

Letter to Sir Julius Caesar

Ms Lansdowne 161, fo. 90, (92 in pencil)

Jhesu

Sir

I find myself much bound and beholden unto you for the good opinion and courtesy it pleaseth you to conceive of me. And touching in the < t > complaint exhibited by Clerke that I may give unto you a full satisfaction I humbly and earnestly beseech yow licence me (though to your trouble) to lay open at large the estate of the cause. Willum Clerk father to the petitioner, in tricesimo H. 8¹ did take, by copy of court roll, a tenement and two yardlands in Brailes, for the term of his life; and the life of Johann his wife. About 40 years past,² William Clerk, the father died; Johan his wife married again one Cockbill who in the right of Johann did hold the said tenement and two yard lands: until within these two years at which time Johann also dyed. Now Clerk the petitioner pretendeth³ a right unto this tenement as of an estate of Inheritance by the customs of the manor : may it please you the copy taken plainly expresseth the custom being a tenancy for life or lives at the will of the Lord: moreover the said custom was (by a suit lately preferred in the exchequer⁴ chamber by the tenants) examined at the full: and a decree therein made:⁵ the said copy and decree I most heartily pray you vouchsafe⁶ to peruse both which this bearer hath ready, and shall attend your best leisure SPACE About 20 years past at a court held at Brailes⁷ I granted the reversion of this tenement unto two persons for the term of their lives. Upon the suit made by the petitioner within these 3 years past I wished him to compound with the parties to whom my grant was past, offering my consent and good will therein which either by his poverty or by some other defect he < pus > pursueth not. Now what cause he hath to complain and how I am disabled (by my former grant) to do him any favour if he hath by any means deserved the same I leave to your wisdom and consideration. If he shall continue his clamour I humbly beseech yow that I may answer him by the course of law, for other means there are not to suppress the slanderous and clamorous courses which he and others do daily undertake and follow against me. I shall think myself very happy if in any dutiful or thankful sort I might acknowledge your exceeding favours and kindnesses done unto me, the continuance whereof I wish I may deserve both in my prosecutings⁸ and in all due respects of you.

And so saving your further trouble I humbly take my leave from Weston the 25th of July 1601.

Yours ever to be commanded

Raff Sheldon

To the Rt Worshipful

¹ 30th year of king Henry VIII, ie April 1538-39.

² This would be about 1560.

³ In the sense of 'claims',

⁴ Exchequer.

⁵ BAH MS 3061/1/552, (former 167952) 15 April 1600 seems to be the resolution of this.

⁶ Sheldon wrote 'wygtsafe'.

⁷ Perhaps the court of survey of 1580/81 BAH MS 3061/1/807, (former 168208)

⁸ Prosecution (of law suits).

Mr Doctor Caesar
Master of the Requests
Unto Her Majesty

Endorsed, different hand, 25 July 1601 Mr Ralph Sheldon touching his answer to a complaint made against him to the master

Double sheet of paper, folded

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