WILL OF JOHN STAFFORD, OF MARLWOOD, ESQ. 1596.

THE following Will, evidently never proved, was found in the Bishop's Registry at Gloucester. It was made by John Stafford, Esq. of Marlwood, in the parish of Thornbury, co. Gloucester, on the eve of his departure on the expedition to Spain in 1596. He returned thence in safety, and with increased honours, having been knighted before Cadiz by the Earl of Essex in the month of June that same year, immediately after the successful siege of that city. [a] For forty-seven years he was one of the Gentlemen Pensioners to Elizabeth and James the First, [b] and by the latter monarch was appointed Constable of Bristol Castle. [b] He was the third and youngest son of Sir William Stafford, Knt. of Chebsey, of the family of Stafford of Blatherwick, in Northamptonshire, by his second wife, Dorothy Stafford, daughter of Henry the restored Baron Stafford, only son of Edward last Duke of Buckingham. He was born circa 1554 at Geneva, [c] whither his family went into exile on the accession of Queen Mary, at which place, [d] and about which time, his father died. [e] He was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. [g] He was twice married; but left no surviving issue. His first wife, whom, it would appear from the following document, he married after the expedition against Cadiz in 1696, was Milicent, [h] daughter of Edward Gresham, [i] who was buried at Thornbury 24 Dec. 1602. [h] His second wife was Susannah, widow of John Wynyard, Groom of the Wardrobe to Queen Elizabeth and James the First (who ob. 20 Jan. 1605-6), [k] and daughter of George Stonehouse, of Little Peckham,

[a] Camden's Reign of Elizabeth. Lansd. MSS. 81, article 73, and 678, fol. 26; also Harl. MSS. 983, fol. 29 b, and 6063, art. 26.

[b] Monumental Inscription to Sir John Stafford in Thornbury church. The name occurs in the list of Gentlemen Pensioners, 1608, printed in the Collectanea Topographica, &c. vol. VI. p. 192.

[c] Act of Parliament for making John Stafford a denizen. Parl. Rolls, 8 Eliz. No. 26.

[d] Monumental Inscription in Nettlested church, Kent, to his sister Elizabeth, Lady Scott.

[e] Monumental Inscription in St. Margaret's, Westminster, to his mother, Dorothy Lady Stafford.

[g] Master's History of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Reprint 1831.

[h] Parish Church Register.

[i] Pedigrees in Heralds' College, H to Z, vii. fol. 308.

[k] Exchequ. Plea Rolls, Hilary 9 Jac. I. memb. 81—84. [Gilman v. Dudgeon.]

Kent, and of Radley, Berks, one of the Clerks of the Green Cloth to Queen Elizabeth, by his first wife Elizabeth Gibson.[l] She was buried at Thornbury 28 Dec. 1621.[h] Sir John Stafford survived till 1624. His last will was dated 10 August 1624; and power to administer it was granted 2 December in the same year, to Sir Richard Lovelace, Knt. of Hurley, Berks, one of the Supervisors named in the same will, during the minority of Richard Stafford, his great-nephew and executor. It was afterwards proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury by the aforesaid Richard Stafford 23 Nov. 1629. [Byrde, 107.]

Sir John ob. 28 Sept. 1624, s. p.[m b] and was buried in Thornbury church on the 30th following.[h]

In the name of God, Amen, the xth day of May, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, 1596,

I, John Stafford, of Marlwood, within the county of Gloucester, Esquire, being of good and perfect remembrance, thanks be unto God, do make this my last will and testament in manner and form following:—

First. I bequeath my body to the earth, and my soul unto the hands of Almighty God, in whom I trust to be saved.

Item. I bequeath to my servant John Wisse all such money as is due to me for rent.

Item. I bequeath to my servant Thomas Tayer, 20*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant George Michell, 10*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant Anne Tucker, 20*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant Elizabeth Skydmore, 5*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant Thomas Wrytt, 5*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant Richard Morton, 5*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant Edward Parker, 10*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my neighbour Richard Atkynes, of Oldbury, 10*l.*

Item. I bequeath to my neighbour Thomas Jones, of the Port, 20*s.*

Item. I bequeath to my neighbour William Serche, 20*s.*

[l] Pedigree of Stonehouse in Benefactors Book in Heralds' College, fols. 86, 87, and Will of John Wynyard in Prerog. Court, Canterb. 1606. [Stafford, 10.]

[m] Inq. p. mort. of Sir John Stafford. Esch. bundles, 1 Car. I. p. 1. No. 80, Glou.

Item. I bequeath to my servant John Jones, 20*s.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant Thomas Jane, 20*s.*

Item. I bequeath to my servant George Thurstone, 40*s.*

Item. I bequeath to my cousin George Gryme, of Foulsham, in the county of Norfolk, gentleman, and to Catherine Gryme his wife, either of them, 5*l.* a peice, to be bestowed upon two gold rings with a picture of death's head to be graved in them.

Item. I give to my loving brother Sir Edward Stafford, Knight, all my plate left in the hands of my cousin Anne Gifford, widow, dwelling in the parish of Thornbury: Imprimis, one basin and ewer; three silver times; three silver bowls; one silver cup gilt; one dozen silver spoons; one casting bottle; one bowl gilt; one double salt with a pepper box at the end; one little salt gilt.

Item. I give to all my brothers and sisters 5*l.* a peice, to be bestowed upon a gold ring, with a death's head graved in it; for every of them a gold ring each.

Item. I give to my cousin (nephew) William, the son of Sir Edward Stafford, knt. my great horse and armour, and all my horses, mares, and colts, running within my grounds of Marlwood, with all my apparel left in the hands of my servant Henry Cooke; to be bestowed at his pleasure.

Item. I give to my cousin Anne Gifford, 40*l.*

Item. I give to my neighbour Mr. Thomas Wysse and his wife, of Houpe, in the parish of Thornbury, 60*s.* a peice, to be bestowed on a gold ring with a death's head graved in it.

Item. I give to Mr. John Andrews and to Mr. Robert Perrie 5*l.* a peice, for a ring with a death's head graved in it.

And lastly, I ordain and make my Lady and mother, Dorothy Stafford, my only and whole executrix. In witness whereof I have hereunto sealed and subscribed, the day and year first above writen.

Jo: STAFFORD.

Witnesses,—Robert Perry,
Erkynwald Wylls,
George Michell.

B. W. G.