

PIETY AND FRUGALITY

Joan Brudenell was daughter of Edmund Brudenell, of Raans, Amersham, who died in 1469; she married John Iwardby who died in 1485 possessed of the manors of Overbury, Great Missenden and of Quainton, at which place she lived until her own death in 1528, when the Iwardby property was divided between her three daughters and co-heirs. These were Elizabeth, who married William Elmes, and, after his death, she became the second wife of Serjeant Pigott; Margery, who married, as his first wife, the third Sir Ralph Verney, of Penley, her great grandson was Sir Edmund Verney, the Standard Bearer, who fell at Edgehill; and Ellen, who married, first William Cutland and secondly Thomas Clifford.

Amongst the Doddershall muniments is Joan's will which proves her to have been much more concerned with the next life than with mundane affairs; probably indeed she had not much in her own right which she could bequeath. The will is printed by kind permission of Lady Pigott-Brown.

It begins with an elaboration of the customary opening, it becomes indeed sonorous as the service of the Church:—

I bequeth my sowle to God, most holy and blessed Trynytie, one God and Lorde omnipotent, in persones iij, beseeching the same most tenderly to accept my synfull soule to his Infynyte goodnes and mercy, and into the most holly and blessed company of hevyn, eternally there to joy and to gif laude, glorye, and honor to their hollynes, and for their infiinite mercy to me shewed.

After asking to be buried next to her husband in Quainton Church she says:—

I will have provided for my enterment, monthly mynde, and yere day iiij tapers of clene wax, and every taper to be of v lbs waight, and fowre poore men to bere the said tapers, and everye of the saide poore men to have a gowne and a hood of black freys [frieze] and iiij^d for their labor at every of the iij dayes.

The month's mind and the year-day marked the celebration of masses for the repose of the soul of the deceased one month and one year after the actual date of death. On these occasions however she instructed her executors

not to desyre any kynsmen therto, but to pray them to have my sowle in Remembraunce, nor I will have any solemnpt cost or superfluous charge to be provyded for the same tymes, but yf yt lyke any of them to come at any of the said dayes, that meate, drynke, and honest fare be provyded for them and other of my frends comyng hether. And for preests and clerks doyng the dyvnye servyce for my sowle to be rewarded by the descetryons of my Executors, and that all poor-folke thether comyng be rewarded, that is to say every personne under xv yeres of age to have 1^d, and every personne above that age to have ij^d. Item, I will a lyverey of black cloth be bought against my month's day, and my executors and my dowghters and allso my servants being in howshold or in wages by yere, eche of them to have a black gowne. Item, I will the forsaide iiij tapers be newly made after my enterment against my month's mynde of lyke waight as ys above said, and so against my yereday. Item, I will after my yereday kept that the rest of the said my tapers be made in small tapers and spent by the discretyon of my executors.

After mentioning that any debts proved to be due should be discharged before bequests she goes on:—

I bequethe to the Abbot of Myssenden and to his bretheren x^s to the entent to have in the saide

Monastery a solempn obyt kept after the custome of the saide place of lykø obytts for my sowle, the sowl of my forsaid husband, our faders, mothers, benefactors, and all Xtian sowles, and the Lyghts, and Ringers of the bells to be awarded with part of the saide x^s.

This provision for an obit, or service for her soul, was only the beginning, for she goes on:—

Item, I bequeth to the Churchwardens of Whaddon, Grendon Underwood, Stepull Cleydon, Myddell Cleydon, Est Cleydon, Swanburn, Grandeborow, Wynslo, Sir John Shorne, Whitechurche, Ovyng, Pyched [Pitchcott], Hardwycke, Great Myssenden, Amersham, Woddesdon, and Drayton Becham, Egecote, Hartwell and Lyllestone,—eche of them vi^s viii^d to be disposed in this manner, that ys to saye that the churches wardens of every of the saide churches to have the saide vi^s viii^d to the intent that they shall in all convenyent hast upon payment of the saide money cause to be kepte a solemp obit, placebo,¹ and dirige² overnight, and in the mornyng masse of Requiem to be sung or said with lights and ringing of bells in their saide churches after the costom and manner of their solempn obits, and to have in remembrance by name the sowles above namyd, and the preest that shall principally do service to have vi^d and every other preest helping the service and sayng masse of Requiem for the saide sowles iiiij^d, to the parishe clerke iiiij^d, and other helping the said service to be rewarded by the discretyn of the said Churchwardens, and the ringers of the bells after lykø manner, the wax and torches, yf any be burnt, be payde for of the said vi^s viiiij^d, and yf any money remayne to be put in the churcheboxe.

