

men forget, namely, the necessity of arranging his affairs so that things might go as he wished after his death. His property lay chiefly in houses, and he wished to give his sister a life-tenure of part of that property, and to constitute his niece ultimate heir to all. Without a will, this disposition of the property could not be made, as Richard's brother, who was heir-at-law, would otherwise be entitled to all. Richard had no enmity at his "poor miserable" brother, as he called the parsimonious James, but he knew that the latter had much more wealth of his own than he ever could, or would use. Accordingly, to provide for his dear Lucy and her mother, was Richard's object, and in order to accomplish this, the schoolmaster's talents were put in requisition; for the schoolmaster, as is the case with his class in almost every parish in England, was a will-maker—at least he had acted in that capacity frequently, and the honest man thought himself very perfect in the calling. To attain perfection in it, indeed, after his fashion of going to work, was no very difficult matter. He had one form for all cases; and, accordingly, when Richard Symmons communicated his wishes to him, the schoolmaster drew up a will agreeably to this form. According to his friend's wish, the schoolmaster himself was nominated executor—a post which he held in nine out of ten of all the will-cases with which he had to do.

When the schoolmaster came to old Richard's bedroom with the will, to have it signed and witnessed, Lucy sat by her kind uncle's bedside, and, to use the beautiful language of Shakspeare,

—like the watchful minutes to the hour,
Still and anon cheered up the heavy time,
Saying, "What lack you?" and, "Where lies your grief?"
Or, "What good love may I perform for you?"

Her mother also was in the room, engaged in knitting what she hoped her brother would yet live to wear. Neither she nor Lucy knew of the commission which Richard had given to the schoolmaster; and when it was communicated to them, they were moved to tears, partly of gratitude and partly of affectionate anxiety. "Oh! dear uncle," sobbed Lucy, "you will be spared to us yet!" "A little while, perhaps, Luce darling," said the old man calmly, "but not long—not long now. The blow has been given, and the first high wind will bring down the tree.

But come, let us have this matter settled, and I will be easy in mind." The invalid signed the will, and, under the directions of the schoolmaster, Lucy and her mother put their names to it, along with his own, as *witnesses*.

After the completion of this deed, Richard lived several weeks in the enjoyment of tolerable health. But a second attack, of the same nature as the first, terminated his days. The schoolmaster, as executor, spared Lucy and her mother the painful task of directing the funeral ceremonies. For the first time for many years, James Symmons entered his brother's house, on the occasion of the burial. He had become more squalid and haggard than ever, and though evidently verging rapidly to the grave, still grasped at wealth with as keen a hand as ever. Some thought they observed on his countenance gleams of wild eagerness breaking at times, as if unconsciously, through the show of gravity which he wore, as he followed his brother to the tomb. Certain it is, that his disappointment was obvious to every one present when the will of the deceased was read, though all the village anticipated the destination of the property. The countenance of the miser fell when he heard the deed gone over, his knees shook, and he glared with his dark cunning eyes on the innocent inheritors, as if they had robbed him of his treasure. He had so much self-restraint as not to break out into abuse, but he would partake of nothing with the other friends of the family, and left the house with a drooping head, and with mutterings upon his lips. His character and peculiarities were too well known to his widowed sister and his niece for them to feel surprise at his behaviour.

About a week after the funeral, the schoolmaster, in his capacity of executor, waited on Lucy's mother, and informed her that it would be necessary to prove the will in the Prerogative Court, and proposed that she and Lucy should go with him to a friend of his, an attorney, in order to get the matter completed. Of course this proposal was immediately acceded to. On reaching the attorney's chambers, the special will of Richard Symmons, drawn up and signed as already mentioned, was shown to the legal practitioner. He had not looked at it a few