PROPOSALS
For Building in every COUNTY
A WORKING-ALMS-HOUSE
OR
HOSPITAL;
As the best Expedient to perfect the TRADE
and MANUFACTORY
OF
Linnen-Cloth.

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PROPOSALS for Building in every County a WORKING-ALMS-HOUSE or HOSPITAL, as the best Expedient to perfect the Trade and Manufactory of Linnen Cloth.

WHEREBY,

I. All Poor people and their Children from five or six years old may be employed and maintained, as also all Beggars, Vagrants, &c. restrained and for ever prevented, and so all Parishes eas'd of that intolerable Burden.

II. Many Hundred Thousand Pounds kept at home, which now every year goes out of the Kingdom for Linnen, whereby our Wealth becomes a prey to other Nations.

III. Much Land improved in every County to great advantage of Landlord and Tenant.

Humbly Offered to the Consideration of the great Wisdom of the whole Nation, now Assembled in Parliament.

Considering the great Complaints of Poverty, the heavy Burdens most Parishes lie under to maintain their Poor, which daily increase; the Swarms of Beggars, Vagrants and
Idle People in City and Country; the great, and 'tis fear'd, irrecoverable decay of our Ancient Trade for Woollen Cloth; the vast Charge we are yearly at in purchasing Linen, &c. from other Nations, whereby our Treasure is exhausted, and our Land falls for want of being improved some other way, besides planting Corn, breeding for Wool, &c. Which are become of so low a price, as scarce to turn to Account; and understanding, that for remedying thereof, the Improving the Manufactory of Linen is now under Debate, I have taken the boldness to offer the following PROPOSAL, which if thought fit to be put in practice, will (in my opinion) infallibly conduce to all the good Ends desired and intended; viz.

That there may be Erected in every County according to its Extent or Populousness, a greater or lesser Working-Abode, where the Poor may be continually employ'd in the Manufactory of Linen Cloth.

The Advantages whereof are evident; for,

1. This Manufactory is an Employment for the weakest people, not capable of stronger Work, viz., Women and Children, and decrepit or aged people, now the most chargeable; as likewise for Beggars and Vagrants, who live idle, and by the wear of other men's Labours, can no way be effectually brought to Industry and Order, as when reduced into narrow a Compass or Confinement under fifty qualified Rulers, Officers, and Regular Government.

2. Thse Working-Abode may raise and supply the Nation yearly with a sufficient Stock of Linen Cloth (the finest sort excepted) if true Measures be taken, and the Design effectually prosecuted; As for example, 135,000 pounds worth of Cloth may yearly be spun in them only, besides what is made in private Families—Thus demonstrated.

3. 'Tis well known by experience, that three quarters of a Pound of Thread worth 12 d. per Pound spinning, will make one Ell of Cloth worth 2 s. per Ell; which Three quarters of a Pound two Spinners may spin in one day. Hence it follows,

2. That 2000 Spinners will spin Thread enough in one day to make 1000 Ells of Cloth, worth 100 l. And working but 260 days in the year, may spin 26,000 Pounds worth of Linen Cloth in a year.

3. Suppose then there be as many publick Workhouses, as there are Counties, which are 52, and in every Workhouse, one with another, 2000 Spinners (though in some more, some less) then according to these reasonable measures, there will be the aforesaid Sum of 135,000 l. worth of Cloth spun in one year, which is what we undertook to demonstrate.

This or some such prodigious Sum of Money might yearly be raised to the Nation, whereby a Treble Benefit would ensue, First, we might save so much Money now yearly sent out of the Nation for Linen, which, as computed by very worthy Intelligent persons, has of late cost us more than a Million per Annum. Secondly, By employing those hands, which for the greatest part are idle, it being reasonably suppos'd that there are at least 100,000 Beggars or others who want a lawful Employment. Besides, almost all both Men, Women and Children that can pull Tire or Tow from the Dufff or such ease work, may be speedily employed and removed from being chargeable, so that there will be no fear of any Parth in the Kingdom being oppressed, or indeed charged, save only in case of extreme Age, or Children in their Infanty, neither of which continues long. And Thirdly, Much Land throughout England will be greatly improved by lowering Hemp, Flax, &c.

Obj.
It may be objected, That if the Hous be stock'd with so many weak, ancient people and Children, this will crost the great Designs, because they will not be able to spin their quantity of Cloth, nor so fine.

Again, As to Fineness, it matters not, if but one in five be employed in it to an exquisite degree; for there is enough occasion for coarser, for Sacking, Sails, Ticking, Common Table-Linnen, Sheets, &c. And as to Quantity, it may not be the least, because the most laborious thing in Spinning is turning of the Wheel.

