

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 218 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=218>)

From: Gilbert Talbot (Sheffield, Yorkshire);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: [October 1575?]

Summary: Gilbert Talbot writes to his stepmother and mother-in-law, Bess (countess of Shrewsbury), with news of the earl and (his sister Katherine) countess of Pembroke's recent trip to Antwerp in a ship lent to them by the queen. His father (Bess's husband), the sixth earl of Shrewsbury, is 'in exceeding cholor of slight occasion' and Gilbert is troubled that 'he speaks nothing of my going to house', for 'I rather wish myself a ploughman than here [i.e. in Sheffield] to continue'. He sends wishes for Bess's good health on the behalf of himself, his wife, Mary (Bess's daughter), and their son, 'your ladyship's pretty fellow'.

Archive: Sheffield Archives, MD 6279

Delivery status: to Bess, sent

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no. Letter packet - slit and band

Hands: Gilbert Talbot | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 218: Gilbert Talbot

Gilbert Talbot (1552-1616) was the son of George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, and his first wife Gertrude (née Manners; d.1566). Gilbert was the second son but as his older brother Frances died in 1582, Gilbert succeeded to the earldom and became seventh earl of Shrewsbury after his father died on 18 November 1590. After his father's marriage to Bess (and to serve their interests), on 9 February 1568 Gilbert was married to Bess's daughter from her second marriage, Mary (née Cavendish). That is to say, Gilbert was married to his step-sister, at which point Bess became both his step-mother and mother-in-law. (At the same time, his sister Grace was married to Bess's eldest son Henry.) Gilbert and Mary were known for living large and eventually relations between Gilbert and his father Shrewsbury deteriorated over what Shrewsbury saw as his son and daughter-in-law's careless spending and the resultant debt. Gilbert also became notorious for his quarrelsome disposition. His relationship with his father suffered further damage when he accused him of siding with his wife Bess during their marriage breakdown. After his father's death he became engaged in litigation with Bess over the will (a legal battle which Bess won). Then, in 1594, he challenged his brother, Edward Talbot, to a duel amidst allegations of poisoning. These and other feuds were often long-lasting and expensive and left Gilbert with many enemies and debts. Gilbert had five children with Mary. His two sons, George and John, died in infancy and therefore his three daughters became joint heirs to their father's titles and great estate: Mary Herbert, countess of Pembroke (d. 1650), Elizabeth Grey, countess of Kent (1582-1651) and Aletheia Howard, countess of Arundel (b. After 1582, d. 1654).

Other letters associated with Gilbert Talbot:

- 4 November 1570 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=171>)
- 28 June 1574 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=80>)
- 14 May 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=81>)
- 13 October 1575 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=217>)
- 20 February 1575/6 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=165>)
- 28 May 1576 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=82>)
- [July 1577?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=84>)
- 1 August 1577 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=85>)
- [30 June 1578?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=83>)
- 13 February 1578/9 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=166>)
- 28 February 1578/9 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=174>)
- 11 September 1580 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=154>)
- 31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)
- 31 January 1580/1 (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=227>)

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[19 September 1583?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=86>)

[February 1589] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=87>)

1 July 1589 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=88>)

28 February [1597/8?] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=187>)

[November 1604] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=177>)

15 January [1606] (Recipient)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=180>)

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People Associated with Letter 218: Bess of Hardwick

