

Thoughts on the plan for a Magdalen-House for repentant prostitutes / [Anon].

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THOUGHTS

ON THE PLAN FOR A

MAGDALEN-HOUSE

FOR

REPENTANT PROSTITUTES,

WITH THE

Several Reasons for such an Establishment; the Custom of
other Nations with regard to such Penitents; and the

GREAT ADVANTAGES

Which will probably arise from this Institution, upon political and

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES.

Addressed to the

PROMOTERS of this CHARITY.

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged. Prov. xvi. ver. 6.

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M.DCC.LVIII.

T H O U G H T S

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MAGDALEN-HOUSE

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REPENTANT PROSTITUTES,

WITH THE

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R E L I G I O U S P R I N C I P L E S

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Addressed to the

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SECTION I.

General view of the design. Reasons for communicating these thoughts. General view of life. The application to the subject.

IT is with the highest satisfaction I see the plan of your charity is ready to be carried into execution. The more I think of the objects of it, the more I am convinced of the propriety of your design. I apprehend you mean—1. To induce women, who have lived as *prostitutes*, to forsake their evil course of life.—2. To open a retreat for them, where they may pass their time in comfort and safety, under no other confinement than such as shall be absolutely necessary for their own preservation, and what themselves shall have voluntarily consented to, without any legal power. — 3. To employ them in the most useful manner, both for themselves and the community, and by rendering them pious, industrious, and frugal, prepare them for a comfortable settlement in the world.— 4. To establish such regulations and œconomy as shall at once seclude them, for a proper time, from any evil communication, and give them such habits as shall recommend them to the sober part of mankind. — 5. To treat them with such regard, as shall convince them that nothing more is meant than their own happiness ; and yet avoid showing any such indulgence as shall tempt the evil-minded to abuse the charity, or which may disqualify those who are really penitent, from procuring a maintenance by virtuous industry when they shall return into the world. — 6. To dismiss them whenever it shall appear for their service ; but not till they shall have acquired such habits as promise fair to secure them from the fatal effects of idleness ; nor 'till after

they shall have entitled themselves to such a certificate of their good behaviour, as will recommend them to useful and reputable employments. —

7. To appropriate such a share of the produce of their industry to them, with the addition of such other bounty, as shall be thought due to their merit, as may enable them to live with honor and reputation. — 8. To conduct this charity in such a manner, that it shall be considered as a favor to be accepted; and, consequently, totally inconsistent with the notion of imprisonment.

It will be a *glorious* task, indeed, to co-operate with heaven, as far as blind and indigent mortals can imitate their Maker, in curing a *disease* of the mind, much more fatal than *frenzy*. We are told, that “*the price of a good woman is beyond gold.*” The *sincerest* joys of life indeed flow from the conduct of *virtuous* women; and the *acuteſt* miseries from the *vicious* part of the sex. If you can convert *bad* women into *good* ones, it will be a work worthy the applause of Angels, who *rejoice at the conversion of sinners*: and I hope the consciousness of your good intentions will advance *your own* happiness, as the effects of your piety will necessarily promote the felicity of *others*.

How unworthy is that life which has not the good of mankind for its ruling principle! And how joyfully do his days pass, to whom a close attention to the welfare of his country, at once furnishes the most interesting *employment*, and the most delightful *amusement*. Happy were it, if men in general could bring themselves to this turn of mind: *Vice* and *Folly* would then have but little footing in the world. It is with this desire, I would gladly catch some fleeting hours, retired from *noise and bustle*, to examine my subject, as far as my thoughts will lead me, consistently with the design.

sign. I am the more induced to make this my task, not having yet seen it handled with so much seriousness, as I think it deserves; and though there are many more able pen-men than myself, the subject may not affect them at all, or not in the same manner as it does me. I intend to set it in different points of view; that, whilst it affords you some entertainment, possibly it may reach the *hearts*, as well as the *understandings*, of our fellow-citizens.

It is a common observation of *very busy*, and of *very idle* men, *that people are too indolent to read*. I apprehend this to be a great mistake; for if it were *true*, there could *never* be such armies of *writers* and *scriblers*; we could never pretend that the press supports our liberty; nor could we be so learned and inquisitive a nation. Is there a subject we do not trace from its very first principles? Even the absurdities which writers fall into, often lead to the truth. It is certain, there are many who have not, and many more who *think* they have not, *leisure* to read; but, even these pin their faith chiefly on the report of those who criticise books; or, on those who *examine* if they contain any instruction. And as no subject has come before us, for a long time, so *new* as this, and yet so *interesting*, some parts of it not perfectly understood, and others liable to be mistaken, I confess I shall think the time I devote to this purpose *well employed*: what I have already advanced on the subject, under different forms, will render the task the more easy to me.

We are all candidates for comfort, ease or happiness! We all long for some distant good; and *Heaven* knows we *all* have need of *mercy*! To learn what we ought to do to please our Maker, and how to shun whatever may *offend* him, is the only concern of life which, in *strict* propriety
of

of language, demands our *constant* attention: it is that momentous business which, as we *zealously* pursue, or *carelessly* neglect, stamps the character of wisdom on the *beardless boy*, or of folly on the *hoary head*.—*What shall I do to be saved?* — How shall I most effectually serve my *God*, my *country*, and *mankind*? — This was not the question of a hermit, contented to be *passively* virtuous, but of one whose busy spirit engaged him in the *active* scenes of life; of one who had the happiness to behold the *Messiah*, with his own eyes, and was anxious to give the highest proof of the most sincere obedience to him, as his *Sovereign*, his *Lawgiver*, and his *Saviour*. The question he asked is, indeed, that which points out the true distinction between the *busy wise man*, and the *busy fool*; between him who *employs* the talents God has intrusted him with, and him who *squanders* them away on *trifles*.—Riches and honors do not always attend the paths of the virtuous, nor yet of men of understanding; but still, whilst we make a true estimate of life, we shall clearly discover, that virtue and understanding, which, in a religious sense, mean one and the same thing, are so essential to us, that without them *all is vanity indeed!*

We see in the persons of others, that our days *are truly but as shadows that depart, or as a dream when one awaketh*; yet still we are apt to doat on this world. We believe that *the soul is immortal*; we are *convinced* that there is a state of happiness, and of misery, after death; and yet how seldom do we act, in all respects, *agreeably* to such belief! This would be the greatest of all *wonders*, if we were not equally sensible of the *frailties* of human nature, and of the delusions we so often fall into. At the same time we are compelled by *reason*, and the laws of our own minds, as well as by *faith* in the *attributes* of the *invisible God*, to acquit him with regard to the duties which he requires of us. And tho' weak and indigent,
yet

yet when we contemplate the *amazing* properties of the soul, and consider the *wonderful* frame of the body, we must entertain a *reverence* for ourselves, especially when we find that it is the *sensibility* of our weakness which puts us on our guard; it is this that *absorbs* the pride to which our depravity so much inclines us; it *bumbles* the soul; we confess our *dependence*; we *prostrate* ourselves, and *adore* the hand that made us!

Thus, in spite of our imperfections, in spite of the consciousness of our infirmities, we *march* on, and aspire at a much higher glory, than *earthly splendor*, or the applause of men. Though so many of us *sweat* under a load of *evils*, yet we are still supported: a confidence in a future state of happiness, makes us *masters* of the world. Wisdom teaches us to value life, but it instructs us also to *consent* to die; and death seems far preferable to a *repugnance* to the will of Heaven. The *true philosopher*, as well as the *true soldier*, submits to *discipline*, and follows his *leader*. He knows it to be at once his duty, and his honor, *to obey*. He *feels* the force of truth: he *exults* in the reflexion that he is *acting right*; and whether he triumphs, or is led in chains, he looks forward to the world unknown, still persuaded, that he shall one day be happy!

Such are the heights to which the *native greatness* of the soul conducts us. But, alas, it is equally true, that we are apt to *give way* to the sollicitations of our senses: *pleasure*, with delusive smiles, often tempts us to desert our post. *Passion*, or *appetite*, *fancy*, or *opinion*, misrepresents things to us, and either flatters us into a belief of that which has *no existence*, or entices us to pursue those *fleeting* joys, which lead to *pain* and *sorrow*. — Hence it follows, that some *overlook*, and some *despise* the
great

great law of life ; whilst *many* an unhappy mortal, is grasping at the *transient* moment, at the utmost hazard of *eternity* !

If life is thus pregnant with evils, and if this is the *general* state of it, he who understands human nature best, will most readily compassionate those, whose situation having early exposed them to temptations, are now groaning under the *miserable* bondage of vice ; and are either tormented with anxious *forebodings*, or sleeping with *security*, on the verge of *perdition* ! We know, that “ *offences must come, but woe to those by whom they come.*” Let him to whom God has given power, *exert* that power to prevent the evil ! He who searches into the heart, will soon discover the defects of it ; and the most ready way to find the remedy for such defects, is to be persuaded that there is hardly any evil without its remedy. As creatures of one common nature, we are bound to take care of each other : the essence of religion consists in it : and for this end we were sent into the world. Nothing can be more obvious than this, since even the Son of God himself appeared on earth, charged with a commission to save mankind, upon condition of their *repentance*. It is very apparent, that we are not to confine our regards to the present time, and the precarious events of human life ; our concern must be extended to another *being* : the highest promises are made to him that is instrumental to the *salvation* of others ; and what man can wish to succour the naked and the hungry, and not grasp at the *golden* opportunity of *saving a soul from everlasting perdition* !

SECTION

SECTION II.

The practicableness of this undertaking. The force of habit. Motives to this charity derived from a belief of the christian religion. Fatal consequences of the Libertinism of the common people. Sense of shame remarkable in some women. Notions of honor amongst women of education. Complaint of the want of people. Practice with regard to marriage. Some causes of there being so many common prostitutes.

THE most penetrating amongst men, can see but a little way; and means, the best contrived, are not always adequate to the end: yet as human nature is still the same, and as the promises of divine assistance are not withdrawn, the same causes will, probably, produce the same effects; and if that which has been done in one instance, may be expected in many, you have a strong foundation to go upon.

Habit is the *axis* on which life turns. To acquire good habits, and to correct bad ones, is the sum and the amount of life. By *habit* we act as if we were in earnest with God and men; and by *habit* we become triflers in our commerce with heaven and earth. Nay more, by habit we abandon ourselves to the gratification of sense and appetite, and even exceed the bounds which are prescribed to brutes: and by *habit* we are led to act agreeably to the dignity of our own nature, and to pursue what is fit to be done for the attainment of our proper happiness.