Now for the better effecting a Design so profitable and honourable to the Kingdom, I have improved my small Genius to the utmost, notwithstanding I above all Projectors, have been most discouraged: And I know whoever will attempt any thing for publique Benefit, may expect these Three things. (The first is Necessity, the second Customary, and the third Diabolical) viz. To be the Object of wise mens Centure, others mens Laughter, and if advantageous to himself, Envy implacable displeasure; of which I have had three to the highest degree that Revenge could express; and this too from a pretended loving Brother, a person of an honest Profession, and of as debauched a Conscience; yer I lay, notwithstanding such discouragements, I have spent some time for Publick Advantage, viz. To find out an Expedition both for Ease and quick Dispatch, so that the weak may do as much as the strong, and the strong much more than before.

As thus; One man may turn 90 Spinning Wheels, which shall serve 100 persons to Spin with at once; so that the Spinners shall have nothing to do but employ both hands to draw Wire from the Daff. The Demonstration of the Infallibility of this Invention may be easily made when commanded.

As also, An Engine by which 50 men may, without striking a Stroke, beat as much Hemp in one day, as 100 shall do in two days.

Besides the Advantage of this Spinning Engine in Ease, its expedition will also be considerable; For if (as we doubt not) by this help Spinners can earn 9 d. per day, as eafe as 6 d. per day without; By that means computing only 1000 Spinners in each of the 52 Work-houses, in one years time will be gained the Sum of 163068 Pounds and upwards, as by Calculation appears; and the Invention for Hemp-beating (which is the hardest work of all) will likewise in its kind be very considerably advantageous.

Obj. 2. But some will be ready to object, and tell us, That we talk of brave things, if words would do the Work, but where's the Money for the Building of such great Hospitals? and providing all Tools and Materials will cost many Thousand Pounds.

I confess here's the Knot, which seems knit by Magick Art; but if it can be untied without cutting or breaking the Thread, then I hope our Proposals will not be rejected.

Again, To this therefore I humbly Answer, That it may be done by a County-Charge, with as much Satisfaction, Pleasure and Advantage, as to part with 3 l. to prevent paying 50 r. per An. which I think no wise people will judge to be an hard Bargain; especially if they consider the other vast profit to the Nation, and that thereby they purchase (in the Country) 90 r. per Annum more by improvement of their Lands for Hemp or Flax. As thus;

Suppose every Parish, one with another, throughout the Nation, relieves as many poor People, Beggars, &c. as doth amount to 12 d. in the Pound, so that every 100 l. per Annum, pays 5 l. per Annum to the poor; Now if every 100 l. per Annum, pays 5 l. towards Building such Hospitals, then whereas more than half their poor consist of Children, Women, and decrepit weak persons, unfit for any other Employment, but such as may easily be removed to this Hospital; it follows, more than half their Charge will for the
the future be abated; yea, many Parishes have scarce any poor to provide for.

Wherefore as for raising Money, we will take our measures thus: In England there are commonly accounted 9725 Parishes, and 52 Counties; so that one with another, there are 187 Parishes to each County, and each Parish supposed to be worth 1500 l. per Annum (some more, some less) at the Rate of 12 d. per Pound, it will amount to the Sum of 14025 l. in each County, which undoubtedly will compleat the House and Materials.

Obj. 3. But this Method will not hold, because one County hath not so many Parishes as another.

Answ. It matters not; Let each County build proportionably to their Money as it will arise at 12 d. per Pound, we doubt not but it will be sufficient.

Obj. 4. It may farther be Objected as impossible, That the Spinning Engine should turn to account, because as oft as one Spinner has occasion to stop, all the rest must be idle; and again, since every Wheel hath its motion alike, and several Spinners work some fuller, some slower, therefore all considered, this Project will make but a Confusion.

Answ. To this I reply, Any one may say, and the rest work on, and also may the motion of each Spinning Instrument, so as the middle and the flower may have their desire; Nor may these Instruments be contested, since they are as cheap as the other, and so ordered that the Spinners may fit or fit when they please; which doubtless will be a good convenience.

The invention of these Engines is wholly mine, and if they prove effectual, I hope I shall not be deprived of receiving some benefit thereof, because I am so free, as in effect to discover it beforehand. However, I submit to what the Pleasure of Authority shall allow: And to the intent these Hospitals may never fail of encouragement, that the Invention may be for ever secured to them, and prohibited to all others, so that the same may be improved only for their benefit, and private persons not take the advantage thereof to the prejudice of the our pious and necessary Design: I doubt not but many will say, Thus! this is easier any body may invent such things as these.—Thus the Industry of one is gratified with the contempt of others: Howbeit I leave it with all humble submission to the grave Wofford aforesaid, to consider,

1. Whether these great Hospitals may not become Nurseries for bringing up all poor peoples Children to Industry, and how by a Methodical Government, every one may be so encouraged, that one striving to excel the rest, in very short time, the finest Linen may be made at home upon far better terms than what comes from beyond the Seas; and whether there be not a probability, if the Engines take, that we may come to transport Linen upon as good terms as other Nations, since Flax and Hemp may here be as plentifully produced as in any other Country.

2. Whether this great and profitable Trade may not be managed for the most part by those what present are a burden, so that those which before were indolent, may follow their former employments, and to no want of People for Husbandry, &c.

