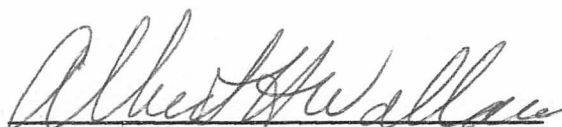


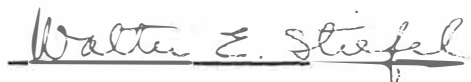
May 26, 1964

To the Graduate Council:

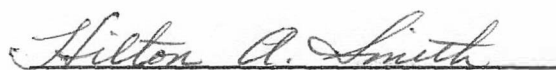
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Garner Elwyn Hoyt entitled "The Life and Works of Ruben Saillens." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours of credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in French.

  
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:


Accepted for the Council:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF RUBEN SAILLENS

---

A Thesis

Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
The University of Tennessee

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by

Garner Elwyn Hoyt

June 1964

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GEH

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## CHAPTER I

### THE LIFE AND WORKS OF RUBEN SAILLENS

"C'est ainsi, monsieur, qu'à mon grand regret je me suis rendu coupable envers vous d'un plagiat involontaire, et c'est avec le plus grand plaisir que je constate ici par cette lettre que le récit: Là où est l'amour là est Dieu n'est qu'une traduction et une adaptation aux moeurs russes de votre admirable récit Martin.

"Je vous prie, monsieur, d'excuser ma négligence et de recevoir l'assurance de mes sentiments fraternels.

"Léon Tolstoï."<sup>1</sup>

Who is this writer to whom Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist and social reformer, found it necessary to address these words of apology?

The recipient of this unusual apology from Tolstoy was the little known but remarkable Ruben Saillens, who was born in Southern France at Saint-Jean-du-Gard<sup>2</sup> on June 24, 1855. His family was gifted as regional singers, orators and poets. His grandfather, François Saillens, was known throughout the region as "lou cantaïre" (le chanteur) the singer. His father, Auguste François Saillens, was exceptionally gifted as a poet and as an orator. Other members of the family were talented musicians who participated in the religious and secular life of the community.

The maternal ancestors of Ruben Saillens were wealthy Corsicans. Long before the French Revolution, Ruben's great-great-grandfather Guigou appeared with his young son in Saint-Jean-du-Gard. They were en route from Corsica to an unknown destination in France. As the stagecoach horses were being changed, the father and son warmed themselves before the fireplace at the village inn. The father fell asleep and never awakened, leaving with his orphan son their luggage and a satchel containing money and valuable papers. The orphan remained at Saint-Jean-du-

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<sup>1</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, Ruben et Jeanne Saillens, Evangélistes (Paris, 1947), p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Jean-du-Gard, a town of approximately 2500 inhabitants today, is located about 50 miles northwest of Nîmes, France.

Gard and became the great-grandfather of Ruben Saillens. The guardian, on his deathbed, confessed that he had dissipated almost the entire fortune of the Guigou family.<sup>3</sup>

The paternal ancestors of Ruben Saillens were millers by trade. Very likely they were landowners and belonged to la petite noblesse of Saint-Jean-du-Gard and its environs. Two rather extensive properties of the area, as well as the mountain which separates Saint-Jean from Lasalle, are named Saillens. The name can be traced as far back as the founding of the Reformed Church at Saint-Jean-du-Gard in 1560. The name also appears in records of religious persecution among the Huguenots.<sup>4</sup>

Ruben Saillens was the son of a talented provincial poet, Auguste François Saillens, and Emilie Guigou. Ruben was a precocious child who could speak well before he could walk. His mother, Emilie, died when he was two, and his pious grandmother Guigou cared for him during his early childhood. She read him stories from the Bible and taught him religious songs which reflected the beliefs of the Darby Assembly. Ruben was happy living with his grandmother, but when his father re-married it became necessary for Ruben to leave the province to join the new family unit at Marseille. The contrast between the quiet little interior village and the busy excitement of the large city was so great that Ruben found the adjustment very difficult. At Marseille he refused for some time to speak anything but the provincial dialect, considering the use of French an act of treason against his grandmothers. Ruben became shy and withdrawn as a result of his loneliness. The birth of his little half-sister, Léa, solved his problem of adjustment to the new home. The two children became loving companions. In time Léa demonstrated literary gifts with a definite leaning toward poetry,<sup>5</sup> and dedicated some poems to Ruben.

The family experienced very difficult times before moving from

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<sup>3</sup>M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>5</sup>In adult life, after becoming Madame Albert Legg, she published a volume of charming poetry entitled Les Pâquerettes.

Marseille. Ruben's father became an evangelist for the Eglise libre. They were extremely poor, and Ruben's step-mother was in poor health. His little sister was cared for in another home, and Ruben, for his board and room, was placed in the home of a local business man. Later this experience gave him great sympathy and a deep understanding for the poor. This compassion endured throughout life.

In 1868, Ruben entered his teens, became eligible for serious employment, and his father accepted a call as evangelist in the Eglise libre at Lyon. Ruben was emotionally ready for this move and had no difficulty in making the adjustment as the family took up residence in Lyon. After various kinds of employment during the first year, he accepted a position at the Crédit lyonnais, a bank just newly established in the city.<sup>6</sup> Working first at copying letters on the press and making office-work schedules, he later was trained in accounting. This experience at the bank gave him a taste for order, exactitude, and attractive writing, as well as speed in calculating.

He became popular among the youth of Lyon and, in spite of his age, enjoyed considerable influence as a result of his talents. The same year, the J.B. Crétin family moved to Lyon from the North of France. Jeanne, the youngest daughter of this family, later was happily married to Ruben.

Ruben's genuine patriotism was amusingly demonstrated when war was declared in 1870. At 15 years of age Ruben, with his companions, heard the news of the declaration of war. They did not bother to go home first, but went immediately to join the National Guard. On the following day, when his father intervened, Ruben was allowed to return his fire-arms, and was definitively liberated. One month later, however, he accompanied his father who, along with other pastors of Lyon, had joined the Ambulance Corps. Thus, after all, at 15 years of age he was enrolled in the service of France.

As we look at the education of his formative years, various significant factors may be observed. Ruben received his first formal

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<sup>6</sup>M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 21.

education in a Protestant school, founded and directed by the Reformed Church of Marseille. He and more than 100 other boys studied under a teacher with poor health and advanced in age. There was very little to insure an effective program of study, for the boys were grouped and supervised by student monitors. The situation was only slightly improved when a M. Louis André was added to the teaching staff. André was a rather curious fellow, and although he held nothing beyond the brevet élémentaire, he was gifted as a poet. It was from him that Ruben learned all the rules of prosody, and under his direction wrote his first poetry.<sup>7</sup>

While yet at Marseille, after completing all that was available at the Protestant school, he was offered a scholarship at a collège. But poverty and sickness in the family forced him to seek employment for his own personal livelihood and, therefore, he was not free to accept the scholarship. For a short space of time, however, he attended an evening school. Upon completion of these courses he was awarded le prix d'honneur.<sup>8</sup> On another occasion, while living in Lyon, he took advantage of lessons in music theory and voice that were being offered at the Christian Union by a former teacher from Switzerland.

Though he was deprived of further formal education, his awakened intellect could not remain inactive. Independently, therefore, he spent many hours and entire nights in reading and learning poetry. He was especially fond of the poetry of Victor Hugo, the great poet of the period.

While Ruben was employed at the bank in Lyon, he made the acquaintance of an Englishman, Grattan Guinness, founder of a missionary training school in London. As a result of this contact, arrangements were made and Ruben left very shortly for London, passing through Paris for the first time. At 18 he began this specialized training looking toward service on the mission field in Africa. He followed such courses as theology, natural history, astronomy, chemistry and mathematics. In an

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

excellerated course of Greek, he caught up with the second year students in three months time.<sup>9</sup>

His period of study in England was far too short but he profited greatly from his adaptation to the intense religious life of England and his contact with some of the most eminent Christians of the country. He was also greatly influenced by his contacts with Moody, Sankey, Spurgeon and others internationally known at that time.<sup>10</sup> This program of study was interrupted in 1874 when Reverend Robert MacAll, founder of a popular mission in Paris, persuaded Ruben to join him. It was not long, however, until the question of further study in the Classics came up again. His family and close friends were firm in their opinion that his unusual gifts made him material for a serious program of advanced study in the Classics. Upon returning from his military service he did not have the courage to return to the classroom. He only considered the possibility of part-time work in order to take further study at the Faculté de Théologie then in formation. Though permission was granted, it was too late for Ruben Saillens, for the whirlpool of active life had seized him. The completion of his education was to be realized through carefully chosen reading matter and his further development was achieved through experience.<sup>11</sup>

The religious experience and contribution of Ruben Saillens must be considered in a treatment of his life's work. Like Pascal, he demonstrated consistently his devout acceptance of Christianity as the explanation of the higher meaning of man's life. J. M. Nicole,<sup>12</sup> has so well summarized the religious contributions of Ruben Saillens in the quotation below. In referring to the MacAll mission, where Saillens officially began his life's work, Nicole continues:

Pendant quatorze ans, il devait consacrer ses forces à cette oeuvre, soit à Paris, soit à Marseille. Puis, après une crise spirituelle . . ., R. Saillens sentit plus vivement la nécessité de

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>12</sup>presently co-director of the Bible Institute founded by Saillens.

grouper les convertis des réunions MacAll; il fonda donc, en 1888, en plein milieu populaire, une église baptiste à laquelle il donna le meilleur de lui-même pendant seize ans.

