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A Blacksmith's Song.

Clang, cling, clang, cling!
Bellows, you must roar, and anvil you must ring;
Hammer, you and I must work, for ding, dong, ding!
Must dress my Kate and baby, and bread for us must bring.
So dong, ding, dong, ding!
anvil to my hammer make music while I sing—
Clang, cling, clang, cling!
Ding, dong, ding, dong!
Dear to Kate's ear, my old hammer, is your song;
For while my anvil rings and clings she knows there's nothing wrong;
She knows we're busy earning what will be hers ere long.
So ding, dong, ding, dong!
She loves me more and more as she hears my anvil's song—
Ding, dong, ding, dong!
Clang, cling, clang, cling!
Oh, well I love my smithy when the birds in spring-time sing,
And the pleasant sun comes streaming in, the sun that loves to bring
Its gladness to me, working, and to hear my anvil ring.
Dong, ding, dong, ding!
And to see my iron glowing, and the sparks in showers spring—
Clang, cling, clang, cling!
Blow, blow, blow, blow!
Bellows you must work till the furnace is aglow.
Snug is my old smithy when, without comes down the snow,
When sooty wall and rafter in the blaze are all aglow.
Blow, blow, blow, blow!
What care I if the storm, without, be high or low?
Blow, blow, blow, blow!
Clang, cling, clang, cling!
Merrily the hours fly that hear my anvil ring;
And quick my evening chair and my pipe and glass they bring;
Then, while Kate works beside me, I'm happy as a king.
Clang, cling, clang, cling!
God give me always health and tregth to make my anvil ring!
Clang, cling, clang, cling!

Robert Bramleigh's Will.

AN ENGLISH LAWYER'S STORY.

It had been a busy day with me. I had been working hard getting up evidence in a railway accident case, and was putting up my papers with a sigh of relief. Another forty minutes and I should be at home. I could almost smell the boil capon and oyster sauce which I knew were being prepared for me. "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," says the proverb; and in my case it proved only too true; for just as I was tying up the last bundle of papers, the office boy put his head in at the door and dispelled the tempting vision.

"A woman to see you, if you please, sir. She won't give no name. Says she's a stranger."

"A stranger!" I repeated. "What is she like? Is she a common person?"

"Not exactly, sir," replied the lad.

"A lady?" I asked.

"O no, sir."

"What is she, then?"

Arthur paused, as if considering, and then, with a look of intelligence, as much as to say that he had hit the nail on the head this time, he answered: "Well, sir, she's a sort of betwixt and between."

"Not a bad definition, Arthur. Ask the 'betwixt and between' up-stairs."

"A tall, middle-aged woman entered and took the seat I placed for her.

My visitor removed her gloves and, carefully smoothing them, placed them on the table beside her. She then produced from her pocket a large foolscap envelope, from which she drew a piece of paper folded longways. This she handed to me, explaining, in a hard, monotonous voice, that she had been sent to me by her master, Mr. Robert Bramleigh, of Coleman street, who was dangerously ill—in fact, was not expected to live many hours. The paper, she said, had been written by his direction, and signed by him for his will that afternoon. Fearing lest it should not be in a proper form, he had desired her to take it to the nearest lawyer and have one prepared according to the law.

I unfolded the paper and read as follows:

In the name of God, Amen. I leave my body to the ground and my soul to Almighty God who gave it. Now this is the will of me, Robert Bramleigh, of 559 Coleman street. I give and leave all my houses, lands, money and everything that I have, to Hannah Churton, my housekeeper, as a reward for her long and faithful services. Signed by me on Tuesday, December 12, 1868.

ROBERT BRAMLEIGH.

Witnesses—James Burn, Margaret Sims.

I examined the writing carefully. The signature "Robert Bramleigh," was weak and shaky. The will itself was written in a masculine-looking hand of singular decision and boldness. The characters were large and well-formed. The will had evidently been prepared by some one who had had but an imperfect knowledge of the form to be used for such a purpose. The solemn appeal to the Deity and the bequest of the testator's body and soul was an old form, much in vogue with our grandfathers, who generally headed a will with one or two pious phrases.

The document shown to me was, however, sufficient to give Hannah Churton all Mr. Bramleigh's property.

Now, I am always very particular about wills; I think they are too serious to be settled in a hurry. I never will allow a client to execute one until I am convinced that its purport is perfectly understood.

"You are Mrs. Churton, I presume?" I asked.

