

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 14 February 1582 and proved 26 June 1582, of Elizabeth Lyster Blount, whose nephew, Richard Lyster (b. 23 November 1532, d.1558?), esquire, married Mary Wriothesley, aunt of Henry Wriothesley (1573-1624), 3rd Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testatrix was the daughter of Sir Richard Lyster (c.1480 – 16 March 1553), and sister of Sir Michael Lyster (d. 1 August 1551). For the will of Sir Richard Lyster, see TNA PROB 11/36/390. For the will of Sir Michael Lyster, see TNA PROB 11/34/405.

According to a recent article by Cheryl Butler, the testatrix was born by 1510, the daughter of Sir Richard Lyster by his first wife, whose name is unknown. According to Butler, the testatrix' brother, Sir Michael Lyster (d. 1 August 1551), was almost certainly also Sir Richard Lyster's son by his first wife. See Butler, Cheryl, How Many Wives Had Sir Richard Lyster? at:

<http://www.tudorrevels.co.uk/articles.php?itemId=74>

As noted above, Richard Lyster (b. 23 November 1532, d.1558?), eldest son and heir of the testatrix' brother, Sir Michael Lyster, married Mary Wriothesley (buried 13 December 1561), daughter of Thomas Wriothesley (1505-1550), 1st Earl of Southampton. See Hants. RO 5M53/932, TNA C 54/830, and the will of Thomas Wriothesley, 1st Earl of Southampton, TNA PROB 11/34/154.

By Mary Wriothesley, Richard Lyster (b. 23 November 1532, d.1558?) had a son, Michael Lyster, who married Elizabeth Southwell, eldest daughter of Richard Southwell (d.1600), illegitimate son of the Privy Councillor Sir Richard Southwell (1502/3-1564), and sister of the Jesuit, Robert Southwell (1561-1595). For Elizabeth Southwell's grandfather, Sir Richard Southwell (1502/3-1564), see the *ODNB* entry, his will TNA PROB 11/43/577; and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/southwell-richard-15023-64>.

For Elizabeth Southwell's father, Richard Southwell (d.1600), see his will, TNA PROB 11/96/175, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/southwell-richard-1531-1600>.

For Elizabeth Southwell's brother, the Jesuit, Robert Southwell (1561-1595), see the *ODNB* entry.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

In 1526 or 1527 the testatrix married Sir Richard Blount (d. 11 August 1564) of Mapleduram, Oxfordshire, for whose will see TNA PROB 11/47/281. By Sir Richard Blount, the testatrix had two sons and two daughters:

* Sir Michael Blount (d. 11 November 1609), who married Mary Moore, the daughter and eventual coheir of Roger Moore of Bicester, by whom he had five sons, including his eldest son and heir, Richard Blount (1564-1628), another son, Charles Blount (1563-1606), 8th Baron Mountjoy and Earl of Devonshire, who married Penelope Devereux (1563-1607), sister of Robert Devereux (1565-1601), 2nd Earl of Essex, and six daughters, including a daughter, Catherine Blount, mentioned in the will below. See the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/blount-michael-1529-1609>.

See also the History of Parliament entry for Richard Blount (1564-1628) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/blount-richard-iii-1564-1628>.

* Richard Blount (d.1628), who married Mary West (living 1625), the daughter of William West (c.1519-1595), 1st Baron de la Warr, nephew of Thomas West (1472-1554), 8th Baron West and 9th Baron de la Warr, by whom he had one son, who predeceased him, and six daughters. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. IV, pp. 323-5, and the History of Parliament entry for Richard Blount at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/blount-richard-ii-1628>.

The life of Richard Blount's father-in-law, William West (c.1519-1595), was a complicated one. According to the *ODNB*, in 1549, Thomas West, 9th Baron de la Warr:

... placed a private bill before parliament to disinherit his nephew William West, first Baron De La Warr (c.1519–1595). The latter was the son of the ninth baron's half-brother Sir George West of Warbleton (d. 1538) and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Robert Morton of Lechlade, Gloucestershire. His uncle was childless, and had at some time adopted William as his heir. However, West tried to gain the de la Warr estate early by poisoning his uncle. The attempt was unsuccessful and he was in the Tower by October 1548. He was disinherited by an act of parliament in 1550, although he had been reinstated as heir by the time of his uncle's death. . . .

