

**THE CHILDREN OF
ALSACE
(LES OBERLÉS)**

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The children of Alsace (Les Oberlés) by René Bazin

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RENÉ BAZIN

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(*LES OBERLÉS*)

BY

RENÉ BAZIN

AUTHOR OF "THE NUN," "REDEMPTION," ETC.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

DR. ANGELO S. RAPPOPORT

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PREFACE

RENÉ BAZIN is already known to the English public as a writer of exquisite charm and wonderful sensibility. "The Nun," "Redemption," and "This My Son" have revealed his powers to appreciative readers. Bazin is not only an original writer, a charming story-teller, but also a deep thinker, a clear delineator of human character and life, a wonderful landscape-painter, and a bold realist. For it is real life, humble, poignant, palpitating, which we meet in his stories. Life, full of misery and suffering, but also of pity and charity, of self-sacrifice and heroic traits. Bazin is a passionate admirer of Nature, and this admiration and love manifest themselves in his preference for pastoral and rural scenes, and his description of nature and peasant life.

Nature and climate, M. Bazin thinks, exercise a paramount influence upon the soul, and produce deep and permanent impressions.

But in none of his books has he laid so much stress upon this mysterious influence of a country upon the soul of its inhabitants as in "Les Oberlés," which is now placed before English readers under the title of "The Children of Alsace." For it is the country of Alsace, with her woes and sorrows and sufferings,

her aspirations and hopes and dreams, which speaks to us through the mouth of Jean Oberlé, the hero, who mysteriously feels the influence of soil upon his soul, and is drawn to France, since Alsace is sighing under the German yoke, and her weeping soul has fled to France, there to wait the day of delivery and freedom!

"Les Oberlés," or "The Children of Alsace," possesses all the elements necessary for a real drama, for a great tragedy, namely, the clash of conflicting passions, emotions, and duties. And these conflicting passions arise where one has a right to expect peace and goodwill. The author introduces us to a divided family, and we see the husband rise against his wife, the son against his father, and the brother against the sister. Their different modes of thinking and of feeling, their ambitions and dreams, turn these beings, united by the ties of blood, into enemies. But "Les Oberlés" is not only a family drama, tragic, irreparable, but also depicts the love of the native soil, a love almost physical, in conflict with the love for the Greater Fatherland. It also shows the clash of two civilisations, the Latin and the Teuton, which for forty years have now been waging war on the soil of conquered Alsace.

All these elements make "Les Oberlés" a really tragic novel—a novel full of dramatic incidents, of poignant scenes, but also full of life and love.

A. S. RAPPOPORT.

LONDON,
November 1911.

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