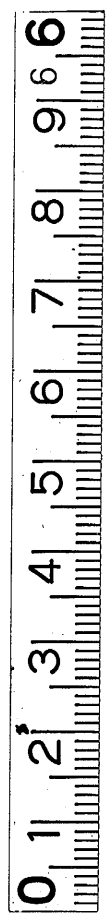
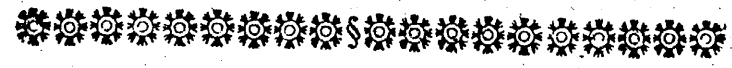


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THE  
V I C E S

Of the CITIES of

LONDON *and* WESTMINSTER.

Trac'd from their ORIGINAL.



[Price One Shilling]

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THE  
V I C E S

Of the CITIES of

LONDON and WESTMINSTER.

Trac'd from their ORIGINAL.

BEING

An impartial Detection of the true Cause  
and Source of the present Growth of Immo-  
rality, and the prodigious Number of Thefts  
and Robberies daily committed in the Streets,  
&c. of this Metropolis.

WITH

Some rational Hints propos'd for removing  
those Evils, restoring the Morals of the People, and  
securing our Persons and Properties against the Out-  
rages of these Villains.

---

In Five LETTERS, from a Citizen of *London*  
to a Member of Parliament.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for CHARLES CORBETT, at *Addison's-Head*,  
against *St. Dunstan's-Church*, in *Fleet-Street*.

[Price One Shilling.]



THE  
V I C E S  
Of the CITIES of  
LONDON and WESTMINSTER.

L E T T E R I.

*Containing, The Introduction, and a necessary Caution, that unless the honest few are zealous in beginning a Reformation in themselves, and promoting the same in the Body of the People, it is past the Power of the Magistrate, or of any human Power, to redress our present Misfortunes.*

S I R,

**T**HE almost universal Contempt of Religion, the total Perversion of the Morals, especially of the lower Class of People, the infinite Number of Robberies, and other most enormous Crimes, that prevail at this Time, in this Metropolis, and Parts adjacent, are become the Subject of every Man's Complaint, and call aloud for the Attention of every honest Subject; but ought particularly to awaken the

B Concern

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Concern of the Legislature, and every Person entrusted with any Degree of Power, to apply some speedy and effectual Remedy to the growing Evil, that threatens the Peace and Destruction of the Community.

That Prophaneness, Infidelity and practical Atheism, that Luxury, Prodigality, Idleness, and every Species of Wickedness, for which our Language has a Name, have spread themselves like a Deluge over the Face of the whole Kingdom, is a Truth no Man denies; all are sensible of the Evil that threaten us, every Individual confesses the dangerous Malady that preys upon the Vitals of the Body politic, and all with one Voice cry out for Redress, and a speedy Reformation of these glaring Abuses. But from whence this Salvation is to be expected, where the Reformation is to begin, or how the Cure is to be effected, is a Mystery past the Comprehension of most Men; and the Task itself so arduous, that few Individuals, however otherwise qualified, have Courage, so much as seriously to make the Redress of these publick Calamities, the Subject of their Consideration. We are in the State of a Merchant, who has allowed his Accompts to lye so long in Disorder, who has permitted his Affairs to run into so great Confusion, that he dares not bring his Books to a Balance, for Fear he should find himself undone past Redemption; and so either out of Laziness or Pusillanimity, permit Bankruptcy and Misery to overtake him; when, perhaps,

( 3 )

perhaps, by a little timely Care, he might have prevented the fatal Disaster, and preserved his Credit and Reputation.

The Distemper is indeed dangerous, the whole Mass is corrupted, every Limb and Member, seiz'd with a mortal Gangreen, and a Complication of Diseases puzzles the Skill of the Physician. However, we are not yet incurable; there are still Officinals in the political *Materia Medica* potent enough to effect the Cure, if it is attempted by skilful Hands, and not delay'd till the Patient is so far weaken'd by the Disorder, as to want Strength to go thro' the Operation.

As it is every Man's Interest, who has a Value for his Peace, and the Safety of his Person and Property, and every Man's Duty, who has the least Regard for the Good of his Country and the Happiness of the Commonwealth, to wish for a Redress of these Grievances, and to contribute all in his Power to put a Stop to that Torrent of Vice and Immorality that overwhelms the Nation. I hope, Sir, you will not think it impertinent in me to lay before you my Thoughts on that important Subject; and to endeavour, as the first Step towards the Removal of these Complaints, to trace these Evils to their Fountain Head, that their proper Remedies may be applied. Every Man, the most ignorant Creature in the Kingdom, feels the Disease, and the most hard-hearted are moved with Compassion for the Crowds, that

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daily fall, I may say uselefs Victims to the Laws of the Country, without the smallest Prospect of a Decrease of those Crimes, that bring so many to Destruction, and robs the Publick every Sessions of so many of its Members; but it is very few that are able to trace these Calamities to their real Source, and consequently they must be utterly incapable of pointing out the adequate Means of Redress. The Vulgar, and by much the greatest Part of the People, are utterly incapable of such a Disquisition; and our Superiors, Men in Power and high Life, are too far removed from the Scene of Action to have sufficient Matter or Information to finish the necessary Enquiry to an Affair of so complicated a Nature; that I am equal to the Task I have undertaken, I will not take upon me to assert; but as you know my Motives disinterested, so I flatter myself, your Candour will take the Attempt in good Part, especially since if I fail in the Design, it may awaken others more capable, to employ their Time and Thoughts upon a Subject of so great Importance to the Publick.

It is common on these Occasions for People to cry out for new Laws, severer Penalties, for military Guards, Executions, and other dangerous Corrosives, to be applied to the quick spreading Evil. These are the first Suggestions of the Vulgar, and of some Men, who think their Stations screen them from being rank'd with the Mob. They have no Plan of Government

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vernment but Force, and no Coercive but what is founded on Fear, Cruelty and Violence; they are apt to blame the Laws in Being, or the Magistrate in Power for the publick Calamity, and think that publick Misfortunes are only to be removed by cutting, slashing, and continual Amputations.

But before I proceed on this intended Enquiry, I would recommend it to all Men, who have any Influence with the People, to all who have any Opportunity to remove their Prejudices; I say, I would recommend it to such, as a Truth that ought to be inculcated on all Occasions, that unless there is a general Disposition in the Body of the People, to co-operate with the Magistrate in the Suppression of Vice and Immorality; and in the Execution of the Laws against publick Offenders, that it is out of the Power of any human Legislature, to contrive Laws, that can make that People honest, happy, or free. If Virtue and Liberty prevail in a Country blest'd with a Constitution such as ours, it must be owing to that Disposition prevailing in the Generality of the People; without which, either the Government must be entirely military, and the Subjects kept to their Duty by planting a Bayonet at every Man's Door, or they must be in the State we are now in, free from legal Force and Violence, but Bond-Slaves to Vice, Luxury, and all Degrees of Wickedness, which may in Time bring this ugly Consequence along with it; that the few honest

( 6 )

honest Men amongst us, will be necessitated to put into the Hands of the Government such a Power as may enable it to secure their Persons and Properties from Robbers; but leave both at the Mercy of a wicked or designing Ministry, and to put into their Hands a Force sufficient at the Pleasure, to strip us of what they have saved from their Banditti. In a Word, I would be understood to mean, that unless every Individual, who complains of these Abuses, begins the Reformation within himself, in his own Family, and in his own Practice, unless every Man in his Station is zealous in encouraging Virtue and Industry, both by his Advice and Example; unless every Man, who pretends to be honest, and wishes to be free, makes a Point of Conscience of prosecuting and bringing to Justice every Offender against the Laws of his Country; unless the inferior Springs of Government, entrusted with the Execution of the Laws, are obliged and kept close to the Discharge of their Duty. It is in vain to look for better Times, it is needless to make new Laws, or multiply penal Statutes, and Madness to expect, that any Means projected by the Wit of Man, can be effectual to remove the present Evils, excepting by such a Remedy, as to every *British* Subject must appear worse than the Disease; that is, unless that Disposition is in the Generality of the People, and all Means used to promote it; human Policy can invent no Means to stop the Progress of Vice, or secure our Persons

( 7 )

sons and Properties from Thieves, but by employing such a Force of Guards and Garrisons as must reduce us to a military Form of Government, and leave us entirely at the Mercy of arbitrary Power.

