THE PENNYCOMEQUICKS

—Written for THE DISPATCH by—

S. BARING GOULD,

Author of "MEHALAH," "COURT ROYAL," "JOHN HERRING," "THE GAVEROCKS," ETC

CHAPTER XIII.—WHAT NEXT?

What was to be done?

Mrs. Sidebottom was the first to see what was to be done.

"I shall take out an administration at once," she said.

Philip said nothing. Of course she must do what she said. She was the proper person to take out an administration as nearest of kin. But he was not thinking of her and what she proposed to do. He was standing still with the will in his hand. Salome had not reclaimed it, as it was worthless. He proceeded to fold it and replace it in the cover. Philip was not easy in his mind. He had spoken in a rude manner to the girl, throwing a gross charge against her, and had grievously hurt her.

Was the charge just? Was it possible to explain the peculiar circumstances in any other way than that which had occurred to him?

Suddenly looking up at Mrs. Sidebottom and then at the Captain, he looked down again, and this time with great attention at the envelope.

"The envelope has been tampered with," he said.

"In what way?" asked Mrs. Sidebottom.

"It has been opened by means of a heated penknife. Here are the marks of the smoke that have been rubbed off the blade upon the paper; and here are cuts made by the knife in the paper. The envelope, after having been sealed, was opened carefully, even cunningly."

"Why carefully or cunningly I cannot tell, but of course opened it has been," said Mrs. Sidebottom. "You do not suppose Jeremiah could destroy his signature without opening the envelope?"

"Certainly not. But I should not have supposed he would take pains to do it in such a manner. He had plenty of long envelopes at hand. Then again, to refasten it a different sealing wax was employed to what had been used before, a slight difference in tint of scarlet, and one impression of the stamp can be traced over the other, the earlier not being wholly obliterated. Excuse me one moment, Aunt Louisa, I should like to have a look at my uncle's study."

"Philip—the room is in disorder!" said Mrs. Sidebottom, starting to her feet and flushing, "I cannot really; upon my word I will not permit——"

But he had left the room before she could prevent him. She moved to follow him, but reconsidered herself and turned back.

"Fiddlesticks!" she said, angrily; "nothing but fiddlesticks."

"I am the sufferer," grumbled Lambert; "I shall be left in the cold. You and Philip take everything."

"What I have serves to make you comfortable," retorted the mother.

"That may be," answered Lambert, "but it is one thing to have money of one's own, and another thing to have to come to one's mammy for every penny, and to find that the mammy rarely has any pennies in her purse."

"Hitherto I have been pinched in circumstances. It will be different now, Lamb, you will see." After a pause, she added, "Unless that meddlesome, vexatious prig, Philip, prove an obstruction."

Presently Philip returned.

"It is as I thought," said he. "The sealing-wax employed the second time is that now in the pen tray on my uncle's desk; not only so, but his knife is there also, bearing on it the traces of exposure to fire. It was probably thrust into the flame of the gas to heat it so as to enable it to dissolve the wax of the seal."

"No doubt about it," said Mrs. Sidebottom; "and this proves that Jeremiah canceled his will shortly before his death. I should not be surprised if he did it the same night that he died, immediately before giving it to Salome."

"The case is a most extraordinary one," said Philip.

"Not at all, it is clear as day."

Philip did not care to debate the matter with his aunt, so he left the room, and taking his hat, entered the garden.

The garden, as already said, descended from the house to the valley. It consisted of two slopes, divided by a wall: the upper slope ended in a terrace walk with the coping of the wall serving as a parapet to it. Access to the lower garden wall was obtained by a flight of steps at each end. The upper of the two divisions devoted to flowers, the lower to vegetables, and fruit trees were trained against the wall that buttressed up the terrace.

Philip paced the upper terrace for several minutes, and was unable to come to a decision; he could not see that the matter was as simple as his aunt pretended. For, as he argued, why should his uncle have taken pains to preserve the original envelope when there was no apparent necessity for so doing. If any one else had opened the envelope then he could understand the care taken to preserve it with its superscription, "The Last Will and Testament of Jeremiah Pennycomequick," and to conceal the fact that it had been adroitly unclosed.

But who would have been likely to commit such an act? Certainly not Salome, in whose keeping, under lock and key, the will had been. It was hardly possible that it had been tampered with since it had been given to her. Was it possible that it had been canceled before, unknown to Jeremiah?

Philip saw that he had not the data, or had not data sufficient, on which to come to a decision. He must have another interview with Salome. He therefore returned to the house, and meeting a servant in the hall asked her to request Miss Cusworth to speak with him a few minutes in the garden.

Without delay Salome came. She had not put on a bonnet, but had thrown a gray shawl over her head, and pinned it under her chin like a mill girl. Some of her burnished hair, like autumn oak leaves flaming in the evening sun, shone out from under the shawl, and the grey wool contrasted pleasantly with the delicately beautiful complexion, now no longer white, but with flying tinges of color in it, like a sunset sky in which are drifts of vapor, high aloft, undefined, yet sensitive to the rays of the declining orb. She was deeply wounded, and the changes in her color followed the fluctuations of resentment, humiliation, anger and pain in her heart.