Now reinstated as his uncle's heir, William West was unable to inherit the barony owing to the act of parliament. Some time previously he had married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Strange of Chesterton, Gloucestershire; after her death he married Anne, widow of Thomas Oliver and daughter of Henry Swift of Andover, Hampshire, who survived him. Involved in the Dudley conspiracy, West was arraigned in the Guildhall on 30 June 1556. He insisted on answering the charge as William, Lord de la Warr, forcing the heralds to prove that he had no right to the title. He was convicted of treason and sentenced to death. The punishment was not carried out, however, and he was pardoned in 1557, shortly before fighting for the queen at St Quentin. In 1563 he was restored in blood by Elizabeth I, and on 5 February 1570 he was knighted and created Baron De La Warr. This was regarded as a new creation, and in his lifetime he sat in the House of Lords as junior baron. Like his uncle before him he was the government's agent in Sussex, serving at times as lord lieutenant. Unlike his uncle he was a protestant and was particularly active in the prosecution of recusants. No doubt for that reason he took part in the trials for treason of the duke of Norfolk in 1572 and the earl of Arundel in 1589. He died at Wherwell, Hampshire, on 30 December 1595, and his son Thomas succeeded to the barony, successfully claiming the precedence within the peerage that had belonged to his title before his father forfeited it.

As noted above, Richard Blount's father-in-law, William West (c.1519-1595), 1st Baron de la Warr, was involved in the Dudley conspiracy. In February 1556 he and his cousin, Edward Lewknor (d. 6 September 1556), were asked by Henry Peckham (d.1556) to obtain a copy of Henry VIII's will in order to disprove Queen Mary's right to the crown. Lewknor took the copy of the will to West's house, where it was given to Henry Peckham, who was later executed for his part in the conspiracy. For Henry Peckham, said to have been a cousin of Jane Cheyne Wriothesley (d. 15 September 1574), Countess of Southampton, see her will, TNA PROB 11/56/535, and the will of Henry Peckham's father, Sir Edmund Peckham, TNA PROB 11/47/325. See also the History of Parliament entry for Edward Lewknor at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/lewknor-edward-151617-56>.

Richard Blount's brother-in-law, Captain William West, immigrated to Virginia, where he was killed by Indians in 1610. See 'Jamestown Rediscovery' at:

<http://historicjamestowne.org/archaeology/chancel-burials/founders/william-west/>.

Richard Blount's sister-in-law, Jane West, married firstly Thomas Wenman, esquire, secondly James Cressy, thirdly Thomas Tasburgh, and fourthly Ralph Sheldon of Beoley. For the will of Ralph Sheldon of Beoley, whose daughter, Katherine Sheldon, married Oxford's brother-in-law, Francis Trentham, and whose daughter, Elizabeth Sheldon, married the brother of Thomas Russell, overseer of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford, see TNA PROB 11/121/345. For the will of Thomas Russell, see TNA PROB 11/65/424.

* Elizabeth Blount (c.1540 - 11 August 1587), who married Nicholas St John (born c.1526, d. 8 November 1589), esquire, of Lydiard Tregoze, by whom, according to their monumental inscription dating from 1592, she had three sons and five daughters:

-John St John, eldest son and heir, who married Lucy Hungerford, the daughter of Sir Walter Hungerford.

- Oliver St John (1559 - 29 December 1630), first Viscount Grandison of Limerick, who married Joan Roydon (d.1631), widow of Sir William Holcroft, and daughter and heir of Henry Roydon of Battersea, by whom he had no issue. See the *ODNB* entry.

-Richard St John, living and unmarried in 1592.

-Elizabeth St John, who married St George [=Gorges?] of Cambridgeshire.

-Catherine St John, who married a husband surnamed Webb. She is not mentioned in the will below.

-Eleanor St John, who married a husband surnamed Cave of Northamptonshire.

-Dorothy St John, who married a husband surnamed Egiocke of Warwickshire.

-Jane St John, who married a husband surnamed Nicholas of Wiltshire.

