

Dart Seventh

"The moon made thy lips pale, beloved ;
The wind made thy bosom chill ;
The night did shed
On thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will."

NEXT morning our three friends lay late abed, and breakfasted in their rooms.

They had all three passed "white nights"—even the Laird, who had tossed about and pressed a sleepless pillow till dawn, so excited had he been by the wonder of Trilby's reincarnation, so perplexed by his own doubts as to whether it was really Trilby or not.

And certain haunting tones of her voice, that voice so cruelly sweet (which clove the stillness with a clang so utterly new, so strangely heart-piercing and seductive, that the desire to hear it once more became nostalgic—almost an ache!), certain bits and bars and phrases of the music she had sung, unspeakable felicities and facilities of execution; sudden exotic warmths, fragrances, tendernesses, graces, depths, and breadths; quick changes from grave to gay, from rough to smooth, from great metallic brazen clangors to soft golden suavities; all the varied modes of sound we try so vainly to borrow from vocal nature by means

of wind and reed and string—all this new "Trilby-ness" kept echoing in his brain all night (for he was of a nature deeply musical), and sleep had been impossible to him.

"As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,"

so dwelt the Laird upon the poor old tune "Ben Bolt," which kept singing itself over and over again in his tired consciousness, and maddened him with novel, strange, unhackneyed, unsuspected beauties such as he had never dreamed of in any earthly music.

It had become a wonder, and he knew not why!

They spent what was left of the morning at the Louvre, and tried to interest themselves in the "Marriage of Cana," and the "Woman at the Well," and Vandyck's man with the glove, and the little princess of Velasquez, and Lisa Gioconda's smile: it was of no use trying. There was no sight worth looking at in all Paris but Trilby in her golden raiment; no other princess in the world; no smile but hers, when through her parted lips came bubbling Chopin's Impromptu. They had not long to stay in Paris, and they must drink of that bubbling fountain once more—*coûte que coûte!* They went to the Salle des Bashibazoucks, and found that all seats all over the house had been taken for days and weeks; and the "queue" at the door had already begun! and they had to give up all hopes of slaking this particular thirst.

Then they went and lunched perfunctorily, and talked desultorily over lunch, and read criticisms of

la Svengali's début in the morning papers—a chorus of journalistic acclamation gone mad, a frenzied eulogy in every key—but nothing was good enough for them! Brand-new words were wanted—another language!

Then they wanted a long walk, and could think of nowhere to go in all Paris—that immense Paris, where they had promised themselves to see so much that the week they were to spend there had seemed too short!

Looking in a paper, they saw it announced that the band of the Imperial Guides would play that afternoon in the Pré Catelan, Bois de Boulogne, and thought they might as well walk there as anywhere else, and walk back again in time to dine with the Passefils—a prandial function which did not promise to be very amusing; but still it was something to kill the evening with, since they couldn't go and hear Trilby again.

Outside the Pré Catelan they found a crowd of cabs and carriages, saddle-horses and grooms. One might have thought one's self in the height of the Paris season. They went in, and strolled about here and there, and listened to the band, which was famous (it has performed in London at the Crystal Palace), and they looked about and studied life, or tried to.

Suddenly they saw, sitting with three ladies (one of whom, the eldest, was in black), a very smart young officer, a guide, all red and green and gold, and recognized their old friend Zouzou. They bowed, and he knew them at once, and jumped up and came to them and greeted them warmly, especially his old friend Taffy, whom he took to his mother—the lady in black—and introduced to the other ladies, the younger of

whom was so lamentably, so pathetically plain that it would be brutal to attempt the cheap and easy task of describing her. It was Miss Lavinia Hunks, the famous American millionairess, and her mother. Then the good Zouzou came back and talked to the Laird and Little Billee.

Zouzou, in some subtle and indescribable way, had become very ducal indeed.

He looked extremely distinguished, for one thing, in his beautiful guide's uniform, and was most gracefully and winningly polite. He inquired warmly after Mrs. and Miss Bagot, and begged Little Billee would recall him to their amiable remembrance when he saw them again. He expressed most sympathetically his delight to see Little Billee looking so strong and so well (Little Billee looked like a pallid little washed-out ghost, after his white night).

