

THE MISER'S DAUGHTER

By HONRE DE BALZAC

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

"Of course my b-b-brother's n-n-name name was Grandet—th-that is certain sure; I d-d-don't deny it—and, anyhow, this l-l-liquidation would be a very g-good thing for my n-n-nephew in every way, and I am very f-f-fond of him. But we shall see. I know n-n-nothing of those sharpers in P-Paris, and their t-tricks. And here am I at S-Saumur, you see. There are my vine-cuttings, m-my d-d-draining—in sh-sh-short, there are my own af-f-fairs, to s-s-see after. I have n-n-never accepted a bill. What is a bill? I have t-t-taken many a one, b-b-but I have n-n-never put my n-n-name to a piece of p-paper. You t-t-take 'em and you can d-d-discount 'em, and that is all I know. I have heard s-s-say that you can b-b-buy them—"

"Yes," assented the president; "you can buy bills on the market, less so much per cent. Do you understand?"

Grandet held his hand to his ear and the president repeated his remark.

"But it s-s-seems there are t-t-two s-s-sides to all this," replied the vine grower. "At my age, I know n-n-nothing about this s-s-s-sort of thing. I must s-stop here to look after the g-g-grapes, the vines d-d-don't stand still, and the g-g-grapes have to p-pay for everything. Then I have a great d-d-deal on my hands at Froldfond that I can't p-p-possibly l-l-leave to any one else. I don't understand a word of all this; it is a p-p-pretty kettle of fish; I can't l-l-leave home to s-see after it. You s-s-say that to bring about a l-l-liquidation I ought to be in Paris. Now, you can't be in t-t-to p-p-places at once unless you are a b-b-bird."

"I see what you mean," cried the notary. "Well, my old friend, you have friends, friends of long standing ready to do a great deal for you."

"Come, now!" said the vine grower to himself, "so you are making up your minds, are you?"

"And if some one were to go to Paris, and find your brother Guillaume's largest creditor, and say to him—"

"Here just l-l-listen to me a moment," the cooper struck in. "Say to him—what? S-s-something like this: 'M. Grandet of Saumur th-th-th, M. Grandet of Saumur th-th-th, He l-l-loves his brother, he has a r-r-regard for his n-n-nephew; Grandet thinks a l-l-lot of his f-family, he means to d-do well by them. He has just s-s-sold his vintage uncommonly well. Don't drive the thing into b-b-b-bankruptcy, call a meeting of the creditors, and ap-p-point l-l-liquidators. Then s-s-see what Grandet will do. You will do a great d-d-deal b-b-better for yourself by coming to an arrangement than by l-l-letting the l-l-lawyers poke their noses into it.' That is how it is, eh?"

"Quite so!" said the president.

"Because, look here, Monsieur de Bonfons, you must l-l-look before you l-l-leave. And you can't d-do more than you can. A big af-f-fair like this wants l-l-looked into, or you may ru-ru-ruin yourself. That is so, isn't it, eh?"

"Certainly," said the president. "I myself am of the opinion that in a few months' time you could buy up the debts for a fixed sum and pay by installments. Ah! you can trail a dog a long way with a bit of bacon. When a man has not been declared bankrupt, as soon as the bills are in your hands, you will be as white as snow."

"As s-s-s-snow?" said Grandet, holding his hand to his ear. "S-s-s-snow? I don't understand."

"Why, then, just listen to me!" cried the president. "A bill of exchange is a commodity subject to fluctuations in value. This is a deduction from Jeremy Bentham's theory of interest. He was a publicist who showed conclusively that the prejudices entertained against money lenders were irrational."

"Bless me!" put in Grandet.

"And seeing that, according to Bentham, money itself is a commodity, and that that which money represents is no less a commodity," the president went on; "and since it is obvious that the commodity called a bill of exchange is subject to the same laws of supply and demand that control production of all kinds, a bill of exchange bearing this or that signature, like this or that article of commerce, is scarce or plentiful in the market, commands a high premium or is worth nothing at all. Wherefore, I am of the opinion that you could easily buy up your brother's debts for twenty-five per cent of their value, and in law, if you hold all the outstanding bills of the firm of Grandet, your brother, his heirs and assigns, would owe you one penny."

