

supreme development ; the lordship of man over beast, the lordship of man over man, the lordship of woman over all !

En voilà , de l'éloquence— à propos de bottes !

Trilby had respected Mother Nature's special gift to herself—had never worn a leather boot or shoe, had always taken as much care of her feet as many a fine lady takes of her hands. It was her one coquetry, the only real vanity she had.

Gecko, his fiddle in one hand and his bow in the other, stared at her in open-mouthed admiration and delight, as she ate her sandwich of soldier's bread and fromage à la crème quite unconcerned.

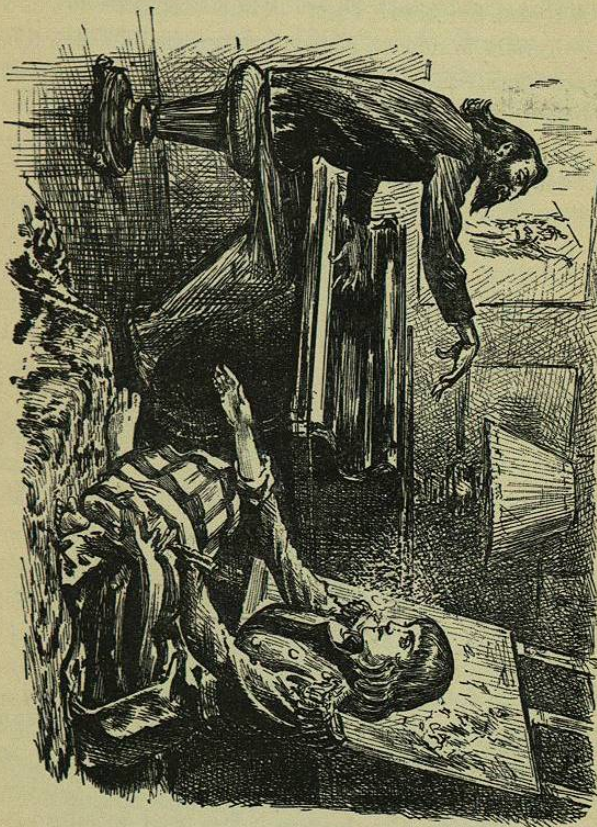
When she had finished she licked the tips of her fingers clean of cheese, and produced a small tobacco-pouch from another military pocket, and made herself a cigarette, and lit it and smoked it, inhaling the smoke in large whiffs, filling her lungs with it, and sending it back through her nostrils, with a look of great beatitude.

Svengali played Schubert's "Rosemonde," and flashed a pair of languishing black eyes at her with intent to kill.

But she didn't even look his way. She looked at Little Billee, at big Taffy, at the Laird, at the casts and studies, at the sky, the chimney-pots over the way, the towers of Notre Dame, just visible from where she sat.

Only when he finished she exclaimed : "Maïe, aïe ! c'est rudement bien tâpé, c'te musique-là ! Seulement, c'est pas gai, vous savez ! Comment q'ça s'appelle ?"

"It is called the 'Rosemonde' of Schubert, mate-moiselle," replied Svengali. (I will translate.)



THE "ROSEMONDE" OF SCHUBERT

"And what's that—Rosemonde?" said she.

"Rosemonde was a princess of Cyprus, matemoiselle, and Cyprus is an island."

"Ah, and Schubert, then—where's that?"

"Schubert is not an island, matemoiselle. Schubert was a compatriot of mine, and made music, and played the piano, just like me."

"Ah, Schubert was a *monsieur*, then. Don't know him; never heard his name."

"That is a pity, matemoiselle. He had some talent. You like this better, perhaps," and he strummed,

"Messieurs les étudiants,
S'en vont à la chaumière
Pour y danser le cancan,"

striking wrong notes, and banging out a bass in a different key—a hideously grotesque performance.

"Yes, I like that better. It's gayer, you know. Is that also composed by a compatriot of yours?" asked the lady.

"Heaven forbid, matemoiselle."

And the laugh was against Svengali.

But the real fun of it all (if there was any) lay in the fact that she was perfectly sincere.

