

ART. XIX.—*Bellbridge and Captain Thomas Morris.* By  
R. S. FERGUSON, F.S.A.

*Read at that place, August 25th, 1883.*

ON the occasion of the visit of the Royal Archæological Institute and this Society to Rose Castle during last summer, Mr. Hartshorne handed round reprints of two letters he had disinterred from his family archives. These were entitled “letters from Belvedere,” and were written in 1719 from Rose Castle by William Bradford, son of the bishop of that name, who was then visiting his diocese for the first time. These two letters, and some additional ones, have since been reproduced in the Gatesgill Chronicle and Raughton Gazette. In these letters the writer gives an account of his intimacy with the family of an officer, who having been disabled in ye Marine service is forced to turn Country Gentleman. His seat—Bellbridge—is a charming walk of a mile thro’ a fine wood by ye river’s side from Belvedere. He himself is soldier like, all Generosity & Freedom. The 2 Oxons & I frequently walk up & take a glass with ye Father.

At that time I was unable to furnish Mr. Hartshorne with the name of this old soldier, but good luck rather than good guiding has since helped me very materially. What I have found I shall give in chronological order—not in the order that I came upon the various facts.

The earliest information I have comes from the title-deeds of an estate at Farmanby, in the parish of Addingham in this county, now the property of the governors of Carlisle Grammar School. By a deed, dated 1710, I find Thomas Morris, captain in the regiment of foot commanded by the Honourable Brigadier Weightman, purchased the estate just mentioned from Dorothy Hasell, widow and executrix of Edward Hasell, for £395. In 1719, Thomas Morris sold this estate to the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle for  
£500,

£500, who bought it under Bishop Smith's will as an endowment for the Grammar School; he is then described as "Esquire of Carlisle", so that he had left the army at some date between 1710 and 1719. From the title-deeds of Bellbridge, to which Mr. Lonsdale, the present owner, has kindly referred, it appears that Captain Thomas Morris married Jane Bell, daughter of Elizabeth Bell, of Bellbridge. The mother-in-law in 1718 assigned to them the lease, from the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle, of Bellbridge, in consideration of an annuity of £15, and in the following year the captain and his family took up their residence at Bellbridge, where he died in 1721. A brass tablet, now loose, but which should be secured, was placed to his memory in Sebergham Church, and it reads thus:

Here lieth interr'd  
the remains of Captain  
Thomas Morris who  
paid nature's debt at  
his seat at Bellbridge.  
November 19<sup>th</sup> 1721 aged 49.

On tombs encomiums are but vainly spent  
A virtuous life is man's best monument.

From the parish register it appears that he was buried on the same day that he died. The brass plate bears the arms of Morris, which are thus blazoned in Papworth's Ordinary:

*Azure.* a battle-axe in bend sinister surmounted of a tilting spear in bend dexter between four cannons *or*; on a chief of the second a fleur-de-lis of the first enclosed by a demirose coupé in pale *gules* radiated gold, & by the stump of a tree eradiated & coupé at the top as the third.

On the brass a second battle-axe is substituted for the tilting spear, but the composition is a very extraordinary one.

From the district registry at Carlisle I have obtained a copy of the captain's will, which I reproduce in the appendix to this paper. It gives a good idea of the sort of home  
and

and establishment kept in the beginning of the 18th century by a country gentleman, who lived in a good house, was on intimate terms with his neighbour, the Bishop of Carlisle, and was otherwise in good society. From the inventory of his furniture, he seems to have kept a bedroom at least some time in Carlisle. No doubt he would pay occasional visits there, when he found Bellbridge too dull.

