

tains. All heavenly visions were chased away for the night. . . .

Our hero, half-crazed with fear, disgust, and irritation, lay wide awake, his nostrils on the watch for the smell of burning chintz or muslin, and wondered how an educated man—for Ribot was a law-student—could ever make such a filthy beast of himself as that! It was a scandal—a disgrace; it was not to be borne there should be no forgiveness for such as Ribot—not even on Christmas Day! He would complain to Madame Paul, the patronne; he would have Ribot turned out into the street; he would leave the hotel himself the very next morning! At last he fell asleep, thinking of all he would do; and thus, ridiculously and ignominiously for Little Billee, ended the réveillon.

Next morning he complained to Madame Paul; and though he did not give her warning, nor even insist on the expulsion of Ribot (who, as he heard with a hard heart, was “*bien malade ce matin*”), he expressed himself very severely on the conduct of that gentleman, and on the dangers from fire that might arise from tipsy man being trusted alone in a small bedroom with chintz curtains and a lighted candle. If it hadn't been for himself, he told her, Ribot would have slept on the door-step, and serve him right! He was really grand in his virtuous indignation, in spite of his imperfect French; and Madame Paul was deeply contrite for her peccant lodger, and profuse in her apologies; and Little Billee began his twenty-first Christmas Day like a Pharisee, thanking his star that he was not as Ribot!

#### Part Fourth

“*Félicité passée  
Qui ne peux revenir,  
Tourment de ma pensée,  
Que n'ay-je, en te perdant, perdu le souvenir!*”

MID-DAY had struck. The expected hamper had not turned up in the Place St. Anatole des Arts.

All Madame Vinard's kitchen battery was in readiness; Trilby and Madame Angèle Boisse were in the studio, their sleeves turned up, and ready to begin.

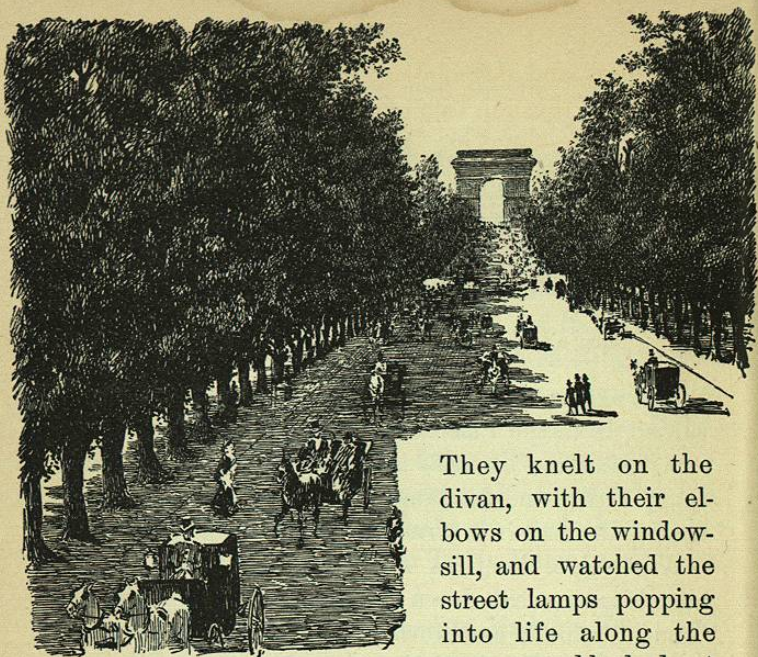
At twelve the *trois Angliches* and the two fair blanchisseuses sat down to lunch in a very anxious frame of mind, and finished a *pâté de foie gras* and two bottles of Burgundy between them, such was their disquietude.

The guests had been invited for six o'clock.

Most elaborately they laid the cloth on the table they had borrowed from the *Hôtel de Seine*, and settled who was to sit next to whom, and then unsettled it, and quarrelled over it—Trilby, as was her wont in such matters, assuming an authority that did not rightly belong to her, and of course getting her own way in the end.

And that, as the Laird remarked, was her confounded Trilbyness.

Two o'clock—three—four—but no hamper! Darkness had almost set in. It was simply maddening.



SOUVENIR

They knelt on the divan, with their elbows on the windowsill, and watched the street lamps popping into life along the quays—and looked out through the gathering dusk for the van from

the Chemin de Fer du Nord—and gloomily thought of the Morgue, which they could still make out across the river.

At length the Laird and Trilby went off in a cab to the station—a long drive—and, lo! before they came back the long-expected hamper arrived, at six o'clock.

