame his parents,

"Non, j'ai été chrétiennemment préparé au baccalauréat. Je le reconnais. J'ai eu plus d'instruction religieuse, plus d'exhortations à la piété, plus d'exemples de foi, parmi mes maîtres, que beaucoup d'hommes de ma généra-
tions; cela aurait suffi, cela suffit pour faire un croyant
solide, mais à une condition : c'est que la famille soit
en harmonie avec l'enseignement qu'elle fait donner...
Moi, j'ai vu, en rentrant à la maison, trop d'exemples
qui ne concordaient pas avec la leçon de l'école, et j'ai
douté."23

Félicien enumerated a long list of things that his parents
let pass before religion.

A problem which often confronted the bourgeois family
was the cost of educating their children. The children were
numerous and the parents desired to give them all, equal
advantage. The following conversation between the father
and the mother in Le Pays Sans Ombre, by Bordeaux, explains
the sacrifice they made in order that they might give their
children the best in education. "La mère" is concerned about
the education of her eight children. "Le père" consoles her,
and tells her that he will manage. She answers,

"San doute, mon ami, mais avec quoi?"
"Ne t'inquiète pas, Valentine. Huit enfants, c'est
beaucoup sans doute...Les vignes nous coûtent cher,
avec leurs maladies, au lieu de nous rapporter. Tant
pis. Nous emprunterons au besoin sur nos immeubles.
Il ne sont pas hypothéqués, ils le seront. Mais nos
fils et nos filles seront bien élevés...."

In accord with her husband, the mother answered:

23 René Bazin, La Barrière, p. 243.
"Tu as raison. L'éducation passe avant tout. Nous ferons d'eux des hommes courageux et d'honnêtes femmes."24

It was necessary for higher education that the children be sent to boarding schools, and the cost was great. In La Maison, Mme Rambert worries about the cost. She says to her husband,

"Les grandes Ecoles sont très coûteuses, car nous n'obtiendrons pas de bourses bien que nous ayons sept enfants."25

Some institutions granted scholarships to families that had at least seven children. But M. Rambert could not obtain one because he was hostile to the institutions who registered them.

The choice of a boarding school concerned both parents. They consulted each other on this point on every occasion. Mme Ehrsam in Les Nouveaux Oberlé, by Bazin, gazed at the photograph of her dead husband, and asked advice, when it was time to choose a college for her son:

"Mme Ehrsam regardait la photographie; elle était debout; elle demandait conseil, comme si son mari eût été vivant, comme le jour où l'on avait décidé, tous deux, mari et femme, de quelle manière les fils seraient élevés. Ce jour-là dans ce même cabinet de travail, elle avait dit, "Notre aîné est à l'âge où il faut choisir un collège. Mon cœur me pousse à te dire, mon ami, que je voudrais le faire élever en France, ce Pierre si intelligent, et après lui, notre Joseph. Il y a de bons collèges, à Nancy, mais tu sais mieux que moi ces choses...."26

The boy's schooling varied more than the girl's. His choice of a career was a matter of concern to the family, since it either weakened or consolidated it. The duties of direction, of administration, or of a father of the family, were considered as important as those of husband and wife. For this reason the parents spared nothing for his preparation. Frequently, they were disappointed as the son often had other ambitions than those destined by his parents.

In Une Tache D'Encre, l'oncle Mouillard sent his nephew, Fabien, to Paris to prepare him to take up his profession as attorney, and to direct the patrimony in Bourges. Fabien described the studies he pursued for that purpose:

"A peine bachelier, mon oncle et tuteur M. Brutus Mouillard, avoué à Bourges, m'envoie à Paris faire mon droit. J'y passe trois ans. Voilà qui est fait. Je suis licencié depuis dix-huit mois, et j'ai prêté en ladite qualité, suivant l'expression de mon oncle, un serment qui m'a transformé en avocat stagiaire...Pendant le cours de mes études juridiques, j'ai mené à bonne fin ma licence à lettres. Je poursuis à présent le diplôme de docteur en droit..."

At the end of his studies Fabien had planned to settle in Paris and to practice his profession there. M. Mouillard was disappointed and begged him to return to Bourges, to whom Fabien answers,

"Vous n'avez fait qu'achever une preuve déjà commencée, à savoir que nous ne comprenons pas la vie de la même manière et qu'il vaut mieux, pour vous comme pour moi, 

27 René Bazin, Un Tache D'Encre, p. 2.
que je continue d'habiter Paris, comme vous continuerez
d'habiter Bourges."28

The following words show how severe the uncle dealt with
his nephew.

"Eh bien! retiens ce que je vais te dire...Si, dans
quinze jours d'ici, tu n'es pas fixé à Bourges: avant
trois semaines l'étude Mouillard aura changé de nom!"29

The girls' education was not less important than that of
the boys, although it was altogether different. The young
girl was prepared solely for the home and to be a good mother
and wife. Her education consisted of much religion, sewing,
housework, singing, and often some drawing, piano, painting,
and French, and the art of writing.

The young girls were usually sent to a convent boarding
school, or sometimes to secular boarding schools. In Les
Oberlé, Bazin mentions that the school chosen for Lucienne,
was the boarding school of Mündner in Strasbourg. M. Oberlé,
although an Alsatian, had sided in with the Germans, and he
wished his daughter to be educated in a German school. The
school was more elite, more scientific, and less pious, than
the one her mother had attended. He said:

"...sa mère, élevée partie à Obernai, partie chez les
religieuses de Notre Dame, au couvent de la rue des
Mineurs, à Strasbourg."30

28 René Bazin, Une Tache D'Encre, p. 139.
29 Ibid., p. 140.
30 René Bazin, Les Oberlé, p. 83.
And of Bastian Odile, who was thoroughly Alsatian, he said,

"Quel secret enchantement complètement à la campagne, sauf deux ou trois années passées chez les religieuses de Notre Dame à Strasbourg."

Thus in the traditional family we have seen that the education of the sons and daughters stressed their preparation for life. The girl was prepared to take her place in the home as a dutiful wife and mother, the boy to take up a profession, a trade, or to assume charge of the patrimony. The parents spared no sacrifice to give them a thorough education so as to develop them morally and intellectually, and to instill into them faith, loyalty to France, and duty to the family.

Much is embodied in the following words in La Maison, by Bordeaux, that express the parents' interest in the future welfare of their children.

"Nous ne leur laisserons pas de fortune, disait-il. Ne négligeons rien dans leur éducation. Il faut les armer pour la vie."

