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R E M A R K S

O N

T W O B I L L S

F O R T H E

Better Maintenance of the Poor, &c.

In a LETTER to ———,

Member of Parliament.

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— — — — — *Alterius sic*  
*Altera poscit opem.* ——— HOR. ART. POET.

*Priusquam incipias, Consulto; ubi consulueris, maturè facte*  
*opus est.* SALLUST.

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By THOMAS ALCOCK, M. A.  
Late of BRASE-NOSE College, OXFORD.

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L O N D O N:

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*noster-Row*, and R. CLEMENTS in *Oxford*, 1753.

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## Advertisement.

*SINCE* this Letter was put to the Press and almost printed off, the ingenious Mr. FIELDING has obliged the Public with a Pamphlet, entitled, A Proposal for an effectual Provision for the Poor: *Wherein, I have the Satisfaction to find, this Gentleman has adopted the General Plan for erecting public Work-houses for the better Management and Employment of the Poor, laid down in my Observations on the Poor Laws, &c. published towards the End of last Session of Parliament: Which I take this Occasion of mentioning, because I think it no small Recommendation of my Scheme to have the concurrent Testimony of so judicious a Writer in its Favour; tho' he has omitted to mention my Performance.*



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# R E M A R S

On Two BILLS for the

Better Maintenance of the Poor, &c.

S I R,

**A**BOUT this Time last Year I published a Pamphlet on the Poor Laws, with a Proposal for the better Provision and Management of the Poor. The Pamphlet, I had the Satisfaction to find, was well received by the Public. For besides some authentic Testimonies I had in its Favour from *Oxford*, and elsewhere, the recommendatory Character given of it by the ingenious Authors of the *Monthly Review*, must be deemed no inconsiderable Sanction of its usefulness\*. A summary Recital whereof, I hope,

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\* “ This is the Plan laid down for relieving the Poor of all  
“ *Denominations*: and one would think it no difficult Undertak-  
“ ing to carry it into Execution, at the same Time, that the Pub-  
“ lic would hardly fail of being eased of a heavy Burden, and the  
“ Poor themselves better provided for. These with many other ju-  
“ dicious Observations, are to be found in this Pamphlet, which de-  
“ serves to be perused by All, who have it in their Power to re-  
“ medy the Abuses complained of. A Spirit of Benevolence, as  
“ well as good Sense, reigns in every Part of it, &c.

*Monthly Review for February, 1752.*

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the judicious and candid Reader will not impute to that mean Motive of little Minds, Vanity and a low Affectation of a trifling Praise; (which indeed the Nature of the Work, however important in itself and well executed, admitting of little Scope for Style or Genius, is but ill calculated to gratify;) but to the Desire of more effectually recommending, to the further Attention and consideration of the Public, in this critical Conjunction, whatever may be found useful in that Performance for settling, on a sound Foundation, an Affair of so great Moment and National Concern.

Whether the Pamphlet hath been read by any of those who have it in their Power to *remedy* the Abuses complained of, I know not: (if it hath not, I hope it will) But soon after the Publication, I am not so vain as to say in consequence of the Publication, two Bills relative to the Poor, were brought into the House of Commons, by two very eminent and deserving Persons, Sir *K——d L——d* and Lord *H——l——k*. The passing either of those Bills into a Law indeed was purposely suspended, as a worthy Member of that House assures me, that during the Recess of Parliament the Matter might be more thoroughly canvassed and considered, and such Alterations, Additions, or Amendments might be made, as to render one or other of the Bills effectual for the charitable and salutary Ends proposed.

In pursuance then of this laudable Intention of the House, I hope I shall be excused, if I offer my Sentiments again upon this Subject and make a Remark or two on the two Bills in Question.

With all due Deference to the Judgment of Persons of superiour Talents and Stations, I must beg Leave to say, that I think both of these Bills are liable to some very material Objections. That by Sir *R——d L——d*, which was first introduced, allowing it to be right, as far as it goes, certainly stops too short and does not go far enough. The Title is only, “ A Bill for “ the better Maintenance and Employment of “ *Poor Children.*” This is taking in but a very small Part of the Poor. For chargeable Children, I’m persuaded, don’t make a fourth Part thereof. All Parents are obliged, if able, to maintain their Children; so most Parents that can get or bear Children, have generally Youth and Strength of Body sufficient to enable them to maintain them, for a few Years at least in the Beginning, when both the Quantity and Quality of their Food is less considerable and expensive, Bread and Milk and Roots being the principal Part of their Diet. And when the Children are grown to any Bigness, the Parish Officers by the Law now in Being are obliged to bind them out Apprentices; and all poor Children above seven Years old need no longer be a Burden to their indigent Parents, or Parishes. Besides, in many Parishes now a-days there are some Sort