I have found the birth of Charles in the register of St. Mary's, Carlisle, thus :

Abbey Charles y<sup>e</sup> son of Capt<sup>n</sup> Morris ye 26 May 1707.

but as yet I have not found either at Carlisle, Sebergham, or Kirkbampton any other entries referring to the family, except the captain's burial. Of the history of the Bell family, or of the house of Bellbridge I can tell you very little; the title deeds in possession of Mr. Lonsdale do not go back beyond 1718, and I have not had time or opportunity to search for Bell wills and Bell entries in parish registers. The Bells were a family of importance, for Bishop Nicolson in his Visitation mentions Mr. G. Bell of Bellbridge, as having a seat in the quire of Sebergham church; the others who enjoyed that privilege being Mr. Denton of Warnell, Mr. Crossby, and Mr. Aglionby. The arms over the door, a fess ermine between three bells with the crest of a hawk belled and jessed, indicate that the Bells of Bellbridge claimed relationship with the Bells of Woolsington, Northumberland, who may well have sprung from this place. The house itself was built about the end of the 17th century, which was a period, locally, of much building activity: the "troubles" had subsided, and peace had been restored, and the gentry began to rebuild the houses which had gone to ruin. This probably stands on the site of something older, but I see no peel tower; it is a good specimen of the residence of one of the lesser gentry of the day. It has a small enclosed court in front of the entrance hall, and in front again of the court is the fold,  
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lying between the great barn on one side, and the stable and byar on the other, which are connected by a wall with gate into the road. Outside of these buildings lie the stackgarth contiguous to the barn, the orchard behind the house, and the garden next to the stable.

The widow of Captain Morris in 1722, assigned the lease to the Rev. David Bell of Aspatria; between 1730 and 1740 it was purchased by Mr. Stordy, and by him bequeathed to the Studholmes, in which family it remained until purchased by the late Dr. Lonsdale.

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APPENDIX.

WILL OF CAPTAIN THOMAS MORRIS.

EXTRACTED from the District Registry at Carlisle, attached to the Probate Division of Her Majesty's High Court of Justice.

EXTRACTED from the Testamentary Records of the Consistory Court of Carlisle, transmitted to and now of record in the above named District Registry.

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN I THOMAS MORRIS of the City of Carlisle, in the County of Cumberland, being in perfect health of body and of sound perfect & desposing mind and memory, and considering the frailty of human life and that it is appointed for all men to die and after that to come to judgment; and that it is fitt for all men to dispose and order their affairs so as that when the time of desolution draws on, nothing may be left to do but meditate on those things which with God's assistance may procure everlasting happyness, Therefore I do order and despose of those earthly blessings God of his bounty hath been pleased to bestow on me and do hereby make my last Will and Testament.

FIRST, as to my body I recommend it to the Earth from whence 'twas taken, and my soul I recommend to God who gave it, hoping through the merits of my Saviour Jesus Christ to have free and full pardon of all my Sins, and to have a joyfull Resurrection at the last great day and to dwell with God for ever.

IMP<sup>s</sup> WHEREAS my dear and well beloved wife, Jane, is joyn'd with me in the Lease of Bellridge and will consequently enjoy the same and have the disposal thereof, and will also have and enjoy her thirds  
of

of all my freehold Estate after my decease during her natural life which will in some measure be a provision for her, but not believing it sufficient, I do in consideration of the great love and affection I bear to her, give, devise and bequeath unto her my said beloved wife all those my Messuage, Lands and Tenements called Clay Pott Whins\* and Gallabrough,† in the parish of Kirkbanton, together with a House in the said Kirkbanton, for and dureing her natural life provided she continue sole and unmarried, but in case she marries again, then immediatly the s<sup>d</sup> Messuage, Lands, Tenements, and House is to go to my three younger Daughters as they are after her decease to do also.

ITEM. All the rest of my freehold Estate, that is to say my Lands and House at Under-Lanrigg‡ and Atchin Syke,§ now farmed by Robert Pearson and his Sons, as also the two closes near Carlisle (commonly) call'd Monks Closes,|| I give and bequeath & devise to my said beloved wife for the space and term of two year after my decease and she to receive, have, and enjoy all the rents, profitts, and advantages thereof for the s<sup>d</sup> term of two years and no longer.

