

in the old world, I extract the following from M. Victor Cousin's report to the French Government in 1831, when he was occupied along with M. Guizot, in digesting the system of primary schools which now exists in France; and I may remark that both Cousin and Guizot adopted nothing and recommended nothing, according to their own acknowledgement, the safety and success of which had not been fully verified by the experience of other countries :

"The most difficult point in law on primary instruction is the determination what are the authorities to be employed. Here also let us consult facts. The French administration is the glory and the master-work of the Imperial Government. The organization of France in *maires* and *prefectures*, with municipal and departmental councils, is the foundation of government and of social order. This foundation has stood firm amidst so much ruin, that prudence and policy seem to point to it as the best and safest prop. Moreover, this organization has just been reformed and vivified by rendering the municipal and departmental councils elective and popular. Thus the French administration unites all that we want—activity and popularity. The administration, then, is what you must call to your aid. Recollect, also, that it is these local councils that pay, and that you cannot fairly expect much from them unless they have a large share in the disbursement of the money they have voted. These councils are chosen out of the body of the people, and return to it again; they are incessantly in contact with the people; they are the people legally represented, as the *maires* and the *prefects* are these councils embodied, if I may so say, in one person for the sake of activity and dispatch. I regard then, as another incontestible point, the necessary intervention of the municipal and departmental councils in the management of public instruction. *As there ought to be a school in every commune, so there ought to be for every communal school a special committee of superintendence, which ought to be formed out of the municipal council, and presided over by the maire. I shall perhaps be told, that men who are fit to conduct the business of the commune are not fit to superintend the communal school. I deny it: nothing is wanted for this superintendence but zeal, and fathers of families cannot want zeal where their dearest interests are concerned.*"

The only reason assigned for the infringement of our municipal law is, that it is so infringed in the cities and towns of the United States. So says Dr. Ryerson; and to this dictum we have all bowed down with humble submission. We certainly seem to have been a very enlightened people, to have been so successfully duped! The fear is, our population has been in a great measure infidelized and republicanized by United States importations, without being in the least sensible that such a process was going on. And it is a sad reflection that, at the present day, so many should be found unconsciously yielding submission to the same deceptive influence. Notwithstanding, however, that our municipal law has been violated, that in no way affects the validity of the principle that the Council should be supreme, and should exercise an undivided jurisdiction within the municipality in all matters of local concern.

The County, Town, and City Councils are the three corporate powers into whose hands the whole local control should be placed. Each Council could appoint a special committee on education from its own members, and also a Local Superintendent who should act as secretary. The County Council should superintend and regulate the schools in the townships. For many reasons it is the proper authority. In the first place, because every township and incorporated village is represented in the county council by the town reeve. In the second,

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