

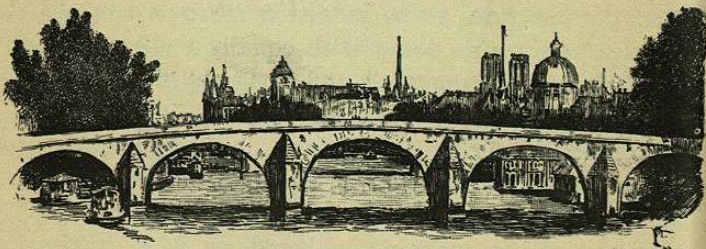
adversary to breathe, now the beautiful sensitive face of Little Billee and his deferential courtesy.

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

aunts, hard-working, frugal folk of whom he was the pride and the darling.

He had but one virtue—his love of his art; or, rather, his love of himself as a master of his art—the master; for he despised, or affected to despise, all other musicians, living or dead—even those whose work he interpreted so divinely, and pitied them for not hearing Svengali give utterance to their music, which of course they could not utter themselves.

“Ils safent tous un peu toucher du biâno, mais pas grand’chose!”

He had been the best pianist of his time at the Conservatory in Leipsic; and, indeed, there was perhaps some excuse for this overweening conceit, since he was able to lend a quite peculiar individual charm of his own to any music he played, except the highest and best of all, in which he conspicuously failed.

He had to draw the line just above Chopin, where he reached his highest level. It will not do to lend your own quite peculiar individual charm to Handel and Bach and Beethoven; and Chopin is not bad as a *pis-aller*.

He had ardently wished to sing, and had studied hard to that end in Germany, in Italy, in France, with the forlorn hope of evolving from some inner recess a voice to sing with. But nature had been singularly harsh to him in this one respect—inexorable. He was absolutely without voice, beyond the harsh, hoarse, weak raven’s croak he used to speak with, and no method availed to make one for him. But he grew to understand the human voice as perhaps no one has understood it—before or since.

So in his head he went forever singing, singing, singing, as probably no human nightingale has ever yet been able to sing out loud for the glory and delight of his fellow-mortals; making unheard heavenly melody of the cheapest, trivialest tunes—tunes of the café concert, tunes of the nursery, the shop-parlor, the guard-room, the school-room, the pothouse, the slum. There was nothing so humble, so base even, but what his magic could transform it into the rarest beauty without altering a note. This seems impossible, I know. But if it didn’t, where would the magic come in?

Whatever of heart or conscience—pity, love, tenderness, manliness, courage, reverence, charity—endowed him at his birth had been swallowed up by this one faculty, and nothing of them was left for the common uses of life. He poured them all into his little flexible flag-eolet.

Svengali playing Chopin on the piano-forte, even (or especially) Svengali playing “Ben Bolt” on that penny whistle of his, was as one of the heavenly host.



Svengali walking up and down the earth seeking whom “AS BAD AS THEY MAKE ’EM” he might cheat, betray, exploit, borrow money from, make brutal fun of, bully if he dared, cringe to if he must—man, woman, child, or dog—was about as bad as they make ’em.

To earn a few pence when he couldn’t borrow them

he played accompaniments at café concerts, and even then he gave offence; for in his contempt for the singer he would play too loud, and embroider his accompaniments with brilliant improvisations of his own, and lift his hands on high and bring them down with a bang in the sentimental parts, and shake his dirty mane and shrug his shoulders, and smile and leer at the audience, and do all he could to attract their attention to himself. He also gave a few music lessons (not at ladies' schools, let us hope), for which he was not well paid, presumably, since he was always without the sou, always borrowing money, that he never paid back, and exhausting the pockets and the patience of one acquaintance after another.

He had but two friends. There was Gecko, who lived in a little garret close by in the Impasse des Ramoneurs, and who was second violin in the orchestra of the Gymnase, and shared his humble earnings with his master, to whom, indeed, he owed his great talent, not yet revealed to the world.

Svengali's other friend and pupil was (or rather had been) the mysterious Honorine, of whose conquest he was much given to boast, hinting that she was "une jeune femme du monde." This was not the case. Mademoiselle Honorine Cahen (better known in the quartier latin as Mimi la Salope) was a dirty, drabby little dolly-mop of a Jewess, a model for the figure—a very humble person indeed, socially.