of Charity Schools set on foot, and poor Children have not only their Schooling, but Cloathing, and in many Places, their Diet, gratis. So that if this Bill were to pass, and all poor Children might have the Priviledge of being sent to the House of Industry, I'm firmly of Opinion, few would be sent thither : Most Parents would endeavour to rub on without this Assistance, and either out of Pride or Fondness, or some trifling Convenience to themselves, would chuse to keep their Children at home, tho' in Poverty and Idleness and Rags, just as we see many of them do at present, notwithstanding the Law for binding out poor Children Parish Apprentices. To have a Lottery then, build Work-Houses, establish Corporations, with all the other tedious expensive Business of returning and chusing the Members, maintaining a Number of Officers, Monthly or Weekly Meetings, &c. &c. All this, I say, seems to be greatly over-doing the Thing, and the Matter is not adequate to the Apparatus and Trouble. I'm very sensible of what Consequence it is to take Care of the Education of poor Children, and bring them up in an honest and industrious Way. But to confine these Houses to the Reception of poor Children only or chiefly, I'm afraid would prove to be but of little Service. The Poor Rates in each Parish would be but a trifle lessened on this Account. But they would be greatly increased on another Account : The extraordinary Expence of Buildings, Management, Salaries, Poor Tax, &c. would



would bring a very considerable additional Charge. At the same Time that the Aged, the Lame, the Blind, the Idle, the Sick Poor would remain to be provided for as at present, and demand near the usual Allowance. So that when the People found not only the usual Burden nearly continued, but a new Burden superadded, and Idlers and sturdy Beggars still left to stroll about, they would soon repent these new Establishments, and by withdrawing all voluntary Charities bring the Scheme to nothing, or what would be worse, leave it to be carried on by a heavy annual Taxation.

The Charity Schools in England, exclusive of *London*, were reckoned to be thirteen Hundred and Twenty-nine in the Year 1735: Boys educated therein, nineteen Thousand five Hundred and six; Girls three Thousand nine Hundred and fifteen; in all twenty-three Thousand four Hundred and Twenty-one. And the Number since then is allowed to be much increased. From the Appendix to the Bishop of *Lincoln's* Sermon, Anno 1735, it appears, there were then in *London* one Hundred and Thirty-two Charity Schools: Boys in them three Thousand one Hundred and Fifty-eight; Girls nineteen Hundred and Sixty-five; in all five Thousand one Hundred and Twenty-three. The Children of poor Clergymen provided for by Contributions there, and in many other Parts of the Kingdom, are not included in these Accounts. Since that Time too there has been created and established  
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the Foundling Hospital, which yearly takes off many poor Children; and by the Enlargement of its Buildings and Revenues, will no doubt continue yearly to take off more and more poor Children, and at last perhaps, which is most to be wished, will be capable of receiving all that shall be offered. \* But, as Lord *Bacon* says, Hospitals abound, and Beggars abound never a whit the less. For notwithstanding these ample Provisions already made for the Maintenance and Education of poor Children, we don't find the Poor Rates have at all lessened: On the contrary, at the same Time that Free-Schools, and Institutions for the Benefit of poor Children have increased, the Poor Rates have been also more and more increasing. For from the Restoration, and much later, we may date the commencement of much the greater Part of these Schools and Institutions. But the Poor Rates in England in *Charles* the Second's Reign, according to a good Calculation I have seen amounted to but a Trifle more than 600,000 *l.* Whereas *London* only was found some Years back to pay to the Poor more than 250,000 *l.* And supposing *London* one Tenth of the Nation, the whole Nation must pay, in that Proportion, 2,500,000 *l.* It is now reckoned indeed to exceed that: It is now reckoned to pay upwards of 3,000,000 *l.* From hence, I think, it appears plain, that such

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\* Letter CCI. on occasion of Mr. Allen the Player, who was going to found a Hospital at Dulwich in Surrey.

a new Law for the better Maintenance and Employment of poor Children, would not at all remedy the Grievance complained of, the present Burden and Expence of the Poor : So far otherwise, I believe it would greatly add to the Grievance.

And as I object against the Foundation of the Bill, as being too partial and narrow Bottomed, so I might also against some Circumstances in the Conduct and Execution of it ; particularly the Manner of chusing the Guardians. “ The Justices are to order the Head-Constables, and they the Petty Constables, to return Lists of all Persons qualified to be chosen Guardians, to the Clerk of the Peace. The Clerk of the Peace is to write down the Name of each Person so returned, on a Piece of Paper. These Papers or Names being thrown together in a Box, some indifferent Person is to draw out a certain Number of them ; and then out of this Number so drawn, the Justices are to take out a certain Number, and the remaining Names, with the Justices of the District, are to be the Guardians.” Now this Method, to say no more of it, seems to be laboured and troublesome. I don't speak of the Trouble here given to the Clerk of the Peace, Constables, &c. But as there are rightly supposed to be several Districts in a County, why must all the Business of returning and chusing the Guardians be done at the County Town or Quarter Sessions, at such a Distance oft-times from the District ?

District? The Quarter Sessions have already so much Business upon their Hands, that a good deal of it is forced to be hurried over; and some, I suppose, cannot be meddled with at all. Is it to be thought then, that the Justices can constantly afford to give all the necessary Time and Attention to this new Business of Elections? May not *this indifferent Person* that is to draw out the Name, be any Body that the Justices shall call or appoint? And since the Justices may take out a certain Number of these Names when drawn, will not this be giving the Justices in a Manner the whole Power of chusing the Guardians? and can any Gentleman be ever chosen this Way, if the Justices have a dislike to him? And may not some Country Gentlemen be apt to take Umbrage at this? As the Bill is designed by all Sides purely as a National Benefit, and the Success of the Scheme will in a great Measure depend on the Assistance and Concurrence of the Country in general, undoubtedly it ought to be made as popular as possible, and any the least Appearance of sinister Views, engrossing of Power, or partial Administration, should be avoided. A much shorter, better, and more acceptable Way of chusing the Guardians, I should think, would be, to let every Parish, I mean the Payers in every Parish or Hamlet, chuse one Deputy every *Easter Monday*: And such Deputy to be a Guardian of the Poor House for that Year, or a larger Term, if thought necessary. No Person to be capable of being  
 chosen



