

# SIR WILLIAM'S WILL

"Is he dead?" she asked.  
"The dog?"  
"No; the man, stupid!"  
"Oh, no," he said. "But," he added, almost to himself, "he won't ill-treat anything again for a while."  
She looked at him approvingly, and yet with a woman's maternal pity for the man whose goodness of heart is certain to lead him into trouble.  
"Yes; you look the sort of man who would stand by a dog or a helpless woman in trouble. There! drink up your tea and have some fresh and hot. James, give him the tobacco-jar when he has finished." As she went out of the room with a comfortable waddle, her husband, pushing the tobacco-jar across the table, said:  
"The missus has settled it, Douglas—or Jack, if you prefer it? We want a boundary-runner, and we'll take you on. A pound a week will do, I suppose; and you won't object to giving a hand to anything that may be going on?"

"A pound a week will do very well, Mr. Jarro," said Jack; "and as you say, I'll take a turn at anything." He was silent for a moment or two, then he added: "Perhaps you won't mind giving me a month's advance."

Mr. Jarro seemed rather taken aback and, scratching his head, not unreasonably demanded:  
"What for?"

Jack glanced up at the ceiling, to the room where the girl was lying. Mr. Jarro laughed quietly.

"You take my advice and don't interfere with what doesn't concern you. The missus has taken that affair in hand, I can plainly see; and she don't stand any interference from you—or me."

It did not take Mr. Jarro many days to discover that in Jack Douglas he had gained a treasure. The young man was not only a magnificent rider, but understood all the work of a station, and did it—willingly and cheerfully. He was so strong and active that he seemed incapable of fatigue; and, as he had said, he was perfectly willing to turn his hand to anything. It was to Jack and Mrs. Jarro when she wanted anything done that needed a strong hand and a quick brain. He promptly made friends, not only with the animals, but with his fellow humans, even the boy of the farm, who was called Teddy, because his name was Algernon Sidney, and who had hitherto been the torment and the despair of everybody about him.

Mr. Jack Douglas' method was simple, quiet, but deadly effective. When he wanted a thing done, he asked for it pleasantly, and if it were done he smiled and nodded approvingly; if he were disobeyed, he repeated the request just as quietly, but in a tone, and with a look in his hazel eyes, which obtained prompt obedience. With Teddy he had a few preliminary words, on the first misunderstanding between them, which brought that ingenious and trying youth to Jack's feet, and made the boy his enthusiastic adherent and devoted slave.

For the first few days Jack worked upon the farm so as to get his bearings, and in those few days made every one feel that he had been there for years. The girl he had rescued was still up-stairs; but Mrs. Jarro

told him that she was getting on as well as could be expected. They had buried her child in a little cove behind the house, and Jack had read the service, Mr. Jarro declaring that parson-work was "out of his line."

Mary Seaton was still up-stairs when Jack started on his boundary-run. He was gone a little over a week; and it is much to his credit that everybody about the place had missed him, especially Mrs. Jarro.

"He is the nicest man we have ever had, James," she remarked. So willing and so clever. And it's a pleasure to have him about the house and to look at him. I do like a good-looking man."

"Of course," said her husband. "That's why you married me."  
"Of course," retorted Mrs. Jarro, with a laugh. "It couldn't have been for anything else."

They were all glad when Jack returned from his solitary ride; and Teddy, who had suffered a relapse during the absence of his heart's idol, announced Jack's return with a grave face, and a manner that had already undergone a change.

As Jack drew up to the stables, a woman crossed the yard with some washed linen over her arm. It was Mary Seaton. She was still pale, but she looked a very different girl to the one he had found lying by the roadside; but her life's tragedy still lurked in her eyes, and about the corners of her mouth, and her face looked as if it had been impossible for a smile to have ever rested on it. She stopped as Jack dropped from his horse, and looked at him; so might the dog, which Jack had rescued, have looked at him; but suddenly the expression in her eyes changed to a questioning one, and her brows came together as if she were perplexed, as if she were trying to remember something; but she did not speak, and Jack, with a cheerful nod, said:  
"Glad to see you out again. All right now, I hope?"

Her eyes, fixed on his face, grew thoughtful, absent, as if she were listening intently, and there was almost an embarrassing pause before she replied, in a low voice, the toneless voice of a person numbed by a great grief:  
"Yes; thanks to you, sir."

Jack looked rather surprised at the "sir," but made no comment and turned to Teddy who, with hero-worship in his eyes, was hovering about him.

"So they haven't killed you yet, Teddy?" said Jack, in his pleasant fashion. "No; I'll rub down the horse; you go and ask Mrs. Jarro for some bran, and we'll give her—Sally, not Mrs. Jarro—a little gruel. You've had a long day, my beauty, haven't you?"

Teddy bounded to the store-room, where he was found by Mrs. Jarro helping himself from the bran-tub. She raised her huge hand to box his ears; but it fell to her side as he squeaked out:  
"It's for Mr. Jack!"

