DUHAMEL'S ATTITUDES AS EXPRESSED IN THE SALAVIN AND PASQUIER SERIES

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CHAPTER I

PREFACE

One of Georges Duhamel's outstanding qualities was his concern for mankind. He himself came from a family of the petite bourgeoisie. Duhamel especially admired les petites gens for their courage, the manner in which they undertook their work in the midst of difficulty, and the gaiety with which they accomplished the hardest and most thankless tasks. He was a moralist, a doctor of medicine, and a keen observer of people. As a surgeon in the First World War, he helped the wounded, the physically handicapped, and the mentally disturbed. Deeply moved by what he observed at first-hand, he foresaw that the world was in need of une nouvelle civilisation. He presented it in this way:[1]

> . . . le règne de la confiance mutuelle, de l'arbitrage cordial, de la justice authentique, de la paix généreuse . . . à l'avènement d'une nouvelle civilisation, la vraie, celle qui se trouve dans le coeur de l'homme . . . .

It was Duhamel's desire to be able to understand man and his problems and conflicts, to sympathize with the individual,

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[1]André Antoine et al., Georges Duhamel (Paris: Editions Revue de la Capitole, 1927), p. 295.

and to try to put himself into his particular situation. This is expressed in Le Voyage de Moscou:[2]

> J'aimerais de comprendre tout. J'aimerais de pouvoir me substituer à tous les êtres que je rencontre, épouser leurs raisons, leurs détresses, leur joie et me sentir un instant emporté dans le sens de leurs actes.

What Duhamel expressed in the above lines is his inner-most longing to understand those he knew.

Among the many novels which Duhamel wrote, his greatest literary achievement was the Salavin and Pasquier cycles, composed of five and ten volumes respectively. Salavin is the main character in the first series describing his life and his adventures. The second series deals with the Pasquier family; Laurent Pasquier, one of the children, is the leading figure. These two series voice Duhamel's opinion toward certain attitudes in human psychology and will be used as the basis for this study.

This thesis is composed of six chapters. A biographical chapter will relate pertinent facts of Duhamel's life and their influence on his development, revealing his philosophy of life. Chapters three through five will attempt to show Duhamel's attitude toward friendship, toward kindness, and toward material possessions as expressed

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[2]Cited by Paul Claudel et al., Duhamel et nous, Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journee, numero 38 (Librairie Bloud et Gay, 1937), p. 92.

in the Salavin and Pasquier series from which quotations will be chosen. The Salavin series includes Confession de minuit, Deux Hommes, Journal de Salavin, Le Club des Lyonnais, and Tel qu'en lui-même. The Pasquier series includes Le Notaire du Havre, Le Jardin des bêtes sauvages, Vue de la terre promise, La Nuit de Saint-Jean, Le Désert de Bièvres, Les Maîtres, Cécile parmi nous, Le Combat contre les ombres, Suzanne et les Jeunes Hommes, and La Passion de Joseph Pasquier.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF GEORGES DUHAMEL

I. DUHAMEL'S FAMILY BACKGROUND

Georges Duhamel was the grandson of a peasant; his father was a native of Picardy, who had come to Paris before the war of 1870 to work as a clerk in a small firm. He then studied pharmacology and later worked in a pharmacy. The family was in continual financial straits, largely because of the father, who lacked foresight. He was an unusual character, proud, and apt to change his ideas very suddenly. At the age of forty-five, he determined to become a doctor of medicine and received his diploma in 1900 at the age of fifty-one. The family moved forty times in a period of twenty years.[1] Duhamel's mother was a Parisian, whose ancestors had come from Normandy. The mother managed to feed, clothe, and educate the children by the use of strict economy.

Georges Duhamel was the seventh of eight children. He was born in Paris on June 30, 1884. He was a puny, sickly child, not a very gifted pupil, but already concerned

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[1]Georges Duhamel, Pages choisies (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1955), p. 3.

about suffering humanity. He attributed any good in him to his mother.[2]

Duhamel wished that his own sons might be spared the poverty, anguish, distress, sadness, and restlessness which he had endured. Later he looked upon this experience as having made a man of him, thus showing that in order to mature one needs to experience hardship.[3]

II. DUHAMEL'S EDUCATION

Duhamel lost much time from his studies because of the repeated moves the family made. He finished his elementary education and then entered an advanced primary school. At eleven, Duhamel had a minor throat surgery which greatly improved his respiration. He was intrigued by the surgical instruments, and a desire to follow the medical profession was awakened in him. As a boy, he played doctor and performed operations on objects which he had made. One day, when he and a friend of his were discussing their future plans and professions, his friend told him that he should be in a lycée if he wanted to be a doctor. Duhamel conveyed this problem to his father,

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[2]Pierre Humbourg, Georges Duhamel (Paris: La Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1930), p. 14.

[3]Ibid., p. 13.

who then placed him in a private lycée because he was too old to enter the regular one.[4] He received his secondary-school diploma in 1902. As a sideline interest throughout his course of studies he composed poems.

In 1902, two years after his father received his medical diploma, Duhamel entered the University of Paris, enrolling in the medical school and concurrently in classes at the Institut de Biologie. During his university studies he became acquainted with a number of contemporary writers and was much interested in current literature. Charles Vildrac was a lifelong friend of his, and later also became his brother-in-law. Other acquaintances were Jules Romains and René Arcos. Several times a week, about eight men assembled to share their writings. Vildrac had the idea of getting a sort of abbey, where they could live as writers in the order of monks, but would be free from all rules. Friendship was to be the force which bound them together. They intended to live as free men and philosophers, away from the noisy activities of the world. Part of their time would be consecrated to writing and part to manual labor to assure them of some material income for their existence. They chose to be printers, and their first works were printed at this abbaye. The Abbaye de Créteil

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[4] Ibid., p. 16.

was founded in 1906 in a suburb southeast of Paris. In 1907, Duhamel published his first work, Des Légendes, des Batailles, a collection of poetry. Financially the group soon became almost bankrupt and, in 1908, they dispersed, each returning to his former position. Duhamel published Le Désert de Bièvres in 1937, in which he recalled his part in the Abbaye de Créteil. Professor Keating states that, whenever Duhamel described the imaginary house in Bièvres, the l'Abbaye de Créteil would come to his mind.[5] Duhamel's experience at the Abbaye was enriching and educational, and he referred to it quite frequently. To have witnessed it terminate in failure saddened him. He returned to his medical studies and received his diploma as a Doctor of Medicine in 1909. This was also the year in which he married Blanche Albane, an actress. Having completed his education, he investigated various positions which were open to him and decided to work in a laboratory. In his leisure time he continued writing.

III. DUHAMEL'S MEDICAL PROFESSION

Duhamel preferred to work as an administrator in a laboratory rather than to be a general practitioner or

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[5] L. Clark Keating, Critic of Civilization, Georges Duhamel and His Writings (University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 127.

a surgeon. This gave him the opportunity to experiment with animals and discover new preventives and medicines for diseases for which a cure had not yet been ascertained. He never sought the highest paying job. Material possessions did not concern him, for they had no part in his philosophy of life. He was determined to help mankind and, in particular, the petites gens. He maintained strong relations with the lower middle class and communicated with them "non seulement par l'esprit et le coeur, mais par toutes les fibres de la chair."[6]

Five years of the gratifying work in the laboratory passed by rapidly, and then came a sudden change in world events. In 1914, Duhamel, with other young Frenchmen, was mobilized. At the time of induction, Duhamel was placed in the auxiliary service; but, upon his request, he was admitted into active service as a médecin aide-major de deuxième classe.[7] In 1916 his unit reached Verdun; and, a year later, he was promoted to chef d'équipe chirurgicale dans une autochir.[8] As a surgeon near the

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[6]William F. Falls, Le Message humain de Georges Duhamel (Edition Contemporaine Boivin et Compaynie, 1948), p. 33.

[7]Paul Claudel et al., Duhamel et nous, Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée, numero 38 (Librairie Bloud et Gay, 1937), p. 35.

[8]Duhamel, Pages choisies, op. cit., p. 4.

front lines he never saw the victories but only the defeats, the most mutilated bodies, and the worst shattered nerves. This was a picture Duhamel was not able to erase from his memory. He always had a notebook and pencil near at hand and took precise notes of the happenings behind the front lines. This information was very valuable to him in writing his books on the war. During these tragic war years he performed 2,300 operations and treated 4,000 wounded.[9] Duhamel's war companions considered that he was one of the best surgeons at the front lines.[10] He served near the trenches fifty-two months, out of fifty-seven months of military service.

Ten volumes had already been published by Duhamel before the war: collections of poems, several plays, and some critical works. In the waiting minutes near the front lines, which were rare and usually left very little time for rest, he wrote war stories. The first of these, Vie des Martyrs, appeared in 1917. This book describes with remarkable talent the horrors of war, yet defending patriotism. It was proclaimed a masterpiece

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[9]Humbourg, op. cit., p. 22.

[10]Ibid., p. 22.

among the many war books.[11] Unlike most doctors who did an outside analysis describing the cries and groanings, Duhamel did an inner research. He sought until he came to the very depth of the pain, which is probably the least visible; the suffering of the soul; the distress of a man with a mutilated body. He diagnosed the psychological causes of the suffering soul. In 1918, Duhamel published Civilisation under the pseudonym of Dennis Thévenin. This book received the Goncourt literary prize. Duhamel's entire life showed that he had a great love for humanity. In Civilisation he tried to impress his idea of an international spirit in order to avoid the horrors of another war.

Duhamel voiced his opinion concerning the nouvelle civilisation in Vie des Martyrs and Civilisation. Deeply moved by the martyrs who endured much agony and pain from the war, Duhamel's answer was not a perfected anesthetic with a capable surgeon and his instruments, but le règne du coeur. The pivot upon which this nouvelle civilisation rests is le règne du coeur.[12] These war books were intended to arouse man from his laissez-faire attitude, and to cause

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[11]Edouard Bourbousson, Les Ecrivains de la liberté (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949), p. xxiii.

[12]Henri Peyre, French Novelists of Today (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 51.

him to realize that the cruelty and bloodshed of the First World War were an insult to mankind. In place of the laissez-faire attitude there should be pity, love, and a sense of beauty, thus a Second World War might be avoided.

About a year after the First World War Duhamel relinquished his medical activities and took up writing as a career.

IV. DUHAMEL'S CAREER AS A WRITER

The First World War revealed a writer who already existed. Duhamel strongly recommended following another profession before taking up writing as a career. He spoke rather boastfully of his experiences in the medical profession as having been a wholesome diversion.[13]

Some critics think Duhamel leaned toward the doctrine of unanimisme, which emphasized the group in society. His contemporary, Jules Romains, was a strong unanimiste, centering his ideas on society. In 1917 Duhamel published La Possession du Monde in which he strongly supported

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[13]Wilson Micks and Alfreda Hill, Twentieth Century French Writers (Norfolk: New Directions, 1950), p. 178.

the individual, in fact, he proposed modern spiritual humanism which he defined in this manner:[14]

> . . . pacifisme raisonable et vigilante, "règne du coeur," domination sur la civilisation mécanique, défense et promotion de la culture, sous le signe d'une générosité, qui peut parfois s'égarer dans l'utopie ou l'incompréhension, mais qui n'en confère pas moins à cette oeuvre une force de conviction peu commune.

