

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
DEFECTS
OF THE
POOR LAWS,
AND ON THE
CAUSES and CONSEQUENCES
OF THE GREAT
Increase and Burden of the Poor.
WITH A
Proposal for redressing these Grievances.
IN A
Letter to a MEMBER of PARLIAMENT.

*Nemo hec ita interpretetur, tanquam reducam libertatem, & frenis
arctioribus reprimam. Illa vero in quantum libet, exeat ; sed eat, non
erret.*

Sene. De Benef. l. 1.

Hoc habeo quodcunque dedi. Fragm. Rabir.

Poet. apud eundem.

De Benef. l. 6.

*Let every Man do according as He is disposed in his Heart : Not
grudgingly, or of Necessity ; for God loveth a chearful Giver.*

2 Corinth. ix. 7.

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L O N D O N,

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O B S E R V A T I O N S

ON THE

Defects of the Poor Law, &c.

S I R,

Y O U may remember, that, when I was at your House the Beginning of last Summer, I mentioned some Part of a Conversation that had passed some Time before at an Ordinary in *B—g—m*. The Maintenance of the Poor was the Subject of that Conversation. A worthy *Scotch* Member of Parliament, who was one of the Company, declared strongly against our present Method in *England* of relieving the Necessitous, and said, the Poor-Law was a Reflection upon the *English* Nation. He observed, that they had never any such Law in *Scotland*, and yet their Poor, he was convinced, were as well, or better taken Care of; (he might have added) although their Country was comparatively barren, and their Nation poor. This Gentleman further took Notice, that many of the House of Commons were of the same Sentiments with himself, as to

the Impropriety of that Law, and thought it would be right to have it repealed, if it were not, that it might carry an unpopular Appearance, and perhaps endanger an Insurrection. Most of the Company agreed with him, as to the Imperfection and Impropriety of the Law, but not as to the Expediency of now repealing it.

You and I then entered into a Conversation on the same Subject, when you took Occasion to observe to me, how exceeding high the Poor-Rates ran in your Parish ; that you knew Parishes however, in several different Counties, where they were still considerably higher, (particularly in *Oxford*, and some Parts of *Essex*, &c.) amounting some Years, I think, to five and six Shillings in the Pound. I also took Notice, that in *Cambridge*, whither I had made a Tour the Summer before, several Gentlemen were complaining of their excessive burthensome Poor-Rates ; in some Parishes, if I remember right, exceeding even those which you had instanced ; and further added, that they were drove to a Necessity of thinking of some new Scheme, and endeavouring at some better Methods of Management, by erecting a Poor-House or otherwise, in order, if possible, to save Charges, and in some Measure ease themselves of such an intolerable Load of Expences. Our Discourse on this Topic ended with your wishing (what every wise and good Man must wish) that the Sources of this great Grievance were properly enquired

enquired into and represented to the Public; and that some effectual Remedy (which such an Enquiry might probably suggest) could be found out for so great and growing an Evil.

From these, and other Observations I had made and met with in some other Counties, where I was more particularly acquainted, I thought there was but too much Reason for the Complaint — That the Business of the Poor was not rightly managed — That with all the Expences complained of, they were but badly provided for — And, that all Endeavours should be used to put their Maintenance upon a better Footing. And though what I have here drawn up, was done in a very hasty and imperfect Manner, yet such as it is, I hope, may be of some Use, as the Subject is seasonable and interesting, and has not, that I know of, been handled before in this Way.

The Manner of providing for the Poor in *England* is so wrong, and hath been productive of so many Evils, and may be of still more, that several wise and good Men have long complained of it, and thought some Alteration, if not a total Abolition, necessary. The whole Nation, indeed, is now become so sensible of this growing Evil, that our Representatives in Parliament have taken the Matter into Consideration, and no doubt in a future Session will endeavour, either to reform the Errors and Abuses in the present Method, or contrive and establish some new and better Measures. With a Design to forward
this

this good End, several Treatises have of late been published, and some new Schemes and Regulations proposed for the better Provision and Management of the Poor : And every Attempt this Way ought to be kindly received and encouraged, as it is a Point of so much Consequence to the Publick, as the Parliament has as yet come to no Determination thereupon, and may be supposed willing to listen to any useful Hints, from whatever Quarter they may be offered, for enabling them to form a more perfect Plan. The Difficulty of forming any effectual Plan for the Provision and Employment of the Poor, sufficiently appears from the many ineffectual Ones already made for that Purpose : For after all the Poor Laws passed, no less I think than thirteen in Number at various Times and in different Reigns, a new One seems now as absolutely requisite as ever. Every Law of this Kind appears rather to have been an Essay, than an Establishment, and was no sooner promulged and put in Force, but new Inconveniencies arose, or further Imperfections were discovered. Perfect, indeed, no human Establishment can ever be expected to be : The wisest Scheme, we can contrive, will not only be found to be deficient at the first, but soon to want great Amendment, and must every now and then be altered and suited to the present Times and Circumstances. When the Poor Law was first made in the Forty Third of Queen *Elizabeth*, it was thought to be extremely well calculated to answer the End : Namely, to provide

vide Bread for the impotent Poor, and Employment, and thereby Bread for all other Poor. But the Expence upon the first of these Articles has now risen to an immense and intollerable Sum ; and the Design of the Legislature as to the Second, has been in a Manner quite frustrated. Indeed, the setting the Poor to work, and keeping them from wandering, appears to have been the main Design of that Law : And if this Part of the Law had been duly executed, the Burthen as to the other Part, the Maintenance of the impotent Poor, could never have been very heavy, for the Number would have been inconsiderable. The two Members of the Law should at least keep pace together, and only have been obligatory in Conjunction. But a Failure or Neglect of employing the Poor forced some, and tempted others to take the Benefit provided for the Relief of the Poor ; and has now made the Expence thereof swell out to an enormous Size.

The first Compilers of the Poor Law were no doubt very wise and good Men : The Ministers I suppose were chiefly concerned ; and where or when were there better Ministers ? Their Goodness appeared in their kind Disposition to establish a Method for relieving all real Objects of Charity ; and their Wisdom and Goodness both appeared, in their endeavouring to find Work for those that were able and willing to work, — in their endeavouring to fix Idlers and Vagrants to their proper Places of Habitation,

Habitation, and bring them to an honest and regular Way of getting a Livelihood, and thereby rendering them more happy in themselves, and useful to the Community. But could they have foreseen that this their main, this their latter Purpose, the fixing and employing the Poor, would have been so little answered, I believe they never would have passed a Law for the former Purpose, the compulsory relieving them ; which in itself is liable to Abuse, and productive of much Evil, but vastly more so when the other Part is not kept up, which should be a check and controul upon it.

Many bad Consequences, I doubt not, were then foreseen, or apprehended from the Law to relieve Paupers: for most of the following Objections do naturally arise against it.

In the first Place, it is difficult in many Cases to determine, who are real Paupers, or proper Objects of Parish Charity. It is so easy to personate Misery, and feign Distress, that you are oftentimes at a Loss to know, whether a Man's Wants be real or pretended, and whether you ought to relieve him as a Pauper, or punish him as an Imposter. The Idle, the Bold, the Impudent are always most forward to offer themselves, and most clamorous for Relief: while the bashful Poor, the really distressed, keep aloof, and almost starve in Silence, and are ashamed and afraid to open their Mouths for Charity, and come a begging. No Law can define who are, or who are not properly Paupers. Some, with all the Exteriors of
this

Character may have private Sums, and unknown Resources for a Maintenance : And others, tho' all Nastiness, Poverty and Rags, shall be far from being Paupers indeed ; — shall deserve Chastisement rather than Charity, as having brought themselves into Distress by their Vices and Wickedness ; while several poor House-keepers, Petty-Tradesmen, and small Leaseholders or Renters, by Reason of sickly Wives, and a long Train of Children, or other Accidents and Misfortunes, shall be the greatest Objects as to the Spirit of the Act, and yet not come within the Benefit of it : nay, shall be obliged to pay towards the Maintenance of Persons that are much less in want than themselves.

In the second Place, tho' the Point was fixed and settled, as to who shall be deemed Paupers, yet it would be difficult to fix the Degree of Charity they should be entitled to, and adjust the Pay to the Wants and Merits of the Receivers ; for surely mere Poverty does not entitle every one to an equal Portion : great Regard ought to be had to the Causes of a Man's Poverty. If one Person by his own ill Conduct be brought into Distress, by Idleness, Sloath, Luxury, Drunkenness, Gluttony or Whoredom : and another be reduced by unavoidable Misfortunes, by Sickness, Old Age, Fire, Storm, loss in Trade, Shipwreck, a hard Farm, or sickly expensive Family ; tho' the Wants of these two Persons may be equal, surely their Claims to be relieved are far from being so. As Want is the natural Consequence

quence of the former of these Persons Behaviour, so is it the natural Punishment ; and neither the Laws of God or Man ever design'd that such a Person should be thrown a Burthen upon others, and have the Privilege of demanding a Maintenance.

Justices, indeed, have a discretionary Power to determine who are Paupers, and what Relief they shall be entitled to : But Justices may not be able to determine a-right, any more than the Parishioners in Vestry. Justices often live a great Way off from the Parish of the Person that applies for Relief, and are unacquainted with his Circumstances and Character; and consequently, deceived by a plausible Story, which Idlers are seldom at a Loss to make out, and not at all interested in the Expence, may be prevail'd upon to grant Relief to those that don't want or deserve it, or in too great a Proportion to those that do.

In the third Place, such a Law has a Tendency to hurt Industry, Care and Frugality. The Fear of one Day coming to Want, is a strong Motive with most People to be industrious, careful and sober ; and to make use of their Youth, and Health, and Strength, to provide something for Accidents, Sicknefs, and the Imbecillities of Old Age. But this Motive is much weakened, when a Man has the Prospect of Parish Pay to rely on in Case of future Wants or Misfortunes : And too many, I'm afraid, trusting to this have neglected fair Opportunities of gaining a tolerable

a tolerable Competence, and have become chargeable upon the first Cessation of their Labour, whether by Sickness, Old Age, want of Employ, or otherwise. The Sluggard, upon this Presumption, is tempted to continue in Sloth ; the Glutton, as he receives his Gains, eats them, and the Drunkard, drinks them. In short, Men labour less and spend more ; and the very Law that provides for the Poor, makes Poor.

