

doctors, and changed her church very often. The poor curate evidently did not know exactly what to say, but I suppose he thought he ought to try and comfort me, so he said, 'God be wi' ye,' instead of good-bye, in a hollow voice, and squeezed my hand so viciously that my ring cut into my finger. I was horrified with myself for feeling more inclined to laugh than to cry, for I am sure he *meant* kindly; but when he asked if I was staying on I explained I should be going back to Coed-Ithel in a few days, so I don't *think* he'll come again. I wrote to Uncle Roberts and told him when it was all over; and he sent a post-card to say it was the decree of Providence and what we must all come to. But he evidently had no idea of coming up for the funeral, as the doctor thought he might, and as I was sure he wouldn't. . . .

"I am writing this in the morning-room; and I will finish it to-morrow when I have seen Mr. Valentine."

CHAPTER V

THE WILL

A GLEAM of wintry sunshine stole in through the lace-shrouded windows, and turned the green damask walls of the morning-room to gold; and brightened the flowered chintz on the couch; and shone through the ragged petals of the giant lemon-tinted and copper-hued chrysanthemums, and upon the fresh dark violets in their silver bowl.

Before an old French bureau, Mr. Valentine sat, with crossed knees, and folded hands, explaining the late Miss Marney's wishes to her grand-niece.

He was not at all like Jeanne's preconceived notion of a family solicitor; being neither dried up nor severe, but, on the contrary, a very pleasant, cheerful, grey-headed old gentleman; with an expression which, subdued it as he would, was jovial in the extreme.

"This will was executed somewhat hurriedly," he said,