

W. H. Partridge.

A

D I S C O U R S E

Of the

P O O R.

Shewing the

PERNICIOUS TENDENCY

Of the

LAWS now in Force

For their

MAINTENANCE and SETTLEMENTS

Containing likewise,

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

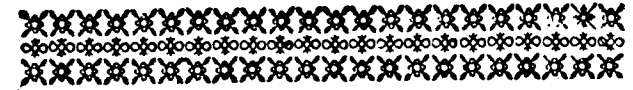
Relating to

NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT
in general.


By the late Hon. ROGER NORTH, Esq;

L O N D O N :

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

 *I may not be amiss to acquaint the Reader beforehand, that, of the three general Heads proposed to be discussed in the following Papers, he will not find the last so fully treated of as the honourable Author seems at first to have intended. I am persuaded his Thoughts were as much taken up about that, as about either of the two foregoing Particulars: But as it is generally much less difficult to pull down than build up; so he could easily demonstrate the pernicious Tendency of the Poor Laws as they at present stand; but to form a complete Scheme for the Support and Maintenance of the Poor, in such a Manner as to answer all Objections, it is plain he thought he could not; at least to his own Satisfaction. I am apt to believe it appear'd to him as a Thing impossible to be done, otherwise than from Observation of those Evils, whatever they might be, which would be found by Experience to accrue from the Repeal of those Acts, and to deserve a Remedy. And accordingly in his last Revisal of these Papers, he had entirely omitted the Consideration of this*

Article; and for those Reasons chiefly which are alledged at the Conclusion of the second Proposition. But as I found amongst his loose Papers a Hint or two, touching some hard Cases which, as he observes, might happen upon such Repeal, I have not omitted them. But whether they be deserving of Notice, or no, must be submitted to the Judgment of the Publick.

In the Account of the present State of Stow in the Wold, which I had from the Rev. Mr. Brown of that Place, and is put by Way of Note at the Bottom of Page 42. I observ'd he had remark'd, among other Things, that there is no Land belonging to that Town but what it stands upon. This appeared to me almost as extraordinary as what the honourable Author has said of it in his Book. I therefore desired that Gentleman to be a little more explicite with Regard to that particular Article. And he was so good as, soon after I wrote, to return me the following Answer.

“ There are, in the Parish of Stow, two
 “ Hamlets called Mangersburg and Donington;
 “ both which contribute, jointly with the
 “ Town of Stow, towards the Support of the
 “ Parish Church; but are in their Poor's
 “ Rates, and in every other Respect, separate
 “ and distinct from Stow. And, as there is
 “ no Land belonging to the Town of Stow, the
 “ Poor, which are very numerous, are sup-
 “ ported by a Rate charged upon the Houses,
 “ which

“ which are, most of them, old and very bad;
 “ and upon the Stock of the few Tradesmen
 “ that live in the Town. Other Parishes
 “ come so near the Town, that two Houses,
 “ contiguous to, and generally supposed to be
 “ Part of, the Town, are in two other Pa-
 “ rishes, one of which, that is on the North-
 “ East Side of the Town, is in the Parish of
 “ Broadwell; and the other, on the South-West
 “ Side, is in that of Netherswell. An Inn
 “ upon the Foss (for the Foss runs close by the
 “ Town) is Part in the Town of Stow, and
 “ Part in the Parish of Netherswell. The
 “ Inhabitants are supplied with Water from
 “ two Springs, which arise very near the Town.
 “ One of which is in the Parish of Broadwell,
 “ and the other in that of Netherswell.”

This particular Account I thought would not be disagreeable to the curious Reader, as it is a good Explanation of a common Saying, current in that Country, of the Inhabitants of this Town; namely, that they have there no Element but Air, as being destitute of Wood, common Field, and Water.

In Page 77 the honourable Author instances a second Time in the Town of Colchester, and with a little Alteration, but not material. In Page 43, he says, that the Bays-makers used then to give the Poor Six-pence a Day out of their own Pockets, and make up their Wages with Four-pence by Way of Collection. Here, he says, that the Poor had Four-pence a Day
 private

private Wages, and Six-pence a Day by Collection. This may be a Slip of the Memory; or, perhaps, this Thing may have been done both Ways by somebody or other. As it is alledged upon an Occasion something different from the former, I did not erase it.

As to the Time when this Discourse was wrote, it must be before, or soon after the Revolution; as the then present State of the Town of Stow in the Wold, as described by the honourable Author, must precede their being forced by Sir Richard Atkins to make a Poor's Rate.

He has interspers'd in the following Discourse, (agreeably to the Fashion of his Time) many Latin Phrases which he found were full to his Purpose, and very expressive of his Meaning.---Most of these I have attempted to translate as well as I could. But one Sentence in Page 48, I was much puzzled to find an apt Translation for. It is this. The Author says, that, in Peopling, *Lucrum cessans est Damnum emergens*. By which I cannot tell what he should mean, otherwise than what we do, when we say, in English, that Not going forward is going backward.

It may be some Confirmation of what is advanced in these Papers, under the Article of Depopulation, to consider what I observed myself the other Day, whilst I spent a few Hours in a certain Town in the County of Suffolk, where the principal Concerns of the free British Fishery
are

are carried on. Among other Things that pass in Conversation, this invaluable Branch of Trade, which had been so long neglected, was mentioned with those Encomiums that are thought due to it by such as wish well to the Marine of these Kingdoms. In Opposition to this, one of the principal Inhabitants of the Place declared himself very uneasy at the great Resort of People thither, occasioned by it. And when he was asked what Reason he had to be disturbed about that, he returned for Answer, that it was to be feared lest some of them should marry and settle, and so bring a Charge upon the Parish. Fine Sentiments these for a Member of that Community which subsists by Trade and Manufactures! Or rather, fine Laws those which create in People such Sentiments!

And now, as the growing Inconveniencies of these Laws appeared evident to this great Man so long ago, and inclined him to set his Thoughts down upon Paper, for the Service of his Country, to demonstrate the evil Consequences of them: I have thought it my Duty to make as publick as I can, whatever I could find of his Notes relating to this Subject; as well as I may those upon any other, which, like these, may be approved of by Persons of Abilities and Judgment.

And if the following Observations shall be found in the least to have forwarded the Amendment, in any Degree, of our present
evil

viii **The PREFACE.**

evil Constitution in Regard to these Laws; as it would have been the greatest Satisfaction to the Author, could he have seen the good Effects; so it will give no less Pleasure to the Editor, if it should please God that he lives to be an Eye-Witness of such good Fruits resulting from the Labours of this extraordinary Person.

March 22, MOUNT. NORTH,
1753.



E R R A T U M.

In Page 68, at the Beginning of the 35th Section, for *as they to draw it*, read, *as was necessary to draw it.*



A Dis-



A

Discourse of the POOR.



Y Intent is to examine the Condition of the Nation with Regard to the Laws made, and in Force, for Maintenance of the Poor, and their Settlements; and to shew that all the People of *England*, as well the Poor as Rich, are great Sufferers by them; and, unless this Constitution be reformed, that Poverty and Desolation of the whole must succeed; and, lastly, propose the easiest and softest Methods, I can think of, for compassing this nice Business. But, in the Process, touch upon several Matters incidentally relating to National Improvements.

43 *Eliz.* 2. Overseers shall be chosen annually in *Easter Week*, for raising (by Taxation) a Stock in the Parish wherewith to employ the Poor, and to relieve the Aged and Impotent; to continue to the End of the next Sessions of Parliament.

i. A short State of the Laws themselves.

A

Con-

2 *A Discourse of the Poor.*

Continued over. 1 *Jac.* 25. 3 *Car.* 4.
16, 17 *Car.* 4. At the Meeting of this Parliament, the first Thing they did was to continue all Laws, depending on Periods to determine them, until Provision should be otherwise made by Parliament.

Diverse Laws have been made for punishing Vagabonds and sturdy Beggars, erecting Houses of Correction, and for sending Men to the Places of their Birth, or last Habitation, if the other could not be found. 31 *Eliz.* 4, 17. 1 *Jac.* 7. 7 *Jac.* 4.

But one says, that, after branding on the Shoulder, the Person shall be sent to his last Dwelling; and, if that were not known, to the Place of his Birth. 7 *Jac.* 4.

Now, all this while, who were the Parishes proper Poor, and what was Dwelling, were troublesome Questions.

14 *Car.* 2. 12. It was enacted, that, within 40 Days of any Person's coming to a Town, the Justices of the Peace, on Complaint, should remove him to the Place where he was last settled for such 40 Days.

This Act set up the 40 Days Settlement, but being not perpetual,

It was continued for seven Years, and from thence to the End of the next Sessions of Parliament, with this Addition, *viz.* That the 40 Days shall not commence but from the Time of Notice in Writing left with the Parish Officers (which the Party is enjoined to do)

A Discourse of the Poor. 3

of the Person and his intended Settlement there. 1 *Jac.* 2.

The Notice to be read in the Church, and register'd in a Poor's Book. But being a Parish Officer is a Settlement. 3, 4 *W. & M.* 11.

Thus stands the Law at present; and, under them, the Practice hath been for Parishes to choose Overseers, and make pecuniary Rates to be levied of the Inhabitants, for Maintenance of the Poor: Which Rates must be confirmed by two Justices; and, upon Complaint of any Person to one Justice, he, upon hearing the Officers and the Party, orders Collection to be given. And the Officers pass Accounts before the Justices, from whom, in all Cases, an Appeal lies to the Sessions.

Upon the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and appropriating all their Houses and Possessions to private Interest, many People, who used to be fed upon their Alms, and consequently

not much addicted to work, grew miserably poor and necessitous. This might create a general Commiseration, and Disposition in the Nation, to yield to any plausible Project which should start up for Relief of the Poor. But, as Things are not done ordinarily whilst the Occasion presseth, but after the Brunt is over, so here 60 Years passed between the Dissolution and the first of these Laws; whilst those, who wanted Monastery Alms, were starved out of the World. So that I assign to this

2. *The first Occasion of these Laws.*

4 *A Discourse of the Poor.*

Cause only, a Disposition of the People, created by visible Poverty, supposed to arise from the Dissolution. But the true Source might be a farther Reach.

In the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth* Popery was to be thoroughly extirpated; as may be seen in the Laws of that Reign, which strike at the Root. Those, who acted, sought to justify themselves to the World as much as might be; and particularly in this Instance, whereof the Catholic Party (which was very considerable in *England*) made Advantage, by clamouring that the Reformation had destroy'd all Christian Charity in *England*, and left no Resource for the starving Poor to be kept alive, or comforted with Food, as was done by the Monasteries. Therefore it is reasonable to think that this Clamour was a principal Occasion of setting up this national Provision for the Poor; which was very extraordinary and new, scarce known in *England*, or any Nation else.

However adult and strong the Reformation was in that Reign, it is plain from the Laws, that the Parliament sought to be justified to the World, and to maintain a Reputation in Point of Form and Regularity abroad, and to establish their own Interest at home, and advance the Credit of the Reformation in other Countries. Witness,

1. The Act which distinguisheth upon the Supremacy, and restrains it to Government, exclu-

A Discourse of the Poor. §

excluding Ecclesiastical Order and Functions. This was to answer the Cavils that a Woman was Head of the *English* reformed Church.

2. The Act which declares the Validity of Bishops, and their Succession from the Apostles, &c. which was to answer the Pretension that the *English* Reformation had interrupted that Succession.

3. The Act, for setting up the High Commission, was to answer the Fancy that Ecclesiastical Power, to enquire of and punish Spiritual Disorders, was wanted.

And lastly, to return; That Law for the Poor was intended to refute a Calumny, as if, in taking away the Monasteries, the Poor had been robbed of their daily Bread, and nothing provided for them in lieu of it. Whereas *Now*, a better Provision was made for them, by a working Stock, to labour and be paid, and so eat honestly, and not live lazily, as before. And had there not been this Inducement, the Law, as I guess, whatever Reason or Disposition there was for doing somewhat, had never been made.

I suppose that, besides Charity and setting the Poor on work, which might incline many to agree to this Law, there was a farther Policy by it, which was thought, and strongly argued to be for the publick Good; and that was, Encrease of Industry and Manufactures, and Prevention of Robbing and Stealing; and

3. *The Advantages proposed by this Law.*

and farther, that these Stocks once settled, such Gain and Advantage of Encrease would grow out of them, as would enrich the Parishes, and provide for the Aged and Impotent so as no more Want, Poverty, or Charges for the Poor should be known in *England*. So here was Charity to the Poor, and the Utility of the Nation, most amiably combined together; and this must needs allure all Men into the Design; as most Projects, however in themselves impracticable or pernicious, have yet very tempting Faces to deceive with. But, in this Instance, the Parliament was not deceived beyond an Experiment, for they made the Law but temporary.

4. *The Abuses, which are the true Effects of this Law, in general.*

It was little then suspected, as it hath since proved, that this Law, instead of lessening, should multiply Poverty and Stealing; instead of Mercy, bring Cruelty upon the Poor; instead of promoting Industry, encourage all Manner of Idleness and Debauchery: And that the specious Project of raising and managing Parish Stocks, whereby to ease the Inhabitants and employ the Poor, should all vanish *in Fumo*, and nothing at all of it be done (by Virtue of this Law) in the whole Nation. But, on the contrary, in some Places, the Poor want Work and cannot have it, and, in others, Work abounds, and there are not Poor to do it; and, which is worse, one cannot accommodate the other by transplanting the People.