"I am," she replied, looking me unflinchingly in the face. Somehow I felt suspicious that things were not so fair as they should be. I questioned her rather closely; but the only admission I obtained from her was that she had written the will, but that it was at her master's dictation. I offered to prepare a more formal document; but before doing so, I declared that it was necessary I should see Mr. Bramleigh. I named the omission of the appointment of an executor. This seemed rather to nonplus her. She asked whether she could not be named as executrix. The more aversion she showed to my seeing her master the more convinced I felt that something was wrong; and, seeing that I was not to be moved from my purpose, she at last gave in; proposing, however, that I should accompany her back, as she greatly feared it would be too late if left till the morning.

A cab soon took us to No. 559 Coleman street. It was a large, gloomy, old-fashioned house, with a spacious entrance hall. I was taken into the dining-room and asked to wait while Mr. Bramleigh was being prepared for my visit. The furniture in the room was old and very massive. Some handsome oil paintings graced the walls. I am very fond of pictures, so, raising the lamp, I walked around the room slowly inspecting them. On the right of the fireplace I came upon a picture with its face turned towards the wall. I turned the picture. It was the portrait in oils of a young and very beautiful girl in a dark riding-habit. Hearing footsteps outside the door, I restored the picture to the position in which I had found it, and as I did so I saw written at the bottom of the frame "Magdalen Bramleigh."

The footsteps I heard were those of the housemaid, who had come to announce that Mr. Bramleigh was ready to see me. I followed her upstairs, and was ushered into a large comfortable-looking bedroom. A cheerful fire burned in the grate. Facing it was a large four-post bedstead hung with white curtains, and at the head of the bed Mrs. Churton was standing, with a small table in front of her, on which were placed an inkstand and some paper. She pulled back the curtain and I saw an old man propped up by pillows, his face drawn and the eyes very much sunk. I almost feared that he was too far gone to make a will; but after speaking with him for a little time I felt satisfied that the intellect was quite clear.

Turning to Mrs. Churton I told her that she need not wait; I would ring if I wanted anything.

"Yes, go—go, Hannah!" cried the sick man; and I fancied that I could detect an eagerness in his voice as if he desired her absence rather than her presence. As Mrs. Churton left the room I caught sight of the reflection of her face in the glass over the chimney piece, but I do not think she would have scowled quite as much had she known that I was looking. I began by asking Mr. Bramleigh what were his wishes with regard to his will. In low tones he told me that he desired to leave everything to Hannah Churton, his housekeeper, as a reward for her long and faithful services.

I spoke gravely to the old man, although without much hopes of success, but at last I got him to confess that he had had no intention of making his housekeeper his sole heiress until she had herself broached the subject to him. She certainly must have had great power over the old man to induce him to agree to such a scheme. I proposed to Mr. Bramleigh that he should leave his property to some one on whom he could rely in trust for his daughter. I also volunteered, although I have an aversion to the trouble and responsibility of a trusteeship, my services as trustee for this purpose. My arguments prevailed. He assented, and I prepared a will accordingly, the old man requesting that his medical man, Dr. Ramsey, should be nominated as my co-trustee, and that an annuity of £50 should be paid to Hannah Churton for life.

I read the will very carefully, explaining as I did so, its full effect. When I finished he muttered: "Quite right—quite right; but I am afraid Hannah will not be pleased." I counselled him not to mention it to her, and my advice seemed to satisfy him.

Ringing the bell, I requested Mrs. Churton to summon James Burn and Margaret Sims, the two servants who had witnessed the first will. As soon as they were in the room, I gave Mr. Bramleigh a pen, and placing the document before him, I said distinctly, so that all might hear: "This which I have just read to you is your final will, and you request James Burn and Margaret Sims to witness your execution of it?" "It is—I do," he solemnly said, as with feeble fingers he wrote his name. The two awe-stricken domestics then added theirs, and I think their hands shook more than the testator's. Hannah Churton was a silent spectator of the whole of this; but I could not see her face, as she stood in the background, out of the light of the lamp.

Before allowing any one to leave the room, I placed the will in a large envelope. Fastening it with wax, I impressed it with Mr. Bramleigh's monogram and crest by means of a seal that was on the tray of the inkstand. The old man watched me closely, and when I had finished, he said: "Keep it—till it is wanted;" thus relieving me of a great embarrassment, for I did not like leaving it in the power of Hannah Churton, lest she should tamper with it.

On our way down stairs Dr. Ramsey told me that his patient was rapidly sinking, and that he doubted whether he would live another twenty-four hours. Taking him into the dining-room and shutting the door, I told him my suspicions of the housekeeper, and that I felt afraid of leaving Mr. Bramleigh alone with her all night. He agreed with me, and promised to send his assistant to watch till the morning, when, if Mr. Bramleigh should still be living, he would on his own responsibility place a trustworthy nurse in charge. The housekeeper opened the door to let us out.