Le règne du coeur, motivated by love, was to be the keynote to happiness. Each individual has the power to cultivate simple pleasures such as enjoyment of nature, of music, of family life, of books, and of art. This produces happiness and thus one is en possession du monde. Certain joys are born in suffering, but man must be master of his distress. Salavin was not master of himself and lacked le règne du coeur, thus he despaired.

Duhamel was a musician and held concerts in his home. When troubled and perplexed, music helped him forget human distress and filled him with joy. He named one volume of the Pasquier series after Cécile, the musician in the Pasquier family. This volume indicates the importance of music in the life of the individual. André Rousseau's impression of this book was:[15]

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[14]Cited in André Lagarde et Laurent Michard, Vingtième siècle (Paris: Bordas, 1965), p. 422.

[15]André Rousseau, Littérature du vingtième siècle (Paris: Albin Michel, 1939), p. 33.

> Cécile parmi nous paraît être l'expression même de ce que la vie offre à l'homme d'élévation parmi ses imperfections, de patrie idéale dans la complexité des désirs et des intérêts, de beauté en exil dans le champs des laideurs.

Music brought ecstasy and solace to the perplexed mind. This was also evident in the life of Laurent Pasquier who had many of Duhamel's characteristics.

As a student, Duhamel made trips together with his friends to various parts of France: the Vosges, the Massif Central, the Alps. Many of these trips were made on foot. Countries surrounding France were also visited--Northern Italy, Austria, Germany, Holland, and Finland. In 1927 he visited Moscow to give some lectures. A book published the same year, Le Voyage de Moscou, described his impression of the country and its government. Duhamel avoided any serious discussion of politics because he distrusted the Russian political regime. In his observations he thought life in Russia had improved considerably from the time of the czars. In 1928 he made a trip to the United States. Scènes de la vie future appeared in 1930, voicing his opposition to American mechanized civilization because it took away man's freedom. Duhamel also expressed his dislike of speed: "La vitesse ne multiplie pas la vie: plutôt elle la vise de son contenu, elle évapore

en impressions fugaces, en images brisées."[16] Duhamel was of the opinion that speed subtracted from life rather than adding to it. He concluded that, being no businessman, he had nothing to learn from a capitalistic country like United States. The book was highly praised by the Académie Française.

Duhamel also knew Greece and lived in Tunisia in 1947. It is, however, more likely to imagine him at one of two familiar places: Valmondois in the suburbs of Paris, where he occupied a peaceful house under large trees in the invigorating air of the countryside, or in Paris on Vauquelin street where he usually spent the winter. His home in Paris was surrounded by shopkeepers and professors, not far from two Jewish schools, a chemistry school, and an agronomical institute.[17]

Duhamel's philosophy was, no doubt, influenced by Charles Nicolle, whom he met in 1922. Nicolle was a French bacteriologist who worked on the typhus vaccine. Pierre-Henri Simon says:[18]

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[16]Cited in Pierre-Henri Simon, Georges Duhamel ou le bourgeois sauvé (Paris: Editions du Temps Présent, 1946), p. 33.

[17]André Thérive, Georges Duhamel ou l'intelligence du coeur (Paris: Vald, Rasmussen, 1925), p. 16.

[18]Simon, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

> Charles Nicolle fut le maître vénéré de Duhamel. Maître de science, qui le fit avancer en connaissances théoriques et techniques auxquelles il ne cessa d'accorder le plus grand prix. Maître de pensée, qui lui enseigna la voie prudente d'un positivisme attentif à rendre la raison souveraine dans le domaine de la science. Maître de vie, enfin, qui demeure à ses yeux le modèle du saint laïque, de l'honnête homme purifié et grandi par le culte de la vérité et la vocation du service.

Duhamel's hope was in man, and Nicolle to him was a model, an ideal whom he wanted to follow to attain his own spiritual virtues.

Duhamel began one of his greatest works, the Salavin cycle, in 1920. This is a story about a peculiar character, Louis Salavin. He was a perplexed and bewildered individual, a typical twentieth-century man who was aware of his shortcomings. Some critics found it difficult to accept such a man but Duhamel's answer to this was:[19]

> Salavin est un homme moderne, un homme quelconque, mais en qui des hommes venus de tous les points de l'horizon moral, en qui des hommes différents par l'âge, le métier, la condition sociale, la nationalité, la race, peuvent à certaines heures et s'ils sont de bonne foi retrouver quelque chose qui leur soit humblement ou mystérieusement commun.

Duhamel did not consider that Salavin suffered from a chronic mental disorder. With the passing of time, the Salavin novels have made Duhamel a pioneer in the portrayal of the twentieth-century psychological outcast and have

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[19]Cited in Keating, op. cit., p. 59.

won him increased reputation as a novelist. In the last three or four decades many characters like Salavin have come into existence in novels by Mauriac, Malraux, and Camus. What Duhamel intended to show was that in some aspect of Salavin's character there is a partial reflection in each one of us.

Duhamel was approaching his fiftieth birthday in 1934, and it was his opinion that it took a mature mind to produce a good novel. He had reached the peak of his literary talent, thus he was ready to commence his masterpiece, Chronique des Pasquier. Ten volumes were done in a decade, from Notaire du Havre, in 1933 to La Passion de Joseph Pasquier in 1942. The ten-volume work was a story of a lower-middle-class family and its progress. Numerous minor characters portrayed aspects of the bourgeoisie, but for the most part he concentrated on the family. One of the minor characters Justin Weill, a Jewish friend of Laurent, played a strong role; but the central figure in the Chronique was Laurent Pasquier, the third child in the family. To Laurent the world was in an upheaval, a disordered place, and he sought to find a balance. This balance, he said, was not the rule but the exception.[20] Duhamel has not clearly defined just what form this balance

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[20]Simon, op. cit., pp. 140-41.

is to take. It is apparent that Laurent's goal was to bring about a counter-balance between the forces that make for happiness and those that make for bitterness and despair so that despair does not dominate.

Duhamel combined the imaginary with the real. To him these characters were as real as people he had known. He states:[21]

> Je l'ai dit, je me rappelle très imparfaitement ma vie. Je me rappelle, en revanche, jour par jour, minute par minute, la vie de Laurent Pasquier, ma créature, mon compagnon imaginaire.

Thus it is apparent that he drew on his own life and experience and on his family for the Chronicle. Had he not deserted the laboratory for the writing desk, he might well have been this biology professor that Laurent was. He put many of his own aspirations, perplexities, and passions into this character. Duhamel declared that his domain was psychological realism, and the Pasquier family gave him a wide open field with which to experiment. This Chronicle is a written memorial to Duhamel's talent; none of his previous works are equal to this one.

Duhamel's philosophy of life may be defined as humanisme, but with certain misgivings and a spontaneous love of humanity. It was a humanisme related to man's

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[21]Cited in Keating, op. cit., p. 124.

knowledge and which could be perfected through his own efforts, without divine grace. Duhamel thought that modern man had lost his faith, his metaphysical axis; but man remained.[22] He sympathized with Pascal's reasoning, that the heart must intervene, which gives one a sense of justice and by sympathy makes us like our fellowmen. He further proposed the establishment of a brotherhood of benevolent men, more concerned about moral culture than technical knowledge.[23]

Duhamel tried to put God out of his mind, he made man of supreme value, and the brotherhood of man his ideal. He placed himself outside of the church and followed humanitarian idealism. He did not believe in eternal salvation. Man saves himself by his good deeds and by his intellectual reasoning. Duhamel never had a personal experience which left an indelible imprint like that of Paul Claudel in Nuit de Jouffroy.[24] Although Duhamel often declared himself an agnostic, he made it plain that he was sympathetic to the faith of others. In Vue de

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[22]Simon, op. cit., p. 191.

[23]G. Lanson et P. Tuffrau, Manuel illustré d'histoire de la littérature française (Paris: Classiques Hachette, 1953), p. 810.

[24]Achille Ouy, Georges Duhamel, l'homme et l'oeuvre (Paris: Les Ecrivains Reunis, 1927), p. 95.

la terre promise, Laurent Pasquier and Justin Weill, as two intimate friends, have a lengthy discussion on the Jewish concept of the Messiah.[25] Each young man had an ideal which he sought to attain even though it seemed impossible.

As a prose writer, Duhamel is inferior to Jules Romains, to Colette, and to Gide, who had more impetus, more style, and more ideas; to Mauriac, who had more atmosphere. But of the twentieth-century writers he is one of the most balanced and sound of mind.[26] He was a real creative genius, so that between his heroes and himself, between his life and his literary work, one can detect no severance. He felt, suffered, and lived with his characters.[27] He also created a balance between emotion and humor.

César Santelli has written an excellent definition of Duhamel's style of writing:[28]

> Je voudrais définir brièvement ce que distingue ce style, ce qui le différencie nettement de celui

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[25]Georges Duhamel, Vue de la terre promise (Paris: Mercure de France, 1932). References are from Le Livre de Poche edition, complete text, 1966, pp. 151-55.

[26]Simon, op. cit., p. 18.

[27]Ibid., pp. 89-90.

[28]César Santelli, Georges Duhamel (Paris: Mercure de France, 1925), p. 155.

> d'autres grands écrivains; je ne trouve qu'un mot . . . accent fraternel. Simplicité de la phrase, vocabulaire de tous les jours, images qui semblent spontanément jaillies du réel, rythme naturel, tout contribue à me donner une sensation que ne m'a fait éprouver jusqu'à ce jour aucun écrivain; lorsque je lis Duhamel, j'ai l'impression très nette que je l'entends me parler tout bas, avec une voix très douce, tandis que son regard se pose fraternellement sur le mien.

Duhamel began by conquering with love those who were nearest to him. It was easier to penetrate into their inmost souls. However, Duhamel also wished to conquer his adversaries.

In the time that Duhamel was writing Chronique des Pasquier, several honors were bestowed on him. He was elected member of the Académie Française in 1935, whose chairs are reserved for forty distinguished literary men. He edited the Mercure de France, one of France's best-known literary journals, from 1935 to 1939. He became a member of the Académie de Médecine, in 1937. His services as a surgeon in the First World War had won him the admiration of the medical profession.[29] From 1937 to 1949, he was president of the Alliance Française. In 1940 he was elected member of the Académie de Chirurgie and in 1944 of the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques. During the Second World War, when the Nazis occupied

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[29]Keating, op. cit., p. v.

Paris, Duhamel helped take care of refugees in a civilian hospital at Rennes. When Paris was liberated, he assisted with exuberant joy in the celebration.

Duhamel was a poet, playwright, essayist, and critic; but his greatest work was as a novelist. He won a prominent place in French literature of the twentieth-century. He died April 13, 1966, at his home in Valmondois, a suburb of Paris. Santelli, a good friend of Duhamel's since 1920, wrote a farewell message giving some of his impressions on Duhamel's literary work, of which excerpts are quoted here:[31]

> . . . Duhamel n'a toujours qu'un but: posséder le monde et surtout posséder l'âme humaine, et une fois qu'il s'est emparé de ces trésors, les partager autour de lui pour diminuer cette détresse qu'il a osé regarder en face . . . .
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> . . . . . .
>
> Son oeuvre a enrichi l'humanité. Dans le monde entier, elle est connue et appréciée . . . . Car, sous toutes les latitudes, on a reconnu, en Duhamel, le peintre merveilleux et compatissant de la vie intérieure, avec son contenu de détresse et la misère, mais aussi de joie et de réconfort.