She was, however, of a very lively disposition, and had a charming voice, and a natural gift of singing so sweetly that you forgot her accent, which was that of the "tout ce qu'il y a de plus canaille."

She used to sit at Carrel's, and during the pose she would sing. When Little Billee first heard her he was so fascinated that "it made him sick to think she sat for the figure"—an effect, by-the-way, that was always produced upon him by all specially attractive figure models of the gentler sex, for he had a reverence for woman. And before everything else, he had for the singing woman an absolute worship. He was especially thrall to the contralto—the deep low voice that breaks and changes in the middle and soars all at once into a magnified angelic boy treble. It pierced through his ears to his heart, and stirred his very vitals.

He had once heard Madame Alboni, and it had been an epoch in his life; he would have been an easy prey to the sirens! Even beauty paled before the lovely female voice singing in the middle of the note—the nightingale killed the bird-of-paradise.

I need hardly say that poor Mimi la Salope had not the voice of Madame Alboni, nor the art; but it was a beautiful voice of its little kind, always in the very middle of the note, and her artless art had its quick seduction.

She sang little songs of Béranger's—"Grand'mère, parlez-nous de lui!" or "T'en souviens-tu? disait un capitaine—" or "Enfants, c'est moi qui suis Lisette!" and such like pretty things, that almost brought the tears to Little Billee's easily moistened eyes.

But soon she would sing little songs that were not by Béranger—little songs with slang words Little Billee hadn't French enough to understand; but from the kind of laughter with which the points were re-

ceived by the "rapins" in Carrel's studio he guessed these little songs were vile, though the touching little voice was as that of the seraphim still; and he knew the pang of disenchantment and vicarious shame.

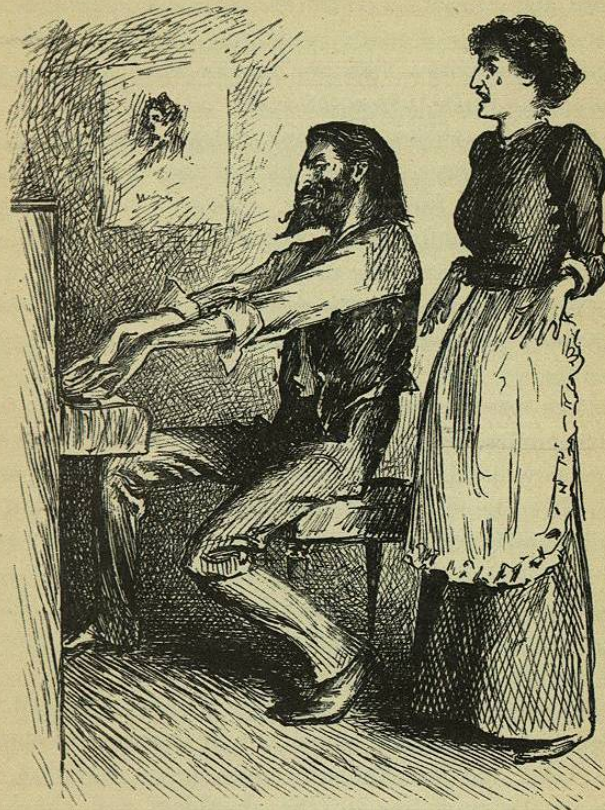
Svengali had heard her sing at the Brasserie des Porcherons in the Rue du Crapaud-volant, and had volunteered to teach her; and she went to see him in his garret, and he played to her, and leered and ogled, and flashed his bold, black, beady Jew's eyes into hers, and she straightway mentally prostrated herself in reverence and adoration before this dazzling specimen of her race.

So that her sordid, mercenary little gutter-draggled soul was filled with the sight and the sound of him, as of a lordly, godlike, shawm-playing, cymbal-banging hero and prophet of the Lord God of Israel—David and Saul in one!

And then he set himself to teach her—kindly and patiently at first, calling her sweet little pet names—his "Rose of Sharon," his "pearl of Pabylon," his "cazelle-eyed liddle Cherusalem skylark"—and promised her that she should be the queen of the nightingales.

But before he could teach her anything he had to unteach her all she knew; her breathing, the production of her voice, its emission—everything was wrong. She worked indefatigably to please him, and soon succeeded in forgetting all the pretty little sympathetic tricks of voice and phrasing Mother Nature had taught her.