¹ The first antiphon in the vespers of the dead is Psalm cxiv, beginning *Placebo Domino*.

² The first word in the antiphon at matins of the dead is Psalm v, 8, beginning *Dirige, Domine, Deus meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam*. The English word 'dirge' derives from it.

The list of twenty churches is decidedly interesting; it will be noticed that North Marston is referred to solely as "Sir John Shorne," on account of that famous man's shrine there; it is also to be noticed that "Grandborough" distinctly has a "d" in it, so the interpolation (only recently corrected), is of long standing.

The excellent lady, having provided fully for her spiritual welfare, went on to look after the temporal affairs of her household in a way which proved she had the true spirit of charity:—

Item, I will that my howsehold with my howsehold servants be kept together by the space of a monythe after my deathe, and they to have meate, drinke, and bedyng as they had in my lyf, yf they will abide and take yt. Item, I will that every of my saide servants have their hole wages for the quarter in whiche yt shall fortune me to decease, and another quarter's wages for a rewarde. Item, I will that my preest and John Pypis have eyther of them x kine suche as my executors shall apoynt them, and they therwith to be content, and every of my other men servants to have v sheepe by the discretyon of my executors.

She then returns to the Church, with a curious form of "conscience money":—

Item, I bequethe to the high Aulter of the parrish Church of Quaynton for my tythes by my negligens forgottyn or unpayd iijs^s iiij^d, and to the mother Church of Lincoln iiij^d. Item, to the reparacons of the saide church of Quaynton xx^s. Item, to the fyndyng of the lyght of the same iii^s iiij^d. Item, to the bells of the same church iii^s iiij^d. Item, to the torches of the saide church iijs^s iiij^d.

All her purchased lands and tenements in Bucks she leaves, without naming them, to her daughter Elizabeth for life, with remainder successively to her sons Thomas, Robert and Roger Pigott; failing them it was

to go to John Elmes, "squier,"—Elizabeth's son by her first marriage. The legatee, whoever it was, must "have a preest to syng for me by the space of x yers next after my decease, and to syng every Fryday and Satterday in Jhus Chappell in Quaynton." Her Missenden property was to go to John Elmes after his mother's death. Then come her remaining bequests, all secular, with one exception:—

I bequethe to George Clyfford, my dowghter Elyn Clifford's sonne to fynde him to scole v£, to be payed by the discretyon of my executors. Item, I bequeth to the freres of Alisbury to have an obit there kepte vi^s viij^d. Item, I bequethe to the highe waye xx^s. Item, I will that every child of my iii daughters Elizabeth, Margery, and Elyn, have every of them vi^s viij^d, and that my executors see the same money to be bestowed for their most proffit as they shall thynke convenyent. Item, I will that every woman servant in my howsehold, as well my gentilwoman as others, have a cowe or a heyfer and yf I have not so many keyn, such as my executors shall appoynt them, and I pray them all that they sell not the saide cattle so bequest them, but to kepe them or put them to other personnes to halfe or to hyer for money, and they tenderly to pray for my sowle. I bequeathe to every of my godchildren a sheepe or els xx^d in money at the pleasure of my executors.

Her executors were her daughters Elizabeth Pigott and Elyn Clifford, together with John Cheyne.

Altogether the will leaves us with the impression that the testator was a truly kind and good-hearted woman, somewhat under the domination of priests possibly, but genuinely a daughter of the Church so soon to be broken up. Certainly she was a notable housewife with a very clear notion of the length to which money should go.