

THE MISER'S DAUGHTER

By HONRE DE BALZAC

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

"P. S.—I enclose a check for eight thousand francs, payable in gold to your order, comprising the capital and interest of the sum you were so kind as to advance me. I am expecting a case from Bordeaux which contains a few things which you must allow me to send you as a token of my unceasing gratitude. You can send my dressing case by the diligence to the Hotel d'Aubriou."
"By the diligences!" cried Eugenie, "when I would have given my life for it a thousand times!"

"Horrible and complete shipwreck of hope: the vessel had gone down, there was not a spar, not a plank in the vast ocean. She raised her eyes to the sky. There was nothing left to her now but to live prayerfully till the day of her deliverance should come and the soul spread its wings for heaven."
"My mother was right," she said, weeping. "Suffer—and die."

She went slowly into the house, avoiding the passage; but when she came into the old gray parlor, it was full of memories of her cousin. On the chimney-piece there stood a certain china snuffer, which he had used every morning, and the old Sevres sugar basin.

It was to be a memorable and eventful day for Eugenie. Nanon announced the cure. He was related to the Cruchots, and therefore in the interests of the President de Bonfons. For some days past the Abbe had urged the cure to speak seriously to Mlle. Grandet about the duty of marriage. Eugenie fancied that he had come for the thousand francs which she gave him every month for the poor, and sent Nanon for the money; but the curate began with a smile. "To-day, mademoiselle, I have come to take counsel with you about a poor girl in whom all Saumur takes an interest, and who, through lack of clarity to herself, is not living as a Christian should."

"M. le Cure, just now I can think of nobody but myself. I am very miserable, my only refuge is in the church; her heart is large enough to hold all human sorrows, her love so inexhaustible that we need never fear to drain it dry."

"Well, mademoiselle, when we speak of this girl, we shall speak of you. Listen! If you would fain work out your salvation, there are but two ways open to you; you must either leave the world or live in the world and submit to its laws—you must choose between the earthly and the heavenly vocation."

"Ah! your voice speaks to me when I need to hear a voice. Yes, heaven has sent you to me. I will bid the world farewell, and live in silence and seclusion."

"But, my daughter, you should think long and prayerfully before taking so strong a measure. Marriage is life, and the convent is death."

"Yes, death. Ah, if death would only come quickly, M. le Cure," she said, with dreadful eagerness.

"Death? But you have great obligations to fulfill toward society, mademoiselle. There is your family of poor, to whom you give clothes and firing in winter and work in summer. Your great fortune is a loan, of which you must give an account one day. You have always looked on it as a sacred trust. It would be selfish to bury yourself in a convent, and you ought not to live alone in the world. In the first place, how can you endure the burden of your vast fortune alone? You might lose it. You will be involved in endless litigation; you will find yourself in difficulties from which you will not be able to extricate yourself. Take your pastor's word, a husband is useful; you ought not to lose what God has given unto your charge. I speak to you as a cherished lamb of my flock. You love God too sincerely to find hindrance to your salvation in the world; you are one of its fairest ornaments, and should remain in it as an example of holiness."

At this point Mme. des Grassins was announced. The banker's wife was smiling under a grievous disappointment and thirsted for revenge.

"Mademoiselle—" she began. "Oh! M. le Cure is here—I will say no more, then. I came to speak about some matters of business, but I see you are deep in something else."

"Madame," said the cure, "I leave the field to you."

"Oh! M. le Cure, pray come back again; I stand in great need of your help just now."

"Yes, indeed, my poor child!" said Mme. des Grassins.

"What do you mean?" asked Eugenie and the cure both together.

"Do you suppose that I haven't heard that your cousin has come back and is going to marry Mlle. d'Aubriou? A woman doesn't go about with her wits in her pocket."

CHAPTER XXII.

Eugenie was silent, there was a red flush on her face, but she made up her mind at once that henceforward no one should learn anything from her, and looked as impenetrable as her father used to do.

"Well, madame," she said, with a tinge of bitterness in her tones, "it seems that I, at any rate, carry my wits in my pocket, for I am quite at a loss to understand you. Speak out and explain yourself."

"Well, then, mademoiselle, see for yourself what des Grassins says. Here is the letter."

