



“TO SING LIKE THAT IS TO PRAY!”

“‘C'est égal, voyez-vous! to sing like that is to pray!’

“And then I thought how lovely it would be if I could only sing like Mimi la Salope, and I've thought so ever since—just to *pray!*”

“*What!* Trilby? if you could only sing like— Oh, but never mind, I forgot! Tell me, Trilby—do you ever pray to Him, as other people pray?”

“Pray to Him? Well, no—not often—not in words and on my knees and with my hands together, you know! *Thinking's* praying, very often—don't you think so? And so's being sorry and ashamed when one's done a mean thing, and glad when one's resisted a temptation, and grateful when it's a fine day and

one's enjoying one's self without hurting any one else! What is it but praying when you try and bear up after losing all you cared to live for? And very good praying too! There can be prayers without words just as well as songs, I suppose; and Svengali used to say that songs without words are the best!

“And then it seems mean to be always asking for things. Besides, you don't get them any the faster that way, and that shows!

“La mère Martin used to be always praying. And Père Martin used always to laugh at her; yet he always seemed to get the things *he* wanted oftenest!

“*I* prayed once, very hard indeed! I prayed for Jeannot not to die!”

“Well—but how do you *repent*, Trilby, if you do not humble yourself, and pray for forgiveness on your knees?”

“Oh, well—I don't exactly know! Look here, Mrs. Bagot, I'll tell you the lowest and meanest thing I ever did. . . .”

(Mrs. Bagot felt a little nervous.)

“I'd promised to take Jeannot on Palm-Sunday to St. Philippe du Roule, to hear l'abbé Bergamot. But Durien (that's the sculptor, you know) asked me to go with him to St. Germain, where there was a fair, or something; and with Mathieu, who was a student in law; and a certain Victorine Letellier, who—who was Mathieu's mistress, in fact. And I went on Sunday morning to tell Jeannot that I couldn't take him.

“He cried so dreadfully that I thought I'd give up the others and take him to St. Philippe, as I'd promised. But then Durien and Mathieu and Victorine

drove up and waited outside, and so I didn't take him, and went with them, and I didn't enjoy anything all day, and was miserable.

"They were in an open carriage with two horses; it was Mathieu's treat; and Jeannot might have ridden on the box by the coachman, without being in anybody's way. But I was afraid they didn't want him, as they didn't say anything, and so I didn't dare ask—and Jeannot saw us drive away, and I *couldn't* look back! And the worst of it is that when we were half-way to St. Germain, Durien said, 'What a pity you didn't bring Jeannot!' and they were all sorry I hadn't.

"It was six or seven years ago, and I really believe I've thought of it almost every day, and sometimes in the middle of the night!

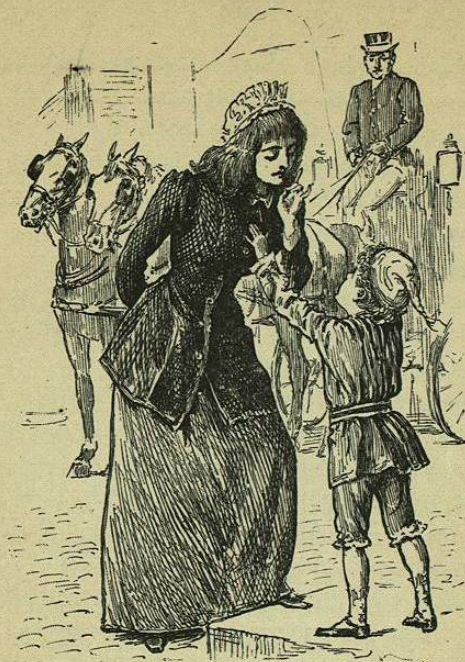
"Ah! and when Jeannot was dying! and when he was dead—the remembrance of that Palm-Sunday!

"And if *that's* not repenting, I don't know what is!"

"Oh, Trilby, what nonsense! *that's* nothing; good heavens!—putting off a small child! I'm thinking of far worse things—when you were in the quartier latin, you know—sitting to painters and sculptors. . . . Surely, so attractive as you are. . . ."

"Oh yes. . . . I know what you mean—it was horrid, and I was frightfully ashamed of myself; and it wasn't amusing a bit; *nothing* was, till I met your son and Taffy and dear Sandy McAlister! But then it wasn't deceiving or disappointing anybody, or hurting their feelings—it was only hurting myself!

