

being hopelessly, emphatically "no lady!" Though it was funny without being vulgar, it was perhaps a little *too* funny!

And she handled her knife and fork in the dainty English way, as no doubt her father had done—and his; and, indeed, when alone with them she was so absolutely "like a lady" that it seemed quite odd (though very seductive) to see her in a grisette's cap and dress and apron. So much for her English training.

But enter a Frenchman or two, and a transformation effected itself immediately—a new incarnation of Trilbyness—so droll and amusing that it was difficult to decide which of her two incarnations was the most attractive.

It must be admitted that she had her faults—like Little Billee.

For instance, she would be miserably jealous of any other woman who came to the studio, to sit or scrub or sweep or do anything else, even of the dirty tipsy old hag who sat for Taffy's "found drowned"—"as if she couldn't have sat for it herself!"

And then she would be cross and sulky, but not for long—an injured martyr, soon ready to forgive and be forgiven.

She would give up any sitting to come and sit to her three English friends. Even Durien had serious cause for complaint.

Then her affection was exacting: she always wanted to be told one was fond of her, and she dearly loved her own way, even in the sewing on of buttons and the darning of socks, which was innocent enough.

But when it came to the cutting and fashioning of garments for a toreador's bride, it was a nuisance not to be borne!

"What could *she* know of toreadors' brides and their wedding-dresses?" the Laird would indignantly ask—as if he were a toreador himself; and this was the aggravating side of her irrepressible Trilbyness.

In the caressing, demonstrative tenderness of her friendship she "made the soft eyes" at all three indiscriminately. But sometimes Little Billee would look up from his work as she was sitting to Taffy or the Laird, and find her gray eyes fixed on him with an all-enfolding gaze, so piercingly, penetratingly, unutterably sweet and kind and tender, such a brooding, dovelike look of soft and warm solicitude, that he would feel a flutter at his heart, and his hand would shake so that he could not paint; and in a waking dream he would remember that his mother had often looked at him like that when he was a small boy, and she a beautiful young woman untouched by care or sorrow; and the tear that always lay in readiness so close to the corner of Little Billee's eye would find it very difficult to keep itself in its proper place—unshed.

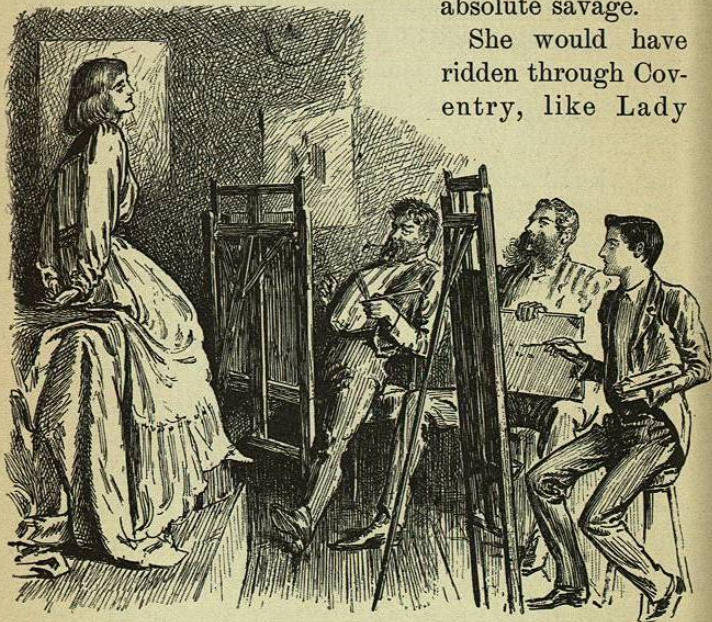
And at such moments the thought that Trilby sat for the figure would go through him like a knife.

She did not sit promiscuously to anybody who asked, it is true. But she still sat to Durien; to the great Gérôme; to M. Carrel, who scarcely used any other model.

It was poor Trilby's sad distinction that she surpassed all other models as Calypso surpassed her

nymphs; and whether by long habit, or through some obtuseness in her nature, or lack of imagination, she was equally unconscious of self with her clothes on or without! Truly, she could be naked and unashamed—in this respect an absolute savage.

She would have ridden through Coventry, like Lady



“THE SOFT EYES”

Godiva—but without giving it a thought beyond wondering why the streets were empty and the shops closed and the blinds pulled down—would even have looked up to Peeping Tom’s shutter with a friendly nod, had she known he was behind it!