To bring those back to a sense of virtue, who have been long accustomed to *banish reflexion*; or, in other words, to give a *habit of piety* to such persons as have contracted strong habits of impiety, is a hard task; but, if proper means are used, we shall be insensibly led into a better opinion of human nature, than is generally entertained. And since divine providence now seems to point out the probable means of relieving *penitent prostitutes*, it is our *duty* to try such means, and to trust in the assistance of that God *whose mercy is over all his works*.

Divines and philosophers are not yet perfectly agreed, how far *virtue* is *natural* to the soul of man; and yet it is confessed, that *man* is by nature a *reasonable* being, and that *reason* declares against every thing we believe to be *vicious*. Whatever name we give to the *propensity* in question, we know that nothing unhinges the whole frame, and distempers the *soul*, as well as the body, more, than giving up ourselves to an *unlawful* gratification of this *appetite*. The express command of God, both in the *literal sense*, as well as the *spirit* of the *christian* law, fixes the *conditions*. Those who have kept alive any sparks of their *native modesty*, and are not given up, to what the royal prophet emphatically calls an *impudent mind*, will ever lament that *illegal* commerce, which is productive of so much mischief: and as it is the *duty* of men, it will ever be their *honor*, to endeavor to restore things to that *order*, which the God of nature certainly intended they *should* be in; namely, that *reason* should prevail over *passion* and *appetite*.

Every act of general beneficence carries with it some evidence of a *religious* disposition, but yours requires a more than common zeal and vigilance. And though your enterprize may be considered as a *secular* concern, you are, in fact, acting the part of *champions* for your religion. Whilst
you

you remember you are *christians*, look back and see how many thousands have died in battle; how many have fallen sacrifices to cruelty; and, thank Heaven, that many are yet *ready to die*, in support of the *reputation* of that book of laws, in which we are told, *no fornicator, adulterer, or unclean person, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven*. The words are explicit, and free from ambiguity: reject the authority of this book, and there is an end of the *christian* religion. We all know, that by the same *scripture* it is likewise said, that if we *repent* of our sins, and give timely and *sincere* proof of our repentance, we shall be *pardoned*.—Shall the *omniscient God* make a *law*, and will men, who pretend to *believe* in him, and to *love him with all their hearts*, be idle spectators of the violation of that law? Or, shall *he* offer conditions of *pardon*, and we not countenance and recommend such conditions with all possible care and attention?

How truly melancholly is the situation of that *christian* country, where a great number of people have so worn off a sense of their *religion*, as to adopt notions and customs which the followers of *Mahommed* are ashamed of. There is apparently such a neglect of this divine prohibition, that the *word of God* seems to be of *no effect*. Something is wanting to be done! Under our present customs there is reason to fear, that the sacred records in general, will grow into *contempt*. Most other breaches of the divine law are *unpremeditated*, or committed under a consciousness of the *guilt*, but this is done, not only *premeditatedly*, but seemingly without any such *consciousness*. Vice is become so *cheap*, and the spirit of modesty at so low an ebb, among many common people, that it is hard to say, how far these acts of uncleanness may be carried; nor what *mischiefs* they may produce. As *wisdom* begins with the *fear of God*, the want of this *fear* has introduced such *ignorance*, that many seem to have lost all sense of duty,

duty, in the article of continence. Let us try then if we can prevent *some* of the calamitous effects of this excess, in which both the sexes, and the *virtuous*, as well as the *vicious*, are so frequently involved.

It seems to be acknowledged, that the common people, especially the inhabitants of *London*, are more abandoned than their fore-fathers were; and among the higher classes, many *refinements* in vice, and various methods of carrying on the *trade of lust*, are introduced, to which our ancestors were strangers. At the same time it is worth *observing*, though not as a foundation to build upon, that the sense of *shame* is so strong in the breasts of some of our women, that it has betrayed them into a *more horrible* crime than the iniquity complained of; witness the *murthers* that have been committed on infants, with no other view, than to conceal an *illegal amour*, at once demonstrating a *sad* distinction, between those who have transgressed in *secret*, and those who sin in the face of the sun; that one crime naturally follows another, and that the *fear of men* is exceedingly stronger than the *fear of God*.

Whilst we contemplate this difference in guilt, we may observe in the characters of women in higher life, whose parents have been careful of them, that there is, amongst us, a more exalted *sense of honor*, and a truer notion of duty as grounded on the solid foundation of religious principles, than are generally to be met with amongst the women of other countries.

The good proposed by your undertaking is obvious in so many respects, that I hardly know where to *begin*, nor where I shall *end* my praise of it. *First*, if you can stop the progress of those diseases, which are so fatal to the human species, you will save a number of subjects to the state. *Next*, if you can
check

check libertinism, you will not only prevent great *mifery*, but also great *confusion* among the lower classes of the people : and *lastly*, in proportion as you lessen the number of *prostitutes*, it may be presumed that the number of *marriages* will increase, as well as the number of souls saved.

Whether it arise from an *inordinate* desire of augmenting our wealth, or from any opinion how much greater things might be done, were our numbers greater, but we frequently complain of the want of inhabitants. If it is true that we want people, the remedy seems to be in our own hands ; I mean, if we assist the virtuous, countenance *foreigners*, and encourage *matrimony*. So far from pursuing any such rules, we refine upon *politics*, and, forsaking the laws of God, we follow our own *inventions*, teaching the *common people* to do the same. We say the *soldier* should not marry, that he may be the more ready to go to war ; and the *sailor* will be nothing but a *sailor*, therefore it is in vain to encourage him to spend any *part of his time on shore*, in attending the care of a *family*. These men are, indeed, left to their own inclinations, which, God knows, are generally bad enough : but we carry the thing farther, for we adopt it as a part of *family-policy*, that *domestics* should not marry, and they are too often turned out of service for it, as if they had by this act, forfeited their right to any farther countenance and protection as *servants*.

As to the practice of a great part of the *common people* in the *country*, it is well known that numbers of them come together *first*, and marry *afterwards*, if they think proper, which rarely happens, in any other case, than that of the woman proving with child. In a *partial* and *contracted* view of things, the practice of not marrying till a woman is pregnant, may not appear altogether *impolitic* ; but, in *reality*, it is big with the greatest mischiefs.

mischiefs. It is not only a great scandal to us, as believers in *Christ*, but it wears off the impressions of the *disgrace* of *illegal love*; and must, in the issue, be attended with many pernicious consequences.

These, among many others, are the causes that our streets swarm with *prostitutes*; and, as if the distinction between the *rational*, animal, and the *brute* were destroyed, and the sacred institution of marriage exploded, such excesses are committed as are shameful to recite. What then is to be done?—If notions of *private convenience*, or false *maxims*, induce men in higher life to decline marrying; if the gratification of *vanity*, or *artificial* wants, is preferred to the *order of nature*, and we despise that *simplicity* of manners which is the only true source of happiness: if the bulk of the people are really *foolish* or *impious*, the stronger reason arises to endeavor to prevent such crowds of females becoming the prey of *penury* and *disease*. Let us succour those who *desire* to be delivered out of their *sad condition*. And, if marriage is the source of almost every relation that is dear or sacred, every one who *thinks* so, must see that it is a *noble* task to promote your *design*. If we deliver a number of young women, in the *pride* of their *youth* and *charms*, from the *vilest* of all kinds of *slavery*, and prevent their being *sacrificed* at the *altars of pollution*, will it not so far promote *virtue and industry*, with *beauty* and *strength* to defend the produce of our labors? Will it not so far preserve us from the *sad* effects of those impurities, which not only efface the impressions of moral rectitude, but also *prey* on our very vitals?

SECTION

SECTION III.

The temptations to which young women are exposed. The infamous conduct of many debauchees. Complaints of women with regard to the laws of honor. Vanity, and the love of admiration, great enemies to chastity. Opinion of the want of principles in women, injurious. The cruel treatment of prostitutes. The dangerous consequences of seducers, particularly in the character of barwds.

THE deeper we examine this subject, the more we shall see how truly humane, and practically consistent, your design is.

Of the whole race of *Adam*, there are surely none who stand in greater need of assistance, than these unhappy women. Can there be greater objects of commiseration, than those thoughtless girls, who are hurried into ruin by temptations, to which they have been exposed, against their *intentions*; and *experience*, as well as *charity*, bids us think there are *many*, under these circumstances. No woman, being young or handsome, can be too secure; but youth and beauty are things, which we must not expect the possessors will conceal. The impressions of religion and modesty go a great way, but if these young women are not guarded by *others*, how ill qualified do too many of them prove in guarding *themselves*, especially when they are surrounded by snares, the most artfully, the most industriously laid, by those who make a *trade* of warring against them. — When women of *education*, who are supposed to be the guardians of their own honor, trespass,

pass, it is the greater shame; but the *poor* and *ignorant* are generally less secure against such formidable seducers. — What contrivances will not a depraved mind suggest to accomplish its end? Where men are endowed with superior faculties, and possess all the advantages which education and fortune afford, if they will prostitute their *honor* to gratify their *appetite*, many will become their *prey*.

The distinctions of fortune, do not alter the *rights of mankind*. But when a man forgets the great law of *doing as he would be done by*, it is not surprizing he should debauch *his neighbour's daughter*, at the very time that an offer of marriage with *his own*, would be deemed the highest insolence: yet such are the inconsistencies men fall into! And what can be said of those who pretend to *honor* and *justice*, and yet, after gratifying their inclinations, expose *her* to every kind of misery, to whom they professed the sincerest love?

How many are engaged by *promises*, or by words which men of honor understand as *promises*, which they never intended to fulfil, or do not in the least regard. We must acknowledge this to be a *common* evil, but the commonness of it does not change its nature in the least. If the conduct of the *gentleman* is of a worse tendency to the general welfare, than that of the *porter*, he is so much a worse member of society: and it is not enough that these violators of the divine law, must expect a day of *retribution*, it is the part of the virtuous, and *truly brave*, to maintain the warfare of life, that where iniquity cannot be restrained, the *least offender* may not be the *most punished*.

But whilst women justly complain of the conduct of men, in contriving the means of gratifying themselves at the expence of their misery, they must not murmur, that the *laws of honor*, in regard to *chastity*, are so
much

much less rigid towards men, than to their own sex. The *distinction* is very plain ; nor does it in the least preclude the due consideration of what *human nature* is, more than what the duties of religion are.