Some of the expressions most frequently used by Georges Duhamel as a basis for his literary work are: posséder le monde; le règne du coeur; une nouvelle civilisation; and le monde est en désordre, il faut trouver l'équilibre.

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[31]César Santelli, "Adieu à Georges Duhamel," La Promotion violette, numéro 14 (juillet, 1966), pp. 3-4.

CHAPTER III

DUHAMEL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD FRIENDSHIP

Friendship was one of Duhamel's major themes, as he himself has said in Biographie de mes fantômes:[1]

> La passion d'amitié, toujours, a dominé ma vie. Je dirai plus tard, si j'en ai loisir, comment certaines de mes amitiés m'ont exalté, torturé, rompu. Si l'amitié forme un des thèmes essentiels de mes ouvrages, c'est d'abord qu'elle fut, qu'elle est, qu'elle sera l'un des ressorts majeurs de mon expérience humaine.

Duhamel had a passion for friends and a desire to be a friend.[2] Four relationships reveal Duhamel's attitude toward friendship. They are Louis Salavin and Octave Lanoue, Salavin and Edouard Loisel, Salavin and Louis Dargoult, and Laurent Pasquier and Justin Weill.

Louis Salavin was an honest, thoughtful man, essentially undistinguished, but he had a strong inferiority complex. Salavin's gratis deeds were the reaction of an unquenchable need of liberty. The things that interested Duhamel most were what Louis Salavin did subconsciously and unconsciously.[3]

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[1]Georges Duhamel, Biographie de mes fantômes (Paris: Mercure de France, 1949), pp. 66-67.

[2]César Santelli, Georges Duhamel, l'homme, l'oeuvre (Paris: Bordas, 1947), p. 28.

[3]César Santelli, Georges Duhamel (Paris: Mercure de France, 1925), p. 50.

Confession de minuit relates the friendship between Louis Salavin and Octave Lanoue. Salavin said:[4]

> Lanoue est un camarade d'enfance. . . . J'aime tendrement Lanoue, en d'autres termes, le sentiment que j'éprouve pour lui me semble une pure, une vigilante amitié.

Outwardly it appears to be a deep friendship; inwardly Salavin does not quite trust himself.

Salavin lost his job for yielding to an irrational impulse to put his finger on the ear lobe of M. Sureau, his employer. Salavin was dismissed from his position. He was so discouraged when he came home that the special mutton dinner which his mother had prepared and which he liked so well did not cheer him. When he opened Lanoue's letter and read the invitation to visit him at his earliest convenience, Salavin's countenance and attitude changed. An invitation from a friend is significant at such a time.

Lanoue was married and had one child. Salavin enjoyed the fellowship in their home and, when asked to stay for supper, he accepted. Following this refreshing evening spent with his friend, he went out almost every day to look for work, but was not successful and became

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[4]Georges Duhamel, Confession de minuit (Paris: Mercure de France, 1958), p. 62. Hereafter, the title and page of each book by Georges Duhamel will be given in parentheses in the body of the thesis, except when quoted from another source. A footnote will be used in each new chapter for data on a book.

very distressed. His mother said to him: "Va voir tes amis" (Confession de minuit, p. 156). Salavin answered:

> Mes amis! Je n'en ai pas d'amis. Si! J'en ai un, j'ai Lanoue. "Un ami," ce n'est pas la même chose que "des amis" pour un coeur ambitieux (Confession de minuit, p. 157).

Salavin visited Lanoue often just to be in the presence of one who seemed to understand his problems. He made this comment:

> . . . Lanoue m'écoutait avec une complaisance attentive et murmurait à chacune de mes phrases: "Je suis parfaitement de ton avis." Cet assentiment obstiné ne tardait pas à me donner de l'impatience. Eh quoi! je débitais des bourdes, des pauvretés, et Lanoue était parfaitement de mon avis, Lanoue, qui est mon ami, mon seul ami! (Confession de minuit, pp. 182-83)

Salavin sensed that Lanoue was willing to listen to him pour out his heart but was of little help in solving the problems.

Salavin had not gone to visit Lanoue for four days because of Marguerite's illness. Marguerite was a seamstress who worked with his mother; she also lived in the same tenement house as Salavin and his mother. Salavin helped with the housework while his mother was taking care of Marguerite.

Lanoue had found a copyist job for Salavin. In those days there were no typewriters or duplicators to make the necessary copies for their files. Men with a good handwriting were in demand and received a menial

remuneration. Often the copyist would take this work home. Salavin was content to be at home because this gave him the opportunity to enjoy his freedom and to be alone. Lanoue came to visit his friend and told him about the copyist job. Concerning this visit, Salavin said:

> . . . Lanoue fit une apparition rue du Pot-de-Fer. Il m'apportait du travail: des copies de conclusions grossoyées dont il s'était chargé dans le dessein de m'en faire profiter (Confession de minuit, p. 188).

This work had a positive effect on Salavin's life as he indicated:

> Je passais mes journées et une partie de mes nuits à transcrire d'une plume fiévreuse toute la loi sur les accidents du travail. . . . Je trouvais, dans cette activité dérisoire, des motifs de fierté et maintes raisons de m'estimer moi-même. Je vous l'ai dit: je me sentais devenir un autre homme. On avait changé Salavin (Confession de minuit, pp. 189-90).

This work gave Salavin a certain pride; he forgot his feeling of worthlessness. Lanoue had shown true friendship. He knew that if Salavin were to overcome his problems he needed to be occupied.

Salavin was invited to Lanoue's house for Christmas dinner. He arrived at the house when Lanoue was absent. He had a fleeting desire for his friend's wife. Taking the thought for the act, Salavin decided that he was an unworthy friend and fled from the apartment just as Lanoue was coming up the stairs. Four days in succession Lanoue

came to see Salavin at the house and stayed one or two hours waiting to speak to him, but Salavin was always absent. Lanoue sought to understand his friend's action and endeavored to help him to master his feelings, but Salavin refused to talk to his friend. What seemed to have been real friendship ended in failure, as Salavin said:

> Je suis incapable d'amour, incapable d'amitié, à moins qu'amour et amitié ne soient de bien pauvres, de bien misérables sentiments (Confession de minuit, p. 206).

Salavin perceived that he was unable to love and to be a real friend.

The friendship of Salavin and Edouard Loisel is recorded in Deux Hommes. Edouard Loisel was happily married and a successful chemist. Salavin meanwhile had also married. His wife was Marguerite, the seamstress whom his mother had cared for when Marguerite was ill. Salavin and Edouard Loisel met in a restaurant. Edouard deserted his usual table companions in order to sit with Salavin. They started a conversation, moving very cautiously, seeking to understand each other. They shared each other's life story, but Salavin thought that, in

order not to be unfair to Edouard, he must voice his opinion concerning this friendship:[5]

> Ne parlez pas de notre amitié, Loisel. Je ne peux pas être votre ami.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . je ne suis pas un ami pour vous. Il n'y a, en moi, aucune possibilité d'affection. Vous ne savez rien de moi.

Salavin warned Edouard not to consider him a friend because it would only end in failure.

Edouard Loisel was not persuaded by this warning to dismiss the possibility of friendship. He said: "La principale est que je n'ai jamais eu d'amis. Je n'ai que des camarades de travail ou de jeu. Il me faut un ami" (Deux Hommes, p. 72). He convinced Salavin to accept this reciprocal friendship.

Salavin was exceptionally happy when he came home that evening because of his friendship with Edouard Loisel. To his mother and to Marguerite, now his wife, he commented on Edouard's understanding of him:

> Je lui ai tout dit, tout raconté, et il m'aime mieux qu'auparavant.
>
> . . . Un homme sans arrière-pensée. Un coeur pur. Il me comprend, je le sais, et il m'aime quand même (Deux Hommes, p. 80).

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[5]Georges Duhamel, Deux Hommes (Paris: Mercure de France, 1963), p. 69.

Salavin said that Edouard loved him but remained silent on his love for Edouard.

Edouard and Salavin's friendship deepened. They talked about each other to their wives, and Edouard arranged for a meeting of the two families. At this gathering, Salavin ate lobster, knowing it would disagree with him; but he did it for the sake of friendship.

By nature, Edouard was a happy man. He was promoted to be director of research in his laboratory. His first thought was to share this joy with his friend, but that particular day it was too late so he went early the next morning. Salavin was indifferent to his friend's promotion, probably because he was jealous of his success. He had experienced many reverses in life and never seemed to be successful, thus he found it extremely difficult to enter into Edouard's happiness. Edouard begged:

> Aide-moi! Assiste-moi! Prends une part de ce beau fardeau. Tu vois bien que je ne suis pas capable d'être heureux tout seul (Deux Hommes, p. 121).

Edouard wanted Salavin to rejoice with him. This promotion meant a raise in his salary, and Edouard would be able to help Salavin more financially. Edouard became more and more his friend's benefactor, which hindered the progress of Salavin's friendship. Everything Edouard attempted seemed to bring success, and this greatly irritated his friend. Almost every week, when Edouard

would bring Salavin money like a hunter who brings a piece of venison, he would say:

> "Voilà ta part!" Et Salavin disait toujours "merci," car Salavin avait sa destinée, qui était de dire toujours "merci."
>
> Il y a une justice dans le monde, une justice qui met les forts à côté des faibles. . . . Il y a dans le monde, des riches qui donnent et des pauvres qui reçoivent. . . . Il faut que chacun remplisse son rôle et persévère dans son régime. N'est-il pas doux de savoir que faire et de s'y tenir avec une pieuse application? (Deux Hommes, pp. 124-25)

Edouard found satisfaction by helping Salavin, not realizing that he was hastening the end of their friendship. Salavin always had to accept his friend's gifts but whatever he had to offer in return was refused. Edouard's control over his friend strengthened Salavin's inferiority complex to the extent that their friendship finally became impossible.

The two friends who were both working a distance from their homes always ate their dinner in a certain restaurant. Edouard was concerned because for two days Salavin failed to join him. After work he went to visit Salavin at his home. The latter was out of work but unconcerned and content to be at home because this provided him a certain liberty which he craved. He had not even thought to notify Edouard that he was out of work. Edouard expressed deep sympathy for his friend:

> Edouard fit quelques pas dans la pièce. Il plissait de son mieux un front promis à des pensées sereines. Il voulait comprendre Salavin tout entier et n'était pas sûr d'y parvenir. Il se sentait le coeur débordant de sympathie (Deux Hommes, p. 148).

Edouard immediately set out to secure a new position for Salavin and wished to prove to him that he was an indispensable friend. In a kind but resolute voice he said:

> Eh bien, laisse-moi faire, compris?
>
> Il secoua les mains de Salavin et s'en fut débordant de lyrisme, prodiguant les encouragements: "Tout va s'arranger. J'ai mon plan. Il suffit que je m'en mêle. Aie confiance en ton ami!" (Deux Hommes, p. 151)

Edouard arranged for Salavin to get secretarial work at the Vedel and Gayet milk pasteurizing plant. Salavin accepted the position and wrote Edouard a letter to thank him.