And Mme Rambert answered,

"Tu as raison. Nous ne devons rien négliger. Leur fortune, ce sera leur foi et leur union."32

32 Henry Bordeaux, La Maison, p. 145.
CHAPTER III

THE MARRIAGE PROBLEM

The paternal care and training bestowed on the French boy and girl continued until he had chosen a career and had established himself in life. Just as his choice of a career was a matter of concern to the family, because it either weakened or solidified it, so was the marriage an important matter since it affected the entire family. For this reason, as well as for their happiness and success in life, the parents instructed their children in the duties they would have to pursue in that state.

The marriage of the French boy or girl was not an individual question. It engaged the entire family since it linked the past generations with the future ones. The continuation of the race depended solely on the solidity of the family. To establish this family the young boy or girl prepared for a solid foundation.

In *La Croisée Des Chemins*, by Bordeaux, M. Rouvray had sent his son, Pascal, to Paris to prepare him to follow his career as a doctor, and to undertake the direction of the patrimony, Colletière. But when his studies were completed, Pascal wrote to his parents that his intention was to marry, and to establish himself in Paris. The choice of a Parisian girl troubled M. and Mme Rouvray, and immediately, M. Rouvray
wrote him on the important step he was to take.

"Pour entreprendre il faut trouver chez soi, avec certitude, la paix et le réconfort. Aucune inquiétude ne doit venir de son intérieur à un homme d'action. Il faut comprendre, vois-tu, l'anxiété des parents qui envisagent l'établissement de leur fils. L'amour ne suffit pas au mariage. Un mariage engage une maison. Nous ne t'eussions donné qu'un conseil. Tu t'en es passé. J'espère que tu t'es néanmoins inspiré de nous...."¹

In those words, M. Rouvray refers to two important points that the young Frenchman must consider when he contemplates marriage, namely, love and the solidarity of the family.

To assure the solidarity of the family, it is essential that the young man and his fiancée be in perfect accord with each other, in all beliefs pertaining to the family, and above all in the belief of the indissolubility of marriage. No foundation is secure unless all the slight differences have been dispelled. M. Rouvray continues his letter on this point.

"Souviens-toi que se marier, c'est accepter de durer. Tout est là. Quand on bâtit pour longtemps, on prend garde à la solidité de la construction. Nous vivons à une époque troublée où chacun remet tout en cause. Écrète avec ta fiancée ce sable mouvant. Une foi d'accord sur la croyance essentielle à l'indissolubilité du mariage, au nom déjà ancien des Rouvray, vous prendrez vos dispositions en conséquence."²

The origin of the marriage contract as the Frenchman understands it goes back to God Himself. God raised it to

²Ibid., p. 24.
the dignity of a Sacrament. This Sacrament the husband and wife administer to each other, when they exchange their eternal promises in the presence of the priest, who is God's witness and representative. Its sacramental character made it indissoluble. The purpose of the party contracting the marriage was the creation of a new family.

In the preparation for marriage, it was essential that the contracting parties understood the importance of the indissolubility of marriage before taking the step.

In Les Yeux Qui S'ouvrent, by Bordeaux, M. Nolay-Norris, speaking to Philippe on the stability of marriage, remarked:

"Le mariage indissoluble, c'était la sécurité des familles."³

In the same book, Albert confides to his mother his difficulties and separation with Elizabeth. Mme Derize hesitates to answer, but once decided, she pleads like a good Christian mother.


Mme Derize could not understand Albert's actions. For the first time he had caused her deep sorrow.

³Henry Bordeaux, Les Yeux Qui S'ouvrent, p. 33.
⁴Ibid., p. 90.
"Elle n'admettait pas, ne comprenait pas sa conduite. Le mariage, à ses yeux, était une union indissoluble et sacrée que la mort seule pouvait rompre, que la mort même, pour elle, n'avait pas rompu en brisant sans pitié un bonheur de trop courte durée. Que deviendraient les enfants, si chacun des époux gardait la liberté de recommencer sa vie?"

Her strong faith and belief in the indissolubility of marriage, is more strongly manifested in the following words, which she addressed to Philippe Largier, who was trying to reconcile Albert with Elizabeth:

"Les hommes n'ont pas le pouvoir de séparer ce que Dieu a uni...."

In La Barrière, by Bazin, Marie Limerel refuses to marry Félicien, because of his mediocre faith and of the difference in belief on the indissolubility of marriage. He pleads with Marie:

"Que voudrais-tu?"

And she answers,

"Que mon mariage eût quelque chose d'éternel. Je crois qu'ils sont médiocres, ceux qui ne sont pas faits pour la durée sans fin. Je pense qu'une famille qui se fonde à un retentissement infini, avant elle, après elle. Je voudrais être la mère d'une race sainte."

In the next passage, Félicien discloses his lack of belief in the indissolubility of marriage, and declares that love alone suffices.

5Henry Bordeaux, Les Yeux Qui S'Ouvent, p. 79.
6Ibid., p. 115.
7René Bazin, La Barrière, p. 144.
In the solid construction of this family it has been said, that the love which attracts the boy and girl must be true love. It must be free from all sentiment and emotion.

In *Le Roman Des Quatre*, by Bourget, Gérard d'Houville, Henri Duvernois, and René Benoit, (in whose many expressions and sentiments seem to be those of Bourget), Antoine Barge advises his daughter, Micheline, to examine her conscience on the love she bears to Bernard. Antoine's own married life had been more than a failure. It had been a tragedy, and he wishes to spare his daughter the same difficulty.

When Micheline heard of the tragic death of her mother, no one helped her support the trial except Bernard, and she writes to her father of him,

"Bernard ne m'avait donné la force d'être à mon tour pitoyable, n'avait fait rentrer en mon âme si sombre les claires puissances de l'amour." Antoine fears that her love for Bernard is only emotional and founded on gratitude. He says to her,

"Tu me dis que tu as trouvé, pour t'aider dans ta peine, quelqu'un dont je n'aime pas le nom... je t'invitais à

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8 René Bazin, *La Barrière*, p. 144.
tirer de notre destinée, à ta mère et à moi, une leçon pour le jour où tu penserais à fixer ta vie de femme."\textsuperscript{10}

Then he goes on to instruct and counsel her on true love.

