

the "Thirteen" and the secrecy of their movements are not exaggerated. Ferragus, of course, belongs to the same class of "superior" men as Argow and Vautrin, but he is dearer to the former than to the latter. On the other hand, what merely sensational novelist could have given us the pages on the streets of Paris, the description of Parisians caught in a shower, the sketch of the beggars of the great city, of its lorettes, and of its craze for building? Who else could have written so about the love of young men, marriages for love, women's "white lies," and the like, if not the great analyst, whose description of Mme. Jules' chamber recalls, by the way, the "Physiologie du Mariage," one of the earliest analytic studies?

Yes, even in this sensational story Balzac is still Balzac. He gives us the fine pages on the *Dies Irae* and on Père Lachaise to balance the romantic death of Mme. Jules and the rather absurd mystery and commotion attending her cremation. He gives us the admirably realistic figure of the Vidame de Pamiers (*cf.* the Chevalier de Valois) to balance that of Justine, which is plainly extravagant. It will be noted that the scene at the cemetery recalls "Le Cousin Pons," and the diatribe on official reports, "Les Employés," both later works. The parental affection of Ferragus suggests that of Père Goriot, and his last days in a way recall those of Colonel Chabert.*

In short, this novelette proves in many ways that Balzac's genius after 1830 could never long remain in the lower spheres of his art. And even as a sensational romance, "Ferragus" is notable enough. The evil consequences of a secret kept from one devoted soul by another have rarely been more strikingly exhibited, even if one sees no good

* The use made of the cipher causes one to wonder how far Poe was influenced by Balzac, who, as we have already seen, laid the foundations of the detective story. The alleged prudishness of Mme. de S'rizy makes us remember her far from discreet behavior in the third part of "*Splendeurs et Misères.*"