

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 4 May 1568 and proved 28 May 1568, of Nicholas Leveson (d.1568), uncle of William Leveson (d.1621), who acted as trustee to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, including William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon, in the allocation of shares in the ground lease of the Globe Theatre in 1599. The testator leaves Shakespeare's trustee a bequest in the will below:

Item, I bequeath more to William Leveson, one of the sons of my brother, Thomas Leveson, over and besides the ten pounds to him before bequested, the sum of twenty pounds of lawful money of England to be paid to him by mine executors at his full age of 21 years.

For the will of the testator's nephew, William Leveson (d.1621), see TNA PROB 11/137/600.

The testator was the son of Nicholas Leveson (d. 20 August 1539) and Dionyse Bodley (d.1560). For the will of the testator's father, Nicholas Leveson, see TNA PROB 11/27/552. For the will of the testator's mother, Dionyse Bodley, see TNA PROB 11/43/645.

For the testator's siblings, see the will of his mother, Dionyse Bodley, *supra*.

The testator married Mary Mathew, sister of Henry Mathew, and widow of the London goldsmith, Richard Grace, by whom she had a daughter, Margaret Grace, mentioned in the will below, who married John Robotham. John Robotham's sister, Mary Robotham, married the testator's nephew, Shakespeare's trustee, William Leveson (d.1621). See the pedigree of Robotham of St. Alban's in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Hertfordshire*, (London: Harleian Society, 1886), Vol. XXII, p. 87 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=a_wUAAAQAAJ&pg=PA87#v=onepage&q&f=false.

For the will of the testator's wife, Mary (nee Mathew) Grace Leveson, dated 30 December 1578, see TNA PROB 11/62/540.

RM: T{estamentum} Nich{ola}i Leveson

[f. 69r] In dei nomine amen. The fourth day of May in the year of Our Lord God 1568 and in the tenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Nicholas Leveson, citizen and mercer of London and Merchant of the Staple, sick in body but whole of mind and memory, lauded be God therefore, make this my present last will and testament in manner and form following:

First and principally I commend my soul into th' hands of Almighty God by whose mercy and goodness and blessed passion my trust and confidence is for to be saved, and my body I will shall be buried in the parish church of Saint Andrew Undershaft where I now dwell in some convenient and meet place for the same at the discretion of mine executors;

Item, I bequeath unto the poor people of the parish of Saint Andrew Undershaft five pounds to be distributed where most need shall be at the discretion of mine executors immediately after my decease;

Item, I do bequeath unto the poor prisoners of the King's Bench, Ludgate, Marshalsea and Newgate which do lie in irons, to every of the said four prisons five pounds apiece;

Item, I do bequeath unto Elizabeth Buckmaster, one of my maidservants, the sum of six pounds thirteen shillings four pence of lawful money of England to be paid to her by mine executors at the day of her marriage;

Item, I bequeath unto Katherine Fairechilde, another of my maidservants, three pounds six shillings eight pence to be paid to her by mine executors at the day of her marriage;

Item, I bequeath to the residue of my maidservants being with me at the time of my decease forty shillings apiece to be paid to them by mine executors at the day of their marriage;

Item, I do bequeath unto Richard Grace, now dwelling with me, three pounds six shillings eight pence of lawful English money to be paid to him by mine executors at his full age of 21 years;

Item, I do bequeath unto Richard Twycton, mine apprentice, the sum of thirty pounds of lawful money of England to be paid to him by mine executors at the end and term of his apprenticeship towards his beginning and occupying in the trade of the Staple;

Item, I do bequeath unto Henry Pitt, mine apprentice, fifteen pounds of lawful money of England to be paid by mine executors to him at th' end and term of his apprenticeship toward his beginning and occupying in the trade of the Staple;

Item, I will that no black gowns be given for me unless it be two gowns to my twain executors hereunder specified, and the same to be considered in rings as hereafter followeth, that is to say, I will to my brother, Thomas Leveson, and his wife, to my brother, William Leveson, and his wife, to my brother Calthorpe and his wife, to my cousin Osborne and his wife; to my cousin Kyrton and his wife, to my cousin Vaughan and his wife, and to my friend, Mrs Arlakaden [=Harlakenden?], to every of them rings of gold of the value of thirty shillings apiece for a remembrance of me;

Item, I bequeath unto Margaret Grace, my wife's daughter, to my brother John Grace of Saint Alban's, to my brother Mathew and his wife, and to John Fallowfelde, to every of

them likewise rings of gold of the value of thirty shillings apiece for a remembrance of me;

Also I bequeath unto every one of the children of my brother, Thomas Leveson, and of my brother, William Leveson, now being alive rings of gold of the value of 30s apiece for a remembrance of me;

Item, I do give and bequeath to every one of the children of my brother, Thomas Leveson, & of my brother, William Leveson, now being alive ten pounds apiece of lawful money of England to be paid to them by mine executors at their full age or marriage;

