

Morgue gleaming cold and still and fatal in the pale lamplight, and Notre Dame pricking up its watchful twin towers, which have looked down for so many centuries on so many happy, sanguine, expansive youths walking arm in arm by twos and threes, and forever talking, talking, talking. . . .

The Laird and Little Billee would see Taffy safe to the door of his *hôtel garni* in the Rue de Seine, where they would find much to say to each other before they said good-night — so much that Taffy and Little Billee would see the Laird safe to *his* door, in the Place St. Anatole des Arts. And then a discussion would arise between Taffy and the Laird on the immortality of the soul, let us say, or the exact meaning of the word "gentleman," or the relative merits of Dickens and Thackeray, or some such recondite and quite unhackneyed theme, and Taffy and the Laird would escort Little Billee to *his* door, in the Place de l'Odéon, and he would re-escort them both back again, and so on till any hour you please.

Or again, if it rained, and Paris through the studio window loomed lead-colored, with its shiny slate roofs under skies that were ashen and sober, and the wild west wind made woful music among the chimney-pots, and little gray waves ran up the river the wrong way, and the Morgue looked chill and dark and wet, and almost uninviting (even to three healthy-minded young Britons), they would resolve to dine and spend a happy evening at home.

Little Billee, taking with him three francs (or even four), would dive into back streets and buy a yard or



"THREE MUSKETEERS OF THE BRUSH"

so of crusty new bread, well burned on the flat side, a fillet of beef, a litre of wine, potatoes and onions, butter, a little cylindrical cheese called "bondon de Neufchâtel," tender curly lettuce, with chervil, parsley, spring onions, and other fine herbs, and a pod of garlic, which would be rubbed on a crust of bread to flavor things with.

Taffy would lay the cloth Englishwise, and also make the salad, for which, like everybody else I ever met, he had a special receipt of his own (putting in the oil first and the vinegar after); and indeed his salads were quite as good as everybody else's.

The Laird, bending over the stove, would cook the onions and beef into a savory Scotch mess so cunningly that you could not taste the beef for the onions—nor always the onions for the garlic!

And they would dine far better than at le Père Trin's, far better than at the English Restaurant in the Rue de la Madeleine—better than anywhere else on earth!

And after dinner, what coffee, roasted and ground on the spot, what pipes and cigarettes of "caporal," by the light of the three shaded lamps, while the rain beat against the big north window, and the wind went howling round the quaint old mediæval tower at the corner of the Rue Vieille des Mauvais Ladres (the old street of the bad lepers), and the damp logs hissed and crackled in the stove!

What jolly talk into the small hours! Thackeray and Dickens again, and Tennyson and Byron (who was "not dead yet" in those days); and Titian and Velasquez, and young Millais and Holman Hunt (just

out); and Monsieur Ingres and Monsieur Delacroix, and Balzac and Stendahl and George Sand; and the good Dumas! and Edgar Allan Poe; and the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. . . .

Good, honest, innocent, artless prattle—not of the wisest, perhaps, nor redolent of the very highest culture (which, by-the-way, can mar as well as make), nor leading to any very practical result; but quite pathetically sweet from the sincerity and fervor of its convictions, a profound belief in their importance, and a proud trust in their life-long immutability.

Oh, happy days and happy nights, sacred to art and friendship! oh, happy times of careless impecuniosity, and youth and hope and health and strength and freedom—with all Paris for a playground, and its dear old unregenerate Latin quarter for a workshop and a home!

And, up to then, no kill-joy complications of love!

No, decidedly no! Little Billee had never known such happiness as this—never even dreamed of its possibility.

A day or two after this, our opening day, but in the afternoon, when the fencing and boxing had begun and the trapeze was in full swing, Trilby's "Milk below!" was sounded at the door, and she appeared—clothed this time in her right mind, as it seemed: a tall, straight, flat-backed, square-shouldered, deep-chested, full-bosomed young grisette, in a snowy frilled cap, a neat black gown and white apron, pretty faded, well-darned, brown stockings, and well-worn, soft, gray, square-toed slippers of list, without heels and originally shapeless; but which her feet, uncompromising

and inexorable as boot-trees, had ennobled into everlasting classic shapeliness, and stamped with an unforgettable individuality, as does a beautiful hand its well-worn glove—a fact Little Billee was not slow to perceive, with a curious conscious thrill that was only half æsthetic.

