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Parochial Tyranny: *N*
OR, THE
HOUSE-KEEPER'S
COMPLAINT

AGAINST
The insupportable EXACTIONS, and par-
tial ASSESSMENTS of
Select Vestries, &c.

WITH A
Plain DETECTION of many ABUSES com-
mitted in the Distribution of PUBLICK
CHARITIES:

TOGETHER
With a Practicable PROPOSAL for Amendment of
the same; which will not only take off great
Part of the PARISH TAXES now subsisting, but
ease Parishioners from serving troublesome
OFFICES, or paying exorbitant FINES.

By ANDREW MORETON, Esq;

L O N D O N:
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PAROCHIAL
 TYRANNY:
 OR, THE
 HOUSE-KEEPER'S
 COMPLAINT, &c.

IT is never too late to mend:
 For tho' Custom (the De-
 light of Fools, and plague
 of Men of Sense) may plead
 much in Defence of Pa-
 rochial Government; yet
 Experience makes it most
 evident, that like other well intended
 Things, it is so far abus'd, as to become
 a Nufance, and therefore cries aloud for
 Redress, or at least Amendment.

B

Many

2 *Parochial* TYRANNY :

Many things might be necessary formerly, which are not so now; Time altering their Nature much, but Corruption more: No doubt but Parishes were divided for Order and Convenience sake, but they little thought in those Days how far the Project would be improv'd by designing Men, who have enhaunc'd Parish Taxes to above treble their old Standard, and yet the Poor are not near so well provided for; these cunning Vultures screening themselves behind old Laws, so that nothing but new ones, and those more coercive, can restrain their unlimited Power, and Merciless Oppression.

The King cannot raise Money without his Lords and Commons, nor they without the Royal Assent, so happy are we in our Present Establishment; but our Parish Tyrants are more arbitrary, they assess, re-assess, and distress at pleasure: The Wealthy cry out, and think themselves oppress'd, the Middling People are put backward in their Endeavours to thrive, and the Meaner Sort are squeez'd to the last Drop; insomuch that those who are not poor stand fair to be made so, and those who are poor may be sure to continue so to their Lives End.

The

Or, the House-keeper's Complaint. 3

The Government all this while bears the Burthen of Reproaches, and the King and Parliament are unjustly blam'd for the Exactions of Select Vestries. *Taxes were never so high in this World before,* this is the Cry every where; when alas it is not the King's Tax, but the PARISH TAX, which pinches the poor House-keeper. The King's Tax is paid by the Landlord, who is indeed most able; but the poor Tenant is squeez'd by the Parish Harpies, who make him pay at least as much to the Poor, as his Landlord pays to the King; nay in some of the Out-Parishes, the Poor's Rate by much exceeds the King's Tax. The only Tax the Tenant pays the King is to the Window Lights, and that but a very Trifle; but to the Parish he must pay the Parson's Rate, the Church-Rate, the Poor's-Rate, the Over-Rate, or Superfluous and Extravagant-Rate, besides the Scavenger, the Sewers, the Watch, the Highways, the Orphans, (if in the City) the Trophies, and other Rates without Number: Insomuch that our Doors are eternally haunted at a most unreasonable Rate, by these Vultures, who eat poor Tradesmen up alive, and give them not the least Time to rest and recruit themselves.

B 2

But

4 *Parochial* TYRANNY:

But I trust we have a King and Parliament now, will clip the Wings of these Harpies, and make them give an account of their Stewardships, nor suffer them to tax or excuse whom they please, according to their Humour or Prejudice; this is universally complain'd of, and is the highest Injustice. The Landlord pays no more to the King, than so much in the Pound, the Tenant pays but according to the Number of Windows in his House, nor is one Subject favour'd more than another, but all pay according to their respective Possessions.

But woe to those House-keepers who disoblige the Vestry Gentry, who are of a different Party or Principle, who have or may refuse to vote in all Elections National or Parochial, according to their Directions, these shall be saddled with Offices, Fines and double Taxes, as has been the Case of but too many since our late Elections.

In most Villages adjacent to *London*, where the Gentry and Tradesmen retire for Health and Air, they are sure to be rid to Death by these Parish Jockeys, who know no Mercy; and I doubt not make a good Livelihood out of them. It is shameful to think what Taxes are paid where there are but few Poor, except the Church-

Or, the House-keeper's Complaint. 5

Church-wardens, &c. who grow rich at the Parish Charge, and fatten themselves with what they extort from the Parish. Sometimes indeed the Parishioners grumble and are for Law, but they are soon quell'd, the Vestry beat 'em with their own Weapons, (*i. e.*) with their own Money, and Every-Bodies Business becomes No-Bodies, 'till at last all pay quietly, and put their Necks tamely into the Collar.