They talked of Dodor. He said how attached he was to Dodor, and always should be; but Dodor, it seemed, had made a great mistake in leaving the army and going into a retail business (*petit commerce*). He had done for himself—*dégringolé!* He should have stuck to the *dragons*—with a little patience and good conduct he would have “won his epaulet”—and then one might have arranged for him a good little marriage—*un parti convenable*—for he was “très joli garçon, Dodor! bonne tournure—et très gentiment né! C'est très ancien, les Rigolot—dans le Poitou, je crois—Lafarce, et tout ça; tout à fait bien!”

It was difficult to realize that this polished and discreet and somewhat patronizing young man of the world was the jolly dog who had gone after Little

Billee's hat on all fours in the Rue Vieille des Mauvais Ladres and brought it back in his mouth—the Caryhatide!

Little Billee little knew that Monsieur le Duc de la Rochemartel-Boisségur had quite recently delighted a very small and select and most august imperial supper-party at Compiègne with this very story, not blinking a single detail of his own share in it—and had given a most touching and sympathetic description of “le joli petit peintre anglais qui s'appelait Litrebili, et ne pouvait pas se tenir sur ses jambes—et qui pleurerait d'amour fraternel dans les bras de mon copain Dodor!”

“Ah! Monsieur Gontran, ce que je donnerais pour avoir vu ça!” had said the greatest lady in France; “un de mes zouaves—à quatre pattes—dans la rue—un chapeau dans la bouche—oh—c'est impayable!”

Zouzou kept these blackguard bohemian reminiscences for the imperial circle alone—to which it was suspected that he was secretly rallying himself. Among all outsiders—especially within the narrow precincts of the cream of the noble Faubourg (which remained aloof from the Tuileries)—he was a very proper and gentlemanlike person indeed, as his brother had been—and, in his mother's fond belief, “très bien pensant, très bien vu, à Frohsdorf et à Rome.”

On lui aurait donné le bon Dieu sans confession—as Madame Vinard had said of Little Billee—they would have shriven him at sight, and admitted him to the holy communion on trust!

He did not present Little Billee and the Laird to his mother, nor to Mrs. and Miss Hunks; that honor

was reserved for “the Man of Blood” alone; nor did he ask where they were staying, nor invite them to call on him. But in parting he expressed the immense pleasure it had given him to meet them again, and the hope he had of some day shaking their hands in London.

As the friends walked back to Paris together, it transpired that “the Man of Blood” had been invited by Madame Duchesse Mère (Maman Duchesse, as Zouzou called her) to dine with her next day, and meet the Hunkses at a furnished apartment she had taken in the Place Vendôme; for they had let (to the Hunkses) the Hôtel de la Rochemartel in the Rue de Lille; they had also been obliged to let their place in the country, le château de Boisségur (to Monsieur Despoires, or “des Poires,” as he chose to spell himself on his visiting-cards—the famous soap-manufacturer—“Un très brave homme, à ce qu'on dit!” and whose only son, by-the-way, soon after married Mademoiselle Jeanne-Adélaïde d'Amaury-Brissac de Roncesvaulx de Boisségur de la Rochemartel).

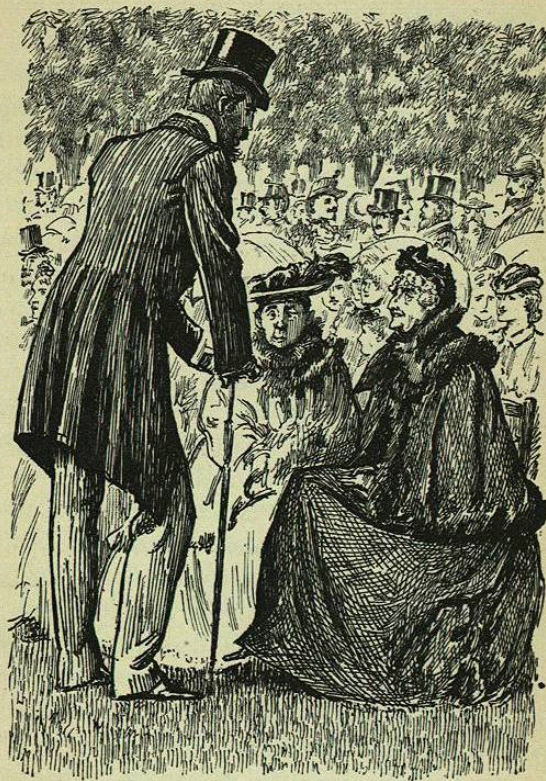
“Il ne fait pas gras chez nous à présent—je vous assure!” Madame Duchesse Mère had pathetically said to Taffy—but had given him to understand that things would be very much better for her son, in the event of his marriage with Miss Hunks.

