

Coal Raising in the Seventeenth Century.

By THE EDITOR.



HIS copy, from the original draft of a letter, written in 1673, by John Twentyman, Vicar of Tibshelf, appealing against his assessment, was found among the papers belonging to the Twentyman family of Newark, co. Notts, lately in the possession of Mr. Thos. M. Blagg, a member of the Council of the Thoroton Society, and was sent by him for publication.

“ Gentlemen,

“ It is no small greife to a Minister to have the accessions of unworthy wrangles about temporalls from some unquiet spirits about him whilst he is labouring for their good & welfare in matters of an higher Nature: And if the White Tithes¹ I have from my people were of any Considerable Value, it might be thought my Complaints arise out of y^t vice attributed much to the Clergie (though it is grown Epidemicall) viz^t. Covetousness. But that cannot even by my Adversaries, Deo gratia, be charged upon me, & therefore hope may admitt of a favourable Construction from your Candour. My Vicarage upon the Oath of 2 of the then most antient & knowing men of my pish was given in, when the Ordinance came out for Uniting of Parishes, at 40 Marks; & as they told me they swore as far as they durst, & according to what I have found it. This seemes a mighty reward after all the charge & expence in the University, or for a M^r. of Arts of Both: & is all I have from them [? *i.e.*, the white tithes] & too short a maintenance is it for that liberall Education my Parents & friends have bestowed upon me.

¹ Tithes of Corn.

“ But God in his gracious Providence hath made an addition to this small portion of the Vicarage by a Coal mine, yet nothing neer so much as the Envie of the World speaks it to be, for in the 16 years my banke has been bared but 3 times. The first in 1658, when Mr. Heslehurst[’s] Pitts at Carter Lane were not in work, & Blackwell Delfe was in a fault: since then I can lay claime only to those 2 yeares of 1665 & 1672. And these were such motes in the eyes of the Envious, that they are altogether for preying upon the Vicar because they may not pinch the Parson, which I esteeme very great unkindnesse & irregular dealing. And it is upon this g^t mistake w^{ch} a willfull ignorance of theirs would fasten upon you more intelligent & worthy persons. They will needes pswade you & all the Comissioners I have had to deale with that what I have of the pfits of the Coal-Delfe, whereas through God’s blessing the Estate which I have & paye for in other places they take no notice of, & would have me pay for again among them under this notion of my Coal-delfe, & I now am forced to spend mine own Rents to doe them service. And in this year 1673 though I have sold & trusted but about 300^o of Coales they threaten’d to raise me in Assesmt^s which in as much reason, with submission to your j[udgments?], I thinke might as justly have faln upon the very Corn in their Barnes. Because my Pitts have been unwrought ever since the 28th of June last past. And though they have thus stood yet have they assessed me for these 3 last Quarterly payments, but have left a delfe upon the Common belonging to the Hospitall unassessed in the 2^d & 3^d Quarters because unwrought, & in this 4th Quarterly payment, though in worke, because of the Priveledge in the Act w^{ch} relates to the Land, but not as I humbly conceive to a Coal mine upon the Waste: & I mention [not] y^t I desire he should be assessed, but only to shew the p^tiall dealing of our Assessors being both Hospitall Tenants, & accompting it very hard measure to pay both for my Ground & supposed pfits when I have none.

“ Besides, Worthy S^{rs}, if you please but to Enquire into the Taxes lay’d upon Blackwell, a Coal-mine Treble to mine, or Pinxston, or Normanton, which with our Delfe on the Comon sell at q^{ter} rates then I doe & have advantage in the first sale for Coales you may easily see ther is little reason for these fresh sallies which are made upon me upon every start of (I know not what) fancie. I have now lay’d open the whole matter in plainnesse & truth before you, who have those sentiments w^{ch} are most congruous to an Academicall breeding & hope upon the little Supplyes w^{ch} are afforded me from their purses, they may be convinced p^swaded & reduced to that Civility as to give me leave to passe my time & studies with more quietnesse for their advantage & benefit. If I was neglig[en]t in my Office, or molestive unto them ther might be phaps some reason for them in the rise & fury of a passion to set upon such an unseemly enterprise, but as ther is none save the denying of my Consent to the inclosing of y^e Comons w^{ch} will be prejudiciall to o^r poore . . . many, I shall patiently submitt my selfe to your Worp^s determination & remain

“ Yo^r humb. serv^t.

“ J. T.”