

THE MISER'S DAUGHTER

By HONRE DE BALZAC

CHAPTER I.

In some towns there are houses more depressing to the sight than the dimmest gloister, the most melancholy ruins or the dreariest stretch of sandy waste. Perhaps such houses as these combine the characteristics of all the three, and to the dumb silence of the monastery they unite the gauntness of the ruin and the lid desolation of the waste. There is no particular house front in Saumur which possesses all these melancholy characteristics, standing at the end of a steep street. It was a venerable relic of a bygone age, built for the men and women of an older and simpler world, from which our modern France is farther and farther removed day by day. In a gloomy recess a doorway is dimly visible, the door of M. Grandet's house.

M. Grandet enjoyed a certain reputation in Saumur. There were still old people in existence who could remember former times and called M. Grandet "Goodman Grandet," but there were not any of them left, and they were rapidly disappearing year by year. In 1789 Grandet was a master cooper, in a very good way of business, who could read and write and cast accounts. When the French Republic confiscated lands in the district and proceeded to sell them by auction, the cooper was forty years of age, and had just married the daughter of a wealthy timber merchant. As Grandet possessed at that moment his wife's dowry as well as some considerable amount of ready money of his own, he acquired some of the best vineyard in the neighborhood, an old abbey and a few little farms, for an old man. In the days of the Consulate he became Mayor, did prudently in his public capacity and did very well for himself. Times changed, the empire was established and he became Monsieur Grandet. He had a fair claim to the Cross of the Legion of Honor and he received it in 1809.

By this time M. Grandet was fifty-seven years old, and his wife about thirty-six. The one child of the marriage was a daughter, a little girl ten years of age. In this year he succeeded to three fortunes. Mme. Grandet's mother and her father soon followed her; the third in order was M. Grandet's grandmother on the mother's side. M. Grandet received a new distinction—he paid more taxes than any one else in the country round. He now cultivated a hundred acres of vineyard. In a good year they would yield seven or eight hundred puncheons. He had thirty or thirty-five acres of olive and a hundred and twenty-seven acres of grazing land, in which three thousand poplars, planted in 1793, were growing taller and larger every year. Finally he owned the house in which he lived.

In these visible ways his prosperity had increased. As to his capital, there were only two people in a position to make a guess at its probable amount. One of these was the notary, M. Cruchot, who transacted all the necessary business whenever M. Grandet made an investment, and the other was M. des Grassins, the wealthiest banker in the town, who did Grandet many good offices which were unknown to Saumur. There was no one in Saumur who did not fully believe the report which told how, in a secret hiding place, M. Grandet had a hoard of louis, and how every night he went to look at it and gave himself up to the inexpressible delight of gazing at the huge heap of gold.

In matters financial M. Grandet might be described as combining the characteristics of the Bengal tiger and the bon-constructor. He could lie low and wait, crouching, watching for his prey, and make his spring unerringly at last; then the jaws of his purse would unclose, a torrent of coin would be swallowed down, and, as in the case of the gorged reptile, there would be a period of inaction. Like the serpent, moreover, he was cold, apathetic, methodical, keeping to his own mysterious times and seasons.

M. Grandet never bought either meat or bread. Part of his rents were paid in kind, and every week his tenants brought in poultry, eggs, butter and wheat sufficient for the needs of his household. Moreover, he owned a mill, and the miller, besides paying rent, came over to fetch a certain quantity of corn and brought him back both the bran and the flour. Big Nanon, the one maid-servant, baked all the bread once a week. Of the tenants were market gardeners, and M. Grandet had arranged that these were to keep him supplied with fresh vegetables. Of fruit there was no lack. Indeed, he sold a good deal of it in the market. Firewood was gathered from his own hedges or taken from old stumps of trees that grew by the sides of his fields. His tenants chopped up the wood, carted it into the town and obligingly stacked his fagots for him, receiving in return—his thanks. So he seldom had occasion to spend money. His only known items of expenditure were for sittings in the church for his wife and daughter, their dress, Nanon's wages, renewals of the linings of Nanon's saucers, repairs about the house, candles, rates and taxes, and the necessary outlays of money for improvements. He had recently acquired six hundred acres of woodland, and had induced a keeper belonging to a neighbor to attend to it, promising to repay the man for his trouble. After this purchase had been made, game appeared on the Grandets' table.