If *virtue* is the supreme happiness of accountable beings, that state of life which renders virtue the most easy, is the *best*. Therefore if *fear*, and a sense of *shame*, operate as strongly as any other passions, it must follow, that in proportion as *women* are more awed by *fear* and *shame*, than *men*, they are more *happy* than men. She who argues from the conduct of men, as if *example* could warrant *libertinism*, contradicts *reason* and *common sense*, as well as *religion*. Therefore, upon the face of this argument, however unequal the *judgment* of the world may *seem*, it would be dangerous to solicit for a *reverse* of it. And whatever may be thought, by those who are more inclined to find motives for deviating from the paths of virtue, than good reasons to walk steadily in them, it is more easy to *imagine*, than *express*, the effects of a *change* of custom and opinion, even upon this very principle, *that the crime in question is, in the sight of God, the same in both sexes.*

The remedy of this evil is, in some measure, in our own hands. If *half* as much pains was taken to impress the minds of the *female* world with just notions of their condition, and how to deport themselves with *humility*, as there is to feed their *vanity*, we should not see so many victims offered to incontinency. *Vanity*, and the *love of admiration*, have hurried more women into perdition, than all the other devices of the *devil*, or *man*. *Adulation* intoxicates men, but *admiration* turns the brains of women : and fond notions of dominion, have often perverted their hearts, till, like *tyrants*, they abused their *real power*, and fell a sacrifice to those whom they might have *governed*.

verned. *Beauty* seldom fails of success, if it is attended with good sense and modesty. The *Italians* say, *a handsome girl is born married*; but this is not always true of the *vain*, and still less of the *profligate*.

In tracing *effects* back to their *causes*, it seems very reasonable to conclude, that many of these unhappy prostitutes, might have been in the full enjoyment of all those comforts which their natural advantages would have afforded them, had they been properly considered by men, and well *instructed*. By this means they might have been reconciled to the condition in which providence had placed them. — Some men entertain a strange notion that women, in general, are governed only by *fashion* and *caprice*, and from hence impute their virtue, not to *principle*, but to mere chance. If this were true, one might ask, from what cause it arises, since it is certain, that women are *rational* and accountable, the same as men? If the father is wise, though he need not give them so much *learning*, he will instill as *great* and *noble ideas* in the minds of his *daughters*, as in those of his *sons*. It is not my business, at present, to enter upon the subject of *education* of the *poor* or *rich*, nor to find out how faulty *that* of our women is: that there are many *mistakes* committed in it, is beyond all dispute; but it would be but fair to say, how *men* generally *act*, for from hence we may best learn what *principles* they have. When the desire of popular opinion, or the means of gratifying their *passions* and *appetites*, interfere with the *rule of right*, how do *they* generally *behave*? They ought always to think it their supreme happiness even *to die* in defence of *virtue*; but, is this the case? — Men, in the foolishness of their hearts, are also often apt to entertain an opinion of a *superiority* over women, very different from that which the author of nature has appointed. It seems to me that, for want of a proper *deference* for women, as creatures equally valuable, in the sight of God, with themselves,

selves, men are not under such *awe* as this consideration would promote, and are often betrayed into transgressions, which it is probable they would not otherwise have committed.

In justice to the female world, may it not also be fairly asked, if virtue has not the same charms to captivate *their* hearts, and religion the same power to create a detestation of vice and folly in *their* minds, as in men's? With regard to women who have wandered from the paths of virtue, let those who have examined only the foul corners of the heart, or pryed only into the *darkest* scenes of iniquity, argue as cogently as they please, even from real facts, they must in their turn indulge others, who know also from *experience*, that there is a native ingenuousness in the minds of many of these women, that inclines them to wish for the *means* of repentance.

Use and custom takes off some part of the force of misery itself, and the heart, which does not *burst* with a sense of injuries, may become *callous* and insensible of them. If this were not the case, many of these prostitutes would see themselves the most abandoned of mankind. They would discover the strange extravagance of revenging upon themselves, the *crimes* of others; or if they imputed their misfortunes to their own indiscretion, they would find but very little reason to live in *infamy*, merely because their own passions first betrayed them. Many a poor girl might have shewn her *power* over him, who is now an *idle spectator* of her misery: and many a one has been deserted by her *friends*, because they thought only of the *crime*, whilst the world judges and condemns with *severity*. Thus left to struggle with the *tyranny of bawds*, and the *insolence of debauchees*; followed by a train of evils, *infamy, poverty, and disease*, what can be the consequence but a miserable death, unrepenting of their sins, unlamented even by their partners in iniquity! To enumerate instances, on the present occasion, is

not proper, nor are they in the least necessary, since it is no secret, either to the *virtuous* or the *vicious*, that many prostitutes are in a worse condition, than even the *brute* that perishes. Every other animal is obedient to his *appetite*, but appetite has frequently no share in the *promiscuous* commerce of these women. — Harlots are, in no country, treated with such gross indignities, as in this, so that one would almost wonder, how it happens that the same *pride*, which led them into the snare, does not induce more of them to *forsake* their evil course, at all hazards. — Every one who considers the subject must see, from this single circumstance, how much these unhappy women are enslaved by their *bad habits*.

As there is no nation which carries every thing that is *vile*, as well as every thing that is *virtuous*, higher than this, so there is, I believe, no city in the world, where such rank enormities prevail, as in this great metropolis. — There is an elegance in *vice* as well as in *virtue*, and though it is the more dangerous, in some respects, on this account, yet still it is a safe-guard against those disorders to which a brutish and profligate life exposes mankind. — There is also a certain *delicacy* of manners essential to *good order*; and the distinctions which the *sexes* show to each other, is one great means of supporting that *order*. How dreadfully are things transformed with us! — We frequently see these women treated like *dogs*, and we hear those tongues, which the *God of nature* designed should soften the *distresses* of human life, and give a relish to its joys, uttering the *biggest indecencies*, and the most *dreadful imprecations*! At the same time we acknowledge, that these young persons are born in a *free* country, where *pure* religion is professed; that many of them were educated in the principles of *virtue*; that all of them are entitled to the *protection* of men, and most assuredly intended by the wise and beneficent Father of mankind, as their *partners* in the

the social joys of life : can we then *turn the glass*, and behold them the abject *slaves* of an abandoned *procuress*, sold both *body* and *soul* for *half a crown*, without being *fired* with a generous *indignation* for the cause of *humanity* !

We see, how deplorable *their* circumstances are, who are thus abandoned. But this is not the only object : — your institution calls on us to consider seriously, with regard to *domestic comforts*, and the *pleasing* expectations of *tender* parents, how often they are pluck'd in the bud, and blasted by the *pernicious contrivances* of *bawds*. Whilst these ministers of *Lucifer* are supported in *splendor*, it is no wonder the victim to lust should be ornamented with *elegance*, and taught to practise all the blandishments which can infatuate a young man's mind. *Her ways* do, literally, *lead to the grave*. Nor is the destruction of health, or even the loss of life, the greatest evils which happen : the expences created by such *illegal commerce*, are oftentimes followed by the sale of a *man's honor*. Among men of meaner condition, whilst some become sacrifices in the hands of unskilful surgeons, others, being no longer able to supply by *fair means*, the extravagance of bad women, are prompted to commit desperate actions, which bring them to untimely death by the hands of justice : and I believe it will be found, amongst *malefactors*, that two in three are in these circumstances.

There is yet a more melancholly scene in *real life* ! — The *agonies* of tender parents do not usually rise so high for their *sons*, as for their *daughters* ; and though it is a sad truth, the *fear* of *everlasting* punishment generally makes a much fainter impression, than the dread of *temporal* evils. In the *first* case, the distress is equal with regard to both : in the *last*, the *parent* and the *daughter* are indeed the most *pitiable* ! If we see her deluded by the
intrigues

intrigues of an abandoned procuress, and follow her through the beaten track, from *guilt* to *disease* : if we behold her languishing under a *venereal* complaint, and still subject to the *arbitrary* will of an *imperious* mistress, who leaps over all the boundaries of humanity, to gratify her own *insatiable* avarice, what a *dreadful scene* does it exhibit ! Let us even exclude the thoughts of an *hereafter*, what *anguish* must it create in his breast, who *feels as a man* ; much more if he *feels as a parent* too ! Who can be a careless spectator, even in *imagination*, of so noble a part of the workmanship of heaven, treated with such *gross indignity*, and *expiring* under circumstances so *shocking* to humanity, that they would draw compassion even for the sufferings of a *brute animal*.

It is too well known, that many a venerable head is hurried to a grave by such accidents ; and that this is the case with great numbers of prostitutes in their several degrees. Even the greatest part of those who are pampered in *private stews*, have seldom prudence to make any reserve for a retreat ; and if they do not fall by an early death, before they feel the *utmost* misery of this *condition*, they are condemned to infest the streets, where they spread contagion through a *much greater* part of both the sexes, than is generally imagined ; and many a *virtuous woman* has felt the dreadful effects of her husband's irregularities.—If then we take in the whole scope of your design, it is pregnant with so many *great* and *good* effects, that all arguments against it appear as *contemptible* as, I hope, they will be found *fallacious*.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

Observations on the name of this institution. Reflexions on the time of commencing this work. All charities subject to abuses. The several objections to this answered. Necessity of confining this charity to penitent prostitutes. Bad women not irreclaimable. Kind of persons who will probably take refuge under this charity. The use of it, with regard to example.

HITHERTO I have dwelt upon the *general* motives to establish your *magdalen-house*; I will now be more *particular*. First, give me leave to take notice of the *name of your charity*. It does not appear to me that *Mary Magdalen* was deficient in point of chastity, as is vulgarly understood, I rather imagine she was not. It is certain, she was a lady of distinction, and of a *great and noble* mind. Her *gratitude* for the miraculous cure performed upon her, was so remarkable, that her story is related with the greatest honor, and she will ever stand fair in the records of fame. Your charity requires a zeal like hers: you are her *disciples*, and the *dedication* of your institution to her *memory*, is entirely consistent with the honor due to her *character*; and, in this light, no name more proper could be given to it.

As to your *plan*, no-body expects to see it perfected without *experience*: the *trial* is as *new* in this country, as the *design* is *pious*; and it will be more easy to *add* what is *necessary*, than to *annul* that, which, upon trial, may

may be found superfluous. Numerous regulations, however pretty in *theory*, in *execution* seldom produce the effects intended.

The *time* in which you begin this good work, is also a circumstance that strikes me, and presages good to the undertaking. Without indulging any *enthusiastic* opinion, methinks there is more than a concurrence of common causes, to induce you to make the attempt at this juncture. As *war* necessarily occasions devastation, we are called on to think of the properest means of saving as many lives as possible. To do this in such a manner, as religion and good policy point out, each in his respective province, requires almost as much skill and resolution, as even the *arduous* affairs of war.