chosen Deputy, that had not 100 *l.* a Year Freehold, or 150 *l.* for Lives. A Body of such Deputies, together with the Justices of the District, annual Subscribers of suppose 5 *l.* a Year, and other occasional Benefactions, would form a very worthy and respectable Corporation, would be likely to give all the necessary Time and Attention to the Business in Hand, and could hardly fail of carrying it on with Honesty, Zeal and Spirit, as they would be so much interested themselves in the Profit of it, and be obliged likewise in Honour and Duty to their respective Parishes, to see into the right Management. This Method of making the Guardians is so easy, natural and constitutional, that I am surprized so sensible and worthy a Patriot as Sir R——d L——d, had not thought upon it, and embraced it. In short, to have the Business of the District advantageously and successfully managed, the Inhabitants thereof, should as much as possible, have the Management among themselves, and not be obliged to have Recourse to distant Places and Persons, for their Powers, or Members, or Orders. To cramp or control them, would defeat the Institution. If the Deputies, or Representatives of the several Parishes were to be made Guardians of these Houses of Industry; this would be agreeable to our present Laws and Constitution, and vary but a little from the first established Methods of governing the Poor; by which the principal Part of the Management was committed to the

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respective

respective Parish Officers. The People too would have great Confidence in such Managers, as being all of their own Election, and if a Tax was thought necessary, would readily contribute their Proportion. At the same Time, if any Parish was over-rated or agrieved, or their Poor ill used, or not admitted, tho' coming with a legal Title, every such Parish would have a proper Person in the House to represent their Case and procure Redress.

However the main Objection against this Bill is, what I said at first, that it is not of Extent enough—That it is appropriated only to one Species of Poor, and does not provide for all in general. To remedy this Defect therefore, another Bill was soon afterwards brought in by the Earl of *H—l—k*, for the Maintenance and Employment of all Sorts of Poor, as well the Aged as Children; Lame, Blind, Ideots, Sick, that is, all Persons not in a Capacity of maintaining themselves by their Means or Labour. This Bill promises well, and, by what I can find, is generally well received. It enacts in the first Place, “ That in every County in *England* and “ *Wales*, there shall be *one Corporation* for the “ Poor.” But surely a whole County is of too large Extent for only one such Corporation. The other Bill rightly orders every County to be divided into a certain Number of Districts, according to the Discretion of the Justices, &c. And this Bill, I must think, ought to have adopted the same Regulation. Indeed some of  
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the smaller round Counties, such as *Rutland, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire*, whose off Parts may be nearly equidistant from the Centre, might do pretty well perhaps with only one Poor House. But for the large Counties, as *Yorkshire, Devonshire, Lincolnshire*, or very long Counties, as *Cornwall, Buckinghamshire, Lancashire, Berkshire*, if there was to be only one such House in these, the distant extreme Parts of the County could have but little Benefit of it, at least would be far from having a proportional Benefit.

The Parish I live in is about forty-four Miles from the County Town, where the Quarter-Sessions are always held, and near which I suppose the Poor House would be erected. But the Trouble and Expence of carrying up a Pauper so far, would oftentimes be tantamount to the Advantage received there. Besides that many distressed Persons, greatly wanting Relief, could not be convey'd to such a Distance without manifest Peril to their Lives. Some very aged Persons for Instance: Persons that should have the Misfortune of a broken Limb: Persons, or Families, fallen down with the Small-Pox, epidemic Fevers, &c. Poor Women very big with Child, or Lying in: Persons labouring under any accidental Distresses. Such feeble, or occasional poor Objects, could not come within the Benefit of the Hospital, but must directly be relieved in their respective Parishes, or perish for want of Help.

But the Difficulty and Expence of sending Paupers so far is not all. Consider what a Trouble too it would be for the Gentlemen Guardians to attend. Few or none would accept of the Office at such a Distance, or duly attend upon it, if they did. The Management would chiefly be engrossed by a Junto of a few busy Persons in the Neighbourhood, who would find their Account in attending, and share all the Places and Profits among themselves and their Friends. The Revenues would soon begin to draw the Use, and not the Use the Revenues. And when such Management once appeared, all voluntary Contributions would be stopped and the Hospital with what Lands and certain Income it had got would become like many other deserted Hospitals in this Kingdom, only a *Sine Cure* to some Master or Guardian.

Let me add, if there was to be only one Poor House in a large County, the Numbers of Paupers to be thronged together would prove to be very great and inconvenient, and Nastiness, Infection and Sickness could scarcely be avoided. \* And then this great Number of Paupers would of Course require a great Fund to support them, with a great Number of Officers and Proveditors to take Care and look after them, as

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\* To take an Instance from one County : Devonshire contains three Hundred and Ninety-four Parishes. And supposing, as one reasonably may, that those Parishes one with another have ten Paupers each : At this Rate there will be three Thousand nine Hundred and Forty Paupers, besides Officers. Too great a Number to be crowded together in one House !