Obj. 5. But what shall we do for Wofford?

Answ. I propose it to consideration, whether it might not be a more Carlist and effectual coule to suppress notorious Mafctors (except only in cases of Treason and Murder) to condemn them hither for life or years, where they may be servicable to turn Wheels, or to the Distuffs, reed Yarn, twine or hithin Hemp or Flax, Weave, &c. which an ordinary Ingenuity may learn in few days, rather than to send
them out with a Brand to commit fresh Villanies, or transport
them, whence they pretty return: And this the rather to
be heeded, for that Foreign Plantations have now little oc-
casions for them, that Merchants refuse to take them off the
Sheriffs hands, without being paid for their Passage; so that
above 800 Convicts in Newgate lately obtained: General Par-
pass on that very score, because they knew not what to do
with them: Besides, how many overstocked Trades are there
that complain for want of Trade, &c. These may quickly
learn to weave, and never fear an employ.

Obj. 6. But as to Convicts brought hither, it will be Objet-
ced, That they must be kept more secure, lest they escape and do
Mischief.

Ans. They may be secured well enough, and tho' that
ever the wheel, &c. may be separated by an iron grate from the
rest:—And here by the way, the pious wisdom of the
City of London may find out a means, whereby all those
impudent Night-walkers, and Nuises of Debauchery may be wholly
removed, which at present are a destruction both to the
Estates, Bodies and Souls of many Hundreds, and cannot be
reclaimed by ordinary Bridewells, because their Labour there is
only a punishment, and not an advantage, to keep them
there all their days, or at least until they marry, and keep
within doors.

Obj. 7. Some may imagine an inconvenience in sending so
many people from all parts of the Country to one place, and
say, Why were it not better to build many little Work-Houses rather
than one great one?

Ans. I Answer, By no means; for then we shall give one
great and chief Design, viz. the maintenance of good Government,
by which the whole Family may be instructed in good
Manners both towards God and Man; only as some Counties
are greater, more populous, &c. they may have more or less
proportionably.

Obj.

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Obj. 8. There still remains one Objection; and that is,
What shall we do for Hemp and Flax?

Ans. To which I Answer, That Hemp or Flax (one or
the other) may plentifully be had in every County of England:
Take Suffolk as an example, any indifferent good Land, Chalky,
&c. from the foot of the Downs to the Sea-side, with double
Folding or Draining, and twice Plowing, will produce Hemp
in abundance; yet though their Land be rich enough, day, &c.
it will not produce good Flax; But to supply that, many
Thousand Acres of the Wild of Suffolk, will produce Crops of
Flax, worth some four, some five, some six Pounds an Acre,
and that kind for Hemp, as aforesaid, worth as much. Besides,
for encouraging the Planting the same at home, it may be con-
venient to lay an Imposition of Four or Five Shillings in the
Pound, or upwards, upon all Hemp, Thread, Cordage, or
Linnen Imported from Foreign parts; by means whereof, we
may raise it at home cheaper than buy them abroad, and then
everybody will Plant Hemp and Flax abundantly, as a thing
of course, enriching those that promote it.

But why 4 or 5 Counties should (as some have propos'd)
enjoy this great Wealth and Advantage of promoting the Lin-
en Manufactur and Improvement of Lands, and not the rest,
I cannot understand; nor for what reason so many people
should be drawn out of the whole Nation into four or five Mid-
land Counties, since tho' those Counties next adjoining to the Sea,
ought to be kept most populous.

But to what purpose should so much Hemp be planted?

I Answer, Hemp is of greater strength than Flax, therefore
of more excellent use for great advantage, as Cables, Ropes,
and all kinds of Cordage, Sails, Sacking, &c. As also Thread
for all Necessities for Fishery; for which, and other purposes, we
now buy yearly several hundred Thousand Pounds worth from
beyond the Seas; so that without controversy, there's as much

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Hemp to be used as Flax, and consequently the Hemp-Mill may be as useful as the Spinning-Instrument.

Having, we hope, satisfactorily Answered all Material Objections against the main Body of this Design, it remains to consider of the Order and Method of Governing these great Families or Corporations; but the Particulars thereof we leave to the deeper Wisdom and judicious Care of Authority; only in general propos,

1. That for the better encouragement and support of so many poor people labouring in so profitable a Manufactory, each Alms-house be provided with and allowed a publick Granary, for stocking themselves with Corn when it is cheapest, against the time of Dearth; a privilege we conceive not to be so properly advisable for other Companies or Handicrafts (as some propos and desire) because that would always keep Corn too cheap, and consequently undo the Tenant, or Landlord, or both: For what makes Wheat as often at 4 1/2 a Bushel (under which it is known the Farmer cannot live) as at 2 6 d. but because all people in the Nation that have occasion, must buy of the Land Occupiers at the same time when it is scarce? But by such general Granaries the hopes of 4 1/2 per Bushel will be benefit the Market, but in our case painful Husbandry, that ancient Employment may well allow Granaries, both because this Manufactory and Design caters their Charge to the poor, and is of more advantage to the Publick, than some 20 Trades besides; and particularly, because it helps to improve their Lands by Flax and Hemp, that now they need not so much recite upon Corn for raising their Rent: Besides, if other overstocked Trades want Bread, let them quit their Station, and come to Weaving, and then they may enjoy the benefit of these Granaries also.

