

CURIOSITIES AND LAW OF WILLS.

and begins to give something to the little ones, or to provide against the time when Polly, too, will shuffle off this mortal coil, the every-man-his-own-lawyer amateur begins to stumble and fall, even the professional reader of Swinburne occasionally becomes involved, and if, perchance, he is arranging his own affairs is very apt to provide business for his own successors at the Bar. For proof of this last statement we need only refer to the note to Hayes and Jarman's Concise Forms of Wills, where a catalogue containing the names of no less than fifteen legal luminaries is given, all of whom blundered over their own wills. On that black list we find such names as Mr. Sergeant Hill, Sir Samuel Romilly, Chief Justice Holt, Chief Justice Eyre, Sergeant Maynard, Baron Wood, Mr. Justice Vaughan, Vesey, Jr., the reporter, Preston, the conveyancer, and Lord Westbury. A Canadian list of similar defaulters might be begun, (32 Vict. (O.) cap. 74.)

The object of the little book under notice is not merely to entertain, but by reference to apt and striking cases to illustrate and expound the principles and rules of law relating to wills, and provide a systematic, clear and concise summary for the student and the practitioner, and an interesting volume for that fastidious individual—the general reader. It seeks not to supplant Jarman or Hawkins, Theobald, Redfield or Walkem, but to afford a manual which may serve as a refresher to minds weary of heavy reading, and give non-clerics a glimpse into the bewildering mazes in which last wills and testaments are involved and of the shadows that seem ever to group around them. Well and successfully has the author accomplished his task, and a great boon has he conferred upon his long suffering and heavily-laden-with-cumbrous-law-books confreres. His style is attractive and clear. The publisher, too, has well done his task, for it is a dainty little book, more like a

volume of poetry than of law, printed—as it is—on tinted paper and tastily bound in muslin.

The making of a will is one of the most solemn acts of a man's life—hence the insertion of so many good words and pious ejaculations. Yet, solemn as the occasion is, many take advantage of it to freely speak their minds, to vent their spleen on ungrateful friends, to deride an unfeeling world, to give a last utterance to notions, eccentricities and prejudices. 'Tis well nigh impossible to predicate what may not be found in last wills and testaments. Some testators who, while able to retain their wealth, would not give even a cup of cold water to a beggar, leave enormous sums (which they know would be assuredly cremated if taken with them into another world) to endow a college, found a hospital, build a church; others leave their nearest and dearest to starve, while they bequeath millions for the benefit of far distant savages. Some wills are remarkable for their conciseness and perspicuity; others for their twisting and contortions; some for their great piety and contempt of things mundane; others again for their acidity, cynicism, shrewdness or humor. One man provides for a church, another for his dog; while a lady pensions off her dear and amusing Jacko, her faithful Shock, and her well-beloved Tib—monkey, dog, and cat, respectively, (p. 78). An Oxford professor left money to his executors to have his corpse skinned, the skin tanned, and then on it to have printed the Iliad and the Odyssey of the immortal Homer: Jeremy Bentham gave his body to the surgeons for dissection; while a third genius directed that his executors should "cause some parts of his bowels to be converted into fiddle strings, that others should be sublimed into smelling salts, and that the remainder of his body should be vitrified into lenses for optical purposes." *Morgan v.*