Treasurers,

Treasurers, Clerks, Purveyors, Stewards, Masters of Manufactures, Physicians, Chaplains, Surgeons, Masters, &c. The Salaries of all which would not only be so much a Drawback upon the Income, but the more Money there was to pass through their Hands, the more room there would be found for Jobs and Impositions. And I need not say, how apt most public Undertakings are now a-days to be made Jobs of.

I might also add, that such Numbers crowded together in one Place, could with great Difficulty be managed, would hardly be prevented from strolling about and pillaging, and proving in many Respects a Nuisance to the Neighbourhood. Whereas in lesser Districts, the People might be cleaner and more orderly kept, much of the Business of the House might be done by some of the poor Persons belonging to it; the Officers would need to be but few, the Salaries small, the Accounts and Expences would be subject to a more minute Inspection and Examination; Frauds of every Kind would more easily be prevented or discovered; the Distance from the Hospital would be inconsiderable; most Paupers might be brought to have the Benefit of it; the Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood would be able and willing to attend, and would have the Thing ten times more at Heart, as they would look upon it then as a Creature, I may say, of their own forming and nursing.

Counties

Counties therefore, at least the larger Counties, undoubtedly ought to be divided into lesser Districts : And if a Hundred, which I proposed in my Scheme, be thought too small a Division, let two or three Hundreds be united as shall be thought most convenient. Indeed the Compiler or Compilers of this Bill seem to be sensible that one Poor House or Hospital would hardly suffice for a whole County. For further on in the Bill it is said, “ that in two “ Years, *at least one Hospital* shall be erected in “ each County :” As if more might be erected if thought necessary. But surely if more Hospitals may be erected, more Corporations should be established. For it would be wrong to have several of these Houses in a County and all of them made subordinate and subject to one general Corporation. For this in time would come to the same Thing, as if only one such House had been erected. The great House would draw to itself most of the Profits and Revenues, and like *Aaron’s Rod* or *Serpent*, soon swallow up all the rest. Every District should be an independent Body; otherwise it would not be worth while to have an Hospital erected in it.

Some, that have rightly spoken against Counties, as too large Divisions, have at the same time spoken much in behalf of Parishes, and still thought them to be the properest Divisions for the right Management of the Poor. But one should think that Experience would have sufficiently convinced us, that such small Divisions will



will not do. A single Country Parish cannot possibly set up a Work-House to any good Purpose. The Trouble and Expence would never be defrayed by the Profit of it. The same Building and Cover almost, that must be raised for one Parish, would serve for several Parishes. The same Persons that attend or look after a few, could look after more. The same Fire and Candle, that warms and lights and dresses the Meat of half a Dozen, with a very small Addition, would warm, and light, and dress the Meat of double the Number. And so in greater Matters: Victuals, Materials for Work, &c. can be laid in much cheaper, when bought in Quantities, than in small Parcels. But I don't need to stop here to shew, that the \* Poor can be cheaper maintained in larger Bodies together than in separate Parishes and Houses as at present. This is supposed and taken for granted in both Bills. I shall only say, that when much may be said against the two Extremes of a Thing, we may commonly presume, that the Medium is right. Hear what the great Lord *Bacon* says on this Subject, who had seen how the Poor were taken Care of, before any Poor Law had passed; who had some Hand in framing and passing it, and who saw the Effect, or rather Defect of it some Years afterwards. He, you'll see, was not for having the Poor to be maintained in too large Bodies together, nor yet indeed in too small.

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\* See Observations on the Poor Laws.

In his Advice to King *James* about the \* *Char-  
tereux*, now by Corruption called *Charter House*,  
He says thus : “ Concerning the Relief of the  
“ Poor, I hold, some *Number* of Hospitals with  
“ competent Endowments, will do far more  
“ Good than *One Hospital* of an *exorbitant*  
“ *Greatness*. For though the one Course will be  
“ the more seen, yet the other will be the more  
“ felt. For if your Majesty erect many, besides  
“ the observing the ordinary Maxim, *Bonum*  
“ *quo communius eo melius*, Choice may be made  
“ of those Towns and Places where there is  
“ most need, and so the Remedy may be distri-  
“ buted as the Disease is dispersed. Again,  
“ *Greatness* of Relief accumulated in one Place,  
“ doth rather invite a Swarm and Surcharge of  
“ Poor, than relieve those that are naturally  
“ bred in that Place ; like to ill-tempered Me-  
“ dicines, that draw more Humour to the  
“ Part, than they evacuate from it. But chiefly  
“ I rely upon the Reason that I touched in the  
“ Beginning, that in these *great Hospitals* the  
“ Revenues will draw the Use, and not the  
“ Use the Revenues: And so through the Mass  
“ of Wealth, they will swiftly tumble down to  
“ a Mis-employment. And if any Man say,  
“ that in the Hospitals in *London*, there is a  
“ Precedent of *Greatness* concurring with good  
“ Employment, let him consider, that those

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\* So called from having been a House or Monastery of Car-  
thusians. There are many Religious Houses of this Name abroad,  
particularly there's a famous one at Bourdeaux in France.



“ Hospitals have annual Governours, that they  
 “ are under the superior Care and Policy of such  
 “ a State as the City of *London*: And chiefly,  
 “ that their Revenues consist not upon Certain-  
 “ ties, but upon Casualties and Free Gifts:  
 “ which Gifts would be with-held, if they ap-  
 “ pear’d once to be perverted; so as it keepeth  
 “ them in a continual good Behaviour and awe  
 “ to employ them aright: None of which Points  
 “ do match with with the present Case.”

