

and performance, nothing ever became him better than the way he left it. It was as if he were starting on some distant holy quest, like some gallant knight of old—"A Bagot to the Rescue!" It shook the infallibility of a certain vicar down to its very foundations, and made him think more deeply about things than he had ever thought yet. It gave him pause! . . . and so wrung his heart that when, at the last, he stooped to kiss his poor young dead friend's pure white forehead, he dropped a bigger tear on it than Little Billee (once so given to the dropping of big tears) had ever dropped in his life.

But it is all too sad to write about.

It was by Little Billee's bedside, in Devonshire, that Taffy had grown to love Blanche Bagot, and not very many weeks after it was all over that Taffy had asked her to be his wife; and in a year they were married, and a very happy marriage it turned out—the one thing that poor Mrs. Bagot still looks upon as a compensation for all the griefs and troubles of her life.

During the first year or two Blanche had perhaps been the most ardently loving of this well-assorted pair. That beautiful look of love surprised (which makes all women's eyes look the same) came into hers whenever she looked at Taffy, and filled his heart with tender compunction, and a queer sense of his own unworthiness.

Then a boy was born to them, and that look fell on the boy, and the good Taffy caught it as it passed him by, and he felt a helpless, absurd jealousy, that was none the less painful for being so ridiculous! and then that look fell on another boy, and yet another, so that it

was through these boys that she looked at their father. Then *his* eyes caught the look, and kept it for their own use; and he grew never to look at his wife without it; and as no daughter came, she retained for life the monopoly of that most sweet and expressive regard.

They are not very rich. He is a far better sportsman than he will ever be a painter; and if he doesn't sell his pictures, it is not because they are too good for the public taste: indeed, he has no illusions on that score himself, even if his wife has! He is quite the least conceited art-duffer I ever met—and I have met many far worse duffers than Taffy.

Would only that I might kill off his cousin Sir Oscar, and Sir Oscar's five sons (the Wynnes are good at sons), and his seventeen grandsons, and the fourteen cousins (and their numerous male progeny), that stand between Taffy and the baronetcy, and whatever property goes with it, so that he might be Sir Taffy, and dear Blanche Bagot (that was) might be called "my lady"! This Shakespearian holocaust would scarcely cost me a pang!

It is a great temptation, when you have duly slain your first hero, to enrich hero number two beyond the dreams of avarice, and provide him with a title and a castle and park, as well as a handsome wife and a nice family! But truth is inexorable—and, besides, they are just as happy as they are.

They are well off enough, anyhow, to spend a week in Paris at last, and even to stop at the Grand Hôtel! now that two of their sons are at Harrow (where their father was before them), and the third is safe at a preparatory school at Elstree, Herts.

It is their first outing since the honey-moon, and the Laird should have come with them.

But the good Laird of Cockpen (who is now a famous Royal Academician) is preparing for a honeymoon of his own. He has gone to Scotland to be married himself—to wed a fair and clever country-woman of just a suitable age, for he has known her ever since she was a bright little lassie in short frocks, and he a promising A.R.A. (the pride of his native Dundee)—a marriage of reason, and well-seasoned affection, and mutual esteem—and therefore sure to turn out a happy one! and in another fortnight or so the pair of them will very possibly be sitting to breakfast opposite each other at that very corner table in the court-yard of the Grand Hôtel! and she will laugh at everything he says—and they will live happily ever after.

So much for hero number three — D'Artagnan! Here's to you, Sandy McAlister, canniest, genialest, and most humorous of Scots! most delicate, and dainty, and fanciful of British painters! "I trink your health, mit your family's—may you lif long—and broser!"

So Taffy and his wife have come for their second honeymoon, their Indian-summer honeymoon, alone; and are well content that it should be so. Two's always company for such a pair—the amusing one and the amusable!—and they are making the most of it!

They have been all over the quartier latin, and revisited the well-remembered spots; and even been al-

lowed to enter the old studio, through the kindness of the concierge (who is no longer Madame Vinard). It is tenanted by two American painters, who are coldly civil on being thus disturbed in the middle of their work.

