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LEGAL LORE

Beautiful Will of an Insane Man

"Justice Walter Lloyd Smith, who presides over the third department of the appellate division of the Supreme Court, brought with him to a dinner of the New York University Law School Alumni Association what he said was the most remarkable document that ever came into his possession," says the *New York Times*.

Others who read the document, the last will and testament of Charles Lounsbury who died in the Cook County Asylum at Dunning, Illinois, were not disposed to disagree with him.

Here it is:

"I, Charles Lounsbury, being of sound mind and disposing memory, do hereby make and publish this, my last will and testament, in order, as justly as I may, to distribute my interests in the world among succeeding men.

"That part of my interests which is known in the law and recognized in the sheep-bound volumes as my property, being inconsiderable and of no account, I make no disposal of in this, my last will.

"My right to live, being but a life estate, is not at my disposal: but, these things excepted, all else in the world I now proceed to devise and bequeath.

(Item) "I give to good Fathers and Mothers, in trust for their children, all good little words of praise and encouragement and all quaint pet names and endearments, and I charge said parents to use them justly and generously, as the needs of their children may require.

(Item) "I leave to children exclusively, but only for the term of their childhood, all and every flower of the fields, and the blossoms of the woods, with the right to play among them freely according to the custom of children, warning them at the same time against thistles and thorns. And I devise to children the banks of the brooks and the golden sands beneath the waters thereof, and the odor of the willows that dip therein; and the white clouds that float high over the giant trees. And I leave the children long, long days in which to be merry in a thousand ways, and the Night; and the Moon; and the train of the Milky Way to wonder at, but subject, nevertheless, to the rights hereinafter given to lovers.

(Item) "I devise to boys jointly the use of the idle fields and commons where ball may be played; all pleasant waters where one may swim; all snow-clad hills where one may coast; and all streams and ponds, where one may fish, or where, when grim winter comes, one may skate; to have and to hold the same for the period of their boyhood. And all meadows, with the clover blossoms and butterflies thereof; the woods and their appurtenances, the squirrels and birds, the echoes of strange noises, and all distant places which may be visited, together with the adventures there found. And I give to said boys each his own place at the fireside at night, with all pictures that may be in the burning wood or coal, to enjoy without let or hindrance and without incumbrance or care.

(Item) "To lovers, I devise their imaginary world, with whatever they may need as to the stars of the sky, the red roses by the wall, the bloom of the

hawthorn, the sweet strains of music, and aught else by which they may desire to figure to each other the lastingness and beauty of their love.

(Item) "To Young Men, jointly, I devise and bequeath all boisterous, inspiring sports of rivalry, and I give to them the disdain of weakness and undaunted confidence in their own strength. Though they are rude and rough, I give them the power to make lasting friendships, and of possessing companions; and to them exclusively I give all merry songs and brave choruses to sing with lusty voices.

(Item) "And to those who are no longer children, or youths, or lovers, I leave Memory; and I bequeath to them the volumes of poems of Burns, and Shakespeare, and of other poets,—if there be others—to the end that they may live over the old days again freely and fully, without tithes or diminution.

(Item) "To our loved ones with snowy crowns I bequeath the happiness of old age, the love and gratitude of their children, until they fall asleep!"

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