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"My name is Ida, sir."

(*The Thirteen*, page 74)

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Library Edition

THE THIRTEEN
FATHER GORIOT
AND OTHER STORIES

BY
HONORÉ DE BALZAC
With Introductions by
GEORGE SAINTSBURY



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THE THIRTEEN

INTRODUCTION

THE *Histoire des Treize* consists—or rather is built up—of three stories: *Ferragus* or the *Rue Soly*, *La Duchesse de Langeais* or *Ne touchez-pas à la hache*, and *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or*.

To tell the truth, there is more power than taste throughout the *Histoire des Treize*, and perhaps not very much less unreality than power. Balzac is very much better than Eugène Sue, though Eugène Sue also is better than it is the fashion to think him just now. But he is here, to a certain extent, competing with Sue on the latter's own ground. The notion of the "Dévorants"—of a secret society of men devoted to each other's interests, entirely free from any moral or legal scruple, possessed of considerable means in wealth, ability, and position, all working together, by fair means or foul, for good ends or bad—is, no doubt, rather seducing to the imagination at all times; and it so happened that it was particularly seducing to the imagination of that time. And its example has been powerful since; it gave us Mr. Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* only, as it were, the other day.

But there is something a little schoolboyish in it; and I do not know that Balzac has succeeded entirely in eliminating this something. The pathos of the death, under persecution, of the innocent Clémence does not entirely make up for the unreasonableness of the whole situation. Nobody can say that the abominable misconduct of Maulincour—who

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