Though all that is here said by this great Po-  
 litician and Philosopher does not actually match  
 with our present Case, yet it matches so well in  
 most Points, that I believe most Readers from  
 his Reasons only, will conclude, that one ex-  
 horbitant over-grown Hospital is far from being  
 the properest for the Management of the Poor  
 of a whole County.

And as I think there should be more Houses  
 of this Kind, than one in a County, so undoubt-  
 edly each House should consist of three Parts,  
 as I mentioned in my former Pamphlet, a Work  
 House, Correction House and Hospital, adapted  
 to the three different Sorts of Poor, the Able  
 industrious Poor, the idle sturdy Beggars, and  
 the Sick Poor. But as to the second of these  
 Houses, that for hard Labour, and the Confine-  
 ment and Correction of disorderly wicked Va-  
 grants and other Offenders, I find no particular  
 Mention made in the Bill before us. Tho’ such  
 a House would be more especially necessary, if  
 there was to be only one Poor House in a Coun-

ty. For how could such a numerous Body of Paupers, as would in all Probability be accumulated here, such a Farrago or Medly of Idlers, Swearers, Drunkards, Pilferers, Vagabonds, how could all these be possibly well managed, without some such House ready at Hand, to take off, and punish the Offenders? A Poor House, without a House of Correction annexed to it, will never answer the End, which most Gentlemen now have in View; namely, the Suppression of these idle daring wicked Poor, (who are the most troublesome and dangerous to a State) as well as the Employment and Maintenance of all other Poor. The Scheme, to be perfect, should take in a Provision for the Poor of all Denominations, should provide Bread for those that are not able to earn it, Physic for the Sick, Labour for those that are able to labour, and proper Chastisement and Labour for those who can labour and will not, or who are otherways notorious Offenders.

The same noble Author will confirm too what I advance upon this Point, and therefore I shall make another Quotation from him. “ The best  
 “ Effect of Hospitals is, to make the Kingdom,  
 “ if it were possible, capable of that Law, that  
 “ there be no Beggars in *Israel*. For it is that  
 “ Kind of People that is a Burden, an Eye-fore,  
 “ a Scandal, and a Seed of Peril and Tumult  
 “ in the State. But chiefly, it were to be  
 “ wished, that Beneficence towards the Relief  
 “ of the Poor, were so bestowed, as not only  
 “ the mere Beggars and naked Poor should be  
 “ sustained,

“ fustained, but also, that the honest Person,  
 “ which hath hard Means to live, upon whom  
 “ the Poor are now charged, should be in some  
 “ Sort eased. For that were a Work generally  
 “ acceptable to the Kingdom, if the public  
 “ Hand of Alms might spare the private Hand  
 “ of Tax. And therefore, of all other Employ-  
 “ ments of that Kind, I commend most Houses  
 “ of *Relief* and *Correction*, which are *mixt Hof-*  
 “ *pitals*, where the impotent Person is relieved,  
 “ and the sturdy Beggar *buckled to Work*: And  
 “ the unable Person also not maintained to be  
 “ idle, (which is ever joined with Drunken-  
 “ ness and Impunity) but it is sorted with such  
 “ Work as he can manage and perform. And  
 “ where the Uses are not *distinguished*, as in  
 “ other Hospitals; whereof some are for aged  
 “ and Impotent, and *some* for *Children*, and some  
 “ for Correction of Vagabonds; but are *general*  
 “ and *promiscuous*: So that they may take off  
 “ Poor of *every Sort* from the Country, as the  
 “ Country breeds them: And thus the Poor  
 “ themselves shall find the Provision, and other  
 “ People the Abatement of the Tax. Now if  
 “ it be objected, that Houses of Correction in  
 “ all Places have not done the Good expected:  
 “ It must be remembered, that there is a great  
 “ Difference between that which is done by the  
 “ *distracted Government* of Justices of Peace,  
 “ and that which may be done by a settled Or-  
 “ dinance, subject to a regular Visitation, as this  
 “ may be. And besides, the Want hath been

“ commonly in Houses of Correction, of a  
 “ competent and certain *Stock for the Materials*  
 “ *of Labour*, which in this Case may be like-  
 “ wise supplied.”

I suppose, a House of Correction was thought needless to be particularly mentioned in this Bill, as there are Houses of this Kind already established in every County. But Lord *Bacon* here acknowledges, that Houses of Correction, even so early as his Time, when the Institution was in a manner new, and the best Fruits might be hoped from it, had not produced all the Good that was expected. Of late Years, I believe most Persons will allow, that they have produced little or no Good at all. And therefore if there is be but one Poor House in a County, and no new Houses of Correction are to be erected, the Old Ones at least ought to be put under a better Regulation, and be made subject to the Orders and Visitation of the Guardians, and not left to a *distracted Government* as Lord *Bacon* calls it, or rather to no Government at all. See Mr. Fielding's *Enquiry*, &c. Pag. 99, &c.