In fact, she was absolutely without that kind of

shame, as she was without any kind of fear. But she was destined soon to know both fear and shame.

And here it would not be amiss for me to state a fact well known to all painters and sculptors who have used the nude model (except a few senile pretenders, whose purity, not being of the right sort, has gone rank from too much watching), namely, that nothing is so chaste as nudity. Venus herself, as she drops her garments and steps on to the model-throne, leaves behind her on the floor every weapon in her armory by which she can pierce to the grosser passions of man. The more perfect her unveiled beauty, the more keenly it appeals to his higher instincts. And where her beauty fails (as it almost always does somewhere in the Venuses who sit for hire), the failure is so lamentably conspicuous in the studio light—the fierce light that beats on this particular throne—that Don Juan himself, who has not got to paint, were fain to hide his eyes in sorrow and disenchantment, and fly to other climes.

All beauty is sexless in the eyes of the artist at his work—the beauty of man, the beauty of woman, the heavenly beauty of the child; which is the sweetest and best of all.

Indeed it is woman, lovely woman, whose beauty falls the shortest, for sheer lack of proper physical training.

As for Trilby, G——, to whom she sat for his Phryne, once told me that the sight of her thus was a thing to melt Sir Galahad, and sober Silenus, and chasten Jove himself—a thing to Quixotize a modern French masher! I can well believe him. For myself,

I only speak of Trilby as I have seen her—clothed and in her right mind. She never sat to me for any Phryne, never bared herself to me, nor did I ever dream of asking her. I would as soon have asked the Queen of Spain to let me paint her legs! But I have worked from many female models in many countries, some of them the best of their kind. I have also, like Svengali, seen Taffy “trying to get himself clean,” either at home or in the swimming-baths of the Seine; and never a sitting woman among them all who could match for grace or finish or splendor of outward form that mighty Yorkshireman sitting in his tub, or sunning himself, like Ilyssus, at the Bains Henri Quatre, or taking his running header *à la hussarde*, off the spring-board at the Bains Deligny, with a group of wondering Frenchmen gathered round.

Up he shot himself into mid-air with a sounding double downward kick, parabolically; then, turning a splendid semi-demi-summersault against the sky, down he came headlong, his body straight and stiff as an arrow, and made his clean hole in the water without splash or sound, to reappear a hundred yards farther on!

“Sac à papier! quel gaillard que cet Anglais, hein?”

“A-t-on jamais vu un torse pareil!”

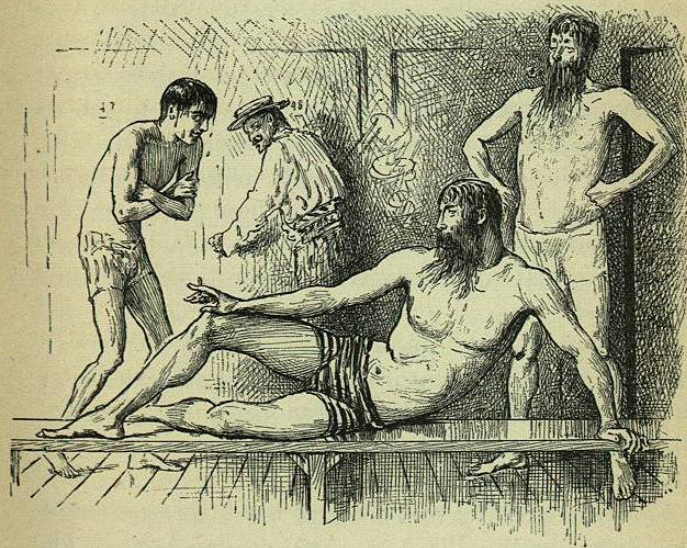
“Et les bras, donc!”

“Et les jambes, nom d’un tonnerre!”

“Mâtin! J’aimerais mieux être en colère contre lui qu’il ne soit en colère contre moi!” etc., etc., etc.

Omne ignotum pro magnifico!

If our climate were such that we could go about without any clothes on, we probably should; in which case, although we should still murder and lie and steal and bear false witness against our neighbor, and break the Sabbath day and take the Lord’s name in vain, much deplorable wickedness of another kind would cease to exist for sheer lack of mystery; and Christianity would be relieved of its hardest task in this sinful world, and Venus Aphrodite (*alias* Aselgeia) would



ILYSSUS

have to go a-begging along with the tailors and dress-makers and boot-makers, and perhaps our bodies and limbs would be as those of the Theseus and Venus of Milo; who was no Venus, except in good looks!