See also:

<https://goodgentlewoman.wordpress.com/2014/06/25/the-other-elizabeth-blount/>.

See also *The New England Genealogical and Historical Register*, (Boston, 1900), Vol. LIV, p. 342 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ONyBYniOsxwC&pg=PA342&lpg=PA342&dq=%22Elizabeth+Blount%22+%22Nicholas+St+John%22&source=bl&ots=APwktAlrRr&sig=TKPqQwMNT04xaQoHZEoDXOg9cb8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj0nsnhtuTKAhUFxGMKHS80Cjc4ChDoAQgfMAE#v=onepage&q=%22Elizabeth%20Blount%22%20%22Nicholas%20St%20John%22&f=false>.

* Barbara Blount (d. 28 February 1564), who married Francis Shirley (d. 24 March 1578) of West Grinstead, Sussex, the son of Sir Thomas Shirley (born by 1489, d.1544). Their children Richard Shirley, Thomas Shirley, and Eleanor Shirley are mentioned in the will below. For Francis Shirley, see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/shirley-francis-1524-78>.

See also the entry for Barbara Blount (c.1538-1563/4) at:

<http://www.kateemersonhistoricals.com/TudorWomenB-B1.htm>.

Barbara Blount was the daughter of Sir Richard Blount of Mapledurham, Oxfordshire and Dedisham, Sussex (d. August 11, 1564) and Elizabeth Lister (1520-1572). In about 1551, she married Sir Francis Shirley of West Grinstead, Sussex (d. March 20, 1578), by whom she had Thomas (1555-1606), Richard (d. yng), Francis (d.1559), William (d.1568), Richard (d.1614), Elizabeth (c.1555-1624+), and Philippa (d.1591). In 1557, when her husband was in the Fleet for debt, his mother died at West Grinstead. Shirley ordered Barbara to take their servants and enter the house there and hold it. She did so, and sold some of the plate to maintain her household. Her brother-in-law, William Shirley, who had been made administrator of his father's will and of his mother's estate, later sued Francis for theft and violence. Barbara was buried at West Grinstead.

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

For 'Elizabeth Wyborne, the daughter of Barbara Shirley', mentioned in the will below, see the entry for her at:

<http://www.kateemersonhistoricals.com/TudorWomenSa-Sn.htm>

ELIZABETH SHIRLEY (c.1555-1624+)

Elizabeth Shirley was the daughter of Francis Shirley of West Grinstead, Sussex (c.1524-March 20, 1577/8) and Barbara Blount (c.1538-February 28, 1563/4). They were a recusant family. Elizabeth's first husband, to whom she was married by 1582, was William Wyborne (Wyborn/Wybarn) of Hawkswell, Sussex (c.1540-c.1612). They do not appear to have had any children but took in the orphaned sons and daughters of his sister Ellen or Eleanor—John, Walter, William Margaret, and Mary Windsor. Upon her husband's death, Elizabeth inherited the estate of Little Hawkswell and her husband's debts, which far outweighed his assets. On April 2, 1612, she conveyed all her goods, household stuff, chattels and goods to his executors, Sir Richard Blunt and Dudley Norton, retaining only £30 for herself. At some point prior to this, Elizabeth agreed to marry Ambrose Vaux (c.1570-April 1626), a younger son of Lord Vaux of Harrowden... .

As noted above, Elizabeth Shirley Wyborne took in the orphaned children of her husband's sister, Eleanor Wyborne, wife of Edward Windsor, grandson of Oxford's brother-in-law, Edward Windsor (1532?-1575), 3rd Baron Windsor. See Weyburn, S. Fletcher, *Weyburn-Wyborn Genealogy*, (New York: Frank Allaben Genealogical Company, 1911), pp. 167-70, 175-6 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/weyburnwyborngen00weyb#page/174/mode/2up>.

For the will of Edward Windsor (1532?-1575), 3rd Baron Windsor, see TNA PROB 11/57/332.