"Descends bien au fond de ce coeur, Micheline, et si c'est vraiment l'amour qui te pousse vers Bernard, que la pensée de menager ton père ne te fasse pas hésiter...."\textsuperscript{11}

Micheline writes to her father. In her letter, Antoine reads sentences that express uncertainty in her sentiment towards Bernard. He begs her to delay any final step, and then he explains to her, that to construct a home the foundation must be solid, and that true love is necessary. He says,

"Précisément, parce que ce foyer, s'il doit se fonder, reposera sur un terrain qu'a bouleversé une catastrophe, il faut que cette fondation soit très solide. Il faudra, pour parler sans métaphores, que, Bernard et toi, vous aimiez de cet amour complet, absolu, immuable dont on a dit si profondément qu'il est plus fort que la mort. Cette antique formule aura pour vous un double sens. Je t'invite donc de nouveau à un examen de conscience qui ne laisse pas un point de doute dans ton âme. Vous marier dans un élan d'émotion qui serait chez lui de la pitié, chez toi de la gratitude, ce serait risquer une déception que je te supplie de t'épargner...."\textsuperscript{12}

Antoine Barge is so anxious that Micheline construct her marriage on a solid foundation that he writes a letter to Bernard begging him to dispel all what might cause any strange feeling between them, and to examine the love he

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{10} Paul Bourget, \textit{Le Roman Des Quatre}, p. 284.
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\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 286.
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\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 288-289.
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bears to Micheline to see if it conforms to that found in the chapter on divine love, in the Imitation of Christ. He writes:

"...Je l'ai écrit à Micheline et je vous l'écris; fonder un foyer sur un terrain bouleversé par une catastrophe, c'est presque tenter le destin. Mais l'amour est la force souveraine et bienfaisante qui peut accomplir ce miracle--pourvu que ce soit bien l'amour, celui dont un mystique, qui fut, ce jour-là, un admirable psychologue, a dit:

"L'amour veille, et même quand il dort, il ne sommeille pas. Fatigué, il n'est pas lasse; enchaîné, il est libre. On l'effraie, et il n'est pas trouble. C'est une flamme vivace, un brûlant éclair qui monte, qui brille et traverse tout avec sérénité...Rien ne pèse à l'amour, il compte pour rien les labours...."13

Those words express so well Antoine's interest in his daughter, Micheline. Knowing life as he does he fears again that emotion is at the base of love.

"L'émotion n'est pas la passion, mais elle la joue parfois à s'y méprendre, et la passion même n'est pas l'amour, quoiqu'elle en simule si bien la ferveur...."14

The meaning of true love is still more strongly expressed in La Croisée Des Chemins, by Bordeaux. When Pascal returns home after the death of his father, Mme Rouvray speaks to him of his father, at the same time she drives home a lesson of true love.

"Comment peut-on continuer de vivre seul, quand on a vécu à deux trente années, et que la tendresse n'a pas cessé de croître chaque jour? On croit qu'on aime

13 Paul Bourget, Le Roman Des Quatre, p. 300.
14 Ibid., pp. 300-301.
quand on est jeune, et l'on ne connaît la force de l'amour qu'après avoir vieilli ensemble. Ces séparations-là, personne ne peut exprimer leur arrachement...."15

Not only did the French parents counsel their boy or girl on the preparation for marriage, but moreover, they sometimes made the choice of the partner, their affair.

According to traditional regulations, no plans for marriage were undertaken without the intermission of the parents. In fact, the young man had no right to speak to the young girl of marriage without having first consulted her parents, although this point was not strictly adhered to.

Bourget, in Drames De Famille, explains how M. Le Prieux considers this point of marriage important and that the violation of it causes inconveniences. Reine Le Prieux and Charles Huguenin make plans for marriage without consulting their parents. Later, difficulties arose and Charles was obliged to confess his plans to M. Le Prieux. It happened that M. Le Prieux favored the marriage and therefore he explains to Charles the importance of the intermission of the parents.

"Il y a une grande sagesse, vous l'éprouvez vous-même, dans notre vieux préjugé français qui veut que les enfants ne se marient que par l'entremise des parents. Si vous y aviez strictement obéi, si vous étiez venu à moi, ces temps derniers, me parler, avant de lui parler à

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elle, vous lui auriez épargné des émotions bien inutiles, et vous ne l'auriez pas froissée, d'une manière peut-être irréparable...."18

It is interesting to note how the father takes the matter in hand and clears the difficulties;

"Laissez-moi le soin de sonder sa plaie, et, encore une fois, puisqu'il y a un malentendu à dissiper, de le dissiper...Ecrivez et mettez dedans tout ce que vous voudrez. Je la donnerai à Reine, sans la lire."17

Those words show that there could be very little communication between the young girl and her partner, without the knowledge of her parents.

In La Croisée Des Chemins, by Bordeaux, M. Rouvray reprimands Pascal, who wrote home that he had made a choice of a partner, without consulting them. He says,

"J'ai prié ta mère qui est ta correspondante ordinaire de me laisser t'exprimer notre étonnement. Nous n'avons pas été consultés sur l'acte le plus grave de ta vie: le choix de ta compagne, la fondation de ton foyer...."18

It was very important that the partners be chosen among one's own rank and race in life, and it was probably for this reason that the parents arranged the marriages themselves. They had at heart, besides the happiness of the child, the continuation of the race and the safe-guarding of the traditional customs, which could best be accomplished within their

16 Paul Bourget, Drame de Famille, pp. 246-247.
17 Ibid., pp. 247-248.
18 Henry Bordeaux, La Croisée Des Chemins, p. 23.
own race. Bourget attributed much of the decadence of the French race to the inter-provincial marriages. In *Drame De Famille*, differences in social and economic ideas existed, which the author attributes to the difference in race. He says,

"Sa mère, une demoiselle Huguenin, était originaire d'Aix-en-Provence; son père était le fils d'un petit commerçant du Nord. Ces coupages de sang, si fréquents dans les familles modernes que personne n'y prend même garde, ont souvent pour résultat une hérédité de tendances contradictoires, qui se paralysent en s'équilibrant. Peut-être la cause de la décadence de la race en France git-elle là, dans cette continue mixture du nord et du midi, de l'est et de l'ouest, par des mariages trop disparates d'origine...."19

As much as possible the parents encouraged marriages between members of the same provinces, as it influenced and strengthened the traditional heritage. Sometimes those of another province were not considered on equal level. In *La Terre Qui Meurt*, by Bazin, Jean Nesmy, a Boquin, from the province de Bocage, came to the Marais de Vendée, and worked at the Fromentière. After two years of satisfactory service, Toussaint Lumineau, the maître de la Fromentière, discharged Jean Nesmy, because he was paying too much attention to Rousille Lumineau.

"Je ne te renvoie pas parce que tu es fainéant... Tu m'as bien servi. Seulement ma fille est à moi, Jean Nesmy, et je ne t'ai pas accordé avec Rousille."20

19 Paul Bourget, *Drame De Famille*, p. 98.
20 René Bazin, *La Terre Qui Meurt*, p. 61.
To whom the boy replied:

"Si c'est son goût, et si c'est le mien, Maître Lumineau?"