And with it Durien, Vincent, Antony, Lorrimer, Carnegie, Petrolicoconose, Dodor, and l' Zouzou—the last two in uniform, as usual.

And suddenly the studio, which had been so silent, dark, and dull, with Taffy and Little Billee sitting

hopeless and despondent round the stove, became a scene of the noisiest, busiest, and cheerfulest animation. The three big lamps were lit, and all the Chinese lanterns. The pieces of resistance and the pudding were whisked off by Trilby, Angèle, and Madame Vinard to other regions—the porter's lodge and Durien's studio (which had been lent for the purpose); and every one was pressed into the preparations for the banquet. There was plenty for idle hands to do. Sausages to be fried for the turkey, stuffing made, and sauces, salads mixed, and punch—holly hung in festoons all round and about—a thousand things. Everybody was so clever and good-humored that nobody got in anybody's way—not even Carnegie, who was in evening dress (to the Laird's delight). So they made him do the scullion's work—cleaning, rinsing, peeling, etc.

The cooking of the dinner was almost better fun than the eating of it. And though there were so many cooks, not even the broth was spoiled (cockaleekie, from a receipt of the Laird's).

It was ten o'clock before they sat down to that most memorable repast.

Zouzou and Dodor, who had been the most useful and energetic of all its cooks, apparently quite forgot they were due at their respective barracks at that very moment: they had only been able to obtain "la permission de dix heures." If they remembered it, the certainty that next day Zouzou would be reduced to the ranks for the fifth time, and Dodor confined to his barracks for a month, did not trouble them in the least.

The waiting was as good as the cooking. The handsome, quick, authoritative Madame Vinard was in a dozen places at once, and openly prompted, rebuked, and ballyragged her husband into a proper smartness. The pretty little Madame Angèle moved about as deftly and as quietly as a mouse; which of course did not prevent them both from genially joining in the general conversation whenever it wandered into French.

Trilby, tall, graceful, and stately, and also swift of action, though more like Juno or Diana than Hebe, devoted herself more especially to her own particular favorites—Durien, Taffy, the Laird, Little Billee—and Dodor and Zouzou, whom she loved, and tutoyé'd en bonne camarade as she served them with all there was of the choicest.

The two little Vinards did their little best—they scrupulously respected the mince-pies, and only broke two bottles of oil and one of Harvey sauce, which made their mother furious. To console them, the Laird took one of them on each knee and gave them of his share of plum-pudding and many other unaccustomed good things, so bad for their little French tumtums.

The genteel Carnegie had never been at such a queer scene in his life. It opened his mind—and Dodor and Zouzou, between whom he sat (the Laird thought it would do him good to sit between a private soldier and a humble corporal), taught him more French than he had learned during the three months he had spent in Paris. It was a specialty of theirs. It was more colloquial than what is generally used in dip-

lomatic circles, and stuck longer in the memory; but it hasn't interfered with his preferment in the Church.

He quite unbent. He was the first to volunteer a song (without being asked) when the pipes and cigars were lit, and after the usual toasts had been drunk—her Majesty's health, Tennyson, Thackeray, and Dickens; and John Leech.

He sang, with a very cracked and rather hiccupy voice, his only song (it seems)—an English one, of which the burden, he explained, was French:

“Veeverler veeverler veeverler vee  
Veeverler companyee!”

And Zouzou and Dodor complimented him so profusely on his French accent that he was with difficulty prevented from singing it all over again.

Then everybody sang in rotation.

The Laird, with a capital barytone, sang

“Hie diddle Dee for the Lowlands low,”

which was encored.

Little Billee sang “Little Billee.”

Vincent sang

“Old Joe kicking up behind and afore,  
And the yaller gal a-kicking up behind old Joe.”

A capital song, with words of quite a masterly scan-sion.

Antony sang “Le Sire de Framboisy.” Enthusias-tic encore.

Lorrimer, inspired no doubt by the occasion, sang the "Hallelujah Chorus," and accompanied himself on the piano, but failed to obtain an encore.

Durien sang

"Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment ;  
Chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie . . ."

It was his favorite song, and one of the beautiful songs of the world, and he sang it very well—and it became popular in the quartier latin ever after.

The Greek couldn't sing, and very wisely didn't.

