

TREATISES ON POOR RELIEF REFORM

A Method Concerning the Relief and Employment of the Poor: Humbly Offer'd to the Consideration of the King and Both Houses of Parliament (London, 1699).

Laurence Braddon, *Particular Answers to the most Material Objections made to the Proposal Humbly Presented to his Majesty, for Relieving, Reforming, and Employing all the Poor of Great Britain* ([London?], 1722).

John Vancouver, *An Enquiry into the Causes and Production of Poverty, and the State of the Poor: Together with the Proposed Means for Their Effectual Relief* (London: R. Edwards, 1796), pp. 1–9, 17–19, 27–35, 50–1, 63–5, 74–82, 87–9, 101–6.

Thomas Ruggles, *The History of the Poor: Their Rights, Duties, and the Laws Respecting Them: In a Series of Letters. A New Edition Corrected, and Continued to the Present Time* (London: W. Richardson, 1797), pp. 1–8, 25–32, 197–202, 219–24.

The eighteenth century witnessed a steady stream of pamphlets and treatises critiquing the functioning of the Poor Laws, and proposing reforms, with a torrent of proposals in the 1790s. While these publications varied widely, they generally shared a preoccupation with four themes: the need to take poor relief out of the parish and put it under more central or regional direction; problems created by the laws of settlement; freeloaders and the perceived need to reform the morals of the poor; and, in contrast, the better provision of adequate and humane relief for the truly desolate, deserving poor.

The last theme was the most relevant to the support of the aged poor, but the aged featured to some degree in discussions of all of these issues. The problem identified with the parish-based system of poor relief was the obvious one: the poorest parishes were the hardest hit with demands on the parish rates, while they were the least able to furnish funds. Such concerns lay behind many of the proposals for the erections of 'hundred houses' and similar houses of industry that would draw from a regional rate base. Most of the publications were written, especially in the first half of our period, by those whose primary financial interest lay in trade. By the last couple of decades of the eighteenth century, however, there appears an increased concern with the state of the poor more generally, and a more humanitarian thread enters into discussions about the poor,

as exemplified by Thomas Ruggles's concern that the laws of settlement violated the 'natural and political liberty' of the poor.¹ The documents selected for this volume were chosen in an effort to show this span of writings on poor relief, while they also articulate attitudes towards the elderly poor that are particularly interesting and clearly expressed.

Throughout these tracts, however, the reader will note that the case of the elderly poor appears always as part of the larger question of how best to deal with the poor more generally, and with poor relief legislation. Here, as in so many places in this collection, the reader will be faced constantly with the reality that the needs of the aged poor were always discussed in the larger context of the poor as a whole. The aged were always, throughout the eighteenth century, considered to be amongst the most deserving poor, but for this very reason their needs were often assumed, their rights often implied, rather than discussed explicitly at any great lengths in tracts and treatises.

Although each of the treatises reprinted here provides a unique view on Poor Law reform, we can group the authors by period and by inclination. The two early treatises will strike the reader as obviously cut from the same cloth as those documents reprinted in Volume 5 of this collection: the mindset is mercantilist and moralizing; the motive is to increase the productivity of the poor for the good of the nation, and the method proposed is to set the poor to work. The first is a compilation of the work of Sir Josiah Child, one of the most prominent writers on Poor Law reform from the later seventeenth century, and appears to have been reprinted by his son.² The author is deeply respectful of Child's work, feeling that he is primarily answering objections to his father's well-developed proposals. *A Method Concerning the Relief and Employment of the Poor* also summarizes the seminal work of Sir Matthew Hale, and other late seventeenth-century writers, arguing that both God and Nature require better care of the poor, and (in typical mercantilist fashion) that England suffers mightily in comparison to France and Holland (as well as New England and 'Hamborough') in both caring for and maximizing the productivity of its poor. The author concludes that the problem is the inadequacy of the Poor Laws themselves, principally, the leaving the poor to individual parishes. In his scheme, 'Fathers of the Poor' would channel charitable contributions and set up institutions for the poor (the usual mix of bridewells, houses of industry and hospitals). More unusually, the author explicitly uses the model of the East India Company for the management structure of his plan, and he seeks to use the poor to increase employment not only in England, but also in the North American colonies. The aged are seen, here, as simply one section of the poor to be employed (more like the seventeenth-century treatises in Volume 5, and in contrast to most of the eighteenth-century tracts). The elderly are mentioned in passing when the particular tasks assigned to workhouse inmates are discussed, and only because their clothes will need

mending. The author also has a faith in the charity of the people (believing that some three-quarters of the stock for putting the poor to work would come from charitable donations) that is typical of one strand of thinking throughout our period, especially in the first half of the century.

