

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the undated last will and testament, proved 10 November 1615, of John Combe (buried 12 July 1614), who in 1602 sold 107 acres of land to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon (see SBTRO ER 27/1) and bequeathed him £5 in the will below.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the son of John Combe (d.1588), who is said to have married four times. The testator was the son of his father's first marriage to Joyce Blount, the daughter of Edward Blount of Kidderminster (see Bellew, *infra*, p. 368) and granddaughter of Sir Thomas Blount (see Lewis, *infra*, p. 326). According to Adams, Edward Blount of Kidderminster, third son of Sir Thomas Blount (d.1524) of Kinlet, was in the service of Leicester's father, John Dudley (1504–1553), Earl of Northumberland, and Edward Blount's son, Thomas Blount (d.1568) of Kidderminster, was Leicester's leading officer of household, and may have been Leicester's steward at Kenilworth. See the will of Thomas Blount of Kidderminster, dated 28 November 1568 and proved 24 March 1569, TNA PROB 11/51/110, in which the testator leaves a bequest to 'my nephew, Thomas Combes', i.e. Thomas Combe (d.1609); the nuncupative will of Edward Blount of Kidderminster, dated 7 June 1557, TNA PROB 11/43/182; and Adams, Simon, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 331 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=-Nn5UY-RilEC&pg=PA331>

By Joyce Blount, John Combe (d.1588) had four sons and a daughter:

-Edward Combe (d.1597) of Wasperton, Warwickshire, who married Anne Hales, the daughter of Stephen Hales (d. 27 March 1574). Anne Hales may have been the daughter of Stephen Hales' first wife, Amy Morison, sister of the diplomat Sir Richard Morison (d.1557). Before her marriage to Stephen Hales, Amy Morison had been the wife of Robert Beale, by whom she was the mother of the diplomat and Clerk of the Privy Council, Robert Beale (1541-1601), for whom see the *ODNB* article and the will of Robert Beale dated 16 September 1545, TNA PROB 11/32/171. After the death of Robert Beale, Amy Morison married secondly, on 26 June 1546, Stephen Hales (d. 27 March 1574), esquire, of Newland and Exhall, Warwickshire, freeman of the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1552, Warden in 1557, 1564 and 1565, and one of the four founders of the Merchant Taylors' School. See the will of Sir Richard Morison, TNA PROB 11/39/330, in which he mentions 'my sister Amy's children by Stephen Hales'; the Wikipedia article on Stephen Hales' brother, John Hales (d.1572) edited by the author of this summary; Lewis, *infra*, p. 326; Bellew, *infra*, p. 148; and 'Combs Families of Coventry' at:

<http://www.combs-families.org/combs/records/england/war/coventry.htm>

By Anne Hales Edward Combe had three daughters: Joyce, who married firstly, in 1592, John Gardner, and secondly Sir Francis Cornwall of Burford, Shropshire; Elizabeth (d.1598); and Anne, who in 1601 married Robert Decons of Wasperton. After the death of Edward Combe in 1597, his widow, Anne (nee Hales), married Humphrey Ward (see Lewis, *infra*, p. 326).

-Thomas Combe (d.1609) of College House, Old Stratford, who in 1586 married Mary Bonner (d. 5 April 1617), daughter of Anthony Bonner (d.1580) and Bridget Savage (d.1608x11), sister of Francis Savage (c.1524 - 19 August 1557). See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. III, pp. 493-4, and Vol. IV, p. 387; the will of Francis Savage dated 17 August 1557 and proved 4 July 1558, TNA PROB 11/40/349; the will of Anthony Bonner, dated 16 November 1579 and proved 2 November 1580, TNA PROB 11/62/452; and the will of Bridget (nee Savage) Bonner (d.1608x11), dated 16 January 1608 and proved 3 June 1611, TNA PROB 11/118/12.