People. And that discouraging the Encrease of People, which is also kept down by such as, to avoid the Burthen of Poor, demolish Houses, enclose Commons, and drive People from them with Carts and Whips, whatever Use or Need may be of them, the Nation is extremely depopulated. And all this while an immense Charge upon the Estates of *England*, sufficient (indeed) to support the Crown in War and Peace, carried on by a perpetual and regular Taxation of Money (instead of Working Stocks) and that to be managed by a Crew of well-instructed Parish Officers, whose Insolence and Cruelty to the Poor is insupportable, and waste great Part in secret corrupt Misapplications. All this, and much more Mischiefe, comes out of this Law; which at the making the Acts, was not dreamt of, but found by costly and sad Experience to be true, and shall, partly, be demonstrated in the following Discourse; whereby I hope to stir up every one to assist in demolishing such a specious, but deceitful, Trade, as this Law hath introduced.

The Parliament were aware at first that a great and general Change was introduced; and being doubtful of the Mischiefs that might arise, made the Law to determine with the first next Sessions of Parliament; whereby there might be an Opportunity of continuing, mending, or letting it fall, according as they should find Cause upon Trial. 43 *Eliz.*

5. *Some Observations of the Steps this Law hath made before it was perpetual.*

Then

Then it had another Continuance in the first Parliament of *Jac. I.* which held till *4 Car.* and then was continued over till the Troubles grew ripe; and that was after a long Discontinuance of Parliaments. The next Session of Parliament was which, in all likelihood, had determined this Law. But this Parliament, lest Inconvenience might happen from a Neglect of continuing the good Laws that depended on their Sessions, thought fit to continue good and bad, all in general Terms together, until other Provision should be made.

Now it is under this Act that this Law, for the Poor and Settlements, proves to be perpetual. And I have been informed by some, who were upon the Stage at that Time, that, even then, the Mischiefs of it were so far seen, and the Members so sensible of them, that, if it had passed by Debate and Question upon this particular Law, it had certainly fallen.

There was an Intention in the Parliament, when the greater Affairs of the Nation were settled, as they vainly expected would soon follow, to review all these Laws at Leisure, and continue, mend, or let fall, as they found Reason from the Experience of them. Else it had been a Madness to perpetuate a List of Laws blindfold. Nor was that Course, taken, prudent with all that, nor adding the Fear that good Laws might fall in Company: For the

the common Law, which takes Place in all distatuted Cases, is sufficient for Government of the Nation; and for the most Part, if not always, is better than the Statute Provisions are. Therefore it were a more prudent Course to leave all to the common Law than suffer a bad Statute to stand; and not to prop up all for fear a little Good comes down with bad. Therefore this Course being mistakenly inverted by that Parliament, it becomes future Parliaments to be wiser, and to review all those Acts, so huddled together in one blind Continuance, and, at least, put them in *statu quo*, and affix a Time for their Determination.

It is not enough to say that any one may offer a Bill to repeal this, as well as other Laws; for then the Movement must be out of some particular Person or Number: And perhaps they are not found who will advance their Names in a Matter so tender, and turn Solicitors, as is, for the most Part, necessary to get a Law repealed. But if a Law stands upon Continuance, then, unless the Virtue of it be found such as shall stir up a Care of it, it falls without looking after; and if it be inconvenient, as this is to a fatal Degree, there is no Doubt but, if it were so reduced, it would fall in Course, and no Person be exposed as Agent in it: For many Things of very good Use, and founded in right Reason, may be, and often are, misapprehended by the Rabble. Therefore it is a Prudence to cover

them who seek to do the People such Good as either they understand not at all, or misunderstand : Else we must expect no Patriots, or Men of true and sincere public Spirits. And how few of these we have in our Time, and how much such Discouragements hinder the having any more for the future, is not of this Design to determine.

I know it will be alledged that few Laws have had a longer Time of Probation than this; for between 43 *Eliz.* and 3 *Car.* there is the whole Reign of *Jac. I.* And if the Law had been found inconvenient to the Nation, as surely must have appeared in that Time, if there were Cause for it, the Nation had Opportunity enough to have provided a Remedy; so the Continuance is an Argument of the Goodness, at least, not extreme Mischief, as we pretend, of this Law. I answer, some Things, and, for Instance, such as cover the whole People, either do not put forth their Consequences so early, or, for Want of mutual Converse and Correspondence, or, perhaps, right Sense and Understanding of Things, the Consequences are not so soon inferred, as in some other Cases of Government or Power, which, perhaps, may touch but a few. As if a Law set up a Trial for Life by a Judge without a Jury, every one says *it may be my Case.* But say, a Rate shall be levied from the whole People, and we are apt to say, *Let others took out, or, I shall fare as the rest do.*

do. So also an Evil that strikes at all at once, as to take away Life or Estate without Trial, is more resented than that which prunes it away by little and little; as these former Instances shew. Now the Mischief of this Law, which I ascribe most to DEPOPULATION, cannot appear but to very sagacious Wits, until the Consequences of the Depopulation is felt. We love Depopulation while it is called *easing us of Poor,* that are, for the most part, a Burthen, as also thievish and troublesome, until Want of Men, Women, and Children, to plow, sow, weed, make Hay, carry, thresh, spin, &c. makes a general Scarcity and Dearness of Manufactures, and consequently, a fastidious Plenty of some Sorts of Products, as Wool, Cattle, &c. and also of Corn, Hay, &c. but surcharged with vast Wages; and then we cry out, *O the Want of People!* Thus our Understandings are gross, and influenced only by feeling. Now until this State of Feeling and Want arrives, a wise Man may charm like an Angel, and not be heard. And however clearly he discerns the growing Evils, he shall not convince others until the Cudgel hath crossed their Backs; and, instead of being thanked and encouraged for his kind Hints, Whispers shall pass, as if some Trick, or private Interest were aimed at. And, if that hurt not, Objections shall be started, as is usual against all Innovations, though fresh Liberty is proposed against accustomed Slavery;

and the least Objection is entertained, and magnified by vain Supposals and Imaginations, to hinder the Reception of a profitable Reform. Whereas nothing under the Sun is free from Capacity of Abuse; and the settled Order and Constitution of the Nation, its Policy and Justice, admits the same or much stronger Objections. So old *Egyptian* Flesh-pots held harder than the Hopes of a new Land of Plenty.

Now to return to our Time and the present Subject: I do not find the threatening Mischiefs so great as the supine Neglect of our Countrymen in Parliament to obviate them. Nay, although the Evil pincheth, and we find not Hands to perform our Harvests, none stirs, however sensible the Occasion of it is; as if they were asleep, or surrender'd the Public to blind Chance, being resolv'd to accept the Ruin, by whatever Means it comes. This makes me recollect my Thoughts, and commit them to Paper; whereby I am at present diverted, and hereafter, if Occasion be, may have Recourse to them, and recover the Considerations I now have had upon deliberate thinking and converse on the Subject. And if I never see Occasion to use them, perhaps some that follow me, and will be troubled to peruse my Papers, may, and I hope, will be inclined to favour their own and Posterity's Interest, and be induced to set their Hand to the pulling down this unhappy Constitution.

It

It may perhaps be esteem'd an Undertaking not the best natur'd, if not right-down uncharitable, to heave at the present Establishment of the Laws for the Poor, which, some may say, being removed, exposeth Thousands to a State of Famine. And this, exaggerated to the short-scented Multitude, may draw a Fury upon any one as such a Character or Event deserves: And, so understood, I am far from being concerned. But if I make appear that this Establishment, instead of a Provision, is in Truth a Snare to the Poor, and Cause of Poverty, robbing them of all Means to mend their Condition, either by Industry or Removal, and snatcheth away their Dwelling and daily Bread; and moreover, pins them down to their Misery, and, in the End, proves the Death and Destruction of more than ever Want did in the Time; then, I guess, my better Intentions may be accepted. However, as to my own Sincerity and Charity, I shall not appeal to what I write, but what I practice; and I hope that will indemnify me: So I resume the Discourse and proceed.

In the Prosecution of which Discourse, I shall propose, in the general, three Things. 1. That the End and Design of this Law is in no Sort attained by the Use and Practice of it. 2. That the Public is extremely damnified, and in Danger of utter Ruin from it. 3. The Means I think most apt for obtaining a Regulation with the least Inconvenience.

The

6. *That the Ends of this Law fail.* The Intent and Design of this Law I shall consider under three Heads.

1. Prevention of Beggars, Thieves, Vagabonds, and other such Nuisances to the Public.
2. Charity to the Poor.
3. Encouragement of Industry.

1. As to the Prevention of common Beggars, Thieves, and Offenders, supposed to spring from Poverty, which this Law intended to remove; consider, first, if there are fewer such, now, than probably would have been if the Act had not been made.

It is hard to determine what the State of this Case, as to common Beggars, was before, and about, the Time of making the Act; because it is of a Time past Memory; and History doth not condescend to touch such Matters; nor hath the Act any Preamble to shew the Inducement of it. But if we reflect what Numbers are now in all Towns and Places of Note, especially the capital City of *London*, where not a Door, Person, or Coach abroad is free from Application; it is not easy to imagine there could be more at any Time.

I cannot avoid observing that, about *London*, the Inconvenience from Beggars is become almost insupportable; and that it proceeds not from meer Poverty, because there wants no Employment and Pay for them that will take it; Wages being so high, that a common

La-

Labourer earns 20*d.* or 18*d.* a Day; but from Vice, and, that grand one, Laziness. For Begging is no hard Labour, and hath a Sort of Freedom as well as Luxury (if there be any Truth in common Fame) in it, which tempts Men to beg rather than work. But farther, it is a Trade to beg, and not only a Trade for Subsistence but Profit. If it were not so, it would not be so plied by Men of sound Complexions and athletic Constitutions as we continually see follow it. If the Profit of a Trade fails, the Traders leave it, and the Employ is deserted: But this is full, and, as some say, regulated as any formed Society; whereby they are enabled to carry on their Imposture in due Form and Method, and for the common Interest of their Calling, as well as Jollity and Feasting, like a formed trading City Company.

It is notorious that these hypocritical People, having learnt to counterfeit real Poverty by lamentable Tones and Looks, impudently impose upon the charitable Disposition of good People, and then laugh at their Easiness and their own Successes. It is not easy for any one, not a listed Member of the Society, to distinguish a real poor Person from an Impostor, although well used to the Town. Much less can such, as are affected by Cries and disguised Misery, distinguish; and, with them, the False hath an Advantage, because it is display'd

play'd with Art and Address; whilst true Poverty is often modest and silent, and so toucheth no Passion.

The truly-necessitous Poor suffer much from this public Abuse of Charity; for many are so scandaliz'd as not to give Alms but to such as they know to be poor and helpless; and unless they stumble upon such (for few will search for them) they give no Charity at all. And such as do give Alms to common Beggars, commonly misplace it upon luxurious Counterfeits, who are importunate and very dissimulative; whilst the necessitous Poor are, as I said, more modest, and press not so much: And even that Modesty shall be counterfeited. All which Considerations make a Jealousy fall upon all that ask Alms, and occasions much less to be given in Charity than otherwise would be.

This seeming Digression serves our Purpose in shewing that the Laws for the Poor have not hindered or reformed the Trade of common Begging. But as it is grown up, in all Probability, since the making the Act (and a great Encrease of it falls within most of our Memories) so, if Order be not taken to hinder, it will farther encrease; till the Scandal, or more general Poverty, introducing a total Defection of Alms, puts Bounds to it. I grant it is a cruel Thing to hinder such as are poor from asking Relief: But the Abuses of it may be taken away by better Regulations

of the State of the Nation as to the Poor; and then by permitting none to beg but such as are really deserving Poor. And, that well looked after, I think Begging ought to be promoted as a Means of Virtue to the Rich; giving them Opportunities of exercising the Duty of Charity, against which they will not (as now) have such fair Pretences.

Then next, as to idle Persons, Vagabonds, Thieves, Clippers, &c. surely there could not be so many, when these Laws were made first, as now. Nor is there any Sort of Reason, from the Practice of them, to fancy the Contrary, or that they will ever make any Advances towards it. For who, by these Laws, are supplied with Work? What Country Parishes have raised Stocks of Hemp, Flax, &c. and kept the same going, as the Law requires, whereby the Poor may have a constant Employment? I grant, that (out of the Munificence of particular Persons, and not from Taxations under this Law) there are, in some Places, Stocks and Work-houses; and while some very industrious upright Men have look'd after the Manufactures, they have stood for some Time: But, if you examine now, you will find even those Stocks wasted, and slunk into private Purfes, ate up by losing Accounts, made so (perhaps) by eating, drinking, and such corrupt Charges brought upon them by the Managers; whereby the Designs, however pious and well-laid, are almost, if not alto-

gether, frustrated. Nay, the Houses of Correction, for the Counties, set up by Statute for Work, and which are, or should be, continually under the Inspection of the Justices of the Peace, are of little or no Use. It is true, they serve for Prisons, and a Sort of Punishment; So doth the common Goal. But neither are famous for Encrease of Work, publick Stock, or Reformation of any Note there, unless it be that from half-Rogues, they are there consummated.

