

[Written for the News.]

## TESTED.

## PART II.

Sweetly gleams the brow of Dawn  
Thro' night's sombre tresses;  
And anon the convent lawn  
Youthful life confesses:  
With the light step of a lawn  
Clad in snowy dresses.

Two by two the children pace  
Walking hand in hand,  
Towards the ancient market-place  
Where the little band,  
Waiting each with sober face  
All sedately stand.

Till the "Host" is borne along  
In the great procession,  
And the feeble and the strong,  
Throughout the procession,  
Swift recalling deeds of wrong  
Make low-toned confession.

With a child on either side  
Sister Agnes kneels,  
And a gladness, deep and wide,  
Her pure spirit feels;  
Life's sharp thorns are glorified  
Where religion heals.

Suddenly a startled cry  
Rends the childish throng,  
And, with red and glazing eye,  
Fiercely sweeps along  
A sight that would terrify  
Even brave and strong.

"A mad dog," and right and left  
Falls the crowd apart  
All of reason half bereft  
Save one steady heart,  
Straight into the narrow cleft  
See her swiftly dart.

Right before her children stood,  
With a calm, bright eye,  
White her cheeks, but firm her mood,  
Grand her majesty!  
And the distance of a rood  
Drew the creature nigh.

On he comes with lips that froth,  
And eyes all a flame,  
Resolute she stands forth,  
As he onward came,  
Caught her long dark veil of cloth  
And with steady aim

Threw it round him, firm and fast;  
Then the light began;  
Terrible from first to last  
"Escape while ye can!"  
To them her last order past,  
And the children ran.

But anon the strife is o'er,  
See the river well!  
Bound around his bloody jaw,  
See his breathing fail!  
See the slender hands he tore  
Ere she could prevail!

Down she sank upon the ground,  
Nor their voices heeded,  
As they raised her, crowding round,  
And for answer pleaded,  
But, above all other sound,  
Children's sobs exceeded.

And the bright brow of her hair  
With red blood is stained,  
And the lashes, long and fair,  
And the lids blue-veined  
Softly curtain the sweet eyes,  
Death so swiftly claimed.

Still they lowly breathe her name;  
Tell with tears the story;  
In the city whence she came  
People old and hoary  
Tell the deed that wrought her fame,  
Aye, and deathless glory!

Montreal.

MAPLE LEAF.

## The Professor's Darling.

AN ORIGINAL NOVEL.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"THERE WAS A MORNING WHEN I LONGED FOR FAME."

Mr. Graem kept to his resolution of re-visiting Italy, going first to Germany and Austria.

Herr Richter worked himself into a wonderful state of excitement over Graem's advent, and neglected all his pupils, even Stannie, for three days, during which the old friends were never apart. They are not likely ever to meet again, as both are stay-at-home birds; so his pupils magnanimously forgave him when he explained the extraordinary circumstances.

Madame Berg claimed him next. He stayed a fortnight at Alberg Schloss, walking and driving, and overlooking the building going on at The Tower. Then he went to Italy; but of his visit there he never spoke to any one. It was more a pilgrimage to a shrine than an actual visit, for all his old friends had left long ago. There was no one to bid him welcome to the once familiar place; but the little grave amongst the oleanders was still there. Any stray passer-by, who might have chanced to glance in its direction, would have seen only a common-place elderly man kneeling beside a battered, time-worn wooden cross, the inscription on which had become illegible. But the spirit of her whom still he mourned was, perhaps, looking down, and saw, and understood.

Mrs. Mactavish has married her two eldest daughters most satisfactorily to parish ministers, who revel in good manes and productive glebes. Not very interesting men, if the truth be told; but if their intellects are not of the highest order, and their pulpit orations, though very orthodox, insupportably dry, their positions are undoubted, and they make very kind

ordinary husbands; and what more should a girl desire?

Alice Hunter, or rather Mrs. Morton, would shrug her pretty shoulders if she could behold the substantial furnishing of their respective manes!