Grandet's manners were distinctly homely. He did not say very much. He expressed his ideas as a rule in brief, sententious phrases, uttered in a low voice. He had other peculiarities. He habitually drowned his ideas in a flood of words more or less incoherent; his singular inaptitude for reasoning logically was usually set down to a defective education; but this, like his unweildy fluency, the trick of stammering and various other mannerisms, was assumed, and for reasons which, in the course of the story, will be made sufficiently clear. He never paid visits, never dined away from home, nor asked any one to dinner. His movements were almost noiseless. He seemed to carry out his principles of economy in everything—to make no useless sound, to be chary of spending even physical energy. His respect for the rights of ownership was so habitual that he never displaced nor disturbed anything belonging to another. And yet in

carried huge bunches of flowers gathered in their little garden plots, but the stalks of the magistrates' bouquets were ingenuously bound round by a white satin ribbon with a tinsel fringe at the ends.

In the morning M. Grandet had gone to Eugenie's room before she had left her bed, and had solemnly presented her with a rare gold coin. It was her father's wont to surprise her in this way twice every year. Mme. Grandet usually gave her daughter a winter and a summer dress, according to circumstances. The two dresses and two gold coins, which she received on her father's birthday and on New Year's Day, altogether amounted to an annual income of nearly a hundred crowns; Grandet loved to watch the money accumulating in her hands. He did not part with his money; he felt that it was only like taking it out of one box and putting it into another.

Eugenie wore her new dress at dinner, and looked prettier than usual in it; her father was in high good humor.

"Let us have a fire," he cried, "as it is Eugenie's birthday! It will be a good omen!"

"Mamemoiselle will be married within the year, that's certain," said big Nanon, as she removed the remains of a goose.

"There is no one that I know of in Saumur who would do for Eugenie," said Mme. Grandet, with a timid glance at her husband, a glance that revealed how completely her husband's tyranny had broken the poor woman's spirit.

Grandet looked at his daughter, and said merrily, "We must really begin to think about her; the little girl is 23 years old to-day."

Neither Eugenie nor her mother said a word, but they exchanged glances; they understood each other. After the dinner, when the question of Eugenie's marriage had been raised for the first time, Nanon went up to M. Grandet's room to fetch a bottle of black currant cordial, and very nearly lost her footing on the staircase as she came down.

"Great stupid! Are you going to take to tumbling about?" inquired her master.

"It's all along of the step, sir; it gave way. The staircase isn't safe."

"She is quite right," said Mme. Grandet. "You ought to have had it mended long ago. Eugenie all but sprained her foot on it yesterday."

"Here," said Grandet, who saw that Nanon looked very pale, "as to-day is Eugenie's birthday, and you have nearly fallen downstairs, take a drop of black currant cordial; that will put you right again."

"I deserve it, too, upon my word," said Nanon. "Many a one would have broken the bottle in my place; I should have broken by elbow first, holding it up to save it."

"Poor Nanon!" muttered Grandet, pouring out the black currant cordial for her.

"Did you hurt yourself?" asked Eugenie, looking at her in concern.

"No, I managed to break the fall; I came down on my side."

"Well," said Grandet, "as to-day is Eugenie's birthday I will mend your step for you. Somehow, you women folk cannot manage to put your foot down in the corner, where it is still solid and safe."

Grandet took up the candle, left the three women without any other illumination in the room than the bright dancing firelight, and went to the bakehouse, where tools, nails and odd pieces of wood were kept.

"Do you want any help?" Nanon called to him, when the first blow sounded on the staircase.

"No, no! I am an old hand at it," answered the cooper.

At this very moment, while Grandet was doing the repairs himself to his worm-eaten staircase, and whistling with all his might as memories of his young days came up in his mind, the three Cruchots knocked at the house door.