To the thinking Part of Mankind, this Doctrine must appear almost self-evident, and therefore some may imagine, that in the very Opening of my Enquiry, I have superceded the Necessity of any such Thing, and shew'd us only that our Situation is desperate, and that we have no Choice left, but either to continue Slaves to the Ravages of Midnight Robbers, and common Highwaymen, or at once throw up our boasted Constitution, and become Slaves to a military Force, something like which is nearly approaching, when the Authority of the civil Magistrate is at so low an Ebb, that a Pickpocket cannot be sent to Jail, nor a petty Gaming-house suppress'd without the pompous Assistance of the military Power. For, some may think, that the Conditions on which I have founded the Success of any future Regulations for the Redress of these Grievances, are, in their Nature, next to impossible to be complied with, that is, say they, the Morals of the People are so much debauch'd, there is such a total Neglect and Contempt of every Thing relating to the publick Good, that not one Man in a Hundred, much less the Generality of the People, think themselves, in any Measure bound to promote it. If then that Disposition is necessary in the Generality of the People,

( 8 )

People, before our publick Grievances are redress'd, we must despair of ever seeing that happy Period, without omnipotent Power should work a Change in the Hearts of the Inhabitants of these, once happy, Islands.

But our Case it not quite so desperate; for tho' the Morals of the People are much debauch'd, and tho' it is absolutely true, that these must be mended before the wisest Regulations can have their full Weight; yet, they are not so far gone in Vice, but they may be reclaim'd, and render'd fit for Freedom, and worthy to be free. If the better Sort of People, if the Clergy, if those, who thoroughly convinc'd in their Conscience, of the Necessity of a Reformation, will but every Man begin the Work upon himself, and in his own Family; the Generality, the Vulgar, who are but bad Mimicks of their Betters, will soon follow their Example, will be soon cured of their foolish Prejudices, that make them at present so much in Love with Vice, as to oppose every Measure that tends to suppress it.

Let us suppose the Vulgar, which I take to be no less than nine Parts in ten of the Community, to be as wicked as we can imagine; yet, if the other tenth Part are truly virtuous and sincere in their Desires for a perfect Reformation, it is in their Power to effect it without any new Law, or any coercive Power, more than what exists. Let every Man examine his own Conduct impartially, and ask himself seriously,

( 9 )

riously, is there any Vice, that I have either connived at or encouraged; is there any Folly or Vanity tending to debauch the Morals of the People, that I have wink'd at or promoted? Do I know of any Offenders against the publick Laws of the Kingdom calculated for restraining Vice and Debauchery, that I have conceal'd from the Knowledge of the Magistrate, or screen'd from Justice out of Interest, Party Views, or a foolish Compassion? Have I been remiss in supporting the Authority of the civil Magistrate, and oblig'd him by my Negligence to have anticonstitutional Recourse to the military on almost every trifling Occurrence? Let, I say, every conscientious Man ask himself these Questions, and answer them truly, as I believe most Men must, in the Affirmative; let him reform these Errors, and tho' the Number of such honest Men are few in Proportion to the Bulk of the People, yet, I dare venture to affirm, that, without a Miracle, the Manners of the Vulgar will soon take a different Turn, and Laws calculated for their Freedom and Happiness operate naturally without Force or Violence, and produce the Effect propos'd.

It is to these happy, thinking few, that this Enquiry is directed, and for that Reason, I shall point out the Means, by which the People have been debauch'd, and the Prejudices and Errors, that oppose the Growth of a Reformation; that these removed, the Laws already in Being may have their Force and Efficacy, and such further

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Regulations made as the Circumstances of the Times require, without meeting the Fate of most *English* Statutes, of being made to be read only, and not to be executed ; but I have already exceeded the Bounds of a Letter, and am,

S I R,

*Your most obedient, and*

*Most humble Servant.*



LETTER

( 11 )



LETTER II.

*Containing, the partial and careless Execution of the Laws, the first grand Source of our Vices. The Causes and groundless Prejudice that prevent their Execution enumerated, viz. Weakness and foolish Compassion in some, Selfishness, and Disregard to the Publick, and Laziness in others, and the wrong Notion most entertain of the Nature of what is invidiously called an Informer ; the careless Choice of Grand Jury-men and Constables, and their remissness in their Duty, with a Parochial Association, proposed to detect Offenders, and Discountenance such Prejudices as prevent their Punishment.*

S I R,

**T**H<sup>O'</sup> it's a melancholy Truth, that there is no Country on Earth, where Vice and Immorality is so predominant as in this Nation, especially in these great Cities of *London* and *Westminster* ; yet it is equally true, that there is not a Kingdom on the Face of the Globe, that can boast of so many and so wholesome Laws, calculated with great Wisdom, and enforced with proper Sanctions to discourage Vice and promote Religion, and the Practice of Virtue and Piety. To Look at our Law-Books,



( 12 )

and examine our Collections of publick Statutes, a Foreigner would imagine, that it's impossible for a People to be more Happy, since in these Books and Collections there is not a Grievance that can happen, but what is provided with a Wise and adequate Remedy, there is no outrage upon our Person, no attack upon our Properties, against which the Law does not provide a safe and easy Redress; yet, let the same Man examine the Enormities that are daily committed in our Streets, the Account of the strange and unparalleled Crimes that are committed in all the Roads and Avenues to this Metropolis, the miserable Complaints that are in the Mouths of every Man against Wickedness unpunished, he would be apt to conclude, that we were a People, without Laws, without Form of Government, but like the *Hottentots*, Savages, in a mere State of Nature, without Humanity, or any Vestige of civil Polity. In a Word, Sir, we have the best Laws, but the worst executed of any Nation under the Sun, and to this Source we may trace the present enormous Growth of Wickedness and Impiety; and till those we have already are drawn into Execution, it's needless, nay mere Madness, to create any more useles Scarcrow Statutes.

There are, Sir, some Prejudices, founded on false Notions of Things, but strengthen'd by Custom, and authorized by the Example, even of the wisest and best amongst us, that prevent the Execution of our Laws. To point out these shall  
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be the Subject of this Letter, in which though at first Sight, I may seem singular in some of my Opinions, yet I flatter myself on a patient Hearing, I shall convince you, and the thinking Part of Mankind, that my Notions are founded on Reason.

In the first Place, Selfishness so far prevails over the Minds and Dispositions of all Ranks of People, that few or none think themselves under any kind of moral Obligation, to serve the Publick, unless they are paid for it, and even then, they are more anxious to receive the Sallary and Perquisites, than to discharge the Duties of their Office; every Man has fix'd a foolish and unnatural Distinction between himself and the Government, making them two distinct Bodies, pursuing different and contradictory Interests. He looks upon Government as a Burthen, and thinks if he pays the unwilling Taxes, he has done the Part of a true Subject, and that he is no way concerned in the Execution of the Laws, or obliged to detect any Infringement of publick Statutes, unless he is in a particular Post, entrusted with their Direction. But a wise Man, so happy as to be a Subject of *Great-Britain*, ought to know, that the Government and the People, the Legislature and He are truly the same Thing, that it's impossible to divide them either in Nature or Interests; that he himself is a Part of the Government, as well as of the People; that the Taxes he pays are to himself, for his own Use, Benefit, and Happiness; that the Laws and  
Statutes

( 14 )

Statutes enacted are *virtually* of his own making, as much as if he had deliberated upon and voted for their passing, and consequently, that he is as much personally injured by any Infringment against the Spirit and natural Meaning of these Laws, as when his Debtor forfeits his Bond or Articles, and equally concerned in Honour and Conscience to punish the Offender, as to sue his Debtor to Execution, or an Arrest.