She had been crying—Philip saw that—for though she had wiped her eyes, the tears were still near the surface, and with difficulty restrained from overflowing.

"Miss Cusworth," said Philip with stiffness, but an attempt at graciousness, "I regret that I addressed you a few moments ago without that charity which I was bound to entertain. I was surprised, indignant, and rushed to a conclusion which may prove to have been formed too precipitately. I shall be greatly—very greatly obliged, if you will accept my apology, and allow me to ask you a series of questions on the subject of the will, to enable me to form a matured opinion as to the manner in which it was canceled, and by whom it was done, two points that appear to me at this moment by no means as clear as they did a quarter of an hour ago, because a close examination of the envelope has shown me that it was opened recently, and in a manner that seems to me suspicious."

"I will answer any questions you put—as far as it is in my ability to answer them."

"And—we shall be more at our ease, more in private, if we take the lower walk at the foot of the wall," said Philip, "as from the windows everyone can see us here and comment on our interview. May I ask you to do me the further favor of walking with me below the steps?"

"Certainly," answered Salome, and began to descend.

Philip would have been devoid of the elementary faculties by which beauty is perceived and admired, if he had not been struck at this time by the young and graceful figure that preceded him, and by the perfect sweetness of the innocent, sad face that turned at the bottom and looked back at him. She did not reproach him with her eyes, and yet, when he caught them, his own eyes fell, and he became uncomfortable and conscious of having wronged her. She puzzled him. Was she tricky, double, self-seeking? or was she what she looked—sincere and straightforward?

A consciousness stole over Philip that had he lived in the same house with her for 16 or 17 years, as had Uncle Jeremiah, and had come to make his will, and then without her uttering a word of persuasion, he would be leaving her everything he had—just as Jeremiah had at one time done; only he would never have worded his will in such a clumsy, absurd and unusual fashion. As soon as he reached the foot of the steps he took his place at her side. Here was a broad walk parallel to that above, facing the sun, sheltered, with the trained trees against the wall on one side and a box-edging on the other, with, in summer, a border of herbaceous flowers fringing the beds of cabbage, onions, brussels sprouts and carrots.

"I am at your service," said Salome.

"Then I will begin my catechism at once," said Philip. "Please to give me an exact account of what passed in your last interview with Mr. Pennycomequick."

"Do you mean actually the last—as he went out for his walk by the canal, or when he gave me the will to keep?"

"I mean the latter."

"He had been out to dinner. I sat up awaiting for him, thinking he might want something before he went to bed. It was most unusual for him to accept invitations to dine out. When he came back——"

"He had been dining with Mrs. Sidebottom, I think?"

"Yes; when he came back it was early—that is to say, earlier than I expected. But he was out of spirits, and told me he left as soon as he could get away for that reason."

"Had anything occurred to disturb him?"

"Not that I know. But he certainly was in a more desponding mood than I had seen him in at any time previously."

"Did he give any reason for it?"

Salome hesitated.

"What reason did he give for his depressed spirits?"

"He did not exactly give a reason for it, but he was a little mistrustful—perhaps of the world in general."

"And of anyone in particular?"

Salome colored; her hand caught her shawl below her chin and worked nervously with it.

"I had rather you did not force me to answer that question," she said, timidly.

"Very well," said Philip, "only let me observe that this is not answering me with the fullness that was promised."

"I think he was unjust—and I had rather that little ebullition of injustice was forgotten."

"Go on," said Philip. "Did he give you the will, then?—and was it in any way in connection with the mistrust he expressed?"

"I cannot say that. He started up, said he would confide to me a most solemn trust, that concerned me nearly, and went out of the room——"

"Whither did he go?"

"To the study, I fancy; and in a moment returned——"

"Excuse me. In a moment?"

"Yes, almost directly, returned with a paper."

"It was in the envelope?"

"Oh, yes, just as I gave it you."

"You did not think he would have had time to open the envelope, tear off his signature and re-seal the cover before coming back to the room where you were?"

"Oh, no! He went upstairs and came down again immediately."

"Now tell me. Are you quite sure that he believed the will was intact when he gave it you?"

"I am sure of it from his manner."

"And where did he keep it before he gave it you?"

"I do not know."

"Had you any previous knowledge of the will and its contents?"

"None whatever. I have not even heard my mother speak of it; and she must have known, because she witnessed it. But I am sure also she had no idea as to its contents, or she would have joined with me in entreating him not to make such an unjust disposition of his property. I am glad the will is worthless, because I never could have felt that I had a right to receive all, uncle—I mean Mr. Pennycomequick—left me in that will. I should have felt that I was robbing the relations, and I would have refused to benefit by the will."

"Who is the John Dale who signed as witness along with your mother?"

