

constitutional liberties. England and France have enjoyed a pre-eminence in science and literature—in none from the earliest times have the arts and commerce been more perseveringly and successively prosecuted. In the present age, those nations famed for the best systems of education, enjoy a reputation equally high for perseverance in the accumulation of national wealth. Scotland now inhabited by the most intelligent and industrious people in the kingdom, perhaps in the world, were, until the time of the Union and the introduction of Parochial Schools, brave, it is true, but idle and superstitious. Prussia, where the best system of popular education on the Continent is now organized, is taking the lead in the career of national manufactures. The Swiss Cantons, famed for their intelligence, are alike distinguished for their advancement in agriculture and manufactures. The New England States, the best educated in the Union, are bee-hives of commercial speculation and persevering industry; and I pass from this branch of the argument without further reference or illustration, as I regard these views as only embodying an admitted axiom in the science of general politics.

The last paragraph as standing in contrast to the one which preceded it, has been introduced for that reason only, out of its natural order. I intended to dilate further upon the effects of learning, in mellowing the heart and manners—in giving to life an enthusiasm and poetic embellishment—in lending, in the words of Irving, 'to the stars music, and to the flowers eloquence'—but I refrain and pass to graver and more practical illustration.

Of all classes of society none have so deep an interest in the spread of learning and civilization as females. In rude states of society they are the slaves rather than the companions of their lords. Amongst our own Indians the wife is reduced to the most laborious and menial offices. Amongst the French in Cape Breton and Dutch in Lunenburg, they are subjected to labour, requiring the severest muscular exertion. In our fishing settlements they are the cultivators of the soil, they plant, reap and hoe, bear the barrow and raise the fish pile—all labours useful and necessary in themselves, but

scarce fitted for the slighter frame and delicacy of woman. In these she neither occupies her proper station, nor exercises her virtuous and softening influences upon society. As education and civilization advance, her position in the social scale is elevated. She is confined to the duties of domestic life, and becomes the Queen of her household. In place of the servant she is raised to be the friend and the companion of her partner, she shares his good and evil fortune—brightens success and softens adversity. It becomes her above all others to be the patroness and friend of education. It elevates her consequence and extends her dominion. Nor does she fail amply to repay the privileges and dignity thus conferred. How much of the national virtues are dependant upon the gentler sex. They mould the tone of general manners, and render man virtuous or otherwise at their will. They exercise a secret but resistless influence. No system or individual can stand up against their ban. How many domestic kingdoms are ruled by a Catharine de Medicis, whose agency is never seen,—but it is fortunate for one Catharine there are ten Portias and ten Cornelias. They soften, purify, exalt,—they enforce a charity and mildness into the intercourse of society, and come to control and heal those conflicts of the evil passions, into which men, however prudent, if forced into the tide of the world, are involved. But the influence of the sex is chiefly felt in their capacity as mothers. To them belongs the early developement of the mind,—the formation of the character or habits. They have the modelling of the wax while it is ductile and freely inclined—they may inspire to patriotism or degrade to selfishness—make religion an element of character, or a thing to be scoffed—teach virtue, or sow the seeds of vice—compel industry or suffer idleness and inattention. The household under their dominion is either a heaven or a hell. The higher their elevation in the social scale, the more kindly they are treated, their influences are inspired with nobler inducements; and hence if education exalts them, and they, from the position to which they are elevated, shed down more benign and kindlier auspices, it is equally their interest, and the interest of society, to spread among them the gifts of intellectual improvement.