But tho' few Men will own themselves so weak as to deny this Doctrine in Theory, yet there are some other Prejudices that prevent the Effects of such a Persuasion; for though I know it is my Duty as a Subject, and as a Christian to detect and bring to justice all Offenders against the publick Laws, yet many are hindered from it by a foolish, effeminate Compassion; they are tender of their poor Neighbours Ease, and cannot find in their Hearts to be the Author of any Man's Misery, however much he may have deserved it. They see the Thief, and let him pass, saying let the Villain go, let him fall into some other Hands, I care not to be the Ruin of any Man. Thus out of pure Humanity to Individuals, Villainy goes unpunished, the Laws are trampled on, and the Publick bleeds by the Means of his best natured, and most compassionate Sons; but if true Benevolence moves the Heart of an honest Man, the Publick must be the first Object of his Compassion, and as he knows Vice unpunished doubly Wounds the Common-wealth, and multiplies Evil upon innocent Individuals,

( 15 )

Individuals, the wise Man steels his Heart against the weak and worthless Suggestions of Pity for the Criminal, feels every tender Emotion for his Person, but zealously pursues him to condign Punishment, out of Compassion to the injured many, and the violated Laws of his Country.

This ill-timed Pity, and effeminate Compassion, is strengthened by the Laziness and Indolence of many; they cannot bear the Fatigue, and perhaps grudge a small Expence to bring the most Guilty to Justice. They think it all lost Time that is spent in the Service of their Country, and cannot prevail on themselves to steal a Moment from the most trifling Amusement, or from the important Business of doing nothing, to vindicate violated Justice, and to secure their own, and their Neighbours Property from Violence and Oppression, however, much it may be in their Power. It's impossible that these People can think of the Consequence of their remissness and criminal Indolence, or that they have any Notion that they themselves, their Friends, Neighbours, Children, and latest Posterity are deeply interested in the Execution of the Laws, and suffer a slow, but certain Poison, to act upon their Vitals, as long as they connive at the Breach of, or neglect to bring to Justice any Offender against the Public Laws of their Country. But Things are now come to such a Crisis, that we must either lie at the Mercy of every desperate Villain, that can purchase a Case of Pistols, to bid us stand and deliver, or submit

( 16 )

mit to the wise Project of a late Projector, of having a Soldier, or a Garrison of Soldiers, planted at the Distance of every Quarter of a Mile throughout the Kingdom, and so hold all we have at the curtesy of a Military Power; sure this must awaken our Attention, rouse us from that stupid Indolence, and enduce every Man, that has a Sense of Conscience, every Man that has any Property to lose, or any Notion that Liberty is worth preserving to exert himself in this Station, in suppressing Vice, and these Nest and Seminaries of Vice that debauch the People, and in bringing to Punishment every Species of Offenders against the Public Peace.

But supposing our Compassion directed to it's proper Object the Public Good, and that Danger has alarmed the Indolent; there is yet another fashionable Prejudice to combat, that is, that Custom and the prevailing Opinion has fixed a Kind of universal Odium, and Scandal upon the Man, who is so handy as to inform the Magistrate, or assist him in bringing the blackest Offenders to Justice; such as do, are at best looked upon as officious, busy, meddling, troublesome Fellows, are shun'd and despised by most Men, and by many branded with the odious Name of Informers, Spys, &c. Epithets, now become so scandalous, that no Man, who values his Reputation, dares appear openly to prosecute a Villain, except the Injury has been personal to himself, by which Means thousands Escape, that otherways would fall a Sacrifice to injured Justice.

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In a Country, where the Government and People are two distinct Bodies, that is, where the Subjects have no Hand in making those Laws that govern them; it may possibly happen, that Penal Laws may be so multiplied to support the base Purposes of Tyranny, and Arbitrary Power, that an honest Man in such a Kingdom, would be ashamed to enforce such Laws, either by Information, or any other Assistance to the Magistrate. In such a Country, Informers may be justly look'd upon as the Pests of Civil Society, and the base Fools of Tyranny and Oppression. But in a Constitution such as this, under which we live, where the Laws are made by the People, as well as for their Interest, Informers against Offenders ought to be looked upon in a quite different Light, since we must suppose the People consenting to no Laws, but what are manifestly for the public Utility, and consequently, that every Man that enforces them, or brings Offenders against them to Justice, ought to be looked upon as acting the honest Part of a Patriot. But the Generality have annexed to the Word Informer the Idea of a Wretch, who has sold his Soul and Body to serve a wicked Ministry; who has no other View in giving Information, but the mean Design of enriching himself with the Penalty, and the malicious Pleasure of plaguing his Neighbours, without any Regard to the publick Interest. And for this Reason alone, it is now certain, that the Magistrate has no other Means of coming to the Knowledge of Delin-

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quents,

quents, but from Wretches of the above Character; who, as Money is their Motive, take Care to inform against none, but such as are not of their Gang, or that have not Money to purchase their Connivance and Protection.

Is it any Wonder, then, that our Laws are badly executed, when their natural Guardians, those who have enacted them, those for whose Interest they were made, are ashamed to protect them, and have left them to the Care and Management of Thieves, Pickpockets, and the Scum and Off-scourings of Mankind? I think it is no Miracle, that they are not, but rather that there is any Notice taken of them at all. Are Men's Properties become so little their Concern? Are our Liberties of so little, of little Value to *Englishmen*, that they are ashamed to be instrumental in bringing to Justice those Wretches that daily commit such Outrages upon the one, and sap the Foundation of the other? Is there no Man who has so much Value for the Public, or for himself in his publick Capacity, as to combat this base Prejudice, and boldly own himself a Protector of these Laws he himself has framed, and bring to Justice Delinquents from a Motive of public Spirit, without Regard to the mercenary View of the Penalty?

I am not here contending that an honest Man ought to busy himself in discovering every Delinquent against all the Penal Laws, that have crept of late into our Constitution; I mean only, that as there are Laws already in being, capable of reforming

ing the Abuses, we are now speaking of, Laws that, if duly executed, and all Offenders against them impartially prosecuted and punished, would be a rational Means to recover the lost Morals of the People, restore the Authority of the Civil Magistrate, and free us from the Dread of Thieves and Highwayman. I say, that as we have such Laws, if honest Men, Men of Character and Reputation, would openly inform the Magistrate of all Offenders against these, and strenuously insist upon their being prosecuted and brought to Justice, the Spirit of Reformation might seize the Body of the People, and these Nests and Seminaries of Wickedness, that has so long debauched the People, at last rooted out. It is remarkable, that a Gin-seller, a Bawdy-house-keeper, &c. is not afraid of their reputable Neighbours, no, they are sure of their Connivance, if not their Protection; they are only afraid of Strangers and Villains; but if every honest Parishioner would himself inform against these, and all such other Abuses of the like Kind, as are transacted under his Eye, and with his own Knowledge, we should not, in six Weeks, have any Grounds for the numberless Complaints, made by People who exclaim against Abuses they themselves promote by their wilful Connivance. Sit but half an Hour in Company with any sober House-keeper of the Parishes of *St. Martin's*, or *Covent-Garden*, you cannot fail to hear him exclaim against disorderly Houses, Street-Walkers, &c. and hold forth pathetically