Fourthly, A Law to enforce Relief, tends to destroy the Principle it proceeds from, the Principle of Charity. All Virtue must be free : If you force Charity you destroy her, with respect to the Author. ‘ If left to my own Liberty, I
 ‘ should be willing to do for the Poor to the utmost of my Power : But it’s grating to be obliged to it. I then part with my Money as
 ‘ a Tax, not as a Benevolence ; and there is no Kindness or Merit in what I do. As Charity
 ‘ is said to cover a Multitude of Sins, a Christian by being forced to it, may think himself deprived of the Blessing of it. My Mind is
 ‘ quite charitably disposed : but my Income, considering my Exigencies, is small ; and I’m
 ‘ oblig’d to pay so much to the Poor by Law, that I am not of Ability to bestow in voluntary
 ‘ Contributions. I already do more by Compulsion, than I’m well able to do.’ This checks and weakens the charitable Principle within : and this Principle, by not being exercised, becomes languid, grows weaker and

weaker, and in Time, perhaps, is quite extinguished. I appeal to any Gentleman that lives where they are burthened with a numerous Poor, what Heart has he to give or send, as was customary in former Times, Corn, or Flesh, or Money, to such or such a Pauper, or poor Family, when he already murmurs and grudges at what he's forced to part with by a Rate on his Stock, or Estate? The distressed are many Times worse provided for now, than when there was no Law for relieving them. People are forced to harden their Hearts, and dare not take in a poor Wretch for fear of bringing a Charge on the Parish. Miserable Creatures, sick and destitute, far distant from or without a Settlement, are bandy'd about, and drove from Door to Door, till at last they are starved in a Barn, or found dead in the Street. What are now become of the Poor-Boxes, and Public-Gatherings, the usual and commendable Methods heretofore of providing for the Poor? So little is now given to Poor-Boxes, that many Parishes will not be at the small Expence of erecting or keeping them up. And Collections, whether for Parish Poor, or distant Sufferers by Briefs are so much dwindled and discouraged, that the Collectors are almost ashamed, and hardly think it worth their while to go about. Even the Oblations made at the Altar are found, I'm afraid, to lessen more and more, and many seem to give them rather out of Custom, and a formal Compliance with the Words of the Prayer, than from a charitable Heart; the Sum being commonly

monly so disproportionate to their Circumstances. The Generality indeed begin to think, and say, that giving to the Poor is only giving to other People, whose Estates must be eased, by lessening the Wants of their Poor. It is for this Reason, in part, that so little hath been left to the Poor of late Years by Gift or Legacy : Such Bequests being now looked upon only as Aids to the Landowners, or Contributors of the Parish. What Charity there is in the Nation, hath taken another Turn : And People mostly chuse to give, what they have to give, to public Works of Charity, to Hospitals, to Infirmaries, and to Schools for the Education and Maintenance of poor Children, where they think they have some Merit and Honour in their Charity, and the good Works are the Effects of their voluntary Benefactions.

Fifthly, As Force tends to destroy Charity in the Giver, so does it Gratitude in the Receiver. * *Seneca* justly observes, there is only so much Good-will owing for a Favour as was shewn in bestowing it. And therefore where no Will was concerned in the Deed, no Return can be expected. The Pauper thanks not me for any thing he receives. He has a right to it, he says, by Law, and if I won't give, he'll go to the Justices, and compel me. So that, what is still more provoking to the Contributor, he's forced to pay largely to the Poor, and at the

* De Benef. Lib. i. Cap. i.

same time perhaps sees them ungrateful and saucy, affronting and threatening, and looking upon themselves as equally good, if not better Men than their Supporters, without Dependency or Obligation. This must of Course create a great deal of ill-blood, hatred, murmuring and Indignation on the Side of the Payer, and make him think it an Invasion on his natural Right for such, in spite of him, to go away with a Portion of the Gains of his honest Industry: And, in Consequence of this, still more Disrespect, Ingratitude and Contempt on the Side of the Pauper. Beneficence on one Hand, and Thankfulness on the other, are most amiable Virtues, and are the great Bonds of Union, Friendship and Society.

*New Needs, new Helps, new Habits rise,
That graft Benevolence on Charities. †*

And happy that Nation, where the People live in natural Love and Dependence, and the several Ranks of Kings and Subjects, Masters and Servants, Parents and Children, High and Low, Rich and Poor, are attached to each other by the reciprocal good Offices of Kindness and Gratitude: But this happy Connection between High and Low, Rich and Poor, once so strong in this Kingdom, seems in Danger of being quite broke off in Time. The Poor complain of the Rich as hard-hearted, selfish, cruel and

oppressive : And the Rich complain of the Poor, as idle, extravagant, thankless, and impudent. It's greatly for the Interest of Charity, that the Objects of it should be respectful and grateful. We think our Kindness in a manner repaid, when it is thankfully received : It's a Pleasure then to have done it, and an Incitement to do more. But as long as Charity is forced, we can never expect to see the Receivers of it either grateful or respectful.

Sixthly, It might be apprehended, that a Tax to relieve Paupers would be attended with many other co-incident Expences. It very plainly appears to be so now. Every Tax laid on a Nation, is always attended with some additional Charge, on account of securing, levying and collecting it : And the Sums raised for the Poor have been not a little increased by several concomitant Expences. Parish-Officers may sometimes be blamable in favouring their Acquaintance or Kinsfolk in the Disposal of the Parish-Money, in spending considerable Sums at their Vestry-Meetings, making the Rates, passing the Accounts, and applying the Money in their Hands to Feasts and Entertainments, or putting it in their own Pockets, and imposing upon the Parishioners by false Accounts. There are many Fees to the Clerk of the Peace, Justices Clerks, &c. for signing the Poor Books, for Summons, Warrants, Orders, Reversion of Orders, Parish-Indentures, and other Business relative to the Poor. And tho' in some Counties, particularly the

the County of *Somerset*, as I lately observed, a Table of these Fees is publickly set up, that all Persons may have Notice, yet in general it's certain these Fees have increased, and in many Places, I'm told, are still increasing. The Indentures for binding out poor Children Apprentices are required to be on Stamps. If a poor Person be taken ill, or meet with the Accident of a broken Limb, &c. and send to an Apothecary or Surgeon, 'tis a Chance now-a-days whether they will come to attend him, unless the Parish Officers engage for Payment. There are Instances of some poor Objects perishing, while the Doctor, as he is call'd, has been parlying about Stipulations with the Overseers. And this further confirms the Point abovemention'd, that the Poor-Law tends to destroy Charity. And tho', when the Parish pays, 'tis an Act of Charity, and consequently the Doctor should charge as low as possible, yet very often he considers not the Poverty of the Patient, but the Wealth of the Parish, and makes out a very handsome Bill accordingly. But the greatest additional Expence arises from the Trouble and Difficulty of fixing the Settlements of Paupers. When the Statute of *Elizabeth* for relieving the Poor first took place, the Burthen was light and inconsiderable. Few applied for Relief. It was a Shame and a Scandal for a Person to throw himself on a Parish: And Parents, Children, Relations and Friends commonly endeavoured all they could, as well as the Party himself, to
prevent

prevent it. But the Sweets of Parish-Pay being once felt, more and more Persons soon put in for a Share of it. One cried, he as much wanted, and might as well accept it, as another; the Shame grew less and less, and Numbers encouraged and countenanced one another.

Defendit numerus, junctæque umbone Phalanges.
JUVENAL.

And tho' Badges by the 8th and 9th of *William*, seemed rightly ordered to be fix'd as some public Marks of Shame, and to distinguish Parish Paupers from those industrious Poor that live by their own Endeavours: Yet these Marks of Distinction have had but little effect, and for that Reason, I suppose, have been almost every where neglected.—By Numbers thus throwing themselves more and more upon Parishes, the Poor became a great Burthen on the Publick; so great, that in those Parishes, where half a Rate or less once served, we find four, five and six Rates now very often assessed and levied, or twelve Times more than at the first Establishment: For these Reasons one should not be surprized to hear, that the whole Sum laid out on the Poor-Account in *South-Britain* for four Years last past, amounted at a Medium, to near Three Million yearly, according to the Accounts given in to Parliament last Session, which is equal to a Land-Tax of Six Shillings in the Pound.

Now the Number and Expence of the Poor thus increafing, People foon began to grow uneasy at it, and great Difputes arofe between Parifhes about the Settlement and Removal of Paupers : And tho' thefe Difputes proceed from an Endeavour to eafe, and fometimes do eafe particular Parifhes, yet do they vastly increafe the Poor-Charge, with repect to the Nation in general. The Legislature could never yet lay down one certain ftanding Rule for determining all Cafes arifing upon this intricate Affair of Settlements. The Juftices are often forced to leave the Matter to Council, and Councillors very likely fend you to the King's Bench : and the Delay and Expence of going hither, may fometimes be fo great, that it were better to fit down quiet with the firft Lofs. Befides, that here you are not fure of Succels, as Cafes feemingly the fame, for no two Cafes are ftremely the fame, may prove to be differently determined. But, without going fo far as this, confider the Expence only of attending firft at a private Seffion, getting an Order, removing the Pauper, perhaps with a Wife and Children, to a diftant County, it may be, from one End of the Kingdom to the other : And afterwards attending again very likely at the Quarter Seffions, to try the Order, and thereupon an Appeal from a powerful Parifh, backed perhaps by one of the Bench, have the Order quafhed and reverfed, the Poor returned upon you, with Cofts of Suit to pay, over and above all your own Charges of Journeys.

Journeys, Attorneys, Council, carrying up Witnesses, &c. Besides these, there are many other incidental Charges arising from other Quarters, from Constables, Highways, Bridges, Land-Tax-Deficiencies, Goal and Hospital Money, Doctors, &c. So that the Poor-Rate may be considered as a kind of Pack-Horse, and made to bear all kind of Burthens; and in Time, very likely, we shall see the Non-Essentials exceed the Necessaries.

Seventhly and Lastly, I add, that the forced and expensive Way of relieving the Poor, has put many Gentlemen and Parishes upon contriving all possible Methods of lessening their Number, particularly by discouraging and sometimes hindering poor Persons from marrying, when they appear likely to become chargeable, and thereby preventing an Increase of useful Labourers;—by discharging Servants in their last Quarter, and preventing them from gaining a Settlement, whereby they become Vagrants perhaps;—by pulling down Cottages, and suffering no Places of Inhabitation for Paupers, whereby the Estates are flung into a few Hands, and several Parishes are in a Manner depopulated;—by hindering Handy-Craftsmen and Manufactures from settling amongst them, whereby some sorts of Business are monopoliz'd and spoil'd, Trade is injured, and ingenious Artists can find no Encouragement. *England* complains of a Want of useful Hands for Agriculture, Manufactures, for the Land and Sea Service : And for remedy-

ing this, a Bill for a general Naturalization was lately introduced. But this Remedy, in all Probability, would have increased our Disease ; that Shoal of ragged Foreigners, which such a Bill would very likely have brought over, would only have filled us with a still greater Number of Poor, and would have brought a very small Addition of serviceable Men to the Public. Useful industrious People seldom leave their own Country, unless in Time of great Distress. The proper Way to increase the *Inhabitants* of a Nation, is to encourage Matrimony among the lower sort of People, and thereby stock the Nation with *natural-born* Subjects. This was the Way of the ancient *Romans*. The *French* we see are taking this Course : And the *English* Parliament had very lately a Scheme before them to the same Purpose ; But no Scheme, I believe, will ever succeed, as long as Parishes are so apprehensive of Paupers, and take all Manner of Precautions to prevent a Multiplication of Inhabitants. When the Minister marries a Couple, tho' but a poor Couple, he rightly prays, ' that ' they may be fruitful in Procreation of Children.' But many of the Parishioners pray for the very contrary, and perhaps complain of him for marrying Persons, that, should they have a Family of Children, *might likely become chargeable*.

