

**NOTABLE CASES HINGED ON HANDWRITING.**

The testimony given by handwriting experts will be put to a severe test when the case of Roland B. Molineux, accused of sending a package containing poison to Harry Cornish, comes to trial. In the inquest the spectacle of six handwriting experts coming forward and, on the strength of comparisons of handwriting alone, declaring that Molineux was the guilty man was witnessed. These six experts are expected to go on the stand again and reiterate their statements. The result of the Molineux trial will do much to determine the value of evidence of this character.

Some very complicated cases have been unravelled during the last fifteen years by handwriting experts. One of the most famous cases of this kind was the Dodge libel suit, tried at Plymouth, N. H., in 1885. J. A. Dodge was the president of the Boston, Concord, and Montreal railroad, and a man of considerable wealth. He had as confidential man and secretary one Henry Raymond, a man of excellent reputation, who was superintendent of the local Sunday school and a highly esteemed citizen of Plymouth. In 1882 Mr. Dodge went to California for his health. He returned a few months later and in August of the same year died. A few hours before his death a cheque for \$2,500, signed by him, was presented at a local bank by Raymond, and cashed without question. The cheque was dated a few days before Mr. Dodge died. Immediately after the funeral Raymond presented a note for \$5,000, signed by Dodge, to the widow, requesting immediate payment. He explained that Mr. Dodge had given him the cheque and the note, as a reward for his lifelong devotion to his interests. Mrs. Dodge, who enjoyed her husband's full confidence, denounced him as a forger and a fraud. It was very strange, she said, that her husband had never spoken to her about the matter, and she declined to honour the note. The matter got into the newspapers, and there were expressions of sympathy with Raymond. Mrs. Dodge was accused of trying to defraud him out of the reward her husband had planned for him. She replied by denouncing Raymond as a swindler. Then Raymond made his first mistake. He began an action for libel, placing damages at \$5,000 and a second action to recover the amount of the note alleged to have been given to him by Mr. Dodge.

For the first few days of the trial of the libel suit it looked as though Mrs. Dodge was hopelessly beaten. Witness after witness, all men who were familiar with Mr. Dodge's handwriting, went on the stand and declared that the signatures on the cheque and the note were genuine. Mrs. Dodge's friends advised her to give up, but she refused to. In open court she again denounced Raymond and declared that she would prove her allegations before she got through. When the plaintiff finally rested he had made out a strong case. Mrs. Dodge made little headway against him at first. She had engaged Daniel Ames of this city, as an expert and the turning point was reached when he was put on the stand. After an examination of the exhibits in the case, Mr. Ames came to the conclusion that both cheque and note were forgeries. He produced enlarged photographs of Mr. Dodge's signature to his will and other signatures to the cheque and note. He pointed out differences that would never be noticed by a layman and illustrated them on a blackboard in court. He produced a letter written by Mr. Dodge in California to Mr. Raymond and showed beyond question that the figures "26" and the word "Raymond" in the note were made by holding the note, which was on thin paper, over the letter and tracing them. He also showed on the blackboard twenty-eight capital Ds, made in letters, notes and cheques written by Mr. Dodge and compared them with the D in the signature to the note presented to the widow by Raymond. The expert convinced the jury and the spectators in the courtroom in five minutes that Mr. Dodge did not write the D in the signature to the note.

The distinctions made by the expert were based almost entirely on infinitesimal differences in the shadings and loops. In the matter of the letter D the expert brought out his strongest evidence. He showed that every D written by Mr. Dodge in notes and letters, the genuineness of which was not questioned, could be exactly boxed in an exact square, with some portion of the letter touching the sides and the top and bottom. The Ds in the note and cheque would not fit in a square; in fact, it took all kinds of angles to make a box for the Ds which would allow of some portion of the letters touching each side and the top and bottom. Yet before they were boxed the letters were so much alike that no difference could be discerned by the inexperienced eye. There was a complete change of sentiment among the people of Plymouth after Mr. Ames' testimony was in. The very people who had been abusing Mrs. Dodge ran to congratulate her and Raymond found himself without a friend. His attorneys threw up the case and surrendered the forged note to Mrs. Dodge. Raymond was arrested

at once, charged with forgery and only escaped the penitentiary by jumping his bail.