Since therefore we are tax'd by the Government, but according to the Lands or Tenements we possess, the Merchandizes we import, and the exciseable Commodities we consume, and that no farther than what we freely grant of our selves, by our Representatives in Parliament, why should these Parish Tyrants tax us at random, and make it penal to be industrious: For Example, if I pay the King his Right, he has no farther Demand upon me, and I am at Liberty to call what I get by my Labour, my own, without being call'd to an account; a Happiness peculiar to this Nation. But these Parish Blood-suckers will not let me come off so, for if by my Industry and Success, I furnish my House with a little Plate, &c. or other handsome Furniture, this is an immediate Eye-sore to the Vestry Gentry, and they charge me so much the more

6 *Parochial TYRANNY :*

more for Stock, so that in a few Years I pay dear for my Finery, and if I would save my Purse, must conceal my Substance; and for what Reason, not for Fear of the King, (as is the Case of some neighbouring Nations) but for Fear of the Churchwardens, forsooth.

Thus, while our Gracious King subjects even his own Royalty to our Liberty and Property, these Villains subject our Properties to their Avarice, and make us pay for our very Furniture.

As we know what Demands the Government have upon us, we are in no Fear of Re-assessments, &c. our Receipts are our Vouchers, nor can we be impos'd upon; but there's no End to Parish Taxes, we know not when we have paid, but Book succeeds Book, and Re-assessment follows Re-assessment, without End or Reason.

The Charge and Trouble of giving Receipts would be but small, in Comparison to the Ease and Satisfaction it would give the Parishioners; but it is too honest, too fair a Method for Parish Tyrants to follow.

I would fain learn by what Kalendar they go: Our Almanack divides the Year into Four Quarters, but these Gentlemen can make Ten or a Dozen at least;
were

Or, the House-keeper's Complaint. 7

were the Government to do so too, the Lord have Mercy upon us.

If the Government receives but a Shilling of the Subject, there is a Receipt given for a Voucher, but Parish Officers give no other Satisfaction for your Payment, than crossing the Book with a Pencil, which may be rubb'd out with a Piece of Bread at pleasure, and you oblig'd to pay over again. Nay while they have all the Cards thus in their own Hands, if they are not honest, they may make duplicates of their Books, and collect the same Rate over and over again; as has been the Case in several Parishes.

Were the Poor to have the Money collected, and the Parishioners satisfy'd it was rightly apply'd, it would not be Matter of such Complaint, but for them to collect what they think fit, to distribute it as they think fit, and give what Account they think fit, is intolerable: This makes their Partiality most evident, Loading some, and Excusing others; whereas, were all to have Neighbour's Fare, that is to say, to pay according to their several Rents, it would not fall so heavy on those who do pay: For if one is excus'd out of three, the Burthen must consequently fall heavier on the other two. Why are not their Books open to general Inspection,
that

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that we may see by whom the Money is paid, to whom it is paid, and whether any is left to be carried on to another Quarter, and lessen the succeeding Charge: This would be but fair Dealing, and I think, reasonable Satisfaction to be given us for our Money. But there are too many Parish Feasts, to admit of such honest Administration, the Spit is too often faddled, and the Bottle goes too merrily round, for the Ease of the Parishioners. Surely there must be a great Fatigue in Parish Affairs, where so much Refreshment is requir'd, and no small private Gain, when they are so eager and severe in their Collections. And yet for all these great Sums collected, the Poor fare ne'er the better, the Money is parcel'd out to make the greatest Show, and a few miserable Wretches have some Six-pence, some a Shilling a Week, to starve upon; which scanty Allowance is the Reason why our Streets swarm with Beggars.

With what Imperiousness do they ride the Parishioners? How do they lord it over the poor Wretches, who take Relief at their Hands? and yet these Gentlemen to save Charges, are brisk enough to hunt a distressed Creature from Parish to Parish, 'till they perish for Want by the way: How many poor Women in Labour have
been

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been lost, while two Parishes are contending to throw her on each other, tho' common Humanity, and the Danger of the Circumstance, make all Delays in that Case inhuman to the last Degree.

To what end is this outside Caution, but to save the Money for their own Guts, and feast themselves at the Parish Charge. But nothing is so profitable to these Gentlemen as Parish Repairs; if the Church is new Beautify'd, Painted or White-Wash'd, whip they come upon you with a Church Rate, and where Two Hundred Pounds has been expended, Twelve Hundred shall be collected; for Mr. Church-warden will strive hard, but his Daughter shall be a Thousand Pounds the better: Nay, there are some Parishes, where Church-wardens tho' they went in as poor as Rats, have come out too rich ever to be poor again; and yet every Booby is willing to eternize his Name with an Inscription, to tell the World in what Year he put the Parish to an unnecessary Charge; so that there is always something to be done to the Church, to please the Vanity of the Church-warden.