LM: T{estamentum} Domine Elizabethe Blount vid{ue}

[f. 199rv] In the name of God, Amen. The fourteenth day of February in the year of Our Lord God one thousand [+five?] hundred eighty-one and in the four & twentieth 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, Dame Elizabeth Blount, widow, late wife of Sir Richard Blount, knight, deceased, recounting with myself the certainty of death to be such as no creature can escape it, and the time thereof to be so uncertain as no flesh can know it before it cometh to pass, therefore I, being of perfect mind and remembrance, thanks be to God for it, for the better settling in some order those things which by the permission of God I do enjoy in this world, and for the quietness of my conscience, I do by and in these presents make and declare my last will and testament of all and every my goods and chattels movable and unmovable, leases for terms of years, debts, duties, sums of money, plate, jewels, household stuff and other things of whatsoever kind or nature they be within the realm of England in manner and form following:

First I commit my soul to the mercy of God, and my body to the earth to be buried in the parish church of Mapleduram or in such other parish where I shall fortune to die, with such charges to be bestowed in funerals as to my executor hereafter named shall be thought most convenient, which, over and besides ten pounds at the least to be given to the poor, I do wish not to be over sumptuous;

And I do devise, give and bequeath unto my daughter, Elizabeth St John, wife of Nicholas St John, esquire, my best velvet gown which I shall have at the time of my decease, my black enamelled tablet of gold, and a cup of silver and gilt, to be delivered unto her within one month next after my decease;

Item, I do give and bequeath unto Elizabeth St John, her daughter, forty pounds of good and lawful money of England, to be paid unto her within a quarter of a year next after my decease;

And I give and bequeath unto Eleanor Saint John, Dorothy St John and Jane St John, other the daughters of the said Nicholas St John and Elizabeth, to every of them forty pounds apiece of lawful English money, to be paid to every of them at the days of their several marriages or else when they shall be of their several ages of four and twenty years, which of them shall first happen;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mary Blount, the wife of my son, Michael Blount, a ring of gold or some other jewel of the value of five pounds of lawful English money as she shall best fancy, to be bought for her by my executor hereafter named;

And for the [f. 200r] good zeal and love which I do bear unto Richard Blount, son and heir apparent of the said Michael Blount and of the said Mary, and for my late husband's

sake, whose godson the said Richard was, I do give and bequeath unto him, the said Richard Blount, all those implements of household and household stuff as in a schedule or inventory to this my present last will and testament annexed are contained and expressed;

And I give & bequeath unto Catherine Blount, the daughter of the said Michael and Mary, twenty pounds of current English money, to be paid within half a year next after my decease;

And to every other the children of the said Michael Blount and Mary, his wife, a piece of silver plate of the value of forty shillings or forty shillings in money at their choice;

Item, I do give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Wyborne, the daughter of Barbara Shirley, forty pounds in money, to be paid within one quarter of a year next after my decease;

Item, I do give and bequeath unto John St John, son and heir apparent of Nicholas St John, a pot or cup of silver and gilt of the value of six pounds thirteen shillings four pence, to be bought for him by my executor hereafter named after my decease;

And my will is that if that any of the said Eleanor St John, Dorothy St John or Jane St John shall happen to decease before the time of her marriage or before her age of four and twenty years, that her legacy before herein given which shall happen so to decease shall be equally divided amongst her other sisters which shall then survive;

And further I do give and bequeath unto Oliver St John, Richard St John, sons of the said Nicholas St John, and unto Richard Shirley, son of Francis Shirley, esquire, deceased, to every of them a piece of silver plate of the value of forty shillings apiece or else forty shillings in lawful English money to every of them at their choices, to be paid within one quarter of a year next after my decease;

And unto Thomas Shirley, son and heir of the said Francis, a bowl [+and?] a cup of silver and gilt of the value of five pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my nephew, Charles Lyster, the bowl of silver and gilt which was his father's with the cover thereunto belonging;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every one of my servants to whom I do give wages, and to no other servants, with that which shall be due unto them by me of their wages at the time of my decease, one year's wages;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son, Richard Blount, as well my leases, terms of years and interests of my rectory and parsonage of Clympyn [=Climping?] with th' appurtenances in the county of Sussex and Sonnyng Milles [=Sonning Mill?] in the county of Berkshire as also (my debts paid, my funerals discharged and my legacies performed), all my money, cattle, plate, household stuff, goods and chattels movable and

unmovable whatsoever within the realm of England before by this my present last will and testament not given or bequeathed;

