AN ARGUMENT

IN SUPPORT OF THE

RIGHT OF THE POOR

IN THE

Kingdom of *IRELAND*,

TO A

NATIONAL PROVISION;

In the APPENDIX to which,

An ATTEMPT is made to ſettle a MEASURE of the CONTRIBUTION due from Each MAN to the POOR, on the FOOTING of *Juſtice*.

BY RICHARD WOODWARD, L. L. D.
Dean of *Clogher*.

——————Oh! I have ta'en
Too little Care of this. Take Phyſick, Pomp,
Expoſe thyſelf to feel what Wretches feel,
That thou may'ſt ſhake the Superflux to them,
And ſhew the Heavens more Juſt.

SHAKESPEARE'S LEAR.

DUBLIN:
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Houses of the Oireachtas

Houses of the Oireachtas

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THOMAS CONOLLY.

SIR,

IF I were to addreſs You in the ordinary Style of Dedications, I am convinced I ſhould totally forfeit that Share, which I flatter myſelf I poſſeſs at preſent, of Your Eſteem. It is as offenſive to an ingenuous Mind to receive, as to pay the Adulation too often laviſhed on ſuch Occaſions, beyond the Bounds of Delicacy, or even Decency: Encomiums too extravagant to gain the Confidence of the World; too indiſcriminate to reflect any Honour, even on a deſerving Object; and of Courſe, derogatory from the Integrity, if not the Genius of their Author. For there is a Dignity in real Eſteem and Friendſhip,

which diſdains the very Garb of a Paraſite. However highly I prize Your real Worth, from a thorough Knowledge of it, I am ſatisfied to leave Your general Character to be eſtimated by the particular Regard and Affection born to You by all Ranks of Men; and ſhall content myſelf with giving the Reaſons which induced me to dedicate to You, this little Production of my leiſure Hours.

The Subject would naturally have turned the Attention of any Writer to You, who diſtinguiſhed Yourſelf by ſo laudable a Solicitude, during the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, to bring in Heads of a Bill, for the Relief of the Poor: the Burthen of which, if it lay on landed Property, no Individual in this Kingdom would have ſupported in a larger Proportion than Yourſelf. But in Addition to this *common* Motive, I could not let ſlip

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ſo publick an Opportunity of expreſſing my private Obligations to You, for Your Protection as a Patron; and even beyond that, for the Confidence and Intimacy with which You have ſo long honoured me, as a Friend. It is owing ſolely to your Recommendation, that I am placed in this Kingdom, and I am perſuaded that You will ever regard it as the beſt Return I can make to Yourſelf, to devote to the Benefit of Your poor Countrymen, the little Services in the Power of,

Dear Sir,

Your Moſt Obliged,

And Faithful

Humble Servant,

RICHARD WOODWARD.

Houses of the Oireachtas

Houses of the Oireachtas

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

READER.

THE Object of this Pamphlet is to place in their true Light, the Wants and the Rights of the Poor in this Kingdom. For this Purpoſe, the Author hath confined himſelf to one Train of Reaſoning, which appears to him abſolutely concluſive: Without deviating into Variety of Proof, which might diſtract the Attention; or into any Kind of Ornament, which (by engaging the Imagination or Paſſions) might ſeduce, or be ſuſpected of ſeducing the Judgment. As it is his Ambition, for the Sake of thoſe whoſe Cauſe he is pleading, to draw the Attention of Perſons qualified by their Station and Talents to carry theſe Speculations into Execution, who ſeldom have Leiſure or Reliſh for minute

minute and tedious Deductions; he hath limited himſelf to general Reaſonings, and to the utmoſt Brevity compatible with Clearneſs. From the Candour of ſuch Readers he flatters himſelf, that if any of his Opinions have the Air of Novelty, they will at leaſt weigh before they reject: if the Freedom of any of his Sentiments ſhould alarm, as tending to excite the Murmurs of the Poor, that they will reflect whether he hath not at the ſame Time inculcated the Reaſonableneſs of their Subordination in Society, and their Obligations to Obedience, and whether he was not obliged to be thus explicit in ſtating their Rights by the Conduct of the Rich: if any Expreſſion ſounds harſh or invidious, that they will conſider, whether it could have been ſoftened without betraying the Truth: if it appear aſſuming in a private Man, to point out the Duties of the Legiſlature of a great King-

Kingdom, that they will condeſcend to examine, (before they condemn him) whether the Duty be not proved as well as ſuggeſted, and whether it be not important enough to juſtify, and in ſome Sort to require, that Preſumption. At all Events, whatever Judgment may be formed of the Execution, the Deſign of this little Piece needs no Apology. No ſiniſter or intereſted View can be imputed to its Author. Little is to be gained by maintaining the Rights of the Poor, againſt the Prejudices and ſuppoſed Intereſt of the Rich, but the Conſciouſneſs of a benevolent Intention, and the Heart-felt Satisfaction of endeavouring to be a Friend to the Friendleſs.

Houses of the Oracles

Houses of the Oireachtas

AN
ARGUMENT

*In Support of the Right of the * Poor in this Kingdom to a* NATIONAL PROVISION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE want of a competent Proviſion for our Poor muſt have been ever regretted by the Conſiderate, from Motives of Policy as well as Compaſſion. But ſuch is the Deference paid even to Error long eſtabliſhed, that few of thoſe who diſcern this Imperfection in our Police, would dare to hazard a Sentiment ſo new and alarming; regarded by almoſt all as a dangerous Paradox, or at beſt a viſionary and impracticable Truth. So general a Diſcouragement

* To prevent Miſtake, it is premiſed, that throughout this argument by the Term *Poor*, are meant not thoſe idle Vagrants who are a Peſt to Society, but thoſe only, who though willing to work, cannot ſubſiſt by Labour; and in the Term *Rich*, are comprehended all who have more than enough to ſupply them with the mere neceſſaries of Life. See the Appendix.

makes moſt of them give up the Cauſe as deſperate. It requires perhaps a more *uncommon* Fortitude of Mind to contend with Civil than with Military Difficulties, to oppoſe the Prejudices, than to face the Enemies of one's Country: And yet in both Caſes it is equally the Duty of a good Citizen, to ſtem the Torrent with Reſolution, and even in Circumſtances the moſt diſcouraging, *non deſperare de Republicâ.* Indeed where both Duty and Expediency can be plainly proved; in ſuch a Caſe to deſpair of the Wiſdom and Virtue of the Publick, is certainly in ſome degree to derogate from our own. For we ſhould reflect, that the ſteady light of Truth will (by ſure, however ſlow, degrees) break through the Miſt of Ignorance and Prejudice; and that whatſoever is conſonant to the Maxims of Reaſon, as well as the Feelings of Humanity, (being Proof againſt Cavil, and ſuperior to Ridicule) can never be hopeleſs; eſpecially in a free and enlightened Country. Of this, the courſe of the laſt Parliament Winter gave abundant Proof, when the *Sketch* of * a Plan for a National Proviſion for the Poor

* Drawn up haſtily by the Author, and ſubmitted to a Committee of the Society, who were pleaſed to approve and adopt it; and for which he had the Honour, much above the Merit of the Performance, of a Gold Medal.