( 20 )

enough against the fatal Influence such Places have on the Morals of the People, and the Peace and Safety of the Public. Admit his wise Observation to be just and true, and he joins with you in wishing such Houses suppress'd; ask him if he knows any of them in particular, he will own that he does; but urge him to go and inform the Magistrate, whose Hands are tied up without such Informations, and this querulous good Man shrinks back, makes some slight Evasion, and concludes, that he scorns to be an Informer; that is, that he expects the Magistrate is to come to the Knowledge of these Abuses by Inspiration, and that it is beneath him to serve himself by removing the Subject of his just Complaint on the Public, by bringing publick Offenders to Justice, for Fear of a Name that has nothing in it that should fright a Man, conscious that he acts from a Love of Justice, and Motive of publick Good. But there is so much in this Name of an Informer, that some Allowance must be made for such strong Prejudices as are against it; and therefore, to remove their Force, I would propose, that such Gentleman of Reputation, as are convinced that the Peace and Safety of the Public depend upon the due Execution of the Laws, would break the Ice, and give an Example, by publickly informing against Delinquents that come within their Knowledge, and resolve never to use their Credit or Interest, to screen or conceal Offenders from publick Justice. For this Purpose I would recommend an Association to be set on Foot in every

( 21 )

every Parish in *London, Westminster,* and Parts adjacent, of the principal Inhabitants, and most reputable House-keepers, by which they should bind themselves by the most solemn Engagement, to discover all Offenders against such Laws as are calculated for preserving the Morals of the People, and securing their Properties against the Outrages of Thieves, &c. and to prosecute such without Favour or Affection, or Partiality, to the utmost Rigour of the Law. Association

Such an Association would soon restore the Laws to their full Vigour, encourage People of a lower Class to despise the Name of Informer, and to discover many Abuses that come oftner within their Knowledge, than others of a higher Class; and by that Means, we may expect to see these Cities freed from these Nests of Vice and Impiety, that gives so much Scandal and Offence to Religion and Morality.

The Parish of *St. Paul's, Covent-Garden,* have in some Measure begun a Thing of the Kind, by a voluntary Subscription for a Reward to Informers; but if these Gentlemen would mend their Scheme, and become Informers themselves, in every Case that comes within their Knowledge, I am perfectly convinc'd, that they would save most of their Subscription Money, and long before this Time, a great Part of the Nuisances complain'd of would have been remov'd from their District; for I dare lay an equal Wager, that there is not a Subscriber to that Scheme, but to his own Knowledge, is acquainted

( 22 )

acquainted with some, if not many, reputed disorderly Houses. Why then should he hire an Informer, or delay acquainting the Magistrate, and bring these Wretches to Justice? By the Reward, he only gives the Crew of mercenary Informers an Opportunity of raising the Price of their Silence, and enhancing their Stipends from these Nests of Thieves.

*Constables  
Jurys* There is yet another Cause of the bad Execution of the Laws, that depends more upon the Subject than the Magistrate; that is, the Negligence of the most honest Constable, in presenting Delinquents in their District to the Grand-Jury, and the Remissness of these Juries in making Presentments to the Court, or finding Indictments; and the bad Choice that are made of Constables, Beadles, and other Officers, is perhaps the greatest Security for the Impunity of Offenders of every Class. It is a well known Case, that most disorderly Houses are in Fee with some of these Rascals, whose Duty it is to detect them; and that there are so many Ways to stifle Indictments before the Grand Juries, that it is next to an Impossibility to bring any of them to Justice. It is a common Thing to make Publicans Constables, than which, there are no Men more improper; their Business keeps them in a general Dependence on their Neighbours; and it is no Secret, what Faults drinking a few Bowls of Punch at the Constable's House will conceal. It should be the Business, then of such an Association as

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I have just now hinted, to use their Interest, that Grand-Juries should be often changed, composed of Men of Reputation, and Men zealous in the Cause of Reformation, above being brib'd, and of a Disposition not to be driven from their Purposes by the Importunity of Friends, or the Threats of Knaves; that Constables should be chosen of the same Stamp, and whose Profession leaves them most independent on their Neighbours; and that such an Association should take Care that these Constables do their Duty, and punish their Neglect; and that when Indictments are found, or Presentments made by the Grand-Jury, that the Association should see them prosecuted to their full Effect.

There is yet, Sir, another Abuse that retards the Execution of our Laws, which, for the Respect I owe to Magistracy in general, I dare touch on but slightly; that is, the Scandal of what is call'd trading Justices. Common Fame speaks a great many harsh Things of this Class of People, which, if true, and there cannot be so much Smoak without some Fire, I should be apt to conclude them the greatest Nuisance to Society; but if all is not true, it is still a Scandal to Justice, that he, who is to disperse it, must live by Shillings gain'd from the Wrangles of the lowest Class of the People. It degrades the Dignity of a Magistrate to be oblig'd to accept of such mean Fees, and lays him under Suspicions that greatly weakens his Authority, let his Integrity be never so cautiously guarded.

For

( 24 )

For this Reason, I would think it no mean Blessing to the City of *Westminster*, if the High Bailiff and Burgeses were cloathed with the Powers of Justices of the Peace, in the same Manner as the Aldermen of *London*; and, that they should sit daily by Turns, for the Dispatch of Business; or at least, if a decent Salary were annex'd to the Office of Justice for this City and Liberty, that might pay these Gentlemen for their Trouble, and put them above the Suspicion of doing low and mean Things, for the necessary Support of their Families, and the Dignity of his Majesty's Commission; of which, the Vulgar must have but a mean Idea, when they are sure his Worship is rejoic'd at every Opportunity that brings him a Shilling, however the Publick may suffer by the Affair that brings it him.

To conclude this Letter, Sir, if private Persons will do their Duty, and either single, or in Associations, resolve to withdraw all Countenance and Protection from Delinquents, and openly, from a Motive of publick Spirit, give the Magistrate all the Information and Assistance in their Power; if Care is taken in the Choice of Grand-Juries, Constables, &c. If these are zealous in the Discharge of their Duty, and are punish'd for every apparent Neglect; if the Magistrate assert, the Dignity of his Office, and acts up to the Duties of his Place, we may again see Justice executed without Partiality, the Necessity of a Military Power in Civil Affairs superceded,

( 25 )

ceded, and Peace, Order, and Decency, take Place in the Society; and on Supposition that all wise Men intend some such Thing, I shall, in my next Letters, point out the Abuses against which our Laws have been so long dormant, and the Sources of the many Calamities these Cities groan under. I am,

S I R,

*Your most obedient, and*

*most humble Servant.*



E L T T E R



L E T T E R III.

*Containing publick Beggars, and the partial Execution of the Laws against them, a flagrant Source of our Vices. Means proposed to extirpate them, and to disable Foreigners to follow the Occupation of Cooks, Valets, Footmen, &c. without a Bill of Naturalization. And Irish Vagrants to be obliged to have Passes before they are permitted to Land.*

S I R,

**H**OWever Divines may describe the Nature of Man as prone to Evil, yet, I believe, every Man's Experience, will teach him, that few Men are born Villains; that no Man becomes wicked all at once, but debases his Nature by slow and often painful Degrees; Vice is contagious, it is communicated by Example, and improv'd by Habit. Vice and Immorality is strongly predominant in these Cities, but they have grown so by Degrees, and are daily encreasing in all Manner of Wickedness; there must be some Source, from whence this Malady took its Rise, some latent Spring, that has communicated the black Contagion to all Degrees of People, which we must find out before a proper Care can be applied.

The Neglect of the Execution of our Laws is the first and grand Source of this Evil, and what has permitted it to grow to so enormous a Bulk.

a Bulk. I have in my preceding Letters been full upon this Head, as judging it needless to mention Abuses, if the Laws against them are not to be enforc'd; supposing then, that first and grand Grievance removed, I shall now proceed to mention the Springs and Nurseries of these publick Vices, that make us the Reproach of all Nations.