The *omniscient God* only knows what the event of the present struggle will be! — It is true, many clouds are dispersed, but many are still gathering: and there is much reason to believe, that rivers of human blood may yet be spilt, before the affair is every where decided. To *think* like *men*, will not prevent our *acting* like *warriors*. Our transgressions are numerous, but heaven, perhaps, will take the side of this *defensive war*: and let us imitate the example of those troops, amongst whom *piety* is an essential part of *discipline*, and who are carried on by so noble a kind of *military enthusiasm*, that it seems as if *heaven* and *earth* appear to them but as *one object*. — You are now engaged in a *domestic* affair, which, however trivial it may appear to some, demands the *steadiest* resolution, the *purest* zeal, the most *seraphic* benevolence. And since all the deeds of men are registered in the books of heaven, let us at once solicit for favor to our *arms*, and for *mercy* for our *offences*. Let us establish a *charity*, un-
known

known to our forefathers, even in the best of days. Who can limit the *good* which it may do, or the *blessings* which it may draw down upon us !

You are sensible, that all charities are subject to some *abuses*, but I know that you are armed *at all points*. Nothing is perfect in this world ; but, considering the *corrupt state* of the people of this land, it is amazing with what a purity of conduct, many public charitable institutions are conducted ; and whoever draws any conclusion from the evils they are subject to, that there should be no such *charities*, will surely expose himself to be stoned to death as an enemy to *religion*, and his *country*. Things are sometimes more *difficult* to execute, than was imagined ; so are they frequently more *easy* too, than was conceived. If we indulge ourselves in *refinements*, instead of correcting what we find amiss, we may bewilder ourselves in fruitless researches, without rendering our *morals*, or our *politics*, in any degree the better. The present object of *your* attention will no more admit of empty speculation, than of a *languid* indifference : we must interest our *hearts*, as well as our *heads*, or we shall never carry such a business through with a becoming alacrity. This we owe to the immediate service of these poor women, and moreover, it is our duty to convince other nations, as well as ourselves, that we are capable of *executing* whatever we think right to undertake.

It is no *pleasing* consideration, but it seems *necessary* to take notice, on this occasion, that every effort out of the ordinary track, to support the cause of *reason* and *religion*, appears to some people as an *extravagant* attempt ; though, in reality, the *extravagance* consists in their passive desertion of the interest of *reason* and *religion*. A close adherence to some political principles, however well grounded in observation, not only *depreciates* human nature, but betrays us

into an opinion, that our *efforts* to obey the laws of God, in certain instances, are *romantic* and ridiculous. It is thus men lose their reverence for human nature; they first steel their hearts to a sense of human misery; and the transition then becomes easy, to leave *reason* and *religion* to take care of themselves. But these politicians should remember, that was there nothing more in view than *political* prudence, with regard to the increase of the species, and the good order of the state, there is the utmost reason to check the progress of this species of iniquity. For, as *matrimony* is the most certain means of augmenting the number of people, and the truest cement of *civil* society, though we cannot *suppress* whoredom, it is surely no *small* object to *discourage* it.

Upon the whole, I think it is wonderful that we see *so little* *ridicule* prevail on this occasion: in honor to the *good sense*, as well as the *piety* of this nation, we may observe, that there has been no *wit* displayed against the design, but such as is below notice. The difficulty that arises in some *serious* minds, from a supposition that *idleness* and *debauchery* are habits not to be subdued by a *simple*, *regular*, and *laborious* life, is an argument which proves too much; it is saying, these habits cannot be subdued at all. And those who do not yet favor your charity, from an opinion, that although whoredom is confessedly productive of the greatest mischief, yet that it is a *necessary evil*; even these, I say, will, upon mature reflexion, learn, from their own principles, if they can find none better, to draw conclusions in behalf of so humane, so benevolent an undertaking as yours.

Granting that mankind are generally so lost to a sense of their own *importance*, as to repent more of their *follies*, than of their *sins*, and rather wish for the *means* of gratifying their *passions*, than for that kind of life
which

which renders *virtue* most easy to be acquired: granting all this, is it not reasonable to think, that the establishment of a *charity* of this nature will, in the issue, be productive of great good? The *principle* you set out upon, of introducing young women to a life of *piety* and *industry*, who have been used to a life of scandalous *impiety*, and shameless *idleness*, must make impressions even on *their* minds, who will never come within the walls of your house, as well as on those who will become the inhabitants of it. There is something *epidemical* in *virtue*, as well as in *vice*, especially when such proofs of sincerity are given, as you demonstrate. To suppose that any body will be the worse for your charity, is going a great way indeed: we may as well suppose, that *men* will squander their fortunes in hopes of an *alms-house*; or break their legs because there are *surgeons*, as that *women* will become *prostitutes*, because the means of *labor* and *repentance* are offered them.

The religion of Christ is distinguished by that kind of charity, which leads us *even to wish to die* for the *service* of mankind: it teaches its votaries *to be all things, to all men, in hopes of winning some*: and it is as certainly true, that the tears of *virtue* have more charms to captivate the hearts, of those who *really* love her, than the loudest peals of laughter to exillerate *their* spirits, who think only how they shall enjoy the present moment.

The seeming difficulty that is started, by demanding, if it is *necessary* that a girl must be a *prostitute*, in order to be *qualified* for your charity, is best answered by asking another question: *If an hospital is erected for setting broken limbs, would you receive into it, her who only complains of a fever?* I apprehend, the end and design of your institution will be soon perverted, if it is not absolutely reserved for those who call

themselves, and really appear to be, *repenting prostitutes*. She who is not a *prostitute*, or not known to be such, is supposed to have a *character*, and may be admitted to serve in a family, and, consequently, is not a proper object of the care of your charity ; and, surely, no girl will become a *prostitute*, because she may have an opportunity to *repent* of having been so ; more, than women will desire to become objects of charity, because bread is sometimes given at a rich man's door. It is also reasonable to conclude, that those only who have transgressed, and are *really penitent*, will *submit* to *appear* as penitents ; and, what is more, to be *confined* ; since the confinement, however short it may happen to be, can be supportable only to those who *mean* what they *profess*.

To say that you *countenance vice*, because you *relieve the vicious*, is absurd, and as little true in *fact*, as in the *intention*. Every one who wishes well to mankind must see, that, in resentment of the gross enormities committed, the friends to this charity take the most effectual method to *recover* those who are enthralled, lost and undone. The *law of God*, *zeal for liberty*, the *love of your country*, and the *duty* you owe to your *fellow-creatures*, earnestly call on you to try the *experiment* ; and to *see* what *can* be done for their service. We all know what great difficulties these unhappy women labor under : and how very important your assistance may be, to such as *would* repent, if they knew how to obtain, were it only a *bare support*.

Some of the unhappy women in question, have *sense* enough to *see* themselves become the *slaves*, the *miserable slaves* of an abandoned bawd ; and is it to be conceived, that *many* of them do not *wish* to be set at *liberty* ? If a door is opened to them, is it not *probable* that *some* of them will come in ? *Go, and sin no more*, was the sentence of the Savior of mankind, to one who, it is supposed, was such a *penitent* as yours may be. You may
say,

say, *come and learn how to repent. You have done great mischief to yourself, and to others also, we will teach you to be happy in yourself, and to do good to mankind.*

As to the kind of persons who will become petitioners for your mercy, you may judge by those who have already offered themselves, before your doors are opened; and it is probable, that the most intelligent and ingenuous girls, who have had some education, and remain with some impressions of religion on their minds, or those who are *young* in iniquity, will be the first, and always the most ready to accept your offer. When women are restored to health, and discharged from hospitals, such as contracted their disease by prostitution, have *generally* returned to their former course, as a dog to his vomit; but many of these, whether from a *sense of duty*, or of *misery*, will certainly accept the invitation which is given them.

There are other objects who will probably covet this retreat; those who have *parents, friends, or relations*, whom they apprehend will be reconciled to them, whenever they shall give proof of their real repentance. By means of the *Lock* and other *hospitals* many will have it in their power to present themselves, not only as penitent prodigals, but with the more sincerity of heart, as they will be free from pain and disease. She who wishes to return to her *obedience* to the *parent of mankind*, may surely hope to be received; and she who would make her peace with her *natural* father, and will pursue her own happiness, may with equal propriety, by this means, really return to him and say, "*Father I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am not worthy to be called thy child.*" And will she not meet a kind reception? Will not such a declaration find its way to his *heart*? Will he who can feel, though it were but a little, the *power* of religion,

or:

or the force of *parental love*, refuse to receive her? *Can he*, whose heart is not steeled to the impulses of humanity, forbear to sympathise in *tears of forgiveness*, with *tears of real repentance*? Under a consciousness of past guilt, such *confession* is surely as natural to the *soul*, as the *evil* which occasioned it was to the *body*; and we may entertain the highest hopes, that your *charity* will be a means of reconciling many a poor girl to her parents and her friends, who otherwise would be entirely lost to them, to her country, and to her God!

I cannot *check* my thoughts in carrying the *benefits* of your charity still farther. Your design, in favor of *penitent prostitutes* will, in time, weaken the influence even of those who are not *penitent*; and let the number of *penitents* be ever so small, it will so far lessen the number of *prostitutes* in general. As an *addition* to the *labors* of the *pulpit*, and in *opposition* to many *dramatic writers*, you will give proof that *laymen*, as well as the *clergy*, interest themselves in the cause of religion; whilst we convince the world, that we know our interest too well as *politicians*, to neglect *any means* of preserving the lives of our fellow-subjects, or of promoting *useful industry*.

Will it not strike the hearts, even of the most prophane, when they see you show an *anxious* concern for the *immortal* happiness of your fellow-creatures; and a pious resentment of the *distresses* of these women? This will surely never create *impenitence*; nor render the evil you mean to *cure*, more fatal: such an apprehension is not consistent with any common principle. Though it is confessed, that we are the most *ingeniously iniquitous* of any nation under the cope of heaven, to *abuse* and *frustrate* the good intentions of salutary laws, and pious institutions, can any one suppose, that we shall *strengthen* our enemies by *dividing* their forces; or succeed the less in battle,

tle, by using *new* engines of war, hitherto unpractised, when the *old* method of fighting has been found so ineffectual ?

To suppose that it is beyond the power of a *judicious*, and *zealous* divine, to acquaint these women of the *value* of their souls, would not be doing such honor to the clergy, as they deserve. As you have made choice of a *chaplain*, chuse also with propriety the objects you admit, and we *ought* to expect great good from the institution. As the design is so peculiarly calculated to inspire these women with a sense of religion, there is the utmost reason to hope, that many who are the objects of it, will pass the remainder of their days in such a manner, as to draw down *blessings* on your heads ; and whilst it does the benefactors to this charity great *honor*, it will do them greater *pleasure* too, than they could derive from the highest indulgencies of their passions, or the most lavish gratification of their *vanity*. Proceed then cheerfully in the task ; if it proves arduous, the greater applause will be due to those who subscribe to the support of it.