It may be objected, that the Design of these Laws being so very good *in Hypothesi*, and failing only in Practice, may, by future Laws, be so well invigorated and corrected, that a better Execution will ensue; and then the Advantages, proposed, may have Effect, which, hitherto, by remis Execution, or corrupt Usages have failed, or made Things worse. As would soon be seen if greater Vigilance and Rigour were used.

Now with Reserve that no Medicine will cure unsound *Stamina*, or make this Constitution, which, I say, is intrinsically bad (as will be shewn) to be wholesome and good, I answer, at present, that Severities upon the executive Part will not mend, but make the Evil much worse. Which lets my Thoughts into a new Series of Matter, concerning Punishments as now used in *England*, which, I conceive, may be allowed a Place here.

My

My Sentiment of this Matter is, 7. The Nature and Use of Punishments. that Penalties are the worst Means of enforcing the Observance of Laws. If it can be done by milder Methods, that is, by the Inducement of Interest, or other Engagement of the free Will, it is infinitely better. Punitive Laws do not regulate so effectually, as Laws of Encouragement; For Men will follow Encouragements against Danger of Punishments; but will not go from Interest, if they understand it, into Danger. Wherefore, if any publick Concern can be so established, that it shall be the Interest of all Men to conform to it, there needs no Punishment to drive them. And many Things may be done by Methods and Encouragements, which Punishments will never obtain. And here lies the Art of Legislature, whereby publick Order is preserved without excoriating the Subjects. Punishment is odious and cruel; to be avoided all Manner of Ways; especially in a tender-hearted Clime as ours is. I need not multiply Instances, those of Wool and Clipping verify this Proposition. Tully in his Book *de Legibus*, Lib. 2. hath a System of Law, wherein he concludes, that *Reason is so essential to a Law, that it cannot subsist without it: And that a Law against Reason is void.* So the Common Law of *England* says also; for if an Act of Parliament erects a Court of Judicature with Power declared to determine by hearing one Side only, that Act of Parlia-

ment is void, as being contrary to a Principle of Justice. And such is what Tully calls Reason, meaning, some Principle of Justice, without which, the Law would be evil in itself; but not every Inconvenience. But of all Inconveniencies which can attend a Law, it is one of the highest, and most near to natural Injustice, when the Law terminates in severe Punishments; and, as human Nature is constituted, neither can nor will prevent the Offence, or reform the Abuse, as I hinted afore to be in the Cases of Wool and Clipping: For it is truly to execute Rigour without the Fruit. But, sometimes, Men will be exorbitant against both their own Interest and common Justice; and out of an innate Pravity, delight in unprofitable Mischief. Much of this Humour is found in Children, who are, as Women use to say, unhappy; being pleased with perverse Actions, without any Sense at all of the Effects. Men have the same Humours in a higher Degree; and will choose ill Courses, though dangerous, for meer Ill-nature; and refuse better, though more their Interest, and safe. Those who have lived in Business, and know Men, have often found some so propense to indirect Ways, that they will sacrifice a plain and direct Business to a Trick: And others will be Thieves and Robbers, though no Necessity drives them to it; but from a malign Habit of Mind, which drives them into such Practices, as the only

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Satisfaction they can have. Such cannot be restrained but by Punishments, for Interest scarce toucheth them, but Fear may; and therefore punitive Laws, in Case of Conviction, should be rigorously executed. A third Sort, mixed of these, are such as do not think much, but are driven by Accident, and move either to Good or Evil, as Company determines them; but are ready to consider and be wise, if their Interest appears gross and plain, or Terror reaches them. And such as these are the Generality of Mankind; easily deluded, tempted, or frightened; shallow Thinkers and obnoxious to Error. The Laws, proper for these Men, should be such as lay their Interest before them so plainly that they cannot overlook it, and to take away all the Occasions which they catch at to delude and seduce one another. This with a Mixture of Punishment, will, if any Thing can, bring the common Men into Order, and to pursue their own Interest. And you are to expect more Advantage from the perswading Part, than from the punitive Part of a Law; because much fewer will resist an Evil upon Account of Fear, than pursue a Good on Account of Profit; and the Profit shall draw more than the Terrors fright away.

Now to apply this Discourse, it is not to be expected that whipping of Beggars, Vagrants, Wood-Stealers, Petty-Larons, and like, should dispose Men to an industrious

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Course of Life; though it is not without its Virtue too; For the immediate Interest or Gain by Theft, &c. draws stronger than Fear of Whipping, of which, their assured Hope to escape soon gets the better. So Hanging and Drawing Clippers and Wool-Transporters doth not cure the Evil, because the Gain is great, and the Danger of Discovery and Punishment little. The Odds much exceed a Proportion; which will serve to tempt those Gamesters. And if the Gain were less, and the Punishment greater, they would not forbear. So Goal, House of Correction, &c. are scarce thought of when the Offences are committed that deserve it. The Good is present, the Evil to come. So that as long as People are poor, and Poverty tempts to Vice, and there is no Despair of Livelihood without Industry, because of the Parish Duty to provide; all the Whipping, Goals, and Corrections, that can be inflicted, will not prevent the Effects of Poverty, that is, Stealing, Clipping, and Vagabonding. But if the Laws are so ordered that Men shall strive against Poverty, they will generally grow industrious and rich; and endeavour to preserve themselves and their Means by keeping the Laws, which will effectually prevent Offences and Disorders. And how should this be done better than by turning up the People to shift for themselves, by repealing the Laws for the Poor, and declaring that if they do not provide, they must take

take what follows; and that, if they will, they may mend their Condition, when nothing obstructs or excuses them; and when they have no Handle vainly to flatter themselves in the Help of others.

Laws, therefore, of Severity will never make a Regulation in *England*; for our Natures are soft and pitiful. We have Compassion at punishing the vilest Rogues, and therefore cannot be rigorous, nor hold one another to the hard Labour the Laws require and inflict. And if Men are not willing to execute the Laws, other Laws, made with Penalties to enforce them, is like making an Hole to put out of the Way the Earth taken from another, which produceth the same Inconvenience.

I know I shall be told of very great Severities used by the *English*, as by any Nation, in diverse Instances, even up to the Character of Cruelty and Barbarity. I grant it true; but with this Difference; that is, when out of Order: As upon popular, factious Tumults and Revolutions, they are worse than many other Nations; though not often rising to promiscuous Murther, as the hotter Nations do. But in Imprisonments, bad Usages, Burning, Destroying, and other more formal Handling, in the Disguise of Law and Justice, they are cruel enough; but never when it ought to be, in Times of Justice and good Order; for the People always take Part with the Sufferers; and helping Criminals to escape is so earnestly done,

done, as if their Compassion had this Reason; *that they do, would, or intend to do the same themselves.*

This is not all : The Execution of Laws is a Matter of Skill, as well as strict Diligence and Application ; which, in our Nation, is not found so plentiful as it should be. It is an Employment for Men of Business, as we style them, who are well practised in the Affairs of their Country. And if there happen to be some few who, out of a true Zeal and public Spirit, affect Country Business, and there be the least Failing or Vanity intermixed, from which scarce any Mortal is perfectly clear, that shall be maliciously observed and exaggerated against them, even while they are in actual and gratuitous Service of the Public, and often for the Sake of a meer Jest, and by such as know no better, and are incapable of serving so well ; which is such a Discouragement as makes the best Men decline the Public.

This yet is not all ; Informers are infamous, the Officers, that minister in the Courts, are corrupt, and, for want of good Government over them, and severe and inexorable Examples of the Guilty, cheat Justice itself. And if any one, desiring to correct an Officer, chargeth him publicly, 'tis Odds but, for Want of Skill in Forms or Terms, he doth it so awkwardly, that, instead of mending the Fault, exposeth himself, and the crafty Officer takes Advantage, and sets up others, of his Party,
upon

upon him, and grows more impudent and audacious in his Knavery than ever he was. For this Reason, many worthy honourable Persons, being conscious of their Defects, decline public Business, and are glad when forward and pragmatcal Men put themselves upon it. This is so notorious, that there are few Countries where the public Business is not mostly dispatched by such as one would not trust to conduct a private Concern of five Shillings. This indeed brings a Scandal upon the Business of the Country, as if it were unbecoming a Person of value. So the Country is surrendered to be harrassed by Knaves and Cheats, who might be suppressed almost every Sessions, if due Courses were taken, and such had not Protectors where we ought not to suspect any.

From hence it is that Laws which require severe and rigid Execution, supposing them naturally proper, will not, in *England*, reach the Design, that is Reformation. In the mean Time let us imagine for once that apt Laws, and well executed, would do much to prevent Thieceries, Robbing, &c. yet, if we consider our Constitution, as is, and will be, the Practice of it in criminal Cases, we shall find in it somewhat more which will vitiate all again, and render them ineffectual.

A Thief is brought to Prison, not to a solitary Confinement, which might give him Opportunity to reflect on his past Follies, and

(escaping present Danger) resolve never to venture again, as is most probable he would if so kept; but he is brought into a College of Thieves, where he meets with Encouragement, and is supported in his early Attempts. All the Conversation of Felons is comforting each other, and relating Adventures of their Errantry. By this the Time passeth agreeably, and Tricks are contrived for Escapes, each lending his helping Hand to get the others off. So that, instead of being mortified and reformed by Imprisonment, they are hardened in Roguery, and become graduate Thieves, as in an University. And when, upon a Discharge from Want of Evidence, Inclination to Pity, Corruption of Juries, or any other such ordinary Means, they come forth very Adept: And for one Rogue the Gallows takes off, or Examples prevent, the Goal breeds ten. For there Men know no Punishment or Uneasiness, but only Infamy, which a little Time and Example will digest or cure; and then they become shameless for ever.

S. Some Remarks of Criminals escaping Justice.

It is wonderful to see and observe how many Ways Criminals have to escape Justice; and it makes it less strange that we have so many, than that we have no more.

1. It is hard to discover and then to apprehend them; wherefore, of all the Burglars and Felons we hear of, few are taken: For Men are not (always) earnest to prosecute in

any

any Case; and, were they not bound over, very few would be at the Charge to go to the Assizes and pay two Shillings for the Sake of Justice, to indict a Felon. Nay, when they are taken in the Fact, with the Goods upon them, not one in ten is carried to Justice, but the Owner falls to traffick the Felony for his Goods again, and farther, for the Value of all that was stolen, since the last Thief was caught and cleared the Account; which Account of Thief they keep as carefully as that of any Lord whatever, and live in Hopes continually of apprehending their Pay-master.

2. But be it the hard Chance of one to be sent to Goal; if he be an old Thief, and fat in the Purse, the Goaler soon finds his Account, and, not only makes his Confinement easy, but aids in order to his Acquittal, that he may have more of his Custom: And the Criminal shall have a World of invisible Friends, which Money, either of his own or Friends, shall extract most wonderfully out of bought Places; as the Sun breeds Vermin in a Dunghill. I say nothing of Jury Burn-Cards, because that is no great Secret. And after all, the Law itself is mild and favourable, the Judges careful of the Evidence, and requiring that, against Life, it be almost demonstrative, which seldom happens. Wherefore a Criminal hath great Odds to escape by Trial, unless he hath very ill Fortune in the Circumstances of his Taking.

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3. But let him be convict. Perhaps it is the first Offence, and within Clergy; and then a Dab on the Hand is the worst, which will not be very irksome if the sympathetic Palm of the Goaler be first greased. And that will arm him for a like two, three, or four, or any Number of Offences within Clergy. However it is seldom that the Advantage is taken either of *non legit*, or double Offence, which passeth not but on the Sight of the Record of a former. And if his Crime fall within, or he be ousted of Clergy, and is Felony of Death, praying Transportation fetcheth him off; and, that being granted, he sails to the next Highway, from whence you may shortly hear of his prosperous Voyages.

4. But suppose him stily prosecuted, and that the Cry of the Country is against him; then Transportation, and other ordinary Shifts will not serve his Turn, but the Man is sentenced. Now is the Crisis for true Friends to shew themselves in. Sometimes a Reprieve, by the Help of some mercenary Courtier, is obtained from above; but that Method, for Want of Time, is not to be relied on. The Judge is going out of Town, and it is ventilated abroad that this is a proper Fellow, fit to serve the King, and might do good against the *French*: And then, if he will take Service, he is reserved for the next Captain that wants Recruits. Nay, this Trick of taking Service hath been as good as a general Goal-Deli-

Delivery beforehand. It may be, this is his first Offence (discovered perhaps) and will, as they say, be a Warning to him: Or his Aunt's Cousin German was Sister to some Gentleman's Wife's Nurse's first Husband's Mother-in-Law. So the Train takes, and Interest is made with other Gentlemen considerable on the Bench (forsooth) who, expecting the like when they have a Turn to be served, join in Applications to my Lord, as they call the Judge. And it being hard to refuse a Request from the Body of the Gentry (as they call themselves) whose Request is a Screen to the Judge, who had a Mind to the same Thing, the Man is reprieved. Then, after a Year's lying, the Edge of Prosecution and Clamour is abated; and the next Judges not caring to award Execution upon a Trial before another Judge, way is given to sue for a Pardon, and at his own Charge if he be rich; else, paying moderate Duties to the Clerk of Assize, he gets a Place in the common Circuit Pardon. None gets by his Execution except the Hangman, whose Vails are but a few old Cloaths; and his Interest will go but a little Way to encrease them.