Salavin's child, Pierre, was seriously ill. Dr. Chabot came to examine the boy. The case was serious and the only hope for Pierre was at least six months of rest, with medication, at the seashore. This was beyond the Salavins' budget. Edouard offered financial assistance, which Salavin refused. Marguerite and Salavin's mother pleaded with him to accept Edouard's generous offer so his son might have a chance to recuperate. Edouard immediately took action. He arranged for the trip, gave Marguerite a check-book, told her how to use the checks, thus making the Salavins' feel that Edouard was indispensable

to them. Marguerite and Pierre were on their way to the seaside. A few days later, Salavin received a cheerful letter from Marguerite. He shared the news with Edouard. Then Salavin took Edouard's two hands and said: "Je te rendrai tout ça quand je pourrai, par petites sommes" (Deux Hommes, p. 171). He economized by refusing to go to movies and concerts. One day he handed Edouard an envelope with one hundred fifty francs which his friend refused. With a sad look, Edouard said:

> --Alors, tu me refuses le plaisir de te rendre service!
>
> Salavin rougit.
>
> --Et toi, tu me refuses le plaisir d'acquitter une partie de ma dette!
>
> --Allons, dit Edouard, il ne faut pas compliquer la vie. Ne parlons plus de ça.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Et d'un geste brusque, il fourra l'enveloppe et son contenue dans la poche de Salavin (Deux Hommes, p. 173).

This act of Edouard's was another step nearer to the crisis in their friendship. Salavin had not asked for this assistance. He would probably find it difficult to return the entire sum, but he intended to pay as much of the debt as possible. Marguerite returned with Pierre, but he was not well. Edouard Loisel arranged for the

boy to be hospitalized in Paris and said that he would pay the bills.

Edouard remarked a change in Salavin's attitude which became moody and irritable. This disturbed Edouard. He wondered if probably he were at fault. At the factory and on their way to and from work, Salavin remained silent or he insulted his friend. The time came when Edouard concluded that the issue must be faced. He asked Salavin: ". . . que t'ai-je fait? . . . Je veux savoir ce que tu as dans le coeur" (Deux Hommes, pp. 196-97). Salavin replied:

> Je ne t'ai jamais rien demandé. Tu m'as obligé d'accepter tout. Pour que tu sois toi, il me fallait tout accepter. Tu m'as contraint d'être faible, pour pouvoir, toi être fort. J'ai voulu te rendre l'argent. Tu as refusé.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . Sous prétexte de tout me donner, tu m'as tout pris, même mes rares heures de liberté, même de l'amitié.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . Oui, je t'ai prévenu: je t'ai dit que je ne pourrais être ton ami, que je n'étais pas un ami. Tu as insisté. Tu m'as forcé la main, forcé le coeur. Tu m'as épuisé. Es-tu content? (Deux Hommes, pp. 199-200)

Edouard was shocked by these severe accusations, thus his friendship with Salavin ended. A reconciliation never materialized; however, both parties contemplated this thought. Salavin wrote to Edouard:

> Ne me laisse pas périr de tristesse, Edouard. Je suis en danger. . . . Viens. Je t'attendrai demain tout le jour. C'est à toi de venir, puisque tous les torts sont de mon côté. . . . (Deux Hommes, p. 225).

Salavin did not send the letter, but all day Sunday he wished Edouard would come. He heard footsteps coming up the stairs. The visitor reached the second floor. In hopes that it might be his friend, Salavin opened the door on the third floor and was ready to welcome him. The steps did not come closer, but the visitor descended and disappeared in the distance. This visitor was Edouard. When he heard someone open the door on the third floor, he lost his courage and descended. Shortly thereafter little Pierre died in spite of the care Edouard had provided for him.

Edouard wrote Salavin a letter when he heard of Pierre's death. This letter required no answer and did not receive any reply. In an epilogue, Edouard reflected upon his relationship with Salavin:

> Nous sommes deux hommes intelligents, généreux, malgré tout, et bons dans notre faiblesse. Nous souhaitons que la concorde et l'harmonie régissent toutes les actions des peuples; et, pourtant, nous n'avons pas pu mettre à l'unisson nos deux voix.
>
> Et bien, c'est à recommencer!
>
> Je recommencerai! Etre toute franchise, toute loyauté, toute droiture, voilà mon grand, mon unique désir. Et je veux croire que ce désir de pureté n'est pas la seule pureté des hommes . . . (Deux Hommes, p. 235).

What appeared to be a perfect friendship at one time ended in failure because two intelligent men failed to understand each other. Thus ended the friendship of Louis Salavin and Edouard Loisel in Deux Hommes.

The fifth volume* of the Salavin series, Tel qu'en lui-même introduces Louis and Gertrude Dargoult and their daughter Christine who were on their way to Tunis by way of Marseilles. Louis Salavin had adopted a new name, Simon Chavegrand; he had dyed his hair and had made arrangements to be manager of a phonograph shop in Tunis. He wrote Marguerite a letter that he had some plan in mind which would separate them for a length of time. The letter stated: "Je demande à faire quelque chose pour devenir un homme autre que celui dont tu as déjà tant souffert."[6] It is significant that Duhamel sent Salavin to Tunisia for he himself had lived here in 1947. Salavin was the Dargoults' seat companion on the train enroute for Marseilles. Since he had very little baggage he offered his services to the Dargoult family, who accepted. Their friendship came into being when Salavin

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*Volume three, Journal de Salavin, and volume four, Club des Lyonnais, do not discuss the subject of friendship.

[6]Georges Duhamel, Club des Lyonnais (Paris: Mercure de France, 1948), p. 270. This quotation does not concern friendship but merely refers to the intended departure of Salavin for Tunis.

subconsciously threw himself on the railroad track to save the Dargoults' child. News reporters and photographers were on the scene and wanted to publicize the incident in the press, but Salavin refused to be questioned or photographed. The Dargoults sensed that he was a strange sort of individual. Furthermore, Salavin requested that they remain silent on this incident if they wished to remain friends. He said:[7]

> . . . je veux dire pendant mon séjour à Tunis, séjour qui doit être long, j'espère mériter non pas votre reconnaissance, mais votre amitié à tous deux. Si je peux inaugurer cette amitié en vous demandant quelque chose, puisque vous parlez de récompense, je vous prie que la mienne soit de ne plus jamais entendre parler de ce qui s'est passé ce soir, en gare de Marseille. Plus jamais, je vous le demande.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Il me sera plus facile d'être votre ami, si nous ne parlons plus de ça.

The Dargoults highly esteemed Salavin; and, in order to foster their relationship with him, they granted his request. The friendship between Dargoult and Salavin deepened and became intimate. It was described thus:

> . . . Simon (Salavin), le plus souvent, montait, à travers la ville arabe, jusqu'au collège Sadiki, pour y chercher Louis Dargoult.
>
> . . . . . .

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[7]Georges Duhamel, Tel qu'en lui-même (Paris: Mercure de France, 1948), p. 38.

> De chaudes conversations ornaient et nourrissaient l'amitié nouée entre les deux hommes (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 59).

These conversations terminated at either one of two places in Tunis, Alfa street where the Dargoults lived or Maltais street where Salavin had a room above his phonograph shop. Salavin seldom accepted a supper invitation with his friends.

In Tunisia, schools and business firms were closed from noon until two o'clock for people usually took a siesta, and Salavin knew that the Dargoults would be at home at that time. This might be the last time he would see the Dargoults because he was going to expose himself to typhus in order to try out a new vaccine. He brought as a gift to Dargoult's daughter Christine his most treasured possession, a locket with a portrait of his dead mother. However, he did not inform them of his intended trip. Two or three days later Dargoult, who was a teacher at the Collège Sidiki, realized he had not seen Salavin recently, so he stopped at the phonograph shop after classes had been dismissed, but Salavin was absent. Moktar, Salavin's Arab assistant, handed Dargoult a letter which his friend had left for him. In the letter Salavin requested that Dargoult come to check on Moktar every day, which Dargoult did faithfully. In the event that Salavin did not return, further instructions would be

found in a trunk. In this letter he addressed Dargoult as his friend:

> Mon ami, je n'écrirais pas cette lettre si je ne pouvais pas la commencer par ces mots: mon ami. Je viens vous demander un service (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 94).

It appears that Salavin had made progress in being a friend. In his friendship with Edouard he had never asked for a favor, nor had written a letter such as the above.

Louis Dargoult learned from Dr. Arnauld, their family doctor, the purpose of Salavin's absence. Salavin, who always felt inferior, was determined to raise himself in his own estimation. Therefore, he offered to be exposed to typhus fever, in order to try out a new vaccine. He did this without thinking through all the possibilities of the act. When he arrived at the hospital, where the test was to be performed, Salavin was struck with fear and wished to withdraw; but it was too late; thus he considered himself a coward. When Salavin returned to Tunis, Louis Dargoult was the first to compliment his friend for the heroic deed. Salavin was morose and indifferent to his compliment. Dargoult knew that his friend was in misery, but how could he help him?

Salavin lived in complete solitude for two weeks, and forbade Moktar to give any indication that he was at the house. Then he wrote a letter to Dargoult in which

he confided some of his misery but entreated his friend not to visit him for another week. However, Dargoult felt an urge to express his gratefulness for the many lessons Salavin had taught him about helping humanity. Salavin was taken by surprise and proclaimed his worthlessness as a hero. He could not understand why Dargoult did not abandon him. Then he asked:

> Mais pourquoi vous intéressez-vous à moi, Dargoult? Pourquoi ne m'abandonnez-vous pas? Pourquoi ne me laissez-vous pas seul? (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 160)

Dargoult felt indebted to Salavin because of saving his daughter's life, but Salavin considered it of no importance because he had done it subconsciously. Dargoult was assured that Salavin was an intelligent man and was interested in assisting him to overcome his psychological problems as is indicated in Tel qu'en lui-même:

> Louis Dargoult a l'air consterné, malheureux. Il voudrait verser quelque baume sur des plaies qu'il ne connaît pas, qu'il ne peut même pas imaginer (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 170).

Dargoult went home sorrowful. Salavin sought a plaintive melancholy record which was often played in Paris on a rainy winter evening. He listened to this pitiful voice sounding as though it ascended from an abyss.

At the next meeting of the two friends, Salavin had to some extent recuperated from a fever but still

looked like a convalescent. Dargoult was touched by Salavin's appearance and remarked:

> . . . Je ne peux rien pour vous. Vous souffrez et je ne sais rien de vos souffrances. . . . Vous m'avez donné bien des choses, sauf la plus précieuse: votre confiance. J'ai le sentiment d'être injuste, à cette minute. En outre, je fais violence à ma nature même, à mes habitudes, à mon éducation. . . . Je ne demande rien pour moi. Tout pour vous, Simon (Salavin)! Je sais que l'homme est moins misérable quand il peut ouvrir son coeur (Tel qu'en lui-même, pp. 197-98).

Salavin evaded the issue very cleverly by changing the subject of the conversation, which gave him some time for thought. Then he answered:

> . . . Vous saurez un jour, je vous le promets, tout et presque tout ce que vous désirez savoir de moi. Je vous ai parlé d'une lettre . . . déposée dans la grosse malle. Cette lettre existe toujours, j'y ajoute de temps en temps une ligne. Elle finira bien par vous parvenir. Je vous annonce tout de suite que vous serez profondément déçu.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> --J'ai entrepris une grande chose. Et j'ai échoué (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 200).

Salavin knew himself but refused to accept himself. He longed to confide in Dargoult but seemingly lacked courage.