At all events, there would be no cunning, cruel deceptions, no artful taking in of artless inexperience, no unduly hurried waking-up from Love's young dream, no handing down to posterity of hidden uglinesses and weaknesses, and worse!

And also many a flower, now born to blush unseen, would be reclaimed from its desert, and suffered to hold its own, and flaunt away with the best in the inner garden of roses!

And here let me humbly apologize to the casual reader for the length and possible irrelevancy of this digression, and for its subject. To those who may find matter for sincere disapprobation or even grave offence in a thing that has always seemed to me so simple, so commonplace, as to be hardly worth talking or writing about, I can only plead a sincerity equal to theirs, and as deep a love and reverence for the gracious, goodly shape that God is said to have made after His own image for inscrutable purposes of His own.

Nor, indeed, am I pleading for such a subversive and revolutionary measure as the wholesale abolition of clothes, being the chilliest of mortals, and quite unlike Mr. Theseus or Mr. Ilyssus either.

Sometimes Trilby would bring her little brother to the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, in his "beaux habits de Pâques," his hair well curled and pomatumed, his hands and face well washed.

He was a very engaging little mortal. The Laird would fill his pockets full of Scotch goodies, and paint him as a little Spaniard in "Le Fils du Toreador," a

sweet little Spaniard with blue eyes, and curly locks as light as tow, and a complexion of milk and roses, in singular and piquant contrast to his swarthy progenitor.

Taffy would use him as an Indian club or a dumb-bell, to the child's infinite delight, and swing him on the trapeze, and teach him "la boxe."

And the sweetness and fun of his shrill, happy, infantile laughter (which was like an echo of Trilby's, only an octave higher) so moved and touched and tickled one that Taffy had to look quite fierce, so he might hide the strange delight of tenderness that somehow filled his manly bosom at the mere sound of it (lest Little Billee and the Laird should think him goody-goody); and the fiercer Taffy looked, the less this small mite was afraid of him.

Little Billee made a beautiful water-color sketch of him, just as he was, and gave it to Trilby, who gave it to le père Martin, who gave it to his wife with strict injunctions not to sell it as an old master. Alas! it *is* an old master now, and Heaven only knows who has got it!

Those were happy days for Trilby's little brother, happy days for Trilby, who was immensely fond of him, and very proud. And the happiest day of all was when the Trois Angliches took Trilby and Jean-not (for so the mite was called) to spend the Sunday in the woods at Meudon, and breakfast and dine at the garde champêtre's. Swings, peep-shows, donkey-rides; shooting at a mark with cross-bows and little pellets of clay, and smashing little plaster figures and winning macaroons; losing one's self in the beautiful

forest; catching newts and tadpoles and young frogs; making music on mirlitons. Trilby singing "Ben Bolt" into a mirliton was a thing to be remembered, whether one would or no!

Trilby on this occasion came out in a new character, *en demoiselle*, with a little black bonnet, and a gray jacket of her own making.

To look at (but for her loose, square-toed, heelless silk boots laced up the inner side), she might have been the daughter of an English dean—until she undertook to teach the Laird some favorite cancan steps. And then the Laird himself, it must be admitted, no longer looked like the son of a worthy, God-fearing, Sabbath-keeping Scotch writer to the signet.

This was after dinner, in the garden, at "la loge du garde champêtre." Taffy and Jeannot and Little Billee made the necessary music on their mirlitons, and the dancing soon became general, with plenty also to look on, for the garde had many customers who dined there on summer Sundays.

It is no exaggeration to say that Trilby was far and away the belle of that particular ball, and there have been worse balls in much finer company, and far plainer women!

Trilby lightly dancing the cancan (there are cancans and cancans) was a singularly gainly and seductive person—*et vera incessu patuit dea!* Here, again, she was funny without being vulgar. And for mere grace (even in the cancan), she was the forerunner of Miss Kate Vaughan; and for sheer fun, the precursor of Miss Nelly Farren!

And the Laird, trying to dance after her ("dongsong

le konkong," as he called it), was too funny for words; and if genuine popular success is a true test of humor, no greater humorist ever danced a *pas seul*.



“VOILÀ L'ESPAYCE DE HOM KER JER SWEE!”

What Englishmen could do in France during the fifties, and yet manage to preserve their self-respect, and even the respect of their respectable French friends!