Laurence Braddon's treatise appeared in print some twenty years later, and highlights the attention to population that had been typical of mercantilists and political arithmeticians since the time of Gregory King, though Braddon is more obsessed than most with using poor children to supply the Navy.³ Braddon wrote longer pieces on the poor, but we have chosen to reprint just this very short tract here, as it encapsulates his most interesting attention to the aged.⁴ It is clear that for Braddon the purpose of reforming the poor was to increase the wealth of the kingdom (through manufacture) in relationship to other nations; poor children were to be trained into industrious habits, poor adults were ensured (or forced into) work and, finally and almost as an afterthought, the aged and impotent were to be 'more comfortably maintain'd' than any other country's helpless poor (below, p. 149). Uniquely, the chief benefit of such assistance was seen to be its attraction to foreigners, who would then immigrate to England to enjoy the benefits not only of civil and political liberties, but also of full employment and, essentially, old age/disability insurance. In its essence, Braddon's proposal is almost identical to the earlier tract: he wants to set up a single corporation for relieving the poor, starting with the area of London covered by the Bills of Mortality, and then extending throughout the kingdom. The details, though, show increased attention to age. The hospitals he wants to set up in London would segregate not only the poor children from the adults, but would include an institution designated solely for the use of 'those, whose Years have rendered them altogether incapable of Labour' (below, p. 149). Braddon's proposals for 'collegiate cities' for the poor are actually a direct echo of the prominent Quaker reformer John Bellers's earlier work, first published in 1695, which was reprinted almost at the same time as Braddon's.⁵

The mid-eighteenth century saw a steady trickle of publications on the poor and poor relief, but real anxiety about the topic did not peak again until the last quarter of the century. In part to provide a more striking contrast to the earlier material, we have chosen to reproduce here two works from the very end of the century.

By the 1790s, as Thomas Ruggles comments, the vast increase in the cost of poor relief was evident to all, and he even includes a digest in his book of answers to the Parliamentary inquiries of 1783, 1784 and 1785. The plight of the poor in times of dearth, inflation and European-wide warfare, alongside the great concern for public order generated by the French Revolution and Irish Rebellion, ensured massive public awareness of the need to address the inadequacies of the Poor Laws.

Here, we reproduce selections from Thomas Ruggles's classic treatise on *The History of the Poor* alongside the much lesser known work of John Vancouver in order to highlight the importance and prevalence of radical Enlightenment views on human rights, and their effects on thinking about poverty, and because these two works demonstrate particular concern for the entitlement of the elderly to public support.⁶ Both works reflect the new intellectual and economic landscape of the later eighteenth century. Mercantilist thought had been replaced by adherence to the political economy of Adam Smith, and there was a new awareness of the rise of large-scale manufacturing. Ruggles's work is vast in scope, so I will summarize a few of the most salient points here. His work first appeared in the *Annals of Agriculture*, published by Arthur Young, and was first published as a book in 1793. Ruggles had intended to address this collection of letters, many of which summarize the history of the Poor Laws and writings on the poor, to Prime Minister William Pitt, hoping to influence him.⁷ Here, we reprint selections from the 1797 version, where he made comments on Pitt's Reform Bill, which generated considerable reaction in print, as well as in Parliament.⁸ Vancouver's text was published in 1796, the same year in which Pitt's Poor Law Reform Bill was introduced (but failed to pass) in the House of Commons.

Ruggles recognizes a need to increase productivity among the manufacturing sector without alienating agricultural labour, and he cites Adam Smith with great frequency. In suggesting the erection of houses of industry, he notes that workhouses are 'horrible', but at the current time, 'necessary evils'.⁹ For Ruggles the claims of the poor are 'serious rights', and, most relevant to the aged, 'the right of maintenance from the more opulent classes of society, when that capability to labour is passed, is another debt which society owes them'.¹⁰ Poor labourers should even be assured a salary generous enough to support their aged parents, as well as their children. Ruggles is particularly clear on his assumption that old age will produce dependence. While he is somewhat unusual, in the 1790s, in insisting on the importance of the role of parish clergy in the relief of the poor, he does echo all of the earlier reformers in emphasizing the importance of inculcating religious values into the poor.

While Ruggles applauded and encouraged the erection of friendly societies, it is John Vancouver (1756–1829) who really carried the idea of the benefit club to its logical conclusion, essentially proposing a national contributory pension scheme to alleviate the problems of the deserving poor. He served as deputy collector of customs in King's Lynn from 1773, and later as agent to the Earl of Warwick. His brother Charles was very active in agricultural reform, writing volumes on the 'General View' of the agriculture in several counties, for the series published by the Board of Agriculture.¹¹ Vancouver's work obviously lies on a radical edge of writings on the need to eliminate poverty, alongside that of Thomas Paine and the Marquis de Condorcet.¹² Also of great interest are

Vancouver's vehement attacks on workhouses; he was one of the most forceful negative voices of his time in this regard.

Although the four treatises reproduced here give a taste of the nature of debates on poor relief over the course of the eighteenth century, they only begin to reveal the variety and scope of the discussion. Scholars interested in getting a broad overview of this literature can get an excellent sense of the printed discussions up to 1790 by reading the first volume of Sir Frederic Morton Eden's *The State of the Poor* (1797), which not only summarizes many of the most important documents, but also includes extensive quotations from many.

Notes:

