

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 30 December 1578 and proved 3 December 1580, of Mary (nee Mathew) Leveson, aunt 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. For the will of William Leveson (d.1621), see TNA PROB 11/137/600.

The testatrix' family background is unknown, apart from the fact that she had a brother, Henry Mathew.

The testatrix married firstly the London goldsmith, Richard Grace (d.1560), by whom she had a daughter, Margaret Grace (d.1585), 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 will of Richard Grace, TNA PROB 11/43/172; the will of Robert Robotham, TNA PROB 11/53/552; and 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_wUAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA87#v=onepage&q&f=false.

The testatrix married secondly Nicholas Leveson (d.1568), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/50/162.

The testatrix leaves a bequest to 'my sister Fanshawe', who was Grace Paget, the daughter of Lady Anne Yorke (d.1575) by her first marriage (for the will of Lady Anne Yorke, see TNA PROB 11/57/581). Grace Paget married firstly Robert Bull (d.1551); secondly Robert Robotham, by whom she was the mother of the testatrix' son-in-law, John Robotham; and thirdly Godfrey Fanshawe (d. 12 February 1588). For further particulars see the will of Robert Robotham, *supra*.

The testatrix also leaves a bequest to 'my cousin, Henry Foster', who appears to have been a nephew of the testatrix' first husband, Richard Grace. See the will of Richard Grace, *supra*.

For the testatrix' 'sister Calthorpe', see the will of the testatrix' mother-in-law, Dionyse Leveson (d.1560), TNA PROB 11/43/645.

The testatrix also leaves bequests to her brother-in-law and supervisor of her will, William Leveson (d.1593), and his children, Robert Leveson and Ellen Leveson. For William Leveson (d.1593) see his will, TNA PROB 11/82/143.

For the will of Thomas Sarys, haberdasher of Saint Andrew Undershaft, witness to the testatrix' will, see TNA PROB 11/72/719.

RM: T{estamentum} Marie Leveson

[f. 379r] In the name of Almighty God, Amen. The thirtieth day of the month of December in the year of Our Lord God one thousand five hundred threescore and eighteen and in the one and twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Mary Leveson, widow, late wife of Nicholas Leveson, whilst he lived citizen and mercer of London, being whole of mind and of good perfect memory, thanked be Almighty God, considering the frailty of man's life, how that death to every creature is certain and the hour and time of coming thereof is uncertain, not minding therefore by God's grace to die intestate, do ordain and make this my present testament and last will in manner and form following, to wit:

First and principally I give and recommend my soul unto Almighty God, my Maker and Redeemer, and my body to be buried at the discretion of mine executor;

Item, I bequeath to the poor of the parish of St Andrew Undershaft where I now dwell six pounds of lawful money of England to be distributed in coals in six years, the first yearly distribution of twenty shillings thereof to be made about the feast of Christmas next ensuing after my decease;

Item, I bequeath to ten poor women of the same parish to every one a gown, price five shillings the yard;

Item, I bequeath to the poor prisoners of Newgate, Ludgate, the King's Bench and Marshalsea, to every of the said houses thirty shillings of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to the Spital at St Bartholomew's and to St Thomas' Hospital, to either of them five marks of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to twenty poor maids' marriages six shillings and eight pence apiece;

Item, I bequeath to ten poor of my kindred, to every of them twenty shillings of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to Elizabeth Newman, my servant, six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence of lawful money of England, and I will that mine executor do give and deliver to some good honest person as will keep Agnes, the fool, the sum of forty shillings of lawful money aforesaid;

Item, I bequeath unto my cousin, Elizabeth Leveson, six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence of lawful money of England;

And I bequeath to every of the rest of my household servants twenty shillings of lawful money aforesaid;

More, I bequeath to every of my household servants a gown, price eight shillings of every yard;

Item, I bequeath to poor Mistress Harrington a black gown cloth of the same price;

Item, I give to Ralph Sydall and Oliver Bradford, to either of them twenty shillings of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to my daughter, Margaret Robotham, the value of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England to be delivered her by mine executor of my best bedding, linen and household stuff;

More, I bequeath to my said daughter four of my best gowns or cassocks, my best kirtle, two of my best fore-parts for kirtles, and my best petticoat;

More, my ring with a table diamond three-cornered, one hoop ring with a ruby, one ring with a snake figured upon it, and one ring with a diamond having the letter S in the midst of it;

Item, I bequeath to my god-daughter, Grace Robotham, the residue of all my rings, jewels, bracelets and chains and all my neckerchiefs, ruffs and wearing linen, to be delivered her at her lawful age or marriage;

Item, I give to my brother, Henry Mathew, so much of the lease and term of years of and in the house wherein I now dwell and of the two tenements thereunto appertaining as may be to come until the said Grace Robotham shall come to her full age or marriage, and I will that the said Grace Robotham shall then have the residue of the said lease and term of years then to come;

Item, I forgive my said brother, Henry Mathew, one hundred pounds of lawful money of England that he oweth me by one bill obligatory, and also I forgive him forty pounds of like money that he oweth me otherwise;

And I bequeath unto my said brother, Henry Mathew, one hundred pounds of lawful money of England, my best gilt salt, two gilt pots, two bowls and six silver spoons with wreathed knops, which bowls are commonly occupied about my house;