“Voilà l'espayce de hom ker jer swee!” said the Laird, every time he bowed in acknowledgment of the

applause that greeted his performance of various solo steps of his own—Scotch reels and sword-dances that come in admirably. . . .

Then, one fine day, the Laird fell ill, and the doctor had to be sent for, and he ordered a nurse. But Trilby would hear of no nurses, not even a Sister of Charity! She did all the nursing herself, and never slept a wink for three successive days and nights.

On the third day the Laird was out of all danger, the delirium was past, and the doctor found poor Trilby fast asleep by the bedside.

Madame Vinard, at the bedroom door, put her finger to her lips, and whispered: "Quel bonheur! il est sauvé, M. le Docteur; écoutez! il dit ses prières en Anglais, ce brave garçon!"

The good old doctor, who didn't understand a word of English, listened, and heard the Laird's voice, weak and low, but quite clear, and full of heart-felt fervor, intoning, solemnly:

"Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace—
All these you eat at Terré's Tavern
In that one dish of bouillabaisse!"

"Ah! mais c'est très bien de sa part, ce brave jeune homme! rendre grâces au ciel comme cela, quand le danger est passé! très bien, très bien!"

Sceptic and Voltairian as he was, and not the friend of prayer, the good doctor was touched, for he was old, and therefore kind and tolerant, and made allowances.

And afterwards he said such sweet things to Trilby

about it all, and about her admirable care of his patient, that she positively wept with delight—like sweet Alice with hair so brown, whenever Ben Bolt gave her a smile.

All this sounds very goody-goody, but it's true.

So it will be easily understood how the trois Angliches came in time to feel for Trilby quite a peculiar regard, and looked forward with sorrowful forebodings to the day when this singular and pleasant little quartet would have to be broken up, each of them to spread his wings and fly away on his own account, and poor Trilby to be left behind all by herself. They would even frame little plans whereby she might better herself in life, and avoid the many snares and pitfalls that would beset her lonely path in the quartier latin when they were gone.

Trilby never thought of such things as these; she took short views of life, and troubled herself about no morrows.

There was, however, one jarring figure in her little fool's paradise, a baleful and most ominous figure that constantly crossed her path, and came between her and the sun, and threw its shadow over her, and that was Svengali.

He also was a frequent visitor at the studio in the Place St. Anatole, where much was forgiven him for the sake of his music, especially when he came with Gecko and they made music together. But it soon became apparent that they did not come there to play to the three Angliches; it was to see Trilby, whom they both had taken it into their heads to adore, each in a different fashion:

Gecko, with a humble, doglike worship that expressed itself in mute, pathetic deference and looks of lowly self-depreciation, of apology for his own unworthy existence, as though the only requital he would ever dare to dream of were a word of decent politeness, a glance of tolerance or good-will—a mere bone to a dog.

Svengali was a bolder wooer. When he cringed, it was with a mock humility full of sardonic threats; when he was playful, it was with a terrible playfulness, like that of a cat with a mouse—a weird ungainly cat, and most unclean; a sticky, haunting, long, lean, uncanny, black spider-cat, if there is such an animal outside a bad dream.

It was a great grievance to him that she had suffered from no more pains in her eyes. She had; but preferred to endure them rather than seek relief from him.

So he would playfully try to mesmerize her with his glance, and sidle up nearer and nearer to her, making passes and counter-passes, with stern command in his eyes, till she would shake and shiver and almost sicken with fear, and all but feel the spell come over her, as in a nightmare, and rouse herself with a great effort and escape.

If Taffy were there he would interfere with a friendly "Now then, old fellow, none of that!" and a jolly slap on the back, which would make Svengali cough for an hour, and paralyze his mesmeric powers for a week.

Svengali had a stroke of good-fortune. He played at three grand concerts with Gecko, and had a well-

deserved success. He even gave a concert of his own, which made a furor, and blossomed out into beautiful and costly clothes of quite original color and shape and pattern, so that people would turn round and stare at him in the street—a thing he loved. He felt his fortune was secure, and ran into debt with tailors, hatters, shoemakers, jewellers, but paid none of his old debts to his friends. His pockets were always full of printed slips—things that had been written about him in the papers—and he would read them aloud to everybody he knew, especially to Trilby, as she sat darning socks on the model-throne while the fencing and boxing were in train. And he would lay his fame and his fortune at her feet, on condition that she should share her life with him.