Eugenie read:
"My Dear Wife—Charles Grandet has returned from the Indies, and has been in Paris these two months—"
"Two months!" said Eugenie to her-

self, and her hand fell to her side. After a moment she went on reading.

"I had to dance attendance on him, and called twice before the future Comte d'Aubriou would condescend to see me. All Paris is talking about his marriage, and the bans are published—"

"And he wrote to me after that?" Eugenie said to herself. She did not round off the sentence as a Parisienne would have done, with "Wretch that he is!" but her scorn was not one whit the less because it was unexpressed.

"—but it will be a good while yet before he marries; it is not likely that the Marquis d'Aubriou will give his daughter to the son of a bankrupt wine merchant. I called and told him of all the trouble we had been at, his uncle and I, in the matter of his father's failure, and of our clever dodges that had kept the creditors quiet so far. The insolent puppy had the effrontery to say to me that his father's affairs were not his! There is something that he does owe me, however, and that the law shall make him pay, that is to say, twelve hundred thousand francs to his father's creditors, and I shall declare his father bankrupt. I mixed myself up in this affair on the word of that old crocodile of a Grandet, and I have given promises in the name of the family. M. le Comte d'Aubriou may not care for his honor, but I care a good deal for mine! So I shall just explain my position to the creditors. Still, I have too much respect for Mlle. Eugenie to take any steps before you have spoken to her—"

There Eugenie paused, and quietly returned the letter.

"I am obliged to you," she said to Mme. des Grassins. "We shall see—"

"Your voice was exactly like your father's just then," exclaimed Mme. des Grassins.

Mlle. Grandet went up to her father's room and spent the day there by herself; she would not even come down to dinner, though Nanon begged and scolded. She appeared in the evening at the hour when the usual company began to arrive. The gray parlor in the Grandets' house had never been so well filled as it was that night. Every soul in the town knew by that time of Charles' faithlessness and ingratitude; but their inquisitive curiosity was not to be gratified. Eugenie was a little late, but no one saw any traces of the cruel agitation through which she had passed; she could smile benignly in reply to compassionate looks and words.

About 9 o'clock the card players drew away from the tables. Just as there was a general move in the direction of the door, an unexpected development took place; the news of it rang through Saumur for days after.

"Please stay, M. le President."

There was not a person in the room who did not thrill with excitement at the words; M. de Bonfons, who was about to take his cane, turned quite white and sat down again.

"The President takes the millions," said Mlle. de Gribenour.

"It is quite clear that President de Bonfons is going to marry Mlle. Grandet," cried Mme. d'Orsonval.

"M. le President," Eugenie began, in an unsteady voice, as soon as they were alone. "I know what you care about in me. Swear to leave me free till the end of my life, to claim none of the rights which marriage will give you over me, and my hand is yours. Oh!" she said, seeing him about to fall on his knees. "I have not finished yet. I must tell you frankly that there are memories in my heart which can never be effaced; that friendship is all that I can give my husband; I wish neither to affront him nor to be disloyal to my own heart. But you shall only have my hand and fortune at the price of an immense service which I want you to do me."

"Anything, I will do anything," said the president.

"Here are fifteen hundred thousand francs, M. le President," she said, drawing from her bodice a certificate for a hundred shares in the Bank of France; "will you set out for Paris? You must not even wait till the morning, but go at once, to-night. You must go straight to M. des Grassins, ask him for a list of my uncle's creditors, call them together and discharge all outstanding claims upon Guillaume Grandet's estate. Let the creditors have capital and interest at 5 per cent from the day the debts were contracted to the present time; and see that in every case a receipt in full is given. You are a magistrate, you are the only person whom I feel I can trust in such a case. You are a gentleman and a man of honor; you have given me your word, and, protected by your name, I will make the perilous voyage of life. We shall know how to make allowances for each other, for we have been acquainted so long that it is almost as if we were related, and I am sure you would not wish to make me unhappy."

The president fell on his knees at the feet of the rich heiress in a paroxysm of joy.

"I will be your slave!" he said.

"When all the receipts are in your possession, sir," she went on, looking quietly at him, "you must take them, together with the bills, to my cousin Grandet, and give them to him with this letter. When you come back, I will keep my word."

