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Select Poetry.

SOMEBODY'S MOTHER.

The woman was old and ragged and gray
And bent with the chill of the winter's day:

The street was wet with a recent snow,
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.

She stood at the crossing, and waited long,
Alone, uncared for, amid the throng

Of human beings who passed her by,
Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street, with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of "school let out,"

Came the boys, like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.

Past the woman so old and gray
Hastened the children on their way,

Nor offered a helping hand to her,
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir

Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

At last came one of the merry troop—
The gayest laddie of all the group;

He paused beside her, and whispered low,
"I'll help you across, if you wish to go."

Her aged hand on his strong young arm
She placed, and so, without hurt or harm,

He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

Then back again to his friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.

"She's somebody's mother, boys, you know,
For all she's aged and poor, and slow;

And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help *my* mother, you understand,

If ever she's poor and old and gray,
When her own dear boy is far away."

And "somebody's mother" bowed low her head
In her home that night, and the prayer she said

Was, "God, be kind to the noble boy,
Who is somebody's son and pride and joy!"

Written for The Bloomfield Times.

THE MISSING WILL.

BY F. DELACY.

DURING thirty years practice at law, many curious incidents came to my knowledge, among which was the one I am about to relate. I will change the names of the persons, but in all other respects, shall record the events just as they occurred.

Among my clients was a wealthy merchant, a resident of New York, who I shall call Henry Harper. At the time my story begins his family consisted of himself, a nephew, James Harper, who he had brought up as a son, and an only daughter named Jennie. She was a girl of sweet disposition, and was a daughter any father might well be proud of. Mr. Harper had always desired his nephew to marry Jennie, as by that means he could keep his property all together, without showing preference to either.—When Jennie was nineteen and James twenty-one years of age, he told them his wish and his reason for it. This arrangement was exceedingly pleasant to James, while Jennie was decidedly opposed to it, and earnestly plead with her father, not to insist upon such a marriage, declaring that she would not consent to it.

He was, however, determined that his wish in this matter should be carried out, and would hear no reasons Jennie could offer. She knowing that any further discussion would be useless, said no more, and thus matters remained several months, Mr. Harper supposing his daughter decided not to oppose his wishes. He therefore was exceedingly surprised one day to find Jennie gone, leaving a letter explaining her absence.

It was at this time that I received a note from Mr. Harper, requesting me to call on him as soon as convenient. I accordingly went to his residence and found him greatly excited at the elopement of his daughter. After I was seated he said he had sent for me as he wished to make a will, and handing me a note requested me *first* to read *that* and see how children sometimes showed their gratitude. The note read as follows:

DEAR FATHER.—Knowing you would not consent to my marriage with the man of my choice, I have decided to marry him without your knowledge, and trust to your love for forgiveness—you would not wish, dear father, to make me miserable all my life, and such would have been the result of a marriage with cousin James. I love Charles Bradley dearly, and when you receive this, I shall be his wife. For the present we shall reside at No. 100 Madison Avenue, where I hope to receive a letter sending a father's forgiveness to his his daughter Jennie."

"And now," continued, Mr. Harper, "I have written her a note stating that as she has taken her own way she need neither look for help or forgiveness from me, and that henceforth I have no daughter, and that any letters she may send will be returned unopened. You will now if you please, Mr. Bruce, draw up a will leaving my nephew James Harper my entire property."

I endeavored to persuade him to wait, and perhaps he would after a little time feel more kindly towards his daughter. I told him that I knew Mr. Bradley to be a young man of fine ability and of good habits, and that he would undoubtedly make his daughter a kind husband. My advice had no effect except to make him angry at me, and he replied that he sent for me to draw up a will, and not for advice upon any other subject. I therefore drew up the will as directed and calling in witnesses had it properly signed, when I took my departure.

