

THE SCHOOLS OF SCOTLAND.

BY PRINCIPAL GRANT.

IN his excellent political "History of the United States," Dr. Goldwin Smith says: "Massachusetts led the world in the institution of common schools, to which all citizens were required to contribute and which all citizens were required to use."

I have no desire to take away glory from Massachusetts, but it is just as well that the old Bay State should not be arrayed in borrowed feathers. Scotland had common Schools, as well as Universities, before the Pilgrim Fathers instituted either. Even before the Reformation, the Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen had been established, grammar schools existed in some of the principal towns, and the convents generally had schools attached to them. No provision, however, had been made for educating the bulk of the people. But the old system did wonderfully good work.

In the diary of James Melville, we have very interesting notices of the school in Montrose, in which he was a scholar, six years after the Reformation. "There," he says, "were a guid number of gentle and honest men's bairns, of the country about, well trained both in letters, godliness and exercise of honest games." After describing how the scholars were instructed in Scripture, Catechism, Latin, French, etc., he goes on to say that they had their play, too: "By our master we were taught to handle the bow for archery; the clubs for golf; batons, for fencing; also to run, leap, swim, wrestle; everyone having his match and antagonist both in our lessons and play." Not a bad system of education, that! The Reformation in Scotland, however, went to the

roots of things. It was essentially a democratic movement, and in "Knox's First Book of Discipline" it was laid down that every church should have a school attached to it; that every notable town should have a college; and that the existing universities should be liberally endowed. The greed of the nobles prevented this grand scheme from being carried into effect, but the Church never ceased to press for it, even in the troublous times, which continued for more than a century. The Reformers were also anxious to encourage sacred music, and the first editions of the Scottish Liturgy (for the Church of Scotland had a Liturgy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) have the Psalm tunes then sung attached to the Psalms. Early in the seventeenth century, the Church did much for the establishment of common schools, supporting them in some instances by fees and elsewhere by voluntary assessment, which the rich had to pay on penalty of being called before the Session; if the poorer people refused to pay their share of the assessment, they would be denied any charity if they should come to need relief.

In 1616 the Privy Council passed an act that in every parish where it could be done conveniently, a school should be established and a fit person appointed to teach the same, "upon the expense of the parishioners, according to the quality and quantity of the parish." This act was not fully carried out; but the Parliament of 1633 ratified it, the clergy followed it up; and soon after the revolution of 1688 (in 1696), the proprietors of every parish were compelled by law to furnish the means of education to every child. Not only schools but