Salavin's assistant shopkeeper, Moktar, was sought by the police because of the murder of a second-hand dealer. Some officers were in the store; others surrounded the place. Salavin sent for Dargoult, who came as quickly as possible, but what could they do? Moktar stood in the back yard with his pistol in hand ready to shoot at

anyone who made a move. The officers knew he had only one shell left. Suddenly the door opened, Salavin subconsciously stepped out of the back door and asked Moktar to give himself up and he, Salavin, would take all the blame. The Arab shot his master in the knee; he fell to the ground. The police caught their criminal, Moktar. Dargoult called for Dr. Arnauld to come examine Salavin's wound. At the request of Salavin, he was cared for at his own house. Dargoult stayed with him all night; and, while his friend was sleeping, he opened the trunk and found the letter addressed to him. He read the letter and, to his astonishment, he learned that Salavin was married. Enclosed was an envelope with his wife's address. Without hesitation, Dargoult sent a telegram to Marguerite to come immediately to Tunis. Just the thought of having Marguerite near him greatly improved Salavin's condition. He expressed the desire to go back to Paris to spend the rest of his days. Dargoult assisted Marguerite with the liquidation of the phonograph shop. She soon realized that, after the accounts would be balanced, there would be a lack of funds for the voyage. In her need, she appealed to the Dargoults. They had been waiting for an opportunity to recompense Salavin for saving Christine's life. Thus, they considered it a great privilege to pay for the Salavins' trip to Paris. Dargoult obtained a

comfortable cabin, insurance which would cover the care of the patient, and rented an ambulance and stretcher for Salavin to be transported to the ship. Trying to make this difficult voyage as comfortable as possible, Dargoult too experienced the joy of giving.

When the time came for the ship to leave harbor, Louis Dargoult said good-bye to Salavin. The latter embraced him and whispered these words:

> --Si je vis, souffla-t-il, je vous écrirai. Dargoult, je vous raconterai certaines choses de moi qu'un ami tel que vous doit savoir pour me comprendre et m'absoudre (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 238).

What a change from the previous two friendships! Louis Dargoult had won Salavin's confidence, not by imposing on him, but by a slow and painful process of patience and love. However, one must admit there was also progress in Salavin's attitude toward himself. Some of the last words Salavin uttered were:

> --Oh! si je devais recommencer une autre vie, il me semble que je saurais. Comme ce serait simple! Comme nous serions heureux! (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 246)

From the final words before Salavin died, it is apparent that he had accepted himself and, if he had had another opportunity, he would have known how to live with himself.

Salavin described in Confession de minuit how he saw himself in relation to others:

> Monsieur, vous allez prendre de moi une idée qui a bien des chances d'être fausse. Vous allez penser que j'ai un sale caractère, que je suis misanthrope. Moi, misanthrope! C'est absurde! J'aime les hommes et ce n'est pas ma faute si, le plus souvent, je ne peux les supporter. Je rêve de concorde, je rêve d'une vie harmonieuse, confiante. . . . Quand je pense aux hommes, je les trouve si dignes d'affection. . . . Je voudrais leur dire des paroles amicales, je voudrais vider mon coeur dans leur coeur. . . . Dès que je me trouve face à face . . . avec des êtres vivants, mes semblables, je suis vite à bout de courage! Je me sens l'âme contractée, la chair à vif. Je n'aspire qu'à retrouver ma solitude pour aimer encore les hommes comme je les aime quand ils ne sont pas là, quand ils ne sont pas sous mes yeux (Confession de minuit, pp. 95-96).

There is evidence of this feeling in his friendship with Lanoue, with Edouard, and with Dargoult. He was an extremely complex character, who oscillated between a hatred for mankind and a love for mankind. It appeared that he acted upon a system instead of loving truly with a spontaneous overflow of the heart. Just at the time when Salavin's friends thought they understood him, he created new problems which were even more difficult to analyse. In the end, however, Salavin understood the truth contained in the two words "escape" and "acceptance." He knew escape was a lure and a lie; the cure for which was a voluntary acceptance of self.

The friendship of Laurent Pasquier and Justin Weill is recorded in the Chronique des Pasquier. Laurent Pasquier was an intelligent boy, but an idealistic dreamer who wanted the world filled with honest men. The other

members of the family did not share this philosophy with Laurent.

As a boy, Laurent had a friend by the name of Désiré Wasselin. Désiré was unloved and often beaten by his parents. His father was dishonest and had been imprisoned for embezzlement. Désiré was so frustrated by his father's act that he committed suicide by hanging himself in the family living room.

Georges Duhamel's first boyhood friendship also ended in tragedy. Professor Keating says: "Justin was taken in part from recollections of a school friend of Duhamel who was killed at a grade crossing at the age of fourteen."[8] Duhamel says in Inventaire de l'abîme:[9]

> Et comme le poète a des pouvoirs discrétionnaires, j'ai décidé, bien des années plus tard, de donner à l'ombre de mon ami cette vie qu'il n'avait point vécu, de le faire durer, jouir et souffrir ume ample et riche existence, sous le nom de Justin, l'un de mes personnages, et de vivre avec lui, en rêve, toute cette fervente affection qui nous avait été ravie.

Duhamel makes his boyhood friend live on in the person of Justin Weill. Many students ridiculed him because he was a Jew, but he stood up boldly for the Jewish faith and customs.

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[8] L. Clark Keating, Critic of Civilization Georges Duhamel and His Writings (University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 125.

[9] Georges Duhamel, Inventaire de l'abîme (Paris: Mercure de France, 1945), pp. 155-56.

Laurent, who was now fifteen years of age, missed his boyhood friend, Désiré Wasselin, and was happy when Justin befriended him. Both Laurent and Justin were students in the Lycée Henri IV. Le Jardin des bêtes sauvages first mentions their friendship.[10] They were frank with each other; Justin mentioned his views of the Messiah; Laurent listened, but had no comment to make because he had abandoned his faith. Laurent insisted that the world would be redeemed by science, but Justin refuted this idea.

One day, after classes had been dismissed, Laurent invited Justin to listen to his sister, Cécile, who was developing into a talented pianist. Justin was introduced to Valdemar Henningsen, a Dane, who tutored Cécile. Valdemar was an eccentric who alternately worshipped and scolded his pupil; it was after one of these episodes that Justin excused himself and asked Laurent to accompany him on a short walk. Justin called Valdemar an adventurer and was surprised to find that the Pasquiers tolerated this man.

In September of that same year, Laurent received an invitation from Justin to spend eight days with him

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[10]Georges Duhamel, Le Jardin des bêtes sauvages (Paris: Mercure de France, 1933). References are from Le Livre de Poche edition, complete text, 1964, p. 7.

at his summer home near Jouy-en-Josas. The two boys found it easy to share each other's problems but were not always able to reach a satisfactory solution. Justin believed that the Messiah had not yet come and was still looking for Him. He even thought that he could be the Messiah if he remained pure from any passion for the opposite sex. He was disturbed when he realized that he loved Cécile. Laurent discovered that his father was visiting another woman and, whenever he attended any public meeting, it was this mistress who accompanied him. Laurent felt that his father was unfaithful to his mother and was troubled about this double life of his father who, however, thought that such action was quite natural. Laurent told Justin of the temptation to commit suicide like his boyhood friend, Désiré Wasselin, so together they discussed various methods to commit suicide, as one notes in Le Jardin des bêtes sauvages:

> Nous fîmes ensuite plusieurs projets de suicides jumeaux. Pour finir nous tombâmes dans les bras l'un de l'autre en nous jurant amitié éternelle (Le Jardin des bêtes sauvages, p. 203).

This friendship deepened with each volume of the Pasquier cycle.

The Pasquier family lived in Créteil, the suburban town where Duhamel and his friends had established the Abbaye de Créteil. Laurent commuted to Paris every day

because he, like the author Duhamel had done, was studying medicine at the University of Paris. Justin was still at the summer resort, thus the two boys carried on their friendship by correspondence. Laurent's ideals were shattered by the world's wickedness. About the only subject the Pasquier family discussed was money. He had vowed that, to prove his contempt for money, he would destroy the first thousand francs he possessed. When the other members of the family requested money from the father, Laurent also asked for a thousand francs. After he had changed the thousand-franc note into two five-hundred franc notes he invited Joseph, his oldest brother, to walk down to the river with him. He jumped on a bridge out of his brother's reach and tore a five-hundred franc note into small pieces and threw it in the river, but retained the other five-hundred franc note. Laurent knew he had deceived his brother Joseph and longed to obtain Justin's opinion on this act. He wrote to Justin:[11]

> Justin, mon cher Justin, tu es mon seul ami. Au nom de la poésie, de l'amour, de tout ce que nous chérissons, viens me voir à Créteil, demain. Arrange-toi pour rester quelques jours avec ton malheureux.

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[11]Georges Duhamel, Vue de la terre promise (Paris: Mercure de France, 1934). References are from Le Livre de Poche edition, complete text, 1966, p. 63.

Justin arrived the next day, but was crushed to learn that Laurent's act was less sublime than he had expected. He begged his friend not to tell Cécile about the thousand francs.

Justin Weill then moved to Alsace and from there he took a trip to Palestine. Laurent rented a room in Paris to get away from family troubles. He informed Justin of his new address and of the death of Valdemar Henningsen. When Justin returned from the Holy Land, he rejoiced to be back in Paris to visit his friends, and in particular, Cécile.

Justin contacted a number of friends who might be interested in founding a suburban phalanstery at Bièvres, similar to the Abbaye de Créteil in which Duhamel had had a part, where they could live the lives of free men. Laurent was unable to help his friend with the project, because he had fallen ill with a serious fever. Laurent had tried out on himself a new vaccine that his science professor, who was particularly interested in lung diseases, had discovered. When he had recovered from this illness, he went to join the group at the phalanstery. Some of the men were undisciplined and selfish, others were lazy. When the group was about to break up, Laurent was called to take care of his father, who had pneumonia. Quarrels caused first one and then another of the members of the phalanstery

to go back to Paris. Justin wrote to Laurent: "Reviens, je t'en prie, dès que la santé de ton père cessera de te tourmenter. J'ai besoin de te sentir là."[12] Two days later Laurent went to join his friends. The iron gate was locked. This surprised him. When Justin came to open the gate, he said:

> Excuse-moi, dit-il, en faisant tourner la clef. J'ai fermé parce que je suis seul.
>
> --Tu es seul? Où sont les autres?
>
> --Je te raconterai tout à l'heure (Le Désert de Bièvres, p. 245).

All the other members had deserted the place except Justin and Laurent. Justin felt defeated because he had failed to make others love and respect him enough to follow his leadership. In his despair he pled with Laurent:

> Aide-moi donc! . . . Puisque c'est fini, brisons tout et qu'il n'en soit plus question. Qu'il ne reste rien, rien, pas même un souvenir (Le Désert de Bièvres, p. 247).

Laurent managed to calm his friend and made him realize that there was some valuable property which could still be used. Justin responded:

> Oui, toi, tu es un frère véritable. Je n'ai rien à te reprocher. . . . Je ne suis pas toujours juste avec toi. Je suis seul à le savoir. . . (Le Désert de Bièvres, p. 248).

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[12]Georges Duhamel, Le Désert de Bièvres (Paris: Mercure de France, 1937). References are from Le Livre de Poche edition, complete text, 1966, p. 240.

