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"As you please, father," the girl answered  
lowering her eyes.

(*The Country Parson*, page 13)



MISS MARY ANN WELLS, 1870  
Age 20 years  
L. W. WELLS, BOSTON, MASS.



Library Edition

THE COUNTRY PARSON  
AND ALBERT SAVARUS  
THE PEASANTRY

BY  
HONORÉ DE BALZAC  
With Introductions by  
GEORGE SAINTSBURY



THE THOMPSON PUBLISHING COMPANY  
SAINT LOUIS AND PHILADELPHIA

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(Translator, ELLEN MARRIAGE)

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**THE COUNTRY PARSON**

**AND**

**ALBERT SAVARUS**





## INTRODUCTION

PERHAPS in no instance of Balzac's work is his singular fancy for pulling that work about more remarkably instanced and illustrated than in the case of *Le Curé de Village*. The double date, 1837-1845, which the author attached to it, in his usual conscientious manner, to indicate these revisions, has a greater signification than almost anywhere else. When the book, or rather its constituent parts, first appeared in the *Presse* for 1839, having been written the winter before, not only was it very different in detail, but the order of the parts was altogether dissimilar. Balzac here carried out his favorite plan—a plan followed by many other authors no doubt, but always, as it seems to me, of questionable wisdom—that of beginning in the middle and then “throwing back” with a long retrospective and explanatory digression.

In this version the story of Tascheron's crime and its punishment came first; and it was not till after the execution that the early history of Véronique (who gave her name to this part as to a *Suite du Curé de Village*) was introduced. This history ceased at the crisis of her life; and when it was taken up in a third part, called *Véronique au Tombeau*, only the present conclusion of the book, with her confession, was given. The long account of her sojourn at Montégnac, of her labors there, of the episode of Farrabesche, and so forth, did not appear till 1841, when the whole book, with the inversions and insertions just indicated, appeared in such a changed form, that even the indefatigable M. de Lovenjoul dismisses as “impossible” the idea of exhibiting a complete

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