1. Ruggles, *The History of the Poor*, p. vii (not reproduced below). Ruggles also notes the perceived danger that the cry for liberty has destabilized the Continent, but he dismisses these concerns because this is 'a restraint inimical to the interests of labour and industry', p. viii (not reproduced below).
2. The attribution to Child's son is made on the basis of the following statement: 'Earnestly to desire and endeavour that the *Poor of England* should be better provided for and employed, is a Work that was much studied by my deceased *Father*, and therefore though I be as ready to confess as any shall be to charge me, with Disability to propose of *Model of Laws* for this Great Affair, yet I hope the more Ingenuous will pardon me for endeavouring to give aim towards it ... J. C.' (see below, p. 145). 'J. C.' likely refers to Josiah Child's son Josiah, who was born to Child's second wife in 1668, and had been knighted in 1692. Josiah senior died in 1699, the year in which this compilation was published.
3. See discussion in the Introduction to Volume 5 of this collection.
4. L. Braddon, *The Miseries of the Poor are a National Sin, Shame, and Charge* (London, 1717). He also had a longer abstract of the Bill he was proposing published in 1717, followed by several versions of his ideas for reform. The tract printed here is his latest and most concise version of his ideas for reform.
5. J. Bellers, *An Essay for Employing the Poor to Profit, Humbly Dedicated and Presented to the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament* (London, 1723).
6. See G. Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty? An Historical Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).
7. Ruggles, *The History of the Poor*, pp. iii–iv (not reproduced below).
8. Among the many pamphleteers to take on Pitt's Bill was Jeremy Bentham. See J. Bentham, *Writings on the Poor Laws*, ed. M. Quinn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
9. Ruggles, *The History of the Poor*, pp. viii–ix (not reproduced below).
10. *Ibid.*, pp. ix–x (not reproduced below).
11. I have not been able to verify the accuracy of this account; this was written by a family historian and is published on the web at: <http://pages.quicksilver.net.nz/jcr/~vancouver7.html> [accessed 28 August 2008].
12. Jones, *An End to Poverty?*

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A

METHOD

Concerning the
Relief and Employment

OF THE

POOR:

Humbly offer'd to the Consideration of the KING and both
Houses of PARLIAMENT. Taken out of Sir *Josiah Child's*¹ Writ-
ings.

With somewhat added;

Which the Late Renowned Judge, Sir *Mathew Hale*,² Writ in his
Book Intituled, *A Discourse touching Provision for the Poor*.

May true Wisdom be given, for the carrying on so Great and so Good a Work.

LONDON, Printed by the Advice of some in Authority, 1699. /

A
METHOD
Concerning the
Relief and Employment
OF THE
POOR.

IN the Discourse of this Subject, I shall first assert some Particulars, which I think are agreed by common Consent, and from thence take occasion to proceed to what is more doubtful.

1. That our Poor in *England* have always been in a most sad and wretched condition, some Famished for want of Bread, others starved with Cold and Nakedness, and many whole Families in all the out Parts of Cities and great Towns, commonly remain in a languishing, nasty and useless Condition, Uncomfortable to themselves, and unprofitable to the Kingdom, this is confessed and lamented by all Men.

2. That the *Children* of our Poor bred up in *Beggary* and *Laziness*, do by that means become not only of *unhealthy Bodies*, and more then ordinary subject to many loathsome Diseases, whereof very / many die in their tender Age, and if any of them do arrive to years and strength, they are, by their idle habits contracted in their Youth, rendred for ever after indispos'd to Labour, and serve only to stock the *Kingdom* with *Thieves* and *Beggars*.

3. That if all our impotent *Poor* were provided for, and those of both Sexes, and all Ages that can do Work of any kind, employed, it would redound some Hundreds of Thousands of Pounds *per Annum* to the Publick Advantage.

4. That it is our Duty to GOD and Nature so to Provide for, and Employ the Poor.

5. That by so doing one of the great Sins (for which this Land ought to Mourn) would be removed.

6. That our fore-Fathers had pious Intentions towards this good Work, as appears by the many Statutes made by them to this purpose.

7. That there are Places in the World, wherein the *Poor* are so provided for, and employed; as in *Holland*, *Hamborough*, *New-England* and others and as I am informed, now in the *City of Paris*.

Thus far we all agree: The first Question then that naturally occurs is,

How comes it to pass that in England we do not, nor ever did comfortably Maintain and Employ our Poor?

The common Answers to this Question are two.

1. *That our Laws to this purpose are as good as any in the World, but we fail in the execution.*

2. *That formerly in the days of our Pious Ancestors the work was done, but now Charity is deceased, and that is the reason we see the Poor so neglected as now they are.*

In both which Answers (I humbly conceive) the Effect is mistaken for the Cause: For tho' it cannot / be denied, but there hath been, and is a great failure in the Execution of those *Statutes* which relate to the *Poor*; yet I say, the *Cause of that failure, hath been occasioned by defect of the Laws themselves.*

For otherwise, what is the reason that in our late times of the Confusion and Alteration,³ wherein almost every Party in the Nation, at one time or other, took their turn at the Helm, and all had that Compass (those Laws) to Steer by, and yet none of them could, or ever did, conduct the *Poor* into a Harbour of security to them, and profit to the Kingdom, i.e. *none sufficiently maintained the Impotent, and employed the Indigent amongst us:* And if this was never done in any Age, nor by any sort of Men whatsoever in this *Kingdom*, who had the use of those Laws now in force, it seemes to me a very strong Argument that it never could, nor ever will be done by those Laws, and that consequently the defect lies in the Laws themselves, not in the Men, i.e. those that should put them in Execution.

As to the second Answer to the aforesaid Question, wherein *want of Charity* is assigned for another cause why the *Poor* are now so much neglected, I think it is a *scandalous ungrounded accusation of our Contemporaries;* for most that I converse with, are not so much troubled to part with their Money, as how to place it, that it may do good, and not hurt to the Kingdom: For, *If they give to the Beggars in the Streets, or at their Doors, they fear they may do hurt by encouraging that Lazy unprofitable kind of Life, and if they give more than their Proportions in their respective Parishes, that (they say) is but giving to the Rich,* for the *Poor* are not set on Work thereby, nor / have the more given them; but only their *Rich* Neighbours pay the less. And for what was given in *Churches* to the *Visited Poor*, and to such as were *impoverished by the Fire;* we have heard of so many and great Abuses of that kind of *Charity*, that most men are under sad Discouragements in Relation thereunto.