The first Source then, of the many Robberies, &c. committed in our Streets, that I shall take Notice of, is the prodigious and scandalous Encrease of publick Beggars. I have as much Compassion for the real Poor as any Man, but I own for this Class, I have not the smallest Charity. I know, if they are truly what they pretend, Objects of Charity, that there are ample Provision for them in their several Parishes, since there is no Nation under Heaven, that gives away more to the Poor, than the Inhabitants of this Island; and yet, I venture to affirm, that there are more publick Beggars in *London* and *Westminster* alone, than in all the great Cities of *Europe* put together, tho' the Revenue collected for the Use of the Poor in these Cities, exceeds the Revenues of some very reputable Sovereign States.

There are at least, on a very moderate Computation, twenty thousand Souls within the Bills of Mortality, that live by the publick Trade of Begging and Pilfering, and other Arts of that sly Profession. The Maintenance of these People, one with another, exclusive of those legally



( 28 )

gally provided for, allowing but Three-pence a Day *per* Head, which is one Half less than political Arithmeticians allow, amounts to four-score thousand Pounds, and upwards; which of itself, excluding all other Inconveniences attending it, is a prodigious Tax upon the Industrious, and the more grating that it is paid to Fraud, Laziness, and Imposture.

That greatest Part of these Vermin, live better in their secret Retirements, and carry Home more Money at Night, than most working Tradesmen, is a well known Truth; that most of them are Thieves, is doubted by very few, and that the Young amongst them, of which they have a greater Number, than their Proportion, are brought up to nothing but Thieving, Picking of Pockets, and House-breaking, can scarce be call'd in Question. If so, we need be at no Loss, to account for the Encrease of Thieves, &c. where we see daily before us, and are ourselves so very industrious to feed the Seminary, that breeds them in such Swarms.

It is needless to take up much Time in describing this Abuse, or enculcating its Consequences; it is seen, felt, and acknowledged, by all, and needed no Law to redress it; but that People should make use of their Reason, to refuse their Bounty to all the begging Poor in general. If they would agree to this, the Beggars would vanish of themselves; but they know our Weakness too well, and find so much of the Sweets of the medicant Profession, that no  
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( 29 )

Confideration can prevail on them to quit it. However, there are Laws in Being to force them to it; real Objects of Charity are amply secured in a decent Maintenance, and the Constables and Parish Officers, vested with full Power to clear the Streets of these Nuisances; but these neglect their Duty, and our Compassion is daily exposed to the Insinuations of these cheating Vagrants. Our only Difficulty then, is how to oblige these petty Officers to do their Duty. A careful Choice of these Officers may go a great Length to remedy this Evil; but if either their Numbers were augmented, or an Officer or two were appointed in every Parish, for this Purpose alone, to continue till the Grofs of them were rooted out; if such Officers were oblig'd to go their Rounds daily, and take up all the Beggars they met, and were liable to be fin'd, if they permitted any one to pass them, or neglected to visit their Haunts and Stations; if the Association I have mention'd in my Last, would resolve themselves, to take up all Beggars they met, to serve none of them at their Doors, and diligently put in Force all Laws against Vagrants and sturdy Beggars, I fancy, a few Months would free us from those devouring Locusts, without having Recourse to the Legislature, for any new Law. Tho' I must confess, I should not be sorry to see this Addition made to the Laws, against Beggars, &c. *viz.* That after any one of them had been pass'd to his own Parish, or committed to a Workhouse,

( 30 )

house, if any of them should be a second Time caught begging in *London* or *Westminster*, that they should forthwith, on Conviction, be transported to one of his Majesty's Colonies, where they might be render'd useful to their Mother Country, to which, they have been so long a Plague.

The begging Poor, Sir, are a flagrant Source of our present Misfortunes; but the Encrease of real Objects of Charity, is no less a Grievance, and a heavy Burthen on the Labour of the Industrious, and brings many of them to penury and abandon'd Courses, that otherwise might continue useful Members of Society. The Carelessness of Parish Officers, and the Waste that is said to be made of the Funds allotted and levied for their Maintenance, makes the Grievances fall heavier on the Subject, a Case that is certainly worth the Enquiry of the Legislature; for, I believe some Regulations might be made, that would provide better for the real Poor, and yet lessen the Tax upon the industrious Inhabitants of this City. But to enter into that at present, I think foreign to my Purpose. It is here only necessary for me to observe, by what Means our native Poor are encreased to such a Degree, as to become an insufferable Burthen to the Community.

Amongst the many obvious Causes of their Encrease, there is one very flagrant; that is, the intolerable Number of Foreigners that swarm about this Metropolis, and eat the Bread of the

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( 31 )

the Natives. When I speak of Foreigners, as a Nuisance, I do not mean any employ'd in our Manufactures, but Vagrants, Valets, Footmen, Cooks, Confectioners, Taylors, Perriwigmakers, and many others employ'd in the consuming Trades, Creatures, that whether Natives or Foreigners, add nothing to the Publick Stock, whose Labours are never exported, but who live upon the Vanity, and feed the Luxury of the People.

In a well regulated Commonwealth, Care should be taken, that these consuming Artificers, these Tools of Luxury, should not encrease even of the Natives themselves; but how monstrous is it, that notwithstanding the Number of useless Hands, the Number of starving Families, that we have in these Branches, that are daily filling our Workhouses with useless Mouths, of our own Country; that we should permit such Swarms of *French*, and other Nations, to be daily imported upon us. I believe the Act against Vagrants, if duly executed, would free us of a great many; but it would be, Sir, a truly Patriot Act, if a Bill was pass'd, disabling Foreigners, of any Nation whatever, from serving as Valets, Footmen, Cooks, Taylors, Mantuamakers, Perriwigmakers, &c. in any City or Town corporate in *Great-Britain*, without being first naturaliz'd by Act of Parliament.

Such a Bill as this would clear us at least, in the Compass of the Bills of Mortality, of  
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( 32 )

twenty thousand uselefs, foreign Vanities, and make Room for as many of our Natives, who are now ftarving and forc'd to rob, thieve, or filch, for Want of Bread. It would, allowing but Six-pence a Head, to be spent *per Diem*, on thefe Foreigners, fave above eight-score thoufand Pounds a Year, to thefe Cities; which, when divided amongft our induftrious Natives, would greatly leffen the Poor Rates, and decrease the Number of Parifh Pensioners.

When I am on the Subject of Foreigners, I cannot help mentioning the Mifchief of Importing fo many poor *Irifh* every Year, under Pretence of Hay-making; I would do it tenderly, without any View to make national Diftinctions, or to fow Miftrufts between the Subjects of two Kingdoms, fo clofely united in one common Bond of Intereft; but the Abufes committed by many of thefe pretended Hay-makers, are too flagrant, not to excufe me at the Hands of the worthy Gentlemen of that Nation, from wifhing, that fome Stop were put to their Importation, and that none fhould be permitted to land without a regular Pafs. Some Such Regulation would be for the Honour and Intereft of both Kingdoms, and could be oppofed by none, but fuch as are fond of Thieves and Sharpers. I am,

S I R,

*Your moft obedient,  
Humble Servant.*

L E T T E R

( 33 )



## L E T T E R IV.

*Of Bawds and Bawdy-houfes, Means to deftroy them, and a Propofal for an Hofpital for the Reception of repenting Prostitutes. Of Gaming, its prefent State, Means to fuppreff private Play, and to render that Foible of the Great ufe-ful to the Publick, and raifing from thence a Fund for Support of the Foundling-Hofpital, &c.*

S I R,

I N my laft, I endeavour'd to illustrate the *Bawdy* pernicious Confequences of the Number of *houfes* publick Beggars, how much they contribute towards the Encrease of Thieves, Highwaymen, &c. and offer'd fome Hints to get rid of that publick Nufance, as well as to prevent the Encrease of real Objects of Charity. I would in this, turn your Attention to another Source of our Misfortunes; that is, the Number of Bawdy-houfes, loofe and diforderly Women, that ply in all Corners, and with Impunity lay Snares for the Unwary, and debauch the Morals of our Youth, before they have arriv'd at Years or Experience, to guard againft the Snares of thefe Deluders.