The studio is very spick and span, and most respectable. Trilby's foot, and the poem, and the sheet of plate-glass have been improved away, and a book-shelf put in their place. The new concierge (who has only been there a year) knows nothing of Trilby; and of the Vinards, only that they are rich and prosperous, and live somewhere in the south of France, and that Monsieur Vinard is mayor of his commune. *Que le bon Dieu les bénisse! c'étaient de bien braves gens.*

Then Mr. and Mrs. Taffy have also been driven (in an open calèche with two horses) through the Bois de Boulogne to St. Cloud; and to Versailles, where they lunched at the Hôtel des Réservoirs—*parlez-moi de ça!* and to St. Germain, and to Meudon (where they lunched at la loge du garde champêtre—a new one); they have visited the Salon, the Louvre, the porcelain manufactory at Sèvres, the Gobelins, the Hôtel Cluny, the Invalides, with Napoleon's tomb, and seen half a dozen churches, including Notre Dame and the Sainte Chapelle; and dined with the Dodors at their charming villa near Asnières, and with the Zouzous at the splendid Hôtel de la Rochemartel, and with the Duriens in the Parc Monceau (Dodors's food was best and Zouzou's worst; and at Durien's the company and talk were so good that one forgot to notice the food—and that was a pity). And the young Dodors are all

right—and so are the young Duriens. As for the young Zouzous, there aren't any—and that's a relief.

And they've been to the Variétés and seen Madame Chaumont, and to the Français and seen Sarah Bernhardt and Còquelin and Delaunay, and to the Opéra and heard Monsieur Lassalle.

And to-day being their last day, they are going to laze and flane about the boulevards, and buy things, and lunch anywhere, "sur le pouce," and do the Bois once more and see tout Paris, and dine early at Durand's, or Bignon's (or else the Café des Ambassadeurs), and finish up the well-spent day at the "Mouches d'Espagne"—the new theatre in the Boulevard Poissonnière—to see Madame Cantharidi in "Petits Bonheurs de Contrebande," which they are told is immensely droll and quite proper—funny without being vulgar! Dodor was their informant—he had taken Madame Dodor to see it three or four times.

Madame Cantharidi, as everybody knows, is a very clever but extremely plain old woman with a cracked voice—of spotless reputation, and the irreproachable mother of a grown-up family whom she has brought up in perfection. They have never been allowed to see their mother (and grandmother) act—not even the sons. Their excellent father (who adores both them and her) has drawn the line at that!

In private life she is "quite the lady," but on the stage—well, go and see her, and you will understand how she comes to be the idol of the Parisian public. For she is the true and liberal dispenser to them of

that modern "esprit gaulois" which would make the good Rabelais turn uneasily in his grave and blush there like a Benedictine Sister.

And truly she deserves the reverential love and gratitude of her chers Parisiens! She amused them all through the Empire; during the *année terrible* she was their only stay and comfort, and has been their chief delight ever since, and is now.

When they come back from *La Revanche*, may Madame Cantharidi be still at her post. "Les mouches



"PETITS BONHEURS DE CONTREBANDE"

d'Espagne," to welcome the returning heroes, and exult and crow with them in her funny cracked old voice; or, haply, even console them once more, as the case may be.

"Victors or vanquished, they will laugh the same!"

Mrs. Taffy is a poor French scholar. One must

know French very well indeed (and many other things besides) to seize the subtle points of Madame Cantharidi's play (and by-play)!

But Madame Cantharidi has so droll a face and voice, and such very droll, odd movements that Mrs. Taffy goes into fits of laughter as soon as the quaint little old lady comes on the stage. So heartily does she laugh that a good Parisian bourgeois turns round and remarks to his wife: "V'là une jolie p'tite Anglaise qui n'est pas bégueule, au moins! Et l' gros boeuf avec les yeux bleus en boules de loto—c'est son mari, sans doute! il n'a pas l'air trop content par exemple, celui-là!"

