

from the title and from Balzac's purposes when he began his story.

Yet with all its defects the "Curé de Village" holds by no means a low place in the "Comedy." As a provincial scene, the first division is worthy of the highest praise. What a touch do we find in the single sentence—"Old Mme. Sauviat knitted [while Véronique read] calculating that she was thus making back the cost of the oil." Another touch worthy of Balzac is given us in the exclamation of Sauviat—"Ha, old woman, people are admiring your daughter." Whether that daughter is thoroughly to be admired, either as a young girl ardent with sentiment—had she not read "Paul and Virginia"?—or as a married woman dominating the society of Limoges, or as philanthropic châtelaine, or as a somewhat theatrical penitent, must be left to the reader to determine. Some persons will perhaps conclude that the faithful old mother is really the more striking character of the two.

The division entitled "Tascheron," which describes the murder committed by this unfortunate young man, as well as that entitled "The Curé of Montégnaç," which describes the means used to reconcile Tascheron with the church and introduces good Abbé Bonnet, while belonging to the domain of sensational romance, are characterized by that realistic power that makes the mature work of Balzac in this *genre* almost unique. The interest of the town, of Véronique's circle, of the clergy of the diocese in the complicated trial is well described, as is also the obstinate contumacy of Tascheron, as well as his yielding to the old Curé. As for the mass said in the village church and the subsequent scene in the Tascheron cottage, they should delight all classes of readers, not Balzacians merely. The discussions carried on by the Bishop and his clergy are as good as if they had been written by George Eliot or Anthony Trollope, and remind us of the fact that from the days of his "Œuvres de Jeunesse"