nineteenth century! And right through the ragged lawn (where lay, upset in the long dewy grass, a broken doll's perambulator by a tattered Punchinello) went a desecrating track made by cart-wheels and horses' hoofs; and this, no doubt, was to be a new street—perhaps, as Taffy suggested, "La Rue *Neuve* des Mauvais Ladres!" (The *new* street of the bad lepers!)

"Ah, Taffy!" sententiously opined the Laird, with his usual wink at Little Billee—"I've no doubt the *old* lepers were the best, bad as they were!"

"I'm quite *sure* of it!" said Taffy, with sad and sober conviction and a long-drawn sigh. "I only wish I had a chance of painting one—just as he really was!"

How often they had speculated on what lay hidden behind that lofty old brick wall! and now this melancholy little peep into the once festive past, the touching sight of this odd old poverty-stricken abode of Heaven knows what present grief and desolation, which a few strokes of the pickaxe had laid bare, seemed to chime in with their own gray mood that had been so bright and sunny an hour ago; and they went on their way quite dejectedly, for a stroll through the Luxembourg Gallery and Gardens.

The same people seemed to be still copying the same pictures in the long, quiet, genial room, so pleasantly smelling of oil-paint—Rosa Bonheur's "Labourage Nivernais"—Hébert's "Malaria"—Couture's "Decadent Romans."

And in the formal dusty gardens were the same pioupious and zouzous still walking with the same nou-

nous, or sitting by their sides on benches by formal ponds with gold and silver fish in them—and just the same old couples petting the same toutous and loulous!*

Then they thought they would go and lunch at le père Trin's—the Restaurant de la Couronne, in the Rue du Luxembourg—for the sake of auld lang syne! But when they got there, the well-remembered fumes of that humble refectory, which had once seemed not unappetizing, turned their stomachs. So they contented themselves with warmly greeting le père Trin, who was quite overjoyed to see them again, and anxious to turn the whole establishment topsy-turvy that he might entertain such guests as they deserved.

Then the Laird suggested an omelet at the Café de l'Odéon. But Taffy said, in his masterful way, "Damn the Café de l'Odéon!"

And hailing a little open fly, they drove to Ledoyen's, or some such place, in the Champs Élysées, where they feasted as became three prosperous Britons out for a holiday in Paris—three irresponsible musketeers, lords of themselves and Lutetia, *beati possidentes!*—and afterwards had themselves driven in an open carriage and pair through the Bois de Boulogne to the fête de St. Cloud (or what still remained of it, for it lasts six weeks), the scene of so many of Dodor's and Zouzou's exploits in past years, and found it more

* *Glossary.*—Pioupiou (*alias* pousse-caillou, *alias* tourlourou)—a private soldier of the line. Zouzou—a Zouave. Nounou—a wet-nurse with a pretty ribboned cap and long streamers. Toutou—a nondescript French lapdog, of no breed known to Englishmen (a regular little beast!) Loulou—a Pomeranian dog—not much better.

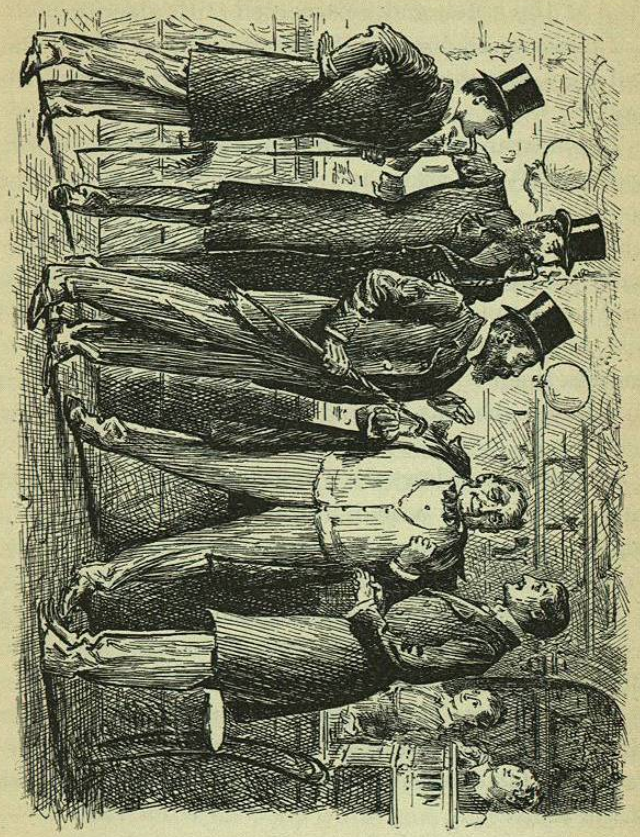
amusing than the Luxembourg Gardens; the lively and irrepressible spirit of Dodor seemed to pervade it still.