ITEM. All my household goods, plate, Linning, Bedding and household furniture of what kind soever, I give and bequeath the use thereof to my said beloved wife dureing her natural life provided she continue sole and unmarried, and after her decease to be equally divided among my four daughters or the survivor of them share and share alike, but in case it so happen that my said wife shall marry again, then I will and devise that immediatly after her s<sup>d</sup> marriage, all the said Household Goods, Plate, Linning, Bedding, and household furniture shall go to my four Daughters or the survivors of them and to be divided among them equally share and share alike, except the Large Silver Tankerd which I give entirely and forever to my said dear wife to be disposed af as she pleases.

ITEM. I give and devise to my said dear wife all my interest w<sup>ch</sup> I now have in the office of assurance, call'd the Amicable Society except twenty five pounds thereof, which I will and require may be Employ'd in my funeral expenses and the rest towards payment of my debts.

ITEM. WHEREAS my son Thomas and my second son Arthur have already a competent provision, I give and bequeath to each of them

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\* Now owned by a family named Morton, resident near London.

† Three fields of this name, owned by John Brown, Kirkbampton, Miss Mark, Kirkbampton, Mrs. S. Hodgson, Kirkbampton.

‡ In Kirkbampton parish, property of exors. late George Lawson.

§ Kirkbampton parish, property Mrs. S. Hodgson.

|| Probably near Monkhill Loch.

ten pounds to buy mourning cloaths and to be allow'd them by my Executors out of the mony they owe me as appears by there bond under their hands and seals.

ITEM. I give and bequeath unto my third son, George, the sum of One hundred pounds to be paid to him out of the mony I lent to my son Thomas and Arthur as soon as it is received or can be had from them, which my Execut<sup>rs</sup> are hereby desired to see perform'd exactly and as soon as possible.

ITEM. I give and bequeath unto my youngest son, Charles, the like sum of One hundred pounds to paid him by my Execut<sup>rs</sup> out of the mony due from my son Thomas and son Arthur, as soon as it can be had from them as afores<sup>d</sup>.

ITEM. I give, devise, and bequeath unto my eldest daughter, Elizabeth, all those Lands scituate, lying and being near the said City of Carlisle, which were purchas'd by me from Mr. William Rooke, commonly called Monks Closes within two years after my decease that is to say, after her mother hath receiv'd and enjoyed the profitts of the two closes two years, as is before directed and express'd and then and not till then shall they go to my said daughter Elizabeth, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the s<sup>d</sup> two closes, to her my daughter Elizabeth, dureing her natural life, and in case she marry and have children by her husband, then to her and her heirs for ever, but in case she dies before she marry or being married has no children by her husband then the s<sup>d</sup> closes to go to my other three daughters, or the survivors of them to be equally divided among them.

ITEM. I give and devise unto my second daughter Mary, my third daughter Anne, and my fourth daughter Susanna, All those messuages Lands and Tenements scituate, lying, and being at Under-langrigg and Atchyn Syke, in psh of Kirk Banton afores<sup>d</sup> within two years after my decease, that is to say, after the two years are expired in which my s<sup>d</sup> dear and well belov'd wife is to enjoy the s<sup>d</sup> Lands and Tennements as is before directed, and then and not till then, shall the s<sup>d</sup> p'mises go to my s<sup>d</sup> three daughters, Mary, Anne, and Susanna, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said Messuage, Lands, and Tennements under the same restrictions, limitations, provisoes, and conditions by which my daughter Elizabeth, is to enjoy Monks Closes as aforesaid, that is to say, if any of my three daughters dye unmarried or being married and dye without children lawfully begotton on them by their husbands, then the share of those who dye shall go my surviving daughters, my daughter Elizabeth included.

ITEM. The close call'd Claypott Whins and the iands at Gallabrough, and the house at Kirkbanton, which I already bequeathed to my dear wife dureing her life, I do hereby give and bequeath unto  
my

my three daughters, Mary, Anne, and Susanna, after the decease of their Mother, my dearly belov'd wife, but never the Less under the same restrictions, limitations, provisoes, and conditions that they are to enjoy the Lands at under Langrigg, and my daughter Elizabeth the Lands call'd Monks closes.

ITEM. The Thirty shillings to be paid yearly out of the Lands of Farminby I give and bequeath to my dear wife to dispose of as she pleases for the benefit of my children.

