

COPY OF THE LAST

Will and Testament

OF

MR. NICHOLAS WATTS.

Watts' Charity.

COPY

OF THE LAST

WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF

MR NICHOLAS WATTS,

FORMERLY OF TAVISTOCK, MERCER

THE FOUNDER OF THE ABOVE CHARITY,

WHICH BEARS DATE

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY,

1674

TAVISTOCK :

PRINTED BY THE TAVISTOCK PRINTING Co., LTD.

1933.

COPY OF THE LAST
WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF
MR. NICHOLAS WATTS.

IN the name and fear of the ever blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whose direction and assistance have been desired,

E. Nicholas Watts, of Tavistock, in the County of Devon, Mercer, though at present by the mercy of God, in perfect health, strength, and memory, yet being abundantly convinced, not only by the infallible word of God, but also by constant experience of the brevity and uncertainty of this mortal sinful life, DO HEREBY desire to set mine house in order, and make, ordain, and declare, this my last Will and Testament, in manner and form following, that is to say :—

FIRST.—I do commit my sinful soul into the hands of my most merciful God, beseeching Him graciously to accept it through the Lord Jesus Christ, my alone Mediator and Redeemer, upon whose alone satisfaction and merits, I desire to cast all my hopes and expectation of a better life, when this is ended. I also commit this body of mine to sleep in the dust until the Resurrection.

Item.—I DO GIVE AND BEQUEATH unto the poor people of Tavistock, one hundred yards of strong Dowlas, to be made up into shirts and smocks, and then distributed by my Executrixes hereafter named, unto such as they conceive to have most need, within one year after my decease.

And forasmuch as the immortal souls of poor men and women are of infinite more worth than their perishing carcasses, it is upon my heart also to give them somewhat that may thro' God's blessing, have a tendency to the promoting of their eternal welfare.

And therefore my Will is, that my Executrixes, hereafter named, do bestow five pounds in Bibles and good practical books, as Mr. Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," Mr. Shepherd's "Sincere Convert," "Sound Believer," and such like, and bestow them on the poorer sort of people in the town and parish of Tavistock, I mean such of them as are able themselves to read, or have children that can.

And my Will is, that they be distributed also within one year after my decease, and this I would have the rather to be done, that by bestowing of these good books, I may testify my repentance, and make amends for those idle, wretched pamphlets that I wrote in my youthful years, for my own vindication, wherein I stuck not to cast dirt on others for the clearing of myself.

Item.—Upon the same grounds, and induced by the same reasons, I DO HEREBY GIVE AND BEQUEATH unto the poor people of Tavistock, the land of the house wherein Thomas Frost now dwelleth, with all its members and appurtenances, for ever.

The rents and profits thereof to be ordered and disposed of as is hereafter mentioned and appointed, that is to say :—

That the Churchwardens and Overseers for the poor, do, from time to time, collect and receive from the present tenant or his assigns, during the term of his estate therein by me granted, the sum of fifteen shillings yearly, which is the ancient rent reserved in his lease, which my Will is, shall never be lessened or abated, but still reserved in all leases and grants to be made. And the same to be bestowed every year in one Bible, and some other good practical books of Divinity that do treat of conversion and regeneration, a holy life and faith in Jesus Christ. And the books so bought to bring into the Church at the time of receiving the parish account every year, year by year, and there by the advice, and with the direction of the eight men of the parish, and the minister for the time being, to bestow upon the poorer sort of householders in the town and parish, as that either themselves can read them, or else have children that can, for the instructing of them and their families in the way to heaven. And my Will is, that when the present lease of the premises shall expire, that the same be sett again by the Churchwardens and Overseers for the

poor, and eight men above said, or the major part of them, at a public survey, either for three lives, or for ninety and nine years, determinable on the death of three lives as the custom now is of setting in these parts, and that the fine so raised be brought into the Parish Church on the next account-day of the parish then following, by the Churchwardens and Overseers for the time being, and then and there to be distributed upon two or three, and no more, of the poorer sort of tradesmen that have families, and receive no alms, or upon some hopeful young men that are newly married, and have set up their trades, to help them to a stock, whereby they may be the better enabled to uphold their calling, wherein my Will is, that such as fear God and do possess religion, be the persons principally regarded in bestowing the said money, as they will answer the same in the great and terrible day of judgment, at the bar of our Lord Jesus Christ. And to the end that my Will herein may be the more faithfully observed, my Will further is, that this present clause be entered and registered in the ledger book as it is called, and read publickly at the meetings of the parishioners, before the giving and disposing of the money so raised as aforesaid. And my Will is, that all the rents which shall be made of the premises, be from time to time so bestowed on tradesmen as aforesaid, for ever.

Item.—I give and bequeath the use, benefit, and profit of all my lands in Tavistock and elsewhere, except the house in which Thomas Frost now dwelleth, which is already disposed of in this my last Will and Testament, unto Mary Watts, my wife, and Elizabeth Watts, my aunt, for, and during the term of their natural lives, with full power, liberty, and authority to sett leases for three lives, or for ninety and nine years, determinable on the death of three lives, and to fill the leases that are already sett by me, or any other of these of whom I bought the said lands, or shall hereafter be sett by me or them, if any of the lives happen to die whilst they or either of them, my said wife and aunt shall happen to live, and also to exchange lives in any of my said lands as the custom here is.