An even more interesting case which was solved by Mr. Ames involved the will of the Miser Paine in this city in 1886. Here a deliberate attempt to get away with something like half a million dollars was made. When quite a young man James H. Paine was a clerk in a Boston business house. He speculated with the money and everything he touched turned to gold. He soon became a very wealthy man. Then he became a miser. He went around the street in rags, lodged in a garret with a French family on the west side who took him in out of pure charity and lived on the leavings which restaurant keepers gave him. There was only one thing that he would spend money on; that was music. He was passionately fond of music, and for years was a familiar figure in lobby of the Academy of Music during the opera season. He would go there early in the evening and beg people to pay his way in. If he didn't find a philanthropist he would buy a ticket himself, but he never gave up hope until he knew that the curtain had risen. Finally Paine was run over by a cab in Broadway. He was taken to a hospital but he made such a fuss about staying there that he was finally removed to his garret home. He died there in a few days. Then a man came forward with a power of attorney which he said Paine gave him in 1885 and which authorized him to take charge of Paine's interest in the estate of his brother Robert Treat Paine. The closing paragraph empowered him to attend to all of Paine's business and to dispose of his property without consulting anybody in the event of anything happening to him. Nothing was then known of Paine's possessions. Later Chickering the piano man came forward and said that some years before Paine gave him a package wrapped in an old bandanna handkerchief for safe keeping. He had opened this package and found that it contained \$300,000 in bank notes. Other possessions were also found.

When the holder of power of attorney sought to get possession of this property some distant relatives of Paine attacked the genuineness of the document. It was finally placed in the hands of Mr. Ames, who showed that, while the greater part of the paper was genuine, the sentence giving the holder the power to act for the dead man in all matters and to dispose of his property as he saw fit was forged. The only power of attorney ever given by Paine was in the matter of his brother's estate. Mr. Ames proved the forgery by making comparisons before a jury.

Another famous case that hinged on the testimony of handwriting experts was the Davis will conspiracy, where the swindlers came near getting away with \$13,000,000. Andrew J. Davis was a Massachusetts man. He went to California in the late forties with a bad case of gold fever. He made some money there and afterward lived successively in Iowa, Indiana, and Michigan. Later he moved to Montana, where he accumulated a fortune of \$13,000,000. He died there in 1890, a single man. His next-of-kin were three brothers Irwin, Calvin, and John A. Davis, four sisters and several grand-children. For some time after his death it was understood that he died intestate and it was practically agreed among the heirs to divide the estate. The fact that he had left no will was apparently settled by several friends, who said that Davis had told them shortly before his death that he had not made a will, and by an old friend and business associate named Knight, who said that he had made a will for Mr. Davis in 1880, but had afterwards destroyed it at Mr. Davis' command. Davis told Knight at the time that he would never make another will, as he preferred to let the law divide his estate. Shortly after Mr. Davis' death letters of administration on his estate were issued to John A. Davis, his brother, despite the protests of the other heirs. John had been administrator for about a month when news came from the backwoods of Davis county, Ia., that a will drawn up twenty-five years before by Mr. Davis, in which he bequeathed all his property to his "dear brother John," had been discovered. There was a howl from the other heirs at once, and they showed that if there was one relative that was not dear to the dead millionaire, it was this same brother John, with whom he had frequent quarrels.