Toussaint Lumineau then explained to him:

"Tu n'es pas de chez nous, mon pauvre gars. Qu'un Boquin se marie avec une fille comme Rousille, ça ne se peut, tu le sais: tu aurais mieux fait d'y penser avant."²¹

Later when Toussaint Lumineau was obliged to leave the Promentière to Rousille, because his sons had left him, he said,

"...Toi Rousille, j'aurais aimé te marier avec un Maraîchín, comme nous, quelqu'un de notre condition et de notre pays. C'était peut-être de l'orgueil. Les choses n'ont pas tourné selon mon goût. Crois-tu que Jean Nesmy viendrait bien à la Promentière?"²²

From those words we conclude that the Maraîchín considered themselves of higher social standing than the Boquin, and it was a humiliation to Maître Lumineau to see his daughter marry one of them.

The French provincial families were hostile to their children marrying those of Parisian origin. In Paris, due to the transient population, the races became mixed and the families were unstable. In La Croisée Des Chemins, by Bordeaux, Pascal announced to his parents that he had chosen Mlle Avenière, of Paris, for his fiancée. M. Rouvray explains to Pascal why he objects to his choice.

²¹ René Bazin, La Terre Qui Meurt, p. 61.
²² Ibid., p. 307.
"Mais on y fait une grande consommation d'idées fausses. Et surtout Paris, est une ville où les origines de chacun se perdent et qui, se recrutant de tous côtés, accepte d'être composée de passants et de couples éphémères. On ne s'y installe pas pour durer."23

This hostility is still more clearly explained in Une Tache D'Encre, by Bazin, when Fabien tells his Uncle Mouillard, that he has chosen a Parisian girl for his fiancée, and that he intends to establish himself in Paris. The uncle writes,

"Ce n'est pas à Paris que les Mouillard prennent leurs épouses, Fabien; ce n'est pas une Parisienne qu'il nous faut pour perpétuer les traditions de la famille et de l'étude. Une Parisienne! Quand j'y pense, j'en ai le frisson...."24

From those words the safeguarding of traditions formed an important means to the stability of the traditional family, and since the Parisian families were of mixed origin, it was no wonder that their choice caused anxiety to the parents.

Unless the French boy or girl approved the partners chosen for them by their parents, they were not forced to accept them. On the contrary, if the choice of the boy or girl was not according to the desire of the parents, they, nevertheless, respected them. In Le Peur De Vivre, by Bordeaux, Mme Guibert and her daughter Paule are not pleased with Marcel's choice of Alice Dulaurens. Paule says to him one day,

24 René Bazin, Une Tache D'Encre, p. 132.
"Elle manque de courage. Et puis, elle n'est pas de notre monde."

To whom Marcel answered rather bruskly:

"Comment pas de notre monde? Parce que les Dulaurens ont plus de fortune que nous?...."

And Paule continues,

"...Ces gens dont nous parlons comprennent la vie autrement que nous. Ils en font une parade, et confondent les futilités avec les choses qui ont de l'importance...."25

Although Mme Guibert did not approve of his choice, she respected it and contributed all she could for his future.

"Elle respectait le choix de Marcel bien qu'il ne corresponde pas à son désir, et, oubliuse de ce désir, décidée à s'incliner devant la volonté de son fils et à contribuer de toutes ses forces à ce nouvel avenir...."26

Careful provision for the new home to be established was the "dot" provided by the parents of the girl. It consisted of a small amount of money, according to the means of the family, and it was regarded as an affectional prudence for the new established home. So important was this custom that when the family was unable to furnish the "dot," the daughter did not marry.

It is mentioned in La Maison, by Bordeaux, that when Mme Rambert worried about the cost of the education of her eight children, she mentioned with equal importance the "dot" of her daughters.

26Ibid., p. 113.
"...D'ici quelques années, il nous faudra établir Louise, si Melanie n'a besoin que d'une petite dot...."27

In *Les Roquevillard*, by Bordeaux, Marguerite is willing to dispose of her "dot," in order to help save the name of the family, which her brother Maurice has dishonored. She says to her father,

"Fère, dit la jeune fille, disposez de ma dot. Je ne me marierai pas."28

From those words it is evident that the French family considered this custom as a necessary means to security.

From an early age the parents instilled into their children the duties they would have to pursue in life. No one was more prepared to instill devotion to duty than the one who had practiced it all her life. In *La Peur De Vivre*, by Bordeaux, Mme Guibert, whose entire life had been one of sacrifice, although filled with many blessings, spoke to her daughter, Paule, of duty. Paule had just alluded to their wealthy neighbors, the Dulaurens, who took pleasure in exhibiting their wealth at the expense of duty. She said:


revue de cinq années. ...Cependant ma part a été belle.
Je bénis Dieu qui m'éprouva après m'avoir comblée...."30

In the same book, Mme Dulaurens, has chosen a wealthy,
and titled man, M. de Marthenay, for her daughter Alice. Alice
prefers Marcel Guibert, although she does not contradict her
mother on her choice. When her father speaks to her of a
choice,

"...Il ne te faut pas un mari qui s'en aille conquérir
le monde...."30

She replies, using the words of Paule Guibert:

"Père, dit la jeune fille qui se souvenait des vaill-
lantes leçons de Paule, une femme doit aider son mari, et
non pas entraver sa carrière."31

Later, Marcel asks Alice to promise him her heart. She
weakens and cannot make the sacrifice. She says,

"Vous ne me connaissez pas. J'ai peur. J'ai peur de
tout. Je suis une pauvre petite femme. Oh! Comme ma
tête est lourde."32

When Marcel sees her hesitating he bids her adieu for the
last time and says,

"Non, Alice, ne promettez rien. Je vous rends la
parole que vous aviez donnée à Paule pour moi. Vous
n'avez pas la force d'aimer."33

29 Henry Bordeaux, La Peur De Vivre, p. 9.
31 Ibid., p. 101.
32 Ibid., p. 149.
33 Ibid., p. 152.
Later, Marcel, in speaking of the refusal to his sister Paule, makes allusion to Alice's lack of sacrifice:

"Laissons cela, petite soeur. Ce mariage m'eût amoindri. Une femme n'a pas le droit de rétrécir la vie de son mari! Qu'est-ce qu'un amour qui n'est plus assez fort pour supporter la séparation, la douleur, pour accepter le sacrifice?"34

Finally, Alice married M. de Marthenay, who bestowed much wealth on her, but no happiness. In her unhappy moments, Alice recalled her lack of sacrifice when Marcel asked her to marry him, and suppliantly, she addressed the following words of regret,

"Oui, j'ai été lâche, j'ai eu peur de lutter pour vous, de défendre ma tendresse; j'ai eu peur d'attendre, d'aimer, de souffrir, de vivre. Mais Dieu m'a punie...."35