"Oh, all right," she said. "You tell Mr. Jack to hurry in. I've got his supper ready for him; and you brush his clothes and his boots for him. And look sharp, so that he is not kept waiting, or you'll get that box on the ears, after all."

"However tired he may be, however hard set, he always has a good wash and changes his clothes," she remarked to Jarro, as, with her own hands she laid the supper for the treasure. "He's a real gentleman; that's what he is, James."

"Thank you for the information," retorted Jarro. "Even I can see that, missus, by the way he works. I've always noticed that your real gentleman—I don't mean your scallywag, your 'remittance man'—but a right down real gentleman—always works twice as hard as a navvy, and thinks nothing of it, and is always reliable. I'd trust that young fellow with untold gold."

"So would I," said Mrs. Jarro; "but there's no need to hawl it—he's coming down-stairs."  
Jack came in from his bath, with that well-groomed appearance which was always so pleasant and flattering to Mrs. Jarro's eyes; and she made his report as he ate his plentiful supper. Mrs. Jarro had discovered that there were one or two dishes which he favored, and she had cooked them with her own hands to-night.

"You have covered a lot of ground," said Mr. Jarro, with an air of satisfaction. "I couldn't have done it better myself."  
Mrs. Jarro very impolitely laughed.

"Any news?" asked Jack.  
"No," replied Jarro, as he let his pipe and, with vicarious enjoyment, watched Jack put away the good things. "A sundowner or two. One of them said he was from Mintona. A rough-looking fellow; we got rid of him early in the morning."

"Mary Seaton's about again," remarked Mrs. Jarro.  
"So I see," said Jack, wiping his mouth with the napkin with which

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Mrs. Jarro always supplied him. "You've kept her on, then?"

Mrs. Jarro nodded. "Of course," she said. "And very useful she is." Jack looked thoughtfully across the table. "You've not learned—she has not told you—"

"No," said Mrs. Jarro. "She hasn't asked. It's no business of ours. The poor thing has evidently had a lot of trouble, and I'm not one to open old wounds."

Jack nodded. "You're a good woman, Mrs. Jarro," he said.

"Somebody's been telling you," she retorted; but she looked pleased.

There was some work on the farm, and Jack set about it with his usual promptitude and thoroughness. He seemed to be all over the place at once, as Mrs. Jarro remarked; and the hands worked as if he used some spell, some magic with them. One day, while he was breaking a colt which had successfully resisted the blandishments of every man on the station, Teddy came running to him, his face aflame, his protuberant blue eyes almost starting from his head.

"Mr. Jack!" he gasped. "There's a man—in the wood—Mary!"

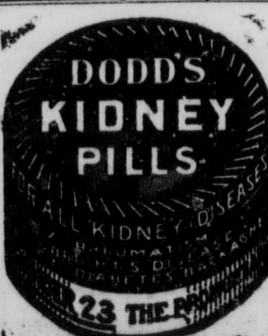
As he paused for want of breath, a woman's scream clove the still air. Jack tossed the colt's halter to Teddy and ran swiftly in the direction of the sound. Mary Seaton was standing with her back to a tree, struggling with a burly, rough-looking man, whose countenance was not improved by a bulging bruise on his forehead. She was as white as death, and her eyes were gleaming; but her screams stopped at sight of Jack, and the man, with an oath, turned to meet him.

Jack was on him like a knife, and the two men were locked together in a deadly embrace. The man was heavier than Jack, but what there was of Jack was muscle and sinew, and very soon the ruffian went down and Jack's knee was on his chest. But as he fell, with outstretched arms, the man's right hand struck a stone; his fingers closed it, and dealt Jack a blow on the temple.

Jack saw stars, the great trunks of the trees danced in the sunlight in an absurd and grotesque manner, his grip of the man's throat relaxed, and a deadly faintness assailed him and he fell back full-length.

The man sprang to his feet, bestowed a kick on the prostrate form, swore at Mary, then sprang heavily toward the sheltering trees and disappeared.

Mary Seaton bent over Jack, her face white as death, her breath coming and going painfully; but she covered herself in a moment or two, and tearing open the collar of his



shirt drew his head upon her knee. Jack had not been badly stunned and he came to almost immediately.

She drew a long breath as he opened his eyes, and bending down, so that her hair swept his face, and her lips touched his ear, whispered:  
"Mr. Wilfred—Mr. Wilfred Carton!"

Jack started, an expression of recognition and acknowledgment of the name crossed his face and was visible in his eyes.

"Yes? Who—what?"

His eyes closed again, and she bent over him with tightly compressed lips, and nodded. She knew that he would soon recover again, and she held his head against her and waited; and presently she helped him to stagger to his feet.

"Are you hurt?" he asked, as he wiped the blood from his face.

She shook her head. "No; you came in time—again."