Brussels carpets of the best quality adorn the floors; but patterns and colours are chosen with a view to futurity. Solid mahogany in the dining-room, covered with leather of the saddest green complexion, which, being sacredly shrouded in holland, will endure to the next generation. Dark blue sateen in the drawing-rooms, a good standing colour which cannot fly, let it try ever so hard, for the blinds in these cherished rooms are never lifted above four times a year.

"Everything is good and substantial," Mrs. Mactavish says, and she is right; but beauty and grace have been quite forgotten. The girls, being their mother's daughters, are quite happy and contented, and make good wives, and are unrivalled in their parishes as housekeepers.

And now, with an humble apology for having so long neglected her, golden-haired, blue-eyed Stannie shall resume her place as principal performer on our mimic stage.

Herr Richter was conducting himself in a somewhat remarkable manner.

He would sit at his piano for two or three minutes, striking chords at random, and then suddenly start to his feet, and execute a wild measure upon the floor, which being highly polished, it was a wonder that he did not get a tumble. He would then proceed to refresh his inner man with copious draughts of strong coffee, unflavoured by sugar or milk. After which exhilarating potion he would resume his slightly unconnected musical performances, only to start up again spasmodically, and perform another series of gyrations.

The little man, who was carefully attired in his best garments, and decorated with all his honours, was evidently in a high state of excitement.

A modest knock at the door thrice repeated was quite unheeded. A legion of soldiers might have hammered upon it with the stocks of their muskets, and he would have been deaf to their sound. The outsider's patience giving way at last, with a preliminary rattle of the handle, he turned it and entered.

Herr Richter looked up and regarded the intruder placidly, but otherwise took no notice of him.

"Are you ready?" asked Gordon Hunter.

He was dressed in the evening costume, peculiar to English gentlemen and waiters, but the hideous insular dress assumed an almost classic gracefulness upon his splendid form. His diamond studs gleamed in the lamp-light, and a tiny white rose-bud, half hidden in a scrap of maiden-hair fern, ornamented his button-hole. He carried a pair of lavender gloves in his hands, which he slowly drew on as he repeated his question.

"Ready! Ah, yes, yes—quite ready—quite. Shall we depart at once? Are you ready?"

"I? Of course," answered Gordon, in surprise; "and the carriage is waiting."

"Herr Gordon," and the little man grasped Gordon's arm as he spoke,—"Herr Gordon, I have looked forward to this night for two years and four months, and it has come at last—at last."

"Others have looked forward to it as well," said Gordon. "Myself for instance, and—"

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted the little man, impatiently; but to me it is everything. It is a battle lost or won. It is a great triumph of art and vocal culture or it is disgrace, ignominy, failure, in the most deplorable form! People will say Carl Richter is getting old and stupid, that he can no longer train the singers of the next generation. If Miss Ross makes one little slip, one false inflection to-night, I am a lost man from that moment."

"You need not conjure up such dismal results; she will not disappoint you, Herr Richter."

"I know not," he answered, shaking his head dolefully. "The crowd may make her nervous, and there are royal guests at the Ducal Palace. A crowned King and his consort will be with the Grand Duke and Duchess at the concert to-night."

"If there were fifty kings sitting in a row with their crowns on, it would not frighten her," said Gordon, encouragingly; "she has confidence in herself."

"Alas, no!" persisted Herr Richter, who seemed determined to take as gloomy a view of things as possible.

Gordon hurried him down-stairs to the carriage, and resigned himself heroically, during the short drive to the concert hall, to the musical director's prophecies of utter failure on Stannie's part, and subsequent ruin to himself.

"How can you play to-night?" Gordon asked. "You are trembling like an aspen."

"Oh, that is nothing! When I hear the music, I shall revive. It is for Fraulein—Miss Ross I fear. She is—"

The carriage stopping at that moment prevented further confidences, and both gentlemen stepped out and ascended the steps of the music hall.

"Here we shall part," said Herr Richter. "I go this way," indicating with a wave of his arm a side-door leading to the private offices.

"All right; we shall meet again at the close of the performance."

The concert-room was flooded with light, emanating from hundred of concealed gas-jets in the roof. Gordon walked down the middle passage which was spread with crimson carpeting, bordered on each side by flowering shrubs, and looked right and left for the number corresponding with the one upon his ticket. A velvet-footed attendant came to his aid, and ushered him into a stall two rows from the orchestra.