At the time of her marriage to Thomas Combe (d.1609) Mary Bonner was the widow of William Yonge (d. December 1583), gentleman, of Caynton (in Edgmond), Shropshire, (whose first wife had been Anne Sneyd, aunt of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham), by whom she had an only daughter, Bridget Yonge. By Thomas Combe (d.1609), Mary Bonner had two sons, William Combe (1586-1667) and Thomas Combe (1589-1657) (to whom William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon left a sword in his will), and two daughters, Mary (1591-1620), who married Edward Lane (d.1625), and Joyce (b.1593). For the will of Thomas Combe (d.1609), see TNA PROB 11/113/130.

-John Combe (buried 12 July 1614), the testator, who died a bachelor. See Bellew, *infra*, p. 366.

-George Combe, who married a wife surnamed Barcroft, by whom he had a son, John Combe of Ulvechurch, Worcestershire. See Lewis, *infra*, p. 326.

-Elizabeth Combe.

The testator's father, John Combe (d.1588), married secondly, on 27 August 1561, Rose Clopton (buried 14 October 1579), the daughter of William Clopton (d.1560) by Elizabeth Grey (b.1505), buried 31 January 1559), the daughter of Sir Edward Grey (c.1472 - 14 February 1529) of Enville, Staffordshire, by his second wife, Anne Middleton. See the will of Sir Edward Grey, dated 2 February 1529 and proved 4 May 1529, TNA PROB 11/23/92, and Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, p. 484 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=8JcbV309c5UC&pg=PA484>

Rose Clopton was the sister of William Clopton (c.1537-1592), owner of New Place (later purchased by William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon), who married Anne Griffith (d.1596), the daughter of Sir George Griffith (c.1511-1559) of Stockton, Warwickshire, by whom he was the father of Joyce Clopton (1562-1637), Maid of

Honour to Queen Elizabeth, who on 31 May 1580 married the soldier and courtier George Carew (1555-1629), later Earl of Totnes. Carew was a favourite of James I, and vice-chamberlain of the household to James' wife, Anne of Denmark. Joyce Clopton was thus the wife of George Carew during the years when Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, was a Maid of Honour to the Queen. See the *ODNB* entry for George Carew, and *Anagrammata* on this website. By his second wife, Rose Clopton, John Combe (d.1588) had several children. See 'The Cloptons of Warwickshire' at:

<http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~clopton/warwick.htm>.

See also Lewis, *infra*, p. 326; and Bellew, J.C.M., *Shakespeare's Home at New Place, Stratford-Upon-Avon*, (London: Virtue Brothers and Co., 1863), pp. 162-6, 366, 369 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=psIjAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA369>

By Rose Clopton the testator's father had a son and daughter, as well as three other sons who appear to have died young (see Lewis, *infra*, p. 326):

-**John Combe** (b.1563), who married Joan Murcott.

- **Elizabeth Combe**, who married John Hyett (according to Lewis, Wyett); and three other sons who appear to have died young.

PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

The foregoing information identifies most of the persons named in the testator's will below. For further details of the testator's relationship to the children of his father's first and second marriages, see SBTRO ER 27/1; and the pedigree in Lewis, B. Roland, *The Shakespeare Documents*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), Vol. II, p. 326. See also the pedigree of Blount in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1883), Vol. IV, pp. 81-2 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=dD7QAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA81>

In the will below the testator requests burial in the church of Holy Trinity in Stratford upon Avon 'near to the place where my mother was buried'.

The testator's uncle, John Blount, mentioned in the will below, was the brother of the testator's mother, and the younger son of Edward Blount of Kidderminster. See the will of Edward Blount of Kidderminster, TNA PROB 11/43/182.

Sir Edward Blount, whom the testator appoints as one of his overseers, may have been Leicester's servant, Edward Blount (c.1554-1630), elder son of Thomas Blount (another brother of the testator's mother). For the will of Thomas Blount, see TNA PROB 11/51/110.