But it doesn't want the presence of a Dodor to make the blue-bloused sons of the Gallic people (and its neatly shod, white-capped daughters) delightful to watch as they take their pleasure. And the Laird (thinking perhaps of Hampstead Heath on an Easter Monday) must not be blamed for once more quoting his favorite phrase — the pretty little phrase with which the most humorous and least exemplary of British parsons began his famous journey to France.

When they came back to the hotel to dress and dine, the Laird found he wanted a pair of white gloves for the concert — "Oon pair de gong blong," as he called it — and they walked along the boulevards till they came to a haberdasher's shop of very good and prosperous appearance, and, going in, were received graciously by the "patron," a portly little bourgeois, who waved them to a tall and aristocratic and very well dressed young commis behind the counter, saying, "Une paire de gants blancs pour monsieur."

And what was the surprise of our three friends in recognizing Dodor!

The gay Dodor, Dodor l'irrésistible, quite unembarrassed by his position, was exuberant in his delight at seeing them again, and introduced them to the patron and his wife and daughter, Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle Passefil. And it soon became pretty evident that, in spite of his humble employment in that house, he was a great favorite in that family, and especially with mademoiselle.



"'OON PAIR DE GONG BLONG'"

Indeed, Monsieur Passefil invited our three heroes to stay and dine then and there; but they compromised matters by asking Dodor to come and dine with *them* at the hotel, and he accepted with alacrity.

Thanks to Dodor, the dinner was a very lively one, and they soon forgot the regretful impressions of the day.

They learned that he hadn't got a penny in the world, and had left the army, and had for two years kept the books at le père Passefil's and served his customers, and won his good opinion and his wife's, and especially his daughter's; and that soon he was to be not only his employer's partner, but his son-in-law; and that, in spite of his impecuniosity, he had managed to impress them with the fact that in marrying a Rigolot de Lafarce she was making a very splendid match indeed!

His brother-in-law, the Honorable Jack Reeve, had long cut him for a bad lot. But his sister, after a while, had made up her mind that to marry Mlle. Passefil wasn't the worst he could do; at all events, it would keep him out of England, and *that* was a comfort! And passing through Paris, she had actually called on the Passefil family, and they had fallen prostrate before such splendor; and no wonder, for Mrs. Jack Reeve was one of the most beautiful, elegant, and fashionable women in London, the smartest of the smart.

"And how about l' Zouzou?" asked Little Billee.

"Ah, old Gontran! I don't see much of him. We no longer quite move in the same circles, you know; not that he's proud, or me either! but he's a sub-lieu-

tenant in the Guides — an officer! Besides, his brother's dead, and he's the Duc de la Rochemartel, and a special pet of the Empress; he makes her laugh more than anybody! He's looking out for the biggest heiress he can find, and he's pretty safe to catch her, with such a name as that! In fact, they say he's caught her already—Miss Lavinia Hunks, of Chicago. Twenty million dollars!—at least, so the *Figaro* says!"

Then he gave them news of other old friends; and they did not part till it was time for them to go to the Cirque des Bashibazoucks, and after they had arranged to dine with his future family on the following day.

In the Rue St. Honoré was a long double file of cabs and carriages slowly moving along to the portals of that huge hall, Le Cirque des Bashibazoucks. Is it there still, I wonder? I don't mind betting not! Just at this period of the Second Empire there was a mania for demolition and remolition (if there is such a word), and I have no doubt my Parisian readers would search the Rue St. Honoré for the Salle des Bashibazoucks in vain!

Our friends were shown to their stalls, and looked round in surprise. This was before the days of the Albert Hall, and they had never been in such a big place of the kind before, or one so regal in aspect, so gorgeously imperial with white and gold and crimson velvet, so dazzling with light, so crammed with people from floor to roof, and cramming itself still.

A platform carpeted with crimson cloth had been erected in front of the gates where the horses had

once used to come in, and their fair riders, and the two jolly English clowns; and the beautiful nobleman with the long frock-coat and brass buttons, and soft high boots, and four-in-hand whip—"la chambrière."