2. That the Maiden-Children brought up in this Corporation, may after they attain to the Age of 15 Years, or other fit time, be permitted to go forth to Service to learn good Husbandry, Huwirry, and the Lads to Husbandry or Trades, if they think fit; nor will there be need of so great caution to prevent the Marriages of the meaner sort, since now the Parishes need not so much fear a Charge, knowing a means how to employ all their Children as fast as they come to be five or six Years old; nor can a young man have better choice for a Wife than her, amongst so many, all bred up industriously under strict Discipline, and in a way to live, and therefore this Method will be to far from causing any depopulation, that it may encourage Inhabitants, and the more, the better, since we know how to dispose of them in such laudable Employments: Moreover, hereby the distressing cares of poor honest Parents, oft occasioned by a forethought of their incapacity to provide for their Children, will be removed; so that they may pass their time in peace, knowing that a good honest comfortable Employment and Education is provided for their Children, and their Children’s Children; nor may this let remove the Temptations both in Parents and Children, which cause them to be guilty of such Middlemenors as sometimes bring them to the Gallows, so that the Expences offered for the accomplishing this Manufactory, will produce a happy change in the whole Nation, and no more want of Work or Bread for the poor, no more Parishes oppressed, no more Beggars; a great abatement of Felons, Thieves, Cheats, Nurtures of Debauchery, &c. many Lives preferred, and (which is an hundred thousand times more than all the rest) many Souls saved: Much more might be said in this case, to set forth the excellence of this Design; but I leave it as a work more deferring the skill of the most Learned and Godly Divine, and shall only add,

In order to that last mentioned incomparable end, and for the better Education and Instruction of this great Family, that there may be placed in each House an Able, Honest, Godly Minister, of a good, peaceable, kind disposition and exemplary Conversation; that to no means may be wanting for promoting God’s Glory and their Edification: To which purpose, on Ho-
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Days and other spare times, all or the most docible part of the People train'd up here, may likewise be taught to read, &c.

So may our most Great Prince, and Worthy Senators become further Instruments for the Nations Prosperity, and the Salvation of many Souls: Thus may the Blessing of Heaven crown all their Honourable Enterprizes and Prudent Counsels with most prosperous Success; which that it may be fo, is the hearty Desire of

Your most Humble, Obedient and Faithful
Subject and Servant,

R. H.

FINIS.

POSTSCRIPT.

Having received the princely Approbation of that most Judicious and publick spirited Promoter of England, Wealth and Prosperity, and all such Ingenious as tend to general Good, and whose Noble Actions have given matchless proofs of his great zeal thereunto, &c. His Illustrious Highness Prince Royal, who having condescended to peruse the preceding Proposals, was pleased to Honour me with his Approbation, Advice, and Encouragement therein; Judging it necessary that I should first offer the same to His Majesties Consideration, and in order thereunto, did Introduce me to His Royal Presence, who was Graciously pleased to order me to deliver it to one of His Secretaries of State, to the intent he might peruse it, and bring in his Report thereof; whereupon I carried it to Mr. Secretary Coventry, who gave his Approbation thereof to His Majesty at the Council Table, where it pass'd without any obstruction:

Which gave me the greater Encouragement to put the said Proposals in Print, for the deliberate Perusal, and grave Consideration of both Houses of Parliament, who, I humbly conceive, arc as greatly concern'd to encourage all such humble Endeavours, tending to such General Wealth and Honour of the whole Nation.

A And
And for as much as I have the opportunity by reason of the Advertisements of Parliament since the last November, immediately after which, my Proposals came out of the Press, I thought it might not be superfluous to add a few Lines for the Advertisement for the Answering of some further Objections, but first I shall add a few Words to the Answer already given to the second
"Obj. pag. 5. where I lay, That the laying out of 5 l. for the building of Working Almshouses, will purchase 50 s. per Annum for ever. Whereas now I find, That it will purchase 20 l. per Annum in most Parishes; as may thus appear.

Suppose every Farm worth 100 l. per Annum, Plant but Eight Acres of Flax or Hemp, and that worth 7 s. 6 d. or 9 l. per Acre, which last sum is the least that may be expected from good Land, to be worth, as it stands on the Ground, wherefore to avoid mistakes, we will take our measures from 5 l. per Acre on 150-00-00.

For Rent we will Deduct 20 s. for Seed 20 s. and for Plowing, Sowing, and 20 s. 10.0 0.

Which Deducted out of 5 l. there remains clear Profit for one Acre of Land. 2-10 00

So that Eight Acres, at the least value, will yield clear Profit, all Charges Deducted 20-00-00.