"True," stammered the cooper, "b-b-business is business. So that is s-s-settled. But, for all that, you understand that it is a d-d-difficult matter. I have not the m-m-money, nor have I the t-t-time, nor—"

"Yes, yes; you cannot be at the trouble. Well, now, I will go to Paris for you if you like; you must stand the expense of the journey, that is a mere trifle. I will see the creditors, and talk to them, and put them off; it can all be arranged; you will be prepared to add something to the amount realized by the liquidation so as to get the bills into your hands."

"We shall s-see about that; I cannot and will not under-take anything unless I know. You can't d-d-do more than you can, you know."

"Quite so, quite so."

"And I am quite bewildered with all these head-splitting ideas that you have sprung upon me. Th-this is the f-f-first t-time in my l-l-life that I have had to th-th-think about such things. I am a p-p-poor vine grower, and I know n-n-

nothing about what you have just t-t-told me; I m-m-must th-th-think it all out."

CHAPTER XI.

A knock at the door announced the arrival of the des Grassins; their coming and exchange of greetings prevented Cruchot senior from finishing a sentence. Nor was he ill-pleased with this diversion; Grandet was looking askance at him already, and there was that about the men on the cooper's face which indicated that a storm was brewing within. And on sober reflection it seemed to the cautious notary that a president of a court of first instance was not exactly the person to dispatch to Paris, there to open negotiations with creditors, and to lend himself to a dubious transaction, which, however you looked at it, hardly squared with notions of strict honesty; and not only so, but he had particularly noticed that Goodman Grandet had shown not the slightest inclination to disburse anything whatever, and he trembled instinctively at the thought of his nephew becoming involved in such a business. He took advantage of the entrance of the des Grassins, took his nephew by the arm, and drew him into the embrasure of the window.

"You have gone quite as far as there is any need," he said, "that is quite enough of such zeal; you are over-reaching yourself in your eagerness to marry the girl. You should not rush into a thing open-mouthed; like a crow at a walnut. Leave the steering of the ship to me for a bit, and just shift your sails according to the wind. Now is it a part you ought to play, compromising your dignity as magistrate, in such a—"

He broke off suddenly, for he heard M. des Grassins saying to the old cooper, as he held out his hand:

"Grandet, we have heard of the dreadful misfortunes which have befallen your family—the ruin of the firm of Guillaume Grandet and your brother's death; we have come to express our sympathy with you in this sad calamity."

"There is only one misfortune," the notary interrupted at this point, "the death of the younger M. Grandet; and if he had thought to ask his brother for assistance, he would not have taken his own life. Our old friend here, who is a man of honor to his finger tips, is prepared to discharge the debts contracted by the firm of Grandet in Paris. In order to spare our friend the worry of what is, after all, a piece of lawyer's business, my nephew, the president, offers to start immediately for Paris, so as to arrange with the creditors, and duly satisfy their claims."

The three des Grassins were thoroughly taken aback by these words; Grandet appeared to acquiesce in what had been said, for he was pensively stroking his chin. On their way to the house the family had commented very freely upon Grandet's niggardliness, and indeed had almost gone so far as to accuse him of fratricide.

"Ah! just what I expected!" cried the banker, looking at his wife. "What was I saying to you only just now as we came along. Grandet, I said, is a man who will never swerve a hair's breadth from the strict course of honor; he will not endure the thought of the slightest spot on his name! Money without honor is a disease. Oh! we have a keen sense of honor in the provinces! This is noble—really noble of you, Grandet. I am an old soldier, and I do not mince matters. I say what I think straight out; and this is sublime!"

"Then the s-s-sub-sublime costs a great d-d-deal," stammered the cooper, as the banker shook him warmly by the hand.

"But this, my good Grandet, is simply a matter of business," des Grassins went on, "and requires an experienced man of business to deal with it. There will have to be accounts kept of sales and outgoing expenses; you ought to have tables of interest at your finger ends. I must go to Paris on business of my own, and I could undertake—"

"Then we must s-see about it, and t-t-try to arrange between us to provide for anything that m-may t-t-turn up, but I d-d-don't want to be d-d-drawn into anything that I would rather not d-d-do," continued Grandet, "because you see, M. le President naturally wants me to pay his expenses." The good man did not stammer over these last words.

