

or delegate that power to the instructor, and in short are responsible in all particulars for the faithful fulfilment of the trust committed to them ; the general system being, that a school is kept in each district during the long winter months when the children of the farmers are unoccupied, by a male teacher capable of instructing in reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography and history ; while in the same school-house, during the summer months, schools are kept by women to instruct the smaller children in knowledge even more elementary. In this way, for the population of New-England consisting of two millions of souls, not less than from ten to twelve thousand Free-schools are open every year ; or on an average, one school to every two hundred souls ; a proportion undoubtedly quite sufficient, and larger than would be necessary, if the population were not in many parts very much dispersed.

The beneficial effects of this system are such as might be expected, and are in general sufficiently obvious. The security of life and property is greater in New-England than it is anywhere else in the world, by far the larger part of the inhabitants sleeping constantly with doors neither barred nor bolted. The intelligence of the people is greater, on an average, than anywhere else ; not one in a thousand of those born and educated in New-England being unable to read and write. The pauperism in the native population is almost nothing. Indeed the industry, order, wealth, and happiness, which so generally prevail there, which have so greatly increased during the last half century, and which are still so rapidly increasing, rest, under Providence, for their basis, mainly on the elementary education given to all in the Free-schools.

But besides these obvious and wide effects of the system of universal education, there are others, which have been incidental and unexpected, and which can, perhaps, be fully understood only in connexion with the circumstances that produced them, and the principles on which they depend. One of the most remarkable of these is the readiness with which the inhabitants of each town vote and raise the money necessary to support their schools. *The reason is, that it is raised by a tax on property, and therefore operates as a benefit to the majority of those who vote for it.* In most towns of New-England, one-fifth of the inhabitants pay, at least, one-half of the tax ; and probably do not send more than one-sixth of the scholars. Of course, the school-tax is, to a considerable extent, a tax on the richer classes to educate the children of the poorer ; and yet, as all pay in proportion to their means, the poorest man feels that he has done all he ought to do to purchase the benefit which he receives, and he therefore claims it, like the protection of the state, as a right, instead of receiving it as a favour. And this is as it should be. Every man in the community has an interest, that ignorance, vice and barbarism be kept out of it, and a claim on the commonwealth that they should be. In New-England, if he be poor, he has the promise of the law, that his child shall be educated, and thus preserved from the greatest temptations to degradation and crime ; if he be rich, he is promised by the same law, that he shall live in a community, where universal education shall keep the foundations of society safe, and afford him a personal security greater than that offered by the terrors of prisons and tribunals of justice. The system of Free-schools in New-England, therefore, is to be regarded, and is there regarded, as a great moral police wisely supported by a tax on property, to preserve a decent, orderly, and respectable population : to teach men, from their earliest childhood, their duties and rights, and by giving the mass of the community a higher sense of character, a more