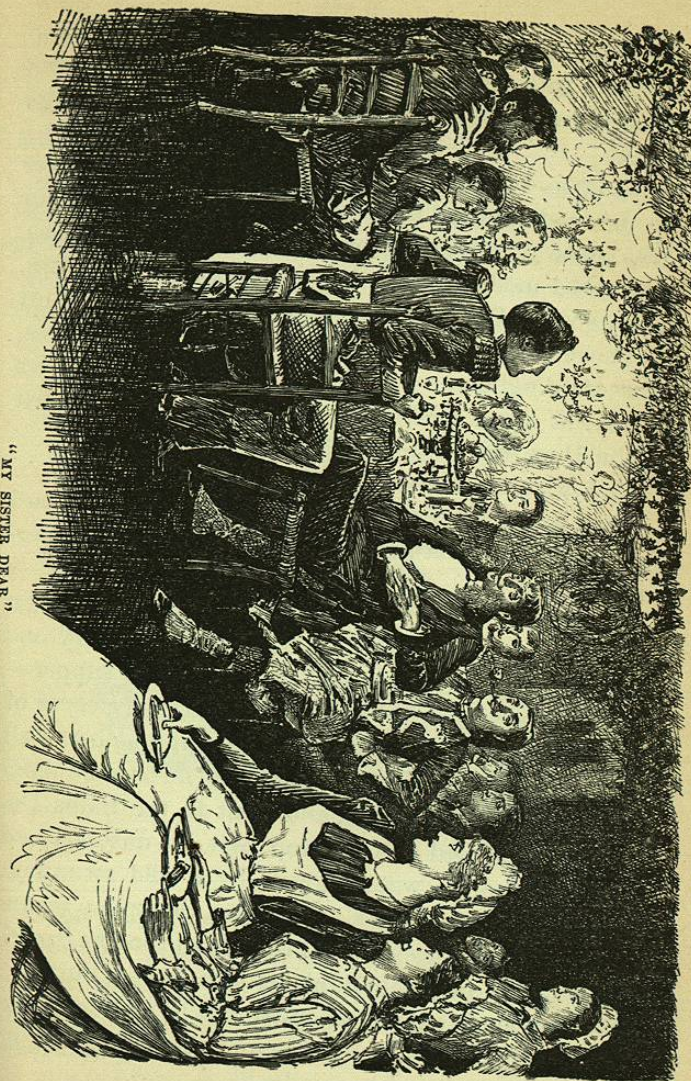
Zouzou sang capitally a capital song in praise of "le vin à quat' sous!"

Taffy, in a voice like a high wind (and with a very good imitation of the Yorkshire brogue), sang a Somersetshire hunting-ditty, ending :

"Of this 'ere song should I be axed the reason for to show,  
I don't exactly know, I don't exactly know!  
But all my fancy dwells upon Nancy,  
And I sing Tally-ho!"

It is a quite superexcellent ditty, and haunts my memory to this day; and one felt sure that Nancy was a dear and a sweet, wherever she lived, and when. So Taffy was encored twice—once for her sake, once for his own.

And finally, to the surprise of all, the bold dragoon sang (in English) "My Sister Dear," out of *Masaniello*, with such pathos, and in a voice so sweet and high and well in tune, that his audience felt almost weepy in the midst of their jollification, and grew quite sen-



timental, as Englishmen abroad are apt to do when they are rather tipsy and hear pretty music, and think of their dear sisters across the sea, or their friends' dear sisters.

Madame Vinard interrupted her Christmas dinner on the model-throne to listen, and wept and wiped her eyes quite openly, and remarked to Madame Boisse, who stood modestly close by: "Il est gentil tout plein, ce dragon! Mon Dieu! comme il chante bien! Il est Angliche aussi, il paraît. Ils sont joliment bien élevés, tous ces Angliches—tous plus gentils les uns que les autres! et quant à Monsieur Litrebili, on lui donnerait le bon Dieu sans confession!"

And Madame Boisse agreed.

Then Svengali and Gecko came, and the table had to be laid and decorated anew, for it was supper-time.

Supper was even jollier than dinner, which had taken off the keen edge of the appetites, so that every one talked at once—the true test of a successful supper—except when Antony told some of his experiences of bohemia; for instance, how, after staying at home all day for a month to avoid his creditors, he became reckless one Sunday morning, and went to the Bains Delligny, and jumped into a deep part by mistake, and was saved from a watery grave by a bold swimmer, who turned out to be his boot-maker, Satory, to whom he owed sixty francs—of all his duns the one he dreaded the most—and who didn't let him go in a hurry.

Whereupon Svengali remarked that he also owed sixty francs to Satory—"Mais comme che ne me baigne jamais, che n'ai rien à craindre!"

Whereupon there was such a laugh that Svengali felt he had scored off Antony at last and had a prettier wit. He flattered himself that he'd got the laugh of Antony *this* time.

And after supper Svengali and Gecko made such lovely music that everybody was sobered and athirst again, and the punch-bowl, wreathed with holly and mistletoe, was placed in the middle of the table, and clean glasses set all round it.