5. Those, who do suffer, are very few in Comparison with the Escapers, and are commonly such as Debauchery and Lewdness hath not swept away, and have lived in a concatenated Series of Roguery, until that unhappy Pass, successful. Therefore the Terror to others,

others, from Examples, is inconsiderable as to Effect. Soldiers, for an half-starved Livelihood, venture more, and at greater Risk, than Felons that live like Princes. If a poor old stupified Crony doth come short home, and is hanged, the rest of his Crew have a Compassion for, and pity him. Alack a Day! he had some good Qualities, either was a good Setter, nimble Actor, or courageous; and they ascribe his hapless End, not to his Demerits, but to Want of Dexterity at his Trial, or some unlucky Planet at his Nativity. And, all this while, they make full Account to manage their own Cases with more Subtilty and Circumspection, and so pass the Time under a strong Faith of escaping. But, when one is acquitted, he falls, like a Tyger, upon the Prosecutor, with an Action on the Case for false indicting; and none are so fierce, this Way, as the Guilty. Hence it is that, sometimes, the worst Rogues are often let go, and not so much as indicted; and, at other Times, innocent Persons, against whom an Accusation is begun, shall be prosecuted to Death: For Men think, by thorough swearing a Man to the Gallows, to save themselves from the after-glasp Action. All this Digression concerning Punishments in *England*, is to shew how vain penal Laws are for Reformation, and that there is never a considerable Amendment, that doth not arise more from Invitation than Terror. I now proceed to the second Part of my Undertaking.

2. And

10. *That the Laws for the Poor do not help but rather hurt them.*

2. And that is to consider whether these Laws do in Reality bring any Comfort, or be, in Truth, charitable to the Poor, as is pretended, or not; wherein it seems to me that they are so far from this, that the Poor are great Sufferers, and betrayed into the worst of Conditions by them.

For, first, much less is given, by Way of Alms, to poor People, than would be if the Law did not seemably provide for them. It is a common Answer to Beggars, that they must go to the Parish; and what they get there shall be observed anon.

2. The Poor have not the Benefit of the Charity that is intended for and given them by good People. For what is more known than that Parishes well endowed, have low Rates for the Poor. The Produce of Feoffment Lands, dying Persons Legacies, Sacrament and other Collections, and other charitable Monies, which fall into the Hands of Church-Wardens, are, it's true, given the Poor; but then a Rate or two is saved to the Parish by it: And the Poor scarce eat or drink the more. So when Bread is given to be distributed, it is set out for Ostentation, and the Poor have it, which is most likely to do them so much Good; but then the Parish considers that less Collection will serve. This makes all charitable Donations and Collections, intended for the Relief and Comfort of poor

poor People, to be administer'd by Parish Officers (who are supposed to know best who needs most) to be meer Delusions; and, in Effect, they do but ease the Parish Rates, that is, relieve and comfort the Rich: And the Poor have no more than strict Maintenance to prolong a miserable Life. Whereas, if no such seeming Provision had been made for them, all, that is given, must be distributed, and they would have it in the same Plenty, as was intended, without being pinch'd on the other Side by subtracting ordinary Collections,

3. There is not a due Consideration for distinguishing the less-deserving Poor from others, to whom Charity is more worthily given. For, generally speaking, such as, out of Vice or Laziness, are fallen to Poverty, and being still lazy, but, withal, petulant and clamorous, shall teaze the Parish Officers to get Collection; if they refuse, then teaze the Justice till he orders it. And, all that While, the modest Sort, when by Misfortune fallen low, do not importune at that Rate, and therefore are unregarded, and left to sustain their Wants as they may. The Parish will not be at Charge unless the Law compels them. And were it not for private Charity, such as it is (happening not to sink in Parish Officer's Hands) many Persons, really and commiserably Poor, would suffer extremely.

4. When

4. When a poor Family, or Person, is maintained by the Parish, it is done so grudgingly and extreme strait, that Life is scarce maintained by it. This Parish Poverty is a Condition void of all Comfort. For to be deprived of Alms (as mostly on that Account they are) and be left to Overseers Allowances, and having no other Means to subsist, is little better than a slow starving. A short Life, with less Pain, were to be preferred to this pining Death with Parish Allowance.

5. Charity would become an indispensable Duty on all Men, in a much higher Degree than it is, if these Laws were removed, which, standing, seems not so necessary upon them: For why are we exhorted to give to the Poor in a private Way, when the Law makes us give, as Members of the Public, what there is Occasion for? Are the public Collections eat and drank up by Parish Officers, so that the Poor want their Due? Or is it desired that the charitable Part of Mankind should maintain the Poor, to screen the Purfes of the Rich and Uncharitable? It is certainly a great Charity (designed by the Law) to maintain the Aged and Impotent by an equal Tax out of Men's Substances; each Person in Proportion to his Ability. What is more equal, or agreeable to the Duty of Charity? But (say some) the Parish Officers fail of their Duty, and either do not collect enough, or embezzle what they collect;

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Poor, or neglect them. Well then, Must we pay for their Omission, Neglect, or Corruption? Shall their Faults be veiled over by the good Disposition of others, who, by feeding the Poor, make their Accounts light and easy? I do not say this is pious Reasoning; but yet it is Reasoning, and such as gives too much Colour against promiscuous Alms. And all proceeds from the Laws, which, pretending to provide for the Poor, have made their Condition worse than if no such seeming Provision had been made. The rather because

6. Charity, when flowing as it ought, and perhaps would, if the Necessity enforced the Duty, is more beneficial than Collection. For that riseth to Liberality, and seeks, not only to fill, but, to sweeten a poor Man's Cup. The other goeth no farther than to maintain Life; and so, by protracting a wretched Subsistence, depauperates the Spirits even to Despair. That never comforts or refresheth; whatever, of that Sort, comes, is from private Persons. And if there were no Comfort to be had, but what comes from the surly Parish Officers, it were a greater Charity to beat a poor Man's Brains out, than generally they afford. Charity is a Sort of Mercy, and takes care of Ease and Joy as well as Life. The Parish seeks only to keep the Coroner out of the Town, that an Inquest might not sit upon the departed Poor, and find them starved. And they will tell you, and argue before the
Justice,

Justice, that the Law, and they hope his Worship, will require no more. And yet this is called a Provision for the Poor; but it is, in Truth, a Diversion of, that which would do the Poor much more Good, private Charity.

7. But that, which is worse than all this, is the Poor are imprisoned in their Towns, and chained down to their Wants, so that they are deprived of Means to mend their Condition, if their own Wits or their Friends should suggest any, by removing to Places more proper for them, either for Sort of Work, or of Friends to employ them. But, if any chance to move for an Experiment, then are they sent back, and tost from Pillar to Post in Carts, till they return to their old settled Misery again. No Town willingly receives a poor Man, though they want poor People to do the ordinary Works of Husbandry, because they say his Family may become a Charge to the Parish. And if one, that is not legally settled, happen to be sick or near Labour, they will hoist them up, in this carted Pilgrimage, without allowing them any Repose, and, if it be Midnight, hurry them to next Town, and there shoot them down like Dirt; and they find there as little Comfort as they left behind. And thus have diverse perished, as the Men about *Croydon* well know. And if I should say that as many have lost their Lives thus, by being carted about with Passes, as perished by mere Want before those Laws were made, I

should not hyperbolise. So that, from these many Reasons, I may conclude that the Provisions, pretended for the Poor, by the Laws of Rates and Settlements, carry a false Face, and in the Use and Practice of them, are really more prejudicial than of Advantage to them.

*11. Whether
diverse might
not otherwise
starve who are
preserved by
Parish Rates.*

Some may be strong in the Affirmative of this; therefore I shall a little consider how the Case of the Poor, probably, was before the Act, and how, probably, it would be again, if the Acts were taken away.

It must be granted that, in all Times and Places, there hath been, and ever will be, poor People. But, in some Times and Places, it is much worse, and the Poor are greater in Number and Want than in others. Yet it is rarely, if at all, seen that any starve for meer Want: And, where such are, it is among those who, out of Pride or Modesty, will not make their Wants known; for that Hardness of Nature is scarce found amongst Mankind, to deny Part of his own Meal to save the Life of another. What Gentleman, who lives in a Town, will suffer any to die for Want of Food? Nay Farmers, and even Labourers, have such Compassion, considering it may be their own Case, to spare out of their Pittance to sustain Life in any that is in meer Danger of starving. This Charity is not wanted in any Country, or Religion; and the
common

common Law of *England*, allows stealing in Case of extream Hunger; Which speaks that, in such Case, Property holds not, and all Things (as in primitive Christianity) ought to be common.

But however this might prove, it cannot be denied but Parents, Children, Nephews, and such like Relations, who can work, or have any Substance, would assist their Kindred in extreme Want, or if they were sick, or any Way helpless, and they knew they must perish without their Aid and Care. But so long as the Parish is bound to find them (as they chant it) away run the Husband, the Sons, &c. and leave the poor aged People to the Misery I just now touched upon; and those, whose very Company and Conversation would support their Spirits, are gone, that they might not save the Parish any Thing, as they fancy. And it is well known that, when strong and able Fellows are not humoured by the chief of the Parish (as the Officers love to be called) they cry take my Wife and Children, and are gone. Such a Thing, as this, would not be known in the Nation; I mean that able People should relinquish their poor aged Parents and Relations, if they thought they left them to perish for Want of Help (as e'en almost they, in Truth, do) and that the Parish were not to have the Charge of them. Which would be the Case; and it would connect Families in mutual Care of each other, the Strong helping the
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the Weak, the Well the Sick, the Richer such as are Poor, if these Laws were remov'd. And, before the making of them, it doth not appear that *England* was poorer than now, or than other Countries; but that was a Time of Peace, flourishing in Trade and Riches, by Manufactures encreas'd. Nor doth it appear that, then, Men were less charitable and humane to the Poor than in other Places. And I do not know of any Country or Place, either Christian or other, where there is any Law like this. And though Provisions are not so plentiful in foreign Parts as here, yet it cannot be said that the Poor starve any where. And if this Law were removed, whereby the same Necessity would arise, which, in former Times, and in other Countries, puts Men upon finding out industrious Ways of subsisting, we should find the like Effect of it. Families would foresee Old Age, and Casualties that might happen, or Sicknefs, Fire, &c. combine in Manufactures, as the wiser Sort do now; depend on their Labour, and not rest satisfied without saving somewhat to keep them in such Cases. They would have Houses of their own, purchase small Parcels of Land, and cultivate them to the Height of Improvement. But, now, all this is, to them, ridiculous, the Parish is bound to find them. There is the Refuge of sottish Idleness, and is always at their Tongues End. And they neglect Work, and ply Alehouses accordingly.

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In the Countries about *Constantinople*, are many Villages; some inhabited by *Turks*, and some by Christians only. And, of those Christians, some are privileged upon Account of keeping the Grand Signior's Woods, from whence the Serrail and City are served with Water. This Privilege exempts from the perpetual Poll of about 20 s. *per Ann.* and also allows them to cut and sell Wood: So that, whenever they are in Want, it is but carrying a Load of Wood to the City, and they have it. The other Christians, that live by Husbandry, pay the Head Money, and have nothing to sell for raising it, but, the Product of their Labour, Corn, or Manufactures. And those, who have observed these two Sorts of Christians, by residing and conversing among them, say, that there is no Comparison between their Conditions; the latter are so much better provided and clean in their Houses than the others that are so privileged. The Reason is, that the Christians, at large, know what they must trust to, *viz.* their Wit and Labour in their Callings; and they ply them accordingly, which, in Process of Time, breeds them to an habitual Industry, which sets them in a good Condition and beforehand. Whereas the others live without any Spur, and void of Providence or Forecast, and are, consequently, dull, stupid, and wanting of all Things.

12. Some Instances confirming diverse Matters before touched upon.

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The *Irish* are, in some Measure, a Proof of the same Thing, for their Country is grassy, and feeds a World of Cattle, and all the Care that is taken for Food, is to milk the Cow when any one is hungry: and their Houses, Habits and Customs are sluggish and nasty, and their Persons dull to Extremity.

In *England*, see to the fat Plains or Fens, where the Poor live upon the Commons, having Pasturage of Cattle for little or nothing, and you will find the *Irish* Effects upon them. Whereas in the barren Countries, where a Crow is almost starved, the People are sprightly and mercurial, being forced to look out more sharp for their daily Food.

The *Jews*, at *Constantinople*, are numerous, and have great Effects among them; but, withal, a World of Poor: And no People, in the World, are so superstitiously charitable as they: Some are forced to give at least 3 or 400 l. *per Ann.* to their Poor: And they are, on the other Side, so insolent, that they demand Charity as a Debt, not as a Gift; and, if not presently served, threaten instead of praying; which is the Reason of the *Italian* Saying that the *Jews* beg, *Con Baston in Mano**. And all this Charity doth but make their Poor careless, wicked, and saucy; and no People, in the Cities where they are, are half so wretched and nasty in Poverty as the *Jews*. For they, relying upon Charity, have no Forecast or Industry. But

* With a Stick in their Hand.