To which add 2 l. 10s. which will be saved out of the Poor's Book, and it 22-10-00 makes

So that a Farm which was worth 100 l. per Annum, will by this Expedient, be worth Six score and Two pounds and Ten Shillings per Annum, and to be Sold, will yield 450 l. more than before. Which.

Which is a plain Demonstration, that the laying out of 5 l. towards the building and furnishing these Hospitals, will purchase above 20 l. per Annum, or bring in 450 l. And this is the lowest Calculation that may be made of the Profits and Advantages that may arise by planting of Hemp and Flax, if well Husbonded.

And if true it is, there's no one Manufactory in England so generally profitable as this may be made, especially to be raised from Land, with so little hurt done to the fame, as may be Demonstrated thus:

Suppose the Crop of one Acre, as it stands on the Ground to be worth 7 l. (which is a very moderate Supposition.) This Seven Pounds worth being well Dressed for the Spinners, may be worth 14 l. This Fourteen Pounds worth being well Spun and made into good Cloth, may be worth from 40 l. to 60 l. Yea I have been informed beyond the Seas, that the Cloth which might be made of one Acre of Flax well Dressed, and well Spun, might be worth more than a 100 l.

Let us not forget, that we have idle hands enough in our Nation to perform this most profitable Improvement, and also, that little more than half the Money which in one year goes out of the Nation for Linen, will pay for accomplishing the same: Nay, if the thing were rightly considered, it might be easily Demonstrated, That the Money which goes out of the Nation for Linen in one year, will pay for making all the Cloth that may be made in 20 years; although in every year of that twenty, there be as much made, as now we buy in a Year of other Nations: As thus: A 2

Money
Money being kept at home within the Body of the Nation, is (as it hath no less apply, than frequently been remembred) like the Blood in its Circulation in the Body of Man, which is not the less for its perpetual Motion; but the whole Body thereby the better supplied, strengthened, and nourished in every Part. So it is with our Money; for, suppose Twelve hundred Thousand pounds goes out of the Nation in one year (which, some say, is much more). This never returns again: But if the same sum be paid for making so much Cloth at home, there's not one Great for the years end: So that the very Money which pays for one year's work, may pay for two years, and consequently for 20 years, and yet pass through all necessary Trades, and as well to the Land Occupiers, as any.

The 9th Obj. But possibly your Engins for Expedition may fail, which if so, then notwithstanding, the Spinners, &c. may earn their own Food, yet there will be nothing towards the maintenance of good Government, which is the great thing you aim at, whereby all persons who are brought into the Hospital, may be well Educated, and effectually instructed in a Methodical way for expedite and advantage; Administering encouraging Rewards to the Ingenious and Industrious; and Correction to those that deserve it, without which it is almost impossible to perform your good design.

Answ. Tis very true: But first, I am confirm'd in my Judgement, that the riddance these Engins will make, cannot be less than what I have already propos'd in pag. the 5th.

Secondly, Suppose the worst, viz. that the Engins fail; What then, If every 100 l. per Ann. in each County contribute 3d. per Week, which would undoubtedly be sufficient to maintain good Government amongst them? Nay, what, If for the better Encouragement, and more Comfortable maintenance of all the whole Family, six pence per Week be paid, it would amount but to 26 l. per Ann. to be allow'd out of the Profits which each 100 l. per Ann. will reap thereby, which according to our lowest Calculation, is not less than 22 l. 10s. a year: And I hope the great wisdom of the Nation will not think it too much to part with 5 l. for the Building these Hospitals, and after they are built, to allow 26 l. per Ann. for the maintenance of good Government, &c.

since by so doing, the whole Nation is enrich'd thereby: The truth is, these Hospitals and Government is so Essential, that the thing cannot be brought to pass without them, for whatever we may promise ourselves; yet the Work is otherwise as unlikely to be effected, as a great multitude of unhappy Scholars to learn their Books, where there is neither Master nor Tutor, to Rule, Teach, or Govern.

And who knows, but in very few Ages, each Hospital may have a plentiful Revenue belowe'd thereon: For what can be a fitter object for the Charity of such well disposed People, who out of their Abundance, may please to leave a Legacy behind: them for Pious and Charitable uses, seeing here it will ever be implo'd to the comfort of distressed Widows, the Maintainance and good Education of Fatherless Children; The Feeding the Hungry, Cloathing the Naked, &c. yet, the Pofferity of the Donor, (accor-
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(according to the Revolutions of human things) and the Pollution of his Relations, may reap such benefit by these deeds of Charity as that they may be ever preferred from Extremity.

Or why should we think it too much out of tool, per Annum, to call 5 l. a year into the Treasury of this House, to be scatter'd amongst the Poor, since it is but a fourth part of what we gain by them? By this means, I am confident the Poor of each Parish would be few, that there would be scarce enough to eat the spare Meat that comes from other men's Tables: Howbeit, it were good, that a Law were made, that every person that gives any Alms to any idle Beggars, or wandering People, (the Poor of their own Parish only excepted) should forfeit 5 l. to the Treasurer of the Hospital of that County in which they dwell, which would be no violation of the Precepts of Charity, but an effectual expedient to restrain all Beggars and idle People for the future.

