

fragment having previously been issued in *Le Voleur*, April 5, 1830. In 1835 the story was transferred to the "Scènes de la Vie Parisienne." In 1842, under the title it now bears, it was restored, with a slight retouching, to the "Scènes de la Vie Privée" of the "Comedy." The Granville family has already been set before us in "Une Fille d'Eve" and will be met again. None of the Crochards reappears save Charles, Granville's natural son—see "Les Petits Bourgeois." The Abbé Fontanon has been mentioned in "Honorine," and will reappear in "Les Employés" and the "Député d'Arcis." Bianchon we now know well.]

Balzac wrote Mme. Hańska that "Le Contrat de Mariage," or, as he called it then, "La Fleur-des-Pois," was "again something in the class of 'Eugénie Grandet.'" If he meant by this that the new story was as powerful as the older one—which he was inclined to run down because the public ran it up—he was undoubtedly wrong. It is more probable that he was thinking of the fact that in both the commercial side of marriage plays a most important part. Both are also provincial stories, although neither Bordeaux nor Saumur stands out so clearly as some other towns do. But it was the financial element in the later novel that chiefly impressed its author, as we learn from a letter to Mme. Surville. He thought the scene describing the combat between the young and the old notary profoundly comic, although he admitted that probably only men of affairs would appreciate its comic quality. He regarded the whole story as one of the grand Scenes of Private Life, but did not suppose that the public would care for the work.

Doubtless the public does not care for it so much as for certain other stories, since considerable knowledge of the peculiarities of the French laws relating to marriage is needed for its full appreciation. Then again, if the five-