

minutes, when he discovered it to be totally useless and invalid! By the established law of England, every devise, in such a will, to an *attesting witness*, is *void*, and of no avail. Lucy and her mother were placed in this position through the consummate ignorance of the person who had undertaken to be their guide in the matter. When the attorney, with a grave face but kindly tone, intimated this sad error, the heart of the poor widow sank within her, as she looked at her daughter, and as the recollection of the heir-at-law's character came across her mind. And, for the schoolmaster, who was really a worthy, kind-hearted man, his self-accusations were bitter exceedingly. But he tried to re-assure himself and his friends with the hope that the flaw would never be known, and that, if it were known, James Symmons could not be so cruel and unjust as to take away what it undeniably was his deceased brother's wish to give to those who now had it. The attorney shook his head at the latter observation of the schoolmaster, and said, that "secrecy, to say the least of it, was much the stronger hope of the two." To the preservation of silence on the subject, he at once pledged himself, and trusted that the flaw might not be heard of. The schoolmaster then departed with Lucy and her mother, all three, it must be confessed, somewhat depressed in spirits by the unexpected intelligence which had been conveyed to them. Lucy's heart, already sad for the loss of her kind uncle, was now still more saddened by the fear of her mother's having to encounter hardships in her declining years. The mother, again, was grieved at the thought of the effect which the discovery would have upon the prosperity of her daughter's whole life. And self-reproach was busy in the breast of the schoolmaster.

Alas! evil news spreads fast. Whether James Symmons had himself observed the circumstance of the signatures at the reading of the will, and had afterwards discovered the legal consequences, or whether some other person had detected the error, and promulgated it, we are unable to say. But the flaw did come to the knowledge of James Symmons, and the cold-hearted miser, regardless of his brother's undeniable wishes, lost not a moment in taking advantage of it. The widow, within a

few days after her own discovery of the fact, received a letter from an agent employed by her mean and cruel brother, which informed her that Mr. Symmons having learned that the will of the late Richard Symmons was improperly executed, was resolved to claim restitution of his just and legal rights as heir-at-law. The letter concluded with a base hint that the will had been extorted from Richard by improper influence. This was the only colour which the miser could invent for his unnatural proceedings.

On receipt of this communication, the widow again visited the attorney alluded to, and consulted him respecting the probable issue of a legal attempt to oppose the claims of James Symmons. The attorney candidly told her that he believed all men would allow the intentions of the testator to be correctly represented by the will, but that these intentions most certainly had not been made good in such a way as to stand a contest in a court. Lucy's mother returned to her home, with the intention of giving all up to the greedy claimant, as soon as the few moveables which were her own could be taken away, and some arrangement made for providing herself and her child with another home. This resolution once taken, and notified to James Symmons, her mind became more easy, and the cheerful Lucy soon lightened the mother's heart still more, by detailing all her little plans for their mutual sustenance and comfort in future.

A few days passed over, and the widow and her daughter were seated in an humble dwelling in a retired corner of Springwell, and Lucy had taken in needlework. They had removed in the morning from the late Richard's house. But let us leave them, cheerful and resigned, and turn to the miser. This day he has added another half, at least, to his wealth, and still he is in his old wretched hovel. Though the night is one of winter, he has no fire, but he lies in bed with his clothes on, and all the rags in his possession heaped above him to keep him warm. Yet this night all will not do, for he shivers incessantly. Ever and anon, however, the thought of his newly acquired wealth sends something like a glow through him. Lying in bed saves candles; this is also a part of his creed. Has he no remorse for turning a sister and her child to the door? It is