"Mr. Dale! Oh, he was a dear friend of Mr. Pennycomequick. He always spent his Christmas here, and uncle went at Whitsuntide to spend a few days with him at Bridlington. Mr. Dale is trustee to Janet. We both like him."

Salome spoke so openly, so quietly and with such self-possession, that again his suspicions began to yield to the charm of her honesty, as they had before.

"One matter further," said Philip. "After Mr. Pennycomequick had given you the will, you locked it up in—I remember you said—a workbox."

"Yes, in my workbox."

"And the workbox—was that put away anywhere?"

"Oh, no. I use it every day."

"Then—the same box is unlocked very often?"

"Yes."

"And left unlocked?"

Salome hesitated a moment, then said, "Yes—but it is in my room. No one would meddle with my things—no one has any interest in my little odds and ends. Besides, no one would be so mean."

Then after a pause, "Mr. Pennycomequick, you charged me with a piece of baseness which"—she shook her head impatiently, as if to shake off the imputation—"which it is a stain on me to think of as possible. I could not—I would die rather than do what is mean. Mean?" She turned her face suddenly round on him; it was flushed, and the eyes sparkled. "No, Mr. Pennycomequick, I could be wicked, but not mean—no, not that on any account, under whatever provocation—no, not mean!"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Cusworth, most sincerely. I committed myself to a rash charge, which I withdraw."

She paid no attention to his apology, but went on—"No, I would not have taken advantage of the will had it been in form and right for that would have been mean. Dear Mr. Pennycomequick I loved and love still from the depths of my heart, but he had his faults, and one was that he was not forgiving to his own relations—to you. And he thought harshly of his sister, Mrs. Sidebottom, and despised Captain Pennycomequick. I had no claim on him at all, and if he saw that he had done wrong, and had himself cancelled the will, no one would rejoice more than myself; for it would show me that he had returned to a more kindly view of you all."

"But how do you account for the signature being torn off?"

"I have not thought much about it since. I thought only of the hurt you had done me."

"Is it possible that he can have changed his mind, invalidated his will, and then forgotten that he had done so? No, that is impossible. The act was too recent," Philip argued aloud.

"I would not have had people think ill of dear old uncle," said Salome, pursuing her own train of thought, little concerned how the will was invalidated, concerned only with her solicitude for the memory of the deceased. "He had been unspeakably kind to my mother and my sister and me. Everyone would talk, all would say he had been unjust, supposing that will had stood. Over his grave—that was not he who was buried to-day—his grave, wherever it may be, heart-burnings would have arisen, and reproachful words would have been cast at his memory. He wrote that will in some queer mood when he was not quite himself. He never, I must say it, quite valued Mrs. Sidebottom as a sister, and he was ill-pleased when she left York and settled at Mergatroyd. The Captain, he thought, had not much brains and was imprudent about money. You he did not know, and he had a mistaken prejudice against lawyers. But there—how the will was made of no effect; whether by himself or—or, how, matters little, the deed is done, and no one can ever say that he wronged his own flesh and blood."

She had spoken quickly, eagerly, without pause, and with a heightened color.

A sudden idea came into Philip's mind with a flash.

"You—Miss Cusworth! For the sake of his memory, did you meddle with the will?"

This was a repetition of the charge. First, he charged her with coarse self-seeking, now with blind self-effacement.

"I—I—Oh! Mr. Pennycomequick, of course not. It was a trust. I could not touch it, even to save his dear name from reproach."

"Miss Cusworth," said Philip, "have you any objection to my seeing your mother?"

"Not in the least. Only remember she is frail. She suffers from her heart."

"Will you take me to her at once?"

"Certainly. Follow me."

She led Philip up the steps, through the upper garden; Philip's eyes, which had watched her descend the steps with admiration, saw her mount them with even greater. She conducted him to the room occupied by her mother as a parlor.

The old lady was in black, and was dusting. That was her daily occupation. She traveled about the house with a duster in her pocket, and when the duster became dirty she took her pocket handkerchief and dusted with that; and it was also black. She had been an energetic woman in her youth, and now that she suffered from her heart, was impatient at not being allowed to do as much as she had been wont. She had made an excellent housekeeper to Mr. Pennycomequick. When he was short of domestics she turned her hand to anything—cooked, did housework, needlework—would have cleaned the knives and boots if the boy had failed. The deficiency in servants was not an extraordinary event. In a manufacturing district few girls care to enter domestic service and submit to its restraints, when they can earn their livelihood at the mills, and have the evenings to themselves in which to meet their friends. When Mr. Pennycomequick's establishment was complete, she spent her day in making up for the deficiencies of the domestics—putting stright what they had crooked, cleaning out corners they had neglected, brushing down cobwebs they had overlooked, detecting breakages they had made, and repairing rents they had effected in the household linen. She was not a good-looking woman, but the likeness of the two girls to her was traceable; moreover, she must have had at one time auburn hair, for though her hair was much darker now, it had in it glints of red copper. Her heart complaint had given to her face a waxy, even greenish tint, and her lips were leaden.