"It is all right, Mrs. Churton," I maliciously said as the doctor wished her good night. "I am quite satisfied now. The will will be safe in my keeping. By-the-by, I added, looking her sharply in the face, "had you not better let your master's friends know of the danger he is in? Dr. Ramsey says he does not think he will last much longer."

She mumbled something in reply, but I could not catch what it was. I stayed talking upon indifferent subjects, to while away the time until the arrival of Dr. Ramsey's assistant. Mrs. Churton, however, was, unlike her sex, remarkably reticent; I could only get the shortest replies from her. She seemed very much astonished and rather displeased when Dr. Ramsey returned with his assistant. He explained to her that although there was no chance of saving his patient's life, yet his last moments might be alleviated by skilled attendance; and therefore, as he himself could not stay all night, he had brought his assistant for that purpose.

In one's experience of mankind we find that it is possible to be sometimes too clever. Mrs. Hannah Churton was very clever, but she committed two great mistakes. The first was in consulting a lawyer. The will drawn by her—for so it really had been—might have been upset on the ground of undue influence. I say "might have been," for there is nothing so hard to prove as undue influence. The great point against her was the ousting of a child in favor of a stranger.

Mistake number two was as follows: The doctor had gone up stairs to install his assistant leaving me standing in the hall with the housekeeper. Fumbling in her pocket she pulled out a roll of bank notes; thrusting these into my hands, she told me that it was her master's wish that I should take them for my trouble. I unrolled them, and found two for ten, and one for five pounds. Twenty-five pounds!

A long legal experience has taught me that in all dealings with doubtful people one's safety lies in having a good witness. I waited till the doctor came down stairs, occupying myself by entering the numbers of the notes in my pocket-book.

"Look, doctor," I cried as he appeared, showing him the notes. "Mr. Bramleigh is a liberal paymaster." Turning to Mrs. Churton, I said: "This will amply repay me."

Retaining the note for five pounds, I returned her the other two. She took them from me without saying a word, but a black look came over her face. I think she began to suspect me. I got home very late that night. The capon was more than done, and so was the oyster sauce!

Mr. Bramleigh died the next morning at ten o'clock. Soon after I had left he became unconscious, in which state he remained till shortly before his death, when there was a rally. Opening his eyes with an eager look, as if he missed something, he threw one arm outside the coverlet, and crying, "Magdalen, Magdalen!" he obeyed the summons which bade him thole his assize—yea, in that dread court where "Not proven" is unknown. Guilty or not guilty? Who shall say?

The funeral took place on the Saturday, but an engagement prevented me from following. Mrs. Churton had written, requesting that I would attend with the will, which still remained in my possession with the one drawn by her.

I arrived at the house a little after one o'clock and was at once taken into the dining-room, where I found Dr. Ramsey, Mr. Robson (a brother practitioner), and a handsome young fellow, who was introduced to me as Lieutenant Maitland, the late Mr. Bramleigh's son-in-law.

The door opened, and a young lady entered. It did not require any introduction to tell me that she was the original of the portrait, still with its front turned towards the wall. Her face was very beautiful, notwithstanding its extreme paleness and the tear-swollen eyelids. She seated herself by the fire, her husband standing behind her, leaning his arm on the back of the chair.

Mrs. Churton had closely followed Magdalen Maitland into the room. She was dressed in deep mourning and wore a black cap, thus offering a marked contrast to Mrs. Maitland, who was wearing a gray dress rather travel-soiled. Apparently she had no time to prepare her mourning.

Dr. Ramsey politely pulled forward a chair for the housekeeper. Taking it from him with a cold "Thank you," she placed it at the end of the table, directly facing me. Very stern and forbidding she looked in her black garments—her features immovable, her hands resting on her knees.

I was about to unseal the envelope containing the will, when Lieutenant Maitland interrupted me.

"One moment, if you please," he said, placing his hand on my arm. "Before this will is read, I wish to say a few words. Mrs. Churton tells me that Mr. Bramleigh has left her everything unconditionally. I simply wish to express my firm belief that Mr. Bramleigh could only have been induced to make such a will by unfair and foul means. Although I have been the cause of an estrangement between father and daughter, I cannot think that he could so far forget his love for her as to strip her of everything. It is my intention, for her sake, to contest this will; and it is with this view that I have requested my old friend, Mr. Robson, to be present today as my legal adviser."

His frank, manly face was flushed with honest excitement as, leaning over the back of his wife's chair, he took her face between his hands and kissed it. "For your sake—not mine, dearest," I heard him whisper.