But though she had an exquisite ear, she had no real musical intelligence—no intelligence of any kind



"A VOICE HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND"

except about sous and centimes; she was as stupid as a little downy owl, and her voice was just a light native warble, a throstle's pipe, all in the head and nose and throat (a voice he *didn't* understand, for once), a thing of mere youth and health and bloom and high spirits—like her beauty, such as it was—*beauté du diable, beauté damnée*.

She did her very best, and practised all she could in this new way, and sang herself hoarse: she scarcely ate or slept for practising. He grew harsh and impatient and coldly severe, and of course she loved him all the more; and the more she loved him the more nervous she got and the worse she sang. Her voice cracked; her ear became demoralized; her attempts to vocalize grew almost as comical as Trilby's. So that he lost his temper completely, and called her terrible names, and pinched and punched her with his big bony hands till she wept worse than Niobe, and borrowed money of her—five-franc pieces, even francs and demifrancs—which he never paid her back; and browbeat and bullied and ballyragged her till she went quite mad for love of him, and would have jumped out of his sixth-floor window to give him a moment's pleasure!

He did not ask her to do this—it never occurred to him, and would have given him no pleasure to speak of. But one fine Sabbath morning (a Saturday, of course) he took her by the shoulders and chucked her, neck and crop, out of his garret, with the threat that if she ever dared to show her face there again he would denounce her to the police,—an awful threat to the likes of poor Mimi la Salope!

“For where did all those five-franc pieces come from—*hein?*—with which she had tried to pay for all the singing lessons that had been thrown away upon her? Not from merely sitting to painters—*hein?*”

Thus the little gazelle-eyed Jerusalem skylark went back to her native streets again—a mere mud-lark of the Paris slums—her wings clipped, her spirit quenched and broken, and with no more singing left in her than a common or garden sparrow—not so much!

And so, no more of “la betite Honorine!”

The morning after this adventure Svengali woke up in his garret with a tremendous longing to spend a happy day; for it was a Sunday, and a very fine one.

He made a long arm and reached his waistcoat and trousers off the floor, and emptied the contents of their pockets on to his tattered blanket; no silver, no gold, only a few sous and two-sou pieces, just enough to pay for a meagre *premier déjeuner!*

He had cleared out Gecko the day before, and spent the proceeds (ten francs, at least) in one night's riotous living—pleasures in which Gecko had had no share; and he could think of no one to borrow money from but Little Billee, Taffy, and the Laird, whom he had neglected and left untapped for days.

So he slipped into his clothes, and looked at himself in what remained of a little zinc mirror, and found that his forehead left little to be desired, but that his eyes and temples were decidedly grimy. Wherefore, he poured a little water out of a little jug into a little

basin, and twisting the corner of his pocket-handkerchief round his dirty forefinger, he delicately dipped it, and removed the offending stains. His fingers, he thought, would do very well for another day or two as they were; he ran them through his matted black mane, pushed it behind his ears, and gave it the twist he liked (and that was so much disliked by his English friends). Then he put on his *béret* and his velvet-reen cloak, and went forth into the sunny streets, with a sense of the fragrance and freedom and pleasantness of Sunday morning in Paris in the month of May.

He found Little Billee sitting in a zinc hip-bath, busy with soap and sponge; and was so tickled and interested by the sight that he quite forgot for the moment what he had come for.

"Himmel! Why the devil are you doing that?" he asked, in his German-Hebrew-French.

"Doing *what*?" asked Little Billee, in his French of Stratford-atte-Bowe.

"Sitting in water and playing with a cake of soap and a sponge!"

"Why, to try and get myself *clean*, I suppose!"

"Ach! And how the devil did you get yourself *dirty*, then?"

To this Little Billee found no immediate answer, and went on with his ablution after the hissing, splashing, energetic fashion of Englishmen; and Svengali laughed loud and long at the spectacle of a little Englishman trying to get himself clean—"tâchant de se nettoyer!"

When such cleanliness had been attained as was possible under the circumstances, Svengali begged for

the loan of two hundred francs, and Little Billee gave him a five-franc piece.

Content with this, *faute de mieux*, the German asked him when he would be trying to get himself clean again, as he would much like to come and see him do it.

"Demang mattang, à votre sairvece!" said Little Billee, with a courteous bow.