The fact is that the good Taffy (who knows French very well indeed) is quite scandalized, and very angry with Dodor for sending them there; and as soon as the first act is finished he means, without any fuss, to take his wife away.

As he sits patiently, too indignant to laugh at what is really funny in the piece (much of it is vulgar *without* being funny), he finds himself watching a little white-haired man in the orchestra, a fiddler, the shape of whose back seems somehow familiar, as he plays an *obligato* accompaniment to a very broadly comic song of Madame Cantharidi's. He plays beautifully—like a master—and the loud applause is as much for him as for the vocalist.

Presently this fiddler turns his head so that his profile can be seen, and Taffy recognizes him.

After five minutes' thought, Taffy takes a leaf out of his pocket-book and writes (in perfectly grammatical French):

"DEAR GECKO,— You have not forgotten Taffy Wynne, I hope; and Litrebili, and Litrebili's sister, who is now Mrs. Taffy Wynne. We leave Paris tomorrow, and would like very much to see you once more. Will you, after the play, come and sup with us at the Café Anglais? If so, look up and make 'yes' with the head, and enchant

"Your well-devoted
Taffy Wynne."

He gives this, folded, to an attendant—for "le premier violon—celui qui a des cheveux blancs."

Presently, he sees Gecko receive the note and read it and ponder for a while.

Then Gecko looks round the theatre, and Taffy waves his handkerchief and catches the eye of the premier violon, who "makes 'yes' with the head."

And then, the first act over, Mr. and Mrs. Wynne leave the theatre; Mr. explaining why, and Mrs. very ready to go, as she was beginning to feel strangely uncomfortable without quite realizing as yet what was amiss with the lively Madame Cantharidi.

They went to the Café Anglais and bespoke a nice little room on the entresol overlooking the boulevard, and ordered a nice little supper; salmi of something very good, mayonnaise of lobster, and one or two other dishes better still—and chambertin of the best. Taffy was particular about these things on a holiday, and regardless of expense. Porthos was very hospitable, and liked good food and plenty of it; and Athos dearly loved good wine!

And then they went and sat at a little round table outside the western corner café on the boulevard, near

the Grand Opéra, where it is always very gay, and studied Paris life, and nursed their appetites till supper-time.

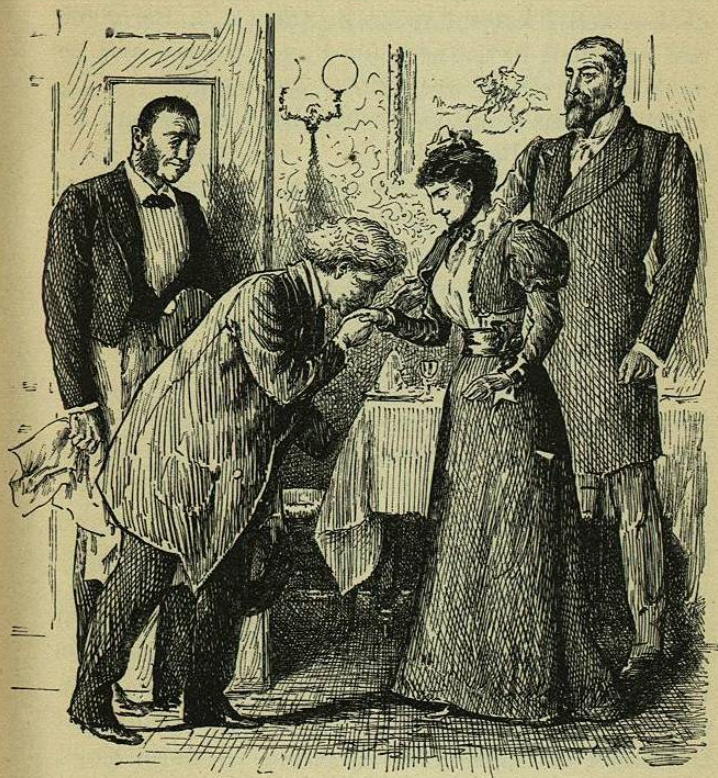
At half-past eleven Gecko made his appearance—very meek and humble. He looked old—ten years older than he really was—much bowed down, and as if he had roughed it all his life, and had found living a desperate long, hard grind.