What consolation for Justin to have Laurent present when all seemed futile! Night had fallen, and Justin said:

> Couche-toi près de moi. . . . Si je pleure un bon coup, je m'endormirai peut-être. . . . Dis-moi, Laurent, pourquoi donc as-tu le coeur pur, toi? Pourquoi as-tu la grâce, alors que moi, je ne l'ai pas?
>
> --Mais, fis-je, tu te trompes tout à fait. Je n'ai pas la grâce comme tu dis. Au contraire: je me dégoûte et me déteste (Le Désert de Bièvres, pp. 250-51).

Justin realized that his friend was susceptible to the same human distress as he, but the burden was lighter when it could be shared.

After the experience at the phalanstery, Justin's attitude changed. He was bitter and almost willfully misinterpreted the motives of Laurent's letters. Laurent felt one must understand a friend when he was going through a crisis, for he said:[13]

> On ne choisit pas sa famille -- et c'est bien regrettable. --Je commence à comprendre qu'on ne choisit pas non plus ses amis. On les a reçus, on les garde, on les porte, on les subit . . . .

And he further states:

> . . . Je commence à comprendre que nos amis, nous ne les avons pas choisis, et qu'il nous faut les accepter, les tolérer, les subir, comme les gens de notre famille, comme tous les fardeaux envoyés par le sort (Les Maîtres, p. 214).

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[13]Georges Duhamel, Les Maîtres (Paris: Mercure de France, 1955), p. 55.

Laurent was able to tolerate and accept Justin because he recognized that his friend was being subjected to trials.

Justin's lingering bitterness over the failure of the phalanstery was expressed in a letter to Laurent:

> Ce n'est pas cette lettre-là que je voulais t'écrire. C'était une tout autre lettre, toute éclairée, toute glorieuse. Tant pis, je ne t'admets, ce soir, qu'à partager mes ennuis. Tu ne mérites rien d'autre (Les Maîtres, p. 246).

Justin overcame his bitterness because of the kindness of his friend. They visited each other, and Justin came to be the impulsive and lovable fellow of his earlier years.

Laurent was then faced with political interference in his laboratory work. Larminat, the director of the Institut de Biologie, gave Laurent an incompetent laboratory assistant. Laurent dismissed the assistant; Larminat reinstated him, but Laurent forbade him to do any work. Laurent defended himself in the newspapers and declared that science must have a free hand. Since Justin was then living in Nantes, the two friends saw each other only on rare occasions. Correspondence was the chief means of communication. However, Laurent found it difficult to explain the problem with Larminat by letter and wished for Justin's personal advice. He wrote Justin:[14]

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[14]Georges Duhamel, Le Combat contre les ombres (Paris: Mercure de France, 1957), p. 125.

> Cher Justin, tu m'as beaucoup manqué pendant toute cette période. Il me semble que tu m'aurais donné quelque précieux avis, toi qui connais très bien la société des journalistes.

Justin was a journalist and would have been able to advise Laurent as to the choice of the newspaper in which to publish his article. Furthermore, Justin knew how to correct an article for publication. Too impatient to wait for the answer to arrive, Laurent took the article to the newspaper l'Assaut for publication. Justin's telegram arrived. It stated: "Je te conseille de ne pas publier l'article si tu peux revenir en décision. Lettre suit" (Le Combat contre les ombres, p. 145). Justin was shocked to see Laurent's article appear in l'Assaut. The title, its contents, and the divisions were not what he had expected from his friend. He reproached Laurent. However, Justin did not know about the adaptations made by the journalists. Article succeeded article; many persons who pretended to be on Laurent's side, friends and colleagues, were either lukewarm or secretly opposing him. Laurent was disillusioned. He sent a telegram to Justin: "Si tu peux venir, d'urgence, viens. . . . J'ai grand besoin de toi" (Le Combat contre les ombres, p. 210). Laurent met his friend at the station. Their meeting was a friendly one:

> De loin, Justin fit un signe de tête, un sourire que Laurent trouva pâle, distrait, et qui, tout à

> coup, lui serra le coeur. Il courut, se jeta sur le voyageur, l'embrassa . . . (Le Combat contre les ombres, p. 214).

He took Justin to his room and opened a drawer, pulling out all the original copies of his articles. Justin read them and commented:

> . . . J'ai mal lu. Je n'ai rien compris. Je t'ai engueulé dans le fond de mon coeur; mais je ne t'ai jamais trahi! Je ne suis pas un salaud, comme les autres, comme la multitude des autres! Et je te le prouverai! Dis-moi que tu me pardonnes ou je t'assomme, à l'instant, pour te prouver que je t'aime (Le Combat contre les ombres, p. 219).

After Justin had understood the real situation, he supported Laurent loyally.

Laurent was dismissed from his laboratory position at the Institut de Biologie. He was not concerned because, as the First World War was starting, he enlisted in the army. Duhamel also had enlisted in the army in the First World War after he had been working in a laboratory for a period of five years. At the time that Laurent was inducted into the army, Justin came to tell him good-bye. This was the last time these two friends met. A little later Justin also enlisted in the army and was killed. Justin Weill and Laurent Pasquier had remained faithful in their friendship. They were not always in agreement and had reproached each other, but this often made for a purer and closer friendship. Here were two talented young men who experienced the significance of friendship. Laurent, like the author

Duhamel, found his greatest consolation in friends. Friends and friendship give meaning to life.

CHAPTER IV

DUHAMEL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD KINDNESS

Kindness was a means suggested by Duhamel to counterbalance the forces that make for materialism. His idea was to win man by love and, through him, to gain the entire world.

Louis Salavin was determined to rise above his mediocrity. He was employed in Paris as an office secretary by the Compagnie Industrielle des Laits Pasteurisés et Oxygénés.[1] The philosophy which he had adopted was to perform deeds of kindness.

Salavin, who had his own psychological problems, keenly realized that his co-worker, Jibé Tastard, had a problem too. Jibé, a thief, who came from a poverty-stricken home, worked with Salavin in the same office. Once, when Salavin was balancing the accounts, some money was missing from the cash box. Since he was not certain who had taken the money, he replaced it with his own money rather than report the theft to headquarters. A few days later, he caught Jibé taking money from the cash box. Salavin loved him and was concerned how he might win Jibé's

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[1]Georges Duhamel, Journal de Salavin (Paris: Mercure de France, 1963), p. 25.

confidence. He talked with him, and the young man confessed that he had taken money once before. Salavin did not ask him to return this sum but entreated him to discontinue this practice if he wished to remain employed, for he was determined to reform Jibé.

Bottles of milk were disappearing. Who was taking them? The foreman placed spies at strategic places in the firm to discover the suspect. Jibé was guilty and was dismissed from work. Salavin felt defeated and was deeply grieved to learn that, despite his effort to show the young man love and kindness, Jibé had continued his thievery in a place where he was not under Salavin's supervision. Salavin learned that to be kind meant to endure hardship and defeat.

A certain Madame Baratti lived in the same tenement house as Salavin. Thoughtfully, Salavin brought her milk up from the entrance hall and placed it by her door. For twelve days, Salavin performed this act of kindness. On the twelfth day, when he came up the stairs, Madame Baratti shouted:

> Je voudrais bien savoir quel est le vaurien qui déplace ma bouteille de lait tous les matins et qui s'amuse peut-être bien à cracher dedans (Journal de Salavin, p. 46).

Madame Baratti was ungrateful to Salavin and distrusted him.

Salavin observed that the Arabs in Tunis were being suppressed by the French. When he took Moktar, an Arab boy, as his shop assistant, he thought that the boy needed to appear in clothes that were becoming and clean. He asked Moktar to wash himself, then gave him a new suit of clothes, a pair of sandals, and a turban. After Moktar had finished dressing himself, he wanted to kiss his master's knees. Salavin drew back and said: "Non! . . . Dites seulement 'merci' comme un homme."[2] Salavin's motive for this deed of kindness was his love for the underprivileged. Dargoult reproached Salavin, saying that he treated Moktar like a prince. Salavin declared: "Je ne le traite pas comme un prince. J'essaye de le traiter comme un homme" (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 69). Salavin was of the opinion that these underprivileged Arabs needed love and kindness.

Tunis had one hospital for French people and another for Arabs. Salavin offered his services to the Arab hospital to assist Dr. Rude. He visited the Arab patients and tried to cheer them but was often ridiculed by the French nurses.

An old friend of Dargoult, Gabriel Soulagne, who had been teaching at the Collège Sidiki, became involved

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[2]Georges Duhamel, Tel qu'en lui-même (Paris: Mercure de France, 1948), p. 64.

in anticolonial politics. He was to be expelled from Tunisia but contracted pneumonia so the departure was delayed. It was evident that Soulagne needed help, so Salavin volunteered to spend his nights at the patient's bedside. Dargoult remarked to another friend:

> Salavin est venu faire ce que les autres n'ont pas fait.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Quelle leçon! Quelle leçon!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . Je me sens plein de honte. . . . je n'ai pas eu l'idée et le courage de m'y coller moi-même (Tel qu'en lui-même, pp. 125-26).

An extraordinary man! This was the best description Dargoult could find to explain Salavin's deeds of kindness.

One morning, when Salavin came to the Arab hospital, an adolescent, Hassine, who had been wounded by a dagger, had just been taken into the surgical room. Dr. Rude murmured:

> --Les fils de bronze! Ils sont sur la table? Merci (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 129).

After the surgery, Dr. Rude realized that Hassine had lost too much blood and that his heart was failing. He said:

> Oh, beaucoup de travail pour rien. Ce petit imbécile va mourir. Il est bien trop choqué. Votre sérum est fini? Enlevez le tube. Pas grand' chose à faire encore. Quoi? Une transfusion? Ce sale gosse ne le mérite pas. Une transfusion? Bah! (Tel qu'en lui-même, p. 130)

Such statements grieved Salavin. Why was Hassine's life less important than that of another individual? He turned to Dr. Rude and offered his blood for the boy. Since Salavin had the same blood type, the transfusion was performed. Hassine died in spite of Salavin's deed of kindness, but he had done all that was in his power to save the boy's life.

Duhamel has shown in a vivid way that acts of kindness are the result of love for mankind. Ridicule, distrust, and ungratefulness are to be expected but should be an incentive rather than an obstacle for further deeds of kindness.

CHAPTER V

DUHAMEL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

Duhamel expressed his attitude toward material possessions through the character of Joseph Pasquier, the eldest child in the Pasquier family. Joseph believed that the acquisition of wealth would result in his personal happiness. Laurent Pasquier, a physician and Joseph's younger brother, expressed a contrary view when he said:[1]

> Joseph accumule et conserve. C'est une des fonctions humaines. Les vrais hommes d'argent sont tourmentés, à leurs manières, par le goût de l'éternel.

Joseph had the idea that the wealth of the world belonged to those who were bold enough to proclaim themselves to be the owners of it. His passion for money caused him to have a cynical attitude toward all else in life. He declared that he would have the wisdom to save money. Joseph stated:[2]

> Gagner de l'argent, ce n'est rien. Le tout est de conserver l'argent. Personne jamais n'y réussit. Eh bien, je serai le seul. Moi, je garderai l'argent.

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[1]Georges Duhamel, Le Jardin des bêtes sauvages (Paris: Mercure de France, 1933). References are from Le Livre de Poche edition, complete text, 1964, p. 188.