But the greatest Instance, and the most apposite, is that of *Stow in the Wold* in *Gloucestershire*. That is a populous great Town, situate in a desert Country between the West and North of *England*. There is neither Wood nor Water in a Mile and a half of the Town. It is seen ten Miles off every Way. It hath some Inns for the Use of Travellers; else, there are not many in the Town that have any Substance. The Generality are errant Poor: And in no Place are there better settled Poor than there. Their Houses neat, and Children clean; and not more Beggars, nor scarce so many as in flourishing Countries and great Cities. And there never was any Rate made for the Poor there since the Law was made. And no Person was ever removed out of the Town, that desired to live there, nor denied to come in, if any Convenience invited him. And this is so fixed in their Minds, *viz. that they ought to provide for themselves*, that they abhor a Justice, and will not endure any charitable Revenues, though some have been given to be distributed there, because they will have no Justices (as they call them) come there; and in such Case (if I have been truly informed) they have rose, and drove the Justices out of their Town. I enquir'd whether the People were not thievish, and a Nuisance to the Countries round about. They said, that they would not let Wood grow near the Town; nor is it indeed fit for Wood, F being

being a Place extraordinary bleak; but, otherwise, there was no Inconvenience, to the Country, from them, but the Contrary; for they went out to work at great Distance all round, and came home at Night, and lived very industriously. And as for Relief, if any were sick, they, who had some Substance in Town, used to send them hot Broth, and Meat; but, otherwise, they never relieved them, and therefore were not troubled with them at their Doors.*

*This Account of *Stow in the Wold* seem'd to me so very extraordinary, that, though I had but very little Reason to doubt the Truth of any Fact advanc'd by my Father; yet for the Reader's better Satisfaction, I wrote thither about it, and was favour'd with the following Account of this Affair, from the Rev. Mr. *Brown* of that Place. It is as follows.

• *Stow* is neither a populous nor a great Town, situate on a bleak Hill. The Country round about it, is not desert but fruitful. There is no Water in the Town; but there is both Wood and Water at a small Distance. There is no Land belonging to the Town but what it stands upon. From whence I presume the Report arose of its having neither Wood nor Water. With Respect to the Poor, they are settled here as in other Places, and have been so ever since some Time in the Reign of King *William*, when the Poor's Rate was first made. In what Manner the Poor lived before that Time, I can get no Information. Their Houses are not now remarkable for Neatness, nor their Children for Cleanliness. There are Beggars enough. There are some very ancient charitable Revenues. There always were two or more Justices living very near the Town. I can hear of no Attempt that was ever made to drive them out. Lord Chief Baron *Atkins*, who acted as a Justice, and lived within a Mile of the Town, was the Person who first obliged them to make one in King *William's* Time. So that the Poor of this Town subsisted; and those of them, who could not otherwise support themselves, were provided for without the Assistance of any Parish Rate for that Purpose, till some time after the Revolution. *M. North.*

The

The Case of this Town is no less than a Demonstration to the Senses that I have argued with Reason against these Laws.

There is one great Instance, to shew what Abuse the Laws for the Poor are liable to, in *Colchester*. There is the best regulated Manufacture that I ever heard of, the Bays. And a very great Advantage is by it to the Bays Merchants, who are the Governors of Parishes, and also to the Poor who are very numerous, and employed under it. And yet the Rates for the Poor are higher than in any other Places, *viz.* 25, 30, 35 *per Cent. per Ann.* Revenue of Houses and Lands in the Town. Upon a strict Enquiry, we, with much ado, found out that the Bays Merchants, who set the Poor on Work, paid Part of their Wages by the Parish Rate in the Name of Collection. So that, if a poor Man could earn Ten-pence a Day, they would give him but Six-pence for his Day's Work. But then he should have Four-pence per Day Collection. And, having Justices among themselves, this is made good; whereby the Land Owners pay for the Bays making.

3. Now I come to the last of ^{13.} *Industry discouraged.* the three Things I propos'd; to make appear that the End and Design of these Laws is frustrate, and that is Industry, which is so far from being encouraged, that it is altogether discouraged by this Law.

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For

14. *Introduction concerning the publick Interest in these Cases.*

Here a large Field opens, and so much offers against the Law of the Poor, and Settlements, that I find it difficult to collect and digest it all in any tolerable Order. And I believe that, besides what I shall set down, every Person, experienced in Country Affairs, will be able to suggest a great deal of Mischiefs and Inconveniences, of their particular Observation; and therefore I must appeal to general Experience for all that I shall omit.

I do not pretend that a meer Contribution of Money is so great a Nuisance to the Nation, as some, who magnify the Poor's Rates to be even equal to, or more than the Crown Revenue in the Time of the sharpest Wars: Nor that any Ruin to the People in general can grow from thence. For it matters not to the Public who is rich or poor; and they may interchange States as often as is possible, the Public neither loseth nor gaineth, and the grand Stock is still the same. Therefore I shall dismiss this Consideration of pecuniary Collections, as trivial with Respect to the other fatal Mischiefs which this Law hath charged upon the Nation. And, to keep the best Order I can think of at present, I shall rank these under five Denominations;

1. Depopulation.
2. Enhancing of Labour.
3. Fall of Lands.
4. Decay of Trade. And,
5. Increase of Poor.

¶

It will be easily granted that Plenty of People are the Source of Riches in a Nation. Estates are but as good Ore, meer Stone, without Art and Industry to extract the Metal. I wonder what Gentlemen expect to make of their Estates, if they can have neither Tenants nor Labourers; they must labour themselves, keep their Cattle company, and wear Sheep skins, as their *British* Forefathers did, if they cannot have, as now, Multitudes to go and come on their Errands, as well as work and sweat, as well here as in most Parts of the World, for them to raise Profits of Land, negotiate them abroad, and import Dainties to pamper and please with. These are they that cause Plenty, Wealth, Greatness, and all that makes a Nation be esteemed rich, safe, and happy.

15. *Depopulation is a Consequence of these Laws, and a Step to publick Ruin.*

Now a People are to be held or lost by the Management of them. They are free Agents, and industrious as Bees, to find out infinite meandrous Ways by themselves, every one according to his Mother Wit, for the obtaining the Materials of his own Subsistence and Convenience. And where they prosper, or (which is all one) believe they shall prosper and be safe, they will encrease and multiply; but, if they have no Opinion of future Successes, they decay, and, by Degrees, are, to that Place, lost; and the few Remains of them will be but such as live, like *Irish*, upon Herbs

Herbs and Milk, without Thought of Improvement.

There is no other Account, but this, why the most commodious Countries for Habitation and Business, as *Asia, &c.* are deserted, and the worst, as *Holland, Venice, &c.* swarm. In one Place they despair of their Safety and Convenience, and in the other, though, in Truth, they have neither, yet they think they have them. Nothing pleaseth human Nature, but that which they call Liberty, or rather Security; for their Kind is so apt to tyrannize over others, and each knows it by himself, that they compound not to be Slaves to each other, and submit (against their Desires) to Laws. No Art shall draw Pigeons so powerfully, as the Name of Liberty shall draw People to inhabit in any Place: And the visible Decay of People, in some Countries, is not, as many think, from a Translation to other Places, but from wasting, and want of the Increase which Nature, if encouraged, would give, to supply the old Stock which is always wearing off, and must be recruited. Convenience makes them settle, marry, procreate; Want of Convenience makes them scamper into adventurous Voyages and Projects, till, by War, Diseases, or the Gallows, they are cut off. In Peopling, *Lucrum cessans est Damnum emergens*: And in all Countries, the Signs of Depopulation are Symptoms of Ruin to the Public, as will farther appear.

I. As

I. As Liberty, or the Opinion of it, encreaseth, so the Contrary, Restraint, and in a most tender Point, that of Habitation, and chusing their Place and Way of Residence, diminisheth the Quantity of People every where. I grant some, either out of Humour, or the Chance of Nativity, will inhabit in Bogs, or under the worst Tyranny, partly not knowing, and, partly, not caring for better. But they shall be abject unflourishing People, and not encrease, but, on the Contrary, decay, in some Measure, continually, although the Humour is so strong in them, that no Invitation to a better will prevail to draw them to it; for if nothing draws them off, for certain, on any Exigence by War or Pestilence, they shall have no Recruits from abroad. But we are not to make a Measure of Mankind from such an Humour, or Prejudice for its natural Soil; nor calculate their Growth or Decay from any other Principles than Liberty, Security, and Convenience; without which we must conclude that the Race of them will, in Time, wear out and be lost.

Then surely it is a great Imprisonment, if not Slavery, to a poor Family, to be under such a Restraint, by Law, that they must always live in one Place, whether they have Friends, Kindred, Employment, or not, or however they might mend their Condition by

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remov-

16. *Restraint of Habitation binds Encrease of People.*

removing: And all because they had the ill Luck to be born, or to have served or resided a certain Time there. Such Persons, if they had Spirits, have no Encouragement to aspire to better Condition; since, being born poor, and in a Place which gives no Means to be otherwise, they are not allowed to go and search it elsewhere, and, if they find it, they are not permitted to entertain it. Then their Spirits sink, and they fall into a sottish Way of living, depend on the Parish who must, however wretchedly, maintain them.

There are many Instances which shew that this Restraint of living, called Settlement, more particularly and sensibly steals away our Stock of People. The more a Place, in Truth, wants People, the fiercer are the few Inhabitants to keep out Strangers. The Reason is, the Charge of the Poor, on a small Number of Inhabitants, is heavy, almost to Oppression, in some Places, which, if the Inhabitants were more, would be lighter. This is the Case of Towns lately enclosed, or ingrossed into a few Hands; the Process of which hath depopulated the Place; and it is impossible it should ever recruit again. A new Comer cannot be concealed there, as in great Parishes and Cities; therefore, when one comes, the Officers of the Parish have him straight to the Justice, and so, with Cart and Whip, to his last Settlement.

Some

Some may say that, when People leave the Country Towns, it is but a Translation of them to Cities and other Places, and not a wasting of their Number.

17. People, removing, are not found all in other Places, but mostly are wasted.

I grant that if you look to the Beginnings, and in single Instances, this may be true; for populous Places invite by the Society they have; and Men, that remove, are apt to go to such: But, if you look to the Consequence and Effect of such Removes, it will be found meer wasting; and that the Cities (*London* excepted) are not more populous than in former Ages. And so the Decay grows as well by Desertion as want of Encrease.

The supposed Growth of great Cities, and particularly *London*, which is manifestly increased to an immense Proportion beyond former Times, is much, of late, noted and lamented, as if they robbed the Country of their People; and therefore the Country Gentlemen, that see the next Hill, but know little before or behind, are often moving in Parliament to restrain its Growth. But that is like patching a diseased Body, by applying a Plaster to every Scab as it appears; which will never make a Cure of what lies inwardly in the Constitution, and proceeds from a bad Diet. Mend the Habit and Constitution by removing the Cause, and you will have no Need of Plaisters. They think to mend the Public

by tormenting it with cramp Laws applied to every individual Mischief, as they find, or rather feel it out. This will never signify much, and is an Error, in nothing more visible than, in this Case of Peopling.

I desire it may be observed that
 18. *Cause of the Growth of great Cities.* great Cities neither are nor can be so careful to keep out new Comers, as Country Villages are.

For the great Numbers, already there, screen those that creep in on Pretence of Labour, or Trades, and so they lie concealed for many Years, and are, at length, settled. It is plain, from hence, that the City must, in Time, get all the People, and, wherever they are wanted, the Cities will have them. I may boldly affirm that if the Laws would permit People to remove into the Country for Affectation of Variety (which they, as well as Country Folks, are obnoxious to) or for Health, or Cheapness of Living; and to remain, where they found to settle, without Jealousy or Disturbance, Thousands of People would come from great Cities and Towns into Country Villages. But the Case is so unfortunate that the People may remove to, but not from, Cities: And, besides the sitting unsatisfied-Humour of most Men, which makes them apt to change, there is, in Cities, Employment for all Sorts of People, so as none there, that are industrious, can want Work. Then also there are Pleasures and Luxury as well for the Poor as Rich,
 the

the former being addicted to it as well as the Rich; all which invites thither. But, in the Country, a poor Man must do the Work of the Town, whatever it is, or suck his Paws. There is no Room for him to invent, or exercise his Fancy in employing himself. If he were allowed to remove from Town to Town, some would come and some go, as their Inclinations led them, and no Place would want. I shall deal more in this Subject afterwards; at present I use it only to shew that the Laws are the Cause of this Mischief of People gathering to Cities. Which Cause removed, we should find the Constitution, in Respect of equal Distribution of People, speedily mend of itself.