(an Idea heretofore ſo generally exploded) was honoured with the Approbation of the DUBLIN SOCIETY, and a laudable Beginning of a publick Eſtabliſhment for the Sick was made by the Wiſdom of the Legiſlature. At the ſame Time, the Zeal of many Gentlemen of diſtinguiſhed Rank and Character to extend the National Bounty to the aged and infant Poor, though prevented from taking effect by the cloſe of the Seſſion, gave a further Preſage of the Practicableneſs of any Scheme recommended by its Propriety and Benevolence to the Parliament of *Ireland*. From theſe favourable Appearances, the Author is encouraged to lay before the Publick his Thoughts on the Expediency of ſuch an Eſtabliſhment, which he is convinced (after much Conſideration) is as nearly capable of Demonſtration, as any moral or political Queſtion whatever. How far he may do Juſtice to ſo good a Cauſe, he ſubmits with becoming Deference to the publick Judgment: and, in order to give the Merits of the Queſtion a fair Trial, will confine himſelf to a Method ſtrictly argumentative, reſting his Plea in favour of the Poor on the Proof of theſe Three Poſitions:

THAT the Poor are ſo inadequately provided for by *Voluntary* Contributions in this Kingdom,

Kingdom, as to ſtand in *need* of ſome *Legal* Title to a Maintenance.

THAT it is the *indiſpenſable Duty* of the Rich to grant them a competent Proviſion: And,

THAT it is eminently for the *Intereſt* of the *Commonwealth* that this Duty be diſcharged in an ample and effectual Manner.

IF theſe Three Points admit of a clear Proof, and there remain no Doubt of the Neceſſity, the moral Obligation, or the political Expediency of providing a publick Support for the Poor; there is a reaſonable ground of Hope, that ſuch narrow and ſordid Prejudices as will not yield to the Voice of Reaſon, or the united Affections of Compaſſion and publick Love, may be controlled by the Wiſdom and Authority of Law.

POSI-

POSITION I.

That the Poor are ſo inadequately provided for by Voluntary *Contributions in this Kingdom, as to ſtand in* need *of ſome* Legal *Title to a Maintenance.*

THAT the lower Claſs of our People are very ill accommodated with Lodging, Rayment, and even Food, is but too manifeſt to all who are acquainted with their manner of Living. That their Poverty is likely to continue, with but little Mitigation, will be as evident to any intelligent Man, who reflects on the following, amongſt other, Cauſes of it: The exorbitant Rent extorted from the poorer Tenants, ever loth and afraid to quit their antient Habitations, by the general Method of ſetting Farms to the higheſt Bidder without any Allowance for a Tenant-Right; the Syſtem, as prejudicial to the Landlord as to the Under-Tenant, of letting large Tracts of Land to Undertakers inured to Tyranny and Extortion; the Oppreſſion of Duty-Work, which calls the Cottager arbitrarily from the Tillage of the little Spot which he holds at

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ſo dear a Rent; and the low Rate of Wages for Labour. Theſe Circumſtances, combined with ſome others, reduce the *Iriſh* Cottager below the Peaſant of almoſt every Country in Europe. Such is his hard Condition in the moſt plentiful Seaſon, and in the prime of his Health and Strength: What then muſt be his State in time of Dearth, under the Preſſure of Years, Infirmities, or even a very numerous young Family? His Expences admit of no Retrenchment. He is a Stranger to Luxury, or even to decent Accommodation, and yet his Wages ſeldom afford any Reſerve. On the Death of ſuch a Father of a Family, dependent on his Labour for their main, or perhaps entire Support, how forlorn muſt be the Situation of his Widow and Orphan Children! It would ſhock a tender Mind to imagine (if Imagination could paint) the Miſeries, to which the Bulk of the Inhabitants of this Kingdom are conſtantly expoſed by the ſlighteſt Reverſe of Fortune: By a ſingle bad Seaſon, by an accidental Loſs, by an occaſional Diſeaſe, and even by the gradual Decay of Nature. Nor are theſe affecting Scenes confined to Seaſons of Scarcity; they muſt always exiſt in a great, though not equal, Number. They preſent themſelves but too often to every country Gentleman, (and ſtill more to the Clergy, in the Exerciſe of their

their parochial Duties, to whoſe Experience we appeal) to need a Proof. They cannot be doubted or denied by any, but thoſe who ſhut their Eyes or ſteel their Hearts againſt them.

So numerous, ſo urgent, and ſo well known are the Diſtreſſes of the Poor: Let us now fairly eſtimate the Sufficiency of the Reſources, at preſent ſubſiſting for their Relief. Our Eyes will be naturally turned *firſt* to the Landed Gentlemen, who derive their Wealth and Importance from the Labour of theſe Men. Of theſe, many, perhaps a Majority, of the moſt Conſiderable, conſtantly reſide in another Kingdom; and though ſome of them may caſt back a Part of their Superfluity on thoſe to whoſe Induſtry they owe their *All*, yet it is to be feared, that ſuch Inſtances are comparatively very rare. On the contrary, it is too frequently urged as a Recommendation of *Iriſh* Property, that it is not *encumbered with any Tax for the Maintenance of the Poor*. A ſingular Inſtance this of the Inadvertence (one would only hope of the Inadvertence, leſt we ſhould be forced to impute it to the Depravity) of Mankind, that ſuch a Phraſe could be rendered ſo familiar to the Ear of any wiſe and good Man, as to loſe its genuine Horror! If the Sentiment were developed, ſurely few would entertain,

and ſtill fewer avow it: And therefore, no ingenuous Reader will think it either invidious or unneceſſary in this Intereſting Argument to lay open its plain Import, which is this, "An Eſtate in this Kingdom is re-"preſented to be peculiarly advantageous "to the Landlord, becauſe, though he may, "and generally does avail himſelf of the ut-"moſt Profit that can be drawn from the "Labour of his Tenant," (leaving him in Truth too ſcanty a *preſent* Maintenance,) "he is nevertheleſs at Liberty to abandon "that Labourer to periſh, when he is una-"ble to work any longer." Is this boaſted Privilege either Honourable or Deſirable? A wiſe Man would not glory in ſuch an Exemption, a good Man would not claim it, and he who wiſhes to enjoy, doth not deſerve it.