"Ach, himmel, Drilpy!" he would say, "you don't know what it is to be a great pianist like me—hein! What is your Little Billee, with his stinking oil-bladders, sitting mum in his corner, his mahlstick and his palette in one hand, and his twiddling little footle pig's-hair brush in the other! What noise does *he* make? When his little fool of a picture is finished he will send it to London, and they will hang it on a wall with a lot of others, all in a line, like recruits called out for inspection, and the yawning public will walk by in procession and inspect, and say 'damn!' Svengali will go to London *himself*. Ha! ha! He will be all alone on a platform, and play as nobody else can play; and hundreds of beautiful Engländerinnen will see and hear and go mad with love for him—Prinzessen, Comtessen, Serene English Altessen. They will soon lose their Serenity and their Highness when they

hear Svengali! They will invite him to their palaces, and pay him a thousand francs to play for them; and after, he will loll in the best arm-chair, and they will sit all round him on footstools, and bring him tea and gin and kuchen and marrons glacés, and lean over him and fan him—for he is tired after playing them for a thousand francs of Chopin! Ha, ha! I know all about it—hein?

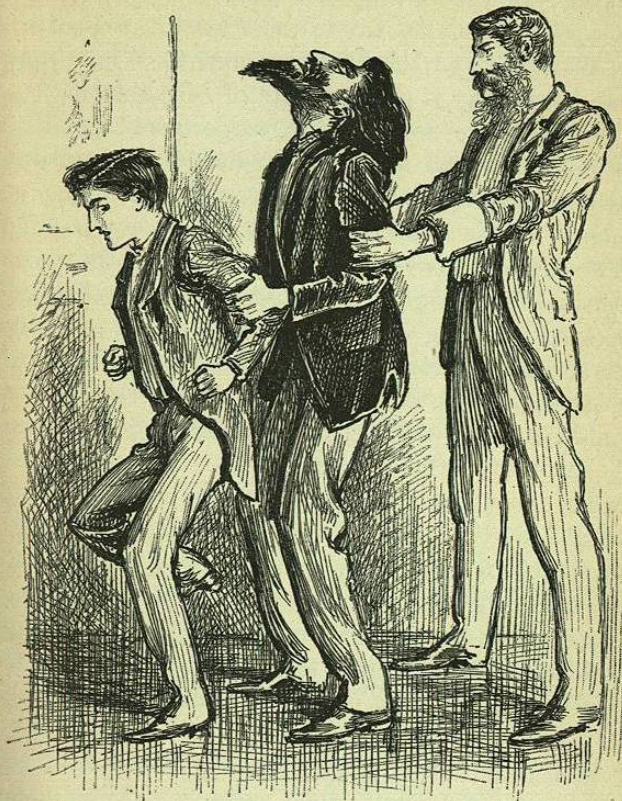
“And he will not look at them, even! He will look inward, at his own dream—and his dream will be about Drilpy—to lay his talent, his glory, his thousand francs at her beautiful white feet!

“Their stupid, big, fat, tow-headed, putty-nosed husbands will be mad with jealousy, and long to box him, but they will be afraid. Ach! those beautiful Anglaises! they will think it an honor to mend his shirts, to sew buttons on his pantaloons; to darn his socks, as you are doing now for that sacred imbecile of a Scotchman who is always trying to paint toreadors, or that sweating, pig-headed bullock of an Englander who is always trying to get himself dirty and then to get himself clean again!—*e da capo!*

“Himmel! what big socks are those! what potato-sacks!

“Look at your Taffy! what is he good for but to bang great musicians on the back with his big bear’s paw! He finds that droll, the bullock! . . .

“Look at your Frenchmen there—your damned conceited verfluchte pig-dogs of Frenchmen—Durien, Barizel, Bouchardy! What can a Frenchman talk of, hein? Only himself, and run down everybody else! His vanity makes me sick! He always thinks the



TIT FOR TAT

world is talking about *him*, the fool! He forgets that there's a fellow called *Svengali* for the world to talk about! I tell you, Drilpy, it is about *me* the world is talking—me and nobody else—me, me, me!

“Listen what they say in the *Figaro*” (reads it).

“What do you think of that, hein? What would your Durien say if people wrote of *him* like that?”