He kissed Mrs. Taffy's hand, and seemed half inclined to kiss Taffy's too, and was almost tearful in his pleasure at meeting them again, and his gratitude at being asked to sup with them. He had soft, clinging, caressing manners, like a nice dog's, that made you his friend at once. He was obviously genuine and sincere, and quite pathetically simple, as he always had been.

At first he could scarcely eat for nervous excitement; but Taffy's fine example and Mrs. Taffy's genial, easy-going cordiality (and a couple of glasses of chambertin) soon put him at his ease and woke up his dormant appetite; which was a very large one, poor fellow!

He was told all about Little Billee's death, and deeply moved to hear the cause which had brought it about, and then they talked of Trilby.

He pulled her watch out of his waistcoat-pocket and reverently kissed it, exclaiming: "Ah! c'était un ange! un ange du Paradis! when I tell you I lived with them for five years! Oh! her kindness, Dio, dio Maria! It was 'Gecko this!' and 'Gecko that!' and 'Poor Gecko, your toothache, how it worries me!' and 'Gecko, how tired and pale you look—you distress



ENTER GECKO

me so, looking like that! Shall I mix you a mai-trank? And 'Gecko, you love artichokes à la Barigoule; they remind you of Paris—I have heard you say so. Well, I have found out where to get artichokes, and I know how to do them à la Barigoule, and you shall have them for dinner to-day and to-morrow and all the week after! and we did!

"Ach! dear kind one—what did I really care for artichokes à la Barigoule? . . .

"And it was always like that—always—and to Svengali and old Marta just the same! and she was never well—never! toujours souffrante!

"And it was she who supported us all—in luxury and splendor sometimes!"

"And *what* an artist!" said Taffy.

"Ah, yes! but all that was Svengali, you know. Svengali was the greatest artist I ever met! Monsieur, Svengali was a demon, a magician! I used to think him a god! He found me playing in the streets for copper coins, and took me by the hand, and was my only friend, and taught me all I ever knew—and yet he could not play my instrument!

"And now he is dead, I have forgotten how to play it myself! That English jail! it demoralized me, ruined me forever! ach! quel enfer, nom de Dieu (pardon, madame)! I am just good enough to play the *obbligato* at the Mouches d'Espagne, when the old Cantharidi sings,

"'Vlà mon mari qui r'garde!
Prends garde—ne m'chatouille plus!"

"It does not want much of an *obbligato*, hein, a song so noble and so beautiful as that!

"And that song, monsieur, all Paris is singing it now. And that is the Paris that went mad when Trilby sang the 'Nussbaum' of Schumann at the Salle des Bashibazoucks. You heard her? Well!"

And here poor Gecko tried to laugh a little sardonic laugh in falsetto, like Svengali's, full of scorn and bitterness—and very nearly succeeded.

"But what made you strike him with—with that knife, you know?"

"Ah, monsieur, it had been coming on for a long time. He used to work Trilby too hard; it was killing her—it killed her at last! And then at the end he was unkind to her and scolded her and called her names—horrid names—and then one day in London he struck her. He struck her on the fingers with his bâton, and she fell down on her knees and cried . . .

"Monsieur, I would have defended Trilby against a locomotive going grande vitesse! against my own father—against the Emperor of Austria—against the Pope! and I am a good Catholic, monsieur! I would have gone to the scaffold for her, and to the devil after!"

And he piously crossed himself.

"But, Svengali—wasn't *he* very fond of her?"

"Oh yes, monsieur! quant à ça, passionately! But she did not love him as he wished to be loved. She loved Litrebili, monsieur! Litrebili, the brother of madame. And I suppose that Svengali grew angry and jealous at last. He changed as soon as he came to Paris. Perhaps Paris reminded him of Litrebili—and reminded Trilby, too!"

