

THE REQUEST.

BY MAX.

Sing to me, dear, again,  
Make glad my heart and take away its pain;  
No bird that thrills in Heaven his glad refrain,  
Sings half so sweet a strain.

Striking the chords of love,  
How mighty and how strong thy voice can prove;  
Then sweet and low as any cooling dove,  
Murmuring thro' the grove.

Sing of thy native land,  
Thy Italy, serenely calm and grand;  
Till in my spirit 'neath its dome I stand,  
Clasping thy faithful hand,

Borne on the wings of song  
I lose myself as in an Angel throng;  
And find the glory I have sought so long,  
A recompense for wrong.

Sing to me, dear, again,  
Thou sweet enchanter of my heart and brain,  
Till every pulse shall vibrate with the strain  
Of the divine refrain.

A BREACH OF THE LAW.

BY LEWIS HOUGH.

Winnie Amlet came cantering along the strip of grass which skirted the high road, on her rough pony; Noble, the big deer-hound, followed as groom, while Chang and Anak, small Scotch terriers, skirmished about the hedge, falling far behind when they found a gamey hole to scratch at, and then making up the lost ground at a terrific pace. Winnie was the only child of the rector of Sparsely-cum-Thinpop, a widower. The vicarage was at Thinpop, so Mr. Rusport, the young curate, lived at Sparsely. The villages were some three miles apart, Sparsely being very much the larger, and each had a separate church. It was an excellent arrangement, because the young man got most of the work. He did not get enough to please him though, for Mr. Rusport was zealous, and the rector was charmed to think how nicely he was managing those wearisome schools, and what comfort he administered, by deputy, to the sick poor cabined in those close cottages. Ay, his curate earned his salary right well; but I doubt if the same could be truly said of the lady he had selected for his girl's governess, for she had even less authority over her than he himself had, and he, good easy mortal, could no more insist upon man, woman, child, or animal doing what he, she, or it did not want to do than he could fly. So little Winnie, who lost her mother at five years old, had her own way to a scandalous extent, and her way was to run, and jump, and climb, and throw stones, and scamper over the country on her pony, and attend to the comforts of the old men and women of the parish, who adored her. She preferred digging in the garden to history, sawing wood to geography. The rural dean, calling rather early one morning, found her mowing the lawn. Yet people could do anything with her by appealing to her affections. She stuck to her music like a heroine, in order to play and sing to her father; and Miss Mumps, her nominal governess, got her to apply to more unpalatable studies by weeping when she refused them. One way or another, Winnie knew a great deal more than you would have thought possible. She was now sixteen, and had no idea that she had grown out of the child into the woman. Any young fellow who met her would have known it though. Mr. Rusport knew it, for instance, and William Ferreter.

Cantering along over the crest of an easy hill, Winnie came to Sparsely—past the red-brick Elizabethan mansion of Sir Charles Ferreter, glimpses of which could be caught through the foliage; past the snug little lodge with overgrown stables, where the sporting doctor lived; past the old church and church-yard where her mother lay, up the straggling single street, she stopped at the door of the general shop, jumped down, hitched her reins on to a hook in the wall, went in and rapped the counter with her whip, calling—

"Jane Nye! Jane!"

The prettiest girl in the village hurried in and bobbed.

"Oh, Jane! I want four ounce packets of tobacco, and three of snuff, and five quarter-pounds of tea, and two penn'orth of sweeties. But, why, Jane, whatever can be the matter?"

For Jane Nye's eyes were swollen and red, and her soft brown hair was ruffled, as though her head had just been raised from her arms. She tried to speak, broke down, and then at last sobbed out—

"Robert Jackson!"

"What of him?" asked Winnie, who was as curious as Eve.

"Oh, he's took up!"

"Taken up! Who by? What for?"

"By Squire Ferreter's game-keeper, for poaching."

"Poaching! what, in June?"

"Oh, he has not done it, miss, I'm certain. He promised me faithful he'd never done it again, and he has kep' his word nigh on two year."

"He used to poach once, then?"

"I don't know, miss; they said so when I first kep' company with him, and so I made him promise. And there's his poor mother just out of the fever, and not able to get about. Sally Brown is there mornings and nights, and I run over a bit; but I have no one to mind the shop while I'm gone. Even if he had killed the hare, they need not have made such a fuss, with his

mother in that state and wanting something relishing."

"A hare!" cried Winnie Amlet, turning very red, and flashing curiously with her eyes. "When did it happen?"