The president understood the state of affairs perfectly well. "She is accepting me out of pique," he thought, and he hastened to do Mlle. Grandet's bidding with all possible speed, for fear some chance might bring about a reconciliation between the lovers.

CHAPTER XXIII.

As soon as M. de Bonfons left her Eugenie sank into her chair and burst into tears. All was over, and this was the end.

The president traveled post to Paris and reached his journey's end on the following evening. The next morning he went to des Grassins, and arranged for a meeting of the creditors. Every man of them appeared.

M. de Bonfons, in Mlle. Grandet's name, paid down the money in full, both capital and interest. It was an amazing pertent, a nine days' wonder in the business world of Paris. After the whole affair had been wound up, and when des Grassins had received fifty thousand francs for his services, the president betook himself to the Hotel d'Aubriou, and was lucky enough to find Charles at home, and in disgrace with his future father-in-law. The old marquis had just informed that gentleman that until Guillaume Grandet's creditors were satisfied a marriage with his daughter was not to be thought of. To Charles, thus dependent, the president delivered the following letter:

"Dear Cousin—M. le President de Bonfons has undertaken to hand you a discharge of all claims against my uncle's estate. I heard rumors of bankruptcy, and it occurred to me that difficulties might possibly arise as a consequence in the matter of your marriage with Mlle. d'Aubriou. Yes, cousin, you are quite right about my tastes and manners; I have lived, as you say, so entirely out of the world, that I know nothing of its ways or its calculations, and my companionship could never make up to you for the loss of the pleasures that you look to find in society. I hope that you will be happy according to the social conventions to which you have sacrificed your early love. The only thing in my power to give you to complete your happiness is your father's good name. Farewell; you will always find a faithful friend in your cousin."

"EUGENIE."
In spite of himself an exclamation broke from the man of social ambitions when his eyes fell on the discharge and receipts. The president smiled.

"We can each announce our marriage," said he.

"Oh! you are to marry Eugenie! Well, I am glad to hear it; she is a kind-hearted girl. Why!" struck with a sudden luminous idea, "she must be rich?"

"Four days ago she had about nineteen millions," the president said, with a malicious twinkle in his eyes; "to-day she has only seventeen."

Charles was dumfounded; he stared at the president.

"Seventeen millions!"

"Seventeen millions. Yes, sir; when we are married Mlle. Grandet and I shall muster seven hundred and fifty thousand livres a year between us."

"My dear cousin," said Charles, with some return of assurance, "we shall be able to push each other's fortune."

"Certainly," said the president. "There is something else here," he added, "a little case that I was to give only into your hands," and he set down a box containing the dressing case upon the table.

The door opened, and in came Mme. le Marquise d'Aubriou; the great lady seemed to be unaware of Cruchot's existence. "Look here, dear!" she said; "never mind what that absurd M. d'Aubriou has been saying to you. I repeat it, there is nothing to prevent your marriage—"

"Nothing, madame," answered Charles. "The three millions which my father owed were paid yesterday, capital and interest. I mean to rehabilitate his memory."

"What nonsense!" cried his mother-in-law. "Who is this person?" she asked in Charles' ear, as she saw Cruchot for the first time.

"My man of business," he answered in a low voice. The Marquise gave M. de Bonfons a disdainful bow, and left the room.

"We are beginning to push each other's fortune already," said the president, dryly, as he took up his hat. "Good day, cousin."

"The old cockatoo from Saumur is laughing at me; I have a great mind to make him swallow six inches of cold steel," thought Charles.

But the president had departed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Three days later M. de Bonfons was back in Saumur again, and announced his marriage with Eugenie. After about six months he received his appointment as councillor to the court at Angers, and they went thither. But before Eugenie left Saumur she melted down the trinkets that had long been so sacred and so dear a trust, and gave them, together with the eight thousand francs which her cousin had returned to her, to the parish church, whither she had gone so often to pray for him. Henceforward her life was spent partly at Angers, partly at Saumur. Her husband's devotion to the government at a political crisis was rewarded; he was made First President. Then he awaited a general election with impatience; he had visions of a place in the government; he had dreams of a peerage; and then, and then—

"Then he would call cousins with the king, I suppose?" said Nanon.

