

## MY MARGUERITE.

[A vacation idyl, written in the Botanical Gardens at Hamburg, Germany.]

I roam afar—she still is near;  
In every flower methinks I see her.  
Yon patch of sky so deeply blue,  
Reflects but her orbs' brighter hue.  
Ah! blessed me! Tall tree above,  
Bend o'er me now  
Thy fragrant bough  
And shut me in with all my love!  
Earth, thou art fair,  
Yet I declare  
The lime-tree breathes not scent so sweet  
As memory of my Marguerite!

The lakelet sleeps so quiet by  
It seems another cloudless sky;  
And there, adown the marble steps,  
Her face is imaged in its depths—  
What art thou thinking, oh! my fair!  
Sit'st thou apart  
With thy lone heart,  
And is my image mirrored there?  
What ecstasy, if I but knew  
That thou art dreaming of me too!—  
Oh were I kneeling at thy feet,  
My own, my sweet,  
My Marguerite!

Old ocean cannot, will not tear  
The dearer west  
From out my breast.  
To love the loved is everywhere.  
For, as the shores clasp 'neath the river,  
Twin souls that love meet mid way ever;  
And till my heart hath ceased to beat,  
In every clime,  
Throughout all time,  
These accents with my lips repeat—  
Oh, she is fair! Oh, she is sweet!  
None knows how sweet,  
My Marguerite!

## The Professor's Darling.

AN ORIGINAL NOVEL.

## CHAPTER XXIV.\*

Madame Muller looked over every morning's invitations, and told her which to accept and which to decline.

"Why am I not to go to such a place, Madame Muller?" she would sometimes ask. "I have seen the Countess von M. in the theatre and other places. She looks very nice."

"She is a very handsome lady," Madame Muller would answer; but I shall decline her invitation for you."

"Very well," Stannie would answer, and forget about it the next minute. She never resisted the wishes of those whom she considered as being in authority over her. She acquiesced so willingly and pleasantly that those who did not know her might have been tempted to say that she possessed but little character of her own.

Such an assertion would have been very wide of the mark.

Underlying all her placid gentleness was a will as strong as iron, which would bend to no one.

Her life had been so smooth hitherto in its flow, that it had rarely been called into exercise, but it was there all the same.

One afternoon, nearly three weeks after her return to Wirtstadt, Stannie was sitting alone, when the door was burst violently open, and a lady muffled to the very eyes in furs, for the weather was bitterly cold, rushed in, and embraced her with remarkable fervour.

"Lotty, is it really you?" cried Stannie. "It really is," answered the Countess, giving her another hug. "I am a pretty evident fact, am I not?"

"When did you come?" "Yesterday; and have been dying to embrace you ever since; but that old Richter got hold of us, and insisted that we must go to the theatre, and see you there first. They almost had to tie me with ropes; but I prevailed upon to wait until to-day."

"Is the Count von Geoler here?" "Yes; he and Madame Berg will be along directly. I left them in Gordon's hotel."

"Were you all at the theatre last night?" "Ja, mein fraulein."

"Why don't you talk English, Countess?"

"Why don't you talk Chinese? Because you can't, that's just the reason. I can't; I am not English any longer. I am Austrian now, but I'll speak anything you like, dear."

"Yes, we were at the theatre. Did you not remark a very handsome lady in the Princess' of D—'s box? No! Well, that lady was your humble admirer. Oh, Stannie, you looked like an angel; and, bless me, how you act! You will be a second Rachel some day. I never saw such a Marguerite before, and I've seen 'Faust' at least twenty times. I was so excited, that if the Princess hadn't held me back, I think I should have jumped clear on to the stage and hugged you. I threw a bouquet at you. It hit you fair on the nose. Wasn't it splendid? I was so delighted!"

"Oh, did you throw that one; there it is, in that blue vase. No, it wasn't charming. You almost took my breath away. I wish I had seen you; but I never look up at the Princess' of D—'s box. Where are you all staying?"