"Are you fond of music?" asked Little Billee.

"Oh, ain't I, just!" she replied. "My father sang like a bird. He was a gentleman and a scholar, my father was. His name was Patrick Michael O'Ferrall, fellow of Trinity, Cambridge. He used to sing 'Ben Bolt.' Do you know 'Ben Bolt'?"

"Oh yes, I know it well," said Little Billee. "It's a very pretty song."

"I can sing it," said Miss O'Ferrall. "Shall I?"

"Oh, certainly, if you will be so kind."

Miss O'Ferrall threw away the end of her cigarette, put her hands on her knees as she sat cross-legged on the model-throne, and sticking her elbows well out, she looked up to the ceiling with a tender, sentimental smile, and sang the touching song,

"Oh, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?
Sweet Alice, with hair so brown?" etc., etc.

As some things are too sad and too deep for tears, so some things are too grotesque and too funny for laughter. Of such a kind was Miss O'Ferrall's performance of "Ben Bolt."

From that capacious mouth and through that high-bridged bony nose there rolled a volume of breathy sound, not loud, but so immense that it seemed to come from all round, to be reverberated from every surface in the studio. She followed more or less the shape of the tune, going up when it rose and down when it fell, but with such immense intervals between the notes as were never dreamed of in any mortal melody. It was as though she could never once have deviated into tune, never once have hit upon a true note, even by a fluke—in fact, as though she were absolutely tone-deaf, and without ear, although she stuck to the time correctly enough.

She finished her song amid an embarrassing silence. The audience didn't quite know whether it were meant for fun or seriously. One wondered if she were not paying out Svengali for his impertinent performance

of "Messieurs les étudiants." If so, it was a capital piece of impromptu tit-for-tat admirably acted, and a very ugly gleam yellowed the tawny black of Svengali's big eyes. He was so fond of making fun of others that he particularly resented being made fun of himself—couldn't endure that any one should ever have the laugh of *him*.

At length Little Billee said: "Thank you so much. It is a capital song."

"Yes," said Miss O'Ferrall. "It's the only song I know, unfortunately. My father used to sing it, just like that, when he felt jolly after hot rum and water. It used to make people cry; he used to cry over it himself. *I* never do. Some people think I can't sing a bit. All I can say is that I've often had to sing it six or seven times running in *lots* of studios. I vary it, you know—not the words, but the tune. You must remember that I've only taken to it lately. Do you know Litolff? Well, he's a great composer, and he came to Durien's the other day, and I sang 'Ben Bolt,' and what do you think he said? Why, he said Madame Alboni couldn't go nearly so high or so low as I did, and that her voice wasn't half so strong. He gave me his word of honor. He said I breathed as natural and straight as a baby, and all I want is to get my voice a little more under control. That's what *he* said."

"Qu'est-ce qu'elle dit?" asked Svengali. And she said it all over again to him in French—quite French French—of the most colloquial kind. Her accent was not that of the Comédie Française, nor yet that of the Faubourg St.-Germain, nor yet that of the pavement.

It was quaint and expressive—"funny without being vulgar."

"Barpleau! he was right, Litolff," said Svengali. "I assure you, matemoiselle, that I have never heard a voice that can equal yours; you have a talent quite exceptional."

She blushed with pleasure, and the others thought him a "beastly cad" for poking fun at the poor girl in such a way. And they thought Monsieur Litolff another.

She then got up and shook the crumbs off her coat, and slipped her feet into Durien's slippers, saying, in English: "Well, I've got to go back. Life ain't all beer and skittles, and more's the pity; but what's the odds, so long as you're happy?"

On her way out she stopped before Taffy's picture—a chiffonnier with his lantern bending over a dust heap. For Taffy was, or thought himself, a passionate realist in those days. He has changed, and now paints nothing but King Arthurs and Guineveres and Lancelots and Elaines and floating Ladies of Shalott.

"That chiffonnier's basket isn't hitched high enough," she remarked. "How could he tap his pick against the rim and make the rag fall into it if it's hitched only half-way up his back? And he's got the wrong sabots, and the wrong lantern; it's *all* wrong."