And I bequeath unto my said god-daughter, Grace Robotham, the residue of my plate not bequeathed to my said brother Mathew;

Item, I bequeath to my said brother Mathew and to his wife, to my sister Fanshawe, to my son-in-law, John Robotham, and to my daughter, his wife, and to my brother [=brother-in-law], William Leveson, I say to every of them one black gown, price sixteen shillings every yard;

Item, my will is that the residue of my plate before bequeathed to Grace Robotham is to be delivered her at her lawful age or marriage;

Item, I bequeath to my brother [=brother-in-law], Mr John Grace, to my good friends, Mr William Dixon, Mrs Harlakenden, Mrs Good, Mrs Bingham, Mrs Clerke, Mrs Dixon, my sister Calthorpe, my cousin, Henry Foster, and his wife, Robert Leveson, Helen [=Ellen] Leveson and my god-daughter, Mary Clerke, I say to every of them one ring of gold, price twenty shillings of lawful money of England for a remembrance of me;

Item, I bequeath to my good friend, Thomas Stokes, one ring of [f. 379v] gold of the value of forty shillings of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to Nicholas Grace, the son of John Grace, the sum of twenty shillings of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to and amongst the children of my cousin, Henry Foster, twenty nobles of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to my cousin Chaff [=Gough?] a ring of gold of the value of twenty shillings, and unto her poor sister I bequeath twenty shillings of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to Mr Johnson, parson of St Andrew Undershaft, twenty shillings of lawful money aforesaid;

Item, I bequeath to Mrs Hanykyn twenty shillings of like money;

Item, I bequeath unto Christ's Hospital five marks of lawful money of England;

Item, I bequeath to the poor people lying in Bedlam [=Bethlehem] twenty shillings of lawful money of England;

The residue of all and singular my goods, chattels, household stuff and movables whatsoever, my debts, funerals and legacies paid and performed and this my present testament and last will in all points fulfilled, I fully and wholly bequeath to the children of my daughter, Margaret Robotham, to wit, to Mary Robotham, one hundred pounds of lawful money of England, to Elizabeth Robotham another hundred pounds of lawful money aforesaid, and the rest to Grace Robotham, to be paid to her and every of them at their lawful age or marriage;

And my will is that if the Company of the Goldsmiths will become bound for the sure payment thereof, that then they shall have the said residue to be put forth to such honest poor young men of their Company as they shall appoint the same, paying therefore yearly after twelve pence for the pound unto every of the said children for their parts of the said residue;

Item, my will is that if any of the said children shall die before any of them shall come to their lawful age or marriage, that then her or their part or parts, legacy or legacies, herein bequeathed shall remain to the survivor or survivors equally to be divided, to be paid to them or any of them at the said lawful age or marriage;

And I will and desire my loving friends, Mr William Dixon, and my cousin, Henry Foster, that they or one of them cause by their learned counsel to be devised one bill obligatory of one thousand pounds of lawful money of England to be paid unto them with condition thereupon endorsed to th' effect, intent and purpose that John Robotham, my son-in-law, and Margaret, his wife, shall not by fine, recovery, deed or any other act or acts to be knowledged, suffered or done break, alter or make void the devise or any part of the devise of Richard Grace, late of London, goldsmith and father of the said Margaret, in his last will and testament made touching the disposition of all his manors, messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments with their appurtenances whatsoever set, lying and being in St Albans in the county of Hertford or elsewhere in the said county and in the parish of St Andrew in Holborn in the suburbs of the city of London, in the which bill obligatory my will and mind is that the said John Robotham shall be bound, and at my house wherein I now dwell shall seal and deliver it as his deed to my said friends within one month after my decease, from the doing whereof if he, the said John Robotham, shall absent himself or do not seal and deliver as his deed the same bill obligatory with condition endorsed to the same effect and purpose devised at the place and within the time aforesaid, my will and mind is fully and wholly that neither the said John Robotham or Margaret, his wife, my daughter, shall take legacy, benefit or profit by this my present testament and last will, anything herein before expressed to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding;

And I do make and ordain my said loving brother, Henry Mathew, executor of this my present testament;

And I make and ordain my said loving friends, Master William Dixon, and my loving brother-in-law, William Leveson, supervisors or overseers of the same;

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 will that this my present testament and all things herein mentioned and recited shall stand, remain and abide only for my very last will and testament and none other or otherwise;

In witness whereof I, the said Mary Leveson, have to this my present testament put my seal the day and year above-written in the presence of those who have hereunder written their names as witnesses thereunto called and required. Mary. Per me, Iohannem Johnson, rectorem. By me, Thomas Sarys, as witness hereunto. By me, James Wene.

Probatum fuit h{uius}mo{d}i test{amentu}m Apud London coram mag{ist}ro Will{el}mo Drury legum Doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cant{uariensis} Com{m}issario Tertio die mensis Decembris Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo Quingen{tesim}o octogesimo Iuramento Rich{ard}i Windor no{ta}rij pu{bli}ci procur{atoris} Henrici Mathew executoris &c Cui com{m}issa fuit Admi{n}istrac{i}o &c De bene &c Iurat{i}

[=The same testament was proved at London before Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the third day of the month of December in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eightieth by the oath of Richard Windor, notary public, proctor of Henry Mathew, executor etc., to whom administration was granted etc., sworn to well etc.]