Mme Guibert had instilled duty and the spirit of sacrifice so deeply into the heart of Paule that later in life when Jean Berlier asked Paule in marriage, she was ready to sacrifice her life to care for her mother. But Mme Guibert said to Jean:

"Elle regarde en arrière, et dans la vie c'est en avant qu'il faut regarder. Les pères et les mères peuvent vivre pour leur enfants, mais non pas le contraire. C'est la loi naturelle. C'est la volonté divine. Ne pleurez pas Jean; elle serait votre femme...."36

Later, when Alice in her unhappy moments came to Mme Guibert to seek consolation, she reproaches her lack of duty:

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34 Henry Bordeaux, La Peur De Vivre, pp. 162-163.
36 Ibid., p. 303.
"Pauvre petite...Vous ne saviez pas aimer. Quand on donne son cœur, c'est pour toujours. Et l'amour inspire la force, la patience, l'endurance. Votre mère cherchait votre bonheur, mais elle le cherchait à sa manière. Elle a cru bien agir en vous détournant de mon fils. Ne l'accusez pas. N'accusez que vous-même."37

Thus the success and happiness of marriage, as the traditional family conceived it, was only insofar as it continued the race in the same traditional characteristics.

The following letter to Pascal by M. Rouvray, in La Croisée Des Chemins, by Bordeaux, embodies the idea of what was necessary for the traditional marriage. Pascal had made his own choice and then wrote to his parents about it. His father writes him:

"...Je sais toute l'importance de la formation individuelle et que ce n'est pas en s'imposant sans cesse que la famille transmet son esprit et ses directions. Je sais aussi que les générations, et surtout la tienne, marchent en avant sans trop se préoccuper de ce qu'elles laissent derrière elles, et je me suis penché sur trop de vies, et aussi sur trop de morts, pour m'en plaindre ou m'en révolter.... Je ne puis croire que dans ton choix tu n'aies pas été contraint en quelque sorte par ces voix du passé qui prennent malgré nous-mêmes la parole lorsque nos intérêts les plus sacrés entrent en jeu. Nous avions souhaité pour belle-fille une de ces jeunes filles du Dauphiné qui fut le berceau de notre race et dont nous gardons le caractère. Celle à qui nous avions pensé t'aurait apporté en dot, outre une fortune bien acquise, le courage et la sécurité. Ce sont là des vertus indispensables, quand on veut de sa vie composer quelque chose...."38

CHAPTER IV

SOME CRITICISMS OF MODERNISTIC IDEAS

The stress which the French family laid on the strict observance of the traditional customs, gave an explanation to the strong family spirit that lead to the continuation of the race for generations. Many circumstances in the long life of the traditional family before the French Revolution contributed to the safeguarding of those customs.

The quiet and peaceful life of the rural districts strengthened the family customs that were practiced at the patrimony, and among the families of the same Provinces. Slow communication and travel prevented the too rapid incoming of modernistic ideas.

Later when the French Revolution had ruined the ancient order, and France faced a period of progress, socially and economically, new ideas were introduced, which influenced the minds of the younger generations. The change produced in the young, a desire for wealth and advancement, and lead to their deviation from the old social customs.

It is interesting to note here, that throughout the novels of the traditional authors reviewed for the study, there was a constant anxiety felt by the French parents lest their children wander from the traditional beliefs. They spent much effort to instill into them the love and importance of the
traditional customs, which assured the continuity of the family.

Thus the patrimony which was handed down with the name, held within its walls and its land, the visible image of the family that had inhabited it for centuries. Nothing was more consoling for the head of the domaine, than to view the image of the past generations who had built, developed, and improved the patrimony. He saw that they had implanted on the land a tradition of honor, courage, and nobility.

In *Les Roquevillard*, by Bordeaux, when Maurice marries Mme Frasne and dishonors the family name, M. Roquevillard plans to sell the Vigie, and in his desolation he views the image of the family that had inhabited and cultivated it for centuries.

"...Avec une émotion croissante, il évoqua toutes les générations successives qui avaient défriché ces terres, bâti cette maison de campagne, cette ferme, ces rustiques, fondé ce domaine, depuis la première blouse du plus ancien paysan jusqu'aux toges de Sénat de Savoie, jusqu'à sa robe d'avocat. Le plateau qui s'étendait à sa hauteur, en face de lui, était occupé comme un fort, par la chaîne de ses ancêtres qui, avec le blé, le seigle, l'avoine, et les vergers et les vignes, avaient implanté sur ce coin de sol une tradition de probité, d'honneur, de courage, de noblesse. Et comme, les produits du patrimoine en répandaient au loin la réputation, cette tradition rayonnait sur la cité que là-bas, au fond du cirque de montagnes, l'ombre commençait d'envahir, sur la province qu'elle avait servie, protégée, illustrée même à certaines heures historiques, et jusque sur le pays dont la force était faite de la continuité et de la fermeté de ces races-là."  

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In that passage is seen the strength and union that was contributed by the continuity and the stability of those generations. Yet, in spite of the safeguarding and strict observance of the customs new ideas were introduced. In the same book, *Les Roquevillard*, during the conseil de famille, M. Roquevillard asks his nephew, Léon, to express his idea of selling the patrimony in order to save the honor of the family name. Léon, who has imbibed modernistic ideas on individualism, replies:

"Mon oncle commença-t-il, vous êtes de ces hommes d'autrefois qui cherchaient partout des croisades et se battaient contre les moulins à vent. Votre ruine est inutile. Voyez les choses d'une façon plus positive. A cette heure, Maurice pratique contre vous le chantage de l'honneur...Maurice est un garçon intelligent, plein d'avenir; il comprendra. Si, par hasard, il ne comprenait pas, eh bien! tant pis pour lui, après tout. C'est triste à dire devant vous, mon oncle, et je vous en exprime mes regrets; mais il l'aura voulu, et je sais que vous aimez la franchise. Son risque lui est personnel. La solidarité de la famille n'entraîne plus la déchéance de tous par la faute d'un seul. C'était là une de ces théories absurdes que notre temps a définitivement reléguées dans le passé. Chacun pour soi, c'est la nouvelle devise. Nul n'est tenu des dettes d'autrui, quand ce serait son père, son frère ou son fils...L'industrie, les machines, c'est l'avenir, comme la société c'est l'individu."2

M. Roquevillard is disturbed at the words of his nephew, and he explains to him the loss he himself would have suffered, if his maxim had been practiced.

"Chacun pour soi, as-tu dit? Si ton oncle ici présent avait pratiqué cette belle maxime, mon garçon, tu ne

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dirigerais pas, à l'heure qu'il est, une usine qui te rapporte des cents et des cents....

