

THE LOST WILL.

They had grown old together, this brother and sister. I say had advisedly, for now they are dead and only their memory lives. Yes, they had grown old more from the hardness of their lot than from anything else; wealth, honor, position might have been theirs, but with them duty came first, and right nobly did they do it. Neither of them had married, they had just lived from day to day that quiet life that true contentment brings. Such then my readers were they at this your first glance of them, Henry Seldome and his sister Mary.

"Of all the letters we have ever received, this is the most unexpected and the most strange, Harry. Who would have thought that the very fortune we refused, years ago, should now be left us, and under such strange conditions, too! I think we cannot hesitate in our decision for one moment. Humanity itself would demand our taking this child, fortune or misfortune!"

"Your thoughts are mine. Mary. You are always right.

And thus was I taken into the home of these two dear old people; an orphan, still young in years, and I learned to love them better than many a father and mother are loved.

So the days passed by, making weeks and months and years, until I had become a man, and these dear, kind friends had nigh lived their allotted span. Many times had they told me my future was provided for, that the estate and all they possessed was willed to me, but I thought not much of that then.

I well remember—nay, shall I ever forget—the terrible suddenness of their taking off. It was after a mild yet trying winter, in a spring time which seemed to have changed places with the season just gone.

Let me not linger on this part of my tale; it seems to me that these times that occur to all of us, are best enshrined in our hearts. I will therefore proceed to relate what may be of more interest to any who may peruse these lines.

After all was over and when the time to read the will had come, what was the surprise of everybody to find that will missing. Everything went to a distant relative of Henry Seldome, a man whom I had not even seen. What legal right had I to the property? It had been left to Henry Seldome by a friend of father's, who had tacked me on as a condition, wishing to provide me with a home.

Thus at the age of twenty-one was I thrown a second time on the mercies of this world. Years afterwards, when by hard fighting I had won my way to a position and a comfortable income, I happened to drop into Christie's auction rooms, where I found them bidding on a writing table, old fashioned, yet strangely familiar to me; there was something about that table that recalled bygone years, and on that account I bought it. Shall I tell you more? cannot you guess the rest? That little table had belonged to Henry Seldome—he used to write at it, and I began to do the same. One day I accidentally upset it, and the fall somehow released some secret spring and opened an unsuspected drawer, and in that drawer among other things I found that lost will. How strangely some things happen; that same day's mail brought me the news of decease without is-

sue of the man who for all these years of my toiling had held my old home twenty years—just twenty years after Seldome's death did I succeed to this property, a better, a wiser, a more contented man, thanking God for the years of hardship that had shown me how to be a man, the years that had taught me sympathy for those in need.

REGINALD RIVERS.

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MY WORST ENEMY.

Most people have enemies, and I am not an exception to this rule by any means. I have many enemies, I know, and a few friends, but there is one enemy I hate and yet love, I despise and yet serve; nay more, an enemy whom it seems I worship; one who ousts even God Almighty, or, to speak more correctly and a little more reverently, whom I allow to take the place of God to me. Who is this enemy? Need you ask? He is your enemy and mine; the enemy of mankind.

My brothers! I am my worst enemy, and you, you are your worst enemy. I am a God to myself and you are the same to yourself. The god of this world is "self." Others have told you the same thing time and time again. They have told you this far better than I ever can.

Such assertions seem sweeping, cruel, untrue. Yet stop and consider, have patience, think! think long and deeply, cultivate that perhaps dormant quality in your nature, learn to know yourself as you are and not as you would have others fancy you are.

Watch this enemy, ask the reason, the motive of his every action, his every word. Forever is he saying: "All glory be to me! See how good I am! how brave I am! how rich I am! how generous I am. What is the wished-for outcome of each and every deed but the advancement of himself, the uplifting of himself for others to fall down to worship.

Many years ago one who was counted clever, good and true; whilst speaking of mankind, compared him to the seed sown in the ground, which, as you so well know, must die to live and grow. Well and truly did he speak. Let me repeat, perhaps not in his very words, still somewhat to the same purpose: Is God to live for you and me, then self must die. We must all die some day, true, but to live as he has meant us to live, means to die many days and every day. Were this not so, then why did God come to earth, or when he came, why was his life a living death?

And man lives on and angels weep! Oh man, perverse and foolish, reckless, selfish, base—toiling, longing for and wining but, to lose and leave behind, on this side death's portals, all of this world thou hast won! Were God but such an one as you and I, how he must laugh us to very scorn. But he is our Father still. He just lives on and waits, seeing the end from the beginning and rejoicing in the time to come, when all things are accomplished, when the battle is o'er and the victory won. My brothers, you profess to love the beautiful, you profess to be trying to better mankind, but are you doing so? Nay are you not rather blindly sacrificing God's future for the attainment of that which should you attain it you will find will crumble in your