"But how on earth did Svengali ever manage to

teach her how to sing like that? She had no ear for music whatever when *we* knew her!"

Gecko was silent for a while, and Taffy filled his glass, and gave him a cigar, and lit one himself.

"Monsieur, no—that is true. She had not much ear. But she had such a voice as had never been heard. Svengali knew that. He had found it out long ago. Litolff had found it out, too. One day Svengali heard Litolff tell Meyerbeer that the most beautiful female voice in Europe belonged to an English grisette who sat as a model to sculptors in the quartier latin, but that unfortunately she was quite tone-deaf, and couldn't sing one single note in tune. Imagine how Svengali chuckled! I see it from here!

"Well, we both taught her together—for three years—morning, noon, and night—six—eight hours a day. It used to split me the heart to see her worked like that! We took her voice note by note—there was no end to her notes, each more beautiful than the other—velvet and gold, beautiful flowers, pearls, diamonds, rubies—drops of dew and honey; peaches, oranges, and lemons! en veux-tu en voilà!—all the perfumes and spices of the Garden of Eden! Svengali with his little flexible flageolet, I with my violin—that is how we taught her to make the sounds—and then how to use them. She was a phénomène, monsieur! She could keep on one note and make it go through all the colors in the rainbow—according to the way Svengali looked at her. It would make you laugh—it would make you cry—but, cry or laugh, it was the sweetest, the most touching, the most beautiful note you ever heard—except all her others! and each had



“WE TOOK HER VOICE NOTE BY NOTE”

as many overtones as the bells in the Carillon de Notre Dame. She could run up and down the scales, chromatic scales, quicker and better and smoother than Svengali on the piano, and more in tune than any piano! and her shake—ach! twin stars, monsieur! She was the greatest contralto, the greatest soprano the world has ever known! the like of her has never been! the like of her will never be again! and yet she only sang in public for two years!

“Ach! those breaks and runs and sudden leaps from darkness into light and back again—from earth to heaven! . . . those slurs and swoops and slides à la

Paganini from one note to another, like a swallow flying! . . . or a gull! Do you remember them? how they drove you mad? Let any other singer in the world try to imitate them—they would make you sick! That was Svengali . . . he was a magician!

“And how she looked, singing! do you remember? her hands behind her—her dear, sweet, slender foot on a little stool—her thick hair lying down all along her back! And that good smile like the Madonna’s, so soft and bright and kind! *Ach! Bel ucel di Dio!* it was to make you weep for love, merely to see her (*c’était à vous faire pleurer d’amour, rien que de la voir!*)! That was Trilby! Nightingale and bird-of-paradise in one!

“Enfin she could do anything—utter any sound she liked, when once Svengali had shown her how—and he was the greatest master that ever lived! and when once she knew a thing, she knew it. *Et voilà!*”

“How strange,” said Taffy, “that she should have suddenly gone out of her senses that night at Drury Lane, and so completely forgotten it all! I suppose she saw Svengali die in the box opposite, and that drove her mad!”

And then Taffy told the little fiddler about Trilby’s death-song, like a swan’s, and Svengali’s photograph. But Gecko had heard it all from Marta, who was now dead.

Gecko sat and smoked and pondered for a while, and looked from one to the other. Then he pulled himself together with an effort, so to speak, and said, “Monsieur, she never went mad—not for one moment!”

“What? Do you mean to say she *deceived* us all?”

“Non, monsieur! She could never deceive anybody, and never would. *She had forgotten—voilà tout!*”

“But hang it all, my friend, one doesn’t *forget* such a—”

“Monsieur, listen! She is dead. And Svengali is dead—and Marta also. And I have a good little malady that will kill me soon, *Gott sei dank*—and without much pain.

“I will tell you a secret.