"Eh?" said Mme. des Grassins. "Why, it is a pleasure to stay in Paris! For my part, I should be glad to go there at my own expense."

She made a sign to her husband, urging him to seize this opportunity of discomfiting their enemies. Then she flung a withering glance at the now crestfallen and miserable Cruchots. Grandet seized the banker by the buttonhole and drew him aside.

"I should feel far more confidence in you than in the president," he remarked; "and besides that," he added, "there are other fish to fry. I want to make an investment. I have several thousand francs to put into consols, and I don't mean to pay more than eighty for them. Now, from all I can hear, that machine always runs down at the end of the month. You know all about these things, I expect?"

"I should think I did. Well, then, I shall have to buy several thousand francs' worth of consols for you?"

"Just by the way of beginning. But mum. I want to play at this game without letting any one know about it. You will buy them for me at the end of the month, and say nothing to the Cruchots; it would only annoy them. Since you are going to Paris, we might as well see at the same time what are trumps for my poor nephew's sake."

"That is an understood thing. I shall travel post to Paris to-morrow," said

round to take your final instructions at—when shall we say?"

"At 5 o'clock before dinner," said the vine grower, rubbing his hands.

The two factions for a little while remained facing each other. Des Grassins broke the silence again, clapping Grandet on the shoulder, saying:

"It is a fine thing to have a good uncle like—"

"Yes, yes," returned Grandet, falling into the stammer again, "without m-making any p-p-parade about it; I am a good uncle; I l-loved my brother; I will give p-p-proof of it, if-it-if it d-doesn't cost too much."

"We must go, Grandet," said the banker. "If I am to set out sooner than intended, I shall have to see after some business at once before I go."

"Right, quite right. I myself, in connection with you know what, must p-put on my cons-s-sidering cap, as P-President Cruchot s-s-says."

"Plague take it! I am no longer M. de Bonfons," thought the magistrate moodily, and his face fell; he looked like a judge who is bored by the cause before him.

The heads of the rival clans went out together. Both had completely forgotten Grandet's treacherous crime of that morning; his disloyal behavior had faded from their minds. They sounded each other, but to no purpose, as to the Goodman's real intentions in this new turn that matters had taken.

A few moments later, and the news of Grandet's magnanimity was set circulating in three houses at once; the whole town talked of nothing but Grandet's devotion to his brother. The sale of his vintage in utter disregard of the agreement made among the vine growers was forgotten; every one fell to praising his scrupulous integrity and to lauding his generosity, a quality which no one had suspected him of possessing. As soon as Grandet had bolted the house door he called to Nanon:

"Don't go to bed," he said, "and don't unchain the dog; there is something to be done, and we must do it together. Cornouiller will be round with the carriage from Froldfond at 11 o'clock. You must sit up for him and let him in quietly; don't let him rap at the door, and tell him not to make a noise."

Having thus delivered himself, Grandet went up to his laboratory, and Nanon heard him stirring about, rummaging, going and coming, all with great caution. Clearly he had no wish to waken his wife or daughter, and above all things he desired in no wise to excite any suspicion in the mind of his nephew.

In the middle of the night Eugenie heard a sound like the groan of a dying man; her cousin was always in her thoughts, and for her the dying man was Charles. How white and despairing he had looked when he wished her good night; perhaps he had killed himself. She hastily wrapped herself in her capuchine, a sort of long cloak with a hood to it, and determined to go to see for herself. Some rays of bright light streaming through the cracks of the door frightened her at first, perhaps the house was on fire; but she was soon reassured. She could hear Nanon's heavy footsteps outside, and the sound of the old servant's voice mingled with the neighing of several horses.

"Can my father be taking Charles away?" she asked herself as she set her door ajar, cautiously for fear the hinges would creak, so that she could watch all that was going on in the corridor.

All at once her eyes met those of her father, and, absent and indifferent as they looked, a cold shudder ran through her. The cooper and Nanon were coming along carrying something which hung by a chain from a stout cudgel, one end of which rested on the right shoulder of either; the something was a little barrel such as Grandet sometimes amused himself by making in the bakehouse when he had nothing better to do.

"How heavy it is, sir!" said Nanon in a whisper.