For nearly two years I heard no more of the Harper family, when one evening I was again sent for to visit Mr. Harper at his residence on Union square. This time his nephew came for me, and said that his uncle was quite poorly and would be pleased to have me call at once if possible. Not being very busy I immediately went to his house and found him much broken down and very feeble. He seemed well pleased to see me, and said:

"Had I taken your advice before, Mr. Bruce, I should not have had to send for you now." After some further conversation he said: "I have finally decided to make another will, and divide my property equally between James and Jennie. The will I formerly made I have mislaid, but this having a later date will, of course, annul that."

I was much gratified at this change of feeling, as Charles Bradley whom Jennie had married, I knew to be a worthy young man, and one in whom I felt an interest.

After completing the will, Mr. Harper requested me to place it in a secret drawer in his desk in the library. By his direction I readily found the drawer and deposited the will. I took my leave, feeling much better satisfied than upon the former occasion.

It was only two weeks afterward that I read a notice of his death. The day succeeding his funeral I called on James Harper and told him that his uncle had made a will at the time I was last sent for, which by his direction I had deposited in a secret drawer in his desk, and with his permission I would now get it, to which he readily assented. You may imagine my astonishment upon opening the envelope in which I had placed it, to find the will drawn nearly two years since—the one making James his sole heir—and no trace of the later one. I told James that his uncle had said this will was mislaid, and that the last will divided the property between him and Jennie.

He replied that perhaps his uncle had again changed his mind, and unless the other will could be found he should feel it his duty to carry out his uncle's wishes as here expreseed.

I could not dispute his right to do this and as all search failed to discover the late will, I was, with great reluctance, compelled to allow the nephew to take possession of the entire property.

After this I occasionally met James Harper, but the subject of his uncle's will was at such times not mentioned, although I often thought about it.

Nearly two years more passed, when one evening after my return home, an urgent message came for me to go to Mr. Harper's as soon as possible. The messenger said, that Mr. Harper was not likely to live long, and might die before morning, and perhaps I would be good enough to call to-night. Under these circumstances I could hardly refuse, and the remembrance of the missing will, made me the more anxious to go. I was soon at Mr. Harper's and was immediately shown up to his room. I found him very low and apparently near his end. My arrival seemed to arouse him somewhat, and he requested the physician who was present to give him some stimulant and leave us alone.

After the doctor was gone he directed me to lock the door, and draw the table close to the bed as he had a long story to tell me.

The story he told me, I will tell as nearly as possible in his own words:

"Mr. Bruce, I sent for you to write my will, and I wish to leave all my property to Mrs. Jennie Bradley — but before doing so I will confide to you a secret—you will then understand why I make the will as I do. As I am a bachelor and have no near relations, no one will have any reason to be disappointed. You already know the circumstances attending the elopement of my cousin, and the effect it had upon uncle. It was also a severe blow to me, as I loved Jennie better than anything else in the world, unless it was money. I was very angry, however, at her refusal to marry me, and glad to have uncle take the course he did. I have seen her but once since that time, and that was about two months after her marriage, when she called on me at the store and entreated me to intercede with her father in her behalf. Not that she needed any help from him, she said, but she could not bear to think her father would die and not forgive her. I told her it was no use, as her name was never mentioned in the house. Nothing was ever said by uncle about Jennie, until a short time before his death, when he one day asked if I knew where she was, or if I ever heard anything of her. I told him that I had not seen or heard from her for a long time. He then said I wish you would go to my desk and bring me an envelope you will find there, marked 'private papers.' I went as directed, and finding the envelope, I opened it and seeing in it a will making me his sole heir, the idea occurred to be, that perhaps uncle wanted to destroy it, and make another. I therefore put the papers in my pocket, and returning to uncle, told him I could not find them.—He replied that perhaps he had mislaid them, and said it would make no difference. He then requested me to call at the place Jennie mentioned in her letter, and see if she was still there, or if not, learn where she had gone; also, to call at your office, and ask you to come to the house, as he wished to see you.—I went to Madison avenue, but found that Jennie had removed, and no one knew where they had gone, but they thought somewhere out West. After you had gone into the room with uncle, I listened in the adjoining apartment, and made out by that means to ascertain, not only that a new will was to be made, but where it was to be put. After you had gone, I got the will and read it, and found that Jennie was left half of uncle's property. I therefore, determined if uncle did not recover, to substitute the will I had in my pocket for that last made. As you know, he died not many days after this, and on the day after his death, I opened the drawer and exchanged the wills. That explains why you found the will you did, instead of the one you expected. And now," continued he, "I will give you the missing will, and if I should happen to recover, you will see that Jennie has what are her rights, by that, and if I die, I desire you to see that my wishes as expressed in this will are carried out." Assuring him I would, I took my leave. I then, late as it was, went to the offices of several morning papers, and had a notice inserted, asking information in regard to the residence of Charles Bradley or his wife, or, in case of their death, of any of their heirs, promising to reward any one giving such information to me at my office.

