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*Some Pitty on the Poor:*

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A way how poor people may be supplied with labour and relief, without begging; particularly intended for the Town of Marlborough in the County of Wilts, which occasioned another short form concerning the three Nations of England, Scotland, and Ireland, with an appeal to the Parliament to encourage the work.

Dan. 4. 27. *Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor.*

Psal. 41. 1, 2. *Blessed is the man that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble, the Lord will keep him and preserve him alive, he shall be blessed upon earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies.*

Phil. 4. 8, 9. *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things: those things do, and the God of peace shall be with you.*

*To the Inhabitants of Marlborough in the County of Wilts, and Country near adjaying.*

**F**riends and Neighbours, it is more shame to be negligent and idle, then to be poor, but to strive who shall be first in a good work is honourable: There is some reason why this particular way of shewing mercy towards the poor should be first in practice, where it was first in question, though the number of poor be many, the work great, and means small, yet nothing is hard to God when his hand hath done it: where it is so hard, it may encourage others; where it is more easie, none can object the charge, because it will be les, nor injustice, because it is more equal, and for the pains, what can be done without: if the work be hard, it is not impossible, for all things are possible to God, and to him that believeth: Let us go on with courage, diligence and constancy for the glory of God, the good of the poor, and the peace of our consciences, for it is our duty, *T. Laurent.*

*T. L.* his propositions to the inhabitants of *Malbrough*, he having formerly employed the poor of that town 24 years, hath seen much the ground of their misery, & something of the remedy, & being deeply sensible of their sad condition, and greatness and daily encrease of their numbers that beg, their manner of living, and not like to be otherwise, in discharge of his conscience towards God and

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He shall appoint, may use means the poor may be provided for: That there be not a beggar in the streets. As first to take notice how many householders, sojourners and inmates there be in *Marlbrough*, and of what calling. 2. How many persons beg about the streets and Inns. 3. How many of them are able to work. 4. How many old, impotent, and young children. 5. How many work to the Workhouse. 6. How many labourers that are not in constant work, and settle them as much as may be. 7. To take notice out of the former numbers, of such as are fit to work, and of them that should bring them into work according to order. 8. To enquire in any house, whether any beg, how many persons in that family, and how employed. 9. To meet the Officers that collect and bring in the money, and the keeper of the workhouse, every sixth day at the middle of the day, to set in order the work. 10. To use some diligence about settling a poor mans office, first where labourers and handicrafts men that want work, and such as want workmen may enquire. 2. Where some boys that would or are fit to be Apprentices, may be informed of masters, and some that wants servants in City or Countrey, or whom they have spoken to may enquire. 3. Where maids that would or are fit to be Apprentices or Covenant servants, or some as want such, may enquire, but none to be put to service until they be first taught to knit, spin, sew, learn some trade or way of livelihood, left in after times they can do nothing for themselves. 4. Where any poor people that may have work, and are known to live idly, may be informed of, and course taken with. 5. Where tradesmen who at some times have more work for customers then they can do, and others of that trade want, may be informed and advised to help one another, and so improve their trades, and not encrease poor families. 6. Where any in distress, having just cause to complain, may make their several conditions known, that course may be taken to supply their wants, as money can be had. 7. Where any well affected may inform of work, or advise in whatsoever may be for a general good, that poor people having work constant, may yearn more at a lower rate, then they that work onely three or four days in a week at a higher rate; and until this work be effected, *Tho. Laurence* doth agree to act all on his part at his own charge, if the Governours and inhabitants of *Malbrough* shall on their part consent and agree first, that all that have paid one peny a week adde one half peny a week more, and all others accordingly to help children that are to be taught, and to dispose of them when they can work well. 2. To require the keeper of the workhouse that he provide wool to set on work from time to time sixty persons of the Town, if more want work, then they to have work provided also, and the keeper of the workhouse to be paid for that as can be agreed, and to pay wages as others pay for the like work, being as well done, and to have money allowed him to buy working instruments, to teach such to work at the workhouse who cannot work, nor have friends to teach them; and every one to pay for their tools and teaching, and when they can work well, to be disposed of and others put in their places. 3. That the Governours appoint the