"Besides, all that sort of thing, in women, is punished severely enough down here, God knows! unless



"THE REMEMBRANCE OF THAT PALM SUNDAY!"

one's a Russian empress like Catherine the Great, or a grande dame like lots of them, or a great genius like Madame Rachel or George Sand!

"Why, if it hadn't been for that, and sitting for the figure, I should have felt myself good enough to marry your son, *although* I was only a blanchisseuse de fin—you've said so yourself!

"And I should have made him a good wife—of that I feel sure. He wanted to live all his life at Barbizon, and paint, you know; and didn't care for society in the least. Anyhow, I should have been equal to such a

life as that! Lots of their wives are blanchisseuses over there, or people of that sort; and they get on very well indeed, and nobody troubles about it!

"So I think I've been pretty well punished—richly as I've deserved to!"

"Trilby, have you ever been confirmed?"

"I forget. I fancy not!"

"Oh dear, oh dear! And do you know about our blessed Saviour, and the Atonement and the Incarnation and the Resurrection. . . ."

"Oh yes—I *used* to, at least. I used to have to learn the Catechism on Sundays—mamma made me. Whatever her faults and mistakes were, poor mamma was always very particular about *that!* It all seemed very complicated. But papa told me not to bother too much about it, but to be good. He said that God would make it all right for us somehow, in the end—all of us. And that seems sensible, *doesn't* it?"

"He told me to be good, and not to mind what priests and clergymen tell us. He'd been a clergyman himself, and knew all about it, he said.

"I haven't been very good—there's not much doubt about that, I'm afraid! But God knows I've repented often enough and sore enough; I do now! But I'm rather glad to die, I think; and not a bit afraid—not a scrap! I believe in poor papa, though he *was* so unfortunate! He was the cleverest man I ever knew, and the best—except Taffy and the Laird and your dear son!

"There'll be no hell for any of us—he told me so—except what we make for ourselves and each other down here; and that's bad enough for anything. He

told me that *he* was responsible for me—he often said so—and that mamma was too, and his parents for *him*, and his grandfathers and grandmothers for *them*, and so on up to Noah and ever so far beyond, and God for us all!

"He told me always to think of other people before myself, as Taffy does, and your son; and never to tell lies or be afraid, and keep away from drink, and I should be all right. But I've sometimes been all wrong, all the same; and it wasn't papa's fault, but poor mamma's and mine; and I've known it, and been miserable at the time, and after! and I'm sure to be forgiven—perfectly certain—and so will everybody else, even the wickedest that ever lived! Why, just give them sense enough in the next world to understand all their wickedness in this, and that'll punish them enough for anything, I think! That's simple enough, *isn't* it? Besides, there may be *no* next world—that's on the cards too, you know!—and that will be simpler still!

"Not all the clergymen in all the world, not even the Pope of Rome, will ever make me doubt papa, or believe in any punishment after what we've all got to go through here! *Ce serait trop bête!*

"So that if you don't want me to very much, and he won't think it unkind, I'd rather not talk to Mr. Thomas Bagot about it. I'd rather talk to Taffy if I *must*. He's very clever, Taffy, though he doesn't often say such clever things as your son does, or paint nearly so well; and I'm sure he'll think papa was right."

And as a matter of fact the good Taffy, in his opin-

ion on this solemn subject, was found to be at one with the late Reverend Patrick Michael O'Ferrall—and so was the Laird—and so (to his mother's shocked and pained surprise) was Little Billee.

And so were Sir Oliver Calthorpe and Sir Jacob Wilcox and Doctor Thorne and Antony and Lorrimer and the Greek!

And so—in after-years, when grief had well pierced, and torn and riddled her through and through, and time and age had healed the wounds, and nothing remained but the consciousness of great inward scars of recollection to remind her how deep and jagged and wide the wounds had once been.—did Mrs. Bagot herself!

Late on one memorable Saturday afternoon, just as it was getting dusk in Charlotte Street, Trilby, in her pretty blue dressing-gown, lay on the sofa by the fire—her head well propped, her knees drawn up—looking very placid and content.

She had spent the early part of the day dictating her will to the conscientious Taffy.

It was a simple document, although she was not without many valuable trinkets to leave: quite a fortune! Souvenirs from many men and women she had charmed by her singing, from royalties downward.

She had been looking them over with the faithful Marta, to whom she had always thought they belonged. It was explained to her that they were gifts of Svengali's; since she did not remember when and where and by whom they were presented to her, except a few that Svengali had given her himself, with

many passionate expressions of his love, which seems to have been deep and constant and sincere; none the less so, perhaps, that she could never return it!