"Dear me!" said Taffy, turning very red; "you seem to know a lot about it. It's a pity you don't paint, yourself."

"Ah! now you're cross!" said Miss O'Ferrall. "Oh, maïe, aïe!"

She went to the door and paused, looking round

benignly. "What nice teeth you've all three got! That's because you're Englishmen, I suppose, and clean them twice a day. I do too. Trilby O'Ferrall, that's my name, 48 Rue des Pousse-Cailloux!—pose pour l'ensemble, quand ça l'amuse! va-t-en ville, et fait tout ce qui concerne son état! Don't forget. Thanks all, and good-bye."

"En v'là une orichinale," said Svengali.

"I think she's lovely," said Little Billee, the young and tender. "Oh, heavens, what angel's feet! It makes me sick to think she sits for the figure. I'm sure she's quite a lady."

And in five minutes or so, with the point of an old compass, he scratched in white on the dark red wall a three-quarter profile outline of Trilby's left foot, which was perhaps the more perfect poem of the two.

Slight as it was, this little piece of impromptu etching, in its sense of beauty, in its quick seizing of a peculiar individuality, its subtle rendering of a strongly received impression, was already the work of a master. It was Trilby's foot, and nobody else's, nor could have been, and nobody else but Little Billee could have drawn it in just that inspired way.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est, 'Ben Bolt'?" inquired Gecko.

Upon which Little Billee was made by Taffy to sit down to the piano and sing it. He sang it very nicely with his pleasant little throaty English barytone.

It was solely in order that Little Billee should have opportunities of practising this graceful accomplishment of his, for his own and his friends' delectation,



TRILBY'S LEFT FOOT

that the piano had been sent over from London, at great cost to Taffy and the Laird. It had belonged to Taffy's mother, who was dead.

Before he had finished the second verse, Svengali exclaimed: "Mais c'est tout-à-fait chentil! Allons, Gecko, choutez-nous ça!"

And he put his big hands on the piano, over Little Billee's, pushed him off the music-stool with his great gaunt body, and, sitting on it himself, he played a masterly prelude. It was impressive to hear the complicated richness and volume of the sounds he evoked after Little Billee's gentle "tink-a-tink."

And Gecko, cuddling lovingly his violin and closing his upturned eyes, played that simple melody as it had probably never been played before—such passion, such pathos, such a tone!—and they turned it and twisted it, and went from one key to another, playing into each other's hands, Svengali taking the lead; and fugued and canoned and counterpointed and battle-doored and shuttlecocked it, high and low, soft and loud, in minor, in pizzicato, and in sordino—adagio, andante, allegretto, scherzo—and exhausted all its possibilities of beauty; till their susceptible audience of three was all but crazed with delight and wonder; and the masterful Ben Bolt, and his over-tender Alice, and his too submissive friend, and his old school-master so kind and so true, and his long-dead school-mates, and the rustic porch and the mill, and the slab of granite so gray,

"And the dear little nook
By the clear running brook,"

were all magnified into a strange, almost holy poetic dignity and splendor quite undreamed of by whoever wrote the words and music of that unsophisticated little song, which has touched so many simple British hearts that don't know any better—and among them, once, that of the present scribe—long, long ago!

"Sacrepleu! il choue pien, le Checko, hein?" said Svengali, when they had brought this wonderful double improvisation to a climax and a close. "C'est mon élève! che le fais chanter sur son fiolon, c'est comme si c'était *moi* qui chantais! ach! si ch'afais pour teus sous de voix, che serais le bremier chanteur du monte! I cannot sing!" he continued. (I will translate him into English, without attempting to translate his accent, which is a mere matter of judiciously transposing p's and b's, and t's and d's, and f's and v's, and g's and k's, and turning the soft French j into sch, and a pretty language into an ugly one.)