Survint le réveil du Pays de Galles. R. Saillens se rendit dans ce pays, et revint enthousiasmé par ce qu'il y avait vu. Désormais il confia la direction de l'église à son gendre Arthur Blocher, pour se consacrer lui-même à des missions de réveil en France et à l'étranger. Ce furent quinze années exceptionnellement fécondes . . . C'est au cours de cette période qu'il fonda également, avec Madame Saillens, les Conventions de Morges et de Lézan qui devaient servir de modèles à tant d'autres.

Enfin, à l'heure où l'on prend habituellement sa retraite, ces deux infatigables évangélistes créaient encore une nouvelle oeuvre, l'Institut Biblique de Nogent. Par la grâce de Dieu, ils purent le diriger pendant dix-huit ans, communiquant leur flamme à plus de deux cents jeunes, dont la plupart exercent maintenant un ministère béni en France, dans les colonies et ailleurs . . . .<sup>13</sup>

In considering the literary career of Saillens, it is evident that he had a poetic gift which appeared in childhood. His "Souvenirs d'enfance," which he wrote at the age of eleven, reveals clearly that he had the soul of a poet:

Sur les ailes du temps s'envolent mes pensées.  
Pour mon esprit rêveur, mille scènes passées,  
Radieux souvenir d'un âge radieux,  
Se pressent pêle-mêle et s'offrent à mes yeux.  
Je revois mon village et ses vertes campagnes,  
Sa rivière limpide et ses belles montagnes . . .  
Et là, sur un coteau dont les arbres touffus  
Au souffle du zéphyr rendent un bruit confus,  
L'enclos silencieux, plein d'ombre et de mystère,  
Où tant d'êtres aimés reposent sous la terre.<sup>14</sup>

As a youth he read many poets and learned hundreds of their lines, becoming thoroughly acquainted with the elements of French poetry. In an article which he wrote for an English Review on the subject, "Victor Hugo croyant," he said:

J'admire Victor Hugo, j'aime ce style, entraînant, passionné,

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<sup>13</sup> taken from the program-bulletin prepared for the memorial service of the Centenaire de la naissance de Ruben Saillens, held on June 26, 1955 at Saint-Jean-du-Gard.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

frémissant, j'aime ces vers où l'homme se peint, j'estime que jamais la France n'a eu une plus grande gloire littéraire.<sup>15</sup>

Saillens produced poetry from early childhood until the final years of his life. Subject matter for his poetry came from every phase of his life and thought. His earliest poems, of course, treated subjects such as his mother, grandmother, and his pays natal. Later in life, the subject of romance inspired poems of which the following lines are an example. These lines were written in 1876 during his military service:

Douce colombe au blanc plumage,  
Dont le vol n'est jamais lassé,  
Dis, veux-tu porter le message  
D'un coeur de tristesse oppressé?

\* \* \* \* \*

O pars, ma colombe charmante,  
Vers Albion, brumeux séjour,  
Vole apporter à mon amante,  
Avec un baiser, mon amour.

Puis reviens, ô reviens me dire  
Messagère de l'exilé,  
Que son âme pour moi soupire,  
Et mon coeur sera consolé . . .<sup>16</sup>

Some of his poetry treated subjects of an historical nature as indicated in the following titles: La Cévenole, "Quatre-vingt-neuf," "Aux Avant-Postes," and "Résistez!" These lines from "Résistez!" are representative:

#### RESISTEZ!

Non, ce n'est pas ta lourde grille  
Ni ton mur noir,  
Sombre tour, funèbre bastille,  
Que j'aime à voir!  
Mais ces traits qui, par une femme,  
Furent sculptés,  
Ce mot qui recouvre un long drame:  
RESISTEZ!

\* \* \* \* \*

Et c'est toi qui fus la plus forte,  
Vaillante foi!  
Depuis longtemps la femme est morte  
Et mort le roi,

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

Mais tandis que sceptre et couronne  
Sont emportés,  
Dans la tour ce vieux mot rayonne:  
RESISTEZ!<sup>17</sup>

"Devant le Rigi," "Devant la Jungfrau," and "Dans la forêt" are examples of poems in which he has treated the subject of nature. He often wrote poems commemorating birthdays and anniversaries, as well as poems of consolation. Especially noteworthy here, is the poem "Fidèle" written in honor of his son-in-law, Arthur Blocher:

Fidèle, il entendit la voix du bon Berger  
Et se laissa conduire à l'heureux pâturage;  
Puis, quand il le fallut, le suivit dans l'orage,  
Sans écouter jamais la voix d'un étranger.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Mais qui remplacera le lutteur qui succombe?  
Qui viendra sur l'autel s'offrir -- corps, âme, esprit --  
Pour hâter le grand jour où, sortant de leur tombe,  
Les élus triomphants salueront Jésus-Christ?<sup>18</sup>

Saillens did many poetic paraphrases of Bible stories such as "La Pécheresse" and "Le Bon Samaritain," of favorite passages, of outstanding chapters of Isaiah, and of popular Psalms. He wrote poems in which the subject was symbolical as for example, "L'Immortelle," and "La Revanche de la Femme," the first few lines of which we insert here:

Voyez ces deux vieillards qui marchent dans la plaine.  
L'air est une fournaise, et pas la moindre haleine  
Ne soulève leurs cheveux blancs; pas un ruisseau  
Ne murmure; pas un arbre, pas un oiseau  
Sur le sentier désert où ce couple chemine.  
L'Homme marche, appuyé sur un bâton d'épine;  
La Femme, près de lui, se traîne; on ne sait pas  
Lequel des deux a fait son avant-dernier pas,  
Tant l'un et l'autre sont courbés et misérables.<sup>19</sup>

The most imposing collections of poems published by Saillens are three in number: A demi-voix is the first volume which appeared in 1886;

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<sup>17</sup> Ruben Saillens, Pour Lui Seul, poésies (Paris: Imprimerie Vve Lievens et fils, 1892), pp. 15-17.

<sup>18</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup> Ruben Saillens, Pour Lui Seul, pp. 9-10.

next is a brochure of 32 pages entitled Pour Lui Seul, published in 1892; and in 1921, a volume of 104 pages, Sur les Ailes de la Foi. Many of his poems have been printed on seasonal greeting cards, and still many more have never yet been edited or published. Of all his poetry one poem is especially significant in that it records very clearly his decision at the age of 19 concerning his life work. The first few lines of his "Adieux à la Muse" are the following:

C'en est fait, je ne puis chanter! La faible lyre  
Que je faisais vibrer d'un enfantin délire,  
Ne résonne plus sous mes doigts.  
Où je la pris jadis, ma lyre est retournée,  
Elle ne peut me suivre en cette destinée,  
Où trop de bruit couvre sa voix!<sup>20</sup>

A consideration of the poetry of Ruben Saillens, of necessity, must include his voluminous quality-production in the area of hymnology, for

. . . Ruben Saillens a pu écrire des cantiques qui se chantent. Ce fut une grande joie et peut-être une des plus fécondes activités de sa vie.<sup>21</sup>

It has been found convenient to classify the nearly 200 religious songs which he composed, on the basis of their proximity to their immediate sources. Approximately 40 of them are very close translations, another 30 are considered imitations, less than a dozen are the result of an inspiration from a sentence or two, while 50 or more are recognized as originals and still others remain unclassified.<sup>22</sup>

The ease with which he composed songs varied considerably. On occasions he found le mot juste only after hours of toiling and searching, and at other times the words and ideas seemed literally to flow from his pen. For example on an Easter Sunday morning as he went to Saint-Jean-du-Gard, his birth-place, he composed an Easter song and sang it for the Easter worship service.