But it will be replied, that notwithſtanding the Abſence of many great Proprietors of Land in *Ireland*, there is yet a large Number of Perſons of diſtinguiſhed Property, and a ſtill greater of reſpectable Gentry, who reſide on their Eſtates, (a part of the Year at leaſt) adminiſtring Employment to the Induſtrious, and Charity to the Diſtreſſed. Granted! There are many ſuch valuable Characters amongſt us, who are an Ornament and Bleſſing to their Country. To ſuch, every Mark of publick Regard is due.

due. We pay Homage to their Virtues with Alacrity, we perceive and unveil their Imperfections with Regret. But it is the Duty of an Advocate for the Poor to aſk even *them*, whether their Bounty be not confined too much, if not entirely, to the Neighbourhood of their own Reſidence. Does their Liberality extend equally to their diſtant Eſtates? How few can truly ſay, that they ever have it in their Contemplation, what may be the Condition of their lower Tenants on Lands remote from their own Manſions! Yet thoſe Tenants are unqueſtionably of equal Service to them and the Publick, equally entitled to their Attention, and the more likely to ſtand in need of their Charity, becauſe from thoſe Eſtates they are *Abſentees*, almoſt as fatally as if they reſided in another Kingdom. On the whole it cannot be denied, that by far the greater Part of our Lands do not enjoy the Benefit of the Proprietor's Reſidence, and in general the Poor of thoſe Eſtates partake not of his Charity. Now when we have weighed, on one Side, the extraordinary Indigence of the whole Peaſantry; and allowed, on the other, for the Number of Abſentees from the Kingdom, the Remoteneſs of many Eſtates from the Manſions of the reſident Gentry, (which together render it no uncommon Caſe to find a Tract of Country containing ſome Scores of ſquare

Miles without one Family of Note) it will be intuitively clear, that there can be no Balance, nor indeed any the leaſt Proportion, between the Neceſſities of the poor Tenants, and the Alms of their Landlords.

To compenſate for this Inequality, let no one lay the ſmalleſt Streſs on the Collections in the Places of divine Worſhip. For however conſiderable they may be in ſome particular Churches, fortunately circumſtanced, the Average of them through the Kingdom is too trivial to be worth mentioning. In a Word, however harſh or unpalatable it may be, it is but too notorious a Truth, that the Poor in the Country draw little of their Support from the Gentry; the vagrant Beggar excepted, who is generally a Diſgrace to the Name, and an Injury to the Cauſe of Charity. They depend principally upon the neighbouring Farmer, or even Cottager, the Pooreſt of whom are humane enough to communicate with them, and thereby leſſen their little Stock. Can there be a Spectacle more edifying, and at the ſame time more reproachful to an affluent Landlord, than to ſee (and it is his own neglect if he does not ſee or know it) one of his poor Tenants feeding another, with Bread taken as it were out of the Mouth of his own Children; whilſt he who is Feaſting on the Labour of both, attends

to

to the Miſeries of neither ; but throws the whole Burthen of relieving them on thoſe, whom no reaſonable By-ſtander could think equal to bear the ſmalleſt Part of it. But to return to the Argument, (if this Obſervation be thought a Digreſſion) what can ſuch Wretches give? What can they who are themſelves ſo ill defended from Cold and Hunger, be ſuppoſed to ſpare to another for Food, much leſs for Cloathing ? As to Education for the Infant, or Medicine for the ſick Poor, ſuch Relief ſeemed to have been never thought of, till the latter were conſidered in a late Act for County Infirmaries, which does Honour to the Legiſlature. Yet honourable as this Beginning of Good is to our Governors, it can be regarded only as a Sample of what they approve, a kind of Earneſt of Publick Benevolence. For it is clear at firſt Sight, that the Income of thoſe Infirmaries is in no Degree adequate to the Number of ſick Poor in a whole County ; the Orphan, the Aged, and a vaſt Majority of the Sick, (who from Diſtance of Situation, or the Extremity of their Caſes, cannot be removed, or from the Contagiouſneſs of their Diſtempers, or want of Room, cannot be admitted to the County Hoſpital) are ſtill without Relief ; and therefore no more is neceſſary to place out of the Reach of Cavil the firſt Poſition :

" That

" That the Poor are ſo inadequately pro-
" vided for by *Voluntary* Contributions in
" this Kingdom, as to ſtand in *need* of ſome
" *Legal* Title to a Maintenance."

POSI-

Houses of the Oireachtas

POSITION II.

That it is the indiſpenſable Duty *of the Rich to provide a competent Maintenance for the Poor.*

IT hath been ſo uſual for the Advocates for the Poor, to content themſelves with exciting the *Compaſſion* of the Rich, that it will probably appear to many a Paradox to aſſert, that they have a clear Title to a Subſiſtence from them on the Footing of *ſtrict Juſtice*. Yet the Reaſonableneſs of this Claim may be made ſo plain to any Man accuſtomed to conſider the Origin of Society, and the Foundation of Property, (and for ſuch Readers this Argument is principally intended) as to ſuperſede the Neceſſity of any other Plea for a public Proviſion for them. Nor would we ſo far wrong their juſt Pretenſions, as to repreſent that Aid, which is really a Debt, as an Act of Bounty to be granted or with-held at Pleaſure; or even (in the Language of ſome Writers on the Law of Nature) as a Duty of *imperfect* Obligation. We make our Demand *abſolutely*, and ſupport it on the following Principles :

EVERY

EVERY Friend to the common Rights of Mankind will readily admit, that no political Syſtem can be wiſely and equitably conſtructed, without giving ſuch Attention to the Welfare of every Claſs of its Members, as will render their Situation in that Society preferable to what is called (in popular, though ſomewhat unphiloſophical, Language) a State of Nature. Now as every Citizen (who hath not forfeited his Right by civil Guilt) hath this Claim on the Community to which he belongs, ſome Writers on Natural Law have had Recourſe to the Idea of a certain Compact, as the Origin of Government; which, though it never fully took Place, ſerveth well to illuſtrate the Right inherent in every Man to Subſiſtence and Protection, in Return for his Services to the Publick, and Submiſſion to its Laws. The Idea is founded in Equity: For every Civil Conſtitution ſhould be ſo framed, that each Member of it could have been ſuppoſed to have acceded to it voluntarily, with a rational Attention to his own Happineſs. On this Suppoſition, as on a Contract implied, is built the reciprocal Obligation to protect and obey, and on the Neglect of his relative Duty by either Party, is built

built the Right of the * Sovereign to take away the Property or Life of the Subject, and the Right of the Subject to reſiſt and annul the Power of the Sovereign. But that this Compact is to be regarded only as a kind of Fiction, taken up to convey an Idea of Rights, is evident from this known Fact; that every Man finds himſelf a Subject of ſome State, without a Power of emancipating himſelf from its Juriſdiction, though he hath not at any Time aſſented thereto, or agreed to exchange the Liberties of a State of Nature for the Privileges of a Member of that Community. And this Arrangement of Providence conduceth to the happineſs of Man, though it ſeemeth an Infraction of his Liberty; for otherwiſe every Infant muſt be unprotected, and every Man remain an Outlaw, 'till he had made an Option of his Country, and taken out his Charter as a Citizen.

Thus, however flattering to the Love of Liberty the Idea of an original Compact may be, and however uſeful to aſcertain the Rights and Duties of Magiſtrate and Subject, yet in Reality every Man is adopted by Cumpulſion into the Society of which his Parents were Citizens, entitled only to that

* The Term *Sovereign* is here to be taken in its utmoſt Latitude, as ſignifying the *Ruling Power* in every State, whether lodged in the Hands of one, few, or many.