On being introduced to her, Philip felt somewhat ashamed of not having made her acquaintance before because he had allowed himself to be influenced by Mrs. Sidebottom's prejudice. His aunt had treated the widow with studied indifference, and when noticing her, behaved toward her with superciliousness. Mrs. Cusworth had accordingly kept very much to herself in the rooms allotted to her use.

Janet was fired with indignation at the discourtesy shown to her mother; she wished to defy Mrs. Sidebottom, but her mother bade her remember that now this lady was in authority, and that she and her daughters remained in the house upon sufferance only.

Philip bowed on entering, and apologized somewhat lamely for not having made the lady's acquaintance earlier, and then, turning, saw Salome glide out of the room with her arm in that of her sister. The girl rightly understood that Philip desired to speak with Mrs. Cusworth alone. He proceeded at once to cross-question her on the subject of the will.

"You must excuse me," he said, "but I am forced to make inquiries. I presume you have been told that a very advantageous will, made in favor of your daughter, has been found, canceled, and no subsequently drawn will has been discovered. Mr. Pennycomequick gave this valueless one to Miss Cusworth to keep, and I cannot doubt he did so believing he intrusted her with one that was valid. Now, either he took this one by mistake for a subsequent will which has disappeared, or the will has been—no, I will not commit myself to the statement of the alternative. Be so good as to tell me what you recollect about the signing of the will.

"It was done just after Janet's wedding."

"Were you aware of the contents?"

"Certainly not. Mr. Pennycomequick sent for me in his study, where he was with Dr. Dale. He merely asked me to witness his signature to his will; but he entered into no particulars."

"You had no reason to believe he intended to constitute Miss Cusworth his heiress?"

"Not the least. I supposed he would leave her something as he had dealt so liberally by my other daughter at her marriage; I neither wished for nor expected more; certainly for nothing which might cause annoyance to the family."

"He never alluded to his intention?"

"Never. He was a reserved man."

"And you have no reason to suppose he made another will subsequent to that?"

"I know nothing. I was not called in to witness another."

"Thank you," said Philip rising. "The mystery is to me as dark now as before, only—and this he said to himself—"the one explanation I gave at first is, I am now convinced, certainly the wrong one."

CHAPTER XIV.—ADMINISTRATION.

Philip Pennycomequick returned to the garden. He was still greatly perplexed, but a new and disquieting suspicion had invaded his mind. He was now completely satisfied that no undue influence had been used to force the old man to make his extraordinary will. He was also tolerably certain that he handed it to Salome in good faith, believing it to be untouched. The will had been tampered with either just before or after his death. It was hardly possible that this could have been done before, when preserved, as he little doubted, in the iron chest in which Jeremiah kept all his deeds and papers of value. It was more probable that the mutilation had been effected afterward, when carelessly kept in Salome's workbox, which probably had a lock easily fitted with a key, and which was sometimes incautiously left unlocked when Salome was not in her room.

But who would be likely to do such an act, commit a felony? He dared not accuse his aunt; even in thought such an accusation was too terrible. He had no confidence in her rectitude. His mistrust of her truthfulness had been deepened by her audacious assertion that Jeremiah had worn a nightshirt she had given him, a statement which he was convinced was untrue, and one made by her to get over the difficulty about the linen of the drowned man differing from that known to have belonged to her brother.

He could not disguise from himself that, on the supposition that Mrs. Sidebottom had mutilated the will, all the difficulty in explaining the mystery disappeared. She had heard from Salome where the will was—in her desk and in her room. It was to Mrs. Sidebottom's interest to know its contents, and to invalidate it when she did know them. But Philip, though he held his aunt in low esteem, could hardly think she could be guilty of such wickedness. But how else explain the difficulty. Then, again, supposing he reached moral conviction that she had tampered with the document, what course could he pursue? He had absolutely no evidence to justify a public accusation, and without very strong and conclusive evidence he could not make such a charge—a charge of felony against his own aunt.

When he considered the grounds on which his suspicion rested, he found how slight they were. The facts were that Mrs. Sidebottom knew where the will was, that she was in the house, and had opportunities of obtaining access to the will, and that it was to her interest to destroy its force. He had no reason to think his aunt morally capable of such a crime. His belief in her veracity was shaken, but it is a long way between telling a lie and committing a crime such as that he was half-inclined to attribute to her.

With his mind still unsatisfied he went to the study, where he knew he would find her. Captain Lambert had gone out. The Captain had borne the restraint imposed on him by the death of his uncle with impatience. He had been prevented from playing his usual game of billiards. He had yawned in the morning and stoop at the window with his hands in his pockets, then had shifted his position to the fire, and stood before that with his hands behind him, and found neither position to his taste. In the afternoon he had lounged between the two houses, and had sountered in the garden and grumbled and yawned continually. In the evening, when alone after dinner, in his frogged smoking-jacket and slippers, lounging in an armchair, he read a little, and when Philip was there, talked with him. But nothing satisfied him; the *Field* he found "awfully dull!" his cousin "awfully prosy!" and he pronounced as his criticism of every novel he dipped into that it was "awful trash!"

