PRACTICAL REMARKS UPON THE EDUCATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES; WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE PLAN PURSUED, UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND SOCIETY, AT THE BRENTON ASYLUM, HACKNEY WICK

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CHARLES FORSS

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PURSUED

Under the Superintendence of the Children's Friend Society,

AT THE

BRENTON ASYLUM, HACKNEY WICK.

By CHARLES FORSS,

AGRICULTURAL TEACHER, AND SECOND MASTER OF THAT INSTITUTION.

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1835.

TO THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE

DUCHESS OF KENT AND THE PRINCESS VICTORIA,

PATRONESSES

OF

THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND SOCIETY,

THESE HUMBLE PAGES

ARE (BY PERMISSION) INSCRIBED,

BY

THE EDITOR.

At the commencement of the above-named Institution, a majority even of the benevolent English public considered its views Utopian, and its efforts vain.

In that hour of difficulty the endeavours of the Society were encouraged, assisted, and protected by Your Royal Highnesses. The meed of public approbation now confirms that generous Patronage; and we may confidently hope that hundreds, nay thousands of British children, rescued from destruction, will have reason to bless the enlightened views, and timely aid, of their Royal Benefactresses.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

The powers of observation and reflection evinced in the following remarks, and the practical nature of the facts detailed, render them, in the opinion of competent judges, not unworthy of public attention.

Charles Forss was educated as a simple agriculturist and carpenter in Dorsetshire; and left his native county for the purpose only of undertaking the situation he at present holds at Hackney Wick.

REMARKS

UPON THE

EDUCATION OF THE WORKING CLASSES,

&c. &c.

NOTHING is more needful at the present time than a good system of education for the working classes. Schools we have, but they are not all they ought to be, and therefore every true lover of Christian philanthropy should come forward and cast in his mite to promote the great work of improvement. The welfare of the church, and the peace and happiness of society at large, loudly call for it. Could I but give one small hint, or be in any way of service towards so worthy an undertaking, I should feel myself highly gratified.

If education above all things tends to form a bond of society, surely that reason alone should be sufficient to induce all benevolent and well-disposed persons to assist its progress and spread its benefits over the world; but, as yet, in villages, in the agricultural districts, and even in the great

towns, the most gross ignorance prevails. It is my humble opinion that we shall never see a well-working system of universal education, for the humbler classes, until it is taken under the care and support of the government.

Many plans have been laid down by benevolent individuals, such as Lord Chichester, Mr. Allen of Lindfield, Mr. Fellenberg, at Hofwyl in Switzerland, and the Founders of the Asylum at Hackney, of which I am prepared to speak more fully hereafter. Now these are all very good as local establishments, but what we want is a universal system.

I believe the plans to be laid down for towns, and for manufacturing districts, should be different from those for agricultural situations. In towns the employment for boys is scarce; they are generally in the streets till fourteen or fifteen years of age, and during that time they obtain bad and idle habits, and in the manufactories the children are too much confined; now it would be very desirable in such cases, also to connect gardening with education, even if it should not be attended with immediate profit to do so; if the manager could clear his expenses on an average he should be content,—the benefit to the employed would be great. In the first place, it would be a means of keeping them healthy; secondly, it