Then he looked into her freckled face, and met the kind and tender mirthfulness of her gaze and the plucky frankness of her fine wide smile with a thrill that was not æsthetic at all (nor the reverse), but all of the heart. And in one of his quick flashes of intuitive insight he divined far down beneath the shining surface of those eyes (which seemed for a moment to reflect only a little image of himself against the sky beyond the big north window) a well of sweetness; and floating somewhere in the midst of it the very heart of compassion, generosity, and warm sisterly love; and under that—alas! at the bottom of all—a thin slimy layer of sorrow and shame. And just as long as it takes for a tear to rise and gather and choke itself back again, this sudden revelation shook his nervous little frame with a pang of pity, and the knightly wish to help. But he had no time to indulge in such soft emotions. Trilby was met on her entrance by friendly greetings on all sides.

“Tiens! c’est la grande Trilby!” exclaimed Jules Guinot through his fencing-mask. “Comment! t’es déjà debout après hier soir? Avons-nous assez rigolé chez Mathieu, hein? Crénom d’un nom, quelle noce! V’là une crémaillère qui peut se vanter d’être diantrement bien pendue, j’espère! Et la petite santé, c’ matin?”

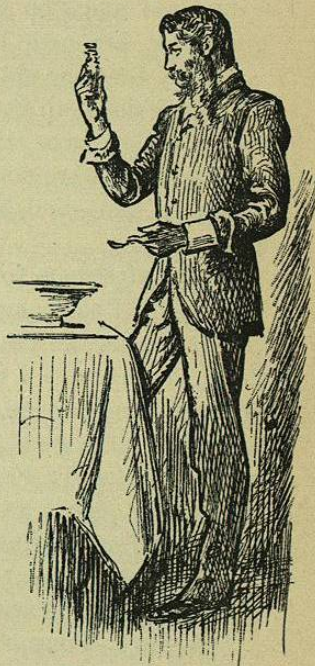
“Hé, hé! mon vieux,” answered Trilby. “Ça boulotte, apparemment! Et toi? et Victorine? Comment qu’a s’ porte à c’t’heure? Elle avait un fier coup d’chasselas! c’est-y jobard, hein? de s’ fich ’paf comme ça d’avant l’ monde! Tiens, v’là, Gontran! ça marche-t-y, Gontran, Zouzou d’ mon cœur?”

“Comme sur des roulettes, ma biche!” said Gontran, *alias* l’ Zouzou—a corporal in the Zouaves. “Mais tu t’es donc mise chiffonnière, à présent? T’as fait banqueroute?”

(For Trilby had a chiffonnier’s basket strapped on her back, and carried a pick and lantern.)

“Mais-z-oui, mon bon!” she said. “Dame! pas d’ veine hier soir! t’as bien vu! Dans la dêche jusqu’aux omoplates, mon pauv’ caporal-sous-off! nom d’un canon—faut bien vivre, s’ pas?”

Little Billee’s heart sluices had closed during this interchange of courtesies. He felt it to be of a very slangy kind, because he couldn’t understand a word of it, and he hated slang. All he could make out was the free use of the “tu” and the “toi,” and he knew



TAFFY MAKES THE SALAD

enough French to know that this implied a great familiarity, which he misunderstood.

So that Jules Guinot's polite inquiries whether Trilby were none the worse after Mathieu's house-warming (which was so jolly), Trilby's kind solicitude about the health of Victorine, who had very foolishly taken a drop too much on that occasion, Trilby's mock regrets that her own bad luck at cards had made it necessary that she should retrieve her fallen fortunes by rag-picking—all these innocent, playful little amenities (which I have tried to write down just as they were spoken) were couched in a language that was as Greek to him—and he felt out of it, jealous and indignant.

“Good-afternoon to you, Mr. Taffy,” said Trilby, in English. “I've brought you these objects of art and virtue to make the peace with you. They're the real thing, you know. I borrowed 'em from le père Martin, chiffonnier en gros et en détail, grand officier de la Légion d'Honneur, membre de l'Institut, et cetera, treize bis, Rue du Puits d'Amour, rez-de-chaussée, au fond de la cour à gauche, vis-à-vis le mont-de-piété! He's one of my intimate friends, and—”

“You don't mean to say you're the intimate friend of a *rag-picker*?” exclaimed the good Taffy.