Bordeaux continues to explain that the unity of the family was beginning to lose strength, caused by the new ideas based on individualism. Léon's mother, Mme Camille Roquevillard, always sided with her son's individualistic ideas.

"...Quand on vit côte à côte, on ne s'observe pas, et l'on est quelquefois tout surpris, dès qu'une circonstance grave en fournit l'occasion, de découvrir la solitude. Aujourd'hui, cette sensation d'isolement est plus fréquente d'une génération à l'autre, à cause du relâchement des liens de famille et de la rapide transformation des idées." 4

The law requiring the equal division of land was detrimental to the traditional customs and influenced the breaking up of the patrimony. Each one cultivated his portion of land and worked for himself instead of for the good of the family.

During the conseil de famille, the old ancestor who still held the unity of the family at heart, spoke his mind to the assembly.

"...Ces jeunes gens ignorent ce que représentait alors le patrimoine qui était la force matérielle de la famille, de toute la famille groupée autour d'un chef, assurée de subsister, de durer, grâce à sa cohésion. Aujourd'hui, à quoi bon garder un domaine? Si tu ne le vends pas, la loi se charge de le pulvériser. Avec le partage forcé, il n'y a plus de patrimoine. Avec le chacun pour soi, d'une part, et, de l'autre, l'intervention permanente et intéressée de l'État dans tous

4 Ibid., p. 235.
les actes de la vie, il n'y a plus de famille. Nous verrons ce que réalisera cette société d'individus asservis à l'État."

From those words we note how the ancient families felt anxiety at "cette société d'individus." The traditional customs formed a part of their life and as each one was transgressed, they experienced a breaking away from what had been dear to them.

Any ideas contrary to those of the family group tended to disturb its unity and solidarity. In La Maison, Bordeaux mentions the disunion that grand-père Rambert was causing in the Rambert family. Grand-père had imbibed liberal ideas from his reading and from his friends at the Café de Navigateurs. His friends were enemies of the Rambert family. He frequented the Café at which time he presented himself against his son M. Rambert. Hence, when the calomnies reached M. Rambert, he reprimanded grand-père for presenting himself against him at the Café, which he said was the rendezvous of our enemies. Then grand-père ironically replied:

"Oh! je vais où je veux et je vois qui me plait." 6

And M. Rambert explains to him that in a family all the members must be of one mind. He says,

"Vous êtes libre, père, sans aucun doute. Mais dans une famille, tous les membres sont solidaires. Celui

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6Henry Bordeaux, La Maison, p. 199.
qui vous vise m'atteint. Celui qui me difame vous insulte."

In the next statement, it is clear that grand-père's idea of the unity of the family is not according to tradition.

"Je n'ai pas de la famille cette idée étroite. Je ne t'ai jamais contrarié: fais-en autant."\(^7\)

M. Rambert did not allow such ideas contrary to the family spirit to be spoken in the home. He feared that it might fill the minds of the children. Grand-père had already communicated some of his liberal ideas to François, the oldest son of the Rambert family. He had placed the *Confessions de Rousseau* in François' reach. François had already imbibed some of the liberal ways of grand-père, and therefore the *Confessions* delighted him. When his sister told him,

"Tu n'as pas le droit de lire ce livre."

He answered,

"Je lis ce qui me plaît."

And grand-père answered quickly,

"Oh! chacun est libre. Et d'ailleurs Jean-Jacques est sincère."

Such liberal ideas of grand-père, with his indifference and lack of order, caused constant anxiety to the Rambert family.

\(^7\) Henry Bordeaux, *La Maison*, p. 199.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 199.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 294.
Deviation from traditional ideas and customs which tended to break up the solidarity of the family came from various sources. In *Les Oberlé*, by Bazin, the desire of wealth and honor furnished the means to break away from tradition. Joseph Oberlé, an Alsatian, sided in with the Germans, for economic purposes. He was the inheritor of a large industry, founded in 1850 at Alsheim by M. Philippe Oberlé. He had been engaged in public functions as a lawyer, and he directed his power and influence for the interest of Germany. The marriage of Joseph Oberlé to Monique Biehler, of an old Alsatian family, had proved unhappy since they were divided in their beliefs.

Bazin describes how Mme Oberlé had had no influence on her husband's dispositions. He says,

"Son mariage avec Monique Biehler, désiré et préparé par le vieil et ardent patriote qui votait au Reichstag contre le prince de Bismarck, n'avait eu aucune influence sur les dispositions nouvelles, d'abord secrètes, bientôt soufflées, puis connues, puis affirmées, puis scandaleusement affichées de M. Joseph Oberlé...."10

Later when his son and daughter were old enough to attend higher institutions, Joseph Oberlé sent his son Jean, "au gymnase de Munich, pour le faire élever en Bavière." He sent Lucienne to the most German institution of Baden-Baden, la pension Mündner. When his Alsatian friends reproached him for having his children educated in German schools, he answered:

"C'est pour leur bien. J'ai perdu ma vie; je ne veux pas qu'ils perdent la leur. Ils choisiront leur route plus tard, quand ils auront comparé. Mais je ne veux pas qu'ils soient malgré eux, dès leur jeunesse, catalogués, désignés, inscrits d'office sur la liste des Alsaciens parias."

Lucienne had been under the influence of the German atmosphere for seven years, where she developed both morally and intellectually. Bazin explains the influence of her education.

"Cette éducation physique l'avait déjà éloignée moralement de sa mère, qui n'avait jamais été qu'une promeneuse intrépide, devenue une médiocre marcheuse. Mais d'autres causes avaient agi et les avaient plus profondément et plus irrévocablement séparées l'une de l'autre. C'était sans doute l'instruction tout allemande de la pension Mündner, plus scientifique, plus solennelle, plus pédante, plus éparpillée et beaucoup moins pieuse que celle qu'avait reçue sa mère, ...Rentrée chez elle, elle ne comprenait plus le passé de sa race et de sa famille. Pour elle, ceux qui défendaient l'ancien état de choses ou qui le regrettaient, sa mère, son oncle Ulrich, étaient les représentants d'une époque finie, d'une opinion déraisonnable et puérile. Tout de suite elle s'était mise du côté du père, contre les autres...."12

Those words express clearly, that the new ideas Lucienne had received in education caused the loss of traditional customs and the separation from the family. Later, Lucienne decided to marry M. Farnow, a German officer. Her ideas of marriage were altogether different from those of her mother. Previous to her marriage Mme Oberlé took her to Obernai because the

11 René Bazin, Les Oberlé, p. 50.
12 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
grandfather, M. Philippe Oberlé, refused to let a German come into the paternal home. When Lucienne was alone with her mother she pitied her and said:

"Vous devez beaucoup souffrir, maman, dit-elle. Avec vos idées, ce que vous faites est presque héroïque."