"I cannot sing myself, I cannot play the violin, but I can teach—hein, Gecko? And I have a pupil—hein, Gecko?—la betite Honorine;" and here he leered all round with a leer that was not engaging. "The world shall hear of la betite Honorine some day—hein, Gecko? Listen all—this is how I teach la betite Honorine! Gecko, play me a little accompaniment in pizzicato."

And he pulled out of his pocket a kind of little flexible flageolet (of his own invention, it seems), which he screwed together and put to his lips, and on this humble instrument he played "Ben Bolt," while Gecko accompanied him, using his fiddle as a guitar, his adoring eyes fixed in reverence on his master.

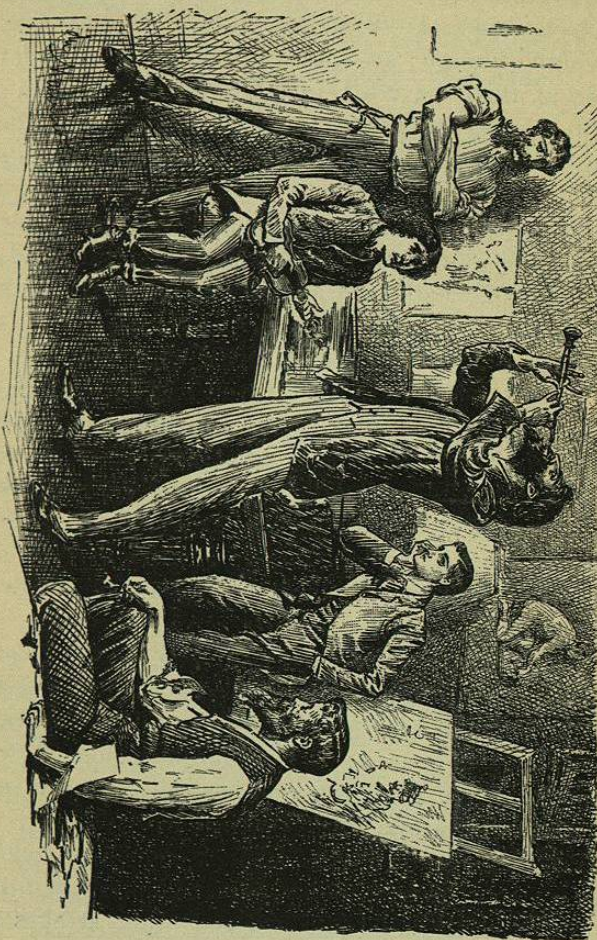
And it would be impossible to render in any words the deftness, the distinction, the grace, power, pathos, and passion with which this truly phenomenal artist executed the poor old twopenny tune on his elastic penny whistle—for it was little more—such thrilling, vibrating, piercing tenderness, now loud and full, a shrill scream of anguish, now soft as a whisper, a mere melodic breath, more human almost than the human voice itself, a perfection unattainable even by Gecko, a master, on an instrument which is the acknowledged king of all!

So that the tear which had been so close to the brink of Little Billee's eye while Gecko was playing now rose and trembled under his eyelid and spilled itself down his nose; and he had to dissemble and surreptitiously mop it up with his little finger as he leaned his chin on his hand, and cough a little husky, unnatural cough—*pour se donner une contenance!*

He had never heard such music as this, never dreamed such music was possible. He was conscious, while it lasted, that he saw deeper into the beauty, the sadness of things, the very heart of them, and their pathetic evanescence, as with a new, inner eye—even into eternity itself, beyond the veil—a vague cosmic vision that faded when the music was over, but left an unfading reminiscence of its having been, and a passionate desire to express the like some day through the plastic medium of his own beautiful art.

When Svengali ended, he leered again on his dumb-struck audience, and said: "That is how I teach la betite Honorine to sing; that is how I teach Gecko

THE FLEXIBLE FLAGOLET



to play; that is how I teach '*il bel canto*'! It was lost, the *bel canto*—but I found it, in a dream—I, and nobody else—I—Svengali—I—I—I! But that is enough of music; let us play at something else—let us play at this!" he cried, jumping up and seizing a foil and bending it against the wall. . . . "Come along, Little Pillee, and I will show you something more you don't know. . . ."