"*What!! Monday too!!* Gott in Himmel! you try to get yourself clean *every day*?"

And he laughed himself out of the room, out of the house, out of the Place de l'Odéon—all the way to the Rue de Seine, where dwelt the "Man of Blood," whom he meant to propitiate with the story of that original, Little Billee, trying to get himself clean—that he might borrow another five-franc piece, or perhaps two.

As the reader will no doubt anticipate, he found Taffy in his bath too, and fell to laughing with such convulsive laughter, such twistings, screwings, and doublings of himself up, such pointings of his dirty forefinger at the huge naked Briton, that Taffy was offended, and all but lost his temper.

"What the devil are you cackling at, sacred head



"AND SO, NO MORE"

of pig that you are? Do you want to be pitched out of that window into the Rue de Seine? You filthy black Hebrew sweep! Just you wait a bit; *I'll* wash your head for you!"

And Taffy jumped out of his bath, such a towering figure of righteous Herculean wrath that Svengali was appalled, and fled.

"Donnerwetter!" he exclaimed as he tumbled down the narrow staircase of the Hôtel de Seine; "what for a thick head! what for a pigdog! what for a rotten, brutal, verfluchter kerl of an Englander!"

Then he paused for thought.

"Now will I go to that Scottish Englander, in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, for that other five-franc piece. But first will I wait a little while till he has perhaps finished trying to get himself clean."

So he breakfasted at the crèmerie Souchet, in the Rue Clopin-Clopant, and, feeling quite safe again, he laughed and laughed till his very sides were sore.

Two Englanders in one day—as naked as your hand!—a big one and a little one, trying to get themselves clean!

He rather flattered himself he'd scored off those two Englanders.

After all, he was right perhaps, from his point of view; you can get as dirty in a week as in a lifetime, so what's the use of taking such a lot of trouble? Besides, so long as you are clean enough to suit your kind, to be any cleaner would be priggish and pedantic, and get you disliked.

Just as Svengali was about to knock at the Laird's door, Trilby came down-stairs from Durien's, very

unlike herself. Her eyes were red with weeping, and there were great black rings round them; she was pale under her freckles.

"Fous afez du chacrin, matemoiselle?" asked he.

She told him that she had neuralgia in her eyes, a thing she was subject to; that the pain was maddening, and generally lasted twenty-four hours.

"Perhaps I can cure you; come in here with me."

The Laird's ablutions (if he had indulged in any that morning) were evidently over for the day. He was breakfasting on a roll and butter, and coffee of his own brewing. He was deeply distressed at the sight of poor Trilby's sufferings, and offered whiskey and coffee and gingernuts, which she would not touch.

Svengali told her to sit down on the divan, and sat opposite to her, and bade her look him well in the white of the eyes.

"Recartez-moi bien tans le blanc des yeux."

Then he made little passes and counterpasses on her forehead and temples and down her cheek and neck. Soon her eyes closed and her face grew placid. After a while, a quarter of an hour perhaps, he asked her if she suffered still.

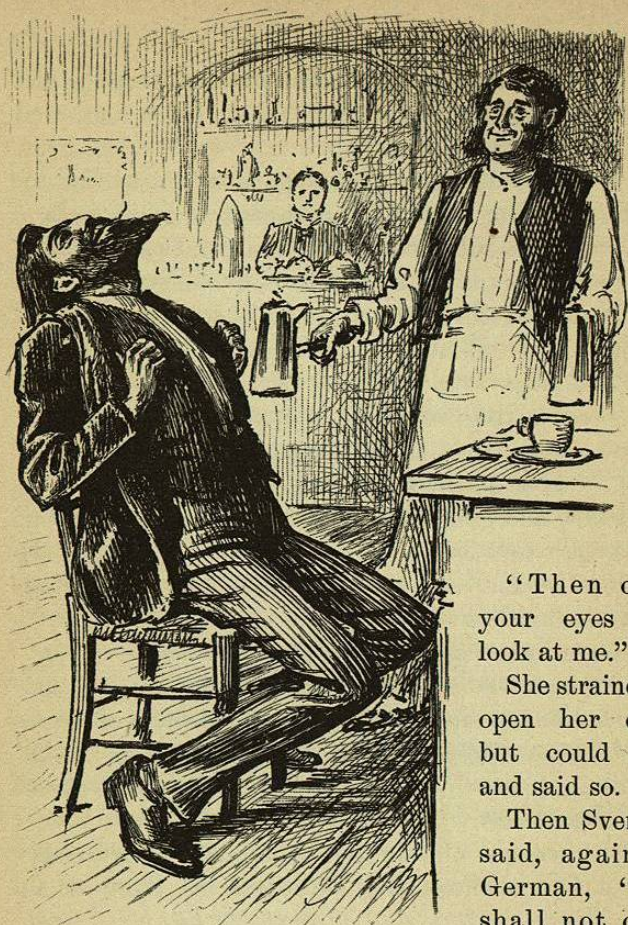
"Oh! presque plus du tout, monsieur—c'est le ciel."