Born Elizabeth Hardwick (in c.1521/2, d. 13 February 1608), the woman known to posterity as Bess of Hardwick married four times during her life, as a result of which her name changed from Hardwick to Barlow (or Barley), Cavendish, St Loe and then finally (when she was countess of Shrewsbury and then dowager countess) Talbot. As one of the five children of John Hardwick (1495-1528) of Hardwick, Derbyshire, and his first wife, Elizabeth (née Leake), Bess had three sisters (Mary, Jane and Alice) and one brother (James). The Hardwicks were established Derbyshire gentry who had inherited a modest manor house and c.400 acres in and around Hardwick. But when John died in 1528, and their lands were seized by the crown, Bess faced hardship. Bess's mother quickly remarried but her new husband, Ralph Leche of Chatsworth, Derbyshire, brought little land or money to the marriage, and three more daughters were born (Bess's half-sisters Elizabeth, Jane and Margaret). Little else is known of Bess's childhood but, while still young, she was married for the first time, to Robert Barlow (or Barley) of Barlow, Derbyshire, sometime in or before 1543. Barlow died in 1544 and Bess received a small inheritance. In 1547 she married the twice-widowed Sir William Cavendish, treasurer of the king's chamber. Bess and Cavendish had eight children, six of whom survived: Frances (1548), Henry (1550), William (1551, from whom the dukes of Devonshire are descended), Charles (1553, from whom the dukes of Newcastle and Portland are descended), Elizabeth (1554) and Mary (1556). Probably due to a mixture of affection and shared social ambition, Bess's second marriage was happy and fortuitous. She was now moving in courtly circles and experiencing (for the first time) considerable wealth. In 1549 Cavendish and Bess bought the estate of Chatsworth, which was held jointly in both their names and which he and then Bess, following Cavendish's death in 1557, ambitiously rebuilt. Soon after her second husband's death, and sometime before Elizabeth I's accession (in 1558), Bess married Sir William St Loe, a wealthy widower of ancient noble pedigree. St Loe was captain of the guard to the young queen and in addition to further improving Bess's finances, he also brought her into the queen's inner circle and she served briefly as a gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber (in 1559). The marriage seems to have not been without affection; however, the two would have spent most of it apart - he serving the queen in London and Bess mostly at Chatsworth. Upon St Loe's death (probably in 1565), Bess inherited most of the estate. In 1567 Bess married for a final time, to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, one of the richest and most powerful men in England. To consolidate the union of their fortunes, the couple had Bess's eldest son, Henry, marry Shrewsbury's daughter (from his previous marriage), and Shrewsbury's eldest son, Gilbert (later the seventh earl), marry Bess's daughter, Mary. Also around this time, Shrewsbury was appointed to be the keeper of Mary Queen of Scots (from 1568-84). At first, relations between Bess and the Catholic Scottish queen seem to have been amicable; however, relations deteriorated all around as Bess's marriage to Shrewsbury broke down in the 1580s. An infamously nasty and highly public legal battle over estates ensued and finally the courts resolved that Shrewsbury provide Bess with a sizeable income from 1587 onwards (Shrewsbury died in 1590). In 1582, Bess took charge of the upbringing of her orphaned granddaughter, Arbella Stuart (1575-1615), claimant to the English

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and Scottish crowns. In 1587, Bess undertook her remarkable building works at Hardwick: the house now known as Hardwick Old Hall was complete by 1591; next to it, the extraordinary building now known as Hardwick New Hall was complete by 1599 and is one of the greatest architectural ventures of Elizabethan England. It was at Hardwick that Bess spent most of the remainder of her life, much of it devoted to caring for and managing Arbella, who came to loathe her existence in Derbyshire and devised several bizarre plans for her escape (to Bess's great distress). Bess also quarrelled with her eldest son, Henry, and disinherited both him and Arbella in her will. She left most of her estate to her beloved and faithful son, William Cavendish, who continued her great dynasty into the seventeenth century.

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Other letters associated with Sheffield, Yorkshire

- 27 Aug 1567 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=114>)
- 3 May 1571 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=29>)
- 8 Aug 1574 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=73>)
- 7 Jun 1575 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=74>)
- 19 Jun [c.1575?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=77>)
- 13 Oct 1575 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=217>)
- 29 Mar 1576 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=103>)
- 27 Jun [1576?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=110>)
- 18 May [1577?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=109>)
- 1 Aug 1577 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=85>)
- 17 Mar 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=120>)
- 14 May 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=188>)
- 29 Dec 1578 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=123>)
- 17 Jan 1580 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=190>)
- 13 May 1580 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=194>)
- 21 Jun 1580 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=78>)
- 31 Jan 1581 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=228>)
- 31 Jan 1581 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=227>)
- 28 Nov 1581 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=104>)
- 28 Jan 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=144>)
- 28 Jan 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=162>)
- 8 Feb 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=195>)
- 6 May 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=146>)
- 6 May 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=145>)
- 10 Jun 1582 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=105>)
- 24 Nov [1582?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=204>)

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7 Feb 1583 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=148>)

4 Aug 1584 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=119>)

23 Oct 1585 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=117>)

19 Dec 1590 (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=231>)

14 Apr [1600?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=2>)

Normalised view of Letter 218

[To my]Lady.