"There. Her husband is the Austrian Ambassador, and one of Herr von Berg's countless cousins. They count their cousins by the hundred in this enlightened country. There is to be a tremendous affair of a ball there three weeks hence. You are coming. There will be Grand

Dukes and Serene Highnesses by the ton. I offered to bring your card, but the Princess turned pale gray at the suggestion. A fat man, trimmed with gold lace, will hand it in with all proper solemnity. Of course, you'll come. I hear that you are a perfect butterfly of fashion. Oh, Stannie, what would Mrs. Mactavish say? Gordon tells me those red-headed girls are married. You look just the same, love. You haven't changed a bit since the day when I swooped down upon you in St. Breeda."

"Neither have you, Lotty. Somehow I expected that you would be different."

"Do you not perceive an increase of dignity?" asked the Countess, gravely.

"No. Are you trying to acquire it?"

"Acquire it! You have crushed me completely. I thought that I was the very personification of imposing dignity. Well, I shall have to give it up, I see. What a nice room this is! Have you been killing all the tigers in the Zoo for the sake of their skins?"

"Yes; it's a cozy enough room. Do you wish me to come to this ball?"

"You are coming. Put on a pretty dress, a pale green satin, with a lace overskirt—Brussels, say."

"I haven't a dress like that," objected Stannie.

"Get one, then," said Lotty, who evidently had not grown economical since her marriage. "Oh, I must tell you about a present that papa and Gordon gave Heinrich and me the other day. They had been consulting what they should do with the money which would have been Elma's portion if she had lived. Papa wished to give it to Gordon, but he proposed investing it for Alice and myself, and said that he knew of a capital investment for my share. Papa asked what in? His mind at once flew off to stocks and mortgages, and all that kind of stuff. Gordon said he knew that a part of Heinrich's old estate was in the market again. Wouldn't it be a good thing to buy it back for us? Well, he wrote at once to Herr von Berg, and told him to buy it at any price. He would pay the extra money himself. Isn't he a good, liberal brother? The addition to the property makes it quite a large one again; at least, large for this country. I feel, though, as if I had got it from Elma more than them. Poor little dumb Elma! Some person, I don't know who, has said that if anyone who had been dead one year were to come back to earth and to the home which had once been theirs, they would find no welcome awaiting them. Their place would be completely filled up, and the hearts which once had beat in unison with theirs would turn coldly from them. A greater fallacy was never uttered. We dry our tears as time ebbs on, but we never forget; and if our beloved dead were to come back to us through the mists of twenty years, our hearts would leap wildly up to greet them."

"How is your mother?" asked Stannie. "I have not heard from her for a long time."

"She is quite well. Eily Bleunerhasset is still with her. I don't know what she would do without her, now that we are all away! Tom is well, and enjoying India. Bill is in Asia Minor, rummaging about for sites and ruins of old cities, and studying Sanscrit."

"And Alice—how is she?"

"Such news! I forgot to tell you! I only heard yesterday she is the unfortunate mother of twins!"

"Unfortunate, Lotty! The dear little things! I should like to see them!"

"Unfortunate for her, I mean! Fancy Alice with a baby on each arm! They will crush her high puffs, ruffles, and pull her hair, and tumble her all about! I wonder if they are æsthetic babies?—if they are, they will be a sight to see! She will be sure to dress them in olive green!"

"I shall send them each a rattle!" said Stannie, laughing. "I saw some lovely silver ones with coral handles the other day. I wonder what their names will be?"

"Something ridiculous, rest assured! Catch Alice giving a child of hers a respectable name like Jack, or Bill, or Tom! I am going to write to Professor Neil, and ask him to come over and see us next summer."

"I hope Uncle Alan will be persuaded! It's more than three years since I have seen him."

"It's getting on to nearer four," replied the Countess. "I hear Heinrich knocking; with your leave, I'll let him in."

She left the room, and returned with the Count, Madame Berg, and Gordon.

They all commenced to speak at once, and the confusion of tongues was dreadful, Madame talking German, the Count French, and Gordon English.

"One language, if you please," cried Lotty, "and let it be English! Is the time so valuable that you must all talk together?"

"We were so anxious to congratulate you that we could not help it!" said Madame.

"You didn't know, Stannie, that old friends were listening to you last night! Carl Richter thought that it might excite you if we called before, so we had to obey him. He tells me that you have written your name upon his piano lid."

"Yes. He drank a glass of sour wine after the interesting performance."

"Fraulein, you are a wonderful singer and a great actress to be so young!" said the Count.

"I cannot understand it!"

"I can," said Madame. "Those who work will win!"

