

**REMAINS, HISTORICAL AND
LITERARY, CONNECTED WITH THE
PALATINE COUNTIES OF LANCASTER
AND CHESTER. VOL. 2-NEW SERIES;
THE VICARS ROCHDALE, PART 2**

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CANON RAINES & HENRY H. HOWORTH

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THE
Vicars of Rochdale.

BY THE LATE
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PART 2.

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rectory of Ruckinge, both in the county of Kent, and diocese of Canterbury, and worth 320*l.* per annum." (*London Chron.*, April 1-3, 1760.) And on the 2nd May, 1761, another dispensation passed the seal to enable him to hold the rectory of Witresham, near Tenterden, in Kent, to which he had been lately presented, worth nearly 400*l.* per annum, with "the vicarage" (rectory) of Great Charte. (*Ibid.*, Apr. 30-May 2, 1761.) At this time he resigned Ruckinge. (*Gent. Mag.*, vol. xxxi. p. 238.)

Whilst at Lambeth he became acquainted with Mr. Porteus, his fellow chaplain, afterwards his diocesan, and their principles and habits being similar, a friendship was formed which continued through life. Like their patron, they were both of humble origin. Both had been sizers at Cambridge, and both of them natives of Yorkshire, and were distinguished, like their master, Secker, for their zeal and piety, as well as their devotion to the English Church.

On the 6th April, 1762, Wray was collated to the vicarage of Rochdale,* and here he constantly resided, and had no other preferment. In 1763 he obtained at his own expense, an Act of Parliament, which had long been desired by his parishioners, to enable the vicar for the time being to grant building leases of the glebe for the term of 99 years. The costs of his application to parliament so far exceeded his calculations, that he frequently regretted having made it. Shortly after the act was obtained, he offered to a parishioner *all* the glebe, with the privileges the act conferred, during his incumbency, for 400*l.* a year, but the offer was not accepted. His successors, as well as the parishioners, are indebted to his memory for this measure, although to

* "The Rev. Mr. Hollingbury of the Charter House is presented to the vicarage of Shepherd's Well in Kent in the room of the Rev. Mr. Benson, preferred to the rectory of Great Charte in the place of the Rev. Dr. Wray removed to Rochdale, in the room of Dr. Tunstall, deceased." (*London Chron.*, April 22-24, 1762.) Jan. 5, 1764, the Rev. John Benson, M.A., chaplain to Lord Bath, obtained a dispensation to hold Great Charte with Harbledown in Kent, worth 260*l.* per annum. (*Ibid.*, Jan. 5-7, 1764.) *Qu.* Was he any relation of Robert Benson of Clapham, Yorkshire, yeoman, afterwards named?

himself it proved, in a pecuniary point of view, extremely disadvantageous.

[The very important Act, here referred to, runs as follows :—

A.D. 1764. *Whereas* the Reverend Thomas Wray Doctor in Divinity vicar of the Parish and Parish Church of *Rochdale* in the County of Lancaster and Diocese of Chester in the Right of his said Vicarage is seised of certain Glebe Lands which are very conveniently situated for building Houses upon for the use of the Inhabitants of the said Parish.

And Whereas there are at present standing upon part of the said Glebe several Cottages and other Buildings which are ancient and subject to frequent repairs.

And Whereas the Most Reverend Father in God Thomas by Divine Providence Lord Archbishop of Canterbury is Patron of the said Vicarage.

And Whereas great Benefit would accrue to the said Vicarage if Power was given to the Vicar for the Time being to grant a Lease or Leases of the said Glebe Lands and Premises for a Term of years sufficient to encourage Persons to build thereon and improve the same.

May it therefore please Your Most Excellent Majesty.

