

**AN ACCOUNT OF TWO CHARITY
SCHOOLS FOR THE EDUCATIONS OF
GIRLS: AND OF A FEMALE FRIENDLY
SOCIETY IN YORK: INTERSPERSED WITH
REFLECTIONS ON CHARITY SCHOOLS
AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES IN GENERAL**

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Anno 1800,

PREFACE.

THE design of the following pages, is to give a short History of the rise, progress, and present state of two Charitable Institutions in this City, called the SPINNING SCHOOL and the GREY COAT SCHOOL; and also of a third Institution, the FEMALE FRIENDLY SOCIETY; of its present state and proposed improvements.

The Writer sent some account of these Institutions, in the course of the last year, to the Monthly Magazine, but it having been suggested that to some who are interested in such investigations, it might be useful to have a more detailed account; and moreover, circumstances having arisen, which evinced that the principles on which the Grey Coat School is conducted, have been misunderstood, it has been thought

adviseable to lay before the public such further particulars as may enable it to judge, how far in its present state, that School is worthy of patronage: Such a statement it is also hoped may render those regulations more stable which have had the sanction of reason and experience.

The subject, it is admitted, is an humble one: Yet to the Christian, who knows that in the eye of God, all his rational offspring are equal, all alike candidates for a glorious state of endless and happy existence; or to thinking persons of whatever description, the good order and proper regulation even of a Female Charity School, will not seem unworthy some portion of attention.

But there is another point of view in which the proper regulation of Charity Schools for Girls, may be considered as highly important, namely, that of fitting them for Servants.

In a late valuable publication on the subject of Practical Education, I was much struck with the following remark: Speaking of the many baneful consequences of suffering Children to be much in the company of Servants, such as they now generally are, the Authors say, "Let the Poor be well educated, and the difference in their conduct and understanding will repay society for the trouble of the

“undertaking.”* The writers add, in a note, that perhaps an institution for the education of Attendants upon Children, would be of the highest utility. What they here suggest, respecting those, whose future designation may be this, is perhaps not less true, if applied to servants in general; since it must be admitted, [that servants who are sober minded, industrious and faithful, contribute essentially, not only to the peace and comfort of the family of which they are members, but also in their measure, to the order and happiness of society at large.] I know that the education of the Grey Coat Girls, would not fully qualify them to become the enlightened attendants of children educated on the plan of Mr. and Miss Edgeworth, although I believe they will not be found deficient in habits of order, œconomy, decency, industry, and cleanliness; nor in the principles of general rectitude. But might not some of the many Charity Schools, already established throughout the kingdom, be regulated with a particular view to this object? This would be the more useful, as there is not any description of children, except those who are wholly maintained at the expence of the public,

* See a Treatise on Practical Education, by Mr. and Miss Edgeworth, Vol. 1, page 124.

whose education the public can have either the power or the right, entirely to direct.

We know who it is that hath said, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and surely if a few specimens of Servants well educated, for different departments in families, were sent out from Charity Schools, something at least would be done towards the reformation of a class of persons, whom, taken as a body, we have long been accustomed to regard with suspicion. Nor would the service done society end here, for the children of Mothers, whose habits had been thus formed, would in their turn be much better educated than those of the generality of our poor now are.

Here, may I be permitted to bear testimony to the benevolent exertions of many Ladies of this City during a series of years, for the benefit of the Institutions about to be described? I know that the approbation of their own minds, is a reward far superior in its value to any praise which others can bestow; yet, to those of my Countrywomen, who have leisure, and to whom similar modes of usefulness may not have occurred, it cannot be improper to mention their example as praise-worthy, and as deserving of imitation.

PREFACE.

7

In a state of Society, like that of this Country, it will always happen, that many Ladies, especially in the middle ranks of life, will be free from the cares of a family. Of what importance would it be to the happiness of such persons, voluntarily to take upon themselves the patronage and protection of forlorn and friendless young Women? We are so admirably framed, that in proportion as our benevolent affections are called into exercise, and our minds occupied in pursuits that are useful, in the same proportion will our own happiness, as well as that of others, be ultimately increased. This, however, I mention, merely as a fact, and not as a principal motive to such exertions; which, whatever may be their effects, ought not to originate in selfishness.

May I be allowed to suggest one consideration more, which if it do not immediately arise out of the subject, is however but too closely connected with it? If one profligate female, even of the lowest order, may be instrumental in spreading mischief and ruin to an immeasurable extent, what language can express their guilt, who are the seducers of innocence? I appeal not to the awful sanctions of Religion, for to Christians, who are really such, the appeal is unnecessary; I would merely ask, what sort of Members of Society are such characters?

The many instances of the fatal consequences of Female seduction, that from time to time have come to our knowledge; some, in which the seducers have been married men, the fathers of families, make me feel it a duty, having this opportunity, not to let the subject pass unnoticed: For assuredly, however lightly it may sometimes be spoken of, to betray and to desert an innocent young Woman, is an evil of the greatest magnitude, whether viewed in its effects on society at large, or as leading on the total ruin of an unhappy individual.

YORK,

DECEMBER 20. 1799.

