

may find flaws in the American school system, which varies very much in point of excellence in different districts; but we can hardly form any opinion but one as to the character of the general result. Knowledge will not supply the place of public any more than of private honour or duty; it will not make men patriots; it may sometimes make selfishness more formidable to the State and increase the powers of bad men for evil. We have had too many proofs in the United States themselves that it is not an infallible safeguard against corruption; though, let me remark, in countries noted for popular ignorance, such as Spain and Turkey, to say nothing of our own country under the régime of the last century, political corruption is ten times worse than it is in the United States. But knowledge and the intelligence developed in acquiring it do give you a people capable of understanding the public interests, and of solving aright any question in which the public interests are concerned when fairly brought before their minds. The more you see of American politics, the more you will learn to trust the national intelligence and to rely on the power of the community to save itself from actual disaster, even when it has gone dangerously near the brink. Apart from any ultra-democratic sympathies, few can doubt that, in the political progress of humanity, the hour of popular government has arrived; that the principle of order henceforth must be general self-guidance; not the pressure of external force; and in embarking on a political sea not exempt from storms, it is something to be assured by American experience that one anchor will hold.

I should waste your time then if I were to descant on the benefits of education; I should be guilty of presumption if I were to lecture you on the management of schools. There must be many present who under-

stand that subject better than I do; especially the head master whom the Governors have just selected, upon strong evidence of his merits, and who is entering on his career with the best omens, and the head mistress who has already presided for a year with the greatest success.

In looking at the school buildings, the apparatus, the sanitary arrangements, one is struck with the immense stride that has been made since the early days of popular education, when Erasmus depicted the hapless pedagogue in a close and fetid room, wearily listening to the tasks of pupils whose only aid to learning was his rod. Teaching is still hard, and often weary work; in justice to the teacher it should be remembered that it is so. Learning is not play, and cannot be made so. But as the railroad is to the packhorse, so both for the teacher and pupil, is the school of the present day to the school of four hundred years ago. Nay, I suspect, the accommodation and apparatus even of our most expensive schools, as they were not half-a-century ago, would seem wretched, compared with those of a popular school to-day. And perhaps these improvements may only be the earnest of still greater improvements of all kinds to come. Some of our best intellect is now given to these subjects, and we may expect the fruits daily more and more to appear.

The improvement of the material apparatus is the symbol of an equal or even greater improvement in the course of instruction. The list of subjects for the Salt Schools comprises mathematics, English grammar, composition and literature, history, geography (physical and political), natural science, political economy, drawing, class singing and harmony, with one or more of the following languages—Greek, Latin, French, and German. No one can find fault with the liberality of such a programme,