"That's all right," said Jack, with satisfaction; then, with disappointment, as he looked around: "The scoundrel's got off, of course! It's the man I licked for beating the dog, at Mintona. It's a pity I didn't give him a little more." Then he gazed before him in a confused, puzzled fashion. "I seemed to have been knocked out of time," he said. "Been kind of dreaming. Did you—say anything just now—mention my name?"

"No," she said.

He frowned. "That's strange," he said. "Only fancy, I suppose. I must have been clean off my head for a minute or two. Come on to the house. You must be frightened out of your life. Here, lean on me."

He offered a wavering arm; but she drew it within hers.

"No," she said quietly, but with a tremor in her voice. "It's you to lean on me this time, Mr.—Jack."

CHAPTER V.  
Hesketh Carton scarcely glanced round him, but looked straight ahead as he left the hall after his interview with Clytie; he held his body erect, and his countenance under command, as he paced slowly down the Broad drive, for the two girls might have been watching him from the window; but the tenseness of his figure relaxed as he got out of sight of the house, his head drooped, and an expression of lassitude and disappointment settled on his face. He went down by a narrow road to the Pit and entered the house which had now become his.

It was a small and gloomy building, close under the shadow of the great factory which loomed above it and to which it was connected by double doors leading to Hesketh's private room, or office. Hanging his hat up in the narrow passage—what a contrast to the vast, hifi he had just left!—he went into the small sitting-room—how shabby and mean it was compared with the magnificent one in which he had left those girls sitting!—he sank into a chair, and, letting his head fall back, wiped the perspiration from his brow.

He had been very ill, his nerves were all unstrung; one does not attempt to destroy a will, to steal a large estate, a quarter of a million of money—and bungle the business—without undergoing a severe mental strain. And how he had bungled it! In the whirl of the machinery, the motions of which vibrated through the small house, seemed to mingle, in a ghastly fashion, the words, the furious tones of the old man's voice.

Hesketh closed his eyes and saw the whole hideous scene. Yes, he had bungled the affair, had failed irretrievably? He sat up and peered at the opposite wall, his eyes narrowed to slits, his lips drawn straight, by the tenseness of his thoughts. Was there no way out, no way of recovering all that he had lost by an act of, what seemed to him now, incredible stupidity? Was he to surrender the Hall and the large fortune that went with it, and be content to mull and toll all his days, just "Mr. Hesketh Carton, of the Pit Works?"

The foolish, farcical will would stand; there was no one to dispute it. His only chance lay in the possibility of Wilfred's refusal to marry Clytie, and in—her subsequent death. A poor chance, indeed; for, of course, Wilfred would not be such a fool as to refuse; and if he were to do so, the girl was young, strong, and aggressively healthy.

Why should Wilfred refuse? She was a charming girl, a pretty girl; quite lovely, in fact. He had never seen a girl half so lovely. Why, if he had destroyed the right will and become master of Bramley, he himself might have married her. Yes; that would have been right enough; the Bramleys, as represented by her, would have been restored to Bramley; his position would have been assured. As the owner of such an historic estate, the husband of Clytie Bramley, he would have had full play for his ambitions, and might have risen to any heights. A brilliant political career, a baronetcy, a peerage floated before him.

He rose and paced the room, looking remarkably like a lean, but respectable tiger, say, rather, a jackal; with his thin hands, thinner by illness, clasped and working behind him, he was like the aforesaid tiger, crammed full of energy, panting for freedom of action, and yet cribbed, cabined, and confined by his insensate folly.

Suddenly he heard the second, the outer, of the two doors leading to his office open, and a knock came to the inner door. He thrust away his thoughts with a gesture and, opening the door, met the manager of the works—he had recently been raised to that position—a man named Merril. He started slightly as he came upon his master's pale, set face.

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"I beg your pardon, sir," he said. "But you asked me to bring the returns as soon as they were finished."

"Quite right, Merril," said Hesketh.

He went into the office, closing the doors behind him; and, taking the papers, seated himself at his large table, almost covered with account-books, samples, and files, and ran through the returns.

"Quite right," he said. "Merril took them from him, but seemed to hesitate."

"Anything else, Merril?" asked Hesketh.

"Well, sir," replied Merril, reluctantly. "I think I ought to speak to you about Stephen Radwon."

Hesketh had drawn a sheet of paper toward him and had begun to write; he arrested the pen, and without raising his eyes, said coldly:  
(To be continued.)

### Carrot Pie.

Scrape and boil the carrots until very tender, then mash thoroughly and to one cupful of carrot add one pint of milk, one-half teaspoonful each of salt, cinnamon and ginger, one well-beaten egg, sugar to sweeten to taste. Bake slowly in an earthen crust, like squash pie.

### Birds and Aeroplanes.

Compared with a recent aeroplane ascent of 15,000 feet, the common birds are mere groundlings, for generally they fly at no greater height than 300 feet. When migrating, however, they mount higher, though even then the wild goose (the loftiest of them) seldom reaches 2,000 feet. The highest flier in the world is the great condor, which sometimes rises five miles.

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