

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 19 October 1586, of Thomas Trentham of Rocester in Staffordshire, father of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham. The testator leaves life estates to his wife, Jane (nee Sneyd) and to his younger son, Thomas. To his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, he leaves a marriage portion of £1000, payable at the rate of 500 marks a year for three years. When Elizabeth Trentham married Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, in 1591, this £1000 would presumably have constituted the dowry she brought to the marriage. This clause in Thomas Trentham's will thus contradicts the claim that Elizabeth Trentham was a 'rich heiress', and that Oxford's financial difficulties were resolved by the marriage. Thomas Trentham was buried at Rocester on 25 May 1587. His will was probated on 4 May 1588. For the wills of Thomas Trentham's sons Francis and Thomas, and daughters Elizabeth and Katherine, see LRO B/C/11; PROB 11/105, ff. 259-60; PROB 11/121, ff. 74-5; and PROB 11/137 ff. 434-6. It would appear from Thomas Trentham's will that his sister, Joan, was estranged from her husband, Godfrey Foljambe of Morehall in Derbyshire, and was residing with her brother. Godfrey Foljambe died in 1591, and in his will makes no mention of his wife, Joan (see PROB 11/80, ff.278-9). In the will Godfrey Foljambe appoints Roger Columbelle, esquire, as one of his executors, and makes bequests to Peter Columbelle, his 'young clerk', and to Godfrey Columbelle. It may be that there is a connection between these members of the Columbelle family and Oxford's clerk, Francis Columbelle (see REQ 2/388/28).

LM: Testamentum Thome Trentham

In the name of God, Amen. The nineteenth day of October in the year of Our Lord a thousand five hundred eighty and six, I, Thomas Trentham of Rocester within the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, esquire, being of perfect remembrance, do make, ordain and institute this my last will and testament for the ordering and disposition of all my lands, goods and chattels in manner and form following;

First I bequeath my soul unto the hands of Almighty God, my Creator, Saviour and Redeemer, and my body to be buried in the church of Rocester aforesaid;

Also I give and bequeath unto Francis Trentham, my eldest son, all my lands, tenements, rents, reversions and hereditaments with all and singular their appurtenances whatsoever within the realm of England, to have and to hold all the said lands and all other the premises to the said Francis Trentham, my son, and to his heirs forever;

Saving and except that I give and bequeath unto Thomas Trentham, my younger son, all those my lands and tenements, rents and reversions in Whitgreave and Biddulph within the county of Stafford, to have and to hold the said lands and other the premises unto the said Thomas Trentham, my son, during his natural life without impeachment of waste,

the remainder over unto my eldest son Francis Trentham and to his heirs forever as is aforesaid;

And also saving and excepted that I give and bequeath unto my well-beloved wife the third part of all my said lands during her natural life for and in the name of her dower, the remainder thereof unto my said son Francis and to his heirs as is aforesaid;

Also I give and bequeath unto my said son Francis Trentham and to his assigns the ward of the body and marriage of my nephew Francis Meverell, with all lands, profits, advantages and emoluments whatsoever to the said wardship of right belonging or in any wise appertaining or that I have or lawfully ought to have by means of the said ward, in consideration whereof I do charge my said son Francis with the payment of all my debts and legacies, which debts with legacies I have at large in this my testament made relation;

Further, my mind and will is that my said wife shall have the education and bringing up of Thomas Trentham, my son, and also shall have the receipt and ordering of all his lands and rents in Whitgreave and Biddulph till he accomplish the age of one and twenty years, at which time the charges of his maintenance and education defrayed and allowed, what sum or sums of the said receipts and profits is remaining, the same she to allow him;

Also I give and bequeath unto my said wife the one half of all my plate and household furniture and also the one half of my mansion-house during her natural life;

Also I will and bequeath unto Elizabeth Trentham, my eldest daughter, for her portion and preferment, the sum of one thousand pounds of lawful current money, to be paid unto her or her assigns within four years next after my decease if she be so long unmarried, and in the mean season, being unmarried as is aforesaid, I will that my executor herein named shall pay her yearly forty pounds towards her maintenance, but if it fortune my said daughter to marry, then I will that my executor or his assigns shall pay unto her the said sum of one thousand pounds within three years next after her said marriage, that is to say, every of the said three years five hundred marks, and so from the time of the said marriage to be discharged of the payment of the said yearly payment of forty pounds as is aforesaid;