The unhappy Wretches that infest our Streets, to the great Scandal of Religion and Modesty,

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( 34 )

are to be look'd upon as great Instruments of the Ruin of many thousands ; but the Bawds that help to debauch and trepan these poor Creatures, who support and shelter them, in their Wickedness, who reap most of the Fruits of the Labours of these miserable Drudges in Sin and Lewdness, are much more culpable, much more mischievous to the Community, and merit no Mercy at the Hands of any Man, that has the least Regard to Conscience, Order, or Decency.

To describe the Scenes of Debauchery, that are carried on under the Direction of these infernal Agents, would be a fresh Assault upon Modesty, and to go about to enumerate the Murders, Robberies, Thefts, and Perjuries, that are either committed in these Nests of Iniquity, or perpetrated by their Means and Instigation, would be a Work equally needless, since every Man is convinc'd, that few Men have been undone, few have gone to *Tyburn*, without owing Part, if not the whole of their Misfortunes, to these Brokers for the Devil, these wholesale Dealers in Sin and Damnation. Yet, these Wretches, are conniv'd at, tolerated, nay, have their Patrons, Protectors, and Abettors, of Men, who pretend to be religious, and whose Years and Gravity, free them from the Suspicion of any Calls for the Commodities vendid in these Houses. And tho' their Habitations, Persons and Occupations, are as publick as *St. Paul's*, and *Charing-Cross*, and known to every

( 35 )

every Passenger; yet they stand in open Defiance of the Law, and carry on their iniquitous Trade without the least dread of Punishment.

It is needless, Sir, to call for new Laws to suppress these publick Pests, our Law-Books are full of Statutes, Acts of Parliament, &c. to destroy them, the Method is potent to all Mankind, but these Laws like the rest of our *English* Privileges, are only a mere dead Letter, scarce operating the Effect of a Scare-crow. It is equally needless to harangue the Passions of the Generality, upon the Necessity of rooting out these Springs of Vice and Villainy ; the generality of this Nation are not to be roused from their Lethargy by the Rethoric of Angels, the Calls of Conscience, or the Dictates of Religion and Morality ; they are deaf even to their own Interest, if the Gain is only consequential, or in the smallest Measure removed from the Touch. In a Word, unless we are paid in ready Money, we will not save ourselves from Slavery, Thieves, Highwaymen, or even Damnation ; nor will not trust the Publick with the smallest Share of our Labour but for a Day.

To the gross, venal Body, I would not Address myself on this Occasion, but there are still a few left, who for their own Sake, for the Glory of God, and the Interest of Religion, for the Liberty of the Publick, and Safety of their Posterity may be prevailed on, to join in suppressing, by all legal Means, these Nurseries of Impiety. I can frame to myself no Means to prosecute this Work but by an Association of such Men, as I mention-

( 36 )

ed in a former Letter, who shall make the Destruction of these Vermin a chief Object of their Care, and under such Inspection and Protection, I make no doubt to see the *Strand*, and Places adjacent, as decently inhabited as any other Part of his Majesty's Dominions.

But before I leave this Head, Charity and Humanity obliges me to say something in behalf of these Wretches, who drudge in these Houses of Vice. There are not perhaps on Earth greater Objects of Compassion; all Sense of Pleasure are lost to them, the whole is mere Labour and Wretchedness, they are Slaves to, and buffeted by every drunken Ruffian, they are the Tools of, and tyrannized over by the Imps of Bawds, exposed to all the Rigours of cold and inclement Weather, in-constant dread of the Night Magistrate, worn out with Toil and a Loathsome Disease, they die wretched, without Pity or Compassion; they are most of them in sober Hours, sensible of their Misery, and wish to be free from a State in which their is neither present Pleasure, nor Prospect of Future Happiness, and into which many of them have been ensnared by the Baseness of those who should have protected their Innocency; but what most aggravates their Woe, they have no Means, no Hopes of a Retreat, they are debarred of all modest Society; no honest Family will receive them, let their Repentance and Compunction be never so sincere, and they have no other Choice left, but to remain  
Slaves

( 37 )

Slaves to Vice, and those Wretches that make a Livelihood of their Prostitution.

As this is certainly their Case, I think it would be an Act of great Benevolence, if amongst the many noble Charities, established in this Metropolis, some Foundation were made for the Support and Maintenance of repentant Prostitutes; some such Place, might even become an Ornament, and of use to the Kingdom, if these Women, who are a great many of them expert Needle-Woman, were employed in a Manufacture of Dresden Work, so much now the Mode, or in some easy Labour that might employ their Time, and help them to earn their Bread; had they such an Asylum to fly to, three Parts of them would voluntary retire into it, and when they had behaved decently for a Year or two in such a Retreat, the most rigidly Virtuous need not scruple giving them Countenance and Employment. To a Mind truly Humane, the more such a Scheme as this is thought on, the more Advantage would be discovered in it, but I have only Time to hint at it as a necessary Means to promote a general Reformation, and I do it the rather, as I have heard you formerly approve of such a Thought.

From the black Scene of the Stews, and their Inhabitants, permit me, Sir, to conduct you to the Gaming-House, for these Places are generally near one another, and have much the same Effect upon the Morals of the People.

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Tho' there is no Nation in Europe so much addicted to Play as we are, nor no City where there are greater Sums lost at Play than in this; yet, I think there is no Place, where the Character of a Gamester is held in so much Contempt; the Example even of the gravest Heads, and most splended Titles cannot screen them from the Denomination of Thieves and Pick-pockets, every Body exclaims against it, are sensible that it ruins Thousands, and sends more to the Highway and Tyburn, than most other Vices; yet we go on to play, unawed by Infamy, and in spite of Laws and Penalties. I leave the Immorality of this Passion, to be settled and inculcated by Divines, I shall only here observe as a Politician, that the Public is mostly concerned to prevent this Passion from taking Possession of the trading, industrious, and labouring Part of the Community; for as to the Nobility and Gentry, it is of very little Consequence what they do in this Respect, it being of very little Importance, whether five thousand a Year is in Possession of a Lord, or divided amongst a hundred Sharpers. But the Misfortune is, that the Itch of Gaming, does not confine itself to the Gentry, it has caught the Mob, who are now as expert at E and O, and G and S, as the greatest Judges that voted the Destruction of these Games, in the Senate, and Practice them in all other Places; and what is still worse, it happens, that the Laws made to destroy Gaming, have been, *like the Makers of them*, chiefly Instrumental in raising it to its present

sent dangerous Height, and spreading the Contagion amongst all Ranks of People. As the present State of Gaming is not thoroughly understood, and that what I have now advanced, may seem to many a little Paradoxical, I must explain myself at large on a Subject that deserves our most serious Attention.

Gaming, Sir, is amongst these Passions, in Human Nature that is not to be totally eradicated where it once takes hold of the Head, or the Heart of Man; it must only then be treated by a wise Legislature, by proper Restraints and just Regulations, that may prevent some of its most baneful Influence. I am much afraid this Position, though confirmed both by Reason and Experience, was not fully adverted to in framing the many Acts against Gaming; the Lawgivers thought it possible to destroy it intirely, and so have not only missed of their Aim, but spread the Disease through every Member of the Body Politic.

