

schools are not fit to educate the children of the higher classes of society, and therefore these classes ought not to be taxed for the support of the common schools.'

"Answer.—The argument of this objection is the very cause of the evil on which the objection itself is founded. The unnatural and unpatriotic separation of the wealthier classes from the Common School has caused its inefficiency and alleged degradation. Had the wealthy classes been identified with the Common Schools equally with their poorer neighbours,—as is the case in Free School countries—the Common School would have been fit for the education of their children, and proportionally better than it now is for the education of the children of the more numerous common classes of society. In Free school cities and states, the Common Schools are acknowledged to be the best elementary Schools in such cities and states; so much so, that the Governor of the state of Massachusetts remarked at a late school celebration, that if he had the riches of an Astor, he would send all his children through the Common School to the highest institutions in the State.

"Second objection:—'It is unjust to tax persons for the support of a school which they do not patronise, and from which they derive no individual benefit.'

"Answer.—If this objection be well founded, it puts an end to school taxes of every kind, and abolishes school and college endowments of every description; it annihilates all systems of public instruction, and leaves education and schools to individual caprice and inclination. This doctrine was tried in the Belgian Netherlands after the revolt of Belgium from Holland in 1830; and in the course of five years, educational desolation spread throughout the kingdom, and the Legislature had to interfere to prevent the population from sinking into semi-barbarism. But the principle of a public tax for schools has been avowed in every school assessment which has ever been imposed by our Legislature, or by any District Council; the same principle is acted upon in the endowment of a Provincial University—for such endowment is as much public property as any part of the public annual revenue of the country. The principle has been avowed and acted upon by every republican State of America, as well as by the Province of Canada and the coun-

tries of Europe. The only question is, as to the extent to which the principle should be applied—whether to raise a part or the whole of what is required to support the public school. On this point it may be remarked, that if the principle be applied at all, it should be applied in that way and to that extent which will best promote the object contemplated—namely, the sound education of the people; and experience, as well as the nature of the case, shows, that the free system of supporting schools is the most, and indeed the only, effectual means of promoting the universal education of the people.

"I observe again on this second objection, that what it assumes as fact is not true. It assumes that none are benefitted by the common school but those who patronise it. This is the lowest, narrowest and most selfish view of the subject, and indicates a mind the most contracted and grovelling. This view applied to a provincial University, implies that no persons are benefitted by it except graduates; applied to criminal jurisprudence and its requisite officers and prisons, it supposes that none are benefitted by them except those whose persons are rescued from the assaults of violence, or whose property is restored from the hands of theft; applied to canals, harbours, roads, etc., this view assumes that no persons derive any benefit from them except those who personally navigate or travel over them. The fact is, that whatever tends to diminish crime and lessen the expenses of criminal jurisprudence, enhances the value of the whole estate of a country district; and is not this the tendency of good common school education? And who has not witnessed the expenditure of more money in the detection, imprisonment, and punishment of a single uneducated criminal, than would be necessary to educate in the common school half a dozen children? Is it not better to spend money upon the child than upon the culprit—to prevent crime rather than punish it? Again, whatever adds to the security of property of all kinds increases its value; and does not the proper education of the people do so? Whatever also tends to develop the physical resources of a country, must add to the value of property; and is not this the tendency of the education of the people? Is not education in fact the power of the