For the testator's executor, Sir Richard Verney (1563-1630), see the will, dated 1 April 1583 and proved 11 February 1584, TNA PROB 11/66/331, of his guardian, Sir John Huband (d. 24 December 1583), and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/verney-richard-1563-1630>

Verney was a lifelong friend of Sir William Cooke (d.1619), son of Lord Burghley's brother-in-law, William Cooke (d.1589) by Frances Grey. In 1597 Verney negotiated Cooke's marriage to Joyce Lucy, the daughter of Thomas Lucy (1551–1605), son of the Sir Thomas Lucy (d.1600) of Charlecote who allegedly prosecuted William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon for deer poaching. See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. II, p. 172; the will of Sir John Grey, TNA PROB 11/48/27; the will of Sir Anthony Cooke, TNA PROB 11/59/110; the entry for Sir Thomas Lucy (d.1600) of Charlecote in the *ODNB*; a letter from Master Richard Verney to Sir Robert Cecil, dated 6 June 1597, and the History of Parliament for William Cooke at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/cooke-william-ii-1572-1619>

The identity of the testator's first cousin, Sir Henry Clare, mentioned in the will below, has not hitherto been ascertained. He was the younger son of Simon Clare of Kidderminster, by Anne or Agnes Blount, the daughter of Edward Blount of Kidderminster. It would appear that Anne was the sister of the testator's mother, Joyce Blount. Sir Henry Clare's elder brother was Sir Francis Clare, who married Muriel Sheldon, the daughter of Ralph Sheldon of Beoley. See the will of Simon Clare, dated 17 May 1580, TNA PROB 11/63/330; the will of Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, TNA PROB 11/121/345; and Grazebrook, H. Sydney, *The Heraldry of Worcestershire*, (London: John Russell Smith, 1873), Vol. I, pp. 114-115 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=8IMBAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA115>

Clare of Caldwell Hall, Kidderminster, and Croome D'Abitot, as borne by Sir Ralph Clare of Caldwell, who was created a Knight of the Bath at the coronation of Charles I. This gallant cavalier, who died in 1670, aged 84, was the eldest son of Sir Francis Clare of Caldwell by Muriel, daughter of Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, grandson of Simon Clare by Anne, daughter of Edward Blount of Kidderminster, and great-grandson of Gilbert Clare, who was a son of Nicholas Clare by Margaret, daughter of Symon Ryce of Croome D'Abitot, which Simon Ryce was the son of Thomas Ryce of Shrewsbury by Margaret, daughter and heiress of John, son of Sir Geoffrey D'Abitot of Croome. The family pedigree was recorded at the Visitation of 1682-3.

See also the pedigree of Clare of Crome D'Abitot in Grazebrook, George, and John Paul Rylands, eds., *The Visitation of Shropshire Taken in the Year 1623*, (London: Harleian Society, 1889), p. 113 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationshrop00britgoog#page/n166/mode/2up>

The testator leaves bequests to his ‘cousin, Margaret Reynolds’, wife of Thomas Reynolds the elder of Old Stratford, and to the children of Jane Fetherston, daughter of Thomas Reynolds the elder. According to the pedigree of Reynolds, Thomas Reynolds the elder was the son of Hugh Reynolds of Old Stratford and Joyce Blount, the daughter of ‘Robert Blount of Glason Park near Ashley’. See Fetherston, John, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Warwick in the Year 1619*, (London: Harleian Society, 1877), Vol. XII, pp. 242-3 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationcount01britgoog#page/n268/mode/2up>

It appears, however, that the pedigree is inaccurate, and that Joyce Blount was the daughter of Walter Blount (d.1561) of Glasshampton Park near Astley, Worcestershire, by Isabel Acton, the daughter of Walter Acton. Joyce Blount, the wife of Hugh Reynolds, was thus the sister (not the daughter) of Robert Blount (d. 25 May 1573), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/55/263. See the pedigree of Blount in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire, supra*, p. 81.