“But you are not listening, sapperment! great big she-fool that you are—sheep's-head! Dummkopf! Donnerwetter! you are looking at the chimney-pots when Svengali is talking! Look a little lower down between the houses, on the other side of the river! There is a little ugly gray building there, and inside are eight slanting slabs of brass, all of a row, like beds in a school dormitory, and one fine day you shall lie asleep on one of those slabs—you, Drilpy, who would not listen to Svengali, and therefore lost him! . . . And over the middle of you will be a little leather apron, and over your head a little brass tap, and all day long and all night the cold water shall trickle, trickle, trickle all the way down your beautiful white body to your beautiful white feet till they turn green, and your poor, damp, dragged, muddy rags will hang above you from the ceiling for your friends to know you by; drip, drip, drip! But you will have no friends. . . .”

“And people of all sorts, strangers, will stare at you through the big plate-glass window—Englishers, chiffonniers, painters and sculptors, workmen, pious, old hags of washer-women—and say, “Ah! what a beautiful woman was that! Look at her! She ought to be rolling in her carriage and pair!” And

just then who should come by, rolling in his carriage and pair, smothered in furs, and smoking a big cigar of the Havana, but Svengali, who will jump out, and push the canaille aside, and say, ‘Ha! ha! that is la grande Drilpy, who would not listen to Svengali, but looked at the chimney-pots when he told her of his manly love, and—’”

“Hi! damn it, Svengali, what the devil are you talking to Trilby about? You're making her sick; can't you see? Leave off, and go to the piano, man, or I'll come and slap you on the back again!”

Thus would that sweating, pig-headed bullock of an Englisher stop Svengali's love-making and release Trilby from bad quarters of an hour.

Then Svengali, who had a wholesome dread of the pig-headed bullock, would go to the piano and make impossible discords, and say: “Dear Drilpy, come and sing ‘Pen Polt’! I am thirsting for those so beautiful chest notes! Come!”

Poor Trilby needed little pressing when she was asked to sing, and would go through her lamentable performance, to the great discomfort of Little Billee. It lost nothing of its grotesqueness from Svengali's accompaniment, which was a triumph of cacophony, and he would encourage her—“Très bien, très bien, ça y est!”

When it was over, Svengali would test her ear, as he called it, and strike the C in the middle and then the F just above, and ask which was the highest; and she would declare they were both exactly the same. It was only when he struck a note in the bass and another in the treble that she could perceive any dif-

ference, and said that the first sounded like père Martin blowing up his wife, and the second like her little godson trying to make the peace between them.

She was quite tone-deaf, and didn't know it; and he would pay her extravagant compliments on her musical talent, till Taffy would say: "Look here, Svengali, let's hear *you* sing a song!"

And he would tickle him so masterfully under the ribs that the creature howled and became quite hysterical.

Then Svengali would vent his love of teasing on Little Billee, and pin his arms behind his back and swing him round, saying: "Himmel! what's this for an arm? It's like a girl's!"

"It's strong enough to paint!" said Little Billee.

"And what's this for a leg? It's like a mahlstick!"

"It's strong enough to kick, if you don't leave off!"

And Little Billee, the young and tender, would let out his little heel and kick the German's shins; and just as the German was going to retaliate, big Taffy would pin *his* arms and make him sing another song, more discordant than Trilby's—for he didn't dream of kicking Taffy; of that you may be sure!

Such was Svengali—only to be endured for the sake of his music—always ready to vex, frighten, bully, or torment anybody or anything smaller and weaker than himself—from a woman or a child to a mouse or a fly.

Part Third

"Par deçà, ne delà la mer
Ne sçay dame ni damoiselle
Qui soit en tous biens parfaits telle—
C'est un songe que d'y penser :
Dieu ! qu'il fait bon, la regarder !"

ONE lovely Monday morning in late September, at about eleven or so, Taffy and the Laird sat in the studio—each opposite his picture, smoking, nursing his knee, and saying nothing. The heaviness of Monday weighed on their spirits more than usual, for the three friends had returned late on the previous night from a week spent at Barbizon and in the forest of Fontainebleau—a heavenly week among the painters: Rousseau, Millet, Corot, Daubigny, let us suppose, and others less known to fame this day. Little Billee, especially, had been fascinated by all this artistic life in blouses and sabots and immense straw hats and panamas, and had sworn to himself and to his friends that he would some day live and die there—painting the forest as it is, and peopling it with beautiful people out of his own fancy—leading a healthy out-door life of simple wants and lofty aspirations.

At length Taffy said: "Bother work this morning! I feel much more like a stroll in the Luxembourg Gardens and lunch at the Café de l'Odéon, where the omelets are good and the wine isn't blue."