“*There were two Trilbys.* There was the Trilby you knew, who could not sing one single note in tune. She was an angel of paradise. She is now! But she had no more idea of singing than I have of winning a steeple-chase at the croix de Berny. She could no more sing than a fiddle can play itself! She could never tell one tune from another—one note from the next. Do you remember how she tried to sing ‘Ben Bolt’ that day when she first came to the studio in the Place St. Anatole des Arts? It was droll, *hein? à se boucher les oreilles!* Well, that was Trilby, your Trilby! that was my Trilby too—and I loved her as one loves an only love, an only sister, an only child—a gentle martyr on earth, a blessed saint in heaven! And that Trilby was enough for *me!*”

“And that was the Trilby that loved your brother, madame—oh! but with all the love that was in her! He did not know what he had lost, your brother! Her love, it was immense, like her voice, and just as full of celestial sweetness and sympathy! She told me everything! *ce pauvre Litrebili, ce qu’il a perdu!*”

“But all at once—pr-r-r-out! presto! augenblick!”

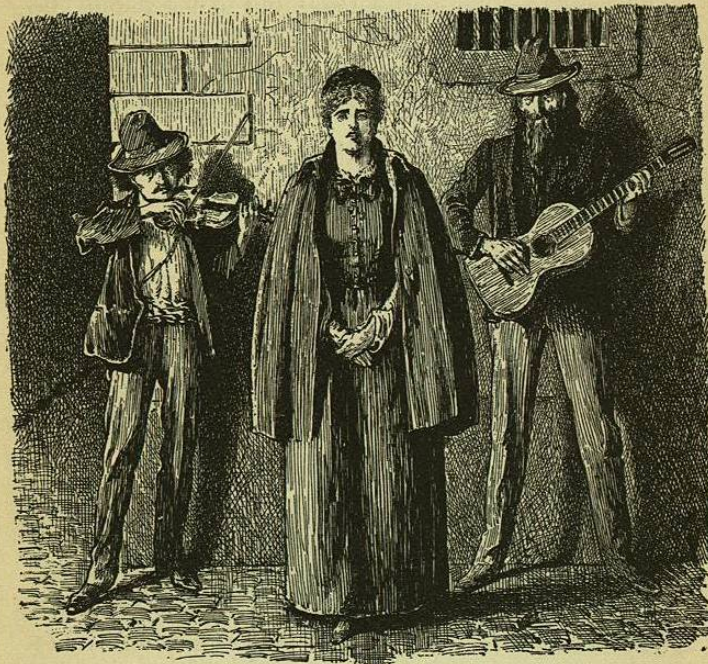
... with one wave of his hand over her—with one look of his eye—with a word—Svengali could turn her into the other Trilby, *his* Trilby—and make her do whatever he liked... you might have run a red-hot needle into her and she would not have felt it...

“He had but to say ‘Dors!’ and she suddenly became an unconscious Trilby of marble, who could produce wonderful sounds—just the sounds he wanted, and nothing else—and think his thoughts and wish his wishes—and love him at his bidding with a strange unreal factitious love... just his own love for himself turned inside out—*à l’envers*—and reflected back on him, as from a mirror... *un écho, un simulacre, quoi! vas autre chose!*... It was not worth having! I was not even jealous!

“Well, that was the Trilby he taught how to sing—and—and I helped him, God of heaven forgive me! That Trilby was just a singing-machine—an organ to play upon—an instrument of music—a Stradivarius—a flexible flageolet of flesh and blood—a voice, and nothing more—just the unconscious voice that Svengali sang with—for it takes two to sing like la Svengali, monsieur—the one who has got the voice, and the one who knows what to do with it... So that when you heard her sing the ‘Nussbaum,’ the ‘Impromptu,’ you heard Svengali singing with her voice, just as you hear Joachim play a chaconne of Bach with his fiddle!... Herr Joachim’s fiddle... what does it know of Sebastian Bach? and as for chaconnes... *il s’en moque pas mal, ce fameux violon!*...