See also *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Worcestershire*, (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1971), Vol. IV, pp. 232-3 at:

http://www.lamartin.com/genealogy/blounts_of_astley.htm

See also Croke, Alexander, *The Genealogical History of the Croke Family Originally Called Le Blount*, (Oxford: W. Baxter, 1823), pp. 157-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/genealogicalhist02crok#page/156/mode/2up>

See also, Enos, Carol, *The Shakespeare Encyclopedia*, available online:

Reynolds, Hugh “. . . a well-to-do and well-connected yeoman. His wife was Joyce, daughter to Walter Blount of Glason Park. He owned leases of ‘Colles’ (Colley’s?) Farm in Old Stratford, a farm at Shotertry, and ‘Hall’s Close’ by the Bridge, and was owner or lessee of at least seven barns—three in Swine Street, one on Bankcroft Side, one in Chapel Lane, the Old Town Barn, and the College Tithe-Barn. His house in Chapel street was of modest dimensions but very comfortably furnished, of two stories, containing a ‘hall,’ a parlour, two upper chambers, a servants’ chamber, a kitchen and buttery. . . . His son, Thomas, who married Margaret, the daughter and coheirress to William Gower of Remarley, and had by her a large family, made his home, in or before 1585, at Colles (Colley’s?) Farm near the Church. His household in 1595 consisted, with servants, of no less than twenty-two persons, and was the largest we hear of in Stratford. He and his wife were stout Roman Catholics, paying their monthly fines for recusancy. Their eldest son, the heir of his mother, William, born in 1575, was one of the numerous young men of good family who enjoyed the friendship of Shakespeare. He married a lady from London,

Frances de Bois, at Clifford Chambers, on 3 August 1615. Shakespeare may have been at the wedding. 'To William Reynolds gentleman' he left in his will, in March 1616, '25s. 9d. to buy him a ring'" (Fripp, Shakespeare's Stratford, 42).

As noted by Enos, *supra*, and by Palmer, William Reynolds (1575-1633) was bequeathed money for a ring in the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. See Palmer, Alan and Veronica Palmer, *Who's Who in Shakespeare's England*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981, 1999), p. 202.

It is often claimed that William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon wrote doggerel verses on the testator on the basis of a diary written by a Lieutenant Hammond, BL MS 213, ff. 315-84. See Legg, L.G. Wickham, ed., *A Relation of a Short Survey of 26 Counties*, (London: F.E. Robinson, 1904), pp. 77-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/relationofshorts00capt#page/76/mode/2up>

In that dayes travell we came by Stratford vpon Auon, where in the Church in that Towne there are some Monuments which Church was built by Archbishop Stratford; Those worth obseruing and which wee tooke notice were these.

A Monument for the E. of Totnes, and his Lady, yet liuing.

The Monument of Sir Hugh Clopton, who built that strong Stone Bridge of 18. fayre Arches, ouer that Riuer; He was Lord Mayor of London.

A neat Monument of that famous English Poet, Mr. William Shakespeere; who was borne heere.

And one of an old Gentleman a Batchelor, Mr. Combe, vpon whose name, the sayd Poet, did merrily fann vp some witty, and facetious verses, which time would nott giue us leaue to sacke vp.

The first monument mentioned is that of George Carew (1555-1629), Earl of Totnes, and his wife, Joyce Blount, Maid of Honour to Queen Elizabeth, the testator's distant relatives through his father's second marriage (see above).

With respect to the verses on the testator allegedly penned by Shakespeare, it should be noted that when Lieutenant Hammond passed through Stratford upon Avon on 9 September 1634 he did not record them for lack of time, and his information that they were written by Shakespeare cannot have been anything other than hearsay. Versions of the alleged epitaph were common at the time, including one printed in 1608 in *The More the Merrier* by H.P., a work now attributed to Henry Peacham. Moreover according to Legg, Lieutenant Hammond's diary and other pieces in BL MS 213 are all written in the same hand, a hand which cannot date from earlier than the Restoration, i.e. 1660.