“Oh yes! Pourquoi pas? I never brag; besides, there ain't any beastly pride about le père Martin,” said Trilby, with a wink. “You'd soon find that out if *you* were an intimate friend of his. This is how it's put on. Do you see? If *you*'ll put it on I'll fasten it for you, and show you how to hold the lantern and handle the pick. You may come to it yourself some

day, you know. Il ne faut jurer de rien! Père Martin will pose for you in person, if you like. He's generally disengaged in the afternoon. He's poor but honest, you know, and very nice and clean; quite the gentleman. He likes artists, especially English—they pay. His wife sells bric-à-brac and old masters: Rembrandts from two francs fifty upwards. They've got a little grandson—a love of a child. I'm his god-mother. You know French, I suppose?”

“Oh yes,” said Taffy, much abashed. “I'm very much obliged to you—very much indeed—a—I—a—”

“Y a pas d' quoi!” said Trilby, divesting herself of her basket and putting it, with the pick and lantern, in a corner. “Et maintenant, le temps d'absorber une fine de fin sec [a cigarette] et je m' la brise [I'm off]. On m'attend à l'Ambassade d'Autriche. Et puis zut! Allez toujours, mes enfants. En avant la boxe!”

She sat herself down cross-legged on the model-throne, and made herself a cigarette, and watched the fencing and boxing. Little Billee brought her a chair, which she refused; so he sat down on it himself by her side, and talked to her, just as he would have talked to any young lady at home—about the weather, about Verdi's new opera (which she had never heard), the impressiveness of Notre Dame, and Victor Hugo's beautiful romance (which she had never read), the mysterious charm of Leonardo da Vinci's Lisa Gioconda's smile (which she had never seen)—by all of which she was no doubt rather tickled and a little embarrassed, perhaps also a little touched.

Taffy brought her a cup of coffee, and conversed

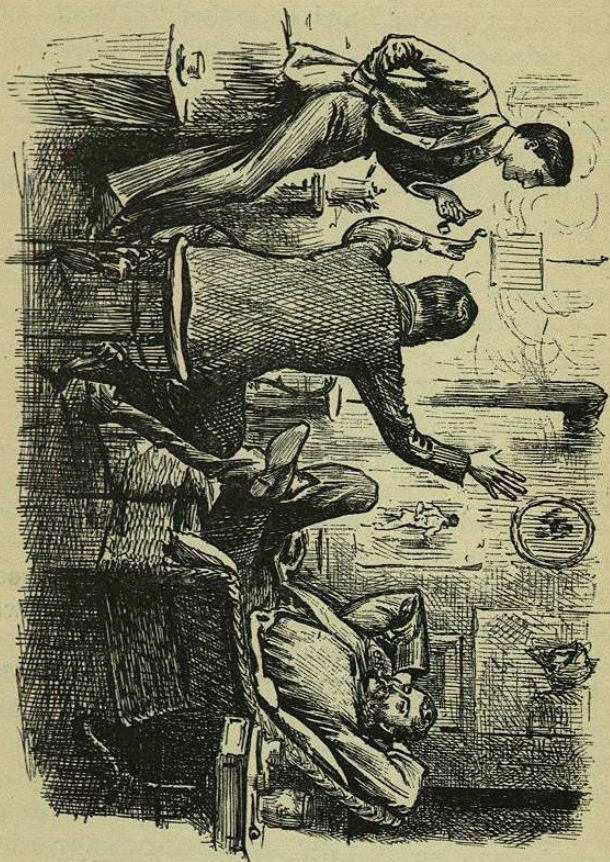
with her in polite formal French, very well and carefully pronounced; and the Laird tried to do likewise. *His* French was of that honest English kind that breaks up the stiffness of even an English party; and his jolly manners were such as to put an end to all shyness and constraint, and make self-consciousness impossible.

Others dropped in from neighboring studios—the usual cosmopolite crew. It was a perpetual come and go in this particular studio between four and six in the afternoon.

There were ladies too, *en cheveux*, in caps and bonnets, some of whom knew Trilby, and thee'd and thou'd with familiar and friendly affection, while others mademoiselle'd her with distant politeness, and were mademoiselle'd and madame'd back again. "Absolument comme à l'Ambassade d'Autriche," as Trilby observed to the Laird, with a British wink that was by no means ambassadorial.

Then Svengali came and made some of his grandest music, which was as completely thrown away on Trilby as fireworks on a blind beggar, for all she held her tongue so piously.

Fencing and boxing and trapezing seemed to be more in her line; and indeed, to a tone-deaf person, Taffy lunging his full spread with a foil, in all the splendor of his long, lithe, youthful strength, was a far gainlier sight than Svengali at the key-board flashing his languid bold eyes with a sickly smile from one listener to another, as if to say: "N'est-ce pas que che suis peau! N'est-ce pas que ch'ai tu chénie? N'est-ce pas que che suis suplime, enfin?"