Considering these Objections against the Law to enforce Poor-Pay, one may wonder how it came at first to be enacted. *Seneca* in his third Book

Book of Kindnesses, discussing this Question, Whether Ingratitude ought to be made subject to Law, determines it in the Negative. And if the Beneficiary is not to be forced, why must the Benefactor? If Ingratitude is not to be made subject to Law, why should Illiberality, Inhospitallity be made subject? There are many Faults or Vices, as Avarice, Gluttony, certain Degrees of Impiety, Cruelty, which we don't find it expedient to punish by Law; but we think it sufficient, according to the above Author's reasoning, to condemn them by our Abhorrence, and leave them among those Things which we refer to the Gods as Avengers. And why might not want of Charity, which is a Species of Avarice or Cruelty, have been left among these? 'No Nation, says he, except the *Medes*, ever allowed of an Action of Ingratitude. A strong Argument this, that no such Action ought to be allowed.' The same may be said of the Poor Law. No Nation, if we except the *Jews*, who had something of this kind in later Times, ever allowed of a Law to force Charity. A strong Argument this, that no such Law ought to be allowed. For if the Law had been right, and requisite, and necessary, many States and Nations would long ago, no doubt, have adopted it. May not it seem very extraordinary then, that *England* should be the only Nation that should ever have come into such a Law? Are there not Poor in other Countries, as well as in this? Are not the Wants and Distresses of the Poor rather greater

greater in most other Countries, as *England* is so fruitful a Place, produces all the Necessaries, and most of the Conveniencies of Life in plenty, has Tillage and Manufactures in Abundance, and consequently can find sufficient Employ for all her Poor? Or is there no Charity, no Compassion, think we, in other Countries, but the Poor are utterly neglected, and left to shift for themselves, or perish? No: the Poor suffer no more in other Countries than in this; nay, in many Countries, particularly in *Holland* and some Parts of *France*, the Poor are better taken Care of: And, notwithstanding we have a Law in Being to exact a Provision for them, and such a vast Sum in consequence of that Law is annually expended, more Beggars, Vagrants, and distressed Objects are every Day to be seen amongst us, than in any Place of equal Compass on the Globe beside. The Law, at the same Time that it has been attended with so many Evils, doth not seem to have produced even that single good Effect it was thought it could not fail of producing; I mean, the Relief of the Impotent, and the Diminution of the Number of the distressed: For we have still the same complaining in our Streets, and Cries of the Poor are as numerous and as loud as ever. So that, tho' the Law as at first designed, was quite charitable and good, I think we may now apply to it the *Italian* Proverb mentioned by Lord Bacon, * '*Tanto buen, che val niente* ; it is so good, that it is good for nothing.'

God Almighty, indeed, the Helper of the Poor and Friendless, seems to have made a human Law for the Relief of them unnecessary, by having implanted a natural Law for that Purpose in every Man's own Breast. We have an innate Philanthropy. We carry, as I may say, a Poor-Law about with us. Nature strongly inclines, and even forces us to commiserate and help the Wretched. The Principles or Passions of Love, Pity, Compassion, Sympathy and so forth, are wrought into our very Frame. Who is not affected and concerned at seeing Human Nature in Distress? Who hath not got a Fellow-Feeling for the Sufferings and Afflictions of his Fellow Creatures? Who, upon beholding a poor Object in Nakedness, Cold and Want, is not prompted from within to compassionate his unhappy Case, and disposed to give him a Morfel of Bread to feed him, and something for a Garment to cover him? The Heart of Man commonly bleeds at the Sight of others Sufferings, and a good-natured Man to use the Expression of the excellent Writer above-mentioned, is like the noble Tree, that is wounded itself, when it gives the Balm. There may be an occasional, or an acquired Malignity in some few obdurate Breasts. But I don't think, with Lord Bacon, there is a natural Malignity, or that there be any, that don't affect in some degree the Good of others. A Man utterly devoid of all social and humane Affections, and quite unconcerned at the Wants and Miseries of others,

would

would be as much a Monster in Nature; as one born without the Senses of Seeing, Hearing, or Feeling; and would deserve to be driven out of human Society, as a Lion, a Bear, or the worst of Savages..

*No Bandit fierce, no Tyrant drunk with Pride,
No cavern'd Hermit rests self-satisfy'd.
Who most to shun, or hate mankind pretend,
Seek an Admirer, or would fix a Friend.*

ESSAY ON MAN.

These kindly Affections then being implanted in our Nature, are continually exciting us to the Exercise of them; and in exercising them, we not only feel an immediate Pleasure and Gratification, but we at the same time obey the Will of God, plainly signified to us, by his having implanted these Affections in us. And every Man moreover, as a frail and social Being, is obliged to take part in other Person's Sufferings, as we cannot live in this World without mutual Assistance, and as no one knows, but such a Man's unfortunate Case may one time prove to be his own.

Upon these Principles Mankind have ever been ready and disposed to assist their indigent Fellow-Creatures, and real Objects of Charity, if their Distress was properly known, have seldom failed, I believe, to find Help in Time of Need.

Revelation has further strengthened these Principles of Affection, and God has not only enjoined

joined us by a natural, but also by his written Law to be kind and assistant to the Poor. The Jewish Law is very full of Exhortations and Commands to this Purpose, and God seems to take the Poor into his peculiar Protection. They were to be admitted to partake of the Sacrifices slain in the Temple—The Corners and Gleanings of the Corn Fields were to be left for them, and the Gleanings likewise of their Vineyards. In the Sabbatical Years, and Years of Jubilee, the whole Produce of the Land was to be left in common for the Poor, the Fatherless, and the Widow. Beside these and other public, they were likewise entitled to private Charities. * *If there be among you a poor Man of one of thy Brethren, thou shalt not harden thy Heart, nor shut thine Hand from thy poor Brother. But thou shalt open thine Hand wide unto Him, and shalt surely lend Him sufficient for his Need, which He wanteth: Because that for this Thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy Works, and in all thou puttest thine Hand unto. For the Poor shall never cease out of the Land.*—In after Times there were Collections made for the Poor in the Synagogues every Sabbath Day.—The Gospel has carried this Charity to the Poor still farther, by exacting a higher Degree of it, and extending it not only to our Brother or Neighbour, but to the Poor of whatever Nation or Kindred, to the Poor of all the Earth.

* Deut. xv. 7.

Christ teaches us †, that every Man in Distress is to be looked upon as our Neighbour, and is entitled to our Mercy and Relief. *A Christian is a Citizen of the World, and his Heart should be no Island, cut off from other Lands, but a Continent that joins to them.* Our Saviour has carried the Duty of Alms-Giving to the highest Pitch: He practised it Himself, He recommended it to his Followers, and advised those, that would be his Disciples indeed, to sell what they had, and give to the Poor. *When thou makest a Dinner or a Supper, says he, Luke xiv. call not thy Friends, nor thy Brethren, neither thy Kinsmen, nor thy rich Neighbours: Lest They also invite Thee again, and a Recompence be made Thee. But when thou makest a Feast, call the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, the Blind: And thou shalt be blessed. For they cannot recompense Thee. But Thou shalt be recompensed at the Resurrection of the just.* Having Pity on the Poor is lending to the Lord: To those that have fed the Hungry, and given Drink to the Thirsty, have received the Stranger hospitably into their Houses, and visited them that were sick or in Prison, our Lord says, Matt. xxv. *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the Least of these my Brethren* (pointing to the Poor and Needy) *ye have done it unto me.* The Church in the Beginning of the Gospel maintained her own Poor. Many rich Persons contributed largely, and some

† Luke x. 30, &c.

fold all that that they had, and laid the Money at the Apostles Feet, and Distribution was made unto every Man according as he had Need. Sometimes in case of Death and Famine, Collections were made in distant Churches. The Disciples at *Antioch*, on such an Occasion, sent Relief to their Brethren that dwell in *Judea*. Bishops were given to Hospitality; and their Houses were an Asylum for all poor Strangers, and persecuted distressed Christians.

Considering then the natural, social, and self-interested Motives we have for assisting the Distressed, together with these higher and stronger Motives, arising from a religious View of the Case: Considering that we may by our Acts of Charity, save a Soul from Death, and hide a Multitude of Sins,—may lay up Treasures in Heaven;—become rich towards God, and gain an Inheritance in his glorious Kingdom: Considering all this, I say, one should think, that the Provision for the Poor and Needy might safely have been left to voluntary Contributions, and private Charity.

How have the Poor been all along maintained for so many Ages, in the several Parts, and Climates of the World? For the Poor have never ceased from the Earth: They have been found to appear, more or less, in every Age, and every Country. Sloth, Extravagance, Sickneſs, Misfortunes of Fire, of Storm, or Inundation, Lameness, Blindness, the Weakness of Infancy and old Age;—These Causes have

never failed, nor ever will fail, to produce in every Country, Poverty and Distress among great Numbers. But such Persons have generally been taken Care of one way or other : And few, I believe, if it was not some how their own Fault, have perished for want of Sustenance. Parents, Children, Friends, Neighbours, and Acquaintance, have always some of them been ready to do something themselves, and to make a Collection, or recommend the Case to others, that might be willing and able. Princes, and Nobles, and other rich Men have allotted something. It may be said too, very great Objects of Charity, as the Blind, the Lame, the Decrepid, whose Friends were utterly unable to support them have commonly been suffered in most Countries to take their Stand at the Corners of Streets, or the Doors of Temples, at any public Places of Passage or Resort, in order to make their Distress more known, and move the Charity of Travellers, Passengers, or Worshippers, by a View of their pitiable Case. Thus blind * *Bartimeus* sat by the Highway Side begging : And, asking an Alms of Jesus Christ, as he passed by, received that blessed Alms, the Recovery of his Sight: Whereby he was put into a Capacity of Gaining a Livelihood, and had no Occasion to ask for Charity any more. Several other poor Objects in different Places, our Saviour found begging, and, so far from reprov-

* Mark x.

ing them, always shewed Compassion on them. We read in Acts iii. *A certain Man lame from his Mother's Womb, was daily carried, and laid at the Gate of the Temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask Alms of them that entered into the Temple; who, seeing the Apostles, Peter and John, about to go into the Temple, asked an Alms. And Peter fastening his Eyes upon Him, with John, said, Look on us. The Man immediately gave heed unto them, naturally expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and Gold I have none: But such as I have, give I unto Thee: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*

Such Petitioners were generally tolerated and encouraged, as long as their Distress was real, and their Means of Support otherwise insufficient. For the idle, the dissolute, the valiant Beggars, as our Law calls them, were neither then so common, nor had they learnt so well to impose upon the Good-natured, under the Mask of pretended Infirmary and Want. For at present such a Way of Relief ought to be discouraged and suppressed, and the Lame, the Blind, the Impotent be supported some other way; suppressed I say, not as being wrong in itself (for it is really otherwise, and many People must see the Object before they will have Pity on it;) but as giving a Pretence for Strolling, and an Opportunity to a Number of Impostors to obtrude themselves on the Public, and deceive or rob the Unwary. Rome was for a long Time a wise and

and well-governed State. How were the Poor maintained there ? The People often complained of great Hardships, particularly of the Exactions and Oppressions of the Nobles, and would often be clamorous, and insist on enjoying, or being restored to certain Privileges and Immunities. But the Poor, properly so called, were for the most part well taken care of. *Cato* the Elder, indeed, was for having Slaves to be knocked on the Head, when become old, decrepid and useless, as a Piece of good Oeconomy, and a Way to save Charges. But his rigid Virtue has ever been justly impeached, for this monstrous Instance of Inhumanity and Cruelty. When the Rich begun to bear hard upon the Poor, and Creditors had proceeded not only to bind and shut up, but even to exercise corporal Punishment, to whip and beat their Debtors, a Law was made in the 260th Year of the City, to restrain these Oppressions and Cruelties, and no poor Man, at least while he served in the Wars, could be touched in his Person or Estate. Many of the rich Senators kept an open Table, and had always a great Number of Clients, Freedmen, Slaves, and poor Citizens, Retainers at their House, and Partakers of their Bounty. Some of the principal Magistrates and Citizens gave every now and then, especially in Time of Scarcity, or at Elections, which were mostly annual, considerable Quantities of Corn, and all that came were welcome to a Share. Ships were very often sent abroad for Corn, and the State ordered

it to be doled out to the Poor, or sold at moderate Prices. Generals returning from the Wars in Triumph, never failed to remember the Poor, and gave away among the People Largeſſes of Corn, and Money. Friends likewise always made Collections among themselves for a Friend reduced and in Distress. The *ἐρανος* * among the *Greeks* was also a Contribution much of this Kind. Only the *ἐρανος* had this Peculiar in it; that if the distressed Person ever afterwards came to be of Ability, he was to make full Restitution. It was not an absolute Gift, because there was a tacit Condition and Expectation of Repayment: Nor a real Debt, because there was no Interest payable, nor any fixed Time, or compulsory Obligation, for Repayment. The *Romans*, it seems, were so generous to their Friends in Case of Misfortunes, that it was sometimes an Advantage to have been a Sufferer, and the Liberality of the Contributors more than made up the Losses of the Petitioners. Hence the Satyrist says:

Suspectus tanquam Ipse suas incenderit Ædes.