"Gordon, are you ill?" asked Lotty. "You are quite pale, and very *piano* for you."

"When are you going home, Gordon? Soon, I hope?" said Stannie.

If she had struck him on the cheek before them all, Gordon could not have looked more surprised and pained than at her sudden question.

"Why?" he asked. "Are you tired of seeing me about so much?"

"No; but I wish you to take two silver rattles over for Alice's babies. Why didn't you tell me of their arrival?"

"I quite forgot that I was an uncle!" answered Gordon, looking wonderfully relieved.

"Wouldn't one rattle do between them?"

"No; the dear little boys shall have one each."

"Well, since you persist in such reckless extravagance, I'll take charge of them in ten days or so."

"Are you intimate with many of the singers here?" asked Madame Berg.

"No," said Stannie; "I don't know any of them very well. I have so little time for that sort of thing. They come and see me, and I go and see them, and there it ends."

"Do you get on well with them at the theatre?"

"Yes, very well, with one exception; I think the second soprano hates me—I don't know why, unless that I get more bouquets thrown to me. I'll send a gardener with a dozen to throw to her some night when I am not singing, dear; perhaps that will soften her."

"What is her name?"

"Clara Barth."

"Ah, I know her. She is getting a little old, and her life has been a hard one. Her father and mother died fifteen years ago, and she had to support the whole family, eight of them for ten years. She did it by denying herself proper food and warm garments, and walking night after night to the theatre, often through pitiless rain. She got them all settled in the world at last, one way or other, and then began to lay aside a little for the proverbial wet day. But the bubble company in which she had invested her little savings burst, and Clara is as poor to-day as ever. Try and bear with her, dear child—her jealousy is not unnatural."

Stannie was crying when Madame Berg ceased.

"How glad I am that you have told me!" she said. "I'll try and be pleasant to her. She is often very rude, but I'll not take any notice of it."

"I have seen the Barth in Vienna," said Lotty. "She prances round like a horse with ribbons on his tail, and her shoulder-blades are like hatchets. She can never have been pretty, surely!"

"No, never, but she was always a good girl. You have met my dear old rival, Mercedes; I think?"

"Yes, the first night I sang; she gave me this beautiful ring. Used you and she to say unkind things to each other?—she said she had her tantrums sometimes."

"No we were good friends, but she has a temper of her own. She, too, has her own trials to bear."

"Impossible!" cried Stannie. "She is rich and beautiful, and has such spirits—I don't think she could be sad for a minute, if she tried."

"The world sees her with her mask on. She is too proud to take it off before strangers. She belongs to a noble Castilian family, from which she inherited nothing but her splendid beauty. She has made a great fortune, and her jewels are worth another; but if there is a broken-hearted woman in Europe to-day, it is my dear friend Mercedes. Her husband, a Spanish noble, is in a madhouse in England, and her only child is a helpless idiot. Never judge by appearances again."

"Does the world know her history?" asked Gordon. "I thought her divine the night I heard her."

"No; I told you she was proud and a Castilian. Very few know her story. Carl Richter does; she was a pupil of his. She is still young—just thirty-three. Poor Mercedes!"

"Who took the old lady's part last night?" asked Lotty.

"Fraulein Jastanowitch," answered Stannie. "I scarcely know her—do you, Madame Berg?"

"Yes. She is a Russian, and has a mouth like a shark. Not a pretty woman, I own. She is very respectable, and very disagreeable."

"Is she married?"

"Yes; her husband is a political exile, dragging out a weary existence in the mines of Siberia."

"And Signor Avelina, is he nice?"

"Yes; he is a gentlemanly man. I always got on very well with him."

"Of course he is married?"

"He is a widower. His wife was a pretty ballet girl, a Parisian. She ran away from him, and would have died in a ditch in Berlin, if Mercedes had not discovered and taken her home to her own house, and kept her there until the end."

"Did her husband know about it?"

"Not at the time; he did later."

"Was he grateful to her for taking the poor thing in?"

"I don't think he pretended to entertain such a sentiment on the matter."

"Is that little Nina Brandt nice? She puts me in mind of a May Queen, she has so many garlands about her always. She looks an impudent monkey."

"No; she is not nice. She has a fine voice,

though. She was a poor little beggar in the streets of Hamburg when Richter picked her up. Have as little to do with her as you can, Stannie."

