

A DAUGHTER OF EVE

*To Madame la Comtesse de Bolognini,
née Vimercati.*

If you remember, dear lady, the pleasure your conversation gave to a certain traveler, making Paris live for him in Milan, you will not be surprised that he should lay one of his works at your feet, as a token of gratitude for so many delightful evenings spent in your society, nor that he should seek for it the shelter of a name which, in old times, was given to not a few of the tales by one of your early writers, beloved of the Milanese. You have an Eugénie, with more than the promise of beauty, whose speaking smile proclaims her to have inherited from you the most precious gifts a woman can possess, and whose childhood, it is certain, will be rich in all those joys which a harsh mother refused to the Eugénie of these pages. If Frenchmen are accused of being frivolous and inconstant, I, you see, am Italian in my faithfulness and attachment. How often, as I wrote the name of Eugénie, have my thoughts carried me back to the cool stuccoed drawing-room and little garden of the *Vicolo dei Capuccini*, which used to resound to the dear child's merry laughter, to our quarrels, and our stories. You have left the *Corso* for the *Tre Monasteri*, where I know nothing of your manner of life, and I am forced to picture you, no longer amongst the pretty things, which doubtless still surround you, but like one of the beautiful heads of Carlo Dolce, Raphaël, Titian, or Allori, which, in their remoteness, seem to us like abstractions.

If this book succeed in making its way across the Alps, it will tell you of the lively gratitude and respectful friendship of

Your humble servant,

DE BALZAC.