

WILLS OF RICH MEN.

HOW SEVERAL WEALTHY MEN DISPOSED OF THEIR ESTATES.

The Astor and the Vanderbilt Riches Went to the Oldest Son—The Late A. T. Stewart Gave His Property to His Wife—His Other Bequests.

The small bequests by Jay Gould to his brother and sister call attention anew to the fact that the financial results of the creation of a fortune in a family are apt to be small to the collateral branches, and heavy to the direct line of issue.

The wills of the heads of the Astor family do not point a moral in this respect, because the family has followed a rule designed for the perpetuation of a great family estate in two parcels. Side bequests, if considerable, would have prevented the execution of this plan. The distribution of the late Samuel J. Tilden's fortune is not illustrative of the common custom, because he was a bachelor.

A. T. Stewart, the great merchant prince, made a simple will. In the second paragraph of the document opened after his death in 1876 he wrote simply, "All my property and estate of every kind and description and wherever situated I give, devise and bequeath to my dear wife, Cornelia M. Stewart, her heirs and assigns forever." In the next paragraph he appointed Henry Hilton to manage, close and wind up his partnership business and affairs. He made Judge Hilton, the widow and William Libbey his executors, and he bequeathed to Mr. Hilton the sum of \$1,000,000 "as a mark of regard."

In a codicil to the will he bequeathed various sums of from \$20,000 to \$500 to as many faithful employees in his business, and other sums of \$2,500 to \$500 to seven household servants. To two sisters named Marron, at whose father's house and hands he had enjoyed hospitality, he gave \$12,000 a year and a house in this city. To Henry Hilton's wife he gave \$5,000. In a second codicil he gave \$10,000 each to four persons of the name of Clinch, who were relatives of his wife, to two of whom he gave a house in town, and to Sarah Smith and her daughter he gave \$10,000 each. He willed that all persons who had remained in his employ during twenty years should have \$1,000, and all who had worked for him ten years \$500. A letter to his wife accompanied the will, and in that he said that he hoped to live to carry out his charitable schemes, but if he died before doing so he would depend on her to do so with the advice and assistance of their friend, Henry Hilton.

Mr. Stewart had no children. If he had no relatives either, his will is not a case in point. But, on the other hand, if it is true, as many claimants assert, that he had a number of cousins and other kin in Ireland, his absolute forgetfulness of them or refusal to benefit them is remarkably apposite.

Commodore Vanderbilt, who died in January, 1877, made many bequests to others than his children. To his wife he gave \$500,000 and all the contents of his house in Washington place, the use of which was hers for life. To his brother, Jacob H. Vanderbilt, he gave \$50,000. To his sister Phoebe he gave \$1,200 a year during her life. To his nieces and nephews he gave various sums, ranging from \$20,000 and \$10,000 down to \$300 and \$200 a year. But he gave one grandnephew \$25,000 and another \$20,000. His doctor got \$10,000, and a faithful old clerk got \$20,000. To an uncle he gave \$5,000, and the wife of a nephew received \$25,000.

When he came to consider his children the situation was altered. To William H., his eldest son, he handed down the bulk of his magnificent property, the value of this gift being estimated at \$90,000,000. The whole property had been considered as worth \$105,000,000, and of the \$15,000,000 that William H. did not get one-half went to William's sons, the oldest one, Cornelius, getting greatly the largest share. He seemed thus to indicate a belief that young Cornelius, who had already shown ability as a financier, would become the head of the house in the third generation.

To his own less worthy son Cornelius he gave merely the interest on \$200,000. He divided \$1,250,000 equally among five daughters, and two of these he further enriched, the one with the interest on \$400,000 and the other with the interest on \$300,000. Enriched is scarcely the term to use, for it was evident that he intended only to insure to each of them the comforts of a competency.

When it came time to open the will of William H. Vanderbilt it was found that he had given to a nephew, W. V. Kissam, \$50,000, to his uncle Jacob the dividends on 1,000 shares of New York Central; to his aunt Phoebe and to each of twelve other relatives annuities of \$1,200. The great bulk of the increased estate went to the children. There were eight of them, and each got \$5,000,000 outright, together with the interest during life on another \$5,000,000, the eighth part of a trust fund of \$40,000,000. The principal in this legacy was to go to his grandchildren when his children died. To his eldest son, Cornelius, he gave an additional \$2,000,000 outright, and to his favorite grandson, William H., the son of Cornelius, he gave \$1,000,000 outright. The youngest son, George, was to have the family mansion and works of art when his mother should die. To his own widow he left a yearly allowance of \$300,000 and the right to give away \$500,000 howsoever or to whomsoever she pleased. To each of his four daughters he gave the house in which she was living when he died. Having thus disposed of only about half of this great property, which was said to be sufficient to give four dollars to every man, woman and child in the country, Mr. Vanderbilt gave the rest to his first and second sons, Cornelius and William K., or about \$50,000,000 each.—New York Sun.