"You are a strange set, taking you all in all," said the outspoken Countess, "with so many strange stories folded out of sight in your lives; and yet, judging by the party you had at the Schloss last summer, I should have thought you were the jolliest people going, with not a care amongst you; and this beautiful Mercedes seemed the gayest of you all."

"The half of the world goes masked. Not those in our ranks only; but everywhere, all over the world, the half of the tribes go masked."

"Stannie," whispered Gordon, bending his head very low under pretence of examining a photograph, "I wish you were free from the whole gang of them, and safe in England."

"What is the matter with you, Gordon?"

"Nothing; only that I did not get to bed last night. We all went to the Princess von D—'s to supper when we left the theatre, and then Richter dragged me into his den to hear a new sonata he has invented. As if I knew a sonata from the Dead March in 'Saul.' I think I am beginning to dislike music. We get so much of it here."

"Go home, then," said Stannie, haughtily. "No one is forcing you to remain here and listen to what you dislike."

"No, I suppose not," muttered Gordon.

## CHAPTER XXV.

STANNIE GOES TO A BALL.

"You look exactly like a piece of Dresden china," said Madame Muller, as she smoothed the folds of Stannie's dress, and pinched a bow here and there. "There will not be a prettier dress at the ball to-night."

It was certainly a marvellous triumph, even of the great "Worth's" skill. The dress was of satin, of a delicate green shade, with a train of palest pink velvet, which suggested the interior of a sea-shell; the whole effect being softened by clouds of flimsy lace, which might, from its gossamer appearance, have been the work of fairies' fingers. On her neck lay ten rows of exquisite small pearls. They had been a gift to her father from a barbaric Eastern potentate, to whom he had once been fortunate enough to render some trifling service. Other ornaments she had none, save Elma's golden bangle, which gleamed upon one soft white arm. She had dressed her hair over a high cushion in front, and upon the top of the golden erection lay a tiny chaplet of wild roses, matching the tint of her velvet train.

She was truly a vision to gladden the eyes of any man or woman who loved to gaze upon beautiful objects, as she stood waiting for the arrival of Lady H—, the wife of the English Ambassador, who had volunteered to take her under her protecting wing for the night.

"May I ask Mrs. Hall to step in and see you, Miss Ross?"

"Surely, Madame Muller, if you think it would please her. I look pretty well, I think; at least, my clothes do. Some people profess a sublime indifference to pretty clothes. I don't. I think you have a greater feeling of self-respect when you are well dressed, don't you?"

"It is very satisfactory to feel well dressed, no doubt," answered Madame Muller, laughing. "Ah, here is Mrs. Hall. How do you like Miss Ross's dress?"

"Mrs. Hall put on her gold-rimmed spectacles, and surveyed Stannie critically from head to foot before she ventured to give an opinion.

"You are like an old picture of a court lady which I once saw, I forget where," she said, at last. "Your dress is lovely. But are not those rather strange shades to go together—green and pink?"

"Of course they are. That's why I chose them," said Stannie. "I like something original. When you are getting a new dress, especially from Paris, you may as well get a pretty one."

"I suppose so, if you have not to count the cost," assented Mrs. Hall.

"Oh, never mind that; pretty things all cost money."

"They do, indeed!" said Mrs. Hall, looking significantly at her, then at the costly surroundings of her room.

All balls are alike, so why describe this particular one?

There were the usual number of gorgeous servants with powdered hair and blazing uniforms, standing at intervals on the route from the hall-door to the large drawing-room, where the Austrian Count and his noble wife received their guests.

Their reception of Stannie was most gracious. Besides being the rage of the hour, she had the prestige of being a lady by birth.

Poor Charlie Ross would have been overwhelmed with amazement if he could have known what grand proportions the modest rank he had held in this lower world had swollen into. Nothing less than that of a judge, whose sway over the swarthy Eastern races had been almost unlimited.

Stannie felt as if she had got into a past age, when she heard grand old names which history has made familiar to everyone ringing around her. She felt as if the atmosphere was too aristocratic and highly rarefied for her, the plain old minister of St. Breeda's grandchild, to breathe, and pressed closer to her English chaperon's side. Even Lotty, in her white velvet robes,

\* This and the three following chapters should precede those in the last issue, as will be seen by their number.