When Men are not allowed to
 19. *Discouragement of marrying binders Entcrease of People.* settle and remove, as they fancy they may subsist with Comfort or Convenience, they will not entcrease their Burthen by marrying, but keep themselves single; in which State they believe they can ramble and shift better. This hinders the Country of many a procreative Family, which would furnish out able and vigorous Constitutions for Husbandry or War. This makes Youth ramble to Cities, where they expect better Usage than at Home; and there match and settle if no Mortality, or Accident, overtaking, destroys them in the mean Time. That is a clear Loss of an able Body. But suppose they survive their Follies;
 and

and settle, and have Children; they live so poorly, and in Want of all that is wholesome for Life, live in Cellars, bad Diet, close packed, Want of Exercise, and, which is worse than all, the Rewards of unlawful Lust, which, with such People, is promiscuous, and, having no fitting Expedients, as the Rich have, sweep whole Shoals away, especially Children, of whom *London* is a Sepulchre. These Inconveniencies, which the People find upon their Remove to the City, whereof they were not aware before, but thought all was Gold there, would incline them to seek out wholesome and Country Habitations, for the Sake of their Families, if the Laws would permit them; but they cannot do it for fear of being carted and whipt back again. And thus, in the City, they are heaped up in nasty Holes, and lie and infect each other with Diseases and Immoralities.

What is more ordinary than for young Men and Women to decline marrying because there is not an House, in the Town, for them; when the next Town, perhaps, hath many, and to spare, and those neglected, and falling for want of Inhabitants? And is not this a senseless Constitution, that Men shall want Houses, and Houses Men, and neither Side be accommodated? Young People, that are strong and full of Spirits, are not in their Natures cautious of the Future, but will venture, marry, and trust Providence, and to their ordinary

dinary Labour, for a Subsistence. And tho' this Sort of People have not so much Judgment and Foresight to consider a Series of Consequences to come, yet the first Step of their Proceeding will take up their Thoughts; and that is marrying; which they still not do without having an House to cover them. Each Instance of this, frequent as they are, robs the Nation of a numerous Family, which would spring from a poor Man's Match, if you will let him go where his Convenience invites.

And this Matter runs so cross and perverse, that, if young People are disposed to marry, as they call it, indiscreetly, that is without Prospect of House, Furniture, or other Necessaries (which, by the Way, Men, in Necessity, will find out, better or worse) they are instantly attacked by the grave Elders of the Parish, with Arguments against it. And why? Not for their Sakes, or the Public, but the Parish (to cloak their Avarice of their particular Purfes) lest this poor Man, or some of his Family, should, in Process of Time, prove a Charge to the Parish. And this is not done only in extreme Cases, as I put (though, supposing poor People lay under Trees and engendered, it is good for the Public) but in middling Cases, where, with Help of Friends and other probable Means, they may shift, and tolerably well.

The Consequence is, the stout lusty Fellows, that are hardy and adventurous, run away, and seek

seek a Means to live with a Wife comfortably where they can; since the inhospitable Humour of their Neighbours denied them the Liberty of settling with a Family in their native Town. And the Wenches, being poor and helpless, are tempted, and prove with Child, which either they (for Shame or Fear of Punishment) kill, or, for ever after, are desperate and shameless Prostitutes, never capable of happy living.

These wicked Proceedings, and the canorous Effects of them upon the Public, would, when considered, create an Amusement that such could be, and that any People in the World should be such Sots as not to oppose the Encrease of them. But corrupt Interest doth this and more, even for a Conceit, or Possibility only; and makes Men snap at Shadows, cut the Bough they sit on, and do all the absurd Follies that are exemplified in the World. But, were these compulsory Laws for the Poor taken off, we should see the Effects of discharging a pretended Interest, and there would be as much Industry to bring People together, as now there is to keep them asunder.

20. *The Plantations want a Supply* If it were not for the Causes before hinted, the Plantations would not so much drain us of our People. If Men might plant at home to their Content, they would soon furnish People enough to plant the *Indies*; but, for Want of that

that, they are inclined to transplant themselves, and leave *England* deserted; because, there, they may marry and settle, as they please, without being whipt from Town to Town. And surely nothing inclines them more to go thither, than because they cannot move at home to any Place they think more propitious for them. If this were permitted, the Encrease might be so great as that we should be glad of Plantations to take off the Superfætation. What an Interest to the Nation would that be? *Rome* proves this; for it is observed that City never encreased more than when they sent out vast Colonies, and possessed most Provinces by them.

It is another very great Destruction of People, as well as an Impediment to the Recruit of them, that Gentlemen, of late Years, have taken up an Humour of destroying their Tenements and Cottages, whereby they make it impossible that Mankind should inhabit upon their Estates. This is done sometimes bare-faced, because they harbour Poor that are a Charge to the Parish, and sometimes because the Charge of Repairing is great, and if an House be ruinous, they will not be at the Cost of rebuilding and repairing it, and cast their Lands into very great Farms, which are managed with less Housing: And oftimes for Improvement, as it is called; which is done by buying in all Freeholds,

21. *Destroying Houses hinders peopling.*

Copyholds, and Tenements that have Common, and which harboured very many husbandry and labouring Families; and then enclosing the Commons and Fields, turning the Managery from Tillage to Grazing. And how well such Estates have thriven I need not enquire; it may suffice to say, that this would not be if Men had Liberty to settle as they pleased. They would become Owners, and not Renters, of Houses, and have such as their own Labour might keep in Repair; and not live, as Renters, liable to be turned out upon the Parish; and they would not sell their Tenements at any Rate, but in order to buy others, if they did not lean on that broken Reed, the Parish, to be kept when old.

Thus much for Depopulation, which is the chief Title of the Mischiefs I am shewing. I proceed to others which are mainly consequent of this, but, having peculiar Denominations and Intent, give us Means to expatiate in the Subject more largely. So the next is,

That of late Years, the Enhancing of Labour is one of the greatest Burthens the landed Interest of *England* hath groaned under, will easily be granted: For it is notorious that both Year and Day-Men's Wages are risen almost as much as the Profits of Land have fallen; and chiefly in the Tillage Countries, where the Labour of Men is absolutely necessary for carrying on the Husbandry of the Country:

And,

*22. Labour
enhanced by
Want of
People.*

And, in some Places, Men are not to be had upon any Terms; but, with much Trouble and searching in remote Places, some are found and far fetched, and no sooner arrive, but find themselves so necessary, that they fall to imposing in Wages and Diet, as well as lazy Working, that nothing shall content them; and their Insolence, as well as their Knavery, is intolerable to a poor Farmer.

It is plain enough that this Disadvantage, at present, lies upon the Husbandry of the Nation, and almost confounds it, so that neither Landlord nor Tenant knows how to carry on his Work. If the Value of the Product sinks, and the Price of the Labour, necessary to the raising of it, riseth, what hath the Owner? It is, in Truth, a Loss of his Land, and transferring of it to maintain poor People, that labour, according to their Pleasure and Humour. Nay, the Case is so perverse, that, when the Prices of Corn and Victuals were very low, so that Labourers might live at half Charge, yet they would not abate, but rather enhanced their Labour, and made the Bullance good by their Idleness the better half of their Time. This, and more, will fall upon the Interest of Land in *England* so long as that is precarious to the Labourers, and not those to that.

For it is in this, as in all other mercantile Things. Prices are governed, not by Reason, or any thing intrinsic, but, by Advantages

Men take of others Needs and Occasions, which are mostly influenced by Plenty and Scarcity. For if the Buyer stands in Need of a Commodity, the Seller makes the Terms; if he be in more need to sell, the Buyer makes the Terms. It follows, that Scarcity of People must make Labour and Servants Wages dear; for, there being much Work and few Hands in the Country, the Labourer will set the Dice, and cannot fail to understand his Advantage, for all will court and invite him to their Work, and overbid each other. And by how much Depopulation is the Effect of these Laws for the Poor, by so much are those Laws an Oppression of the Nation, by enhancing the Price of Labour, and corrupting the Industry of the Poor.

23. *Labourers (from the Plenty) decline the Work, having less Need at present, and no Apprehension for the future.*

This Mischief, I have been discoursing of, goes yet farther. For, granting we had People enough and to spare, the Price of Labour is such as they can make a good Living of two or three Days Work in a Week: And why more, say they? This provides Bread, Food, and Ale; if we are sick and old, &c. the Parish must provide for us. Now if these Parish Laws were away, and Men put to their Shifts, to expect and know Want, and the Miseries of it, if they have not of their own to defend them, they will not be so jocund upon the Point of Sickness

ness or old Age, but seriously apply to their Labour, and save all they can against such Visitation, that they may not perish. Parish Provision is a mere Subterfuge of Laziness and Debauchery in the common People. Were it not for that, few Men, though beforehand, would lose a Day's Work from their Store, and count upon their Labour as Money in their Coffer, and not willingly cast away the one more than the other.

This works the same Mischief as want of People. For if the Poor slight, and do not press for Work, as it is plain very many do so; the Land Owners, Farmers, and Manufacturers must court and press them; which need not be done if the Poor had nothing to trust to for Life and Death but their Work; then the Consequence falls to the Charge of these Laws, as hath been already at large discoursed.

The Evil goes farther yet. In some Places there is little Work for the Poor, and in others a great deal. Where most Work is, there are fewest People, and *e contra*. In *Norfolk, Suffolk* and *Essex*, a Labourer hath Twelve-pence a Day; in *Oxfordshire* Eight-pence; in the North Six-pence, or less; and I have been credibly informed, that in *Cornwal* a poor Man will be thankful for Two-pence a Day and poor Diet: And the Value of Provisions, in all these Places, is much the same. Whence should the Difference proceed?

24. *Work and Workmen cannot accommodate each other.*

ceed? Even from Plenty and Scarcity of Work and Men, which happens cross-grainedly, so that one cannot come to the other. If a *Cornish* Man comes into *Norfolk*, he hath a hard Journey back again with a Whip at his Tail; therefore he must content himself with dead Loss of his Time at home. If you ask a Farmer in *Norfolk*, *Why do you not bring Poor into your Town to do your Work?* *Ay, marry,* quoth he, *and so we may bring a Charge upon our selves.*

Now what an Ease were it for the industrious Part of Mankind, if they might transplant themselves where their Labours would yield most? It would ballance the Work of the Nation, and bring Prices to a Standard with Respect to all Circumstances of living. It would dissolve all those exacting Advantages that Men take against each other, and make a fair Market of Works. It would find Employment for such as desire and, now, cannot come at it; and mightily help the Sort of Men, we call Undertakers, who are very instrumental in the Public by advancing Manufactures. But the Laws now stand in their Light, and hinder both Poor and Rich of their Convenience. As the Case stands now, stout Labourers and strong young Men will come to the Parish Officers to provide them Work, or, else, away they go to the Justice for Collection; and some Justices are so weak as to grant it, which is a great Error and Abuse.

For

For if Men have Limbs, the World is wide, and they may, without moving Habitation, find Employment, and ought to do it, else, they should starve and not be pitied. No Place is so barren but will employ Men, if they will conform their Wages to Occasions; for that will make Work, which cannot be done at so high Rates as usual. If Work be cheap, many Persons will undertake and enter upon great Designs for Pleasure and Improvement; but not touch upon it when dear. I mean here Gardening, Dressing, Clearing, Planting, Enclosing, &c. by which, as the Price of Work falls, Work will encrease; I am sure where I am concerned it will.

Would not a Stranger think a Nation void of Sense, or bewitched in that little Sense they have, that should bear such Inconveniences from Laws; especially when they are possessed with an Evil of chopping and changing their Laws, and so often to their own Loss, as we observe and lament, and, all that while, do not remove those which keep Labour and labouring Men from coming together? Poor Men and their Families are carted away from Places that most want them, and others denied Entrance; and where they abound, and cannot be employed, the Parish must have the Charge to maintain them. Thus private paltry Interest fights against the public Interest, and the Convenience of all Men. Most admirable Policy!

All

All Ages have been possessed with that shallow Mistake, concerning Laws, that Punishments will regulate. I have treated of this already, and here only take up one Instance, apposite to our present Purpose, which sufficiently shews the Vanity of it. And that is the Statute of Labourers. [5 *Eliz.* 4. 1 *Jac.* 6.] It was thought, by the Means of those Laws, that the Price of Work might be kept to a due Station, proportionable to the Prices of Provisions. And to make sure of this (in their Conceit) the Execution of these Statutes was intrusted with the Gentlemen of the Country who were Justices, and interested, to lower Prices of Work: And, if I mistake not, special Commissions have issued for seeing these Laws executed. And, ever since 1 *Jac.* the Sessions of Peace, in many Places, have set the Rate of Work. And the Justices, who employ Servants and Labourers, have done all that in them lay to hold the Country to them; but in vain, as all know by Experience. And the Poor laugh at them, and cry *Statute Work against Statute Wages*: For Laws will not make nor influence Prices in open Market; and they admit no Reglement but that of Mens Occasions and Desires.

Here I am come to another Denomination in my Discourse, which is branched from the Former, and is consequent of it, and that is the Fall of Lands, the only Staple Interest of *England*. Therefore I shall treat it as a
 Thing,

Thing, in great Part, proved already, and illustrate what is past by Applications and Instances of Fact.