In front of this was a lower stand for the orchestra. The circus itself was filled with stalls—stalles d'orchestre. A pair of crimson curtains hid the entrance to the platform at the back, and by each of these stood a small page, ready to draw it aside and admit the diva.

The entrance to the orchestra was by a small door under the platform, and some thirty or forty chairs and music-stands, grouped around the conductor's estrade, were waiting for the band.

Little Billee looked round, and recognized many countrymen and countrywomen of his own—many great musical celebrities especially, whom he had often met in London. Tiers upon tiers of people rose up all round in a widening circle, and lost themselves in a dazy mist of light at the top—it was like a picture by Martin! In the imperial box were the English ambassador and his family, with an august British personage sitting in the middle, in front, his broad blue ribbon across his breast and his opera-glass to his royal eyes.

Little Billee had never felt so excited, so exhilarated by such a show before, nor so full of eager anticipation. He looked at his programme, and saw that the Hungarian band (the first that had yet appeared in western Europe, I believe) would play an overture of gypsy dances. Then Madame Svengali would sing "un air connu, sans accompagnement," and afterwards other airs, including the "Nussbaum" of Schumann

(for the first time in Paris, it seemed). Then a rest of ten minutes; then more csárdás; then the diva would sing "Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre," of all things in the world! and finish up with "un impromptu de Chopin, sans paroles."

Truly a somewhat incongruous bill of fare!

GECKO

Close on the stroke of nine the musicians came in and took their seats. They were dressed in the foreign hussar uniform that has now become so familiar. The first violin had scarcely sat down before our friends recognized in him their old friend Gecko.

Just as the clock struck, Svengali, in irreproachable evening dress, tall and stout and quite splendid in appearance, notwithstanding his long black mane (which had been curled), took his place at his desk. Our friends would have known him at a glance, in spite of the wonderful alteration time and prosperity had wrought in his outward man.

He bowed right and left to the thunderous applause that greeted him, gave his three little bâton-taps, and the lovely music began at once. We have grown accustomed to strains of this kind during the last twenty years; but they were new then, and their strange seduction was a surprise as well as an enchantment.

Besides, no such band as Svengali's had ever been

heard; and in listening to this overture the immense crowd almost forgot that it was a mere preparation for a great musical event, and tried to encore it. But Svengali merely turned round and bowed—there were to be no encores that night.

Then a moment of silence and breathless suspense—curiosity on tiptoe!

Then the two little page-boys each drew a silken rope, and the curtains parted and looped themselves up on each side symmetrically; and a tall female figure appeared, clad in what seemed like a classical dress of cloth of gold, embroidered with garnets and beetles' wings; her snowy arms and shoulders bare, a gold coronet of stars on her head, her thick light brown hair tied behind and flowing all down her back to nearly her knees, like those ladies in hair-dressers' shops who sit with their backs to the plate-glass window to advertise the merits of some particular hair-wash.

She walked slowly down to the front, her hands hanging at her sides in quite a simple fashion, and made a slight inclination of her head and body towards the imperial box, and then to right and left. Her lips and cheeks were rouged; her dark level eyebrows nearly met at the bridge of her short high nose. Through her parted lips you could see her large glistening white teeth; her gray eyes looked straight at Svengali.

Her face was thin, and had a rather haggard expression, in spite of its artificial freshness; but its contour was divine, and its character so tender, so humble, so touchingly simple and sweet, that one melted at the

sight of her. No such magnificent or seductive apparition has ever been seen before or since on any stage or platform—not even Miss Ellen Terry as the priestess of Artemis in the late Laureate's play, "The Cup."

The house rose at her as she came down to the front; and she bowed again to right and left, and put her hand to her heart quite simply and with a most winning natural gesture, an adorable gaucherie—like a graceful and unconscious school-girl, quite innocent of stage deportment.

It was Trilby!

Trilby the tone-deaf, who couldn't sing one single note in tune! Trilby, who couldn't tell a C from an F!!

What was going to happen?

Our three friends were almost turned to stone in the immensity of their surprise.

Yet the big Taffy was trembling all over; the Laird's jaw had all but fallen on to his chest; Little Billee was staring, staring his eyes almost out of his head. There was something, to them, so strange and uncanny about it all; so oppressive, so anxious, so momentous!