SECTION

SECTION V.

The common notion of mankind with regard to prostitutes. The christian world particularly distinguished for charities of every kind. The humor of this nation for novelty. Institutions for the reception of penitent prostitutes in Holland, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy. The police of Rome with regard to prostitutes.

EVERY nation has something peculiar to itself: their genius, their laws, and particularly their religion, generally create a great difference in their manners and customs. Hence it is obvious, that an establishment which is very consistent in one country, may be absurd in another. Yet, as human nature is still the same, and the propensity to sensual gratifications differs very little, it is no wonder that there should be some points in which men agree. With regard to the duties of *humanity*, we see that the most barbarous people, whose notions of the *deity* are dark and perplexed, still think it their duty to preserve their fellow-creatures, unless there appears good reasons for destroying any of them, and these reasons are generally founded in the first law of nature, *self-preservation*. In all free and civilized states, the first principle is, *save your neighbour, if he has not forfeited his life to the laws, and you save yourself*: and indeed, not to preserve those, whom it is in our power to preserve, comes next in order to the actual destroying of them.

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The *christian* world is distinguished by the most extensive *benevolence*, at the same time that the religion of Christ enjoins a stricter *purity*, than is known under any other faith. The *parabolical* story of the good Samaritan, which stands upon such honorable record, leads us to the truest knowledge of the eternal obligations of Charity. The *traveller* was fallen among *thieves* : he was not questioned how it came to pass, or if his own indiscretion was concerned in it; he was grievously *wounded*, and in danger of perishing, therefore this truly good man, thought it his duty to relieve him. No difference in faith, or country, no opinions in politics, influenced his conduct, it was enough that this traveller was a *man*, and in *great distress*.

To bring the matter yet *more home*, let us consider what the practice of other christians is, in regard to public charities, for the relief of such prostitutes as are inclined to repent of their sins. — The genius of this nation leads us to be pleased with *novelty*, but it does not follow that when *old* things are *erroneous*, or defective, *new* ones should not be countenanced. We think ourselves much *wiser* than most other nations, yet, in regard to the subject before us, we are many years behind several of them. Motives of *policy*, as well as a sense of *moral* and *religious* obligation, have erected many institutions of this kind, which have been supported by some of the greatest, and noblest minded persons of both sexes, in *Italy*, *France*, *Spain*, and several other countries. In *Holland* they have such an establishment, differing from the others, for it is not of the *monastic* kind, but there are some circumstances relating to the conduct of it, which, in my judgment, do not recommend it as an exact model to us.

In *Amsterdam* there are many houses of labor : the *Dutch* know well how to employ the profligate as well as the poor. One of these houses is

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called the *Spinbuis*. "Here the women work, and by that means more than support themselves. In a year or two, their faces, by the natural change of inhabitants in that country, are forgotten as prostitutes; and when they have a mind to come out, the character they have obtained in that house of sobriety and industry, is allowed to be a sufficient recommendation to any family. But there are other circumstances which attend their situation: once or twice a year they walk in a kind of gallery, and appear, as servants do at a statute fair, in the different counties of *England*. Sailors just landed, and who have neither time nor inclination for long courtship, often marry them; the *states* give their consent, and sometimes a small fortune; and many persons, from prostitutes, have been made *joyful mothers of children*. — In a year or two, if they chuse to stay, all ill-natured stories die: and there are many instances of men, who have gloried in thus saving the unfortunate." The author goes on and asks, "How many parents, in an hour of kind relenting, might, by these means, find out their daughters again, which it would tire one out to do in this metropolis. Changing names, and places of abode, renders this impossible, and many a poor girl *dies in an hospital, or a prison*, at the very instant her friends are in search of her, and willing to bring her home."

The institution above mentioned has existed ever since 1596. when the house was built by the *regency*. Many who were beggars, or lived in *stews*, were put in here, and maintained at the expence of the city. The sense of the inscription over the door is, *Do not fear: I revenge myself not, of the evil, but I compel to do good. My hand is severe, but my heart is friendly*. — In this building are shut up different kinds of people, in different apartments; some to be punished corporally for their offences; some only simply set to work for their debaucheries, as observed above. Here the Bible is read to them whilst they

they are at work; they also sing psalms and spiritual songs, and other means are used to estrange them from vice, and encourage them in virtue; but people are permitted to see them, *for money*, which I apprehend, in some measure, destroys the intention of the institution. — Here are other private apartments, where young women, who are viciously inclined, are occasionally shut up at the request of their parents, till such time as they shew tokens of repentance. I mention these particulars, not so much as a means proper for us to chastise the turbulent and vicious, as a practice adopted by a people, *once* famed for good discipline, as well as renowned in arms.

There is an order of penitents at *Merfaillies*, established about the year 1272. with a view to engage women, who had prostituted their honor, to return to virtue. In 1452 there was a foundation of the same kind at *Metz*. At *Naples* there was an order established in 1314 (or as some writers mention, in 1324) for harlots, under the name of *Magdalens*.— About the *fifteenth* century, there was another establishment of the same kind, commenced at *Paris*, for those unhappy women who groaned under the crime of prostitution, and desired to devote themselves to heaven, and atone for their misdeeds. Among others I find this remarkable circumstance, that none were to be received after *thirty-five* years of age. This order was branched out, and we see, soon after, there were *Magdalens*, and *Magdelanettes*, at *Rouen* and *Bordeaux*, being convents to receive these kind of sinners, and four nuns of one of the first orders at *Paris*, were employed to regulate the conduct of these penitents. This proved so laborious a task, these nuns were relieved from time to time. In these places it was prohibited, under pain of excommunication, to receive any but real harlots. Another order was founded at *Seville*, in 1550, for such women as

had followed a licentious life, and, being touched with remorse, were become penitents.

In *Rome*, a convent of this sort was established so long since as 626, dedicated to *Mary Magdalen*, who is considered as the patroness of *penitents*. Pope *Leo X.* afterwards confirmed the same. *Clement VIII.* ordered, that all the effects of public or private harlots, who died intestate, should devolve to this monastery ; or, if they made a *will*, it should be null, unless they bequeathed a fifth part of their goods, to this institution. — There are charities of this kind in almost every city in *Italy*, and many others in *France*, which need not be enumerated at present. It may, however, illustrate the subject, to take notice, that in some of these *retreats* there are of *three* distinctions ; *one* of *St. Magdalen*, who make *vows* ; *one* of *St. Martha*, who are not admitted to make *vows* ; and *one* of *St. Lazarus*, who are detained by force.

Thus we may see what the practice of *christians* has long been in *popish* countries. Thank heaven we know, that the *parade* of *papal* vanity, is the genuine produce of gross *ignorance* and *superstition* : but I apprehend, that religion has not been the only motive ; and in honor to the female world, it must be remembered, that ladies of great fortune and distinction, have had the most merit in the establishment of these charities. It may be also presumed, that the *tendernefs* which the wise and benignant author of nature has implanted in the human breast, has had a great share in every institution of this kind. Nor does this *passion*, for so we may justly call it, predominate least in those, whose *imagination*s are the most *chastised*, or the deceptions of their *fancy* best understood : on the contrary, we find that the most vicious, whose passions, in general, are the least *tamed*, have also

also the least sense of the miseries their vices create. This is clearly evinced by the conduct of the generality of *men*, with regard to *women*, in the instance of *illegal* commerce.

It is, indeed, one of the absurd tenets of the *Romish* church, to engage people to make *vows*, and to shut them entirely from the world, whether their hearts shall afterwards subscribe to such seclusion or not; but this is not the case in all instances, even with that church, as appears from what I have mentioned above; and I am sure it will not be the less agreeable to the purity of genuine christianity, nor the less consistent with the wisest policy, to afford these unhappy women a *temporary* retreat, where *piety* may be supported by *labor*, and where the united force of these, will qualify them effectually for both worlds. Here no *incense* will be offered, but the pure flames of devotion; nor will any *vows* be required: it may be hoped, indeed, they will be inspired with a *resolution* to die, rather than abandon *virtue*, to which they profess themselves to be votaries. Thus may they learn what it is to act like *accountable* beings! When they return into the world, they will know how to shun temptation, and, however disguised under specious appearances, they will fly from it as from the teeth of a serpent. By such means they may at length advance the cause of *true religion*, promote the welfare of their country, do honor to human nature, and provide for their *lives*; and when *death* comes, submit gracefully, and look forward with joyful hopes of everlasting happiness.

Thus have I collected these instances, and drawn these conclusions, to shew what the common sense of mankind has been in regard to the *means of repentance* afforded, for this kind of violation of the divine law. I must now mention the *police* in some of those very countries where such indulgence

indulgence is shewn. It has been a received notion amongst us, that in *Rome*, and several other places, these women are *licensed*, or tolerated; and it is true, that they are under *regulations*, as a part of the *police* of that city, but not in the *manner* as is generally apprehended. When a woman is detected, or known to live in this state of licentiousness, she is summoned before a *magistrate*, who declares the reason of it in these terms:

You are impeached of being guilty of prostitution, and of making a trade of it. If you are inclined to repent, you may be received into the house of penitents, (a) where you will be properly employed, and taken good care of. If you will not accept of this offer, and are detected again, you must enter your name at the public register, as a prostitute, and be subject to the following regulations, for the breach of which you will be severely chastised.

1st. *You shall not appear on any account, except in a certain district (b).*

2dly. *You shall not refuse any man who may ask you, except on sundays or holidays; it must not be before such an hour, nor after such an hour (c).*

3dly. *If you live on the ground floor, you are to take but one shilling; on the first floor one shilling and sixpence; and on the second you may take two shillings (d).*

4thly. *You are to receive but one man at a time to your apartment, under severe penalties, which will be exacted of you, upon information.*

5thly. *You are not entitled to receive any benefit, from any hospital or parish.*

6thly.

(a) *Le Convertite.*

(b) *Places mentioned.*

(c) *Hours mentioned.*

(d) *About this value: the Italian houses differ from ours, as to the estimation of different floors.*

6thly. *You have no right to appeal to justice for any insult, or debt, acts of cruelty excepted.*

7thly. *Your oath shall not be valid, except in case of robbery or murder.*

8thly. *You are not entitled to any asylum hereafter, except to be received to hard labor.*

9thly. *You are to be subject to such future laws and regulations, as may be hereafter made for the incorrigible : and,*

Lastly. You are not entitled to christian burial.