A DUCAL FRENCH FIGHTING-COCK

Then Dodor and l' Zouzou stood up to dance with Trilby and Madame Angèle, and executed a series of cancan steps, which, though they were so inimitably droll that they had each and all to be encored, were such that not one of them need have brought the blush of shame to the cheek of modesty.

Then the Laird danced a sword-dance over two T squares and broke them both. And Taffy, baring his mighty arms to the admiring gaze of all, did dumb-bell exercises, with Little Billee for a dumb-bell, and all but dropped him into the punch-bowl; and tried to cut a pewter ladle in two with Dodor's sabre, and sent it through the window; and this made him cross, so that he abused French sabres, and said they were made of worse pewter than even French ladles; and the Laird sententiously opined that they managed these things better in England, and winked at Little Billee.

Then they played at "cock-fighting," with their wrists tied across their shins, and a broomstick thrust in between; thus manacled, you are placed opposite your antagonist, and try to upset him with your feet, and he you. It is a very good game. The cuirassier and the Zouave playing at this got so angry, and were so irresistibly funny a sight, that the shouts of laughter could be heard on the other side of the river, so that a sergent de ville came in and civilly requested them not to make so much noise. They were disturbing the whole quartier, he said, and there was quite a "rassemblement" outside. So they made him tipsy, and also another policeman, who came to look after his comrade, and yet another; and these guardians of the peace of Paris were trussed and made to play at cock-fighting, and were still funnier than the two soldiers, and laughed louder and made more noise than any one else, so that Madame Vinard had to remonstrate with them; till they got too tipsy to speak, and fell fast asleep, and were laid next to each other behind the stove.

The *fin de siècle* reader, disgusted at the thought of such an orgy as I have been trying to describe, must remember that it happened in the fifties, when men calling themselves gentlemen, and being called so, still wrenched off door-knockers and came back drunk from the Derby, and even drank too much after dinner before joining the ladies, as is all duly chronicled and set down in John Leech's immortal pictures of life and character out of *Punch*.

Then M. and Mme. Vinard and Trilby and Angèle Boisse bade the company good-night, Trilby being the last of them to leave.

Little Billee took her to the top of the staircase, and there he said to her:

"Trilby, I have asked you nineteen times, and you have refused. Trilby, once more, on Christmas night, for the twentieth time—*will* you marry me? If not, I leave Paris to-morrow morning, and never come back. I swear it on my word of honor!"

Trilby turned very pale, and leaned her back against the wall, and covered her face with her hands.

Little Billee pulled them away.

"Answer me, Trilby!"

"God forgive me, *yes!*" said Trilby, and she ran down-stairs, weeping.

It was now very late.

It soon became evident that Little Billee was in extraordinary high spirits—in an abnormal state of excitement.

He challenged Svengali to spar, and made his nose

bleed, and frightened him out of his sardonic wits. He performed wonderful and quite unsuspected feats of strength. He swore eternal friendship to Dodor and Zouzou, and filled their glasses again and again, and also (in his innocence) his own, and trinquéd with them many times running. They were the last to leave (except the three helpless policemen); and at about five or six in the morning, to his surprise, he found himself walking between Dodor and Zouzou by a late windy moonlight in the Rue Vieille des mauvais Ladres, now on one side of the frozen gutter, now on the other, now in the middle of it, stopping them now and then to tell them how jolly they were and how dearly he loved them.

Presently his hat flew away, and went rolling and skipping and bounding up the narrow street, and they discovered that as soon as they let each other go to run after it, they all three sat down.

So Dodor and Little Billee remained sitting, with their arms round each other's necks and their feet in the gutter, while Zouzou went after the hat on all fours, and caught it, and brought it back in his mouth like a tipsy retriever. Little Billee wept for sheer love and gratitude, and called him a *caryhatide* (in English), and laughed loudly at his own wit, which was quite thrown away on Zouzou! "No man ever *had* such dear, dear frence! no man ever *was* s'happy!"

After sitting for a while in love and amity, they managed to get up on their feet again, each helping the other; and in some never-to-be-remembered way they reached the Hôtel Corneille.