Portion of the publick Wealth which accrues to him by Inheritance, and precluded from all Right of Occupancy over any other. If then his Parents were ſo poor, as to tranſmit no Patrimony to him, he is born the Inhabitant of a Land, every Spot of which is appropriated to ſome other Perſon; he cannot ſeize any Animal or Vegetable for his Food, without invading Property, and incurring the Penalty of Law. The ſame Law too forbids him to become an effective Member of any other Society. He cannot emigrate without the Permiſſion of the Government, ſo as to * *expatriate* himſelf, or ſerve in Arms for his adopted againſt his native Country, without forfeiting his Life as a Rebel. Nor is all this any Impeachment of the Equity of the State, for without it the Purpoſes of Society could not be anſwered. Without excluſive Property, there could be no regular Induſtry; without Subordination there could be no Government or Order; and without a Power of commanding the Perſons and Services of its Subjects, the State might nouriſh Drones or Vipers in its Boſom. Beſides, the meaneſt

* Tho' there ſhould be found any Inſtance of a State ſo particularly conſtructed, as to permit its Subjects to renounce their Allegiance at Pleaſure, which yet the Author from the whole of his Enquiries believes not to be the Caſe in Europe at leaſt, it is ſtill perfectly ſufficient for the Purpoſe of this Argument, that the Conſtitution of theſe Kingdoms allows no ſuch Liberty.

Subject

Subject hath hitherto no Grievance, for he is in a State as good as the Nature of Society will admit, and far preferable to that of any lonely Savage. His perſon is protected from Violence, and though he hath no ſtable Poſſeſſion, his Induſtry is free. His Labour will be uſeful to ſome rich Neighbour, and produce to him in Return, a more comfortable Subſiſtence, than falls to the Share of the ſolitary Lord over a Deſert. So far he is more ſafe and happy, than he could have been out of Society.

But one of theſe inferior Citizens, excluded from any Source of Support but Labour, becomes by Sickneſs, or otherwiſe incapable of earning a Subſiſtence. This is the Caſe in Queſtion (which is proved in the former Section to be but too common in this Kingdom) and the Enquiry is, whether his rich Neighbours are, or are not bound in *Juſtice*, to provide for him a competent Maintenance? If not, by what Right did they take upon them to enact certain Laws, (for the Rich compoſe the Legiſlative Body in every civilized Country) which compelled that Man to become a Member of their Society; which precluded him from any Share in the Land where he was born, any Uſe of its ſpontaneous Fruits, or any Dominion over the Beaſts of the Field, on Pain of Stripes, Impriſonment, or Death? How can

they juſtify their excluſive Property, in the *common Heritage* of Mankind, unleſs they conſent in return to provide for the Subſiſtence of the Poor, who were excluded from thoſe common Rights by the Laws of the Rich, to which they were never Parties? For the * Chimera of virtual Repreſentation in the Legiſlative Body hath no Place *here*, nor can the Civilian find *here* any Traces of an original Compact entered into by the lower Claſs of People, where *the World is evidently not their Friend, nor the World's Law.* It would be a Waſte of Words, and a Diſgrace to Reaſoning, to labour to prove a Point ſo clear as this: That the richer Members of Society, who are a Minority, have no Right to exclude the lower Claſs, who are a Majority, from any Portion in the publick Patrimony; without ſecuring to them the Reſource of a Subſiſtence, when they muſt otherwiſe be reduced to the dreadful Alternative

* That the Notion of virtual Repreſentation is in Part Chimerical, will be evident to any Man, who conſiders the frequent Oppoſition of the Local Intereſts of Boroughs, *&c.* (which generally influence the Repreſentative) to the Publick Good; and the Caſe of the Poor is perhaps the ſtrongeſt Inſtance, that the whole Body of the People are not virtually repreſented, becauſe the Intereſt of the Poor calls for a Tax on the Rich, and therefore is in direct Oppoſition to the ſuppoſed Intereſt of all the Repreſentatives, and almoſt all who are concerned in electing them.

tive of breaking through thoſe Regulations, or periſhing by a dutiful Obſervance of them. And conſequently, as the Welfare of the Commonwealth requireth Subordination and excluſive Property, that it becometh the *indiſpenſible Duty* of the Rich, in whoſe Favour principally that Arrangement is made, to provide a competent Maintenance for the Poor who are excluded by it.

THE Argument might be cloſed here, were the object of it merely to eſtabliſh a ſpeculative Conviction, that the Poor are entitled to a Support from the Rich by the fundamental Principles of Equity; but as Speculation when oppoſed by Intereſt, hath little Chance of being reduced to Practice, it will be expedient to proceed to the Proof of the third Poſition; and ſhew that in this, as in every other Inſtance, (whatever ſhallow Pretenders may conceive to the contrary from their contracted Views of either) ſound Policy is inſeparably connected with Virtue and true Religion.

POSI-

POSITION III.

That it is eminently for the Intereſt *of the* Commonwealth *that this Duty be diſcharged in an ample and effectual Manner.*

AS it ſeems the primary Axiom with all judicious Stateſmen, that publick Convenience, Power, and Wealth, ariſe from the Multitude of People uſefully employed; if it can be evinced, that a diſcreet Management and Maintenance of the Poor will encreaſe the Number and Induſtry of the People, this Proportion will be demonſtrated: and there will be no Neceſſity of engaging in the various other Proofs of which it is capable.

LET us conſider firſt, as it is firſt in its political Importance, the Caſe of the Infant Poor. It cannot long remain a Doubt with any Man of ordinary Diſcernment, whether an Eſtabliſhed Fund in every Pariſh, County, or other more commodious Diſtrict, for the Support and Education of deſtitute Children, would not preſerve the Lives of many; and form them all to be more uſeful Members of Society, than they could be if abandoned to acci-

accidental Alms, or trained to earn a precarious Subſiſtence by Begging. For the Children in Queſtion muſt, in general, either remain in the Cabin of ſome compaſſionate poor Neighbour, (as hath been ſhewn in the firſt Section) who at moſt can only ſpare to them what is barely neceſſary to ſupport Life, without a Thought of any regular Inſtruction; or elſe they muſt be led about the Country by ſome ſtrolling Beggar, in Order to extort Alms by their infant Cries; in which Caſe Ignorance and Idleneſs would be the ſmalleſt Evils in their Education. Now on either Suppoſition, can there be the ſame Probability of their being *reared*, without any regular Supply of wholeſome and nouriſhing Food, and without a Poſſibility of medical Aſſiſtance in Sickneſs? Or can they be as well fitted for the Services of Society, without any, or with a vicious Education, as if they were, by the Aid of ſome well conducted Charity, principled in Virtue, diſciplined and inured to Induſtry? We might appeal to the Publick Opinion, fully expreſſed on this Queſtion, in the popular Contributions to Charity Schools in the Capital: We might appeal to the Apprehenſions of the Legiſlature of the bad Conſequences likely to ariſe from breeding up Children in the Trade of Begging, which induced them to grant a Power to certain Magiſtrates to take away Children from any ſtrolling Beggar,

and

and ſend them to the next Charter School: But that it would be an Affront to the common Senſe of any Reader, to multiply Arguments or Authorities to prove, that a regular Maintenance and Education of deſtitute Children would ſecure more Lives and Service to the State, than a total Neglect of them. But one Circumſtance more is worth Notice, though a little beſide the preſent Argument, yet not foreign to the general Scope of it; that a proper Eſtabliſhment for the Children of the Poor, a vaſt Majority of whom are Papiſts, would perfect the Scheme of the INCORPORATED CHARTER SCHOOL SOCIETY, (which is very juſtly the favourite Object of Government) by diſtributing Proteſtant Working Schools throughout the Kingdom.