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<sup>20</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 74.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

In 1926, there appeared a collection of songs entitled Sur les Ailes de la Foi. The volume contained nearly all the songs composed by Saillens in addition to others of the most popular songs from several other collections. A second edition, considerably enlarged, was published in 1936 and still a third edition a decade later. Of this collection of religious songs, one person wrote to Saillens:

Quelle richesse pour toutes les églises, que cette anthologie musicale où votre nom revient si souvent, signant vos beaux cantiques si pleins de saveur, de poésie et de sens divin!<sup>23</sup>

Turning to the prose writings of Ruben Saillens, two volumes have special importance. They are Récits et Allégories published in 1888, and Contes du Dimanche which appeared in 1904. These stories, 41 in number, had been written during his early ministry for the purpose of illustrating and emphasizing the Biblical truths presented in his sermons. He believed that:

Les prédicateurs ont le devoir, à l'exemple de leur Maître, de rendre accessible la vérité par toutes les images et les similitudes que leur offre la nature, l'histoire, l'ensemble des choses visibles.<sup>24</sup>

Saillens became an active contributor to religious journals as early as 1873. He provided articles, while yet in his teens, for the Union chrétienne under the signature of "Spectator." For thirty years, Saillens directed the publication entitled L'Ami de la Maison, and for fifty years Le Rayon de Soleil, both originally founded by the Société des Amis.<sup>25</sup> Saillens edited for a number of years the Baptist Journal, L'Echo de la Vérité, and in 1910 founded the Biblical review, Grâce et Vérité, the direction of which was transferred to J.M. Nicole.

Of all the writings of Ruben Saillens such as brochures, sermons, tracts etc., one is of particular importance, La Croix de Jésus-Christ, et l'Évangélisation. This was originally presented in the form of a

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>25</sup>The Quakers.

report to a pastoral convention in 1909. Concerning this report, a prominent pastor at the time made this statement:

M. Saillens s'est défendu d'avoir fait un rapport théologique; en effet, la théologie au point de vue technique était absente de son discours . . . Artiste dans l'âme, orateur entraînant, M. Saillens remplace l'analyse facilement desséchante du théologien par une synthèse de grand style . . . Sa foi chrétienne parle un langage clair, et doré par le chaud soleil de sa Provence . . . Si M. Saillens publie ce chaleureux plaidoyer, on le lira avec fruit et plaisir. Mais mieux valait le lui entendre lire. Car s'il écrit bien, M. Saillens lit comme un orateur.<sup>26</sup>

Another very important work is his book The Soul of France written during World War I at the request of the publishers, Morgan and Scott of England. He has stated in the preface of the book that his purpose was, "to afford the English reader a cursory view of the spiritual history of France."<sup>27</sup> As a result of this publication together with the one just mentioned above, Saillens was awarded the honorary Th.D. at McMaster University of Ontario, Canada. The Missionary Review of the World published this statement concerning The Soul of France:

Beaucoup de livres ont été écrits sur la France, mais aucun ne contient une aussi fine analyse et tant de discernement. M. Saillens est Français protestant, ardent ouvrier de Dieu, mais il rend justice aux catholiques romains et à d'autres Français dont il ne partage pas les opinions. La description qu'il nous donne n'est pas une image superficielle de la France, mais une vue historique sur la véritable vie de l'âme des Français . . .<sup>28</sup>

Late in life, he published a volume of 255 pages on Christian doctrine entitled Le Mystère de la Foi, and still another brochure on Le Mystère de l'Eglise. When too old to undertake further creative work, he remained fervent in circulating such works of quality appearing in English, after having them translated into French. Some mention should be made of Ruben Saillens as a correspondent. There were always numerous letters going out from his desk. Though written in haste, they were none

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<sup>26</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 237.

<sup>27</sup> Ruben Saillens, The Soul of France (London: Morgan and Scott, 1916), p.v.

<sup>28</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 239.

the less clear and elegant. There were letters of appreciation, of encouragement, and of controversy, as well as business letters. Not without special notice is a voluminous correspondence with un forcat de l'Ile du Diable.

Ruben Saillens finally surrendered to the realization that he was growing old, and that his next and final step was retirement. He transferred the direction of the Nogent Bible Institute to his daughter, Louise, his grandson Jacques Blocher, and his co-laborer, J. M. Nicole.

World War II in 1939 necessitated their retreat from Nogent to the town of Condé-sur-Noireau in Normandy. On October 7, 1941, his wife died. Three weeks later he came successfully through a major operation. When learning that he was no longer in danger, he punctuated a long sigh with the comment, "Il faudra recommencer."<sup>29</sup> He settled down once again to a normal daily schedule. Then one day as he was ascending the stairs, he experienced a dizzy spell, falling backwards down the steep narrow stairway. The doctor came immediately but found nothing at all wrong. Quite astonished, the doctor said to Saillens in a quiet tone of voice reflecting both affection and sadness, "Je me demande bien si vous pouvez mourir!"

During his very last days, Saillens prepared this free translation of Lauchlan Maclean Watt's "The long last mile:"

#### LE DERNIER BOUT DE ROUTE

Porte-moi sur ce long, ce dernier bout de route,  
 Homme de Nazareth, mon Sauveur, Christ pour moi!  
 Fatigué, je n'attends que la mort, et j'écoute  
 Les grands vents du désert qui m'emplissent d'effroi.  
 Je vois tout mon passé, de cette nuit profonde,  
 Surgir comme un regard qui me perce le coeur . . .  
 Puisque je dois enfin quitter mon triste monde,  
 Me tiendras-tu longtemps dans l'attente, Seigneur?

Homme de Nazareth, mon Christ, la nuit avance;  
 Je suis tout près du fleuve et n'en vois pas le bord;  
 Ah! Parle-moi, du sein de ce silence,  
 Pour que j'aille sans crainte au-devant de la mort,

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 314.

Et que je sente enfin, ô Christ, tes mains percées  
Me portant au-dessus de ces ondes glacées!

After a full and fruitful life, Ruben Saillens died at Condé-sur-Noireau on January 6, 1942 at the age of 87.

The principle source of vital statements concerning the life and works of Ruben Saillens has been M. Wargenau-Saillens' biography, Ruben et Jeanne Saillens, Evangélistes.

## CHAPTER II

### A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS OF SAILLENS

Certain critics have made Romanticism responsible for most of the ills of the modern world. With some of that adverse criticism there is very general agreement, but there is also a widespread and justifiable belief that the Romantic writers produced a great lyric poetry whose beauty will never cease to charm, console, and enrich mankind.<sup>30</sup>

This statement is applicable to the warm lyric poetry of Ruben Saillens. Although few have heard of him, his Christmas story, "Le père Martin," revised and re-named by Tolstoy, is read by many thousands throughout the world. His hymns are well known and sung by French-speaking Protestant Christians.

Saillens' works include Romantic poetry, nearly 200 French Protestant hymns, and informative prose. His poetry consists of odes, sonnets, elegies, wedding hymns, simple lyrics, meditations, religious hymns, and historical narrative verse. During his life he was honored for his works in France and abroad. The themes of his poetry and prose are usually Romantic in character. They are: the return to nature, the glorification of rural life, a dislike for materialism, a love for France and the democratic way of life, glories of the Huguenot past, and the exaltation of Christian mysticism and idealism. His prose includes sermons, short stories, which are sermon illustrations, and informative prose. His masterpieces in prose are The Soul of France and the short story, "Le père Martin."

Saillens' lyric poetry has many outstanding merits: variety of form and rime, the use of figurative and rhetorical devices, originality, vivid description and rich vocabulary, simplicity, honesty and clarity. Variety in Saillens' poetry may be observed in several of his poems. His great lyric gift is evident in his popular La Cévenole, an octosyllabic with the theme of patriotism:

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<sup>30</sup> Elliot M. Grant (ed.), French Poetry of the Nineteenth Century (second edition; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 6.

Salut, montagnes bien-aimées,  
 Pays sacré de nos aïeux!  
 Vos vertes cimes sont semées  
 De leurs souvenirs glorieux.  
 Elevez vos têtes chenues,  
 Espérou, Bougès, Aigoal!  
 De leur gloire qui monte aux nues  
 Vous n'êtes que le piédestal!

Choeur:

Esprit qui les fis vivre,  
 Anime leurs enfants (bis)  
 pour qu'ils sachent les suivre!

Redites-nous, grottes profondes,  
 L'écho de leurs chants d'autrefois,  
 Et vous, torrents qui, dans vos ondes,  
 Emportiez le bruit de leur voix!  
 Les uns, traqués de cime en cime,  
 En vrais lions surent lutter;  
 D'autres -- ceux-là furent sublimes --  
 Surent mourir sans résister.

O vétérans de nos vallées,  
 Vieux châtaigniers aux bras tordus  
 Les cris des mères désolées,  
 Vous seuls les avez entendus!  
 Suspendus aux flancs des collines,  
 Vous seuls savez que d'ossements  
 Dorment là-bas, dans les ravines,  
 Jusqu'au grand jour des jugements!

Dans quel granit, ô mes Cévennes,  
 Fut taillé ce peuple vainqueur?  
 Quel sang avait-il dans les veines?  
 Quel amour avait-il au coeur?  
 L'Esprit du Christ était la vie  
 De ces pâtres émancipés,  
 Et dans le sang qui purifie  
 Leurs courages étaient trempés.