She had left the bulk of these to the faithful Marta.

But to each of the trois Angliches she had bequeathed a beautiful ring, which was to be worn by their brides if they ever married, and the brides didn't object.

To Mrs. Bagot she left a pearl necklace; to Miss Bagot her gold coronet of stars; and pretty (and most costly) gifts to each of the three doctors who had attended her and been so assiduous in their care; and who, as she was told, would make no charge for attending on Madame Svengali. And studs and scarf-pins to Antony, Lorrimer, the Greek, Dodor, and Zouzou; and to Carnegie a little German-silver vinaigrette which had once belonged to Lord Witlow; and pretty souvenirs to the Vinards, Angèle Boisse, Durien, and others.

And she left a magnificent gold watch and chain to Geeko, with a most affectionate letter and a hundred pounds—which was all she had in money of her own.

She had taken great interest in discussing with Taffy the particular kind of trinket which would best suit the idiosyncrasy of each particular legatee, and derived great comfort from the business-like and sympathetic conscientiousness with which the good Taffy entered upon all these minutiae—he was so solemn and serious about it, and took such pains. She little guessed how his dumb but deeply feeling heart was harrowed!

This document had been duly signed and witnessed

and intrusted to his care; and Trilby lay tranquil and happy, and with a sense that nothing remained for her but to enjoy the fleeting hour, and make the most of each precious moment as it went by.

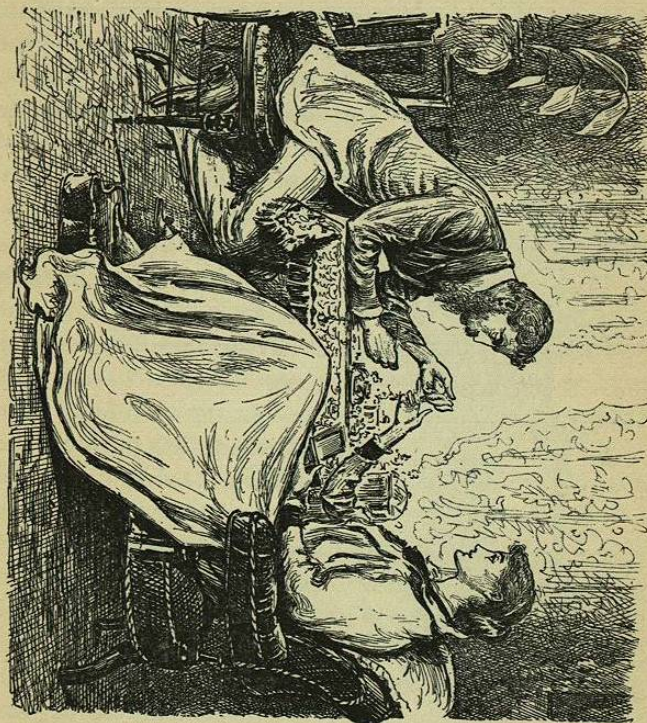
She was quite without pain of either mind or body, and surrounded by the people she adored—Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee, and Mrs. Bagot, and Marta, who sat knitting in a corner with her black mittens on, and her brass spectacles.

She listened to the chat and joined in it, laughing as usual; "love in her eyes sat playing" as she looked from one to another, for she loved them all beyond expression. "Love on her lips was straying, and warbling in her breath," whenever she spoke; and her weakened voice was still larger, fuller, softer than any other voice in the room, in the world—of another kind, from another sphere.

A cart drove up, there was a ring at the door, and presently a wooden packing-case was brought into the room.

At Trilby's request it was opened, and found to contain a large photograph, framed and glazed, of Svengali, in the military uniform of his own Hungarian band, and looking straight out of the picture, straight at you. He was standing by his desk with his left hand turning over a leaf of music, and waving his bâton with his right. It was a splendid photograph, by a Viennese photographer, and a most speaking likeness; and Svengali looked truly fine—all made up of importance and authority, and his big black eyes were full of stern command.

Marta trembled as she looked. It was handed to



FOR GREGO

Trilby, who exclaimed in surprise. She had never seen it. She had no photograph of him, and had never possessed one.

No message of any kind, no letter of explanation, accompanied this unexpected present, which, from the postmarks on the case, seemed to have travelled all



"OUT OF THE MYSTERIOUS EAST"

over Europe to London, out of some remote province in eastern Russia—out of the mysterious East! The poisonous East—birth-place and home of an ill wind that blows nobody good.

