

Copy of the Will of Edward Stratford, born 27th August 1736, and died at Belan House, County Kildare January the 2nd 1801. Earl of Aldborough

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I have added in brackets my own comments

In the name of God, Amen. I Edward Earle of Aldborough, though past my grand climatick (climacterick), being better in health thanks to my creator and the unvaried blessings and benefit and comfort I have received rom an unwearied tender care, affection and attention of my dearly beloved wife whose exalted and comprehensive mind amiable and accomplished manners, mild and humble disposition, religious, virtuous and charitable conduct, have deservedly endeared her to all who have the ahppiness of knowing her, rich and poor - and whose ample portion and management, has brought me from debt to affluence - to whose solace and society under unmerited oppressions, injustice, partialities, ingratitude, malignity, envy and implacability of notorious miscreants and upstarts, whose intrigueing and factioys manouvers pulled the weak and credulous - useing their ill gotten power with the cruelty of cowards and the rancour of demands - he has supported me under every pressure and indisposition of mind and body - to whom under God I am indebted for every happiness I enjoy under life with the satisfaction of finding I never lost the friendship of the Honourable and just and those whose amity worth prizing - and being of sound and disposing mind and memory - do make, publish, constitute and ordain this my last will and tesptament conforming however the dispositions in former ones, so far as they regard my said dearly beloved wife and hereby revoking and annulling all other and former will and dispositions (I read somewhere that he was called 'the man of a hundred wills,' so he evidently made a good many.) save those herein and hereafter expressed, and first bequeath my soul to my Creator hoping for the remission of my sins thro' the merits and mediation of Christ my Saviour and Redeemer. Secondly I bequeath

my body to the Earth to be interred where in such manner as my Exor and those joined in the execution of this my will may appoiny, (His body was interred in the Crypt of St. Thomas's Church, Dublin. This was so badley damaged in the 1916 Rebellion that it had to be demolished. Such coffins as were found were taken and reburied in a large plot in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin. However no names are recorded. Lady Hannah Stratford was also buried along side of her brother). avoiding all ostentations or superflous expence - And whereas I have the example of a late Chief Justice in stateing reasons for the dispositions I make of my worldly substance. Those above recited respecting my beloved and justly honoured and respected wife, Anne Eliza, render further reasons superfluous for my leaving her sole heiress of all my real and personable Estates, Goods, Chattles, Stock, Plate, Furniture, Books, Paintings both in Great Britain and Ireland Lease and freehold Interests purchased and stock carriages and horses etc. etc. during the term of her natural life confident that she will make a proper use of them be kind to those who were kind just and true to us and attend to the recommendations of a letter herein inclosed, as much as if made specified legacies or bequests in this my will - so confident am I of her honor regard deference to me and my wishes, and of her own justice and discrimination and which made I chuse to adopt towards my friends and those I wish well to lest any should be induced to pester my said wife with law suits or applications well assured they need no mementos with a Lady of her delicate feelings and judgment - It may be suggested that I should have limited such amply bequests to her during her widuity only but as I am certain she never will marry unworthily, (Anne Eliza, Countess of Aldborough did re-marry her brother in law, George Powell, the Barrister w widower of Lady Anne Stratford. He survived her, and they had no issue)., and I pray to God none but a man of honor and who will make her as fond a husband as I flatter myself I have been never prevail upon her to trust her peace of mind and happy with him - in that case I shall consider any children she may have by him as my own and appoint them as such takeing the name and useing the armorial bearings I use. It may also be objected why I have passed

my brother and nephews to each of whome I bequeath 1 shilling. (This was the old fashioned insult, and gave rise to the expression 'cut off with a shilling').

It is because they and Morley and John Saunders, (the sons of his sister Lady Martha Saunders, born about 1732, died in Dublin 1816, of Saunders Grove County Wicklow. The younger brother John Stratford Saunders, of Golden Fort, County Wicklow became a Lt General in the Army)., have repaid earliest attention care and affection with the utmost ingratitude undermining my character and fortune doing me all the possible acts of unkindness and uniformity opposing my interest attacking my Borough which they have for many years and at enormouse expence to each endeavoured to wrest from me by violence, fraud, threat, mobs assault, and every species of baseness and injustice and instead of being friends, respectable and affectionate brothers and nephews and supports they have been my greatest enemies for as their impotent malice could go - my brothers conduct I owe to two causes - first my improvident intailment of most of my Irish Estates on them thro' love which they have repaid with hatred without any consideration else whatever - secondley, A will two of them in concert with others since dead influenced if needed he was competent procured a partial and absurd will I cannot think his justice ever dictated - By that he possessed themselves of personale to near £100,000 amount and large parcels of the Hereditary Estate - of which puffed up and aiming to be my superiors they strip'd the mantion (this is presumably Belan House, County Kildare, now demolished, exvept for the stables. Some monuments obiisk and a Temple survive nearby. The Patent of the Earldom does not survive as far as O know)., of every valuable - plate furniture stack, jewels, wines, carriages, horses, carrying off even the Patents and Robes of Honor, refusing to give them unless paid for the expences of creations etc. Si I succeeded to a large house gutted without horses, or carriages but anold one which soone As I have repair'd they came with the Distringas and carried off and have squandered all the personals in ostention, play and at law - 2nd, Chuseing