It is therefore a Thousand Pities Church-wardens should be vested with such Power; to put the Inhabitants to what Charge they please; to squander away the Parish
C Money,

10 *Parochial* TYRANNY:

Money after their own Inventions; to build, rebuild, alter, and pull down at Pleasure, without being call'd to Account.

There is not a greater Abuse in the World, than that of Select Vestries; it is the most flagrant of Tyrannies, for while the King gives us the full Enjoyment of our Liberties, these Select Vestries make us the greatest Slaves imaginable: Nor is there any Redemption, unless our Gracious Sovereign take us from the Jaws of these Devourers, who constitute themselves our Rulers *in Eternum*. All other elective Bodies have a Rotation, but these Select Vestries stagnate and stink in the Nostrils of their Fellow Citizens. The Parliament is Septennial, the Mayoralty and Common-Council Annual, but Select Vestries Perennial, and never renew'd but by one at a time, as the old Ones drop off; for they are sure to chose none in their Room, but those whom they have mark'd for their Purpose before-hand; so Rogue succeeds Rogue, and the same Scene of Villainy is still carried on, to the Terror of the poor Parishioners. Besides, while the Election is in themselves, we have no Hopes of Amendment. If they happen to be mistaken in their Man, and by Chance chose one honest Man among 'em, he must either absent himself,

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self, or come into their Measures; otherwise he is like an Owl among the Birds: So that it may be said of a Select Vestry as of the Mint, let a Man go in never so honest, he's sure not to come out so.

What prodigious Sums are rais'd for every trifling Expence, but what is done with the Over-plus, there's the Mystery?

Offices of Burthen, Fatigue, and Expence, are the Ministers of their Resentment, and the Punishment of inquisitive Reasoning, or rebellious Parishioners; but the sweet Posts of Profit are reserved for their true and trusty Hell-Hounds, who go through-stitch with their dirty Work, and boggle at nothing, no not the Ruin of whole Families.

And yet for all this, many Parishes are up to the Ears in Debt, poor Tradesmen are kept out of their Money Year after Year, and who can they sue? why the Parish. What do they get? why nothing. Is it not an easy Matter for a Vestry to go to Law, when they have the Parish Money at Command. In short, they are quick to Contract, slow to Pay, severe in Assessing, unrelenting in Redressing. What Tyrants would these Men be, were more Power lodg'd in their Hands! and yet these are the Men who shall grumble to pay the Land Tax, when

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they themselves are making their Neighbours pay more to the Poor; as is the Case in most of the out-Parishes.

But they stop not here, if two or three hundred Yards of Highway is to be repair'd, there is six Pence in the Pound charg'd upon the whole Parish, and seven or eight Hundred Pound *per Annum* shall be collected for the Highways, which may probably cost forty or fifty if repair'd at all; for were it not for the Turnpikes, there would be no going in or out of *London*: What wretched Ways there are till you come to the Turnpikes.

This is an insufferable Tax, and ought to be carried to the Parish Account; nor is there any Need to have a Rate on Purpose; but therein lies the Advantage of Vestries, who think it better to leave than lack, and had rather gather a Thousand Pound more, than Five Pound less.

The Scavengers Rate is something more Reasonable, I being entirely for having the Streets kept clean, and the Soil carried away, but at the same time am averse to multiplicity of Rates, and cannot but think this Charge had better be carried to a general Account, as hereafter shall be specified, and not made a particular Rate.

There

Or, the House-keeper's Complaint. 13

There is another Demand, *viz.* for Watch and Ward, than which nothing is more abus'd, for great Sums are collected, and yet the Streets are but very indifferently watch'd. For Example, a Watchman shall have a Beat of four or five Hundred Houses, and many of those in Courts and Alleys; so that while he is at one Part of his Rounds, many Robberies may be easily committed at the other; and yet the Fault is laid on the poor Watchman, while others run away with the Profits; for he is allowed but six Pence *per Night*, which comes to no more than *9l. 2s. 6d. per Annum*, and yet there shall near a Hundred Pound *per Annum* be gather'd in his Beat. Is not this an Abuse!

Every now and then there is a Rate made for the Sewers, not but that they ought to be a Publick Expence, as they are a Publick Benefit: But why must so much be gather'd, when so little is laid out? Who has the Over-plus? And why might not this Expence likewise be carried to a general Account?

In short, Numberless are their Rates, and a Book is made for every trifling Article to give Parishioners double Trouble, and put them to nine times the Expence.