And Martial,

*Collatum est Decies : Rogo, non potes Ipse videri
Incendisse tuam, Tongiliane, Domum?*

Besides these Methods of providing for the Poor, the *Romans* had one other very good one, equally practicable with us in *England* now, and

* See Theophras. Char. xvii.

that was, the sending away the able superfluous Poor into the conquered Countries and Provinces, whereby they became happy in themselves, and greatly strengthened and enlarged their Mother Country.

I must further add, that Parents were obliged to take Care of their Children ; and Children of their aged impotent Parents : This indeed the Law of Nature and of Virtue, as well as the municipal Law of most States, exacts and enjoins. The principal Laws of *Solon*, and of other States of *Greece*, were adopted at *Rome* : And among the Laws of *Solon* this stands as chief : *εαν τις μη τρεφῃ τες γονεας, αλιμος εστω*. If any one supports not his Parents let him be deemed Infamous. He was unworthy of enjoying any Honour or Preferment in the State.

Theophrastus, * describing a Desperado, or an audacious abandoned Fellow, gives it as one chief Part of his Character that he doth not maintain his Mother : *την μητερα μη τρεφειν*. Not to maintain the Father is suppos'd to be bad ; but not to maintain the Mother is suppos'd to be worse ; it is shameful and shocking, as the Mother is the weaker Sex, and is more apt to stand in need of Help, and having undergone all the Cares and Pains of bearing, nursing, &c. has more Obligations due to her. One of the principal Laws of *Moses*' Table, and the same again we find enforced in the Gospel, is, *Honour*

* Char. vi. ΠΕΡΙ ΑΠΟΝΟΙΑΣ.

thy Father and thy Mother. And *St. Paul* observes, † that this is the first Commandment with Promise : with the Promise of a peculiar Blessing annexed to it, namely, long Life. By honouring Parents, I need not say, is meant paying them all proper Regard and Obedience, and affording all the Help and Assistance in our Power. The Poor Law in *England* has not superseded this Obligation, but Children are still bound, if able, to maintain their Parents, as Parents are their Children.

That Parents should maintain their Children, tho' equally right and necessary, has not been thought to want so much to be enforced. Affection is generally seen to descend more than to ascend ; and it is necessary it should be so, for the Increase and Propagation of the Species ; and most Parents shew a greater Love to their Children, than Children shew back to their Parents, and consequently have less need to be compelled to it. Children, like Buds soon open into Blossoms, which are not only sweet and lovely in themselves, but are still the more valued, as they are expected to grow on to Maturity, and bring forth Fruit : But aged helpless Parents, alas ! considering the Treatment they often meet with, may be compared to withered and decayed Trees, that have shed their Leaves and Fruit, are become Sapless, and past bearing, and by their Continuance are only thought to encumber

† Eph. vi. 2.

the Ground. The Father thinks he lives in his Offspring, and that if he can but support his Son in his Youth, he will fully repay all his Cost and Care, and be the Staff and Support of him in his old Age : But the Son has no such Prospect of future Service from a decrepid Sire, who is too frequently considered as a Burthen, and all that is given or done for him, as so much lost or thrown away. *Anchises* could easily dandle about the Infant *Æneas* in his Arms, but *Æneas* found it a heavy Load to carry his aged Father on his Back. The Innocence, Health, and fondling Ways of Children, please and endear ; but the Infirmities, Maladies, Crossness and Peevishness of old Age, are disagreeable and provoke. Parents, therefore, have not commonly so much need of a Law to oblige them to maintain their Children : they are of themselves strongly disposed to it, and for the most Part are of a competent Age for it : The same Persons that can beget and bear Children, being generally young and strong enough to work and provide for them. The Duty, however, of reciprocal Assistance has always been thought equally incumbent : and the Apostle with great Reason says : * *If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own House, He hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.*

These Methods then of taking Care of the Poor seem to have answered the End, and are

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

what Humanity and Good-Policy naturally dictate ; and what, allowing for Difference of Times and Circumstances, have obtained more or less, I believe, in all civilized Countries of the World.

The *Dutch*, one should think, would be troubled with a great Number of Poor, as their Country is so populous, and of so small extent, and doth not afford Bread-Corn for a Tenth of the Inhabitants, nor any native Commodities to export, or native Materials to work up into Manufactures, whereby the Poor might have Employment ; and yet, we are assured, a Beggar is rarely to be seen among them : Their Manner of taking Care of the Poor is, by all that have seen it, commended, and deserves to be imitated. According to the Account of an ingenious modern Writer, their first Care is to provide proper Materials and Instruments for Labour, and set those, that are able, to work ; those that are not able, are taken care of in Hospitals : And those idle Vagrants that are able and not willing to work, are taken up and sent to the Rasp-House, or other Places of Labour and Correction, and forced to earn their Bread before they eat it. For the Maintenance of these Hospitals, where all the impotent Poor are kept, (besides what is given towards them by well-disposed People, and part of the Revenues of some secularized Monasteries) they impose several little Taxes, as a Penny upon every one that passes thro' the Gate after Candle-Light, — upon Appointments

at Taverns and other Places where they have Boxes to put in Forfeitures for the Use of the Poor : Nay, at every Bargain, something is reserved for the same Use. To which must be added what is collected in Churches, and weekly by the Hospital Officers from the Inhabitants at their Doors. But here is no Assessment or Compulsion, every one gives as his Circumstances enable, or charitable Disposition inclines him : He puts his Alms with his own Hand into a long Purse or Bag which the Collector holds out to him ; so that God only and himself are privy to his Alms.-- But the greatest Relief which the Poor have, comes from a Quarter one could least expect, and yet that can best spare it : The Play-Houses, Mountebanks, and Music-Booths, pay the third Penny ; and in some Cities, as *Amsterdam*, half the Money received. At the Play-House in *Amsterdam*, which does not take in a Week so much as one of our Play-Houses sometimes in a Night, 'tis reckoned above 6000*l.* is yearly collected for the Use of the Poor. In that City alone there are near Twenty One Thousand maintain'd yearly. The Gast-House, or Hospital for the Sick, deserves a particular Description ; for its wise Institutions I mean, not its Buildings. We shall only observe, that there is no need of recommending ; the Door stands open to all Comers : The *Dutch* ask no Questions, but receive every one there for God's Sake ; even young Women, who have had a Misfortune, are well look'd after, the Children put
out

out to nurse, and the Mother's no more troubled with them : This they do, not to encourage Libertinism, but to prevent Murders. The Hospital-Children are so tender in the Eye of the Government, that when any of them have Occasion to travel, the Publick Track-Skuyts, or Passage-Boats, are obliged to carry them gratis. There is another Hospital, where all poor Travellers, without Distinction, are lodged and entertained for three Nights, but no longer. There is also in most Towns a Society of Burgers or Tradesmen, who engage to support one another on their happening to fail in the World : The Fund for this is raised insensibly, by each Member's paying a Trifle weekly.—This last excellent Practice has obtained in a great many Parts in *England*. The Wool-Combers of *Tiverton* have a common Stock for the Support of decayed Brethren of the Trade. There is likewise a publick Box for the same laudable Purpose at *Wellington* : And so I make no doubt there is in a great many other trading Towns in the Kingdom. The last quoted Writer mentions a Confraternity of this kind established among the Tradesmen and others at *St. Albans* : They pay only Three Pence a Week, and this Trifle enables them to maintain their Members disabled for Work through Accidents, Sickness or Old Age, and allow them Seven Shillings a Week. It were to be wished there were more of these Confraternities ; they would give no small Ease to Parishes, and be a much more genteel

feel Way of supporting unfortunate Tradesmen. The Clergy in many Parts of the Kingdom assist the Widows and Children of their poor deceased Brethren, by subscribing a small Sum annually. And a Fund for the Support of Officers Widows by Land and Sea, is raised by a small Deduction out of their monthly Pay.

And as the *Dutch* excel in the Management of their Poor, so the *French* perhaps come next to them: The Hospital-General of *Paris* is reckoned to exceed every Thing of the Kind in the whole World; it consists of three distinct Houses, in which commonly there are computed to be about Eleven or Twelve Thousand Poor: Those pinched in Circumstances have no more to do but present themselves, and immediately they are received. Beside their Lodging, their Provision amounts to about Seven * Sols a Day: All Nations are received, and all treated alike; they send not a poor Creature from Parish to Parish. For the Sick, there are many Hospitals at *Paris*; the most famous was the *Hotel Dieu*, the largest perhaps in the World, which was burnt to the Ground in 1737. Every Body was received, Protestant, Catholic, Turk, and Jew; it buried them when dead, as well as cherished them when living. The Hospital for Foundlings is an excellent Establishment, and has wisely been thought worthy of Imitation by the English. Besides, almost every Parish in *France* has some sort of Hospital and Charity School. They have also in every Church an
Iron

* Or Three Pence English.

Iron Box, and so indeed we had formerly in all our Churches, to receive private Charities for the *Pauvres Honteaux*, the bashful Poor ; Persons that greatly want, and yet are ashamed to beg : whose Bashfulness, therefore, deserves much to be commended, and to have the Necessity of asking prevented.

