

"ment; the acquisition of better tastes, of mental amusements, and enjoyments, which are cheaper while they are more refined."

The same Report contains the evidence of many English manufacturers to the same effect, as also the Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the training of Pauper Children, 1841.

The same causes produce the same effects among the laboring population of the manufacturing towns of the United States.*

In 1841, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education made a laborious inquiry into the comparative productiveness of the labor of the educated and uneducated manufacturing operatives in that State. The substance of the answers of the manufacturers, and business men to whom he applied, is as follows: "The result of the investigation is the most astonishing superiority in productive power on the part of the educated over the uneducated laborer. The hand is found to be another hand when guided by an intelligent mind. Processes are performed not only more rapidly, but better, when facilities which have been cultivated in early life furnish their assistance. Individuals who, without the aid of knowledge, would have been condemned to perpetual inferiority of condition and subjected to all the evils of want and poverty, rise to competence and independence by the uplifting power of education. In great establishments, and among large bodies of laboring men, where all services are rated according to their pecuniary value, there is it found as an almost invariable fact, other things being equal, that those who have been blessed with a good Common School Education, rise to a higher and higher point in the kinds of labor performed, and also in the rate of wages paid, while the ignorant sink like dregs to the bottom."†

From the preceding facts, may be inferred the importance of a sound Common School Education, among even the lowest class of agriculturalists, and mechanics, in respect both to employers and the employed.

The general diffusion of such an education even in the poorest country is the precursor and companion of the general diffusion of industry and virtue, comfort and happiness. Of this Switzerland—naturally the least productive, and the most difficult of cultivation of any country of central Europe—is an indubitable example.

In several of the Cantons of Switzerland I have lately had the opportunity of witnessing the substantial correctness of what is thus stated by a recent traveller: "The intermixture of classes is wonderfully divested of the offensive familiarities which would infallibly arise from it in less educated countries. Deferential respect is paid, rather perhaps, to age, and moral station, than to mere affluence; but I have seldom witnessed any departure from a tone and manner of affectionate courtesy on the part of the poorer towards the higher classes.

"This may, however, be mainly attributable to the habitual and kindly consideration shewn to the working classes by their superiors.

"Whether this results from a higher sense of doing to others as we would be done by, whether from natural kind-heartedness, or whether from the know-

* Report of Poor Law Commissioners.

† Report of the Secretary of the Massachusetts Education Society for 1841.

"ledge of the power possessed by each man, I know not; but be it from love, or be it from fear, certain it is, that a kindly feeling is evinced by employers to the employed in Northern Switzerland, of which few other countries afford an example. Switzerland is clearly indebted to the highly educated, or, to speak more correctly, to the extensively educated mind of her people, for her singular prosperity, and advancement.

"Brilliant talents, or any eminent powers of intellect, are very rarely found among the Swiss; but for sound good sense, and general proficiency in the common branches of education, I do not think that there is a people equal to them.

"A family in one of the villages I visited in the Canton of Zurich, was pointed out to me as unusually disreputable, and I was cautioned not to take any thing I saw there as a sample of the rest. One of the heaviest charges made against the conduct of the master was, that he had been repeatedly warned by the *gemetindemann* to send two of his children to school who were turned of eight years of age; that he had proved so refractory, that at length, the Stadholder had been informed of his conduct, and it was only when he found he was about to be fined that he complied with the law."

One may well ask then, with Bishop Berkely, whether a wise State hath any interest nearer heart than the education of youth.† Independent of the answer furnished by the foregoing facts, the safety of a constitutional State may, in the words of M. Girardin, late Educational Inspector of the French Government to Austria: "The instruction of the people endangers Absolute Governments; their ignorance on the contrary imperils Representative Governments, for the Parliamentary debates, while they reveal to the mass the extent of their rights, do not wait until they can exercise them with discernment; and when a people knows its rights there is but one way to govern them, to educate them." A sentiment which is still more strongly enforced by the present enlightened Archbishop of Dublin: "If the lower orders are to be the property, the slaves of their governors, and to be governed not for their own advantage, but entirely for the benefit of their rulers, then, no doubt, the more they are degraded towards the condition of brutes, the more likely they are to submit to this tyranny. But if they are to be governed as rational beings, the more rational they are made the better subjects they will be of such a Government."*

The first feature then of our Provincial system of Public Instruction, should be *universality*; and that in respect to the poorest classes of society.

It is the poor indeed that need the assistance of the Government, and they are proper objects of its special solicitude and care; the rich can take care of themselves.

The elementary education of the whole people must therefore be an essential element in the Legislative and Administrative policy of an enlightened and beneficent Government.

Nor is it less important to the efficiency of such a system, that it should be *practical*, than that it should be universal.

The mere acquisition or even the general diffusion of knowledge, without the requisite qualities to apply that knowledge in the best manner, does not merit the

* Archbishop Whately. Sermon for the benefit of Halesworth and Cloudatkin National School, p. 13.