At the humble Petition of the said Thomas Wray That it may be enacted And be it enacted by the Kings Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Temporal and Spiritual and Commons in this Present Parliament assembled and by the Authority of the same That from and after the Passing of this Act it shall and may be lawful for the Vicar of the Parish and Parish Church of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster for the Time being by Indenture or Indentures duly executed to demise or Lease all or any Part or Parts of the said Glebe Lands and Premises and of the Buildings standing thereon unto any Person or Persons who shall be willing to build upon and improve the same for any Term or Number of Years not exceeding ninety-nine years which Lease or Leases shall be renewable at any Time and shall commence and take effect in Possession and not in Reversion with Liberty for the Lessee or Lessees to take down all or any Part of the Buildings now standing thereon in such Lease or Leases to be comprized and to convert or dispose of the Materials thereof to such Uses and Purposes as therein shall be mentioned and agreed upon so as in the said Lease or Leases there shall be reserved the best and most improved Ground Rent or Ground Rents that can be had or obtained for the Benefit of the said Vicar and his successors to be paid quarterly without taking any sum of Money or other Thing by way of Fine Income or Foregift except as hereinafter is excepted and so as the Lessee or Lessees execute a counterpart or counterparts thereof and enter into Covenants to build and keep in Repair the Messuages and Buildings intended and agreed to be built and to surrender the same at the expiration of the Term by such Lease or Leases to be granted and so as in such Lease or Leases there be contained a power of Re-entry for nonpayment of the Ground Rent or Ground Rents thereby to be reserved.

And be it further Enacted by the authority aforesaid That it shall and may be lawful for the said Thomas Wray to take and receive of and from any Person or Persons to

whom he shall grant a Building Lease or Leases as aforesaid any sum or sums of Money by way of Fine Income or Foregift not exceeding in the whole the sum of one Hundred and Fifty Pounds and to apply the same to reimburse himself such sum or sums as he shall have expended in obtaining this Act.

And be it hereby Declared and Enacted by the authority aforesaid That all and every such Lease and Leases so to be made of the said Glebe Lands and Premises in pursuance of this Act shall be good valid and effectual in Law to all intents and purposes.

Provided always and be it further enacted That nothing herein contained shall extend or be construed to extend to empower the said Thomas Wray or his successors vicars of the said vicarage to grant any Lease or Leases by Virtue of this Act of the Parsonage House belonging to the said Vicarage or of the Gardens adjoining to the said House or of the Field called the Broad Field in which the said House stands (except a Part of the said Broad Field where the same is adjoining to the Present High Road leading from Rochdale to Manchester containing 180 feet in Breadth and no more) or of any Barns or out-houses now standing in the said Field or of the Fields called the Higher Sparrow Hill the Lower Sparrow Hill the Cant Hill and the Stone Holme.

Saving always to the Kings Most Excellent Majesty his Heirs and Successors and to all and every Person and Persons Bodies Politic and Corporate his or their Heirs Successors Executors or Administrators other than such except the said Archbishop of Canterbury and his Successors and the said Thomas Wray and his Successors all such Estate Right Title Interest Claim and Demand of into and out of all and singular the Glebe Lands and Premises so to be leased as aforesaid as they every or any of them respectively had before the Passing of this Act or could or might have had held or enjoyed in case this Act had not been made.

An Act to Enable the Vicar of the Parish of Rochdale in the county of Lancaster, to Grant a Lease or Leases of the Glebe Lands belonging to the said Vicarage, 1764.
(*Lanc. MSS.*, vol. viii. pp. 99-102.)

That this Act, however much needed, involved considerable sacrifices to the vicar we have some proof of. We may quote the case of *Chorlton v. Smith*, tried at Lancaster Assizes, March 14, 1770. The trial arose out of a supposed water-trespass on the glebe lands, and was between two of the vicar of Rochdale's tenants. In the plaintiff's declaration we have the phrase:—

The present vicar of Rochdale, Dr. Wray, obtained an Act of Parliament enabling the Vic. of *y* place for the time being to make and renew Leases of the Glebe for 99 years. An Act as ill-advisedly obtained and ineffectually planned for answering the good effects intended by it, and as precipitately and inconsiderately put in execution as was possible for anything for the utmost folly to invent or ignorance to practice.

It would seem that Charles Smith, Isaac Smith, and John Smith then lately deceased, took a lease of parcel of the glebe,