If we believe (as I hope we all do) that the happiness of a Nation hath its dependence on the good Will and Pleasure of God Almighty, and that the more we please him the greater Blessings we may receive from him. Let it then be considered, how acceptable an offering it would be to the most High, when by a pious Act of Our Gracious King and Parliament, together with the wise gifts of all able Godly disposed People, to many Thousand, yea Ten Thousand of Thorough, in course of time, may be restrained, and prevented from living in that broad way of Idleness and Lewdness, in which is all manner of Debauchery. And now by this Reformation, from Generation to Generation, may become attentive Hearers of his Holy Word, which is the most Infallible Directory to bring them to Heaven.

Obj. To talk of great Profits made of Flax in other Countries. But you are of the Opinion, that to raise the Linnen Manufactory here to that degree, is utterly Improachable; as well, because our Domestic Flax is not so good as that which comes from beyond the Seas; as also, because our people cannot work so well.

Answ. This Objection, (which some are pleased to think very considerable) consists of two branches: The first is an Exception to the goodness of our Flax; The second, to the Skill and Dexterity of our People.

As for the first, whether ours be as good as Outlandish Flax? It must be considered, and cannot be denied, but that the far greatest part of the Flax which we import from beyond the Seas, is English Flax, I say, the far greatest part, ten to one in proportion. Now I am credibly informed by several well experienced Flax-Men (who have dealt in both Sorts) That English Flax is full as good, to all intents, as this English Country Flax, and do not doubt, but it will appear upon Examination, So that the Objection, as in Companion with such English Flax, vanishes; of which yet, (though we have but little Cloth made in England there is, as I am informed) several Hundred Thousand Pounds worth yearly Imported.

But then, as to Dutch Flax, indeed the Cafe is somewhat more difficult: It being a common opinion, that their Flax, in its nature, is better for making of Fine Cloth, than ours generally is: But even this is denied by persons of great judgment and Exper-
ence, who affirm, that such much Land in England may produce as kind Flax, to the full: Besides, the Dutch Flax Imported, is but little, and comparatively Inconsiderable, as is indeed the Use and Consumption of very Fine Cloth, in respect of the vast Quantities of Court and Ordinary Cloth; so that, if the Trade be encouraged, we need not fear, but we may find ground enough in England, fit to produce as excellent Flax as any now brought from Holland, I mean, so much as we have occasion for; And consequently, may make as good Linnen; If we do not spoil it in working: Which is the second Charge of the Objection.

To which I answer, That I have credibly been informed by some persons, that they have, and can now already make as good Cloth here, as that which we commonly buy for 5, 6, 7, or 8s. per Ell: And why should not our people, when they find the Manufactury encouraged, and especially by the Emulation and striving each other in good Workmanship in the public Work, Work Alms-Houses? Why, I say, May we not arrive at as great Perfection in the Mystery as any people in the World? The English once had the Reputation of the only excellent Artificers for Wollen Cloth, other Nations knew nothing, or very little of it; yet now we find, by unhappier experience, they equal, if not exceed us therein: Why may we not retaliate, and out-flourish them in another Mystery? Or Why should we more scandal our selves with suggestions of Dullness and Indolency, than our Neighbours?

But to give more full satisfaction, that this Manufactury, especially that part which is most advantageous to the Nation, as being most Consumpt of our Hemp and Flax, and most promoting Trade and Employment for the Poor, which indeed is common and ordinary Cloth, of which there is a Thou'dell Ells to one Transported into all His Majezy's Plantations.

That this I say is sufficiently to be perfected, I cannot but give a signal Instance, from the faisible practice and experience of that worthy Gentleman, Mr. Tho. Firmin, Citizen of London, who at this time employs in his House (built for that purpose) several Flax-men, Weavers, &c. And also above 600 Spinners abroad. This Judicious person has'd me more than 500l. worth of very good substantial Cloth, of his own working. And in truth, I have convers'd with many, but never found any man able and free to resolve all doubts in this case; who told me for a Truth, that a Child of 5 or 6 years old, that had its Health, and a moderate Appetition, might be taught in 6 Weeks to earn its living in Spinning; Which, if so, as from the Veracity and Experience of the Relator, I have no reason to doubt. It is most plain, that the most profitable part of this Manufactury may be both easily and speedily accomplish'd, and perfected, to the happy Reformation of many Thou'sands, who now live by Begging, &c. giving care any thing for whatever they Eat, Drink, or Wear.