ITEM. In further explanation of my intention I will and require that if my son George dye before he is marryied, and before his brother Charles, and before he receives the hundred pounds hereby bequeath him that then whatever part is unpaid to George at his death, shall go to his brother Charles and the same to George if his brother Charles dyes before him &c, and I further will and desire that my two youngest daughters Anne and Susanna, shall remain under the tuition and Guardianship of there mother till they are marryied or arrive to the age of twenty years, and that she shall have the yearly rents and profitts of the portions hereby appointed them towards their education and maintenance, but no part of the principle.

ITEM. All the rest and residue of my Goods Chattles and personall Estate whatever I give and bequeath unto my dearly belov'd wife and to my daughter Mary, my daughter Anne, and daughter Susanna, which four I do hereby nominate and appoint joynt Executors of this my last Will and Testament hereby revoking, annulling, and making void all former Wills and Testaments heretofore made. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal the 21 day of July, 1721.

THOMAS MORRIS.

SIGN'D seald and published  
by the Testator Thomas Morris,  
as his last Will attested at his  
request and in his sight by us

Thomas Crosly, jurat.  
James Kinneir,  
Robert Hinde.

proved at Carlisle, 13<sup>th</sup>  
December, 1721.

INVENTORY of all the Goods and Chattles of Captain Morris, of the parish of Sebram and County of Cumberland, deceased, as they were appriz'd this 24 day of November, 1721, by Mr. Thomas Crosby and Mr. John Relfs, of the same parish, &c<sup>ca</sup>.

Imp<sup>r</sup>

Imp <sup>r</sup> His purse, apparel, horse and Rideing furniture	50 : 00 : 00
Item: Plate - - - - -	27 : 15 : 00
Item: Pewter - - - - -	05 : 00 : 00
Item: Brass Kettles and potts - - - - -	5 : 16 : 00
Item: Delf ware and Glasses - - - - -	00 : 12 : 00
Item: Jacks, Spitts and other Iron utensills - - - - -	02 : 00 : 00
Item: Mortar, pestel, warming pan, candlesticks, chafing dish, coper cans - - - - -	01 : 10 : 00
Item: Cupboards, tables, chests & chairs in kitchen, Dressers, & <sup>o</sup> - - - - -	03 : 10 : 00
Item: Ground chamber furniture - - - - -	06 : 19 : 06
Item: More belonging to s <sup>d</sup> chamber - - - - -	02 : 01 : 00
Item: Gard de vine - - - - -	00 : 05 : 00
Item: In the palour, the furniture - - - - -	07 : 03 : 00
Item: Bed Linning and Table Linning - - - - -	15 : 00 : 00
Item: The Room over the Kitchen, its furniture - - - - -	07 : 03 : 00
Item: The Dineing—its furniture - - - - -	06 : 06 : 00
Item: The Room over the palour, its furniture - - - - -	02 : 00 : 00
Item: A clock - - - - -	05 : 00 : 00
Item: A Chest of Drawers and Six Grates - - - - -	03 : 10 : 00
Item: In the Brewing-house, its utensils - - - - -	05 : 00 : 00
Item: In the Brewhouse Loft, a Steel Miln and other utensils - - - - -	03 : 00 : 00
Item: In the Seller, its utensils - - - - -	02 : 10 : 00
Item: In the Stable Loft, bed and other utensils - - - - -	04 : 00 : 00
Item: Husbands Gear - - - - -	03 : 16 : 06
Item: Two cows - - - - -	05 : 00 : 00
Item: Malt - - - - -	03 : 12 : 00
Item: Hay at Sebram - - - - -	05 : 00 : 00
Item: Hay at Carlisle - - - - -	09 : 00 : 00
Item: Wine at Carlisle - - - - -	03 : 15 : 00
Item: Bed and other Furniture at Carlisle - - - - -	06 : 00 : 00
Item: Debts due to the Deceased - - - - -	112 : 08 : 00
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	324 : 19 : 00

Exhibited 13 December, 1721