Some of these articles, in a *free* country, would be thought hard terms, even for a prostitute : but surely a person dying in a state of *premeditated* prostitution, seems to forfeit a title to *christian burial*. Can the *burial service* be read over such a body ? Our *dearly beloved sister departed in sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection*, may be considered as *sure and certain* mockery.

How far the *Italians* adhere to these rules, I do not venture to pronounce, but this is the light in which their *civil* and *ecclesiastical* laws regard prostitution. It is not essential to my present purpose to consider any further, the nature of these institutions, nor what were the motives to the establishment of them : *you mean* to save a number of poor helpless creatures from perishing ; to remove, so far as the effects of your charity shall extend, one *cause* of the *decrease*, or *hindrance* of the *greater increase* of the people of this land ; to employ these women in useful labor, and to habituate them to a religious life : and surely this is an object most highly worthy of your attention, and will as surely entitle you to the applause of your fellow-subjects and citizens !

SECTION VI.

The inefficacy of our laws. Liberty and virtue interwoven. The advantage of zealous magistrates. The infamous practices of keepers of bawdy-houses. The necessity of correcting this abuse, in order to render this charity effectual. The advantage of giving the penitents part of the produce of their labor. The utility of giving small portions, or donations, upon the marriage of those who are reclaimed. Hospitals appropriated to the cure of venereal distempers will encrease in reputation, by means of this charity. This institution not extended to the aged and distempered.

IT has been often debated how far it is adviseable, supposing it were practicable, *totally* to suppress prostitutes. The subject is *delicate*, not *necessary* to be discussed, and will hardly admit of a strict examination. Let it suffice that it is, or should be, in the power of the *civil magistrate*, to drive prostitutes from the public streets, and remove every dangerous temptation to the unwary youth.

As to the inefficacy of our *laws* to accomplish a reformation, it is but too obvious from experience, which is the best guide of life, that we want either *skill* to make, or *virtue* to execute, any law to answer the purpose in all respects; and, indeed, it is much easier to talk of such laws, than to frame and adapt them to our religion and constitution. This gives us a striking proof, that *true religion*, and *true politics*, cannot be long supported, they will ever be in a tottering condition, unless the virtue of individuals comes in aid of them.

It is certain, that *rods were made for the backs of fools*; but it is also certain, that severity of some kinds brings on as great evils as it cures. Are we really ambitious of being *free*; let us then remember, that *liberty and virtue are twin-born, and descended from heaven at the same time*: and that the inexpressible blessings which *liberty* bestows on mankind, can be enjoyed no longer than we offer our devotion at the shrine of *virtue*: if once we totally neglect, or wantonly despise *virtue*, not even the smiles of *princes*, nor the *favor* of the *great*, are half so precarious as *liberty*. — If prostitution were punished with death, should we not think it tyranny? And yet even this would not totally cure the evil.—The laws already in being are *ineffectual*; and it is much to be wished, that some new law were made, *provided it could be so well digested, as to steer betwixt the extremes of lenity and severity*; but there are many *inconveniences* which *free-born* subjects will submit to, *of their own choice*, that the notion of law would render insupportable. So far as *reason* and *religion* have any power over the *mind*, your good work may be accomplished, without the authority of the *civil magistrate*: and surely no body can pretend to say, it is *not possible* that reason and religion can produce the end proposed. Would *human laws* be of sufficient force, to prevent mankind from degenerating into a species of *unnatural brutes*, were *religion*, and the *persuasive* calls of *humanity*, quite out of the question? When these women, who offer themselves as objects of this charity, are *reminded* that there is a *God*, and a *state of rewards* for *good*, and of *punishments* for *evil* actions, after death, it will surely *rouse* the attention of *some* of them: I say *reminded*, for it is to be feared that many, even of these, have *forgotten* what they were once taught, and that others ^{are} properly of *no religion*.

As to a *coercive* law to accomplish a reformation, however necessary it may be in the great view of correcting the *vices* of the people; in the case of

penitence, which is the true foundation on which your charity stands, to compel women to *repent*, is an absurdity in terms. A vigorous exertion of power in a legislature, and the *attention* of good magistrates to their duty, do marvellous things, towards the reforming the *manners* of a people; but the remedy against prostitution is one of those circumstances, which, as I have just observed, depends so much on the virtue of *individuals*, that with us, who are unhappily so little awed by the fear of punishments, we must *undermine these works of Satan*, or make a *breach* in them, before we can take them by storm. Your design may prepare the way for some law that is consistent; and it will contribute to set the vigilance of the *good magistrate*, and *truly honest man*, in the most amiable point of light: he will now have it in his power to point out the rewards of virtue to the *real penitent*, as well as to hold up a *rod* for the punishment of the *incorrigible*.

We need but step out of doors, to see what *situation* we are in at present. To say nothing of harlots, who figure at the top of life, whether *these* are more or less dangerous, where shall we find such an *abandoned race* as some of the lower sorts, who infest the most *public streets of London*? The number of prostitutes is so great, *in the evening*, not to mention their various appearances *at noon-day*, that we should doubt whether every female we meet, is not an *harlot*, if the women of this profession were not generally distinguished by their open *solicitations* to passengers, and a certain *effrontery* in which *modesty* has no share. It is true, they are sometimes *apprehended*, but this frequently occasions fresh iniquity, and *another kind of prostitution*. How often the laws are rendered subservient to the avarice of petty officers of justice, is a fact more easy to be *lamented* than *described*, and of which many will *complain*, and few attempt to *remedy* the evil.

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I have already deplored the sufferings of these women, and the calamities they create ; the immoral conduct of those who *tempt*, and the infamous behavior of such as expose the *tempted* to *misery*. Without entering minutely into the numerous causes of the *distress* of these women, it would be unjust to them, whose *reformation* we wish to see, not to take notice that the *chief cause* of the utter ruin of many of them, is owing to the *infernal* arts of the keepers of bawdy-houses, who contrive that *young women* shall run into their debt for *lodging*, *diet*, and *clothes* ; and then, by the terror of that debt, and the consequences of it, force them to submit to their hellish practices. It would be happy if a law were made to afford some shelter and relief, to open some room for these unhappy creatures to escape from their ruin ; for as the case now stands, the sacred name of the *law*, is the *great engine* of *debauchery* and *destruction*, which these bawds make use of.

If *some officers*, whose duty it is, were to do their duty, in a proper manner, the *bawd*, instead of being countenanced and protected, would hardly have power to pursue her trade, much less to prosecute for false debts, or for such as are not strictly due. It is well known, that there are a set of fellows, supposed to be *ministers of justice*, employed in enquiring after handsome girls, that are a little in debt, “ and if they can contrive to buy up their notes, perhaps at
“ a *crown in the pound*, they *arrest* them, *detain* them at their house in quality
“ of a *spunging-house*, and make their *property* of them. The debt, perhaps
“ of *two or three pounds*, still remains if they were to earn them a *hundred*
“ *pounds* ; so that they are never after, out of their clutches, till they are *rot-*
“ *ten* and *unfit* for service, when they are cast into the streets.” Happy were it if a *law* could be so contrived, without danger to *good subjects*, that debts contracted to bawds, or in *notorious bawdy-houses*, should be considered as debts contracted at *play*. The proposition seems to be equally consistent,

and it might *check*, if it did not *prevent* such *lawless* practices, under the sanction of the laws. And if those women were upon their guard, so as not to give their notes of hand, it would be a difficult matter to prove, that a bawd trusted a whore, for a *good purpose*. But, alas, of all the daughters of *Eve*, these girls are the least considerate; *foolish* in their departure from *virtue*, and, *if possible*, still *more foolish*, in not knowing how to make *vice* instrumental to their support; a *prey* to the *debauchee*, and the *merchandize* of the *artful pimp*, who *triumphs* in their *credulity*. It is undoubtedly a less crime against God, and the *state*, to take a purse, than for one of these bawds to ensnare a poor girl first, and then plunge her into prison for a debt, the value of which, perhaps, has been paid ten times over. This is an *evil*, which you will, 'ere long, have greater knowledge of; and, I hope, you will be able to obtain some remedy for it. For if these keepers of bad houses, find means to *force* women to continue prostitutes, they will be enabled to declare open war against *your institution*, in particular, as they now set at defiance *all laws in general, human and divine*. If these practices are not suppressed, the attempt to relieve these wretched women, will require so much the *greater attention*. As to the bawds taking much pains to misrepresent the nature of your institution, I have too much reason to believe they have done it, and will continue to do it; but we may hope, that those who have *any sense*, will not be talked out of it, or their good inclinations frustrated by persons, whose profession it is to *deceive*, and who having bargained for their souls with the *father of lies*, the more company they *drag* with them into the regions of darkness, they seem to think the less miserable they shall be. May heaven *punish* them till they become virtuous!

You will soon discover what a true gallantry of spirit it requires, to rescue these unhappy prostitutes from *slavery*; to restore them to the arms of their afflicted

fllicted parents ; and to render them a comfort to their *relations* and *friends*. And if you can thus defend the *laws of God*, you may also recover us, in some measure, to discipline, and obedience to *legislative* authority, which, I am sorry to say, has long been at a low ebb among *common* people.

Let nothing be wanting to render your design effectual to the end proposed ! If *reason*, if *persuasion* ; if the most suitable encouragement, can make any impression ; if the *hopes* of ease in this world, or of *happiness* in the next, can engage the attention of these women, I know you will convince them of the benevolence of your intention. Some time, however, will be necessary to *persuade them how well you mean* ; and it may be hoped, they will at length learn that *virtue*, in a plain garb, with health and a sober diet, is preferable to being dressed up like *sheep* for the altar, and of suffering all the dreadful consequences of an *impious* life.

As you propose to give each a part of the produce of her labor, and intend that those who behave well shall have a *bounty* also, it may be hoped, they will find the greater reason to thank God for their deliverance. It is also probable, that many of those who are *real* converts, will, by their labor, piety, and modesty, and their *character* in consequence of such qualities, recommend themselves to good husbands ; for it is very easy to conceive, that the agreeableness of many of these women, added to their ability to support themselves, will tie the bands of social affection much stronger, than is usual in common life, where neither *piety* nor *industry* are regarded.