So Little Billee took off coat and waistcoat, donned mask and glove and fencing-shoes, and they had an "assault of arms," as it is nobly called in French, and in which poor Little Billee came off very badly. The German Pole fenced wildly, but well.

Then it was the Laird's turn, and he came off badly too; so then Taffy took up the foil, and redeemed the honor of Great Britain, as became a British hussar and a Man of Blood. For Taffy, by long and assiduous practice in the best school in Paris (and also by virtue of his native aptitudes), was a match for any maître d'armes in the whole French army, and Svengali got "what for."

And when it was time to give up play and settle down to work, others dropped in—French, English, Swiss, German, American, Greek; curtains were drawn and shutters opened; the studio was flooded with light—and the afternoon was healthily spent in athletic and gymnastic exercises till dinner-time.

But Little Billee, who had had enough of fencing and gymnastics for the day, amused himself by filling up with black and white and red chalk-strokes the outline of Trilby's foot on the wall, lest he should forget his fresh vision of it, which was still to him as the

thing itself—an absolute reality, born of a mere glance, a mere chance.

Durien came in and looked over his shoulder, and exclaimed: "Tiens! le pied de Trilby! vous avez fait ça d'après nature?"

"Nong!"

"De mémoire, alors?"

"Wee!"

"Je vous en fais mon compliment! Vous avez eu la main heureuse. Je voudrais bien avoir fait ça, moi! C'est un petit chef-d'œuvre que vous avez fait là—tout bonnement, mon cher! Mais vous élaborez trop. De grâce, n'y touchez plus!"

And Little Billee was pleased, and touched it no more; for Durien was a great sculptor, and sincerity itself.

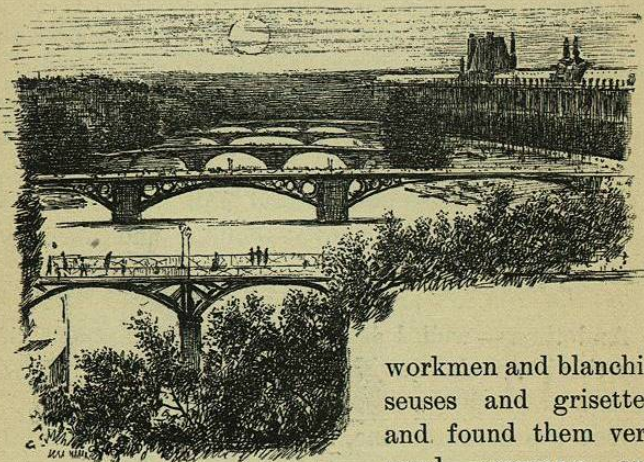
And then—well, I happen to forget what sort of day this particular day turned into at about six of the clock.

If it was decently fine, the most of them went off to dine at the Restaurant de la Couronne, kept by the Père Trin, in the Rue de Monsieur, who gave you of his best to eat and drink for twenty sols Parisis, or one franc in the coin of the empire. Good distending soups, omelets that were only too savory, lentils, red and white beans, meat so dressed and sauced and seasoned that you didn't know whether it was beef or mutton—flesh, fowl, or good red herring—or even bad, for that matter—nor very greatly care.

And just the same lettuce, radishes, and cheese of Gruyère or Brie as you got at the Trois Frères Pro-

vençaux (but not the same butter!). And to wash it all down, generous wine in wooden "brocs"—that stained a lovely æsthetic blue everything it was spilled over.

And you hobnobbed with models, male and female, students of law and medicine, painters and sculptors,



THE BRIDGE OF ARTS

workmen and blanchisseuses and grisettes, and found them very good company, and most improving to your French, if your French was of the usual British kind, and even to some of your manners, if these were very British indeed. And the evening was innocently wound up with billiards, cards, or dominos at the Café du Luxembourg opposite; or at the Théâtre du Luxembourg, in the Rue de Madame, to see funny farces with screamingly droll Englishmen in them; or, still better, at the Jardin Bullier (la Closerie des Lilas), to

see the students dance the cancan, or try and dance it yourself, which is not so easy as it seems; or, best of all, at the Théâtre de l'Odéon, to see Fechter and Madame Doche in the "Dame aux Camélias."