The applause had at last subsided. Trilby stood with her hands behind her, one foot (the left one) on a little stool that had been left there on purpose, her lips parted, her eyes on Svengali's, ready to begin.

He gave his three beats, and the band struck a chord. Then, at another beat from him, but in her direction, she began, without the slightest appearance of effort, without any accompaniment whatever, he still beating

time—conducting her, in fact, just as if she had been an orchestra herself:

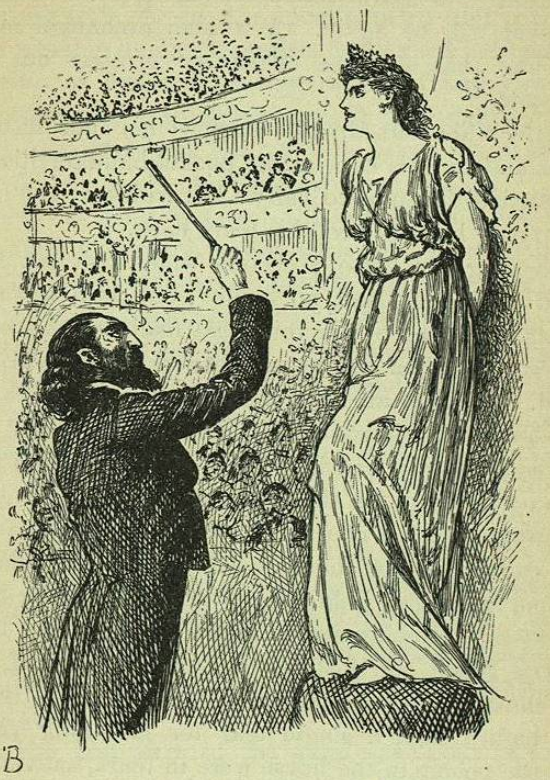
"Au clair de la lune,
Mon ami Pierrot!
Prête-moi ta plume
Pour écrire un mot.
Ma chandelle est morte . . .
Je n'ai plus de feu!
Ouvre-moi ta porte
Pour l'amour de Dieu!"

This was the absurd old nursery rhyme with which la Svengali chose to make her début before the most critical audience in the world! She sang it three times over—the same verse. There is but one.

The first time she sang it without any expression whatever—not the slightest. Just the words and the tune; in the middle of her voice, and not loud at all; just as a child sings who is thinking of something else; or just as a young French mother sings who is darning socks by a cradle, and rocking her baby to sleep with her foot.

But her voice was so immense in its softness, richness, freshness, that it seemed to be pouring itself out from all round; its intonation absolutely, mathematically pure; one felt it to be not only faultless, but infallible; and the seduction, the novelty of it, the strangely sympathetic quality! How can one describe the quality of a peach or a nectarine to those who have only known apples?

Until la Svengali appeared, the world had only known apples—Catalanis, Jenny Linds, Grisis, Albonis, Pattis! The best apples that can be, for sure — but still only apples!



"AU CLAIR DE LA LUNE"

If she had spread a pair of large white wings and gracefully fluttered up to the roof and perched upon the chandelier, she could not have produced a greater sensation. The like of that voice has never been heard, nor ever will be again. A woman archangel might sing like that, or some enchanted princess out of a fairy-tale.

Little Billee had already dropped his face into his hands and hid his eyes in his pocket-handkerchief; a big tear had fallen on to Taffy's left whisker; the Laird was trying hard to keep his tears back.

She sang the verse a second time, with but little added expression and no louder; but with a sort of breathy widening of her voice that made it like a broad heavenly smile of universal motherhood turned into sound. One felt all the genial gayety and grace and impishness of Pierrot and Columbine idealized into frolicsome beauty and holy innocence, as though they were performing for the saints in Paradise — a baby Columbine, with a cherub for clown! The dream of it all came over you for a second or two—a revelation of some impossible golden age—priceless—never to be forgotten! How on earth did she do it?

Little Billee had lost all control over himself, and was shaking with his suppressed sobs — Little Billee, who hadn't shed a single tear for five long years! Half the people in the house were in tears, but tears of sheer delight, of delicate inner laughter.