How were the Poor maintained in *England*, before the Law in the latter End of *Queen Elizabeth* ? I suppose they had been as numerous in the preceding Reigns, as they were then.—‘ We are told the Church, that is the Abbies, Monasteries, and other religious Houses maintained them : And that when these religious Houses were secularized, and given away, or sold to Lay-Proprietors, in the Time of *Henry* the Eighth, and *Edward* the Sixth, the Poor were left destitute, and must have starved, if they had not been provided for by Law.’—The Abbies, and other religious Houses were many of them, no doubt, very liberal, and kept an open hospitable Table every Day. And the neighbouring Poor used to repair to them, and fill their Bellies, and very likely carry Home with them something for their Families. The Possessors of those religious Houses received them from their Founders, on Condition, that they should generously and charitably use and dispose of them, for the Honour of God, and the Good of his Church and People. And this Condition should at least have accompanied the Alienation or Transfer. And tho’ they were no longer to be applied to the Maintenance

tenance of Monkery and Popery, the Entail of Charity and Hospitality should not have been cut off. Several of these Houses were rather charitable than religious Foundations. The Name of *Crutched-Friars*, for Instance, plainly shews such a House to have been principally designed for the Maintenance of a certain Number of poor Cripples, or lame Brethren. Religion indeed was generally attached: And these, and other poor Brethren of other Denominations, were expected to dedicate themselves the Remainder of their Days to the Service of the Church, and behave as Servants or Ministers of it. And so it was in some Sort in the Primitive Church. Nay, even so early as the latter Part of *St. Paul's* Time, we find that aged and destitute Persons, particularly ancient poor Widows, not less than Sixty Years of Age, and of good Character, were to be put upon the Poor List, and maintained by the Church, to the Service of which they were afterwards to apply themselves, and were to help, what they could, in distributing the Church's Alms to the Poor, in attending the Sick, in instructing the young and ignorant, and assisting at the Celebration of Baptism and the Eucharist. See 1st *Tim.* v. 9.

Some, in Consequence of the above Opinion, that the Church maintained the Poor, have lately proposed to have the Poor thrown back again on it. But this is absurd, unless with the Poor all the Church-Lands and Tythes were likewise to be restored. For the Church at present can
hardly

hardly maintain her own Members. The inferior Clergy are so scantily provided for, that many of them cannot live or appear with common Decency. It is for the Good of Religion, and the Interest of Society, that every Parish Minister should have a handsome Competency. For no Set of Men contribute more to keep up Order and Government in a State. But Poverty disqualifies the Minister for these Ends: It depresses his Spirits, exposes him to Contempt and Ridicule, and by lessening his Authority as a Man, greatly lessens it, as a Moralist and Divine.

*Nili habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
Quàm quòd homines ridiculos facit* :— JUVENAL:

The Stipends of many Churches being so mean, mean illiterate Persons of course are placed upon them, who by their servile, or worse Behaviour, dishonour both their Religion and Profession. Or if a worthy ingenious Man be forced to take up with such a Place, he is soon in Danger of being over-run with Rusticity and Ignorance, as his Circumstances will neither afford him Books to improve his Knowledge, nor Time to apply to his Studies and the Duties of his Office, by Reason of worldly Avocations, and the Solitude of a Maintenance. This Grievance, for I think, it is a Grievance, might easily be remedied, by buying in the Improvements, (which certainly ought to go to the Church, or revert to the Land-Owners) and raising the Purchase-money

ney by *Queen Anne's* Bounty, and a Tax for one, two, or three Years on all Clergymen of such a particular Income.—By disallowing of Pluralities and Non-residence.—By sinking some Prebends and Canonries, as they shall become void, and applying the Profits to the Augmentation of poor Livings, and thereby rendering the Revenues of the Church more equable and useful.

But it is ridiculous to talk of throwing the Poor upon the Church again, unless, as I said, all the Church Revenues were likewise to be restored. And even if they were, which there is no Likelihood of ever seeing, I believe the Church would find the Burthen too great to be born, if she was obliged by Law indiscriminately to relieve all that offered. As *Henry* the VIIIth is reported to have told the Abbot of *Glastenbury*, upon the Abbot's refusing the King a large Sum of Money he had asked for, that he would burn his Kitchen about his Ears; So the Poor under such a Law, I believe, would soon grow obstreperous and insolent, and threaten to pull down Churchmen's Houses upon their Heads, if they did not give them what, and in what Manner, they pleased. But in Fact it is not true, that the Church maintained the Poor then. The Religious Houses did no otherwise than the Religious Houses abroad, and the hospitable Masters of other Houses did, and do now, live generously, keep a plentiful Table, and give the Surplus to the Poor. The Abbies, Monasteries, &c. as being rich Bodies, and not
incumbered

incumbered with Wives and Children, and expensive Families, were able to contribute largely: But could what the Poor received from them be a Sufficiency? Meat and drink were only given here; at least, not commonly any Thing else; the Poor had still Lodging, Cloathing, Firing, &c. to find, that is to say, the greater Part of the Necessaries of Life. Private Charities were quite needful, and were as much bestowed then as ever. Collections were made on the Sabbath Days, and at several other Times. Poor Boxes, now fallen in a Manner into disuse, were kept up in the Churches, and received the secret Alms of many generous Benefactors. Upon a Recovery from a Fit of Sickness, upon returning safe from a Voyage, or a long Journey, upon the Birth of an Heir, upon any signal Success or Blessing, the Thankful never failed to repair hither, and shew by their Regard to the Poor their Gratitude to God.

If the Abbies, &c. maintained the Poor, how came the Poor not to have been equally destitute in other Protestant Countries on the Secularisation of them? and how came the Poor Law not to have been passed here in *England*, immediately on the Dissolution, or Secularisation, when the Poor, we must suppose, were most to seek for a Maintenance, and no new Resources were as yet opened? How did they subsist the latter Part of *Henry* the VIIIth, all the Reign of *Edward* the VIth, of *Queen Mary*, and of *Queen Elizabeth*, till about a Year before her Death,

that is, near Seventy Years in the whole ? We don't read of any extraordinary Sufferings of the Poor during this Time ; nor of any Tumults or Rifings amongst the lower Sort of People on Account of their Distress, tho' many on Account of the Alteration in Religion. But when the Poor have been greatly pinched and oppressed, they have seldom failed to let the Government know it, by their Complaints, Remonstrances, or Insurrections. How often have the People in former Times run to Arms on Account of Inclosures, and forced their Superiors to disforest the inclosed Lands, and lay them open for the Poor again ? It was not therefore the Dissolution of the religious Houses that brought on the Poor Law ; (It contributed to increase the Distress of the Poor, I'll allow :) But there were a great many idle, sturdy, wicked Vagabonds going about then, as now, a Terror to honest People, and a Nuisance to the Public : And for the Suppression and Prevention of these, several Laws had been passed in different Reigns, even from the Time of the wise and good King *Alfred* to the 39th of *Elizabeth* : and the Law to relieve the Poor was meant only as a further improvement or Amendment of these, and was understood to vary, and at first seemingly varied, but little from them. After all the vagabond Laws, still Poor People wandered from Place to Place, and Strollers and sturdy Beggars, and under that Denomination, many Cheats and Thieves went about. And to keep every Body at Home
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and suppress such Vagrants, and also to take away the Pretext, that they must starve, if they did not go about, a Law was made, that every Parish should find Employment, and set to labour all those of the Parish that should be able to work, and to maintain the helpless and impotent who should not be able. So that what may now be thought the main Part of the Act, the giving Parish-Pensions to the Poor, seems only to have been a consequential Part ; the keeping the Poor at home, and setting them to work having been the principal Design, and the Clause for relieving them in their respective Places of Habitation, or Settlement, introduced only as a Means to Silence all Complaints, and take away every Pretence for strolling, and begging abroad.

Indeed, some new Species of Expence have arose since the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*, which have greatly contributed to increase the Wants and Distresses of the Poor : As First, the Custom of *smoking* and *chewing Tobacco*. This, 'tis well known, is now, and has been for many Years extremely common among the Poor. But the Plant, I believe, was hardly heard of in *England*, till Sir *Waltar Raleigh* introduced it, who lived under *Queen Elizabeth* and King *James* the First. The Expence to many poor labouring People only on this Article is very considerable. I believe some lay out almost as much in Tobacco, as in Bread; and declare, they can as ill go without the first as the last. To this unnecessary idle Expence must be added another of a similar

similar Nature, arising from the like Misapplication of the same Plant, that of *Snuff-taking*. This for some Time was practised chiefly by the better Sort; but as Inferiors are always apt to imitate the Ways of their Superiors, tis now become general among the lowest Class; and you shall scarce meet with a common Handicrafts-Man, or a Servant Maid, but what is more or less addicted to this Habit. The Custom is become so prevalent and notorious, especially amongst the Females, that in Advertisements for Servant-Maids, we see it particularly mentioned very often, that no Snuff-takers will be accepted. To one that has, or gets but little, a little is much. And tho' these Things are bought by small Quantities, and the Money is laid out by Pence and Half-pence, and seemingly is not felt, yet if an Account was kept of the Sum thus yearly expended, it would appear no small Matter; it would appear much too great for the Person that expends it.

But it is further observeable, that, besides the Expence, the habitual Use, or rather Abuse of Tobacco and Snuff is detrimental to Health. Constant Observation and Experience but too evidently prove, that these Practices pall the Appetite, impair Digestion, taint the Blood and Juices, and render them less fit for Nutrition. Whence follow, in a greater or less Degree according to Circumstances, a pale fallow Cast of the Complexion, Loss of Flesh, Relaxation,

ation, and Decline of Strength, Vigour and Spirits.

Another new Species of Expence crept in of late Years among the lower Sort is *Tea-Drinking*. It has been asserted many times in Print, and is indisputably known to be true, that several poor Persons, who receive Charity, have their Tea once, if not twice a Day. In Sea-port Towns, and most Places on the Coast, where, by clandestine Means, Tea is afforded cheaper, it is the ordinary Breakfast of the very meanest of the Inhabitants. But for poor Wretches, almost destitute of the common Necessaries of Life, to run daily into such idle Extravagances, is certainly a very ridiculous Piece of Management: For the Expence of the whole Apparatus of Tea, Sugar, Cream, Bread and Butter, &c. must be near treble to that of Milk or Broth, or any other common wholesome Breakfast. Besides, Experience fully evinces, that Tea is prejudicial to the Health, as well as to the Pocket of the Poor. Tho' a moderate Use of it, as a Diluent of the Food and Blood, may agree well enough with Persons that have good Constitutions and *live well*, yet in Concurrence with a low, coarse, vegetable Diet, the chief Food of poor People, its Effects are very mischievous; as it relaxes and weakens the Solids, impoverishes the Blood, and enervates the Strength and Vigor of the Body. There is also a considerable Loss of Time attends this silly Habit, in preparing and sipping their Tea; a Circumstance of no small Moment to those who
are

are to live by their Labour. It is now usual with many Female Servants to insist on Tea in their Agreement, and to refuse serving where this is not allowed. And when from Servants they go to be poor Men's Wives, we may naturally suppose they carry the same expensive Appetites and Habits with them, which being propagated by Example to the Offspring, the Evil becomes still more epidemical.

Another Article of Expence that in these later Times hath made its Way among the Poor or lower Sort, is the wearing of *Ribbands, Ruffles, Silks*, and other slight foreign Things, that come dear, and do but little Service. Why might not *English* Woollens or Worstedes, worked up so fine as they are to be met with, be sufficient to serve for the Apparel of all Servants, and others of a certain Degree, as they did heretofore? Have not Extravagances in these Articles contributed greatly to make Labour and Servants Wages run so high? And yet the Servants and Labourers are not a Jot the better or richer. A sumptuary Law would be of Service to the Poor themselves, as well as to the Nation in general. For notwithstanding the high Price of Wages and Labour to what it was formerly, the Poor seem to be as needy and bare and wretched as ever.