Or, if it were not only fine, but a Saturday afternoon into the bargain, the Laird would put on a necktie and a few other necessary things, and the three friends would walk arm in arm to Taffy's hotel in the Rue de Seine, and wait outside till he had made himself as presentable as the Laird, which did not take very long. And then (Little Billee was always presentable) they would, arm in arm, the huge Taffy in the middle, descend the Rue de Seine and cross a bridge to the Cité, and have a look in at the Morgue. Then back again to the quays on the rive gauche by the Pont Neuf, to wend their way westward; now on one side to look at the print and picture shops and the magasins of bric-à-brac, and haply sometimes buy thereof, now on the other to finger and cheapen the second-hand books for sale on the parapet, and even pick up one or two utterly unwanted bargains, never to be read or opened again.

When they reached the Pont des Arts they would cross it, stopping in the middle to look up the river towards the old Cité and Notre Dame, eastward, and dream unutterable things, and try to utter them. Then, turning westward, they would gaze at the glowing sky and all it glowed upon—the corner of the Tuileries and the Louvre, the many bridges, the Chamber of Deputies, the golden river narrowing its perspective and broadening its bed as it went flowing and winding on its way between Passy and Grenelle to

St. Cloud, to Rouen, to the Havre, to England perhaps—where *they* didn't want to be just then; and they would try and express themselves to the effect that life was uncommonly well worth living in that particular city at that particular time of the day and year and century, at that particular epoch of their own mortal and uncertain lives.

Then, still arm in arm and chatting gayly, across the court-yard of the Louvre, through gilded gates well guarded by reckless imperial Zouaves, up the arcaded Rue de Rivoli as far as the Rue Castiglione, where they would stare with greedy eyes at the window of the great corner pastry-cook, and marvel at the beautiful assortment of bonbons, pralines, dragées, marrons glacés—saccharine, crystalline substances of all kinds and colors, as charming to look at as an illumination; precious stones, delicately frosted sweets, pearls and diamonds so arranged as to melt in the mouth; especially, at this particular time of the year, the monstrous Easter-eggs of enchanting hue, enshrined like costly jewels in caskets of satin and gold; and the Laird, who was well read in his English classics and liked to show it, would opine that “they managed these things better in France.”

Then across the street by a great gate into the Allée des Feuillants, and up to the Place de la Concorde—to gaze, but quite without base envy, at the smart people coming back from the Bois de Boulogne. For even in Paris “carriage people” have a way of looking bored, of taking their pleasure sadly, of having nothing to say to each other, as though the vibration of so many wheels all rolling home the same way

every afternoon had hypnotized them into silence, idiocy, and melancholia.

And our three musketeers of the brush would speculate on the vanity of wealth and rank and fashion; on the satiety that follows in the wake of self-indulgence and overtakes it; on the weariness of the pleasures that become a toil—as if they knew all about it, had found it all out for themselves, and nobody else had ever found it out before!

Then they found out something else—namely, that the sting of healthy appetite was becoming intolerable; so they would betake themselves to an English eating-house in the Rue de la Madeleine (on the left-hand side near the top), where they would renovate their strength and their patriotism on British beef and beer, and household bread, and bracing, biting, stinging yellow mustard, and horseradish, and noble apple-pie, and Cheshire cheese; and get through as much of these in an hour or so as they could for talking, talking, talking; such happy talk! as full of sanguine hope and enthusiasm, of cocksure commendation or condemnation of all painters, dead or alive, of modest but firm belief in themselves and each other, as a Paris Easter-egg is full of sweets and pleasantness (for the young).

And then a stroll on the crowded, well-lighted boulevards, and a bock at the café there, at a little three-legged marble table right out on the genial asphalt pavement, still talking nineteen to the dozen.

Then home by dark, old, silent streets and some deserted bridge to their beloved Latin quarter, the