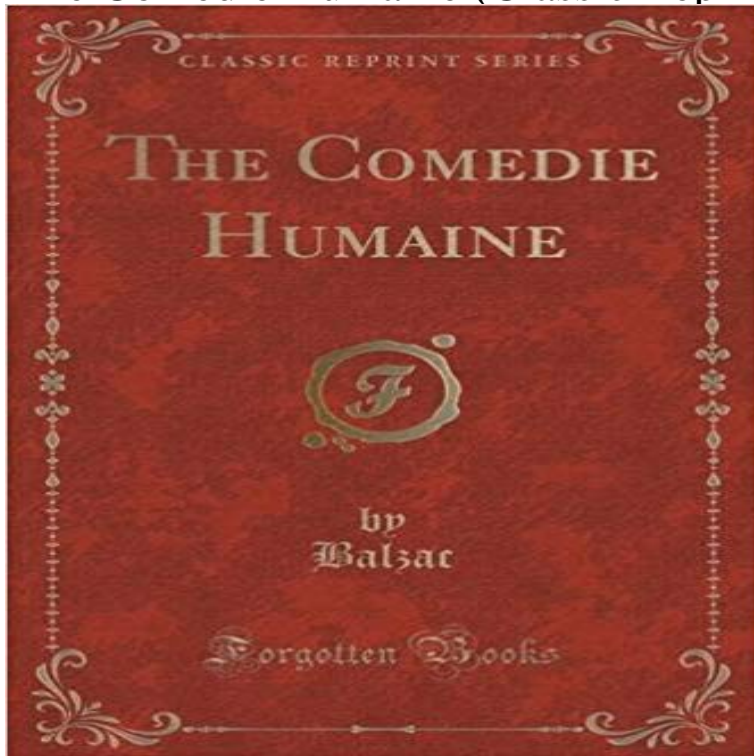


The Comedie Humaine (Classic Reprint)



Excerpt from The Comedie Humaine In its original form the Histoire des Treize consists - or, rather, it was originally built up - of three stories: Ferragus or the Rue Soly, La Duchesse de Langeais or Ne touchez-pas a hache, and La Fille aux Yeux dOr. The last, in some respects one of Balzacs most brilliant effects, does not appear here, as it contains things that are inconvenient. It may be noted that he had at one time the audacity to think of calling it La Femme aux Yeux Rouges. To tell the truth, there is more power than taste throughout the Histoire des Treize, and perhaps not very much less unreality than power. Balzac is very much better than Eugene Sue, though Eugene Sue also is better than it is the fashion to think him just now. But he is here, to a certain extent, competing with Sue on the latters own ground. The notion of the Devorants - of a secret society of men devoted to each others interests, entirely free from any moral or legal scruple, possessed of considerable means in wealth, ability, and position, all working together, by fair means or foul, for good ends or bad - is, no doubt, rather seducing to the imagination at all times; and it so happened that it was particularly seducing to the imagination of that time. And its example has been powerful since; it gave us Mr. Stevensons New Arabian Nights only, as it were, the other day. But there is something a little schoolboyish in it; and I do not know that Balzac has succeeded entirely in eliminating this something. The pathos of the death, under persecution, of the innocent Clemence does not entirely make up for the unreasonableness of the whole situation. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the

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