Declaration of the Diggers of Warwickshire (1607)

Transcript

British Library, Harley MS 787, f. 9v

9v

The Diggers of Warwickshire to all other Diggers

Louing Freinds & Subjects all under one renowned Prince, for whom we pray longe to continue in his most Royall estate to the [*Left margin:* X] subuerting of all those Subjects of what degree soeuer [tha]t haue or would depriue his most true harted Com[m]unalty both from life and lyuinge. Wee as members of [th]e whole doe feele [th]e smart of these incroaching Tirants, w[hi]ch would grinde our flesh upon [th]e whetstone of pouerty, & make our loyall hearts to faint w[i]th breathing, so [tha]t they may dwell by themselues in [th]e midst of theyr Heards of fatt weathers. It is not unknowne unto yo[u]r selues [th]e reason why these mer-cyless men doe resist w[i]th force ag[ain]st our good intents. It is not for [th]e good of our most gracious Sou[er]aigne, whom we pray God [tha]t longe he may reygne amongst us, neyther for [th]e benefitt of [th]e Communalty but onely for theyr owne priuate gaine, for there is none of [the]m but doe tast [th]e sweetness of our wantes. They haue depopulated & ouerthrown whole Townes, & made thereof Sheep pastures nothing profitable for our Com[m]onwealth. For [th]e com[m]on Fields being layd open would yeeld us much com[m]odity, besides [th]e increase of Corne, on w[hi]ch standes our life. But if it should please God to w[i]thdrawe his blessing in not prospering [th]e fruites of [th]e Earth but one yeare (w[hi]ch God forbidd) there would a worse & more fearfull dearth happen then did in K[ing] Ed[ward][th]e seconds tyme when people were forced to eat Catts & Doggs flesh, & women to eate theyr owne children. Much more wee could giue you to understand, but wee are perswaded [tha]t you your selues feele a part of our greiuances, & therfore need not open [th]e matter any plainer. But if you happen to shew your force & might ag[ain]st us, wee for our partes neither respect life nor lyuinge; for better it were in such case wee manfully dye, then hereafter to be pined to death for want of [tha]t w[hi]ch these deuouring Encroachers doe serue theyr fatt Hogges & Sheep withall. For God hath bestowed upon us most bountifull & innumerable blessings & [th]e cheifest is our most gracious & Religious Kinge, who doth and will glory in [th]e flourishing estate of his Com[m]unalty. And soe wee leaue you, com[m]ending you to [th]e surhold & safeguard of [th]e mighty Iehoua, both nowe & euermore. From Hampton field in hast.

Wee rest as poore Deluers & Day labourers for [th]e good of [th]e Com[m]onwelth till death.

A. B. C. D. &c/.

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https://mpese.ac.uk/t/DeclarationDiggersWarwickshire1607.html