“And *our* Trilby... what did she know of Schumann, Chopin?—nothing at all! She mocked herself

not badly of Nussbaums and impromptus... they would make her yawn to demantibulate her jaws!... When Svengali’s Trilby was being taught to sing... when Svengali’s Trilby was singing—or



THE NIGHTINGALE'S FIRST SONG

seemed to *you* as if she were singing—*our* Trilby had ceased to exist... *our* Trilby was fast asleep... in fact, *our* Trilby was *dead*...

“Ah, monsieur... that Trilby of Svengali’s! I

have heard her sing to kings and queens in royal palaces! . . . as no woman has ever sung before or since. . . . I have seen emperors and grand-dukes kiss her hand, monsieur—and their wives and daughters kiss her lips, and weep. . . .

“I have seen the horses taken out of her sledge and the pick of the nobility drag her home to the hotel . . . with torchlights and choruses and shoutings of glory and long life to her! . . . and serenades all night, under her window! . . . *she* never knew! she heard nothing—felt nothing—saw nothing! and she bowed to them, right and left, like a queen!

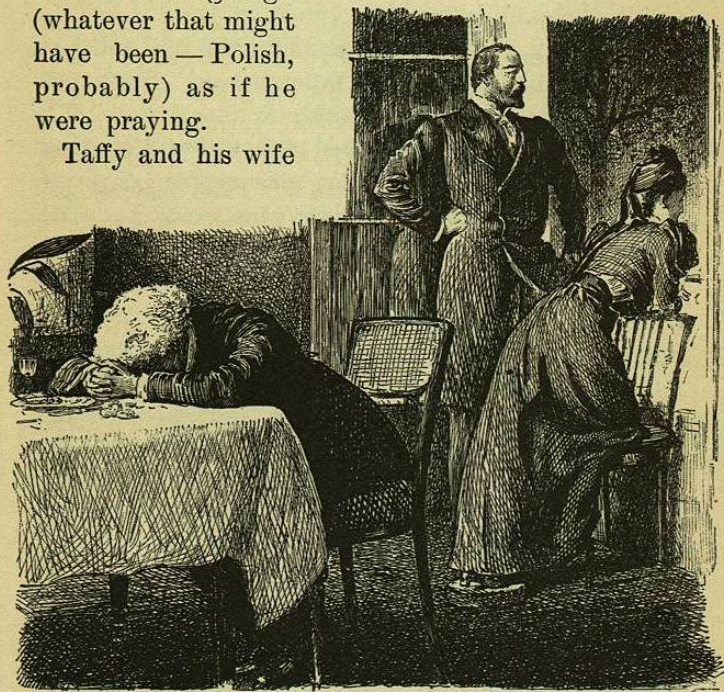
“I have played the fiddle for her while she sang in the streets, at fairs and festas and Kermessen . . . and seen the people go mad to hear her . . . and once, at Prague, Svengali fell down in a fit from sheer excitement! and then, suddenly, *our* Trilby woke up and wondered what it was all about . . . and we took him home and put him to bed and left him with Marta—and Trilby and I went together arm in arm all over the town to fetch a doctor and buy things for supper—and that was the happiest hour in all my life!

“Ach! what an existence! what travels! what triumphs! what adventures! Things to fill a book—a dozen books— Those five happy years—with those two Trilbys! what recollections! . . . I think of nothing else, night or day . . . even as I play the fiddle for old Cantharidi. Ach! . . . To think how often I have played the fiddle for la Svengali . . . to have done that is to have lived . . . and then to come home to Trilby . . . *our* Trilby . . . the *real* Trilby! . . . Got sei dank! Ich habe *geliebt und ge-*

lebet! geliebt und gelebet! geliebt und gelebet! Cristo di Dio . . . Sweet sister in heaven . . . Ô Dieu de Misère, ayez pitié de nous. . . .”

His eyes were red, and his voice was high and shrill and tremulous and full of tears; these remembrances were too much for him; and perhaps also the chambertin! He put his elbows on the table and hid his face in his hands and wept, muttering to himself in his own language (whatever that might have been— Polish, probably) as if he were praying.

Taffy and his wife



“ICH HABE GELIEBT UND GELEBET!”