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and whatsoever things or persons are not rated being rateable, be equally rated and paid to the poor, and that all extraordinary charges, as by pestilence, or the like, be not paid out of the collection money; and that there be a poor mans box in the Office, to put in what money any one shall freely give for his information and advice, or any other charitable person for the use of the poor. 4. That the Officers that collect and bring in the money, the keeper of the workhouse, and *Tho. Laurence*, meet at the poor mans Office every sixth day, at the middle of the day, to dispose of the money collected for children, and such as justly complain of want, and to settle labourers and handicrafts men as much as may be in constant work, and the old and impotent in most convenient places, and that the Officers of every ward desire work of them that have it, for labourers and handicrafts men, being required by them that want work, and that there be a provision of firing at the best rate in several places of the Town, for poor people to have at hand for their money as they have occasion. 5. If any one concerned in this Covenant, through any occasion whatsoever, shall fail of his duty for the publike good, then *Tho. Laurence* is to chuse another in his place, or act himself by the same power. 6. That not onely Governours, but all inhabitants assist in one to advance the publike good, by setting aside work for times of want, as wood cleaving, threshing, hedging, gardening, digging, weeding, ring hearbs, or any work, and inform at the Office what work they have, and how long they can stay. 7. Not onely the rich, but poor also be provident to get work for themselves, and not live idly and disorderly, causing their own misery, but labour and eat their own bread, this is that the Apostle warned, *1 Thess. 3. 10. If any man would not work, he should not eat: The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall cloath a man with rags, Prov. 23. and stripes are for the back of fools, Prov. 19. 20. and a deceitful person shall be famished, Prov. 19. 15.* 8. If not onely the Town, but the Countrey neer adjoining shall say, they suffer much by the poor of *Marlbrough*, if they will contribute, then their doors, woods, hedges, and other goods may be more free: and if any person shall be found to have stolen any thing from them that contribute, that then restitution be made by them that stole it, according to the Law; but if the Countrey shall take no notice, neither may the Town. 9. When the streets are cleaned of all beggars that are able to work, then they who paid three half pence a week, pay one half peny a week more, and all others accordingly, to maintain the old, impotent, and young children, these are some pointings, but the knowledge is in practice. 10. That all householders in *Marlbrough* meet at the Town Hall to give their consent. If some will say, They will give their charity themselves; so they may, for this publike collection is paid, not given, neither doth this hinder any to give money, food, raiment, or send gifts to the poor, according to Scripture. 11. That whatsoever things are just, and for the good of the Town, though not mentioned in this form, be performed by every particular inhabitant. 12. That six of the Governours, and six of the inhabitants in the behalf of the whole Town, set their hands and seals to this agreement, and

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*Marlbrough* will enter into this Covenant, *The Laurence* doth agree to act all on his part till the work be effected, at his own charge. At the first he judged it might deserve 100 l. for his pains and charge, but his conscience bearing him witness, that gain was not the mover, and fearing the Inhabitants would stumble at the same, *T. L.* is free to act without money. 13. After consideration of the numbers at present charge, and there may be many more, besides others in danger, and the most are old, impotent, and families of children that are very small, and of them that are well able to work, but a very little number: If therefore the Governors and inhabitants of *Marlbrough* shall consent and agree, that after tryal the former rates are found too little to maintain the poor, that then every one who pay one penny a week, pay one farthing a week more, and all others accordingly, and when the poor can be maintained with less, and children are grown, the Town may by consent take their rates lower.

*In tender heart love to my neighbours and Countrey men I wrote this short form, the same love in truth reaching to the Creation. I have written another, and directed it to the Parliament, to whom these Nations are to be subject, in all just commands.*

### To the Parliament.

That there may not be a beggar in *England*, *Scotland*, nor *Ireland*, it is desired, That you would give order that every Parish under your Government provide two able men fearing God, with whom they may agree to act as followeth; (in case none shall undertake it freely) First to take notice how many families there be in that Parish. 2. How many beg. 3. How many old, impotent, and young children. 4. To take notice how many are able to work, and of such as should set them to work according to order. 5. To meet the Officers that collect and bring in the money, one day in every week at the time and place appointed, to set in order things concerning the poor. 6. To settle a poor mans Office, to set down first where labourers and handicrafts men that want work, and such as want workmen, may enquire. 2. Where boys that would or are fit to go Apprentices, may be informed of Masters, or such as want servants in City or Countrey, on whom they have spoken to may enquire. 3. Where maids that would or are fit to go Apprentices or Covenant servants, or some that want such may enquire; but none to be put to service, until they be first taught to knit, spin, sow, learn some trade, or way of livelihood, lest in after times they can do nothing for themselves. 4. Where

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 having just cause to complain, may make their conditions known, that court may be taken to supply their wants, as money can be had. Sixthly, Where any well-affected may inform and advise for the publike good, that poor people having constant work, may earn more at a lower rate, then those that work only three or four days in a week at a higher rate: And as the men entrusted are to act as aforesaid, so the Officers and Inhabitants of the Parish to act as followeth.