Yet, after all, none of these ambitious dreams was to be realized, and the name of M. de Bonfons was to undergo no further transformation. He died only eight days after his appointment as deputy of Saumur. Mme. de Bonfons was left a widow three years after her marriage, with an income of eight hundred thousand livres.

She was beautiful still, with the beauty of a woman nearly forty years of age. Her face was very pale and quiet, with a tinge of sadness in the low tones of her voice. She had simple manners, all the dignity of one who had passed through great sorrows, and the saintliness of a soul unspotted by the world; and, no less, the rigidity of an old maid, the little penurious ways and narrow ideas of a dull country town.

Although she had eight hundred livres

a year, she lived just as she used to do in the days of stinted allowances of fuel and food while she was still Eugenie Grandet, the fire never lighted in the parlor before or after the dates fixed by her father, all the regulations in force in the days of her girlhood still adhered to. She dressed as her mother did. That cold, sunless, dreary house, always overshadowed by the dark ramparts, was like her own life.

She looked carefully after her affairs; her wealth accumulated from year to year; perhaps she might have been called parsimonious, if it were not for the noble use she made of her fortune. Various pious and charitable institutions, almshouses and orphan asylums, a richly endowed public library, and donations to various churches in Saumur, are a sufficient answer to the charge of avarice which some few people have brought against her.

They sometimes spoke of her in joke as mademoiselle, but, in fact, people stood somewhat in awe of Mme. de Bonfons. It was as if she, whose heart went out so readily to others, was always to be the victim of their interested calculations; as if for all warmth and brightness in her life she was to find only the pale glitter of metal.

Yet her hands were always ready to bind the wounds that other eyes did not see, in any house; and her way to heaven was one long succession of kindness and good deeds. The real greatness of her soul had risen above the cramping influences of her early life. And this is the life history of a woman who dwelt in the world, yet not of it, a woman so grandly fitted to be a wife and mother, but who had neither husband nor children nor kindred.

(The end.)

TEST OF NAVAL EFFICIENCY.

Foreign Nations Taking Great Pains to Improve Sea Gunnery.

The true test of efficiency of our warships does not lie in speed, coal endurance or vexing formulae, according to a writer in World's Work, but depends almost entirely upon the rapidity and accuracy of gun fire. "Gunnery, gunnery, gunnery," says the first Sea Lord, "is of extreme importance," and the leading navies of the world are to-day making such efforts to improve their shooting that it is not too much to assert that the greatest progress in naval development in the last year has been in gun practice.

The Impetus was given by the first published reports of the battles of Manila and Santiago, when the Impression spread abroad that the Americans possessed the secret of shooting straight. The outcome was a mechanical contrivance invented by Capt. Scott, of the British navy, called a "dotter," by which a small paper target drawn to scale is caused to move in front of a gun with a combined vertical and horizontal movement. While the target is in motion the gun pointer endeavors to train the gun so as to keep the cross wires of his telescope on the target. Whenever the cross wires are "on" an electrical connection causes a pencil to make a dot on the target, the dot representing a real shot or a real target at a thousand yards. Thus the men are accustomed to train the guns under the disturbing conditions of a ship in a seaway.

The result of this training has produced results almost marvelous; in a comparatively short time green men were taught to fire the heavy guns with great precision. A six-inch gun on the Crescent made 165 hits out of 130 at a target about 1,500 yards distant, the average of hits a minute being 4.37. The 9.2 gun made nine hits out of ten at a range of from 1,400 to 2,000 yards. On board the Terrible one of the 9.2 guns fired twelve rounds in six minutes and hit the target nine times, which is 1.5 hits a minute.

Other foreign nations guard more jealously the results of their gun work, but it is known that all the great navies are working to this end, the central idea being to train the men to point and fire guns under the sea conditions, and doubtless in the next naval battle the percentage of hits will be far in excess of any yet recorded, which is another way of saying that future naval battles will be of shorter duration but more destructive.

Reindeer Tote The Mails.

The prospect is that the government will not have reason to regret the establishment of reindeer farms in Alaska. The capacity of the reindeer for team work is remarkable. His hoofs are very broad and do not penetrate the snow crusts. His average weight is about 400 pounds. He will swiftly draw a sled carrying 600 pounds, and with this load can cover thirty, fifty and even ninety miles a day. The reindeer teams now carry the mails from Kotzebue to Point Barrow, a distance of 650 miles—the most northerly post route in the world.

