

not, it is to be expended on flowers, which are to be placed on the graves of the goldfish after death."

In 1892 a French lady left ten thousand francs to her cat. On its death the money was to be spent upon elementary schools of the kindergarten order. The death of the cat in 1897—this animal, like all pensioners, lived long—caused the money to revert to the district governing body for educational purposes.

Poetical Disposition.

To dispose of one's property in poetry is certainly unusual, if not incongruous. Nevertheless, quite a number of rhymed wills are in existence. An English lawyer (solicitor), who made his own will, wrote: "As to all my worldly goods, now or to be in store, I give them to my beloved wife, and hers for evermore. I give all freely, I no limit fix: This is my will, and she is executrix."

An old bachelor, on dying, left the whole of his estate to three ladies to whom he had proposed, and who had refused him. The reason of this bequest was that by their refusal, "to them I owe all my earthly happiness."

Odd Testaments.

One of the most curious wills of which the writer has heard, was that of M. Zalesky, a Polish land-owner, who died in 1889, leaving property valued at a hundred thousand roubles. His will was enclosed in an envelope bearing the following words: "To be opened after my death." Inside this was another envelope, upon which was written, "To be opened six weeks after my death." When this time had elapsed, the second envelope was opened and a third uncovered. Upon it the following words were found: "To be opened one year after my death." At the end of the year a fourth envelope was discovered, to be opened two years after the testator's death; and so the play proceeded until 1894, when the will was both uncovered and discovered. It was quite as eccentric in its dispositions as in the process of hiding its contents for a number of years. The testator bequeathed half his fortune to such of his heirs as had the largest number of children; the rest of his property was to be placed in a bank, and a hundred years after his death was to be divided, with the accumulated interest, among the testator's descendants. Thus, by 1989, at five per cent. compound interest, the fifty thousand roubles will have swelled into six million roubles; but the chances are that the descendants will be so numerous that each one will receive quite a small amount.

It is not at all surprising that in former days lawyers grew rich over will-disputes, when a gentleman bequeathed \$2,500 "to that amiable young lady, Miss Blank, who smiles so sweetly in the

street when we meet." In the Blank family there were six sisters; of course they all claimed to be the "amiable young lady," but the case seems to have been settled out of court.

Difficult to Avoid Litigation.

History shows that neither lawyers nor laymen can be trusted to make their own wills. While I do not recall any eminent American lawyer concerning whose will there was a law suit, I can name three British judges—lawyers of quite the first rank—whose wills gave rise to any amount of litigation. Sir Joseph Jekyll, who died in 1738, without children, bequeathed £20,000 after his wife's death to the commissioners of the national debt, to be applied as a sinking fund. A portion of this fund was restored to the testator's residuary legatees by an act of parliament passed in 1747. At this period the British national debt amounted to about eight hundred million pounds, and Lord Mansfield is said to have remarked that Sir Joseph "might as well have attempted to stop the middle arch of Blackfriar's Bridge with his full bottomed wig." The will was set aside on account of the mental condition of the maker at the time when it was drawn up.

Lord Mansfield made his own will, and although it turned out to be valid, it was far from being in regular form.

Lord St. Leonards was one of the most distinguished chancellors the English bench has known. He made his own will, and it was a source of long and costly litigation. It cannot be said, however, that the testator was the sole cause of this, for the document, which had been signed some years before his death, had mysteriously disappeared when it was wanted for probate. The resulting law-suit established the "admissibility of secondary evidence of the contents of a will in the absence of a presumption that the testator had destroyed it *animo revocandi*."

It is undesirable, I think, to refer to recent will-contests of which, in a number of instances, the facts are well known to the legal profession, if not to the public. The cases already cited probably exemplify extreme eccentricity of a varied character. But between eccentricity and legal insanity, there is, of course, a wide dividing line, and the display of the former by a testator is no evidence whatever that he was mentally unbalanced when his will was made.

MILLIONS IN PENSIONS TO THE OLD SOLDIERS.

The commissioner of pensions states the results of the efforts of the bureau for the eleven months of the fiscal year ending May 31, as follows:

Original pensions have been granted: For account of war of 1812, widows, 2; for account of Indian wars, widows, 112; survivors, 7; for account of Mexi-

can war, widows, 325; survivors, 14; for account of service prior to 1861, 6; making a total of 466 pensioned for account of service prior to the civil war.

For the account of the civil war there have been pensioned for disabilities incurred in service: Invalids, 1,051; for disabilities as provided by act of 1890, invalids, 10,852; for widows under old law, 2,901; for widows under act of 1890, and amendments, 14,479; for nurses, 25; making a total original issues, account of the civil war of 35,308.

In addition to this number there have been restored to the rolls, 4,100 names that were previously dropped or suspended for various causes.

There are now about 160,000 of those drawing under the act of 1890 and amendments that receive the maximum rate of \$12 per month.

There have been 619 pensioned that carried a total of \$927,314 (an average of \$1,514 each) as first payment. A large per cent of these cases are known as "old minors" and only appear on the rolls for the one payment.

For account of service in the war with Spain there have been granted 2,369 pensions to invalids and 1,156 pensions to widows and dependents.

The total number of claims filed for account of this war to date has been 43,874.

Under the act of March 3, 1901, providing for the re-pensioning of widows who re-married and again became widows, there have been 1,905 claims filed.

There will be an increase in the number of pensioners on the rolls at the close of the present fiscal year, June 30, 1901, over the previous year.

The appropriations made by congress for the fiscal year will be sufficient, with the one exception, viz: That for medical examinations. In this item there will be a deficiency. Congress appropriated \$700,000, but the demand for medical examinations during the fiscal year has been so great that the appropriation will not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the law under the established practice.

In addition to the number of original pensions granted as set forth, for the eleven months there have been issued for increases, re-rating and accrued pensions, 50,680 certificates, or the bureau has written for all classes 94,077 certificates.

There have been 43,387 names added to the rolls since July 1, 1900.

July 1, 1897, the adjudication of original invalid pensions was from twenty to thirty months in arrears in the respective divisions. The commissioner predicts that by the close of the present fiscal year, June 30, 1901, the adjudication of all original claims (invalids, widows and dependents) will be current, to the end that just so soon as the evidence in a claim is complete, that claim will go from the pending files for adjudication.