I write not this to divert any Man from Works of Chaity of any kind: *He that gives to any in Want does well, but he that gives to Employ and Educate the Poor, so as to render them useful to the Kingdom, as my judgement does better.*

And here by the way, not to leave men at a loss how to dispose of what GOD shall incline their Hearts to give for the Benefit of the *Poor*, I think it not impertinent to propose the *Hospitals* of the *City*, and *Poor Labouring People that have many Children*, and make a hard shift to sustain them by their Industry, whereof

there are multitudes in the out Parts of this *City*, as the best Objects of Charity at present.

But to return to my purpose, viz. to prove that the want of Charity likewise that is now, and always hath been in relation to the *Poor*, proceeds from a defect in our Laws. Ask any Charitable-minded Man, as he goes along the Streets of *London*, viewing the *Poor*, viz, *Boyes, Girles, Men and Women* of all Ages, and Many in good Health, &c. why he and others do not take care for the setting those poor Creatures to Work? Will he not readily answer, that he wisheth heartily it could be done, though it cost him some part of his Estate, but he is but one Man, and can do nothing towards it; giving them Money, as hath been said, being but to bring them into a liking and continuance in that way. /

Question 2. *Wherein lyes the defect of our present Laws relating to the Poor?*

I answer, that there may be many, but I shall here take notice of one only, which I think to be fundamental, and which until altered, the *Poor* in *England* can never be well provided for, or Employed; and that when the said Fundamental Error is well amended it is almost impossible they should lack either Work or Maintainance.

The said radical Error I esteem to be the leaving it to the Care of every Parish to maintain their own Poor only; upon which follows the shifting off, sending or whipping back the poor Wanderers to the place of their Birth, or last Abode; the Practice whereof I have seen many Years in *London*, to signify as much as ever it will, which is just nothing of Good to the Kingdom in general, or the *Poor* thereof, though it be sometimes by accident to some of them a Punishment without effect; I say without effect, because it reforms not the Party, nor disposeth the minds of others to Obedience, which are the true ends of all Punishment.

As for instance, a *poor idle person*, that will not Work, or that no Body will employ in the Country, comes up to *London*, to set up the Trade of *Begging*, such a person probably may *Begg* up and down the Streets seven Years, it may be seven and Twenty, before any body asketh why she doth so, and if at length she hath the ill hap in some Parish to meet with a more Vigilant *Beadle* than one of twenty of them are, all he does is but to lead her the length of five or six Houses into another Parish, and then concludes, as his *Masters* the *Parishoners* do, that he hath / done the part of a most diligent Officer: But suppose he should yet go further to the end of his Line, which is the end of the Law; and the perfect Execution of his Office; that is, suppose he should carry this poor wretch to a *Justice* of the Peace, and he should order the *Delinquent* to be *Whipt* and sent from *Parish* to *Parish*, to the place of her *Birth* or last Abode, which not one *Justice* of twenty (through Pity or other cause) will do; even this is a great charge upon the Country, and yet the business of the Nation it self wholly undone: For no sooner doth the *Delinquent* arrive at the place assign'd, but for Shame or Idleness she presently deserts it, and wanders directly back, or some other way,

hoping for better Fortune, whilst the *Parish* to which she is sent, knowing her a Lazy, and perhaps a worse qualified person, is as willing to be rid of her, as she is to be gone from thence.

If it be here retorted upon me, that by my own confession, much of this mischief happens by the non, or ill Execution of the Laws, I say, Better Execution then you have seen, you must not expect; *and there was never a good Law made, that was not well executed; the fault of the Law causing a failure of execution;* it being natural to all men to use the remedy next at hand, and rest satisfied with shifting the Evil from their own Doors; which in regard they can so easily do, by threatning or thrusting a *poor Body* out of the verge of their own *Parish*, it is unreasonable and vain to hope that ever it will be otherwise.

*For the Laws against Inmates,*⁴ and empowering the Parishioners to take Security before they suffer any poor Person to inhabit amongst them; it may be they were prudent constitutions at the times they were / made (and before *England* was a place of Trade) and may be so still in some Countries; but I am sure in *Cities* & great *Towns* of Trade, they are altogether improper, and contrary to the practice of other *Cities* and *Trading Towns* abroad. The Riches of a *City*, as of a *Nation*, consisting in the multitude of *inhabitants*; and if so, *you must allow Inmates, or have a City of Cottages.* And if a right course be taken for the Sustentation of the *Poor*, and setting them on Work, you need invent no Stratagems to keep them out, but rather to bring them in. For, *Therefore of Poor to a City or Nation well managed, is in effect, the conflux of Riches to that City or Nation,* and therefore the subtil *Dutch* receive, and relieve, or employ all that come to them, not enquiring what *Nation*, much less what *Parish* they are of.

Question 3. If the defect be in our Laws, how shall we find a remedy that may be rational and consistent?