NEXT to the Infant, the Sick Poor claim our Conſideration, on the Principles of political Arithmetic, becauſe the Publick is deeply intereſted in their ſpeedy Reſtoration to Health and Strength. And here it would be difficult to find a Medium of Proof clearer than the very point in Queſtion: That a ready Care and Cure of the Diſeaſes of the labouring Claſs of Mankind, will ſave Lives, ſhorten the Intermiſſions of Labour by Sickneſs, and of Courſe increaſe conſiderably the Aggregate of their Induſtry. Not to mention the Preſervation of Health and Lives in general, by the Improvement of the Art of

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Medicine, from Publick Hoſpitals. But as an Eſtabliſhment for the Sick hath received, though not an adequate Support, yet a Sanction from the Legiſlature; we will paſs on to the

THIRD Claſs of the Poor, and examine how far the ſame publick Expediency may take Place, in Favour of the Aged. Now even though we ſhould be ſo ungrateful as to forget the Merit of theſe worn out Servants of the Publick, the Expence of relieving them will be in a great Degree, if not fully repaid, by lengthening their Lives, of Courſe protracting the Period of their Service, and preſerving entire the little Induſtry of which they are ſtill capable. For ſuppoſe that the aged Labourer be able to earn one Half of his Maintenance, if a charitable Fund be at Hand to ſupply the other Moiety, he will ſtay in his Cottage, and employ his remaining Strength in Induſtry, inſtead of devoting his *whole Time*, as he muſt at preſent, to the precarious and pernicious Employment of Begging. Two ſuch Paupers would be the Addition of one effective Man to publick Induſtry. If at the Cloſe of Life they become an abſolute Burthen, in that *ſhort* Interval indeed, we have only to plead their former Services, with this ſhort Remark; that if the Intereſt of the Publick does not admit of relieving their Wants, it

would be a ſtill higher Degree of Oeconomy, and even of Mercy, to adopt the *refined Indian* Policy, of putting an immediate End to them.

CON-

Houses of the Oireachtas

CONCLUSION.

IF theſe three Propoſitions be clearly eſtabliſhed, and there remain no Doubt but that the Poor of this Kingdom ſtand in *need* of a publick Proviſion; that the Rich are bound *in Juſtice* (though they neglect) to give it; and that the *public Intereſt* requires, that it ſhould be given amply and effectually: From theſe Premiſes neceſſarily flow the following Concluſions.

FIRST, that the *Intereſt* of the State demands ſome *compulſory* Law, that the Rich may provide a competent Subſiſtence for the Poor.

SECONDLY, that it is the *Duty* of the Legiſlature, (for Legiſlatures have their moral Characters and Duties as well as private Men) to make ſuch an Arrangement, as will ſecure the juſt Rights of the lower, who are not the leaſt uſeful, Claſs of their Subjects; and at the ſame Time promote the general Weal, by increaſing the Number and Induſtry of the People.

Some OBJECTIONS conſidered.

AS the Rights of the Poor, and the conſequent Duty of the Legiſlature, are thus firmly fixed on the Baſis of Policy as well as Equity; it would be ſuperfluous to add more, but that in a Caſe where Cuſtom and private Intereſt concur in raiſing Prejudices, every opening to Cavil ſhould be guarded: and therefore the Author thinks it adviſable to obviate thoſe Objections which have come to his Knowledge, when a Plan of this Kind engaged the Converſation of the Public, during the Courſe of the laſt Seſſion of Parliament. On that Occaſion he had the Satisfaction of obſerving, that the Diſtreſſes of the Poor were univerſally confeſſed and regretted, and did not meet with any Speculator in Morality who would not, on Reflection, admit the indiſpenſable Duty of the Rich to relieve them. So that his two firſt Poſitions ſeemed to ſtand unimpeached, and the whole Weight of Oppoſition to be levelled at the political Expediency of a *compulſory* Law, to conſtrain the Rich to diſcharge that Duty. And this was branched out into two different Objections: Firſt, that a Legal Eſtabliſhment for the Poor is a Temptation to Idleneſs and Expence amongſt the labouring Claſs of Mankind, and therefore

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inexpedient: Secondly, that though in ſome Reſpects expedient, it would be attended with an *Expence* more than equivalent to that Expediency. Theſe two Objections ſhall be conſidered ſeparately; which yet the candid Reader will allow to be a further Indulgence to Prejudice, becauſe a Demonſtration of the Wants of the Poor, and the abſolute Duty of the Rich to relieve them, in Reaſon precludeth both Individuals, and the Legiſlature from pleading Political Expediency. For what is that Plea but a formal Attempt to prove, that it is expedient for Government to acquieſce in the Oppreſſion of one Diviſion of its Subjects, in Order to ſecure to another an Exemption to which it hath no Right? An Abſurdity in Politicks, as well as Morals, that neither needs, nor deſerves Confutation! However, as we fear not to join Iſſue on the footing of general Utility, we will proceed to examine theſe Objections.

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OBJECTION I.

That a legal Eſtabliſhment for the Poor is a Temptation to Idleneſs and Expence amongſt the labouring Claſs of Men, and therefore inexpedient.

THIS Objection is grounded on a Suppoſition, that a Labourer will be leſs induſtrious and ſaving, if he be ſecure of a Supply in Time of Need: and thence is inferred the Inexpediency of eſtabliſhing a Fund for the Maintenance of *any* Poor. Now though we ſhould admit the Suppoſition, which we ſhall hereafter prove to be at beſt very doubtful, the Inference will by no Means follow. For in the firſt Section it was ſhewn, that the Income of the lower Rank of People is ſo ſcanty, that they ſeldom have it in their Power to lay up a Reſerve ſufficient for *their own* Sickneſs, or old Age; much leſs for their Orphan Children. Although therefore it be admitted, that ſome Paupers may owe their Diſtreſs to their own or their Parents Improvidence; yet there muſt be many more, amongſt a Peaſantry ſo ill appointed, who are Objects of Charity, in ſpite of the moſt ſlaviſh Toil ar d the moſt rigorous Parſimony.