The last new Species of unnecessary Expence which I shall mention is *Dram-drinking*; which perhaps is worse than all the rest together, bad as they are singly. The Distillation of Spirituous Liquors

Liquors was formerly a very Trifle in this Kingdom, and chiefly confined to the Druggists and Apothecaries Shops. But of late Years it has been immensely great, and the Consumption in Proportion. I have been assured by an Officer in the Excise, that there was a greater Quantity or more Hogshheads of Spirituous Liquors drank in *Plymouth* in the late War, than of Beer, Ale and Cyder together. How far Tea-drinking, by relaxing the Nerves and sinking the Strength and Spirits, may have contributed to Dram-drinking, which affords a short delusory Relief for those Depressions, I shall not take upon me to determine. If we look abroad into the World and view the Havock and Destruction which Dram-drinking makes among the common People, amongst whom it chiefly prevails, and consider the Miseries and Calamities which it brings, by that means, upon the Nation in general, every thinking Well-Wisher to his Country must be greatly shocked at the Sight of such a Scene. This monstrous abuse of Spirituous Liquors has most pernicious Effects; it consumes the Gains and Subsistence of the People, and reduces them to Poverty and Want; destroys their Health and Strength, and makes them both unwilling and unable to Work, and cuts off the thread of Life before they have lived out half their Days; it intoxicates the Mind, inflames the Passions, puts Men off their Guard, and exposes them to all manner of Vice and Corruption. From whence follow a great Loss of useful Hands for

our Manufactures and Agriculture ; extravagant high Wages and great Expence of Labour ; an Obstruction and Diminution of our Trade both at Home and Abroad ; a general Corruption of Manners ; a numerous burthensome wicked Poor ; Frauds, Thefts and Robberies, the natural Consequences of Licentiousness and Poverty ; a Degeneracy of the *British* Nation from the manly Size, Strength, and Courage of our Ancestors ; instead of a stout, vigorous, brave-spirited People, for which this Nation has always been distinguished, we can expect to see nothing but a poor, diminutive, mean-spirited degenerate Race, a Dishonour to their Country. It is to be hoped, the late Law will put some Stop to this destructive Practice, or some more effectual one will be enacted.

These then are new Articles of Expence, unknown to this Nation in former Times. A Law to relieve People brought to Want by these Extravagances is unreasonable and impolitic, and in Time must prove fatal to the Nation. The Number of the Receivers will become greater than that of the Contributors, and these must fall with the rest, and all come to Poverty, Misery, and Confusion.

However, tho' so much may be said against the Law for a Taxation to the Poor, I am not for having it repealed, but only amended. Tho' I'm satisfied, it were better even for the Poor themselves, as well as the Nation in general, that the Law had never been passed, yet as the
 Poor

Poor have been so long in Possession of it, they may think they have a kind of Right to it, and it might seem Cruelty now to resume what at first might have been unexceptionably withheld. Besides, Relief having so long passed thro' this Conveyance, might not soon find its Way thro' other Channels.

There is only one good Argument, that I know of, in Favour of a Poor Tax, and that is, it forces open the Purfes of the Covetous-Rich. The generous and worthier Part of Mankind, it is said, bear all the Burthen in voluntary Charities. But the Poor-Law obliges the Hard-hearted and Cruel to be merciful, and contribute to the Relief of their aged, helpless, distressed Neighbours.

But Query, whether the Evils don't a great deal more than counter-balance this single Benefit? Besides, what a Fallacy is there in this Argument? 'The generous and worthier Part of Mankind bear all the Burthen in voluntary Charities;' go away with all the Pleasure, we should rather say, the Pleasure of doing a kind Thing now, and the Glory and Reward of it hereafter. If a Man hath not the Heart to part with any thing voluntarily, let him keep his Riches as a Curse to him, and let him never taste the Happiness the Beneficent enjoy, when they cheer the Sorrows, and assuage the Grief, when they relieve the Wants, and gladden the Hearts of their Fellow Creatures around them. As the Apostle says, 'He would rather speak five Words with his Understanding,

‘ than ten Thousand in an unknown Tongue:’
So there is more Merit in five Mites of voluntary Charity, than in ten Thousand of forced.

The People of *England* want less perhaps to be forced, than any other Nation under the Sun. They are naturally a kind, a compassionate, a generous People, and notwithstanding the vast Sums exacted yearly by Law, and notwithstanding compulsory Methods tend to weaken, and have, I doubt not, much weakened the Principle of Charity, yet a noble Spirit has shewn itself, and still doth shew itself, tho’ not so much as heretofore, on all proper urgent Occasions. Witness the many grand Structures, and large Endowments for Charity-Schools, for Hospitals, Infirmarys, &c. which we have seen erected and established only within a Century past. Witness the handsome Subscriptions and generous Collections, that even now are commonly made, when the Call is really pressing, and the Object truly deserving. Witness the daily Alms, the Lane, the Blind, the Beggar of every Sort, commonly meets with, on the Road, in the Streets, or at our Doors, tho’ we know such Alms to be wrong, as giving Encouragement to Strollers, tho’ we know that no Poor can justifiably go about, and tho’ we every now and then find, to our Cost, such Beggars to be Impostors and Thieves, and by suffering them to come about our Houses, give them an Opportunity of spying out the weakest Parts, and, as Occasion offers, of rifling them, and by permitting them to approach our
Persons,

Persons, put it in their Power, especially on the Highway, of assaulting and robbing us.

Many Persons, upon hearing of the great Riches and Revenues of Churches, Monasteries, &c. have wondered how so much ever came to be given in Charity, and have admired the Bounty of former Ages. Indeed, it being the general Belief of the *Roman* Catholics that Charity doth absolutely cover a Multitude of Sins, it's no Wonder, that Charity should greatly prevail under such a Persuasion. Besides, in *England* forced Charity, as hath been observed, has gradually checked and thrown a Damp upon voluntary. And yet still we may almost say, the same Charitable Spirit hath shewed itself, only changing Objects, since the Dissolution of Monasteries, as before, and that Charity-Schools and Hospitals have gone away with Legacies and Benefactions, much as the Abbies and Priories and Religious Houses did formerly. The Wealth of those Houses, we are not to think, was speedily accumulated : It was the Produce of the Nation's Charity for more than five Hundred Years. But we in less than two Hundred have seen most magnificent Fabricks erected, and noble Foundations established, not only in, and about the Metropolis, but in most Counties of the Kingdom. And if it had not been for a new Statute of Mortmain passed a few Years ago, our Charities in Time might have proved our Grievance, and a Dissolution of them have become as necessary, as of Religious Establishments heretofore.

For

For no doubt, it's the Interest of every Nation, that the Wealth should be pretty equally dispersed, and that no over-grown Bodies, especially Bodies that never die, should engross too great a Property. This Turn, as I mentioned before, our Charity hath taken for some few Years past. But, to use the Words of Lord *Bacon* in his Essay on Riches, 'Glorious Gifts
' and Foundations, are like Sacrifices without
' Salt, and but the painted Sepulchres of Alms,
' which soon will putrify, and corrupt inwardly.
' Therefore measure not thine Advancements by
' Quantity, but frame them by Measure. And
' defer not Charities till Death. For certainly
' if a Man weigh it rightly, He that doth so, is
' rather liberal of another Man's than of his
' own.'

However it must be confessed, that at present, the Love of many waxeth cold. As Poor Rates have increased, private Alms and Gifts have lessened, and tho' the present Times afford sufficient Instances of occasional Benefactions, and particular Donations, a general Beneficence, and constant Flow of Charity upon all poor Objects that come in our way, I'm afraid, is far from being our modern Character.

As some of the Evils of the Compulsory Law to maintain the Poor, appeared upon the first Establishment, and others have since arose, and the Expence thereof has been continually increasing, and very likely will still increase, tho' the Burthen is in many Places already become
almost

almost intolerable, some Alteration or Amendment seems absolutely necessary : What Method the Parliament intend to take, is not as yet made public. Poor Houses or Hospitals are generally talked of. And they seem indeed the likeliest Means to produce the End we aim at, namely the Maintenance of the Impotent, the Employment of the Able, and the Confinement and Correction of the idle vagrant Poor. The *Dutch* have been reckoned remarkable for their Frugality, Oeconomy, and good Management, and particularly for their good Management of the Poor, and the Suppression of Vagrants and Beggars. And the Way, as hath been observed before, they have so well succeeded in, is chiefly by Hospitals. Suppose then, a Poor-House, Work-House, Hospital, or whatever you will please to call it, was erected in some convenient Place near the Middle of every Hundred. It should consist of three Parts, one for the Impotent, and the able and honest industrious Poor ; one for the Sick ; and one for the Confinement, Labour, and Correction of Vagrants, Idlers, and Sturdy Beggars. It should be strong and plain : Grandeur here is absurd. For surely Palaces are not proper for Paupers. The Buildings need not be of large Extent : For I'm convinced the Inhabitants would not be very numerous. That Part intended for a House of Correction should be particularly strong. If possible, the Building should be erected near some River, and where there is a good deal of waste Ground. The River
might

might serve for Mills of various Sorts, and for many Purposes in Trade and Manufactures, as well as culinary Uses: And the waste Ground might be taken in and improved, and serve for the Production of Roots and Vegetables, Corn, &c. for Rope-Yards, for bleaching and drying Hemp, Flax, Yarn; Wool, &c. for many other Purposes, which it is not necessary here to enumerate. If possible also it should be near some Church, that the Poor might have the Benefit of Divine Service every *Sunday*, and other Days of Public Worship.

All Persons that begged or asked for Relief, should directly be sent to this House, and be immediately admitted, on an Order signed by the Minister and Overseers for the Time being, or by a Majority of the Churchwardens and Overseers of every Parish. No Money, but what passed thro' this House, should be charged by the Overseers. Here the Poor should be well taken care off, and supplied with wholesome Diet, Cloathing, and Lodging: Materials should be provided for the Employment of all those that should be able to work, as Hemp, Flax, Wool, Leather, Yarn, both Linen and Woollen, Iron, Wood, &c. and likewise proper Implements and working Tools, as spinning Wheels, Cards, Turns, knitting and other Needles, Looms, Shovels, Axes, Hammers, Saws for Stone and Timber, and perhaps some sort of Mills, where a Stream could be had, as Corn, Fulling, Paper Mills, &c. Here several Sorts of Business,
and

and some small Manufactures might be carried on, as Spinning, Weaving, Stocking and Net-knitting, Sawing, Rope-making, Wool-combing, particularly in the West of *England*, where the Woollen Trade is considerable, Flax-dressing, particularly in the *North*, where a good deal of Hemp and Flax is grown. The Manufacture of Pin-making would employ a Number of Poor. A skilful Manager would find Work of some Kind or other for every one. The Lame of Foot, might use their Hands for many good Purposes. The Blind might turn a Windlas, a Wheel, or Grinding-Stone. Even Children might soon be brought to do many Things, to knit Stockings or Nets, to wind Thread or Yarn, and assist the Weavers, &c. The Aged, if they could do nothing else, might overlook, instruct, and direct others, in those several Branches of Business they were skilled in. But none should be hardly dealt with, or forced beyond their Age or Strength. For Encouragement, there might be several little Posts in the House, as Butler, Cook, Gardener, Porter, House-keeper, Chamber-Maid, &c. and these given away to those that were most industrious, and behaved best. It might be ordered, that the Poor should in a manner do all the Business of the House, and work for, and attend one another, without the Expence of Taylors, Shoemakers, Sempsters, Spinsters, Weavers, Nurses, &c. A Gentleman bred a regular Apothecary and Surgeon,

geon, might be contracted with by the Year to attend the Sick.