"A little too near the scene of action on ordinary occasions," he thought, "but all right for to-night."

He looked curiously at the platform upon which Stannie was to make her first appearance professionally. Behind the footlights stretched a sea of red carpet, on which were two pianos, a harp, and a music-stand. In the background, tiers of flower-pots and shrubs were arranged like a floral bank, reaching up to the ceiling. To the right, overlooking the platform, was a sort of alcove, screened by purple velvet curtains, surmounted by a crown. This was the royal box.

Although he concealed it, Gordon was, in reality, almost as nervous as Herr Richter.

He had not seen Stannie since his arrival, deeming it wiser to keep away until the ordeal had been passed.

He had written to the Professor before he left Cumrie, saying that he would telegraph the impression produced as soon as the concert was ended.

It was only a trifling thing, but a student lodging opposite the little house in college bounds, who was consuming the midnight oil, observed that Professor Neil was also very late of retiring to rest that night; in fact, when morning dawned his lamp was still burning.

Gordon was to return to England the next evening. Stannie's boxes were all standing corded and labelled for Milan, to which city Herr Richter was to conduct her himself, and give her in charge to a friend of his, with whose family she was to board while she remained there.

Six months later she would return to Wirstadt, and make her first appearance in the opera, but the crucial test would be that night.

It was no ordinary concert, but one given in honour of the betrothal of the Grand Duke's daughter to a royal heir. Several of the first performers in Germany had offered their services.

The place filled rapidly as the hour drew near; stalls, galleries, and passages were overflowing.

The orchestra commenced with an overture, of which Gordon did not hear a single note. This was followed by a duet from two celebrated pianists; then came a solo, sung by a *cantatrice* whose fame was world-wide. A lovely woman, with great dark eyes, which had made fools of half the men in Europe, and whose diamonds would have served for a king's ransom.

She came gracefully to the front, trailing her pale blue velvet robes behind her, and smilingly acknowledged the uproarious applause which greeted her.

She was well known in Wirstadt, and had been a pupil in the *conservatoire*. She folded her hands, and stood waiting to begin, when an incident occurred to divert the attention of the audience.

The velvet curtains of the royal box were drawn back, and the imperial party glided in, and quickly took their seats. The Grand Duke and Duchess, and their royal visitors, followed by the prospective son-in-law and his fair intended.

The whole royal party were known to be musicians of no mean order, and it was a brave thing to stand there, under their very eyes, fronting a thousand listeners in the foreground, and sing a difficult air.

But the singer knew her own powers. She threw a careless glance up at the august strangers, and commenced.

Gordon trembled for Stannie as he listened to her brilliant execution. He wished that she might be taken suddenly ill, and in that way beat a graceful retreat, for who could compare with the gifted artist, who had acknowledged only one living rival—Madame Berg?

Poor Stannie! Her name was down on the programme for a simple German air. Herr Richter was a wise man, and knew what would touch the people's hearts when he selected it. She came in so softly that she was standing there before Gordon knew it.

Being a stranger, the audience reserved their plaudits until they had tried her metal. But more than one voice murmured, "How beautiful!"

Never before had Gordon realized how peerlessly lovely the girl from St. Breeda was. She wore a dress of white satin, which fell around in plain flowing lines. Not a plait or frill broke its graceful outline. The bodice was cut square, and on her neck lay a diamond cross, the Professor's last gift.

Her golden hair, which rippled low upon her brow, was gathered upon a loose knot behind, and a water-lily nestled against one shell-like ear.

Herr Richter's nervousness had all vanished, or, rather, he had left it behind him in the waiting-room, where the *cantatrice* had laughingly an instant before dosed him with more of the potent coffee, and offered him her arm to the piano.

He touched the piano, and looked at his pupil. She turned her head and smiled, then opened her lips and sang.

The audience held their breath, and listened as if they had heard an angel.

The applause which had gone before was nothing in comparison with the thunders which rang through the building when she ceased.

The Grand Duke leant from his box, and flung a bouquet at her feet. Before she could stoop to pick it up, well-nigh a hundred more came flying from all directions, until the stage looked like a flower-show gone mad.

