

ART. VIII.—*The Will of Edward Ridge, of Cambridge, 1582.* By H. S. COWPER, F.S.A.

Communicated at Carlisle, September 10th, 1903.

“**E**DWARD RIDGE of Cambridge in the Countye of Cambridge and Dioces of Elye Bachelor”; who made his will on the 27th of May 1582, was, in a way, a worthy of Hawkshead Parish. He was one of a family so prolific and numerous in the parish in former times, that in the oldest register book of the parish there are no less than 1631 entries of the name, a number only exceeded by one other family—the Braithwaites. The Riggés were of course statesmen and landowners, but no branch ever entered a pedigree at the Herald’s visitations, so that among the large number of entries in the Parish Register and wills, it is practically impossible to identify any particular individual.* The spelling of his name in the present case is remarkable, for I have never come across any local variations other than Rigg and Rigge. Of course Rigg and Ridge have really the same origin and meaning.

Edward Ridge’s will is too long to print verbatim here, for it probably contains about 4,000 words. He begins by bequeathing his body to be “decentlie buried at the discrecion of the righte worshipful Maister Doctor Harvey and Maister ffoxton” or either of them. He directs “that a sermon be made at the tyme and place where I shall be buried by some godlye preacher, to whome I bequeathe for his paines therein tenne shillings.” Three and fourpence is to be given on the day of his burial to each parish in Cambridge.

* He was not the only Rigg who by will benefitted the parish. For the charity of George Rigg, Parish Clerk in 1706, see my *History of Hawkshead*, pp. 397, 558.

He then proceeds to direct that a sum of threescore pounds is to be carried into the "northe partes" to be distributed among his "poore kynsfolkes" there, within "one half year" of his decease, and another threescore pounds to be carried into the northe within one year and a half after his decease; and these six score pounds are to be "delivered by Maister William ffoxton alderman of the Towne of Cambridge my executor in manner aforesaide to th'ende that the same maie comme to the handes of my brother James Rigg, and my cosen William Sowrey my brother in lawe Robert Braythwate and my cosen Robert Rigg dwellinge at Roger grounde, to be paide and discharged by them." He then specifies in detail these local legacies which are as follows:—

Agnes dau. of John Elrowe*	...	...	...	5	.	0	.	0
Elinor " " "	...	...	...	5	.	0	.	0
Christophere Braythwate and his wyffe	...	...	...	3	.	6	.	8
Their five children	...	...	each	0	.	6	.	8
Agnes Brathwate	...	...	...	3	.	13	.	4
(to be paid by his brother in law Robert Braythwate, being a sum due to Margaret late sister of Agnes)								
Agnes Braythwate	...	...	...	3	.	6	.	8
(to be placed in the hands of his cousin William Sourey,† and his brother James Rigg to be used for her benefit)								
Brian Makrell "dwellinge in Kendall"	...	...	...	20 ^s				
George Makrell dwellinge at Skelloth‡	...	...	...	40 ^s				
Each of his children	...	...	...	20 ^s				
Agnes Braythwate, Isbell Brathwate and Elizabeth Brathwate daughters of Rollande Braythwate	...	...	each	3	.	6	.	8
Each child living of the wife of Leonard Benson	...	...	...	10 ^s				
Cousin John Sourey	...	...	...	10 ^s				
Thomas, William and Christopher Braythwate "my sisters sonnes"	...	...	each	40 ^s				

* This is no doubt the Cambridge spelling of the North Country name Ellery or Elleraie.

† This is of course a misspelling of the well-known Hawkshead name "Sawrey."

‡ "Makrell" a clerical error for Makrett, an abbreviated form of Mackreth, a common name at Skelwith (Skelloth).

For a "Dyner at John Braythwates for the neig- boures"	40 ^s
My brother James his fower daughters ... each	40 ^s
A debt owed by Edward Rigge son of his brother Alexander	3 . 6 . 8
(" which he oweth me of lente monney ")	
William and James sons of the said Alexander each	3 . 6 . 8
The wife of William Satterforthe*	3 . 6 . 8
Each of the children of the same...	0 . 6 . 8
The wife of William Braythwate of Satterhowe† and her children	40 ^s
" My brother in lawe " Roberte Braythwate	20 ^s
His son William Braythwate	40 ^s
My brother James Rigge	20 ^s
His son William Rigge	40 ^s

After detailing these bequests, the will proceeds as follows:—

Item I will . . . that twentye poundes . . . shalbe bestowed uppon the repayinge of the high wayes, specialie on the mosse betwene Coltehouse and the churche of Hawxsyde and at the Stang or bridge at Esk waterfoote‡ (where moste neede is) at the oversighte and goode discrecion of Maister Rolland Nicholson my cosen William Sorey my brother James Rigge, my brother in lawe Robert Braythwate, and my cosen Robert Rigg dwellinge at Roger Grounde, of whiche sayde twentye poundes last before mencioned I will tenne poundes thereof to be delyvered (towards the repayinge of the sayde highwayes) when, and at suche tyme as they begynne thee works, And the other tenne poundes afterwarde, as the work shall goe forwarde and be accomplished. And to those supervisors and overseers beinge then lyvinge I will and bequeathe tenne shillings a peece. Provided and I will, that if the Repayinge of the highe

* " Satterforthe " a clerical error for Satterthwate or Satterthwaite, one of the most common names in the Parish, but then as now mostly found in Claife.

