

JUDGES' WILLS.—It is related of Serjeant Maynard, who flourished as a "black-letter lawyer" in the days of William III., that he deliberately worded his will in ambiguous terms, so that several legal questions which had vexed him in his lifetime might be settled in court after he was dead. It is abundantly clear that this disinterested notion was not entertained by Sir James Stephen in the disposition of his wealth. "This is my last will. I give all my property to my wife, whom I appoint sole executrix." No testamentary disposition could be much simpler. The will is the shortest a judge has ever been known to make. The occupant of the Bench who most closely approached Sir James Stephen in his testamentary conciseness was Lord Mansfield, who wrote his will on half a sheet of note paper. This economy of labour and space was all the more remarkable because the testator disposed of property of the value of half a million pounds. Having provided for a few specific legacies to friends, he gave the residue of his possessions to his nephew in these unusual terms: "Those who are dearest and nearest to me best know how to manage and improve, and ultimately, in their turn, to divide and subdivide the good things of this world, which I commit to their care, according to events and contingencies which it is impossible for me to foresee or trace through all the mazy labyrinths of time and chance."

Judges rarely draw their own wills. They know too well the truth of Lord St. Leonards' words: "It is quite shocking to reflect upon the litigation which has been occasioned by men making their own wills." It is a remarkable fact that the very man who wrote these words committed the error he condemned. Lord St. Leonards is the only Lord Chancellor whose will has been the immediate subject of litigation. It was not, however, on account of the obscurity of its phraseology, but because of its disappearance, that the will acquired the notoriety it possesses. It was understood that the distinguished jurist, who died in 1875, at the advanced age of ninety-four, had spent not a small part of his latter years in making an equitable disposition of his wealth, and it was known that he kept the precious document in a box. At his death the carefully-prepared will was missing, and the most diligent search failed to discover it. His daughter, who had often perused it in his presence, was fully acquainted with its provisions, and Sir James Hannen, with the subsequent