“Good heavens!” said Little Billee, on hearing this; “that grotesque little bogy in blue? Why, she's deformed—she squints—she's a dwarf, and looks like an idiot! Millions or no millions, the man who marries her is a felon! As long as there are stones to break and a road to break them on, the able-bodied man who marries a woman like that for anything but pity and

kindness — and even then — dishonors himself, insults his ancestry, and inflicts on his descendants a wrong that nothing will ever redeem—he nips them in the bud—he blasts them forever! He ought to be cut by his fellow-men—sent to Coventry—to jail—to penal servitude for life! He ought to have a separate hell to himself when he dies—he ought to—”

“Shut up, you little blaspheming ruffian!” said the Laird. “Where do *you* expect to go to, yourself, with such frightful sentiments? And what would become of your beautiful old twelfth-century dukedoms, with a hundred yards of back-frontage opposite the Louvre, on a beautiful historic river, and a dozen beautiful historic names, and no money — if *you* had your way?” and the Laird wunk his historic wink.

“Twelfth-century dukedoms be damned!” said Taffy *au grand sérieux*, as usual. “Little Billee’s quite right, and Zouzou makes me sick! Besides, what does she marry *him* for — not for his beauty either, I guess! She’s his fellow-criminal, his deliberate accomplice, *particeps delicti*, accessory before the act and after! She has no right to marry at all! tar and feathers and a rail for both of them—and for Maman Duchesse too —and I suppose that’s why I refused her invitation to dinner! and now let’s go and dine with Dodor— . . . anyhow Dodor’s young woman doesn’t marry him for a dukedom —or even his ‘de’ — *mais bien pour ses beaux yeux!* and if the Rigolots of the future turn out less nice to look at than their sire, and not quite so amusing, they will probably be a great improvement on him in many other ways. There’s room enough — and to spare!”



“MAMAN DUCHESSÉ”

“‘Ear! ‘ear!” said Little Billee (who always grew flippant when Taffy got on his high horse). “Your ‘ealth and song, sir—them’s my sentiments to a T! What shall we ‘ave the pleasure of drinkin’, after that wery nice ‘armony?”

After which they walked on in silence, each, no doubt, musing on the general contrariness of things, and imagining what splendid little Wynnes, or Bagots, or McAlisters might have been ushered into a decadent world for its regeneration if fate had so willed it that a certain magnificent and singularly gifted grissette, etc., etc., etc. . . .

Mrs. and Miss Hunks passed them as they walked along, in a beautiful blue barouche with C springs—*un “huit-ressorts”*; Maman Duchesse passed them in a hired fly; Zouzou passed them on horseback; “tout Paris” passed them; but they were none the wiser, and agreed that the show was not a patch on that in Hyde Park during the London season.

When they reached the Place de la Concorde it was that lovely hour of a fine autumn day in beautiful bright cities when all the lamps are lit in the shops and streets and under the trees, and it is still daylight—a quickly fleeting joy; and as a special treat on this particular occasion the sun set, and up rose the yellow moon over eastern Paris, and floated above the chimney-pots of the Tuileries.

They stopped to gaze at the homeward procession of cabs and carriages, as they used to do in the old times. Tout Paris was still passing; tout Paris is very long.

They stood among a little crowd of sight-seers like themselves, Little Billee right in front—in the road.

Presently a magnificent open carriage came by—more magnificent than even the Hunkses’, with liveries and harness quite vulgarly resplendent—almost Napoleonic.

Lolling back in it lay Monsieur et Madame Svengali—he with his broad-brimmed felt sombrero over his long black curls, wrapped in costly furs, smoking his big cigar of the Havana.

By his side la Svengali—also in sables—with a large black velvet hat on, her light brown hair done up in a huge knot on the nape of her neck. She was rouged and pearl-powdered, and her eyes were blackened beneath, and thus made to look twice their size; but in spite of all such disfigurements she was a most splendid vision, and caused quite a little sensation in the crowd as she came slowly by.