I

14 *Parochial* TYRANNY:

I take all Parochial Taxes to be no more than a fair and equal Contribution of the Parishioners towards necessary Expences; whoever abuses the Intention, is as base as he, who being a Member of a Club, shall underhand send home Wine, &c. which he shall cause the Master of the House, by Connivance, to charge to the general Reckoning, and feast himself by that Means at other Peoples Charge. And yet the Case is thus with our Parish Fleecers, they can't stir without a Bottle and a Bird; if they gather but forty Shillings, thirty must be spent. They may very well afford to keep much Company, to be every Night at the Tavern, to grow Purfy and Gouty, when let them spend what they will, or with whom they will, 'tis all carried to the Parish Account; for in most of their Accompts you will find these or the like Articles; spent such a Day — so much, without specifying the Occasion; given such or such a Sum to a poor Person, without saying to whom: And yet these Accompts are pass'd, and the same Game still continues to go on in Opposition to all Truth and common Reason.

We are a Reproach to the People call'd Quakers, and they an Example to us; for they not only contribute to maintain our Poor,

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Poor, but entirely support their own, who dare not take Alms of a Parish on Pain of being excluded from among them. The Heads of these People have their monthly Meetings, where all Affairs relating to their Poor are settled, without a Multiplicity of Rates, as is our Case. And I am well assur'd, that there is not one Farthing of the publick Money expended, but if any among them take a Glas after the Meeting is over, every Man pays his Club out of his own Pocket.

Were our Vestry-Men to do the same, our Rates would shrink considerably, but instead thereof we must expect an Increase, now the Vintners have rais'd their Wine to two Shillings a Bottle.

There is another devilish Practice among these Blood-suckers, which they call Birding, that is to say, picking up Fines, which indeed pay for Birds, Bottles of Wine. Every now and then they rumage the Parish, and prick down those whom they are sure will fine for Offices; nor shall a young Beginner scarce be settled, but the old Ones have an Hawk's Eye upon him; and if they find him more inclinable to Fine than Serve, he is sure to be their immediate Prey.

To this, and other their hellish Purposes, they, like the Jesuits, have their Emissaries

ries to inspect the Circumstance and Inclination of whatever Parishoners they have a mind to Sacrifice; and first their Peerer, who under Pretence of paying a Visit, &c. takes an Inventory *Memoriter* of your Goods, Plate, &c. which he reports to the Conclave, who charge you to stock accordingly.

Secondly, their Interferer, who makes himself yet more intimate, sitting the young Gentleman to know if he will swallow the Bait, to enquire whether the serving an Office would not be detrimental, or if he had not rather Fine than Serve.

Thirdly, the Peerer or Decoy Bird, who though he pays no more Rent, and therefore reasonably ought to pay no more Taxes than his Neighbours, yet for a Blind, is charg'd as much more, to quiet the Grumbletonians, and draw other Fools into the Snare, who pay quietly, while he has his Over-plus repay'd him, and a good Treat into the Bargain.

They have moreover those who will first give into your Complaints with sham Condolance, and then cordially advise you to pay every Tax, and submit to every Fine impos'd on you, to avoid Law-Suits, Doctors Commons, and the like.

But of all their Punishments or Offices, the most terrible is that of the Constable,
or

or Parish Drudge, for he is in Effect a greater Slave than the Beadle, who is only Lacquey to the Church-Warden. The Imposition of this Office is an insupportable Hardship; it takes up so much of a Man's time, that his own Affairs are frequently totally neglected, too often to his Ruin; yet there is neither Profit or Pleasure therein, but an inconceivable Fatigue. Besides the Office is so intricate, that a Man is generally out of his Constableness before he has learn'd half his Duty.

The Fine for Constable brings no small Grist to their Mill, from Merchants and Foreigners in the City, as well *Jezus* as Christians: If a Man can't speak one Word of *English*, 'tis so much the better for them, nay they stick not to choose old, infirm, and lame Persons, totally incapable of Serving, merely for the Fine-sake. To justify which, I appeal to most foreign Merchants in *St. Mary-Ax*, and all other Places adjacent to the *Royal Exchange*.

If two Basket Women, or such like Creatures, fall out at a Geneva Shop, the Constable must attend with a Warrant, and loyter away that Time which ought to be employ'd in his Shop or Business.

One would hardly imagine that these Parish Tyrants, which for the Generality, are but Impudent, Illiterate, Upstart Fellows,
D
lows,

lows, of much Leisure and little Business, who put themselves forward, while the more substantial, sensible, and honest Part of the Parishioners, mind their own Business, too much to be ambitious of Parish Offices. One would hardly imagine, I say, that these Wretches should make themselves so formidable by their Cabals, to ride whole Parishes, bring Communities under Contribution, and enrich themselves with the Sweat of their Neighbour's Brows.