"Oh, it's you, is it, M. Cruchot?" asked Nanon, as she took a look through the small square grating, opening the door, and the glow of the firelight shone on the three Cruchots, who were groping in the archway. "Oh! you have come to help us keep her birthday," Nanon said, as the scent of flowers reached her.

"Excuse me a moment, gentlemen," cried Grandet, who recognized the voices of his acquaintances; "I am your very humble servant! There is no pride about me! I am patting up a broken stair here myself."

"Go on, go on, M. Grandet! The charcoal burner is major in his own house," said the magistrate sententiously. Nobody saw the allusion, and he had his laugh all to himself. Mme. and Mlle. Grandet rose to greet them. The magistrate took advantage of the darkness to speak to Eugenie.

(To be continued.)

Another Name for Crazy.

"Did you ever know the origin of the word 'bughouse'?" said Tom Ernst, a prominent member of the Musicians' Union, to some friends. "Well, a few years ago I was playing clarinet in the orchestra of a theater in Oakland. We had a little old German playing viola, who loved only his instrument and himself. He was altogether too quiet to suit the drummer, who was always up to something, from trying some one's instrument up and hanging it in the files to nailing a plum hat to the wall—which he once did because his cornet player had the temerity to wear it.

"It was the season for the big brown electric light bugs, as they are called, and the chance to do something to the viola player was not to be lost to Mr. Drummer. He gathered a dozen or two of the big beetles and, before the musicians arrived one evening squeezed them through the sound holes into the viola. Nothing happened until the leader dropped his baton for the first note of the overture, and then—whang went the bugs as the bugs struck the strings. The little German if not 'bughouse' was not far off. He nearly fell off his seat, and on partly recovering composure began swearing loudly in German. When the overture ended the only explanation that could be obtained for his erratic conduct was 'You take me and my fiddle for bughouse, hey?'"—San Francisco Call.

Merchant Marine Figures.

Placing Him Right.

"Mrs. Grummage," said the facetious boarder to the patient landlady, "there's some mistake here. I have found a straw in my shortcake, but no berry."

"Better consult an oculist Mr. Fizk-wig," replied the landlady in her delect tones. "Didn't you notice that the straw was buried?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

In Harmony.

"What makes Mr. Jones screw up his face so dreadfully?"

"Why, that's the face that goes with his automobile cap."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Eternal Wrangle.

First Soubrette—I am engaged to star in "Beauty and the Beast" next week.

Second Soubrette—Indeed! And who have they engaged for the "Beauty?"

What They Overlook.

Diggs—There is at least one thing to be said in favor of the "oldest inhabitant."

Biggs—What is that?

Diggs—You never hear him getting all that old chestnut about the good of being young.

An Old-Time Player.

Stringer—Moses must have been one of the originators of football.

Nibbles—Why do you think so?

Stringer—Doesn't the good book say he was found among the rushes?

Two of a Kind.

Her bread, of course, is not the kind.

His mother used to bake;

And his "bough" is far from what Her father used to make.

Harsh Announcement.

Reginald—I received a spring announcement card from my tailor.

Harry—You did. Then that shows your credit is good.

Reginald—Hardly. He announced that if I didn't settle that bill for last year's suit he'd put the law on me.

Rural Opinion.

Mrs. Crawfoot—They do say that Fanny and her city husband have a comfortable parlor.

Mr. Crawfoot—Nothing comfortable about it. Why, when I sat in my short-sleeves and started to smoke Fanny objected.

War Strategy.

Some one was showing the visitor around the great navy yard.

"But where is the bottling department?" asked the visitor.

"The bottling department?" echoed the escort in surprise.

"Yes, the modern navies are always bottling up something."

She Had a Heavy Load on Her Mind.

Always Together.

Bobby had made an addition to his Noah's ark.

"What are those little things, Bobby?" asked his mamma.

"Oh, they are peanuts," replied the little boy.

"But we never heard that Noah carried peanuts on the ark."

"He must have, mamma. How could he have elephants without peanuts?"

What He Learned.