Before Hazard, Pharaoh, the Bank of Philet, &c. were suppress'd, Gaming was indeed at a great Height, but I believe carried to no greater Excess than at this Day; but then it was by different Hands: Hazard is a Game beyond the Comprehension of the Vulgar, every Boy, Prentice, or pretty Miss could not learn it of a sudden; it was a Kind of Science, and required Time to be a Judge of it. However, this was suppress'd, and the Consequence was that *Rowley Powley*, E and O, and G and S took its Place, the Games that

( 40 )

that are learned in a Minute, of which the mearest Novice is instantaneously as good a Judge as an *Archimedes*. Immediately young and old grew Gamesters, and the Itch of Gaming got amongst the Mob; however, as these Games were kept in Noblemens Houses, or Houses that went by some such Name, the mere Mechanicks and working Tradesman, were still kept out, but the Protections, were no sooner taken from these Houses, than the Gaming Tables fell into the Hands of a Parcel of pillory'd infamous, Thieves, who besides, their own bad Character, were constrained for Fear of Informations against them to admit Tag Rag, and Bob Tail, the mere Scum of the Earth. The better sort of People, who used to frequent these Places, ashamed of their ragged scandalous Company, left them, but did not give over Play, but settled in Private Parties in different Corners of the Town, where more is now lost in one Night, than was in Publick in a whole Month, and where the Sharpers have full Scope, to make the most of their Bubbles; upon the whole, though there is not now a Public Gaming Table in *London* or *Westminster*, there is more Gaming than ever, and where the Unwary had before but two or three Temptations, which he must have gone out of his Way to come at, he cannot now enter a Coffee-house, Tavern, or Alehouse, but where he meets with a Snare, and Sharpers ready prepared to initiate him in the Mysteries of Gaming, and strip him at once of his Money and Morals.

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( 41 )

I would not, Sir, by the Scope of these Observations be thought to be an Advocate for public Gaming, I am not, Sir, I am glad those that were not exempted by Law are suppressed, but I wish Sir, that since Gentlemen will play in private when they are debarred public Play, where there is much less Danger than in private, that some Means had been fallen upon in the Suppression of the late Gaming Houses, for preventing the Increase of private Play, that has been the Ruin of so many Thousands, and that the Groom-Porter's had continued open, where Men of Fortune might have played the Fool by themselves, without communicating this mad Distemper to so many Corners of the Town.

It is certain, Sir, private Play in *London*, &c. never was at a greater Height, and in public Places, such as *Bath*, *Tunbridge*, &c. the Company are the open Bubbles of a Crew of the most abandoned Sharpers as ever missed a Halter. They Play at the Disadvantage of four *per Cent.* on every Stake, and yet they lose, at this Odds, with their Eyes open. This shews how strong the Passion is, since rather than not play, they venture to infringe the Law, incur Penalties, and play with recorded Villains, at an Odds that must strip the Bank of *England*, were she to risque it.

To lessen this Evil, and call in the Gentlemen from their scattered Parties in Town, which Parties must soon disperse when they are deprived of the Money and Company of the Gentry, who

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( 42 )

alone support them, and to rescue those that resort to publick Places out of the Hands of Pick-pockets, I own to you I can see no better Remedy, but that the Groom-Porter, as usual, should open his Mad-house at *St. James's*, for his Right Noble Fools, and that he should be permitted by his Deputy, to keep one Hazard Table at *Bath, Tunbridge, &c.* This would effectually put an End to E and O, and banish the Sharpers from these Places; and such Regulations might be made at such Tables, as might prevent all Suspicion of Fraud, and their being resorted to by Tradesmen, or Mechanics. But if I am for tolerating the Quality, &c. in their mad Frolicks, I would at the same Time make it in some Measure useful to the Publick.

For I would propose, that the Profit arising from these Tables at *St. James's, Bath, &c.* should be divided in two equal Moieties, one to be for the Use of the Groom-Porter, his Deputies, Expences of Servants, &c. and the other Half to be applied religiously for the Support of the *Foundling Hospital*, which by this Means would acquire such a Revenue, as to be able to take in all Children that is offered, and so answer its Name, as well as the Intention of its Foundation; for I believe under judicious Management, their Half, might amount at least, to ten thousand Pounds a Year.

Since Sir, Gaming is not to be totally suppressed, I think this the best Means to prevent the

( 43 )

the future Growth of private Play, and that it is no small Service to the Publick to avail itself of the Follies of the Great, by making them subservient to the Support of so noble, so necessary, and so useful a Foundation as that of the *Foundling Hospital*. A Scheme of this Nature will require many Improvements and Additions, to reduce it into Execution; but these Hints are sufficient to direct Men's Thoughts to such a Subject; in the mean Time, it ought to be the Study of the Civil Magistrate, and of these often mentioned Associations, to prevent Gaming Tables of E and O, and their being kept by the old Set of Thieves and Sharpers, who are, I am told, still upon the Watch, to set up their old Trade, in Hopes of Connivance as formerly. I am,

S I R,

*Your most obedient, and**Most humble Servant.*

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L E T T E R





## L E T T E R V.

*Of Tippling, Gin Shops, and hedge Alehouses, and Means to suppress them. Of our publick Diversions, Regulations proposed to render them less hurtful to the People, and to render the Watch more useful.*

FROM Gaming and Wenching, Sir, let me entreat your Patience to a Transition to Gin-drinking, and Tippling, that Bane of *London* Servants, and I am afraid of many of a more elevated Station, especially amongst the Female Sex. The Mischief attending the Sale of Gin, and other Spirituous Liquors in Chandlers Shops, &c. has long been complained of as a Source of the present Debauchery of the People, and that has influenced the Legislature to make many severe Laws against the Practice. The Justice of these Laws, however they might have been looked upon at first, as a State Trick to increase the Civil List Revenue, are now confessed by every Body; yet by some Means or other these Nests of Lewdness and Idleness are as numerous as ever, and daily spreading their baneful Influence in all Corners of this Metropolis; there our Servants are debauched,

debauched, they are taught to thieve from their Master, to idle their Time, and blab the Secrets of Families; and there Thieves and House-breakers contract Intimacy, lay Plots with our Servants, and from them learn the Means, Times and proper Seasons to rob us; the labouring Workman toils for Penury, while his Wife and Daughters spend his honest Earnings at the Gin Shop; the Family is neglected, Industry laid aside, and the unhappy Family are either reduced to a Workhouse, or forced to beg or steal for Support, and at last die in Want and Wretchedness. Is it possible that a Man can be possessed of the least Spark of Humanity, or have any feeling of the Sufferings of his Fellow Creatures, that can connive at, or protect these Wretches from publick Justice? Yet there is scarce a House-keeper but knows that Gin Shops are kept at every other Door, and dares not, or has not so much Honesty, publick Spirit, or Compassion for his Fellow Creatures, as to inform the Magistrate; but on the contrary, when they are detected, uses his Influence to get the Fine mitigated. How far the Justices are empowered to mitigate the Fine for this Offence, I am a Stranger, but I know it is a common Thing to take some Trifle, and dismiss the guilty Wretches to their base Trade.

I cannot flatter myself that the Magistrate will be more cautious from any Thing I can say on this Subject, or that the Chandlers can, by Argument, be prevail'd on to quit their gainful Trade; nor is it possible to devise Laws more severe

severe to intimidate them; all depends upon the Execution of those already made, and I despair of seeing that done but by an Association, of which this Abuse ought to be a principal Object; in that Case, we might see them routed out of every Parish, which would be a great Benefit to the honest Publican, at whose Supineness in asserting their own Privileges I am not a little surpriz'd.