I read the will slowly and distinctly. It was very short. Save the annuity of £50 to Hannah Churton for life, everything was left to Dr. Ramsey and myself in trust for Magdalen Maitland, to be settled on her as we in our discretion should think fit.

Astonishment is a mild word to express the feelings of those present, nor will I attempt to do so. My tale lies with Hannah Churton. Starting to her feet, she pushed the chair from her, and stretching out one arm, gave utterance to a fierce torrent of invective. The veil was lifted, and the native coarseness of the woman's nature stood revealed. It was as I had feared. Unmindful of the bounty of but too generous a master, she heaped obloquy on his memory, and fearlessly asserted that she had wasted the best years of her life in his service!

Magdalen Maitland covered her ears with her hands, to shut out the hard words. Her husband led her towards the door; but Hannah Churton intercepted them. Tearing her cap from her head, she threw it on the ground before the frightened girl.

"Trample on it!" she cried, in a frenzied voice. "Your father's victim has no right to wear it!" I must admit that she looked grandly tragic as she declaimed these fierce works. I felt half sorry for the poor defeated creature.

Nine years have passed since then, and Mrs. Maitland declares that there are "silver threads among the gold." The cares of a young family have somewhat marred her good looks, but they will live again in my little god-daughter Magdalen, who promises to rival her mother in beauty.

A London policeman, aged twenty-two, lately reported seven fires within thirty hours. Such amazing activity excited suspicion that he had originated the calamities himself for the informant's reward, and this being proved to the satisfaction of a jury he has gone to penal servitude for fifteen years.

Sandwich Island Swimmers.

We returned to the Sunbeam on Christmas Day, and on the following day we witnessed some extraordinary feats of swimming performed by the natives of the island. A copious stream enters the sea about a quarter of a mile west of the little town of Hilo. At a short distance from its mouth it forces its way through a chasm in the volcanic rocks, and then winds round a precipitous crag of lava, at the foot of which it forms a still pool, six fathoms in depth. We had been invited to witness two noted swimmers leap from the summit of the crag into the pool below. The whole population turned out on the occasion, and seated themselves on the slopes above the river, awaiting the arrival of the two athletes. Meanwhile a number of the more youthful inhabitants of Hilo, of both sexes, entertained us with a display of the art of swimming and diving. One active girl leaped repeatedly from a height of twenty feet into the river. In the intervals between their performances these amphibious people climbed up the rocks that overhung the river, where they gathered themselves into the most picturesque groups of bronze-colored yet shapely humanity. There were few garments to mar the symmetry of their forms, but there was not the slightest taint of immodesty in the scene. A sculptor, looking on with the cultivated eye of a trained artist, would have revelled in the graceful movements of the forms displayed before him; while a painter would have appreciated not less the harmonious colors of the picture in which the olive flesh-tints formed such an admirable contrast to the dark lava rocks on which the swimmers reclined. Many a laborious student of the Academy has racked his brain in the vain effort to produce a composition on canvas or marble, with not one-half the beauty or the truth to nature of these fortuitous assemblages of graceful figures.

An hour had passed away not unpleasantly when the heroes of the day arrived. They were to leap in the pool beneath from the summit of a precipice ninety feet in height. Thirty feet below the edge a craig juts out fifteen feet from the face of the rock. It was necessary for the swimmers to clear this projection. We were seated on the ledge of rock near the edge of the water, to witness the feat they were about to perform. It was a point of view whence the swimmers were seen with striking effect, as they first appeared on the craig above us, and paused for a moment on its brink before taking their tremendous leap in the gulf beneath.

As we looked up to the summit of the precipice, the powerful forms of these olive-colored men—notable specimens of the native races of the Pacific—stood out in magnificent relief against the dark-blue sky. Each wore a green wreath fastened on his brow—a trifling touch, which enhanced the resembance to those admirable products of ancient art, the bronze figures of the flying Mercury in the museum at Naples. As the first swimmer gathered himself together for the leap, there was a breathless silence in the crowd, a momentary glance of hesitation in the hero of Hilo, succeeded by that set look which a man wears who has determined to do a chivalrous deed or perish in the attempt. Then came a superb elastic bound, an agile readjustment of the balance, and the athletic figure darted downwards like an arrow through the air, with a tremendous splash disappeared feet downwards below the glassy surface, and, after a prolonged immersion, rose again to the surface scatheless, amid the enthusiastic ovations of the crowd.

The great feat was followed by a performance which, in a less amphibious country, would have excited wonder. It was a leap down a waterfall having a fall of fifteen feet. Not only did the two champions take the leap, but even the nymphs of Hilo, in numbers, followed them. After disappearing for a few moments in the seething water at the foot of the cascade, they reappeared, laughing and talking, evidently regarding the feat as an ordinary bathing incident.—*Nineteenth Century.*

A Woman's Torpedo.

