

# Bess of Hardwick's Letters

**Letter ID: 217 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=217>)**

From: Gilbert Talbot (Sheffield, Yorkshire);

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: 13 October 1575

Summary: Gilbert Talbot writes to his stepmother and mother-in-law, Bess (countess of Shrewsbury), regarding the state of the Goodrich Castle estate and thanks her for the furniture she has given to him and his wife, Mary (Bess's daughter). He also writes at length about various provisions of fabric.

Archive: Sheffield Archives, MD 6278

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 217: 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>)
- [October 1575?] (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=218>)
- 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 217: 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>)
- [Oct 1575?] (origin) (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=218>)
- 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 217

[To] my Lady.

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My duty moste humbly Remembred vnto your honor. my Lorde left me heare behind him when he wente to Worsop on Wednesday, for that Perence and the workemen were not then redy to goe toward Gotherydge, but I hastened them so muche that yesterday they wente early, There is gone with Perence Loe, Swyfte and one other, they meane to consyther what may be donne of the oulde weare, & if they see no possibilitie of recovery therof this winter, then to vewe yat new place yat is spoken of and get all thinges in redines presently vppon my commynge thither it may goe in hande. Madame where it hathe pleased your Ladyship to bestow of vs a great deale of furniture towards house, we can but by our prayers for your Ladyship shew our selves dutifull as well for this as all other your Ladyship's continuall benifytts towards vs, wherof we can never fayle so Lonnge as it shall please god to continew his grace towards vs./ presently after your Ladyship's departure from hence my Lord apoynted him of the wardrop to delyver vs the tester and curtaynes of the oulde greene & redd bedd of velvett and satten yat your Ladyship did see, and the clothe bedd tester & curtaynes yat we now lye in, and ij very ould counterpoynts of tapstery, and forbad him to delyver yat bed of clothof gould & tanney velvet yat your Ladyship sawe. That which your Ladyship hathe geven vs is more worth then all that at gotherydg or here of my Lord's bestowing on Wednesday yat my Lord wente hence, cootes brought in a peace of housewyfes clothe nothing deere of xij pence ye yarde & so was holden, which cootes tould my Lord woulde very well serve my wyfe to make sheetes bor[d] clothes & such lyke which my Lord at the fyrst yealded vnto, & bade him carry it to steale to measure into the vtter chambre, and he sayde he thought it very deere of that pryce, and thervppon my Lord refused to buy it, which was no otherwise then the deniall of ye plate your Ladyship called for. but whether the man or the place be more in faulte I stande doubtfull, I pray god when he will to amende bothe./

Tymperley came yesternyght, it apereth by a note yat came with the stuffe yat there is suche thinges comme as nicholas steward wrytt for, as thredd & silke or suche like, but it is lapped amonge so many other roulles of the lyke, and nothing wrytten on the backsyde, yat we can not tell which is for your Ladyship from other folkes, if therfore my cosen Iane will wryte what your Ladyship sente for, we shall sende them, they appeere to be but small thinges./ I thinke my Lorde will be heare to morow at nyght, and aboute twesday I thinke we shall set forwarde. Thus I beseche your Ladyship moste humbly of your blessing to your lyttell fellow & my selfe, who is very well, (thankes be to god) not forgetting my prayer to god for your Ladyship in all honour to your harts desyre. Sheffield this fryday. xiiijth of octobre. 1575

Your Ladyship's moste humble and obedient loving sunn



# Bess *of* Hardwick's Letters

Gilbert Talbott

## Diplomatic view of Letter 217

[Address Leaf]

... my  
Lady.  
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[Letter Text]

### [Letter Text: Notes]

MD 6278

11 [Old item number, hand: archivist]

My duty moste humbly Remembred vnto yo<sup>r</sup> honor.  
my Lorde lefte me heare behind him when he wente  
to Worsop on Wednesday, for that Perence and the workemen  
were not then redy to goe toward Gotherydge, but I hastened  
them so muche that yesterday they wente early, There is  
gone w<sup>th</sup> Perence Loe, Swyfte and one other, they  
meane to consyther what may be donne of the oulde  
weare, & if they see no possibilitie of recovery therof  
this winter, then to vewe y<sup>t</sup> new place y<sup>t</sup> is spoken <sup>^of^</sup>  
and get all thinges in redines presently vppon my e<sup>o</sup>  
commynge thither t<sup>o</sup> <sup>^it may^</sup> goe in hande. Madame where  
it hathe pleased yo<sup>r</sup> La. to bestow of vs a great  
deale of furnif furniture towards house, we can but  
by our prayers for yo<sup>r</sup> La. shew our selves dutifull  
as well for this as all other yo<sup>r</sup> La. continuall  
benifytts towards vs, wherof we can never fayle  
so Lonnge as it shall please god to continew his  
grace towards vs./ presently after yo<sup>r</sup> La. departure  
from hence my L. apoynted him of the wardrop to  
delyver vs the tester and curtaynes of the oulde  
greene & redd bedd of velvett and satten y<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> La.  
did see, and ij the clothe bedd of tester & curtaynes  
y<sup>t</sup> we now lye in, and ij very ould counterpoynts of

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tapstery, and forbad him to delyver y<sup>t</sup> bed of cloth=of Gould & tanney velvet y<sup>t</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> La. sawe. That  
w<sup>ch</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> La. hathe geven vs is more worth then  
all that at gotherydg or here of my L. bestowing  
on <sup>^</sup>Wednesday <sup>^</sup>Thursday y<sup>t</sup> my L. wente hence, cootes brought in  
a peace of housewyfes clothe nothing deere of xij pence  
y<sup>e</sup> yarde & so was holden, w<sup>ch</sup> cootes tould my L. woulde  
very well serve my wyfe to make sheetes <sup>^</sup>bor... clothes <sup>^</sup> and & such lyke  
w<sup>ch</sup> my L. at the fyrst yealded vnto, & bade him carry  
it to steale to measure into the vtter chambre, and he

[page break]

sayde he thought it very deere of that pryce,  
and thervpon my L. refused to buy it, w<sup>ch</sup> was  
no otherwise then the deniall of y<sup>e</sup> plate yo<sup>r</sup> La.  
called for. but whether the man or the place  
be more in faulte I stande doubtfull, I pray god  
when he will to amende bothe./

Ty<sup>p</sup> Tymperley came yesternyght, it apereth by  
a note y<sup>t</sup> came w<sup>th</sup> the stuffe y<sup>t</sup> there is suche  
thinges comme as nicholas steward wrytt for, as  
thredd & silke or suche like, but it is lapped  
amonge so many other roulles of the lyke, and  
nothing wrytten on the backsyde, y<sup>t</sup> we can not  
tell w<sup>ch</sup> is for yo<sup>r</sup> La. from other folkes, if  
therefore my cosen Iane will wryte what yo<sup>r</sup> La.  
sente for, we shall sende them, they appeere to be  
but small thinges./ I thinke my Lorde  
will be a heare to morow at nyght, and aboute  
twesday I thinke we shall set forwarde. Thus I  
beseche yo<sup>r</sup> La. moste humbly of yo<sup>r</sup> blessing to yo<sup>r</sup>  
lyttell fellow m & my selfe, who is very well,  
(thankes be to god) not forgetting my prayer to  
god for yo<sup>r</sup> La. in all honour to yo<sup>r</sup> harts desyre.  
Sheffeld this x fryday. xiiij<sup>th</sup> of octobre. 1575

Yo<sup>r</sup> La. moste <sup>^</sup>humble <sup>^</sup> and

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obedient loving sunn

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*[significant space]*

Gilbert Talbott

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