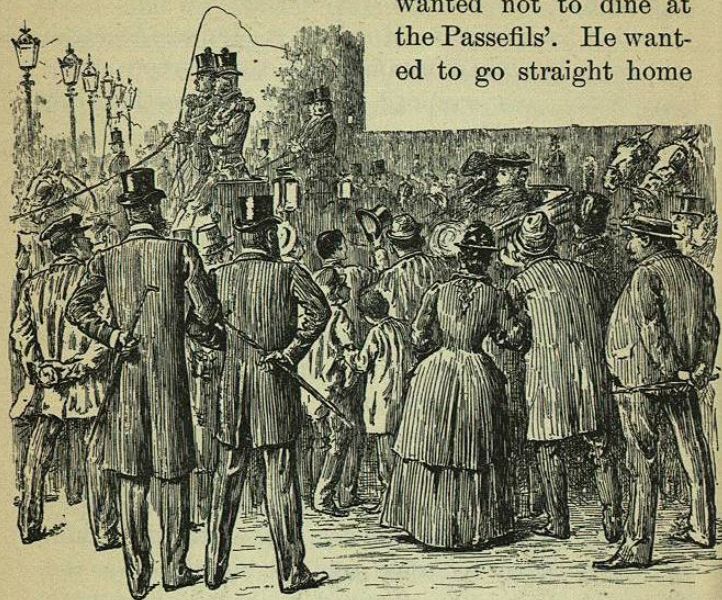
Little Billee’s heart was in his mouth. He caught Svengali’s eye, and saw him speak to her. She turned her head and looked at him standing there—they both did. Little Billee bowed. She stared at him with a cold stare of disdain, and cut him dead—so did Svengali. And as they passed he heard them both snigger—she with a little high-pitched flippant snigger worthy of a London bar-maid.

Little Billee was utterly crushed, and everything seemed turning round.

The Laird and Taffy had seen it all without losing a detail. The Svengalis had not even looked their way. The Laird said:

“It’s not Trilby—I swear! She could *never* have done that—it’s not *in* her! and it’s another face altogether—I’m sure of it!”

Taffy was also staggered and in doubt. They caught hold of Little Billee, each by an arm, and walked him off to the boulevards. He was quite demoralized, and wanted not to dine at the *Passefils'*. He wanted to go straight home



THE CUT DIRECT

at once. He longed for his mother as he used to long for her when he was in trouble as a small boy and she was away from home—longed for her desperately—to hug her and hold her and fondle her, and be fondled, for his own sake and hers; all his old love for her had come back in full—with what arrears! all his old love for his sister, for his old home.

When they went back to the hotel to dress (for

Dodor had begged them to put on their best evening war-paint, so as to impress his future mother-in-law), Little Billee became fractious and intractable. And it was only on Taffy's promising that he would go all the way to Devonshire with him on the morrow, and stay with him there, that he could be got to dress and dine.

The huge Taffy lived entirely by his affections, and he hadn't many to live by—the Laird, Trilby, and Little Billee.

Trilby was unattainable, the Laird was quite strong and independent enough to get on by himself, and Taffy had concentrated all his faculties of protection and affection on Little Billee, and was equal to any burden or responsibility all this instinctive young fathering might involve.

In the first place, Little Billee had always been able to do quite easily, and better than any one else in the world, the very things Taffy most longed to do himself and couldn't, and this inspired the good Taffy with a chronic reverence and wonder he could not have expressed in words.

Then Little Billee was physically small and weak, and incapable of self-control. Then he was generous, amiable, affectionate, transparent as crystal, without an atom of either egotism or conceit; and had a gift of amusing you and interesting you by his talk (and its complete sincerity) that never palled; and even his silence was charming—one felt so sure of him—so there was hardly any sacrifice, little or big, that big Taffy was not ready and glad to make for Little Billee. On the other hand, there lay deep down under

Taffy's surface irascibility and earnestness about trifles (and beneath his harmless vanity of the strong man), a long-suffering patience, a real humility, a robustness of judgment, a sincerity and all-roundness, a completeness of sympathy, that made him very good to trust and safe to lean upon. Then his powerful, impressive aspect, his great stature, the gladiatorlike poise of his small round head on his big neck and shoulders, his huge deltoids and deep chest and slender loins, his clean-cut ankles and wrists, all the long and bold and highly-finished athletic shapes of him, that easy grace of strength that made all his movements a pleasure to watch, and any garment look well when he wore it—all this was a perpetual feast to the quick, prehensile, æsthetic eye. And then he had such a solemn, earnest, lovable way of bending pokers round his neck, and breaking them on his arm, and jumping his own height (or near it), and lifting up arm-chairs by one leg with one hand, and what not else!