The next morning on my way down town, I called at Mr. Harper's and found him still alive, though evidently fast failing. I told him that I had already advertised for information in regard to Jennie's residence, and hoped soon to hear something from her. He was much pleased, and expressed himself very anxious to live long enough to ask Jennie's forgiveness. I remained with him awhile, and stopped to transact other business on my way down town, so that it was about noon before I got to my office. As I entered, my clerk said, "there is a lady in your private room, who has been waiting nearly an hour to see you." I hastened to my room and was both surprised and pleased, for before me I saw the pleasant face of the very person I most wished to see—Mrs. Jennie Bradley herself.

After a cordial greeting, she said she had read the notice in the morning paper. I told her the situation of affairs as far as was requisite for her to know at this time, and in return she told me that after finding it was impossible to obtain a reconciliation with her father, she had prevailed upon her husband to remove to Chicago, and that for several years they had lived there. Charles had come on to New York upon business, and she had accompanied him, and had only arrived two days since.

Knowing that Mr. Harper would be glad to see her, I proposed that she should at once accompany me and see him. To this Jennie readily consented, and we accordingly started immediately. On arriving at the house, we found that death had again been there, and James Harper had been called away without the chance to ask forgiveness of the cousin he had wronged. His repentance was too late.

The rest of the story is soon told. I returned with Mrs. Bradley to the hotel, where we found her husband, to whom we explained matters. At my suggestion, they at once took up their abode in the house which had been Jennie's home in childhood, and ere long I had the pleasure of putting them in possession of all the property which had been left them. As soon as possible, Charles closed up his business in Chicago, and made the old homestead their future residence.

Hook's Practical Jokes.

THERE is a story of Hook carrying off a splendid wooden Highlander from before a snuff shop, throwing a cloak around it, and thursting it into a cab. "My friend," he said, addressing the driver, who looked rather astonished at the figure, "a very respectable man, but a little tipsy." Not even the passer-by in the street was exempt from his cool impudence. Observing a man of most pompous air strutting down the Strand, he stopped him with, "I beg your pardon, sir, but may I ask if you are any one particular?" Then, without waiting for a reply, he walked off, leaving the stranger transfixed with amazement. These, however, are but poor specimens of his effrontery.—Strolling one day arm-in-arm with Dan Terry, the actor, up a street in Soho, his nostrils were assailed by a most savory odor. Looking down an area, he saw the servants in the kitchen below dressing up a very fine dinner. "A party, no doubt," said Terry; "jolly dogs! what a feast! I should like to make one of them." "I'll take a bet I do," replied Hook. "Call for me at 10." Leaving his friend, he mounted the steps and knocked at the door. Believing him to be one of the expected guests, the servant conducted him to the drawing-room, where a number of persons were already assembled. Making himself perfectly at home he had half a dozen people about him, laughing at his jokes, before the host discovered that a stranger was present. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, addressing the uninvited one, "your name?—I did not quite catch it; servants are so incorrect."—"Smith, Sir, Smith," replied the unblushing Theodore, "don't apologize; you are quite right, Sir, servants are good blockheads; I remember a most remarkable instance of their mistakes." "But really, Sir," interrupted the host mildly, "I did not anticipate the pleasure of Mr. Smith's company to dinner. Whom do you suppose you are addressing?"

