

18 Jan 1676 William Blackett to Edward Blackett

[Note: This letter was found amongst the pages of an accounting ledger, and evidently copied –perhaps by Edward, the recipient, from the now lost original . The date is given as 18 Jan 1675, but context and usual ‘old calendar’ dating conventions strongly suggests 1676 was meant. ‘Dear Willy’ was baptised on 25 Feb 1674 at Bedale and buried there on 17 Jan 1675, aged about 11 months. Parish register data is thus given as 1674 and 1675, but this seems unlikely, and most probably a mistaken use of the old calendar in place of modern dates of 1675 and 1676 respectively. The marriage settlement and wedding of Edward Blackett and Mary Norton are dated April and May 1674 respectively, and the child was baptised with the surname Blackett rather than Norton. There is also the question as to whether the marriage settlement would have been quite so conventional had the couple already have a child acknowledged by Blackett as his son.]

A Copy of Sr Wm. Blacketts Lettr to his Son upon the death of his Granson

Newcastle 18 Janry 1675

Son Edwd,

I have both yours and my Brothr Nortons Lettrs of the 15 pr.sent, the first giving me an acct of the Illness of our dear Willy & the latttr of his Eternall happiness in takeing his Leave of this vale of misery wherein he left us to bewaile his loss; and though nature cannot but be sensible of such a visit yet when we consider it’s from the Lord we have no reason to repine but resigne all to his holy will. Doe we not dayly desire his will be done and shall we not submit thereto. For my part notwithstanding my being a deep sharer in this affliction yet when I think with my Self the bliss our deare babe Enjoyeth amongst the heavenly Quire of the blessed Spirits it much mittigates my greif, & I hope the Same being Seriously considered by you and my daughter it may have the like Influence upon you, what Toyls Labours and Continual Hazards do parents run through in this miserable world & all for the Education and well Establishment their children therein & where is there a greatr Comfort to the father upon his death bed then to See that his Endeavours were Seconded with a Blessing from god So far as to leave his children in possession of a Considerable and well acquired Inheritance that they may not only live Justly & honestly (which poverty sometimes Induces people to do otherwise but also Improve the Endeavours of their father and benefactor & the fruight of his Labours left them. I say if this be So great a Satisfaction to a father, how much more ought he to rejoice & be satisfied to See his child in possession of an everlasting Inheritance which all the Kingdoms on Earth cannot Paralel. With my love to yr Self wife my Bro.r and Sister Norton desireing the almighty to send us all Comfort & the grace of Patience I remaine

Your affection.t father

Will Blackett