Cévenols! le Dieu de nos pères  
 N'est-il pas notre Dieu toujours?  
 Servons-le dans les jours prospères  
 Comme ils firent aux mauvais jours;  
 Et, vaillants comme ils surent l'être,  
 Nourris comme eux du pain des forts,

Donnons notre vie à ce Maître,  
Pour lequel nos aïeux sont morts!<sup>31</sup>

Here we find such unusual themes as the exaltation of nature, rural life, and the past.

Another example of variety in Saillens' style may be seen in his historical narrative, "Résistez!," a Romantic account of human suffering and heroism. Stanzas one and six are as follows:

Non, ce n'est pas ta lourde grille  
Ni ton mur noir,  
Sombre tour, funèbre bastille,  
Que j'aime à voir!  
Mais ces traits qui, par une femme,  
Furent sculptés,  
Ce mot qui recouvre un long drame:  
RESISTEZ!

En ce temps-là, dans son Versailles,  
Le roi riait,  
Tandis qu'ici, sous ces murailles,  
La foi priait.  
L'un écrivait, dans une fête:  
Persécutez!  
L'autre écrivait, baissant la tête:  
RESISTEZ!<sup>32</sup>

Another form of poetry which adds to his variety in style is his ode, "Fidèle," to Arthur Blocher, with its theme of immortality. Stanzas three and five are representative:

Fatigué, haletant, mais poursuivant toujours,  
Le coureur est tombé . . . sur les marches du trône,  
Il a touché le but et reçu la couronne  
Qu'au serviteur fidèle offre l'Ancien des jours.

Maintenant, au repos, sous le baiser de Dieu,  
Il vit, il voit, il sait . . . L'épreuve est terminée;

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<sup>31</sup> Ruben Saillens and L. Roucaute, La Cévenole, illustrée, paroles de R. Saillens, musique de L. Roucaute (Valence: Imprimeries Réunies, Ducros et Lombard, 1926), pp. 8-19.

<sup>32</sup> Ruben Saillens, Pour Lui Seul (Paris: Dépôt central, 1892), pp. 15-17.

Ayant fini sa tâche et rempli sa journée,  
Il a dit à la mort un éternel adieu . . .<sup>33</sup>

His variety of forms includes sonnets such as, "La Roue," with a rime scheme, abba abba ccd, eed, common to the Pléiade. Stanza one of this alexandrine sonnet has a feminine rime enclosing a masculine couplet, the reverse of which is found in stanza two. A feminine couplet introduces the third and fourth stanzas whose third lines form a new rime. The first stanza of "La Roue" is as follows:

Le Temps m'est apparu comme une roue étrange:  
Ses jantes tour à tour, étaient d'ombre et de feu,  
Et l'on voyait, rivée à son horrible essieu,  
La foule des humains, triste et morne phalange.<sup>34</sup>

He also composed love lyrics such as, "A Ma Bien-aimée Jeanne," written for his wife on their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Composed of pure alexandrine lines, all eight stanzas follow the rime scheme of aabccb with no irregularities in the structure of the poem. Saillens has used rime suffisante in each stanza consisting of a masculine couplet followed by two feminine lines which enclose another masculine couplet. Though Saillens normally used the rime suffisante in his poetry, he wrote his wedding hymn, "Cantique Nuptial," using rime riche throughout.<sup>35</sup>

Variety is observed in the mechanics of Saillens' poetry. He used traditional French verse with variation in syllable characteristics, rhythmic measures, and rimes. The Romantic alexandrine line with its two coupes varied with the classical line of three coupes. His manner of clustering syllables to produce a desired effect achieved interesting diversity. The slow rhythmic measure for a somber mood contrasted with the rhythmic measure that raced and leaped with the joie de vivre.

The reader is impressed with another outstanding excellence in the lyric poetry of Saillens. This is his use of figurative and rhetorical devices. La Cévenole, the song of a provincial people, exalts rural life, nature, and the glorious past of the Huguenots. We see here

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<sup>33</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, Ruben et Jeanne Saillens, Evangélistes (Paris: Les Bons Semeurs, 1947), p. 114.

<sup>34</sup> Saillens, Pour Lui Seul, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, pp. 45-46.

Saillens' use of the apostrophe. The mountains are addressed in the first two lines of stanza one, "Salut, montagnes bien-aimées,/Pays sacré de nos aïeux!" In stanza two the deep grottoes and torrents are invoked:

Redites-nous, grottes profondes,  
L'écho de leurs chants d'autrefois,  
Et vous, torrents qui, dans vos ondes,  
Emportiez le bruit de leur voix!

The old chestnut trees are hailed in stanza three, "O vétérans de nos vallées,/Vieux châtaigniers aux bras tordus."

Another device which Saillens used is personification. This too may be seen in La Cévenole. In the first stanza the mountains are commanded to lift their snowy heads, "Elevez vos têtes chenues," and in stanza three, the chestnut trees are addressed as sensitive, conscious veterans, and described as having twisted arms:

O vétérans de nos vallées,  
Vieux châtaigniers aux bras tordus  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Vous seuls les avez entendus!  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Vous seuls savez . . .

Personification is seen as well in his "Résistez," as for example in stanza five, "Elle voulut que cette pierre/Fût son témoin." And in stanza six it is used in the illustration of faith praying:

En ce temps-là, dans son Versailles,  
Le roi riait,  
Tandis qu'ici, sous ces murailles,  
La foi priait.

The metaphor is also used by Saillens. Again, in La Cévenole, he says that the green peaks of the mountains are sown with the glorious memories of their ancestors and then uses the metaphor, "Vous n'êtes que le piédestal!" In stanza four granite is used as a metaphor in referring to the Huguenots, "Dans quel granit, ô mes Cévennes,/Fut taillé ce peuple vainqueur?"

The simile was used by Saillens and examples of this may be found in his, "A Ma Bien-aimée Jeanne." The following lines picture the tender love he had for his wife:

Comme on voit à Lyon deux beaux fleuves couler  
 L'un vers l'autre, et leurs eaux sans efforts se mêler,  
 Ainsi se confondaient nos deux âmes jumelles,

In his sonnet, "La Roue," Saillens compares time to a strange wheel, "Le Temps m'est apparu comme une roue étrange." In the historical narrative poem, "Scènes d'Automne," Saillens commemorated the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Two lines from that poem illustrate his use of the simile, "Et son roi criminel de justes représailles,/Comme un autre martyr, d'épines couronné,"

In addition to these few examples of figurative and rhetorical devices, Saillens also used paradox, antithesis, enjambement, metonymy, hyperbole, understatement, oxymorons, and parallelisms. These many artifices added color and movement to his Romantic lyrical poetry.

Originality is another virtue in the style of Ruben Saillens. His originality lies in his knowledge of the heart of the contemporary Huguenot of the Cévennes whose very heartbeat and way of thinking he communicated. He described vividly the past sufferings of the Huguenots.

Simplicity, honesty, and clarity are still other characteristics of his lyric poetry. An illustration of these elements may be seen in the last stanza of his, "Résistez!"

Et c'est toi qui fus la plus forte,  
 Vaillante foi!  
 Depuis longtemps la femme est morte  
 Et mort le roi,  
 Mais tandis que sceptre et couronne  
 Sont emportés,  
 Dans la tour ce vieux mot rayonne:  
 RESISTEZ!

Turning from the merits of Saillens' style, his chief defects are sentimentalism and didacticism. Excessive sentimentalism is noted in his "Souvenirs d'enfance," which he wrote at eleven years of age and is representative of his very earliest poetry. Though this fault is understandable at that early age, it became a permanent feature of his poetry. Several lines, taken at random from "Souvenirs d'enfance," reflect this weakness:

L'enclos silencieux, plein d'ombre et de mystère,  
 Où tant d'êtres aimés reposent sous la terre.

C'est là, je m'en souviens, que je venais parfois :  
J'aimais cette tristesse, . . .

. . . . .

J'écoutais, je rêvais . . . et me sentais heureux.

. . . . .

Mon aïeule, aimait comme moi la solitude,

. . . . .

Ah! qu'elle était suave,  
Cette voix! Que j'aimais cet accent doux et grave  
Où la sainte espérance aux larmes se mêlait . . .  
Toujours sur les absents notre entretien roulait,  
Et je sentais ses pleurs tomber sur mon visage

. . . . .

Et, suivant à pas lents le chemin solitaire,  
Nous rentrions au logis . . .36

Unlike those who follow a literary career, Saillens did not write for the purpose of bringing enjoyment and amusement to his readers. His works, for the most part, were produced to convey a serious message to the reader. Didacticism, therefore, is a dominant characteristic of his poetry. He strove to be understood by the common people and, therefore, wrote simply and with a religious goal of converting the French to orthodox Christian Protestantism, and of bringing instruction and comfort to the Protestants. His simplicity is evident in one of his songs entitled, "Dans le drapeau:"

Dans le drapeau qui frissonne  
A tous les souffles des cieux,  
C'est la patrie en personne,  
Qui parle à ses fils pieux:  
"Enfants, je suis la chaumière,  
Je suis le foyer sacré,  
La tombe où dort votre père,  
Le champ qu'il a labouré!"