But such is the Cunning of these Men, that Craft supplies the Want of Learning, insomuch that they have acquir'd a Policy peculiar to themselves; this over-reaching Subtlety is their whole Study, and the *Caballa* or Mysteries of their Fraternity are handled down from Generation to Generation: And if every Generation grows wiser and wiser, no wonder if every Vestry grows worse and worse.

And as in Mysteries of State there is often a Wheel within a Wheel; so in Parochial Government there is many times a Vestry within a Vestry; that is to say, Numbers for Shew, but a few for Business. Those who have paid all the Fines of a Parish, of Course become Vestry-Men: But alas, they know little of its Affairs! their Advice and Assent may be asked now and then in Matters of more Form than
Con-

Consequence; but the most material Affairs are transacted at the Tavern, over a Bird and a Bottle, by the Select and Knowing few, who blind the others with plausible Amusements, and make one Part of the Parish help to deceive the other.

Some indeed are more bare-fac'd, and make even a Trade of a Parish; I mean those Church-Wardens and Vestries who lump it with Harlots and Whoremongers, and take Bastards from off their Hands at so much *per Head*; for which they get a good Treat from two Guineas to five, according to the Circumstances of their Chap, which they call saddling the Spit; besides a good round Sum with the Bantling, which 'tis to be fear'd is entirely sunk, all this being done by Connivance. I must indeed justify them so far in the Affair, that their Care ought to be commended in putting the poor Children out to those they call God Almighty's Nurses. I would fain ask by what Charter they hold this hellish Commerce, and become the Devil's Brokers: Encouraging lew'd Persons in their Sin, and making little better than Pimps of themselves, by pocketing the Pence. This is a Trade no ways justifiable, and far below the Character they would aggrandize to themselves; but the Profit palliates the Shame, and a
D 2 good

good Front with a forc'd Laugh will easily bear 'em out.

And now I am talking of Harlots, give me leave to digress a while, and mention the Impudence of those Creatures, who infest our Streets in the most shameless Manner imaginable, and are grown to such a Height of Obscenity and Profaneness, there is no passing the Streets; yet are they suffered to reign in their Impudence, insomuch that *London* is become a mere *Sodom* and Sink of Uncleanness. There is no Nation in the World to which we are not a Reproach in this Particular; and Foreigners carry away a sad Account of *England* from this open Testimony of its Debauchery. One would think the Societies for Reformation should amend it, but I believe it is out of their Power. The Civil Power should therefore interpose; nor is it below its Cognizance, when it corrupts our Youth, and annoys the sober Part of Mankind to such a Degree. Our Watchmen in general are corrupted, and have these Creatures under Contribution; so that while this Trade goes on, idle Persons will more and more throw themselves upon the Town, and we shall at last find it a hard Matter to get or keep an honest Servant.

Street

Street-Abuses are now so frequent, between these Trulls and their Fellows, that honest People can hardly pass, especially after Candle-light. Cries of Murder, Shrieks, Oaths, and the vilest Barbarities are but too common even in our Principal Streets. I for my Part am so far for publick Peace, I would not have these Brutalities allow'd of, even to the worst of Strumpets: The Laws have provided proper Correction for them; nor should every vulgar Fellow be indulg'd in these Cruelties; because under this Pretence many honest Women are Mobb'd, and oftentimes robb'd in the very Face of the World, nay beat into the Bargain: For if any one make a Struggle or Out-cry, these Villains swear they are Whores, and so are left at Liberty to rob or abuse them at Pleasure.

These, and many the like Abuses are indulg'd, because it is advanc'd, that it is below the Civil Power to take Notice of such Low Life; to which I answer, nothing which is necessary or conducive to publick Peace, is below the Cognizance of a Commonwealth: and if these Evils are not amended in time, they at last may grow too many for us.

But to return to my Subject — The Terror of Taxes and Fines keeps many Persons of Fortune from being House-keepers, so

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so that (at the Court End of the Town especially) Houses are occupied by poor and desperate Persons, who live, or rather starve, by what is call'd Letting of Lodgings. Thus does the Landlord too often lose his Rent by these Creatures, who shift from Place to Place, receiving Money for Rent, but never paying any, for by keeping close and changing their Names, they evade not only Rent, but Taxes. Whereas were it not for the Bugbear of Fines and high Taxes, our Houses would be occupied by creditable and substantial Persons, to the no small Comfort of the Landlord, and Benefit of the Publick; because those would be good Subjects, Tenants, and Parishioners, who now are but Lodgers or Inmates; and consequently of much less Benefit to the Publick than otherwise they might be.