RM: T{estamentum} Iohannis Combe

[f. 419r] In the name of God, Amen. I, John Combe of Old Stratford in the county of Warwick, gentleman, being both in perfect health and memory, God be thanked, do make, ordain and declare my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First I commend my soul to God, my Maker, hoping and steadfastly believing that through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my alone Saviour and Redeemer, I shall after this life ended be partaker of the life everlasting;

And my body to be buried in the parish church of Stratford upon Avon in the said county of Warwick near to the place where my mother was buried, and my will is that a convenient tomb of the value of three score pounds shall be by my executors hereafter [f. 419v] named out of my goods and chattels first raised within one year after my decease be set over me;

Item, I give and bequeath to my cousin, Sir Henry Clare, knight, two hundred pounds of lawful English money to be paid unto him within six months after my decease, and if he die before then, I will and bequeath the said two hundred pounds to Frances Clare, his daughter, to be paid to her within the said six months;

Item, I give and bequeath to my brother [=half-brother], John Combe, all that messuage or tenement with th' appurtenances wherein William Cawdery alias Cooke now dwelleth situate, lying and being in Warwick in the said county of Warwick near and adjoining to the Gable there, to have and to hold the same unto the said John Combe, my brother, for and during the term of his life, and after his decease the reversion and remainder thereof to be to the use and behoof of the heirs males of the body of the said John Combe lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for want of such heirs to the heirs males of the body of my nephew, William Combe, esquire, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to the use and behoof of my nephew, Thomas Combe, gentleman, and of the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to my [-my] brother, George Combe, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to the right heirs of me, the said John Combe, forever;

Item, I give and bequeath to the children of my brother, John Combe, the sum of three hundred pounds of lawful English money to be paid unto them within six months after their father's decease, and to be equally divided amongst them, I mean those of his children as shall be living at his decease, and in the meantime my will is and so I bequeath and devise the said three hundred pounds shall within one year after my decease be raised out of my goods and chattels and be set forth or otherwise employed to the best

use it may be, and the use and profit coming thereof to be paid yearly to my said brother, John Combe, during his life to his own use and towards the bringing up of his children;

Item, I give, will, devise and bequeath unto the said William Combe one close or ground with th' appurtenances called Pole close or ground called Walimtrye(?) close and other close or ground with th' appurtenances lately divided into two grounds called Ingon grove, all of them situate, lying and being within the parish of Bishop's Hampton alias Hampton Lucy in the said county of Warwick, to have and to hold the same to the said William Combe and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs the reversion and remainder thereof to be and remain to my said nephew, Thomas Combe, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to my brother, George Combe, for and during his natural life;

And after his decease to my nephew, John Combe, son of the said George, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to the use and behoof of my brother, John Combe, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to the right heirs of me, the said John Combe, forever;

Item, I give, will, bequeath and devise to my said nephew, Thomas Combe, all those grounds or closes of land, meadow and pasture lying and being in Hampton aforesaid with their and every of their appurtenances called or known by the several names of Syndrye meadow, Rynell alias Rynhill, and Priest croft, to have and to hold the same to my said nephew, Thomas Combe, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs the said last-mentioned premises to be and remain to the use and behoof of the said William Combe and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to my said brother, George, for and during his natural life;

And after his decease to my said nephew, John, his son, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to my brother, John, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to the right heirs of me, the said John, forever;

Item, I give, will, bequeath and devise unto my said brother, George Combe, all those closes or grounds with th' appurtenances called or known by the name of Parsons close alias Shackspere's close, lying and being in Hampton aforesaid, to have and to hold the same to the said George Combe for and during the term of his natural life;