A Misunderstanding.
Young Lady—Is warm water and oatmeal good for the complexion?
Doctor—Oh, no. It should boil twenty minutes.—New York Weekly.

Decolful Appearances.

I was chatting with a Montague street real estate man in his office a few days ago, when a woman entered who attracted the attention of both of us. She was middle aged, very plain in face and figure and wore a black dress which was patched and ripped in many places. Her entire appearance denoted poverty and misery and indicated that she had a great struggle to keep the wolf from entering at her door. Instinctively feeling that the woman was a beggar, we were about to offer her some money, when she astonished us a little by saying she had some private business with the real estate man.

They went into his inner office and were engaged for about fifteen minutes in earnest conversation. After she had gone and my friend had ceased to gaze in open mouthed amazement at her vanishing figure, he enlightened me as to her object in the following manner: "Well, I'll be darned! That woman wanted to buy a \$10,000 piece of property I have for sale, and she had \$3,000 in her pocket to pay down to bind the bargain. O Lord, think if I had offered her ten cents and told her to clear out!"—Brooklyn Eagle.

Hard Luck of Two Lucky Men.

Early in the present century two brothers of the peasant class were laboring in the fields when their tools struck against a metallic substance, which proved to be a massive chain many pounds in weight which they took to be of brass and carried away with them, thinking it might be useful as a plow chain. On reaching their humble cottage the weight and luster of the metal aroused their attention. A link of the chain was detached and taken to the nearest town, was tested and proved to be fine gold. The fortunes of the men were assured could they have kept their own counsel, but boasting of their prospects and spending money lavishly on the strength of them, curiosity and suspicion were aroused. Wives and children chatted about the wonderful find, and at last the officers of the crown descended upon the scene. The treasure, which proved to be worth several thousand pounds, was snatched from its finders, who, for all result of their "good fortune," were awarded a term of imprisonment at the following assizes.—All the Year Round.

Necessary Education.

While it would be pleasant to have our schools cultivate the literary element in English composition, this is not the first end to be sought. All educated men cannot hope to be poets or essayists, but no one has a right to consider himself educated till he is able to say in writing what he would say to his correspondent aloud if they were standing face to face. Slovenliness of expression not only is usually traceable to slovenliness of thought as a cause, but the habitual neglect of expression has also a tendency to increase by reflex action the habit of loose or muddy thinking. A person who lacks the power of clear thought and expression is not a person to whose keeping it is safe to confide public interests, and in our country, where every citizen is liable to be called upon to bear some of the burdens of state, it is especially necessary that the study of written as well as spoken English be given the place to which its importance plainly entitles it in every American school course.—Good Government.

Too Horrible.

There was to be a grand display of rich toilets at the forthcoming ball in a provincial town. The wife of a wealthy banker wanted to outshine all the other ladies who had invitations. She accordingly ordered a dress from Paris that should exceed by its splendor the wildest expectations. Exulting in the proud conviction of her surpassing magnificence she entered the ballroom. Here her experienced eye took stock of the ladies present—a scream of horror—and she lay fainting in her husband's arms, to the no small consternation of the company, which, however, is increased twofold when another lady in the room is discovered to be fainting. Our fair readers will agree that both sufferers deserve our deepest sympathy, for their dresses (Paris make both) were precisely similar in style and material.—Fliegende Blätter.

An Efficient Physician.

Among the "characters" in the little Hoosier town which proudly owns me as a favorite son is an Irishwoman by the name of Lynch. Not long ago Mrs. Lynch made a visit to the town cemetery. The sexton welcomed the old lady with a mournful smile and said sympathetically:

"You have quite a number of little graves to look after, Mrs. Lynch?"

"Yes, God be praised, I have. I have nine children buried here."

"What physician do you employ, Mrs. Lynch?"

"Docter Brown, hivin bless him! He's the only docter in town who understood the constitution of me childer."—Washington Post.

Men's High Priced Shirts.

There was a time when all linen shirts were generally worn by the rich men of the town, and there are a number of the old guard and many of the younger men of the town that pay so much as twelve dollars each or \$14 per dozen for their fine white all linen shirts. These are with and without collars and cuffs. The laundrymen do not get a chance at them. Some old fashioned retainer handles them tenderly and gets the homelike, dull finish on the starched shirt front.—Clothier and Furnisher.

Making Apple Pies.

"Dear me suz," said Mrs. Smith, wearily. "I might about as well quit tryin to cook. I hain't nothin to make pies from exceptin rotten apples an there ain't a bit o' sugar in the house. Here, Robbie, you run over to Mrs. Green and ask her to let me have a cup o' sugar till tomorrow."

"What's your mother doin this mornin, Robbie?" asked Mrs. Green as she filled the cup.