Oui, c'est elle, c'est la France,  
C'est sa gloire et ses douleurs,  
Son passé, son espérance,  
Qu'on voit dans les trois couleurs!  
Si l'étoffe en est flétrie,  
Dans cet auguste lambeau  
Toujours belle est la patrie,  
Et c'est toujours le drapeau!

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

Pour que le vent de la haine  
 Ne le déchire jamais,  
 Devant la croix souveraine  
 Qu'il s'incline désormais!  
 Ah! que bientôt le jour brille  
 Où les peuples et les rois  
 Ne seront qu'une famille,  
 Unie autour de la croix!

Jeunes chrétiens, noble armée,  
 Servons, dans un même esprit,  
 Notre France bien-aimée  
 Et notre Roi Jésus-Christ!  
 Que le drapeau tricolore  
 Par la croix soit abrité  
 Et sous ses plis voie éclore  
 La paix et la liberté!<sup>37</sup>

Saillens realized his desire to be understood by the common people, for his writings are easily understood by the unschooled. Although much of his writing has depth, it is still clearly understood. There are some examples in which the meaning is on the surface. His simple Romantic lyric, entitled "Douce colombe," is such a poem, from which these lines are taken:

Douce colombe au blanc plumage,  
 Dont le vol n'est jamais lassé,  
 Dis, veux-tu porter le message  
 D'un coeur de tristesse oppressé?

Pourquoi, voyageuse timide,  
 Suis-je pas libre comme toi?  
 Et que n'ai-je ton vol rapide?  
 Pourquoi, ma colombe, pourquoi?

O pars, ma colombe charmante,  
 Vers Albion, brumeux séjour,  
 Vole apporter à mon amante,  
 Avec un baiser, mon amour.<sup>38</sup>

Saillens' prose is more vigorous than his poetry, and at the same time possesses a highly poetic quality. His "génie poétique . . . perçait

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<sup>37</sup> Ruben Saillens (ed.), Sur les Ailes de la Foi (Nogent-sur-Marne: Institut Biblique, 1936), p. 460.

<sup>38</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 83.

dans sa prose," said J. M. Nicole. It is distinctive in its cadence, vivid description, vigor, and noble, reflective style. His prose may be divided into two categories: the informative prose and the short story.

An example of the first division of Saillens' prose is The Soul of France, some 250 pages in length, a Spiritual history of the French people. The Soul of France has many outstanding merits and some weaknesses. The first virtue of this work is its elevated diction and its clear, vigorous style. The reader is quite apt to forget that Saillens is writing in his third language. An example of the clear vigorous style may be seen in the following quotation:

Victor Hugo began his public career at that time, and his youthful lyre was Catholic; but later on he greatly modified his views. Indeed, the splendid poetry of Victor Hugo throughout his long life . . . may be considered as the faithful echo of the nation's mind. He changed with the times, and, apparently, did so with perfect good faith . . . . He gave a voice -- a most eloquent one -- to those incomplete, but genuine, elements of Christianity that have never ceased to exist in the subconsciousness of the French soul.<sup>39</sup>

The second excellence of The Soul of France is evidence of the author's international viewpoint. One example of this broad viewpoint is the explanation of his "dream" of a new understanding between French and English Christians. He longed for them to associate more closely, feeling that their suffering together during World War I was a bond which might bring them together. He expressed it in this way:

What a powerful combination . . . England stolidity, liberality, practicalness, joined to French imagination, enthusiasm, and clear logic -- all bound together for the same end, to free the world from all bondage, superstition and infidelity, not by sword, but by the preaching of the Grace of God.<sup>40</sup>

His global point of view is seen also in his analysis of events and characters of international scope. Montaigne, Rabelais, Voltaire, Rousseau, Victor Hugo, Benjamin Franklin, and Tolstoy are some of those whom he analysed and categorized. His awareness of world history is seen

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<sup>39</sup>Ruben Saillens, The Soul of France (London: Morgan and Scott, 1916), p. 143.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

in his comments concerning Franklin:

Just a little before the beginning of the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin had lived in Paris, where he had been greatly lionized as the representative of the newly-founded United States. Franklin was an Anglo-Saxon edition of Rousseau, with more good sense, but with less genius. The influence of the new-born democratic Republic, and of Franklin especially, blended with that of Rousseau, greatly contributed to the formation of the soul of France at that time, as is evidenced by the Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen . . . which was voted by the Assemblée Constituante in that same year, 1789. That Declaration was inspired by the American Declaration of Independence, though by no means a translation of it.<sup>41</sup>

The third indication of worth in The Soul of France is its expression favoring religious tolerance. In spite of the fact that Saillens was a strong Protestant with a Calvinistic viewpoint, and in spite of the fact that he opposed Catholicism, he was tolerant in his attitude toward Catholic Christians. He vigorously encouraged La Société de la Morale Chrétienne, founded in Paris. The organization was very successful in bringing together in Christian fellowship and social work some of the most distinguished Catholic and Protestant Christians of France. The association grew until the pope pronounced his veto on it, and it disappeared shortly after this act. Several other movements were examined by Saillens: the Oxford movement, the Waldensian movement, and the Jansenist movement. Saillens' tolerance may be seen in his criticism of Jansenism. He considered it a compromise between Romanism and Protestantism, and recognized that it had attempted to eradicate superstition and formalism, and to bring back spirituality into the Roman Catholic Church. He further stated that the Protestant Christian loved Jansenism with an intense sympathy because Jansenism had proclaimed free grace, justification by faith, and by faith in Christ alone. His admiration of Pascal, one of Jansenism's most outstanding followers, may be seen in his remark that Pascal was a true saint, and one of the holy men whose genius and example belong to all of Christendom.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

Saillens' contact with Charles Péguy shows his love and feeling of brotherhood for individual Christians outside his own sect. After reading the works of Péguy, he became acquainted with the famous poet. Saillens concluded that he could not agree with Péguy's returning to the Catholic Church, but Saillens remarked that somehow Péguy was satisfied that the creed of the Catholic Church could be accepted by an intellectual, well-formed mind. He goes on to say that some of Péguy's pages would strike any Christian reader because of the intense love for Christ, and the understanding of God's heart, which they reveal. After an interview with Péguy, Saillens said that he went away from the visit with a deep impression that Péguy was a sincere lover of Christ.<sup>43</sup>

The fourth outstanding credit of The Soul of France is Saillens' use of figurative and rhetorical devices. The writer uses abundant Biblical, historical, and literary allusions. His work is filled with references to the philosophy of the literary past and of the contemporary world. For example, there is the use of literary allusion in his reference to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He describes, in a general way, Rousseau's importance and philosophy stating, however, that this natural religion did not quite satisfy Rousseau, who expressed intense religious feelings in his celebrated and eloquent Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard:

The simplicity of the Gospels fills me with wonder, their holiness speaks to my heart. Look at all the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp; how insignificant they are compared with this!<sup>44</sup>

Numerous historical allusions are found throughout the book. Specific examples of secular history are often referred to as in the illustration where he states that:

One-fourth, perhaps, of the whole kingdom had become Evangelical. . . Catherine de Médicis herself seems, at one time, to have contemplated the necessity, in order to keep her power, of granting full liberty to the new faith. For she had to contend with a strong party,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 205-6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

more bigoted than herself, headed by the duke of Guise, and which, under the name of the Holy League, and with the support of Philip of Spain, aimed at no less than the overthrow of the reigning family. It must be said that the Paris populace was on the side of the Ligueurs, and was savagely opposed to the Evangelical faith.