And after his decease the said last-mentioned premises with their appurtenances and the reversion and reversions thereof to be and remain to my said nephew, John Combe, and the heirs males [f. 420r] of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to my nephew, William Combe, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to my nephew, Thomas Combe, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to my said brother, John Combe, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to the right heirs [-heirs] of me, the said John Combe, forever;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Thomas Reynolds, son of Thomas Reynolds of Old Stratford aforesaid, gentleman, one hundred pounds of lawful English money; to my cousin, Margaret Reynolds, wife of the said Thomas Reynolds th' elder, one hundred pounds of lawful English money; to the children of Jane Fetherston, daughter of the said Thomas Reynolds th' elder, one hundred pounds of lawful English money, equally to be divided amongst them and to be paid unto the said children at the decease of the said Jane, and my will and meaning is and so I devise and will that the said one hundred pounds shall within one year after my decease be set forth by my executors and overseers to the best use and commodity that may be, and the use thereof coming shall be paid and [sic?] yearly to the said Jane during her life for her maintenance;

Item, I give and bequeath to Margaret Reynolds, daughter of the said Thomas, twenty pounds, [+and?] to every one of the rest of my cousin Thomas Reynolds his children ten pounds apiece, to be paid within one year after my decease, and my will is and so I devise that if any of the children of the said Thomas Reynolds happen to die, then his, her and their legacy so dying shall be and remain amongst the rest of his now children as shall be then living, equally to be divided amongst them;

Item, I give and bequeath to my brother, George Combe, my best suit of apparel and my second gown, and if he be not living at my decease, my will is that his son, John, shall have the said apparel and gown;

Item, I give and bequeath to my sister Hyett and her children one hundred marks of lawful English money, to be paid within six months after my decease and to be equally divided amongst them;

Item, I give and bequeath to my nieces, Mary Combe and Joyce Combe, daughters of my brother, Thomas Combe, deceased, one hundred pounds apiece of lawful English money to be paid within one year after my decease, and if either of them die before her legacy be due to them, my will is and so I devise that her legacy so dying shall be paid and remain to the survivor of them, and if both of them so die, then my will is and so I devise that both their legacies shall remain and be paid unto my brother George his two daughters equally to be divided between them;

Item, I give and bequeath to my said brother George his two daughters one hundred marks apiece of lawful English money to be paid unto them within one year after my decease, and if either of them die before that time, her legacy so dying shall remain and be paid to the survivor of them, and if the[y] both die before their legacies be due, my will is and so I do devise that both of their legacies shall remain and be paid unto the said Mary and Joyce Combe equally to be divided between them;

Item, I do give, will and devise unto my cousin, Margaret Reynolds, wife of the said Thomas Reynolds th' elder, all my right and title I have to those grounds called Samon Tayle lying and being within the parish of Stratford upon Avon in the said county of Warwick, to have and to hold the same for and during the term of her natural life;

And after her decease the said last-mentioned premises and the reversion thereof to be and remain to William(?) Reynolds, her son, and the heirs males of her [sic] body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to Thomas Reynolds, her son, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to Walter Reynolds, her son, and the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and to be begotten;

And for default of such heirs to the right heirs of the said Margaret Reynolds forever;

Item, I give, bequeath and release unto my said cousin, Thomas Reynolds th' elder, all such sums of money and debts which he oweth unto me, and thereof and of all reckonings, accounts and demands whatsoever I do by this my will release, acquit and discharge him, the said Thomas Reynolds th' elder, his heirs, executors and administrators forever;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my said cousin, Margaret Reynolds, all my plate, my best [f. 420v] gown, and all my household stuff except my apparel;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my servant, Richard Mason, if he be my servant at my decease, fifty pounds of lawful English money; to Andrian Holder, if he be my servant at my decease, thirty pounds of lawful English money; to John Fetherston, ten pounds; to Robert Davies, if he be my servant at my decease, twenty pounds; to Richard Burnett, if

he be my servant at my decease, twenty shillings; and to Panckeridge, if he be my servant at my decease, forty shillings; and to my cousin, Thomas Reynolds th' elder his servants, such as shall be his servants at my decease, five shillings apiece, all these legacies to be paid within one year after my decease;