No food is carried for the deer. At the end of his journey, or at any stopping place, he is turned loose and at once breaks through the snow to the white moss which serves as food. It costs nothing to feed him. As the white settlements increase in the mineral-bearing parts of Alaska and in many places remote from railway and steamboat transportation the reindeer express will be one of the most important factors in territorial life.

It sometimes happens that wrath discourages a soft answer.



Sago Pudding.

Soak a half-cup of sago in a cup of cold water for two hours. Drain, put into the inner vessel of a double-boiler with a quart of milk, scalding hot, and simmer until the sago is clear, stirring up from the bottom several times. Add a tablespoonful of butter, four tablespoonfuls of sugar, a pinch of salt and three well-beaten eggs. Turn into a buttered pudding dish and bake in a good oven for about twenty-five minutes. Eat hot or cold.

Biscuit Ice Cream.

Rub off the yellow rind of four lemons on lumps of loaf sugar, then crush the sugar and mix it with half a pound of powdered loaf sugar. Have ready eight small Naples biscuits or sponge-cakes grated fine; stir them together with the sugar, into one quart of rich cream. Bring the mixture to a boil, cool and freeze in the usual way. Afterwards, transfer to a pyramid mold and freeze again.

Soft Ginger Cake.

One cup of molasses; one cup of sugar; one-half cup of shortening—butter or lard—one cup of sour milk; two eggs, the whites and yolks beaten separately; three cups of flour; one-half tablespoonful of cinnamon; one-half tablespoonful, each, of cloves, nutmeg, and ginger; two teaspoonfuls of soda in a little hot water, stirred in at the last. Bake in a steady, but not over-hot oven. This makes a large cake.

Canned Beets.

Cook young beets and peel, then slice and pack into jars. Add to good vinegar, salt and pepper to taste and a tablespoonful of granulated sugar. Bring to a hard boil and, while boiling, fill the jars to overflowing with it, sealing immediately. Wrap in paper and keep in a very dark room or closet.

Cherry Preserve.

Stone the cherries, and to every pound of fruit allow a pound of granulated sugar. Heat the cherries slowly and stew them half an hour in their own juice, then add the sugar and stew gently until clear. Pour them boiling hot into cans taken from hot water, and screw down the covers.

Cherry Pie.

Line a deep plate with paste, fill it about half full of stoned cherries, add sugar to taste, fill up the plate with fruit, add a little more sugar, and cover with strips of pastry laid so as to form open squares. Bake in a hot oven.

Raspberry Ice Cream.

Mash the berries and strain off the juice, to which add sugar to taste and stir in the cream; strain in the juice of half a lemon; press the whole through a sieve and freeze.

Short Suggestions.

Cold tea is good for cleaning varnish. Varnished paint wita tea which is slightly warm.

Before jolling milk or making any sauce with milk always rinse out the saucapan in cold water.

When juice is left from canning it may be boiled low, made into jelly or syrup for flavoring purposes.

Macaroni should be kept in an airtight receptacle and when cooked plunged into boiling salted water.

The skins of new potatoes can be removed more quickly with a stiff vegetable brush than by scraping.

Clean painted woodwork with a strong solution of sal soda water, wiping it quickly with a soft cloth.

Wash your windows with ammonia, hot water, and a sponge, and be sure to dry them with old newspapers.

A lump of gum camphor placed in the clothes press or closet will keep the steel ornaments from tarnishing.

To keep hardwood floors smooth and clean, rub them with waste and warm paraffin oil, and polish with dry waste.

Don't use a galvanized-iron lemon squeezer. When brought in contact with the lemon it forms a poisonous salt.

Rub articles stained from eggs, baking custards, etc., with salt. The brown stains will come off in a short time.

When anything is accidentally made too salt it can be counteracted by adding a tablespoonful of vinegar and a tablespoonful of sugar.

Leave a few of the husks on your sweet corn for boiling, and take it to the table with them on. It will keep warm longer, and you will find it much sweeter.

To clean copper utensils use half a lemon dipped in salt for scouring copper pans, etc., and afterward rinse thoroughly in clean water. Finish by polishing with a soft cloth.