It was in order to overcome that opposition, and to pacify the country, that Henri of Navarre, now become Henri IV, recanted from the Reformed religion, which he had professed at one time with great zeal, though never with that spiritual devotion which had been so marked in his mother, Jeanne d'Albret. He remained, notwithstanding his conversion, obnoxious to the extreme Catholic party, and died by a Jesuit's poignard in 1610.<sup>45</sup>

The allusions to religious history are equally numerous. Throughout the book, Saillens traces the history of the suffering Huguenots. As a specific example, he describes how the Huguenot women were imprisoned in the Tour de Constance. A certain Marie Durand, who lived for thirty-six years in this dungeon, was set free, in 1768, by the generosity of the Prince de Beauvau, governor of the province. Saillens writes:

When he came to inspect the prison, he was moved to pity . . . and he ordered that they all should be at once released, without waiting for the king's permission which, probably would have been refused.<sup>46</sup>

Biblical allusions are abundant. The following is illustrative of this kind of allusion:

Rabelais, the cynical but witty and genial priest who, in the great awakening of the French mind which characterized his time, solved all questions very much in the same way as the Greek philosopher quoted by Saint Paul: "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." (1 Cor.xv.32).<sup>47</sup>

Saillens used parallelisms effectively, as exemplified in the following lines:

Please think of this: The Methodist missionary goes out with his Bible, with the Gospel and Epistles; he needs nothing more to stir him. The Jesuit missionary goes out with his breviary; he needs

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

nothing more to keep himself up and to prompt him to prayer . . .<sup>48</sup>

Saillens handled personification very skillfully. We have an excellent example of this in these lines:

It would be hard to exaggerate the harm -- both moral and social -- caused by the excessive centralization . . . The two long reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV, covering together a period of one hundred and thirty-one years . . ., destroyed the old provincial liberties, as well as the religious ones, turning France into a lean body with a tremendously big head . . .<sup>49</sup>

Another good example of his personification is found in his description of the persecutions of the Huguenots. He speaks of "the primitive Church, clothed in martyrs' blood . . ."<sup>50</sup>

Although the virtues in Saillens' informative prose are numerous, and though they are predominant, the weaknesses of didacticism and sentimentalism, as in his poetry, are observable here. His didacticism may be seen in the many parentheses which interrupt his writing. An example of this defect may be seen in his chapter on letters written by soldiers during the first World War. His purpose in citing these letters was to illustrate the fact that many turned to Christianity. As The Soul of France is a book slanted religiously, a moderate amount of moralizing is understandable, but Saillens, unfortunately, has an excessive amount in this publication. The following is an example of such interruptions:

Such is the greatness, such is the power, of Christian living and Christian dying. Who knows but that this officer will, after the War, become a witness for Christ in the place of the young man so gloriously fallen?<sup>51</sup>

Saillens' informative prose is often overly sentimental as well. This may be seen in his chapter, "The Soul of France During the War." His description of French womanhood and motherhood is unrealistic and far too sentimental. He has a typical sentimental description in the following:

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 254.

She has in her veins the blood of generations of women who have known untold hardships, and saving has become, in our womanhood, a kind of second nature.<sup>52</sup>

He also includes excerpts of very sentimental letters from French mothers to their sons:

My dearest child, -- I am almost dumb in thy presence, as I am afraid to break down while speaking, and thus to weaken thy courage, of which I am so proud!

Keep this, my dear child, as the will of my motherly tenderness. Keep it near thy heart, and in the hour of solitude thou wilt find the kiss which I put here.<sup>53</sup>

Saillens' overly sentimental tone is observed in his description of the Huguenots' past. After describing how Brousson, a Huguenot minister, was martyred, he continues:

How the spots on which great scenes have been enacted take hold of our soul when we happen to visit them! If ever the reader finds himself in the city of Montpellier, formerly so well known to English tourists, let him find his way to the Esplanade du Peyrou, a magnificent terrace which offers one of the grandest views to be seen anywhere, and let him say to himself: "Here, right in view of those Cévennes hills, where the testimony of Christ is still alive, thanks to the faithfulness of the Huguenot martyrs, -- here scores of them have been done to death, and Claude Brousson was the greatest of them."<sup>54</sup>

Turning from the informative, reflective prose found in Saillens' Spiritual history of France, the short stories of this gifted son of the Cévennes constitute his second category of prose. His short stories are much like the exempla of the Middle Ages, for Saillens wrote them solely to illustrate the moral and spiritual truths of sermons. Unlike many illustrations they are gems of literature, and have been read by many thousands of French orthodox Christians. His masterpiece is "Le père Martin," which has already been mentioned in this paper. This much loved story is an illustration of the change which Saillens believed is brought about by a conversion from skepticism to orthodox Christianity. Because

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 90-91.

of the great merits and the great themes, this story has outstanding universal appeal. The chief features which make it great are those which Poe emphasized. They are unity of effect, immediateness (or concentration on the effect), compression, and verisimilitude. The unity of effect was achieved by the unity of time (Christmas), the unity of place (a cobbler's shop), and the unity of action (a Biblical theme). The immediateness was achieved by the stripping of all non-essentials from the central plot, which was the search of Père Martin for Christ. The compression was easily fulfilled in that it takes less than one half hour to read the selection. Saillens accomplished verisimilitude by the realistic description of the cobbler's shop and the one great character, Père Martin, a typical cobbler of France. Saillens' excellent characterization, his sympathetic touch regarding the common people, aided greatly in giving strong universal appeal to the story. There are school children, a street-sweeper, vendors, and a poor young wife and child. The action and characters are treated in a style which is both simple and sincere. The vocabulary, as well as the sentence structure, is simple. In addition to these merits, are the Romantic themes with their lively contrasts: There is the contrast of the innocence of the child and Père Martin against the ugly world. There is the contrast of the lonely man against the laughing crowds of the street. There is the contrast of the poverty of the old man against the wealth of the shoppers. There is the contrast of the young child to the old man. There is the contrast of Protestantism to Catholicism. Finally there is the important theme of the triumph of faith in contrast with skepticism. All these themes are skillfully woven into this beautiful story of the simple goodness of the devout Protestant peasant with his Bible.

The Romantic themes and the plot are treated with simple realism. The setting is realistically described. Very early in the story, the reader is acquainted with the city, the quarter, the corner, and the shop of Père Martin. Saillens describes how the fishermen, the school boys, the housewives of the quartier Saint-Jean know the cobbler. Saillens describes, without didacticism, the habits of Père Martin before and after his conversion to an orthodox Protestant sect. In a few sentences he

tells of the cobbler's tragedies. His description gives us a gem of realistic detail. He tells how the cobbler knows where the shoes hurt the feet of the school children and how long his repairs will last for the rough-playing boys of the community. These details give an insight into the outgoing personality of the cobbler. The giving of his masterpiece, the baby shoes, is another beautiful detail which Saillens paints romantically. The author used for his effective conclusion a Biblical allusion taken from Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, verses 35 and 40.

The combination of all these excellent features produced the great short story, "Le père Martin." It is little wonder that Tolstoy, who recognized its great universal qualities, picked it up when it went adrift, authorless. The following is an account of the incident:

Saillens wrote "Le père Martin" in 1883 expressly for a Christmas program, and published it later in La Feuille Populaire, a journal of evangelism of which he was editor. It was through this publication that the story began its round-about journey until it finally came to the attention of Leo Tolstoy who adapted it to the Russian people and their customs. In 1888, Saillens happened on to the story again, but this time, translated from Tolstoy, in the journal l'Eglise libre. In addition to altering slightly the style and adding a scene or so, Tolstoy had changed the title to, "Là où est l'amour, là est Dieu."

Through contacting the editors of l'Eglise libre, Saillens learned that the story had been found in a volume of Tolstoy's prose. Contact was made, therefore, directly with Tolstoy, who was then in the glory of his fame. In response, Tolstoy recognized Ruben Saillens as the rightful author of the story, and included the explanation of how it all happened. He wrote:

Il paraît en Russie une feuille mensuelle très peu répandue: Le Rabochie (l'Ouvrier). Un de mes amis me donna un des numéros de ce journal dans lequel se trouvait une traduction et une adaptation à la vie russe de votre récit "Le père Martin," sans nom d'auteur, en me proposant de profiter de ce récit pour en faire un conte populaire. Le récit me plut beaucoup; je ne fis que changer un peu le style et ajouter quelques scènes, et le remis à mon ami pour le publier sans mon nom, comme cela était convenu, non seulement pour "Le père Martin,"

mais aussi pour les récits qui étaient de moi . . .

Dans l'une des éditions rédigées par moi, je fis ajouter au titre "Là où est l'amour, là est Dieu," la parenthèse (emprunté de l'anglais), l'ami, qui m'avait donné ce journal m'ayant dit que ce récit était d'un auteur anglais. Mais dans mes oeuvres complètes, on a omis la parenthèse, et le traducteur a fait la même faute.<sup>55</sup>

Some time later the story appeared as a booklet in the United States and attributed to Tolstoy. Again Saillens protested, and the Russian novelist gave this further response:

Pour ce qui est des traductions que se font de votre récit en Amérique ou ailleurs, il m'est tout à fait impossible de les contrôler, d'autant plus qu'il y a plus de quinze ans que je me suis dédit de tous mes droits d'auteur pour tous mes ouvrages parus après 1881 en Russie, de même qu'à l'étranger. Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de mes sentiments distinguées.

20 mars, 1889.