Only my Will and pleasure is, that of the house and its appurtenances wherein I now live, and also the garden which I purchased of Mr. Masters, that no leases be sett to

any person or persons by my said wife and aunt, nor that they sett any lease further than for seven years, and that on a yearly rent of the lands which Mark Hicks now holdeth of me. But for all the rest of my lands, my Will is, that my wife and aunt jointly, whilst they both live, and my wife, surviving my said aunt, and likewise my aunt, in case she outlives my said wife, shall have full power to sett leases and exchange lives as aforesaid, whilst both or either of them shall live, and upon the death of my said wife and aunt, my Will is, that the house wherein William Hore now dwelleth, with the garden thereunto belonging, together with all and singular their appurtenances shall descend and come unto my brother, John Tickel, to be enjoyed by him and his heirs for ever, for so I have promised him, and do hereby give and bequeath it to him and his heirs for evermore, after the death of my said wife and aunt.

Item.—I give and bequeath unto Thomas Watts, the son of Thomas Watts, my kinsman, and the heirs male of his body lawfully to be begotten, the houses wherein I dwell at this present, and the house wherein John Sowton now dwelleth and also my garden wherein I have sett trees, and which I bought of Mr. Masters, with all and singular their appurtenances, from and immediately after the deaths of my said wife and aunt, to be enjoyed by him, the said Thomas Watts, during his natural life, and afterwards by his issue male for ten generations, but for want of such issue male, my Will is, that the said houses and garden shall descend to such uses as I shall hereafter appoint, in this my last Will and Testament.

And for the rest of my lands not yet disposed of in this my last Will and Testament, my Will is, that they shall wholly descend unto, and be employed in such cases as are hereafter expressed, and none other.

AND FIRST, for the lands which I bought of William Brownsdon, alias Cole, my Will is, that these twenty men hereafter named, to wit:—Mr. John Tickel, my brother, Mr. Thomas Martin, Mr. Obadiah Hughes, Mr. John Flavil, Mr. Henry Flamank, Mr. Henry Berry, ministers; Mr. Samuel Brett, the elder, Mr. John Veal, Mr. Daniel Condy, Mr. Stephen Rundle, Mr. George Pearse, John Trout, the elder, Richard Hutchins, John Shere, William Gee, Daniel Sowton, George Oxenham, David Condy, Mr. John

Elford, the younger, of Buckland, George Edcombe, of Lamerton, or any twelve of them, shall have power and authority to appoint any two of their number every year, year by year, to collect and receive the several respective rents of the tenants that now do, or hereafter shall enjoy the same, excepting the tenement which Thomas Frost now holdeth, which is above disposed of.

And the rents so collected, the high rents discharged to bestow upon any five religious and godly men within the County of Devon, whom any twelve of these, my fore-named Trustees shall agree upon in the month of August, every year, for ever, provided that the said persons do not ordinarily receive alms from the town or parishes wherein they dwell; and I do hereby also invest these twenty persons before named, or any twelve of them, with full power and authority to sett leases for three lives, or fourscore and nineteen years, determinable upon the death of three lives, reserving still the accustomed rent.

And the money received for every such fine, to bestow upon such honest and poor religious tradesmen as do not ordinarily receive alms, dwelling within the town or parish of Tavistock, wherein my Will is, that none shall have less than twenty shillings, and none more than four pounds a-piece, out of the money of any one fine received for any lease so by them sett.

And my Will is, that when any of the said twenty above-mentioned persons shall happen to die, that any twelve or more of them that are living shall elect and choose in the next month of August following (if it be possible), some other honest and religious person in his room and stead, who is deceased, dwelling either in Tavistock or Plymouth, who shall have as full power for the ordering of this my gift, after the death of my wife and aunt, as the person before had in whose room and stead he is chosen. And my Will is, that this course for the election of Trustees upon the decease of any of their number, shall be continued for ever. And that their names be enrolled in a book, wherein that the leases are which they sett, and for how much money, and also to whom the said money was given, shall continually be recorded.

And for the lands which I bought of Mr. Tremayne, whereof one parcel is in hand, and another in lease ; my Will is, that no lease or leases be sett of that which is in hand, nor of the other neither, by any of my Trustees, for any longer term or time than ten years, and that only at an yearly rent, with conditions for the very well manuring and dressing the same.

And I do hereby ordain, constitute, and authorize the same twenty men above-mentioned, and their successors so chosen as aforesaid, to appoint the same two of their number which they choose for the receiving of the rents of the lands abovementioned, which I bought of Brownsdon, alias Cole, for the receiving the rents of those lands also, and the rent so received every year in the month of August, at their meeting, to distribute in manner following, that is to say :—three pounds yearly to Mr. Obadiah Hughes, during his life, and forty shillings yearly to Mr. Thomas Martin, and forty shillings yearly to Mr. Thomas Travers, and three pounds yearly to Mr. Samuel Tapper, my brother-in-law, during their lives, and the overplus to such godly, religious persons as my said Trustees shall think fit, and appoint, reserving only twenty shillings out of the said rent, to pay for the dinner of those of the twenty above-mentioned, that meet together yearly for the disposing of the moneys according to this my last Will and Testament, raised out of the lands above-mentioned.