"She's makin rotten apple pies."—Exchange.

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Puzzled Englishmen.

"At a private dinner in England I told the very best story I could think of," says Chauncey M. Depew. "It was greeted with a little laughter. Next day I met my host on the Strand. He advanced to me smiling, began to laugh as he grasped my hand and said: 'Do you know, Depew, that was a capital thing you got off last night—capital! And do you know I have just this minute been thinking what a capital thing it was? The point of the joke has just come to me.'"

"I said, 'Why, it must have traveled to you on a freight train.'"

"My dear Mr. Depew," said the Englishman, "I assure you I have not seen any freight train. I assure you I haven't 'pon honor.'"

Mr. Depew told this story to an Englishman who had been in America for a long time. One of the officers of the Central road was with him in Mr. Depew's office when the story was told. The Englishman gave a courteous laugh, a forced and feeble "ha, ha!" When he turned into Duval's office and the door of the president's room had been shut he remarked anxiously, "I say, what the blazes did Depew mean by that freight train?"—New York World.

Caught by a Singular Error.

"Some queer accidents happen in this world," said A. G. Smoto, a noted thief taker, who was talking shop in the Laclede corridors. "In 1876 a particularly atrocious crime was committed in Cleveland. An old lady was robbed and murdered. The perpetrator was arrested and jailed, but succeeded in effecting his escape. Nothing was heard from him for fifteen years, though the world was scoured for him time and again. About a year ago I concluded to change my residence and put an advertisement in a morning paper of Cleveland for a furnished room. Among the replies was a letter from the missing murderer, written to an old friend in Cleveland. The Cleveland man had a room he desired to rent and answered my advertisement, but by mistake inclosed the letter he had received from the fugitive instead of the one intended for me. I learned from the letter that the man I wanted was night watchman in a railway roundhouse in New Mexico, and a week later I had him in irons en route to Cleveland, where he was tried and sent up for life."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Strange Superstition.

In regard to the habit of partridges flying into civilization and a popular superstition regarding them an Augusta man says: "One flew on our premises and was captured. Then came up the question whether we should kill the bird or allow it to live. At that time there was a general superstition that if a partridge came to a house where a sick person lay and the bird was killed and the sick person ate the broth, it would effect a cure. There was a sick girl at our house and the doctor had given up her case as hopeless."

"Some of the family said kill the partridge and give the sick girl the broth. But the sick girl and others were for permitting the partridge to live. We were equally divided and agreed to let one of the neighbors whom we saw coming to the house decide whether the partridge should be killed or not. He said kill it, and we did, and the sick girl ate the broth and got well."—Philadelphia Times.

Death Valley.

The geological formation of Death valley, Inyo county, Cal., is paralleled by but one other spot on the globe—the Dead sea region of the Holy Land. The valley is about eight miles broad and thirty-five in length, and is said by geologists to be a striking illustration of the condition of the whole world in its early epochs. It lies far below the level of the Pacific, in some places as much as 160 feet, and has the appearance of being under the ban of some terrible curse. Thunderstorms pound around its borders, but no cloud ever intercepts the rays of the scorching sun that continually beat down upon Death valley sands until they are hotter than those of "burning Sahara." For week in and week out the thermometer stands above 100 degs. night and day, often touching the 125 mark in the afternoon. Moisture of all kinds is unknown. Dead animals dry up and mummify in the sand.—St. Louis Republic.

A Bit of Antique Ware.

"We are all laughing at home over my latest 'prize,'" says a woman who is an ardent collector of antiques. "It is a veritable millennium plate, considerably over 100 years old, which I secured in a recent scouring of the old places in the Connecticut valley. It is of delft or mulberry hue, with the 'eye of God' staring from the upper rim. Beneath the bowl is shown the lamb lying down, and the lion on his hind feet with a sort of baby's nightgown on him being led by a small child. The expression of the lion's face is the irresistibly funny part. That kind of beasts mimes along with the smirk of a dancing master adapted to a lion's scale of mouth. We have indeed advanced in ceramic art since that artist's conception of the millennium."—New York Times.

A Perpetual Sacred Fire.

In the peninsula of Abcheron, formerly belonging to Persia, but now a part of Russia, there is a perpetual or rather what the natives call an eternal sacred fire, which is known to have been burning continually for more than 2,000 years. It rises from an irregular orifice of about twelve feet in depth and 120 feet square. The flames, which are constant, rise to a height of from six to eight feet, unaccompanied by smoke or disagreeable smell, waving back and forth with the wind like a field of golden grain.—Philadelphia Press.

Papa's Boy Has Grown Up.

An advertisement appears in a western paper which reads thus: "If George William Brown, who deserted his poor wife and babe twenty-five years ago, will return, the aforesaid babe will knock the stuffing out of him."—Charles News and Courier.