This I confess is a hard and difficult question, it is one of the *Ardua Regni,*⁵ & may very well deserve the most deliberate consideration of our wisest *Counselors.* And if A WHOLE SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WERE EMPLOYED ON THIS SINGULAR CONCERN, I think it would be time spent as much to the Glory of GOD and good of this *Nation*, as in any thing that noble and worthy *Patriots* of their Country can be engaged in: But seeing I have adventured this far, I shall humbly proceed to offer some General Proposals that have a tendency towards the effecting this great Work, which being seriously thought of and debated by a COMMITTEE may be capable of such melioration as may render them in a great measure effectual to the *Kingdom* in / general, although at present, to prevent that Common Objection, that great Mutations are dangerous; I shall only propose them to be experimented in these parts of the *Kingdom*, which are the Vitals of our body politick, which being once made sound, the care of the rest will not be difficult.

Proposition, 1. That the City of London and Westminster, Burrough of Southwark, and all other places within the usual Lines of Communication, described within the weekly Bills of Mortality, may by Act of Parliament be associated into one Province or line of Communication for relief of the Poor.

2. That there be one Assembly of men (and such as they shall from time to time appoint and deputise) entrusted with the care for, and treasure of all the Poor within the said Pale or Line of Communication.

3. *That the said Assembly be incorporated by Act of Parliament, with perpetual Succession by the name of Fathers of the Poor, or some other honourable and significant Title.*

4. *That all Constables, Church-wardens, Overseers, or other Officers in all Parishes, within the said Line, be subordinate & accomptable to the said Fathers of the Poor, and their Deputies for, & in all things relating to the Poor.*

5. *That the said Fathers of the Poor may have liberty to Assess and receive into thier [sic] common Treasury, for relief of their Poor, so much Money from every Parish as they yearly paid to that purpose any of the three years preceding this Constitution, and to compel the Payment thereof, but not of more.*

6. That the said *Fathers of the Poor*, and their Deputies, may have very large and sufficient Power in all things relating to the Poor, and particularly to / have and receive the charitable benevolence of all Persons once every *Sunday* in every Parish Church, and in any other place, and at any other time or times which they shall think fit.

7. That the said *Fathers of the Poor*, and such as they shall authorize, may have Power to purchase Lands, erect and endow Work-houses, Hospitals and Houses of Correction, and to exercise all other Powers relating to the Poor, that any number of *Justices of the Peace* now may do, in their *Quarter Sessions* or otherwise.

8. *That the said Fathers of the Poor may have Power to send such Poor beyond the Seas as they shall think fit into his Majesties Plantations, taking Security for their comfortable Maintainance during their Service, and for their freedom afterwards.*

9. *That the said Fathers of the Poor may have Power to erect petty Banks and Lumbards⁶ for the benefit of the Poor, if they shall find it convenient, and also to receive the one half of what is paid at all the Doors of Play-Houses [if they be continued] and have the Patent for Farthings,⁷ and to do whatever else his Majesty and the Parliament shall think fit to recommend to them, or leave to their Discretion.*

10. *That the Treasure that shall be collected for this purpose, be accounted sacred; and that it be fellony to misapply, conceal, lend or convert it to any other use or purpose whatsoever.*

11. *That there be no Oaths, or other Tells imposed upon the Fathers of the Poor, at their Admission; to bar out Nonconformists, amongst whom there will be found some excellent Instruments for this good Work, and such as will constantly attend it, for if / they be kept out, the People will be cold in their Charity, and in their hopes of the success.*

12. *That the said Fathers of the Poor may constantly wear some honourable Medal, such as the King and Parliament shall devise, besides the Green Staff⁸ which is now used in London to such like purpose (but upon extraordinary days only) to denote their Authority and Office, at all times, and in all places, after the manner of the Habits in Spain, or rather, as have all the Familars of the Inquisition in most Romish Countries, with admirable effect, tho to a wicked purpose; the consequence whereof will be, that the said Fathers of the Poor, being Numerous, and disperst by their Habitations and Business into most parts of their Province, will readily see any neglects of Officers, and as easily redress them; the Medal which they wear about them, being a sufficient Warrant to command Obedience from all Parish Officers wherever they come, although their Persons be not known there.*

13. *That the said Fathers of the Poor may have Liberty to admit into their Society, and all Powers and Priviledges equal with them, any Persons that are willing to serve GOD, their King and Country in this Pious and publick Work, the Persons desiring to be so admitted, paying at their admission 100%. or more, into the Poores Treasury, as a demonstration of the Sincerity of their Intentions to labour in and cultivate this most Religious Vineyard. This I only offer because the number of the said Fathers of the Poor hereafter mentioned, may be thought rather too few than too many.*

14. *That the said Fathers of the Poor, besides the Authority now exercised by Justices of the Peace, may / have some less limited Powers given them, in relation to the Punishment of their own, and Parish Officers by pecuniary mulcts⁹ for the Poores benefit, in case of neglect, and otherwise, as his Majesty and the Parliament shall think fit.*

15. *That the said Fathers of the Poor may have freedom to set the Poor on Work about whatsoever Manufacture they think fit, with a Non obstante¹⁰ to all Patents that have been or shall be granted to any Private Person or Persons for the sole Manufacture of any Commodity; the want of which priviledge, I have been told, was a prejudice to the Work-house at Clerkenwell, in the late design of setting their Poor Children about making of Hangings.*

16. *That all Vacancies by reason of Death of any of the said Fathers of the Poor, be perpetually supplied by Election of the Survivors.*

Ques. 4. Who shall be the Persons entrusted with so great a Work, and such excess of Power?