Philip and Lambert had no interests in common, because Lambert had no interests at all. Philip was reserved, Lambert open, with the difference that exists between a purse and a glove. Philip had much in him which was not for all the world, Lambert had nothing in him whatever.

Lambert was easy-going, selfish and good-natured in what did not touch his own comfort and ease. He had little conversation, and what he had was uninteresting. We come across people continually who have to be dredged that anything may be got out of them, and when dredged, yield nothing to compensate the labor of dredging. In some rivers it is worth while to try the depths with rakes and grapples, or even by diving, for on examination they yield gold dust, diamonds and pearls. But out of others nothing is extracted save pots, weeds, the waste matter and sewage of civilization. When Lambert was dredged he gave up worthless stuff, scraps of stale news, old jokes worn to pieces, venerable conundrums that had lost their point, and familiar anecdotes retelled without salt. Undredged, he yielded nothing, except among those of his own mental caliber, and with them he talked about people he had met, houses at which he had visited, wines that he had drank, game that he had shot, the relationships of his acquaintance, about jolly fellows, nice girls, good cigars and scrumptious dinners. He was a harmless, lazy man, who would not wilfully do what was wrong, and would never exert himself to do what was right.

There are tens of thousands of these negative beings about, male and female, useful in their way, as nitrogen is of use in the atmosphere, void of quality itself, but diluting the active oxygen; as certain ingredients are serviceable as fluxes to valuable metals, but have no other known use in creation.

Lambert's mother had energy for both, and managed for herself and for him. He was well content that it should be so, and it saved him trouble. He left her to decide everything for him, as he left his clothes to be brushed and folded and put away by the servant. And as he was a man without a pursuit, he voted everything he had to do a bore, and was voted by everyone who knew him the worst of bores.

"Well, Philip," said Mrs. Sidebottom, cheerily, as her nephew entered; she was engaged in looking through a list of designs for mourning dresses. "Well, Philip, I am knocked to pieces with the strain, and am glad all is over. I hope you have had a satisfactory interview with that girl, brought her to a humble frame of mind, and induced her to confess that she and her mother concocted that abominable will?"

"On the contrary," answered Philip, gravely, "I am satisfied from what she and Mrs. Cusworth have told me that they had nothing to do with it. Not only was no undue pressure brought to bear on my uncle, but they were completely ignorant of the contents of his testament."

"Fiddle-faddle," said Mrs. Sidebottom, "I don't give them credit for being such fools. They had Jeremiah in their hands for many years. He made that will in their favor, at their suggestion; only when I came here did his conscience speak out, and then he canceled it. The case is as plain as a pikestaff."

"You wrong her—her mother," said Philip, with some heat.

"You—yourself," retorted Mrs. Sidebottom, "accused her of having employed unfair means to procure the will. I am only repeating what you said."

"I did so. I was hasty. I now regard both Mrs. and Miss Cusworth as incapable of such conduct."

"Why!—what a weather-cock you are! You men are easily talked round by women. A cow has horns, a horse has hoofs, and a dog teeth, for self-protection; but a woman has only her tongue, which she can use skilfully—far more skilfully than the brutes use their weapons. Why, Philip, there are insects that accommodate themselves in color and appearance to the ground they are on, or the tree or leaf they are destroying, so as to escape detection; and you would have this precious Salome less clever than an insect? She has assumed the color necessary for imposing on your eyes."

Philip winced. He had changed his mind twice with respect to Salome, and both times in consequence of an interview with her.

"I have a proposal to make," he said; "but before making it, I must lay the case before you plainly."

"I desire nothing better, but I wish Lamb was here also."

"I wish first to discuss it with you alone, after that we can take Lambert into conference."

"I am all attention."

"In the first place, I take it that my uncle made the will without having been subject to any direct pressure. Indirect there was, but that was also unconscious. The children had grown up in his house, he had become warmly attached to them, and when one was married he provided for her."

"Most unbecomingly and unnecessarily."

"He did as he thought fit. The money was his own—his savings; and he had a perfect right to dispose of it as he considered proper. In full possession of his faculties, more than a twelvemonth ago he made a marriage settlement of a large sum on one of the young ladies, and then, as she was provided for, he made his will, providing for the sister. Miss Salome had been as a daughter to him, he loved her not less than he did Miss Janet, and certainly had no intention that she should be left destitute when he was removed."

"I grant you all that," said Mrs. Sidebottom. "He might have left her an annuity of £50 or £100. That would have sufficed. But why leave her everything? But there—what is the good of discussing a document which is of no legal force?"