After the Buildings were erected, and Furniture, and Materials for Work, and working Implements provided, I reckon the Labour of the House would go a good way towards maintaining it. The Eating, &c. of the House might be upon much the same Plan, as our County-Hospitals. The Cloathing should be an Uniform. The Charge of Building, and all other Expences, should be borne by the several Parishes of the Hundred, each Parish paying a Proportion, according to a Medium of what they had paid to the Poor for four Years last past. The Money should be assessed, and collected, in the same Manner as at present.

The two Overseers, and Minister of the Parish, if he thought proper to join with them, should be the acting Officers for a Year, and should have the Management of the ordinary Business of the Hospital. And each Parish in the Hundred should take the Management by Rotation, beginning Alphabetically according to the initial Letters of each Parish. No Person should be capable of being chosen Overseer, that had not 40 *l.* a Year Leasehold, or 20 *l.* a Year Land. The Accounts of the two acting Officers, should be audited, and passed every Quarter, at a General Meeting of all the Overseers of the Hundred, and the Ministers of the respective Parishes, together with the Justices of the Hundred: And the Determination of a Majority.

Majority of those that attended, should be final. In case of Fraud, or wilful Mismanagement in the acting Officers, the Majority should have a Power to levy by Distress, and Sale of the Offender's Goods, so much Money as would make Satisfaction. Or if any particular Parish thought itself aggrieved, there might be Liberty of appealing to the next General Quarter Sessions for the County, or to a Committee of three or five of the Managers of the House, chosen by Ballot. The Charge of Appeal should be borne by the Parish appealing, unless the Persons or Parish appealed against should be cast, in which Case they should pay the Cost. Market Towns I think should have an Hospital of their own, and not be admitted as Members of the united Hundred ; Because their Numbers might cause a good deal of Trouble to the House, and, upon a Decay of Trade, Accidents of Fire, Sicknes, &c. which Towns are most liable to, might bring an extraordinary Charge of Poor, and their Payments would not be in Proportion to their Burthen. Besides, a Personal Estate, and Stock in Trade, which are charged in Towns, being uncertain fluctuating Things, there might sometimes be a Deficiency, oftentimes a Difficulty in getting in their Quota.

If any idle, disorderly Persons, should be found begging, or loitering about, in twelve Hours after Notice given to depart, they should be taken up by the Minister, Overseers, or Constable, and sent to the House of Correction, and

there be kept to hard Labour for one Week, and then dismissed with a Pass to the next Hundred, &c. on a Promise to behave well, and forthwith to repair to their respective Places of Settlement. And if found a second Time so loitering or begging in the same, or any other Parish of the Hundred, then to be taken up, and whipped at the House, and confined to hard Labour for one Month. And upon a third Offence, to be confined, as above, till the Quarter Sessions of the Peace, and on Proof of any such Person's being an incorrigible Rogue, &c. to be transported, made a Slave of, or whatever the Quarter Sessions shall think proper. Nay, the Officers of every Parish should have a Power to take up any idle, disorderly, drunken, phrophane, abusive Persons of their own respective Parishes, especially such Persons as should frequent Tippling Houses, neglect to provide for their Families, refuse to labour, and had no honest apparent Way of getting a Livelihood, and send them to the Work-House, and there keep them to hard Labour a longer, or shorter Time, according to the Degree of the Offence, and Appearance of Reformation.

If any Poor in the Houses, that were able to work, refused, * *St. Paul* shews us the right and ready Punishment, commanding, *That if any would not work, neither should He eat.* In Case of Theft, Quarrelling, Abusiveness, Drun-

* 2 Thessal. Chap. iii. Ver. 10.

kenness, Contumacy, lying out of the House without Leave, selling their Cloaths, &c. the acting Officers, after proper Admonition for the first Offence, should have a Power to put the Offenders into the House of Correction, and there keep them to hard Labour and on hard Fare for a Space of Time suitable to the Nature and Degree of the second Offence, with the Addition of proper Chastisement, if other Means would not do, upon a Repetition of Misbehaviour.

The Reason I would leave the Management of the House so much to the respective Parish Officers is, because they, as the Representatives of the Parishes, are the Persons properly concerned, are particularly interested in the Affair, and consequently it being their own Business, will be most likely to mind and do it best. Justices have so much other Business upon their Hands, that it could not be expected they would be able or willing to give the necessary Attention and Attendance. So that to leave the Execution of the Scheme to them, I'm afraid, would bring it to nothing. The Charge would not at all be too great to be committed to the Overseers, as they would be obliged by Law to be Men of considerable Property, and the several Parishes would take Care, for their own Sakes, in a Trust of so much Importance, to chuse always Men of some Credit, Understanding, Honesty, and Virtue. The Act of Queen *Elizabeth* requires the Overseers to be two substantial Housholders: And perhaps it would

would be limiting their Qualification too low, to fix it as I have done, at 40/. a Year Lease, and 20/. Land. They should, as much as possible, be Persons of Authority and Character: And I hope, and doubt not, but we should see the best Gentlemen of the Parishes most commonly elected. The acting Officers should have a Matron and a Deputy-Manager or Clerk constantly resident in the House, to act under them.

A Poor-House, or Hospital upon some such Plan, as is here mentioned, would in a short Time be found to be of vast Service. It must be left to Persons of wiser Heads, and superior Stations, to draw out a full and regular Plan. I only presume to give some rude imperfect Sketches.

Some of the Advantages, that would arise from such a Regulation, are these.

First, It would lessen the Number of the Poor. For to be sent to the Poor-House, however well they might be taken Care of there, would look like a Sort of Exile, and be deem'd some Hardship and Punishment: And many that now live lazily on Monthly Pay, in order to avoid going thither, would be content to labour, and fare harder, and make a Shift to subsist. For they would consider, they must work at the Hospital: And therefore that it's better to live among their Friends and work at home. I verily believe, that one half of the present Poor, upon the Alternative, either to go to the Hospital, or be struck off the Parish Poor-List, would

would chuse the last. And in this Case no Injury or Hardship is done. For if a Person will not take Charity in the Way it is offered Him, He may be supposed to be able, and ought indeed to go without it.

The Hospital would chiefly consist of Children not come to work, of the Aged, who are past Work, and of the Blind and Lame and Sick, that is of the Impotent, who are thought incapable of Work. The Number of the First and Second would not be great, if the Law was strictly enforced, that in Case of Ability, all Parents should maintain their Children, and Children their Parents. And the Number of the Third would still be less again, as natural and accidental Incapacities happen so seldom.

Secondly, It would not only lessen the Number of Poor, but of Course it would increase Labour, Care, and Industry. For if some, that now receive Pay, would endeavour to subsist themselves by their Work, rather than go to the Hospital; they must certainly be more careful and work harder. And the same Dislike of going to the Hospital that makes them industrious now, would put them, very likely, upon making some little Provision for Futurity, that they might not afterwards be sent thither upon the first Failure of their Labour. Thus Care and Industry would increase among the Poor out of the Hospital, and great Advantage accrue thereby to the Public. And as for the Hospitallers themselves, very few of them, except the Sick,
and

and those disordered in their Senses, would be found to be absolutely incapable of Labour. Dispersed and neglected as they are at present in their several Parishes, they can get little or nothing. They must starve, if they are not relieved. They have neither the Instruments nor Materials for Work, nor any Labour suited to their Capacity and Strength. But in the Hospital proper Employment might be found for all, and Business of one kind or other adapted to every one's Condition. You give such or such a Pauper so much Pay *per* Month. He lives but from Hand to Mouth. He continually spends it as he receives it. He does not put himself on any Business; he has none, if he would, to put himself upon. You must continue his Allowance from Year to Year, or you starve him. But in the Hospital, where there would be a Stock, and Materials for most Kinds of Work, all such Paupers might in part, if not wholly be brought to earn their Bread. And consider what vast Benefit would redound to the several Parishes, and consequently to the Nation in general, from such an Increase of Industry and Labour. For

Thirdly, An Increase of Labour, and a Diminution of the Number of Poor, would of Course produce a Diminution of the Expence. Not only because there would be fewer Poor to be maintained, but because those that were to be maintained, would most of them by their Labour contribute to their Maintenance, and those that were entirely to be maintained, would be maintained

maintained cheaper in a Body in the Hospital, than they can separately, as at present, in their respective Parishes. But beside this, what would cause a vast Saving, many of those incidental Charges beforementioned, would by such a Regulation be avoided. It would be no great Matter, which Parish in the Hundred, such or such a Pauper belonged to, when the whole Hundred, with Regard to the Poor, might be considered as one Parish. Disputes about Settlements, and Orders, and Appeals would in a great Measure be at an End. For these Disputes commonly arise between neighbouring Parishes; Servants, poor Cottagers, and such like Emigrants, that generally give Cause for the Disputes, seldom going further than from one Parish to another in the Hundred. The Cessation of such Disputes, would save the Justices a great deal of Trouble, and produce Harmony and good Neighbourhood in the Nation, and prevent many Quarrels and Animosities between contiguous Parishes and Gentlemen, that first arise on Account of Differences about the Poor.

It might not be amiss, if these Hospitals were empowered to receive all distressed Travellers; especially such as should come with lawful Passes, and entertain and lodge them for one Night, whereby the really Distressed would find great Comfort, the several Parishes would be excused that Burthen, and no Persons, under the Pretence of Shipwrack, or otherwise, could have

any Plea for going about from House to House to ask for Alms and Lodging.

Fourthly, Some such Regulation, as is here offered, would in all likelihood suppress a great Number of Strollers and Vagrants, if it did not entirely put an End to them. For here is a Remedy cheap and easy at Hand. The several Officers having nothing to do, but to take up, and send to the Work-House, (which would scarce be a Shilling Expence) all Loiterers, Idlers, and Sturdy Beggars, that should be found wandering in their respective Parishes, and should refuse to depart, upon proper Notice. Parishes would find it so much their Interest, and at the same Time so easy to do this, that I make no Doubt we should see it effectually executed. But at present Vagrants may lurk about, or wander where they please, without any Body's molesting or taking Notice of them. If any Persons were to go to take them up, perhaps they would be called only Busy-Bodies. And before they can take them up, they must go to a Justice of Peace, and have a Warrant. The Justice perhaps lives several Miles off, and may not be found at Home the first Time of going. Here is some Time and Labour lost. Or if he be at Home, there's the Expence of the Warrant, Guard, and Loss of another Day to bring the Delinquent before him: Who perhaps, hearing something of the Affair, in the mean Time slips away. But suppose him taken up, and carried before a Justice,

tice, it may be doubtful whether Reasons will appear to the Justice sufficient to commit the Man to Bridewell, considering what plausible Stories such Fellows have always ready, and considering that there are seldom wanting some Pettifoggers to bring an Action, even in Behalf of a suspected Rogue, in case of any Irregularity in the Proceedings against him. However, suppose an Order made to commit him to the House of Correction, there must be the Expence of a Man and Horses, perhaps two or three Days, to carry him thither, if he happens to be taken up at a distant Part of the County. So that the Trouble and Charge is too great to expect that the generallity of People will offer to put the Law in Execution. And, what is a further Discouragement, after the Vagrant, or lewd Woman, or whoever it be, are brought to the County-House of Correction, there's seldom any Punishment there for them, never, I believe, any Change, or Reformation made upon them. But after continuing there a certain Time, they are let loose again, improved only in Impudence and Wickedness, and directly go perhaps and brave their Prosecutors at their own Doors, and threaten to be revenged of them, to shoot or knock them on the Head, to poison their Water, kill their Cattle, or set fire to their Buildings. So that the intimidated Prosecutor is only more plagued and provoked ;—sees all his good Efforts in a Manner eluded ;—and heartily wishes he had sat still, and never meddled with

the Delinquent at all. The present House of Correction-Punishment is so difficult to be come at, and so little Good is now to be expected from it, that if we must have no other, give us back again, I say, that antiquated easy parochial Punishment of the Stocks, to which the Institution of Bridewels succeeded.