People of Condition being thus scared, too many Landlords have their Houses either empty or ill Tenanted, by which the Government itself suffers, both in its Civil and Ecclesiastical Estate: For if Houses are empty, Landlords do not pay; if ill Tenanted, 'tis hard upon them. If Persons of Fortune were eased of Offices, Fines, &c. and would become Parishioners, would it not handsomely augment many Benefices in and about *London*? But now the first
Question

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Question which is, or ought to be asked, is, In what Parish is this House? If it happen to be a severe Parish, the Landlord loses a good Tenant, and too often has half his Estate un-occupied: Infomuch, that I cannot think it below the Notice of any Government to reform such notorious Abuses. But on the Contrary, it will be a general Ease and Satisfaction, and a great Means of having national and more necessary Taxes better paid, and with less Remorse.

Most Gracious and Illustrious King!
Most Noble Lords! Most Honourable House
of Commons! Hear! O hear the oppressed
House-keeper's Cry, and relieve them from
the insupportable Tyranny of Parochial
Inquisitions! Eas'd of these Burthens, we
shall pay our Taxes and Customs with
Pleasure. And as you, our most Au-
gust Legislature, have it in your Power to
do good, we doubt not of your good Will
to prosecute a Work which will gain his
Majesty the Hearts of all his Subjects. Oh
what a Glory will it be to that King and
that Parliament, who shall take this Yoke
from our Necks, and give us Liberty in
Perfection! which is a Task undoubtedly
reserv'd for this most happy, most auspicious
Reign.

POST-



POSTSCRIPT.

ONE very great Abuse I had like to have forgot is, that many noble Charities are sunk and swallowed up by these Villains, who basely wrong the Indigent living, and sacrilegiously pervert the Donations of the Dead. What a Scene of Villainy would be open'd, were a strict Inquisition made of the Charities and pious Gifts left to the several Parishes. Were Commissioners instituted by the Government, who should make a general Inspection into all Parochial Legacies, and a strict Enquiry after Publick Charities sunk or missapply'd, doubtless they would bring many lost Charities to Light, and by an exact Register and Recollection, save many more noble Gifts from Abuse and Oblivion. This would be an Undertaking worthy our Royal *George's* Reign. Nor should Church-Wardens or Vestries longer be suffer'd to embezzle pious Gifts, but the Nature and Intent of 'em should be made plain as the Sun at Noon-Day; that the Light of the good
Action

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Actions of our Fore-Fathers might shine before all Men, and to all Generations.

Were such Charities, I say, publickly recorded, and publick Copies exhibited, it would be impossible to Conceal or Abuse them. Those who had any Claim to 'em, need but make out their Title before the Commissioners, and be satisfied. Whereas Application to Church-Wardens is in a Manner fruitless, so imperious are they in their Carriage: They Brow-Beat whoever applies to them, and seldom or never return a Satisfactory Answer.

And though many Charities are yet kept up to outward Appearance, yet such Abuses are crept in as stand in much Need of Amendment. Every Hospital, Alms-House, &c. should therefore be visited, — the Will of the Donor, and the Rental inspected, and strict Enquiry made, whether the Objects of such Charity have had Justice done 'em or no, whether they have not been Abridg'd in their Allowance, Diet, or Cloaths, &c. If so, for what Reason, and whether the Steward, Manciple, or other commanding Officer, has not ek'd out his Perquisites with the Pensioners Properties.

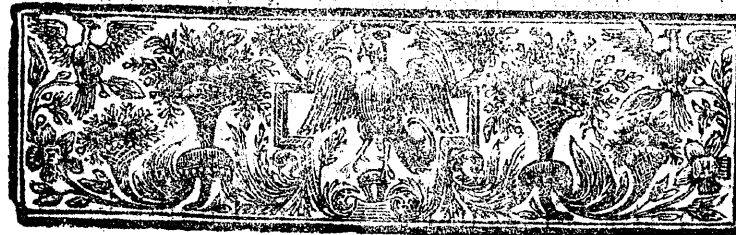
They should moreover carry in their yearly Accounts to the Commissioners afore-
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said

said, to prevent all future Abuses; and all publick Charities, &c. should be subject to such Regulation.

There are moreover sundry Gifts to publick Grammar Schools for the Encouragement of Learning; nor should we forget Exhibitions given to maintain ingenious Youths at the University, and other Donations well worth looking after. Many of which Charities might be much augmented, the Estates being considerably improv'd; nor should any Leases be given higger-mugger to rob the Poor, by letting an Estate at half the Value, for the sake of a Fine, which 'tis to be fear'd is but too often sunk, after the manner of Fines rais'd by Parish Sportsmen in Birding time, who either swallow or pocket their Game, and churlishly deny even the least Morfel to their Neighbours.



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Plain and Practicable PROPOSAL, for the better Regulating Parish Affairs.



