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Caroline was giving the roots of the honeysuckle
a glass of water.

(*The Second Home*, page 322)

Library Edition

A MARRIAGE SETTLEMENT

MODESTE MIGNON

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

With Introductions by

GEORGE SAINTSBURY



THE THOMPSON PUBLISHING COMPANY
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**A MARRIAGE SETTLEMENT
AND OTHER STORIES**

INTRODUCTION

IF Balzac had been acquainted with the works of Chaucer (which would have been extremely surprising) he might have called *Le Contrat de Mariage* "A Legend of Bad Women." He has not been exactly sparing of studies in that particular kind; but he has surpassed himself here. Mme. de Maufrigneuse redeems herself by her character, however imperfectly supported, of *grande dame*, Béatrix de Rochefide by a certain naturalness and weakness, Flore Brazier by circumstances and education, others by other things. But Madame Evangelista and her daughter Natalie may be said to be bad all through—thoroughly poisonous persons who, much more than the actual Milady of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (there was some charm in her), deserved to be taken and "justified" by lynch law. If the "Thirteen" (who were rather interested in the matter) had descended upon both in the fashion of d'Artagnan and his friends, I do not know that any one would have had much right to complain. How far the picture is exaggerated must be a question to be decided partly by individual experience, partly by other arguments. Although I am not always disposed to defend Balzac from the charge of exaggeration, I think he is fairly free from it here.

Madame Evangelista, besides the usual womanly desire to make a figure in the capital, has (not to excuse, but to explain her) the equally natural tendency to regard everybody outside her own family as an at least possible enemy to be

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