Item, I bequeath unto Dionyse Calthorpe, my sister Calthorpe's daughter, the sum of ten pounds of lawful money of England to be paid to her at her full age or marriage by mine executors;

Item, I do forgive to my brother, Thomas Leveson, the twelve pounds which he doth owe me by account;

Item, I do forgive unto John Aldey ten shillings which he doth owe me by his bill;

Item, I do bequeath to the poor scholars of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, to either university five pounds apiece of lawful money of England to be distributed among the poor by mine executors where most need shall be thought by them at their discretions;

Item, I do bequeath unto the church of Saint Andrew Undershaft five pounds toward the reparations and maintenance of the said church;

Item, I bequeath unto Richard Twycton, mine apprentice, the next advowson or avoidance of the parsonage of Kislingbury in the county of Northampton, the which of late I had of one George Sheffield in the county of Rutland, gentleman, being granted and made from the Lord Latimer to one Francis Watson of Wilton in the county of York and Richard Adamson of Cotton in the county of Duresine(?) [=Durham?], yeoman, bearing date the third day of January in the fourth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, to have and to hold the said next advowson and avoidance to the said Richard Twicton and his assigns together with all deeds, evidences, conveyances and writings to the said advowson or next avoidance belonging or appertaining;

Item, I will to the preacher that shall make a sermon for me at my funeral six shillings and eight pence;

Item, I do forgive unto my brother Mathew eleven pounds six shillings and five pence which he doth owe me by arrest(?) upon a bill of his hand;

Item, I bequeath six pounds thirteen shillings four pence for and towards a dinner to be made for me after my decease and funerals by my kinsfolks and friends;

And touching the disposition of all my lands & tenements, I will that all my lands and tenements set, lying and being in Hanslope in the county of Buckingham, the which I late purchased of one Henry Sommer, shall be sold by mine executors to the most advantage towards the payment of such debts as I do owe to Margaret Grace, my wife's daughter;

Also I will that mine executors, so soon after my decease as the sum of three hundred pounds may be collected and gathered towards the payment of Margaret Grace, do repay into the Chamber of London the said three hundred pounds of lawful money of England in part of payment of her orphan's portion owing to her, the which said payment I will to be done for the clearing and discharge of my sureties for one recognizance;

Item, I bequeath more to William Leveson, one of the sons of my brother, Thomas Leveson, over and besides the ten pounds to him before bequested, the sum of twenty pounds of lawful money of England to be paid to him by mine executors at his full age of 21 years;

And I do make and ordain my well-beloved wife, [f. 69v] Mary Leveson, and my trusty and well-beloved brother, William Leveson, my executors of this my present testament, and I bequeath unto my brother, William Leveson, for his labour in that behalf one hundred pounds of current money of England;

And I make and ordain my well-beloved and trusty friend, Henry Plankney, and my servant, Richard Twicton, supervisors or overseers of the same, and I give and bequeath to either of my overseers or supervisors twenty marks apiece of lawful money of England for their pains to see this my present testament faithfully and truly performed, executed and done;

The residue of all and singular my goods, chattels, silver plate, jewels, ready money and debts whatsoever after my debts paid, my funerals and legacies performed, and this my present testament and last will in all things being performed, I fully and wholly give to Mary Leveson, my wife, to do and dispose the same at her will & pleasure;

And I utterly revoke and disannul all and every other former wills, testaments, legacies, bequests, executors and overseers by me in any wise before this time made, named, given, willed or bequeathed, and I will that this my present testament and all things herein mentioned and recited shall stand, remain and abide only for my verery [sic] last will and testament and none other or otherwise;

In witness whereof I, the said Nicholas Leveson, have set to my hand & seal the day and year above-written. By me, Nicholas Leveson. by me, Edmund Calthorpe, haberdasher, witness to this testament. By me, William Vaughan, draper, witness to this testament. Per me, William Pytt de Clements Inn testem ad hunc testamentum.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum coram Mag^{ist}ro Waltero Haddon legum doctor^e Curie prerogatiue Cantuarien^{sis} com^missario apud London vicesimo octavo die Maij Anno d^{omi}ni Mill^{es}imo Quingen^{tes}imo Sexagesimo octavo Iuramento Will^{el}mi Leveson personal^{ite}r p^{rese}nt^{is} et Edwardi Orwell notarij publici procurator^{is} Marie Reⁱc^te Executor^{um} in testamento h^{uius}mo^di no^miⁿat^{orum} Quib^{us} comiss^a fuit administracⁱo omⁿiu^m et singulorum bonorum &c De bene &c Ad sancta dei Evangelia Iurat^{is}

[=The above-written testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the twenty-eighth day of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred sixty-eighth by the oath of William Leveson, personally present, and Edward Orwell, notary public, proctor of Mary, relict, executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc.]