

THE ROMANCE OF WILLS AND TESTAMENTS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649283187

The romance of wills and testaments by Edgar Vine Hall

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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EDGAR VINE HALL

**THE ROMANCE OF
WILLS AND
TESTAMENTS**

**THE ROMANCE OF WILLS AND
TESTAMENTS**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SONGS AND LYRICAL POEMS

(1908)

In Preparation

SPIRITUAL TESTAMENTS

OR

PRAYERS AND PREFACES FROM
WILLS, &c.

THE
ROMANCE OF WILLS
AND TESTAMENTS

BY
EDGAR VINE HALL

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

T. FISHER UNWIN
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE
LEIPSIK: INSELSTRASSE 20

1912

GIFT OF
R.F. MORRISON

TO VINU
AIRPORT

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KB40
H29

My Life's my dying day, wherein I still
Am making, alter and correct my Will."

FRANCIS QUARLES.

"Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land."

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

"Of Carthage wall I was a stone
O'h Mortals Read with Pity
Time consumes all it spareth none
Man, Mountain, Town nor City.
Therefore O'h Mortals now bethink
You where unto you must,
Since now such Stately Buildings
Lie Buried in the dust.

THOMAS HUGHES, 1663."

The Carthage Stone, S. Dunstan's Church, Stepney.

M101946

PREFACE

BY way of preface it is necessary to explain the sources from which the material for the following pages is taken. The chief feature of these essays consists, I think, in the large amount of original matter rescued from the multitudinous MS. volumes of wills, &c., which are preserved at Somerset House and elsewhere.

As in death, so in those volumes, small and great rest side by side. Of the majority their wills, or, if they died without wills, their intestacies, are their only memorials. But it is fascinating to come suddenly upon some well-known name. In a volume of intestacies of the year 1674, for instance, is an entry stating that administration was granted to Elizabeth Milton, widow of John Milton, late of the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, his nuncupative will not having been proved—"testamento nuncupativo dicti defuncti . . . per antedictam Elizabetham Milton allegato nondum probato."

Different types and times, the lighter or the

more serious pages of this book, will appeal to different readers. I would, for my part, especially suggest attention to wills illustrative of times of plague as likely to interest students of human nature and history. Time and opportunity for research have been limited—not unfortunately, perhaps. Amid greater abundance of material, choice would have been the more perplexing.

It is desired to make full acknowledgment of the various printed books which I have perused, and from which I have sometimes borrowed, viz. : such books as "Wills from Doctors' Commons" (Nichols and Bruce), "Fifty English Wills" (Furnivall), "North Country Wills" (Surtees Society), "Testamenta Eboracensia" (Surtees Society), "Testamenta Vetusta" (Nicolas), "Testamenta Cantiana" (Duncan and Hussey), "Wells Wills" (Weaver), "Lincoln Wills" (Gibbons), "Royal Wills" (Nichols), "A History of English Law" (Holdsworth).

Again, there are books, not directly connected with the subject, in which wills or pertinent tales occur. In this class I am indebted to such books as Messrs. Macle hose's edition of "An Historical Relation of Ceylon" (Robert Knox), "Anna Van Schurman" (Una Birch), "Bygone Leicestershire" (Andrews), "The Old