Besides, let it be considered, How greatly this Manufactury will quicken and revive our decayed Markets and dying Trade, especially, that of Husbandry, which may easily be demonstrated, thus:

As the case now stands, every Family in the Nation,
tion, either directly or indirectly, send their Money every year to the Drapers for Linnen, the Drapers they pay it to the Merchants, and away it goes every year beyond Sea, and never returns; whereby our Wealth is made a Prey to other Nations, whose Poor are implored and maintain'd thereby, whilst in the mean time our Nation is in a Consumption, our Poor live by Begging, Poverty increases, and our Lands lie unimproved, for want of this Manufactory.

But now under this Reformation, every Family that sends their Money to the Drapers, the Draper lends it to the Masters of the Hospitals, and they scatter it amongst all the Trades in the Nation, especially to the Farmers, and Tillers of Land, ready Money for Hemp and Flax; ready Money for Corn and Fat Cattle of all sorts; and the like for Butter and Cheese, or anything they have to spare: And all this, or the greatest part, from those who before lay a Begging at their Doors, or were maintained by Contribution; and now, the more people increase, the better it will be for the whole Nation: And doubts, if an Imposition sufficient were laid on Foreign Linnen, Hemp and Flax, and Encouragement due to ingenious and industrious people given, (as in this Case, the Nation might well afford) then to be sure, our Hospitals would be suddenly flock'd with curious Artificers, by which our new Manufactory would speedily be brought to perfection.

'Tis worth consideration also, how great an Ornament, besides the great Wealth these Hospitals would be to His Majesty's Kingdom, and how much they would add to the Trade, Wealth, and greatness of those Towns near which they are erected.

13. Obj.

13. Obj. You talk much of Charity, Let Charity begin at home with good Husbandry: If this course be taken, we shall pay dearer for Linnen, than now we do, and it must needs be lost Husbandry to buy where we may have it Cheaper.

Answ. If we lend our Money beyond Sea for what we want, then the more we buy, the less Money we have to pay, which causes scarcity of Money, and also, want of Trade; whereby to get more; but if we keep our Money for Commodities made at home, our Money and Trade will continually Increase; and though for a little while we pay somewhat more, yet it is easier to part with 9d. when Money and Trade are plenty and increasing, than to part with 9d. when Money and Trade is both wanting; especially, seeing the 9d. remains at home, and returns again, but the 6d. is carried into another Nation, and lost irrecoverably.

14. Obj. In pag. 5, you suggrest, That by your Engin, one Spinner may earn 9d. as easily as 5d. without it: But how can that be? Since every Spinner now, may have a wheel to turn with her foot, and so have both hands at liberty, as well as your Engins: And again, it is a more usual fault to over-swift the thread, than to do it too slack, therefore no need of help to turn the wheel.

Answ. To this Answer, First, That the thing we chiefly design, is to employ and maintain such as cannot any other way earn half their living by any other Imply, so that more than half the Spinners would be very young, and of little strength, and consequently to employ one foot all the time they Spin, will be very tiresome; may, the strongest body cannot do it, without eating the fame, neither can they imply both hands so freely, as when they are dif...
chambered of that burthen, or incumbrance.

As for Example: Two men of equal strength, skill, and nimbleness in all parts, were to run a long Race, and one of them must carry such a weight in his hand, as is more tiresome than the motion of his legs, and oft-times, most uneasiness the Burthen with his foot: May not the other, who hath all his limbs free, be at the end of the Race and half-way back again as soon, and more easily than this can get to the end of the Race. Possibly I may say, This Simile is not parallel, and that I make it better on my side than it is. To which I say, for the Resolution of this Question, Do but inquire of those that Spin, which of the Two is most tiresome, The turning of the Wheel, (either by the foot or hand, no matter which) or the other part of the Work. I have almost as often asked the Question, as I see any a Spinning (since I invented this Engin.) and the Answerer has always been, The turning of the Wheel; although they implore both hand and foot by turns to do it: Besides, it is burdensome, and also injurious to the body; especially for youth, which are growing, to be from Morning till Evening, always sitting.

Secondly, Although it be true, That ever-twisting the Thread is commonly a fault, rather than not twisting the same; yet the Cause of this fault is, that they do not draw the Thread fast enough: But to the better advantage, this will be easily cured, for now all the aforesaid inconveniences being removed, which render the Work most burdensome, they may for their ease stand or sit, when, and as often as they please, and freely employ both hands from morning to evening, much more easily than they could one hand before; and

and the farther they draw the Thread from the Dint, the more they Spin, with least danger of over-twisting the same; so that I do not know, but those that are some-time used to this easiness, may Spin as much in one day, as now in two.

Furthermore, these Spinning Instruments may in like manner be for Expedition very serviceable for Spinning of Wollen, I mean Selves, Worsted, Camlets, and Stockings, which being well made, are much more to be encouraged than Hair and Silk, these being Foreign Commodities, the other of our own Growth, especially, since it is so, that our home Markets for their Wool, and Foreign Markets for our Cloth grow worse and worse, and in the opinion of most, scarce ever to be recovered; which, if so, it must needs be the best Husbandry to promote such Manufactures, as may be for the Consumption of our own Materials.

