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SYSTEM OF FREE SCHOOLS IN THE NEW-ENGLAND STATES.

The subject of providing education for the whole community has already been discussed in this journal ; and as the importance of the question can no longer be overlooked, we think it desirable to appeal to experience to aid us in forming a judgment. We, therefore, now refer to the only instance, where, as far as we know, the experience has been fully and fairly tried—to the Free-school system in the New-England States of North America.

Universal elementary education in Free-schools established by law, has been known in that part of the United States nearly two centuries. Of course, by this time, it may be reasonably supposed, that materials must exist there, from which we may form an opinion as to the value and efficacy of the system itself. If it has failed in that free government, it may well fail almost anywhere ; if it has succeeded there, we may, perhaps, gather from the experiment, materials for promoting its success in other countries. But, we must first understand something of the circumstances under which it has arisen, and attained its present extent and character in New-England itself.

The New-England States are now six in number ; Massachusetts being the chief of them ; and constitute the northern and eastern portion of the United States of North America. They lie under a climate, where a severe winter prevails one half of the year ; and this circumstance is, probably, favourable to the education of the labouring classes, since the inclement season, which suspends so many of their occupations, gives them at least the leisure needful for intellectual culture. But, on the other hand, the population, though it has increased and is increasing with enormous rapidity, is still a scattered population ; and this circumstance is unfavourable to the progress of popular education, which, like all other moral ameliorations and benefits, is much dependent on the social principle, and is propagated and maintained with ease only in well-peopled neighbourhoods and communities. The New-England States, whose capital is Boston, a city of about sixty thousand inhabitants, comprise a territory of more than sixty-six thousand English square miles, and constitute about one-fourteenth part of the soil of the whole republic of the United States. Their population in 1830 was more than one million and nine hundred thousand, or about thirty souls on an average to each English square mile ; but if it were as dense as population is in France, there would be nine millions on the same