

**Letters to Mrs Knollys<sup>1</sup>**

British Library, Additional Ms 36901, folio 13  
For the background see Chapter Three

Good Cousin

The annuity reserved to Thomas Bracebridge out of Kingsbury is conveyed to my cousin Ralph Rydgeley<sup>2</sup> and to one William Sheldon<sup>3</sup> of Trust as well for the preservation thereof as also that there may be some consideration had to the children of the said Thomas Bracebridge. This has been done by the consent of my cousin Bracebridge. I am therefore heartily to pray you that from henceforth you will vouchsafe to pay the said annuity to my cousin Ralph Rydgeley whom I have entreated to have care of the children and by whom their portions shall be yearly paid.

And so with my very hearty commendations being ready to do you any pleasure I may whensoever you shall please to use me I take my leave from Weston the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1587.

Your loving cousin and friend assured  
Raffe Sheldon

Double sheet of paper

Verso

To the Right Worshipful my very good cousin Mrs Knollys at Nuneaton give these

**Folio 6 : To Mrs Knollys**

Good Cousin

I have received your letters of the 16<sup>th</sup> of this Instant requesting me to disburse to the relief of Thomas Bracebridge £30, signifying also by them that you will repay the same unto me at Michaelmas next out of his annuity. I will most willingly at your request furnish him with so much and have entreated my cousin Raffe Rydgeley the bearer hereof to see the payment made by me to whom I heartily pray you to make repayment at Michaelmas according to your said letters.

The black millstones you write of I provided for the very little mill I made at Beoley only for the provision of my house the which I do always use when I keep my household there. In mine absence common stones of our country are in place of them used because for such persons the fineness of the bread is not respected. I do also suppose that they are far too little

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Knollys, daughter of Margery Willington and her second husband, Sir Ambrose Cave, married Henry, son of Sir Francis Knollys of Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Rugeley was the son of Sheldon's aunt Joyce, b.c.1547-1602.

<sup>3</sup> Almost certainly his cousin, son of Francis Sheldon of Abberton.

for your use unless your mill be made of that fashion, but if I may do you pleasure in providing of the like kind of stones for you I will do the best I may so as you send me the measure and size you desire to have them of.

And so with my very hearty commendations I take my leave from Weston this 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1588/89.

Your very loving cousin, Raffe Sheldon

Single sheet, no verso inscription

**Folio 28 : To Mrs Knollys**

**Jhesu**

My very good cousin

I was bold to send unto you by my cousin Raffe Rydgeley to understand your pleasure whereof I might be satisfied at your hands of such sums of money as I had disbursed and shall disburse to Thomas Bracebridge for his relief of the annuity payable by you. It pleased you to return to me a friendly answer. I have now sent unto you Bracebridge his letters and his acquittance for the next half year and do most heartily pray you hereafter to retain with you for me the said annuity until I be fully satisfied. You are not ignorant, good cousin, of the imperfections of the man. And my travel for my trouble is to relieve those his poor children being of my blood of whom God knoweth he maketh little care. Your friendly and favourable consideration of this matter shall be acknowledged by to my uttermost in it if I may any way pleasure you.

And so with my very hearty commendations I take my leave from Weston the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1589

Your very loving cousin  
Raff Sheldon

Double sheet

To the Right Worshipful my very good cousin Mrs Knollys give these

**Folio 33 : To Mrs Knollys**

**Jhesu**

My very good cousin

I have spoken with Thomas Bracebridge and Smallwood and though Thomas Bracebridge do avow his acquittance I made to you with direction for the payment of this last year's rents to me yet is Smallwood unwilling to release your promise <as I noteth> which I suppose was

made to him upon condition that he should bring an acquittance of a former date to mine which I know he cannot justly do. If you shall think good to detain the money I will endeavour to see you discharged, for Smallwood is somewhat in my danger. But if your pleasure shall be to pay this rent due let me good cousin assure myself that yow will hereafter pay no more until I may be satisfied and if there shall grow unto you any charge or trouble I will, God willing, save you harmless. My good cousin let me herein trust unto you otherwise I shall not only be a great bearer<sup>4</sup> but the poor children of Bracebridge are like to live with much penury.

And so with my very hearty commendations I take my leave from Weston the 12th of April  
1590

Your Loving cousin  
Raff Sheldon

Verso

To the Right Worshipful my good cousin Mrs Knollys give these at Henley

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<sup>4</sup> Bearer: one who sustains or joins in sustaining a charge or responsibility. Obs.OED