La mère ne leva pas les yeux, mais les paupières battirent plus vite.

"Vous le faites par devoir de femme, et, à cause de cela, je vous admire. Je crois que je ne pourrais pas faire ce que vous faites: renoncer à ma personnalité jusqu'à ce point-là.

Elle ne pensait pas être cruelle.

"Et tu veux te marier? demanda la mère en relevant vivement la tête.

"Mais oui. Nous n'entendons pas le mariage tout à fait comme vous, à présent."13

Those words express her entire breaking away from the ideas of a true home.

Service in the army also encouraged the desire to leave the homeland to establish elsewhere. In La Terre Qui Meurt, Toussaint Lumineau was so happy to see his son, André, return from service. He felt certain now that the future of the Fromentièrè was assured. François, his second son, had returned from service also, but he had been dissatisfied on the farm, and had finally left for the city. When André asked his father where François was, he answered:

13 René Bazin, Les Oberlé, pp. 323-324.
"Depuis le régiment, il a toujours eu le goût de la ville."14  

And in the following words the keynote of André's thought is found.  

"Je le sais bien, et je comprends qu'on aime la ville, répondit André...Enfin, chacun va de son bord, en ce monde. Tant mieux s'ils réussissent...."15  

After some time André, too, became dissatisfied at the Fromentière. His thoughts traveled in the far off countries he had read about. Since his service André had received many newspapers and he had written many letters. This, of course, was a matter of concern for Maître Lumineau. He said:  

"Il n'est jamais entré tant de papier à la Fromentière, Driot, que depuis les semaines de ton retour. Je ne t'en veux pas, puisque c'est ton plaisir de lire. Mais moi, ça me lasserait l'esprit."16  

And later he said to his neighbor, about André:  

"...Ça n'est pas qu'il méprise la terre. Il a de l'amitié pour elle, au contraire, et je n'ai rien à reprocher à son travail de la semaine. Mais depuis qu'il est revenu du régiment, son idée, le dimanche, est dans la lecture."17  

André had read much about foreign countries, their opportunities, their wealth, and when Toussaint Lumineau tried to interest his son on the farm, he answered that in order to  

14 René Bazin, *La Terre Qui Meurt*, p. 137.  
16 Ibid., p. 185.  
17 Ibid., p. 186.
grow anything it was necessary to have new land. He enumerated several countries that were offering better opportunities.

"...En Amérique, au Cap, en Australie, dans les îles, chez les Anglais. Tout poussé dans ces pays-là. La terre a plaisir à donner, tandis que les nôtres...."18

From that statement the family Lumineau noticed that André had grown different from the rest of them.

"...Et tous ils sentaient vaguement, à l'aisance du geste, à la facilité de sa parole, que Driot n'était plus tout à fait comme eux."19

André continued to give the ideas he had read in books, and what he had learned of commerce when he was in service:

"...il y aura peut-être quelque chose à faire, ici dans les vieux pays. Mais on ne nous apprend pas ces choses-là dans nos écoles: C'est trop utile. Et puis l'impôt est trop lourd, et les fermages trop hauts. Alors, pendant que nous vivons misérablement, ils font là-bas des récoltes magnifiques...

Mais j'ai vu aussi des navires dans les ports, et les sacs de froment coulaient de leur bord comme l'eau des étiers par-dessus les talus. Si vous lisez les journaux, vous saurez que tout nous est apporté de l'étranger, à meilleur compte que nous ne pouvons le produire, le blé, l'avoine, les chevaux, les boeufs...."20

The educational ideas taught in the lycées in France were a cosmopolitan ideal of the philosophers of the time. Maurice Barrès, in Les Déracinés, tells how seven young provincial Frenchmen were estranged from their natural

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18 René Bazin, La Terre Qui Meurt, p. 197.
19 Ibid., p. 198.
20 Ibid., pp. 198-199.
surroundings by moving to Paris, to pursue higher studies. These young men were placed in the lycée of Nancy, under the direction of Bouteiller, who professed "Modernism," the new liberty and new theories of the time. He devoted a great deal of his time in impregnating the minds of his pupils with the new thought. Barrès says,

"Il abrégea dédaigneusement la philosophie universitaire pour insister avec de puissants développements sur l'histoire de la philosophie... Il allait hauser ces enfants admiratifs au-dessus des passions de leur race, jusqu'à la raison, jusqu'à l'humanité."

After a few months' teaching, Bouteiller had so prepared and captivated the minds of his pupils that they were ready to imbibe his philosophy. Bouteiller professed the philosophy of Kant. According to William Turner, in History of Philosophy, Kant asserted the supremacy of the moral law which has given rise to the tendency to regard Christianity more as a system of ethics and less as a system of dogmatic truth. The only law one has to follow is the law within one's own consciousness. If this cannot be known by experience, then it has no value in truth. His philosophy led to scepticism which holds that the power of the mind to attain to any certain knowledge cannot be positively demonstrated.

Of the philosophy taught by Bouteiller, Barrès says,

Boutellier did not instill into their minds, ideas that were beautiful and that formed the true Frenchman, as those taught before the French Revolution, but on the contrary, he filled their minds with the teaching of the times. Barrès continues:

"A des jeunes gens qui jusqu'alors remachaient des rudiments quelconques, on venait de donner le plus vigoureux des stimulants: des idées de leur époque! Non pas des idées qui aient été belles, neuves et éloquentes dans les collèges avant la Révolution, mais ces mêmes idées qui circulent dans notre société, dans nos coteries, dans la rue, et qui font des héros, des fous, des criminels, parmi nos contemporains...."23

From such teachings, according to Barrès, it is not surprising that the young men were thrown into such a disordered state of mind, that they were unable to settle down to any stable order. Besides, they had lost all desire of returning to their homeland.

"Bacheliers, ils quittaient définitivement le lycée pour rentrer dans leurs familles. C'était la liberté, mais non un bonheur de leur goût...

22 Maurice Barrès, Les Déracinés, pp. 15-16.
23 Ibid., p. 1.
Si cette éducation leur a supprimé la conscience nationale, c'est-à-dire le sentiment qu'il y a un passé de leur canton natal et le goût de se rattacher à ce passé le plus proche, elle a développé en eux l'énergie. Elle l'a poussée toute en cérébralité et sans leur donner le sens des réalités, mais enfin elle l'a multipliée. De toute cette énergie multipliée, ces provinciaux ont: 'À Paris!'#24

In the following words the author continues to explain how the lycée had cut all their natural social life:

"Le lycée de Nancy avait coupé leur lien social naturel; l'Université ne sut pas à Paris leur créer les attaches qui eussent le mieux convenu à leurs idées innées, ou, plus exactement, aux dispositions de leur organisme. Une atmosphère faite de toutes les races et de tous les pays les baignait. Des maîtres éminents, des bibliothèques énormes leur offraient pêle-mêle toutes les affirmations, toutes les négations. Mais qui leur eut fourni en 1883 une méthode pour former, mieux que des savants, des hommes de France?"#25

Barrès continues to tell us that at the age of twenty the seven young men were roaming about, unsettled, both intellectually and socially. What a contrast it must have been to the spirit they had learned in their traditional family, which spirit they had replaced by the ideas of the time.