And I do make and constitute by these presents my said son, Richard Blount, my whole and sole executor of this my present last will and treatment;

And I do make and appoint also by these presents the said Nicholas St John and the said Charles Lister overseers thereof, praying and beseeching them according to the confidence and trust which I do repose in them to see this my last will and testament according to mine intent and meaning in all points to be justly and truly performed, and for their pains and travail to be taken in that behalf I do give and bequeath unto every of them five pounds of good and lawful money of England;

And I do hereby revoke and annul all former wills and testaments heretofore by me made before the date hereof;

My full meaning, intent and will is nevertheless that any codicil which I shall hereafter make shall stand and be as parcel of my last will and testament as fully as though the same had been herein contained;

In witness whereof I, the said Dame Elizabeth Blount, have hereunto set my seal the day and year first above-written.

Implements of household given and bequeathed unto Richard Blount, son and heir apparent of my son, Michael Blount, as it followeth:

In the parlour at Mapleduram. In primis, two joined tables of walnut-tree, two short joined forms, six joined stools, one long joined form, a standing cupboard of walnut-tree joined, one joined chest, the picture of the Queen's Majesty, the picture of Lucretia, the picture of a little boy, a pair of andirons, a fire pan and a pair of tongs;

In the hall. Item, green say, the King's arms, four pictures, two long dining tables, four trestles, four forms, a standing cupboard, a bench, a settle and a pair of great andirons;

In the buttery. Item, a bin for bread, a table with trestles, a coffer & shelves;

In the kitchen. Item, two boards, four stocks, a trough and shelves, a pair of racks to roast withal, three hinges, an iron bar in the chimney, and two broaches;

In the cheese house. Item, racks to put cheese in, a table with trestles and two hogsheads to put candles in;

In the bakehouse. Item, a moulding table, a kneading table, a brake, a bin, a bolting, with a chest for flour;

In the brewhouse. Item, a furnace, two kives, a mashing vat, a tun-vat and six hogsheads for beer;

In the milkhouse. Item, a cheese- [f. 200v] press, four stock to set milk on and other things on pans of earth, bowls and shelves;

In the middle chamber over the lower parlour. Item, five pieces of tapestry wherewith the chamber is hanged, the standing bedstead, the bolster, the featherbed, two pillows, one pair of blankets, the coverlet, the tester and the curtains thereto belonging, and the livery cupboard in the same chamber;

In the inner chamber to the same middle chamber. Item, the bedstead, the bed, the bolster, the blanket and coverlet in the same inner chamber;

In the chamber over my son Richard Blount his chamber. Item, the painted hangings of blue and yellow, the standing bedstead, the tester, the curtain, the bed, the bolster, the mattress, the blankets and coverlet thereunto belonging, the joined cupboard, the square board, the chair of red fustian of Naples, the pair of tongs and the fire pan in the same chamber;

In the inner chamber to it. Item, the hangings of red and yellow, the bedstead, the bed, the bolster, the blanket, the coverlet, the long table with trestles in the same chamber;

In the armoury. Item, two white corslets, two white Almain rivets, two shirts of mail, two jacks, two pikes, two bills, two hackbutts, two long bows, two sheaf of arrows, two morions and two skulls;

The Lady Blount's last will and testament, sealed and published before us whose names are under-written the fourteenth day of February in the four and twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth within-written, 1581 [=1582]. Thomas Estcourte, John Norborne, William Chowte, George Asheton.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London coram venerabili viro m{agist}ro Will{el}mo Drury legum doctore curie prerogatiue cantuarien{sis} commissario etc Vicesimo sexto die mens{is} Iunij Anno Domini mill{es}imo quingentesimo octogesimo secundo Iuramento Roberti Saye notarij publici procuratoris Rich{ard}i Blounte executoris etc Cui commissa fuit administracio bonorum etc De bene etc Iurat{o}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary etc. of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-sixth day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-second by the oath of Robert Saye, notary public, proctor of Richard Blount, executor etc., to whom administration of the goods etc., sworn to well etc.]