"Allow me to proceed. Whether he acted rightly or wrongly is a question I will not enter into. What he did was what he had proposed in his heart to do, to provide for Miss Salome, and to leave to Lambert and me only small annuities. He did not bequeath the factory to Lambert, whom he very well knew was not calculated to manage a business, and he did not leave it to me, because he knew nothing about my capabilities and character. I think it is by no means improbable that there is something else behind. Miss Cusworth may be engaged to a suitable person, whom Uncle Jeremiah approved as one likely to carry on the business and not throw it away. I conceive that the will may have been prompted quite as much by concern for an old-established and respected business as by regard for the young girl. He may have calculated on the marriage, but not have cared to allude to it at an early stage of the engagement. This is merely a conjecture of mine, and I have no knowledge of anything to substantiate it. You must take it for what it is worth."

"Oh, that is likely enough, but as the will is canceled, why harp upon it?"

"Such I imagine was the mind of my uncle when he framed that will. In two words, he desired that the firm should be carried on, and that his adopted daughter should be provided for."

"I allow all that."

"Now the will has been invalidated in a mysterious manner by the signature being torn away. By whom that was done is not known to us, but I do not allow it is at all conclusive that Uncle Jeremiah did it himself."

"Of course he did it. He did it because I was in Mergatroyd, and he had come to value me. Besides, Lambert had changed his name; he had ceased to be a Sidebottom and had become a Pennycomequick. Indeed he said as much to me. He was mightily pleased at the change. It was a compliment he took to heart."

Philip frowned. His aunt had recollections of things said and done that came in very conveniently to support her theories.

"My impression is," said Philip, "that the will was not torn by my uncle, but by someone else."

"And pray," said Mrs. Sidebottom, tossing her head and moving uneasily in her seat, "do you suspect anyone?"

"I accuse no one," he said dryly. "I have no right without evidence to do so."

"Good gracious me!" laughed Mrs. Sidebottom. "What an imagination you are endowed with, Philip! First it leads you to scheme out the whole story of the concoction and destruction of the will, and this you pour out on Salome Cusworth; then you withdraw the charge, and you conceive a profitable engagement between this young minx and an Admiral Crichton, who is to manage the mill and carry on the business; and now you have an idea of some outrageous fraud having been committed. Save us from such vagaries of the fancy!"

"As it was my uncle's intention that Miss Cusworth should be left comfortably off, and as—by whatever means his will has been mutilated—she is now left wholly unprovided for, which is most certainly against his wish, I propose to you that we, who become the heirs, should do something to assure to Miss Cusworth a provision at least equal in amount to that made for her sister."

"I—I do not understand."

"What I say is plain enough. We who share the property of my uncle must deduct from our shares in equal proportions such sum as will, when invested, bring in for the sole benefit of Miss Cusworth the modest sum of £150 per annum."

"A hundred and fifty fiddlesticks!" said Mrs. Sidebottom. "I'll be hanged before I agree to that!"

"To what extent, then, do you propose to meet my suggestion?"

"Not at all. I will not consent to give her a farthing."

"You decline to carry out the wishes of your brother?"

"I dispute that they were his wishes—at one time, maybe, before I arrived at Mergatroyd. After that he changed his mind altogether, and in evidence—he canceled his will."

"I am by no means prepared to allow that that was his doing."

"A hundred and fifty pounds! Why, at 4 per cent that would be nearly £4,000. I would rather throw my money into the sea, or give it to a hospital."

"I repeat. It was the purpose of the testator to provide for Miss Cusworth. He had not altered his purpose on the night that he died for he handed her the will to keep in such a manner——"

"According to her own account," interjected Mrs. Sidebottom.

"As showed that he believed the will was untouched. Either before that or after—I cannot say when or by whom—the act had been committed which destroyed the value of the will. But Uncle Jeremiah to the last intended that the young lady should be provided for."

"I will consent to nothing."

"Very well," said Philip, "as you cannot agree to my proposal, no other course is left me than to enter a caveat against your taking out an administration."

"What good will that do?"

"It will do no good to anyone—to you least of all; I shall state my grounds before the Court—that I believe the will of my uncle, which I shall present, has been fraudulently dealt with by some person or persons unknown, and I shall endeavor to get it recognized, although it lacks his signature."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Sidebottom, turning all colors of mottled soap. "Throw away your chance of getting half!"

"Yes—because I will not be unjust."

Mrs. Sidebottom was silent. She was considering. Her fidgets showed that she was alarmed.

"You will be able to effect nothing," she said. "The Court would say that Jeremiah acted improperly when he left his property away from his family, and that he did right in canceling the will."

"Anyhow, I shall contest the grant of letters of administration."

"What a chivalrous knight that girl has found in you," sneered Mrs. Sidebottom. "You had better throw yourself at her feet altogether."

Philip made no answer.

Mrs. Sidebottom fished up an antimaccassar that had been on the back of her chair, but had fallen from it, and had been worked into a rope by her movements in the chair. She pulled it out from under her, and threw it on the floor.

"I detest these things," she said. "They are sloppy and vulgar. Only third-rate people, such as Cusworths, would hang them about on sofas and armchairs."

Philip remained unmoved. He knew she was talking about antimaccassars merely to gain time.

Presently he said: "I await your answer."

Mrs. Sidebottom looked furtively at him. She was irritated at his composure.

