

soil ; and if as dense as it is in England, there would be about twelve millions. Taking then all these circumstances together, especially the large amount of the population, and the length of time it has been subjected to the effects of universal education, the experiment has probably been a fair one, and is likely to afford important results either one way or the other.

The history of this population, so far as our present purpose is concerned, is short. It goes back to the year 1620, when the first settlement of that part of America was begun at Plymouth. The people are almost entirely of English descent, and in their language and characteristics more homogeneous than the population of England itself ; since they have hardly any varieties of dialect or personal qualities by which the inhabitants of the different states can be distinguished. For a long time they were nearly all Puritans, who in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., left their native country to enjoy unmolested the rights of conscience. Many of those who thus emigrated were men of property. Many of them had received the best English training and education.\* All of them were high-minded men, full of moral daring, and a stern courage ; eager to sacrifice everything to what they esteemed the true faith, and the genuine practice of Christianity. Their church government, their civil polity founded on it, all their institutions, indeed, were essentially popular from the first, and have remained so ever since.

Among the popular tendencies in these earlier settlers, none was more marked or original in its character, than the tendency to make *education universal*, an idea which, so far as we know, had then been neither acted upon nor entertained elsewhere. The first hint of this system—the great principle of which is, that the property of *all* shall be taxed by the *majority* for the education of *all*—is to be found in the records of the city of Boston for the year 1635, when, at a public or ‘body’ meeting, a school-master was appointed ‘for the teaching and nurturing children among us,’ and a portion of the public lands given him for his support. This, it should be remembered, was done within five years after the first peopling of that little peninsula, and before the humblest wants of its inhabitants were supplied ; while their very subsistence from year to year was uncertain ; and when no man in the colony slept in his bed without apprehension from the savages, who not only everywhere pressed on their borders, but still dwelt in the midst of them.

This was soon imitated in other villages and hamlets springing up in the wilderness. Winthrop, the earliest governor of the colony, and the great patron of Free-schools, says in his journal under date of 1645, that divers Free-schools were erected in that year in other towns, and that in Boston it was determined to allow for ever £50 a year to the master with a house, and £30 to an usher. But thus far only the individual towns had acted. In 1647, however, the Colonial Assembly of Massachusetts made *provision by law*, that every town in which there were fifty families should keep a Free-school, in which reading and writing could be taught ; and every town where there were one hundred families should keep a school, where youth could be prepared in Latin, Greek, and mathematics, for the College or University, which in 1638

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\* It is made apparent by Mr. Savage, the accurate and learned editor of Winthrop's Journal, that in 1638, there were in New-England, in proportion to its population at that time, as many graduates from the two English Universities, as there were in England proper.—Vol. ii. p. 265, note.