This is a Question likewise of some difficulty; and the more, in regard of our present Differences in *Religion*; but I shall answer it as well as I can.

In general I say, *They must be such as the People must have ample satisfaction in, or else the whole Design will be lost.* For if the universality of the People be not satisfied with the Persons, they will never part with their Money; but if they be well satisfied therein, they will be miraculously charitable.

Ques. 5. What sort of men the People will be most satisfied in?

I answer, I think *in none so well as such only as a common Hall of the Liverymen of London shall make choice of*, it being evident by the experience of many / Ages, that the several *Corporations* in *London* are the best *Administrators* of what is left to *charitable Uses*, that have ever been in this *Kingdom*, which is manifest in the regular, just and prudent management of the *Hospitals of London*, and was wisely observed by *Doctor-Collet Dean of St. Pauls*,¹¹ that prudent *Ecclesiastick*, when he left the Government of that *School*, and other great Revenues assigned by him for charitable Uses, unto the disposition of the *Mercers Company*.

Object. That *Country-Gentlemen*, who have Power in places of their Residences, and pay out of their large Estates considerable sums towards the Maintenance of their *Poor* within the aforelimited Precincts, may be justly Offended if they likewise have not a share in the distribution of what shall be raised to that purpose.

Answ. The force of this Objection may be much taken off, if the *City* be obliged to choose but a certain number out of the *City*, as suppose seventy for *London*, ten out of *Southwark* for that *Burrough*, twenty for *Westminster*, this would best satisfy the People, and I think do the Work: But if it be thought too much for the *City* to have the choice of any more than their own seventy, the *Justices of the Peace* in their *Quarter-Sessions* may nominate and appoint their own number of persons to assist for their respective Jurisdictions and so to supply the vacancy in case of Death, &c. But all must be conjunctive, but one *Body Politick*, or the work will never be done.

Quest. 6. What will be the advantage to the Kingdom in general, and to the Poor in particular, that will accrue by such a Society of men, more than is enjoyed by the Laws at present? /

I answer, Innumerable and unspeakable are the Benefits to this Kingdom that will arise from the Consultations and Debates of such a wise and honest *Council* who being men so elected as aforesaid, will certainly conscionably study and labour to discharge their trust in this Service of GOD, their *King* and *Country*.

1. The *Poor*, of what quality soever, as soon as they are met with, will be immediatly relieved or set on Work where they are found, without hurrying them from place to place, and torturing their Bodies to no purpose.

2. Charitable minded men, will know certainly where to dispose of their Charity, so as it may be employed to right purposes.

3. House-keepers will be freed from the intolerable Incumbrance of Beggars at their Door.

4. The Plantations will be regularly supplied with Servants, and those that are sent thither well provided for.

5. The said Assembly will doubtless appoint some of their own Members to visit and relieve such as are Sick, as often as there shall be occasion, together with poor Labouring Families both in *City* and *Suburbs*.

6. *Poor Children will be instructed in Learning and Arts*, and thereby rendered serviceable to their Country, and many other worthy Acts done for publick good by the joint deliberation of so many prudent and pious Men, assisted with such a Power and Purse, more than can be fore-seen or expressed by a private Person.

Quest. 7. What shall all the Poor of these Cities and Countries, being very numerous, be employ'd about! /

This question will be answer'd best by the said Assembly themselves when they have met & consulted together, who cannot be presumed deficient of Invention to set all the *Poor* on Work, especially since they may easily have Admirable Presidents from the Practice of *Holland*¹² in this particular, & have already very good ones of their own, in the Orders of their *Hospitals of Christ Church and Bridewell in London*; the *Girls* may be employed in mending the Cloathes of the *Aged*, in *Spinning, Carding*, and other *Linnen Manufactures*, and many in *Sowing Linnen* for the *Exchange*, or any *House-keeper* that will put out Linnen to the *Matrons* that have the Government of them.

The *Boys* in *picking Oborn* [?], *making Pins, rasping Wood, making Hangings*, or any other *Manufacture* of any kind, which whether it turns to present profit or not, is not much material, the great business of the Nation being first but to keep the *Poor*, from *Begging* and *Starving*, and enuring such as are able to Labour and Discipline, that they may be hereafter useful Members to the Kingdom. But to conclude, I say the wisest Man living solitary cannot propose or Imagine such excellent ways & methods as will be invented by the united Wisdom of so garve [*sic*] an *Assembly*.

The sitting of the said *Assembly*. I humbly conceive, ought to be *de Die in Diem*;¹³ the *Quorum* not more then thirteen; whether they shall Yearly, Monthly or Weekly choose a *President*, how they shall distribute themselves into the several quarters of the *Communication*, what *Treasurers* and other *Officers* to Employ, and where, and how many, will be best determined by themselves, and that without difficulty; because many that will probably be Members of the / said *Assembly*, have already had large experience of the Government of the *Hospitals of London*: The manner of Election of the said *Fathers of the Poor*, I humbly suppose, cannot possibly be better contrived then after the same way which the *East-India Company* choose their *Committee*, which will prevent the Confusion, Irregularity and Incertitude that may attend the Election of Voices, or holding

up of Hands especially because the Persons to be Elected at one time will be very many; the said manner Proposed is Every *Elector*, viz. every *Livery-Man*, to bring to *Guild-Hall* at the appointed day for Elections, a List of the whole number of Persons, such as he thinks fit that are to be Elected, and deliver the same openly unto such Persons as the *Lord Mayor*, *Aldermen*, and *Common-Council-Men* shall appoint to make the Scrutiny; which Persons so entrusted with the said Scrutiny, seven, or ten days after, as shall be thought fit, at another *Common Hall* may declare who are the Persons Elected by the Majority of Votes.

