

## THE WILL OF CHARLES DICKENS

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"I, Charles Dickens, of Gadshill place, Higham, in the county of Kent, hereby revoke all my former Wills and Codicils and declare this to be my last Will and Testament. I give the sum of £1,000 free of legacy duty to Miss Ellen Lawless Ternan, late of Houghton Place, Amptill Square, in the county of Middlesex. I give the sum of £19 19 0 to my faithful servant Mrs. Anne Cornelius. I give the sum of £19 19 0 to the daughter and only child of the said Mrs. Anne Cornelius. I give the sum of £19 19 0 to each and every domestic servant, male and female, who shall be in my employment at the time of my decease, and shall have been in my employment for a not less period of time than one year. I give the sum of £1,000 free of legacy duty to my daughter Mary Dickens. I also give to my said daughter an annuity of £300 a year, during her life, if she shall so long continue unmarried; such annuity to be considered as accruing from day to day, but to be payable half yearly, the first of such half yearly payments to be made at the expiration of six months next after my decease. If my said daughter Mary shall marry, such annuity shall cease; and in that case, but in that case only, my said daughter shall share with my other children in the provision hereinafter made for them. I give to my dear sister-in-law Georgina Hogarth the sum of £8,000 free of legacy duty. I also give to the said Georgina Hogarth all my personal jewellery not hereinafter mentioned, and all the little familiar objects from my writing-table and my room, and she will know what to do with those things. I also give to the said Georgina Hogarth all my private papers whatsoever and wheresoever, and I leave her my grateful blessing as the best and truest friend man ever had. I give to my eldest son Charles my library of printed books, and my engravings and prints; and I also give to my son Charles the silver salver presented to me at Birmingham, and the silver cup presented to me at Edinburgh, and my shirt studs, shirt pins, and sleeve buttons. And I bequeath unto my said son Charles and my son Henry Fielding Dickens, the sum of £8,000 upon trust to invest the same, and from time to time to vary the investments thereof, and to pay the annual income thereof to my wife during her life, and after her decease the said sum of £8,000 and the investments thereof shall be in trust for my children (but subject as to my daughter Mary to the proviso hereinbefore contained) who being a son or sons shall have attained or shall attain the age of twenty-one years, or being a daughter or daughters shall have attained or shall attain that age or be previously married, in equal shares if more than one. I give my watch (the gold repeater presented to me at Coventry), and I give the chains and seals and all appendages I have worn with it, to my dear and trusty friend John Forster, of Palace Gate House, Kensington, in the county of Middlesex aforesaid; and I also give to the said John Forster such manuscripts of my published works as may be in my possession at the time of my decease. And I devise and Bequeath all my real and personal estate (except such as is vested in me as a trustee or mortgagee) unto the said Georgina Hogarth and the said John Forster, their heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns respectively, upon trust that they the said Georgina Hogarth and John Forster, or the survivor of them or the executors or

administrators of such survivor, do and shall, at their, his, or her uncontrolled and irresponsible direction, either proceed to an immediate sale or conversion into money of the said real and personal estate (including my copyrights), or defer and postpone any sale or conversion into money, till such time or times as they, he, or she shall think fit, and in the meantime may manage and let the said real and personal estate (including my copyrights), in such manner in all respects as I myself could do, if I were living and acting therein; it being my intention that the trustees or trustee for the time being of this my will shall have the fullest power over the said real and personal estate which I can give to them, him, or her. And I declare that, until the said real and personal estate shall be sold and converted into money, the rents and annual income thereof respectively shall be paid and applied to the person or persons in the manner and for the purposes to whom and for which the annual income of the monies to arise from the sale or conversion thereof into money would be payable or applicable under this my Will in case the same were sold or converted into money. And I declare that my real estate shall for the purposes of this my Will be considered as converted into personalty upon my decease. And I declare that the said trustees or trustee for the time being, do and shall, with and out of the monies which shall come to their, his, or her hands, under or by virtue of this my Will and the trusts thereof, pay my just debts, funeral and testamentary expenses, and legacies. And I declare that the said trust funds or so much thereof as shall remain after answering the purposes aforesaid, and the annual income thereof, shall be in trust for all my children (but subject as to my daughter Mary to the proviso hereinbefore contained), who being a son or sons shall have attained or shall attain the age of twenty-one years, and being a daughter or daughters shall have attained or shall attain that age or be previously married, in equal shares if more than one. Provided always, that, as regards my copyrights and the produce and profits thereof, my said daughter Mary, notwithstanding the proviso herein before contained with reference to her, shall share with my other children therein whether she be married or not. And I devise the estates vested in me at my decease as a trustee or mortgagee unto the use of the said Georgina Hogarth and John Forster, their heirs and assigns, upon the trusts and subject to the equities affecting the same respectively. And I appoint the said Georgina Hogarth and John Forster executrix and executor of this my Will, and Guardians of the persons of my children during their respective minorities. And lastly, as I have now set down the form of words which my legal advisers assure me are necessary to the plain objects of this my Will, I solemnly enjoin my dear children always to remember how much they owe to the said Georgina Hogarth, and never to be wanting in a grateful and affectionate attachment to her, for they know well that she has been, through all the stages of their growth and progress, their ever useful self-denying and devoted friend. And I desire here simply to record the fact that my wife, since our separation by consent, has been in the receipt from me of an annual income of £600, while all the great charges of a numerous and expensive family have devolved wholly upon myself. I emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner; that no public announcement be made of the time or place of my burial; that at the utmost not more than three plain mourning coaches be employed; and that those who attend my funeral wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hat-band, or other such revolting absurdity. I direct that my name be inscribed in plain English letters on my tomb, without the addition of 'Mr.' or 'Esquire.' I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever. I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works, and to the remembrance of my friends upon their experience of me in addition thereto. I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament

in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there. In witness whereof I the said Charles Dickens, the testator, have to this my last Will and Testament set my hand this 12th day of May in the year of our Lord 1869.

"Charles Dickens.

"Signed published and declared by the above-named Charles Dickens the testator as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us (present together at the same time) who in his presence at his request and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses.

"G. Holsworth,  
"26 Wellington Street, Strand.

"Henry Walker,  
"26 Wellington Street, Strand.

"I, Charles Dickens of Gadshill Place near Rochester in the county of Kent Esquire declare this to be a Codicil to my last Will and Testament which Will bears date of 12th day of May 1869. I give to my son Charles Dickens the younger all my share and interest in the weekly journal called 'All the Year Round,' which is now conducted under Articles of Partnership made between me and William Henry Wills and the said Charles Dickens the younger, and all my share and interest in the stereotypes stock and other effects belonging to the said partnership, he defraying my share of all debts and liabilities of the said partnership which may be outstanding at the time of my decease, and in all other respects I confirm my said Will. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand the 2nd day of June in the year of our Lord 1870.

"Charles Dickens.

"Signed and declared by the said Charles Dickens, the testator as and for a Codicil to his Will in the presence of us present at the same time who at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other hereunto subscribe our names as witnesses.

"G. Holsworth,  
"26 Wellington Street, Strand.

"H. Walker,  
"26 Wellington Street, Strand."