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BETTINE

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"On Sunday I will preach a sermon about her."
(Beatrix, page 46)

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Library Edition

BÉATRIX

THE JEALOUSIES OF A COUNTRY TOWN AND THE COMMISSION IN LUNACY

BY
HONORÉ DE BALZAC
With Introductions by
GEORGE SAINTSBURY



THE THOMPSON PUBLISHING COMPANY SAINT LOUIS AND PHILADELPHIA

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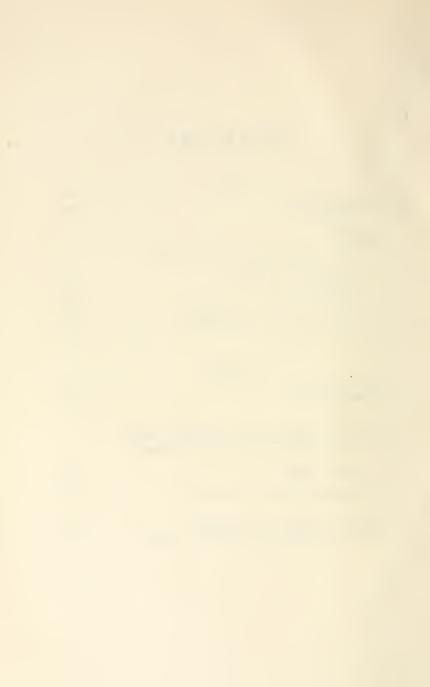
John D. Avil

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CONTENTS

PART I

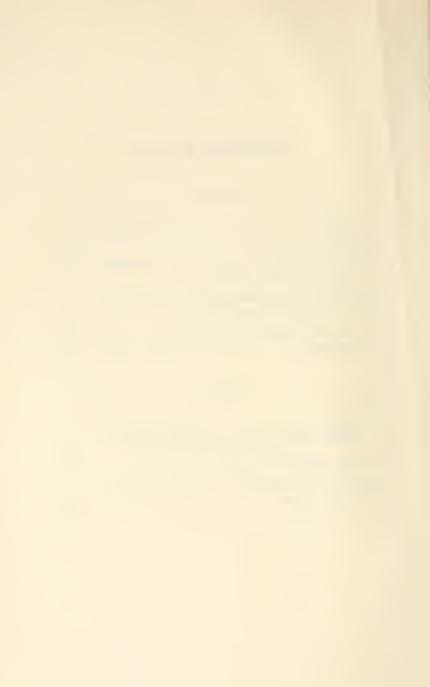
INT	ROL	UCTI	ON			-			_	PAGE
$B \not \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! \! $	TR1	<i>X</i> :								
			(Bèatr	ix; T	ranslato	r, James	WARING)		
	I.	DRAM	ATIS I	PERSO	ONÆ	-	-	-	-	I
	II.	THE D	RAMA	l	-	6-	-	•	-	123
	III.	RETRO)SPE C	TIVE	ADUL	TERY	•	os.	-	226
	٠				PART	r II				
INT	ROD	UCTIO	ON	-	-	-	-	•	-	vii
THE	JE					OUNTK or, Ellen				
	THE	OLD M	AID	-	-	-	-	-	-	I
	THE	COLLE	CT101	V OF	ANTIQ	UITIES	-	-	-	147
THE	CO	MMIS.				ACY	ARA BRI	-	_	303



ILLUSTRATIONS

PART I

"ON	SUND	AY I	WILL	PREAC	H A	SER	MON	I ABO	OUT	HER	"	
((p. 46)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		Front	ispiece
												PAGE
				D SIGI						ICIT	Έ	
;	SAT S	ILEN'	r FOR	A MI	NUTE	Ç	-	-	-	-	-	95
** OP	EN V	OUR	EVES.	FORG	HYE	ME	, ,,	SAID	CAL	XST	Ĕ.	
			,	GETHI						_	, 	191
		,										
" LE	"LEAVE ME, DAUGHTER," SHE SAID, GOING TO HER											
	PRIE-1	DIEU	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	278
				1	PAR	Т	11					
				,	AI		11					
TTTO I	r 10/11/27	TED :	D 4 /f/T E/1	NTLY			TO	TATI	ee or	7 4YE	TC ⁴	
				LIFE								8
	41114	12 000	11,5 01	. 1/11/1	, 114	.1	0011	11(1	10,11	1		
AT (ONCE	HE T	URNE	D TO	LOOK	AT	AT	HANA	ASE	-	-	76
				SIEUR								
	HER :	DISOR	RDER	-	-	-	-		-	-	6.1	242



BÉATRIX



INTRODUCTION

Béatrix was built up in the odd fashion in which Balzac sometimes did build up his novels, and which may be thought to account for an occasional lack of unity and grasp in them. The original book, written in 1838, and published with the rather flowery dedication "to Sarah" at the end of that year, stopped at the marriage of Calyste and Sabine. The last part, separately entitled Un Adultère Rétrospectif, was not added till six years later. It cannot be said to be either very shocking or very unnatural that the young husband should exemplify the truth of that uncomfortable proverb, Qui a bu boira; and it is perhaps rather more surprising that Balzac should have allowed him to be "refished" (as the French say) in a finally satisfactory condition by his lawful spouse.

Still, I do not think the addition can be considered on the whole an improvement to the book, of which it is at the best rather an appendix than an integral part. The conception of Béatrix herself seems to have changed somewhat, and that not as the conception of her immortal namesake in Esmond and The Virginians changes, merely to suit the irreparable outrage of years. The end has unsavory details, which have not, as the repetition of them in more tragic form a little later in La Cousine Bette has, the justification of a really tragic retribution; and a man must have a great deal of disinterested good nature about him to feel any satisfaction, or indeed to take much interest, in the restoration of the domestic happi-

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