First, To raise a stock or gather money to provide work for them that are able to work, and to supply their old, impotent, and young children by collection, and also help those whose work will not maintain them, though the money may trouble some, yet the charge may be much less, and more equal then giving victuals; besides, consider the ill breeding, wicked life, and bad end that many come unto by idleness. 2. To take the best course they can for the manner how to set them to work on silk, wool, hair, cotton, hemp, flax tow, wick, or any other matter; if there be 20 persons in a village that live by begging, being able to work, then the Parish to agree with some clothiers, Throwster, stuff, or stocking-maker for 5 pound a year, or as the thing is or can be agreed; to furnish the 20 persons with as much work constantly as they can do, and pay as others pay for the like work being as well done; so in great Towns or Places of clothing, one Clothier may take 20, another 20 as before: so in great Cities where is much trade on silks, wool, hair, cotton winding, weaving, button making, or the like, every Parish or Division agree with some Tradesman to provide work for 20, as aforesaid, and so may rise to hundreds or thousands by the same rule; so the poor may have work to do, Tradesmen their work done, and money also; so in places where poor are encreased, and have no Trade; or where some great Trade is wholly decayed, some other is to be sought for with discretion; but where Trade at present is dead, there some persons only to be set to other work, or put to other places for a time, and not hanker after matters for work, when the Trade is so dead, and hurt both. 3. That all Officers in the Parish assist the men entrusted, as need requires; and they that collect and bring in the money, and the men entrusted meet at the poor mans Office one day in every week at the time appointed to settle the work, to dispose the collection money to children that learn to work, and such as are in want, to settle labourers and handicraft men in constant work, and old and impotent in convenient places; and whatsoever they can do for the good of the Parish, though not mentioned in this form. 4. That not only Officers, but all Inhabitants joyn in one to advance the publike good, by setting aside work for days and times of want, and inform at the Office what work they have, and how long they can stay. 5. Not only rich, but the poor also in every parish be provident to get work for themselves, and not live idle and disorderly, causing their own misery, but labour and eat their own bread; this is that the Apostle warned *1 Thess. 3: 10. If any would not work, he should not eat: The drunkard and the glutton shall be poor, and drowsiness shall cloath a man with rags. Prov. 23: 21. and stripes are for the back of fools. Prov. 10: 20. and a desire for riches shall not satisfy a mans soul.*

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doors, woods, hedges, and other goods may be freed from them, and then public notice be given that none of the Town enter upon the ground of any person or parish that contribute, for they have given so much by the year, and who-soever shall be found to have stolen any thing from them that contribute, are to make restitution according to the Law; Gods law was, that whom the Judge should condemn, was to pay to his neighbour double, or fourfold. 7. That all householders in every parish meet in some convenient place where this form may be read, and the whole Parish with the men in trust enter into covenant to perform all that is herein, and all else that may be for the general good, and all the Officers of the parish, and as many more of the inhabitants in the behalf of the whole parish, set their hands and seals to this Agreement. These are some pointings, but the knowledge is in the practise: Now that words may come into practise for the public good, it is desired that the Parliament would give order that this short form be read by the Minister of every Parish under their Government (it may be done as easie as to proclaim a Fast) it will prevent idleness, lewdness, drunkennes, theft, &c. and so break the bands of wickedness, and let the oppressed go free, the true Fast which God hath chosen, proclaim it abroad, it is honourable) and then to be delivered the Officers for the poor to take notice how many beg in every parish, what course they have taken to supply them with labour and relief, and to give in their accompts to any one who is appointed Justice of the Peace for the County, one moneth before the Quarter Sessions, and the Justices of every County to peruse the accompts, and give them in to the Judge of the Sessions to be considered of as is need; if any Officer fail of his duty, or any of the Parish shall oppose, or not assist, that then both Officers and others so failing, pay at every Sessions to the use of the poor, double their rate for their neglect: and if any have just cause to complain, he may appeal to the Officers of the poor, or to the Justices of the County, or to the Judge of the Sessions, or to the higher powers, to which every soul is to be subject.