"THE GLORY THAT WAS GREECE"

Then enter Durien the sculptor, who had been presented with a baignoire at the Odéon to see "La Dame aux Camélias," and he invited Trilby and another lady to dine with him "au cabaret" and share his box.

So Trilby didn't go to the Austrian embassy after all, as the Laird observed to Little Billee, with such a good imitation of her wink that Little Billee was bound to laugh.

But Little Billee was not inclined for fun; a dullness, a sense of disenchantment, had come over him; as he expressed it to himself, with pathetic self-pity:

"A feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain."

And the sadness, if he had known, was that all beautiful young women with kind sweet faces and noble figures and goddess-like extremities should not be good and pure as they were beautiful; and the longing was a longing that Trilby could be turned into a young lady—say the vicar's daughter in a little Devonshire village—his sister's friend and co-teacher at the Sunday-school; a simple, pure, and pious maiden of gentle birth.

For he adored piety in woman, although he was not pious by any means. His inarticulate, intuitive perceptions were not of form and color secrets only, but strove to pierce the veil of deeper mysteries in impetuous and dogmatic boyish scorn of all received interpretations. For he flattered himself that he possessed the

philosophical and scientific mind, and piqued himself on thinking clearly, and was intolerant of human inconsistency.

That small reserve portion of his ever-active brain which should have lain fallow while the rest of it was at work or play, perpetually plagued itself about the mysteries of life and death, and was forever propounding unanswerable arguments against the Christian belief, through a kind of inverted sympathy with the believer. Fortunately for his friends, Little Billee was both shy and discreet, and very tender of other people's feelings; so he kept all his immature juvenile agnosticism to himself.

To atone for such ungainly strong-mindedness in one so young and tender, he was the slave of many little traditional observances which have no very solid foundation in either science or philosophy. For instance, he wouldn't walk under a ladder for worlds, nor sit down thirteen to dinner, nor have his hair cut on a Friday, and was quite upset if he happened to see the new moon through glass. And he believed in lucky and unlucky numbers, and dearly loved the sights and scents and sounds of high-mass in some dim old French cathedral, and found them secretly comforting.

Let us hope that he sometimes laughed at himself, if only in his sleeve!

And with all his keenness of insight into life he had a well-brought-up, middle-class young Englishman's belief in the infallible efficacy of gentle birth—for gentle he considered his own and Taffy's and the Laird's, and that of most of the good people he had lived among in England—all people, in short, whose

two parents and four grandparents had received a liberal education and belonged to the professional class. And with this belief he combined (or thought he did) a proper democratic scorn for bloated dukes and lords, and even poor inoffensive baronets, and all the landed gentry—everybody who was born an inch higher up than himself.

It is a fairly good middle-class social creed, if you can only stick to it through life in despite of life's experience. It fosters independence and self-respect, and not a few stodgy practical virtues as well. At all events, it keeps you out of bad company, which is to be found both above and below.

And all this melancholy preoccupation, on Little Billee's part, from the momentary gleam and dazzle of a pair of over-perfect feet in an over-æsthetic eye, too much enamoured of mere form!

Reversing the usual process, he had idealized from the base upward!

Many of us, older and wiser than Little Billee, have seen in lovely female shapes the outer garment of a lovely female soul. The instinct which guides us to do this is, perhaps, a right one, more often than not. But more often than not, also, lovely female shapes are terrible complicators of the difficulties and dangers of this earthly life, especially for their owner, and more especially if she be a humble daughter of the people, poor and ignorant, of a yielding nature, too quick to love and trust. This is all so true as to be trite—so trite as to be a common platitude!

A modern teller of tales, most widely (and most justly) popular, tells us of heroes and heroines who,

like Lord Byron's corsair, were linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes. And so dexterously does he weave his story that the young person may read it and learn nothing but good.

My poor heroine was the converse of these engaging criminals; she had all the virtues but one; but the virtue she lacked (the very one of all that plays the title-rôle, and gives its generic name to all the rest of that goodly company) was of such a kind that I have found it impossible so to tell her history as to make it quite fit and proper reading for the ubiquitous young person so dear to us all.