Those who have been curious to observe either the lying of Grounds about many Villages in the Country, or the Evidences of Title far back, shall find vast Depopulations, not ordinarily thought of, or imagined possible to be. For, in some, one may see the very *Vestigia* of Streets, Houses, Outhouses, Pigholes, and such home-stall Conveniences, and even Wells scattered at large Distances from any present Dwelling. And in the Title, when old Deeds have been preserved (useful only for the Curiosity of ancient Things) one shall find vast Numbers of small Parchment Deeds, being Feoffments, and Releases to Houses, Cottages, Tenements, and scattered small Pieces of Land in the Fields of the Town, where, now, perhaps, lives only one Shepherd, or Farmer, under some single Proprietor. And, of all that Arable and Fields, little is to be found, except the Footsteps of the Plough, which all Places shew, though no Memory extends to any Ploughing there. But all is Pasture, or Sheep-walk, which, formerly, was common-field, and cultivated by poor People to ultimate Improvement. This demonstrates that the Want of Inhabitants hath depreciated the very Land of *England*: For if a poor Man was Owner

25. The Land of England is full of it. Fatal for want of poor People.

of a Tenement and a few Acres, he had an Employment, as well as Maintenance, out of it for himself and Family; and all the Manure he could make, rap, or fend, was laid on to fight against natural Sterility; which, besides his perpetual Industry in tilling, weeding, and dressing it, made it always in good Condition for Crops, of which he seldom failed.

But, now, great Farmers undertake all; and if Land be not naturally, or, at least, in some Measure, fertile, so that, in the common Proceeding of gross Husbandry, it will bear ordinary and moderate Crops, it is thrown up to Heath or Waste, and used to the lazy Profit of Sheep only; for it would break him to use it as a poor Man doth his Acre, and pay for all the Labour, perfunctory at best, and at the Price current: And, so doing, no Product could recompence it. So Farmers, for Want of cheap Work, must turn into Methods which have least Charge, and that is Grazing; which is the Destruction of Mankind.

And let it be a Note, universally true, that all the Labour of poor Men is Profit and Encrease to the Public; for it fetches, or, rather, creates Value out of nothing; or what would not ever exist without the Application of his Pains.

26. *The Poor are not Land-Owners as formerly.*

But there is yet more in this. Those poor Men were, for the most part, Land-Owners, and not Tenants; and toiled to eat, and bring

bring up their Families, and were of that lusty, and, I may say, honourable Race, styl'd the Yeomanry of *England*, hardy and valiant in the Use and Defence of their own. These sent not their Product to Market, but rather to buy what their own wanted, to make a Provision for all his Family. And notwithstanding all this great Tillage of ancient Time, there was Fear of Famine if a bad Year came, the People were so many; and the Word was, *God speed the Plough*. Corn always bore a Price; Gentlemen's Estates, if they could, out of their own Managery, spare some Acres, never wanted Tenants from among these Yeomen Men, who need it to live well. But, now, the Consumption of Corn fails for Want of People to eat it, and we live in Fear that it will grow a meer Drug, as in *Poland, &c.* The Reason is that, now, the Corn is raised all by great Farmers, who spend little, but send almost all to Market. And so it happens that those who come to the Market, come to sell, and few to buy; and that beats down the Price of Corn so low that little Rent can be afforded for Tillage Ground.

There is a great Difference between the Marketing of poor Men, for their Use, and of Merchants that trade abroad. The former will afford much better Prices than the latter Sort. They come for a little and a little, and therefore do not make

27. *The Poor advance Markets, and the Merchants the contrary.*

Account of a small Matter in the Price of a small Parcel; and that is a great Advantage to the Farmer who sells to many. But the Proceeding of Merchants is otherwise; for they beat down Prices to the least that is possible: For what is inconsiderable in a small Parcel, is Gain enough in the vast Quantities they trade in. And these are the People our Farmers now deal with, and they are pinched accordingly. But then, when they do sell to poor Neighbours, it is well known how apt they are to pinch them. We find that poor Men care not for Excises, nor much for Prices, as I said, for it is little seen in their small Parcels. We see how much the Price of Ale and Beer is raised by the extravagant Excises upon it, yet the Poor, in many Places, and particularly about *London*, use none but Alehouse Drink, and have their Bread and Cheese from Trades that live well by making and parcelling it out to the Poor. If this Way of dealing went through the Nation, as would be if the Kingdom were populous as formerly, the landed Interest would have the Advantage universally, as paltry chanling Trades have about *London*; but the contrary is, for Want of People, true.

And if poor Men were left to shift, they would soon fall into a Way of Tenements and Lands of their own Purchase, and encrease and multiply their Families and every Thing else useful to the Nation. But it seems the

Policy

Policy of our Laws are in the Way, and hinder it.

The Scarcity of Tenants, which proceeds from Want of People in general, makes Gentlemen perpetually depopulate their Towns more and more, and so precipitate their own Confusion; for they think to contract their Trouble and Charge by contracting their Farms. But I hope they begin to see their Error, and will, in Time, alter their Policy, and believe it their Interest to encrease Housing, and divide Farms: For great Farms require great Stocks; and few Countrymen, not Land-Owners, (who can mortgage) can raise such Sums as are requisite. And, after all, if Men are not Owners of their Stocks, Rent and Interest together bears so hard, that there must be very great good Fortune, as well as Industry, to escape being undone.

It is found that Men will launch into Adventure, upon a great Farm, upon borrowed Stock, and trust much to good Fortune for Success; and if that (as often) fails of the Measure expected, then they become Rent run, as they call it, beyond Hopes of clearing. The Consequence of which is a merry Life and a short one; Why should he drudge for his Landlord who must take all at last? All he eats and drinks, is his own; and he plies it accordingly, until, at length, his Landlord is glad to get him out of his Farm, and is loth

28. Tenants are wanted to rent the Gentlemen's Estates.

to lay him in Jail, that can never pay; and so he hath enjoyed his Farm at an easy Rent.

But, when Farms are small, the Stock is inconsiderable, and meer Labour of the Family will raise Rent, whilst they live upon the Product. And such are not incumbered with much Charge, which is all issued in quick Money to Labourers that are the Pest and Ruin of Country Business; but the poor Family spare Time to plough, sow, weed, &c. and all they sell is their own.

There is more yet. If there be Plenty of People, a Man cannot want Tenants; for they will contrive to live in their own Tenements, and be always hiring Parcels one after another, as their Stock encreaseth, to fill up their Employment. And such, as live, and have Estates, in, or near populous Towns and Cities, find the Convenience of this Plenty; which makes such Estates sell for much more than others.

It is from hence plain that Men's Estates sink for Want of People, and they are not allowed to augment their Convenience and Profit by translating People; for, when once settled, they are so fixed by Law that they often prove a Burthen, rather than, what naturally were to be expected, a Convenience. How easy were it to remove whole Families into depopulated Places, and institute, by their Labour, a profitable Employ, either in the Way of Husbandry, or Manufacture? And Places,

*29. The Law
hinder Supplies
by Translation
of People.*

Places, over-peopled, would gladly discharge Colonies, and all the Advantage that is gained this Way, would be, as Land gained from the Sea, clear to himself and the Public. But when this is done, if they shall grow lazy, insolent, and dissolute, and the Justice shall, at their Importunity, or real Pinch of Want, order strait a pecuniary Maintenance for them, or only but for some few, which shall be an Example to the rest, and an Encouragement to Idleness and Remission of Industry, as the Case, so circumstanced, will certainly fall out, it cannot be expected that any Person will be so indiscreet to do it, but content himself to shift, and make the best of his Estate with such Hands as he can get; and so want the greatest Part of the Value of his Estate.

I conjecture that it was for this Reason that most parochial Churches in *England* were endowed by Lords of Manors, and, thereby, became appropriate, as appendant to the Manors, and presentable by the Lords of them. For in Times when Religion seriously prevailed, Men would not live where was neither Priest nor Church: And as well Bond as Free Men, would desire to remove themselves into such Conveniencies, from any Place that wanted them. Therefore the Men of Estates were forced to build, and, out of their Lands, to endow Churches, and maintain a Priest, as well to keep their own, as invite their Neighbour's

Sports and Drinking, which debauches those very Servants whose Diligence should make good their Accounts. And, instead of being thrifty and careful, necessary Qualifications to Managers, and retrenching Charges to recover the Debt, they live up to their old Way, and have not Patience to expect the Turning of the Business, which is slow, and will have its Time; but, as possessed of an immediate Income, which will not answer so soon. Then the Debt encreaseth, and Money is wanted for all Purposes. The Consequence is, they either mortgage or sell, and, at last, grow weary, and truckle to the Country People, letting upon any Terms, and are laughed at for their Pains. And not that, without encreasing the Debt; for the putting into Repair their decayed Housing (neglected for want of Money) is a new Charge at every Bargain, and so all goes worse and worse till Ruin sweeps all.

Here the People, that look after Farms, find their Advantage, that they are necessary, and are, accordingly, insolent and careless: They despise their Landlord, and will live as well as himself, or not hire. These good Pennyworths sink the Price of Corn, for they can afford to sell cheap, and so debase the Value of all Country Trade, and that is still urged for farther Abatement. The Tenant, if he be not humoured, throws up; he is sure of a Farm in the next Town. And there is a most foolish Way of dealing, to tempt Tenants

by Advantages at the Entrance, as light Rent the first Year, or the second, breaking up old Ground, pillaging some Woods, and, perhaps, a false Rent with an underhand Agreement to take less, and to pay well for Secrecy in order to cheat in the Sale. This makes a Tenant always to look out for such a Jobb against his Lease expires; and, that While, contrives to waste and spoil his Farm all that he can, driving the Ground, as they call it, confounding the Wood, and leaving the Place not fit for a succeeding Tenant. All which draws intolerable Mischiefs upon an Estate.

It may be objected that, finding ^{31. The State of Manufac- ture Towns.} Work doth not mend the Matter so as to ease Parishes; for what Towns are fuller of Poor and Rates higher than such as *Colchester*, that have the greatest Manufactures established in them,

I answer that it is too true; such Places are oppressed by Poor; but it grows out of the Midst of these Laws: For the Men will not follow Work so close as they might, but are lazy, depending upon the Parish. However, when Sickness comes, the Town must provide for the Families; which is the Case of the Industrious as well as Lazy; only in Time, the Industrious get a Provision, and so might save the Parish; For, as the Laws are, how many are there, in these Places, who, from Workmen, get up to be Masters and rich Under-

takers: And surely many more would do so if they were not deluded by the Laws.

But the grand Reason why Manufacture Towns are full of Poor, is the Fall, or Removing of the Work the Place hath depended on; and, then, the Burthen of all the Workfolks falls on the Parish. There are not a few Instances of this Case in *England*. For one single Man, who is an industrious Undertaker, hath kept a Manufacture alive; and when he died, or was disabled, the Manufacture, for want of his Spirit, Purse, and Conduct, hath sunk. Not that it must be so universally; but some others, of like Activity, spring up in other Places, and set the Manufacture a going near them; and so it migrates from Place to Place, as the Industry of Persons inspires and gives Life to it. But since the People cannot follow, if there be never so much Need of their Help in the Work, on the one Side, nor however hard the Case is to the Poor, as well as the Parishes, on the other Side, the Case is very unreasonable: And a Stranger, made acquainted with our Constitution, would, in this Instance, think us bewitched, and our Parliament, with Reverence be it spoken, asleep. So as Men want the Work, and the Work Men, and are, by Laws, kept from accommodating each other; but the Parishes are put to feed Families that have not Employ, and the Poor, that are not troublesome to get that, starve.

But

But a more egregious Cause, of the Charge that the Poor are in Manufacture Towns, is the Cheat of the Assessors; as I found out at *Colchester*, in a Journey, resting there. The Rates are often there 25, 30, and 50 in the 100, as the Parishes are moderate, more or less. The Reason is the Bay-Makers, or rather the Bay-Merchants, are the Chiefs in the Town, and, at all Assessments, they rule the Roast. And they give the Poor starving Wages for their Work, as Four-pence *per Day*, and make them Amends in Collections out of which they allow Six-pence *per Day*. And so the Charge of the Bay-making falls upon the Owners and general Inhabitants, whereof the Gains fall in their Purses. Which Secret they were content to discover, even to Strangers, complaining that they had no Redress, because their Justices were of the same Faction. Their Overseers are of Trades that sell to the Poor, and they give them Goods at their own Rates, and spare not, to make a full Account.

It is a common Saying, *So long as we have Labourers enough to do our Work, what Need is there of more?* 32. There cannot be 100 many People.

There is great Fallacy in this Speech, common as it is; for is it all one to have Work done cheap or dear? If a few be enough, those few are Masters, and set what Value upon themselves they please; While, if there

be

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be many Labourers, Labour will be cheaper, which is so much added to the Profit of Land; and the Poor live as well, or better, being so much more industrious. And, if there be no Work, they will contrive, and find it by some Manufacture, or small Farms, for which they will give great Rents, to ensure their Time shall not be lost.