[2]Georges Duhamel, La Nuit de la Saint-Jean (Paris: Mercure de France, 1935). References are from Le Livre de Poche edition, complete text, 1964, p. 161.

Joseph was always boastful about the things he himself had done or would do.

He was wealthy and owned a country estate which he called La Pâquellerie, a name suggested by Justin Weill, Laurent's Jewish friend. Duhamel characterized Joseph Pasquier as one who was given to gluttony. He explained:[3]

> Il (Joseph) buvait et mangeait avec ardeur, non sans, de temps à autre, lâcher un soupir énorme et prendre pour une minute son visage d'enterrement. Il maniait sa fourchette avec une sorte de lyrisme.

He gorged himself with food in the same inhuman manner as he gathered in the possessions of others, including what belonged to his own brothers and sisters. Laurent observed Joseph's actions:

> Joseph dit au dernier déjeuner de famille: "La finance, voilà ce que c'est. Une gorgée de rhum, ce n'est pas grand'chose, mais avalée au bon moment, ça peut vous sauver un bonhomme." La gorgée de rhum, c'est nous les imbéciles, qui l'avons cordialement versée (Les Maîtres, p. 119).

Blaise Delmuter, Joseph's secretary, has given one of the most vivid descriptions of Joseph's character. Blaise wrote in a letter to Joseph, the day he decided to discontinue his work:[4]

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[3]Georges Duhamel, Les Maîtres (Paris: Mercure de France, 1955), p. 49.

[4]Georges Duhamel, La Passion de Joseph Pasquier (Montréal: Editions de l'Arbre, 1940), p. 246.

> J'ai remarqué, Monsieur le Président, que vous aimez à jouer les ogres, à jouer les bêtes sauvages, toutes les fois, bien entendu, que vous ne pleurnichez pas, car il y a chez vous un mélange de brutalité et de pleurnicherie que je regrette de ne pouvoir étudier plus longtemps.

Joseph established his reputation as a man of prey. In the last volume of the Pasquier cycle he was compared to an attacking animal.

Joseph would frequently spend a weekend at Montredon, where he owned a country estate. One day, while walking through his domain, he met the keeper of the vegetable garden, who said to Joseph:

> Monsieur, quand une citrouille cesse de grossir seulement pendant une minute, eh bien! c'est qu'elle est fichue, c'est qu'elle est bonne à pourrir; et ça se devine tout de suite (La Passion de Joseph Pasquier, pp. 166-67).

Joseph then said to himself:

> Une fortune, c'est comme une citrouille. Si elle cesse de croître seulement une minute, c'est qu'elle est malade et qu'elle va bientôt crever (La Passion de Joseph Pasquier, p. 167).

Joseph was involved in complicated business affairs at that time and thought that he could not afford to cease growing in wealth.

In the war between Bulgaria and Turkey, Joseph sold arms to both sides.[5] He also invested heavily in

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[5]Georges Duhamel, Cécile parmi nous (Paris: Mercure de France, 1957), pp. 171-85.

Mexican oil wells. One well was not producing and another caught fire, but the cost of operations continued to increase. Disturbed, Joseph decided to sell his wells to an English financier, and at a great loss. The evening of the sale he was informed by telegram that this had been the day of maximum oil output of his wells.

Laurent, who had a contempt for money and the dishonest manner in which Joseph was handling his financial affairs, thought it best not to have too much in common with his brother. One day, when Joseph stopped for some business, he told Laurent:

> . . . Les gens de ton espèce . . . s'imaginent que la vie des gens comme moi est toute rose. Eh bien, ils ne savent pas ce que c'est . . . l'argent! Tu dis l'argent! Mais moi, je suis un saint de l'argent, un martyr de l'argent. Ne ris pas. Tu aurais le courage de rire! Mais tu ne comprends donc pas que je n'ai jamais de bon temps, jamais de repos et que je finirai par en crever! (La Passion de Joseph Pasquier, pp. 129-30)

Joseph had a fine family, but seemingly money had such a grip on him that he neglected his wife and three children. Hélène, his wife, was very lonely because Joseph had no time for her. His business affairs permitted him to eat with the family only on rare occasions. One day, opera tickets were lying on his desk, so he took them to Hélène, asking her if she would go to the opera with the children. Jean-Pierre, the only child at home, had to study. Hélène said: "j'irai avec des amis" (La Passion de Joseph

Pasquier, p. 105). Joseph excused himself because he had three dinner invitations and would be able to attend only one.

Duhamel continually put elements from his own life into his novels. He knew many people who appeared to have renounced all human ideals and to have turned toward materialism. The desire for material possessions had been portrayed in the life of Joseph Pasquier. Duhamel foresaw the downfall of such a strained life. Overly involved business dealings had an effect on Joseph's mentality. Money was his god; but, if he could not manage his business affairs, then all his material possessions were at stake. He still had revenue, but how could this continue to accumulate? Friends forsook him. He sent Hélène away; his daughter chose to go with the mother; Jean-Pierre locked himself in his bedroom and refused to open the door to his father. At his brother's invitation, Laurent came to the house. Joseph was in an angry mood and emotionally so upset that Laurent's efforts to talk to him were futile. In his fury, Joseph broke into Jean-Pierre's room with an ax. Terrified, the boy jumped out of the third-story window. Joseph ran down the stairs, picked up the bleeding boy, and carried him back to his room. Jean-Pierre was unconscious. Joseph turned to Laurent and pleaded:

> Tu es médecin! Eh bien! fais ton devoir! Sauve-le ou je me tue. Sauve-le. C'est ton métier. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . . Sauve-le et je ferai quelque chose . . . Je ne sais pas ce que je ferai, mais je ferai quelque chose. J'étouffe! J'étouffe! Je vais crever (La Passion de Joseph Pasquier, pp. 267-68).

Joseph's material possessions brought him sorrow rather than happiness. They caused strife in the family circle because love for mankind was lacking and love of money was dominating. The pendulum had swung to one side; the forces of materialism and kindness did not counterbalance.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Duhamel was a man who was keenly aware of the needs of suffering humanity. Strife, hatred, greediness, and the trend toward materialism were present everywhere; but love, kindness, and friendship were lacking. It seemed that man had put his faith in the test tube and in the assembly line to solve the problems of mankind.

Malcolm Cowley says that Duhamel wrote as if with a scalpel exposing and dissecting the human brain. He observed every quiver and every convolution and recorded its results in a style remarkable for its clarity and vigor. This human brain which he laid bare was that of the twentieth-century individual and his psychological problems.[1]

Duhamel himself came from the common people and as such never severed his relationship with les petites gens. With a strong determination he managed to take his place in society. He is well known in France as a surgeon in the First World War and as a distinguished writer of the twentieth century. His experiences in the First World War served as subjects for his literary works.

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[1]Malcolm Cowley, "Duhamel M.D.," The Bookman, LVII (April, 1923), p. 160.

Through the characters of Louis Salavin, Laurent Pasquier, and Joseph Pasquier, Duhamel expressed to the world his attitude toward friendship, toward kindness, and toward material possessions. In a unique and beautiful way he permitted these characters to act out his beliefs, never leaving the impression that they were reciting his philosophy. His success in this area came from his penetrating and sympathetic observation of man.

Duhamel found it extremely difficult to see how improvement of the economic status could bring greater happiness. To him, materialism meant strife and was not synonymous with happiness. Friendship was a subject of which Duhamel spoke nobly and, in his thinking, it was indispensable to man. He had many friends; to him they were his chief consolation. According to Duhamel's philosophy, friendship was based on love and respect. Deeply concerned for les petites gens because of injustices and prejudices toward them, Duhamel made a plea to employ the virtue of kindness, not considering race or creed. To show kindness meant that love preceded and motivated the deed.

As an agnostic, Duhamel did not make allowance for God but believed in a dedicated fraternal love which was to reach out to the weakest, most despised, and least interesting of human beings, making no allowance for social

and racial prejudices. His call to man was to join him to win the world by le règne du coeur.

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APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF NOVELS READ

Vie et Aventure de Salavin

"Confession de minuit" (1921)*

Vie et Aventure de Salavin is composed of five volumes. These volumes deal with the mental processes of Louis Salavin, who was a perplexed and bewildered individual.

The first book in the series is Confession de minuit. As the title indicates, the story took place in a bar, at midnight. Louis Salavin was the narrator who confessed his past to a stranger.

Salavin was working as a secretary for the Socque et Sureau firm. He was sent to Mr. Sureau with some information, and there he was tempted by an irrational impulse to touch the ear lobe of his foreman. Mr. Sureau became angry, had Salavin searched for weapons, and dismissed him from work. Salavin described his return home and the humble apartment where he lived with his mother. His mother worked hard as a seamstress. This bothered him, but his lack of a job gave him the liberty he desired. He made life miserable for his mother, lost all self-respect, and gave up all effort to find work.

Marguerite, a seamstress, who lived in the same apartment house as the Salavins, spent most of the day sewing with Salavin's mother. Salavin suddenly realized that he loved Marguerite and remarked: "J'étais sauvé, j'étais capable d'amour."

Octave Lanoue, a friend in whom Salavin confided, was deeply interested in him. Lanoue secured for his friend a copyist job which Salavin could do at his own house. One day, when Lanoue was not yet home from work, Salavin had a fleeting desire to seduce his friend's wife. Salavin took the thought for the deed, and ceased seeing Lanoue. Salavin wandered aimlessly around Paris

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*The summaries are given in chronological order according to the date written.

for several days; the guilt was too great to take home. Thus the story ends. Salavin had no work, was not married, and was deeply oppressed.

"Deux Hommes" (1924)

Deux Hommes is the story of an unsuccessful friendship and shows us a Salavin who was unable to be a friend. Between the first and second volume Salavin was married to Marguerite. He also had a secretarial position and ate his lunch in a down-town restaurant. Edouard Loisel was married and a successful chemist. Edouard had been looking for a friend so, when he noticed Salavin coming to the same restaurant at noon, he decided to sit across the table from him and befriend Salavin.

Edouard was a generous and a successful man. He understood friendship to mean the sharing of his salary with his friend, particularly because Salavin was poor. Inwardly, Salavin resented the fact that Edouard was trying to be his benefactor. This made Salavin feel even less important, and he felt deprived of his liberty. However, Salavin did not have the courage to tell his friend how he felt about the problem, until one day Edouard asked him to do so. Salavin did not spare words in revealing to Edouard the cause of his moodiness. The friendship came to an end.

This unsuccessful friendship revealed some of the essential problems in human relations of which Edouard Loisel and Louis Salavin are representative.

"Le Journal de Salavin" (1927)

Salavin decided to become a lay saint, although he had no religious faith. This new philosophy was based on lending a helping hand. He discovered very quickly that, when he tried to help people, they were ungrateful and sometimes distrusted him.

At this time he was working for the Compagnie Industrielle des Laits Pasteurisés et Oxygénés. Jibé, a sneak thief, and Arbelot, an indecent fellow, worked in the same office with Salavin. After tolerating Arbelot for a time, he silenced him by throwing an inkwell at

him. Where was Salavin's saintliness? By being kind to Jibé, Salavin intended to reform the young man, but his efforts failed.

When Salavin learned that the company for which he was working was not oxygenizing their products, he reported it to the police. The next day the manager, a good friend of the police, showed Salavin his own letter but did not dismiss him from work. The manager took Salavin as his private secretary so he could watch him closely.