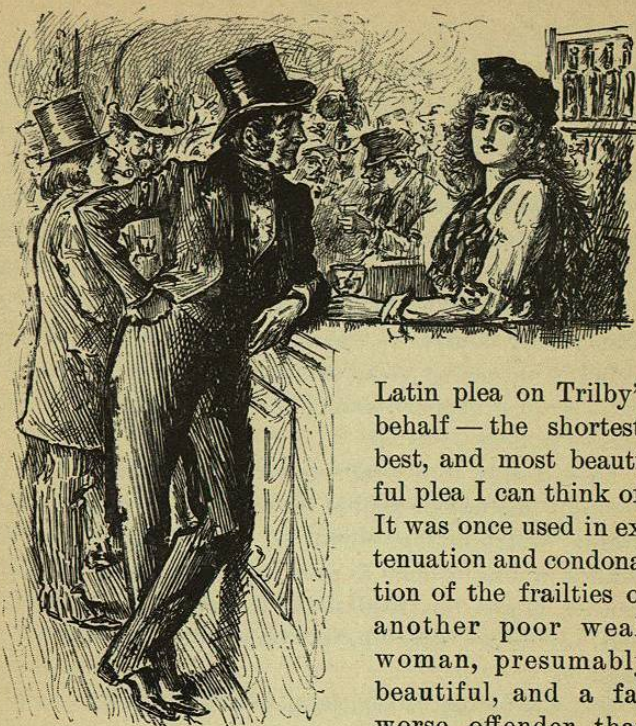
Most deeply to my regret. For I had fondly hoped it might one day be said of me that whatever my other literary shortcomings might be, I at least had never penned a line which a pure-minded young British mother might not read aloud to her little blue-eyed babe as it lies sucking its little bottle in its little bassinet.

Fate has willed it otherwise.

Would indeed that I could duly express poor Trilby's one shortcoming in some not too familiar medium—in Latin or Greek, let us say—lest the young person (in this ubiquitousness of hers, for which Heaven be praised) should happen to pry into these pages when her mother is looking another way.

Latin and Greek are languages the young person should not be taught to understand—seeing that they are highly improper languages, deservedly dead—in which pagan bards who should have known better have sung the filthy loves of their gods and goddesses.

But at least am I scholar enough to enter one little



TRILBY'S FOREBEARS

Latin plea on Trilby's behalf — the shortest, best, and most beautiful plea I can think of. It was once used in extenuation and condonation of the frailties of another poor weak woman, presumably beautiful, and a far worse offender than Trilby, but who, like Trilby, repented of her

ways, and was most justly forgiven—

“Quia multum amavit!”

Whether it be an aggravation of her misdeeds or an extenuating circumstance, no pressure of want, no temptations of greed or vanity, had ever been factors in urging Trilby on her downward career after her first false step in that direction—the result of ignorance, bad advice (from her mother, of all people in the

world), and base betrayal. She might have lived in guilty splendor had she chosen, but her wants were few. She had no vanity, and her tastes were of the simplest, and she earned enough to gratify them all, and to spare.

So she followed love for love's sake only, now and then, as she would have followed art if she had been a man—capriciously, desultorily, more in a frolicsome spirit of camaraderie than anything else. Like an amateur, in short—a distinguished amateur who is too proud to sell his pictures, but willingly gives one away now and then to some highly valued and much admiring friend.

Sheer gayety of heart and genial good-fellowship, the difficulty of saying nay to earnest pleading. She was “bonne camarade et bonne fille” before everything. Though her heart was not large enough to harbor more than one light love at a time (even in that Latin quarter of genially capacious hearts), it had room for many warm friendships; and she was the warmest, most helpful, and most compassionate of friends, far more serious and faithful in friendship than in love.

Indeed, she might almost be said to possess a virginal heart, so little did she know of love's heart-aches and raptures and torments and clings and jealousies.

With her it was lightly come and lightly go, and never come back again; as one or two, or perhaps three, picturesque bohemians of the brush or chisel had found, at some cost to their vanity and self-esteem; perhaps even to a deeper feeling—who knows?

Trilby's father, as she had said, had been a gentleman, the son of a famous Dublin physician and friend of George the Fourth's. He had been a fellow of his college, and had entered holy orders. He also had all the virtues but one; he was a drunkard, and began to drink quite early in life. He soon left the Church, and became a classical tutor, and failed through this besetting sin of his, and fell into disgrace.

Then he went to Paris, and picked up a few English pupils there, and lost them, and earned a precarious livelihood from hand to mouth, anyhow; and sank from bad to worse.