The newly discovered will left all to John, with the exception of some money for the maintenance of "T. J. and Pet Davis," alleged to be natural children of A. J. Davis and a Miss Burgett. The executors named to carry out the provisions of the will were James Davis and his son Job, who were in no way related to A. J. Davis. Both had been dead long when the will was produced and the only living witness was one J. C. Sconce. Of course, the validity of the will was attacked. On the trial Sconce told the story of how it was drawn in great detail. There wasn't a thing about it that he didn't seem to remember. The heirs alleged that the will was a forgery and that it was drawn by James R. Eddy, a nephew of Job Davis. Eddy figured as the discoverer of the will, but it developed that neither he nor anybody else in Davis county, Ia., had ever mentioned the subject of a will until the news of

A. J. Davis' death and the fact that he had left an estate valued at \$13,000,000 found its way out to Iowa. Mr. Ames was called in. He first dug up the fact that Job Davis, who, Sconce said, wrote the will, was a man of some education, and, at any rate, a good speller. The spelling in the will was execrable. Here are some samples "Guive" for give, "whether" for whether, "sheat" for sheet, "shal" for shall, and "wardly" for worldly.

Then the expert declared that the paper on which it was written was comparatively new, but that it had been steeped in coffee and tobacco to give it an antique appearance, also that the edges had been scalloped with a knife or scissors and then grated down, to give the appearance of having crumbled from age. Then the paper had been partially carbonized by heat and punctured with pin holes in simulation of holes which often appear in the creases of old paper.

Mr. Ames next showed that the signature to the will was written before the body of the document was put in. This was clear from the crowding of the last few lines, and the reason for it was obvious. It was necessary to get a satisfactory signature before writing the body of the will. By comparing the will with two other wills which Eddy admitted having drawn, Mr. Ames showed the same misspelling in all three of the documents. Then he began making handwriting comparisons, and after two days he and the other handwriting experts employed on the case convinced everybody of the fraudulent character of the will. But one jurymen hung out for the will and couldn't be induced to change. So there was a disagreement. The case was set down for a new trial, but it never came off, and it was understood that the legal heirs finally divided the millions left by A. J. Davis.

Among lawyers and legal experts handwriting evidence is not regarded very highly. The lawyers do not place very much confidence in it, and the handwriting experts have had a long struggle for recognition. In a number of cases they have not been allowed to testify at all, but in this State and in California, as recent events have shown, they have won a place, and a great deal of attention has been given to their deductions. The handwriting experts themselves claim to have their profession down so fine that they can pass accurately on all samples given to them if they are allowed a reasonable time, and do not believe it possible to make a mistake. William J. Kinsley, who has attained some prominence in the Molineux case, summed up the position of the experts as follows:—

"I believe, with Disraeli, that nature has given every individual a distinct sort of handwriting, as she has given him a peculiar countenance, voice and manners. Few persons who have not carefully investigated the matter of individuality in handwriting can understand how the tell-tail peculiarities, which we call characteristics, are so thoroughly identified with the handwriting of the individual. People don't even know the peculiarities of their own handwriting until they are pointed out to them. These peculiarities are acquired in much the same way as peculiarities of voice, gesture and manner, by countless repetitions, until they become fixed as unconscious habits.

The innumerable combinations of letters and strokes give such a variety than duplication of any quantity of one person's handwriting by another is impossible, and the comparison of handwriting has been reduced to almost a mathematical certainty. If two pieces of writing are to be compared, the genuine piece is first closely examined by the expert for peculiarities or characteristics. Every point is noted, size, slant, speed, spacing, movement, regulation of letters, parts of letters and words. Then the disputed handwriting is examined, and if the same characteristics are noted, there is no doubt that one person wrote both pieces.

A forger cannot avoid that of which he has no knowledge—he does not step around that which he does not see. There are four things which are impossible to the forger—to know all the characteristics of the hand he wishes to simulate; to be able accurately to reproduce them if he should see them; to know all the characteristics of his own hand, and to sink his own individuality and drop the characteristics of his own hand at will. In spite of skill, conception, and practice he will fail to see all the characteristics of the hand he is imitating, he will not reproduce all that he sees, and in addition, is sure to infuse some of his own characteristics into the forgery. In writing a single name the forger often betrays himself.