"Chacun d'eux porte en son âme un Lorrain mort jeune et désormais n'est plus qu'un individu. Ils ne se connaissent pas d'autre responsabilité qu'envers soi-même; ils n'ont que faire de travailler pour la société française, qu'ils ignorent, ou pour des groupes auxquels ne les relie aucun intérêt...ils vaguent dans le Quartier latin et dans ce bazar intellectuel, sans fil directeur, libres comme la bête dans les bois."#26

24 Maurice Barrès, Les Déracinés, p. 43.
26 Ibid., pp. 138-139.
And of the further effects of these ideas Barrès says:

"De l'ambition mêlée à la mélancolie romanesque, voilà ce que l'on retrouve au cours de ce siècle, chez des milliers de jeunes gens, pour qui les conquêtes de la bourgeoisie ont rompu les frontières sociales, et ouvert tous les possibles. M. Bouteiller, qui croit soumettre ses élèves à la notion du devoir, ne fait que les jeter plus ardents dans la voie commune aux jeunes Français modernes. Et leurs lectures aussi les exaltent sans plus leur fournir de sentiment social."27

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CONCLUSION

We have attempted to trace in the works of the four authors, those problems which were more widely treated by them. Many others could have been included, as we know that the traditional family possessed its own spirit, and its particular idea of the past which it clung to, so profoundly. The French family was extremely traditional, and particularly did it adhere to the three characteristic traits of continuity, stability, and heredity.

The traditional Frenchman remained in a fixed place, living his life among the same relatives and friends. With them, he worked for the common good of the family, cultivating and improving the land. He spoke of the same interests and held the same sentiments as they did. The same life was handed from father to son. The son inherited the patrimony, which he was bound to safeguard as had been done in the past.

The education and moral training of the children occupied the first interest of the parents, which interest they directed until each one was established in life. All this assured the stability and the continuity of the family.

The Frenchman was happy and contented in his quiet life in the rural district. But a change was to come. With the coming of industrial, economic, and social progress, after the French Revolution, a transformation was to reach even the fields of the peasant.
War and service in the army was probably one of the greatest causes of the change. It claimed the young men who, previously, had continued the work of the patrimony. When they returned they were dissatisfied with the farm and sought to establish themselves elsewhere.

The new scientific inventions, increasing the modes of traveling and communication, effected a change in the life of the rural districts. The younger generations received a desire for economic and social advancement, and thus, some sought to leave the paternal home and establish themselves in the cities.

Not less should be mentioned the great change caused by the new ideas introduced in the Lycées and Universities of the cities, which many of the provincial young people attended. Cut away from the provincial life they had been accustomed to, they sought to rise from their low condition to that of equality and independence. Up to this time the rural Frenchman had been looked upon as being too traditional, too unadvancing, and too self-satisfied in his mode of living. Robert de la Sizeranne says of the peasant at this period:

"Dans ce vertige d'internationalisme et de progrès, de voyages et de réformes, où le mouvement de 1848... le paysan français demeurait dédaigné, autant qu'au grand siècle, non plus parce qu'il était laid, mais parce qu'il était traditionaliste, ni parce qu'il était misérable, mais parce qu'il était résigné...."¹

Finally, the change came. The traditional Frenchman evolved from his state of seclusion and strove to take his place in the world of progress. But he maintained his spirit of conservatism, the same ideas, the same customs, which had been so deeply grounded into him for centuries. René Maunier says of the spirit of the traditional Frenchman after his evolution:

"C'est la conservation, qui se maintient toujours, des idées, des façons, qui, depuis longtemps, étaient établies; non seulement les paysans-gens du passé-et les bourgeois-gens du présent-mais les ouvriers, des gens du futur, s'ils veulent du nouveau, ils gardent de l'ancien...."2

This movement caused the writers to turn their eyes towards the man of the soil. Before this time many of them had already written of the provincial family, but they had brought out only the ugly and the ridiculous. Now, they found beauty in his picturesque scenes, goodness in his traditions, and philosophy, probably superior to other philosophies of the time, in his serenity.

Bazin has written more especially on the provincial peasant. He strove to uplift the mind of the reader on the peasant life and show the beauty of his life and his devotedness. Henry Bordeaux said of Bazin:

"Peintre de la vie provinciale, dont tant d'autres n'ont su voir que les tares ou les ridicules, il en faisait goûter le charme de paix et de recueillement.

Du paysan, dont on venait de nous donner une brutale caricature, il dégageait le type véritable. Il aimait la terre de France pour la beauté de ses paysages, dont il savait rendre, d'un pinceau tout en nuances, le coloris varié et la grâce mesurée. Et il aimait cette terre, parce qu'elle était le sol sacré de la patrie.3

Paul Bourget has spent his time writing of the higher bourgeois class bringing out the problem that affected the morality of the society. René Doumic says of him:

"A partir de 'l'Etape' toute son oeuvre est dominée par une idée: celle de la famille considérée comme la cellule sociale, dont la santé importe à l'organisme tout entier. Tout ceux qui ont eu l'honneur de ses entretiens savent avec quelle angoisse il suivait les progrès du mal qui ronge, chez nous et ailleurs, les sociétés modernes oubliées des principes qui, à travers les siècles, en ont été l'intangible armature."4

The strong national and traditional spirit of Barrés in his later years has shown his strong belief in the continuity of the race. All that one has received, he claims, depends upon his race and the land where they live.

"Dans ces derniers ouvrages, il explique que chaque homme est le prolongement de sa race sans laquelle il n'existait pas, que tout lui vient de ceux qui lui ont préparé le chemin et il dépend de la terre où lui et les siens ont vécu...."5

And finally, no one has contributed more to uplift the spirit and the sentiment of the traditional family than

5 M. S. Pargment, Gens Et Choses De France, p. 200.
Bordeaux. He has exalted and praised the virtues of the family, and he has encouraged the continuity by the safeguarding of the traditional customs that have been handed down by their ancestors. He believed in,

"...l'effort accumulé de génération en génération sur le même coin de sol, effort qui produit les races solides et puissantes et prépare les énergies nécessaires."

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6 Henry Bordeaux, *Ame* Modernes. Préface, p. X.
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