

state of primitive, but not innocuous simplicity, than the transit of Railways through our agricultural districts. The civilizing tendency of the locomotive is one of the modern anomalies, which however inexplicable it may appear to some, is yet so fortunately patent to all, that it is admitted as readily as the action of steam, though the substance be invisible and its secret ways unknown to man. Poverty, indifference, the bigotry or jealousy of religious denominations, local dissensions or political demagogueism may stifle or neutralize the influence of the best intended efforts of an educational system; but that invisible power which has waged successful war with the material elements, will assuredly overcome the prejudices of mental weakness or the designs of mental tyrants. It calls for no co-operation, it waits for no convenient season, but with a restless, rushing, roaring assiduity, it keeps up a constant and unavoidable spirit of enquiry or comparison; and while ministering to the material wants, and appealing to the covetousness of the multitude, it unconsciously, irresistibly, impels them to a more intimate union with their fellow men.

Having attempted to illustrate the influence of a Railway upon a district supposed to have culminated, let us proceed to notice some of the general characteristics of the system before we apply the results of our investigations to our own particular wants.

We are not backward in importing improvements or transplanting systems *which we understand*: at the same time, those which are new to us, we have curiosity enough and distrust enough to challenge until their principles are defined—when, with the materials before him, with a particular individuality, each man arrives at his own conclusions as to the practicability of their proposed application to this country. It is to this broad principle of “common sense,” judgment, or whatever you will,