So that there was hardly any sacrifice, little or big, that Little Billee would not accept from big Taffy as a mere matter of course—a fitting and proper tribute rendered by bodily strength to genius.

Par nobile fratrum—well met and well mated for fast and long-enduring friendship.

The family banquet at Monsieur Passefil's would have been dull but for the irrepressible Dodor, and still more for the Laird of Cockpen, who rose to the occasion, and surpassed himself in geniality, drollery, and eccentricity of French grammar and accent. Monsieur

Passefil was also a droll in his way, and had the quickly familiar, jocose facetiousness that seems to belong to the successful middle-aged bourgeois all over the world, when he's not pompous instead (he can even be both sometimes).

Madame Passefil was not jocose. She was much impressed by the aristocratic splendor of Taffy, the romantic melancholy and refinement of Little Billee, and their quiet and dignified politeness. She always spoke of Dodor as Monsieur de Lafarce, though the rest of the family (and one or two friends who had been invited) always called him Monsieur Théodore, and he was officially known as Monsieur Rigolot.

Whenever Madame Passefil addressed him or spoke of him in this aristocratic manner (which happened very often), Dodor would wink at his friends, with his tongue in his cheek. It seemed to amuse him beyond measure.

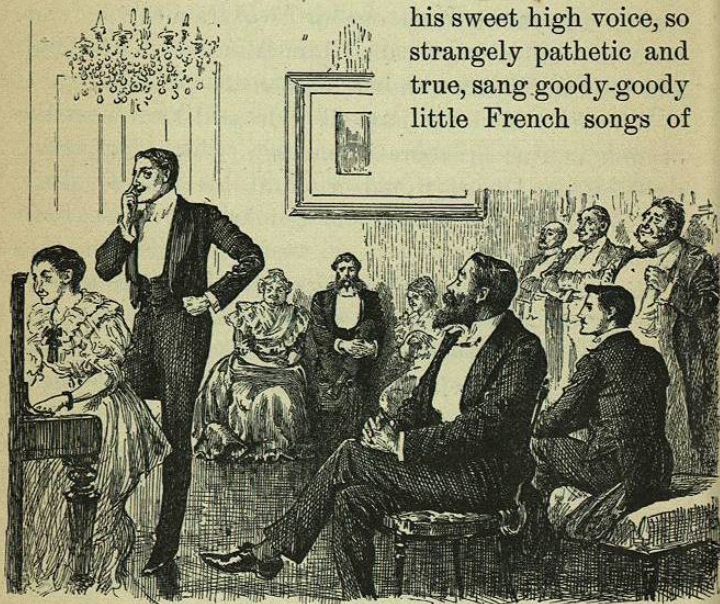
Mademoiselle Ernestine was evidently too much in love to say anything, and seldom took her eyes off Monsieur Théodore, whom she had never seen in evening dress before. It must be owned that he looked very nice—more ducal than even Zouzou—and to be Madame de Lafarce *en perspective*, and the future owner of such a brilliant husband as Dodor, was enough to turn a stronger little bourgeois head than Mademoiselle Ernestine's.

She was not beautiful, but healthy, well grown, well brought up, and presumably of a sweet, kind, and amiable disposition—an *ingénue* fresh from her convent—innocent as a child, no doubt; and it was felt that Dodor had done better for himself (and for his

race) than Monsieur le Duc. Little Dodors need have no fear.

After dinner the ladies and gentlemen left the dining-room together, and sat in a pretty salon overlooking the boulevard, where cigarettes were allowed, and there was music. Mademoiselle Ernestine laboriously played "Les Cloches du Monastère," (by Monsieur Lefébure-Wély, if I'm not mistaken). It's the most bourgeois piece of music I know.