Mrs. Van Cort is vigorously pressing her claim to priority of invention of material portions on features of the torpedo machinery in use on board Admiral Porter's torpedo vessel, the Alarm, and which it is proposed to bring into general use of the government. Mrs. Van Cort appeared before a board of officers and experts at the navy yard with three attorneys, and pushed her suit with a great degree of force.—*Washington Post.*

Before a man deliberately makes up his mind tew be a raskal he shood examine hisself clusely tew assertane ef he aint better constitooted fur a phool.—*Josh Billings.*

Items of Interest.

It is said that eating onions will prevent the lips from chapping. It will certainly keep the chaps from girls' lips.

Servant looks into the breakfast-room and says: "Please, ma'am, there's a beggar woman in the kitchen wants something to eat." "Give her the water in which the eggs were boiled this morning, Bridget, it's quite nutritious."

The will of Barbara Allen, a New York beggar, who died suddenly recently, has been probated. She leaves bequests to friends amounting to $3,000, and the residue of her fortune, estimated at $12,000, she leaves to the S ciety for the Support of Destitute Seamen.

There are but fifteen coal-producing countries in the world, and the entire annual product is about 240,000,000 tons. Of this 135,000,000 tons, or over one half, is from the English mines, and about 50,000,000 from American mines. In 1801 the production of English coal was but 11,000,000 tons.

Demosthenes poisoned himself, but no one knows how. Terrible as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that if a complete list were drawn up of men of mark in the world's history, reckoning all nations and all times, it would appear that at least a quarter of them died not like other men, and that very nearly another quarter committed suicide.

T. O. Carter and Daniel Cleaves, of Antioch, Cal., while riding horseback in the Diablo Hills, near Round Valley, saw a monster snake in a semi-dormant state a few feet ahead. Carter, who had a shotgun, emptied both barrels at the head of the serpent. When assured that life was extinct, Cleaves measured the snake, and found its length to be thirty-one feet. The body was from three to four inches in diameter. The snake was of a greenish color, and had apparently just shed his winter coat.

Poetry, some practical people think, hath no value. Not so, even in this practical age. The price paid by the Nineteenth Century to Tennyson recently for his ballad of the Revenge was pretty high, yet it is not the highest paid in our time to a poet. The ballad contains 120 lines, and the author received for it 300 guineas, or $12.50 a line. Mr. Robert Bonner paid Longfellow for the "Hanging of the Crane" $4,000. That poem contains 200 lines, at which rate the poet received $20 a line. For "Tithonus," published in an early number of the *Cornhill Magazine*, Tennyson received 100 guineas, or $7.25 a line, and Tom Moore much exulted in receiving a guinea a line.

Marriage Laws—Important Decision.

The United States Supreme Court has rendered a decision declaring that a marriage at common law is good no matter what a state statute provides. The following is the decision:

No. 260—*Meister vs. Moore et al.*—Error to the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.—In this case it is held that the statutes of any state providing for the presence of a minister or magistrate at the solemnization of marriage do not render a marriage at common law invalid for non-conformity. Such statutes regulate the mode of entering into the marriage contract, it is said, but they do not confer the right, and hence they are not within the principle that where a statute creates a right and provides a remedy for its enforcement, the remedy is exclusive. A statute may take away a common law right, but the presumption is against the intention to do so, unless it is clearly expressed. Whatever directions statutes may give respecting its formation or solemnization, the courts have usually held a marriage good at common law to be good notwithstanding such statutes, unless they contain express words of nullity. In this case the marriage was with an Indian girl by declaration and cohabitation. Reversed. Mr. Justice Strong delivered the opinion.

Bible Terms.

Readers of the Bible will be interested in the following explanation of expressions frequently met with in the Scriptures. They are believed to be entirely correct: A day's journey was thirty-three and one-fifth miles. A Sabbath day's journey was about one English mile. Ezekiel's reed was eleven feet, nearly. A cubit is twenty-two inches, nearly. A finger's breadth is equal to one inch. A sheke of silver was about fifty cents. A shekel of gold was $8.09. A talent of silver was $1,518.32. A talent of gold was $23,309. A piece of silver, or penny, was thirteen cents. A mite was one and one-half cents. A homer contained seventy-six gallons and five pints. An ephah, or bath, contained seven gallons and four pints. A hin was one gallon and two pints. A firkin was seven pints. An omer was six pints. A cab was three pints. A log was one-half pint.

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