And, rather than be idle, they will invite Employment to themselves, by undertaking great Jobs, at certain Rates, either in Husbandry or Improvement, or else in Gentlemen's Gardens or Parks, planting or embellishing; all which is Addition to the public Wealth. And much, of that Sort, would be done, if there were Undertakers, which none will venture upon at Day-Work. And these Fellows, knowing how they are depended on, will not take any Thing, nor bend their Minds at all that Way; they know, at Day-Labour, they are sure of their Pay, which they are not at Taken-Work. It is a strange Blindness to esteem Numbers of People a Burthen, when so much Good comes from them; their very Eating and Drinking is a profitable Consumption of our Country's Product, and their Labour is sowing Riches for the Public to reap; and it is impossible such Opinion should prevail, if the Laws did not bind down the Grievance of the Charge to Towns, of maintaining their Poor.

This

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33. Great Numbers of People are not an Incumbrance to the Government.

This is another Objection to the Tenor of this Discourse. They say, *If we were very populous, Men would be driven to such hard Shifts for a Livelibood, that they would grow turbulent, and apt to plunder or steal, and it would be hard to keep them in Order.*

I grant it is the Ottoman Policy, to keep down the People of Countries conquered, or suspected to rebel; and if the Government goes upon an Ottoman Policy, I have nothing to answer but that the People have Reason to kick it down if they can. But if the People have Advantage of Laws, executed at their own Doors by rural Magistrates, with the Authorities and Officers of the legal Force of the Nation, in the several Counties, ready always to suppress Riots and Tumults, and all Beginnings of such Disorders, there is no Reason to fear the People, who, by their Constitution of Laws and Parliaments, are satisfied they do not live under despotic Power; and therefore the Majority will always be for the Constitution, and not for overturning it; and even ill Men, for Fear of worse than themselves, will be of this Mind. And if any thing tends to Disorder on the People's Side, it is either the ill State of the Government, that must support itself, not directly by the clear Laws, but, by Artifice and Insinuation, looking one Way and rowing another, fearing that a right Under-
standing

standing of the People is a Means to subject them: All which favours of the *Ottoman*. No Wonder then if Mischiefs follow. I know a right and honest Government may be, and commonly is, weak in Policy, addicted to Pleasures and Pomp, neglecting the Nursery of it, Wealth and Greatness. The People, like good Plants, thrive not unless dug about and weeded; that is made secure by Laws well executed, and Deceivers rooted out. If this be not done, then such Weeds grow up; Folk that are either Knaves, or, their Instruments, Fools, who join to persuade the People out of their Happiness, and tell them a King and his Heirs is Slavery.

But it is not Numbers of Poor, but Numbers of Rich; not Want, but Plenty, that makes Governments shake: Else Tyrants would not seek to impoverish their People. It was said of *Rome*, *suis & ipsa Viribus ruit*, in an Age of Plenty, wherein Vice and Exorbitance abound, and the very Populace is tainted with them. It may be some Difficulty to keep down the Froth and Scum that is apt to work up. And, in this Respect, Populacy may be accounted hazardous to Government; for, in human Certainty, it will make a Nation rich; but it will be hard if there be not also a correspondent Sagacity in the Government, which may, with Ease, suppress such ill Humours.

Having

Having spoke of the *Romans*, I cannot but observe, that, in Times of their Poverty, they were populous, and grew great, and always found it their Interest to let in Foreigners to Freedom, to repair the Loss by Colonies. And though they were mutinous and seditious, they came not to Blood, but were satisfied with a Temper given their Government by the Tribunitial Laws. The sanguinary Commotions, which began in the Time of *Marius* and *Sylla*, were the Result of Riches, Pride, and Ambition of their Commanders, and the mercenary Humour of the Soldiery. What is this to a People that hath no Armies, and needs not any, to be a-foot for Conquest; and only an Handful of Guards to defend the Laws? And, to say Truth, there was not only prodigious Opulence to make the People wanton and capricious, which tended to destroy the Government, but the Government itself was not fit for a People of such Wealth and Power, as it was when it subsisted in continual Streights and Difficulties. There grew up a Necessity of its Change. It was no more a Wonder that it turned from Republic to Monarchy, than that *Europe* and *Asia* are greater than *Italy*. The Charge and Care of the Public was so prodigious, as required Dispatches inconsistent with the Proceedings in Assemblies. A Faction troubled Elections of Magistrates: when that was over, all was hush. But, when Armies and Empires came to be voted, a Faction

tion, by meer disturbing, overturned all. So that the Phlebotomy, which introduced the *Cæsars*, was but the Cure of a Disease in that Government, by which it was unfit for the Business, and introducing one more proper; where the Voice of one Man ended all Addresses, Petitions, and Disputes, which will always encrease in Number and Importunity, as Conquest and Empire grows. If the People of *Rome* had been truly wise, seeing this, as some did, (*Tully*) they should not have strove *Mordicus* to restore the old phlegmatic factious Methods, but established a legitimate Monarchy to succeed in regular Manner for ever, with due Checks, as such an Empire was capable of: Or, else, to have set up Kings, in the several Conquests, dependent on the People of *Rome*, and contented themselves to have held the Balance amongst them. It was not without Reason that some would not have *Carthage* destroyed; because, being an envious City, they would have kept *Rome* in continual Exercise, and hindred the growing up of Luxury in the profound Security and Plenty that succeeded after the Ruin of that Power. All which Matters considered, there will be no Reason to charge the Troubles of *Rome* upon Numbers of People, but upon the great and Empire. And if *England* had seen, that Government is fitter for the Conduct of the Whole, and to keep Order and Justice with the People, than *Rome* was.

To

To return to the Estate of this Kingdom; in which the Conservacy of the Peace is in the Hands of the rural Gentry. It is possible, if the People swerve from the true Policy of the State, that, in the Room, some fond Folly, or other, shall be erected, which shall be spirited by the People to a Pitch even to usurp the Law: And then, no Wonder that such Folk, if their Government be not sagacious and careful to set them right, fall foul upon one another, and be finally destroyed. Wherefore *Machiavel* says, that People often will be furiously bent upon their own Destruction; and, if not, by some good Fortune, hindered, are surpris'd with it. The true *English* Policy, which will ever conserve Peace and Happiness, consists in two Maxims.

1. Never to suffer the Laws to be undermined, either by Court Flatteries, or popular Tumults; especially such as relate to the Right of Government: But to be sure to preserve that neat and defined; so that (if possible) there can be no Pretence ever set up to make a Dispute concerning it; or give Way to any Change, to which Disputes are incident. It is much easier to preserve the Laws under the worst of Kings, than it is to keep out Wars and Desolation under the best of disputed Governments. The *English* History is fertile in declaring the Fruits of Change, which was ever fatal to Peace, Plenty and Populacy; and, to all Order and good Government. And which

1.

3

is worse, the Powers *de novo* were (as the Horse in the Fable) armed to serve a Turn, and then too strong for their Creators.

The other is to avoid all Manner of Wars that engage the Body of the People. Lions may scratch with their Talons, and Bears with their Claws; and, all that while, propell Force, and save their Skins. But if they are forced to grapple with equal, or stronger, Powers, the Wounds will not be answered by the Glory got, though Victory (which is uncertain) go on their Side. For then the People will not be distressed or harrassed with Taxes, which always tend to Sedition and Disorder. I might be more explained in these Matters, but hope this is enough to shew that we have no Need of Shifts to deal with our People. Honesty and Justice, in Place and Proceeding, cannot fail to have the superior Party; and so we need not be afraid of a Plethory of People, but, rather, of a tabid Wasting of them; which is certainly the worst of Diseases in a Commonwealth.

34. *The long Practice of these Larvs no Hindrance to the laying them aside when found inconvenient.*

This is another Objection. They say, if they had never been made, the People had done well enough; but now, after so much Practice, they are habituated, and wrought into the Temper and Customs of the Country, and therefore cannot be so well laid aside.

I an-

I answer; that the Difficulty, in these Cases, is not from the Nature of the Thing, but a certain Averseness we have to any new Proposals, though it be to take away an old Slavery. Folk will rather carry a Burthen, they know, that is heavy, than change it for a lighter. The Reason is Ignorance, and frequent Disappointments. It is too often found that new Proposals, varnished over with popular Pretences, are but selfish Projects; therefore it must be a very clear Intuition that makes us trust any such. And the Unhappiness is, the Law-makers are commonly Persons little speculative, though in the Policy of their own Country: And, being used more to Pleasure than the Pen, eating and drinking than Study, following others than being guided by their own Judgments, they hate the Burthen of weighing Reasons *pro* and *con*, and, unless some of their Luminaries go before, they follow not; but, with them, they go any where. And this, being liable to Clamour, as against the Poor, they are the more shy, partly because they would not do an hard Thing, and, partly, for fear of Violence from the Rabble: So that nothing is so difficult to be introduced as a Regulation of this Nature. For which Reason it ought to be strenuously undertaken by some of the capital Men in Power and Authority. The Government itself ought to leave Money to the Good-nature of Parliaments, and depouie such grand Regulations as these

these are. And, if some are averſe, they ought to have Good done them againſt their Wills. But, after all Difficulties, the Thing being feaſible, I ſhall add my Thoughts of the Methods proper for it.

35. *The beſt
Methods of re-
gulating the
Laws for the
Poor.*

A tender, nice, Gentleman had Occaſion to draw an aching Tooth, but could not bear the Thought of ſuch a Violence as they to draw it; a Smith offered his Service, valuing himſelf upon a Secret he had to make a Tooth come out eaſily; and, if he might but make faſt a String to the Tooth and the Window of his Shop, the Gentleman ſhould, at his own Eaſe, draw it himſelf. This accepted and done, the Blacksmith went to his Forge, and got an Iron into a Flame Heat, all the while encouraging the Gentleman to pull harder and harder, and to reſt between whiles; till, at length, with notable Quickneſs, conveys the flaming Iron from the Fire almoſt into the Gentleman's Face: The Surprize of which made him forget his Tooth, and recoil with that Violence as drew it clever out.

We are of this Gentleman's Humour; find Sorrow from our Laws, and, as aching Teeth, cannot bear to have them drawn. But ſome State Smith may cheat us into it; and, after it is done, we ſhall rejoice in the Good we ſo unwillingly entertained. And I am ſatisfied that, as the Tooth was drawn, it muſt be done

done all at once; and the pulling by Degrees will never compaſs it. It hath been found in the tenderſt Point, (Money) that People bore the Change of it, even to Loſs in the Purſe of almoſt every Man in *England*: Yet, being done by Parliament, every one bore it with Patience, for there was no Remedy.

Therefore I ſhould propoſe that, in one ſingle Law, or Clause, the Statute *Eliz.* and the ſubſequent Laws, depending on it, be repealed at one Stroke, which a few Words will diſpatch; and make no Proviſions in the Room, or to break the Fall at that Time. The Reaſon of that is, the infinite Fancies and Contrivances that will offer as Expedients, and, perhaps, every one worſe than the Miſchief, will make ſo much Debate, and accumulate Objections, as well as intricate the Matter, as it will hinder wholly the Proceeding. When one Point is *jur la tapis* [upon the Carpet] it lies fair to be debated *de integro*, viz. Whether the Laws for the Poor are beneficial to them and the Public, or not? If they are of opinion, not; there is no more but the Repeal. Whereas if, after that, they muſt enter upon Expedients, there will riſe a Wilderneſs of Debate and Doubt, and the Main will fail by the Delay of them; for every Inſtance will, perhaps, take more Debate than the main Queſtion. And, as for Expedients, there will be better Capacity to judge of them when the Repeal is approved and digeſted, that is, in future Seſſions. Now

36. *The Ways
to amend the
Laws.*

Now that some Provisions may be needful for hard Cases, such as, perhaps, had never been if the Laws had never been made, will be thought by most People: And therefore, although what these hard Cases are, or will be, may perhaps be best referred to Experiment; and so Discourse about them vain. Yet, that I may not leave my third general Head entirely untouched, I will venture to make the following Propositions, by Way of Amendment of the Laws of the Poor. And they are these:

First, That all Persons now receiving Collection shall have the Benefit of the Laws during their natural Lives.

Secondly, That all others incurably impotent, and aged Persons, who by the Laws in force ought to be admitted to Collection within the Space of Years next ensuing, shall have also the Benefit of the Laws during their natural Lives.

Thirdly, That as to the Settlement of all Manner of Persons during the Space of Years, the Laws now in force shall continue.

Fourthly, That from and after the said Space of Years, the Laws for the Poor and Settlements, *viz.* shall stand and be absolutely repealed and void.

Fifthly, That if any Person, except the natural Parents, will be, with the Consent of the Church-

Church-Wardens, at the Charge of nourishing and educating any Bastard, or other Child, from the Age of three Years, or under, to the Age of twelve, such Child shall be bound to serve such Person as an Apprentice in any Trade or Work, until it attains to the Age of 25 Years, and the said Person shall have the Benefit of the Laws touching Servants, as if hired at the Petty Sessions; and it shall not be lawful for any Person to entertain such Servant without Leave; provided such Undertaking be register'd in the Parish Book. And the Justices of the Peace by Imprisonment of the Person, or by levy of the Goods, shall be enabled to compel such Person to nourish and educate Children according to the said Undertaking.

But whatever Amendments may be thought proper; or if there should not be any immediately resolved upon; I here conclude with this Declaration; That if ever the Poor of my Town are left to themselves, I shall think myself more bound to preserve them than at present; and shall be at more Charge and Sollicitude to see it done,

F I N I S.