Léon Tolstoï<sup>56</sup>

Henri Bicoux wrote concerning this incident in an article for the Journal des Débats, November 8, 1928, in this manner:

A Monsieur le pasteur R. Saillens, un peu trop cavalièrement oublié par Tolstoï, ce qui lui appartient, c'est-à-dire une idée qui est fort belle, et félicitons-le: son petit conte est devenu un joyau de la littérature universelle.<sup>57</sup>

and again, M. Pierre-Paul Plan stated in Le Figaro of November 3, 1928, that:

Après la publication très documentée du Monde Slave qui épuise le sujet, une justice éclatante est rendue à M. R. Saillens à qui il reste la consolation de se dire que, grâce à Dieu et grâce à M. Charles Salomon, son nom demeurera dans l'histoire des lettres aussi longtemps que celui de Léon Tolstoï.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of these rectifications on the part of the Russian novelist, and the conclusive work of M. Salomon concerning Tolstoy's sources, the authorship of "Le père Martin" was again contested following the

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<sup>55</sup> M. Wargenau-Saillens, p. 231.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 233.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

death of Saillens. Les Editions Labor of Geneva published a very attractive collection of Christmas stories entitled Vieilles histoires de Noël, one of which was translated from German and was attributed to Tolstoy. This time, it was M. Roger Chérix, a pastor of Neuchâtel and former student and co-laborer of Saillens, who sent to La Vie Protestante of Geneva a new rectification by citing, on January 14, 1944, Leo Tolstoy's letter of March 20, 1899.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF RUBEN SAILLENS

Ruben Saillens was a non-conformist whose Christian humanitarian philosophy of life was colored by orthodox Calvinism. Saillens was both like Puritans, and unlike Milton. A Puritan with lofty, noble, Christian ideals and purposes, as was Milton, he nevertheless contrasted with Milton in possessing an amicable, and Romantic, if withdrawn personality. He was the lyric voice of Protestantism.

When the philosophy of Ruben Saillens is considered negatively it is evident that he was very much opposed to cynicism, skepticism, infidelity, materialism, and any form of totalitarianism. Saillens also hated the narrow and hypocritical bigotry of any church, whether it was Protestant or Catholic. Although the writer was not primarily concerned with literary criticism in The Soul of France, he made many shrewd analyses of the great names of literature and philosophy. In his attempt to show the English reader the soul of the French people, he traced the movements of the French Reformation, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the subsequent persecutions, cynicism, infidelity and materialism. Saillens believed that as a result of the Edict of Nantes, France lost over a half million of the noblest Frenchmen, who could have and would have changed the philosophy and possibly the history of France.

Lefèvre d'Etaples, Calvin, Farel, Coligny . . . were the greater lights, amidst a galaxy of choice spirits. The influence of those Frenchmen . . . has been world-wide and still continues.<sup>60</sup>

But France, according to Saillens, benefited least. The Huguenots were forced to flee because of persecution. With their nobility, the Huguenots could have made France a much greater nation than it was to become. Saillens was of the opinion that no nation could afford to do without the purifying and elevating element constituted by its Christian citizens provided their Christianity was genuine, and was neither imposed

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<sup>60</sup> Ruben Saillens, The Soul of France (London: Morgan and Scott, 1916), p. 36.

on them nor imposed by them. France ruthlessly put to death and forced into exile those who were most likely to prevent the blood baths of the French Revolution.

Saillens further contended that those left behind, who capitulated or went underground, acted in disobedience to their conscience and contributed to the spiritual deterioration both of themselves and of the non-Protestant majority. He believed that the common people were perniciously influenced by the sight of so many noblemen and ladies abjectly giving up their faith, with ease, in order to retain their titles, their lands, and the king's favor. Thousands of Frenchmen were compelled to a sullen acceptance of a creed which they secretly abhorred. The connivance of the Church at their hypocrisy was also very evident. Saillens said that all this must have been very effective in breeding skepticism among the working classes.<sup>61</sup> He believed that the masses were usually pagan, even in the most enlightened countries, and that not much effort was needed to induce them to put off the restraints of religion. In the seventeenth century, infidelity could not openly show itself; but the spirit of Montaigne and Rabelais still existed. Molière brought the narrow and hypocritical bigotry of his time before the footlights in his celebrated comedy, le Tartuffe.<sup>62</sup>

The author considered Jean de Lafontaine, however, the true mouth-piece and representative of his day. Saillens described him as a careless, selfish, good-natured poet, and an epicurian. Each of the Fables is in itself, said Saillens, a miniature, most carefully drawn, in which the figures are, really, men disguised as animals.<sup>63</sup> He said that the real king was the fox. His comment was that Lafontaine had touched every problem without going deeply into any. He was a veiled cynic, and nothing ruffled him. He had for the fox's villainies nothing but a smile and a

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-120.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

shrug of the shoulders; he never laughed very loud, and he never wept. The nobler words of the human language, Immortality, Purity, Heroism, Self-Sacrifice were not even implied in the Fables. Lafontaine did not deny spiritual values, he simply ignored them.<sup>64</sup> Saillens summarized by saying that it would have been suicide to dissent openly with the king's decisions on matters of religion and politics. Since anger was impotent, and tears useless, there was, therefore, no alternative but to smile. This, he said, was a supreme manifestation of independence. The smile was a symbol of cynicism. Saillens made the observation that the résumé of Lafontaine's wisdom was worship of self; a worship without pomp, but nevertheless a worship.<sup>65</sup>

In evaluating Voltaire, Saillens also rejected infidelity as a scourge to France. He said:

What was the smile of Lafontaine compared with the terrible laughter which was to follow it -- a laughter which shook the very foundations of the old world, pulled down, with a crash, a number of crumbling edifices, even the Royal throne itself, and threatened, as it seemed, the very existence of Christianity?<sup>66</sup>

Saillens said that Voltaire's plea for religious tolerance was the one trait which relieved the unpleasant picture of Voltaire's long life.<sup>67</sup> The great question was, according to Saillens, how was it that Voltaire's shallow infidelity took such hold of the French mind, and to a great extent, the whole of Europe, England excepted?<sup>68</sup> His answer was that the strong and tenacious hold that infidelity had on the French mind during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the direct outcome of the violation of conscience at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

He further suggested that Voltaire's ingenious fallacies would have been met by a host of learned and enlightened men who would have been an apology of Christianity.<sup>70</sup>

Saillens, in turning from Voltaire's infidelity, rejected Rousseau's religion of nature, which Saillens called, "a most bewitching fallacy."<sup>71</sup> Perhaps it was Rousseau's return to Protestantism, as well as his Romanticism which caused Saillens to admire Rousseau in spite of the great man's egotism and many grave faults. Saillens wrote that Voltaire was met, and vigorously contradicted, by a man who was his equal in genius, and that man was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Saillens felt that Rousseau prevented the total wreck of the French soul.<sup>72</sup> Our author agreed with Rousseau's sense of life and death, a serious view of the universe and of God, and said that this was wholly absent from Voltaire's mental constitution. Saillens identified Rousseau as the father of the French Revolution and said that Rousseau, in his Contrat Social, laid the foundations of a new world.

Totalitarianism, whether in government or religion, was vigorously condemned by Saillens. He said that any church that adopts the principle of national as against individual religion annuls the virtue of her spiritual teaching, however orthodox it may be.<sup>73</sup> He explained that while the church thinks she is serving God, in reality, she practically suppresses God's chief handiwork: man. He stated that a nationalist conception of religion was the reason for religious persecution. His hatred of the suppression of the individual is seen throughout his writings, and he criticized this in the Catholic Church hierarchy.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 128

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 6

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

His hatred of totalitarianism may also be seen in his rejection of Marxism and socialism. His comment was that there is much in the teaching and tendencies of socialism which works in the same spirit, towards the same end, viz., the suppression of the individual on the altar of collectivity.

From a positive point of view, Saillens' philosophy affords us an interesting mingling of Romantic, practical humanitarianism modified by a rigid Calvinism. How did such a strange philosophical combination work out in the life of our author? In spite of his rigid Calvinistic orthodoxy, and due to his Christian humanitarianism and idealistic Romantic qualities, he was a friend to Catholic Christians, and he encouraged the Société de la Morale Chrétienne, which was composed of Catholic and Protestant Christians alike. He could disapprove of many of the beliefs of Jansenism and still love it with intense sympathy, because of one redeeming point: its doctrine of salvation by Grace and Grace alone. He could call Blaise Pascal, the famous Jansenist follower, one of the greatest saints France had known.

His religious tolerance is also seen in his comments concerning the many sects of Protestantism: the Salvation Army, the Darby Assembly, and the French Reformed Church, as well as others.<sup>75</sup> In spite of the many variations of sects, Saillens hoped for unity among Christians within and outside of France. His Calvinism made him hold rigidly to the belief that man may attain to an immediate consciousness of the knowledge of God, and that this is attained only through a personal relationship with Christ through faith in Christ alone.

His idealism is evident when he comments on Victor Hugo, of whom he was a disciple. Saillens pointed out that the great principle of the Gospel -- the sacrifice of self for the sake of others -- comes out again and again in Hugo's works such as Les Misérables, for example, or in that charming poem, "Les Pauvres Gens." He applies this idealistic view to everyday living for he said that it should work in everyday living.

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<sup>75</sup>  
Ibid., p. 165.