BUT

But to take this Argument in its ſtrongeſt Bearing, and confine ourſelves to the Caſe of an idle prodigal Man, who in the extremity of Age or Sickneſs cries out for Food or Medicine; can any one avow, that we ſhould ſuppreſs every tender Feeling, ſtop our Hand when by the Inſtinct of Compaſſion it is ſtretching forth Relief to him, and with a ſtoical Indifference ſuffer him to periſh; from a deep and doubtful Speculation, whether ſuch Relief may not encourage Idleneſs, and become, in the End, a political Evil? And if we may, *without Injury to the State* (and muſt if we expect Mercy) relieve the Diſtreſs, though we blame the Cauſe; wherein conſiſts the Inexpediency of obliging thoſe of the Rich, who are too diſtant or diſſipated to know, or too callous to regard the Miſery of the Poor, to contribute to its Relief, and not throw the whole Burthen (as at preſent) on the Reſident, the Conſiderate, and the Benevolent? For a Legal Proviſion hath this double Advantage above Voluntary Alms, that it is at once moſt equitable to thoſe who pay, and moſt equal and effectual to thoſe who receive.

Now if no Reaſoning can juſtify ſuch Obduracy, as would permit a Wretch to languiſh without help in his Age, or Sickneſs, becauſe he had not made a provident Uſe of his

his Health and Strength; on what Principle, ſhall we conclude from the Imprudence of the Parent, againſt all Compaſſion to his Orphan Children? On what Pretext, ſhall we exclude from the publick Care the Diſtreſſes of the Laborious and Frugal, which were owing neither to their own, nor their Parents political Sins; but took their riſe from high Rents, and low Wages, from the Scarcity of Bread, or the Check of a Manufacture, from the ſudden Increaſe of Family, or the Death of Cattle, from Diſeaſe unaſſiſted by Medicine, and in conſequence perhaps of the ſame want of Help, the untimely Loſs of an induſtrious Father?

THUS it is clear, that the Inference is by far too wide to reſt on the Premiſſes; and that it would be neither juſt nor expedient to refuſe Relief to the unavoidable Diſtreſs of a great Number of innocent and meritorious Perſons; becauſe, by a certainty of Relief, a few others might be tempted to Lazineſs and Extravagance. But after all, is this Apprehenſion itſelf well founded? The Objector muſt be little attentive to the ordinary Conduct of the lower Claſs of Mankind; if he conceives that they are idle and profuſe on a regular Syſtem, and not rather from the want of any. He muſt be little acquainted with the State of Europe, or he would have obſerved that the whole Current of Fact bears againſt his Theory,

ory, and that in thoſe Countries where the Poor have the moſt ample and ſure Proviſion, (as in *England*, † *Holland*, and the Canton of *Berne)* where, if this Suppoſition was well founded, there would be a general Idleneſs; there is, on the contrary, the moſt univerſal Spirit of Induſtry. He is further required to prove, that this *ſuppoſed* Diminution of Induſtry from a *Security* of Relief, will overbalance the *certain* Deductions from Labour, proved above to ariſe from the *Want* of it; as loſs of Lives, of Time by Sickneſs, of Education for the Young, and of all Diſpoſition and even Leiſure for Induſtry by the Trade of Begging, now the neceſſary Occupation of ſuch Numbers. He is called on firſt to inſtitute this Balance, and demonſtrate that it muſt turn in favour of his Suppoſition; or he can with a very bad Grace advance a vague Surmiſe, founded on no Calculation, unſupported by Experience of human Nature, contradicted by the Practice of the moſt commercial Nations, repugnant to the Inſtinct of Humanity, the Maxims of Juſtice, and eve-

† In *Holland*, (according to the Informations which the Author received in that Country) when the Contributions in the Places of divine Worſhip, and the Collections made three or four Times in the Year from Houſe to Houſe, are inadequate to the Relief of the Poor; the Deacons, whoſe Province it is to diſtribute theſe Alms, muſt apply to the Magiſtrate, who is to take ſuch Meaſures, as to him ſhall ſeem moſt expedient and effectual to ſupply the Deficiency. In the Canton of *Berne* there is a parochial Proviſion for the Poor.

ry reaſonable Preſumption of Political Expediency. Indeed a well conducted Proviſion for the Poor, is ſo far from being calculated to encourage Idleneſs, that it tends to detect, and may be employed to puniſh and ſuppreſs it. It will naturally deſtroy all Pretence for Begging, * a Nuiſance both troubleſome and pernicious; which however the ſevereſt Police can never reſtrain, until ſome publick Inſtitution for genuine Diſtreſs ſhall have drawn a Line between Want and Impoſture. A Law prohibiting Perſons in Want to beg, is juſt as wiſe, humane and practicable, as a Law prohibiting Perſons in Pain to groan. To the real Object, it is at once tyrannical and ineffective, to the Impoſtor it is equally nugatory, or rather a poſitive Encouragement. For the former having a right to aſk Relief, (by a Law paramount to all others, that of Neceſſity) under that Right, which is before proved to be the Right of a great Number in this Kingdom, a far greater Number will ever ſecurely ſcreen a vagrant and idle Diſpoſition.

* It will here perhaps be aſked, are there no Beggars in thoſe Countries where there is a National Proviſion for the Poor? Yes; and there always will be, ſo long as there are thoughtleſs rich People to encourage them. But a conſiderate Man will paſs them by, becauſe he knows, that if really Indigent, they are relieved, if Pretenders, they ſhould be puniſhed. In this Kingdom indeed, where the Poor have no National Proviſion, whoever reſolves not to give to a common Beggar, muſt abandon to Deſtruction a great Number of *real* Objects, who have no Reſource but Begging.

OBJEC-

OBJECTION II.

That though a legal Eſtabliſhment for the Poor be expedient in ſome Reſpects, it would be attended with an Expence *more than equivalent to its Expediency.*

NOW this very Objection is no ſlight Preſumption, of the abſolute Neceſſity of a Poor Tax. It muſt be grounded on a Suppoſition, that the Poor ſtand in need of ſome further Relief, than what is at preſent afforded them. For, if voluntary Contributions are already ſufficient, it vaniſhes of courſe; as no additional Burthen will be incurred, and the only Alteration will be in favour of the Benevolent, by a more equitable Partition of the preſent Expence. If more indeed be wanted, it hath already been proved, that both Juſtice and the publick Welfare require that it ſhould be given. But whence is the Idea derived of ſo enormous an Expence? It hath not yet been tried in this Kingdom, and it ſurely is worth an Experiment; there being no Colour of Reaſon, that the Poor ſhould continue to languiſh under ſuch complicated Miſery, becauſe the Rich will not riſk an imaginary Inconvenience. But theſe Apprehenſions