But, Sir, the People, the labouring People are not only debauch'd in Gin Shops, but the vast Increase of licens'd, hedge, mean Alehouses, contribute not a little to their Idleness and Poverty. It must occur to every Man that thinks, that the Number of Vagrants, Beggars, Thieves, and Pickpockets, that infest this Metropolis, must have some Haunts, some Places of Resort, frequented only by their Crew. These can only be in some of our blind Alehouses, in bye Allies, and unfrequented Corners, of which there are an infinite Number, and all acting under a Licence. I would submit it to you, Sir, and the Publick, if the Suppression of these Houses would not contribute much to the Discouragement of Vice and Villainy; proper Presentments would suppress many of them, but there is yet a surer and shorter Way to get rid of them all, and that is, to pass a Bill, that no House shall have a Licence to sell Beer, Ale, &c. that does not pay a stated Rent, of at least forty Pounds a Year, and rated as such in the Parish Books. This would effectually destroy these

these hedge Alehouses, that are the only Harbours of all the Villains that infest our Streets; since it is not probable, that a Man, who stands at such a Rent, can be in Fee with, or depend upon the Custom of such Vagabonds. To this Regulation, I would add, that all Houses that keep Skittle-grounds, Shuffle-boards, or that permit Cards to be play'd in the Tap-room, should likewise be incapable of a Licence.

From Tippling, Sir, let us take a View of our publick Diversions, Places that are look'd upon by many, as Sources of our Misfortunes, and for that Reason exclaim'd against virulently, and Proposals urg'd for reducing their Number; that they contribute their Share with the rest of the Sources I have mention'd, I make no Doubt, but it is from Causes different from what is commonly apprehended, and the Remedy proposed of Reduction far from being adequate to the Disease. The Places and Diversions there exhibited are very remote in themselves, from having any bad Influence on the Morals of the People, and are as innocent, and as rational as any known to our more rigidly, virtuous Ancestors. I presume, no Man in his Wits, will deny the Quality, Gentry, and Men of Fortune and Substance, from resorting to these Places as much as they please; their taking these Diversions, either in Excess or Moderation, can in no Measure affect the publick Good. The Misery to be complain'd of is, that these Places are crowded by People, who are not able to bear

( 48 )

bear the Expence either of Time or Money employ'd in them; in short, that they are resorted to by Tradesmen, their Wives, &c. of all Ranks, whose Business is neglected, and Credit ruin'd for the Sake of these polite Vanities. What is to be done? Must the Nobility be debar'd an innocent rational Amusement, because the Mob will ruin themselves to get a Sight of it? That is too great an Absurdity; reduce the Number, yet still they will crowd to what remains, and we are no better than before, only the Quality is more crowded, and have no Choice left but either to stay at Home, or submit to be jostled by every greasy Tradesman, that pushes into their Diversion. In short, in a free Country, such as this, where Money sets all on a Level, there is scarce an adequate Remedy for this Evil.

What bids fairest for some Redress, is to raise the Price so high, by laying a Tax upon such Pleasures, as may keep out some of the very lowest Class; the Profits arising from this Tax, might, like that of Gaming, be apply'd for the Support of the *Foundling Hospital*, or some other publick Charity. But even this would not effectually remedy the Abuse of these Diversions, for what Money will purchase the *English* will have, and it is their Nature to be fonder of it the dearer it is, and the more they are restrain'd from it. To prevent then, as much as possible, Diversions being haunted by those who cannot support this Expence, as I propose

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( 49 )

a Tax to be levied on all Places that take Money for Admission; so I would propose, that this Tax should be managed by the Master of the Revels, who should grant Tickets only to Gentlemen of Fortune, and that none should be admitted without a Sword, a full Dress, &c. and that it should be made penal for any not having a Ticket from the Master of the Revels to appear in these Places with a Dress peculiar to a Gentleman, unless he really was such by Birth or Fortune. This would keep up the Dignity of our Quality, and the Decorum and Chastity of our Places of publick Entertainment; but at the same Time, Sir, I would not debar the Mob the Use of their Drolls, Puppet-Shews, and Tumblers, provided these Shews were never exhibited in labouring Hours; for they have an equal Right to innocent Amusements as the Quality, and are only to be restrain'd from what may debase their Morals, or check or divert their Industry.

Our Watch, Sir, is design'd for our Security *Watch* against Street-robbers, House-breakers, &c. they are a great Expence to the Inhabitants, and yet they are of very little Use for the Purposes they are intended; they are mostly old, lazy, and unactive, are too late before they are set upon Duty, leave it too early, and not a few of them are suspected to be in League with, or intimidated by the Rogues that infest our Streets. In a Word, their Inutility is obvious to most People, and yet the several Parishes to whom they

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( 50 )

belong care not to be prevail'd on to alter their Measures, or give any Redress of Complaint that are exhibited against them; and the Management of most Vestries are so well known to the Generality, that most People are discourag'd from making their Complaints, as despairing of Redress from that Quarter.

There ought, Sir, to be some general Regulations to govern the whole Watch, and some shorter Remedy against Abuses or Neglects committed by them, than can be obtain'd by Application to the respective Parishes to which they belong. I think, their Number upon the whole, ought to be encreas'd, their Hours of Attendance ought to be as early and as long as the Lamps continued lighted; they ought to be able-bodied Men, and govern'd by Constables, that would make Conscience, and not a Trade of their Duty.

I think it would greatly contribute to their Utility, especially in *Westminster*, if the Gentlemen Commissioners for the Court of Conscience, or some others commission'd specially for that Purpose, had a Power to ascertain the Number of Watchmen in every Parish, to appoint general Rules for the Discharge of their Duty, to inspect into their Abilities, to discharge such as are unfit, and oblige the Parishes to find able-bodied Men, and redress all Complaints that might be made against them; for which Purpose, they ought to have stated Meetings in proper Places, at least three Times a Week.

( 51 )

Week. In the City of *London*, the Court of Lord-Mayor and Aldermen might have the Power of general Regulations, and the fitting Alderman of redressing all Complaints. I am convinc'd, that some such Regulation would render these Men more useful, and prevent a great many of these Abuses now committed in our Streets.

I have now, Sir, given you a short Detail of what I take to be the Source of our present Calamities, and hinted at some rational Expedients for Removal of these Abuses; there may be many other Causes of less Note, operating with these already mention'd, but it would be too tedious to enter into every minute Particular that accumulates Mischiefe, and contributes to the Growth of Vice and Villainy. These I have mention'd, are the capital and main Springs, which if dried up, we may expect to see Virtue once more flourish, and the Laws take their full Course against obstinate Offenders; but, Sir, it is in vain to mention these, if Gentlemen are lukewarm in the Cause, if every Man puts the laborious Task off from himself, and waits for a To-morrow to do that which ought to be done To-day. The Case is clamant, our Disease is desperate, and requires a speedy and effectual Remedy; it must not be flurr'd over with some temporary Expedient, but must be prob'd to the Bottom. To the Weak, the Unsteady, Impatient, or Pusillanimous, we need not plead for Redress; but to the honest Few, whose Heart feels

( 52 )

feels the Anguish of the Widow and Orphan, whose Breasts are warm'd with Love for their Country, whose Zeal is animated by her Interest, and who are above selfish Views, or the mean Designs of Party and Faction, we look up for Relief from these Mischiefs that disturb our Peace. To you, Sir, and such as you, your Country commits her Cause, and begs Protection for her violated Laws and sinking Liberties, a Cause in which all may join, since all Parties, all Factions and Denominations, that unhappily divide this Island, surely must wish to be free from the Tyranny of Rogues, Vagabonds, Street-robbers, and Highwaymen. I am,

S I R,

*Your most obedient, and**most humble Servant.*

*P. S.* Money given at this Season of the Year to Apprentices, &c. is perhaps a more dangerous Piece of Villainy than is generally supposed, and ought to be prevented. But the Numbers of People detain'd in Jails for Debts corrupts the Morals of Thousands, gives them a Habit of Idleness, takes off from them a Sense of Shame, and prepares them by insensible Degrees for the greatest Villainies: Some Act that would clear our Jails, and keep them clear, would contribute much to the general Honesty.

F I N I S.