Item, I give and bequeath to my uncle, John Blount, if he be living at my decease, forty shillings to buy him a ring; to my cousin, Anne Dickens [=Decons?], five pounds to buy her a ring; to my god-daughter Gardener twenty pounds; and to her sister ten pounds, to be paid within one year after my decease;

Item, I give, will and bequeath one hundred pounds of lawful English money to be used and employed forever according to my intent and meaning hereafter expressed in this my will, that is to say and my will is that my executors and overseers hereafter herein named shall within one year after my decease upon good and reasonable security lend the said hundred pounds unto fifteen poor or young tradesmen, occupiers or handicraftsmen dwelling within the borough of Stratford upon Avon aforesaid, viz., to every one of them twenty nobles apiece for the term of three years, every one of them paying yearly during the said three years the sum of three shillings and four pence at the feasts of Saint Michael th' Archangel and the Annunciation of Blessed Mary the Virgin by equal portions, and at th' end of the said three years to fifteen others for three years, every one paying yearly 3s 4d in manner aforesaid, so from three years to three years forever, ever paying as aforesaid according to my true meaning, which said yearly several sums of three shillings and four pence before mentioned to be paid as aforesaid for the said one hundred pounds shall be and forever remain to the use of the almsfolk of Stratford aforesaid, and my will is and so I do desire that my executors and overseers or the survivor of them will take such order either with the bailiff or burgesses of the borough of Stratford aforesaid for the time being or by some other way or mean that the said hundred pounds and the benefit thereof coming may continue forever according to my meaning before expressed;

Item, I give and bequeath to the poor of Stratford twenty pounds, to the poor of Warwick five pounds, and to the poor of Alcester five pounds;

Item, I give unto William White forty shillings which he oweth me by bond if he be living at my decease, and the same bond to be cancelled; to Mr William Shakespeare five pounds; and to my landlord, John Davies, 40s;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Francis Collins th' elder of the borough of Warwick ten pounds of lawful English money, and to my godson, John Collins, his son, other ten pounds of lawful English money, to be paid unto them within one year after my decease, and if either of them die before receipt of his said legacy, then my will is and so I devise and bequeath that the survivor of them shall have his legacy that shall so happen to die, and if the said Francis and John Collins happen to die before the time appointed for the payment of their legacies, then my will is and so I devise and bequeath both their legacies of ten pounds apiece to Susanna Collins, wife of the said Francis, and to th' eldest son of the said Francis equally betwixt them;

Item, I give and bequeath to the said Susanna Collins six pounds thirteen shillings four pence of lawful English money, and to Mr Henry Walker twenty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my servants, Richard Mason and Andrian Holder, if they be my servants at the time of my decease, all my wearing apparel not before given except that apparel that was my uncle William Combe's, and if they be not my servants, then to such persons my executors shall appoint;

Item, I give and bequeath to my cousin, Thomas Reynolds th' elder, and Margaret, his wife, my team of oxen which I shall have at my decease, and if I then shall have no team, then I give and bequeath forty marks of lawful English money, and also I give unto them, the said Thomas and Margaret, my wains, tumbrels, ploughs and other things belonging to a team;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Sir Francis Smith, knight, five pounds [f. 421r] to buy him a hawk, and to the Lady Anne, his wife, forty pounds of lawful English money to buy her a basin and ewer, and unto Mrs Palmer, the wife of John Palmer, esquire, 40s to buy her a ring;

Item, I give and bequeath to every one of my godchildren before not named five shillings apiece;

Item, I give, will, bequeath and devise to my cousin, Thomas Combe, his heirs and assigns, forever all my meadow ground with th' appurtenances in Shottery meadow to the uses, intents and purposes hereafter herein mentioned, that is to say, that he, the said Thomas Combe, his heirs and assigns, shall yearly and every year forever pay to a learned preacher twenty shillings to make a sermon twice a year at Stratford church aforesaid, and also shall and do yearly and every year forever one week before the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord God give and deliver to such ten poor people within the borough of Stratford upon Avon aforesaid as shall be yearly appointed and elected by the bailiff and chief alderman for the time being of the said borough and two of the ancientest aldermen there ten black gowns, every one of them worth thirteen shillings and four pence apiece;