*And what shall be laid upon Superiours if they shall neglect the trust committed to them?*

When the deceit of such is laid open before the higher powers, I leave to their judgement, knowing that all, both high and low must give an accompt to God; nor do I desire to burden any mans conscience or estate, but to ease them rather, and to stir up the mindes of wise men to act for their own profit, to compleat by practise and experience what is briefly pointed at in words: just men in trust, a just account, and a penalty upon the unjust justly executed, are as sinews to the body of this work; but if there be no man in trust, no account nor penalty, the work will fail, Gods judgements have been long upon these Nations, great differences and contentions have been seen, great bloodshed and burthens have been felt, great counsels and undertakings have failed, who knoweth but it hath been much for the cause of the poor, there have been often fastings and long prayers; who stop their ears at the cry of the poor, shall cry themselves, and not be heard: that there may not be a beggar in Israel: no

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Reader,

I Have not written to hinder others, but to stir them up, who may know more variety of places, trading, and commerce: I have considered of Cities, Towns, and Villages, but no place have I found where some part of this Platform may not be suitable with little alteration; great Cities may be divided into convenient parts, that the poor, impotent, and labourers that live in Our streets, and Alleys, may be supplied with labour and relief from the rich Tradesmen, and Merchants, having severall Offices of Information, where poor people may make their severall conditions known, that means may be used for their relief, and not perish, as many have done; to supply the poor with money, and not with work and government, may bring the rich to poverty, and the poor to idleness: none can serve God themselves, nor their generation better then in some honest employment.

*Object. 1. Where shall work be had for all beggars, seeing they that would work have not enough?*

*Answ.* Is no more work to be found? Is all work improved? May not some planting of <sup>L</sup> and Flax; and spinning of Linnen be when Woollen fails for a time? We keep other Nations in work on Hemp and Flax, and our Woollen? What makes Cloth and Wool a Drug in England? And is not much work done by Horse-mills, Water mills, Frames, Engines, &c. that might be done with hands, and one rich man begger others of that trade, where one will do as much as five or ten, and hand-works also deceitfully done with half work, the goods hurt, the buyer deceived.

*Answ. 2.* If man cannot finde a way, God can: Israel at the Sea could not finde their way, yet God made one; Hagar could not finde water for the childe, yet a Well was near; in every City, Town, and Village there is work enough, and money enough to be found, but neglect and selfishness hath blinded the eye, that men grope and cannot see the means though presented to them.

*Object. 2. The work is great, and had need be set forth more large and plain.*

*Answ.* This short way will set many men a talking, and many small sticks may make a great fire.

*Object. 3. There are many Laws and many Officers concerning the poor already.*

*Answ.* But where is the execution? The proverb is fulfilled, *That which is every bodys business, is no bodys business.* But where is the man in trust that doth not fail to order the poor, the Tradesmen engaged to finde them work, the penalty and just execution if any fail, or higher Powers to redress all just complaints?

*Object. 4. Bad people will spoil mens work that are engaged.*

*Answ.* The Yarn may be as good as the Wool or Flax; pay justly what they earn, abate for what they spoil, and they will mend; but who-soever bate more, they are the bad people.

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POSTSCRIPT.

If any man would know how such a great work may be effected, that none perish, that none want food convenient, no beggar in Israel, then every particular set upon the practise, that what as yet layeth hid, in after times may be manifest, good works are in least esteem with bad men: honest undertakings may finde more neglect and opposition then encouragement; but what is of God shall stand over all opposition and opposers, who are to be in this th. Lord's day first discovered, and then confounded; Gods ways are not like mans; he doth great things by small means for his own glory, that vain man might not boast; what entertainment trunck hath with heathen; the like I have received in this undertaking, questioning, questioning and talk themselves out of the thing; one objecteth one thing, another another thing, others sling at all, and say, it is impossible, Powers will not do, Parishes will not do, it will never be, like the ten Spies, raise an ill report: sons of Anak are there; Gyants are there, what shall we do with our little ones? But the little ones went into the good land, but their carcasses fell in wilderness.

The End.