Then Dodor, with his sweet high voice, so strangely pathetic and true, sang goody-goody little French songs of



"PETIT ENFANT, J'AIMAIS D'UN AMOUR TENDRE
MA MÈRE ET DIEU—SAINTES AFFECTIONS!
PUIS MON AMOUR AUX FLEURS SE FIT ENTENDRE,
PUIS AUX OISEAUX, ET PUIS AUX PAPILLONS!"

innocence (of which he seemed to have an endless répertoire) to his future wife's conscientious accompaniment—to the immense delight, also, of all his future family, who were almost in tears—and to the great amusement of the Laird, at whom he winked in the most pathetic parts, putting his forefinger to the side of his nose, like Noah Claypole in *Oliver Twist*.

The wonder of the hour, la Svengali, was discussed, of course; it was unavoidable. But our friends did not think it necessary to reveal that she was "la grande Trilby." That would soon transpire by itself.

And, indeed, before the month was a week older the papers were full of nothing else.

Madame Svengali—"la grande Trilby"—was the only daughter of the honorable and reverend Sir Lord O'Ferrall.

She had run away from the primeval forests and lonely marshes of le Dublin, to lead a free-and-easy life among the artists of the quartier latin of Paris—*une vie de bohème!*

She was the Venus Anadyomene from top to toe.

She was *blanche comme neige, avec un volcan dans le cœur.*

Casts of her alabaster feet could be had at Brucciani's, in the Rue de la Souricière St. Denis. (He made a fortune.)

Monsieur Ingres had painted her left foot on the wall of a studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts; and an eccentric Scotch milord (le Comte de Pencock) had bought the house containing the flat containing the studio containing the wall on which it was painted, had had the house pulled down, and

the wall framed and glazed and sent to his castle of Édimbourg.

(This, unfortunately, was in excess of the truth. It was found impossible to execute the Laird's wish, on account of the material the wall was made of. So the Lord Count of Pencoek—such was Madame Vinard's version of Sandy's nickname—had to forego his purchase.)

Next morning our friends were in readiness to leave Paris; even the Laird had had enough of it, and longed to get back to his work again—a "Hari-kari in Yokohama." (He had never been to Japan; but no more had any one else in those early days.)

They had just finished breakfast, and were sitting in the court-yard of the hotel, which was crowded, as usual.

Little Billee went into the hotel post-office to despatch a note to his mother. Sitting sideways there at a small table and reading letters was Svengali—of all people in the world. But for these two and a couple of clerks the room was empty.

Svengali looked up; they were quite close together.

Little Billee, in his nervousness, began to shake, and half put out his hand, and drew it back again, seeing the look of hate on Svengali's face.

Svengali jumped up, put his letters together, and passing by Little Billee on his way to the door, called him "verfluchter Schweinhund," and deliberately spat in his face.

Little Billee was paralyzed for a second or two;

then he ran after Svengali, and caught him just at the top of the marble stairs, and kicked him, and knocked off his hat, and made him drop all his letters. Svengali turned round and struck him over the mouth and made it bleed, and Little Billee hit out like a fury, but with no effect: he couldn't reach high enough, for Svengali was well over six feet.

There was a crowd round them in a minute, including the beautiful old man in the court suit and gold chain, who called out:

"Vite! vite! un commissaire de police!"—a cry that was echoed all over the place.

Taffy saw the row, and shouted, "Bravo, little un!" and jumping up from his table, jostled his way through the crowd; and Little Billee, bleeding and gasping and perspiring and stammering, said:

"He spat in my face, Taffy—damn him! I'd never even spoken to him—not a word, I swear!"

Svengali had not reckoned on Taffy's being there; he recognized him at once, and turned white.

Taffy, who had dog-skin gloves on, put out his right hand, and deftly seized Svengali's nose between his fore and middle fingers and nearly pulled it off, and swung his head two or three times backward and forward by it, and then from side to side, Svengali holding on to his wrist; and then, letting him go, gave him a sounding open-handed smack on his right cheek—and a smack on the face from Taffy (even in play) was no joke, I'm told; it made one smell brimstone, and see and hear things that didn't exist.

Svengali gasped worse than Little Billee, and couldn't speak for a while. Then he said,