And my Will further is, that when any one of these four ministers shall happen to die, that the major part of the survivors shall have power to nominate unto my Trustees, any one godly and religious person, to receive from them the same sum which he did receive who shall so happen to die, and that this course be continued for ever.

And my Will further is, that if my meaning herein be not sufficiently explained, that my said twenty Trustees, or the major part of them, of which, Mr. Martin, Mr. Travers, Mr. Flavil, Mr. Flamank, Mr. Tickel, to be of the number, or at least three of them shall have full power to interpret the same as if it were interpreted in this my last Will and Testament, provided that it be done within three years after the death of my wife, and that they put it also under their hands and seals on parchment, within the said three years.

And whereas there is some other land which I purchased of Mr. Francis Edgcombe, my Will is, the same Trustees above-mentioned, or the major part of them, shall have the same power to sett leases and receive the rents continually, that I have given them, for the land which I bought of Brownsdon, alias Cole, and that the rents which they shall still reserve upon any leases which they shall make, shall be the same that now they are.

And my Will is, that my said Trustees give twelve shillings yearly to those two of their number, whom they shall appoint to collect the rents of all those lands before mentioned and that five shillings be given also yearly for writing and keeping the account of the moneys received and disbursed, according to this my last Will and Testament, out of the rents of the last mentioned premises. And for the residue and remainder, after the five shillings and the twelve shillings are deducted out of the said rents, my Will is, that the one moiety be given yearly, to some sober, hopeful youth of this town, that is fitting himself for the University, to be given unto him at such time and times as my Trustees shall judge convenient, and for the other moiety of the remaining rents of the last recited premises, my Will is, that it be given to such religious maidens as are of the poorer sort, and are of good report, towards the raising for them a marriage portion, and my Will is, that all such moneys as shall be raised out of the last recited lands, for setting of leases or exchanging lives, which I give my said Trustees as full and ample power to do as I myself have, shall be also from time to time employed unto these two last mentioned uses, and no other, for ever.

And whereas, I am likewise invested in an estate of fee-simple, of one tenement and garden in Beer Alston, and another on the Reeve, which I bought of Caleb Huling, I do also enfeoff, confirm, and convey unto the said Trustees and their successors for ever, as I have done, and hereby do the former lands mentioned, which I bought of Mr. Brownsdon, alias Cole, Mr. Tremayne, and Mr. Edgcombe, to the uses hereinafter mentioned, as I have done the other lands to the use formerly mentioned, and no other, that is to say :—the rents reserved in the leases granted of those two last tenements and gardens, as also the fines that shall

be raised for setting of leases or exchanging lives, the one half towards the maintaining of a youth before mentioned, that is fitting himself for the University, that is born in the town of Tavistock, the other to be bestowed in good practical books of Divinity, and bestowed on the poorer sort of householders in the town or parish, as they see most meet.

And for the house wherein I now dwell, together with the house adjoining, and also the garden above-mentioned, where the trees are, my Will is, that the above said Thomas Watts, my kinsman, the son of Thomas Watts, now living in Rudeway, near Plympton, shall have, hold, and enjoy the aforesaid houses and gardens, with all and singular their appurtenances, during his natural life, and after his decease, if he have any issue male, that then his son also shall enjoy the same for his life, also and after his decease, his issue male unto the tenth generation; after which time, my Will is, that my said Trustees and their successors shall be seized of the same for ever, and employ all rents, benefits, and profits, of the same unto such pious uses from time to time, as shall most conduce to the promoting of the power of godliness.

But my true intent and meaning is, that he, the said Thomas Watts, shall not enjoy the same till after the decease of my said wife and aunt, and if it happen that he have no issue male, or that his issue male at any time shall fail before the tenth generation above-mentioned, then my Will is, that my said Trustees, or their successors, shall immediately enjoy and possess the said premises, and employ them to the said pious uses above said, anything before expressed in any wise notwithstanding.

Also, I give and bequeath unto Christian Moore, my sister, five pounds, to be paid one year after my decease.

The residue of all my goods and chattels, I do give and bequeath unto Mary Watts, my wife, and Elizabeth Watts, my aunt, whom I do hereby make, ordain, and declare my whole and sole Executrixes of this my last Will and Testament;

Beseeching the great and righteous God of all the earth, to be an overseer thereof, and to put His dread and terror

upon any soul that shall go about to pervert my true meaning herein, and for want of any law terms or expressions, shall go about to make it void, in whole or any part thereof, and if any yet shall presume so to do, then O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, make it appear unto the world how much Thou hatest such hellish practices, by causing thy jealousy to smoke against him.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this seventeenth day of February, anno domini, 1674.

(Signed) NICHs. WATTS.

Signed, sealed, published and declared in the presence of—

WILLIAM WHITE,
WILLIAM CONDY,
NATHANIEL WHITE,
RICHARD TURNER.

