

of attendance, the short duration of stay at school and removal at an early age, should wish them to be met by legislative measures. The opinion favourable to Compulsory Education has been quietly but steadily growing among managers for the last three or four years but I am not quite sure that those who are most determined in advocating it have very clear notions as to the mode of harmonizing it with the denominational system."

Mr. Sewell :—

"If I may add a conviction of my own, it would be that, as the want of children to be taught is the most real and serious cause to assign for the low character of the English primary education, the removal of the difficulty will be followed by the silent disappearance of many other difficulties, which, while it exists, appear insurmountable. If the authority of the law could be worked to deal with it in such a way as to diminish and not increase the present popular distaste to education, and the self-denial that it requires, the interest of managers, which must naturally be languid as long as children and their parents can, by simple inaction, thwart and disappoint the most earnest efforts on their behalf, would awake to vigorous action. The dignity of school and the value of education would rise in popular estimation and popular use as people learned that the better kinds, if not all kinds, of respectable labour were closed against those who neglected it."

Mr. Sharpe :—

"In the first two classes of schools (rural and suburban) there would be very little difficulty in enforcing compulsory attendance. The 'mauvais sujets' at these districts are well known to managers and scholars. But in that part of my district which lies within a radius of about a mile on the average from the Elephant and Castle (London) the migratory habits, poverty and indifference of parents would increase the difficulty of tracing and punishing the worst offenders."

Mr. Watkins :—

"The Educational Conference at Manchester, which is proceeding while I write, has already spoken with a clear, a loud, and a commanding voice as to the compulsion needed; there is no doubt of the need—the only doubt is how to provide for it. There are many and considerable difficulties in the way, difficulties arising from the friends as well as from the enemies of education; from the working classes as well as from the higher; but there are none so great as not to be removable by earnest determination, by patient forbearance, and by intelligent devotion to the most important subject which in this century has risen up and taken its rightful place in the minds and hearts of the people of Great Britain."—*Papers for the Schoolmaster*.

4. ADULT EDUCATION IN FRANCE.

The Minister of Public Instruction has published the "Statistics of Adult Classes for the year 1867-8," which show that much is being done in this important matter. During the past winter, 27,902 adult classes for men were opened in 26,193 communes, and 4,429 classes for women in 4,084 communes, and the number of persons who attended them amounted to 779,373, of whom 95,281 were women. These figures are, however, inferior to those of the preceding year, for, says the document in question, if there has been no falling off in zeal, and if the teachers deserve the highest commendation, the winter was long and rigorous, the cold rendered communication difficult, especially in mountainous parts, while to other difficulties was added the dearness of provisions. In some rural communes, a portion of the population was compelled to emigrate. Yet, in spite of these exceptional circumstances, a general desire to attend the adult classes was evident; married men and women, in many instances no longer young, were often to be seen at the evening schools for months. Of the whole number that attended the adult classes, at least one-half were in a state of complete ignorance, or had a most imperfect knowledge of the most elementary matters, and it appears that they were certainly not 18,000 who failed to derive any appreciable advantage from their attendance at the classes. In Algeria, 82 classes were opened for men, and 22 for women during the year; the whole of these were evening classes, and open to all without any charge whatever. Of the teachers, 87 were laymen, and only 17 belonging to religious societies. The total number of persons who attended the schools was 2,548 men, and 274 women. A comparison is made between the state of primary education at the present time and that of thirty-five years ago, when primary schools were organized in all the communes of France. In 1833 the proportion of illiterate conscripts was 48.83 per cent.; in 1853 it was 34.39 per cent., a gain of 14.44 per cent. in twenty years, or 0.72 per annum. The adult classes are gradually being completed by the addition of scholastic libraries, the teachers, as well as the poor scholars themselves, contributing the collections. The movement is so unanimous, says the report in question, that it cannot be

arrested, and it may be safely predicted that before long France will occupy a high place amongst the nations most famous for popular education.—*Society of Arts Journal*.

5. REMARKS ON AMERICAN SYSTEMS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

THE REV. DR. E. RYERSON, Chief Superintendent of Education for the Province of Ontario, has presented a special report on the *Systems and State of Popular Education* on the Continent of Europe, in the British Isles, and the United States of America. It is a very valuable document, and will have great influence in improving the system of education in that province.

As far as our own country is concerned, he confines himself chiefly to the systems of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. It is interesting to learn the opinions of one who judges these systems from without, especially of one so capable of judging and so unprejudiced as is Dr. Ryerson. As far as our own observation goes, we should give the schools of our country towns more credit than he has. Still, he is surveying a wider field, and it may be that the facts will support his conclusions. But it must be remembered that in a country like our own, subject to so large an influx of immigrants, there must be a large percentage of its inhabitants uninfluenced by its system of public schools. The remarks, however, of DR. RYERSON are worthy of consideration.

We know our systems are not perfect. Great improvements have been made in them during the last quarter of a century; but there are still defects which it is well to consider, that the proper remedies may be devised and applied.—*Massachusetts Teacher*.

6. THE NEW AMERICAN UNIVERSITY.

The Cornell University in Central New York was opened on Wednesday last for the reception of students. There are some things connected with the origin and constitution of this University which are deserving of special notice. The gentleman from whom it derives its name, is well known among the millionaires of America. He was born in Massachusetts, about the year 1808, and is, like the most of the prominent men on this continent, altogether what is called a "self made" man. His father was a farmer in very humble circumstances, and belonged to a branch of the Quaker society. The son, even when a boy, showed considerable mechanical ability, and as he grew up, this tendency manifested itself still more decidedly. It was when at Washington, seeking a patent for a plough which he had invented, that he became connected with the telegraph system, through which he has accumulated his princely fortune. He was the first to suggest carrying the telegraphic wires through the air by means of poles rather than by pipes under ground. The whole thing was new at that time and not in much favour. Ezra Cornell believed in it, and whatever money he made by contracts for the construction of telegraphic lines, he invested in stock. By degrees he became one of the largest holders of telegraph stock, and when that began to pay dividends, he became very speedily one of the wealthiest men in America. No man has employed his wealth more worthily. Impressed by painful experience with the difficulties to be met with by poor but deserving and gifted young men in seeking a liberal scientific education, he had no sooner become rich, than he conceived the idea of providing such youth with an education according to their turn of mind, without their being subjected to the annoyances and drawbacks he had himself passed through. For this purpose, it may be almost said he has for many years lived, and has finally seen his efforts crowned with success in the opening of the University which bears his name.

Some considerable time ago, the United States Congress, after much discussion and agitation concerning the subject of mechanical and agricultural education, passed an Act distributing grants of land belonging to the nation to the various States for the purpose. According to the plan of distribution, New York State received scrip for 990,000 acres. Mr. Cornell, now a member of the New York State Legislature, advocated the division of the whole into two parts, one to go to the existing colleges, and the other to found a great Central State University.

At this time, some five or six years ago, Mr. Cornell received an energetic coadjutor in Professor Andrew White, then of the University of Michigan. Mr. White was a native of the District of New York, where Mr. Cornell resided,—a man of great wealth and liberality; already, though young, distinguished in literature, and an enthusiastic educationist. His ideas of education were somewhat different from those generally held, and as he saw his way to embodying them in connection with this large grant to New York, he resigned his position in Michigan, came to his native State, sought and secured a seat in the Local Legislature, and became Cornell's right-hand man and adviser in the affair. Cornell had proposed