"Yesterday evening, miss. They have put him in the lock-up; and he is to be brought before Sir Charles at twelve o'clock to-day. They will send him for certain to Mudborough Gaol to wait for the 'sises, and that will be the ruin of him. How is his bit of land, and cow, and pig, and mother to be looked to while he is in prison?" And the girl broke down again.

"There, don't give way; I am sure all will come right. I promise you it shall. You say he is to be brought up at twelve o'clock; now it's a quarter to. I shall have time to reach the Hall and speak to Sir Charles before it's all over."

"Sir Charles won't have the judging of it; he got so much blame in the papers and from

a window, reading the newspaper; he was a dark, coarse, mean-looking youth, and he was not present willingly, but at his father's command, for the prisoner had appealed to certain evidence with which "Master William" could clear him.

Robert Jackson, charged with slaughter of the hare, was one of a class which has become extremely rare in England; he was a peasant proprietor. How his family became originally possessed of the little patch of soil I cannot say. All I know is that a late Robert Jackson had inherited from a former Robert Jackson a little bit of land, situated in the centre of one of Sir Charles Ferreter's best farms, and that the fact was a crumpled rose-leaf in the Ferreter couch. Many efforts had been made to buy the land, but the Jacksons were very Nabobish for the tenacity with which they stuck to their patrimony. So there was feud between the little family and the big one, for the Ferreters were a harsh lot—overbearing, petty, spiteful, preten-

spoke truth. Speak up for me, Mr. William, and tell them how it was."

William Ferreter put down the newspaper, and looked round with an air of astonishment.

"Pon my word," said he, "I don't know what the fellow is talking about. Of course I gave him no hare. To begin with, I don't shoot them in June; and, in the next place, I am not in the habit of sending game to cads."

Here Mr. Tredler whispered to Mr. Stacey, who coughed and said that the proceedings were irregular. Mr. Ferreter must be properly sworn if he had any evidence to give.

"But I have none to give," said the young man, taking up the paper again,

"Oh, this is too bad to be true!" cried Jackson. "Mr. Stacey, sir, you have the name of being a just gentleman, who will not see a poor man wronged. I have got a mother dependent on me, sir, and if you send me to prison it will ruin me and kill her, and all for nothing. For, let him deny it as he likes, the squire's son did give me the hare, and I was loth to take it."

"But, my good man," said Mr. Stacey, just think what an improbable statement yours is. What possible motive could Mr. William Ferreter have for such conduct as you impute to him?"

"It's spite, sir," cried Jackson eagerly. "Yes; I see it all now, though it is hard to believe that any one can be so wicked. I wonder he don't expect the roof to fall in and crush him; I do. Look here, sir; it's more than a year ago that I was going home one evening down the Mill-head Lane, when I heard a woman screaming; and running up I found it was my sweetheart, Jane Nye, and that he, Mr. William there, had been rude to her. Well, I lost my temper, I don't deny, and gave him a licking. He swore at the time he would be even with me; but he spoke so fair afterwards that I—God help me, I see you don't believe me. Well, swear him; let him kiss the book and say I lie."

"Very sad, this persistence," said Mr. Stacey, turning to Sir Charles, who shrugged his shoulders. "Prisoner, you do yourself no good by making such imputations, which I advise you to repress on another occasion. Make out his committal, Mr. Tredler."

"Please, Mr. Stacey, will you make me swear," said a quiet, girlish voice behind the magistrate, who looked round in great surprise and saw Winnie Amlet standing at his elbow, with eyes sparkling and cheeks carnation, but perfectly unembarrassed in manner.

"You, my dear!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, me. I did not wish to speak if I could help it; but as the poor man will be sent to prison if I don't, why, you know, I must."

So Winnie had her first oath administered, and swore thus: "I was walking in Thinpop Woods yesterday evening, and I saw a young thrush that seemed frightened by something, and unable to fly, on the branch of a tree which looked easy to climb. I often climb trees when there is no one looking, so I went up this one to try and catch the little bird. I had nearly done so when a gun was let off somewhere near, and that frightened it so that it fluttered away. I know people think it queer and unladylike to climb trees, so I made myself as small as I could till the person who fired should have passed, and peeped through the leaves for him. There were two little paths coming from different directions to be seen from my bough, and presently Robert Jackson came along that one exactly opposite to the part where I heard the shot, so that he could not have fired it, could he? Directly after, another man came in sight along the other path from which the report had come, and he carried a gun in one hand and a dead hare in the other. He stood and stirred some brushwood about with his foot as if looking for a good place to conceal the hare; but presently he caught sight of Jackson, and went on towards him, and they met close to my tree."