And if my said nephew, Thomas Combe, his heirs or assigns, shall or do not pay the said twenty shillings yearly to a preacher and give and deliver the said gowns, then my will is and so I will and devise that it shall be lawful to and for the bailiff and burgesses of the borough of Stratford aforesaid and their successors for the time being from time to time and at all times hereafter, so often as the said twenty shillings shall not be yearly paid to a preacher or the said gowns or any of them delivered and given as aforesaid according to my will and meaning herein mentioned, to enter into the said meadow ground and every part and parcel thereof, and the issues and profits thereof to take and out of the issues and profits thereof to pay, give and satisfy the yearly sum of twenty shillings so behind unpaid and the arrearages thereof, if any be, together with the said gowns as shall be

behind undelivered according to this my will, and after the said meadow ground to be to the said Thomas Combe, his heirs and assigns, charged as aforesaid;

Item, I give and bequeath to every one of my good and just debtors for every twenty pound that any man oweth me twenty shillings, and so after this rate for a greater or lesser debt to be delivered back unto them by my executors when they pay in their debts;

All the rest of my goods, chattels, leases, credits and rights whatsoever, after my debts and legacies paid and my funerals discharged according to my degree, and my will performed, which I will and charge my executors to do within one year and an half after my decease upon pain of forfeiture of such legacies [-of?], as well of lands as money or goods, [+as?] I have or do herein give and devise unto them, I give and bequeath unto my said nephew, Thomas Combe;

And I do make and ordain the said Thomas Combe, Sir Richard Verney, knight, and Bartholomew Hales, esquire, executors of this my last will and testament, and I do give and bequeath to the said Sir Richard Verney and Bartholomew Hales twenty pounds apiece of lawful English money;

And also I do nominate and appoint Sir Edward Blount, knight, Sir Henry Rainsford, knight, Sir Francis Smith, knight, and John Palmer of Compton, esquire, to be overseers of this my will, unto whom I give five pounds apiece or unto every one of them a silver salt worth five pounds;

Item, I give to Mrs Barnes forty shillings to buy her a ring, and to the Lady Rainsford forty shillings to buy her a ring;

And my will is and so I do devise that if any person whatsoever before named shall dislike of such legacies as I have herein devised or bequeathed unto them, and not hold themselves therewith contented, shall lose the same and all the benefit that the[y] can any way claim by this my will;

And I do hereby revoke all former wills by me heretofore made, and do declare and publish this to be my last will and testament, and have unto every sheet hereof written my name. John Combe.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro Mag^{ist}ro Will^{el}mo Bird legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cant^{uariensis} Mag^{ist}ro Custode sive Comissario l^{egi}time constituto Decimo die Mens^{is} Novembris Anno domini mill^{es}imo sexcentesimo decimo quinto Iuramento Thome Combe vnus executorum in eodem testamento nominati Cui comissa fuit administracⁱo omniu^m et singulorum bonorum Iuriu^m et creditorum dictⁱ defuncti de bene et fidel^{ite}r administrando eadem ad sancta dei evangelia Iuratⁱ Reservata potestate similem Comissionem faciendi Richardo Verney militi et

Bartholomeo Hales armigero executoribus etiam in dicto testamento no{m}i{n}at{is}
cum venerint eu{m} petitur{is} in debita iuris forma admissur{is}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Bird, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the tenth day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred fifteenth by the oath of Thomas Combe, one of the executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same, with power reserved for a similar grant to be made to Richard Verney, knight, and Bartholomew Hales, esquire, executors also named in the said testament, when they shall have come to petition in due form of law to be admitted the same.]