But *mixt* Hospitals are undoubtedly the best, and Houses of Relief and Correction should go together, that both may be under the Eye of the Governours, and a Transgressor be easily removed from the one to the other: Which could not be, if the present Houses of Correction should be thought sufficient to serve, as it would not be convenient to erect the new Poor Houses in Cities sometimes perhaps not within twenty  
 Miles



Miles of the Cities, or County Towns, in which the present Houses of Correction are kept: For Poor Houses should be in the Centre, but many Cities, as *Oxford, Chester, &c.* are upon the Borders of the County, and consequently several Poor Houses, with a House of Correction adjoining, and that each Parish-Deputy or Guardian, will have the Justiciary Power of taking up all Strollers, Pilferers, idle Disorderly Persons, and sending them to the House of Correction: As I mentioned more at large in my *Observations* on the Poor Laws.

The Six-pence in the Pound, to be raised indiscriminately upon every Parish throughout the Kingdom, will, I dare say, by many be excepted against. For in several of the Inland Counties, they do not now pay more than this Sum towards the Maintenance of their Poor: (in some Country Parishes I know they don't pay so much:) And therefore the Inhabitants will say, they would much rather continue under the old Method, which they have tried, and known the worst of, than be brought into a new Scheme, which at best they cannot expect to get by, but which perhaps they may greatly lose by, as a larger Tax may hereafter be thought necessary, and the very Projecters of the Scheme do not know how it will turn out or where it will end. But supposing they were never to pay more in the new Way, than they do at present, yet still they would have Reason to prefer the old Method, as by it they pay the Poor with their own  
Hands,

Hands, they see the Application of their Money, and know, that being paid at home, it circulates again amongst them, and is all expended upon Victuals, Fuel, and other Necessaries, in the Neighbourhood. And further they may say, that by the new Method, their Poor, if relieved, will be promiscuously relieved, the Merits of their Paupers will not be known, no Difference will be made between the Worthless, and the Virtuous unfortunate Poor, the Parishioners will be debarred the Privilege of affording extraordinary Pay, and shewing particular Kindness to some of their honest distressed Neighbours, such as faithful Servants, reduced Tradesmen, decayed House-Keepers, that do not deserve to be flung among the Crowd, and treated like common Beggars: Besides, that over and above this Six-pence in the Pound, they must still have some small Parish Rate for the Relief of such sudden feeble occasional poor Objects, as could not come within the Benefit of the Hospital.

But some Inland Places, I said, do not pay so much as Six-pence in the Pound. With respect to them therefore such a general Assessment would be very unequal and unjust. The Maritime, the Manufacturing, and large Market-Towns, more especially the Suburbs, abound most with the Poor. And as these Towns and Places have the Benefit of the Labour and Consumption of the Poor in their Youth and Strength and Health, 'tis but reasonable they should bear the



the Burden of them in their Sicknefs, Infirmitieſ, and old Age : And therefore ſhould either have Poor Houſes of their own, or Pay in Proportion to the Number they ſend to the Hoſpital : that by a general Tax of Six-pence in the Pound, all Places and Eſtates will pay nearly alike, and a fertile well regulated Pariſh, that has few or no Poor, will fare no better than a ragged dirty Place that has hardly any Thing elſe but Poor. Nay, it will fare worſe, and ſuch Places, that have the moſt numerous Poor, and ought therefore to pay a great deal more towards their Maintenance than according to the general Quota, will by ſuch a Taxation be found, I believe, to pay a great deal leſs. For as to Stock in Trade, and Perſonal Eſtate, it will be difficult to raiſe much Money from them, and ſignify but little to charge them. The Houſes in ſuch Places, many of them Cottages, are hardly Rateable. The Poor Tax muſt chiefly be raiſed from the Ground or Land of ſuch Places : But the Yearly Value of the Land of ſuch Places we may ſuppoſe, is not an hundredth Part of the Value of the Land of the whole County, and yet the Poor thereof ſhall be a fifteenth Part of the Poor of the whole County : By which Means one Half of the Poor of ſuch Places will be thrown a Burden upon others.

“ The Six-pence in the Pound is to be raiſed,  
 “ it is ſaid, by the Overſeers of the Poor, in  
 “ each Pariſh, according to the *uſual Method*  
 “ *of Taxation* for the Poores Rates.” But what  
 Valuation,

Valuation, I would ask, does this Six-pence in the Pound refer to? To the present advanced Rent or Valuation? or to the Land Tax Valuation made in King William's Reign? or to the Valuation of Lands in Queen Elizabeth's Time, when a Poor Tax was first raised? According to the Valuation in Queen Elizabeth's Time, no Doubt, the Taxation is meant to be made: For this is the *usual Method of Taxation* for the Poor's-Rates. But here, I am afraid, some Difficulty may arise. For ask the Parishioners of any Parish, how much their Poor Rate is in the Pound, and they'll say so much, according to the Land Tax; or about so much, according to the present real Value: But ask, what it is according to the Valuation of Estates in Queen Elizabeth's Time, and very few can tell. If you bid them to raise one, two, or three Rates, the Overseers know how to go about it, and can easily compute what every Payers Part comes to. But tell them to raise Six-pence in the Pound, and they don't know what Rule to go by, nor what to demand of every Payer, nor what Sum they are to make up. For they don't know what their Lands were Yearly valued at in Queen Elizabeth's Reign, nor what Six-pence in the Pound according to that Valuation will amount to.—

It may be said, indeed, the first Assessment for the Poor was after the Rate of one Penny in the Pound, according to the then Valuation of Land: And that six of these Poor Rates in a  
Parish