And when his worst was about reached, he married the famous tartaned and tamoshantered bar-maid at the Montagnards Écossais, in the Rue du Paradis Poissonnière (a very fishy paradise indeed); she was a most beautiful Highland lassie of low degree, and she managed to support him, or helped him to support himself, for ten or fifteen years. Trilby was born to them, and was dragged up in some way—*à la grâce de Dieu!*

Patrick O'Ferrall soon taught his wife to drown all care and responsibility in his own simple way, and opportunities for doing so were never lacking to her.

Then he died, and left a posthumous child—born ten months after his death, alas! and whose birth cost its mother her life.

Then Trilby became a *blanchisseuse de fin*, and in two or three years came to grief through her trust in a friend of her mother's. Then she became a model besides, and was able to support her little brother, whom she dearly loved.

At the time this story begins, this small waif and stray was "en pension" with le père Martin, the rag-picker, and his wife, the dealer in bric-à-brac and inexpensive old masters. They were very good people, and had grown fond of the child, who was beautiful to look at, and full of pretty tricks and pluck and cleverness—a popular favorite in the Rue du Puits d'Amour and its humble neighborhood.

Trilby, for some freak, always chose to speak of him as her godson, and as the grandchild of le père et la mère Martin, so that these good people had almost grown to believe he really belonged to them.

And almost every one else believed that he was the child of Trilby (in spite of her youth), and she was so fond of him that she didn't mind in the least.

He might have had a worse home.

La mère Martin was pious, or pretended to be; le père Martin was the reverse. But they were equally good for their kind, and though coarse and ignorant and unscrupulous in many ways (as was natural enough), they were gifted in a very full measure with the saving graces of love and charity, especially he. And if people are to be judged by their works, this worthy pair are no doubt both equally well compensated by now for the trials and struggles of their sordid earthly life.

So much for Trilby's parentage.

And as she sat and wept at Madame Doche's impersonation of la Dame aux Camélias (with her hand in Durien's) she vaguely remembered, as in a waking dream, now the noble presence of Taffy as he towered cool and erect, foil in hand, gallantly waiting for his

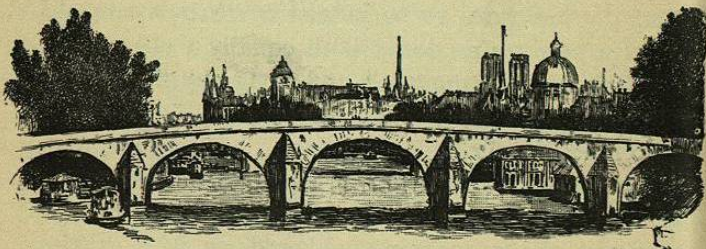
adversary to breathe, now the beautiful sensitive face of Little Billee and his deferential courtesy.

And during the *entr'actes* her heart went out in friendship to the jolly Scotch Laird of Cockpen, who came out now and then with such terrible French oaths and abominable expletives (and in the presence of ladies, too!), without the slightest notion of what they meant.

For the Laird had a quick ear, and a craving to be colloquial and idiomatic before everything else, and made many awkward and embarrassing mistakes.

It would be with him as though a polite Frenchman should say to a fair daughter of Albion, "D— my eyes, mees, your tea is getting — cold; let me tell that good old — of a Jules to bring you another cup."

And so forth, till time and experience taught him better. It is perhaps well for him that his first experiments in conversational French were made in the unconventional circle of the Place St. Anatole des Arts.



Part Second

"Dieu ! qu'il fait bon la regarder,
La gracieuse, bonne et belle !
Pour les grands biens qui sont en elle
Chacun est prêt de la louer."

Nobody knew exactly how Svengali lived, and very few knew where (or why). He occupied a roomy dilapidated garret, au sixième, in the Rue Tire-Liard; with a truckle-bed and a piano-forte for furniture, and very little else.

He was poor; for in spite of his talent he had not yet made his mark in Paris. His manners may have been accountable for this. He would either fawn or bully, and could be grossly impertinent. He had a kind of cynical humor, which was more offensive than amusing, and always laughed at the wrong thing, at the wrong time, in the wrong place. And his laughter was always derisive and full of malice. And his egotism and conceit were not to be borne; and then he was both tawdry and dirty in his person; more greasily, mattedly unkempt than even a really successful pianist has any right to be, even in the best society.

He was not a nice man, and there was no pathos in his poverty—a poverty that was not honorable, and need not have existed at all; for he was constantly receiving supplies from his own people in Austria—his old father and mother, his sisters, his cousins, and his