are favoured by the Complaints of the *Engliſh* Gentry, on the Exorbitance of their Poor Rates. To this, there are many Anſwers. Firſt, it is well known that Complaints do not always imply a Grievance, eſpecially where a Tax of any Kind is in Queſtion; and whatever may be the Murmurs of the thoughtleſs, or unfeeling, the moſt virtuous and judicious Part of the *Engliſh* Nation have ever conſidered the Poor Laws, as an Honour to the Wiſdom and Humanity of that trading Kingdom. They have indeed frequently meditated ſome Alterations in the Detail of thoſe Laws, but that very Attention proves their Senſe of the great Importance of their general Object: A Repeal of them having never been in Contemplation of thoſe Perſonages, who have at different Times attempted to new model the Management of the Poor. Secondly, if the *Engliſh* Landholder pay more than the Neceſſities of the Poor require, it is his own fault; he is intruſted by the Legiſlature to grant and to expend it, and is inveſted with Powers ſufficient to prevent or puniſh Impoſition: If he be too indolent to avail himſelf of thoſe Powers, he may perhaps *ſuffer*, but he has no right to *complain*. Thirdly, if there be Imperfections and Abuſes in that Syſtem, (which on the whole is contrived with ſo much Wiſdom, that they who have conſidered it moſt maturely, are leaſt ſanguine in their Expectations of improving it) we are not limited to copy the Errors of our Neighbours, but may profit

profit by their Experience. Laſtly, the Expence of maintaining the Poor in *England*, where the Labourer lives ſo much better, cannot with Reaſon be applied to any Calculations for this Kingdom; becauſe the utmoſt a Pauper can expect, is ſuch a kind of Maintenance, as may be earned by the meaneſt Labour. If, in Oppoſition to this, it may be ſuggeſted, that the Poor are more numerous here; that indeed may augment the Expence, but would be a ſtrange Plea againſt the Obligation or Propriety of relieving them. But admit a Poor-Tax to be a Grievance to the Rich, by retrenching their Superfluity; and place it fairly in the Balance with the Miſery of the Poor, who, for want of that Regulation, are robbed of the Neceſſaries of Life; and the Inconvenience of the former will be found lighter than *Vanity itſelf*, from whence it ariſes. We are content to ground the whole Merits of our Cauſe on this Competition, exemplified in a Calculation not abſolutely arbitrary. Suppoſe, on one Hand, that the Maintenance of the Poor would conſume the twentieth Part of the Rents of the Rich; (which is by no means probable*) and ſuppoſe, on the other (what is much more likely) that every † twentieth Family will occaſionally need Aſſiſtance; is it

* See the Appendix.

† This Proportion is founded on a careful Examination of a Pariſh containing upwards of 1600 Families.

not

not far more reaſonable, that every Man of Property ſhould be curtailed of the twentieth Part of his Income by Law, than that one Perſon in twenty ſhould be expoſed to periſh, becauſe his Landlord reſideth in *England*, or in ſome diſtant County in this Kingdom, or, though at Hand, is ignorant or regardleſs of his Diſtreſs.

And now I can only foreſee one other Species of Argument againſt the Utility of theſe Speculations, ariſing rather from the Obſtructions to their Execution, than Objections againſt their Truth or Importance. They are too Good to be put in Practice! ſays the deſponding Man of Virtue. They are too Refined and Viſionary! cry the frivolous and corrupt; who, without Warmth of Heart, or Power of Underſtanding, to conceive any thing for the Benefit of their Fellow-Creatures, have the Preſumption to meaſure all Mankind by their own imperfect Standard; condemning as Utopian, every Thing that is good; as wild, every thing that is, or appears to them, new; and as impracticable, every Thing which they have not Abilities to carry into Execution. I ſhould not have mentioned the latter Claſs, but to repreſs their petulant Triumph at the Simplicity of a Projector; who, in Oppoſition to Cuſtom and Prejudice, is hardy enough to plead the Cauſe of Juſtice, even in favour of the Rights of the Wretched: To

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let them know, that I was aware of their Cenſure, and appeal from their ſummary and unweighed Deciſion to the Tribunal of Common Senſe and Virtue. The former, who, from an Anxiety for what is good, are apt to fear for its Succeſs, muſt yet allow, that it is the Duty of a moral Writer, to delineate Virtue in her perfect Form; though ſhe ſhould appear of too exalted a Beauty to catch the Eye of the Vulgar, and of too exact a Purity to captivate the Affections of the Corrupt. But why ſhould they ſo far wrong the Virtues of their Country, as to allow any good Thing to be impracticable. The Legiſlative Body, after their Bounty in the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, deſerve a greater Confidence. Nor ſhould the Individuals of a Kingdom, amiably diſtinguiſhed for a liberal Hoſpitality to the Rich, be haſtily ſuſpected of invincible Parſimony and determined Injuſtice to the Poor.

Thus hath the Author compleated his Argument in Favour of a Poor Law, grounded (unleſs his Wiſh have in this Caſe laid an unperceived Biaſs on his Judgment) on unqueſtionable Facts, and fair Reaſoning. In purſuing this delicate Subject, whilſt he was pleading the Cauſe of the Poor, he wiſhed not to offend the Rich; whilſt he was aſſerting their Rights as Men, he hath endeavoured to inculcate the Reaſonableneſs of their Subordination, and their Obligations to Obedience,

Obedience, as Citizens; and whilſt he was exerting the Privilege of a Free Country, to deliver his Sentiments on the Duties of the Legiſlature, he hath ſtudied to preſerve the Reſpect due to Government. He hath now diſcharged what he thought his Duty, and recommends the Cauſe he hath undertaken to the Mighty, to the only Effectual, Protection of that Being, *in whoſe Hand are the Hearts of Men, who delivereth the Poor that crieth, the Fatherleſs, and him who hath none to help him.*

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APPENDIX.

In which an Attempt is made, to eſtabliſh a Meaſure of the Contribution due from each Individual *to the Poor, on the footing of* Juſtice.

WHEN the above Argument was finiſhed, which was intended to lay before the Publick, the Duty incumbent on the Legiſlature to ſecure a Subſiſtence for the Indigent; it occurred to the Writer, that a Wiſh might ariſe in the Mind of ſome Individuals, to whom his Plea in Favour of the Poor, on the footing of Juſtice, appeared concluſive, to ſee ſome Meaſure eſtabliſhed, by which each Man might calculate his Proportion of the common Debt; and ſatisfy his own Conſcience by diſcharging it, until it ſhould be aſcertained, and exacted by legal Authority. Indeed, ſuch a Standard is a Deſideratum in Ethicks, as it is neceſſary in order to fix the Boundary between Juſtice and Charity in our Contributions to the Poor. At preſent, every Contribution is called Alms, and conſidered as an Act of *Bounty*. But if the Poor have a Claim on every rich Man founded *in Juſtice*, that

Demand muſt be fully ſatisfied, before his Offerings can deſerve the Title of Mercy, or Liberality. So far, he is required not ſo properly to give, as to pay; and if he refuſe, is not only unkind, but unjuſt. As the intelligent Reader muſt be ſenſible of the Difficulty, as well as Utility, of forming ſuch a common Meaſure, as will ſerve Caſes infinitely varied; he will regard the Attempt with an Eye of Indulgence, and candidly allow for Inaccuracy or Error.