Encores were not the order of the night, and the people might have roared themselves hoarse before Herr Richter would have allowed her to sing a bar more than he had previously arranged. But the Grand Duke once more leant from his box, and shouted "Encore!" so loudly, that the people in the distant gallery heard him, and yelled "Bravo—bravo!"

"You can't refuse royalty, good people!" said the good-natured *cantatrice*. "Go on again, and give them something English to refresh them after so much Italian and German. Never mind what Richter says—'Home Sweet Home,' or 'The Last Rose of Summer,' always drives them wild. Go,"—she added, imperatively, as master and pupil still lingered,—"go, or they will scream the roof off!"

Herr Richter whispered something to her as they re-appeared, and without the slightest hesitation as she seated herself at the piano, she sang that grand English ballad which makes an echo in every heart. Perhaps visions of her own distant home lent pathos to her accents, as she trilled out the simple words which brought tears to many eyes.

She had not the courage born of vain glory, certainly; but she possessed a much better gift—the power of forgetting for the time that she was singing to an audience. Every visage vanished into thin air, as her heart rushed into the spirit of the melody. Carping critics and smiling friends might be all around her, but she did not know it. She sang on, regardless of kings or peasants, seeing nothing, knowing nothing, but the harmony of sound, which was her second nature.

If Herr Richter danced before, he fairly jumped when he was once more behind the scenes.

"She will do! The house is rapturous," he shouted. "The first notes of her fame have sounded; to-morrow all Germany will be talking of Fraulein—Miss Ross! Ach, mein Gott! I am a humble and grateful man to-night."

"Humble you are not," said the *cantatrice*, toying with her jewelled fan, which sent out flashes of light each time she waved it. "You are as lifted up over this child's success, as—as—well, as you were over mine, ten years ago. I remember it well. You were almost in convulsions for fear that I should faint, or choke, or do some equally improbable thing. It's a wonder you did not make me as nervous as you were yourself. I got on very well, but did not create such a wild furor as Miss Ross has done. Shake hands with me, pretty one! You are one of us now, and we must be friends, not rivals."

"I hope I shall never be anyone's rival," said Stannie, holding out her hand. "We all do as well as we can, so why should we be cross because another, perhaps, does a little better than our best?"

"Ah, why?—because it's human nature. I speak generally, not individually, remember. We hate those who do better than ourselves, and would scratch out their eyes if we could."

"Madame Berg can never have been like that," said Stannie.

"No; but Lily is a rare woman. If every second woman and third man had a touch of her charity, the world would be a deal better than it is. I have had my own tantrums and fits of jealousy in my day, but have got over all that sort of thing now. And sing you your sweetest, my dear, and don't be apitful when a new light dazzles the crowd, as you have done to-night. See how calmly I bear it! To prove that there is not one atom of malice in my bosom, let me place this ring upon your finger. You will soon get trinkets enough, but will, maybe, wear this in memory of to-night."

The singer drew a broad band of silver, in which was set a turquoise of immense size and value, studded round with diamonds, from her finger as she spoke.

"Pretty, isn't it?" she continued. "It's not a presentation. I bought it myself in Paris a month ago."

"Thank you; I shall wear it always," said Stannie, holding up her hand to look at it.

"Adieu to you all. I have to look in at two parties before I get any rest to-night."

Throwing on her sable-lined mantle of crimson satin, she gathered up her velvet skirts, and went humming gaily along the corridor.

"Is our carriage here? Will you take me home, Herr Richter?" asked Stannie, turning to him.

"I cannot, Fraulein; my duties here are not yet finished; but Mr. Hunter is waiting for you. When he has seen you safely home he returns for me, and we are to have supper together at his hotel."

"That will be delightful! I'll not detain him long. Have you packed your things for your journey?"

"That can be done in four seconds. We do not start till five p.m. Miss Ross, are you satisfied? Do you feel that all your labour has not been for nought, and your money flung away?"

"I am happier to-night, Herr Richter, than I have ever been in all my life. I would not give up my profession for anything on earth."

Herr Richter's sallow countenance beamed with delight, but his heart was too full for speech;