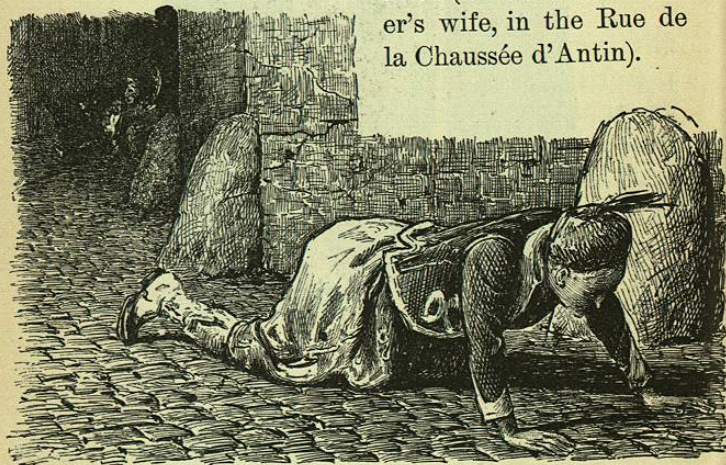
"ANSWER ME, TRILBY!"

There they sat Little Billee on the door-step and rang the bell, and seeing some one coming up the Place de l'Odéon, and fearing he might be a sergent de ville, they bid Little Billee a most affectionate but hasty farewell, kissing him on both cheeks in French fashion, and contrived to get themselves round the corner and out of sight.

Little Billee tried to sing Zouzou's drinking-song:

"Quoi de plus doux  
Que les glougloux—  
Les glougloux du vin à quat' sous . . ."

The stranger came up. Fortunately, it was no sergent de ville, but Ribot, just back from a Christmas-tree and a little family dance at his aunt's, Madame Kolb (the Alsatian banker's wife, in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin).



A CARYHATIDE

Next morning poor Little Billee was dreadfully ill. He had passed a terrible night. His bed had heaved like the ocean, with oceanic results. He had forgotten to put out his candle, but fortunately Ribot had blown it out for him, after putting him to bed and tucking him up like a real good Samaritan.

And next morning, when Madame Paul brought him a cup of tisane de chiendent (which does not happen to mean a hair of the dog that bit him), she was kind, but very severe on the dangers and disgrace of intoxication, and talked to him like a mother.

"If it had not been for kind Monsieur Ribot" (she told him), "the door-step would have been his portion; and who could say he didn't deserve it? And then think of the dangers of fire from a tipsy man all alone in a small bedroom with chintz curtains and a lighted candle!"

"Ribot was kind enough to blow out my candle," said Little Billee, humbly.

"Ah, Dame!" said Madame Paul, with much meaning—"au moins il a *bon cœur*, Monsieur Ribot!"

And the cruelest sting of all was when the good-natured and incorrigibly festive Ribot came and sat by his bedside, and was kind and tenderly sympathetic, and got him a pick-me-up from the chemist's (unbeknown to Madame Paul).

"Credieu! vous vous êtes crânement bien amusé, hier soir! quelle bosse, hein! je parie que c'était plus drôle que chez ma tante Kolb!"

All of which, of course, it is unnecessary to translate; except, perhaps, the word "bosse," which stands for "noce," which stands for a "jolly good spree."



In all his innocent little life Little Billee had never dreamed of such humiliation as this—such ignominious depths of shame and misery and remorse! He did not care to live. He had but one longing: that Trilby, dear Trilby, kind Trilby, would come and pillow his head on her beautiful white English bosom, and lay her soft, cool, tender hand on his aching brow, and there let him go to sleep, and sleeping, die!

He slept and slept, with no better rest for his aching brow than the pillow of his bed in the Hôtel Corneille, and failed to die this time. And when, after some forty-eight hours or so, he had quite slept off the fumes of that memorable Christmas debauch, he found that a sad thing had happened to him, and a strange!

It was as though a tarnishing breath had swept over the reminiscent mirror of his mind and left a little film behind it, so that no past thing he wished to see therein was reflected with quite the old pristine clearness. As though the keen, quick, razorlike edge of his power to reach and re-voke the by-gone charm and glamour and essence of things had been blunted and coarsened. As though the bloom of that special joy, the gift he unconsciously had of recalling past emotions and sensations and situations, and making them actual once more by a mere effort of the will, had been brushed away.

And he never recovered the full use of that most precious faculty, the boon of youth and happy childhood, and which he had once possessed, without knowing it, in such singular and exceptional completeness. He was to lose other precious faculties of his over-rich and complex nature—to be pruned and clipped and

thinned—that his one supreme faculty of painting might have elbow-room to reach its fullest, or else you could never have seen the wood for the trees (or *vice versa*—which is it?).



“LES GLOUGLOUX DU VIN À QUAT’ SOUS. . . .”

On New-year’s Day Taffy and the Laird were at their work in the studio, when there was a knock at the door, and Monsieur Vinard, cap in hand, respectfully introduced a pair of visitors, an English lady and gentleman.