As there is joy in *heaven* over a sinner that repenteth, there ought to be joy on *earth* also. We *lament* the loss of a *good man* when he leaves this world, but we ought to *shudder* at the death of the *unrighteous*. It is this
only

only which gives a *deep* anguish of soul to him whose ideas are enlarged, and who looks beyond the *narrow* verge of life. When you see these women restored to a true sense of virtue, you may consider them as rising from the grave, and you may safely show all the indulgence which the nature of your undertaking will admit of. If by any act of munificence you can put them in a way of settling comfortably in the world, your charity will shine with redoubled lustre. This leads me to mention, what notions have been entertained by some of the greatest and best of men, in regard to the encouragement of marriage. The learned *Erasmus* thought the giving dowries one of the *noblest* kinds of charity, and bequeathed certain sums of money to it. And the ingenious baron *Holberg*, who was also greatly distinguished for his merit, established a *fund* for that purpose, and without doubt, he died with much the greater pleasure, in the reflexion that he should be instrumental in making some young ladies the happier, in that state, which it is no indignity to them to suppose, most young women wish to be. *His* legacies were confined to the *most virtuous* part of the sex, and consequently to render them more happy than they were before : you plead for those *who were lost, and are found*, with a view to alleviate their *misery*, and render them useful. And since *pleasure* chiefly consists in an absence of *pain* ; and as virtue is, in some degree, its own reward even with regard to this world ; it seems to be a higher object of the care of mankind, to relieve the distressed, than even to augment the happiness which *virtue* has so strong a title to.

If the promise of *temporal* as well as *eternal* rewards, will raise a glorious emulation amongst the *most virtuous* ; may we not hope that it will be instrumental also in reclaiming the *vicious* ? Happiness is the common end pursued ; and we may point out, even to the most abandoned of mankind, what are the truest *means* to acquire this *end*. ——— We may also lay it down

as an invariable maxim, that whatever tends to promote, amongst the idle and dissolute, a habit of industry which, to all appearance, will produce as great an advantage to the community, as the pecuniary consideration which is given, to promote that industry, amounts to, will in the issue be highly beneficial. But, if to industry we add the means of *preserving life*; the improvement of *moral virtue*, and the exercise of religious duties; it is, in fact, only making use of a *few good things* of a *lesser* value, to acquire *more good things* of a much *greater value*: and where care is taken to prevent abuses, this must be productive of the greatest benefit. It seems absurd to entertain a jealousy, that whilst we feel the sad effects of any certain *vice*, that the encouragement of a virtue of an opposite nature will promote such vice; and *nothing* but *virtue* should entitle them to such an encouragement.

A *bounty* being thus given to such *reclaimed persons*, as excel in piety, industry, and a submission to a *regular oeconomy*, it will certainly prepare the way to their being married to honest and industrious men. The happy ends which will be obtained by such a *bounty*, given to the virtuous, with a view to prevent the propagation of misery and bad example, seem to be too obvious to need any farther illustration; for, if those, who have been a nuisance, become useful members to society, and they receive the rewards of *virtue* as they now receive hire for being *vicious*, the *ends* of *true policy*, and *true charity*, will be answered in the highest, and most *proper* manner, and the *state* will be doubly repaid the charge.

I apprehend from your *plan*, that you do not intend to receive the *distempered* till cured, nor the *aged*, but only such as have been *prostitutes*, and being yet in the prime of life, are in danger of returning to their evil course; and also *desirous* to become industrious; and above all, such as seem to have

have a sense of their guilt, and earnestly wish to give *proof* of their repentance. Under these circumstances, it will be hardly possible your establishment can degenerate into a *Lock Hospital*, as some imagine, more than it will become a *common workhouse*, and, least of all, a house of *correction*.

I refer it to your consideration, if you can by any other means have so fair an opportunity of discovering the real *character*, and *disposition* of such objects of your charity, as come from hospitals, as in the very place where they have been cured of their diseases: and if, during the time of cure, those who are candidates for your beneficence should not be separated from those who do not so much as pretend to leave off their iniquity? If an able divine, who knows how to recommend religion, is also employed in such hospitals, the difficulty of accomplishing your work, will every day decrease. — *Humanity* in *preserving* their health when *recovered*; *piety* in taking care of their *souls*; *policy* in promoting useful *industry*, will then keep pace with those *charities*, which are so well calculated to cure the *diseases* of these *unhappy women*.

Every hospital established for the cure of *venereal* diseases, and particularly that which is appropriated to this purpose only, will derive a sanction, and increase in reputation, in proportion to the number of patients who become *penitents*, and after they are *cured* prove an honor to society. Thus we shall make one institution subservient to another, and render such hospitals effectual, to every *great* and *good* purpose for which they were established. They are already temporary expedients to *alleviate* misery, but they cannot render the objects *happy*, in *this* world, much less can they secure the *felicity* of the *next*.

SECTION

SECTION VII.

The dangerous consequences of feeding the idle. The duty of chastising the vicious, and of encouraging the virtuous poor. The general duty of an active and industrious life. The advantages which may arise from the skilful employment of young female orphans. The great utility of the Magdalen charity. Conclusion, with an invitation to prostitutes to consider what their situation is.

YOU will easily judge of the zeal with which I espouse the cause you have adopted: but whilst I am pleading in behalf of this pious institution, it is necessary to take notice, that if there was less *idleness* among the working female poor, there would not only be fewer *prostitutes*, but fewer *beggars*, and fewer *thieves*: there would likewise be a heavy expence in the *poors-rate* saved. — The indulgence of feeding girls and young women who do not work, is a mark of *false* tenderness, and sometimes renders charities instrumental to debauchery. I have often heard talk of the great difference of the rates, between parishes where the poor *work*, and where they are *idle*: and one may naturally conclude, that many who are born to get their bread by labor, do really spend their days in idleness. This I apprehend to be the case amongst us, more than is observed in many other nations, and from hence arises the stronger reason to enter seriously into the consideration of your undertaking, even upon *political* principles.

Lawgivers and *magistrates* have at all times supposed, that the fear of *death*, or *confinement*; of *compulsive labor*, or *corporal correction*, would either *awe* the wicked, and *prevent* iniquity; or that the actual suffering of these severities, would *reform* all gross enormities. But it is a fact too well known, that the *abuse* of *houses of correction* is carried to that pitch, with us, as to render them houses of *corruption*, not of *reformation*. Hence it is probable, that you will succeed in the way you propose, rather than by any compulsive means, which, to a *free people*, may render the *remedy* as bad as the *disease*.

Notwithstanding the mutability of all human affairs; notwithstanding our *changeable* tempers, we are amazingly constant in the great article of public charities; and yet we must not pretend to *much virtue*, 'till we pay *more* attention to that part which relates to *piety* and *industry*, though less *money* be given. The *first* will render the objects of these charities more *moral*, and consequently less inclined to impose on their benefactors; the *last*, will enable many of them to get their bread without such charitable assistance. Some charities, from their very nature, ought in all reason to *decrease*; for, if acts of beneficence do not create *less want*, and *less misery*; if those who have been relieved once, shall for this and no better reason, conclude that they have a right to be relieved again, the measure of such moral obligations, between the *rich* and *poor*, will be confounded; the *virtue* of the *Donor* will pervert its own end, and create that very misery which he intended to prevent. It is an observation but too well founded, that when the generality of the common people have worn off a sense of *duty*, and though *able to work*, are not ashamed to eat the *bread of idleness*, great misery and abuse of charity will creep in; and if *corruption*, and *bad examples*, turn *panders* to *excess* and *luxury*, many *wants* will be created, even among the poor, which have

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no existence from *necessity*; and which, otherwise, would have had no existence at all. But it is in vain to contemplate the evils which have made such inroads upon us, unless we resolve upon measures to prevent their *progress*. If the *vicious poor* were oftener chastised, and *compelled to work*, agreeably to the great *order of providence*; and if the *virtuous poor* were more *timely* relieved with gentleness and humanity; if a constant *attendance* were given, and a greater exertion of skill *shewn* in the oeconomy of *parish affairs*, we should not find so much money expended, *seemingly in vain*: there would not be such *enormous* sums devoted to charitable purposes, and yet our streets abounding with objects, who are a *shame* to government, and a *disgrace* to human nature. — It is a happiness we enjoy in this commercial nation, where nature has been so indulgent to us with regard to the *fertility* of the earth, that perhaps there is no country in the world, where the people may be so easily set to work; but, as our *riches* are great, so is the indolence of the opulent; and, as our *liberty* is *sacred*, libertinism and a contempt of discipline will often arise from it.

Men of speculative minds may refine as they please, things will have their course: on the *one side*, even riches, with indolence, and licentiousness, will certainly produce misery: but, on the *other*, virtue, skill, and vigilance, will shew their effects in *preventing*, or alleviating, the *evils* of life. It ought to be constantly instilled as a *ruling principle*, in the minds of both sexes, and of all ranks; that *man* is an *active being*, and if he is not taught to do *good*, he will certainly do *mischiefs*. *Idleness* is very justly called the *root of evil in general*, but it is particularly so in the case of prostitution. — Of all stations in life, the most deplorable is that of persons who are brought up in affluence, and reduced to poverty, without any means of support from their own skill and industry. This I take to be

the case of many prostitutes, who are the daughters of poor tradesmen, or of clergymen of poor livings in the country. If, by means of your institution, such persons learn to work, though they begin late in life, they may provide themselves a comfortable support. A woman who is mistress of a trade, is a *fortune* to a husband, and in case of his death may provide for her children, as many widows do, who have had the happiness to be educated in an industrious manner, and in the way which nature seems to have appointed for both sexes, equally the same, though the object for employment is different. It has been often observed, that there are many trades, now in the hands of *men*, in which *women* might do as well, and some which their natural ingenuity would enable them to carry on much better.

The remedy of these *evils* has long engaged our thoughts, but war must teach us to be strictly circumspect. The *skilful* and the *active* must help to lighten the burthen of the *rich*, as well as of the *poor*, and, by *saving money*, assist in the support of the *war*, that, when it is happily finished, we may be the better enabled to cultivate the *arts of peace*. Thus we may render our charities equally subservient to the *honor of God*, the *service of the state*, and the *temporal and eternal* welfare of our fellow-subjects.

With regard to such as are only in *danger* of being corrupted, it must be confessed, that in *some cases* it is more easy to *prevent* than to *cure a disease*, yet it does not follow, that such cure is to be neglected. When the proposition was first made for an *establishment of charity-houses for friendless girls and repenting prostitutes*, they were justly distinguished as two very different objects : and for as much as the denomination of *friendless girls* might take in vast crowds, from every part of the kingdom, the support of which no

private

private subscription could compass, the proposal required much *consideration*. It also appeared, that if the *overseers* of parish work-houses, and the guardians of charity-schools were to do *their duty* effectually, and *employ* all young persons, within their jurisdiction, in useful labor, there could be no occasion for any such *new institution*. It was for this reason, I presume, that you first *resolved* to pursue the plan for such relief of these women, for whom no provision has been yet made, as might recover and preserve them.

