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Collected Edition

EUGÉNIE GRANDDET

URSULE MIROUËT

IN TWO VOLUMES.

"Come, Nanon, take as much as you like."
HENRI (*Eugénie Grandet*, page 22)

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Library Edition

EUGÉNIE GRANDET

URSULE MIRQUËT

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

With Introductions by

GEORGE SAINTSBURY



THE THOMPSON PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(Translators, ELLEN MARRIAGE AND CLARA BELL)

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EUGÉNIE GRANDET

AND OTHER STORIES

INTRODUCTION

WITH *Eugénie Grandet* as with one or two, but only one or two, others of Balzac's works, we come to a case of *Quis vituperavit?* Here, and perhaps here only, with *Le Médecin de Campagne* and *Le Père Goriot*, though there may be carpers and depreciators, there are no open deniers of the merit of the work. The pathos of *Eugénie*, the mastery of *Grandet*, the success of the minor characters, especially *Nanon*, are universally recognized. The importance of the work has sometimes been slightly questioned even by those who admit its beauty: but this questioning can only support itself on the unavowed but frequently present conviction or suspicion that a "good" or "goody" book must be a weak one. As a matter of fact, no book can be, or can be asked to be, better than perfect on its own scheme, and with its own conditions. And on its own scheme and with its own conditions *Eugénie Grandet* is very nearly perfect.

On the character of the heroine will turn the final decision whether, as has been said by some (I believe I might be charged with having said it myself), Balzac's virtuous characters are always more theatrical than real. The decision must take in the *Benassis* of *Le Médecin de Campagne*, but with him it will have less difficulty; for *Benassis*, despite the beauty and pathos of his confession, is a little "a person of the boards" in his unfailingly providential character and his complete devotion to others. Must *Eugénie*, his feminine companion in goodness, be put on these boards likewise?

I admit that of late years, and more particularly since the undertaking of this present task made necessary to me a more

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