Parish will now make the Six-pence in the Pound required.—Well, be it so, and let it be farther said, that this Penny in the Pound-Rate, being a small Sum, was to be made and gathered Monthly.—But then to save the trouble of going about so often to collect and also to raise a larger Sum answerable to the increased Demand of a growing Poor ; two or three of these Penny in the Pound-Rates were by many Parishes flung together, and these Rates combined, came afterwards to be called and considered as one Simple Rate. This is the Case in the Parish where I live, and of a Number of others, no doubt, in the Kingdom. The Overseers collect only once a Year, and what is now called in their Assessment one Rate, was originally, and is really three Rates of a Penny in the Pound each. If such Parishes then were to pay Six-pence in the Pound, and their present Rate was supposed to be only one Rate, and that was to be the Rate to levy this new Six-pence in the Pound by, such Parishes in paying Six-pence in the Pound, would really pay Eighteen-pence, and consequently be two Thirds overcharged. I know some Parishes, apprehensive of this, have lately altered their Poor-Rate, and reduced it one Third. Many Alterations of the Poor's-Rates have happened in many other Parishes upon various other Accounts. One Parish, for instance, as I have heard, not willing to comply with the Demand, very likely the unreasonable Demand of a considerable Payer, to be eased in his Poor-

E Rate,

Rate, after two or three Trials at Sessions was forced to ease him. But at the next Assessment the Parishioners eased every Payer in the Parish in the same Proportion; by which Means the Complainant, an Out-liver, was still but where he was: For what was abated as to the Sum of the Rate, was still made up by the Number; the Contrivance, I think was afterwards found out and the Plaintive effectually relieved. I do not mention this either to commend or censure the Policy of the Parish, but only to shew, upon what various Accounts the Poor Rates in this Kingdom may have been increased and lessened and altered, since their first Establishment. The late Parliamentary Order for all Parishes to give in an Account of the Charge of their Poor will, I doubt not, contribute to increase these Alterations in the Poor's Rates, as most Parishes begin to surmise that some new Taxation for the Poor will take Place, and a great many designing cunning Folks we may be assured, will be contriving how to make such Taxation the most easy to them. These Things considered, I am afraid the Overseers would meet with a great many Difficulties in raising this Six-pence in the Pound, *according to the usual Method of Taxation for the Poor's Rates.*

That suppose the Difficulties of raising the Rate were got over, the Rate itself, as was said before, would with Respect to many Places be unequal and unjust. All Places should pay in Proportion, and none should pay more than in  
pro-



proportion to the Charge they bring. The Land Tax Valuation, I suppose, was pretty much regulated by that of the Poor Rates, tho' the Land Tax is somewhat the higher. In paying this Six-pence in the Pound then, all Parishes would pay nearly in the Proportion that they now pay to the Land Tax. But some Parishes (one of these I have now in my Eye) where the Buildings and Inhabitants have of late greatly increased, and where new Towns have in a manner risen up within these fifty Years, pay perhaps not more than Six-pence in the Pound to the Land Tax; these new Houses and Inhabitants being all chargeable to it, and consequently much lessening every Payer's Part of the original Sum assessed upon the Parish. But together with this Increase of Houses and Inhabitants, there has been also a prodigious Increase of Paupers, and some of these Parishes, I am assured, now pay at least Four Shilling in the Pound to the Poor. Nay, I could name a certain Parish, in or near a certain City, and some more such it is to be feared there are in the Kingdom, where, without any such visible Increase of late of Houses or Inhabitants, the Poor are so numerous and expensive, that a very good Landed Estate brings in little or nothing to the Owner. Such Parishes or Places then, in case this general new Levy of Six-pence in the Pound should take Place, would be far from paying towards the Poor in Proportion to the Charge they would bring: All that they now

pay above this Sum would be thrown upon others that pay under; all I mean, except what Savings might be made upon the whole Poor Charge, by a new and better Method of Management.

But the Injustice or Inequality of such a general Taxation is not all: It is also very Impolitic. Parishes would not care how much they multiplied their Poor, or what Numbers they sent to the Hospital, if their Payments were to be all the same whether they had few or many there. They would be ready to send every one that offered, whether Worthy or Worthless, whether entitled or not entitled. The Overseers would seldom concern themselves to look out for the Fathers of base or other chargeable Children, tho' there's a Clause in the Bill for this Purpose: They would take the shortest Way of getting rid of them, *i. e.* order them away to the Hospital, and so trouble themselves no more about them. The Addition of three or four Poor, they would think, would make but a very small Addition to their Part of the Expence upon a general Taxation. And as every Parish would, or might think in this manner, consider how the House would always be over-crowded, and what vast Numbers would by this Means be superadded. It is not easy in this Case to conceive what Buildings would contain them, or what Funds would hold out to support them. At best People would be forced to pay to the Hospitals, all that they now pay in Parishes, and  
the



the present Evil of a burdensome Poor would only be shifted, not removed. But was every Parish or Hamlet to pay only in proportion to the Charge they bring, it would then be their own particular Interest to have as few in the Hospital as possible ; they would be careful whom they sent thither, they would put off all disqualified Pretenders, and see that those who could otherwise be maintained, were not thrown a Burden upon the Public. If each Parish and Place were thus interested and encouraged to distinguish their own Quota of Poor, I will be bold to say, the general Number in the Hospital would thereby be diminished one Third. Indeed the Appearance of a settled permanent Tax on this occasion, does not promise very well. As long as this is continued, the Generality of People will think of nothing else, the Landed Interest will still bear the chief Burden, and voluntary Charities will come in but sparingly. But if the whole Scheme were tried as much as possible, to be put upon a charitable Footing, I am persuaded that Subscriptions, Benefactions, Collections, and Legacies, would in a few Years put it upon a sufficient and an established Foundation. And this is a main Thing to be aimed at, that the Relief of the Poor should in this Country, as well as in other Countries, be voluntary, not forced, a Matter of Charity, not a Tax : And also, that the Rich and Generous, the Monied-Men and opulent Traders, should have Calls and Opportunities of shewing their Benevolence ; “ *that the*  
“ *public*