In a few minutes more he asked the Laird if he knew German.

"Just enough to understand," said the Laird (who had spent a year in Düsseldorf), and Svengali said to him in German: "See, she sleeps not, but she shall not open her eyes. Ask her."

"Are you asleep, Miss Trilby?" asked the Laird.

"No."



“TWO ENGLANDERS IN ONE DAY”

“Why couldn’t you open your eyes, Miss Trilby?” She strained to open her mouth and speak, but in vain. “She shall not rise from the divan. Ask her.” But Trilby was spellbound, and could not move.

“Then open your eyes and look at me.”

She strained to open her eyes, but could not, and said so.

Then Svengali said, again in German, “She shall not open her mouth. Ask her.”

“I will now set her free,” said Svengali.

And, lo! she got up and waved her arms, and cried, “Vive la Prusse! me v’là guérie!” and in her gratitude she kissed Svengali’s hand; and he leered, and showed his big brown teeth and the yellow whites at the top of his big black eyes, and drew his breath with a hiss.

“Now I’ll go to Durien’s and sit. How can I thank you, monsieur? You have taken all my pain away.”

“Yes, matemoiselle. I have got it myself; it is in my elbows. But I love it, because it comes from you. Every time you have pain you shall come to me, 12 Rue Tire-Liard, au sixième au-dessus de l’entresol, and I will cure you and take your pain myself—”

“Oh, you are too good!” and in her high spirits she turned round on her heel and uttered her portentous war-cry, “Milk below!” The very rafters rang with it, and the piano gave out a solemn response.

“What is that you say, matemoiselle?”

“Oh! it’s what the milkmen say in England.”

“It is a wonderful cry, matemoiselle—wunder-schön! It comes straight through the heart; it has its roots in the stomach, and blossoms into music on the lips like the voice of Madame Alboni—voce sulle labbre! It is good production—c’est un cri du cœur!”

Trilby blushed with pride and pleasure.

“Yes, matemoiselle! I only know one person in the whole world who can produce the voice so well as you! I give you my word of honor.”

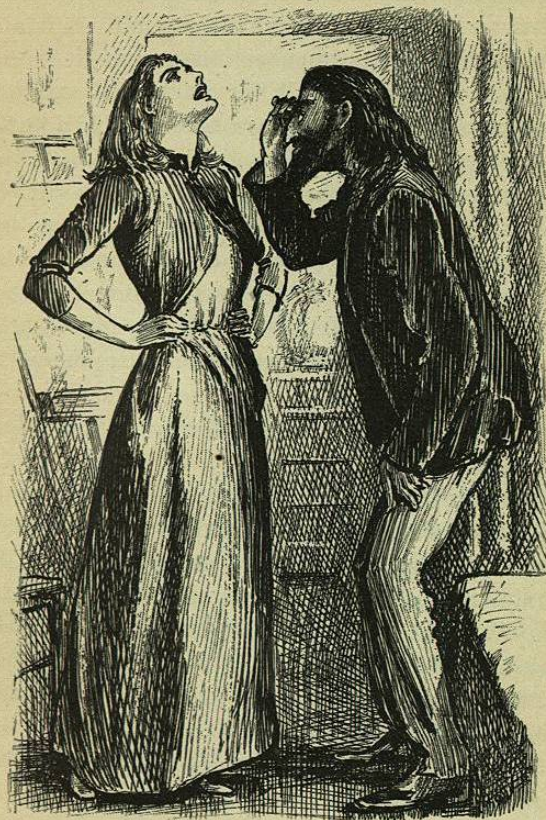
“Who is it, monsieur—yourself?”