My duty moste humbly Remembred vnto your good Ladyship Here is no thinge that I can advertise your Ladyship of yesterday Ratclyfe my brother Savills man came from London with a lettre to my Lord from his master of my Lord of Pembroke and my sisters departure from london on thursday laste, their hole companie is aboute xxx persons, the Queen's majestie hathe lente them one her beste shippes throughly furnished to carry them to Andwerpe, and hathe apoynted master William Gorge the captayne therof. my brother Saville and my sister hathe earnestly desyred me to excuse them for not wryting now vnto your Ladyship and to gyve you moste humble thanks for the furthering of my Lord's liberallitie vnto them, whereof at large I wrytt vnto them. howbeit master Alderman osburne to whom my Lord earnestly directed his lettres to gyve them creadite for one hundreth markes and he wolde repay the same at michellmas, woulde not lende them any more then fyvetie poundes, & that not in presente mony, but by a byll of exchange to be receaved in Andwerpe, for which he muste pay for the exchange, interest, wherin, in myne opinion he hathe litell deserved the good turnes yat my Lord dothe vnto him & hindered them of my Lord's gyfte./.

my Lord is continually pestered with his wonted busyness, and is very often in exceding collar of sleyghte occasion, a great greife to them yat loves him to se him hurte him selfe so muche. he now speketh nothing of my goyng to house, & I fere woulde be contented with scilence to passe it over but I haue great hope in your Ladyship at your cumming, and In all my lyfe I never longed for any thing so muche as to be from hence truly madame I rather wishe my sealfe a plowman then here to continew. my Lord myndeth to sende me to killingworth, when her majestie commeth thither./ Your Ladyship's pretty fellow is a ryghte honeste man every way I truste your Ladyship thinketh so besyde his owne desertes, by father and moother. who doe all moste humbly crave your Ladyship's blessing and pray for your Ladyship's lonnge healthe in all honour & happines. sheffield this presente Wednesday. my Lorde is now goyng to Tankarsely to course, I here not of any that dothe mete him therre./

Your Ladyship's moste humble and obedient loving sunn.

///

Gilbert Talbott

Diplomatic view of Letter 218

[Address Leaf]

...Lady.

§

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

MD

62779 [Old item number, hand: archivist]

7 [Old item number, hand: archivist]

My duty moste humbly Remembred vnto yo^r good La.
Here is no thinge that I can s^e advertise yo^r La. of
yesterday Ratclyfe my brother Savills man came from
London wth a *lettre* to my L. from his m^r of my L.
of Pembroke and my sisters departure from london
on thursday laste, their hole companie is aboute
xxx persons, the Q. ma.^{tie} hathe lente them one
her beste shippes throughly furnished to carry
them to Andwerpe, and hathe apoynted m^r William
Gorge the captayne therof. my brother Saville
and my sister hathe earnestly desyred me to excuse
them for not wryting now vnto yo^r La. and to gyve
you moste humble thanks for the furthering of
my L. liberallitie vnto them, whereof at large
I wrytt vnto them. howbeit m^r Alderman osburne
to whom my L. earnestly directed his *lettres* to gyve
them creadite for one hundreth markes and he wolde
repay the same at michellmas, woulde not lende
them any more then fyvetie poundes, & n^ot that
not in p^r sente mony, but by a byll of exchange to be
receaved in Andwerpe, for w^{ch} he muste [^]pay for[^] the exchange,
as it were interest, wherin, in myne opinion he hathe
litell deserved the good turnes yt my L. dothe vnto him

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^& hindered them of my L. gyfte.^ /.

my L. is continually pestered wth his wonted
busyness, and is very often in exceding collor of sleyghte
occasion, a great greife to them y^t loves him to se him hurte
him selfe so muche. he now speketh nothing of my goyng to
house, & I fere woulde ^be^ contented wth scilence to passe it over

[page break]

but I haue great hope in yo^r La. at yo^r cumming, and
In all my lyfe I never longed for any thing so
muche as to be from hence truly madame I rather
wishe my sealfe a plowman ^then here to continew.^ my L. myndeth
to sende me to killingworth, when her ma^{tie} commeth
thither./ Yo^r La. pretty fellow is a ryghte
honeste man every way I truste yo^r La. thinketh so
besyde his owne desertes, by father and moother.
who doe all moste humbly crave yo^r La. blessing
and pray for yo^r La. lonnge healthe in all honour
& happines. sh. this p^r sente Wednesday. my Lorde
is now goyng to Tankarsely to coursse, I here not
of any that dothe t mete him therre./ ~

Yo^r La. moste humble
and obedient loving sunn.

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[significant space]

Gilbert Talbott
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