“ *public Hand of Alms might spare the private*  
 “ *Hand of Tax* ; and the honest Lease-Holder  
 “ or poor Farmer, nay and Country-Gentleman  
 “ too, upon whom the Poor is now charged,  
 “ and who hath hard Means to live, be eased.”

Besides there are more Houses of Oeconomy, Frugality and good Management under a voluntary, than under a compulsory Method of Support. A Tax the Managers would look upon as their own, independent of the Payers of it, and would be under no great Fear of having their Income withdrawn on Negligence or Misapplication. But under an Institution, that depends chiefly upon voluntary Contributions, the Managers are always upon their good Behaviour, and know that nothing can continue their Supports to them, but Honesty, Skill and Integrity in their Administration.

Upon the whole, I must be of Opinion, and I fancy several of my Readers by this Time will be of the same, that this *Poor's Bill* would prove an inadequate Law, if passed in its present Form. The other Bill contains a great many very good Articles. The Method there proposed for raising Money for the purchase of Lands, providing Houses of Industry, and carrying on the Charity, is certainly a very right Method. It enacts, that each Parish should pay only in Proportion to the Charge they bring. And for ascertaining this, the preceding Year is to be the Rule for the Charge of the Subsequent : That is, after the Houses shall be built and furnished, and  
 the

the Poor shall have been one Year admitted. For the Rule cannot take place till then. Each Parish's Proportion before this, might be settled at a Medium of what they had paid to the Poor for the four Years given in to Parliament. For no doubt a Tax of about Three-pence in the Pound would be found necessary at the first putting forth of this Business.—Besides what Money shall arise from annual Subscriptions and Benefactions, the Minister and Parish-Officers of every Parish are ordered by this Bill to make Collections, twice or four Times a Year perhaps, and return what they collect to the Guardians. But what will be a main Help to put the Scheme in motion, a Lottery is also proposed : And so much *per Cent* to be deducted out of the Prizes. Tho' Lotteries in general are not much liked, I think, as tending in some degree to encourage a Spirit of Gaming, and inviting many People to lay out their Money upon Tickets, who might otherwise employ it in Trade, or lend it at low Interest to those that would employ it so; and also, as giving an Opportunity sometimes to Stock-Jobbers and Engrossers of making an unreasonable Profit, by buying up a Quantity of Tickets and selling them out again at an advanced Price; yet a Lottery upon this present Occasion I will venture to say, would be an excellent Contrivance. A Lottery for 500,000 *l.* at Ten *per Cent.* Deduction out of the Prizes, would produce 50,000 *l.* And if a Subscription was open'd for such a Lottery, and the Prizes, after this Deduction,

Deduction, were to be put upon the Footing of the Three *per Cent.* Annuities, there could be no Doubt of it's soon filling. For considering what a Price the last Lottery-Tickets sold at, and that the Three *per Cent.* Annuities now sell at between five and six Pounds above Par, the Prizes, notwithstanding the proposed Deduction, would, when turned into a Capital of Three *per Cent.* very near fetch their Prime Cost. In the *Hague* Bond-Scheme, which is now going to be drawn, there's to be a Deduction of Fifteen *per Cent.* of all the Prizes, and the Money is not to be paid for them, but to remain in Bonds, bearing an Interest of only Two and a Half *per Cent.* And if this Lottery be already full, we may reasonably conclude, that a Lottery upon Terms so much more advantageous would not be long unfilled in *England.* Especially when we consider, that Charity as well as Lucre would operate in our Scheme, and many People would subscribe in Order to do Service to the Poor, as well as in hopes of doing a Kindness to themselves. I am persuaded Subscribers would be so numerous and pressing that the Lottery would in a Manner suffer *Violence, and the Violence would take it by Force.* Now 50,000 *l.* would be a Thousand Pound to each County, allowing a somewhat less Portion to a few of the small Counties: And such a Sum with what would otherwise come in voluntarily, would be good a Instrument to put the Engine in Motion, and make this enterprising, this difficult Affair, very easy and natural.

I have

I have now in Compliance with your Request, drawn up a few cursory Remarks upon these Two Bills, and though I have objected against several Points in each of them, yet with some Alterations and Additions, I think, an effectual Law might be formed out of both. And if the Two worthy Authors of them should hereafter be joined together in a Committee upon this Affair, I make no doubt but on Reconsideration they will be able to prepare a Bill, for which, an Account of its salutary Effects as a Law, his Majesty will have Reason to thank them, the Poor to bless them, and every Land-Owner in the Kingdom to praise and esteem them.

*I am, &c.*

*Ernesettle near Plymouth,*

*Feb. 10, 1753.*