INSTEAD of Select Vestries, Church-Wardens, or other superfluous Officers; who serve but to pillage a Parish, by playing into each other's Hands, and keeping the rest of the Parishioners in the Dark; an annual Election should be made of a Treasurer, one of the most Substantial among them, in which Election every Parishioner, who contributes towards the Charge of the Parish, should have a Vote. The Treasurer should have an Office into, and from

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which

which all Monies should be paid. There should likewise be a Monthly or Quarterly Meeting of the Parishioners, to regulate the Parish Affairs, direct the Distribution of Money, and settle a general Rate hereafter to be specified.

In the Treasurer's Office should be a Clerk, who ought to give Security answerable to this Trust, and have a Salary sufficient to engage his constant Attendance. This Clerk should keep fair Accounts of all Monies receiv'd and disburs'd, to be Audited by the Treasurer and general Meeting aforesaid, and moreover lie open to be perus'd at any Time by any of the Parishioners who shall request to inspect the same.

An Account should be taken of the Respective Rents of the Parish, to be set against the Expences, and a Pound Rate allow'd accordingly.

Now it will be ask'd, how is this Money to be gather'd; to which I shall answer, not by a Multiplicity of Books to make substantial House-keepers dandle up and down the Parish, and neglect their own Business, while some People keep their Doors shut and never pay, others are never to be found at home; so that the Fatigue is Inconceivable. Instead of this, the Parishioners should have publick Notice how much in the Pound

Pound the general Rate amounted to; this they should be obliged to send or carry in to the Treasurer's Office by a certain limited Day, for which they should have a Receipt: Those who neglect or refuse, ought to be punish'd by Fine, Imprisonment, or otherwise.

This would be a great Ease to some Parishioners, who have not ready Money always by them; and I am sure had rather carry in their Money at Convenience, than be always pester'd with Tax-Gatherers. Besides, while one half of the Parishioners pay, and the other evade it as aforesaid, it falls very heavy on those whose Principle or Business will not admit of keeping their Doors shut, and putting Parish Officers to Defiance.

Instead of the dangerous, fatiguing, Expensive, and at present, vulgar Esteem'd Office of Constable, which is the Vestry Revenge, and always bestow'd on those who mutiny; and moreover a rare Raw-Head and Bloody-Bones, to frighten Fines out of quiet People. Instead, I say, of making substantial House-keepers break their Rest, endanger their Health and Lives, neglect their Business, and oftentimes run into expensive Law-Suits, through Ignorance; I think it much more adviseable for

30 Parochial TYRANNY:

for a Parish, that, according to the Bigness thereof, two or more decay'd Parishioners be made Constables, during good Behaviour: That they be allow'd twenty or thirty Pounds *per Annum* each, which with the common Allowance for serving Warrants, &c. may afford a comfortable Subsistence for many reduced Tradesmen and their Families, who otherwise would be chargeable to the Parish.

Instead of making a Book for every particular Charge, and gathering such large Overplus, each particular Charge should be made a particular Article, in a general Account, after this or the like Nature.

	l.
To the Poor, ———	200
To the Watch and Constables, —	100
To the Scavenger, ———	30
To mending the Sewers ———	10
To Church Officers, as Clerk, Sexton, &c. ———	60
To Treasurer's Clerk, ———	40
Repairs, Coals, Candles, Books, and other Incidents. ———	60
	—————
	500
	—————

We

Or, the House-keeper's Complaint. 31

We will suppose the Rents of this Parish to amount to 10000 *l. per Ann.* Now if the Rents of the Houses at an Average amount to but 25 *l. per House*, one House with another, which by the Way, is but a small Rent at present for a Man in any thing of Business, we shall find but four Hundred Houses in the whole Parish; and I am confident forty Poor is a competent Number for such a Parish: Out of the two Hundred Pound above-specified, they may be allowed five Pounds *per Annum* each. If the Number be smaller, the handsomer may be the Allowance. To every fifty Houses there may likewise be a Watchman at 10 *l. per Annum*, which with twenty Pound to the Constable, amounts to but one Hundred Pound. If a Coach and two Horses may be hired at 10 *s. per Diem*, a Scavenger to work a Cart and Horse will be very well paid at 6 *s. per Diem*, which at twice a Week amounts to but a Trifle above 30 *l. per Annum*. The other Allowances are most ample, and yet all these together amount to but twelve Pence in the Pound for the whole, for which there are at least four Watchmen for one: A Constable is paid for his Trouble, a Clerk allowed a handsome Sallery, and the Charge of the Treasurer's Office is sufficiently provided for.

This

32 Parochial TYRANNY:

Now if this is so handsome an Allowance for a small Parish, whose Rents do not exceed 10000*l. per Annum*. In some Parishes in the City, where there are few or no Poor, the Charge will amount to much less; but in the Out-Parishes, were the Rents amount from 50 to 100000*l.* and upwards. And where the Poor's Rate is generally 3 or 4*s.* in the Pound, what prodigious Sums must be collected! and how handsomely might they provide for their Poor? especially if they receive Helps from other Parishes, as I am inform'd is practis'd in some Places.