"Very well—as you like," she said, with a toss of her head; "but I did not expect this inhuman and unreasonable conduct in you, Philip."

"I take you at your word. That is settled between us. Now let us turn to another consideration. The mill must not be stopped, the business must be carried on. I do not suppose that Lambert cares to enter into commercial life."

"Certainly not."

"Or that you particularly relish life in Mergatroyd."

"I hate the place,"

"I am quite willing to undertake the management of the factory, at first provisionally, till some arrangement has been come to between us. As soon as the administration is granted, we shall consider the division of the estate, and deduct equally from our several shares that portion which we have resolved to offer to Miss Cusworth."

"As you please," said Mrs. Sidebottom, sulkily. But you treat me abominably. However—now I suppose unopposed by you—I can ask for right to administer?"

"Yes—on the conditions to which you have agreed."

"Wait—this house is mine, I suppose. Then I will clear it of those who are odious to me."

She started from her seat and lest the room.

[*To be continued next Monday.*]

LIVE STOCK MARKETS.

Condition of the Market at the East Liberty Stock Yards.

OFFICE OF THE PITTSBURG DISPATCH, SATURDAY, March 16, 1889.

CATTLE—Receipts, 600 head: shipments, 480 head. Nothing doing; all through consignments. One car of cattle shipped to New York to-day.

HOGS—Receipts, 2,500 head: shipments, 2,600 head. Market slow; medium Philadelphias, $4 90; heavy hogs, $4 80; pigs and Yorkers, $5 00. Six cars of hogs shipped to New York to-day.

SHEEP—Receipts, 1,400 head; shipments, 1,800 head. Market slow and a shade lower than yesterday's prices.

By Telegraph.

KANSAS CITY—Cattle—Receipts, 818 head; shipments, 541 head; slow; dressed beef and shipping steers weak and 5@10c lower; best cows and heifers steady; common lower; stockers and feeding stock stronger and active; good to choice corn-fed, $3 85@4 10; common to medium, $2 70@3 60; stockers and feeding steers, $1 60@3 20; cows, $1 85@2 75. Hogs—Receipts, 2,588 head; shipments, 789 head; strong and active, 5c higher; good to choice, $4 00@4 55; common to medium, $4 20@4 40. Sheep—Receipts, 10 head; no shipments; quiet; choice to good muttons, $4 25@4 50; common to medium, $2 50@4 00.

ST. LOUIS—Cattle—Receipts, 100; shipments, 400; market steady; choice native steers, $3 80@4 40; fair to good do, $3 10@4 00; stockers and feeders, fair to good, $2 00@3 15; rangers, cornfed, $2 75@3 60; grassfed, $1 90@2 80. Hogs—Receipts, 1,400; shipments, 1,400; market unchanged; choice heavy and butchers' selections, $4 70@4 80; packing, medium to prime, $4 60@4 70; light grades, ordinary to best, $4 55@4 70. Sheep—Receipts, 100; shipments, 700; market steady; fair to choice, $3 00@4 90.

CHICAGO—Cattle—Receipts, 1,500 head: shipments, none; market quiet and steady; beeves, $4 00@4 85; steers, $3 00@3 90; stockers and feeders, $2 00@3 35; cows, bulls and mixed, $1 40@3 00. Hogs—Receipts, 10,000 head; shipments, 4,000 head; market steady; mixed, $4 55@4 75; heavy, $4 50@4 70; light, $4 60@5 00. Sheep—Receipts, 200 head; shipments, none; market slow and steady; natives, $3 00@5 00; western cornfed, $4 50@4 65; lambs, $4 50@5 50.

BUFFALO—Cattle—Receipts, 2,000 head through, 60 sale; market steady; mixed butchers, $2 75@3 25. Sheep and lambs steady; receipts, 600 head through, 1,400 sale; good sheep, $4 35@4 50; good lambs, $5 35@5 85. Hogs slow and a shade lower; receipts, 4,600 head through, 4,500 sale; all stock sold straight at $5 00@5 05.

CINCINNATI—Hogs heavy: common and light, $3 90@4 75; packing and butchers', $4 80@4 85; receipts, 1,160 head; shipments, 1,160 head.

Drygoods Market.

NEW YORK, March 16.—Trade in drygoods was restricted as usual to Saturday. Jobbers did a relatively good business, but it was generally quiet with agents. No new feature was developed in the market, though there was a continued uncertainty in some directions on account of the Fall River strike, with a strong tone to goods of print cloth grades. The market generally in firm hands continues in a good position with agents of popular goods very firm and confident.

Movements of Specie.

NEW YORK, March 16.—The exports of specie from the port of New York during the past week amounted to $2,113,230, of which $1,784,500 was in gold and $328,730 in silver. Of the total exports $1,423,500 in gold and $316,630 in silver went to Europe, and $361,000 in gold and $12,100 in silver to South America. The imports of specie for the week amounted to $165,946, of which $114,306 was gold and $51,640 silver.