Saillens believed in living a noble Christian life. He believed that one Christian soldier could change the morale of a company for the better. He also felt that Protestantism should and had helped directly or indirectly every social, moral, or religious reform in France for the past two centuries.

Ruben Saillens' Romantic qualities and Christian humanitarianism are seen in his melancholy and sorrow for the sufferings and deaths of the soldiers of World War I. In The Soul of France he reviews many cases of suffering Christians. In his prayer for France, at the end of the work, he shows intense concern for his countrymen both Christians and non-Christians. He prays for the blessing of his God on Christians, and for the evangelization and relief of the suffering of non-Christians.

Ruben Saillens' Romanticism may be seen in his warm patriotism. In The Soul of France he exalts his country's past and present. In this respect he reflected moderation for he had an international viewpoint. He hoped that the world might have a better knowledge of France and hence a greater respect for his nation. He was humiliated as people considered her only light-headed and light-hearted. He stated that writers had been incorrect in saying that a "new spirit, or a dramatic transformation had been born during the war." On the contrary, said Saillens, "It is something very old and familiar."<sup>76</sup> He felt that this nobility of mind was due to the fact that France carried in her very soul, from her birth as a nation, those immortal principles which are expressed in her motto: Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, words drawn from the Gospel itself.<sup>77</sup>

Saillens used the coined expression of Amiel, the pessimistic philosopher, who said that every nation has "a fundamental paradox."<sup>78</sup> Saillens said that not only nations but individuals have two tendencies which, at times, may seem to work harmoniously together, but at other

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

times are desperately at war. This opposition accounts for the tragedy of life. He pointed out that the Bible describes it in two very simple words: the flesh and the spirit. He described the French soul as having a fundamental paradox which, on the one hand, consists of her light-heartedness, a fondness for pleasure and enjoyment which, at times, amounts to frivolity; and on the other hand, consists of her passionate love for the Ideal, a longing for Truth, Beauty, and Perfection.<sup>79</sup> He believed that the first was responsible for the materialism and the second was responsible for the outbursts of devotion and sacrifice which have surprised the world especially in time of war.

This then, was Ruben Saillens' philosophy of life. Negatively, he was opposed to materialism, cynicism, skepticism, infidelity, and all forms of totalitarianism; positively, he was a Romantic individualist with a paradoxical philosophy of rigid Calvinism as opposed to a warm practical Christian humanitarianism. As a result, he had noble and lofty standards and a heart which reached out to all faiths in tolerance and respect.

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the development of this study as presented in the preceding chapters, to list important findings resulting from the study, and to state the conclusions pertinent to these findings.

The purpose of the investigation has been to introduce an obscure poet and writer of the Cévennes of Southern France. This has been accomplished through answering the following questions: (1) Who is this writer? (2) What has he written? (3) What are the distinctive features of his works? (4) What was his philosophy of life?

Ruben Saillens was introduced as the author of "Le père Martin," a short-story jewel, discovered and innocently plagiarized by Leo Tolstoy. In the biographical sketch of the first part of Chapter I, Saillens is further identified as to ancestry, childhood, education, and unusual literary gifts. An account of the problems and obstacles that he encountered in seeking a formal education in France is presented. A description is also given of his subsequent education in England as preparation for his life work as pastor, evangelist, and religious educator in France.

The remainder of Chapter I is concerned with the second question. The literary production of Saillens covers a number of genres. His prose includes propaganda, sermons and sermon illustrations, several works in the field of theology, and The Soul of France, a history of the spiritual fluctuations and progress of Catholic and Protestant Christians. His poetry is in varied forms and his hymnology is extensive.

Chapter II deals with the distinctive features of his work along with an analysis of his style. Both his poetry and prose are classified as to type, and an attempt is made to evaluate them, both as literature and as didactic works.

Important findings discovered through this analysis are the following: His literary works include Romantic poetry, Protestant hymns,

and informative prose. Within the area of poetry, he produced: odes, sonnets, elegies, wedding hymns, simple lyrics, meditations, religious hymns, and historical narrative verse. His prose includes: sermons, short stories, and informative prose.

His themes are usually of a Romantic character, such as the return to nature, the glorification of rural life, the dislike for materialism, a love for France, individualism, and the exaltation of Christian mysticism and idealism.

An examination of his lyric poetry reveals such merits as variety of form and rime, the use of figurative and rhetorical devices, originality, vivid description and rich vocabulary, simplicity, honesty and clarity. His defects of excessive sentimentalism and didacticism are also discussed.

There is a treatment of Saillens' prose of which the distinctive qualities are discussed: cadence, vivid description, vigor, and noble, reflective style with an international viewpoint. As in the case of his poetry, the noticeable defects of his informative prose are also excessive sentimentalism and didacticism.

The short stories of Saillens, with their outstanding universal appeal, exhibit the virtues of unity of effect, immediateness, compression, and verisimilitude. The superior quality of his short story is confirmed by the Tolstoy incident. A thorough investigation, which is described in this work, clarified the confirmation of the contention that Saillens was the rightful author of "Le père Martin" which was taken and used by Tolstoy after he had made some minor revisions.

The fourth question, which concerns his philosophy of life, is treated in Chapter III. Those elements which constitute the negative aspect of his philosophy were seen as he traced the spiritual deterioration of France. He pointed out the significant factors in the movements of the French Reformation, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the subsequent persecutions, cynicism, infidelity, and materialism.

Saillens has shown that, as a result of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, France lost her ablest and most influential people. Of those who remained, many renounced their faith to retain titles, lands and the favor of the king. As the common people saw all this take place,

they also suffered a complete moral and spiritual collapse. The trend consisted of a gradual unfolding which began with cynicism followed by skepticism, then infidelity, and finally materialism. Saillens had no place for these elements in his philosophy. In his critical evaluation of this trend, he pointed out some of the great names of France and mentioned the characteristic rôles they played and the effect they had on the fashioning of the soul of France. Montaigne was the philosopher of agnosticism, and Rabelais the witty cynic. Molière directed his flood-light on the narrow and hypocritical bigotry of his time.

Lafontaine was the veiled cynic, the true mouthpiece and representative of his day. Voltaire was the messenger of infidelity, and it was only Rousseau who had the courage to contradict Voltaire. Though Rousseau's natural religion was a serious mistake, he nevertheless prevented the total wreck of the French soul, according to Saillens. He was opposed to all totalitarianism both in government and religion. He saw nothing but religious persecution in a nationalist conception of religion.

The elements which constitute the positive aspect of Saillens' philosophy are the Romantic practical humanitarianism and rigid Calvinism harmoniously blended together. This philosophical combination enabled him to hold firm doctrinal beliefs and at the same time to have a deep and sincere respect for those of another religious persuasion. Saillens exercised admirable religious tolerance without compromise on doctrinal issues. He believed in living a noble Christian life. He held firmly to the belief that man can know God through a personal relationship with Christ through faith. His Romantic qualities and Christian humanitarianism are reflected in his melancholy and sorrow for others and in his warm patriotism. Saillens viewed the French soul as having a fundamental paradox, which consisted of a fondness for pleasure and enjoyment, and of a passionate love for the Ideal, a longing for Truth, Beauty, and Perfection. The first was responsible for the materialism, and the second was responsible for the out-bursts of devotion and sacrifice.

The following conclusions seem to be substantiated by the information presented in this thesis:

1. Saillens possessed a gift of poetic genius which was substantial. His secular contemporaries called some of his works jewels of literature. He was considered a genius of many gifts by the secular and religious circles.

2. The purpose of his writing was to communicate with and to instruct the common man on vital Christianity for his spiritual betterment and happiness.

3. The chief merits of his style are lucidity, musicality, and Romantic vitality. He was the voice of the Huguenots for he sang of this group's glorious past both in prose and in poetry. There is a certain sweetness and gentleness, as well as charming sadness in his poetry. His theme is medieval other-worldliness but he grapples with the great problems of the universe and he has an international outlook and interest. The merits of his style included many literary, historical, and Biblical allusions.

4. The chief defects of his poetic and prose styles are his sentimentalism, his didacticism, and the conflict of his lofty, orthodox Calvinism with his warm humanitarianism.

5. His obscurity may be due to various factors. The following are suggested: a) His failure to develop his special short-story genre and his lyric poetry of the Cévennes. b) His lack of specialized training in the art of poetry. c) His particular choice of subject matter. d) His attitude of other-worldliness.

6. Had Saillens chosen the Romantic and patriotic past of the Cévennes, or confined himself to the Huguenots' Romantic and tortured past, and had he written on these two subjects alone, he might have become a much better known poet. Certainly his religious didacticism and his excessive sentimentalism prevented him from becoming popular.

It is the investigator's hope that the information assembled and analysed in this study may be to someone a source of inspiration toward a further and more inclusive study of the works of Ruben Saillens, and that this thesis may make a definite, if modest, contribution to knowledge in this area.



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