Trilby laid it against her legs as on a lectern, and lay gazing at it with close attention for a long time, making a casual remark now and then, as, "He was very handsome, I think"; or, "That uniform becomes him very well. Why has he got it on, I wonder?"

The others went on talking, and Mrs. Bagot made coffee.

Presently Mrs. Bagot took a cup of coffee to Trilby, and found her still staring intently at the portrait, but with her eyes dilated, and quite a strange light in them.

"Trilby, Trilby, your coffee! What is the matter, Trilby?"

Trilby was smiling, with fixed eyes, and made no answer.

The others got up and gathered round her in some alarm. Marta seemed terror-stricken, and wished to snatch the photograph away, but was prevented from doing so; one didn't know what the consequences might be.

Taffy rang the bell, and sent a servant for Dr. Thorne, who lived close by, in Fitzroy Square.

Presently Trilby began to speak, quite softly, in French: "Encore une fois? bon! je veux bien! avec la voix blanche alors, n'est-ce pas? et puis foncer au milieu. Et pas trop vite en commençant! Battez bien la mesure, Svengali—que je puisse bien voir—car il fait déjà nuit! c'est ça! Allons, Gecko—donne-moi le ton!"

Then she smiled, and seemed to beat time softly by moving her head a little from side to side, her eyes intent on Svengali's in the portrait, and suddenly she began to sing Chopin's Impromptu in A flat.

She hardly seemed to breathe as the notes came pouring out, without words—mere vocalizing. It was as if breath were unnecessary for so little voice as she was using, though there was enough of it to fill the room—to fill the house—to drown her small audience in holy, heavenly sweetness.

She was a consummate mistress of her art. How that could be seen! And also how splendid had been her training. It all seemed as easy to her as opening and shutting her eyes, and yet how utterly impossible to anybody else!

Between wonder, enchantment, and alarm they were frozen to statues—all except Marta, who ran out of the room, crying: "Gott im Himmel! wieder zurück! wieder zurück!"

She sang it just as she had sung it at the Salle des Bashibazoucks, only it sounded still more ineffably seductive, as she was using less voice—using the essence of her voice, in fact—the pure spirit, the very cream of it.

There can be little doubt that these four watchers by that enchanted couch were listening to not only the most divinely beautiful, but also the most astounding feat of musical utterance ever heard out of a human throat.

The usual effect was produced. Tears were streaming down the cheeks of Mrs. Bagot and Little Billee. Tears were in the Laird's eyes, a tear on one of Taffy's whiskers—tears of sheer delight.

When she came back to the quick movement again, after the adagio, her voice grew louder and shriller, and sweet with a sweetness not of this earth; and went on increasing in volume as she quickened the time, nearing the end; and then came the dying away into all but nothing—a mere melodic breath; and then the little soft chromatic ascending rocket, up to E in alt, the last parting caress (which Svengali had introduced as a finale, for it does not exist in the piano score).

When it was over, she said: "Ça y est-il, cette fois, Svengali? Ah! tant mieux, à la fin! c'est pas malheureux! Et maintenant, mon ami, *je suis fatiguée—bon soir!*"

Her head fell back on the pillow, and she lay fast asleep.

Mrs. Bagot took the portrait away gently. Little Billee knelt down and held Trilby's hand in his and felt for her pulse, and could not find it.

He said, "Trilby! Trilby!" and put his ear to her mouth to hear her breathe. Her breath was inaudible.

But soon she folded her hands across her breast, and uttered a little short sigh, and in a weak voice said: "*Svengali. . . Svengali. . . Svengali! . . .*"

They remained in silence round her for several minutes, terror-stricken.

The doctor came; he put his hand to her heart, his ear to her lips. He turned up one of her eyelids and looked at her eye. And then, his voice quivering with strong emotion, he stood up and said, "Madame Svengali's trials and sufferings are all over!"

"Oh, good God! is she *dead?*" cried Mrs. Bagot.

"Yes, Mrs. Bagot. She has been dead several minutes—perhaps a quarter of an hour."

#### VINGT ANS APRÈS

PORTHOS-ATHOS, *alias* Taffy Wynne, is sitting to breakfast (opposite his wife) at a little table in the court-yard of that huge caravanserai on the Boulevard des Italiens, Paris, where he had sat more than twenty years ago with the Laird and Little Billee; where, in fact, he had pulled Svengali's nose.

