

got up and leaned on the window-bar and looked out on the deserted boulevards, where an army of scavengers, noiseless and taciturn, was cleansing the asphalt roadway. The night above was dark, but "star-dials hinted of morn," and a fresh breeze had sprung up, making the leaves dance and rustle on the sycamore-trees along the Boulevard—a nice little breeze; just the sort of little breeze to do Paris good. A four-wheel cab came by at a foot pace, the driver humming a tune; Taffy hailed him; he said, "V'là, m'sieur!" and drew up.

Taffy rang the bell, and asked for the bill, and paid it. Gecko had apparently fallen asleep. Taffy gently woke him up, and told him how late it was. The poor little man seemed dazed and rather tipsy, and looked older than ever; sixty, seventy—any age you like. Taffy helped him on with his great-coat, and, taking him by the arm, led him down-stairs, giving him his card, and telling him how glad he was to have seen him, and that he would write to him from England—a promise which was kept, one may be sure.

Gecko uncovered his fuzzy white head, and took Mrs. Taffy's hand and kissed it, and thanked her warmly for her "si bon et sympathique accueil."

Then Taffy all but lifted him into the cab, the jolly cabman saying:

"Ah! bon—connais bien, celui là; vous savez—c'est lui qui joue du violon aux Mouches d'Espagne! Il a soupé, l' bourgeois; n'est-ce pas, m'sieur? 'petits bonheurs de contrebande,' hein? . . . ayez pas peur! on vous aura soin de lui! il joue joliment bien, m'sieur; n'est-ce pas?"

Taffy shook Gecko's hand, and asked,

"Où restez-vous, Gecko?"

"Quarante-huit, Rue des Pousse-cailloux, au cinquième."

"How strange!" said Taffy to his wife—"how touching! why, that's where Trilby used to live—the very number! the very floor!"

"Oui, oui," said Gecko, waking up; "c'est l'ancienne mansarde à Trilby—j'y suis depuis douze ans—*j'y suis, j'y reste. . .*"

And he laughed feebly at his mild little joke.

Taffy told the address to the cabman, and gave him five francs.

"Merci, m'sieur! C'est de l'aut' côté de l'eau—près de la Sorbonne, s'pas? On vous aura soin du bourgeois; soyez tranquille—ayez pas peur! quarante-huit; on y va! Bonsoir, monsieur et dame!" And he clacked his whip and rattled away, singing:

"V'là mon mari qui r'garde—
Prends garde!
Ne m'chatouill' plus!"

Mr. and Mrs. Wynne walked back to the hotel, which was not far. She hung on to his big arm and crept close to him, and shivered a little. It was quite chilly. Their footsteps were very audible in the stillness; "pit-pat, flopety-clop," otherwise they were both silent. They were tired, yawny, sleepy, and very sad; and each was thinking (and knew the other was thinking) that a week in Paris was just enough—and how nice it would be, in just a few hours more, to hear the rooks cawing round their own quiet little English country

home—where three jolly boys would soon be coming for the holidays.

And there we will leave them to their useful, humdrum, happy domestic existence—than which there is no better that I know of, at their time of life—and no better time of life than theirs!

“Où peut-on être mieux qu’au sein de sa famille?”

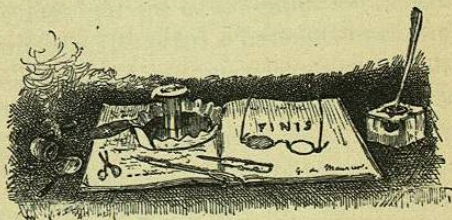
That blessed harbor of refuge well within our reach, and having really cut our wisdom teeth at last, and learned the ropes, and left off hankering after the moon—we can do with so little down here. . . .

A little work, a little play
To keep us going—and so, good-day!

A little warmth, a little light
Of love’s bestowing—and so, good-night!

A little fun, to match the sorrow
Of each day’s growing—and so, good-morrow!

A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing! And so—good-bye!



PETER IBBETSON

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