On the other hand it is very apparent, that *there are*, in this great metropolis, a number of *young girls*, entitled to protection, of whom, to our great shame, no parish, or school, takes any cognizance, and who can hardly avoid becoming the prey of *lust, disease, and misery*. — The design of a well-regulated workhouse for *vagabond girls*, may prove a great relief to many miserable objects; and if such an institution can be managed in so judicious a manner, as to serve as an *example* to parish officers, and a *guide* to guardians of charity-schools, throughout this kingdom, it will operate in a great measure to the end in view: and if a proper provision is not yet made for the relief of such *vagabond children*, it is much to be wished that some *law* for this purpose were enacted.

In *Rome* they have an establishment for poor female orphans, called the order of the *holy sacrament*, where they are taught such trades, as they can live by when they come into the world: they make manufactures of wool, both cloth and stuffs, at the same time that they observe great exactness in their devotions. There is hardly any country, *protestant* or *papist*, *mahomedan* or *pagan*, but shews more tenderness than we seem to have had for such young girls as wander about the streets in filth and rags; for whilst we forget *our duty* to them, they seem totally unacquainted with every

every *moral* obligation, and accordingly we find them so lost to a sense of *their duty to God*, as hardly to know that there is one.

If such charity should be found useful and *expedient*, you will, I presume, consider the *young vagabond female orphans* also, if any number of them are found in the eastern quarters of the town, *where there is the most shew of police*. This I apprehend to be your design : but your first attempting the *Magdalen Charity*, is a proof of your distinction : if this is not the most *essential*, it is the most *difficult* undertaking, and will require the most skill and circumspection. And for the same reason that the *cure* of a disease, seems to be more interesting, in a direct view, and sometimes more *certain* in the *operation*, than the prevention of it, there is the utmost reason for you to continue steady to your intentions, in the pursuit of which, it is probable, you will have business enough on your hands, though you were never to take up the other object.

After all that can be said on the subject of your undertaking, it must stand on *piety* : real repentance is the only true foundation which can support it, and much will depend on your *vigilance*, and *good sense*. I make no doubt but that every precaution will be used ; and if your *officers* enter with zeal and spirit into your ideas, and endeavor to make reflexions on their experience, and to furnish such hints as may be drawn from it, you can hardly fail of success. — *No body* doubts of your sincerity or abilities ; and, it may be presumed, the propriety of the design will every day merit the attention of our fellow-subjects, more and more, and engage them to subscribe to it with an *open heart*, and a *liberal hand*, as well knowing that, *in the most direct view*, they will save the *wretched* from *perdition*.

Before

Before I conclude, I cannot help remarking, what *infinite* pains some men take to *deceive* themselves; *half* so much labor to set themselves *right*, would answer their *true* end. Among other absurdities, it is the common cant of libertines of both sexes, that *God* never made man to be *damned*. If they know their own meaning, it must be this, that man being made, and as his maker certainly intended his happiness, *he must be happy*, whether he answers the conditions of that happiness or not. — Is not this an opinion more absurd than was ever entertained, even by the *Pagan* world? — The *learned* and the *illiterate* may equally *bewilder* themselves in their enquiries, but still they must recur to this conclusion, that we were *made* free, and are *rational* agents; that we *are* free, and as such, a *free* and *rational* obedience must, from the very nature of things, be expected from us. Could God be the judge of mankind if there was nothing to be judged of? — And what *sentence* can we conceive, can be past, where there is no *punishment* for *offenders*? — And for what can we imagine men will be punished, but for their *disobedience* to the divine command? — Wretched mortals, thus to endeavor to put out the eyes of their own understanding, that under the shelter of darkness they may gratify the animal part of their composition, or please some favourite passion, though it be but for a *moment*.

So it is; the *weak*, and the *wicked* part of mankind, generally incline to adapt their *notions* to their *practice*, and talk of the infinite *mercies* of God, as if they meant only to *flatter* him out of his *justice*. As it is *blasphemy* to challenge our Maker for creating us what *we are*, or for making the conditions of our happiness such as *they really are*; so it is the grossest *folly* to imagine, he will reverse his *decrees*. If we really *believe* in him; if we have any pretence to the privileges of reason, we shall indeed find the highest consolation, in the contemplation of his *mercy*, whilst the terror
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of his *justice* will keep us in awe: we shall do honor to the *power* he has entrusted us with, and receive with joy the *assurances* he has promised; and thus, instead of *rebell*ing against his *authority*, we shall find infinite reason to pay divine honors to his *clemency*, as the supreme lawgiver; and to *adore* his *goodness* as the *tender parent* of mankind. Let us ever remember that our *belief* depends greatly on our *practice*, as well as our *practice* on our *belief*. Every one may *see*, if they chuse to look, what God has been pleased to reveal of himself: and what his *will* is towards mankind. Those who fondly imagine that he *means* the contrary of what he *says*; or that our revelation is *fabulous*, may, as I set out by observing, as well discard *christianity* at once. We must either give up the *bible* and *testament*, or *renounce* our *reason*, or *forsake* our *sins*.

The task of teaching these unhappy prostitutes the *great law of confidence*, will be *glorious*, in proportion as their present situation is *dreadful*. What a *trade* is that, the wages of which is everlasting perdition!—If they saw the real state of their condition, and the ruin gaping wide to swallow them, they could not live in open contempt of the laws of *God* and *man*, and in defiance of conscience; their souls would shudder at the thought! their minds would be amazed with terror! If they were made sensible what clouds of darkness hang over their prospect of futurity, *remorse* would rend their hearts! *Thought* may, indeed, be in some measure banished, and the mind become insensible of fear, or sorrow; but will the soul therefore cease to be immortal? — Or will a God of infinite justice not punish for offences, the *habitual* exercise of which, occasions this very insensibility? On the other hand, they will be convinced, that heaven has boundless joy in store for *those* who *repent* of their misdeeds. That the practice of virtue will comfort the heart, and exilerate the spirits, rejoice the soul,

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and exhibit a scene of *pleasure*, and *self-complacency*, beyond the power of language to describe ; and since life, at best, is balanced on a point subject to fall, even by the motion of the air, let those who have been most exposed to danger, rejoice most, when they happily finish their journey, and whatever *temptations* or *distresses*, *disappointments*, or *misfortunes*, they may have met with on the road, let them cheer each other, and rest in pious confidence, that they shall at last be safely conducted to the mansions of everlasting felicity !

Let me once more observe, that it is *amazing* how far prejudices often betray the most *virtuous* and sensible persons, into a belief of what the most *vicious* and foolish are solicitous to give credit to, namely, that it is an absurdity to think of *repentance* among *prostitutes*. If nothing but a miracle could reform this vice, it might be absurd indeed to expect such miracle, but I apprehend that this vulgar error has taken its rise from *good policy* not rightly understood. We may now appeal to *facts*. Whilst I am yet writing, I hear that you have taken in a number of poor girls, who give every token of being what they pretend, sincerely desirous to forsake their evil course of life, conscious of their offence, and glad to make atonement for it ; that they live with the *simplicity* of young children, and the *understanding* of women who know *their* happiness is the only object *you* have in view.

The *utility* of your undertaking must be *apparent* to all the world. If you afford these women the means of *employment*, you will instruct some in *useful arts* who never learned any before ; you will give others a *habit* of industry, as well as an *opportunity* of reforming their *morals* ; and rescue their *bodies* and *their souls*. Thus may we flatter ourselves that the most sensible, the most virtuous, the most pious and distinguished ladies amongst

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us, will shew the most *commiseration*, and pride themselves in promoting this charity : while *men* in general, those who are the *least*, as well as those who are the *most* conversant with *harlots*, will find sufficient reason to contribute towards the establishment and support of it. I hope *both sexes*, will promote an undertaking, so well calculated at once to prove a *blessing* to the *commonwealth*, and an *honor* to *human nature*, that we may *live* to see true divinity, and true policy unite, and die in so much the more *exalted hope*, and *pious confidence*, that we shall receive our reward in that state, which *every moment* brings so much nearer to us.

Let it not be coldly said, “ *these women are self-punishers, and their misery the effect of their own folly* :” Alas, we are all *foolish*, though not in the same manner or degree. Our *worldly* misfortunes, and our *spiritual* distresses, generally arise from our *passions*, our *weakness*, or *perverse* inclinations ; and if no succour ought to be afforded in such distress as this, when is it to be afforded ? God forbid that the *greatest* calamity should be the *least* considered ! There are many instances in which human laws exact *atonement* for crimes, and, without which, society could not exist. In such cases the *Persian* adage takes place, *they MUST sleep in the bed which they have made* ! But you intend to convert and *save* sinners by the means of *piety* and *labor*, not to *destroy* them by the sword of justice.

Perhaps some of these women have never been *properly* taught, that the same *divine lawgiver*, on whose authority we found the *certain* belief of the *immortality* of the soul, has declared that he shall one day denounce the severest *malediction* against those who die *impenitent*. Go, ye *curst*, into *everlasting fire* ! — Depart from me, into that *unutterable* misery, into which your own *impenitence* has plunged you. But, to those who have *repented*,

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in sincerity of heart, and, by a sober and religious life, have given proof of such *repentance*, he assures us, *praise* and *applause* will be given, more harmoniously sweet, than the most seraphic strains of music, and far more transporting than the united force of all the captivating delights this world can afford! *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.* Be happy. — Be *happy* for ever; immortally happy, as far beyond your conceptions, as *heaven* is exalted above *earth*, or the duration of *eternity* exceeds a *moment*!

Thus have you set a view of *ease* and *comfort*, *disease* and *misery*, *life* and *death*, *heaven* and *hell*, before the eyes of these poor women. To those various methods in which *mercy* is generally offered, you add another *striking proof*, how much the hearts of men are influenced by that *benignant power* which governs the world. May your *piety* be communicated to others, and produce all the happy effects of this truly charitable, and truly *pious* institution!

F I N I S.

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of their sincerity, and others will be given, more
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transporting than the united force of all the captivating delights this world
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Be happy — the happy for ever; infinitely happy, as far beyond your
conceptions, as heaven is exalted above earth, or the dominion of eternity
extends above mortality.

Thus have you for a view of my father, and myself, and my wife, and
children, and all, before the eyes of these poor women. To those va-
rious methods in which every is generally offered, you add another. And
yet, how much the hearts of men are influenced by that language
which comes from the mouth of a woman, and how much the hearts of
women are influenced by the happy effects of this holy discipline, and truly