Little is changed in the aspect of the place: the

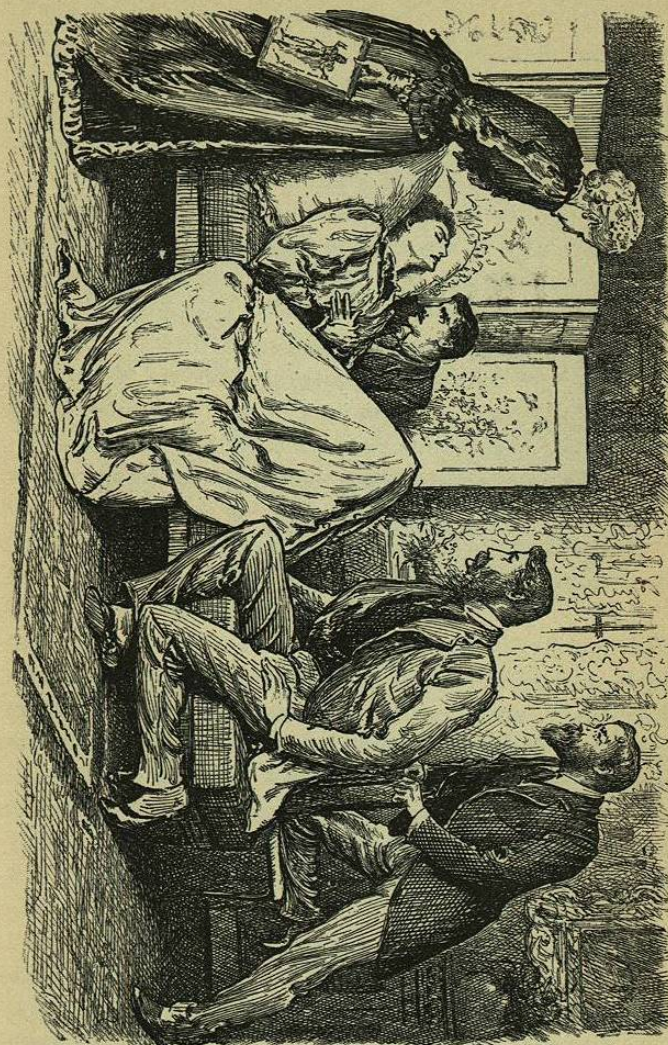
same cosmopolite company, with more of the American element, perhaps; the same arrivals and departures in railway omnibuses, cabs, hired carriages; and, to welcome the coming and speed the parting guests, just such another colossal and beautiful old man in velvet and knee-breeches and silk stockings as of yore, with probably the very same gold chain. Where do they breed these magnificent old Frenchmen? In Germany, perhaps, "where all the good big waiters come from!"

And also the same fine weather. It is always fine weather in the court-yard of the Grand Hôtel. As the Laird would say, they manage these things better there!

Taffy wears a short beard, which is turning gray. His kind blue eye is no longer choleric, but mild and friendly—as frank as ever; and full of humorous patience. He has grown stouter; he is very big indeed, in all three dimensions, but the symmetry and the gainliness of the athlete belong to him still in movement and repose; and his clothes fit him beautifully, though they are not new, and show careful beating and brushing and ironing, and even a faint suspicion of all but imperceptible fine-drawing here and there.

What a magnificent old man *he* will make some day, should the Grand Hôtel ever run short of them! He looks as if he could be trusted down to the ground—in all things, little or big; as if his word were as good as his bond, and even better; his wink as good as his word, his nod as good as his wink; and, in truth, as he looks, so he is.

The most cynical disbeliever in "the grand old name



“SYNGALI! . . . SYNGALI! . . . SYNGALI! . . .”



of gentleman," and its virtues as a noun of definition, would almost be justified in quite dogmatically asserting at sight, and without even being introduced, that, at all events, Taffy is a "gentleman," inside and out, up and down—from the crown of his head (which is getting rather bald) to the sole of his foot (by no means a small one, or a lightly shod—*ex pede Herculem*)!

Indeed, this is always the first thing people say of Taffy—and the last. It means, perhaps, that he may be a trifle dull. Well, one can't be everything!

Porthos was a trifle dull—and so was Athos, I think; and likewise his son, the faithful Viscount of Bragelonne—*bon chien chasse de race!* And so was Wilfred of Ivanhoe, the disinherited; and Edgar, the Lord of Ravenswood! and so, for that matter, was Colonel Newcome, of immortal memory!