If the Church want Repairs, it should not be in the Power of any single Man, or Select Number of Men, to squander the Parish Money, but the whole Community should settle the Expence and Rate, which is the only Particular Rate I see Occasion for; all other casual Charges may be made Articles in the general Account above-proposed.

Thus we find that one Year with another, the whole Charge, as here propos'd, will amount but to one Shilling in the Pound at most. Let us see what a Bill the Parish Hucksters will bring in for a House of twenty Pounds *per Annum*.

To

Or, the House-keeper's Complaint. 33

	l.	s.
To the Poor, _____	2	00
To the Scavenger, _____	0	06
To the Sewers, _____	0	03
To the Watch, _____	0	06
	2	15

I have made but a very moderate Bill, and yet there is near treble the Difference; but if it happen in a Parish where the Highways give Pretence for a Book, they will be sure to Jockey you yet farther, that and the Sewers being their sweetest Profits.

To make a Shew of Frugality, and soothe the Parishioners, they have lately set up Work-houses in many Parishes, and raised large Contributions for those Purposes, (out of which no Doubt they have had some Share) notwithstanding which the Taxes are never a Whit lessen'd, they can't afford it at the Rate they live; and the Parishioners have only the Mortification to see themselves gull'd and Vestry-ridden *in Eternum*.

These Work-houses, tho' in Appearance Beneficial, yet have in some Respects an evil Tendency, for they mix the Good and the Bad; and too often make Reprobates of all alike. We all, alas, are
F subject

subject to Misfortune! and if an honest Gentleman or Trader should leave a Wife or Children unprovided for, what a shocking Thing is it to think they must be mix'd with Vagrants, Beggars, Thieves, and Night-walkers? to receive their Insults, to hear their Blasphemous and Obscene Discourse, to be suffocated with their Nastiness, and eat up with their Vermin. And if any Parishioners interpose in their Behalf, they are sure to be shut up, and worse treated for the Future.

If we must have Work-houses, let there at least be separate Wards, and Tables; let some Difference be made between once substantial and contributing House-keepers, and vagabond Wretches; let all Communication between the Parties be cut off, that the innocent Children of honest unfortunate Men may not be corrupted. On the Contrary, let them have a Christian Education, and sent to Church every *Sunday* at least; under the Inspection of some sober Person the Committee shall appoint from among the decay'd Parishioners. If they do not think fit to send 'em to the Charity-School, let some Care at least be taken that they be taught to read and write, and that they be virtuously brought up, notwithstanding their Poverty.

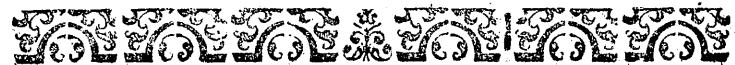
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Thus have I specified how many Abuses may be amended, more may probably have escaped me, which I hope some abler Person will take in hand. What I have offered is plain and practicable, and if it be not totally approved, something at least may be made out of it. If Parishioners be obliged to carry in their Money, it will prevent the almost inconceivable Trouble of collecting Rates. If Constables are made in the Manner above-propos'd, many needless Fines will be saved. If the Watch and Work-houses are better regulated, we shall soon feel the good Effects. But above all, if the Parish Books are made liable to general Inspection, and a general Rate constituted, instead of such a Multiplicity; and contributing Parishioners have the Disposal of their own Money, instead of Church-Wardens, Select Vestries, or any other Set of Tricksters: Then may we hope to have our Parish Taxes abridg'd at least three Fourths.

This may not be unacceptable at a time when other Bodies of Tradesmen have learn'd to form Cabals and raise the Price of their Commodities without the least Reason or Pretence; particularly the Tallow-Chandlers and Bakers, who have abused God's Providence, and turn'd Plenty into Scarcity: But I hope the Government

36 *Parochial TYRANNY, &c.*

will take Notice of them, before the Infection reaches farther, and stop this growing Evil; which so sensibly affects the working or middling People, who maintain not only those below, but those above them: And are in Effect the Chief, if not the sole Support of this Kingdom.



ST. *Thomas's* Day approaching, I give this Caution to the Citizens of *London*, (those in the Out-Wards especially) that they set aside the idle Distinction of *Whig* and *Tory*, and unite in the common Cause, by electing such Persons to Represent them in Common-Council, as are of unbyas'd Principles, and not to be brought over by any *Select Vestry*; but on the contrary, such as will oppose and break their Corrupt Measures, and as much as in them lies, see Justice done to their Fellow Citizens.

F I N I S.



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