"What a pity it is only full of pence!" replied the cooper. "Look out! or you will knock down the candlestick."

The scene was lighted by a single candle set between two balusters.

"Cornouiller," said Grandet to his game-keeper, "have you your pistols with you?"

"No, sir. What can there be to fear for a keg of coppers? Besides, we shall get over the ground quickly."

"Is the carriage strongly built?"

"That's all right, mister. Why, what is the weight of a few paltry barrels like those of yours? It would carry two or three thousand of the like of them."

"Well," said Nanon, "I know there's pretty well eighteen hundred weight there, that there is!"

"Will you hold your tongue, Nanon! You tell my wife that I have gone into the country, and that I shall be back to dinner. Hurry up, Cornouiller; we must be in Angers before 9 o'clock."

The carriage started. Nanon bolted the gateway, let the dog loose and lay down and slept in spite of her bruised shoulder; and no one in the quarter had any suspicion of Grandet's journey or of its object. The worthy man was a miracle of circumspection. Nobody ever saw a penny lying about in that house full of gold. He had learned that morning from the gossip on the quay that some vessels were being fitted out at Nantes, and that in consequence gold was so scarce there that it was worth double its ordinary value, and speculators were buying it in Angers. The old cooper, by the simple device of borrowing his tenant's horse, was prepared to sell his gold at Angers, receiving in return an order upon the treasury for the sum destined for the purchase of his consols, and an addition in the shape of the premium paid on his gold.

"My father is going out," said Eugenie to herself. She had heard all that had passed from the head of the stair case.

(To be continued.)

If a woman is an elocutionist, she can't hide it, but a man occasionally escapes under the title of "orator."

DOINGS OF WOMEN

Woman Sells Farms.

Woman's ability to sell farms and induce city people to move to them, no matter how far away they are, is proved by the experience of a Chicago woman school-teacher, according to the story an Illinois land agent tells. He says one of the women teachers in Chicago schools made \$1,500 in commissions during her vacation last year, selling farm lands in a far Northern country. This woman is not only a good talker, dresses and looks well, but she seemed to know just what families or heads of families to select. In each case they were the best adapted, according to her view of the matter, to farming, and as a result some of them are on their farms and have crops growing. She did not sell to women particularly, but to men who are good judges of land.

She had one advantage in taking up the country in which she was selling land. She had herself invested in a quarter section. She knew what is raised there, what class of people go to that locality, and something about the weather of the region, acquiring a familiarity with so many features she was able to answer almost any question asked of her. Not long ago, among a party that left Chicago on an evening St. Paul train, at least half were Chicago persons whom she had induced to go north and look at the country in which she herself had invested her earnings.

It is told by those who are in a position to know that women make good homesteaders and stick to a claim until it is proved up and a number of improvements made. A Sycamore (Ill.) girl proved up a claim in North Dakota, taught school at the same time, and finally won a banker for a husband, all in the same deal.

About two years ago, when the Southwestern railroads were developing and reaching out to a new section of Oklahoma, two young women of Manitowoc, Wis., got the homestead fever and started off for that now promising land. They were in the rush, and each got a claim. These girls are now at their homes in Manitowoc on a visit. They staid down in the territory until they had perfected their claims and made a number of improvements. The land, in the face of sure statehood to the territory, has already become valuable.

The names of this plucky pair are Mary Trestik and Mathilda Meyer. Both are under 23, and neither had been away from home until they started off to a new country, where they now have together 320 acres of the finest farming land of the Middle West.—Chicago Tribune.

Happiness in the Home.

The first year of married life is the most important era for both the husband and wife. As it is spent, so generally are all the rest of the years, as regards their kindly or unkindly relation to each other. Neither one alone makes home happy. There must be great forbearance and love in both husband and wife, to secure happiness in the home circle. Home is no paradise of sweets; the elements of peace and true happiness are there, and so, too, are the elements of discord and misery; and it needs only the uncharitable spirit to make it a pandemonium, or the loving genius to make it a paradise.