If it be here Objected to the whole purpose of this Treatise, that this work may as well be done in distinct *Parishes*, if all *Parishes* were obliged to Build *Work-Houses*, and Employ their *Poor* therein as *Dorchester*, and some others have done, with good success.

I answer, That such attempts have been made in many places to my knowledge, with very good intents and strenuous Endeavours, but all that ever I heard of, proved vain & ineffectual (as I fear will that of *Clarken-well*) except that single instance of the Town of *Dorchester*, which yet signifies nothing / in relation to the Kingdom in general, besides all other places cannot do the like, nor doth the Town of *Dorchester* entertain any but their own *Poor* only, and *Whip* away all others; whereas that which I design is to propose such a Foundation, as shall be large, wise, honest and rich enough to maintain & employ all *Poor* that come within the Pale of their *Communication*, without enquiring where they were Born, or last Inhabited: Which I dare affirm with Humility, that nothing but a *National*, or at least such a *Provincial Purse* can so well do, nor any persons in this *Kingdom*, but such only as shall be prickt out by Popular Election for the reason before alledged, viz. That in my Opinion *three fourths* at least of the *Stock* must issue from the *Charity* of the *People*; as I doubt not but it will to a greater proportion, if they be satisfied in the *Managers* thereof; but if otherwise, not the fortieth; I might say not the hundredth part.

I propose the Majority of the said *Fathers of the Poor* to be *Citizens* (*though I am none my self*) because I think a great share of the Money to be employed, must and will come from them, if ever the Work be well done, as also, because their Habitations are nearest the Center of their Business, and they best acquainted with all affairs of this Nature, by their Experience in the Government of the *Hospitals*.

Earnestly to desire and endeavour that the *Poor of England* should be better provided for and employed, is a Work that was much studied by my deceased *Father*, and therefore though I be as ready to confess, as any shall be to charge me, with Disability to propose a *Model* of Laws for this great Affair, / yet I hope the more Ingenuous will pardon me for endeavouring to give aim towards it, since it is so much my duty, which in this particular I shall be careful to Perform (though I may be too remiss in others) as shall appear by MORE VISIBLE

AND APPARENT DEMONSTRATIONS, if ever this design, or any other (that is like to effect what is desired) succeed.

J.C. /

This following,

Judge HALE writ (with much more to the same purpose) in his Book, Intituled, *A Discourse touching Provision for the Poor*.

WE have very severe Laws against *Theft*, possibly more severe than most other Nations, yea, and than the Offence simply considered deserves; and there is so little to be said in defence of the severity of the Law herein, but the multitude of the Offenders, and the design of the Law rather to terrifie then punish: *ut metus in omnes pœna in paucos*:¹⁴ But it is most apparent that the Law is frustrated of its Design therein; for altho more suffer at one Sessions at *Newgate* for Stealing, and Breaking up Houses, and Picking of Pockets, and such other Larcenaries, than suffer in some other Countries for all Offences in three Years, yet the Goals are never the emptier: Necessity and Poverty and want of a due Provision for the Employment of Indigent persons, and the custom of a loose and Idle Life, daily supply with advantage, the number of those who are taken off by the Sentence of the Law: And doubtless, as the multitude of *Poor* and necessitous, and uneducated Persons increase, the multitude of *Malefactors* will increase, notwithstanding the Examples of Severity.

So that upon the whole account, the Prudence of Prevention, as it is more Christian, so it will be more / effectual than the Prudence of Remedy. The prevention of *Poverty*, Idleness, and a loose and disorderly Education, even of *Poor Children*, would do more good in this Kingdom, than all the *Gibbets*, Cauterizations, and Whipping-Posts and Goals in this Kingdom, and would render these kind of Disciplines less necessary and less frequent. *Pref.*

In that State that things are, our Populousness, which should be a blessing to the Kingdom, becomes the Burden of it; by breeding up whole Families, and Successful Generations, in a meer Trade of Idleness, Thieving, Begging, and a Barbarous kind of Life, which must in time prodigiously increase and overgrow the whole face of the Kingdom, and eat out the heart of it, unless care be taken to prevent it. *p. 32.*

He Concludes his Book thus, viz.

That it would be a Work of great Humanity (to relieve and employ the *Poor*) and such as we owe to those of our own Nature as we are men. The wise GOD did tell his ancient People that the *Poor* should be always among them; 1. to exercise their Liberality and Charity in supporting the wants of some by the

abundance of others. And 2. to Exercise their Discretion and Industry to think of and set on foot such means as might put them in a Course of honest Employment, and encourage them in it. They that are Rich are Stewards of their Wealth, and they that are wise are Stewards of their Wisdom unto the Great MASTER of the Family of Haven and Earth, to whom they must give an account of both, and one (I am sure) of the best accounts they can / give of both is, to employ them in the Reformation and Relief of those that want both or either.

2. A work that as well becomes a Christian as any: Christianity commending Charity as one of the Principial Vertues, and indeed the ill Provision for the *Poor* in *England*, is one of the greatest Reproches to us in relation to our Christian Profession.