"Look here, Jackson," said he, "I have shot this by mistake for a rabbit; do you care to have it?"

"Thank you, sir; it would make the old woman a nice soup—only I am afraid of getting into trouble."

"Nonsense!" said the other; "I'll say how you came by it if any one sees it; though you had better not show it either, as I had rather not be laughed at for the mistake."

"Well, sir," said Jackson, "if you press me I will take it; for since it is killed it seems a sin almost to waste so much good meat, don't it?"

"And then he took it, and wrapped it in his handkerchief and went away, and the other went away too; and I came down and walked home; and that is all."

There was a pause of dead silence, and then Mr. Stacey asked—

"Do you know the other man—the one who gave the hare away?"

"Did I not name him?" said Winnie. "It was—He has left the room."

William Ferreter had not only left the room, but the house, and presently afterwards the county, to which he did not return for some years. Of course Robert Jackson was set at liberty directly.

His story aroused a good deal of indignant sympathy, which took the form of presents when he married Jane Nye in the August following.

Winnie Amlet has given up climbing trees; but she is somewhat masterful still, and I fancy will be, unless she marries an energetic man like Mr. Rusport. And I do not think that he would mind much if she did, by-the-by.

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"SAW WINNY AMLET STANDING AT HIS ELBOW."

neighbors about the last case of poaching on his own estate he committed a man for, that he has sent for Mr. Stacey to come and justice for him."

"All the better!" cried Winnie. "Keep a good heart up, Jane, and look after the widow." She whistled to the dogs, who were foraging, jumped on her pony, and cantered off to the Hall—a single-minded, ready-witted, self-dependent young lady enough, for all her innocence and tendency to tomboyishness.

The case had just opened, when she slipped quietly into Sir Charles Ferreter's library, and after exchanging silent salutations with the two magistrates, made herself small in an arm-chair in the back-ground. It was a good room for magisterial business; large, lofty, well lined with books smelling of Russian leather. The idea that he had drawn down the wrath of a man who had mastered all those volumes, dummies included, might well strike awe into the rustic soul. Mr. Stacey occupied the post of honor—a deep maroon-colored chair, placed behind a table with a space for the legs in the centre, and drawers on each side. He was a tall, straight man, rather lean, bald on the top of his head, but with the hair at the sides long enough to be brushed forwards into the semblance of small elephant's tusks. His eyebrows were shaggy, his complexion fair, his fingers long. He had come over to Ferreter Hall at the first summons for the exercise of magisterial functions was his especial hobby. Sir Charles Ferreter sat on his right hand; he was old and very infirm, being a martyr to rheumatic gout. Tredler, Mr. Stacey's clerk, was stationed at one end of the table. Mr. Rusport, who had come as a witness to character, sat behind the justices; Winnie took a place at his side. William Ferreter, only child of Sir Charles, stood at

tious, grasping. There never was a good average English country gentleman of their breed since they came into the county, which disliked them.

Robert Jackson, then, had been brought up to look upon his rich neighbors as foes, to be voted against at elections, and despoiled of their game, and he had poached till Jane Nye had taught him better. But since his engagement to her he had used his gun for lawful purposes only—the searing of birds and destruction of predatory rabbits. For Jane was a Sunday-school teacher, and good. Jackson was a fine, sturdy young fellow; handsome, honest-looking. His features betrayed anxiety when he first came in, but they cleared, and he gave a sigh of relief on seeing William Ferreter standing by the window.

John Morris, game-keeper, being sworn, deposed that on the previous evening, at about half-past seven, Mr. William called at his lodge and said he had just heard a shot in Thinpop Woods; so he hurried off in the direction indicated, and going through the plantation, saw led to his own home, carrying something in a pocket-handkerchief. Went up and asked him what he had got there. Was told to mind his own business. Said it was his business, and snatched the bundle. Found that it contained a hare, still warm and bloody, evidently recently shot. Jackson had no gun then, but that was how he came by the hare; prisoner said that it was given him by Mr. William. Knowing that to be all moonshine nonsense, he took him into custody, getting a bleak eye on so doing. Black Hare, ditto, ditto.

"But, gentlemen," cried the accused, "I only