Also I give and bequeath unto Dorothy Cooper, my second daughter, for a remembrance, one silver bowl gilt;

Also I give and bequeath unto Katherine Stanhope, my youngest daughter, for a remembrance, one other silver bowl gilt;

Also I bequeath unto my son Stanhope and my son Cooper each of them one gelding, that is to say, to my son Stanhope the ambling grey gelding in Throwley Park, and to my son Cooper the gelding that was bought of widow Backlowe;

Also I do leave my said son, Francis, charged with the receipt of one annuity of eighteen pounds by year granted to my sister Joan Foljambe by her husband, Godfrey Foljambe, during her life, with all arrearages unpaid, which annuity and arrearages if he slack to demand, and cannot recover, then I will that he and his assigns shall yearly pay unto my said sister during her natural life the sum of thirteen pounds six shillings eight pence of lawful current money, and also I will that she shall have her chamber that she now hath during her life;

Also I will that my said son, Francis, shall of his cost and charges maintain and bring up well and sufficiently Richard Meverell, Ralph Meverell and Anne Meverell till Francis Meverell, their brother, shall accomplish the age of one and twenty years;

Also I give unto Marie Fernes and Joan Witterente, my wife's maids, either of them six marks;

Also I give and bequeath unto Mistress Dorothy Ashby, my niece, twenty pounds;

Also to Richard Rogers, gentleman, thirty pounds;

Also I will that my said son, Francis, shall make one sufficient lease in reversion for one and twenty years unto Thomas Smith, my servant, yielding the old and accustomed rent, of one tenement in Denstone, now in the occupation of widow Hughe, in consideration of his service, the said lease to take beginning from the day of her decease;

Also I give unto my servant, Robert Draycot, the yearly annuity of forty shillings during his life;

Also I give unto my servant, John Whithall, six pounds thirteen shillings four pence;

Also I give unto my servant, John Bentley, six pounds thirteen shillings four pence;

Also I give unto my servant, John Bradshaw, six pounds thirteen shillings four pence;

Also I give unto Ralph Nabbs five pounds;

Also I give unto William Hodskinson, my cook, five pounds;

Also I give unto Nicholas Langforde, my horsekeeper, forty shillings;

Also I give unto John Ferne, gentleman, my neighbour, my young bay mare;

The rest of all my goods, debts and chattels (my funeral expenses and debts discharged, whereof I have hereunder wholly made mention and relation), I give and bequeath unto my said son Francis Trentham, saving that I give unto my brother Chetwynd of Ingestre,

esquire, and my brother Sneyd, esquire, either of them one gelding or either of them ten pounds in gold at their election;

And I make and ordain my said son Francis Trentham my sole and lawful executor of this my last will and testament;

And also I do appoint my said brother Chetwynd and my brother Sneyd as overseers that this my will be performed;

In witness whereof to this my present last will I have set to my hand and seal the day and year above-written.

These be the debts that I, Thomas Trentham, do owe at the day of my decease:

First, unto Sir Thomas Stanhope, five hundred pounds;

Item, to my brother, Master George Sneyd, a hundred and ten pounds;

Item, to my servant, Thomas Smith, twenty pounds;

Item, to Thomas Sutton of Merston, forty shillings;

Item, to Fynian, three pounds eighteen shillings;

Item, to my brother Sneyd for two geldings, twelve pounds ten shillings;

Item, to Master Ferne two hundred and eighteen pounds.

Thomas Trentham.

Provided always that if my son should refuse to execute this my last will, that then my daughter Elizabeth to have the wardship of Francis Meverell and his brothers, with all profits in Throwley belonging to me, for her preferment in marriage. Thomas Trentham.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of John Ferne, John Bentley, John Whithall, Robert Draycot, Ralph Nabbs, with others.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud Londonia coram venerabili viro magistro Willelmo Drewrey Legum doctore Curie prerogative Cantuariensis magistro Custode siue Commissario &c quarto die mensis Maij Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo octagesimo octauo Iuramento Edwardi willett notarij publici procuratoris ffrancisci Trentham executoris in huiusmodi testamento nominati Cui Commissa fuit Administratio

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bonorum iurium et creditorum dicti defuncti de bene et fideliter administrando &c Ad  
sancta dei Evangelia iurato Examinatus

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury etc., on the fourth day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-eighth by the oath of Edward Willet, notary public, proctor of Francis Trentham, executor appointed in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same. Examined.]