Married people should treat each other like lovers all their lives—then they would be happy. Bickering and quarrelling would soon break off love affairs; consequently lovers indulge in such only to a limited extent. Women should grow more devoted, and men fonder after marriage, if they have the slightest idea of being happy as wives and husbands. It is losing sight of this fundamental truth which leads to hundreds of divorces. Yet many a man will scold his wife who would never think of breathing a harsh word to his sweetheart, and many a wife will look glum and morose on her husband's return who had only smiles and words of cheer for him when he was her suitor. How can such people expect to be happy?

Bugs and Moths.

To get rid of bedbugs, go over the bedsteads, cracks in the walls or floors, or wherever they congregate, with a feather or small brush dipped in carbolic acid. Our house, a comparatively new one, was infested with this loathsome insect, and I became almost discouraged, when a friend told me about the above remedy.

Our bedroom floor was covered with matting, and once in a while I would find a bug under the edge of it, under the bed. I raised up the edges and wiped up the floor with water, in which I had poured a small quantity of the

carbolic acid. I used the pure stuff on the ends of the slats, corners of bedsteads and in the cracks in walls, etc. I did this in the spring at house-cleaning time, and once again through the summer, when by chance I found a bug or two on our bed. I have never seen one since. This is the most complete remedy I have ever used. This is deadly poison, and should be kept out of the way of children.

This would also be a good riddance for moths. Wash out the drawers or shelves with water and a spoonful or so of carbolic acid, and I do not think you will be bothered with moths any longer.—Hazel Hawthorne.

Women the Gullible Sex Now.

An unkind critic once said that woman would be the last thing to be civilized by man; and as sheer credulity is one of the foremost characteristics of the savage, it really would seem that the unkind critic was right, for every day the newspapers teem with proofs of the extraordinary gullibility of women. No simple South Sea islander who has never been beyond his island of palms, could be more easily gulled than women who have lived in the center of civilization. Illumined by a daily press, all their lives.

Now the newspapers are brimming with the ever-recurrent tale of women who have intrusted their savings to the first smooth-tongued scoundrel who discovered they had any and were worth robbing. We find the present Mormon proselytizing mission, which would come to an end at once were it not for the credulity of their women converts.

In a recent case, more amazing still, a young woman of rank and position married, without the smallest inquiry, an individual who masqueraded under a preposterous title (which the first glance into the "Almanach de Gotha" would have demolished), and who told a still more preposterous fairy tale of being the son of one of the reigning sovereigns of Europe. If such a tale had found credence in the ears of a scullery-maid it would have been surprising enough; that it should have been believed, without a title of proof, to the point of marriage by a woman who had enjoyed education and social advantages would seem impossible were it not for the incontrovertible fact that women are ever fond believers.

The feminine tendency to "rush their fences" as soon as they are attracted in any way seems proof against all the repeated knocks of experience given by civilization to women; and it is the certainty of encountering this characteristic in ninety per cent of womankind that makes the careers of adventurers so remarkably easy and pleasant.—Chicago Journal.

Waists for Summer.

To make an old waist like new, and to add a smart touch to a new waist, the shops are selling the most attractive of 1830 yokes. They are made with collar and yoke in one piece. They button up the back, and are held in place with small pins. These yokes are seen in a tempting variety. They are made of coarse linen with the eyelet embroidery, and then again they come in the sheerest of lawn with exquisite lace motifs as their decoration. They are made shirred, plaited or plain, and a number are trimmed with narrow lace insertion lace beading run with ribbon may be used, or a very narrow vine of colored silk embroidery. These 1830 separate yokes are a welcome change from the deep lace collars.—Woman's Home Companion.

Carbolic Acid Antidote.

The recent discovery of Mr. Allen, a Dublin veterinary surgeon, that ordinary turpentine is an antidote to carbolic acid is one of the many important discoveries which have resulted more or less from accident. Mr. Allen had in his establishment some horses which were suffering from carbolic poisoning, and he asked for oil to be given as an antidote. It was only the unexpected success of the treatment which caused it to be discovered that a happy mistake had been made, and that turpentine had been administered instead of oil. A few days later a blacksmith who was unconscious from carbolic poisoning was similarly treated with satisfactory results.

Woman's Chief Ambition.

Like the unmarried woman teachers, of whom there are something like 300,000 in this country, the young women employed in other gainful occupations look on their employments as only temporary—are waiting for men to lead them to the marriage altar of their fondest dreams.—New York Sun.