"Mr. Thompson, of course," replied Hook, "an old friend of my father's.—I received a kind invitation from you yesterday, on my arrival from Liverpool, to dine with you to-day, family party, come in boots, you said."

The host at once disclaimed the name of Thompson, or any knowledge of the vivacious Smith.

"Good heavens! then I have come to the wrong house," exclaimed the hoaxer, "my dear Sir, how can I apologize? so awkward, too, and I have asked a friend to call for me."

The old gentleman, probably thinking so witty a personage would make and excellent addition to his party, begged him to remain. With a profusion of apologies, Hook at first pretended to decline—ultimately accepted. Everybody was delighted with him; all the evening he kept up a constant fire of wit and repartee, and ultimately sat down to the piano and sang extempore verses on every one present. In the midst of these the door opened, and true to his appointment, in walked Terry, at the sight of whom, striking a new key, he sang:

"I'm very much pleased with your fare,
Your cellar's as good as your cook;
My friend's Mr. Terry, the player,
And I'm Mr. Theodore Hook."

One day, after riding som distance in a hackney coach, he discovered he had no money in his pocket to pay the fare. Catching sight of a friend upon the road, he took him up, hoping to borrow the sum required, but the friend was as impecunious as himself. Hook considered for a moment, then, calling out to the coachman, desired him to drive to Mr. M———'s, a well-known West end surgeon. Arrived there, he sprang out of the coach, knocked loudly and demanded of the servant who answered if Mr. So-and-So was within. The doctor was descending the stairs at the time. "Oh, my dear sir," he cried wildly in an agitated voice, "I trust you are not engaged—excuse the feelings of a husband, perhaps a father by this time — your attendance is required instantly at Mrs. P———, No. ——, such-and-such a street. Don't loose a moment; a peculiar case, I assure you."

"I will order my carriage and go at once," said the doctor.

"No need for such delay; I have one at the door; jump in; I have to go for the nurse and will follow immediately."

The lady to whose house the doctor was driven was a sour tempered, middle-aged spinster; her indignation upon receiving such a visit for such a purpose, may be imagined, and the doctor was too glad to escape from her very pronounced wrath. But his troubles were not yet over, for upon arriving home cabby demanded of him the entire fare, and would not leave the house until it was paid.

The Dutchman's Contract.

"My son, what's the matter?" said a cheery voiced old gent to a mournful visaged gamin who had just escaped the clutches of an irate saloon keeper on Main street, who stood in his front door Wednesday, and poured forth a volume of Teutonic expletives.

"Matter? Why that man won't pay me my wages—that's what the matter."

"My good friend," and the old gentleman turning on the saloon man with righteous indignation depicted in his voice and in his face, "my good friend don't you know that it is very—"

"Now, shust you go owet mit dis house. You doan't talk about vat you doan't know all about. Dot poy goom me lasht September, und he say, 'Vhat you gif a mont to geep dot pavement dot shnow?' 'Feefty cent,' says I.—Undt he say, 'Gif me feefty cent in adfance efery mont undt I do it.' I say, all righdt.' I pay him for September; dere goom no shnow. I pay him for Ochtober, und dere goom no shnow agin. I pay him in Decemper—nisht shnow. He gooms dese morning und says, 'Hi! ole lager peer, Santa Claus!—I vant my Shanuary money, undt as it looks like zum shnow to day, I vant ein tollar or I strike mit you.' Mein Gott in himmel I vas"—but the venerable philanthropist cast a reproachful glance on the boy and passed on.

☞ A law has just been passed in France which provides that "every person who may be condemned twice by the police for the crime of open drunkenness will be held incapable of voting, or of elective eligibility, and of being named for the jury or any public office."