Mining Stocks.

NEW YORK, March 16.—Mining quotations closed: Amador, 100; Belcher, 310; Bodie, 135; Caledonia B H, 300; Chollar, 230; Crown Point, 470; Consolidated California and Virginia, 887; Commonwealth, 500; Deadwood T, 150; Eureka Consolidated, 200; El Cristo, 120; Gould & Curry, 260; Hale & Norcross, 370; Horn Silver, 165; Iron Silver, 325; Mexican, 365; Mutual, 140; Ophir, 575; Sierra Nevada, 300; Standard, 125; Silver Cord, 105; Sullivan, 135; Union Consolidated, 360; Yellow Jacket, 385.

Metal Market.

NEW YORK—Pig iron firm. Copper nominal; March, $15 60. Lead a shade easier and fairly active; domestic, $3 72½. Tin quiet and steady; straits, $21 30.

Whisky Market.

Finished goods are in demand at $1 03.

Wool Markets.

ST. LOUIS—Wool dull and weak but unchanged.

When baby was sick, we gave her Castoria
When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria.
When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria.
When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

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DOMESTIC MARKETS.

Active Movement in Butter, Eggs and Cheese All Week

WITHOUT AN ADVANCE IN PRICES.

Wheat Turns Upward, Flour Easy, High Grade Oats Scarce.

CEREALS DRIFT TO A LOWER LEVEL

OFFICE OF THE PITTSBURG DISPATCH, SATURDAY, March 16, 1889.

Country Produce—Jobbing Prices.

For the week now closing there has been an improved tone in the lines of butter, eggs and cheese, but no change in prices. Creamery butter and eggs are, in fact, a shade lower. The stock of Ohio cheese in first hands is very light and a scarcity is not improbable in the near future. Wholesale grocers are well supplied and there is little likelihood of a shortage. The leading jobber of cheese here reports: "We have still enough New York cheese to meet all demands, but cannot promise to have enough Ohio a week or two hence if trade holds up." New cheese from the West begins to show up, but is little good so early in the season. The trade in cheese is unusually quiet for Lenten times. Ordinarily prices advance at this time, but this season has been an exception to all rules.

BUTTER—Creamery, Elgin, 30@31½c; Ohio do, 26@28c; fresh dairy packed, 20@22c; country rolls, 20@22c; Chartiers Creamery Co. butter, 26@30c.

BEANS—Choice medium, $2 00@2 10; choice peas, $2 05@2 15.

BEESWAX—23@25c ℔ lb for choice; low grade, 6@18c.

CIDER—Sand refined, $6 50@7 50; common, $3 50@4 00; crab cider, $8 00@8 50 ℔ barrel; cider vinegar, 10@12c ℔ gallon.

CHEESE—Ohio cheese, fall make, 12@12½c; New York, fall make, 12½@13c; Limburger, 11½c; domestic Sweitzer cheese, 11½@12½c.

DRIED PEAS—$1 45@1 50 ℔ bushel; split do, 2¾@3½c ℔ lb.

EGGS—14@15c ℔ dozen for strictly fresh.

FRUITS—Apples, $1 50@2 00 ℔ barrel; evaporated raspberries, 25c ℔ lb; cranberries, $8 00 ℔ barrel; $2 40@2 50 per bushel.

FEATHERS—Extra live geese, 50@60c; No. 1 do, 40@45c; mixed lots, 30@35c ℔ lb.

HOMINY—$2 65@2 75 ℔ barrel.

HONEY—New crop, 16@17c; buckwheat, 13@15c.

POTATOES—Potatoes, 35@40c ℔ bushel; $2 50@2 75 for Southern sweets; $3 25@3 50 for Jersey sweets.

POULTRY—Live chickens, 65@75c ℔ pair; dressed chickens, 13@15c ℔ pound; turkeys, 13@15c, dressed, ℔ pound; ducks, live, 80@85c ℔ pair; dressed, 13@14c ℔ pound; geese, 10@15c per pound.

SEEDS—Clover, choice, 62 lbs to bushel, $6 ℔ bushel; clover, large English, 62 lbs, $6 25; clover, Alsike, $8 50; clover, white, $9 00; timothy, choice, 45 lbs, $1 85; blue grass, extra clean, 14 lbs, $1 00; blue grass, fancy, 14 lbs, $1 20; orchard grass, 14 lbs, $2 00; red top, 14 lbs, $1 00; millet, 50 lbs, $1 25; German millet, 50 lbs, $2 00; Hungarian grass, 48 lbs, $2 00; lawn grass, mixture of fine grasses, 25c per lb.

TALLOW—Country, 4½@5c; city rendered, 5@5½c.

TROPICAL FRUITS—Lemons, fancy, $3 00@3 50 ℔ box; common lemons, $2 75 ℔ box; Messina oranges, $2 50@3 50 ℔ box; Florida oranges, $3 00@3 50 ℔ box; Valencia oranges, fancy, $6 50@7 50 ℔ case; Malaga grap