

THE two great objects of this statute seem to have been, 1. To relieve the impotent poor, and them only. 2. To find employment for such as are able to work : and this principally by providing stocks to be worked up at home, which perhaps might be more beneficial than accumulating all the poor in one common work-house ; a practice which tends to destroy all domestic connexions (the only felicity of the honest and industrious labourer) and to put the sober and diligent upon a level, in point of their earnings, with those who are dissolute and idle. Whereas, if none were to be relieved but those who are incapable to get their livings, and that in proportion to their incapacity ; if no children were to be removed from their parents, but such as are brought up in rags and idleness ; and if every poor man and his family were employed whenever they requested it, and were allowed the whole profits of their labour ;---a spirit of chearful industry would soon diffuse itself through every cottage ; work would become easy and habitual, when absolutely necessary to their daily subsistence ; and the most indigent peasant would go through his task without a murmur, if assured that he and his children (when incapable of work through infancy, age, or infirmity) would then, and then only, be intitled to support from his opulent neighbours.

THIS appears to have been the plan of the statute of queen Elizabeth ; in which the only defect was confining the management of the poor to small, parochial, districts ; which are frequently incapable of furnishing proper work, or providing an able director. However, the laborious poor were then at liberty to seek employment wherever it was to be had ; none being obliged to reside in the places of their settlement, but such as were unable or unwilling to work ; and those places of settlement being only such where they were born, or had made their abode, originally for three years<sup>m</sup>, and afterwards (in the case of vagabonds) for one year only<sup>n</sup>.

<sup>m</sup> Stat. 19 Hen. VII. c. 12. 1 Edw. VI. c. 3. 3 Edw. VI. c. 16. 14 Eliz. c. 5. <sup>n</sup> Stat. 39 Eliz. c. 4.