If then the Rich are bound *in Juſtice* to ſupport the Poor, on Account of their having appropriated to their own Uſe the Whole of the publick Patrimony, and excluded the Poor from the Right of taking any Portion of it, even for the Support of Life; of Courſe, each Man is obliged to contribute to the Payment of that common Debt, in Proportion to his Allotment of the publick Wealth. But before we begin to tax any Income for the Poor, we muſt deduct from it as much as is requiſite to purchaſe for the Poſſeſſor and his Family, the abſolute Neceſſaries of Life. No Man can be bound to give to another, what is eſſential to his own Subſiſtence. To this every Man has that excluſive Right, on which the very Claim of the Poor is founded. But how ſhall we fix that Sum, which varies in every Country and Seaſon? By the loweſt Rate of Wages in each Country, which muſt be

be ſuppoſed a Sum ſufficient to mintain the Labourer and his Family; and in this Kingdom cannot juſtly be thought to exceed it. That being deducted, the Remainder of every Man's Fortune muſt be accounted taxable to the Poor; as being a Superfluity above what is neceſſary to the Support of a human Creature. For though much, or all, of it, may be thought requiſite to ſuſtain the Rank of the Poſſeſſor; yet no one Man can want Luxury and Splendor as abſolutely, as every other doth Rayment, Food, or Medicine: Nor, conſidering the natural Equality of Human Creatures, can any Man have as perfect a claim to Dignity and Affluence, as every other hath to a Subſiſtence. Every Man therefore is bound *in Juſtice* to contribute in ſuch a Proportion to his Superfluity, (that is, the Exceſs of his Income above the Maintenance of a Labourer) as, if univerſally followed, would leave no one unſupplied with the Neceſſaries of Life. Here then is the Meaſure of each Man's Debt to the Poor, clearly fixed in the Abſtract. Whatever he gives beyond that Proportion, in Order to ſupply the Defect of that Juſtice in his Neighbour, that Sum, and that only, can be called Charity.

But how ſhall we apply this Abſtract Standard to each Man's Income? Here the Difficulty commences, and yet, even here, perhaps is not unſurmountable. The ſame

Idea closely followed will suggest a Method of calculating this Contribution for landed Property, which constitutes by far the Bulk of the Wealth of this Kingdom, and would be no unreasonable Measure for personal Fortunes*. It is evident then, from the Principles established above, that the Proprietor and the richer Tenants of every Estate are obliged, *in Justice*, to contribute to the Maintenance of the Poor on that Estate, in Proportion to their Income from it beyond a mere Subsistence. For, from the Labour of those Cottagers ariseth the Improvement and Value of the Lands; and whence should the Labourer draw his Support in Time of Age or Sickness, but from those in whose Service he hath exhausted his Health and Strength.

It is obvious, that the amount of this Contribution cannot be fixed in any one Proportion, to the Rent-rolls of Estates differently circumstanced; but the Estimate may be

* For a Merchant, Tradesman, or Manufacturer is as much bound, and for the same Reasons, to support those, whose Labour he employs in his Business, as the Landlord to support his poor Tenant. The Lender of Money on Mortgage, or otherwise, who enjoys a Portion of the Revenues of the Land or Trade of the Borrower, is obliged, in Equity, to take on him the same Proportion of the Burthens attending it. The same may be said of the Proprietor of Stock in the Publick Funds, whose Interest is paid by a Tax from every Man's Fortune.

be made by any Gentleman or his Agent, with half the Trouble new employed in ſetting Land. However, in Order to illuſtrate the Principles laid down, and exemplify them in one Inſtance, the Author hath adjuſted ſuch Proportions, as ſuit thoſe Lands he is beſt acquainted with; and about which he hath made as accurate Enquiries as poſſible, in order to lay a Plan for the better Relief of thoſe Poor whom the Providence of God hath placed more immediately under his Care; and this Calculation may be eaſily applied, by Parity of Reaſon, to Eſtates of different Degrees of Cultivation, Populouſneſs and Income.

Suppose, out of * thirty Families there be at all Times one incapable of earning a Maintenance, nineteen having only abſolute Neceſſaries, there will remain ten Contributors in various Proportions to the Support of one poor Family. Now, as this Family will very frequently comprize ſeveral Individuals, who can earn their own, and even more than their own, Subſiſtence; or perhaps conſiſt of a Widow, an aged or infirm Perſon, capable of ſome little Induſtry, we may reduce the Relief wanted by each Fa-

* Though there will probably be one in twenty, who occaſionally may want Aſſiſtance, yet there will not be perhaps on an Average more than one in thirty conſtantly in Pay.

Family to the full Maintenance of a ſingle Pauper: For though more might be wanted in ſome Inſtances, leſs would ſuffice in others. If then we allow to that Pauper * one Shilling a Week, which will be ſufficient, in general, to ſupport Life; and levy that at the Rate of two Thirds on the Landlord, (if his Lands have been lately ſet) and one Third on his nine richer Tenants, there will lye a Tax of 1l. 14s. 8d. a Year on the former, for the Subſiſtence of each poor Family on his Eſtate, where the Leaſes have been lately renewed. Now it will be a very moderate Allowance to ſuppoſe, that a Tract of Land (even in a populous Country) containing thirty Families will pay to the Lord of the Fee 150 l. per Annum, or 5 l. per Family; and, of courſe, the Tax of 1 l. 14s. 8d. a Year for the Pauper in that Diſtrict, will amount to little

* This Allowance may appear too ſcanty to ſome Benevolent Perſons, who wiſh to give to the Poor a *comfortable* Maintenance; and may compare it with the Expence *per Capita* of the Charter Schools, or other charitable Inſtitutions. But they will be pleaſed to bear in Mind, that this Calculation is not intended to eſtabliſh a competent Meaſure for *Charity*. It aims merely to fix every Man's *abſolute Debt* to his poor Tenants, what cannot be withheld without Injuſtice; without rendering him acceſſory to their Deſtruction, if they ſhould periſh for Want; and perhaps chargeable with the ſame Guilt, for abandoning them to periſh, even though their Lives ſhould be accidentally preſerved by the Bounty of their indigent Neighbours, who are not under equal Obligations to relieve them.

little more than One per Cent per Annum of his Rent. As far as the ſhort Experience of the Author, in the Care of an extenſive and populous Pariſh, of little Manufacture, can enable him to judge; a regular Contribution of One per Cent † from every Landlord, would (with the Aid of the Farmer's Bounty in Meal, Potatoes, &c) make ſuch a Proviſion for the Poor, as would take off from the landed Gentleman the Imputation of Injuſtice to his poor Tenants ‡, under which he muſt at preſent labour; unleſs there be ſome defect in the Proceſs of this Argument. Of this however, the Author, has ſo little Suſpicion, that he is ready to reſume his Defence of it againſt any Objection, advanced with ſuch Candor and Decency as to deſerve Attention.

† By fixing a certain Rate per Cent on the Rent-roll, this Tax will lye proportionably light on Lands cheaply ſet; where, of Courſe, the richer Tenants, having a greater Share of the Profits of Cultivation, are more able to contribute.

‡ I ſay, Injuſtice to his *poor Tenants*, becauſe, however liberal he may be in his Contributions to the Poor at large, yet if he neglects the Poor on his own Eſtate, who in ſome Sort owe their Indigence to him, he ſtill remains their *Debtor*.

THE END.

House of the Orphan

Houses of the Oireachtas