Salavin decided to rent a room near his place of work. This was a disappointment to his wife and mother. In his desire for sainthood he sought help from a Protestant pastor and from a priest but to no avail. He gave his only overcoat to the erring Jibé and wandered around in the snow, but all he attempted seemed to fail. He contracted pneumonia and without his knowledge was taken to a charity hospital. After his dismissal from the hospital he went to live with his wife and mother.

"Club des Lyonnais" (1929)

Salavin lived at home and gave up sainthood. Max Aufrère, a former associate of Salavin, introduced his friend to a group of quite radical men who called themselves the Club des Lyonnais. These men were from various walks of life and had found a common meeting place with Legrain, an old cobbler, on Lyonnais street. Legrain thought that, by becoming a revolutionist, he was working for a better world. This group included a number of communists. Salavin was attracted by the communists because they had strong convictions. Aufrère attempted to persuade Salavin not to become a Communist, but his friend was unsuccessful.

The Communists needed to have a check cashed and wanted someone who was opposed to the party to cash the check. Finally, the Communists imposed upon Aufrère to cash the check. At first he refused but later he decided to do so. The police then closed in upon the group and arrested all who had frequented the place. Their homes, including Salavin's, were searched for any secret communistic information. Salavin's mother was so shocked that she had a fatal heart attack. Marguerite was bewildered and in despair. When the police sought for information, they did not find any evidence in Salavin's house.

Salavin was still determined to change his soul. He understood himself better and recognized that he was not responsible for all his wayward thoughts.

"Tel qu'en lui-même" (1932)

In the fifth volume, Salavin decided to leave Paris and go to Tunis. In order to conceal his identity he adopted the name of Simon Chavegrand and dyed his hair. On his way to Marseilles he became acquainted with the Dargoult family, who were his train companions. In Marseilles, the Dargoults' daughter, Christine, was walking on the tracks; Salavin saw the train coming so he threw himself on the tracks to save Christine. The Dargoults offered him a reward but he refused.

In Tunis, Salavin was manager of a phonograph shop. He took an Arab boy, Moktar, as his shop assistant and house boy. Salavin soon learned that the Arabs were accustomed to stealing, but he thought he could reform Moktar. Salavin devoted his spare time to working at the Arab hospital, helping Dr. Rude and cheering the patients. When the call came for volunteers to be exposed to typhus in order to try out a new vaccine, Salavin volunteered. During his absence the phonograph shop was inspected by a representative from France, who threatened to close the shop if Salavin did not tend to his business.

Moktar became involved in criminal activities which resulted in the murder of a second-hand dealer. Salavin pleaded with Moktar to surrender, but he wounded his master in the knee. Infection set in, and Dargoult remained a faithful friend, arranging for Salavin to receive the best of care. While Salavin was unconscious, Dargoult looked for the letter Salavin said he had written to him. The letter revealed Salavin's real identity and that he had a wife in Paris. When Marguerite arrived, he asked to return to Paris as soon as the doctor would give his consent. Arrangements for this voyage were made by Dargoult. When the ship arrived at Marseilles, Salavin was in misery. He was rushed to the hospital and the only hope the surgeons gave him was to amputate his leg. After he had recovered sufficiently, he was taken to Paris to his old home. Once there, Salavin seemed to recognize that his greatest failure was to accept himself. He died shortly thereafter.

Chronique des Pasquier

"Le Notaire du Havre" (1933)

Duhamel introduced the Pasquier family in Le Notaire du Havre. The story of this lower-middle-class family was essentially the story of one man, Laurent Pasquier. Like Salavin, he wished to purify and to redeem himself. Unlike Salavin, Laurent Pasquier was well adapted to social life.

The members of the Pasquier family included Raymond Pasquier, the father; Lucie-Elénore Delahaie Pasquier, the mother; Joseph, Ferdinand, Cécile, and Laurent, the children. In a later volume Suzanne, a younger child, is mentioned.

The Pasquier family struggled for its existence and sought a way for self-improvement. The father, a very poor economist, was in medical school which he had started late in life. A letter came from a lawyer in Le Havre, from which the volume derives its title, announcing that Madame Pasquier was to receive a small inheritance from two half-sisters in Peru. Upon the hope of receiving this money Raymond Pasquier bought household furnishings and clothing for the children. Rightfully, this money belonged to Madame Pasquier and the children. The conversation in the Pasquier family centered around the inheritance and often resulted in quarrels. Laurent, a growing boy, developed a contempt for money and often wondered what in essence was a family.

Laurent's friend Désiré, an unwanted child who was often beaten, committed suicide in the Wasselin living-room when he heard that his father was in prison for embezzlement. This tragedy left a deep impression on Laurent.

"Le Jardin des bêtes sauvages" (1934)

These were the animals in the Jardin des Plantes, the location of the Paris zoo near which the Pasquier family lived at this time. Laurent, who was about fourteen years old, tried to combat the misconduct of his father, who usually went to public gatherings with his mistress.

Madame Pasquier accepted this without complaint because Raymond Pasquier had never mistreated her.

Laurent became the friend of Justin Weill, a Jewish schoolmate. Both of the boys had high ideals, and thus had much in common as they faced the problems of growing up. Justin visited the Pasquier home and met Cécile, Laurent's sister, who played the piano very well. In this same volume, Joseph began to show his passion for money.

"Vue de la terre promise" (1934)

The father, Raymond Pasquier, had received his diploma from medical school. The family had moved to Créteil where the father intended to practice and to earn much money, which was the terre promise.

Joseph was a successful business man, Cécile a concert pianist, and Ferdinand an accountant. Laurent was studying medicine at the University of Paris. Recorded in this volume was the incident of the destruction of a five-hundred franc note by Laurent in the presence of his brother Joseph. Laurent, more disturbed than ever because of his father's immoral life and the family's preoccupation with money matters, decided to move to Paris. He thought that the distance from family quarrels would help him to love them more and in Paris he was near the University where he was studying. Laurent and Justin's friendship became more intimate. They shared their religious viewpoints and the problems which confronted them.

"La Nuit de la Saint Jean" (1935)

The greater part of the story deals with the events which took place on the eve of Saint John's Day. Joseph, now a proud and wealthy man, owned a country estate, named La Pâquellerie. He was married and had two children. He invited for an overnight visit the Pasquier family; an artist, Delcambre; Laurent's science professor, Censier; and Justin Weill. Laurent's friend, Laure Desgroux, was also there.

Cécile offered to marry Justin, but his desire for purity made him refuse her. Laurent tried to woo Laure, but, to his dismay, he learned that Censier loved her too. Neither Censier nor Laurent married her.

"Le Désert de Bièvres" (1937)

The Pasquier family was not in the foreground in this volume except for a few incidents of the father's minor encounter with the police. Joseph engaged in shady business transactions.

This volume was the story of the founding and failure of a suburban phalanstery. Justin Weill, Laurent Pasquier, and five other comrades decided to live as writers and philosophers. For a livelihood, they did some artistic printing on a hand press. Too many differences among these men and a lack of funds caused one after the other to return to Paris. Finally, when only Laurent and Justin were left, they too decided to leave the phalanstery. Justin had carried the responsibility and was very disappointed that he had not been able to keep the group together.

"Les Maîtres" (1937)

In this volume, Laurent wrote letters to Justin about his work in the laboratory. Two professors whom he especially liked were Nicolas Rohner and Oliver Chalgrin. Rohner was prejudiced and rationalistic. He was hasty in his decisions, thinking science had the answer for everything. Chalgrin was a noble and flexible character, who admitted that science might not have the answer to all human problems.

Justin had left Paris after his experience at the phalanstery and was working in a factory in Nantes. Because of this experience he became bitter and, at times, wilfully misunderstood Laurent's letters.

As Laurent observed the enmity of his two revered teachers, he realized that even great men had some weakness and that even a weak man, like his father, had some greatness.

"Cécile parmi nous" (1938)

Laurent here ceased to be the narrator of family affairs. Duhamel used a direct and objective approach.

Cécile married an intellectual man, Richard Fauvet, whom she did not love. He was cold and indifferent but blamed Cécile, saying that she was jealous. They had a son Alexandre. When she saw that Richard was unfaithful to her, she became so distressed that the child's illness was detected too late. When the boy died, she severed her relationship with Richard and went to live in a convent. Cécile turned to God and put her faith in Him.

In the same volume, Joseph sold arms to both Turkey and Bulgaria in a war between these two countries. Justin Weill had overcome his bitterness and showed his friendship with Laurent.

"Le Combat contre les ombres" (1939)

This was the last volume published before the Second World War. The entire story was written in the third person with Laurent in the center. He was then a laboratory professor of the National Institute of Biology. The director gave him an incompetent laboratory assistant whom he dismissed. The director reinstated the assistant, but Laurent did not permit him to work because he would not take orders.

Consulting some of his friends in the city, he decided to publish an article on the subject that scientists should have freedom to secure competent employees. He also corresponded with Justin but, in this particular instance, Laurent was too impatient to wait for Justin's answer. Article followed article. Journalists changed his articles, and many of his friends and colleagues misinterpreted his ideas. In his distress, he called for Justin to come. Justin fully supported Laurent after he had read the original copies.

Laurent was dismissed from work but was unconcerned because the First World War was starting, so he enlisted in the army. Justin came to tell Laurent good-bye. This was the last time the two friends saw each other

because Justin was killed in the war. They had remained true in their friendship.

"Suzanne et les jeunes hommes" (1941)

This volume was published in Canada in 1941. In this story the First World War had ended. Laurent, who had married and had one child, was working in a laboratory. Cécile, a concert pianist of world renown, was asked to give concerts in many different countries. Joseph was deep in money affairs.

Suzanne Pasquier was the central figure in this volume. She had become an actress. Suzanne attached herself to Eric Vidame, the director of a small art theatre. When she discovered that some of the leading roles were to be played by someone else, Suzanne left the theatre.

Philippe, the eldest member of the Baudoin family, had been courting Suzanne and invited her to come to live with them. The Baudoins had three boys and five girls. The father had lost his eyesight in the First World War. The Baudoin family was talented but what impressed Suzanne most was the harmony and affection that existed in the family. She enjoyed the walks, parties, and picnics. All three boys thought she was charming.

After two happy months, one of the Vidame troupe came to ask Suzanne again to consider the theatre. Within forty-eight hours she was on her way to South America. She left the three Baudoin boys heartbroken and in despair. Suzanne feared that she herself had missed life and the words, "Suzanne a perdu sa vie," kept going through her mind.

"La Passion de Joseph Pasquier" (1944)

This final volume was also published abroad in 1944. Unlike Cécile, Laurent, and Suzanne, Joseph was egotistical, brutal, and cynical. He used every means possible to accumulate wealth so that his fortune became colossal. Joseph had wealth, success, and a mistress but not happiness. He invested heavily in Mexican oil

wells. Because of the increasing expense in the oil wells, Joseph sold them to an English financier at a great loss. This was the beginning of reverses for Joseph.

Joseph neglected his family and chose material possessions instead. His wife and daughter left, and the youngest son jumped from a third-story window. Laurent, a doctor, was summoned to save this son who was badly injured. Some of Joseph's last words were: "Je vais crever." This volume in particular stresses Duhamel's lack of interest in material possessions.