But the Regulation mentioned above, being so easy and practicable, would greatly tend to the Suppression of Strollers; and I need not mention how great Service this would be to the Community. The Suppression of Vagabonds would stop Wickedness in the Bud; and by preventing Men from falling into an *idle* Course of Life, we should generally secure them from falling into a *vitious* Course. The Desire of living in Credit and Reputation among their Neighbours, or the Fear of the Odium of a contrary Character, is a great Restraint upon the Mass of the People against Immorality and Vice: But Wanderers and Vagabonds, having no settled Residence or Neighbourhood, are Strangers to every Body, and consequently are free from this Restraint. Most Pick-pockets, House-breakers, Street-robbers, and Foot-pads have once been idle Vagrants. And such being but little influenced by Shame or Conscience, and having no honest Means of getting a Livelihood, are always ripe for any wicked Enterprizes: And when urged either by the Pressures of Necessity and Want, or the Solicitations of an inordinate Appetite, stick at no Crimes

Crimes to satisfy them. You may hang, or transport, or cut off a Number of Felons at this Sitting, but, like Hydra's Heads, there will more spring up by the next, and ever will do so, as long as idle Vagrants, who continually furnish a fresh Supply, are suffered to go as they do, unmolested.

Fifthly, This Manner of taking up all Strollers, and sending them to the Hundred-Workhouse, would not only be of great Benefit to all honest People, and put a Stop to the present audacious Crimes of Robbery and Violence, but be an Advantage likewise to Strollers themselves. It would keep them very likely from the Gallows, from a shameful and untimely End. It is their Misfortune at present, that they are in some Measure obliged to wander and stroll about, to pick and steal, urged on as they are with Hunger and Want, and not knowing otherwise how to get a Piece of Bread. But the Workhouse would find them Employment, and afford them a Maintenance. And when once put into such a Situation, they would very probably in Time come to like it, and be pleased with it, and be sorry and ashamed of their former irregular Course of Life, and think it a Happiness they were forced to leave it. Thus the Vagrants themselves would be the better for such a Regulation, and instead of continuing Rogues and Vagabonds, and preying upon other Men's Lives, and Labours, and Properties, they would be brought to earn their own Bread, would add the Benefit of their Labour

bour to the Public, and become useful Members of Society.

Sixthly, As such a Regulation would in all Probability suppress a great Number of the present Vagrants, so would it very much lessen the future Growth and Produce of them; by taking Care of poor People's Children, and bringing them up in Industry, Honesty, and Virtue. As many Children, legitimate and illegitimate, would no doubt be sent hither; so here they would be well looked after, be taught Reading, Writing, and early instructed in the Principles of Religion. At the same Time they would be brought up to labour and Business, as soon as they should become capable of any. The Forenoons might be allotted to their Schooling, and the Afternoons to Employment of one kind or other, which would serve for Play and Exercise, and which ought to be more practised in all our Charity-Schools. These Children, when seven Years old, or upwards, would no longer be any Trouble to the House, but might be Bound out Apprentices to Farmers, Handicrafts-men, Masters of Ships, &c. and would be trained up in a regular Way of Life, and become most useful Hands to the Public. Whereas at present, many poor People ruin their Children by keeping them at home, and bringing them up in Idleness, Beggary, and Rags. It is a Pity, and a Shame, to see such young Things half naked plying at a Gate on the Road, and commencing Beggars from their Infancy, running after and pursuing

pursuing you till you are forced by mere Im-
 portunity at last to throw them something.
 What can we expect such unhappy Creatures
 will prove in future Life? What but Idlers
 and Vagabonds, and by Degrees Pilferers,
 Pick-pockets, Thieves, and Robbers. Persons
 that have been honestly and regularly brought
 up, and that have been used to get their
 Livelihood by Labour and Industry, have much
 Shame and Difficulty to get over, before they
 can bring themselves to beg. But such Chil-
 dren are initiated in the Art from their Cra-
 dle: Begging is almost natural to them, and
 they make no more Shame or Difficulty of going
 about it, than others do to go about their respective
 Trades and Occupations. From this bad Soil,
 or rather bad Culture, I doubt not, a considera-
 ble Part of the yearly Crop of unhappy Felons
 has grown, and will still grow up, if Recourse
 is not had to better Methods of Cultivation and
 Management. In short, I believe, a Law upon
 some such Plan as is here mentioned, would be
 of universal Service to the Nation: It would ease
 the Expences of the Rich, and fully provide for
 the Necessities of the Poor: It would give a
 right Turn and Spirit to Charity, and make it
 flow cheerfully both in public and private: It
 would fill the truly Hungry, the honest, the in-
 dustrious, the unfortunate Hungry, with good
 Things; and the Idle and Worthless it would
 send empty away: It would see that the Chil-
 drens Bread should not be taken and cast unto
 Dogs:

Dogs : It would throw off the Burthen of the false, the pretended Poor, that it might relieve those that are Poor indeed : It would cause a great Diminution of Beggars and Strollers for the present, and hinder in a good Measure the Growth of them for the future : It would crush the Cockatrice in the Egg ; and, what all Law-givers should chiefly aim at, it would prevent the Commission of many Crimes, as well as punish them when committed : It would put an End to many Quarrels, Animosities, and Law Suits among neighbouring Gentlemen and Parishes : It would greatly tend to suppress Idleness, Drunkenness, Sloth and Luxury, and promote Industry, Parsimony, Honesty and Virtue in the Nation. I say, it would greatly tend to produce these good Effects ; for I'm not so sanguine as to think it would actually of itself produce them all ; other Regulations would be necessary to be joyned with it, in order to bring about the Reformation, and put an effectual Stop to *those audacious Crimes of Robbery and Violence*, taken Notice of by his Majesty in his gracious Speech from the Throne, which have extended themselves from the Metropolis to the distant Parts of the Kingdom. Particularly, such a Number of Public Houses ought not to be allowed. Many of these live upon the Vices of the People. And surely it must be wrong Policy to encourage or Licence those Professions, that eat out, as one may say, the Bowels of their Mother Country. *Demades*, a famous Orator of *Athens*, having convicted

convicted a certain Undertaker of Funerals, of having wished for great Profit by his Trade, got him condemned for it: Because such Profit, it was said, could not arise, but by the Death of many of his Fellow-Citizens. And can the Profits of many of our Public-Houses arise any other way, but from the Consumption, Beggary, and Destruction of many of the People? When there is a Public-House not only upon every Part of the Road, but almost in every Corner of the Country; what a Temptation is it to many People to go in and spend their Time and Money, especially when Baits of various Kinds are thrown out, and all Manner of Diversions and Allurements contrived to draw in Customers? The Masters of these Houses, from the Time they first take up the Business, think of nothing but living an idle luxurious Life: Whatever Trade or Occupation they had been brought up to, 'tis all soon dropped and forgot. So that not only the Damage to the Tipplers themselves, in the Expence of Money, Loss of Time, Loss of Health and Labour, is to be charged to this Source of Evil; but likewise the Damage the Public sustains by losing the Labour of so many Gentlemen Landlords, as well as of their tippling Guests: Whose Number (I mean of the former, the latter being numberless) throughout the Kingdom would, upon a Calculation, appear surprizingly great. Indeed Public-Houses abound so excessively in all Parts, that, to a Stranger, the whole Nation must appear like a great Thoroughfare, and as if it depended

in a great Measure on some Foreigners for its Support ; it being otherwise almost inconceivable how such a Number of Houses of Entertainment, or the Nation itself on their Account, should be able to subsist. Public-Houses were designed only to be Places of Reception and Entertainment for Travellers, Sojourners and Strangers, and none should be allowed, but in such Numbers and Places, as might be sufficient to answer this End. The Cities of *London* and *Westminster* have lately given a good Example, by suppressing a great Number of petty disorderly Public-Houses, and agreeing to Licence none, but such as shall be recommended by some of the principal Inhabitants in the several Parishes. And the Example ought to be followed throughout the Kingdom, and no Licence should be granted to any Person to keep a Public-House, but upon a Certificate from the Minister and Parish-Officers, of the Usefulness of such House, and of the proper Qualifications of the Person going to keep it. And tho' the Government might find some Deficiency upon one Branch of the Revenue, by such a Reduction of Public-Houses, it would more than find an Equivalent in the Health, Wealth, Sobriety, Trade and Prosperity of the People.

Drunkenness is, and has been for some Time at an amazing Height in this Nation, especially among the common People. This monstrous Enormity is fraught with so many and so great Evils of almost every Kind, that tho' some of its
baneful

baneful Effects have been before took Notice of, one can hardly, on this Occasion of touching again upon the Subject, quit it without endeavouring to set some further Mark upon so odious and destructive a Vice.

Si natura negat, facit indignatio Versum.

JUVENAL.

Drunkenness, like the Infection of a pestilential Disease, rages most and spreads its Contagion fastest and farthest among the Flower of the People; among the most healthy, active, strong, and vigorous; among the most useful Subjects of the Kingdom, and most valuable Members of the Community. It every where carries with it Idleness and Sloth; Debauchery and Corruption; Sickness and Infirmary; Poverty and Want; it drowns Reason, makes Men daring and desperate, ready to engage in any wicked Enterprize, to rob and murder, for a Supply of their Necessities and Vices. Some Stop therefore, if possible, should be put to this reigning epidemical Evil of Drunkenness. And one way to do it, is to reduce the Number of *Publicans*; and take Care, that those who shall be continued, observe good Order, and suffer no Tipplers in their Houses after a certain Hour; and no Servants, Day-Labourers, &c. at any Hour, unless upon some reasonable Occasion.

In short, Idleness, Drinking, Gaming, Whoring, whatever brings Men to Distress and Want
should

should, if possible, be removed and suppressed. For when Men are in great Want, Nature will force them to look out for a Supply. But no honest legal Way of Supply occurring to People reduced by such Courses, Thieving and Robbing are too commonly resolved upon, as a necessary Evil, and as the last Resource: Are too commonly resolved upon by the Strong, and Bold, and Courageous; while the Infirm and Pusillanimous perhaps are content to throw themselves on their Parish for a mean and wretched Subsistence. To tell a Man in extreme Want, and in no Way of getting a Livelihood, not to rob or steal, is almost the same Thing, as to tell him, not to eat or drink. Many Persons, that set out in the World with very honest Principles, by bringing themselves into distressful Circumstances through their Vices and Extravagances, have been tempted to transgress the Bounds of Justice, and have proceeded to defraud and steal, nay to commit Robbery and Murder, Crimes they once abhorred the very Thoughts of.

Yours, &c.

Ernesettle, near Plymouth,

Jan. 2, 1752.