

# The Jolly Testator Who Makes His Own Will

Lord Neaves

Ye lawyers who live upon litigants' fees,  
And who need a good many to live at your ease,  
Grave or gay, wise or witty, whate'er your degree,  
Plain stuff or Queen's Counsel, take counsel of me:  
When a festive occasion your spirit unbends,  
You should never forget the profession's best friends;  
So we'll send round the wine, and a light bumper fill  
To the jolly testator who makes his own will.

He premises his wish and his purpose to save  
All dispute among friends when he's laid in the grave;  
Then he straightway proceeds more disputes to create  
Than a long summer's day would give time to relate.  
He writes and erases, he blunders and blots,  
He produces such puzzles and Gordian knots,  
That a lawyer, intending to frame the thing ill,  
Couldn't match the testator who makes his own will.

Testators are good, but a feeling more tender  
Springs up when I think of the feminine gender!  
The testatrix for me, who, like [Telemaque's mother](#),  
Unweaves at one time what she wove at another;  
She bequeaths, she repeats, she recalls a donation,  
And ends by revoking her own revocation;  
Still scribbling or scratching some new codicil,  
Oh! success to the woman who makes her own will.

'Tisn't easy to say, 'mid her varying vapors,  
What scraps should be deemed testamentary papers.  
'Tisn't easy from these her intention to find,  
When perhaps she herself never knew her own mind.  
Every step that we take, there arises fresh trouble:  
Is the legacy lapsed? Is it single or double?  
No customer brings so much grist to the mill  
As the wealthy old woman who makes her own will.



The law decides questions of [meum and tuum](#) ,  
By kindly consenting to make the thing [suum](#) ;  
[The Aesopian fable](#) instructively tells  
What becomes of the oysters, and who gets the shells;  
The legatees starve, but the lawyers are fed;  
The Seniors have riches, the Juniors have bread;  
The available surplus of course will be nil,  
From the worthy testators who make their own will.

You had better pay toll when you take to the road,  
Than attempt by a by-way to reach your abode;  
You had better employ a conveyancer's hand  
Than encounter the risk that your will shouldn't stand.  
From the broad beaten track when the traveler strays,  
He may land in a bog or be lost in a maze;  
And the law, when defied, will avenge itself still  
On the man and the woman who make their own will.