"Pictorial effect will deceive anybody. A forgery is bound to look like the original, and those who judge writing by pictorial effect cannot avoid being deceived." But comparison on the lines I have mentioned will reveal any forgery. It is infallible. No stronger proof that handwriting is entirely an unconscious product, produced without any reflex action, can be given than the fact that in cases of double consciousness the writing retains its normal character. I tested this once by having a man write a line, and I later, while in a hypnotic state, write the same line over again. The writing was precisely the same down to the smallest characteristic.

"In recent years the work of handwriting experts has done so much to explode great frauds and to bring swindlers to a halt that I cannot understand why our deductions are not more generally accepted as accurate. However, it takes time to convince people, but I don't think it will be long before the public will believe that what a competent expert says about specimens of handwriting he has carefully examined is true, no matter how much hangs on his decisions."—New York Sun.

**SCROFULOUS SORES.**

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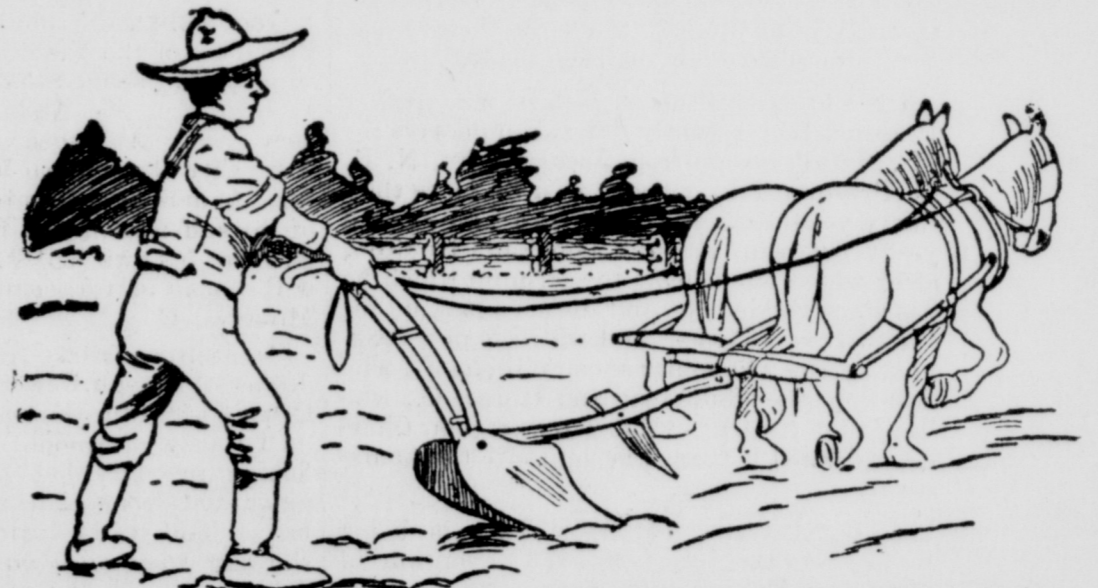
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I am a farmer located near Stony Brook, one of the most malarious districts in this State, and was bothered with malaria for years, at times so I could not work, and was always very constipated as well. For years I had malaria so bad in the spring, when engaged in plowing, that I could do nothing but shake. I must have taken about a barrel of quinine pills besides dozens of other remedies, but never obtained any permanent benefit. Last fall, in peach time, I had a most serious attack of chills and then commenced to take Ripans Tabules, upon a friend's advice, and the first box made me all right and I have never been without them since. I take one Tabule each morning and night and sometimes when I feel more than usually exhausted I take three in a day. They have kept my stomach sweet, my bowels regular and I have not had the least touch of malaria nor splitting headache since I commenced using them. I know also that I sleep better and wake up more refreshed than formerly. I don't know how many complaints Ripans Tabules will help, but I do know they will cure any one in the condition I was and I would not be without them at any price. I honestly consider them the cheapest-priced medicine in the world, as they are also the most beneficial and the most convenient to take. I am twenty-seven years of age and have worked hard all my life, the same as most farmers, both early and late and in all kinds of weather, and I have never enjoyed such good health as I have since last fall; in fact, my neighbors have all remarked my improved condition and have said, "Say, John, what are you doing to look so healthy?"

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