The want of a due Provision for *Education* and Relief of the *Poor* in the way of Industry, is that which fills the *Goals* with *Malefactors*, and fills the *Kingdom* with *Idle* and unprofitable persons, that consumes the Stock of the *Kingdom* without improving it, and that will daily encrease even to a Desolation in time. And this Error in the first Concoction is never remediable but by *Gibbets* and *Whipping*. But there must be a Sound Prudent and Resolved Method for an Industrious Education of the *Poor*, and that will give better remedy against these *Corruptions* than any Penalties can.

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FINIS.

9. *Rice*: The unit of measurement for the rice is pounds, specified in the original document as 'lbs.' but omitted here to save space.
10. *Indiff*: indifferent; indicates poor health.
11. *Humphry*: John Humphry's family is the last one listed on the first page of the census.
12. 2: The lines are slightly different here. This entry is presumably for another individual whose first name is not specified, and who has two female children aged 9 and unspecified.
13. [*Ma*]*y*: This surname is almost completely concealed by a fold of paper, but the attribution is almost certain.
14. *Phillips*: no age or health information given.
15. *Good*: The bracket indicates that all the girls are in good health.
16. *wood*: her casual relief includes half a load of wood.
17. *Vallentine*: Vallentine's family is the last entry on the second page of the original document.

TREATISES ON POOR RELIEF REFORM

A Method Concerning the Relief and Employment of the Poor
(1699)

1. Sir Josiah Child's: see above, note 3 to Shaw, *The Practical Justice of Peace*, p. 330.
2. Sir Matthew Hale: see above, note 2 to Shaw, *The Practical Justice of Peace, and Parish and Ward-Officer*, p. 330. Hale's critique and proposals for reforming the Poor Laws are outlined in the text printed here.
3. *times of the Confusion and Alteration*: i.e. the Civil Wars, Restoration and Glorious Revolution, 1642–88.
4. the Laws against Inmates: a reference to the clause in 43 Eliz., c. 2: 'An Acte for the Releefe of the Poore', that forbids more than one family from sharing a habitation.
5. *Ardua Regni*: Latin, the weighty or difficult affairs of the kingdom.
6. *Lumbards*: pawnshops or money-lending shops.
7. Farthings: 'Farthing' was a general term for something small, derived from the coin of very small monetary value (0.25*d.*), also used as a measure of land, a special kind of comb and the like.
8. *the Green Staff*: This was apparently a medal used in London to indicate a position of honour.
9. *pecuniary mulcts*: fines exacted in money.
10. *Non obstante*: Latin, a clause in a statute that allows dispensation from a monarch notwithstanding any statute to the contrary; this was abolished in the Bill of Rights of 1689.
11. Doctor-Collet Dean of *St. Pauls*: John Collet, or Colet, was the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral from 1505 to 1519, and royal councillor from 1518, a reformer who re-founded St Paul's School.
12. *the Practice of Holland*: This refers to the workhouses of Amsterdam set up at the end of the sixteenth century, a *tuchthuis* for men and a *spinhuis* for women in 1596. Many other Dutch cities followed suit, setting up workhouses during the seventeenth century, and serving as models for English and Continental reformers. It was very common for seven-

teenth- and early eighteenth-century writers on the Poor Laws to refer to the Amsterdam workhouses in particular.

13. de Die in Diem: Latin, 'from day to day'.
14. ut metus in omnes pæna in paucos: Latin, 'by punishing a few, fear comes to all'.

Braddon, *Particular Answers to the most Material Objections* (1722)

1. *Laurence Braddon*: Laurence Braddon (d. 1724), lawyer and member of the Royal Society, an ardent exclusionist who worked against James II's accession to the throne, he also tried to prove that the Earl of Essex, Arthur Capel, had been murdered while imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was appointed solicitor to the Company of Watermen and Lightermen in 1708, which may explain some aspects of his sympathy for the poor.
2. *within the Bills of Mortality*: referring to those 109 districts of London where weekly official accounts were kept of the number of deaths that had occurred.
3. *Mechanicks*: i.e. manual labourers.

Vancouver, *An Enquiry into the Causes and Production of Poverty* (1796)

1. *Blackstone's Commentaries*: see above, note 16 to Cobbett and Wright (eds), *The Parliamentary History of England*, p. 333.
2. *The property of the employed ... ingenuity*: Note here, and throughout the text, how the discussion of the labourer having property in his labour refers to John Locke's definition of property in his 'Second Treatise' in *Two Treatises of Government* (London: Millar, 1764), V.25–51.
3. *the two societies*: refers here to the employers and the employed. He developed this dichotomy at length in the previous pages, not reprinted here, and it is his chief way of understanding both economic and social relations.
4. *other society*: referring to those who are employed, as opposed to the employers who have been exploiting them.
5. *act of the 33rd year ... legislature*: 33 Geo. III was the 1793 Friendly Societies Act, brought in by Secretary to the Treasury George Rose, the great moral reformer William Wilberforce and Lancashire MP Thomas Stanley. The bill both promoted and regulated the clubs. The legislation is discussed at length in P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580–1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 371–3.

Ruggles, *The History of the Poor* (1797)

1. *Annals of Agriculture*: This periodical was edited by Arthur Young, and published from 1784 to 1809. It included many articles on the labouring poor, as well as on agricultural improvements.
2. *squalid inhabitant of Magellan's Streights*: Many fantastic tales circulated around early modern Europe, detailing the lives of 'Patagonians' 'discovered' by Magellan in his voyage down and around the coast of South America.