† Satter Howe, the farm house at the head of the hill leading down to the Ferry, and for many generations in the possession of the Brathwaites.

‡ " Esk waterfoote," error for Estwaterfoote, a not unusual contraction for Esthwaite water (foot). " Stang " (literally a beam or plank) was commonly applied to a footbridge. The bridge at the head of Esthwaite was regularly called " Pool Stang," but the one at the foot of the lake is now called Ees Bridge. The bequest includes both these places, but from the text " on the mosse betwene Coltehouse and the churche," it rather looks as if at that date there was no bridge, but only a ford. There evidently was one in 1672 when Thomas Lancaster was hung " near unto the Pool-Stang "; and the causeway over the moss was found in 1836. See *Hawkshead, Its History*, etc., p. 44, 226, 241.

wayes shalbe neglected by the overseers above named, that then the monneye thereof unbestowed to be and remayne to the poore people inhabiting within the precinctes of the sayde parrishe of Hawxside.

The testator then bequeaths £6 13s. 4d. to be distributed "emounge the poore people dwelling in the same parrishe of Hawxside" at the discretion of the overseers and supervisors, or the "overlivers" of them,—a curious paraphrase for "survivors." To Thomas Manser who was with him when sick, 13s. 4d. : and he orders that if, after all these legacies have been paid, any thing remains of the six score pounds, it shall be bestowed as his supervisors decide. Only stipulating that six pounds parcell of the six score pounds "shalbe bestowed in erectinge buildinge and settinge upp of an howse at the water syde in Swynsnesse (if it maye well suffred by the order, custome or contrey there) for people to staye in and defende themselves there againste the tempeste when they comme and tarye at the waterside, to bee builte and erected, at the discrecion and oversighte of the supervisors in the Northe above named or thee overlyvers of them."

This bequest gives us information which is of considerable interest. There can be no doubt that it refers to the Ferry on Windermere, the only place, as far as I know, in the parish where folks would have to tarry at the waterside. Swynsnesse is evidently the old Norse name (Sweyn's nes)* for the promontory on the Lancashire side of the lake, and the "howse," for the erection of which the bequest arranges, must have been the original "shedd or coathouse at great boat," which the trustees of the market house had to keep in repair. In 1789 this was ruinous, and had to be rebuilt,—30 feet by 17 feet by 10

* It is perhaps unnecessary to note that the Norse family name Swainson was thick in High Furness and Cartmel from very early times. The name occurs locally in "feudal" days. Henry son of Suan was one of the 30 sworn men who delimited the boundary between the abbot of Furness and the Baron of Kendal late in the twelfth century. I doubt if he was identical with Henry Fitz Swaine, Lord of Edenhall, temp. Hen. I. John Swainson was on Jury Inq. P.M. of W. de Coucy, Lord of half the Manor of Ulverston, 49, Ed. III. From the fifteenth century the branches were numerous.

feet, with the road cleared to run carriages into it. Presumably up to the time of Edward Ridge there was no shelter at the Ferry at all, for the inn was, I believe, not erected till long after. The name Swynnesse is totally unknown now, and I have never seen the Ferry alluded to in any terms but as the "Boat" or the "Great Boate" even in the oldest documents. It shews how completely a place name, even when of a place continually spoken of, and a prominent natural feature, may pass absolutely into oblivion.

From this point, the local interest of the will is less. There are a great many small bequests to individuals in the south: and of these we need only note a few. He gives 20s each to two poor kinswomen, "th'one beinge at London in a gouldsmythes house which is a straunger dwellinge in litle St. Bartholmewes and thother beinge in Cambridge;" to a "layme maide at widdowe Awdries" 3s. 4d.; to Christopher Raie "for oulde acquaintaunce, and for that my horse stode there in his stable a peece of this laste Wynter," 13s. 4d.; "to the widdowe dwellinge under my chamber or Office of the Register, xij^d;" to Richard Moodye his "olde russett gowne;" to widdowe Awdrie his "olde redde satten dublett." "Item that I owe to Trinitie Colledge for sizinge (I thinke aboute sixe shillinges) I will it to be payde, be it more or lesse."*

Testator then orders his personal property, clothes, bedding, books, and other movables, to be sold, and after his debts and funeral expenses are paid, the money to be bestowed on "godlie uses, as uppon the repayinge of highewaies wheare I was borne, and uppon my poore kynsfolke at the discrecion and oversight of my above saide supervisors dwellinge in the northe, viz. James Rigg, William Sowreye, Roberte Braythwate Robert Rigg or the survivors of theme, and that where moste neede is, especiallye [as they will awswere (*sic*)] upon their consciences."

