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Chicago Edition

THE CHOUANS

THE CONDREVILLE MYSTERY  
AND OTHER STORIES

"Stay where you are."

*(The Chouans, page 94)*

HONORE DE BALZAC

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

GEORGE SAINTON



THE THOMSON PUBLISHING COMPANY  
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Library Edition

THE CHOUANS  
THE GONDREVILLE MYSTERY  
AND OTHER STORIES

BY  
HONORÉ DE BALZAC  
With Introductions by  
GEORGE SAINTSBURY



THE THOMPSON PUBLISHING COMPANY  
SAINT LOUIS AND PHILADELPHIA

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THE CHOUANS  
AND  
A PASSION IN THE DESERT





## INTRODUCTION

WHEN, many years after its original publication, Balzac reprinted *Les Chouans* as a part of the *Comédie Humaine*, he spoke of it in the dedication to his old friend M. Théodore Dablin as "perhaps better than its reputation." He probably referred to the long time which had passed without a fresh demand for it; for, as has been pointed out in the General Introduction to this Series of translations, it first made his fame, and with it he first emerged from the purgatory of anonymous hack-writing. It would therefore have argued a little ingratitude in him had he shown himself dissatisfied with the original reception. The book, however, has, it may be allowed, never ranked among the special favorites of Balzacians; and though it was considerably altered and improved from its first form, it has certain defects which are not likely to escape any reader. In it Balzac was still trying the adventure-novel, the novel of incident; and though he here substitutes a nobler model—Scott, for whom he always had a reverence as intelligent as it was generous—for the Radcliffian or Lewisian ideals of his nonage, he was still not quite at home. Some direct personal knowledge or experience of the matters he wrote about was always more or less necessary to him; and the enthusiasm with which he afterwards acknowledged, in a letter to Beyle, the presence of such knowledge in that writer's military passages, confesses his own sense of inferiority.

It is not, however, in the actual fighting scenes, though

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