Then she came back to earth, and saddened and veiled and darkened her voice as she sang the verse for the third time; and it was a great and sombre tragedy, too deep for any more tears; and somehow or other

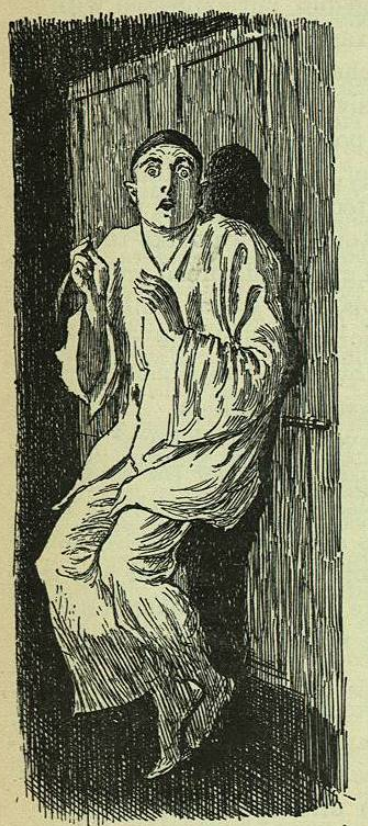
poor Columbine, forlorn and betrayed and dying, out in the cold at midnight — sinking down to hell, perhaps—was making her last frantic appeal! It was no longer Pierrot and Columbine — it was Marguerite — it was Faust! It was the most terrible and pathetic of all possible human tragedies, but expressed with no dramatic or histrionic exaggeration of any sort; by mere tone, slight, subtle changes in the quality of the sound—too quick and elusive to be taken count of, but to be felt with, oh, what poignant sympathy!

When the song was over, the applause did not come immediately, and she waited with her kind wide smile, as if she were well accustomed to wait like this; and then the storm began, and grew and spread and rattled and echoed — voice, hands, feet, sticks, umbrellas!— and down came the bouquets, which the little page-boys picked up; and Trilby bowed to front and right and left in her simple *débonnaire* fashion. It was her usual triumph. It had never failed, whatever the audience, whatever the country, whatever the song.

Little Billee didn't applaud. He sat with his head in his hands, his shoulders still heaving. He believed himself to be fast asleep and in a dream, and was trying his utmost not to wake; for a great happiness was his. It was one of those nights to be marked with a white stone!

As the first bars of the song came pouring out of her parted lips (whose shape he so well remembered), and her dovelike eyes looked straight over Svengali's head, straight in his own direction — nay, *at* him — something melted in his brain, and all his long-lost power of loving came back with a rush.

It was like the sudden curing of a deafness that has been lasting for years. The doctor blows through your nose into your Eustachian tube with a little India-rubber machine; some obstacle gives way, there is a snap in your head, and straightway you hear better than you had ever heard in all your life, almost too well; and all your life is once more changed for you!



"OUVRE-MOI TA PORTE POUR L'AMOUR DE DIEU!"

At length he sat up again, in the middle of la Svengali's singing of the "Nussbaum," and saw her; and saw the Laird sitting by him, and Taffy, their eyes riveted on Trilby, and knew for certain that it was *no* dream this time, and his joy was almost a pain!

She sang the "Nussbaum" (to its heavenly accompaniment) as simply as she had sung the previous song. Every separate note was a highly finished gem of sound, linked to the next by a magic bond.

You did not require to be a lover of music to fall beneath the spell of such a voice as that; the mere melodic phrase had all but ceased to matter. Her phrasing, consummate as it was, was as simple as a child's.

It was as if she said: "See! what does the composer count for? Here is about as beautiful a song as was ever written, with beautiful words to match, and the words have been made French for you by one of your smartest poets! But what do the words signify, any more than the tune, or even the language? The 'Nussbaum' is neither better nor worse than 'Mon ami Pierrot' when *I* am the singer; for I am *Svengali;* and you shall hear nothing, see nothing, think of nothing, but *Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!*"

It was the apotheosis of voice and virtuosity! It was "il bel canto" come back to earth after a hundred years — the bel canto of Vivarelli, let us say, who sang the same song every night to the same King of Spain for a quarter of a century, and was rewarded with a dukedom, and wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.

And, indeed, here was this immense audience, made up of the most cynically critical people in the world, and the most anti-German, assisting with rapt ears and streaming eyes at the imagined spectacle of a simple German damsel, a Mädchen, a Fräulein, just "verlobte"—a future Hausfrau—sitting under a walnut-tree in some suburban garden—à Berlin!—and around her, her family and their friends, probably drinking beer and smoking long porcelain pipes, and talking politics or business, and cracking innocent elaborate old German jokes; with bated breath, lest they should