Yet who does not love them—who would not wish to be like them, for better, for worse!

Taffy's wife is unlike Taffy in many ways; but (fortunately for both) very like him in some. She is a little woman, very well shaped, very dark, with black, wavy hair, and very small hands and feet; a very graceful, handsome, and vivacious person; by no means dull; full, indeed, of quick perceptions and intuitions; deeply interested in all that is going on about and around her, and with always lots to say about it, but not too much.

She distinctly belongs to the rare, and ever-blessed, and most precious race of charmers.

She had fallen in love with the stalwart Taffy more than a quarter of a century ago in the Place St. Anatole des Arts, where he and she and her mother had



"TOUT VIENT À POINT, POUR QUI SAIT ATTENDRE"

tended the sick couch of Little Billee—but she had never told her love. *Tout vient à point, pour qui sait attendre!*

That is a capital proverb, and sometimes even a true one. Blanche Bagot had found it to be both!

One terrible night, never to be forgotten, Taffy lay fast asleep in bed, at his rooms in Jermyn Street, for he was very tired; grief tires more than anything, and brings a deeper slumber.

That day he had followed Trilby to her last home in Kensal Green, with Little Billee, Mrs. Bagot, the Laird, Antony, the Greek, and Durien (who had come over from Paris on purpose) as chief mourners; and very many other people, noble, famous, or otherwise, English and foreign; a splendid and most representative gathering, as was duly chronicled in all the newspapers here and abroad; a fitting ceremony to close the brief but splendid career of the greatest pleasure-giver of our time.

He was awakened by a tremendous ringing at the street-door bell, as if the house were on fire; and then there was a hurried scrambling up in the dark, a tumbling over stairs and kicking against banisters, and Little Billee had burst into his room, calling out: "Oh! Taffy, Taffy! I'm g-going mad—I'm g-going m-mad! I'm d-d-done for . . ."

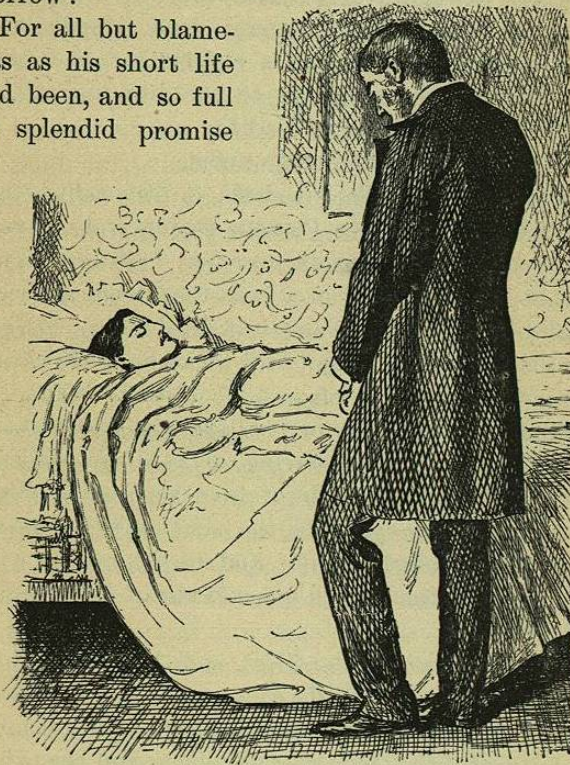
"All right, old fellow—just wait till I strike a light!"

"Oh, Taffy! I haven't slept for four nights—not a wink! She d-d-died with Sv—Sv—Sv . . . damn it, I can't get it out! that ruffian's name on her lips! . . . it was just as if he were calling her from the t-t-tomb! She recovered her senses the very minute she saw his photograph—she was so f-fond of him she f-forgot everybody else! She's gone straight to him, after all—in some other life! . . . to slave for him, and sing for him, and help him to make better music than ever! Oh, T—T—oh—oh! Taffy—oh! oh! oh! catch hold! c-c-catch . . ." And Little Billee had all but fallen on the floor in a fit.

And all the old miserable business of five years before had begun over again!

There has been too much sickness in this story, so I will tell as little as possible of poor Little Billee's long illness, his slow and only partial recovery, the paralysis of his powers as a painter, his quick decline, his early death, his manly, calm, and most beautiful surrender—the wedding of the moth with the star, of the night with the morrow!

For all but blameless as his short life had been, and so full of splendid promise



"I, PETE COELESTES. . ."