Obj. If you intend these Hospitals for the Employment of such poor Families of their own to maintain the business will be confus'd and impracticable.

Answ. Possibly so, at least, in some respects and circumstances; but that was never intended, the main design of these Hospitals being only for the relief of all oppressed Persons, Families, and Parishes, by taking off their young Children, and single people, who have neither Habitation, nor Parish willing to receive them, there to be comfortably maintain'd, well educated, and instructed in all good manners towards God and Man; Nor are any of them to be confined to this House longer than until they can well earn their Livings by other means; unless it be such as are committed as persons deserving perpetual or
(14)

Defender of the Faith; as also to the Great Wisdom of a Christian Nation, all which strengthens my hopes, that I shall not be more unfortunate than was that importunate Widow.

And why should I doubt it, since it is so, that even an unjust and ungodly Judge will redress the Grievances of the Oppressed, shall not the Best and Most Christian Government exercise its power, for suppressing and reforming intolerable Evils, Oppressions, and Discord, facing the Welfare and Prosperity of the whole Nation as it were in a hand to such an Act of Justice and Mercy. It is said of Faith, Hope, and Charity, That the greatest of these is Charity; yes, if a Man had all Faith, and all Hope (both which are most excellent and necessary) yet it avails nothing, if Charity be wanting. And since it is a Maxim, That the best of Men cannot be Unmeritable: I cheerfully hope, that my humble Proposals for an Act of Charity, will not be concerned by our Greatest Worthies, since now in our view, the Wealth and Prosperity of the Nation, is in pursuance of the same.

I would not flatter my self or others, but do confidently believe, That what with the Decrease of Poor People, The Happy Reformation, and the true Restriction of Beggars, Vagabonds, Plays of Debauchery, &c. The yearly increase of Ten or Twelve Hundred Thousand Pounds, which now will be kept at home, that before went beyond the Seas for Linnen. The great Improvement of Lands, The Exportation of Linnen of our own growth, &c. The worth and advantage of the whole cannot amount to less than Two or Three Millions Sterling, per Annum, to the Nation: and over and above many lives preserved, and (with Gods blessing on the mean) many souls saved; which, if so, certainly it will be the best Bargain and happiest that ever the Nation made, all circumstances considered. Because where so much Money is disbursed, it will compasse this great Wealth (without which it is almost impossible to be attained,) our Poverty will have it for nothing: yes, the present Inhabitants have their Purchase Money still amongst them, as it were, In their own Sacks with their Corn, seeing we Buy not this profitable Expedition of other Nations; which, if we were obliged to do, to be bare they would make us pay dearly for it.

But suppose neither of these Advantages were to be reap’d for us Money, only the Poor provided for, and Reformation of Va-
grants accomplished, Must we do nothing for Charity? Suppose any Opposers of this Design, were worth 3000 l. or 10000 l. per Ann. a piece, Can they be certain, that none of their Post-
s
terity may within 200 years come to Poverty? Why then should
they be unwilling now to contribute freely, seeing the Method pro-
posed, may secure both Rich and Poor from Extremity? And how
dishonourable is it to this Kingdom, that so fruitful a Soil as Eng-
land, which by the Industry of its most useful Inhabitance,
might so easily become the Garden of Europe, should, by their
loath and obstinacy, be unimproved? How many Hundred Thou-
sand Beggars, Vagabonds, Drones, Nurtures of Debauchery, &c.
who are not only a Dishonour, but a great Disadvantage to the
Nation, living in continual penal Practices against the Laws of
God and good Government, depriving themselves of all means of
Religious and Civil Education, to the great danger of their own
Souls; ill Example of others; and destruction of their Post-
terity, being neither serviceable to the Publick, nor capable of raising
themselves to any better condition, might by this Method, be whol-

tly reform'd, or prevented?

Wherefore upon these several weighty considerations, and for
that, besides the Princeely Encouragement before-mentioned, I have
had the Approbation of that great lover of Ingenuity, The Right
Honourable, the Lord Viscount Bromley, President of the Royal
Society, who was pleas'd to peruse my Proposals, and express his
Sentiments very favourably thereupon; As also having received
by letters some considerable and prifing Increments, to proceed
from an Eminent publick spirited Divine, the Reverend, Dr. John
Beale, one of his Majesties Chaplains, and a Member of the said
Royal Society. I am therefore embolden'd, particularly to entreat
the Christian consideration of the most great and pious Divines,
and all the Honourable and Ingenious Associates of that August
Society in this matter, and accordingly, to give their Encour-
gement, Approbation, and Assisstance; or otherwise to discover my
misdakes, and rectifie any false Measures, which through Inadven-
tency, or over-zeal, to the design I may have committed, by pub-
lishing some more Feasible Methods from their better improved
Reason, whereby I shall at once be confuted and instructed, and
though failing in the means, shall not miss of my defined End, viz.
The glory of God, the Prosperity of the Nation, and the Happy
Reformation of many thousands, who are a dishonour to Both.