* "Sizinge" is, I suppose, extra food supplied from the college buttery.

As executor he appoints "Maister William ffoxton one of the Aldermen of the Towne of Cambridge," to whom he leaves "a grate golde ringe with my name on it, or else a fyne cheyne ringe and a Riall of golde."*

Following is a very long passage, which is peculiarly obscurely worded, but which, having no bearing on north country matters, cannot be quoted in full here. The purport is that the testator Edward Ridge had been acting as deputy for Thomas Hopkyns (Public Notary), who held the office of Register to the Archdeaconry of Ely. To succeed him in this deputy office with its fees, and "likewise the collectinge of procuracons and other duetyes for Maister Archdeacon," and the "collecting of Elye farthinge and certeyn Elye Rentes belonginge to the Church of Elye . . . and of other dueties (with the fees thereof beinge fower marke by yere)" he appoints "John ffryckley of Jhesus Colledge, Publique Notarye, who is to exercise the office of Registershipp . . . withe the custodye of the same, and the muniment† thereto belonginge." John ffrickleye is to pay £12 yearly, and in case of his death during the life of Hopkyns, or of his absence, two other individuals are appointed.

The remaining part of the will contains small charities to Cambridge and individuals of that district. One quarter's rent out of the office of Registership is to be applied towards the erection of a hospital "which is prtended to be hereafter appoincted win the Universitye and Toune of Cambridge, to be delyvered and paide at suche tyme as the same Hospital shalbe broughte to perfection." "Item to the spittle howse in Cambridge the Castell and the Tolbooth the fyve shillenge a peece." The Dean of Ely, Doctor Harvey, and the Archdeacon of Ely to be supervisors in the south; and he bequeathes six "gemmel ringes" to six goodwives and widows whose

* The Rial was first coined by Edward IV. and was called from its type representing the King in Royal robes. French rials date earlier.

† Emolument?

names he specifies. "Repeated read over and ratified by the above named Testatoure the day and yere fyrste above named" in the presence of six witnesses, among whom are William ffoxton and John ffrickley.

A codicil is added, part reading as follows :—

The saide Edwarde Ridge the xxvijth daie of Maye Anno Domini 1582 (viz. at the tyme of the ratificacion of his saide will) . . . emonge other talk by occasion there offered did saie, Those fellowes (meaninge John Aldrie* John fuller and Robert Swanne) would have twenty shillinge a peece, And did leave it (as it did seeme, and as he did in like manner some other thinges) to the discrecion of his executoure named in the saide testamente in the presence of the witnesses of the said will withe Thomas Manser and others.

It goes on to say that on the 28th he made a bequest of "an oulde gowne," and also authorised the settlements of certain claims against his estate. It seems doubtful if such a document (apparently unsigned) could form a legal codicil.

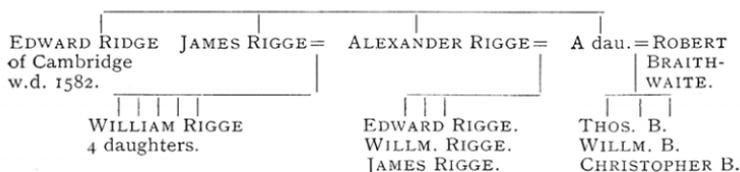
Proved June 15th, 1582, in London.

Of the local persons named in this will, Rowland or Rolland Nicholson was the second of the Nicholsons who lived at Hawkshead Hall, and was in his way a public man, being one of the High Jury who drew up the code of customs for High Furness, 28 Eliz., and also one of the original governors of the Grammar School. His wife was probably connected by marriage with Ridge, for she was one of the Sandys of Graythwaite, and the widow of one William Rigge. William and John Sowrey, whom he mentions as his cousins, were not of Grathwaite and Plumpton, but were, I think, the same as William and John Sawrey, who served on the High Jury just mentioned. William Sawrey was also one of the original governors of the School, and was, I believe, the same William from whom Archbishop Sandys purchased the "tenement at Churchsteele," which afterwards became the school itself.

* Aldred in list of witnesses at end of will.

I am not sure where these Sawreys lived, though I am inclined to think that both they, and the family of Ridge himself, were in the eastern quarter of the parish, called Claife. There were, however, Sawreys at Sawrey-ground at this date.

It is very curious that the knowledge of these bequests to local charities, small though they were, should have no record in the parish itself, the earliest dated charity that I have come across hitherto being 1625.



There are two copies of this will at Somerset House, the registered copy (25 Tirwhite) and the filed copy. For the use of this paper a copy was obtained by Mr. H. Rigge, of 49, Garden Road, Ealing, who was good enough in the first instance to call my attention to the will and its local interest. This copy was subsequently compared with the filed copy.