“Ach, no, matemoiselle; I have not that privilege.

I have unfortunately no voice to produce. . . . It is a waiter at the Café de la Rotonde, in the Palais Royal; when you call for coffee, he says 'Boum!' in basso profundo. Tiefstimme—F. moll below the line—it is phenomenal! It is like a cannon—a cannon also has very good production, matemoiselle. They pay him for it a thousand francs a year, because he brings many customers to the Café de la Rotonde, where the coffee isn't very good. When he dies they will search all France for another, and then all Germany, where the good big waiters come from—and the cannons—but they will not find him, and the Café de la Rotonde will be bankrupt—unless you will consent to take his place. Will you permit that I shall look into your mouth, matemoiselle?"

She opened her mouth wide, and he looked into it.

"Himmel! the roof of your mouth is like the dome of the Panthéon; there is room in it for 'toutes les gloires de la France,' and a little to spare! The entrance to your throat is like the middle porch of St. Sulpice when the doors are open for the faithful on All-Saints' day; and not one tooth is missing—thirty-two British teeth as white as milk and as big as knuckle-bones! and your little tongue is scooped out like the leaf of a pink peony, and the bridge of your nose is like the belly of a Stradivarius—what a sounding-board! and inside your beautiful big chest the lungs are made of leather! and your breath, it embalms—like the breath of a beautiful white heifer fed on the buttercups and daisies of the Vaterland! and you have a quick, soft, susceptible heart, a heart of gold, matemoiselle—all that sees itself in your face!



“HIMMEL! THE ROOF OF YOUR MOUTH”

“ ‘Votre cœur est un luth suspendu !
Aussitôt qu'on le touche, il résonne. . . .’

What a pity you have not also the musical organization !”

“Oh, but I *have*, monsieur; you heard me sing ‘Ben Bolt,’ didn’t you? What makes you say that?”

Svengali was confused for a moment. Then he said: “When I play the ‘Rosemonde’ of Schubert, matemoiselle, you look another way and smoke a cigarette. . . . You look at the big Taffy, at the Little Billee, at the pictures on the walls, or out of window, at the sky, the chimney-pots of Notre Dame de Paris; you do not look at Svengali!—Svengali, who looks at you with all his eyes, and plays you the ‘Rosemonde’ of Schubert!”

“Oh, maïe, aïe!” exclaimed Trilby; “you *do* use lovely language!”

“But never mind, matemoiselle; when your pain arrives, then shall you come once more to Svengali, and he shall take it away from you, and keep it himself for a soufenir of you when you are gone. And when you have it no more, he shall play you the ‘Rosemonde’ of Schubert, all alone for you; and then, ‘Messieurs les étutians, montez à la chaumière!’ . . . because it is gayer! *And you shall see nothing, hear nothing, think of nothing but Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!*”

Here he felt his peroration to be so happy and effective that he thought it well to go at once and make a good exit. So he bent over Trilby’s shapely freckled hand and kissed it, and bowed himself out

of the room, without even borrowing his five-franc piece.

“He’s a rum ’un, ain’t he?” said Trilby. “He reminds me of a big hungry spider, and makes me feel like a fly! But he’s cured my pain! he’s cured my pain! Ah! you don’t know what my pain is when it comes!”

“I wouldn’t have much to do with him, all the same!” said the Laird. “I’d sooner have any pain than have it cured in that unnatural way, and by such a man as that! He’s a bad fellow, Svengali—I’m sure of it! He mesmerized you; that’s what it is—mesmerism! I’ve often heard of it, but never seen it done before. They get you into their power, and just make you do any blessed thing they please—lie, murder, steal—anything! and kill yourself into the bargain when they’ve done with you! It’s just too terrible to think of!”

So spake the Laird, earnestly, solemnly, surprised out of his usual self, and most painfully impressed—and his own impressiveness grew upon him and impressed him still more. He loomed quite prophetic.

Cold shivers went down Trilby’s back as she listened. She had a singularly impressionable nature, as was shown by her quick and ready susceptibility to Svengali’s hypnotic influence. And all that day, as she posed for Durien (to whom she did not mention her adventure), she was haunted by the memory of Svengali’s big eyes and the touch of his soft, dirty finger-tips on her face; and her fear and her repulsion grew together.

And “Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!” went ringing