Auntie to little Tommy, who had just returned from his first day at school—What did you learn?

Tommy—Didn't learn anything.

Auntie—What did you do?

Tommy—Didn't do anything. There was a woman there who wanted to know how to spell "cat" and I told her.—Philadelphia Telegram.

Merely Their Talk.

Mr. Haamagan—I hear Miss Love's quite a belle now. They say she is prettier now than she ever was.

Miss Speltz—Exactly; they say she is prettier than she ever was—or is.—Philadelphia Ledger.

An Important Personage.

Caller—Well, the nerve of that! Merchant—What?

Caller—Didn't you hear that snip of a boy referring to you as "Bill"?

Merchant—Sh! That's our office boy, so long as I can pretend I didn't hear him it's all right.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Those Dear Girls.

Grayce—Maude is engaged to a man of 60. He's old enough to be her father, eh?

Edythe—We-el, yes; supposing that he married very, very young.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Roundabout Way to Pleasure.

Dick—Why did you ask her to sing! Surely you can't enjoy that caterwauling.

Ned—No, but it is always such a keen delight to hear her stop.—Somerville Journal.

Her Air of Indifference.

"What a cool and indifferent all Miss Frappay has. She acts just as if she didn't know that anybody was looking at her."

"Yes, she inherits that. Her mother used to bake pancakes in the window of a quick-lunch restaurant."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

VARIETIES OF LINEN.

ALL SORTS OF THE MATERIAL NOW IN VOGUE.

New Taffetas Are Soft and Supple—Great Favor Shown Pongees—Some Incalorated Evening Gowns Are Sketched by the Artist.

New York correspondence.

ORTS of linen range from coarse, open meshed weaves to the finest that can be made. Many of the latter grade are exquisite of themselves, yet are enriched with embroideries to an extent that makes them an extravagance for most women. The kinds, however, that are much less expensive have beauty in positive degree, while the manner in which they wash is an unmistakable charm. Shirt waist suits in linen are almost as stylish and smart as like suits in silk, and it is a temptation to have several, since no two need be at all alike. Much white is seen in these weaves, but white is not to rank so high this summer as it did a year ago, so it should not be taken up to the exclusion of something newer. The open weaves,



Transparent and semi-transparent dress materials are notable for the beauty of the flowered sorts. In some great blossoms are sprinkled all over the ground, while in others tiny bloom trails about in beautiful sprays. Some of the larger flowerings are bold, indeed, but they are to be worn, and will have the effect of rendering pleasantly inconspicuous the more moderate examples of the same treatment. White and cream whites are often the ground colors, so the bloom stands out pretty well. These materials are employed for evening and dancing dresses, some made in the extreme of elaboration, others in reasonable simplicity. Not all evening gowns are planned to be wonders of highly wrought effects, but you may depend that the

comparatively simple one that doesn't have its original touch will not rank as much of a success. Three evening dresses are put here by the artist, a pink or gandy trimmed with white silk embroidery, a white dotted lace finished with black satin ribbon and lierre lace insertion, and a yellow silk mull set off with passementerie and embroidery. When flowered stuffs are combined with plain weaves, as is permitted by the fashions, a new grade of gown is touched and another field of old-time styles is invaded.

Fashion Notes.

Velvet ribbon tabs are used with good effect.

Tucks of all widths are noted on new dresses.

Wrinkled ribbon festoons have an old-time flavor.

Coarse laces trim the canvas fabrics to perfection.

The wheat pattern is conspicuous in the new laces.

The newest skirt features seem to be the narrow front gore and the deep

model appears across this picture. It was finished with cut pieces and cluny lace in a fashion characteristic of this summer. Black taffetas and pongees are attractive, especially for middle-aged wearers. A suggestion for the use of voile in tailoring is conveyed in the gown in appearing between the two dresses last described. The trimming

flounces that sweeps downward from the knee.

A job of contrasting velvet edges the neck of a smart eon.

Double skirt effects are seen in both plain and elaborate rigs.

Mhirings about the hips are liked for light weight fabrics.

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