

GENERAL BUSINESS.

Continued from 1st Page.

unless a solicitor is present, so he has referred me to you."

"Perfectly right; perfectly right of my brother James, Messrs. Considering how small are the opportunities of becoming cognizant with the practice of his profession, it is extraordinary how well he is acquainted with its theory. And now, what is the point?"

"Well, do you know, Short, as the point is rather a long one, and that your brother said he should expect us at two precisely, I think that we had better take the bus back to the Temple, when I can tell the yarn to both of you at once."

"Very well. I do not, as a general rule, like leaving my office at this time of day, as it is apt to put clients to inconvenience, especially such as come from a distance. But I will make an exception for you, Messrs. William," he went on to the counterpart of the Pump Court, "if any one calls to see me, will you be so good as to tell them that I am engaged in an important conference at the chambers of Mr. Short in Pump Court, but that I hope to be back by half past three."

"Yes, sir," said William, as he shut the door behind them; "certainly, sir." And then, having replaced the musty documents upon the shelf, whence they could be fetched down without difficulty on the slightest sign of a client, that ingenious youth, with singular confidence that nobody would be inconvenienced thereby, put a notice on the door to the effect that he would be back immediately, and adjourned to indulge in the "chuck farthing" with various other small clerks of his acquaintance.

In due course Eustace and his legal adviser arrived at Pump Court, and, oh! how the heart of James, the barrister, swelled with pride when for the first time in his career he saw a real solicitor enter his chambers accompanied by a real client. He would, indeed, have preferred it if the solicitor had not happened to be his twin brother, and the client had been some other than his intimate friend; but still it was a blessed sight—a very blessed sight!

"Will you be seated, gentlemen?" he said, with much dignity.

"They obeyed."

"And now, Messrs. I suppose that you have explained to my brother the matter on which you require my advice?"

"No, I haven't," said Eustace; "I thought that I might as well explain it to you both together, eh?"

"Hum," said James; "it is not quite regular. According to the etiquette of the profession to which I have the honor to belong, it is not customary that matters should be so dealt with. It is usual that papers should be presented; but that I will overlook, as the point appears to be pressing."

"That's right," said Eustace. "Well, I have come about a will."

"So I understand," said James; "but what will, and where is it?"

"Well, it's a will in my favor, and it is tainted on a lady's back."

The twins simultaneously rose from their chairs and looked at Eustace with such a ridiculous mixture of movement and expression that he fairly burst out laughing.

"I presume, Messrs. that this is not a hoax," said James, severely. "I presume that you know too well what is due to learned counsel to attempt to make one of their body the victim of a practical joke?"

"Surely, Messrs.," said John, "you have sufficient respect for the dignity of the law not to tamper with it in any such way as my brother has indicated?"

"Oh, certainly not. I assure you it is all square. It is a true bill, or rather a true will."

"Proceed," said James, resuming his seat. "This is evidently a case of an unusual nature."

"You are right there, old boy," said Eustace. "And now, just listen, and he proceeded to unfold his moving tale with much point and emphasis."

When he had finished, John looked at James rather disheveled. The case was beyond him. But James was equal to the occasion. He had mastered that first great axiom which every young barrister should lay to heart: "Never appear to be ignorant."

"This case," he said, as though he were giving judgment, "is doubtless of a remarkable nature, and I can not at the moment lay my hand upon any authority bearing on the point—if, indeed, any such are to be found. But I speak off-hand, and must not be held too closely to the obiter dictum of a vice versa opinion. It seems to me that, notwithstanding its peculiar idiosyncrasies, and the various 'crucies' that it presents, it will, upon close examination, be found to fall within those general laws that govern the legal course of testamentary disposition. If I remember aright—I speak off-hand—the Act of 1 Vic., cap. 26, specifies that a will shall be in writing, and that it shall be fairly defined as a rude variety of writing."

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